

LD+A

LIGHTING DESIGN and APPLICATION

Should Nature Drive Design?
Hyatt Seeks An Edge
Hospitality How-To



Coronavirus
**The Industry
Responds**



IMPACT AND RESPONSE

The coronavirus has had a profound effect on all aspects of the industry. A first take on how we're adapting

With breathtaking speed, the coronavirus pandemic overwhelmed the global economy in mid-March. From the cancellation of trade shows and conferences, client meetings, construction, design projects and RFPs, the lighting industry was not spared the effects. In this special section, *LD+A* has collected commentary from more than 20 industry professionals who discussed the immediate impact, response and the potential long-term ramifications of the pandemic.



IES Podcast

A Snapshot of the Early Days

The state of the construction market, the supply chain and COVID-19's long-term effect on how we work were among the topics discussed during an IES podcast in late March. The virtual roundtable panel, moderated by IES Industry Relations Manager Mark Lien, included Bob Preston (Capital Electric Supply), Erik Ennen (MNCEE), Megan Carroll (New York Digital), Diane Borys (Noctiluca Lighting Design and Consulting) and Randy Reid (National Lighting Bureau). With developments changing by the day, the roundtable "marked a point in time," says Lien, in the industry's response to the virus.

Preston spoke to the issues facing distributors and whether lighting products and the construction industry would remain "essential businesses." The state-by-state nature of the mandates addressing COVID-19 continue to be a moving target. At the time of the roundtable, construction was still deemed essential in his state (Pennsylvania), but not in other states along the eastern seaboard which are part of Preston's market. (That changed in the days after.)

Ennen, speaking for ESCOs and NALMCO, described the situation in late March as "absolute chaos," again in part due to the state-by-state restrictions. There was one upside, as some customers with skeleton crews used the downtime at

their facilities to quickly jump on projects.

Offering the manufacturer/manufacturer's rep perspective, **Carroll** summarized the experience of many in the industry: "Life seems relatively unchanged despite the huge changes." Teleconferencing with customers for the moment has replaced in-person visits, and "nobody has asked for samples, which is great," she joked. On a general level, she wonders "what the new normal will be. Will schools do more distance learning and how will that affect our industry?" For lighting professionals, she says, "distance learning is wonderful, but it doesn't replace face-to-face learning." And when the crisis ebbs, she predicts a pent-up demand for live events.

Borys, the panel's lighting designer, mused that with the shift to remote work, "we're finding out what meetings could have been emails." Regarding project status, the Californian said that "architectural lighting design was moving forward in California, the theater market had been shut down and hospitality was decimated." Still, there

Carroll recalls that "two or three years ago when I was chair of the IES Annual Conference, the papers committee turned down presentations on this because they thought they weren't particularly relevant." Preston, meanwhile, urged the industry to be "cautious about a rush" to disinfecting light, before the science is in. Finally, if remote

'There may be more appreciation for not just hospital lighting, but for the science and effect of daylight on people working from home'

—Borys

remained a steady flow of RFPs for future work. NLB's **Reid** mentioned how his Edison-Report website was keeping a running list of companies open for business (www.edisonreport.net) To that point, "most lighting companies were still able to ship product." However, layoffs at mid-sized companies had begun, he noted. What opportunities may emerge from the crisis? UV light for disinfection has received attention. Ironically,

work becomes a bigger part of our lives, then it's up to the industry to practice what it preaches. Says Borys: "There may be more appreciation for not just hospital lighting, but for the science and effect of daylight on people working from home."

The full podcast can be viewed at www.ies.org.

Paul Tarricone



Manufacturers

Next Best Thing to Being There

As the industry hits the pause button on client visits and live events such as LEDucation and LightFair, manufacturers are turning to other educational approaches to fill the void for their customers.

Acuity "was able to adjust quickly," says Tricia Foster, VP - customer marketing. "Over the past several years, we have been greatly expanding our virtual learning through on-demand training, educational videos and webinars." The company even used the downtime in live events to launch a contest. The top three individuals who completed the most courses on Acuity Academy through April 19 won prizes such as an Apple Watch, Echo Show or Echo Dot. "In addition," says Foster, "we have armed our specification sales managers with over 60 AIA/CEU presentations that can be delivered via the webinar format."

