



Xilica Audio Design
Xilica manufactures high performance

DSP products for the professional audio market. Its products include the Neutrino A-Series for fixed audio installations, and the XD series for live audio production and small to medium sized fixed audio installations.

Barry Steinburg is the company's marketing manager. Of the advantages of basing a company such as Xilica in Canada, he says: "Canada provides education excellence where engineering degrees in particular are concerned and thus can produce the quality of engineering staff required in our field of expertise. The high standard of living and economic stability also makes Canada a great place to work, build high technology businesses, and live."

Steinburg does not feel, however, that the North American market is an easy place to launch a new brand: "I like the European model of sensibility. In North America, users are way more brand-conscious. So it is more difficult for new but innovative manufacturers to get a foothold in the market. That is why Xilica established itself first in Europe, Asia, and other parts of the world where there is less brand focus and the customers will give your product a listen. That approach has been very successful for Xilica."

Asked what Canadian audio manufacturers had a common flair for, Steinburg says: "Going their own way. Making not necessarily the most expensive, most ruggedly built, elaborate primo products of their type but products that provide state-of-the-art technologies in a package that makes sense, are priced fairly and provide best-in-class audio performance. Paradigm and PSB do it well with hifi speakers, Adamson do it with live speaker systems, and Xilica do it with DSP."

➤ xilica.com



SOUND ART

Sound Art is one of Canada's leading professional sound rental companies, with facilities in Calgary, Winnipeg and Toronto. It provides state-of-the-art audio equipment and expertise via an in-house team of dedicated sound engineers and technicians.

Sound Art president, Dave Cousins feels that there is a very healthy work ethic in Canada, which is crucial, particularly in the pro audio industry, where the financial gains are not always high: "God knows being a sound tech is hard work, long hours and nobody's getting rich doing the job," he says. "The reward is the show."

Disadvantages of running a business such as Sound Art in Canada he believes are the short summers when festivals are crammed into a six-week period, resulting in a lot of overlapping shows, which is hard on the inventory and the staff. He also points out the sheer size of the country, which can mean 1,400km drives between shows. In contrast, US firms, he notes, benefit from the higher population in their country and thus more work in general. In the UK he has observed a greater variety and availability of equipment. Since there are not as many sound hire firms in Canada, Sound Art must fulfil its clients' requests internally.

➤ soundart.com

SENNHEISER CANADA

Sennheiser Canada distributes its namesake products, Neumann, Innovason, L-Acoustics and K-Array, among others in the Canadian market.

President Jean Langlais notes that Canada enjoys a highly-skilled work force. An advantage of being based there specific to Sennheiser, is that it places the company very close to customers who appreciate premium European audio products.

In terms of disadvantages, he says: "One must consider the size of the country to fully understand the challenges: more than 5,000 kilometres from coast to coast, four time zones and various very different cultures – native Indian, Inuit, French and English – define the cultural landscape of Canada. The great distances can make it very difficult to serve the remote areas. The differences in languages require time and patience to establish proper communications. Fortunately due to the multi ethnic culture of Canada there are plenty of resources to fulfil the needs."

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