

FINE TUNING

As well as zoning and wayfinding, lighting can have a profound effect on the customers' in-store experience and their emotional response, from the window displays to the fitting rooms.

Text: Lyndsey Dennis

Colour temperature is very important in creating atmosphere in-store and driving sales. Get it wrong and it can put off potential customers: do it well and the products look more attractive and sales can increase.

At Light + Building in Frankfurt last month, Atrium launched its colour tunable TILE, the latest lighting component to the Cooledge portfolio. Colour temperature control allows architects and designers to make light feel more natural and create drama in retail and hospitality environments.

'As we see more "interior skylights" being designed into retail and hospitality environments, it's clear there's a growing need for luminous surfaces to mimic the quality of light we get from the sun. The ability to control colour temperature as well as light output has become essential,' says Philippe Schick, vice president of product management at Cooledge.

Comprising four ranges, Cooledge can be used in ceiling, wall, display and perimeter lighting on virtually any surface, giving architects and designers the control to integrate the light exactly where it's needed.

'In the UK, many retailers use natural white 4,000K for a bright look, or a warmer 3,000K for a more classy look. The colour temperature sets the atmosphere for the store,' says Rob Jerams, managing director of BÄRO Lighting (UK).

He says the biggest issue with LEDs is they can be very poor at bringing red colours out. Red is an important colour as it is in many food items, skin tones and, of course, clothing. Failure to bring out red tones can make shops look ghostly and products faded or washed out. BÄRO has mastered this effect in LED lighting through careful design of the LED manufactured for itself to bring slightly over saturated red tones to retail and make colours stand out.

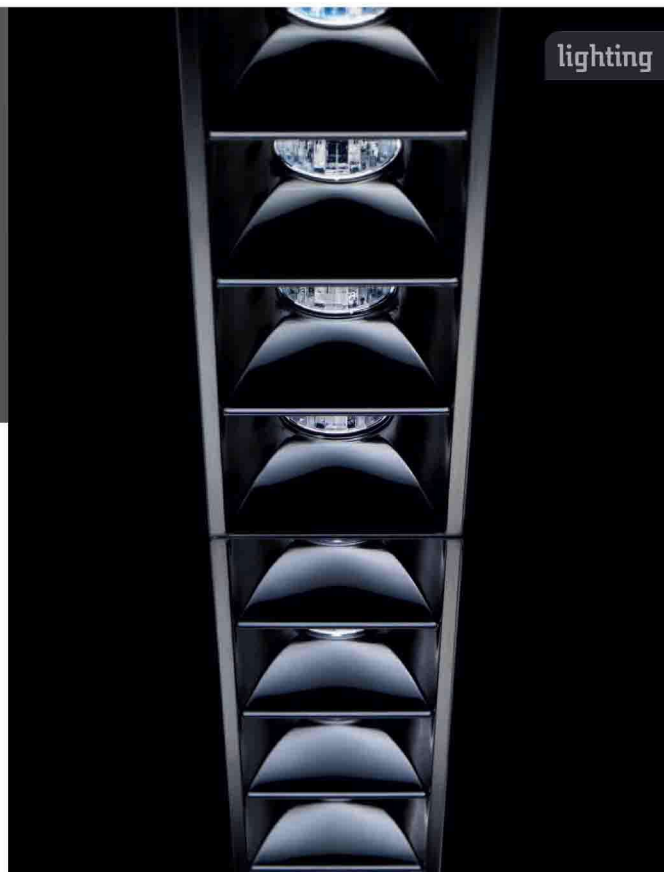
'We buy with our eyes. Lighting in retail is used to calm people and create a luxury look with warm lighting colours, and bright white lighting colours to wake people up. Lighting intensity and colour can then be used to emphasise sales areas, products, etc,' continues Jeram.

'Research shows that varying the colour temperature across the store and in line with the products being illuminated has a positive effect on customer satisfaction,' says Giorgio Pierini, design liaison manager at iGuzzini UK.

Pierini says the colour temperature must be defined by the product it is illuminating. 'This is easily achievable now that tuneable white LED products are widely available. This allows retailers to tune the colour temperature to an optimum level for the merchandise without changing the luminaire or compromising the location of the display.'

iGuzzini's Laser Blade range comes in various sizes and lumen outputs with CRI >90 Ra. This discreet luminaire also provides the perception of being invisible, ensuring the focus remains on the merchandise. A vast range of colours allow retailers to customise their store designs right up to the frame of the luminaires.

