

We need to talk about collaboration

Pulling together UK construction

by Dave Stitt



The **team** is the master, now

When my dad began his career in the early fifties, the pace of change was such that he had 40 years to master his trade. He was a coach builder for the United Bus Company in Newcastle upon Tyne and he would straighten out buses after a crash. It was a slow, painstaking process of beating body panels back into shape. And in his 40 years he brought on apprentices who also had decades to master their trades. Nowadays, the pace of change is so fast that nobody has that much time to master their jobs and so we increasingly rely on others—the team is the master.

When I started my construction career in the mid-seventies, the architect (for a building project) and the engineer (on a civils project) were omnipotent beings. They would design, oversee and instruct, and everyone else was required to do as they were told. Now they just come up with the overall concept and the subbies do the design. Once again, the team is the master.

If we are relying on others, we need to collaborate for the system to work well. In my career as a civil engineer I didn't get time to master my profession. I was too ambitious and was propelled too quickly into management. It seemed that my main qualifications for this promotion were that I was big, fast, loud and aggressive. Nobody taught me how to get the best out of people and nobody taught me how to collaborate.

A lost generation

I often wonder if my path is typical of the fiftysomething “baby boomers” who run today's industry, and if that is why it's known for being combative and non-collaborative. Maybe, maybe not; either way, the pressure for change is mounting and the word “collaboration” is on everyone's lips.

In the mid-nineties just as I was moving into a leadership role (again, without any training) I went through a transformation programme that changed my career. I really “got” for the first time that relationships are the foundation of all results. My life-change occurred between the Latham and Egan reports, both of which fuelled my desire to make a contribution. Since then I have made it my business to help build relationships across projects in the UK construction industry—helping people to collaborate effectively and work as a team.

In the past 15 years I have been so busy working with teams and executives that I have lost track of government and



Egan-type reports, although over the past year I have become increasingly aware that collaboration is very much on the agenda. Curious about this, I commissioned a small team to research and summarise the government's agenda for construction and the drivers for collaboration. Part one of this book explains their findings. In short, there is an unprecedented drive to make collaboration a prerequisite for winning public sector work. Part two gives my views on the challenges that project teams face when trying to collaborate, and part three describes my approach to overcoming them; an approach that has matured over 15 years and that has been road tested in more than a thousand workshops involving hundreds of organisations.

Why should you read this book?

The intent of this book is to explain the drivers for collaboration in the UK construction industry in the mid to late-2010s and then set out one tried and tested approach that an organisation or project team can adopt to enhance the effectiveness of their combined efforts. In short, it will put the challenge and solution in one convenient place for you, the reader.

I love watching movies. In the film *We Need to Talk about Kevin*, Kevin's mother, played by Tilda Swinton, tells her husband that there is something very wrong with their son. Father replies, "There's nothing wrong with him; he's just a normal little boy." Kevin grows up and does something terrible and it all ends badly.

The government has been saying for generations, "we need to talk about collaboration" and the industry has either ignored the message or said "we're already doing it". This time round, your organisation really does have to take up the challenge in earnest, and prove that it is really doing it—otherwise, it may end badly. "We need to talk about collaboration" is my attempt at getting the conversation going, backed up by an approach that will work for your organisation. I hope this is useful for you.

Lastly, this book is not finished: indeed, I see it as a work in progress. We may have missed things out; you may wish to add to, or disagree with, our findings. Also, there will be a general election in 2015 and all things might change. So, please get in touch, give us your views and every few months we will update this book so that it builds into a collaboration and more widely reflects the developing picture of collaboration in UK construction.

My experience has predominantly been in contracting, and, inevitably this book reflects that. So my first collaborator is Rob Charlton, the chief executive of Space Architects, who has kindly written a foreword putting the designer's point of view.

Dave Stitt



Clear it away. Start again

Balfour Beatty has just announced that yet another top executive is stepping down after yet another profit warning. Sir Robert McAlpine, another of the UK's biggest and best contractors, has revealed £38m losses for 2013. Five years ago, Balfour was our biggest customer. Now it faces break-up and a possible sale.

These firms' misfortunes stem from problem contracts, but why is it that so many contracts are going wrong? I believe the problem lies in the way the industry is organised and the way that its top managers think.

The industry is divided into professions whose members are taught from a young age to regard a stranger in a rival camp as an enemy they haven't shafted yet. When I was training as an architect, I attended seminars in legal self-defence, because I was taught that the contractor was going to try to do you over. I was also told that architects are better than everybody else and that clients were just the people who commissioned buildings on our behalf.

Meanwhile, the contractors look to make their profit targets by squeezing their supply chains and extending their payment terms by another 30 days. They spend almost nothing on research and development, and it seems that whenever something goes wrong, their only response is to throw another chief executive to the shareholders. As a result of this we have businesses such as Balfour that look great when they're riding a wave of public sector investment, but struggle when the bad times come.

Set up to fail

I should say here that I'm not blaming anybody. The fact is that the system is set up in such a way that people are encouraged to behave in a selfish way. True collaboration springs from a shared goal, and in construction we tend not to have that. If I'm the architect, my goal is to get my drawing out as quickly as possible and get my fee; I'm not really bothered about helping out the M&E guy because I just want to get my bit done.

If I'm a contractor, my goal is to get the building up as quick as possible, while reducing the risk and making as large a margin as I can. And if I'm a subcontractor, all I care about is getting the next job and try not to take too many beatings from the main contractor. A subcontractor has no interest in a common goal; they

just want to get through the process and get their last payment.

So, how do you break the cycle of boom and bust? How do you change attitudes and organisations in an industry renowned for sticking to what it knows, even though it also knows it doesn't work?

I believe the answer is to think in a completely different way. I believe we have to start with the product and then work out the process that will best deliver it. In an industry that is driven by costs, it means focusing on value and collaborating to deliver that value.

Let's try it another way

The good news is that there are powerful drivers for change in the industry. This first part of this book examines the government's plans to use its regulatory and economic power, and these are going to make a difference. For example, PAS 91, the pre-qualification questionnaire, is creating what amounts to a common language across the industry for sharing information.

There are other forces at work as well. There is a generational change, and that is bringing a different approach to providing a product. One part of it is technical. When Sir John Egan produced his report in 1998, I was using a Rotring pen to design buildings. He talked about technology, but most of it wasn't quite there.

The government's *Construction 2025* is, I believe, the Egan Report with a different cover, and this time the technology has transformed everything. The iPad generation are using Twitter and other social media to discuss building information modelling 24/7. They are coming together around BIM regardless of what they do, or which company they do it for. I would go so far as to say that BIM has allowed the rising generation to create Construction 2.0.

And with that comes a radically different approach to the construction process. Instead of designers, builders and building engineers, BIM divides the work into design and validate, design and prototype, manufacture and assemble, operate and maintain. And with that comes a new intolerance to skips full of waste and court rosters full of construction cases.

The opportunity is there to redesign the design process and rebuild the industry around shared goals. I think this book shows some of the ways it's going to happen. I only hope Balfour can take on board some of the new thinking before it's too late.

