



Captain John Lloyd FNI Chief Executive

Focus

Stronger together

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Recent travels to Asia and the Middle East have provided me with a useful reminder of the global challenges we face in our maritime community and beyond. Key meetings with industry stakeholders reveal that many industry concerns are truly international and similar in nature. These include the standards of training and professionalism in the industry and what we can do to ensure that the next generation of mariners are equipped for the next generation of ships and trades.

There are many dimensions to this, but perhaps key is how do we attract the next generation of leading maritime professionals to an industry in a period of great change? How do we ensure they have the aptitude to embrace the opportunities ahead of them?

One key component, in my view, is presenting a positive image of maritime opportunities. I agree with those who have the view this is simply the most important role in society. Merchant shipping is the lifeblood of international trade. It functions in good times and bad times. It successfully delivers energy and food on a global scale and for the vast majority of time does so without fanfare and without incident. This is testimony to the planners and ships' crews who go about their business quietly, professionally and often invisibly. But for all that it often goes under the radar, it really matters.

One thing we can all do is to recognise that the industry is always going through profound change and that we have the opportunity to embrace this change, and seek the rewards and benefits that can emerge. We can ensure that our cadets and junior officers are hungry for the challenge, and support them in meeting it. Bemoaning the fact that things are 'not like they used to be' or 'I wouldn't go to sea nowadays' are cries from a generation that does not understand that young professionals are still hungry for adventure, international travel, responsibility and the chance to shape their industry into a better place for tomorrow. Just like the generations before them, and those at sea today!

Of course the skill-sets are different, just as they have been with all change. Ships are bigger, more complex,

more demanding in many ways. At the same time our crews come from a society that has also moved on; one that demands and rightly expects greater consideration of welfare, equal opportunity and support for career progression as well as safety and security. Leadership, empathy, support, mentoring of others are all attributes that are as important, if not more so, than the technical skills required to operate our ships. The review of STCW will help shape the qualifications and experience required for the future and I extend my thanks to all those in the NI community and beyond who are engaged in this important work. It is important.

So too is providing berths and training opportunities for new entrants to our great industry. A tiny outlay will create a lifetime of opportunity for individuals, their families, the companies they work for and the industry as a whole. If you are operating and managing ships but not training the next generation of mariners – you are only doing half the job!

Those seagoing opportunities are not just important for the safe and effective running of our ships. The leaders of tomorrow will not just be senior officers and Captains. They will also be working in other sectors, including pilotage, harbour operations, the legal profession, salvage, education and training, maritime regulation insurance, chartering, ship management and many more.

Delivering exciting opportunities today opens the door to a lifetime of wonderful maritime careers where our sea and shore members and maritime professionals interact competently, professionally and effectively to keep the world supplied.

During my recent travel, it was clear these issues are of global significance. The worldwide maritime sector is not a series of islands, with no connection between them. We are a community that is better, stronger and more effective when we work together and when everyone bears their share of the work to be done.

There are superb opportunities ahead as well as many challenges. But, as always, our industry will respond. It will do so effectively and safely – with your help. 🌐



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