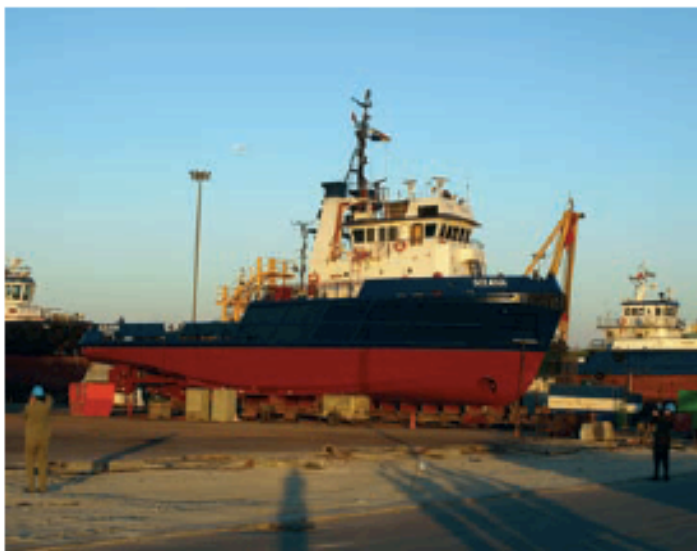


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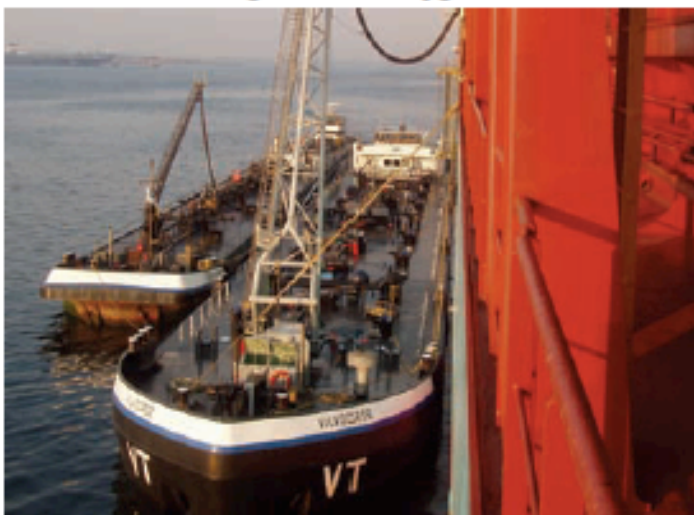
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### Front cover photo

From 1st July, new regulations from the IMO will require new vessels of over 150 gt to carry a bridge navigational watch alarm system (BNWAS). The overall aim is to reduce the risks of accidents due to an incapacitated officer on watch (OOW). Several type approved BNWAS systems are available, including those from Martek Marine and Uni-Safe. Their purpose is to monitor bridge activity and detect operator disability.

# Don't forget the training budget

**Joanne Kelleher, marketing executive, GAC Training & Service Solutions (GTSS), explains how modern training methods and technologies can help meet the plethora of commercial and operational challenges facing the tanker industry.**

**T**he modern tanker business faces a multitude of pressures in its operating environment. Faced with the global economic downturn, shrinking commercial margins, rising bunker prices, stringent environmental regulations and ongoing operational challenges, including piracy, it is understandable that some will regard training as just another cost.

However, the need to ensure that all your maritime professionals are qualified, capable and confident of doing their jobs to the best of their abilities is not only an investment worth making, but one that could also give you a crucial commercial advantage over your competitors, particularly when there is a shortage of qualified, experienced crew.

The 'human factor' may be a source of vulnerability at times, but it is also a source of great opportunity. In such tough economic times, it is vital that the skills of your key personnel are re-tuned and re-aligned in order to drive up productivity levels. Efficient tanker operations require that people with different tasks within your organisation that are nevertheless collaborating towards the same goal are able to understand the factors at work that are outside their immediate role.

Those on board a vessel will have practical

first hand knowledge, but can lack commercial experience. By contrast, shore-based personnel will understand the commercial aspects of tanker operations but will lack the operational experience of their seafaring colleagues. Working in these silos compromises the lubricity of the overall process and exposes vulnerabilities that lead to inefficiencies, or even threaten safety.

One consequence of the economic downturn has been the temptation to see training and crewing as 'soft' costs that can be cut in order to protect the bottom line. The UK's Marine Accident Investigation Board (MAIB), the IMO and DNV have highlighted concerns about corners being cut and seafarers serving in positions for which they lack the qualifications and experience.

This is despite the fact that the costs of training are low, relative to the investments that are put at risk. For example, an exportation LNG terminal that costs \$3 bill to build, with an LNGC alongside valued at \$250 mill, discharging a cargo worth \$20 mill, is a valuable asset - and a not inconsiderable safety, environmental and financial risk.

The best way to minimise that risk is to ensure that all parties with a share of the responsibility for implementing the correct



**Joanne Kelleher, GTSS' marketing executive.**

procedures, upholding regulations and maintaining standards are properly trained to do so.

The latest maritime training courses seek to achieve this by breaking down working silos between the operational and commercial activities in every tanker business.

## **Error consequences**

There are many instances of where a commercial error has operational



consequences and vice versa; a vessel may not see the importance of issuing a note of protest about a shoreside delay, while the shipmanagement team may not understand the true cause of a breakdown that rendered the Note of Readiness invalid. Bridging this knowledge gap between ship and shore can be a rich source of efficiency gains for tanker operators.

