

Different perspectives



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Your perspective depends on where you've been, where you are and where you're going.

Where you've been is, of course, your history. Where you are currently is colored by your history and experience, and includes your cumulative knowledge. Where are you going? Well that depends on any number of internal factors, like whether you want to reach for the stars or simply enjoy the ride, and external factors, like economic conditions and technology.

In our business, like in life, your perspective often depends on who you are. For the major operators, oil and gas prospects must be large and abundant so that the huge initial capital investment also has a big payoff. As these fields mature, the return on investment (ROI) is less attractive for the majors, but there's a whole group of independent companies, armed with new technology and a different perspective, who see these brown fields as golden opportunities.

External factors such as the economy and technology can affect our collective industry perspective. At the first US-Norway Oil and Gas Summit, held in Houston in March, the focus was on development in the Arctic, which as recently as 35 years ago was seen by most as an impossible pipe dream. However, we started in the North Sea, where the harsh environment was seen as a serious impediment to field development. But with the advent of gravity-based structures, better motion compensation and other technologies, we conquered those obstacles and moved on to yet harsher environments such as **Hibernia** field in Eastern Canada. There we met new obstacles and developed more technology to meet those challenges. Now here we are in the Barents Sea, facing ever more remote locations, freezing conditions, and sea ice and icebergs of epic proportion. So we continue to hone existing technology and develop new technology and, in the face of roaring world energy demand, Arctic development is not only now possible but urgent.

As experience and outlook provides different perspectives for players in our business, individuals with varied experiences and outlooks doing the same job will also see things differently. I bring to the table a different set of skills and experience than my predecessor, Hart legend Dick Ghiselin. Dick is a veteran engineer, a seasoned practitioner with a long perspective of the industry and its technology.

My primary professional role has been that of someone who creates information — tools and technology in the form of software, printed and online documentation, and Web sites — to help practitioners do their jobs. Some of my industry work

includes: developing software for drilling engineers for a number of years as part of a team with ExxonMobil; working with subject matter experts developing operating and maintenance procedures for three installations in the Norwegian North Sea as a consultant with ExxonMobil; and developing a user guide for reservoir simulation software as a consultant for Shell.

Throughout my career as an information professional, I've worked with industry professionals and technicians to understand *their* perspectives — what their jobs are, what tasks they are trying to accomplish, what information they need to help them, how that information should be organized and displayed. Does it mean I know how to do their jobs? Of course not. But I'd like to think, since coming to work in Houston in 1991, I've learned some things along the way about the oil and gas industry, the people in it and the work we do that will serve me in my new role as an editor at *E&P*.

So I bring a different history, experience and perspective to the job that I hope proves to be an interesting change for *E&P* readers. But you and I will also continue to have the wisdom and experience of Dick Ghiselin in his new role as technical director, and of my other colleagues on the *E&P* editorial team to provide the industry history and knowledge required to keep it all in perspective.

And where are we going from here? Personally, I'm trying to strike the balance between reaching for the stars and enjoying the journey. As for our industry, I'll paraphrase Jim Mulva, president and chief executive officer of ConocoPhillips, from his opening remarks at the US-Norway Oil & Gas Industry summit: if you're looking for confidence and inspiration going forward, just look back at how far we've come.

Now that's perspective. **E&P**



Icebergs offer an interesting perspective when you consider that, on average, 7/8 of their total mass is below the waterline, out of view. (Photo courtesy of Petro-Canada)