

VERREX INSIDERS

SUMMER 2023



Verrex's Very Exciting Announcement!

An Interview with Rich Mebane

We are very proud to announce that we are a part of the PSNI Global Alliance, the world's most recognized network of AV integrators, manufacturers, distributors, and service partners, with a presence in more than 200 cities worldwide. As part of this global alliance, Verrex is even better suited to provide our customers with best-in-class scalable, standardized technology solutions and managed services anywhere around the globe.

What is the PSNI Global Alliance?

The Alliance offers an immense range of specialized, fully vetted expertise that advances organizational strategies and activates innovation.

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BYOD: How to Enable Flexibility and Preserve Simplicity

By Ben Dandola-Grubb

While the collaboration culture of organizations varies and the equipment provided to employees differs, many people prefer to use their own devices when presenting and hosting a video call from a conference room. BYOD originally meant Bring-Your-Own-Device solely for content sharing, whether that was PowerPoint, Excel, or the latest marketing video.

Today content sharing is a given in all collaborative spaces, primarily wirelessly, though often with a wired backup option. What's been new over the past few years is the ability to use your own device with access to all the microphones, cameras, and speakers in a meeting space.

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Its proprietary global deployment and services certifications allow Alliance affiliates to finish projects faster and more consistently and ensure top-tier, localized support. Technology end users receive service in their own languages and in compliance with the regulations and requirements of each location. Customers can keep their local or regional technology partners while receiving global Alliance support if desired.

From project design, integration, and user training to ongoing solutions management, The Alliance expands and improves the integration and optimization of technology solutions so organizations worldwide can transform how we work and experience life.

“Our desire to join such a mature Global Alliance has been a multi-decade journey. We fully comprehend the current and future opportunities The Alliance will bring to our clients and the entire Verrex ecosystem. Our goal is to grow our business through our new PSNI relationships and expertise from around the world.”

Thomas Berry, CEO of Verrex

Ready to Learn More?

Verrex Insiders sat down with Rich Mebane, Vice President of Operations at Verrex, to discuss what this membership means to Verrex and its clients.

What is the value of being a part of the PSNI Global Alliance?

Verrex will instantly expand its footprint of top-quality service and implementation for our global customers. Through our membership in PSNI, our resource pool expands to include all our fellow CSPs (Certified Solution Providers) globally. As the head of the integration and service departments, I understand the immense value of having access to trusted partners worldwide. Our customers will reap the benefits, especially our global customers.

Will our clients receive the same level of service they get from Verrex?

Customer service has always been top of mind at Verrex. We have prided ourselves on our excellent service for 75+ years. Verrex will be able to provide the same high level of service our customers expect in more areas of the world. The secret now is that we will expand our coverage with a deep pool of thoroughly vetted partners who share the strict standards and guidelines of The Alliance, which align with the processes and procedures Verrex has always adhered to.

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What are you most excited about PSNI Global Alliance?

First, with the help of our partners in PSNI, Verrex will have more flexibility. We will be able to get our customers the best of the best no matter their location. This is an exciting prospect. Through The Alliance, we will have opportunities to improve service level agreements (SLAs) for our customer base. We have instantly widened our reach and increased our depth through PSNI.

But, I think I'm most excited about building relationships with the other members of the PSNI Global Alliance, both the CSPs and the Preferred Vendor Partners (PVPs). We are honored and excited to have such a great pool of quality partners worldwide that adhere to the same standards that we do at Verrex.

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This allows users to make video calls on any platform, such as Zoom, Teams, Webex, and Google, while accessing all the great AV equipment in any size space. Some have called this Bring-Your-Own-Meeting, or BYOM. However, I prefer using the acronym BYOD to include the ability to drive video calls from a personal laptop.

BYOD

BYOD is easy to envision in a Huddle Room. A small display with a table that's up against the front wall with a simple camera bar mounted above the display. Then either a combination of HDMI and USB connected to your laptop or just a USB-C cable. As collaborative spaces grow more extensive, with separate microphones, speakers, and possibly multiple cameras, BYOD is still a good option. Though as complexity increases, we must be careful to maintain a simple user experience.

Wireless BYOD

A wireless BYOD solution can solve numerous connectivity and USB extension problems. I'm talking about Mersive Solstice, Barco ClickShare, and Crestron AirMedia as popular examples. These are not only wireless presentation devices, but they can also wirelessly send a USB camera, microphone, and speaker to the user's laptop.

Challenges

The most significant challenge for new BYOD users is selecting the correct camera and microphone when connecting in a meeting space. Device selection is relatively simple in a Huddle Room when only a single device exists, but it can be challenging in a large space. Here's where consistency of AV gear is critical, along with intentional room design. Consistency could mean using the same camera or audio device manufacturer across all rooms or using the same USB conversion unit.

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This allows users to remember just a few microphone and camera brands to select for calls on their laptops. Organizations have varying needs, multiple user groups, and various technology cultures. There isn't and shouldn't be a one-size-fits-all BYOD solution. The key is to create a solution that can be scaled throughout a single organization with simplicity and consistency.

Room-Based Systems versus BYOD

When meeting with a new client, one of the first discussion points is whether a Room-Based System, such as a Zoom Room or Microsoft Teams Room, meets their needs. Room-Based Systems have numerous advantages, and I typically recommend these before BYOD. That is, if the client wants to pick just one. But the exciting reality is that every meeting space can have both a Room-Based System and BYOD. Though again, I would not automatically recommend both as this potentially adds unneeded complexity. AV design aims to meet the user's needs today while providing a path toward their future vision.

I credit Crestron for popularizing the Zoom Room and Microsoft Teams Room (MTR) when they announced their Flex Integrator Kits in late 2018. Verrex had a client who was immediately ready to move from the prior Crestron RL systems, which used Microsoft's Lync and then Skype for Business, into MTR's. The challenge was the client's demand to combine MTR with BYOD from Day One, which requires USB switching. This was years before Crestron announced their Flex-X kit with BYOD or the existence of Android-based Room System video bars with BYOD built-in.

We ultimately found a USB 3 switcher from ATEN, which was thoroughly tested in-house to ensure long-term stability, then deployed in over 100 conference rooms. By July 2019, Verrex was deploying MTRs with BYOD on a large scale, years before this was an industry standard. The rooms are still in daily use by the client. Now combining Room-Based Systems with BYOD is ubiquitous, and manufacturers have taken some of the challenges off the Integrator's shoulders by offering built-in USB switching options.

Closing Thoughts

BYOD takes all the AV gear in a system and brings it back to a single USB cable. This cable either connects directly to the user's laptop or a wireless BYOD interface such as Mersive. AV systems revolve around USB today more than ever, and gaining a deep understanding of USB is critical for every AV Integrator, especially when there's USB switching. I'll review USB in more depth in an upcoming issue of Verrex Insiders. In the meantime, [contact us](#) to discuss enabling BYOD/BYOM options in your AV solutions!