

SPEC FINISH

FIS

The magazine of FIS
representing the finishes
and interiors sector

www.thefis.org



A TRUE LEGEND, EDDIE MCELHINNEY

Skills:

Revolutionarily thinking to the recruitment challenge

Educational:

What is Threads and should you be using it?

Sustainability:

Modern Slavery in the construction industry

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INSURANCE... ARE THEY TAKING THE P'S?

The expected consultation on secondary regulation to support the implementation of the Building Safety Act did not arrive before the summer recess of Parliament. Despite this, the Building Safety Regulator (BSR) remains (at the time of writing) committed to pressing ahead with the new Gateways in October.

THE Infrastructure and Projects Authority in its Annual Report gave an amber warning about the readiness of the BSR and I think we would be hard-pressed to give more to the industry. There were teething issues and problems at Gateway One; Gateway Two is more complex and there is less clarity about what good looks like, so delays are inevitable. That said, the fundamentals of compliance haven't really changed and FIS has steadfastly focussed on its "the three P's" Product Process People framework, zoning in on gaps in evidence and common compliance concerns, competency and unpicking the golden thread with digital information.

There are positive signs. I am certainly experiencing greater collaboration in our sector (Covid-19 aside) and I believe things are starting to fall into place. But there is another P that continues to undermine best efforts – Procurement. Procurement teams just don't seem to have gotten the memo that change is required!

Three key conclusions from the research FIS commissioned with the University of Reading are:

- Contractors suffer from regressive procurement practices and poor practices in terms of payments and retentions.
- Risk dumping is widely implemented through the inclusion of onerous clauses in supposedly 'standard' forms of contract. Indeed, the very concept of a standard form of contract is to all extents and purposes almost dead.

- The result is that too often contractual risk is being assigned to relatively under-capitalised subcontractors. Such firms are ill-placed to carry the associated liabilities and often lack the necessary professional indemnity insurance.

And if we are honest progress here is slow. Despite the RIBA Plan of Works recognising the vital role of specialists in the design development process and a fundamental need to focus buildability that has routinely tripped up construction and necessitated the "site fix", I still routinely hear in meetings "that can't work, because that is not how we procure construction". This will be a big problem at Gateway Two. Building Control will be looking for developed designs and clear programmes including competency matrices. It is hard to see how projects will make it through Gateway Two to construction if critical details like internal wall systems are not fully detailed and the supply chain is not appointed.

Beyond Gateway delays (which will only impact higher risk buildings) procurement is limiting the change we need to see in insurance. Insurance reform could help to accelerate transformation across the market, but again little change is evident. I now believe the Professional Indemnity market is broken, I certainly believe it is not fit-for-purpose, but apparently one of the reasons we can't adopt a more warranty or project-based approach is that the project team would



IAIN MCILWEE
Chief executive
Finishes and
Interiors Sector

have to be assembled far earlier... and "that is not how we procure construction".

Project insurance leans on different and in my opinion better contracts that manage collective responsibility (much more in keeping with the accountability aspects of the Building Safety Act). But rather than assemble project teams well in advance and work out how we manage fluid start dates, apparently, it is easier to carry on with everybody paying for indemnity insurance which actually adds to the confusion about who is responsible for what.

Apparently, project insurance is expensive, but I question whether it really is more expensive than the overlapping cover we are all paying for. I am convinced project insurance would be cheaper if you take into account the sham that is standard contracts, which necessitates us paying lawyers to write complex schedules of amendments that we need to pay lawyers to explain and ultimately in all the confusion creates disputes which are settled by lawyers!

Welcome

SPEC FINISH

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Eddie McElhinney during SAS motor racing years

SpecFinish magazine wrapper

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WELCOME

TO THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE OF SPECFINISH

When I started to write this introduction, the schools were out for the summer and lots of excited people were looking forward to their summer breaks.

A break can mean different things to different people. From making memories with family, to experiencing different cultures or just having time to themselves. For many, myself included, it enables escaping from the norm, the pressures of work, and of course; relaxing, recuperating, and generally having some fun.

Personally, I find that a good break increases my mental wellbeing and gives me a fresh wave of motivation, resilience and strength to help tackle any of life's challenges ahead. Whilst I'm very grateful I'm able to reset when a break allows, I do know there are many who are experiencing mental health struggles and require additional support including that provided by professionals. This is very evident as we talk to the inspirational Liam Colebrook about his struggles with mental health and his mission to increase people's awareness and understanding through his lived experience. Please turn to page 16 for the full feature.

On page 14 Joe Cilia, FIS Technical Director provides a Ladybird style guide on the Building Safety Act's complicated new responsibilities and processes.

Solid surfaces are one of the most exciting and fastest-growing categories within the global materials market. In the second article in the series about new, innovative and groundbreaking materials, we are introduced to HIMACS, a high-spec, high-performance solid surface with near-unrivalled creative potential. To read more go to page 24.

Please let us know about your projects and company news as we do like to feature members as much as we can. No project too small... david.crowson@warnersgroup.co.uk

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Contractors will need to consider their options if non-compliant concerns are brought forward against them due to the amended Defective Premises Act 1972. We discuss that if non-compliance is agreed how and what evidence you should gather.

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Community news

The B1M and Procore launch construction mental health awareness campaign on London Underground

Catching attention with the headline “construction needs to talk”, the campaign will run on digital screens at more than 30 sites across Zone One in Central London, including Leicester Square, Oxford Circus and London Bridge.

It comes as The B1M’s Fred Mills and Procore’s Tooley Courtmanche prepared to launch “Get Construction Talking” at a special event in London on Wednesday 12 July.

The new mental health initiative sees the two putting the weight of their organisations behind this critical industry issue to help make a difference.

At the core of Get Construction Talking will be a two-part video series on The B1M’s YouTube channel, putting the topic of construction mental health in front of its vast audience.

The videos are being made freely available to the industry alongside a new guidance portal at getconstructiontalking.org, a podcast series and an events programme.

Get Construction Talking is supported by leading construction mental health charities across the US, UK, Australia and New Zealand, including the Construction Industry Alliance for Suicide Prevention (CIASP), Lighthouse Charity, Mates in Mind, MATES in Construction and Construction Sport.

Together, The B1M and Procore are mobilising to raise \$1M for construction’s mental health charities through the Get Construction Talking campaign.

Research worldwide shows that the construction sector struggles with poor mental health almost more than any other industry, and that the issue is most prevalent among men.



Though of course nuanced and unique to individuals, research has found that many factors contribute to the problem; including long working hours, excessive travel requirements, tough payment practices and a tendency for men in particular to put on a brave face and avoid sharing their feelings.

Get Construction Talking aims to use the power and reach of both The B1M and Procore to raise the profile of mental health and help millions understand how they can start to help today, for free.

To read more visit: www.theb1m.com or www.procore.com/en-gb

New fire safety regulations come into force on 1 October

On 1 October, new fire safety guidance will come into force. Section 156 of the Building Safety Act 2022 (BSA) makes a number of amendments to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (FSO) to improve fire safety in all buildings regulated by the FSO. These improvements form Phase 3 of the Home Office’s fire safety reform programme, building on Phase 1 (the Fire Safety Act 2021) and Phase 2 (the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022).

Phase 3 further strengthens fire safety in all FSO regulated premises by:

- improving cooperation and coordination between Responsible Persons (RPs)
- increasing requirements in relation to the recording and sharing of fire safety information thus creating a continual record throughout a building’s lifespan
- making it easier for enforcement authorities to take action against non-compliance
- ensuring residents have access to comprehensive information about fire safety in their building

The Government is not at this stage commencing a requirement for RPs to

ensure that anyone they appoint to do a fire risk assessment is competent. We are actively working with the sector to develop a robust rollout plan and will provide more information on this in the coming months.

Guidance to support RPs in understanding and meeting these new requirements will be published before they come into force.

To learn more visit pages 14 and 15 in this issue of SpecFinish.

www.gov.uk/government/news/new-fire-safety-guidance-comes-into-force-on-1-october-2023

CITB release latest Migration and Construction report

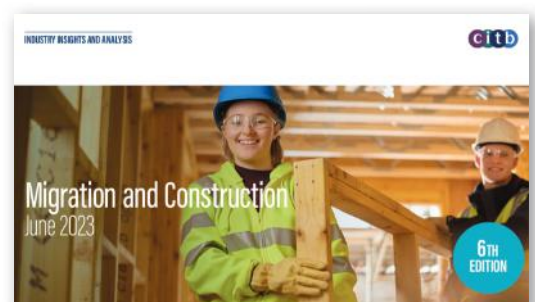
After the referendum decision to leave the European Union (EU), CITB worked with industry to develop an evidence base, looking at how and why construction was using migrant workers, the key occupations they were working in, and how employers planned to adapt to the new migration regime.

Together with the Construction Leadership Council (CLC), CITB has worked closely with the Government and related bodies such as the Migration Advisory

Committee (MAC) to develop a shared understanding of the industry’s skill needs and how it is adapting to the Points-Based System (PBS).

The sixth report and the first since the end of the Pandemic and the introduction of the PBS in January 2021 when the UK formally left the EU has now been published and can be viewed by visiting:

www.citb.co.uk/media/nwefbu4r/final-english-migration-report-june-2023.pdf



Lights out on fluorescents

The lights are going out on fluorescents – so what should you do?

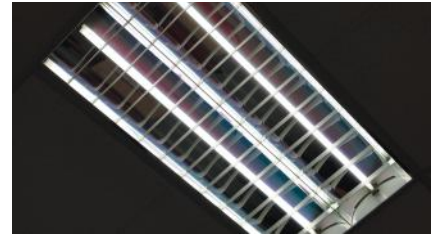
The UK Government plans to phase out all types of fluorescent lamps under the Restriction of the use of Hazardous Substances (RoHS) directive by 2024.

For decades fluorescent lighting has been fundamental in illuminating installations such as offices, schools and factories. Throughout the years, these luminaires have evolved from the T12 fluorescent batten which incorporated switch start control gear, to the T8, T5 or Compact Fluorescent Lamp (CFL) which are controlled by a high frequency electronic ballast.

The improvement in technology regarding the starting and controlling of fluorescent lamps with electronic gear reduced the consumers electricity bills and reduced the amount of heat energy emitted by the "thicker" T12 style lamp.

However, the last ten years have seen the gradual replacement of the fluorescent luminaire with the more efficient Light Emitting Diode (LED) fitting. This will continue to be the case, as the UK Government has followed the European Union's lead in recent years by implementing the RoHS legislation which has already ceased the manufacture of the T12 type lamp and has a directive of stopping the production of the remaining styles of fluorescent lamps by 2024.

These lamps contain mercury gas, which has been banned in the manufacturing of products. However, an exemption was implemented for the production of the fluorescent lamp. These lamps will still be in circulation and available to purchase until September 2023 for the T8 and February 2024 for the T5 and CFLs, when the manufacturing of lamps will end.



Although the availability of the lamps may aid maintenance, manufacturers have slowed the production of electronic control gear and inverters as the demand for the LED luminaire has increased.

Specifiers, clients, duty holders and landlords etc. should consider the above information when consulting with their electricians regarding the method of illumination that should be used in properties when existing fluorescent lighting is present, considering the problems that may arise for maintenance in the future.

Source: https://select.org.uk/SELECT/Website/Professionals_News/2023/June/lights_going_out_fluorescents.aspx



Ann Bentley receives CBE

In the King's birthday honours list, Ann Bentley was awarded a CBE for her services to construction.

Ann has more than 40 years' experience in the property and construction sector including sitting on the Construction Leadership Council for six years. She was also one of the driving forces behind the Government Sponsored Value Toolkit.

In a recent LinkedIn post she said: "I am honoured and delighted to have been awarded a CBE for my services to construction. Enormous thanks to everyone who has encouraged and supported me along the way".

