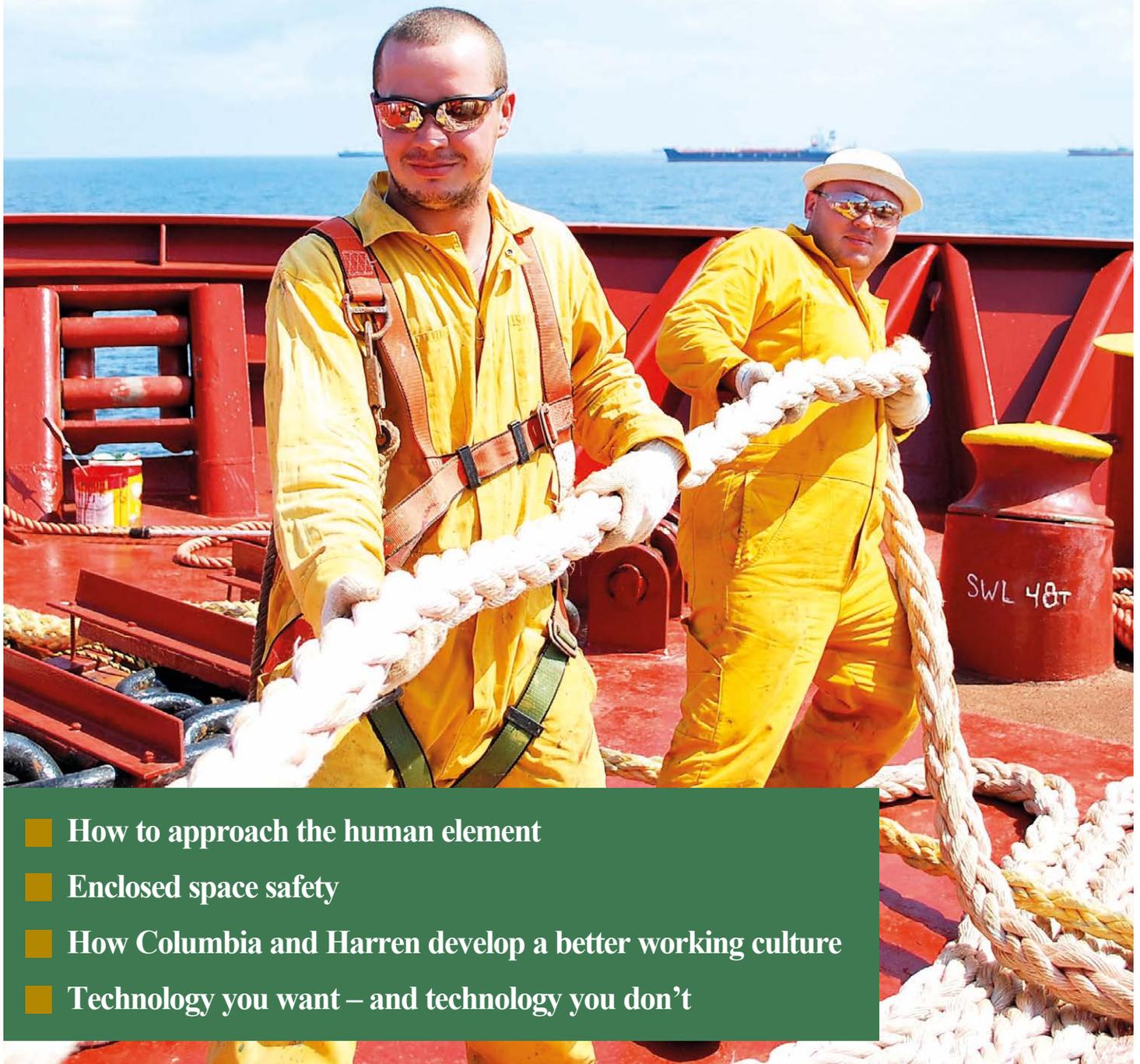


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Focus on seafarer performance



- How to approach the human element
- Enclosed space safety
- How Columbia and Harren develop a better working culture
- Technology you want – and technology you don't

Columbia – finding better approaches to training

Columbia Shipmanagement is improving the ways it encourages seafarers to think about safety, develops a safety culture, and trains the crew. Capt. Faouzi Fradi, group training director, Columbia Shipmanagement explained

Columbia Shipmanagement, one of the world's largest Shipmanagement companies with 15,000 employees, is exploring better ways to encourage crew to look at safety, build a safety culture, and improve training. Capt. Faouzi Fradi, group training director, Columbia Shipmanagement explained more.

Captain Fradi formerly worked as a master on oil tankers, gas carriers and chemical tankers, and has worked as a pilot, marine superintendent and crewing manager.

Columbia is keen to accentuate the

positive side of safety – rather than tell people what not to do, it wants to tell them to “live another day”, he said.

