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Introduction

There is no more powerful institution in society than business. The business of business should not be about money, it should be about responsibility. It should be about public good, not private greed. Stakeholders want companies to make a profit, but not at the expense of their staff and the wider community.

Anders Dahlvig, CEO of IKEA

1.1 Introduction to the Book

With reference to the above quotation there have in recent years been a stronger focus on ethics and moral responsibilities aligned to businesses. Accordingly, the subject matter of what this book refers to as '*organisational ethics*' has become a hot topic and one that businesses need to pay special attention to if they want to succeed. For this reason, the book will explore many different aspects and themes around organisational ethics, specifically within the context of the built environment. It will highlight some of the issues and challenges that are currently being experienced in the sector on a national and international level. It is hoped that this will stress the importance, relevance and significance of ethics in the workplace. The book will explore and articulate many different innovative initiatives and measures to addressing some of these challenges. It is hoped that these can be introduced within organisations in the construction and engineering sectors particularly and represent a model of good practice for the future of the built environment. The following will hopefully give some context and background to the discussions around organisational ethics, alongside the justification and aims and objectives for the book.

1.2 Overarching Rationale, Synopsis and Justification: The Aim and Objectives for Writing the Book

Organisational ethics in the built environment is concerned with how we make improvements and positively contribute to the construction industry in terms of providing a safe and sustainable environment to work. Furthermore, organisational ethics should be

focused on human relations adversities, to create a thriving and aspiring, motivational and learning workplace. For this reason, the book covers motivational management and leadership in the context of the built environment alongside areas such as social value and corporate social responsibility. The focus and relevance in these important areas is related to all those construction and engineering companies involved with the procurement or life cycle of buildings from planning through design, construction, operations and facilities management. Accordingly, it includes many different organisations including clients, consultants, contractors, suppliers and manufacturers.

The aim of the book is to provide the foundations for advance thinking and shape future practices in the rapidly emerging field of organisational ethics and articulate how there can be a vast array of methods, motives and rationales for achieving more successful outcomes on both an organisational and industry-wide basis. In this pursuit there are clearly many unexplored challenges and dilemmas to grapple with and it is recognised that we are at the start of a largely unexplored journey. Such challenges include leadership, corporate social responsibility, motivational management and collaborative working. The improvements in practice in these key areas will be drawn from case studies across many other knowledge fields. These include other industries such as manufacturing and retail and involve the cross pollination of ideas from a broad range of collaborating stakeholders. In this regard, previous examples of what works best in practice will be given to pave the way forward for the advancement of applied knowledge as a new and clear agenda for change in the built environment. The cultural changes in the construction industry especially in the UK over the last thirty years, including significant improvement in health and safety can lead us to be optimistic that further reforms can be made possible around organisational ethics. This may be assisted by changes through legislative, leadership and training and education initiatives to achieve the same shifts for organisational ethics in those areas previously referred including sustainability, human resources, motivational management and collaborative working.

1.3 The Need to Rethink the Concept of Organisational Ethics

Organisational ethics, rather like corporate social responsibility, are concepts that are not new. Their roots have gone back as far as the slave trade over 300 years ago when anti-slavery groups lobbied communities and governing organisations to ethically source supplies from countries that had not enforced slave labour. In recent years, however, the world has been witnessed to many different corporate financial and sometimes environmental failures and scandals. These have included major global institutions such as BP, WorldCom and Enron. Such events which have been followed by public scorn and reputational damage for those organisations involved have heightened attention to the urgent need for corporate social responsibility and corporate governance. More recently there is the ongoing war and atrocities in Ukraine which has highlighted good and bad responses from global organisations who have historically had business dealings with Russia. Accordingly, the need to rethink organisational ethics has never been more profound and the pressure exerted from the general public and stakeholders to behave ethically is something that can no longer be ignored (Koh and Boo 2004).

