

Ryder

REINVENTION
FOR AN
EXCEPTIONAL
CONSTRUCTION
INDUSTRY

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Preface

We wouldn't start with what we have if we were to design an effective construction industry today, so let's reinvent it.

At Ryder our goal is simple - to improve the quality of the world around us, and in doing so, improve people's lives - and our approach is one of Everything architecture which recognises the multiple skills involved need to act as one.

Realisation however is rather more complex and we are on a mission to break the downward spiral of poor performance and failure which dogs the construction industry.

We are not alone, but as an industry we've spent too long tinkering at the edges or ignoring what's happening around us. We need total reinvention. Our industry is barely fit for purpose and is certainly woefully inefficient, founded on principles of organisation which are no longer relevant. We spend far too much energy, time and money managing unnecessary divisions and interfaces while avoiding responsibility. Effort is duplicated, and errors compounded.

We have tired of generic government backed calls for industry change. It will only happen if we all, in our own spheres of influence, make it happen. Mark Farmer is right, it is modernise or die!

One of the founders of our firm, Gordon Ryder, said in 1967, "unless we have the closest cooperation between all who make contributions we will continue to make a great many mistakes". His partner Peter Yates, said, "I can't imagine working any other way." For these reasons the precursor to Ryder became multi disciplinary 50 years ago.

"Only intimate integration of the various parts or the various disciplines will produce the desired result."

Ove Arup, Key Speech, 1970

When I joined the practice, I walked into one space with architects and engineers working together on one project with one employer and one agenda - to get the best possible outcome. The aim was to provide better service and the pursuit of excellence, quality and value. Making a better world. Why wouldn't you?

Sadly, the dream faded as the industry invented complexity to deal with an increasingly intricate world of risk management, or, perhaps more accurately, risk dump.

Existing organisational structures were developed to manage complexity through segregation, with all the skills needed to design and build residing in different organisations wary of responsibility because the lawyers were on our case. We created the need for new professions to manage the interfaces. We invented "scope gap". Some still want to divide and conquer on the basis this is the best way to monitor performance, locked into a blame culture which started in the 1980s.

Design isn't a linear process to be passed from one discipline to another, nor should it logically be divorced from the process of building.



It is a fusion of creative minds and multiple skills to solve problems - the right problems relating to people, society and the future of our planet. Not the wrong problems deriving from different agendas, misunderstanding and compromise. The notion of the master builder, the universal building problem solver who worked closely with skilled craftsmen, to create the great buildings of our past can be reinvented. No longer one person but many, acting as one. A process liberated by technology dedicated to making simplicity out of complexity. For the last 50 years the industry has done the exact opposite!

Change has to begin somewhere. Ryder, with others, have started to adopt new practices to begin to shake things up but it will be today's students who will really begin to think and act differently provided we prepare them.

Investing in education dedicated to developing skills in creative thinking and problem solving is crucial. Show children that our industry is one of the most important to the future survival, prosperity and wellbeing of society.

We require new skill sets to meet these challenges and this must be industry led, not government, universities or the professional institutions. They will follow, but it is only us who can determine the skills and attitudes needed to reinvent construction.

In this way we begin to reinvent the industry - developing the best talent to create the world we inhabit. What could be more exciting, or simple ... Everything architecture.



**Peter Buchan, Senior Partner
Ryder Architecture**

Introduction

The current generation of construction business leaders has largely failed to adapt throughout their careers - the time has come to heed Farmer and do something to help ourselves.

The construction industry is regularly at the forefront of UK news and policy making. The 2017 autumn budget and Industrial Strategy incorporated the construction industry as a platform to bolster a struggling economy. In addition, the industry has been placed in the spotlight because of the issues arising from Grenfell and more recently Carillion - all of which come in the context of downgraded growth forecasts and ongoing Brexit uncertainty.

Yet during this period of significant challenge and change, the target of 300,000 new homes per annum by 2020 remains a target which has not been achieved in over four decades.

In addition, the UK construction industry also has major infrastructure projects such as Heathrow, Hinckley Point and HS2 to deliver.

The question, inevitably, is whether the industry is fit and ready to deliver on such an ambitious strategy. We have seen increasing fragmentation and instability for decades despite a series of calls to arms beginning with Sir Michael Latham and Sir John Egan over 20 years ago.

Innovation requires talented people who are willing and able to lead, be experimental and pioneering. It also requires the understanding and application of available technologies, and the constant development of new ones.

Arguably, the ingredients are all there but the industry has never really embraced change to develop a truly high quality offer - more of the same will not deliver.

Mark Farmer's review, Modernise or Die, recognised the systemic problems facing the industry and recommended urgent action.

The success of construction requires a step change in the way stakeholders work together across the project lifecycle. This is not just about money. It is not just about culture and skills. Nor is it about the availability of land, or the need for sustainable buildings. It is about recognising these ingredients only matter if leadership with unambiguous communication and collaboration are at the core from inception to beyond the completion of every project.

For the past ten years we have been listening to feedback from our Stakeholders through a structured feedback programme, helping us align our work with the requirements of our clients. Crucially, all forms of feedback and knowledge sharing remind us we are not working in isolation but are part of a much larger team which should be delivering to a common goal. Shared values and aspirations help shape this collaboration, but there is a long way to go - for all of us.

The construction industry is still not client friendly. It is fragmented and confusing - the result of the separation of design from delivery and the complexities of risk management.

