

CEPro | Jason Knott, JULY 2021

Integrator Finds Ingenious Way to Sell Over-Fireplace TVs



AVS Concepts showroom has a motorized MantelMount MM860 with an 85-inch TV directly adjacent to where clients sit for sales discussions. Blueprints, plans and other sales materials are cast onto the TV during sales presentations.

 CEPro

AVS Concepts in Ankeny, Iowa, uses subtle sales technique using motorized MantelMount units as part of documentation discussion with clients.

It's not often that an integrator can make an understated sales presentation so effective that the customer doesn't even realize it is a sales demo. But that is exactly the situation at AVS Concepts in Ankeny, Iowa, where integrator Aaron McCombs has developed an ingeniously smooth and subtle way to present and sell over-the-fireplace TVs using MantelMount motorized mounts.

Indeed, the technique is so subtle that clients don't even recognize it as a sales tactic, but instead it has the customers themselves making the initial inquiry about the over-the-fireplace solution. The result is that almost every AVS Concepts' client ends up purchasing an over-the-fireplace TV and mount combination.

McCombs has been involved in the custom installation market in the Des Moines area since 2007, and he formalized the creation of AVS Concepts as an LLC in 2014 officially. The company offers a broad array of smart home solutions across all equipment categories, along with consultation and design services, McCombs also acts as an AT&T dealer for nationwide telecom services, which he says helps generate solid leads.

Today, AVS Concepts works with high-end homebuilders in the area, with about 25% of its business coming from commercial projects and the bulk in residential. McCombs makes it imperative that 100% of his clients visit the showroom, which has multiple zones of audio, a home theater vignette, lighting control, motorized shades, door stations and video doorbell cameras.

Also in the AVS Concepts' showroom is a MantelMount MM860 motorized mount over a fireplace. The MM860 mount is designed to go over the fireplace and with the push of a button it will not only rotate and swivel but also drop down from above the mantel to provide the optimum viewing angle. The unit can be integrated with whole-house control systems.

The mount and fireplace in the AVS Concepts showroom are directly adjacent to a large table where McCombs sits down with clients to review the plans and build out the design of their custom installation project.

McCombs ingeniously incorporates the MM860 product into his sales presentation by casting the client's blueprints and other product information onto the TV. He then uses URC Total Control or Josh.ai voice control to maneuver the motorized mount and the 85-inch TV down from above the fireplace and rotates it so the clients can see the images better.

"As soon as I do that, everyone asks, 'What is that?' when they see it," says McCombs. "There is a real 'wow factor' to it."

McComb responds by saying something like, "Yes, we were going to talk about it later but since you asked." He then describes the features of the MM860, including the heat sensor that automatically moves the TV back to its original position above the mantel when it senses heat from the fireplace.

According to McCombs, nearly every one of his customers ends up with a TV over the fireplace, especially those with gas fireplace because the mantels tend to be much higher.



Using MantelMount to Expand TV Sales

"I am a hands-on person and when the customers see the technology in person, it shows the value of the investment and see what they use best," he notes.

"We've had many situations where we would not have sold a TV without MantelMount product. Clients come in thinking they are just going to put some artwork above the fireplace primarily because of the height and the poor viewing angle. But after they see MantelMount, it's only then they realize they can put a TV there. So we sell many more TVs because of the mounts."

AVS Concepts signed on to be a MantelMount dealer particularly due to the MM860 motorized unit.

"That is all we sell... we have never sold one of the manual units," he comments.

McCombs even has the MM860 in his own home.

"I fell in love with it," he adds.



Jason Knott is Chief Content Officer for Emerald's Connected Brands. Jason has covered low-voltage electronics as an editor since 1990, serving as editor and publisher of Security Sales & Integration. He joined CE Pro in 2000 and serves as Editor-in-Chief of that brand. He served as chairman of the Security Industry Association's Education Committee from 2000-2004 and sat on the board of that association from 1998-2002. He is also a former board member of the Alarm Industry Research and Educational Foundation. He has been a member of the CEDIA Business Working Group since 2010. Jason graduated from the University of Southern California.