

MagnaX + 20|20 Business Insight Ltd
20|20 Business Insight Ltd helps MagnaX achieve Corporate APM Accreditation in record time
Summary

MagnaX is the management and operations contractor responsible for 10 nuclear sites and one hydroelectric plant in the UK. In recent years, the company has moved from a focus on generating power to becoming a decommissioning company. Its core activities have been combined into the MagnaX Optimised Decommissioning Programme (MODP) and strong project management skills have become central to daily operations for its employees. To emphasise the importance of project management for its business objectives, MagnaX worked with 20|20 to achieve Corporate APM Accreditation, as confidently as possible.

Background

In order to be considered suitable by the APM, MagnaX had to demonstrate their alignment to the association's five dimensions of professionalism – breadth of knowledge, depth of competence, achievement of professional qualifications, commitment to continuing professional development and accountability to the APM's Code of Professional Conduct.

In addition, 20|20 supported MagnaX through the substantial Corporate APM application process in which the company needed to demonstrate its commitment to project management excellence and formulate appropriate measurement criteria for monitoring ongoing learning and development.

Project management skills development is key to achieving business goals

The nature of MagnaX's business means that its project managers are working in a highly regulated environment similar to oil and gas, but with the added potential hazard of radiation contamination. Over the past two years, MagnaX has completely realigned its capability and performance measurements, to place greater emphasis on project management.

Expenditure on the company's decommissioning activities was estimated at around £700 million for the 2012 to 2013 financial year. With such high levels of investment at stake, delivering projects on time and within budget is a business priority. The total expenditure originally estimated by MagnaX to deliver the MOD Programme by 2027 was £2.4bn across all sites, a figure which could be significantly reduced with effective ongoing project management. "The quicker we can decommission sites into the Care and Maintenance phase, the lower the costs incurred from

keeping these sites open are, and the case for building new nuclear power facilities is made stronger," said Peter Allen, Programme Delivery Support Manager at MagnaX.

Company wide APM accreditation guarantees consistency

To commence the accreditation programme, 20|20 firstly completed a comprehensive review of all existing project management processes including a Gap Analysis against best practice, recommendations and provision of missing elements where applicable. MagnaX then needed to prove they had suitable training plans and competency frameworks for staff and provide further information on their future plans.

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Company wide APM accreditation guarantees consistency (cont.)

Magnox launched a company-wide project management learning and development programme for its project management and project planning community. Since a number of Magnox's partners and competitors had already achieved Corporate APM accreditation, including AMEC, with whom the company shares resources, it was important for Magnox to have a consistent approach and demonstrate the same level of competence.

Development of transferable skills

"Having a corporate APM accreditation is important because it shows we are aligned with external measures and when the people working for us go into other industries, they have transferable skills that are respected by other industries," says Peter Allen, Programme Delivery Support Manager at Magnox.

Added to this, having the corporate APM accreditation is an important element of staff development and future career planning for Magnox. This is because it allows project based employees to transition from the company to new opportunities within AMEC or other strategic resource partners, once decommissioning is completed at a site.

Multi-stakeholder approach to competency assessment

Achieving corporate APM accreditation is a complex and lengthy undertaking and 20|20 played a key role in guiding Magnox towards achieving its APM accreditation in the fastest possible timeframe. Key elements of this process included developing a competency assessment framework to measure both project management skills and maturity levels across the organisation.



Magnox developed a two-pronged approach to competency measurement examining individual and organisational capabilities. At the individual level, the company developed technical and behavioural competency feedback assessments for its community of project managers to identify how well they score for capabilities. These are then mapped to correspond with the 47 technical, behavioural and contextual competence elements specified by the APM. This was combined with company wide reviews to measure the extent to which projects were being delivered in an innovative and efficient way. "We examine where we are currently and then take several deep dives after people have finished the development programme to examine where the business benefits most from having invested in the programme," says Peter Allen.



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20|20 helped Magnox provide detailed evidence to demonstrate the company had in place a structured body of project management knowledge to support its project managers. This included an assessment to identify whether key processes involved in managing projects through a lifecycle had been mapped out with appropriate documentation.

20|20's experience in energy sector made it stand out

"When we decided to go for the APM accreditation we needed to identify a trusted expert to guide us through the process quickly and 20|20's experience working in the energy sector meant they were a perfect fit," said Peter Allen. "They were very professional, sympathetic to our objectives and gave us a lot of confidence and reassurance at exactly the times when we needed it most."

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Conclusion

20|20 were successful in supporting Magnox through the Corporate APM accreditation process and the company was able to achieve its accreditation in the shortest possible timescales. One development which indicates how this approach has helped to contribute to organisational goals has been the extent to which Magnox has been able to reduce its original cost estimate to complete the entire decommissioning works across 11 power stations at a forecast value of £1.2billion, representing a 50% potential saving.

This clearly demonstrates the financial impact good project management has within an organisation. "The whole ethos of Magnox is enveloped by professionalism, integrity and accountability", says Peter Allen. "We highly value the importance of professional accreditation by the APM and will continue to support our staff to undertake APM qualifications at the highest levels."

"It is very important for Magnox to measure how they have benefited from applying the 5 levels of the APM Five Dimensions of Professionalism training programme and then directly linking the achievement of corporate APM accreditation with the professional uplift they can see as a return on investment," says Jim Littlefair, Director of Business Development at 20|20 Business Insight.

Looking ahead, Magnox intends to take a random selection of projects in order to benchmark efficiency levels as a result of Corporate APM Accreditation. The company hopes to achieve at 5% improvement to efficiency levels but is confident this may be more, exceeding the expectations of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority.

"20|20 are a key part of our strategic resource partnership and we intend to consider them for our future project management training requirements", concludes Peter Allen.



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