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Lighting Automation

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Fluence announced late last year the availability of its new [SHYFT lighting automation tool](#) to the market. I was able to chat with Fluence CEO David Cohen about the controller and what it can help growers accomplish.

“SHYFT allows growers to independently automate schedule and dimming of two separate zones and each zone can grab up to 100 fixtures,” he explains. “So roughly every 100 fixtures is a SHYFT controller and it depends on how big your grow is.”

He adds a smaller grower might need a couple per room or a larger grower would need more based on the amount of lights they have. The technology is a touchpad that can program the lights to dim or brighten and change intensity levels for up to 20 days at a time in multiple zones.

David notes there are lots of different types of growers out there, and for all he recommends using this as a tool in a bigger strategy.

“From our standpoint we come across a number of different profiles of growers. Growers who engage with us and say we want to know everything you know, tell us everything,” he says. “Then the other end of spectrum that grows say I’m all set, I know what I’m doing, just give me the stuff, I’ll figure it out.”

“In any application or any situation what we would recommend is to spend some time with our experts, our horticulture specialists, our cannabis architects—people who know how to design these facilities—and at least get their input.”

He would like to see a collaborative process where the company works with the grower to make sure they are accomplishing the grower’s goals with the technology. “There’s always going to be something our team has seen no matter how good the grower is, and conversely there’s always something we learn from the grower.”

He adds the SHYFT controller is designed to withstand a wide range of greenhouse and indoor farm environments, including humidity and changing temperatures. “What we want to do is come with something that out of the box is easy to use. It can be installed directly in the environment, located right near the crops,” he says. “This is more on-the-ground, you’re right in there, here’s your controller, you can see what’s going on and you can make changes on the fly very, very quickly.”

He also notes the photo acclimation and photoperiod modes are important to provide growers with two



different options to automate the intensity of the light delivered and the duration of light exposure to the crops daily. In the end, the goal is consistency.

“We’re looking at it as automated control that’s consistent, it’s accurate and can produce repeatable results for the crops,” he says. “It’s the same thing every day at the same time.”