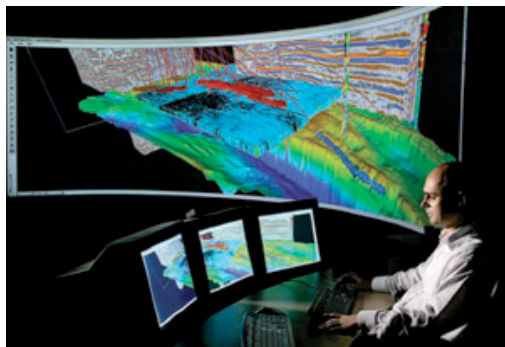


ProTracks

Recruiters Look to Shape Future of Industry

By COURTNEY CHADNEY, EXPLORER Correspondent

Oil giant BP, whose image took a hit with the 2010 Macondo oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, has a big resolution for 2012: To add talent to its team by recruiting the next generations' leading geoscientists.



BP's Highly Immersive Visual Environment, or HIVE, is a high-tech draw for young professionals. *Photos courtesy of BP*

Not an easy task, you may think, considering a recent history that was dominated by what some see as public relations missteps.

But company officials already have begun implementing their strategy with gusto – and they say the new focus on entry-level opportunities could do much to undo the company's old image.

Indeed, Simon Drysdale, head of BP's Human Resources Department-Upstream, says its recruiting strategy is not about portraying a particular image, but rather opening a window for future generations to see BP and “the scale, global reach and breadth of our business, and the tremendous career opportunities that represents.

“Since the Macondo incident, we have made a number of investments in our recruitment capability,” he said, “but these have been driven by the need to attract talent to fill the new jobs being created by our increased investment and success in exploration, our strong project portfolio and our success in recovering more from existing fields.”

Drysdale said BP has seen a spike in interest in careers at BP, both through inquiries and web traffic to bp.com/careers – and he believes this indicates that potential recruits have been impressed by BP's response to the Gulf of Mexico incident.

According to him, recruiting the new generation is essential, because “the entry-level geoscientists that we hire today are the innovators that will keep BP at the forefront of the industry and the coaches and mentors of future generations.”

And helping him bring in the talent is a name familiar to AAPG: Cindy Yeilding, a current member of AAPG's **PROWESS Committee**, a previous AAPG **Distinguished Lecturer** and an explorationist who was featured in DPA's special publication, “Heritage of the Petroleum Geologist.”



According to Yeilding, who is BP's vice president of exploration and appraisal for the Gulf of Mexico, “BP is looking for minds that don't just accept the norms of doing things, but challenge the dogma and create new ways of thinking.

“We're also looking for people with the desire and appetite to learn and develop,” she added, “both themselves and others.”

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Yeilding said that her company, like others, looks for candidates with a strong academic record and a good degree in geosciences, geophysics, geology, natural sciences, earth sciences, mathematic or physics. It equally emphasizes the importance of applicants having strong knowledge of the first principles of geosciences, and being able to apply those concepts to practical applications.

To recruit these types, BP is setting up at universities at many different locations – but the company’s recruiting actually starts even before university level.

In hopes of recruiting future students to not just BP but the industry as a whole, “we take part in high school outreach programs where we bring in science and engineering students to spend the day here to learn about our careers,” Yeilding said. “We also sponsor ‘Take Your Child to Work Day,’ where elementary through high school students join us at BP for a day to learn about the science and engineering we apply on the job.”

Yeilding also spoke of the data the company has been releasing as another way they are not only recruiting but also educating others about the industry. She said BP just released to 14 U.S. universities access to more than 300 gigabytes of high-resolution geophysical data in the Gulf of Mexico.

“The data was originally gathered and developed for operational planning at four BP-operated deepwater fields,” she said.

The files included multi-beam echo-sounder data for detailed bathymetric mapping, sidescan sonar for seabed imaging and sub-bottom profiler records for analysis of shallow marine sedimentary layers.

“This project provides data to universities to continue academic research and develop specialized expertise among students and researchers in the offshore, while giving BP the opportunity to strengthen relationships with and learn from geosciences researchers and potential recruits.”

Team Work

Yeilding and Drysdale both spoke of the “great career environment” and opportunities for growth available at BP for the next generation of geoscientists.

They also cited two programs that help support geoscience professionals beginning their careers with the company:

- The HIVE, or Highly Immersive Visual Environment, a collaborative work space that enables young professionals to image and integrate a wide range of data below the earth’s surface.
- The Challenge Program, offering structured training and mentorship in their early career years.

“We get great feedback from our Challenge Program,” Yeilding said. “My friends in the program value the structured training the Challenge Program offers, the responsibility that they get early in their careers and the fact that people always take the time to help them out and answer their questions.”

Yeilding cited “technology, people and opportunity” as reasons why BP would be an attractive place for young geoscience professionals, but also added, “It’s not just about the rocks and the high-tech equipment.

“A geoscientist at BP gets real responsibility, working with amazing people to deliver energy to the world,” she said. “We work as one team to develop, test and challenge our ideas, creating an excellent environment for new industry entrants to develop their careers.” 