

DALE KREVENS

Vice President, Tech 21 USA Inc.

By Brian Berk

The Music & Sound Retailer: Who was your greatest influence or mentor and why?

Dale Krevens: I have to go with my parents. I really lucked out in that department. Both were very loving and supportive, and great role models. My mom was quirky, creative, fun, fiercely independent and exceptionally strong in the face of adversity. My dad was a jack-of-all-trades and master at every one of them. He too was creative and fun. He was also very intelligent, a perfectionist and naturally talented in the arts. He could sing, play drums and paint. I didn't get that gene...

The Retailer: What was the best advice you ever received?

Krevens: As a youngster, I was notorious for not "applying myself," according to my teachers. So, my dad said, "If you're going to do something, do it 150 percent." It stuck. On the flip side, the worst advice I ever received was, "Dale, you have to learn how to eat sh#t and like it." Uh, no, don't think so.

The Retailer: What was your first experience with a musical instrument?

Krevens: A flutophone in elementary school. I learned to play "Moon River." I tried violin, only because it was the smallest non-wind instrument to carry. But I was terrible. Really terrible. I took up drums when I was 10 because my brother was in a band that had a female drummer. I thought that was the coolest. After two years, I switched to piano. But it just wasn't for me. So, I threw in the towel and got a sewing machine.

The Retailer: What instrument do you most enjoy playing?

Krevens: If I still played, it would be the drums. I think the real reason I gave it up was because I felt as though my teacher thought I wasn't good enough. In retrospect, I think he had a chip on his shoulder and resented having to teach instead of making it as a rock star. But I was 10 and didn't have the confidence or the insight to try a different teacher.

The Retailer: Tell us something about yourself that others do not know or would be surprised to learn.

Krevens: I never went to college. I learned everything on the fly. My career path was like a pinball machine. I was a hair stylist and salon manager, bartender, waiter, fashion designer, seamstress, ad space salesperson, bookkeeper, advertising account executive and marketing executive. I couldn't decide on a particular career, which is partly why I didn't go to college. Too many things appealed to me, so I kept jumping around. The upside is that it gave me a lot of diverse experiences and skills. Then I met Andrew Barta (inventor of SansAmp and president of Tech 21) in 1986. Andrew completely changed the direction of my life, and I couldn't be happier. Not a day goes by that I don't think about how lucky I am.

The Retailer: What's your favorite activity to do when you're not at work?

Krevens: Hang at the beach! Unfortunately, it's not a year-round activity in New York City. I do go out quite a bit to music venues, in general for my own interests, and also to support our artists when they're in town.

The Retailer: What is the best concert you've ever been to?



Tech 21 president Andrew Barta and Dale Krevens

Krevens: Rammstein at Jones Beach two summers ago. It was spectacularly spectacular. The wardrobe, set designs and pyro were all killer. But, more importantly, the music was invigorating. I don't see them as industrial metal, as that's not really my genre. I think it's misleading because they're so musical.

The Retailer: If you could see any musician, alive or deceased, play a concert for one night, who would it be and why?

Krevens: Satchmo. I saw him at Jones Beach when I was really little and don't remember it. I do remember my mom making me go up to him after the show for his autograph, which I did. The autograph was on a salt water taffy box! Unfortunately, it went MIA over the years. He had such an enormous personality and was an amazing player. Truly one of a kind.

The Retailer: What musician are you hoping to see play in the near future?

Krevens: I'm planning a trip to France so I can see Rammstein again.

The Retailer: What song was most memorable for you throughout your childhood, and what do you remember about it the most?

Krevens: Music was always playing in my house. A lot of big-band stuff like Duke Ellington and Count Basie. But most memorable would have to be "Mr. Sandman." My mom used to play it every night to get me to go to sleep.

The Retailer: What are your favorite songs on your smartphone/iPod?

Krevens: I have nothing on my phone except for U2, which came with the phone and cannot be deleted. I still buy CDs because the artists get more money. I happen to like a very broad range of genres, but the artists I listen to most are King's X, KXM, Rammstein, YYNOT, The Winery Dogs, The Struts, Seal and Phoebe Snow.

The Retailer: What's the most fun thing you saw/did at a NAMM Show?

Krevens: The Spinal Tap concert. It was fun and brilliant at the same time.

The Retailer: If you had to select three people, past or present, to have dinner with, who would they be and what would you ask them?

Krevens: Amelia Earhart: So, what really happened out there? Warren Buffett: What stocks should I buy now? Cary Grant: Will you marry me?

The Retailer: Tell us about your most memorable experience with an MI retailer (without naming them).

Krevens: Catching a dealer gray marketing and violating other rules of conduct. Even though they did substantial business with us, it felt good to give them the boot.

The Retailer: What is the best thing about the MI industry?

Krevens: Same as what everyone else says. The passion. With few exceptions, it is very unusual to have so many buds who are also competitors. It's very rewarding because we're making products that stimulate and inspire players to play their best. It's so satisfying

and gratifying to receive so much positive feedback. I don't think that would happen if we made toothpaste.

The Retailer: Who do you admire most outside of the music industry and why?

Krevens: Jean Paul Gaultier. Fashion is still a huge passion of mine. As a teen, I fancied myself on becoming a famous designer, but once I had a taste of the actual business, I was mortified. Talk about dog-eat-dog. So, I checked out. But I still love the art itself. Gaultier has consistently impressed me and makes me drool.

The Retailer: What technology could change MI down the road?

Krevens: Not a clue. But what I wish for the most is doing a complete overhaul and developing a system of distribution where artists actually get paid what they are due. Seems everyone makes money except for the artists. Getting \$0.0009 for a download is just plain criminal.

The Retailer: If you weren't in the music industry, what would you be doing and why?

Krevens: Making shower curtains. Seriously. The selection is mind-bogglingly bad.

I've actually made my own a few times. I have plenty of designs in my head, just no time to make them.

The Retailer: Tell us about your hometown and why you enjoy living there.

Krevens: New York City! It really is a helluva town. So much to do, so many places to go. There's never a dull moment unless you choose it.

The Retailer: What are your most prized possession(s) and why?

Krevens: A stunning diamond ring I bought when I was broke. My dad, being the co-signer on my credit card, received a notice of non-payment. He covered it and set up a schedule [for me] to pay him back. In my stocking that Christmas, there was my credit card cut up into pieces. That was followed by the ring itself. I was off the hook for the balance! So, it has an extra special place in my heart.

The Retailer: What's your favorite book and why?

Krevens: "Goodnight Moon." I think I read it to my daughter 1,000 times when she was little.