
JANUARY 2020

Building Vision

Market insight to help your business thrive

The logo for Morris & Spottiswood, featuring the company name in white lowercase letters on a blue square background.

Welcome to our latest communication. Building Vision aims to engage you with useful content, creating conversation and collaboration as we navigate our way through the months ahead. We would love to hear what is affecting your business, to open debate and provide solutions as we move forward.

AIM HIGH

Shifts in Private Sector Procurement

By Pete Dennis – Director

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As I sit to write this article, three thoughts immediately sprung to mind:

1. I have lost count of the businesses that have gone this year alone and I know from talking with pan-industry experts, there remain many hanging on by the barest of threads. And here we are again, as we start a New Year, with people facing the most difficult personal circumstances.



2. Strangely, my thoughts then went back some 30 years to when I was doing my plumbing apprenticeship. Fresh out of school I soon learnt there was a very big world out there. But I also saw first-hand what it takes to deliver a project – the people,

coordination, the skills, the teamwork.

3. This then made me contemplate on how we really do seem to have lost our compass as an industry. What we do is complex, yet we allow ourselves and allow others to sometimes dumb it down. We resort to price-cutting because much of the industry and many clients continue to believe that lowest cost is best.



Part of this problem is a pervading under-current that there remain contractors who will “try it on” compounded by an unregulated entry to the industry – just about anybody can profess to be a builder. But, when you listen to the news, every industry, every profession has “rogues”. What makes construction different?

Whilst there will always be many parts to this equation, my thoughts went immediately to a simple fact – we have lost our [pride](#) as an industry. We have allowed the attitude of “that’s what is always done” to override the quality of what we do every day. We allow H&S to become an approach of “what can I get away with” rather than “how do I keep myself and my co-workers safe today”.

It’s easy therefore, to see why procurement and delivery strategies are changing, you simply need to step outside of the construction world and put yourselves in your client’s shoes. The client’s customer journey, from inception and feasibility through to design, procurement, delivery and close-out, and the complexity of options, processes, and demands of stakeholders would make anyone’s nose bleed. More clients than ever are also not from a construction background, making the need to change even more pertinent.

How should we respond to this? Through being curious. We need to look, listen, understand and build on the core skills our industry has prided itself on for generations. In order to drive “best cost” and “value-added solutions”, we need to put aside the wrong behaviours and look back at the respective Construction Reviews (they have all said and recommended the same needs, yet we continually ignore / disregard the facts).

Morris & Spottiswood have spent a lot of time in recent months trying to decipher the variables relating to excellent delivery and value-add. The answer is complex, but, when we were involved at the very early stages of the project, or part of a Supplier Led Delivery team - the client was delighted.

This fact aligns with the changing environment of procurement. Each client's procurement strategy will be dependent on the peculiarities of the project in hand, but in recent months, we have seen a shift in client sentiment. Clients are currently less likely than ever to want to deal with a cast of thousands, complex tender processes and stakeholders everywhere – they want us to take more ownership and responsibility meaning that they have to deal with less people, have a simpler and quicker process to manage, have more cost certainty and less risk.

Perhaps this mirrors market uncertainties? Perhaps clients have realised that it is a bit of an urban myth that a one-stage tender provides cost certainty? Whatever the reason, we are experiencing that where our clients involve us from the beginning, through framework allocations, two-stage tenders, direct negotiated works where we have early involvement or D&B projects, it works. It works for our clients, it works for consultants and it works for us.

Supplier Led Delivery embraces all of these points. It allows clients to use their framework specialists (contractor and consultant teams) to act as a unified project delivery team - a team all working to deliver in the best and most efficient way, driving continuous improvement, standing and falling together to create the best outcome for the client.

Supplier Led Delivery puts aside traditional mindsets of “consultant” and “contractor”, it puts aside ego and individuals, it puts trust and collaboration at the very fore of every decision, action and interaction. It demands the baton to be passed to the most suitable construction professional, irrespective of role, employer, job title and with no agenda attached.

It works because our industry has vast experience that, when put together, becomes an unstoppable force. We live and breathe project cost and design management, every second of every day. We all deal with the reality of bad design at the coal face and pay the consequences for poor cost and programme management.

