

CASE STUDY

WINDOW SHADES

FLEXSHADE RECHARGE ALLOWS MOTORIZATION WITHOUT WIRING



Product: FlexShade Recharge, Location: Commerce Tower, Kansas City, MO.
Dealer and Photography: Window Treatments and More! Inc.

- Commerce Tower, located in downtown Kansas City, Missouri, is on the National Register of Historic Buildings as the first “curtain wall” building west of the Mississippi. So when a renovation was planned for the landmark, no detail was too small—including solar control.

INNOVATIVE SHADING

Commerce Tower was planned as a vertical neighborhood, and includes beautiful state-of-the-art apartments, a restaurant, daycare, college (Park College), dog park, and a floor where you can rent a unit for a night for visitors. Later this year, an Olympic-size swimming pool, cabanas, and basketball courts will open atop a 6-story parking garage. The 17th floor is an incredibly-designed and decorated amenities floor with a full kitchen, game rooms, a fireplace, a business center, and movie room, all with breathtaking views overlooking the Missouri River and Kansas City Airport. The new “Kansas City Streetcar” has a stop outside the main lobby, which is outfitted with wall-to-wall Draper motorized shades.

To keep costs down, initial plans for the renovation included clutch-operated manual shades on the 4,000 windows of the 30-story structure. But that soon changed.

“About halfway through the project, owner/partner Michael Knight decided to upgrade the 30th floor penthouse shades to motorized units,” said Marsha G. Ross, ASID, designer and owner of Window Treatments and More! Inc., in Kansas City. “We were originally going to put in the shades that use external battery packs. My thought was, ‘Are they actually

going to put it on their schedule to go change those batteries every now and then when they needed it?’ But batteries were much less expensive than hard-wiring.”

With so many windows, however, Ross’ concerns over battery replacement were valid. So Draper offered an alternative.

“Draper called and said we have a new technology,” Ross said. “You can plug it in to the wall and charge it, and you can use your cellphone to control them.”

The new technology was Draper’s FlexShade® Recharge. The Recharge batteries are housed inside the roller, so no extra space is needed for battery wands and, as the name indicates, the batteries are rechargeable. The Recharge installs like a manual window shade, so there was no need to re-measure 4,000 windows. But perhaps best of all for the Commerce Tower project is that they wouldn’t need to find extra space for a separate battery wand. The battery is hidden away safely inside the tube. Recharge uses no disposable batteries—it’s rechargeable from a 110V outlet or an optional solar panel and each charge lasts months.

After discussing the pros and cons of both products, Ross decided to switch over the 146 penthouse shades to the new, more innovative product.

continued on next page

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“Because of the layout of the building and the window locations, it worked out that there was an outlet below all of the shades,” said Ross. “So on those occasions when a recharge is necessary, it will be easy.”

Since the majority of shades are in apartments, Ross opted for wireless wall switches to raise and lower by room, and also provided the occupants with a 5-channel remote. But she’s not finished yet.

“What I want to do is go back and sit down with the owner and get the app set up on his phone. With this simple step, he can virtually operate his shades from anywhere. The savings on heating/cooling, issues of security, not to mention care of expensive artwork and carpets are impressive” Ross said.

And she has other plans. Her next project is her own house. “My installers are going to come integrate my whole house, with a security system, Google Home, and of course Draper Motorized FlexShades,” she said. “For years this technology has been cost-prohibitive, but now it is affordable for all homeowners. I think this is our next big market. The possibilities are endless.”

For the fabrics Ross chose 3% openness factor throughout much of the building, going with 1% openness in bedrooms.

The building has been certified LEED Gold by the U.S. Green Building Council.

For more information on the Commerce Tower urban community, click here. (commercetowerkc.com)

Click here for more information on the [FlexShade Recharge](#).

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