

APRIL 2021

KBB

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF **NKBA + KBIS**



TRIBUTE TO AN INDUSTRY ICON

- **KBIS VIRTUAL:**
A LOOK AT 2021'S
NEW PRODUCTS
- **TIPS FOR
MULTIGENERATIONAL
DESIGN**
- **DEFINING
EACH CLIENT'S
TECH NEEDS**



Technology Solutions

How to deliver each client's necessities and meet changing demands

TECHNOLOGY CAN RUN THE GAMUT from a refrigerator with different temperature zones or a hands-free faucet to whole-home automation systems that include lighting, security and temperature control.

Are your clients looking for a cooking appliance they can interact with via their phone and monitor remotely? Or do they want something as simple as more USB outlets in the bathroom? Finding out their sweet spot is the key to success in incorporating technology in today's homes and potentially expanding your service offerings.

DETERMINING THEIR NEEDS

Mary Fisher Knott, CID, CLIPP, CAPS, of Scottsdale, Ariz.-based Mary Fisher Designs, studies her clients' profiles – age, family, budget, lifestyle, what they want to generally accomplish in their overall design – to find out what level of technology they want and what they are able to handle.

"Not everyone wants to control their appliances with an iPhone," she added. "Although younger clients tend to want as much technology as possible."

Molly Switzer, AKBD, of Molly N Switzer Designs LLC in Portland, Ore., suggests starting out basic, as technology can be so overwhelming for some. She asks her clients how they are already using it in their homes and then educates them on the benefits of technology in making things more convenient.

It is helpful to come up with a checklist of tech/smart/connected items with information on how they can solve everyday problems to see which your clients want to incorporate. This can start out more basic and then get into the different layers of lighting, security, etc.

"It's also important for consumers just getting started with smart home tech to consider the connectivity options available to them," said Mitchell Klein, executive director of the Z-Wave Alliance, a group of home tech companies that relies on Z-Wave as the industry standard for wireless smart home and automation offerings. "Wireless protocols are at the core of every smart home and serve as the backbone to connectivity in a system to keep devices communicating with one another."

ABOVE BOSCH's appliances powered by Home Connect allow homeowners to manage everything from cooking to doing laundry from a smartphone. Through Home Connect, you can preheat ovens, manage internal temperatures and turn appliances off remotely. It can also send alerts to let you know when a refrigerator door has been open too long, provide food storage tips and let you know if a leak occurs in your dishwasher – shutting it down automatically. The user can also sync their hood with an induction cooktop so it will turn on when the cooktop is on and manage and monitor laundry cycles. www.home-connect.com/us/en

RIGHT The NOBI Smart Lamp was designed to monitor the movement of older people in a home using artificial intelligence. It can detect when someone falls and provide communication between the resident and family members or caregivers if necessary. The lamp can also notify emergency services and open the door to them, as well as monitor air quality and provide fire and burglary detection. The lamp will be available by the end of this year, and pricing varies based on whether you plan to purchase or rent the lamp(s). nobi.life/en/

By CHELSIE BUTLER

MISGIVINGS AND BENEFITS

There are undoubtedly consumer reservations when it comes to technology. Some of the most common are cost, privacy/security issues, obsolescence and user friendliness – or lack thereof.

"The need for increased security remains important as more devices are added to the same network," said Klein. "Smart home technology developers should focus on the consumers' desire for products that add convenience and safety to the home without putting network security at risk, prioritizing devices with security built in."

Some homeowners refuse to incorporate technology into their homes because they think it will be hard to operate. Bill Strang, TOTO's president of corporate strategy, eCommerce and customer experience, said this may have started as early as when we had to set the clock on the VCR, but his company strives to make its products as easy to use as possible. He believes consumers today have the benefit of the internet to learn how to use these tech-driven offerings and in turn see the value they can provide.

"All technology can be complicated, but not all products need to be connected to the internet," said Jeremy Snider, Zephyr VP of product. "And just because a connected feature exists with a product does not mean you have to use it."

He added that the Zephyr app is extremely easy to use and eliminates the need to physically interact with the hood if your hands are full. And if your clients do choose to use the connected features, remind them that this will provide important information regarding service needs.

