



A SMART CHOICE



AS HOMES GET A TECH SAVVY MAKEOVER, IT IS ALL ABOUT INTERCONNECTING DEVICES AND FUNCTIONS TO MAKE THE MOST OF THE SPACE.

BY BINDU GOPAL RAO

1. An intelligently designed home theatre, lighting and audio system can make managing the entertainment, mood and vibe effortless when socialising, just as in this home by Studio Osmosis.

2. Shilpa Jain Balvally, Principal Architect, Studio Osmosis

Home Automation is currently witnessing amazing growth with constant innovation in all areas. From cleaning robots, hubs, security systems, door locks, video door locks and motion sensors, the way a home of the future will look has changed forever.

DESIGN ETHOS

Smart products should complement and support interior design instead of getting in the way. "Automation and smart products help the functional, operational as well as aesthetic aspects. Imagine seeing 25 switches on the beautiful living

room panel and replacing the same by a single phone operated panel creating several lighting moods, daylight saving and energy efficient planning. An intelligently designed home theatre, lighting and audio system can manage the vibe effortlessly when socialising," says Shilpa Jain Balvally, Principal Architect, Studio Osmosis. "An intelligently designed home theatre and audio system can make managing your movie and music collection effortless when entertaining guests. Ultimately, connecting your appliances and other systems with automation technology will improve your appliance effectiveness and make your home life much easier and enjoyable," says Manoj Verma, Executive President and COO, Polycab India Limited.



3. Lights and motorized shades can be programmed to switch to an evening mode as the sun sets, or lights can turn on and off automatically when you enter or leave the room or bathrooms to save energy, courtesy Studio Osmosis.

4. Manoj Verma, Executive President & COO, Polycab India



5. WhiteLion's affordable products bring the convenience of modern technology within the reach of all

6. Vishal Kukadiya, Founder, WhiteLion.

7. Abrar Ahmed, Co-Founder, Aura Smart.

8. Vivek Yadav, Sr. Vice President, Havells India

9. One can control appliances like geysers, A/Cs and water pump using the Crabtree Smart Socket via Mobile (Havells DigTap App) and Voice assistants.

10. Home automation solutions from Aura Smart.

11. Hohm Automation range from Polycab offers individual smart products.



PRODUCTS GALORE

WhiteLion's products such as smart switches and sensors are aesthetically designed to look good and not be intrusive. For example, WhiteLion's Mocha Series provides custom-designed switch panels made from marble, wood or any surface the client needs. "This way, you can add a switch that blends into the interiors without spoiling the design. Our range of TV sensors allows you to hide all the devices around the TV and keep the area looking neat," says Vishal Kukadiya, Founder, WhiteLion.

The Internet of Things (IoT) is now the key driving force behind smartification. This versatile smart socket simply plugs into any existing wall socket and enables smart controls for anything plugged into it. Smart IR Blaster, for instance, can provide app and voice controls to any Infra-red remote-controlled device. This works with other smart home devices on the same platform using Automation Routines. Smart Video doorbells add a lot of new features such as intelligent alerts, motion triggers and remote lock release. Some advanced models offer local and cloud video storage, voice controls and additional platform dependent features like integration into the overall home security systems.

GETTING ROOMY

Home automation can work in a small studio apartment or a large villa. Automation, till a few years ago, was hailed as the domain of the uber rich, but not anymore. "With rapid strides in wireless home automation solutions, we have developed one of the largest portfolios of automation products in India and are able to cater to the needs of every kind of homeowner, irrespective of the project size. Our solutions range from ready to use out of the box smart products for simple automation to wireless retrofit automation that does not require any electrical or structural changes, and smart modular wireless automation with premium aesthetics for scalable, retrofit solutions for both new and old structures," says Vivek Yadav, Sr. Vice President, Havells India Ltd. Technologies have become widely accessible and much more economical than before. "Smart Homes offer value even in smaller projects with a variety of use-cases such as temperature control or geyser control for better energy savings. The only difference between a large project and a small one is



the scale of the project and the number of devices involved. In the end, it's all about consumers taking back control of their lives," says Abrar Ahmed, Co-Founder, Aura Smart. A research by www.energy.gov shows that smart home automation technologies save up to 1-15 per cent energy.

