

Talent Council Workshop Focuses on Diversity Solutions

Susan Howes, Chevron Horizons Program Manager

To meet the need for people to replace those due to retire during the “big crew change,” the oil and gas industry must attract, retain, and promote a more diverse workforce than it has in the past. In October 2009, the SPE Talent Council held a Diversity Workshop in Paris to explore ways the industry can be more attractive to today’s diverse workforce. Human resources professionals from 11 employers participated, sharing best practices in encouraging diversity in the workplace.

The SPE Talent Council, chaired by Fabrice Bouchard of Schlumberger, provides a forum in which industry and academia collaborate on initiatives to increase the quantity and quality of industry talent, including initiatives to increase industry attractiveness to a diverse workforce. Numerous opportunities exist for employers to collaborate in encouraging diversity/inclusion in the industry, including

- Benchmarking maternity policies, especially for expatriates on international assignments
- Encouraging more women and ethnic minorities to study engineering, math, and science
- Sharing best practices in staffing difficult locations with women and ethnic minorities
- Supporting dual-career couples
- Providing industry role models from diverse backgrounds
- Preparing for the crew change by accelerating competency development
- Transferring the knowledge from the generation retiring to new recruits
- Encouraging women and minorities to take assignments in global projects and in operations
- Implementing nationalization strategies including the development of national work forces

Initiatives to Encourage Diversity Discussed

A number of examples of initiatives to encourage diversity were shared during the workshop. From employee networks and diversity training sessions to adapting the field work environment to women employees, participants elaborated on the many initiatives taken by their companies to encourage diversity in the workplace.

Nicky Jenkins, Baker Hughes Diversity manager, described a women’s resource group that was enthusiastically received among employees. Baker Hughes also launched an internal photographic competition to ensure inclusion of photos representative of its diverse workforce in its media bank.

Suzanne Jahn, Human Resources manager with ExxonMobil, shared her company’s enablers for diversity:

- Global functional structure facilitating sharing of best practices
- Common performance assessment and development processes, integrated structures with diverse committee membership, and metrics to monitor progress
- People strategies aligned with business objectives stewarded to close diversity gaps
- Policies, guidelines, and programs focused on harassment prevention, workplace flexibility, family-friendly expatriate policies, dual-career accommodation, and temporary leave-compensation guidance
- Employee networks providing self-help assistance
- Involving women in recruiting interviews, mentoring, and training
- Senior-management engagement and support

In addition, ExxonMobil sponsors events, such as the teacher workshop held at the SPE Annual Technical Conference and Exhibition in New Orleans, to promote math and science in secondary schools, which helps to persuade students from diverse backgrounds to pursue studies and careers in math and science.

Tania Gandamihardja, Human Resources director for Schlumberger Artificial Lift, discussed the cultural transformation that Schlumberger has undergone. Thirty years ago, Schlumberger’s management had a vision for global nationality diversity. That commitment transformed the company from one made up of mainly French, American, and British nationalities to one with a balanced mix of nationalities that matches the countries generating its business revenues.

And 15 years ago, Schlumberger focused on creating gender diversity by developing a roadmap with key milestones. The company’s target was to recruit female young professionals and develop them over time to generate a talent pool that would make up at least 20% of the management team by 2010. The proportion of females in management-level positions is now 12.5%, so the company decided that it must step up its hiring. Significant progress has been achieved: during 2009, women accounted for 28% of field technical-position hires and more than 32% of R&D hires.

The company learned that recruiting globally from the best universities, training everyone in the same way, and paying equal compensation for the same job across all nationalities

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did not achieve the success desired, Gandamihardja said. The company discovered that progress requires an internal cultural change in several areas, including:

- Senior-management support is essential.
- Attracting highly skilled women is a challenge not a barrier.
- Respect for specific gender needs is necessary and internal perceptions about this must change.
- Specific gender challenges require broadening of policies on career flexibility, dual careers, maternity, and accommodations in the workplace.
- Being wary of stereotypes and glass ceilings.

The field environment is challenging, especially for women, and adapting the workplace is imperative. Schlumberger introduced a new coverall designed for women and developed a field-location classification system for female placement based on working conditions and the local environment. It also created a global women's network called Connect Women, which provides women working in remote locations the opportunity to communicate and get support from other women across the company, and highlights some of the critical issues that women face in their field assignments.

Schlumberger also introduced a global maternity and parenting standard and allowed more flexibility for expatriate employees to use their home leave entitlement to cover childcare. Workshop attendees agreed that more effort is needed to adapt the working environment to make it more welcoming to women and that this is an area where industry should collaborate.

