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## Spreading its wings

**F**leet is really like a grown up child. It started from literally nothing. To begin with, there was Kishore, four ships and three other people. Looking back over these 15 years, it has been a great source of pleasure for me to see Fleet grow in that we have built a business from scratch which is now in the top five in the world, and the second largest in Hong Kong.

We will look to continue this growth and given its great global network we may find parallels or alternative businesses for Fleet to pursue as well in the future. ■■■

Richard Elman, chairman, Noble Group



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# Experience the quality

*Fleet Management managing director, **Kishore Rajvanshy**, is a serious believer in the virtues of knowledge*

**T**hough he's too bashful to admit it himself, when Kishore Rajvanshy quit his previous job in the mid-1990s, there were a raft of shipowners looking for him to manage their fleets. By 1994, Rajvanshy, then just 46 years old, had been identified by those in the know as a visionary in the world of shipmanagement. There was only one destination though for this budding guru of shipmanagement: the Noble Group and the challenge of building a new company from scratch, but with the free reins to do so with his own attention to detail.

Rajvanshy was one of the first to fully appreciate the full ramifications of how information technology could change the face of ship operations. This, combined with his exacting demands for experience and by extension safety, saw owners flock to the new company in their droves.

On IT, the usually modest Rajvanshy can't help but note, 'We are heads and shoulders above everyone else.' It's not just him who believes that, the company has won nine awards for its pioneering IT. 'We want owners to have a full perspective of their assets at all times. What we have, IT-wise, is a virtual office - almost a ship's bridge - for all our clients.'

However, IT is not what the md is most keen to highlight. Throughout 2009, the shipmanager has been making waves calling international bodies to help enforce minimum standards of training on ships. 'Experience is the single defining quality that we look and strive for,' he says.

Looking ahead, Rajvanshy says, 'I envisage a motivated and highly visible culture of experience building; a culture that integrates aspirations with earnest participation, and with 24/7 learning.'

Every oil major constantly

vets tankers. Perhaps the most important criteria is the experience of senior staff. 'If you don't meet that experience matrix, they don't approve you, simple as that,' says Rajvanshy, adding that other bodies should think about adopting experience matrices. Countless surveys by insurance companies show that 70-80% of all accidents take place because of the human element. 'Experience is such an important factor in safeguarding ships,' stresses Rajvanshy. He is calling for the International Maritime Organisation to make it mandatory that seafarers are at sea longer before they can become senior staff, an issue made all the more pertinent by the global shortage of officers, leading to many underhand operators promoting too fast.

Experience breeds safety, something Fleet holds dear. 'There is a safety culture in everything we do. Your way of life should be to follow safe practices and that is something we try and ingrain in our staff from day one,' says Rajvanshy.

Day one for many entering the Fleet experience is set to be in new, swish surroundings. Fleet is looking at dramatically expanding its Indian footprint, in line with its soaring fleet size. Its award winning training institute in Mumbai is simply not big enough anymore and the company is looking to expand its facility.

'Our philosophy,' says Rajvanshy, 'is we don't want to run a university, which every other manager is trying to do. We are not educationalists. It is not a college, but a training centre.'

The Fleet philosophy, as revealed in the following pages, is one bearing in mind. Thus far it has yielded an average of 15 extra ships a year, making it one of the top shipmanagement companies in the world. ■■■



## Curriculum Vitae

- A Mechanical Engineer from BITS Pilani, a prominent university in India.
- Joined Shipping Corporation of India (SCI), the country's state shipping firm. Went to sea from 1971 to 1978 on a variety of vessels, becoming chief engineer.
- Went ashore and became superintendent with SCI.
- Joined Hong Kong's Univan Shipmanagement in 1979. Starting as a superintendent, during a 15-year career with the legendary - and recently deceased - Capt Charles A J Vanderperre, was elevated to technical manager, then technical director and finally - for the last eight years with the firm - he was a director and gm, helping firm grow 250% to 70 ships.
- Left in 1994, and founded the award-winning Fleet Management for the Noble Group. In 15 years it has become a top five shipmanagement company worldwide.



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# Competency in every sector

*Fleet Management's broad range of ships on its books underscores its diverse experience*

In just 15 years Fleet Management has become one of the top five ship managers in the world with 214 ships under full technical management and four under crew management. How? By reinforcing quality experienced personnel to handle each and every ship type. This is not a firm with a preferred ship type – all vessels are welcomed by Fleet personnel with significant experience in each sector – from the humble bulk carrier to the advanced gas carrier.

At its training centre in India each ship type receives its own training material reinforced by the company's in-house IT training system. This all forms part of Fleet's concept of "Total Ship Management" – a core philosophy of the company.

Recognising that shipowners are entrusting Fleet with their assets, Fleet's primary goals are clear: to maintain the highest standards at minimum costs; enhance earnings potential and maintain market value of the vessels.

Once a budget is agreed with the owner, a dedicated team is assigned and held accountable to ensure that the budget is maintained whilst ensuring the asset value of the vessel does not depreciate. Fleet achieves this with effective and efficient utilisation of its resources, offering unique, award winning web-based systems and analysis tools.

As Fleet Management has grown inexorably vessels-wise so too have its staff and its corporate organization. Full time onshore staff now number around 400, and ships are divided into specific

**F**leet started out as an in-house management division with four ships and, is today, one of the top five management companies in the world. The spectacular growth of Fleet fills me with immense pride and pleasure.

Over the past few years, Fleet has won many awards and accolades for its innovations in crew safety, training and IT development. It has always been at the forefront of new developments in ship management and I am extremely proud of each and every member of the team, both onboard and ashore.

Congratulations to the entire Fleet family on an extraordinary 15 years. I am sure they will continue to scale new heights and remain the benchmark for the ship management business. ■■■

Harry Banga, vice chairman, Noble Group



Scale new heights

supervisory groups of expertise so that their attention is not diluted despite the rising number of vessels on Fleet's books. This sees 10 groups in Hong Kong. Each group has a dedicated manager, typically five superintendents, four technical assistants, a secretary and a couple of support superintendents. This set up ensures attention to detail and the requisite expertise whatever the ship type.

On top of this, as Fleet has expanded so too has its global footprint, and overseas offices now look after ships. This development now sees Fleet's Mumbai set up manage ships, as well as one Singapore subsidiary, its London office and its branch in Cyprus.

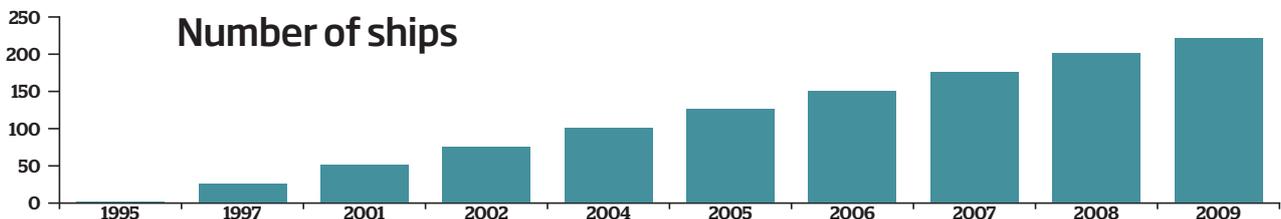
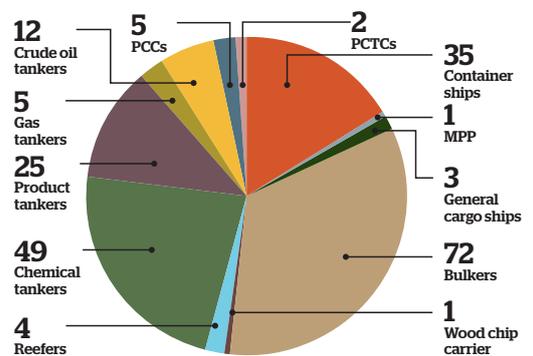
While every ship is welcome – so long as the owner is committed to quality management and is not merely an asset player – certain focuses on ship types in the past have paid dividends.