OPEN DOORS
Get into Construction

Recruiting the Next Generation

Construction needs to recruit almost 45,000 new entrants each year to maintain output. To aid recruitment Open Doors goes behind the site hoardings to show young people and those looking for a change of career what the industry has to offer.

This year's event enabled nearly 5,000 potential recruits to take the first step on their journey from education to employment in the industry. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with 87% of visitors stating that they are now more likely to consider a career in construction. A review of Open Doors 2023¹ has been published and demonstrates how the event impacts recruiting the next generation.

Build UK contractor member and Open Doors partner Willmott Dixon has also published an article in Building², reflecting on the success of Open Doors for its business and the wider industry, and further information can be found in the Open Doors update³.

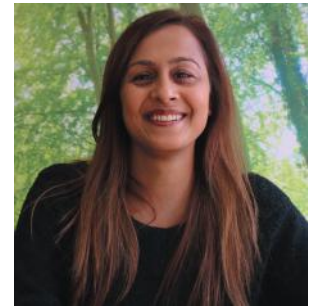
The event will return from 18 - 23 March 2024 with over 200 sites expected to take part across Great Britain. The sites participating will range from houses to skyscrapers, and will also include a wide range of virtual experiences, whilst offices, factories, and other facilities will open their doors to demonstrate the off-site roles across the sector.

Source

1. www.builduk.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Open-Doors-2023-Review.pdf
2. www.building.co.uk/comment/recruiting-the-next-generation-through-open-doors/5123244.article
3. <https://mailchi.mp/opendoors/opendoors-22-may-1287011>

www.opendoors.construction

REVOLUTIONARILY THINKING TO THE RECRUITMENT CHALLENGE



Beena Nana, FIS Head of Skills and Training

Beena Nana, FIS Head of Skills and Training explores several unconventional routes to enter the finishes and interiors sector, including ex-offenders seeking rehabilitation and reintegration and ex-military personnel transitioning into civilian life and revisits the excellent opportunity provided by apprenticeships.

We know that the construction industry is a vital sector that encompasses a wide range of professions and trades. Within this industry, the finishes and interiors sector

provides a crucial role in creating functional, aesthetically pleasing and sustainable indoor spaces. However, entering the finishes and interiors sector can be challenging for individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Ex-offenders are bouncing back

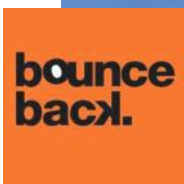
Bounce Back is a Charity and Social Enterprise that works with people both inside and outside of prison who may be at risk of or have a history of offending and substance use. They are focused on supporting people to change the direction of their lives and reduce offending, to shape a society where everyone can look forward to a bright future. Bounce Back firmly believe everyone has the ability to change and should be given the opportunity to do so¹.

Justin Devaney, Operations Director at Platt and Reilly, explained that he first heard of Bounce Back and the employment of ex-offenders through a chance conversation with James Rowland of Encon and Iain McIlwee of FIS.

Justin shares with us his insight and experience after Platt and Reilly recruited Nordeen, who is a full-time employee whom they met through Bounce Back.

Justin explained that Nordeen's passion for the job is a refreshing change that resonates through the site teams that he works with. Justin said: "He started with us as a metal fixer on a central London project. His keenness to progress and his attitude towards his work colleagues has seen him excel on site and become not only a valued member of the team but an essential component that drives the team forward.

"We have a detailed continuous training schedule laid out for Nordeen for the next two years and I genuinely believe that he now has the aptitude and the ability to lead a team of his own in the future."



(L-R) Nordeen and Justin Devaney of Platt and Reilly

Justin went on to explain that one year on from employing Nordeen through the Bounce Back programme the experience has been incredibly positive and rewarding and to date it has been highly successful for Platt and Reilly. He said: "I will definitely employ further candidates through the programme and would recommend any companies in the fit-out sector to reach out to Bounce Back and engage where possible.

"It will not always be smooth sailing but finding employees like Nordeen make Bounce Back an invaluable resource for employers and employees to connect and work towards a positive future for candidates that have come through the programme".

Bounce Back candidate Nordeen shared his thoughts on the journey so far. He told us that he used to work for a company called Fireclad. He said: "Unfortunately, Fireclad was no longer trading however, I met with Justin from Platt and Reilly who offered me a position as a metal fixer.

"When the new opportunity opened up for me to work with Platt and Reilly it was quite exciting.

"Initially I was very sceptical as I had to start again and I had just started to settle into work with Fireclad however, my introduction to them was very warm and accepting, and their organisation made me feel immediately wanted".

Nordeen explained that as his first year passed, Platt and Reilly helped him with gaining extra qualifications within the construction industry and set a plan to help him climb the ladder to become solidified within the construction industry and have a more financially sound lifestyle.

He concluded by saying: "I was very anxious about moving to a new company however, after the move, I was very happy with my decision and I am now looking forward to a future with a more stable foundation and a productive and active life in the team. I'd really like to thank Justin and Platt and Reilly".

www.plattreilly.co.uk

Military reliability in Fire Door Safety

David Livingston, Managing Director at Fire Team Solutions, is a man on a mission to build a business whilst creating sustainable employment opportunities for British military veterans in the fire door and passive fire stopping industry. As a former Light Infantryman, David served in the Army for 13 years and, after graduating with the Sword of Honour from the Royal Military Sandhurst, he went on to lead operational missions in Northern Ireland and Bosnia. Following his military career, David established successful businesses in the security and leadership training sectors.



He is very modest about his experience and, despite commendations for courage and leadership on operations, and with two successful business start-ups under his beret, he is quick to point to the rock solid foundation that military training gives to all service personnel and which engenders the well-recognised qualities of reliability and 'can-do' attitude that pervade their ranks, both during and after service – all skills which can be readily transferred to the fit-out sector.

The Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield (IPB)!

David described to me what the military call the "Intelligence Preparation of the Battlefield"; before an operation is conducted, military planners scrutinise the existing tactical situation to work out where best to deploy their efforts. David maintains this is just as applicable for commercial operations and he spotted his business opportunity through careful reconnaissance of the existing market landscape. He observed that recent fire-safety legislation change has driven a surge in demand for reliable fire door services and that this boom is set to continue for the foreseeable future. "This, combined with a scarcity of reliable labour in the market, led to the opportunity to establish Fire Team Solutions (FTS) with the objective of providing sustainable employment opportunities for veterans," he said.

Concept of Operations

David explained that FTS objective was to contribute to the improvement of fire safety by combining the industry experience of their partners with the recognised benefits of employing ex-military personnel to inspect, install and remediate fire doors on a national scale. He said: "I believe we can create a recognised, market leading passive fire protection company which can work direct to clients or in support of main contractors".

Mission: Totally Possible

"My vision is to build a tech enabled, world class fire door installation and inspection business, operating from five regional hubs across England, providing sustainable employment for 50+ veterans nationwide. I want FTS to become an employer of choice for British military veterans, and to be an industry partner of choice for reliable service delivery, whilst managing to have some fun along the way!

"The business drivers to create this growth are clear:

- The ever-tightening fire safety legislation is nationwide;
- The property portfolios are nationwide;
- The veterans are nationwide.

"All I have to do is join the dots. 21,000 men and women have left the Armed Forces in each of the last five years, contributing to an ever-increasing pool of an estimated 900,000 working age veterans and those who did not have a specialist background or technical skills but have all benefited from the military training and ethos are an ideal talent pool for us. We are committed to providing full training and development to our veterans and supporting them to adapt to, and progress in, civilian life, said David".

David recalls an old army adage which, he says, is just as true in business as it is in the army; "if you look after your people and they believe that you have their best interests at heart, they will go to the ends of the earth to look after you."

Baptism of Fire Doors

David told me FTS has already had its baptism of fire doors. The business has successfully completed several jobs already, mainly installing in the care home sector, and has hired its first full-time veteran employee, which is a great milestone. During the setup phase, they concentrated on getting the skills training and certifications in place. The team are all BWF trained, BlueSky certified

Installers and Maintainers and are currently working through the inspection certification. They also have Silver Construction Line status and are Silver members and signees of the Military Covenant (Defence Employer Recognition Scheme)."

David concluded by saying: "If you know of anyone who may be interested in joining Fire Team Solutions' mission to create a safer built environment then please direct them to careers@fireteam.co.uk"

www.fireteam.co.uk

Apprentice to Technical Support Consultant, a remarkable journey

Another inspiring story is **Anmol Singh** who is an apprentice at Hadley Group.

Harry Webb, Head of Project Specification (Dry Lining) at Hadley Group told us about Anmol's remarkable journey to success.

Harry explained that Anmol, a determined and talented individual, has emerged as a shining star in the field of drylining specification and engineering. Born in December 2000, in the district of Hoshiarpur, Punjab, India, Anmol embarked on his educational journey at an early age, showcasing a keen interest in learning and an exceptional work ethic.

At the age of six, Anmol's mother made a life-altering decision to move abroad, leaving behind her family, in pursuit of a better future for her son. This sacrifice served as a driving force for Anmol, motivating him to excel academically. Despite facing the initial challenge of a language barrier upon arriving in the United Kingdom, Anmol remained undeterred. Fortunately, his primary school teacher, coincidentally of Indian descent, could speak Punjabi, Anmol's first language. Recognising his potential, she assured his mother that he would soon become fluent in English. True to her words, within just one month, Anmol mastered the language.



Anmol Singh, from apprentice to Technical Support Consultant at Hadley Group

Following his primary education, Anmol sought admission to Lordswood Boys School in Harborne, Birmingham. One of the key factors influencing his decision was the school's specialisation in sports. Throughout his time at Lordswood, Anmol consistently performed at a high level, achieving top rankings in all his classes and steadily improving his grades.

When Anmol reached year nine, he encountered a setback as his school discontinued the option to study engineering due to limited resources. However, he remained undaunted, continuing his studies and excelling at Lordswood. Fate had a surprising turn in store for him in year ten when he discovered Aston University Engineering Academy, a specialised institution for engineering education. This opportunity allowed Anmol to commence his engineering studies at the young age of 16, while also pursuing his GCSEs and undertaking a BTEC Level 2 course in Engineering.

It was during his time at Aston University Engineering Academy that Anmol realised his passion for the engineering industry was flourishing. This realisation led him to continue his education at the academy's sixth form, where he successfully completed a rigorous BTEC Level 3 Extended Engineering Diploma, equivalent to three A-Levels. This comprehensive program provided Anmol with a solid foundation in engineering principles and practical skills, including operating machinery such as lathes.

Anmol's perseverance and dedication paid off, culminating in an outstanding result of DDD (Distinction Star, Distinction Star, Distinction) upon completing the sixth form course. With his sights set on a future in mechanical engineering, Anmol began applying to various universities in Birmingham and its surrounding areas.

While awaiting responses from universities, Anmol's mother suggested exploring apprenticeship opportunities. This led him to discover Hadley Group and its renowned apprenticeship schemes. After successfully completing the interview process, Anmol proudly became an employee of Hadley Group in September 2019.

Harry said: "In the first year of his apprenticeship, Anmol honed his skills at Make UK², an esteemed engineering training facility. Here, he acquired in-depth knowledge of advanced manufacturing machinery, maintenance techniques, and computer-aided design (CAD).

"Transitioning to on-site work at Hadley Group in his second year, Anmol attended Make UK once a week for coursework. While many apprentices would pursue BTEC Level 3 engineering at Make UK, Anmol was presented with a unique

opportunity by Hadley Group. Having already completed the Extended Diploma in sixth form, he was offered the chance to pursue a Higher National Certificate (HNC) in engineering. At Hadley Group, Anmol gained practical experience by rotating through various departments every three months, acquiring a diverse skill set and comprehensive understanding of the company's operations, including machine build, maintenance, tool making, CAD, commissioning, and production. This hands-on experience enabled him to work with the tools and machinery used in Hadley Group's manufacturing processes.

