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GAIA RESOURCING

Tim Dartnall has 12 years recruitment experience in the Energy Sector. Tim initially specialised in Subsurface for the O&G sector before expanding his recruitment offering into a wide variety of disciplines e.g. Well Engineering and Production, Discipline Engineering, Commercials & Business Development on a global scale. In addition, he has also worked within, and leads renewable teams focused on Wind, Solar and Power.

In 2021, Tim founded Gaia Resourcing which was predominantly driven by a desire to focus on more sustainable energy sources and help influence recruitment in Energy Transition and New Energies.

Gaia Resourcing is currently working with numerous partners on various exciting Energy Transition projects in the UK and globally. Their offerings range from C-Suite/Executive to entry level positions

1. What sub sectors of the Energy Industry do you work with? How have you seen levels of recruitment activity change in each sub sector over the last couple of years?

Energy Transition (Green/Blue Hydrogen and CCS), Geothermal, Minerals and O&G.

From an Energy Transition and a New Energies recruitment perspective, many companies have been working towards NetZero and have started to address becoming more sustainable.

Typically, companies with hydrocarbons as their main energy source have started to action this by internally re-organising and re-training existing employees. When these companies have externally

hired, it has generally been to backfill the vacated O&G spaces for those that have transitioned. The other approach has been to hire relatively small teams, tasked with evaluating new projects and longer-term strategies within New Energies.

In parallel, New Energy and Renewable focused companies have also continued to grow conservatively, in anticipation of the gradual transition away from traditional hydrocarbon sources.

The situation in Ukraine has significantly impacted global energy policy and strategy. There has been a noticeable re-focus and investment increase for hydrocarbon projects which in turn, has seen a surge in O&G recruitment. It's also apparent that the emerging energy sectors have received more attention and accelerated investment. The need to move away from reliance on gas imports has become much more evident.

2. In terms of employers, have you seen any changes in what skillsets (soft or technical) or experience they are looking for? Do you see more flexibility or openness to consider a wider range of candidates and then train specifics on the job?

There haven't been any ground-breaking changes in 'soft skill' requests in the last 12 years. Most employers tend to look for similar characteristics when hiring. That said, Energy Transition is usually better suited to people who have a collaborative, dynamic, open-minded and resilient approach. This is because projects are fast paced, unpredictable and outcomes are often unknown.

From a technical perspective, it's very subjective to the exact skillset that is needed.

Of course, it helps if you have existing knowledge of the sector but there aren't many candidates with existing New Energy/Energy Transition experience. Usually, companies are happy to draw on candidates' transferable skills that are similar to previous or current disciplines. It's then a matter of learning or refining the specifics of the job as quickly as possible.

3. Have you placed any O&G workers in other energy sectors and is this trend increasing? Can you give any examples? Have they needed to upskill for these moves? What are the barriers you see to this happening more?

Yes, to date a high percentage of Gaia Resourcing's placed candidates have an O&G background. There are numerous disciplines across the New Energy and Renewable sectors in which there are extremely similar transferable skills from O&G. It's likely that demand for O&G skillsets will increase within New Energies. These sub-sectors have a shortage of existing knowledge and highly skilled people. There should be a steady increase within recruitment as the technologies and project phases evolve.

It's worth remembering that there is often competition from candidates in the Renewable sectors that also have relevant transferable skills.

It's not a prerequisite to upskill and acquire additional qualifications to transition into a New Energy sector. One of the commonalities of Gaia Resourcing's placed O&G candidates is their historical exposure to a variety of different projects. This, combined with a desire to keep improving and learning, should help to achieve success in any new sector.

There are a few barriers that have come up in the last 2 years for people moving from O&G into New Energies. The most common barrier is the difference in salary bandings between O&G and the other Energy sectors. Companies whose main revenue income is from New Energies, have much lower margins and this is usually reflected in salaries which struggle to compete with O&G bandings. In time, this should come to a natural consolidation.

Location and travel may also be potential issues to consider for O&G professionals looking to make the transition. A lot of the New Energy projects (particularly if you are required to be onsite) are located outside the main energy hubs/cities in the UK and Europe. Hybrid and flexible working arrangements have changed work-life balances, but most employers still like to see people in office. This is very applicable if you are entering a new sector where there is lots to learn! It's yet to be seen whether O&G style rotations might be a possibility in the future, but this might be an option.

4. In terms of candidates, are their preferences changing in terms of what kind of roles/T&Cs they want? Any advice on how O&G candidates can maximise their potential to land an energy transition role if that is what they are looking for?

People who have transitioned into New Energies are often motivated by the impact they can have towards a more sustainable future. They tend to look for projects that are technically challenging, future proofing employment/skillsets, offer career progression while doing something new and exciting!

As mentioned above, salaries and packages are nearly always a factor. It can be challenging to find candidates willing to take a financial reduction. This is very current as the strong oil price has resulted in a high number of opportunities within O&G. Gaia Resourcing have placed people who have taken a financial reduction to join different sectors, but it does limit the candidate pool available.

These days, hybrid working is nearly always a candidate's preference and most employers do offer some form of flexibility.

In terms of advice for candidates -research the relevant sector that you are interested in entering. If you don't have existing experience, it's best to try and obtain as much knowledge and understanding as possible.

Follow people on social media in the sectors who write about subjects of relevance and interest. It's also important to try and find people who are critical. This is useful for a balanced and varied perspective.

Collaborate; ask existing contacts who have experience within New Energies. People are usually very open to discussing topics and sharing knowledge. Some people's current companies have existing New Energy teams so reach out to them and you might even be able to get some direct experience!

Ensure social media profiles and CV's are detailed with any direct experience in desired sector/locations. If people lack direct experience, then elaborate on transferable skills so that capabilities are clearly visible.

For employers and candidates, it's best to approach the New Energy sector with pace and urgency. It's always beneficial to revert to recruiters and companies quickly. The market is extremely competitive from every sub-sector and moves at a fast pace.

Don't be afraid to try something new and take a risk!

Find a good recruitment company that is knowledgeable and has a proven track record of delivering results within the New Energy sector!