

# Case study:

**Nigel Wright helps Aubin Group  
improve employment brand to  
attract in-demand skills**

aubin



## ABOUT THE CLIENT

Established in 1986 and based in Ellon, 20 miles north of Aberdeen, Aubin Group is a chemical engineering business that specialises in the design, development and supply of chemistry-based enabling technology and engineering services to the global oil and gas industry. The business has five divisions, encompassing Aubin Subsea, Aubin Integrity, Aubin Pipelines, Aubin Well Services and Aubin Solutions.

Over the last few years the company has developed two 'game changing' gel based 'pigs' capable of cleaning pipelines which would otherwise be considered uncleanable. In addition, the company has produced a range of other innovative technologies for buoyancy, pipeline insulation and pipeline sealing. The group has increased turnover by over 35% during the last two years and plans to continue expanding rapidly, as its products and services gain further commercial adoption and traction in the market.

## THE CHALLENGE

Since 2006, under the leadership of CEO Paddy Collins, Aubin Group has focused on making its products and services more commercially viable. As part of this process, in 2013, the business established a specialist Subsea division to capitalise on an anticipated market demand for its 'liquid buoyancy' products. Aubin Subsea's new technologies facilitate safe and precise placement, movement and recovery of subsea structures, unlike traditional subsea lifting and manoeuvring methods. It also offers an unprecedented level of control, enabling operations in difficult access locations.

DeepBuoy and LiquiBuoy are low-density, liquid lifting systems which adjust buoyancy levels to provide a quick and effective solution in a range of challenging subsea situations. DeepFloat is a cost effective low density buoyancy material which can be deployed as a liquid and set as a solid into any shape to provide a permanent buoyancy solution. It reduces the submerged weight of subsea equipment, pipelines, structures and provides consistent lift performance, regardless of depth.

Historically, Aubin Group had always been reactive to customer demand and even relied on other vendors' brands through which to sell its products. The business also mainly employed chemists, and in launching its subsea division, had no internal expertise within subsea engineering. Aubin Group therefore needed to establish a core subsea engineering team to help it become credible in the market as well as more consistently profitable. However, because Aubin Group had never proactively targeted the subsea operations sector before, its brand and reputation was relatively understated.

Significantly, in the highly competitive subsea engineering talent market in Aberdeen, the overriding issue was: why would in-demand subsea engineers join a small chemistry business, located 20 miles north of Aberdeen, with no background or reputation in the subsea oil and gas sector?

## NIGEL WRIGHT SOLUTION

In July 2013, Nigel Wright was retained by Aubin Group to help build its subsea engineering team. In the first instance, we agreed to identify one senior subsea engineer to lead the team. We would then assist Aubin Subsea in building the team around this individual.

Our approach focused on three key areas: a talent mapping exercise to identify companies where we believed we would find candidates with the right skills and experience (this was necessary because Aubin Subsea have no competitors); utilising our broad networks within the oil and gas industry to get referrals for potential candidates (this also included identifying candidates who would consider relocating to Aberdeen); utilising internal marketing resources to create a microsite and candidate pack to support the recruitment process, aiding candidate engagement by articulating the story and potential of Aubin Group.

Our campaign was focused on raising the employment brand of Aubin Group, by explaining to the market why Aubin Group was an 'employer of choice' within the subsea sector. We sought to leverage the fact that this was a unique opportunity to work for a new division within a highly innovative company. Although Aubin Group was a small business, it was at the very early stages of a potentially rapid period of growth, due to the ground breaking technology the business had developed.

In identifying the lead engineer for the team, we highlighted to potential candidates the opportunity this presented to build and develop a team of engineers from scratch. From an engineering perspective, working within Aubin's subsea division meant the chance to take concepts from the design and testing stage through to full build and operation; both of these critical factors, we argued, were rare opportunities in a market dominated by big companies with large teams, where working on or managing project specific areas, rather than the full engineering process, is common.

So far, Nigel Wright has been instrumental in identifying the engineering lead plus several additional team members for Aubin Group, including Engineers, a Business Line Manager and a Senior Projects Manager. For each assignment, there were four shortlisted candidates. All candidates were successfully identified using a combination of the three methods outlined above. Our employer branding campaign was successful in persuading these individuals that Aubin Group was a business worth considering. The successful candidates could have joined any of the big subsea companies in Aberdeen, but chose instead to join Aubin Group.

On the back of these campaigns, Nigel Wright's partnership with Aubin Group continues today.

## CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

*Nigel Wright started working with Aubin Group in mid-2013 and since then has essentially built our subsea engineering team from scratch. The consultants went to great lengths to really understand our business and culture and used this information to effectively promote our brand to the oil and gas market, raising our reputation as an employer of choice.*

*We genuinely believe we now have some of the best subsea engineers in the market working for us, giving our division real credibility moving forward. Nigel Wright has found Aubin Group some truly exceptional people in a very competitive market, and got them to work for a very small business when they could have gone anywhere.*