The drivers of change in the shipping industry are also the catalyst for new approaches in the world of maritime training - and there is no shortage of challenges facing tanker operators. Just as slow steaming has emerged to counter rising fuel costs and new environmental solutions have been developed to drive up vessel efficiency, so the training sector has responded by modernising its methods and tools in order to equip all maritime professionals with the skills that they need.

New technology is also playing a decisive role, not only in revolutionising shipping operations through the likes of ECDIS, and also in helping to deliver safe, effective, realistic and value-for-money training for crews and land-based personnel alike. This is reflected in the training courses provided at GTSS and elsewhere.

GTSS is a partnership between GAC, the global provider of shipping, logistics and marine services, and the National Maritime College of Ireland (NMCI), one of the most advanced maritime training facilities in the world. GTSS is committed to delivering high value, technologically advanced training. Right now there are a number of innovative new training tools, but among the most exciting advances is the increasing sophistication of marine simulators. This is best exemplified in the field of ship-to-ship transfer (STS) training.

STS is an inherently risky operation and the



**Simulators are becoming increasingly sophisticated.**

consequences of getting it wrong can be horrendous. It is essential that everyone involved in STS is properly trained; from mooring masters, senior masters and superintendents, to those co-ordinating operations from the shore. Specialist training for all those involved in STS is fundamental to realising efficiencies, minimising risk and ensuring crew welfare.

STS is also a clear example of where industry regulation, environmental awareness and market pressure have upped the ante in terms of the skills required by seafarers. The bar was raised even higher in January 2011 when new rules governing STS procedures took effect under the auspices of the IMO's MARPOL Annex 1, Chapter 8.

These new regulations place an even greater

onus on tanker owners and operators to ensure that STS activity is carried out competently and in a way that proactively manages the risk to personnel, vessels, equipment and the environment. This has prompted the training sector to utilise the latest technology to meet the industry's needs.

Shiphandling experience is the key to successful STS operations and simulator training is the ideal way to solve the riddle of how to gain experience, without the risks of 'on the job' training. GTSS offers a week-long STS simulator course at the NMCI, which covers a multitude of topics, including safe manoeuvring using the ship's engines and helm, the impact of natural forces, such as wind, current and interaction, the importance of approach planning, efficient management of

bridge procedures and effective and safe bridge team management. The course progresses from the basics of STS procedures in benign weather conditions to worst-case scenarios in adverse conditions.

### Largest simulator suite

NMCI has the largest simulator suite in the world with 17 simulators, supplied by Kongsberg Maritime, including one of the few full 360 deg simulators in the world and damper-mounted simulators, which can simulate the movement of the ocean.

There are many variables at the disposal of the course lecturer, including different vessel types, locations, weather conditions and every imaginable operational scenario, meaning that attendees can be trained on precisely the right type of vessel for their needs.

## NMCI profile

**The National Maritime College of Ireland is a state-of-the-art \$100 mill training facility in Cork.**

Located on a 10-acre waterside campus, NMCI's facilities include a suite of 17 bridge, engine room, fleet work, VTS and GMDSS simulators, including one with 360 deg imaging, full-size ship engine and control rooms, workshops, electrical engineering facilities, Return to Scene digital imaging technology, a survival pool and fire-fighting training facilities.

As well as training the next generation of Irish seafarers and meeting the training requirements of the Irish Naval Service, NMCI trains maritime professionals from around the world through GTSS. ■

“ The more forward thinking tanker companies recognise that their human capital can be the strongest link in their value chain and are investing in training for their seafarers and land-based teams. ”

GTSS' course also complies with the requirements of the OCIMF 4th edition guidelines, which is particularly important for external organisations, including the oil majors, looking for the reassurance of competence that specialist courses provide.

Increasing numbers of companies are also asking for commercial STS training for their shoreside personnel that incorporate an element of simulated STS operations, in order to help them to understand the role of their seafaring colleagues.

To meet this demand, GTSS offers a commercial STS course that bridges the gap between ship and shore by covering the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in STS operations, including the mooring master, the vessel owner, the shipping agent, the port and OCIMF, the vetting of the vessels involved, the equipment required, cargo quality inspection and measurement, the costs and the bills of lading.

There is a lot more to tanker operations than STS and other specialist tanker courses are available from maritime training providers, such as GTSS' course on tanker operations at the terminal, which focuses on the critical ship/shore interface between vessel and terminal from a commercial and a practical perspective and covers everything from pre-vessel arrival jetty inspections and ship/shore safety practices, to dealing with emergency

situations and defending demurrage claims.

Given the rapid growth of the LNG sector and the resulting demand for appropriately trained and qualified LNG professionals, there is also a growing demand for specialist LNGC training. GTSS' LNG courses cover the buying and selling of LNG, operational safety issues, the LNG value chain, world markets and operational shipping logistics, as well as a dedicated course on terminal operations.

Despite the fact that training budgets have come under considerable pressure during such tough economic times, the demands placed upon maritime professionals have rarely been higher. The more forward thinking tanker companies recognise that their human capital can be the strongest link in their value chain and are investing in training for their seafarers and land-based teams.

At a time when there has never been a greater need for safe, cost-effective training that better recreates the operational environment and drives up professional standards, the marine training sector is responding in a dynamic, creative and proactive fashion by delivering cutting edge training solutions that meet specialist needs with the right blend of practical and commercial skills.

In doing so, it is helping its tanker customers to minimise the risks and maximise the efficiencies in their operations. **TO**