

Retail Lighting: Light Well, Sell Well



LIGHTING HAS ALWAYS PLAYED AN IMPORTANT ROLE WHEN IT COMES TO ENHANCING BRAND VISIBILITY AND INCREASING FOOTFALL IN SHOWROOMS. WITH THE ADVENT OF LEDS AND THE PROSPECTS IT OFFERS, RETAIL STORES HAVE A LOT MORE TO EXPLORE IN TERMS OF LIGHTING WITH AN AIM TO ETCH THEIR NAMES IN THE MINDS OF THEIR CUSTOMERS.

Retail always remains the sunshine industry as far as India is concerned. With such bright prospects, brands behave cautiously to fight the ever growing competition in their efforts to attract customers and grab the largest market share in their respective segments. It is therefore important that they present their brand in the finest possible way, and a part of it is about making their showrooms and outlets eye-catching and attractive for their customers.

In order to do so, attention is given to various aspects of interiors, one of the most important ones being lighting. Visibility is absolutely crucial for any product, and right amount of light at the right spot makes all the difference. No one knows this better than retail outlets which depend on lighting and décor for appealing to customers. They

pay a lot of attention to illumination of the items in their stores and install different types of lighting products according to their specific requirements.

As the retail sector across the country grows by leaps and bounds, the brands are trying hard to beat their rivals at the number game. In order to achieve a greater market share and lift their bottom lines in today's 'Mall Culture', they are investing huge amount of capital in decorating and beautifying their showrooms. A key aspect of this enhancement in the interiors of retail stores is lighting. LED World explores this further.

Booming Retail

India has imprinted its name in the list of emerging nations and is credited for being one the fastest growing economies in the

world. According to World Bank data, India became the world's sixth largest economy in 2017 surpassing France, and is likely to go past the UK which stood at the fifth position. One of the largest contributors of this surge in GDP has been the retail sector, which has seen remarkable growth in the past decade. As per the A.T. Kearney's 2017 Global Retail Development Index, India has overtaken China to grab the top spot in global retail. The country's retail industry is projected to grow from USD 672 billion in 2017 to USD 1.1 trillion in 2020.

A research by India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF) states that retail is India's largest industry, currently accounting for over 10% of the country's GDP and 8% of total employment. Moreover, recent policy changes have further given a fillip to this growth by allowing 100% FDI under the



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Devendra Singh Bhandari
Vice President - Professional Lighting
HPL Electric & Power Ltd

automatic route for single-brand retail trading. The gush of retail wave has mainly been a result of swelling middle class population that is driven by aspirations to maintain a high quality lifestyle. Increasing urbanisation, rising household incomes, connected rural consumers have together contributed to the progression of this sector.

The lighting within the store contributes to a major part of its operating cost, and thus, it is important for managers and light designers to work towards reducing this. With the arrival of LED lighting solutions, this aspect has been taken care of. LEDs help in curbing the energy consumption, while maintaining an inviting and attractive atmosphere. These lights also require low



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Murlidhar Manvi
Chief Operating Officer
Endo India

maintenance and thus, increase the reliability of installations. Moreover, with the advent of intelligent lighting solutions, the luminaries can be controlled in a much better way, and they have carved the path for high level customisation to suit the needs of a particular store.

The Solution Providers

Quite a few lighting companies in India are working in this segment. HPL Electric & Power Ltd., an established electric equipment manufacturing company in India, manufactures a wide range of LED lamps and luminaries at varied wattages. The company was a late entrant in retail lighting segment but has been successful