As an industry we have watched this fragmentation creep in over several decades, creating new roles and layers of management to deal with the gaps that are formed. Fragmentation results in poor alignment with clients and users, with buildings too often overrunning in cost and time and underperforming in use.

We need to disrupt these entrenched behaviours and processes if we are to build an enlightened construction industry fit for the future. It will require vision, resilience, bravery and a willingness to break down silos and work in collaboration - from every business, not just a few willing to step out from the line.

We need to support talented people to feel empowered and motivated, and to share knowledge from successes and failures with others who can learn from them.

There has been much talk and debate over the past 20 years. The purpose of Reinvention is to inspire action to create an exceptional construction industry with much improved outcomes for all Stakeholders.

“We are living in the age of the iPhone, yet construction is still in the Walkman phase.”

Ben van Berkel, UNStudio, Netherlands, 2018

A Decade of Reflection

Every two years, we have taken time to stop, listen and learn. This research does not exist in isolation - it is part of a much wider responsibility we all have, which is to lift our heads above our day to day work and listen to the industry in which we operate.

Research has been fundamental to Ryder's development in the past decade - responding to and, more importantly, allowing us to anticipate changing client needs and aspirations.

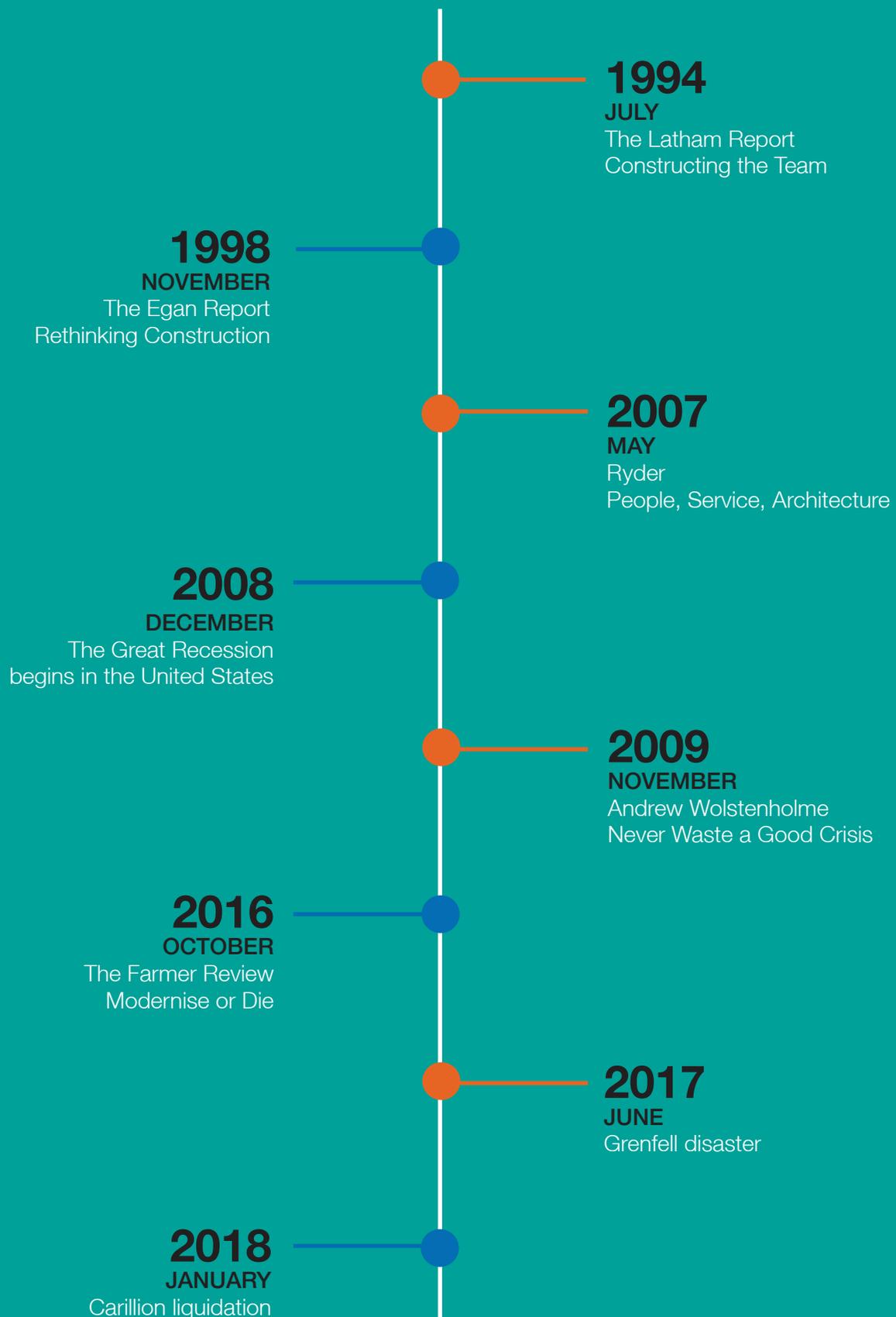
A flexible approach to research has helped us achieve this, we have loosely structured conversations with our clients providing the opportunity to comment on the issues most important to them - not just the issues we want to hear about. We follow up with all participants to ensure their comments are not only heard but acted on, and this often begins a longer conversation which continues far beyond the research itself.

Several Stakeholders have asked us to provide similarly candid feedback to them - recognising the importance of honesty and constructive criticism, or simply praise where it is due. But this culture of candour should not reside only in a feedback programme. It should not be limited to a single annual discussion or recorded in a report which is relegated to a folder, to be ignored in perpetuity.

