

the Advent Newsletter

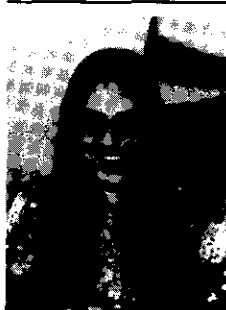
Equal Level Speaker Presentation

We want to tell you about a way which will enable you to make the most effective speaker demonstrations in town. We call it Equal Level Speaker Presentation (ELSP), and the reasons we recommend it are: it will greatly increase your credibility with your customers; it will put your competition on the defensive; it will develop more sales for you. Here's why.

We all realize that, for the consumer, evaluating loudspeakers intelligently is the most difficult part of choosing a music system. Very few customers feel comfortable deciding on a pair of speakers after reading advertisements. Too often the glowing phrases on one page of a magazine make a \$50 speaker appear to be the same as the \$500 speaker described similarly on the next page. On the other hand, ads (and manufacturers' literature) give specifications which, even if they were comprehensible, would not accurately reflect the audible differences between speakers.

You are probably aware of the fact that most speakers are sold by recommendation: recommendation by reviews, recommendation by friends and most importantly, recommendation by you, the "audio expert." This would put you in a very strong position, except for one thing—most customers get contradictory information from other sales people when they shop different stores. Where and from whom they eventually buy is where they feel they will get the best system for their money. How a customer decides if you are giving him more than your competition depends on the prices, service and display facilities of the store where you work, and on your own personal credibility. The only one of these factors over which you have complete control is the last one, how well you communicate to your customer that you are both willing and knowledgeable enough to act in his interest. A powerful demonstration can accomplish this because you give your customer objective evidence to justify your equipment recommendations. If the customer looks for similar proof from another dealer, and doesn't get it, which is probable, chances are good that he will come back to buy from you.

With speakers the most effective demonstration you can make is one which really shows the major differences between one system and another. Unfortunately this is easier said than done, because unless compensated for, the variations



We'd like to welcome (and have you welcome) a new member of our Marketing Department, Audrey Bund. Audrey has taken over the editorship of the Advent Newsletter, among other duties. For example, if you have the opportunity to come visit us, Audrey will be the one to give you an expert and knowledgeable tour of our manufacturing facilities.

Audrey's background in hifi includes two years working for one of the largest and fastest-growing high fidelity component retailers. During that time she compiled what must be one of the highest sales records ever in this business, while simultaneously managing retail stores. Somewhere along the way she also managed among other things to earn a B.S. degree from MIT, do some teaching, and become a gourmet cook.

With this issue your former editor "retires" to help introduce and market our projection television. Our policy of issuing a Newsletter only when we have something important to say will continue, and we think you'll agree that Audrey is able to say it very well. *Joe Hull, Editor Emeritus.*

in speaker efficiency obscure all the other more important performance characteristics. The louder speaker always sounds like the better speaker, whether or not it really is. Therefore the only way for you to show the more important differences between speakers is to begin with equal output levels. You can then make a logical presentation which first deals with the quantifiable, objective differences between speakers: their range and distortion. The respective ranges of speakers can be easily perceived and discussed in a very straightforward way. Only after this should you begin the second part of your presentation which is an evaluation of the more subjective differences such as tonal balance. Comparing speakers with respect to subtle variations in "coloration" is more difficult for your customer. However, having established your credibility during the evaluation of the objective differences, your advice now will be welcome. He is also likely to trust your recommendations for other products, such as amplifiers, where the differences are not as easily demonstrable.

By taking this approach you give your customer credit for being an intelligent, rational person who merely doesn't happen to know much about audio equipment. Instead of bewildering him with hifi jargon or subjecting him to a sales hype you are giving him the concrete, understandable information he needs and wants. And after he has taken his speakers home he will know *why* he bought them. Ultimately he will generate a great deal of enthusiasm, for you and for the products you sold him, among his friends—who are your potential customers.

