



CREATIVE SOUND & INTEGRATION

Lessons from a **Longtime Luxury Builder-Integrator Partnership**

Arizona's Crown Canyon Estates epitomizes the successful relationship between Creative Sound & Integration and BedBrock Developers to deliver amazing smart homes and concierge service.

By Krissy Rushing Tomlin

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canyon of Paradise Valley, Ariz., Crown Canyon Estates is the crown jewel of the Phoenix Mountains Preserve and the wealthiest community in the state – a perfect place for potential custom integration clients.

The ultra-luxury subdivision was envisioned and created by BedBrock Developers, an award-winning local builder and developer. Led by Rich Brock and his team, BedBrock worked closely with longtime integrator partner Creative Sound & Integration (CSI) to outfit every home in Crown Canyon with high-performance technology and five-star service.

Contributor Krissy Rushing Tomlin (founder, RISE Media Strategy) conducted this interview with Brock and CSI Co-Owners Ed Moreau and Doug Greenwald (CSI also developed ProjX360) to understand how tech and design coalesce.

How long have BedBrock and CSI been working together?

BROCK: About 20 years. We had worked with many different integrators before meeting Doug and Ed. One of the things I said to them when we met was that service was our No. 1 requirement for a home technology partner, because the top customer service interaction in the home is always

home automation. Devices get used often, so it makes sense they require a higher level of customer service.

What sets CSI apart from other home technology firms?

BROCK: It was important that I had a partner who could provide excellent customer service, and Doug pulled through. He always said that they would be there when needed — any day, any hour.

One year, we had a client who was having a party on Christmas Day, and the projection screen fell. The customer called me, and I called Doug and Ed, and within the hour, they had technicians out there fixing it.

That was a testimonial to the level of service ... I knew that CSI was legit. I'm guessing we've done close to 100 projects since.

GREENWALD: Yes, at least 100. It's been a lot.

BROCK: We've built roughly 300 homes. So, I'd say CSI works on one-third of all of our business, add to that the remodels — that's a lot of different projects. Most of them are developments and custom homes. BedBrock started as a custom home and spec home builder.

We've evolved into an ultra-luxury new home developer. Currently, we have five subdivisions, all managed and installed by CSI.

When you say 'luxury,' like Crown Canyon, how does that translate to home controls?

BROCK: Yes, we require the best technology, and that's

"We don't build a house and then ask the customer if they want to add home automation to it. It's that way from the beginning. Having technology in a luxury home is a necessity. It's not an option. We can't do that without an integration company behind it. It's impossible."

—Rich Brock, BedBrock Developers



BEDBROCK DEVELOPERS

another reason to partner with an integrator like Doug. You must have an integration partner that has the brands your company needs. But it's also about service.

We have a concierge service that goes along with the home automation systems. We provide tremendous service to the client. These homeowners couldn't live without that type of service, so it's an integral part of what we do today.

GREENWALD: None of the other builders we work with do this concierge service like BedBrock does. CSI has partnered with OneVision to facilitate service. So, the homeowner has 24/7 access to someone experienced.

BedBrock's concierge service is for the entire home and includes all the things that a homeowner is going to need at this luxury level. Our home automation service and Rich's concierge service are all bundled together.

Rich and BedBrock are the visionaries on that, and it helps set them apart. It's

not just building a home. It's about how the home is going to be handled after the fact, not just the AV, but a host of other things people need. It sets the bar for these neighborhoods.

What other perks are included in the concierge service?

BROCK: We build very expensive homes, so we want our clients to feel like they are living in a five-star resort. When you are on vacation, the last thing you want to deal with is inconvenience and minutia.

Concierge service ensures that the home keeps its value. In 10 years, it will look as great as the day the client moved in. We do monthly inspections, looking for anything that has possibly gone wrong, is broken, needs to be resealed or restrained, and so on.

We also take care of every aspect of property management. Who's doing the gardening? Cleaning the windows or barbecue grille? We handle everything asso-

The integrator implemented a slick Crestron Home system to control all the tech.

ciated with service on our homes — all in one bill — while managing the various trades and negotiating on the homeowner's behalf.

Finally, we're working to provide services outside the home. For example, if the homeowner needs to get to the airport or requires a chef for the weekend, we set that up for them.

One of the greatest things about working with CSI is that they recognized what we were trying to do early on and integrated

mistakes, and learned from them. In fact, we put products in our own homes and in our showroom before we put them in our clients' projects to make sure they are reliable.

MOREAU: Like Rich said, he has a technology background, so he'll call us about something he's heard about that he may want to incorporate into his homes. Luckily, we have a relationship of trust, so we can tell him when something isn't ready for prime time. He respects our opinions, and if we tell

BROCK: Yes, we just finished the home. We use it as the model home, so it has every bell and whistle. I don't think we've left anything out, right guys?

MOREAU: No, we've done things that we've never done anywhere before in Rich's house.

Like what, for example?

MOREAU: Rich recently hosted his daughter's wedding at his house and wanted to have live music from the band play throughout the speakers. We've never done that before.

Can you share a bit more about the Crown Canyon Estates development?

BROCK: Crown Canyon is 12 lots in a 30-acre canyon in Paradise Valley. One of the homes recently sold for more than \$30 million — the most expensive new home in Arizona. That house will be spectacular. They're going to build an underground ice hockey rink, a shooting range, and some other interesting stuff. All the homes are 10,000 to 20,000 square feet and start at \$15 million.

