# From the Archives:
# How We Rewired Buildings—Without Electricians
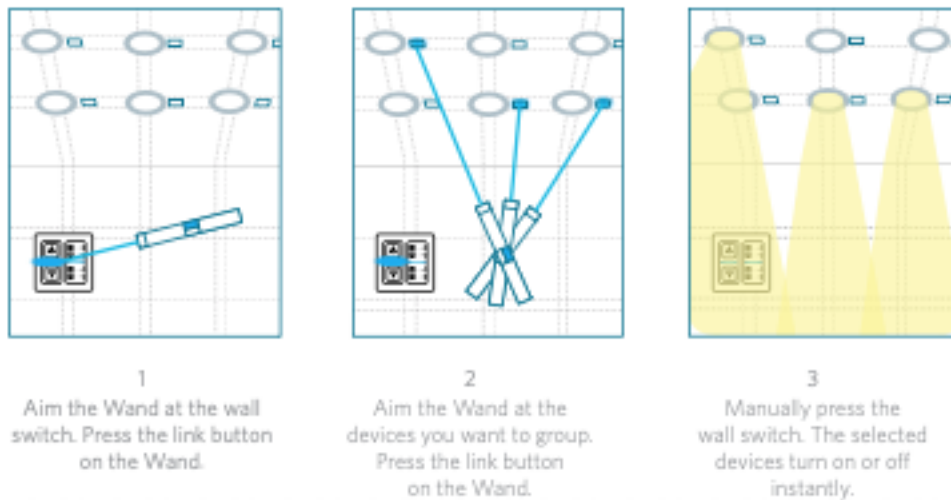
By Randy Storch / Ideon Consulting

In 2005, as part of **Convia**, a division of [Herman Miller](#) created to explore the nexus of **furniture, architecture, and building systems**, we developed a tool that let you reconfigure an entire lighting system—**without an electrician, and without touching a single wire**.



Convia Wand - 2005

We called it the **Wand**.

It looked simple—just a two-button handheld device—but when aimed at a wall switch, it triggered a broadcast protocol embedded in the infrastructure. That signal told nearby light fixtures to open themselves for pairing. The technician would then point the Wand at selected fixtures to instantly link them to the switch.

| 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|
| Aim the Wand at the wall switch. Press the link button on the Wand. | Aim the Wand at the devices you want to group. Press the link button on the Wand. | Manually press the wall switch. The selected devices turn on or off instantly. |

How the Wand worked - 2005

Just like that, lighting zones were redefined. Entire floors could be reconfigured in minutes—**no rewiring, no ceiling tiles pulled, no disruption to operations**.

At the time, we didn't call it "field-driven configuration" or "technician-first design"—but that's exactly what it was. A tool built to empower the people doing the work, with flexibility and control at their fingertips.

Yet even then, we saw a challenge that still lingers today:

**Customers and project stakeholders didn't put enough value on operational flexibility—especially if it added cost on the construction side.** Our solution, despite offering clear long-term savings for facility operations, was often value-engineered out of projects by the construction team. The disciplines remained siloed: **capital budgets prioritized first costs**, while **operational savings were someone else's problem.**

Sound familiar? It should.

This disconnect between design, build, and operate is still one of the biggest hurdles to real smart building progress.

Today, that same spirit of field-enabled configurability lives on in mobile-first, AI-powered platforms that give technicians real-time control and insight. The tools have evolved. The mission remains:

👉 **Empower the people doing the work with technology that works for them.**