



SMILING

FROM PORT TO PORT

With almost 15 years' experience managing vessels in the marine industry, Highland Maritime continues to live up to its commitment of making customers smile. Managing Director Andrew Airey provided an update on the company's operations and discussed its continuous popularity, in a report by Imogen Ward.

Trust is paramount at Highland Maritime, who works hard to maintain a flawless reputation and always ensures its clients receive consistent customer service. With reliability at the helm of the company's operations, no request is too big.

"Time and time again, our seafarers prove themselves to be the safest, most dependable, innovative and genuinely helpful crews," said Managing Director, Andrew Airey. "As a result, the demand for Highland's crewing and dedicated management services continues to grow."

Highland is a medium-sized vessel manager based in Bangkok, Thailand, that offers a full service to its clients – from its

superb duty-of-care for vessels to its dedication to clients' cargo commitments. With the ultimate goal of enhancing its customers' businesses, the company efficiently manages 25 vessels. This includes Panamax and Supramax bulk carriers, multi-purpose cargo vessels, a floating transshipment terminal and a Capesize bulk carrier – the first of its kind under Highland's management.

The other services on offer at Highland include consultancy-based support (pre-purchase inspections, buyer representation and insurance advice) and the more hands-on supervisory aid (crew management, dry-dock management and project management). ▽



As of 2021, Highland also has ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 certifications. These are great additions to the company's accreditations and have helped the company progress in its quest for customer satisfaction.

News to smile over

Highland has been exceptionally busy since its last article with Inside Marine. The company has successfully implemented a hybrid working schedule for its 25 inland staff, which has had a positive impact on the business' carbon footprint and employees' wellbeing.

"Like many companies, Highland was developing remote working and cloud data systems before Covid," Mr Airey said. "During the pandemic, we were

able to transition smoothly to working from home. In turn, this enabled us to reduce our office space, which minimised our energy consumption and reduced our carbon footprint. Our staff also became more productive, and their job satisfaction increased too."

On the back of this outcome, Highland made the decision to permanently implement hybrid working after lockdown restrictions were lifted. Whilst many companies crumpled under the pressure of the pandemic, Highland found that business surged.

This popularity is partially due to the company's devotion to its customers' happiness. Another appealing aspect is the work of the company's diligent suppliers. Highland works hard to create and

maintain meaningful connections with these companies. "Our long-term suppliers have provided constant aid, regardless of the economic situation or the shipping cycles," Mr Airey said. "They fully understand and reflect the exceptional level of service and high quality our customers expect, providing them with a consistent international standard of care for their vessels."

Happy customers and crew

To ensure its employees have the most positive environment, Highland is planning to implement an in-house staff awareness campaign. This will take place later in the year and will include a competition to ensure everyone is getting involved. Staff will be asked to generate ideas to help identify areas needing improvement – with a specific focus on sustainability and equality. The goal is to maintain a positive and safe working environment. The company also hopes this campaign





will highlight more innovative ways to reduce its carbon footprint and improve company-wide sustainability efforts.

To guarantee a safe workplace, Highland provides all staff with regular training, and actively encourages them to develop transferable skills that can be utilised on future projects.

All crews are hired locally; this element is extremely important to Highland (who always takes every opportunity to reinvest into the local economy). In the past, the company has organised beach clean-ups and volunteered at local children's homes – brightening their days with freshly painted walls and fun murals.

Highland shows a great deal of care, not just for its own crews, but also for future professionals and the maritime industry more broadly. There is a shortage of base-level professionals across all sec-

tors, but Highland has devised a plan to help improve recruitment rates within the maritime industry. The company has committed to a sponsorship programme for high school students with a passion for seafaring.

Starting this year, Highland will offer funding to those studying maritime related courses at Thai maritime colleges and universities. "There is currently a shortage of officers and crews that have the right professional attitude," Mr Airey explained. "We are working in partnership with the Government Marine Department and the Department of Education in Thailand to update how the maritime career is portrayed to younger generations."

Grin-worthy global goals

With a focus on the future, Mr Airey maintained a positive outlook: "Our marketplace is driven by global public opinion, especially

now we live in a world of technological connectivity. The younger generations are constantly striving for more sustainable and healthy business practises. Highland is dedicated to listening to these voices to continually educate ourselves and adapt our services accordingly.

"We aim to apply our experience and continuous skill development to be ready for the management of vessels run on clean fuels, which will be a vital step towards the maritime industry's decarbonisation targets."

As a steadfast competitor in the industry, Highland is focusing its efforts inwards. The company is always looking for ways to improve, and aims to dedi-

cate resources to expanding its management team and increasing its production capabilities. Mr Airey described this development as careful and organic – to ensure service quality and customer satisfaction remains consistent. With a positive assessment of the market, there is no doubt that these goals will be achieved.

"I am always optimistic about our market and global development," Mr Airey concluded. "If you remain optimistic, you will always find a way to achieve your goals and improve. Ultimately, our aim is simple – we work hard to ensure the happiness of our clients. This is reflected in our motto: we manage...you smile." ■



Managing Director Andrew Airey