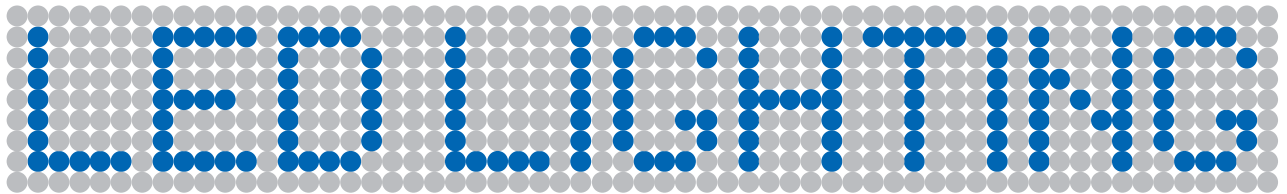


KEY TRENDS IN



FOR THE RETAIL SEGMENT OF THE FUTURE

LED lighting is the next big thing in lighting across the board and specially in the retail segment. Retail segment per se, is highly focused on “appearances” and needless to say, lighting plays possibly the most important role here.

By Sandeep Singh

Creating an environment that is appealing, utilitarian yet well-lit is no mean task and that is only some of the stuff that lighting sector is concentrating on so far as the retail sector is concerned. The sheer number of applications for the segment are mind-boggling and newer innovations are the name of the game rather than “one size fits all”. There are thousands and thousands of lighting products that are available in the markets but the demands of the

sector are never ending and justifiably so, considering the sector is evolving almost as fast as it is growing. Let us look at some of the numbers that are propelling the retail story in India.

As on date, the Retail industry in India is the 5th largest preferred retail destination with highest per capita retail store availability and with development taking place across the cities along with tier 1 and tier 2 and tier 3 cities it is expected to grow to US\$ 1.3 trillion by 2020, registering a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 16.7 per cent over 2015-20. It is expected that Indian retail industry will be amongst the top three globally and therefore



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it is no surprise that the sector has started to demand constant updation and innovation, specially from the lighting sector.

Lighting is the critical component that can make the difference between a great store and an ordinary store. It is the first step to a customer becoming a buyer. A well-lit store is something that beckons a casual passerby and highlights the salient points of the merchandise. It is a well known fact that the while lighting provides the “visibility”, it can help enrich the overall experience by showcasing and highlighting the setting, experience and ambiance of the store. Making an ordinary element “extraordinary” is another aspect of optimally utilizing focused lighting and there are a large number of specialized lighting products that are used to highlight and elevate this very aspect. It is also scientifically proven that using different colour spectrums can actually change the “mood” of the store from the “energetic” to the “sublime”. Effective lighting can not just increase the foot-falls but can also effectively influence buying decisions.

At the same time it is important to use lighting product that reflect true color rendering of the items displayed so that the consumer is able to choose options as per their liking/taste..

There is no argument today that LEDs are the lamps for the years to come. The sheer values, in terms of aesthetics, pliability, speed of innovation, types of products available, makes it an amazing

technology. And added with the huge reductions in the energy bills as well as carbon footprint, makes it a stellar winning combination.

Interestingly, retail category as a segment has a huge number of constituents, there are differentiations made on the basis of the type of stores (Supermarkets, standalone stores, boutiques, malls, hypermarts, etc.), the product categories (Pharmacies, apparel stores, Jewellery Stores, Food Stores, etc.) and the distinct lighting types for the environment (Product lighting and lighting of floor spaces).

Retail lighting plans typically should be built on four illumination types: accent lighting, ambient lighting, shelf lighting and feature lighting. There are numerous applications and solutions available for each and it is mostly a judicious mix of these that makes the complete package.

Retail store lighting is witnessing a trend toward lower ambient and higher contrast levels. In addition, Accent lighting that has a broad spectrum, highlights merchandise and people alike, can lead to energy cost savings. Ambient lighting actually heightens the customer experience and their sense of comfort and focus. This is becoming the norm rather than the exception in big format stores as against accent lighting. Accent lighting is being used more and more for displays and is used in stores like





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boutiques, art galleries, accessory stores - typically small format stores. Accent lighting highlights product shapes, colour, styling, and can change the complete focus of the store and showcase/highlight the most unique aspects/parts of it.

The lighting typically depends on the category as well as the amount of time that the customer spends in the store as well as the product category. Retail lighting requires very specific products for specific applications and LED lighting today has the capability of delivering across verticals.

One of the main benefits of LED lighting for the retail segment is

the “directional” lighting provided by the LED lamps – These act as highlighters, focus on displays/key products, allow for even lighting distribution as well as enhance the viewing experience. Another aspect of lighting is dimmability that allows for specific applications for the sector. A variety of colour temperatures add to the different segments of use – A hypermart or a supermart may use cool colours but a boutique of jewellery showroom will use warm colours to highlight the product. LEDs offer the versatility for the retail segment to choose the products that are best suited to their offering.

The IHS’s study of the retail spaces in the global arena states that In the \$17.6 billion retail market this year, the key requirement is to light the product - not the space -to increase sales. Food, clothing and many other items require a high colour-rendering index. The report states that “the three most important factors of successful lighting are the right amount of lumens, the right placement of the lights and the right light colour”.

Some of the key trends that are visible across the segment is the increased usage of lighting controls and photosensors to reduce energy wastage.

Whatever the requirement for the retail spaces, be it signages or displays, architectural lighting or floor space lighting, indoor or outdoor lighting, ambient or accent lighting, LEDs have a plethora of exciting options available for retailers to choose from. And each day brings in newer products that are more technologically superior than the earlier ones. Infact the retail segment is quite spoilt for choice when it comes to the lighting segment and the LED technology is here to stay for the foreseeable future. **R**



About the author:
Sandeep Singh is CMO at NTL Lemnis