Stakeholder research

In 2017 we completed the fifth iteration, providing us with a decade of insights into the world of construction and what it means to those who commission, design, build, use and operate the buildings we have helped create. These interviews tell us a lot about our Stakeholder's views on issues such as sector expertise, design creativity, value, teams, leadership and digital solutions such as building information modelling (BIM). While details of these issues naturally differ for every business and project, it remains apparent they are inextricably linked, and the key to reinventing construction is to approach them holistically.

By sharing some of the learning gathered over the past decade and considering it in the context of the current construction industry, we hope to encourage all our clients and partners to join us in conversation and action to address some of the issues we are all facing.



Many of the reports were government commissioned with a top down emphasis

A shifting landscape

As well as internal reflection, it is important to revisit the changes which have taken place in construction and the economy over the last 10 years and the way in which the industry has, and we and our Stakeholders have evolved in response.

Whilst there has been progress, the magnitude and pace of change has been woeful. In **2007** it was a very different market, with a very different set of challenges.

In the year that Northern Rock saw its bailout by The Bank of England, Tony Blair stepped down after 10 years in power leaving Gordon Brown at the helm. Widespread summer flooding followed the storms earlier in the year which brought chaos to building projects across the country. The property crash was yet to hit, but attitudes, spending and the markets all reflected rapidly developing tension.

With this backdrop of growing uncertainty, those who participated in our research in 2007 were looking for their architect and other consultants to perfect core service elements, including responsiveness and consistency in the people involved in their projects due to the merry go round associated with the times of plenty. Beyond these essentials, our respondents were starting to think more strategically, looking to gain a deeper understanding of the goals and vision of the firms they were working with.

Perhaps unsurprisingly in **2009** respondents were focusing on managing costs and risks, and riding out the storm of the global recession.

The government's Plan for Growth was announced in **2011**, bringing forward many projects and a much needed cash injection to the construction industry. Competition for work was understandably high, and our survey respondents talked of a tendency for inappropriately wilful design by their architects.

2007: "I want to know that the designers understand the drivers we have as investors or developers – it isn't just about architecture, it's about creating suitable architecture to accommodate the financial drivers."

Whilst it may win projects and associated funding, it may be unachievable in ever tighter viability, budget and construction constraints.

By **2013** the survival mode adopted by many was starting to loosen, with relationships again becoming increasingly important in the selection of project teams.

In **2015** the general feeling was much more considered and forward looking. Participants discussed the need for balance in design and project delivery. We saw an emerging requirement for architects to take more of a lead role, demonstrating a confidence in their ability to deliver. Collaboration began to be a key theme, with many businesses looking to share information about goals, objectives and needs.

The construction industry has grown fragmented and risk averse with procurement effectively rewarding silos, encouraging risk dump and disincentivising collaboration. The problems caused by blinkered professionals have been highlighted in a series of government commissioned reports, each more vocal than the last about the dangers facing the UK construction industry and the urgency required to tackle them. As an industry we should use the insight gained from our clients, coupled with keeping a constant eye on the horizon, to anticipate where our efforts can be invested to best equip us for the future.

The benefits of reform, transparency, and the harnessing of technology are plain to see but we are increasingly frustrated by an industry which appears to be paralysed by the fear of change.

It requires an entrepreneurial spirit and a little bravery, and it needs project teams including clients committed to working collaboratively.

In **2017**, our research told us how Stakeholders view us, what they want, and how they want to achieve it. Each nugget of feedback helps us to adjust our approach, build on our successes, and better understand where we go wrong and how we can improve. It helps us understand how to work better, smarter, and more collaboratively with our peers who in their own businesses, are trying to deal with the same challenges and opportunities.

Every business in the construction industry can, and should, spend time with Stakeholders. This is fundamental to fostering relationships with longevity and delivering great projects.

“Lack of predictability is the biggest challenge in construction. Every job is unique, the conditions are uncertain, the solution bespoke. Cost and schedule are estimates not certainty, those estimates are usually over optimistic, because lowest price wins procurement incentivises that, and clients are therefore more likely to ultimately experience disappointment than elation.

It doesn't have to be like this. The government's recently published Transforming Infrastructure Performance report, the construction sector deal outlined in the Industrial Strategy, and the Project 13 campaign, orchestrated by the Institution of Civil Engineers, all point towards fundamental industry reform based on long term partnerships underpinned by appropriate and transparent risk sharing and investment in technology, in particular manufacturing based solutions.

This is the blueprint to future excellence in our industry. Early adopters will reap the benefits.”

Richard Threlfall

The construction industry exists, at its core, to create an environment in which we can all live and flourish - and, yes, make money!

To be bogged down in convoluted procurement in a risk and blame culture which hinders the sharing of knowledge, means at every stage the construction industry is preventing the change which is seen as so crucial to its own survival.

From collaborative, multidisciplinary beginnings we have been caught up in a world that is unnecessarily complicated. Ryder has always been about people working together, and we have always endeavoured to navigate a course to maintain our culture. It has not always been easy, but in the light of both our client feedback programme and current market analysis, we know it is the right thing to do.

“[Working together successfully requires] common purpose. On large projects, you get what you reward and there is no more powerful enabler than alignment of purpose and incentives. [It is a] fallacy that risk can somehow be delegated or outsourced to contractors/partners/suppliers. If any key element fails, everyone fails.”

Justin Hughes

People, Design, Delivery

People

In our surveys we have analysed performance and industry attitudes in three categories - People, Design, Delivery.

