



The Role of the Professional within the Construction Industry

Self-development, Professional Practice and the Management of Construction Personnel

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Table of Contents

1.0 The Importance of Professionalism and Ethics Within Decision Making in the Construction Industry	2
1.1 Case Study	2
1.2 Measurement of Professionalism and Professional Ethics	4
2.0 Professional Development	5
2.1 Curriculum Vitae	5
2.2 Summary of My Career	5
2.3 Personal Development Plan	6
2.4 The Importance and Benefits of Organisational Behaviour	6
2.4.1 People	6
2.4.2 Structure	7
2.4.3 Technology	7
2.4.4 Environment	7
2.4.5 Benefits of Organisational Behaviour	7
3.0 Leadership	8
3.1 Leadership Theories	8
3.1.1 Contingency Theory	8
3.1.2 Situational Leadership Theory	8
3.1.3 Transformational Leadership Theory	9
3.1.4 Transactional Theories	9
3.1.5 Behavioural Theory	9
3.1.6 Great Man Theory of Leadership	9
3.1.7 Trait Theory of Leadership	9
3.2 Leadership Styles	9
3.2.1 Autocratic	10
3.2.2 Authoritative	10
3.2.3 Pacesetting	10
3.2.4 Democratic	10
3.2.5 Coaching	10
3.2.6 Affiliative	11
3.2.7 Laissez-Faire	11
3.3 Personal Experience	11
3.4 Personal Leadership Style	12
4.0 Teamwork	13
5.0 Conclusion	14
6.0 References	15
Appendix A - CV	18
Appendix B - CPD	19
Appendix C - DPD	20

1.0 The Importance of Professionalism and Ethics Within Decision Making in the Construction Industry

The decision-making process can be defined as determining the best and most effective course of action among two or more options to achieve the desired outcome (Sharma, n.d.). The practice is fundamental in planning processes across all industries and is perhaps the most integral part of a professional's actions; however, decision making can prove challenging due to a multitude of factors influencing the process and, ultimately, the final verdict (Price, 1999).

In the construction industry, the success of each project is determined by the decision-making process (Price, 1999). Construction professionals are continuously confronted with situations that necessitate a quick decision and action. A construction professional must not only be able to make complex judgments on a daily basis, but they must also be able to justify their choices as making the wrong choice can be costly in terms of time, quality, cost, relationships, and most importantly health and safety (Price, 1999). Considering the risks associated with the industry, construction professionals have the fundamental right of professional conscience. Therefore, they must approach each situation carefully, with the highest moral consideration, to determine the best course of action moving forward (Skitmore, 2003).

Ethics and professionalism play vital roles in the decision-making process, so much so it is often unclear where ethics ends and professionalism begins. However, despite their relationship, the terms are not interchangeable (Worthington, 2015). 'Professionalism' is defined by the Oxford dictionary as the competence or skill expected of a professional. In terms of industry, 'professionalism' can be defined as putting personal ideas, feelings, and benefits aside to fulfil the responsibilities of professional employment (Martin, 2000). 'Ethics', on the other hand, is defined by the Oxford dictionary as the moral principles that govern a person's behaviour or the conducting of an activity. In terms of industry, ethical behaviour is measured by the level of integrity in which organisations/individuals conduct business (Mason, 2009).

Despite their contrasts, there is a significant correlation between the two. Professionalism entails being dependable, setting high standards, and taking pride in all aspects of your work. It's about being diligent and well-organised and taking responsibility for one's thoughts, words, and actions. Professionals are held to a high standard and are expected to exhibit the following attributes: competency, knowledge, conscientiousness, integrity, respect, emotional intelligence, appropriateness, and confidence (Mindtools, n.d.). Many of these characteristics can also be seen in a person's ethics. Integrity and emotional intelligence are traits shared by many ethical professionals, as being morally correct, i.e. truthful, fair, and honest, is fundamental (Vocabulary.com, n.d.). A balance of both professionalism and ethics are crucial pillars of not only decision making but also industry management techniques and are attributes that contribute to a well-rounded professional.

1.1 CASE STUDY

Approaching problematic situations can be most challenging when professionals are required to effectively balance opposing values - especially when personal, societal, and cultural values conflict. (McCuen 2022) Construction professionals must therefore be able to apply their knowledge effectively to serve four different entities: the employer, the employer's client, the profession, and, most significantly, society (McCuen 2022)

It is suggested that, in general, professionals believe their obligations to their clients outweigh their responsibility to others, and therefore decisions are often made in their favour. (Johnson, 1991) However, sociological, economic, and political constraints may need to override the decisions and go against immediate interests depending on the situation. The 2017 Grenfell Tower fire is an exceptional yet tragic demonstration of construction professionals failing to explore these constraints while decision making, which resulted in numerous fatalities and put the industry's professional ethics into question.

In 2017, a fire broke out at Grenfell Tower in London. The blaze spread quickly and lasted for 24 hours, and claimed the lives of countless individuals (Bentham, 2017). Therefore, questions were raised regarding what caused the fire and how the fire was able to spread so quickly.

In 2012, Grenfell Tower was included in Kensington and Chelsea Council's £100 million, government-funded restoration project. The project's goal was to improve the surrounding area in which Grenfell Tower is situated. The tower's refurbishment consisted of a replacement heating system, replacing the original windows, and improving the tower's overall thermal efficiency while also improving its general appearance (Kentish, 2017). The original plans by Studio E Architects were publicised in 2012, with the project to be completed by 2016. Rydon Ltd undertook the £8.7 million refurbishment in conjunction with Artelia for contract administration and Max Fordham as mechanical and electrical consultants.

The addition of external cladding, according to the BBC, was the most significant component of the refurbishment. Originally, Studio E Architects proposed to install new zinc cladding, but due to a combination of government impost budget borrowing constraints and the towers tenant management organisation's demand to keep prices low, a sub-par cladding material was installed. (Gregory, 2020) In fact, it is said that David Gibson, head of capital investment at the Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation (KCTMO), convened a "secret" and "offline" meeting with the contractor Rydon in which they agreed on more than £800,000 in savings, £293,368 of which on the cladding material alone (Twomey, 2020).

