(e)Learning the ropes

by Fitzwilliam Scott

Protecting lives is one of the founding principles of OneLearn Global, the digital e-learning training provider to the maritime industry. Since its inception in late 2020, the Cyprus-headquartered company has launched safety courses for seafarers working in hazardous environments to help protect them from severe injury or even death.

One such programme explores safely accessing enclosed spaces on vessels with dangerously low oxygen levels, explosive gases, or physical hazards. The company introduced the Entry Into Enclosed Spaces course in response to a sobering report revealing an alarming number of fatalities between 2015 and 2020. Statistics from the International Group of P&I Clubs show that 83 seafarers died while working in an enclosed space, with 53% of deaths attributed to oxygen depletion and 60% of all incidents occurring in the cargo hold. A 2019 report by the International Transport Workers Federation revealed 145 casualties in enclosed spaces dating back to 1999. Of those fatalities, 28 (16 dockers and 12 seafarers) took place in the 16 months leading to January 2018. The causes were asphyxiation, explosions, or falls involving seafarers who passed out because of poor air quality.

"These figures show how dangerous it is for seafarers to enter confined areas on board a vessel," says Nigel Cleave, Senior Advisor at OneLearn Global. He furthers, "We launched our enclosed spaces course to try and prevent further tragedies, by providing a training programme that identifies the risks of, and gives clear safety instructions for, working in hazardous areas. The stark reality is that taking our course could be the difference between someone emerging safely from an enclosed space or losing their life."

A separate safety-related course in OneLearn's portfolio of training programmes explores how crew members can shield themselves from the coronavirus while at sea. The Coronavirus (Covid-19): Advice for Shipboard Personnel programme shows seafarers how to stay healthy while travelling, what to do if they become ill, and where to get the latest health management and hygiene guidance. Managing suspected corona cases onboard, coronavirus variants, and the importance of getting vaccinated are also covered. OneLearn Global launched the course on the Day of the Seafarer (25 June 2021) in honour of the crew members who have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic, despite the risks of catching or spreading the virus.

"Without seafarers, global trade would be severely hindered. Our course helps these key workers to understand the effects of the virus, the measures they can take to protect themselves and their fellow colleagues from Covid-19 and what to do if anyone catches it. Their safety is absolutely paramount, which is why it's vital to have a training programme that provides guidance on the protective measures they can take against a life-threatening virus," Cleave underlines.

The seafarers of tomorrow

Running digital courses that could save lives is one reason for setting up OneLearn Global. Another is to help attract younger generations to an industry that must ramp up recruitment in the coming years. Research from BIMCO and the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS) warns of a critical officer shortage by 2026. Their July 2021 *Seafarer Workforce Report* estimates that the maritime industry needs an additional 89,510 officers to operate the merchant fleet within the next five years. Guy Platten, ICS' Secretary-General, has called on the sector to actively promote careers at sea and focus on maritime and education training worldwide.

OneLearn Global has answered it by sparking a paradigm shift in how maritime training is delivered. The company's learning management system (LMS) features interactive, visually stimulating and informative courses that cover the whole spectrum of seafarer-related topics. The training programmes, which are available offline and online 24/7, have been created predominantly for Generation Z (those born after 1996) and Millennials (born between the early 1980s and mid-1990s) – the seafarers of tomorrow.

"Our extensive, ever-growing catalogue of e-learning programmes offers a range of vibrant courses that cover the entire spectrum of subjects needed for operating a vessel safely and securely. Our innovative approach to maritime training is extremely popular with Gen Z and Millennials who expect digital, interactive and personalised content in today's tech-driven world," Cleave describes. He adds that younger generations are digital natives, "It's second nature for them to use technology when studying a particular subject or watching a lecture, which is something we recognised when setting up the company." Today's youth also expect on-demand access to training programmes through multiple devices from anywhere in the world and at any







Photos: OneLearn Global

time. "Digital e-learning courses have to be available to maritime learners or industry employees looking to upskill, whether they are ashore or at sea," he says.

While popular with OneLearn's primary audience of Gen Z and Millennials, the company's training programmes are also landing well with more senior officers and crew. Cleave believes their interest has been piqued by the informative and entertaining course modules, which typically take 15-20 minutes to complete. He says, "Maritime training programmes should be no longer than 20 minutes, otherwise Gen Z and Millennials won't sit through them. We're seeing the same thing with older generations that would traditionally spend longer on a training module or programme, before the advent of e-learning. Anyone with Wi-Fi or broadband has instant access to masses of data and content, so people's attention spans are naturally shorter than they once were."

An engaging learning experience

When researching the psychology behind what attracts Gen Z to specific websites and learning platforms, Cleave and his team found some interesting results. A **Barnes & Noble College report** talks about Gen Z using on-demand interactive learning tools and videos alongside traditional approaches to education, such as reading a textbook or listening to a teacher in class. Moreover, they benefit from watching recorded lectures and other online content, going through digital study guides, or conducting web-based research.

Further insights were found in an *FE News* **blog post** on Gen Z, written by Sam Blyth, from LMS developer Instructure, who feels that new technology makes it easier to create engaging, interactive experiences for learners. She also believes that students can control their learning journey by deciding how, where, and when to engage with course material, learning in a way that suits them best.

Using these findings, OneLearn Global has developed an LMS featuring personalised and interactive e-learning programmes with video, animation, and audio content that appeals to digital natives. Even the colour scheme has been chosen with younger generations in mind; the company uses green throughout its system to appeal to the eco-friendly sensibilities of Gen Z.

"We've invested a huge amount of time and energy in researching our audience, the maritime training industry landscape and the latest digital technology to create a unique, fresh and innovative e-learning platform. In a relatively short period, we've established OneLearn Global as a market leader that serves the training and development needs of shipping companies and seafarers around the world," Cleave concludes. □

ONELEARN GLOBAL

OneLearn Global was created to provide training solutions to serve the maritime, energy, hospitality, and industrial sectors. It offers an enormously effective and intuitive next-gen learning management system designed to deliver both an enhanced and engaging yet personalised, enjoyable, and intuitive learning experience through digitalisation. Go to **onelearn.global** to learn more.