



Insight on

Innovation in our industry: 30 years of John Rowan and Partners

INSIGHT 4

The John Rowan and Partners magazine

Summer 2013

 **john rowan
and partners**
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This whole
sector adoption
of BIM will put
us at the
vanguard of a
new digital
construction era
and position the
UK to become
the world
leaders in BIM

QUOTE
OF THE
MONTH

Francis Maude
Minister for the
Cabinet Office

Send us your views on the 'quote of the month.'
Email: ichisholm@jrp.co.uk

STAT OF THE MONTH

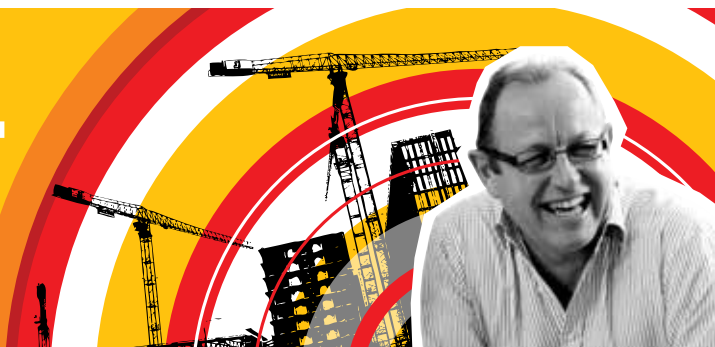
204
million
every minute
Intel

**john rowan
and partners**

John Rowan and Partners is a global property
and construction consultancy specialising
in the delivery of cost management, project
management, building surveying, health
and safety, planning, sustainability advice,
information systems and strategic asset
management services to all areas of the
construction and property industry.
www.jrp.co.uk

STEPHENGEE ON THE SPOT

INDUSTRY NEWS/
VIEWS/OPINIONS



So what does
the rest of 2013
have in store
for us?

As you can tell from the front cover we're celebrating 30 years of John Rowan and Partners. In this edition we look back at what has changed over the years, as well as looking forward to the possibilities ahead.

It doesn't seem that long ago that I first joined the company in 1985, working in the back room of John Rowan's house in Ealing. Then into offices where we didn't have a cleaner so the partners took it in turns to clean the toilets. From there, we slowly grew as a company, working through 3 decades, 4 recessions and 8 World Cups! From a time when you could leave the office to visit a site and no one would expect to see you or get hold of you until the next morning to today's expectation of 24/7 availability.

Above everything we've focused on our staff and delivering for our clients. This has been a big part of what has kept us going through some incredibly tough times, including the current economic climate. We've always tried to keep up with the latest developments in the industry, I remember the debate with John on whether we should get a fax machine – "what would be the point as no one else had one!" Or the first mobile phone supported by a battery the size of a breeze block.

Last year we took on 20 employees to increase our staff numbers to over 100 and were named Building Magazine's Employer of the Year. We were shortlisted for the Top Consultant title at the Building awards and returned to the Sunday Times 100 Best Companies to Work For in 2013! Personally, I couldn't think of a better way to celebrate our 3 decades in business.

So what does the rest of 2013 have in store for us? Unfortunately we have neither a Jubilee or an Olympic sporting event to grab our attention and give the country and economy a boost. But our own Happiness Advantage and positive outlook on things will allow us to outperform our sector once again and achieve another year of growth approaching 20% achieved in the UK, Europe, New Zealand and India. A remarkable achievement at the end of what has been a remarkable 30 years.

STEPHENGEE
MANAGINGPARTNER



INSIGHT TALKS TO Sarah Richardson



Sarah Richardson has been a journalist in the construction industry for 8 years and is the editor of the leading industry title Building Magazine. Insight caught up with Sarah and asked for some of her thoughts on the industry.





So, first question: in your time as a construction journalist how do you think the industry has changed?

Well, I think it has become more collaborative. I know people always talk about collaboration, but I think it has a lot to do with the increasing use of BIM (Building Information Modelling). I also think we're seeing more collaboration due to the current need for more standardised design in sectors such as education, which has meant architects and contractors are working much more closely. With that said though, the industry is still fragmented and I think in the future we'll gradually see even more collaboration and less fragmentation.

I think another change that I've seen is the amount that UK companies are working internationally and again, that's something I can only see increasing in the future.

What single event sticks out as being the most memorable?