"In his third year, Anmol's dedication and hard work resulted in a remarkable opportunity, an internal job role as a Technical Support Consultant. Guided by myself and **Joe Sargeantson**, Technical Director at Hadley Group, as his mentors, Anmol refined his skills in drylining and gained insights into Hadley Group's contributions to the drylining industry. During this period, Anmol also pursued a Foundation Degree in Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering offered by Hadley Group, further augmenting his accomplishments. He successfully completed this degree in the final year of his apprenticeship.

"Presently, Anmol serves as a Technical Support Consultant at Hadley Group, working in the last year of his four-year apprenticeship. Collaborating closely with main and subcontractors, he provides invaluable support and leverages his expertise to secure projects by offering innovative and value-engineered Hadley K10 specifications. Remarkably, with just two years of experience in drylining, Anmol has made significant contributions to the industry, establishing meaningful working relationships through his supportive mentors. Anmol said about his current role: "I take particular pride in supporting the drylining subcontractor in developing a truly value-engineered K10-specification that's fully tested and warranted by Hadley".

Reflecting on his remarkable journey with the Hadley Group Anmol said: "I would like to thank my mentors Harry and Joe and also the Hadley Group for their continued support".

Concluding Harry said: "Anmol stands as a testament to the power of determination and unwavering dedication, paving the way for a promising future as a true drylining professional in our industry".

www.hadleygroup.com

Source

1 www.bouncebackproject.com

2 www.makeuk.org

THE BEST BUSINESSES FOLLOW FIS BEST PRACTICE GUIDES



FIS

FINISHES & INTERIORS SECTOR

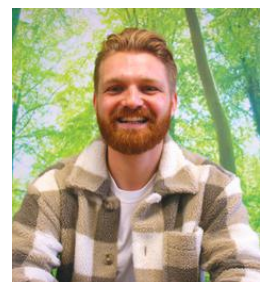
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WHAT IS THREADS AND SHOULD YOU BE USING IT?

In the third article from the Social Media series **Oscar Venus**, Social Media expert at FIS, discusses if new social media platform Threads is the new Twitter.



Oscar Venus, FIS Social Media and Content

JULY saw the birth of the social media platform Threads which people are calling Instagram's version of Twitter (or "X", as it is now known). The Threads app is the fastest growing app of all time with over 100 million accounts being created almost overnight with the directed integration to Instagram.

Meta launched Threads as an attempt to challenge Twitter's dominance in the short-form content-sharing space. By capitalising on Instagram's widespread popularity, the

social media giant hoped to create a new hub for sharing quick, bite-sized posts. To Meta's delight, Threads quickly gained traction, racking up millions of followers in just a few hours, including verified brand accounts and a plethora of high-profile individuals.

This has since dropped in numbers after the initial hype but Meta CEO, Mark Zuckerberg has said that they have seen more people returning to the app. Whilst Twitter and Threads are very similar there are some subtle differences that separate

the two apps. However, is there space for both, and if not, where should you be focusing your efforts?

In essence, Twitter and Threads serve the same purpose which is to enable the sharing of concise messages that can be viewed and interacted with by other users. The content of these messages can range from personal updates, humorous quips, grievances, song lyrics, or any other thoughts that are on your mind and may be of interest to your followers.

has remained minimally useful over the years, it appears that constructing a Threads website is not top of their priority list.

New technology: Provides users with a completely ad-free experience. Threads currently offers the opportunity to maximise the organic content potential for your audience without the interruption of advertisements. While advertisements are not currently present on Threads, this may alter in the future given Instagram's recent trend towards a more commercialised and shopping-centric user experience.

Engagement: The common themes of Twitter and Threads continue when it comes to engagement. They both offer a variety of tools and options such as the like button, comment feature, repost and quote function, and share options. When you click on a Tweet or Thread, it expands to show the comments, allowing you to respond to the original message or reply directly to another comment - giving you a chance to chime in on the conversation in your own unique way.

The Activity tab on the Threads app offers more insight into your social media activity. You can view who followed you, who liked your posts, your replies, and your tags. While on Twitter, the notifications tab is where you can find all your past likes and other interactions. Twitter also has a dedicated Likes tab on your profile page, which is helpful if you want to save an article or post to read later on.

Both Twitter and Threads are great social media platforms that offer similar engagement features, but with slight differences in how they present and organise user activity.

Search: Twitter has the upper hand. You can search for words or phrases to see all publicly available recent and relevant posts. Threads only allows users to search for accounts, making it less of a destination for news or trending topics than Twitter.

Content discovery: It is clear that Twitter and Threads have different approaches. Twitter allows users to curate their post feed with detail, giving them control over what they want to see. Users can choose to view a "For you" feed that mixes suggested posts with posts from the accounts they follow or stick to their "Following" feed that only shows posts from accounts they follow.

On the other hand, Threads has a singular feed that pulls in a mixture of content from the accounts users follow, as well as trending posts. It's like a main Instagram feed, merged with the Discover page. The only way to control what you see on Threads is to block accounts and mute words, unlike Twitter where you have more options.

Both platforms have their strengths and weaknesses when it comes to content discovery. Twitter is great for news and trending topics, while Threads is more focused on personal connections with friends and family. It all depends on what you're looking for and how you manage your communities and the type of content you produce.

Big-name brands: They seem to be using the app in the same way as the way in which they use Twitter, focusing on humour to gain followers and create engagement.

Should we stop our Twitter efforts and flock to Threads or do both?

I have frequently asked social media managers in the construction industry about their use of Twitter and the level of engagement they have experienced in recent years. Unfortunately, the most common response I receive is that their Twitter engagement has been stagnant or that they don't see much happening on the platform these days. This has been the case for FIS as well. As we have shifted our focus to LinkedIn, we have seen a decline in engagement on Twitter, and our audience growth on Twitter has not kept pace with that of LinkedIn.

It's not uncommon for companies to experience a decline in Twitter engagement over time, especially as other social media platforms like LinkedIn continue to grow in popularity. However, does that mean that Twitter should be completely abandoned?

Experts have forecasted a potential decline in Twitter's user base in the year 2023, as the platform continues to encounter controversies and technical glitches. Despite this, the most recent statistics reveal that Twitter's daily active user count has remained robust, with an estimated 260 million users reported in the last count. There are numerous social media platforms available, and Twitter remains one of the most popular choices.

One of the main benefits of using Threads for business is that it allows for more intimate and personalised communication. Unlike email or traditional messaging platforms, Threads allow for quick and informal conversations that can help build stronger relationships between team members or customers.

Ultimately, whether businesses should use Threads depends on their specific needs and preferences. If a business values informal and intimate communication and is willing to accept some potential drawbacks, then Threads may be a useful tool for them. However, businesses that require more robust communication and security features may be better off using a different platform.

The primary difference between the two is that Threads allows for a maximum of 500 characters whereas Twitter only allows 280 characters. As a result, Threads offer more space for users to express themselves and share longer messages than they would be able to on Twitter. However, for those who have perfected the art of crafting succinct messages on Twitter, the character limit on Threads may not be a significant benefit.

What you need to know about Threads

Sign up: You are required to have an Instagram account. Once you have created your account, you can download the Threads app for either iOS or Android. Upon launching the app for the first time, you have the option to either follow all the accounts you currently follow on Instagram automatically or select only a few. Once you have picked the accounts you want to follow you are then free to start "threading".

Access: It can only be accessed through its mobile app, which is downloadable from the iOS and Android app stores. This means that the platform is solely tailored for mobile usage. Whether this is the intended direction for Meta is uncertain. However, given the current state of Instagram's website, which

A SUMMARY OF THE BUILDING SAFETY ACT



The Building Safety Act (BSA) is the most significant piece of new legislation in a generation. It will fundamentally change the way in which buildings where people live, are designed, constructed and maintained and how the records are kept of what was built by whom and how.

The BSA comprises primary as well as secondary legislation which is complicated and has new responsibilities and processes. Ladybird hasn't written a guide on the BSA but if they did it might look something like this.

The Building Safety Act

At 12.54 am on 14 June 2017, a fire broke out in Grenfell Tower. The fire spread rapidly on the outside and engulfed the building. By the time the fire was put out 72 people had died.

The disaster played out across television screens and was constantly debated, often with the word "how". How in this modern time did a recently refurbished building burn so quickly and what caused so many lives to be lost when we had a Building Control process, tested products and systems to meet them?

Dame Judith Hackett was asked to investigate and in her interim report, she pointed out that there was a lack of evidence of what has been built, what was compliant, and if those constructing it were competent.

FIS at the time responded with the Product Process People (PPP)¹ initiative that emphasised the importance of record keeping, to be clear about what is being asked for and document what was built including progress images and recording who was involved and their qualifications.

Dame Judith's final report Building a Safer Future² set out a number of recommendations to change the process and culture (many of them built around the Construction Design and Management (CDM) regulations) and they were all accepted by Government. The Government then drafted a Building Safety Bill which was added to the Statute book as law in April 2022.

The BSA applies to all buildings, special attention however is paid to the process required when building or refurbishing high risk buildings (HRBs).

What are high risk buildings?

HRBs are defined as being at least 18m high or at least seven stories and containing at least two residencies.

HRBs, are considered under two states:
1. During design and construction and
2. In occupation.

Care should be taken to clarify if the buildings are in scope. HRBs during design and construction include residential buildings, care homes and hospitals. Only residential buildings are considered to be HRBs during the operational stage.

The BSA

The BSA defines a number of new bodies, roles and responsibilities.

Firstly, the new bodies:

- The Building Safety Regulator (BSR)³ will be responsible for overseeing the safety and standards of all buildings (remember it's not just HRBs).

Under the control of the BSR, The National Regulator for Construction Products will replace the Trading Standards to oversee and enforce the regulatory requirements for building products.

And there will be a New Homes Ombudsman, where people in new build homes can raise concerns and complaints. There are also newly defined responsibilities in the BSA:

- Accountable persons will have a number of duties including registering the building and ensuring all risks are managed and residents' voices are heard.

Building owners, developers and landlords will be required to pay a building safety levy on new residential projects.

There are new duty holders defined:

- The client, which commissions the work.
- The principal designer, which carries out the design.
- The principal contractor, which controls the construction work.
- The contractor, which carries out the construction works.

Everyone involved in constructing buildings (from shed to shard, and from labourer to leader) will be required to demonstrate that they are competent to carry out their roles, responsibilities and functions.

Individual competence is described under four headings in Flex 8670 as a person's Skill, Knowledge, Experience and Behaviour (SKEB).

Organisational competence will be assessed on the capabilities including management process systems, policies and resources.

FIS has recently published The Sector Guide Competence Management Plan⁴ to provide examples and signposts to available information and assist organisations in improving quality and safety whilst ensuring they meet the requirements of legislation.

How have liabilities been changed by the Act?

The Defective Premises Act⁵ was limited to the first six years after completion. The BSA includes a clause to look back 30 years (from 2022) and then extend the current six years to 15 years on all new buildings.

What are the gateways?

The BSA defines three stop go gateways at key stages of an HRB project,

- Gateway 1, before planning permission is granted.
- Gateway 2, before work can commence.
- Gateway 3, after completion but before occupation can take place.

Gateway 1: The client should submit a fire strategy in the form of a statement alongside the planning application, whilst the designer needs to demonstrate they have prepared a "safe" design.

The HSE will examine the applications and may reject or approve; in the case of a refusal the application should be amended and resubmitted, this may delay the project by six weeks or more at each gateway.

Gateway 2: (October 2023) The client will be required to submit information and details on how the proposals comply with building regulations with four critical elements:

- **Full plans** demonstrating compliance (including clear design responsibility matrix and realistic programme).

