

HOW DO I BECOME . . .



. . . A CONSULTANT?

UPSTREAM, downstream, wildcats and blow-outs; the oil and gas sector has a language all of its own to master (see *Jargon Decoder*, page 4) if you want to become a consultant in the global energy industry.

Wood Mackenzie, a specialist energy consultancy and research firm, covers both upstream (exploration and extraction) and downstream (refining, distribution and marketing of petroleum products) activities. Its work is in three areas, says Sondra Scott, the head of consulting: business environment analysis – assessing the energy market; advisory – advising on corporate strategy; and transaction support – including valuing companies and their assets.

Consultants must be comfortable working with senior executives across a range of organisations. "We work for almost anybody touching the oil industry: oil companies; governments and end users; and also people who finance the industry, such as banks," Scott says.

One area Wood Mackenzie does not cover is technical work in the field. For this you should join a technical oil and gas consultancy firm, such as Petroleum Development Consultants (PDC).

"Primarily, we work in the upstream oil and gas industry conducting integrated sub-surface studies," says David Aron, the managing director of PDC. "We look at underground oil and gas reservoirs, evaluate potential reserves, predict the future recovery of oil and gas and assess what might be needed to produce it."

Sub-surface technical consultants require a petroleum engineering or geology degree, plus knowledge of petroleum geology, usually via an MSc, Aron says.

At Wood Mackenzie, Scott looks for academic excellence and sector experience. "A junior person, straight from postgraduate education, needs a year or two of relevant experience in the energy sector, whether through studies or practical work," she says. "At a more senior level we tend to take people who have worked in a range of functions within the industry, typically someone from the business development group of an integrated oil major."

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