

# GULF LEADER

Winner of the first *MEP Middle East Project Manager of the Year* award, Basheer Massad stresses to **Alison Luke** the impact of productivity, partnering and prefabrication to the region's MEP sector.

**W**alking around the Index Tower construction site with BK Gulf operations manager Basheer Massad, his popularity becomes clear pretty quickly. Almost without exception, every person that we pass greets him. And many of the words today are of congratulations, for Massad is fresh from winning the MEP Project Manager of the Year Award.

His colleagues seem genuinely pleased at this achievement, some even taking the trouble to mount photos of him receiving his trophy to display in the on site office. In the high-pressure MEP contracting industry, gaining popularity with your staff while still getting the job done on time, on target and to a high quality has got to be tough. So what's Massad's secret?

Teamwork is a vital part of the job he stresses. He is quick to point out that this award is a

signal of the entire team's success, not just his own efforts. "One of my earlier managers told me something that stuck in my mind; you are only as good as the people working with you. It's never a one man show... involvement is the best way of solving problems, you cannot just solve them by telling people what to do," he stresses.

And it would seem that Massad is genuinely interested in the careers of his staff. He is one of the facilitators co-ordinating with a newly employed third-party training firm to operate a training programme for BK Gulf's project managers and engineers. He is also involved in the firm's plans to set up labour training schools. Massad was also one of the lead players in investigating and establishing a labour incentive scheme that has resulted in labourers' earn-

ings. The first implementation of the scheme was on the construction of the 50-storey Chelsea Tower on Shelikh Zayed Road, Dubai.

The incentive aimed to ensure that the project could succeed and the firm could gain future work in the high-rise market. "Productivity of labour is a major issue [on high-rise buildings] because you're talking about the logistics of going up and down...in vertical construction the biggest challenge is the sequencing of works to allow access to following trades. You can't put supervision and cover all areas, so you need a system where its self-initiated and self-supervised," explains Massad.

The incentive scheme was devised following analysis of the tender information and comparisons to actual activities on site. From here a simple sheet was created on which to detail productivity. In addition to labour, the logistics of moving materials was included in the system. Targets were set and continually reviewed as the job progressed. Initially the labour force was sceptical admits Massad, but once the facts were in black and white on their wage slips, its success was all but guaranteed. "When somebody sees that they made 20% [on incentive pay] this month they started believing in it," he explains.

The benefits gained by the firm were also impressive. "Time saving was tremendous, in that job; we finished a floor a week 100% to second fix in six days," Massad states. "The scheme was 100% self-financed as the results in that job were the best on labour expenditure than on any other job that we'd done. It was a win-win situation for the company and the lads. They worked hard, they earned more money and the compa-

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In Massad's present role he is responsible for the firm's residential and commercial buildings department and is currently overseeing around 12 projects, with Index Tower being the largest of these. Index is a design and build job being carried out in a 100% partnering arrangement with guaranteed maximum price. "Partnering is the best way forward, not only for contractors, but for the clients and the whole team. It saves not only money, but time and gives a better quality product. It's proven

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