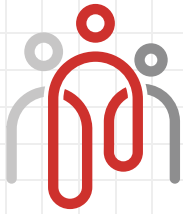
Acclaim's Director of Sales & Marketing Eric Loader adds, "while global trade shows and product showcases at [client] facilities would have provided an opportunity to learn more about the latest product developments, we have taken steps to provide alternatives by investing in new cutting-edge web conference technology which allows us to showcase our products in the next-best fashion with personalized one-on-one presentations."

WAC Lighting President and Co-CEO Shelley Wald says that "since we are unable to present new products at events, we are using videos, videoconferencing and other online tools to connect with clients. Dealers and sales reps are getting together virtually for 'Friday Night Lights' on Facebook to give feedback on videos so that we can keep improving on the content we are providing. Stay tuned for updates to our websites and contests."

Lutron has pivoted to its "well-stocked" Lighting Controls Institute, says Eric Lind, vice president - global specifications. "Specifically, we are now even more focused on providing a wide range of CEU courses on the most high-profile issues in the electrical industry, including human-centric lighting; codes and controls; and wireless lighting controls. In the last few weeks Lutron has also worked to expand our online and distance learning tools."

Finally, take a break from those cat videos. **Cooledge Lighting** is pointing customers to a web resource we all know well. The company's YouTube channel offers a collection of "informative and inspiring videos," it says.

Paul Tarricone



Designers

Ever Forward

“Project” can mean many things. It can be something already under construction, still in design or awaiting an RFP. “Project,” of course, also calls to mind camaraderie and the interplay between the team. The coronavirus has forced lighting designers to adapt on the fly to all of the above, as these comments illustrate.



Robert White
Illuminart, Troy, MI

“Workflow has not really changed that much as we have strong remote working infrastructure that has been in place for years and a wonderful IT group to support us.

“A challenge for some residential clients has been relating design concepts through the computer screen instead of face to face. Patience and persistence on both sides of the screen helps. Communicating with architects, interior designers and engineers has been relatively seamless as we all in the lighting world have been heading toward more web-based meetings anyway. Things have now been fast-forwarded.

“Handling RFPs has now become more of a coordination project between designers who received the RFP, support staff to assemble materials and other companies who are also part of the team. It’s more complicated now. My recently moved-into home has become lighting mock-up central where I can document lighting effects and send to the client to help communicate design options and intent. I can imagine puzzled neighbors wondering “what the heck is going on over there?!”

“A few other thoughts: Web-based communication software—who would have known how quickly we are becoming experts on various features and limitations. Waist-up fashion: cargo pants and slippers below, snappy designer fashion above for client calls.

Finally, I’m reminded how important simply talking with coworkers and clients is. Emails are important, of course, but it’s the voice-to-voice and face-to-face screen connection that is nuanced and vital for real communication. Random check-ins with team members are nice. Even just a simple hi there, for no other reason, is golden.”



David Orgish
O’Mahony & Myer
San Rafael, CA

“COVID-19 has had a dramatic effect on our firm. Thankfully, though, after initially having to quickly adapt to a work-from-home model and getting over a few hurdles like electronic access to files, it has been fairly seamless from a production standpoint. Culturally, it has been tough to maintain close communication between teams, but we are adapting by using the many electronic tools available to us to stay in touch.

“The fallout, however, is starting to become clearer as the weeks progress. Some of our project construction sites have been shuttered and many City Planning/

The Remote Work Model

As remote work has become the new normal, employees now face the task of creating productive and comfortable environments within their homes—and proper lighting plays a key role. The following checklist, based on recommendations from Progress Lighting, includes a few simple lighting tips for maximizing in-home work.

