

# Unwinding The Changing Dynamics of Sennheiser with Naveen Sridhara



**TeamConnect  
Bar Solutions**  
Flexibility that empowers.



*When it comes to innovation and development, Sennheiser has been one of the global leaders to deliver impressive sound experiences. Motivated to expand the horizons and keep up the momentum, Sennheiser extended its portfolio in the pro-AV vertical. AV-ICN Magazine got in touch with **NAVEEN SRIDHARA**, Director of Sales, Sennheiser, during the latest 'TCC Medium' and 'TC Bar' launch where Sridhara shared Sennheiser's big leap in the unified communications market and its strategies to stimulate growth in the pro-AV segment.*

## **Could you introduce us to the latest TeamConnect Family solutions?**

Sennheiser entered the TeamConnect Ceiling Solutions with TCC1 and later expanded its innovation with TCC2, which is a 2x2 tile with automatic dynamic beamforming. The company further decided to expand the portfolio under the same TeamConnect family while giving a thought to the medium sized rooms. While TCC2 covers 800 sq. ft. of area, it may not be a suitable option for the medium sized meeting rooms. Therefore, expanding the market standards and the pro-AV industry, Sennheiser launched TCCM (TeamConnect Medium), while advancing the performance and the cost of meeting room solutions. TCC Medium

takes up 400 sq. mt. with 40 sq. mt. as the radius of the product.

Sennheiser has been a pioneer in audio for about eight decades in terms of our innovation on stage, studio, or any such performance venues. Sennheiser also wanted to enter the unified communication market because right now when you enter meeting rooms, it's just not about the audio part, people also investigate video solutions. That's when TC Bar comes into picture. TC Bar is also an extension of the

TeamConnect family. It's not an independent device, it can be connected with the ceiling microphones when you have a larger room, which makes it a part of the same family. So now the family has TCC2, TCCM, and TC Bar.

### **Can you elaborate on the strategies that Sennheiser takes to ensure consistent growth for the pro-AV vertical in India?**

There are three large segments at Sennheiser – Government, Corporate, and Higher Education. All other manufacturers trying to get in the AV market are joining the industry from IT, however, we are already into the AV market trying to get into Unified Communications. With a strong customer base that trusts us and is keen on exploring our segments, our strategy is to approach the existing clientele and aware them about the new solutions and products.

The key differentiator in our new product portfolio is 'Dante', a protocol in the audio industry, which you can expand with the TeamConnect family in the same room with boundary layered microphones and is not something available with other microphones. You use it like your regular ethernet port, but it is the way of controlling or transmitting the U signal in audio. So, it's the technology wherein it doesn't matter which manufacturer meets us, there is one single protocol on Ethernet, which can transmit your signal and your control. Everything is on one cable making it easier for users as that is the standard cable available in the market. As it gets challenging for manufacturers to have many cables, Dante is something that will resolve the problem of having one protocol for all the devices to network audio with Sennheiser's products. Another big advantage is the tiling and the addition of the camera in our new product portfolio.

### **What are the key features of TC Bar Solutions?**

Dante is the biggest thing to have been

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included in the TC Bar along with the extension of camera. You can have the secondary camera to capture rest of the audience. For normal cameras up to 5 meter is fine, but after that inbuilt primary camera is not able to capture. This is where you can have an additional camera. Another advantage is the DSP built in. While a good external DSP will cost around \$1500, the digital signal processing is within the bar itself.

### **What challenges do the Indian pro-AV market pose when it comes to accepting new technologies, and how does Sennheiser aim to address the same?**

India is one of the fastest countries to pick up on the technology. India always looks after what is more advanced and cost-effective. All our offerings, even with the EW-DX, our recently launched microphone, have got features that are comparable to any high-end systems, which are charging more than five times but have got all the features with a premium of 10%, adding a huge value to the pricing and specifications. We always look at how we can optimise the system so that it is not so expensive and the same time it is premium for the Indian market. If you look at any of the Government projects, they are very particular, therefore, we must be way ahead of the curve offering great specifications with better costs to attract the Indian pro AV market.

One of the biggest challenges for the pro-AV industry also comes down to managing the Radio Frequency (RF) within auditoriums. If you have a receiver and a transmitter with 2000 people inside the venue with the antenna distribution; it needs to be done in such a way that there's no drop out. So, radio frequency management in itself is a big science. Sennheiser being the global leader, for any large events like the Olympics or any of the events on stage, dedicates a team that works on RF management because it's very critical to ensure all events meet quality

sound requirements.

