

Reflective practitioner (Unit 1/2)

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Unit 1 ICM Skills Assessment Template – Survey of existing skills and unit-based targets			
Skills As part of my problem-solving skills: my ability to . . .	Assessment Novice / Advanced beginner / Competent / Proficient / Expert	Reasons for initial assessment	Target for End of Unit Novice / Advanced beginner / Competent / Proficient / Expert
... outline the management techniques employed in the firm for which I work and to take an active role as a confident manager.	Advanced beginner	I understand most of the management techniques (from Human Relations, Scientific, and Administrative – previous training), but I need to strive for a more active manager role while becoming more adept at learning all techniques.	<i>Proficient</i> Assessment at end of unit: Proficient I have a better understanding of the why and how these techniques benefit construction firms. I can see in real-time dollars the better techniques used by managers are producing better results. I assisted higher level managers in using a Contingency school method, where we focused on the client and environment. We increased client interaction and meetings. The increased interaction led to problems being dealt with prior to becoming potential major issues and increased streamlined construction methods for other issues. This all led to cost-savings. Because I am at a junior level manager position, I have yet to be the forerunner in these meetings and methods. I feel I still lack the application side of the management theories, but I am well educated in understanding and analysing them.
... hold an overview of my firm in terms of both its internal structure <i>and</i> the external environment in which it operates.	Advanced beginner	I have a decent understanding of the structure of my organization and its operational environment. Flatiron is internally led by an executive team with oversight by the parent company Hochtief. Another firm is the majority owner of Hochtief, but allows Hochtief and Flatiron to function independently. Flatiron functions with strategy and bidding work at corporate levels, then implements these strategies to numerous divisional offices. Externally they mostly work with governments and larger contracts in both Canada and the U.S.	<i>Expert</i> Assessment at end of unit: Proficient Throughout this project and other workshops I have witnessed how Flatiron operates within Canada, as well as in the US. I have learned their long term goals for the structure they are setup in. The '1 st level' and core executives decide on major strategies of market and location for projects, while the '2 nd level' has estimating teams that fulfill proposals and attempt to procure work. Then further down in the system project managers execute the projects from the site level with the help of a field team. We have a clear direction from the executive of Flatiron that the firm wants to be involved in heavy civil bridge and transportation P3 jobs. They desire to be experts in that market, but apply it over a diversified geographical region over the next 3-7 years. I still need to rise higher in the company to be part of these core strategies decisions and how they combat environmental factors. I would like to apply a PEST analysis to those decisions and help decide how to move the operation forward, based on the risk analysis of the external environment.
... sketch out the organisational chart of the firm for which I work and its links with company strategy.	Advanced beginner	I have a good grasp on the local area and jobs that my firm operates in, but I need a better understanding of the entire international operations.	<i>Expert</i> Assessment at end of unit: Competent Locally and within Canada I have a much better understanding of the organisational chart and how it is linked to company operations. For divisions across the US, I still need more knowledge and understanding of how they all come together with the executive