Rob Charlton
chief executive
Space Group

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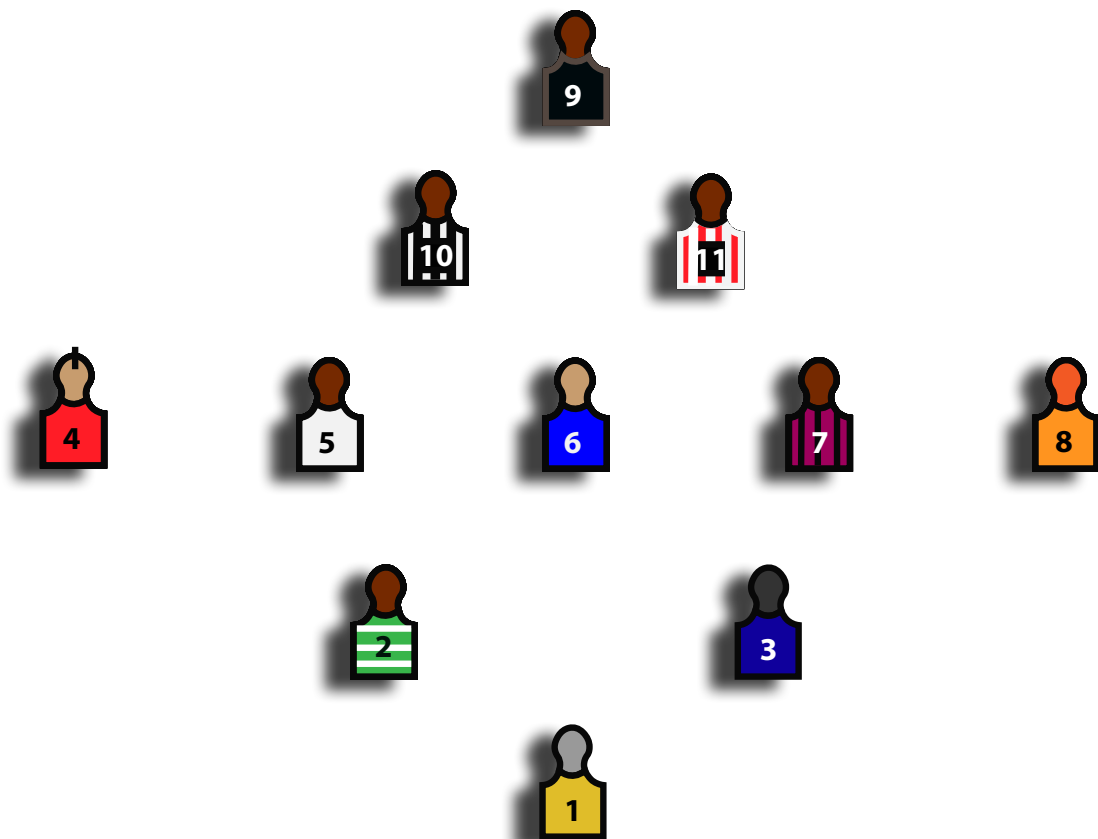
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Part One

The New Drivers for Collaboration in UK Construction



Governments have tried for generations to make the industry work together better. Now it's about to get tough. Here's what to expect

Human beings are social animals, and nowhere is this more apparent than in a construction project. Any medium-sized scheme is a triumph of our ability to create extraordinary structures through collective effort. It takes an immense range of skills to design and build, for example, an ordinary office block. Several million individual components have to be brought together from across the globe; about a million pages of documentation and drawings have to be generated, filed, shared and amended to keep track of everything. And a team of professionals from different companies, with different training, different professional languages and subtly different interests have to work together for more than 14 months to make it happen.

Over the past 40 years or so, improvements have been made in the way the industry marshals the resources needed to create a building. For example, just-in-time delivery and lean construction have made logistics an exact science, and the recent advent of digital models offers the prospect of error-free design.

However, academic studies have suggested that there remain huge savings to be made from

improving the way the industry organises itself and the construction process. For example, it has been found that just under a third of all activity that contractors do on site is rework, that labour is used at about half its maximum efficiency, that 10% of materials are wasted and that accidents make up about 5% of project costs.¹

The prime mover in reforming the industry has been the government, partly because it is responsible for making British industry more productive and competitive, and partly because it has regulatory responsibilities for issues such as site safety.

Another incentive is that public sector clients presently spend something like £30bn a year on construction services, so it is the public sector that stands to gain most if the industry improves its efficiency. The Egan Report of 1998 set the target of a 10% reduction in the capital cost of a project. This was 10% a year, over a number of years. If, for the sake of argument, the industry were to cut capital costs by this amount for 10 consecutive years, the government stands to save a total of £124bn.

Government policy towards the construction

industry has been orientated around a number of landmark reports that it commissioned itself, at the rate of about one every 10 years. In the past we've had the Simon report (1944), the Banwell report (1967), the Phelps Brown report (1968), the Latham report (1994) and the Egan report (1998), as well as numerous parliamentary inquiries. The two most recent examples, Latham and Egan, made searching examinations of the industry's established practices, and both picked out one particular problem that underlay most of the others: collaboration. Latham went so far as to call his report "Constructing the Team", and one of Egan's main findings was the need to establish integrated teams and long-term relationships between clients and suppliers that were standard practice in industries such as car making.

The essential problem

The reports have different emphases but it is clear that they regard better collaboration as essential to improving the performance of all the trades and professions that come together on site. What's more, it also has a bearing on the relationship between designers and builders and the global network of factories that manufacture their bricks and boilers. It is even necessary to the internal working of individual companies, where all too often one department is in ignorance of the work of others (see **case study #1**).

Looked at in that light, it's clear that the

Case Study #1

The self-defeating contractor

A team from Loughborough University recently studied what happened to a regional contractor that tried to expand without ensuring its staff were collaborating with each other.³

The company had shared a brand among a group of businesses that worked independently. Now management wanted to provide a one-stop shop that included main contracting, M&E work and facilities management.

One problem was that the firm was trying to offer an integrated service without integrating itself. There was no shared project database, no collection of post-occupancy data, and a culture of "arrogance" that inhibited the ability of the organisation to learn from its mistakes. What's more, the new business teams made promises that the site teams couldn't keep. Meanwhile, the client found itself dealing with a group of strangers that "didn't know what they were supposed to be building". What's even more surprising is that team that won the tender didn't give the delivery team the information they'd compiled on the bid.

When work started on site, each unit of the business operated its own project team, and each strove to meet its targets at the expense of sister companies, with commercial teams sending letters regarding variations and additional charges to their counterparts at other group businesses, thereby moving money around the group rather than taking an overall project perspective.

A system has to be created that will resolve disagreements before they have a chance to corrode working relationships, and preserve team spirit when things are going wrong

need to improve collaboration permeates the construction process, and that (as the reports imply) this need can only truly be tackled by changing the culture of the industry.

The government's solution

Despite the fact that the problem of poor collaboration has been seen and understood, it has never been solved. The issue is too important to be left to the personalities of individual managers; rather a kind of system has to be created that will resolve disagreements before they have a chance to corrode working relationships, and that can preserve team spirit even when things are going wrong.

It is true that Egan's *Rethinking Construction* generated a great deal of enthusiasm, and even a kind of evangelical zeal, among some industry professionals, and it's true that "demonstration projects" were completed that illustrated the advantages of turning a project team into a "virtual company", and that framework contracts became *de rigueur* with many large clients. However, that movement was sidetracked by the extraordinary boom that followed the second Labour election victory of 2001: there was so much work to do that nobody had the mental space to step back and consider how it was being done. Of course, the crash of 2008 was equally distracting in its own way.

Now that the industry is recovering, and now

that the Treasury is under intense pressure to cut public spending, the issue of efficiency savings is back on the agenda, which means that the government is looking again at how to get the industry to collaborate more effectively.

The Coalition's first thoughts on the subject were set out in a 19-page document called *The Construction Strategy*, published in May 2011. The overall aim was to reduce the cost of government construction procurement by 15-20% by the end of 2014/15. Once again, it was the issue of collaboration that was picked out as the key to a more rational and efficient construction process. What the state is seeking on public sector projects is "a more collaborative, integrated model that nonetheless maintains competitive tension and the ability to demonstrate value for money".

The aim is to require framework contractors to hit benchmark cost targets by improving collaboration. This can be done by, for example, "removing contractual interfaces and the corresponding risk pricing associated with protecting individual rather than project interests", which is another way of stating the ideas behind Latham and Egan's "no blame" culture. It also made the familiar point that specialist contractors should be given a look at early-stage designs so that they can comment on their buildability. And join the collaboration.

The "competitive tension" is to be provided



'The universal use of this questionnaire could raise the standard of communication, understanding and supplier capability across construction'

by the benchmarks, rather than lowest-price bidding (which Egan in particular regarded as the source of many of the industry's ills). If the framework companies can't meet the benchmark, the project will be put out to tender, and the companies on the framework will not be allowed to bid.

All of that is expanded upon by the 63-page *Construction 2025—Government and Industry in Partnership*, published in July 2013. Michael Fallon, the business minister, said this was a call for "radical, transformational change", although he did not say how it was to be achieved (see part three of this book for more on that).

The leading item on its list of the weaknesses of UK Construction plc is the following: "Vertical integration in the supply chain is low and there is high reliance on subcontracting. Lack of integration often leads to fracture between design and construction management and a fracture between the management of construction and its execution, leading to lost opportunities to innovate."

Mark Bew, the chairman of the government's task group, says the government's strategy is simply to hurry the industry into doing something that it would anyway, in time.

Approached for comment, he said: "Collaboration is going to be engendered by the digital economy and the transparency

of data. If I know what you're doing, and you know that I know what you're doing, then your opportunity to have behaviours that are non-collaborative disappears. We know that ultimately the banks will be publishing big data to be analysed and mined, so an interested party will know if a company doesn't pay its suppliers within 90 days. It won't happen tomorrow but it will happen in our lifetime; a few years ago we wouldn't be giving away free data the way we do now on Facebook and social media."

