EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

An Eye on the Future
with CEO and Managing Director Laurie Voyer

Saadiyat Expressway on the right track

Business Bay Executive Towers Living your Dreams

The way we do Business
A leading diversified International construction group in the Middle East and North Africa

Stuart Wallace
Senior Estimator
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Undoubtedly a reformed business climate has enabled the region to bounce back after months of speculation and a wait and watch approach. The Al Habtoor Leighton Group is working on a plan of action that will help us capitalize on this visibly changed outlook.

The current year was essentially a period of consolidation. There were a few small concerns in our business environment and weeding out the ineffective and unnecessary activities was essential. Several critical decisions were made that enabled us to exhibit strong business performance and steer the Group to success.

With a new managing director driving company affairs, we look forward to strategic direction, good governance, and growth opportunities. We are looking at a decentralized model, where the leaders of each strategic business unit can drive accountability and ameliorate market strategies that garner increased market share.

We have a new productivity plan in place for the workforce, that should enable us to pursue better performance, subsequently increasing morale. Health and safety metrics, construction waste management, delivery systems, corporate ethics, and socially responsible programs, need to be addressed with tactical solidity. We need to keep this momentum going by ensuring that appropriate skilled resources are allocated specific responsibilities. We need to continue to protect our financial fundamentals and keep costs in control.

Although significant amendment and robust adjustments may continue for a while, our broader objectives for a superior working environment for both our employees and our clients will always remain the core focus of the Group.

Riad T. Sadik
It is with much pleasure that I write this message. Since arriving here in early July, I’ve spent my time trying to get to understand how the Group operates, and to know the people who make it what it is. From my initial observations, one thing is immediately apparent - we have an extremely talented and committed group of people that are eager to contribute to the Group’s continued success.

My primary goal as CEO and Managing Director, is to ensure that the Al Habtoor Leighton Group becomes the most successful construction group in the Middle East and North Africa. Success can be measured in many different ways. Of course we want to be financially successful, and this remains a key objective of the Group. But success means much more than just financial achievement. We want to be the contractor of choice for our clients. We want to establish long-term, mutually beneficial relationships with blue-chip clients across the region, and be regarded as a contractor that consistently delivers quality projects on time and in line with our clients’ budgets.

We also want to become the employer of choice in our industry. We want to earn a reputation for looking after our people, and for rewarding performance. In doing so, we will not only retain our current people, but will also attract the best and brightest new recruits to the Group.

We also want to be seen as a leader in safety, and aim to have the best safety record in our industry. We must not compromise on our commitment to the safety and wellbeing of our people and those under our care. It’s fair to say that our safety performance over the past couple of years has been poor, and it’s something we must immediately rectify. We should also strive to be a leader in our approach to environmental management. Sustainability is becoming increasingly important to our clients, and we need to be able to offer them the level of expertise and service that they require in this area.

I look forward to working with you all.

Laurie Voyer
Abu Dhabi’s Tourism Development and Investment Corporation (TDIC) contracted the company for constructing the 20.3 kilometre roadway, which includes eight bridges and three tunnels on Saadiyat Island, a natural island half the size of Bermuda, and 500 metres offshore Abu Dhabi.
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The Saadiyat Link Expressway
Bridging the Gap

The Saadiyat Link, represents the first major piece of infrastructure successfully delivered to Abu Dhabi’s Tourism Development and Investment Company (TDIC).

A project that the Al Habtoor Leighton Group has been proud to be associated with, the Saadiyat Link Expressway was officially inaugurated by His Highness General Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of Armed Forces of the United Arab Emirates, on Wednesday the 14th of October 2009.

A region that falls prey to rising traffic woes will now have many reasons to celebrate. Linking with the Shaharma Expressway, the new development will reduce travel time between Dubai and downtown Abu Dhabi by twenty five minutes, thus bringing sighs of relief and pleasure to the residents of the Abu Dhabi. There is another reason to cheer, especially for the fans of speed – the expressway also forms part of the main route between the city and the new Formula One circuit on Yas Island.

The first stand-alone project for Leighton in the UAE, the contract was signed at the end of August 2007. Abu Dhabi’s Tourism Development and Investment Corporation (TDIC) contracted the company to construct 6.5 kilometres of expressway with interchanges, and 13 kilometres of local, collector and arterial roads on Saadiyat, a natural island half the size of Bermuda, 500 metres offshore Abu Dhabi.

Saadiyat Island is being developed into a complete visitor residential destination. As explained by the Project Director, Brett Bass, “The project provides the first level of infrastructure for Saadiyat Island, which TDIC is aiming to develop into one of the top ten tourist destinations in the world. As a result, it has been a very intensive assignment with high attention to detail.

Even today, there are areas where design is ongoing, and this will see construction continuing into 2010. The recent opening of the expressway, prior to the Grand Prix, is a result of the proactive approach of the project team in dealing with the changes.

Major design change was introduced by the project team through value engineering, and this helped bring significant time and cost savings in bridge construction. All of the bridges within the original scope of work were post-tensioned box-girder structures from single cell to five cell units, with spans up to 55 metres, the longest structure being 407 metres in length.
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Brett Bass
Project Director

The scope of work can be summarised as:

- 6.5km of expressway with 5 lanes in each direction, with one main interchange and three sets of on and off ramps
- 13km of local, collector, and arterial roads
- 8 twin bridges, serving the expressway and the local road network
- An 840m long cut and cover tunnel
- 13km stormwater network
- 20km potable water network
- 15km sanitary sewer network
- 27km irrigation network
- 45 km of telecommunications ducting
- 40km gas pipeline network
- 172km of 22kV cabling
- 17 22kV substations
- 4 stormwater/sewer pump stations
- Construction of a 16.5ML/day Sewage Treatment Plant
- Construction of the largest potable water reservoir in the emirate of Abu Dhabi
- The excavation, transport, and placement of fill to shape a golf course and other parts of the island in preparation for future development

Value engineering savings were made principally through foundation design, optimisation of the superstructure, and standardisation of work systems, the latter point resulting in significant improvements in productivity during the course of construction.

All of the structural works on the project have been self-performed, with the labour coming through Al Habtoor Engineering. The demand for labour within the Group meant that a high percentage of the labour that came to site was new to the company and the UAE. Over 500 personnel have received third-party accredited training for scaffolding, with a number of these obtaining supervisor level accreditation. This was essential given that scaffold requirements made the project RMD Middle East’s biggest ever single job.

Training was also implemented for riggers and plant operators, with a further 200 personnel obtaining licences, allowing the effective operation of our own plant on site. This was particularly beneficial for earthworks, where the fill quantity increased from 4.4 million to 10.35 million cubic metres, in terms of both programme and cost.
The training that was implemented on the project increased the capability of the workforce, enabled more tasks to be performed directly, increased productivity, and most importantly improved site safety, helping the team to achieve an LTI environment in excess of 11 million man hours.

The logistical challenges on the project were recently reduced with the opening of Sheikh Khalifa Bridge, linking Saadiyat Island to Abu Dhabi. For the past two years, nearly all of the staff have put on life-jackets and made the five minute boat ride from the Mena boat yard area across to the island. Access from the mainland was possible, but the trip around through Yas was time consuming.