- **Quality Management System** to include change management protocols, inspection, sign-off regime and mandatory occurrence reporting.
- **Digital Information Plan**
- **Competence Management Plan**
Only after approval from the BSR can work start on site.

Gateway 3: (October 2023) The client must be able to demonstrate that the building is safe to occupy and apply for a completion certificate.

- The principal contractor submits the Golden Thread as built drawings and the operations and maintenance (O&M) manuals and information.
- The building can only be occupied after the BSR has checked that the building work is compliant and has issued a building control certificate.

The finer details of the “Golden Thread” of information are yet to be published, but it is clear that it is a separate set of information from the O&M manuals. The Government refers to it as storing the building’s information⁶.

FIS will publish details separately on the digital spine of information. The information in the “Golden Thread” should be secure, stored digitally, be a single source of the truth, available and accessible, and be presented in a way that a person can use.

During design and construction, the information should describe the building and demonstrates that it complies with the Building Regulations.

After the occupation, it should include a record to demonstrate how it’s being maintained and how the building and any safety risks are being managed.

Design responsibility

The overall design responsibility sits with the principal designer who will need to take advice from subject matter experts that products and systems can be safely incorporated with other systems to create a building that is safe for the occupants.

Subject matter experts could include manufacturers, designers and contractors. Those offering designs should ensure they have Public Indemnity (PI) insurance to cover them in case of a claim.

It’s important to understand your responsibility when giving any advice or suggestions on design or materials to use or changes to a system as you become the unintentional designer⁷ by default.

Designs will have to be completed earlier in the process in order to have sufficient detail to demonstrate compliance at Gateway 2.

Building Safety Act: A New Compliance Environment



Other regulation and guidance

Mandatory and voluntary occurrence reporting⁸ will be a requirement on all new buildings and will be set out in secondary legislation for specific people responsible for the safety of HRBs to capture and report certain fire and structural safety issues called safety occurrences to the Building Safety Regulator.

- Further secondary legislation is expected by 1st October and will provide more information on the “Golden Thread”, the transition period, as well as mandatory reporting.

What you should do at a glance

The steps shown in Figure 1. are relevant to manufacturers, designers, consultants, contractors and specialist contractors. Read in tandem with the roles and responsibilities at the three Gateways.

Figure 1. What you should do at a glance

1	Does your company have the competencies and capabilities to carry out the work as specified in the contract?
2	Establish if the building is a HRB and hence in scope for different processes including the Gateways. If deemed a HRB what stage in the gateway process is it at?
3	Have you been given a clear design Responsibility Matrix and have you checked your contract for any design responsibility even inadvertently?
4	Have you carried out a Responsibility Matrix (RACI) model to establish your roles and responsibilities as a company and have you carried out a competence management plan ⁹ aligned to your RACI model?
5	Do you understand how information will be provided and what information you are required to provide and in what format?
6	Have you confirmed that you are working on the latest and up to date set of drawings and information, and have you raised and recorded the RFI's required to carry out the work?
7	Is the change management register and procedures clear and the process communicated to your team, and do you understand what constitutes a 'Major and a notifiable' change and when it should be addressed?
8	Do you have a clear inspection and sign off process, including what and when installations should be inspected and how they should be recorded? Ensuring that you retain a copy of all inspections and reports separately to what is submitted.
9	Have you got a clear process for mandated occurrence reporting?
10	Do you have a documented quality control process to cover the scope of this project?
11	Have you created a risk register to identify any other risks that would impact compliance?
12	Do you understand the handover information required, for the O&M manuals and the Golden thread of information?



FIND OUT MORE

This is a summary of a more detailed guide that is available to FIS members. To read more visit: - www.thefis.org/membership-hub/publications/sector-guides/

Source

1. www.thefis.org/knowledge-hub/product-process-people
2. <https://tinyurl.com/yhvz2udp>
3. www.hse.gov.uk/building-safety/regulator.htm
4. <https://tinyurl.com/2sbxttptz>
5. www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1972/35/data.pdf
6. <https://tinyurl.com/5a6rkabp>
7. www.specfinish.co.uk/the-unintentional-designer
8. www.hse.gov.uk/building-safety/safety-cases/report/occurrence
9. www.thefis.org/skills-hub/competency-passport

A MENTAL HEALTH LIVED EXPERIENCE

SpecFinish had the pleasure of speaking to the inspirational **Liam Colebrook**, Business Development Director at SIG plc. Liam has bravely started to talk about his struggles with mental health. As he continues his mission to increase people's awareness and understanding of mental health, Liam shares his lived experience and the important message that other sufferers are not alone and there are ways to improve their mental health.



Liam lifting the lid on mental health at the FIS members meeting in Birmingham.

Liam explained that mental health can be many things, but for him, it's about how he thinks, feels, and behaves. He said: "Anxiety and depression are very common mental health problems and these affect me as they do so many others. These led me to some very dark places including thoughts of taking my own life".

Some research suggests there are links between addiction and mental health, Liam's lived experience support that theory with his struggles around mental wellbeing leading him to seek what he calls "a crutch to lean on", Liam's crutch was compulsive gambling. This, unfortunately, led to relationship breakdowns, severe money troubles, ever-worsening mental health and a personal life that was rapidly deteriorating. Liam's mental health struggles ultimately left him bed bound and with no option but to seek the help he needed - a residential retreat (rehab) with Gordon Moody.

Liam said: "When talking about my lived experience, I really needed to start at the beginning of my working life as there may

be a misconception that my struggles are recent as I've always been outgoing, taking on new challenges at work and had everything a man (and a dad) could ask for. However nothing could be further from the truth as my struggles were not "new" I just learned to wear many masks, at work, at home, out with friends and as a dad to two amazing children.

"I have been in the construction industry all of my working life and what people don't know is that I started as an apprentice plasterer and dryliner, so I was on the tools. Although this is a great job, this was a lonely time in my life as I was normally working alone, and some days never saw anyone else. Looking back, I don't believe this was the catalyst for my mental health struggles, but I believe it's where they started to manifest.

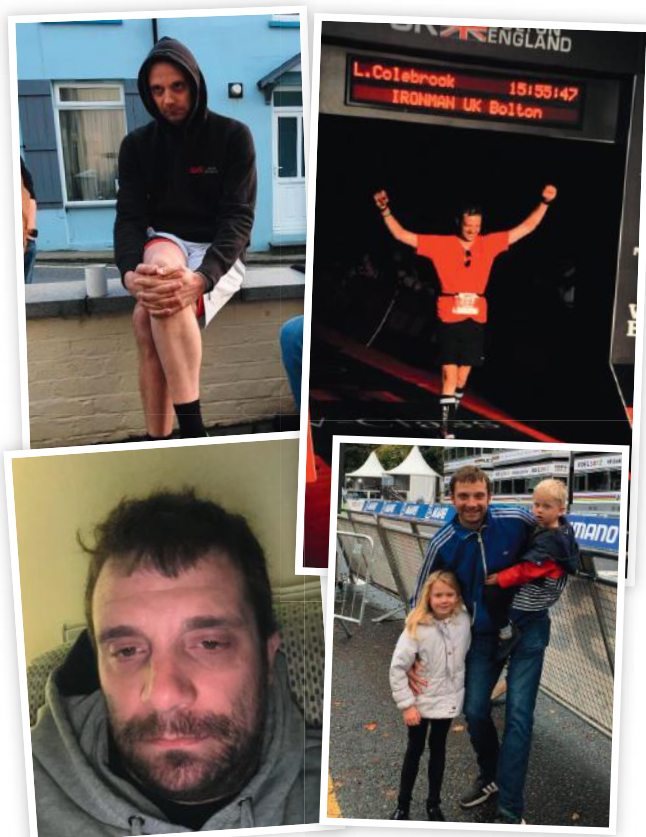
"At this period in my life, I was struggling on and off with my mental health and started to gamble periodically. With hindsight this may have been the first time I began to use gambling as a crutch to lean on for my depression and anxiety. That said, as I embarked on my recovery journey the understanding that I was using gambling as a support for my mental health was the final thing I learned.

"Fast forward 15 years or so and I did seek help twice however, at this time I was in denial and maybe I was not ready to talk. I convinced myself, and my therapist at the time, that I was fine. I left the second

round of therapy accepting I would always live a three out of ten life.

"As time passed, I started to look for ways out that included going tent shopping to live homeless or convincing myself that my friends and family would be better off without me being around. This was not the case and nor is it the case for anybody reading this.

"One Sunday after 48hrs of sadness I decided to stay around and not "check out" of life and reached out to Gordon Moody. My mental health struggles were still to continue but with the support they gave me I had turned a corner".



These pictures show the same person with mental health challenges, it does not discriminate.

Liam explained that after fighting many demons, he eventually went into rehab and was cut off from the outside world. He said: "Time stuttered by while in the residential retreat, and as I left rehab with the rain coming down as hard as I had ever seen, this enabled me to hide the tears on my face. The following words however, kept echoing around my head "We don't think you would have made it past Christmas." Only then did I realise my family and friends would sooner have me in their lives than not.

"This realisation gave me the strength to tell my employer and now friends at SIG. While continuing to struggle with my mental health, I maintained a positive career taking on many new roles within SIG Interiors and the manufacturing side of the business within SIG Specialist Markets. I was very thankful that SIG supported me as an individual, not a number. This has given me the confidence to start to tell more people, old employers and even the Finishes and Interiors Sector about my struggles. None of these people have judged me, which was my biggest fear and only asked how they could support and help me to move forward.

"Following a second residential retreat with Gordon Moody, they introduced me to the EPIC Restart Foundation. Although there were still minor ups and huge downs, I could feel my life getting back on track. Thanks to EPIC Restart Foundation I've continued to go from strength to strength and my life is now getting better every day".

Liam explained passionately that it is a day-by-day process, and he wants to thank his family, friends, this great industry and the charities that have saved his life.

"What can you do?"

If you recognise yourself, colleague, friend, or family member in his lived experience then Liam urges you/them to seek support from a healthcare professional, from a charity such as Gordon Moody, EPIC Restart Foundation, Step Change or call the Samaritans.

We can all also raise awareness in the workplace of mental health and connect with charities such as Gordon Moody and EPIC Restart Foundation by visiting their LinkedIn pages. Ensure you follow them, like and share their posts, add comments etc. This will provide you with further knowledge and when a post is shared this will appear on your connection's feeds. Remember you never know when someone may need them.

Don't assume everyone is okay and don't add a stigma to mental health and addiction.

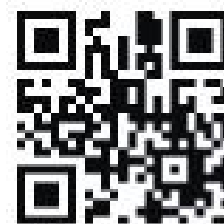
Liam said: "In my pictures, they show the same person with mental health challenges. It does not discriminate; it can be hidden and it can be you or the person working alongside you".

Liam concluded by saying: "You will continue to see a lot more of me in this space as I continue on a journey to help others.

"Recently at the FIS members meeting in Birmingham, I conducted my first lived experience talk around my mental health battles which I have discussed in this feature. I was extremely grateful that I had the audience's undivided attention and based on the generous feedback I have received I believe this was worthwhile and thought provoking. The silence in the room reminded me of what a great industry we operate in".

Commenting on the talk, FIS CEO Iain McIlwee said: "You could have heard a pin drop when Liam was talking in Birmingham, nobody was judging, but all were reflecting. His story inspired a powerful and open discussion and how we can be better. Lifting the lid on mental health can be a scary thing to do, not least there is a mirror in that lid, one that forces

us to look at ourselves and how we treat those around us. The really scary part is that when we lift it, we have to confront what is in the box. We have revolutionised safety in construction, but we still have a way to go on mental health. Lived experience is essential to honest conversations and meaningful interventions. Liam's open and brave delivery is another step to ensuring our business and sites are welcoming and inclusive and that we are creating an industry that really looks after our people."



