

# SINGAPORE maritimeweek<sup>®</sup> 2022



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in the war for talent**

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From left: Caroline Yang, President, Singapore Shipping Association and Chief Executive of Hong Lam Marine; Low Peck Kem, Chief HR Officer and Advisor (Workforce Development), Public Service Division, Prime Minister's Office; Lau Yin Cheng, Strategic Advisor; Sophie Smith, Chief HR Officer of BW Group; and Joshua Lee, Regional HR Director – Asia at Hapag-Lloyd.



# In The Battle For Talent, Maritime Players Should Adapt To Winds Of Change

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From the rise of the gig economy to changing employee expectations, the COVID-19 pandemic has wrought major workforce changes across all industries.

This comes at a crucial time for the maritime sector as it pursues ambitious goals like decarbonisation and digitalisation. Adapting to these changes is thus necessary to boost the industry's appeal, said panellists at the Maritime Manpower Forum yesterday.

"Motivational forces that are compelling people to give their best selves to their work are changing, particularly for the young people," said Sophie Smith, Chief Human Resources Officer at shipping

“As managers, we play a role in ensuring that we are building good competencies and skill sets. At some point, this talent is going to flow somewhere into the maritime sector.”

Joshua Lee  
Regional HR Director - Asia,  
Hapag-Lloyd

company BW Group. "There is quite a profound workforce shift happening."

She was one of four experts speaking at a panel that discussed the sector's manpower challenges, future manpower trends, and ways to attract more talent.

For instance, Ms Smith noted that employees now regard organisational values and workplace camaraderie as bigger pull factors over traditional incentives like pay. There is also a real appetite for skills diversification and development as job hunters seek employers who can stretch and train them.

But the maritime industry has so far been sluggish in responding to these changes, observed Joshua Lee, Regional HR Director - Asia at container shipping company Hapag-Lloyd.

"I don't find conversations on talent management to be very robust in the maritime sector," he said. "As managers, we play a role in ensuring that we are building good competencies and skill sets. At some point, this talent is going to flow somewhere into the maritime sector."

To this end, panellists noted that there are a few key things that the maritime industry can do to attract talent.

First, there is a need to hit the ground to find out what makes the maritime industry attractive. Speaking to the sector's veterans can be a good place to start, noted Low Peck Kem, Chief HR Officer and Advisor (Workforce Development) of the Public Service Division in the Prime Minister's Office.

"Ask them why they are staying with this industry. What excites them about it? What is the passion that is driving them?" she suggested. "Then build on those value propositions and use them to attract people into the industry."

She emphasised that companies also need to take a strategic look at their workforce plans to make them-

selves more agile and adaptable. "At the end of the day, it's the organisations that will benefit," she said.

Next, the industry can burnish its brand by crafting an exciting narrative that will turn heads, Strategic Advisor Lau Yin Cheng proposed. During the discussion, Mr Lee of Hapag-Lloyd had noted that there is still a perception of shipping as an "old-school" sector.

But with the industry having enjoyed two stellar years of record revenues and soaring profits, there is a golden opportunity to change this backward image.

"We need to capitalise on this – (and) make sure that during good times, you work together to have a narrative to encourage people to join," said Mr Lau.

One possible narrative that may attract more to join, said Ms Smith, is the impact that people can make working in the maritime sector.

"Maritime is the pulse of the world and that is a huge purpose," she said. "Amplifying messages, such as the environmental progress the industry is making... are big purposeful statements that may excite people working in this industry."

Echoing this, Caroline Yang, President of the Singapore Shipping Association and Chief Executive of Hong Lam Marine, believes the maritime industry presents "amazing opportunities" for meaningful work. "You cannot find a more purposeful industry than maritime, with clear pathways for digitalisation and decarbonisation," said Ms Yang, who moderated the panel.

Lastly, the battle to secure talent is not only about seeking ability, but passion too, said Mr Lee.