Although over many years business organisations have focused mainly on strategies linked to making increased profits and creating value for shareholders (Stormer 2003). However, in recent years companies are realising that they need to focus on non-financial strategies alongside their economic goals. This involves behaving ethically which in turn can raise their reputations and in turn increase their success in the marketplace. This is supported by Orlitzky et al. (2003) and Joyner and Payne (2002) who found from their research that a positive correlation exists between corporate financial performance and environmental/social performance. Furthermore, Koh and Boo (2004) found that organisational commitment to ethical initiatives can have a positive relationship with job satisfaction and career success of employees. Companies that embraced ethical policies around social, environmental and human resources found that this raised the motivation levels of employees. In these instances, they found that staff loyalty and willingness to suggest organisational improvements were prevalent where motivation levels are high. In addition, such policies were found to reduce absenteeism and staff turnover which are very costly for organisations. The evidence would therefore suggest that ethical initiatives underpinned by moral considerations for staff and the communities they work in, could have far reaching positive effects on organisational success. It is for this reason that the book will articulate the various ethical measures that organisations in the built environment should be progressing to achieve more successful outcomes. Such measures will revolve around leadership, human resources management, environmental sustainability strategies, ethical procurement, motivation of employees and pursuing corporate social responsibility policies.

1.4 The Fragmentation and Bespoke Nature of the UK Construction Industry

In the UK nearly half of all work completed is undertaken by approximately 200,000 small contractors. Some of the workforce in this regard, especially those who undertake smaller jobs, are often individuals with limited and potentially insufficient experience. Because of such inexperience there may be cases where their knowledge and awareness of issues relating to regulations, compliance, best practice and ethical considerations is lacking. Furthermore, in the context of the built environment, which is predominantly associated with fragmented, complex and potentially confrontational practices, this can create a dilemma for the sector. It is, therefore, perhaps not surprising that there have been many reported cases in the press of examples of malpractice and contractors' breaches of regulatory standards and codes of practice. Some of these cases have resulted in litigation proceedings brought by their clients, which has resulted in reputational damage for the industry. In addition, these practices have frequently led to less than acceptable project outcomes in terms of value for money, delays and poor-quality build standards.

The book will respond to the increasing demand for practical, and industry aligned, ethical practice in the built environment, covering construction and engineering management. More specifically the book will address how existing ethical standards can be pragmatically applied to professional practice from an organisational perspective and provide case studies and example scenarios aligned to modern-day requirements. Furthermore, the book

will provide coverage of those real-world situations where the minimum legal and contractual requirements continue to require practitioners to demonstrate professional judgement and ethical decision-making. It will outline how ethically problematic situations can arise from internationally geographical differences in expected behaviours, conflicts between legal and moral dictum, or the mismatch between business goals of client and contracting organisations and society's perceptions of them as social facilitators. The book will then address how decisions can and should be made to uphold ethical standards and values. To enable this, it will bring together ethical theory, existing worldwide ethical standards and the requirements of many professional bodies including the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS), the Royal Institute of British Architects and the Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB). Practical advice will also be provided on how the largely theoretical ethical principles and guidelines adopted can be applied to all professional practitioner disciplines at both a national and international level.

1.5 Examples of How This Area Is Used or Represented in Our Society Today

The book will explore the extent to which organisational ethics are a viable tool in delivering improved outcomes in the built environment and will provide an important insight into the influence they have on the success of construction and engineering projects and redevelopment programmes. The book is intended to be a natural extension to *Professional Ethics in Construction and Engineering* (2022) by Dr Jason Challender. Whilst this book was largely focused on ethical dilemmas and types of unethical and illegal practices and behaviours and institutional codes of conduct to govern such adversities, the new book in will deal with organisational ethics to enhance working practices from many different perspectives.

1.6 The Lack of Trust in Construction Contracting and Reputational Damage for the Industry and Those Organisations Associated with It

The lack of trust in the construction industry has been highly documented by authoritative sources over many years and the underlying reason for this would predominantly be around breaches of professional ethics. The book will seek to address this ongoing dilemma and act as a catalyst for improvements to encourage more organisations and individuals to embrace and embed professional ethical standards in everything they do. This is a deliberate attempt to improve construction practices in the UK, which have arguably not been delivering the impact, and benefits that were intended in terms of successful project outcomes. Various government reports have reinforced this dilemma over the years. These have included *Construction 2015* (HM Government 2013) which identifies those fractious and sometimes unethical practices and behaviours are embedded in the UK construction industry. The report stresses the golden thread between professional ethics, collaboration

and trust across the entire supply chain which is crucial to deliver successful projects. Furthermore, findings from the *Low Carbon Construction Final Report* (HM Government 2010) confirmed the growing need for increased awareness of environmental ethics especially between clients, consultants and the supply chain, in order to make greater contributions to the pursuit of sustainable solutions and efficiencies.