For instance, in Fleet's 15-year history it became one of the world's leading reefer managers with 10m cu ft of capacity under its control at the peak.

Similarly, a focus on chemical tankers, another technically demanding sector, paid off not just in numbers but also blue chip clients. Another drive for gas ships also bore good results, ranging from ammonia carriers to LPG and ethylene carriers.

Fleet's latest drive has been striving for 'quality' and 'incident-free' operations. Fleet's owners have recognised this development, showering the company with more ships and accolades than ever before. ■■■

## Ships under full technical management





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# Training seafarers for the 21st century

*The Fleet Management Training Institute in Mumbai has become a world leader in the provision of seafarer training on land and sea in 12 short years*

India has a maritime history dating back more than 5,000 years, when trade began between it and ancient Mesopotamia.

Throughout history, Indian officers and ratings have held and continue to hold a commanding position in the supply of seafarers to the world's commercial fleets.

In the modern, fast-moving world of global marine transportation the need for highly skilled seafarers is greater than it has ever been.

Every step of the way, shipowners, charterers, P&I Clubs, classification societies, Port State Control and the International Maritime Organisation are all seeking higher and higher standards from those who spend their lives working on ships.

At Fleet Management there is an abiding consciousness that only through recruiting the best candidates

and training them to the peak of efficiency can India's proud legacy continue.

Those concerns and the drive to address them were made with the setting up of the Fleet Management Training Institute (FMTI) in Navi Mumbai, 30km from downtown Mumbai in 1998.

Since the institute's establishment it has grown out of all recognition reflecting both the growth of the company's managed fleet and that of the global commercial shipping fleet.

In 2003, the institute was greatly expanded to accommodate a larger number of ship staff using state-of-the-art simulators and audio visual aids. The centre has the latest technology for both its ship handling and engine simulators. The former can simulate a wide range of ports, weather conditions, ship types, day or night-

time while the engine simulators offer a full introduction to handling and maintaining engines down to the dripping of generators.

Today FMTI offers continuous, seamlessly integrated training to the crew of all Fleet Management's 200 plus-vessel fleet.

Information Technology has been key to the expansion of Fleet's Indian training network.

The introduction of the company's in-house web-based training system TOLAS (Training On Land And Sea) has made FMTI the world leader in providing online web-based training. In 2009 more than 8,000 students benefited from a raft of essential modules covering all aspects of ship operations: the figure has grown from 3,000 in 2004.

This was achieved by the setting up of servers in all the regional offices

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across the country including, Chennai, Delhi, Kochi, Kolkata, Lucknow, Patna and Vizag.

'All the training material is loaded on the servers which are directly linked to the Hong Kong training server,' explains Captain Kishore Shingare, FMTI's principal and senior manager for training. 'Candidates in the regions where servers are installed have access to all the training materials which can fulfill their needs before embarking on a Fleet managed vessel,' he adds.

TOLAS has the additional advantage of allowing training centre staff to identify individual training needs and tailor the appropriate course of modules.

TOLAS is also eminently scalable: the institute produces most of its own course materials. Videos vividly reconstructing real-life practices and incidents are produced onboard vessels. Subsequently edited and enhanced by the institute's in-house creative team, the finished products are uploaded to the TOLAS system where they form an integral part of any overall training programme.

Capt Shingare says: "Over 700 items of course material have been integrated into TOLAS so far. And producing new course materials is always ongoing."

FMTI's position as a world-leading training centre is not recognised by its candidates alone. The institute is DNV certified and its courses are approved by India's Director General of Shipping.

In April 2009, Fleet Management's crew manager Ebony Ship Management was awarded "Best Foreign Employer of Indian Seafarers" by the Government of India. FMTI was instrumental in this extraordinary success.

But before FMTI puts its candidates through their paces the institute has to be certain that they all have the right stuff. In modern shipmanagement terms, according to Capt Shingare, this means all candidates must have 'a positive attitude, strong moral values and a firm conviction and commitment towards the seafaring profession.'

The global shipping fleet has grown immensely since 2001, due largely to the emergence of China as a major economic power. This has put huge

### *The company has future generations of seafarers set firmly in its sights*

pressure on the supply of seafarers. Under such conditions it could fairly be expected that difficulties in finding enough candidates with the attitude that Capt Shingare seeks would be a major headache. But, for good reasons, that is patently not the case.

The captain explains: 'With a huge number of ships managed by Fleet Management, combined with its long standing reputation in the maritime industry as a leading professional ship manager, candidates are easy to find even for our tankers.'

'Candidates who have sailed with Fleet Management are willing to sail again and again with us, thanks to the company's employee friendly orientation and initiatives.'

Fleet Management is undoubtedly the shipmanager of choice among aspiring Indian ship's officers and ratings but the company is not prepared to sit back on its laurels. It has future generations of seafarers set

firmly in its sights.

As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility programme and a determination to openly share knowledge with a new generation of seafarers, FMTI promotes its objective of freely providing purpose-built TOLAS centres to India's leading maritime training institutes for their cadet development programmes.

The first TOLAS Centre was inaugurated on 27 December 2008 at the Marine Engineering & Research Institute. A second followed on 12 August the next year at Tolani Maritime Institute in Talegaon. More are in the pipeline.

For FMTI and Indian cadets at large the future is bright. In order to cater to the growing training and certification requirements of shipowners and increasing legislation, FMTI has ambitious plans to take over a larger location in Navi Mumbai. The new site will be a catalyst for a new range of cutting-edge programmes and modules.

'Plans are in the pipeline to start additional value added courses for officers and crewmembers in various topics related to containerisation and container refrigeration,' says Capt Shingare.

Also lined up are modules covering the operation and maintenance of Framo pumping systems along with basic hydraulic, pneumatic, electrical and electronic machinery maintenance skills.

'We are looking to provide upgrading of skills in basic seamanship and bridge watch keeping to fresh and experienced seafarers to enhance their confidence levels,' he says.

'In order to address the growing need for a good working knowledge of the English language among seafarers, we also intend to start maritime English courses along with soft skills development courses in leadership, communication, team building, goal setting and time management.

'We expect that with the addition of these courses, FMTI will be fully geared up to take the challenge of seafarer training for the coming decades,' Capt Shingare concludes with justified confidence. ■■■

### **Fleet's Indian footprint**



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## Towards a thousand

*Fleet Management's Manila staff are increasingly busy finding the right crew*

Just outside Fleet Management's office in Manila is the uncontested epicentre of global seafarer recruitment. Fleet's Philippine set up is in Ermita, a hop, skip and a jump away from the Luneta Seafarers Centre, where agents rub shoulders with owners and managers as swarms of locals flock to sign up for a career at sea.

The Philippines supplies 30% of the global merchant fleet's crew – around 300,000 people – and this one noisy street in the heart of Manila is where

most are processed.

How then to sort the good from the bad? Corazon Cruz, a director of Fleet Management in Manila, says one of the key qualities she looks for is loyalty. 'If we find applicants who have five contracts with different companies,' she recounts, 'Well, we're not going after them as there is clearly no loyalty.'

Cruz practices what she preaches, being with Fleet Management from the day the Hong Kong company set up in the southeast Asian archipelago. Back then, 12 years ago, Fleet had just three

Filipino-staffed ships, employing 60 people.

'We are very proud to tell you,' she says, 'that since we started the company the original staff are still here. We are loyal.'