The major logistical challenge of bringing thousands of labour to site from Mussafa and Jebel Ali was greatly simplified when TDIC agreed to the establishment of a labour camp on the island. TDIC has built on this further, and Al Habtoor ATCO has constructed an impressive state-of-the-art 20,000-man facility to serve both ongoing and future projects. The biggest challenge on the project was being able to achieve the client’s objectives in the available timeframe.

This resulted in two shift operations being implemented for all structural works at various stages of construction.

When asked what the key factor in delivery of the project was, Brett Bass advised that it was “the commitment of the team. From the time of award, when there were of 6 of us, through to a peak of 220 office personnel, there has been a great spirit within the team, and this has driven the success of the project, and will hopefully result in further work on the island.”

The Project Big Numbers

11,325 Site Safety Inductions
20,876,320 Manhours
4,600 Peak workforce
10,350,000 m³ Fill
242,500 m³ Concrete
30,600 tons Steel reinforcement
1,700 tons Stressing strand
395,000 tons Asphalt
AED 2,600,000,000 Project Value
Two years ago Sheikh Zayed Road, the busiest road in Dubai, was an incredible display of cranes overshadowing an array of semi constructed and completed high-rise towers significant of the construction boom in the region. Today those cranes seem to be vanishing into thin air with the promised dream lifestyle becoming a reality.

The Executive Towers at Business Bay, a mass of 11 residential and commercial buildings in Business Bay, slated as one of the most sophisticated business hubs of the world, already has life brimming within its environs. Recently the buildings were handed over to the owners and end-users and a number of tenants have already occupied their properties.

The Executive Towers project is the biggest Building projects undertaken by the Group. Consisting of residential and office blocks, as well as villas and retail mall facilities, it was constructed for Dubai Properties (a member of Dubai Holdings) as the project developer.

Due to the scale of the project, for the team on site to both continue with the remaining balance of construction and commence maintenance while families begin occupation, presents a significant challenge. The usual snags that follow occupancy, although not unheard of, means that the site team is suddenly confronted with a large group of individual clients. With almost 2,600 residential and commercial units being progressively taken-over or occupied, attending to their individual requirements is a huge responsibility for those involved.

To provide good customer service, a special team known as the Defects Management Team (DMT) has been deployed at the site. The team comprises various staff ranging from all levels of management, from senior project staff through to the skilled workforce, to provide support and assistance to residents around the clock.

Ensuring respect, security, and safety the DMT have been going beyond the “normal call of duty” to expedite the pending tasks. The work is carried out under close supervision, as a single lapse may cost dearly.

The site’s safety records have so far displayed zero harm and no major accidents, despite having logged in excess of 82 million man hours. This is an amazing feat and the credit goes to all engaged on site for demonstrating responsible safe behavior and work practices. The entire project will successfully be handed over to the main clients in the next few months.
A glance through the “interesting statistics” highlights a few amazing facts that relate to the scale and nature of this landmark building project. The key challenges fundamental to the progress and completion essentially relate to procurement, logistics, health, and safety management. The site team has displayed great diligence and dedication in carrying out their responsibilities. As the apartments are progressively completed and handed over to residents and occupiers, new challenges of a distinct nature arise. Normally during the course of construction the site management deals with a few select representatives of the client and resident Engineers. However in the current handover situation, the team is required to deal with the needs of over 2,600 individual clients.

Grant Beckett
Project Director

### Interesting Statistics

- The largest ever aluminium façade cladding contract in the Gulf region. Total tower façade and ancillary package area of 430,000m² comprised of 140,000m² glazed areas, 260,000m² composite panel areas, 30,000m² ancillary areas such as glass balustrade, canopies, sun shades, and pergolas.
- 18,000 refrigerant tons of cooling via a district cooling plant of approximately 300,000 tons capacity feeding 10,000 fan coil units and 50 air handling plants.
- Electrical demand of 82 megawatts supplied through 52 transformers.
- All buildings fully sprinkler protected with addressable fire alarm systems.
- Integrated security and access control to all areas and apartments.
- 2,200 bored piles, 500,000 m³ of readymixed concrete, 90,000 tons of reinforcing bar, 21 tower cranes, 22 dual-car construction hoists (personnel and materials).
- 27,000 shop drawings along with 2,900 RFI’s and 91,000 inspection requests submitted to the consultants.
- 26,700 wooden doors and 1,250 steel doors.
- 89 permanent building elevators and 10 escalators.
- 82.5 million man hours worked to date (October ’09).
This has been the largest building project that the Al Habtoor Leighton Group has constructed, and it has established HLG in a league that demonstrates the Group’s capacity and capability to carry out this type of work anywhere in the region.

The Delivery Team

**Developer:**
Dubai Properties Group

**Project Manager:**
Mace International

**Principle Consultants:**
DAR Consult

**Main Contractor:**
Al Habtoor Engineering Enterprises

**Construction commenced:**
Mid 2005

**Completion scheduled for:**
End 2009

- Total built up area approximately 9.3 million sq.ft. (approximately 865,000m²).
- 1 office tower comprising 187 shell and core office suites.
- 10 residential towers ranging in height between 28 – 52 floors.
- 2,151 residential apartments ranging from studios to four bedrooms, terrace apartments, duplex apartments, loft apartments and penthouse apartments.
- 60 villas located on the Plaza.
- 16 boutique office villas on the Plaza.
- 3 podium levels including approximately 4,500 car parking spaces and approximately 360,000 sq.ft. (approximately 34,000 m²) of landscaped grounds.
- Retail Mall with 158 units (including amalgamations) of which 77 are planned for food and beverage usage.
Updates from **Abu Dhabi**

**Dusit Hotel and Complex** – Distinctively blue

**Developer:** East & West International Group LLC  
**Value:** AED 1.32 billion

Impressively covering the skyline of the capital is the beautiful blue coloured Dusit Hotel and Complex. Partners in progress include East & West International Group LLC who is the developer, Morganti Group International who are the project managers and Binona the project consultants. HLG is the main contractor and was awarded the project in 2008 as a build-only proposition.

Located opposite the Al Jazeera Club in Abu Dhabi and popularly referred to as P9, the project consists of four adjacent buildings, the hotel, serviced apartments, office and the unfurnished apartments buildings. About 45% of the entire project has been completed. The final works (testing, commissioning and handing-over works) will commence towards the end of January 2010 and is expected to be finished in the first and second quarter of the coming year i.e. March end for the office building and end of April for the unfurnished building and with this the first milestone will be achieved.

According to the project plan, the second milestone includes the hotel and serviced apartment buildings. The final mock-up for interior design in the Hotel has been completed and the ID works will commence shortly. Currently the block-work, plaster, floor screed and façade activities are ongoing within both buildings structures.

Our goal is to ensure we are meeting each milestone outlined in the project plan. We have a great combination of an integrated team from both the client’s end and our end working together with unified objectives and a single mission to be on time, on track.

Yehia Abdullah  
Project Director
Updates from **Dubai**

**Iris Bay – Iconeering presence**

**Client:** Sheth Estate International  
**Value:** AED 325 million

Iris Bay, the unique half-moon shaped tower on Sheikh Zayed Road, is well on its way to completion. 44 storeys in height, the mixed-use-development is generating a great deal of interest. The tower is being developed by Sheth Estate International, India’s 21 year-old construction house, along with Atkins as its architects and consultants.

