Continuous Briefing and User Participation in Building Projects

Briefing is not just about specifying needs as requirements but also about evaluating how well design proposals fulfill the needs and aspirations. Furthermore, briefing is not only about building design. Briefing starts at the pre-project stage to create a basis for the project decision. It includes an initial strategic briefing to define the overall vision and objectives. Parallel to the design briefing it is necessary to carry out a briefing process related to interior design and building operation and before the building is commissioned a briefing process related to moving into the building is required. A building project is often part of a change process of the organisation that is going to occupy the building, and this change process should be management carefully to reach a successful result. An important aspect of briefing is to manage the participation of the coming users in the process. This paper includes a literature study on briefing and user participation in building projects and presents a case study of a major ongoing building project DR Byen - a new headquarters for DR (Danish Broadcasting Corporation) in Copenhagen. The paper describes the briefing processes and the methods for user participation, identifies problem areas and point out possible improvements. The author has been actively involved in the project as deputy project director with responsibility for the briefing process until spring 2005 and is now a researcher.

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