Subject: Audio Show Visitors Categorized
Posted by AudioFred on Tue, 25 May 2010 11:57:51 GMT
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I spent some time observing the behavior of the people who came to my room at the LSAF, and I've concluded they fall into seveal distinct categories. These are the categories, starting with the ones exhibitors love the most to those we love the least:

1) Questioners - these visitors are characterized by technical curiosity. Not satisfied just to lisen to the system, they have lots of questions about how the components work, what are their differentiating characteristics, and how they are assembled. Regardless of whether that visitor ever buys something from you, you know when he does buy something it will be an informed decision. Snake oil manufacturers hate the questioners; manufacturers of well-designed and well-built products that offer lots of value for the money love them.

2) Listeners - This visitor enters the room, sits down, and listens intently to the music. He may leave with only a nod or a brief 'thank you', but you know he heard your system and has formed an opinion. A purchase decision based on an audition is just as valid as one based on a detailed technical understanding. Possibly even more so.

3) Talkers - This one listens for ten seconds or less then proceeds to tell you in great detail about his system, the great speakers his dad owned when he was a kid, of some other audio topic. He talks for a long time and then leaves without having heard the system. Or he may initiate the discussion with another show visitor, in either case talking loudly enough that others can't listen. If asked I would tell this person I would love to hear about his system anytime other than at a show, where this forces me to ignore several other people and make it impossible for them to hear the system.

4) Backsiders - Some people are mostly interested in the backside of the system. They enter the room and immediately step behind the system and carefully examine the backside of each component, the cabling, and whatever else is back there. You hope they don't step on your expensive speaker cables as the photograph the back of your system. I'm amazed at the number of show visitors who are backsiders. If it were a woman I would understand, but somebody please tell me what's so fascinating about the backside of an audio system?

5) Audiosnobs - Price itself is a virtue to the audiosnob, therefore they are only interested in the most expensive equipment. I believe anybody who can afford it is entitled to buy expensive stuff. Some audio equipment is expensive because it uses premium parts and cost a lot to manufacture, and its price is justified by the fact that it sounds better than the less expensive stuff. But the audiosnob feels compelled to make sarcastic comments about real-world equipment. This is good if you sell obscenely overpriced stuff, but not good if you sell high value equipment like the typical LSAF exhibitor.

6) Diysnobs - Most of the manufacturers I know price their products realistically to enable them to make a reasonable profit and stay in business. I've been told this typically involves a markup of four or five times the price of the parts. The Diysnob will enter the room, ask the price, and announce in a loud voice that he could build it for a quarter of the retail price. Do any Diysnobs realize what assholes they are?

7) Touchers - And finally, the visitor from hell, the toucher. Many visitors will approach the system and closely observe the controls, led's, lcd screens, etc. on the components, the placement of the drivers and ports on a speaker, etc. This I understand, but the toucher isn't satisfied just to look; he must touch. One toucher felt up the the faceplate of my expensive Scan Speak Revelator tweeter, his fingers less than a inch from the delicate silk dome. I envy Duke and Wayne for their horn tweeters, with their recessed and untouchable drivers. On a closely related topic, I have a friend who touches women at social events - a hand brush across a breast, a too intimate hug or kiss, and that sort of thing. I find this disrespectful of the women, and so do the women who are the object of this guy's desire, but at least I understand his motivation. I find audiotouchers both disrespectful and inscrutable.