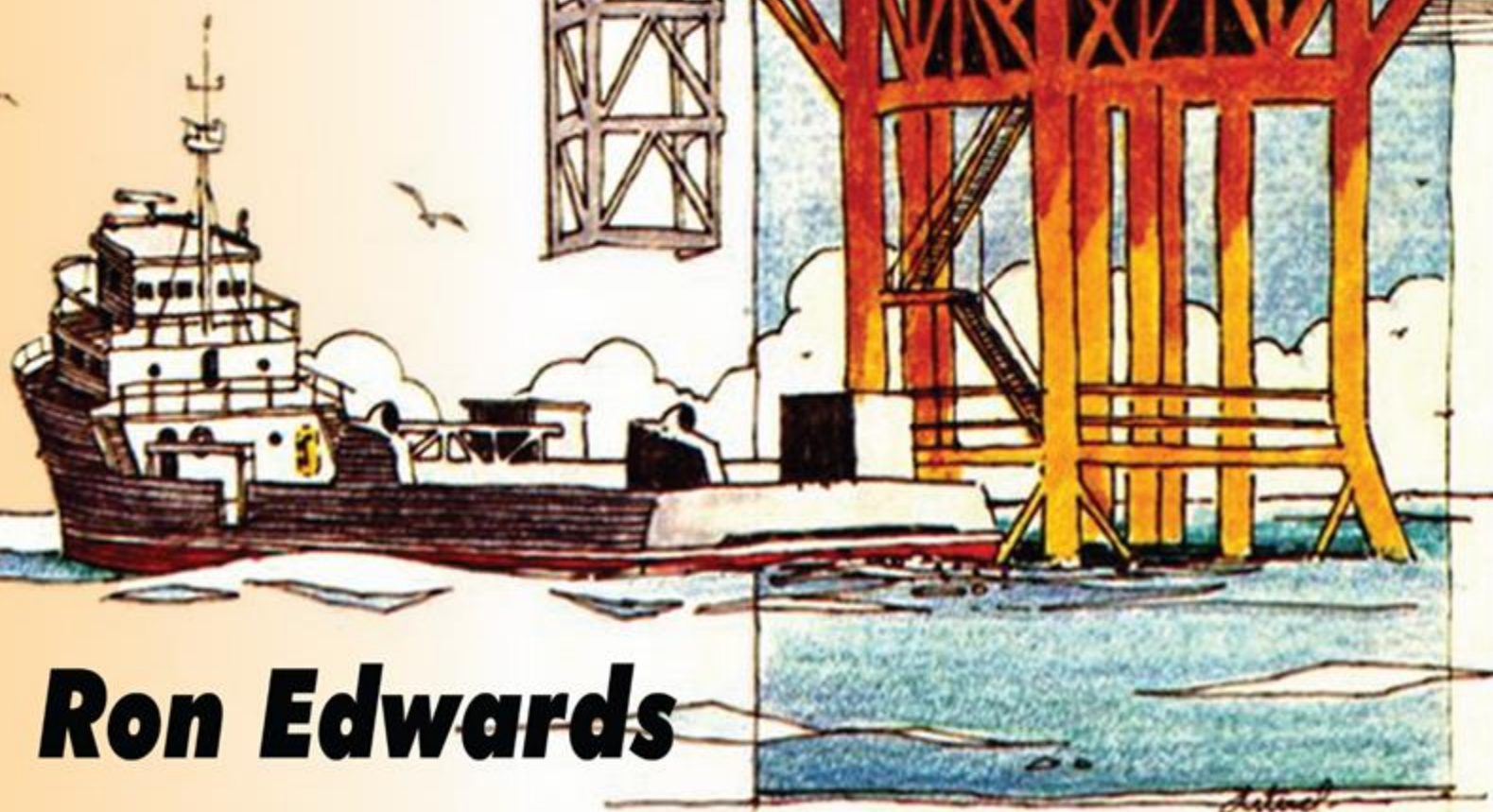


# The Complete Offshore Oil Rig Job Guide



**Ron Edwards**

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Thanks!

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## **Dedication:**

This book is dedicated to my wonderful wife, Brenda, whose kind and loving nature has been and always will be my greatest inspiration and blessing.

Special thanks to Paul Braun of PAB Web Solutions for his unwavering patience and uncanny ability to fix any problem I can produce. Thanks also to Charles Mohr and Marie Leonard of Eagle Studios for page layout and design.



## About Cpt Ron



I started my offshore career right after I finished my military obligation with the US Army. I had picked up a welding certification from a 2-year vocational high school class before I was drafted, and when I was in the army, I went through an 18-week machinist course. With those two trades under my belt, I felt confident about not having too much trouble in finding work once I got out of the service.

Following my army gig with the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne, 307<sup>th</sup> Engineering Battalion, I worked mostly construction jobs as a welder but wasn't happy due to the low South Mississippi pay rates and frequent rainouts.

I wanted something better. I had been hearing rumors about working on offshore oil rigs and that they paid a lot more money than regular land-based jobs, but I never could find out anything about getting hired; where to go or who I needed to talk to.

### **And then one day that all changed...**

One weekend, during my normal course of just being myself, I met Ed Magee. Ed had been working offshore 14/14 in the Gulf of Mexico the last 2 years as a crane operator and was kind enough to answer all my questions.

Come to find out, the rumors I had been hearing about how much offshore workers earned were true. Ed made more money in 2 weeks working offshore than I did in 2 months working my land-based job. Seeing that I was interested in getting on, he gave me the phone number of a company that was looking for a certified welder to work in Brazil.

Talk about hit the jackpot! Needless to say, I barely slept a wink that weekend trying to imagine what it would be like to work on an offshore oil rig, much less one on the other side of the world in place I'd never heard of. So, first thing the following Monday, I called the number Ed had given me. I was in luck. At the time, that company was desperate for a certified welder. I was able to convince the recruiter that I was the man for the job.

It seemed the regular welder did not show up for crew change and the one that was on board had to work over and was threatening to quit if the company did not get him some relief ASAP. They had been trying to find a welder for the last 2 weeks but so far had not found anyone who fit the bill.

When they were satisfied that I could fill the slot, they informed me how much money I would earn on my 28-day hitch. I knew it would be more than I was currently earning but I had no idea it would be as much as they were offering. Naturally I told them to sign me up TODAY!

The only problem was that I would have to get my passport, shots and other papers in order in a very short period of time. This would normally take 2 to 3 months, but because of the connections they had we were able to speed things up a bit.

Ten days later I had everything I needed including a round trip ticket to Aracaju, Brazil. They even included a nice amount of spending cash to help with meals, drinks, knick-knacks, etc., as it was a 2-day trip with 5 changeovers.

And a long trip it was. I flew from Gulfport, MS to Atlanta, GA. Atlanta to Paris, France. France to Buenos Aires, Brazil. Buenos Aires to Aracaju, Brazil and Aracaju to the rig via a 1-hour helicopter ride. Talk about jet lag!

The rig was a platform rig with a tender that was a converted WW2 Navy vessel containing the engine room, crane, mud pumps & pits, pipe rack and other oilfield machinery.

To say I was amazed does not even come close to describe how I felt the first time I set foot on a rig. Talk about a different world! Boats were being unloaded, huge cranes were swinging in every direction, helicopters were flying and the entire rig was going up, down and sideways at the same time. And no matter what direction you looked; land was nowhere in sight...

After putting my bags in my assigned room and getting a cup of coffee, I went to meet the "toolpusher" (boss man). Come to find out he was an "ole Mississippi boy" himself, which I thought was pretty cool.

But that did not stop his jaw from hitting the floor when he found out that all I had was a structural welding certification, nothing in pipe. "Well," he said, in a

typical southern drawl, “you can either learn to weld pipe or we gotta get someone else.” I can usually learn things fairly quickly when I have to, and this was definitely a “have to” situation.

With a bit of hard work, determination and a touch of luck I was able to add pipe welding to the list of things I could do. In fact, I was welding pipe almost like a pro before the end of the hitch (almost).

I made 2 hitches on that rig and then the job was over. The company hired a Brazilian welder for less than they were paying me and that was the end of that. And there I was again, back doing construction welding 5 days a week, except for rainouts. I had lost Ed’s phone number somewhere along the way and had no way to get in touch with him.

About a year and a half later I got a call from guess who? Ed. He had not heard from me and wanted to check and see how I was doing. And boy, was I glad he did. I told him what happened with the Brazil job, that I really liked offshore and did he know of any other jobs.

“As a matter of fact,” he said, “that’s why I’m calling.” He went on to tell me about a company, that had 4 new, state of the art semi-submersibles coming out of the shipyard in Belle Chase on their way for their first deep water contracts. He said they were looking for hands and would I be interested?

I called the contact, he was a rig manager for one of the rigs, and wanted to do a personal interview. The next day I drove to Louisiana and met with him. He said he didn’t have any openings for a rig welder at the time. He did have a crane operator trainee slot available and would I be interested?

And I said “sure” and was hired on the spot, provided I could pass the physical. Which I did without any problem. A few days later I was going down the Mississippi River to the Gulf of Mexico on a deep-water semi, which became my home base for the next several years.

This rig was enormous, almost 3 times the size of the one in Brazil. It had 3 cranes on it where the one in Brazil only had 1. Up until that time the only crane operating experience I had was a couple of months on a boom truck and 1 day in a cherry picker lifting shingles up on a roof. I was facing quite a learning curve in the weeks and months ahead.



The Manitowoc cranes on the rig were huge! 2 of them had 120 ft booms and the other one a 70 ft boom. Lifting capacity was 30ton, 50ton and 70ton. The cranes set on pedestals, 30 ft off the deck, and the deck was 65 ft from the water. Operating them was like nothing I had ever imagined.

I trained with the regular crane operator for 2 weeks and then I was on my own. Running & pulling anchors, running & pulling the stack, spudding in, moving the rig and even running casing were operations I had to learn all by myself, along with many other procedures. I admit my butt cheeks were squinched up tight in that crane seat on many an occasion.

Even though I had never operated equipment of this caliber and scale, I think I did pretty good. There were some mistakes, yes, but thankfully no serious injuries occurred on my watch. In fact, I thought I turned out to be a damn good crane operator. I was even able to work a few hitches as a rig welder when the regular welder was off due to medical issues.

I stayed with that company for several years. They were a great company and I loved my job. Eventually I left due to management issues and sought offshore employment elsewhere. With the experience I had, I had no trouble in finding work.

During my off time I had started a small welding business. It brought in a little extra money every month, and served me well whenever offshore was slack and jobs were hard to come by.

Over the years I worked for several different companies. Most of the time as a crane operator and once as maintenance foreman. I pulled a couple of hitches off the Ivory Coast in West Africa, Norway, South Africa and the US West Coast. I was even part of a relocation crew bringing a rig from Norway to Pascagoula in the middle of winter in 95.

That was one scary trip, the North Atlantic during the winter months is quite formidable. We got caught in an Atlantic storm that lasted 2 weeks. Total time for that voyage was almost 3 months. We got our regular pay, plus 25% overseas pay, plus one HUGE “special” bonus when it was all said and done. Get hooked up with the right company and you can make some serious cash.

The last time I worked in the oilfield was a land job as a crane operator working 7/7 out of Port Fourchon, LA loading and offloading crew and supply boats going to the rigs.

The job and pay was much the same as offshore. We worked a 7/7 rotation, 12 hours a day and there were 2 – 12-hour shifts. The company provided room, board and laundry service just like on the rigs. The main difference was you didn’t fly to work in a helicopter, you didn’t have to worry about drowning (unless you fell off the dock) and when your hitch ended you could leave and go home. You didn’t have to wait for transportation to get back to shore, which sometimes in itself can be a big hassle.

### **How Offshore Guides Got Started**

When I began my offshore career, many of my friends asked how to get such an exciting and high paying job. As a crane operator, I always had a crew of 4 roustabouts. At that time, I could recommend people to personnel for hiring. Personnel would call them and do a quick phone interview and if that went well send them off for a medical. If they passed the medical, the next destination would be the heliport.

Naturally I recommended my friends and family. Once they got hired, I made it a priority to get them promoted to the next position whenever possible. Most of the time they were promoted to roughnecks on the rig floor. The company I worked for was a great company, and they always hired from within whenever possible. If they thought you could handle the job with a bit of training, they would definitely give you a shot at it.

I helped 2 welders, 1 warehouseman, 2 crane operators and a barge engineer get promoted from roustabout to positions that were more fitting of their abilities. One of those crane operators kept his job for 20 years straight! On the same rig!

Sad to speak, things are a bit more involved these days. Companies want you to go to Houston or some other major operations office, get a complete physical with back X-rays and MRI's, do various kinds of personal and behavior tests, fill out paperwork, get a drug screen and background check and successfully complete entry level training.

As I went on through my career, I talked more and more about the unique opportunities found in offshore employment. I found that by writing down the step-by-step procedures about how to get hired and putting it into a small book I could communicate the process a lot easier and faster as opposed to trying to explain it to anyone wanting to know how to get hired offshore. AND, I discovered people would even pay money for it, which got my business brain working on a plan.

I typed out what I knew about how to get hired on a portable typewriter, found some good pictures of offshore oil rigs, went to a copy shop and had them put together a 15 page, 11 ½ by 8½ booklet which I named "Offshore Guides."

I then took out a small ad in my local newspaper which read "Offshore Job Information, \$4.95" and provided a mailing address. To my astonishment, people started sending me money. I still have my first \$4.95 check.

**The best part was people would write and thank me for providing this information. Others would tell me it helped them get hired, which was awesome...**

It wasn't long before I realized there had to be a faster way to do this than making copies. So, I went to a printer, they took my ideas and added a few of their own, and we came up with a more professional looking publication and renamed it "The Complete Offshore Employment Handbook."

It became more successful than I ever imagined, which amazed me, as I had never considered myself a writer. As a hard copy, it went through 5 editions and updates, selling several thousand copies to people all over the world. I continued to receive letters from men and women on how that simple little idea of writing a book had inspired them.

The publication went online in 1998 and since has received over 3.5 million-page views from more than 1.3 million visitors. I consider it to be one of the best if not

the best sources of information about how to get hired offshore. The latest edition is what you are reading and was completed in November of 2021.

Why am I telling you all this? Hopefully to inspire you. You see, there is something here a lot of folks don't consider that I want you to be aware of. Sure, offshore pay is high and the benefits are great, but there is also something else I want you to think about that many don't even give a second thought to. I call it the "unseen" opportunity. It's those big blocks of time off you get.

Most rig jobs only require you to work 6 months out of the year. The rest of the time is yours; you can do with it what you like. Many people go on extended vacations or long hunting or fishing trips. Unfortunately, there are some that don't do much more than drink, party and waste away valuable time and money that could better be used in other endeavors. And that's OK, they have a right to live their life however they want.

But instead of squandering away your opportunity, you could take advantage of it and do something less wasteful and more productive. You could start a business. Go to college and advance your education. There are opportunities all over the place, if one just looks. There are universities that have curriculums especially for people working rotational shifts. There are trade and night schools that offer the same type of arrangement.

Me, I wrote a book, and turned my work experiences into a small side business. At the same time, I also purchased some welding equipment and started a business doing onsite fabrication and welding during my days off along with a lot of wrought iron artsy stuff. Both of these businesses contributed to my overall income and helped out immensely when rig work was slack.

Today, I am retired from working offshore and welding but I still spend a lot of my time with the OffshoreGuides.com website. I have a passion for meeting new people and helping them in their quest for offshore work. I do hope “The Guide” will provide you with what you need to get the offshore job of your choice.

Working offshore not only provides an exciting and well-paying vocation, the time off can provide you with some great opportunities to better yourself. But, that’s enough about me and how all this came about. The rest of this eBook along with the entire OffshoreGuides.com web site was developed to help you get the offshore job you want. GOOD LUCK!



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# 1

# The Offshore Oil Rig Industry



Whether your entry level or have years of industry experience, if you have not been getting any reasonable responses to your job applications and are scratching your head on how to get more action, “The Guide” should prove to be a valuable resource to you.

Offshore is a great place to work. Of all the jobs I've had, working offshore is at the top of the list. Even though it was hard, it was fun and meaningful and paid very well. This is not to say there weren't times when it was not so fun, not so safe and not so comfortable. However, even with that, I would not trade those experiences for anything.

Offshore work is not for everyone. It takes a special breed of person to endure the hardships of being away from home in an isolated environment working in an industry that life insurance companies consider to be one of the most dangerous in the world, in all kinds of weather, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

- Normal work schedules are 12 hours a day, 7 days a week, week after week.
- Some schedules are "can until can't." You go on the job and stay until it's finished (these jobs provide huge checks).
- Expect to work in bad weather, cold weather, hot weather, and everything in between. There is a saying that "it never rains in the oilfield and every day is like Sunday." It's a lie! Sometimes your working conditions are poor, the food is terrible, and management sucks big time. Sometimes it's “easy peezy” with not much more to do than sit around, watch movies, play cards, and interact with your favorite media while waiting on weather or some special equipment to arrive or machinery to be repaired.

You'll either love it or hate it, and it won't take long for you to make up your mind. By the time you wear out your first pair of boots, you'll know. One thing is for sure; you'll never forget it.

## **Current Outlook:**

The oilfield is a cyclic industry, meaning it's one of ups and downs that can sometimes be very extreme and happen very fast. It's not unusual for one company to be laying off while others are having severe personnel shortages.

Then you have the political side of things:

- Trump was sweet on the industry, and it was making a great comeback.
- Biden seems hell bent on total destruction of the oil industry.
- One group of analysts and forecasters predict oil will be at \$80 plus a barrel.
- Another group predicts we are about to see the worst oil bust in 40 years. Which one are we to believe?

If you know what you're doing, you can go online and easily find 50, 60 or more current offshore jobs, for both entry level and experienced personnel. Don't let anyone tell you there are no jobs available or that all the good ones are a thing of the past. If you are having trouble finding a position which fits your skill and experience level, get in touch with me and I'll help get you connected.

The oil companies themselves are expecting an uptick in activity this year, and are estimating they will invest \$44 billion more than they did last year in exploration and production projects. The push for offshore wind is adding hundreds of new jobs to the industry every year.

Even with the present administration doing all it can to shut things down, work goes on. Projects are being planned and funded, platforms are being fabricated and installed, pipelines are being laid, and a range of other oilfield and offshore activities are taking place as you read this.

People retire, quit, or get fired from these jobs, every day. And every day, new people are hired to replace them, every day. Granted, the industry might not be as fast paced as it used to be hiring wise, but it is still hiring.

As long as there are tens of millions of vehicles on the road, as long as planes are flying and ships are sailing, as long as people use natural gas to heat their homes and cook their food, there will be offshore jobs. Plus, over 6,000 items we use every day and could not survive as a society without come from petroleum products, and much of it comes from offshore sources.

**Leanne from Scotland:** My tenure in the industry allowed me to meet some remarkable people, women included. The following is a true story from a Scottish Lass, a first-time greenhorn bold enough to step into a male dominated industry. Meet Leanne from Aberdeen, Scotland:

*“I was contracting on the same platform for 2 years, and truly had a most remarkable experience, tales too many to tell. I am an offshore female. No day was ever the same, and I got on very well with all the guys. I started from the hookup and commissioning right through to startup phase. It was a real eye-opener, and I had the opportunity to cover a variety of jobs from RP Assistant to Production Administration, IT Support and Materials, so as you can see I was all over the place.*

*On a typical day, I would often be told, walk, don't run, but as I was careful, I would say I'm not running just walking very fast. The reply would be oh, ok then, on you go. I enjoyed making the guys laugh. They could be guys around me because I feel it is a males' environment, and they should be able to behave as they would with a female present. If a female cannot cut it or accept the language or the way the guys behave, then they must up and chuck. Although I found the guys were generally well behaved, at times I would come across a fella from the old school who hated females offshore. Some I managed to swing around and accept me, but I didn't bend over backward for anyone. After a tongue lashing from me, I guess they would be a wee bit friendlier. I don't honestly remember many that I couldn't swing around.*

*My trips were made up of 3 weeks offshore and 1-week onshore leave, which I loved, as I am also a South African, so I knew no one onshore. The week was just enough to stock up and catch up on a bit of R&R. My days were normally from 7 to 7, but I typically called it a wrap at about 10 at night. I was also a day rater, so no overtime. I was truly dedicated to the Platform.*

*The tables were turned on me cause some of the guys lose their marriages when working offshore, I lost mine as well. Initially, I decided to go offshore to see for myself if I would let my ex work offshore. I was hooked 5 years ago; he since gave it up. I can now go ahead and pave my way in the patch.*

*The offshore sound effects were great. I would walk through the MCR (main control room) and miaows (meows) would follow me due to my accent.*

*Because I sometimes speak tannoys (announcements over the intercom, again my accent would come into play), they would echo the number for whomever it was that I was calling for.*

*Other times I would go out onto the decks if I was covering materials and work alongside the deck crew, just baby stuff you know. I don't have my banksman / slinger ticket but am going for it. I feel it is important for guys and gals out there to be able to do what is required to get the job done.*

*I'm looking forward to my next project and have been told I will be expected to muck in, oh for sure! At last, I'm going to be treated as almost an equal, one of the guys. I'll be doing fire watch duties and all the rest of the stuff alongside everyone else.*

*I am proud of what I have achieved, not a great deal, but just being out there is an achievement in itself. I was broken hearted when I left, but I guess that is what the offshore industry is all about. It is a very small world, as I realized when my new back-to-back worked with me for a couple of trips previously.*

*At the moment because I am still fresh and green, I've decided that offshore is where I want to be. Everyone is natural and aren't afraid of being peed off because they are someplace they don't want to be. Get out is what I say to them, be a landlubber because there are many people who want to be offshore and just aren't able to make it.*

*Many people who bring sunshine into the tea shack but are paid off, while the sad, dreary chaps hang around. I saw them come and go over the 2 years. I fought to keep my job for almost a year, hanging on by my fingernails, which is why I ain't got none left. In the end, I was just tired and kinda gave up. Even though that door slammed shut, new ones have opened.*

*I had a lot of good people on my side, and for that, I thank them. Sorry, it's not a day story, more like an abbreviated 2-year story. There was always something to laugh about out there, even if I had to act the clown to catch that laugh. Everyone laughed from the OIM right down and through the ranks.”*



## **Basic Operations:**

The oilfields of the world are commonly referred to as the "patch" and operate in two areas; onshore and offshore. While the actual drilling activity is much the same for both, offshore operations present challenges which are unknown to onshore drillers. The oceans of the world are a formidable power. The technology used to drill wells offshore is very much akin to putting people into space. Those of you who have worked offshore are familiar with these challenges. Those of you who have never worked offshore can only guess.

If you are a green hand looking at your first trip out, I would recommend you spend some time and get familiar with these operations. The reason is that the more you know about what goes on in the oilfield operations wise, the more intelligently you can talk to recruiters about getting hired.

Something else you might also factor into your career search is the offshore wind farm industry which uses many of the same processes and procedures as offshore oil drilling. Work schedules, pay and benefits are much the same. Offshore wind power is an up-and-coming industry with lots of potential for growth and advancement opportunities.

Many people believe they know how the oil and gas industry works, how crude oil gets out of the ground and into the gas tank of your car. However, in reality, they usually don't know as much as they think they do.

For example, take a company like Chevron. Most people would think that Chevron would own the drilling rig, ship it through Chevron pipelines and tankers to Chevron refineries to be processed and finally to Chevron pumps where it would be sold to the consumer. That's not always the case. Companies that do it all are called "supermajors." Currently, there are 6 of them, but they are the exception rather than the rule.

Officially, the offshore oil and gas industry is composed of 3 primary sectors. They are upstream, midstream, and downstream. Secondary categories are maritime and special services.

## **Upstream:**

The upstream industry, also known as exploration and production (E&P), finds, drills for and produces crude oil and natural gas. This is accomplished by using onshore land rigs and offshore drilling rigs to include offshore semi-submersibles, FPSO's, jackups, drillships and platforms; to name a few.

## **Midstream:**

Midstream is the conduit between upstream activities and downstream consumption. Activities would include transportation through pipelines, ocean-going tankers, rail cars, etc., processing, storing, and marketing of oil, natural gas and natural gas liquids.

