Going Further: Innovation and Collaboration Drive Successful Subsea Strategies

lain Smith, Senior Vice President, Proserv explains how the controls technology company's proactive and creative instincts represent a highly effective template.





At Proserv, we go further. That is not only our philosophy but it's intrinsic to our values. By going further, we have established partnerships and alliances leading to disruptive solutions and fresh product supply models for the energy market.

By going further, we have taken our core expertise and reputation in agnostic control system integration and subsea environments to construct an exciting and growing business in offshore wind.

Be it a mature subsea field in the Gulf of Mexico or a new offshore wind farm in the North Sea, our instinctive desire to respond to market needs, and even anticipate them, has been rewarding and inspiring.

In today's world, service providers and technology developers must be alert to the voice of the customer and evolving trends. Climate change policies, an unexpected pandemic and a conflict on the margins of Europe have pulled short-term energy strategies in opposing directions, so navigating a path forward takes boldness, perception and expert capabilities.

Anticipating the market

We moved into the subsea arena over 30 years ago and since then we have become the world's pre-eminent controls innovator and supplier but it was our wider control system know-how, stretching back 50 years, that was the basis for this step.

But we have continued to innovate and go further. Industries never remain static, with market requirements continually advancing, and we have built a position as the de facto subsea controls specialists.

How have we achieved that? By honing in on what provides real value. So, when analysts estimate the mean time between failures for a subsea control system is only 22 months, innovating technology that has reliability at its heart is critical. That's why we now offer seven-year extended warranties on our controls to demonstrate our confidence in our product.

By supplying fast open communications infrastructure, broader functionality can be delivered from multi-phase flow metering, important for future expansion, through to underwater cameras and leak detection, vital for environmental responsibility.

But one of the most impactful examples of our forward-thinking approach has been the generation of our augmented controls technology known as ACT.

Obsolete subsea electronics are a chronic problem for operators - when systems start to break down, production is immediately affected with efficiencies and reliability compromised. Typically, the OEM that supplied the original modules will have developed an upgraded system and will no longer support its own legacy product. A full system upgrade, requiring extensive and costly offshore campaigns to rip out the failing equipment, seemed the only option.

But through ACT, we offer a disruptive industry-leading solution incorporating backwards compatibility where our technology interacts with the existing infrastructure and can simply be retrofitted to replace any faulty electronics modules.

ACT is a game-changing technology representing a timely, cost-effective and less carbon-intensive solution, enabling equipment to be regenerated, not automatically replaced, meaning less waste and extended life, while alleviating the need for (and emissions footprint of) the manufacture of new parts and their transportation to site.

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Strategic and creative partnerships

Collaboration can be a strong catalyst for a service company to go and push further, leading to unique offerings for customers.

Partnership is very much part of Proserv's methodology. Across our cycle of offerings, we have joined with multiple partners to present solutions of real quality. Last year, in the subsea space, we forged strategic tie-ups with two US based businesses, Dril-Quip and Trendsetter Engineering, to create new models around product supply and exciting technology opening up safe subsea field expansion.

With Dril-Quip, we have brought together our leading controls capabilities with its reputation for subsea tree delivery to provide best-in-class specialist technologies as a radical departure to the typical OEM bundles and packages of standard subsea equipment. This is an example of driving further into a new supply model where we see quality aligning with cost and time savings.

Meanwhile, with Trendsetter, we have combined our control system expertise and reliability with its High Integrity Pressure Protection System (HIPPS). Together, we are bringing operators increased flexibility and reassurance in addressing potential varying pressure regimes between new tieback wells and existing infrastructure, enabling a viable, straightforward and cost-effective solution. Already, this offering has seen rapid pick-up in the Gulf of Mexico with leading independents choosing to engage our technology to extend and maximise assets.

We remain an independent provider of OEM agnostic control systems but when partnership can add value for our clients, we never hesitate to take that step.

Subsea stats



Control system reliability is the No.1 equipment issue for subsea operators

45% of subsea control system purchases in the next two years are anticipated to be for retrofits and/or replacement of existing systems

22 months is the average mean time between failures for subsea control systems



Operators expect expenditure on subsea developments to increase by 13.2% per annum over the next three years

Going further into renewables

Collaboration lies at the heart of our push into offshore wind, harnessing our controls and subsea know-how alongside the talents of our partners, including start-ups and university

The energy transition is the road forward and technology leaders like Proserv must be a big part of that journey. Going further into the sustainable energy segment and innovating real-time condition monitoring solutions, underpinned by cutting-edge data analytics and intuitive, accessible intelligence insights, is a natural and essential path for us.

Our ECG™ holistic subsea cable monitoring system was rolled out little more than a year ago and already the power of its proposition has seen it win a contract on the world's biggest offshore wind farm. It marks a shift in cable asset management and the technology is a springboard to further digital offerings, across the full energy sector, that will prioritise realtime asset optimisation, enhanced O&M and ultimately life extension.

The transition opens up many opportunities for those right across the industry to continue innovating, collaborating and to keep "going further", evolving their offerings and skill sets to make oil and gas production safer, more efficient and reliable, while helping crucial renewables activities, such as offshore wind, to accelerate.