People buy people - a truth universally acknowledged. In architecture, people are of course an intrinsic part of the solution. It is not only design skills and raw talent which are sought and valued - in every wave of our research, Stakeholders told us they value honesty, integrity and personality.

Good people do not happen by accident - the best person in the wrong environment will not thrive. A large part of attracting and retaining the best teams for any business is to understand what that business is about, what it stands for, and what it strives to deliver.

Businesses need to ask themselves, do our people know what we stand for? Can they articulate it to themselves and to others? Do they believe in it and, most importantly, do they want to be part of it?

Having realised the importance of the people aspects of business, we committed to measure and analyse our performance across key attributes.

Understanding not only what is important to colleagues, but also improving our delivery in these areas, has led to a significant long term improvement in our results. We are proud many of our clients describe Ryder as a team that is on their side and willing to get our hands, boots and hard hats dirty when it comes to the crunch.

Over the course of the last decade we have seen a subtle shift in the desired attributes of architects.

Hygiene factors - such as responsiveness, heavily discussed in 2007 perhaps driven by the time and inflationary cost pressures of the employment market - have been a feature through all our surveys past and present. However, topics including business management, commercial nous and client empathy have all become more important, and the factors involved more complex.

Issues such as budgets, procurement, and sustainability all seem to have changed the landscape of what commerciality and delivering the brief mean.

2007: “They don’t go for an out of the box solution that they drop on the customers. They’re very receptive – they listen, then they go away and do something about it.”

A talent war

The future is set to present more challenges as the anticipated skills shortages take hold. The RICS Construction Market survey (Q4 2016) shows a significantly higher proportion of respondents agreeing there is a shortage of both professionals and skilled trades than in 2012.

Whether or not we will find ourselves in a talent war is dependent on a wide range of factors, from the broad economic and social impact of Brexit to the nuances of each business and the skills required to deliver services. These skills requirements are also being impacted by technology. The very different views of our contributors illustrate just how difficult it is to predict how the availability of the right people with the right skills will affect our industry.

“The skills crisis in UK construction is not a new problem. It has been developing over many years, the sad consequence of the poor image of the industry, which makes it unattractive to school leavers, and the failure of many employers in the industry to invest adequately in training and development.

The problem has been masked to some degree by a steady supply of construction labour from other EU countries, leading to some sites having up to 70% of the workforce without UK passports.

The risk of a Brexit settlement which restricts access to that foreign labour pool is therefore of considerable concern to the industry. But the long run solution lies in industry reform, to embrace a more high tech, manufacturing environment approach, raising the status of the industry, systematic investment in training, including through the apprenticeship levy, targeting schools with a modern, exciting image of what construction achieves in society and increasing gender diversity.”

Richard Threlfall

“High quality people will always be in demand. In my opinion, the only real change is that the segments in which demand exceeds supply evolve and there is a potential for a price war – ‘twas ever thus. There is much discussion regarding millennials but I think it’s important to remember that millennials did not arrive from Mars and that every generation probably has some similar angst. Maybe millennials just happen to be reaping the benefits of a shift in power facilitated by technology.”

Justin Hughes

“I have been in the construction industry for over 40 years and for all that time there has been talk of skills gaps and talent wars. From my perspective, (senior management and leadership level), I hear about it though don’t see it. I frequently hear - we cannot get good staff, they lack skill, bad behaviour, wrong attitude - and yet I come across amazing people, all the time. There is a mismatch between what I hear and what I see.”

Dave Stitt

“The construction consultancy world is definitely in a war for talent so our ability as a business to present a vibrant, innovative business which is focused on industry transformation is really important in attracting people of the right mindset and calibre.

This also means that extrapolating this trend at scale, we start to have an oversupply of traditionally trained project managers and quantity surveyors. This has implications on professional institution accreditation of courses and reskilling and conversion programmes that may be required over time.”

Mark Farmer

“Our business is highly dependent on the quality and motivation of the staff that we employ, but there are a number of influencing factors on the need for and availability of talent over the next 10 years or so. I don’t think that in the type of professional services that we provide there will be a war for talent, in fact I anticipate that a number of businesses will become much more specialist and only provide the services that they are very confident that they have the staff to provide. I do think that the industry needs to be aware of and prepared for what is coming around the corner.”

Ann Bentley

“We are already seeing the impact of digitalisation and new fabrication techniques such as 3D printing or mass prefabrication on the way buildings are designed and constructed. To embrace these new technologies we need profiles with a background in computing, product design and robotics in addition to the more traditional engineer or architect profiles. Combined with the forecast skills gap in the UK, it will deeply change the way the construction industry recruits and retains talent. Opening up the recruitment to new disciplines, offering more diverse career paths, and encouraging continuous professional training (or retraining) will be key to create diverse teams able to approach the design process differently.

Young talent entering the workforce today are already in a position of choosing the company they want to work for – based on a wide range of criteria, such as work/life balance, salary, international mobility or social usefulness. This should be a starting point for discussions on company values and on the staff’s real motivators. Their alignment is one of the keys to talent retention. ”

Dorothee Citerne

2017: “The common strength that I see through all of the people at Ryder is they are very engaging, they are very open and amenable, they are very straightforward to deal with, so there’s no sense of walking on egg shells with anyone.”

Design

Whilst we have focused on people, design and delivery as three separate ingredients, in both theory and practice they are inextricably linked.

