

The Readiness Gap Playbook

An executive guide to building workforce readiness across offshore and maritime operations





Why workforce readiness is becoming one of the biggest operational challenges facing offshore and maritime organisations

For years, offshore and maritime organisations have focused on one workforce challenge: finding enough people.

Recruitment, retention and skills shortages remain critical, intensified by offshore energy growth, ageing workforces and increasing competition for specialist capability.

The latest **BIMCO & ICS Seafarer Workforce Report** estimates a **shortage of 39,100 STCW-certified officers** today, rising to a requirement for more than 113,000 additional officers by 2030 if demand continues to grow. Since 2021, demand for certified seafarers has **increased by 35%**, driven by fleet expansion, recovery in global trade and increasing operational complexity.

But workforce shortages are only part of the story.

Operations increasingly depend on interconnected workforces spanning vessel crews, specialist offshore personnel, contractors and project teams. Requirements shift by project, asset and operational need, making readiness harder to assess, forecast and manage.

Workforce readiness is therefore becoming a strategic operational capability. Leaders need to know not simply how many people they have, but whether the right people, with the right skills, qualifications, certifications and availability, are ready when operations depend on them.

Competitive advantage is shifting from simply securing talent to understanding workforce readiness: having the visibility to anticipate constraints, mobilise capability and make better operational decisions before delivery is affected.

That then raises a different set of leadership questions:

- ? Can we confidently resource our next project or mobilisation?
- ? Which workforce risks threaten delivery?
- ? Do we have the right balance of seafarers and offshore specialists available for the work ahead?
- ? How resilient are we if priorities shift, vessel schedules change or specialist resources become unavailable?
- ? Do we have the visibility to make critical workforce decisions before operations are affected?

The ability to answer these questions quickly and confidently is becoming a defining capability for offshore and maritime organisations—shaping project delivery, operational resilience and the ability to respond to change across both traditional and renewable offshore energy operations.

Executive Insight

The next competitive advantage in offshore operations won't come from larger workforces. It will come from better workforce decisions.



Four Strategic Shifts Redefining Workforce Readiness

The offshore industry is evolving rapidly as workforce pressure, market change and operational complexity converge.

Growth across renewable energy alongside continued investment in traditional energy is increasing competition for specialist skills. At the same time, projects are becoming larger, supply chains more global and workforces more distributed, with contractors and specialist partners playing an increasingly important role.

Yet while offshore operations become more connected and data-driven, workforce planning often remains fragmented across HR systems, spreadsheets, emails and operational processes.

The result is a growing disconnect between the complexity of offshore operations and organisations' ability to understand workforce readiness.

The result is an **operating environment** defined by:

- ! More projects.
- ! More stakeholders.
- ! More contractor dependency.
- ! Greater regulatory scrutiny.
- ! Increasing competition for specialist skills.
- ! Fewer experienced people available.

Ultimately, it comes down to one critical question.

Has workforce planning evolved at the same pace as the industry it supports?

In practice, this pressure is exposing **four critical readiness gaps** across offshore and maritime organisations:



The workforce gap

skills shortages, certification shortages and succession risk.



The operational gap

mobilisation failures, resource conflicts and vessel staffing issues.



The compliance gap

expiring certifications, audit readiness challenges and regulatory evidence gaps.



The visibility gap

siloeed systems, spreadsheet-based planning and fragmented reporting.

Together, these gaps show why workforce readiness is no longer just a people issue. It is an operational, compliance and resilience issue that directly affects project delivery.





SHIFT 1

The workforce challenge is becoming structural, not cyclical.

Workforce shortages are no longer simply a recruitment issue. They reflect a fundamental shift in the offshore labour market.

The energy transition, continued investment in oil and gas, marine infrastructure growth and an ageing workforce are increasing competition for specialist capability. At the same time, digitalisation, decarbonisation and regulation are changing the skills organisations need to remain competitive.

OEUK identifies people and skills as a significant long-term industry priority, reinforcing the need to retain experienced workers, develop new capability and support workforce mobility.

