



# NXT LEVEL DESIGNEE SPOTLIGHT

## ADVANCED TRAINING FOR ADVANCED CUSTOMER SOLUTIONS

After founding lighting and energy solutions company GEL America in California in 2017, Charlie Gerwe moved to Bend, Ore., to open a sister company: GEL Energy Solutions. While setting up his new lighting business, one of Gerwe's priorities was to make sure he and his staff had completed the requisite trainings to achieve professional designations that would help differentiate his business. He first heard about NXT Level training as a component of qualifying to become an official Energy Trust of Oregon Trade Ally. Gerwe achieved his NXT Level 1 designation and then quickly moved on to NXT Level 2 to help him qualify for the even more prestigious Energy Trust Performance+ Trade Ally program, an enhanced incentive program for advanced, whole-building lighting design.

For Gerwe, even more than the professional designations, the most valuable aspect of NXT Level training is the wide-ranging educational value offered by the curriculum. For this reason, upon completing his coursework and becoming a NXT Level 2 designee, Gerwe encouraged his full team—from sales and marketing to auditing experts—to earn their NXT Level 2 designations as well.

“NXT Level 2 training has improved our sales process and our audits,” said Gerwe. “We can now give our clients better solutions by giving them better information throughout the sales process. And now we audit with even more detail than before. These tools have given us a new, more well-rounded perspective when we walk into a facility, and it gives us more to discuss with our clients.”



## CHARLIE GERWE



**TITLE:**

**Owner**

**COMPANY:**

**GEL Energy Solutions**

**LOCATION:**

**Bend, OR**

**YEARS OF EXPERIENCE:**

**10**

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Learning to focus on the human benefits of advanced lighting has been an invaluable contribution to our sales process. We're always looking to find ways to bring value to our clients, and NXT Level has given us a variety of tools to help us deliver that value.

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— Charlie Gerwe  
Owner, GEL Energy Solutions

## A MORE HUMAN APPROACH TO LIGHTING

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Gerwe was particularly intrigued by NXT Level 2's focus on the non-energy benefits of advanced lighting. From the ways in which lighting affects human behavior, to strategies in cultivating the best possible visitor experience, NXT Level 2 equips lighting professionals with the latest insight into providing lighting solutions that not only reduce energy costs, but create more productive and comfortable human conditions as well.

“Even beyond the technological advancements, the lighting industry has evolved so much in the last 10 years,” said Gerwe. “It’s not a simple exchange of rebates for LEDs and fluorescent tubes like it used to be. Now, we’re focusing on control integration and designing solutions that increase productivity and safety, and that support human circadian rhythms. By being more knowledgeable, we can provide better outcomes for our customers.”

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After completing NXT Level 2, we became the only lighting contractor in Bend to qualify for the Energy Trust Performance+ designation. It really set us apart.

– Charlie Gerwe

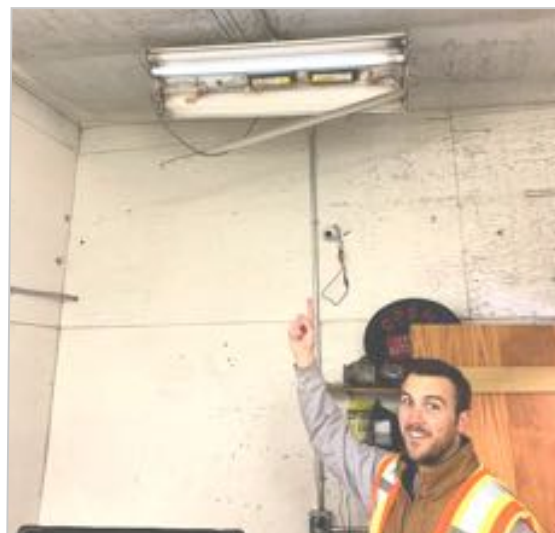
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## ADVANCED SOLUTIONS USING ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY

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For Gerwe, understanding how to teach clients about advanced lighting solutions is as important as understanding the technology itself. He and the GEL Energy Solutions team found particular value in NXT Level 2's coursework related to explaining and selling the value of advanced lighting benefits, including approaches to leveraging lighting benefits to sell projects, crafting well-organized proposals, and conducting and documenting the results of a sales meeting.

“Of course you have to stay on top of the technology so you’re not selling tech that’s already two years old,” said Gerwe. “But we also have to be able to help the customer understand how lighting can support their business goals, regardless of their business type.”



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To learn more about the training, or to find a NXT Level designee in your area, visit [nxtleveltraining.com](http://nxtleveltraining.com).

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- LEVEL -

