

LIGHTING 101: HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS LEARN BY DOING

Sharing his love and knowledge of the industry with tomorrow's generation of entrepreneurs and designers, lighting veteran Sy Mayerson has developed a program that inspires young people.

Many in the industry admit they never planned to enter the lighting business, and still others are born into it. All would probably agree, however, that a preparation course would have been welcome.

For some lucky New Jersey students, an opportunity to explore their entrepreneurial skills is now available and it is using the lighting trade as an example.

Sy Mayerson, CEO of The Mayerson Group International (MGI), a lighting designer, business developer, and long-time advocate of education in entrepreneurship and the creative arts, has developed E-MAP – Entrepreneurial Management Achievement Program® – for secondary school. Education has always been a passion for Mayerson, who initiated in-house courses where he worked in the 1960s and 1970s and later on in the businesses he has owned or operated through the past four decades. He also co-founded one of the first Master of Fine Arts programs for Architectural Lighting and Business Management at Parsons School of Design and served as its director for more than 20 years. Collaborating with the original program administrator



E-MAP director Sy Mayerson introduces Cutting Edge principals Tom Hazel (rear) and Steve Filler to students during a field trip to the manufacturer's Linden facility.



Student Damian Kuligowski threads a wire through a lamp body while Mark Jaeger observes. Diana Baginski asks a question regarding the process during the Cutting Edge field trip.

and his business associate, Dianne Blazier-Jiosi, he developed a mini MFA-type program for the high school level.

Last year Mayerson and Blazier-Jiosi presented their plan of 30 sessions (running October through May) to a receptive Linden, N.J. board of education, which endorsed the pilot program. The

duo tapped their lighting contacts – most notably Philips Lighting, Cutting Edge Industries, and Silk-O-Lite – to create a curriculum that affords students the chance to observe manufacturing processes plus visit companies on-site to learn how those businesses are run.

Referred to as “A Student’s Bridge to the Real World of Busi-



Student Rudolfo Solorzano proudly shows off his completed lamp.



A satisfied group of young entrepreneurs-in-training complete a full day of seminars and workshops at Philips Lighting.



Patrick Chimento, model and mold artisan, explains the casting process while Hazel looks on.



Jean Claude Etienne, Cutting Edge's manager of design, assists student Carol Benaderet with wiring a lamp.

ness," the program's goal is to inform and guide E-MAP candidates so that they gain practical information and self confidence in goal setting, strategizing, and execution techniques so that they will be capable of meeting present and future challenges while maximizing their potential.

Through E-MAP, kids ages 15-18 are shown the entire process of taking an idea from concept through fruition. Design, development, manufacturing (sourcing), and marketing are taught via seminars and hands-on projects, packaging, and even marketing. These young entrepreneurs-in-

training actively interact with executives at the companies they visit. Mayerson's hope is that corporate internships might be the next step.

Students have already participated in an all-day educational trip to Cutting Edge's headquarters and manufacturing facilities in Linden. Company principals Steve Filler and Tom Hazel prepared mini-seminars conducted by Hazel, Jean Claude Etienne, and others covering design, model-making, tools and dies, metal-casting, plating, finishing, assembly, and quality control. Even the topics of packaging and

warehousing were discussed. A hands-on experiment permitted the students to produce lamps.

Steven Myers, manager/lighting education and sales training at Philips Lighting, coordinated the trip to its Somerset, N.J.-based Learning Application Center. There, industry expert Dan Blitzer hosted seven hours of seminars and hands-on experiments. He covered all elements of light sources, the effects light has on human psychology, task requirements, design, and even medicinal applications involving light.

Considering that a full day of seminars could be exhausting for