

Discrepancies Between Clients' Goals and the Outcome of Design Processes in Corporate Real Estate

Preliminary abstract – full paper will be handed out at the conference

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The Scandinavian building trade is very skilled in carrying out complex projects and in mastering multidisciplinary design and construction projects in an efficient way. Despite this, there is a common opinion among representatives for core business and corporate real estate that the finished projects often do not meet the goals of core business or add the expected value to core business.

A study initiated by Chalmers University of Technology and The Real Estate Department of the Region of Västra Götaland and partly financed by FORMAS (the Swedish Research Council for Environment, Agricultural Sciences and Spatial Planning) hopes to discover better ways of carrying out complex projects from a core business point of view.

Our aim with the initial study is to find out the common conceptions and show however there is a difference in standpoint between different actors in the process. The first step is carried out as a Delphi study directed to a large number of experts throughout Sweden, including those from the construction industry, real estate industry, consultants, finance, facilities management and core business representatives and users in large organizations.

The Delphi method is developed by Rand Corporation and often used for predicting trends of the future or to explain complex courses. It is directed to a large number of experts that is e.g. asked how they predict the development of certain aspect of the future. A Delphi study is mostly carried out in at least three steps. The first step has a set of open questions that the experts should answer based on their own understanding of the subject matter. The idea with the study is that the experts, based on the other experts' statements should, if they so wish, modify their opinions. The goal is to find a prediction close to consensus where a number of dissenting opinions can be identified.

In this study we use the Delphi method as a starting point for a number of case studies. We like to identify the common conceptions among a number of experts, as for an example the relation between the identified goals of the project and the outcome of projects, the design process itself and the behavior of different actors. The second step in our study is based on the results of the first set of open questions. The answers from step one is boiled down to a large number of statements. The experts are asked to react to these statements on a five-grade scale from "agree totally" to "disagree totally". The result from step two is analyzed and summarized in a non-identifiable way and fed back to the experts during step three. They now get a chance to reconsider their statements due to the understanding of the others' answers. If needed step three can be repeated and followed by individual interviews with selected experts.

In the end we will receive a number of aspects sorted in matter of importance by the experts. The result will give us a good picture of what experts in industry see as the major problems and to what extend these problems are present in their professional practice. This will form the point of the departure for observations in a number of case studies. By identifying the common conceptions we can focus on studying however these conceptions of problems relate to those found in the case studies.

In this conference the result of the Delphi study will be presented and we plan to present the result of the case studies at a later conference.