



B U S I N E S S P L A N · I N D I A

Lighting Design & Solutions

Architectural and decorative lighting design with photometric simulation and measured commissioning

INTERIOR DESIGN & FURNISHING

AISEVAK.IN · BY ABL DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

August 2026

This document is confidential and prepared for planning purposes. All financial figures are illustrative model assumptions for an Indian MSME context and must be validated against live quotes, local rates and professional advice before any investment or borrowing decision.

1. Executive Summary

This plan sets out a **Lighting Design & Solutions** practice in India — providing **architectural and decorative lighting design** for hospitality, retail, commercial, residential, facade and landscape projects: concept and mood development, photometric calculation and simulation, fixture and control specification, mock-ups, site supervision, and **commissioning with measured verification**.

This is the vertical's second fee-based design model. It shares the interior design studio's structure — staged fees, utilisation economics, referral-led selling — and those are assumed rather than restated. **What distinguishes it is that lighting design has a genuine technical core that general interior design does not.**

Lighting is the one design discipline in this vertical that can prove it was right. Illuminance in lux, uniformity ratios, correlated colour temperature, colour rendering index, unified glare rating, beam angles and lighting power density are **engineering quantities — calculable in advance, simulable before construction, and measurable at handover with an instrument.** An interior designer's proposition rests on judgement that cannot be verified; **a lighting designer can commission the installation, take readings, and demonstrate that the space performs to the numbers specified.** That is a real and unusual asset in a design practice, and this plan builds the business around it: **commissioning and measured verification is charged as a separate service line growing to 14.3% of revenue, and projects commissioned and measured at handover rise from 38% to 76%.**

The commercial conflict, however, is structurally worse here than in general interior design — and it must be confronted rather than mentioned. The design studio plan noted that suppliers pay designers commissions on what gets specified. In lighting the leverage is far greater: **a fee of roughly 1.2% of the fixture value it directs means a ₹6 lakh design fee can determine a ₹1.2 crore luminaire package. A 10% supplier commission on that package would be twice the entire fee.** The temptation is therefore not marginal, it is overwhelming, and a practice that takes it has stopped being a design consultancy in any meaningful sense. **This plan accepts no supplier commission — and pairs that policy with the technical answer, which is more robust than a promise: SPECIFY BY PERFORMANCE, NOT BY BRAND.** A specification written as lumens, beam angle, CRI, CCT tolerance, UGR and driver life is one that several manufacturers can meet — **and when the designer names no one, there is nobody positioned to pay them.** Performance-based specification rises here from 55% to 90% of projects.

Two market realities complete the picture. First, **most Indian projects still treat lighting as a procurement line rather than a design discipline** — an electrical contractor's item, priced per point — so **the practice must sell the existence of the service before it can sell itself**, which is slow, unbillable and the main reason Year 1 loses money. Second, **the work is judged after dark, months later, when nobody remembers who specified what** — and by then the contractor has value-engineered fixtures, the electrician has installed them at the wrong aiming angle, and the client has replaced a failed lamp with whatever the shop had. **The designer receives the credit or the blame regardless**, which is precisely why commissioning and measurement matter commercially and not just technically.

This plan models a practice requiring **₹55 lakh** (₹30 lakh promoter + ₹8 lakh term loan + ₹17 lakh working-capital finance), moving from **₹1.78 crore revenue and a ₹16 lakh loss** in Year 1 to **₹4.75 crore revenue and ₹37 lakh profit** by Year 3, directing roughly ₹39 crore of fixture value. (*Lighting design; utilisation-driven, specification-integrity dependent — figures illustrative.*)

2. Business Description, Vision & Legal Structure

Concept: An independent lighting design practice — concept and mood development, photometric calculation and simulation, daylight integration, fixture and control-system specification, mock-ups and trials, tender documentation, site supervision, and commissioning with measured verification, across hospitality, retail, commercial, residential, facade and landscape projects.

Vision: To hand over a space where the readings match the drawings.

Mission: Specify performance, not brands; take nothing from any supplier; mock up before we commit a client to a look; and come back at night with a meter to prove it works.

Legal structure options

- **Private Limited** — suits hospitality groups, retail chains and corporate clients, and any ambition to scale beyond the founder.
- **LLP** — a natural fit for a partner-led consultancy.
- **Proprietorship** — workable for a solo practitioner but limits institutional appointment.