Ryder's ethos, Everything architecture, captures the collaborative integrated approach to design which we consider fundamental to the success of the construction industry. It is predicated on a connected industry capable of working harmoniously to common goals and echoes the multi faceted solutions proposed by Latham et al as we face the future of an industry reaching a crisis point.

Design is fundamentally about problem solving. The ultimate driver for industry change is to deliver better solutions effectively and efficiently. Designs which meet client and user needs into the future, which optimise material use, simplify buildability and minimise environmental impact.

A meaningful feedback loop is crucial to understanding the impact our work, and ways of working, have on those around us. All too often feedback is not actively sought, or is sought but not acted upon, or is sought around one aspect of the process without stopping to consider the other players involved in the project.

Our research typically includes clients and end users, alongside our design and building partners who often comment they would welcome the opportunity to hear what Ryder thinks of them.

Design is intrinsically linked to service excellence - deepening relationships and listening to one another, empowering everyone to think creatively, and act collaboratively.

Likewise, clients need to be actively involved in the delivery of excellent design - from the moment of project inception through to occupancy and beyond.

More often than not the design solution is right.

“Clients are highly satisfied with the results of architect's design performance. They appear to love the end product of the design process overall, specifically rating it very highly or the things we associate most closely with architects ... superb aesthetic quality, meeting the brief well, and being clever with functional design.”

RIBA, We love you but ..., 2016

2013: “It's about the architects using their skills and knowledge of the market to help us design buildings which are cost effective to build, cost effective to run and create value.”

“Great design should be about how you effectively triangulate what we call the three Ps – performance, productivity and predictability. Designers who focus on aesthetic without thinking about what they design in these terms I believe are part of the problem in our industry, as are clients that brief design in terms of purely securing a planning consent without thinking of the overall end outcome.

Design excellence with outstanding aesthetic and quality should inherently be driven by the three Ps, and this is very different from value engineering or cost led design.

Functionality is an imperative but the process of securing this needs rethinking to cut so much of the waste and delivery risk out of our industry. Pursuing strategies that employ mass customisation is also an important a venue in harnessing production efficiency and certainty whilst retaining design flair and individuality to suit project constraints.

Ultimately, I think great design is only possible with the right people around the table at the right points in the process spanning design, construction and operation.”

Mark Farmer

“Twenty years on from Egan most think that partnering/collaboration/team working/ working together is about being nice to each other and they are doing it. Though somehow it doesn’t feel quite right, and something is missing.”

Dave Stitt

“Great design is when the needs and objectives of the end user are fulfilled without them even noticing! I think that the industry suffers because it means that great design, to some extent, goes unseen but bad design is glaringly evident. In my view, the simplest way that outstanding projects will be delivered is if clients demand outstanding projects, and to do this they need to know what an outstanding project is and how to demand it! ”

Ann Bentley

2015: “[Excellent design is when a client receives] more than they were looking for, the architect has made you think, and they have changed [the client’s] views as to what they have thought they were going to get and what they wanted and they’re absolutely gob smacked that they’ve got something better.”

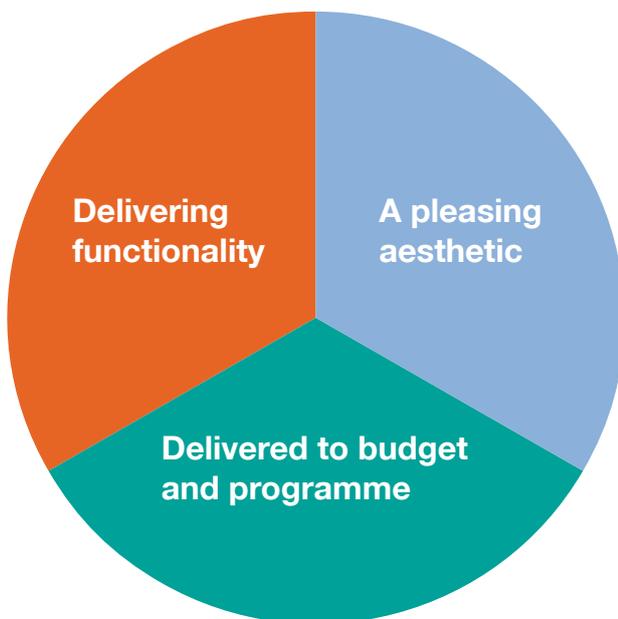
A building which is attractive to look at, performs to every aspect of the brief, and is delivered on time and budget requires a collaborative approach from inception to construction and beyond - something which requires sustained effort, communication, and proactivity from every member of the team.

While this balance of quality and value, whatever they mean in the context of a given project, is almost universally expected in the post recession economy, it is often unclear as to who is, or should be, driving it.

The industry has such inertia it is largely unable to respond, hampered by a silo mentality preventing knowledge sharing and compounding inefficiencies and errors.

Fundamental to success is a thorough understanding of the brief, the client's expectations, the functional aspects of the build, and a close relationship with the project team - as early as possible.

When asked what constitutes excellent design our Stakeholders identified, in equal measure ...



“The success of a project should never be measured only on a single discipline or from a single point of view – client, architect, etc. The design is a complex process which, when managed properly, gets all the parties working holistically towards the same vision beyond their field of expertise. The Guy’s Cancer Centre awarded the 2017 RIBA London Award is a particularly inspiring example because the team has placed the user’s experience at the very core of the design process right from the start. Structural engineers had to solve complex vibration issues in order to place radiotherapy treatments in naturally lit upper floors rather than the basement. As a result, the patient’s experience was greatly improved which is an amazing outcome for the whole multidisciplinary design team.”

