

# WINNER'S

## CASE STUDY



Category **Project Management Company of the Year 2012**

Winner **Arup**

### Overview

Arup is a global consultancy with a far-reaching and diverse portfolio of projects. At any one time the company says it has around 10,000 live projects and commences 100 new projects every day – ranging from high-profile projects such as the Cannon Place development and the National Grid London Cable Replacement programme, to small-scale change projects – all of which are underpinned by a strong programme/project management framework.

The framework promotes technical excellence and innovation but just as important is the culture at Arup. The employee-owned firm is underpinned by values of quality, holistic approach, a humane organisation, honesty, fairness and social responsibility. Arup chairman Philip Dilley is quoted as saying: "our people are what makes everything possible". And with so many live projects across the globe

it is not hard to see why he places such stock by the people who deliver day after day.

### Company culture

The focus on effective project and programme management (PPM) runs throughout the business – both explicitly and implicitly. Internal activities such as corporate social responsibility and marketing campaigns all benefit from project elements, including structured programmes and defined leadership roles and responsibilities.

Support for PPM comes right from the top, with project champions at board level leveraging support for improved PPM skills and a greater alignment with professional bodies such as APM – the company recently pledged to

increase APM membership among its project managers to 80 per cent. Moreover, the application of good project management practices enables Arup employees to deliver on the company vision of 'shaping a better world'.

## Career development

Arup reports that "the vast majority" of its project management professional employees hold PPM qualifications such as APMP, Prince2 and MSP, and it continues to invest in PPM and other related learning. This has resulted in more than 90 training and development opportunities being available, including accredited professional post-graduate courses and the Arup University, which opened in 2010. In addition, there are various learning initiatives including Arup Thoughts – our thought leadership blog, and Project Showcase presentation evenings, which allow colleagues to showcase finished projects, talk through the process and discuss lessons learned.

Retention is another key focus for Arup. It regularly celebrates length of service, with 10, 25 and 35-year milestone celebrations, and staff turnover is currently significantly lower than the comparable UK industry average.



## Communication

The aim is to provide 'the right information at the right time to the right people'. Often this means face-to-face contact, with review meetings at key milestones and lessons learned workshops. The company also encourages 'site walkabouts' for non-technical stakeholders, helping to review progress in situ as the build develops.

Throughout the project process the emphasis is on enhanced visibility, ensuring key issues are quickly identified and communicated.

## Supporting work/life balance

A healthy work/life balance is actively encouraged internally, and more than 70 per cent of employees believe the company demonstrates care and concern.

Arup offers flexible working where possible, and if staff members are regularly working longer hours, senior staff will investigate the causes and allocate additional resource where required. Employees are encouraged to log overtime and workload is monitored via fortnightly resource meetings.

Outside of work the firm subsidises social clubs and regular events – all of this helps to achieve the core company value of "creating a humane and friendly working environment".

## Results – what its clients say

Arup's commitment to working in close partnership with clients and tailoring solutions to suit individual needs has won widespread praise. By using bespoke project management tools it has improved the day-to-day running and added value to the end user. For example, a recent noise and disruption management plan for University College London, led the client to say: "A lot of people have talked about producing this sort of thing in the past, but Arup has actually done it and it works – incredible, a first!"





**The APM Project Management Awards** have been celebrating project management excellence since 1993 and the broad range of categories is designed to make entry possible for projects and companies of all sizes and complexity.

The awards reflect the invaluable contribution project managers make in all sectors of society and the event provides an opportunity for industry professionals to meet with colleagues and entertain guests as well as celebrate at one of the year's most exciting events.

Highly regarded in the project management industry, the awards reflect the dedication and talent that helps to shape the project management community and the world around us. The finalists, winners and sponsors of the awards attract national publicity for their achievement and involvement. Winning an award provides invaluable recognition and kudos to the careers of winners.

For more details on the awards and how to enter or attend, visit [apm.org.uk/awards](http://apm.org.uk/awards) or email [awards@apm.org.uk](mailto:awards@apm.org.uk)

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