

iVOYAGE

Edition 05 | 2025



Khor Fakkan anchorage



From the Bridge

It gives me immense pleasure to share this latest edition of the STAG Marine newsletter — a reflection of our unwavering commitment to safety, innovation, and operational excellence in maritime compliance.

This quarter has been particularly dynamic, with significant strides made across various fronts. Our team has actively conducted **ISM, ISPS, and MLC audits** for a diverse range of fleets, ensuring our partners remain aligned with evolving regulatory expectations while also enhancing their onboard safety culture.

A notable advancement has been the development and rollout of our proprietary **Virtual Inspection Reporting (VIR) App**, purpose-built to streamline ISM audits. The app enables enhanced traceability, real-time non-conformity management, and seamless reporting — raising the standards of digital compliance and audit readiness.

We also successfully completed our **ISM/ISPS/MLC /ISO 9001 training course for Superintendents** for one of our very esteemed clients which stood apart in its delivery. Unlike traditional sessions, this program focused on **real-world case studies, scenario-based exercises, and critical thinking framework** sharpening both technical acumen and decision-making skills for shore-based teams.

Additionally, our **Bridge Team Management (BTM)** training took on a fresh perspective, integrating simulator-based exercises with peer-group assessments. This approach not only elevated the learning experience but also fostered a better bridge team and confidence under pressure.

On a personal note, I had the opportunity to **attend a tanker vessel myself** recently and oversee preparations for a **SIRE 2.0 inspection**. I'm proud to share that the vessel achieved **an outstanding result**, reflecting the hard work

of the crew and the effectiveness of our coaching methods, documentation systems, and risk-based approach to inspections. It was a powerful validation of our belief in proactive readiness and human-centric training.

Beyond technical delivery, our presence at the **UAE Maritime Week** and the **Seatrade Maritime Logistics Middle East event** reaffirmed our belief in digital transformation, sustainability, and AI as the cornerstones of the industry's future. The convergence of maritime leaders from across the globe offered rich insights and new collaboration possibilities.

Lastly, it was an honour to represent STAG Marine at the **Nautical Institute AGM and Annual Marine Ball & Gala Dinner**, celebrating the achievements of maritime professionals and reinforcing the importance of mentorship, knowledge-sharing, and community in shaping the future of our industry.

As we navigate the rest of the year, we remain committed to our mission — **to elevate compliance, empower crew competency, and embrace innovation without compromise**. Thank you for being a part of this journey with us.

Warm regards,

Capt Tanuj Balani
Managing Director,
STAG Marine Group



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- Capt Murali
- Sea Glitz
- Shashi Ganghas



Top Findings, Real Impact: Data-Driven Insights from ISM/ISPS/MLC Audits

As inspections evolve into behaviour-focused and data-driven assessments, audits must move beyond checklist compliance. At STAG Marine, we conduct ISM, ISPS, and MLC audits that don't just meet regulations — they add value to vessel operations, crew awareness, and long-term safety performance.

STAG Marine's "Value Audit" Approach

We focus on three key pillars:

1. Pre-Audit Preparation

Crews are briefed in advance with readiness checklists, familiarization sessions for senior officers, and mock interviews based on trends in SIRE, PSC, and internal inspections.

2. Operationally Focused Auditing

Our audits examine real behaviours — not just procedures. We assess the application of safety barriers, permit-to-work systems, contingency preparedness, and actual use of the SMS onboard.

3. Actionable Findings

Each finding is supported by context, root cause guidance based on ISM GM 3.11.1, and recommendations aligned with TMSA 3 and SIRE 2.0.

12-Month Audit Trends (200+ Vessels)

Category	Common Issues
ISM – Safety	Outdated muster lists, incomplete drill records
ISPS – Access	Inconsistent gangway log control
MLC – Welfare	Grievance procedures not understood
MLC – Work/Rest	Unjustified manual corrections

ISM and PSC Code 30

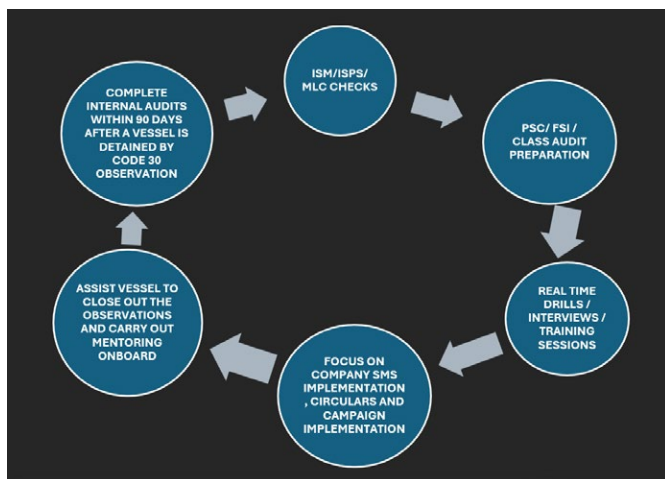
A serious ISM finding by PSC triggers a mandatory flag State audit within 90 days (IMO A.1155(32)). STAG Marine assists in documentation, coordination with flag/RO, and ensuring close-out.

