

Inside the Front Cover:

Alexander Pushkar has over 30 years of experience working in industry and academia in Europe, the Middle East, the US, and the Far East.

He holds four university degrees, one from Teheran University, and three from London University, including a PhD in Mechanical Engineering. He studied French in Paris, and Corporate Finance in Oslo.

He has held a number of courses, lectures, and presentations on offshore-engineering and platform construction.

He is happily married with his wife from North Norway, has three children, and lives in Oslo.

PHOTO OF REZA SARMAST IN LONDON UNDER THE SNOW IN OCTOBER OF 2009

In keeping with offshore-engineering tradition, this edition of the book is intended as;
"Issued for Comments" and the writer is grateful to reader comments, whatever these may be!

Oslo,2012

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On the occasion of Aker Solutions Capital Markets Day on 8th December 2011 at Oslo Concert Hall , attended by Offshore and Finance personalities , I held a presentation entitled:

”**Engineering – A main differentiator**” where I led off by stating that:

”Some people think that **Engineering is BORING!** I am here to convince you **that it is NOT!**”

The spectacular developments on the Norwegian Continental shelf have been driven by wise engineers with high Technological competence and the ability to generate brilliant ideas . To maintain the positive trend , we need to recruit and develop engineers . But it is also necessary to retain this competence by ensuring an interesting and enjoyable work environment.

The present book is addressing that core element by stating that ”**humor**” could turn a good project into a great one . This will certainly contribute to job satisfaction among engineers and may lead to a higher probability of retaining them in their job.

I find it interesting that the Author whose background is radically different from mine and with his 28 years of hands-on experience, has come to the same conclusion, and clearly states that:

”Engineering is not BORING!

On the contrary, it is a meaningful job and at the same time it is FUN!”

Valborg LUNDEGAARD

**Executive Vice President & Head of Engineering
Aker Solutions**

The book is my memoirs as an immigrant who became an Offshore Engineer in Norway. I believe a typical offshore engineer is:

An OVERWORKED, OVERLOOKED, OVERDRAWN, but basically a fun person!

I am a Persian who has been educated in England and worked in both Industrial and Academic circles over there. Before I came to Norway, I read a book written by a Hungarian writer called George Mikes⁽¹⁾ titled: "How to Be An Alien" which has been well-received all over the world. This is a tiny pocket sized book in 86 pages consisting of two chapters only.

He immigrated to England in the late 30's and explains in this book how he has been received by the new people and the surroundings and how he tried to understand and behave like his new fellow country men for the period of 26 years before he wrote the book (successful or not? one should read the book).

His simple and unpolished style has attracted me and doubtless many others. His book is written in a simple language and has no photos in it, yet it serves to create so very many vibrant graphical images of how an alien is received within a new country.

I knew very little about Norway prior to my arrival in the country. I knew thick and thin about Edvard Grieg, Henrik Ibsen and Roald Dahl. The latter was (and still is) my favourite writer for the style of story writing. His stories seem to be mostly in plain language, but do surprise and delight the reader at the end.

As I entered Norway, I was a visitor, similar to Uncle Oswald, the character in Dahls novel "*the Visitor*⁽²⁾". Roald Dahl describes him as a help seeker, yet a notorious female seducer too.

I arrived, very much in need of help, but unlike him, I was here only to seduce captains of the Norwegian "offshore industry" to build up a future for me and my family.

At times, I hope and pray that if my children and their offspring go through my papers one day and find my writings, they become as intrigued as Uncle Oswald's nephews and nieces who read about their uncle's adventures. I hope my children can find a "grain" of his wit is embedded in my writings .

Once this happens, I shall be happy, wherever, I may be.

Being in Norway for 28 years, I can claim without undue modesty, that I have certain qualifications to write the present book. After all, being for so many years here, could have made me an "un-voluntary" expert on Norway!