			<p>team. Strategy decisions originate from the corporate head office and move down through the organization by levels. See figure 1 (at the end of template) depicting how decisions are made and the relationship with a green arrow is better understood than the red arrow relationship. A SWOT analysis is done at corporate levels, which fosters plans and forecasts to meet the desired procurement methods. If I can be privy to a SWOT analysis from the head office operations, than I can better understand why and how these strategy directions are being applied to mid-level district operations. I can make educated approximations right now from my experience within that company that some key analysis points would be: strengths – design-build expertise, large working capital and support, weakness – disconnect of employees on lower levels with directions, opportunities – large gov't transportations P3 contracts coming out, threats – US dollar vs. Cdn dollar currency fluctuations, increased timelines for receiving monies on long term design-build-finance jobs, which negatively affects cash flow. This all comes together for their 'organisational purpose'.</p>
... identify the types of leadership employed within my firm and to readily take on leadership roles.	Novice	<p>I only see a general leadership style with the other leaders I work with. I tend to view other managers as being task-orientated and fairly driven towards company goals. Most seem content with current positions and not willing to take on future leadership roles.</p>	<p><i>Proficient</i></p> <p>Assessment at end of unit: Proficient</p> <p>The leadership section really benefited my understanding of the types of roles to utilize. Working alongside other direct leaders and managers I have seen the benefit that comes from leading people effectively. Simple methods and media were used most often by most leaders. They very much lead through informal meetings and basic or average presentations on software programs and also informal site meetings periodically with field crews. My current managers use task-orientated directions for most day to day dealings. I see a benefit in combining that with people-orientation; the firm is people driven and making sure they are happy and led effectively is the key. Flatiron's leaders should move more towards a 'Grid' model using a fair/firm style. Allan and Lewis (2007) p. 6-11, describe this method to be fair and "push for production, but don't go 'all out'; give concessions where appropriate, but not unnecessarily." I would like to continue to improve the application of those skills because right now I have only led smaller field related groups. Executing and leading a general portion of a project I feel will continue to improve my leadership skills.</p>
... in terms of my network of contacts, hold a clear understanding of managerial roles and my position within the strategic decision-making process.	Novice	<p>I need to work on maintaining my work contacts I meet and also discuss with managers and leaders of where I fit within the overall strategy.</p>	<p><i>Proficient</i></p> <p>Assessment at end of unit: Proficient</p> <p>I effectively understand the benefit of having a solid network of contacts within my working group. The interpersonal relationships are invaluable towards producing a quality product and progressing careers. My work relationships and contacts have improved and flourished because of this knowledge. My position is clear and mostly focuses on the strategic implementation side of the project. Planning and forecasting with the current resources to complete the strategic tasks at hand. The goal is to continue to grow this at a more international level. I still require more skill and knowledge in working with the strategic choice and analysis my firm advocates. What are the options we have available for business growth? Where should we direct these options based on the current environmental pressures?</p>
... have insights into origins and form of my leadership style and those of my colleagues.	Competent	<p>I understand how I lead people and the colleagues I work with. I do not always agree with how certain people lead others, but I am very aware of my surroundings. Growing up in a family run construction group, I feel I have developed my leadership skills very well.</p>	<p><i>Proficient</i></p> <p>Assessment at end of unit: Proficient/Expert</p> <p>I have a better understating for the origins of my style, as well as others. I feel there is a combination of learned and taught skills, with leaders still being able to be taught and educated on most points to a degree. Most people in the firm think and act like lower level managers, by directing specific resources to a goal, but few are able to actually inspire and band a construction team together. I have realised that is an extremely desirable and difficult to attain trait. The good leaders at the firm have social ability, determination, and intelligence on the firm's matters. Most managers are directive</p>

			<p>and task-orientated, while the few great leaders have these skills, but apply more of a combination of participative and people-orientated styles. This has led to increased collaboration and innovation on the current design-build project I'm working on. Ultimately leading to a more cost effective, high quality work product for this specific design. I am able to apply this information on a daily basis to help interactions within the workplace and company. Knowing where someone is coming from has improved my reactions and answers to situations.</p>
<p>... describe my psychological contract in terms of its possible coercive, calculative or co-operative elements and to explain my personal goals and motivation.</p>	Novice	<p>Not sure exactly what my contract is, but I have a grasp on some of my future goals.</p>	<p><i>Proficient</i></p> <p>Assessment at end of unit: Proficient</p> <p>A have a much better understating of my psychological contract after reading this topic. The three main areas of the contract from Handy (1993) are coercive, calculative, and co-operative. I understand how my firm is motivating me through a more co-operative contract. Through quarterly company meetings and newsletters, Flatiron aligns me with their overalls goals and clearly sets out how employees are altogether working for one common goal. They help pay for advanced school (my master's degree), as well as other training, and forums across the country. An example of this co-operative contract is in figure 2 showing Flatiron's tuition payment policy, where they have setup an avenue for this benefit. In return I work on a salary of 40 hours per week, but value the company higher than that and am willing to work more 'unpaid' hours well above and beyond 40 hours per week. Negatively, I feel the contract values are undervalued based on competitive balance in the industry and am planning to negotiate that during my next contractual review. I, and others, think that cutting corners on small costs (living expenses, technical items, vehicles, etc.), undermines some employee commitment that has been built up over time towards the company. I am going to apply my understanding to benefit my goals, along with the company's goals.</p>
<p>... identify the range of formal and informal groups (and their various dynamics) in my firm and my role in them.</p>	Advanced beginner	<p>I see on a daily basis different groups within the company and I think I know where I stand within most informal groups</p>	<p><i>Competent</i></p> <p>Assessment at end of unit: Proficient</p> <p>I fully understand the formal and informal groups within my project. I have been here longer than most on this specific project and am very capable of interacting with the respective groups. My colleagues and I manage and run the main engineering and construction tasks on the project. We as a team form a 'formal' group working together across the project supporting each other and asking for tips and assistance during construction. Cross-functionally we rely on managers that lead the access group and enable us efficient access to all working sites. As Allan and Jones (2007) p.8-3 discuss, "bringing these individuals together enables a development of a common language and the overcoming of departmental boundaries" during our cross-functional groups on our projects. Working cohesively together has become a key towards continued progression on the project. When one aspect fails the timelines and other operations that rely on our initial access and construction are completely held up. It creates a domino effect on the project, in which costs soar because of the high amount of personnel involved in building the power line in certain stages. To properly perform, our functional design and construction groups shares problems with each other, and integrate the daily activities. We report our cost-effectiveness as a team to upper management, so everyone is working collaboratively to benefit the group. It is still a dynamic situation that is learned being on the day to day operations. I think it will take more time to actually get to see/view all the other groups related to this project and other projects in the district area. For example there is a related power project in the same geographic location that I am not very connected to at all yet, but networking opportunities are on the horizon.</p>