The structure of the building has been completed, and internal finishes are in progress up to level 30. Façade works are also in progress, and one can see the aluminum and glass skin of the building taking shape. There have been some design changes as well, but the project is on track for completion in the first half of 2010.

Also logistics are tough and storage areas around the site are very limited, as is the space for other amenities. The project currently has a total manpower numbering approximately 1,150 including subcontractors. With all the complexity and challenges at hand, safety and quality standards have also been exceptional.

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**The greatest challenge is the shape and complexity of the project, which requires meticulous planning and extensive co-ordination at site to make it a success.**

*Mahmoud Irshheid*  
Project Manager

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Updates from **Qatar**

Qatar has been doing relatively well in the last quarter of this year. Works are nearing completion on the first two Marriott hotels of the City Centre Expansion Project, with the remaining three hotels scheduled for handover to Shangri-La, Rotana, and Merweb in October 2010. Recently, HLG secured a QR 750 million water infrastructure project to connect two Qatari communities. The project, awarded by Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation (KAHRAMAA), includes the development of new and independent water infrastructure facilities in the Duhail and Umm Qarn communities.

The current market outlook is very positive and we are confident of securing some of the key infrastructure and development projects in Kuwait and Doha.

*Tony Saadie*  
Executive General Manager, Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain
The leadership pipeline at the Al Habtoor Leighton Group is flowing. On the 1st of October 2009, Laurie Voyer officially assumed the role of CEO and Managing Director.

With a charming demeanour and a ready smile, the new chieftain is a man marked with a steely grit and determination. A single corporate plan, a single brand, a single vision, and a single set of values will be the new mantra.

An experienced construction industry professional, Laurie has held senior executive roles in the industry in Australia. He joined the Al Habtoor Leighton Group after a distinguished career as Deputy Managing Director for Leighton Contractors, the Leighton Group’s flagship operating company.

Laurie was largely responsible for Leighton Contractors’ outstanding performance over the past few years, and was in charge of the company’s construction and mining operations across Australia and New Zealand. His extensive experience incorporates some of Australia’s largest civil infrastructure, building, and mining projects for both the public and private sector.

**In your managerial approach, what do you do differently? How much does experience play into such an approach?**

**Laurie:** I believe in an open door policy. I prefer to let staff talk to me openly, and I will give them an honest answer where I can.

My 35 years’ experience with Leighton Contractors in Australia has given me a deep understanding of our contracting business; I have held nearly every position in terms of running a business, from being an estimator right through to being a Managing Director, so I possess a fair insight into what happens in a business.

People are welcome to come and talk to me and discuss concerns regarding their business, and I think I can help them understand where their businesses are going.

Managing our business, our clients, and our people, requires a certain level of agility in order to be on top of issues and industry dynamics. Experience propels business decisions in the right direction.

I would like our people to understand that we are here to make this business, the Al Habtoor Leighton Group, the leading diversified international contracting group in the Middle East and North Africa.

**How do you characterize the construction environment in the Middle East, and how does it differ from the other regions in which you have worked?**

The Middle East is certainly one of the most active and exciting construction markets in the world. Its economic diversification and supportive regulations have made it a unique marketplace.
I believe in an open door policy. I prefer to let staff talk to me openly, and I will give them an honest answer where I can. I would like our people to understand that we are here to make this business, the Al Habtoor Leighton Group, the leading diversified international contracting group in the Middle East and North Africa.
We need to grow, understand and develop an Al Habtoor Leighton way, and we all need to build it together. Our employees are our most valued assets and we will continue to build and develop a healthy environment of growth and performance.

Laurie: The Middle East is certainly one of the most active and exciting construction markets in the world. Its economic diversification and supportive regulations have made it a unique marketplace.

There is not much difference in the basics of construction, however, the Middle East has a different regard to contracts as there are relatively more variations in terms of timing and extensions. Although there is a lot more flexibility here, the most important aspect is to ensure that one maintains strong relations with clients and understands their needs and preferences.

AKHBAR: Someone once said that if you do not have a clear vision of the future ten years hence you are not managing. In the current context one might think such a concept is far-fetched. Having said that, how do you strike a balance between the short-term and long-term analysis of business goals?

Laurie: I am a convert of long-term strategic planning. We are developing a five-year strategic plan to roll out more completely in the month of January. If you do not possess an aspiring target, how can you steer a business towards that outcome? Each time you make a decision you are inching towards your aspirations.

We recently concluded a strategic planning process and will soon roll out the strategic plan for the next five years. This will summarise the short term initiatives and broader action plans. We have a definite vision and the proposed strategic plan will have a visible impact on the way we work, including our corporate governance structure, operating systems, and business policies.

AKHBAR: What regions, according to you, are evolving as high-growth markets, and what other geographical expansion is the Group looking into?

Laurie: Part of our strategic planning process was to develop a business model that will allow us to spread our business geographically. Abu Dhabi in particular, represents a singular market opportunity to engage in with large-scale, highly visible projects.
The Middle East itself is a high-growth market and most of the GCC economies including Bahrain, Oman, Qatar, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia, have very active construction industries.

We are actively bidding for projects in these regions. Egypt and Libya are also growing economies with rising construction activities. We hope to have an increased presence in all these areas in a few years. It will be done very carefully, taking into account every reason as to why we have gone there, and those aims will be successfully achieved.

**AKHBAR**: What is your approach to sustainability and a business model centered on this concept? What level of priority will you assign to its progress and diffusion in our processes and procedures in the current scenario?

**Laurie**: Sustainability is a wide set of activities in terms of its applications, but from my personal perspective we should ensure we are a socially responsible business and demonstrate responsible corporate practices.

We need a business model that produces profits, keeps the health of the organisation intact, and helps fulfill obligations to the environment and the community we live in.

**AKHBAR**: In the wake of the recent downturn, many find that they need to concentrate on building their balance sheets, and confront the challenge of rebuilding trust, relationships, and corporate reputations. What opportunities for improvement to do you envisage?

**Laurie**: This again relates to the sustainability factor. We have a balance sheet that is robust, delivers the banking stability we need, and delivers dividends and returns to our shareholders; so from my point of view the balance sheet is very important. It has to be kept in check and managed very carefully.

**AKHBAR**: Every new leader brings in hopes and aspirations for their employees, that can help them traverse through the disillusionment or the stew of challenges that the recent past may have unraveled. Would you like to share anything in this regard?

**Laurie**: The Al Habtoor Leighton Group’s culture has always been that of one large family, and we shall continue to be one and look after one another. It is critical to contribute to building an environment where we enjoy coming to work and enjoy belonging to our corporate brand, as we spend a lot of time here – probably more than we do with our family.

We need to grow, understand, and develop an Al Habtoor Leighton way, and we all need to build it together. Our employees are our most valued assets and we will continue to build and develop a healthy environment of growth and performance. We are developing a robust business model and that is what is being structured within our strategic plan. This structure will bring the Al Habtoor and Leighton families together and there will be something for everybody.

**AKHBAR**: On a lighter note, as a youngster what did you always aspire to be? If it was not for construction, what industry would you be active in right now?

