

Understanding the Pro-Audio Market with Sennheiser



Vipin Pungalia, Director, Sales
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Sennheiser is a leading manufacturer of headphones, loudspeakers, microphones, and wireless transmission systems and has been creating unique sound experiences for customers. PALM+ AV-ICN got in touch with Vipin Pungalia, Director, Sales - Pro Audio & Country Manager, Sennheiser - India, to learn more about the company's plans for the Indian market.

The live music industry had seen a boom before the third wave of COVID stuck. What are the current industry sentiments, and do you think that the industry is poised to see a boom again?

India has always been a music-loving country, for global as well as local artists. According to a survey by BookMyShow, 51%¹ of entertainment enthusiasts were eager to attend live events. With the ease of COVID restrictions, and rise of vaccination rates, real life concerts are back. It almost did not matter that they were not yet back in full effect, because even a gradual return before the third wave of COVID, drew a large number of audiences from across the country. Considering the enthusiasm from people on wanting to attend concerts, the live music industry has been witnessing a remarkable recovery post the pandemic and one can say, that it is definitely heading towards its boom.

Which is why, once again artists are hopeful to connect with their audience one-on-one through live concerts. To prepare for future live performances, artists are looking for the best quality products that will amplify their sound in a manner that their audience is captivated and realises what they have been missing out on these couple of years.

So, considering the ever-increasing footfalls at music concerts, the live music industry will continue to grow in India in the coming years. Because live

entertainment as a format will always remain a crucial element in providing a memorable experience to people. This will have a direct impact in the demand for superior professional equipment with cutting-edge technology, making it important for brands like us to constantly innovate and create the best to provide an impetus to this growing culture.

How has the growth been for Sennheiser in India since the last year and what are Sennheiser's priority markets in India currently?

India is one of the key markets for Sennheiser. We have a well-structured and large team covering everything from sales to support to technical services.

Live performance and Audio-for-video continues to be the topmost focused vertical for us. Additionally, the pro audio market has been reporting substantial growth for the last couple of years. The market is likely to grow further based on factors like the transition to digital audio, smart solutions like Dante (VoIP), innovative solutions for meeting and conferences, and investment from clients in cutting-edge solutions to resolve their challenges. Other major factors playing a role are favourable regulations, growing investments in M&E, exponential rise in OTT platforms, and content creation.

Currently, we are focussing on tier 1 and tier 2 cities are an important market for us.

We have seen quite an encouraging growth in tier 2 cities with the increase in level of awareness of the customers.

They are well-informed, demand high quality and strong after sales support which very well resonates with Sennheiser's approach. This has helped us solidify our stance in these markets.

Could you elaborate on Sennheiser's channel strategies in the Indian market?

At Sennheiser, we have our wide and strong network of channel partners region-wise and business segment-wise across India. During such an unprecedented time, brands may need to consider a Phygital approach – a combination of both physical and digital, a new powerhouse of experiences.

In this model, the physical aspect works on the human connection which

helps build trust & reliability, while the digital approach helps us acquire data, which when analysed can help reach out to our target audience, thus making this model a future-ready approach. This model is a powerful approach because it gives a 360-degree view of the current customer experience landscape and brings complete transformation in physical and front-end business.

Speaking of Sennheiser, our major chunk of business comes from traditional channel. However, online channel is also gaining popularity with many customer groups. Keeping this in mind, brands need to find the right balance between online and offline channels. Fortunately, we have a sturdy approach in place as Sennheiser and its channel partners provide consumers with a choice of both offline as well as online medium.

Tell us briefly about the new products launched by Sennheiser and their USP and how do you think it will have an impact on the market?

To give music producers the full account of their mix, we recently introduced the HD 400 PRO studio headphones to our portfolio. An ideal companion for creators seeking natural and precise sound reproduction, these headphones are a reliable reference to create outstanding audio mixes to give an immersive listening experience to audiophiles.

Witnessing the rise of content creators, we introduced from mobile kits for vlogging, shotgun mics for the most demanding environments, to an ultra-convenient digital wireless lavalier

In India, people have started understanding the importance and the meaning of a superior audio quality. While investing in any audio device, consumers should not look at the price as the ultimate criteria.

¹ <https://www.livemint.com/industry/media/51-of-indians-eager-to-step-out-for-live-entertainment-survey-11600849475821.html>

for crystal-clear dialogue, built to be a great addition for vloggers, videographers, and mobile journalists.

To equip artists who put quality and performance above all, Sennheiser launched the EWD- Evolution Wireless Digital, which provides the most reliable connection for any situation, any place, today or even tomorrow – whether it's voice, lecture, conference, moderation, or live performance. A unique tool, best in its class with staggering 134 dB dynamic range – highest in any wireless system at present. The EWD series introduces an easy, app-based workflow

while retaining all the professionalism, multi-channel capability and reliability that users have come to expect of UHF and 1G8 microphones.

Through these launches, Sennheiser is catering to the ever-evolving needs of our customers through innovation and our passion for excellence.

Price has a significant influence on consumer behavior. What are your views on the Indian market for pro audio solutions given this price sensitivity?

Sennheiser, with a 76-year legacy has

been at the helm of shaping the future of the audio industry. In India, people have started understanding the importance and the meaning of a superior audio quality. While investing in any audio device, consumers should not look at the price as the ultimate criteria. Considering that a lot of brands are entering the market, the audio space offers a huge scope for growth. Brands should ensure to not get into a rat race of producing affordable devices with no distinct USPs and key features.

Do you have any plans in 2022 in terms of conducting webinars?

In recent years, we conducted various virtual training programs for partners to help them navigate through unprecedented business-related dynamics. These trainings are undertaken to educate them about the market trends and leverage those to their benefits.

At Sennheiser we strongly believe that there should be no reason to stop educating yourself even while social distancing or working from home situation. Which is why we will continue to conduct a series of webinars this year, to offer both our customers and partners a chance to put forward their questions and clear out queries with the application engineer team.

The webinars would cover the applications of Wireless and RF Application - Wireless microphone and IEMs and various topics under the application such as the basics of Analogue & Digital Audio transmission, RF Noise floor, C/N Ratio, RF Dynamic range, Intermodulation, Multichannel and MultiZone antenna setups for wireless mics, In Ear monitors, Sennheiser Flagship Digital 6000 series features, and Link Budget.

How does Sennheiser promote their service support system in India?

We do have quite a strong network of distributors and channel partners across India who play an extremely crucial role for us in catering to needs of our diverse customers PAN India. Additionally, we have the Online Reputation Management team to manage daily online inquiries from the customers. Our service centres are located in Gurgaon, Mumbai, and Kolkata.

Can you give us an outlook on what customers can expect from Sennheiser in the near future?

We plan to launch a range of varied products in the pro-audio segment and will keep our customers, partners, and other stakeholders updated about the same.

Considering the ever-increasing footfalls at music concerts, the live music industry will continue to grow in India in the coming years. Because live entertainment as a format will always remain a crucial element in providing a memorable experience to people. This will have a direct impact in the demand for superior professional equipment with cutting-edge technology, making it important for brands like us to constantly innovate and create the best to provide an impetus to this growing culture.



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