

# Brand new light shines on reception desking

Clarke Rendall has developed a standard version of its bespoke reception desking with feature backlighting. In an exclusive interview with *Interior Channels*, MD Martin Clarke explains why dealer support is even more important when the going gets tough

A welcoming reception area is an essential component in any new build fit-out or office refurbishment. But over the last few years, it has also become an important part of a creative corporate branding mix. For architects, designers, well-heeled clients and dealers targeting the top end of the market, that has meant just one thing – bespoke designs.

Clarke Rendall has changed that view. The company was set up in 1992 by Martin Clarke as a manufacturer of bespoke reception and meeting room furniture. But in response to market demand, a standard range, called 'evolution' was launched in 2002. "Manufactured to the same high standard as our bespoke products but at a lower cost, it has been very successful and we hope that our new product, called simply 'evolution light', will be equally successful".

Described as a bespoke quality, value engineered, minimally styled, back-lit reception desk range, 'evolution light' is hand-built to order in the UK. Sales, design and manufacturing are all housed under one roof at the company's 20,000 sq ft centrally located facility in Milton Keynes. "This allows us to offer a co-ordinated package of products and services at competitive prices and, when required, to extremely tight deadlines".

"Our approach was that if a client becomes inspired by a bespoke designed back-lit reception desk, we can adapt a standard 'evolution light' desk to fit a particular space. So the new product goes out as a special within the evolution portfolio, rather than an out and out bespoke. The benefits of adding the new desking as a 'standard' within the evolution portfolio are numerous, not least in terms of lead time and from a cost point of view. "In today's economic climate, that is a massive selling point for our dealers and their customers".

## The secret of continued success

Support services to help dealers secure new and repeat business include a design and planning service for standard, bespoke and, now, special furniture; room space planning; special request design ideas; and samples upon request – all free of charge. Alternatively, Clarke and Rendall can provide CAD Blocks in a variety of formats for all evolution reception desks and boardroom tables. Another support tool is a regular monthly newsletter 'Evolutionary Times' that is emailed to our dealers.

From the numerous client testimonials, there can be no denying that the most important secret of continued success is the quality and breadth of its dealer support, with an oft-repeated comment being "For Clarke Rendall nothing is a problem". The managing director's approach to teamwork speaks volumes: "It is by constantly developing the close working partnerships we enjoy with our nationwide dealer network, that our design team is able to provide specialist product and space design input and excellent presentation materials to assist in securing contracts. We never deal direct".



A project that drew on Clarke Rendall's bespoke feature back-lit reception furniture manufacturing skills was for Beechcroft LLP

One example of that ethos is its partnership with Imperial Interiors, for whom Clarke Rendall has regularly produced 'evolution' reception desks. But a project that drew on true bespoke furniture manufacturing skills was for Beechcroft LLP. It involved 87,000 sq ft of new build over 3 floors with a budget of £2.95million which needed to be completed in just 18 weeks. For Clarke Rendall it required the manufacture and supply of reception and bespoke furniture to the value of £100,000.

A huge undertaking for Imperial Interior's Sean Cox, it required putting together a co-ordinated and highly motivated team that would guarantee a successful conclusion. It proved to be an all round success delivered on time and to budget: "We've had a very long and very happy relationship with Clarke Rendall, and after this project, I don't see that changing".

Last month, on 19th January, the support also included the launch of Clarke Rendall's redesigned website. Within hours, visitors were sending goodwill messages.

Asked about above-the-line marketing plans for evolution light, Martin Clarke revealed the launch was to be announced to dealers first, via a double-page advertisement in the February 2009 issue of *Interior Channels*, and in March to specifiers, architects and designers via other specialist publications. Our Editor was given a sneak preview before publications, You can now see it for yourself by turning to pages 8-9. [[www.clarke Rendall.com](http://www.clarke Rendall.com)] ■