Total's Initiatives

Monique Simon, Total's Diversity manager, explained that Total embarked on its diversity journey in 2003, creating the Women's Career Committee to review women with the potential to get to a certain level in 5 years, to review the positions needed for career development, and to ensure that they were included in succession plans. A Diversity Council was created in 2004 with the head of E&P serving as its chair, followed by creation of an Internationalization Steering Committee in 2005 and the Diversity Department in 2006. Each affiliate now has a diversity officer who ensures that Total's diversity policies are translated into action.

Kofo Ati-John of Total reviewed the diversity program in Total E&P Nigeria. That subsidiary's employees come from a variety of states and ethnic groups in Nigeria, and also include expatriates. Recent growth in the subsidiary increased the demand for talent, resulting in growth in both local recruitment and expatriates assigned to Nigeria. The subsidiary faced challenges of multicultural diversity, and interpersonal conflicts affected creativity, productivity, and collaboration.

In 2007, the subsidiary launched the Ambition for a Diverse Total in Nigeria with management involvement, which instituted policies on gender, cultural, and generational diversity. Programs to integrate and enhance the potential of the diverse workforce include team-building activities; cultural excursions; a sports festival; and a newcomers' night for new expatriates, new local recruits, and locals returning from assignments abroad. The staff and their families attend seminars and participate in a



Jenkins makes a point during the discussions as Bouchard, left, and Gandamihardja look on.

mentoring program. The result has been an increased awareness of intercultural issues and better internal communication.

Susan Howes, Chevron's Horizons Program manager, noted that Chevron has 11 employee networks, including ones on Asian Employees, Black Employees, Boala Moort Employees, Boomers Employees, Chevron Enabled, Chevron Pride, Filipino Employees, Native Americans, Somos, Women, and XYZ Employees. Each has a mission and vision, and provides business value by:

- Facilitating the transfer of knowledge, skills, and experiences
- Increasing cross-cultural awareness and diversity appreciation
- Serving as a resource for organizations and leadership teams
- Acting as resources for attracting and retaining new talent
- Improving Chevron's image and reputation through community activities and outreach
- Providing an avenue for discovery of new talent within the organization
- Improving employee morale, commitment, and retention

Debbie Allen represented BAE Systems, a global defense company of 105,000 employees, recognized by the *London Times* 4 years running as one of the "Top 50 Companies Where Women Want to Work." BAE Systems evolved from recruiting heavy-manufacturing specialists to filling more information technology and technical positions. In employment advertisements, photos of military defense equipment changed to photos of young men and women employees in coveralls. The company culture evolved from a command-and-control approach to one embracing flexibility and innovation.

BAE Systems provides diversity training sessions for its senior leadership groups based on the video "The Eye of the Storm." The sessions instruct the leadership team in what they can do to address the challenges of diversity. The company also holds global virtual women's forums, which include speakers discussing issues of mentoring and career development. BAE Systems uses a Diversity/Inclusion Maturing Matrix/Continuum Model to establish

a baseline and a direction for diversity/inclusion in each home market.

Discussions in the workshop revealed that having a work permit for the accompanying spouse positively affects the successful completion of international assignments by employees. Françoise Van Roosmalen and Katy Van der Wilk represented The Permits Foundation, an independent foundation that lobbies countries for work permits for spouses of intracompany transferees. Its global survey found that 82% of spouses are university graduates and that 79% speak two or more languages. Before assignment, 89% had employment or were self-employed, but that fell to 35% during assignment. Having a spouse working positively impacts an employee's completion of an assignment, extension of the assignment, and willingness for new assignments, the company said. Adjustment to location, family relationships, health and well-being are also positively influenced. Countries were more attractive if spouses were permitted to work, according to 96% of spouses in the survey, and 60% said they would be unlikely to relocate to a country where it is difficult for a spouse/partner to get a work permit. Van der Wilk presented a global overview of the current status of accompanying spouse work permits.

PartnerJob.com, an independent nonprofit association focused on finding jobs for accompanying spouses, has 38

member companies that get access to the accompanying spouses' resumes. Most accompanying spouses are willing to work short term or on projects, allowing employers to recruit international professionals at a local price. Laura Puig with PartnerJob.com said employers can post jobs by connecting their job boards to the site or posting jobs manually.

Mentoring Programs

Anne-Marie Hubert and Debra Grandjean of Ernst & Young discussed their company's mentoring programs that focus on women and under-represented minorities. They emphasized that it is important to get the right learning, experience, and coaching best suited for personal development.

Mentoring programs at Ernst & Young team senior-level mentors with less-experienced professionals to develop competencies. Mentoring includes explicit and tacit knowledge transfer and tutoring. The formal mentor is at least two levels above the mentee, so that the mentee is not a direct report.

Mentees need not embrace the style of their mentor, but get coaching to improve performance. Mentoring programs help women employees get promoted to partners. Although women are recruited at or above parity with males from business schools, there is considerable attrition as they progress to levels approaching partner. **JPT**



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