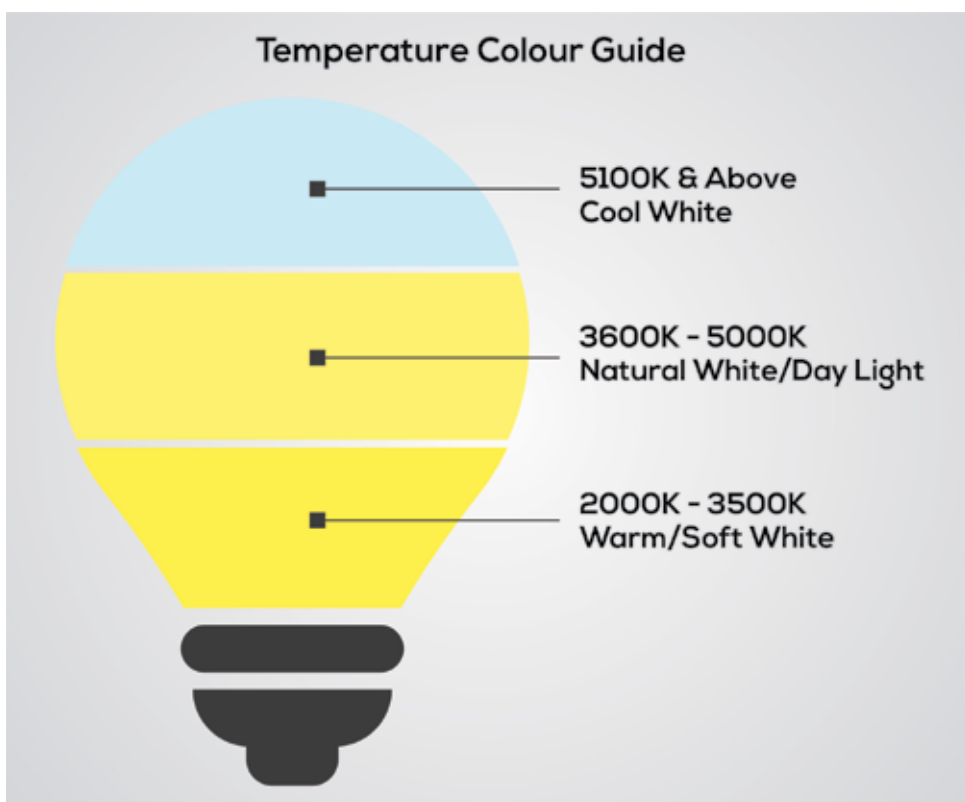


"It is imperative for us to showcase our products in the best possible light to illuminate every detail in intricate designs."

Sheetal Seam
Visual Merchandising Head -
Jewellery Division, Tanishq

in making its presence felt in a short time. **Devendra Singh Bhandari**, Vice President - Professional Lighting, HPL Electric & Power Ltd., says, "We are very well placed in retail lighting segment despite being a late entrant. Lately, we have taken up a lot of projects and have achieved big success. We have worked with Market99 retail chain, BlackBerry showrooms etc. We have also taken up the lighting project for Bharti Airtel experience centres. Recently, our company has set foot in auto showroom lighting as we are in talks with Maruti Suzuki for their Arena showrooms. We are aggressively working towards this, and owing to our credentials, we are confident of bagging this deal. Apart from this, a few showrooms of Suzuki Motorcycles and Hero Motors have been illuminated by us."

Established in 1967, Endo Lighting Corp. boasts of over 3500 products in its portfolio and offers comprehensive lighting solutions for every category, including retail, office spaces, residential spaces, outdoors and industries. Sharing his views on retail lighting, **Murlidhar Manvi**, Chief Operating Officer, Endo India, says, "Globally, retail sector is moving towards application-based lighting to increase the attraction quotient of their merchandise. This stands true across segments like food, apparel, lifestyle products etc. Simultaneously, with the advent of LED, energy saving, consistency and maintenance-free operation have taken the centre stage. These trends are also making inroads in the Indian sub-continent and the retail boom makes India a place of immense opportunities." Endo Lighting offer unique solutions for retail lighting for showrooms across varied segments, such as high-end apparel, automobile, furniture, jewellery etc.





Lighting Done by Endo India

Lighting is The Key!

Indians have always been fashion-conscious and like to follow trends in clothing & accessories. With the entry of foreign brands in the country, their fashion statement has become even more versatile. They like to explore everything new on offer to which brands try hard to cater to the desires of their demanding customers. The first step towards grabbing the attention of shoppers is to make the shop window eye-catching and engaging, wherein lighting becomes vital and most likely inevitable component.

The lights are installed in such a way so as to accentuate the designs and colours of the garment or accessory. They create a pleasant shopping experience, and at the same time help the customer browse through the options. It is said that the first impression is the last too, and thus, shop exteriors and interiors are important to enable conversions and increase customer loyalty. The lights are also required to guide the customers to specific promotional offers. The kind of lighting to be used depends on the section to be illuminated, for instance, brighter lights are required for corners while less bright light works well in other sections.

Light is an important element when it comes to providing the visibility to jewellery. Since these products are small with a lot of intricacies involved, the light that falls on them should make them sparkle from every angle. The customer should be able to see all the detailing on the jewellery pieces in order to make his/her buying decision. The ones displayed on racks should also be illuminated well, making it easy for the customer to choose from the options and decide.

One of the most important points to keep in mind is that the light should always fall at an angle so that it doesn't cast a shadow on the jewellery when a customer leans onto it to have a closer look. A light that offers a slightly yellowish-white glow is perfect for accentuating gold jewellery and reddish or orange gems. For diamonds, sterling silver, platinum and white gold, bright white light is the best choice. The showroom owners have to pay special attention to diamonds as they have a brilliant reflective capacity, and one has to make sure that the right amount of light falls on them at all the right angles.

