

LIGHTING DIMENSIONS

THE MAGAZINE FOR THE LIGHTING PROFESSIONAL

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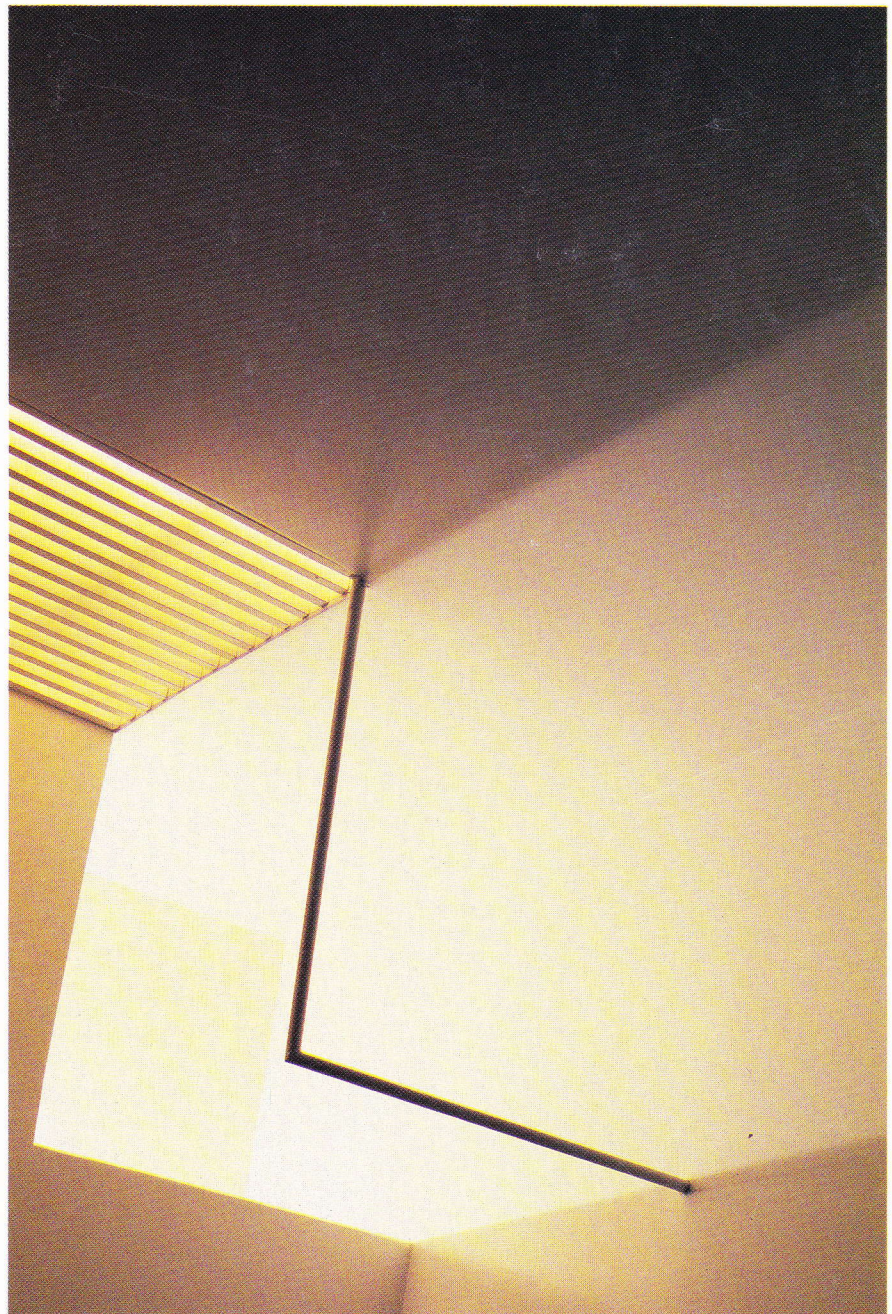
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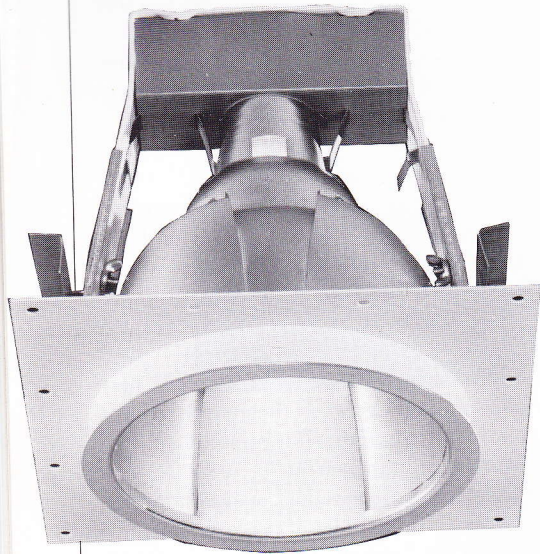
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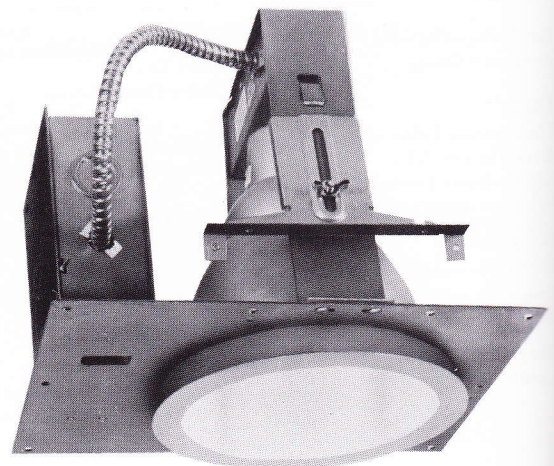
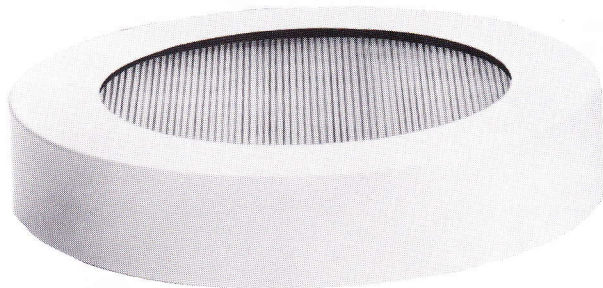
A tradition of quality

