

# The importance of training



## Safety: Eddie Janson

Captain Eddie Janson of MariTrain AB, instructor and consultant in maritime safety, points the Shipgaz spotlight at safety related matters.

Since 2005, we can unfortunately see an increase in number of tanker accidents. Most of the accidents can be referred to as human error. How come that human error continues to increase?

One of the believed reasons is lack of qualified and experienced seafarers. The issue has been highlighted by both Intertanko and the oil majors. Intertanko has a "Growing concern over recent increase in tanker incidents caused by the lack of expertise".

**Many oil majors** have introduced officer matrixes requiring tanker officers to have minimum experience. Some examples of these minimum criteria are:

- Combined experience with company – senior officers, total 2 years
- Combined Rank experience (senior officers) – actual experience at sea, 3 to 5 years
- Total number of years on tankers – actual experience at sea, 6 to 10 years
- Total years on the type of ship – actual experience at sea, 1 to 2 years

## »Shipping companies must see cadets as an investment and not as cheap labour«

### OCIMF TMSA 3A.3.3

→ "Training for seafarers exceeds the minimum requirements of the STCW code or of the relevant authority for vessel trade."

- Combined Rank experience (Junior officers) – actual experience at sea, 1 year
- Combined tanker experience (Junior officers) – actual experience at sea, 1.5 years
- Combined experience with company – Junior Officers, 1 year

**Both Intertanko and** the oil majors realise that the requirements for sea experience set out in the STCW code are insufficient and require compliance above and beyond the STCW.

Intertanko has launched a system called Tanker Officer Training Standards (TOTS). It is a system intended to provide an alternative method of measuring experience other than sea time or calendar years for both time in rank and time with the company. It is divided in different rank specific

modules and a company specific module for all officers. It is, however, still not clear if the oil majors will approve it as a substitute for actual experience.

Even if the TOTS cannot replace experience it is a good initiative where all officers have to prove their competence. The company specific module requires all officers to be fully conversant with all company procedures before commencing their duty. This is something that in many cases is not performed today. Officers are often recruited through manning agents, sent directly on board without passing through the company office and might only have a few hours overlap with whom they relieve to learn all procedures.

**We can clearly see that** both tanker and cargo owners are unsatisfied with the level of experience by tanker officers today. So why is there a lack of experienced seafarers? One of the reasons is the general recruitment problem, which has been discussed many times before; another reason might be that many newly examined officers do not have enough experience when signing on as officer for the first time.

In Sweden the required seagoing service time has been reduced over time. Before 1989 minimum 36 moths were required, from 1989 it was reduced to 18 months if it forms part of an approved training programme. Now this is reduced further to only 12 months.

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**A cadet that gets the right training is an asset for the shipping company.**

However, it is not enough to just spend time on board unless the time is well spent. STCW requires that "a cadet on board receive systematic practical training and experience in the tasks, duties and responsibilities of an officer in charge of a navigational watch" and is "closely supervised and monitored by qualified officers aboard the ships in which the approved seagoing service is performed".

**I have seen both good** and bad examples on how this is performed. The best example is an enthusiastic training officer on board who is given sufficient time to teach the cadet what he needs to know. The worst example

is a training officer that never wished for the assignment and sees the cadet as cheap labour. I think we can all agree that a cadet that spends 12 months on board vessels painting and chipping rust is not ready to become an officer.

I think it is important that all training officers are given sufficient training and resources to perform their job. It must also be realised that this is a very important task that requires both sufficient time and a desire to teach. Shipping companies must see cadets as an investment and not as cheap labour.

If a cadet follows one company during the four years it takes to become an officer he or she will most prob-

**John R Dudley**, Vice President, Koch Shipping Inc said "we fail ships with low Year In Rank because we think that the officers have not seen enough trouble!"

ably continue to work there for a long time. Used correctly this can be a win-win situation for all parties. For the cadet, he or she will know all procedures in the company when getting the first assignment as an officer. For the company they will know who to employ and get someone with experience of the company from day one.

**However, this is just a start.** It is the responsibility of the company to continue to train their junior officers and prepare them for promotion. Many years have passed since we could say "I have finished school". An officer of today needs continuous professional development, not only mandatory STCW courses. \*

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