

CREATING THE CLEVER HOME

ONE CUSTOMERS JOURNEY

Perhaps a common thought that comes into peoples' minds when thinking about a Smart Home installation is that you can easily do it all yourself. After all, it is 2018 and there are now hundreds of products on the market that will help to automate your home. The problem is that the more you look, the more you realise

that there isn't a magic box that can do it all and even if there was, it would be unlikely that it would do it all in the way that you wanted. Of course, the DIY route is very much open to all of us but as we will find out, the service side of the installation can be just as important as the products.

One of RJK Multiroom's clients recently moved into a new property and wanted to explore all that was on offer to make life easier, more convenient and more comfortable. For our case study we chatted to John, a retired businessman, about his expectations and the journey with RJK Multiroom.

'So John, tell us what kicked it off?'

"Right up front ... I do love a gadget! But I have one very important rule called The 30 Day Challenge. I take a good look at a product but before I get all excited about the prospect of owning it I put some serious thought into how I would feel about it in a month's time. I know friends who have cupboards full of stupid impulse purchase things that seemed like a good idea at the time... you know the story, the box got opened, it was used twice and then never seen again. Well I am now about a year into my RJK equipped home and it all gets used every day. In fact, many uses of the system have become totally indispensable and integrated into our family life. Isn't that what it's all about?"

I'd spent most of my working life in the motor industry and recently I found myself taking a leaf out of my own book. I once told a group of students that it was possible to wander into your local Mercedes dealer and order every part fitted to your dream car and then put them altogether yourself. And why would you do such a stupid thing? Well, perhaps you thought that it would work out cheaper than buying the car and probably you might make a better job of it! You don't really want the answer to that question...do you?"

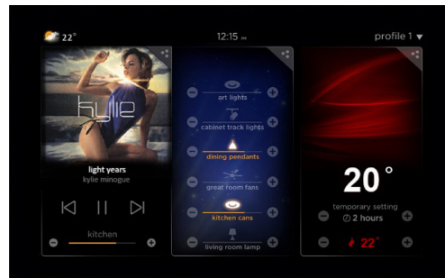
The point of the metaphor was to demonstrate the real value of 'the expert'. This 'expert' has a few names including consultant, project manager and other ones that seemed to reinforce the appeal of the DIY route because they all sounded a bit expensive. For my Smart Home needs, my expert was named Richard King from RJK Multiroom and although there are some others out there, it quickly became evident that he was one of those 'he knows his stuff' people. As it turned out he was backed up by an equally knowledgeable and enthusiastic team. The 'magic box' I'd searched for turned out to be a company and not a collection of randomly purchased items strung together in the hope that they would give me what I wanted."

How much involvement did you have in choosing the bits of your system?

"My 'consultancy' with RJK was not what I was expecting. It was about music, the habits of the family, TV viewing patterns and other things that allowed RJK to understand what our expectations were and most importantly where we would like to be at the end of this journey. Lots of small questions that allowed them (not me) to put a system together that was totally functional and not cluttered with pointless functions that would never be used. To cut to the chase, on the day of handover, the system that I now love (and shown off to all my friends) was quite different from my original thinking."

So in your head, what were you after?

"Specifically, I wanted a system that would manage all the lighting in our home, give me communication and great sounding music wherever I wanted it, manage the climate, allow me to control the sources to the various TV's and then to sit in the bath and use the whole thing from my phone whilst watching Star Trek!



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In fact, the system as installed today does even more, but these were my initial requirements."

We asked Richard King, MD of RJK Multiroom, what was proposed for John.

"John was an enthusiastic customer, commented Richard, and already had a good idea as to what he wanted the system to do. It is very important that we listen carefully to the expectations and always keep things focused on the end result – the usefulness and practicality. We have had clients who approached us saying 'I want a DVK497/7 in there, a pair of MS455's in there and every room must have a BGSTF89998/9/65!!' It sometimes takes a great deal of diplomacy to suggest that their requirements may not give them what they want. Of course, we would never go against the 'customer is always right' rule but nearly every single customer has thanked us in the end for guiding them. After all, that's our job."

John's comments backed this up.

"Probably the most valuable lesson that I learned (and always pass on) was that I had never done this type of thing before but RJK

had done it many hundreds of times. The value of getting in a competent and experienced team to deliver my dream turned out to be the cheapest component in the whole package. There was no trial and error process or system compromise. What we got was a feeling of confidence and something that you don't often find these days...they actually cared about me and my satisfaction. Maybe this explains why RJK were recommended to me and why I would recommend them to anyone either expanding or needing an installation from scratch."

The chosen central core was the Vantage Equinox System from the American Legrand company. Primarily, this controlled all the lighting and music distribution which were high on John's agenda. Other manufacturers' products were used to control window blinds, curtains, 4K matrix video distribution and the complete control of the room temperatures. All these functions are presented through the same Advantage interface including a full function app for mobile devices.

"The huge advantage of using RJK," continued John, "was despite using a combination of manufacturers equipment it was all just one 'RJK' system. I never had to worry about which company to call if something wasn't quite right because it was all a package. That is the number one reason why its far better to buy a system rather than individual bits. You just get so much more value that way... bit like a package holiday."

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As with all case studies it's only possible to scratch the surface of this type of complex installation. However, there are a few points here that are worth remembering. The client knew what he wanted and where the grey areas existed he was guided by people who do this for a living. Yes, you could save a few pounds by attempting a DIY approach but where's the real saving when you are not the expert? One thing is crystal clear though. Smart Homes are well and truly part of living requirements now. Much of this is driven by the need to improve the energy efficiency of our homes but don't forget how cool it is to be able to control every aspect of your home from the back of a cab!

For more information contact RJK Security and Multiroom Ltd on 020 8529 7999
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