### **What key factors, in your opinion, will drive the growth of the pro AV industry in India with respect to hybrid work environment in the near future?**

People were talking about AV over IT around 10 years ago. People were talking about the technologies where everything through IT could be controlled in a classroom sitting somewhere remotely – All that is now a reality. That's how systems are interconnected and how hybrid classrooms are always working. It doesn't matter whether we are in the class, or we are taking remote classes, the experience is seamless. TCC started with the same concept, then the TCC1, TCC2, and the TCC Medium came into picture to follow the same vision. These are all hybrid solutions what Sennheiser has focused on and it has become a reality. Five years ago, during the pre-Covid times, we would talk about something like hybrid taking over but all that is a reality now.

### **How evolved is India as a region when it comes to cutting edge pro-AV technology?**

Segment wise, I would say corporate is covering the major grounds when it comes to cutting edge pro-AV technology. Today, India has evolved from just being an outsource, call centre, or a service industry. All the excellence centres have their largest setup outside their home ground in India, which means it is talking about designing cutting-edge solutions like cloud computing or latest innovation that requires complementary AV setup to connect their meeting rooms or board rooms with the headquarters anywhere around the globe. For example, SAP labs have the largest campus outside the headquarters in Bangalore. The investment and technology are coming from Germany directly to India to bring in the global standards.

Everything in India is about 'Digital India', even the equipment market is digitally advanced. The Government is ready to invest in terms of large projects. 10-15 years back, there was only one convention centre which was associated to major events. Today, every city will have a large convention centre, state-of-the-art auditoriums, meeting rooms, convention halls, etc. Even the government has started upgrading the infrastructure since the last few years.

We are showing technology to the world. We have built the best software and we have the best people in the IT. Now, we also need

to adopt to the fast-changing AV market.

**During the launch event of the Team-Connect products, the team highlighted about the security standards. Could you provide a brief on the measures taken by Sennheiser to keep the market innovations secured?**

There are many protocols that the companies should follow as per the Government norms. There is a global security platform called IEEE, AES encryption software, and TLS software, which are all the protocols that the banks and institutions have made mandatory to participate in the tenure. Also, all the products need to be certified under BIS. Moreover, every product must be certified by the Microsoft Team or Zoom as the entire ecosystem is based on Microsoft. The market itself is working on the security standards to keep the market innovations secured.

**What is the valuation analysis of Sennheiser of the corporate segment in the Indian pro-AV industry currently?**

The Indian AV market is fragmented into video and pro audio. If you see the video part of it including displays, signages, video walls, etc., we are almost negligible in the industry as the pro AV market is very vast. Pro audio segment including loudspeakers, microphones, and other products, amongst which, microphones nearly cover 10-15% of the entire market, drives the major pro-AV industry. So, it's difficult to understand the factual data as the market is still not matured enough.

**What's next for Sennheiser? Is Sennheiser**

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**now, or in the near future, planning to expand its Pro AV vertical into direct-to-consumer or residential segments?**

We had a consumer segment and a professional segment initially. Consumer segment was all into earphones, headphones, and more from the B2C industry, which is now sold to the Swiss company, Sonova. Later, the company decided to be in two segments – pro audio and business communication. The company's focus is on these two segments currently.

As far as the investment on the brand in India is concerned, we have direct presence with offices and service centres across the country and that's a clear indication of our sustaining model in India. In terms of solutions, customers can be assured that they would get the best solutions at Sennheiser.

**While everything is growing every day and new innovations are uprooting the pro AV industry, how does Sennheiser inform people of the coming up technologies?**

I believe in the proof of concept – as

we did during the TC Bar launch event with the Voicelift. We showed Systems Integrators, Consultants, and end users present at the event what is Voicelift to encourage them to talk about it to others. We applied the same concept at GITAM University in August, where we did a demo of the Voicelift. We entered two classrooms – one with existing multiple handled microphones going around and the second classroom with similar Voicelift. One classroom had the presenter and one the student. They started having our technologies installed in 20 classrooms initially and we are hoping to expand in the near future.

To build an excitement in our end-users, we also participate in various events displaying our business solutions. We have training for the people through platforms like Sound Academy, where you can see people discussing about how the devices can be used on stage, conference rooms, etc. We give certifications to people for completing the tests that add on to the awareness of the person about the products and technicalities.

We also have other initiatives that we partner with, like the Systems Integration Asia Awards, and even participation in the cricket event, which is one of the biggest things that bring people together in India. We have an event that gathers around 500-600 people together, called the AVPL (Audiovisual Premier League), in Bangalore where we own a team adding to the brand recall in the market.