

Are You a Champion?

When you are building your own home do you need a champion?

Let's rephrase that:

Do you need a champion or does the project need a champion?

I believe that the project needs a champion – a key ingredient of success in all building projects is having someone prepared to stand up and take responsibility. Someone who sees the big and getting bigger picture and leads on everything from the *very* beginning to the *very* end.

This was summed up very well by Dr Martin Parkinson who said:

'Unless there are clear lines of accountability, as in who is responsible for doing what, no-one is accountable'.

You need to have someone who thinks that this is an important endeavour and is prepared to infect others with a sense of value and urgency. Too often contractors work on many projects at the same time, whether it is starting off and providing early input or picking up on defects or 'snags' after completion. Their minds are on many things and your project does not have their single focus.

Project Manager

You can have many titles but the person running the project (the project manager) is the champion of the project. He or she cares about all aspects of the finished project. This is a commitment from the beginning to the end. It is imperative that someone taking on the build of their own home is tuned in and involved in all the major and minor decisions. They must know what their goals are and what the aim for the project is. What are the timelines and what are the budgets?

Do they have full access to the three most important sets of documents?

- The design drawings.
- The budget.
- The programme of works.

Can they influence changes and variations as events occur?

To effectively do this they must have both tactics and strategy to get them collaboratively to the finish line.

Tactic.

Consider the input you get from your consultants and designers as raw data. This means design, regulations and codes of practice... and how this must be put together. This information is mixed in with the style and content of what you want to include in your home.

Strategy.

The output from all this is a smooth information flow, which is provided to contractors and operatives. They simply want relevant information and instruction, allowing them to efficiently progress their works. This is provided by drawings, specifications, schedule of work and clear instruction.

Collaboration.

The combination of the strategy and tactic brings you to collaboration. This is what you move towards: everyone in the larger team co-operating, with the same aims. People will understand from your example that high standards are expected and that they should be proud of their skillset and what they have delivered to the whole project. This is their opportunity to shine and do their best work.

To do this, the information provided must be fully complete. If there is a detail change, this must be communicated and recorded. With modern technology, all instructions should be available digitally and accessible anywhere, any time.

So, the champion leads from the front, is accessible to all suppliers and contractors and contacts them from time to time to ensure all is on schedule. They understand what is happening and how they want things to happen. They agree to deadlines and expect others to do as well. They will be dressed appropriately, have a clean and safe work area with materials in place, ready to go.

Do you have a champion?

If you do, all well and good. If not are you willing to step up to the challenge?