The implication is clear: organisations can no longer rely on recruitment alone to solve workforce challenges. Competitive advantage will increasingly come from how effectively they anticipate demand, develop capability and deploy the workforce they already have.



SHIFT 2

Operational complexity is growing faster than workforce visibility.

Today's offshore operations are significantly more complex than they were a decade ago. Organisations are coordinating permanent employees, contractors, agency personnel and specialist partners across multiple projects, assets and jurisdictions, while responding to changing customer demands, evolving regulations and increasing operational pressure.

Organisations have more workforce data than ever, but often lack a clear operational view of what it means.

Leaders need to understand where critical skills are under pressure, where workforce risks are emerging, whether people are truly deployment-ready and how changes in one area could affect the wider operation.

The value doesn't come from having more workforce data. **It comes from turning that information into operational foresight.**





SHIFT 3

Compliance is becoming an operational differentiator.

Compliance has traditionally been treated as a governance requirement — something to validate before mobilisation or demonstrate during an audit.

Today, competency, certification, training and medical readiness directly influence mobilisation, customer confidence and project delivery.

Rather than treating compliance as a separate process, leading organisations are embedding it into workforce planning so readiness can be assessed long before deployment begins.

As regulatory expectations continue to evolve, organisations that integrate compliance into everyday operational planning will be better positioned to reduce mobilisation risk, strengthen customer confidence and deliver projects with greater certainty.



SHIFT 4

Workforce visibility is becoming a competitive advantage.

High-performing organisations are shifting their focus. Instead of asking: ***Who is available next week?***

They're asking:

- Which projects carry the greatest workforce risk over the next six months?
- Where will future capability gaps emerge?
- How resilient is our workforce if operational priorities change?

This reflects a broader shift from workforce administration to workforce intelligence.

The organisations that outperform won't necessarily have the largest workforce. They'll have the greatest visibility into workforce readiness, enabling them to anticipate challenges earlier, mobilise with greater confidence and adapt more effectively as demands change.

A question for operational leaders

If your workforce planning process focuses primarily on filling today's gaps, who is preparing your organisation for tomorrow's capability requirements?



Industry Perspective

Industry bodies including OEUK, BIMCO and DNV point to a common conclusion: workforce capability, skills development and operational resilience are becoming long-term strategic priorities.





From Workforce Data to Workforce Decisions



Why visibility is becoming the foundation of operational readiness

Most operational disruption doesn't begin offshore. It begins weeks or months earlier during workforce planning, mobilisation and resource allocation.

When workforce readiness isn't fully visible, mobilisation becomes less predictable, delivery becomes more vulnerable and reactive decision-making increases.

Operational performance therefore depends not on the volume of workforce data available, but on the ability to turn it into insight at the point of decision.



The Cost of Limited Visibility

Limited workforce visibility can affect every stage of project delivery. It often results in:

- Mobilisation delays caused by unexpected capability gaps
- Increased contractor dependency and mobilisation costs
- Last-minute workforce changes and reduced utilisation
- Compliance issues identified too late in the mobilisation process
- Reduced confidence in operational planning and delivery

These are rarely isolated workforce issues. They are operational challenges with commercial consequences.

Leadership Reflection

How confident are you in the decisions your workforce data supports?

- ❓ Can you forecast workforce capability before projects are confirmed?
- ❓ How quickly can you assess the impact of changing operational priorities?
- ❓ Are workforce, compliance and mobilisation decisions connected, or managed separately?
- ❓ How much confidence do you have in your workforce plans six months from now?

If finding these answers depends on multiple systems, spreadsheets or conversations, there's an opportunity to strengthen workforce visibility.

Executive Insight

Digital transformation is reshaping offshore operations, but technology alone isn't creating better outcomes.

Research from the International Chamber of Shipping and The Nippon Foundation highlights that workforce capability remains a critical barrier to unlocking its full value. Operational performance depends on workforce readiness, not technology alone.





