



SmartHomz Gives Homeowners Control, Peace of Mind



Have you entered the age of smart home technology? Do you have a few smart components but want to sync it all up for a streamlined user experience? Smart Homz is a home technology installation and consulting service that can help. Owner Dave LaMere, who splits his time between Ramsey and LBI, is the guy who helps get it installed, makes it work, shows you how to use it and then

remains accessible to you around the clock for consultation.

LaMere came from the kitchen and bath industry, where smart appliances are becoming more common – but, at this stage, often function outpaces form. He believes we’re still at the beginning of the “smart” technology revolution, and the idea of keeping “eyes and ears on your home” even when you’re not there is just the beginning of what will soon be the standard.

One day last month, LaMere gave a tour of a smart setup. He arrived in his SmartCar (what else?) at the vacation home of a client who lives primarily in Budd Lake and can monitor and control almost everything that goes on at his Brant Beach house from the Wink app on his smartphone. His custom smart-home solution happens to include front and rear cams, a garage door opener, video doorbell, thermostat, and a fire and carbon monoxide detection system that sends alerts to his phone.

Satisfied client John Dimonda recommends Smart Homz to his friends. “Having peace of mind while splitting time between both houses has really given us the opportunity to enjoy our time on the beach, knowing that all is good in our main home,” he said. “It’s also great to be able to check in on our house on LBI when up north – whether after a

recent storm or when giving access to a contractor or cleaning crew, or just checking in on the house.”

LaMere’s specialty is finding individualized solutions. “You have to get to know the client before you can tell them what their house needs,” he said.

“No two smart-home solutions should be the same, as no two owners live the same way,” the literature reads.

The three main principles that guide Smart Homz’s business are “safety, security and peace of mind.” Convenience is another driving force; it’s about living a more simplified life. Having smart locks means no more fumbling for keys or getting locked out. Lock codes can be customized to specific family members or delivery personnel and changed at any moment to accommodate a particular visitor (contractor, renter) for a certain length of time – one day, one week – so the homeowner knows who is coming and going, and when. Controlling a thermostat from afar means arriving to a house pre-cooled or -warmed to exactly the right temperature.

A popular feature for shore real estate owners is remote water shutoff, which will send an alert to a phone in the event of a leaking, frozen or burst pipe. (Leak protection used to be a sensor under the sink and water heater, LaMere explained; new systems recognize erratic behavior in the water flow.)

As an independent company, he is not restricted to one subset of products, and he knows which devices and systems work together best. A basic “home away” bundle – climate, smoke/CO detection, locks, cameras and lights – combines Nest, Ring, Schlage, Arlo and Phillips brands. The basic setup is \$1,500, no monthly fees.

Smart technology is a godsend to anyone concerned with rental management, storm damage or energy conservation. Burst water pipes were a big problem on the Island last winter.

Entertainment is another perk. Imagine integrated music, video and internet connectivity throughout the house, indoors and out. Gone are the days of unsightly wires. Boxes and devices can be hidden away for a clean, uncluttered look.

Other ways being smart-equipped can make life easier: fire alarms; electrical outlets (so no power is being pulled when appliances are turned off); motorized window blinds on a timing schedule; and irrigation systems for landscaping, as a better alternative to

sprinklers, given the proximity of houses on LBI. A temperature limit can be set for the bathtub so young kids don't get scalded; safety measures can be installed in an elderly parent's house, for their adult offspring's peace of mind, which could mean senior housing instead of assisted living.

LaMere recognized a "massive gap" in the industry a few years prior to starting Smart Homz as a side business 18 months ago. Right now, his focus is on content marketing, raising awareness, building a network, and cultivating relationships with manufacturers, distributors and partner agencies (insurance companies love the risk mitigation factor). His coverage area is concentrated in Ocean, Monmouth, Bergen and Essex counties. He currently has a staff of three handling marketing, sales and procurement, plus a dozen installers.

For more information and to explore the smart possibilities, visit smarthomz.com or call 1-888-573-HOMZ.

— **Victoria Ford**