



AT WORK

A SELECTION OF DIFFERENT EXAMPLES FROM THE EVERYDAY EXPERIENCE OF BOSKALIS

Eugène van Dodeweerd (Director Fleet Management Offshore) and Steve van Hulle (Business Unit Director Transport & Marine Services)

LOOKING AT ONESELF

ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF REFLECTION AND CONSENSUS AFTER AN ACCIDENT.

Each accident is one too many. But if something happens one should critically consider the way one acted and dare to take responsibility for it, with the aim of learning from it. Piet Bolt (Captain), Eugène van Dodeweerd (Director Fleet Management Offshore) and Steve van Hulle (Business Unit Director Transport & Marine Services) look back at the accident with the Union Lynx last summer.

THE ACCIDENT

In July 2017 the Union Lynx had to anchor up a crane vessel of Heerema. Because the wire was not properly winched, leading to a risk for the anchor work, it was decided to wind it up first. The night before, the approach was discussed: with the stern in the wind the weight of the ship would ensure a constant force to properly wind off and up the wire. The next morning there already was much wind, which rapidly increased even more. Because of the course of the ship and as it was held by the wire, the stern was kind of pulled into the waves. With the first high wave the boatswain and a sailor grabbed the crash rail but in vain; the second wave lifted them up and smashed them against a boat landing that was lashed on the deck. The men had to be taken to hospital with various injuries. Fortunately, both are doing well now.

THE INVESTIGATION

The weather as a risk factor was one of the subjects of the investigation that followed – which is the normal practice. What made this investigation particularly special is how both the customer and Boskalis immediately stood shoulder to shoulder: no blame game but reflecting on their own acts and responsibilities in complete openness. Eugène: “The customer was in the same gear as we were. Where we have NINA, Heerema has IIF, with comparable values & rules, which made it much easier to address the affair together.” Steve: “All parties wanted to learn from it. That I found something very special.”

HOW TO MOVE FORWARD?

The collective approach led to a number of lessons learned, which were shared through the Safety Newsflash, as well as a change to the protocol: now everyone must meet before the start of the work (the marine radio cannot be used for this) to discuss any change of the weather, for instance. “The idea is that people are more likely to say something if they can look each other in the eye” - says Steve - “because this remains something tricky.” He intends to ask his people even more about NINA: “We must keep insisting

on the execution of start-ups, toolboxes, team reflections, as because of NINA you really begin to realise what your responsibilities are and that you need to act proactively.” Eugène shares this view: “NINA reduces the distance between the shore and the ship through the dialogue one starts. And that is precisely what our responsibility is: build an open relationship within your own team and with the customer, internal organisation and ship crew.”



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Captain Piet Bolt:

“I WAS ACTUALLY DEVASTATED.”

Piet Bolt joined Smit directly after the nautical college. He has many years of experience in the offshore and with towing. The accident with the Union Lynx is the first one that happened under his leadership, he tells in his living room in Zuidhorn, while his wife is serving coffee and homemade apple pie. “I was actually devastated”, he says. “It just keeps haunting you; if I had done this or that differently those men would not have got injured. I made a wrong estimate. If I could do it again I would put the head in the wind, or choose another time.”



That is what you say now, but at the time you thought your approach was a responsible one; how do you make such a decision?

“In practice you are all on your own. For this job it was the best approach but the weather remains an uncertain factor. One assesses the situation based on one’s experience and on what the crew think. People must feel safe; otherwise you should not do it at all.”

How do you make sure they feel safe?

“Once I have gathered all of them for the toolbox, I ask them if they are confident about it. If you have a perfectly attuned team they dare to

express their opinion. If not, one often sees that people do say ‘yes’, but actually feel a bit reluctant. Sometimes we go and have a look on deck: what do you think of it now? If anyone does not feel right about it, we do not do it.”

Do you think the management relied on your assessment of the situation?

“Well, no one came to tell me I made a mistake, or what I should have done instead. I was actually quite surprised about that.”

So, you are surprised that no one blames you, while you do blame yourself?

“Perhaps, yes. But the most important thing is that it is reported, properly investigated, that lessons are drawn from it and that it can be discussed openly – in line with the values of NINA.”

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