TECH INCLUSIVITY

Currently, home automation is limited to a niche group within the ultra-luxury and luxury segment of real estate mainly in metros and mini metros. "There is a visible imbalance in the usage of technology within the urban, semi-urban and rural population (urban masses have a greater dependence). Furthermore, the scope of smart technology is not just dependent on the design of the house but also on an uninterrupted flow of electricity and Wi-Fi facilities. This, along with infrastructural challenges, might be more prevalent in semi-urban and rural areas as opposed to their urban counterparts. However, we are optimistic that home automation will soon find its way to tier-2 and tier-3 markets," says Abbasali Oookabhoy, President – Design, Puravankara Ltd.

PANDEMIC IMPACT

Home upgrades and improvements are the focus as people increasingly work from home. "Home entertainment systems are looking at a complete overhaul with smart devices like the fire cube which seamlessly integrates with any device that you choose for your entertainment space. Right from your latest televisions to your surround sound speakers and the amps running the speakers or your game consoles, everything can be controlled just with your voice even without touching your remote," says Priyanka MC, Founder, Principal Architect and Interior Designer, Maze Concepts.

SUSTAINABILITY CUES

One of the biggest advantages of home automation is that it keeps your home safe, and prevents accidental fires, water leaks, gas leaks, and other disasters. "Smart home technology switches off appliances that are not required after periods



of inactivity, or as individuals leave from one room to the other. This also aids in easily switching on and switching off gadgets and appliances whether inside the house, or from a distance," says Srinivas Shanbhogue, Vice President, Home & Distribution, Schneider Electric India.

TREND CHECK

Investors of the home automation industry understand the grave need to make day to day activities touch free. "This revolution has brought many new trends into the construction realm, including automated domestic help, adjustable interior temperatures, facial and voice recognition and many more. There is also a rising need to integrate workspace automation solutions within homes. The new trends offer at-home conferences, control and contact of various devices, automated communication systems for a company, etc. Additionally, there are several acoustic panels and noise insulators available on the market that help to accentuate telephonic communication within a room," says Alok Hada, Director, Anusha Technovision Pvt. Ltd.

WALK THE TALK

Smart Home Technology is the future of sustainable living,



12&13. With a razor-sharp focus on convenience, safety and wellness, BluNex Life is the next generation of intelligent homes by Puravankara.

14. Abbasali Oookabhoy, President – Design, Puravankara

15. Priyanka MC, Founder, Principal Architect and Interior Designer, Maze Concepts.

16. Srinivas Shanbhogue, Vice President, Home & Distribution, Schneider Electric India.



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17. Niyati Chander, Co-Founder and COO SmartDEN

18. Alok Hada, Director, Anusha Technovision

19. Sudhir Kamat, Founder Director, Raylogic Control Systems

20. A smart automation project by Anusha Technovision.

21. Anusha Technovision has smart products like lighting controls, motorised shades, integrated security systems, speaker systems, and home controls.

22. Scene Keypad at the Raylogic Experience Centre.



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as now homeowners can monitor their carbon footprint and choose to adopt a green lifestyle. Niyati Chander, Co-Founder and COO SmartDEN, a homegrown smart-home solution provider, explains, "During our most recent project, we completely transformed a villa into a smart home. The homeowners, based out of Delhi, were looking for a fully functional smart home that they could control using their phone. We completed the entire installation of over 20 smart devices within the span of a single day to

make sure our clients had a hassle-free experience along with complete training on how to operate their home using their phones."

ROADBLOCK

The challenges that most people find with Home Automation are cost, the complexity and the need for rewiring and tearing down existing walls. Sudhir Kamat, Founder-Director, Raylogic Control Systems Private Limited, says, "With automation, a big chunk of the challenge is perception. Potential users think using a smart home system is going to be more complicated than it is. Getting people to interact with smart switches, getting them to understand the concept of scenes that integrate various elements of automation are challenges that we overcome by keeping our user interface simple and intuitive, and keeping our philosophy simple."

At present, home automation consists of smart products such as fans, lights, switches and home appliances and devices which can convert non-smart products to smart products. "They can now be controlled through apps on mobile phones, voice commands and web platforms. But as we progress with technological advancements, these appliances will be able to predict user patterns and preferences with the help of machine learning algorithms and artificial intelligence," avers Verma. Time to make a smart move. **AB**