It has to be the Olympics. When we were actually due to find out if we had won the bid it happened on a press day, so we were all waiting for the decision. We even had two versions of the magazine ready to go, one to use if we won the bid and another to use if we lost it. From that day, right through to the games last summer, the work done by the industry and the stories that have come out of the Olympics are some of the best we've covered. Out of everything I've seen, it has to be the stand out moment for me.

What do you think is the greatest opportunity or threat to the industry?

I think both the greatest opportunity and the greatest threat for our industry is the UK government. At the moment the government has an opportunity to drive innovation within the industry through areas such as sustainability or through standardising designs to help create better efficiencies in building. As one of the biggest clients for the construction sector it can certainly lead best practice in these areas, but it is also the biggest threat to the industry, due to the current constraints on public spending.

The government needs to start attracting more private sector investment into our industry. This may be through developing its new PFI model or, failing that, targeting more capital spending in the right areas. Without this approach, the government could hold the industry back because businesses aren't going to invest in research and development if there's no work available for them to win.

What has been your strangest interview or experience in your time at Building?

I had to interview an MP once and basically follow him around on his campaign trail. He was actually a former construction minister and I spent the day with him up in his constituency. It was just a bit of a whirlwind, following him around on his campaign trail. There were some quite baffling moments too, when he asked me to stop people in the street and ask them if they knew who he was and if they would vote for him. The first three people we spoke to had no idea who he was, even when it was explained to them, so that was quite embarrassing. However it didn't seem to faze him and he managed to ride it out quite well.

That's certainly a bold move isn't it?

Yes and he was marching up and down with one of those loud hailer things as well. The day was very surreal.

And finally we have to ask: what is your favourite building?

The Tate Modern Gallery, which is just by our offices. Particularly the Turbine Hall, which I think is a fantastic space for the different kinds of art they show there.



Starting the term fresh last September, 8 of our staff have gone back to school.

Members from across the company have been working as mentors for 6th form students at Lillian Baylis school in Vauxhall.

Adopt a Student is a mentoring scheme that links 6th form students with people who work in a professional field. The aim of the programme is to address one of the barriers faced by young people: a lack of knowledge and experience of the professional world.

The scheme provides a means by which young people can access individual and personalised advice which enables them to unlock their potential and take the first steps towards a fulfilling, successful career.

This is a perfect way for us to make a positive impact on young people and also help us to broaden the knowledge, skills and experience of our staff. We hope John Rowan and Partners is providing young people with some really good examples of positive role models in the property and construction industry.



Green Boot Camp 2013

We're looking to build on the success of last years' John Rowan and Partners Green Boot Camp.

This year the camp will run from 8 - 12 July and will contain exciting and innovative best practice sessions, lectures and discussions on a selection of sustainable ideas, guidance papers and explanations of available funding methods.

Speakers from Vital Energi, Willmott Dixon and Marks & Spencers join us this time for what is shaping up to be an exciting week. If you're interested in getting involved please contact:



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+44 (0)208 567 6995

ADAPT & SURVIVE

NEWS

So what have Social Landlords ever done for us? Well, a good place to start is recognising their role in delivering thousands of houses over the past 10 years!

If there's one type of organisation that has gone through a rapid change in the last decade it's affordable housing developers and they're certainly not finished yet. Mash Halai, Head of Residential Development and Regeneration at John Rowan and Partners, talks about their commercial rise...

Go back a couple of decades - or in some cases just a few years - and there were still organisations who were wholly reliant on grant funding to develop their projects. Back then, affordable housing providers could expect to receive more than £100,000 a home, but now most are lucky to get £20,000 to £40,000 at most.

This has led to a huge turnaround in the affordable housing industry and providers have quickly adapted to the situation. We're now seeing the vast majority of these social housing companies generating their own income. This is being undertaken in a number of ways including attracting investors, borrowing against assets and raising money in the bond market.

These providers have risen quickly from being grant-reliant organisations to commercially astute developers who are also undertaking a lot more private sales in order to cross subsidise their affordable housing stream.

So what does the future hold?

It will be interesting to observe how this affects their approach to joint ventures with construction companies. At present, we're seeing a rise of these joint ventures on large scale housing developments, but time will tell if the relationships flourish or the affordable housing providers start to strike out on their own.

Companies may also head towards a business model that doesn't need to rely on grant funding; any received will simply be seen as a bonus. Others may look to explore the opportunity that commercial space offers, improving the value of their assets and also becoming a stable revenue stream.

