

ACCREDITATION

CASE STUDY



Introduction

The Costain Group is a leading international engineering Company with a global reputation for technical excellence built on more than 140 years of experience. Today it has a comprehensive spread of operations working on major projects in the key sectors of environment, infrastructure, energy and process.

It currently employs 3,500 people in the UK, including around 200 project managers working at the sharp end of contracts. It also operates internationally.

Choosing Costain is the Company's strategy to deliver increasingly a full-service offering, from front-end engineering consultancy and design through construction to back-end care and maintenance. National activity in the

areas of infrastructure, environment and energy is intense and is set to gather momentum in the years to come.

The Costain commitment to and focus on training and corporate responsibility won the Supreme Award at the 2009 Construction News Quality Awards, with its Project Management Academy also winning the training category

It took the 2010 Association of Graduate Recruiters Award for its graduate development programme. In 2011 the Group was awarded a Business in the Community (BITC) Big Tick Award for Excellence for its skills in the workplace and was short-listed in the Example of Excellence category.

Values for success

Success for this project-based organisation depends on a shared culture and work ethic driven by effective leadership, sustained through career development and enhanced through performance measurement, review and feedback. This is underlined by the company values that promote behaviour such as integrity, tolerance, teamwork and inclusion, enhanced by a commitment to training.

Costain encourages people to take ownership of their careers and to continuously develop their skills, broaden their knowledge and widen their experience within the business. To achieve this, it provides a challenging and stimulating working environment, where people enjoy their jobs, fulfil their potential and are recognised for their efforts.

All staff are regularly assessed against the group's own core competence framework embracing 11 key areas:

- Safety, health and environment
- Teamwork
- Commercial awareness
- Communication
- Customer focus
- Continuous improvement
- Leadership
- People development
- Planning
- Problem solving
- Result focus

Senior executives have said that Costain's fate depends, to a large extent, on the group's project managers and all involved in project management as it is they who bear the greatest responsibility for ensuring that jobs are delivered on time, to cost and to a standard that delights the customer.

Said Chief Executive, Andrew Wyllie: "Excellence in project management is key to the future success of Costain. It is imperative that we have a leading team of fully skilled, highly motivated project managers. The Costain Project Management Academy (PMA) has a key part to play in meeting this objective."



Building a model of excellence

The Costain Project Management Academy is intrinsically linked with the Choosing Costain strategy as it is fundamentally about enhancing the capability of the group's project management teams in delivering total solutions for customers.

The approach to project management is governed by Costain's Implementing Best Practice (IBP) processes, which were first introduced in 2006 and have had a significant impact on improving the business approach to project management.

Explained Tony Blanch, Business Improvement Director: "We have directly linked compliance with our project management processes with the financial success of projects across the Group."

Added Group Training and Talent Manager, Jeremy Galpin: "Effective project management can be the most significant influence as to whether the project is a success or not. There is also an increasing demand from customers for evidence of our project management competency."

To address this and to complement the process of IBP, the academy was created in 2007 with the objective of addressing the people element of project management and of building a model of project management excellence, benchmarked against world-class standards. It is a core element of the Costain people strategy to raise professionalism by nurturing the highest quality staff.

Supported by the sector skills council for construction, Construction Skills, the PMA offers structured progression and development mapped to individual candidates' level of responsibility, from new entrants to project directors.

There is an annual intake of 25 project managers who stay in the academy for three years. Most are technical graduates – primarily engineers – and first have to gain membership of their core professional institution before widening their project management skills and abilities.

The academy has a principle of open access and applicants are selected based on their application form linked to the Costain strategy for talent management. Once accepted, they assess their own training needs against the ideal skills model, developed from studying some of the company's most successful project professionals.

Every candidate follows a clearly defined learning and development route supported by internal mentors. Each step is closely monitored through online testing, performance measurement, six monthly reviews and success in the APMP and APM Risk Certificate qualifications as well as membership of APM. Those working in sectors where customers require it also take PRINCE2 qualifications.

Costain is now also sponsoring 17 people from across the business to attain APM's Registered Project Professional (RPP) standard to further raise the capability across the group.



"The academy has been instrumental in up-skilling our managers to demonstrate competence and deliver complete solutions. Our customers are increasingly demanding whole of project capability and it's very likely that the RPP standard will become a prerequisite in the future," said Jeremy Galpin.

Underpinning the learning and development process are the APM Body of Knowledge and the APM Competence Framework, complemented by Costain's business-wide competence framework.

The APM's RPP lifts project management to the highest level. It will give me a competitive advantage and prove that I am a responsible leader with the ability to manage complex projects. It also complements our ability to offer complete solutions across the Group."

Shafali Shown-Keen

The training is designed to be primarily self-managed. In the first year following an academy induction, participants complete the web-based testing of their APM knowledge, are 'talent profiled', linked with a mentor, develop a five-year career plan and may also attend a two-day development centre. In their second year, those who successfully complete the

first year are offered the opportunity to study for the APMP examination. This is delivered over six months specifically to embed the knowledge into the language and behaviour of the candidates.

Throughout the initial two years culminating in the third and final year, delegates will be required to develop their portfolio for APM's RPP standard and to assess themselves against the APM competencies. In the third year those with sufficient experience are supported in applying and preparing for RPP.

Progress is assessed against a range of measures, including professional qualifications, changes in behaviour and Costain's own rigorous Project Performance Assessment model, which provides real-time information on topics for each project, such as leadership and people, profitability, customer service, teamwork and engagement.

As well as achieving professional qualifications and developing as individuals, members of the academy contribute to the wider project management skills base through their input into the IBP systems that form a comprehensive process structure for the whole organisation.