## **Downstream:**

The downstream sector is the refining, processing, purifying, marketing, and distribution of crude oil and raw natural gas along with the products derived from them. Downstream would include refineries, retail gas stations, lubricants, plastics; anything that comes from oil or oil products.

## **Maritime:**

The maritime industry provides boats and utility vessels to support the industry. This would include seismic vessels to find places to drill, crew boats to transport workers to and from the rigs, anchor handling boats to run anchors, supply boats to take equipment and drilling materials to the rigs, towing vessels to move the rigs, diving support vessels, pipe laying barges and heavy lift vessels.

## **Special Service Companies:**

Special service companies provide workforce personnel, help, and services to oil and gas companies, but they don't produce any petroleum or petroleum products themselves. This would include engineers who design and manufacture rigs and oilfield equipment, casing companies, logging companies, directional drillers, air transport, offshore fabrication and welders, sandblasters, painters, offshore demolition; the list of special service companies is quite extensive.

## **How It All Works:**

Most people caught up in the rush of everyday life don't stop to think what is involved in getting oil or natural gas out of the ground, refined, and to the pumps, especially from offshore sources. The process is expensive, complicated and time-consuming, taking on average from 3 to 12 years to get it to the pump after its initial discovery offshore. Each company and country have their own way of doing things.

## **US Waters:**

### **First:**

Waters which are three miles or more off the US coastline, are considered to be in the Outer Continental Shelf and are owned by the federal government. Every August, the fed leases these lands, called tracts or sections, to oil companies interested in drilling at that location. An offshore oil lease tract covers about 9 square miles. In 2018, oil companies spent \$178,069,406 on leases, with the highest single bid being \$25,919,784.

This is a considerable chunk of money, but all it provides is the right for an oil company to drill on that tract. These initial exploratory wells are called "wildcats." On average, 7 wildcat wells must be drilled to find an area worth producing. There is a time limit, on average of about 15 years, to get the well producing after the lease has been signed. This seems like a long time, but a lot must happen after the initial find to get the oil out of the ground and to the pump.

After the lease has been secured, the oil company must contract a drilling rig, called a MODU or mobile offshore drilling unit from a drilling contractor at a specified day rate. Day rates vary according to the type of rig, location, water depth, and price of oil.



This shallow-water jack-up, drilling in water depths of 200m or less, will cost between \$30k and \$50k per day. Courtesy of Pixabay



Photo Courtesy of Christopher Griner, licensed under Creative Commons

Deepwater and ultra-deepwater rigs, drilling in water depths from 3,000m up to 12,000m will fetch between \$300k to \$400k and more per day.

**Price volatility:**

As the price of crude goes up and down, so does the day rate. When oil was \$120 per barrel, the day rate for an ultra-deepwater rig reached \$650k per day. When oil fell to \$30, the day rate for the same rig dropped to \$200k per day, if it was even working at all. When the price of crude is this low, many rigs are not working. This is called being “stacked” or “cold stacked.”

The day rate only includes the cost of renting the rig and pays for the maintenance, general upkeep, insurance, crew salaries, and food services if the company provides their own catering. Other contractors are needed to provide additional services to drill and complete the well:

- Supply and crew boats, (2 or 3) at \$5k to \$20k a day plus fuel.
- Helicopters for crew transportation (1 or 2) at \$10k or \$20k a day each plus fuel.
- Fuel for the rig, up to 50,000 liters of diesel per day.



- Various drilling services: Casing, logging, wireline, directional drilling, divers, etc., will add between \$100k to \$200k per day.
- Special drilling chemicals can reach \$5m per well; the average cost is \$50k per day.
- Cement can reach \$1m per well; the average cost is \$10k per day.

**Second:**

Once it is determined the well is worth producing, a platform will be built for that location and water depth. This construction takes place at a shipyard specializing in offshore platform fabrication. The average time for deepwater platform construction is 1 to 3 years at the cost of \$8m to \$40m. Once the platform is completed, it will be towed to the site and sunk on location by allowing water to enter the legs (called jackets). This process is known as controlled ballasting.



Photo Courtesy of Chanilim 714, licensed under Creative Commons



After the platform is sitting on the ocean floor and adequately secured, offshore “modules” will be installed on the platform by a derrick barge. To date, the record lift for a derrick barge is 10,000 tons! The modules would include complete living quarters, main engines and equipment, mud pumps, the derrick, draw works, heliport, etc.

**Third:**

After all this is installed and made operational, the platform is ready for drilling. The contractor will drill on location anywhere from 1 to 10 years and, on average, drill from 15 to 50 holes. These wells will go to different depths, angles, and locations.

**Fourth:**

Once the production platform is in place and drilling, pipelaying contractors will begin to lay a new pipeline on the ocean floor to connect it to refineries on land. The installation of underwater pipelines is a science of its own, requiring specialized equipment and personnel. Underwater pipelines can easily cost \$1m per mile or more.

The offshore industry is quite an operation which takes much effort to find, drill, and produce a well. It is also an industry that is continually searching for dependable men and women who want something a bit different for a career path.

YouTube has thousands of videos on how each of these processes works. Knowing more about what goes on in the offshore and onshore oilfield operation is a wise move since you will be able to communicate more effectively with recruiters.

Here are some key industry phrases that will give you good YouTube results concerning operations in the offshore oil and gas industry:

Casing / Cementing / Fracking  
Offshore Decommissioning  
Demolition  
Dockside Facilities  
Mud Engineers  
Mud Mixing Plants  
Oil Rig Construction  
Onshore Drilling

Crew Boats  
Offshore Drilling Vessels  
Heavy Lift Vessels  
Lift Boats  
Offshore Commercial Diving  
Offshore Rig Demolition & Salvage  
Offshore Crew Change Procedures  
Offshore Helicopter Transportation

Onshore Drilling Animation  
Fracking  
Oilfield Wireline Operations  
Life on a Rig (in Australia)  
Anchor Handling  
Offshore Diving Operations  
Underwater Welding  
Offshore Utility Vessels

Offshore Supply Boats  
Offshore Platform Installation  
Platform Sandblasting & Painting  
Offshore Rig Moving  
Types of Offshore Drilling Rigs  
Underwater Pipeline Installation  
Offshore Wind Farms  
Vessel and Rig Repair / Painting

## **Domestic and Overseas Work:**

### **Commuting:**

Commuting is when the drilling company sends its employees overseas to work and then sends them back home when their hitch is completed. This usually involves the 21/21- or 28/28-day schedule. In your off time, depending on company policy, you can tour the country you are working in. How's that for adventure?

Any time you commute back and forth to the US like this, all expenses are paid by the oil company that has leased the rig. Some will even give you a little carry-around cash for drinks, snacks, cigarettes, etc.

### **Overseas Contract Assignments:**

On this type of assignment, the employee and sometimes his entire family and household goods are moved into the country in which the drilling or work will take place, or into a nearby country. Before this can be done, the employee must sign a contract stating that he will remain on the job until his contract expires. These types of assignments can range from 12 to 24 months, with work schedules ranging from 7 days on with 7 days off to 28 days on and 28 days off.

At the end of the contract, you may be offered an opportunity to renew or return to your home country. A bonus is usually paid for employees staying the entire length of the contract.

Transporting employees overseas is a significant expense for oil companies. Because of this, they will not usually even consider sending a worker overseas unless they have had at least two years of offshore rig experience. Again, this is determined by their needs. If they need you, they'll send you.

The first offshore job I ever had was in the waters off Brazil. I got that job with no previous offshore experience because they needed a certified welder on the spot. I was lucky to be in the right place at the right time. Hopefully “The Guide” will provide you with helpful insights on how to get hired offshore – especially if this is your first time out.

## **The Positive Side of Working Offshore:**

To prepare yourself properly for working offshore, it is essential you know the nature of life on an oil rig or supply vessel as well as the advantages and disadvantages. This will help prepare you as to what to expect. First and foremost are the monetary benefits; your pay, bank, dough, moolah, pesos, euros, cold hard cash, etc. Offshore workers earn a pile of it! This career can be very tough, which is why it is so financially rewarding.

Here are some facts:

1. US entry-level personnel can earn upwards of \$50,000 to \$80,000 per year.
2. Other technical and professional positions can earn upwards of \$70,000 to \$220,000 per year.
3. Moreover, this is for working only six months out of the year.
4. Overseas wages are approximately 25% higher than US wages.

In addition to the high wages, here are some other monetary benefits with the larger companies. Benefits differ depending on whom you work for.

The better companies provide the following at little or no cost to you:

- Career Advancement Training
- Major Medical Insurance
- Major Medical Insurance
- Stock Ownership Plans
- Dental Insurance
- Life Insurance
- 401 K Programs
- Profit Sharing

## **Career Advancement Training:**

One thing that is awesome about many of these companies is that they encourage career advancement.

Here is a direct quote from a drilling company that encourages its employees to move up the ladder with an in-house training program called “*Basics to Success*.”:

*“As a dynamic and growing company that focuses on services throughout the life of the well, Basic offers employees training that enables them to move their careers forward to where they want to be. We offer a range of training programs, including Drilling and Well Service Programs, Safety Courses, Technology Courses, and Environmental Courses. Whatever course you choose, you are assured of benefiting from Basic’s proven and proprietary standards of operations.”*

If you are attending this training while you are off, the company will usually pick up the tab for all the expenses you incur. This includes paying your standard daily wage, paying for the course, paying your lodgings, meal ticket, and mileage to and from the school.

Entry-level workers can have well-paid careers while developing industry experience and personal leadership skills on the rigs. Many entry-level positions do not require a formal education. This makes offshore and maritime work an excellent choice for those not inclined toward academic pursuits. Opportunities for high pay and promotions for noncollege graduates are readily available. College degreed applicants will do just as well.

## **Major Medical / Life / Eye / Dental Insurance:**

While you are working on the rig, all medical costs are covered in the event of an accident or medical emergency. During your off time, you would be covered through these optional programs if you elected to do so. This includes all members of your family. The employer usually covers most of this cost.

## **401 (k) Programs:**

A 401(k) plan is a qualified employer-sponsored retirement plan that eligible employees can make salary-deferral contributions to on a post-tax and pre-tax

basis. In 2018 the maximum you could contribute was \$18,500. Whatever you contribute can be deducted from your annual tax bill.

### **Profit Sharing:**

Your employer takes a portion of your salary, usually up to about 6%, and puts it in an individual account. Then, if the company has a good year, they will match up to 100% of what you contributed. Profit sharing is an excellent way to save and invest for the future.

### **Stock Ownership Options:**

Some companies, after you have been with them for a while, will give you a pre-arranged number of shares of their stock each year. It does not take long for this to add up to a substantial amount of money.

The above benefits are for everyone. Salaried employees, which are usually the top supervisory positions, get not only those but others such as sick leave, disability insurance, and paid vacations.

### **Convenience:**

Working offshore is quite convenient as far as getting to the work site once you are on the rig. After rolling out of bed, you can be to work in five minutes flat! There is no hassle with traffic, truly a blessing.

### **Challenging Work:**

If you like adventure in your job, working offshore will provide you with plenty of it. Offshore work requires one to do what the average and ordinary person won't do. Most of the jobs are physical in nature, working a minimum of 12 hours a day, for weeks at a time, in all types of weather conditions and sometimes dangerous situations.

### **Accommodations:**

It's convenient to work where your room and board is paid for. The steward department makes your bed every day. Clean linen is provided as needed. Your clothes are washed every night and are clean and fresh for the next work day.

***“If you are not willing to risk the unusual, you will have to settle for the ordinary.” Jim Rohn***

During your off tower (the time on the rig that you're not working), there are plenty of satellite programs and videos to watch, served with hot popcorn and cold drinks. The better companies go out of their way to provide all the conveniences of home. Some of the rigs even have weight rooms and saunas.

### **Food:**

The galley provides 4 hot meals a day, all you care to eat. Take as much as you want, just be sure to eat all you take. Seafood and steaks are on the menu often. Snacks, cold drinks, and fruit juices are available 24 hours a day. For 6 months out of the year, you don't have any grocery expenses.

### **Environment:**

Sea air is very healthy to breathe and adds to the invigoration of the experience. Now and then you will experience some extraordinarily beautiful sights, breathtaking sunrises, and tranquil sunsets. You can enjoy these because you will not be caught up in the daily rush to go to and fro found in regular land-based jobs. When you're offshore, there's nowhere to go, except on crew-change day.

### **Travel the World:**

After you've been in the patch for a couple of years, you could see many work opportunities open for you that were previously unavailable. There are not many parts of the world where offshore work is not going on, and new drilling fields are being explored and produced all the time. If you are working on a 28/28 schedule, your time off is yours. You can go to any approved country you want and see things most people can only dream about.

Most of the time, your employer will pick up the tab for your travel expenses, to and from whatever destination you choose. For example, if you are working offshore Russia and want to visit Brazil during your time off, just let the travel department know where you want to go, and they will have a round trip ticket waiting for you to your chosen destination. Just be sure to be back for crew change!

Even though the company will pay for your travel expense, you will be responsible for all other costs incurred during your time off.

## The Unseen Opportunity:

What you do with your time off is the “unseen opportunity.” Where else can you go to work and (depending on your schedule) get two weeks off every month? The high wages and time off present a truly fantastic opportunity.

This is how Offshore Guides got started. People would ask me what I did for a living. When I told them I was an offshore crane operator, flew to work in a helicopter, made a pile of money, and got two weeks off every month, many wanted to know how they could get a job like that, so I wrote this book to point them in the right direction. It was much easier to provide an interested person with a detailed plan on how to get a job than to try and explain it in 5 minutes or less.

The need was there, and I followed through by writing this book. Not only was I able to work, learn, and advance in the industry, I was also able to help others who were interested in the same lifestyle while building a business during my time off.

While the benefits of working offshore are numerous, it’s not all fun and games, so don’t get the idea this will be like taking a cruise on the “Carnival Princess.” It’s hard ass work. It’s dangerous. There will be times when you wonder what in the world are you doing out there.

## The Negative Side of Working Offshore:

Working offshore is a dangerous occupation and puts rig workers at high risk of injuries and even death. The better companies spare no expense in ensuring offshore operations are as safe as can be; however, the risk of accidents is ever-present.

### Here are some of the most common types of accidents and injuries:

- Lost limbs and amputation
- Back and neck injuries
- Shoulder injuries
- Head injuries
- Burns
- Drowning
- Repetitive use injuries
- Slip and fall injuries
- Hearing loss
- Loss of life

## **Homesickness:**

This is a significant disadvantage of working offshore and is something that I never entirely got over. It gets less and less noticeable as time goes by, but it is natural to miss the home life. The first time out is usually the worst. It is new and exciting until you watch the chopper fly off into the distance. Looking around, you see nothing but water and sky in every direction. No land, no trees, no buildings, no other rigs, nothing. And this is the time the homesickness really kicks in.

## **Hot, Hard, Dirty & Dangerous Work:**

No matter what your job title is, you will be working a minimum of 12 hours a day, rain or shine, hot or cold. Most of the work involves getting dirty and oily, especially if you are the new guy (or gal).

## **Emergencies at Home:**

Will your family be able to do without you for possibly months at a time? What happens if the car breaks down, the child gets in trouble at school, the wife gets sick? You cannot just take some time off to deal with these things. I was amazed at how the car would break down, or the AC would quit working at the exact time I had to leave for a crew change. Be sure you have a game plan for dealing with emergencies should they arise while you're away.

## **Missing Family Events:**

When you work offshore, you will miss half of what goes on in the life of your spouse or children. Depending on your schedule, you will not be there for some of their birthdays, graduation, Christmas, and other events that only happen once. On the other hand, during your off time, you will be able to spend more quality time with them as you would while working a typical land-based job.

## **Spousal Separations:**

Leaving your spouse alone for long periods has proven to be too much for some couples. More than one rig hand has found themselves divorced due to the odd working hours and long hitches. If you are married or involved, make sure your spouse fully supports you.

Working offshore can be draining, both physically and mentally. However, if you are an energetic, hard-working individual with a craving for an adventurous profession in an exciting vocation, you could be the perfect candidate for a career offshore. Get started today!



# 2

# Working In The Offshore Oil Rig Industry



## Work Schedules:

Schedules vary among different companies. You might even find different schedules in the same company but on different rigs. The general rule for drilling contractors is that for every day worked there is a day off.

- Transportation and catering companies usually work two weeks on and one week off.
- Some special service companies will go on a job and work until it is finished. This is known as “a can 'til can't” schedule. You can work on these jobs for weeks, even months at a time, if that’s what you prefer.
- Other special service companies work on a rotating on-off basis. There are many variations.

## Off Time:

Other than the high wages, your time off is one of the most appealing aspects of these jobs. It creates an added benefit which most land-based jobs do not offer. It gives you extra time to do things you would not otherwise be able to do. You can spend more time with your family, work on projects around the house, start and grow a business, go fishing, camping, traveling, whatever you like. Moreover, you won't be rushed to do it all on the weekend.

These lengthy off-time periods also provide people who do not live right next door to the industry with an opportunity to work. Most of the offshore work in the United States is located in the Gulf of Mexico. The people who work offshore in the Gulf do not come solely from this region. They come from all over the US, Canada, and overseas. At first, this might seem like a long way to travel to work, but remember, it is only once or twice a month.

Consider this; depending on whom you work for and what your position is, many companies will fly you, at their expense, from the nearest airport to your work

site. When I worked off the Coast of Africa, I flew from the Gulfport Regional Airport in Mississippi to Dallas, to London, to West Africa and then to the rig. The return trip was just the opposite. All this was at the company's expense. Some companies, instead of flying, will reimburse your driving mileage. Don't think you live too far away. You really might not because of the travel arrangements a company may be willing to make with you.

## **Wage Computations:**

Wages are computed on an 84-hour work week. This is a typical work schedule. Work weeks of 100 hours or more are not uncommon. This might seem like many hours, but remember you are already on the job site. You don't have to hassle with getting up after a long night, worry about traffic, car problems, or any of the everyday difficulties associated with land-based jobs.

If you work for a drilling contractor or oil company, you will usually work only 6 months out of the year. If you work for marine services, service companies, or catering companies, you will probably work 6 to 9 months out of the year, sometimes more, sometimes less. It just depends.

If you want to work more, then that can be arranged, too. There were several times when I worked over as opposed to going home for my time off. An extra paycheck was always appreciated. Here are a few examples of what your schedule could be:

7 days on – 7 days off	28 days on – 28 days off
14 days on – 14 days off	20 days on – 10 days off
21 days on – 21 days off	14 days on – 7 days off

## **Advancement & Training Opportunities:**

Advancement offshore will depend primarily on 3 things:

1. The price of crude.
2. The company you work for.
3. Your particular abilities, skills, and motivation.

When I worked offshore, drilling rigs, crew, and supply boats always seemed to have a shortage of experienced and dependable hands. I doubt things have changed a whole lot.

Here are 2 major reasons this happens:

1. The employee quits company A to work for company B because the opportunities and money with company B are better.
2. The employee does not show up for crew change. This happens a lot, for a variety of reasons.

Companies want you to advance. They want you to become better trained so you can take a more responsible position. This makes you a greater asset to them. Many companies have excellent training programs to help you move up the ladder, with trainee slots for most positions. Other companies have only marginal training programs or none whatsoever.

Your ability speaks for itself. I always believed a man could do almost anything he wanted to do, given half a chance. I still believe that. You can look around all day long and find thousands of examples of this. A lot of where you go in life, whether it be in the offshore industry or elsewhere, will depend entirely on you.

**“Believe in yourself, and you will be unstoppable.” Lynda Field**

## **Prior Military:**

If you have prior military service, or if you’re still in the military, you will be able to use your military training to your advantage. The military offers a great deal of excellent training, and some of it is transferable into the offshore industry.

For example, if you are a mechanic in the military, you will probably have diesel and hydraulic experience. Many things offshore operate hydraulically, pneumatically, and are diesel powered. The Coast Guard prohibits gas engines offshore for industrial uses. If you worked on jet aircraft or helicopters, then you have some excellent experience to offer. Turbine engines are becoming more common all the time as power plants offshore.

**Most ship and boat time in the military is counted as legitimate sea-time in qualifying for Coast Guard endorsements or licenses...**

If I were a personnel manager, I would seriously consider a prior military person. Military people are trained to follow orders. Even in basic, they are taught how to respond in emergencies, giving them an edge over their civilian counterparts. If you are young person and not sure what direction you want to go in life, try the military. They offer excellent training and have some great benefits, too.



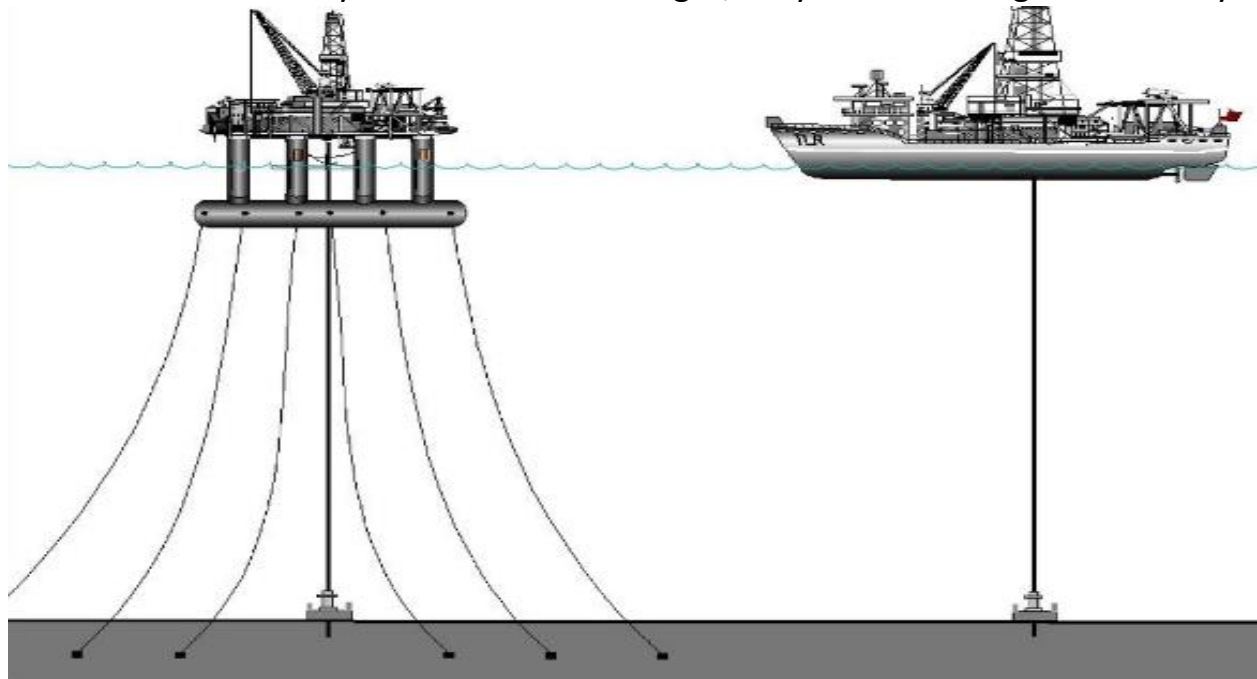
Photo Courtesy of BSEE, licensed under US Public Domain

## Types of Offshore Drilling Rigs & Vessels:

Below are the main types of drilling rigs, offshore platforms, structures, and how they operate:

### Semi-Submersible:

The semi-submersible has the hull design of a catamaran (see above picture) and is either towed or self-propelled. A semi-submersible can be dynamically positioned, use anchors or both. When the rig is on location, it is ballasted down, in about the same way a submarine submerges, sixty feet or so to give it stability.



Semi-submersibles are heavy-duty rigs designed for adverse weather conditions.

### Submersible:

An offshore drilling structure which is used in relatively shallow water, usually 80 feet or less. It is towed to its location where it is submerged until it sits on the bottom. This submerging serves as its mooring system, although anchors can also be used. Offshore submersible drilling rigs are old school, outdated and seldom used anymore.

Photo Courtesy of Minerals Management Service, licensed under US Public Domain

The above photo illustrates the 2 different ways floating offshore drilling vessels are kept on location. The semi-submersible on the left is using 6 anchors to stay on site, while the drillship on the right is using the more advanced dynamically positioned system. Anchors can weigh from 20,000 to 40,000 pounds each.



Depending on the ocean floor density, as many as 16 anchors might be required to keep the rig on location.

