

FOR PROGRESSIVE MUSIC RETAILERS

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TIGHTENING THE CHAIN

How Schmitt Music survived the piano slump and came back as a nimbler operation {PAGE 50}

+ PLUS: Tom Schmitt as NAMM chairman

Meet Tom Schmitt,
President of Schmitt
Music and the New
Chairman of NAMM

Why Jackson's
Music Invests in
Real Estate
{PAGE 15}

Audio
Retailers
Turn to the
Consulting
Business
{PAGE 94}

Loud's
Bold
New
Year's
Plans
{PAGE 26}





From left: Loud's Jim Stewart, Jeffrey Cox, Adrian Bell, Rodney Olson, Case Kuehn, John Boudreau and Alex Nelson with the company's roundup of new gear

LOUD TECHNOLOGIES | BY JENNY DOMINE

A LOUD COMEBACK

Loud Technologies was off to a rocky start in 2009. In quick succession, headlines announced the company was selling off its SLM Marketplace, Knilling and Austin brands and delisting from the Nasdaq. This was followed by a disruption of its Mackie and EAW supply chain and bankruptcy rumors.

Now, Loud is making headlines again but for entirely different reasons, as the company kicks off 2010 with a gear-centric, people-focused business plan.

TIMELY CHANGES

While other suppliers were reacting to the economic upheaval last year, Loud was already going through a structural reorganization.

"I'm really proud of what the company accomplished in the past 15 months," said Rodney Olson, Loud CEO.

One year after the gloomy headlines, Loud announces its bold plans for 2010

According to Olson, delisting from the Nasdaq saved Loud \$1 million in annual public company expenses, and after 12 months, 95 percent of the products waiting for restored supplies are back in production.

"Our customers should feel very confident that the new Loud supply chain is stable and has ample capacity to continue growing as the economy comes back to life," Olson said.

FEET ON THE STREET

One expense Loud didn't cut back on was face time with its dealers, distributors and overseas factories.

"We firmly believe that feet on the street are key to supporting the channel and helping our partners find new ways to position and sell our gear in this challenging economy," Olson said.

Loud held a distributor meeting in Ria Bintan, Indonesia, from Oct. 17–19, 2009, that hosted 45 attendees from 26 distribution companies. It held two similar seminars in the past 18 months in Opio, France, and Marrakech, Morocco.

"We will also invest in much stronger in-field training, as well as virtual tools like video and Webinars, to ensure our dealer and distributor network is armed with the information they need to grow their businesses," Olson said.

GAGA FOR GEAR

At The NAMM Show 2010, Loud will unveil the Ampeg Heritage line of heads and cabs, which are designed

and assembled in the United States. Loud will also roll out the lightweight neodymium Pro Neo series cabs with SVT-7PRO and SVT-8PRO heads. Mackie will debut a new line of Mackie HD and Thump powered subwoofers.

To support its new products, Loud is launching a training push for its rep network. Through a mix of social media, online content and promotions, such as Ampeg's 60th anniversary contest, Loud's executives hope to drive end-users into stores. Other promotions will include sponsoring the Lennon Bus, product placement in *Guitar Hero 5* and activities to drive store traffic, such as Loud's online buy-it-now system.

"We've successfully navigated through a complex period for our company and the industry and are once again ready to tackle the fun stuff — growing the business," Olson said. **MI**