

Taking a seat at the table

The value of chartered to employers



These are exciting times for the project profession, thanks in part to APM's Royal Charter in 2017 and the launch of the Chartered Project Professional (ChPP) designation earlier this year.

Foreword

These are exciting times for the project profession, thanks in part to APM's Royal Charter in 2017 and the launch of the Chartered Project Professional (ChPP) designation earlier this year.

At this juncture it was therefore timely to explore employer attitudes towards chartered bodies across several sectors, to understand how APM as a new chartered body can be among the best.

This work is complete and the resulting report, produced by APM backed up by with research conducted by Opinium, offers some challenges to APM, particularly around improving its visibility across new sectors but also within its traditional ones. It does also provide some positive feedback from employers – for example, a pleasing confirmation that once companies are aware of APM's role, a higher than average number will engage.

And looking across many professions, it is clear that chartered status does play an important role as a differentiator for recruitment – nearly 80 per cent of those surveyed said they were more likely to hire someone if they were chartered.

As for the impact of having chartered members in an organisation, it is clear that companies place plenty of value on this – more than 85 per cent stated that it has a positive impact on a business. This in turn will make it easier for the project profession to emerge with confidence alongside more established professions and be a valued part of an organisation, in the same way that the project profession is seen as an increasingly attractive career option for those just starting out.

We can now take our place at the table of professions, being mindful of course that with this comes responsibility and opportunity. So I am committed that we work together to ensure that we deliver on the strong foundations we have created.

David Waboso, APM president



It is clear that companies derive a range of benefits from engaging with a chartered body such as APM, and that chartered individuals stand to gain from their status when seeking employment or career progression.

Summary

This report, produced by the Association for Project Management with research conducted by Opinium, offers insight into the value of chartered status for both an individual and an organisation. It is clear that companies derive a range of benefits from engaging with a chartered body such as APM, and that chartered individuals stand to gain from their status when seeking employment or career progression.

The report also explores how APM performs against other chartered professional bodies in how it services its members. Many of the results are positive – APM performs well against similar and larger organisations. One clear area of improvement is around communication and visibility.

Opportunities

- There is still a need for promoting Chartered Project Professional (ChPP) status to a wider audience in a wider range of sectors, and more extensively within existing corporate clients.
- Those holding ChPP will promote and advocate the pathway, supported by a new interactive career path tool.
- APM can be bold in promoting the good relationships it has with its corporate and individual members.
- APM can engage with its corporate members to tease out the key benefits of working with APM and in the light of chartered look to respond to gaps.

Conclusions

APM should:

- continue to engage with customers across all sectors;
- reach out to a wider range of stakeholders;
- produce advocacy-led content that demonstrates the value of chartered;
- work collaboratively with corporate and individual members to promote the profession and the route to chartered;
- benchmark itself against other chartered bodies regarding the extent to which it can influence and engage with its individual and corporate members.

Introduction

The Association for Project Management (APM) is the chartered body for the project profession and has more than 27,000 members. Among this growing membership are many with chartered status from another professional body, typically in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)-based areas.

Relative to many other chartered bodies in the STEM space, APM is a young organisation reflecting the relatively new discipline of project management. APM won't celebrate its 50th anniversary until 2022.

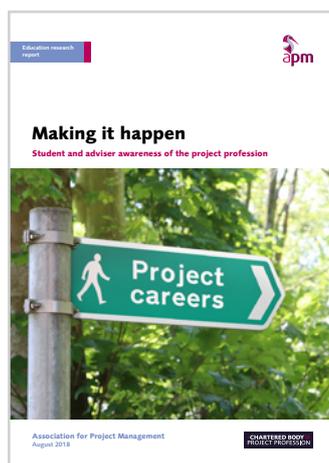
As APM has attained its own Royal Charter and is seeing individuals achieve Chartered Project Professional (ChPP) status, it was timely to undertake some research among a range of employers (250 respondents) about the value of chartered status to their business as well as the way in which they viewed chartered professionals compared to those without this designation.