## **Drillship:**



Photo Courtesy of Petty Officer Tiffany Carvalho, licensed under US Public Domain

Drillships are self-propelled, carrying a full maritime crew while underway, as well as a crew of drilling personnel. Drillships are moored either by the standard anchoring system or by the dynamic positioning of the vessel.



## Dynamic Positioning:

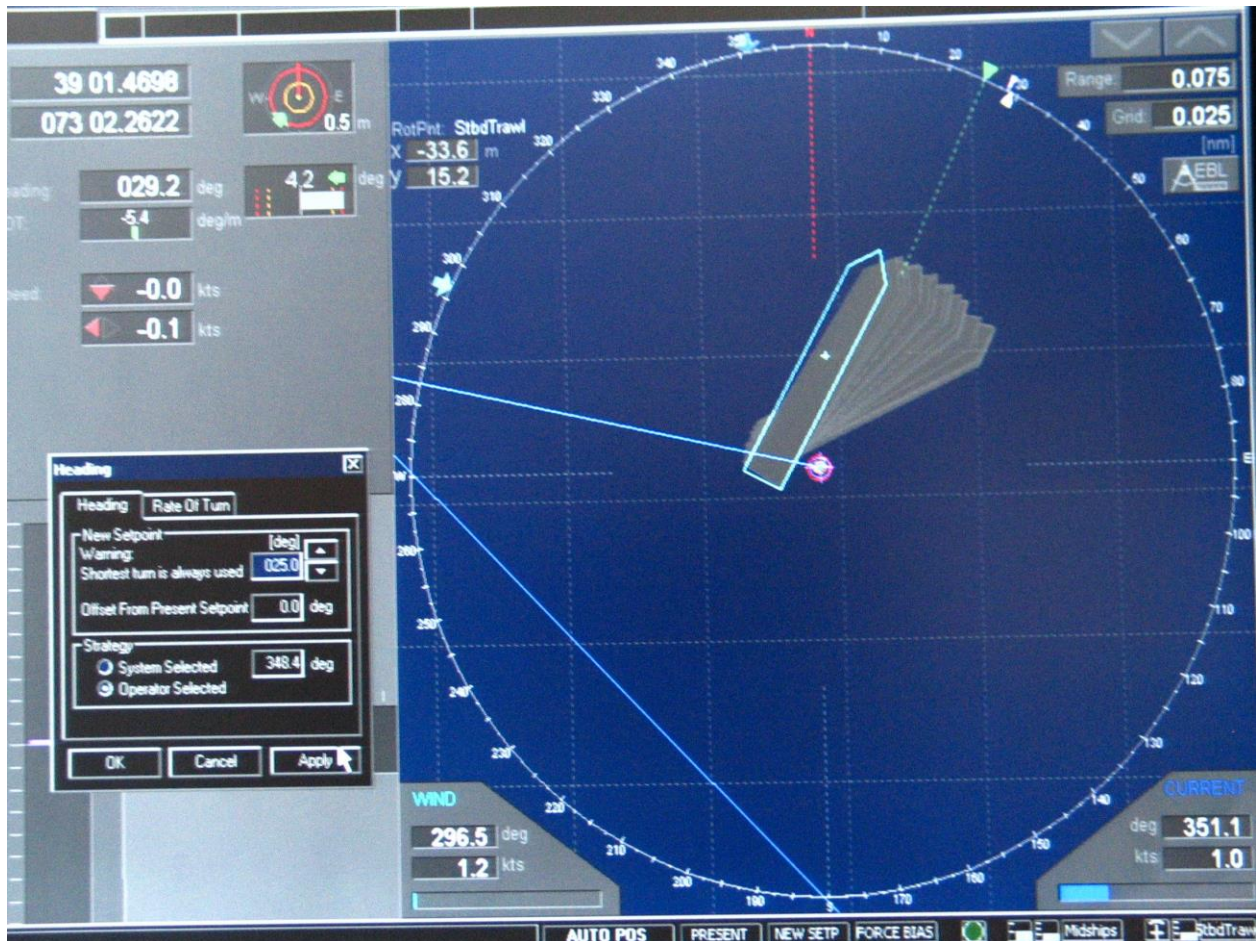


Photo Courtesy of Ben Frantz Dale, licensed under Creative Commons

Dynamic positioning (available on rigs, ships, and boats) uses computer-operated inboard thruster systems to keep the vessel on location without the use of anchors.

This arrangement allows offshore drilling rigs to drill in ultra-deepwater. The Maersk Venturer drillship currently holds the record @ water depth of 3,400 meters (11,156 feet) drilling offshore Uruguay in 2016. They have to go almost 2 miles down BEFORE they can start the actual drilling process!

## Ultra-Deep-Water Semi-Submersible:



Photo Courtesy of BSEE, licensed under US Public Domain

The ultra-deep-water rigs are drilling between 2100-3700 meters at the time of this writing. It won't be surprising to come back and edit these words in a few years with a few thousand extra meters added to the record.

## Jack-Up:



Photo Courtesy of Marine Link

This photo shows a jack-up rig fully extended in shallow water. This is done to test the systems out before heading to the drilling site.

The name of this type of rig implies what it does. Jack-ups get towed to their location where rig personnel operate heavy machinery to jack the legs down into the water until they are on the ocean floor.

After the jack-up platform has been raised about 50 feet out of the water, the rig is ready to begin drilling. Jack-up rigs are limited to a water depth of about 200 meters or less. The most massive jack-ups are called “gorilla class” jack-ups.



## FPSO:



Photo Courtesy of T3-N60, licensed under Creative Commons

FPSO stands for Floating Production Storage and Offloading and is a floating vessel located near an oil platform or drilling rig, where oil is processed and stored until it can be piped to a tanker for transportation.

FPSOs can be converted former supertankers or can be purpose-built. A vessel used for natural gas is known as an FLNG, for Floating Liquefied Natural Gas.

## Derrick Barges:



Photo Courtesy of VM Gulf

Heavy lift crane barges, also known as derrick barges, are used to make extremely heavy lifts. The record to date is 7,000 tons.

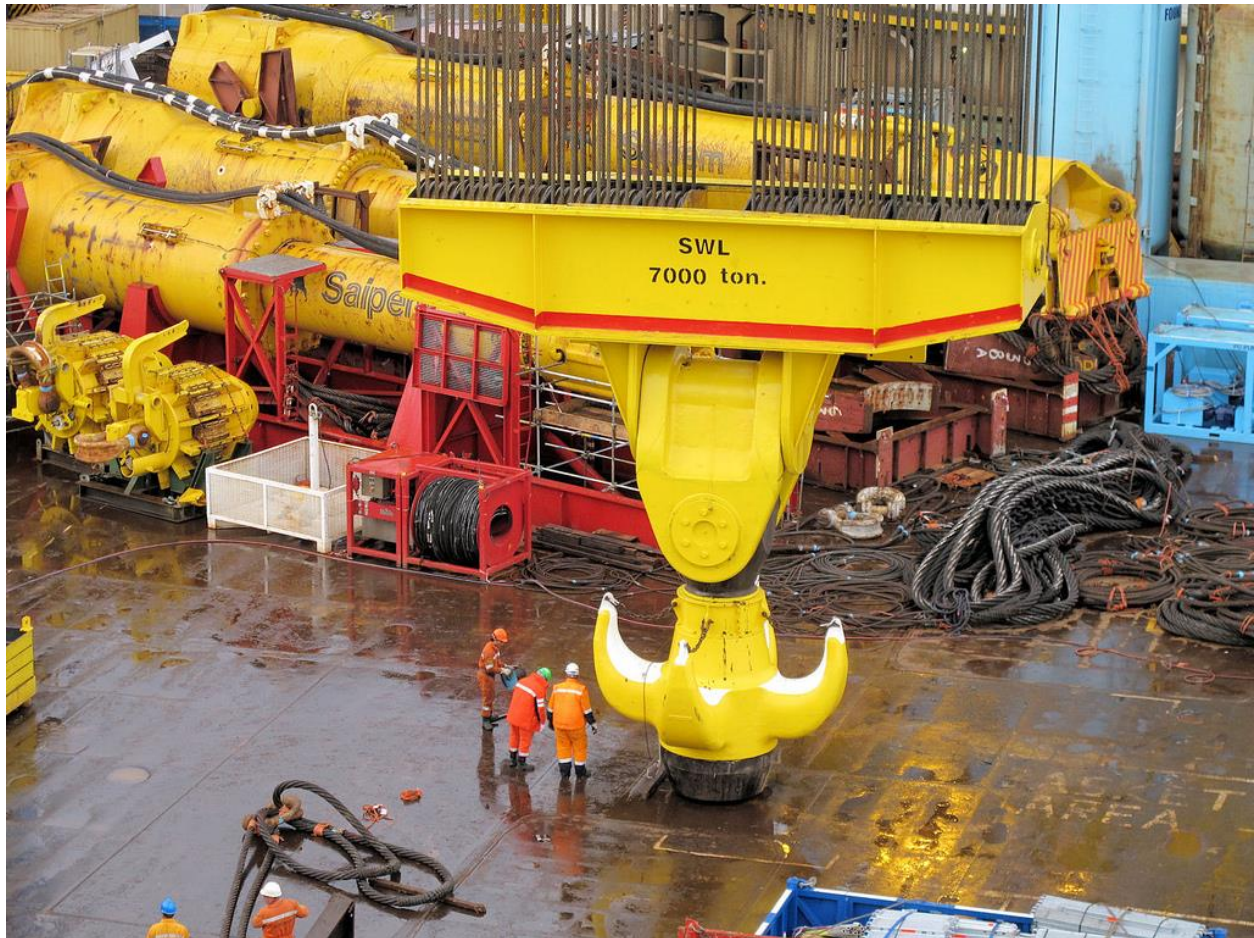


Photo Courtesy of Bcthalff

This photo gives you an idea as to how big the cranes are on a derrick barge. When these lifts take place, there is a lot of support personnel on board (up to 200) including welders, electricians, riggers, mechanics, crane operators, cooks, etc. Derrick barges can be either self-propelled or towed. When they are self-propelled, they also carry a full maritime crew.



## Pipe Lay Barge:



Photo Courtesy of All Seas

A pipelay barge is a maritime vessel used in the construction of subsea infrastructure. It serves to connect oil production platforms with refineries onshore through the laying of underwater pipelines. Large diameter pipelines have onboard welding stations and lots of jobs for welders.

## Offshore Lift Boats:



Photo Courtesy of Hannes Grobe, licensed under Creative Commons

Offshore lift boats are self-propelled, self-elevating vessels with relatively large open decks capable of carrying equipment and supplies in support of various offshore mineral exploration and production or offshore construction activities.

Lift boats are commonly used to perform maintenance on oil and gas well platforms and offshore wind turbines.



## Heavy Lift Transport:



Photo Courtesy Blue Marlin

These ships are designed to carry excessively large items such as other ships, drilling and platform rigs, or anything else too large or heavy to be easily transported on conventional transport vessels.



## Offshore Production Platform:



Photo Courtesy of Draugen Oil

After exploratory drilling has proved the presence of oil or gas deposits; a platform structure is fabricated and then erected on site. Platforms are permanently installed.

The current water depth record for a production platform is the Tobago well at 3050 meters below sea level, in the US Gulf of Mexico, operated by Shell and jointly sponsored by Chevron and Nexen.

## DSV Boats:



Photo Courtesy of Bahnfreund, licensed under Creative Commons

Diving Support Vessels are designed for diving operations carried out below and around oil production platforms and related installations in open waters. These vessels are used for underwater ROV operations, repair, inspection, construction works, well intervention, and other oilfield related activities.

## Offshore Accommodation Vessel:



Photo Courtesy of JLMarine

An offshore accommodation vessel, sometimes known as a floating hotel or “floatel,” has a primary function to accommodate personnel at sea during set up or maintenance of offshore structures. Helo decks are available for exchanging personnel and receiving spare parts, equipment, and other needed materials.

## Offshore Seismic Vessel:

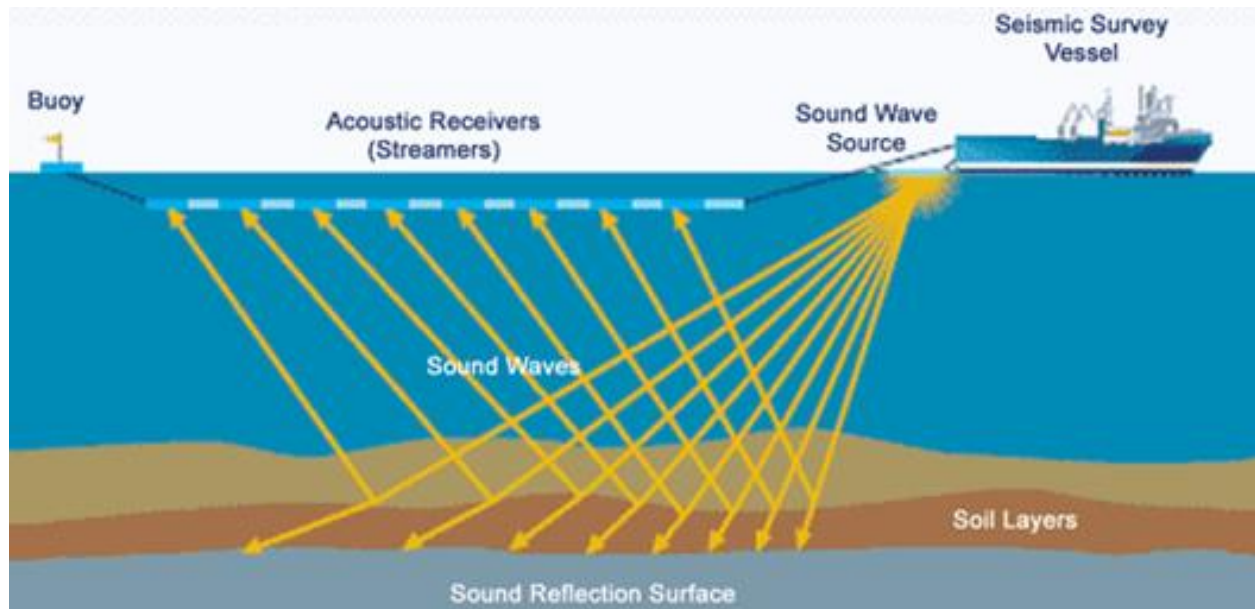


Photo Courtesy of Pacific Gas and Electric Company

Seismic vessels are boats that are solely used for seismic surveys in the high seas and oceans. Seismic and survey vessels are used to locate and pinpoint the best possible areas for offshore oil drilling.



## AHTS Boats:



Photo Courtesy of Job At Sea

Anchor handling, tug and supply boats are large, powerful vessels that tow non-self-propelled rigs to the drilling site, run out the securing anchors and then bring equipment, supplies, and personnel to and from the rig.

## Crew Boats:



Photo Courtesy of I Learning Engines

Crew Boats are fast, sleek vessels that transport crew, equipment, and supplies back and forth to the rigs.

Most companies prefer to fly their crews back and forth to the rigs by helicopter. However, when the weather is bad, and choppers can't fly, they use these fast-moving crew boats to make crew changes.

Now that you know what types of rigs and vessels are used offshore let's explore what qualifications are required to work in the industry.

## **Industry Specific Certifications:**

All positions offshore require some type of training and certification. This includes the person doing laundry up to the top dog. Different countries have different policies, but in America all official offshore and maritime certifications are US Coast Guard approved.

Back in "the day," when one got hired, the hiring company sent the individual to training courses after they were hired. They still do, but more and more individuals are paying for and going to these schools at their own expense to have extra bargaining chips during the application process.

Example:

1. Applicant A has paid for and received their Basic Offshore Safety Induction & Emergency Training (BOSIET) certification along with their Transportation Workers Identification Card (TWIC) certification.
2. Applicant B has done nothing but apply for the position

The work experience, skills, and education for both applicants are about the same. Which candidate do you think the recruiter will choose?

Getting certified in any of these schools does not guarantee employment. Having basic certifications under your belt during the application process will weigh in your favor of making a good first impression, but that's all it will do. It will not "entitle" you to be hired!

Going to these schools cost money, but the money spent will be a good investment if you are serious about working offshore. If you don't have the

money, don't let this discourage you. Begin the application process anyway and BE SURE to let the recruiters know you would be willing to get the required certifications on your dime if it might make a difference in their decision about hiring you.

**From time to time, federal and state grant money is available for attending these schools. Check with me for details...**

Once you get hired and prove your merit, you can ask to be reimbursed for the cost of the training. The worst they can do is say no. If that happens, you can deduct the cost from your taxes.

When the industry goes back into a "boom" cycle, this will not be much of a requirement as there will be a shortage of workers. The length of time it takes to complete these required training courses and get certified for offshore and maritime work ranges from a few hours to several weeks.

If you do decide to pay for any of this training on your own, make sure it is through a US Coast Guard approved agency. From time to time, there have been unscrupulous individuals posing as official offshore certification training agencies but not doing anything but ripping people off. If you are going to spend the money, make sure it's the real deal.

Depending on what section of the industry you want to work in (exploration, production, maritime, special services, etc.) will determine what certifications you need.

If your company is paying for the schools, they usually send you to them during your off time. Normally, you should be paid your regular wages; eight hours a day if you are an hourly employee. Salaried people typically don't receive wage compensation for outside schools as their attendance is part of their job requirement. Room and board are provided for both salaried and hourly workers, and reimbursement is frequently given for mileage traveled.

## **The most common schools and certifications for offshore work are:**

**BOSIET Certification:** (Basic Offshore Safety Induction & Emergency Training)

This training program is designed to meet the initial offshore safety and emergency response training requirements for personnel new to the offshore oil & gas industry.

**IADC Rig Pass:** This is an accredited industry training program which meets most of the training requirements applicable to production and drilling crews.

**Maritime Certifications:** These are a bit different; you have to have a required amount of sea time as well as pass a written exam to qualify for the certification, endorsement, or license. If you've paid for the school yourself, once you get hired, you can ask to be reimbursed for the cost of the school. If you intend to ask for a reimbursement, I recommend you work a couple of hitches first.

Other outside schools you might want to attend are: Able Seaman, Life Boatman, Marine Firefighting, EMD Maintenance and Operation (representing the Electric Motor Division of General Motors), Blow Out Preventer (BOP) schools, Hydraulic, and the list goes on and on.

**The more schools you complete, the more credentials  
you have when shopping for another job...**

## **Living the Lifestyle:**

Working offshore is like nothing you have ever experienced before. Think of a construction job, but instead of constructing something, your job is to drill a hole in the earth's crust. Rigs work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The only time they shut down is when they are not under contract (stacked), make a rig move, during bad weather or experience equipment failure.

People who work on the rigs are called hands. They work 12-hour shifts called towers. Sometimes they work longer - 16 to 18 hours a day is not uncommon. I've worked many 18-hour days myself. Why else are you out there but to work? You might as well get as many hours per check as possible.



I've seen people stay up 30, 40, even 50 hours straight, depending on what was going on. They would get a break and possibly a nap here and there, but if something on the rig is broke and you are the only one who can fix it, you will be up till it is "fixed."

You will be working in an isolated environment which might be hostile. In many cases, you will not be in sight of land, nor anything else but water and sky. The people you will be working with will come from all walks of life, nationalities, faith, and color. You will meet all kinds of people, mostly good, some bad. However, that's true of all areas of life.

Your first few weeks offshore might be very lonely. You will get homesick and wonder what in the world you are doing there. Don't despair. Everyone experiences the same feelings. You might be referred to as a "squirrel" or "worm" by some of the more experienced hands. This will pass in time, once you've proven yourself. Everyone was a worm at one time or another. Not surprisingly, many still are, even with years of experience!

You will possibly hear a lot of cussing and hollering, so be prepared. It's just part of the job, accept it as that. You may be subjected to occasional poor-quality supervision. People who become supervisors in the oil industry possess the necessary technical skills to perform their job, but leadership skills are where a lot of them are lacking. They do not know how to lead people effectively. They sometimes abuse their authority because they don't know how to handle it.

If you wind up under one of these, do the best you can. Learn all you can, get the experience you need, which is the key to your future, and move on. It's unfortunate, but there's often a jerk hidden in every crowd.

On the other hand, you could just as easily find an excellent example of what ideal supervisors should be like — extremely competent people, not only in technical knowledge but also possessing highly commendable leadership qualities. Their crew is run with the precision of a fine Swiss watch; morale is high, and men are excited about doing their work because their boss is someone who appreciates their efforts.

If you are fortunate enough to wind up with one of these men, stick with them as long as possible. Try to learn to deal with people as they do. If you can absorb and master their motivational and leadership skills, you will be in high demand.

For the most part, you will know what your working hours are. 12 hours a day minimum, sometimes more. Add an extra hour for safety meetings and hand over time with your relief. At first, you might find this schedule a bit unrelenting, especially if you are scheduled to work 21 or 28 days straight. If you are not used to it, it will be an adjustment. Hang in there; you can do it!

Here are the regular schedules. If you are the “new man out,” more than likely, you will have to prove your worth by working your ass off, so be ready. Don’t try and be a “know it all.” Oil rigs cost big money to operate; there is no room for slackers.

6AM to 6PM
6PM to 6AM
12AM to 12PM
12PM to 12AM

## Is Offshore Work for You?

Would you like to find a fascinating job? A job that pays well, which has adventure, gives you new challenges every day, and has room to grow and educate yourself? And on top of that, being free 6 months out of the year?

**Then working in the offshore drilling industry is the job you’re looking for...**

Be prepared to go where the work is, and to work as hard as you can. Always strive to put in an honest day’s work. If you’re an adventure seeker and want variety in your chosen occupation and in your daily life with the possibility to travel internationally, then get your offshore career started today! The jobs are there.

Say goodbye to traffic jams, farewell to your 9 to 5 job at a dusty office, working the same routine day in day out; say goodbye to the standard policy of only getting a 2-week vacation every year, if you even get that. Working offshore is your new challenge!

To start, your employer will have you picked up by a helicopter which flies you off to the rig. And when you’re working internationally, then your flight from your hometown to anywhere in the world will be arranged for you. Once at the job site, it’s your job to do what you were hired to do, working hard for up to 28 days in a row, for 12 hours or more every day.

You will enjoy 4 meals a day, prepared by the best cooks and catering companies available. Eat whatever you want, and as much as you want, because you will need the energy while you’re on the job. Working on a rig is hard, with loads of

responsibilities, and dangerous conditions surrounding you. Moreover, don't you dare drift off or slow down, because downtime costs big money.

At the rig, working as a welder or crane operator, I learned to respect and be thankful for the responsibilities I had been given and did my best to do my best; and help others achieve the same when possible. I found this to be an excellent "work attitude," and it served me well.

These days, most rigs and offshore vessels provide a minimum of DVD movies and internet access for your off time. Popcorn and movies start after each 12-hour shift. Some rigs have sports & fitness facilities, sauna, jacuzzi, billiards and, ping-pong tables.

You're onboard with lots of people, with many backgrounds and cultures. You can educate yourself and learn new skills (cross training) which will help you grow and climb the ladder. You will be working with the latest equipment, tools, and systems available.

Your accommodations may vary, as will your salary. This will differ from company to company, from location to location, and from one rig to the other. Your accommodations are paid for, as are all the facilities onboard and of course the meals you enjoy are at no charge to you.

It doesn't matter if you end up on a brand-new rig, or at an old rust bucket. The main thing that counts is you are getting more experience because more experience means better opportunities and higher pay for you.

You might come on board as a "worm" (green hand, new start, roustabout, etc.) and climb up the ladder to become a welder, crane operator, boat captain, engineer or driller, and even higher. The choices are extensive. Many have ended up as tool pushers, rig superintendents, and even company CEO's earning a substantial salary. If you are committed to your job, all this is possible.

Please do note the consequences of your actions and always be responsible. You will be checked randomly for the use of illegal drugs. Mess up, and your career in the offshore business might be over for good. Don't lie, don't cheat, don't whine and don't be a know-it-all. Listen to your superiors. Learn, get some good experience, and advance through the ranks. That's the American Dream, and it

still exists. It sometimes gets a bit foggy in these turbulent times, but it's still there.

Looking at your fellow employees, you will find people aged from 20 up to 60 years old and sometimes older. Young ones might be a superior officer, while an old timer still has a job as a crane operator, welder or derrick hand. Show respect to all. You will find out soon enough what position suits you best.