<p>... assess the drivers for change acting at various levels inside and outside my firm.</p>	<p>Advanced beginner</p>	<p>I see most outside influences that drive my company. The higher corporate levels give us some insight with presentations and quarterly updates about change and strategy taking place in the company.</p>	<p><i>Proficient</i></p> <p>Assessment at end of unit: Competent/Proficient</p> <p>The drivers for change in some cases have been explained to me and in some cases I have used my new education to assess where Flatiron wants to go as an international construction company. I understand on a local, national, and international level why Flatiron is changing certain operations and what that will do for the company. Inside the firm the senior level management team desires to direct Flatiron further into the large bridge/transportation market, while focusing on larger P3 contracts. Deteriorating and lacking transportation infrastructure in North America, has led to increase in construction contracts for the major metropolitan areas. Flatiron feels they have a competitive advantage and expertise in procuring and building these types of projects. The process would be: the advocates are the new Flatiron COO, CEO and Hochtief executives. The degree of change is substantial because other job markets in the company are being focused now into a familiar marketplace. The time frame is 3-5 years with current bids ongoing in Canada and the U.S. There will be little impact to culture because Flatiron employees are used to this type of work, they will just be taking on more quantity and scale of work. The ongoing project will be evaluated against the set margins and how those are being reported. Profits will fully come to form after governments take over operations of bridges and design-build-finance-operate projects are over. Final profits and revenues are set over longer time periods, so it will be hard to estimate the final figures up front. I have yet to fully grasp and realize the resistance to some changes made by Flatiron. Economically is it sound to work on large jobs that the construction partners have to finance? Will that tie up cash flow for future projects? Is the transportation industry always going to blossom with commuter belts being built, or will things tend towards smaller public transit systems near the city centres? Will Hochtief share these same drivers for change in the next 5-10 years, I know little about their level of confidence and support as our parent company for these aspirations.</p>
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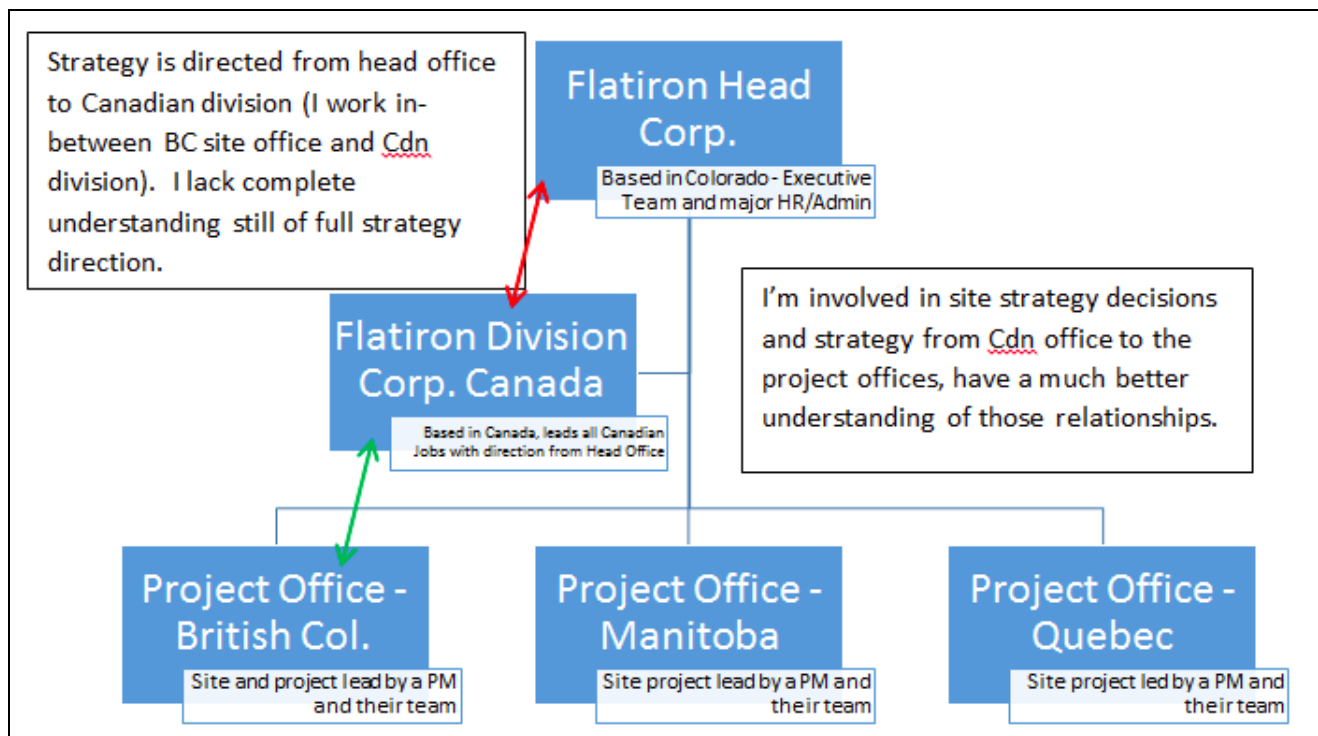