Nowadays, Cruz and her colleagues are hectic. In 2007 there were 250 Filipinos sailing onboard Fleet ships, a figure that now stands above 700 with plans afoot to crack the 1,000 mark very soon.

Two more full time staff have been added this year to the Manila office taking the total to nine.

Sourcing the right personnel onboard is very much a matter of national pride for Cruz and her colleagues. 'The quality of crew should satisfy the owner's requirement to prove to owners they did not make a mistake choosing Filipinos onboard,' says Cruz.

In addition to Luneta Park, Fleet Management personnel head to training centres to identify the right seafarers for employment. These include the Philippine Nautical Training Institute and the Excellence and Competency Training Centre both in Manila as well as review centres such as Argonaut and Newport.

On top of that, Fleet's reputation proceeds it, as Cruz explains. 'We get a lot of inquiries thanks to word of mouth from Fleet crew living in the provinces who spread the word for us,' she says.

The only cloud on the horizon for Fleet's Philippine recruitment drive, one suffered by other managers and owners alike, is a scarcity of senior personnel for tankers.

'We are having difficulty getting officers on tankers and we also have difficulty getting engineers,' Cruz admits. This is a problem common throughout the world. Drewry Shipping Consultants, for one, suggest that 18,000 of the 26,000 officer shortage expected between 2008 and 2012 are for chemical and oil tankers. The engineer shortage on these ships has gone largely unreported but is if anything even more acute. 'At just about every agency in Manila they are looking for chief engineers and second engineers,' says Cruz. Hopefully, Fleet's word of mouth is bringing a few of these prized crew through the doors of its fast expanding Ermita office. ■■■



*ClassNK extends its warmest congratulations to Fleet Management Limited on the 15th anniversary of their founding.*

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# China calling

*Fleet's operation in Dalian allows it to train 100 cadets a year*

**R**esponding to growing demands by owners for Chinese crew, Fleet Management founded Dalian Gold Fleet Shipping in January 2005.

Nowadays, Fleet is one of the most adept third party managers at both sourcing and training Chinese crew.

At present, there are 25 Fleet vessels manned by Chinese crew. These ships are a diverse mix. In total there are more than 500 Chinese crew onboard Fleet managed ships.

As with other Fleet locations

around the world, seminars are regularly held (pictured) and the Dalian outfit conducts professional training, including the TOLAS seafarer training system. Since 2007, the company has trained 100 Chinese cadets every year. On top of this, the Dalian subsidiary helps out with all Fleet Management ships calling at Chinese ports.

Senior management of Dalian Gold Fleet comes from the most famous names in Chinese shipping, something that is likely to bring Fleet many

more Chinese ships to its books in the coming years.

'The clients' demand of Chinese seafarers keeps growing and there are indeed many Chinese seafarers today, but a certain amount of them are not good enough and need further training,' Gu Jianwen, gm of Dalian Gold Fleet Shipping says.

Many Chinese seafarers have talked themselves out of a job in the downturn, observes Gu, by continuing to ask for too high salaries.

Before the global financial crisis, Chinese authorities had developed a lot of favourable policies to promote the development of seafarer resources for the growing demand by both domestic and overseas shipping concerns. Thus a flourishing period for Chinese seafarers training has arrived, with the number of graduates from various maritime colleges soaring. However, these new graduates face a changed shipping universe, with the downturn in full swing, says Gu, 'The graduates are facing great pressure to find employment.'

Part of the problem is that graduates have few opportunities for onboard training. This problem has become more acute as owners have slashed the number of cadets they'll take onboard. Getting the right training then is vital to make a rounded, ideal Chinese seafarer. To this end, Dalian Gold Fleet has arranged its training with Dalian Maritime University (like Fleet, a winner at last year's Seatrade Asia Awards) and Jimei University to provide a better practicing environment for cadets. ■■■

## Ocean of talent

**A**ccording to the latest statistics from the Marine Administration of the Ministry of Communications in Beijing, there are 12 universities, 13 vocational schools and 12 technical secondary schools with maritime majors, as well as more than 50 professional shipping training organisations. China trains an incredible 200,000 seafarers every year. The country had 1.55m seafarers in 2008 including 510,000 ocean seafarers and over 1m river crew, ranking number one in the world.



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# Not so much an IT system, more a way of life

*The Hong Kong manager leads the world in shipping software sophistication*

Since the beginning of the 21st century Fleet Management has led the way in harnessing the limitless power of the web to run its business safely, efficiently and transparently.

It started with a website: [www.fleetship.com](http://www.fleetship.com): a user-friendly site that is cost effective and transparent.

But it had its limitations. It could update onshore staff on essentials such as ship expenditure, earnings and crew payments, but this involved a certain amount of data replication and was time-consuming.

In 2003, Fleet Management's IT team was called upon to create an application that would not only iron out the problems inherent in the website but also offer much greater functionality.

At a total cost of US\$1.5m and many late nights for head of Fleet IT development John Barcy and his team, the romantic acronym PARIS was born.

Fleet Management's Planning And Reporting Infrastructure (Ship) is the backbone of the company's IT system. A comprehensive database of all 200 plus ships, functionalities include:

- Position and technical reporting

- A crew list and portage bill
- Events calendar
- Planned maintenance system
- Incident reporting
- Requisitioning of stores and spares
- Financial reporting
- Vessel inspection details
- Certificates and surveys

An essential element of the system is that all data is available in real time on a single interface to crew, onshore staff, owners and charterers.

All data elements are constantly being updated resulting in huge amounts of current and historical data. On an annual basis PARIS produces data involving:

- 90,000 technical results
- 150,000 individual components
- 8,000 crew
- 28,000 crew appraisals
- 6,000 inspections, and much more

All this data is extremely useful on a moment-by-moment basis.

With a press of a button a shipowner can discover where a given ship is located, what condition it is navigating in and how well the ship is being maintained.

Charterers of a given vessel will be

keen to know how well the vessel has been audited and be assured that it has passed all its inspections.

Oil majors, with a brand reputation to preserve, are particularly stringent in their transparency requirements. With PARIS, shipowners and charterers can dig deep into the system and analyse the quality and experience of the crew operating their fleet at any time of day or night.

But the accumulation of such vast amounts of data adds another vital dimension to the system.

Fleet Management quickly realized that the historical data being produced could be vital in generating knowledge to improve operations across the whole fleet.

With the introduction of a business intelligence system, the data opened up.

Barcy and his team were tasked with building an application that would provide a single integrated data source that would facilitate timely and accurate data collection.

'We could now use that information to improve operational efficiency onboard all our vessels,' says Barcy.

Fleet Management could now employ KPIs (key performance indicators) as the first steps in converting raw data into useable

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**Boxes out, bulk in**  
Japan's Big Three are moving away from containers

Japan's 'Big Three' shipping lines, Mitsui O.S. Lines, Nippon Yusen Kaisha and Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha, are all pairing back their exposure to the container sector, with carrier leaders while retaining their presence on the tanker and bulk sectors.

The No. 10 will announce this shift in the management plan next month, but Seaside Asia Week played an exclusive peek at the reports on a recent visit to Tokyo.

In the past, on a per sector basis, more money has been outbid on container ships than other vessel types, and senior management at all three firms see growth to make sure this does not happen again.

MOL member of the board and senior managing executive officer Kazuo Matsuda is securing long-term contracts for bulk and

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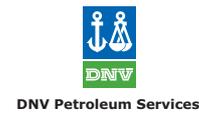
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It can hardly be surprising that the word of Fleet Management's unique IT systems has gone beyond its primary users. From the very beginning the system has been showered with accolades. Even when the system was just gaining its legs in 2004, Paris won an MIS Innovation Award in the Knowledge Sharing Category.