We know that Supplier Led Delivery works. It is a model that works successfully in many other countries around the globe; it drives out conflict and inefficiencies; it drives the right culture and behaviour; it seeks to deliver for our clients.

This not only serves the customer and improves efficiencies for us; it contributes to the construction industry as a whole. Working together for the client, SLD solutions create new best practice, process and techniques that will lower costs and improve safety, quality and sustainability across the industry.

At Morris & Spottiswood our clients come first. We seek to add value every step of the way. We are delighted with the changes we are seeing, allowing us to use our experience to provide the best outcomes for each project we deliver.

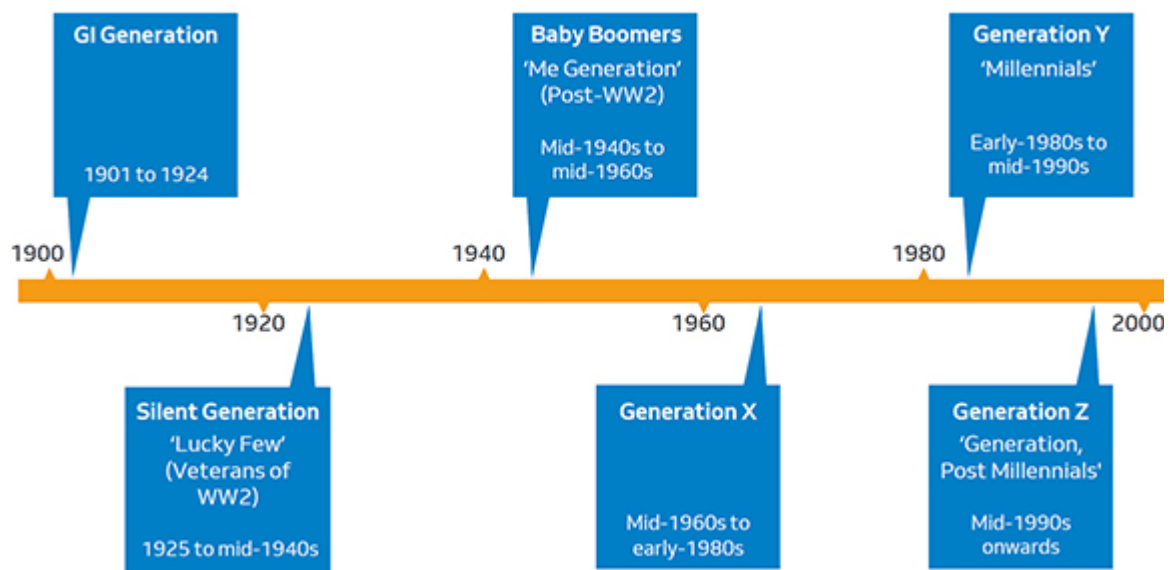
ACT RESPONSIBLY

Is Greta Thunberg correct - are we betraying the next generation?

By Viv Sutherland – Strategic Development Director

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There are many aspects of the next generation that I love, and in my view, I'm not entirely sure that they get the credit that they deserve. They are unshackling themselves from labels and stereotypes that damaged and limited the older generations, and whilst no generation is perfect, in my view they are the first generation that are simply not that fussed about your sexuality or the colour of your skin, they judge people based on behaviours rather than outdated social rules and values. I am not sure there has ever been a larger social polarisation in relation to social acceptance, than that between millennials and their grandparents in the Silent generation (veterans of WW2).