In addition to the aforementioned government reports, historically the credibility of the construction sector has come under increased scrutiny with many questions being raised about the morality of the industry. One example relates to the unethical tender practices in the UK associated with blacklisting of the supply chain, bid rigging and collusion. Over one hundred national construction companies came under scrutiny in this investigation which resulted in significant fines and reputational damage for these organisations and the industry as a whole. In addition, there have been UK companies that have been found guilty of unethical and illegal conduct on a global scale. One example relates to the case of construction and professional services company Sweett Group PLC in February 2016, which was ordered to pay £2.25 m after a bribery conviction. This case was followed shortly afterwards by the demise of Carillion in 2018 with revelations of unethical practices and shortcomings. These cases have presented a poor image for the construction industry, and many have called for a radical recalibration of the industry to address such adversities. One could argue that the high-profile negative practices exhibited by some construction companies is arguably resultant of the unethical behaviour and management practices of their employees and consultants.

The book will be designed to assist practitioners in their awareness, understanding and breadth of knowledge of the issues around professional ethics to build trust between contracting parties on projects, with the overarching aim of delivering construction and engineering projects that are more successful. To achieve this aim, the book is designed to provide a practical guide for organisations in ethical compliance that can develop into a common practitioner framework. Therein, it will seek to address the significant institutional risk that lies in the lack of a clear and consistent approach to professional ethics within the construction industry.

1.7 The Book's Value Proposition and Its Unique and Outstanding Features

In previous studies into professional ethics, very little attention has been focused on the process of embedding ethics into decision-making and everyday practices. Furthermore, scant attention has been paid to the role and development of organisational ethics in the context of construction and engineering management. This book will seek to infill the literature gaps through examination of those factors already referred to which could greatly improve current practices and behaviours and achieve more successful project outcomes.

In addition, there have been few books which have been written on the specific subject of encouraging and incentivising appropriate organisational ethics in the built environment specifically through a practical guide. Other books which have been published have largely focused on theoretical studies examining different client behaviours and relational

analysis of clients with construction teams. Although the component elements of professional ethics have been covered previously and are therein well-trodden ground, there has been very little to articulate how these can be incorporated into organisational strategies in the built environment. As previously referred to the only other book of this kind is J Challender's (2022) *Professional Ethics in Construction and Engineering*, which the new book in this proposal intends to lead on from, drawing on case studies from the author's experiences and interviews. It will, however, take a slightly different course and approach from its predecessor by asking some very fundamental questions:

- How can improvements to organisational ethics positively promote good ethical standards, behaviours and practices and influence the success of projects in the built environment?
- What is the importance and role of leadership, motivational management, human resource management, corporate responsibility and social value in influencing strict compliance and adherence to ethical principles, values and standards within organisations?
- How can trust, collaborative working and partnering arrangements encourage professional ethics to be embedded within construction and engineering organisations?
- Why is environmental ethics so relevant in society today and how can corporate policies and strategies linked to them influence the success of projects in the built environment?

In consideration of the above questions the book's objectives are:

- To use case studies to look at how successes, failures and key risks can be influenced by organisational ethics.
- To identify how adopting policies and delivering strategies linked to environmental ethics can assist organisations in the built environment achieve more successful outcomes.
- To articulate the importance and role of leadership, motivational management, human resource management, corporate responsibility and social value for organisational ethics in the built environment.
- To identify a set of clear guidelines, national or international, to support the adherence and regulation around organisational ethics.
- To form the basis of a practical toolkit for guidance and teaching of organisational ethics in the built environment.
- To be the standard reference for businesspeople in understanding how ethics affects organisational risk.
- To educate readers on how trust, collaborative working and partnering arrangements encourage professional ethics to be embedded within construction and engineering organisations.

