

Is managing a declining workforce holding you back? the latest blog from Allocate

Submitted by: PR Artistry Limited

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Crispin Jessop at Allocate Software says it's time to future-proof your organization with careful planning and a little help from technology

The maritime offshore industry faces a myriad of challenges, in addition to the depressed oil price, from complex offshore engineering projects to safeguarding staff in dangerous conditions. Finding, deploying and managing the correctly skilled workforce is demanding. Just ensuring personnel have the proper skills, training and valid certification is a difficult and onerous task. Add to this the fact that some assets are reaching maturity and experienced specialists are nearing retirement and there is yet another hurdle to overcome, as more people are leaving the industry than are joining.

At a conference last autumn, Lloyds Register highlighted ageing assets and access to talent as being the offshore industry's top issues, with 29% of respondents of their annual survey, citing them as their primary concerns.[i]

In truth, the industry has consistently struggled to recruit enough new, young, high quality entrants, a situation that is fast becoming a major HR and business problem for offshore companies everywhere. The time has come to act now. Failure to do so may well impact the ability of your organization to compete for projects, leading to lost business, lower revenue and poor stock performance.

How-to future-proof your organization

Follow these simple steps to assess risk, redress skills imbalances and minimise the longer-term impact of managing attrition caused by retirement:

Start from within.

- Maintain a skills matrix – preventing skill shortfalls on high-risk projects is so much easier when you know exactly what skills and qualifications your staff have and the type of training they have undergone or need to attend. A well-managed skills matrix will evolve over time to reflect any changes to regulation, business environments and, of course, succession planning to compensate for a declining workforce.
- Provide a well-defined career path for employees – this will vastly improve staff motivation and retention, essential to overcoming the gaps left behind as experienced staff leave the industry. Encourage older members of staff to act as mentors to their younger colleagues, therefore transferring valuable skills and knowledge that only experience can bring.

Let technology do the rest:

The latest workforce optimization software offers a host of benefits that can help to redress the imbalance of a reducing skilled workforce. Look out for:

- One single, integrated platform – in large, complex, international organizations, good communication is paramount. Avoid the situation where one part of the company could be hiring new employees or contractors with specific skills while in another region personnel, with those same skills are idle or

even worse, being laid off. Easy global access to skills and training information, all in one place, saves time and money.

- Inbuilt statistical analyser – create a profile of those roles that pose the greatest risk or exposure to the organization, backed up with information that can be fed into recruitment and training processes, such as headcount, personnel records, current positions, grades, qualifications and training details. Then match skills and resources against the specific needs of diverse projects around the world
- Trouble-shooter – deploy functionality that effortlessly identifies future issues before they cause problems by flagging up future skills gaps, potentially unqualified staff and any likely resource conflicts
- Specialist tools – manage engineering projects by resource utilization and headcount. You should be able to slice and dice pertinent workforce data by person and by fleet or vessel
- Advanced reporting – when integrated with HR systems or to other reporting tools, dynamic statistical reporting capabilities give managers the heads-up and the hard evidence they need to increase headcount or buy in specialist skills to plug any gaps. Existing, missing or expiring skills and information, such as role skills checks and promotion suitability, can help fully utilize your existing resources and improve resource-planning in the future.

Fluctuations in the profile of every workforce are inevitable but ignoring the consequences can mean a ticking bomb for many organizations. Be sure to defuse it before it causes irreparable damage by combining a well thought-out skills matrix with the latest automated technology. Your organization will be rewarded with the best possible talent pool to survive in the highly competitive offshore market and deliver successful projects that are both sustainable and profitable.

Crispin Jessop is an offshore workforce management specialist at Allocate Software

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About Allocate Software

Allocate Software was founded in 1991 and is today a leading provider of healthcare, maritime and defence workforce deployment software. Headquartered in London, and with offices throughout the UK, the company operates worldwide offices in Canberra (Australia), Sydney (Australia), Stockholm (Sweden) and Skopje (Macedonia) and employs more than 350 people.

Allocate Software serves over 500 customers globally. Its comprehensive range of OffshoreSuite, HealthSuite and DefenceSuite solutions are designed to underpin complex workforce management in safety critical and high skill level environments, delivering both safe staffing and productivity savings.

For more information, visit Allocate Software (<http://www.allocatesoftware.com/ww/>)

Press contact:

Mary Phillips
PR Artistry Limited
T: +44 (0)1491 639500
E: mary@pra-ltd.co.uk

(1) Lloyds Register
(<http://www.lr.org/en/news-and-insight/news/offshore-europe-survey-talent-aging-assets-survey-top-issues.aspx>)