

## Increased R&D and Innovation in Construction

The scenario starts from the changes that occurred in the last few years. The Latham report, 'Constructing the Team' has stimulated greater emphasis on long-term relationships and framework agreements, moving away from single project delivery. This has brought a greater focus on customer/ client requirements and made people understand that what we need to offer is quicker and better value. The ultimate outcome would be an environment that fulfils this need, and a built environment that aids the end-user/ customer needs, as well as business. The process to achieve this should be a pleasurable/ pleasant experience, which is quite different from the reality at the moment.

The critical point to achieve this aim and underlying reason for any industry-based research is understanding emergent customer needs via Post-Occupancy Evaluations (POE). The outcomes of POEs are then studied and linked with evidence-based design and briefing. Participants should aim to embed this into the current process. This undertaking is closely related to a few supporting practices such as learning how to add value, learning to measure value, partners mutually benefit from value increase, and improving and/or changing culture. Continuously improving and maintaining this good practice would lead to a development of a knowledge management system which is embedded internally and accepted by all the strategic partners, and would require sharing innovation and knowledge amongst partners. This whole process would depend upon the cultural readiness of the partners (or the industry in general) to accept this new model of capturing client requirements and embedding this in a media for continual improvement. On the cultural side, the emphasis on long-term relationship has redefined the nature of relationships from traditional master-servant to equal partners pursuing a common objective of performance improvement and better delivery. The principle of collaborative working embraces partners as part of integrated team and dedicated supply-chain, enabling improved performance of the whole system rather than its parts.

There are several key supporting deliverables or changes that may start to drive this movement. For example, on the finance side, changing our tax-levy would be a key event that enables more people to get people through to this (although it is not an absolute requirement). Changes in the law associated with zero-carbon building is a customer-driven future event, which can drive innovation. The demand of increased output and available technology in mass customisation and multi-dimensional modelling permits design and construction of facilities in a very short time. The use of collaborative contracts is also highlighted as key to the innovative behaviour of project partners as it allows them to 'experiment' and introduce new approaches within conducive environment of partnered projects. The use of IT is also seen to enable seamless collaboration between partners and embedding best practice within their organisation.

