

# On-Site Support Services

IHS On-Site Support Services Help Marathon Focus Efforts, Extract More Value from Resources



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## Case Study

### Business Benefits

- Helped customer optimize its data management resources for greater efficiency and cost-savings.
- Consultants helped employees increase usage and derived more value from the company's data and application investment.
- New Ventures course featured workflow driven examples; users immediately applied new skills and knowledge to enhance their interpretations.
- On-site consultant helped increase speed of analysis and number of projects presented to management.

### Customer Profile

For more than 20 years, Marathon Oil has used IHS international and domestic exploration and production databases. Recently, when the energy industry faced yet another downturn, Marathon's management was challenged with centralizing services and finding the most efficient ways to optimize its resources. The company called on IHS Consulting Services to help them achieve these goals.

"Our strategy is rather straightforward," said Damon Simmons, supervisor – Enterprise Information Management at Marathon. "We want to Web-enable most data management functions and outsource whenever



**Marathon  
Oil Corporation**

practical. We know we can't do it all ourselves, therefore, we have a strong external focus that allows us to utilize our resources more appropriately," he said.

### Business Challenge

As companies in the oil and gas industry are faced with lean workforces, IHS on-site consultants are becoming increasingly popular in the industry, and they have become essential team members in many clients' offices. Because IHS is the largest provider of technical and commercial data to the E&P business, IHS consultants have the tools, as well as the experience and expertise to give their clients a daily competitive advantage.

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Damon Simmons, Supervisor – Enterprise Information Management

IHS is a world leader in consulting services for the exploration and production industry. The company has consulting teams focused on training and support services, strategic planning support, new venture services, field development solutions, production operations improvement, regulatory compliance services, and information and data systems. IHS consultants have worked with more than 300 companies – from international oil companies to government ministries – in 50 different countries.

“Many challenges face the energy industry, including scarce resources related to smaller staffs and budgets,” said Sandy Rushworth, managing consultant, Training and Support Services at IHS. “As a result, explorationists and business analysts are being asked to analyze more opportunities quicker than ever before. Our on-site consultants bring an expert knowledge of the databases and the E&P industry with them,” she said. “We leverage our data knowledge, and anticipate our clients’ needs to provide them with results that exceed their expectations. Many opportunities that used to take a company six months to analyze now take us two weeks or less — because we have IHS applications and database.”

### Training to Maximize Value

In late 2000, Marathon entered into an agreement with IHS to bring an IHS consultant to work on-site in Houston. Armed with 22 years of industry experience with major oil companies, Rushworth was originally brought in to train, trouble-shoot and use IHS database and applications in E&P projects.

“We initiated monthly ‘Lunch and Learn’ education sessions to train Marathon geoscientists on the databases and applications, so they could get more benefit from the IHS products they were already using,” Rushworth said.

Typical audiences for the sessions ranged from 20 to 40 Marathon employees. However, as the exploration staff learned more about IHS solutions, Rushworth said explorationists regularly contacted her first to help them “jump-start” their projects.

And as Marathon explorationists increased their own knowledge of the data, they wanted to integrate IHS products into their regular workflow. This success spawned more in-depth training to meet their exploration challenges. In the resulting four-day New Ventures course taught by IHS, geoscientists analyzed basins and exploration opportunities. The course culminated in a basin- and country-ranking presentation where each team presented a full case for new-country entry. They evaluated an opportunity’s exploration potential, but also addressed the related political risk and economic criteria essential for management decisions. These opportunities will compete for Marathon’s exploration dollars.

When a new internal Marathon exploration group was formed, Gary Guthrie, New Ventures manager at Marathon, enlisted Rushworth as a team member. Her role was to provide IHS data and analyses that would help geoscientists deliver a more focused, in-depth analysis, which quickly ranked a large number of basins in various countries – essential for determining targets for new-country entry. The challenge for the group was the projects’ short time schedule and limited manpower. Not only did the exploration potential of each basin need to be assessed, but the countries’ political risk and fiscal terms also needed to be evaluated.

“The information and support that Sandy provided us accelerated our understanding of existing fields and infrastructure and the licensing terms available in the countries we were evaluating,” Guthrie said. “It also allowed us to rank those opportunities and proceed quickly into the technical evaluation. Otherwise, our geoscientists would have had to try to pull together the data and information on their own, which would have taken some time.”

The New Ventures training that Rushworth taught was also critical to the team’s speed and success, he said. “Our new team members were not all international users,” Guthrie noted, “so Sandy helped familiarize and train them on the data and software, which enabled us to do more on our own with the tools. She also showed the team how to present the data in a meaningful format. The creaming curve, which illustrates cumulative reserve additions over time, is a very powerful tool, and the ability to show the evolution of a basin was very important. We were able to plot historical information regarding well, seismic, lease and exploration activity, which gives you a much better understanding of basin development.”

Taking full advantage of IHS international E&P databases and her applications expertise, Rushworth standardized the data products format being used so that the basins could easily be compared and ranked. These products were then used to analyze and display basin exploration potential, undiscovered field sizes, competitor acreage, reserves and activity, cost of entry, economics of developing offshore fields and commercial data for each country.

Given these data and application tools, the Marathon team was able to quickly assess geological and exploration trends. The team’s geoscientists were impressed by the depth and detail of this timely and well-researched analysis, and with this foundation, they were able to focus on the task of evaluating new plays and individual exploration opportunities. As a result, the team realized they could more selectively entertain farm-in opportunities, saving both time and money.

## Increased Usage

“We’re getting much better use from the data and products than ever before,” said Roger Holeywell, advanced senior geologist for Marathon. “We’ve invested in IHS products, and the costs are fixed. The only way to add value is to increase our usage, and we watch that closely. Now we’re getting two-to-three times more usage of the database and products than we were a couple of years ago.”

Building on Rushworth’s efforts, Greg Shoemaker, an IHS consultant with years of industry experience, has transitioned into the role Rushworth held at Marathon, and is focused on ensuring that Marathon is getting not just increased use out of their IHS investment, but also a better value for Marathon as a whole. IHS data is used throughout our company,” said Holeywell. “And we count on the on-site consultant just as we do a Marathon employee.”



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