He added: "It's a question of being careful not to force the market but to enable it to behave in a more coherent way—every step is going to be careful and deliberate; the industry has to be responsible for itself otherwise you haven't got a capitalist society, you've got something different, which none of us want. The government provides 40% of construction spend but it also has a massive responsibility to wield that axe gently."

A recent report by Aecom stressed that the industry would do well to fall in with Bew's plans. It said: "It is in the construction industry's interest to co-operate with public sector bodies in pursuing the strategy", and firms should seek to join the policy-making community that is evolving it.²

The universal questionnaire

In the past, the government has often urged the industry to improve the way that project

In practice, 'collaboration' tends to mean what you want it to, and one person's idea of collaborative behaviour might come as a surprise to his or her colleagues

teams work together, but has failed to use the privileges of the client to effect that change. One reason is that "the public sector" is, in reality, a multifarious swarm of procurement organisations, most of which are not contained in any straightforward chain of command leading up to Whitehall or the Treasury.

One way of imposing some kind of unity on the state sector is to ask all buyers to administer the same pre-qualification questionnaire, and to include certain requirements within it. This has already been done with "Publicly Available Specification 91", or PAS 91, the latest version of which was published last year.

In the preamble to the questions, the authors of the specification make it clear that one of their ambitions is to improve the quality of the construction sector across the board. Or, as they put it: "The *universal* use of this PAS could help to raise the overall standard of communication, understanding and supplier capability across the construction sector." (Emphasis added.)

PAS 91 consists of a list of core questions and another of supplementary and optional ones. Among the queries that have to be answered is one asking whether firms "have arrangements for co-operating and co-ordinating your work with others (including other suppliers, notably contractors)?" Another requires that designers "ensure the co-operation and co-ordination of design work within the design team and with

other designers/contractors"; a third asks: "Do you review and develop your effectiveness at delivering the coordination role?"

These questions are aimed at improving companies' health and safety performance, but they also require firms to demonstrate that collaboration is taken seriously at a senior level, that staff are trained to collaborate and the company has incorporated collaborative procedures into its operations manuals. All of these questions give firms the opportunity to display their ability to collaborate and follow "widely accepted good practice in the construction sector".

The first supplementary question in PAS is this: "Does your company have the technical ability to carry out the activities that are the subject of this prequalification questionnaire?" To answer this, firms will have to present "a completed project record" that demonstrates the "specific working methods for providing, maintaining and monitoring a high level of service delivery and customer satisfaction" and provide "details of meetings, communications and interactions between all parties".

Firms that can give a chapter and verse account of their collaborative processes and skills will be at an obvious advantage when answering this, but they will have to hurry: the government wants to make PAS 91 mandatory for all public projects by 2016.

The digital divide

Among the questions in PAS 91 is a section dealing with a firm's proficiency with building information modelling, or BIM. Although this part is optional, the government's 2011 Construction Strategy is clear that all government projects are eventually going to be carried out with the help of a model that can automatically detect faulty designs, automate costings and embed a wealth of information about every individual element of a building.

More specifically, fully collaborative 3D BIMs (that is, "level two") will have to be used on all schemes procured by central government by 2016. To prepare the way for compulsory models, PAS 91 sets out what bidders will have to show in order to establish their digital credentials.

Firstly, it comments that the "effective use of BIM is underpinned by collaborative working and effective information exchange". This may sound obvious, but it is not what has always happened in practice (see **case study #2**). Companies will be expected to show that they "understand the concept of a 'common data environment' and are able to exchange information between supply chain members in an efficient and collaborative manner". They will also have to give evidence that they have a chief-executive-approved BIM implementation policy and training arrangements "to ensure that

Case Study #2

Using BIM does not make us better people

Just because a project was designed using a 3D digital model does not mean that it is going to be a successful, collaborative project. One researcher shadowed two site managers to find out how big a role BIM played in the construction of two schools.⁴ She found that one site manager used his BIM only to retrieve information that would help him elicit bids from subcontractors, and the other spent about 20% of his time with the model "encountering errors, discrepancies, or a problematic design solution". As you might imagine "those were the occasions when the most vivid communication between the site managers, designers and other stakeholders emerged".

A BIM specialist with another contractor, complained that the quality of the models he receives from the design team is often poor. He says: "We grade the information we receive out of 10, and most designs are four or five."

One project that was designed with BIM was a large office for a healthcare provider. There were so many problems with this design when it was handed over to the contractor that it took more than two months to resolve. One of the problems was that the foul sewage pipes had been inserted into the air-conditioning vents.

The project manager says: "The potential for BIM is still largely untapped. BIM makes it possible to check whether plant and structures fit together, but it just doesn't happen. Nobody presses the button."

A word of warning: the creation and management of collaborative relationships takes a significant amount of work

its staff have sufficient skills and understanding to implement and deliver projects in accordance with the policy and procedures established to achieve level-two BIM maturity”.

The easy part is buying the software. The more difficult part is getting people to use it, especially at site level. The *really* hard part is to get team members and their line managers BIM-compliant, in the sense of incorporating the model into the way they do their jobs. Up until now, the industry has tended to alter BIM to fit in with the way it works, but it will sooner or later have to change the way it works to fit in with BIM—and that will require new patterns of behaviour that put a premium on collaborative skills.

Define “collaborate”

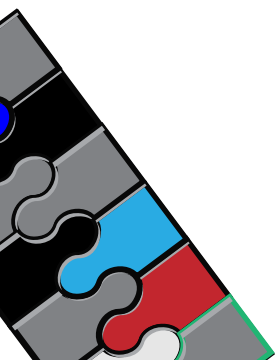
Throughout this book, we have thrown around the term “collaborate” as though we all knew exactly what it is. However, in practice it tends to mean what you want it to, and one person’s idea of collaborative behaviour might come as a surprise to his or her colleagues.

To address this issue, government and industry launched a draft British Standard at the beginning of 2012. This is BS 11000: Collaborative Business Relationships. The aim of the standard is to provide a framework that will help firms to understand what counts as collaboration, and therefore how to go about doing it. A side benefit is that as the ability to collaborate becomes more

desirable—in the private as well as the public sector—the achievement of BS 11000 will appear on firms’ mastheads as a badge of honour, and as a factor in winning work.

As the standard says, relationships affect every aspect of business operations, so it makes sense for companies to develop relationship management programmes. This is easy to say, but hard to define in practice. They can be individual one-to-one relationships, but more frequently they are networks that stretch through the departments of a company and out into suppliers, partners, project team members, clients and external stakeholders.

A word of warning: the creation and management of these collaborative relationships takes a significant amount of work, and requires the wholehearted participation of senior management and those individuals who are doing the collaboration. For example, the standard calls for each significant business relationship to be “identified, considered and prioritised in terms of the organisation’s strategic business objectives and its potential for improvement through the adoption of a collaborative relationship”. What’s more, “the organisation shall establish an action plan for each significant business relationship identified” including key objectives, potential benefits and opportunities, identified risks, key resource



requirements, the identification of a collaborative relationship team leader, exit strategy parameters and the estimated life cycle/length of relationship. Once established, of course, all of these factors need to be kept in mind when the relationship is under way. In other words: collaboration requires commitment—it's not just a one-off, one-day team building workshop—that's just entertainment.

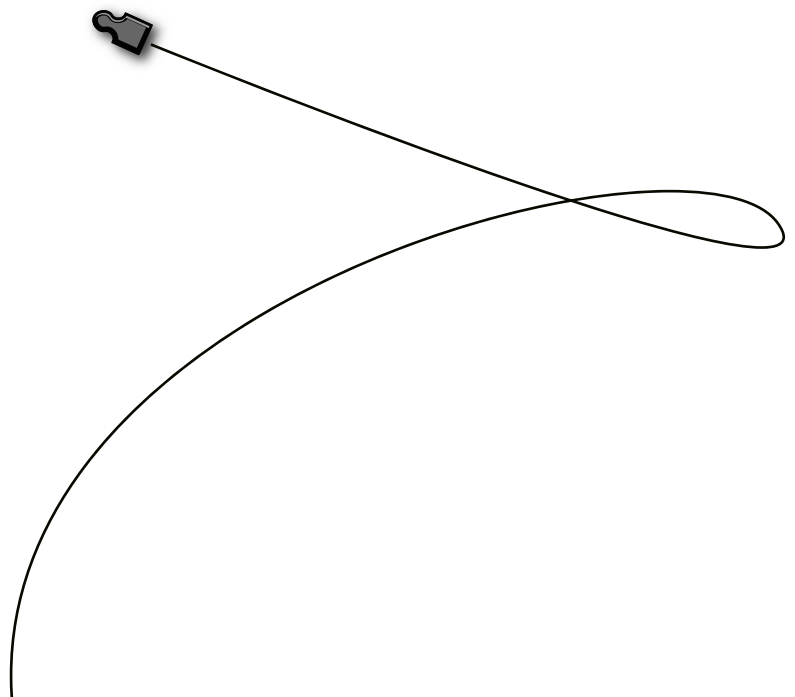
The neutral facilitator

Firms that are interested in preparing themselves for the future will need to begin by considering the subject of collaboration. What's more, they will have to be able to prove that they have an established methodology to create and sustain collaboration. What this means is that managers will have to create action plans in order to change their company's formal procedures and the informal assumptions of its employees.

