New York Brownstone

NEW YORK, NY

➡ Challenge

Provide a home technology solution for a 100-year old New York townhouse owned by a family unsure of what they want or what is possible.

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➡ Solution

Install an advanced, wired network infrastructure using Crestron DigitalMedia™ and Sonnex™ technology. Then add systems as the family lives with the technology.

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— **Todd Anthony Puma**

The Source Home Theater, Inc.

Start with the Basics

Planning to add technology to your home? This residential contractor suggests starting with a strong network infrastructure, so everything else can follow.

What's the most important consideration when you add electronics to your home?

"Pay careful attention to the wiring," says Todd Anthony Puma, owner and CEO of The Source Home Theater, Powered by Fregosa Design of New York City. "There are so many things you can do and so many ways to go about doing them. But how well it all works is going to depend on the first step you take: installing a hardwired network infrastructure."

Puma and his team recently engineered and built an extensive home automation, entertainment, and security system in a beautiful five-story brownstone row house. "The homeowners started out by asking only for a five-room audio setup. As they came to understand what was available to them, they realized how much more they could do and how much they would enjoy doing more," he adds. As the project unfolded, Puma collaborated with longtime partner, Richard Fregosa, to create a custom software and user interface package for the homeowner's growing needs.

"Fortunately, they allowed us to install an extensive network infrastructure early in the construction process. Once that was in place, it was very easy to add and configure components and features anytime."

The Source installed a Crestron DM-MD8X8 switcher to route video to the various TVs and a Crestron Sonnex® 24x8 Multiroom Audio System with an expansion unit able to route up to 24 audio sources to 16 different areas of the home.

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The genesis of a very cool system

The brownstone itself is located on the upper west side of New York City. Built in the 1920s, the building was overdue for a major overhaul by the time the current owners purchased it more than two years ago. In the process, they replaced nearly all of its major components: plaster, plumbing, flooring, electric, heating, and air conditioning. They added a fifth story and a rooftop deck plus security, home entertainment, and automation features. Only the exterior and the wood-burning fireplace are original. The result is a magnificent century-old residence brought up to today's highest standards.

Puma says with all this work going on, the homeowners were not thinking much about home electronics. "Many clients consider AV a treat. It's something to be put on the back burner, kind of a dessert to be brought up only after the meat and potatoes decisions have been made." He says he had worked with the homeowner on another project for his business, and then he came to Puma for advice on an audio system. "One of the reasons he called me was, like many people, he was confused about what to buy. His friends were recommending this brand or that, but he wanted someone with real expertise to help him answer the basic question, 'What's right for me and my family?'"

> "Our customers like us, but they don't want to see us all the time... Instead of waiting for us to come over, we can resolve any issue from anywhere, immediately. We want them to be happy 24/7, and this way, they are."
>
> — **Todd Anthony Puma**
> *The Source Home Theater, Inc.*

At that point Puma suggested they wire the home for other technologies the family might possibly want later on. That would be a relatively simple process because the home had been stripped down to the studs and Puma's technicians had easy access to every part of every room. Puma installed CAT6 network cable and 14-gauge speaker wire throughout the home.

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"We got to the stage where the sheetrock was going in and the client said, 'You know what? Let's add speakers in this room and television here. Let's make the house a little more exciting.' We said, 'No problem,'" says Puma.

"In another week, we got another call. 'The kids want speakers in their rooms – and we were thinking it would be nice to have music in the bathrooms.' We ended up adding audio to every room on the first two floors plus the home gym, master bedroom, master sitting room, and the rooftop deck. We also added TVs to the dedicated media room, a family room on the third floor, the gym, master bedroom, and on the rooftop deck."

Puma says the family decided to add a Kaleidescape® movie server, an Autonomic® Mirage Media Server®, Blu-ray™ players and docking stations for the iPod®.

"Once all this was decided, we went back and asked, 'Since we have all this media now, how do you want to control it?'"

The homeowners heard they could operate all of their home systems with the iPad® and iPhone®, and so Puma suggested controlling everything with the Crestron mobile app as the user interface. "I also said, I think we should add another device that will work even if the Internet service or WiFi® isn't available." At

this stage of the project the client declined, but would later reconsider.

In the meantime, they started shopping for a security system, and The Source helped them by suggesting Siedle electronic door locks with built-in cameras. They asked about lighting and climate control, and The Source provided a Crestron centralized lighting control system together with Crestron motorized shades and Crestron in-wall thermostats. "Since we had already installed the standard network infrastructure, it was very easy to add these systems, even though the walls, ceilings, and floors were finished."

By the time the homeowners moved in, they had a very complete home entertainment and automation

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system, which they loved. As they enjoyed controlling the home from their mobile devices, they realized that a dedicated touch screen would benefit them as well. The Source added 10" Crestron TSW touch screens in the dining room and master bedroom, and the clients loved them. Soon after, they added Crestron MTX-3 handheld remotes to replace the TV remotes, so the homeowners could readily adjust their lights, shades, audio, and security systems, in addition to channel surfing.

Remote service

Crestron technology gives The Source and Fregosa Design the ability to log in, service, and adjust the customer's system remotely – a huge benefit. "This is the homeowner's favorite part of having an integrated solution," notes Puma.

"Our customers like us, but they don't want to see us all the time, especially if they're throwing a party. Instead of waiting for us to come over, we can resolve any issue from anywhere, immediately. We want them to be happy 24/7, and this way, they are."

The Crestron system also enables the team to analyze the way their clients are using their systems and modify them accordingly. "We're able to identify and address any issues, without having to bother the client with a lot of questions. There's no other system I've seen that can do that."

In the end, listening to the customer and educating them about what was possible made all the difference. "Our clients were focused on the remodel of their townhouse, so it was up to us to think about home technology. We were able to provide them with a solution that would fit their needs and provide the foundation to do more when they were ready. They appreciated the flexibility of their system and the freedom they had to add or change components and features."

A strong infrastructure, based on Crestron technology, made it easy to provide that.

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Integrator
The Source Home Theater, Inc.
wwww.thesourcehometheater.com/

Programer
Fregosa Design
www.fregosadesign.com/

Interior Design
Virtus Design
www.virtusdesign.com/

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