The book is intended to assist academics, construction related practitioners and clients in their awareness, breadth of knowledge and comprehension of the issues around ethical considerations, with the overarching aim of delivering more successful project outcomes. This is felt to be particularly important as in previous studies into ethics in the built environment, very little attention has been focused on giving practical advice. The book has sought to infill the literature gaps through examination of traditional roles of clients, design consultants, main contractors, and subcontractors and through providing guidance on potential improvement measures. Case studies and practical examples have been included

to assist the reader on how theoretical perspectives can be applied to real-life construction projects and scenarios which involve ethical dilemmas. There have been academic calls for greater insight into how leadership around ethics can be created, mobilised, and developed and more understanding of the resultant positive effects and impact that can be generated therein (Walker 2009). The book responds to this gap in knowledge and Chapter 9 is specifically dedicated to this area. This chapter will articulate the links between academic ethical leadership theories and professional practice as a vehicle for improving ethical behaviours and leadership skills of construction professionals. Relationship between poor leadership and project failure scrutinised to encourage best practice is explored from a lessons learnt perspective to avoid further repeated failures in the future.

There will be frequent reference to construction practitioners' views and opinions throughout the book and these have been sought through qualitative research carried out in 2020 from a small sample of semi-structured interviews. In this regard one chapter of the book (Chapter 11) has been dedicated to ethics around the global COVID-19 pandemic which emerged from China in 2019 and the impacts, behaviours and practices, good and bad, that have been experienced by many organisations and individuals through the crisis. Examples have emerged of companies using unethical and unfair practices to seek competitive advantage over other businesses during the epidemic in the name of necessity. Participants from these interviews included clients, design consultants, main contractors and subcontractors.

There have been few books which have been written on the specific subject of incentivising organisational ethics in the workplace and the benefits this can have on motivation levels of staff. Most other previous publications have largely focused on theoretical studies examining different construction practitioner behaviours and relational analysis of clients with construction teams. Chapter 10 bridges this gap in knowledge. It identifies from previous research studies which factors can affect motivation levels of project teams and the reciprocal influence that these can have for professional ethics.

Understanding the risks posed for breaches of ethical standards in the built environment is a growing area as the tolerance for project failure reduces. Contemporary books to this seek to externalise professional ethics and codes of conduct by rooting them with professional institutions that create and regulate them. This book takes a different perspective and is unique in considering organisational ethics as an integral and valuable component of the construction and engineering industries. In doing so it creates a practical baseline for awareness of ethical considerations and therein smoothing the transition between traditional ethics teaching and embedding standard, values and principles within the built environment. Accordingly, it is a starting point for standard ethical practices to be developed and integrated within organisations to support and de-risk their business activities.

The value proposition of this book is that it will hopefully be read, understood and accepted by businesspeople as their main guidance and reference tool for reducing construction-based risk associated with unethical conduct. Accordingly, this is a book written for businesspeople by businesspeople based on sound theory (how to do it) and sound practice (lessons derived from case studies). It is considered unique in that it represents a comprehensive and wide-ranging analysis of best ethical practice in the built environment as well as other industries and sectors and what can be learned from them. The book will

take established and widely accepted business ethical management practices and models and align them with development/construction issues. From this perspective, it does not seek to adapt established project management systems and processes but simply use ethical best practice models to co-exist alongside them. The book also investigates the area of environmental ethics and corporate social responsibility. These have become more prominent and important over recent years with the advent of cases such as the Deepwater Horizon oil spill which had major financial implications and reputational damage for British Petroleum PLC.

Although the research was undertaken in the UK, and all findings are likely to therefore have best fit with the UK construction industry, the overall knowledge and understanding to be provided by this book will have international relevance. Other countries seeking to develop ethical guides using similar approaches to the UK will be able to utilise the book, with consideration of how the findings fit with their own understanding in practice.

