



A job that never ends

Raymond Fisch, Senior Vice President, at BBC Chartering, talks to PES about the changes in the shipping market, the importance of training and the strong ethos which runs throughout the company.



Raymond Fisch

PES: Welcome back to PES Wind magazine. It's been two years or so since we last spoke. Thanks for talking with us. For our new readers would you like to begin by explaining a little about the background of BBC Chartering and how you currently serve the wind industry?

Raymond Fisch: Thank you PES. BBC Chartering continues to be the leading force for industrial ocean transport services and also to the wind power industry. We have continued to operate the world's largest fleet of project carriers, the leading project chartering network and with 33 offices around the world the leading global service for integrated transports of any cargo. In 2016 we operated more than 180 vessels and a peak fleet capacity of more than 2.1mln. DWT.

Although the shipping markets are generally slow, we have seen an unprecedented growth of the wind power sector over the past few years. Our share of bookings for the sector increased significantly by over 60% alone in 2016. This is strongly driven by US wind power developments, especially from the Far East. But also South America and Europe could strengthen their exports in the industry. Meanwhile we also observed significant increase in their import bookings. A clear sign of how global wind power supply chains have become.

PES: How has the wind sector business changed during this time?

RF: Global sourcing strategies in wind power are the rule these days. The industry is looking for efficient, reliable and high performing transport solutions. In general we are noticing that more responsibility gets transferred to us, as a strategic partner to the industry. This trend is not entirely new but, we also observe an increasing spot orientation for wind power projects these days.

Unfortunately price levels today are devastating and do not reflect the service value our customers receive. This has to change so that service quality can be sustained.

There are many large developments under way and principally BBC Chartering serves the sector through three different types of chartering services. One is on a standby basis, second is on a dedicated project basis and third is as a strategic volume partner to industrial customers.

PES: We are interested to know if your apac service – any port any cargo – has impacted directly on your work in the offshore wind industry.

RF: Our apac service is highly appreciated by our customers delivering transport solutions for any port, any cargo and for any sector. It also offers great shipping solutions for all long haul transports in the off-shore wind sector, and there is much interest in it. Where we say that 'no port is no problem' either, we stay out of the business which is usually covered by dedicated offshore wind installation assets.

PES: What are the benefits of BBC's apac service for the customer?

RF: With apac service customers find the world's largest and highest performing project shipping network. Already in the planning phase they know they can bank on the experience and know-how of a highly accomplished partner for their project. There is no spot in the world which is not covered through our sailing network.

Wind power shippers benefit from our flexibility, i.e. if booked at short notice, we can arrange inducements along trade lanes, anywhere on over 30 global high frequency lanes; they benefit from the least commercial risk through our market-leading shipping performance, and with that they benefit from the lowest damage risk, with our quality operations and integrated transport services.

If booked on a strategic volume contract basis they benefit from the most economical shipping solutions and the highest service value that the market currently has to offer.

PES: Could you explain the advantages of chartering to the user? Are any extra costs incurred?

RF: Either a strategic volume contract forms the basis of an apac service trade, or a spot engagement benefits from existing trades in apac service.

In the first case, the charterers book their strategic capacity and while securing it as part cargo, this would allow other project charterers to use the shipping capacity as well. The charterer's advantage is to book a reliable and economic service. With a future oriented view on larger volumes, also covering latest global sourcing and supply chain strategies, this service is a



great tool to minimise risk, streamline cost, stay highly flexible and secure performance for charterers.

In the second case, charterers focus on flexibility and apply short term capacity decision making. Apac service then still provides them a high performance; however the desired contracting flexibility usually comes at a higher price tag. In the current market, the medium term shipping rates are very volatile and difficult to predict, which means charterers risk increasing their cost basis though this.

PES: As the turbines get bigger what specific challenges do you have to overcome in their transportation?

RF: Our fleet currently provides a maximum lifting capacity of up to 900mt. More than 80% of our fleet can lift 240mt and above and this gives our charterers unparalleled possibilities, flexibility and

performance for any existing wind power cargo requirement. With that today, BBC Chartering operates the world's largest fleet of premium project carriers.

Whereas lifting capability is of increasing importance, it's equally important to optimise cargo handling and intake for large, long and voluminous cargo, e.g. rotor blades. Especially for new buildings this becomes a major criteria, i.e. demanding faster traversing hatch cover systems, better crane layouts, etc... Our current newbuilding program of an "EcoTrader 500" addresses such factors, not limited to, but especially for wind power cargo requirements. The vessel is already recognised as the "next generation work horse" in the industry.

PES: How important is training to you as a company in view of the stringent health and safety regulations?

RF: It's our mission to build the highest performing and most trusted shipping company for project-, breakbulk-, heavy lift and general cargo transports in the world. At BBC Chartering we set out to further a company culture where improving our business, looking after each other and the environment is a natural way of thinking. All our values are important guiding principles, but two are of highest importance for this.

First-off it's about professionalism: for us this is the value behind skill, judgment and behaviour of trained people; and second-off integrity: for us this is the value behind an unimpaired condition, honesty and fairness. Both are most important preconditions in project shipping and we could not do our job without taking this to heart with regards to our training efforts.

We ensure a high level of quality throughout our activities; we continuously identify and



address the training needs of our employees so they can develop, understand and apply the relevant skills, methods, or tools. For projects specifically, we do safety inductions, debriefings, deliver toolbox talks and ask for feedback. We work every day to create awareness for our HSEQ policy.

PES: We know that you operate in many countries worldwide and wondered where the key markets are for BBC Chartering and if there are any areas you would like to break in to?

RF: As I said before we are global and geographically speaking there is hardly one port which we have not visited over the years. Alone in 2016, we had close to 6,000 port calls in more than 700 ports around the world. There is probably no second operator in project shipping who can claim the same kind of global

coverage. Also with regards to industrial shipping segments, we go where the market asks us to go; this also includes the development of regional niche services. Of course we are always open to discuss on any type of collaboration.

PES: There have been significant changes in the political landscape, with BREXIT and Donald Trump in the Whitehouse, how do you think these will affect the current trade agreements?

RF: We have to see what comes our way. We believe in the future of project shipping and that there will always be a demand for high quality transport solutions. We also believe in globalisation and free trading as important economic policies to create welfare on a global scale. But we cannot deny that there are many challenges which we have to deal with. We may get used to slow global economic growth, which is for

many reasons, subject to further demand dampers as we move on.

PES: Lastly, what singles you out from other heavy lift shipping specialists?

RF: In a nutshell what singles us out are our brand values: trust and performance. They are the basis of our unique global set-up, both with regards to the chartering network and the fleet. We have a great global team, with the largest aggregated experience in project shipping, and this extends to the many indispensable working relationships around the world. Our experience, know how and network are unparalleled and we are on a mission: to build the highest performing and most trusted shipping company for project, breakbulk, heavy lift and general cargo transports in the world; a job that never ends.

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