

ECN Roundtable Discussion

“While LEDs continue to gain widespread adoption, what challenges must the industry address to maintain or improve progress?”?

Michael Kretzmer - Applications Engineer, ERG Lighting www.erglighting.com

There are still a few hurdles that must be overcome before LEDs replace incumbent technologies in many lighting applications. If we overlook price and anticipate that recent downward trends in cost will continue, two of the major obstacles are a general lack of standardization and the speed at which the technology is evolving.

Many stakeholders throughout the value chain are lobbying for the standardization of components such as led drivers, light engines, heat sinks, and optics. As MTBFs for some components far exceed their field time and test data, people are looking for assurance that their expensive luminaire will not be rendered useless should one component fail. I think it's very important that OEMs consider the reputation of their component manufacturers before making decisions based solely on the lowest price and rather, select those who have proven quality and longevity. ERG has been designing and manufacturing long-life electronic components for over 30 years and has never obsoleted a power supply or LED driver.

The rate at which the technology is evolving is also slowing the adoption rate. LEDs are improving so rapidly that a product may be out-of-date by the time all the safety approvals and/or energy star ratings are met. Many consumers question whether the higher initial cost for an LED-based product is worth it, as a better model will most likely be available in a few short months. As advances in LED output start to slow, the market will be more willing to adopt it as the leading technology.