Finally, it is worth acknowledging that the author has gained over 33 years' experience of construction management from both a practitioner and academic perspective. From this, the book has drawn on both academia and practice, and it seeks from both these perspectives to prove an important insight into an area which has long been problematic for the construction industry.

1.8 Audience for the Book

The book is mainly intended for construction and engineering management practitioners but could suit a wide target audience including under- and postgraduate students and academics. The research findings will be presented to prioritise use by professional practitioners and therein provide a practical guide for adherence to professional ethics, as a toolkit, for improvements in project management in the built environment.

The book will not be designed as a holistic course textbook although it could be worthy of inclusion in a recommended reading list for courses related to construction procurement. As such, it is not intended solely as a practitioner guide. Rather, the book aims to cross this divide and provide useful insight to both academics and practitioners in developing their understanding of the topic area. Although the research was undertaken in the UK, and all findings are likely to therefore have best fit with the UK construction industry, the overall knowledge and understanding to be provided by this book will have international relevance. Other countries seeking to develop strategies for improved ethical practices using similar approaches to the UK will be able to utilise the book, with consideration of how the findings fit with their own understanding in practice.

1.9 Structure of the Book

The book has been structured into 14 chapters and covers the subject of organisational ethics from many different angles and perspectives but specifically in the context of the built environment. A brief outline of the themes of each chapter is detailed below:

- Chapter 1: Introduction** Introduction, justification, aims and objectives, readership and brief description of the areas covered throughout the book.
- Chapter 2: An introduction to organisational ethics** Introduces the concept of organisational ethics and what it means for both companies and employees in the context of the built environment. Articulates how organisations can sometimes suffer reputational damage by not pursuing policies and strategies linked to ethical initiatives. The importance and relevance of organisational ethics in the construction and engineering sectors is covered and the possible effects of workplace ethics on employees. The relationships between ethics, productivity and culture within organisations will also be explored.
- Chapter 3: Environmental ethics** Discussions around environmental ethics and encouraging sustainability in the design and construction processes and estates strategies. Outline of what we mean by environmental ethics and definition of what sustainability is within the context of the construction and engineering sectors. Articulation of the importance of environmental sustainability policies for construction organisations and the ethical case for participation.
- Chapter 4: Corporate social responsibility (CSR)** What corporate social responsibility means in practice and how CSR philosophies can be embedded into organisational cultures, policies and procedures. Benefits that adopting CSR practices and conversely reputational and financial damage from breaches of corporate social responsibilities. Introduction to the different types and models of corporate social responsibility from a legal, economic, philanthropic, and volunteering perspective, and the interwoven relationship between CSR and economic, social, and environmental considerations. Examination of the Considerate Constructors Scheme from a CSR perspective.
- Chapter 5: Relationship between ethics and other factors** Introduces the relationship between ethics and other factors including risk, quality, reputation, trust, leadership, and motivation. Hypothetical and real-life practical examples included where risks were taken due to the unlikelihood that they would occur and the catastrophic consequences that ensued. Relationship between ethics and quality examined and various examples and scenarios will be presented wherein unethical behaviour, including dereliction of duty and ‘cutting corners’ of one or more parties. Resulting catastrophic failures of buildings and structures and loss of life from deficiencies in quality of construction is also explored.
- Chapter 6: Ethical human resource considerations** Ethical and legal aspects around employment law including inclusivity, equality, and diversity in the workplace. Discrimination and the consequences for organisations in breaching regulations around human resource management. The ways and means that organisations can improve the culture of their workplaces. Encapsulates the requirements of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).
- Chapter 7: Ethics around construction health and safety** The legal and regulatory requirements in the UK, designed to protect the health and safety of employees and members of the public. Articulation of the measures and initiatives that the construction industry has adopted over recent years to reduce accidents and fatalities on site, including near miss reporting and improved supply chain management. The role of the Health and Safety Executive in policing and managing health and safety regulations.
- Chapter 8: Ethical considerations around trust and collaborative working** Focus on trust and collaboration as a way and means of encouraging improved ethical practices and

behaviours and improving business relationships. Discussion around duties of trust in the context of professional ethics and how trust can be gained and lost through moral and responsible actions and behaviours of individuals.

