

# WOMAN IN THE INDUSTRY:

## Eilidh McKay

Applications Engineer – Completions Technology, Tendeka

### What was your first job in the industry and was it always going to be the oil industry for you?

My first job in the industry was with Tendeka. I started off at the company in 2012 as a laboratory technician and was involved in the daily lab work of all our swell testing and development. The oil industry was new to me, having grown up outside Aberdeen. Oil and gas wasn't on the radar when deciding university choices, so much so I studied sports and exercise science at university.

### Did you always plan to move into an engineering position?

Engineering was not something which was encouraged when I was looking at career choices prior to joining Tendeka. When I was applying for jobs in the industry, I was looking for a more science-based role and the concept of formulating new rubber compounds was appealing to me. However, since joining the company and working with extremely talented engineers, it changed my focus to look at the bigger picture and not necessarily focus on one area.

### What has been the high point of your career so far?

My high point in my professional career is developing a rubber compound which secured the biggest swells contract for the company and has since been successfully used over 4,800 times in multiple Tendeka products. My personal high point is to be in my current role within only six years of joining the company, managing my own team and being a technical lead for the Completions Technology Product Line, something I would never have anticipated.

### What have been your main challenges?

My main challenge was my mindset. Prior to starting at Tendeka, I believed the negative perception regarding women in the oil and gas industry and assumed this would be something I would experience. Due to this, I lacked confidence in my ability, as

*"I have found if you have a passion for something, someone is always willing to listen."*

1) I was female 2) I was young, fresh out of university and 3) had no experience or education in oil and gas. However, after joining the company and being mentored by my colleagues, I realised that is not the case. My opinion, right or wrong, has always been listened to and discussed. I have been encouraged to believe in myself and my ideas. I have found if you have a passion for something, someone is always willing to listen.

### Are there any key changes you would like to see in the industry moving forward that would improve efficiency?

During the downturn, a lot of experience and knowledge was lost from the industry. I would like to see more knowledge sharing, company and industry-wide, to prevent this from occurring. This would also develop the young professionals in the industry and enhance efficiency.

### What would be your advice for up and coming graduates to the industry?

Don't focus too hard on getting that position with "graduate" in the title. You don't need to start at the top. Take any opportunity to get into the industry, grab it and use it to develop yourself, learn from any experience provided to you and use the knowledge and experience to get where you want to be. And don't worry if that end position is not what you thought you would be doing, or what was studied at university - focus on what you enjoy and are passionate about; you will go a long way.

