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.

Subject: Re: Audio Show Visitors Categorized
Posted by Wayne Parham on Tue, 25 May 2010 15:05:35 GMT
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Oh, man, Fred, that's a gass. And so true!

I had always kinda noticed some of these types, the listeners, the talkers, etc. But you really put a magnifying glass on it and you're sooo right!

For me, my room is predominantly the tech talkers and the listeners. I am happy with both, because it is really what I'm all about. I love the technical side, so I love chatting with people about it. And I love the sound, and the way the room "feels" when there's a group of people hushed by a beautiful musical passage. That's when you know people are really enjoying the sound.

I have had problems with the talkers though. Most are people I want there, and that I want to talk to, which makes the problem tougher to solve. I don't want my room to be a stuffy quiet zone where conversation is met with stern looks or a twist of the volume knob. But sometimes that happens, sometimes a guest will turn up the volume to drown out conversations, if they are trying to listen when others start talking. When I see that, I've started trying to take people out in the hall to talk. That usually works, but sometimes not, especially during busy times. Too much going on.

The other "showgoer types" you've listed crack me up too. The guy that goes around to look at the back of the system - I never thought about it but you're exactly right! There are a few every year that do exactly that! I think they are probably checking out what kinds of cables you have and if there are any secrets behind the curtain, so to speak. Then the audio snobs, I've seen a few of those, but to tell the truth, I've seen as many exhibitors that were that way as guests. LSAF tends to attract a different kind of crowd though, so the ratio of audio snobs to more modest audiophiles favors the less arrogant by a large margin.

DIYers are sort of in the same general group as the techies, although I do see some that are technical that don't DIY and I also see plenty of DIYers that aren't very technical. Still, a large proportion of the guests that visit my room are DIYers that are pretty tech savvy. Those are the people I chat with the most. But I never have any say they can do what I'm doing for a quarter of

the price. That would be pretty tough to do. Only way I can think of is to buy used components and recone, and I encourage that.

Touchers, wow, I guess I never noticed them. I guess it's because, you're right, my stuff isn't particularly vulnerable. I've wanted to bring a turntable though, my Rega always calls to me but there just never seems to be enough room to pack it with a lot of vinyl. I always feel disadvantaged by not bringing records, as a result. Now I'm wondering if that's not been a blessing in disguise. Maybe the touchers make it best to stick with CDs.