WORKING FROM HOME IN SHIPPING 2020

A UTOPIAN CONCEPT OR THE NEW NORMAL?

GMCG GLOBAL MARITIME
CONSULTANTS GROUP

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Author: GMCG—Global Maritime Consultants Group

WORKING FROM HOME IN SHIPPING 2020 - A UTOPIAN CONCEPT OR THE NEW NORMAL?

The pandemic has affected the way we live, work and play in more ways than one.

The world of shipping has taken a hit from the global pandemic and the idea of working from home has taken on a new life. Is this the way we see the shipping industry going or are there issues we all still have to come to terms with?

Introduction

The world has changed and more specifically, so has the maritime world: the old ways of working are still intact; the dependency on real people, the seafarers, the port workers and the myriad of associated human elements interacting together are all still there. Increasingly the shipping industry is embracing digital ways of working, which is helping employees work together more easily and efficiently and for new technologies to become the new normal.

The Covid-19 pandemic is not going away. Life has changed; the ways we work have already started to change and so has the ideas that have defined our working lives for centuries. Today we need to assess how the shipping world is affected, can cope with, or even wants to be a part of this hastened revolution.

What it means for the shipping world is that a faster introduction of remote operations is now becoming more the normal and defining the new ways of working in the 21st century.

In this short white paper we are looking at some of the ideas that need to be considered and refined if this remote working and digital revolution has any traction in the shipping world. Despite the old-fashioned nomenclature, the reality of remote operations in the shipping environment will probably be a part of a digital evolution rather than a revolution.

A GLOBAL NETWORK

The shipping world is such a global network and the engine of the world's economic recovery from the global pandemic. Ship owners and managers, charter operators and almost everyone associated with the industry have been forced to re-examine their ways of working.

For some employees in ports and other land-based maritime sectors, it has been a relatively simple operation to work from home. Surveyors, auditors and marine engineers are seeing a revolution through technology in their roles: remote audits and drone surveys are now becoming commonplace.

Yet there are recognisable concerns for the shipping world in changing the methods of working and working from home is not so easy when you are dealing with a 15,000TEU container ship or an oil tanker some 5,000 nautical miles away at sea. There are parts of the shipping world that can be tackled in this new way but there are issues that need to be addressed before all areas can be, these mainly centre on operational parameters. Many of these tasks can be handled remotely if planned correctly and with the smart use of digital and remote technology they will come into their own.

TRAVEL WILL BE AN ISSUE

The pandemic has resulted in travel restrictions not only in social interactions but also for business and industry worldwide. It is unlikely that the former levels of movement will return to those of pre-Covid days for a very long time and combined with greater challenges for global trade, these will have an impact on shipping. What this means for ship owners and operators is that new digital strategies will be needed to enable staff to work remotely to support those at the front-end of shipping, the seafarers and those who do not have the ability to work remotely. It will also hasten the introduction, at some stage, of autonomous shipping operations in a limited form.

SHIPPING IS PHYSICAL

There will be a new vision of how the shipping world works and many of the jobs that were on the verge of digital changeover will probably now happen very quickly - think of office-based support, customer interactions and communications to ships at sea. These could be done by home-based employees.

Despite the faith in digital technology, there are still issues of concern when it comes to operational shipping that need addressing. These centre around the technical jobs, legal issues and logistical imperatives that are at present resilient to WFH, remote working, maybe through some unconscious bias here, but when peeled back in parts, are able to be transferred to this new way of operating.

Technical undertakings, such as surveys and audits are being done remotely using drones and digital communications – with monitoring or actions being taken from a home base or office - so WFH and remote works is happening despite these concerns or biases.

Even the legal and documentation roles that so often infuriate and vex the most placid of captains can be handled remotely. So maybe what we should be saying is that it is more about a move towards overall remote operations enabled by digital technology.

TELEMEDICINE

Telemedicine is gradually becoming a reality and an important part of new digital services in many areas: doctors can now diagnose and discuss medical issues remotely and this is an area that GMCG will be developing over the next few months as part of our ongoing digital service developments along with broader maritime advisory services.