Commenting on the role of lighting in jewellery showrooms, **Sheetal Seem**, Visual Merchandising Head - Jewellery Division, Tanishq, says, "It is one of the most important features of a jewellery store design. Good lighting design gives our product an edge with its enhanced glitter effect, while minimising the formation of shadows on the product. It is imperative for us to showcase our products in the best possible light to illuminate every detail in intricate designs, which helps the customer to clearly see, understand and appreciate it. Rapid prototyping is the key for us to help decide what light to use and where to use. While the ambient lighting makes the



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Lighting in a Footwear Showroom

statement from longer viewing distances, the product lighting is required when the products are being viewed closely."

Bhandari says, "Lighting is a very vital and essential part of any retail outlet because it is one of the most crucial factors that differentiates a high-end showroom from a low-end one. In big showrooms, the light levels are high and most lighting is scientifically designed. In any retail outlet, the basic objective of lighting is to enhance the quality of product as well as reveal it in its purest form. In regular standalone apparel shops, one has to take the clothes out under the daylight to see what they actually look like as the lighting within doesn't bring out the true colours. Such a thing is not possible in malls and modern showrooms. Thus, lighting has to be perfect so that the customer need not have to worry about making a wrong choice."

Customised Illumination!

The artificial lighting in any retail store can be divided into four major heads – General/

Ambient, Task, Accent and Decorative. This segregation is important for the retail store managers to understand how lighting should be customised to fulfil the requirements of various segments inside the store. It is often a necessity to install different lighting solutions to clearly bring out the differentiation in product categories across the store as well as to highlight the sections that need greater customers' attention. For example, a section offering discount on a particular product range needs to be highlighted well so that the store is able to get rid of its inventory before it becomes outdated. Thus, lighting requirements are different across stores and segments.

General/Ambient Lighting

This kind of lighting is meant for general illumination in the store. It is not intended to highlight anything in particular but it is aimed at providing a bright, cheerful disposition to the store environment. It creates a welcoming ambience and provides visibility to each and every corner of the store. The amount of brightness depends on

the kind of products the brand is offering. For example, a car showroom is illuminated with high power lights as compared to a shoe store that needs medium intensity lighting, while jewellery stores install very bright lights in order to attract customers to their shining ornaments.

Though these lights do not focus on any particular items, they play a crucial role in grabbing the attention of customers and inviting them in to browse through the products. It has a psychological effect as it has been noticed that shoppers are lured by dazzling and colourful ambience of a store, and they tend to ignore low-lit, dull ones. Bright lights also create a sophisticated environment in the store, and give an elite feel to it. This is extremely important for a brand that wants to leave an impression in the minds of its customers. Sloppy interiors and low level of illumination are enough to keep a customer away from exploring the things on offer.

According to Bhandari, "Normally, there are three classifications of customers in the retail segment - high end, mid-end and low end. In the first two categories, a lot of technical people are involved such as architects and project management teams, who usually have in-depth knowledge about the requirements of the showrooms. We work with them and offer them our expertise in this field. We have to pay attention to the design of the lights, lux level, and uniformity. The solutions we give should be the best for showroom as well as its customers. The third category includes low value projects which do not take services of technical experts. Therefore, we provide them with almost everything including products, solutions and information, and also conduct routine maintenance."

Manvi says that the company follows a three dimensional approach - right kind of lighting for right application, sustained energy saving and sustained output and quality over a longer period of time. "Endo embraces energy saving using highly efficient equipment and automation, subtleness in product offerings and flexibility to adapt to changing layouts of new age trends," he asserts adding that Endo clients look for light quality, which is suitable to the very core demand of the application. "Clients look for high CRI products, which showcase the merchandise in natural colours and shows colours more vividly."

Task Lighting and Accent Lighting

This type of lighting is used in areas that require attention, and where some regular activity takes place, such as billing counters, customer care desk, exchange counters, experience zones etc. This is meant for providing guidance to the customers about the location of any particular section meant for human interface or where some 'task' is being performed.

