

Condition Based Maintenance Network Brings Best Practice Sharing to the UK Oil and Gas Industry

Earlier this year in Aberdeen, OTM - an independent firm of technology management consultants specialising in upstream oil and gas - launched the new oil and gas industry Condition Based Maintenance (CBM) network. As the new network manager, OTM aims to formalise this successful forum and engage more oil industry companies so that the benefits to their equipment maintenance are far-reaching.

Condition based maintenance is an effective form of predictive maintenance where the condition of plant and equipment is monitored so that maintenance can be planned and machinery performance optimised.

Based in Guildford, UK, OTM has wide experience in setting up and running networks for various business sectors to share knowledge and experience. The company has picked up the reins and launched the new CBM network, inviting oil companies, duty holders, service companies, suppliers and academic institutions to participate.

Managing the project is Associate Director, **Annie Hairsine**, who says: "Building on a previously successful CBM initiative with Robert Gordon University (RGU) the CBM network is now scheduling three workshops each year where case histories and lessons learned will be shared amongst members. This is an important way to allow all members to share in best practice, and we are also pleased that RGU's CBM benchmarking tool will be deployed to measure and improve CBM techniques and practices."

The network, which demonstrates a rare degree of collaboration in the UK oil and gas industry, will, it is said, ensure that engineers in all participating companies can increase their awareness and understanding of CBM and its business value throughout the industry.

"The kick-off meeting in May 2005, was attended by 10 companies with a similar number who expressed interest in the network's future activities," says Annie Hairsine. "Membership is open to oil companies, OEMs,

service companies and academic institutions alike. Current members include BP, Shell, CNR, SKF, DEI, Robert Gordon University, Petrofac, Chevron, and Wood Group.

"The initial meeting heard presentations from George Rae, BP, giving his perspective on how to integrate CBM into maintenance schedules, then from Keith Dunnett of CNR, who identified potential 'Pitfalls of Not Understanding Condition Monitoring'. Given that this was just a taster of what is to come we were encouraged by the level of discussion and networking that was generated as a result of this preliminary meeting."

One enthusiastic participant, Garth Reucassel, Rotating Engineer with Shell in Aberdeen, said: "We don't often sit round a table with other oil companies and discuss operational issues, and we have found it very useful to share experiences and good ways of doing things. The North Sea oil industry is unique in its operations and cross-company learning is of great benefit to all of us who attend the forum meetings."

"Looking outside of your own business to see how others tackle issues is very beneficial, and with Shell's platforms ranging from 3 to 30 years in age, we know we can benefit from widening our perspective on maintenance practices."

The costs of running the network are met by the members. "Members pay for it on an annual basis," says Annie. "Oil companies and duty holders, service companies and suppliers pay an annual fee and universities participate for free. Typical attendees at a forum meeting might include rotating equipment engineers, reliability engineers, asset performance managers, optimisation and maintenance engineers."

There have been two further meetings scheduled in Aberdeen this year, the first of which took place on Thursday 8th September at Woodbank on North Deeside Road, to coincide Offshore Europe; the second will be held in Aberdeen on the 6th December 2005. A new CBM network web site is under construction to market the forum and offer members access to valuable shared knowledge and documentation held in a secure restricted-access area. This network formula has been very successfully applied and managed by OTM in the oil industry's Deepstar project, the Chevron-led forum for the development of technologies for enhancing the production of oil and gas in water depths of up to 10,000 feet.

Annie Hairsine believes that oil companies will benefit through increased production, reduction of long-term OPEX, optimised maintenance costs and measuring and improving



Annie Hairsine

their CBM techniques and practices, whilst service companies and suppliers will benefit through increased awareness and understanding of CBM and its business value throughout the industry.

"Everyone will identify and report best practice so that benefits are seen across the industry," she says, "and this includes ensuring optimum HS&E protection. This is truly a win-win situation for all who are involved in managing the performance of maintenance systems."

Progress is already being made following the recent Offshore Europe venue in Aberdeen and OTM is presently concentrating its efforts on European participation, having already approached the Dutch and Danish sectors with sights already set on the Norwegian market.

OTM is an independent firm of technology management consultants specialising in upstream oil and gas, based in the UK and the USA. Established in 1993, it employs 12 people who are specialists in technological innovation and its commercialisation. OTM helps both technology end users (eg. oil companies) and their suppliers to identify, commercialise and deploy new innovative technology.

OTM clients include industry bodies, technology providers and oil and gas companies around the world, such as BP, Shell, ExxonMobil, Total, ChevronTexaco, Statoil, Petrobras, Amerada Hess, BG, Aker Kvaerner, Schlumberger, Halliburton, Wood Group, Robert Gordon University, DTI, Enterprise Ireland, Subsea UK and ITI Energy. –

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