**Laurie**: I would probably have been a teacher. As a child I imagined I would be one.

**AKHBAR**: Tell us more about your family? Would they recognize you in the workplace?

**Laurie**: My wife Theresa and son Luke live here in Dubai with me. My son is three and half years old. I also have two older children and four grandchildren. They would all definitely recognize me as I am pretty much the same person whether at home or at work. Of course one has a more serious demeanour while at work.

**AKHBAR**: Who has been your role model and source of inspiration?

**Laurie**: I’ve never had any role models that I particularly pledged on to. There are many great people in the world and all of them have plusses and minuses.

What my grandfather or father did and do in their lifetime is built into my system and has given me a way of life, but in terms of a role model or inspiration I did not look up to anyone in particular. My philosophy in life is very simple, and that means each day we should try to do something good and amass goodness.

**AKHBAR**: What are your most treasured memories?

**Laurie**: There was a time back in Australia when we were not performing to our best ability, but over a period of a very short time we actually moved the business to the top of the businesses in that area, and many businesses became envious of our position. Today people remind me of that and remember me for a good and rewarding time. That was very important to me, as it was about moving a whole group and a whole part of our business to being the best in its class.

**AKHBAR**: What are your favourite passtimes?

**Laurie**: I like to work five days of the week as I prefer two days a week off to do things for oneself or for spending with the family, whether it be walking down the beach or even going to the mall.

We should have time after a highly busy week to relax and spend with family. Without identifying a particular favourite, I personally feel that time for oneself to unwind and enjoy other activities rather than having to work all the time, is absolutely essential and something I enjoy.

**AKHBAR**: Do you practice any sports activity?

**Laurie**: Not in particular, although I like sports as I was a good hockey player. I also like watching games like rugby or soccer.
But unlike many, I am not an avid cricket fan and given the choice, would not prefer watching a five-day test. It consumes too much time, although I could do a one day or half-day match occasionally.

I am leading a very international team here at the moment trying to be a good construction company. This is my team and we hope to be the best team in the Middle East.

**AKHBAR**- On a concluding note, what message do you wish to give your employees across the group?

**Laurie:** We are looking forward to exciting years ahead and hope everybody can share that glory and be proud to work for the Al Habtoor Leighton Group.

We are looking to be one name, one identity, and one culture. Let us all work together to make the Group the best and the strongest brand in the region.
A vital element of leadership includes the establishment of a corporate strategy that can provide direction and goals.

With a captaincy role comes the challenge of ensuring that a proper framework for governance is established which can provide a strategic connection between the Group and its divisions. As part of his primary initiatives since coming on board, Managing Director, Laurie Voyer called for a strategic plan of action.

The company ran a two day workshop at the Grand Millennium Hotel in Dubai for senior managers. The main aim of the workshop was to identify the major issues currently facing the Group, and to agree how to best address these issues in order to establish the Group’s strategic direction for 2010 to 2014.

The session included comprehensive reviews and discussions held individually prior to the workshop to assess key major concerns and significant potential changes.

A strong strategic plan was identified which will be reviewed by the Group’s Board of Directors before its implementation early in the new year.

One of the most critical requirements of the Group is to align its strategies with its overarching goals.
The Way We Do Business

An overview of the corporate Commercial Department Experience

In its first year, the corporate Commercial Department has established a small but highly experienced team of individuals.

Based in Dubai, Rob Johnstone has led the team as Corporate Commercial Director for the Al Habtoor Leighton Group since August 2008.

He brings over 30 years’ of experience in construction, engineering, project management, and general management across building, civil, infrastructure, energy, and petrochemical industries in both the UK (10 years) and Australia (21 years), chiefly with the Leighton Group.

“In addition to dealing with a myriad of day-to-day contractual and commercial ‘fire-fighting’ issues across the Group, we have developed a composite suite of Commercial Procedures which represent ‘the way we do business’ going forward.

A series of training modules has also been developed based upon these fundamental procedural controls, and sessions have been run and will continue to be rolled out in Doha, Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

Similarly, an ‘Audit Pack’ has been developed to ensure compliance with these key procedural controls and this will be rolled out early in 2010. At the same time, we have established and operated a regime of...
Corporate Commercial Managers
(L to R) – Mike Fallon (Contracts),
Garry Presdee (Business Systems),
and Andrew Mulcuck (Projects)
It’s important to identify the changes that consultants often make in the mistaken belief that they are “protecting” their client’s interests.

Mike Fallon Corporate Commercial Manager (Contracts)

regular Corporate Commercial Reviews of projects, from which we have been able to distil common areas for improvement.

“We are also currently evaluating the best proprietary systems available in the market to provide the Group with a fully integrated business systems platform for use across the Group,” Rob said.

Contracts Management

Mike Fallon has over 18 years experience, including 15 years overseas, and specializes in contractual issues, insurances, guarantees, and legal interface, joining HLG in April 2008.

“Most projects in the region use amended versions of the FIDIC Forms of Contract, and it’s important to identify the changes that consultants often make in the mistaken belief that they are protecting their client’s interests,” Mike said.

“Off-loading unreasonable risks on to the Contractor can either drive the price up correspondingly, or make the more professional contractors walk away from the bid,” he said.

The corporate Commercial Department therefore takes a closer look at tenders where HLG is “first ranked” to ensure that the company does not accept any contractual nasties, for example, provisions that affect the company’s fundamental rights to payment and redress.

The department also advises on a range of other pre-contract and post contract “Agreements” that may impact projects or the business. Another focus for Mike is bank guarantees which, in the wake of the recent financial downturn, have become even more onerous as both employers (who want the guarantees) and the banks (who issue them on our behalf) seek to better protect their respective, and in many ways opposing, positions.

Mike checks all “Guarantee Request Forms” against the common sense tenets of the FIDIC based “HLG Standard Wordings”, and advises projects requesting bonds of any issues that need to be qualified out or referred to Managing Director for sign off.

Mike keeps a watching brief on the HLG bond portfolio once a bond is issued and advises projects as required on subcontractor guarantees.

Another area coming under Mike’s scrutiny is project insurances. The department coordinates with insurance brokers when projects are awarded to ensure an adequate standard of cover is placed initially, reviews policy expiry dates and cover values thereafter, and also advises projects in the unfortunate event of a claim.

Mike is also the primary point of contact for requests for external legal advice and maintains a panel of lawyers within particular legal firms who have been identified as best suited for various fields.

When legal/contractual advice is requested, Mike will either respond directly, including providing copies of related advice that may have been sought by HLG in the past or, if the issue warrants external opinion, review the requestor’s ‘briefing pack’ and budget before instructing the appropriate external lawyer. Mike also advises on any arbitration or court cases that HLG might be involved with from time to time.

Project Management

Andrew Mulcuck has 28 years experience in construction and civil engineering across building, civil, infrastructure, energy and petrochemical industries in both the UK (23 years) and in South East Asia (5 years). He has worked as a consultant quantity surveyor, contractual and commercial claims consultant, and now with HLG.

A significant part of Andrew’s current role is being an integral member of the HLG team which undertakes corporate commercial reviews of projects. Instigated at the beginning of 2009, these reviews usually entail an intense 3-day visit to a project where the review team meets with key members of project staff to review cost, value, programme, and risk/opportunity forecasts, as well as the overall contractual management of the project.