- 1. Define your work space.** Try to avoid high-traffic rooms, such as the kitchen, where you may be more likely to be distracted or have to pack up and move during mealtimes.
- 2. Choose a space with abundant natural light.** Natural light diffuses through a space, cutting down on glare from computer screens and desk surfaces.
- 3. Avoid using overhead fixtures.** Ceiling lights can be overly harsh, leading to headaches and eye strain. If overhead lighting is the only option, consider using a dimmer switch to adjust light levels throughout the day.
- 4. Correctly position your desk.** If your space has natural light from a window, place your desk perpendicular to the window, ideally facing north or

Building Departments have shut down, so getting projects permitted has become increasingly difficult. So far, design work is still progressing on our current projects, although some of our deadlines have shifted slightly to accommodate the time it took firms to get back on their feet after shifting to working remotely. In addition to being concerned about the people whose health or jobs have been directly affected by this virus, and how long this will continue, I am also concerned about reductions in future project funding due to the drop in the stock market. Hopefully, the industry will be able to rebound quickly once the peak health threat of the virus has passed and the shelter-in-place orders are lifted.”



Eileen Thomas
StudioK1, Irvine, CA

“We are still getting some RFPs and have had a few new projects start up, but not at the normal volume. We have also furloughed some employees and hope to bring them back soon, but in the meanwhile they are able to collect unemployment. The entire staff has taken a pay cut until workflow returns to normal. Our parent firm, tk1sc has been proactive in having everyone work from home prior to state mandates, and our IT team has been amazing getting everyone up and running. We have embraced Microsoft Teams for chatting and interoffice communication and have expanded our use of Zoom for video confer-

south so that sunlight does not cast shadows at certain times of the day. If an overhead fixture is the only light source, situate your workstation so that the light shines from behind it.



5. Add task and accent lighting. After you've created a glare-free space, add task lighting using sources like desk lamps to help with specific jobs like paperwork and filing. Finally, add accent lighting for visual appeal to personalize your space. For instance, a pair of desk lamps can frame your work space, while a wall sconce can light up a bookshelf.

*Pro Tip: Try adding LED tape lighting behind a monitor or under a desk to create diffused light.

‘When we return to the office, we’re looking at “socially distanced” office layouts and considering turning large conference rooms into smaller mock-up spaces to be used by a single person’

—Andersen

encing. Our marketing group even came up with company logo virtual backgrounds to use. We have been reaching out to current and potential clients with virtual presentations and invites to virtual happy hours. As a manager my goal is to remain calm and pitch in any way I can.”



Brett Andersen
Focus Lighting, New York City

“Focus Lighting has multiple clients hurt by the COVID-19 crisis, especially our friends in restaurant and hospitality. However, many of our clients are pushing full steam ahead. The challenge is that so much of our work with light is hands-on. While we’ve gotten quite adept at doing mock-ups in the darkest room of our homes, it’s just not the same experimentation and discovery pos-

sible in our office’s Lighting Lab. So, we’re thinking about what our team needs to return safely to the office when the time comes. We’re looking at ‘socially distanced’ office layouts. We’re considering turning large conference rooms into smaller mock-up spaces to be used by a single person. We’re also exploring ways to accomplish our on-site work virtually until travel is safe. The sooner we can get back to ‘playing with light’ safely, the better we’ll be able to help our clients rebuild and create memorable experiences for their customers once again.”



Steven Rosen
Available Light, Boston

“It’s almost impossible to focus on individual strategies, tactics and coping mechanisms in this unprecedented (especially in terms of speed) age of COVID-19. The veil of isolation has clearly caused emotional and economic anxiety. That said, we Available Lighters are all working very hard to support and celebrate one another. The camaraderie and level of trust and respect each employee has demonstrated for another has given us all much joy and professional satisfaction. There is a shared sense we are all in this together and together we hope to come out of better than ever. Our work continues, we bolster our clients and they in turn return moral support. It’s hard to keep great people down.”

Paul Tarricone



Donations
Stepping Up

Shortages of critical supplies have prompted individuals and companies small and large to jump in with donations—and the lighting industry is no exception. In March, New York-based **WAC Lighting** donated 500,000 Level-3 surgical masks to U.S. hospitals through the company’s Glow Foundation, and Michigan-based **Landscape Forms** donated its inventory of personal protective equipment, including respiratory masks and gloves, to workers on the front lines. Also in March, the **National Lighting Bureau**, through its members across the U.S., began offering free LED lights for remote sites being set up to conduct coronavirus testing.

Samantha Schwirck