

IT cuts through bureaucracy and saves lives

ISM is a key element in the software companies' offerings with Danaos, ShipNet and Vector all providing specific ISM modules. Capt. Jamie Clarkson, CEO of Modern Maritime has some clear views on what is needed: "The trick is to get the maximum benefit with the minimum bureaucracy; IT can be a real help". He illustrates his point by talking about traditional paper-based quality systems: "Managing updates to manuals, for example is a very laborious task - creating the amendments, circulating them to all the vessels in the fleet and receiving confirmation of receipt. IT can greatly simplify this process, making sure that procedures are up to date, relevant and accessible."

Capt. Clarkson describes three elements which he regards as essential to a successful safety management system, "First you need to create and manage the procedures, second, you have to create a collaborative environment where people can benefit from each other's experience, third you need to be able to distribute the procedures quickly and efficiently". He stresses the importance of being able to distribute the information so that it is relevant to the context in which it will be used. For anyone who has been through ISO 9000 or a similar programme, Capt. Clarkson's comments will ring true. Far too much time has been spent paying lip-service to quality ideas and going through the motions while impenetrable manuals gather dust in the stationery cupboard, only being dug out and dusted down in preparation for a periodic audit.

The Eurasian Dream case, where a fire broke out on a car carrier causing the total loss of vessel and cargo, shows that simply having a Safety Management System getting the crew to perform safety drills is not enough. The court found that the SMS set up made it impossible to find relevant information promptly when needed, that the safety drills were not right for the type of vessel and were not being monitored by the management. This case illustrates Capt. Clarkson's point about the importance of making relevant information easily accessible in the right context.

Vector's ISM Manager

Vector's ISM Manager exists as two versions; one for use in the office (containing all the functions for the creation of standard documents, procedures, drill plans, check and task lists, job descriptions etc.) and one for use at sea; they share a common database. This solves the problems about the distribution of manuals and their updates; vessels automatically access the latest versions held on the shore-based server.

ShipNet's vessel-based Non Conformity Reporting enables sea staff to file incident reports (including General Information about the incident, Description, Action taken, and Lost Time. and to receive directives from shore. The system enforces follow up by requiring a vessel to respond to directives. The response can vary from a simple acknowledgement to a report of action taken. The system also provides a history of all the incidents reported onboard. Information on each incident is routed to a central database ashore for processing by ShipNet's Non-Conformity Control.

Premaster PRO

Satpool has paid close attention to ISM. "We have created a dedicated reporting programme for near accidents," accidents and non conformance," explains Leif-Arne Remøy, Managing Director of Satpool." The user is guided through the form filling by a Wizard. We tested this with officers who had no prior training; it worked well and is now being installed successfully."

Satpool's main focus is technical operations management and its Premaster PRO received DNV type approval as Plan Maintenance System (PMS) for Machinery. The approval states that PreMaster PRO version 1.1.3 is approved for use onboard DNV

classed vessels with a Survey Arrangement based on a Planned Maintenance System (SA-PMS). The system handles not word processing and spreadsheet files but also pictures, videos and even sound files. These files may be linked overall in the system (to pieces of equipment, job descriptions, spare parts and for the documentation of work done) thus providing a very complete record of maintenance activity.

DanaosSpares, used in conjunction with danaosPMS, help users manage inventory of the spares required for planned maintenance. DanaosSpares provides alerts for spares critical for oncoming maintenance prioritises tasks onboard and ashore. It also provides purchasing tools. Its Supply Service (Info@sea) allows purchasing departments to email pre-formatted RFQs to selected suppliers and to evaluate responses with the help of downloaded Danaos software or the danaoSUPPLY module. The integration of all the levels of preparation of the RFQ, transmission, quotation and evaluation eliminates data transcription errors and improves productivity for both purchaser and supplier.

Mr Pantelis sees the tanker operators as quicker to adopt new technology than their colleagues in dry bulk. "There is a higher awareness of the need for careful risk management and of the importance of compliance." This view is supported by market uptake of Task Assistant. Golar LNG Ltd.'s general manager fleet, Graham Griffiths explained the company's reasons for adopting the system in January. "We were looking for a system that would ensure maximum safety at sea and environmental protection whilst maintaining and improving operational efficiency - we considered Task Assistant to satisfy these requirements."

The end result of all this work will one day be a tanker world where data flows freely and instantaneously between ship and shore and between operators, brokers, charterers and suppliers and where business process tools help drive both efficiency and safety.