

BLAZE

BLAZE AUDIO

Executive Sales Director for the Americas, Kevin Wilkin provides some insight into the company's expansion into the region following its initial European launch.

www.blaze-audio.com



For several years, Pascal A/S of Copenhagen, Denmark has been one of the leading OEM suppliers of amplifier electronics for professional audio companies in the global AV market. Only recently did the company embark on a mission to formulate its own identity under the Blaze Audio nameplate. Blaze Audio was initially launched in Europe slightly over a year ago and now the company is making a push to expand its presence. Both in Europe and abroad, Blaze Audio is gaining traction as a manufacturer of power amplification, signal processing, loudspeakers, and related products under its own name.

Kevin Wilkin, Blaze Audio's Executive Sales Director for the Americas, shared his perspectives on the opportunities and challenges such an endeavour involves. "Our company's mission is to create commercial simplicity through product flexibility and competitive pricing, with the goal of becoming the go-to solution for system integrators and dealers handling all types of projects," he began. "Innovative product designs that enable fewer products to address a wide range of fixed install applications will be a key focus for everything Blaze Audio introduces. This enables system integrators and dealers to carry fewer SKUs in stock and simplify stock keeping, service, support, along with inbound and outbound ordering and logistics."

According to Wilkin, Blaze Audio is dedicated to innovative engineering that redefines industry standards. "While we're well established in Europe, Blaze Audio is a start-up here in the Americas. I was hired to formulate business operations for the Americas as well as to build the sales channel for North America. As a company, Pascal A/S has a proven track record for designing and building many of the very types of products that will be sold under the Blaze Audio name. The difference is that now, the company will be reaping the benefits of its own cutting-edge designs." Sustainability is a pillar of the company ethos. "Blaze Audio will always be dedicated to innovative engineering that redefines industry standards. This, by its nature, builds longevity into its products' life cycles," Wilkin explained. "Consider our PowerZone Connect power amps and the versatile way they can be configured. So much of what we do today is done through our mobile phones and we expect to be able to make changes to our environment



Above: Kevin Wilkin, Executive Sales Director for the Americas, Blaze Audio.

with them. Hence, we at Blaze Audio are aligning with how people already interact with their personal technology. The PowerZone Connect amplifiers can, of course, be controlled from any smart device since it is browser-based. The amps have a router built into them that immediately shows their availability as a Wi-Fi device on phones, tablets, or laptops.”

Blaze Audio is focused on providing the best quality future-proof amplifier solutions at the lowest possible price point. “Our products must play well with others,” Wilkin added. “We’re rolling out new firmware for the PowerZone Control Web App with drivers for the major third party control platforms and ability to select loudspeaker presets encompassing all major brands. Moving forward, expect us to expand smart accessory options for our amplifiers. What’s taking place with our PowerZone Connect amplifier line is just one example of our focus on the long view.” In addition to innovative product design, the way the company conducts its business is equally notable. “We

offer complementary system design services for those who would benefit and by registering projects, the profitability for integrators becomes significantly greater,” Wilkin noted. “Set-up time for the PowerZone Connect matrix amplifiers DSP is simple, yet sophisticated, so programming and labour time is minimal. These days, more and more AV companies are experiencing less and less profitability on hardware and are having to focus more on services to be profitable. This is not a new trend. As a good business partner, it’s important for Blaze Audio to facilitate the sale of services, and providing networkable audio products is part of that.”

Loudspeakers, an integral part of the picture

According to Wilkin, Blaze Audio has one of the foremost loudspeaker engineers in the US on its team: Hugh Sarvis. The engineer has a long and distinguished track record, including being the founder of the highly regarded WorxAudio line of products, which is now part of the



Above left: A house of worship solution by Blaze Audio.

Above right: Loudspeaker engineer Hugh Sarvis.

extensive range belonging to PreSonus Audio Electronics. During his WorxAudio years, Sarvis introduced the popular V8 line array, X Series, and UltraMax Series of products. As Managing Director of the PreSonus loudspeaker division, he was responsible for the PreSonus ULT and AIR Series loudspeaker systems, the ERIS E5 XT PreSonus Studio Monitor, the R65 PreSonus Studio Monitor, as well as the CDL Series.

"I first met and became a customer of Pascal in 2009 and started implementing their amplifier modules in our WorxAudio products around 2011," Sarvis recalled. "When I sold WorxAudio to PreSonus in 2014 and became Managing Director of their loudspeaker division, PreSonus was already utilising Pascal modules, so it made the transition very smooth. After parting ways with PreSonus, I already owned all the testing hardware and software, so I took over the Lab in Greensboro, NC, which is now home to Blaze Audio's US-based operations."

Sarvis, continued: "It was during the stay-at-home period of the COVID pandemic that I reached out to one or two people at Pascal A/S I had come to know over the years about some ideas I was considering. I was informed they were exploring the idea of formulating their own identity under the Blaze Audio nameplate and was asked if I would be interested in collaborating with them. I thought it was a terrific opportunity and this is when the Blaze Audio loudspeaker division was created. As Director of the loudspeaker division,

my goals are to have commercial loudspeakers for the House of Worship, education, restaurant, bar, stadium, and AV markets. The forthcoming addition of loudspeakers creates a complementary relationship with Blaze Audio's amplifiers and DSP. In the process, I believe this opens the door to a wealth of opportunity." Wilkin added: "Hugh has been an invaluable addition to the Blaze Audio team – our first loudspeaker is an excellent example of that. With a 160° horizontal dispersion, it challenges the traditional notion that arrays need to limit horizontal dispersion to control sound better. Blaze is documenting and proving in practice that an extremely well controlled loudspeaker with an ultra-wide horizontal dispersion can overcome many of the acoustical anomalies that consultants, installers, and production companies routinely wrestle with at significant expense." "It's important to not lose sight of the fact that Pascal is still the leading ODM supplier for amplifiers and is experiencing record sales success," Wilkin concluded. "Blaze Audio is yet another opportunity for the company to make a significant impact upon the pro audio landscape – in this case, with its own brand identity. There's no better time than now for being rewarded for innovation and forward-thinking engineering. I honestly believe the ROI on our offerings will result in great selling products for longer periods of time. Everyone involved in Blaze Audio is eager to make it all happen." ■