It also contributed to the Fleet website being awarded:

- Inova Gold Award
- Intelligent Enterprise Asia - 120 winner
- CIO Asia - 100 winner

In 2005, Fleet won the Industry-Based Grand Award of the 2005 Linux Business Awards

Later in the same year the company was honoured by the New York-based Technology Managers Forum at its tenth annual Best Practice Awards with a coveted first place in the Technology Innovation category.

In 2006 the Fleet Management Training Institute was recognized as one of "Asia's All Stars" by Network World Asia for its work on TOLAS.

And the awards have just kept coming; in 2007 IDG's InfoWorld named Fleet Management's IT systems one of the world's 100 Most Innovative Corporate IT Solutions.

In 2008 Fleet management was a CIO Asia 100 winner for the fourth time.

Managing director Kishore Rajavanshy's office is weighed down by the weight of the many awards won over the years. But, as he said back in 2004: 'We believe we are one of the only companies to have such an advanced system.' That remains as true today as it was then.

information. KPIs can tell the company how the fleet is performing according to certain parameters and thus form the first stage of a business intelligence system. Typical KPIs for a shipmanagement company are:

- Lost time injuries
- Loss of life
- Port State Control detentions
- Pollution incidents
- Machinery breakdowns
- Overdue PMS items

But with an integrated system such as PARIS with added Business Intelligence (BI), that's just the beginning of its potential.

'The real potential of using our data lies far beyond KPIs and basic reports,' says Barcy.

'KPIs are a good indication of our overall performance but may not be relevant to problems that arise or may be too general,' he adds.

Being able to adjust the reporting parameters meant that the company could move beyond the everyday incidents that might occur onboard to a more dynamic approach.

'Being able to dynamically modify all reporting requirements is essential,' notes Barcy. 'Flexibility is paramount. The system needs to continually evolve over time to meet ever-changing requirements. BI initiatives never end.'

With evolution comes increasing sophistication, as with the introduction of the Det Norske Veritas approved Paris-PMS (Planned Maintenance System). But none of this has impeded the ability of the system to immediately disseminate information to all concerned including other ships in the fleet, the technical staff, owners and charterers.

How does this work in real life?

The moment an onboard incident is reported, it is exported to all of Fleet

Management's global offices. Upon receipt of the information the Quality Management Department will conduct an in-depth analysis of the data and offer immediate feedback to the ship. This is only part of the value of the system because the same analysis is spontaneously analysed with other data and pushed out to the rest of the fleet.

Later the intelligence gathered from that incident will be passed onto new staff when they join the company - a better example of a true knowledge-based system you are unlikely to find.

Another way in which Fleet Management's IT system has revolutionised the way shipmanagement is conducted is the introduction of TOLAS (Training On Land And Sea).

Through the introduction of TOLAS all the more than 700 courses made available to the company's crew at its training centres across the globe are equally accessible to the same seafarers who are onboard ship.

'All courses are updated regularly, stored on the database and made available to all. Any crewmember can login and find the required, recommended courses that suit him in line with his rank and the type of vessel he is operating,' says Barcy.

TOLAS is fully interactive. This means that when a seafarer has completed a course he will then be sent a series of questions and answers from which he - and the company - can compare his performance.

The data then becomes historical so that a seafarer's training history is accessible to all who need to know. Such reports can be traced back to the introduction of TOLAS, and completes an unbeatable suite of IT tools on land and on the high seas. ■ ■ ■

## Thinking of taking the plunge?

Own many ships? Worried about the prices of managing your own fleet? The one-of-a-kind website Fleet Management has created allows you, the shipowner, the chance to see what you could be saving by moving your vessels to the knowledgeable team at Fleet. Head to their website, and there is a simple online form to fill in about the details of your ship and Fleet will be back in touch promptly with an approximate management quotation. Try it! You might be surprised!

<http://www.fleetship.com/quotations/index.html>





Second engineer Vijaykumar Ramalingam attends to the main engine. Fleet's Planned Maintenance System and highly qualified staff ensure ships travel smoothly for longer

# A day in the life

*As a global operation headquartered in Hong Kong with five branch offices strategically located across the world, Fleet Management manages more than 200 ships, employs 8,000 crew and nearly 400 onshore staff. As an entity Fleet Management never sleeps*

## 00:00 GMT

It's 08:00 in Hong Kong and a 6,350 teu containership is loading boxes from the port's gantry cranes and the crew are securing the lashing as master and second officer plot their course to Tokyo.

Meanwhile, managing director Kishore Rajvanshy is driving to the office through the traffic jams of Hong Kong's Wan Chai district. For the boss today will be a variation on every other day: the daily meeting with senior colleagues, welcoming an old customer, signing up a new client, making a final decision on action to be followed after a high seas incident, encouraging new staff and so on it goes.

## 02:12 GMT

In Mumbai it's 07:42 in the morning. Fleet Management Training Institute's principal and senior manager Captain Kishore Shingare is opening up shop. He's expecting a new batch of candidates who are travelling in from all four corners of the country hopeful of a chance to work with a leading shipmanagement company.

As Capt Shingare turns on the lights, the PCs and the simulators, across the Indian Subcontinent in the Bay of Bengal, crew are now putting one of Fleet's panamax bulkers through its paces at Paradip Port as they offload coal which has been transported all the way from Australia.

## 03:00 GMT

Everyday the heads of the various technical, operations and insurance divisions gather in Mr Rajvanshy's office to go over key issues of the fleet, requests from owners and to brainstorm ideas and solutions. Today, the senior executives are looking at improvements to engine maintenance.

## 04:00 GMT

It's 22:00 hours in the calm waters outside Houston, Texas in the USA. The Master of a Fleet-managed chemical tanker is submitting his daily report to head office. Later he'll conduct a final thorough investigation with input from the chief engineer to ensure that the vessel meets all the tough requirements of the US Coast Guard.

As the Master goes about his work a number of the crew are down in the dining area grabbing a late supper of dahl and rice cooked just the way they like it.

Fleet Management manages ships from across the spectrum of commercial carriers from general cargo vessels to crude oil tankers, from chemical tankers to all sizes of bulk carriers, and from reefer vessels to pure car carriers.

## 08:12 GMT

Captain Prashant Rangnekar only popped out for lunch for half an hour and already there's another bundle of emails in his inbox that need urgent attention. As the head of Fleet's Indian manning portfolio, Capt Rangnekar oversees eight



offices spanning the length and breadth of India. From his own office, in the western suburbs of Mumbai, he starts tapping out an email to colleagues in Lucknow, giving the green light to a swathe of recruits to start their training with the company.

### 10:33 GMT

It's 18:33 in Singapore, the world's busiest port and a 6,500 unit pure car carrier is offloading a fleet of Japanese vehicles some of which will meet the strict Singaporean quota, others will be transhipped to Europe.

A scheduled quarterly vessel inspection is simultaneously underway by a technical superintendent from Fleet's

Singapore Office. Each of Fleet's 200 plus ships are rigorously inspected and its crew appraised every 3 months. A comprehensive vessel status report follows this inspection which is uploaded onto PARIS, where from it gets disseminated to the ship's owner, and the concerned department at Fleet for any proactive measures that may be required.

### 14:09 GMT

After a hectic day in preparation Fleet Management's newbuilding team are celebrating the successful delivery of the first in a series of three ethylene tankers from a world leading Korean shipyard.

Fleet Management has been actively involved in newbuilding supervision for a number of its most important clients since 1997. For some of those clients it represents the first steps in what will be comprehensive service from cradle to grave - for the ship.

