

3.2 Joint industry marketing

Industry-wide collaboration on employer marketing

In an industry where women constitute just 9% of the workforce and where employee turnover will be an estimated 33% in the next 10 years – both values at the extreme, relative to other industries – a joint marketing effort by employers is seriously needed.<sup>92</sup> The objectives are to persuade young people to pursue a career in construction, to challenge preconceptions about working in construction and to demonstrate the variety of career options and entry routes.

Ideally, formal centralized organizations would be set up, to pool the respective competencies of construction companies and align marketing efforts across the industry. The organizations would get all member companies to adopt a uniform stance and become involved in creating a consistent image of the construction industry. An active and wide-ranging communication effort would convey that consistent image to target groups, via marketing campaigns using multiple channels.

**EXAMPLE:** The *Construction Industry Training Board*, a centralized organization representing the interests of the construction industry in the United Kingdom, initiated a comprehensive marketing campaign called *goconstruct.org*. The website provides details on qualification requirements, job opportunities and salaries; a video provides several job profiles and information; and a full advertising campaign disseminates information on the sides of buses, on billboards and in phone booths.

Coordinated communication with civil society<sup>93</sup>

The E&C sector will also need to engage constructively with the public at large. Thus individual companies should adopt best practices regarding construction sites, should protect communities and the environment and should secure everyone's safety.

**EXAMPLE:** The *Considerate Constructors Scheme* – a non-profit organization founded by the United Kingdom construction industry to improve its image – addresses concerns relating to the general public, the workforce and the environment. It has established a *Code of Considerate Practice* to guide the behaviour of its members.

The main influence on people's perception of the industry, however, is their personal experience of construction projects or assets. By involving the affected communities throughout the asset's life cycle – from planning and construction through to operating the asset – companies can sustainably enhance the image and reduce the likelihood of political intervention, particularly in infrastructure projects. In most cases, infrastructure projects are extremely beneficial for the wider society, and all stakeholders have a common interest in seeing this message communicated effectively.

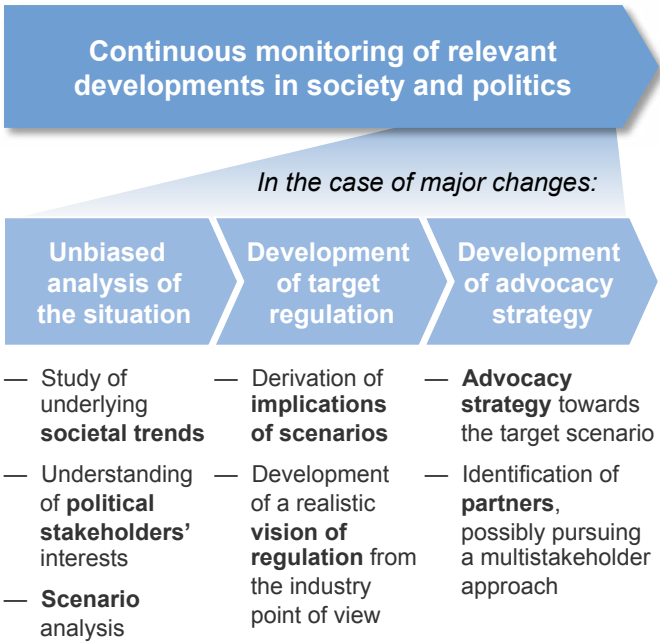
Infrastructure projects can provoke public disapproval in various ways. Many projects have a very disruptive impact on the local community despite their acknowledged advantages for wider society. And the public tend to object when projects exceed their budgets or schedules, especially when national debt rates and austerity measures are on the increase.

So companies would be well advised to engage the community early on, and continue that engagement throughout. During the planning process, for example, they should arrange formal consultations with the community as part of their environmental-impact and social-impact assessments. Such consultations will help to ease local anxieties, and also to fine-tune the design of the project and reduce inconvenience during the construction period: well-planned route management, for instance, will make diverted traffic more bearable for local residents. In general, companies need to maintain a strong communications strategy. During the planning period, and throughout the construction phase, project developers should keep the local community fully informed on progress and potential impacts – to satisfy curiosity, allay fears and even rally public support for the project.

**EXAMPLE:** The redevelopment of *Vienna's main station* was supported by the "Infobox", Europe's highest wooden tower. It became a magnet for visitors, and hence a fertile venue for circulating details of the project's goals, progress and long-term advantages.

Engagement with the community should not end when the construction phase ends. Ongoing public support for the infrastructure asset is crucial, and cannot be taken for granted. During the operations phase, various public relations and educational measures are possible, such as guided tours in ports and viewing decks in airports.

Figure 16: An Approach to Regulatory Engagement<sup>94</sup>



Source: World Economic Forum; The Boston Consulting Group

## Effective interaction with the public sector

Companies should also take steps to engage constructively with the public sector to avoid misunderstandings, discuss the impact of regulations and ensure good relations. Figure 16 outlines one approach to regulatory engagement.

The advocacy strategy is especially important as a counterweight to the regulatory regime, which is always subject to change at a national or even international level. Ideally, the industry would engage in joint initiatives with government, working closely together towards the common goal of taking the industry forward.

**EXAMPLE:** *Construction 2025* is a partnership in the United Kingdom between E&C and government to transform the industry by optimizing the relationship between private companies and public authorities. E&C is acknowledged as an “enabling sector having a massive impact on the

performance of the wider economy”.<sup>95</sup> It has set out a vision and a plan for long-term strategic action by government and industry: they are to continue working together, especially on smart technologies, green construction and overseas trade.

Once again, effective communication between the two sides is crucial.<sup>96</sup> The industry needs a well-designed communication initiative for each phase in the life cycle of an infrastructure project. During bidding and contract negotiations, for example, companies should refuse to give any misleading information, even if such information is requested by the public-sector representatives. During the construction phase, the contracted company should be open and proactive in reporting progress or problems to the public-sector agency. And ideally, the company will employ a high-level individual as the dedicated point of contact, to build trusting relationships and resolve issues promptly.