These lights are meant for drawing attention

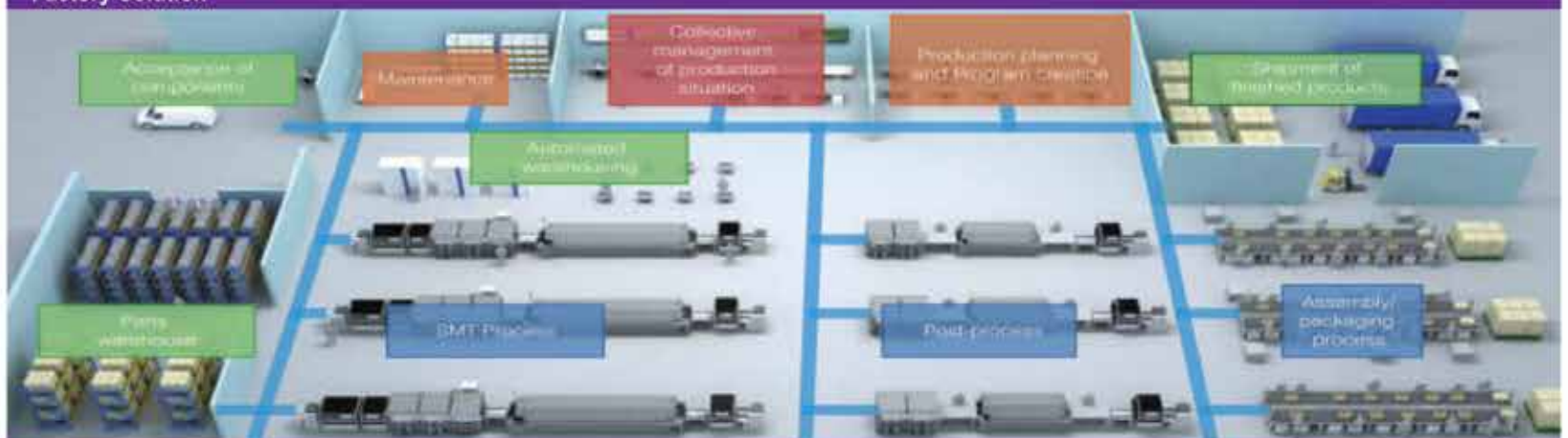


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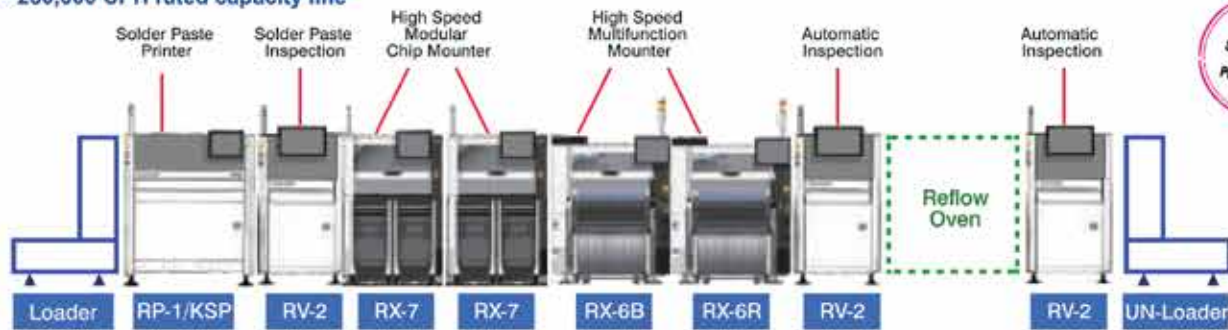
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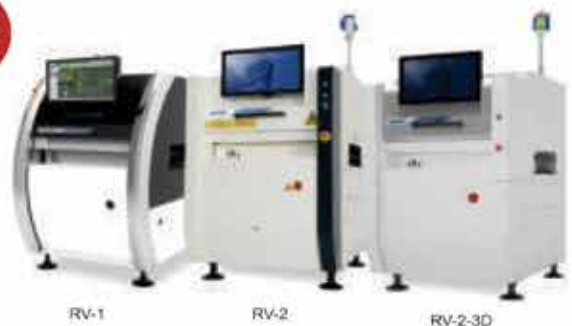
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Lighting Products from HPL

to latest fashion apparel, shoes, jewellery, electronic products, household items etc. that are normally displayed on some highlighted zones within the store or on the mannequins placed at shop windows. It is an important part of shop display and these lights lure customers to explore the latest trends and innovations brought in by that brand.

With LEDs and their intelligent applications, it has become possible to dim or brighten these accent lights as per the colour of clothing. For example, red and orange colours need less amount of light as compared to dull colours like brown and grey. Similarly, white-coloured clothes, cars, shoes, as well as diamond jewellery need white light to bring out their sheen. Gold jewellery needs a decent amount of yellow light to sparkle and reveal its intricate design. Thus, with LEDs, retailers have the freedom to adjust lighting as per their needs, and with its smart versions, they can also change the colour of the light.

