



A Company with Bright Ideas

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Dinesh, left, and Danny Wadhvani, co-owners of ThinkLite, and Longfellow Sports Club owners Laury Hammel, right, and Myke Farricker look over the new ThinkLite T5 LED tube retrofit for the tennis bubble at the Natick Raquet Club.



Dinesh Wadhvani, center, co-owner of ThinkLite, and Longfellow Sports Club owners Laury Hammel, left, and Myke Farricker look over the new ThinkLite T5 LED tube retrofit for the club's gym.

Natick , MA — When the Longfellow Sports Club and Natick Racquet Club wanted to score points with a better lighting system for their facilities, they turned to ThinkLite, the Natick company that specializes in lighting efficiency. Let's just say the decision has come up aces.

ThinkLite retrofitted the clubs' existing fluorescent lights with its high-out LED tube lighting, and the change has been, well, a smash, according to Shelia Weinstock, the general manager of the Natick Racquet Club.

"The lights are fantastic," said Weinstock. "They are really bright and the members are loving them. The light is much more even on all the courts and there is a significant improvement in the lighting for play. We're very happy with them."

The clubs gain another advantage on the money front, too. Applying a combination of utility company incentives and rebates, the projected annual savings for the Natick Racquet Club total nearly \$38,000, according to ThinkLite. "The rebates were significant", said Mike Andersen, the company's sales director. "We were very pleased to work directly with the utilities to secure rebates of 70 for the club."

“ ThinkLite has been growing at an average rate of 300% per year since it was founded. Last year we were No. 43 on the Inc. 500 list of fastest-growing companies, with millions of dollars in revenue. — Danny Wadhvani, co-owner of ThinkLite ”

Danny Wadhvani, who owns ThinkLite with his brother Dinesh, recently discussed the company with Daily News staff writer Bob Tremblay.

Q: How did you come up with the name?

A: The mission was to challenge the wasteful practices in the lighting industry. We set out help businesses and governments re-Think and re-Lite, hence the name ThinkLite.

Q: Why was the business started?

A: We realized an opportunity in helping businesses and governments go green without having to incur the upfront difficulties and costs associated with the change.

We frown upon wasteful practices. We understand the high investment, hassle and time involved with replacing existing fixtures and infrastructure currently in place. This erodes the return on investment of the project. It defies the whole objective of saving money and being more efficient. This is why the adaptation rate of new technologies is so low.

So we decided to remake a replacement of the existing bulb by combining the most advanced technologies in the lighting industry with our sophisticated and unique supply chain. Our solution screws or plugs right into the existing fixtures in a matter of seconds with no changes to the current wiring or configurations.

Q: Why did you choose your current locale?

A: Massachusetts is truly the hub of innovation and entrepreneurship. And it has the talent. With the large number of the world's finest universities here, the access to research and skilled people is widely available. This is key for a company that is growing and scaling and we are committed to hiring locally. Massachusetts is also one of the greenest states in the nation. The utility companies provide significant rebates (sometimes up to 90 percent) for energy efficiency projects. Being located in the heart of this allows us to provide greater value to our clients.

Q: Has your business moved?

A: The business was founded at Babson College in Dinesh's dorm room. We then moved to an office space in Framingham from 2010 to 2011. In 2012 we moved part of the office to Mass Challenge's facility in downtown Boston. In 2013, we consolidated to our headquarters in Natick and have been here since.

Q: What did you do before you started this business?

A: Dinesh is a serial entrepreneur who, at 15, founded a software development business, which he sold years later prior to starting ThinkLite. I worked for PwC Advisory in Boston doing finance and operations consulting prior to joining ThinkLite.

Q: What is the company's reach?

A: ThinkLite currently has operations in 14 countries and expanding very quickly. We are focused solely on growing and scaling it at this point.

Q: What does your company do?

A: ThinkLite is a global lighting efficiency company that custom designs, manufactures, distributes, and installs energy efficient retrofit solutions to commercial customers and governments. The company's efficient lighting products leverage proprietary LED and induction technologies that specifically adapt to existing infrastructures.



Sheila Weinstock of Framingham, general manager of the Natick Raquet Club, plays tennis under the club's new lights, compliments of ThinkLite.



About 300 ThinkLite T5 LED tubes have been placed in Natick Raquet Club's tennis bubble.

Q: What makes you different from the competition?

A: The higher light level is the result of a major breakthrough, ThinkLite's proprietary driverless design. Until now, all LED tubes required an internal or external driver, which consisted of an array of more than 150 electronic components. LED drivers generate a lot of heat, thereby limiting the lumen levels that can be achieved and impacting the life span of the lamp. However, we are able to replace the driver with four micro-chips that essentially perform the same functions yet give off virtually no heat. They also enhanced the heat sink enabling the chips to be driven at never before seen levels, while significantly improving the life span of the product.

This results in a 50 percent reduction in energy consumption, as well as a 65,000-hour life span, three to four times the average life span of the fluorescent bulbs that were replaced. They also feature instant on/off, minimal light depreciation over time, and the highest light levels available today.

ThinkLite also provides a "Pay as You Save" program that provides customers with a monthly payment plan to finance their portion of the lighting upgrade. The zero out-of-pocket costs make it very convenient for customers. In most cases, the monthly payments are significantly less than the total monthly savings. That's a positive cash flow project right from installation.

We work with our customers to provide a turnkey solution and coordinate everything – the utility rebates right down to the installation.

Finally, there isn't another company out there that has the ability to retrofit ANY TYPE of existing lighting fixture. For example, regardless of whether you have a 2-foot, 4-foot, 6-foot or 8-foot tube, or whether they are T12, T8 or T5, regardless of the wattage, the color temperature, ThinkLite has the solution ready to go.

Q: What is the price of your product?

A: One of our most popular product lines is our T5 and T8 LED tube retrofits. These are very competitively priced and provide customers with an average payback of fewer than 2 years for a solution that lasts 10-plus years. With the utility rebates available, the payback is usually just a few months.

Q: Any financial figures?

A: ThinkLite has been growing at an average rate of 300 percent a year since it was founded. Last year, we were No. 43 on Inc. 500's list of fastest-growing companies, with millions of dollars in revenue.

Q: Any future plans?

A: To continue being on the forefront of technology and develop superior energy efficiency lighting products. We also have expansions to three other countries lined up for 2015.

Q: How many employees do you have?

A: Our U.S. team size has grown to 36 this year and expanding quickly.

Q: Any news to report?

A: We are excited to see our driverless LED tubes making big strides. We have sold several thousand units this year alone.