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SMART SEATING

THERE'S MORE THAN MEETS THE
EYE WHEN IT COMES HOTEL CHAIRS

BY ROBIN MCLAUGHLIN

Samuelson Furniture, located in Paterson, N.J., creates furnishings that include LED lighting, charging stations, and data ports. The company integrates these advanced technologies into its chairs to create unique experiences in the hospitality industry.

Larry Chalfin, president of Samuelson Furniture Inc., says, "Our smart chairs have LED lighting running around the base, a charging port with a USB station for a phone, and sound-conducting speakers, which are not conventional speakers. The sound is carried through the frame of the chair, which conducts the sound through vibrations—unlike conical speakers, which project sound out into the space."

But to realize the potential of these technologies, hotels need to adapt and build in the required hardware for optimal use—e.g., electrical outlets. He says, "There's remote power, but it doesn't have a long enough life, so the design proposition must have floor outlets and other points of connection readily available."

Additionally, constructing smart chairs is more difficult than it seems. Chairs are designed to provide the ultimate comfort, especially in the hotel space. Unlike a table or cabinet that has a set design each time, chairs need to be adjusted once they're created. And although a chair can be drawn exactly, it isn't right until a prototype is built. Chalfin explains, "When we design a chair, we draw it, build the sample, look at it, step away from it, and leave it for a few days. We'll upholster it, we'll decide if it isn't right, and we'll make any changes. It's a process. To do a chair well, you need to let it breathe. We've done some projects where it has taken several weeks to get the curve of the leg or the sweep of an arm just right for the final design to achieve what we really want."



Larry Chalfin (LEFT) and his son,
Vice President of Samuelson
Furniture Michael Chalfin.

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