

Singhai Chairman Terence Zhao: When We Invest in New Ships, We Must Also Invest in the People Who Operate Them



On October 20, the 10th Annual Capital Link International Shipping Forum, co-organized by Singhai Marine, was held in Pudong, Shanghai. Mr. Terence Zhao, Chairman of Singhai Marine, attended the forum and shared his views. Hundreds of guests from global shipowners, ship management companies, financial institutions and shipping service enterprises attended the event and exchanged views on shipbuilding and fleet renewal, the new energy landscape, the dry bulk market, financing strategies and other topics.





This year marks the 10th edition of the Capital Link China Forum. In his welcoming remarks, Mr. Terence said that over the past decade the forum has been committed to promoting exchanges and cooperation between China and the international shipping community, and has gradually become an important platform connecting Chinese and foreign shipowners, ship management companies, financial institutions and shipping service enterprises.

Facing energy transition, digital development and geopolitical changes, Terence pointed out that in such times it is all the more necessary to strengthen communication, share experience and learn from each other. "Shipping is a global industry. Cooperation has always been the foundation, and today in particular all parties need to work together."

Three Directions for AI in Crew Management



In the roundtable discussion “Maximizing Fleet Operational Performance: Efficiency, Safety and Competitive Advantage,” Terence, from the perspective of crew management, proposed three decision-making areas where AI can provide realistic support in the next decade:

First, matching the right people to the right ships. AI can integrate certificates, experience, availability and training needs to help build a balanced team. “Certificates are the starting point, but we still need to ask: Is this person ready for this ship, this position and this team?”

Second, planning crew changes earlier. By verifying crew availability, certificate validity, vessel schedules and travel arrangements, AI can flag potential problems in advance and reduce last-minute situations.

Third, making training more targeted. With assessments, simulator exercises and onboard feedback, AI can identify what each person truly needs to improve. “Two officers may have

the same simulator score but for different reasons. AI can help determine whether they need technical training, decision-making training or teamwork training.”



Terence introduced that Singhai is exploring ways to more closely connect recruitment, onboard feedback and training through its digital crew platform AiSailings and the Shenzhen International Maritime Training Center (SIMTC). But he also stressed: “For AI to be useful, it needs reliable data and maritime professional judgment to turn suggestions into actionable decisions.”

What Cannot Change? Professional Judgment, the Courage to Speak Up and the Way We Treat Seafarers



When the discussion turned to “what should never change in the role of people,” Terence gave three answers: professional judgment, the courage to speak up, and the way we treat seafarers.

Technology will change the way work is done, but people still need to understand what is happening and know when to intervene. Situations at sea do not always develop as planned. When systems fail or circumstances change, crew members must be able to think, act and take responsibility. “While introducing more automation, we must ensure that people retain the ability and confidence needed to take over.”

Crew members must dare to say “There is a problem” or “I am not sure this is safe.” This depends on leadership and trust. Masters and senior officers need to listen and encourage

questions. "No matter how good the technology is, if someone sees a problem but dares not speak up, it cannot help much."

Seafarers have families, ambitions and concerns. They need fair treatment, adequate rest, shore-based support and a visible future in the profession. Terence stressed that humanistic care is not a soft benefit but a key factor affecting seafarers' working condition and retention choices. "These things affect how well they work and whether they stay in the industry."



In the summary of the roundtable, Terence brought the discussion back to action: investing in people. Attract more young people to the shipping industry, help seafarers prepare for the application of new technologies, and give them strong support onboard and ashore. "When we invest in new ships, we must also invest in the people who operate them."

As an enterprise deeply engaged in maritime human resources services for many years, Singhai has co-organized the Capital Link forum for consecutive years and maintained continuous dialogue with the international shipping community. At a time when green transition and intelligent upgrading are proceeding in parallel, Singhai is using its digital platform and training center as pivots to promote coordination among recruitment, training and onboard management, supply high-quality seafarers to the industry and contribute professional strength to the building of the Shanghai International Shipping Center.