

News

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A day in the life of an award-winning operations director

Neil Lock is operations director at Morgan Sindall Construction in Northern Home Counties and is based in the company's Welwyn office. Neil joined the business in 2019, having already worked in the construction industry in a successful career spanning almost 30 years.

In October 2018, Neil was named the Chartered Institute of Buildings' (CIOB) Construction Manager of the Year – one of the industry's most celebrated awards. Now working at Morgan Sindall Construction, Neil oversees the delivery of projects across its Northern Home Counties business and works closely with the company's supply chain partners to ensure a smooth and seamless delivery for customers. No two days are the same, but here, Neil talks through a typical day in his role as operations director and Construction Manager of the Year:

8.00am: I'll attend a breakfast meeting with our supply chain partners or consultant teams - regular open communication helps to share best practice and to promote the collaborative behaviours required to deliver the project safely, with a relentless focus on quality, on time and snag free. It's important for the senior team to take the time to attend and support these gatherings to form relationships with the supply team, consultant teams and maintain strong relationships.

Our area director, David Rowsell, and I generally host these meetings. If it is a specific supply chain in relation to a completed project, we may also present awards to our supply chain partners who worked on the project. It's a good opportunity to build on the important relationships we have with subcontractors, which we value so much.

9.00am: For the first few hours of my morning, I'll be in meetings with the operations and business development teams to discuss incoming project bids and decide which ones we would like to progress as a business. It's then my responsibility to consider, with the wider team, which of our supply chain partners will be best suited to the different projects.

Morgan Sindall Construction operates a structured supply chain approach focused on developing collaborative, mutually beneficial relationships. Those subcontractors who support us to win work and then consistently deliver well on site, are promoted to 'preferred' status. This means our relationship with our supply chain is built on extremely strong foundations. This has enabled the business to develop a supply chain which is loyal, committed and collaborative – and willing to go the extra mile.

I can honestly say that Morgan Sindall Construction's relationship with its supply chain is unique and I'm very proud to be working with a business that prioritises these vital relationships, which are so crucial to delivering best in class projects for our customers. The Northern Home Counties' preferred supply chain is increasing and we'll soon be growing from nine preferred subcontractors to 12.

11.00am: Team wellbeing and personal development is at the heart of everything we do. Morgan Sindall Construction places a major emphasis on supporting the next generation through programmes such as apprenticeship schemes, community engagement days and ultimately adding lasting social value in the communities where we work. I mentor a team of trainees, apprentices and graduates as part of a new programme we've recently launched to support the continuous development of our younger team members in the Welwyn office. I regularly invite the group to host a discussion in the office, where they can all come to the table and voice their perspectives on

a particular topic about the business. I don't set a subject for their discussion, I ask them to decide the agenda and explore the subject in their own way. We have a talented young team in place at the Welwyn office and it's a privilege to be able to play a role in supporting the construction leaders of the future and to learn from the fresh perspectives they bring to the table.

1:00pm: A visit to one of our live construction sites, possibly with our customer, to update them on how work is progressing on site.

I'm currently working closely with the project teams at Abbey View Primary Academy, which is a brand new £6.8 million primary school in High Wycombe, and at the new Civic Centre Opportunities Site (CCOS) redevelopment in St Albans. Abbey View is being delivered as a BIM level 2 project. As part of our focus on technology being at the heart of working smartly, we are also trialing the use of HoloLens in areas such as quality assurance on some of our projects. It's really important to invite the customers to attend a project visit at every stage of the build and see the supply chain working on site. It can provide comfort to the customer to see the mature and strong relationships we have with our supply chain and they can feel confident to recommend the same team to work on a future project with us.

3:00pm: One of the main reasons that I was attracted to Morgan Sindall Construction is our special relationship with our supply chain. I'm always keen to secure early engagement with our subcontractors and ensure that we're forthcoming and open, which helps us to build a trusting relationship from the very beginning and creates more value. We want to be viewed as the 'customer of choice' by our subcontractors and look for regular feedback to listen to their experience of working with us, and explore ways that we can improve the process.

We understand that cash flow is incredibly important to our supply chain, which is why as a business we have recently been investing in improving our payment terms and we are improving our processes to make sure we pay our supply chain on time, all of the time. As a preferred subcontractor, we auto release retention at practical completion for every project delivered safe, on time, snag-free and to a delighted customer. This policy is incredibly beneficial for our subcontractors who tell us they really value it, and it acts as an incentive for all of the supply chain partners to work together in order to achieve the best result we can.

For more information about this news release please contact Steph Bocking at Influential on 0151 239 5000 or email bocking@thisisinfluential.com