Digital skills. Why More Data Isn't Creating Better Decisions

The recent maritime digital skills study found

more than
80%

of seafarers reported receiving

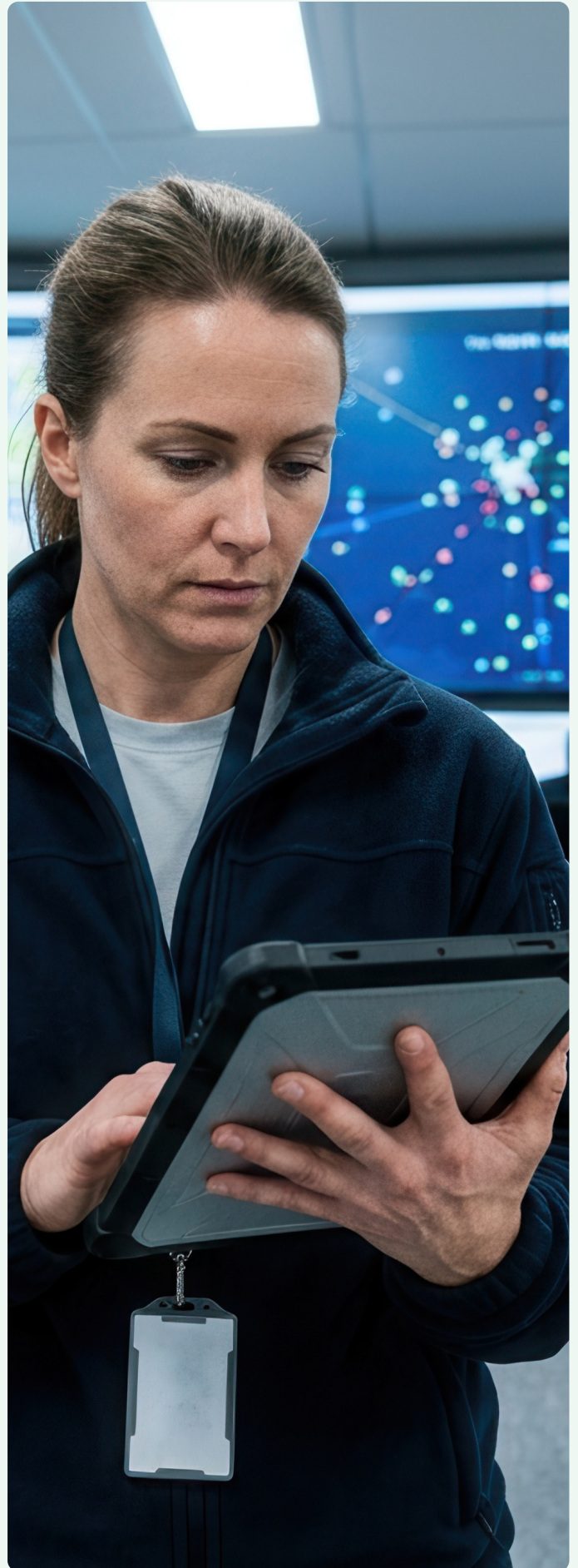
**little or no digital
skills training,**

while only

13%

believed **shore-based training**
reflected the digital systems
they actually use onboard.

As fleets become more connected and data-driven, the workforce challenge is evolving from simply having enough people to ensuring people have the right capabilities for modern operations.





Organisations leading the market are adopting a different approach. Rather than reacting to workforce issues, they are building operational confidence through better workforce readiness.

✓ Five Operating Principles for Workforce Readiness

1. Plan for capability, not just capacity

Forecast future skills, competencies and critical roles - not simply workforce numbers. The goal is to ensure the right capability is available when operations require it.

2. Connect workforce decisions

Connect planning, mobilisation, compliance and contractor management to create a trusted view of workforce readiness.

3. Build workforce visibility across the operation

Connect people, projects, contractors and compliance to understand readiness across the operation - not just individual teams or projects.

4. Integrate compliance into planning

Don't treat compliance as a final checkpoint. Consider competency, certification and medical readiness from the outset, reducing mobilisation risk before it affects delivery.

