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## THE BUZZ: INSTALLATION SPOTLIGHT:

### RUEHL RETAIL STORES

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#### Setting the Tone



As soon as you enter typical youth-oriented retail outlets these days, the sound system instantly captures your attention. Sound isolation is an important issue for loud retail outlets in close proximity to other stores. Many are challenged to successfully isolate their thumping sound systems without jeopardizing the overall audio quality. This was certainly a big challenge for Ruehl retail stores, a national chain owned by Abercrombie & Fitch that sells casual sportswear to the post-collegiate demographic. To meet the challenge of sound isolation, Ruehl opted to use the Auralex Acoustics' SubDude isolation platform.

Ruehl commissioned the services of the New York-based **Essential Communications**, a provider of audio and video systems for commercial and residential environments, upon opening several new retail outlets in locations across the country. Locations included Roosevelt Field Mall in Garden City, N.Y.; Aventura Plaza in Aventura, Fla.; the Dallas Galleria; the San Francisco Centre; and Topanga in Canoga, Calif. The goal was to identify and install the ideal audio system to reinforce Ruehl's brand image and retail vision in these locations. Sound isolation was a particular challenge.



*Auralex Acoustic's SubDude isolation platform successfully isolated Ruehl retail stores' sound system components from cabinets and other surfaces.*

Ruehl typically relies on music and décor to set the tone for its stores. The décor features bookcases stocked with polos, graphic tees, and cargo shorts, and newly installed sound systems add to the stores' ambiance.

**Essential Communications** previously outfitted several Abercrombie & Fitch flagship stores with Auralex's GRAMMA (gig and recording, amp and monitor, modulation attenuator), a system used to float and isolate amplifiers or loudspeakers. Essential Communications has typically turned to the GRAMMA to achieve pure tone and nearly total acoustic isolation, but the firm took a slightly different approach for the Ruehl stores because the GRAMMA system was too large for the custom-built Tannoy TS-10C subwoofers that were already in place.

To accommodate the Tannoy subwoofers, **Essential Communications** chose Auralex's SubDude, a riser for subwoofers, speakers, and amps, to reduce the resonance transfer of Ruehl's existing 12x12, cubed Tannoy subwoofers. Essential installed eight SubDudes in each location. The SubDude units were effective in decoupling the subwoofers from cabinets and other surfaces.

Though the isolation platform was initially designed for home theater applications, systems integrators such as Essential have found SubDude technology useful for installation in retail environments, as the Ruehl application illustrates. The SubDude is made of MDF and structural acoustic foam specifically designed to provide rigidity and stability, with sufficient strength to support a load of up to 200lbs. The SubDude platform severs the speaker system's direct mechanical connection with the room floor. Such isolation allows sound to emanate directly from the subwoofer or speaker, enabling listeners to hear more of the sound passed through the air, and less of it passed through the floor.

"Installing the SubDude allowed us to achieve optimal sonic tonality in a challenging retail environment," says David Schwartz, president of **Essential Communications**. "We wanted something that was easy to install, and the SubDude served that purpose as it arrives from the factory ready to use. Additionally, the ease of installation was extremely beneficial in that we needed to implement this solution in multiple locations."

The various Ruehl sound systems share staple components, including Tannoy speakers: 18 V8 8in. full-range Dual Concentric (DC) loudspeakers; nine CMS601 DC flush-mount loudspeakers; four CMS601 DC BM (blind mount) 6in. flush loudspeakers; nine CMS501 DC 5in. flush loudspeakers; a 110 SR-A active 10in. down-firing amplifier; and eight TS-10C active 10in. subwoofers.

The Ruehl installations also typically include a Rane RPM 88 DSP, three Rane SR 3 smart remotes, four QSC CX404 4-channel power amplifiers, five QSC CX502 2-channel Pas, two QSC CX204V 4-channel 70V Pas, an RDL RU-AEC1 digital-to-analog converter, a Raxxess equipment enclosure, and a Furman PS-8R power sequencer.

Officials at Essential say that in order to maintain the sound consistency of all the installs, they expect the Auralex SubDude isolation platform to remain a staple product in future Ruehl store installations.

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