



## A LIGHTING SOLUTION TO FOSTER CONNECTEDNESS

Helping global tech giant Akamai Technologies bring their vision to life by illuminating their new Cambridge headquarters

***By Axis Staff***

## CASE STUDY

Lighting has the potential to tell a story within a space and, when executed with creativity and innovation in mind, bring an inspired vision to life. In 2019, content delivery network providers Akamai Technologies needed a lighting solution for their new headquarters at 145 Broadway in the tech-centric Kendall Square neighbourhood of Cambridge, Massachusetts. The towering 19-story LEED Gold and WELL-certified building—the district's tallest—was designed to consolidate Akamai's six local offices, bringing its over 2,000 Boston employees together under a single roof for the first time since the company's inception more than two decades ago. Eschewing tradition in favour of an outside-the-box approach, the global tech leaders sought a way to light their new headquarters that would communicate their brand vision.

**Akamai's *raison d'être* is to connect their customers around the world, and our task was to execute the shared vision of design firm HLB Lighting Design and architect Barbara Horton, expressing that sense of connectedness through lighting.**

## CHALLENGE: AN INSPIRED LIGHTING SOLUTION

Understand and execute designers' and architects' vision to provide a lighting solution for Akamai's new company headquarters, communicating brand vision while facilitating day-to-day work for employees.

**INDUSTRY:** Tech

## SOLUTION

A 6,700-foot continuous light fixture that integrates seamlessly into architectural plan, communicating brand vision while facilitating collaboration, movement and creativity for Akamai employees.

**LOCATION:** Cambridge, Massachusetts

## THE CHALLENGE

From the outset of the project, Axis Lighting's focus was on giving Akamai the connectedness they craved in a lighting solution that spanned across their sprawling 482,000 square feet of office space. The new headquarters functioned not only as a centralized local office but also as a global hub that would connect Akamai offices across the country and around the world, from Chicago to San Diego, Buenos Aires to Brussels, Tel Aviv to Dubai. That theme of global connection had to be felt throughout the space.

There was also an additional, more tangible need to satisfy: lighting each of the 19 floors in a way that would encourage movement, collaboration and creativity for Akamai employees. With the unique origami-like layout of Akamai's 145 Broadway offices, fixtures had to be carefully and seamlessly integrated into walls and ceilings. Working within these parameters, our team got to work developing a unique custom-made lighting solution.

## THE SOLUTION

With Akamai's forward-thinking brand vision in mind—"to connect the world, we must first connect each other"—we worked with the project's designers and architects to create the AkaMile: a mile-long continuous path of light that weaves through the building and points in the direction of actual Akamai offices around the world. The end result brought to life architect Barbara Horton's desired lighting effect, achieving the optimal balance required for the project. A wholly unique and thoroughly ambitious solution, the project gave us the opportunity to do what we do best: bring inspired, innovative and never-before-seen ideas to life.



*We used our Sculpt lighting system to create a custom solution that would accommodate intricacies like tilted walls—as seen here in the lobby of Akamai's headquarters—countless compound angles and narrow intersections.*

To light the path, we developed a custom solution using our Sculpt linear lighting system: 1.5" lines of light brought together to create a single, unending fixture that begins at street level and continues uninterrupted through the building.

**The result is a 6,700-foot light fixture that illuminates a continuous path throughout the 19 floors of 145 Broadway.**

At the start of the AkaMile, which transitions and intersects across walls and ceilings, visitors are drawn towards the building's impressive command center, where network and broadcast activities are monitored and displayed on massive screens.

Wayfinding was an important principle in the design of the space, with color used strategically at different points along the AkaMile to foster a sense of exploration while also employing Akamai's brand colors. Designers used warmer hues like oranges and yellows towards the base of the building, transitioning to cooler blues and greens as the floors progress towards the top of the tower. Complementing this emphasis on exploration, the fixtures along the AkaMile path vary in thickness depending on the function of the space, achieved using a strategically-placed perimeter.

In "collaboration zones"—areas where employees congregate to work together as a team—fixtures are thicker and more noticeable, setting a vibrant tone. In quiet work areas, lines of light become thinner and more discrete, creating ideal conditions for focused work. With the inspired use of color and light, the Akamai offices are immediately identifiable to onlookers from the outside.

## THE RESULT

The result is a light-filled tower with energetic pops of color and a clear path throughout. A work of collaboration between Axis and the project's designers and architects, this custom lighting solution provides ideal conditions for both collaboration and concentration, respectively, for the over 2,000 employees using the space on a daily basis. The building's lighting scheme succeeds at expressing Akamai's brand vision, mission and values, with a sense of connectedness felt deeply throughout the space, from the first step into the building winding all the way to the 19<sup>th</sup> floor.

Finding a way to integrate this custom solution in a complex architectural plan was a challenge, but the result is a beautifully-lit building that not only prioritizes the people who inhabit the space on a daily basis but also tells a meaningful story.

