

CESW Newsletter #2 — Oct 05

Alan Mossman writes:

NB: All email addresses have been broken to prevent spamming

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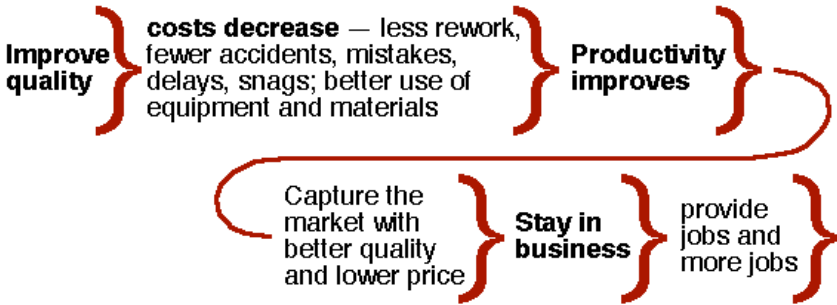
Correction: In the last newsletter I said Lesley Seymour was a Director of Genesis Project. She sits on their Advisory Board. *The Road to Genesis* is still on 2 November. For info mailto:sam.mcintyre@somerset.ac.uk?subject=Road_to_Genesis_info_please

Thanks to those of you who sent feedback and ideas for the title of the newsletter. There's still time to send in your ideas. To see the last issue go to <http://groups.google.com/group/CESW-Newsletter>

What did you do before the recession Dad?

In Germany the construction industry has been in recession for a couple of years. In UK we have enjoyed the longest construction boom in ages – will it continue? We hope it will, but what if it doesn't? What is your company's strategy for weathering the next recession whenever it comes? What are you doing **now** to prepare your company? If you are taking action now I imagine that you are realising much higher margins and lower costs which will help you manage your way through the recession when it comes.

Waiting until the storm arrives will be too late. With margins as low as they are now there will not be time to institute new measures that take months or years to really bite. Last minute cost cutting will only reduce quality and productivity and ultimately increase costs that will increase the chances that your company will fail. Improving quality is the only sure way to both reduce costs and improve productivity as Dr Deming showed in his Quality Chain Reaction:



from: W Edwards Deming Out of the Crisis p3
<<http://www.amazon.co.uk/exec/obidos/ASIN/0262541157/ukdn-21>>

So what is your strategy for systematically improving quality? Let me know.

There are many ways to go – Deming's is one, Lean is another. If you want some help finding a way forward for your company let me know and I will do my best to help you find the resources you need.
Alan.mossman@cesw.org.uk 07968 485627

Why clients should take control of their building projects

In the October *Harvard Business Review* David Thurm, VP & CIO of the New York Times Company, writes about his experience of commissioning NYT's new corporate HQ. He stresses the importance of client's (owners) taking responsibility for creating a building that reflects their mission and produces an energising workplace. The only way to get this—great design and innovative features that together further your business goals—is for the client to actively engage by assembling the right team, then staying involved and asking hard questions about things that are generally taken as givens. He urges clients to articulate a vision of their future work space and drive the search for ways to realise that vision. In short, to be a builder, not merely a client/owner.

It's easy to understand why this approach is the exception rather than the rule. To most clients, design and construction seem foreign and forbidding, rife with pitfalls. Because of their lack of experience and confidence, most client organisations play a relatively minor role in their construction projects. But, he says, it's a giant mistake to be a passive consumer when it comes to one of your most important assets. At best, the client gets well-intentioned guesses by others as to what's wanted; at worst, a building that's at odds with their identity.

Full copies of the article for US\$6.00 at

http://harvardbusinessonline.hbsp.harvard.edu/b01/en/common/item_detail.jhtml?id=R0510H

Kevin Thomas, former Director of Glaxo Smith Klein, has delivered a similar message based on his experience with the new GSK HQ in West London and since translated that into material in the Strategic Forum for Construction's Supply Chain Toolkit

<http://www.strategicforum.org.uk/toolkit.shtml>

NB:

- [Gloucestershire Club](#)'s meeting on 2 November is entitled 'The Client's Perspective' Chargrove House, Shurdington 1630 mailto:Lhuckfield@camarguepr.com?subject=GCEC_The_Client_Perspective
- [Dorset Club](#)'s meeting on 17 November also has a Client focus: 'Winning work in Dorset' 1630 Bournemouth Football Ground. details mailto:gillianwright@traico.co.uk?subject=Winning_work_in_Dorset

Collaborative, 'win-win' relationships between main and specialist contractors?

Bristol Club's Dti-funded project '*Bridging the gap: engaging specialist contractors and suppliers in the Rethinking Construction/Constructing Excellence agenda*', has reaffirmed the vital role played by specialist contractors in construction projects in the region. The project has also confirmed that business relationships between main and specialist contractors remain largely contractual, confrontational and opportunistic.