### 18:01 GMT

In London Mr Nigam, general manager of Fleet Management Europe limited, is preparing documents; he'll shortly be on his way into the city centre to meet a prospective owner and his financiers who are keen to enter into a management contract. At the moment he leaves the office, on the other side of the world in

New Zealand Mr Glen Pereira, Fleet Management's general manager is up early at the breakfast table. One of Mr Pereira's responsibilities is to enhance MARPOL awareness across the fleet and he's preparing a presentation that all 8,000 crew will soon be able to learn from on land or sea through the company's TOLAS (Training On Land And Sea) system via their PCs.

### 22:44 GMT

And back in the US it's 16:44 when we catch up again with the chemical tanker in Houston, which has safely completed loading its cargo of styrene and is ready to undertake its voyage to Far East through the Panama Canal.

### 00:00 GMT

24 hours have passed in a couple of pages, leaving us with no opportunity to meet and greet new cadets as they enter the offices of Fleet Management Services in the Philippines.

No chance to wish the young Chinese hopefuls as they celebrate being hired outside the crewing office in Dalian, China.

Too little page space to talk to the general manager of FML SML Ltd in Cyprus Mr Sunil Kapoor. He's just dispatched someone to visit Larnaca Port to ensure ...

So much to do, so little time. It's because Fleet Management never sleeps that its clients can slumber restfully each night. 

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# Risk-based approach to safety

*The whole company is involved in stringent risk assessments*

In the old days safety at sea was simply a matter of ticking the right boxes and off you went. All too frequently such a system was found wanting.

At Fleet Management there has evolved a more efficient risk-based approach. The company's head of quality and safety Captain Mayank Mishra explains: 'A few years ago, Fleet Management introduced a system whereby each ship inspection is followed up by a stringent risk-assessment procedure that demands participation by the company's top personnel.'

Capt Mishra says the bottom line is that each deviation from standard procedures is assessed for the risk that it possesses and awarded a risk level. 0-3 would be considered negligible risk; 3-6 might be acceptable, above that level the company would have to take immediate action to place additional safety measures.

That relevant members of staff both at sea and onshore can be alerted for proactive action so quickly is down to the ubiquitous IT system PARIS, which links all crew and onshore staff 24/7.

Capt Mishra says that the number of crew injuries and accidents has dropped 20% since the introduction of the risk-based approach.

This is at least partly to do with the fact that Fleet Management standards are far more stringent than minimum standards.

*That relevant members of staff at sea and onshore can be alerted for proactive action so quickly is down to the ubiquitous IT system PARIS*

A case in point is the recent decision to ban AC welding machines from our managed fleet. 'It is not a requirement of any regulatory body,' says Capt Mishra, 'but our own system of risk-based checks helped us determine that only DC welding machines were acceptable under the strict terms of best practice.'

Even before the radical new system

was brought in Fleet Management had gained an enviable reputation for safe and efficient carriage of cargo on some of the most complex ships.

'Our TMSA (Tanker Management Self Assessment) auditing system has assigned us as a Level 3 operator. Fleet has been audited by most oil majors, who after stringent Gap Analysis have confirmed that our self assessment is realistic,' Capt Mishra announces proudly.

And rightly so. Full marks can only theoretically be achieved by a shipowner, not a manager. ■■■

**A**s managing director of Fleet Management Limited Kishore Rajvanshy is eminently qualified to spot problems in the industry, raise the issues, and expect to be heard.

In early 2009, Mr Rajvanshy did just that by signalling to the IMO a dangerous lack of experience possessed by many of today's ship's officers.

Mr Rajvanshy has urged the maritime body and other industry organisations to introduce minimum mandatory experience requirements as a priority.

Concerned that the current officer shortage will drive down safety standards, Mr Rajvanshy explains: 'Quick promotions, rising salaries and shorter contracts for seafarers have contrasted poorly with higher insurance costs, depreciating asset values and environmental disasters.'

He is certain that only by legislating for appropriate service time onboard can the potential dangers be properly addressed.

'The universal cause of maritime safety would take a giant step forward if the IMO and honorary Flag states could integrate more rigid experience standards in the STCW.'

'Act now' Mr Rajvanshy implores, 'rather than react later to an inevitable disaster.'

**The big picture**





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How then to ensure your investment is built to perfection? Call in the experts. Fleet Management has been involved in newbuild supervision since 1997 with a dedicated team spread out across east Asia, assisting owners who already have supervisors in place. The general rule is that this service is offered by Fleet for owners who will then place their newbuilds under management with the Hong Kong company.

Fleet's supervision duties started out primarily in Japan and Korea in the late 1990s but lately have focused more and more on China.

Dilip Nair, gm and director at the company, says that the big projects under supervision at the moment are eight 92,500 dwt bulkers at COSCO Dalian (pictured) for two different owners and one Diamond 53,000 dwt bulker compliant to CSR plus options at Chengxi Shipyard.

'On these ships,' says Nair, 'we are doing full turn key operations: plan approval onwards, starting from scratch, from the first line on the drawing board.'

A few years ago, Fleet had eight similar Diamond ships at Chengxi.

COSCO Dalian, the flagship of COSCO Shipyard, is 'very modern' according to Nair with a state of the art pipe making facility, which Nair claims is 'the best I have ever seen'.

That said, Nair does not gloss over the shortfalls of building in China, but with the right attitude, he explains, any problem can be solved on the mainland.

'People are willing to learn there,' he says. 'The way you behave and speak to them that goes a long way. Give the man his due, respect him, they have face. If there is a problem the best way is to sit down with them and give them a solution and they will accept it. People interaction is very important.'

China's incredibly rapid shipbuilding evolution has left many stunned, including Nair, who notes the huge improvement in skills including welding. Moreover, he is amazed by the seriousness yards attach to safety nowadays. He puts this down to a change in management set up. Previously, a shipyard's quality department used to report to the production department, which could lead to the stretched latter overlooking certain issues to ensure the ship was completed on time. Now, the quality department reports to management and that has improved output unquestionably.

'By being safe it helps their output dramatically,' says Nair.

Fleet's core philosophy to newbuild supervision is simple. 'You get what you inspect,' explains Nair.

To this end, Fleet has pioneered so called patrolling inspections whereby one site member is designated every day to inspect various parts

of the ship rather than waiting for the yard to allocate time for Fleet to snoop around. This has proved so effective that even COSCO Dalian has now started doing the patrolling inspections themselves. 'It helps save money spotting problems earlier,' says Nair.

With teams on the ground in both China and Korea, these two nations are the main area for Fleet supervision, but the company has had experience in many other emerging newbuild destinations including Vietnam, Indonesia and India. ■■■

**U**nfortunately, and somewhat inevitably, lay-ups have become one of the more topical returns to shipping's lexicon.

Fleet Management has been involved in a wide variety of lay-up operations, both hot and cold, in Asia and Europe.

Md Kishore Rajvanshy rates southeast Asia as the premier place to hole up during the downturn, thanks to the proximity to major tradelanes and ship repair sites, as well as competitive port fees. Finding a safe haven for layup helps Owners negotiate a higher return premium for their ship's insurance costs.

If laying up in hot and steamy southeast Asia, Rajvanshy urges owners to use dehumidifiers throughout the ship to stop damage to machinery.

He also warns of the dangers of fouling building up on the hull, which can reduce speeds by as much as 10 knots once the ship is back up and running. 'Give the hull a good clean when bringing a ship back into service,' he stresses.

Lay-ups

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# Family atmosphere

*Fleet Management places great importance on a series of roadshows across the region*

**F**leet Management's global footprint sees it now spread across 10 cities in three continents. While the pioneering IT system fostered in-house takes care of the day to day knowledge upkeep of staff across the world, there is nothing like good old fashioned face-to-face meet ups and so since the inception of the company regular seminars have been held.

