

Geological Mentoring and Training - ConocoPhillips Canada Initiatives

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The Western Canada Business Unit of ConocoPhillips Canada has recently started a program of geological technical mentoring. The overall aim of the program is to improve technical excellence. The more focused aim is to bring new hire/early career geologists up to speed and working at an advanced technical level as soon as possible. The program focuses on sharing best practices, collaboration and networking. Other reasons for the mentoring include motivation, engagement, retention of staff and career development.

History of the geo-mentoring initiative:

The stage was set for geo-mentoring at our company when a new organisational structure was established in late 2010. At that time four functional managers were appointed who were organisationally outside the operating asset or business teams. The four appointees became the managers of geology, geophysics, engineering and business improvement. Their mandate was to improve technical excellence in those areas.

In early 2011, a one-day geo-mentoring offsite was held that defined our company needs for geological mentoring and what the scope of the mentoring should be. This meeting of about 20 people included mainly experienced geologists and a couple of experienced geophysicists and engineers. In July 2011 a geologic advisor role was created and filled to assist the geology manager in developing a mentoring program and then focus on the tactical aspects of such a program.

In fall 2011, a more focused team was created with about a dozen geologists who had a range of experience from 2 years to over 30 years. This group answered the question of "what should we actually do?". The group recommended that mentoring focus on ConocoPhillips Canada geology needs, which centre on a foundation of stratigraphy/sedimentology, hydrodynamics and petrophysics/petrography. These foundations are suited deliberately for mainly basin-centered hydrocarbon-saturated tight reservoirs.

Role of geological mentors:

The role of our geo-mentors is to focus on geological mentoring and is meant to complement the efforts of a business team mentor (a team geologist who assists the new person with business execution tasks, day to day business activities, and project work). Both mentors also complement a career/personal mentor assigned by the Human Resources team and could be from any discipline in the company.

Mentoring Activities:

To date the main mentoring-related activities have included:

- two core workshops and four company-specific outcrop courses
- “Geology 101” presentations for students, new-hire geologists, several non-geological teams
- many (100?) technical assists, new-hire onboarding assistance,
- setup geo mentoring knowledge-sharing sharepoint site
- a networking event for all our geologists & geophysicists
- created a list of recommended geological courses for early career geologists

Outlook:

Currently, we have scheduled out workshops, courses and networking events for 2012. We have begun coordinating our geo-mentoring efforts with our geophysicists and with other business units in ConocoPhillips Canada and ConocoPhillips American business units. This program is new and just beginning. This, at this point it is difficult to predict outcomes and whether it will be successful or not. Certainly to date, staff and management are supportive and enthusiastic about these mentoring initiatives.