Moreover, your age is just depending on how old you feel. Most jobs on offshore drilling rigs require heavy lifting and the need for physical strength. Working 12 hours a day, in rain or shine for a minimum of 7 days in a row. Your body will tell you if you are not up for it.

### **Depending on your work location, it could be:**

- Not too hot, not too cold, with a mild breeze and some clouds floating by.
- Days on end hot as hell and not a single breath of fresh air.
- 24/7 rain, below freezing temperatures, 40 knot plus winds and even some badass storms. I once had to ride out a hurricane on a rig 100 miles offshore. Talk about a trip! And that's just the weather!

### **Points to Consider:**

1. DO NOT take drugs, alcohol, or firearms with you. All companies reserve the right to search your person for these items at any time. Spot checks are often made at helicopter and boat departure and landing points, as well as on the rigs. If any of these items are found on you, you will be fired on the spot. You might be able to get a job with another company; it just depends. The best policy is not to do anything that might get you fired. It's not worth it.
2. If you are taking prescription drugs, make sure the dates are current. Also, do not mix prescription drugs in the same container to save space. If you are found with prescription drugs, you will be okay as long as the prescription is in your name, it is current, and you have a prescription for each type of medication you are taking.
3. Before you can be hired, you will have to submit to a drug screen. THC, the active ingredient in marijuana, will remain in your body between 14 and 30 days after your last usage. Traces of cocaine can stay for up to 3 months

after you last used. If your blood shows any evidence of illicit drugs, you will not be hired - end of the story.

**If you want to work offshore, don't do drugs...**

4. One of the first things to do when coming on board for the first time is to locate your room so you can stow your gear. The clerk or someone in the rig office should greet you and help you with this. Usually, you will be required to go through a "first time on the rig" orientation before you are allowed on deck. If no one is there to greet you, find the galley, and ask the cook or one of the galley hands where your room is.
5. At your first opportunity, find and study the station bill. These will be conspicuously posted throughout the living quarters and on the rig. The station bill will tell you where to muster and what to do in the event of an emergency. This should be explained during your orientation.
6. If you are going to the rig by means of a helicopter, you will usually have a relatively smooth and comfortable ride. If, for some reason you have to go by boat, that could be a different story.
7. When you leave your house for crew change, take a pillow and a blanket with you, just in case you have to ride a boat. Boats are kept cold on the inside to prevent people from getting sick. When I say cold, I mean freezing ass cold. Usually, you will not be allowed to go outside during a boat ride.
8. Ask the captain or one of the deck hands if they have any Dramamine (motion sickness pills). Even if you think you could handle the ride on your own, take the pills. Your boat ride could last from 2 to 14 hours, and when you get out into a 6 to 12-foot sea, it gets quite rough; people get sick, which usually starts a chain reaction of others getting sick.

## **Additional Tips:**

1. Have a positive attitude. Regardless of how cold, hot, wet, or seemingly unbearable the conditions, don't whine about it. The more positive you are, the quicker the time will pass, and the more you will enjoy your job. No matter the difficulty, make the best of it.
2. Respect the personal space and time of your co-workers. Space is at a premium on offshore drilling vessels and platforms. More than likely, you will be sharing a room with others. You could be rooming with them at the same time, or they could be working the opposite shift as you. Either way, respect their personal space.
3. Most rigs have change rooms. This is where you remove your boots and work clothes before you go into the living quarters. Nothing will get you into hot water quicker than tracking dirty, greasy foot or handprints where they do not belong.
4. The BR Hand will make the bed, take out the trash and tidy the room up every day. Even so, don't be a slob. Unless it's an emergency, do not disturb the other men in your room when they are sleeping. When you report for duty, take everything you will need during your work hours.
5. There are no bathrooms in the individual rooms unless you are upper management. Since you will be sharing showers, toilets and other facilities, keep them clean. Pick up after yourself.
6. **DON'T SPEND YOUR OFF TIME WATCHING PORNOGRAPHY!** While some companies block any access to XXX adult web pages, others don't. Just because it's available does not mean you have to indulge in it. You are out there to work, so work when you are supposed to work and rest when you are supposed to rest. Offshore jobs are physically demanding and looking at porn burns through the hours. Not being fully rested when you start your 12-hour shift could very well cause an accident for you or someone else. Besides that, it is not good for you as a person.

# 3

## Breaking Into The Offshore Oil Rig Industry

### The Catch 22 Squirrel Cage:

Usually, the first question any offshore recruiter will ask you is, "*Do you have previous offshore experience?*"

This will probably be the most vital bit of information you can provide. Even if you are at the top of your game in your trade, with years of industry experience, (such as a pipe welder, industrial-commercial electrician, crane operator, diesel mechanic, warehousemen, medic, etc.) recruiters will tend to be reluctant to hire you directly into that position if you have no offshore experience.

Here's why:

- Working offshore is vastly different from working a similar land-based job.
- You must be familiar with offshore emergency procedures and what to do if the need arises.
- You will be lost when you first get on a rig. While such terms as forward and aft or port and starboard are easy to figure out (port has four letters in it just like left), other words, such as the moonpool, the V door, the monkey board, the shale shaker, the annular, the bullhead, the mousehole, the cathead, the #3 caisson, the mud pits, dope, elevators, etc. will take a bit of getting used to.
- In some cases, it might take you (if you go by boat) 12-14 hours in rough seas to get to the rig, at which time you could be expected to work a 12-hour shift. Even the most physically fit person can get seasick. It's a tough gig trying to pull a 12-hour shift after having been on a rough 14-hour boat ride.
- There have been occasions when a new hire was told he had to work 12 hours after being seasick from a 14-hour boat ride and he said, "*TO HELL*"

*WITH THIS CRAP, I QUIT!"* Recruiters need to know you are going to hang in there when things get tough. And believe me, they can get tough.

In times past, having previous offshore experience was not near the requirement it is today, but times have changed. Currently, most offshore recruiters require that an applicant have a minimum of 6 months experience offshore before they hire you. Some recruiters want as much as 2 years' experience. There are exceptions to this requirement, which I will talk about later.

It takes anywhere from 2 to 6 months for a new hand to get even basically familiar with offshore procedures. Usually, after you're worn out your first pair of boots, you're pretty much a hand if you've got any merit about you at all.

**Once you've gotten your first 6 months experience, you will satisfy the question of "*Do you have any previous offshore experience?*"**

**NOTE:** If you are looking at a job with a particular company and, after having contacted the recruiter, they say something like "*We are seeking someone with at least 2 years' experience*" don't become discouraged. Ask that recruiter if you can check in every couple of weeks or so. If the job is still there, let him (or her) know you are immediately available and, if given a chance to prove yourself, you will make a good hand.

**Recruiters sometimes say no just to see if you will persist...**

- Don't let the prerequisite about 2 years' experience dismay you. 2 years' experience might be what they ask for, but what they want is someone who can fill that empty slot on the rig. With baby boomers retiring by the thousands, there was a mass exodus of experienced offshore hands before the last downturn. One thing I know, there are plenty of current vacancies for offshore workers posted on the web at this time.

**How does one get the experience if no one will hire you because you have no experience?**

For the "newbie," your biggest problem is your lack of "previous offshore experience." Back in the day, this was not a problem. It was easier then for a non-experienced applicant to get a job than it is today. All you had to do was walk into the office, tell them you wanted to work offshore, and, if you passed the medical,



you were on your way. Not so anymore. The reason is liability. A drilling rig is a dangerous place; if you don't know what you are doing, you can get hurt very badly, very quickly. This is one reason why companies are hesitant to hire personnel who are not familiar with drilling operations.

Offshore companies that are currently seeking personnel are looking for many things in a new hire, having "previous offshore experience" is at the top of the list. Once you get 6 months under your belt of either rig or boat experience, you will find many doors opening that previously were closed.

How do you get offshore experience if no one will hire you to get the experience? That's the catch 22 question I get asked all the time. If you have previous offshore job experience, you are "in the click."

While having prior experience is not a guarantee you will get hired, not having it will get you rejected most of the time, probably upwards of 90%, unless you have strong transferable skills, like welder, crane operator, electrician, diesel mechanic, painter, medic, etc.

If you have no previous experience, here are a few tidbits of advice that will better your chances:

- Learn as much as you can about the industry. If you want to work on a rig, find out what types of rigs there are and what each one does. If you're going to crew on a boat, find out what types of vessels there are and what they do. Learn what each rig hand is responsible for. By doing this, even if you have no previous offshore experience, at least you can talk somewhat intelligently with the recruiter about the responsibilities of jobs you might qualify for.
- Be sure to include research into the companies you are interested in applying with. Who they are, what their mission statement is, anything you can find out about them that will help you.
- The recruiter is going to point out that you have no previous offshore experience. Your response should be "Yes, BUT; I am a very dependable person, I get along well with others, I learn fast and can work with minimum supervision, and will make an excellent hand if given the opportunity" (say these only if true). Then highlight your past work

experience and go into whatever sales pitch you feel is appropriate for the situation.

- If you don't get hired on your first contact with a recruiter, don't take it as a "definite and forever no." Ask them if it would be OK to check with them from time to time to review any open positions.
- Then do it. Check with them from time to time. DO NOT stop your contact with them unless they tell you explicitly not to call, but at the same time don't make yourself a pest by calling every day unless instructed to do so.
- A key point I want to interject here is whatever you do, don't sound desperate! Take the attitude that you have something of value they need. DO NOT tell them, "I'll do anything!" Research the company BEFORE you apply. Keep a record of every time you make contact, whom you spoke to and what was said. Many recruiters use the ploy of turning you down the first time to see how bad you want it. Be persistent, but don't be a nuisance.

Once you get some basic offshore experience, you will have the key which will open many doors for you. Regardless of the position they hold today, everyone had to start somewhere. However, it's getting that first bit of experience which presents the biggest problem. Again, let me stress a big part of this book is to show you how to get hired (with no prior experience) and get that all important first 6 months under your belt.

You will not find many job advertisements that explicitly say, "Entry Level." The reason being is because most of the people who work offshore have friends and relatives they want to get hired. Personnel departments have no end of entry-level applicants.

HOWEVER, by no means do I want to imply you should NOT apply for an entry-level position. The exact opposite is true. If you have no prior offshore, oilfield or maritime experience and no transferable skills (such as welder, electrician, medic, mechanic, crane operator, warehouseman, cook, etc.) you will want to post on your application that you are applying for an "Offshore Entry Level Position."

Other entry-level positions are roustabout, apprentice, trainee, cleaner-painter, scaffolder, rigger, utility hand, deckhand, ordinary seaman, and oiler. When you are searching ads and see one of these listed, change your résumé from "Offshore

Entry Level Position" and post the position listed in the vacancy. For example, if you see an opening for Roustabout, that is what you will put in your cover letter and objective. The same goes for a rigger, utility-hand, deckhand, etc.

## **Training Positions:**

Many companies have training slots available. These positions are for personnel who have a specific set of skills that are required for a job but don't have any actual offshore experience. Examples would be rig welder trainee, crane operator trainee, motorman trainee, rig electrician-mechanic trainee, storekeeper trainee, ballast control person trainee, etc.

Typically, what happens in these situations is that you will be placed with an experienced hand for a couple of hitches to learn the ins and outs of offshore drilling along with the responsibilities of your job. Then, when management decides you know your stuff, they will turn you loose in your own position.

This is a great way to get on and is how I started my offshore career as a crane operator. I had worked offshore before as a rig welder. However, the company recruiter I was talking to at the time said he didn't need any welders but wanted to know if I could run a crane if someone trained me. To which I replied, "*Most Certainly.*"

I trained 2 weeks with another crane operator and was then turned loose with my own crew. This was when semi-submersibles were first coming out, and I was fortunate enough to get on one coming right out of the shipyard. I got to participate in the break-in and commissioning procedures as well as normal drilling operations.

Establishing personal relationships with recruiters is essential in getting hired. They are looking for people who are honest, dependable, and who want to work. When you develop a personal relationship with a recruiter, he or she is no longer dealing with electronic files and word documents, but a real person and that person is you.

If you are finding it hard breaking into the industry, a brilliant strategy you can use is offering to work for free. You must understand, because of maritime and Jones Act labor laws, no one is going to take you up on it. The point of this offer is to show the employer you are sincerely interested in working and are willing to go the extra mile.

If you use this, tell the recruiter you are willing to work a week or two without pay, to have the opportunity to demonstrate your ability to do good work along with a willingness to learn. This is a great way to make a lasting impression on recruiters. The key to making it work is to be willing to take them up on it just in case they call your bluff.

## **Industry Specific Training Courses:**

Industry training schools have been springing up not only in the US but worldwide. These are excellent schools and offer fundamental courses like BOSIET (Basic Offshore Safety Induction & Emergency Training), SafeGulf, Rig Pass, Basic Roustabout-Roughneck, etc. to Advanced Drilling and Rig and BOP operating courses.

While these courses are not a requirement to getting hired; taking, completing and getting an industry certification will go a long way in persuading potential employers you are the guy (or gal) for the job. However, taking a course and getting a certification is not a guarantee you will be hired. Do keep this in mind. When you do get hired, you can ask to be reimbursed for any money you had to put out in taking the course.

- DO NOT mention anything about reimbursement before you are hired, unless the recruiter brings it up.
- Wait until you've been on the job a couple of hitches and then talk to your immediate supervisor about the possibility of getting reimbursed.
- This is not an unreasonable request; the worst they can say is "no."

Back in the day, taking courses before getting hired was unheard of. When a company hired you, they sent you to get the training they wanted you to have, at their expense. However, that was "back in the day." Things have changed considerably since then.

Remember, there are tens of thousands of others wanting to get one of these high paying offshore oil rig jobs. Anything and everything you can do to make yourself more "sellable," you want to do. Taking industry courses is a major way of getting ahead of the competition because most of your job-hunting competition is not going to do it.

Some websites have videos about their operations. Watch them, maybe even a couple of times. Some are animated; some are real-time videos. Fluor, an offshore engineering, construction, and maintenance company, employs approximately 41,000 personnel worldwide, and has an excellent introductory video about offshore drilling operations.

On their website, you can view many videos about what they do and how they do it. The more you watch, the more you learn. The more you learn about the operations of a company, the better you will be able to communicate what you know about that company to the recruiter and how you can fit in and help in their mission.

You may find videos on websites from a CEO or other top management types, watch them. If they have links about their mission statement, corporate strategy, executive management, safety policies, pay attention. Here is the reason - these types of pages are great resources for keywords that are specific to that company and its mission.

When these are strategically placed in your cover letter and résumé, you will have a much better chance of getting a recruiter's attention and interview than if you did not take the time to do this.

Many of the sites have begun writing quarterly and even monthly newsletters. If possible, subscribe or get a copy and read it from front to back. Maybe even a couple of times. The more you can learn about each company and their specific industry mission, the better your chances are of getting hired.

### **Be willing to do what others are not...**

If you want to get hired offshore and have no prior offshore experience, you must be willing to do what others are not. In other words, be prepared to accept any position, no matter how menial it might seem to you. Your goal is to get hired and get 6 months under your belt, once this is achieved, you're good as gold.

**Here's an example:** if your goal is to be a roughneck, crane operator, rig welder, etc., and the only position available is washing dishes in the galley, take it! At least you will be on the rig. You get to talk with the other rig hands and ask questions; you get to watch the drill floor operations, you get to watch the crane operator as

they load & offload crew and supply boats, you get to participate in emergency and abandon ship drills. You get to see the entire drilling operations first hand, how the different positions contribute to the whole. Valuable experience for sure.

There will be times when a crew member(s) will either quit or get fired during the middle of the hitch. This will leave immediate openings that have to be filled. If a floor hand leaves, a roustabout will be moved up to take his place, which leaves a vacancy in the roustabout crew.

If you are working in the galley and see this happening, go to the tool pusher and let him know you want to apply for the open position. If he thinks you can do it, he will send you in to get a physical. Pass that, and presto, you are a member of the crew.

**Let me emphasize this point again; if you have no prior offshore experience and want to work offshore, it would be in your best interest to consider initially taking whatever you can get.**

## **Vocational Training Courses:**

If you presently don't have any offshore, oilfield or maritime experience and would like to work offshore, you might consider a class or two at a vocational school or junior college where you could pick up some transferable skills, such as welding, heavy equipment operations, painter, diesel mechanic, electrician, etc.

These schools and classes are staffed by skilled, experienced professionals who know their trade. If you attend one, do your best, make a good impression and don't forget they have insider contacts. Most vocational schools offer job placement assistance.

Offshore is about work. Depending on what it is, it could be hot, nasty and dangerous; like going into a tank with the temperature at 110 to clean out stinking mud, oil, drilling chemicals, etc. If you are not willing to "give your best" in doing the most menial of tasks, it is doubtful you will "give your best" in higher positions.

Entry level positions such as galley hand, cleaner-painter, deckhand, etc., are a test to see if you have what it takes and to train you for advancement. It costs much money to train new hands, make sure you are a good investment!

If you are a green hand entry level with no prior experience or transferable skills, begin with the catering companies and then the marine transportation companies, as these are the easiest to get on with when you have zero offshore expertise. Entry level positions with catering companies would be galley-hand or utility-hand; with marine transportation companies - deckhand or ordinary seaman.

Also, check out the offshore fabrication and welding companies, offshore painting and sandblasting companies, wind tower companies and other special service companies, they usually have lots of laborer or apprentice positions available.



# 4

# Employment In The Offshore Oil Rig Industry



Information varies on how much offshore workers earn. Here is the latest available information as of 2019.

Offshore wages begin at \$800 a week for entry-level first timers and top out around \$325,000 a year for top-notch management types. Working offshore, at the current minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour, you would make almost 2 ½ times the amount of money than you would from a similar land-based job, working only 6 months out of the year. The same rule applies for skilled crafts; welders, electricians, mechanics, equipment operators, painters, warehousemen, etc.

The oilfield is a place where hard work earns good money. Wages are usually computed on an 84-hour work week. All hours above 40 are calculated as time and a half. I say usually, because I once worked for a company that split the work week up in a way that the employees did not get the full 48 hours overtime. I'm not quite sure how they did that, it was a long time ago and I didn't work for them very long, once I found out what they were up to. I mention this just so you understand how the pay structure works so you don't get surprised.

A roughneck position advertised @ \$25 per hour would gross \$2650 per week, a minimum wage job of \$7.25 would gross \$812. Don't forget that taxes have to be taken out.

This is based on an 84-hour week, which is the starting point for oilfield work. It is not uncommon to work 100 hours or more every week. I worked one hitch where I was the only crane operator on board during a crucial rig move and got paid 24/7 or 168 hours; 40 hours of regular time and 128 at time and one half, a nice check for sure.

Then there are the workovers. Workovers are when someone does not show up for crew change, and you get to work over. That month you would pick up 3 checks instead of 2. If you don't mind hard work, there's money to be made.

Positions on an oil rig include hourly and salaried employees. These positions vary from company to company and sometimes rig to rig. The salaried employees might consist of day and night toolpusher, barge engineer, subsea engineer, and possibly the medic. All other positions would be paid on an hourly basis. With some companies, holidays are paid at double time instead of time and one half.

During the last boom, many oil job websites made some outrageous claims as far as earnings were concerned. If you are entry level, it is doubtful you will start at \$100,000 per year. I've seen sites that claimed no experienced green hands would be earning over \$100,000 per year from day one. It is a good possibility you could be making this after 2-3 years of dedicated work; don't expect it right at the get-go.

## **Offshore Oil Exploration & Production Positions:**

There are 4 types of oil rig vessels staffed with workers that fit into 5 central departments.

### **Types of offshore drilling rigs:**

1. Drillship
2. Semisubmersible
3. Jackup
4. Platform

### **Departments of rig personnel:**

1. Management - Administration
2. Drilling
3. Marine (not required on jackups and platforms)
4. Maintenance
5. Catering

Here are the latest average wages for US Gulf of Mexico oil rig workers. Workers in other countries and other locations might get paid more; some might get paid less. If you have no prior offshore experience, your primary concern should be to get hired (at any wage), so you can get that all important first six month's experience behind you.

These wages were compiled from industry sources readily available online. They will vary from company to company and even rig to rig. For example, the pay for an OIM working on a state-of-the-art drill ship drilling in ultra-deepwater would

be in the \$250,000 to \$325,000 range, while the salary for an OIM working on an older jack-up in shallow water might be in the \$120,00 to \$135,00 range.

The more modern and sophisticated the rig is, the more the pay will be. Below is a general breakdown of each department, the jobs included in that department and the average wages offered with that job. If you find any errors concerning wages, please let us know. Figures are for annual salaries unless stated otherwise.

## **Management & Administration:**

Personnel at this level usually have many years of experience in the industry and are responsible for many men on all levels. Hence their higher pay.

### **OIM (Offshore Installation Manager): \$120,000 to \$325,000**

The OIM is the most senior manager of an offshore rig and is responsible for the health, welfare, and safety of all personnel on board at all times. The OIM ensures full compliance with all mandatory procedures and regulations that relate to drilling and production operations.

The OIM plans daily operational activities and manages emergencies; organizes, supervises, and delegates the operations of personnel, and ensures that preventative maintenance, housekeeping, and regular rig repairs are performed promptly and that all equipment is adequately maintained to a high standard of readiness.

### **Senior Toolpusher: \$175,000 to \$250,000**

The senior toolpusher is the overall supervisor of the rig, under the OIM. Toolpushers oversee the day-to-day drilling operations, coordinate plans of the oil company with the drilling department and schedule all work. They are responsible for handling personnel, promotions, terminations, etc. They authorize the ordering of supplies and provide technical information and mentoring as needed.

### **Junior Toolpusher (nights): \$115,000 to \$175,000**

The junior pusher does much the same thing as the senior toolpusher but on the night shift.

## Rig Medic & Safety Man: \$65,000 to \$95,000



Photo Courtesy of Julian Mamilton / Daily Mirror

This position has come into existence very strongly in the last 10 years. It is a very comforting thought to know that there is a trained medical technician on board. Some companies take regular people and train them in advanced first aid and critical care courses. Other companies prefer people with para-med training and trauma experience and often recruit heavily from the military.



**Subsea Engineer: \$125,000 to \$160,000**



Photo Courtesy of Paranormalne



Sub Sea Engineer  
inspectng riser pipe

The subsea engineer is the operator-mechanic for the underwater blow-out prevention system (BOP), and marine riser and tensioner systems. He is a highly trained individual, has been sent to many schools by his company, and should be competent enough to trace and repair any problem which may arise on any part of the BOP system at any time. He also operates the equipment and advises in emergencies.

The BOP is a four-story conglomeration of iron, hydraulic valves, hoses and control systems. BOP's weigh from 30 to 55 tons. It sits on the ocean floor and is connected to the rig by the riser and riser compensation system. The riser serves as an insulator to keep seawater out of the wellbore during the drilling process.

When a blowout occurs, high-pressure gas blasts upward through the hole toward the surface. If not adequately controlled, it could erupt on the rig, cause a fire, equipment damage, and loss of life. The BOP, when operated correctly, will prevent this from happening.



People who have a good background in hydraulics, mechanics, and pneumatics can qualify for these positions. The arrows pointing to the above subsea engineer will give you an idea as to the size of the equipment they are responsible for.

**Rig Clerk:** \$45,000 to \$60,000

The offshore rig clerk is accountable for performing logistical, procurement, accounting, and clerical duties as directed by the OIM and toolpushers.

This includes purchasing or renting material and equipment, scheduling of all transportation, operational documentation of rig activity, material tracking, cost control, etc.

## **Drilling Department:**

**Driller:** \$85,000 to \$175,000

The driller is in charge of the operation on the rig floor and controls the drilling process. He has a very responsible position and is required to have a great deal of technical knowledge as well as much practical experience. The safety of everyone on the rig is often dependent on his decisions. He has to be thoroughly familiar with drilling fluids, well pressures and characteristics, and emergency procedures. It takes many years of working as a roughneck and derrickman to possess the experience to be a good driller.

**Assistant Driller:** \$75,000 to \$90,000

On rigs that have an AD slot, the job is that of a driller trainee. He runs the brake when the driller is off having a meal, operates the iron roughneck, assists the floorhands during trips, and supervises the men when the driller is preoccupied with rig floor operations.