During this meeting, it was decided that panels consisting of plastic and aluminium were to be used in lieu of the original zinc. Manufactured by Arconic Architectural Products in France, these panels are formed using polyethylene (PE) sandwiched between two thin aluminium sheets. Arconic states that the cladding can be installed in two ways: with rivets or cassettes. In the case of Grenfell Tower, the cassette approach was used (Symonds, 2021). Arconic commissioned testing in France in 2005 to evaluate how their products would fare in a fire, but when the cassette version was put to the test, it failed to complete. It's important to note that the results of a typical European fire test are graded from A1 (best) to F (lowest) (worst) - this product, throughout 12 years of testing, managed to top a rating of E (Symonds, 2021). According to the Approved Document B: Fire Safety, only products with a rating of B or above in the European Fire Test can be used on buildings above 18m, indicating the use of this cladding system on Grenfell Tower did not meet British building regulations.

An inquest into the fire, held in June of 2020, found that Celotex supplied the majority of the insulation used in the Grenfell Tower refurbishment; however, following the fire, it became evident that a product by Kingspan had also been used (Heath, 2020). The enquiry found that this change in insulation may have also contributed to the spread of the fire (Heath, 2020). Kingspan made a formal comment regarding this and revealed the product was used without their knowledge, as part of a combination for which it was not designed and which Kingspan would never recommend (Kingspan, n.d.). The phenolic insulation core of the Kingspan product meant that the material is classed as combustible and should not be used on buildings taller than 18m in height. Ultimately,

the decision to swap the Celotex for the Kingspan insulation was approved by the projects site manager, without the knowledge of Kensington and Chelsea Tenant Management Organisation (KCTMO), despite the clause in Rydon's contract with KCTMA which states that "the contractor shall not make any substitution for any materials, goods or workmanship without prior consent in writing of the employer" (Heath, 2020).

Ultimately, these decisions resulted in countless fatalities on the night of the fire, casting doubt on the building industry's professionalism and ethics. Imprudent judgments and aggressive cost-cutting resulted in one of the biggest disasters in recent British history. In the aftermath of Grenfell Tower, Dame Judith Hackitt took direct aim at industry ethics and blame culture in her Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety. She asserts that industry professionals have a duty of care to the workers and the people who will live in and use the structures and infrastructure for many years to come. Unfortunately, this tragic event could have been avoided, and it has called into doubt the competence of many professionals.

1.2 MEASUREMENT OF PROFESSIONALISM AND PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

Considering the risk associated with the industry, the professionalism and ethics of an individual and/or organisation must be measured to ensure their competency, integrity and knowledge. According to Bayles (1989), professional ethics is a collection of standards that can manage a professional's everyday work activities while making specific considerations to morality and conduct. It assigns blanket moral obligations to all professionals in the same profession rather than allocating them to a single individual - meaning that when an ethical failure occurs, the entire profession's reputation is called into doubt (Pearl, Bowen Mankanjee, Akintoye & Evans, 2005) – much like that of the industry following the Grenfell Tower fire mentioned in section 1.1.

Construction professionals are expected to follow a code of ethics specific to their field or organisation. These codes are designed to aid professionals in conducting business honestly and with integrity and may include guidelines on how to approach problems (Hayes, 2021). While not currently mandatory in the construction industry, many organisations produce a code of conduct that outlines a set of principles that a company pledges to follow and will align with a company's core values and ethics (CHAS, n.d.).

While establishing and adhering to an organisational code of conduct is a good working practice, it is not necessarily a tool that can measure an individual and/or company's professionalism. However, professionals within the industry are typically governed by a relative chartered/professional body, which may establish its own code of conduct and expect its members to prove compliance (GOV.uk, 2022). Individuals who achieve specific academic and skills-related qualifications can use a Chartered title courtesy of these Chartered institutes; however, they must evidence continual compliance with their set of standards, ethics, and performance throughout their career to maintain their chartership (RICS, 2020). Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is one example of this. To uphold chartership with a professional body, a professional must vow to maintain their competence through CPD and document their progress (EngineeringCouncil, 2019). Professional bodies frequently sample registrants' CPD records and provide appropriate feedback annually, thus ensuring their members maintain, improve and broaden their knowledge and skills (Professional Associations Research Network, n.d.).

2.0 Professional Development

2.1 CURRICULUM VITAE

NB: Please see Appendix A.

2.2 SUMMARY OF MY CAREER

Prior to my journey in the construction industry, I worked in a series of unfulfilling job roles in retail and call centres. Realising the lack of progression plans for employees, I explored the possibility of chasing a career before eventually landing a job as a labourer for a local conservation company. With no prior site experience, I surprisingly relished every arduous moment and was finally happy waking up to work in the morning. I now realise that the type of buildings we were conserving was what drew me in. From ecclesiastical to ancient monuments, each project had a unique story to tell.

Following conversations with co-workers, I instantly recognised the opportunity for personal growth and development. As a result, I requested a meeting with the Managing Director to convey my interest in studying a trade. He offered me an apprenticeship as a site carpenter and workshop joiner. After three years of education, I earned a Level 3 in Carpentry and Joinery and was a candidate for the CITB's Apprentice of the Year award.

After obtaining invaluable on-site experience, I expressed an interest in pursuing a career in construction management. I was given the opportunity to train as a quantity surveyor apprentice. My Managing Director recommended that I enrol in a foundation course at a local college, where I achieved a Level 3 in Construction and the Built Environment after two years of study. My company also nominated me to be a CITB Construction Ambassador during my college years, and I participated in a programme to promote the construction industry to children and teenagers. As part of the programme, I participated in several videos broadcast on the CITB website and presented at local schools.

I am now pursuing a Higher National Diploma in Quantity Surveying at UWTSD, with the goal of becoming a Chartered Quantity Surveyor. Since transitioning into construction management, I've developed skills outside of my job role that will hopefully help the company develop and integrate current technologies into the conservation world. I've completed internal training to learn new software to improve our project management systems' efficiency and have explored the use of technology such as drones in site surveys – both of which we now utilise on a regular basis.

