

**An introduction to CLIP**

The Construction Lean Improvement Programme, or CLIP for short, is a new approach that aims to boost performance and profitability.

Over the last three years, CLIP has been adapting lean tools and techniques for use in the construction industry. CLIP has worked successfully with over 80 construction companies, across the construction supply chain, with most achieving productivity improvements of up to 50% in key processes.

CLIP works by focusing companies on improving the quality, cost, efficiency and delivery of a product or service, to achieve higher levels of customer satisfaction. It provides the knowledge and practical skills needed to take the

“This project demonstrates that ‘lean principles’ get the job done and fosters good working relationships, making the project enjoyable to work on”

– TIM STRINGER OF PEARCE GROUP LTD

highly theoretical topic of lean construction, and turn it into a practical tool that they can implement effectively.

The heart of each company’s CLIP programme consists of a tailored improvement activity built up of four core Masterclass modules. The programme is designed so that a company can pick and choose the range of tools and expertise available in the modules that it needs.

In this case study we feature the use of ‘The Lean Relationships Masterclass’ – This looks at ways of establishing a supplier team and collaborative working principles. Companies take part in workshop days over a 3 - 9 month period, and learn to use effective planning and scheduling tools to improve performance.

**A construction contractor used CLIP to reduce construction time by 16% & deliver a challenging project on time...**

**THE PROJECT:**  
New Waitrose Store, Wallingford

**CLIENT:**  
John Lewis Partnership (JLP)

**CONTRACTOR:**  
Pearce Group Ltd

Tim Stringer of Pearce Group Ltd tells how CLIP allowed them to work collaboratively with their supply chain, to deliver a difficult project on time, and on budget.

**View from the contractor:**

**Background to the project**

Pearce is a national construction company based in the South West of the UK. We operate across a number of market sectors.

We have a reputation for quality, and a commitment to invest continuously in ‘leading-edge’ construction skills.

**What attracted us to the CLIP programme**

We have been working with ‘lean principles’ for many years, and have a manager dedicated to finding new techniques that will improve our performance.

Using CLIP seemed a natural extension to this, and with JLPs backing we asked a CLIP Engineer to run some workshops and help develop an action plan for us.



Both photos show the completed store at Wallingford



**KEY SAVING:**

Using CLIP allowed us to make up the nine weeks we lost at the start due to unforeseen archaeological ground works. This 16% time saving meant we hit the store opening date, and gave us a delighted client.

**What our aims & expectations were**

JLP is one of our leading clients, so we felt the ‘lean construction’ focus that CLIP brings would help us deliver this difficult project on time to meet their needs.

The new £11m Waitrose store is steel framed with pre-cast and brick external cladding. It is located in the town centre near a number of existing structures.

Our main aim was to deliver the new store on time, and within cost.

**We also expected CLIP to help us**

- Develop our knowledge of ‘lean construction’ methods
- Develop collaborative relationships with our supply chain to improve performance.

**How the CLIP process worked for us**

We encountered an interesting, but challenging setback when we discovered that the site was on an Anglo Saxon burial ground. Around 200 bodies needed to be exhumed, which put us



The team discusses the collaborative planning board

nine weeks behind schedule. We had to hit JLP's opening date, so we took a step back to look at how we could reduce construction time.

To get buy-in, we visited all our suppliers' senior management, and then invited their site teams to a series of collaborative workshops. This gave the team the opportunity to really think about, and understand every aspect of the project, before arriving on site.

At the workshops the CLIP Engineer introduced us to collaborative working principles. This involved the whole team meeting in a large room with a board. Each team member wrote down on post-it notes the work that they needed to do to complete the job. These were then stuck on the wall, and the team then discussed what was required at each step of the process.

“This is my 58th retail development and this has been one of the most enjoyable – thanks to all those involved!”

– TIM PERRY OF JOHN LEWIS PARTNERSHIP

This was a new approach for many members of the team. Some were sceptical of the benefits, but they soon bought into it, as we made some early gains. By looking in detail at the design stage we quickly realised where significant time and cost savings could be made. For example, by switching to a less labour intensive pre-cast cladding system, we got the structure water tight faster, and it also gave us a higher quality finish. We also re-jigged the structure so fewer steel columns needed to be put up.

During the fit out phase, we ran daily and weekly site meetings where the available team members met to discuss the project plan, and make any amendments based on recent events. This helped the whole team understand what everyone else was doing, and stay focused on the plan throughout the project.

### How we benefited from this initiative

Using CLIP allowed us to win back the nine weeks we lost at the start, and hit the store opening date. This 16% time saving gave us a delighted client.

The collaborative approach fostered a commitment to deliver the project programme, and everyone worked as a real team at every step. The whole team showed a willingness to continue learning and applying 'lean construction' techniques during CLIP's involvement in the complex fit out phase.

Our successes show that the collaborative 'lean approach' really does produce time and cost savings for everyone involved. We also learnt how important it is to invest the time up front with your suppliers, and that they must be willing to explore new ways of working with you.

### How we plan to use the skills & lessons learned

Using CLIP was a real learning experience, and we are now taking effective 'lean working' methods onto other projects to improve our performance further. The collaborative working principles proved very effective, and we are now creating an IT based version to make the process even slicker.

To drive through improvements, appoint a 'lean champion' who understands the benefits that CLIP can bring. This ensures that the valuable knowledge gained is shared throughout your organisation.

The collaborative workshops highlighted how important it is to get the whole project team together early to discuss

the project programme. This way you can identify the crucial points in the construction process where different members of the team can add their value, and avoid any hidden pitfalls.



A site team review meeting

### Learning points

- Ensure the whole team understands what everyone else is doing, and stays focused on the plan throughout the project.
- Invest the time up front with your suppliers to make 'lean relationships' work effectively, but they must be willing to explore new ways of working with you as well.
- Have a 'lean champion' who understands the benefits that CLIP can bring to your company, to drive through improvements.

### Getting help

#### CONTACT DETAILS:

Martin Watson, CLIP Director  
BRE, Garston, Watford WD25 9XX  
01923 664638  
www.bre.co.uk  
email clip@bre.co.uk

#### PUBLISHED – JANUARY 2006

All activities carried out through CLIP are certified for CPD hours.

#### COPYRIGHT:

Requests to use any part of this document should be sent to the BRE

#### RESEARCH & AUTHOR:

Leading Edge Management Consultancy Limited  
www.lead-edge.co.uk

#### DESIGN:

Allan & Company Limited  
www.allandesign.co.uk

### Acknowledgements:

We would like to thank the following people who gave us their time and explained their experiences for this publication:  
Contractor – Tim Stringer for Pearce Group Ltd