

Project Management Training Case Study

INCE & CO | INTERNATIONAL
LAW FIRM

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Overview

Customer

Ince & Co

Products and Services

Project Management Training

Organisation Size

Large (1,000 - 9,999 employees)

Country

United Kingdom

Industry

Law

Microsoft Partner

Specialist Competency

Wellingtone
PPM Intelligence▶

Microsoft Partner
Gold Project and Portfolio Management

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Establishing a Project Management Culture Supported by APM Certification for Ince & Co

International commercial law firm Ince & Co practices English, French, German, Greek, Hong Kong and PRC law from 8 locations across the world. The operational and cultural challenges in this global environment are significantly complex, and Ince & Co recognised the need to integrate a project management culture to address some of these challenges. Wellingtone was selected to help the firm's PMO drive the first steps towards an organisation-wide project management methodology as well as a cultural shift in attitudes to project management. Ince & Co's Richard Album, Head of Learning & Development and Ian Kehoe, Head of Projects, explain the approach in more detail.

"Throughout the debate, Wellingtone were totally transparent about the pros and cons. They weren't biased and didn't try to influence us – they simply offered his expertise and the benefit of past experience to guide our discussions and help us make the right decision for our specific situation."

Ian Kehoe, Head of Projects - Ince & Co

The Challenge: Achieving Stakeholder Buy-In for a Formal Project Management Methodology

Ince & Co already benefitted from a central PMO headed up by Ian, who has specialised in project and portfolio management in the legal sector since 2009. "In recent years the legal sector has started to recognise the need to incorporate project management best practice for the benefit of clients and practitioners alike" he explains. "But at that time there was no real recognition of the importance of formalised project management across Ince & Co. The work of the PMO has addressed that to some extent, but we felt that we needed some independent assistance in defining and rolling out the right project management frameworks and parameters to the wider organisation."

Richard adds that the Ince & Co's partnership model presented a key challenge in delivering this ambition. "We have more than 600 people working in 8 global locations, including over 95 partners worldwide. That distinguishes our governance structure from other sectors decision making might be more hierarchical. We can't just announce something new and expect everyone to adopt it without question. Buy-in at all levels (and particularly partner level) is important to ensure that new initiatives work well and become properly embedded."

Recognising the need to tackle these challenges, Ince & Co selected Wellingtone to support the PMO and L&D departments in the journey towards an organisation-wide project management function. Vince Hines, Managing Director of Wellingtone, began with the basics. "Ince & Co came to us with the simple aim of wanting to get better at project management" he recalls. "Our starting point was to define a consistent methodology. I worked with Richard and his team to develop a project life cycle supported by the right documents at each stage – including a project proposal, highlight report, closure report and change request form. Once this framework was established, we were able to get started on training key people to integrate the methodology and tools more widely."



The Big Decision: Making the Move towards APM Certified Training

The training programme was designed to introduce key senior people at Ince & Co to the new methodology, why it mattered and how to use it. During the planning stages, Wellingtone suggested the possibility of “ramping up” the training by aligning the two day course to the APM Introductory Certificate in Project Management – a globally recognised qualification that opens the door to pursuing more advanced qualifications if desired. According to Ian, the debate over whether to go down this road was an intensive one. “We were expecting significantly senior people to take two days out of their busy schedules to attend the training. Because of our partnership model, there was no room for a ‘three line whip’. It was vital to encourage people to make a pro-active decision to attend – otherwise they would be unlikely to engage fully. On the one hand, we could see that the prospect of gaining an additional qualification could be a motivator to attend. On the other hand, given that our organisational understanding of project management was relatively immature, we didn’t want to be too heavy handed and put people off. Throughout the debate, Wellingtone were totally transparent about the pros and cons. They weren’t biased and didn’t try to influence us – they simply offered his expertise and the benefit of past experience to guide our discussions and help us make the right decision for our specific situation.”

For Ince & Co, the decision was to take the training down the APM Certification route. It was the right path, according to Ian, “The prospect of gaining a new professional certification at the end of the two days proved to be a good incentive to get people through the door. But I also think it helped with the training process itself. Put it this way: noticeably less people were distracted by their Blackberries than you would normally expect! That’s partly because delegates knew they would be taking an exam at the end of the course and naturally wanted to pass. But it’s also testament to the quality of the Wellingtone training, and the Trainer’s ability to recognise their audience demographic and adapt their approach accordingly.”

Richard is of the same opinion: “Project management training can be extremely dry. Especially when you’re training a senior audience who have other pressing matters to think about, keeping them engaged is no easy task. Wellingtone understood that. They managed to get people on side and interested right from the start. They built in little nuances and in-jokes that showed our people they understood where they were coming from. They established early credibility and found ways to make the training fast-paced and engaging, whilst still maintaining the full content and rigour of the course.”

The Result: An Emerging Organisational Recognition of Project Management Techniques

Reflecting on the impact of Wellingtone’s services, Richard and Ian are in agreement that they have generated encouraging early results. “From my perspective, the really important impact has been a shift in mind-set” says Richard. “Since we introduced the methodology and delivered the first round of training, I got the sense that people appreciate the value of project management more. As an example, there’s a greater understanding of the importance of decisions around discrete projects within the wider portfolio. People can see why certain activities would be included or excluded from the scope of a project, and why a project needs to be clearly defined. Previously they didn’t really get that, and that led to all kinds of issues such as project creep or conflicting resource management. We have a long way to go before we can really say that project management is mature across Ince & Co, but as a result of our work with Wellingtone we now have champions in the company who speak the language and can cascade their understanding to others.”

Ian concurs: “We’re a relatively small firm, so it was always our intention to bring Wellingtone in to help us kick start this process so that we could then spread the skills and knowledge internally. We’re planning to deliver some further training in Hong Kong and Singapore, but ultimately we want to be self-sufficient in rolling out our PM methodology. Wellingtone has been instrumental in helping us achieve that. Wellingtone got us up and running extremely quickly with the tools we needed to lay the foundations. Wellingtone didn’t just give us an out of the box solution. They helped us to establish a firm grounding for developing a project management framework that matches the nature of our business, our people, our structure and our operations.”

To Learn more about Ince & Co, visit <https://www.incelaw.com/en>