In every aspect of their work from construction, financing, marketing and sales, affordable housing providers have come along way and soon we may simply be defining them as developers with a speciality in social housing provision.

Mash Halai



Innovation in people management

The John Rowan and Partners team has grown from one person to more than 100 over the past 30 years and in that time a lot has changed.

Having worked through several recessions and then battling against the skills shortages that always follow, we're determined to try to break the cycle. 28 years after joining the company, Stephen Gee, Managing Partner, discusses how people management has changed...

At John Rowan and Partners our employees' commitment and experience has driven 3 decades of success. This is not just 'the party line' either. I can honestly say it is the main reason behind our success and the reason why we still continue to grow. It is also the reason we challenged the bleak economic outlook with a new corporate culture and introduced a concept called The Happiness Advantage.

Rather than striving for the next achievement or milestone and blindly hoping it makes us happier, we're promoting happiness in the workplace as a way of fuelling success and providing our business with a competitive edge. This approach has already improved motivation and driven growth. Alongside this, our task-based management and flexible working hours make staff more efficient, bringing in new work leads and help us to secure repeat business from existing clients.

For these reasons our approach to people management is a business critical function and is acknowledged by all as the backbone of our business. The company has undergone some real innovation in terms of HR and we've certainly come a long way from the point in the early 80's.

Through our Internship initiative The Pledge, we've also changed our approach to recruitment and last year over 50% of our new staff were recruited following time spent on a paid internship with us. We took on 14 interns and after 3 months we offered all of them full time employment.

This approach has not only created a new way to employ people but, as each new graduate is required to present their dissertation to the company, it has also helped to bring new ideas and ways of thinking into the business.

I can't convey how much it means to us that in our 30th year of business we were named as Building Magazine's Employer of the Year.

Our message is clear: in times when it's easy to go to ground and simply focus on bringing in the work, don't forget who actually does that work, and keeps customers coming back.



This year's top employer, consultant John Rowan and Partners, is setting the benchmark for others to follow in its approach to employees ... with satisfaction levels soaring across the board.

The Building Good Employer Guide.



At the Construction Youth Trust's awards night as sponsors of the Young Surveyor of the Year



Calum winning The Great John Rowan and Partners Bake Off held to raise organ donor awareness



The team at the Sunday Times 100 Best Companies to Work For dinner

How technology has changed the way we work

TIM YOUNG



The construction industry is constantly developing innovative solutions to complex problems. Tim Young, Partner (Member) at John Rowan and Partners, discusses the numerous advances in technology the company has witnessed over the past 30 years which have made work more efficient and more enjoyable...

With this stream of new technological developments and cost and time effective solutions, the challenge, of course, is looking at each 'innovation' that comes along and deciding whether it's going to change our working world or is actually just a passing fad that will never catch on. We had a long debate over whether to invest in a fax machine, for example, it seemed like a brilliant concept, but would it really catch on?

The internet, computers and the way we communicate with each other has perhaps been the biggest area of innovation within the construction industry, with a single project involving hundreds of people in dozens of locations, over many years. The technology that has helped people to stay connected and support the decision making process has, in my opinion, been the greatest step forward.

Key changes:

The internet – In the mid 90's we saw the internet start to connect people in ways we had never imagined. John Rowan and Partners saw the world of communication transformed, from posting letters to instant emails... and for the whole industry, which was often seen to operate in silos, this had a great impact.

Desktop computing – Back in the day we had typewriters and then eventually moved on to word processors, which were used to revolutionise systems by all the

company's PAs. When the computer came along, we took the first step in to this new technological frontier by buying the company's first desktop computer. Admittedly, it did sit gathering a layer of dust in the corner of the office to begin with... but gradually everyone became convinced that the idea might just catch on. Soon followed the specialist tools and programs that could really help surveyors, architects and engineers. Project managers began to run programmes on a laptop that calculated complex formulas, and foremen could manage payroll and job codes accurately and more quickly than the old paper-based systems.

Computer Aided Design – As we moved away from hand drawn diagrams, which had to be repeated time after time, CAD began to change our projects by giving us extra time and resource. The ability for the company to infinitely reproduce and amend designs was simply amazing.