**Derrickman:** \$65,000 \$80,000

The derrickman gets his title because he spends much of his time at the top of the derrick racking and unranking pipe during trips. A trip is when the drill string is pulled out of the hole or put back in. A drill string is individual 30 ft joints of pipe connected in 90 ft sections called a stand. Drill strings can be many miles long.

When they are not tripping pipe, the derrickman will usually be found in the pump room, where the high-pressure pumps used to pump the drilling fluids into the wellbore to control the well are located. His responsibility is to keep the mud pumps in operation at all times. Also, he is responsible for the mixing of the

drilling fluids, called mud, to see that it is of the right consistency and has the proper chemicals added.

**Shaker Hand or Mudman:** \$65,000 to \$80,000

The shaker hand, sometimes called the mudman, works in the shaker room when drilling is in progress to monitor the shakers. Shakers are screens mounted on vibrating motors that separate the down-hole cuttings from the drilling fluid.

The shaker hand maintains this equipment and weighs the mud. If the mud weighs less coming out of the hole than going in, the driller knows it is being cut by gas. If the driller doesn't do something quickly to change that condition, a kick could result, turning into a full-scale blowout in a short period.

While kicks are frequent in the industry, resulting when well pressures get out of hand, blowouts are a rarity. When the rig floor is tripping pipe, the shaker hand is on the floor, assisting the other roughnecks.



## Floormen, Roughnecks or Leasehands: \$40,000 to \$62,000



Photo Courtesy of National Review

Floormen, roughnecks, and leasehands are the general laborers on the rig floor. During a trip, they work the tongs, which are large pipe wrench-like devices used to tighten and loosen drill pipe and other downhole tools.

They also work other assorted equipment, such as spinning chains, spinning wrenches, and air hoists. When they are not making a trip, they will be found doing general maintenance work on the rig floor and other drilling-related equipment. The roughnecks are the background of the drill crew.

## Crane Operator: \$75,000 to \$110,000



Photo Courtesy of Wolf Offshore

Cranes on an offshore drilling rig average anywhere from a 15-ton to 80-ton lifting capacity. Most supplies, pipe, casing, specialized equipment, groceries, etc., come to the rig utilizing a supply or crew boat. The CO gets these supplies off the boat and onto the rig without excessive damage. They are also responsible for supplying the rig floor with everything needed and is in charge of the roustabout crew.

He or she supervises a roustabout crew that does general maintenance on the cranes and general cleaning and painting on the rig. Running a crane offshore is very different from running one onshore because the rig, especially a floater, is always moving up and down as well as sideways due to the wave and wind action. The supply boat is also bouncing up and down as it is being unloaded or loaded. The 2 are seldom in sync. Crane operators need to have sharp reflexes, a perfect sense of timing, and exceptional depth perception. A good sense of humor is a big plus.



**Assistant Crane Operator:** \$60,000 to \$75,000

The assistant crane operator is a crane operator trainee position. He is learning how to operate the cranes and supervise the roustabout crew.

**Roustabout:** \$55,000 to \$65,000

Usually, 4 roustabouts work under the crane operator's supervision. These are the riggers and general laborers for the rig. When a boat comes in, 2 roustabouts board it, and 2 stay on the rig. The 2 on the boat hook up the supplies and equipment, and the 2 on the rig unhook it. Sometimes the boat hands do the rigging on the boat. Roustabouts also do general cleaning, painting, light maintenance, and anything else that needs to be done.

All the above positions make up the entire rig drill crew. Onshore rigs do not usually have a crane operator, welder, electrician, warehouseman, or roustabouts always on duty while it is always required offshore. Offshore drilling vessels require two complete drill crews to be on board at all times.

**Marine Department:**

The Marine Department is the nerve center of the rig. However, marine crews are usually found only on self-propelled semi-submersibles or drillships, called "floaters." Some self-propelled semi-submersible rigs have limited marine crews. The primary responsibility of the marine crew is to ensure the rig remains afloat, adequately ballasted, and all deck and anchor equipment is well maintained and operational.

**Captain / Master:** \$185,000 to \$220,000

On self-propelled rigs, a licensed captain and chief engineer will always have to be on board while the vessel is underway. These positions are available only through Coast Guard testing and certification and can be gotten only after many years of experience at sea.

**First Mate / DPO:** \$110,000 to \$145,000

The first mate performs necessary routine maintenance, repairs, and handles the ship's business under the direction of the captain. Some first mates are in charge of operating and maintaining the dynamic positioning system.

**Chief Engineer:** \$165,000 to \$205,000

A chief engineer is ultimately responsible for all operations and maintenance that has to do with the main engines, generators, propulsions system, compressors, anchors or any other deck equipment throughout the entire vessel. The chief engineer answers to the captain and oversees all other engineering personnel.

**Assistant Engineer:** \$85,000 to \$110,000

The assistant engineer provides help to the chief engineer as needed. This is a trainee position for a chief engineer's slot.

**Barge Engineer:** \$90,000 to \$165,000

The barge engineer oversees the marine department on all floaters that are not self-propelled. His main responsibilities include safety, fire and abandon rig procedures, and the adherence of the rig to Coast Guard rules and regulations.

**Ballast Control Person or Watch Stander:** \$65,000 to \$85,000

Before the rig can drill, it must be stable. The ballast control person ensures this takes place promptly. In the control room are relays which control ballast valves. These valves allow seawater in or out of the rig to determine the rig's trim. The BC also writes stability reports, takes on fuel, barite, drinking water, drill water, serves as a radioman, and calls out football scores on Sundays and Mondays over the PA system.



**Able Bodied Seaman:** \$55,000 to \$75,000



Photo Courtesy of Mari Terre

After a certain amount of time (360 days for offshore drilling vessels), an ordinary seaman can upgrade to an able-bodied seaman or AB. Typically ABs supervise the ordinary seamen, deckhands and are responsible for the operation and maintenance of all deck equipment.

**Ordinary Seaman:** \$45,000 to \$55,000

General vessel upkeep, chipping, and painting, operation and maintenance of deck equipment, tying and untying of deck lines.

**Deckhand:** \$30,000 to \$40,000

General housekeeping, chipping and painting, fuel transfers, tying and untying of deck lines and anything else required for general vessel maintenance and operation of deck equipment.

**Cleaner / Painter:** \$20,000 to \$30,000

Cleaner-painters clean and paint and provide additional general labor.

**Wiper:** \$45,000 to \$55,000

Wipers are entry-level positions for the engineering department.

**Maintenance Foreman:** \$60,000 to \$70,000

On exceptionally large rigs, there will be a separate crew from the crane operator roustabout crew called the “maintenance roustabout” crew. The maintenance foreman supervises this crew.

**Maintenance Roustabout:** \$50,000 to \$60,000

Works under the supervision of the maintenance foreman. Their duty is to keep the decks painted. This would include chipping with needle guns, using heavy duty industrial sandblasting equipment and painting with high production airless sprayers. They also provide additional manpower as needed on the rig.

## **Maintenance Department:**

The heart of the rig is the maintenance crew. They keep the life flow of the rig a reality. Without them, nothing would function.

**Senior Mechanic-Electrician (maintenance supervisor):** \$135,000 to \$160,000

The senior mechanic-electrician oversees the maintenance crew. He supervises their day-to-day activities, ensures that the maintenance program for the rig is always kept up-to-date, and serves as an extra hand in the event of mechanical or electrical failures.

**Rig Mechanic:** \$90,000 to \$120,000

The rig mechanic maintains the rig's equipment using a preventive maintenance program and makes repairs as necessary. Rig mechanics must be familiar with diesel engines, hydraulic systems, piping and valve systems, cranes, draw works, and any other type of mechanical equipment on the rig. Welding skills would be a plus for a rig mechanic.

**Electronic Technician (ET):** \$90,000 to \$150,000

These technicians install, operate, test, troubleshoot, maintain, repair, and replace all the electronic equipment on the rig. This would include computers, computer systems, navigational equipment, sensors, fire detectors, and alarms, etc.

**Rig Electrician:** \$90,000 to \$115,000

The rig electrician works on and repairs all the electrical systems aboard the rig, from ice cream machines to the silicon-controlled rectifier system. The SCR system changes the kinetic energy of diesel engines into the AC and DC power that all rig equipment operates on. The rig electrician and rig mechanic both need to be good troubleshooters.

**Rig Welder:** \$75,000 to \$90,000



Photo Courtesy Pipe Old School Welding

Since almost everything on the rig is made from metal, a welder is right at home. Anything added to the rig must be built from scratch. A rig welder must be skilled at layout, fabrication, and often design. He must be able to improvise on the spot. And, he must be very competent at welding. Some of the pipe he welds will carry very high pressure. The safety of others will depend on his competence.

If you are not willing to work in a situation like this, you won't make it as a rig welder. This picture was taken of a welder on a land job. That's fresh water he's sitting in. Offshore the water is saltwater and conducts electricity much more than fresh water; it is a lot easier to get shocked offshore when things are wet, and I don't mean just a little tingle. I mean having the crap shocked out of you. Now imagine you are doing the best you can in a situation like this and it starts to rain. The job must be completed rain or shine. Welcome to the oilfield.

**Motorman:** \$50,000 to \$65,000

The motorman works in the motor room and controls the engines that supply power for the rig. The motorman is also responsible for the air compressors and water makers. Watermakers change sea water into fresh water. The motorman also writes reports on the equipment, keeps up with running-time hours, changes oil and fuel filters, etc.

**Storekeeper:** \$65,000 to \$70,000

All the larger rigs and most of the floaters have a storekeeper. Their responsibilities are very similar to those of a parts person in a parts house. He is responsible for supplying rig personnel with all they need to complete their mission. Things such as paint, soap, machinery parts, tools, etc. The storekeeper inventories these supplies and requisitions them as necessary. The storeroom is also a place to get a hot cup of coffee.

**Catering Department:**

Someone must do the cooking, cleaning, and laundry. This is left to the catering department. Some companies have an in-house catering department, some contract with outside vendors. Catering companies are always looking for people. If you are not having any luck finding a job anywhere else, apply to catering companies.



**Executive Steward / Camp Boss:** \$55,000 to \$70,000

The steward is the supervisor of the catering crew. They are personally responsible for ordering all food, supplies, selection of the day's meals, and directing galley and housekeeping operations. They also substitute as a cook or any other position if the need arises.

**Cooks:** \$42,000 to \$56,000



Photo Courtesy of Liliana Moreno

There is usually a day cook and a night cook on board at all times to prepare meals. Again, if you are a cook, you need to be good at what you do, but let me point something out: you will not be able to please everyone, no matter how hard you try. There will always be someone to complain, justifiably, or not.

**Bakers:** \$38,000 to \$47,000

Bakers bake and bake and bake. They bake fresh biscuits, rolls, and bread every day. They also bake pies, cakes, cookies, and the like. They give the cooks a hand if the cooks are getting slammed. Also, they help ensure that the kitchen and galley equipment stays clean and organized.



**BR-Utility Hands:** \$25,000 to \$35,000

Bedroom Attendants (BR hands) keep the accommodation area of the rig clean and ship shape. The rooms for the crew and other personnel are cleaned daily.

This includes making the bed, mopping the floors, dusting where needed, emptying the trash and any other requirement specified by the camp boss. BR hands also take care of common areas like showers, public and private restrooms, the dining hall, the recreation room, and conference areas.

**Galley Hands:** \$25,000 to \$30,000

These are the grunts of the catering crew. They do general cleanup to include dishwashing, pots and pan washing, floor mopping, stocking supplies and assisting the cooks when necessary.



## **Boat Jobs:**

If you cannot get hired in a rig position right away, you might consider breaking in through the offshore maritime services as this is an excellent way to get some experience under your belt.

After the first offshore well was drilled off the coast of Louisiana in 1947, oil companies relied strongly on area fishermen well acquainted with the local waters to furnish the rigs with the needed supplies. That is how the first generation of Louisiana's offshore marine fleet began.

Today's fleet is a far cry from those early pioneering years. Vessels today are sleek, highly maneuverable, ultra-powerful, and equipped with the latest navigational and radio equipment. Vessels average in size from 30-foot to 100-foot crew boats, up to 300-foot supply, tug, and anchor handling vessels.

Crew boats are fast and used primarily to transport crews and small equipment to and from the rigs. Supply boats carry heavier and bulkier items, such as drilling water, potable water, diesel fuel, drilling mud and other chemicals, along with pipe and larger equipment. Many supply vessels double up as towing-anchor handling vessels to move the rigs when the need occurs.

Most supply boats range anywhere from 300 to 500 gross tons. Utility vessels are between crew boats and supply boats in size and are used to ferry men and equipment between rigs in known fields. They also serve as standby evacuation boats for emergencies.

There are several thousand boats engaged in the offshore marine industry, presenting numerous job possibilities. People quit these jobs every day, and new people are hired every day to fill empty slots. Boat companies are usually hiring!

All positions on boats require a US Coast Guard license or endorsement. The first requirement being an "Ordinary Seaman's Card" (referred to as a Z-card or Merchant Mariners Document - MMD). The Coast Guard issues entry rating cards without written examinations.

To obtain these entry-level endorsements, one must present a letter of employment or commitment for employment from the company one will be working for, pass a physical, and pass a background check for drug convictions or other felonies. Entry ratings for the deck department are classified as Ordinary

Seamen. Entry ratings for the engine room are classified as Wipers. Entry ratings in the steward department are classified as Food Handlers.

### **Here are the more common positions available on the crew and supply boats:**

#### **Master-Captain:**

The captain of the vessel holds a Master endorsement from the Coast Guard. The master has all the power and authority of his counterpart on a large ocean-going ship. What the Captain says is the way it is.

#### **Chief Engineer:**

Just like you'd guess, the Chief is in charge of everything that makes the vessel work. Engines, engine room, water makers, pumps, compressors, winches; all electrical and mechanical equipment.

#### **Chief Mate / First Mate / Senior DPO:**

The chief mate is the second-in-command. He or she stands their watch while the captain sleeps. They also monitor the dynamic positioning system and oversees the deck department.

#### **Able Bodied Seaman (AB):**

Photo Courtesy of PH3 Rebecca J. Moat, USN

These are the guys that make the deck department hum. ABs are responsible for general upkeep and painting of the vessel and its equipment, including mooring equipment, anchors, chains and lines, lifeboats, and safety equipment. ABs usually supervise the deckhands.

#### **Assistant Engineer:**

The next promotion level above oiler, the AE usually stands watch while the engineer sleeps.

#### **Oiler:**

One promotion level above wiper.

#### **Wiper:**

Entry level position. Wipers provide labor and cleaning in the engine room under the supervision of the Chief Engineer.

## Deckhand:



Photo courtesy of Military Sealift Command

Entry level position. Deckhands are responsible for general labor and cleaning on the boat. They do whatever is needed whenever it's needed.

**Cook:** Being a cook may be self-explanatory, but I can tell you one thing; if you're the cook, you had better be a good one! Also, it would help if you were a bit thick skinned because no matter how good your cooking is, someone will always be complaining about it.

## Jobs with Special Service Companies:

Special service companies provide support for a whole range of oilfield and offshore operations. They play a critical part in the exploration, production, and transportation of oil and gas reserves.

They also provide tens of thousands of jobs ranging from general laborers, to directional drillers, casing crews, demolition crews, as well as blowout control

crews, underwater welders, and sophisticated analytical, geological and engineering teams, to name a few.

Service companies are excellent examples of America's free enterprise system at work. There are thousands of them. Many a fortune has been made by people going to work in the patch, starting at just the most basic position, then seeing a need for some specialized service or equipment and providing it in the form of ideas, inventions, and startup companies.

The following is a brief description of a few of the different categories of special service companies and what they do. Pay is more or less equal to other oilfield and offshore positions.

**Seismic-Survey Crews:**

Seismic or survey companies establish where the well is to be drilled and the location of the platform. Using computers and satellite global positioning systems, survey crews can pinpoint locations within six inches anywhere on earth and in any depth of water.

In addition to the regular maritime crew, jobs on seismic boats would include navigators, seismic operators, handlers (mechanics), data processors (geologists), and seismic acquisition operators.

**Catering Company Positions:**

Wherever men are working offshore, be it on a rig, platform, boat, or offshore construction site, you will find the services of a catering company. They provide food, cleaning, and general housekeeping services such as laundry, floor mopping, making beds, etc. The size of a catering crew can be as few as one man or as many as 20 depending on the number of personnel they are supporting.

Some companies have their own in-house catering departments. Many companies use outside contractors that come on the rig or boat and provide the services mentioned above.

**Anchor Crews:**

After the drilling location has been established, the rig will be brought on site and anchored up. The anchors are extremely heavy, weighing from 10,000 to 40,000 pounds each. Standard anchor patterns for semi-submersible rigs is usually 8.

However, up to 16 are sometimes used, with the additional 8 being piggybacked off the first 8.

The anchor crew works on the anchor handling tug supply (AHTS) vessel and usually consists of a specialized team of 5 to 9. Sometimes they are employees of the company supplying the vessel; sometimes, they are independent contractors. They ride on the supply or towing vessel and perform the task of hooking up the cables which are used to hoist or lower the anchors, buoys, and associated rigging. They work 24/7 until the job is done. Anchor handling crews have one of the most dangerous jobs offshore.

### **Casing Crews:**

Once the rig is on location and anchored up, the drilling process begins. To ensure that the hole does not cave in, high-pressure pipe, called casing, must be installed. The standard diameter for the first string of casing is 30 inches. The next string is either 20 inches or 16 inches (depending upon the depth of the well). As the downhole increases, the casing is reduced in size. The standard casing sizes used downhole are: 13 3/8 inches; next is 9 5/8 inches; and last is 7 5/8 inches. At this point, the well is quite deep, and usually, no more casing will be run if it is an exploratory hole. If it is a production or completion well, more casing will be run.

The casing crew is usually a 3 to 4-man team. They come onboard the rig a day or two before the casing is to be tripped and leave the rig right after the job has been completed. I've seen casing crews come on board and because there were problems with the well, could not perform their duties for weeks on end. Their pay, however, starts when they leave the dock!

### **Cement Crews:**

When the hole is drilled, its diameter is always larger than the casing that is to go in it. The extra space is used so cement can be pumped in between the casing and the earth's crust. This cement helps stabilize the casing and also helps secure the integrity of the well. On exploratory holes, there is usually one man from a cementing company on board at all times

### **Diving Companies:**

Divers are used frequently to inspect underwater structures and equipment and make needed repairs. When a piece of sub-surface equipment malfunctions divers must be sent down to repair it. Oilfield divers are underwater welding and demolition experts. People who wish to go into the offshore oil rig diving industry

are required to serve at least a year as diving tenders after they have completed the necessary schools.

**Diver-Tenders** serve as the surface-based partner for the man underwater. He monitors the breathing gasses for the diver, serves as safety man, and uses state-of-the-art communications equipment to relay instructions between the diver, crane operators, and anyone else involved in the sub-surface operation. Tenders can also be used as back-up divers if the need arises.

### **Fishing Crews:**

In oil well drilling, a fish is a foreign object in the open hole. It could be something as simple as a wrench or sledgehammer that was carelessly dropped in the hole, or something more complex, such as several thousand feet of drill pipe which had twisted off. Whatever it is, it must be removed before drilling can continue. Even something as small as a crescent wrench can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to remove. Fishing crews specialize in getting unwanted items out of the hole.

### **Directional Drillers:**

Whenever the well must change directions or deviate from a true vertical, a directional driller is called in. He specializes in drilling curved wells and gets paid much money for his expertise.

### **Mud Engineers:**

Mud is the term for the chemical elements used for several purposes in the drilling process:

- Mud washes away cuttings from the drill bit downhole and returns them to the surface where they can be analyzed.
- Mud cools the drill bit.
- The weight of mud prevents high-pressure gasses from reaching the surface.

Mud engineers are not usually engineers in the academic sense but are given that title because they have a complex and demanding job. They determine the weight of the mud and ensure all the proper chemicals are added once the drilling begins. There are usually 1 or 2 mud engineers on the rig at all times.



### **Logging Companies:**

Loggers are responsible for the monitoring and analysis of what's happening downhole. They monitor instruments that detect pressures and changes in the well. They warn the drilling personnel when dangerous regions have been reached. Several people monitor this equipment during the drilling process. Another type of logging company drops sophisticated electrical equipment into the well to help determine the quality and quantity of oil and gas deposits and their depth.

### **Mud Logger Trainee Positions:**

One of the critical people on any drill site is the mud logger. There is usually a big demand for mud loggers AND mud logger trainees.

Duties of the mud logger include:

- Write comprehensive documentation of a borehole by inspecting the rock or sediment dislodged by the circulating mud through the borehole.
- Monitor drilling activity in real time using a mobile laboratory.
- Provide information on the drilling and pumping parameters, seismic activity, and pressure trends.
- Use technological devices to gather data, analyze it, and send it to the rig management team.
- Proficiency in computer use / computer software programs is desirable.

### **Offshore Welding-Fabrication Companies:**

Offshore welding & fabrication companies are specialized contractors who play a vital role in the erection of new platforms and the maintenance, repair, and modification of existing ones.

### **Electrical Contracting / Electronics / Communication Companies:**

As you might guess, these contractors provide the expertise in the installation and maintenance of all the sophisticated electronic and communications equipment on the rig and make repairs when necessary.

### **Offshore Rig Decommissioning-Demolition:**

Offshore drilling rigs are only good for so long. After that, they have to be

decommissioned, demolished and hauled back to shore to be cut up for scrap. These companies hire lots of general laborers, welders, and equipment operators.

### **Offshore Sandblasting-Painting Companies:**

Since rigs are metal, they rust profusely in saltwater. Sandblasting, and painting goes on continually. Every so often the structure must be cleaned to the bare metal by sand or water blasting, then primed and painted. Even though the regular rig crew performs these duties as part of their daily job, every so often a full-scale sandblast and repaint will be required.

### **Wind Power:**

Offshore wind farms are going up all over the place. The tower must be secured to the ocean floor, much like a platform rig. The main structure must be erected and the massive turbine blades installed. The equipment must be maintained. Personnel that work on offshore wind farms follow a very similar schedule to offshore oil rig workers.

### **Onshore Alternatives:**

Another thing you might consider if you cannot get an offshore gig right away is to get hired on a land-based rig until you can get offshore. When the oilfield is operating in a normal mode, there is plenty of work available on land rigs.

The actual drilling process is about the same onshore as offshore, so most of what you learn on a land rig can be applied offshore. Getting six months experience on a land rig as a roustabout or roughneck, motorman, operator, etc., will go a long way in helping you to get hired for an offshore job.

This is true because you will be exposed and trained in basic drilling procedures; rig up- rig down, spud ins, running casing, drilling, bit changes, tripping pipe, fishing trips, mud pits & pressure, V door operations, shaker screens, what type of chemicals to mix for various drilling runs, emergency blowout procedures, etc.

You will also be around people who are working in the industry. Their experience, expertise, and contacts could provide you with valuable assistance in helping you get to where you want to go.

**On-shore special service companies** operate in much the same manner as their offshore counterparts.



**Labor Camps:**

Labor camps provide a wide array of services to companies who need them, most of these are general labor but also include skilled trades like welders, operators, electricians, mechanics, etc.

What makes labor camps so unique over some onshore employers is that they provide you not only with a job but also three meals a day and a roof over your head.

**Shipyards:**

There are many shipyards in the US and worldwide, which not only provide repair and modification capabilities for existing offshore rigs, platforms, and boats but build new ones as well. Many offshore companies use overseas shipyards because they are cheaper than shipyards in the US.

There has been many a shipyard hand hired onto a rig because he was present during the construction and fabrication process of the rig, obtained a good knowledge of how the rig was built, and applied with the drilling company when the rig left the shipyard for offshore drilling duties.

If you live near a shipyard that is building offshore drilling rigs, supply, crew and utility boats, you might consider getting a job there to see what it is all about. Keep in mind that some prominent people from the offshore company will be visiting the construction site regularly to see how things are progressing. These are great contacts, let them know you want to work offshore!

# 5

# Pre-Requisites For Employment In The Offshore Oil Rig Industry



## Basic Requirements for Working Offshore:

### Health Requirements:

The first and foremost requirement for working offshore is being in sound physical shape. You will be required to take and pass a thorough physical examination, including a spinal MRI, cat scan, and X-ray before you can be employed. Answer all questions truthfully. You will also be tested for illegal drugs.

