Cultural Sensitivities – Feedback from a member after discussing with masters

What is our Goal?

To create a safety philosophy where there are no barriers for anyone, regardless of rank, nationality or other, to have the confidence to intervene and stop an unsafe act.

(1)   General Maritime Culture (Authority)
- Top – Down / Bottom – Up / Peer-to-Peer Culture

In this section, we primarily focused on our Tanker Fleet where **all on board are US Nationals**, we conducted a study into our STOP UNSAFE ACTS program, we also asked our senior officer teams on board for feedback and examples where unlicensed and junior officers intervened and actually stopped an unsafe act or intervened with a safety concern.

A common theme - the feedback we received from our Masters was nothing short of enthusiastic and everyone embraced it and agreed this was a very important topic to bring out in the open.

To set the scene, here are a few examples of setting expectations:
- During initial sign-on for new personnel, we stress our safety record and how we expect every crewmember to look out for the safety of colleagues, that we want everyone to return home safely, in one piece and in the same condition that they came onboard.

- Orientation for new personnel covers all areas of safety; we give all new crewmembers a sheet with PPE policies and guidelines; we also make a point of showing new personnel a PowerPoint presentation on e.g., slips, trips and falls, hand injuries, etc..

- Safety Meetings, where open dialogue is encouraged; crewmembers are recognized for their input and safety awards are presented to anyone who demonstrates a commitment to safety.

- Safety Audits, where unlicensed personnel from each department tour the vessel with a safety officer every quarter and report on any safety items or deficiencies; the audits get reviewed at Safety Meetings.

- Safety observations are recorded by the Third Mate, who encourages all unlicensed personnel from every department to submit observations; new personnel are trained and introduced to safety programs by completing a safety observation during their orientation tour under guidance.

If no one sets out our expectations, how can we be successfully run a safe operation?

As part of our measuring process, we record KPIs on Near Misses and Safety Observation Process (SOP). In both categories we found the following commonalities;-
1) There was clear evidence that we have a process where ratings and junior officers have identified unsafe conditions or concerns to seniors and had the work/operation stopped.

2) That the process was encouraged through safety programs, meetings, continual discussion during JHAs, etc., with full support from senior management on board.
3) Senior Officers consistently 'leading by example' and encouraging others to follow suit.
4) Positive reinforcement on the job, acknowledging anyone who raises a concern.
5) Encouragement.
6) Safety awards monthly, the award being in essence, recognition with a tee shirt or similar, feel good factor. The ratings especially respond to this incentive.
7) This subject is always discussed during our Officers Workshop in Dania, next one due October.

We also encountered some barriers, e.g., :

1) Many of our unlicensed staff drift through for a single trip and then move on.
2) Personalities, reluctance to put that foot forward for fear of being wrong?
3) That there were individuals on board who, whilst working safely, were 'happy to do their time' and not intervene.

- Accountability for Inaction

In our ISM, we have clearly stated that anyone who chooses not to comply with our use of risk tools and safety initiatives chooses not to work for our company.
We always try to encourage people to get involved and being a part of a safe minded team

- (Safety) Observation Process & Sharing Mechanism

As mentioned above, the SOP is a valuable tool for not only measuring numbers of submission, but determining the content and outcomes of the findings.
We share these depending on the significance or potential of the risk.

(2)   National / Geographical Risk Tolerance Frame of Reference
- Recognize Differences

Despite best intentions and willingness to promote change, some cultures are set in stone from many generations before we came along.
These are cultures, where despite one person out ranking the other, the elder or upper cast person will always be looked up to and seldom (if ever) challenged!
I have personally tried to work around this both on board and ashore, I see this as my biggest challenge and one where despite my (our) best efforts, I feel we will never fully accomplish.

- Cultural Awareness Training – initial focus on senior level / leaders

In order for any of this to work, we need the Master to demonstrate clear leadership for <u>any</u> progress is to be made.
I have already made the point, with time, study and experience; anyone can become a ship's Master.
Not everyone can be a leader.
Unless the Master endorses a product, fully supports a concept and leads by encouragement and example, then the chances of success are somewhat diminished.
The same goes for the shore organization, our Chairman frequently asks questions on safety.
Safety should never just be a motto or a mission statement without there being a strong core that actually embraces what safety is all about.
We talked about the shift in philosophy over the years for car seat belts to a point where before we start up, you have your belt on and ensure others have theirs on also before the car moves off?

In essence we have gone from a reactive culture to an interdependent culture, from being told you have to do it, to where you do it naturally and look out for others at the same time.

This is what safety means and what needs to be a minimum standard, we can only get there with a smile on our face and taking safety from being boring to being exciting.

I believe the training shouldn't only be focused on cultural differences, but with emphasis on leadership as well.

- Training Protocol e.g. percentage per year

On board training can be a day to day experience; the first person you see in the morning when you look in the mirror is your safety manager.

Training courses ashore need to be interactive and move away from death by power point!!

- Top Down

Without leadership and encouragement, the chances of success are slight.

(3)   Communications

- Recognize Language Issues

This company operates foreign flag (non-tanker) vessels, we run our operations in English and have in our policy that candidates must be able to communicate in English.

We do realize that in a 'heat of the moment' during an operation or where something goes wrong then the mother tongue will prevail.

There must be tolerance in these cases where it is usually best for someone to act on what is being said and translate when action has been taken.

<u>Not being able to communicate in English shouldn't prevent an individual from stopping an unsafe act.</u>

- Simplify Literacy – increase visual elements
- Sensitivity to Translation
- Measurement Use – Fleet Survey / Initial Training

Action Items / Commitments

- Industry Benchmarking
  - ➢ Association (Other Industries)
  - ➢ Shell (Internal)
  - ➢ Individual Companies

- Revisit workshops engagements from Singapore / Amsterdam for similar content
- Date Due – work team to complete by 30th Sept for feedback to Singapore conference in Q4 / 2013.

Output:

<u>**Create a Cultural Sensitivity Primer for the Maritime Industry.**</u>