

# BrightTree STUDIOS

## The Modern Method of Audiovisual Consulting

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The modern method for audiovisual consulting and design is not independence.

I feel a little bit like a rebel writing that, as many of my colleagues in this field shy away from boldly declaring it. History is filled with change makers, pushing the innovative spectrum of their times in an effort to make our lives brighter, more interesting, easier, and fair. Thomas Jefferson said it best, "I like the dreams of the future better than the history of the past."

So, I'm rebelling against the current message. The modern method for audiovisual consulting and design is not independence, its agnosticism, and here is why.

Manufacturer Agnostic: a term used in the IT and audiovisual fields, and generally referred to as "a system or design that can be interoperable with all other products, non-manufacturer specific, and not influenced by any outside sources."

To be manufacturer agnostic is to design systems and solutions based on the best fit, and not based on any relationships or commitments. A trusted partner will give you the best of breed and will have the experience with all products to know what that is.



Most, if not all, audiovisual integrators now have access to every product on the market. Expertise with interoperability is much more easily garnished with hands on experience. For this reason, many reputable audiovisual integrators and designers are manufacturer agnostic, because they buy, sell, or install from all manufacturers.

And thus, my main point in writing this post is to point out that the old paradigm of favoring manufacturing independence is stale and outdated. Audiovisual designers that are manufacturer agnostic produce the greatest value for the client. The reality of the market place is that there are dozens of products in the same space. Technical specification and research is great and really important, but so are constant evaluation, testing, usage, and troubleshooting. That real-world expertise turns into value added and cost savings during the system design and system build phases of the project.

We owe it to all of our clients to roll up our sleeves, face the challenges, and get our hands dirty. We are not the integrators on these projects, we are design consultants, but we have installation and programming knowledge that can contribute to the success of the project, and it is our job to bring that value to the table. As a manufacturer agnostic consultant and designer, we are using our real world experience to bring owners, architects, and university planners, designs that are innovative, consistent, and reliable, while avoiding the pit-falls that are common from theoretical, not practical, design.

By challenging the manufacturers for what works in the field, we are also forging important relationships. Design teams are constantly probing manufacturers for products and product changes they would like to see. However, there is only one way to discover how a product truly performs and the support that a manufacturer will provide to resolve the issue, and that is by having experience integrating it and programming it. When recommending a product or solution to an end-user/owner, part of that recommendation has to take into consideration the technical support and availability of the manufacturers.

As an apt analogy to this issue, think about how you deal with personal devices that you use at home and work. In our personal lives we make choices to not remain impartial by choosing iPods and iPhones



over Surface and Android or vice versa. We pick the product that meets our requirements, lifestyle, workflow and budget, not the ones that offer the biggest rebate. We choose what works from experience and not from a spec sheet.



I believe that professional audiovisual consulting and design is the same thing. To have access to all products, but then to choose only the ones that work for a specific purpose and project, and match our clients professional requirements, workflow, and budget, is what makes us a true consultant.

To be a part of this changing world and how we integrate design technology for it, you must be in it and understand it. To be a thought leader and a visioning mentor is to be tech savvy, experienced, and agile. Leading the discussion on building technology is more than understanding how it was done in the past, but to also understand functional limitations, future opportunities with real-world products, and the realities of integrating in real world buildings.

I think it is important that I clarify our position as a design consultant with a design-build wing. What we are offering is a new experience and paradigm for audiovisual design. We see an added value in our expertise and refined mastery of hardware, software, and integration.

A trusted technology consultant should be both a thought leader and an expert on the practical details that make systems work; and that is only possible as manufacturer-agnostic consultant.