Research in Progress Abstract - Construction Practice (Non-Pedagogical Content)

The Role of the Site Manager on Construction Projects in Ireland: Competencies and Attributes Required for Success

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The job title for the supervisor on a construction site in the United State is Superintendent, Project Superintendent or General Superintendent. The superintendent has primary responsibility for the success of the project and therefore has a huge impact on the success of the construction company. The job title for that same role in Ireland most often is Site Manager. When asked to describe the role on a construction project, one site manager in Ireland stated, "He starts the project and he has to hand it over finished. So everything happening to put that project together I had to stay on top of it. And that's including all the subcontractors. Any aspect of the projects, from window-fitters, plumbers, electricians, painters, everything has to be controlled." When asked the same question a Project Director stated, "I suppose the Site Manager's role is coordination mainly. They should know how to build a job. They should have it built in their head. They should have done all that in prior roles. But it's mainly people skills and coordination. If they can't do that they can't manage." The authors utilized a mixed methods research protocol to determine which competencies and attributes were most important for project success. The sequential explanatory research design included a survey followed by face to face interviews. The survey, completed by 52 participants, invited the construction professionals to volunteer to be interviewed. The authors interviewed 13 individuals working in the construction industry as site managers, project managers, project directors, or owner's representatives. Quantitative and qualitative data analysis is in progress, but preliminary results are available. The survey used a 6-point Likert scale for participants to rank the competencies and attributes which are the most important for success. Based on the survey results, the top 20 ranked competencies and attributes for a site manager's success in Ireland included: 1. Ability to plan ahead (5.64); 2. Ability to get along with other (5.54); 3. Strong work ethic (5.53); 4. Time management skills (5.48); 5. Ability to schedule work activities (5.47); 6. Broad knowledge of construction (5.44); 7. Reliable and responsive (5.37); 8. Understand construction materials (5.36); 9. Oral communication skills (5.36); 10. Collaboration ability (5.32); 11. Leadership skills (5.32); 12. Ability to work with different people (5.29); 13. Can keep you cool (5.28); 14. Understand safety regulations (5.26); 15. Detailed knowledge of construction (5.24); 16. Reinforce behaviors in others (5.14); 17. Ability to learn from others (5.14); 18. Ability to build trust (5.07); 19. Team building skills (5.05); 20. Listening skills (5.00). Many of these competencies and attributes are skills that can be introduced in construction education programs in Ireland. There are 13 Institutes of Technology in Ireland "that allow students to progress from two year through primary degree to Masters and PhD." Several of these Institutes of Technology offer construction education degrees including Construction Management and Construction Site Management. The identified competencies and attributes could also be utilized to develop curricula in professional development courses and workshops for current site managers.

Key Words: Site Manager, Superintendent, Site Supervision, Ireland Construction