

'We've Learned Useful Lessons, Setting Up in Ghana'

Francis Faka, Business Development Director at BRADE, the subsea service company, spoke with Akpelu Paul Kelechi about its new operational front in West Africa. Excerpts:

AOGR: How far has BRADE West Africa gone in settling down in Ghana, its newest regional centre?

BRADE: We are domiciling skills in Ghana. We are committed to building legacy by grooming Ghanaians to become industry professionals. In January 2017, we organized a 3-day Leadership booth camp at The Holiday Inn, Accra.

AOGR: The last time we spoke, you were struggling with the rigorous process in registering the company.

BRADE: Yes. All the permits have been issued, all the documentations have been effected and registration is properly setup now. We are in business. BRADE West Africa has partnered with two local companies, A&F Investment Limited and PX Services and Logistics.

AOGR: How do these local Ghanaian partners contribute to the overall goal of BRADE West Africa?

BRADE: BRADE, PX Services and Logistics and A&F Investment Limited make up BRADE West Africa and the company is run as a single entity. We bank on the pool of resources and expertise brought in by each of the individual partners to execute projects that would exceed the expectations of our clients. Stefan & Kevin West Africa Limited (SKWAF) is the OCTG arm of BRADE and is an independent Nigerian company. All supply of line pipes, premium tubulars and heavy duty equipment sales and services are done by the company.

AOGR: What's the difference in company registration processes between Ghana and Nigeria?

BRADE: It is easier in Nigeria than it is in Ghana. Altogether, it took us 6-8 months to get all of our paper works together. In Nigeria it doesn't take that long. You can get a DPR permit in Nigeria within 6-8 weeks with the new process but in Ghana, it took us about 6 months to get the Petroleum Commission permit and this was even expedited. We had our lawyer in Ghana chase it every day; so imagine if we had come in without a good representation to help us pursue the permit, we probably would have still been chasing it today. It's a much more difficult process there, things take longer to be done.

AOGR: What have been your preliminary staff training like?

The facilitator from the Academy Leadership in the United States was in Ghana to help develop leadership capacity in our staff and

partners in Nigeria and Ghana. With materials and work tools like The Leader's Compass, My Leader's Journal and a Personal Energize2Lead™ Leadership Profile for each participant along with continuous performance coaching from the Institute for 90 days. There was a significant improvement in performance, productivity and effectiveness that spilled over to those who were not able to attend the training. In May 2017 we had five drilling engineers attend the International Well Control Forum (IWCF) training and got certified. The IWCF is the only independent body focused on oil and gas well control training and accreditation. Our engineers are now IWCF Level 3 certified and can work in any oil and gas field in the world as drilling supervisors. In September 2017, we sent some Engineers to attend the Integrated Well Completions Design Workshop targeted at maximizing hydrocarbon reservoir asset value in Nigeria using integrated well completions. Continuous learning never stops at BRADE.

AOGR: So it wasn't like the trainings were set up for only offshore engineering?

BRADE: No it wasn't an engineering training. It was generally a management and skill development program aimed at improving workplace culture and interpersonal relationships. The participants discovered themselves, their strengths and how to transform their weaknesses into strengths. Some BRADE staff have worked with such reputable companies as Schlumberger, NOV, Baker Hughes, now GE and Mobil. Together, we have more than 200 years of combined relevant experience and have the capacity to domicile our global expertise in Nigeria and Ghana.

AOGR: Why go all the way to the US for managerial training on skills acquisition? Is there no company in West Africa that could deliver on that aspect of the training?

BRADE: It's a culture. We believe there are local companies that can deliver the same training content but the leadership booth camp is a BRADE culture. All key personnel have attended the booth camp at least once. Most senior managers have even attended advanced versions of the leadership academy. It's the way we do things here. It's our Culture.



AOGR: Are you working on any project for any of the big oil servicing companies in Nigeria or Ghana at the moment?

BRADE: We have no running projects but we are busy. In a few months, we'll be extremely busy. BRADE is currently negotiating the provision of IPM services for drilling and completions projects to a major E&P company in Nigeria and is also prospecting for various offshore and onshore projects with the majors in Ghana. BRADE is NOV's partner for implementing SEABOX-SWIT, a novel subsea water treatment and injection technology in Nigeria and Ghana. This technology has already been approved for deployment by DPR and has been introduced to the major IOCs in Nigeria. We are also one of DOW's distributor for drilling, manufacturing and production of chemicals in Nigeria and Ghana. DOW is the 2nd largest chemical company in the world and the largest chemical company in the world by revenue.

AOGR: If you were to do this again, what would you have done differently?

BRADE: We have a lot more information now than we did then and so of course we would have approached certain things differently and maybe save one or two thousand dollars here and there. But we are happy to be in the position that we are now; a vantage space to take advantage of the opportunities that exist in Ghana. BRADE is a young, dynamic, entrepreneurial, innovative and technology driven company; we are keen at excelling in the field in which we currently play and we are also eager to venture into areas where we see that we can add value to our clients.