Measuring and ordering materials, assisting with pricing tender documents, liaising with clients, and assisting with building condition surveys are all part of my day-to-day responsibilities. My managing director recently assigned me the task of on-site programming works. To do so, he placed me on a training course to learn how to generate Gantt charts and cash-flow estimates for clients using Microsoft Project. He noticed that I was able to plan and organise resources efficiently, and as a result, he has since tasked me with managing two projects with a total contract value of £325,000.00. I now represent the company at frequent site meetings and supervise work remotely from the office. I also received further training in historic buildings, specifically on retrofitting and managing their energy efficiency, where I achieved a Level 3 Award in Energy Efficiency for Older and Traditional Buildings and am on the path to becoming a Retrofit Co-ordinator.

NB: Please see my 2019-2020 CPD in Appendix B to highlight my progression.

2.3 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

NB: Please see Appendix C.

2.4 THE IMPORTANCE AND BENEFITS OF ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

The concept of organisational behaviour is a topic in academia that focuses on determining how and why individuals behave in unique situations within various professions (Kopp, 2022). At its core, it is a study of human behaviour in a group context, encompassing disciplines such as sociology, psychology, social psychology, and economics, to enhance efficiency and effectiveness within the workplace (Luthans, 2005). The study contributes to the development and comprehension of the characteristics that may motivate employees, increase employee morale, and help organisations establish a solid and trustworthy relationship with their employees by providing important insight into how they behave and perform in the workplace (JEBGroup, 2021).

According to Professor Astrid Marie Richardsen of BI Business Review, promoting positive organisational behaviour and stimulating happiness enhances the workforce's ability to adapt and perform, increases their creativity and innovations and ensures organisational effectiveness. A thorough study on happiness and productivity conducted by Oxford University's Said Business School and the British multinational telecoms firm BT established a conclusive link between happiness and productivity, highlighting the relevance of the study of organisational behaviour. The research, which lasted six months and took place in British Telecoms' contact centres, discovered that employees are 13% more productive when happy and was described by Professor De Neve as "the first strong casual field evidence for this relationship" (Oxford Press, 2019).

In contrast, poor organisational behaviour encourages employees to act irrationally and may contribute to conflict (VantageCircle, 2021). A study undertaken by Jordanian businesses to identify a relationship between employee morale and productivity was published in the International Business Research journal in 2017. Questionnaires were distributed to selected accounting and management employees in different working environments. Once returned, the questionnaires were analysed using the statistical tool Smart PLS. The research results concluded that low morale and motivation directly impacted organisational productivity and competitiveness and made recommendations for improving organisational efficiency by improving employee satisfaction through providing incentives, education, and training (International Business Research, 2017).

Understanding organisational behaviour is unquestionably essential in business, and professionals must therefore be aware of its core elements; people, structure, technology, and environment (VantageCircle, 2021). These elements are interconnected; thus, maintaining a healthy balance is critical.

2.4.1 PEOPLE

The study focuses on employees (the backbone of every organisation) and the importance of understanding how people adjust in response to new events. Therefore, by conducting a thorough study, leaders can identify the external factors that have caused a change and work on solutions that improve efficiency (VantageCircle, 2021).

2.4.2 STRUCTURE

In any workplace, having adequate processes and a solid structure is vital. Employees rely on their management to meet their needs and requirements to some extent, and without a good structure, coordination between different levels of the organisation may suffer. Maintaining a strict organisational structure can ensure that if there are any vulnerabilities, the structure will stem the flow of control, having a substantial long-term impact on the organisation's culture (VantageCircle, 2021).

2.4.3 TECHNOLOGY

Technology is utilised in the workplace to make activities more manageable, providing new and better solutions to day-to-day tasks. Technology has a significant impact on today's environment, and when used correctly, it can be highly beneficial. Employees who lack sufficient knowledge of work-based technology, on the other hand, may become unsure of their role, which can have a significant impact on productivity, morale, and behaviour change (VantageCircle, 2021).

2.4.4 ENVIRONMENT

The workplace environment has likely the most significant impact on employee productivity and efficiency, to the point where it is stated that when one changes, the other is significantly impacted. Therefore, managers and professionals must be aware of how working surroundings influence employee engagement and the distinctions between healthy and toxic. A healthy working environment, for example, will integrate positive energy, improve organisational happiness, and boost morale and confidence. Unhealthy working environments, on the other hand, have been shown to have a negative impact on thought processes, as well as a reduction in willingness to perform and excitement for work (VantageCircle, 2021).

2.4.5 BENEFITS OF ORGANISATIONAL BEHAVIOUR

In brief, research has demonstrated that organisations with a thorough grasp of organisational behaviour can increase staff productivity, hence, in principle, increasing profitability. Human resource management can also benefit from organisational behaviour by better understanding the work environment and implementing strategies to improve the atmosphere and overall morale. Using an understanding of organisational behaviour, a manager can forecast, recognise, and prevent unhealthy behaviours by thoroughly understanding organisational behaviour (Indeed, 2021).

Understanding organisational behaviour benefits the workplace as a whole and can also help a professional's personal development. Understanding how and why people behave in specific ways helps people become better leaders by providing a better understanding of human values, thus improving their capacity to make difficult decisions by giving them insight into how to relate with people and improve their surroundings (Indeed, 2021).

In terms of my personal development, understanding myself, i.e. my needs, wants, stressors, etc., integration into an organisational setting can become more manageable. Having a good understanding of my strengths and weaknesses allows me to work on specific elements to better myself in a personal and work setting.

3.0 Leadership

Contrary to common belief, leadership has nothing to do with seniority, titles, or one's position in a company's hierarchy (Kruse, 2020). Leadership, according to Forbes, is a social influence technique that maximises others' efforts in the pursuit of a goal. In its literal sense, The New Oxford Dictionary defines leadership as "the act of directing a group of people or an organisation", while a leader is defined as someone who assists in the establishment of strategic goals while motivating employees inside an organisation to carry out tasks in support of said goals. (Tokar, 2020).

According to Eastwood (2019), a competent leader has various beneficial attributes, including being self-aware, prioritising personal development, focusing on others' growth, supporting strategic thinking, being ethical, and practising effective cross-cultural communication. According to Eastwood (2019), leaders who are self-aware and focus on improving their emotional intelligence are more adaptable, resilient, and tolerant of feedback. Effective leaders, in theory, can adjust to whether an individual or organisation is willing and able to take particular action through delegating, coaching, and mentoring by focusing on developing others (Eastwood, 2019). Innovation is enhanced, and the overall grasp of the organisation's direction is improved by a leader fostering strategic thinking. According to Eastwood (2019), respected leaders are able to communicate clearly with stakeholders and their workforce, which increases trust in their leadership abilities.

