



THE TIMES 100

BUSINESS CASE STUDIES

Workforce planning - OPITO

OPITO is the focal point for skills, learning and workforce development in the oil & gas industry. It aims to deliver the right skills for the industry now and in the future. OPITO was established to meet industry demand for a competent and competitive workforce. To achieve this it works with industry employers, training providers and higher education providers. The oil and gas industry is a diverse sector that operates globally, both onshore and offshore. Over 400,000 people are employed in the UK industry alone with the majority of those employed onshore. Both offshore and onshore environments offer a wide variety of roles from drilling to design, accounts to engineering and HR to PR.



OPITO plays a strategic role in the oil and gas industry through workforce planning and skills development globally. OPITO works with industry employers to allow employees to engage in an ongoing process of professional development. Workforce planning is a fundamental tool used by many organisations. This involves estimating future workforce requirements in terms of both labour demand and skills to aid the achievement of business objectives. An appropriately skilled workforce is critical to an organisations short-term and long-term future in order to remain competitive. The industry requires a highly talented workforce, meaning the search for talent is extremely competitive. There are many factors affecting the employee marketplace, such as the UK's ageing workforce and the need for appropriate skills and qualifications. These factors may contribute to future skills shortages as they reduce the pool of suitably qualified candidates that the oil and gas sector can recruit from. OPITO has published a Labour Market Intelligence survey which analyses the current skills situation within the industry. This can be used as a workforce planning tool to identify future skills needs. In order to address these needs, the industry works closely with schools, colleges and universities to inform and influence pupil/student subject choices, in an attempt to widen the pool of talent.

As a technology-led business, the oil and gas industry is constantly changing and developing with roles following suit. However, attracting employees with the desired skills and abilities can be challenging across the sector. For example, increasingly oil is located in deeper waters and with this comes the challenge of accessing pipelines and structures safely. The role of Divers is now supplemented by the use of Remotely Operated Vehicles (ROVs) for tasks including the inspection of pipelines and in continuing maintenance. The operation and control of ROVs requires specialist skills and knowledge at both Technician and Graduate level. Companies require skilled people, in both on and offshore roles, in order to extract oil and gas safely, whilst acting environmentally responsibly and remaining profitable. Companies within the industry often employ contractors to fill specific short-term roles. This is often the case when there is a need to manage increased production levels or when the use of specialist equipment is required. Workforce planning is an important tool in this situation. Companies need to ensure the required skills are not already available through salaried staff before hiring contractors for the specific role.

As the oil and gas industry locates and explores previously challenging reservoirs, innovative technology is at the forefront. In order to keep pace with these advances a diverse range of core skills and competences are fundamental. Within a project team a combination of both technical and commercial disciplines work closely together to ensure the project is viable. This may include Geologists, Seismologists, Accountants, Lawyers, Engineers and Analysts.



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Questions

1. What is workforce planning?

2. Describe some of the factors that affect the oil and gas labour marketplace.

3. Explain how the oil and gas industry works to increase the pool of appropriate skilled workers it can recruit from.

4. Analyse why workforce planning is important in the oil and gas industry.

Task

Investigation – carry out an investigation into a job role of your choice in the oil and gas industry. Find out what skills and qualifications would be needed for this job role. Consider whether a company would be able to recruit a worker with these requirements or provide the necessary training.

What have you learned?

Find a pair – work in small groups. Each group should write 6 questions and their answers on to 12 separate squares of paper. They should then shuffle the squares and swap with another group. The squares of paper should be placed face down on the table and each individual should take it in turns to turn over two squares. The aim is to find a question and the corresponding answer. When found, the student should keep that pair of squares. The winner is the student who finishes with the most pairs. *(To make this harder, increase the number of questions and answers).*