Figure 1: Simple Organisational Sketch Outlining Strategy Connections. (Sanders, 2016).

Tuition Reimbursement Policy						
Policy & Reimbursement Procedures						
Issued by:	Human Resources	Approved by:	T&D Department	Code:	HR - PQ_	Revision 3

II. ~~Approved~~ Programs/Courses

- Tuition reimbursement is available for courses offered by fully accredited colleges, ~~universities~~, trade, or technical schools. This includes independent-study, self-study and ~~online~~ courses.
- Individual courses not taken as part of a degree or certificate program must be related to the employee's current position or prepare the employee for more advanced positions within the Company.
- Degree or certificate programs must prepare the employee for more advanced positions ~~within~~ the Company.
- Tuition for courses not specifically related to employment with Flatiron, but required to complete a degree or certificate program that is related to employment with Flatiron, may be ~~reimbursable~~ under this policy provided the appropriate approvals are obtained. An example of such a course is one in Humanities that is required for a degree in Engineering.

III. ~~Reimbursement~~

- Tuition will be reimbursed in accordance with this policy upon successful completion of courses, up to the following amounts:
 - ~~1) \$5,250 per calendar year per employee.~~
 - All tuition reimbursement costs will be covered under the individual department or regional budget.
 - Reimbursement amounts for courses that begin in one calendar year but are completed in a subsequent calendar year will be calculated as part of the reimbursement limit for the year in which the course began. For example, reimbursement for a course that began in September 2010 and was completed in January 2011 will count towards the reimbursement limit for 2010.
- Employees must be on Flatiron's payroll upon completion of their courses in order to qualify for tuition reimbursement. Employees receiving tuition reimbursement are expected to stay with the company for at least eighteen (18) months. If the employee unilaterally leaves the Company within eighteen (18)

Figure 2: Showing one page of Flatiron's tuition policy advocating how they offer co-operative contracts. (Flatiron, 2010).