3.1 LEADERSHIP THEORIES

Leadership is believed to be multi-faceted and influenced by a wide range of elements. Several hypotheses have emerged as a result of decades of research into leadership. These theories are numerous schools of thought proposed by philosophers, scholars, and cognitive experts to explain how a leader is formed. These ideas provide insight into the qualities that will aid in the development of leadership skills. Some theories emphasise the relevance of situational factors that determine leadership behaviour, while others focus on traits and attributes. (Simplilearn, 2022):

- Contingency Theory
 - Situational Leadership Theory
 - Transformational Leadership Theory
 - Transactional Theories
 - Behavioural Theories
 - Great Man Theory of Leadership
 - Trait Theory of Leadership
- (Simplelearn, 2022)

3.1.1 CONTINGENCY THEORY

According to this theory, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to leadership that can be applied to all scenarios and an appropriate balance between needs, context and behaviour is required. In other words, it acknowledges that there may be varying factors impacting any given scenario and that a leader must determine the best course of action while making specific considerations to the influencing factors (Simplilearn, 2022).

3.1.2 SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP THEORY

Situational Leadership Theory, like contingency theory, emphasises the importance of situational circumstances and does not consider any leadership style superior. It is said to be based on a

combination of leadership style and skillsets of followers, the relevant party, implying that leaders must first appraise the situation before acting (Simplilearn, 2022).

3.1.3 TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP THEORY

This theory focuses on the relationship between leaders and followers (Simplilearn, 2022). The thesis examines the many types of motivating and charismatic leaders who inspire their followers via development and understanding, thereby enhancing their followers' knowledge and abilities (Simplilearn, 2022). They are typically concerned with improving their team's performance and potential by highlighting the importance of the task at hand and the benefits involved in undertaking it.

3.1.4 TRANSACTIONAL THEORIES

In short, the transactional theory is one of the most commonly used management techniques and is typically oriented toward collaboration, supervision and management. This theory is based on the use of incentives and punishments to motivate employees (Simplilearn, 2022).

3.1.5 BEHAVIOURAL THEORY

The behavioural theory, which is said to be one of the most effective leadership theories, believes that effective leadership results from various learned or acquired skills. It proposes that a person can develop into a strong leader through education. This approach focuses on a leader's patterns of behaviour rather than their qualities or characteristics (Simplilearn, 2022).

3.1.6 GREAT MAN THEORY OF LEADERSHIP

Arguably the most dismissed theory, the great man theory believes a leader must possess natural charisma and confidence, intelligence, effective and efficient communication skills and social aptitude. In contrast to the behavioural theory, the great man theory believes that leadership cannot be taught and stresses that leadership is a trait that an individual either has or does not (Simplilearn, 2022).

3.1.7 TRAIT THEORY OF LEADERSHIP

Like the Great Man theory, this theory assumes that leaders have innate characteristics that make them better suited to the role than others who do not. As a result, the theory identifies qualities like intelligence, accountability, feeling of duty, and creativity as features that enable someone to flourish at leadership (Simplilearn, 2022).

3.2 LEADERSHIP STYLES

Cherry (2021) defines a leadership style as a leader's particular behaviours when instructing, motivating, leading, and overseeing a team. Great leaders have evolved a variety of leadership techniques for providing guidance, implementing initiatives, and motivating others throughout history, which Kurt Lewin, a social psychologist, identified in the 1930s as the following:

- Authoritarian (Autocratic)
- Participative (Democratic)

- Delegative (Laissez-Fair)

According to Lee (2021), each leadership style has a place in a leader's arsenal. While one may naturally dominate, a multidisciplinary leadership style can be used to become an effective leader. As contexts and environments dictate, the competent leader understands how to transition from one style to another. Over time, leading theorists have evolved and expanded on Lewin's primary styles of leadership, which range from autocratic, the most rigorous and disciplined, to laissez-faire, the most fluid and undisciplined, with an array of styles in between (Lee, 2021):

3.2.1 AUTOCRATIC

An autocratic leader, often known as a top-down leader, focuses less on gathering input from team members and instead makes executive choices that others are expected to follow. According to Lee (2021), this technique can help with decision-making, team cohesion, and consistency, as well as reducing team members' stress and clarifying each team member's position. On the other hand, this type of leadership is recognised for sometimes suffocating innovation and collaboration, and it is frequently disliked by employees as the leader is perceived to lack flexibility and is uncompromising (Lee, 2021).

3.2.2 AUTHORITATIVE

In contrast to autocratic leaders, authoritative leaders are believed to be able to explain their views to others rather than barking orders. They are well-known for allowing participation and flexibility in achieving shared objectives. According to Lee (2021), this type of leadership may motivate a team, foster effective working relationships via collaboration, and promote more creative thinking. On the other hand, this method may not be appropriate for a more traditional hierarchical culture as, by disturbing the status quo, team members may feel a sense of instability in the team (Lee, 2021).

3.2.3 PACESETTING

According to Lee (2021), this type of leadership is focused on performance and completing tasks, and it expects brilliance from the leader and their team. According to Lee (2021), this leadership style is excellent for achieving goals and fosters high performance, speed, and quality. On the other hand, team members may grow discouraged by the lack of feedback and progression and may believe that the results are valued more than the team (Lee, 2021).

3.2.4 DEMOCRATIC

According to Lee (2021), this is the most participative leadership style. A leader who employs this technique helps their team reach the intended goal in a way that is most beneficial to the group. Individuals can be motivated by participating fully in the decision-making process. This can foster creativity and invention, which, in turn, stimulates teamwork and instils a strong sense of accountability in team members. However, this leadership style may lack vision and direction and can even lead to conflict when team members' perspectives and concepts conflict (Lee, 2021).

3.2.5 COACHING

A Coaching Leader provides direction to team members in order to help them advance their personal growth and maximise their abilities. They are committed to instilling confidence in their teams by steering them through challenging situations in order to reach their goals. This leadership style is considered to aid in identifying weaknesses and their transformation into strengths and the promotion of trust and empowerment. Coaching leadership is renowned for developing talent and growing a highly-skilled workforce. This technique, however, demands a significant amount of time

and patience. To avoid demotivating their team, the leader must have the confidence, expertise, and the ability to provide meaningful feedback (Lee, 2021).