"We're a niche and unique industry," he said. "It's not just about attracting talent per se, but what kinds of talent we are bringing in. We have to bring in people who are passionate about the industry – we have to attract the right people." ■

# Talent Central To Realising Singapore's Maritime Vision

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Singapore is investing deeply into strong talent development to attract and retain a multi-skilled workforce – a key focus of the country's push to transform its maritime sector, said Senior Minister of State for Transport Chee Hong Tat yesterday.

That transformation is empowered by tripartite partnerships, which offer crucial collaborations that support the industry, said Mr Chee. As emerging challenges like digitalisation and decarbonisation surface, companies and workers can tap new opportunities to create a more efficient and sustainable sector.

In his keynote address at the Maritime Manpower Forum, Mr Chee said: "The key to surviving stormy seas and navigating uncharted waters is to build well-equipped ships and to have a well-trained crew."

This comes as the refreshed Sea Transport Industry Transformation Map 2025 was launched by Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat earlier this week. The roadmap lays out updated strategies to catalyse innovation, drive productivity improvements, and enhance the skills of the maritime workforce.

Talent is central to realising this vision. It is therefore imperative to offer rewarding careers with ample opportunities for continuous learning and skills upgrading for both seafaring and shore-based roles, said Mr Chee.

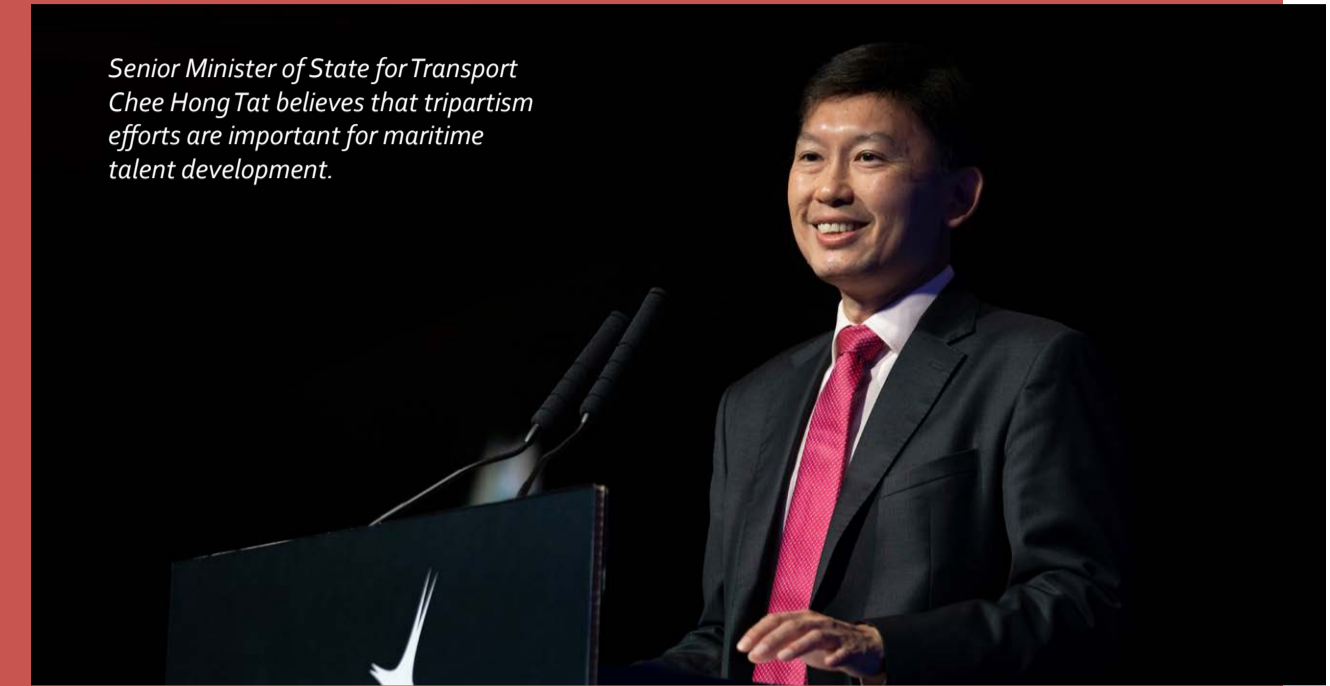
For one thing, the industry is also making compelling offers to encourage more Singaporeans to take up seafaring as a career. Students interested in entering the sector can enrol in Institutes of Higher Learning (IHLs) like the Singapore Maritime Academy at Singapore Polytechnic to take related courses such as a Diploma in Nautical Studies or Diploma in Marine Engineering.

