

*TANJA JANKOVIĆ<sup>1</sup>*

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL MANAGER IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY**

### *Abstract*

**Management is science, and a successful manager is an art. That is the reason why management can never be fully learned and even less copied. The success of companies more than ever is the result of effective management, and successful management is impossible without capable and talented people. The role of the manager in construction industry management is a great responsibility. An effective construction manager must have many different skills, qualities, and abilities to be able to respond to most of the demanding situations within the construction projects. The construction manager must act as a leader throughout the life of the construction project. The need for leadership ability of a construction manager depends on the tasks, teams, organizational environment, manager's abilities, project resources, available time, and budget.**

*Key words: management, manager, construction industry, company*

### **Introduction**

Managers are the most important value and resources of each company, but at the same time due to the fact that for the construction of a good management team big investments are necessary, and a lot of time as well, they're also considered the most deficient resources [1]. In exploring the managerial potentials and their development one should keep in mind their personal, professional and business qualities, such as undertaking capacity, communication skills, creativity, knowledge of management methods, reliability, and dedication to the company, etc.

The importance of quality management and managers is undeniable for success of any company, especially in the field of construction industry. The success of the construction company will be bigger if management takes into the account the "human perspective", because according to modern concepts, the management is as successful as how much he/she respects the human factor and human component of the organization. As there is no management without a manager, there is no successful management without creative, skilled and talented managers. For managers in the construction industry it is very important to know how to motivate the people and must be completely devoted to harmonization of relations between people. Only those managers who have a distinct

---

<sup>1</sup> TANJA JANKOVIĆ, MSc, Faculty of Economics, Jovana Tomaševića, 37, Podgorica, Montenegro, email: [tanja.jankovic2012@gmail.com](mailto:tanja.jankovic2012@gmail.com)

individuality and innovative capabilities can meet the environmental challenges that await them, not just today, but even more in the future. There are three key points that separate the successful from the unsuccessful construction managers, namely: finding the best staff, finding ways to motivate employees and giving freedom to employees to work in their own way.

Modern construction manager is different from the classic one, because he/she is not focused on the search for the ideal organizational structure, but rather on management in accordance with the changeable environment and competition requirements. He/she is devoted to work, has no working time and knows how to motivate, coordinate and link the team in order to achieve company goals.

## **2. Identification of successful construction managers**

Managers are the source of the competitive advantage of one company over another; they are the main initiators of development, i.e. the most important and best resource in modern companies [3].

Human resource management in construction industry has typically been an emergent rather than a strategic or deliberate process. This has resulted in the infrequent use of comprehensive workforce management strategies in the industry.

Modern construction manager accepts compromises, ceases to think only of his/her own interests, and has a high degree of confidence, less organizational dependency and much greater autonomy. He/she is expected to make the right decisions, to be well paid and motivated.

Today construction managers need to be effective, operational and successful strategists. Their responsibility is to provide a framework and direction of organizational activities, determining the strategy and priorities, focus of action, the standard for valorization of results etc, which requires great strategic, technical and professional competence and knowledge.

There is a rule today that, apart from mental and intellectual abilities, construction managers must possess specific skills and knowledge, as well as personality traits. These are not only the assumption of managerial success, but often a contraindication for performing managerial job. It is unthinkable that someone who has no personal confidence, enthusiasm and determination can be a good manager.

The most important skills required for each specific managerial job, including the construction industry are: expertise, speed of decision making, ability to anticipate, willingness to take risks, knowledge of foreign languages, innovative capacity, high general education and extensive management experience [8].

Depending on the management level, specific attributes of construction managers are given different importance [1]:

- Top construction managers must have the ability to anticipate, as well as the expertise and ability to organize work, speed of decision making and willingness to take risks in the uncertain construction market;

-Middle-level construction managers must possess the expertise, the ability to organize work, speed of decision making, ability to predict as well as the ability to coordinate activities for a very large number of construction workers of different professions;

-Construction line managers and middle-level construction managers must possess the expertise and ability of the organization of work, then the ability to coordinate work and also the willingness to take risks.

Certainly, during identification of candidates for managerial positions one should take into account all these features, but personality traits are in the first place, as they are key factor to differentiating unsuccessful from successful construction manager.

