



GANGWAY

EDITION 2 - APRIL 2007

Welcome to the second edition of "Gangway" ShiptalkJOBS news bulletin.

In this the second edition of "Gangway" we feedback the views of recruiters, trainers and Chinese cadets aired at the 3rd Lloyd's List China Manning and Training Conference held in Shanghai last month.

We also provide a focus on the new featured companies that have joined ShiptalkJOBS.com since the publication of the first edition of Gangway.

Finally, we announce the forthcoming 10th European Manning and Training Conference due to take place in the majestic city of Dubrovnik next month.



Anneley Pickles
Managing Director ShiptalkJOBS.com

Bull in the China shop

Whenever there is trouble brewing it is always comforting to have a secret weapon. For shipping it seems that China has long been seen as the silver bullet to slay all the industry's woes, especially when it comes to manning.

The equation seems so simple, China has lots of people, shipping needs people...so there you are, job done.

Nice theory, but can it really be so straightforward? We recently packed our overnight bag and headed out to the 3rd Lloyd's List China Manning and Training Conference, in Shanghai to get some answers.

We at ShiptalkJOBS are determined to find the best seafarers from across the globe for our clients, and we spent the two days listening intently to talks on competency, on meeting standards, and the challenges posed by the international crew shortage.

The turn out at the event was very strong, as one might expect when some great secret is thought to be revealed, but despite the rows of smartly dressed Chinese Cadets many in the audience expressed

serious concerns about the issues facing manning and training today, and of a gloomy future in store.

As the present demographic of OECD, Indian and Filipino seafarers waxes and wanes it goes without saying that the supply of well trained, competent Chinese seafarers of all ranks is hugely important. Naturally the Conference recognised this importance, as Amit Ray of DNV Seaskill Asia, presented a piece on "People fit for purpose" stressing that the biggest challenge is that of raising competence across all ranks and even ashore. However the Conference hinted strongly that the assumed assimilation of Chinese seafarers into the global market is far from natural, assured, or straightforward.





As ever the Lloyd's List Events forum was an excellent networking opportunity, and there was a strong showing from local manning and training organisations, as well as from foreign ship owners and managers. They all united in praise for the progress made by the Chinese shipping industry during the past few years, particularly with regard to seafarer training, but below the surface bubbled a sense that something was not quite right, a whiff of concern was evident.

The Chinese Cadets wheeled out were of the highest order, smart, intelligent and with a strong sense of their own future but these are the tip of the iceberg. What of those below them, and that will come later? The questions and debate flowed like Green Tea. Will the next generation of Chinese crew be of the same standard, will they be allowed to work on foreign ships? Will they want to work on foreign ships? Also with the rapid rise of living standards across China, especially for the bright young things such as these, will they be enticed by the bright lights ashore and look to cement careers in the new, booming Chinese economy?

Once the questions started there was no stopping them, and whether it was the brave ones who stood and grabbed the microphone, the shy quizzical ones who wrote their questions down, or the cigarette toting debaters in the coffee break – they all had serious concerns to air. The biggest issues remained not so much the people the industry already has, but of those it lacks. Where are the

seasoned seafarers, and why is it so tough to recruit?

Despite great efforts to improve supply, it was grimly stated that it is still well short of demand, with the differential set to grow further as shore jobs in the industry look set to drain the best seafarers from the fleet.

One of the major concerns in dealing with the Chinese market was one of English language. Will the massed ranks of promised new Chinese Seafarers really be able to cut the English mustard? Some said yes, others simply shrugged looking worryingly as if they hadn't understood the question. While it seemed inevitable that owners and managers will look to take advantage of the potential labour supply in China, and while the Chinese look certain to supply, while perhaps not the cream of the crop, certainly the best of the rest there was the small matter of the "human element" to consider.

It seemed that many were more than comfortable in addressing the technical aspects of operating a ship, but what of the social? Where is the emphasis on making seagoing a life and a career not just an attractive job?