Unit 1 ICM Skills Assessment Template – Survey of additional skills and targets			
Additional skills required to improve my ability as a problem-solver / decision-maker in the field of construction management	Desired rating Novice / Advanced beginner / Competent / Proficient / Expert	Comments and evidence about my current state	Target priority level with reasons Likely programme input required to meet this target Evidence to be collected to show new level achieved

Better time management and daily scheduling.	Expert	My role has to take on a lot of responsibilities and tasks. Need to control and schedule everything better.	<p>Assessment: Proficient</p> <p>I schedule priorities based on computer generated lists and also daily diaries/journals that are used for my record keeping. This enables me to schedule my time in blocks of units, as well as provide a record of conversations, meetings, emails, and important information. This has been useful already on numerous occasions, particularly providing in-situ recorded notes for our legal team associated to constructions claims. A detailed log of information (from numerous employees) has given the firm prominent positions during arbitration and litigation.</p>
More comprehensive understanding of psychological contracts and how they specifically motivate people in the construction field.	Expert	There is a little understanding and experience to draw on that uses the knowledge of contracts to motivate people and make decisions of how to lead people	<p>Assessment: Proficient</p> <p>Leading people is key and finding the right motivation tools make the job of a manager that much easier. Structuring decisions around a co-operative contract is a helpful ability that people then relate too. They want to work hard for the company if they feel valued and part of the team. Giving both ways seems to motivate and produce better quality employees.</p>

References:

- Allan, N.D. and Lewis, H.C.E. (2007) *Management in construction: 2013 update*. University of Bath: Distance Learning Unit.
- Flatiron (2010) *Tuition Reimbursement Policy*. Flatiron Revision 3. Internal document.
- Handy, C. (1993) *Understanding organisations*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Sanders, P. (2016) *Figure 1: Flatiron organisational sketch*. Self created.

Chosen concept

Select one significant concept from your academic studies in **Unit 1/2** that you have used to improve a professional key skill (ideally a concept that, in relation to your initial skills assessment, has made a significant impact on your professional performance).

The concept of psychological contracts and how they motivate people will be explored.

Handy (1993) pointed out three main categories of the psychological contract:

- Coercive type - where someone must do something at risk of being let go or through a submissive nature. Much less common in today's construction industry. Etzioni (1961) discusses how employees will have resentment being forced into obligations of this nature.
- Calculative type - produce work for an exchange of a reward, most of the time involves a salary. Commonplace. Here Etzioni (1961) believes employees will do only what they are rewarded to do, not usually anything above and beyond.
- Co-operative type - Firm is more committed to employee's ambitions and goals. The individual feels they are part of the team and will receive a stipulated compensation, but as Etzioni (1961) points out, they are also willing to go above and beyond and provide more work than a typical contract might set out.

My construction firm, like other, uses these type of contracts to motivate their employees. Understanding and analyzing these contracts enable leaders to better motivate their teams and produce greater results within the firm. The employee to firm interaction and how willing those employees are to produce high quality work for their firm is a key area.

References:

- Etzioni, A. (1961) *Complex Organisations*. Holt, Reinhart and Winston.
- Handy, C. (1993) *Understanding Organisations*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Skill to be improved

Describe the skill you claim to have improved during your studies on **Unit 1/2**, including the professional context for using this skill.

I discussed in my SAT how I had some long-term and short-term goals for myself, but never really understood or knew of the type of contract I had originally signed with my firm. Overall I did not know the types of psychological contracts and how my firm, and others, used these contracts to motivate their staff and produce results.

Through my education and working experience I wanted to fully understand the types of contract, the benefits and drawbacks associated with them, and how they were being used inside my firm. My aim was to study the types contracts in the industry, while reflecting on how each of the people I needed to lead were contracted and if I could use this knowledge to better motivate them in their positions. On top of this my goal was to grasp my own contract and improve my self-motivation to be a more productive leader for the company.

How skill improved

Explain how you have improved the skill.

Learning and analyzing the psychological contract has benefited my work and understanding of what my company is expecting from its employees.