Here the existence of the new British Standard has made it possible to align a firm's institutional behaviour with what is presently understood to be best practice. However, it makes sense to make use of a third party to offer support and guidance, both to draw up a road map to BS 11000, and to advise on the best way to effect the changes. It makes sense to bring in help to design a system that will nurture collaborative relationships between team

members over the entire lifetime of a project.

Part two of this book will explain why the rigour required by BS 11000 means that, in practice, an independent facilitator is necessary. To try to do without is like trying to play a football match without a referee to observe the play and enforce the rules.



The image features three human hands against a white background. The top hand is an open palm, fingers slightly spread. The middle hand is in a peace sign gesture, with the index and middle fingers extended. The bottom hand is a clenched fist. The text is overlaid on the image.

Part Two

**The
Challenges
to
Collaboration**

Construction relies on the enthusiasm and goodwill of individuals to make a projects happen. This is a fragile foundation on which to build a multi-million-pound project

You are under no obligation to agree with anything I say in this section ...

Without a doubt, the UK construction industry produces some amazing outcomes and could not do so without a level of collaboration. From my near four decades in the industry, I would say the collaboration that exists stems from determined and energetic individuals wanting to build something. Where their individual enthusiastic effort meets that of another then, at the overlap, some collaboration happens. It seems to me the job gets built through the overlapped positive intentions of many, many people, although it's not planned and systematic collaboration. I'm up for being challenged on this, but the weight of evidence set out in the previous section seems to match my experience. So how come?

There are real challenges to collaboration, forces that dramatically diminish the positive intentions of project staff and the many inspired moves towards a more collaborative culture that they make. The industry can sometimes seem like the game of rock, scissors and paper depicted on the previous page: a system where the players

have no option but to compete with each other.

This part covers these challenges, from my perspective. I'm conscious that this may be a gloomy read and that for every challenge there is an alternative, but more on that in the next part.

What follows is a series of conversation starters—things that I see as the main blockers to collaboration. You may have your own list (in which case I'd love to hear what it is: see the **afterword** on page 36 for more about that).

1 Everyone is rushing around

Everyone spends their days fighting fires and solving problems—working “in” the team. There is little time and energy for working “on” the team. This includes the director who keeps rolling up his sleeves to work “in” the business, usually at two levels down from his pay grade, instead of “on” the business—developing future scenarios, strategies and the necessary resources to move from “where we are now to where we want to be”.

In her book *E Squared*, Pam Grout says, “Currently our minds are devoted to things we don't want. Our positive intentions

Effective teams need to train together; there are no successful teams that only see each other when they're playing a competitive match

occupy but a tiny slither of our minds. The rest is focused on the problems we hope our intentions will eliminate." She goes on to say, and I love this, "To bring something into the physical world requires focusing not on what we see, but on what we want to see."

This almost universal focus on problems and the incessant rushing around means that people don't have time to stop and talk about "what they want to see" never mind designing the collaboration necessary to get there.

2 The team never meets itself

The key project players are geographically spread throughout the country and sometimes across international borders, so it's physically difficult to work "in" and even harder "on" the team. Many times when I am called in to support a team, it's the first time that this group of people have ever been in the same room together. They then leave and go their separate ways and rarely, if at all, get back together.

Effective teams need contact time where they can practise and train together; there are no successful teams in the sporting world that only see each other when they're playing a competitive match. **Case study #3** describes a situation where a contractor's bid team just "turned up" to a must-win bid presentation without practising or training. **Case study #4** illustrates how it is for many

Case Study #3

The red team review

As a coach I was asked to join a contractor's bid team in their red team review of a must-win bid presentation prior to them doing it live in front of the client the following day. Apparently a red team review is a dry run with "outsiders" providing a critique and role-playing client team perspectives. On this day the outsiders included a few of the contractor's directors and me. My role was to somehow help the people become more client-facing in time for the real event the following day and to demonstrate "soft" people skills.

In the event, the 90-minute review was the first time this group of individuals had got together and it ended up as a combined effort to cut and paste library PowerPoint slides into a single presentation. There was just enough time at the end to divvy up who was going to speak to each slide, but none for any practising, nor for the soft stuff. I largely watched the scene develop. I didn't invoice for the work, and they didn't win the job. After the dust had settled I rang my contact and asked what he would have done differently. He came up with some great ideas and asked if I could help. I said "delighted", and that was the last I heard.

management teams or project principals' teams.

3 The scourge of email

Some of my customers get 250 emails a day, frequently with big attachments. One of the purposes of these is to make sure that, if it all goes wrong in the future, the sender can say: "Did you not read my email?"

When I first got a laptop in 1997 I thought it was fantastic; I imagined I would communicate with people everywhere in the country without moving from my seat. And because it was novel, that is mainly what I did.

It must have been novel for other people, too, as in those early days I used to get replies fairly consistently. It didn't last long, and as a communications vehicle for important messages it didn't work then and doesn't work now—how could it, if people get 250 emails a day?

At that time, people talked about how email was going to revolutionise business. Now I think they're killing it—and the people who carry it out. I know busy executives who try to clear their inbox each day, which lengthens an already long day, although they only get through a fraction and it spills over into the evenings and weekends, and they still don't keep up

I know others who don't even try: they open a few that look interesting and ignore the rest—without a worry, so they tell me. Email is not killing *them*, but it is doing

Case Study #4

Being Roy Hodgson

A few years ago I was helping to integrate the management teams of a client and a contractor organisation who were working on a £750m framework. Assembled in the room were about 15 managers, each responsible for important support and delivery functions across both organisations. The intent was to bring them together to form a single joined-up management team.

Fairly soon it became clear that they were not very happy with their progress since the previous get together and when I challenged: "To what extent have you physically worked together on your previous plan". One of them snapped back: "When I am back at the office and have my team around me, I am as good as Sir Alex Ferguson. This team here is like the England team and we hardly ever get together and you, Dave, are Roy Hodgson."

A point well made, I thought.

grave damage to the collaborative effort of those seeking a response from them.

Keeping on top of the inbox is one thing, but emails (and mobile phone calls) are also

a source of interruption and distraction. Some psychologists reckon that every time an email pings into your inbox it can take up to 20 minutes to regain the same level of concentration you had before. So, if you are taking emails, the chances are you are constantly distracted and are not doing your job as well as you could (unless responding to emails *is* your job).

George Bernard Shaw once said, the biggest problem with communication is the illusion that it has taken place. People send an email and then kid themselves that they have communicated. Well, according to the American professor of psychology Albert Mehrabian, when a person tries to communicate, only 7% of their feelings and attitudes are contained in their words; 38% is in their tone of voice and 55% in their body language—mostly facial expressions and eye contact. There is no eye contact in an email, and the only way you can modulate the tone of your voice is by using capitals, which is SHOUTING.

So, using email to communicate anything important is not very effective, and it's certainly not the collaboration platform to revolutionise business.

4 Cultural challenges

Advocacy, testosterone, lack of trust and a focus on weaknesses are some of the deeply

seated cultural challenges to collaboration. In the West, we adopt advocacy in our search for the truth, you see it in the House of Commons, in law courts and in business and project meetings. The point is not to listen, it's to make a case and defend it. Edward de Bono explains this brilliantly in his book *I Am Right and You Are Wrong* and goes on to compare this with the Eastern culture of parallel thinking.

In a subsequent book, *Six Thinking Hats*, de Bono explains a practical process for developing parallel thinking in our meetings and collaborations. Having a look at both these books will reveal why so many of the meetings we complain about are ineffective and how the right/wrong approach undermines collaboration.

