



Meet the Team: Robert Moreau

This month, get to know Robert Moreau, Managing Director for Clockaudio NA

Robert Moreau is proud to be Clockaudio's Managing Director for North America, but like most of us in AV, he started his career with a much different dream in mind. He was going to be a musician.

Bob says that he always loved music and knew from an early age that he wanted to record his own. He was a huge fan of progressive rock and British bands and distinctly remembers, watching in awe, the first time the Beatles performed on the Ed Sullivan Show. He says, "I was fascinated by how musicians experimented with sound to create great music, and I was truly intrigued by the transformation that was happening as the DSP world began developing."



His father played trumpet and guitar and he grew up with a healthy appreciation for what it took to be a musician. When he was about 13, he sat down at a drum set for the first time. He had never played before, but he picked up the sticks and said playing came naturally to him. Bob was hooked and he shares, "I'm still amazed at how supportive my parents were at the time. After all, having an aspiring drummer in the house can be anything but quiet."

As Bob grew through his teens and into his early 20's, he played with a few different bands and was exposed to the studio world which he was fascinated with. He says that his ultimate goal was to record his own band, but that he quickly figured out that studio time was very expensive and realized it was time to build his own.

In school, he studied electronics and landed a job at Richard Audio, a small Pro Audio store, and was put in charge of the studio department. He says, "When they hired me, I told them not to give me a paycheck but to pay me in equipment instead. They were happy to oblige, and this is how I furnished my first studio for the band. Bob shares that he was committed to creating a state of the art studio and it quickly became a hot spot not only for the band's recording sessions but for other bands as well. He used the money they made recording outside musicians to pay the bills and to invest in new technologies and before long the studio became a viable business of its own.

He says that "the band was doing really well, but life was moving fast and one day, out of the blue, we found out that the building the studio was in had been sold. All of the tenant's leases were cut short,

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including the one for our studio.” At that point, Bob had to make a decision to focus on either rebuilding a new studio from the ground up or investing himself more fully into his Pro AV world. He adds, “It wasn’t an easy decision, but I made the commitment to push forward with my corporate career. I had made some great contacts while at Richard Audio, one of which was a distribution company called Sound Craft Canada. They gave me my first taste of manufacturing and a more in-depth knowledge of quality audio products, including microphones.”

Bob worked for SCC for 8 years and during his tenure there SCC acquired the distribution rights for AKG Canada. He comments, “I was excited about working more extensively with their microphones and embraced the challenge of being a manufacturer and sales person for audio equipment. Eventually I became the National Sales Manager for AKG for Canada and felt very fortunate to be in a field that focused on something that I felt so strongly about... sound quality.”

Bob really enjoyed working as a distributor and after several years working with SCC and AKG, he decided to start his own distribution company. In 1996, a chance encounter on a plane while on his way to an NSCA show in Saint Louis, led him to a meeting with Jim Hallington. Jim was an up and coming manufacturer with a demonstrated background in the audio industry, who had just launched his own microphone company (Clockaudio), and he was looking for distribution in Canada.

Bob comments, “Honestly, if you told me ten years prior that I, a musician, a drummer and studio owner was going to get involved with the AV systems integration market and become a distributor, I would have thought the idea was truly crazy. But life has a way of placing you and the events of your life in such a way that you keep moving towards what you are meant to be and do.”

After about four years distributing Clockaudio in Canada, Bob and Jim discussed the need to grow Clockaudio’s reach into the U.S. At first, he says they looked at a few contacts that Bob had in the U.S., but eventually realized that if they were going to break open the NA market, they would have to be the champions for the Clockaudio brand to make the push. So, in 2002, Bob stepped into the ring and became the Managing Director for Clockaudio N.A. which now includes both the US, Canada, Mexico and the Caribbean.

Clockaudio NA started with two people Bob says, “me and a good friend from college. Our beginning was humble, working with the UK team from my basement. But the products were top-notch, and we kept growing. First we hired a shipper, then a receptionist and soon after my wife came on to do the import and export, and then through people in the industry and other contacts we started adding more and more technicians on staff that could handle customer support and the growing technical expertise for the company and we just kept growing.”

Today, Clockaudio NA has a 6,000 square foot facility in Canada that houses the sales team, technical support, shipping, administration, marketing, product development and troubleshooting. They have representation across the US and Canada, and together with the UK and Singapore teams, provide

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service and support to nearly every corner of the world.

As a company, Clockaudio has always been focused on building a strong contingent of independent rep groups to represent the brand. In fact, Bob says that he is proud to share that some of his very first reps in the states are still his reps today, adding, “We are fortunate to have many talented firms representing our products in the Pro AV space both in NA and around the world that also uphold the values we place on sound quality. In my opinion, we owe them a world of thanks for believing in us so strongly and helping to build our company to where it is today.”

They say that moving a box is easy, but supporting people is not. Of course, Bob wants to sell microphones, but his ultimate goal at Clockaudio is to create positive and memorable customer experiences while providing the best possible products and support.

Last year marked the 15th anniversary for Clockaudio NA. Of their success Bob says, “We’ve had a lot of opportunities that enabled us to meet the right people and be in the right place at the right time. This has always kept our growth and momentum moving in a positive direction and has attracted the best and brightest to our team.”

When asked about his role with the company, Bob says he feels that this is always a hard question. He comments, “Of course, there is the day to day responsibilities I have of running a business and being part of a global operation. But at its core, I think my role is to keep moving the company forward and making sure that we adapt with the times and that we embrace new technologies to remain responsive to the market needs.”

Bob says that the challenge today is juggling a client base that runs the gamut from Baby Boomer and Gen Xers to Millennials and balancing the AV professional audiophile with the AV professional that is focused on easy integration. He knows that to bridge the different generations in the workforce, he must keep the company eye on the sound quality but offer significant flexibility, and he plans to continue to do both.

Bob shares, “I don’t believe in coincidences. When I think of everything that had to line up in my past that has positioned me for the future that I am living now, I pause to reflect how fortunate I am. Along the way, I’ve met some truly talented people and that is by far my favorite thing about being in the industry. I hope that never changes. Despite that the ways we interact keep evolving – there is a huge opportunity to bridge humanity and professionalism with an evolving stream of technologies that can support it.”

One of the biggest challenges Bob sees in the AV industry is the need to educate the market and provide the up and coming generations with practical information that supports the virtue of quality sound and the need to defend its value and integrity. He talks about how most of us were raised in an analog and high-fidelity generation, but the new generation is used to iPod which represents a completely different

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standard for sound quality. He goes on to add that “based on when you were born, you may also have a completely different expectation for user interface and system integration.” “The challenge,” he explains, “is to meet in the middle, to make the new generations understand that when it comes to sound quality, sometimes ‘good enough’ isn’t really, and for AV long-timers, sometimes when the user interface isn’t intuitive, it’s time to consider something different.”

So, what does the future hold? As far as the industry, it is very clear that Clockaudio is going to continue moving towards IT and the network. Bob’s hope is that Clockaudio continues in a direction that values sound quality, security, user interface and convenience, and that balances all of these elements to create the most flexible and robust environments.

As for Clockaudio N.A., he pledges to continue to be a primary resource to AV professionals (from Millennials to Baby Boomers) and to bridge any gaps between the generations when it comes to specifying the right product and the right performance spec for microphone products.

For more about Clockaudio or Robert Moreau, contact info@clockaudio.com.

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“When I look back at the young man that I was and consider who I am today as a business man, I see how so many things that were part of my past are still somehow part of my professional life today. Communicating messages, whether through music or through interacting with people, has always been my passion.”

- Robert Moreau, Managing Director for Clockaudio N.A.