Personality traits of construction managers have a great impact on the behavior of associates and the whole organization, because the problems related to the personality traits of managers result in improper relationship with co-workers and employees, errors in determining, fluctuation of the most capable construction staff, negative attitudes towards work and organization, passivity, apathy, poor results of work and the stagnation of the construction, not making decisions in a timely manner and the inability to select the right style of leadership. Also, a manager who is depressed and without enthusiasm acts in a demoralizing way on his associates. An authoritarian manager, with a strong need for power, dominance and control, creates uncertainty and fear, while the manager who has no self-confidence and self-assurance is crippled by inability to make decisions without all the facts and a large number of checks [8].

The issue of features, that is personality traits of successful managers, is related to the fact that despite the knowledge and desire, not everyone can be a successful manager [1].

### **3. Factors of success of construction managers**

#### **3.1. Leadership of construction manager**

Leadership is a complex process and successful leaders must have a wide-ranging variety of personal characteristics [8]. As a leader, a construction manager's primary job is to achieve results in construction projects to accomplish tasks A construction manager must

carry out this process by applying his/her leadership attributes: belief, values, character, knowledge and skills.

A construction manager as a leader must have a solid understanding of leadership philosophy in the construction delivery process and must be able to use effective leadership processes in all phases of the construction project, such as in the preconstruction phase of the project.

Good construction manager's leaders are continually working and studying to improve their leadership skills and develop through a never-ending process of education and training.

There are four factors of leadership which a construction manager as a good leader must know:

- A successful construction manager as leader must be able to counsel effectively to help individuals solve problems, to encourage or reassure, and to help an individual reach his/her potential [4,8] .
- Leaders must know themselves and seek self-improvement. It means continually strengthening their attributes [12].
- A successful construction manager as leader must have and must use effective communication skills to provide and receive data and information, making sure that all members are totally understood [4].
- One of the important tasks of a successful construction manager is to be able to handle unexpected situations effectively, so a good leader must have good judgment [8].

A construction manager as a leader is a very busy individual and he/she has many responsibilities during the life of the construction project. The construction manager must first manage his/her time and, second, manages the client for success of the project.

### **3.2. Skills of successful construction manager**

Good leadership in construction is a result of the effective use and implementation of the important skills that leaders have. Different skills and abilities enable the construction manager to monitor and control the progress of the project smoothly. These important skills are [8]:

1. Planning phase includes considering the task and objectives, and considering the resources/equipment, knowledge, skills and attitudes [8].

2. A successful construction manager must totally understand the organizational environment and monitor and control its structure and progress [12].
3. A successful construction manager must be aware of certain needs and characteristics of the project [9].
4. The construction manager can use evaluating to improve teams and the organization's performance [9].
5. Construction managers as leaders must energize their people, encouraging them to create and find new opportunities daily [8].
6. The successful construction manager can then use his/her successful team for further projects, therefore establishing productive teamwork [8].
7. A successful construction manager as leader must share his/her vision with the members of the team and organization and consider their ideas [4].
8. A successful construction manager must focus to increase the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the team and its members by using such steps as evaluating the process [4, 10].

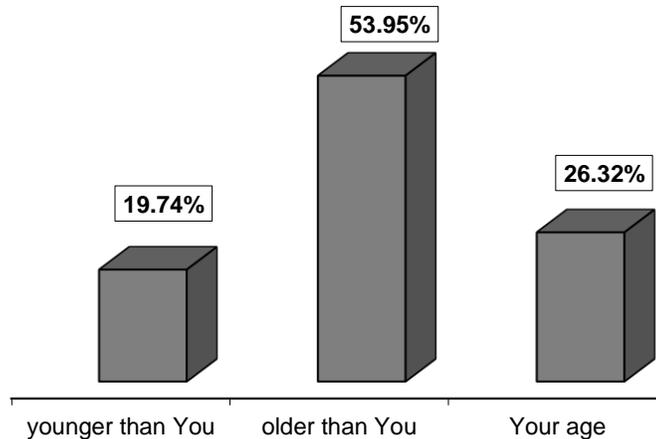
A construction manager has very important objectives such as setting achievable and effective goals, monitoring and controlling the project, and ensuring the project's success within budget and time constraints. So, a construction manager must be a person with multiple skills and abilities. The more skills and attributes the construction manager has, the more likelihood there is of successful project completion.

### **3.3. Success factors of construction managers and their age**

Depending on the age, construction managers perceive different factors of management performance. Younger construction managers have a lack of experience to control the situation and are more inclined to work in a team and, therefore, consider their co-workers' skills as crucially important for their own success. Older construction managers, with their vast experience are capable to better control the unpredictable situations, adapt to them, rely less on co-workers and emphasize personal skills as the key factor to managerial success [2].