### Age:

In most cases, you must be at least 18 to work for an offshore drilling contractor. You need only be 16 to sit for Coast Guard endorsements. The average age for offshore workers is 47, so don't feel you are "too old" unless you are in your sixties and don't think you can handle the rigors of offshore life. There are some OLD people out there. You must be comfortable working at height and in adverse weather conditions as well as being able to cope with the 24/7 unusual on and off working conditions.

You will need to be a practical person and be good at learning how to use equipment or machinery you are not familiar with. Most of these jobs are manual in nature, so being physically fit is crucial. You will be working as part of a team, so any skills or experience in working with others where teamwork is required would be helpful.

### Experience:

The better your expertise in your field or profession, the closer you will be looked at by prospective employers.

### Examples:

- If you are a welder with a 6G (ASME / AWS / Lloyds of London, etc.) certification, you stand a high chance of getting hired on a welding crew, perhaps even getting hired directly on a drilling rig as a rig welder.

- If you have an ASE Diesel Mechanic Certification with some good experience under your belt, there is a good chance you can start in the maintenance department. A definite PLUS would also be to be HVAC certified. Having a welding ticket would also help.
- To be a rig electrician, you will need substantial DC experience along with AC, SCR power module experience, PLC controller experience, and HVAC experience, to name a few. Most of the heavy equipment on the rig; draw works, main engines, anchor winches, thrusters, etc. run on DC power.
- If you have good onshore crane operator experience, you have a good shot at a trainee position, maybe even as a regular crane operator. It just depends on how desperate a company is for crane operators when you apply.
- Other examples of transferable skills would be painters, warehousemen, cooks and galley hands, medics, administrative personnel, etc.
- Working offshore is entirely different from land-based jobs. You can be a firecracker or a welder or a real hotdog of a crane operator onshore, but when you go offshore, things change drastically and quick. For example, as a crane operator, when you are offloading a supply boat, the boat is moving up and down and sideways. If you are on a floater the same is happening to you. This presents quite a challenge, especially in rough weather.

The crane operator has the legal authority to shut crane operations down if it is too rough to make lifts. However, if there is something on the boat that is essential for drilling operations, it would be in your best interest to make the lift(s). When seas get up to 15 and 20 ft with 40 plus knot winds, it can be quite the experience.

- Seas in the Gulf of Mexico get 20 ft and higher
- Seas in the North Sea get 65 ft and higher

As for welding, get prepared to work in wet and windy conditions. You will be putting on some rubber boots, rubber gloves, and a good slicker suit (foul weather gear). Offshore saltwater is more conductive to electricity than fresh water. Be prepared for some bone wrenching shocks.



For the "newbie," your biggest problem is your lack of "previous offshore experience." Back in the day, this was not a problem. It was easier to get a job offshore than it is today. All you had to do was walk into the office, tell them you wanted to work offshore, and, if you passed the medical, you were on your way.

Not so anymore. The reason is liability. A drilling rig is a dangerous place; if you don't know what you are doing, you can get hurt very badly, very quickly. This is why companies do not like to hire personnel who are not familiar with offshore drilling operations.

Offshore companies that are currently seeking personnel, are looking for many things in a new hire, and having previous "offshore experience" is at the top of the list. Once you get 6 months under your belt of either rig or boat experience, you will find many doors opening that previously were closed tight. As long as it has anything to do with the oilfield it will go a long way.

**How do you get offshore experience if no one will hire you to get the experience? That's the catch 22 question I get asked all the time...**

If you have previous offshore job experience, you are "in the click." While having prior experience is not a guarantee you will get hired, not having it will get you rejected most of the time, probably upwards of 90%.

If you have no previous experience, here are a few tidbits of advice that will better your chances.

- Learn as much as you can about the industry. If you want to work on a rig, find out what types of rigs there are and what each one does. If you're going to crew on a boat, find out what types of vessels there are and what they do. By doing this, even if you have no previous offshore experience, at least you can talk intelligently with the recruiter about the responsibilities of jobs you are attracted to.
- The recruiter is going to point out that you have no previous offshore experience. Your response to that should be *"Yes, BUT; I am a very dependable person, I get along well with others, I learn fast and can work with minimum supervision"* (say these only if true and in your own words). Then highlight your past work experience and go into whatever sales pitch you feel is appropriate for the situation.

- If you don't get hired on your first contact with a recruiter, don't take it as a "definite and forever no." Ask him (or her) if you could check with them from time to time to review any possible open positions, either currently or in the future. Then do it. Check with them from time to time. DO NOT stop your contact with them unless they tell you explicitly not to call, but at the same time don't make yourself a pest by calling every day unless instructed to do so.

A key point I want to interject here is whatever you do, don't sound desperate! Take the attitude that you have something of value they need. DO NOT tell them *"I'll do anything!"*

Research the company BEFORE you apply. Keep a record of every time you made contact, whom you spoke to and what was said. Many recruiters use the ploy of turning you down the first time to see how bad you want it. Be persistent, but don't be a nuisance.

### **Education:**

Most entry-level rig jobs do not require a formal education as the employer is more interested in your ability to do your job well and learn quickly than in how many years you went to school or how many degrees you have. Some jobs, such as a ballast control, mud engineer, etc., require at least a high school education. Other positions, geologist, petroleum engineer, etc., will require higher levels of learning.

### **Dependability:**

One of the foremost concerns of offshore employers is dependability. Regardless how good a hand is, he isn't much good if he isn't there! One of the quickest ways to lose your job is not to show up for crew change. When you hire on with a company, you become part of a team, and it is difficult to operate when any member of the team is not present.

### **Interest-Ambition:**

Your interest and ambition will play an essential part in your getting and keeping a job, whether it be offshore or anywhere else. Offshore work is an immensely exciting field, and interest in learning your post as well as other positions (cross training) will benefit you in the long run. Once you get in and get some significant experience under your belt, you can move into different areas of operation.

## Industry Certification Requirements:

Safety is the top concern for offshore employment, and there are many certifications required to work offshore. Each country has different requirements. Nowadays, every rig operator worldwide insists that everyone traveling to any offshore platform or structure must complete some type of offshore survival course before being allowed to go.

This offshore survival training applies to employees and visitors alike, irrespective of the length of the visit, whether it be for a 2-month rotation or a one-day inspection or photo shoot.

These certifications are not cheap. Having them does not guarantee employment but goes a long way in your favor. The more reputable schools that provide training have excellent industry contacts and will go out of their way to help you find work.



### United States:

#### **TWIC Certification:**

A Transportation Workers Identification Card (TWIC) is a must (new applicant fee is \$125.25 payable to the US Government). This is a government issued card, and you will not get anywhere near a rig, boat, helicopter, dock or anything to do with the offshore industry in the US unless you have one. <https://www.tsa.gov/for-industry/twic>

There are specific requirements you have to meet to get one of these cards, which are explained on the site. Also, there are disqualifying offenses-factors on getting this card. If you have a police record, you can still qualify, it just depends. There is no need to go any further if you cannot get a TWIC card.

#### **BOSIET: Basic Offshore Safety Induction & Emergency Training**

Course candidates will gain a basic level of understanding and awareness of safety and emergency responses that are required to work on offshore installations. After the completion of these courses, candidates will be required to demonstrate their level of knowledge and understanding of how the procedures are to be executed. At that time an industry certification will be issued.

The cost of these courses varies from school to school. Financing is available. Most of the schools have insider contacts that will help you get hired. However, do keep in mind that going to these schools and getting these certifications does not guarantee employment.

BOSIET courses are usually a combination of the following:

**Safety Induction:**

- Offshore hazards
- Proper waste disposal
- HSE (health, safety officer and medic) safety officer procedures and responsibilities
- Work permits (hot work-confined space, etc.)
- Prescription medication procedures
- Substance abuse policy
- Personal protection equipment requirements (PPE)
- Near miss, incident and accident reporting procedures

**Sea Survival-First Aid:**

- How to suit up with a survival suit before an emergency
- How to successfully board survival craft while wearing your survival suit

**Underwater Helicopter Escape Training (HUET):**

- Proper crew change procedures
- Proper outfitting and operation of survival suit, aviation lifejacket, and emergency breathing system
- Helicopter emergency ditching procedures; dry land, water submersion, capsizing

**Firefighting-Self Rescue:**

- Fire discovery and reporting
- Correct use for all types of portable fire extinguishers
- Correct use of fire hoses and foam applicators
- Correct use of air packs in smoke-filled enclosures and confined spaces
- Basic CPR, first aid, and emergency responder



## Canada:

There are several mandatory safety courses required before working on an offshore installation in Atlantic Canada:

- Basic Survival Training (BST) provides workers with the knowledge and skills necessary to react adequately to an offshore emergency and care for themselves and others in a survival situation.
- Helicopter Underwater Emergency Breathing Apparatus (HUEBA) provides a practical understanding of how to use underwater breathing equipment in case of an emergency helicopter landing.
- Helicopter Underwater Escape Training (HUET) provides training in escaping from a submerged or partially submerged helicopter.
- Hydrogen Sulfide Awareness (H2S) educates personnel about the dangers associated with hydrogen sulfide gas and the appropriate response measures to be taken should it be encountered.
- Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) training provides advice on the safe handling, use, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials in the workplace.
- Regulatory Awareness Training outlines applicable safety-related legislation and regulations and provides an overview of the regulatory regime for offshore oil and natural gas activity in Atlantic Canada.



## United Kingdom:

Basic Offshore Safety Induction and Emergency Training (BOSIET). The UK BOSIET includes safety, fire prevention firefighting, first aid, helicopter safety & escape and survival at sea. Further Offshore Emergency Training (FOET) is the refresher certificate.



## Norway:

The Norwegian Oil and Gas Association (NOGA) requires everyone working offshore Norway to have completed the Basic Safety and Emergency Training Course (GSK). For Norwegian applicants, there is also a 5-day course and a 2-day refresher course provided by SOTS.

## Vocational Schools:

If you presently don't have any offshore, oilfield or maritime experience and would like to get some, you might consider a class or two at a vocational junior college specializing in oil field training. These schools and classes are taught by skilled, experienced professionals who know their trade. If you make a good impression, don't forget that they will have insider contacts. Most schools will offer job placement assistance.



# 6

# Searching For Employment In The Offshore Oil Rig Industry



Once you've decided what position you want to apply for, it's time to start the actual job search. While this was never my favorite part of working in the industry, it's one of those necessary evils we all experience in life. Learning how to do this will benefit you in your pursuit for a job, offshore or otherwise:

1. Searching in Person
2. Newspaper Want Ad Searches
3. Job Fairs
4. Using the Internet
5. Offshore and Maritime Employment Agencies

## **The Physical Search:**

When I was looking for offshore work my first time, I drove to Venice, Louisiana (a 3-hour drive) because someone told me I could get an offshore job there. When I reached Venice, I asked around about who could I see to get a rig job. For whatever reason, no one was able to help me and back home and to square one I went.

Later, while sitting in the local pub contemplating my next move and having a cold one, I met someone who worked offshore as a crane operator. Luck was with me that day. When he found out I wanted to work offshore, he gave me the phone number of a company located in New Orleans that needed a rig welder ASAP. I called the company and spoke with someone briefly, told them I was a certified welder and yes, I thought I could handle a job as a welder on one of their offshore platforms.

There was some SERIOUS HESITATION on the recruiter's part about the fact that I had never worked offshore before, which was to be expected. But that was nothing compared to the long silence on the phone when I told them I had never welded pipe, much less had a certification in it!

I did get out of the recruiter that they were in dire need of a welder before the next crew change and time was running out. This is where the element of “sell” came in, where the rubber meets the road. At first, he wasn’t going to hire me, but I told him in a confident tone that “If you’re a welder, you can either weld or you can’t,” and I didn’t think there was anything on the rig I could not handle, welding wise.

It took some serious convincing on my part that I was the man for the job, but he eventually hired me, reluctant as he was. I was thrilled with this blessing and determined to make a good go of it. I would be working a 28-28 schedule out of Brazil at an unheard of (to me) salary.

The next two weeks were quite hectic, as I had to get my passport, work permits, vaccinations, etc. in order. And then I was on my way to work offshore Aracaju, Brazil where I worked my first hitch as a rig welder.

If you have a couple of days and are not pressed for time and money, the in-person search could be quite advantageous. You'll see a lot of different sights and meet some interesting people.

If you are out physically looking for an offshore job in the US, it’s possible you could get hired, so be prepared. If you get hired using this method, there’s a 50/50 chance your new employer will want you to go to work immediately. He will not want to hear. *"Just let me go back home and get my stuff..."* Take your stuff with you and be prepared to go to without delay.

One of the current hot spots for offshore, oilfield, and maritime activity in the United States is Port Fourchon, Louisiana. The highway you travel to get there (LA 1 or LA 318) has billboards advertising for workers, both entry level and experienced. Port Fourchon is the supply headquarters for US Gulf of Mexico offshore operations, this is a good place to look.

Other cities to consider are Houston, Dallas, and Galveston in Texas; Morgan City, Lafayette and New Orleans in Louisiana; and Mobile in Alabama. You can check the online Yellow Pages for physical addresses under offshore drilling contractors, offshore fabrication & welding companies, oil companies, oil field service companies, maritime companies and anything else you can come up with concerning the offshore, oilfield, and maritime jobs industry for locations and phone numbers.

**Anyone you know working in the industry is a  
great source for information and leads...**

The job in Brazil was great, the only problem was I got hired at the end of the contract. I successfully completed 2 hitches and earned enough money to see me through the next couple of months.

By that time, I was hooked, and had made my mind up that working offshore was going to be my career choice. I began applying with different companies to see what I could come up with next.

While driving down the beach one day (I live on the Mississippi Gulf Coast) I saw a huge vessel at the dock. As I got closer, I saw it was a drillship, and boy, was I excited. Mostly what comes into the port here are banana boats so you can imagine my surprise when I saw this huge drillship right there in my front yard. They were between jobs and in for some minor welding repairs.

This was before 9/11 so a TWIC card was not required to enter the docks or board a vessel. I walked right up the gangplank and asked the first person I saw where I could find the toolpusher.

I was directed to his office. After I had introduced myself, I told him I was interested in a job as a rig welder and had prior overseas and offshore experience. We talked briefly, he then called the Houston office and got a recruiter on the line and gave me the phone.

From that call I was able to schedule an interview with Global Marine out of Houston. I flew in for the interview a couple of days later and got a job as a rig welder on a drillship working 14/14 out of Brownsville, TX, for my second offshore job.

If you live near any ocean ports, be on the lookout for rigs that might come in from time to time. You can always tell a vessel is a drilling rig because the derrick will be taller than most anything else around.

Rigs sometimes come into ports when they are in between contracts or need specialty repair or modification work that can only be performed at a wharf or shipyard. If you see a rig docked, by all means, try and find out how you can get a phone call to the OIM or toolpusher. It is quite possible you could get hired on

that very vessel. People have done it this way. Shorthanded crews are not uncommon.

**CAUTION #1:** The days are over where one could enter a docking facility and board a vessel without being challenged. In the US, you will not get anywhere near a dock or vessel without a TWIC card. Other parts of the world might have less stringent requirements, just be cautious.

**CAUTION #2:** I would not advise using the physical search method if you are out of work and out of money. If you are desperate for a job and use all your cash for a trip to Houston, Lafayette or Port Fourchon and don't get hired, then where you be? Use some common sense here. Also, desperate people usually don't make good first impressions with a recruiter.

## **Newspaper Want Ads:**

Newspapers used to be one of the main methods recruiters used to advertise for open positions, but not so much anymore. This does not mean there will not be any advertisements in the paper for personnel, they are just not as frequent as they used to be.

If you come across a newspaper that has a job advertisement you are interested in, follow the instructions in the ad for applying. Sometimes you must appear in person to apply. If you're required to appear in person, keep in mind that the employer might want you to work immediately. Be prepared!

## **Internet Searches:**

And then came the Internet. In many ways, the internet has taken the place of snail mail postal services. Heck, it's FREE! It does not cost anything to e-mail your résumé or CV to companies that are currently seeking oilfield workers on a global basis, both onshore and offshore.

Along with the convenience of having instant access to thousands of companies you can apply with using the web, prepare yourself to go on some wild goose chases when you are searching for them. While some of the major players in the offshore industry can be found through regular generic searches, the majority of them can be found only through deep searches that take a lot of time. What you will find yourself encountering more than you would like are "click bait" sites. These are sites that look like offshore oil industry sites and claim to have

just the information you are searching for but are nothing more than ploys to get you to generate page views.

These sites may or may not eventually get you to an actual offshore job opening, but you might have to jump through some hoops to get there. For example, I recently did a search on Yahoo for “offshore oil rig entry level jobs.” On the 1st search result page, I found a link that advertised: “Offshore Jobs, Hiring Now, \$68 to \$80 an hour, In Your Area, Entry Level, No Experienced Required.”

The inexperienced job seeker would probably be thinking “Hot dang, that’s just what I’m looking for!” A post like this would get anyone’s attention, especially someone with no previous offshore experience looking for their first time out. And the part about “In Your Area!” How could anyone pass that up?

I clicked the link and went to the site and was asked what type of job I was looking for and in what location. I used Cincinnati, OH as the location and “offshore entry level” as the job type. Right away it let me know there were 74 available offshore jobs in Cincinnati, OH! I found this to be interesting, because offshore jobs are located “offshore,” not in the middle of the country!

I wanted to find out more about this and continued to go down the rabbit hole. This is what I found:

1. After I had posted what job I was looking for and in what location, the next request was for my email address, which was expected.
2. The page after that wanted my name and gender, with 4 choices for gender.
3. The next page asked if I wanted a loan to go back to college.
4. After that came a question inquiring if I wanted any type of government compensation.
5. Then I was asked if I wanted to purchase health care.
6. The next page offered a link to where I could build and online résumé.
7. The next question asked if I was interested in a “work at home” opportunity.

Finally, some actual job postings came up, but they were for airport operators, loader operators, tire changers, Uber operator partners, email senders, printing press operators; a lot of jobs that have nothing to do with offshore entry level positions. In other words, a LOT OF BS.

It' won't take you long to recognize these types of sites for what they are, time wasters. There are 3rd party sites that offer good leads for offshore jobs, but I recommend going directly to the company website itself when possible.

As I stated earlier, many of the companies involved in the industry cannot be found through regular generic type searches, but only through deep searches that take a lot of time. A page with links to many of those [be found here](#).

## **Job Fairs:**

Job fairs, also referred to as career fairs or career expos, are excellent places to get hired. Jobs are usually available for both for entry level and experienced personnel. I recently saw one job fair in Houston claiming they were going to hire 180 people on the spot.

If you go to a job fair, expect to see a lot of others there applying for work, also. Be sure to take a professional résumé (chapter 7) with you and the proper amount of clothes and other necessities in case you get hired. Whenever I see a job fair advertising for offshore workers, I post it on my web site, so check in often.

Rig personnel are not hired strictly on their experience or education. Motivation and the desire to do a good job goes a long way. A poorly written résumé or CV, no matter how great you are at your job, can project the image of someone who will not take the effort to do things right.

**Over the years, I've found that most people work better than they write...**

For every job you see advertised online, recruiters will be looking at hundreds, possibly even thousands of applications per week. Industry sources estimate that as much as 75% of them get trashed, with zero notification to the applicant. The following chapter will show you how to prevent this from happening to you.

## **Oilfield, Offshore & Maritime Employment Agencies:**

Another method used by many job seekers is to hire an agency that specializes in finding and placing personnel in the offshore, oilfield, and maritime industry.



Although there is a fee for this service, it can be well worth it since you usually get instant results, or you pay nothing.

If you choose to use a professional agency, here are some tips that could be helpful to you.

- Use a reputable agency, an agency which has been in business for some time as opposed to a brand new one. The established agency will run smoothly and efficiently. The new agency will be in the process of getting the bugs worked out.
- You should not have to pay any money up front for “filing or administrative fees.” That would be like having to pay a cover charge to go into a grocery or department store. Don't pay any money for a drug screen. When you get offered a job, you will be required to pass a physical examination which includes a drug screen as a condition for employment. The cost of this will be paid for by the employer.
- Do not pay money to see a training or orientation video. Most companies require their new employees to watch a video about the company's operation before they turn them loose on a rig or a boat. These videos will include general operations, safety guidelines, and fire and abandon ship procedures. Again, there should be no charge for this.
- Do not pay money for Z-cards, licenses, or certifications unless they come from a bona fide US Coast Guard training institute that requires you to participate in intensive hands-on training. Watching a video for 15 minutes of an offshore crane lifting pipe and pallets of chemicals off an offshore supply boat does not qualify you to be a rigger.
- Do not use an agency that will hold you liable for their entire fee if you get to the work site and for some reason beyond your control, the job doesn't work out.
- An example would be not being able to get along with the crew, captain, pusher, etc. The patch has got some great people, but it also has some real jerks who are most challenging to work with. On your first trip out, you might wind up somewhere it is impossible for you to stay.

- Discuss this in detail with your agency and understand the terms and conditions before you sign. Once you sign, you are legally bound. A good agency will not hold you responsible for the entire fee if the job doesn't work out due to conditions beyond your control. They will make every attempt to place you somewhere else.
- Do not agree to pay any unreasonable amount. The standard rate reputable agencies charge is 14 days' pay. The standard payback time is one day's pay for each week you work until your obligation is completed.
- These guidelines are just that, guidelines. Different agencies have different ways of doing things. If you have questions about any of this, drop me a line or give me a ring and I'll check it out for you.
- These guidelines are just that, guidelines. They are not written in stone. Different agencies have different ways of doing things. If you have questions about an agency you are interested in working with, or have any questions whatsoever concerning getting a job through an offshore employment agency, drop me a line or give a call.

# 7

# Applying For Employment In The Offshore Oil Rig Industry



After you've decided what position you want to pursue and found some companies to apply with, the next step will be the application process itself. Study this process and learn it; it will serve you well in future job searches.

Note: Chapter 7 has several links that will take you to different pages I think you should see. There is a problem that if you click on a link and then want to go back, it will take you back to the table of contents. In order to avoid this, instead of just clicking the link, right click and then click "open link in a new tab."

## **10 things that will greatly boost your success rate:**

1. How to successfully apply online
2. 3 ways companies receive online applications
3. Make a professional presentation
4. Well written cover letters make a big difference
5. Avoid the ATS roadblock (Applicant Tracking System)
6. Don't get rejected because of spam filters
7. Is your résumé even opening
8. Use snail mail as a back-up for selected jobs
9. Tidy up your social media
10. Follow up makes all the difference

**Learning these steps is just as important as any other skill you have...**

## **1-What You Need to Know:**

In today's world, applying for most employment requires having basic computer and internet skills. Smartphones are the "in things" these days, and it seems like desktop PC's and laptops are becoming "old school."

If you can do what needs to be done with your phone, more power to you. I can't imagine doing the following on my phone, but if you can, go for it. Phone or otherwise, here is what you need to know how to do:

- How to access and navigate the internet
- How to write, edit, send and receive emails and text messages
- How to write, edit, save, and send word documents and PDF files
- How to fill out online forms and upload files to the HR department of hiring companies
- If you can't do this, get someone who can and is willing to help. If you cannot find anyone, I am readily available.

While this might seem ridiculously simple to some, for others, it is a hair-pulling experience they want no part of, and that is OK. Not everyone is a geek. It doesn't matter who does it, as long as it gets done.

## **2-How Online Applications Are Received:**

There are 3 ways companies receive applications. Before you start applying you want to be prepared for all 3. You do this by having the following: A word.doc version of your résumé, a HTML version (web résumé) and a PDF file.

- The 1st way companies receive applications is to provide only an email address. When you click on the email link, it opens up your email program with their email address in the "To" box. The subject line may or may not have something in it. If the subject line is empty, type in what position you are applying for.
- You can copy and paste your résumé in the body of the email, or you can send it as an attachment. My advice would be to have a web résumé and send them the link. A well written web résumé makes a better first impression than any of the others, and it opens every time, all the time.
- The 2nd way companies receive applications is to provide you with an upload link on their webpage. This will allow you to upload your résumé directly from your device to their site. For best results don't upload PDF files unless asked to do so. Use a standard word.doc résumé.
- The 3rd-way companies receive applications is to provide you with an online form to fill out. Copy the requested information from your résumé and post it in their form or type as you go.