Chapter 9: The importance of ethical leadership in construction management Articulates the links between academic ethical leadership theories and professional practice as a vehicle for improving ethical behaviours and leadership skills of construction professionals. Relationship between poor leadership and project failure scrutinised to encourage best practice is explored from a lessons learnt perspective to avoid further repeated failures in the future.

Chapter 10: Professional ethics as a means for motivating project teams Considers the reciprocal relationship of how fostering a culture of professional ethics can lead to raising motivation levels within organisations. Examination of how communication as a motivational factor can maintain staff awareness of changing practices, codes of practice, standards and values from an ethical perspective.

Chapter 11: Professional ethics in the context of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic Real-life examples from interviews carried out by the author, to some of the behaviours, issues and dilemmas that emerged during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Reporting of both positive and negative ethical practices and actions that organisations have adopted during the crisis.

Chapter 12: Independent research study: Exploring ethics in the construction industry and understanding its impact on the built environment Independent research study to explore and evaluate the phenomenon of construction ethics within the built environment and to support the other findings and discussions in previous chapters of the book.

Chapter 13: Implications in practice for ethics in the construction industry Implications for the construction industry from unethical practices, including reputational damage and image considerations for organisations. Future improvement measures those organisations can adopt in their policies and strategies to address some of the current failings in the built environment.

Chapter 14: Summary of key points, reflections, overview and closing remarks Final chapter to summarise the book with reference to each chapter, extrapolating the key findings and issues raised. Presentation of the author's reflections and recommendations for the future of the construction and engineering industries, taking account of the issues raised in the book around organisational ethics.

1.10 Summary

There are many different aspects and themes around organisational ethics, specifically within the context of the built environment. Organisational ethics has become an increasingly important area and 'hot topic' over recent years, predominantly to address some of the challenges in the sector on a national and international level. Such challenges have revolved around leadership, corporate social responsibility, motivational management and collaborative working. *Organisational ethics in the built environment* is concerned with how we make improvements and positively contribute to the construction and engineering industries and adopt different innovative initiatives and measures to addressing some of

these challenges. For this reason, the book covers human resource considerations, health and safety, motivational management and leadership in the context of the built environment alongside areas such as social value and corporate social responsibility.

In recent years companies are realising that they need to focus on non-financial strategies alongside their economic goals. This involves behaving ethically which in turn can bolster their reputations and in turn increase their success in the marketplace. In addition, organisational commitment to ethical initiatives can have a positive relationship with job satisfaction and career success of employees and provide a safe and caring environment for them to prosper. For this reason, companies that have embraced ethical policies around social, environmental and human resources found that this raised the motivation levels of employees and increased productivity and retention of the workforce. Accordingly, the evidence would therefore suggest that ethical initiatives underpinned by moral considerations for staff and the communities they work in, could have far reaching positive effects on organisational success. Notwithstanding this assertion, such positive measures are not always easy to integrate into the built environment, which is predominantly associated with fragmented, complex and potentially confrontational practices. This can create a dilemma for the sector and is evidenced in reported cases of malpractice and breaches of regulatory standards and codes of practice. The book responds to this dilemma and will address how existing ethical standards can be pragmatically applied to professional practice from an organisational perspective and provide case studies and example scenarios aligned to modern-day requirements.

The lack of trust in the construction industry has been highly documented by authoritative sources over many years and the underlying reason for this would predominantly be around breaches of professional ethics. The book will act as a catalyst for improvements to encourage more organisations and individuals to embrace and embed professional ethical standards in everything they do.

The book's objectives include the use of case studies to look at how successes, failures and key risks can be influenced by organisational ethics. Other objectives are linked to identifying how adopting policies and delivering strategies linked to organisational ethics can assist businesses in the built environment achieve more successful outcomes. These objectives are intended to assist academics, construction-related practitioners and clients in their awareness, breadth of knowledge and comprehension of the issues around ethical considerations, with the overarching aim of delivering more successful project outcomes.

Although the research was undertaken in the UK, and all findings are likely to therefore have best fit with the UK construction industry, the overall knowledge and understanding to be provided by this book will have international relevance.

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