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TOBI SEFTEL



EDISON PRICE LIGHTING CONTINUES TO BUILD ON ITS DISTINGUISHED REPUTATION

A BY JOHN HUNTINGTON

At first glance, Edison Price Lighting might seem to be a stodgy, all-in-the-family business. The facts: The company went without a catalog for over 25 of its 38 years. It never advertised—the founder counted on keeping the business of his old clients. But look a little deeper, and you find that some of those “old clients” are Philip Johnson and I.M. Pei. You also discover that the company is innovative and growing at a rapid pace. It uses the radical “Just In Time” manufacturing system and has state-of-the-art equipment both on the shop floor and in the design offices.

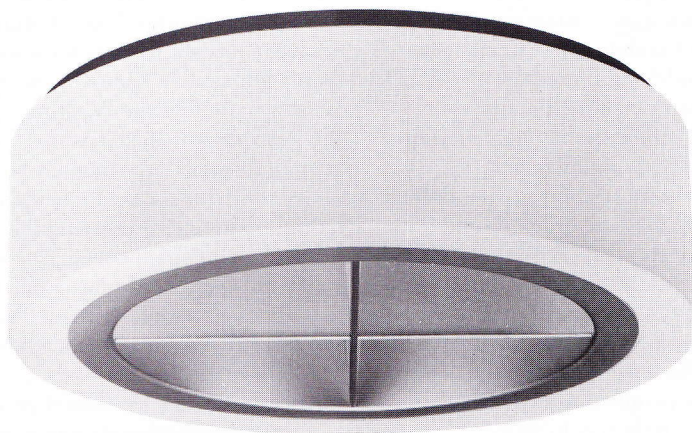
Edison Price founded Edison Price Lighting Inc. (EPL) in 1952, and acted as president until 1989. Price kept tight control over the company, and according to Richard Shaver, VP of research and development, was very involved in how his fixtures were going to be used in every job. This attention to each individual project kept the company small. In 1976, Price's daughter, Emma, joined EPL and brought with her a clear vision of how the company could transform itself into a name to reckon with in fixture design. “Our goal is to make quality lighting for quality spaces,” says Emma. Her support of new product design, in-

novative production methods, and increased emphasis on marketing have been the keys to her success. Last year, Emma was named as successor to her father as president and treasurer.

EPL's project list reads like a veritable Who's Who of modern architecture: I.M. Pei's Grand Louvre in Paris; the Seagram Building by Mies van der Rohe and Johnson, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art, all in New York City; Los Angeles' Armand Hammer Museum; and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

With a base of Price's quality designs, augmented by Emma's commitment to progress, EPL has developed into an international design force with reps throughout the US and two foreign licenses. Sales figures mirror this impressive growth: from \$36,000 in 1952, to \$14.8 million in 1989.

