

Marine & Oceanographic Technology Network (MOTN)

The Marine & Oceanographic Technology Network is a nine-year old regional, non-profit association of marine and oceanographic companies and organisations located throughout the New England area. The overall objectives of MOTN are twofold. First, it seeks to improve the financial bottom line of its commercial member companies. At the same time, it strives to develop strong strategic ties between industry, academia and government. MOTN encourages shared R&D activities and fosters partnership opportunities between commercial organisations, research institutions and state and federal government agencies.

The Marine and Oceanographic Technology Network (MOTN) started out as a Massachusetts-Only organisation that expanded to include the entire NE area and has grown again to include companies and organisations from all over the US and the globe. It consists of marine and oceanographic companies and organisations focused toward creating a better environment in which members may conduct business.

The Industry

The New England region contains a vast collection of marine science and technology companies and organisations. Fuelled by the significant number of ocean science-related research institutions and federally funded laboratories in the area, new and innovative marine technology products and services are continually be introduced onto the world market by these companies and organisations. Though it is New England based, MOTN has been internationally successful in bringing together like-minded individuals and companies all over the world.

MOTN Membership

The marine technologies being launched from MOTN companies and institutions cover a broad range of applications that are becoming increasingly critical as we move into the 21st century. These applications include:

- Offshore oil and gas exploration
- Underwater search and survey
- Port and harbour security
- Vessel navigation, guidance and tracking
- Environmental monitoring
- Naval undersea warfare
- Meteorological forecasting
- Seafloor plate movement and earthquake prediction
- Marine mammal protection
- Sub-sea telecommunication infrastructure support
- Alternative, renewable energy resources

What is MOTN?

MOTN serves to create a sense of community for members. It creates a cohesive, collaborative approach to increasing marketing exposure. It offers seminars and resources to improve business practices, encourages shared Research and Development activities and fosters partnership opportunities between commercial organisations, universities and state and federal government agencies. Organisations of various sizes join MOTN to share information, leverage resources, market products and services and accomplish tasks in a collaborative and cost-effective manner. The diverse membership includes large and small manufacturers, research institutes, industry suppliers, consultants and many others all working together to increase business opportunities both within and outside the network.

Objective

The overall objective of MOTN is twofold. It seeks to improve the financial position of its commercial members whilst at the same time striving to develop strong strategic relationships between industry, academia and government. These relationships facilitate economic growth at regional level and for the marine technology business sector as a whole. What differentiates MOTN from other non-profit organisations in this field is that it is not a professional society, yet everyone in MOTN is a professional. MOTN unabashedly pursues commercially based ventures that either enable a member to do more business or sets the stage for this to be realised at a later date. MOTN works for the members and must reflect their priorities.

MOTN Activities

The organisation puts forth many activities, including:

- Workshops focused on emerging business opportunities and potential new markets
- Creation of new subcontracting opportunities with large Department of Defense prime contractors
- Co-operative programmes such as trade-show assistance, joint marketing activities and export assistance are all aimed at reducing

- operating costs for members
- Interaction with state and federal legislative bodies to increase awareness of new funding and build a local, regional and national technology presence
- Employment fairs in collaboration with universities
- The highly successful biennial Ocean Technology Workshop series (OTW). Hundreds of existing and potential customers from around the world have attended OTWs to learn about the newest products and services available from MOTN companies. These events are also open to non-MOTN members
- An interactive website with links to member sites
- Advertising discounts in key industry trade magazines (both online and print)
- Networking events at trade shows and other venues, as deemed necessary by members

In early June MOTN relocated its headquarters from Cape Cod to the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth's Advanced Technology and Manufacturing Center. Realising the growth of its membership base in the north-east and a growing trend towards participation in economic development activities in south-eastern New England, MOTN chose the location for its central location.

Impact of Marine Technology

MOTN and UMASS, along with several other marine and maritime concerns in the Bay State, have initiated a comprehensive economic study of the marine technology industry in New England. The Donahue Institute has been tasked with conducting research and producing a report, due out in by the end of 2004. Some of the objectives of this study include the assessment of the value that the industry adds to the Massachusetts economy, profiling the products, services, capabilities and research in marine technology, and identification of trends and business drives within the industry.

MOTN is also participating with UMASS in the development of programmes related to marine science and technology research and development, as well as a multi-campus information technology collaborative related to USA homeland defence.

The organisation has also engaged in a programme in concert with the Massachusetts Manufacturing Extension Partnership to utilise federal H1B funding sources to assist members in technology assessments and in the development of technology commercialisation plans and related training. Companies engaged in the programme may receive 50% cost reimbursements for certain training of employees holding a technical degree.

Board of Directors

A Board of Directors annually elected by the entire membership is charged with governing the organisation. An Executive Director appointed by the board is responsible for day-to-day administration. The board meets regularly to decide on policy issues and to plan for future events. MOTN has established committees to address key areas of member and industry interest. All members are encouraged to participate. Committees include those dealing with strategic planning, trade shows and workshops, legislative affairs, membership, new markets and business development, and port and harbour security.

Expanding Membership

Realising that the world is increasingly a global marketplace, and responding to requests from companies from the Pacific coast, Gulf of Mexico, as well as non-USA businesses, the Board voted to extend its charter to include national and international companies. The current MOTN strategic plan is focused on polishing member services, legislative and policy agenda, and collaboration efforts in the north-eastern USA. Based on successes in these areas, similar programmes and services will be offered across the entire organisation, partly using local agents in the respective territories. Meeting a growing demand for a unified and effective economic development engine in the marine technology sector, MOTN plans to significantly increase the size of its organisation over the next 18-24 months.

<https://www.hydro-international.com/content/article/marine-oceanographic-technology-network-motn>
