

Apart from the emphasis on co-operation and win-win solutions, the outstanding feature of this attitude, as it is found in the industry, is its defensiveness; however integrative individuals might be, they are forced to recognize the threat posed to their approach by the existence of the distributive attitude.

Integrative contractors

Our research has identified two types of integrative contractor – the views of both may be summarized as follows. The aims relating to any project are to do a good job, on time and at contract price. The best way to achieve this is through developing co-operative relationships with the client, which contribute to a more pleasant and efficient working relationship. Nevertheless, profitability is an issue of survival and where it is threatened, overshadows other considerations. Integrative contractors will try to avoid unprofitable contract prices, but may be forced by competition to become claims conscious.

Integrative contractors' engineers

Integrative economic attitudes among contractor's engineers have the following four characteristics: an interpretation of engineers' occupational rights such that they encompass economic issues; feeling that engineers' occupational rights are diminished by the claims culture; a contemptuous attitude to quantity surveyors; a defensiveness regarding clients' attitudes.

Contractors' engineers who express an integrative attitude to the economic order tend to have a wide interpretation of an engineer's competence and responsibility to encompass the control of costs. This is exemplified in the expression: 'an engineer is someone who can build for ten pounds what any damn fool can build for a hundred'. Economically integrative engineers can also tend to be idealistic, wishing to see an end to the claims culture, which they perceive as interfering with the effectiveness of the construction process. This feature is closely connected to their professional rivalry with quantity surveyors.

However, this integrative attitude among contractors' engineers is severely constrained by practical concerns. Short-term profit is an overriding factor. Two factors determine this outlook, the need for project managers to show a profit on each project and the need for companies to show a positive return to stockholders. As one integrative engineer put it: 'If you get to the end of a job and you've made a loss, you look at bloody everything, to see if there are any commercial opportunities you've missed'.

Customer-centred managers

Some managers in contracting, at all levels from site engineers to directors, see a prime objective as being to 'get along with the client'. Indeed, some speak of their ability to foster good relations with the client as the key feature of their role. However, the important thing to note

about this attitude is that, unlike that of the integrative engineer described above, it is fundamentally conservative; it is complementary to, rather than opposed to, the distributive attitude. These customer-centred managers accept the necessity for claims and see their role as being to manage the tensions created by them.

Integrative clients

Integrative attitudes among clients' representatives were more difficult to uncover. Some spoke of having sympathy for the contractors' problems, but it was not clear whether this had an effect on their practice. However, some expressed the opinion that contractors' profitability is essential to the health of the project and to the industry as a whole and that fair-minded contractors will act in a reasonable manner, if they are treated fairly. Nevertheless, this tended to be qualified by the observation that many contractors will attempt to 'put one over' on the client and this possibility must be guarded against.

Examples were found where integrative attitudes were expressed on both sides of negotiations and, although the inevitable consequences of the claims culture played themselves out, the participants performed their parts with good will and humour. In these cases, it was the integrative interpersonal skills exhibited by project participants that made the project successful despite the claims.

Distributive attitudes to the occupational order

Although economic attitudes are central to the claims culture, occupational attitudes, particularly distributive ones, are also relevant. In particular, the following should be noted:

- Economically integrative engineers regularly display distributive attitudes to other professions, particularly QSs.
- Site engineers often resent non-site personnel. Often, integrative attitudes will predominate between contractors and client's engineers on site, while distributive imperatives are begrudgingly accepted from the 'desk jockeys' at head office. In this way, site engineers can work amicably together, while attributing blame for contractual difficulties to others.

An integrative attitude to the occupational order?

An integrative attitude to the occupational order was rarely observed. However, this may be because such attitudes are so fundamental to the occupational order as to be invisible. It is expected that a closer analysis of the data will reveal subtle indications of such attitudes.