

# The human part in the tech mix

by Przemysław Myszka

**The IT industry is like an ocean – vast and deep. The maritime part of it, though a niche, has very much matured over the years. Among the big venture-led and small start-up fish, there are also established software companies that have been steadily developing their offerings for decades. We are talking with Grieg Connect’s chief executive, Espen Ranvik, about his own transition within the tech domain, what differentiates the Oslo-based company from other vendors, its solutions and how they deploy them, as well as its expansion in the Baltic Sea region.**

■ *Having worked for such multinationals as Deloitte and Capgemini, employing thousands of people and doing consultancy gigs all over the world, why did you decide to become a member of the Grieg Connect team, a slightly more slenderly built organisation?*

I joined the company in the spring of 2024 – and these months have been truly informative in getting to know the particulars of the maritime industry, which I really grew to like. I have been filling consultancy & managerial roles for the past quarter of a century, including the last 12 years in the tech world. In my previous occupation, I visited the Baltics and Finland quite often to deploy digital solutions. These not only improved performance or heightened security but maybe, above all else, targeted customer satisfaction. Sure, you can dump

IT on clients and leave them to wrap their heads around it – for better or worse. Yet, that’s certainly not my way of doing things – and surely not how projects are executed here at Grieg Connect. Another key lesson from that Baltic period of my career was the finding that although Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Finland are distinct cultures, what unites them is the shared openness to employ digital solutions to improve work – be it safety or efficiency. Believe me, it makes business life a lot easier in the IT world when you’re met with an open mind instead of pitchforks and torches.

I sincerely hope this ‘critical mass’ of software-for-heavy-duty-hardware & business experience, the staff’s likewise mine, will come in handy now that Grieg Connect has decided on a considerable market expansion in the Baltic Sea region. As we near the end of 2025, we have the

opportunity, both personally and as a company, to catch our breath ahead of what will in all probability be an exciting period of building the enterprise on the Baltic Sea pillar. We are ready and eager to grow with the help of our new customers in Estonia, Finland and Sweden – and whoever jumps on the maritime digitalisation bandwagon along the way. Though we want to develop, which will by all means result in onboarding more people, Grieg Connect will stay a company that’s nimble, one that offers the personal touch in the IT sector. Besides, we’ve got excellent solutions that we’d proudly like to present to a wider, tech-performance-hungry audience. Personally, it really feels invigorating to leverage one’s accumulated experience in IT, consultancy & executive management, leadership, telecom, and finance to set sail into new waters!



Photos: Grieg Connect

We are also very fortunate to have the backing of the Grieg Group. While Connect's team is 30+ person strong, the Group counts some 2,000, well-established in various industries (seafood, shipping, ship-broking, maritime innovation, logistics, and investments) and with a solid maritime heritage reputation built throughout 140 years. From its inception, the Group has been a family-owned organisation. From an IT perspective, this has a clear advantage. Unlike venture-led vendors, we're not subordinated to chasing after

quarterly dividends. And in contrast to start-ups, we're not on a hunt after that unicorn client that will lift the business off before it implodes. Grieg Connect was born more than a quarter of a century ago. It became part of the Grieg Group about a decade ago, with long-term thinking as the guiding star. Fast forward to end-2025, and we serve over 90 ports & terminals, plus 320 ferries & high-speed vessels. We prioritise stability, continuity, and responsible development over quick returns. That holds for both our partners, who benefit

from predictable roadmaps, as well as our team, which gains from the trust put in them and gradual competence building. Whereas it's true that IT, software, and digital solutions are about data and coding, it's not that we have AI working for another AI. We have people working for people, doing business with each other, implementing and maintaining what's been invented thanks to the power of the human brain. If there's one secret ingredient to Grieg Connect's to-date success, it is exactly not losing sight of the human part in the tech mix. If we are a family-owned firm, it is that kin-centric relationship we try to foster in parallel to developing a top-notch offer.

■ **What's in Grieg Connect's current portfolio?**

In a nutshell, our Port Management Information System (PMIS) is a modular, software-as-a-service platform that 'sits' in the cloud. It has your back in the areas of port calls, berth and resource planning, tariffs and invoicing, contracts, statistics, reporting, port community services, security and access control, and business intelligence. PMIS is one configurable, modern, and secure (NIS2-compliant) system covering the full port mandate. Scalable from small to large ports, our solution is out there to assist companies in their journey from pen & paper to 24/7/365 digital operations. But of course, it takes two to tango. Fortunately, we can see a growing momentum in the maritime community to level up their businesses digitally. Ports understand





that delaying the digital transformation increases operational risk and cost. Manual processes simply do not scale with business or regulations. If somebody is sceptical about the whole transition, or perhaps just overwhelmed, Grieg Connect is ready to show value early on. A typical implementation takes the client and us through process design, configuration, data migration, training, and phased go-live. Afterwards, we provide support, maintenance, upgrades, and access to new modules. Worth mentioning is that we research in advance to illustrate what practical benefits our solution can bring to this-and-that concrete port. This individual approach proves especially useful when dealing with a customer who might at first be stunned by the different options and the amount of data.