A survey carried out by Nautilus (the maritime trade union) pointed out that many crews rely on a physical copy of the Ship Captain's Medical Guide for medical guidance when working on board a ship. In the case of an incident or serious accident, there are concerns about the distance from shore and access to medical professionals. In these cases, when asked what would make seafarers feel safer at sea, 82% of those questioned specified the ability to transfer live vital signs to a medical professional who can diagnose patients and offer advice. Telemedicine, according to 98% of seafarers, would provide a greater provision of medical support and information on vessels that would save lives.

One seafarer suggested that, " In this day and age, it is crazy that I should be flicking through an outdated book to try and diagnose appendicitis, when there is technology available to let an expert diagnose it for me."

With an increasing use of telemedicine on land, it is not hard to see why it makes sense for the maritime industry to push for greater inclusion of telemedicine services in the months ahead.

SEAFARERS AND TELEMEDICINE

We can also expect a much larger part to be played by AI in initial diagnosis and preventative medicine. This is an important area for the shipping world and providing healthcare services to crews is becoming a major factor in developing a new way of operating at sea.

Telemedicine offers practical and valuable solutions to address this matter. A potentially ill seafarer can be examined via videolink without a nurse or doctor being there in person providing simple variables such as temperature, heart rate, respiration rate, blood pressure and blood sugar and blood oxygen levels can be provided automatically. These are all well within the bounds of current technology and already available to many land-based patients. In this new world of social distancing, lockdowns and concerns over transmissions of virus, it makes even more sense to press for a greater use of such technology. In reality, a medical professional or team with AI assistance will likely be able to cover a large number of vessels per fleet, providing infections or outbreaks are not too great.

CONNECTIVITY OF SHIPS TO SHORE

An area that has to be addressed is the connectivity between sea and land, satellite communications from and to ship. Satellite services are the enabler of voice and data communications at sea. The global maritime satellite communication market includes, Inmarsat (UK), Iridium Communications (US), Thuraya (UAE), Hughes Network Systems (US), and KVH Industries (US).

In the past the discussion has been mainly focussed around the cost, as it was very expensive but in recent years this has started to change with the introduction of broadband VSAT. There is an increasing demand for VSAT connectivity across all segments, including merchant, passenger, offshore (oil and gas) and fishing.

Demand growth is being driven by crew welfare, seafarers and passengers using their own devices on ships and the increasing appetite for operational data processing and analysis.

Connectivity at sea isn't all plain sailing. Here are some of the problems that you might face.

SPEED AND CONNECTIVITY

The fastest satellite service is only 432 kbps compared to what we typically are able to receive on land of 100 MBPS. The 432 kbps is from the FleetBroadband network developed by Inmarsat (three geosynchronous orbiting satellites called I-4) If there is line-of sight to one of the three I-4 satellites, then connectivity can be achieved, even in rough rolling seas. But it doesn't have coverage in the extreme Polar Regions hence some parts of the northern sea route is an issue.

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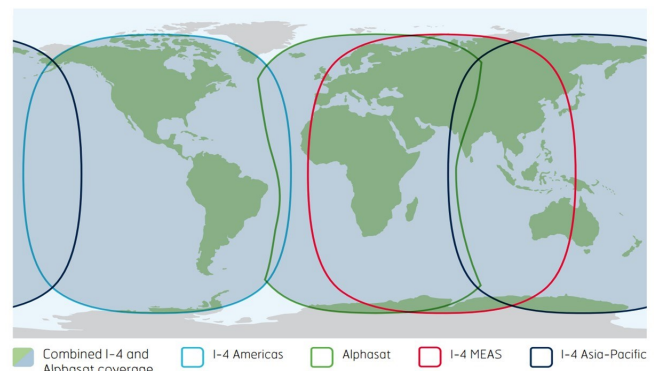
CONNECTIVITY AND SECURITY

On the plus side, since the FleetBroadband network uses the L band, rain fade is much less of an issue than the larger VSAT Ku band or C Band systems.

IT'S UNRELIABLE

You might experience unstable connections, lack of coverage, lapses in service and long delays as your system tries to locate a satellite. A good internet system should take into account these factors and search for overlapping beams that take advantage of redundancy in satellite coverage.

IT'S COMPLICATED - IT'S EXPENSIVE

A huge rack of equipment, lengthy installations and being locked into a restrictive long-term contract are issues today.

