

# DEALERSCOPE

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## Savant & USAI Shed Light on the Fixtures Business





By **Nancy Klosek**

With an eye to helping technology integrators both broaden their service horizons while leveraging their inherent and unique professional strengths in control system installation, Savant made use of its New York City Experience Center in early March, playing host to 22 of the installer members of the Azione Unlimited buying group for an intensive, two-day seminar on lighting and fixtures. The cram course was loaded with presentations by Savant partner USAI Lighting, culminating in an evening visit to USAI's nearby Collaboratory showroom, where the morning and afternoon PowerPoint presentations on how Savant control and USAI tunable lighting choices can work synergistically were brought to life with actual demos.



Glikes addresses his integrator members

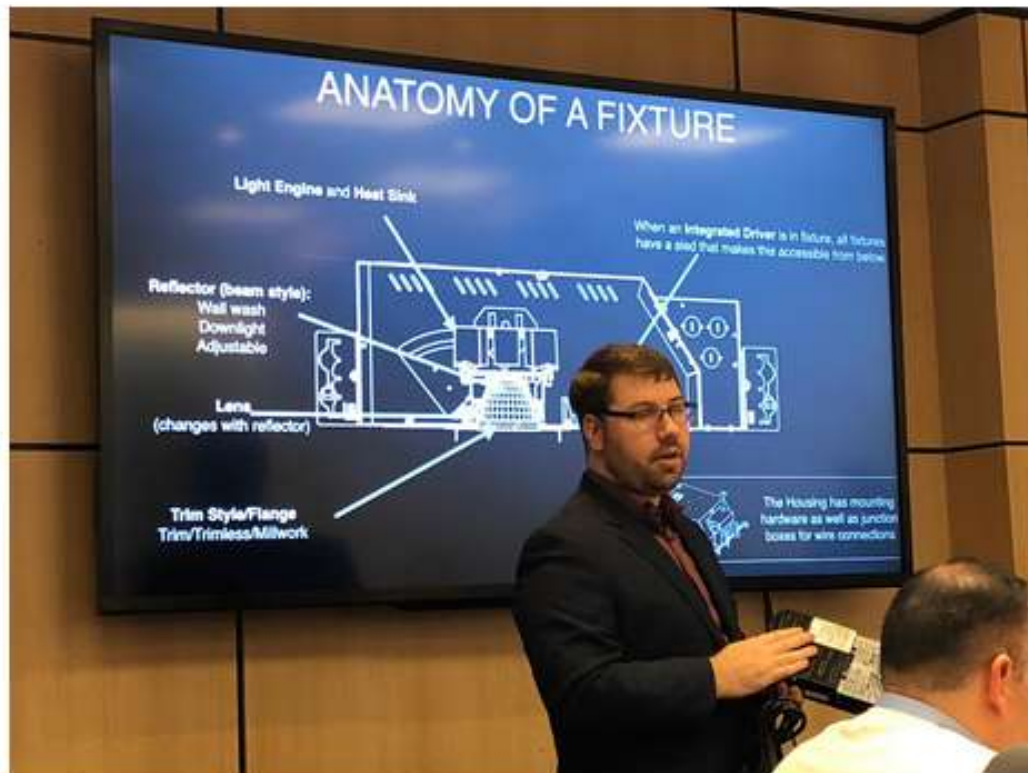
"Lighting is a natural for us," Richard Glikes, Azione president, told his members in noting its profit potential as a marketplace differentiator. "We need to focus on things the big boys on the Internet can't take from us. Amazon can't sell or design lighting fixtures."

"Not all architects are trained in professional lighting design, and usually, the electrical contractor is left to make the choices – and they don't think of the quality or the design aesthetic of fixtures," USAI Product Manager Greg

Barrett added. "We want you to reconsider how you view light... You can take designs to the next level."

"Fifty percent of our business should be doing lighting," integrator Jonathan Phillips, managing partner of Connect Consulting in Woodland Park, N.J., told us. "Designers don't understand it – and we should be guiding it, especially since we have the control systems."

Angie Larson, Savant's vice president of sales operations, remarked that many integrators "have been doing lighting control for 20 or 30 years, but the fixture category is new for some of them. There's often the challenge they meet of integrating with fixtures that they themselves did not specify – that the lighting designer spec'd but usually not with an idea of connecting them to a control system. That's a big piece of what we're addressing." She said a goal here was "showcasing the importance of consistency in lighting. USAI is a huge partner for us in helping our dealers deliver that."



*USAI's Greg Barrett gets into the weeds with fixtures*

"All of our members do lighting control, but fixtures is a different animal," Glikes told us. "It's not a simple business. We're thrilled that USAI and Savant are taking a much more transparent mode. They're in it for the long run with education, which is commendable and helps our dealers move into this category. We may get run over on a lot of categories, but not on lighting fixtures – and if we're good, we won't get run over on design. And all this makes the design aspect easier."

Bonnie Littman-Gatof, president and CEO of USAI Lighting, weighed in on the big picture that her company's associates were keen on communicating at the meeting about the breadth of choices in lighting technology currently available to integrators, architects, designers and

builders. "It's a new conversation integrators can have with the client," she said. "Lighting is a specialized area. In earlier days, there weren't a lot of choices to make. What LED has done is remarkable. Energy efficiency and longevity are givens for LED. But nuances, color technology, personalization – all these benefits mean that lighting is no longer a commodity, and it's now all about choices and preferences, and about fitting lighting into the overall user experience. It's a large tool box for designers – and for integrators. And everything we make is easily serviceable from the floor.



*Larson, with USAI's Bonne Littman-Gatof*

"Both Savant and USAI have best-in-class products that need the right control system and the world-class products to control," she continued. "Designers, once they see the control experience, are excited about specifying tunable lighting."

She also alluded to how new commercial trends in lighting technology can translate well to residential owners' needs. As an example, USAI LEDs, she said, illuminate auction house Christie's gallery in New York City, giving the gallery the ability to tune the lighting's nuances to replicate the conditions under which the artworks on display were viewed during the periods when they were created.



*A wall collage display of various textures, fabrics and colors is available at the Collaboratory for demos showing how differently tuned LEDs affect color perception*

USA's Barrett brought the tutorial full circle when he encouraged integrators to be as mindful, when working out lighting plans, as interior designers are about the architectural elements and artwork and sculptures that will occupy the space that they are designing the technology for. "It only raises the value you bring to your clients," he said.