Too much testosterone is also a killer for collaboration. I've handled hundreds of workshops in UK construction, most at the senior executive level, and the participants are nearly always men. Occasionally there may be one or two women in a room of 20. This is probably representative of management and leadership in our industry. Men, it seems to me, are competitive whereas women are nurturing.

Take me, I am fiercely competitive and when I am on my bike and in the gym I thrive on adrenaline and testosterone. I find these hormones less useful in the pool and in business where, for me at least, technique is more important. Alfie Kohn, author and leading educationalist says "competition blunts the

Sitting there not saying anything saps the life out of collaboration just as much as one bloke bawling out another

social skills that we need to survive” (I would add, and collaborate) and that “competition is to self-esteem as sugar is to teeth”. It’s a huge philosophical argument, way outside the scope of this book, although worth thinking about: testosterone is the competition hormone that correlates to lowered social skills and damaged self-esteem. People with low self esteem go inward and don’t easily collaborate.

Exercise is great for channelling aggression, although for many in our industry there is no time for exercise. So, aggression lands right in the middle of your meeting, even if it arrives in its disguised, passive–aggressive form. Sitting there not saying anything saps the life out of collaboration just as much as one bloke bawling out another.

When I ask “what’s getting in the way of collaboration here?” Lack of trust always comes up. It’s not just politicians, bankers, the police, press and energy companies that we don’t trust, apparently. It’s also “us”, the fellow members of our project team. In her brilliant TED Talk *What We Don’t Understand about Trust*, Baroness Onora O’Neill points out: “You have to provide the basis for people to give you trust; you have to be trustworthy.”

According to O’Neill, to be trustworthy we need to be “competent, honest and reliable”. I would add “caring”, informed by the author Seth Godin’s insight that “caring

Case Study #5

Tracking trust

Trust is an important feature of collaboration and my work. I have therefore developed a diagnostic called The Trustworthy Tracker, which enables collaborating parties to measure and strengthen trust.

In one such measure a company said of another that they were competent, honest and reasonably reliable, but “they don’t really care for us”.

I challenged, “Three out of four’s not bad, eh?”

They replied, “No. We don’t trust them.”

for someone is a useful shortcut to trust”.

Trust and fear each erode the other and there is always fear in construction—risk is ever-present, along with blame when things go wrong (see **case study #5**). Does this mean that there is no hope for trust? That depends on whether you are working on it or not.

There seems to be widespread focus on weaknesses that steadily eats away at trust and collaboration. One organisation subtly and cunningly sets out to exploit the contract or to protect itself against mounting losses; in such a situation, only superficial

We then focus on my weaknesses, some possible training gets identified and I leave, hacked off. I suspect you aren't very happy either ...

collaboration is possible and both sides know what is going on even if they're not prepared to call it by its real name and talk about it.

At the individual level there's the annual appraisal. Once a year we get together, and we've both got this complicated form to fill in; you're the boss so you're going to tell me stuff about my strengths and weaknesses. By the way, I don't hear any of the strengths: I'm waiting for the "but" followed by my weaknesses and then my "score" out of 10. We then focus on my weaknesses and why you think I'm "only" a seven. Some possible training gets identified and I leave, hacked off. I suspect you aren't very happy either, and neither of us does anything about any of it until the day before we do it all again next year. In the meantime I tell myself I'm going to do my best until something better comes up. And I'm your front line in this collaboration. Maybe that's why I'm sitting in this collaboration meeting without saying anything ...

5 Proving the benefits

To me, collaboration is a no-brainer. People and organisations that work together have got to be more productive than those that pull in opposite directions.

Despite this, some people need proof. They include sceptics who ask fair questions, such as, "How will it happen in practice?" and "How will it register on the bottom

Case Study #6

Proving the benefits

I was commissioned to design and deliver a change programme for a construction company. In an early conversation with the director responsible, I asked, "What benefits does this programme need to deliver?" My rationale for asking that questions was that if we knew the answer to that, we could design the programme accordingly and track the results along the way.

The director replied: "I need to get the board to agree the benefits; in the meantime, let's crack on with the preparations and get going."

Two years later, after lots of positive feedback and success from within the ranks of the business, the managing director was happy. The commercial director was less impressed, however; passing me in the corridor he commented, "That all didn't seem to make much difference, did it?" To which I replied, "What difference did you want it to make?"

It seemed to me that, unless you have an idea of what you're looking for, you will probably not find it.

The board never agreed on the desired benefits and although the MD was happy with the buzz and anecdotal evidence from within the business, the CD wanted hard numbers (I'm told they came later).

line?” And cynics who mock the whole idea, because “it’ll never happen round here”.

By “proof”, they usually mean a cause-and-effect calculation that says, “if we do this, that will happen and we will get this”. They want something that can be written up as a business case for investment (see **case study #6**).

One must-read book for building information modelling enthusiasts and those with an eye on the future is *Big Data*. In this, Viktor Mayer-Schönberger and Kenneth Cukier observe that human beings are primed to see the world in terms of cause and effect. They go on to point to a shift in modern thinking away from causality and towards correlation. “The correlations may not tell us why something is happening, but they alert us that it is happening.”

In my work there is a strong correlation between establishing and sustaining collaboration and business success—although that isn’t always the easiest thing in the world to explain to a time-pressed executive who is under pressure to deliver instant results in an incredibly complex system. This is often the first obstacle to getting a collaborative process started.

6 People don’t know how to collaborate

There are plenty people exhorting the industry to be more collaborative and exhorting collaboration at project level. I believe

exhortation doesn’t work. People switch off and continue as normal. It’s clear to me also that people don’t know how to collaborate in what is an incredibly complex system.

Digressing, I sometimes ask people to plot out their system—who is involved in this project and who connects with whom. Within five minutes the plot looks like a brillo pad on a white board—that’s what I mean by a complex system.

Treading carefully here, I would probably go one step further: people don’t really know how to collaborate. You are mostly left brain, logical, rational engineer-types who have been highly trained and specialised in matters technical and haven’t invested in understanding the human bit; it is assumed that we will all just get on and get the job done. And even if we did understand the human bit a bit, you haven’t got a robust approach for establishing and sustaining collaboration and nor has the construction industry, although BS 11000 is a decent start.

So, as it stands, collaboration is a corporate value on the company website and the doing of it is left to the well intentioned to get on with as they see fit, which sometimes entails being nice to each other and avoiding the straight conversations necessary for real collaboration— (**see case study #7**). And it works to some extent, when things are going well.

7 The contract is a very blunt instrument

From what I see, the contract is a source of uncertainty for project staff; they hesitate over whether to issue notices (required under the contract) or to stay “friendly”. I also still hear people saying “we should put the contract in the draw as it’s not needed if we are ‘partnering’”. I learned my lesson on that one a long time ago (**see case study #8**).

This uncertainty over how to, or indeed whether to, administer the contract is undermining collaboration. People say they are collaborating even though they don’t understand the rules—you have to administer the contract.

I know the commercial director of a major UK client, and one of his measures for collaboration is how many early warning notices (EWNs) are issued on his organisation’s projects. He is currently concerned because the number is too low; some projects haven’t had any. Through his commercial team he is trying to spread the culture of early warnings: no shocks. For operations staff on both sides, the desirability of EWNs are counterintuitive—in workshops they tell me they are not well received, so staff are reluctant to issue them. In the same organisation, one of the senior managers pleads with the contractor “you got to tell me the issues; if you don’t, how can we as a client help to get them sorted?”

It seems as though there is no happy middle ground as far as administering the contract is concerned—it’s either

Case Study #7

Colchester

A contractor was stuck as to what to do next on a “partnering” contract. The director responsible had tried everything to get the clients team to listen to his concerns, but even lodging a fatuous claim didn’t work. So, in desperation, he called me and said: “We’re in week 25 of a 50-week contract. We’re trying to do it in partnership and it’s supposed to be collaborative. The job has changed and although we’re getting on with it, we’re entitled to payment for the changes. The PQS is striking out huge chunks of our monthly evaluation and the sentiment from the client’s team is stop whingeing and get back on programme. What do you suggest, Dave?”

We got the 20 key players in a room and split them into their camps. I asked them to consider what they would do differently if they had their time again, and wandered round the room listening to their conversations. They were all saying the same thing: “We would get these issues on the table and have some tough conversations, though we can’t now because that would damage the relationships and the partnership.”

When I played that back to them they got the irony, laughed at it (some nervously) and then we got into some tough conversations.

They had their time again on the last 25 weeks of the project and finished it with style.

snotty letters back and forth or “let’s not issue notices as they cause upset”.

