

# In pursuit of Knowledge

By Helen Jauregui



“Whether your business is experiencing financial boom or downturn gloom, the provision of high quality training for maritime staff, whether onboard or ashore, is a necessity which cannot be avoided. New regulations such as electronic chart display information system (ECDIS) mandate and STCW Manila amendments mean shipping companies are legally obliged to offer appropriate training but regardless of legislation requirements, the benefits of providing quality, regular training are clear as achieving a low turnover of knowledgeable, motivated staff is undoubtedly a plus for any maritime stakeholder.

When choosing a training method or provider, employers should carefully consider the needs of their trainees as from traditional, classroom-based techniques to onboard computer based training (CBT), the availability and range of training formats and approaches has never been so extensive.

GAC Training & Service Solutions (GTSS) works in partnership with the National Maritime College of Ireland (NMCI) to provide training for maritime sectors such as the LNG and tanker markets, specialising in support for terminal and jetty operations. Based in County Cork, the NMCI boasts a \$100 million facility which includes fully operational and life-size ship engine and control rooms; welding and electrical workshops for training mechanical engineers; a survival pool; fire fighting training facilities and the jewel in the college's crown – a suite of 17 state of the art simulators covering the bridge, engine room, vessel traffic services and global maritime distress and safety systems.

Joanne Kelleher, has worked at the NMCI for five years and as Marketing Executive for GTSS, is responsible for co-ordinating training courses for the Maritime, transport and commodity sectors. Describing the ethos of GTSS, Ms Kelleher said: “One of our aims is to bridge the gap that's traditionally existed between ship and shore

side staff.” She explained how, particularly for ship to ship transfers, the college's facilities are especially useful for shore staff who may have never been on a ship before and “may not know what a ship to ship transfer looks like” but through simulation, can embark on new experiences in real time. She added that the college's course entitled ‘Ship to Ship Transfer Operations’ includes extensive use of a 360° bridge simulator which “gives people a more practical approach, to be able to see a transfer actually taking place before they've ever had to do it. As for more experienced mooring masters or senior officers, they get to practice time and time again on the simulators which obviously they wouldn't get to do in reality as it's far too dangerous.”

Ms Kelleher acknowledged that as shipping is a global business and GTSS aims to be a global training provider, the company “won't always have the benefit of using the simulator in the academy” but a further piece of equipment which may solve this issue, particularly for the LNG market, is Return to

Scene (R2S): "It's a camera you can place onboard, inside an LNG tanker and it will spin around and take 360° images, capturing everything in sight. Files can be embedded into this technology so if we use it in the classroom, we're able to show the delegates inside a moss tanker – they're able to see parts and different technologies and judge what requires servicing. If they can't come to Cork for the training, we'll bring the technology to them." GTSS currently offers courses at the NMCI's 10-acre waterside campus; on site at the client's location or online.

Though GTSS is flexible in its approach, Ms Kelleher recognised the challenges posed to training providers during the economic downturn and noted the importance of encouraging clients to invest in 'training and human capital' which ultimately, are beneficial to companies and the bottom line. "There are safety and environmental implications where companies must keep up their competitive edge. For some companies, training is the first thing to be cut so it's a big issue for us as the economy may not be doing well but companies need to maximise their operational efficiencies and drive up

their customer services standards and a way of doing that is to invest in training," she added.

A further method of maximising company efficiencies may lie in ensuring a wide variety of training options are available to crew. Stephen Bond, Deputy Chairman of maritime training provider Videotel, explained the importance of providing a range of different materials for different skill sets, including materials for ratings and officers. "We're a great believer in the 'blended' approach which is often a passive medium as videos and workbooks are



appropriate for some sectors but you also need CBT and online training materials for different levels. You've got to provide the right materials for the right audience level and be prepared to be flexible. You must take into account different levels of experience, learning abilities, audience levels and cultures."

Videotel offers video training and CBT for basic and advanced level courses, catering to different levels and in observance of the STCW 2010 Manila amendments (where important training topics include vessel resource management, tanker familiarisation

and chemical and gas training), while recognising support, operations and management levels, in addition to the ability of the seafarer.

Mr Bond described the issue of ECDIS mandate, where there will be an emphasis on 'learning skills quickly' and said: "It will be difficult for those who are in industry, particularly shore-based personnel, to learn everything about a new piece of kit so to a certain extent, this is pushing towards distance learning methods of training. We already have a course on ECDIS 1.27 and are working with manufacturers to develop new

materials." Overall, Mr Bond noted a current trend in training where "the need to be flexible" is clear and "one method of delivery doesn't suit all" as whereas in the past, many companies elected to use one method for all personnel, many have now embraced a more varied approach where seafarers can access training in different formats. He added that client demand for online resources and record-keeping has also increased Videotel's global approach ensures the company is focused on the supply of training materials to numerous regions and Mr Bond was clear regarding the importance of keeping training

Images courtesy of GTSS and NMCI



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materials relevant for different nationalities. "We also offer a lot of materials on 'soft skills' such as communication, leadership, management and cultural issues. Often in training, soft skills are neglected because of the time required to focus on hard skills but they're equally important. Video is an effective way of putting soft skills across as if a picture is worth a thousand words, the moving picture is probably worth a million," he concluded.

