

THE SAFE WAY TO CONTENTMENT

Fleet management believes everybody can contribute to a safer, happier ship

AS THIS EDITION goes to press Hong shipmanagement company Fleet Management is a little over 100 days into a brave new experiment that seeks to enhance safety-related behaviour throughout the organization.

“From group heads to superintendents to cadets, we wanted to bring about a behavioural change,” says managing director Kishore Rajvanshy. “We believe it is not enough to just be what you are, but instead we should always look for ways to improve.

“On this occasion we thought we could best achieve our aims by inviting a team of expert outsiders to take a dispassionate look at the operation and see how they thought it could be improved.”

Looking for calm waters

Fleet took its proposal to a UK consulting firm with a history of coming up with workable corporate solutions, although this is the first time they have addressed shipping. By March the firm arrived at a homeopathic solution with a meteorological twist - a programme entitled “When SUN people meet RAIN people.”

According to the programme SUN people put Safety first. Understand safety processes and comply. They Never walk by when they see something is wrong. RAIN people, on the other hand Rush into jobs, adopt an Attitude of it’ll do and INjure themselves and others.

Getting past the business speak Mr Rajvanshy explains that the main thrust of the programme is for every individual to be responsible for his own safety and that of others. “In this way we believe we can eventually achieve a target of reducing injuries and navigational incidents by 50%.”

At Fleet Management superintendents on average each manage three ships. In line with company policy each superintendent would attend each ship at least once in a three-month period to inspect the ship and reinforce safe practices.

“Ships of course work 24/7 and the strength of safety messages passed on once every three months may erode,” says Mr Rajvanshy.

“With the new programme the responsibility to uphold safety practices are passed to all members of the crew, while at the same time overall guidance is offered by the superintendent on a much more frequent basis.

“Each superintendent makes the commitment of having a weekly safety-related telephonic coaching session with the captains of the three ships he is responsible for,” Mr Rajvanshy says.

Onboard, building the safety culture is a more intense affair. “It’s about building continuous improvement through daily team talks and periods where crew members will be allowed 10 minutes a day to observe and comment on the level of safety their colleagues are employing,” he adds.

The change in culture comes when everyone – irrespective of status or position – recognizes they have a role to play in safety leadership.

Winning over the majority

“When you have a critical mass of seafarers adopting SUN behaviours and challenging RAIN behaviours, you achieve a breakthrough. Where people choose to do the right thing and don’t need rules, threats or red tape to force compliance: they do it because they believe in it, concludes,” Mr Rajvanshy.

The process of getting the programme in place and everybody familiarized with it began in March. At that time the UK consultants coached all group heads and superintendents during an intensive three-day seminar. Now they are out in the field to implement all they have learned.

Fleet Management says it’s too early to share data but the challenge is to significantly reduce onboard injuries and navigational incidents over 12 months. It will be worth a revisit. ☘



Fleet Management is reinforcing its safety message across the organization