There are also additional opportunities for sharing best practice, networking and support through the Costain Project Management Forum.

The success of the academy is measured both in individual achievement and in business performance and has been recognised by customers of the Costain Group. These positive results have led to the academy model being used across Costain and expanded to include other disciplines.

"The academy is about improving everyone's capability, not just the high flyers," said Jeremy Galpin. "We want average people to be good and good people to be excellent. The PMA enhances the capability of our project managers to deliver the total solutions required by our customers."

What APM accreditation means to us

APM Accreditation provides Costain with evidence that the Project Management Academy has achieved a standard of excellence aligned with APM standards and puts us into a peer group of excellence, which embraces



all sectors of project management. It enhances the brand of Costain externally, providing additional confidence to our customers and internally enhancing the attractiveness of the development programme.

Jeremy Galpin, Group Training and Talent Manager

Association for Project Management and Costain

The core knowledge and skills of Costain's Project Management Academy are based on the APM Body of Knowledge and APM Competence Framework. Applicants are expected to join APM at an appropriate level and an APM accredited training provider tests each candidate's initial level of knowledge.

Academy members are encouraged to continuously assess themselves against the APM Competence Framework and to participate in APM professional development activities such as attending the APM conference.

By the start of 2011, nearly 60 members of staff had become members of APM through the academy – a pass rate of 95 per cent – and Costain is committed to raising the capability of its project managers further by supporting attainment of APM Registered Project Professional designation and the prospect of Chartered Project Professional subject to the decision of the Privy Council on APM's application for a Royal Charter.

“Our ongoing business success is dependent upon the safe delivery of innovative solutions meeting our customers' needs in consulting, construction and care.

The project management academy introduces structured training for our project leaders to enhance our collective capability to create these solutions and deliver on our promises in a manner that is consistent across Costain Group.”

Tim Bowen, Highways Sector Director



Personal story

Having worked on a number of Costain's major highway projects, Phil Davies became one of the first to join the Costain Project Management Academy and readily admits it transformed him into a better, more professional project manager.

“The Academy is first class,” he said. “It makes you stand back and review your processes and procedures and evaluate your performance. It details the need for procedural accuracy and highlights the benefits obtained in following processes.

“The course considers projects from concept to completion and details some of the early stages, which in the past had been foreign to contractors. Being involved in the Highways Agency Managing Agent Contracts (MAC) where we undertake a portfolio of schemes through all stages, the course was of paramount importance assisting me in understanding the client's requirements.”

Phil has been with Costain for 21 years, starting as a graduate engineer and becoming a Project Manager eight years ago. Following success on the Academy course and achieving the APMP and APM Risk Certificate, he has been promoted to programme delivery manager on a multi-million pound Highways Agency MAC.

Costain is part of the Aone+ joint venture currently maintaining areas in the North of England. The joint venture consists of consulting engineers Halcrow and contractor Colas. Phil is presently based on the Area 10 Mac where Aone+ maintains over 300 miles of highway network and 2,000 structures from Lancashire to North Wales. His role is to manage a portfolio of schemes from feasibility stage, design and financing, right through to benefits realisation.

“The Academy helped me to improve processes on all the required aspects and to see things from the sponsor's viewpoint,” added Phil, who found the mix of classroom and online self-study fitted well with his wide-ranging and demanding work schedule.

He is now totally committed to the Costain Academy way and is enjoying being part of APM, sharing ideas and thoughts with fellow members from other sectors at meetings of the South Wales and West of England branch.

Client testimonial

As a client and an APM RPP Champion, I welcome the development and successful implementation of the Project Management Academy at Costain. All too often in the construction sector, engineers progress in their careers to take on project management responsibilities without further training and mentoring having completed technical accreditation. The Costain academy enables successful engineers to develop their project management skill sets and gain formal recognition as industry accredited competent project managers.

I particularly welcome Costain's approach to open the Academy to supply chain partners and customers, as Costain looks to fully integrate with the total supply chain it engages with. This can only benefit the construction sector and strengthen the depth of trust and performance Costain achieves through its partners in delivering complex construction projects.

The Academy looks to develop and continually improve the capabilities of Costain personnel, something we at Network Rail look for from the earliest tendering stages through to the delivery of projects. I have seen the difference that continuing professional development makes within a delivery team faced with complex challenges and onerous time and budgetary constraints. Farringdon Station on the Thameslink Programme is one such example where dedicated personnel with a clear ambition to develop their personal competencies have delivered significant value to their parent company and to the Client.

Richard Walker MEng CEng CEnv FICE FAPM, Network Rail Project Director (Farringdon)

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FIVEDimensions of Professionalism

APM Corporate Accreditation

APM Corporate Accreditation will help you stand out as an exemplar in the development of project management professionals. It provides assurances to your customers and suppliers and allows you to attract and retain the best project management talent in the country.

APM Corporate Accreditation recognises the commitment of organisations and professional development services to the defined, APM Five Dimensions of Professionalism, each of which is supported by an APM standard:

Breadth

The APM Body of Knowledge defines the knowledge needed to manage any kind of project. It underpins many project management standards and methods including the National Occupational Standard in Project Management.

Depth

The APM Competence Framework provides a guide to project management competences. It is part of your professional toolkit; mapping levels of knowledge and experience to help you progress your skills and abilities.

Achievement

APM qualifications take your career in new and exciting directions. They are recognised across the profession and aligned with IPMA's 4 level Certification Program.

Commitment

Continuing Professional Development helps develop your project management practice. A targeted development plan will enhance your project management career.

Accountability

The APM Code of Professional Conduct outlines the ethical practice expected of a professional. Becoming an APM member shows your commitment to the Code and sets you apart from others.