



# CASE STUDY

Florida Distributing



## Seeing is Believing for One Orlando Daylighting Customer

Sometimes, all it takes is a little encouragement and, perhaps, some proof. After that, the benefits of using today's more advanced skylight products to provide lighting to your operations are readily apparent.

That was the case when Dennis Kuhn, Senior Project Manager for commercial roofing company CentiMark Corp., had just one Sunoptics® Signature Series skylight installed at Florida Distributing, an Orlando-based beer distributor.

Kuhn and Florida Distributing's George Feltner, Vice President of Operations, had been in discussions about a re-roofing project for an off-site building the distributorship owned. Eventually, those talks led to a conversation about replacing existing skylights on that building with daylighting products from Sunoptics. Sunoptics is a California-based company owned by Acuity Brands, Inc., the largest lighting and controls manufacturer in North America, specializing in high-performance prismatic skylights for the commercial market.

Florida Distributing eventually sold that building, but Feltner's interest in the daylighting products was maintained.

Soon, he was focusing on the company's main distribution center.

"Because we sold him on replacing some skylights on that first building, he was interested in trying them out at his facility," Kuhn said. "It's a big, beautiful, clean distribution center that was using conventional lighting. (Feltner) was interested in being green and in reducing costs. He asked about the Sunoptics product."

Kuhn said to Feltner, "I know it's tough to visualize what kind of light it's going to bring in," and a light went off, so to speak. Feltner agreed with Kuhn on having CentiMark install the one Sunoptics daylighting unit, and that led to an agreement for the installation of seven more.

"He was very impressed," Kuhn said of his new customer. "That completed a section of the facility and it looked fantastic. So we were able to put that eight in, and (Feltner) was able to get managers to pull the trigger on the entire project."

A total of 113 high-velocity, hurricane-zone-approved Sunoptics prismatic skylights measuring 5'x8' were subsequently installed.

"It sells itself," Kuhn said. "It's really difficult to put into words. You can describe it; you can put it on paper. But until you can see it, you can't know. It's just a different feel."

### More Technology Included

Even The Sunshine State experiences a cloudy day, so photosensors were added to the skylights to allow the artificial lighting to kick on when light levels dropped below a certain level.

On average, the measure of footcandles in the distribution center was 12 before the installation of the daylighting system; it reaches 25 now. That's with a 2.6% coverage of the roof in skylights.

"As for the potential for the skylight installations to draw more Florida heat into the facility, the science actually works in favor of skylighting," said Kuhn, by reducing the amount of heat typically produced by artificial lighting overhead.

Of course, the significant reduction in overall energy consumption by artificial lighting is the most apparent benefit to daylighting, though the numbers might not be apparent immediately after installation.

"It'll be a full year before we realize any cost savings," Kuhn said of the Orlando building, talking specifically about an average three-year return on overall investment. In the meantime, he said, "It brought free, natural light into the space. That's good for production, for the guys in there."

While the decision to install daylighting was as much an operational decision for Florida Distributing as it was a cost-saving decision, according to Kuhn, the company has a strong mission toward sustainable practices. The company's Web site promises:

**"Florida Distributing Company is committed to a green supply chain that contributes to our brewing partners' sustainable development initiatives and conserves resources for our communities today, tomorrow, and forever into the future."**

To that end, the company has also incorporated fluorescent (vs. metal halide) lighting and motion sensors to further reduce electricity consumption.

According to Myles Sosnoff, Eastern Region Sales Manager for Sunoptics, the Florida Distributing project is an example of how organic a company's transition from artificial lighting to daylighting can be once evidence is presented to the right decision-makers.

"The great thing here that is noteworthy," he said, "is that CentiMark, a strategic partner, is a roofing company, one of the biggest in the county. But theirs was not an opportunity to replace skylights that were leaking."

Instead, he noted, "Dennis was professional enough to discuss daylighting. He went outside the normal service means and then brought us in as their vendor partner." Sunoptics did an analysis for the project, and helped CentiMark in other ways to allow for an easy installation.

"It was truly an organic beginning," Sosnoff continued. "CentiMark developed an opportunity where skylights didn't even exist, and we were able to be there from beginning to end. We worked hand-in-hand."

The result inside the building once the project was completed, however, was quite the expected outcome.

"This is about bringing light in; using light, not glare, not hotspots," Sosnoff said. "It's the use of prismatic property at its best."



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