

# THE CONNECTED WORKER



## Connected Worker Technology: *"Get the Right People on the Bus"*



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**Exclusive interview with Sean Barnes,**  
Vice President of Corporate Operations at  
**Nine Energy Services**

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**C**onnected Worker technology— a category of applications that includes mobile apps, wearables, and virtual/augmented reality - allows frontline workers to connect with the resources and information that they need to get a job done safely and efficiently. Proponents of Connected Worker technology cite how it can improve everything from training through to asset management, quality, and safety.

It's easy to get excited about the potential of Connected Worker technology but much more difficult to fully realize the benefits. For every digital transformation success there are often multiple failures, especially when companies take a “technology first” approach. So how can you get more out of your Connected Worker technology?

Make sure you've got the right people on the bus and ensure they understand the 'why,' says Sean Barnes, Vice President of Corporate Operations at Nine Energy Service. “To have insight into the project so that you can provide the right feedback is important; additionally, including the appropriate levels of the workforce in the feedback loop is key right from the start.”



**IN THIS INTERVIEW, BARNES OFFERS ADVICE ON ENGAGING WITH YOUR PEOPLE, THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN ESTABLISHING THE RIGHT CORPORATE CULTURE, AND WHAT'S ON HIS RADAR FOR 2022.**

**Diana Davis, IX Network:**

**What do you think works best when companies are getting started with a Connected Worker strategy?**

**Sean Barnes, Nine Energy Service:**

The best approach is threefold: focus on people, then processes, and, lastly, technology.

Unfortunately, many businesses believe that technology alone will solve their problems, without realizing the issues lie with people or processes. Technology alone will not fix those challenges. There is a step progression that must occur before any implementation begins.

Technology can be very powerful, but if you do not have the correct people and processes in place, it will be very challenging for any implementation to be successful.

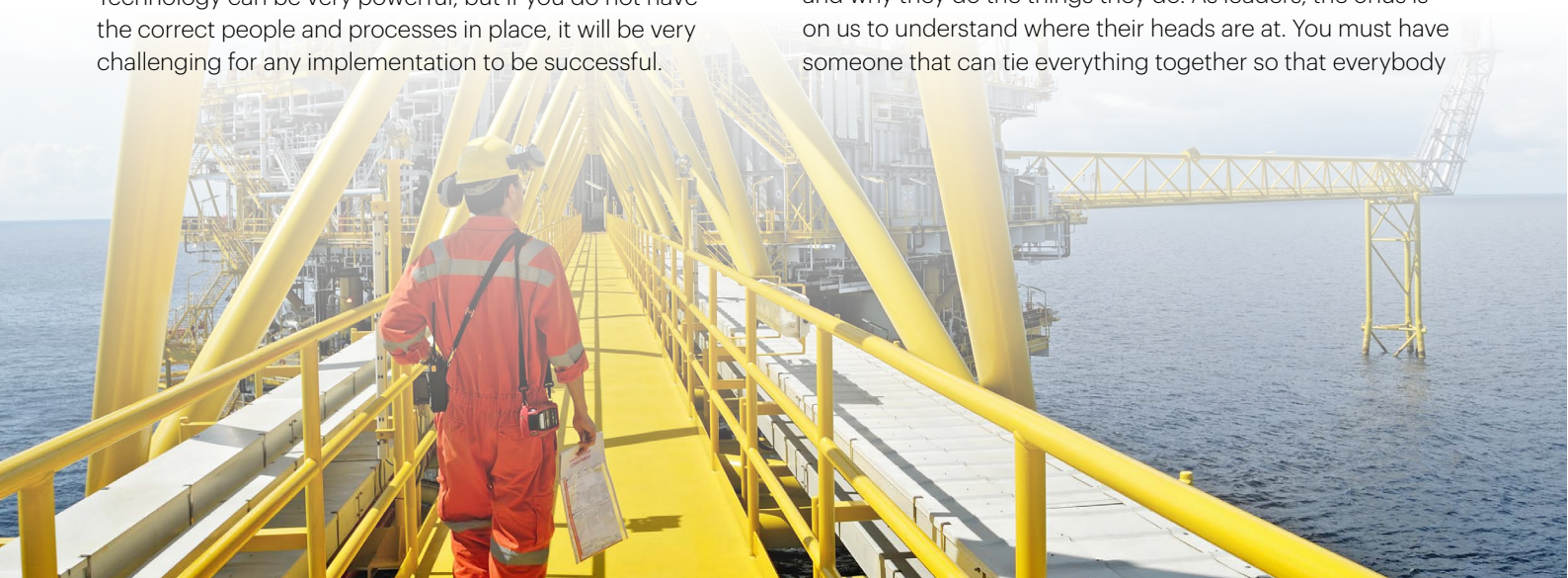
**Diana Davis, IX Network:**

**Why is engaging workers so important in this process?**

**Sean Barnes, Nine Energy Service:**

Since 2017, I have led the Human Resources and IT teams, and in 2021 I acquired the Safety, Transportation, and ESG teams. Leading these teams has taught me the value of having the right people in the right positions. At the end of the day, it is the people that make things happen. The culture of a corporation is the people.