This culminates in a review report with recommendations in the form of an agreed action plan to address/improve upon the key

Site teams still believe we are going in to audit the project. This is not the intent of the reviews. There is an open and positive dialogue with the projects which ultimately benefits all concerned.

Andrew Mulcuck Corporate Commercial Manager (Projects)
issues impacting the project’s commercial and contractual outcomes.

The department has now undertaken approximately a dozen reviews, across most of the Group’s business units and JVs, together with a number of re-visits to discuss/review progress against the agreed action plans. Feedback has been extremely positive despite understandable initial scepticism. “Site teams still believe we are going in to audit the project,” Andrew says. “This is not the intent of the Reviews. There is an open and positive dialogue with the projects which ultimately benefits all concerned,” he adds.

In addition to the reviews, Andrew assists in the management of any arbitration/legal proceedings the company may be involved in and is currently providing assistance in the commercial management of the Dubai Towers project in Doha.

He is also involved in providing ad-hoc advice on a number of issues on various projects across the Group as well as having some input into the commercial procedures developed by the team.

**Systems Management**

Garry Presdee has 24 years’ experience, including 19 years working overseas chiefly in South-East Asia, in quantity surveying roles, contractual claims, and more recently in business process management positions, predominantly with major building contractors.

In his role at HLG, Garry’s focus is business systems in the commercial area. “This is essentially a ‘back room’ role but still a vital one in the effective commercial management of the business,” says Garry.

This has involved playing a major role in managing the development, distribution and maintenance of the suite of commercial procedures and the associated training modules and audit packs which are being utilized to assist with ‘buy in’ and compliance.

He also acts as the department’s interface with IT where he has been instrumental in the recent roll out of the contract valuation portal and is currently involved in the evaluation of a potential integrated cost, project management and reporting system for the Group to be rolled out in 2010.

In addition, Garry also provides valuable assistance as a member of the HLG team which undertakes corporate Commercial reviews of projects, focussing chiefly on programme analysis.

**Garry Presdee**

Corporate Commercial Manager (Systems)
New Markets Business Unit

Creating a strategic advantage

The Group’s proactive efforts to continue its steady expansion across new geographic markets have enabled the formation of the New Markets Business Unit (NMBU). Led by Doug Watkinson, General Manager NMBU, the new business unit assesses opportunities and growth options across the MENA markets, outside of the Group’s core markets of the UAE and Qatar.

As markets around the globe rebound and emerge from the recent slowdown, corporate restructuring and strategic business decisions are on the rise. Recently HLG established the New Markets Business Unit and appointed Doug to lead and manage this division.

Doug is a Chartered Civil Engineer from the UK, who has now been in the region for over 30 years. He started out in Oman in 1978, and subsequently worked in Bahrain, Australia, Hong Kong and the UK. More recently, Doug spent two years in Bahrain, and another in Abu Dhabi with a development management company.

Rich with experience, he has taken the challenge for fresh opportunities head on.

When asked to explain his objective, Doug is very clear. “I aim to create self-reliant businesses in select countries in the MENA region, outside of HLG’s established territories. We are currently well entrenched in the UAE and Qatar, and my focus lies outside these countries,” he says. Sounds impressive, but how does one judge self-reliance? “To qualify as a success, businesses established in these new countries would need to be completely capable of operating on their own at a local level,” he says.

As you explore further, you understand that there is already a clear plan in place. Commonly, there exist several market entry strategies, such as operating from the home country, going in alone, etc. Doug explains that HLG will form strategic alliances with well established local companies in the new markets that we enter. This is by far the most tried and tested strategy, and one that has the most chances of success.

Headway has already been made, with clear progress in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Bahrain. Doug has the heads of HLG business units in each of these countries reporting to him.

They are backed up by a support team based in Dubai, allowing the sharing of information and best practices. Doug explains, “This allows us to spread our expansion in a planned and organised manner over several markets. We need to begin the growth process from here (Dubai), then move businesses over to operate in their country, while providing centralised support”.

New markets are indeed something to be excited about. They come with their challenges, but provide a strong platform for organic growth. We wish Doug and his team all the best.

“We were the first construction company in the UAE to be have our quality management system independently certified way back in 1995,” shared the Chairman, Mr. Riad Sadik, with other company officials during the certificate handover ceremony.

Now, as Habtoor Leighton Group, we have taken another significant step on our journey to becoming the leading international diversified construction group in the Middle East and North Africa.


Soon after the formation of Habtoor Leighton Group it was recognized by the senior management team that in order manage the new company effectively and to gain a competitive business advantage it would be necessary to develop a new management system. Following extensive consultation with all the functional directors an integrated management system began to take shape and was deployed to each of the divisions and projects for implementation.

During two consecutive days in May, three auditors from SGS conducted the Stage 1 audit. Once the audit report was received and the findings of the audit were addressed by the QHSE Department and the auditees, a Stage 2 audit was arranged.

At the beginning of June SGS deployed seven auditors over a four day period for the Stage 2 audit. Constantly accompanied and guided by members of the QHSE Department, the audit team visited ten different work locations, throughout Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Qatar.

The result of the effort and commitment from the senior management, functional directors, project directors, the project teams and in particular the QHSE Department, was that all five of the business units audited were rewarded with certification in all three disciplines.

Having made this remarkable achievement we cannot rest on our laurels. These certificates are not a prize to hang on the wall, but a recognition of the first step on a commitment to continually improve on all aspects of our work. SGS will continue to audit our performance on a regular basis and will be expecting us to improve with each visit.
Creating a high performance zone is crucial for success. Under the sponsorship of the COO, Joe Dujmovic, a productivity framework has been developed for the workforce. The program intends to lift performance to optimum levels. A work group has been set up to address both worker and site management concerns and challenges.

The system devised addresses the basic principles and tenets of productivity that includes work hours, production targets, measurement statistics, and reward indices.

To understand and implement the system at sites, a forum for project directors and senior project managers was held. The forum addressed rate calculation, including target analysis and bottlenecks.

The productivity incentive structure was derived from pilot implementation and assessments held at several project sites across Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Whilst operational and system support will be provided by the Group, it is the responsibility of the project leaders to ensure its successful implementation at their respective project sites.

Enhancing productivity

Thomas McGuire explaining the concept of the new system to the participants of a recent productivity training event.
A group of HLG employees have become the first to complete a new training course designed to improve productivity across the business. HLG has successfully trained 15 site staff as Productivity Assessors, with many of them now operating on key HLG sites.

The training was delivered by Cameron Brooks, Manager Organizational Effectiveness, on the 6th and 7th of September as part of the Group’s recent drive to increase productivity across the business. The HLG Productivity Systems Assessor course covered elements including punctuality and break adherence, planning systems and tools, and effective supervision.

The purpose of the training is to spread understanding of the systems and behaviors that drive good productivity. While it’s not rocket science, implementing these systems requires discipline and persistence in order to achieve good results.

Cameron Brooks
Manager Organizational Effectiveness

Course participants were recently recognized for their efforts at an HLG head office lunch, which included awarding of certificates by Tom McGuire, Director of QHSE & Training. “I would like to congratulate the participants on completion of the HLG Productivity Systems Assessor course,” he said. “We need to encourage people to further develop themselves and acknowledge their efforts.”

