

# No option but to change

by Martin White, CEO, Stream Marine Group

**Traditional training approaches of ‘one size fits all’ are not applicable anymore as the industry looks at how it will ensure the global fleet is ready for the transition to new fuels and, more importantly, how it will keep crew members safe.**

**T**he shipping industry has long been evolving to suit the demands of the world’s economies and has always worked in isolation under the banner of maritime with multiple vessel types and purposes of voyage.

While the varying ships and voyage types have somewhat differed, the power source was, for the most part, very similar. With previous transitions being about technological advancement, industrial change or commercial value, these have been more phased and with much less sea-going activity. This time change is different – it’s driven by global political climate directives and government policy shifts with no option but to change.

## **To do more**

This world has advanced more in the last 10 years than the previous 100, and shipping faces new challenges, opportunities, and threats. And the clock is ticking, as companies must move to net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. No industry our size has ever had to evolve under these circumstances before. There is a year-on-year increase in the number of vessels moving towards alternative fuels and technologies for decarbonisation that is driving the need for more seafarer training.

This landscape is still evolving, and the type of fuels and technologies that first emerged in 2017 with the introduction to the International Code of Safety for Ship Using Gases or Other Low-flashpoint Fuels (IGF Code) are also changing and advancing – meaning that the training is also constantly being reviewed and adapted to meet the changing needs of crews. This, in itself, is a challenge for our regulators to keep up with the accelerated volume of change. The responsibility now falls to the industry as a whole, with ship-owners, operators, and third-party marine stakeholders required to do more than the regulated minimum.

## **Safety always prioritised**

There is no longer one fuel to rule them all. The days of learning a single power plant and bunker might be behind us. This brings us to today, where we need to rethink training entirely and how we apply this to seafarers, along with the relevant codes and regulations.

There needs to be an approach that allows for multiple fuels and technologies to have balance with what we expect from our seafarers in terms of education and competency – and the one-size-fits-all approach no longer works. There are multiple new unforeseen hazards, with some

of the proposed solutions presenting serious safety questions among the seafaring community. There is the fear that some options, while supporting decarbonisation, are too much of a threat to the lives of seafarers. We must ensure their safety is always prioritised.

The seafarer must learn how to manage the level of change and learn the significant differences between the many newly proposed fuels. This huge challenge relies heavily on the industry to ensure we provide high-quality guidance and support, as well as keeping up with the current speed of change as new information constantly emerges.

Positively, there is a real drive for this across many parts of maritime. Companies are embracing the change and proactively reaching out to consultancy services to ensure they are ready. Stream Marine Technical has been working since 2017 to support the industry and ensure that the world’s first IGF Code seafarers are ready. We have included some unique learning styles that we introduced to our first trainees, who were very apprehensive – and in some cases, very reluctant or nervous about the prospect of having to manage these types of early adopted cryogenic fuels. This meant there was a need to first introduce the live fuel in a controlled environment to teach the



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class the behaviours of the molecule. This enabled students to interact through crystallisation training and build their levels of confidence. Such a training method is, however, not suitable for all suggested new fuels.

### Overall ecosystem of competency

As a company, we have seen an interesting change in that training is no longer seen as a one course fits all. Generic awareness is not appropriate with the new level of risk involved. We should look at it more as one element of the overall ecosystem of competency. Our clients want to see everything synchronised together with the safety management system and aligned with the onboard safety procedures.

Generic training is becoming redundant in this transition, with so many options to

support our industry: gas, methanol, ammonia, hydrogen, nuclear, fuel cells, and batteries. It is time for a new approach that will allow the world's seafaring fleet the opportunity to learn in a way that suits such diversity in technologies as we move towards our ambitious decarbonisation targets.

There is a really promising opportunity as an entire industry to rethink how we approach this, and I see great work from around the world rising to the challenge, with business leaders, entrepreneurs, and academics in the human element having a voice

alongside great technologists. [You only have to look at the work Strathclyde University in Glasgow is producing for future fuels on the human factors in safety](#), as well as leading industry safety bodies supporting regulation.

Many unanswered questions remain as to what technology solutions will be the future of shipping. For the next transition, it looks like there will be several options, so we must move away from our traditional training methods and refocus on what our seafarers will need to be part of a safe & successful transition. ■



Since 2016, Stream Marine Technical has been at the forefront of training global pioneers in decarbonising the world fleet and preparing seafarers for the future of sustainable fuels. Train with us to acquire the expertise and guidance necessary for a successful career in a sustainable and greener maritime sector. Visit [streammarinetechnical.com](http://streammarinetechnical.com) to learn more.