SCAN ME –
Go to Liam's
LinkedIn account

Gordon Moody

Gordon Moody is a charity dedicated to supporting and treating gambling addiction. Driven by their passion to help those most severely affected by gambling they help people to reclaim and rebuild their lives free from gambling addiction in safe, supported environments by providing the most effective therapies, intervention and counselling possible.

Dealing with a gambling addiction can be daunting. To see what treatment programmes are provided, what's involved, and help find the right treatment or support for you visit:

www.gordonmoody.org.uk
www.linkedin.com/company/gordonmoodyorg

EPIC Restart Foundation

EPIC Restart Foundation is a UK charity that rebuilds lives after gambling harm. They support restoring a person's confidence and self-belief and empower them to take the next steps in their journey of recovery.

They understand how difficult sustaining recovery is, as a lived journey of gambling harm is at the heart of the EPIC Restart Foundation and their team.

To learn more about what support they offer visit:
www.epicrestartfoundation.org
www.linkedin.com/company/epic-restart-foundation

Step Change

Step Change believes everyone should be able to get free debt advice. They are here to give this and help to find a way to deal with the debts, providing support along the way.

Debt advice can be obtained without having to speak to anyone by using an online debt advice tool or by calling their friendly teams who will provide guidance through the process. To learn more about what support they offer visit: www.stepchange.org

Samaritans

Whatever a person is facing, a Samaritan will face it with them. Every 10 seconds, Samaritans responds to a call for help.

They are available day or night, for anyone who's struggling to cope, who needs someone to listen without judgement or pressure.

Samaritans offer listening and support to people and communities in times of need. Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy, and Samaritans' vision is that fewer people die by suicide. That's why they work tirelessly to reach more people and make suicide prevention a priority.

To read more about how their volunteers, staff and branches work together to provide support visit: www.samaritans.org

MODERN SLAVERY IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

Two FIS members tell us how seriously they take modern slavery and the actions they have taken to tackle this issue.



Flavie Lowres,
FIS Sustainability Champion



THERE are an estimated 49.6 million victims of modern slavery worldwide. Modern slavery can take many forms, but in general, it can be defined as “the systematic removal of a person’s freedom in order to exploit them for personal or commercial gains¹”. It is easy to think that modern slavery takes place in faraway countries, but 100,000 victims of modern slavery were recorded in the UK in 2020². In response to these alarming figures, the UK Government introduced the Modern Slavery Act. The aim of the Act is to ensure that the perpetrators receive suitable severe punishments and that law enforcement has the right tool to fight modern slavery. It also provides further support and protection for victims.

Sectors such as the construction industry are at high risk for modern slavery due to the huge demand for labour, complex supply chain, and the high number of indirect employment. According to the Supply Chain Sustainability School³, 12% of the calls to the UK’s Modern Slavery helpline concerned construction in 2019.

Tackling modern slavery

Modern slavery and labour abuse in the construction industry is on the rise. With fragmented supply chains, opaque procurement processes, and a labour supply

shortage, the sector faces a unique set of challenges explained **Rebecca Lea**, Assistant Sustainability Manager at Willmott Dixon. Rebecca said: “We take our responsibility for tackling modern slavery and improving the construction sector’s reputation seriously. We stipulate that all our supply chain partners must comply with the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act and our Modern Slavery Policy.

“Risks relating to modern slavery may arise anywhere in our operations. A significant amount of our business is conducted through our supply chain, meaning this is a particular area of focus for us. Last year, in collaboration with Stronger Together’s construction programme⁴, we developed and piloted a methodology for conducting ethical labour audits in the construction sector. A risk assessment from the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority identified drylining as an activity where there is potential for a greater risk of modern slavery because of its complex labour supply chain.

“The audits focused on processes of engagement and employment of both direct



Rebecca Lea, Assistant
Sustainability Manager
at Willmott Dixon

and indirectly employed workers, looking at documents, employment records, policies, and procedures. Although no evidence of modern slavery was found across the drylining companies, it did identify common themes at risk for exploitation, such as the use of outsourced labour without effective due diligence and the need for formal, written terms and conditions of employment.

“We are working with the drylining partners concerned to develop improvement plans and implement them within their business, in addition to using the combined findings to inform the wider sector. We will also conduct further audits this year, which will involve confidential worker interviews across multiple disciplines and trades on our project sites, and intend to directly capture feedback on employment conditions.”

Rebecca explained that although audits provide useful information about those working on their sites and supply chain partners, they cannot act as a standalone. She said: “We are working with leading organisations, such as the Supply Chain Sustainability School, to provide modern slavery training to our people and supply chain. Training is a crucial step in helping to raise awareness of slavery, educate individuals on spotting the signs, and provide confidence to report anything suspicious. We trained 53 of our supply chain partners last year on how to

identify and prevent modern slavery, and we anticipate training even more this year.

"The construction industry still has a long way to go before we can say we are free from modern slavery. Collaboration is essential to tackling modern slavery as it's not something one person, nor one organisation can solve alone. We need everyone to play a part and share their learnings so that we have a chance to impact those at greatest risk."

www.willmottdixon.co.uk

Combating Modern Slavery: A roadmap for responsible business practices

Olga Manmar,

Sustainability
Manager at

Space Interior

Systems, explained

that in today's

interconnected world,

businesses have a

crucial responsibility

to ensure ethical

practices and

uphold human rights

throughout their

supply chains. Olga said:

"Modern slavery is a grave concern for humanity, often lurking unnoticed in the shadows of global industries.

"Acknowledging this pressing issue, Space is committed to fostering compliance with UK laws on Human Rights and Modern Slavery. We firmly believe that the right to work in the UK and the fight against modern slavery and exploitation are deeply interconnected. To this end, we have developed a comprehensive modern slavery compliance roadmap, urging the industry to join hands in addressing these critical issues."

Olga leads us through the steps in the comprehensive modern slavery compliance roadmap.

Crafting a modern slavery statement

Our first step in combatting modern slavery is the creation of a robust modern slavery statement. This statement is published on the Space website to ensure transparency and easy accessibility. Before publication, it is thoroughly reviewed and approved by our board of directors and signed by a director, signifying our unwavering commitment to this cause. To ensure the statement remains relevant and up to date, it is revised annually, reflecting our continual efforts to eradicate modern slavery from our operations.

Identifying modern slavery risks

Identifying and addressing modern slavery risks is crucial in our mission. We undertake comprehensive right to work checks for all directly and indirectly employed staff to



*Olga Manmar,
Sustainability
Manager at Space
Interior Systems*



assess any potential vulnerabilities. Based on the risks identified, we develop a well-defined action plan aimed at mitigating and eliminating these risks. Furthermore, we collaborate with our supply chain partners to gain valuable insights into potential areas of exposure or key risks in our operations.

Conducting supplier due diligence

We strongly advocate for supplier due diligence as an integral part of our roadmap. We request all suppliers provide a copy of their modern slavery statement. Additionally, we conduct audits on suppliers that fall into high-risk categories to ensure alignment with our commitment to eradicate modern slavery.

Appointing a leader within the company

In the pursuit of our goals, we understand the importance of designated leadership. To drive forward our efforts in eliminating modern slavery and human trafficking, we appoint a dedicated staff member responsible for championing this cause. The individual plays a pivotal role in educating our workforce, responding to problems, and proactively tackling workers' issues or concerns.

Training the staff

Education and awareness form the bedrock of our efforts against modern slavery. We provide comprehensive training to all our staff, empowering them to recognise the signs of modern slavery within our company and throughout the supply chain. This training is integrated into our company training matrix, emphasising red flags to watch for and the appropriate course of action if foul play is suspected.

Embracing modern slavery best practices

Space strongly believes that collaboration is key to driving industry-wide change. By working closely with peers across the construction industry and fit-out sector, we strive to benchmark our progress and share

best practices. This collective approach allows us to gain a deeper understanding of modern slavery risks within our business and supply chain, enabling us to develop initiatives that foster positive, widespread change.

Conclusion

Modern slavery is a harrowing reality that demands the concerted efforts of businesses and industries alike. At Space, we are committed to combating this global issue by adhering to our modern slavery compliance roadmap. By fostering transparency, education, and collaboration, we believe we can make a substantial impact in eradicating modern slavery from our business practices and beyond. We urge others to join us in this vital mission, as we work towards a world free from exploitation and human rights abuses.

www.space-is.co.uk

Modern slavery is a difficult topic. It affects a huge number of people and the construction industry is definitely a target for it. It is important to share examples of good practice, but also to be open about experiences so that others can learn and improve.



FIND OUT MORE

To read more about the risks of modern slavery in construction and what your legal obligations are under the Modern Slavery Act, visit the FIS modern slavery in construction toolkit: www.thefis.org/hot-topics/modern-slavery

Source

1. www.humantraffickingsearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Global-Slavery-Index-2023.pdf
2. www.supplychainschool.co.uk/topics/sustainability/modern-slavery
3. www.supplychainschool.co.uk
4. www.stronger2gether.org/construction

TOP 10 RISKS TO AVOID WHEN PROCURING AND INSTALLING FIRE-RESISTANT DRYLINING

Designing, procuring and constructing drylining is complicated and detailed, it needs to be done by people who are competent and designed by people who have full knowledge of what it is required to do and what it will interface with, as well as what will penetrate it.



Joe Cilia, FIS Technical Director

THIS is particularly true where any type of performance is required: fire resistance, sound insulation, wind loadings, robustness, and if it is likely to encounter moist or humid environments.

The top 10 things that may result in a non-compliant installation are:

- 1. Swapping manufacturer's plasterboards or components:** On the face may appear compliant, but without test evidence of compliance it may not be - It also negates any manufacturer warranty.
- 2. Using different screws or different screw centres than recommended by the system owner:** Screws are an integral part of the system, and the manufacturers'* system should be procured and installed as a complete system to be compliant.
- 3. Assuming that all systems are constructed in the same way:** They are not and can't be. Each manufacturer will test their systems independently of others and may differ in fundamental details such as openings and deflection heads as examples.
- 4. Assuming that a skim coat negates the need to tape and fill the joints where recommended:** All systems are tested to achieve a required performance and any

deviation from the system-tested details are likely to make the installation non-compliant.

- 5. Assuming the size and proximity of the builders' work openings without checking with the system owners:** Prepared openings for service penetrations are likely to be restricted to a certain maximum size, maximum proximity from other holes, doors, soffits and junctions.
- 6. Assuming the size and proximity of the door openings and the door weight, can be achieved without further intervention and without checking with the system owners:** The size and weight of a door leaf can be in excess of that tested with the system and can require additional steels to support the weight leading to a knock-on consequence for fire protection of the supporting steel.
- 7. Assuming that all plasterboards can be installed horizontally:** Unless the manufacturer's systems have compliant evidence, all plasterboard should be installed vertically.
- 8. Failing to observe the correct method to install the insulation between the boards where required:** Insulation is installed to provide acoustic performance and enhanced thermal insulation. Failure to

install the insulation correctly can lead to a loss of performance.

- 9. Failing to stagger the boards and board joints:** All plasterboards should be staggered from face to face and in the case of double boarding and two lifts the boards should be staggered against the internal layer of plasterboard to maintain the required performance.
- 10. Failing to install a flat plate or noggin:** At horizontal board joints as recommended by the system owner when they are required to meet the manufactures recommendations will result in a non-compliant installation.

I couldn't leave out **installing drylining when the site isn't watertight**, which is, unfortunately, a common practice. It runs the risk of plasterboards getting wet and as there is no evidence of compliance if boards get wet it requires replacement of the boards and possibly any insulation and frames.

In simple terms forewarned is forearmed, so always:

- Check what the specification says including workmanship
- Check that any changes are recorded and approved
- Photograph and record the build in stages

*Note the manufacturer refers to who puts the system on the market including the person or organisation who specifies or procures the components from separate sources on the assumption of performance.

