

5 BEST PRACTICES FOR A BETTER MDU HOME AUTOMATION SOLUTION

The Future of Luxury Living with Crestron,
for Developers, Engineers and Architects





For project managers, builders, and engineers embarking on the development of luxury multi-dwelling units, understanding the possibilities, and anticipating potential hurdles are the key to ensuring a smooth delivery on any smart home system. Read on to find out how to avoid pitfalls and stay ahead of the trends with this short guide.

THE MARKET IS READY, BUT DEVELOPER AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE IS KEY

Almost two-thirds of prospective MDU (multi-dwelling unit) tenants look to preinstalled smart devices as a [key amenity](#) in their purchasing decision when looking for a new apartment.

For developers, project managers, engineers, architects, and property managers, the message is clear - new luxury apartment buyers today expect the latest in automation and robust smart home offerings. This category is established as a key competitive differentiator. Additionally, the property development industry - and homeowners alike - are aligned in appreciating that smart home automation can help shorten sales cycles and boost overall property values.

But with that said, property development industry professionals need to remain aware that not all technologies are created equal, and that it's imperative to protect yourself and your client's future needs and experiences in addition to today's requirements.

So let's examine 5 best practices to follow to help ensure a smoother experience in deploying and supporting smart home automation solutions for luxury MDU builds.



5 BEST PRACTICES FOR MDU HOME AUTOMATION SUCCESS

1

Simplify and streamline the home automation installation process by adopting a single ecosystem solution.

This point is so important, it's worth re-reading. You don't want to be dealing with sourcing, installation, programming and coordination through multiple vendors or suppliers, working with varying warranties and fluctuating support services. It remains a myth that various smart devices work seamlessly together - they don't, so avoid being seduced by the idea of bringing different systems together to create a harmonious whole.

Some companies promote a home control platform, which unites different devices from different companies – in theory. The platform is yet another third-party software totally dependent on other companies developing APIs and writing control modules for their hardware to run on that piece of software. The devices are not independently compatible. Also, when updates are made to either the hardware or the software, functionality may be affected for some period. That's a nice way of saying the device or

system

won't work and there's no way of knowing for how long. Instead, look for a reputable vendor (such as Crestron) which controls every aspect of product development, manufacturing, testing, and distribution with a single full-service offering, all on the one platform.

5 BEST PRACTICES FOR MDU HOME AUTOMATION SUCCESS

2

Look beyond the tech hype and *be aware of hidden costs.*

With a wave of smart home technologies flooding the market, unfortunately there are devices and systems that don't live up to the perceptions created by the manufacturer's marketing. Be careful with less well known or regarded brands that claim to offer revolutionary smart technology, and be sure to consider the hidden costs and issues of a solution that appears to be cheaper or quicker to install.

For example, it's understandable that developers and engineers may be attracted by wireless lighting solutions because they appear to be less expensive and involve less labour using less cabling. However, while wireless lighting running on Wi-Fi might be suitable for a single dwelling development, it can potentially cause havoc in complex MDUs compared to wired lighting. That's because you can feasibly end up with 300 competing wireless devices in close proximity, contending with range strength problems, along with interference issues with other wireless solutions nearby. The lesson: money that appears to be saved upfront can end up becoming a costly burden as the project progresses and nears completion. As for Crestron, we manufacture and support both wireless and wired smart lighting solutions; the point is that it's critical to know which is appropriate for a given project.

5 BEST PRACTICES FOR MDU HOME AUTOMATION SUCCESS

3

Keep keypads simple, but ensure you can *customise, personalise, and scale.*

It's tempting to assume we'll know what the homeowner or occupier will ultimately want in their smart home controls, and as such, developers will sometimes attempt to include as much as possible on the home automation keypad to anticipate all needs. In our experience, it's best to keep the keypad layouts very simple, but importantly to install the right infrastructure that will allow for personalisation by the end-user as they settle in. This is an approach that maximises flexibility, while empowering the client. For example the occupier may want to personalise keypads with a single button that simultaneously activates lighting, blinds, and audio. Keep it simple and allow for customisation and your clients will thank you.

5 BEST PRACTICES FOR MDU HOME AUTOMATION SUCCESS

4

Engage a smart home integrator early.

Because home automation speaks to all the different systems in a property's development (e.g. air conditioning, security), your specialist smart home integrator should be involved as early as possible to ensure the entire process goes smoothly. There's a lot to consider and get right: integrating with building-wide systems, networking requirements, power requirements, keypad design and functionality, to name a few. All of this takes experience and skill.

Engaging the integrator early makes all the difference, providing the glue that ensures all aspects of a system link correctly. Too often, home automation is left to the electrical contractor, and in some cases comes after infrastructure design. This can lead to costly variations and delays in the build, which can be avoided when a special integrator is involved pre-construction. A home automation integrator can help ensure electrical, air conditioning and security services are all integrating correctly with the smart home system early on which prevents issues arising down the track, saving you time and money across the project.

5 BEST PRACTICES FOR MDU HOME AUTOMATION SUCCESS

5

Future-proof

Technology trends are ever-changing, so it's more important than ever to prepare for what your clients need now and what they may want tomorrow. For example, features drawing a lot of interest today include touchless technologies, voice activation, and distributed audio and video streaming throughout a home to different rooms and devices. Choosing a dynamic and evolving platform from a trusted manufacturer with a solid track record will help ensure the latest in-demand features are available and provide flexibility for end-users into the future while helping ensure the longevity of the platform you recommend and include in your MDUs.

At Crestron, we believe a smart home should be intelligent enough to update itself. Apps don't become obsolete. Updates are pushed out from the cloud, making them better all the time. The same is true for a good smart home system. New features, functions, and device support gets added in the background consistently, so the system you purchased, deployed, or installed yesterday gets better over time. Swapping out decorative elements, such as keypads, and touch screens is also seamless. When a new device is added, all the settings are pulled down from the cloud and it just works. All of which saves time and money.



Have a development project in mind you'd like to discuss?

Contact Airla Automation team on:

team@airla.au