More collaborations with IHLs aim to grow the talent pool. For example, Nanyang Technological University has expanded the intake for its Bachelor of Science in Maritime Studies by more than 30 per cent, and is aiming for a cohort size of 120 in 2022.

MPA and its tripartite partners also recently launched the Sail Milestone Achievement Programme (SailMAP) to provide each seafarer with up to S\$50,000 when they attain key career milestones, including a sign-on bonus of S\$10,000.

Tying these efforts back to the conversation of lifelong learning, Mr Chee noted: "The incentive

Senior Minister of State for Transport Chee Hong Tat believes that tripartite efforts are important for maritime talent development.



payments help to support their income when they are not sailing, so that they can focus on upgrading their seafaring skills and knowledge during these periods."

International exposure is also essential for Singapore maritime workers to take on senior leadership roles, he added. The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore's (MPA) Overseas Attachment Scheme and Global Talent Programme encourages companies to provide such opportunities to local workers. Between 2019 and 2021, 84 local talents have gone on overseas attachments.

A main area of focus is the development of networks and talent in this region. MPA will enhance co-funding for these programmes by increasing the quantum of support by 20 per cent for employees sent to ASEAN countries.

"We are keen to groom a pipeline of local talents who have a good understanding of South-east Asia and can develop strong professional networks with their foreign partners," said Mr Chee. "They will play a key role in helping their companies to benefit from our region's dynamism and growth."

Meanwhile, the inaugural Maritime Transformation & Innovation Programme (MTIP), held during the Singapore Maritime Week this year, brought together 20 senior officers in maritime administrations from 15 countries to share insights on transformational strategies and change management.

These talent development efforts are driven by tripartite partnerships between the government, employers, and the labour movement, which is "an important enabler", he added. Maritime companies must continue working with the government and unions to transform workplaces through redesigning jobs to "make every job a better job".

The CrewSafe audit programme, created in late 2020 to develop safe crew change protocols such as quarantining and temperature-taking during the pandemic, is testament to tripartism's strength. It is backed by the Shipping Tripartite Alliance Resilience (STAR) Fund, the first global tripartite initiative to facilitate safe crew changes.

"Crew change still remains a global challenge. Thus, the collaboration of efforts not only on the local front but (also) on the international level is required," said Michael Phoon, Executive Director of the Singapore Shipping Association.

As Singapore tackles the economic headwinds, the quality of people and the strong trust and relationship between tripartite partners is a competitive advantage, said Mr Chee.

"I am confident that if we continue to build on this foundation of trust and invest in developing our people, both growing our local workforce and also remaining open to complementary foreign talent, Maritime Singapore can sail further and grow to greater heights for many more years to come," he added. ■

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SMW 2022

# FRIENDSHIPS, NETWORKS, AND RESOLUTIONS

It was a week to remember. Government officials, industry captains, and technologists gathered to discuss critical challenges facing the industry. The higher number of participants at the physical events for this year's SMW signaled growing confidence that the industry is tackling the biggest issues of our time.

More importantly, they struck up new resolutions as many pledged to work together to create a brighter and greener future for the maritime industry. The event may have concluded but the conversations will go on as companies and organisations, big and small, chart a new path to transform for growth.



## Competency Certified

For 15 cadets of various shipping experience, graduating from their respective Certificate of Competency (Special Limit) programmes at the Maritime Manpower Forum yesterday marked a milestone in their careers. The training programme prepares seafarers, who must have a valid Certificate of Competency (CoC), to serve onboard ships operating within "Special Limits" – 30 nautical miles off Singapore waters.