Regulatory anchor: lighting is a designed system with real compliance content. **The Energy Conservation Building Code and state ECBC/ENS rules set lighting power density limits for commercial buildings** — a designed installation must demonstrate compliance, which is one of the strongest arguments for engaging a designer at all. **National Building Code provisions and workplace standards govern illuminance levels and emergency lighting**, and **emergency and egress lighting is a life-safety system with its own duration, illuminance and testing requirements** — **it is not a design flourish and cannot be value-engineered away**. Luminaires and drivers sold in India fall under **BIS requirements for LED products, with mandatory registration for specified categories**, and photometric claims should be supported by test data from an accredited laboratory. **Facade and outdoor lighting attracts obtrusive-light and local-authority conditions**, and in ecologically sensitive or coastal locations, restrictions on spill light are increasingly applied. Contracts should carry scope, stage sign-offs, revision limits, a written no-commission declaration, and professional indemnity cover.

3. Promoter & Ownership

Led by a promoter with lighting design, architectural or electrical-engineering background. Three competences decide outcomes: *photometric and simulation capability*, which is what separates this practice from an interior designer choosing fittings; *specification discipline* — writing performance specifications that survive procurement rather than brand lists that invite substitution; and *commissioning capability*, because a design that is not aimed, focused, programmed and measured is not delivered. Technical depth, specification integrity, commissioning rigour & independence from suppliers are the differentiators. Ownership, equity & any partner are editable inputs.

4. Market Analysis — India

Demand is driven by hospitality development and refurbishment, retail experience investment, workplace quality standards, HNI residential projects, facade and urban lighting programmes, and energy-code compliance in commercial buildings. Demand is growing but the category is still being established. The market rewards demonstrable technical capability; it is **education-dependent, fee-constrained and substitution-exposed**.

Demand drivers

- **Hospitality** — hotels and restaurants where lighting is substantially the product, and the segment most willing to pay for design.
- **Retail**, where lighting demonstrably affects how merchandise reads and how long customers stay — the clearest commercial return in the market.
- **Workplace quality and energy codes**, with glare and lighting-power-density requirements pushing offices toward designed rather than assembled solutions.
- **HNI residential** and architect-led homes where lighting is treated as part of the architecture.
- **Facade, landscape and urban lighting** programmes, including municipal and heritage projects.

Market sizing (illustrative framing)

Layer	Definition	Indicative scale
TAM	Indian lighting spend across built projects	Very large (fixture value)
SAM	Projects that engage a lighting designer at all	Small share of TAM
SOM (Yr 1–3)	Projects designed & fixture value directed	~26 → ~64 projects

The gap between TAM and SAM is the defining commercial fact of this practice, and it is a market-education problem before it is a sales problem. Almost every building in India is lit; **very few engage anyone to design the lighting.** The work is usually done by the electrical contractor from a fixture catalogue, or by the interior designer as one of many decisions. **So a lighting practice spends much of its early effort persuading clients that a discipline exists, at its own cost, in meetings that are not billable** — and it will lose several of those arguments to a contractor quoting a lower point rate. The practical response is to concentrate on the segments where the value is self-evident and the argument is already won: **hospitality, where lighting is the product; and retail, where its effect on sales is measurable.** Those two carry 58% of revenue here for exactly that reason, and they fund the slower education of everyone else.

Target segments

- **Hotels, resorts and F&B** — highest willingness to pay, most design-intensive.
- **Retail chains and flagship stores** — measurable commercial return, rollout potential.
- **Corporate offices** — glare, uniformity and energy-code compliance driven.
- **HNI residential**, usually reached through architects and interior designers.
- **Facade, landscape, museums and heritage** — specialist, prestige, portfolio-building.

5. Competition & Competitive Advantage

Landscape: a small number of established lighting consultancies, architects and interior designers specifying lighting themselves, **lighting manufacturers offering "free design" against fixture supply**, electrical consultants, and electrical contractors specifying from catalogues. **The most difficult competitor is the manufacturer giving design away — and it is worth being precise about why.**

The business's edge

- **Independence** — no supplier commission and no fixture supply, so the specification serves the project rather than an inventory.
- **Photometric proof** — simulated in advance, measured at handover, which no catalogue-based approach can offer.

- **Performance specification** that survives procurement without inviting substitution.
- **Mock-up discipline**, letting clients see light before committing to it.
- **Controls and commissioning capability**, which is where most lighting installations quietly fail.