3.2.6 AFFILIATIVE

According to Lee (2021), affiliative leaders encourage and appreciate the personal traits and behaviours used in task delivery. They focused heavily on encouraging people to agree and building collaborative connections inside and between teams. This leadership style helps in the formation of trust within an organisation and the strengthening of cross-functional working relationships. Power clashes among departmental leaders, on the other hand, have the ability to disrupt results. Underperformance can be typically overlooked in a crisis, and there may even be a lack of clear direction for team members (Lee, 2021).

3.2.7 LAISSE-FAIRE

According to Lee (2021), this kind of leadership is the polar opposite of autocratic leadership since the leader will take a 'hands-off' approach. Leaders who practice laissez-faire management will equip their team with the resources and information required to succeed whilst remaining largely uninvolved. Individuals can be empowered by using this strategy, which encourages autonomous thinking. On the other hand, and when taken to extremes, leaders may appear indifferent and distant, and perhaps even unapproachable. Team members may compete to fill the leadership hole if there is no clear direction, leading to conflict and low productivity (Lee, 2021).

3.3 PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

To put things in perspective, our organisation is modest in size and turnover, with no more than 20 employees. Our organisation was low on management staff and therefore had to recruit a site manager from a local agency for a project with a contract value of no more than 120,000. The site manager in question had a strong resume and extensive experience working on multi-million-pound projects and was used to working in a large team and was able to delegate tasks and responsibilities effectively. We soon realised that the downscaling of project size and value was a culture shock. He soon realised that our site managers frequently performed activities outside their typical responsibilities.

Considering the size of our company, our site managers usually come from a trade background and serve as working foremen. Once they've finished their paperwork, our site managers may be required to help with on-site activities. Coming from a background where site managers did little to no on-site labour, it was apparent that doing things that were not part of the usual site manager's responsibilities was not an option. Our operatives approached the new site manager and asked if they could assist with transporting materials across the site, but he declined. Our operators are accustomed to the site manager assisting them whenever feasible, so this came as a shock and left a poor taste in their mouths.

As the project progressed, it became evident that there was a rift forming on-site, with our operatives appearing to be working against the new site manager. The slip in the schedule and the lack of productivity on site were indications of this. When our managing director learned of the lapse in the programme, he called a meeting with the new site manager to get an update on what was occurring on site. The new site manager mentioned his concerns about being asked to do things outside of his responsibilities and not being allowed to assign tasks to a team. Following my managing director's attempt to explain what our operatives are accustomed to, he was faced with

negativity and dismissal. This eventually led to the site manager taking his possessions and leaving work.

It was evident that the site manager had been trained to work under a leadership style that differed from ours. Our site managers typically follow a participative, democratic leadership style and participate wherever possible. This manager's actions demonstrated a delegative leadership style as they showed little to no cooperation. The clash of styles threw our working environment into a loop, which negatively impacted on-site productivity. While I do not feel that a delegative leadership style is ineffective, I believe that a leader should adapt to his surroundings and strike a healthy balance between different leadership styles.

3.4 PERSONAL LEADERSHIP STYLE

According to a personality test, I have the personality profile of a Mediator (INFP), which means I am introverted, intuitive, feeling, and prospecting. According to the results, my strengths include empathy, compassion, open-mindedness, creativity, passion, and ideological thinking. On the other hand, my flaws are that I may be unrealistic, self-isolating, inattentive, emotionally vulnerable, desperate to please, and judgmental of myself. (16Personalities. 2022)

In terms of leadership, the findings suggest that a mediator is one of the personality types least likely to act in command and treat their staff as human beings, not just workers. It states that rather than making all of the decisions, Mediators frequently seek out the views and opinions of their employees. Mediators often do not micromanage, preferring to focus on the big picture. Instead of telling their employees what to do and how to do it, they believe their role is to support and encourage them. Mediators, on the other hand, may find it challenging to establish limits, drill down on inefficiencies, or offer criticism, even when it is essential. (16Personalities. 2022)

With this in mind, it's evident that my management style is a mix of coaching and democratic. I feel I would seek to grow my employees and encourage collaboration in a leadership position. I believe that allowing multiple team members to engage in decision-making will invigorate my team and instill a strong sense of accountability in my team members.

I took another online test to confirm my theory to identify my leadership style, which revealed that I lean toward a democratic or participative leadership style. It indicates that I usually set the parameters for the task and have the last say on decisions, but that I actively involve team members in the process. The results show that this leadership style can develop trust, but it is not ideal in a high-pressure situation requiring a quick turnaround, which is exceptionally accurate when compared to the results of my personality test, which show that I can be inattentive and disorganised.

4.0 Teamwork

Teamwork is defined by the New Oxford Dictionary as "the activity of working together as a team to achieve a common goal." According to research, collaborative problem-solving produces better results, and people who have the backing of a team are more willing to take calculated risks that lead to creativity (Middleton, 2022). While the team's functional talents are vital, so are the members' personalities. Harvard Business Review (HBR) advises ensuring the mix of personalities between the team is just right is critical to success. Sherman (2020) states that a team should ideally have a strong leader, someone to assist in developing team relationships, and at least one person who is prepared to challenge everyone's assumptions.

According to Harvard Business Review, an effective team consists of a variety of personality types:

- **Self-confident:** Organising and commanding employees
 - **Diplomatic:** Warm individuals who care about other people's feelings and place a strong emphasis on relationships
 - **Detail-Orientated:** Dedicated team members who are well-organised and adhere to the guidelines.
 - **Imaginative:** Curious team members who want to innovate
 - **Cautious:** Level-headed and practical thinkers who insist on other people proving their ideas
- (Sherman, 2020)

Our office team consists of three employees: myself, our office and health and safety manager, and our managing director. My personality profile matches that of a Mediator, which means I am open to new ideas, creative, and empathic, as mentioned in section 3.4. As a result, I fall into the 'Diplomatic' and 'Imaginative' categories listed above. Our office and health and safety manager, on the other hand, is a highly organised and conscientious, practical thinker who follows the rules to the letter - he thus qualifies as 'Cautious' and 'Detail-Oriented.' Because he is an extrovert who frequently takes charge of situations, our managing director fits predominantly into the self-assured category.