The training was immediately put to good work through a series of Productivity Systems Audits carried out across four HLG sites. The selected sites 611, 609, 278, and 279, have all implemented productivity enhancement programs. “It was an excellent opportunity to use the knowledge we gained from the training,” said Rose Cueto, QA Engineer and part of the group trained.

Each site audited has developed an action plan to further improve performance. “These audits are not about finding fault,” said Cameron. Instead, we want to work with each site to help them solve problems as well as recognize the efforts they are making to maintain the disciplines and systems installed.” The people who attended the training and conducted audits included Moawya Hamdan, Jehad Salman, Adham Hamza, Tayyab J. Butt, Rosilita Cueto, Quennie Grace, John Arnal, Gerald Medina, Samer Masoud, Aboubaker Ahmed, Mohammed Shakeel, Abdul Khader, Mohammad Omar, Ashraf Akhan and Mohammed Mahdi.

The HLG Productivity Systems Assessor course is part of a much wider program to improve productivity within HLG. We have only scratched the surface and we can do much more in areas such as materials wastage, work methods, and plant utilization. Institutionalizing these systems through training is just the start of our journey.

Tom McGuire
QHSE and Training Director
Launch of the first phase of the new HLG Intranet

The Group’s formation two years ago brought together two distinct companies with highly varied processes and operating systems. Integration was a great challenge. Management agreed to develop a new intranet that would enable a cross corporate cultural integration platform and provide a central repository of corporate information.

The development of the intranet has been a shared activity between the IT and Systems department (infrastructure and technology management) and the Corporate Affairs department (information architecture and content management). The key objective was to create a single point of corporate information access across the Group and automate basic communication. Whilst getting complete online communications solutions will be a long-term effort, the first phase has been successfully delivered. It included the right technology and relevant functionalities. As a result the intranet was created from scratch on a new technology platform - Microsoft shared-point server. The illustrious project team consisting of both IT and Corporate Affairs team members worked for eight months to structure a process and system appropriate to the needs of the Group.

Each user on the Group’s active directory can easily access the intranet. Proactive hands-on efforts are in progress to ensure all users are transitioned into one single HLG active directory which is maintained by the company’s IT and Systems department where several specialist sub groups contributed in deploying & building each component. The intranet has several built-in functions and features that have been hidden until each section is well populated and the component owners take responsibility for maintenance. The intranet also has self personalization functions which means the homepage can be customized according to a user’s preference. Each web part on the homepage is moveable and a user has the choice of maintaining only those web parts that he frequently uses. The intranet may also be further expanded to incorporate one’s own internal corporate site. This may include developing an exclusive forum for members, corporate blogs, information libraries, asset manager etc.

“The most interesting functionality is enterprise collaboration where different systems like MS Exchange, MS Office, ERP, MSSQL server etc. provide selected streams of data to the intranet. Search options and workflow modules are very robust and these powerful modules are accompanied by a variety of customizable applications like employee directories, e-forms, a helpdesk, online suggestion schemes, online surveys, web mail, and discussion forums,” said Majid Bhatti, Team Leader (Automation), IT and Systems.

Our strong enterprise network and sophisticated infrastructure systems enabled a fast roll-out and necessary support system. We will continue to enrich and enhance the embedded technology. As a phase one roll-out we have established the system and enabled the technology, phase two will incorporate the development of sophisticated and advanced applications that would assist in automating processes. Intranet is now also available to everyone within the group and can also be accessed through secure authentication through the Internet (Extranet).

Naghman Rafique
IT and Systems Director

The Intranet Technical Team
Naghman Rafique (centre) along with Kamil Panna (right) and Majid Bhatti
There were several factors taken into consideration while assessing the required technology, undertaking a thorough scrutiny and assessment of the required functionalities, Microsoft’s share-point server was found to be the most suitable platform. This was the first time the Group requested such a detailed and advanced concept, and we therefore had to be very thorough in what we recommend it all had to fit in the existing infrastructure without any change in IT architecture.

Kamil Panna
IT Manager

With the Group’s new strategic plan and restructuring under progress, the corporate information and process components will be restructured in the second phase of development works. Every department communicates key information meant for business processes therefore the new intranet has been structured in a way to decentralize component information management. Currently very basic information has been migrated within the system with a view to update when the time was right.

Undoubtedly the current information architecture was a time consuming process and had several variables under consideration. However, with a new corporate plan in the pipeline, the current data will once again be refurbished to incorporate the new structural protocols. The ultimate goal is the development of a centralized data control and management system with decentralized components that can facilitate swift communication across the Group thereby fostering a sense of community.

Nisrine Khadra has been appointed as the content manager and is the point of contact for any issues related to the intranet, regardless of the concern relating to the content, the technology or the component. Nisrine is available at nisrine.khadra@hlg.ae.
The Future at Work

Thinkers forecast the next big moves.

Growth happens when we stretch ourselves. To understand what impacts employees the most and what must be done to make our work a more enjoyable experience, we conducted a small survey within the Group and spoke randomly to employees across different locations.

Q: What is your definition of an engaging culture that could be potentially absorbed within the Group?
A: I strongly feel that a happy person is a productive person. In our culture work should be allowed to involve fun, giving people a chance to let off steam, get creative and be happy.

Whilst there should be no compromise on the quality of work and creating milestones, I believe a certain degree of freedom must be given in order to let employees work in their own space and use their own initiatives. These flexibilities will of course be on the basis of a proven track record of the successful implementation and completion of tasks.

Kamal Aziz
Project Director, Site 276

Q: If there is one ongoing problem in your workplace that should be addressed in the future, what is it?
A: I think we should respect everyone, right from the superior, all the way to the subordinates, without discrimination. Everyone should be treated equally from top to bottom and be respected for their work and contributions.

Mark Webell
Project Manager, Site 279

Q: What kind of initiatives might be introduced to groom employees and engage top performers?
A: From what I have seen during my long time in the industry, creating an engaging culture of performance is all about employee pride, self-motivation, serving to make a difference, and investing one’s discretionary effort in an inspiring organizational vision. But once the goals and the vision are shared and communicated in a way that highlights how both parties will be able to reach their goals, only then will you have a fully engaged culture in place.

Ashraf Shibrawi
Government Affairs Head Office

Q: Can you imagine any tool that could reshape the workforce in a way that the email, intranet or internet has made work easier?
A: I always believe you have to connect the best of the past to the present and so create the future. History is important to people, giving them a sense of identity and
belonging. Tell stories about the history of the organization. Glorify heroes of the past who have embodied the corporate values. Tell stories of the present and link them to the past.

Have displays of older and iconic projects. Show photographs of founders and days of thunder.

Nizam A. Mustafa
Chief Accountant, Head Office

A: To become successful, maybe it would be helpful from the company if they give seminar handouts just to update us on the latest things going in the construction industry so we can learn more, and do more, and get a chance to become more senior.

Reynan Zuniga
QCMEP Engineer, 278

Q: What makes your work successful? And what skills will be the most useful in the coming times?

A: I base the success of my work on these three key factors, people going home without injury, seeing people work safely, and having the workforce at all levels feel comfortable about approaching safety team with regards to any safety issue whether negative or positive.

I am a firm believer that the most important skill is communication. As a business how we communicate to gain contracts, communicate with suppliers, sub-contractors, and of course our own employee’s is paramount to moving any company forward.