On manufacturer "free design", plainly and without disparagement: a manufacturer's design service is competent, often excellent, and genuinely free — **because it is a sales function, and its output will necessarily specify that manufacturer's catalogue.** That is not dishonest; it is what it is for, and for many projects it is entirely adequate. **The distinction worth explaining to a client is narrow but real: a manufacturer's designer selects the best solution available within one catalogue, while an independent practice selects the best solution available.** Where those coincide, the client has saved a fee. **Where they do not, the client will never know** — and on a ₹1.2 crore luminaire package, the difference between the best fitting for the space and the best fitting in one range is worth considerably more than the design fee that would have found it.

6. Services & Revenue Model

Service	Basis	Share
Hospitality lighting design	Per sq ft / staged lump sum	~33% — best fees
Retail & commercial lighting design	Per sq ft / per store	Rollout potential
Residential & HNI lighting design	Staged lump sum	Architect-referred
Commissioning, control programming & measurement	Separately charged	12.4% → 14.3% — the proof
Facade, landscape & architectural lighting	Project fee	Specialist, prestige

Charging separately for commissioning is the structural decision that makes this practice different from the interior design studio, and the reason is not only revenue. A lighting design delivered as drawings is a set of intentions; **the installation only becomes the design when fixtures are aimed, beams are focused, dimming curves are set, scenes are programmed and the result is measured.** Fold that into the design fee and it becomes the first thing sacrificed when the fee is negotiated — after which the practice's work is judged on an installation it never finished. **Charged separately, it is visible, optional and defensible, and the client who declines it has knowingly bought drawings rather than lighting.** It is also, not incidentally, **the only service in this vertical whose delivery can be demonstrated with an instrument** — which makes it the easiest thing the practice sells to justify and the hardest for a competitor to fake.

7. Go-to-Market — Architects First, Clients Second

Winning work

- **Architect and interior-designer relationships** — the dominant referral channel, since lighting is usually appointed on their recommendation.
- **Hospitality operators and retail chains** directly, where lighting standards are set centrally and roll out across properties.
- **Portfolio photographed at night**, professionally — the practice's entire marketing asset, and useless if shot badly.
- **Technical talks and CPD sessions** for architects, which are simultaneously marketing and the market education the category needs.

Keeping it

- **Protecting the design through procurement**, which is what a repeat client values most after their first substitution experience.
- **Commissioning properly**, so the finished space matches what was presented.
- **Being available at night** — this discipline's site work happens after dark, and practices that avoid it deliver worse projects.
- **Rollout consistency** for chains, where store twenty must look like store one.

Sales approach

Build architect relationships as the primary channel → concentrate on hospitality and retail where the value argument is already won → publish measured results and night photography → sell commissioning as a distinct, defensible service → and **decline projects where the fee cannot fund proper mock-ups and commissioning**. That discipline matters because **a lighting practice's reputation is built entirely on completed spaces, and a project delivered as unsupervised drawings will be judged as though it were designed badly**. In a category still establishing itself, one visibly poor outcome does more damage than three declined commissions.

8. Operations Plan (concept, calculate, mock up, specify, commission)

- **Brief & concept**: use of space, mood, hours of operation, daylight availability and the client's own visual references.
- **Photometric calculation & simulation**: illuminance, uniformity, glare and energy density modelled before anything is bought.
- **Mock-ups & trials**: **light must be seen to be judged — a rendered image is a persuasion tool, not evidence**, and a mock-up settles arguments a simulation cannot.
- **Specification**: **performance-based — lumen package, beam angle, CRI, CCT and colour-consistency tolerance, UGR, driver life, dimming protocol and IP rating** — with brands referenced only as acceptable equivalents.
- **Controls design**: zoning, scenes, protocols (DALI, DMX, wireless) and daylight or occupancy response.
- **Tender & evaluation support**: **assessing proposed substitutions against the specification rather than against the price**.
- **Site supervision**: aiming, focusing, glare checks and coordination with ceiling and joinery trades.
- **Commissioning & measurement**: scene programming, dimming curves, and **recorded lux, uniformity and UGR readings at handover**.