Other principals on the EPL team have been instrumental in the company's success—Richard Shaver, a “former excellent Edison Price customer,” who, as vice president of R&D, wrote the company's first catalog in the late 70s; Joel Siegel, who has created a national sales network since joining the company in 1983; and Karl Thorndike, VP of man-



Edison Price's principals (facing page, from left), Emma Price, president; Richard Shaver, vice president of R&D; and Joel Siegel, vice president of marketing and sales, count quality as a cornerstone of their success. The durable fixtures shown (clockwise, from below) typify the commitment to excellence: The A 2 1/6 Parklite A Lamp from the mid-50s; the EPA Barflux; the DDT Fixture; the Corolux; the Magic Wand; and the a 2 1/6 DWW from 1965, on which the international patent recently expired.



PETER GOODMAN

ufacturing, who brought the Japanese Just in Time (JIT) manufacturing system to the company in the late 80s.

The JIT method breaks the traditional assembly line flow of materials (with centralized component part fabrication) down into a number of "cells" where each product goes from raw material to shipping carton. Each cell is manned by a small group (four to five) of workers who are grouped together by virtue of their complimentary skills. Because the cells are capable of changing from product to product in a few minutes, custom runs are easy to do. "Our company is price-competitive through our entire nationwide distribution largely because of Just In Time," says Emma. This is in spite of higher labor, utility and tax rates that EPL pays in its two facilities—its original 22,000 sq. ft. factory on the Manhattan's Upper East Side and another 30,000 sq. ft. in the Long Island City section of Queens—than do most of its

competitors.

"Edison Price is in a delivery-sensitive business, and JIT has helped us to meet the demand," says Thorndike. The company responds with a promise to ship its products within three days. Before JIT, this guarantee caused EPL to play a constant guessing game with their stock in trying to anticipate customers' demands. With the old system, most items took five weeks to build and there was only a 77% success rate in meeting the three-day turnaround. Since the implementation of JIT, only 25% of products have to be kept in stock, most items are assembled the day after they are ordered, and 95% of orders are shipped on time. "With Just In Time, we are using our computer less and less," says Thorndike, one of the few Americans experts on this manufacturing method. "We instead rely on the common sense of the people down on the shop floor. It's the right way to do it."

That common sense philosophy also ap-

plies to fixture design, and EPL's equipment is widely known for tool-less installation and adjustment. Its standard product line includes: the Darklite™, which is available with either incandescent or compact fluorescent lamps for downlight or wall-wash applications; the Multipurpose, which is built around PAR lamps; the Simplux™ and Baflux™ compact fluorescent fixtures for a variety of applications; the Anglux™ incandescent accent light; and the Washlux™ compact fluorescent wall-wash fixtures.

In all designs, the company tries to make its fixtures easy to maintain while at the same time preserving the lighting designer's intended specs. The new low-voltage Anglux series has a patent-pending locking mechanism designed to preserve the original focus adjustment through years of relamping.

EPL anticipates continued growth, but is currently enjoying its independent sta-

continued on page 78



PHOTOGRAPHY BY [unreadable]

FIRM:

Edison Price Lighting, Inc.
409 E. 60 St.
New York, NY 10022
212/838-5212

PRINCIPALS:

Emma Price, president
Joel Siegel, VP marketing
Rick Shaver, VP research and
development
Karl Thorndike, VP manufacturing

FIRM SIZE:

Sales = \$15,000,000 +
Employees = 140

CURRENT PROJECTS:

Carousel Center—Syracuse, NY
Reagan Library—Santa Barbara, CA
Merck and Co.—Readington, NJ
AARP—Washington, DC
Armand Hammer Museum—Los
Angeles
National Gallery of Art—Washington,
DC
River Run Country Club—Davidson,
NC
Towers Perrin—Philadelphia
Madison Square Garden—New York
City
Dechert, Price and Rhodes—
Philadelphia
Swiss Bank Tower—New York City
Federal Home Loan—San Francisco

RECENTLY COMPLETED PROJECTS:

IBM/Atlantic Center—Atlanta
City Hall—Dallas
Indianapolis Art Museum—
Indianapolis, IN
Merrill Lynch Corporate World
Headquarters—New York City

OTHER NOTABLE PROJECTS:

Repertory Theatre at Lincoln
Center—New York City
Seagram Building—New York City
National Gallery of Art—Washington,
DC
Metropolitan Museum of Art—New
York City
Museum of Modern Art—New York
City
Regent Hotel—Hong Kong

Edison Price's client list features the best and the brightest of New York and abroad. EPL equipped The Quilted Giraffe, a New York City restaurant, (opposite page) with their Multipurpose fixtures. These flexible, narrow lamps highlight table arrangements, but can be re-aimed to accentuate special settings. A compact Magic Wand fixture was used to light rooms at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (above) in New York City. The glass lenses act as UV filters to protect the valued artwork.

