

APM Corporate



ACCREDITATION

CASE STUDY



Royal Mail

Introduction

Royal Mail boasts a heritage dating back 500 years, to the reign of King Henry VIII. Today, it is the UK's largest letters and parcels delivery company.

Royal Mail collects letters and parcels from over 200,000 collection points at post offices, post boxes and businesses. It delivers to more than 29 million addresses six days a week and is the second largest employer in the UK, with over 140,000 employees.

In 2015–16, Royal Mail made the fifth largest contribution to the wider economy of all UK corporations.

In that same year, the group handled approximately 16 billion letters and approximately three billion parcels.

In October 2013 it successfully floated on the London Stock Exchange.

For the past nine years, the company has undergone major transformation impacting every aspect of its operation – collections, automation, logistics and delivery – and affecting every member of the workforce. The scale and complexity of this business change has been recognised as one of the largest programmes of its kind in Europe.

With a significant investment portfolio, and with over 1,100 project personnel at its peak, it is addressing historical under-investment in operations, modernising automation, equipment, methods and culture.

Last year, this work led to the Project Management Company of the Year title in the 2016 APM Project Management Awards. This followed the BNFL Award for outstanding impact as a result of exceptional project management at the 2013 APM Awards.

|| This team has been at the heart of the transformation that has taken place across Royal Mail in recent years. The focus, dedication and professionalism of this community ensured successful delivery of major change into the organisation, enabling improved efficiency to meet the demands of the changing market. Robust governance, effective planning, perfect execution and strong stakeholder management have enabled the major change portfolio to be successfully delivered to time, cost and quality."

Steve Cameron FAPM RPP – UK operations director



Transformation vision

Back in 2008, when Royal Mail embarked on its marathon transformation initiative, the company appointed director of planning and programmes, Ian Jones. He was clear that the vision for transformation had to be managed within a formalised process of governance and underpinned with the appropriate professionalism of those carrying it out.

Ian saw this as vital in order to mitigate the risks associated with project deployment, deliver a programme of unprecedented change and to create a sufficient and enduring professional capability for the future.

As a constant champion of the development of the project management community, Ian has increased the exposure to the Association for Project Management (APM) and its suite of professional qualifications, events and membership. In recognition of the need for the continuous injection of talent, the company has also embarked on the higher apprenticeship scheme.

Ian heads up a direct team of some 500 professionals, working across four geographic regions and a central logistics function serving the whole of the UK. All have the same opportunities and resources for their professional development and growth.

At the heart of Royal Mail's ongoing transformation is a portfolio of six programmes covering its operational pipeline. Supporting over 100 projects, the portfolio team employs around 270 people and has a significant yearly investment.

Leading this is head of portfolio Richard Moor RPP FAPM. His key aim has been to specifically focus on developing the project, programme and portfolio management community and expanding knowledge across Royal Mail.

Richard has led the first phase of process improvement, starting to deploy new processes and recognise that 'governance is your friend'. The APM Body of Knowledge 6th Edition has been taken as a key and integral reference point, underpinning the professionalism of the management and control of the change programme.

The importance of a high standard and consistent project, programme and portfolio management capability is recognised right at the top of the organisation. The successful application for APM corporate accreditation and subsequent reaccreditation was fully supported and recognised by senior executives.

"I am extremely proud of what the project community has and continues to deliver for the benefit of the business, our people, our shareholders and especially our customers," said Richard Moor.

"The team's achievements have been delivered through excellent sponsorship and direction, people having clear accountabilities and developing a real team ethos. People's development and professionalism is part of the team's DNA and is just another aspect that makes them a valued and high performing team."



Demonstrating our capabilities

The Royal Mail Letters and Network (RML&N) portfolio staff development programme is fully aligned to the APM Body of Knowledge 6th Edition, APM Competency Framework and the range of APM qualifications, as well as the principles of the overall company process.

The company process broadly follows the 70/20/10 learning model:

- 70 per cent predicated through 'on the job' learning and experience;
- 20 per cent built on learning through developmental relationships and the sharing of knowledge, expertise and experiences;
- 10 per cent through structured classroom-based training or studying for formal qualifications.

Ultimately, each individual is responsible for their own development. However, this is supported by a Personal Development Plan (PDP) and Learning Log agreed and reviewed with their line manager.

The PDP and Learning Log are constructed around an individual's own assessment against a set of key competencies, performance feedback, their own personal goals and reflections on what they have learned and will apply.

In order to link this with the specific needs of the project and programme community, the then community and knowledge manager Peter Horsted, APM Honorary Fellow and Registered Project Professional, led the nurturing and growing the resource capability and ensuring they received the professional training and development they need.

It soon became clear that the emphasis on training needed to move from testing knowledge to demonstrating capability. This led to APM qualifications being promoted as the primary set of qualifications and added to the portfolio of skills evaluations to support the development of staff to internationally-recognised standards.

For those who are nominated for APM qualifications, there is a robust support mechanism to maximise their chances of success. A learning community is set up for each cohort so they all get the opportunity to benchmark and learn from each other. Professional, APM-qualified study coaches and mentors and regular progress reviews also help to provide individual, targeted support.

As part of any APM formal learning, employees are supported to become a member of APM at the appropriate level so that they are bound to discharging their accountabilities professionally and ethically.

A regular communications programme adds to the support, such as Get with the Programme, The Learning Hour and the P3M Newsletter. The result is the highest-ever exam success rates – 97.5 per cent for the APM Project Fundamentals Qualification and 87.5 per cent for the APM Project Management Qualification.

Stretching objectives, active participation in project and programme boards as well as the opportunity to be part of an on-line community (JAM) – a group to ask questions, share ideas and content, discuss best practice and much more – further supports an individual's development.

