



# LED LEADER

Introducing new LED lighting solutions to designers, consultants and other end users in Muscat last week was **Ryozo Endo** and his team from Endo Lighting Corporation. **Salim Joseph** meets up with the 'light-emitting' business honcho from Japan

In bookshops in Japan, one could get hold of a copy of the book titled 'LED Revolution' and there one would come across the story of a man, who at a young age, 23 years to be precise, left his banking career to sell lighting fixtures. Started all alone with a small shop selling the products, he was to establish his own company manufacturing conventional lighting solutions five years later. Ryozo Endo, the founder and president of Endo Lighting Corporation based in Osaka, Japan, is now aptly called the 'leader of LED' the book says.

Ryozo and his general manager Koji Murakami was in Muscat last week to attend a seminar on LED lighting fixtures organized by their local dealers Al Hassan Group of Companies, aimed to introduce new products from Endo Lighting to designers, consultants and other end users. "Four years back I left behind the conventional lighting solutions to have my complete focus on LED lights. I felt much younger and more energetic," the 69-year-old business honcho from Japan told Hi Weekly during an informal chat. Excerpts:

#### What are your plans for Oman?

We want to be the number one here. It's almost three years since we have our dealer here in Al Hassan Group of Companies. The products from Endo Lighting have already lit the Asian Beach Games in Musannah, Duqm Beach Hotel, the Majlis at Al Bustan Palace Hotel and Oman Arab Bank. That was a good start promoting LED lighting solutions here and now we can target other public buildings, banks and hotels. The potential is huge. There are so many infrastructure projects including airport development and in future we expect subways. We did business in Dubai metro.

#### Looking back, what prompted you to leave your banking career and start your own business?

I had begun my banking career some 50 years ago. While working at the bank (Daiwa Bank) I had a client who was dealing with lighting products. He told me that it's very easy to sell lighting fixtures and make a profit. I was just 23 years old, young and ambitious and went for it.

#### What were the initial hiccups?

I was all alone and had to do everything myself. When I tried to recruit people, they were not willing to join my business or to work for me. Maybe I was too young to be the boss then.

#### It's exactly 50 years since you established Endo Lighting Corporation. Where do you stand now?

We are now number one in LED lighting solutions in Japan enjoying around 25-30 percent market share. And we are spreading out globally. Earlier we were manufacturing and marketing conventional lights such as incandescent lights. Four years ago, after the Lehman crisis (bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers in the US in 2008) I decided it was time to focus on LED lighting. So we focused on that 100 percent and became very successful. Last

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**Ryozo Endo**  
President, Endo Lighting Corporation

year when Japan was hit by the earthquake disaster, which also led to the nuclear power plant destruction, the demand for LED lighting precuts went up. Four years ago our sales stood at JPY 12 billion which is now JPY 37 billion, and we are still growing. Moving from incandescent lights for which we had production rights for almost 45 years to LED lights was a wise decision.

#### What's your global presence?

Outside Japan, we have factories in Shanghai, China and in Thailand, where we started production 23 years ago. Nobody among our competitors thought about production outside Japan then. We have a joint venture in Mumbai, India and last September we tied up with Icom Inc to set our foot in US. We are trying to make our presence in central and South America as well.

#### What's special about LED lighting and how do you compare your products with that of your competitors?

LED solutions save energy and they also last long, around 10 years. Currently, we have lined up more than 3000 products, which can meet all our customer demands. Our competitors are yet to achieve the 135 lumens-per-watt (the quantity of light emitted) we have achieved in our products. That means you need fewer pieces of lights to light a particular area. We are about to open our new Technical Research Centre in Osaka which will lead to the production of more advanced LED lights.

#### How do you feel about your achievements over the past four decades?

Out of 50 years of my business career, for 45 years I was doing conventional lights. But four years back, when I shifted completely to LED, it was totally a new business for us. It became very successful and I felt much younger and more energetic.