



**UNIVERSITY OF  
CAMBRIDGE**

Department of Engineering

## **CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERING MASTERS DISSERTATION ABSTRACT**

### **The Skills and Attributes of Managers and Executives in the UK Construction Industry**

The UK construction industry is recognising the need for leadership development and succession planning within their companies. Leadership development process has been known to take years to produce results, and it has been found that people have been promoted to senior positions requiring people-orientated direction and management skills that they were ill prepared to provide.

To understand what leadership and personal development are required, we must first understand which skills, attributes and training influence the career paths of managers and executives within the UK Construction Industry. Literature regarding executive management progression has focused on financial sectors; however, no systematic investigation has been conducted on executive career paths within the UK Construction Industry.

A mixed method approach was utilized to complete seven semi-structured interviews with Chief Executive Officers and Executive board members working within the UK Construction Industry. In addition to these interviews, an online survey was completed by 123 UK Construction professionals within low, middle and executive level positions in to determine if there were any similarities within career paths, skills, training, and attributes.

The research findings indicate no direct career path to reach an executive level. Interpersonal skills are considered the most critical skill when reaching executive level. As managers progressed from low to middle managers, personal development, leadership, business operations and strategy skills were either obtained in internal or external training courses.

This research concludes that to reach an executive level, a shift from technical to interpersonal skills as well as and knowing business fundamentals is advantageous in career progression. The insight into the training and skills within this study should be addressed when providing development and training for future leaders in the UK Construction Industry.

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