Dorothee Citerne

“Infrastructure doesn’t exist for its own sake. It exists because it serves a purpose, in some way, great or small, to provide a service for individuals in our societies. So great design, for me, is design which works for those who interact with it. But that doesn’t mean form follows function into minimalist dullness.

KPMG’s Magnet Cities report, published a few years ago, showed that places thrive when they attract wealth creators. And today’s increasingly mobile wealth creators gravitate to places with real quality of life - healthy, vibrant, attractive environments.

So great design needs outstanding functionality and form which lifts our spirits. I think the UK really gets this nowadays.

Our once boring cities are sparkling with inspiring architecture, whether the Library of Birmingham, The Shard, or Sage Gateshead, and we are redesigning public spaces around people, not cars. The key to all this it to develop ideas from the outset in open collaboration not silos, and not just with architects, engineers and contractors - with end users too.”

Richard Threlfall

Delivery

It has always been a challenge for service based organisations to define what quality in service means, and to ensure it aligns with the varying needs and expectations of clients.

In an industry which keeps doing what it has always done, with innovation around the margins, the drive for Reinvention needs to come from service providers and clients alike.

It is inherently difficult to evaluate the quality of service given the unique perceptions of everyone. Past experiences, personal tastes and ways of working, recommendations and relationships all affect how we perceive service, so our challenge was to understand firstly what quality means in each unique relationship. We then needed to extract a set of core measures we could embed within Ryder, track the progress of, and roll out to ensure learnings are shared across the practice.

Based on the interviews completed in the first wave of our research, responsiveness, collaboration and feeling valued as a client were the core measures of delivering a quality service.

Why these measures? Responsiveness, because it is the baseline of good service. Collaboration, to fully understand needs and aspirations and to be able to deliver against them and feeling valued, because it is the ultimate test of great service.

RIBA's Client & Architect report mirrors this importance around architect's process management skills.

"The critical measures - commercial understanding, keeping to the programme, managing their work, admin, collaboration, technical design spec, BIM - are all significantly less good than those for design performance."

RIBA, Client & Architect, 2015

Our research has allowed us not only to gain an early warning of these issues, but to stay ahead of the curve. A key theme in the RIBA report highlighted a trend where builders consistently scored architects lower than other categories of respondents, highlighting the need to understand and more carefully manage the challenging nature of the contractor relationship in the design and build process.

Insufficient construction businesses take client care seriously, they are too wrapped up in their own internal wranglings and agendas to really understand, let alone respond to real client needs.

Client retention is essential to ensuring the future of any business and acts as its own benchmark for the satisfaction of clients.

All of the qualities which allow us to deliver an excellent outcome - listening, understanding, working in harmony with our clients and teams, being responsive and accessible - are also the qualities which make our day to day service enjoyable and rewarding, in what are often long and complex projects spanning many years.

2011: “We’re just human, everybody’s got their own behaviours. It’s really about personal touch, and an understanding of the architects [...] of the world who are actually delivering the job to understand what we want, and actually deliver that service.”

The other key theme identified consistently since 2007 is that of reciprocity. This results from great service leading to client engagement, which we measure by the likelihood of our Stakeholders to recommend us. In recent years, our client surveys have revealed a softening of procurement methods, with a return to the pre recession days where relationships and personal experience were more likely to win work than a heavily formalised procurement process.

Quality of service is a vital component when making referrals. Our own reputations are potentially at risk when recommending a third party. We place our trust in those recommended to deliver the same level of service excellence which we ourselves have experienced. One cannot exist without the other - nor should they.

Our challenge is to get back to basics, designing and delivering quality environments to enrich all our lives, working in partnership with talented, empowered people who want to do the same.

Overcoming the systemic problems which have hampered this kind of collaboration for so many decades must be the goal of an enlightened construction industry.

“What has happened recently at Grenfell Tower will accelerate this competency filter across the industry in my opinion as the ultimate stakes of poor performance can be much higher than money or time.

We are increasingly looking at disruptive delivery and organisational models which create better service delivery control and enable us to do our job better, often circumventing main contractors or avoiding using designers purely in traditional silo based working.

We are pushing a pre manufacturing agenda, where appropriate, and where we can better assure predictability of outcome in the factory aligned to a design that has been driven early by DfMA thinking. This de risks service delivery in the construction phase provided the early commitment and involvement is there.

We are increasingly prepared to call out poor behaviour or lack of competence and management from individuals working within a corporate as part of a project team. Name and shame can be brutal but ultimately fresh approaches are only as strong as the weakest link which are too often accepted as par for the course.”

Mark Farmer

“In our industry we are constantly faced with new challenges and we are never designing twice the same building. In this context, it is important to perfectly understand our clients’ needs to propose the best design solutions. The highest technical expertise needs to be supported by an excellent communication and delivery process in order to bring real value on the projects. Ultimately our ability to collaborate with the other project stakeholders is what makes a real difference for our clients.”

Dorothee Citerne

“The massively increased availability of information and ease of switching these days means that competitive commercial situations are often a race to the bottom of the price barrel. But even outside the luxury sector, I believe that people are prepared to pay for service.

What sets a business apart?

Staff who are genuinely empowered to deliver service

Individuals taking personal ownership of client problems

A focus on outcomes rather than process

The personal touch.”