Now Appearing at:

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Edison Price

continued from page 48

tus in an ocean of conglomerates. "We've gotten more flexible, while the conglomerates have gotten less flexible," says Emma. "There are a lot of advantages in being a small company, among them being able to take a longer-term point of view." Switching to the JIT system is a prime example. Additional machinery and equipment needed to implement the system required a large initial cash outlay might not have been able to fit on a larger corporation's bottom line, but it has more than paid for itself in saved labor costs.

Another commitment to the long term is reflected in EPL's commitment to R&D. "As a small, independent company, we are more interested in building a long-term view of the marketplace rather than a short-term profit," says Shaver. "Because of that, we're willing to invest in research and development of new products."

Continuing study of energy-efficient fixtures has long been a priority for EPL. "Our sales started picking up in the mid-70s [during the energy crisis], and

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one of the reasons was that we were making the most energy-efficient products," says Shaver. These concerns have extended beyond R&D into marketing, with the implementation of their innovative discount program for its compact fluorescent fixtures. The "EPL Rebate Program" offers, for a limited time, a substantial 30% discount on its Darklite DTT™, Baflux™ and Simplux™ lines of compact fluorescent fixtures if bought in conjunction with rebate programs offered by electric utilities.

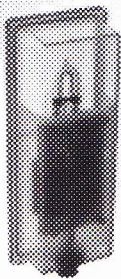
While EPL is still a relatively small company, its fixtures can be found all over the world, thanks to the two international licensees in West Germany and Japan. The major benefit for EPL is that the licensees deal with manufacturing fixtures to meet local codes, which are frequently much different than those in the US. "What you find in other areas of the world are fixtures that look the same from below, but above the ceiling is where the difference is," says Shaver. These licensees also give EPL valuable feedback from the international marketplace.

EPL has started to hook up with developers to complete projects for which they have been preselected as part of the design team—something new for fixture design firms. EPL says this can spell relief for the developer: less headaches with delivery schedules, payment and middlemen.

EPL is also looking to its users for input in shaping its plans for the future. "We just had a new product advisory board meeting where we got together all of our top management, an architect from Los Angeles, an engineer from the Midwest, a lighting consultant from New York, and a manufacturer from Europe," says Emma. "We spent two days talking about the future. We want to look at the new light sources before they come out, taking the ones we think are winners in terms of energy conservation, color, or controllability, and doing as much as we can with them early on."

EPL considers this combination of a new aggressive stance in the marketplace (they have just started their first ad campaign) and their commitment to quality in their state-of-the-art products as a key to the future—not only in the lighting industry, but on a broader scale. Emma says, "I feel that if more people would apply a greater amount of intelligence to manufacturing, this country could do much greater things." □

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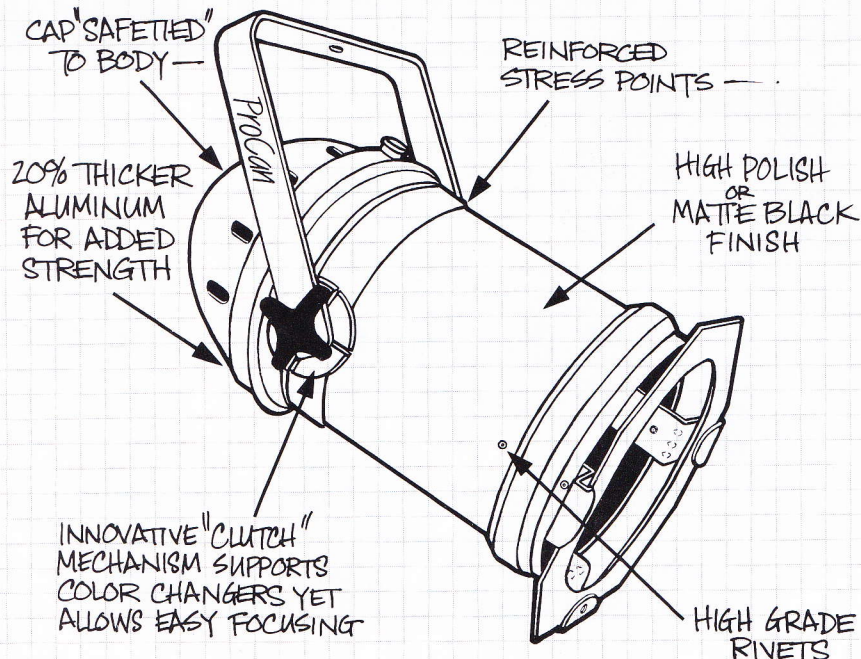
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