

From the Editor's Desk



India being one of the leading top maritime nations in the world, gifted with long coastline and good number of major and minor ports, have made shipping a crucial activity for the rapidly growing Indian economy. India's greatest strengths as a maritime nation, are its ship breaking facilities and the churning of the available abundance of Indian Manpower into potentially high quality of maritime manpower.

Management of Shipping Companies need to ensure, primary responsibility of creating a work environment that causes people to give their best every day, whether the vessel is out at sea or in port. In theory this could appear simple, since the overwhelming majority of employees employed out at sea, are willing workers, not distracted from their outside world, on social commitments. Only a small number of influential people take job on coastal ships to get paid for a minimal effort, meeting people of multi-cultural mix, to visit foreign countries and enjoy adventurous life, to those employed on ocean

going vessels,.

If people are willing to perform at their best and they don't, where does the problem lie? Well over 90 per cent of the problems of quality not to front-line employees, but lies with the top management. We certainly agree and we extend this to most other performance deficiencies as well. The same leadership practices that throw away the employee's (seafarers) goodwill also create the climate that suboptimizes organizational effectiveness. Leaders create the culture, the place, and the conditions for employees and their work. This includes the physical conditions and the management process. The most effective leaders first looks at those elements before looking to individuals or groups of employees for assigning blame or attempting a fix. Most failures are owing to failure of Management Process, not crew's behaviour.

Shipping Companies have some form of process management, in their management of varied vessels of different applications. It is advised to find a management style that fits their personality and the situation. Because there are so many different personality types in multi-cultural mix at times and possible varied situations on board a ship. Hence, there will be many different solutions to the same problem. No effective, stable leadership process is possible with this number of uncontrolled management variables. An effective management process makes the crew (employees), to do the right things at the right time in the right way. To have an effective management process, it is hence imperative that we have understanding of the variables that affect performance. Getting and keeping crew occupied in meaningful activity, whether physically / mentally is essential to a leader (Captain & Chief Engineer of the vessel) with a reasonably held manning helps.

Much of what is common knowledge about leadership is, in fact, fallacious. Ideas extracted from our experience or that of others may not actually identify the critical variables that made that approach work in that specific situation. We are all taught, for instance, to lead by example and to communicate, communicate, communicate! This kind of advice peddles the banal as wisdom and ignores the essentials. While the leader's actions and the visual images he or she paints with words are important, these are not the most powerful influences on behaviour. Much more has been modelled and communicated than has been done. Simply put, the impact of your example and of your communications is to get followers to do something once, perhaps twice. After that, they must see some personal benefit from their actions or the response to your example and your communications will diminish. We may know our Company's Standard Policy and not follow it; we may know a safety rule but violate. All of these points to the fact that most problems that organisations face daily are not the result of not knowing what to do but are often treated by the organisation as though they are. Most attempts to resolve performance issues involve emphasizing the consequences (importance of the actions, stressing the cost of the failure, making our expectations clear, re-telling them, creating new policies and procedures, conducting refresher training and not simply nagging them to do what said. We need to instil in our minds, showing concern about the cost, quality, timeliness, or appropriateness of their actions. Problem solving requires a disciplined approach.

Are we looking at the seafarers fairly? Are'nt we exploiting the situation for their inability to get together and raise their genuine voice, unlike other Officers Associations, Unions of the shore-based employees etc. How about Seafarers looking forward to instil a revolutionary change, to address their genuine grievances on common platform, with a vision on a mission to meet to the times, of the day to day affairs in the changing maritime scenario of the world? All this, very well known to all, of their inability to get together, owing to their mobility of service and while ashore on their hard-earned leave wishes to be attached with their close and near dear ones but on the contrary running pillar to post for the renewal of passport, CDC, MMD offices etc. hence, the imperative need of a common platform to vent their grievances. Seafarers getting exploited, even after freedom and independence from foreign hands, achieved over 60 long years ago. The basic requisite is lacking? Unions/Associations need to be regulated by the national/state governments to oversee and instil justice to their seafaring countrymen, Checks to union fees collected/deducted from seamen (navigating officers, engineer-officers and Ratings). Option to be left to them, to break away from the union and represent themselves as well, without any monopoly. The imperative need of a common platform for seafarers to vent their grievances, Workers who oppose the mandatory union fees - known as "fair share" or agency fees. Seafarers very well know that if they don't have a UNION they will lose everything even what they get now, as their management will further exploit them. Union and non union employees have clashed periodically over the agency fees for years. The fees are designed to cover the cost of collective bargaining and contract administration that benefits all employees, including those who choose not to join the union.

While, Seafarers lack motivation, family-welfare even while in active service they are neglected, as compared to those employed ashore in the supporting services e.g. port services, logistics etc. During their hard earned leave period, while they are supposed to spend with their close, near and dear ones, but they are engaged in running to various offices i.e. renewal of their passport, CDC, revalidation of their certificates, the MMD visits are another harrowing experience, while they are turned down by the private security sitting inside the AC Office at the entrance(it is unknown as to whether they are legally employed in government MMD offices, to do reception and clerical works?), returning the seaman, saying "Today is DECK or ENGINE dept. attendance day" or "TIME is over for the day" Seamen from outstations held up in private hotels for boarding and lodging incurring heavy expenditure, and their valued time lost, if stuck in the week-ends, besides no room in their Seafarers Club, all this faced in the 5 Day week, work-culture of MMD.

