Dutco Balfour Beatty LLC
civil engineering, building and marine contractors in the uae

There to Meet the Challenge
Dutco Balfour Beatty LLC (DBB LLC)

A reputation for delivering consistent performance in what can only be described as an aggressively competitive market where high quality workmanship and demanding schedules are considered the norm, has established Dutco Balfour Beatty LLC (DBB) at the forefront of the Middle East construction industry. The Company which was formally incorporated in 1984 is celebrating 25 years of operation and is regarded as one of the largest and most widely diversified civil engineering, building and marine contractors in the UAE.

The two principal shareholders, Dubai Transport Company (Dutco) and Balfour Beatty Plc, were first introduced to each other in 1976 when together with Dutch dredging giant Volker Stevin they formed the Mina Jebel Ali Construction Company (MJAC) to construct the world’s largest man-made harbour for the Government of Dubai at Jebel Ali.

It will come as no surprise to discover that its client list includes some of the most prestigious and respected names in the UAE, including the Road Transport Authority, Dubai Municipality, Emaar Properties, Dubai Civil Aviation, Dubai Port Authority, Nakheel, Dubai Properties, Sama Dubai, the Engineers Office, Dubai Festival City, Tatweer, Limitless, Dubai Cable Co and RAK Bank to name but a few.

DBB has four principle operating Divisions, each focused on a particular sector of the Dubai construction market:
1. Marine and Heavy Civil Engineering
2. Roads and Associated Infrastructure
3. Building
4. Subsidiary Companies incorporating
4.1 Scaffold and Formwork
4.2 Interiors (incorporating Joinery)
4.3 Strategic Projects
4.4 Piling and Ground Engineering
4.5 Plant & Equipment

As a result of the economic boom experienced in Dubai during 2003 to 2008, the Company has experienced meteoric growth which reached a climax in 2008 when the business turnover reached an impressive Dhs. 4bn. Grahame McCaig, DBB General Manager, explains “the journey we have had has been exciting with its own unique challenges. We have witnessed tremendous growth in the past seven years where we have effectively increased the size of the business 14 fold. Now with the onset of the world financial crisis we are faced with a new set of management issues to consider. There’s never a dull moment in the Construction Industry”

The company’s uncommon level of expertise dictates that it has been involved in some of Dubai’s most prestigious and exciting projects and developments, with all of its divisions universally recognised for their superior performance, fast, friendly customer service, and genuinely cost effective solutions.

1. Marine & Heavy Civil Engineering

Civil engineers are often the unsung heroes of modern development, building better roads, bridges, dams, irrigation systems, plants and many other projects that greatly contribute to a successfully functioning society. This is certainly true in
Dubai, and DBB’s Marine & Heavy Civil Engineering division has helped the Emirate to become the envy of the world in so many areas in recent years. This division concentrates primarily on projects requiring marine construction input, including breakwater, quay wall, canal “edge” protection works, offshore piling, reclamation and both port and leisure yacht marine developments. What’s more, winning much of its new work through repeat business and recommendation, this specialist area of DBB has returned back to where it started … in the best possible way!

The reason for this is that the company has been involved in upgrading the civil infrastructure facilities within the Jebel Ali Port, developing the container and general cargo terminals capacity and improving overall port operational efficiency. The Marine division has also recently been involved in constructing the edge protection works on both the Business Bay and Sama “Lagoons” developments. These projects involved the production of thousands and thousands of precast concrete blocks which were then transported and placed together to form the Business Bay canal and the lagoons island developments. This division will tackle anything involving water and they have completed three spectacular structures across the new Dubai Marina development, an urban centre on the water, comparable to the most exclusive waterfront developments in the world’s leading cities. The present post-tensioned, reinforced concrete design has a central span of 126 m with a 33 m abutment on either side housing expansion joints and with reinforced earth type walls. Deck width is 27.4 m with 8 m clearance between the soffit and high-water level. The bridge profile is elegant but complex, curved in three directions.