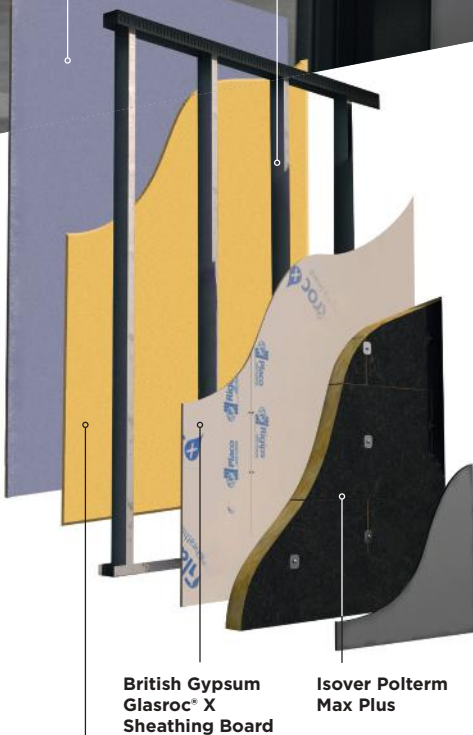
A copy of this article is available on our website www.thefis.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Top-10-risks-to-avoid-when-procuring-and-installing-Fire-resistant-drylining.pdf so you can share it with your teams and contacts.



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*Test data for our specifications can only be used with specified Hadley Steel Framing SFS components. Please contact us through Technical Support on british-gypsum.com to discuss working with other framing suppliers. Image for illustration purposes only.



Find out more at
gyplyner-xternal.com

A TRUE LEGEND, EDDIE MCELHINNEY

Eddie McElhinney sadly passed peacefully on 9 February 2023 at the age of 80. SpecFinish spoke to Eddie's colleagues and clients and, whilst they all agreed the word legend is used too frequently, it is a title that he richly deserved.

EDDIE was the driving force behind SAS International (SAS), a British manufacturer of quality metal ceilings and bespoke architectural metalwork, recognized as a true visionary in the construction industry particularly in ceilings, and was deeply respected by colleagues and clients all over the world. As if that wasn't enough Eddie was the man behind Commercial Ceiling Factors (CCF), which helped shape the interior building materials distribution model in the United Kingdom.

After speaking to some of Eddie's colleagues and clients it was very clear that he was an entrepreneur who was extremely driven and passionate to succeed and make a difference.

He was always looking at how to do things better and no challenge was too big as he was always eager to achieve what others couldn't. His relentless focus on the relationships with and between developers, architects and SAS customers no doubt changed the face and quality of building fit-out. Not only would he have an enduring impact on the construction industry and in particular the interior building products distribution and the ceilings market but also on the lives of the individuals he worked alongside and their families. I use the term work alongside as I have heard many accounts about Eddie's leadership style where he wore many hats including a magician, head teacher, engineer and architect. It has been said he always led by example, had a 'can do attitude', and supported, taught, and mentored individuals to develop themselves and push the boundaries of engineering. These individuals have told me that they exhibit the values and qualities which Eddie instilled in them. They are extremely grateful to Eddie and are very vocal about having the determination to drive themselves and SAS forward to make Eddie proud and cement his legacy in our industry.

A rare interview with Eddie in 2016 gave us an insight into how he approached the industry and achieved success, he said: "Everything about buildings is about form and shape, but I don't claim to have any artistic

skills. I might go to a motor show and look at a car and then say to myself 'I could shape metal like that, but in a totally different way. You don't necessarily have to be an originator of form and shape. You could look at the curve or design of a car and be inspired.

"The Sistine Chapel's ornate ceiling is beautiful, but I always looked at the colour and shape of things, thinking how we might put our own twist on them to create something with its own identity. If you did that once a year, you'd be very successful.

"Usually, four companies in the world tender for the largest projects. We go for them all. We win some, we lose some. We each prototype a design for it, then you have to hope that yours is their favourite one"¹.

The Journey to success

Eddie's journey is fascinating, there were many twists and turns and significant milestones along the way to his and the company's success. Eddie built, bought and sold various businesses always with an eye on creating value to invest in SAS and shape what SAS has become today.

Eddie was very proud of all of the projects however, significant landmark projects included Broadgate development, Canary Wharf buildings, Gherkin St Mary Axe, Stansted Airport, Vodafone HQ, Newbury, Tag McClaren HQ, Woking, Westfield Stratford, The Shard, Bloomberg and Crossrail to name but a few.

The significant milestones

The 60s

Eddie grew up in rural County Cavan which he left for London shortly after doing his Leaving Cert. In London, he did various jobs and stumbled upon working on the tools for Cullum Ceilings, and by the end of the 60s he formed his first subcontracting business, Principal Ceilings.

The 70s

Over the decade Eddie carried out various supply and install contracts which helped to



build his reputation as a quality suspended ceiling contractor.

Towards the end of the 70s, the company changed its name to Special Acoustic Services (SAS) and was operating from Eddie's house in Maidenhead. The company was awarded a major contract by John Laing Management to supply and install the suspended ceilings for the new Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB) regional headquarters at Bedminster Down in Bristol. This project won a number of architectural awards and established Eddie and SAS's credibility as a major ceiling's contractor.

As a result of this Eddie and SAS went on to win a number of prestige contracts including the Courage Brewery in Reading, IBM in Havant and BMW's HQ in Bracknell.

The company moved from Maidenhead to unit 7 Suttons Business Park which was a 3,500 sq. ft. unit. Initially, 12 people were employed and the business focused on the administration of project management contracting installation of ceilings.

At the same time, Eddie spotted an opportunity in building materials distribution and Commercial Ceiling Factors (CCF) commenced trading. As mentioned, CCF changed the interior building materials distribution model in the UK. Eddie aggressively grew the business with multiple depots all over the country. CCF prided itself on exceptional customer service and access to the broadest range of materials possible.

The 80s

The 80s saw Eddie becoming active in acquisitions – Ceiling Consultants, a Bedfordshire based suspended ceiling company that became SAS Midlands, Horace W Cullum (Eddie's original employer), Manchester Slate Company a roofing, cladding and suspended ceiling contracting company, Douglas Manufacturing, a factory based in Maybole Ayrshire, and Truline Ceiling Products (TCP) which was acquired from the Roskel Group. TCP were manufacturers of

illed and plain mineral fibre ceiling products and started Eddie's interest in manufacturing.

Eddie also continued the expansion of CCF with depots in Stevenage, West Bromwich London Silvertown, Fareham, Thetford, Bristol, Leeds, Loughborough, Cardiff, Manchester and Glasgow.

By the middle of the decade, a 50% interest in Gema Baulemente AG, Switzerland was acquired. Gema was a well-established manufacturer of metal ceiling systems. Eddie had recognised the benefits of metal ceilings, the flexibility metal ceilings provided architects in meeting their aesthetic ambitions, and their exceptional acoustic performance. He was determined this would be the direction for suspended ceilings in the UK.

With the expertise learned from his ownership of Gema, Eddie took the decision to commence manufacturing in the UK and started the construction of the first phase of the Bridgend factory in South Wales. The first site was 4.3 acres and he built a 58,000 sq ft factory and office building.

The 90s

The start of the decade saw the Bridgend factory officially opened by the Secretary of State for Wales (and Eddie hired a whole train to take guests from Paddington to Bridgend for the opening). Bridgend was extended a few years later and is now the largest metal ceiling plant in Europe.

The building of the factory in Bridgend and the successful completion of Stansted Airport enabled Eddie to successfully bid for the Foster & Partners designed Chep Lap Kok Airport, Hong Kong. This significant international project established Eddie on the international stage for large, complex infrastructure projects and enabled SAS International's global expansion.



David Hunt, the then Secretary of State for Wales and Eddie at the opening of the Bridgend factory

The 00s

Eddie's passion for manufacturing continued and he sold the highly successful CCF to Travis Perkins, so he could continue to focus on designing and manufacturing best in class ceilings. The CCF brand continues to this day. He used the proceeds of the CCF sale to invest heavily in SAS. SAS continued to successfully win ceilings projects in the UK and all over the world, building its reputation and engineering expertise.

Towards the end of this decade, SAS also built a new factory in West Bromwich, Birmingham for its door and partitioning business (and this has recently been rebranded Truline in recognition of Eddie's legacy).

The 10s

At the beginning of the decade, Eddie opened up a Dubai office servicing projects all over the Middle East including KSA, the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain and Muscat. Eddie travelled extensively building relationships all over the world. He bid and won the Kowloon MTR station in Hong Kong which is the single largest contracting project SAS has ever delivered.

After 48 years in the business, Eddie retired, staying on as a non-exec, and his daughter Siobhan took over as Chairman of SAS. She left her law career in London to oversee the business, building and developing the management team to lead the business. She remains involved as the company chairman.

In the middle of the decade, SAS Australia based in Sydney commenced and won Barangaroo, the biggest multi tower office development in Australia, to launch its business.

SAS celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2018.

Siobhan McElhinney, Chairman of SAS said at the time: "Our 50th birthday gives us a great excuse to celebrate all our

achievements with the people that make it happen, our brilliant employees.

"We are all incredibly proud of what SAS represents - a UK manufacturer which employs people right across the UK and beyond, and works on the most prestigious buildings all over the world. The pioneering spirit of our employees has led us to great success".

The 20s

At the start of the 20s, SAS moved to a brand new HQ building on the same Suttons Business Park estate in Reading that the business had been on since the 1970s. SAS has delivered numerous packages on Crossrail,



Eddie during SAS motor racing years

cementing its reputation in transport infrastructure work and has also continued its development globally by opening offices in New York and Austin as it won prestigious projects such as Newark Airport, Deutsche Bank, NYC and Salesforce, Chicago.

Eddie sadly passed peacefully on 9 February 2023 at the age of 80, may he rest in peace.

More than 50 years on

In 1977 the group employed 10 people and by 1997 had 345 and today +700. The company now operates international offices and factories and leads through innovation, cutting-edge design, and technical acoustic expertise. Success is built on continued investment in manufacturing and achieving value for clients through world-class engineered solutions. SAS produces suspended ceilings for a vast range of spaces across the world be it offices, airports, schools, universities, hospitals, railways or datacentres. The acoustic suspended ceilings provide effective solutions with high quality materials and class leading design.

Commenting on future growth plans for SAS, Siobhan said: "The demand from clients, developers and their architectural teams is forever more challenging solutions, whether it is for integration of services, new aesthetics and materials or prioritising sustainability. SAS remains committed to delivering those solutions, working with client teams from day one, and delivering exceptional results for our clients. By doing so we will be true to Eddie's vision and values. Our international opportunities increase every year as we experience strong demand for our products in USA, Australia and Europe. Eddie was incredibly proud of our people, how they are able to find opportunities and always deliver - we are all driven to continue to make him proud".

www.sasint.co.uk

Source:

1. www.independent.ie/business/precious-metal-how-ceilings-for-landmark-buildings-made-a-cavan-man-a-fortune/35074733.html

HIMACS: THE HIGH-PERFORMANCE SURFACE WITH ENDLESS CREATIVE POSSIBILITIES



Stuart Devoil, Group Head of Marketing at James Latham

In the second article in the series about new, innovative and groundbreaking materials, **Stuart Devoil**, Group Head of Marketing at James Latham, introduces us to HIMACS®, a high-spec, high-performance solid surface with near-unrivalled creative potential.

Solid surfaces are one of the most exciting and fastest-growing categories within the global sheet materials market.

Pioneered in the late 1960s, they could be defined as low-maintenance and non-porous substances composed of minerals and pigments blended with acrylics and/or resins. However, it's probably easier to describe them as natural acrylic stone. They can be produced to mimic the appearance of naturally occurring materials such as marble and granite or achieve vivid colourways nearly impossible with other materials. What's more, the ability to shape, bend and seamlessly join a product that looks like stone brings endless possibilities to the interiors and fit-out sector.