On 10 November 0830-1215 [Bristol Club](#) have a workshop on the research at Gloucestershire County Cricket Ground, Nevil Road, Bristol BS7 9EJ <http://www.gloscricket.co.uk/contact/locationMaps.asp>. Entry is free. If you want to attend or for more information please mailto:helen.davies@cesw.org.uk?subject=Bridging_the_gap with your full contact information.

Speakers from Carillion, Ferson, Hayley, Specialist Engineering Contractors' Group, Mowlem, Taylor Woodrow and UWE will explore ways to bridge the gap between main and specialist contractors.

Lean Service Workshop – applying lean to admin and other back office processes

In a recent email I wrote about the EGLC (European Group for Lean Construction) meeting in Copenhagen at the end of October. In the mail I included a brief suggestion for where to begin getting to grips with lean. (If you missed out on that please let me know and I will send you a copy.)

One of my former colleagues at Rubicon Associates is running a *free* 1 day introduction to Lean Service workshop in association with Axa Sun-Life adjacent to Bristol Parkway Station on Tuesday 15 November. If you or any colleagues want to improve administrative, financial or other back office processes such as responding to tenders this is a great opportunity to appreciate the power of lean thinking. If you'd like more information [mailto:stevebriault@rubiconassociates.com?subject=Lean_Service_Workshop_\(CESW\)](mailto:stevebriault@rubiconassociates.com?subject=Lean_Service_Workshop_(CESW))

Don't Walk by! What should I have done?

Don't walk by is a health and safety slogan prominent on the Carillion site just across the way from my office. When I first heard the slogan I thought "what an excellent message."

Recently, while out walking, I came across the following situation:



An operative (or was he part of site management?) standing atop a part completed wall talking on a mobile phone. The wall looked to be around 1200-1500mm high. There is a drop on one side to uneven ground and on the other to a roof sloping away from the wall. There was no edge protection on either side of the wall. There was a small access tower being used by another operative on one side of the wall. Is he safe?

I was on a public road about 10-20m away, I was with friends, I had no PPE and I had no relationship with the site, with the main contractor or anyone on the site. I was concerned that if I called out I might cause him to fall off the wall. To gain access to the site I would need to go back the way we had come. What should I have done?

1. walk on by
2. call to the operatives – what do I say?
3. walk back and find the site manager and explain what I have seen and ask him to investigate
4. something completely different.

Let me know what you think I should have done. Group or team responses are very welcome. I will tell you in a future issue what I did and what the consequences were as well as reporting on some of your suggestions.

Surfing the edge of chaos

This is the title of a book by Richard Pascale and others. Subtitled *The Laws of Nature and the New Laws of Business* the book looks at the process of business and management from a *complex adaptive systems* viewpoint that challenges the command and control/social engineering viewpoints that predominate in much management literature and most managerial practice in the UK.

The book challenged some of my preconceptions and made sense of things I have observed in my consultancy work in construction. It is a good read with examples from UK and abroad.

For a more info, to look inside and to read other people's reviews see
<http://www.amazon.co.uk/exec/obidos/ASIN/0609808834/ukdn-21>

Construction Industry Environment Forum

New CIEF event reports now available online to download: <http://www.cief.org.uk/downloads.htm>

- Implementing SUDS: model agreements for maintenance & operation
- From landfill to liability - new incentives not to waste
- Building with reclaimed components and materials
- Whole life sustainability: costing, assessment and valuation
- Big Build 2: sustainable construction Eden-style

Learn about Lean at Thomas Vale Construction PLC, Birmingham 23 November 2005

This multiple-award winning company has achieved success by fusing traditional skills and values with professional management and modern technology, ensuring a reputation for quality, integrity and service. Thomas Vale will demonstrate how they are using lean as a key element in their improvement process. To book please [mailto:ailsa@onsiteinsights.co.uk?subject=Thomas_Vale_visit_23.11.05_\(CESW\)](mailto:ailsa@onsiteinsights.co.uk?subject=Thomas_Vale_visit_23.11.05_(CESW)) or phone us on 02392-468978. Places cost just £150 per person.

I plan to join the visit.

If this has been forwarded to you and you would like to receive future issues please sign up at
<http://groups.google.com/group/CESW-Newsletter>

For details of CESW and related events please mailto:helen.davies@cesw.org.uk?subject=please_add_me_to_CESW_mailing_list.

Finally – please tell me what you think of the newsletter, what you want to see and what you are proud of doing to improve the overall construction process – or even just the bit you are responsible for.

With best wishes

Alan

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CESW is funded by the South West Regional Development Agency,
hosted by the University of the West of England and
supported by many individuals and companies