

More on the Importance of Lighting

Lighting can add depth and dimension to an otherwise Plain Jane display. That's especially important in today's ultra competitive trade show environment where often times there are far too many displays to allow attendees to visit each and every one. No only are you competing with other booths, you are also competing with food stands, activities on the center stage, and a generally noisy atmosphere. While loud music and intermittent announcements over the audio system can be distracting, it is a scientific fact that light travels faster than sound. Combined with an attractive display, lighting can help you make a first impression on trade show attendees whose senses may be overwhelmed with the sights and sounds at a bustling event.

The general rule of thumb in design is to grab the viewer's attention within five seconds. If you can't communicate your message concisely and quickly, then you may forever lose the opportunity. There are several design elements that play into the five-second rule, but lighting is the icing on the proverbial cake. Even the most effective design can get lost in a chaotic environment. But the proper lighting can help focus a viewer's attention first to the booth and second to the marketing message.

More from Lightswitch's Howard Werner

Werner says the use of lighting is so important because it helps to create a dynamic, exciting and inclusive experience for today's demanding audiences. But that means different things for different clients. Lightswitch has been lighting Apple Computer's trade show exhibits for the past decade. Werner says Apple wants clean and simple lighting. The goal is to highlight the product, not distract visitors. Werner says the strategy is much different for videogame giant Nintendo. The goal there is to program lighting in synch with music and video events. That means projecting color custom lights onto the booth. A color changing tunnel entrance instantly attracted guests to Nintendo's exhibit.

Whether it's a dramatic presentation or just a simple display, Werner says lighting is equally as important to the overall success of an event. Exhibit managers, he adds, can achieve many different lighting looks with the same equipment. The task is to determine the appropriate level of lighting. Some companies, like Apple, just need flat, even lighting on the products. Other companies, like Nintendo, need color and motion in a dynamic lighting scheme. Lighting designers can collaborate with exhibit designers to help companies get the biggest bang for their buck.

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