People can be challenging to understand at times. It is difficult to comprehend their motivators, to realize what drives them, and why they do the things they do. As leaders, the onus is on us to understand where their heads are at. You must have someone that can tie everything together so that everybody





is in the right seat on the bus and able to move your initiatives forward. This applies to technology implementations as well as process improvement initiatives.

This can be very challenging because individuals are highly dynamic. They could have a good day. They could have a bad day. All these things tie into the overall success of the team.

It is important for leaders to understand the realms at which individuals operate, but also bear in mind their potential. If they are having a rough day, I can expect that I might not want to put them on a certain project until talking through what is going on.

When you look at the effectiveness of any business, it all comes down to the people and the culture. You can have every process perfect, but if you struggle with people and culture, your chances of success decrease significantly.

**Diana Davis, IX Network:**

**How do you engage people in the process of a Connected Worker strategy?**

**Sean Barnes, Nine Energy Service:**

It all comes back to getting the right people on the bus at the right time. When you start any sort of technology implementation - whether it is a connected workforce implementation or a rollout of other new technologies- the right people must be a part of the conversation from the start.

I've seen situations where business leaders will unilaterally decide what is best without including people at the mid-tiers in the corporation who truly understand what is going on. It is important to make sure that whenever you are engaging the workforce that you are going down to the appropriate levels in the corporation and including those people from the beginning.

However, before you even include those employees, it is crucial to make sure you understand how to communicate the 'why' behind looking at this new solution, where your head is at, and what the company trying to ultimately accomplish.

Once the right people are on board, it is critical that you listen to understand their feedback. If your people do not feel understood, they will not buy-in during each part of the implementation process. I have seen instances where business leaders do not listen or incorporate feedback from key players which can cause frustration, disarray, and ultimately a decrease profits/productivity.

The team must understand the why, they must be included, and they must be heard.

**Diana Davis, IX Network:**

**I wondered if you could give an example of how you would approach engagement? What's an example of something you would do?**

**Sean Barnes, Nine Energy Service:**

In the oil & gas industry, our business leaders are highly competitive. With that said, I like to partner with the more progressive and forward-thinking executives first, since they are more inclined to adopt technology at a more rapid rate.

Not all business leaders are ready for change, and some are more inclined to sit back until they have seen proven results. An example of demonstrating results would be during executive strategy sessions when those who have adopted new technology are able to share in-depth analytics and dashboards that tell a story of how the business is achieving success.

When this occurs, those that have not been as focused on adoption of technology and process improvement will want to get onboard. This creates an environment where the business is 'pulling' the technology instead of IT pushing on them. Then a true partnership between operations and technology begins to solidify.

**Diana Davis, IX Network:**

**Do you measure certain KPI or metrics to make sure that you're on track with your technology projects or implementations?**

**Sean Barnes, Nine Energy Service:**

We measure certain metrics around user adoption. We do have a core application called EHS Insight that we use for audits, incident inspections, learning management, and a myriad of other things. In that application we can look at the data and see what the adoption looks like in each of the business units. From there, we can determine whether it makes sense for us to spend more time coaching them in how to use technology to the fullest. Alternatively, we can also go in and find out what could be preventing them from using it efficiently.

For us, it really comes down to looking at the adoption of the systems that users log into. This is a very basic and fundamental metric, but it seems to be a good indicator of whether we are moving in the right direction or not.



**Diana Davis, IX Network:**

It sounds a little bit like the Net Promoter score that you use for customer evaluation. You've got that one metric that you kind of monitor and gives good insight. So, what's next on your agenda in the year ahead?

**Sean Barnes, Nine Energy Service:**

We will meet with all our teams to strategize and determine the best path forward in supporting operations for 2022.

I am very comfortable with where we are at in terms of adoption of our technology platforms. We are leveraging our business intelligence tools to make informed data driven decisions and are always evaluating whether there are other

platforms and systems that could be beneficial. For us, we will be hyper focused on ESG and Operational Excellence.

What we have discovered as we dive in and look at our data and identify our scope one emissions, is that we have various opportunities that are beneficial both to the environment and financially to the company.

We have opportunities to better track fuel disbursement and consumption, which could then benefit the tax implications side of things and potentially save us money on taxes and fuel consumption.

Ultimately, our data is what will drive the effectiveness of our ESG efforts.

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## Interested in learning more?

Having frontline workers that are safe, connected and empowered to make intelligent, informed decisions is the number one way to build resilient operations. Join us at The Connected Worker Summit in May 2022 and network with over 200 operations leaders at the Norris Conference Center in Houston, TX.

On May 4-5, Sean will be discussing the challenging topics of Cultural Leadership, getting buy-in from the top and the ground floor, and the future workforce, joining people to the information, systems and machines required for them to excel. Sean will be sharing the stage and discussing these topics alongside:



**Andy Cuthbert,**  
Global Prevention, Relief Well  
Engineering & Technology Manager,  
*Halliburton*



**Hugo Ashkar,**  
Risk Authority - Wells, Projects,  
and Subsurface Organizations,  
*BP*



**Deidra Armstrong,**  
Director of Operational Excellence,  
*Sinclair Oil Corporation*

**Learn more about the discussions, keynotes, workshops and more taking place at The Connected Worker Summit.**

**DOWNLOAD EVENT AGENDA HERE**