A total of nine Deck Officers and three Marine Engineers graduated from the CoC Class 5 (Special Limit) programme. Meanwhile, two Chief Engineers and one Captain graduated from the CoC Class 4 (Special Limit) programme.

The CoC (Special Limit) programmes were initiated by the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore, the National Trades Union Congress' ezi, and the then-Workforce Development Agency in 2011 to deepen the skills of seafarers and provide structured career pathways to help them progress in the maritime industry.

# To Attract Young Seafarers, Fix The Image And Pain Points Of The Job

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Seafaring as a career has long struggled with an image issue, even as shipping is widely acknowledged as the backbone of international trade.

But the COVID-19 pandemic, for all its challenges, did make the world take notice of seafarers and their role as key essential workers, said panellists at a session discussing how to promote seafaring as a viable career.

"Speaking from the perspective of employers, we possibly have been guilty of focusing too much on the negatives," said Francesco Gargiulo, Chief Executive Officer of the International Maritime Employers' Council, referring to news on seafarers being stranded on ships due to border closures.

"But at the same time, there has been an emphasis on how important the role of the seafarer is for globalisation in general... Let's think about what the pandemic did to create visibility for our (profession)."

Weighing in, Mary Liew, General Secretary of the Singapore Maritime Officers' Union and Vice President of the International Transport Workers' Federation, added: "We turned the (pandemic) crisis into an opportunity, and we made everybody sit up and (notice) that seafarers are key essential workers."

Yet, the profession still suffers from an "image deficit", as recruiting and retaining talent is a perennial challenge, she noted. Companies here also face difficulties attracting Singaporeans to the industry as "there are more attractive, more visible options" elsewhere.

The industry can also do more to accelerate the training for young seafarers, she said. In her chats with young cadets, many have cited being out at

sea for prolonged periods as a downside of the job.

"Many of them aspire to become a sea captain or a chief engineer. But it takes them seven, eight years, some even longer. And really, (to be) away from their loved ones, the sacrifices that they make is really quite a journey," she said.

"Is there any way that we can tap technology and digitalisation, or simulators, to help them to speed up their training process?"

The waiting time in between assignments is another issue for seafarers. "Many actually wait longer than (expected), and they have to join the gig economy – some go into food delivery – to support their family," she noted.

Citing the experience of Japanese shipping and logistics company NYK, which has a cadet training programme that allows young seafarers to rotate around ship and shore positions, Ms Liew called on industry partners to work with unions to create a clear progression pathway for trainees.

"Let's tell them, 'Hey, you can progress from sea to shore, and there is a career path for you,'" she said.

Agreeing with Ms Liew, Esben Poulsson, Chairman of the International Chamber of Shipping, said skills learnt out at sea are valuable and can be transferred to shore-based jobs. He started his shipping career in 1966 at the age of 17 as a seafarer.



The skills that a seafarer acquire out at sea are valuable and highly transferable, said Esben Poulsson, Chairman of the International Chamber of Shipping (middle). Alongside him at the discussion are Mary Liew, General Secretary of the Singapore Maritime Officers' Union and Vice President of the International Transport Workers' Federation (right) and moderator Michael Phoon, Executive Director of the Singapore Shipping Association.

"The impression (seafaring) made on me at that time would stay with me forever. And I have a better understanding of what life at sea is like, than someone who has not done that," he said.

While the global competition for talent is tight, Mr Poulsson pointed to the diversity of the maritime industry as a unique trait that offers employees a multitude of opportunities.

"The key point is that shipping is many, many things. It is shipbroking, it is operations, it is liners, it is law, there are so many aspects to it," he said.

Wrapping up the discussion with a message to seafarers, Ms Liew said: "There are good opportunities out there. With your seafaring experience, seafarers – you have an ecosystem of opportunities before you." ■

# Can Shipping Get To Zero? Yes, We Can

Global shipping has just less than three decades to get to the ambitious targets set by the International Maritime Organization for carbon emissions to be halved from 2008 levels and eliminated within the century. Yet, there is still no clear direction in sight. The question is: can we actually do it?

