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Ageing Workforce

Great news this week that 14% of SW school leavers want to join the industry.

Congratulations to everyone who has helped to improve the image and reputation of the industry – and please continue, there is still more to do.

Construction still has an elderly workforce and the industry in the SW has a higher average age than the nation as a whole; construction operatives tend to leave the industry before retirement age as the heavy lifting, etc takes its toll. What can we do about this?

In Germany companies are required to allow staff approaching retirement to work part time. There is no such requirement in UK, nor is it being considered so far as I know. But might this idea be a useful way to allow skilled operatives to continue working for longer.

So that they can maintain their income, it could be coupled with encouraging these skilled operatives to take on a training role within the company or in a local college. Others could learn to do the Home Condition Reports that will be required to sell your home from July 2007.

The ABBE Diploma in Home Inspection is a Vocational Qualification set at Level 4 in the National Qualifications Framework. Candidates must provide evidence that they have underpinning knowledge, and the practical competence required in order to do the job. This involves producing reports for assessment, satisfactory completion of the ABBE external exam and if appropriate, use of a structured professional interview. Over the next year colleges will be developing courses. We already have an assessor in the SW.

Are there other ways that we can retain as least some of the skills and capacity of older members of the construction team?

Overall System Effectiveness

If you have heard me talk about CESW you will probably have heard me talk about **“improving the end-to-end construction process”**. I see that as both the key rationale for CESW and its principal purpose. Why is this important? Improving the end-to-end process is important because if we only seek to improve one part of the process

- we run the risk of making matters worse elsewhere and
- we may not be working on what would make the biggest difference to the overall process.

A classic example of this is the way many procurement functions seek to cut the cost of individual items without considering the impact on the overall process. Bloggs and Co may

have given you the lowest price but those on site know to their cost the disruption that they will cause to operations on site. For another example see the next item.

But lets just think about the effect of quality. Let suppose there are 20 professions and trades in an integrated project team and that each of them gets their work right 99% of the time. What will the Overall System Effectiveness be? Its not 99%. It is $99^{*99^{*99...^{*99}}}$ = 99 to the power 20 = 86%. That why your car manufacturer wants each one of the 10,000 components in your car to be right 99.9997% of the time – and even then 4% of cars will have defects.

We all know that some parts of the construction process, some trades and professions are better than others. But which ones. It is only by studying your end-to-end processes that you will know. If you want help doing that let me know. If you think you know how to help companies do that let me know your experience.

mailto:alan@cesw.org.uk?subject=Overall_System_Effectiveness_help_please.

Good Screw, Bad Screw

A friend has been working with a panel installer. The installer's operatives had noticed that not all screws were the same - some went in easily and some didn't - this wasn't random they could tell a good batch from a poor one, the points were sharper. They did some measurements. The bad screws took a couple of seconds longer to drive home and required more pressure. In a day that couple of seconds added up to half an hour. With 10 operatives on site that's 5 man hours a day lost and much more tired at the end of it.

But that is not all. Pushing harder causes dimpling in the panel and the screw is more likely to break - defects and rework. Plus the extra hire costs for scissor lifts and delay to the project as the delays mount up.

Good screws and bad screws came from the same manufacturer with the same part number. When challenged the manufacturer was aware of the difference. My friends panel installer doesn't get bad screws any more - someone else must be getting more of them.

So it is worth listening to your operatives. As someone from Todd Shipyards said last year "Remember **with every pair of hands comes a free brain**" Use it.

T5 meets Eden - CE Gloucestershire Club

What struck me most about these two excellent presentations at the CE Gloucestershire Club meeting on 22 March 06 was not the enormous differences between the projects and the focus (T5 = £4.2bn air terminal serving 50m visitors a year, presentation focus *logistics*; Eden = £10m Education building serving around 1m visitors p.a, presentation focus *sustainable construction*) – but the similarities.

Both projects are on highly constrained sites, both managed by strong clients who took an active role in the project, both have important neighbour relations processes.

The message about the two areas of focus was similar too. Start early - both speakers said it was important to start addressing these issues at tender stage, both said it was important for the client to lead the management of these topics. Logistics is a major risk area for T5 and sustainable construction is a risk for Eden. Contractually BAA and Eden have chosen to manage risk differently -- BAA assuming all the risk and Eden sharing it with its contractors but in these, as in other areas, both clients worked hands-on with their suppliers.

Doug Black came to construction from the FMCG logistics only 3 years ago and says that construction is very different -- as you will see in his presentation.

David Losasso told a delightful story about the Eden Foreman. The project has waste neutral and waste sorting policies - no more leaves the pit than came in and all waste is sorted. One sub-contractor consistently put his waste in the wrong bins. The foreman stopped the site called all the subs together and had the bins emptied so that the whole site team could sort it properly into the bins. He never had to do it again. That foreman is now working on the Indian Queens project on the A30 and I gather that multi-coloured recycling bins now adorn one of the bridges he's building - and that was his own initiative not his bosses. When will waste segregation be a feature of all our sites?

This meeting was supported by Tim Bateman from Construction Knowledge Exchange SW. Tim talked about Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTP) at the start of the meeting and I wonder which company will be the first to use a KTP to develop its logistics or its sustainable construction capability. For more information send an email to ktp@cesw.org.uk

BAA have a good sustainable construction story to tell and the Eden team can talk to us about logistics. I wonder who is going to organise that meeting?

For a copy of the presentations please
mailto:t5.eden@gloucestershireclub.org.uk?subject=pdfs_please

Reducing, reusing, recycling, waste

This is going to be a large part of my work in April. I want to understand all the initiatives that can and do affect construction and to find out what CESW and the Clubs can do to support this.

If you or your organisation is already doing something in this area please let me know.

If this has been forwarded to you and you would like to receive future issues and details of CESW events please
mailto:helen.davies@cesw.org.uk?subject=please_add_me_to_CESW_mailing_list or sign up at <http://groups.google.com/group/CESW-Newsletter>

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.

Thanks for reading
With best wishes
Alan

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