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**N**exclusive



With funding for maritime training often limited, what innovative solutions can be implemented to ensure high-quality training remains accessible to future seafarers?



**QMS MTC recognizes financial constraints in maritime training but focuses on innovative solutions. They adapt to evolving regulations, offer diverse cultural training, and invest in simulation technology. Addressing instructor shortages, they prioritize continuous professional development. Resource sharing and competence assessment ensure cost-effective, accessible training. By listening to client needs, QMS MTC aims to make high-quality education widely available, fostering industry sustainability.**

Financial limitations often hinder the availability and quality of training resources. Budgetary constraints and resource availability may impede investments in modern training equipment and facilities. This could have a potentially detrimental effect on the sustainability of maritime training and education. To overcome this, QMS MTC is committed to remaining accessible to its clients and seafarers and, to this end, we have developed a series of innovative approaches to meet our client's budgets. We choose to channel these training and education budgets back into our client's pockets by focusing on the below value-added initiatives which will save owners time and, most importantly, funds.

**QMS MTC** holds as its 'modus operandi' a series of initiatives which all share one core common factor: the maritime training industry is ever evolving. It frequently faces new challenges that significantly influence maritime safety, regulatory compliance, and the overall sustainability of maritime operations. These challenges necessitate continuous adaptation and improvement in our own training methodologies as a Maritime Training Center to better service our clients. **QMS MTC**, with its established experience of nearly three decades of operation, has been able develop a series of key solutions to overcome these challenges. Spurred upon by COVID-19, we faced, and overcame a series of technological challenges as **QMS MTC** had to enter into a new era for online training. We adapted our learning content into live online webinars, our LMS platform, online assessments and interactive training tools – these new initiatives all showcased a new education methodology which we were called upon to create new and flexible content to maintain our high-quality standards.

Some of our key initiatives to meet the economic challenges of the maritime training industry are outlined below:

## Dynamic Regulatory Landscape

The maritime industry is subject to ever-evolving international and national regulations. Maintaining alignment with the latest statutory requirements is an ongoing challenge for training programs and keeping up to date with new trends, regulatory changes and charterer demands. Non-compliance due to outdated training content can lead to serious consequences. The impact of regulatory compliance is what make maritime training a necessity, and should always be up to date and current. Since our job is to provide education, **QMS MTC** is in a key position to understand, and break down, the complexities of regulatory compliance. We work with our clients to provide tailor made courses as we understand that each of our client has different needs and competitive advantages and must meet different stakeholder needs (charterers, inspection authorities, pool of Officers, crew agents, etc.)

## Crew Diversity and Cultural Sensitivity

With a diverse maritime workforce encompassing individuals from various cultural backgrounds, effective communication becomes paramount. Training programs must address cultural differences and language barriers to foster improved communication, teamwork, and, consequently, safety. The soft skills component takes "center stage" both at **QMS MTC** as well as within the commercial market with increased vessel inspection regimes focusing on human element competencies rather than technical skills. All provided **QMS MTC** training programs, whether theoretical or practical, encompass soft skills assessment based on the latest industry OCIMF



guidelines. Through our integrated programs, we work with both Deck and Engine teams, of various nationalities to integrate the BRM/ERM training on own-ship vessel which promotes the realities of onboard life, and simulates the same scenario so that both teams can cooperate and work together during their role play. We also do this for our Bridge and Pilot Interaction courses, Fire Command and Control and upon client request we develop role-based training courses, for office and seagoing staff, that puts their technical and soft skills 'to the test'!

### Evolution of Simulation Technology

Simulation technology is integral to maritime training for providing practical experience in controlled environments. However, staying abreast of the latest simulation technologies requires continual investment and development on the part of the MTC. Outdated simulation tools may fall short in adequately preparing seafarers for real-world challenges and could potentially be dangerous. QMS MTC provides fully interactive online courses and remote simulation centers which are accessed by seafarers without the need for extensive travel. These simulation centers provide a controlled learning environment even if the seafarer is located far from traditional classroom facilities. Our mobile learning environment allows seafarers flexible and convenient access to our updated training content on their devices (tablets or smartphones), in real time, from the comfort of wherever they may be located – even at sea!