Seatrade attended one in April 2009 in Dalian, where more than 70 crewmembers heard from senior managers in Hong Kong, including md Kishore Rajvanshy. Those attending sharpened their knowledge on a variety of different topics including incident analysis, the MARPOL compliance programme, navigation, cargo claims, PSC inspections, and a broad update of the latest regulations.

These seminars move around the Asian offices of Fleet. Explains Rajvanshy, "The main purposes to hold this kind of seminar are sharing experiences, training crews and getting everyone together to work as a family not just a company."

The scale of these seminars can vary. For instance, in 2008 the company hosted a glittering event in Lucknow, India with around 200 people in attendance and the bank HSBC onboard as a sponsor. Fleet became the first shipmanager to open a branch office in Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh, on June 1, 2008.

These seminars are aimed at creating a common platform for interaction as well as sharing of different perspectives from both the sailing and shore side. Most importantly they give a chance to the company to understand the challenges faced by its seafarers. The company then follows up and makes the necessary changes

to benefit its sailing team. Besides discussions on occupation specific matters, these seminars are also a platform for cultural exchanges and active participation from the seafarers' family. Fleet Management prides itself among shipmanagement companies by regarding seafarers as an integral part of its family called the sailing team, and not as a third-party contractual entity. These seminars serve to stress that relationship and forge greater loyalty. Many prizes are handed out for those who have been with Fleet for five or ten years.

While often geography specific, the seminars can also be sector specific, as witnessed recently with a car carrier seminar in Manila or an earlier tanker seminar in Mumbai. ■■■



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- **Kolkata**  
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Since 1995, Fleet Management Limited has grown to become one of the most innovative and reliable ship management enterprises in the world today.

We here at Stratos are pleased to offer a deep bow to the executives, officers, crew and other highly-experienced professionals at Fleet Management on the occasion of your 15th anniversary. With a management philosophy emphasizing safety, environmental responsibility and world-class maintenance, we know you have earned the respect and gratitude of ship owners worldwide.

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That's why Stratos is proud to supply Fleet Management Limited with an array of advanced Inmarsat solutions, including the latest FleetBroadband service, as well as our AmosConnect™ family of value-added services.

At Stratos, we have appreciated the opportunity to work so closely with Fleet Management Limited. We hope we will be honored to continue our mutually rewarding partnership for many years to come.



# Proper maintenance reduces Fleet's carbon footprint

*Kishore Rajvanshy has strong views on the environment, a key issue that was discussed at Copenhagen*

**T**his magazine comes out as shipping grapples with the vital issue of the environment. This past December world leaders convened in the Danish capital, Copenhagen, for the United Nations Climate Change Conference, Kyoto Protocol 2.0 as such. Unlike Kyoto though, this time around shipping was included in the discussions.

'Shipping is at a crossroads,' admits Kishore Rajvanshy, Fleet Management's md. 'Where we, as an industry go next in regards to the environment will be pivotal for the future health of shipping.'

Ahead of Copenhagen the shipping industry, as a whole, was split about what position to adopt: a bunker tax or a carbon trading programme literally halving the industry down the centre.

However, for Fleet the pursuit of clean, green shipping has been at the top of its agenda since its founding in the mid-1990s.

'An important part of our philosophy is maintaining a vessel's value via our unique web-based maintenance systems. By being on the ball, making sure all our ships are at peak performance all the time, ships under our management naturally emit less harmful substances,' says Rajvanshy.

A glance at the owner names on Fleet's books also shows the clear need for a strict adherence to best environmental practice. Some of the most green shipping lines in the world are clients of Fleet.

*'Where we, as an industry go next in regards to the environment will be pivotal for the future health of shipping.'*

'We look at everything when it comes to the operation and maintenance of ships. Coatings, for instance,' says Rajvanshy, 'are an enormously important area that we impress upon all our principals to invest decent sums to save fuel costs in the future and by extension emit less harmful substances.'

Rajvanshy is very much aware of the huge advances in ship design and operation already in place, cementing shipping's position as 'the greenest way to move freight, bar none'.

One ton of fuel on a modern VLCC moves 450MT of cargo more than

2,800 km, he notes. This is more than twice as far as 20 year ago. He outlined some of the measures his firm has taken to help reduce fuel consumption among different principals' ships.

Applying silicon antifouling paint to reduce hull resistance as the ship cuts through the water has reduced fuel consumption by 2.1%. Modifying the propeller edge and installing a cap fin propeller brings a 6% saving while regular underwater hull cleaning helps reduce resistance too. 'These measures are being taken up by many of the forward thinking owners around the world, aware that the initial costs will be clawed back quickly with rising bunker fees,' says Rajvanshy. But, the Fleet boss is adamant the whole industry needs to react as one. 'The costs of delaying action will be far more if we don't all act together now,' he said. ■■■

**N**oble Group, Fleet's parent, announced its commitment to tackle the issue of climate change at the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI) Asia Meeting in Hong Kong in December 2008. The commitment to become a "Carbon Neutral Company" will be realized in a step-by-step approach extending the scope of the "Carbon Neutral Project" across Noble's business units by 2011, with an estimated total value of US\$10m.

Richard Elman, ceo of Noble Group, stated: 'By going carbon neutral, Noble is working to not only reduce and offset its carbon footprint, but also to raise awareness among its employees, partners and communities. Together with the CGI, we can take the lead to change how businesses respond to the challenge of climate change.' Noble's ships, managed by Fleet, are one of the most important parts of Noble's emission reduction plans.

**Noble's pledge**

## CO<sub>2</sub> emissions per km from shipping, aircraft and road haulage

Mode of Transport	CO <sub>2</sub> (grams per ton per km)
Cargo vessel over 8,000dwt	15
Cargo vessel 2,000-8,000dwt	21
Heavy truck with trailer	50
Air freight (747-400)	540

Source: NTM (Swedish Network for Transport and the Environment)

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**Congratulations to  
Fleet Management Ltd  
on your  
fifteenth Anniversary**



# Life savers

*There are many untold tales of heroism at Fleet*

It is a sad fact that the public's perception of the shipping industry is all too often shaped by the media's taste for the very rare marine disasters experienced by the shipping industry each year.

What the public remains largely unaware of is the almost daily acts of kindness and frequent acts of bravery undertaken by mariners on an almost daily basis.

The crew of Fleet Management managed vessels are no exception, as the following accounts vividly portray.

## **Pacific Condor swoops to the rescue**

In the early hours of the 25th August 2009 the Master, Captain Ashutosh Karkhanis, and crew of the Fleet Management managed *Pacific Condor*, an Aframax crude oil tanker, were blissfully unaware that they would shortly be called upon to save the lives of 21 men in mid-ocean.

But shortly after midnight *Pacific Condor* received an alert that the *Sea Star* - just 25 miles distant - was taking

on water in its engine room.

With Jeddah MRCC 150 miles away it would be *Pacific Condor* that was designated On Scene Coordinator. By daybreak the situation on the *Sea Star* was proving to be beyond saving. At 13:40 the Master of the *Sea Star* decided that all crew should abandon ship.

As a result of the cool and calm instructions of the Master of the *Pacific Condor* and the alacrity with which his crew undertook those instructions, all 21 crew of the *Sea Star* were safely rescued with no serious injury.

We salute the Master and the crew of the *Pacific Condor* for their exhibition of rare courage and superb seamanship as they upheld human life above all commercial considerations.

## **Forward Bright rescue operation off Indonesia**

It was on May 29, 2009, the weather was fine and the Fleet Management managed *MV Forward Bright* an Aframax crude oil tanker was buoyed by slight seas.

At 15:40 hours it was the Look-Out

AB that warned the Second Officer the day would not be without incident. He had spotted what appeared to be floating debris less than a mile on the starboard bow.