IT'S NOT SECURE

For all the benefits of being connected at sea, there are dangers too – cyber-attacks can have a devastating effect on your operations. In 2017 the NotPetya ransomware cost Møller-Maersk an estimated £300 million and the company had to reinstall over 45,000 PCs, 4,000 servers and 2,500 applications. This wasn't even a targeted attack.

Without adequate protection, a determined hacker could penetrate all your operational information including routes, manifests, charts, payroll and employee details. Shipping companies always need to be aware of security and take the necessary precautions.

CYBER RISKS

The explosion in remote working and reliance on technology in maritime business continuity throughout the covid-19 crisis has boosted interest in cyber security and resilience in the wake of a fourfold increase in cyber-attacks in the maritime industry since February.

In one high profile attack earlier this year, computer systems at the Shahid Rajaee port in the strategically important Strait of Hormuz were attacked, creating traffic jams of delivery trucks and delays in shipments. This attack was cited as a direct response to a failed Iranian cyberattack on an Israeli water facility last month.

Whilst attacks from criminal groups are far more common than suspected state-based attacks or 'hacktivist' incidents, the overall upward trend is concerning and driving increased interest in security. The global cyber security market is expected to grow from £144 billion to £182 billion by 2021, although that will still be only around 10% of the value lost to cyber-attacks each year. 'Now, more than ever, the advantages of digitisation should be capable of being realised, but only if the corresponding management resilience and recovery plans are in place and practiced to ensure those digital control systems and data flows are uninterrupted and uncorrupted,' according to Robert Dorey, CEO of insurance service and risk management advisory business, Astaara. He commented: "Processes need to be continually reviewed and updated as necessary, training provided, and new approaches to monitoring assessed and adopted."

Robert Dorey added that marine companies were at increased risk of cyber-attacks, as scammers prey on the coronavirus disruption. "The Covid-19 restrictions mean that many activities, for example crew change, marine warranty survey or superintendent spot check will be done differently or just may not happen. This means that maritime businesses are more vulnerable. Criminals realise this and do not care about the human cost of Covid-19, or their crimes. They are not interested in the morality of their action. Instead they are interested in disruption and making money; they see Covid-19 as an opportunity.

Remote working has been highlighted as a major risk for security, as the attack surface is broadened. Spoofing to misdirect payments long being a favourite of cyber criminals; classically, hackers will plant a virus, enabling them to monitor emails and change the text of a message from suppliers, adding a different bank account.

Robert Dorey continued by saying: "Covid-19 impacts the maritime industry like no other, principally due to complex supply chain relationships."

Source: Astaara white paper – 'Managing Ports' Cyber Risks

The Predictive Index Report

Report Conclusions:

Most people felt generally positive about remote work. In fact, 77% of respondents would like to work remotely either full-time or part-time on a permanent basis after the crisis is over. If you're thinking about allowing remote work beyond COVID-19, to reduce overhead or expand the talent pool, this is good news.

Still, many employees have a love/hate relationship with remote work. They may value some aspects of the remote work environment but feel bothered—or worse, demotivated—by others. This is because we're all wired differently. Our behavioural drives impact our remote work perceptions. When you understand behaviour, you can tailor the way you motivate your employees based on their needs and preferences to increase productivity and engagement.

Key takeaway: Successful remote work requires strong communication and collaboration. Regular virtual meetings are a must. Schedule daily team stand-ups, weekly team meetings, weekly manager/ employee 1to1s, and monthly professional development discussions. If tone could be misunderstood via email or Slack, hop on the phone for a quick 15-minute call.

Key takeaway: The majority of people feel positive about working remotely. If you'll be allowing your employees to work from home after social distancing restrictions lift, make sure it continues to be a positive experience. Share remote work tips, schedule regular remote team building activities, and keep a pulse on engagement.

Key takeaway: When there's no punching out and commuting home to delineate work and non-work hours, lines can blur. Remind your remote employees their health and families come first. We can't have the same expectations we did before. Let them know it's OK to do less than usual right now. They'll repay your empathy with loyalty.

Key takeaway: Persistent profiles are most likely to be motivated by the freedom and autonomy of working remotely. Leverage that by giving them even more of what they crave. Allow Persistent employees autonomy over how to perform their work (e,g., they can set their own deadlines). Give them freedom to connect with others at the frequency and pace they choose.