**QMS MTC** closely partners with its Simulator Providers to monitor and update hardware and software requirements as per regulatory changes, improved graphics and user interaction experience to accommodate its client requests. We also provide a variety of manufacturers so our clients can choose which manufacturer can meet fleet needs. I believe that the next step will also follow with the Flag Administrations who will start to accept online Simulation training for national statutory certification.

### Shortage of Qualified Instructors

A scarcity of qualified maritime instructors, particularly those with hands-on industry experience, poses a challenge and can seriously impact the quality of training services offered. This shortage can compromise the quality of training programs and the ability to impart practical insights to trainees. In our years of operation, **QMS MTC** has had the honor of working with key professionals in the industry with a 'calling' to offer their knowledge and make it accessible. My team works closely with our Trainers to ensure they are coached, continuously updated and they consistently renew their manufacturer Trainer accreditations in alignment with our company goals and quality management system. Apart from these qualifications, we also endeavor to develop their skills as Assessors in order to provide competence assessment services, thus developing a well-rounded Maritime Instructor and Assessor who can adapt and modify content and approach basis ability, rank, weaknesses and strengths of trainees to give our clients a transparent, 3rd party profiling of their Officers.

### Continuous Professional Development

The dynamic nature of the maritime industry necessitates ongoing professional development for seafarers to stay current with new technologies, regulations, and safety protocols. Developing training

programs that facilitate continuous learning is essential for maintaining compliance and enhancing safety. Effectively addressing these challenges requires collaborative efforts among industry stakeholders, regulatory bodies, and training institutions such as **QMS MTC**. Such cooperation is vital for developing comprehensive, up-to-date training programs and learning content that prioritize safety, compliance, and sustainability in maritime operations. For example, **QMS MTC** works with organizations such as Hellenic Yacht Crew Members Association (HYCA) to refine and develop skills in the particular yachting sector, joint training programs with the Nautical Institute, GTT UK Ltd for LNG LICOS specialized training courses, MARLINS (part of OTG) as an accredited English Language Test Center and other key stakeholders to develop and enhance MET programs.

### Resource Allocation

**QMS MTC** chooses to openly share its educational resources including digital e-books, videos and training tools to enhance the end user experience and provide freely accessible content to its trainees. We leverage our extensive range of live online training webinars which provide inclusivity and are of high international education standards. We deploy our Bridge/Engine and LCHS Simulators externally to 'bring the machine to the man' to make our courses accessible in Chios, Manila, France, at the crewing agents office and on board the vessel. **QMS MTC** Instructors work to facilitate a community-driven approach to learning and our students can share practical insights and best practices through our remote chat rooms and classrooms. In this way, the online training platforms developed by **QMS MTC** allow experienced Instructors and seafarers to contribute their knowledge and mentorship online, in real time.

### Competence Assessment

An additional measure **QMS MTC** has taken to ensure its services reach a wider range of audiences and is cost effective is our range of developed Competency Based Assessment services, based on OCIMF recommended standards. These Assessments are simulator based, focus extensively on practical skills and real-world problem solving. They are usually absorbed by our clients following either: a near miss where **QMS MTC** provides re-enactment scenarios; for rank promotion; and, initial Officer onboarding. Our Assessment approaches are outcome-based which allow Officers to demonstrate proficiency in specific tasks without unnecessary theoretical emphasis. They provide an immersive environment with challenging scenarios in a controlled setting with the sole purpose of building proficiency. In this way, our Competency Assessments focus on key skills, without spending time and resources on irrelevant topics.

As training budgets for shipping companies are not always at the forefront of the spreadsheets, **QMS MTC** has become very adaptable at finding cost effective and easily accessible solutions. **QMS MTC** continues to grow and listen to its client needs and is committed to implementing these innovative turn-key solutions to address the challenges of limited funding for maritime training. We work to ensure our high-quality education services remain accessible to all seafarers and bring economies of scale. In this way, we hope the industry as whole can foster similar initiatives, yield results and ensure long term sustainability for maritime training and education. ■