

Jean-Jacques Lanzo

8 Misconceptions about Lighting Design *That hold your firm back*



Sirak Phatthiratsanont

For Architects, Interior designers, Landscape designers, Urban Planners.

In this short document, Jean-Jacques Lanzo shares with you, his unique insights into how successful design companies weaponize the Lighting Design for their success while the rest of the profession stay blind to the wake of damage and lost opportunities caused daily in most practices.

As they say : "Ignore it at your own peril !"

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FOREWORD

We visit a lot of design firms and we can say that much: Despite a more challenging economic environment, some companies keep on thriving while others are finding it difficult to cope, and one key of that fact lies in a widely neglected part of the work: The infamous Lighting Design branded as “the Silent Killer” amongst specialists for reasons that will be obvious as you make your way through this document. Most design firms, ignore, bypass or underestimate the potential of lighting design while some others strategically and systematically engage with lighting design as part of their design process and service packaging, gaining extra edges over the competition and covering another dimension of the client's concerns, invariably coming on top of proposals, tenders and competitions. No need to name them, they fill the pages of our architecture magazines. Here some of you might be tempted to think that their access to lighting design as a strategic tool comes as a result of their fame/fortune. The very purpose of this article is to make you aware that the potential of lighting design is lying at no cost in most of the projects you are working on right now, at every stage they may be, even at a rough proposal stage.

As a matter of fact, once we will have all the misconceptions cleared, you may well have the lighting design integrated and working for your firm, as it works for the most prominent international firms, sooner than you think !

Jean-Jacques Lanzo,



MISCONCEPTION 1

"OUR PROJECTS DON'T NEED LIGHTING DESIGN"

A quite classic misconception that often hides the simple fact that most of the architectural design firms never gave a serious thought about Lighting Design.

To put it simply :

A – Whatever design masterpiece you have been creating has been developed with the course of the sun in mind. The sun disappears every evening and until he comes back the next morning, your design becomes inexistent – **WE ARE TALKING ABOUT HALF OF YOUR BUILDING'S LIFETIME.**

B – The modern life is extending further the utilization of the night time, in fact, most of the day time is spent, for an overwhelming part of the population, at work, sitting at their desk and not experiencing your creation under the sun. The experience time starts around 6pm, when work is extending until 10 to 11pm. **NIGHT TIME IS LIKELY TO BE THE TIME YOUR BUILDING IS MOST USED, PERCEIVED AND EXPERIMENTED.**

C – Rare are the building requesting no night use or presence whatsoever.

Now think again... is your project **REALLY** supposed to disappear completely at night? Is this disappearance aligned with the needs of your client? Did your client **REALLY** sign up with you for the design of a part-time building?



MISCONCEPTION 2

"LIGHTING DESIGN IS NOT A PART OF OUR DESIGN SCOPE"

If you have overlooked the lighting design so far, what could we say about your client? Of course, he has overlooked it too... but you are supposed to be the professional!

Most of the clients will not think about it before you leave the scene. And of course, you will not be to blame, as it was not in your scope of work ... The truth is the client will always assume that as an experienced professional, you would have incorporated lighting design in your proposal if you had seen it necessary. The fact that such an important part of the design work (50% of your building life cycle depends directly on it...) flew under your radar for the entire design-to-completion process will speak volumes ... not to the extent of suing you for negligence, no... but enough to never work with you again.

Listen to L.S. Manager of the Beijing Branch of a prominent French Architectural Company:

« We always include Lighting Design in our Packages or suggest a Lighting Consultant, to follow our design implementation. Sometimes the client refuses but when the moment comes for him to regret his choice, we can truthfully state that we gave him this choice and stressed the importance of Lighting Design in his project. Our professional ability is never questioned »

Beyond the business aspect of offering a great and comprehensive service to your client (and this is the trend in our industry), Integrating the Lighting Design to your scope allows you to actually have a look and a say on the night appearance and use of your building.

