

intensify

the art of integration and technology | issue 01 spring 2007



C-Bus
pointOne™
accredited integration professional

at the coalface

Developing innovative products is one thing, but customising and delivering those products to the specifiers is another challenge altogether. Here Kim Powell profiles Clipsal's C-Bus pointOne program.

Technology has become such an integral part of our lives that it's only natural people are interested in the possibilities it can offer. Clipsal's reputation for excellence has seen Clipsal C-Bus – a fully integrated system that enhances living and reduces energy consumption – become the most sought after home automation and commercial lighting control and energy management system in Australia. And now, thanks to the C-Bus pointOne program, you have one point of contact for the consultation, design, installation and after sales service, whether you're a home owner, architect, builder, designer, electrician or manager. A C-Bus pointOne accredited integration professional will provide you with the best system to suit your needs, and as of June this year, C-Bus pointOne will launch over 70 trained and accredited specialists across Australia and New Zealand.

The product design process for Clipsal C-Bus is well-structured and addresses not only the technical aspects, but also the aesthetics. Eddy Rinna is the industrial design supervisor at Clipsal Integrated Systems. He follows the product from styling and conception, right through to engineering. When it came to developing a new switch for the Clipsal C-Bus system, Eddy and the design team travelled all around Australia to meet with leading architects, asking them to visualise perfection.

"The ideal switch does not have to be a focal point of the room unless you are right next to it or interacting with it," he says. "Think design, but nothing that yells out to you. Architects do not want to see labels on the switch because they think that looks tacky. You have to be aware of using materials that will last for the life of the dwelling, and nothing that is fake – or looks fake – because architects like the purity of the device."

The design team also engaged the services of an external designer, Shareen Joel from SJD Melbourne, to bring an outside perspective to the project. The new switch will be launched next year



5thCorner created their Technology Lounge to demonstrate these smart home technologies

and will be available in the A Series format (the rectangular Australian switch plate) and in the square European style.

"Some of our customers have very expensive high-end homes, but at the same time the switches have to appeal to the wider market. We're not just selling switches, we're selling a home automation and commercial lighting control and energy management system," Eddy says.

Although the Clipsal C-Bus system was originally developed for commercial applications, its ability to streamline automation systems meant people were soon asking for a domestic version. And because not everyone has lived with this kind of technology before, 5thCorner, a home automation specialist in Brisbane, created their Technology Lounge to demonstrate these smart home technologies to their customers.

Rather than being just another retail area, says Kelly Weijers, 5thCorner's sales and marketing manager, they seized the opportunity to create a striking space that doubles as a venue for product launches, parties and other events.

"We created the 5thCorner Technology Lounge so people could experience it in the flesh, so to speak," Kelly says. "Most people haven't lived with it because it's new. Being able to show them how it all works is a lot easier."

She believes Clipsal has done a fantastic marketing job and customers always ask for C-Bus.

"We discuss with them what can be done and then design a system to suit that," Kelly continues. "Security, surveillance, home theatre, lighting control and music distribution. People's music collections are astronomical and C-Bus can pipe their music throughout the house and make it really simple for them."

The whole 5thCorner team is proud to be a part of the C-Bus pointOne accredited integration professional program. "We consider ourselves a good installer of C-Bus systems, and C-Bus pointOne is a program that recognises good installers," says Kelly. "Being part of it is good because you get to steer C-Bus in the direction consumers want. We're at the coalface and get to communicate these wants to Clipsal."

Clipsal C-Bus is not just for high-end properties: 5thCorner specialises in designing sleek systems for people in the middle of the market, who see what this sophisticated technology can do and want it in their own homes. Kelly explains that home automation systems are now a natural consideration just like granite bench tops and designer taps, and this is where the C-Bus pointOne program is important.

"You need to do it properly otherwise customers will get very frustrated when they can't do the simplest thing. So you need to go to a reputable dealer," she says. "Our systems are an expression of you, no matter what your budget is. C-Bus is a really cool system, it's living made easier."

*Text Kim Powell
Photography Bill Watson*