Key takeaway: Stabilizing profiles are least likely to be motivated by the freedom and ambiguity of remote work—they prefer collaboration and clear expectations. Provide opportunities for Stabilizing employees to collaborate with others; cross-functional projects require ongoing teamwork. Also, provide them with guidance regarding best practices for remote work.

Key takeaway: Here's a top engagement driver from the 2019 Employee Engagement Report: "Senior leaders have clearly explained the reasons behind the changes made in the organization." In times of change — **especially in a fully remote workplace—frequent, transparent communication is critical**. Execs should give status updates and answer questions weekly.

Key takeaway: Social profiles are most likely to say they feel less sure they're taking the right actions since working remotely. This is likely because there are fewer opportunities to talk it out and observe body language cues. If you're managing a Social profile, be sure to carve out time to chat on the phone on a regular basis — In addition to brainstorming and working sessions.

Key takeaway: Companies could be doing more to recognize employees—especially now. Different people have different preferences, so be sure to recognize your employees in the way they prefer. Give a public shout out to your high Dominance or high Extraversion employees and send an email or handwritten thank you note to your employees who don't crave the limelight.

Key takeaway: Persistent profiles are most likely to feel exhausted by in-person meetings. Half are exhausted by remote meetings, too. When booking a meeting to provide updates, ask yourself, "Could this be accomplished via email, Slack, or a Soapbox video?" Also, consider implementing no meeting blocks so everyone has a chance to unplug and re-energize.

Key takeaway: Dominant profiles need opportunities to influence the work to be done—but they find it harder to have their voices heard during remote meetings. Counteract this by starting each call by coming to a consensus on how each person will get a chance to speak, whether it's round robin, raising hands, or some other signal. Added bonus: this helps everyone feel heard.

Key takeaway: Non-extraverted personalities feel more heard at remote meetings than they do at in person meetings—perhaps because the remote environment offers less opportunity for extraverted and dominant personalities to "control the room." The remote workplace, then, is a safe place for those who don't have a high amount of the Extraversion drive.

Key takeaway: Most everyone feels less able to influence others when working from home, especially Social profiles. To help them feel motivated and inspired, create opportunities for them to influence others remotely. For example, appoint someone in the Social group to head up your virtual book club or present a deck of their accomplishments at a virtual show and tell.

Key takeaway: Analytical profiles aren't wired to crave collaboration, so they usually don't go out of their way to make it happen. But collaboration's essential to success—and it's your job as a leader to ensure it happens no matter where your people are located. Adopt a virtual collaboration tool like Google Docs, Miro, or Figma and schedule cross-functional initiatives.

Key takeaway: Guardians, who have low Dominance and low Extraversion, are most likely to feel less connected to their teammates in a remote environment. Even your less outgoing employees crave interpersonal interaction from time to time. Schedule a remote team building day with an agenda of activities designed to increase team cohesion and bonding.

Source: The Predictive Index | 2020 Report: The Impact of Behavioral Drives in a Remote Workplace

SUMMARY

As things stand, the pandemic has the potential to make far-reaching changes in how humanity lives, works and consumes goods and services. The shock to the global markets and world trade may very well see cargo volumes contract.

The lingering fear of infection may not see people wanting or maybe able to travel for at least a year or maybe longer. This will depend how long it will take for a vaccine to be developed.
In this new normal, the maritime sector will have to gear up to different ways of doing business and further cut costs and remote working and WFH are now seriously being considered in helping to reduce overheads as well as increasing productivity. done right it can make business sense.

With the current world situation it is becoming more apparent what we should be saying is that in the 'new' shipping world WFH is more about a move towards overall remote operations and digital technology than being based in actual locations.

TECHNICAL SERVICES

GMCG will soon be providing **Telemedicine** advisory services.

GMCG is **expanding** upon it is current **Broadband related services** it is providing in collaboration with RADIOLLOYD Panama

About Us

Established in 1988, Global Maritime Consultants Group (GMCG) provides expert technical, legal, training and management consultancy for diverse stakeholders in the shipping and offshore sectors.