Jacqueline Woo speaks to Bo Cerup-Simonsen, Chief Executive Officer of the Mærsk Mc-Kinney Møller Center for Zero Carbon Shipping, who shared why getting to zero is possibly the biggest challenge the industry is facing in all its history and his vision for its future.

**Maritime players agree that decarbonisation is a priority, but change appears to be slow. What is the hold-up?**

**Mr Cerup-Simonsen:** I believe the industry has shown over and over again that it is willing to, and can change. It's just that the change this time around is deeper and wider than we have seen for decades, maybe ever.

So what is holding us back? We're looking at something which requires great, systemic changes on a grand scale – in terms of legislation and investments – yet it is hard to fully comprehend the implications. For a lot of people, it would be irresponsible to just jump at it and create risks for their company or country. It is also the fact that a whole value chain has to move. Whether you're an energy provider or a port or a shipowner – you cannot do it alone.

**The industry is working on a very short timeline. Yet, thousands of ships will continue to sail on conventional fuels even in the next 20 years. Can we do it?**

**Mr Cerup-Simonsen:** Yes, we can. From a social, technical, and economic perspective, it is the right thing to do, and it's possible to do it. Once the sector decides to do it, we're down to implementation. How do we do it? It becomes more tricky because there are many players in this and there are many ways of doing it. The sector is not really in a crisis state-of-mind, where you just need to find a solution or face unbearable consequences. So stakeholders are now looking for a new robust system where everybody can see a benefit, and that has not crystallised yet. For example, how will the developed and less

developed countries participate? That's important because if it is not an equitable transition, we will not get everyone onboard to agree to global regulations. We will be missing an opportunity to act for the greater good, and it will probably not be a robust transition.

We also need to find a way to drive energy efficiency to the next level. Some developments at the IMO include the CII (Carbon Intensity Indicator), which is one attempt to do that by regulation. Digitalisation can play a huge role too, where you use data and analytics to move thousands of ships in a more energy-efficient manner. Some of the segmentation that has historically been in shipping, where you have an owner and an operator and a charter, can be changed by the use of digital tools.

But my point is that it's not only just a piece of technology. It's really about the way we do business. We could probably reduce 20 per cent of the emissions from shipping just by being smarter at how we use the ships. Of course, it doesn't take shipping to zero. We need to also get going with the uptake of green fuels. We need to find opportunities where customers are willing to pay a small green premium for transport of their goods, shipowners are willing to retrofit and prepare the ships, and energy companies are willing to invest in fuel production plants. We need to get going.

**Collaboration will be key to making decarbonisation happen. For an industry that is used to opacity, how realistic is this?**

**Mr Cerup-Simonsen:** The Center I'm leading is a very good example of that. I was concerned when we started the Center because (collaboration) was a key part of our vision – and also one of the main risks. Now, two years down the line, we have 25 partners that are sharing data.

Of course, you cannot be naive about collaboration, because competitors can't share legal or commercial data and they don't want to share proprietary data that gives them a competitive edge. You can't just think, we'll share everything and get together and have a good time. That's not how it works.

So at our Center, we have a very professional set-up around data management, and we're well

aware of the need for both data security and confidentiality. All our partners need to feel safe. You need processes, you need a culture, you need to have like-minded partners, and you need the leadership of all partners to really want this.

**What's the biggest challenge you're facing in your current mission?**

**Mr Cerup-Simonsen:** Many people acknowledge that we have a climate crisis today – but most are not at the point where they will do anything to solve it. Many have a business where they feel that they don't really have the freedom to start moving on this. Because there's a lot of ambiguity in front of us, you have to be humble towards the people who have stretched balance sheets and long-term investments. They have pension money, for example, tied up in certain investments with certain promises. But it is also a risk to continue as if we don't need to change – financial institutions are increasingly demanding investments to be oriented towards decarbonisation.

I think the biggest challenge lies in identifying stakeholders that can make a change, working with them to create a robust transition pathway, and creating confidence around how we can do this. Some can move rather fast, some move slow, but everybody can contribute.

Fortunately, there are leaders who are starting to invest to make the change. That's really encouraging.

