Challenges Ahead for Offshore Surveying

As the offshore oil and gas industry moves into remoter areas and deeper water, the importance of the surveyor knowing accurately the precise position of a piece of work becomes more and more difficult, yet increasingly critical.The International Marine Contractors Association (IMCA) â€“ Stand 137 at Ocean Business - has warned that a serious skills shortage is hitting the market.

The industry is currently thriving in an extremely positive atmosphere, and can look forward to its workload remaining at a very high level for many years to come. Many companies are experiencing significant challenges in recruiting sufficient trained and skilled personnel for their projects all over the world. This is placing significant pressure on their desired growth and ability to deliver services. IMCA, with over 350 member companies in 45 countries is not only highlighting this disturbing trend, but is moving the skills shortage debate on apace.

The industry will commission at least 50 new offshore construction vessels in the next 2-3 years covering IMCA membersâ€™ activities including lifting, pipelay, diving, survey and ROV operations. About 10 of these will be dive support vessels (DSVs)

The drilling industry will commission about 40 more floating drilling rigs (semi-submersible of ship shape) in the next three years. Around a hundred new ROVs will be built, most of them Work Class. The new vessels will require around 1000 additional survey and inspection discipline personnel. The ROV spreads will require some 1200 additional personnel to operate them.

Visitors to the IMCA website will find a section devoted to careers and employment opportunities in the offshore surveying industry (as well as other offshore contracting sectors) including entry and training requirements. Information sheets devoted to careers in offshore surveying include a graphical guide to hydrographic survey operations, and a series of â€œI want to beâ€ leaflets devoted to becoming an offshore surveyor; a data processor; an engineer/technician; or a geophysicist; with similar leaflets devoted to careers in marine construction; dynamic positioning; diving; and working with ROVs.