The more I understood about the types of contracts and their benefits and problems, the better I understood motivational factors surrounding the workplace. Co-operative based contracts are the most fulfilling for the company, as well as the employee. I took a step back and realized that Flatiron was trying to get to a fully co-operative contract to motivate their employees to the fullest, but as Etzioni (1961) points out organisations are rarely offering up more than the basic salary and benefits package, which inhibits their ability to offer a fully co-operative contract. They were trying to offer co-operatives contracts to most salary members, but the field workers felt more in a calculative contract. Etzioni (1961) describes how the calculative contract will only foster the employee to work for exactly what he is compensated for, nothing more or less. During the time I was tasked with building a small area of the project that was accessible by helicopter only, so not only was it a crucial area to the project timeline, it was expensive and high safety risk area to work in. Below is an example of a helicopter site for reference where a tower will eventually sit. We worked on high mountain peaks and all resources had to be flown in by helicopter only.



I was leading a small group of paid hourly workers that were employed by Flatiron, but in their eyes under a calculative contract. I wanted to understand their needs and motivate them the best way possible to build the foundations in the area in a timely manner, but retain a high quality of work. The key to bridge the gap of calculative to co-operative contracts I felt was to make the group of employees seem like a crucial working group to Flatiron as a whole, which undoubtedly they were. I took to practice an idea that has been constantly put forth by our head office; Flatiron ONE policy (figure 1, attached in this document), where I re-iterated to them that what they perform today, matters to everybody on this project and everybody working for Flatiron across North America. They were all part of the same team working towards the same goals. They were not just a number and a lost employee to Flatiron; the corporate message from the very top does not believe in that. I shared on a weekly basis cost reports, schedule reports, and other detailed information about our high productivity with the field crew and not just my management team. On top of this I requested from my firm social outings (nice local dinners) that were paid for by Flatiron because of the great level of work done by the field crew. They really did feel appreciated by Flatiron throughout the working term. Numerous times extra hours of work were put in planning, scheduling, and end of day finishing that the crews were not paid for. They knew the rewards were coming back to them in other ways. After the field work I also recommended a few of them for certain promotions that have helped their careers. As Drucker (1966) discusses aligning Flatiron's objectives with the employees objectives, by constantly evolving the field crews and making them seem part of the team - being 'ONE' Flatiron, bridged that 'gap' of the wants between the individual and the company.



Figure 1: Ensuring all our employees are working towards the same goals. ONE Flatiron means being a company that openly shares resources and best practices; being a company in which employees are able to work on different projects in different locations, yet with the same level of consistency and standardization needed to do a job well, work together successfully, and really be the best. Everybody matters. Source: (Flatiron, 2016).

I now had a much better understanding of my own contract and how I believe it is a co-operative contract with Flatiron. As Handy (1993) and Allan and Lewis (2007) discuss, I share a similar ambitions and identify with the direction of my firm and am able to align myself into a more co-operative setting with Flatiron. I am paid on a 40 per hour week salary, but have work much more than that throughout my tenure because of the committed involvement I have with Flatiron's goals. As Etzioni (1961) details, I am willing to do that service for my firm because I get rewarded in other ways through extras and feel part of the central construction team.

With respect to my self-motivation I analyzed the co-operative contract I have with respect to Maslow's five levels of needs from his 'A Theory of Motivation' paper in 1943. Flatiron is willing to go that extra in most cases, but I needed to present a logical case on how it would benefit myself and the company. I have already done this with success for recent education programs (not including this one) and more in depth career training. The more I initiated myself, the higher I feel myself climbing on the Maslow's five levels of needs. Maslow (1943) discusses how if the lower level physiological, safety, and love needs are met then higher needs of esteem and self-actualization emerge. I feel Flatiron engages these last two level needs with a co-operative contract; my esteem needs are being met by rewards and recognition giving by Flatiron management on a job well done during my field operations, rewarding and engaging me with engineering conferences in California, and enabling and helping pay for an advanced Masters level degree program. My self-actualization needs I think can be fulfilled by looking around at supporting communities and other countries. Flatiron facilitates a Christmas donation policy every year that I have been a part of, as well they also have a bridges to prosperity program where foot bridges are built in Nicaragua. We as employees are paid our regular salaries and travel to participate in helping local communities every year. Figure 2 lays out a profile of the latest bridge that was built in spring 2016. I have spoken to a colleague who participated and he said how rewarding of an experience it was to him. After studying this section and learning further about my co-operative contract and how getting to a self-actualization level of needs would improve my general workplace goals, happiness, and productivity, I have planned to apply to the Bridge to Prosperity program next spring.