Flexibility is also a key facet of the Executive MBA in Shipping and Logistics at Copenhagen Business School – the only part-time course of its kind in the world.

Course representative Tore Karlsson explained how the program allows participants to "combine a busy work life with highly valuable supplementary training, providing up-to-date inputs from an academic stand-point of the fast-moving shipping and logistical industry".

With a holistic approach offering core modules and supporting subjects such as strategy-processes, in addition to a combination of academic and practical exercises and guidance from experts in industry, the course concerns shipping and logistical aspects of the maritime world in addition to further 'tools' such as the forecasting of shipping markets. Mr Karlsson said: "Methods regarding how to approach and analyse problems in general are also a central part of the program. Various disciplines such as organisational learning and leadership development both encourage and teach delegates to be able to think in a broader context for the benefit of themselves and their company."

So what trends has Mr Karlsson experienced recently from the ship-management sector and how has the MBA in Shipping and Logistics accounted for this? "A central part of being a successful ship management company is the ability to cooperate in both directions of the chain. Customer relations need to be developed and must sometimes be tailor-made to give

the most valuable solution to both parties. Knowing your customers' business and being able to understand their objectives and obstacles for a successful relationship is easier to develop and maintain. The program provides participants with a holistic view of supply chain interactions and analytical tools, including how to ask the right questions."

Mr Karlsson also recognised an emphasis to specialise in information technology – a factor he said "will play a central role in the future" but training providers must account for this "as the ability to utilise, combine and analyze large portions of dataflow will demand training and the degree (and need) of specialisation will increase over time".

Technology will undoubtedly form an important aspect of future training processes but Mr Karlsson emphasised the need to "understand your own industry" and to "learn and adapt from the best in other industries/sectors" as an aspect of training which will 'drive development', as identifying what makes your peers successful is important when understanding and evaluating your own business. "Focusing on what the freight rates will be tomorrow and the day after tomorrow is of course important but the ability to look beyond and plan strategic objectives for your business should be the central vehicle of your organisation," he said.

Developing a strategy for training is no mean feat, as Ulf Teske, Business Development Manager at the SVITZER Salvage Academy confirmed, it is important to ensure the 'best mix' of participants so they can learn from each other to enhance the course content.

The Salvage Academy offers a range of courses including the DNV-certified 'Salvage Experience Master Class' – a two-day course which covers methods of responding to maritime emergency and salvage crisis situations. Teaching techniques are based on a mix of theoretical learning and real-life simulation but as Mr Teske

explained, delegates also benefit from a sharing of ideas and expertise which allows for a more rounded learning experience. The course accepts around 12-14 participants and has five dedicated trainers who undertake the program. Rather than accepting applications from one professional maritime sector only, Mr Teske explained how often, the most successful mix of participants can include ship owners, managers, adjusters and lawyers, as each individual is able to share their own unique experience with the group.

"We have a lot of knowledge internally on salvage, which is a specialised form of work but based on the knowledge we have, we began doing our own internal training for SVITZER staff and this was the start of the Salvage Academy. In 2006, we made it official by combining forces with lawyers and media trainers to create dedicated salvage training available to the market. Right now there is a lot of legislation effecting shipping and seafarer training is often curtailed to the minimum – whatever is required in STCW for example, but any extra training is often not considered due to cost saving efforts. Also, existing training usually does not include anything to do with salvage (such as contracts) and what to do in the event the vessel grounds or has a collision. Based on this, we have developed different courses for different audiences.

Mr Teske concluded that his company has 'planted seeds for growth' for those customers who requested a dedicated, short training course on salvage with an overview on issues such as salvage history, stakeholders and operations, equipment, crisis management and the legal side of salvage."

Roger Ringstad, Managing Director of Norwegian training provider Seagull, which specialises in onboard computer-based training through a customised system, also described the importance of creating training solutions to suit the global shipping market. He said much of the shore-based training typically offered in industry can be

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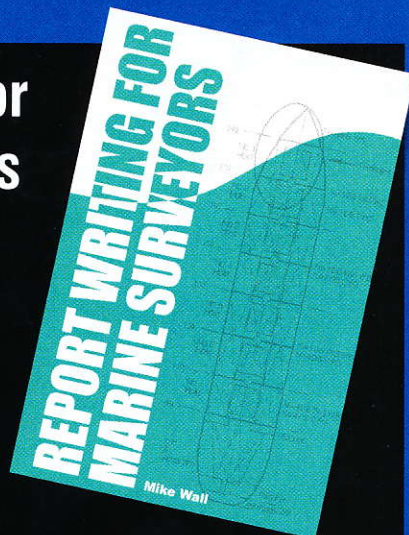
# Report Writing for Marine Surveyors

By Mike Wall

Published by Petrosport

"While it is necessary for surveyors to possess sound technical knowledge it is certain that without an ability to adequately convey their findings in their reports, and sometimes also opinions, they will never become competent and respected surveyors", writes Capt Barry Thompson in the foreword to this extensive 340 page book which will assist surveyors across the globe through an array of accurate information and advice.

