

\* ----- LIGHTING ----- \*

# LIKE MOTHS TO A FLAME ...

When it comes to boosting turnover, most retailers focus on marketing and sales training. While these are important, many forget the power of light and how it can be used to attract customers into shops and dramatically increase the chances of them buying products.



**B**y designing a lighting system for a retail store in a similar way to a theatrical performance, turnover can grow dramatically. The shop interior becomes a theatrical space with displayed products, store staff and customers all taking a role in the performance.

Just as people's perceptions of a space in the theatre can change through the use of light, the same thing occurs in retail outlets.

If the lighting was not up to scratch in shows like *Les Miserables*, it would never attract the people it does. The same applies in the retail world. If lighting does not highlight merchandise in a way that creates an emotional reaction in the customer, far fewer products will get sold.

I've seen retailers increase their turnovers dramatically when they change the design of their lights to reflect this. In a nutshell, there are two major things that lead to these results. Firstly, it's about creating an attractive space that customers are drawn to. Moths are drawn to any light, but humans are far more discerning. For them, the light needs to be warm, inviting and of a particular intensity. This is no different to the theatre.

The second thing that keeps the cash registers busy is the importance of focusing the in-store lighting specifically on the products – with a colour temperature and intensity that creates the emotional response I have just mentioned. Light in the theatre focuses on performers, but in retail stores it should focus on the merchandise.

When this emotional response is activated, moods lift. In the theatrical production, audience members sit back and enjoy the production while, in the store, the customer is more likely to purchase the product.

Another example of this emotional response often happens to

“Light in the theatre focuses on performers, but in retail stores it should focus on the merchandise.”

people when a dark day is suddenly broken by the sun coming out. People's moods lift and they are far more likely to act. This is the same reaction retailers should be looking for when highlighting the products they want to sell. They want customers to see the beautifully-lit products, experience the emotional response and make a purchase.



**Above** The Contemporary Lounge in Ballantynes, Christchurch. Lighting by Kevin Cawley.

**Left** Crabtree & Evelyn's beautiful lit store in Auckland's Newmarket.

**Opposite** Lighting should focus on the merchandise and create an emotive response in the customer.

These elements are vital for high-fashion stores and jewellers.

Other types of stores may require a different approach. For example, a store selling a unique product may wish to use 'effect' lighting such as having its logo shown in moving light around its entrance. This could be used to highlight a point of difference.

But, for many retailers, this would not fit their brand.

A convenience store may want to use 'cool temperature' lighting to encourage people to buy their products and move through the shop quickly.

But for high-fashion stores and jewellers, the approach should follow

lighting. The rest of the shop should be lit less intensely because the focus should always be on what the store owners want to sell.

This is similar to the theatre where the lighting will always focus where the directors want people to look.

“Many fashion stores make the mistake of having the same lighting intensity throughout [the floor space] ...”

the theatrical performance. As a general rule, products in windows should be of the highest lighting intensity to attract customers; the back of the store and all the merchandise in the store should be almost as strong as the window

Many fashion stores make the mistake of having the same lighting intensity throughout, including in the windows. This fails to invite potential buyers into the store in the first place by neglecting to create a moth-to-light feel.



**Above** Devonport Chocolate display designed by Jake from Firefly Design. Picture by Bright Light.

**Below** Colour-changing, RGB ribbon lighting for a home theatre by Bright Light.





# WHY USE LEDS?

**L**ED lighting represents one of the fastest developing technologies. Nearly 40 years after its inception, LED is finally becoming a mainstream light source. LEDs allow you to create flexible, low energy lighting solutions, not to mention their lower maintenance costs and longer life span.

Lighting is an integral part of the business strategy of successful retail stores. It can provide a wide range of effects and contribute to the overall positive shopping experience. There are many benefits to using LED lighting solutions in a retail environment, including energy savings, lower maintenance costs and more effective illumination on products.

In addition to a much longer lifespan, LED lighting allows energy savings of up to 75 per cent from conventional incandescent lighting.

LED lighting is commonly used in food applications as it does not emit any UV light and helps safeguard against any potential damage to fresh goods and fruits resulting from exposure to UV light.

Just because LED lighting brings energy savings and lower maintenance cost and is great for the environment does not mean you have to sacrifice aesthetics or look. LED lighting now gives you an equivalent output of light with the same vibrant look on products that are being displayed in a retail setting.

With LED lighting you can be more creative since it allows more flexibility with beam control, lumen output and colour temperature.

Wide beam angle LED lightings can create uniform brightness and even light spread which is perfect for creating a warm atmosphere.

On the other hand, narrow beam angles are ideal for directional lighting which is great for highlighting objects. Overall, in retail applications, LED lighting will allow you to

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deliver focused, high-efficiency and high colour rendering light for creating emphasis on merchandise.

Creative use of LED lighting can provide a wide range of lighting effects that creates the perfect retail environment and enhances the overall shopping experience. ■

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This means that the people who do make it through the door don't have anything specific to focus on. If open spaces have the same strength and colour of light as the merchandise the owners most want to sell, the chances of moving that stock fall dramatically.

“If open spaces instore have the same strength and colour of light as the merchandise ... the chances of moving that stock fall dramatically.”