Mobile Communications – Right from the beginning, John Rowan could see the importance of mobile communication and in the 80's he invested in a mobile phone – which was at least the size of a brick and was carried in a bag so large it looked as though it belonged to a military operation. But from these humble beginnings, we continued to recognise the importance of mobile communications as it developed. Wireless technology has now taken this to a new level allowing remote onsite working, meaning faster decision-

making and lower costs, thanks to constant access to timely and accurate information. We can keep in touch with colleagues, clients and contractors, and always be on hand no matter where the work is happening.

So, where next?

The truthful answer is we don't really know. 30 years ago we wouldn't have even dreamed of a concept like having an email address so it's a brave man who tries to predict the future of technology. The main area for the development of technology in the construction industry seems to be focusing on BIM (Building Information Modelling). This is the process of creating digital representations of both the physical and functional aspects of a building in a virtual environment, so they can be shared, improved, amended and updated by multiple people working in multiple locations, all in real time.

Of course, only time will tell if BIM has the capacity to change our industry in the same way as the rise of the computer or mobile phone but we're keen to explore its potential at John Rowan and Partners. The government seems to agree and has recently launched a strategy designed to transform the UK into a "global leader" in the use of building information modelling. In another 30 years we may be looking back at the origins of BIM and marvelling that we ever managed to work without it.

Ken Morgan on Asset Management



While Asset Management has been around for years, it has recently become the latest industry buzz word. It's little wonder that with the end of the Decent Homes programme and industry-wide drops in grant funding, new methods of investment in existing housing stock are vital.

But to do this means undertaking complex studies of housing stock, which can number anywhere from a few hundred properties to hundreds of thousands. This also includes bringing together information from a variety of sources in areas such as maintenance, Decent Homes work, energy efficiency, usage, and tenure.

So, what's the best way to tackle this unenviable task? Like most things in business today, the temptation is simply to buy a piece of software and let that do the work for you. Unfortunately, it's not as easy as just buying an app for your iPad. There are so many choices out there, how do you know which one to go for?

Whenever I make a major purchase I start with research. It's not the adverts or the marketing I look at, it's the reviews. This ranges from technical publications to the comments left by people like me who have bought the same product. The opinions of fellow customers and end users are by far the most useful way to get an unbiased view of a product or service.

Our Asset Management Group

For many years, I've been looking for a really good piece of Asset Management software but have been unable to find something that meets my needs and those of my clients. Crucially, I couldn't even find a forum where the issue was being discussed. So we decided to take the initiative and create the forum ourselves.

This was the beginning of AM25. We decided on the name because the group of people who created it are all in the geographic region of the M25 - but the virtual community we're creating has no boundaries. There has never been a forum where you could quickly compare the experiences of other asset managers and use those experiences to enhance the insight and understanding of your own portfolio.

For me, AM25 ticks that box. It's a resource that allows users to gain insight from each other's personal experience and use that experience to generate greater understanding. Our first stage of this initiative was to launch a survey researching what people think about the different software out there. We asked people which systems they're using and their experiences of those systems. The survey revealed that 58% of people said that their software did not meet their needs and 47% of people felt the software only partially lived up to the initial sales pitch.

Get involved – For more information or to receive the survey, email me at kmorgan@jrp.co.uk



THE LAST WORD

OUR PREDICTIONS FOR THE NEXT 30 YEARS



Robert Russell

Greater use of biomimicry in construction and the ability to scan construction layouts which are then automatically transferred into unmanned plants which operate independently.



Elaine Griffin

Digital 3D design that sits on the table in front of you and machines that construct said design in one place.

Pre-constructed units that are picked up and dropped in.

We need to pick up on the aspects of the Jetsons that haven't yet come to reality. We have the video phones but not flying cars!



Mash Halai

Over the next 30 years... I think:

- 5 years – Bankers doing what they did 5 years ago!
- 10 years – Business is done without leaving your office/desk/home
- 15 years – Cars that fly (or flown by robots)
- 20 years – iRobots to do our business/house work
- 25 years – The Delorean time machine (as in Back to the Future trilogy) so we can go back and “improve” interesting decisions!
- 30 years – Build “unaffordable” housing on the Moon or Mars (space regeneration!)



Rishi Patel

The industry will be using some form of holographic BIM where you can open up, view and alter projections of buildings with the touch of your hand.



Gemma Kaling

All I want is a photocopier that does what it's told and doesn't suddenly decide to print everything in A3 landscape because it's having an off day...