Why Bridges?

Bridges to Prosperity envisions a world where poverty caused by rural isolation no longer exists.

Bridges are life-improving catalysts, reducing rural isolation that keeps people from, or makes it extremely perilous, to reach health care, education, jobs or other economic opportunities.

Poverty, as defined as living on less than \$1.25 per day, is a fact of life for many people living in rural areas. The United Nations estimates that of the 1.4 billion people experiencing this extreme form of poverty, 70% live and work in rural areas.^[i]

Lack of infrastructure contributes greatly to rural poverty. Teaching a rural community to build and maintain a footbridge is a simple accomplishment, and one that provides previously isolated people with a huge array of lasting benefits.

A bridge is truly more than just a safe crossing towards health care and other basic necessities. Communities are brought together through building, perpetuating the discovery of their joint potential via collaborative exchange and education. International sponsors, partners, and volunteers benefit from sharing resources and skills, all the while building relationships.

Our Story

Since 2001, Bridges to Prosperity has been the sole organization to globally focus on footbridge education and construction to decrease poverty and improve rural infrastructure. Bridges to Prosperity has built nearly 100 bridges in more than 14 countries, providing an estimated 500,000 people with improved access to opportunities.

Your Story

Bridges to Prosperity's Industry Partners are invaluable collaborators and offer support through generous donations, in-kind material bequests, and sponsoring employee participation on bridge projects around the world.

The Bridges to Prosperity's programs span cultural and geographical divides, bringing individuals together in the pursuit of inspiration, personal achievement, and global citizenship. Our Industry Partners have the opportunities to work with our University Chapters, send employees to the field to build alongside community members, and donate usable materials to maximize our resources, allowing us to reach more communities.

Volunteer participation from skilled professionals is a key way that Bridges to Prosperity is able to provide innovative and locally viable footbridge design and construction solutions for people struggling to overcome rural isolation.



Industry Partner Project Profile

Project: El Triangulo Pedestrian Bridge

Bridge Type: Suspension

Span: 45m

GPS Coordinates: 13 10.705', -85 36.125'

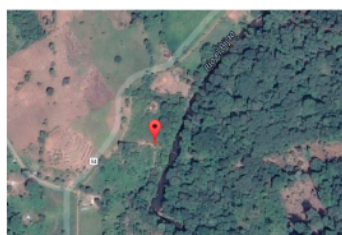
Communities: Triangulo, Cocoa, Cerro Verde

Region: La Dalia

Alcaldia: Matagalpa

Population Served: 4,500

The El Triangulo Pedestrian Suspension Bridge will mean new safe access to critical services and opportunities for a very large population of rural farmers in Nicaragua. From May until December of each year, the Rio el Bijao floods, and residents cross the river utilizing a dangerous footbridge that makes travel particularly difficult for farmers traveling with animals or goods to sell at market, and parents traveling with young children. Residents have no choice but to use the existing bridge, as farms, markets, secondary schools, government services, and potable water are all located on the far side of the river. The primary crops grown by families in the communities that would be served by the El Triangulo Bridge are corn, beans, coffee, and livestock.

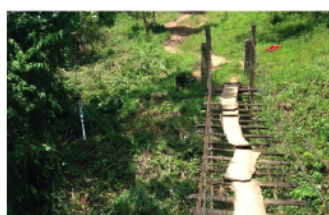


Proposed bridge site on the Rio el Bijao

Bridges to Prosperity is looking forward to continuing a productive partnership with the Alcaldia of Matagalpa, which has demonstrated significant investment in this and other important projects. Local investment is key to each new bridge project, and we are able to work more effectively and efficiently if we can foster lasting partnerships at the municipal level. The beneficiary communities have also shown significant investment, committing to collect river rock for the foundations, cut hardwood for the decking, and work alongside Bridges to Prosperity local staff to prepare the site and complete the substructure in advance of the Flatiron volunteer team.



