

Collaboration, Innovation, Trust: How Munnelly Group is Redefining Construction Leadership

5 months ago



Speaking exclusively to FM Director, Paul David Munnelly, Chief Executive of [Munnelly Group](#), discusses the company's evolution from a single entity to an eight-company group, the challenges facing the construction industry, and his vision for sustainable growth.

From its humble beginnings in Harrow, North London, over 45 years ago, Munnelly Group has transformed from a focused delivery specialist into a comprehensive construction and infrastructure solutions provider. Now led by second-generation Chief Executive Paul David Munnelly, the family-owned business operates across eight companies, serving clients from feasibility and planning through to delivery, handover, and ongoing operations.

Paul's journey within the family business has been both extensive and expansive, having gained experience across several parts of the operation before recently stepping up to the chief executive role from his previous position as Chief Operating Officer.

Expanding Horizons

The evolution of Munnelly Group reflects the changing demands of the construction industry. "When we started 40 years ago, we were quite focused within one area of the process, which was delivery primarily of vertical buildings within the private sector," Paul explained. "But now we've diversified to different stages of the build, and also within different sectors whether that's construction of buildings, rail, road, bridges, energy, nuclear – those sorts of things."

This has seen the company expand its reach from primarily supporting initiatives and schemes in the London area to working nationwide and sometimes overseas. The growth trajectory has been carefully managed, with Paul emphasising that the company specialises in “providing solutions and services to construction infrastructure, working alongside our client base as a delivery partner.”

A Strategic Relocation

After more than four decades in Harrow, Munnelly Group recently made the significant decision to relocate its headquarters to Kings Langley. Paul describes the move as “bittersweet” given the company’s long history in the area, but explains it represented “an opportunity to mark a milestone for something new.”

The investment in the new office space reflects the company’s understanding of modern workplace requirements. “An office has to be so much more than a desk and a chair and a computer,” Paul noted. “It has to be collaborative space, it has to be a safe space, and it has to allow for all different types of working, because certainly office work is no longer at a desk behind a screen.”

The new facility has been designed to be “fluid, dynamic, collaborative,” with significant investment in technology to create “a real social, collaborative and high-tech” environment.

Industry Challenges

Paul identifies three primary challenges currently facing the construction industry. The first is confidence in UK investment. “Recently we’ve seen the government pledge spending to critical infrastructure, which is great because I do think the UK and the major cities need investment,” he says.

The second challenge is talent retention, with Paul noting that whilst the UK has traditionally been seen as “a really desirable place to work and to live,” other regions have become increasingly competitive. “We’ve seen other countries and continents actually really become competitive with their offering. There is a lot of talent going to the Middle East, to mainland Europe, to America, to Canada,” he says.

The third challenge is the ageing workforce and skills shortage. “They don’t teach construction skills at schools anymore,” Paul pointed out. “So where is the next generation of construction professionals and workforce coming from?”

Addressing the Skills Gap

Munnelly Group is actively working to address the skills shortage through apprenticeship programmes and school engagement. “Apprenticeships are great, and I do believe they are the answer,” Paul stated. “We do a lot of speaking in schools, and a lot more young people are seeing the real value in apprenticeships.

“We also want to show people that working for a construction company isn’t necessarily bricks and mortar. There are lots of other roles there, whether that be in finance or marketing or technology or HR.”

Leadership Philosophy

Paul’s leadership approach centres on collaboration, challenge, and trust. “I’m all about collaboration. I like a challenge and feel that if we’re not trying new things, we’re just standing still. In fact, we’re probably even going backwards,” he explains.

The company's three core values – collaboration, innovation, and trust – underpin this philosophy. "Trust is really, really important because if you don't have trust or if you're not trusted, then you lose that reliability and you lose that ability to help people learn," Paul added. "Everyone will make mistakes, but people will learn from those mistakes. The acceptance of that is really important to me."

Looking Ahead

For the future, Paul is focused on sustainable growth over pure expansion. "Our long-term goals are to continuously grow, but we want to grow in the right way. Big isn't always beautiful, so having vast turnover isn't always the desirable outcome," he explains.

The company's strategy focuses on several key areas: selective growth, continued diversification, and maintaining financial strength. "We're debt-free with an overdraft we never use, and having that financial strength, especially in this industry, is super important," Paul said.

Munnelly Group also maintains an active acquisition strategy whilst developing initiatives in-house through talented personnel. "We're acquisitive, so we have an M&A strategy which we're sticking to, but we also like to develop our initiatives in-house ourselves by having really talented people," Paul explained.

Resilience and Evolution

Paul believes that success in construction requires particular qualities. "To be in construction, you have to be very resilient because there'll always be challenges," he says.

He emphasises the importance of continuous evolution, particularly in embracing technology to address industry challenges around investment and skills. "Our industry needs to evolve quicker to deal with those issues," Paul concluded. "Tomorrow is always a new day and there are always positives to come, even out of adversity."