With the above in mind, in theory, we make a great team that has the right balance of personalities to succeed. I agree with this hypothesis as I am confident that we would work well together and challenge each other in various parts of leadership. For example, we recently encountered a challenging circumstance in which an architect had requested vertical hanging tiles, but the method of hanging them was to be with mastic. The tiles were theoretically 'stuck on' with no actual fixings into the substrate. Our managing director agreed at first, but after assessing the hazards, our office and health and safety manager advised him not to. My managing director's concern was that he didn't want to appear to be a "know-it-all" by criticising an architect's recommendations, but our office manager stressed the risk of this installation method. When asked for my comments, I considered my managing directors' and office managers' perspectives. I decided that the best course of action would be to raise our concerns discreetly at the next site meeting without intending to embarrass the architect. With this in mind, during the meeting, our managing director took the architect aside and stated his concerns, after which the architect issued a variation to the works and recommended a more durable fixing approach.

5.0 Conclusion

Please see a brief summary of personal learning points gained across the module:

- Awareness of mental health issues and how to report
- Organisational structure and behaviours
- Different personality traits and how they interlink
- Understanding of value and how to measure
- Good working practice and procedures
- Understanding of teamwork and the contributing factors
- Global impact of COVID-19 on the construction industry
- Professional indemnity insurance
- Professional development
- Professional bodies
- How to manage conflict in the workplace

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Top Skills

Building Conservation

Retrofitting

Energy Efficiency in Historic Buildings

Estimating

Take-offs

Communication

Welsh Speaker

Carpentry & Joinery

Fluent in Photoshop

Building Websites

Marketing

Site Certifications

Fire Marshal

Asbestos Awareness

Working at Height

Abrasive Wheel

IPAF Accredited

CSCS Card

Owen Towell

Trainee Quantity Surveyor, CITB 'Go Construct' Ambassador & CIOB Student Member

Greater Cardiff Area

Summary

I began working in the construction industry over seven years ago as a labourer for a local conservation company. After getting a taste of the industry, I enrolled in a Carpentry and Joinery course and achieved a Level 3 in the trade.

After gaining some experience, I expressed an interest in construction management and began working as an apprentice quantity surveyor. I'm now pursuing a HND in Quantity Surveying at UWTSD, where I'm working toward my ambition of becoming a Chartered Quantity Surveyor.

I am a CITB 'Go Construct' Ambassador, a CIOB Student Member, and a soon-to-be retrofitting assessor with a passion for heritage conservation.

Outside of work, I am an avid videographer and graphic designer who provides free website design services to small, local businesses.

I also own and operate a small online marketplace where I buy and resell limited-edition trainers to consumers all over the world. I built my own website, produced my own stock photos, and promoted my business on several platforms: <http://www.kicknconnect.com> IG: @kicknconnect

Experience

TALIESIN CONSERVATION LIMITED

7 years 3 months

Trainee Quantity Surveyor

April 2017 - Present (5 years 1 month)

Carpenter and Joiner

May 2015 - November 2017 (2 years 7 months)

Laborer

February 2015 - May 2015 (4 months)

Pengam

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Education

University of Wales Trinity Saint David

HND, Quantity Surveying · (2019 - Present)

Coleg y Cymoedd

BTEC, Construction Management and The Built Environment · (2018 - 2019)

Coleg y Cymoedd

NVQ, Carpentry and Joinery · (2015 - 2017)

Qualifications

Level 5 NVQ Diploma in Construction Management (Sustainability)

Level 3 in Construction Management and The Built Environment

Level 3 Award in Energy Efficiency for Older and Traditional Buildings

Level 3 NVQ Diploma in Wood Occupations

Level 3 Diploma in Site Carpentry (Construction)

