

Rising above the rest

Roald Dahl's children's classic *Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator* sees heroes Charlie and Willy Wonka head into space for a crazy adventure in which they encounter the Vermicious Kids, the President of the USA and miracle reverse-ageing pills. Who would have thought that there was so much fun was to be had in a lift?

Elevate Consulting are experts in the field of lift and escalator engineering and consultancy who pride themselves on their imaginative and innovative approach to lift and escalator design and manufacture. Whilst they don't claim to be able to make magic flying elevators, they do provide a range of services ranging from new design, refurbishment and maintenance within the field of lifts, escalators, passenger conveyors, window cleaning cradles and access equipment.

Michael Berry, Elevate's managing director, describes the company ethos as revolving around added value and ensuring that clients get the best engineered solution with the best value for money. He is quick to highlight that the Elevate team pride themselves on offering specialist tailored advice to clients, saying: "We are always trying to think outside of the box and come up with innovative but technically sound solutions."

It is this attitude that has resulted in their adoption of a partnership approach to procurement. Berry explains: "We strive to work in partnership with all our clients creating a climate of trust, openness and honesty. We dislike performance specifications because they are not

detailed enough, a situation which can lead to problem after problem which doesn't make for a good client relationship. We know which products are the best, which companies are the most reliable, and we use our expertise from the word 'go'. Elevate start a project by putting together a framework specification and tendering it to as many companies as we feel are competent. We analyse their products and make sure that they are of a high standard, have good longevity and ease of maintenance." He continues: "We will end up with one or two options to choose from and we do all this for the same price as a less detailed performance specification."

This approach has many benefits for all parties. Berry explains: "We ensure that the best project solutions are presented to the client and our reliable and quality suppliers get the benefit of high volumes of work. This works because we anticipate the demand for lifts and escalators throughout the year and are able to purchase multiple units in advance. For the client this means that they directly benefit from the cost savings we make through our bulk buying power. Additionally, they benefit from a fast tracking process as lead times

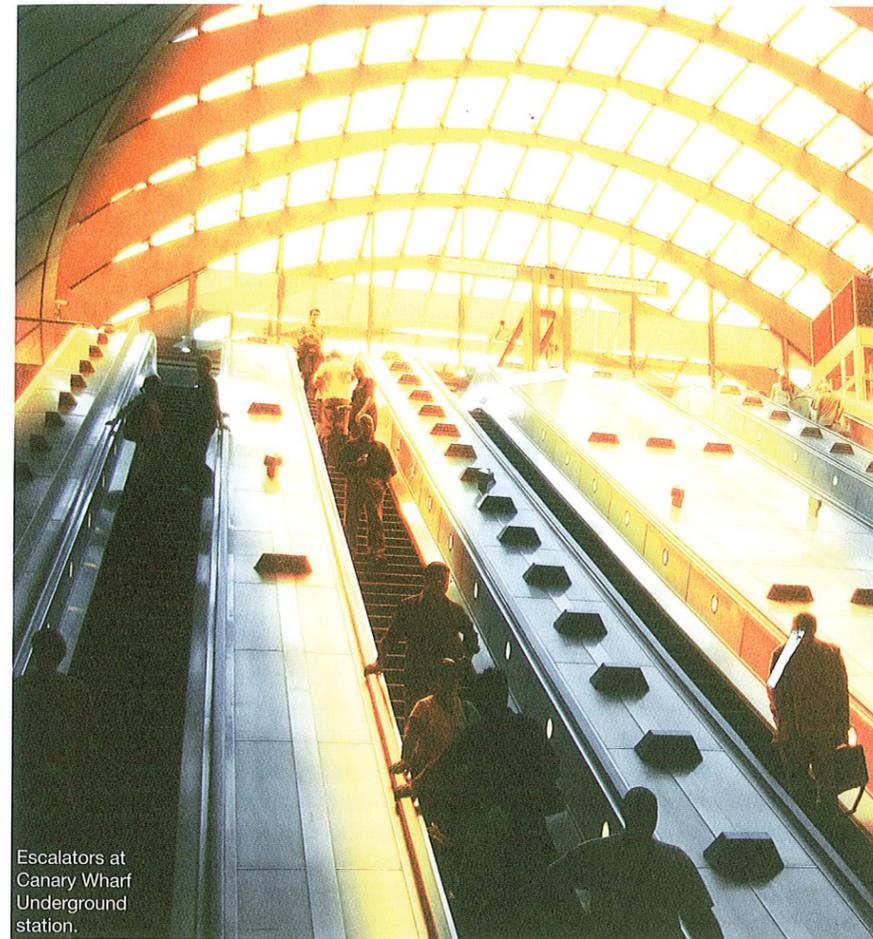
on the manufacture and delivery of lifts and escalators is dramatically reduced. Our suppliers benefit from high volumes of work and from an approach which enables them to plan in advance for the manufacture and timely delivery of the lifts and escalators. This avoids the stress of last minute panic orders on 'urgent' projects and gives us the flexibility to juggle projects if required. It is a set up which suits everyone – Elevate, clients and suppliers all gain through the process and a good working partnership is developed."

Elevate also take a leading role in staying up to date with the rapidly changing codes and standards by working closely with individuals involved in the development of these codes and standards. "Lifts," says Berry, "are the safest form of travel known to man. By contrast, however, there are some 11,000 accidents on escalators in an average year. There are quite a few fatalities as well."

Elevate prides itself on trying to minimise potential dangers. Recently Elevate consultants were involved in the design

imFact

Today, elevators move the equivalent of the world's population every 72 hours



Escalators at Canary Wharf Underground station.

Going up in the world: a history of the elevator and escalator

Over the centuries, mankind has employed ingenious forms of lifting. The earliest lifts used man, animal and water power to raise the load and in ancient times Archimedes developed a lifting device operated by ropes and pulleys.

Elisha Graves Otis is credited as having invented the safety lift and the first commercial escalator. However, in 1892, Charles Wheeler patented ideas for the first practical moving staircase, although this was never built. The first escalator was invented by Jesse Reno as an amusement ride at Coney Island in New York. He sold the machine to the Otis Elevator Company in 1899. Around the same time, Charles Seeberger developed a form of escalator as well and Otis and he teamed up to develop the first commercial escalators.

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In 1911, wooden-legged "Bumper" Harris was employed to ride up and down the first ever Underground escalator at Earl's Court to show people just how safe it was.

of a state-of-the-art safety escalator at the Rotunda. Berry explains: "Ordinarily an escalator has stationary sides and passengers have been known to fall down the gap between the moving steps and the side. We worked with an escalator manufacturer to look into designing a new escalator where the sides were fixed to the steps and actually move with them. The resulting escalator, in the Rotunda, is a very safe escalator."

They also have a progressive approach to design. Technological advances have meant that Elevate is unique in its ability to provide 3D design facilities which allow them to sign designs off early, to know exactly what the contractor needs and to also ensure that the final costs are the same as the tendered costs. Berry says: "3D is no-longer just a pretty picture but a method of engineering the functional and aesthetic solution."

Elevate are keen to spread the word of their successful project management to others in the lift industry. Berry finishes off by saying: "If it can work for us and our clients, there is no reason why it should not be successful across our entire industry."

For further information visit www.elevateconsulting.co.uk or contact Michael Berry on 01933 626656.