



SUMMIT
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Labour Market Research: Visit to an Al Ain Construction Project

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A drive around Dubai or Abu Dhabi takes you through a range of diverse construction projects. Despite the economic downturn, many new developments are still taking place, with more ambitious plans for the future. According to the 'Abu Dhabi Economic Vision 2030', the construction and engineering sector is regarded as a key sector for growth, bringing with it many employment opportunities for aspiring Engineers, Architects, and other construction professionals. Universities are opening up new bachelor and postgraduate degree programs related to this field to enable young people in the UAE to contribute to this increasingly growing sector. According to statistics, the construction industry employs the largest number of workers in the UAE

compared to any other industry (Source: Reed Global 2009).

On Saturday 17th July, I visited the construction site of the Sheikh Zayed Desert Learning Centre in Al Ain, a new development commissioned by Al Ain Wildlife Park and Resort. The purpose of the visit was to conduct labour market research regarding the Construction and Engineering sector, to understand the different roles and responsibilities involved.

The Sheikh Zayed Desert Learning centre is one of many developments that will contribute to the regeneration of land behind Al Ain Wildlife Park and Resort, which will eventually incorporate a residential area, hotels and recreation facilities. The building aims to be the first building in the UAE which produces all its own energy, working towards the Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) Certification for Environmental Sustainability.

Three companies are working together on the Desert Learning Centre, these are Chalabi (Architectural design), Züblin (Building) and Bollinger & Grohmann (Engineering).



Photo: Supervisory Career Advisor Sarah Young takes a tour of the construction

In total, about 450 workers are involved in the construction, which includes Construction Labourers, Foremen, Engineers, Architects, Document Controllers and so on. All workers on the site are expatriate. I was given a tour of the site by the Structural Inspector, Mr. Hans Walter, who has relocated from Vienna, Austria for the duration of the project. He showed me the site office where all of the documentation is kept. The office is shared between engineers, architects, building services specialists (such as AC and electrical services) and administrative support such as document controller and secretary. Mr. Walter provides a brief overview of his role and responsibilities below.

What is your role in the construction project?

My role as a **Structural Inspector** is to check the construction against the drawings and ensure it is structurally correct. This involves working closely with the building company to check measurements and quality of the work.

Can you describe a normal working day?

Normally I arrive at the site at around 8am. I start off the day in the site office, checking emails to see if there are any requests from the building company which need responding to. These could be requests for clarification on elements of the construction or requests for approving materials. Everything has to be documented therefore there is a lot of paperwork involved in the job. I can spend two or three hours per day on site, inspecting the construction in collaboration with the Site Engineer. I normally finish the day at around 7pm.

Sometimes I have to work in the evening or at night, because some activities, such as pouring concrete slabs, can only be done at night due to the heat.

What main skills and qualities do you need for this work?

You need to have a good eye for detail because there are many factors to consider regarding

structural inspections and building processes. You need to be analytical, logical and good at solving problems as well as having good technical skills. You need the ability to develop good working relationships with other people.

What challenges have you encountered?

Initially it can be difficult to gain respect from the site workers and other building experts, therefore you have to be friendly and honest to gain credibility and of course show respect for other people.

What do you enjoy about your role?

I enjoy working on site and being part of the building process.

The construction and engineering sector offers a wide variety of exciting roles at different levels. It is possible to earn a high salary for highly skilled and experienced roles. *If you are an ADU student wanting to explore your career options further, please contact your Career Advisor at SUMMIT for more information.*

Sarah Young

Labour Market Research: An Interview with a Civil Engineer

Civil Engineering deals with different structures from design and construction to maintenance and facilities management. A Civil Engineer is not only limited to construction but is also involved with the maintenance of the naturally built environment and infrastructure

projects such as roads, railways and bridges. Most social and economic activities depend increasingly on engineering applications.

To learn more about this fascinating profession, which

seems to have so many applications, Summit Career Advisor Mahommed Adams interviewed Mrs Georgeta Salameh, who has over 25 years experience in the gulf region, 20 of those years specifically in the UAE, in order to gain further information about the field of engineering.

Mrs Salameh was asked a few questions, which were designed to gain important information which could assist undergraduates and fresh graduates develop a more realistic perspective when considering this career choice.

Q: How did you get involved in the field of Civil Engineering

I became involved in this field as I wanted to contribute in a meaningful way to society at large. To this end engineering appealed to me as I felt that as an engineer I can contribute to society in a positive manner. I believe that engineers help a society develop itself.

Q: Please elaborate on how an Engineer can help develop society

In my opinion engineers don't just design and construct building. By constructing buildings, Engineers contribute to creating jobs and societies. They also leave something special, a legacy behind for future generations.

Q: What excites you about this profession?

The exciting part of my profession is the satisfaction of seeing my work and the projects that I have been involved in, and knowing that this work has in some way helped improve and even change a society or community life.

Q: what qualities a person should have in this profession?

If you want to do well in this profession, you have to be a very sociable person, and should be able to work with people often from different nationalities and religions. If you are a woman in this profession you need to have a robust character and learn to communicate with your colleagues as fellow engineers and not in terms of male and female.

Q: What is it about your profession that you don't like?

