



MERIDIAN

News

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Retailer Focus

Alan Parkyn: identifying customer needs

Martins Hifi, based in the heart of Norwich in the East of England, was founded by Ted Martin in 1968, and was one of the first Meridian dealers in the UK. The inspiration behind the business was, simply, music: Ted loves music, and reasons that most of his customers do too.

Alan Parkyn is the Meridian specialist at Martins. Interestingly, his background is in information technology. "I'm relatively new to the hifi business, and I know I have a lot to learn," he admits. "But by focusing on Meridian products first, I've been able to reach a high level of comfort and confidence much earlier in my new career. I'm sure this is due in part to the similarities Meridian has with IT architecture and product design, and the increasing crossover between home entertainment and IT – music streaming, media file storage/playback and so on."

Alan thinks of himself less as a 'salesman' and more as "an enthusiastic chap talking to other like-minded individuals about products and services we both have an interest in." It's an approach that has paid dividends. In fact, Alan has an interesting perspective on the art of selling at Martins. "We don't actually 'sell' to anyone – our customers buy from us", he says. "We use a technique called SPIN (Situation / Problem / Implication / Need-payoff): it's less about selling to the customer and focuses more on identifying the customer's needs, both now and in the future. It's a very gentle technique that has worked successfully for us for the last 40+ years. We aim to make the buying experience as pleasant an experience as possible." SPIN is

an integral part of the new Meridian Academy training programme being instituted for retailers by Meridian's Training Manager, Graham Knowles.

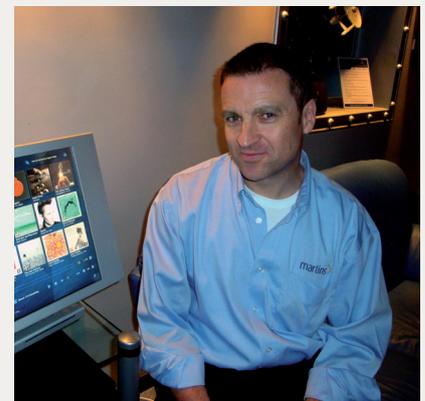
Alan is a Meridian owner himself. "First and foremost I like the sound of Meridian," he says. "Also, I like the technical sophistication of the products and feel this is where the retailer can add a great deal of value. I like the technical design principles that underpin Meridian products and performance." He goes on, "and I like – and am proud – that a British company is at the cutting edge of design and manufacture of high quality products and services.

"Martins needs partnerships with companies like Meridian", Alan continues, "because without the specialist products and support we couldn't survive in the mainstream." Says Alan, "Meridian also has the capability to deliver an exciting lifestyle approach which integrates well with the custom installation side of the business. Meridian Sooloos is a good example of a system that reflects this concept."

"Martins is successful", Alan feels, "because we supply the very best brands and invest in employing the best staff with excellent technical expertise." The business is promoted via the web site, personal recommendation and manufacturer support. "I'd say 90% of our business comes from personal recommendation," he notes.

"We target customers who appreciate the finer things in life and demand great customer service," he concludes. "We specialise in 'toys for the boys' that the whole family can appreciate."

Academy names first Meridian Specialist



The Meridian Academy is pleased to announce confirmation of the first partner staff member to achieve Meridian Specialist status: Alan Parkyn from Martins Hi-Fi, Norwich, UK.

The Meridian Academy is the new, extensive training programme for our retail partners and distributors, which enables them to maximise sales by enhancing their expertise in selling, their understanding of Meridian products, and other areas. For more details on the Meridian Academy, see the full article inside.

Alan Parkyn has attended multiple Meridian Academy courses and has accumulated sufficient units to graduate through the ranks of Sales Professional and Technology Professional to achieve the penultimate level of Technology Specialist.

Alan and his employer, Martins Hi-Fi, have demonstrated both substantial commitment and enthusiasm, embracing the training philosophy and benefiting hugely from it. Alan aims to achieve Master status – the ultimate level – in 2011. Well done Alan and Martins.