Ship&Offshore | Schiff&Hafen

Daily News

No 2 | 5 September 2018

In association with MAN

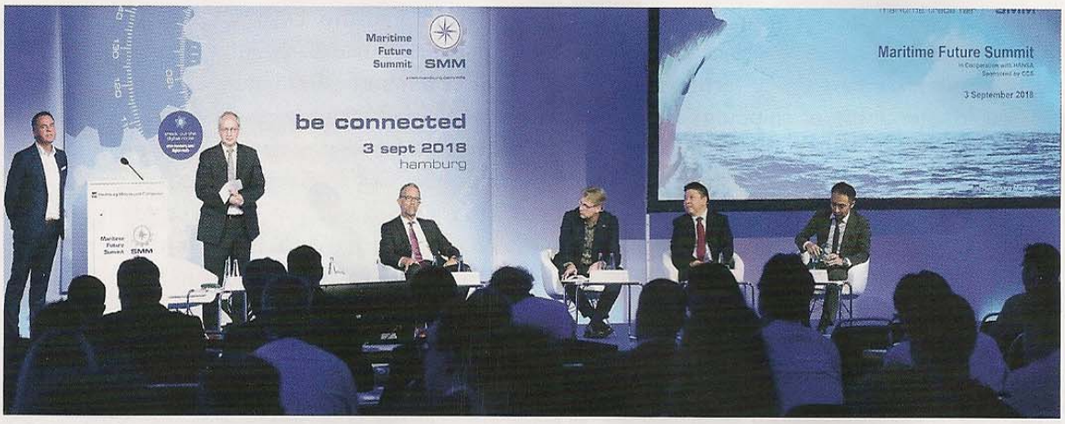
From left: Bernd Aufderheide, Dr Ulrich Nussbaum, Kitack Lim, Esben Poulsson

Photos: Wroblewski

Shipping at a watershed

As the ribbon was cut by leading dignitaries to herald the official opening of SMM 2018 yesterday, speakers and delegates at a range of panel sessions and seminars assessed the future of global maritime transport, a major industry that is undergoing fundamental changes to many of its long-established business models. It was no coincidence that one of those cutting the ribbon was Kitack Lim, Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization where deliberations over the last few years have led to a raft of new regulations which will present unprecedented challenges for all those involved in shipping's complex value chain. The mood amongst exhibitors, speakers and visitors, was positive. Global shipping still faces plenty of challenges but many believe that the worst of the recent downturn is now behind us. Meanwhile, the rapid progress of radical new digitalisation and related technologies offers the potential for huge efficiency gains and completely new operating procedures. A range of new exhibitors from new countries are participating this year and SMM organisers have focused on new technology developments including 3D printing,

Change of mindset needed, expert suggests



Hubert Hoffmann, CIO & CDO of MSC Germany, set the stage for the conference Photos: HMC/Maack

Outdated analogue procedures must be digitalised and standardised. This was the view of Hubert Hoffmann, CIO and CDO of MSC Germany, when he addressed the Maritime Future Summit at SMM earlier this week. One of distinguished range of speakers, Hoffman declared in a keynote speech that it is not technology itself that presents the main challenge, but rather the need to change our way of thinking. Business and bureaucratic processes in ocean shipping, he said, have barely changed over the last eighty years, and the same applies to port registration procedures which have still not been harmonised globally.

Mark O'Neil, CEO of Columbia Marlow Holding, addressed the subject of whether digitalisation will primarily enable optimised work processes. The process of digitalisation, he suggested, would not happen in some sort of abrupt revolution as had sometimes been suggested by the media, but would be more likely to progress as an evolutionary process. Speaking from a ship manager's perspective, he insisted that the key focus should always be the customer's technical needs.

Ulf Siwe, a manager at the Swedish Maritime Administration, revealed how the Government-supported Mona Lisa project in which Sea Traffic Management (STM) procedures had been developed, had led to a range of benefits for the operators of the 300-odd ships in the scheme. A common and automated communication standard for ships

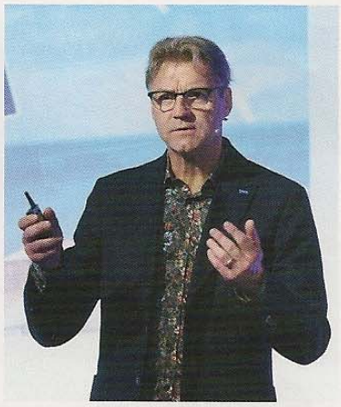
» If autonomous ships travelling the oceans, a legal framework will be needed «

Wu Sun, Deputy General Manager of the China Classification Society (CCS)

» Big data will enable the use of ultra light, extremely robust materials «

Kohei Matsuo, Project Director R&D at the Japanese National Maritime Research Institute

» Becoming a true pioneer by taking the right steps at the right time «



Ulf Siwe, Manager at the Swedish Maritime Administration

and ports had been established, he said, which had resulted in a reduced administrative burden on crew, particularly with respect to reporting requirements. Optimised routes had led to significant fuel savings and more effectively coordinated port calls. Meanwhile safety had also improved as a result of better collision avoidance and a lower risk of groundings.

As some speakers noted in other sessions early in the SMM week, the IMO's 2050 greenhouse gas emission goals are unlikely to be met unless some radically different fuel and propulsion technologies are developed. Mikko Lepistö, director of Software and Automation Operations at ABB Marine and Ports Business, spoke about how to cope with disruptive markets. He said that the company believes in network integration as a means of improving performance and is now offering its customers remote condition monitoring systems enhanced by augmented reality. He warned, however, that the development of fuel cell technology – the focus of a number of current research and development projects – would be a significant challenge.

DNV GL's Pierre C. Sames, director of Maritime Technology, noted that the concept of the 'digital twin' had been accepted by the industry quite quickly. He spoke about the potential benefits of this technology, noting that the digital twin can be used to determine the most fuel-efficient ship design or to estimate the likely lifespan of individual components. Stronger algorithms, likely to improve over time as more data becomes available, should lead to more accurate predictions, he said.