**What does the future of shipping look like to you?**

**Mr Cerup-Simonsen:** My kids are now 12, 19, and 22. They are looking to us to solve the climate crisis. For me, the ideal situation is being able to tell them 10 years down the line that we now know what the solution looks like and we have visibly initiated the transition.

Then 20 years from now, when I'm retiring, my dream is to see shipping as a part of global systems that are far into the transition. We are not yet at zero, but emissions have peaked. We are well on the way to achieving the net zero emissions pledges that have been made – they're actually coming alive. ■



*Team Mixed Greens from the Singapore Management University was one of four winners at the Maritime Case Summit.*

# Maritime Case Summit Heralds Next Wave Of Ideas From Youths

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An island off the coast of Australia would typically conjure up images of a tourist destination with idyllic beaches. But for Elysia Tng and her team from the Singapore Management University (SMU), it could be much more than that. Specifically, it could be the world's first island to house a green ammonia-producing plant for the maritime industry and beyond.

This idea was among the winning solutions at the third edition of the Maritime Singapore Connect Maritime Case Summit, where four global companies – resources company BHP, container shipping firm CMA CGM, bank Standard Char-

tered, and logistics company Toll Group – each presented a challenge to student teams.

Organised by the Singapore Maritime Foundation (SMF), the competition's winners were crowned yesterday on the finale night of the Singapore Maritime Week (SMW), capping a hopeful end to a momentous week where the sector's luminaries ruminated on pressing issues.

Top of the agenda was decarbonisation – and it is perhaps fitting that the next generation brought the curtain down on SMW with their fresh perspectives.

"Youths have the runway to realise their ideas during their lifetime," said Ms Tng, a Year 3 Business Administration and Management student. "The youths of today are tomorrow's leaders. Therefore, it is critical they take charge of the decarbonisation process."

Her team, Team Mixed Greens, were trying to solve the challenge posed by BHP: to identify and evaluate the likely "winners" in safety and decarbonisation technologies from the 2030s.

They settled on ammonia as a future fuel and brainstormed to create a scalable, net zero production process for the fuel. Part of the solution involved a long-term plan to create an ammonia-producing island that is inspired by Denmark's energy islands, the world's first for offshore wind power.

Ms Tng and her team are heartened by their win. "Age should never be a barrier to innovation," she said. "Though, we must admit that being fresh-eyed, and perhaps not as jaded as our older counterparts, does help in pushing us to think outside the box!"

Team Kumkuats was another one of the four winners out of 43 teams, with their solution of creating an online eco-market place, among other initiatives, helping them become the top team in their category.

The team of four, comprising SMU, Nanyang Technological University (NTU), and National University of Singapore (NUS) students, was responding to CMA CGM's challenge to help shippers reduce their carbon footprint.

Team captain Isaac Chua, an NUS Year 3 Business Administration and Management student, said their main motivation in joining the competition was to "gain real-world experience in resolving sustainability challenges".

He added: "It will definitely be fulfilling if we are able to witness our proposed solution being recognised and implemented."

The other winners were Team 3.5 from NTU, which proposed a solution to track and forecast asset carbon emissions for Standard Chartered, and Team SFS from Nanyang Polytechnic, which identified sustainability opportunities for Toll Group.

The winning teams each won a cash prize of S\$3,500, along with mentoring and internship opportunities.

This year's competition saw 172 students participating, the most since its inaugural edition in 2019. They came from varied fields like maritime studies, business, engineering and logistics/supply chain – an indication that complex challenges such as sustainability require a multidisciplinary approach.

"Companies across the maritime ecosystem from shipping to logistics providers are on the quest to balance production with sustainability," said SMF Executive Director Tan Beng Tee.

"The MSC Maritime Case Summit 2022 combines challenge statements and mentorship from companies to give students exposure to real-world considerations that the industry is today addressing." ■

“The youths of today are tomorrow's leaders. Therefore, it is critical they take charge of the decarbonisation process.”

**Elysia Tng**  
Business Administration and Management student,  
Singapore Management University