We should ensure that all personnel are trained correctly to communicate through the maze of cultural differences so they can be polite, honest, and speak with confidence about what they want done.

Our workforce at site level is the most important element of our business and we must ensure that the channels for communication are open in both directions so we be the leading player in this industry for the future.

Stephen Lapsley
Project Safety Manager, Site 276

A: To be successful you need good team work, you need to know how to take initiative, how to coordinate things, how to be practical in everything. Once you have all this, even with limited skills if you know how to deal with a team and arrange things within a team, you get a fine solution. But if you work individually, you will not get anywhere.

Dahouk Al Sbaiti
Sr. Architect, Site 278

A: In these times, the soft skills of emotional intelligence pay hard dividends. There is ample evidence linking emotional intelligence to effective leadership. Emotional intelligence is arguably the hottest topic in leadership development. Research shows how a lack of emotional intelligence underpins the most common reasons for career derailment. People are emotionally driven creatures. As a leader, emotions affect your own personal actions and the actions of those you lead.

Ayaz Mirza
Deputy Estimating Manager, Head office

A: Define both long-term and short-term measurable goals. Concentrate your efforts on the short-term goals. This can be measurable goals either weekly or monthly. The long-term goals will come. Measure everything. Anything with a response will measure your effectiveness. Develop a scorecard system that tracks your target goal versus what you’ve actually achieved.

Eman Al Ghoul
Junior Planning Engineer, Head Office

People are emotionally driven creatures. As a leader, emotions affect your own personal actions and the actions of those you lead.
Q: If you were given the chance to organize a team building activity, what kind of event would you plan and execute.

A: Team building events spread a specific message. In the next team building event I would love to see the sequential pictures story challenge.

A group tries to create a unified story from a set sequential picture. The pictures are randomly ordered and handed out. Each person has a picture but cannot show it to others.

This game requires patience, communication, and an effort in trying to understand the other person’s point of view in order to recreate the story’s sequence. In essence, it would help create and develop an understanding of other people’s perspectives.

Michael Assad
PR & Events Executive, Head Office

Q: What kind of initiatives might be introduced to groom employees and engage top performers?

A: I believe no one can, or should, promise employees an excellent, personally sensitive and caring boss, friendly colleagues, adequate resources and meaningful work all of the time.

Instead leaders must offer people a chance to make their own difference in the service of worthy business goals. Companies often miss the point of employee motivation by trying to create “great places to work”.

Reynaline Jultongbayan
Leighton HR

A: The most successful organizations are the ones that actively encourage employees to take initiative. The key, is training all employees to think and act in ways that add value to both our future and to our bottom lines.

These are aligned goals. Meaningful work occurs when workers harness their strengths, interests and creativity to create real value. When that happens, a culture of engagement is formed, in which innovation thrives and people do amazing things no matter what.

Mridul Eranezhath
HR Executive, Head office

Q: If there is one ongoing problem in your workplace that should be addressed in the future, what is it? What kind of initiatives might be introduced to groom employees and engage top performances?

A: People need to be more organised and foresee tentative issues. They should prepare in advance or engage answers. For example if you knew in 12 week’s time you would be confronted with a specific situation, then it would benefit everyone to sit down and talk about it and reach a consensus.

Rather than everyone going forth with their own last moment solutions. You’re better to have five people’s opinions and have options to discuss, rather than to have one answer at the last minute causing confusion and disarray.

If you make people responsible and accountable for issues they will inevitably take it personally and come up own the problem therefore provide us with better solutions. There may be initial hitches in
coordination issues, but in the long run we will learn to come up with solutions as a team, as well as training people to think in advance and outside of the box.

Shaun Evans
Construction Manager, Site 279

A: One of the frequent problems that I see and feel is the attendance tracking and reporting at site, especially when someone takes a vacation. Normally when one goes on leave and returns, his time sheets are being processed.

Our current system checks manpower availability on a weekly basis. But the time keepers check it on a daily basis, and I am not sure how they are reporting or logging that information.

There is something amiss so I would like our time attendance system to be more structured.

Quennie Satmiento
Production Engineer, Site 276

Can you imagine any tool that could reshape the workforce in a way that the email, intranet, or internet has made work easier?

A: I cannot imagine a new tool, but I can imagine the benefits of the current ones if everyone was able to use them. If with the advancements of technology, we can take away the current obstacles of expensive equipment and incompatibility of devices and geographical and physical limitations, the benefits would be enormous.

Adnan Bhatti
Clerk, IT Department, Head Office

We would also like to implement paper recycling. This will also help not only in the company but also in global warming. Being in the construction industry and constructing all these buildings it will also be good to contribute care towards our environment.

We would also like to implement paper recycling. This will also help not only in the company but also in global warming. Being in the construction industry and constructing all these buildings it will also be good to contribute care towards our environment.

Shadha Banat
Asst. IT Support Specialist, IT Department, Head Office

A: Nowadays, inboxes are always full, we are all flooded with numerous junk emails, which make it easy for us to miss out or forget an important company announcement sent to our inbox. Recent techniques to communicate with include; interactive screensavers, scrolling newsfeeds, desktop alerts, user generated e-mags, pop-up staff quizzes and surveys, employee blogs, discussion forums and helpdesks.

Dahouk Al Sbaiti
Sr. Architect, Site 278

People need to be more planned and foresee tentative issues. They should prepare in advance or engage answers.

IN AND AROUND HLG

Mridul Eranezhath Shaun Evans Quennie Satmiento Adnan Bhatti Shadha Banat
The UAE’s young design talent was put to the test by Al Habtoor ISG at INDEX, the Middle East’s largest interior design show. Every day, two teams of six students, each student representing a different university, worked on designing innovative furniture. The young minds worked on the design from 11am till 8pm, toured the exhibition to look for inspiration, and presented their designs through the use of sketches and models.

Al Habtoor ISG supported design non-profit TASMENA, and the Dubai Autism Centre, in working with the students to design a chair for autistic children – the 3rd challenge. Taking guidance from experts on autism, the students worked on impressive designs with soft surfaces and blunt edges. Amal Mohammed Al Marri, a student involved said, “We had to first understand the special requirements of an autistic child, and then use our collective design skills to reach a solution. I thoroughly enjoyed the process”.

On the final day, the winners were judged by a team of judges. Alan McCready, Managing Director of Al Habtoor ISG, and one of the judges, noted, “It was very tough to make a decision. We have sponsored the Student Design Challenge at INDEX for many years now, and I hope these creative designs will be put to use in the future”.}

TASMENA and the Dubai Autism Centre
A Day in the Life of Domingo Saba
Crane Operator, Site 278

A view from the top is probably an ambition many people aspire for. Domingo Saba is the crane operator at site 278. He shares his experiences and aspirations in this column.

Q: What was your first job and how long have you been a crane operator?
I was a carpenter prior to becoming a crane operator. However I took on this role as I always wanted to control huge vehicles. So I trained and have been a crane operator for the last 3 years.

Q: What kind of training did you undergo to learn the skills of controlling the crane?
Firstly you should not be afraid of heights. The key is to understand the control panels and how they work. After learning the control in the crane cabin, under safe working conditions I was made to practice. I steered it forward, backward and turning the boom round. You also need to recognize the functions of limit switches and must be fully familiar with the banksman signals. After great practice I learnt most of the requirements and passed the assessment.

