

LIGHTING NEWS LETTER

a periodic newsletter on lighting design issues

Vol. 1, No. 5, August 2003

STEFAN GRAF OF ILLUMINART IS INTERVIEWED TO REVEAL NEW INFORMATION TO THE EXHIBIT INDUSTRY ON THE TOPIC OF LIGHTING....

Q: What lighting topics do you think exhibit managers will find most interesting early in this season?

A: I have been providing a power point presentation to exhibit managers recently that discusses issues of lighting, and there were two topics that received the most comment. One cleared up questions on the 'color of light' and the other raised questions on 'lighting and liability.'

Q: Lets start with the color issue. It sounds more fun. What was in the presentation that discusses color?

A: I compared both the color of light and the related costs of using the more recently popular "daylight" lights vs. a more conventional quartz spot for lighting cars.

Q: What do you mean by color of light?

A: There are 2 basic types of lights used in lighting car shows. Some make the vehicles and exhibit look "cool" like day light, and another makes them look "warmer" like the lighting found in a typical upscale department store. The daylight color has become very popular in the past 4 years. Some call it the "euro-look", as the German companies were the first to use it.

Q: Is daylight color better than quartz lighting?

A: No, but this is a very subjective question. It is like asking if a pink wall is better than a blue wall. It depends on who's looking at it. Daylight is being promoted as a "better" source by some, but in fact, quartz lights do a great job lighting cars and they cost much less to use.

Q: Isn't daylight the preferred method of lighting car shows?

A: It really comes down to an issue of style, appearance and personal preference. The cooler light creates a definite brand image in an exhibit space, compared to warmer quartz lights. Both work very well however. Last year in Detroit, Ferrari was lighted with all quartz lighting. Ferrari was positioned in the middle of other exhibits all lighted with daylights, and as a result Ferrari looked distinctively different from the other exhibits. It was bright, warmer, the red cars looked better with the quartz lighting, and their costs were lower.

Q: What are the cost differences of renting quartz lighting vs. daylights?

A: About 4 to 1. Let me make a relative comparison. You can verify this with a rental company. A quartz light rents for about \$15 to \$25 per week each. A daylight fixture rents for \$75 to \$110 per week each. Now, a daylight fixture produces more light than quartz light. You can light a car very nicely using 4 daylight fixtures. Using quartz light to achieve similar brightness, you may need 6 fixtures. You can do the math. There is a savings when using quartz lighting. This is very important to know for those with budget considerations.

Q: Some say that the press or public prefer daylight lights.

A: Daylights may prove to be the best choice if you are lighting an exhibit in an area where there is natural light contribution from windows or skylights. In most cases however, the press can get good images with either quartz or daylight. They use automatic color balancing on their cameras. The general public does not perceive the difference in color unless someone was to point it out to them.

Q: Do daylight lights make colors appear more natural?

A: Only if you are lighting a car in a room with sunlight contribution. The human eye adapts quickly to color shifts and sees color well under both daylight and quartz light. Both have what the industry calls a high CRI (color rendering index). In fact, the quartz lights make warm colors (reds, yellow, maroon, and peach) look more appealing than the cooler daylights. Daylight should be mixed with quartz light when lighting warm color cars to improve color perception of paint finishes.

Q: You mentioned something in your previous newsletter about color and moving lights.

A: Yes. Automated lighting is not only much less efficient and much more expensive to use than non-automated lights, they often render color more poorly. There are lenses in many moving lights that can cause color shift creating a greenish cast. If color rendering accuracy is important, try to avoid using automated lighting unless you do a side by side mockup to see the color difference and then approve it. Another potential problem with daylight lamps is that there are 2 types. The longer life lamp, the MSD lamp, has a very poor color rendering of 65, the MSR lamps have a better color rendering of 90. It is important to specify the MSR lamp for better color.

Q: So, what color of light do you recommend?

A: I recommend that a demonstration be set up and have the exhibit team choose what is best for their brand and budget. We did a demonstration 4 years ago for Mercedes Benz NA at the New York Auto Show. We lighted 3 cars with daylights on one circuit and also with quartz light on a second circuit so we could switch quickly between the 2 sources. After some deliberation, everyone agreed that they liked the quartz lighting better. It made the cars finishes look good and was a better choice for their exhibit, as it helped enhance the warmth of the wood floors. Your mockup may yield a different opinion.

Q: Now, what about this issue of lighting and liability?

A: 2 years ago the Detroit International Auto Show introduced a new show rule that requires exhibits with a scrim ceiling cover to provide emergency lighting in the event of a power failure. Imagine the panic should the power go out and the lights turn off when the show is crowded with people. The tragedy in Chicago at the night club last year where many people were killed and injured running for the exits underscores the importance of safety. The public awareness since 9/11 is also a factor.

Q: Doesn't the hall emergency lighting provide adequate illumination?

A: Usually not, as it is above the scrim ceilings. We pointed this out to our client, Volvo. They immediately responded and had us design a battery backup emergency lighting plan for them in Detroit. The folks in charge at Cobo Hall from Johnson Controls said it should be a standard for all exhibits using ceiling scrims. They were very impressed.

Q: What did Illuminart do that worked so well for Volvo?

A: We engineered and specified the emergency lighting system to provide the minimum foot candles to meet code. We have the computer programs and experience from our architectural lighting projects. We then specified a modified emergency lighting package that was easy to ship, install and remove, saving hall labor costs.

Q: I expect you will offer this service to other exhibitors this year also?

A: Yes. Safety is an important consideration and because of our lighting experience in architectural projects, we can design a system to meet local and national code requirements.

Q: Thank you, we look forward to your next news letter.



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