As the ship closed in on the debris, the Second Officer informed the Master, Captain Noble Pereira, immediately. By now it was apparent that amidst the debris were desperate men not waving but drowning. The Master moved swiftly to raise the alarm to warn all vessels in the vicinity.

The survivors were in real danger as the remnants of their fishing vessel began to gently sink beneath the surface.

In an extremely delicate operation, *Forward Bright* manoeuvred within 20 meters of the distressed fishermen. The crew of the ship now prepared to pass lifebuoys with lines to the survivors who were subsequently hauled aboard through the ship's gangway.

From first sighting to the moment the last survivor was being treated on board took just one hour and 15 minutes.

The grateful fishermen were all given warm clothes, water and food as the vessel informed owners, managers and charterers and contacted RCC Jakarta for instructions. ■■■



# Pipeline strategy pays dividends

*Fleet Management's parent is flourishing*

So the story goes from its modest CEO, the Noble Group started out in 1987 with a couple of telephones, a good sense for a deal and not much else. Since then Richard Elman and his vastly expanded team are closing in on annual net profits of \$1bn, have become the darlings of the financial press and the recent target for China's sovereign wealth fund, who bought a 15% stake in the so called FedEx of the commodities sector last September. No longer the middleman, via many acquisitions Noble Group is front, right and at the centre of the commodities game.

What then is the nebulous Noble Group? In its own words, the conglomerate is 'a market leader in managing the global supply chain of agricultural, industrial and energy products... specialising in the origination and delivery of strategic raw materials, adding value at each stage of the supply chain.' The group is also involved in trade finance, coal mining and running soybean crushing plants and sugar/ethanol mills in Brazil, and, of course, shipmanagement.

Ryan Tsang, an analyst at Standard & Poor's in Hong Kong, says Noble has evolved 'from a transactional commodity business into an increasingly integrated supply chain operation by acquiring and turning around underperforming assets'. This really kicked off eight years ago with the purchase of Andre & Cie's grain trading business in Asia.

Elaborating on this a bit more, Elman tells Seatrade the company has 'three main thrusts'. Its industrial and energy sides of the business 'starts in coal and ends in electricity and is everything in between including oil and gas.' Coal and iron ore are the two largest commodities in these divisions.

What Noble does is to build integrated supply chains - or pipelines, as the company likes to call them - in

commodity sectors, and to control the critical stages of the supply process.

The latest, and arguably most aggressive, addition to this strategy has been 2009's takeover of Gloucester Coal in New South Wales, Australia for US\$301m.

The other side of the sourcing business is agricultural, led by grain. 'This is more recession proof as the world continues to grow in population

*'The plan is to grow net profit to US\$1bn in the next three to five years'*

despite the economic downturn,' says Elman. Moreover, as emerging nations get richer, he observes, they tend to eat more meat, which translates into more grain.' Tyson Foods, an American company, recently pointed out the average Chinese consumes 20 pounds of meat a year compared to the 89 pounds consumed by the average American.

Elman's own story is remarkable. Having quit school at the age of 14, he hawked scrap metal around the East End of London. He went on to join Phillips Brothers (latterly Philbro) working with among others Marc Rich, the founder of Glencore, which many analysts compare Noble to. In 1987, he scraped together \$100,000 and took a gamble, founding the Noble Group in Hong Kong. Now 69, Elman still has plenty of goals he wants his giant commodities creation to achieve.

With revenues in 2008 of \$36bn and net profits of \$577m, Elman has set the group a nice, round figure to aim for. 'The plan,' he says, 'is to grow net profit to US\$1bn in the next three to five years.'

For the half-year to June 30, 2009, net profit climbed by 17% to US\$339m



— the highest six-month total in Noble's history.

In his chairman's review, David Eldon (the former head of HSBC) said the global financial crisis was an opportunity for the group to demonstrate the effectiveness of its people, systems and approach to mitigating risks. 'Having passed the tests, we believe we have now officially passed from gawky adolescence to fumbling manhood,' Eldon wrote in the, as usual, witty corporate statement. For a company knocking on for 23 years of age, Noble is arguably in the prime of its life. ■ ■ ■



Noble, the shipowner

Being in charge of its supply chain - and its own destiny - has always meant the group has had a number of its own ships. On top of this Noble Chartering typically controls 150 ships at any one time.

Typical of the group's operations as a whole, Noble always buys ships when prices are at their most attractive. Consequently, last August Noble placed a \$320m order with COSCO Dalian Shipyard for four 92,400 dwt ships for 2012 delivery.

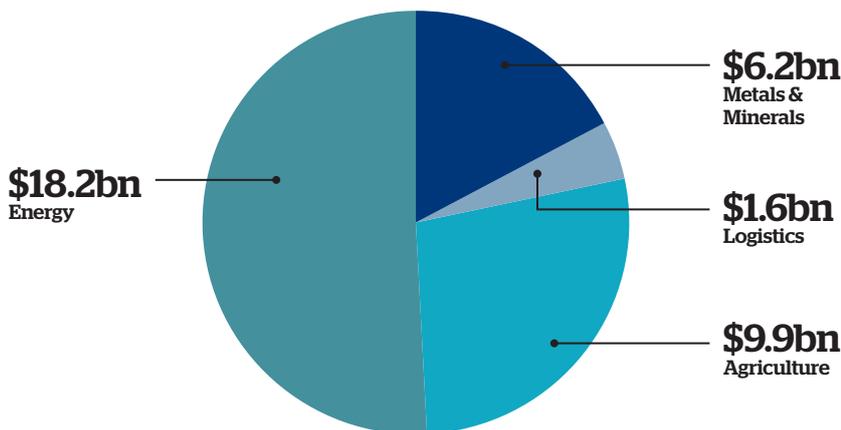
'We have always owned a few ships,' says Noble ceo, Richard Elman. 'At a price we could have no difficulty in owning more. These are special ships - hybrids as such. The are a neat size, suitable for the trades we are in.'

Elman suggests this ship type will be the norm in the future. 'As much as handymaxes have taken over from handysizes,' he says, 'so too these 90,000 dwt ships will take over from panamaxs in the coming years.'

Noble by numbers

- 100+ Offices worldwide
- 4,000 Customers
- 10,000 Employees
- 36,000,000,000 Revenues in 2008 in US\$
- 577,000,000 Net profit in 2008 in US\$
- 1,000,000,000 Net profit goal by 2013 in US\$
- 141,500,000 Tonnes of product handled by Noble in 2008
- 256,000,000 Tonnes of product to be handled by Noble by 2012

Noble Group's revenue by segment (US\$bn)



# Our heartiest Congratulations to Fleet Management Limited for providing 15 years of First Class Ship Management Services



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As your trusted travel partner for over a decade, it's been an honour to witness your spectacular growth and undeterred commitment to provide high standards with emphasis on safety and pollution prevention. Hence, Trust Travels & Tours would like to congratulate its honourable business client Fleet Management Limited for successfully completing 15 years of providing first class ship management services. As one of the leading marine travel company's in India since 1984, Trust Travels and

Tours is part of the prestigious Marine International Travel Alliance (MITA) and takes great pleasure in giving our client the best possible itinerary and fares. Sailing together for more than a decade, we share a bond that goes beyond business today, so here's a toast to your Success. We would like to express our gratitude for entrusting us in providing quality service and wish you many more similar milestones in future. **We reassure you that whenever you sail, we'll travel with YOU!**



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# And the award again goes to...

*When the gongs are being handed out there is a more than fair chance that Fleet Management will be in line*

**T**he fifteen-year history of Fleet Management Limited has been peppered with many moments of high-profile recognition from its peers, from observers and, perhaps most importantly from those tasked with regulating or supervising the rules and customs of the sea.