But if that merchandise is the focal point of light, the customers' eyes will be dragged towards it, increasing their chances of purchasing.

### Flexible

A vital element in making this all possible and raising bottom lines is

the need for flexible systems. These allow fixtures in ceilings to tilt up to 90° at different intensities and colour temperatures. The technology for these is of a similar price to fixed options.

This flexibility lets retailers continually change their displays

without losing the valuable lighting effects on them. Those who understand this, and change their lighting as displays change, see dramatic increases in turnover.

The power of light is so valuable to retailers as a selling tactic that I've seen owners raise their turnovers by huge margins when they have

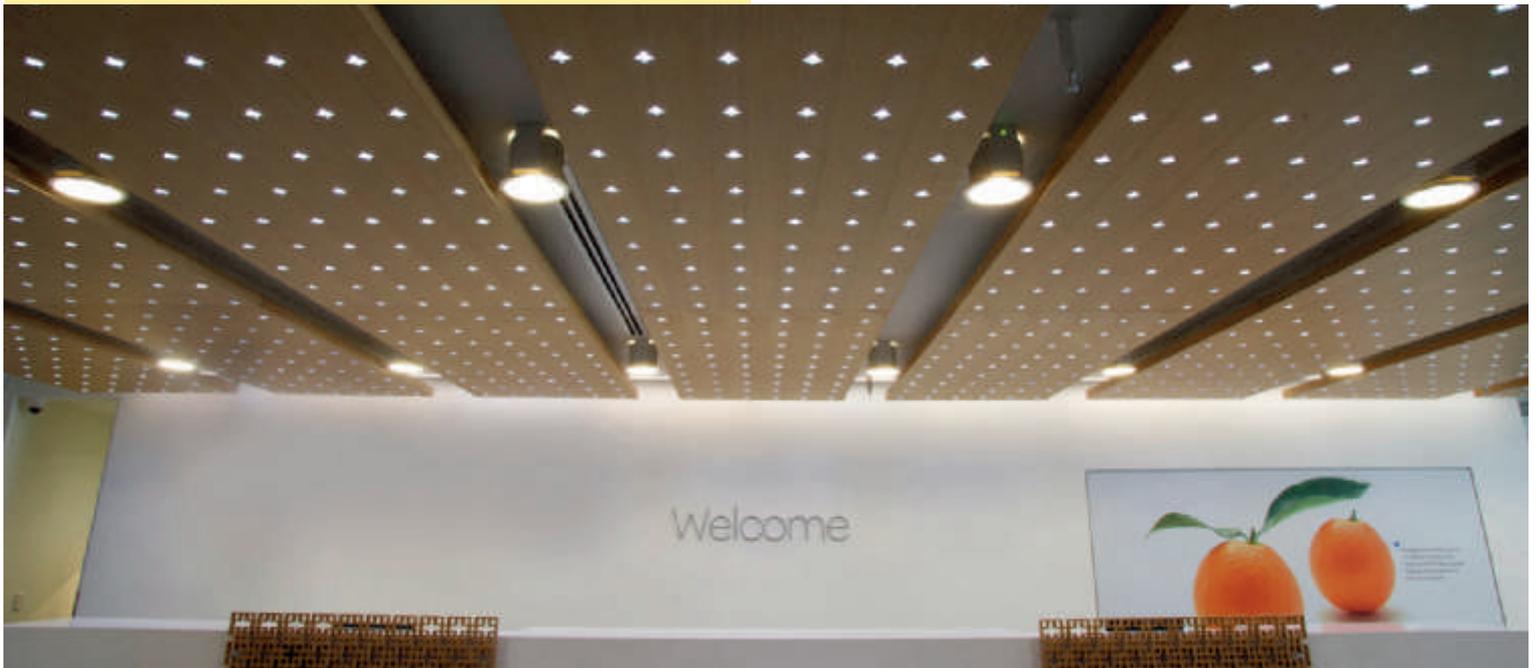
changed their lighting – and done nothing else.

But at the other end of the scale, it's not uncommon to walk into a shop and see the same things in the same place as they were five years ago. Others have the lighting all set up but, because it's not flexible, it no longer highlights the products on display effectively. Imagine watching *Les Miserables* with the lighting fixed on one spot for the entire performance.



**Right** Fuze interior reception desk designed by Bright Light.

**Below** A beautifully illuminated signage module by Bright Light.



Lighting is a subliminal experience and must be used in a discreet way. If the lighting is doing its job properly, every pool of light should be a mini cash register for the retailer.

To maximise the value of lighting to increase turnover, retailers must have flexible systems and learn how to manage them properly.

The benefits of using light correctly in retail are overwhelming. Those that know the secrets and use them in their stores gain huge

mileage. It may be something that doesn't immediately spring to mind when owners look for ways to grow their customer conversion rates.

But those that use lighting design properly are never disappointed. ■



By **Kevin Cawley**, an award-winning, independent lighting designer. He is based in Christchurch and has clients across the world. He can be contacted through his website at: [www.lightingdesign.co.nz](http://www.lightingdesign.co.nz)



**Above** By focusing on the colourful liquor bottles, this creates a dramatic effect in a social setting. Photo by Bright Light.

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