- Filling out online forms can be very tedious and time consuming but is well worth the trouble. Many people will not make the extra effort, even if it is a job they are highly qualified for and in need of. They will just go to another site where the process is easier.
- Companies are not only looking for qualified candidates to fill a vacancy, they are looking for people who will follow instructions and do what it takes to get the job done.
- Using online forms are one way to weed people out. If the job is something you are truly interested in, make the effort to fill out the form exactly the way the employer requests. Their reasoning is that if you are not willing to fill out the form the way they want, you might not be willing to do the job the way they want it done.

### **3-Make a Professional Presentation:**

By far, the most crucial element in your job search is your résumé and cover letter. This is where the rubber meets the road, and it is also where many job seekers reach a dead end. Using only the written word, you have to convince a recruiter that you are the one and have the skills and experience required to get the job done.

The modern-day word for this is “marketing.” The old school word is “sell.” Your résumé and cover letter have to “sell” you to potential employers and persuade them to call you for the interview above all others.

I’ve seen thousands of résumés over the last 20 plus years, and the one thing I found they all have in common is they could use improvement, the majority of them much improvement.

#### **Most people work better than they write...**

Not only do most people work better than they write, but for some reason, many seem to think that because they are educated or highly experienced in their craft or whatever that this automatically means their résumé will get them hired. So off they go, sending out dozens and even hundreds of résumés and never hearing so much as a peep from anyone. Zip. Nada. Nothing. This holds true for entry level as well as experienced hands. Very discouraging this is, to say the least.

Your résumé is your only connection to the people who can hire you. This is your do or die moment; you will not get a second chance to make a good first impression. Before you start sending anything out, make sure yours is up to current standards and will get through the ATS (more on this later).

If you would like me to have a look and give you an honest appraisal as to whether I think the résumé you are using will get you hired, send it over for a **FREE 11-point professional critique**.

Writing about one's self objectively can be a hair-pulling chore. Even though there are numerous articles, books, websites and YouTube videos available on how to do it, many still find it a difficult task and often fall short of presenting themselves in their best light.

It's estimated that as much as 85% of résumés sent out on any given day go straight to the trash. There are usually hundreds of applicants applying for the same job you are. Having your résumé in order is a simple fix.

### **You won't get a second chance to make a good first impression!**

Here are some basic guidelines on what a professional résumé should and should not include:

- A professional résumé contains the element of SELL.
- A professional résumé will not contain spelling or grammatical errors.
- A professional résumé contains a cover letter and clearly defined job objective.
- No part of a professional résumé is written in ALL CAPS, except for state or technical abbreviations.
- For dates, make sure you always use the month and year. Never just the year.
- A professional résumé is an easy read. It's personable.
- A professional résumé projects you as a confident person who can get the job done.
- A professional résumé will get through the ATS.
- A professional résumé makes readily available all relevant information the recruiter needs to make a hiring decision.
- Sending pictures of your résumé does not usually yield good results.
- Use a word.doc unless asked to do otherwise.



- List certifications, licenses, schools attended, etc. as bulleted points.
- Use a professional sounding email address. big\_stud@hotmail.com or partyman4u@gmail.com would not be good choices.
- Make sure you have your name and contact information clearly posted.
- Tell the truth.

One critical thing I seldom see in self-written résumés is the element of SELL. While this is by far an essential ingredient and is not hard to include, it seems to be the one that is always left out!

**A professional résumé will open doors for you  
that would otherwise remain closed...**

I hope I have convinced you of the importance of using a professional résumé. Offshore jobs are hard to come by these days, which is why it is so very important you do everything in your power to make a good first impression. You cannot do this using a poorly prepared résumé that does not project you in your best light.

There are more people now than ever before wanting to get hired offshore. If you have ANY doubt as to how your résumé will perform, send it in for a **FREE 11-point professional critique**.

I have 20 plus years of writing winning résumés that get people hired, specializing in the offshore, maritime, oil, gas & wind industries. Here are some great examples of résumés I recently wrote for 2 of my clients.

**Most people work better than they write...  
You won't get a second chance to make a good first impression!**

## **4-Include a Hard-Selling Cover Letter:**

The cover letter is where the majority of the “SELL” takes place. It SELLS the recruiter on why he or she should pick you above all others.

Résumés which have a motivational cover letter are 60% more likely to get you an interview than résumés with no cover letter, which is a very good reason to include one! And again, from personal experience, I can tell you that 85% or more of the résumés and CV's I get every week do not have a cover letter. [Click here](#) to see what a hard selling cover letter looks like.

**The most crucial ingredient is the element of “SELL” ...**

After the cover letter comes the résumé itself; standard résumé formatting would include work history, education, any special schools, training and/or certifications and finally references.

I break with tradition and put the objective and summary of qualifications in the cover letter and combine the 2 documents to save time and provide ease of handling. Plus, it looks impressive, yes?

The last thing on your résumé would be your professional references, people you know who will say good things about your character and ability to get the job done. This could include individuals you have worked with, personal friends, your lawyer, accountant, pastor, etc.

I've seen many résumés with the words “References Provided on Request.” I break with tradition again and put references at the end of the résumé. Doing this saves the recruiter time. If they want to check your references, all they have to do is contact them directly versus contacting you, having you send them the references and then making the contact.

**Using the instructions in this chapter will put you in front of the majority of people applying for the same job, even people with more experience...**

Once your résumé is ready, and your job search has turned up several positions you are interested in, don't jump the gun and start sending résumés out. If you do you will be putting the cart before the horse. There is something which, if you don't understand how it works, will practically guarantee your résumé never gets read with the result being you never hear from anyone about a job.

Its called the Applicant Tracking System or ATS. I am surprised at the number of sincere job seekers who have never heard of the ATS, much less have a clue as to how it affects their job search. Not understanding the ATS is why 75% of the résumés sent out on any given day by unsuspecting job seekers never get read!

## **5-Understand the Applicant Tracking System:**

The applicant tracking system is a software application that enables the electronic handling of recruitment needs. It provides recruiting and hiring tools for companies and helps sort out the thousands of résumés recruiters get every week, sometimes every day.

Most companies use the ATS because they are overwhelmed by the sheer number of applications. It's physically impossible to read them all. Offshore work is highly sought-after work with high pay, lots of time off, and impressive benefits not found in regular shore-based jobs.

When you apply online for an offshore rig, boat or wind job, your résumé does not go directly to a recruiter or hiring manager. It's first processed through the ATS where it is determined if the applicant meets company's requirements.

Three-fourths of all resumes never even get seen by human eyes. It doesn't matter how much experience you have, what your educational credentials are or how loyal of a worker you are, if you do not have the information the ATS is looking for, your résumé will probably end up in the trash.

**The ATS helps hiring professionals narrow their applicant pool, but many times, top candidates slip through the cracks...**

The ATS is not a perfect system. Many a qualified person has slipped through the cracks or got wrongly rejected because their résumé wasn't optimized with the right keywords. This is an easy fix. Don't let it happen to you.

I heard of one company using the ATS and was having trouble filling a particular vacancy, so they submitted a résumé of someone in the company who was already working in the exact position they were hiring for. Even the guy (who was already working there) got rejected!

There are hundreds of different ATS systems, each with their own features, strengths, weaknesses, and quirks. If you are applying online for work, more than likely your résumé will go through an ATS.

What you want to do is to make your résumé as ATS friendly as possible. It will require additional work on your part, but the extra effort will be well worth it in the long run. It's not that complicated and doing so will put you way ahead of the competition.

**Do not use a generic "one-style-fits-all résumé" in your job search...**

Applicant tracking systems automatically compare your résumé to the job description. Common ways recruiters filter résumé applications are by searching for key skills and titles clearly posted in the job vacancy.

For example, if a recruiter is hiring for a crane operator and has 1200 résumés to look through, they will program the ATS to search for résumés with "crane operator" in them. All résumés that do not have "crane operator" in them will be removed. Pretty straight forward, right?

However, a more refined search might include keywords like “knuckle boom” or “friction” experience. You have years of both knuckle boom and friction experience, but you never bothered to update your résumé because you thought it was OK as is. It has the words “experienced crane operator” but doesn’t mention anything about knuckle boom or friction. Anyone not having those exact terms in their résumé will probably be out of luck.

A search can contain multiple terms. For example, they might perform a search that includes a combination of titles and skills necessary for the job, such as welder and crane operator with knuckle-boom experience.

Candidates who post the correct résumé keywords will have the highest chance of being called for an interview. The best way to figure out which skills and keywords to include is by studying the posted job description or consulting someone familiar with ATS systems, like me.

**A winning résumé is strategically tweaked  
to precisely match the job description...**

One of the main things the ATS will be scanning for is to see if you took the time to put the company’s name and the specific job they are advertising. Be sure to include each individual company’s name and specific job vacancy in your cover letter and résumé.

Next, scan the job posting to see if there are any specific particulars you can add to your résumé that you have not already included. Here are some examples:

- If the vacancy says “Prior Jackup Experience Required” and most of your experience has been on a semi, but you recently did 6 months on a jack-up, but haven’t included this on your résumé, be sure to add it.
- If one of the requirements is “Iron Roughneck Experience” and you just finished a 3-month contract using an iron roughneck, but it is not on your résumé, put it on there!
- If a requirement is to have a TWIC (Transportation Worker Identification Card) and you don’t have one but have applied for one, put “TWIC applied for.”

- If the vacancy describes “Looking for Someone Under 5’5” and you fit the bill, be sure and put it.
- Anything and everything that is posted in the job description you match up with and is not in your résumé, be sure to include it.
- Before you submit your application, spend some research time looking over the complete website of the company you are applying with. Get some feel for where they are going, what their mission statement is, what their values are, etc. Tailor your cover letter to meet those goals and values as best as you can.
- I know I’m repeating myself, but only because this is most important. Keep these pointers in mind whenever you get ready to apply to any particular company for a specific job: Be sure to use the Name of the Company and Specific Job Title in your cover letter and résumé.
- Surviving the ATS obstacle course and getting invited for a job interview requires a well-written winning cover letter and résumé that is written explicitly to each company for each specific job.

**An ATS-optimized résumé is the first step to getting face to face with an actual recruiter...**

Some recruiters still choose to glance at every job application that comes through their system. They can decide in about 6 seconds as to whether they want to learn more about the applicant. Make sure yours presents you in your best possible light.

This is why it is so important to have a professional résumé, not just one that is “OK.” Professional will get you hired, OK will usually get you put into the “maybe” folder at best.

**Remember, there are hundreds and sometimes even thousands applying for the same job you are...**

Having a professional résumé, cover letter, and a clear understanding of the ATS should be the foundation of your job search. However, there are a couple of



additional items listed below you might consider as they could have an adverse effect on your job search.

## **6-Spam & Attachment Filters:**

While the internet is a fast-paced environment as far as communication is concerned, it does present some challenges to the uninitiated. One of these challenges is the spam filter.

Whether you are a newbie on the web or an old timer, you know what SPAM is. Companies go to great lengths and expense to cut down on this worrisome electronic nuisance.

For this reason, it is essential to understand the different ways résumés are sent over the web. By far the most widely used method is to send it as an attachment, usually a word.doc attachment.

**Recruiters are not required to let you know your  
résumé did not open or that a SPAM filter blocked it...**

The online virus and SPAM threats are real problems employers take seriously. This is why I stress to follow the instructions on how to make an application with each company, as each company has different requirements.

Many employers have initiated policies not to open attachments, regardless. Most people are not aware of this until they read it here. Below are some employer responses I received from some of my clients. They were fortunate. Usually there is no notification at all.

**Example 1:** *"As a security measure, our system cannot receive executable files, word attachments, programs, audio or video clips. Since your mail contains an attachment of one of the above types, it has been intercepted and not delivered."*

**Example 2:** *"Your email with the subject 'Résumé Document', contains a file attachment of type '[.doc]'. Our organization does not accept files of this type by email. The message has NOT been delivered to the recipients."*

**Example 3:** *"Sorry, but a message filter removed the following attachment(s) 'resume.doc' from this message."*

This is why I stress the importance of following the instructions. Each offshore web site has clearly posted and easily understood instructions on how they want you to apply for a job with them. Follow their instructions, and you will have a much better chance of getting hired.

## **7-Are Your Documents Even Opening?**

When you view your résumé, it looks fine. When you send it to a trusted friend or family member so they can have a look, it seems fine. While it is essential to have friends and family view your résumé, there is no guarantee it will open for everyone the same way it opened for you. Here are 2 letters from qualified clients who found this out the hard way:

*“Ron*

*I sincerely appreciate you reviewing my résumé and letting me know about the problem opening it. That would explain why I have not had any contact with offshore recruiters in the last 2 months, in spite of my years of experience in the industry.”*

*Scott James*

*Pensacola, FL*

*“Captain Ron*

*My husband has been looking for offshore employment for the last 10 months. We sent out applications every chance we got, sending the résumé as a word.doc attachment. Rarely did we get a reply, even though my husband has years of offshore experience as a driller.*

*You can imagine our amazement when you showed us the attachment did not open correctly! Most of the résumés we had sent out, over 100 of them, had more than likely gone directly to the recycle bin and we did not even know it.*

*Well, it finally happened. Paul got a job as a Driller in Oman with Nabors. We sent them the web résumé you made for us. They rang in January and offered him a driller’s position. He flew out there last week.”*

*Lisa M*

*Australia*

For whatever unknown reason, the résumé you spent so much time getting “just right” or spent good money on, ends up opening as gibberish. If you have the required experience but are not getting any offers, you might be sending out something which is not even opening on the other end!

The résumé in question came from an offshore crane operator with the type of certifications and experience recruiters are always looking for. Guess what? More than likely, it went straight to the trash. Don't let this happen to you.

Everyday people who are seeking offshore jobs are dumbfounded as to why they are not hearing from anyone. I hope I have explained in detail how this comes about. My recommendation is that before you begin your job search, you have a word.doc résumé, a web résumé (.html) and a PDF résumé. This way, you have all bases covered, no matter what the requirement.

Having me personally write a professional résumé for you will not cost you an arm and a leg, and I will have a first draft in your hands in 48 hours. [Sign Up Today!](#)

## **8-Use Snail Mail as a Backup Plan for Selected Jobs:**

Here is an excellent tip to consider. After you have gone through the online “sending out your résumé” procedure, go back and pick out a couple of companies that have positions you are especially interested in and feel you would have no problem in meeting their qualifications. You might even have a strong gut feeling like “this is the one.”

1. Make sure you have applied online for the position per the instructions of the company.
2. Get your résumé printed on some quality linen paper. You can use white, but I recommend a neutral off white. Make sure your résumé is professionally prepared. You don't want to drop the ball because of obvious errors.
3. Get matching envelopes on quality linen paper.
4. Neatly print (don't use labels) your name and return address in the top left-hand corner. In the middle of the envelope, print the name of the company and their physical address.
5. Off to the left of the company name and toward the bottom of the envelope, print **ATTN: Personnel**
6. Under this print the position you are applying for: Crane Operator, Welder, Driller, Entry Level, etc.

7. Be sure to put the required postage on the envelope.
8. Follow the same follow up procedure as if you applied online for the position.

Your Name  
Your Address  
Your City, State, Country,  
Zip / Postal Code

Dynamic Offshore Drilling Company  
1117 West 17<sup>th</sup> Street  
Houston, TX 77777

ATTN: Personnel  
Offshore Crane Operator

Here is what's unique about this and justifies the extra effort and expense to get it done: **NO ONE and I mean NO ONE else is going to do this** (unless they've read this book). It's too much trouble.

The post office will pick the letter up and deliver it to the address on the envelope. The office staff will deliver it to the personnel office. It will be placed on a recruiter's desk.

Human nature being what it is, the recruiter will open the letter, especially if they are seeking a crane operator or welder or whatever. No prescreening of your résumé, no ATS bull, just the right person looking at what you have to offer.

## **9-Clean Up Your Social Media:**

Your presence on social media can have an impact on the hiring process, positive or negative. It is not uncommon for companies and recruiters to vet applicants by looking into their profiles on Facebook and LinkedIn. Having well-groomed social pages can have a positive impact on whether you will be considered for the next stage, the interview process. Having said that, let's take a look at Facebook.

**A Word of Caution:**

Be cautious about what you post that the public can see. Much can be deduced of a person's character by what they post. You could be very passionate about your faith, world affairs, politics or anything else that is dear to your heart but keep in mind that others can be just as passionate, but in the opposite direction.

I know it's not supposed to be this way, but people have been turned down for some great jobs because of their Facebook posts. If you have anything of a controversial nature, you might want to review it before you start the application process.

**LinkedIn:**

This is a social network for professionals. LinkedIn is for anybody and everybody interested in taking their professional life to the next level by looking for new opportunities to grow their careers and connect with other professionals.

LinkedIn is very similar to Facebook in terms of its layout and broad feature offering. These features are more specialized because they cater to professionals, but in general, if you know how to use Facebook or any other similar social network, LinkedIn is somewhat comparable. Make sure you have a professional looking LinkedIn profile along with a professional résumé.

You can think of LinkedIn as the high-tech equivalent of going to a traditional networking event where you go and meet other professionals in person, talk a little bit about what you do, and exchange business cards. However, on LinkedIn, the goal is to make connections with other professionals.

**10-Follow-Up:**

Don't forget to do the follow-up work! Most people don't do any type of follow up work, which is why it is essential that you do. It's just as important as the initial application.

After you've applied for a job or gone in for an interview, it's understandable that you will be eager to find out where you stand. The hiring process can take some time before you get a response. Be prepared to be patient. Unfortunately, it's possible that you may never get an answer, so prepare yourself for that also.

Employers don't always keep applicants informed about the status of their application; this is where the follow up comes in. Follow-ups can be done after you've applied with your résumé or after the job interview.

The follow up will allow you to show the employer you are sincerely interested in the job. Stand out in a positive light by doing your follow up in a courteous, professional manner.

Your application will be one of probably hundreds that hit the recruiter's desk. So, waiting a couple of weeks before following up is just good sense. If you have not heard back from the employer after 2 weeks, send an email requesting the status of your application. Be sure to check your spam and junk folders. Remember to be polite and courteous.

There are a few things to do before you follow up. Check the job listing, emails, or other contacts you have with the recruiter. Does any of that correspondence include information as to when you can expect a response? If there is a given response date, be sure to wait until after that date to follow up.

When you initially send in your cover letter and résumé, you can include a separate note asking if it will be OK to check with them in a week or two concerning the status of your application.

### **Here's what to do:**

- 1. Be Professional and Polite:** Whenever you are speaking with a recruiter, whether in person, by phone or email, be professional and be polite.
- 2. Check for Spelling or Grammatical Errors:** In any written communication with an employer, make sure there are no spelling or grammatical errors.
- 3. Short is the Key:** Whether you write or have a phone conversation or go in-person, keep it short. Your goal is to let the recruiter know you are sincerely interested in the position, but don't overdo it and don't waste their time.
- 4. Voice Mail:** Make sure you have voice mail setup and that your mailbox is not full. Don't make it difficult for a recruiter to get in touch with you by having a full mailbox.



Following these instructions will put you way ahead of your competition, plus give you a boost in your confidence. Remember, most other job seekers will not have the information provided above. If you have any questions, I am readily available by phone or email. GOOD LUCK!

Having me personally write a professional résumé for you will not cost you an arm and a leg, and I will have a first draft in your hands in 48 hours, and you will be happy with my work.

**Sign Up Today!**

# 8

# Interviewing For Employment In The Offshore Oil Rig Industry



You receive the call you have anxiously been waiting for from a recruiter wanting to interview you about a job. The interview will be in 1 of 3 ways: A phone interview, an online interview, or an in-person interview.

Regardless of the type of interview, get a good night's rest the night before. You want to be up mentally, alert, and above all, positive. Be confident, but not boastful. If you are entry level and this will be your first time out, let me stress the importance of not turning down any reasonable offer; it's imperative you get that initial 6 month's experience under your belt.

**BE PREPARED! You are not the only person the recruiter will be talking to.  
BEFORE you interview, research the company...**

## **Before the Interview:**

Study their webpage; know it in and out. Know their mission statement, history, goals, operations, type of rigs they own, what areas of the world they operate in, who their competitors are and whatever else you can find out about them using online searches.

Look them up on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn. Much of this should have already been done when you were customizing your résumé for that company. If not, do it now. Having this type of information available could be the "just the thing" that convinces the recruiter you are the person for the job.

Most job applicants will not do this type of in-depth research; it is a great way to get ahead of your competition. Treat this as if you were going to get tested on what you know about the interviewing company because whether or not you get hired could depend on it. If you think this is unnecessary and you don't have to do it, you could yourself in a pickle. You might not understand what the recruiter is talking about concerning job responsibilities, or you might find yourself asking dumb questions. BE PREPARED!

## **The Phone Interview:**

1. If you get a phone interview, it will be conducted in much the same way as an online or in-person interview. If you get the call for a phone interview at an inconvenient time, ask for a reschedule. You want to have NO DISTRACTIONS during the interview.
2. The interview room should be quiet, where you will not be disturbed by people, pets, etc. Turn off anything that could interrupt the call, such as alarms and electronics.
3. If the recruiter likes what they hear and are convinced you are the person for the job, they will schedule a physical for you at either a local medical facility or one near your departure point. Pass this, and you're on your way!

## **The Online Interview:**

1. Instead of having you travel to an office many hours away; your interviewer may directly interview you via video. Depending on the company, they could send you interview questions along with a webcam. If you already have camera hardware handy, you are that much ahead of the game.
2. Interviewers often use popular video conferencing software like Skype or Google Hangouts. If you're not familiar with these, practice with a friend or family member before the actual interview. There is plenty of online help available, or you can give me a shout, and I'll walk you through it.
3. People unfamiliar with webcam conferencing tend to stare at the screen where their video image is. Look and interact with the camera, not your image.

## **Additional Online Interview Tips:**

Learning how to successfully handle online interviews is JUST AS IMPORTANT as in-person interviews. This online meeting could get you to the next level of interviews or even the job itself. BE PREPARED!

If you are not comfortable with computer stuff and online video conferencing here's a bit of advice for you. LEARN! It's not that hard, and it's a requirement for successful job hunting in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **Here's how to get ready for your online interview:**

1. Download the software ahead of time and practice using it.
2. More than likely you will be sitting down in front of a screen. Regardless of how you conduct the interview, dress appropriately. Dressing appropriately will boost your confidence and help get your head in the game.
3. Have a nice backdrop for the interview to reduce distractions.
4. You do not want a lot of noise going on during the interview, you will not want to be disturbed by people, children, pets, etc. Turn off anything that could interrupt your meeting, such as alarms and electronics.
5. Take notes during the interview. This will give you something to review when the interview is winding down. Most people don't take notes which is exactly why you should.
6. Have a copy of your cover letter and résumé handy for easy reference.
7. Speak as you normally would, but not too fast. Speaking too fast could make your speech come across as nervous, taking deep breaths will help calm you and slow your speech. If you think you're speaking too slow, you're more than likely doing it right.

### **During the Interview:**

- Look into the camera
- Smile
- Listen attentively
- Respond intelligently, think before you answer
- Don't fidget
- Ask questions
- Take notes

## The In-Person Interview:

1. If you are called in for a face-to-face meeting, show up 15 to 30 minutes early. Being “on time” is being late. If the interview is at 9 AM, and it’s more than an hour or two drive from where you live, do the driving the day before, get a room, and show up fresh. If you have to fly in, do the same thing. Interviews can be nerve-wracking experiences. Hopefully, the following will help you gain some confidence and make interviewing a little easier.
2. As I said earlier, BE PREPARED! Bring an 8 x 11 professional fold-out notebook. In it, you will have 2-3 hard copies of your résumé for quick reference. You will have notes on the company that you took when researching who they are and what they do. Any questions you might have concerning the job, company, work schedules, pay, or anything else will be at your fingertips.
3. As you are being interviewed, take notes. For some reason, many people do not take notes. I always did, and I think it makes a big difference. If you are the nervous type, the notebook is something that you can hang onto instead of being fidgety, twitching your thumbs or biting your nails. Don’t sit with your arms crossed.
4. If you are a smoker, don’t go in reeking of tobacco. Greet the interviewer with a polite and sincere smile along with a firm handshake. Expect a bit of small talk, but don’t go overboard with it. Let the recruiter lead the conversation. Don’t call them by their first name unless permitted to do so. Don’t use slang and whatever you do, don’t cuss!
5. Stay away from politics, religion, or any other hot topic that has little to do with the task at hand. Moreover, REMEMBER THE MOST IMPORTANT THING is not what the company can do for you but what you can do for them.
6. Engage with your interviewers. You probably will be a bit nervous, which is understandable. The interview is not an interrogation but a way for the recruiter to get to know you better. Try to create engagement and connection by using the interviewer’s name whenever possible, just don’t overdo it. Don’t allow yourself to feel too comfortable. This person is not

your “friend.” Be respectful, use good body language, and speak in a confident and positive manner.

