

11 Questions with **Petteri Murto**



*Vice President of Sales and Marketing
for APAC, Sennheiser*

*As one of the leading industry experts in the field of business communications with over 15 years of global B2B experience, **Petteri Murto** shares his experiences and business strategies at **Sennheiser** with the **AV-ICN** team in this 11 Questions feature, with insights on **Sennheiser's** global to local approach. Going down the memory lane from pre-pandemic times until now, **Murto** shares **Sennheiser's** focused approach on business communications and the brand's performance on a global scale.*

Could you describe your journey in the field of business communications? Would you like to share some of the highs and lows?

My journey in business communications has been both exhilarating and challenging, marked by significant changes over the years. One aspect that stands out is the evolution of how customers and end-users utilize the solutions we offer today. For instance, five years ago, entering a corporate meeting room meant connecting laptops to screens using HDMI cables and requesting specific brand connectors.

However, the pandemic has had a profound impact on technology, forcing us to adapt and learn new ways of communication. The landscape has dramatically transformed from the days of plug-and-play solutions in remote meeting rooms. Nowadays, many large corporations expect fully automated systems. As soon as you enter a room, everything begins automatically, much like the futuristic scenarios depicted in movies from 20 years ago. You'll notice the lights are on, the meeting has begun, and the curtains have already been drawn.

Being part of this ongoing development within the business communications industry has been thrilling. I have had the opportunity to witness the rapid advancements in technology and to play an active role in shaping the future of communication.

How would you describe your day-to-day duties and responsibilities as the APAC Vice President of Sales for Business Communication at Sennheiser?

There's never a dull moment in my role. The Asia-Pacific region is incredibly diverse, encompassing countries such as India, Australia, New Zealand, Korea, China, Japan, and Southeast Asian markets. This means there's always something unique happening. My fascination with people, different cultures, and human behaviour makes this role truly enjoyable. As the VP of Sales for the APAC region, I am enthusiastic about the responsibilities I hold. This position keeps me engaged, as every day brings new experiences and challenges.

Can you share a few examples that make your days special at Sennheiser?

The individuals I collaborate with, including partners, customers/users, and the industry itself, are truly unique and special within the world of Pro AV. Upon entering this industry, one will quickly realize and appreciate the passion that people have for the industry, and the excitement they feel for various brands and solutions. At Sennheiser, we don't merely sell products; we provide solutions, we contribute to building people's lives, and we enhance the way they communicate and collaborate.

Can you shed light on the current sales strategies at Sennheiser?

At Sennheiser, our current sales strategy revolves around a focused approach to doing business. We place significant emphasis on business communications while maintaining a strategic focus on segments such as pro audio and Neumann Berlin. Our primary goal is to stay close to our customers, keeping their needs in mind in all our endeavours. I have been working with teams in India and other coun-

tries to adopt a more customer-centric approach, ensuring that we listen to our clients and stay relevant.

We have also made significant improvements in providing venues where customers can experience our unique solutions firsthand, which is key to the sale of business communication products and decision making. Therefore, we aim to make our experience centres accessible to as many people as possible and strive to be active and present alongside our customers.

In recent years, we have invested heavily in India, partnering with numerous reputable partners for users to explore our products and solutions. For instance, we recently held a roadshow in Bhubaneswar, India, where we showcased our products and solutions to potential customers. The event saw an impressive turnout, and the enthusiasm with which attendees learned about our offerings was truly remarkable.

How has your brand performance been in the last few years? What are your expectations from sales in the coming years?

In recent years, our brand has seen substantial growth and achieved impressive results. We are determined to maintain this momentum. Specifically, in India, we plan to target various tier cities, expand our presence in more regions, and attract new customers. Our focus is on growing our business markets and exploring opportunities within specific segments.

We have meticulously analysed our business units, establishing a clear distinction between pro audio, Neumann, and business communications. This allows everyone on our team to concentrate exclusively on their respective areas. As the saying goes, "Don't change a winning team or a good strategy." We believe we are currently on the right track and want to continue being proactive while staying focused on our actions. Our aim is to achieve even greater success in the future.

What is your perception of India as a business communication market for Sennheiser in the global scheme of things?

We have placed significant emphasis on and invested in the Indian market. Now is the time to adapt, learn, grow,

and achieve success here. India is, and will continue to be, one of our key markets within the APAC region.

What strategy are you following from the global to the APAC and local levels, and how is it helping India and other countries to grow? Are there different strategies for different countries?

Currently, our global strategy focuses on specific verticals where we can provide the highest quality solutions, particularly in the education and corporate sectors. In the realm of business communications, we aim to maintain a sharp focus. For example, within the education sector, we concentrate on higher education because we believe our solutions add more value for both end-users and professors. These strategies are formulated at the global level.

However, when implementing these strategies at the APAC level, we adjust them to cater to local needs. Our team members are well-aware of our current focus areas. We always approach each market with a local flavor, which is what makes our brand unique. India, for instance, is characterized by its people and the exceptional individuals we work with who make things happen. This distinctive aspect sets India apart from other markets, making it a truly unique environment for growth.

We have placed significant emphasis on and invested heavily in the Indian pro AV market. Now is the time to adapt, learn, grow, and achieve success in this market. India is, and will continue to be, one of the key pro AV markets within the APAC region in the future.

As a part of the leadership team, what is your vision for the Indian business communication market? Any key changes/developments that you would like to make for Sennheiser's Indian team?

Some key developments include the appointment of new team members, such as Naveen Sridhara, who has joined Sennheiser as the Director of Sales. We have also shifted our approach towards the pro AV segment, aiming to be one step closer to our end customers in everything we do. As a result, we strive to stay ahead of the competition and support these actions through our marketing efforts.

Additionally, we have been collaborating with other manufacturers in India to establish strong relationships with them. Having our products in multiple locations sends a powerful message from our brand that "to-

gether we are stronger." Consequently, we have carefully selected partners who share our vision. Together, we focus on providing experiences and solutions that make our customers' lives easier.

According to you, what is the recent game-changing moment in the business communications industry?

In my opinion, the recent game-changing moment in the business communications industry is the rise of hybrid work. The rapid pace at which technology and development have occurred has forced even those who had never used technological devices for communication or collaboration to adapt quickly. The way people can navigate these changes today is truly remarkable.

However, another game-changer is the growing importance of audio. This was something that people didn't pay much attention to when they began collaborating a few years ago. Consider a virtual meeting where the audio doesn't work; both the meeting and the time spent become wasted. As a result, we've moved from having virtual meetings to appreciating high-quality videos, but the significance of audio remains crucial.

What is your perspective on the hybrid work trend? Is hybrid work here to stay?

Providing solutions to the dedicated people who work for you is undoubtedly an asset. As the world continues to change, we are witnessing a shift towards more flexible and balanced ways of working. I firmly believe that hybrid work is here to stay because it has fundamentally transformed how we communicate. Although I am a strong advocate for face-to-face human interaction, hybrid work is now an integral aspect of our lives that we cannot ignore.

Earning the recognition of 40 Under 40 in APAC, a LinkedIn Top Voice, and a technology sector expert, what key insights would you like to share with our readers about the ever-expanding business communication industry?

My advice is to remain curious. If you maintain your curiosity, you are on the path to success. There are people who 'talk,' and there are people who 'do.' It is better to be on the side of the doers, as they are the ones who achieve results. India has many great doers – individuals who make things happen. I believe this quality can drive the growth of the ever-expanding business communication industry in the future.