Level 2 Award in Emergency First Aid at Work

CITB Construction Ambassador

References

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Professional Personal Development Continuing Professional Development Record						
Name	Student Number	Discipline				
Owen Towell	1903180	Quantity Surveying				
CPD Plan (Anticipated 1 and 3 year plan)						
Learning	Classification/Type	Objective	Start Date	Time Scale		
IPAF Training	External training (1 no day)	To receive a license to operate a cherry picker to aid with the surveying of listed buildings	Feb-20	1 day		
University Diploma	HN0 In Quantity Surveying	To receive a Higher National Diploma in Quantity Surveying in order to progress my learning even further.	May-19	3 Years		
CPD Log						
Date	Duration	Classification/Type	Objective	Learning / Outcome / Benefits	Reflection	
7/1/14	1 day	Construction Skills Certificate Scheme	CSCS - Apprentice Card	To provide evidence that I have the appropriate training and qualification for working on a construction site	To implement theory into practise	
2014-21/05/2017	3 years	Internal Apprenticeship - NVQ	NVQ Level 3 in Carpentry and Joinery	Distinction - Wood occupations and site carpentry - better understanding of the construction industry as whole and understand the correct measures to take while undergoing site carpentry	To implement theory into practise	
5/23/17	1 day	External Training Day	CTIB Go Construct - Construction Ambassador Scheme	Gaining an understanding of working with individuals to promote the Construction Industry and demonstrating a high degree of competence and ability in presentation skills	To act as a role model to young people who may be unsure on what career path to take. To attend 30 (minimum) events to pass on skill, knowledge and enthusiasm to potential new construction industry entrants	
4/19/18	1 day	Internal Training Day	Coleg Gwent Business - Microsoft Project	To learn and understand the features of Microsoft Project and how it can be used within the construction industry with making programmes of work and allocating resources	To implement theory into practise by creating all the programmes of work for Talleis Conservation Ltd.	
2017-21/05/2019	3 years	External BTEC College Course	Level 3 in Construction and the Built Environment	Distinction - A better understanding of construction management and construction outside of site-based work	To implement newly learned skills within the company offices, as an acting Quantity Surveyor	
10/4/19	3 weeks	Tender Return - St Dyffys Phase 2	To successfully tender for a project in order to undergo the works	Gaining a better understanding of tender documents with the intention of successfully winning the tender.	During this tender, I learned how important it is to include for mortar gaps for new walls. I initially missed this element but was picked up by my MD who pointed out that we may have lost money due to not ordering enough bricks.	
10/8/19	2 weeks	Tender & PQO Return - Neath Abbey	To successfully tender for a project in order to undergo the works	Gaining a better understanding of tender documents with the intention of successfully winning the tender.	During this tender, I learned about nominated contractors and how an architect can specify a specific contractor to undertake an element of works. In this case, a scaffold contractor was nominated as they have previously worked at the site.	
10/8/19	2 hours	Hand-over meeting	St John the Baptist, Cardiff - Handover to client	Understanding how hand-over meetings work and what information is required from the contractor during these meetings.	During this hand-over meeting, I learned that the contractor is to provide the client with an operation and maintenance manual to include details of material specifications.	
10/15/19	1 day	O&M Manual - St John the Baptist, Cardiff	Develop an O&M Manual for the use of the client	Understanding what information is required within an O&M manual.	During the development of this O&M Manual, I had to include material specifications; and during this, I learned the difference between the grading of Natural hydraulic lime mortar. The mortar used on this church consisted of NHL 3.5 binder. NHL 3.5 is used for general building with moderate exposure.	
10/18/19	3 hours	Application for Welsh Water - St John the Baptist, Nelson	To apply for Section 106 from Welsh Water	The purpose of the application is to get approval from Welsh Water to making alterations to existing sewer arrangements.	This element of construction was completely foreign to me having a background in carpentry. I had discussions with both client representative and drainage contractor to determine exact specification to successfully apply for a section 106 - this was approved by Welsh Water within 10 days.	
10/22/19	1 hours	Discussion on site	Discussion with M&E Contractor and British gas on-site	The purpose of the meeting was for British Gas to upgrade the boiler	The boiler in question was a dated, UTB boiler which the M&E contractor claimed was insufficient for the upgrade in water flow. It was determined that the boiler was capable of withstanding the new flow of water, but was recommended that it would be beneficial for the boiler to be upgraded to a modern metric boiler for the ease of future boiler readings.	
11/5/19	2 hours	Self-learning - Self Healing Concrete	Understanding of recent technologies of self-healing concrete	Improve my understanding of the fundamental construction materials and the recent developments of said materials.	There are new technologies for 'self-healing' concrete, where bacteria is added to the mixture and should cracks form, and water penetrate, it is able to 'heal' itself. In 2017, a contractor from the Netherlands constructed the first building using this bio-concrete, which proved successful.	
11/12/19	2 hours	COB Meeting - Jason Taylor (Kier) Presentation	2 hour presentation from a manager at one of the UK's largest construction companies	To understand your role within the company and how body language, speech and appearance effects working relationships.	Jason showed real enthusiasm for construction and gave himself as an example on how someone is able to develop themselves into an important member of the management team. From this presentation I realised that there is a need for dedication, which will eventually pay off. I learned what it is to be a good construction manager and how to portray yourself in the best manner.	
11/13/19	1 day	Final Account - Capel y Babel, Cwmfelinfach	Draft a final account for CA consideration	To draft a final account using the previous application for payment for the CA's approval.	From this, I realised that the cost for a project very rarely comes in at tender price, and through either task omissions or variations, the price for a tender can vary. In this case, the cost of the project was higher than the tender figure due to variations in work.	
11/15/19	2 hours	Pre-Contract Meeting - St John's, Penhow	Pre-contract meeting with client and representative	To gain a better understanding of what information is discussed during a pre-contract meeting.	During this meeting, our programme was discussed at length to include our critical paths. This was developed by myself with the aid of our managing director. Contracts were handed out which we took back to our head-office to read through and understand what we are signing up for.	
11/20/19	NA	Tender Successful - St Dyffys Phase 2	Successful tender return	To receive feedback on our tender submission	The feedback given for this successful tender were that we were not the cheapest tenderer, however, the final decision by the client was based on our pre-quality questionnaire.	
11/27/19	NA	Tenders Lost - Gunns Mill	Un-successful tender	To receive feedback on our tender submission	While our PQO submission was of favour, we were unsuccessful with this tender due to not being the lowest tenderer. The tender is based on a points system where it's split between PQO and 60points on price. We received 36 points on our PQO and 42 points on pricing. We were told that the winning tender scored 82 points in total.	
12/5/19	NA	Tender Lost - Neath Abbey	Un-successful tender	To receive feedback on our tender submission	The only feedback given for this project was that our preliminaries costs were far higher than the winning tenderer. Having reviewed this with my MD, we deemed that it was not possible to cut our costs any further.	
12/6/19	2 hours	Section 50 Council - St John the Baptist, Nelson	To apply for a Section 50 from the Local Authorities	To understand what information is required for the local authority to approve a Section 50 Application form.	Following confirmation of the Section 106 from Welsh Water, we were then required to apply for a Section 50 - Highways due to the adaptation of sewer taking place in a public highway. This was my first attempt of completing a Section 50 application and following discussions with the drainage contractor, this was completed and accepted within 15 days.	
12/11/19	3 days	Envelope Survey - Whitchurch Library	To identify structural defects and essential repairs	The purpose was to aid with recording of structural defects highlighted by our on-site surveyor	Following an on-site survey, I was tasked with recording the orientation and details of defects and aid with developing of a report highlighting essential repairs. The main issues with this building were that masonry were deteriorating progressively and I felt unattended, may pose a risk to the health and safety of the building users and passers by.	
12/12/19	2 hours	On-site Progress Meeting - St John the Baptist, Nelson	To attend a progress meeting with my MD	The purpose of the meeting was to give the client an indication where we are with programme and highlight any issues we may have had.	During this meeting, it was highlighted that we are ahead of schedule due to the resource management implemented by our team. We used Microsoft Project to manage the project and allocate resources appropriately. By doing this, we were ahead of schedule by two weeks.	
12/18/19	3 days	Final Account Settled - Capel y Babel, Cwmfelinfach	Confirmation of our Final Account	Following our draft final account with the additional variations, we were summoned to a meeting with the CA to discuss.	Although the variations were accepted at first, we eventually settled our final account by providing CA with evidence of verbal instructions via our site diary. This taught me the importance of keeping detailed records of all actions taken place on site.	
12/20/19	1 day	O&M Manual - Capel y Babel, Cwmfelinfach	Develop an O&M Manual for the use of the client	Understanding what information is required within an O&M manual.	Following the previous development of an O&M manual, I understood what information was required and the process ran a lot smoother. The information was readily at hand as I kept records of all specifications and manufacturers information from all materials used.	
12/20/19	1 hour	In-house Discussion - With Managing Director	Discussions on take offs for a spherical dome	To understand how to work out the area of a sphere for re-decoration purposes.	I was required to measure the area of a quarter-dome for redecoration. I was unable to do so off the top of my head, but following a discussion with my MD and online research, we determined we used the following equation: $A = (4 \pi r^2) / 4$	
1/8/20	2 hours	Contractor Progress Report - St John the Baptist, Penhow	To develop a Contractors Progress Report in readiness for an on-site meeting	To understand what information is required for a contractors progress report, and develop one with the aid of my MD	From this experience, I realised that many factors affect progress on site, from adverse weather to delays in RFI responses. It was apparent that due to a number of days of heavy rain, and delay in receiving information from the architect with regards to mortar specification - the re-pointing of the buildings facade was delayed, and in turn affected programme.	
1/14/20	4 days	Envelope Survey - The Court Special School, Llanishan	To identify structural defects and essential repairs	The purpose was to aid with recording of structural defects highlighted by our on-site surveyor	During this on-site survey, I learned the importance of regularly maintaining windows and doors. All defects highlighted were due to lack of maintenance, and in turn, will cost thousands to resolve. All decoration to windows and doors were peeling, exposing the bare timber to the elements, causing the timber to rot.	
1/16/20	4 hours	External training Course	Asbestos Awareness	To be able to detect the signs that asbestos has been used in a building for further inspection by an approved contractor.	To implement theory into practise while undergoing envelope surveys.	
1/20/20	30 minutes	Graphentone Meeting - Lime Based Paint Presentation	Discussion regarding lime based paints and its benefits	To better my understanding on why lime based paint is specified within our projects and what benefits using this finish has.	I learned that time based paints allow the building to breath which allows water vapour escape from the walls. It also has next to no VOC which promotes a healthy living environment.	
Professional Development (Evaluation of progress/development in 2019)						
Personally, 2019 was a learning curve for me and played a significant role in my progression into my role as acting Quantity Surveyor. As I have nobody within the company to shadow, I have been thrown into the deep-end and expected to swim.						
Many mistakes have been made, but everyone involved learned from each one. As a company, we've had several tender packages land in our inbox - all of which were priced by myself and the aid of my managing director. As it stands, we currently have a 70% success rate with tenders; however, the unsuccessful tenders were primarily down to pricing. We have received feedback from architects and reflected as a company on how things went wrong, and where our pencils need sharpening.						
All issues raised are transparent and are thoroughly discussed and evaluated. When I first started my role as acting quantity surveyor one year prior, we had an 'old fashioned' method of pricing, where we would rely solely on construction drawings and a scaled ruler. Since this, and following the training I have been given, we are now able to use more modern technology to price our projects by reading and understanding CAD drawings and using the correct methods of taking-off and understanding information from drawings. If I were to compare our success rate for larger tenders from the beginning of the year to the end, we have substantially improved. We are now able to cost for larger projects as pressure has been taken off of my MD to solely price projects. As I have been given training on Microsoft Project, we are now capable of creating detailed programmes of works with resource management and cash-flow projections.						
Planning for 2020 (Notes about plans for 2020)						
In 2020, I intend to complete my first year in University and continue to develop into my role of Quantity Surveyor successfully. I plan to further my learning using CAD and improve my excel skills. It's my intention - with the aid of my MD - to develop a schedule of rates to price projects more efficiently. I intend to continue using our on-site surveyor to carry out envelope surveys to listed buildings, to assist with identifying structural defects and essential repairs. Once I have attended some on-site meetings, it's my MD's intentions for myself to hold a meeting of my own which in turn, reduces the amount of pressure he's under.						
My goal for 2020 is to raise our success percentage for tenders from 70% to 80%+. I intend to undergo many more envelope surveys of listed buildings, and improve my overall knowledge on the construction and significant buildings. I intend to undergo IPAF training in order that I can operate the cherry pickers while undergoing surveys. It's also my intention to implement theory learned at University into practice in my working environment.						