Seam says, "The lighting design process we follow can be broadly classified into task, mood and accent lighting; all of which are equally important and serve different purposes. While task lighting mainly focuses on highlighting the merchandise, mood lighting and accent lighting focus on the overall ambience of the store. Task and mood lighting are achieved majorly through simple downlighter fixtures, whereas accent lighting is done using feature elements like chandeliers, Grazers, Wall-washers etc."

Dressing Room Lighting

Dressing rooms are another key area in a store that requires special lighting treatment. It is important that these are well lit-up with luminaries that heighten the features of

the product and make the customer look good in that apparel. The light should be at appropriate angles so that the colours and textures come out well, and the customer is persuaded to buy that product. Most brands prefer to use white lights in their dressing rooms as they bring out the colours really well as compared to yellow, which makes the clothing look pale. Moreover, light should never come from the backside as it makes the apparel look darker.

The experience of a customer within the dressing room can be a big factor for increasing sales. Customers should be able to clearly see the intricate embroidery, embellishments and design of an apparel, which is possible only if there is sufficient lighting. However, not all retailers pay attention to this fact. A lot of them continue using low quality lights, which affects customer satisfaction and sales.

Manvi says, "Consumer education is the biggest challenge, and for this, India needs the presence of more global players like Endo. The response has been encouraging, and slowly but surely, Indian retailers are appreciating the need for such lighting and its impact on their merchandise and economics. We have been getting success across segments such as apparel, jewellery, automotive, hardware etc. Endo Lighting's retail product range is exhaustive and application driven. We architect perfect lighting solutions that dramatise the retail space."

Decorative Lighting

As the name suggests, decorative lighting is used for adding exquisiteness to the interiors of a showroom. It complements the décor and can be customised as per the vibe of the showroom or any of its section. For example,

a tribal or bohemian jewellery section can be illuminated with rustic-style pendant lights, while an ethnic clothing section can be lit up using traditional lamps. Similarly, a car showroom can be illuminated with a classy chandelier.

These types of luminaries create a fancy atmosphere that elevates the image of the brand and allows customers to feel connected with the theme in true sense. Such lights can either hang from the ceiling, put on racks or on stools placed on the floor. Apparel stores make use of these lights in a big way as they have a wide variety of products under one roof. These lights do not affect the colours and textures of products and are only aimed at adding an element of beauty to the store. They have a big role in changing customers' perception of a brand and facilitate creation of a lasting impression.

LEDs Pave the Way for Retail Lighting!

The most versatile innovation in the lighting world - LEDs - might seem like the ideal choice as they offer diversity, efficiency, economy and low maintenance. Besides helping retailers save a lot of money, these light are also extremely customisable as well as easy to install. These apart, LEDs come with a lot of other benefits.

"There are various criteria like illumination, intensity, uniformity, colour temperature, wattage, glare, beam angle etc. for choosing the right lighting driven by the type of merchandise. As a thumb rule, we use lights with higher CT (~5000k) for studded jewellery and lower CT (~3000K) for plain gold category. We use 100% LED fixtures as they are versatile, cost-effective and also



Lighting Project by HPL

reduce the overall carbon footprint of our retail outlets," says Seam.

Speaking on the advantages of using LED lights in showrooms, Bhandari says, "The quality of light plays an important role

in retail lighting. The conventional light sources used to emit a lot of heat and UV rays that used to affect the colour and life of the products in the store. LEDs do not have these problems, and are also the most cost effective. Moreover, conventional light

fixtures had a lot of parts such as mechanical housing, reflectors, electrical console etc. But with LED technology, there are just two parts – LED and electronic driver. Therefore, it provides a lot of flexibility while lighting up a showroom."



Lighting in a Jewellery Showroom

Conclusion

Lighting is one of the most essential aspects on visual merchandising as it helps customers to understand the nitty-gritties of a product and allows him to make a sensible buying decision. It helps brands to create a particular type of image, besides increasing the footfall in their showrooms and pushing up sales. It has been observed that lighting has a direct influence on the mood of the customer. It changes the way customers perceive a brand and this itself adds quality to a product.

More than that, it performs the very basic function of highlighting the interiors of a showroom and quality of the products placed therein. Nowadays, illumination has become a part of interior designing and architecture of the showroom and is not done separately. In today's scenario, there is cut-throat competition in the retail industry, and every brand is trying to keep itself a notch above its rivals. Therefore, making their showrooms attractive is one thing they can work on, and lighting is numero uno on that list.