When it comes to the age structure of the construction managers in Montenegro, we have checked through the research of 250 employees in the construction industry in Podgorica. The study was conducted with the aim of collecting data on the degree of satisfaction of

employees in the construction industry with their superior manager, because it is also the way in which the performance of the very manager is reflected.



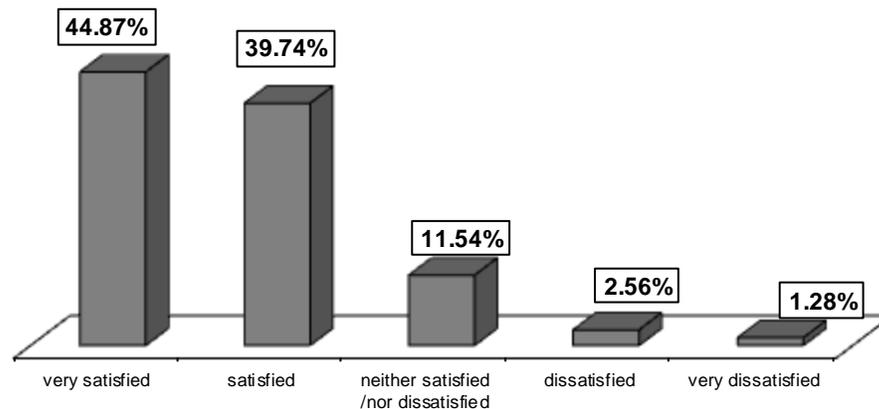
**Chart 1.** Answers to the question: How old is your construction manager?

According to the research results, 53.95% of respondents is younger than their construction manager. Superior is of the same age in case of 26.32% respondents, and 19.74% of respondents have construction manager who is younger than them.

#### **4. Construction manager's success in Montenegro through evaluation done by employees**

The use of positive emotions in the management, which is manifested through sincere intentions and behavior of managers, creates the feeling of job satisfaction and organizational commitment, while negative mood through highlighted dissatisfaction and negative attitudes towards managers and work can in long term make an impact on the decisions of employees to leave the company. Capable managers in all areas, including the construction industry, using their abilities, skills and knowledge create and control the situation, and thus create a favorable working environment for the achievement of project objectives [5,7].

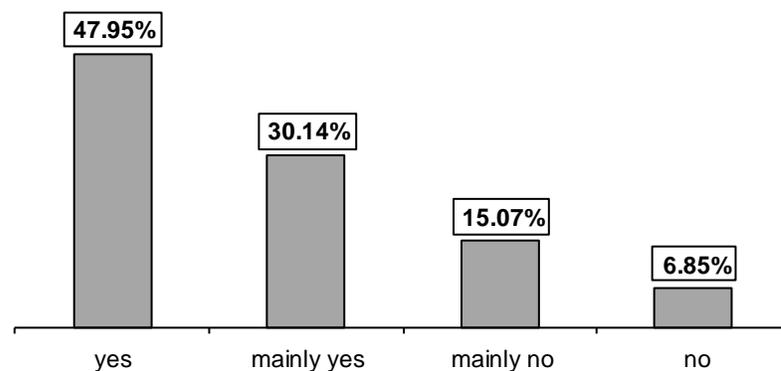
Successful performance of construction manager is evident in interaction with employees: he inspiringly motivates, encourages and recognizes the individual needs of each employee. Positive emotions contribute to evaluating managers as efficient, i.e. the ability of managers to generate positive emotional expression has significant effects on the perception of leadership as efficient [6, 11]. Results of the research conducted at 250 employees in the construction industry in Podgorica (Montenegro) showed a high degree of satisfaction with their managers.



**Chart 2.** Answers to the question: How satisfied are you with your manager?

On this issue, even 84.62% of employed construction workers who participated in the study were very satisfied or satisfied with their superior manager. 14.10% of respondents estimated that they neither were very dissatisfied with their manager or neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, and an additional 1.28% was very dissatisfied.

Complex, risky and very difficult construction jobs require enabling certain autonomy in their performance, without control and additional pressure. Employees in the construction industry are in this way stimulated towards the creation and implementation of new ideas and learn to approach old problems in a new and different way. Construction manager needs to possess the ability to recognize the individual needs of employees and to develop their potential for achieving higher levels of performance. Through conducted research, we came to conclusion that construction managers in Montenegro are in a large percentage aimed at stimulating the professional development of their employees.

