

A day in the life of an NEC accredited Project Manager



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Please introduce yourself including your background, role and company.

My name is Noah Maheya and I am a Procurement and Commercial expert at PA Consulting, the global innovation and transformation consultancy (PA). I have an MSc in Logistics and Supply Chain Management and hold chartered status as a Member of the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (MCIPS). I have over 10 years' experience of procurement delivery in the private and public sectors.

What does your role involve?

I work on high value and complex infrastructure and IT projects for PA's clients and am involved right from project inception. My role involves setting out the procurement and commercial strategy through to managing project delivery, which means running the procurement, awarding contracts and eventually managing the contract(s).

What does a typical day look like to you?

On one hand I can be proactively planning to deliver for clients, for example, ensuring that a commercial delivery strategy will be delivered on time. On the other hand, I could be managing NEC contracts, for example, responding to an early warning raised by a contractor and working to de-risk it and accepting or not accepting a compensation event raised by a contractor to account for client scope changes.

What do you enjoy the most about your job?

My job with PA involves a significant amount of lateral thinking which I really enjoy. When issues surface there isn't always one set way of resolving them. Complex issues require cross functional engagement including with the contractor and sifting through the information gathered to arrive at the optimal way to resolve issues. Carrying out this aspect of my role, I find, is very fulfilling.

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How many NEC procured projects have you worked on?

Since the start of my procurement and commercial career I have worked on over 20 NEC projects on client side and each project has had its own unique features. Although the NEC contracts are standardised and underpinned by working with contractors in a spirit of mutual trust and cooperation, each project requires some form of adaptation in the project management approach. I have worked with stakeholders who did not understand the NEC philosophy and part of my job was to take them along the journey as the project moved from the inception to the delivery stage.

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At what point in your career did you (or your organisation) decide to take the NEC accreditation course?

I took the NEC accreditation course earlier this year (2019) as it would be valuable to me and my organisation if I formalised what I was doing in my day job into a recognised qualification. I also wanted to learn the best practice, tried and tested approach in project management which the NEC accreditation course provides.

What was the one takeaway from the course that you are using every day?

I gained a deeper appreciation of some contractor behaviours. Now, on receiving a query from a contractor I try to reflect on it from the contractor's point of view before taking any of the hard-nosed approaches that are often taken to protect client's interests. Such an open-minded and collaborative approach at most times helps to resolve issues effectively and maintain a spirit of mutual trust and co-operation.

What was the first NEC procured project that you worked on?

The first NEC procured project that I worked on was a civil engineering project worth over £50m for a government department procured under the Engineering and Construction Contract (ECC).

What was the most memorable NEC procured project that you worked on and why?

The current project that I'm working on behalf of PA. It is a design and build project worth over £250m for a

government department that will be based on an ECC contract. It is the first project that I am helping to deliver following my NEC project manager accreditation, so I can use my deeper understanding of the NEC philosophy and commercial project management that I learnt from the course.

What advice would you give somebody pursuing engineering as a career?

I would say learn as much as possible about the technical discipline, for example, mechanical, civil or software engineering and then consider a formal qualification such as the NEC project manager accreditation that provides a commercial and project management foundation. That way the individual will be on their way to building a career that can truly provide personal and professional growth.

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