

Expert thinking on critical issues

SAFETY4SEA, in association with the North of England P&I Club, discusses topical industry issues.

Q: "Is the approach to safety management changing?"



Christis Angelides
Group Director, QSHE
& Compliance,
Columbia
Shipmanagement Ltd

Yes it is definitely changing. When firstly introduced, some 20 years ago, the industry was different: Easier and more robust ships to operate, simple technology, not much of electronic, well known to crew and managers. Today's ships are technologically improved, but are more demanding when it comes to operation and maintenance. At the same time, crew qualification and experience are dramatically downgraded. Through digitalization and modern communication, the office plays nowadays a different role. It can monitor operations live and can even be involved and influence significantly the vessel operation and performance. The safety management approach cannot remain the same. It is a new era and all stakeholders must be ready to change and adjust to the new reality.



Capt. Panagiotis Nikiteas
HSQE Manager / DPA /
CSO, Maran Dry
Management Inc

Yes Involved parties cannot accept anymore that incidents are the necessary evils of doing shipping. Successful business performance cannot be seen anymore without an effective and robust integrated management system and without a truly involved leadership. In a world of diminishing and fiercely fighting for returns, there is expectation for better value from safety systems. "Human error" is not accepted anymore as convenient cause. Qualitative data are increasingly analyzed in addition to the "measurable" targets. Safety management that is heavily geared on the technical issues and downplay human element is, or soon will be, obsolete. Changes of persons in major organizations with new ideas and plans fuel this change in the coming years.



Colin Gillespie
Director
(Loss Prevention),
The North of England
P&I Club

Yes Since ISM Code, vessels' SMS have evolved and grown. To some extent, Safety Management Systems (SMS) are a victim of their own success. They have been an extremely effective tool for companies and seafarers to manage their vessels. But if a system is difficult to use, this leads to workarounds or procedures being ignored. Recently, a number of companies have taken steps to re-write and re-structure their SMS considering also how they can better support seafarers in safety behaviours. The change in emphasis we are seeing is a move away from using systems to control seafarers' actions and towards providing seafarers with the tools and behaviours they need to do the job. At North we call this change in emphasis Safety Management 2.0.



Dustin Eno
COO & Crisis
Response Manager,
Navigate Response

Yes Working in crisis communications, my focus is on soft skills - thinking, feeling and communicating. Historically, safety management too often ignored these human factors and focused only on equipment and procedures, but tools and processes are only as good as the people using them. From recognizing the dangers of mental illness (in all its forms) to addressing the risks of using social media while on duty, our industry's definition of "safety management" is expanding. However, our implementation of this changing understanding of safety must also expand. For example, many companies now have a social media policy for their seafarers (a good step), but to be effective these policies must be backed up by training and understanding.



Sean Hutchings
Chief Technical Officer,
Thome Group of
Companies

No at least not quickly enough. Today, the number of crew on-board our vessels is decreasing, yet the complexities they have to deal with are increasing. More inspections, more paperwork and quicker turnarounds in port. The Safety Management Systems on-board have grown exponentially from the early ISM days, and whilst there are plenty of people wanting to add more checklists and procedures to them, few are willing to remove any. We need to support our crews better by making SMS simpler and more concise. We need to embrace technology and the digital era and become more innovative in our approach to safety management, so as to ensure the safety of our operations and crew.



Capt. VS Parani
Author - Golden
Stripes,
Leadership on the High
Seas

Yes Safety management needs to evolve until we have zero accidents. When existing systems work, but not enough, we need to ask ourselves where we need to focus next. My recommendation is to focus on safety leadership. A similar sentiment was echoed by Peter Voser, ex-CEO of Royal Dutch Shell; "Poor safety is nothing more than a lack of leadership". Safety leadership for me means developing and sustaining a robust safety culture, thereby implementing the SMS effectively. Among other things, this involves leading with expertise, leading oneself, leading our teams effectively, having a hands-on approach towards risk-management, enforcing routines, having a learning work environment, and being able to decide safety-first.



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