Below are just a few of the awards the company is most proud to have received.

## **Seatrade Asia Awards 2009**

June 2009 saw Fleet Management pick up its largest award from its peers when it walked away with the Best Ship Manager Award from the highly-respected Seatrade Asia Awards in Shanghai.

## **Lloyd's List Ship Manager of the Year 2009**

Later that year Fleet Management personnel were under a welcoming spotlight in a glitzy Singapore hotel taking the Shipmanager of the Year Award at the Lloyd's List Asia Awards 2009, the company's fourth award in a triumphant year.

## **Best Foreign Employer of Indian Seafarer 2009**

This highly prestigious award was bestowed upon Ebony Ship Management, Crew Manager for Fleet Management by the Government of India in April 2009.

## **Best Performing Ship Management Company in Port State Control Inspection (Pi Xiu Management Award) 2009**

This award was given by the Hong Kong Marine Department to Fleet Management in March 2009.

The long name for the prize, notwithstanding, this is one of the most prized of awards as far as Fleet Management's managing director Kishore Rajvanshy and his team are concerned.

Fleet Management first took this highly-prized trophy home in March 2008, when the Hong Kong Marine Department-granted Award was called: *Best Performing Ship Management Company in Tokyo & Paris MOUs Port State Control Inspection*

## **Safety at Sea International Award 2007**

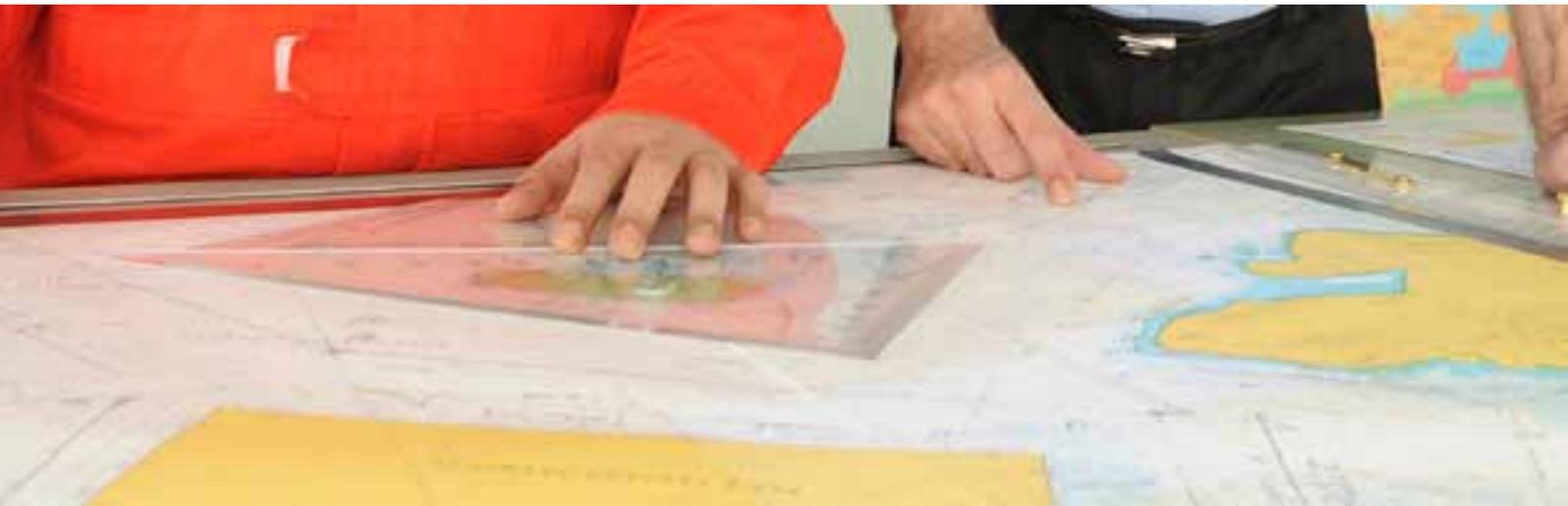
To win an award that pertains to safety will always be coveted by a shipmanager. And so it was when Fleet Management was one of only four companies honoured with a safety at Sea International Award at the Safety at Sea and Marine Equipment Event (SASMEX) organized by Lloyd's Register-Fairplay in the UK in April 2007.

## **Lloyd's List Asia Awards - Innovation 2007**

Just eight months later Fleet Management managing director Kishore Rajvanshy was mounting the podium again - this time on home ground in Hong Kong - to pick up Lloyd's List's Award for Innovation.

Away from the bright lights and the industry plaudits Mr Rajvanshy is characteristically modest about the recognition his firm has attracted since he started with four ships in 1994.

'It is always gratifying to receive the congratulations of the people we work for. But what's most important is my staff and me being able to go home at night knowing that everyday we have done our best to run a safe, efficient operation that everybody is happy to work for.' ■■■



# Charting the next 15 years

*Kishore Rajvanshy writes about the future of his profession*

**A**t a period in the history of shipping that might euphemistically be described as volatile, you might think it presumptuous of me to attempt to predict the future of shipmanagement. Nevertheless, I'm prepared to have a shot, particularly as far as the future of Fleet Management Limited is concerned.

What will not change in our business is the desire by some owners to manage their own ships, and the demand from others to have their ships managed by third party shipmanagers. But the trend will be toward the latter breed of owners.

The most obvious reason for a continuing shift to outsourcing shipmanagement is the increasing challenges presented to the industry, be it regulatory, technical or economical.

Simply, the owner of four to five ships will find that these challenges make it impractical for him to attempt to fulfill all the requirements of ships' operations.

Such a scenario clearly does not pertain to the mega-shipowner. But, even so, there is clear evidence that some of this class of shipowners are happy to avail themselves of the services of a third party shipmanager for at least a portion of their fleet while

they hone their technical skills and generally keep their hand in with the remainder.

Here we come to the point where I think there must be some adjustment to the current model. As I have mentioned, ship operations are increasingly challenging and, I might add, complex. Third party shipmanagement is a highly specialised and demanding skill-set.

Almost without exception shipmanagers pursue their chosen career because shipping is a dynamic, enjoyable and personally gratifying business to be in: full of some of the best people you are ever likely to meet.

But, over the years, as the demands on shipmanagers and the skills required to overcome them have grown, an imbalance has appeared between what the shipmanager brings to his job in terms of quality, efficiency and safety and the rewards he has received for performing the job.

Unless the reward structure is very significantly adjusted upward, I believe it is inevitable that the smaller third party shipmanagers will sadly be pushed to the wall. Others may simply decide that the rewards do not merit the very real physical and legal risks. The result will be that shipowners' choice of manager will be reduced to a few very large players.

'Size counts' I hear some of you saying. Well, yes - too a point. It's true that shipmanagers with a large fleet can achieve an important economy of scale. But there can be a cost too. Compromises may have to be conceded in the quality and attitude of the shipowners a manager is prepared to take on, if the latter is chasing size for size sake.

Let me be clear here, reputable shipmanagers like ourselves are seeking rewards that accurately reflect the cost of operations not vanity payments.

Here at Fleet Management we have taken a conscious decision to seek out or accept only owners who match our quality mind-set. This has resulted in our shedding some vessels although we still have a fleet of 200-plus ships under management - a position that is under frequent review. Equally this approach leads us often to turn ships away.

On the other hand, we are also happy to welcome owners who take as their bottom line safety and quality, not cost alone.

While it is notoriously difficult to predict the future, at Fleet Management we will tenaciously hold on to a vision of a shipping industry where the shipmanager delivers the very best in service for a compatible reward.

At Fleet Management we look forward to sailing with you into the next 15 years. ■ ■ ■

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