

ARCHITECT & DESIGNER SERIES

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Considerations behind creating successful bespoke projects

For Chelsom, creating the lighting collections which it launches every two years with a new catalogue and website is challenging but also a great joy. Within the business the design ethos leads and Chelsom is constantly buzzing with new ideas and new design directions. The aim is that the ranges have a cohesive feel and have the Chelsom handwriting on them no matter which space they are designed for, which country they go to or for whatever price level. It's a wide design brief given that the company supplies the marine industry as well as the hospitality sector and exports to 70 countries around the world, winning hotel projects from 3-star to 6-star.

Along with all the standard product, a huge amount of sales come from the design and manufacture of bespoke lighting products. Chelsom is fortunate to have close working relationships with many of the world's leading interior design practices and for most of them, product design is a part of their skill set. They constantly want to push the boundaries and are always looking for unique lighting to enhance their latest stunning scheme.

Chelsom believes that many interior designers choose

to work with the company because it is so focused in its own field. Chelsom has worked in hospitality lighting for over 70 years and understands not only the aesthetics of a product but its need for perfect and long-term functionality in what can often be a tough environment. The role of the company is to understand in the greatest depth the designer's aesthetic product concept and its relationship with the space in which it sits. It is also imperative to understand the balance between ambience and light output. The manufacturers' role must be that of adding technical lighting expertise and manufacturing know how so that the three crucial aspects of design, function and cost come together perfectly.

Saying 'no' is not something that comes naturally to Chelsom. However, if the company is the lighting manufacturer working collaboratively with a designer, it must sound the warning that a design concept will not meet the functional standards required or will be way outside budget constraints. The company will always find an alternative solution and that is Chelsom's duty in the whole scope of the project. On the budget side,

Chelsom has become experts in the value engineering process. There are so many manufacturing tweaks that can be made in order that little or no aesthetic difference can be seen but sometimes as much as 30% can be saved in costings. This is not about reducing quality- it is about having the manufacturing skills to know how the same look is achieved at less cost.

Whether it be hundreds of pieces of a black ceramic bulldog table lamp for guestrooms or a one off 5-metre diameter chandelier that drops down 3 decks on a cruise ship, the skill set and infrastructure to deliver such custom product is paramount and hard earned through experience. Every custom piece of lighting is a prototype in that it has never been manufactured before. It therefore needs all the experience of design drawings, technology skills, engineering capabilities, manufacturing prowess and finish detailing to bring that unique piece to a successful conclusion. That means as a company, Chelsom is tested and challenged daily but it also brings great pride when a piece of lighting that has never been seen before achieves the intended wow factor and does its job for years to come.





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