

Pharmaceutical Company's Internal PM Certification Program Brings More Predictable Project Outcomes



Industry: Pharmaceuticals/Biotechnology

Services Provided: Training program design, implementation, and management; project management certification program development and curriculum mapping; course customization (including customized case studies); training program measurement; and training delivery.

“Projects are more predictable thanks to the certification program we put in place with PM College. High feedback ratings from our course participants on content and instructor delivery are consistently achieved. The PM College instructors weave their project management experience into the courses adding real-world value; people feel they can immediately apply what they learn.”

— Program Manager
Pharmaceutical Company

Company: The pharmaceutical company offers a broad spectrum of proven tools and technologies, together with performance solutions innovations, dedicated to helping customers succeed in the research, development, and production of biotechnology and pharmaceutical drug therapies. Comprising three business units—Bioscience, Lab Solutions, and Process Solutions—the company is a top-tier supplier to the life science industry and serves as a strategic partner for scientists, engineers, and researchers.

Challenge: A few years ago, the company's Corporate PMO (CPMO) staff realized that its generic in-house project management training was not adequate to address the challenges faced by its staff, a diverse group of researchers and engineers who took on project and program management responsibilities.

The CPMO needed to get project management skills up and going quickly across the company and standardize on a process, thus prompting the development of an internal project management certification program. It intended that a link between company-sponsored learning and professional development would build employee loyalty and morale, fostering improved productivity as well as better on-time project delivery.

The implementation of the program gained further complexity when the company was acquired by a global pharmaceutical, chemical, and life science firm while the first groups of participants were still progressing through the certification levels.



VALUE DELIVERED

An internal PM certification program was rapidly developed and implemented. During the first three years, over 400 participants attended more than 30 courses. Team members, project managers, and sponsors gained a good understanding of project management and the techniques needed to achieve more consistent project delivery. The program's ability to remain intact after an acquisition validated the program's value to the larger company globally.

about pm college

Pharmaceutical Company's Internal PM Certification Program Brings More Predictable Project Outcomes

Solution: The company's CPMO first identified the business drivers and corresponding success criteria, emphasizing the execution of business strategy, retention of top talent, delivery consistency, and accelerating the pace of innovation. From there, it sought out a training vendor who could partner with the organization to develop the competency levels of its project managers in a structured way across the organization and in alignment with its stated success criteria. PM College was selected based on its flexible approach to tailoring course content to the business environment. At the outset, PM College reviewed what was already in place to incorporate elements from the existing training and best practices specific to the business environment. These organizational assets and courses were used to round out a selection of existing PM College courses, so that the program could be developed rapidly while still including customized elements such as case studies applicable to its work areas.

The program was rolled out with three levels that build on each other to broaden and deepen project management knowledge over time:

- ∴ The **Foundational** level is designed for new company employees or those who are beginning their experiences in project management. Fundamental skills are the focus, including Project Management Essentials and Facilitation Skills.
- ∴ The **Applied** level focuses on the managerial aspects of project management including Project Risk Management and Project Cost and Scheduling Management.
- ∴ The highest level, **Expert**, is for advanced project managers and offers classes and development opportunities in leadership skills such as Mentoring Project Managers and Developing Positive Relationships.

PM College administered the project management knowledge assessment that is part of its proprietary talent management program for each new applicant to the program. This assessment is used to place the applicants in the appropriate level and is also used to verify knowledge for graduation from the Foundational level. At the end of the first year, a review of the responses was done and questions with a higher "fail" rate were used to identify areas to add and modify training in the Foundational and Applied levels.

The company's employees must be approved by its managers to seek certification through the program and have a certain level of hands-on experience. The program has gained acceptance in other divisions. Many used the training courses coupled with PM College's *PM Professional Coach* online self-study tool to gain their Project Management Professional (PMP®) certification from the Project Management Institute in addition to their internal certification. Internal mentors were assigned to all participants going through the program to help reinforce the learning. In addition, anyone within the company could take specific courses in the program for his or her own development. PM College also provided support to communicate and promote program participation internally.

results

In the first three years of the program, over 400 participants attended 30+ courses in the US and Europe in response to high demand for the training. Skills checklists and project review documentation were developed for participants to use on the job, allowing them to apply new knowledge immediately. Managers reported an improved ability to communicate project issues and escalate concerns when required. This led to fewer surprises and improved predictability.

Training materials were upgraded continuously to address new challenges in the business environment, with Program Management being added as a study area in the third year

and virtual learning options added for locations with few employees.

After the program had been in place for nearly a year, the company was acquired by a larger firm. The acquiring company did not have a similar program in place and saw the value in keeping the program intact and encouraging its own personnel to participate. Despite organizational changes that included the disbanding of the sponsoring CPMO, demand continued and spread to other company divisions outside the US.