At the same time, it was an ideal opportunity to benchmark APM's performance against some of those other professional bodies with which APM members are associated.

Our research, in conjunction with Opinium, offers encouragement to those embarking on the journey to ChPP as well as some challenges to APM (and other professional bodies) about how better to engage.

At the heart of the findings is a message similar to one that features in our sister report *Making it happen* – APM needs to increase its visibility among business as it does among educators and students. With many employers unaware of the organisation, it represents an exciting opportunity to engage and explain the benefits of having Chartered Project Professionals in a business.

With more organisations becoming project-based, this report is a clarion call for the professional body to engage more – and for members of the project community to understand and embrace the benefits of chartered status.



A top-down view of a meeting table with people, laptops, documents, and coffee. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent pink filter. In the center, there is a white text box with a thin white border. The text inside the box reads: "The Association for Project Management (APM) is the chartered body for the project profession and has more than 27,000 members." The background shows several people around a wooden table. On the table, there are laptops, papers, a calculator, a coffee cup, and a small dessert. One person is pointing at a document on the table. The overall scene suggests a collaborative work environment.

The Association for Project Management (APM)
is the chartered body for the project profession and has
more than 27,000 members.

78 per cent of employers are more likely to hire a project professional if they hold ChPP

Chartered value

Key findings:

- there is no single, standout key benefit of being a member of a chartered body in the eyes of a business;
- recognition and reputation scored highest;
- networking and knowledge feature among the popular responses;
- conversely, chartered bodies can do more to represent their members and support career development;
- however, there is a clear advantage in an individual holding chartered status – 78 per cent of employers are more likely to hire a project professional if they hold ChPP;
- nearly 90 per cent of respondents cited a positive impact on employability of chartered holders.

Individual value

To set the scene, the research asked companies what they believed to be the top 10 benefits to them of being a member of a chartered body. The responses show that companies value chartered for a range of reasons, with no one example standing out.

This is in sharp contrast to how employers view those holding chartered status – when asked whether ChPP would have an impact on hiring someone, 78 per cent said that it would make them more likely to recruit them.

Even more striking is the impact that employers perceive chartered status to have on a professional's employability – 89 per cent cited a positive impact. This should not come as a surprise given that the route to chartered is not a simple exercise in completing qualifications; standards and ethics are at the heart of achieving ChPP and other chartered designations.

This links with the two highest-scoring options for why companies value chartered bodies – the difference being the extent of the positivity.

When a more focused question was asked around the impact that chartered status has on the reputation of a business, 86 per cent confirmed that it was positive. Of those respondents working with APM, that figure rose to 92 per cent.

A similar number overall resulted from asking employers how important holding professional project qualifications/ChPP was when recruiting – 81 per cent saw them as important. Interestingly, this number was higher from employers that don't sit within APM's traditional member base of STEM – 85 per cent there as against 78 per cent in the expected sectors.

70 per cent of all respondents were aware of its existence.

