

TRAINING & SAFETY

In brief

A Netherlands-based consortium has been awarded a government grant of €200,000 to support its innovative training initiative: the first global Learning & Intelligence Support App (LISA) for the maritime industry. Dutch companies Boomsma Shipping, JR Shipping, Van Wijngaarden Marine Services and 1 Ocean developed the hybrid learning system, based on scientific principles of entrepreneurship, game-based learning and peer-to-peer coaching. Ton Boomsma, of Boomsma Shipping, said: “We are extremely happy with the support from the Ministry of Economic Affairs. This allows us to further develop the application and build a community for our maritime colleagues, enabling them to increase their knowledge in a fun and smart way.”

Well-trained seafarers are essential to safe ship navigation in polar waters and the IMO recently held a training course for maritime instructors in Valparaíso, Chile. The course was aimed at participants from maritime training institutions in South America responsible for training seafarers, with a focus on the IMO’s Polar Code. The code entered into force in January 2017 – setting out mandatory standards covering design, construction, equipment, operational, training and environmental protection matters that apply to ships operating in Arctic and Antarctic waters.

Viking Life-Saving Equipment has acquired Drew Marine’s Fire Safety and Rescue division. “Welcoming on board one of the top three marine fire service providers in the world, the acquisition is in alignment with Viking’s long-running strategy to be the world’s leading one-stop solutions and service provider, and a trusted safety partner for the marine and offshore industry,” said Viking CEO, Henrik Uhd Christensen.

Milaha, Qatar’s oldest and largest marine logistics conglomerate, received eight awards, including two spectacular ‘double’ wins in the British Safety Council’s (BSC) prestigious Sword of Honour and Globe of Honour awards for 2019. The awards were for excellence in several categories relating to support functions and business units.



Papua New Guinea-based Pacific Towing (PacTow) is showcasing its maritime leadership in the field of workplace safety. Melanesia’s dominant marine services provider is introducing an innovative workplace safety programme aimed specifically at women, as well as its own safety awards programme.

According to general manager Neil Papenfus, the company has steadily improved its safety performance, particularly over the past five years. He said: “We’re always challenging our staff to do things better and this includes safety. Our two latest safety initiatives are indicative of this drive for continuous improvement. Our women’s workplace safety programme is also very much in accord with our broader gender equality programme and is an initiative that further positions us as the region’s maritime employer of choice for women.”

PacTow’s Gender Smart Safety programme, which comes into operation in January, is based on the premise that women experience different workplace safety issues from men. The programme therefore requires that women be much more involved in workplace safety issues – such as hazard identification, risk assessment and risk mitigation, as well as decision making and the overall safety management function.

Although the focus of the programme is on maximising the workplace safety of women, feedback from piloting companies reveals that it improves the safety of all employees – male and female. As one senior manager commented: “Importantly, many of the recommendations for safety improvements are relatively simple and low cost: allowing female staff to wear trousers rather than skirts and having ‘women only’ designated seats at the fronts of our buses made a huge difference to our female staff’s safety.”

Workplace safety, especially in the maritime and resources sectors, has long been a function largely managed by men and performed by men for a predominantly male workforce. As such, the specific safety requirements of women have often gone

▲ *Gender Smart Safety is an innovative programme that maximises the workplace safety of women like deck and engine cadets Lylellah Kunai (left) and Glenda Amu*

unnoticed. PacTow HR manager Anna Ingip, who has a background in workplace safety, explained: “A lot of women’s workplace safety concerns – like poorly fitting personal protective equipment (PPE), inadequate lighting, machinery operating dimensions and mechanisms that don’t accommodate generally smaller and less muscular female bodies, as well as working with chemicals when you’re pregnant or breastfeeding – risk being overlooked.”

Papenfus was “deeply concerned and genuinely appalled” to find out that despite a sophisticated safety management system of international standard, as well as a significant and long-term investment in a range of gender equality initiatives, Pacific Towing’s female staff might not be as safe as their male counterparts. “Each and every one of our employees, whether they’re male or female, equally deserve to be safe at work,” he said. “This is why we’re embarking on Gender Smart Safety in 2020.”

He also drew attention to the relationship between the safety of female staff and female employee retention. “Women will understandably pursue alternative employment options if their safety is not assured,” he said. “Maximising the workplace safety of female staff, whether it’s on vessels at sea, down on the wharves, or in the office, is essential. We have heavily invested in programmes to increase the number of women we employ and there is no way we’re going to jeopardise that investment.”

One such programme is PacTow’s Women in Maritime Scholarship initiative. A partnership with the Australian government’s Australia Awards and the China Navigation Company, the programme fast tracks the careers of female deck and engine cadets. Twenty young PNG women are currently benefiting from the programme, with additional cadetships on offer from 2020.