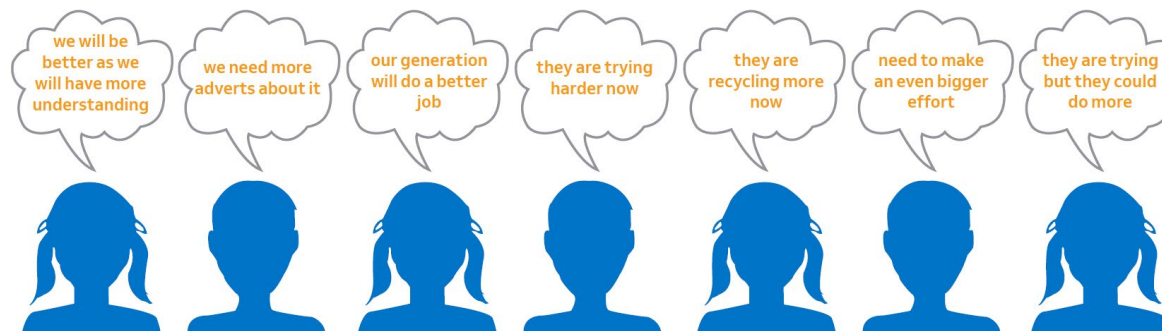


However, whilst I feel pride towards the generation behind me, I'm sure they don't feel the same about the generations that preceded them. You only need to listen to Greta Thunberg's

incredible speech at the UN climate summit to realise their depth of feeling [Greta Thunberg](#) - [You have stolen my childhood](#). They are unhappy about our willingness to accept the scale of damage that has been created, and the urgency and speed required to force change to save our natural habitat and way of life.

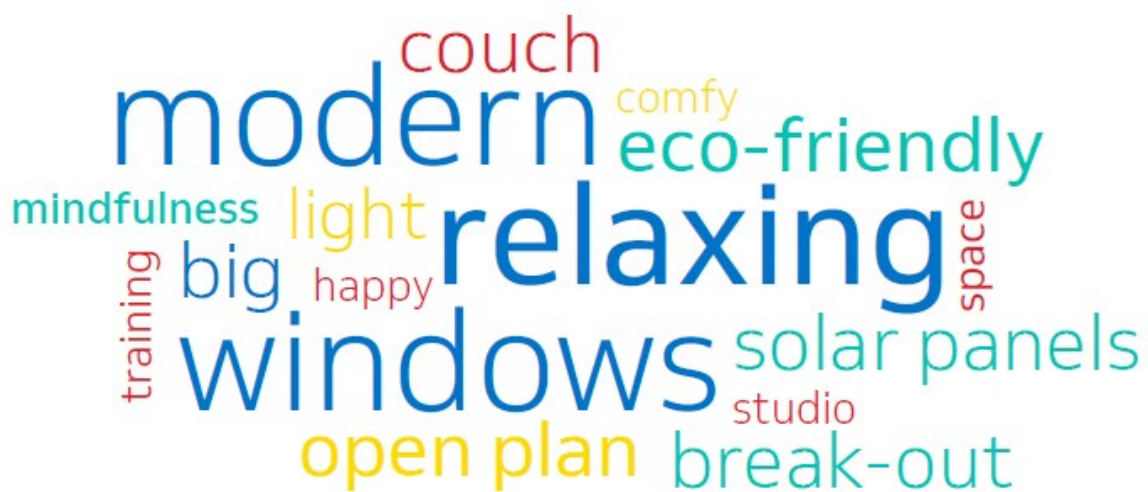
But, do the next generation really think that badly of us? To find out we engaged with a class of 11-year-olds at Cowdenbeath Primary School to understand if they really do think we're not doing enough to protect their planet:

Feedback from Cowdenbeath Primary School



There is no doubt that we need to try harder, whatever we think we are doing, it clearly isn't enough. The future generations are struggling to forgive us for the health of the planet they are set to inherit.

We also thought it would be fun to ask the class what working environment they want - How do they visualise their future workplace? What would attract them? As the feedback below shows, if we want to attract this generation we need to perhaps reprioritise and plan space that aligns to body, soul and conscience.



So, what can we do to meet the demands of the future generations?

First thing on the agenda needs to be your Sustainability Strategy

If you think of Corporate Social Responsibility as a tick-box exercise, not only do you need to click the link to Greta's speech and take a listen, you are also missing a trick. CSR is a pivotal strategic requirement to ensure you are futureproofing your business. Sustainability touches everything you do – from client and staff engagement to profitability, efficiency, process, supply chain management, policy. The list goes on. A clear strategy with sound foundations, measurements, targets and goals not only recalibrates your way of thinking, it also provides a framework to create a business that is fit for the future – hopefully thriving, not just surviving. And, one in which Generation Z will want to work for.

