



People of energy:

James Dixon

positive energy



How a swimming coach became a manager at a world-leading safety training provider.

Finding a good work-life balance is a priority for many of us, and something that James Dixon has managed to find. Previously a lifeguard and swimming coach, and now a UK Product Development Manager at the world's leading provider of safety training for the oil & gas industry, RelyOn Nutec, James makes the most of a structured working week and sport-filled weekends at home in Teesside.

Can you tell us about how you got to where you are today?

Growing up, I had a strong interest in a number of sports. I loved football, golf and swimming – I started out as a swimming coach for children and adults and had planned to become a PE teacher. After leaving university where I had studied Sports and Education my dad, who worked in the oil and gas industry, drew my attention to a training assistant opportunity at RelyOn Nutec (then known as Falck Safety Services) and I went for it. More than 13 years on, I am now the UK Product Development Manager based in Teesside with RelyOn Nutec.

You mentioned that your dad worked in the oil and gas industry. Did you know anyone else while growing up that also worked in the sector?

I knew a lot of people who worked offshore in the oil and gas industry, of course including my own dad. A number of my friends' dad and uncles did too – generally, Teesside has always had a strong connection to the sector and has a wide catchment area for offshore workers.

That's still the case today. The rich heritage has developed over the years and I have no reason to be anything other than optimistic about the opportunities within the energy sector for people living in Teesside.

Your job is based onshore, is that common in the oil and gas industry?

Plenty of people do work offshore but there is also great opportunity to be based here onshore. I really like that as part of the oil and gas supply chain I don't work two weeks on / two weeks off rotations and instead my hours are a more traditional 9-5. That's really important to me – it means that I get to see my family every evening and my friends every weekend.

Sport is of course also still a big part of my life, so I spend as much of my time as possible going swimming or playing golf. That steady work-life balance is one of the things that I really enjoy about working in the oil and gas sector.

How has your role with RelyOn Nutec evolved?

When I first joined the company I was a Training Assistant. From there I progressed from an Instructor and Assessor to Product Development Coordinator to UK Product Development Manager, which is my current role.

Every day is very different, but my main responsibilities include quality assurance of all our current UK products and services, and the development of any new products and services to be added to the UK portfolio. As part of that my day can include meetings with customers to discuss solutions to their needs, conducting internal audits at our sites in Teesside or Aberdeen, rolling out a new product internally and meeting with various stakeholders and awarding bodies to discuss standards.

Do you think that the industry has changed during the 13 years that you've worked in it?

Of course, the industry has definitely changed. From improved health and safety to a greater focus on the reduction in carbon footprint and diversity within the workplace, there has been a big shift. This is all really positive in creating a sustainable offshore energy sector.

