

ARE YOU LOOKING TO ADVANCE YOUR CAREER AS A QUANTITY SURVEYOR?

THIS IS THE GUIDE FOR YOU!

It'll tell you what companies are looking for and what they consider to be the key traits of a top quantity surveyor.

BE A TOP QUANTITY SURVEYOR



IN THIS EBOOK YOU'LL FIND:

- WHY TECHNICAL SKILLS WILL ONLY GET YOU SO FAR IN YOUR CAREER
- WHAT COMPANIES CONSIDER VALUABLE SKILLS AS A QUANTITY SURVEYOR
- HOW TO CAPITALISE ON THE HIGH DEMAND FOR QUANTITY SURVEYORS
- WHAT TOP QUANTITY SURVEYORS DO DIFFERENTLY
- WHERE THE BEST GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES ARE BY SECTOR

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rupert Price has over 25 years' experience working in the resourcing industry, fifteen which have been specializing in Infrastructure and Utilities recruitment. He has a passion for recruitment and enjoys working at all levels across a diverse range of clients.

Rupert graduated in 1992 with a BA(Hons) in Business Studies from Oxford Brookes University. In the first six years of his recruitment career, he worked in search and selection and Interim for Harvey Nash plc. and Glotel plc. respectively. In 2000 Rupert joined CPW Recruitment and then in 2011 he founded Ellis Fox Recruitment.

This has allowed Rupert to build an honest, relationship driven recruitment business that focuses on best practice and instinct.



INTRODUCTION:

Construction is an industry where margins are known to be slim, which means that when there are project delays or price hikes in materials, it makes staying profitable even more challenging. Add to that volatile economic conditions and it becomes clear why costing, contracts and supply chain management are such critical components of keeping projects on track. And why top quantity surveyors are the backbone of operations for most main contractors.

According to [statistics](#) at the end of 2022 there were 59700 quantity surveyors in the UK. This figure has increased by only 9900 since 2010 and possibly highlights why the demand for quantity surveyors is ongoing.

Top quantity surveyors have knowledge and skills that go well beyond basic technical expertise. Getting a qualification and five years' work experience may earn a person the title of senior quantity surveyor, but what makes an impression in the industry is the application of knowledge that ultimately delivers more value.

Companies are seeking quantity surveyors that can navigate the complexities of projects, find solutions and turnaround challenges. In this ebook we uncover what sets top quantity surveyors apart and how to develop the skills needed so that you're able to work your way up to those top ranks.



PART 1: BEYOND THE BASICS

Most quantity surveyors enter the field because have an aptitude for working with and organising data. They're typically methodical and detail-oriented individuals, familiar working with complex spreadsheets and various data management technologies.

Drawing up reports or analysing should be second nature. And while the ability to manage data and familiarity with the NEC contract remain an important component of any quantity surveyor role, at a senior level, technical skills are a given. It's what advancements an individual brings to the role that is the critical difference.

The ability to build relationships, work well with people on all levels and communicate clearly are skills that are honed over time. At a senior level where quantity surveyors are often needed to get projects back on track these skills become the critical factor.



While some individuals may be natural communicators, that doesn't disqualify others from developing these skills as they advance in their career.

In fact, those that invest time in learning these skills while working often are those that get ahead because their learning encompasses practical on-the-job experience.

SOFT SKILLS WORTH DEVELOPING

Companies are looking to employ quantity surveyors to them to help deliver on projects and targets. This means that any new role you take on, there'll be a need for collaboration, organization and negotiation, with others likely to lean into your expertise.



Developing specific soft skills will equip you to be able to deliver more value while working under pressure. Specifically, developing these skills can help you progress your career in Quantity Surveying:

1. Critical thinking

Strong numeracy skills are a given as a QS, along with an aptitude to work with spreadsheets and similar data management software. But the ability to think beyond the numbers is what matters.

Critical thinking incorporates having a broader view, taking into consideration what could go wrong, such as what factors could increase costs as projects progress and how those factors could be mitigated.

These skills are typically honed through experience and often come into play when reviewing contracts, materials, suppliers, and partners. Understanding how the various role players impact the success of a project and how factors in their sectors can impact you, can help you keep ahead of challenges.



2. Efficiency mindset

There are numerous ways to leverage software and technology to become more efficient. This means keeping a pulse on emerging technologies and the advantages they have to offer. It may not be the way things have always been done and ideas may be met with resistance, but ultimately when you can put a case for how efficiency can be improved to positively impact the bottom line it may help you get the technology you need.



An example is 3D scanning technologies that can do quality assessments on sitework, during construction so that deviations or quality issues can be addressed immediately.

When project managers leverage these technologies it can help your life as a quantity surveyor, much easier as many scanning technologies interface with BIM to pull together all project costings and

information. This gives quantity surveyors the ability to make accurate calculations quickly to report on project progress.

