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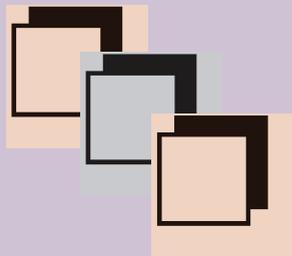
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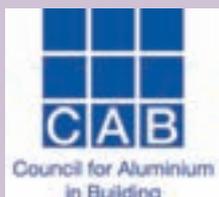
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# THE FABRICATOR

## Comment

This month we should be congratulating Steve Rice on appointment as managing director of the Glass and Glazing Federation. But given the history of the job the devil may well be in the detail.

Rice, who has been with the GGF for 30 years, was previously 'director of technical affairs' (I have noticed that the titles at the GGF have got a lot grander in recent times. What is wrong with 'technical director' for heaven's sake?) The reasoning of the GGF board is that putting the director of technical affairs in charge of the organisation will strengthen its technical side to provide members with 'the support they need'.

This is the latest in a series of restructures at the GGF. It is only just over a year ago that Kevin Buckley was appointed chief executive 'to take the federation and its subsidiary companies through their next phase of development'. The announcement was headlined 'solid experience to lead GGF to new phase'. In this latest announcement Buckley is dismissed, anonymously as 'no longer employed by the GGF'. For the record the head of membership suffered the same fate. No mention of who they were, they just vanished!

The federation seems to have got through a few senior people in recent years. Re-organisations have seen presidents resign (two of those) and senior managers dismissed. Buckley replaced the previous CEO, Phil Pluck who lasted, I think, just over a year. As far as the trade press is concerned Pluck's main claim to fame was writing to us, cautioning us to be careful what we wrote as he had a panel of experts monitoring every word. His letter said: 'the GGF is now employing legal experts to investigate any speculation and to establish the sources from where it originated'. The problem, apparently, was: 'speculation...originating from former employees and ex-board members of the Glass and Glazing Federation (GGF) and its group of subsidiary companies'. That was two years ago and you will note the plural.

Don't get me wrong, I have always had a lot of time for the GGF. As a trade association it has always done a good job for its members. As a lobby group it is effective around Westminster and Whitehall. It was a not-for-profit members' organisation; I remember once it did make a profit and had to give members a refund. Everything was pretty relaxed – one year, at a GGF convention, I, along with a colleague, was asked to attend the AGM because so many members were on the golf course that they didn't have a quorum to hold a legal meeting.

Things seemed to change when it got commercial. It introduced competent persons schemes to the industry in the body of FENSA and bought the official sounding British Fenestration Rating Council. It split the commercial side from trade association which seemed like a good idea but since then has re-organised several times. On page four a long standing member of the GGF says that he wonders what confidence the constant changes give employees, members or the wider industry? He says that after 21 years as a member he has never been more disillusioned.

I first met Steve Rice around the time he joined the GGF. A nice guy, very personable and he did a good job running the technical department. 30 years is a long time in any job but history tells us that, at the GGF, recently the top job hasn't had that kind of longevity.

*John Roper*