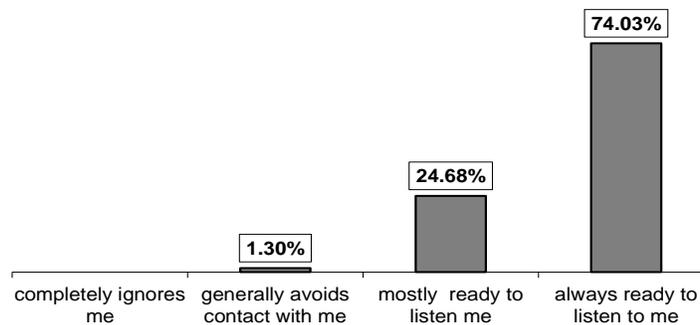


**Chart3.** Answers to the question: Is your manager interested in your professional development?

Even 47.95% of respondents believe that their construction managers are interested in their professional development and advancement. 30.14% of respondents say their bosses are mostly interested in their progress, and 21.92% say they generally are not interested or do not care at all.

Construction manager must have an objective approach to each employee as an individual, diagnose developmental needs of each, and according to that establish appropriate interpersonal mentoring relationship. In this way, manager encourages their autonomy and empowers them to take responsibility in accordance with greater expertise and interests.

A very large percentage of construction managers in Montenegro are ready to listen to all the demands of employees, according to the results of the conducted research.



**Chart 4.** Answers to the question: How would you describe your work with the manager?

Most survey respondents (even 98.70%) said that their superior construction manager was usually or always ready to listen. Other participants believed that their superior generally avoided contact with them (1.30%), and none of the participants answered that their superior completely ignored them.

### Conclusion

The construction manager as a leader must use his/her knowledge and skills to totally comprehend the project and its demands together with his/her team and apply the appropriate leadership style to achieve his/her vision. What makes a construction manager as a leader successful depends on the leader's ability to handle all situations, which a rise during the life of the construction project, such as crises.

The construction manager must have the leadership abilities to successfully accomplish construction projects. The construction manager as a leader must select and develop his/her team. His/her ongoing role is to ensure that the team works and grows together toward common objectives and goals and achieves the manager's vision. The successful construction manager can then use his/her successful team for further projects, therefore establishing productive teamwork.

In conclusion, a successful construction manager must be a person with multiple skills and abilities. The more skills and attributes the construction manager has, the more likelihood there is of successful project completion. Although some of these abilities may not be required at times, it is important to use them in specific conditions and situations. What makes a construction manager successful is his/her ability to satisfy the client by completing the project within the required time and budget and to deliver the desired quality.

## References

- [1] Bahtijarević Šiber, F. (1999), „Management ljudskih potencijala“, Golden Marketing, Zagreb,
- [2] Barrie, D. S., and Paulson, B. C., Jr. (1992), „Professional construction management“, 3rd Ed., McGraw-Hill, New York,
- [3] Bogičević Milikić B. (2006), „Menadžment ljudskih resursa“, Ekonomski fakultet, Beograd,
- [4] Champy, J. (2000), “The arc of ambition: Defining the leadership journey”, 1st ed., John Wiley and Sons, New York,
- [5] Clough, R. H., Sears, G. A., and Sears, S. K. (2005), “Construction contracting”, 7th Ed., Wiley, New York,
- [6] Dessler G.(2000), “Human Resource Management, 8 th edition“, Prentice Hall, New York,
- [7] Gary, D. (2007), “Osnovi menadžmenta ljudskih resursa”, Data Status, Beograd,
- [8] Gharenbaghi K., McManus K., (2003) , “The Construction Manager as a Leader “, Leadership and Management in Engineering,
- [9] Gharenbaghi K., McManus K., (2003) , “Effective Constructive Management “, Leadership and Management in Engineering,
- [10] Hiebert, Murray. (2001),” The encyclopedia of leadership: Apractical guide to popular leadership theories and techniques” . 1st ed., McGraw-Hill.,New York,
- [11] Torrington, D., Hall, L., Taylor S., (2004), „Menadžment ljudskih resursa“, Data status, Beograd,
- [12] Stefanie G. Brandenburg, Carl T. Haas, F.ASCE, and Keith Byrom, (2006) “Strategic Management of Human Resources in Construction”, Journal of management in engineering.