How to empower technical professionals to create sustainable change in the construction industry

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As a major contributor to climate change, Construction is a focus area for emission reduction. This challenge will become increasingly difficult as low-hanging fruit are completed, with organisations requiring all specialists to contribute solutions for their respective fields. Top-down solutions have their place, but in project-based work environments with specific challenges and client criteria, all employees need to be empowered to work towards this common goal. In literature, the focus on leadership styles fails to identify the core tangible factors that influence the empowerment of employees.

In the research, literature was reviewed to identify a theoretical framework that consists of locus of control, knowledge tools and resources, psychological safety, autonomy and accountability, and clear goals. To implement improvements to this framework, good change management and communication would be necessary too. Having established these factors, I assessed a tier one contractor through a mixed-methods

approach. The study found a strong sense of team, which impacted psychological safety and autonomy and accountability, but for sustainability that goals were unclear, and the knowledge, tools and resources were unavailable. Meanwhile, locus of control was found to be negatively impacted primarily by external influences.

The study also confirms the validity of knowledge, tools and resources, and clear goals as influencing factors on sustainable minded decisions making, but with updated survey format it is believe the other factors could also be confirmed in future studies. This method could be repeated at multiple organisations for aggregated industry information, or repeated at the same organisation for a longitudinal review of intervention success.