

The importance of a change culture



VOS Paradise. Credit Flying Focus

If a leopard could not change its spots, it would have long been extinct had it been masquerading as a vessel owner in the offshore industry!

'It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is the most adaptable to change.'

—Charles Darwin



An inability to adapt to changing surroundings has repeatedly been the downfall of those incapable of moving forward. You only need to look at companies such as Kodak and Blockbuster to see what can happen if you are unable or too slow to embrace change.

Bringing things closer to home, shipping in general and offshore specifically has been hard hit over the past few years by a

sustained oil-price crash, compounded by the current global COVID-19 pandemic. These events have shone a critical light on not just the way we do business, but on life as we know it – and this is not said lightly. The devastation from the pandemic has already left its mark on hundreds of thousands of individuals and families, whilst the economic fallout from the current crisis will be deep, far-reaching and undoubtedly leave many casualties in its wake.

Change is definitely on the way, whether we like it or not!

The offshore Oil & Gas market is well established, with tried and tested systems, procedures and infrastructure that have been in place for decades. A mature industry with an experienced and well-oiled supply chain; one that has seen its fair share of good times and bad, but also one bloated with inefficiencies. At Vroon, we have witnessed



VOS Sugar

this first hand, having been active in the industry for more than 50 years.

Take a typical cargo run in the North Sea. A vessel that cost millions of Dollars to build and has high running costs, crewed by highly skilled individuals, is instructed to proceed at best possible speed to a rig or platform. In order to achieve the ETA, the crew sails as instructed, with all engines on line. The vessel arrives, only to be told by the rig to wait on standby until the offshore team is ready. All the while, this vessel is consuming more fuel and costing more money.

This is just one example, but it is certainly not isolated. Ask any crew member sailing on a platform-supply vessel. The purpose of this is not to point fingers, simply to highlight that efficiencies can be easily achieved and these can benefit all stakeholders.

The winds of change

The Vroon Group has been active since the late 1800s. A company that started life transporting coal across the English Channel has evolved into a global maritime company, active in all shipping markets and boasting a fleet of around 140 vessels. Companies like

Vroon do not enjoy such longevity without embracing change and recognising not only the need for change, but also the opportune moments at which to implement it.

The expansion of the offshore Renewable sector provided an opportunity for change. Not only change on a macro level, in the way energy is provided, but also an opportunity for vessel owners to review their modus operandi. Being open to chances and embracing a new reality was crucial, coming as it did at a time when the traditional offshore Oil & Gas market was reeling from a once-in-a-generation downturn. For those willing and able to move forward, the fledgling offshore-wind industry presented an opportunity to diversify and embrace a new market, new customers and a more efficient way of working.

Vroon took advantage of these opportunities, making a move into this niche sector at the very start by purchasing a specialist wind-turbine-installation vessel and engineering company. In this way, we committed to making a significant contribution to the industry. Establishing a fleet capable of installing windfarms, meant

we could complement our growing offshore-support vessel fleet and boost involvement in all aspects of windfarm construction, from initial surveying and seabed clearance, through installation to ongoing operational and maintenance support.

From a vessel owner's perspective, this was an opportunity not to be missed. While crucial, our diverse fleet with a proven track record, well positioned and able to contribute to our customers' successes formed only part of the story. To be successful, there needed to be an organisational culture conducive to promoting and enabling change, whilst also highlighting the implications of a status quo. Chartering a vessel against a day rate is not always the best, most efficient solution for our customers.

Ultimately, as vessel owners, we are part of an overall service, whether it be in the form of inspection, maintenance and repair, survey work or transportation of personnel or equipment. These are all areas where we can add value. We aim to combine our experience from a mature industry, like the Oil & Gas market, with a modern and capable fleet,



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adding a fresh approach to how we can increase the efficiency of our offering.

By partnering other, like-minded, forward-thinking companies, we are able to provide a complete, bespoke service package to our clients and ensure that they get much more than just a vessel against a day rate. We guarantee true value at all levels.

Whilst market dynamics and commercial

models have changed over the past few years, we have also seen an explosion of new technologies, which will play a major part in determining the future of our industry. Some equipment, such as dynamic-positioning systems and improved IT infrastructure, has proved a real game changer for vessel owners, while improved engine efficiencies help reduce running costs, as well as lowering potentially harmful emissions.

Diesel electric generators, hybrid configurations, battery packs, as well as hydrogen or methanol-based systems, are all available on the market, at varying degrees of completeness. Other technologies have been developed to provide ever-more efficient solutions, such as motion-compensated gangways and cranes, autonomous remotely operated vehicles and fully automated bridges, potentially leading to drastically fewer crew members being required to operate these highly complex and ever-evolving vessels.

Recognising the opportunities that all these new technologies present and ensuring we are able to capitalise on them, will ensure we stay ahead of the curve and are seen as a partner of choice, able to contribute to the successes of our customers.

Although we may be in the midst of a greater crisis than we have ever seen before, opportunities are still there to provide increased efficiencies for our clients, whether it be in the way we offer our services, the types of service we offer or the technologies we use to drive efficiencies. As has been mentioned before, change is on the way and if history has taught us anything, it is that we cannot afford not to change.

Would you like to learn more about our diverse offshore-support vessels and services? Get in touch with our colleagues on chartering@nl.vroonoffshore.com.

 www.vroon.nl



VOS Paradise bubble-curtain project