Understanding landscape lighting benefits can help contractors convince clients to brighten their properties.

It happens every day: An effective salesperson sells a product or service to people who really weren't all that interested ... until they tried it. Then, they were delighted — not only gratified by the many features and benefits of their purchase, but anxious to tell others about it. Wouldn't you love to employ salespeople who could do that? What it takes, more than anything else, are people who are familiar with what they sell and what their competitors sell, and believe their products are superior.

Realistically, your sales staff is probably already selling your company and its services well, but there's a pretty high likelihood they are not as proficient as they could be when it comes to upselling the lighting component of a landscape project because they might not be familiar with outdoor lighting's benefits.

For example, in the case of Fairmount Fair Mall, Camillus, N.Y., better parking lot lighting almost eliminated vandalism to parked cars (comparing Christmas seasons), while also allowing security personnel to see more quickly. And, because security forces could do a better job in less time, management was able to decrease security patrols by 40 percent, thus reducing gasoline consumption and personnel costs.

Does your sales staff understand the benefits of effective outdoor lighting as it applies to single and multifamily residential, commercial, institutional and other sites? Can they help clients attain those benefits? They will, once they become familiar with the benefits of landscape lighting.

**VISUAL BENEFITS.** Beautification is the most obvious benefit of outdoor lighting. In essence, nighttime creates a blank, all-black canvas. What people see is determined by the lighting installed. Only the most attractive elements should be illuminated so that ev... (continued on page 118)
Landscape Lighting (continued from page 116)

eything shown is shown in its best light. For that reason, many people would agree that Washington, D.C., a city of beautifully illuminated monuments, is more exciting at night than during the day. At night, elements that detract from appearance are not visible, and buildings or areas are illuminated in a manner to make them more attractive.

Of course, some folks may say that beautification is a somewhat frivolous use of energy. However, well-designed lighting systems not only beautify – they enhance security and safety. Also, a home that is more beautiful at night will probably be worth more and a multifamily residential complex that is lit up at night can experience longer tenancies as was the case at the Watergrove Apartments in Memphis, Tenn., where residents stayed for an average 1.25 years vs. an area-wide average of one year.

Identification is another visual benefit of outdoor lighting that makes a home or building easy to spot because it helps the structure to stand out, creating a unique appearance. For larger, campus-type facilities, identification also can differentiate certain buildings or areas by virtue of the color of light used, and it can mark roadways and walkways. Image is closely associated with this benefit, which is why some buildings that use lighting specifically for identification purposes are easier to locate at night. Therefore, lighting can give commercial buildings an advantage in the marketplace because they tend to be better known.

SAFETY FIRST. People do not like to be where they feel threatened. Outdoor lighting enhances security because it denies vandals, thieves and muggers the darkness they prefer. At Spring Valley Park, San Diego, Calif., new lighting discouraged vandalism (continued on page 120)

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to such an extent that, for the first time in many years, the graffiti problem was eliminated. Community center break-ins, another severe problem, also were eliminated. Together, those two benefits had a value worth more than $35,000 annually. The new lighting also put an end to assaults on older residents, which had become a serious problem.

Similarly, at Watergrove Apartments, the illumination that helped lengthen average tenancies also provided a significant security benefit: far fewer car thefts than would otherwise be expected and nighttime security expenses that were about one-third of those experienced by competing rental communities. Also, improved lighting on campus walkways at Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, Mich., permitted a 7-percent reduction in security patrols, saving enough money to generate a 2½-year payback on the lighting installation.

Safety is an important benefit of outdoor lighting. These sources are readily available to contractors looking for information on outdoor lighting:

- **The National Lighting Bureau** – This is a 25-year-old public/private, not-for-profit organization that educates lighting decision-makers about lighting’s bottom-line benefits. www.nlb.org.

- **The International Association of Lighting Designers** – This is a group made up of independent designers with extensive experience, albeit not all in outdoor lighting. www.iald.org.

- **The National Council of Qualifications in Lighting Professions** – This council is made up of individuals who have demonstrated their knowledge of lighting systems by passing a rigorous examination and earning lighting certified credentials. www.ncqip.org.

- **The National Electrical Contractors Association** – This group acts as the voice of the electrical contracting industry, working to promote higher standards, quality workmanship and training for a skilled workforce. www.necanet.org.

- **National Electrical Manufacturers Association** – This organization develops technical standards for the industry, establishes and advocates policies on legislation and regulatory matters and collects, analyzes and disseminates industry data. www.nema.org. – John Philip Bachner

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lighting because it gives people the ability to see hazards they might not otherwise spot, such as steps, potholes, puddles, slippery surfaces, wet leaves or other wind-blown debris. Effective lighting also can help prevent pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle accidents. For instance, 50 vehicle/pedestrian accidents used to occur annually at Spring Valley Park. After new lighting was installed, that number was reduced to 12. The number of vehicle/pedestrian accidents was reduced from 40 to five or six.

Since outdoor lighting that improves safety and security decreases risks, commercial clients can save on insurance costs. It can be worthwhile for property owners contemplating landscape lighting upgrades to speak with their insurance agents. For example, the reduced accident rate affected by better lighting at Metal Industries Inc., Elizabethville, Pa., led to an insurance savings of $3,000 per year. Home and building owners also have less exposure to claims when they reduce the likelihood of safety and security problems, resulting in improved loss prevention.

**MONETARY BENEFITS.** When people are attracted to a retail facility, increased sales can occur. For example, in Camillus, N.Y., the manager of Fairmont Fair Mall said sales increased by several million dollars each year, thanks to the installation of new outdoor lighting. With so many people working during the day, nighttime shopping has increased, so safety and security are important issues, and this lighting made people feel comfortable enough to continue shopping during late hours.

Residential clients also can experience monetary benefits from outdoor lighting. Through the use of effective aiming and color filters, certain landscape elements can look even more spectacular at night. This can result not only in increased home resale value, but also in additional value received from the money that they invested in their landscape, which is now illuminated 24 hours.

Better space utilization also can be achieved through landscape lighting because it makes a nighttime area usable. In single-family residential situations, this could mean the illumination of a new landscaped area where the family can relax at night. The same can occur on a larger scale, such as on the grounds of multifamily communities, colleges and universities, or parks.

Altogether, no matter where landscape improvements are made, lighting improvements also can be justified.

The author served as executive vice president of the Property Management Association from 1973 to 1976 and is author of The Guide to Practical Property Management, as well as other guides and texts in the fields of energy management, contracting and lighting.

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