SUMMARY

Buildings in Singapore are traditionally procured using the Design Bid Build method. However, in recent years, the Design and Build has been used increasingly as an alternative method of construction procurement. Initiated by the public sector in public housing, the Design and Build procurement method is now being used by both the public and private sectors in their projects of varying complexities. Design and Build method of procurement offers several advantages over the traditional Design Bid Build method in terms of faster completion time of project, greater certainty of price, single point of responsibility on the main contractor, integration of both the design and construction process.

Although the project may be termed as Design and Build, the design and build concept is not evident in most instances between the main contractor and the M&E subcontractors. In other words, the Design and Build concept only exists between the Client and the main contractor. The main contractor undertakes the risk in the Design and Build, however, this risk is not shared with the M&E subcontractors. With this arrangement, the main contractor can concentrate on the architectural and civil works with the partnered M&E subcontractor concentrating on the M&E services.

M&E services are essential components inherent in a building and it comprises between 20% to 40% of the whole contract sum depending on the type of building. M&E contract price therefore cannot be overlooked and the integration of an M & E subcontractor into the design team may be an imperative and a strategic move to assist the main contractors’ to meet with M & E performance specification and Client requirements. To this effect, the incorporation of an M & E design management system into the design and build contract may be necessary.

This study sets out to provide an understanding on the perceived benefits of incorporating an M&E subcontractor into the Design and Build team. A survey was conducted to investigate and determine that the incorporation of an M&E subcontractor from inception to completion may be an effective mode of project delivery in terms of time savings, cost savings and quality.
The main findings of the survey of the dissertation is discussed as follows:

a) Although there may be perceived benefits of incorporating an M&E subcontractor, the main contractor is reluctant to incorporate an M&E subcontractor into the design team. This is because the award of the project to an M&E subcontractor is very much price-driven. They felt that the M&E contractor may not submitted a competitive price under a partnership agreement.

b) The incorporation of the M&E consultant in the design team is sufficient to handle the M&E aspects of the project.

c) There are not many M&E subcontractors that can undertake all the M&E services as a package.

d) The level of M&E technical expertise and knowledge is not evident in the M&E subcontractors.

Although the survey findings were not conclusive, it did however provide an insight into the present mechanism and its perceived benefits of incorporating an M&E subcontractor.