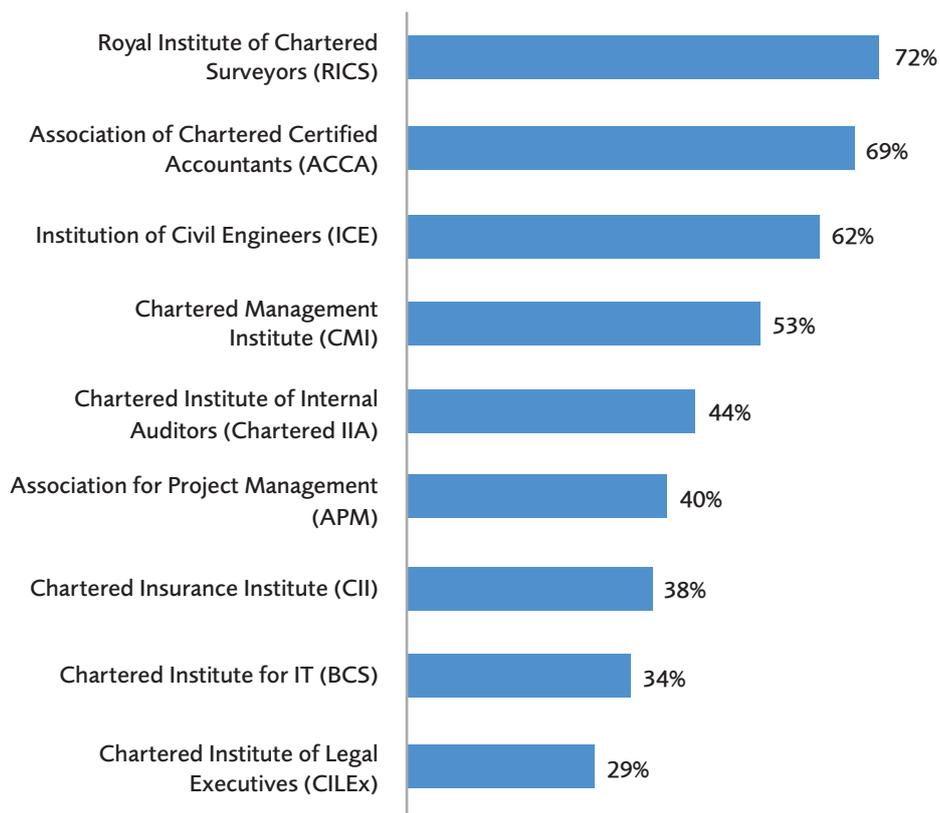
Awareness of ChPP

APM has done a good job in promoting its chartered designation to its audiences – 70 per cent of all respondents were aware of its existence. Just under 20 per cent were not aware and 12 per cent were unsure. As the first cohorts receive and use their ChPP designation, it is a reasonable assumption that there will be greater awareness in future. Businesses will see the benefit of having Chartered Project Professionals in their workforce both from the professionalism and knowledge perspective but also because the international cachet of the chartered brand will add value to bids and tenders.



APM and professional body comparisons

Before focusing specifically on APM, it's useful to gain some context of where APM sits in comparison to employer awareness levels of other chartered bodies:



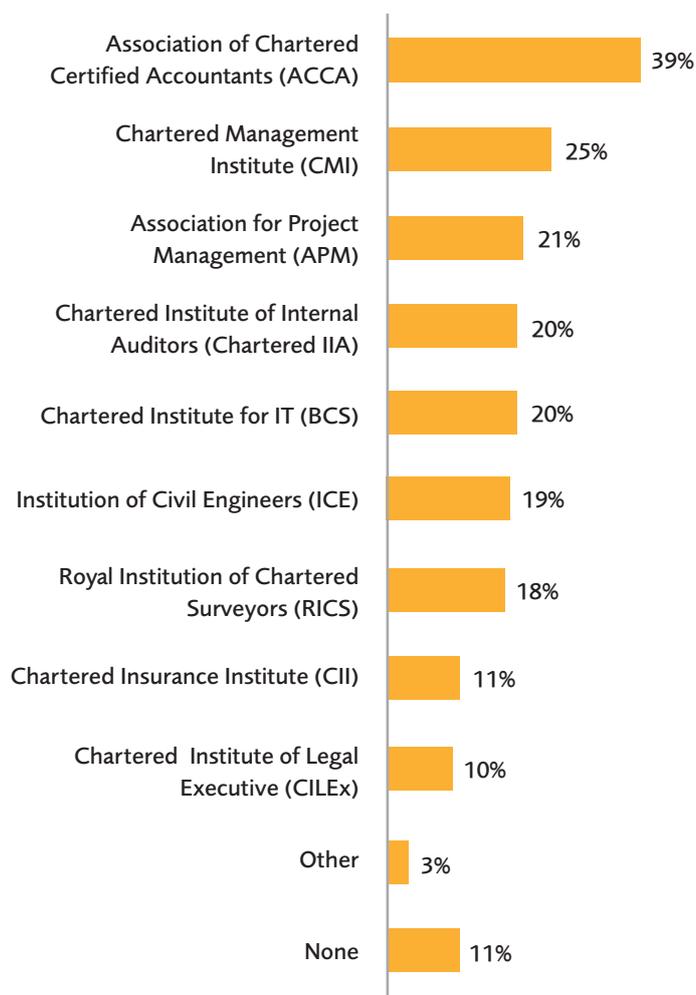
While it is not surprising that longstanding bodies such as RICS, ICE and CMI have higher levels of awareness than APM, there is a higher level of awareness among business leaders for APM than other, larger chartered bodies such as CII (38 per cent) and BCS/Chartered Institute of IT (34 per cent).