8 Construction’s most resilient excuse: ‘It’s a one-off’

There is a mentality about construction and to some extent I share it. It goes something like this: “We don’t work in a car assembly factory. What we do is in the mud, wind and rain, and every building is a one-off that will never be repeated. What’s more, we start from scratch each time: different people, new design organisations, different subbies and a client who has never done this before and doesn’t know what they want.

“Also, 98% of what is actually done on site is done by organisations that employ fewer than eight people—we are working with

white van man here! We have to write their method statements, work out their money, train them, provide them with kit—and the next day a different squad turns up and we have to do it all over again.”

Some contractors, even today, don’t have established procedures and it’s all left to the site manager to make it up, usually by copying what he did in the company he worked for last month. Start as you mean to continue: in chaos. For some, this is reality, their expectation and hence their mentality.

I say I partly share this mentality, or rather I understand it, having spent 38 years in the industry, although I don’t think it has to be like that. I believe effective collaboration can help.

What do I mean by collaboration? Read on...

Case Study #8

‘Don’t do that again’

In the mid-nineties I was a contracts manager for a national contractor. We had just landed a large building project, the company’s biggest at that time. Inspired by the recently published Latham Report (Constructing The Team) and too naïve for my own good, I said to the client’s project manager, “We’re going to do this project in partnership with you, so no need for letters and the like; let’s build this together.” He said something like “fantastic, we have some financial contingency for this project, let’s manage that together”. And off we went. Two years later we successfully delivered the project, but a flurry of late changes meant the contingency was overshot by £750k and there was no contractual correspondence to cover it.

The client’s project sponsor came to me and said, “Good job, Dave, but don’t ever do that again. We’re in contract, and you have to administer the contract. When you are delayed, serve notice of the delay. When there is a change, serve notice of the change. Give me a call to let me know there is a letter on its way. I now have to find another £750k to pay you and there’s no correspondence to substantiate it. The job is good so I am going to do my best to get you paid—but don’t ever do that again!”

Big lesson learned ...

Part Three

How to Establish and Sustain Collaboration



The DSA Approach

The new approach to collaborative behaviour is rigorous, measurable and structured. That's what the government is demanding, and it is right to do so, because this approach works. Here's how to make it happen

"Team development" has got a bad name. It has become associated with meeting up for an awayday and building rafts to cross a lake. Whether that exercise has any measurable benefit on the project or not remains unknown because it is usually a one-off event with no follow-up or measurement.

The terms "collaboration" and "co-operation" have also become drained of meaning. Rob Charlton, the chief executive of architect Space Group, says the terms are overused and generic. He says: "Everyone talks about collaboration, but nobody really knows what it is."

This is why the drive to make construction more efficient (and so less expensive) begins with an attempt to give a rigorous definition of what it means to collaborate, and this is what BS 11000 sets out to do.

Once we have a standard, measurable definition of the process, then it can be used to assess a construction services provider's fitness for purpose—and that is partly what the prequalification questionnaire PAS 91 is intended to do.

Alongside this new approach to defining collaboration, we have new means to carry it out. The effect of building information models on the way a team's members interact with each other is still at an early stage, but

some people argue that it will eventually create a new industry: Construction 2.0.

Mark Bew, the man who's heading the government's BIM taskgroup, told me: "There is massive inertia within the industry, but the reality is that we'll stand back in 20 years' time and think about this conversation we're having now and we'll laugh. By then, everything will have changed."

How do you collaborate?

Charlton says collaboration is both a state of mind and a structured process. Although its success is ultimately shown by things that don't happen—such as the occurrence of entrenched disputes—it does generate data, and that data can be monitored and managed and fed back into the team so that they can get a better awareness of what, and how, they're doing.

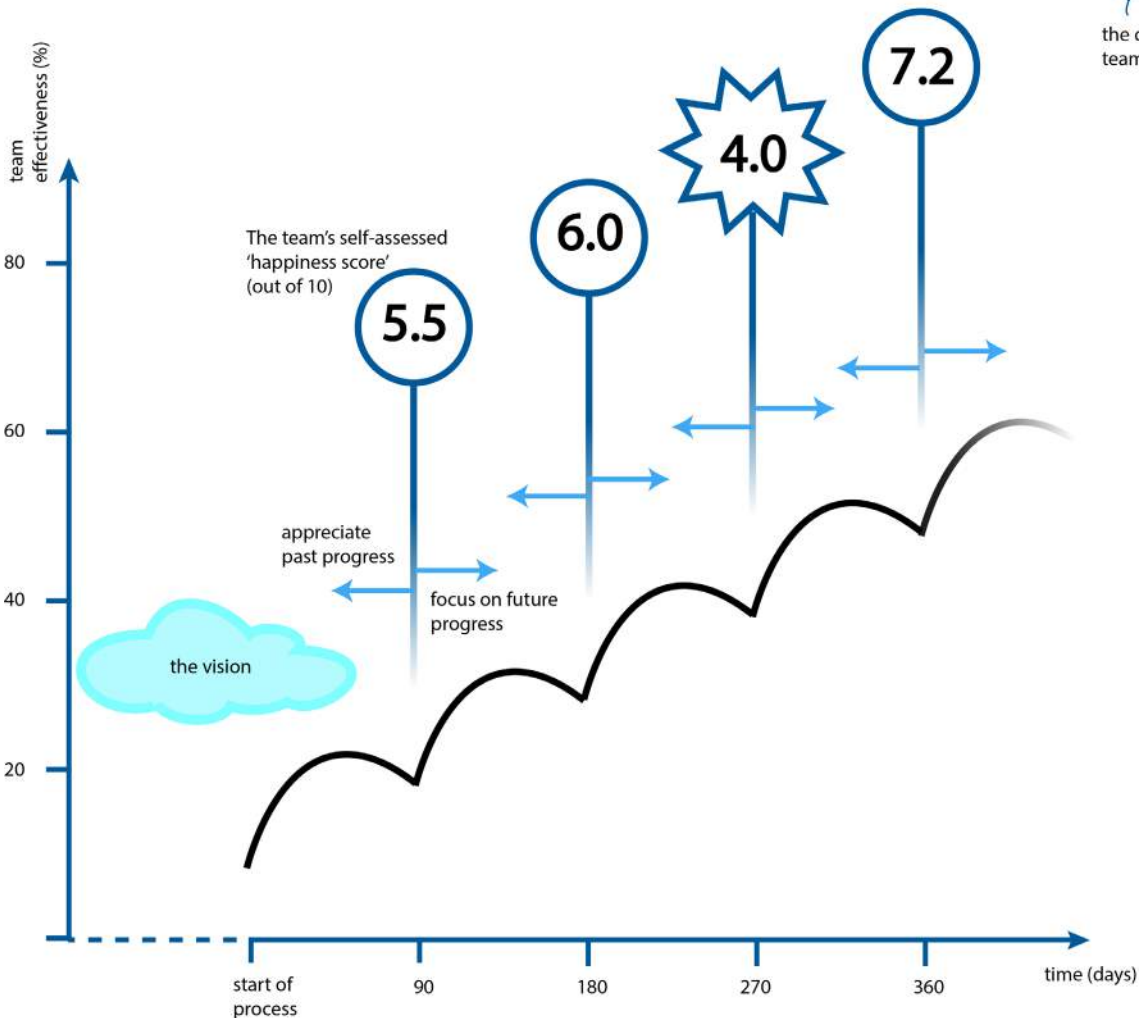
Over the past 15 years, my company, DSA Building Performance Ltd, has developed just such a structured process for collaboration, and I have written this book in order to explain why it will help the construction industry to make the most of the government initiatives explained in part one, and to tackle the cultural and psychological issues that I outlined in part two.

So, this part of the book explains the process and the techniques that DSA has developed

Typical team development over one year of the CollaborateStart2Finish™ process



the coach stands in the team's line of vision



to establish and sustain collaboration at both project and business leadership levels. At the same time, of course, it is intended to give companies an idea of whether they can benefit from the coaching that DSA is in business to offer.

The process we use is called Collaborate**Start2Finish**™, or CS2F for short. It has been used in more than 1,000 workshops over 15 years, and it has been continually honed to take account of lessons learned

over that period. It supports BS 11000, and can be used to help a company achieve real benefits from collaboration rather than just get, and hopefully keep, the certificate.

