

Newsletter Article, Babcock Nuclear PM Capability Transformation, 14 July 2021.

Martin Gosden, SWWE Branch Co-Chair, introduced the webinar on 14th July where he welcomed Babcock Nuclear, who shared their journey to transform their project management capability.

Mark Dearden, Babcock Project Management Director, introduced Babcock and the wide range of sectors they work in from defence, nuclear new build including Hinkley Point C, nuclear decommissioning and marine. He explained the drivers for change, externally from the various customers and the increasing rigour and visibility associated with project delivery and internally with the focus on achieving consistent project delivery, managing risk effectively, providing assurance and governance and responding to societal changes and being able to attract from the millennial generation. Technologically, there is the need to adopt and embrace AI and machine learning, 3D, 4D and 5D BIM.

The transformation is a cultural change programme, and has the essential senior buy-in and support at C-Suite level within Babcock. Selecting the right team has been critical for success which includes appointing a delivery partner comprising Costain, Mott MacDonald and Turner & Townsend.

James Craddock explained the external benchmarking undertaken using P3M3 across a wide range of organisations to determine where Babcock PM capability is now and what good practice is externally to set the programme goals.

Kathryn Jones, Babcock Nuclear Director of Project Management, discussed the vision: to create and enable a leading projects delivery organisation that integrates people, ways of working and technology to successfully deliver predictable outcomes, and the 5 workstreams: People, Organisation, Process, Information and Technology, (POPIT). Benchmarking has categorised the current systems and the target is to move to level 3, defined, in 2 years, and then onwards towards levels 4 and 5.

The people strategy is focussed on building a capability. The challenges are an aging demographic and the need to attract a diverse range of staff from many backgrounds, not just engineering. Babcock is investing in organic growth, with a graduate programme, degree apprenticeship programme for existing employees and seeking to employ new individuals from diverse industry sectors.

A common, consistent approach to project management across the business will enable staff to easily move around to where they are needed, avoiding the need for learning curves each time.

This is to be achieved with career pathways for project management and project controls jobs, including communities of practice and career profiles. Technical competencies, based on the 27 APM competencies plus extras for controls, specific to roles, with levels and criteria, and mapped to development opportunities. And learning and development, with 70% on the job, 20% coaching and 10% qualifications.

Elsie Taylor and Emily Armstrong, PM Graduates, described their experience of the 2 year graduate scheme which involves placements to experience the whole project life cycle, training and APM qualifications, the PFQ and PMQ. Graduate backgrounds are diverse, including degrees in fine arts, events management, engineering. There is a good balance of 40.5% female and 59.5% male.

Kathryn outlined the project management processes developed for the group PM manual. Based on a linear life cycle the processes are proportionate and scalable to different project categories, based on level of complexity. The operating model defines project categories which informs the required level of governance, assurance, PM practices and skill / experience level of staff. There are standardised ways of working with a common life cycle and common delivery methods. Delivery is by integrated teams.

Mathew Hannaway described the project controls process across the life cycle, with disciplines, processes and enablers in an integrated cube. Tools and technology integrate scheduling, risk, and cost management systems to provide an effective management information system which provides dynamic dashboards with difference lenses required by stakeholders and static reports for robust data reporting.

Mark Dearden, summed up the presentation. Our people are at the heart of the transformation, and the focus is to increase improve delivery capability and diversity through the creation of an integrated and scalable approach.

The webinar concluded with a lively and engaging Q&A session.

Previous presentations and webinars can be viewed on the APM [YouTube channels](#).

Martin Gosden

SWWE Branch Co-Chair