

SINGAPORE maritimeweek[®] 2024



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Singapore Maritime Week 2024: Where the action is

It's full steam ahead from this point forward.



Jaime Niam
jaime@nutgraf.com.sg

Singapore Maritime Week (SMW) 2024's theme, *Actions Meet Ambition*, echoes last year's *Ambition Meets Action*, but with a seemingly minor difference. The emphasis on action this time is significant, and change in the industry is clearly afoot.

Deals, agreements, and partnerships were sealed as the global maritime community pledged to change and move the industry into greener waters. Groundbreaking announcements were also made throughout the week, including during Singapore's Minister for Transport Mr Chee Hong Tat's speech at the opening ceremony. One initiative he raised was the establishment of the Maritime Energy Training Facility, which aims to close the skills gap for the safe operation of new maritime vessels and position Singapore as a leading maritime training hub.

"The twin challenges of digitalisation and decarbonisation faced by the maritime industry cannot be tackled effectively by any single country or company alone... Together, we can support one another as we embark on this exciting journey and let our dreams set sail," he said.

The international maritime community showed up where the action was too, with SMW 2024 witnessing a turnout of more than 10,000 visitors including delegates from close to 80 countries, representing port and government administrations, international organisations, research institutes, trade associations, unions, and companies. International Maritime Organization's new Secretary-General Mr Arsenio Dominguez was one of them – and he was intent on making an impression from the start.

He set the tone for the week with a dynamic opening speech, issuing a firm mandate for the

"Two things that struck me are how big Singapore is in terms of its presence in the maritime world, and how geared up it is to take on new challenges."

Mr Harry Corkerry
Senior Director of Business Development
Windward Maritime



Singapore's Minister for Transport Mr Chee Hong Tat said that the country will focus on innovation, talent, and reliable operations as it continues to grow as a global maritime hub.

Mr Arsenio Dominguez, Secretary-General of the IMO, stressed the importance of taking swift action to meet the maritime sector's ambitious decarbonisation timeline.

industry to move beyond self-congratulation for the progress it has already made and instead focus on taking decisive action to meet its goals.

And on Day 3, he threw down the gauntlet. "I am ready to push you whenever I think you are not committed enough, not delivering enough. It is a challenge for both of us. You challenge me, and I'll challenge you back," he said, pushing organisations to deliver on their sustainability commitments.

Panellists echoed this urgency to act during a diverse range of discussions across the week on the topics of digitalisation, decarbonisation, supply chain resilience, manpower, and more.

While it is customary for SMW to feature start-ups eager to rejuvenate the centuries-old shipping sector with new innovations, this year's inaugural three-day maritime showcase EXPO@SMW took it to the next level, giving close to 50 participating companies a chance to network and share their solutions.

Start-ups also had their five minutes of fame when they pitched their ideas to venture capitalists in a do-or-die mission on the Tech Stage.

"Two things that struck me are how big Singapore is in terms of its presence in the maritime world, and how geared up it is to take on new challenges. Coupled with that is the level of innovation that we are seeing around the exhibition," said Mr Harry Corkerry, Senior Director of Business Development at Artificial Intelligence company Windward Maritime.

It is with a sense of optimism that the conference draws to a close for speakers and participants alike, some of whom are already looking forward to the next edition of SMW.

Said Mr Roger Charles, Executive Director for the Institutional Banking Group, Sustainability at DBS Bank, "I've been coming to (SMW) for many years now... Today, I feel that there has been some progress made." ■

SMW 2024 IN NUMBERS

10k+
ATTENDEES

850+
DELEGATES AT SMW 2024
OPENING CEREMONY

~80
COUNTRIES
AND REGIONS
REPRESENTED

100+
SPEAKERS

~50
CO-LOCATED EVENTS

30+
PANELS &
PRESENTATIONS

700+
ATTENDEES AT
FIRST-EVER 8RO
(CLASSIFICATION SOCIETIES)
RECEPTION

∞
VALUE FROM
NETWORKING
&
FACE-TO-FACE
INTERACTIONS

NUMBER OF PLASTIC
BOTTLES PROVIDED:
ZERO

~50
EXHIBITORS AT
EXPO@SMW

1ST
EVER EXPO@SMW



Gold Sponsors



Silver Sponsors



Bronze Sponsors





Actions
meet **Ambition**



It is apt that SMW 2024 ended off with a focus on manpower, said Mr Baey Yam Keng, Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Singapore's Ministry of Transport and Ministry of Sustainability and the Environment.

People, the wind in maritime's sails

The industry is charting new strategies to attract more on board and keep them for the long haul.



Jaime Niam
jaime@nutgraf.com.sg

No progress without people. This was the overarching theme of the Maritime Manpower Forum on Friday, which rounded off Singapore Maritime Week 2024. As the maritime industry sails towards the future, it cannot leave behind a key engine of its transformation: manpower development.

"A skilled maritime workforce forms the foundation and growth engine for many areas we delved into this week, from decarbonisation and digitalisation to maritime services," said Mr Baey Yam Keng, Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Singapore's Ministry of Transport and Ministry of Sustainability and the Environment, in his opening speech.

