

Three experts share their thoughts on attracting skilled personnel



There is a shortage of geomatics professionals to meet the ever-growing need for geoinformation. What can the geospatial community do to tackle this challenge? *GIM International* asked three renowned experts to share their thoughts on how the surveying industry could fill the labour gap.

Hansjörg Kutterer, president of the German National Mapping Agency (DVW):

The number of qualified personnel is becoming increasingly crucial for the further development of the surveying profession. Despite the broad appeal of our professional field and the high number of vacancies, there is still a lack of public visibility and thus limited awareness among potential candidates. For this reason, there have been various activities in Germany over the years aimed at reaching and attracting more young people to the industry. For example, the Instagram campaign #weltvermesserer has been launched in 2021 by a consortium consisting of all national stakeholders, including the private sector, administration, science and all relevant professional organizations. Both the expected impact of this campaign and the increasing interdisciplinary nature of our professional community will provide a good basis for tackling this sizeable challenge successfully.

Paul Digney, president of Australia's Surveying and Spatial Sciences Institute (SSSI):

In Australia, as in many countries, there is a widespread shortage of skilled personnel in the surveying/ geospatial science professions. This is being acutely felt in sectors such as transport infrastructure and resources which are currently seeing significant investment occurring in many regions of the country. The current capability deficiency is likely to continue until the mid-2020s before starting to swing back towards a surplus. Whilst there is a large demand for geospatial professionals, there have been some welcome developments on the supply side which have helped the profession meet some of the shortages. Notably, enrolments in undergraduate geomatics engineering degrees (incorporating surveying and geospatial science degrees) have been rising steadily over the last ten years. This is one area that SSSI and other associations have worked collaboratively with the broader industry. Initiatives such as 'A Life Without Limits' have helped to foster greater interest in surveying as a career amongst young people and provide clearer guidance regarding pathways into the profession. Diversity remains a challenge for our sector in Australia; studying surveying and geospatial sciences is still very much a male-oriented activity. The increase in enrolments in geomatic engineering courses is almost exclusively male, and the share of women in undergraduate geomatic engineering degrees has actually fallen. So there is much to be done to improve diversity and inclusion within our professions. In this context, SSSI has played a significant role in the Space, Spatial and Surveying Diversity Leadership Network (SSS-DLN): a sector-wide group of businesses, governmental and educational organizations aimed at providing visible advocacy for diversity and inclusion within the profession.

James Kavanagh, director of global land & resources at the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS):

There is a growing professional and technical capacity crisis within surveying across all sectors, from engineering to land management to hydrographic surveying. I believe that the only nation on Earth producing a surplus of surveyors is Poland. There is a need to look at our academic and technical training capacity in a less parochial way and perhaps to better share capabilities. Initiatives like 'Get Kids into Survey' and its use of the GeoSquad comic format might be a solution (certainly in the anglophone world) but it is also important to ensure that young people are able to fulfil their professional, social and economic aspirations.

□ There is a strong need for qualified land surveyors or other professionals in the geospatial engineering field.

