

CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING MASTERS DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

How Changes in the Construction Industry are Impacting on a Consultancy Business Model

There have been reports and policies which have proposed developments and targets aimed at improving the efficiency and efficacy of the industry over the past 25 years. Development and innovation within the engineering industry impacts upon the organisations involved in the delivery, including engineering consultancies. Engineering consultancies often have early project involvement, such as in the design process, and therefore could be considered to be a spearhead and a key initiator of change and improvements within projects and the industry.

This study examines the perceived impact on the business model of a subject consultancy in response to different changes and initiatives. Fourteen industry practitioners participated from a UK engineering consultancy business, covering project management, quantity surveying, the engineering disciplines of civil, structural, mechanical and electrical as well as architecture and asset management. Semi-structured interviews with practitioners were used to explore in detail their views and perspectives on the impact that changes in the construction industry have on the consultancy business model. Within the interviews, the participants identified changes impacting the industry such as the increased use of technology, modern construction techniques, client and societal demands due to Climate Change, response to health and safety issues such as the Grenfell Tower disaster and different demands as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, during which the research was conducted.

It was expected that there would be significant impacts on the consultancy business model as a result of these changes and the targets imposed on the industry, but this was not observed. It is discussed that the consultant's role evolves, largely as a result of increased technology usage, to interpret unique issues seen on existing assets or to create and interpret technology-enabled models. However, although subtle, this led participants to consider the development of future generations of engineers and professionals who work within engineering consultancies. Participants also considered the wider industry and the need to invest in enabling significant change if it is to be successful.

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