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has avoided imposing unilateral shipping standards, preferring to work through the U.N. agency. "Shipping is one of those areas where countries either find a way to cooperate, or historically, they go to war," she said.

As for Brown's petition, "This is exactly the kind of activism on global warming he promised when he ran for the office of attorney general," she said.

Brown has vowed to file suit against the Bush administration if it fails to grant a waiver allowing California to regulate carbon dioxide from cars and trucks.

And in the case of ships, he said, "I don't believe the Bush administration can continue to thumb their noses at the laws of the U.S. There is a pattern here. The law is absolutely clear that the EPA has a responsibility to act."

In recent months, Brown has required San Bernardino County and other

counties to account for greenhouse gases in their growth plans and has challenged oil refineries and other industrial projects to mitigate or offset carbon dioxide emissions.

Brown said he did not check with the governor before filing today's petition. "I'm the cop on the beat, and the beat is the environment of California," he said. "This is a national imperative, and we cannot allow petty politics to stand in the way."

W o r l d I n f o D e s k

Psychological disorders among seafarers:

The London P&I Club warns that the shipping industry should pay more attention to psychological disorders among seafarers. In the latest issue of its StopLoss Bulletin, the club says, "Too often, such problems are not identified, or dealt with, as quickly, as knowledgeably or as sympathetically as is the case with physical illness and injury. This seems to be particularly the case in the context of the robust working environment typically encountered at sea."

It adds: "The Club views with concern the large numbers of seafarers now being repatriated early suffering from a range of psychological difficulties. One report suggests that as many as one in three repatriations which require a medical escort are related to such ailments. Great care must be taken to protect the interests of all seafarers when dealing with such issues. In extreme cases, the afflicted crew member can be a danger to others on board, or may constitute a suicide risk."

The club quotes Prof Francesco Amenta, Italian-based Centro Internazionale Radio Medico's (CIRM) scientific director, who says, "When dealing with psychological problems, including stress, anxiety and depression, requests for medical advice should always be sought at the earliest opportunity. What may be lacking in the maritime culture is sufficient sensitivity to health problems. For example, shipping is much more sensitive to technology and safety issues than it is to health problems, so it is perhaps not surprising to hear about the difficulties being encountered in dealing with mental health issues at sea."

Maritime London gave its full backing to the celebration of World Maritime Day which included an event on the world maritime heritage ship HQS Wellington hosted by the Honourable Company of Master Mariners and the International Maritime Pilots Association, in partnership with IMO. This was followed in the evening by an IMO reception at Banqueting House.

Aimed at bringing the role of the maritime industries to the attention of a wider audience, and to highlighting to young people the opportunities offered by a career at sea, the day on the Wellington started with a visit and speech by HRH the Duke of York. Other VIP guests event throughout the day included IMO Secretary General Efthimios Mitropoulos.

Prominent among the stands was Maritime London's, manned by Maritime London-sponsored cadets who were able to explain what life at sea is like to groups of pupils from London schools.

Audits prompt Kenya to tighten anti-terror security at Mombasa:

KENYA's government is quickly upgrading anti-terrorist security at the Port of Mombasa after two audits by the US government's Anti-Terrorism Assistance Office and the Kenya Maritime Authority revealed shortcomings that made it a "soft target" for terrorists. Studies revealed that container congestion led to poor verification and tagging. Overly free movement of unauthorised people and poor inspection and screening due to lack of security cameras, plus piracy off the Somali coast heightened the risk, reported Nairobi's daily, The East African.

Closed circuit television is being installed immediately. The port is now guarded by a National Security Intelligence Service, CID police detectives with the bulk of the personnel provided by the General Service Unit. A team of experts from Israel and the US Homeland Security Office is training the security team. US audits, also of Djibouti, Dar es Salaam and Beira in Mozambique, showed Mombasa to be the most vulnerable. Mombasa came under scrutiny because of its proximity to war-torn Somalia - which Washington firmly believes is host to active al Qaeda cells, and a matter of greater urgency after the Islamic Court came to power there last year. Kenya Ports Authority chief Abdalla Mwaruwa said security systems would soon meet the standards of the International Maritime Organisation's International Ship and Port Security Code.

Marshall Islands flag registry strengthens presence in Japan:

INTERNATIONAL Registries Inc (IRI), the maritime and corporate administrator in the Republic of the Marshall Islands, has appointed the Marine Bureau Inc (MBI) as its official representative to Japanese shipowners and operators. "There are a growing number of Japanese shipowners and operators flying the Marshall Islands flag and MBI will provide services to meet their needs," said Bill Gallagher, president of International Registries (Far East) Limited in Hong Kong.

Said MBI president Masaharu Okamoto: "Our common goal is to provide the best quality ship registration and the most efficient marine safety and technical support." MBI was established in 1975 as the