
Owner's Team Leadership: Directing Design Firms and Contractors Course

19 – 23 October 2026
London - Premier Inn Victorya





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Programme Summary

Owner's team leadership for directing design firms and contractors is a one-week training course for client-side leaders at strategic level, culminating in a consultant and contractor governance plan for a live project or service portfolio. Owners often hand scope, quality and cost control to the firms they appoint, then find they cannot steer them when designs slip or claims arrive. The approach follows the relationship from terms of reference and selection to supervision, negotiation and dispute avoidance. Mars Training Centre UK delivers this programme in owner's team leadership of consultants and contractors.

The Business Case

A weak terms of reference, a consultant agreement with vague deliverables or an Engineer left without clear authority transfers risk back to the owner. Leaders who define services precisely, select on quality, measure performance and negotiate from evidence keep design and construction on track and protect the owner's budget.

- Consultant and Contractor Performance: Improves as scope, deliverables and KPIs are set before appointment.
- Cost of Additional Services and Variations: Falls as fee changes and variations are tested against the agreed scope.
- Disputes and Delays: Reduce as authority, escalation and dispute avoidance are designed into each contract.

Principles and Evidence Base

- FIDIC Client/Consultant Model Services Agreement White Book: Frames the scope of services, fees, liability and suspension of consultants in Session 1.
- Quality-Based and Quality and Cost-Based Selection: Structure the consultant and contractor selection decisions examined in Session 2.
- FIDIC Red, Yellow and Silver Books: Define the role of the Engineer and the Employer's Representative in supervision in Session 3.
- ISO 44001 Collaborative Business Relationship Management: Guides relationship governance and joint working reviewed in Sessions 4 and 5.



Intended Participants

- Leaders accountable for delivering capital projects through external consultants and contractors.
- Executives who approve consultant appointments, fee changes and contract awards.
- Heads of function who act as, or direct, the Engineer or Employer's Representative.
- Procurement and contracts directors who negotiate with design firms and contractors.

The programme serves government and municipal owners, real estate and infrastructure developers, and energy and utilities companies.

Learning Outcomes

1. Participants will be able to construct terms of reference and a scope of services that consultants can be held to.
2. Participants will be able to justify a selection method and evaluation criteria for consultants and contractors.
3. Participants will be able to evaluate client-consultant agreement terms on fees, liability and deliverables.
4. Participants will be able to diagnose supervision and performance gaps using KPIs and site reports.
5. Participants will be able to prioritise negotiation positions on fees, variations and claims.
6. Participants will be able to construct a consultant and contractor governance plan for their portfolio.

Programme Structure

Day 1: Owner's Team Role and Consultant Appointment

What must the owner define before any consultant is appointed?

- Owner's Team Structure and Retained Authority
- Terms of Reference and Scope of Services
- FIDIC White Book Fees, Liability and Suspension
- Deliverable Schedules and Design Review Gates
- Consultant Risk Register

Day 2: Selecting Design Firms and Contractors

How are consultants and contractors chosen on quality as well as price?

- Quality-Based and Quality and Cost-Based Selection
- Contractor Prequalification Criteria
- Technical and Commercial Tender Evaluation
- Clarification Meetings and Award Recommendations
- Conflict of Interest and Probity Controls



Day 3: Supervising Performance on Site and in Design

How does the owner know whether consultants and contractors are performing?

- Engineer and Employer's Representative Authority
- Inspection, Testing and Non-Conformance Reporting
- Consultant and Contractor KPI Scorecards
- Progress Reports and Look-Ahead Reviews
- Underperformance Notices and Recovery Plans

Day 4: Negotiating Fees, Variations and Disputes

How does the owner negotiate from evidence rather than pressure?

- Additional Services and Fee Adjustment Requests
- Variation and Claim Assessment from the Owner's Side
- Principled Negotiation and BATNA Preparation
- Dispute Avoidance and Adjudication Boards
- ISO 44001 Relationship Governance

Day 5: Applying Owner's Team Leadership to a Live Portfolio

How are appointment, supervision and negotiation combined into one governance plan?

- Scope and Agreement Review of a Participant Appointment
- Performance Scorecard for Current Consultants and Contractors
- Negotiation Plan for an Open Variation or Fee Request
- Peer Challenge of Governance Arrangements
- Consultant and Contractor Governance Plan Presentation

Methodology

The programme relies on case analysis supported by structured negotiation exercises. Participants review terms of reference, consultant agreements and site reports from building, infrastructure and energy projects, and rehearse fee and variation negotiations in role play.

- Suggested activity: Rewriting a vague terms of reference into measurable deliverables.
- Suggested activity: Scoring two consultant proposals under quality and cost-based selection.
- Suggested activity: Negotiating an additional services claim with a design firm.



Capstone Output

Each participant completes a consultant and contractor governance plan for a live project or service portfolio. It sets out retained authority, scope and agreement gaps, KPI scorecards, supervision routines, negotiation priorities and escalation routes, ready to present to the project sponsor or board.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is owner's team leadership of consultants and contractors suitable for non-engineers?

Yes. It suits procurement, contracts and project leaders on the client side, and assumes experience of capital projects or major service contracts but no engineering qualification.

Which contract forms underpin owner's team leadership of design firms and contractors?

It draws on the FIDIC White Book for consultants, the FIDIC Red, Yellow and Silver Books for contractors, quality-based selection methods and ISO 44001 for relationship governance.

How is the consultant and contractor governance plan used at work?

You return with a plan your sponsor can adopt, setting out authority, KPIs, supervision and negotiation priorities for the consultants and contractors you direct.

How does directing design firms and contractors differ from contractor-side contract administration?

It takes the owner's view, covering appointment, supervision and negotiation of external firms, rather than how a contractor administers its own contract.