"Some consumers continue to think that smart products are difficult to install or operate, and you need to be tech savvy in order to buy them," said Matt Henson, product manager at Jasco. "Since voice assistants have come out, many products



have streamlined such processes to make a pretty seamless introduction – for even the most novice of consumers."

Cost can also be a deterrent to integrating technology into today's homes, but the benefits of going smarter – convenience, peace of mind, improved health and wellness – can outweigh most misgivings.

TODAY'S CONSUMER DEMANDS

Improved lighting, security and privacy needs top the list, and self-cleaning and touchless options are also growing in popularity.

"Since the onset of COVID, there has been a renewed interest in our homes, and it has changed how we live our lives," said Strang. "More consumers are looking for integration of technology that provides improved hygiene."

ABOVE The ZEPHYR Connect app allows the user to control their range hood from anywhere via a mobile device. They can do things like change the fan speed and control light levels, and the app offers a delay-off feature that will automatically keep the hood in use for up to 10 minutes after cooking. Zephyr Connect will also tell homeowners when it is time to clean or replace filters and sends an alert when the hood has been on for more than three hours. The app can be downloaded via the Apple App Store and Google Play. zephyronline.com

LEFT LEGRAND has designed the all-in-one GFCI USB Outlet for built-in charging anywhere in the home, including kitchens and baths where GFCI protection is required. The outlet includes USB connections for traditional Type A and the newer Type C for adapter-free support and meets the National Electrical Code requirements for ground fault protection. Price is \$54.98. legrand.us



According to Klein, with this heightened awareness around touching surfaces and spreading germs, homeowners have really leaned into voice-controlled smart home devices over the past year as a medium of choice.

"A simple voice command can turn on the bathroom light, turn the water on in the kitchen sink and even put the home to bed at night, thus giving users the ability to conveniently activate a system without having to physically touch it," he added.

Technology can provide other health benefits as well, including bathing therapies to reduce stress and ventilation systems that enhance air quality. Controllable lighting can be helpful for those who need more – or less – illumination for various tasks, and natural light is important for bringing the outdoors in via blind control.

"Consumers are looking for new ways to keep their homes and families protected," said Klein. "Smart home security, video surveillance devices and doorbell cameras have also increased in popularity."

According to Kay Kwok, head of connected products and digital services, Bosch Home Connect, because people are spending more time at home, they are using their appliances more to preserve and cook food and to maintain sanitary conditions in the home.

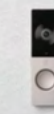
"We have seen greater demand for appliances as a result, and there's a real need for consumers to have those that deliver high-quality, reliable results and make their lives easier," she said. "This is where connected appliances can really make a difference. We're seeing consumers adopting digital solutions at a faster rate and expecting more from the products they're purchasing – not only because they're doing more around the home and want a way to simplify these tasks, but also because they have more time to study and try new technologies."



BROAN-NUTONE introduces a cloud-connected, whole-home indoor air quality system called Overture. The system is integrated into a home's supply and exhaust ventilation via a new build or a remodel and turns the appropriate ventilation fan, range hood, ERV/HRV or supply fan on automatically when air quality levels are low. Overture can be controlled by a phone app and can be used with new or existing products via specialized switches and freestanding sensors. Pricing is available upon request. overture.broan-nutone.com



The ECO-Touch Auto IAQ controller from **FANTECH** senses the presence of VOCs in the home and automatically increases the exchange of outdoor for indoor air. It can also monitor humidity levels and adjust fresh air intake. A control panel alerts homeowners of their clean air status – three leaves indicating when the air quality level is optimal. The ECO-Touch Auto IAQ has an MSRP of \$165. www.fantech.net



The Chime Video Doorbell from **CONTROL4** allows users to see and speak with a visitor, and they can also unlock the door, turn on the lights inside and outside and/or disarm the security system – all within the same app. Chime offers motion detection with five adjustable zones, it is available in black or satin nickel, and its features include a 180-degree field of vision and a built-in night mode. MSRP is \$400, and four models are available. www.control4.com