

## Intercultural Intelligence: How to Turn Cultural Difference into a Key Added Value with Tree Lighting Design Project Examples

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**Abstract :** Today work environment is more multicultural than ever: spatial limits have been blown out, encouraging people and ideas mobility all around the globe. Indeed, opportunities to design with culturally diverse team workers, clients, or end-users, have become within everyone's reach. We enjoy traveling to discover other civilizations, but when it comes to business, we often take for granted that our own work methodology will be generic enough to federate each party and cover the project needs. This paper aims to explore why, by skipping cultural awareness, we often create misunderstandings, frustration, and even counterproductive design. Tree lighting projects successively developed by a French lighting studio, a Vietnamese lighting studio, and an Australian Engineering company will be assessed from their concept stage to completion. All these study cases are based in Vietnam, where the construction market is equally led by local and international consultants. Core criteria such as lighting standard reference, service scope, communication tools, internal team organization, delivery package content, key priorities, and client relationship will help to spot and list when and how cultural diversity has impacted the design output and effectiveness. On the second hand, we will demonstrate through the same selected projects how intercultural intelligence tools and mindset can not only respond positively to previous situations and avoid major clashes but also turn cultural differences into a key added value to generate significant benefits for individuals, teams, and companies. By understanding the major importance of including a cultural factor within any design, intercultural intelligence will quickly turn out as a "must have" skill to be developed and acquired by any designer.

**Keywords :** intercultural intelligence, lighting design, work methodology, multicultural diversity

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