A number of speakers managed to hit just the right note in stressing that so many of the difficulties are human performance related, and as such there is a real need for a human performance management system. Perhaps when the risks associated with the people onboard are aligned with the management

structures in place for safety, security and the environment then perhaps we can improve the status of all seafarers, and perhaps we can develop systems to reward employee loyalty, perhaps through more innovative methods than simply throwing money at the problem.

We didn't just sit and listen, we talked as well... to leading shipowners, manning agents, training centres and even the lesser spotted seafarer. The message was the same from all sides, "yes there is a problem. As for answers, well it seems the manning crisis may be a little tougher to solve than simply relying on China to throw hundreds of thousands of seafarers onto the world stage...shame that, as it seemed so easy!

Able Chaired by the dynamic duo of GlobalMET Executive Secretary, Rod Short and China Coordination Council for Overseas Seamen Employment's (COSE), Mr Pang Lu, it was a real eye opening event for all who were there.

Did it answer all the questions? No, of course not – there were no crystal balls present, but it did paint a stark image of the future –one that all across the industry need to pull together to address the hard work to be done in assuring the supply of trained, skilled, committed and competent seafarers.

So China is indeed the answer, but we're not quite sure of the question yet.

Anneley Pickles
ShiptalkJOBS.com April 07

Shiptalk are pleased to welcome the following featured companies to www.shiptalkjobs.com:

Bibby International Services (I.O.M) Ltd

Situated in the Isle of Man, Bibby International Services I.O.M. Ltd provides a quality assured comprehensive personnel Crew Management service to the International Marine Industry. It is no surprise that a company whose parent, Bibby Line Limited, has been established for 200 years appreciates investment in long-term results and commitment to core values. In every aspect of business at BIS, their concern is with lasting customer satisfaction and how best to achieve it.

By taking a hands-on personalised approach with their seafarers from their initial recruitment and throughout their employment, they have generated loyalty from Officers, Ratings and their families. In turn, this significantly reduces staff turnover, which has a considerable positive effect on the operational performance of a Client's fleet.



Maersk Marine Services

The A.P. Moller - Maersk Group is a worldwide organisation with more than 110,000 employees and offices in over 125 countries with global headquarters in Copenhagen and Denmark. They operate over 500 container, 56 supply, 32 tankers and 9 gas carriers and in addition to owning one of the world's largest shipping companies, they are also involved in a wide range of activities within the energy, shipbuilding, retail and manufacturing industries.

A.P. Moller - Maersk Group customers demand service, quality and reliability and this is what they look for in their people. Maersk Marine Services recruit both experienced seafarers and cadets and a career at sea with the Group provides motivated individuals with a challenging profession within a world of opportunities in an internationally and challenging environment.



Northern Marine Management

Northern Marine Management Limited, is a wholly owned subsidiary of Stena AB Gothenburg, formed in 1983 and located in Clydebank, Scotland with the primary commitment of providing ship management services to the various Stena Sphere Shipping divisions. The company provides a comprehensive range of individually structured ship management services to meet the needs of ship owners and operators, with the range of management services offered extending but not limited to technical management, provision of personnel, purchasing, vessel commercial management, accounts and consultancy.

The company aims to provide employment for personnel of the highest calibre with the appropriate experience and qualifications, and to supply clients and group divisions within the Stena Sphere with an unparalleled service.



Manning & Training Conference

Wednesday 23rd & Thursday 24th May 2007

The Hilton Imperial Hotel, Dubrovnik, Croatia

Lloyd's List events is pleased to announce further details of the 10th European Manning & Training Conference, which will be taking place in Croatia.

Through presentations by industry leaders, expert panel debates and a range of networking opportunities, this event will allow the users and providers of European seafarers to assess the factors affecting the supply, demand and training of officers and crew from this region.

This timely event will bring you up to date with some of the latest issues facing the manning and training industry, as well as offer delegates the opportunity to put their questions to the experts.

The full programme with comprehensive agenda and speaker details can be found at:

www.manningandtraining.com/LM1892

or call the booking hotline on:

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