

A BANK THAT WAKES UP AT NIGHT

Text: Sigi Riedelbauch / Public Touch

Modern self-service banks are open 24 hours a day. Automatic banking machines and account statement printers are there to serve customers. However, until now, many banks did not look very inviting after office hours. In a new approach, Postbank decided to install sophisticated lighting in their self-service banks that welcomes the customer and makes him feel more at ease.

The architects at Dreiform, based in Cologne, Germany, together with lighting planner Peter Paul Fischer, have implemented a new design and lighting concept for Postbank in two pilot branches. Self-service banks at the company headquarters in Bonn and Düsseldorf-Wersten have been fitted out with RGB LEDs and a lighting control system from Helvar.

“We want to send a clear message to customers using light and colour,” says Fischer. “The self-service banks should have a tidy, upscale appearance from the outside. Fine materials and clearly structured surfaces will be enhanced with blue lighting accents, in line with the Postbank image.” Vacant scenes will be dimmed by up to 10 percent, saving energy and extending the life of the lighting components considerably. But when a customer enters the Postbank self-service bank, the lighting changes automatically from blue-green tones to a warm, friendly white. A presence detector built into the ceiling panel maintains this lighting scene as long as the customer remains in the service area.

Together with Dreiform’s new design concept, inspired by design elements from the new Postbank finance centre’s ‘A Branch in Transition’ concept, a pleasant atmosphere that makes the customer feel good about stopping in is created. A world clock built into the control system allows it to recognise the seasons, sunrises and sunsets, so that the right moods for day and night are always automatically activated.

The Helvar Imagine Router 920 was chosen for the lighting control because the system can be pre-programmed before installation and offers the most freedom for individual configuration. Before installation, all of the control and lighting components can be configured with the Helvar Designer software according to a single set of pre-defined standards. This gives the electrician plug-and-play functionality, since he can install and connect the devices without having to programme anything more.

“The division of labour is ideal,” explains Christian Wein, Managing Director of Helvar GmbH. “The lighting scenes are programmed before installation, and the electrician only has to connect the control system on-site.” With its flexible control and innovative lighting elements, the lighting concept can be implemented in just six weeks, from planning to installation.

Several factors came into play when deciding the selection of lighting elements. For one, the elements had to be vandal proof and low-maintenance. Also, the colour temperature was important. The light had to be comfortable, and not seem artificial. The use of LEDs has a positive side effect: Because of their small size and low operating temperature, almost any form of installation can be achieved. This was particularly helpful for the curved wall structures next to the automatic banking machines. iGuzzini LED downlights were chosen for the ceiling lighting, and LED light strips for the backlighting of the opaline glass elements.

Peter Paul Fischer’s concept has brought new life to Postbank: If a customer opens the door with his bank card during the evening and night hours, a message is sent to the Helvar lighting control system. Within a second, the programmed active scene for customer traffic is turned up and the entrance area, bathed in a blue light, transforms itself into a gleaming self-service bank where everyone feels welcome. ■