Interactive training devices may be popular in shipping but as author Mike Wall has proven, the written word still holds a powerful role in enhancing knowledge and skills in the maritime market. Highlights include an extensive variety of diagrams and charts detailing all likely aspects of the marine surveying process. Sections focused on issues such as evidence, protocols, insurance and copyright are included to provide



extensive guidance, particularly for new entrants to the industry or simply those wishing to enhance their writing skills to create concise and accurate reports.

A former lecturer at the Warsash Maritime Academy, the author holds over 25 years experience in surveying and has worked in hull, machinery, cargo and condition surveys in locations from Fiji to the US. Starting with the basics of report writing, this book provides the perfect starting base for surveyors who aspire to produce first class work.

conducted onboard instead, through relevant 'on the job' training and the inclusion of practical elements within a training program. Established in 1996, the company started as a classical training company involved in simulators prior to becoming more heavily involved in CBT materials.

"We believe a great deal of shore based training, performed with or without a simulator, can be performed much better onboard the vessel, where the seafarer can do the training while on the job, using necessary equipment. We think this kind of training can be done onboard, even without a professionally trained instructor. I'm not saying we can do all shore-based training onboard but for short courses which take just two or three days, I think this can be done more efficiently onboard with the real equipment" Mr Ringstad said.

Seagull has recently released a new ECDIS course, produced in association with MARIS – a partnership Mr Ringstad described as a 'win win' situation, as customers are requiring not only the hardware but also a solution for training and so, the close relationship between MARIS and Seagull may yield positive results. "Customers are seeking solutions for training, so when a MARIS customer is buying an ECDIS today, they are considering different suppliers, they also want to train the navigators in an efficient way both from a

logistical and cost point of view." Mr Ringstad explained how his company makes efforts to save shipping companies from unnecessary costs, such as sending employees abroad for ECDIS training – an expensive practice.

"ECDIS training is not new but now it's a hot topic because of the carriage requirement so a lot of shipowners and operators are looking at it more seriously now. When you have people doing training onboard without assistance from an instructor, they need to rely on an 'onboard assessor' – typically one of the senior officers, but of course they have limited training in doing assessments and evaluations so we need to structure the training so it's a whole solution, which is accepted by flag states and can gain flag state approvals certified from the classes – it's important to keep up with current standards of training," Mr Ringstad concluded.

This sentiment was echoed by John Millican, Director and Dean of the Warsash Maritime Academy, Southampton, who explained the need to keep abreast of new course developments: "Courses are evolving all the time, both in response to changes in the STCW Convention and market demand. And of course, our teaching staff take care to remain current so what they teach in the classroom reflects industry best practice.

The cadetship courses were only redesigned and approved a year or so ago so they are up-to-date. The Merchant Navy Training Board holds annual review meetings with the sponsoring companies, and we take part in those and get direct feedback from the companies from their regular visits and via the seminar which we host each year in connection with our open day in January.

"As well as the obvious technical developments (electronic charts for example), there is an increasing demand for advanced, management level courses to do with the human element and especially teamwork. As well as keeping the content up-to-date, we put a lot of effort into developing the teaching and learning skills of our staff. When I was a cadet we used to be lectured at for hours at a time, but today's generation are used to a more interactive style, with more projects and activities." Mr Millican explained how young trainees respond better to a multi-faceted, interactive training approach and the college has invested in modern technological aids such as electronic whiteboards and virtual learning environments. Recent funding for a brand new machinery space simulator has been allocated and the equipment will be installed and operational within a year at the latest.

Another major investment for the college is a brand new manned model facility at Timsbury, north of Southampton, which will replace the old centre at Marchwood. "Because we have been able to design everything from the bottom up – the berths, turning basin, canal etc as well as the buildings – it's going to be exactly how we want it. The new facility will be in operation in another month or so and officially opened in June. Solent University has put a great deal of investment into this, so it signals a real commitment, not only to Warsash Maritime Academy, but also to manned models as a concept. There are few manned-model centres in the world, but we believe there is no better way to develop ship handling skills. You just can't do it as well with electronic bridge simulators," Mr Millican said.

So, positive times abound for Warsash but what concerns does the Dean have regarding the provision of training in this period of recession? "I'm tempted to say at the financial context, with funding from all quarters either being cut or under review but we can work through that. For the long term, it all comes down to people.

Everything we do depends upon the commitment and expertise of the staff we employ, and the quality and commitment of the cadets and officers who come to us. That in turn depends upon shipping remaining attractive as a career choice" he concluded. ■