Justin Hughes

“We have a clearly defined view of service excellence. Our aim is absolute customer satisfaction, every time, and to achieve this we have four component parts of customer service excellence:

Understand our client’s business and what is important to them

Take personal ownership of our commitments to our customers

Build our customer relationship through effective interaction and communication

Always be available and highly responsive to the customer

The hygiene factors are a very high level of technical service delivery, an understanding of the sector in which the client operates and a price point which the client feels is appropriate.

Without these three things I don’t think it would matter how good our service excellence is. However, these things alone don’t lead to repeat business – for that we also need to address the four points above – which are a lot more difficult to do than to write down!”

Ann Bentley

“Service excellence for us is a function of both the experience that the client gets in the performance of our role, but more importantly it links to outcomes we achieve for our clients.

We are acutely aware that with the stresses and strains that the construction industry is experiencing means that consultants face an increasing risk of poor delivery tainting all parties on a project irrespective of actual blame. We are therefore focused on outcomes for clients and the predictability of those outcomes, whether they be cost, time or quality driven.

This means the ability to influence and safeguard a tangible and measurable outcome will be more highly valued in the consultancy world as clients grow increasingly dissatisfied with business as usual and delivery failure.

We are therefore making more radical decisions on:

Who we will and won't work with - clients, fellow consultants and supply chain - if we do not rate them or trust them as a client to intelligently commission or to deliver and work in an integrated way, we would rather turn a job down or not work alongside them as there is now a bigger risk of reputational damage from being associated with a job that goes wrong.”

Mark Farmer

2017: “Every project is different because every customer will have a different set of drivers towards their building.”

Reinvention

The industry has faced many challenges over the past 10 years but not much has changed.

How the industry has responded

The background to Reinvention stretches back way beyond the past decade, notably to the publication of Sir Michael Latham's report.

Constructing the Team identified the fragmented and adversarial nature of the construction industry. Latham pointed to teamwork and fairness as the keys to helping clients achieve the high quality projects they want.

"The prize is enhanced performance in a healthier atmosphere. It will involve deeper satisfaction for clients. It will lead to a brighter image and better rewards for a great industry."

Latham, Construction the Team, 1994

This should result in tangible benefits for every stakeholder in a project. Rewards, yes, but because of better performance in a healthier atmosphere, better buildings and environments, satisfied clients, happier teams, enhanced reputations, and financial reward where it is due - surely these are desirable goals for our industry.

What has been done about Latham's recommendations?

He stated clearly those involved in the UK construction process could either ignore his recommendations, selectively choose the ones that best suit them, or set about constructing the team by implementing his recommendations as a package - the only option to bring about timely and necessary change and avoid losing the mutual confidence and momentum which had built up in the 12 months prior to the report's publication.

Like several high profile public reports prior, Latham was broadly well received but unfortunately option three was not sufficiently embraced.

Sir John Egan's report, Rethinking Construction, identified an environment of unreliable profitability, low research and development investment, a crisis in training, and price driven clients, alongside growing dissatisfaction among these clients.

Building on Latham's observation of a fragmented industry, Egan recommended a commitment to demonstration projects, focus on the client, fostering a culture of trust and respect, full staff training and an environment in which they can give their best, performance measurement and the sharing of learnings and passing these benefits to everyone involved in a project.

Egan envisaged not just doing things better, but to do them entirely differently - a radical change in the way we build.

Latham and Egan did much to raise awareness of the problems facing the industry, but their reports did not inspire the sweeping changes so badly needed.

Farmer's Modernise or Die brought a new urgency to the need for immediate, radical change. Noting the perilous future state of construction might not have been so clear at the time of Latham and Egan, but it is certainly obvious now. Farmer's review states a need to act decisively to move construction away from what he describes as a state of unrecoverable marginalisation.

The Farmer Review identifies 10 critical symptoms of industry failure and poor performance:

- Dysfunctional training
- Structural fragmentation
- Leadership fragmentation
- Lack of research and development
- Lack of collaboration
- Low productivity
- Low predictability
- Low margins
- Inadequate workforce
- Poor image

These span all facets of the industry. Clearly, this is not a quick fix situation - nor can these elements be tackled in isolation.

Nevertheless, as businesses we need to work together on those areas we can change, make provision for the future in those areas where we see opportunities for innovation, and share knowledge with those who can help to effect change elsewhere.

“The concept of value fundamentally belongs to clients, but it is designers who find it. Anyone who chooses (or claims) to lead projects must understand that to get between designers, their clients and end users, and to obstruct the constructive dialogue they should be engaged in, is almost certainly to destroy value.”

RIBA, Client & Architect, 2015

Anticipating and adapting

Bringing about fundamental change across the industry will not be easy. But change happens at the micro as well as the macro level - if we are all willing to see ourselves as part of both the problem and the solution.

Stakeholders in our latest research were very much looking to the future, with collaboration becoming increasingly important in identifying new ways to drive the future of designing and building. If we are to reinvent in the context of an exceptional construction industry, this kind of knowledge sharing with critique and candid feedback needs to be the cornerstone of all our interactions. Action which anticipates the market, rather than reacts to it - or, worse, ignores it - should be our collective focus.

In 2018, some architects are traversing the learning curve as lead consultant rather than simply acting as the project visionary.

Reinventing the construction industry

As we have shaped Ryder in line with the feedback from our clients, we will continue to seek input and discussion from as wide a collection of Stakeholders as possible as we look to the future.

The desire for collaboration and mutual support has always been there, but at a sector level it is not always evident. Every business needs to understand its unique client landscape and shape its own future with that landscape in mind - it's how we build sustainable, successful businesses.