Q: What time do you get to work and how would you describe a typical day at the site?
I start at six in the morning for the day shift and work for 10 hours a day on an average. A crane operator once in the control cabin cannot come down as it is very high and not practical. I only come down for my lunch break or emergencies. I work everyday on a routine basis. However, if we have bad weather or heavy wind and rains the work stops for safety reasons.

Q: What has been the highest elevation of a crane that you controlled and how was that experience?
The highest has been 150 meters, which was an externally fixed crane. I have also worked on internally installed FM cranes. Up here you have the best view in town, which at times is breathtaking.

Q: Do you enjoy your work?
The job provides the livelihood for me and my family, so I enjoy it very much.

Q: If you were given the chance to change your vocation what would that be?
For now I cannot imagine being in another vocation but if I had to, I would have liked to be a safety officer at site.

Q: Where are you from? And what aspirations do you have for yourself?
I am from the Philippines and I hope one day to bring my family over to live with me here in the UAE.
Events and Happenings

CEO Awards

In a surprise announcement by CEO Middle East Magazine, an ITP publication, the Group Chairman Riad T. Al Sadik was awarded the CEO of the Year – Construction award in the CEO Middle East Awards 2009.

With 40 progressive years in the region, Riad has taken the company from a small business set-up to a full blown construction conglomerate that built the world renowned Burj Al Arab, a landmark of Dubai. With a project portfolio of more than 200 projects and a staff size in excess of 35,000 today – the achievement is by all means a historical feat and definitely one to be recognised and relished.

Laurie Voyer, Managing Director HLG accepted the award on his behalf in a glittering ceremony organised at the Grosvenor House, Dubai.

Hosting the Build Safe UAE Member’s Forum

To strengthen and reaffirm our commitment to a safe and healthy working climate, HLG hosted the recent Build Safe UAE members meeting at the Al Habtoor Leighton Group’s Employee Education and Training School. Members of Build Safe from across the region attended the session and shared valuable ideas and solutions to address the growing health and safety concerns. HLG has an overriding aim to be a champion of a zero harm working culture and strives to become a leader in safety.
Diabetes Awareness Campaign

Diabetes is a condition in which the body does not produce or properly use insulin. Insulin is a hormone that is needed to convert sugar, starch and other food into energy needed for daily life.

The cause of diabetes continues to be a mystery, although both genetics and environmental factors such as obesity and lack of exercise appear to play a role in its onset. As part of its ongoing CSR initiatives, the Al Habtoor Leighton Group took up the cause by teaming up with the UAE Ministry of Health, ExHealth and Green Crescent officials.

As part of a nationwide campaign to better understand diabetes, from October 15th to November 14th, HLG organized a free diabetes check-up which consisted of taking employees’ blood sugar levels, blood pressure and calculating their Body Mass Index (BMI) at our head office in Dubai.

In association with the UAE Ministry of Health, Doctors and officials from the UAE Green Crescent were present to provide information on diabetes, as well as to test participants. They also informed the participants of any risks that they might have towards this condition, and recommend preventive and proactive measures.

All employees from most departments participated in the event, and got to have a better understanding of their physical condition and that steps they will have to take in order to best manage their physical condition. While most were happy with their test results, some were advised by the medical team to start exercising, reduce their sugar intake as well as to consult medical officials.

A visit from Estonian Delegates

The region’s impressive projects and construction portfolio never fails to attract visitors across the globe. Recently HLG entertained Estonian delegates from the UAE Society of Engineers. A total of 18 members, the delegates hailed from various disciplines of construction, engineering, and architecture. The Planning Director, Jafar Khair, gave a presentation on the nature of construction in the region, value engineering, and technology platforms in use, with specific reference to HLG’s iconic milestones. They also visited two of HLG’s projects – JAFZA Convention Centre in Jebel Ali and the iconic Iris Bay.
Gatherings and Get-togethers

The year witnessed several get-togethers and festive gatherings where management and staff joined each other in light celebrations. These included Iftars in Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Qatar. They were attended by employees across all levels.

1. Riad T. Sadik, Chairman of Al Habtoor Leighton Group attending the Iftar gathering in Dubai

2. Laurie Voyeur, Graeme Dunn and other senior management attending the Abu Dhabi Iftar

3. Nigel Poole with senior staff and family members

4. Nigel Poole, Tony Saadie, Wafeeq Marouf and Dale Burtenshaw at the Doha gathering

5. Jafar Khair, Muhammed Sadik with staff and guests at the Abu Dhabi Iftar

6. Attendees enjoying the festivities at the Abu Dhabi Iftar

7. Guests and staff at the Doha Iftar

8. Senior management in discussion during the Abu Dhabi Iftar

9. The illustrious HR & Administration team at the Dubai Iftar
Long Term Service Award

As part of Al Habtoor Leighton Group’s culture, our employees have always been our greatest assets.

Each retiring employee is presented a long term service certificate and a token of appreciation as a souvenir.

This time we say farewell to Peter Wilfred who has been working with the Group for over 34 years as a Senior Land Surveyor.

Colleagues like Peter, throughout their tenure have always been fully committed in helping the Group reach its goals and are an inspiration to the rest of us.

New Joiners

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<th>Douglas Watkinson</th>
<th>Stanislav Rassokha</th>
<th>Yousef Subhi Hasan Nasrallah</th>
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<td>General Manager</td>
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Embrace Arabia

A cultural awareness session was organised for the senior managers in Abu Dhabi. Ali Alsaloem the well-known columnist of “Ask Ali” fame was invited to conduct the session. Ali runs his own set-up known as Embrace Arabia. Through this medium, he conducts Arabic cultural awareness for most of the International organisations or public corporates that employ huge numbers of expatriates. A very enlightening and enriching experience for all managers who attended the program, HLG hopes to organise more sessions across its offices in Abu Dhabi and Dubai.
Since times immemorial it has been a proven fact that self-value and self-belief carve a road map for the future. Henry Ford, the renowned carmaker once said “If you think you can, you’re right. If you think you can’t, you’re right.” Thoughts like these inadvertently shape where you are going and how you will reach your destination.

All of us will probably have an anecdote to share as the catalyst in reaching where we are today, consisting of either instant successes or delayed success stories. Successes that helped us reach our goals, and failures that provided a learning experience. Both probably had one thing in common - a gut feeling that was either listened to or ignored. Instincts as great guiding forces have the power to lead you to the best decision in the given circumstances. But often we tend to ignore them, and use our reasoning skills to analyse a possible course of action, overlooking the fact that we are conditioning and cannibalising our minds to see what we want to see, and not what actually is.

However, a belief and trust in oneself involuntarily has the power to move the mind to the right decision. Sir Richard Branson has attributed his success to hard work, belief in his business ventures, and a willingness to take risks. These risks have included starting a business on borrowed capital and taking risks in business where the potential losses were huge. However it was self-belief that made it possible to take those risks.

“It is the lack of faith that makes people afraid of meeting challenges, and I believe in myself” - these words were said by Muhammad Ali, legendary boxer of the yesteryears, but they sum up the essence of what makes any person able to reach his goals in life. We must learn to sow and cultivate self-belief if we wish to achieve the harvest of our dreams. Carve your own path and diligently follow your lead, give your best and remain focused. Success cannot be far behind.

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