

find your perfect Partner

Tarmac and Wimpey.
Wiltshier and Ballast Nedam.
Higgs & Hill and JT Design Build.
Construction industry couplings are all the rage. But who should you be snuggling up to under the mistletoe this Christmas?

1. Fed up with the dire state of the British construction industry, you decide the answer is to lobby parliament. What do you consider the most effective method?
a) exploit your Oxbridge connections and your limitless expense account by taking every relevant minister out to lunch
b) draft a memo about organising a committee that will investigate the possibility of setting up a working party
c) compose a strongly worded letter to the *Guardian*
d) take all your spare site equipment to Parliament Square, and make sure the media come along too

2. Your roadbuilding scheme is invaded by some aggressive-looking road protesters. How do you cope?
a) offer the site to the army for SAS training
b) suggest you all have a friendly chat over tea and sandwiches
c) design some artistic "wanted" posters of the nastiest characters for use by the police
d) no problem. You can arrange for the boys to sort them out - for a nice little percentage, of course

3. You're working on a project that's badly delayed and claims are flying. What do you do?
a) hire the best City solicitors money can buy
b) wish you'd gone on the CPD course in arbitration
c) ask Tony Bingham, *Building's* ace legal correspondent, to write a wittily worded response to all those writs you've been getting
d) break into the opposing party's offices to steal some incriminating evidence

4. How do you ensure that the project you're working on gets lottery funding?
a) rechristen your dull-but-worthy theatre refurb the "National Millennium Opera House"

b) make sure your project is in an inner-city area blighted by as many social evils as you can find
c) present your scheme via a multimedia virtual reality interactive interface
d) buy a jackpot-winning lottery ticket

5. You're asked to come up with ideas for bringing in the Jubilee Line Extension on time. What are your suggestions?
a) start consulting lawyers on recouping costs from tardy subcontractors - then carefully leak the details to *Building*
b) arrange monthly partnering meetings between all parties, for mutual support and hand-holding
c) try the New Austrian Torture Method - piped Viennese waltzes and strudel and schnitzel-only menus for everyone on the project
d) pump some water into the tunnels - a few more inches sloshing about underfoot will get everyone working faster

6. Your client asks you to "go green" on his next project. What do you do?
a) offer your client photovoltaic cladding, high-tech sun tracking blinds, environment-friendly everything - and don't blink at the £3000/m² price tag
b) you've been getting steadily greener for the past 10 years, so your client's request is nothing unusual
c) tell him that green is too cold for the northern hemisphere, and that terracotta is the up-and-coming colour
d) give him your bog-standard product with optional add-on window-boxes

7. Your company takes over a rival. What is the first thing you do?
a) undergo a period of stringent personnel rationalisation, ie sack everybody
b) call a staff meeting to explain how the new company will offer greater opportunities for career development, then send everybody on a team-bonding weekend in the Lake District

8. How would you make your site 30% more efficient?
a) get rid of the architects and engineers and call it design-and-build
b) improve channels of communication between subcontractors by employing the latest electronic document management system
c) recycle all waste materials
d) employ cheap labour and pay cash

9. Building phones you to ask you to choose your Wonder and Blunder. What do you choose?
a) your country pile as your wonder and anything built post-1900 as your blunder
b) the House of Commons as your wonder and Marsham Street as your blunder
c) something with lots of aluminium and glass, preferably by an obscure Dutch architect and, even better, in another continent, as your wonder, and Prince Charles as your blunder
d) Canary Wharf as your wonder because it's dead classical; the Lloyd's building as your blunder

10. Asked to order roofing materials on your project, what do you go for?
a) Welsh slate; you're still a bit suspicious of this foreign stuff
b) copper-coloured roofing felt - well, it's almost what the architect asked for and much cheaper
c) the pre-patinated copper sheets that the architect specified, and hang the expense
d) lead. You know of a church refurbishment going on down the road and you hear they've got loads of the stuff going cheap

11. What do you use your computer for?
a) video-conferencing with Hong Kong, but you get your PA to show you

c) redesign the company logo
d) buy a new BMW and get personalised number plates, a walnut dashboard and an electronic navigation system

12. You are entering a prestigious architectural competition. How do you ensure you win?
a) team up with Sir Norman Foster
b) spend well under the budget - it's commercial suicide, but you need the work
c) spend well over the budget - can't these people appreciate art?
d) sleep with the judges

13. What's your idea of a proper salary?
a) anything with six figures
b) enough to pay for the mortgage, the loan on the Sierra, the two-week camping holiday in Normandy, and a nice Christmas present for the boss
c) you don't have a salary - you negotiate one-off fees for all your various projects
d) you don't have a salary - you just have the figure your accountant thinks you can get away with on your tax return

14. Your management consultant tells you that "differentiation" is the buzzword of the moment. What do you say to her?
a) you agree totally - and relaunch your company as the first-ever partnering-PFI-CDM-planning-supervision one-stop shop
b) you agree totally - and decide the best way of standing out from the crowd is to make sure everyone wears the company tie
c) you sack her immediately - how could she fail to notice that you are already unique, a veritable artist of construction?
d) offer to buy a stake in her company - anyone who can make money flogging this stuff has got to be worth investing in

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HOW DID YOU DO? ADD UP YOUR SCORE, THEN PUCKER UP

mostly a
 You are strong and forceful and probably the dominant partner in any relationship. However, you can often be insensitive to your partner's feelings and need to get in touch with your feminine side. Your ideal partner is an attractive little outfit that will do as it's told.

mostly b
 Hard work and low tenders have kept you in the game this long, but change is the mother of opportunity. Don't hold back on new relationships. Try to find someone who will complement your own strengths. Casual affairs are not your style, so try a preliminary period of cohabitation before tying the knot.

mostly c
 Solitude is the price of a creative life, but your self-inflicted bachelor/spinster status cannot continue forever. What about an exotic liaison abroad? Try Barcelona - there are some great bars out there and the weather's gorgeous. You can always communicate with the office via your PowerBook.

mostly d
 Political correctness has never bothered you and what you really fancy is a nice little earner that you can ditch when you've got what you want. This is hardly a responsible attitude for the caring 1990s, so why not settle down with a reputable company that's going cheap. It's amazing what you can pick up for a quid these days.

equal numbers of a, b, c, and d
 Never one to be thought predictable, you are a veritable multidisciplinary, an entire construction industry in one individual. You will only be truly satisfied by someone as diverse as yourself, or, failing that, several individual partners.



how to switch it on
b) producing spreadsheets and flow diagrams
c) surfing the net and playing Sim City
d) multimedia presentations and virtual reality walk-throughs to impress your clients

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