

PD World  
05/09/13

### Looking forward

**Richard Vann is managing director of the RVA Group, a UK based specialist engineering consultancy providing management services for large scale, high hazard and complex decommissioning, decontamination, dismantling and demolition projects. He is a past president of the Institute of Demolition Engineers and the Institute of Explosives Engineers. He has almost 30 years demolition and decommissioning experience, and plays a pivotal role in continuing to shape industry developments.**

Of course the global economic climate of recent years has brought many negatives to the demolition sector. The pressure to undercut competitors' prices to win work has become so great that unfortunately some demolition firms have not had sufficient resource to execute projects to the required standards, and many others have gone out of business all together, however there have also been a number of positive developments.

I applaud the cultural change taking place within the discipline. A shift in mindset now sees more and more demolition and decommissioning engineers, managers and directors striving to future proof their careers and businesses by continually developing their skills and knowledge.

This has certainly been the case in the UK, helping the sector attain a greater level of credence worldwide. We are increasingly seeing the experience of the most technically equipped professionals being sought overseas. There are some similarities across the US and Europe, but UK standards and methodologies are commonly recognised as the benchmark. Further afield in the Middle East and Asia for instance, clients readily acknowledge that UK expertise can add a great deal of value to their projects, hence a number of UK organisations have a growing international client base.

Significant progress too has been made with the management of waste. Since its inception demolition has been a committed recycler, acknowledging the commodity value and demand for materials that can be salvaged during domestic, commercial and heavy industrial executions of work. In reality demolition was probably one of the first 'green' disciplines, and as global environmental regimes have become more robust, clients have heightened their commitment to reducing, reusing and recycling.

We are also enjoying and encouraging the greater level of teamwork and tripartite alliances being forged between client, contractor and consultant. As project complexities and challenges increase, leading demolition professionals are seeking to share knowledge and specialist insight. The industry has come a long way in its willingness to communicate and peer-interact; this momentum should not be lost.

Demolition is not a black art, and the likelihood is that many challenges will have been encountered in some form or other before. There is sufficient expertise and talent within demolition for us to devise safe, environmentally sound and cost-efficient solutions that demonstrate the degree of engineering aptitude within our specialist field, should we be open enough to embrace them.

Adversity is after all, the mother of progress.