

A STRATEGIC APPROACH FOR THE CUSTOM ELECTRONICS PROFESSIONAL

# CustomRetailer

www.customretailer.net • September 2010



Discuss CEDIA & The Future



## 21 of CEDIA's Finest SALUTE SOLIDARITY

To commemorate CEDIA's 21st anniversary, *CustomRetailer* asked 21 of the CEDIA membership's 'top guns' in custom integration what has changed about their business since they entered it, how CEDIA has helped them to shape their destiny in their business journey, and what sorts of changes they predict and are preparing for in the months and years to come. Here's what they had to say...

CEDIA's best and brightest integrators salute the organization, reflecting on how it has helped them to survive and thrive through the years.

### Bob Gullo, President, Electronics Design Goup, Piscataway, NJ.

I'm 23 years in business this year. Changes? Wow. While it still seems like a 'cottage industry,' we've grown up. I can remember being turned down by our local Adcom rep because we didn't have a store. Heck, I didn't even have an office, other than my parents' garage! But Sonance, Niles, even Sony's CIS group headed by the late visionary Brad Kibble 'saw the vision' of the industry and 'new breed of A/V specialists.' They, along with a bunch of us pioneers, saw it coming.

CEDIA has done a remarkable job on three fronts: creating legitimacy in the eyes of the vendors and, later, consumers and other trades; creating awareness of why working with a competent professional is vital, via CEDIA Electronic Lifestyles Awards and outreach programs; and in training and education-and the EXPO, which is always a highlight for the year.

I see our business model mirroring the IT industry. Companies like IBM derive 50 percent of their revenue from hardware (boxes) and 50 percent from consulting, services and subscriptions. There are likely only a few CEDIA firms that are near the 50/50 mix; more likely 70/30. I'm certain that any business model that continues to rely more on 'boxes' and less on 'services' will not survive.