5. Measure workforce readiness like any other operational KPI

Track workforce readiness alongside project, safety and financial performance to identify risks earlier and improve decisions.

Reflection

Workforce readiness should be reviewed with the same discipline as project readiness, financial performance and safety.



High-performing organisations build workforce readiness through interconnected capabilities spanning planning, mobilisation and delivery. Together, these provide a practical framework for assessing readiness and identifying where greater visibility or coordination is needed.

Organisations leading in workforce readiness typically:

- 

Improve operational visibility.
- 

Reduce mobilisation uncertainty.
- 

Integrate workforce planning with compliance.
- 

Improve contractor governance.
- 

Make faster operational decisions.

5 Five Capabilities of a workforce-ready organisation

Capability	What it enables	Leadership question
 SEE	Create a connected view of workforce capability, availability and compliance	Can we see who is ready to deploy?
 PLAN	Anticipate future workforce demand and capability requirements	Are we planning for future operations, not just today's resourcing needs?
 PREPARE	Ensure people are qualified, compliant and mobilisation-ready	Are potential risks identified before mobilisation begins?
 MOBILISE	Deploy the right people efficiently as operational priorities change	Can we respond to change without disrupting delivery?
 PERFORM	Continuously evaluate and improve workforce readiness	Are workforce decisions improving operational outcomes over time?

Trusted by workforce-intensive organisations

Van Oord | McDermott | Boskalis | Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings | Starboard Cruise Services

The future belongs to organisations that can see earlier, plan smarter and mobilise with confidence.

How ready is your workforce for what's next?

OneView

The principles outlined in this playbook are brought together through OneView. By providing a connected view of workforce capability, availability, compliance and mobilisation, OneView helps organisations move from reactive workforce management to proactive workforce readiness—enabling faster decisions, stronger mobilisation and more resilient operations.



Ready to close the Readiness Gap?

If this playbook has challenged the way you think about workforce readiness, the next step isn't a product demonstration, it's a conversation.

Book a Workforce Readiness Review

In a collaborative session with one of our offshore workforce specialists, we'll explore:

- How prepared your organisation is for future workforce demands
- Where limited workforce visibility may be creating operational risk
- Opportunities to strengthen planning, mobilisation and operational resilience

Turning Readiness into action:

OneView

The Readiness Gap isn't created by a lack of people. It's created by a lack of visibility.

When workforce information is fragmented across systems, operational leaders are forced to make critical decisions without a complete picture of workforce readiness.

OneView connects workforce planning, mobilisation, compliance and operational visibility, helping organisations anticipate workforce risk and make confident decisions before operations are affected.

The result isn't just a better-managed workforce. It's greater operational confidence, stronger resilience and a workforce that's ready for what's next



This executive guide combines publicly available industry research, market insights and operational experience gained from supporting workforce-intensive organisations across offshore engineering, maritime and cruise. It is intended to help operational leaders assess current workforce challenges and identify practical strategies to improve workforce readiness.



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References:

BIMCO & ICS: [Demand for certified officers is expected to exceed supply by more than 113,000 by 2030, highlighting a growing structural workforce challenge.](#)

RenewableUK & Offshore Wind Industry Council: [The UK offshore wind workforce could require 75,000–100,000 additional workers by 2030 to support planned deployment.](#)

OEUK: [Offshore wind investment is accelerating despite market pressures, with floating wind, supply chain capability and long-term workforce planning becoming strategic priorities.](#)

OEUK & RenewableUK: [Around 90% of oil and gas workers have transferable skills that could support the transition into offshore renewable energy, making workforce mobility and skills visibility increasingly important.](#)

RLDatix is a global technology company helping organisations manage complex workforces, strengthen operational resilience and make better-informed decisions. Trusted by more than 6,000 organisations worldwide, our technology connects workforce planning, operational processes and critical data to give leaders greater visibility and control. Through solutions including OneView, we support workforce-intensive organisations operating in complex environments to improve planning, mobilisation and workforce readiness — helping ensure the right people, with the right skills and capabilities, are ready when and where they are needed.

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