The levels of awareness are almost identical when comparing 'traditional' APM sectors and other sectors – 41 per cent in the former, 39 per cent in the latter.

APM scores well when it comes to engagement – 21 per cent of respondents worked with APM as against 18 per cent for RICS and 11 per cent for CII. However, there is still work to be done as 25 per cent worked with CMI and 39 per cent worked with ACCA. This context offers APM a realistic target of engagement to aim for.

The extent to which organisations engage with professional bodies will depend on factors including visibility, specificity and credibility

Professional bodies that businesses work with





If we explore the results a little more, we can see that larger companies are more likely to engage with APM than SMEs

What is also of note is that nearly 90 per cent of respondents worked with one or more chartered bodies and, on average, companies worked with two. The majority of these companies (75 per cent) financed multiple memberships.

APM can take encouragement from the fact that its conversion rate from awareness to usage is 52 per cent, well above the average of 42 per cent for the other bodies.

If we explore the results a little more, we can see that larger companies are more likely to engage with APM than SMEs (27 per cent against an overall figure of 21 per cent); financial services and banking companies are more likely than average to engage and those companies which choose to engage with any professional body's local network are over twice as likely to engage.

There is a similar picture of local network engagement for APM as is the case for the other chartered bodies included in the research:

Twenty-seven per cent of respondents who worked with a professional body did so to a great extent – that is almost identical to the result for APM, where the figure is 25 per cent. Encouragingly, there are fewer who do not engage at all with the APM branch network (six per cent) versus the overall figure of nine per cent.

Looking more closely at the benefits that companies associate with chartered bodies, APM scored particularly well in two areas:

1. enhancing the reputation of a business – +6 – the second highest of those surveyed;
2. increasing the awareness of a business – +8 – this was the highest positive score of any question for any professional body in the research.

Looking at the areas of improvement, APM had another outlier relating to professional recognition for staff – this was the lowest of all sampled bodies and proves that there is much work to do to promote APM and its breadth of offer not just to all sectors but to more people within each.

The other area of improvement relates to providing career pathway and progression information – an area where APM has made positive progress with the launch of its new career path tool.

What can all chartered bodies do better?

The research highlighted some constant themes about how all chartered bodies could improve:

- training – more effective learning opportunities;
- advice – a member benefit on a range of different technical and support topics;
- job opportunities – more access to them allied with more linked networking events;
- qualifications and pathways – a wider range and better content.

Finally, what can APM do better?

Among the many responses came some repeated themes:



Highlight the project management aspects of almost all non-routine work

Offer better mentoring

Improve the professional recognition of its members

Explain how APM can meet business needs

Increase awareness among other professional bodies of its standing

Special awards for projects



APM in context

Guidance and contacts

APM has a team of partnership development managers who work with our corporate members across a range of sectors.

To find out more about APM's corporate member proposition visit

www.apm.org.uk/corporate-partnership-programme/

To find out more about APM's Chartered Project Professional status visit

www.apm.org.uk/chartered

To find out more about APM's Road to Chartered series of papers visit

www.apm.org.uk/resources/find-a-resource/thought-leadership/road-to-chartered-series

Association for Project Management

Ibis House, Regent Park
Summerleys Road
Princes Risborough
Buckinghamshire HP27 9LE

Tel (UK) 0845 458 1944
Tel (Int) +44 1844 271 640
Email info@apm.org.uk
Web apm.org.uk



For more information email info@apm.org.uk