2. Roads & Associated Infrastructure

Development of proper infrastructure is vital for economic growth of any country. Investors like to put capital only into those countries where there is developed infrastructure, and the road network is at the heart of this requirement. The Dubai road infrastructure system is surely one of the most advanced in the world and, due to the dramatic increase in the number of road users, the government is continually providing new routes and upgrading existing facilities. DBB, thanks to its extensive expertise and resources within this field, has been successful in bidding for a significant portion of this type of work. Commuting across Dubai involves using a number of DBB constructed roads and interchanges. The impressive list of projects includes the Dubai International Airport Interchange (1998), SZR Interchange No.3 (2003), Al Khail Road (2004), SZR Interchange 4 (2005), Ras Al Khair Interchange (2007), the widening of the Sheikh Zayed Road (2005), the Widening of the Emirates Road (2009), SZR Interchange 5 (2009), the Access Bridges to Mirdiff City Centre (current) and the new VIP access Bridges at Meydan (current).

The Company operates 3 asphalt production facilities and a modern well equipped testing laboratory in Jebel Ali Industrial Zone.

3. Building

Dutco Balfour Beatty is often mistakenly categorised only as a major civil engineering business and does not always receive the recognition it deserves as a major player in the Dubai building sector. DBB has always been involved in the traditional building sector and early projects include the Al Ali Properties commercial office tower on Sheikh Zayed Road and the unique Emirates Airline Training Centre next to the Dubai tennis stadium. There are numerous examples of
quality work we have completed across Dubai which include the Sheikh Hamdan Awards Building opposite Union Square, the Ibis and Holiday Inn Express hotels on Sheikh Zayed Road, the S4 storey Marina Heights residential development in Dubai Marina, Operations Centres for RAKBank in Silicon Oasis and Ras Al Khaimah, the Dubai Mall (in J with AC & CCLC) for Emaar Malls, which, situated adjacent to the impressive Burj Dubai is the largest shopping mall ever constructed and more recently the new Novotel Hotel development on Sheikh Zayed Road.

DBB is also involved in the residential market and in addition to having constructed a number of residential units across Dubai on behalf of corporate clients also has an impressive portfolio of quality bespoke residences in the Emirates Hills development for individual owners. We have built a number of mosques, clinics and other service related projects.

4. Specialist Divisions

DBB’s specialist divisions not only support the mainstream business, but also conduct a wide range of work in the general market. Perhaps the most high profile of these divisions is Scaffold & Formwork, which is renowned for erecting the public grandstands that are used each year at the Emirates Airline Dubai Sevens rugby tournament, which features 16 of the best Sevens nations in the world.

This particular challenge revolves around accommodating 17,600 people, utilising 850 tonnes of equipment and 39 km of scaffold boarding. The entire contract commences four to six weeks ahead of the three-day tournament and involves an immense amount of logistical planning.

The company’s other niche market divisions include ‘Interiors’, which specialises in commercial office, retail and hotel fit out (utilising its own in-house joinery capability), ‘Strategic Projects’ , ‘Plant & Equipment’, ‘Piling and Ground Engineering’, Walcon marine development and Landpac dynamic compaction.

5. Health, Safety & the Environment

Ensuring that our employees are afforded a healthy and safe environment in which to work is considered paramount. HSE management tops the agenda at DBB and it is a subject that we take very seriously. Over the past few years DBB has introduced a number of HSE initiatives including the 5 Star Grading Scheme, the Mobile Safety Training Unit, the “Make Safety Personal” campaign and more recently “Zero Harm” – to name but a few.

DBB is also a founding member of the BuildSafeUAE initiative, which promotes better HSE awareness across the Industry through facilitating the open sharing of HSE experience.

Indeed, DBB is committed to the best international standards and operates sophisticated business management systems that are all monitored by a dedicated Quality Management System Department. At DBB we recognise that our people remain our most important and influential asset and we are committed to their empowerment. With this mind, DBB has made a significant investment in a new Training & Development Centre, which was officially opened in October 2008.

6. A New Centre of Excellence

One of the more pressing issues that faced UAE construction companies as they grew and expanded in the booming market of 2006 – 2008 was the steady and unavoidable dilution of company culture that was caused by an inability to attract suitably qualified resource.

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In DBB we were witnessing a measurable increase in the incidence of unacceptable HSE practices and reduced quality across our business. The overall skill level of our craftsmen was declining; the result, a marked drop in overall efficiency and productivity. All of this threatened not only the company’s reputation, but also our bottom-line performance. The business risk associated with dramatic increases in resource levels is significant and the company had to implement specific strategies, one of which was to open the Training and Development Centre to assist it in the management of this risk.

The Centre, in which DBB has invested Dh. 2.5 million, offers a comprehensive range of HSE, construction skills and general management training.

