

## Chetan Illuminating Designer Potential

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Photo by Steve Hall/Hedrich Blessing

When entering a space—whether it's a busy office building or a five-star hotel lobby—you are immediately met with an array of visual elements that tease the senses. What many may not realize is that lighting is one of the most crucial contributors in impacting the look and feel of a space.

By understanding the function of a space and its various architectural elements, designers can move from simply providing sufficient illumination toward implementing multifaceted and textured lighting solutions that enhance the lighted environment. To determine the most appropriate lighting sources, it is necessary to consider not only the task being performed in the space and its surrounding aesthetics, but also energy and cost savings, installation needs, and ongoing maintenance.

### Variety is the Spice of Light

Diversity is key. Selecting varied lighting sources or mixed-source lighting helps to create depth and dimension within an area, increasing its visual appeal. Mixing general illumination with wall-washing applications and accent lighting can help to achieve a greater optical impact as well as better highlight the area's specific requirements and functions.

An example of this is seen in the Bank of America project in Charlotte, N.C., designed by Perkins + Will and lighting designer SBLD studios of New York. The lighting designer incorporated square bevel downlights to give it a fresh, modern look and achieved an interesting balance of illumination by layering the downlights with an indirect fluorescent uplight, wall-wash fixtures, cove lighting and a handsome decorative pendant

Be mindful of daylight's contribution to the space. Another crucial and sometimes overlooked component in determining proper illumination levels is the assessment of ambient light within a space. Understanding how the presence of natural light interacts with the various surfaces throughout the area, designers can effectively harvest daylight and properly integrate it with lighting control systems to not only improve upon the visual appeal of a space but also increase energy savings.

### Sustainable Options for the Environment – and Your Wallet

With an increasing demand for energy-efficient technologies that reduce energy consumption and adhere to energy codes and ASHRAE standards, more and more designers are turning to LED (light emitting diodes) or solid state lighting, which use anywhere from 2 to 20 watts of electricity and cut energy consumption by more than 30 to 50 percent. However, other lighting options that provide comparable energy savings should not be overlooked, including ceramic metal halide and compact fluorescent. Even low-voltage incandescent halogen offers considerable opportunity for dramatic lighting design and superb energy-savings potential when incorporated with a lighting control system.

Designers can also save energy by utilizing the existing elements of a space to save energy. For example, if a room has a substantial amount of glass, leverage the available natural light and consider coupling this element with low-voltage or cove lighting—indirect lighting sources built into walls, ledges or valences within a room—as these sources require much less energy. Selecting materials that reflect light is another effective method to move light about a space without implementing additional lighting.

### Cut Costs – Not Performance

In today's economy, cost savings is a key consideration in lighting specification. It's not uncommon during the course of a project's lifespan for the original intent of a given space to change. Unfortunately, if lighting sources have already been installed, completely redesigning, or dismantling fixtures can be a costly process.

When sourcing for a commercial building that is likely to experience various and diverse corporate tenants throughout the years, plug-and-play lighting options should be considered. This option enables the end-user to more easily maintain the fixture or even switch the fixture's function between downlight, wall wash, or adjustable at a later point in time. Certain products even allow the end-user to convert one lighting source effortlessly to another, providing increased lighting flexibility and decreasing the likelihood to completely renovate a lighted area.

Recognizing that what goes in above the ceiling is just as important as what goes beneath it, designers have the ability to select the most appropriate and cost-effective illumination and creative design lighting sources that will increase visual appeal and decrease excess energy consumption— all helping to shine the best possible light on a space and its occupants.

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