Project evaluation reports compiled on completion of projects are shared on a lessons learned database, which has open access to the entire RML&N portfolio community. A free library of online training resources is also available.

All colleagues are required to complete a minimum of 35 hours of continuing professional development (CPD) each year. Commitment is not only expected, but is hardwired into personal goals, with every member of staff required to keep a personal log as evidence of their commitment. Every individual is given an annual learning voucher, which is Richard's personal commitment to them having five days dedicated to their personal development. This expectation also carries financial rewards as part of the company's bonus scheme.

In 2014, Royal Mail launched the higher apprentices' scheme within the programme community and has continued to grow this, along with the graduate schemes designed to develop the project leaders of the future. To date both of these schemes have a 100 per cent retention rate, 100 per cent pass rate and the company attained a Top 50 UK Apprentice Training Award in October 2016.

"But we never rest on our laurels," said Ian Jones. "We are constantly looking to review and refine what we are offering our people, learning from others and seeking external input and ratification along the way."



“Our progress is testament to the commitment of our people to delivering this difficult, wholesale change to the way they work.”

Ian Jones, director of planning and programmes



Bryan Macefield
Project manager

Personal story

I joined the Royal Mail graduate scheme in 1999, following university and three years working for a car hire company. After working in Milton Keynes, introducing performance management and deploying minor projects into the area, I moved into the fleet team, running and eventually outsourcing the company car operation. This was a great learning experience under the tutelage of experienced project professionals.

In 2003 I moved into the central programme team as a strand leader on a delivery project, interfacing with the trade unions. It was here I started my formal project training.

My career continued in parallel with my formal qualifications. I progressed to running my own project, a legal compliance initiative for which I won the Royal Mail Transformation Project Manager of the Year.

Over the subsequent years I worked on larger projects, including project managing the £235 million Walk Sequencing letters automation project and regional lead of the delivery methods improvement project in 265 delivery units, a project which took me as far afield as China.

This breadth and depth of experience gave me the evidence to consolidate my qualifications into APM Registered Project Professional accreditation in 2012. In 2014, I was appointed to lead the challenging and award-winning Customer and You Project, transforming our enquiry offices across the business.

This led to further personal development on the Oxford University management acceleration programme and an exciting new project reviewing the collections operation across the business. In addition to mentoring colleagues across the programme community, I am now developing the professional side of my career on my journey to becoming a Fellow of APM, and was selected as a judge for the 2017 APM Project Management Awards.

Sharing knowledge

In continuing to review and monitor its approach to training and project management, Royal Mail has forged a link with Shell – a long-standing member of APM.

Planning and programme director Ian Jones and Peter Horsted made a benchmarking visit to Shell's Project Academy in the Netherlands. Ian presented Royal Mail's transformation journey and spoke of their challenges while Shell shared their challenges and approach to development and learning. Although the two organisations are very different, they both have similar challenges in the project, programme and portfolio management area and discovered that they are tackling them in similar ways.

Afterwards Ian said: "The visit was extremely valuable. The relationships still remain and we use each other as impartial sounding boards."



Client testimonial

"Mount Pleasant has been one of the most challenging projects in my career in the construction industry. The building was in a very poor state of repair. Royal Mail's ambition was to undertake a complete overhaul of the building infrastructure, internal areas and external envelope – whilst remaining in occupation. This added significant complexity given the dynamic nature of the operation.

"In order to overcome this we had to be diligent in our planning, obsessive about daily communication and robust in our implementation of procedures in order to preserve the safety and wellbeing of all people on the site during the construction process. This has been the primary objective for both Mace and Royal Mail and at the heart of everything we have done from start to finish. We have created a landmark building that we can all be proud of and demonstrated what's possible with team work, collaboration and a 'can do' attitude."

Steven Argent, project director, Mace Ltd

Association for Project Management and Royal Mail

Royal Mail is a corporate member of APM, with 87 individual members within the RML&N portfolio and further members from across the Royal Mail Group, including Fellows and Registered Project Professionals.



“ For us, APM corporate accreditation is all about validating that we are doing the right things to develop and professionalise our people individually and collectively. Aligning to APM, its intellectual property, guidance and tools gives us real confidence and a structured approach to achieving this, knowing that APM develops its offerings through rigorous testing and pan sector engagement. Corporate accreditation is not just a badge to us but rather clear acknowledgement that we are doing and continue to do right by our people.”

Peter Horsted RPP Hon FAPM

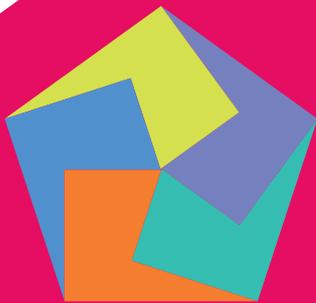
Individual membership of APM is expected and encouraged, supported financially by covering fees when an individual progresses through APM formal learning.

Programme and project practice, including prescribed internal processes, project life cycles and templates, are aligned to the *APM Body of Knowledge* 6th edition, which is widely available to the programme's community. The APM Competence Framework is the lead reference document and acts as the cornerstone for CPD.

The company strives to make full use of its APM membership by encouraging colleagues to attend APM webinars and other events. Everyone has access to the APM website and associated information.

Planning and programme director Ian Jones has been involved in a number of events. At his first ever APM breakfast event in London he gave an overview of the operations transformation in Royal Mail and has since taken part in many ad-hoc benchmarking and best practice sharing meetings with other APM affiliated companies.

Head of portfolio, Richard Moor, was the key speaker at the APM portfolio management special interest group (SIG) summer conference, covering the key ways he prioritises investment for business return. This was followed up with an article in *Project*. Richard is a strong believer in sharing his learning. He is a committee member of the portfolio SIG and mentors internally and externally to Royal Mail.



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.

Association for Project Management

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