“Safety culture for us is not only about procedures.”

“Human element is what we do when no-one is watching. This is how we feel the safety culture, this is how we take it onboard, and this is how we look at each other. When we see people doing the right thing and no-one is watching, we feel that safety culture is really implemented into the company.”

Projects include making safety culture part of everyday life, emphasising the

company's core values, trying to motivate more critical thinking, improving training, encouraging open-reporting, and focussing on welfare.

The company embarked on one project to ask staff from one of the manning agencies to ask their children – so mainly children of seafarers - how they feel about the environment, ships and safety. “The message was very impressive,” he said.

“I CARE”

One project focussed on the words “I care”, telling seafarers “that we care about them, they care about us, the office, the ships.”



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Columbia Shipmanagement's Capt. Faouzi Fradi

I CARE “became our philosophy – which is sitting on top of our values”.

The company developed I CARE into an acronym, standing for “Commitment, Appreciation, Responsibility, Evidence.”

Open-reporting

One Policy was to encourage people to report elements of concern they see, any non-compliance or misbehaviour, not only those related the environment. “We try to tell people, by reporting things, you are not snitching,” he said. “If we do the right thing – but we tolerate someone else doing the wrong thing, we are getting nowhere, and we are not achieving our goals.”

“By reporting, by saying, by telling us things, we have saved a lot of situations.”

“It is amazing the number of reports we have received, when you implement such a Policy of Open Reporting.”

“Some people may try to use Open Reporting for different purposes, not what you expect,” he said. “But that doesn’t matter. What matters is you get to know exactly what is happening on the ships, and you come up with solutions to fix them.”

Critical thinking

Critical thinking is a very important factor when we talk about the human element, he said. “If seafarers and office employees do not have critical thinking, then nobody is going to question the procedures,” he said. “We need to look at things with a critical mind.”

To encourage this, Columbia launched a campaign called “think”.

Meeting clients

Columbia invites its seafarers to attend meetings in Cyprus – and also invites its

shipowner clients to come and meet them.

“Working with industry is very important,” he said. “We always have speakers from different areas of industry. We get oil majors, insurance people. We want the industry to speak to seafarers, we want seafarers to hear from the industry.”

The training can also include role-play and teambuilding exercises. “You see the engagement and how much fun they have,” he said.

It can be very interesting to simulate ship operations onshore, where people are usually more relaxed than when working.

“We talk about all the possible risks which come with such operations,” he said. “You see there’s a lot of learning.”

Learning management System

Columbia has implemented a learning management system, which allows people (both seafarers and shore staff) to access many different training modules, including via their mobile devices. “We want to make training accessible anywhere and anytime,” he said.

There is a learning management system, which records the courses everybody has completed. Managers can monitor the progress of their teams.

Many courses were developed in-house, so they are specific to the company’s requirements, and the equipment it has onboard specific vessels, such as scrubbers and ballast water treatment systems.

10,000 people are currently using the system.

The system is also used to manage classroom training (it does not replace classroom training).

Course certificates are digital, and can be accessed via mobile devices.

There can be friendly competition between Columbia staff about how far they have got with the training. “I saw two of our directors competing with each other, with one saying, ‘I got a Guru badge and you are still behind.’”

The system can be used to send messages and share videos.

Examples of course topics include management system, cyber security, GDPR, risk assessment, enclosed space entry, and using planned maintenance software.

Seafarers are asked to provide feedback on all the training they receive. Their superiors also get notified about how their performance has improved.

There are “social learning” tools where

people can exchange ideas online with other staff members.

Columbia is open to works closely with its competitor ship management companies in developing training courses. As to avoid accidents, people on other ships need to be well trained too, he said.

Virtual reality training

Columbia is working with a UK based virtual reality company to do training.

It has software tools where people go through a checklist – inside the VR – of what conditions need to be true before enclosed space work can begin. It has also developed training tools for scrubbers.

The idea here is that people might learn better by going through a virtual simulation of what they have to do on a ship (in accordance with the procedures), rather than just telling them what the procedures are, which sounds very theoretical. “The idea is to put people through real situations.”

Training centres

The company is gradually transforming all of its training centres.

“During our training – all our seafarers have free access to mobile phones and laptops. They are asked to question what the trainer is saying and be very critical to what they hear.”

“Sometimes we forget seafarers are adults,” he said. “They should have the choice of what they do.”

The company also provides training for its own instructors, including teaching them about decision making and different leadership styles.

Mental health

Columbia is developing a “mental health first aid guide” for ship masters. It is being developed in collaboration with a number of psychologists, based in Greece, Ireland, Scotland and Australia.

“It is not our goal for masters to become psychologists, but to have a basic understanding of mental health issues,” he said.

All seafarers and employees of the Company have access to a free of charge mental health support via a 24-hour hotline.

The company also gathers perspectives from seafarers related to mental health and welfare via a number of surveys.