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (PDP)

NAME: Owen Towell

DATE: 10/01/2022

AREA FOR DEVELOPMENT:	DATE I WILL HAVE THIS COMPLETED BY:	I WILL ACHIEVE THIS BY: State how you will achieve the target using a mix of methods such as discussion, study and actually trying it out. Resources you can use, people who can support.	WHAT'S HAPPENING NOW? Specifics indicating that this is an area requiring improvement/development.	HOW WILL I KNOW I'VE BEEN SUCCESSFUL? What will success look like? e.g. attain a qualification	PROGRESS: DISCUSS WITH YOUR LINE MANAGER IN YOUR PERFORMANCE REVIEWS. Note specifics that worked & any further areas you may need to develop
Surveying of Historic Buildings - Specifically advanced drone use	24/06/22	Undertaking SLCT Drone Surveying Masterclass course	We are currently outsourcing the drone imagery and measured reports	Certificate / Qualification in Built Environment Technical Drone Surveying	Competent in producing survey condition reports on historic buildings, but need to add more strings to the bow.
Surveying of Historic Buildings - Specifically thermal movement	27/06/22	Undertaking ITC Thermal Camera (Thermography) course	This is something that is vital to surveying historic building to understand the buildings thermal movement	Certificate / Qualification ITC Level 1 Thermal Camera (Thermography)	Understands how to read thermal images, but does not know how to take thermal imagery.
Understanding Contracts	TBD	JCT Seminars Completing HND In Quantity Surveying NEC Contracts training course	Currently attending University lectures with specific reference to contracts. Booking JCT & NEC training course	This will be an ongoing learning process for the duration of my working life.	Basic knowledge on JCT contracts, but little to no knowledge on NEC contracts.
Further understanding of PAS 2035 to become a Retrofitting Assessor	TBC	Undertaking further learning on PAS 2035.	Currently awaiting relevant dates for courses. New retrofitting projects in the pipeline which will be co-ordinated by myself	Level 5 Diploma in Retrofit Coordination and Risk Management	Currently have Level 3 in Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings - Owen requires further training to become our retrofit coordinator.