As technical as Lighting Design might be, it is above all a design discipline lining up with the architectural intends and redefining it at night. MEP, Structure, HVAC are only occasionally an important part in your architectural design. Lighting Design ALWAYS is. And it is time for you to double the value of your designs by extending your awareness to lighting design.



MISCONCEPTION 3

“OUR CLIENT DO NOT CARE ABOUT LIGHTING DESIGN”

This was debatable few years back and is nowadays clearly wrong. Taking the example of China, we would all agree, real estate companies have been climbing the learning curve quite fast. Their working environment has been made harder and harder by successive regulations to cool down the market. In response, efficiency has supplanted the once lavish style of management. Real professionals are increasingly in charge of projects developments and yes, they make your life a lot tougher. But their awareness about qualitative design is greater and it is their input that pushes local real estate companies to contract international design companies. They are more often than not, open to the values that lighting design brings to their projects. They are just thinking that the move should come from you. Specific sectors as Offices, Retail or Residential are heavily relying on lighting design to carry their brand in the cityscape, enhance sales and keep operational costs under control. Other Sectors as Hospitality, hold Lighting design as critical for the success of the venture. Your client knows most of it and finds it natural that you handle it. If you do not pro-actively address these needs, someone else will, (Electrical engineer, Lamp reseller....) with no concern for your design. Jeopardizing the quality of your work, exposing your level of commitment to the project thus damaging the trust of your client.

As Miss H.Y. executive in a large development firm in Asia says:

“We usually don’t have to go places to hire lighting designers. We strictly select our architects amongst the best in the world and literally none of them comes to us without their lighting consultant. We refused for our first development and never did this mistake again”



MISCONCEPTION 4

“WE CAN DO IT ON OUR OWN”

In recent discussions with several architects, we found out that some (and I mean amongst the few aware of the existence and importance of the lighting design) actually decided to take care themselves of the lighting design. Most regret it and say that they felt the project was small and easy. They all ended up handing the full project over to a lamp reseller, unable to understand their architectural intent and obviously trying to sell as much as possible of its most expensive items.

Beyond the design ability of the lighting designer which is his capacity to provide a second life to your design, lies a real world of cold expertise and calculations that can never be overlooked without consequences... amongst other things and in no particular order, you will have to be aware of :

- The color temperature (2700, 3000, 4200, 5000 degrees Kelvin ...)
- The glare control
- The optical control (conical or elliptical, 10, 30, 60 degrees ...)
- The choice of sources (Fluorescent, Metal Halide, Led...)
- The power (very important)
- The grouping and control system (Control Panel Configuration, Scenes Control, DALI, DMX...)
- The color rendition indices
- The Protection indices (IP 23, IP 55, IP66 ...)
- The maintenance factor...

If those items are familiar and easy to work with for you then we are colleagues! Otherwise, it is legitimate and honorable to want to further your design reach but it is advisable to get a professional to help you. Especially if you are under the scrutiny of your client, It might be the right time to discuss with him the need for a lighting consultant: just as the client cannot request from you to perform the structures or VAC calculations without a specialist, He cannot expect you to provide a serious lighting design, without the involvement of a lighting designer.



MISCONCEPTION 5

“OUR DESIGN IS NOT FULLY FINISHED...WE DON'T NEED LIGHTING DESIGN YET”

This misconception is as well a classic one. As soon as you have a project secured is the right time to involve a lighting consultant at your side! For the lighting design, there is a de facto closing process of possibilities as the design process evolves. The earlier lighting is entering the thinking process, the closer to your conceptual core it is. As architects, planner, landscape or interior designer you can easily tell the difference. One fundamental and purposefully not publicized aspect of savings and energy efficiency is that the glittering technological lamps and fancy systems are just the paper thin and superficial last layer of the optimization potential in your project. Design is the real deal when it comes to saving energy while enhancing your spaces quality. While the final choice of lamps and control system can painfully yet loudly save you 10% to 20% in energy consumption, a correctly led design process can silently eradicate up to 60% just by coordinating and hierarchizing, spaces and function at an early stage. This kind of performance makes your practice effortlessly stand out. In conclusion, lighting design is better performed when integrated into a project since its beginning.



