

A first for Thome Ship Management

SINGAPORE – Det Norske Veritas (DNV) has struck a groundbreaking agreement with Thome Ship Management to deploy a sophisticated crew appraisal and training system that will set a new global benchmark in seafarer competency management levels.

DNV today signed a contract with Thome Ship Management to verify and certify Thome's Competence Management System in accordance with DNV standards, and in compliance with specifications from the Society of International Gas Tankers and Terminal Operators (SIGTTO) and the Tanker Officer Training Standards (TOTS).

The agreement means Thome Ship Management becomes the first ship manager in Asia to set up a classification society-endorsed Competence Management System for its managed fleet, which currently consists of more than 100 vessels.

DNV is the only classification society to offer a full suite of services supporting ship owners and managers in competency benchmarking. Through its SeaSkill system, DNV is dedicated to helping the industry identify, maintain and develop competence at both the organisational and individual levels.

A signing ceremony officiated by DNV deputy CEO Tor Svensen and Thome Ship Management President and Chief Executive Officer Olav Eek Thorstensen took place at the Shangri La Hotel in Singapore this morning.

Under the terms of the agreement, DNV and Thome Ship Management will systematically examine crew tasks, work tools, operating environment, officers' mental well-being, training and experience, and communications across different vessel types.

Highlighting one of its key focus areas, DNV aims to address what lies behind human error on board highly diversified fleets of ships with the aid of its SeaSkill auditing process: In particular, it analyses:

- The effects of new technology;
- The complexity of the environment and the circumstances surrounding human performance;
- The nature of the mental work and processes that go on in difficult and stressful situations;
- The way in which people coordinate and communicate to get their jobs done.

The entire process is expected to take 12 months and the results will then be audited by DNV.

In announcing the agreement with Thome Ship Management, DNV Deputy Chief Executive Tor Svensen said: "The desired outcome of an effective competence management system should be an efficient, knowledgeable, healthy and safety-conscious crew. Given today's challenges with crew shortage and rising operational costs, Thome and other shipping companies investing in such an undertaking stand to gain a competitive advantage.

“We also see less experienced seafarers enter the job market, sail on increasingly sophisticated vessels with reduced manning, and taking on more responsibilities. This is a concern for the whole industry,” he added.

Mr Svensen, who is also the Chief Operating Officer of DNV Maritime Business Area, pointed out that training and competence development can mitigate human-related risks and optimise overall operational efficiency.

“DNV SeaSkill not only certifies the effectiveness of a client’s training programme against the most stringent standards, but also evaluates the benefits gained against the initial training investment”, Mr Svensen said, adding that quantifiable improvements in efficiency and safety are the key deliverables of a robust competence management system that DNV SeaSkill can help shipping companies develop.

Thome Ship Management Managing Director Capt Bjorn Hojgaard, said: “The shortage of seafarers puts pressure on quality so it is increasingly important to be on top of the competencies in the pool. And by stretching our training dollar investment, it means we can provide more focused training where gaps have been identified.

“This DNV initiative also means we are able to differentiate between officers and so create a career path with visibility on how to advance for the most competent officers.”

Thome Ship Management would be able to offer differentiation to principals and transparency in terms of competencies deployed on vessels, he said.

Capt Hojgaard added: “In addition, we shall now be able to show differentiation towards oil majors. The ‘Matrix’ they use is, in reality, just a proxy for competency; an attempt to set minimum requirements for experience in order to maximize chances of competent crew. With DNV SeaSkill we can replace this proxy with detailed assessments.”

About DNV SeaSkill:

DNV SeaSkill provides global standards, tests and certification services related to competence development in the maritime industry. The services are aimed at organisations and individuals connected to ship owners, management companies, yards, suppliers, maritime training centres and maritime authorities.

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