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Design*

OWNERS

- Can offer “free rein” regarding aesthetics
- Residential owners may need to be educated

ARCHITECTS

- Changing their pre-conceived notions can be a challenge

Working with an owner, facility manager, or architect each has its advantages and disadvantages.

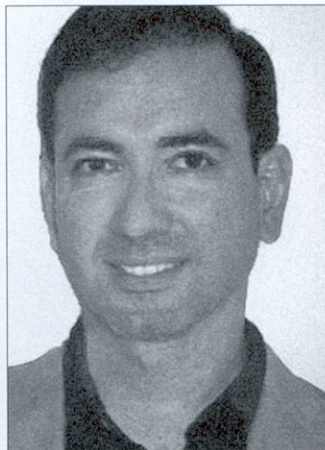
In general, many clients think of choosing fixtures first and not the areas and tasks that are to be lit and their order of importance. I try to break that notion and work counter to that sequence.

An architect is essentially a generalist who has a vision. He is like an orchestra conductor and composer at the same time. He/she would like to do everything him/herself but can't. He/she will do the basic

designs and schematics. The architect needs to bring in specialists of various disciplines and coordinate them to achieve the common goal.

One type of conflict is placement of fixtures to meet geometric criteria, which can be at odds with the best lighting performance. I usually work with them to break pre-conceived notions, explore different lighting themes to make sure the functional aspects of a project come together, while keeping the essence of the space.

In one example, I asked the



architect the theme she wanted in lighting an exterior courtyard. Do we have the ambience of an Edwardian London streetscape at night, or the festive Tivoli Gardens of Copenhagen? Either solution would still meet IES criteria for light levels and glare control.

Facility managers, meanwhile, are not always visually oriented. Many come in with energy, maintenance and task issues. The lighting designer is often given free rein for the aesthetics. Often in an industrial environment, the tasks are most critical; the lighting scheme and fixture pattern has to “design itself.” The result is usually an ordinary space with extraordinary illumination. The good aesthetics result from designing for pure function. If the engineering and planning is ordered and coherent, the visual order will result. The lighting look remains timeless since there

are no contrived styles.

One facility manager, who had previously used ESCOs and was hiring a lighting designer for the first time, was very pleased with the spatial aesthetics going from a “prison yard to a Cathedral [sic]” yet maintaining very low watts per square foot. The job won both an EPA Energy Star Award and an IIDA Honorable Mention.

When working with owners on residential projects, personal life dynamics that have nothing to do with the design often come into play. The biggest difficulty is to educate them that decorative fixtures are the lighting “to look at,” not the lighting “to see by.” Often, a house renovation, or brand new house results from life station changes. Living pattern analysis plays a key role here.

I took one client to a lighting lab. We looked at a vignette of a den with all the functional lighting turned on and the glare bomb off. We then turned off all the shelf lighting, up lighting, wall wash and just turned on the decorative glare bomb. The client was amazed at how the space visually died and now fully understands the importance of the functional/invisible lighting, and that the chandelier is unnecessary.

Overall, though, the success of a lighting job has more to do with the individual client rather than the position they hold.

David D. Rodstein LC, Member IESNA (1987), is the principal of Rodstein Design, which concentrates on fixture design, lighting design, and product strategy in the lighting field. He has held full time design positions with Lightolier, The Pace Collection and Simkar Lighting.

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Many architects have a pre-conceived vision in mind of how a space should be lit, and have decided the type of fixtures that are the appropriate style. It is rare to get tabula