Originally used as kitchen worktops, solid surfaces have been increasingly specified for a variety of applications across residential

and commercial interiors, as fit-out professionals have come to appreciate the category's incredible versatility.

Fast-becoming a go-to choice for surfacing, one of the highest quality, and most innovative, brands currently on the market is HIMACS.

Launched in 1995 by forward-thinking interior products manufacturer LX Hausys¹, an offshoot of Korean tech giant LG, HIMACS is the culmination of a desire to create a durable, smooth, non-porous and visually seamless surface which would also meet the highest standard for quality, aesthetics, fabrication, functionality, and hygiene.

I don't exaggerate when I tell SpecFinish readers that it effortlessly achieves these objectives and more. So, let's take a deeper dive, and find out what sets it apart from the competition and why it's now so popular.

Ultimate precision

First and foremost, HIMACS' unique workability is astonishing. Its composition, a mix of sustainable bauxite powder and pigments, bonded with acrylic, gives it incredible strength, yet it can be worked in the same way as wood, whether sawn, routed, CNC'd drilled or sanded. Even better, fabricators can also achieve unnoticeable joints, for a consistent, and attractive finish.

This means that it can be cut down to the smallest components like cabinet handles or glued and sanded to achieve one continuous, seamless surface, such as an uninterrupted wall-to-wall countertop.

Not only that, with remarkable thermoformability it can be heated, twisted or curved into almost any shape without compromising its structural integrity.



A stunning finish demonstrating HIMACS astonishing unique workability

Only the other day I was able to witness the impressive range of processes which can simultaneously be used on HIMACS at the James Latham-sponsored student competition at leading furniture-making college, Rycotewood, in Oxfordshire. One entrant, Joe Fortune, created an elegant, spiralling planter which combines CNC cut-outs, numerous seamless joints and smooth, thermoformed curves to achieve an attractive, yet stable structure that perfectly showcases HIMACS' qualities.

It perfectly demonstrated how the ultimate level of precision and finesse can be achieved, from standard surfacing applications to the creation of ambitious 3-D features.

What a performer!

In application, HIMACS delivers at every level. For starters, the material's hardness and resistant qualities make it perfectly suited to high traffic, busy environments. The product's composition makes it incredibly tough, so it's able to withstand

everyday scratching and can be easily repaired if heavier damage is inflicted.

A non-porous surface also means it's stain-proof and ultra-hygienic, so safe to use for food preparation stations, bars and washrooms. Likewise, the material is also low maintenance and can even tolerate tough cleaning products and chemicals.

In an era when sustainability is a critical consideration in the fit-out, HIMACS also possesses M1 Emission Classification and LEED. All this means specifiers can sleep easy in the knowledge they're working with a product range which ticks all the boxes in the design brief.

Any colour you like

Of course, a visually appealing fit-out is almost as important as a high-performing one, and HIMACS doesn't disappoint.

The brand prides itself on a portfolio of near-unlimited patterns and colourways. This ranges from surfaces which faithfully represent natural stone, including quartz, marble, granite, sandstone and even composites like terrazzo and concrete to solid colours from bright white and jet black to subtle cream and vibrant orange.

That's not all, HIMACS also has a special range of translucent surfaces which can be backlit for a striking effect, perfect for commercial, retail and hospitality settings alike.

Offering massive creative potential, fit-out professionals can deliver on the most aesthetically ambitious design brief. When working with HIMACS, the only limit is the imagination.

On brand fit-outs

A recent example which perfectly demonstrated the versatility of HIMACS in-situ is its extensive use within many of German Doner Kebab's (GDK) UK sites.

Here, HIMACS was chosen by the country's fastest-growing fast-food chain for its form as much as its function. GDK was particularly keen to ensure all interior finishes dovetailed with its distinctive brand identity as much as selecting a surface which would meet the stringent requirements of a busy food retail environment.

LX Hausys, James Latham, and Leeds-based fit-out specialists Paradigm Woodworking teamed up, not only offering brand-identical colourways but also supplying, cutting, shaping and installing over 1,000 sheets of HIMACS Cima and Orange colourways GDK establishments nationwide.

Once again, the project demonstrated HIMACS thermoformable properties, with numerous curved features specified within the restaurants.

Vital statistics

In terms of topline specs, to recap, HIMACS sheets are made from a blend of natural materials and pigments set in an acrylic matrix. With the ability to be worked in a similar way to wood, they can also be comfortably combined with other materials such as stone and metals.

Available in a wide range of dimensions and thicknesses, HIMACS sheets have a 15-year warranty and carry ISO9001, ISO14001, BS8800, NSF and LGA certification.

HIMACS is only available in the UK via James Latham, a company well-versed in bringing pioneering products to market. With 14 depots across the UK and Ireland, housing 55,000m² of warehouse space, the distributor holds broad stocks of decorative and construction materials.

Possessing a healthy supply of 100 HIMACS colours, James Latham is ready to deliver this best-in-class product direct to the nation's fit-out community, whatever the scale, size or style requirement.

www.lathamtimber.co.uk

Source

1. www.lxhausys.com/uk-en



FIND OUT MORE

To find out more about what makes this material so special visit:

<https://lathamssolidsurface.co.uk/our-products/himacs>

Joe Fortune's elegant spiralling planter showcases HIMACS' qualities



PRODUCTIVITY FUELLED BY INNOVATION

Construction 2025¹ set down a vision for construction emphasising heavily the need for productivity improvements. But nearly a decade on and with just two years left the 33% saving in cost and 50% reduction in time for projects remains a pipe dream.

BUT whilst the time may have slipped, primarily due to the dreaded P's of pandemics and procurement, the drivers for change are perhaps greater than ever - sustainability, rising costs, major labour shortages, the need to deliver compliance through better collaboration and partnerships are forcing us to re-evaluate the way we work and technology is poised to help us deliver.

Understanding the Process: The numbers behind inefficient construction practices

A fascinating study by the technology firm Buildots (which has developed site cameras that can be worn by supervisors and used to measure progress) pulled data from 64 global construction projects embracing over 14 million square foot of space and nearly 82 years of work combined and exemplifies how tech can both help us be more productive, but also harness data to benchmark and understand productivity.

In "sequence deviations" essentially where programmes go array and work takes place out of sequence. Across the projects it was identified that around 10% of activities were performed out of sequence, a direct correlation to delays and sequencing issues is identified. It is also interesting to note that compared to residential, sequence deviations are more likely on commercial projects.

To read the full report visit: <https://tinyurl.com/ut4wna3d>
www.buildots.com



Exoskeleton suit in operation

Powering up the People: The next step in human augmentation, productive working

There is growing momentum behind human augmentation in the construction industry and it is clear this emerging technology can help us to work safer, smarter and more productively.

The exoskeleton suit, developed by Stanley cuts down on overexertion by supporting workers upper limbs when performing monotonous activities. They distribute the user's weight evenly to the core and waist by reducing strain, particularly on the arms and shoulders. This leads to decreased workplace injuries and enables users to improve their health and reduce the number of sick days they take if they still take the required rest breaks for physical and mental well-being.

By being able to retain skilled workers for longer periods due to fewer employee sick days, companies can utilise exoskeletons suits to improve operations by improving employee well-being and increasing on-site productivity.

Augmentation technology has the ability to enhance the lives (and work) of people in our sector. Today's companies must be aware of the issues caused by musculoskeletal injuries from health and safety issues that affect employee well-being to productivity issues.

www.stanleyhandling.co.uk



HP SitePrint laying out a site

Tightening the Process: Robotic layout solution could revolutionise the construction industry

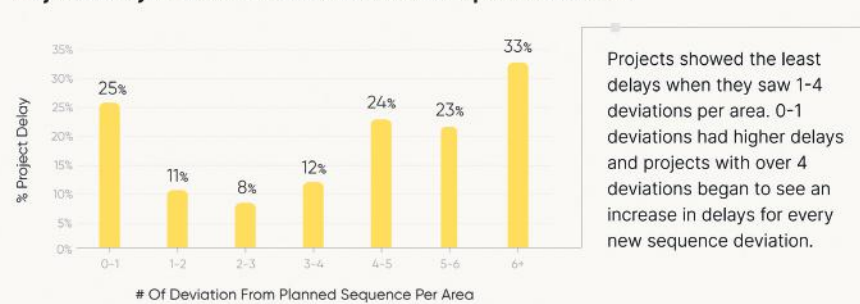
Robotic solutions are evolving that can print the most complex construction site layouts with pinpoint accuracy, in a fraction of the time it takes manually.

HP SitePrint helps automate the site layout process.

2D CAD drawings can be uploaded to HP SitePrint, a lightweight and robust robot that can work around obstructions to print digital layouts onto the floor with pinpoint accuracy. The manufacturers claim that the productivity gains are up to 10 times traditional methods.

www.hp.com/SitePrint

Project Delay vs. Deviation From Planned Sequence Per Area



A graph taken from the Buildots report *The numbers behind inefficient construction practices*

These are just three examples of how technology is driving productivity. There are countless more, technology is driving change and we want to tell this story

Entry is now open for the 2024 innovation awards

We want to hear about your latest innovations that meet a need in the sector and the evidence of adoption or planned use in a commercial environment.

Our focus is ideas that help support improvements in efficiency, productivity, performance, quality or perception of the finishes and interiors sector.

The awards comprise four categories:

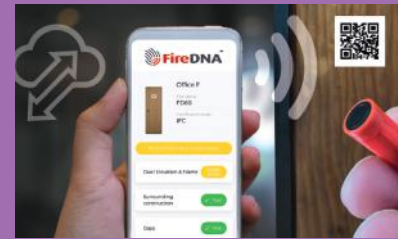
- Product Innovation – Fit-out
- Product Innovation – Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (FF&E)
- Digital Innovation
- Sustainable Innovation

There will also be an overall Innovation of the Year. The winner of each category will be given five minutes to pitch their innovation to the audience who will determine the overall Innovation of the Year on the day.

The Awards are open to all companies operating in the finishes and interiors sector, regardless of size. To qualify innovations should have been introduced to the UK market in the last five years. Deadline for entry is 31 October 2023.

Benefits of entering

- **Free promotion:** Receive substantial publicity across FIS social media channels and the SpecFinish magazine.
- **Elevate your company:** Raise the credibility and the profile of your company.
- **Standout against your competitors:** An award allows you to differentiate your company from your competition.



FireDNA was the 2023 Innovation of the Year and Digital Innovation winner for its Passive Fire Product Monitoring Software

- **Attract customers and talent:** Awards draw new customers and new employees to your business.
- **Increase customer loyalty:** Being recognised for innovation encourages customer loyalty and drives sales.
- **Boost staff morale and motivation:** Awards help build motivation within your team, raising engagement and productivity.

You can enter online at: www.thefis.org/membership-hub/fis-awards/innovation

Source

1. <https://tinyurl.com/ytku32uw>

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www.drywallpro-cut.co.uk

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

FIS Scottish Awards Lunch

voco Grand Central Hotel, Glasgow
15 September

FIS Regional Meeting

Manchester
29 November

FIS AGM and Regional Meeting

Hill Dickinson LLP, London
7 November

FIS Conference

Business Design Centre, London
27 - 28 February 2024

Training Awards Lunch

Plasterers Hall, London
21 November

Workspace Design Show

Business Design Centre, London
27 - 28 February 2024



AGM at Hill Dickinson, The Broadgate Tower

For further information of these events visit: www.thefis.org/events

DEALING WITH NON-COMPLIANCE

One of the significant changes brought to bear by the Building Safety Act has been its amendments to the Defective Premises Act (DPA) 1972. Previously the limitation period for claims under the DPA was six years from the completion of works. This has been extended to 30 years retrospectively for buildings completed before 28 June 2022 and 15 years for buildings.