They are built in the Sonoran Contemporary style that emphasizes an indoor-outdoor lifestyle that honors the surroundings, inspired in part by Frank Lloyd Wright's horizontal Prairie designs.

We've used the best architects, some with direct ties to Frank Lloyd Wright. Swaback Architects, for example, was founded by Vernon Swaback, Frank

Lloyd Wright's youngest apprentice back in 1957. Renowned architects Stratton Andrews and CP Drewett also designed homes in Crown Canyon.

Who designed your home and are there special features, Rich?

BROCK: CP Drewett. It's a very minimalist, clean house. It has white concrete floors, rustic walnut ceilings, and structural exposed steel beams throughout. There is no stucco... the exterior of the house consists of fluted block. The most impressive thing is that we screened out and veneered all the walls with the natural stone that we mined when we excavated the site.

The materials on the inside are very similar to the materials on the outside. The interior flows into the exterior, so there's very little drywall. There are walls of glass that go all the way to the ceiling. It's magnificent.

Lighting is probably a big deal in homes of this size. What is its impact in your home?

MOREAU: I can't imagine living in a 10,000-square-foot house and manually trying to turn the lights off every night. We just program a 'Good Night' button and everything is either on or off. It's so simple.

BROCK: Exactly. And as for mood, I'll give you an example. CSI set up 'Party' lighting for entertaining. As soon as it gets dark outside, we hit that one button. The lights go down to 33% across the entire property.

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—Doug Greenwald, Creative Sound & Integration



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their partners so we could give a higher level of service across the board.

What are affluent clients in subdivisions like Crown Canyon Estates looking for from smart home systems?

GREENWALD: They want it to work, and if it doesn't, they want customer service. Ed and I have been in this industry for a long time. We've taken the time to do the homework. We don't jump on the latest-and-greatest-product bandwagon.

We've gone down that road in the past, made those

them it's not a good idea or isn't a good fit, he listens.

BROCK: There were a few times over the past 20 years that we tried other integrators or took a chance on new technology. It was a good thing that we did those things, because it made us appreciate how great CSI is; the research Doug and Ed have done for us; and that they are representing the very best products.

Rich, you actually live in one of the Crown Canyon Estates homes?

Think how long it would take to go around dimming each light switch on this expansive property and how much convenience this one mode offers.

In terms of safety, how do you keep such an open, airy home secure?

GREENWALD: We have 14 cameras and full automation. So, if Rich is out of town, he can open the gate to the property remotely, turn the alarm off, see a video feed of guests coming up the driveway, open the garage, and let people into the house.

He has complete remote operation of the home. Like Ed mentioned, he can turn lights anywhere in the house on or off, turn the music on, open or close shades, from anywhere in the world.

BROCK: It's wonderful to have that remote capability, because you aren't burdened to have someone at home to admit entry to the property, whether it's a guest or a service person. It's funny because I have another small house up north and for all these years I wasn't using home automation. Now that I have it in this house... well you get spoiled very quickly. Now, I'm the No. 1 salesperson for this technology.

GREENWALD: He's always been a great salesperson for smart home technology. Many in the AV industry underestimate the fact that builder partners can be the No. 1 sales guy for technology.



BROCK: When a client asks me, 'What would you do?' well, if I'm living with the technology, know it intimately, and believe in it, they're never going to walk out of the room not going with what I recommend.

Once you've used it, that's all you're going to talk about with your client. It's also much easier for me to describe it having lived with it.

GREENWALD: The type of clients that Rich describes are exactly the clients we love working with because they believe in what we do. They see the value in our opinions.

Speaking of value, Rich, what are the benefits of having a go-to integration partner?

BROCK: We don't build a house and then ask the customer if they want to add home automation to it. It's that way from the beginning.

Again, having technology in a luxury home is a necessity today. It's not an option. Turning your lights on and off, putting shades up and down — our homes require all that. So, we can't

do that without an integration company behind it. It's impossible. CSI can provide the level of service that our homes must have.

Doug and Ed, why is it game-changing to have a partner like BedBrock?

MOREAU: Because we've worked with BedBrock for so long, we know the team very well. We know what types of systems they want to use in their homes. Even though these are extremely high-level custom homes, we have a certain degree of efficiency because we know what to expect.

BedBrock also knows what to expect from us. They know our team, how we work, and how the systems are integrated, and the timelines. It makes the processes go smoothly, especially considering that at any given time we are working on several different BedBrock projects.

Right now, we are working on 10 different projects, all \$8 million homes and up. We're able to handle 10 projects of that size at a time, handle them efficiently, stay on schedule, and

BedBrock and CSI have partnered on enough projects to have each other's trust.

always manage and meet expectations because we're extremely familiar with how the other operates.

GREENWALD: Exactly. Our relationship with BedBrock has evolved our business. It helped us elevate our clientele. From a business standpoint, if you get a couple of accounts like this, that's really all you need. You have a nice business with steady work. You also get to get more creative when you have a handful of projects that are more intensive rather than several smaller, simpler jobs.

The clientele at this level are some of the nicest people in the world. It's taken them a long time to get to the top. They just want great products and great service.

Overall, it's been an enriching collaboration and fruitful relationship for all of us, and the results are homes that are breathtakingly beautiful, but also convenient, safe, entertaining, and impeccably serviced. **CE Pro**