'Luxury brands tend to side with warmer tones, ample contrast with accent lighting and luminaires that provide superior visual comfort,' explains Pierini. 'On the other hand, mass market retailers prefer cooler temperatures and comparatively flat lighting. The luxury brands want their spaces to be inviting and to exude a sense



Above: iGuzzini's discreet Laser Blade luminaire provides the perception of being invisible, ensuring the focus remains on the merchandise.

Below: Colour temperature played an important part in the lighting scheme at William & Son, Mayfair by Nulty+

Photography: James French

Bottom right: Atrium launched its colour tunable TILE at Light + Building last month.



Right: Ligeo SL structure-based light system.

Bottom left: BÄRO Lighting used saturated colours at Gloucester Services to bring out the saturated colours of clothing, food and other items.

Bottom: Shoplight used a warm white (3,000K) light source at T2 in Westfield London, which makes the warm colours of the packaging appear really vibrant and encourages dwell time in store.

of warmth, inviting the customer to spend as much time on the shop floor as possible. On the other hand, a fast fashion retailer's primary objective is to increase the footfall per day.'

Emilio Hernandez, associate at lighting design firm Nulty+, says colour temperature is closely linked with the quality of light and our sense of vibrancy and calm within a space. 'It can be used to good effect to differentiate between areas such as entrance lobbies or retail points. Warmer lighting can be more conducive to increasing dwell time so pause points or rest areas within retail spaces may benefit from this, with more neutral temperatures being used over merchandise stands where the product is likely to change often.'

'Too much light or poorly controlled light sources make spaces uncomfortable and will discourage people from staying in a particular location for too long,' says Hernandez. 'Although, this can be desirable in some retail environments as it encourages people to move through certain areas, or to grab their attention at entrance points. It is, however, important to balance this with more subtle lighting in adjacent areas to encourage shoppers to dwell at certain points.'

Mark Shortland, managing director of Shoplight, agrees: 'The colour temperature of lighting plays a large part in our perception of a retail store and the retailer's products. Too warm and a value-driven retailer may appear opulent and expensive; too cold and a luxury retailer may be perceived as cheap and uninviting.'

Shortland says in most cases high street retailers would choose a warm white such as 3,000K as it provides the best compromise between these factors due to the changing colours of the merchandise depending on the season (particularly with fashion retailers). 'With new LED innovations such as tuneable white light, this compromise need no longer occur as tuneable white fittings [such as Shoplight's Elys and Avior] allow retailers to change the colour temperature of individual light sources from 2,700K up to 5,700K, resulting in the best colour temperature throughout the year irrespective of the seasonal changes in merchandise colour.'

The fitting room in particular is an important area where lighting can have an impact. 'Skin tones must also be considered when we look at colour temperature: the cooler the light source the more our skin tone will appear less healthy, which will have a negative impact on sales,' he says.

'If retail stores have to increasingly deliver an experience in order to survive, then lighting will be one of the major tools at a retailer's disposal to engage with, communicate to and ultimately retain their customers,' concludes Shortland. **RF**



Light + Building highlights, by Nulty+

Xicato Beauty Series

The Xicato Beauty Series module was developed in direct response to research undertaken by Nulty+ and University College London, which was supported by Xicato. It was developed after extensive research by lighting designers, Claire Hamill and Anna Sandgren to find a light source that best represents the different colours of skin tones particularly within the cosmetics industry, while improving the quality of light for consumers and creating a flawless brand experience in store.

Ligeo SL

Ligeo, a small start-up from Germany, presented its clever structure-based light system. The simple system is ideal for retail installations as it gives architects and interior designers a versatile solution to create graphic light art structures for decorative branding and functional lighting solutions. The system uses a simple plug and play connection, which makes it easy to plan and simple to install. It's a playful product perfect for imaginative retail installations.

Flos UT Spot

A range of track-mounted LED spotlights with a refined and discrete design. They are specially conceived for retail application where light quality, flexibility and lumen output is required within a sleek minimal interior design.