Project stages

Stage	Deliverable	Control point
Concept	Mood, strategy, references	Sign-off; revisions used
Calculate	Simulation & energy compliance	Lux, uniformity, UGR, LPD
Mock up	Physical trial on site	Mock-ups held before commitment
Specify	Performance specification	Specified by performance, not brand
Defend	Substitution evaluation	Design intent surviving VE
Commission	Aim, program, measure	Measured at handover

Value engineering is where lighting designs die, and the mechanism is specific enough to be worth setting out. A specified fixture at ₹8,000 is offered as an "equivalent" at ₹2,500. **The lumen output matches on paper — and nothing else does.** The beam angle is wider, so the pool of light lands where it was not intended; the CRI is lower, so materials, food and skin read badly; **the colour consistency between units is uncontrolled, so a row of identical downlights visibly differs in tint;** the glare is unshielded because the substitute lacks the specified cut-off; and the driver fails in eighteen months. **The client approves the saving because the datasheet appears comparable, and experiences the consequence every evening for a decade without ever connecting the two.** This is the same invisible-substitution family as plating thickness, board grade and unsealed acoustic partitions elsewhere in this library — **but lighting is where it is most consequential, because it is the only one the occupant sees continuously.** The defence is technical rather than rhetorical: **specify the properties that differ (CRI, SDCM colour tolerance, UGR, driver life, beam angle) rather than only lumens and watts,** and evaluate substitutions against those. **A specification that lists only lumens and wattage has invited the substitution it will later be blamed for.**

9. Regulatory, Standards & Professional Conduct (India)

- **Energy code:** ECBC and state energy-conservation rules set lighting power density limits for commercial buildings, with compliance demonstrated by calculation — one of the strongest reasons to engage a designer.
- **Illuminance & workplace standards** under National Building Code provisions and applicable workplace requirements.
- **Emergency & egress lighting: a life-safety system with duration, illuminance and testing requirements — not a design element and not available for value engineering.**
- **Product compliance:** BIS requirements and mandatory registration for specified LED categories; photometric claims supported by accredited-laboratory test data — and **a datasheet without a test report is a marketing document.**
- **Outdoor & facade lighting:** obtrusive-light limits, local-authority conditions and, in ecologically sensitive or coastal areas, restrictions on spill light.
- **Professional conduct: a written no-commission declaration to clients,** disclosure of any supplier relationship, and professional indemnity cover — the specification directs sums many times the fee.
- **Contracts:** scope, stage sign-offs, revision limits, commissioning scope, and IP in drawings and calculations.

10. Organisation & Manpower Plan

Role	Yr 1	Yr 2	Yr 3
Promoter / principal lighting designer	1	1	2
Lighting designers	8	13	20
Lighting engineers & simulation	5	9	14
Commissioning & controls specialists	3	6	10
Site coordination & supervision	3	5	8
Client servicing & business development	2	4	6
Admin & accounts	2	3	5
Total	24	41	65

Engineers and commissioning specialists together are a third of the practice — that ratio is what makes this a technical consultancy rather than a taste business, and it is the reason the practice can offer measured performance where a general design studio can only offer an opinion.

11. Implementation Timeline & Milestones

Phase	Timeline	Milestone
Setup	Month 0-3	Studio, simulation software, measurement instruments, mock-up room, architect outreach
Ramp	Month 3-12	~26 projects; ₹1.78cr revenue, ₹16L loss; performance-spec at 55%
Grow	Year 2	Utilisation 68%, VE survival 62%; ₹2.95cr, ₹4L profit
Scale	Year 3	₹4.75cr revenue, ₹37L profit; 90% performance-specified, 76% measured at handover

12. Financial Plan (Illustrative)

*All figures are illustrative model assumptions for an Indian context, shown so the promoter can replace them with live rates. **Utilisation, commissioning attach rate, design-intent survival and segment mix are the levers — and independence from supplier commission is modelled as a permanent policy, not a variable.***

12.1 Project cost & means of finance

Capital requirement	₹
Working capital (salaries & receivables funding)	22,00,000
Simulation software, photometric tools & measurement instruments	11,00,000
Studio, mock-up room & sample library	9,00,000
Brand, portfolio, night photography & website	6,00,000
Team training, certification & recruitment	4,00,000
Legal, registrations & launch	2,00,000
Site measurement & commissioning equipment	1,00,000
Total project cost	55,00,000
Promoter contribution	30,00,000
Working-capital finance	17,00,000
Term loan	8,00,000

12.2 Projected Profit & Loss (3 years)

Particulars	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Hospitality lighting design	58,00,000	92,00,000	1,45,00,000
Retail & commercial lighting design	46,00,000	78,00,000	1,28,00,000
Residential & HNI lighting design	34,00,000	52,00,000	78,00,000

Commissioning, control programming & measurement	22,00,000	40,00,000	68,00,000
Facade, landscape & architectural lighting	18,00,000	33,00,000	56,00,000
Total revenue	1,78,00,000	2,95,00,000	4,75,00,000
Salaries (designers, engineers, commissioning, admin)	1,08,00,000	1,68,00,000	2,58,00,000
Studio, rent, overheads & insurance	20,00,000	28,00,000	42,00,000
Marketing, portfolio, night photography & BD	18,00,000	24,00,000	34,00,000
Site travel, measurement & commissioning	14,00,000	22,00,000	34,00,000
Software, simulation licences & photometric data	14,00,000	20,00,000	28,00,000
Mock-ups, samples & trials	10,00,000	15,00,000	22,00,000
Depreciation, interest & other	6,00,000	8,00,000	11,00,000
Professional fees, legal & compliance	4,00,000	6,00,000	9,00,000
Total expenses	1,94,00,000	2,91,00,000	4,38,00,000
Net profit / (loss) before tax	(16,00,000)	4,00,000	37,00,000
Net margin	(9.0%)	1.4%	7.8%
Salaries as % of revenue	60.7%	56.9%	54.3%
Designer utilisation	58%	68%	75%
Specified by PERFORMANCE, not brand	55%	74%	90%
Design intent surviving value engineering	46%	62%	78%
Projects commissioned & measured at handover	38%	58%	76%
Supplier commissions accepted	NIL	NIL	NIL
Fixture value directed (₹ cr)	~14	~24	~39
<i>Fee as % of fixture value directed</i>	1.27%	1.23%	1.22%
Projects completed	~26	~42	~64

12.3 Unit economics & break-even

- **The fee-to-fixture ratio is the single most revealing line in this plan.** At roughly **1.2% of the value it directs**, the practice earns a fraction of what a supplier would happily pay it to specify their catalogue. **That ratio is the conflict, expressed numerically** — and it explains why performance-based specification is treated as a control rather than a preference.
- **Utilisation is the profit driver**, as in any consultancy: salaries are 54–61% of revenue and are paid whether or not a designer is on a chargeable project. 58% to 75% is the difference between the loss and the profit.
- **Commissioning is high-margin and self-justifying** — it requires instruments and specialists the practice already funds, and it is the only deliverable that can be demonstrated rather than argued.
- **Mock-ups at ₹10-22 lakh are an investment, not an overhead:** they prevent the late-stage change that consumes far more design time, and they settle disagreements a rendering cannot.

- **Break-even:** Year 2. **Year 1's ₹16 lakh loss is larger proportionally than the interior design studio's, and for a specific reason: this practice must also fund the education of a market that does not yet know the service exists.**

12.4 Projected Cash Flow — Year 1 (quarterly, illustrative)

Particulars (₹)	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Opening balance	32,00,000	20,00,000	14,00,000	8,00,000
Collections	38,00,000	42,00,000	44,00,000	48,00,000
Salaries, studio, software, mock-ups & overheads	50,00,000	48,00,000	50,00,000	44,00,000
Closing balance	20,00,000	14,00,000	8,00,000	12,00,000

The cash pattern follows the design studio's — monthly salaries against staged fees — with one addition specific to this discipline: the commissioning fee is earned last and is the most exposed. Lighting is commissioned at the very end of a project, **after the interior is complete, after the client has moved in, and after every other consultant has been paid.** By then the budget is exhausted, the client is impatient to occupy, and the pressure to "just switch it on and finish later" is considerable. **A practice that has left a meaningful share of its fee to be collected at that moment has placed it where it is least likely to be paid.** The structural answers are simple: **weight design fees toward concept and detailing stages, contract commissioning as a separate engagement with its own payment terms, and invoice site supervision monthly in arrears rather than at completion.** And one practical note — **commissioning happens at night, over several visits, and is genuinely labour-intensive;** a practice that prices it as a single site visit has priced the wrong service.

12.5 Key Performance Indicators to Monitor

- **Technical integrity:** projects specified by performance rather than brand; design intent surviving value engineering; measured lux/UGR vs. designed; substitutions evaluated and documented.
- **Delivery:** projects commissioned and measured at handover; mock-ups held before commitment; controls fully programmed at handover.
- **Practice:** designer utilisation; fee realised vs. quoted; commissioning attach rate; revisions beyond contracted rounds billed.
- **Integrity:** supplier commissions accepted (target: nil) and no-commission declarations issued; supplier relationships disclosed.

13. Funding Requirement & Bankability

Total ask: **₹17 lakh working-capital finance plus ₹8 lakh term loan** against ₹30 lakh promoter contribution — the smallest requirement in this vertical. Four points frame it. **First, there is essentially nothing to hypothecate:** software licences, instruments and a sample library, so this is an MSME/CGTMSE proposition assessed on pipeline and people. **Second, working capital funds a payroll-versus-stage-fee gap** and should be sized to roughly two months of salary. **Third, the Year 1 loss is proportionally larger than a general design studio's and the reason should be stated rather than smoothed:** this practice is **funding market education in a category many clients do not yet know exists**, which is a real cost that produces no billable output. **Fourth, and specific to this discipline, the independence policy is a credit consideration.** A lighting practice earning undisclosed supplier commissions has revenue that **does not appear in its accounts, is not contracted, and vanishes the moment a client discovers it** — so a practice charging proper fees may look less profitable on paper and is materially more bankable in substance.

13.1 Funding utilisation

Use of funds	₹	% of total
Working capital (salaries & receivables funding)	22,00,000	40.0%
Simulation software, photometric tools & measurement instruments	11,00,000	20.0%
Studio, mock-up room & sample library	9,00,000	16.4%
Brand, portfolio, night photography & website	6,00,000	10.9%
Team training, certification & recruitment	4,00,000	7.3%
Legal, registrations & launch	2,00,000	3.6%
Site measurement & commissioning equipment	1,00,000	1.8%
Total	55,00,000	100%

14. Risk Analysis & Mitigation

Risk	Mitigation
Supplier-commission conflict	Structurally worse than in general interior design — a ₹6L fee can direct a ₹1.2cr package, and a 10% commission would be TWICE the fee. Accept none and declare it in writing; and use the technical answer, which is more robust than a promise: SPECIFY BY PERFORMANCE, NOT BY BRAND — when the designer names no one, there is nobody positioned to pay them (55% → 90%)
Value engineering destroying the design	A ₹8,000 fixture replaced by a ₹2,500 "equivalent": the lumens match and nothing else does — wider beam, lower CRI, uncontrolled colour consistency, unshielded glare, driver failing in 18 months. Specify the properties that DIFFER (CRI, SDCM tolerance, UGR, driver life, beam angle), not only lumens and watts — a specification listing only lumens has invited the substitution it will later be blamed for; evaluate substitutions formally (VE survival 46% → 78%)
Design never commissioned	A design delivered as drawings is a set of intentions; the installation becomes the design only when fixtures are aimed, beams focused, curves set, scenes programmed and results measured. Charge commissioning separately so it is not the first thing sacrificed in fee negotiation; 38% → 76% measured at handover
Judged after dark, months later, for others' errors	The contractor substituted, the electrician mis-aimed, the client replaced a lamp — and the designer receives the credit or blame regardless. Commissioning records and measured readings at handover are the only defence, and are commercial as much as technical
Market does not know the discipline exists	The practice must sell the existence of the service before selling itself — slow, unbillable, and the main reason Year 1 loses money. Concentrate on hospitality and retail, where the value argument is already won , and let them fund the education of everyone else
Manufacturer "free design" competition	Explain the distinction without disparagement: a manufacturer's designer selects the best solution within ONE catalogue; an independent practice selects the best solution available — and where they differ, the client will never know
Controls not commissioned	An unprogrammed DALI or wireless system means the client uses one switch for everything, defeating the entire design; scope controls commissioning explicitly and price it for the multiple night visits it actually needs

Commissioning fee uncollectable at project end	Earned last, when the budget is exhausted and the client is impatient to occupy ; weight design fees to early stages, contract commissioning separately with its own terms, invoice supervision monthly
Non-compliant or untested products specified	BIS registration where applicable; a datasheet without an accredited test report is a marketing document ; verify photometric data before specifying
Emergency lighting value-engineered	A life-safety system with duration, illuminance and testing requirements — not a design element and not available for value engineering. Specify to standard and object formally in writing if challenged

15. SWOT Analysis

Strengths The only design discipline in this vertical that can PROVE it was right — simulated in advance, measured at handover; commissioning is a defensible, instrument-verified revenue line; energy-code compliance gives a hard reason to appoint; smallest capital requirement in the vertical; independence is a genuine and explainable differentiator.	Weaknesses Fee is ~1.2% of the fixture value it directs, making the commission conflict structurally severe; the market must be educated at the practice's own cost ; salaries 54–61% of revenue with no operating leverage; work judged months later for others' errors; commissioning fee is earned last and is the most exposed.
Opportunities Hospitality development and refurbishment cycles; retail rollouts where lighting demonstrably affects sales; tightening energy codes; facade, heritage and urban lighting programmes; growing architect awareness; controls and human-centric lighting as emerging specialisms.	Threats Manufacturer "free design" bundled with fixture supply ; interior designers absorbing the scope; value engineering degrading completed work and, with it, the practice's portfolio; fee compression as the category commoditises; a visibly poor outcome in a category still establishing its credibility.

16. Recommended AiSevak Tools for This Business

This lighting design practice would use AiSevak's Interior vertical tools in operations:

- **Technical integrity: performance-vs-brand specification register, substitution evaluation log with design-intent-survival tracking**, measured-vs-designed lux and UGR records.
- **Delivery**: commissioning attach and completion tracker, mock-up register, controls-programming checklist, night-visit scheduling.
- **Practice**: designer utilisation and chargeability, fee-realised-vs-quoted, revision register with billing, stage sign-off log.
- **Integrity: no-commission declaration issuance and supplier-relationship disclosure register**.
- **Compliance**: ECBC lighting-power-density calculation records, emergency-lighting specification checklist, product test-report verification.

17. Key Assumptions & Notes

- Lighting design & solutions: architectural and decorative lighting design for hospitality, retail, commercial, residential, facade and landscape — concept and mood, photometric calculation and simulation, fixture and control specification, mock-ups, tender support, site supervision and commissioning with measured verification.

- **△ THE VERTICAL'S SECOND FEE-BASED DESIGN MODEL** — it shares interior-design-studio's structure (staged fees, utilisation economics, referral selling) which is **ASSUMED** not restated. **WHAT DISTINGUISHES IT: LIGHTING IS THE ONE DESIGN DISCIPLINE IN THIS VERTICAL THAT CAN PROVE IT WAS RIGHT.** Lux, uniformity, CCT, CRI, UGR, beam angle and lighting power density are **ENGINEERING** quantities — **calculable in advance, simulable before construction, MEASURABLE at handover with an instrument** An interior designer's proposition rests on judgement that cannot be verified; **a lighting designer can commission the installation, take readings and DEMONSTRATE the space performs to the numbers specified** → commissioning charged as a SEPARATE line (12.4%→14.3% of revenue), projects measured at handover 38%→76%.
- **THE COMMERCIAL CONFLICT IS STRUCTURALLY WORSE HERE THAN IN GENERAL INTERIOR DESIGN AND MUST BE CONFRONTED RATHER THAN MENTIONED.** The fee is ~1.2% of the fixture value it directs — a ₹6L design fee can determine a ₹1.2cr luminaire package, and a 10% supplier commission on that would be **TWICE THE ENTIRE FEE** → the temptation is not marginal but overwhelming, and **a practice that takes it has stopped being a design consultancy in any meaningful sense.** This plan accepts NIL commission (carried as a P&L line like the design studio) **AND pairs the policy with the TECHNICAL answer, which is more robust than a promise: SPECIFY BY PERFORMANCE, NOT BY BRAND** — a spec written as lumens, beam angle, CRI, CCT tolerance, UGR and driver life is one several manufacturers can meet, so **WHEN THE DESIGNER NAMES NO ONE, THERE IS NOBODY POSITIONED TO PAY THEM** (55%→90%). **The fee-to-fixture ratio is the conflict expressed NUMERICALLY.**
- **VALUE ENGINEERING IS WHERE LIGHTING DESIGNS DIE, AND THE MECHANISM IS WORTH SETTING OUT: a ₹8,000 specified fixture is offered as an "equivalent" at ₹2,500 — THE LUMEN OUTPUT MATCHES ON PAPER AND NOTHING ELSE DOES.** Wider beam (light lands where it was not intended), lower CRI (materials, food and skin read badly), **uncontrolled colour consistency so a row of identical downlights visibly differs in tint**, unshielded glare from the missing cut-off, and a driver that fails in 18 months. **The client approves the saving because the datasheet appears comparable, and experiences the consequence EVERY EVENING FOR A DECADE without ever connecting the two.** Same invisible-substitution family as plating thickness (fashion jewellery), board grade (modular) and unsealed acoustic partitions (false-ceiling) — **but LIGHTING IS WHERE IT IS MOST CONSEQUENTIAL, because it is the only one the occupant sees CONTINUOUSLY.** Defence is technical not rhetorical: **specify the properties that DIFFER (CRI, SDCM colour tolerance, UGR, driver life, beam angle) rather than only lumens and watts — A SPECIFICATION THAT LISTS ONLY LUMENS AND WATTAGE HAS INVITED THE SUBSTITUTION IT WILL LATER BE BLAMED FOR** (design intent surviving VE 46%→78%).
- **TWO MARKET REALITIES: (a) MOST INDIAN PROJECTS STILL TREAT LIGHTING AS A PROCUREMENT LINE RATHER THAN A DESIGN DISCIPLINE** (an electrical contractor's item priced per point), so **the practice must SELL THE EXISTENCE OF THE SERVICE BEFORE IT CAN SELL ITSELF — slow, unbillable, and the main reason Y1 loses money** (a proportionally larger loss than the general design studio's, for exactly this reason) → concentrate on **HOSPITALITY (lighting IS the product) and RETAIL (its effect on sales is measurable)**, where the argument is already won, at 58% of revenue, **and let them fund the education of everyone else;** and **(b) THE WORK IS JUDGED AFTER DARK, MONTHS LATER, WHEN NOBODY REMEMBERS WHO SPECIFIED WHAT** — by then the contractor has substituted, the electrician has mis-aimed, the client has replaced a failed lamp with whatever the shop had, and **THE DESIGNER RECEIVES THE CREDIT OR BLAME REGARDLESS**, which is precisely why commissioning and measurement matter **COMMERCIALLY** and not just technically.
- **CHARGING SEPARATELY FOR COMMISSIONING IS THE STRUCTURAL DECISION THAT DISTINGUISHES THIS PRACTICE FROM THE INTERIOR DESIGN STUDIO** — a design delivered as drawings is a set of **INTENTIONS**; the installation becomes the design only when fixtures are aimed, beams focused, dimming curves set, scenes programmed and the result **MEASURED**; folded into the design fee it becomes the **first thing sacrificed when the fee is negotiated, after which the practice's work is judged on an installation IT NEVER FINISHED.** Charged separately it is visible, optional and defensible, and **the client who declines it has knowingly bought**

DRAWINGS rather than LIGHTING. It is also **the only service in this vertical whose delivery can be demonstrated with an INSTRUMENT — the easiest thing the practice sells to justify and the hardest for a competitor to fake.**

- **ON MANUFACTURER "FREE DESIGN", PLAINLY AND WITHOUT DISPARAGEMENT:** it is competent, often excellent, and genuinely free **because it is a SALES FUNCTION whose output will necessarily specify that manufacturer's catalogue** — not dishonest, and for many projects entirely adequate. **The distinction is narrow but real: a manufacturer's designer selects the best solution available WITHIN ONE CATALOGUE; an independent practice selects the best solution AVAILABLE. Where they coincide the client has saved a fee; WHERE THEY DO NOT, THE CLIENT WILL NEVER KNOW** — and on a ₹1.2cr package the difference is worth considerably more than the fee that would have found it.
- Cash follows the design studio's shape (monthly salaries vs staged fees) with one addition: **THE COMMISSIONING FEE IS EARNED LAST AND IS THE MOST EXPOSED** — lighting is commissioned **after the interior is complete, after the client has moved in, and after every other consultant has been paid**, when the budget is exhausted and the pressure to "just switch it on and finish later" is considerable, so **a practice that has left a meaningful share of its fee to be collected at THAT moment has placed it where it is LEAST LIKELY TO BE PAID** → weight design fees to concept/detailing, contract commissioning as a separate engagement with its own terms, invoice supervision monthly in arrears; and note **commissioning happens AT NIGHT over SEVERAL visits and is genuinely labour-intensive — a practice pricing it as a single site visit has priced the wrong service.** Compliance: **ECBC lighting power density limits** (one of the strongest reasons to appoint a designer), **EMERGENCY/EGRESS LIGHTING IS A LIFE-SAFETY SYSTEM — not a design element and NOT AVAILABLE FOR VALUE ENGINEERING**, BIS registration for specified LED categories, and **a datasheet without an accredited test report is a marketing document.** Engineers + commissioning specialists are a **THIRD** of the practice — the ratio that makes this a technical consultancy rather than a taste business. ₹55L (smallest in the vertical), ~26→64 projects, ~₹14cr→₹39cr of fixture value directed, rev 1.78→4.75cr, Y1 —₹16L → Y3 ₹37L. Figures illustrative, exclude GST.

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