

# Is the Quantity Surveyor ready to Assume the Lead Role ?

Whilst we congratulate Dubai, UAE, and its people for their success to host the Expo 2020, Quantity Surveyors now need to prepare themselves to meet the new challenges that this global event and other mega projects would create in the UAE construction industry which is set to go through another boom over the coming decade. In the procurement and execution of projects, though the Quantity Surveyor always played a key role in the project team, they now have a bigger role to play, as the emphasis of the past on time and quality would now shift to Cost, when Developers and Contractors who learnt their lessons from the bitter events of the recent past would be consolidating their efforts to avoid such disaster in the future.

Increasingly, developers would seek value for money whilst the contractors would look for better cost control in order to improve sustainability of their operations. On the subject of Cost, the Quantity Surveyor is the authority and he would now have to lead the team to achieve the stakeholders' objectives.

Cost planning at design and procurement stages was considered an option in the past, but not anymore. No developer would now embark on a development, without having first verified the sufficiency of the available funds for the development and being convinced that he would get the best value for the investment. Quantity Surveyors' involvement in cost planning, cost benefit analyses, life cycle costing and value engineering would reach a new height and to this extent they should endure to gain further education and competence to meet the industry demands.

At grass root levels, Bills of Quantities need to be prepared accurately in order to ensure that tender prices are accurate. This would require competent takers-off not only to prepare BOQs but also to double check their accuracy. Estimators would now require to achieve a higher degree of accuracy in their pricing of work items and project risks.

Having a perfect set of contract documents itself is not sufficient to achieve a dispute-free project completion. A perfect contract administration is also essential, if disputes are to be avoided.

When Contractors strengthen their contract administration / commercial teams to secure their dues, Employers and Consultants would have no option but to have contract administration / commercial staff of equal number and competence to ensure that the Employer's interests are protected against any undue claims.

The recent redundancies saw many senior professionals leaving the country to greener pastures or leaving the profession to take up alternatives in dispute resolution, facilities management, and other vocations. Those who have been engaged in measure and value roles for sometime now, need to enhance their knowledge and skills to fill the

positions at senior levels in the administration of contracts. The Quantity Surveyor needs to prepare to meet the future demands which have already commenced as could be seen from the regular circulars of SLQS that are received these days on job opportunities at senior levels. Membership of Professional institutions should be pursued at the appropriate rank and continued until professional levels are achieved. Opportunities for academic progression, knowledge enhancement, and training should be made use of whilst in this part of the world, as it is unlikely that one would pursue further education after returning to the home country. UAE offers a wealth of opportunities in this regard, and also spare time away from an otherwise demanding family life back in home country.

The necessity of the QS's contribution to the industry is currently at its peak, and therefore, it is left to the Quantity Surveyors to rise up to this occasion and show to their employers that the decision to employ them have resulted in unprecedented dividends. News would spread fast and the demand for Quantity Surveyors would no doubt increase when all sectors of the industry would desire to achieve similar success by benefiting from the invaluable services of the Quantity Surveyors which are essential for a sustainable construction industry.

It is not only good news that spreads fast. Bad news spreads faster. It has now become of great importance that the industry should not complain of any deficiencies, whatsoever, in the services of the Quantity Surveyor. To this extent the Quantity Surveyor now has a more responsible role to play, in identifying the incorrect practices prevailing in the region, if any, and steering away from them.

SLQS provides many opportunities through their CPD programmes to educate the practitioner on how to administer the contract in the correct manner. All SL Quantity Surveyors should make use of such opportunities not only for the benefit of the industry, but also to demonstrate to the industry, the loyalty of the Quantity Surveyor in adhering to the correct practices thus acting with due care and diligence as true professionals do, which would pave the way for many juniors to follow on their footsteps to this part of the world in the future, as they themselves did in the past. Time has now come for all SL Quantity Surveyors to live up to their maxim – "Delivering Diligence".



**Prof. Indrawansa Samaratunga PhD, DSc**  
FRICS, FAIQS, FIQSSL, FCIArb, FCIQB, FCMI, FASI, FBEng

Chartered Surveyor, Chartered QS, Chartered Manager,  
Chartered Builder  
Arbitrator / Mediator - London Court of International Arbitration  
Arbitrator / Expert - Dubai International Arbitration Centre, UAE  
Middle East Representative - Australian Inst. of Qty. Surveyors