

Supply Chain

It is common for construction companies to have an extensive supply chain employing many people not under their direct control. However there is still a need to co-ordinate and lead these people to ensure that quality standards are maintained. Here we discuss some of the impacts that different suppliers may have on quality.

Many suppliers on a construction site are **subcontractors** in that they not only supply goods but also services in the form of labour and supervision, and often technical expertise and management. These may be working to their own rules for quality control and consideration needs to be given to how these rules are aligned with the overall project rules.

In some cases the supplier is supplying equipment only and this is therefore a **purchasing** function. Key attributes for a construction quality professional here are to ensure that items Critical to Quality (CtQ) are defined in the purchasing agreement and that the purchased equipment is properly inspected and or tested before incorporation into the works.

Alternatively **Professional services (consultants)** may be engaged to support the project. As these companies often only supply personnel and knowledge and not product, ensuring that the personnel and knowledge that they supply continue to be of high quality and appropriate to the project can be overlooked.

A special case here is when they are **novated or nominated** by the client or other party and therefore it becomes the responsibility of the project to monitor their output without the luxury of being able to choose them first. Quite often extreme diplomacy is required in order to make these parties meet the project requirements as they are usually aware that they are in a strong position vis a vis the project.