**HSE Training**

The Centre has recently been certified by both the UK’s CITB-ConstructionSkills Authority (a partnership between CITB-ConstructionSkills, the Construction Industry Council and CITB Northern Ireland) and the Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) as an approved training provider for the following HSE courses:

- Health and Safety Awareness
- Site Supervisors’ Safety Training Scheme
- The Site Management Safety Training Scheme (SMSTS)
- The Site Management Safety Training Scheme Refresher Course
- IOSH Working Safely
- IOSH Managing Safely

This dual certification underlines the company’s commitment to both its own future and the future of its employees, with DBB already having completed a number of IOSH training courses at the Centre. Participants receive the relevant organisations’ certificates and these courses look to improve the HSE performance of the individual employee, the company’s work sites, and ultimately the business as a whole.

**Construction Skills Training**

The construction skills assessment and training programme has been developed in line with the South African Federation of Civil Engineering Contractors (SAFCEC) training and development programmes. This programme is aimed at improving the capability, productivity and general safety awareness of all craftsmen and covers:

- Basic and Advanced Scaffolding
- Basic and Advanced Carpentry
- Basic and Advanced Plastering
- Basic and Advanced Block Laying
- Basic and Advanced Steel Fixing

The Centre can easily accommodate up to 50 people at a time and offers comprehensive theoretical and practical training that utilises the proven EDP (Explain, Demonstrate and Practice) method of learning.

**General Management Training**

The Centre is also being used to deliver a comprehensive management training regime to effectively assist junior level engineers and quantity surveyors to attain the skills deemed necessary to operate at the level of Project Manager and Senior Quantity Surveyor over a 15 year period.

The Training and Development Centre remains at the core of the DBB medium and long-term Dubai strategy, and the company’s ability to provide an educated, capable and motivated workforce will ensure the future of the business for many years to come.
Gold Award

This vision and determination has already reaped rewards – quite literally! For DBB has won one of the prestigious 2009 RoSPA Occupational Health and Safety Awards. The Gold award was presented at a ceremony in Birmingham, England, on May 13, 2009, with David Rawlins, the RoSPA awards manager commenting: “Dutco Balfour Beatty LLC has shown a commitment to protecting the health and well-being of its employees and others.Entering the RoSPA Awards reinforces the message that good health and safety is good the business, and clearly demonstrates an organisation’s dedication to improving performance in this critical area.”

Grahame McCaig, DBB’s General Manager, was justifiably proud of this latest achievement and reiterated the company’s commitment to making safety personal across the business. “For us, safety is and always will be our top priority. Winning this award will further strengthen our resolve to make our project sites better, safer and ultimately more productive and efficient places to work.”

The RoSPA Awards are not just about reducing the number of accidents and cases of ill health at work, they help to ensure that organisations have good health and safety management systems in place. In the current economic climate, awards are more important than ever because they demonstrate that employers care about their employees and will not let slip their standards of health and safety practice even if times are tough. DBB echoes this sentiment and continues to support the principle of investment in HSE – investment that will deliver a positive return.

Forming Strategic Alliances

With the sudden and fairly unexpected arrival of the global financial crisis in late 2008 the harsh reality facing all contractors, including DBB, is that the volume of construction activity in Dubai is likely to decline over the next few years and therefore we will need to seek alternative revenue streams which simply translated means initiating the development of a regional business. DBB is well placed to tackle almost any regional construction project, but the strategy hitherto employed by the group – the formation of strategic alliances with ‘local’ established companies to look more technically challenging projects (marine works, micro-tunnelling etc) – will continue.

Partnerships are a powerful tool for solving problems, and can make efforts more effective by combining resources and competencies in innovative ways. Collaboration can enable companies to better achieve their own individual objectives through leveraging, combining and capitalising on complementary strengths and capabilities. “What we’re looking for is synergy - a local partner’s knowledge and experience of the particular area combined with our unique technical expertise, specialist equipment and management,” says McCaig.

This will remain the backbone of the Dutco Balfour Beatty Group’s regional expansion strategy. Partnerships are a sound investment for both the near and long-term, and DBB intends to invest wisely.

Developing a Global Power-Centre

A global city is defined as a city whose environment provides global competitiveness for its residents and companies, it is not just a large city, but a city that is a power-centre of globalization through its embedding into global structures. At the same time, one can still discern national and local aspects present. This describes Dubai perfectly and DBB will continue to be involved in the development of the emirate and the region as a whole.

To find out more, visit www.dbbg.com, where you’ll get more information on the company, its management policies, and updates on live projects.
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