

Why Wal-Mart Shines Brighter

Submitted By Day-Brite Lighting

Most retail chains have standard regulations on the presentation of their facilities. Décor maintains a look and feel of a retailer's identity, while providing customer satisfaction. Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., which is consistently upgrading its customer-oriented standards, knows that store design is all about presentation – the reason why the company demands bright and clean stores.

Founded by Sam Walton in 1962, Wal-Mart employs more than 885,000 associates in some 3,000 stores and offices across the United States and more than 1,000 stores internationally. It's this planet's most profitable retail chain. Keys are high value and low prices, in a warm, welcome atmosphere.

To augment that atmosphere, Wal-Mart decided it needed customized lighting fixtures. Faced with installed lighting systems that were neither bright nor cost-effective, the company chose Day-Brite Lighting to develop a lighting scheme that would meet its lighting objectives.

From here, a two-step process ensued. First, vendor and customers examined the condition of existing fixtures to determine retrofit possibilities. Second, they chose lighting fixtures that would fit

Ambient light, efficient lumen output, color rendering, and long performance life.

Quality light

Wal-Mart chose the (patent-pending) SmartFit insert fixture for recessed fluorescents, which allowed it to enjoy the design, light quality, and energy efficiency of a new fixture without incurring the costs, mess,

installation to 115 – creating approximately 20 percent more light on the merchandise.

In addition, the color rendering index (CRI), a numeric indication of a lamp's ability to render individual colors, increased from 72 to 86, more accurately portraying the true colors of the merchandise.

Installation

The SmartFit fixtures are said to be simple to install, hinging to the surface of the existing fixture and connecting with three wires – a process that is said to take three to five minutes. This satisfied Wal-Mart, in that it minimizes retrofitting problems.

Weighing only 14 pounds, the fixture installs without disturbing the ceiling or insulation. This installation process minimizes floor clutter and reduces work areas and pathway obstructions.

In fact, Wal-Mart is able to install fixtures while stores are in operation.

Energy savings

Wal-Mart not only benefits from better quality lighting, but saves on energy and maintenance costs. The switch from T12 to T8 lamps and electronic ballasts will result in an estimated 40 percent cut in electricity use, with 60 percent longer lamp life.

This also will reduce levels of mercury to minimize the impact on the environment.

Now Wal-Mart can pass savings along to its customers, while additionally providing them with brighter stores. ■



or disruption of removing the old fixture.

Wal-Mart replaced its current T12 lamps with new SmartFit T8 lamps and electronic ballasts. The staggered reflective lamp design of the SmartFit fixture expanded the light spread from the fixtures and improved vertical and horizontal light distribution.

"This staggered angle is very crucial," says Carlton Plunk, Day-Brite's lead project design engineer. "It helps to reflect the light down and out onto the shopping area below – all in one bounce."

Illumination quality and quantity were both increased by the new lamps, which also "warm" the feel of the shopping environment. Foot-candle levels rose from 93.5 before

Wal-Mart's physical and fiscal needs – taking into account four major criteria for a light source: