

The Quantity Surveyor and Project Management

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This address was delivered at the afternoon session of the Branches Conference, held at the Institute on 6th November, 1981.

Introduction

When I was asked several months ago to take part in this Conference I was delighted to accept for several reasons.

Firstly, it enabled me to come to this Institute soon after completing a year in office at the R.I.C.S. Secondly, it enabled me to take part in discussions on subjects which must interest us all if we are going to survive the next 2 decades and finally I would learn more from my attendance than you fellows listening. This is because project management in the building industry is such a vast subject and there are so many diverse opinions as to how it should operate, when it should operate and often an opinion as to whether it should operate at all.

What I am hoping to do in the 40 minutes or so that are available to me is to give a short historical review, then define what it is we are trying to do, perhaps discuss where these project managers are coming from and how they are to be trained and what benefit there is to the building owner.

Finally I will talk about my experiences on the various N.E.C. projects firstly in the pre-contract stages and then at post-contract time and if time is available conclude with a few personal thoughts as to where this subject is leading us and how I see Project Management and Construction Management being interwoven.

Short Historical Review

I think we must agree that in recent years the traditional relationships and arrangements between clients, consultants (i.e. Architects, Engineers and Quantity Sur-

veyors, and building and civil engineering contractors engaged in development have become strained, due firstly to the increasing complexity of building, secondly the greater degree of financial discipline demanded, and thirdly the continually increasing desire for reductions in the planning, design and construction periods.

Arising from these demands it has become apparent that there is a need for a more intimate understanding and interpretation of a client's requirements in terms of the building required, finance and time, improved communications and a very much closer co-ordination of the work of the consultants and the building contractor.

This necessity has very closely indicated in Britain and other countries the desirability for an additional element of management and co-ordination in the building process and project management in various forms which I shall discuss later, is indubitably emerging to meet the essential requirements in this respect.

At this stage, please don't think I am saying—although some would—that all the historical and traditional systems are wrong because quite obviously the great majority of projects are handled by teams of consultants, comprising architect, engineers and quantity surveyors each separately appointed and hence responsible to the building owner. As we all know in most cases this system works very well and all parties are satisfied. In some cases however the pressures put on the traditional systems are too great and the system then breaks down. In these cases, which tend to involve large and complex projects, or those dealing with out of the ordinary owner or user requirements then I submit the appointment of a Project Manager is often the key to the successful implementation of the plans.

Definitions and Objectives

I think we can now try and define Project Management in the Construction Industry, Construction Project Management—or as I prefer to call it, Construction Project Controlling—if I may—and I'll explain this later when talking about the N.E.C.—comprises the planning, control and management on behalf of the building owner, of the consultants and contractors engaged on a construction project so as to ensure that it is completed on time and within the pre-determined cost and that it fulfils the owner's requirements. It therefore implies that one individual—and in my view, this can be any of the technical professions, as I'll explain later—is appointed the Project Manager or Controller who will be the link between the building owner, the consultants, the contractor, the sub-contractor and the operatives' unions to design and construct the building.

The overall objectives and hence terms of

reference of Project Management are really to establish the management and control of a project from inception to completion within the parameters of the client's brief. Obviously the client's physical and financial objectives should be clearly identified and then procedures established and implemented to ensure that these objectives, updated and modified as necessary are achieved within the required time scale.

Later when I talk about the N.E.C. I will read out my terms of reference which I am sure you will see cover all the objectives that I have just mentioned.

In the absence of a client's preferred consultants the project manager should be responsible for the selection and recommendations of the professional team (such team, if necessary, to include estate agents, legal advisers, architects, accountants, engineers of the varying specialities, quantity surveyors etc.). Each member of the team is, I suggest, appointed by the client. The project manager should also establish and advise on the method of selection and appointment of the contractor, recommend the appropriate form of contract and negotiate with the Trade Unions, if necessary. The project manager should not however seek to carry out the duties or accept the responsibilities of individual members of the team, but should co-ordinate and, where necessary, augment their activities. As normal the professional team and subsequently the building contractor having been appointed, will then steer the project through its many stages.

Perhaps now you will be saying to yourselves that what I am advocating is done by the architect. My answer to that is 'Yes it is and yes it was' both in Britain, Europe and North America, but it is getting less and less as jobs grow in size and become more complex and the various forms of contract and legislation from governments become more and more onerous. To my mind the architect should do it in fact he may do it and as I said earlier, in many cases he does do it, but it does not alter the fact that if there is a Project Manager then this person can be regarded on a major scheme of executing the duties which the client would himself like to carry out had he sufficient time and in many cases the necessary expertise and therefore the Project Manager becomes, in effect, a 'professional client' or as the Americans call the Project Manager 'the client's representative'. As I will show and explain later when talking about the N.E.C. contract as the Project Manager, or Controller, and not being a party to the contract I could undertake various actions which I don't think an architect can do as he is a party to the contract. Also the architect by his very nature and training—certainly post Second World War—is much more interested in planning, design and aesthetics than he is in the mundane practice of management and co-ordination.