

## PERFORMANCE MEANS PARTNERSHIP

Performance means partnership in all aspects of business and accommodation. This was the core message from a panel of distinguished speakers at the invaluable Building Performance conference held recently in London. Buildings will only perform well, and encourage users to perform well, if they are designed, built, occupied, serviced and maintained seamlessly. Those responsible for the ongoing use and maintenance of buildings must be part of the early design process – and this particularly applies with PFI. It was noted that 80% of the construction cost of a building becomes fixed within the first 10% of the pre-contract period.

Ways to improve the whole PFI process was a reoccurring theme. It is here to stay, but must change to become more effective for both providers and customers. The high cost of bidding (£5M was quoted for one project) is naturally carried by other projects, and arms-length relationships between clients and contractors mean that the briefing process is inevitably hit-and-miss. The format needs to allow creative and realistic input from FMs, suppliers and contractors right the way through. Since there is no such thing as being 'risk-free', risk must be acknowledged, managed and shared.

Looking at the relationship of construction costs to lifetime costs of servicing and of maintenance it was agreed that it is nearer 1 : 2 : 20 than the more accepted 1 : 10 : 100 or 1 : 20 : 200. However, value-planning right from the beginning is essential, as is the appreciation of the positive value of good design. Paul Morrell, chairman of the BCO, pointed out that exceptional design can improve the 'exchange' (selling or re-letting) value by as much as 18% above average, and reduce maintenance and service costs by 5%. Increasingly, the brand value of design is being recognised, as is its role in the attraction and retention of talented staff, and in enabling them perform effectively.

Ken Shuttleworth's presentation clearly illustrated the value of an excellent ambience to all user groups. It also showed how involved people, working in a non-hierarchical organisation, can deliver amazing product. At Foster and Partners, Shuttleworth was associated with many of their most impressive buildings – including 30 St Mary Axe (the Gherkin). Make Architecture, set up in January 2004, already has a number prestigious commissions. The practice is a trust, and staff (50 being the maximum number) are all partners along John Lewis type lines, providing an excellent example of partnership-power. Dedicated to providing environmentally friendly buildings, the practice is developing energy efficient facades that have minimal windows positioned where they provide maximum light and views.

Both Roger Madelin, Chief Executive of the Argent Group that is redeveloping King's Cross, and Sir Richard Latham, author of 'Constructing the Team' talked about zero defects (with zero retention). Whilst a building is always a prototype, any other product is expected to be defect free, whether an airplane, a hairdryer, or the dentist's service. Although we know that building on site is very different to factory production, both the use of prefabrication and rigorous processes enable more effective construction. As Latham said: "Best practice must be adopted for both procurement and team building". When asked about ethics in partnering, he agreed that honesty is crucial, but that it is not something he normally talks about.

The building industry is wasteful (30% in materials and manpower), and this is largely due to the whole process. Latham called for the reintegration of design and contracting,

with an increase in fruitful communication, and a reduction in hierarchy allowing a 'ripple sideways' (not downwards) of all information. It was also noted that on average legal costs amount to 7% of the contract value. However, in countries where single project insurance has been adopted, not only have these costs been largely avoided, but insurance costs have been greatly reduced.

'Soft landings – how to link FM to design' was a useful presentation by Mark Way, previously of RMJM. However, although he took us carefully through all the different – before, during and after – elements of ensuring a seamless move-in process, he did not emphasize enough the critical input of FMs in briefing. Nor did he suggest that FMs should be required to 'walk through' a project at design stage to check whether – for instance – windows can be cleaned without employing an expensive abseiler.

From all that was said, it is clear that the acceptance of the key role of facilities management is getting into mainstream consciousness. The client is core to an effective process, and it is for FMs to equip themselves to contribute to this role, and change perceptions of where they are in the food chain. As both Latham and Paul Snoddy, FM at the British Library, said: "If you always do as you always did, you'll always get what you always got". This applies to business; this applies to design and construction, but perhaps most of all it applies to facilities management.

**Santa Raymond RIBA**  
**Santa Raymond Consultants**

Santa Raymond is a client advisor and design strategist, specialising in the workplace, enabling clients develop effective project briefs and creative relationships with their building design and construction teams. She consults and lectures worldwide, devises conferences and seminars, and is a founder member of the FMGuru network.

As associate of the Work Foundation, she is researching the interrelationship between Workplace Ambience and High Performance Businesses. Author of the section on offices in *'The Architects' Handbook*, Santa co-authored *'Tomorrow's Office – creating effective and humane interiors'*, and also guides for facilities managers. She consults and lectures worldwide, and devises conferences and seminars. [www.santaraymond.com](http://www.santaraymond.com)