■ ***Grieg Connect highlights its work in creating smart and sustainable ports. What stands behind your understanding of these two terms?***

Smart, as we understand it, means improving the daily life of those engaged in port (and shipping) activities. A process can be done manually or digitally. Automating the former is impossible. Going digital

simply unlocks improvements unattainable through manual processing. But modern solutions such as our PMIS must go beyond spreadsheets, this pen & paper 2.0 of handling things. This is done by automatically integrating various data sources into an actionable insight – whether a berth is free to welcome a ship or dispatch an invoice for completed services. For somebody running the port business, an overview of what is happening and where and over a set period (not only in the snapshot moment) is also crucial. As such, smart stands for visibility of the port value chain.

Data is called the new currency. With a port management system, it's vital to have enough data, not too little but also not too much, and of the right quality. Data should be a nutritious feedstock for business intelligence – not business guesswork. So, if smart means digital, data-driven, and interoperable operations, then it naturally ties to the sustainability part of the equation. Sustainable means efficient use of resources, reduced emissions through better planning, and reliable reporting to meet regulatory requirements. In short, while dockers sometimes have to work in a foggy environment, there is absolutely no need for a port company to

shorten their line of sight or have to deal with blind spots. Data is knowledge, and knowledge is a springboard to action. And if a port functions better, then the positive effects trickle down the on- & offshore logistics chain and the trade, economies, and people it serves.

■ ***Not every port company is well-versed in all things IT. How do you introduce such clients into the world of maritime software?***

Because Grieg Connect's PMIS is modular, a client can start with the basics, say the port call feature. It is vitally important for both the customer and us that our solution – the concept, likewise the use of it – is 'domesticated' so that it can deliver tangible benefits. There are real differences between having a digital solution, using it, and using it proficiently. Grieg Connect is here to ensure clients get to the 'how-could-I-been-working-without-it-earlier' stage. Then, we don't have a customer anymore – we've got a committed partner with whom we can develop further. And, of course, we're flexible to accommodate any level of tech-savviness a client has – from absolute null to those who have got a handle on their 0s and 1s.

As we grew over the years, the major challenge was handling diverse port practices. Here, the lesson was to build configurability and work closely with the users. We are still here, so it must mean we proved to be as good of a solutions provider as we were a student! What we learnt was that reliability and consistency matter more than features and that standard processes must still allow for local adaptation. Support, uptime, and data quality are critical at scale. Patience and solidity, in other words.

We also invested a lot in making our solution (cyber)secure through strict access control, role management, logging, and secure hosting. That NIS2 compliance didn't materialise from nowhere. These days, security must sit at the very core. Apart from that, the R&D team is now busy with polishing interoperability, automation, analytics, and regulatory reporting. As such, the strategic focus is on robustness and usability rather than experimental technology.

■ **Why did you choose the Baltic Sea region as your next growth chapter?**

We have built a strong network in the Nordics over the years. Grieg Connect has four offices on our home turf in Norway, plus two in Finland and Sweden. Localised

expertise is second to none! That is also the plan for the ongoing Baltic Sea expansion – first a firmer foothold in Finland through the acquisition of Wellamo Data. Founded in 1996 and run by Atte Rotko, this 'integration-is-us' boutique establishment was, among many other developments, the very first Finnish PDS developer that provided a portnet integration. Today, the company's data-enriching solutions are integrated into different vendor systems. Having Atte and his expertise on our side makes us more than confident that Grieg Connect can pull it off on the Finnish market. Organic growth is one thing; takeovers are another. With Wellamo Data, we can have the best of both worlds. We are ready to test ourselves by bringing more competition to Finland's maritime IT scene.

Overall, growth will come mainly from small and mid-sized ports modernising their legacy systems. Recent wins, like the one in Estonia with Saarte Liinid, reflect just that – local presence, credibility, and stepwise delivery. The Estonian deal encapsulates the suitability of our offer. Saarte Liinid manages 18 harbours, cargo and passenger alike, dotted throughout the country's mainland, islands, and lakes. In short, different needs are being satisfied through one platform.

Grieg Connect's PMIS is used by over 90 ports in northern Europe. These are as diverse as the industry itself. The Port of Bergen uses the system to collect cargo data from Sea-Cargo ro-ro traffic automatically. It flows directly into invoicing, thus improving data quality & tax accuracy, and forms the basis for statutory reporting. In Oxelösund, a large industrial port in Sweden, PMIS supports port calls, warehouse rentals, and invoicing. The system has reduced manual work and simplified daily operations. The Port of Harstad uses PMIS to manage ISPS requirements. The Port Security feature supports planning of security activities, access management, permits, and inspections. Deviations, zoning, and movements are handled directly in the system, with documentation available for audits and follow-up.

These are just a few examples showcasing that our system, the complete package or the particular solutions, is tried and trusted in different settings, including in the Baltic Sea region. We will gladly add other success stories in the coming months and years. And this isn't just your standard corporate jargon – nowhere close to it! Success-by-Grieg Connect is measured in efficiency, data quality, revenue capture, and compliance. ■