But as an industry we need to understand the systemic and long standing failures that impact us all, identify our place in those failures, and do something about them. Just as we aim to work collaboratively at a project level, we need to work collaboratively at the industry level to effect radical, sustained and meaningful change.

2017: "We need to work with people who get the message, get the mission statement, get on with it. We're constantly thinking how we can do business, how we can think a bit more out of the box. It's constantly getting harder to make money out of investments. I'd love for a consultant to walk through the door and say, we'll work together, we'll think of something, we won't let you down."

“Our business is likely to see a large scale transformation in skills needs in the medium term. As a predominately cost and project management led business, our cost management function is likely to be impacted by digital technology, the advent of 5D models, automated payment systems and less contractual fragmentation. That drives an imperative for our new recruits to have a high aptitude to learn new skills, have fluid intelligence and be generally articulate and good communicators.

Historical competences such as having a quantity surveying degree or traditional quantity surveying experience are less relevant for us now. We are looking at people with non cognate skills and any hybrid crossover into manufacturing or industrial commercial management.

Project managers will also need to learn new skills more focused on controlling outcomes rather than reporting on them. This will require more logistics, scheduling and risk management core skills as well as the ability to integrate delivery teams in new ways.”

Mark Farmer

We all have a part to play

Ryder has established a series of strategies and initiatives which embrace change in leadership, skills and research in an environment of collaboration and shared endeavour.

These initiatives respond to the challenges which are at the heart of The Farmer Review and they provide immediate, tangible benefits for our Stakeholders, based on feedback and our own vision for Ryder's future. But they are also focused on the future of the industry, making changes we consider to be essential to nurture the next generation of colleagues who will grow and develop businesses in an enlightened industry. We want to do our part to inspire that enlightened industry, arm in arm with our Stakeholders.

The 10 critical symptoms identified by Farmer fall into two categories - primary drivers and their consequential effects.

At Ryder, our priority for some years now has been on improving the primary drivers. If we get those right the rest will follow. We must also increase diversity across all aspects - skills, educational background, ethnicity and gender - to reflect society. Would the greed apparently inherent in the leadership of Carillion have happened with a woman in charge?!

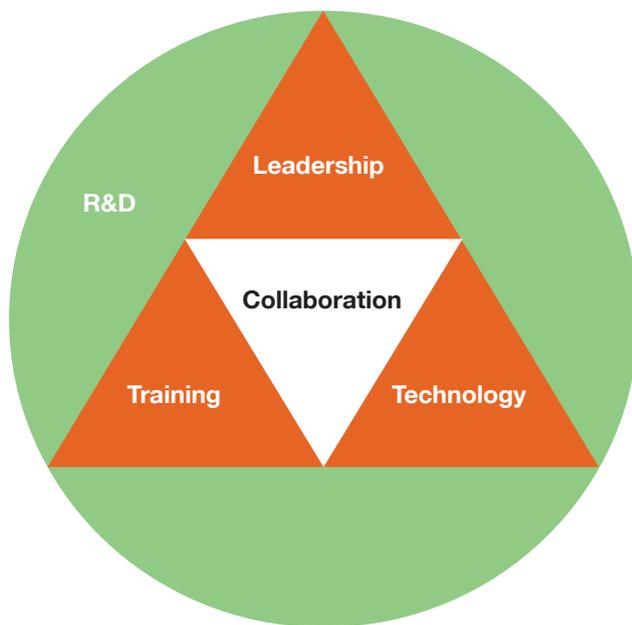
Primary drivers

- 1 Dysfunctional training
- 2 Structural fragmentation
- 3 Leadership fragmentation
- 4 Lack of research and development
- 5 Lack of collaboration

Consequential effects

- 6 Low productivity
- 7 Low predictability
- 8 Low margins
- 9 Inadequate workforce
- 10 Poor image

We believe the essential ingredients are leadership, training, and technology, each working hand in hand, with a culture of collaboration at the core, and all in an environment of open source research and development.



Successful collaboration can only be achieved with strong leadership, skills development, a keen eye on the economic context, design which is fit for purpose, and an emphasis on technology and production. While these ingredients manifest themselves differently across various parts of the industry, the core elements are key to driving forward the disruptive change which will allow the industry to grow and evolve.

To date our initial focus has been with the professional disciplines, each by and large operating in their own silo, each ultimately aligned to its own agenda. Misunderstanding and inefficiency is endemic.

From there, we have done what we can to break down the great divides between designing and building. But we cannot Reinvent the construction industry alone. We are hugely encouraged by the many Stakeholders who share our belief and are excited by the possibilities in evolving from being discipline and service focused to providing holistic turn key solutions to client needs.

Our proposed journey may take a generation. To make your contribution, please contact us at reinvention@ryderarchitecture.com

Everything architecture

Our goal is simple – to improve the quality of the world around us and, in doing so, improve people’s lives. An approach embedded in the origins of Ryder which remains a touchstone today.

Everything architecture is based on principles of simplicity, usefulness and elegance. It connects people to places, from the room to the city. It defines a responsibility to society and to the future of our planet. It is embedded as much in pioneering science and technology as in art and is the foundation for the collective journey from the initial vision through designing and making and beyond into use - learning from each project for the benefit of the next. Everything architecture relies on leadership to transcend the professional silos. It requires talented people with a passion for collaborative project working to deliver the best return on investment for our clients.

Everything architecture relies on strong leadership to transcend the professional silos. It requires talented people with a passion for collaborative project working to deliver the best return on investment for our clients.

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