



CONTACT:
Lin Courtois
VP Marketing & Communications
314.801.6304
Lin.Courtois@idxcorporation.com

PRESS RELEASE

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Can Store Fixtures Be Green? idX Is Banking On It!

As retailers across the country seek ways to become more environmentally friendly and reduce their carbon footprint, store fixture manufacturers are in a quandary. Although green specifications exist for many products – for example, certified organic foods, EnergyStar energy-efficient appliances and the LEED ratings for buildings – no such standards exist for fixtures.

One fixture manufacturer is addressing the predicament head-on, taking on an ambitious green initiative as they begin to pave the way for a greener future.

Practicing What They Preach

idX Corporation, headquartered in St. Louis, has long been a leader in producing custom store fixtures, point-of-purchase displays, millwork and more for the retail, financial and hospitality industries. Today, it hopes to become a role model for greener practices by developing more environmentally friendly products and reducing its own carbon footprint in the process.

idX is following LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) practices until standards are developed to designate fixtures and laminates as green. They are offering products that utilize urea formaldehyde-free MDF and laminates that may be recycled or even more sustainable products such as bamboo veneers.

“There are no standards within the fixture industry so we are actually borrowing guidelines from similar industries such as furniture and cabinet manufacturers. We also consult with architects who are LEED credited to advise us in the latest materials and practices,” said idX CEO Terry Schultz.

With California requiring all building materials and wood-type products to be formaldehyde free by 2009, idX Corporation is encouraging customers across the country to embrace the policy. With legislation being introduced in an increasing number of states, it will be impossible for a retailer to audit its fixture construction on a geographical basis, and all fixtures will eventually comply to the new standard, which will also help drive down the cost of these new materials. According to Mark Pritchard, Executive Vice President, Strategic Business Development at idX, “If it’s the right thing to do in one state, it’s the right thing to do across the board. From an industry standpoint, it’s much more economical for us to have one product line versus having two product lines (one for California and one for everyone else).”

Doing the right thing at idX has meant incorporating eco-friendly practices into the company, from corporate headquarters to manufacturing facilities and even employees’ homes. “It would be very hypocritical of us within management to emphasize providing a green product to our customers and not go beyond that to provide support on a local level at each of the facilities and within our own communities,” said Dave Anderson, idX Corporation’s Vice President of Quality Assurance, who is even pushing his children’s school board to incorporate recycling programs.

idX Corporation’s own recycling program, which allows employees to bring in items from home if their community doesn’t offer recycling, has reduced its facility landfill tonnage by 60 percent. By the end of 2008, they plan to reach a 90 percent reduction, reusing or recycling the majority of materials used.

By changing to more energy efficient bulbs and motion detection lights in low-use areas, the company has driven down energy use (and costs) by 75 percent. Said Pritchard, "By making this a lifestyle effort, our philosophy is going home with our employees. Once it's embedded, it becomes second nature."

The changes within the company and its product line have led to greater satisfaction among customers. While just 10 years ago, one in every 10 requests for quotes (RFQ) may have referenced sustainable policies and processes, today every RFQ includes this request, with many potential clients basing their decision on that. While Pritchard notes idX's green policies differentiate it from its competition, they hope their example will motivate the industry to make changes that will help everyone grow while taking steps to improve the planet.

Challenging the Fixturing Industry

To drive home the message idX Corporation is launching the "idX Green Product Challenge" at GlobalShop, to be held March 18–20 in Chicago. All GlobalShop exhibitors will be eligible for the prize valued at \$10,000, including anyone showcasing products in the Store Fixturing Show, Visual Merchandising Show, At-Retail Marketplace, Store Design & Operations, Digital Store or Retail Marketing Services expos.

"Although we at idX can think of different ways to introduce a more eco-friendly product into the marketplace, we can't do this alone," Pritchard said. "Rather than take a conservative approach, we decided to make a major statement with a competition that is open to the whole industry. Obviously, we aren't allowed to take part in the competition but we want to support free thinking and support other like-minded companies in developing greener products."

All products displayed at 2008 GlobalShop will be eligible for the competition, with attendees (retailers and design firms) voting for their favorite environmentally friendly products. The product with the most votes will win, leaving some to wonder why idX could end up awarding the substantial prize to a competitor.

"Even though we may be competitors we have to do what's right," said Anderson. "The contest came out of frustration. We want to find greener solutions for our customers and we're not able to find those solutions quick enough. You can sit around and wait for someone else to come up with those solutions, or you can stand up and take the lead."

Added Schultz, "We're all fierce competitors but this isn't about being competitors. We're inviting our competitors to enter the Challenge because this needs to be attacked by the entire industry, not just idX. We owe it to our children and our grandchildren to step up here."

About idX Corporation

With 20 years of experience, idX Corporation is a worldwide leader in fixture manufacturing, logistics and project management for the retail, hospitality and financial markets. To meet the needs of global customers, idX has eight facilities and offices worldwide housing more than 1,500,000 square feet of manufacturing and warehousing space, and 1,000 dedicated idX employees. idX's portfolio reflects some of the best-known names in retail, hospitality and finance: Levi's, Ralph Lauren, Microsoft, Marriott Corp., Tommy Hilfiger, Express, Starbucks, CitiGroup, Calvin Klein, Charles Schwab, Bed, Bath & Beyond, Old Navy, Discovery Channel, Niketown, Michael Kors and John Varvatos.