

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP



Construction Connectivity – Getting Back to Basics

The European construction industry is continuing to demonstrate encouraging growth, with Deloitte forecasting that the market is on track to grow at a steady rate of 2.5 per cent a year to 2022. With this continued growth, firms face increasing pressure to deliver against rising demand, but it's widely recognised that the construction industry has a reputation for often delivering projects later than expected and significantly over-budget. Large scale projects in particular can typically take 20 per cent longer to complete than planned and can be up to 80 per cent over budget – so how can the industry adapt to fulfil these ever-expanding expectations when current efficiency levels often leave a lot to be desired?

The adoption of new technology and smarter processes can deliver tangible benefits for construction firms, but there remains a fundamental stumbling block for those organisations looking to capitalise on new innovation – a frequent lack of high speed, portable and reliable Internet connectivity. It is therefore imperative that the industry addresses these key issues as a matter of urgency so that firms can gain access to the connectivity they need at new sites from day one.

The construction site of the future

With rapid advances in technology and the advent of cloud based solutions, the way we work and interact has drastically changed. Technology innovation has led industries to continually strive to be more efficient, productive and cost effective. Yet, when it comes to the world of construction, investment in IT has remained low in comparison to other industries. The market has been hampered by technical challenges relating to projects that can be large, complex and geographically dispersed. Combined with varying proficiency and maturity levels of smaller subcontractors, advancing at scale has been difficult and has subsequently led to the slow progress of the digitisation of the construction industry. Despite these challenges, the available technology in construction has advanced rapidly and we are now starting to see examples of how advances in digital technology can deliver efficiency and productivity opportunities at the start of all projects – truly revolutionising the construction sites of the past. Drones, robotics, 3D printing and augmented reality are no longer works of fiction but can be adopted by forward thinking firms looking to capitalise on the benefits that embracing innovation can bring to the construction site.

Connectivity is essential

Connectivity is a necessity for businesses in virtually every industry and construction is no exception. Crucially, this is still one fundamental hurdle that the industry must overcome if it is to create a solid foundation for all new innovation. Technology that is crucial for the industry to innovate and keep up with demand, cannot function without high speed, portable and reliable internet connection, but gaining access to connectivity can be a challenge for new sites, particularly those that are located in a Green or

Brownfield location where there is typically no existing connection. Often, a fixed line is simply not an option and the reliability of 4G is still patchy, even as talk around the possibilities of 5G continue to dominate the headlines.

Conclusion

The construction industry cannot continue to utilise outdated processes and management methods but instead must embrace digital advances and adopt smarter processes and technology to stay competitive. But there is no way that the construction sites of the future will ever become a reality unless the industry can conquer the basics of connectivity.

So, how can construction firms ensure that a strong and stable connection is established quickly at a new site to ensure lack of connectivity does not negatively impact on projects? By working with an ecosystem of experienced and trusted providers who can supply the connectivity and IoT services that sites require. The industry will then be able to continually benefit from the opportunities that the latest advances in innovation present. The potential rewards to firms that capitalise on digitisation will be instantaneous.

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