The Advent Comparator

Having always felt strongly about ELSPs we have made available to our dealers a unit designed to make such comparisons possible.* The Advent Comparator is the only device of its kind which in no way alters the sound quality of the speakers connected to it, while having a high degree of flexibility and convenience.

In case you are unfamiliar with our newest non-product, here briefly are its features. The Advent Comparator:

- 1 allows for equal volume, instantaneous comparison of any two pairs of speakers, by means of a remote thumb switch
- 2 can accommodate up to 12 pairs of speakers, or more if two comparators are cascaded
- 3 permits 4 of the 12 pairs of speakers to be of the kind which require equalizers. The comparator will automatically switch in the appropriate equalizer when these speakers are selected
- 4 contains electronics which add no audible distortion. It does not use potentiometers which affect damping and hence the bass response of the speakers
- 5 has an "aux. amp" position which permits operating any single pair of speaker with any amplifier on display.

*Just about any ELSP is better than none. If you have a different device which permits such demonstrations, what we have to say about using the Advent Comparator will apply equally well.

Tips On Using The Advent Comparator

We realize that some of you have been making equal volume speaker comparisons for years, while for many of you such presentations are relatively new. In either case, we hope the following suggestions will be of help to you, in actually structuring your demonstrations or in giving you a new outlook on what you have been doing.

1

After much experimenting we have found that there is no scientific way to equalize volume levels throughout the entire band. The easiest approach is to equalize the volume by ear on midrange material, such as voice. However, once you have equalized the volume for one piece of program material, don't be surprised if when you switch to a different kind of material the speakers no longer are accurately equalized. Be prepared to touch up the relative volume levels on different kinds of music.

2

As you are well aware, placement critically affects what speakers sound like. The ideal way to compare speakers is to have them side-by-side (which is the only way you should evaluate a *new* product you may be considering). However, reality dictates that because you have many pairs of speakers on display the ideal arrangement is physically impossible. The best compromise we can suggest is that you group your most popular units by price so that only rarely do you end up in the worst possible situation: comparing one pair of speakers on the floor in the corners to another pair on a shelf in the middle of the wall.

3

Be your own first customer for any equal volume speaker comparison. For such demonstrations to be an effective selling tool you should thoroughly familiarize yourself with all the performance characteristics (range, coloration, distortion) of the speakers your store carries. The point is that equal volume comparisons will only work for you if you can predict what the results will be under any circumstances, with any program material.

4

When making a speaker presentation using a comparator, such as the Advent, it is important to explain to the customer what you are doing and why. Only in this way will you be able to make full use of your facilities to educate your customers, as well as to establish your authority and expertise.

5

Compare only two pairs of speakers at a time, if you try to compare more it will inevitably lead to confusion. If a customer wants to compare three pairs of speakers, have him compare two to begin with and help him select his preference. Then compare the third set to the speakers he had chosen from the previous comparison.

6

After comparing speakers you can use the "aux. amp" position to play the customer's final speaker selection with the electronics you are recommending. This will allow you to demonstrate for the customer what "his" system will sound like.

7

An organized approach to making speaker comparisons *can* allow you to impart more information and close more sales in less time than it takes you now. When your store is busy, you can set up a speaker comparison for one customer and allow him to listen on his own, freeing you to talk to someone else. Or, you can

make a speaker presentation for a group of people, helping you to effectively deal with more customers than would be possible otherwise. Remember that if your presentation is clear and fully planned in your own mind, it will take only a very short time to make, approximately 3 to 5 minutes.

What Does Efficiency Mean? So far we have avoided the question of what efficiency differences really mean; we've stressed the importance of eliminating efficiency as a variable in speaker demonstrations. With many customers the issue of efficiency must be discussed in the only way in which it is important—in relation to available amplifier power, room size and volume levels desired by the customer. For example, some of your customers may already own an amplifier low in power which they can not afford to replace, and for these customers a high efficiency speaker *is* a necessity.