7. Be more interested than interesting. Let them talk. Ask thoughtful, intelligent questions, a vital part of the interview process. We will cover more on this in Chapter 9, “Acing the Interview.” Be genuine and show interest; it will make a difference.
8. Don’t let silence cause you to be anxious. It’s normal to have moments of pause, and it can show thoughtfulness. If the question demands more thought on your part to give a great answer, then take your time. Allow the interviewer time to process your answers before speaking again. Remain calm, you’re going to do great!
9. Be conscious of nonverbal cues. Body language is important and tells the interviewer a lot about you. Chapter 9 covers this topic in more detail.
10. Show your enthusiasm. This is especially important at the close of the interview where you should express your interest in the company and specific position. Don’t be afraid to speak up and let the interviewer know how much you want the job, just don’t come across as desperate.
11. Ask for a business card. Having your interviewer’s contact information readily available will facilitate the follow-up process.
12. Your goal is to REMEMBERED not forgotten. One of the most important things you want to accomplish at the interview is to show the recruiter how much you know about the company, their operations, goals, etc. That is the reason I stress researching the company so you can, at one point, ask specific questions. Believe me when I say, “It makes a difference.”

## **Going Directly to Work from the In-Person Interview:**

1. There is a possibility your new employer will want you to go directly to the rig after the interview. The last thing you want to tell a recruiter is “Let me run home and pack a few things.” More than once, I was sent directly to a rig after the interview and physical. BE PREPARED!
2. Companies typically provide a hard hat, safety glasses, and ear protection on your initial trip out. Most companies have a safety award program that



kick's in 90 days after your hire in date. These programs will provide you with company coveralls, steel-toed boots, jackets, foul weather gear, gloves and the like.

3. Make sure you have what will be required as far as gear is concerned, so you don't have to bum it from other crewmembers. Bring 2 – 3 pair of work clothes, steel-toed boots, several pairs of underwear, socks and a good work jacket if the weather requires it. The catering department will wash your clothes after every shift.
4. For work gloves, I recommend the white cotton ones with black dots over leather ones. These are what most oilfield hands use. They dry out fast when wet and are washable. You can use leather ones, but they stay wet when they get wet and cost more than the white ones. A good pair of leather gloves will cost you \$20 to \$30. You can get a dozen white ones for about \$12.
5. As for personal toiletries, take 2 toothbrushes, toothpaste, soap, shampoo, deodorant and anything else you use for personal hygiene. The catering department will provide towels. If you take prescription medicine, make sure each prescription is in its proper container with the prescription clearly visible. DO NOT mix prescriptions in the same container to save space. I recommend packing your gear in a military-style duffel bag or one constructed specifically for oilfield workers as space is limited on helicopters.

## Following Up After the Interview:

No matter whether your interview was in person or online, there are specific follow-up actions you should take.

1. Send a thank you note by email immediately after your interview ends. You can do this from your smartphone on the way out of the building or from your computer when you get home. You want your interviewer to know that you are both enthusiastic and ready to work. Don't forget to include your contact information and put the Job Title and Your Name in the subject line.
2. If you did your company research and found their presence on social media, especially LinkedIn, send your interviewer a simple message requesting a connection using the LinkedIn interface. If you have any other questions to ask that were not covered in the interview, this would be a good way of following up.
3. If you did not get a date as to when the company will be making hiring decisions, then wait a few days before either placing a phone call to the recruiter or sending an email. Mention that you hope the hiring process for the "name the position" is going well and ask if there is any extra



information you could provide them with that would help them make a decision.

4. If you missed the recruiter's call or email for any reason, respond as soon as you can using the same method that was used to contact you.
5. Thank the interviewer even though you may not have gotten the position by sending a follow-up message thanking them for their time and consideration.

# 9

# Acing The Offshore Oil Rig Industry Interview



Whether your interview is on the phone, online or in person, you are going to be asked questions. They vary from company to company, recruiter to recruiter. If you are lucky, they might send you a list of questions they are going to ask. If not, here are some general ones you can use to help prepare.

## **Possible Interview Questions:**

1. Tell me a little about yourself.
2. Why should we hire you instead of someone else?
3. What do you believe to be your greatest strength?
4. What do you believe to be your greatest weakness?
5. What is your main reason for wanting to work for us?
6. Why did you leave your last job?
7. What would you consider to be your greatest accomplishment?
8. Where would you like to be in 5 years?
9. Do you have any questions about the job or the company?

The questions YOU ASK are just as important as the ones the recruiter asks of you as they will demonstrate your level of interest. When you get asked, "*Do you have any questions?*" say something like: "*Yes, thank you, I do have a few questions.*"

## **Here are some general questions you can be thinking about before your interview:**

1. What skills will be most important for this position?
2. During the probationary period, what do you expect of me?
3. Will there be any training given within the first 30 days?
4. Whom will I be reporting to?
5. What are the company goals when looking at the next five years?
6. When do you expect to let candidates know your decision?

If you have any additional questions, write them down, so you don't forget what they are.

## **Interview Body Language:**

In Chapter 8, we mentioned body language and how it plays an essential part in the interview process. Even if you answer all questions with accuracy and confidence, if your body language is weak, your overall image could be seen as weak. Here are a few pointers you can practice before your interview so that your first impression will be positive:

**DO enter the room confidently:** When you first meet the recruiter, have good posture along with a nice smile, and show them you are excited about the opportunity at hand. Sometimes interviews can be a bit stressful, so relax. If need be, calm yourself with some relaxing meditative music beforehand. If you start the interview expecting an ordeal, your body language will give you away.

**DO pay attention to your posture:** Slouching in your chair is a no-no, the recruiter could interpret you as being lazy, so sit up straight with good posture and focus on the task at hand, convincing them you are the best candidate for the job.

**DO make and keep good eye contact:** Have good eye contact, but don't overdo it. Not making good eye contact with the recruiter could prevent you from making that critical "personal connection." You certainly do not want to come across as evasive or wimpy. Let the recruiter know, through your body language, that you are interested in the job and confident you can do it.

**DON'T shake hands like a dead fish:** A handshake says a lot about a person, make sure yours is not timid and limp, but firm and confident. At the same time, you don't want to squeeze their hand to the point of hurting them and don't keep shaking their hand more than a second or two.

**DON'T swing your legs, tap your feet,** scratch your butt, pick your nose, twirl your hair, wring your hands, or bite your fingernails. These actions exhibit a lack of confidence and can be very distracting. You want the recruiter to concentrate on your great answers, not your squirmy behavior.

**DON'T cross your arms** as this indicates defensiveness, resistance, or a closed mind. Be expressive with your hands when speaking. Take a business type notebook with you and keep your hands on your notebook. If you don't have a

notebook, keep your hands folded in your lap, or in another position lower than your elbows.

## **Being Labeled Overqualified:**

One of the worst things you can hear from an interviewer is that they think you are “overqualified.” This often means the interviewer has several concerns; maybe you have too many years of experience, and you might become unchallenged in the role and leave; you have a salary range above their budget; you might be inflexible in your expectations; you would leave if a better offer were received. Here are some possible responses you can use to counter the “overqualified” matter:

### **Response 1:**

While it may seem my experience and skills over qualify me for this job, I would say that they position me as being fully qualified to perform the duties of this position. Not only fully qualified, but able to achieve performance levels better than expected, and I think this would be advantageous to your organization.

### **Response 2:**

Yes, I enjoyed my senior roles. However, I have reached a time in my career where I would prefer a more hands-on position where I can work more closely with others.

### **Response 3:**

I no longer have dependent children at home and am no longer driven by salary or title needs. I prefer a hands-on role, and my references will confirm I am a dedicated team member that consistently achieves goals and deadlines. I feel certain we can both come to a reasonable salary agreement.

### **Response 4:**

I realize your organization is a dynamic company and is experiencing significant growth in the market. This is precisely the sort of organization I want to establish my career (or second career) with. Rather than your company having to spend thousands of dollars in training, I offer an immediate return on your investment. I am sure you value a team player with skills and aptitudes to support your corporate vision towards further growth.



**Response 5:**

Yes, my background has been in senior level roles, however, I am at a time in my life where I wish to stand down from the stresses of a senior position and regain a healthy work and life balance. This position is precisely what I am looking for and will provide me with more time to spend with my family, which is something my previous roles have not allowed me to do.

**Response 6:**

It's gratifying you believe my skills and expertise would generate further job offers, and I would leave should another opportunity present itself. However, this position is precisely what I am looking for, and I would be prepared to sign an agreement committing to 18 months, or whatever timeline suits you.

These are general outlines. Become familiar with these responses, so they flow in your own words and sound natural. An excellent way to do that is to practice BEFORE any interview.

When I worked offshore, I was good at what I did. In one recruiting interview, the HR guy asked me how good I was. I replied, "*I'm better than most and as good as the best.*" I spoke these words with humble confidence and not in a boastful manner. I tell you this because it is essential to have a PROACTIVE, CONFIDENT ATTITUDE about yourself and your abilities, but you must also be truthful.

That's how I felt about my skills to get the job done. While the "*I'm better than most and as good as the best*" statement helped to get the job for me, it did not get me the interview. Learning how to write a professional cover letter and résumé got me the interview that got me the job.

**Your Chances for Success:**

Of all the questions I get asked, "What are my chances" and "Here's my résumé, what do you think," are the ones I get the most. First, let me restate that Offshore Guides is not an employer. We do not hire people to work on the rigs, boats or anywhere offshore or on land.

However, we will, to the best of our ability, guide you on the "how, what, where, when, and who" of getting hired. Many offshore job seekers like yourself have used the instructions in this book to get the job of their dreams. Many were able to move up the ladder and work themselves into some high paying management positions. Others went on to form their own companies.

I have found over and over again that the successful ones are the people who follow instructions and are persistent in their efforts to obtain employment. Most importantly, they realize it was THEIR RESPONSIBILITY and not ours to make this happen.

The turnover rate in this industry is horrendous. Lots of times people complete a hitch, go home, and for whatever reason just don't come back. Rigs are required by law to have a certain number of qualified personnel on board at all times. If this requirement is not met, by statute, the rig is not supposed to operate. Dependable rig personnel are always in high demand.

Offshore drilling is a critical element to the survival of society. Companies like to have lots of personnel on file, in case there are crew shortages, which happens a lot. I can tell you that if you want to work in this industry, the more companies you have your cover letter and résumé on file with the better your chances will be.

# 10

# Offshore Oil Rig Employment Scams And Frauds



## **Beware of Recruitment Fraud:**

Applying for jobs online, offshore or otherwise, is fast and convenient, but BEWARE, there are pitfalls. Recruitment fraud is sophisticated, operates from many different parts of the world, and is on the rise. However, with just a bit of basic information on how they operate and some common sense on your part, you should be able to detect and prevent any recruitment scam or fraud that comes your way.

Scammers have been known to hack into the databases of legitimate companies and steal contact information from real job seekers like yourself. They also post their ads on job boards and use counterfeit company logos that appear to be from legitimate organizations to lure their unsuspecting victims.

Then, posing as an employer, they will contact you with an awesome job opportunity in some exotic area of the world. Part of their con will be to use phony email accounts and other official looking company documentation to convince you this is the real deal.

The final part of the con will be when they ask for payment of some type for any or all of the following:

1. Passport / custom clearance expenses
2. Visa fees / taxes / administrative expenses
3. Travel agency booking fees / percentage of travel expenses
4. Room and board while at work
5. Medical evaluations / drug screen / background check

They might also ask for your social security number, credit card info, banking info, etc. Be aware that a legitimate company will never ask you for any money for any of these things. They will never make you a job offer until you go through the

recruitment process as outlined in previous chapters. Any such proposal you receive should raise a red flag on your part.

Sometimes these offers are quite convincing and offer big money. This is another red flag. Offshore work does pay well, but getting a job offer @ \$20,000 to \$40,000 a month is a bit much, especially if you have no prior experience. Any offer that is much higher than you are accustomed to should be viewed with caution. Watch out! Don't get sucked in. Reliable confirmation is just an email or phone call away.

I remember one client with no previous experience who asked me about a proposal he received; the job would pay \$22,500 a month on a 1-year contract, with a \$25,000 completion bonus. I investigated, saw it for what it was, and told him to stay away.

He didn't listen as he was lured by big money possibilities and was consequentially taken for several hundred dollars, paying for passport and visa fees, travel expenses (which he was supposed to get reimbursed for once he got on site) and a medical evaluation.

***Timeless advice: "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is."***

Don't get in a hurry. Check things out before you act.

Here are some obvious warning signs that will help you recognize scammers:

1. If you get a job offer you have not applied for, ask them where they got your information. On what site did they first view your résumé?
2. Ask for a landline number you can call them at. If it is a legit company, they will have a landline. If all they provide is a cell number, watch out.
3. Be on the lookout for poor grammar, spelling mistakes, poorly formatted documents – these are "red flags" for fraudulent activity.
4. If their email to you is from a free based email account like Yahoo or Gmail, it is a scam. A legitimate email from shell oil will not look like: ShellRecruitment@gmail.com or ShellRecruitment@yahoo.com. Instead, it will read something like; personnel@shell.com, HR@deepwater.com, or

recruitment@hornbeckoffshore.com. The name of the company will always be in the second part of the email, without exception. If it is not there, then beware.

5. As these low life individuals get more and more sophisticated, they have come up with legitimate looking emails and emails that have the name of the company in the second part of the message. If you look closely, you will see a character in the company email address that does not belong to the legitimate company. Go to the company's website and check their contact information page to see what their contact email address looks like. It's that simple.

Just be wary of any offer that seems a bit over the top compensation wise. Common sense goes a long way so if you are in doubt about any offer you receive, contact me and within 24 hours I will have an answer for you.

## **Not So Reliable Job Leads:**

It is easy to get caught up in other types of wild goose chases when searching for offshore employment online. If you click on a link of an actual company, you are taken to that company's site and will be able to see any vacancies that are currently available.

Many online companies earn a lot of money to get you to "click their link." Unfortunately, many of the links listed under "offshore jobs," "offshore oil jobs," "offshore oil rig jobs no experience," "maritime jobs," are click bait.

While doing an online search, the search link took me to 7 websites BEFORE I found a real job with a real company. Another link sent me to 29 supposedly offshore oil rig jobs in Iowa. In Iowa? Offshore jobs are located "offshore." Iowa is a great place I am sure, but it is not offshore. You can find more information about this on page 95 under "Internet Searches."

Do I find this confusing? Yes, and I've had years of experience in searching for these types of jobs online. If it's confusing for me, I can only imagine how confusing it must be for others.

I even found one that said "If you can't find an offshore job, would you like to try for Walmart jobs, warehouse or airport jobs? Whenever possible, apply directly to actual offshore and maritime companies.

## Résumé Blasting Sites:

At one time, there were sites that claimed they could “blast” your résumé to thousands of companies engaged in the offshore oil drilling business. At this time, there are none of these sites in existence, that I know of. But just to be on the safe side, I have included a description of how these sites operate and responses from recruiters, some of whom were overwhelmed by their spam tactics.

These sites claim to have a list of thousands of offshore, oilfield, and oil rig employers who are eagerly waiting for you to send them your résumé or CV so they could hire you and make all your dreams come true.

Should the oilfield get into a “boom” mode again, these sites will no doubt reappear in droves. Here’s a breakdown on how they work and why you should avoid them.

What blaster sites do is give the impression that industry companies that have advertised positions are standing by to receive résumés. Why in the world would you apply for every job just because you are using the Internet?

Back in the old days, before the internet, the local newspaper would be your first choice to find advertised job positions. If you were looking for a job as a crane operator, would you call every job advertised in the paper? Of course not! You would select the advertisements that are seeking crane operators.

If you are seeking a job as a crane operator, why would you want your résumé going to companies that hire only cooks, or helicopter pilots, or boat captains? If you are a boat captain, why would you want your résumé going to a company looking for crane operators?

Here is what one site had to say about their service: "Click, Click. Sit back! Your résumé has just been sent to the whole offshore oil industry in just a few moments." (Actually, you have just SPAMMED the whole industry).

*"Imagine, 1526 employers will receive your résumé within the next 48 hours! Your résumé will be sent directly to each oil company's human resource manager who is in charge of the hiring. This is the easiest, fastest, and most cost-effective way for you to get your résumé into the hands of 1526 oil industry employers!"*



They also gave the impression you would get a favorable response using their service:

*"You are taking the first step on a journey that could take you all over the world. Over 86% of those who use our service, say they receive either an excellent or good response."*

Regardless of what the site claimed, it was doubtful that recruiters even saw anyone's résumé or CV, much less offered them a job.

I submitted a résumé to several of these blasting sites (found under keywords oil rig jobs) to see firsthand what the results would be. It was not an "I need a job" résumé. It was a letter from me asking each recruiter what they thought of the blasting service.

#### **Here's what I wrote:**

Subject: RESUME BLASTING; DOES IT WORK?

I am conducting a survey as to how effective résumé blasting services like this one are. Any feedback you could provide concerning what you think of this type of service would be much appreciated.

Thanks,

Cpt Ron

OffshoreGuides.com

This letter supposedly went out to 1,526 companies engaged in the oil and gas industry. I received NO confirmation list as to whom the message was sent to and received only 57 replies.

This is a far cry from the number promised. Of the responses I received, 24 were automatic robot replies. Out of the 33 real answers from real people, most of them read like this:

- "Hate it-second only to porn spam. I'm always contacted by people I can't in any way help."
  
- "Absolutely zero. We consider it another form of spam."

- "Ron, we receive over 50 unsolicited e-mail résumés a day. We check them for suitability for the Upstream database and administer accordingly. Over 99.9% are deleted and do not receive a response from us. If you are looking for work, my advice is to not “blast” your résumé to agencies as you do your chances of getting hired more harm than good."
- "Doesn't work for me because I'm not in charge of hiring."
- "Useless would be a fair assessment."
- "The service would work great if we were the intended target. We have been receiving résumés for the past 6-8 months. We are a manufacturing company in Standish, Michigan, and don't have anything to do with offshore."
- "Just delete it. We get a bunch of them every day. I sometimes feel like writing the subject of the résumé and tell them they are wasting their money, but so far, I have not done so."
- "The résumé blasting services we used in the past would send us everyone from cooks to financial consultants. We eventually discontinued service because the vast majority of résumés we could never use. Thanks for asking."
- "Dear Ron of Offshore Guides: Thank you for the opportunity to respond. I am inundated with e-mails of résumés from people seeking jobs that my company nor I offer. I edit an oil and gas magazine."
- "Ron, I agree...I've seen the lists of companies that these résumé blasters send to, and it is a joke...these poor people believe they may get an oilfield job that way and I'm sure it rarely works. Good luck with your endeavors!"
- "No, it does not help. It simply brings false hope!"
- "I typically discard every résumé' that comes into my e-mail address because I don't do any hiring for our company. I have been on someone's e-mail address listing for résumé submittals now for about 6 months, and frankly, it's a pain in the butt."

- "Not at all, strictly automotive, aerospace, and electronics."
- "OPC does not deal with any of the following jobs that are listed on that website. Thus, I guess that this CV blasting is not very effective! Thanks for bringing it to my attention."

It would be best if you focused on the necessary steps that will produce positive results giving special attention to the fact that you need a professional résumé.

I hope this chapter sheds more light on the ins and outs of using the internet to find employment in the offshore industry.

# 11

## My Final Words Of Advice

Well, there you go. I had been wanting to update this book for several years, and I'm glad I finally did. It came out better than I expected. I do hope in some way "The Guide" will be of value to you, maybe even an inspiration, and I certainly hope it helps you get a job in one of the most exciting and high paying careers in the world today.

If working offshore is your dream, by all means go for it. Sometimes it's hard ass work, but not always. It's dangerous, keeps you away from home and loved ones, but it's important. It pays well, but money isn't everything.

When you get one of these high paying jobs, paying 2 to 3 times more than what you were used to earning, don't go crazy buying a new house, truck, boat, motorcycle, etc. This is a cyclic industry. As the price of crude goes up and down, so does the availability of jobs. Offshore and oilfield layoffs are a common thing. I covered a lot of ground in "The Guide."

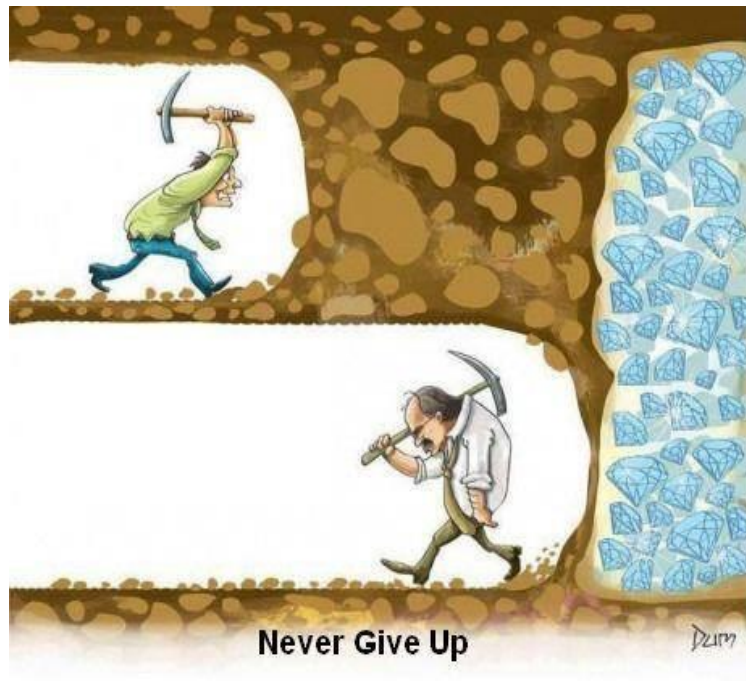
This is everything I know about how to get hired offshore. It always worked for me, it has worked for others, and it will work for you if you do things the way I have outlined. Following my recommendations is a lot of work, I will be the first to admit it. All this résumé and cover letter writing (which I offer help with), incorporating the ATS recommendations, follow up, etc., etc., takes a lot of time and effort. It can be a real pain in the butt. I totally get it. Get used to it, it's the way things are today if you want a job in this industry.

Here is a brief summary of what you need to be doing in the USA if you want to work offshore:

1. Apply for your TWIC card (page 88). If you cannot get a TWIC card, you will probably have to seek employment elsewhere.
2. Read and study "The Guide" and get a fair understanding of the things I have explained here, what you have to do to get best results and why you have to do them.

3. Get a professional looking résumé and cover letter done. DO NOT USE a “one size fits all” generic type résumé. Let me know and I can help.
4. Decide what position(s) you want to apply for.
5. Locate websites that have those positions available and start applying. Keep a record of everyone you applied with, what day you applied and what position you applied for.
6. Do the proper follow up work. This is important.
7. Repeat until you get an interview or give up because you are “tired of trying.”
8. After you get the interview, use the info in chapters 8 and 9 to ace the interview and get the job you want.

Anything worth having is worth working for. Tens of thousands of people give up on their dreams every day at just about the time they were going to make a breakthrough. This picture here is the best example I’ve seen of this. Don’t be like the bottom person in the picture.



I wish you the best life has to offer, favorable winds and happy sailing. Please keep us posted as to your progress, if you have any questions, don’t hesitate to call or write.

The best advice I can give you now is: “*Do not turn down any reasonable offer.*” The most important thing for you to do is get that initial offshore experience. The offshore lifestyle is like no other.

I wish you all the luck in the world. I do offer a [résumé service](#) for those that need a professional résumé. Should you have any questions, don't hesitate to drop me a line.

Cheers,  
Cpt Ron