3. Negotiation

In all phases of a project, the ability to negotiate is critical as it's fairly common to have delays, price increases and disruptions. Understanding the nuances of what is needed and who the key role players are is important, as it the ability to pinpoint what the critical factors that can get a project back on track.

Strong negotiation includes the ability to listen and be empathetic to get the cooperation of stakeholders and then being equally assertive to ensure you're working towards the project outcomes you need.



4. Relationship building

The ability to negotiate effectively is highly dependent on being able to build strong working relationships on all levels. As a senior quantity surveyor, you're likely to interact with CEO's and CFO's and need to be as comfortable presenting to executives as you are with tradespeople and sub- contractors.

As much as quantity surveyor skills are in demand, the industry remains competitive. Standing out amongst peers requires that you put effort into building your business network. This can be achieved by attending industry events, being willing to share knowledge and expertise on various forums and platforms and actively engaging with the industry.



5. Communication

The ability to communicate clearly and effectively should not be underestimated. Even if you have above average technical skills, not being able to get your point of view across can hamper career progression. Communication is the foundation for industry collaboration, supplier and client management and cohesive project delivery



These soft skills may seem logical, but in a career that is dominated by numbers and project deliverables, they're all too easy to overlook. Especially if you tend to be a more introverted personality.

However, being deliberate in developing these skills can help you progress, no matter what role you take on or company that you work for.

Technical skills are seen as a basic requirement for quantity surveyors. The ones who deliver more value to the companies that employ them are those that have something more to offer as an individual.

PART 2: LEARNING FROM THE BEST

You may be fortunate to be employed by a large company that invests heavily in skills development, offers mentorship programs and is quick to adopt some of the latest technologies. If that is the case, use every opportunity that comes your way to learn and expand your expertise.



If that isn't your situation, remember that at every stage of your career, it's ultimately up to you to develop your skills. One of the best ways to do this aside from on-the-job experience is to connect with others in the industry.

There are many online learning opportunities, industry forums, communities and networks where senior professionals willingly share their knowledge and expertise.

They're doing it because it's a way to build their personal brand and expand their business network. By listening to what they have to say, commenting on

their posts or asking questions, you can not only increase your knowledge, you also start to become known in the industry. In time you may feel confident enough to start sharing your knowledge too.

5 WAYS TO DEVELOP INDUSTRY KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS ON YOUR OWN:

- *Subscribe to industry newsletters or news platforms for a broader view of happenings and trends, and make the time to read these each week.*
- *Update your LinkedIn profile with information that showcases your expertise and become active by sharing and creating posts.*
- *Search for and follow leading industry Quantity Surveyors. Comment on posts where relevant.*
- *Ask questions and demonstrate a willingness to learn. Specifically put aside the fear of looking foolish. You won't learn unless you ask.*
- *Research and keep up to date on new technologies impacting your sector or the industry as a whole. This will enable you to engage in conversations from an informed point of view.*



Developing sector specific expertise can help you become a specialist and at a senior level these are highly sought after. Some may have the concern that this will box them in and limit their career prospects later in their career. However, this is not always the case. Many sectors have similar characteristics which mean that skills are transferable between sectors.



For example: the development or maintenance of water infrastructure is characterised by high volume, low value transactions. This means managing many small payments frequently to suppliers and sub-contractors.

This is very similar to telecoms where transactions are also characterised by high volume, low value. A senior quantity surveyor with specific water infrastructure expertise, could easily apply their knowledge to other infrastructure sectors such as telecoms.

