GETTING POWER TO THE PEOPLE (AND GETTING PAID FOR IT)

CE Pro’s first-ever Power Management Study reveals dealers sell $1,695 worth of power management/conditioning equipment per project. While outages are frequent, integrators are not fully compensated for power-related service calls.

By Jason Knott

As the deployment of robust home networks for clients becomes almost ubiquitous for integrators, it is elevating the need for managing power in the home more efficiently. Sure, integrators have been installing power management devices for years, but the primary sales focus has always been on creating “clean power” for A/V quality purposes. Today, the sales pitch is primarily focused around power management for the protection and performance of the home network.

But to what extent are integrators deploying power management devices? For the first time, CE Pro conducted a Power/Energy Management Study, in conjunction with RoseWater Energy Group. In general, the results, which came from 198 responding dealers, reveal that power problems are somewhat widespread, causing service truck rolls on a semi-occasional basis. And most times they are not being fully compensated for those power-related service calls. Meanwhile, dealers report they are looking for solutions to the problems, whether those answers come from surge protectors, generators, uninterruptible power supplies (UPS) or even energy management hubs.

HOW WIDESPREAD ARE POWER PROBLEMS?

According to the study, integrators report the average number of power outages per client, per year is four. While nearly half of customers (47 percent) experience very few power-related problems, 53 percent of clients have power problems at least once every three months. Beyond that, fully 13 percent of customers endure more than 10 power outages per year and another 10 percent suffer with eight to 10 outages yearly.

Among the technology systems integrators report are most affected by power problems are (listed from most to least affected):

• Home Networks
• Security Systems
• Smart Home Controls/Home Automation
• Home Theaters
• Lighting Control

Interestingly, integrators report that power reliability is the fourth-most important system to their clients. And, dealers say that power reliability (or lack thereof) is second biggest threat (behind the performance of home network) to the overall performance of a fully integrated system installation.

So the need is there. More than 85 percent of integrators say their clients would “definitely” or “probably” benefit from having some level of improved power quality/reliability.

Meanwhile, more than nine out of every 10 integrators (93 percent) say power problems are a source of frustration for their service departments because they are not being properly compensated for truck rolls caused by power issues.
General power outages caused by utility problems are cited as the most problematic, followed by lightning strikes and internal surges/spikes caused by other devices in the home (e.g., appliances). When these power issues crop up, dealers say they often have to roll a truck, yet they are unable to bill to their satisfaction in most cases. Indeed more than one-third (34 percent) of survey respondents say they either don’t get paid or rarely do for addressing power issues — 11 percent report they are “never” compensated for a service call related to a power problem, while 23 percent of dealers say getting paid for a service call related to a power surge is “infrequent.”

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SOLVING THE PROBLEM

Surge protectors are the most frequently installed power management devices. In total, 96.4 percent of dealers install them. Battery backup/uninterruptible power supplies (UPS) are the second-most popular devices to deploy. In all, 92.3 percent of dealers install UPS devices. After those two solutions, there is a big dropoff in terms of what integrators actually offer their clients. Nearly one-third of custom integration companies (31.2 percent) report they have never installed a backup generator. More than one-quarter (26.6 percent) say they have never even called an electrician to do some rewiring.

Interestingly, when it comes to determining which are the most effective power management devices to install for clients, UPS devices are cited first. Those are closely followed by backup...
Meanwhile, integrators foresee energy management hubs, like those made by RoseWater Energy, as an up-and-coming solution for their clients. In the study, dealers cited energy management hubs as the fourth most valuable device to install for clients to solve their power needs.

But while integrators believe they are getting the short straw for power-related service calls, they do seem to have success offering power products to homeowners. According to the study, dealers report selling an average of $1,695 worth of power management equipment per project.

Whole-house power management hubs are still a relatively unknown category for dealers. More than half (56 percent) have never considered installing such a device. These devices store power onsite and can run a home from internal batteries, free from the power grid. That lukewarm data from dealers seems to jibe with customer demand at this time. Integrators report that just 24 percent of their clients are interested in alternative energy systems.

**REMOTE NOTIFICATION BECOMING UBQUITOUS**

The final portion of the study covered the remote connectivity abilities of today’s power management devices and how that can help dealers be more efficient by reducing truck rolls, and elevate the overall client experience. According to respondents, remote management is becoming common. Nearly nine out of every 10 dealers (88 percent) say they communicate remotely with their customers’ home systems; power conditioners with technology like BlueBolt from Panamax/Furman facilitate such interaction. In fact, 5 percent say they communicate weekly with customers’ smart homes. Another 4 percent are remotely connecting two or three times per month.

Lastly, CE pros say they would welcome any remote management system that sends email or text messages when problems occur. Almost half of respondents (49 percent) said such a notification would "definitely" be of value.

**WHAT IS THE ROSEWATER HUB?**

“The most complete intelligent residential energy solution on the market today”

The RoseWater Energy Hub is the first all-in-one residential and light commercial power solution integrating three capabilities into one platform to serve the complete electrical needs of an entire premises, in essence transforming the electrical system in place into a microgrid:

- Power conditioned output protects and enhances the performance of all home and office electronics. With power quality higher than utilities, sensitive audio and video systems as well as home networking components, home automation and lighting control systems will perform at their best and last longer.
- Uninterruptable Power Supply with zero transfer time, and a large amount of battery back up will safely and securely allow you to ride out power failures.
- Ready for renewables – users adopting the RoseWater Energy Hub for power quality and back-up reasons can “go solar” for relatively little additional cost, for greener living.

The RoseWater Energy Hub offers a seamless total system integration solution, using a dual inverter system with solar input, that blends power conditioning, backup, and renewable energy management into one pre-assembled, configured and integrated industrial-grade platform. With everything integrated, prewired and tested, the potential for installation and set-up problems is greatly reduced at the jobsite.

“This project is a marathon, not a sprint. Joe and the RoseWater team get that and have been with us every step of the way. There have been too many conference calls, emails and the like to count. All necessary, not just follow-up to follow-up. When something needs to be done to move the project forward, it is always a simple ‘Yes, we can do that.’”

- Steve Paul
Solutions Audio/Video and Technology, Reading, PA

“I didn’t think our [extremely sensitive] audio calibration equipment was plugged in because I was not picking up any noise floor. I then realized we were plugged into an outlet powered by RoseWater and it all made sense!”

- Brian Barr, President/CEO CAT-California Audio Technology, Sacramento, CA

“The RoseWater team is world-class in every way. Support was impeccable, from initial load calculations to on-site surveys to final hands-on installation. Five gold stars!... I can confidently recommend the RoseWater HUB to any homeowner who has issues with power consistency and quality.”

- Rich Green, President of Rich Green Designs, Palo Alto, CA

“With the Hub, I am getting a clean 60 cycle sine wave during an outage, while powered, and all the in-between times. When the power fluctuates several times before settling off or on, connected equipment is completely isolated... My experience has been flawless. It appears to me that RoseWater has built a professional organization geared to serving high-end clients.”

- Jeff Galea, Owner of Boca Theater and Automation, Boca Raton, FL