

Thoresen Thai Agencies turns to Veson for software solution

Thoresen Thai Agencies Public Company Limited (TTA) is a diversified maritime business group with interests in dry bulk shipping, offshore services, and shipping services. The organization provides various offshore oil and gas-related services, including sub-sea engineering and contract drilling through its subsidiary, Mermaid Maritime Public Company Limited (MMPLC). TTA's Dry Bulk Shipping Group owns and operates, through separate subsidiary companies, 43 general cargo vessels and bulk carriers between 16,000dwt and 54,000dwt. It also charters-in approximately ten vessels per month. The organization's liner and tramp services transport dry bulk cargoes between South East Asia and China into the Arabian Gulf, Red Sea and the Mediterranean.



TTA'S MULTI-PHASE IT INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

Recently TTA initiated a multi-phase IT infrastructure plan to either replace or revamp existing systems and processes. Its two primary objectives were to increase productivity in order to handle future fleet and business expansion, and to provide enhanced services to its clients.

Its IT plan included the following phases:

- ❖ create a new network and infrastructure foundation;
- ❖ build and integrate ERPs (enterprise resource planning) for commercial, technical, financial and human resources departments;
- ❖ build a business intelligence/data warehouse; and
- ❖ optimize the systems to better serve customers and clients.

TAKING A CLOSE LOOK AT DRY BULK OPERATIONS

TTA's Dry Bulk Shipping Group had been using a commercial software package to handle its day to day operations. However, the outdated package had reached a point where it no longer served their needs. Although the commercial and accounting modules were contained within the same package, there was no linkage between the two. The team had to export commercial data into Excel files and re-key them manually into other modules; day-to-day operations processes such as voyage calculations were quite time consuming. The old software did not support any statistical reports required by management, nor did it provide continuous upgrades.

The Dry Bulk Shipping Group launched a thorough review of several well-known commercial maritime software vendors. As Pongsak Kanchanakpan, Director, Group Personnel/ Administration for TTA explains: "Overall we needed a comprehensive, integrated package that would eliminate repetitive tasks and deliver a complete, real-time picture of our dry bulk operations for management. Specifically, our commercial and operations staff needed a powerful tool to assist in their work to fix vessels and post fixture work. We wanted the vessel reporting system to be linked directly with the operations modules. The new program had to interface with our financial ERP package and be able to generate statistical reports for top level executives."

TTA FINDS 'TRUSTED PARTNER' IN VESON NAUTICAL

After careful consideration and extensive testing, TTA chose Veson Nautical's Integrated Maritime Operations System (IMOS) and IMOS OnBoard.

Pongsak Kanchanakpan notes, "We were impressed with Veson

Nautical from our first meeting because the staff was able to thoroughly assess our business requirements and provide solutions to our needs. Because they took the time to listen carefully to our input, we were sure the solution would deliver on all points. We felt we had found a vendor and a 'trusted partner' that would be committed to our mutual success."

Today TTA is in the process of completely revamping its IT infrastructure and network, which includes installing new hardware and software applications for the commercial, technical, and finance/accounting departments.

Veson's IMOS Chartering and Operations modules have been installed for the shore-based offices, including the branch office in Singapore. TTA's Handysize and Handymax bulkers, along with an additional ten time-chartered vessels, have begun to leverage IMOS for daily voyage activities.

IMOS has created a centralized, integrated platform to manage all of TTA's marine transportation operations. IMOS's simple, user-friendly, yet powerful package delivers a number of features and benefits, including:

- ❖ comprehensive report generating capabilities, including statistical analysis;
- ❖ ability to track Thoresen's liner business as well as bulkers;
- ❖ sophisticated tools to assist in post fixture work;
- ❖ seamless interface with the financial ERP package;
- ❖ reporting system from the vessel linked directly to operations modules;
- ❖ quick access to accurate voyage data;
- ❖ drastic reduction in manual and repetitive work for the commercial team; and
- ❖ scalability as the company builds its fleet size and client portfolio.

LOOKING AHEAD: TTA'S INFRASTRUCTURE OVERHAUL

The next step is to interface IMOS with SAP, TTA's financial accounting ERP package, and complete the data mapping with the data warehouse and business intelligence projects. Seamless integration between IMOS and SAP will enable the organization to eliminate repetitious manual data entry from the commercial side. They are also implementing IMOS OnBoard, which will enable the vessel and head office staff to input data once into a single system. They will have access to real time information, as the vessel's positions will be directly linked to IMOS.

TTA is also reviewing Veson's IMOS Trading solution for FFAs (forward freight agreements); the ability to track net long or short positions extensively and determine acceptable risk limits will be a key advantage in the future. The company also plans to revamp its HR operations, messaging and collaboration systems, e-documents and employee self service systems in the coming months.

Pongsak Kanchanakpan concludes, "We are very pleased with the decision to select IMOS. Clearly the software itself is of high caliber and we've quickly seen improvements. But there are other benefits as well. Veson Nautical takes a long-term view of upgrades, customer service and maintenance. Its customer support staff is very responsive to our queries and requests despite the time differences between Bangkok, Boston and Singapore. As I said earlier, we were looking for a trusted partner rather than simply a vendor — and have found that with Veson Nautical."