He charted three main pathways to develop and equip Singapore's maritime workforce with emerging and enduring skill sets.

The first is attracting a global workforce of young professionals with diverse skill sets to join and remain in the industry. Maritime is often seen as a traditional industry, and building a sustainable talent pipeline can be a challenge.

To this end, the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) has broadened the MaritimeONE scholarships led by Singapore Maritime Foundation (SMF), as well as the Global Internship Award. These initiatives will support education and training in areas beyond traditional maritime domains, like computing, cybersecurity, and sustainability.

The refreshed Career Conversion Programme for Sea Transport Professionals and Associates, which lowers barriers of entry for mid-career professionals, has also seen keen interest from more than 20 companies.

Second, future-proofing the sector's workforce through upskilling and reskilling in emerging areas is crucial. Last month, the MPA-SMF Joint Office for Talent and Skills was established to raise the quality of training for seafaring and shore-based jobs. Singapore also hopes to be a trailblazer in maritime education, with the Singapore Maritime Academy introducing the region's first MPA-approved training course on the safe and efficient handling of methanol as a fuel.

Lastly, there is a need to redesign jobs to enable multiple fresh, diverse, and exciting career pathways within the industry. This allows people to move from technical and operational roles to strategic and leadership ones, such as a vessel operator becoming an energy portfolio manager.

"(Job) redesign lowers the barriers of entry with more precise identification of the key skills required, compared to traditional entry requirements which may require candidates to have long seafaring experience, thereby increasing their accessibility," said Mr Baey.

Mr Goh Jia Yong, Partner, People Consulting, Ernst & Young Advisory, also shared his perspective on these issues.

His presentation, Maritime Workforce Transformation: Learning from Maritime and Other Sectors, outlined how the needs and aspirations of the maritime workforce have

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changed significantly. The industry's outlook on skills and job roles must thus change accordingly.

"If you ask any young millennial or Gen Z what they want to do in five years' time, they cannot give you an answer," said Mr Goh.

"They are concerned about the here and now... and having the flexibility to decide what they want to do at any point in their careers, rather than being pitched the idea of a 30-year career."

Importantly, lifelong learning and job redesign cannot simply happen at an organisational level – it must be an industry-wide endeavour. Central to this is assuring people that the experience they acquire in one organisation will help them succeed in the next.

"People don't join jobs, they join careers," he said. ■

TACKLING THE MANPOWER CRUNCH



Instead of only relying on hiring talent, Hong Lam Marine has begun training its own staff, said Ms Caroline Yang, its CEO and President of the Singapore Shipping Association.

Retrain and retain to keep pace amid talent shortage

Internal talent might be the answer to attrition and manpower shortfalls in the maritime sector.

Puah Rui Xian

In January 2024, Ms Caroline Yang took the plunge. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of bunker craft operator Hong Lam Marine set up a department dedicated to advancing the organisation's environmental, social, and governance (ESG) goals – a rarity for small and medium-sized enterprises.

This department started out with only two employees who had volunteered themselves. To them, Ms Yang, who is also the President of the Singapore Shipping Association, said: "This is the year I will train you."

Her experience speaks to the reality of companies in the maritime sector as they work to keep pace with the industry's transformation. Amid a talent shortage, more firms are looking to bridge skills gaps in digitalisation, data analytics, decarbonisation, and cybersecurity by tapping internal talent pools.

Speaking at the Maritime Manpower Forum on the final day of Singapore Maritime Week, panellist Mr Anderson Ee, Director of the Manufacturing and Connectivity Division of statutory board Workforce Singapore, said: "Be bold. Reskill and redesign your existing workforce."

"By doing so, you open up (opportunities for) new talent and new capabilities that you always think can only be recruited from the outside."

SMALL STEPS, NOT BIG MOVES

To retrain and retain the maritime workforce, leaders need to understand what employees want, said Mr Mark Charman, founder and CEO of Faststream Recruitment, in a speech at the forum.

"People want to see constant progress in their careers. Your most effective reward strategy may well be to pay more attention to your people," he said, quipping that "you don't always need to pay more, just pay more attention".

This could be as simple as regular check-ins with managers and ample learning opportunities for talent to develop in their careers. But it could also come in the form of identifying synergies between ship- and shore-based roles.

Seafarers have practical knowledge that start-ups lack, even though many start-ups develop technologies that are meant for seafarers, said Mr Nakul Malhotra, Vice-President of the Emerging Opportunities Portfolio (Maritime Services) at global maritime group Wilhelmsen. This presents a "huge opportunity" for seafarers to deploy their expertise in a different capacity.

"At the end of the day, it is about our people," said Ms Yang. "How do we make sure it is a just transition for our seafarers, that we truly leave no one behind?" ■



People want to know how an organisation can help advance their careers, said Mr Mark Charman, founder and CEO of Faststream Recruitment.

Rethinking recruitment: a more appealing maritime

With the industry facing difficulties in attracting talent, it is time to take a new approach.

Angeline Cheong

Demand for maritime talent remains strong, but organisations are finding recruitment tougher, said Mr Mark Charman, founder and Chief Executive Officer of Faststream Recruitment, during the Maritime Manpower Forum on Friday.

