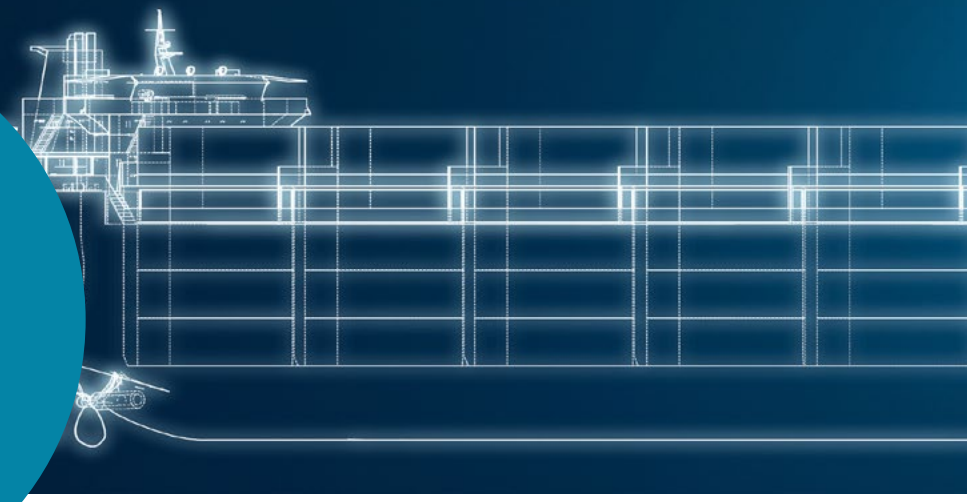
Navigating tomorrow's seas:

The transformative era of maritime training



In the rapidly changing world of maritime operations, we find ourselves in the midst of transformative change, driven by the convergence of technology with personalised learning, notes Valentinos Steliou.

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This shift marks a departure from the traditional view of seafarer training as a mere legal requirement, into a strategic advantage for the maritime sector. As we explore the trends reshaping this evolution, it becomes evident that a holistic approach, combining new technology and innovative training methods, is paving the way for unprecedented efficiency, safety and satisfaction among seafarers.

During the pandemic, digital training met the industry's short-term needs, but post-pandemic success requires a more forward-thinking approach. The emerging interconnected training ecosystem needs to leverage more technologies like immersive online learning, cloud-based remote simulation and virtual/augmented reality. Collaboration is key, presenting an opportune moment for industry stakeholders to create a maritime learning ecosystem to provide seafarers with access to training whenever and wherever they are.

The utilisation of smart and adaptive learning technologies, coupled with the expertise of industry professionals, promises a bigger impact, with heightened efficiency, safety consciousness, and environmental awareness among seafarers. For this ecosystem to thrive, connectivity is also key. An open architecture that allows industry stakeholders contribute to and benefit from an interconnected learning environment.

One standout trend transforming the maritime hiring landscape is the integration of cutting-edge technology. Digital wallets, fortified by blockchain, are emerging as a powerful force in talent acquisition. Seafarers will be able to compile and share verified credentials seamlessly, optimising the recruitment process while fostering transparency and efficiency. This technological leap gives employers a comprehensive view of candidates' qualifications, making the hiring process more informed and streamlined.

The introduction of AI-infused Learning Experience Platforms (LXPs) is another pivotal shift, signalling a move towards embracing lifelong learning in the maritime industry. Personalised learning pathways, crafted by artificial intelligence, tailor educational experiences to individual seafarers, aligning seamlessly with organisational goals. This approach ensures seafarers are equipped with skills tailored to the dynamic needs of the sector, preparing them for upcoming changes such as new fuels, increased automation, and the advent of autonomous ships.

A notable transformation in training methods is the shift from conventional classroom instruction to fully embracing the potential of digital training. Immersive and experiential approaches, particularly Virtual Reality (VR), are revolutionising seafaring skills and safety. By replicating real-life scenarios, VR technologies elevate technical proficiency and enhance critical decision-making skills. As VR technol-

ogy continues to advance, integrating extended reality into maritime training promises to deliver an efficient and effective learning experience, cultivating highly competent and adaptable seafarers.

Crew data analytics, enhanced by AI, is also playing a pivotal role in transforming crew management into a strategic business resource. This approach involves collecting and applying data to improve critical talent and business outcomes. With smart data and meaningful visualisations, crew managers can make informed decisions, optimise training programs, identify high-potential individuals, and align learning strategies with organisational objectives. This data-driven approach enhances the overall effectiveness of crew management, ensuring meaningful contributions from every seafarer towards the organisation's success.

In the realm of digitisation, it is the ability to offer bite-sized modules, real-life scenarios and exercises within extended reality environments that are closing the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical skills. This hands-on approach not only enriches the learning journey but provides seafarers with the readiness to navigate real-world situations. Consequently, digitising crew-related information becomes a cost-effective strategy for companies and as well as improving crew experience. It offers strategic career planning and real-time evaluation opportunities that foster a culture of continuous learning and development. Loyalty and work ethic are enhanced, and seafarers equipped with the skills and appetite to explore career opportunities within the maritime industry.

Seafarers will be able to directly align their career ambitions with a company's objectives. Something that has not always been available to them in the past - that will become extremely important in the future.

Maritime training is entering a transformative era. By wholeheartedly embracing these trends and the interconnected training ecosystem, the sector can chart a course with a crew that is not merely skilled but fulfilled and equipped to meet the challenges of an ever-evolving landscape.

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Trainingportal - a learning and competency management platform - provides an online portfolio of over 2,600 eLearning courses to over 1.7 million workers, while OCS HR crew management system supports the operations of more than 1,800 vessels worldwide.

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