

SHOWER POWER

Form AND Function: Attractive Design With Low Maintenance

BY RYAN PFUND

Builders and remodelers hear it everyday. Homeowners want their bathrooms to have the look and feel of a luxury spa. It's a blessing and a curse for the hospitality and recreation industries. On one hand, it shows that guests notice and appreciate high-end amenities in washrooms and locker rooms. On the other, meeting consumers' increasingly discerning tastes without breaking the budget can be a challenge.

Still, the greater challenge may be the additional considerations for public locker rooms such as privacy, energy savings, ease of maintenance, resistance to vandalism and compliance with codes and regulations. All of these issues converge in one critical area of locker

rooms: the showers. The good news is manufacturers are offering a greater array of shower solutions than ever before, including some that won't break the bank.

Showers for the Masses

In areas that are primarily used for rinsing off, such as near swimming pools, wall showers or column showers are an economical way to accommodate a high volume of users. Arguably more important than which model is the quality of the fixture. To reduce maintenance headaches, look for fixtures designed for commercial use that can withstand abuse. Such fixtures have vandal-resistant features and are durable enough to accommodate a high volume.

For high-traffic locker rooms, column showers can accommodate two to six simultaneous users. Unlike older models, newer fixtures offer a greater variety of valves, showerheads and options to meet a wide range of needs. Metering devices, for example, ensure that showers are not left running while not in use, but can still be set to give users plenty of time to wash up. If temperature control is important, heavy-duty pressure balancing valves or thermostatic mixing valves are available. These valves not only protect the user from scalding, but they are extremely durable and vandal resistant.

Privacy is always a key concern for consumers. Adding partitions around shower units to create clusters of shower stations is a space-saving

Replace Old Showers; Save on Maintenance

Bryan Mykitiuk, maintenance manager at the West Edmonton Mall in Alberta, Canada, knows all too well the challenges that large facilities face when it comes to shower areas. The mall is home to World Waterpark, featuring the world's largest indoor wavepool. The waterpark has 60 shower units in its locker rooms.

"Our old showers were a nightmare of maintenance time and cost," said Mykitiuk. Over the years, he and his team tried many types of showers that worked initially but always developed drips or other problems and were expensive to repair.

West Edmonton Mall has replaced nearly all of its previous showers with TouchTime®, a more reliable in-wall individual shower with an electronic push-button and chrome-plated brass showerhead. All electronics are sealed within the push button pod for protection from moisture and humidity. Showers have no necks to be broken off, and the security screws are made to withstand tampering.

"It's been a few years since we started the shower renovation with Bradley, and we've required no maintenance on any of the showers," said Mykitiuk. "There are no drips, shower rooms are dry, and we've saved huge dollars in labor and parts, as well as water savings." **R+R**



Above - West Edmonton Mall reduced maintenance and energy costs by replacing its old showers with Bradley models featuring Touch Time controls.

Left - Brian Mykitiuk is maintenance manager of West Edmonton Mall, Edmonton, Canada, the largest entertainment and shopping facility in the world housing an indoor amusement park, waterpark, adventure golf, ice rink, dolphin lagoon and more.

solution for additional privacy. Similar to toilet partitions, these low-profile "modesty modules" are built around prefabricated shower fixtures. Stainless steel partitions grouped around the showerheads may include a stall for showering and another area for dressing, separated by a curtain. The dressing stall can include a teakwood seat and robe hooks. In addition to offering users some privacy, such stainless steel solutions resist vandalism.

Luxury Amenities

On the high-end, luxurious spa showers which give guests the comforts of home - or better - are the rule, not the exception. Rather than molded units, showers with ceramic tile or glass-tile adorned shower stalls with invisible glass partitions are common.

Simulated rain showerheads, multiple body sprays and hand-held personal sprayers are the ultimate in aqua therapy. Note that each of these spray outlets will require a thermostatic or



The hinge design on this wall shower appeals to the budget-conscious, streamlining installation and making maintenance a snap. It's vandal-proof (no fasteners on the front of the shower panel), and swings away from the wall, providing easy access to components.

pressure balancing valve large enough to handle the high demand of water.

To keep the brand top-of-mind, resort

hotels and spas can customize their shower escutcheons with the company's logo. Plumbing manufacturers offer coordinating showerheads, hand-held showerheads with slide bars and wall hooks, as well as faucets for lavatory systems that give the bath and shower area a unified appearance. The market

for these types of products is quite large, and the number of different styles seems almost infinite.

A Spray Above the Rest

Image is often critical to repeat business, and a high-end shower experience does make a difference. Visitors form their impressions of your facility by simply taking a peek (and a sniff) inside your guest bathrooms, public restrooms and locker rooms. From lockers to benches and shower stalls, what do your showers say about your facility? If fixtures have a calcium-deposit coating or seem to drip more than spray, users may very well choose another location for their next hot shower. R+0

RESOURCEBOX

Ryan Pfund is the Shower and Thermostatic Mixing Valve Product Manager for Bradley Corporation (Menomonee Falls, Wis.). For additional resources, call (800) BRADLEY or visit www.bradleycorp.com.

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