I don't like the fact that it is still difficult for girls to have a career in the field of engineering. Not because of their intellect, but due to various other reasons. Especially in civil engineering, the common thinking is that it is a hard job for women to do and that a woman needs to dedicate more time to her family and less time on career. However, from my experience in the Gulf region, this profession welcomes the female engineers. If a female wants to become an engineer she should consider all the facts and the consequences of her decision. She should know that when you are starting to build your career, this will affect your family life. You might not get to spend as much time as you would like to with your family because in engineering you may have to work long hours or even the weekend to complete a project on time.

Like any career, I think that a career as an engineer has its ups and downs. Engineers can have challenging moments in their careers; they could make mistakes and projects they are working on could fail, having serious consequences for those involved. Thus engineers are always under a lot of pressure to perform and to ensure that they don't make mistakes and complete the work within the deadline.

Q: What are some of the additional opportunities in the field of Civil Engineering

There are a wide range of additional opportunities such as working in an Engineering or Construction company as a Procurement Agent or Facilities Manager or in research positions. Fresh graduates must also realise that in the beginning of their careers they need to gain experience in all facets of their profession including initially working on site.

Q: What advice would you give to students that want to pursue a career in Civil Engineering?

In order to have a successful career in the field of engineering you need to be diverse in your thinking, as well as in your knowledge and experience. I suggest that students should be familiar with the various computer software programs used in the

You do not need to become an expert but should have a good understanding of the programmes. Also it is advisable to obtain a Masters degree. However before you pursue a Masters degree you should gain some work experience (at least one year).

Q: How do you see the future of the engineering profession in the

UAE for the next couple of years ?

I believe that the engineering profession in the UAE, especially in Abu Dhabi, will boom in the future. I attribute this to the fact that Abu Dhabi has a lot of projects planned and there would be great opportunities for aspiring Engineers. I think that there would be great opportuni-

ties for Engineers in all disciplines ranging from Town Planners, Structural Designers and Construction Managers to Facilities Managers and even Research Engineers and Procurement Engineers.

Mahommed Adams

The Live Communications Industry and Action Impact

During my visit to Live Communications company, Action Impact, I was fortunate to meet with Mr. David Markham, Business Development Director and Ms. Abbe Felters, Office Manager. Mr. Markham provided an overview of the company as well as showcasing some of the live communication events that Action Impact have worked on to date. Founded in 2005, Action Impact currently has a workforce of around 80 employees consisting of about 18 nationalities. Ms. Felters gave me a tour of the Dubai Head office; an open creative, colourful and inspiring working environment. Action Impact specializes in bringing brands to life through live communications, they '**create and deliver exceptional Live Events, Exhibition Stands, Brand Experience Centers, Film and Digital Media**'.

The company has won many prestigious awards such as the

CINE Golden Eagle Award for their film 'Find Al Gharbia' which was created for the Western Region Development Council in Abu Dhabi (WRDC). I was lucky enough to view part of the film during my visit. In May 2010, Action Impact received awards for their Saadiyat Story exhibition commissioned by the Tourism Development and Investment Company (TDIC) for the Manarat Al Saadiyat visitor centre, designed to bring the vision of Saadiyat Island alive. These are just some examples of Action Impact's work.

Q. What is live communications?

Live communications include:
Live events – such as product launches, promotions, fundraising and social/business events
Exhibitions - for example Careers Fairs, Business conferences/ exhibitions and mall shows
Brand experiences - for example sales centers, visitor experiences,

show rooms, retail environments
Film and video – for example TV commercials, documentaries, show reels

Digital Media – for example interactive systems, animations, other applications

Q. What types of jobs are available in this industry?

There are a range of exciting roles available in this industry such as:

- Graphic Designer, Interior Designer
- Events Planner, Production Manager, Project Manager, Logistics Manager
- Account Manager
- Film & Video Director, Producer, Interactive Designer

Q. What skills & qualities are required to work in this industry?

In order to work in this sector, you should:

- be well organised and efficient

- have high energy level
- be able to multi-task
- be a good team worker
- have excellent communication skills, with the ability to deal with a wide range of people
- be imaginative and creative
- be able to cope with pressure and tight deadlines
- be flexible and able to deal with last-minute changes or problems
- have a sense of humour
- have good business, marketing, negotiating and selling skills
- have good project-management and problem-solving skills
- have IT and numerical skills

Q. How can I get in to the industry?

There are no set requirements for entering the Events and Live communications industry. It is important that you have enthusiasm for this kind of work. You should have an interest in events, design, communication and technology. Furthermore, you should have experience of organizing events and exhibitions. You can gain the experience you need through organising events or being involved in the design and delivery of an event whilst at University, for any clubs and associations you are a member of. Additionally you can become involved through volunteer work. It is vital that you gain as much experience as possible, a Bachelor Degree alone is not enough to get into this industry.

Q. Are there opportunities in the UAE?

The UAE hosts many major events, exhibitions and conferences each year therefore there are opportunities for enthusiastic, skilled and experienced individuals, particularly in Dubai and Abu Dhabi.

Q. How can I find out more about this industry?

Contact a SUMMIT Careers Advisor for further information.

Learn more about Live Communications in next month's newsletter, when SUMMIT interview ADU Graduate, Fatima Eisa who has now completed 6 months in her role as Administrator with Action Impact.

Sarah Young



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The LMI Newsletter is a product of the labour market information collected through research and visits conducted with a range of employers in Abu Dhabi and Al Ain by Careers Advisers at SUMMIT.

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