The Collaborate**Start2Finish**™ process

CS2F is a rolling three-month programme of support to establish, sustain and strengthen collaboration and team effectiveness. It comprises a series of workshops usually at

During the tea break we can see if the room is divided between the designers, the clients and the contractors, or if the three groups are interacting in a spontaneous way

90-day intervals and one-to-one coaching and tools that enable collaborative working between the workshops.

The diagram on the previous page outlines the usual process for a team that undertakes CS2F.

The CS2F process can be implemented at any stage of the project, although early is better as that is often when the big value adding decisions are made and usually when a new team is at its weakest.

Normally we get a call early in the project when the key players have been named and they have started work, though have yet to assemble in the same room.

Typically on a project the team will include representatives from client, end-user, architect, engineer, project quantity surveyor, services consultant, contractor and key subcontractors—maybe 15 to 20 people.

The first workshop

The process begins with a day-long workshop in which all the main players get together in a neutral place such as a hotel conference room.

This is often the first time that this group has ever met itself face-to-face; before, many will have just been names in an email cc box. This first encounter often gives a valuable clue as to how effective the team is. For example, we can see how many members are meeting for the first time, how many people

are introducing themselves and entering into conversations—and who's not saying anything.

We can also observe if, during the tea break, the room is divided between the designers, the client team and the contractors, or whether the three groups are mixed and interacting in a spontaneous way.

At this early stage the team is about 15% effective.

To understand what this percentage figure means, consider what a highly effective team looks like: take, for instance, the Real Madrid team that has just won the Champions' League. This club will have a first team squad of about 25 players. They will train together every day for up to four hours, and 11 of them will play a competitive match twice a week. The result of all this is that the players are able to read each other's minds, so they know where a team mate is going to be before they kick the ball.

To support their playing ability, the players have an extensive support network, which includes: the manager and assistants, physical trainers, doctors, dieticians, physiotherapists and psychologists, and defensive, attack and goalkeeping coaches. Also, there is a whole infrastructure behind the scenes to sort travel, accommodation, match ticket sales and a host of other logistical tasks. All of this adds up to finely tuned players combining to make a team that is something like 85% effective. Real Madrid

players do not book their own train tickets!

Compare this with our project “team”, who’ve just arrived in the same room for the first time, and it’s easy to see why their effectiveness score is what it is. Herein lies the potential for significant improvement and this first workshop is where that process begins.

On this day, the first step is to begin to create an atmosphere where people can express themselves freely and honestly. Having helped the players loosen up we enable them to develop a vision of what success looks like to them. From that vision they then agree common goals and develop a team success strategy. From the strategy they agree the most important things that need to “get handled” in the coming three months in order to move together as a team towards their vision of success. They then develop a three month team focus and launch action plan, setting out who is going to do what by when.

We also talk about the kinds of behaviours that people want to encourage and that are vital to team success. Some are obvious, but still need to be said: tell the truth, ring me up before you send a contractual letter, show willingness, do what you say you’re going to do, share your thoughts, don’t hide behind emails with huge attachments.

The team leaves the room energised and confident as they now have a good sense of where they are headed collectively and a joined-

up plan to make a start at getting there together. As a result their effectiveness as a team goes up.

After the workshop, however, people get busy, the usual project problems emerge and business as usual sets in. This means that team effectiveness starts to decline. Our experience shows that the best time to schedule another workshop to halt this decline is after three months. This length of gap allows enough time for the team to deliver on its plans and avoids busy people having to spend too much time away from their place of work.

The second workshop

As in the first workshop we start by establishing an environment in which the participants can express themselves freely and honestly.

Then we enable the team collectively to appreciate their progress against the plan they set themselves in the first workshop. By “appreciate” I mean “increase the value of”. This is important as teams rarely take time to acknowledge and celebrate their success.

To carry out the appreciation we ask the participants to score their progress out of 10. In asking the team to appreciate its progress, we’re really asking how happy they are with it, and the average of everyone’s score is the team “happy score”. Over the years we have noticed a strong correlation between the trend of the happy score and project progress. These are savvy

The workshop becomes an opportunity to air and explore the problem and include its resolution in the focus and launch plan for the coming period

people, their score closely reflects how they feel about how the job is doing. An increasing trend strongly correlates with improving collaboration and effectiveness, and improving project metrics.

In the second workshop the participants self-assesses team effectiveness using our proprietary diagnostic which clearly shows areas of team strength and development needed. The assessment also converts to an effectiveness figure; the average of all team self assessments since 2004 is 28%. This is a big rise from the initial 15%, although there's still some room for improvement before they are challenging Real Madrid.

The team then discusses where they and the project are at and identifies the most important things that need to get handled in the coming three months in order to move closer to their vision of success. They then agree the team focus and launch action plan for the next three months. Again the players leave the workshop joined up, energised and confident for the next period and the team effectiveness goes up again.

Subsequent 90-day workshops repeat this process, and at each a further increase in effectiveness is achieved. In effect, as coach, I am standing in the team's vision of success pulling them towards me every 90 days, helping them appreciate and feel good about their progress and to refocus as a team and decide what they need to do next—all

the way to the realisation of success.

Occasionally in between workshops a problem emerges and the “wheel comes off”. As a result, when the team comes to the next workshop they are not happy with progress and the happy score might drop significantly (as the starred example in the diagram on page 28).

At this point, the workshop becomes an opportunity to air and explore the situation and include its resolution in the focus and launch plan for the coming period. The workshop atmosphere enables supportive and honest dialogue and having an experienced coach on hand also helps the team move forward and not back.

We all talk about no-shocks culture; in the Collaborate**Start2Finish**™ process the potential shocks are “out on the table” and the team is working together to prevent or handle them.

Construction's effectiveness gap

In the first part of this book, we quoted some figures based on academic research into the performance of the construction industry (see page 8). There are many other examples saying the same thing, for example: one leading national contractor reckoned that it was building 1.2 buildings for every client, after allowing for 20% defects and reworking. From my experience in the construction industry I believe that much of this waste is due to the

Q: What do I know now that you'll find out in three months' time?
A: If you work on this plan as a team, you'll come back happy; if you don't, you won't.

72% effectiveness gap in the project lead team rather than mistakes at workforce level.

In the past I've been challenged on this effectiveness gap by boards of directors who maintain that their project teams are much better than that, though when they complete the team effectiveness diagnostic for their own board and realise that they are also about 28% they begin to see the potential for improvement.

In order to bridge this effectiveness gap it is crucial that the team works on their three month plan in between the workshops, and does so as a team. The workshops help, though they are only the start; it's what happens in the other 89 days that really counts. At each workshop I ask the participants: "What do I know now that you are going to find out in three months?" After much head scratching and bemused stares back at me I explain: "From experience of having done this with many teams just like you, what I know is that if you work on this plan as a team you will come back happy, and if you don't, you won't."

So, to help the team work on the plan as a team the Collaborate**Start2Finish**™ process includes one-to-one coaching for the leader effectively to drive the plan in between the workshops and to support the team to deliver on their agreed results.

Also the CS2F process includes an online tool called The Progress Collaborator™ that enables all participants to assess progress, at the end of months one and two and arrive at

and track the team's interim happy scores. The tool allows all participants to see everyone's progress assessment and rational, and this promotes further discussion and collaboration as team members call each other to discuss differing perspectives and agree further action.

Key performance indicators

The construction industry is addicted to measurement—one of my early clients insisted on tracking 125 key performance indicators and refused to see the contradiction between 125 and "key". I was also, many years ago, chairman of the Major Contractors Group Measurement and Benchmarking Club—for one day. My first and only contribution was to suggest that we either start using the swaths of KPI data collected for improvement purposes or we "can the club". They canned the club and my role as chairman went with it. I was happy not to be involved in data for the sake of data.

So, for the CS2F process, we only regularly measure four indicators: the first two are the happy score and team effectiveness. The third indicator is the vision tracker, where in every alternate workshop, the team assesses its progress towards its vision of success.

The fourth measure is the "net promoter score" (NPS), which I believe is the ultimate test of customer satisfaction and which every participant assesses at the end of each workshop. The first three measures help the

team assess its own development and progress, the net promoter score helps me assess the level of “connection” between my customers and the CS2F process and myself as coach.

More details of the NPS and DSA’s current score can be found at www.dsabuilding.co.uk

My vision of collaboration and BS 11000

My purpose in this section is to give a high-level overview of the new British Standard, and a little more detail of the parts that are particularly supported by my work.

Although it is not perfect, BS 11000 provides an opportunity for a common language, understanding and methodology for collaboration. It’s not bedtime reading, perhaps, but it is a good starting point for organisations and teams that want to work collaboratively; partly because it’s self-evidently the right thing to do, and partly for the reasons set out in part one of this book.

