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**Practical implementation of the STCW Manila Amendments  
and the impact on Leadership Training**

**Introduction**

Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, good morning and thank you for this opportunity to address the conference. This is my first visit to Poland and I'm pleased and honoured to be here today.

In a recent collection of fifty quick management tips published by the Harvard Business Review, one was 'It's Always Time to Learn'. The tip said that successful leaders keep their minds open to new things because they know that no matter how high their level of mastery, there's always more to discover.

Noble sentiments indeed, but in the HBR's list this came in at number fifty! I'd much prefer it to have been Number 1, since surely everything anybody ever does is predicated on their ability and willingness to learn?

In my talk this morning I'd like to address this issue of learning, with particular reference to leadership learning, training and development.

The inclusion of 'leadership' as a topic in STCW is surely a welcome step – but there's a great deal of unpacking to do before we will begin to realise the outcomes we think the industry wants and needs.

**STCW**

So what do the Manila Amendments require?

For the OOWs, STCW requires knowledge of resource management, effective communication, assertiveness and leadership, situational awareness, an appreciation of group- and teamwork, decision-making, risk perception, an understanding of human behaviour, learning theory, managing fatigue, stress management and, for some bizarre reason, a knowledge of related international maritime conventions, recommendations and national legislation. I say 'bizarre', because all these elements are already covered extensively elsewhere in an officer's curriculum. For what it's worth and in my view, their inclusion here is at best irrelevant and at worst, a distraction and waste of time.

The more senior officers will have to top this up with a knowledge of the principles of management and leadership including the differences between them, the attributes of effective managers and leaders, management and leadership styles, power and

influence, multi-culturalism, motivation, no-blame and just-cultures, behaviour in emergencies, crowd management, providing feedback and, of course, a knowledge of related international maritime conventions, recommendations and national legislation.

It would almost have been easier to say to people – go, get yourself an MBA!

Faced with this enormous range of topics we can only hope we all subscribe to the HBR tip and are avid lifelong learners. Given this vast array of learning material, how are we going to sort it all out and present it to the learners so that the learning has measureable effect?

Many schools, colleges and universities across the world are well ahead of the game, and have been facilitating this type of learning for decades. In some jurisdictions management has been a staple part of officer education for a long time. However, as we know, its inclusion has always been an extra provision and it's only now that the work has become a statutory requirement.

Some institutions coming to this work for the first time will look, quite rightly, to the IMO for guidance and assistance so it is here we will look next.

## **Model Courses**

Model courses offer a pragmatic solution to the challenges of delivering new curricula. They're designed to assist institutes and their teaching staff in organising and introducing new training courses. They're not intended to offer a definitive, prescriptive one-stop solution to curriculum design but rather help (for those who want it) in developing a curriculum which is fit for purpose, works towards the intended and measurable outcomes and of course meets the requirements of STCW.

Over the past year I've been part of the GlobalMET team developing the Model Course intended to deliver the leadership and management training. The field, as we've seen, is vast and the time available for delivery is finite. So, while recognising the demand for model courses, I do have concerns that they might sometimes be used as a short cut to curriculum design. This would be particularly regrettable in the field of leadership and management since the issues are complex and the answers rarely black and white.

Human behaviours are characterised by their unpredictability and so leaders and managers – in education as well as elsewhere – need to be well versed in many shades of grey. Bluntly, there is rarely only one right answer in this field. That's sometimes a difficult concept to grasp particularly for those who want concrete solutions.

GlobalMET submitted a draft model course at Operational Level to IMO in February this year and the Maritime Safety Committee is actually in session this week [May 2012] hopefully signing off on the definitive version. No doubt we'll know more very soon. In the meantime, anything I say below must clearly be provisional and subject to change when we see the results of the MSC's deliberations.

The draft model course is clear in its guidance, saying that institutions should seek to introduce facilitated learning since the course explores issues that demand a learner-centred approach. Unfortunately, this is difficult to reflect in model course outlines and

timetables. To be consistent with other IMO model courses they have to list curricula topic by topic and include indicative timings. While timing is of course important, it's going to be challenging to deal in any depth, with some of the complex issues this course introduces in the allotted time, except in a most superficial and transitory fashion.

So the risk of condoning and encouraging *shallow* learning is real and, if this is to be avoided, institutions will have to work hard to ensure the curriculum is delivered in such a way that it provokes thought and motivates action.