PART 3: INDUSTRY SECTOR OPPORTUNITIES

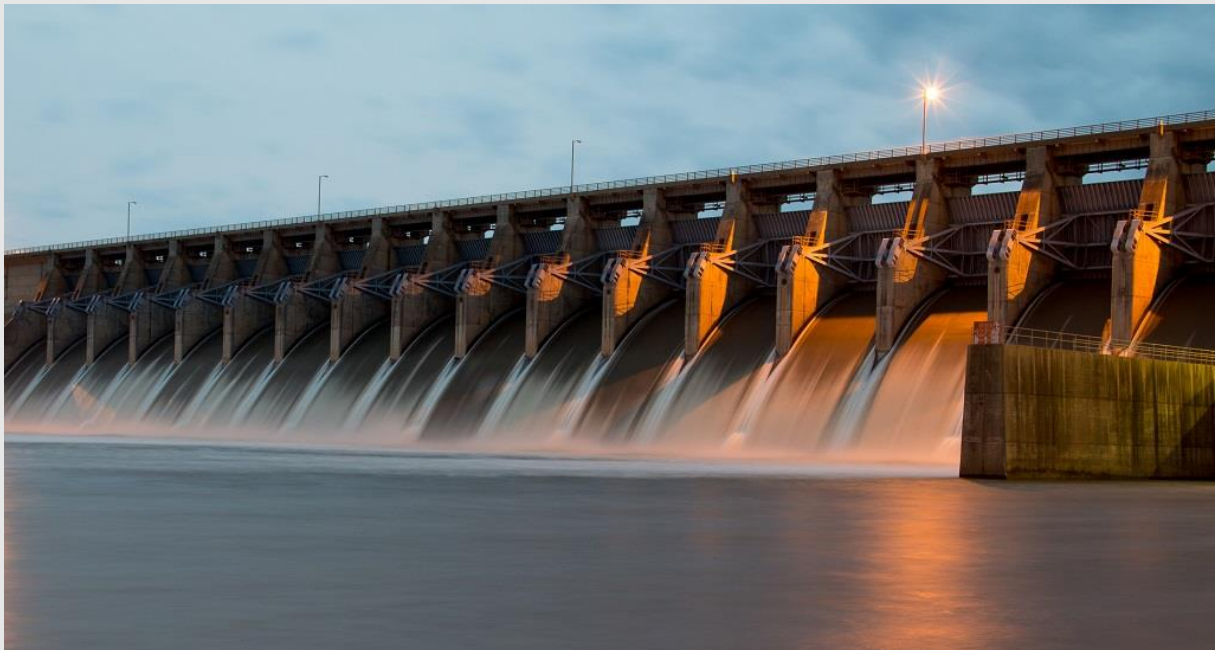
In recent years there has been a big push to improve and increase the UK's infrastructure. This is evidenced by the start and ongoing construction of several high-profile projects such as HS2, Hinkley Point C, Dogger Bank Windfarm and the Lower Thames Crossing.

While it's always a bonus to be able to list high profile projects on a CV, a wealth of opportunities exist for quantity surveyors working on smaller projects. In particular, significant investment has been earmarked for development and improvements in these specific sectors. As a result, the demand for quantity surveying expertise in these sectors is likely to increase.

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

The UK's water infrastructure is taking strain, increasing the requirement for ongoing maintenance and upgrades. There are three primary challenges that need to be overcome: Improving stormwater systems and defences, reducing industrial pollution in waterways, and improving clean water security. All of these challenges are deemed critical which is why significant funding has been made available to accelerate projects.

Gaining a deeper understanding of the water infrastructure sector and specialising in the sector is worthwhile. Even though there's an acceleration of projects currently, this is unlikely to wane in the near future. Additionally, water infrastructure maintenance and upgrades will always be ongoing, and top quantity surveyors will remain in demand.



TELECOMS

There's a goal to improve connectivity throughout the UK and it's an ongoing process requiring upgrades to infrastructure as well as expansion of networks. The telecoms industry also evolves at a rapid pace and each advancement requires infrastructure that is up to the task of supporting it.

This means that the requirement for skilled quantity surveyors is likely to remain high. For those with a strong interest in technology it's a way to build a career while working in a sector that your interests naturally align with.

ENERGY

The discussion about moving to more sustainable energy sources such as wind and solar have been ongoing for decades. But now with gas supplies bringing into question energy security, there's a renewed focus and acceleration to build up infrastructure and energy storage to interface with all the renewable energy that is being generated.



Up until now this has been a challenge as energy infrastructure is old and storage facilities are mostly non-existent. But plans have been approved for new energy storage facilities and there are also innovators working on projects such as repurposing old coal mines for energy storage.

There is a massive opportunity for innovation in this sector and for quantity surveyors that want to be part of this, it's sector worth specializing in.

EV CHARGING



Aligning with the UK's goal to achieve net-zero is the government's plan to ban the sale of new combustion engine vehicles by 2030, there's been a big push to transition to Electric Vehicles (EV's).

However, this requires a charging infrastructure which is continues to lag behind demand.

It's a sector that's attracting both public and private investment and one that is slowly gaining the much-needed momentum in terms of project rollouts. As EV charging technologies evolve, infrastructure will need to keep pace. It's a sector likely to accelerate in growth and offers an exciting opportunity to be involved in innovation and new technologies.



CONCLUSION:

For quantity surveyors there are huge opportunities for growth and to develop specialist skills within specific sectors. There are few limitations on career paths as several sectors have similar characteristics and require similar skill sets.

With the current state of the industry, quantity surveyors have a critical role to play. There's a shortage of skills and while companies need quantity surveyors desperately, they can't afford to hire just anyone. Not when margins are so thin and the success or failure of projects may depend, in part, on their expertise.

They need quantity surveyors with skills that go beyond numeracy and organization. The ability to interface well with people on all levels, negotiate, troubleshoot, and find solutions are what set top quantity surveyors apart.

To become a top quantity surveyor that is in high demand, work to develop soft skills, applying them to work situations. Stay abreast of emerging technologies and industry trends, and consistently build relationships in your network. This will ensure that when a great opportunity presents itself, you will be equipped with the expertise companies are seeking out. Your chances to be at the top of the shortlist will be greatly improved.

