

APM Project Management Awards



WINNER'S

CASE STUDY



Category

Overseas Project of the Year 2012

Winner

Al Wahda Master Development, Abu Dhabi

EC Harris International Ltd

Overview

Located in Abu Dhabi City in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the Al Wahda Master Development is a vibrant business and shopping destination in the heart of the city.

It boasts Abu Dhabi's largest five-star hotel with 850 rooms and apartments, the city's biggest inner city shopping mall with more than 400 shops, thousands of square metres of leasable office space, residential apartments, and is also home to Al Wahda Football Club.

Providing project management and cost consultancy to the development, EC Harris International Ltd has been involved in every element from the master planning of the development to the concept development and management of the interior design, fit-out and furniture,

fittings and equipment installation.

In fact, EC Harris' involvement has been so intrinsic that they were even responsible for naming some of the restaurants and bars in the hotel.

Objectives

EC Harris developed detailed and systematic procedures through a project management gateway approach, which involved design verification checks, employer sign-off at various phases, value engineering workshops, and risk management.

The project execution plans helped to categorise roles,



responsibilities, communication protocols and approval flowcharts.

The development, which is valued at more than £400m, was built between 2005 and 2012 with the objective of creating an exciting shopping mall, five-star business hotel, office and residential buildings, resulting in a new business and shopping destination within the core of the city.

The achievement of those objectives involved significant project management from EC Harris over the duration of the seven-year development.

Resources

It was a truly international project team which comprised a diverse mix of nationalities and cultures. Those working on project included American, Bangladeshi, Chinese, Croatian, Egyptian, German, Ghanaian, Indian, Iraqi, Italian, Jordanian, Lebanese, Malaysian, Moroccan, Nepalese, Pakistani, Palestinian, Philippino, Portuguese, South African, Sudanese, Syrian, Thai and Tunisian. In total there were 31 different nationalities working on this scheme.

EC Harris deployed a dynamic team who were happy to multi-task in their daily roles, allowing the client to maximise value from the project management team. It is down to the dedication of that team which made the project such a success.

Challenges

In 2008, with the project at 70 per cent complete, the worldwide financial crisis struck, posing the biggest challenge in the three-phase initiative.

The UAE was initially regarded as being immune to the financial downturn.

However, the ripple reached them by late 2008 and the impact was bigger than anyone could have forecasted. EC Harris, who was then leading the second phase of the development's construction, faced huge issues as steel prices rocketed and concrete supply became unpredictable.

Vital early planning to avert supply issues helped to ensure the supply lines continued – with main contractor Civilco crucially producing the goods at a time when many projects either stalled or entered into dispute.

Co-ordination

There was an Arab, an Egyptian and an Irishman... It sounds more like the beginning of a joke but, in fact, it's an important point in demonstrating the multicultural mix of the management team of client, engineer and project manager.

Overcoming multicultural barriers was a major contributor to the success of the project and is a challenge that is not normally present in UK-based projects. EC Harris established best practice, clear processes, and communicated one-to-one coordination with all team members and stakeholders.

Importantly the project team was empowered to assume responsibility and manage the process effectively.

Project successes

Ultimately, for EC Harris, the project was a major success. They delivered the largest hotel in Abu Dhabi along with one of the city's most vibrant shopping malls – key assets that are providing a return on investment to the owners and wealth to the city.

Constantly focused on the holistic delivery of the project in line with its Built Asset Consultancy ethos while providing micro-management support to contractors and suppliers. EC Harris has received many accolades for the project – particularly after overcoming the challenging market conditions of 2008.





The APM Project Management Awards have been celebrating project management excellence since 1993 and the broad range of categories is designed to make entry possible for projects and companies of all sizes and complexity.

The awards reflect the invaluable contribution project managers make in all sectors of society and the event provides an opportunity for industry professionals to meet with colleagues and entertain guests as well as celebrate at one of the year's most exciting events.

Highly regarded in the project management industry, the awards reflect the dedication and talent that helps to shape the project management community and the world around us. The finalists, winners and sponsors of the awards attract national publicity for their achievement and involvement. Winning an award provides invaluable recognition and kudos to the careers of winners.

For more details on the awards and how to enter or attend, visit apm.org.uk/awards or email awards@apm.org.uk

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