Rio el Bijao at crossing point, downstream view



Existing bridge at crossing point


Nicaragua 2016

Figure 2: Bridges to Prosperity details why Flatiron participates and a recent project sheet about a project completed in spring 2016. Source: (Flatiron, 2016a)

My strategy really focused on using this increased motivational aspects everyday to target success for myself and the company. Being a young junior member of a staff, I do not have all the skills and experience of some of the other senior managers have. I looked upon Alan and Lewis' (2007) viewpoint of using all available resources that surround yourself to better perform as a manager. A couple examples are: I applied to corporate for access to as much software and beneficial technical instruments as possible. Enabling me to practice on Auto CAD assignments and take Flatiron directed courses for interpersonal skills from their internal website. I wanted to use these resources to be more effective from the point of view of achieving the organisational goals and high productivity the company desired. Further reading of Alan and Lewis (2007), where they discuss the characteristics of the manager's job, and Katz (1974), where he discusses the four types of skill managers need (technical, interpersonal, conceptual, diagnostic), led me to the understanding of how a good manager needs a wide range of high quality skills. Inspired by the original motivational concepts, I felt that I should acquire further technical and human skills, as discussed by Katz (1974). I required technical skills by getting an Auto CAD license from our IT department and practicing on my own time, as well as directed by my current manager on smaller project assignments. I also further developed financial analysis skills looking at job cost reports that is discussed later. For my human skill development I tested myself to try and become more dept at "accepting the existence of viewpoints, perceptions, and beliefs which are different from" my own and "skilled in understanding what other really mean by their words and behaviour" (Katz, 1974, p.91). During toolbox meetings and on-site construction work I asked for everybody's input from junior to senior carpenters on if they had any other ideas for certain construction methods.

For my internal office based work and motivation I looked towards Flatiron's 2015 action plan launched by the corporate team (figure 3). They wanted certain salaried employees to fully engage in what there exact goals were for 2015. Out of this came a perfect discussion with the project engineer of how this year we had to control and forecast costs on the project better than the previous year. Budgets were being overrun and costs were inflating to extremely high levels. The executive had been disappointed by previous forecasts because of their inaccuracy; they really didn't hold any meaning because of previous manager's forecasting methods. The Job-Cost Variance project report accuracy and quality was high on our list of 2015 goals. I went from that meeting and decided to further improve targeted skills for the company. Looking back again at Katz (1974) view on a manager needing certain technical skills, I felt I needed better financial cost analysis skills. We were given some skills training and software, but at a very local, basic level. I wanted to use the same programs and reporting tools that the project manager and project engineer used to report directly to the executive. That way I could not only learn the internal software that they use, but also be a valuable asset in assisting the project engineer with creative and quality ideas. I discussed this with him and within two days corporate IT had setup everything I needed. After that I continued to bother them for web based training programs that I could do on my spare time, but also real-time courses that took the teaching of the software to a higher level. They gave me all I needed for online support and eventually succumb to my request for real-time training.

I have already received positive comments from the project manager on my drive and initiative, which he was already impressed with because I asked him if I could enroll in this masters. I already feel like a more integral team member on this current project and within the company's organisation.



**FLATIRON
LEADERSHIP
LAUNCH 2015**

2015 Impact Plan

How will you contribute?




	<p><u>Operational Excellence</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work along side Rokstad teams to ensure safe and productive tower erection. Stay on top of the safety programs that are installed to ensure they are being carried out. Important to link foundation close out with tower crews to make sure everyone is still one team. Review and stay on top of the quantities and costs for the JCV; I want to be extremely confident in the numbers we report. <p><u>Winning Work:</u> Possibly by late in the year I will be more involved with trying to win work.</p> <p><u>No Surprises:</u> We are becoming more confident and productive in the work that is being done; we have to remind ourselves to not let complacency creep in.</p>
	<p><u>Talent Planning & Selection</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think to the future talents and skill gaps that Flatiron is looking for; be aware of those employees within and outside of Flatiron. <p><u>Talent Development</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue with development of my own skills and abilities through being productive in the first year of my masters. Assist and help any newer employees that would benefit from the skills I have learned so far.
	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the margins involved and how to better increase profitability for the company as a whole. What financial principles can I use and learn to help the company as a whole? <p><u>Operational</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treat jobs and projects like your own business to achieve profitable results. <p><u>People</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the best options for producing results; that may be diligently reviewing bids and picking good partners and subcontractors.

Figure 3: Developed action plan showing how operations, talent planning, and financial responsibility all come together to produce results for the company. Source: (Flatiron, 2015)

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Tip

Don't forget to keep a back-up of your work.

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