The maritime and shipping recruitment agency manages almost 3,000 vacancies annually, a figure which has seen little to no change in recent years. What has changed, he noted, is how much more time-consuming and competitive it is for organisations to fill these positions these days.

To solve these hiring woes, the maritime sector needs to change its hiring approach.

"It's no longer enough... to (only) consider what prospective employees can do for (you)," said Mr Charman. "It's much more about what you, as an organisation, can do for the employee."

This means understanding the mindset and priorities of the younger generation, who could be looking for greater meaning in their work.

Mr Nakul Malhotra, Vice-President of the Emerging Opportunities Portfolio (Maritime Services) at

global maritime group Wilhelmsen, put it simply: "The next generation of talent is coalescing around purpose."

Despite "being the backbone of global trade", maritime does not "feature in the top 10 of any multi-industry evaluation ever", he pointed out. In other words, the sector lacks a compelling narrative.

With the industry's urgent goals towards decarbonisation and digitalisation, it is important to tell the story right. "We have to articulate our purpose much clearer and be more sensitive to (the next generation's) needs," he added.

Maritime companies need to go back to the basics. Job roles and descriptions need to be redefined to not only entice those within the sector but also those outside it, proposed Mr Anderson Ee, Director of the Manufacturing and Connectivity Division at Workforce Singapore.

Ultimately, it is about finding the right fit for the organisation and the industry. "When thinking about attracting talent, it's not about getting the most people. It's about getting the attention of the right people," said Mr Charman. ■

Opportunities abound for youth in the maritime sector

Maritime offers both breadth and depth of experience, say panellists.



Chen Jei Min
jeimin@nutgraf.com.sg

When Singapore Management University (SMU) law undergraduate Ms Evangeline Koh told her professors that she was looking for an internship that would give her experience in a range of areas from dispute to banking, and sustainability, the answer she got was unexpected.

“Why don’t you try the maritime industry, you can do everything there,” they told her.

That was four years ago. Today, Ms Koh is a MaritimeONE Scholarship recipient – an initiative spearheaded by the Singapore Maritime Foundation. Upon graduation, she is keen to practise maritime law.

“I really enjoyed maritime law when I started,” said Ms Koh, who was speaking at a panel on career opportunities for youth in maritime at Youth@SMW. And part of the reason is the wide exposure that she has been given at SMU. Among other things, she went on field trips to St John’s Island to observe marine research initiatives and studied sustainable ocean law and governance.

Such opportunities are plentiful in the industry, said Mr Kenneth Lim, Assistant Chief Executive (Industry & Transformation) at the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore.

For instance, those who are interested in the nexus between technology and maritime can turn to PIER71™, a programme which supports local start-ups.

“The maritime ecosystem is here,” he added, noting that many potential investors from ship owners to operators are based in Singapore.

Agreeing, another panellist Mr Norhakim Sanwan, co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of maritime tech start-up Mascon Technologies, said that the opportunities in the sector will only expand. “The shift and change in technology also brings opportunities for the younger generation,” he said.

Likewise, Mr Chia Yujin, Head of Sustainability, Decarbonisation and Fuels at Pacific International Lines, urged young people to take on the challenge of working in maritime, noting that the pathways ahead are not fixed. “Where you start from (in the sector might) not be where you will end up,” he said.

“Maritime is (a) very international (industry). You are dealing with international issues. I think it is exciting and opens up a lot of opportunities for (the youth),” said Mr Lim. ■

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Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore



(Left) Ms Evangeline Koh, law undergraduate at Singapore Management University and Ms Chan Lin Si, maritime studies undergraduate at Nanyang Technological University, highlighted the wide range of opportunities in the sector youth can tap into.

Career advice for youth: seek purpose, growth, and impact

Victoria Lim

When he made the decision to leave the army as the head of personnel planning to join the private sector in 2014, Mr Goh Jia Yong was guided by three considerations: alignment with personal purpose, growth opportunities, and potential impact.

Now a Partner, People Consulting, at Ernst & Young Advisory, he advises young people to do the same when deciding their career path to ensure a fulfilling and rewarding one.

To find purpose, Mr Goh urged his young audience at the second edition of Youth@SMW held on Friday to tackle challenges in the industry they are eyeing. These could include the green transition and sustainability, use of Artificial Intelligence to solve problems, and improvement of connectivity and trade.

To identify growth opportunities, he advised the youth to embrace experiences that offer global exposure and cultivate multi-disciplinary skills in an ever-evolving professional landscape.

Mr Goh also stressed the importance of making an impact. “If I were a fresh graduate, I would hope to eventually become a titan of the industry, to be a thought leader, and be seen as someone who contributes to the value of the industry.”

The maritime industry, he noted, is ideal for applying these considerations. With the increasing focus on decarbonisation, digitalisation, and security, there are multiple pathways for both sea- and shore-based professionals.

“If I were to join the maritime sector today, I know that my employers, the government, and stakeholders will contribute to the deepening of my enduring skills, as well as the broadening of my emerging skills,” he concluded. ■