



Case study

Name: Costain and MWH UK
Sector: Engineering Services
Location: West Midlands, UK

Embedding Sustainable Performance Improvement

Two global organisations specialising in engineering and water management solutions respectively, undertook a programme to improve efficiencies and quality in operational performance for a regional UK water management company. Managementors assisted with a detailed analysis and performance improvement project, with the installation of a bespoke Management Operating System as a fully optimised, manageable and sustainable solution.

“We had defined the plan and we had the people, but not the time we needed to deliver within the timeframe we would have liked. We needed assistance with an analytical approach to accelerate the process and, in doing so, deliver a manageable programme of high quality.”

Matt Crabtree, Programme Director, Costain

Key challenges

- To accelerate implementation and delivery of the Costain and MWH (CiM6 team) plan.
- To utilise best practice of new technology already implemented.
- The requirement to make tough cost savings targets in AMP6.
- Development of a fully integrated way of working between Costain and MWH, to improve delivery for Severn Trent.

Key gains

- Defined the plan to allow for delivery ahead of target, with clear accountability and ownership driven down to individuals, enabling challenging savings targets to be met.
- Implementation of Managementors Management Operating System (MOS), delivering greater control and visibility of project activities.
- Installation of tools and systems for improved information about the true duration of project activities, enabling more accurate targets.
- Improved clarity over roles, responsibilities and structure, with greater inter-area co-operation and resource sharing.
- The business is now more open, with more constructive and shared dialogue between staff and management, which has led to changes in working practices moving forward.

Background

Costain was founded in Liverpool in 1865 by Richard Costain and today is one of the UK's leading engineering solutions providers. The organisation provides advisory and concept development, specialist design, programme management, complex project delivery, technology integration, asset optimisation and support services to major blue-chip customers in targeted market sectors, including; rail, highways, power, airports, water, nuclear process, waste, oil and gas.

MWH is leading the world in results-oriented management services, technical engineering, construction services and solutions to create a better world. The wet infrastructure sector encompasses a full range of water related projects and programmes from water supply, treatment and storage, dams, water management for the natural resources industry and coastal restoration, to renewable power and environmental services.

Costain and MWH UK formed a partnership, named CiM6, for the delivery of the AMP6 programme for Severn Trent Water plc, a FTSE

100 company providing and treating water and waste water in the UK, and internationally, through two main businesses – Severn Trent Water and Severn Trent Services, based in Coventry. CiM6 is comprised of Costain and MWH staff, and the Board includes two senior staff from each business - Matt Crabtree, Programme Director of Costain and Cath Schefer, Managing Director of MWH UK. The objective of CiM6 is to deliver part of Severn Trent's AMP6 Capital Programme effectively and efficiently, whilst meeting customer satisfaction, client expectations and regulatory outcomes.

The CiM6 operational base was established in Severn Trent Water's Longbridge office, where both Costain and MWH representatives already provided services, including clean and waste water for above and below ground assets. The initial stage of AMP6 was for Severn Trent Water to specify the actual works required to be further developed by CiM6 in a collaborative approach. Together the solution was refined along with cost and timelines for Severn Trent Water to approve and commence design, manufacture and assembly.



“The core requirement was to step up from being good to great, with a robust continuous improvement programme viewed through fresh eyes with dedicated analysis and delivery expertise.”

*Cath Schefer, Managing Director,
MWH UK*

The Challenge

Key challenges for the CiM6 team were to identify issues impacting business operations and identify areas of opportunity, as AMP6 brought with it the requirement to deliver projects significantly more efficiently than they had been during AMP5. At the start of the programme there was, for example, awareness of core issues that needed to be addressed but not the analytical resource available to implement the necessary changes within the time period required to deliver benefits. This identification contributed to the assignment of Managementors as external consultants and specialists, to work in partnership with CiM6 to help accelerate the plan and achieve the delivery of a sustainable and manageable solution.

Analysis, Approach and Solution

Managementors worked alongside design and delivery staff to carry out a detailed analysis of day-to-day operations to uncover reasons for non-achievement in performance, whilst identifying opportunities for quantifiable recovery.

This analysis illustrated opportunities for more effective processes and operational performance measures, as well as shortcomings in the existing Management Operation System. Factors such as limited active supervision contributed to under-performance and restricted opportunities for improvement unless manageable and sustainable changes were implemented. This analysis provided a platform with recommendations on how Managementors could work in partnership with the CiM6 team to help speed up operational improvement.

Analysis findings were presented to the CiM6 Board, with recommendations for the development and delivery of a bespoke Management Operating System (MOS) based on Managementors' proven methodology. This MOS would be delivered with an approach to swiftly develop area controls, for instance in work planning, with improved processes to ensure accurate information is easily available, enabling staff to interpret and understand the impact of issues and poor performance. This, in turn, would encourage proactive management and drive productivity.

The CiM6 team recognised the need to drive collaborative working and a transparent process that reflected change through continuous improvement. Managementors worked alongside staff and management to help them identify core issues and assist in delivering change. For example, they were aware that some practices were not completely effective, but didn't have logical processes in place to manage priorities. Therefore, working practices remained unchanged without the right course of action to resolve issues. Ineffective control, follow-up, communication and ownership of processes resulted in substandard quality, increased cost and cycle times, for instance, information was not being documented and work was being duplicated.

“Working with Managementors and taking an analytical approach truly helped to accelerate the delivery of our plan with clearly defined operational processes. It also provided space for us to reflect and consider change in quality of work and the motivation of our people, with best practices defined for future working.”

Matt Crabtree, Programme Director, Costain



Outcomes

With Managementors approach and delivery of a revised and enhanced MOS this enabled visibility of budget, forecast and actuals on a project, individual or discipline basis, complementing planning and performance management. For example, resource availability rules were put in place to ensure that leave and training were not authorised at times when workload was at its peak.

A new issue escalation and management process has also been created in conjunction with key staff. Individuals are now empowered to solve issues as they happen and management has visibility of ownership and due dates for issues raised within their teams.

Production Control is now embedded to ensure the various elements of collaborative planning drive production to be more effective and efficient.

Recommendations were made about changes to the framework structure and headcount with training and coaching of MOS champions and management.

Audit tools were also put in place to help ensure the changes were embedded and sustained.

In conjunction with key stakeholders, performance dashboards have been developed to enable performance data to be reviewed on an individual, project and hub basis. Managers now have full visibility of the KPI's needed to effectively drive performance.

The business now has more rigorous planning and visibility of the plan down to individual task level, with clear accountability for completing each task, reviewed on a weekly basis. Project Managers now possess visibility and detail of who is completing their tasks and can manage their teams more effectively to ensure that the overall project is delivered on time and to budget through the achievement of these individual tasks.

“Managementors provided a unique approach that I have not seen before in my field. Their objective and detailed view of operations and performance, identifying processes that are clearly not right and developing areas that need attention, helped us to ensure all the cogs in our business are driving us in the correct direction to achieve and maintain sustainable working.”

*Cath Schefer, Managing Director,
MWH UK*

Contact us to find out what
Managementors can do for you

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