I think the essentials of the standard are:

- 1 Effective executive sponsorship**
- 2 A clear business purpose for collaboration**
- 3 Common vision, values and objectives**
- 4 A collaboration strategy and implementation plan**
- 5 Collaboration skills and behaviours**

- 6 Joint business processes**
- 7 Joint risk management for performance and relationships**
- 8 Joint value creation and continuous improvement**
- 9 The continual monitoring and development of relationships**
- 10 A joint exit strategy, including agreed triggers for disengagement**

Drawing on 15 years’ experience enabling team collaboration and more recently having been trained, examined and approved as a BS11000 facilitator, I think there are some critical clauses in the standard. The standard comprises eight stages. The early ones are concerned with selecting and establishing the organisational-level business relationship and are outside the scope of this text. In my work the parties have usually been selected and have already made a start when I come on the scene. So, in this section I am going to focus on the “doing it” stages—that is stage five “working together” and stage seven “staying together”.

Table 1 (see the next page) refers to these stages and the corresponding clauses in the British Standard, and how the DSA Collaborate**Start2Finish**[™] process addresses them.

How DSA supports the BS 11000 process

DSA offers individual coaching of SERs to “sponsor” collaboration

CollaborateStart2Finish™ establishes, develops and maintains the JMT

WORKING TOGETHER

Pick a senior executive responsible (**SER**). He or she will ensure all parties agree to the programme, and will work to create, develop and maintain an ethos of collaboration *[Clause 7.1.1]*

Pick a joint management team (**JMT**) to establish collaborative working *[Clause 7.2]*

CS2F aligns the team and helps it focus as a team at regular intervals

STAYING TOGETHER

JMT is to ensure and demonstrate the overall integrity and focus of the relationship *[Clause 9.1]*

JMT is to establish a defined process for continual development and monitoring behaviours, and trust within the collaboration *[Clause 9.4]*

The **SER** is to ensure corrective actions and improvements with the aim of realising business benefits for all parties and continuing successful collaboration. *[Clause 9.6]*

CS2F strengthens relationships and trust throughout the collaboration by reinforcing desirable behaviours and working “on” the team and the mutual business results

CS2F brings out and examines the team’s most important issues, and continually refocuses the parties on the realisation of their declared business results

Case study #9

The Collaborate**Start2Finish**[™] process

Fifteen people have jointly agreed what success looks like and have developed a team success strategy. They have begun the Collaborate**Start2Finish** process, and every 90 days they take a day out to slow down and tune into what is really important for them: their organisations and this project. This is a chance to get together and work out what they collectively are going to do about it.

Firstly, they take stock of their progress towards the five results that they identified three months ago. They celebrate their progress towards those goals, and hold themselves jointly to account for the stuff that didn't get done.

Then they agree another five results that will move the project forward in the following three months. They leave the workshop aligned, focused, energised and with increased confidence. Between these three monthly workshops they are working on their individual day jobs and they are also working collectively towards their plan—those five team results.

Working together means face-to-face working, telephone and conference calls with occasional supplementary emails to circulate information and confirm decisions. Email used to be their default means of communication, but no longer; now, they walk across the office or pick up the phone.

Teams used to “forget” their plan between workshops, so now I coach the team leader at fortnightly intervals to drive the plan. This means it is constantly on the team's radar. At the end of the two intermediate months each team player assesses interim progress using an electronic platform that allows everyone to see everyone else's assessments and comments. This drives further calls and collaboration as they discuss their different views of what is happening and what must happen next.

Over time, with increasing confidence and performance (but which comes first?) the team is achieving its five results; engagement and communication are strengthening and the leading team members are leading instead of fighting. Constant and consistent messaging is going out to project staff and the workforce, and the job is on track or ahead.

There is energy in this team. Relationships are solid, trust is evident and people are engaged. The team is generating the necessary information and making timely decisions. The collective effort is smoothly moving the project towards success; individuals are playing to their strengths. There is traction; effort is converted into progress; procrastination, politics and miss-communication are things of the past.

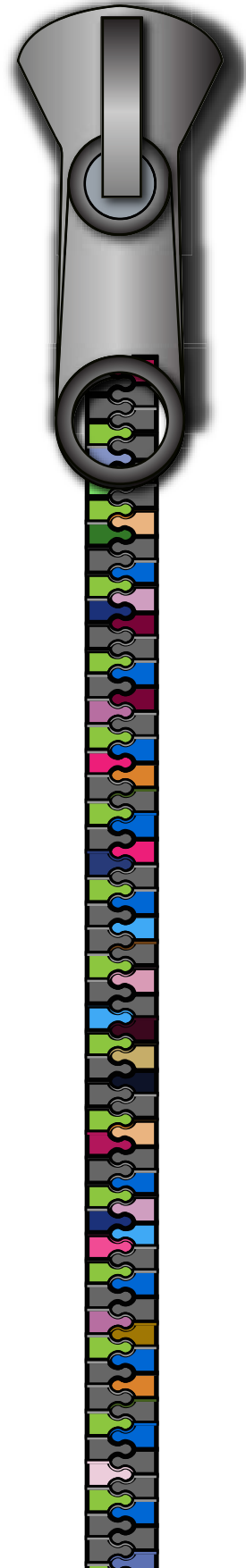
The team has documented its collaborative journey and after six months the key organisational relationships have been certified BS11000; a badge of honour that is helping them to win work with other clients who value a collaborative approach that delivers positive predictable project outcomes.

Afterword

This book is about collaboration in the construction industry, but it is also intended to be a collaboration with the industry. Over the coming months, it will be updated to take account of changes in the regulatory drivers, and also in response to feedback from you, the reader.

If you have anything to say about anything I had to say, then please let me know and I will incorporate your suggestions, corrections, agreements or amplifications in future editions of this book.

If you want to add your comments, please send me an email: dave@dsabuilding.co.uk. If you'd like to discuss any of this with me, please call on 0191-516 6878. And if you'd like to find out more then please visit our website: www.dsabuilding.co.uk. I'd love to hear from you ...



About the author

Dave works with construction industry executives and teams helping them get clear on where they want to get to, also to identify barriers to progress and then to work out their next move. In follow up sessions he helps clients appreciate their progress and refocus on their way forward – all the way to the realisation of their goals. In the year to March 2014 he has 'logged' over one hundred and fifty hours of executive one to one coaching.

Dave has 38 years operational experience in the construction industry, the last 15 of which as a business coach. This experience helps him empathise with and support his client and also to challenge them by asking the right questions at the right time. He is an Accredited BS11000 (collaborative working) Facilitator and a qualified coach to senior practitioner level. He is also a Chartered Management Institute Mentor.

He is a chartered civil engineer and chartered builder and first trained as a coach in the mid nineties as a participant in an organisational transformation programme. This experience shifted his career direction towards people, team and organisational development. Since then he has been involved in and led change programmes for several UK national organisations.

Dave believes that situations are complex and resists identifying any one thing or person as being the cause, instead he helps his clients explore their system and the patterns at play and their role in co-creating those patterns then to shift ineffective patterns in order to free up progress. Dave also believes that relationship is the foundation of results so relationship building is a fundamental part of his work.

In the face of complexity Dave adopts a straight forward and practical approach to helping his clients achieve their desired business results while enabling them to permanently operate at a higher level.

Dave is the co author of 21st Century People Leadership a book specifically written for UK construction industry leaders; he also writes a monthly 'blog' called The Leader which for the last five years has been posted to over one thousand subscribers.

Since his youth Dave has been a 'fitness fanatic' and keen sportsman: he competed at club and county level in golf and has raced in over one hundred triathlons, winning several and representing Great Britain in the 1991 Triathlon World Championship, Australia.

Dave in five words: energetic, responsible, healthy, straight, and passionate.



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NOTES

1 Quoted in **Rethinking Construction** paragraph 25

2 **What Next for the Government Construction Strategy?** Aecom, page 8

3 **Problematism of the Shift from Products to Services** Nicola Morrey, Andrew Dainty and Derek Thomson, Loughborough University and Christine Pasquire, Nottingham Trent University

4 **Site Managers' Uses of Building Information Modelling On Construction Sites** Tarja Mäki And Hannele Kerosuo, Institute Of Behavioural Sciences, University of Helsinki

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E-Squared: Nine Do-It-Yourself Energy Experiments That Prove Your Thoughts Create Your Reality Pam Grout

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21st Century People Leadership Dave Stitt

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