

SPONSORED BY

SWORD

UPGRADE YOUR BUSINESS

www.sword-group.com

About Sword

Dave Bruce, CEO at Sword, has led the business since 2015, following successfully building other technology businesses serving the energy sector. Here he talks to us about what matters most when building a data-driven business.

As the North Sea's largest provider of data and digital services, Sword focuses on solving industry's most critical business technology challenges by enabling our clients to capture, manage and utilise data to make informed decisions. This is supported by technology adoption and people engagement, together with modern ways of working to give confidence that the right decision is made every time.



Dave Bruce

A CONVERSATION WITH OUR PEOPLE FOCUSED CEO

What is the biggest challenge facing your customers?

All of our customers want to deliver greater value through the deployment of technology.

Whether the aim is to reduce cost, increase productivity, minimise risk, or assure compliance, organisations have to achieve it all whilst still focusing on their core operations. To make things even more challenging this often entails significant business process change, often of processes developed over many years.

Our customers have huge amounts of data and contained within it a wealth of business insight that they need to inform their decision making. In short, the key is to ensure that any data used by the business is trusted and accessible to the right people at the right time, enabling people to make informed, data driven decisions at a pace that works for the business.

The biggest challenge to achieving this is the global shortage of technology skills, a situation that is currently complicated by a lack of energy sector domain expertise needed to successfully design and implement these solutions.

The industry is finding graduates are moving further afield due to the perceived lack of opportunities in the UKCS and the recent years of turbulence have seen many people tempted away from the sector, with the shift to remote working during Covid only compounding the issue.

How does Sword help solve customers' challenges?

The first thing we need to do when helping our customers is listen. All too often suppliers are looking to sell a particular solution or technology. At Sword we firmly believe that the key is to understand the business needs, with the technology deployed being a secondary factor in the decision-making process. Too many people want to sell "the answer" before fully understanding the problem.

We combine digital skills with relevant domain expertise to ensure we provide people who understand our customers' business and can quickly identify the key issues and propose relevant solutions.

We strive to keep up to speed with the rapidly changing technology landscape so that our customers don't need to and to ensure we have the right pipeline of talent to support our customer's ever-changing needs and requirements. As a services business it always comes down to the quality of your people, and we are working extremely hard to ensure we attract, retain and develop our team.

The key factor in our success to date has been the opportunity for our people to grow and develop inside our organisation. Career development is vital in retaining our people and we continually aim to provide opportunities to work in challenging and rewarding areas of our business, providing opportunities for growth and development for everyone who wants it.

What behind-the-scenes benefits do customers gain when engaging Sword?

Our core business is technology, and that allows our people to experience a wide range of technology assignments as well as the opportunity to knowledge share across the group ensuring that we provide you with a well-rounded view. Engaging with Sword means that you not only have access to those working directly on your project but the collective knowledge and experience of our wider team.

We are constantly evolving and investing in our people to ensure that we meet their development needs and career goals as well as ensuring our workforce is aligned with the direction in which our customers businesses are evolving.

How are you building the digital workforce of tomorrow?

We are an employer that values talent and strives to give people the opportunity to grow their careers, skills and abilities with us, whilst ensuring we have the right pipeline of talent to support our customers' evolving needs.

Our teams possess highly attractive skills, and we believe that in order to retain them we must provide a highly attractive employee proposition. This is something that we have invested heavily in this year and will continue to do as we further develop our people strategy.

Having been given the opportunity to develop a career over many years in the energy sector I feel strongly that we must continue to attract young talent into our sector.

We are currently employing record numbers of graduates and school leavers and offer first-class on the job training to everyone who comes on board.

In addition to this as part of our buy and build strategy, we will continue to look for complementary acquisitions to round out our offerings.

When you look around at other technology businesses, what's different about Sword?

I believe we have created a culture at Sword that is different from many, we have a strong set of core values that ensure we care about our staff and customers. I'm a great believer in treating everyone equally regardless of the position they hold. We encourage our staff to be open and honest at all times.

We class ourselves as a Business Technology solutions provider which means we focus on the business challenge we are trying to solve and bring domain expertise to the party, while many other providers have a product or solution they are trying to promote.

Of course, we're on a journey and are far from the finished article however every day we strive to make things better and provide a great service to our customers and staff.

"Engaging with Sword means that you have access to the those working directly on your project but the collective knowledge and experience of our wider team."