Innovation & Leadership is a Morris & Spottiswood Corporate Business Goal

Without innovation and leadership that prioritises and invests, as a business you run the very real danger of simply being left behind, and not meeting the needs of your clients, your staff and the community around you. We are currently investing heavily in Mechanical & Electrical Engineering, prefabrication and modularisation - an area inextricably linked with sustainability. We want to drive quality, save time, improve safety and design, reduce cost and hit our sustainability targets. It takes investment, time, effort and vision, but is an initiative that meets the needs of our clients and the demands of future generations.

Training and Developing the Next Generation

One of the most obvious ways to meet the demands of the next generation, is to engage with them and bring them into the team. Our construction ambassadors engage with people of all ages, but particularly school leavers to encourage them into the industry. We support study for formal qualifications (both academic and to support health and well-being), developmental experience, work experience, university placements and mentoring. Learning and development is encouraged for everyone at every level to enhance skills, quality of life, talent and potential. But most importantly, the next generation, who prioritise sustainability, can bring energy, urgency and new ideas to the table.

In the here and now, we need to change our behaviours and lead by example. From Skyping, rather than travelling, and maximising sustainable design solutions at work, to remembering to switch your computer monitor off at night, and bring in your reusable water bottle in the morning.

So, Greta and Primary 7 Cowdenbeath Primary School, thank you for keeping us on our toes and laying down the gauntlet. At Morris & Spottiswood, we are listening, and we are acting with sustainability high on our agenda.

RoSPA Accreditation

Our Scottish offices, Edinburgh and Glasgow, have retained their Gold Award status for our health and safety performance in last year's internationally-renowned RoSPA Health and Safety Awards. This follows our Leeds and Warrington offices who also received their Gold Award in summer. This is in recognition of our commitment to raising Health and Safety standards, and rings true to our values of [Aim High](#), [Act Responsibly](#) and [Value People](#).

Charity Events



We were ranked in the **top 3%** out of a staggering 71,411 fundraisers on JustGiving in September. Together, our sponsored Snowdon hill walk, our Glasgow 10k and 207-mile cycle raised **£5,961.72**. We want to thank our staff who took time to make a difference on behalf of the [British Heart Foundation](#), [Glasgow Children's Hospital Charity](#) and [Mates in Mind](#).

Staff at our Glasgow office hosted a coffee and cake day in September which raised **£300** for the [Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation](#) - a great charity whom we provided some office space for following water damage and repair to their Glasgow office. Our Warrington office also hosted a [Macmillan Cancer Support](#) Coffee Morning which raised **£210** for the charity. We want to thank all of our staff who took the time to arrange these charity events.

VALUE PEOPLE

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Brian McCann
Senior Contracts Manager
Frameworks Division

THURSDAY

5am

Morning alarm goes off.

5:40am

Drive to the Edinburgh office with my Amazon music playlist in the background.

6:45am

Morning gym session with colleague Barry including circuits and cross fit, followed by porridge for breakfast.

8am

Daily stand up. A daily review to discuss what the team did yesterday and what we will do today across the Framework.

8:30am

Weekly conference call with internal M&S team to review / plan for the upcoming week. I then review emails and catch up on all correspondence and work through required actions.

10am

Resource call to review live and upcoming projects within the Frameworks team to confirm resource. I then resume working through outstanding actions.

12:30pm

Weekly touch point call with client Project Manager.

1pm



Grab lunch with whatever I've prepped from the night before, followed by reviewing previous actions and minutes prior to afternoon meetings.

1:45pm

Site visits and health and safety inspections.

2:30pm

Projects review and update. Weekly call with subcontractors to review project status.

3:30pm

M&S Touchpoint Call. Monthly review call with client for general feedback on performance.

4pm

Further catch up calls including a call with Frameworks Site Managers and Contracts Managers to review project status and discuss Top 3 Shared Learnings from the week.

4:30pm

Daily debrief. 30 minutes to review actions and to do list before catching up on all correspondence and working through outstanding actions.

6pm-ish

Leave office and head home to catch up with my better half, followed by homework with the kids before putting them to bed.