With offices and agents in over 100 cities and ports around the world, we serve national and international clients from ship builders, owners, agents and seafarers, to offshore operators, to bankers, underwriters and lawyers with an extensive portfolio of professional maritime services.

Our Mission Statement remains:

To uphold exceptional quality of service in delivering progressive and exact professional, technical and operational solutions to the maritime industry.

Values:

MOTIVATION

Supporting all our people to bring energy and enthusiasm to their daily work

OWNERSHIP

Empowering all our people to take ownership of their actions and sharing the fruits of success.

VALUES

Encouraging and rewarding honesty, loyalty, hard work and sincerity.

ENTERPRISES

Empowering and rewarding innovative thinking, and drive to design and deliver services that exceed customer expectations.

CONTACT US

HEADQUARTERS OFFICE
Zenas Kanther 2B, Alta Building, Ag. Triada 3035,
Limassol, Cyprus
admin@gmcg.global
Tel: +357 25 747638
Fax: +357 25 747894

CHINA
SHANGHAI Suite 2006, Shanghai Rui Feng
International Tower, No.248, Yangshupu Road,
Shanghai, 200082, China T: +86 21 6886 0181, F: +86
21 6886 0182 shanghai@gmcg.global
DALIAN Suite 2203, Friendship Building No. 158,
Friendship Road, Dalian, China T: +86 411 3982 2783
dalian@gmcg.global

EGYPT
ALEXANDRIA 26 (B) Fawzy Moaaz St., Office No. 903,
Mefco Helwan Building, Smouha, Alexandria, Egypt T:
+20 3 425 0155, F: +20 3 425 0955
alexandria@gmcg.global

GHANA
ACCRA GMCG-DAVCON,P.O BOX KN 257, Kaneshie
- Accra, Ghana Tel: +233-541439943
accra@gmcg.global

GREECE
PIRAEUS 4-6 Efplias Street, 18537 Piraeus, Greece T:
+30 2104293837, F: +30 2104293502
piraeus@gmcg.global

GUYANA
GEORGETOWN Lot 162-163 Lamaha Street North
Cummingsburg, Guyana T: +592 501 1000, +592 668
9388 georgetown@gmcg.global

INDIA
COCHIN 1st Floor, CICFS, Old Aanavathil Junction,
ICTT Road Udyogamandal P.O, Kalamassery, Cochin
Pin: 683501, India T: +91 484-2555939 , F: +91 484-
2986023 cochin@gmcg.global

MUMBAI Mayuresh Cosmos Building, Office No 502
Plot No 37 Sector-11 CBD BELAPU R Navi Mumbai-
400614 T: +91 22-497 01399 mumbai@gmcg.global

MIDDLE EAST
LEBANON BEIRUT New Rawda, Park St.Lazar Block
M, Beirut-Lebanon T: +961 76723 982
middleeast@gmcg.global

NIGERIA
LAGOS 9B, Elegba Festival Drive, Oniru Victoria
Island, Lagos, Nigeria T: +234 14627 759, F: +234
14627 758 lagos@gmcg.global

PANAMA
PANAMA CITY 50th Street Global Plaza Building 20th
Floor Suite D & E , Panama City, Panama T: +507
2132260 , F: +507 2132264 panama@gmcg.global

RUSSIA
MOSCOW Zolotorozhsky Val h.32, Building 2, 3rd Floor
Office 310, 111033, Moscow, Russia T: +7 495 926
2357, F: +7 495 926 2358 moscow@gmcg.global

SINGAPORE
21 Woodlands Close #05-28 Primz Bizhub
Singapore 737854 Tel: +65 6 2232203 Fax: +65 6
2262621 singapore@gmcg.global

SRI LANKA
COLOMBO Level 12 Parkland Building, No.33 Park
Street, Colombo 2, Sri Lanka T: +94 11 258 1134
colombo@gmcg.global

UAE
DUBAI M-7 Wasl AL Mamzar Bldg, AL Mamzar Street
P.O. Box 14751, Dubai, UAE T: +971 4 296 5595 T:
+800 472 823 (Toll free), F: +971 4 296 5597
dubai@gmcg.global

USA
FLORIDA 2645 Executive Park Drive, Suite 509,
Weston, FL 33331 USA T: +1 754 217 3851
miami@gmcg.global