

Roadmap for Change

Asking construction to pull together before it moves forward

IN early March at Futurebuild, the last industry exhibition to be held for some time, the Construction Industry Council (CIC) launched its Roadmap for Change. The roadmap is a digital platform that outlines six areas where change is needed and the steps businesses – of all sizes – can take. The six areas are image, progression, procurement, inclusive design, leadership and technology. If construction can crack these, it will be in excellent shape for the second half of the 21st century.



The roadmap came about as CIC celebrated its 30th anniversary at the end of 2018, and it began to think about what the industry needs for the next 30 years. A survey was sent out to CIC's member bodies, including CICES, and distributed across their memberships. Over 1,100 responses came back and it is these that have driven the roadmap. Maria Coulter, chair of CIC's Diversity and Inclusion Panel, has spearheaded the project. A chartered QS and business coach, Ms Coulter launched the roadmap saying "This is not the end of the journey, but the start." However, it didn't stop the roadmap from being criticised by one social media commentator for the start of that journey not including reference to building information modelling (BIM).

There will be gaping holes in the roadmap, but that's where we all come in. The roadmap is about what good looks like, it is about sharing experiences and passing on knowledge. It won't go anywhere without people chipping in. I spoke to Maria Coulter just as the Coronavirus lockdown had begun, and she said: "The world's changed a lot since this was published. People are working at home, some have got more time than others, and I hope they might be able to contribute with some content." There is a lot of good stuff in the roadmap, there will be omissions, but point them out nicely, be helpful, get involved. The world has changed a lot and industry infighting helps no one.

What were you looking for when you started the roadmap?

We wanted to know what needs to change to make construction thrive over the next 30 years. What will make people want to join the industry? What, if anything, would make them leave the industry? There was a lot of qualitative data in the results. We know we need to do a lot on the image of the industry. We know there are different standards for progression –

many people felt that if they had a child, the industry wasn't potentially one they would want to stay in. A lot of people talked about the need for procurement to change. Inclusive design was a major theme, as were leadership and technology.

Our task was then to pull together information to help people start their journey and look at what happens once they're on the road. The aim is to provide content to give people an ideal way to start, but also showcase what can be done and what is being done by other businesses – whether small/medium enterprises, microbusinesses or larger organisations. When you look on LinkedIn, or Twitter, it can feel like information overload. If you search for 'leadership and construction' on Google, you come up with reports from 1995. There's a real lack of visibility of what people are doing now. We've got an opportunity to use the roadmap as a place where we can centrally put good content.

Are there any quick wins?

I'd like to think so. If you're a small company wanting to promote the image of the industry, I'd like you to be able to find out easily how you can get more involved with schools. If you're struggling with alliancing, I'd like there to be helpful information available to you. From a progression point of view, you'll be able to find what your company should have in place as a starting point.

What are the challenges?

Technology has been a tough theme. There's a real gap between the smaller and larger businesses. I've found in my own work as a business coach that some smaller businesses haven't got the technology in place to help them be more efficient and effective. Particularly with BIM, there's a big gap between what's happening at high level and the thousands of small businesses that make up our industry.

Some people are like a rabbit caught in the headlights. They don't know where to start. When they begin engaging with tech companies, they find they just want to sell to them, and not necessarily make sure that it's the right solution for them. Information on technology is definitely a gap that needs to be filled.

We've got some content on the roadmap as a starting point with technology. But that received criticism because we hadn't included BIM. We haven't got all of the answers, we need help to build this. It's not us saying, do this and it'll all be great. We need to help each other.

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