This raises some fundamental points about the efficacy of the model courses themselves. Arguably, their pedagogy is well past their sell-by date and it's been suggested that it may be time to set up some form of review panel to investigate their relevance to 21<sup>st</sup> Century training and education.

However, that's well outside the remit of today's agenda and something perhaps to look forward to in the years to come. For now, we're saddled with the current system and it's the job of us all to make that system work and to generate a return on our investment.

Let's examine some potential models of delivery.

Institutions that embed this work in the overall curriculum (for example, in an officer training scheme) have a great advantage. This is because they can deliver the material in modules where valuable face-to-face time can be used to explore the more challenging parts of the curriculum or where group work and action-learning sets can be co-created to add value. Moreover the entire programme can be themed and linked so that individuals' development takes place within a logical timeline, and is contextualised within their overall study programme.

The time in between modules is crucial and can be used to great effect: assignments and mini-projects can be designed; learners can try out some of the techniques they're learning and report back on the effect (positive and negative); individual learning targets can be negotiated; personal reading encouraged; new knowledge can be gained from relevant computer based training programmes like the ones my company, Videotel, produces; personal reflection can be encouraged and learning logs or portfolios introduced. This blend of learning combines the classroom with an external environment and will help to extend the relevance of the material and stretch the minds of the learners.

This method of delivery is not to be undertaken lightly. It'll require considerable thought and care on the part of the learning institution. Moreover, it can't possibly work without the close support and cooperation of the client and bill-payer. After all it's much the easier option to sit your learners in rows and lecture them and make them sit an exam. But if you're trying to deliver a leadership curriculum then surely you owe it to the learners to be practice what you preach?

This starts with the very physicality of the space you have.

## Q & A

How many teachers or lecturers do we have here today?

Do you still work in traditionally arranged classrooms with chairs and tables in rows and the teacher at the front?

OK. How many people can see the benefits of group-centred learning (whether it's electronics, navigation, maths or leadership?)

Moving to andragogic models like this may not be easy. Some will refuse to engage, dismiss the theory, misconstrue the motives, resist the change, sabotage efforts and retreat behind the safe and comforting wall of didactic delivery.

How many people think they have the influence to change their classroom to promote a more open dynamic and to encourage teamwork, group, *and* individual learning as appropriate?

Well, ladies and gentlemen, if those things look familiar you could be glimpsing an opportunity to go back and make a difference.

We need to excite staff, learners, superintendents, directors, flag state officials – everyone – in the learning process. If you're teaching and you're *not* excited by it then I think some deep reflection is called for - or perhaps a different job. The fertile minds of learners are too important to be left in the hands of half-hearted amateurs. That way leads to disillusionment, cynicism and a lack of engagement that will be hard to turn round.

So much for learners on officer training programmes. What about short courses? Well, if you thought the task so far was difficult, that was a piece of cake compared to how you handle short course delegates.

### **Management and Leadership: Short Courses**

Short courses have their place, of course they do. Their strength lies in delivering bite-sized chunks of skills training that we all need to do our jobs. We've all done dozens over the years – first aid, fire fighting, and so on. However their efficacy when it comes to more cerebral activity – like leadership and management for instance – is less convincing. There's evidence to suggest that managers in some fields dislike this linear approach to development and find it dis-incentivising rather than motivating.

And if we're seriously saying that attendance on a one week management course can change the way you view the world, your place within it and get you to adopt behaviours that will make a change to those around you I would have to disagree. Are learners going to leave the course to proclaim they're qualified managers or leaders (however you'd care to define that)?

Worse, exposing would-be learners to new ideas and then for them to see no effect can be a deeply negative experience. It encourages cynicism and makes it very difficult to motivate that person the next time they're asked to attend such a programme. Using this 'sheep dip' approach to management training is not only expensive but may also be waste of your resources.

So what can be done? One option is to shrug our shoulders, set up the courses and process the learners through the system as we would do for any other short course. We can try and liven up the lectures a bit, encourage group work and even get some discussion going – but please don't get carried away by the idea that that's going to achieve much and that cohorts of transformational leaders will sally forth.