Don't get me wrong, I have seen much to love Norway, much to remember. I also have seen and felt my share of hate and moments that I would like to forget, but the bottom line is:

"in a world where Norway is finished and dead, I do not wish to live"

My long experience from working in this country shows that offshore-engineering does not consist only of winning and losing the contracts, with so much stress and anxiety about the deadline that such work entails. It is also a meaningful job with a lot of fun and humour, if one has an eye for it. Unfortunately, the published material related to offshore projects are often limited to stiff "technical" description so much that the humour aspect is totally "forgotten".

By writing this book, I intend to fill that gap.

The book is deliberately written in English, as this is the preferred language of Offshore Engineers, the principal addressees of this book. Indeed, one of the reasons for publishing it at the moment is to record a "more complete picture" of the projects that I have been assigned to work on in Norway. As the technical details of those projects remain as a back cloth for the "professional" part of the assignments, this book is intended as the "social" part, thus completing the overall picture.

To protect the persons and projects, their names are changed and the events are described in a roman-memoir form.

The last 28 years has been a remarkable journey. Throughout these years, I had gone full circle; from London to London. I arrived as a “*Visitor*” and turned into a fully fledged Norwegian with so many Norwegian friends.

I worked from the dark days of Bodø in North Norway to the hot days of Abu Dhabi and for companies stretching from the Far West to the Far East.

With oil/gas installations engineered to operate; above the water, under the water, immersed in the water, or even installed at the bottom of the sea. Also the installations that were to operate objects beyond the planet earth!

I have met many nationalities from all over the world and tried to tap from their wisdom. In all of these, there was one thing in particular that I sensed. Offshore engineering is a demanding undertaking. More demanding however, is to find “Humour” in this endeavour.

I strongly believe that once humour is found, a **good** project turns into a **great** project!

This book is not written by a professional writer, but by a professional offshore-engineer. The former turns an ordinary event into a great story, but the latter is so overwhelmed by the strength of the story that *becomes* a writer!

The reader will note in the book, that involuntarily, I had to “*defend*” my decision as to why I have settled in Norway, changing the original plan of immigrating to the US, i.e. why have I turned my “American Dream” into a “Norwegian Dream”.

Luckily, those whose opinion matter most to me agree with my decision.

My argument had always been to say that once a person loves somebody or somewhere, it does not matter if there are deficiencies here and there, as compared to the “ideals”.

Yes, I could have been *richer* as concerns the bank balance, but what about job and fun?

Compare a successful person who could have had a much more pretty/handsome spouse, had he/she not binded with his/her life partner. A fair answer is:

What matters is that the partner is the love of his/her life!

Keeping the sentiments aside, I often compare my thoughts with some of my friends who had immigrated to the US.

While I think that peoples’ homes can be improved by IKEA (the hands-on furniture products), some American friends think peoples’ countries can be improved by EKIA (Enemy Killed In Action)!

Thanks Heaven that there are cooler heads in the US who lead the free world which gives us all a choice to “Do it our way”.

So with the words from the song of SINATRA, this roman-memoir is to state:

I did it this way,

and thanks to Norway for letting me do it.

Alexander Pushkar(Reza Sarmast), December 2011, Oslo

Inside the Back Cover:

From PREFACE:

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Back Cover Text:

This book is memoirs written by an immigrant who became an offshore-engineer in Norway. I mean such a person typically is:

An **OVERWORKED, OVERLOOKED** person with an **OVERDRAWN** bank account, but basically a fun and sympathetic person.

The book is deliberately written in English because this is the preferred language among offshore-engineers; the principal addressees of the book (INTRODUCTION and EPILOGUE are nevertheless written in Norwegian).

Offshore engineering does not only consist of winning and losing contracts; with all the stress, supply constraints, delivery and operation of the installations, that such undertaking entails. It is also a meaningful job with a lot of fun and humor, if one has an eye for it.

"Humor" element is important and turns a good project into a great project.

This book is not written by a professional writer, but by a professional offshore-engineer. The former turns an ordinary event into a great story, but the latter is so overwhelmed by the strength of the story that *becomes* a writer!

The technical details regarding projects are to be regarded as the background to the events that are mentioned, so that the content of the book is meant to cover the "social" parts of the happenings, and as such complete the overall picture.

Alexander Pushkar.