

Motivated manpower

BW Offshore's personnel department is dedicated to preparing crew for the complex FPSO business.

Hiring, retaining and developing first-rate employees is always a priority for companies. The complex nature of the Floating Production Storage Offloading (FPSO) business means this challenge is more keenly felt by the BW Offshore Personnel Department. About 650 professionals work on board BW Offshore's production units. The 9-strong personnel team based in Oslo is responsible for HR, crewing, visas, certificates, competence and training for all offshore expats. The local offices in Nigeria, Mauritania, Mexico, Brazil and in the US handle local employees.

BW Offshore started by just supporting the marine crew on the first FPSOs, and operation and maintenance of process plants were contracted out. An in-house pool of production personnel was established at the end of 2006. Since February 2009, all FPSOs are operated and maintained by BW Offshore staff. Efforts are put into training production crew in supporting the marine systems and the marine crew is trained to support the production systems. The aim is to have multi-skilled teams.

Offshore work on board an FPSO is synonymous with lifelong learning. Arne Jørgensen (right), BW Offshore Vice President, Offshore Personnel Department, explains: "FPSO units are becoming more challenging with oil fields being developed in harsher environments, more remote areas and deeper waters. In addition, the well fluids are more challenging to produce, e.g. heavy oil, and the wells and subsea systems are technically more advanced. As more advanced technology is harnessed for oil and gas production, current skills become obsolete and competencies on board FPSO units need to keep pace."

"To maintain operational excellence, access to competent staff with relevant and up-to-date educational background is a must. Our department's motto is 'Quality in = quality out', a simple way to say: only by striving for high quality within the company will we deliver high quality to our clients," Jørgensen observes.



Committed to competence

Oil production is the main focus for our clients and BW Offshore's income is dependent on maintaining high uptime on the production plants. In 2009, BW Offshore FPSOs had an average uptime of 99.7%. This high level requires skilled personnel and considerable effort is put into continuous training. All personnel participate in courses, on-the-job training, project involvement, knowledge transfer and re-certification.

The personnel department has established a quality training system to meet this requirement. An estimated 4,200 man-hours were spent on completing the initial Competence Assessment Process for all offshore personnel. The development of the Competence Assurance and Training Program (CAT) followed. CAT identifies more than 3,000 competence levels and 200 job tasks in 55 position profiles within four departments on board each FPSO. Each task performed offshore is assigned a corresponding competence level based on the responsibilities given in the job descriptions. Offshore personnel then undergo an individual competence assessment for specific job tasks to identify possible competence gaps which are addressed through

training. A standard training matrix for an FPSO contains more than a hundred training courses.

BW Offshore recently tailor-made a comprehensive e-learning platform covering petroleum-related subjects, and launched it for FPSO operation staff in January. The initiative received extremely positive response because the interface is easy to use and allows staff to study when convenient given the busy work schedule.

Best of both worlds

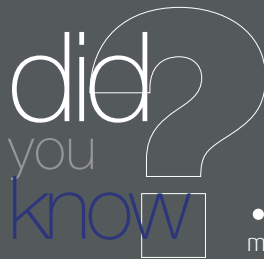
Rules and regulations present another distinctive challenge. Compared to the maritime industry, the offshore industry is subject to more extensive regulations related to personnel, expatriate or local. Instead of the standardised international regulatory approach used by maritime ships, an FPSO operator has to follow both a national regulatory approach (usually belonging to the national continental shelf from which it operates) and the client's own set of operational requirements which can vary from one client to another.

Jørgensen says: "This means that handling offshore personnel requires a flexible approach. Our work is interesting and it is especially rewarding when



we succeed in meeting various local requirements. As part of a company with strong roots in the maritime industry, BW Offshore has the advantage of having a working method that is typically 'offshore' in nature, blended with the rich experience learnt from the wider maritime industry, especially from best practices in the BW Group when it comes to engaging our employees.

"This link with other BW companies gives BW Offshore the best of both worlds and helps us to clearly stand out as a provider of offshore services, from the initial stage when tendering for an FPSO contract and later throughout the contracted period when cooperating with the client and national petroleum authorities." **Wh**



The specialised vessels used in the offshore industry are rarely referred to as ships but as FPSO units. World Horizon takes a closer look at ways offshore personnel differs somewhat from general maritime sea staff.

- In the offshore industry, similar positions are named differently than in the maritime industry. An Offshore Installation Manager (OIM) on an FPSO is equivalent to a Master on a ship, Marine Supervisor is equivalent to Chief Officer, Maintenance Supervisor is equivalent to Chief Engineer, while the designation "seafarer" in the maritime industry is known as "offshore personnel".

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- Maritime personnel normally work in a 1:1 rotation every 4 to 6 months. In other words, a seafarer may work from January to March and then be on leave from April to June. Offshore personnel work in a 1:1 rotation every 2 weeks (local personnel) and every 5 to 8 weeks (expat personnel). Offshore units are normally operating on the continental shelf in close proximity to shore.
- To become the Master (or top leader) onboard a ship, one is usually promoted through various positions in the deck department. To become the OIM (or top leader) on board an FPSO with fixed mooring, one could be promoted through various positions from three different departments (Production, Marine and Maintenance).
- An OIM need not always have a valid Masters certificate. In cases where an OIM does not have one, the Marine Supervisor must carry a valid Masters Certificate. However, to become the OIM (or top leader) on board an FPSO with quick release mooring requires that the OIM carry a valid Masters Certificate.