You may reach the odd individual who will now be motivated to go and seek further, but the majority will keep their heads down, follow the course, do the assessment (if there is one) collect their certificate and go back to work. Any change will be imperceptible and the learning attenuation – in other words how quickly they forget - will be quick.

Meanwhile, we will be satisfied on a job apparently well done. The learner's passed the course; the college has delivered the material; the flag state has discharged its responsibility under STCW and of course the employer has ticked the box and so has nothing to fear from ISM or Port State Control.

A warm glow of mutual self-congratulation will settle on the industry – until the next training fad comes along and we start the whole nonsensical rigmarole again. Ladies and gentlemen, in my view, this will not change things very much and we will be back again in another few years asking what went wrong...

Or, we can grasp the nettle, face up to the challenge, be realistic about the problems and try to do something about them. This needs enthusiasm, this needs effort, this needs support from the top-most person in your organisation and this needs resource. In short, it's difficult. But then I maintain strongly that if management and leadership wasn't difficult there wouldn't be any need to employ you in the first place.

There are elegant ways in which short management programmes can be constructed which will be more efficacious, mutually satisfactory, which will use your resources more efficiently and, at the same time, meet your statutory requirements. The process doesn't start with curriculum input, but at the end - with your requirements and needs. Before any planning is carried out we need to know what you want to do and why you want to do it. And of course the answers may be similar across similar fleets, there may even be generic responses – but only when we ask the questions will we know the answers.

Only then can we move to design. It's at this stage that we need to be innovative and fresh with our thinking. To take one example – do we really want to use up even an hour of precious face-to-face time on a college-based course with imparting a 'knowledge of related international maritime conventions, recommendations and national legislation'? And how can we do that if we have five nationalities represented on the cohort.

An alternative could be to enrol the learners using an on-line Learning Management System (LMS) such as the one recently launched by Videotel. The LMS can be used interactively to deliver as much content as you want before you even meet the learner. It can be precisely tailored to your requirements; it would of course cover the syllabus prescribed in the model course; it could include flag-state specific legislation; it could even include employer- or ship-type specific material. The potential is limitless. Curriculum content can be delivered, knowledge acquisition can be assessed and evaluated and the learners can prepare themselves in advance so that when they *do*

attend face-to-face they're primed and ready for all those sorts of activities that can only be done in that environment.

What do I mean? How about a short demonstration?

**- If time, change management exercise -**

Perhaps a bit gimmicky – but it underlines a serious point. Leadership, management and personal development are concepts intrinsically interwoven with emotion and feelings. Some very famous leaders may deny that (watch the movie about Lady Thatcher) but the evidence is stacked against them. So, we could spend days discussing delegation, teamwork, challenge and change management - but unless we *feel* what it means to do these things, the experience is hollow and the learning shallow.

Having experienced perhaps a couple of days of face-to-face facilitation the learners can return to their work to try out the things they have learned and reflect on the outcomes. This evidence is brought back perhaps for another face-to-face encounter where it can be used to plan future actions.

Learner support during such a programme will promote success and this again is where the LMS can help. Learners may be required to keep learning logs or portfolios which they bring back at intervals. Assignments can be designed and officers can even be supported by coaching or mentoring during the intervals between modules.

This blended approach to learning can be more difficult (and expensive) to create. But it's certainly not some fanciful pipedream. It reflects the model I use in my own practice with officers of every rank and which is considered effective both by the delegates themselves and, of course, the companies who use it. In industries ashore, where the logistics are much easier of course, this blend of on-line, personal learning and facilitated sessions is commonplace.

## **Conclusion**

Professional educationalists should be at the cutting edge. We should use our knowledge and expertise to influence those who make up the rules. We should work within the current system to bring it alive, to inject radical thinking into its interpretation so that we design a learning environment that will make a difference. Above all, we need to promote a shift in the focus of our endeavour.

It's not the IMO Model Course that should take centre stage, neither is it the flag state bureaucrat, nor the shipping company superintendent, nor the teacher or the conference speaker. No, ladies and gentlemen, the only proper focus should be on the learner. How do we define learning? How do we evaluate it? How do we measure it?

If we change our mindsets so the learner becomes our over-riding concern then all else follows and these questions will be resolved. I hope you agree with me that the Harvard Business Review should look again at its 50 tips and put learning where it belongs – at Number 1.

When you go back to your schools and colleges, what are you going to do that moves you along that road to learner success?