Sometimes after an equal level comparison it is a good idea to play the speakers unequalized to show the customer just how hard it is to compare range and tonal balance when one pair of speakers is much louder than the other. This will reinforce the customer's understanding of the need for equal volume comparisons and the effort you have made to give him a fair demonstration. It will also help you explain the inevitable trade-off between efficiency and extended range.**

The Importance of Program Material

The choice of program material in making speaker comparisons is crucial. To show how speakers vary in range you must choose material which contains information at the extremes of the frequency range. Such material comes in all musical styles, so that you can choose the kind of music which your customer enjoys listening to most. Low bass can be as effectively demonstrated by hard rock, with well recorded electric bass as by a classical piece with low organ pedal notes. Differences in high frequency response are more difficult to illustrate, because there are no fundamental musical frequencies above 4,000 Hz. They *can* be heard when using well recorded percussion; a speaker with a smooth extended high end will sound audibly open and transparent on such material. Cymbals and brushes on snare drums are particularly good and you will find both these instruments used extensively in various classical, rock and jazz selections. Tonal balance is best demonstrated by solo voice and it doesn't matter if it's Jimi Hendrix or Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau.

By using pre-selected program material you will know in advance what to point out to the customer, thereby facilitating quick, meaningful speaker comparisons. One easy way of doing this is to use an Advent 201 or 202 as part of your speaker comparison facility. You can re-record appropriate selections onto cassettes and use them as your source material rather than records. By indexing the selections carefully and using the counter you can always find exactly that part of the selection which you want to use. Besides being readily accessible the sound quality of cassettes will not deteriorate. You may be able to mentally filter out the scratches and noise of a worn record, because of your familiarity with the program material, but a customer will always hear them with dismay. Incidentally, using cassettes in this way will generate a lot of consumer confidence and interest in the cassette medium.

**Coming soon: in the near future you will receive another issue of the Advent Newsletter which will talk about speaker design. Hopefully, it will give you the theoretical background to put the previous discussion into a reasonable perspective.

When To Make A Speaker Comparison Using The Advent Comparator

As important as knowing how to do an effective speaker comparison is knowing when to do it. There are several situations in which it is most appropriate.

1

A customer walks into your store and directly or indirectly asks to compare speaker A with speaker B.

2

A customer walks into your store and says he is interested in a certain pair of speakers. If you personally feel that there are other choices in that price range he might make, a speaker comparison is the best way to expose the customer to these other products with which he may be unfamiliar.

3

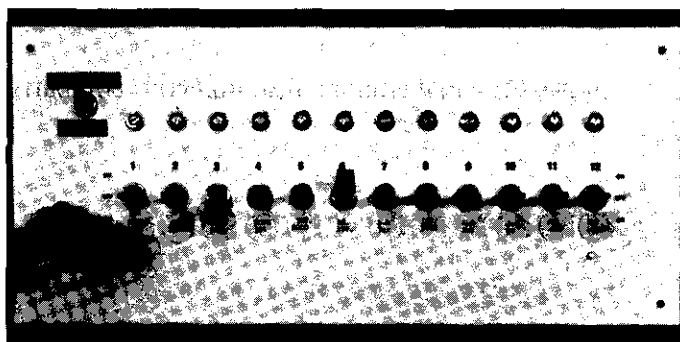
You are making a presentation of a complete music system from a system display and your customer questions the choice of speakers in that system. A speaker demonstration is the logical way to defend the stand you've taken and simultaneously gain his trust.

When Not To Make A Speaker Comparison

A direct speaker comparison is not appropriate for every customer who walks into your store. Many, many people are looking for a complete music system in a price range that is narrowly prescribed. They are not interested in matching up an individually selected receiver, a pair of speakers, and a turntable. For these customers it is crucial to demonstrate the equipment as a complete music system using your system displays and to avoid making the customer confront walls of speakers, receivers and turntables.

Speaker A-B's should be held in reserve, and used only when necessary to clinch a sale or establish your authority.

Thank you for listening.



The Advent Comparator, as installed and labelled by one Advent dealer.