MISCONCEPTION 6

“WE ARE STILL TRYING TO GET THE PROJECT... WE DON'T NEED LIGHTING DESIGN YET”

Well... All the above about integration is true but our studio is known to be active with architects in the phase PRIOR securing the project. Our deep understanding of the architectural industry has put us at the heart of the untold warfare that is fought every day by each practice to secure projects.

Can you imagine what kind of shadow you cast on your concurrent when you have a lighting design chapter in your proposal while the others don't?

Exactly!

You just explained how crucial lighting would be for this project in term of image, operation and how it will support the excellence of your design. Your client is now aware that a great deal of the success of his project lies in the way the lighting will be handled ... and discover that none of your concurrent even thought about it. You basically create a vacuum. Many practices work hard to present a great design but they might just be push out just because another practice made them look amateurish and neglectful. This is one reason why we call lighting design the silent killer: because nobody will ever tell you why you lost that project. We work a lot in competition and proposal preparation steps with prominent architectural companies that have understood that, of course, they will not win just because they have a lighting design scheme, but at least will not lose just because they had no lighting design scheme. So yes, for those in the know, the best time to involve a lighting consultant on your project is before the project even starts.



MISCONCEPTION 7

“THE CONSTRUCTION HAS STARTED ... TOO LATE FOR LIGHTING DESIGN ”

We have heard that one quite often too. When the building is getting near completion, the reality of the night appearance of your project become obvious and sometimes alarming. It is often at this stage that you have to explain that it had never been included in your scope (meaning: you'll ask your client to find himself a solution and not bother you with this...). Needless to say that it is a pity to get that far without even pushing this opportunity and that the chances of a seamless integration are now quite low. But a skilled lighting designer can minimize the damage and even turn it into a great work (Well... unfortunately a large part of our activity is precisely about that.)

Some clever architectural firms have even transformed this problem into a way to further their presence and exposure to their client (always a great option when the project is getting to an end and when some repeated business would be a blessing) and distinguishing themselves by displaying great problem solving abilities (OK, it was not in the scope... but let me help you manage this critical last step...). Some even play the card of the exclusive service (Ok, just because it is you, we get back into this project again to solve the lighting design, we want it done well for you!).

R.J. Asian Director of one of the top 10 US architectural firms:

“We soon realized that lighting design was the last design element in the project and often the last installed system on our buildings. Being there, in charge, until the building is completed, functional and illuminated has always been perceived by our clients as committed and supportive. Few other practices get that far, we simply stand out. On the marketing point of view, it gives me more legitimate chances to meet with the client’s team and discuss further projects until the very end of the construction.”



MISCONCEPTION 8

“ADDING LIGHTING DESIGN WILL COST US PART OF OUR DESIGN FEE ”

Let us face it: just after the architects and other design professionals not knowing that lighting design could be used, this is the second reason why many projects lack lighting design: Who want to give away a chunk of its hard earned (and never quite sufficient) design fees? Nobody!! (not us for sure !!)

You might think that only the successful, famous and therefore rich architecture companies can afford this kind of luxury that make them every time even more successful, but the truth is that using the services of a professional lighting design firm is FREE for you.

You can be a poor twenty-something architect, struggling on its own in its garage, The new Conceptual Netherland sensation with your team of 20 and articles in every architectural magazine or a global architectural corporation with 400 staffs and offices on 4 continents, this does not change the fact that your access to the best lighting design services cannot be paid by you but directly or not by your client.

It is every time a shock for us to find out that this is not a widespread knowledge in the profession, to the point we end up thinking this might actually be a secret amongst a handful of wise professionals.

Of course, at Liquidesign we had to push the point further and the companies that have dealt with us have actually earned more fees (a significant amounts in fact) by incorporating our services in their packages. Being paid extra money to add value to your projects, secure more project with your clients, protect your proposal, literally crush the competition and thrive amongst the top architecture firms worldwide!! believe it or not ... some firms are still “not interested” !!