James Parlour, FIS Technical and Vetting Manager

THIS change means that an increase in claims is expected relating to those projects completed before June 2022, and contractors will need to consider their options if non-compliant concerns are brought forward against them.

In the event that completed work has been identified as being non-compliant by a client, another contractor or a third-party specialist via a commissioned report, there are a number of steps that contractors should take which are somewhat universal to the type of construction and the nature of the complaint that should be followed in order to allow FIS to provide assistance.

If it has not been made clear in the complaint, you should not be afraid to query the qualifications of those identifying the non-compliance and the standards against which non-compliance has been determined. Someone who is appropriately qualified should always be willing to supply this information. It is important that whoever is commissioned is independent as the report may be presented in any subsequent adjudication and/or legal proceedings.

Depending on the answers, you might consider commissioning your own report by an appropriately qualified third party. If there is disagreement over the facts but you do not action a resolution, then matters will likely proceed under the assumption that you agree with the initial report of non-compliance.

FIS offers an Advisory Service¹ covering all matters relating to suspended ceilings, partitioning, drylining, plastering and access floors whereby you will be connected to a competent person with access to a discounted rate (for members).

If the facts of non-compliance are agreed upon, you should gather evidence relating to every point below for each identified issue:

- 1. Issue identification:** Extract from the appropriate technical report. Consider whether cited standards are date applicable to the installation.
- 2. Nature of issue:** Design and/or workmanship?
- 3. Contractual responsibility:** Was this within the scope of your works and do you have any design liability?
- 4. Construction detail:** Builders work information, detail drawings and manufacturers information provided to support construction.
- 5. Specification:** Records of the specification including any revisions at time of contract and procurement etc.
- 6. Variations:** Instructions issued and your involvement in the revised detail/solution. What attempt was made to support compliance of the variation?
- 7. Inspection:** Video or photographic evidence of the condition at key stages of construction, at handover, and when you left the site.

8. Conclusion: Were your contractual responsibilities met?

9. Suggested action: How do you believe the situation should be resolved?

Once evidence has been gathered to support all instances of non-compliance according to the above framework, you will be in a better position to credibly approach either a direct solution or seek legal advice/representation.

FIS offers free Contractual and Legal² advice for members and the above evidence gathering process will greatly assist the value of this engagement.

Source

1. www.thefis.org/membership-hub/memberbenefits/member-benefits-technical/fis-advisory-service/
2. www.thefis.org/membership-hub/memberbenefits/member-benefits-contractual-legal/



Winning smiles as Parkeray receives the RoSPA Order of Distinction Award



(L-R) Michael Murray, Terry Tracey and Spencer Bush receiving the Award

On behalf of Parkeray, Terry Tracey CMIOSH FIIRSM, Michael Murray and Spencer Bush Tech IOSH proudly accepted The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) Order of Distinction Award.

Terry who is the Interiors & Lite Board / Health and Safety Director said: "With 15 consecutive RoSPA Golds to date, this prestigious award is a testament to our culture and approach to health and safety. Thank you to our project teams, supply chain partners and health and safety team for making this possible".

www.parkeray.co.uk

Optima Systems announces entry into US commercial design market

Optima Systems, a manufacturer of glass partitions and door systems, has entered the US commercial design and real estate market as PurOptima.

Benhar Office Interiors (BOI), has been appointed as PurOptima's first Project Delivery Partner. BOI is one of New York City's most trusted building interior solutions providers, with a steadfast commitment to excellence across its entire operation. Entering into a partnership with PurOptima is the result of a shared ambition across both companies to introduce the US commercial design and real estate market to the highest quality, most sustainable glass wall partitions and door solutions currently available.

Commenting on the expansion into the US, Managing Director of Optima Products, Christian Mabey, says: "Bringing the Optima brand into the US market has been a longstanding ambition. We are particularly keen to show contractors, specifiers, and building owners how choosing our glass wall systems will deliver maximum ROI, on so many levels, from striking aesthetic design to market leading acoustic performance and carbon savings. New York City, with its vibrant and well-established commercial construction scene, was a strategically obvious place to start, allowing us to test the market and establish our reputation locally, before exploring further expansion in the territory."

He continues: "BOI has a well-won reputation for creating faultless, premium office interiors, which made them a natural choice to partner with. Their values align well with ours, with a dedication to delivering clients with innovative, high-performance solutions that meet their bespoke requirements every time. We both also hold a strong commitment to developing the most sustainable solutions on the market, to enhance the future of the built environment.

Commenting on the partnership Mark Benhar, Founder of BOI, says: "It's so exciting to be involved as PurOptima's inaugural Project Deliver Partner. There's so much synergy between the two organisations, particularly a shared goal to deliver the highest quality commercial interiors to clients in the New York City area. We can't wait to bring Optima products into the US for the first time and introduce the market to a premium proposition that will take their office space to the next level."

At launch, PurOptima will offer a core range of single and double glazed partitions including Optima 117 Plus, Revolution 54 Plus, Revolution 100, as well as the innovative solid wall solution, the Adaptable Wall. PurOptima will also offer a range of acoustic glass door systems including the Edge, Axile, Elite and Kinetic series', as well as their selection of Timber door options.

PurOptima will operate out of New York City, with BOI managing new and existing client relationships as well as installation.

www.puroptima.com

www.benharoffice.com



Howick survey reveals brand penetration, plus challenges and opportunities for construction software developers

Howick recently undertook a global Construction Software Survey to explore the overall usage of construction technologies like framing automation and CNC-driven technology. It looked at how the take-up of software changed by sector, then it delved into specific categories, including architectural design, MEP design, framing detailing, engineering analysis, cloud-based BIM, and the usage of 2D and

3D technology. The results of the survey are now available and provide valuable insights into the brands of software in use, how those tools are being used, and how they might be improved for the benefit of users.

To access the full Construction Software Survey findings visit: www.howickltd.com/stories/construction-software-survey-insights



Just 14% of building control professionals feel confident when it comes to the specifications of systems for fire safety

Less than a fifth (14%) of building control professionals feel confident when it comes to understanding the specifications of systems for fire safety.

Grey areas and ambiguity around the fire safety guidance detailed within Approved Document B is continuing to cause confusion for professionals across the construction industry. Consequently, an overwhelming majority (86%) say that they are worried about liability when it comes to specifying systems for fire safety, according to new research from Siniat.

Changes to Approved Document B in 2019 outlined that products and systems for fire resistance should be tested to the latest EN standards and that any assessment of fire resistance must use tested evidence. It also stated that this should now be conducted by 3rd parties, and follow the EN standard for direct or extended application, known as DIAP or EXAP.

Despite this, the survey of over 200 construction professionals revealed that less than two in five (35.7%) of those working in building control know that ADB contains the guidelines for fire safety building regulations and a quarter (28%) are not familiar with the extended application standards that should be used to assess and classify systems for fire performance.

Robert Cridford, Technical Manager at Siniat said: "The updated guidelines in Approved Document B are more onerous

than previous testing standards. EXAP is more rigorous and demands extensive additional testing, extension and the classification of a manufacturer's entire portfolio of systems.

"The onus is on manufacturers to provide this performance data and test their products using the most robust standards possible. However, building control professionals must ensure that adequate fire performance data is provided for any project. The easiest way to do this, as asked by Approved Document B, whilst also ensuring a Golden Thread of performance data, is to request 3rd party classification reports for all systems used for fire safety.

"Approved Document B gives some legacy allowance for the 1980s BS476 fire resistance methods, and in some cases newer EN standards don't cover every eventuality so reverting might be the last resort, but for partitions, and many other areas, full EN testing and classification is available now.

"As an industry, there is no room for error, we have to work collaboratively and ensure we are all building to the highest standards. This is the only way we, as an industry, can meet the most up-to-date legislation, avoid liability issues and most importantly, ensure the safety of the people who will live and work in the buildings we construct."

To find out more visit:

www.siniat.co.uk/en-gb/uk/exap

Workplace Interiors Co celebrates 30 years

Workplace Interiors Company Cheltenham held a special evening to celebrate its 30 year in business. Lots of delicious food and drink were consumed as the team celebrated achieving such an amazing milestone. In a LinkedIn post, they thanked their dedicated staff for their contributions over the years and everyone for their kind messages.

On the celebrations, Director Ben Hough states: "We're a family-founded business and our team is an extension of that. The contributions of our close-knit team have been pivotal to the achievements of over 30 years of Workplace Interiors Co, shaping it into the successful group that we are today. It's been an exceptional journey across three decades and we're excited for all of the opportunities that lie ahead"

Established in 1993, Workplace Interiors Co has developed into a dynamic group of brands offering a comprehensive range of commercial interior services, covering ceilings, floors, walls and everything in between. Driven by their commitment to helping customers create high-performance and engaging spaces that maximise potential.

www.workplaceco.co.uk



The team celebrating 30 years in business

Lighthouse Construction Industry Charity 2022 Impact Report shows 23% increase in demand in services

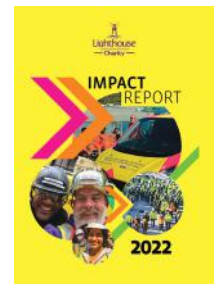
Last year the Lighthouse Construction Industry Charity helped more people than ever before with 3,421 families reaching out for support, a 23% increase on the previous year. 76% of requests for support came from tradespeople seeking help with a variety of emotional, physical and financial wellbeing support.

The charity's caseworkers leveraged a staggering £1.77m of additional funding to support 1,976 complex cases where multiple interventions were required to resolve issues such as homelessness, family breakdowns and domestic abuse.

In response to the issues faced in what can be a challenging environment, the charity invested 22% of its grant expenditure in delivering 1,753 face to face and virtual counselling sessions. This service has meant that the construction workforce has had fast access to a variety of counselling services to address issues such as bereavement, relationship breakdowns and anger management.

Launched in February 2022, the charity's 'Make it Visible on Site' initiative has seen them visit 173 sites and engage with almost 9,000 site operatives. The 'On Site' team has met with some of our industry's most vulnerable workers, including the trades and contractors and they have provided immediate safeguarding support to 25 people during their visits.

To read more about the Impact Report and hear the views of Sarah Bolton, COO and Bill Hill, CEO at the Lighthouse Construction Industry Charity visit: www.lighthouseclub.org/lighthouse-construction-industry-charity-2022-impact-report-shows-23-demand-in-services
www.lighthouseclub.org



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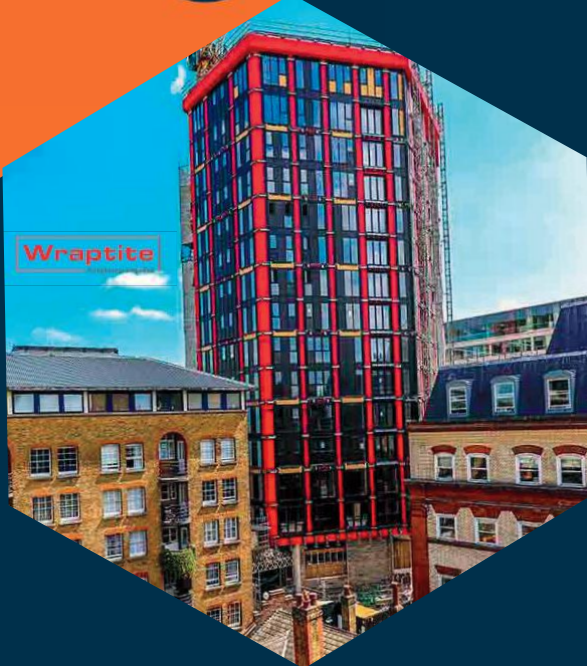


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