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Overview

Customer

Leicestershire County Council

Products and Services

Microsoft Project Online

SSRS

Power BI

Organisation Size

Large (1,000 - 9,999 employees)

Country

United Kingdom

Industry

Government

Wellingtone
PPM Intelligence

Microsoft Partner

Microsoft Partner
Gold Project and Portfolio Management

Specialist Competency

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Leicestershire County Council Promotes Project Maturity and Best Practice with Microsoft Project Online

Serving a population of more than 600,000 residents, Leicestershire County Council is one of the highest performing county councils in England. Central to the delivery of its services is the council's project portfolio, driven by a strategic vision updated in late 2017. The launch of a Transformation Unit was part of an organisational restructure that created a formal PMO employing seven core PMO staff, twenty project managers and a team of business analysts. Over the past two years, the focus has been on building PMO maturity, with the recognition that a professionalised project management tool would support that growth. Project Online was the tool of choice, with Wellingtone contracted to guide the transition, says Scott Young, the Transformation Unit's PMO Manager.

> "I would recommend Wellingtone due to their approachability, flexibility and expert grounding in the world of project management. That's their focus. It's not just about software implementation for them."
>
> **Scott Young, PMO Manager—Leicestershire County Council**

Ensuring Consistency and Accountability Across the Project Delivery and Reporting Chain

A key factor for Leicestershire County Council's PMO is the demand for transparency amongst multiple stakeholders and across the project portfolio, Scott explains. "We're charged with providing assurance not only to our corporate management team, chief executive and directors, but also to our elected members. It's essential that we can demonstrate that we are doing the right things, in the most effective and efficient way – especially given the funding constraints we operate under. Initially, we developed a formal project management framework and governance structure. That has given stakeholders new visibility over the business case, but we also needed to ensure confidence around our risk management and planning, and to achieve consistency in our project management processes. Plus, we were keen to support staff in their continued career development and professionalisation by providing them with professional tools that reflect industry best practice."

The Transformation Unit initially dedicated a year to implementing a standard framework for project delivery, supported by the relevant tools and templates. "At that time, we were using Microsoft Project as well as the Office suite, but not entirely consistently," says Scott. "We recognised that the right digital tool would help us to remove any grey areas and equip our people to document risks, issues, actions and plans in a more consistent way, enabling us to take a helicopter view of our project portfolio. At the same time, we needed a cost-effective option, which was a key factor in the choice of a Cloud-based solution. The entire organisation was already plugged into Office 365, so Project Online was the logical next step towards professionalising our project management without reinventing the wheel."

A formal procurement process led to the selection of Wellingtone as the implementing partner to configure and roll out Project Online. "We were attracted by Wellingone's status as a Microsoft Gold Partner," says Scott. "Plus, they offered the right balance between technical expertise and a strong specialism in project management. They were understanding of our time and spending constraints, encouraging us to start off with the basics and then build on that, rather than trying to sign us up to a huge contract all at once. And they were in a position to act and implement quickly."

Benefits

- *Setting a Baseline against which future efficiency improvements can be measured.*

- *Achieving full visibility and consistency across the project portfolio and pipeline.*

- *Enhanced and automated reporting for the board, executive team and elected members.*

- *A cost-effective, Cloud based solution that can grow as organisational requirements grow.*

Efficient Delivery for a Smooth Systems Transition

A requirement gathering workshop was the first stage of the process. **"Wellingtone knew exactly where we were coming from right from the start,"** Scott recalls. **"They understood that we had already worked hard on our framework and process, and that what we needed to focus on was the enabling toolkit. As soon as we had agreed our requirements, we moved quickly to developing the system. That went smoothly, and we soon had a tangible tool in place before moving on to training. Wellingtone impressed us with their flexible and agile approach to defining our specific requirements and inputting them into the development process. The classroom-based training was ideal for us and offered the additional benefit of covering Microsoft Project before moving onto Project Online. The feedback from staff was very positive."**

Having completed training, the initial process of migrating projects into Project Online led to the identification of some configuration adjustments, which Wellingtone handled as a stage two development. **"Again, that was a straightforward process, and the changes were delivered quickly and efficiently,"** says Scott. **"As a busy department, we liked the fact that Wellingtone were pro-active in supporting our progress and ensuring we kept the momentum up with their assistance."**

> "Ultimately, Wellingtone's goal is to give you the right tools to make your project management better, and for us that's what sets them apart from other suppliers."
>
> **Scott Young, PMO Manager—Leicestershire County Council**

Generating Cross-Departmental Business Benefits

Now established as the Transformation Unit's central project management tool, Project Online has attracted the attention of other departments in the council, says Scott. **"The IT department, for instance, is embarking on a significant change programme and they're interested in using Project Online. People across the organisation are starting to see the benefits. It has made an enormous difference in areas such as highlight reporting. The system is geared up to ensure that all data must be correctly inputted before generating a report, which has brought a heightened level of discipline to project tracking that staff are embracing. In the past, tasks such as examining risk logs and highlight reports were extremely labour intensive. But the reports we can draw out now give us total visibility at the touch of a button. This makes us a more efficient unit, and that has a knock-on benefit to other departments because it gives us the freedom to deploy additional resources to other project departments when needed. But, of course, the overarching benefit is the ability to provide that vital level of accountability to our executive teams, board and members, and to do so with complete confidence."**

Moving forward, the Transformation Unit is keen to explore the full potential of Project Online, with a focus on resource management as the next priority, Scott explains. **"Currently, we manage the time and effort of our business analysis team manually. We'd like to be able to use Project Online to forecast demand versus capacity in a much more effective way. We're keen to continue our relationship with Wellingtone to establish what else we can get from Project Online as we grow and mature. I would recommend Wellingtone due to their approachability, flexibility and expert grounding in the world of project management. That's their focus. It's not just about software implementation for them. Ultimately, Wellingtone's goal is to give you the right tools to make your project management better, and for us that's what sets them apart from other suppliers."**

To learn more about Leicestershire County Council, visit https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/