

Challenges for Surveying Professionals in the 21st Century – Ethics and the Importance of Stakeholder Engagement

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SUMMARY

In a world where there are an increasing number of negative headlines about the alleged poor ethical conduct and competence of professionals: What does it mean to be a surveyor in the 21st century? How is the surveying industry viewed by industry stakeholders? What are seen to be the key risks for unprofessional conduct by surveyors? What does this mean for the reputation of surveyors and the future of the profession? What impact does robust stakeholder engagement have on the ability of surveyors to operate, along with the quality and adoption of standards?

Ethical conduct and competence cuts across the surveying profession regardless of geography or specialism. If surveyors are not seen to be acting appropriately and/or to the appropriate technical competence, the integrity of the profession and those in it are at stake. However, in a globalised marketplace, what constitutes suitable ethical conduct / technical competence and when should a professional step aside from an instruction? How do surveyors hope to understand what is deemed ethical by their peers and clients, whilst remaining relevant especially in this fast moving digital age without appropriate stakeholder engagement?

A thoroughly thought through and executed stakeholder engagement plan, leads to robust professional standards, which facilitate public confidence in those they employ not to mention surveying related professionals and firms to be competitive in their marketplaces. Without public confidence and engagement in the professionalism of those providing surveying services, the long-term value of surveyors and those acting within this industry will be jeopardised. Paying lip service to engagement, by contrast can have negative impacts.

The object of the exercise is to give confidence to the users of surveying related services, especially regarding concerns over perceived and actual ethical and / or competence breaches. Without a

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standardised, high level approach – the chances of public confidence being undermined are high, which ultimately places the future of the profession at risk. A systematic, not scattergun approach to stakeholder engagement promotes long term success and benefits all industry stakeholders. A working group has formed to undertake extensive market research, to answer the question – ‘what does it mean to be a surveyor in the 21st century?’ - noting ethics and stakeholder engagement as key objectives. This presentation will highlight some of the issues involved, the engagement process and the status of the initiative.

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