8:30pm

Dinner, chores, prep kids' stuff for tomorrow and wind-down before hitting the hay.

Why are we supporting Mental Health?

By Susan Hughes – HR
Manager

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At Morris & Spottiswood, safety is our number one priority; which aligns to our values of **Aim High**, **Act Responsibly** and **Value People**. In the construction industry, physical health and safety is already taken extremely seriously. At a time where suicide kills more people in the construction industry than falls from height, it is only right that mental health and safety is given the same level of attention. As a result, we have made significant investment into mental health support to provide the same level of protection to our workforce.

Construction can be a rewarding and varied industry to work in. But it's also one where pressures can be high, and people can be more likely than average to experience work-related stress and other mental health issues. Demanding working hours, working away from home, and deadline driven work can place pressure on our people. We also work in an industry that is male dominated. The "tough guy" image means asking for help and opening up about emotions don't always come naturally.

To tackle this, we recognised that leaders and managers play a vital role in reducing the stigma of mental health in our workplace. Our goal was to ensure our teams feel confident and assured that they can 'open-up' when they may feel that they are struggling. We have utilised various communications and initiatives to promote mental health. These include communication around key mental health events, emails, posters and toolbox talks. Additionally, as well as the **53** employees trained as Mental Health First Aiders, a further **120** staff have received mental health awareness training in the last year. We have more Mental Health First Aid training scheduled for January 2020.



We are proud to be working with Mates in Mind - a charity dedicated to promoting positive mental wellbeing in construction. As part of our overall Wellbeing plan, we are establishing a Wellbeing Working group to focus on the key challenges in our business; our culture, internal communications, stress at work and building resilience. This group consists of senior leaders and managers across our business. It's important that our employees believe we have a sincere interest in their wellbeing. That we talk the talk and walk the walk with mental health and wellbeing support across our business. This is not about a poster campaign to make us look good externally, we will drive an ongoing campaign to ensure all of our employees feel they can raise issues at any time and lean on our managers for support.

We want to continue our drive to site-based teams, ensuring mental health is a regular feature in toolbox talks. Further training is planned for our Supervisors on site to ensure we have a cross-section of our business training in listening and signposting mental health support. We are routinely monitoring employee mental health and wellbeing via employee surveys and absence monitoring, continually looking at ways to provide a positive working environment. This is most definitely a journey to developing better mental health in our business, but we feel confident we are on the right path to supporting our employees.

Securing Degree Apprenticeships



With the aim of promoting the construction industry to future generations, we were delighted to partner with Cardinal Newman College who were looking for a local contractor in relation to degree apprenticeships and work experience placements. Some of our senior team, including [Kevin Harnick](#), [Ian Fowler](#) and [Rachel Sutcliffe](#), led a recruitment day which involved setting capability tasks for students. On the back of this, we offered four summer placements across both Quantity Surveying and Construction Management and have since secured two lucky individuals with degree apprenticeships. A further Meet the Employer took place in October with a view to going through the

same process again next summer. Our Degree Apprenticeships, that form part of our Learning Academy, consist of day release at Salford University as well as an APC Chartered Surveying qualification with the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors.

Q. What have you enjoyed whilst being at Morris & Spottiswood?

George Gaffing

Trainee Quantity Surveyor

I have been at Morris & Spottiswood for 4 months, and even in this short time I have learnt and enjoyed many new things. I visit sites regularly and witness jobs from start to finish. I have been learning how jobs are priced and about the different required stages before work can start. Throughout my time, I have travelled around the UK including a trip to Edinburgh and Blackpool where I have networked with various sub-contractors.



Sophie Bashall

Trainee Contracts Manager



In the short time I have been with Morris & Spottiswood I have visited sites in Birmingham and Wigan. I have also visited the Edinburgh office to take part in a workshop introducing new schemes and programmes. The workshop focused on the organisation's direction for the future which further expanded my knowledge of business activity. The friendly and welcoming environment most certainly settled me in faster than anticipated, with staff activities and outings being a great bonus.

Visit our website here:

<https://www.morrisandspottiswood.co.uk/>

View our corporate video here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1opbkV27fJY>

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