CONCLUSION

As I stated in the beginning of this series of articles, the trend toward the integration of specialized services under the scope of leading design practices is well alive. Lighting design is the natural complement to a successful professional practice whose culture is to deliver the highest possible value to its clients.

You do not have to wait, hope and plan to have the lighting design to become an integral part of your design practice. You may be having your very own Lighting Design Department up and running for free before the day is over, simply by contacting us.

We are a global lighting design studio with a very special understanding of your industry that we have served with efficiency and dedication for the last decade over 4 continents. We are currently extending our collaboration base with great Architecture, Interior, Landscape, Planning companies of any size, anywhere ..

Express interest by email now : jj.lanzo@liquidesign.org (we can handle each year only a limited amount of new partnerships, do not wait too long!!)

Find out more about us: <http://www.pro.liquidesign.org>



ABOUT US



LIQUIDESIGN / LLD Group

From inception in 2007, Liquidesign has taken the construction design world by storm, empowering the various building environment professionals (architects, landscape, urban and interior designers, developers, government decision makers) with a deep and holistic integration of lighting design matching their own ethos, creativity and contextualism, to deliver striking qualities of spaces at night. It is no surprise that our group of pluri-disciplinary professionals, cumulating years of expertise and focused communication with the business and operation world, gave birth to the full concept of Strategic Lighting. Strategic Lighting acknowledges that Lighting Technology can develop peak performance only at the service of a great Lighting Design and that Lighting Design can only reach its full purpose when properly integrated in the other Design Fields while advancing a clearly defined and integrated Lighting Strategy.



LIQUIDESIGN Professional Edition

After years successfully servicing Investors, Operators, Developers, Corporations and Institutions Worldwide. We have grown increasingly aware that Architects, Interior Designers, Landscape designers and Urban Planners never approached experienced lighting designers, especially when delivering a design that stays relevant 24 hours a day instead of just during the course of the sun become an expectation of clients worldwide.

We are the first lighting design company to create a division tasked to remotely assist designers around the world at a cost that make sense with the extent of their projects. Our initiative scales our approach to better understand and help them at the most critical steps of their lighting journey.

CONTACT

email : pro@liquidesign.org
website : www.pro.liquidesign.org



AUTHOR

Jean-Jacques LANZO

*Planner & Architect DPLG - Senior, Lighting Expert
Founder and Design Director of LIQUIDESIGN*



jj.lanzo@liquidesign.org / www.pro.liquidesign.org [Lighting Design]
www.jjlanzo.com / jj.lanzo@jjlanzo.com [Architecture / Planning / Lighting]

French Architect and town planner with a specialized master degree in Asian Cities from Paris-La-Villette Superior National School of Architecture, holding more than 20 years of international design with expertise ranging from architecture to interior design, lighting design, urban planning and development over 4 continents, Jean-Jacques is above all energetic and passionate about creating spaces that improve lives in many ways.

His personal, often artistic approach to forms and materials is always enhanced by his deep understanding of the underlying context and unique mechanisms at work in every project. His work encompasses everything space-design related from large scale projects to smaller endeavors with always in mind the quest for the perfect balance of simplicity, efficiency, elegance, connectivity and sense.

His Involvement with Lighting Design developed professionally during his formative years and allowed him to push projects through Europe, the Middle East and Asia while completing his architectural studies. He embraced long before the rest of the profession the rise of Led Lighting and therefore possess a thorough understanding of its applications, its potential and its control. His projects are described as very architectural as they tend to fusion with the concept of the structures but as well as futuristic since, through animation, he is always pushing forward the possibilities of the solid state lighting (LEDs) as an interactive medium of light and of culture.

The efficiency and sustainability of the lighting systems is as well in the center of his practice, accumulating millions of dollar saved on energy savings. From daring art concepts until complex engineering and completion, very few match his level of expertise in architectural lighting design and engineering.

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*Thanks for your attention
And all the best in your Design
Endeavors*

*Jean-Jacques
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Sirakha Phan Thiratsanont