MESPAS – How fleet management systems enhance competitiveness

Modern fleet management systems are designed to manage and oversee technical installations. But more importantly, they also play an important role in containing operational costs, improving efficiency and enhance competitiveness. This can be best achieved with a system that offers the full range of fleet management software, and at the same time eliminates a great deal of IT related tasks.

Gino Fiore, Marketing & Sales Director and Tommy Fliski, Area Sales Manager of MESPAS AG, Zürich presented the company during a recent visit to Norway. The company's type class-approved software mespas R5 covers all major functionalities of modern marine fleet management. The uniqueness of the solution lies in the centralised database that makes use of a multi-tenant architecture.

The company was established in 2004 by ex marine- and software engineers with a view to develop a drastically more efficient way for managing marine fleets. Ship managers should be able to concentrate on their core business, while being able to count on a system that lets them manage their fleet in an efficient and cost effective way.

Importantly, the fleet management system should be easy-to-use so that all users onboard or ashore not only work with the system because they have to, but because it makes their lives easier.

As an answer to all these requirements, mespas R5 was developed a few years ago. The system comprises a set of modern fleet management software modules in combination with a comprehensive database that makes use of a multi-tenant architecture.

So far the German market has been the most important one for MESPAS. The company is now also well known in other European countries, like Greece, Italy, Cyprus and also in Asia.

With Tommy Fliski onboard the MESPAS team as of April 1st 2010 as new Area Sales Manager concentration will also be on the Nordic countries and North America.

Benefits of multi-tenant architecture

Traditional fleet management software and one based on a multi-tenant architecture differ in two important aspects:

A multi-tenant system features a server infrastructure for a large customer base, managed centrally and in parallel, versus for each customer separately. It features a comprehensive, up-to-date database that comprises master data, i.e. generic data, such as accurate machinery specifications, supplier information, manuals, etc.

This generic data exists once only in the database, regardless of how often that information (e.g. a part or a manual) is linked to various clients or vessels. Furthermore, the master data is congruent with their original diction, meaning no more variations of spelling due to incorrect data entering. This is important for data analysis across the fleet, integrated procurement, and seamless communication within the company as well as with suppliers.

When adding to the database a client whose equipment isn't already part of the system, MESPAS adds this equipment, including spare part lists, manuals, maintenance plans and other documents. This is all done before the client will start working with mespas R5.

In general, OEMs are very cooperative in providing data. Firstly, it is for their benefit, too, if equipment manufactured by them is well maintained. Secondly, OEMs benefit from a flawless, efficient communication with their clientele (e.g. ship owners or ship managers).

Users of the system do no longer have to type information or copy it from some other source; they can simply choose the correct data from a drop-down menu. This ensures, for example, a seamless handling of purchase requests; even more so, as both supplier and customer use the same software (mespas R5 is free for suppliers with currently over 7,000 suppliers in the system).

And thirdly, OEMs prefer for their customers to work with data that is completely in sync with their own data. Not least because accurate, comparable data about their equipment's wear and tear behaviour from a whole host of customers may prove to be very valuable business information.

With mespas R5, paper documentation is already digitalized and both supply as well as demand side speak the same language. Thus the main aims of the ShipDex standard are already fulfilled.

Comparability of the data

Other weighty advantages of a centralized database approach are the comparability of the data, the system's easy handling, and its scalability. Benchmarking and analysing data across the whole fleet is as simple as running a report. Mespas R5 was developed with the users in mind.

The bottom line

To sum it up, the benefits of fleet management system based on a global, centralized database are fourfold:

Significant savings in operational costs

MESPAS' Tommy Fliski, Area Sales Manager (left) and Gino Fiore, Marketing & Sales Director photographed while in Bergen.

Gains in efficiency
Compliance with regulations
Enhanced competitiveness.

One of the greatest sources of cost savings and increases in efficiency results, however, from outsourcing IT related tasks such as backups, hosting servers, providing security, implementing software updates and – last but not least, entering master data. This means, ship companies are finally able to concentrate on what they do best: manage their fleet instead of allocating resources to non-core issues.

With mespas R5, being a very reasonably priced system, the return on investment often can be realized within a short period of time (usually within a year or two) of working with it, thus helping companies not only to prepare for an economic upswing thanks to enhanced competitiveness and cost control, but also to master the current difficult times thanks to more efficient operations and operational cost savings.

The characteristics of the mespas R5 system are:

Robust and secure infrastructure
Comparable data across the whole fleet for benchmarking and analyses
Reports available at fingertips
Upon synchronization, all users (ship or shore) work with the same up-to-date information
Efficient procurement and spare parts management across the whole fleet
Software updates available automatically upon release
Manuals and other releases from OEMs or other stakeholders (e.g. IMO) are linked to relevant parts and processes, and are available immediately upon publication
Comprehensive set of services such as entering company specific data, training, installation
Extremely competitive price, since services and data are all managed on one server only
The customer pays a fixed annual fee

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Main anchor of the «Jahre Viking» placed on museum

A 36 ton anchor belonging to a historic ship, once the world's largest, has been transported from Gujarat and has just arrived in Hong Kong, to be placed as the centrepiece in the new Hong Kong Maritime Museum.

Wilhelmsen Ships Service Hong Kong was approached by the Norwegian ambassador in Guangzhou in early February to arrange the transportation of the anchor of the *Jahre Viking/Seawise Giant* which was scrapped in India this year.

The ULCC (Ultra Large Crude Carrier) was the world's longest ship until she was beached to be broken up after 35 years afloat. Gifted to the Hong Kong Maritime Museum by an anonymous donor this anchor will recognise the involvement of Norwegian shipping in Hong Kong waters since the early 19th century. The transportation of the anchor from India to Hong Kong, was sponsored by the government of Norway.

Built for Mr CY Tung in 1979 and subsequently sold by his family, the ship was owned and operated by Norwegian shipping interests for the rest of its life.

The anchor of the *Jahre Viking/Seawise Giant*, has 20 links of chain, is 7m long in the shank, 4.45m across the flukes and 1.13m thick. This represented a considerable challenge to shift from the beaches of Gujarat to the Government Shipyard in Hong Kong.

The India office of Wilhelmsen Ships Service arranged for the purchase, documentation and land transportation of the anchor onboard a 40 foot flat rack container from the scrapyard in Alang to Pipanav port and thereon onboard the *Nedloyd Barentz* to Hong Kong. The anchor arrived in Hong Kong on 17 June and was transported to the Government Shipyard for storage by Wilhelmsen Ships Service Hong Kong using a crane barge.

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