

# Book Review

## **Construction Stakeholder Management**

Ezekiel Chiniyo and Paul Olomolaiye (eds), Wiley-Blackwell: Chchester, UK 2010, i-xxiv 1-392 pp, ISBN 978-1-4051-8098-6 (hardback) AUD 140.00, NZD 160.00 ., £69.99.

Construction Stakeholder Management (CSM) is an edited book that has twenty-one chapters with introductory and concluding chapters by the editors and a foreword by Professor Emeritus Dave Langford.

The back cover of the book states that the book 'captures the best practice in CSM using a range of international case studies' and 'advocates an alternative to dispute resolution that is proactive, practical and global in its application'. The book is recommended as an essential text for advanced students, lecturers and practitioners in the built environment. The editors of the book are Dr. Ezekiel Chiniyo, lecturer at the University of Wolverhampton and Professor Paul Olomolaiye who is also the Pro Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean for Environment and Technology at the University of West England (UWE) in Bristol. This review will provide an overview of the topics covered in the book, discuss its strengths and weaknesses and assess the book with respect to the statements made on the back cover of the book.

As you would expect of an edited book with contributions from several authors (from around the world) the book deals with a variety of topics covering a historical perspective of stakeholder management; theoretical perspectives; analysis of the types of stakeholders and strategies to deal with them; managerial issues such as leadership, decision making, change management; construction specific issues such as risk management and contracts; dispute resolution practices such as conflict and negotiation management; useful tools like stakeholder circle, diagramming; and case studies from several countries as well as addressing different situations. The strength of the book is its wide coverage of topics and the examples of stakeholder management issues from several countries. There is something valuable in this book for a diverse range of readers.

For those who are theoretically inclined there are chapters that deal with theoretical aspects and a chapter that provides an insight into how stakeholding practices have changed over the years. Chapter 2 by Kenneth Amaeshi reviews corporate stakeholding practices, theories of stakeholder behavior and stakeholder salience. It also points to gaps in the literature on construction stakeholder management which are worth pursuing in future research. Chapter 3 by Frank Harris provides a historical perspective of stakeholder management including a listing of reports by government and industry on how to improve construction industry performance. It also provides a good overview of how stakeholder perspectives have changed over the years. Chapter 11 by Abbas Ali Elumualim discusses the role of culture and leadership in stakeholder management covering some theoretical aspects of relationships and power and socio-cultural elements in stakeholder management.

For the practitioner, the book provides some useful tools that can be directly applied in practice to manage stakeholders better. Chapter 7 by Lynda Bourne and Patrick Weaver explains the stakeholder circle methodology which is a visualization tool that can help in identifying and classifying stakeholder importance and influence. The tool also assists in rating stakeholders through the project life cycle to manage them better. Chapter 8 by Ektewan Manowong and Stephen Ogunlana discusses practical tips on strategies and tactics for managing stakeholders with a useful chart for strategic stakeholder management. Chapter 6 by Mei-yung Leung and

Paul Olomolaiye has some good examples on how risk events affects internal and external stakeholders at various phases of the project life cycle as well as some risk management methods that would come in handy for construction managers.

There are several case studies presented in the book from several countries. In particular Chapter 20 by Ezekiel Chiniyo presents ten case studies devoted to several aspects of stakeholder management. In addition case studies are provided in several other chapters. Examples of stakeholder management from Finland, Austria and Hongkong also contribute to the international favour of the book.

Two of the chapters are worth mentioning for their novel and interesting insights into stakeholder management. Chapter 14 by Matthew Wood, Amlan Mukherjee, Todd Bridges and Igor Linkov discusses the practical application of mental models to improve decision making in dynamic situations. The authors compare four diagram-based representation techniques and explain how these are used in practice. Chapter 16 by Michalea Schaffhauser-Linzetti discusses a case study from Austria on how electronic archiving helped to increase the number of stakeholders involved in document submission and archiving in projects, resulting in increased interconnectedness. The authors claim this as a successful example of eGovernment solutions to aid stakeholder management.

While variety is a strength, it can also be looked upon as a weakness as readers may not find what they want easily. The editors have not provided a summary of what is to come in their introductory chapter. To ease referencing chapters contributing to similar themes could have been clustered together or placed into sections with themes. The editors have covered topics of general interest in early chapters but after Chapter 4 the remaining chapters do not seem to have been placed in any logical sequence. For example while Chapter 9 covers negotiations, conflict management is featured in Chapter 17. Chapter 20 could have benefited by standardizing sections of the case studies or the author could have highlighted the features of the various case studies. The introduction and conclusion sections of this chapter do not provide guidance to the case studies incorporated in the chapter.

The preface and the book's back cover mention partnering which is promoted as a new way of working in contractual relationships. A chapter providing some guideline to set up partnering arrangements or examples of partnering that have been successful or otherwise could have been very useful to the readers and met the objective of the book. A chapter on partnering could have easily replaced Chapter 19 on change management which does not specifically focus on the implications of change management in stakeholder management. The revaluing construction management (Barrett 2007) research and its findings that would of relevance to stakeholder management is missing from the list of reports mentioned in the history chapter.

Would it be useful to get a copy of the book? Certainly readers will find new and useful materials in this book. It is uncertain if the book could be used as a text book but selected chapters could be essential readings in any course on stakeholder management. The editors have to be commended for putting together a number of perspectives across the World to help in managing stakeholders better in construction management.

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