STAG Marine's audits go beyond checklists, uncovering real behaviours and delivering insights that enhance safety, crew awareness, and vessel performance.

More Than Compliance

With SIRE 2.0 and PSC regimes tightening, your vessel needs more than a tick-box audit — it needs a partner who delivers insight, readiness, and performance-driven outcomes.

That's the STAG Marine difference.



Article by
Capt Siddharth Bhandari
Senior Marine Manager



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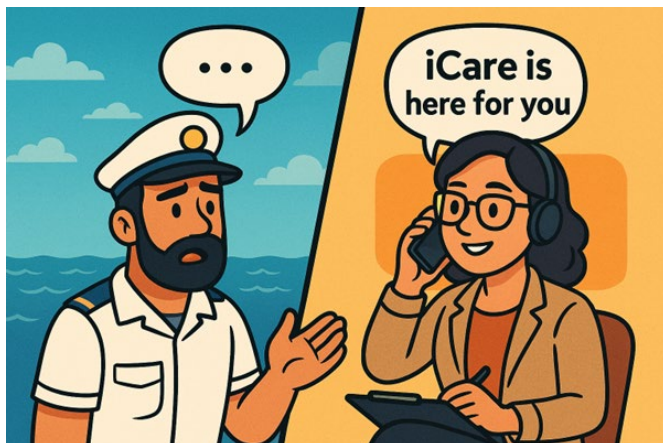
A True Story from Sea: When Silence Breaks and Healing Begins

Life at sea may appear structured and adventurous, but beneath the surface lies emotional isolation, pressure to perform, and the silent burden of personal loss. Seafarers are trained to handle emergencies — but rarely taught how to cope with grief, anxiety, or mental exhaustion.

This is the story of a young officer who reached a breaking point at sea — and how timely counselling helped him come back to himself.

He was a 29-year-old Third Officer — bright, disciplined, and well-regarded by his peers. Halfway through a 6-month contract, subtle changes began to surface. He stopped joining meals, avoided casual conversations, and often seemed lost in thought. His reactions became sharper, his patience thinner. Most attributed it to fatigue — but nobody asked, and he never explained.

What no one knew was that a month earlier, he had received devastating news: a close family member had passed away. He hadn't told anyone. He buried the grief under layers of duty and silence, afraid of being seen as unfit or weak. He told himself he just had to "get through the contract." But the pressure kept building.



One night, he failed to report to the bridge for his watch. He was found in his cabin — sweating, pale, and struggling to breathe. When asked what was wrong, he said, "I don't know. I feel like I'm drowning, and I can't tell anyone." It wasn't a

physical issue — it was a mental health crisis.

Thanks to a supportive Master and quick action from shore management, a tele-counselling session was arranged through the iCare mental wellness team within 24 hours. In the beginning, he said very little. But just being heard without judgment began the healing process. Over the course of several sessions, he finally opened up — about his grief, his guilt, and the weight of pretending to be okay.

Beneath the discipline of life at sea, a young officer silently battled grief and found that speaking out was the first step towards healing.

The counselling focused on emotional release, practical coping tools, and rebuilding his sense of control. He was gently encouraged to share his situation with the Captain, who responded with empathy and discretion — adjusting duties, offering peer support, and preserving the officer's dignity.

Gradually, change came. He started sleeping better. He returned to the messroom. He spoke more. During a later session, he shared, "I thought talking about it would make me look weak. But it's the only thing that helped me feel human again." He completed his contract, supported every step of the way. Weeks later, he sent a quiet message to the counsellor: "You didn't just help me survive the contract. You helped me not give up on myself."

Article by
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"90 Seconds to Make It or Break It"

How Aarushi Turned Interview Failures into a Sailing Career

Did you know that over 65% of maritime candidates fail to clear their first three interviews — not because they're unqualified, but because they don't know how to present themselves? In an industry where timing, confidence, and clarity matter as much as certifications, interviews are often lost in the first 90 seconds.

Aarushi was one of them. Fresh out of maritime college, with a cadetship on her resume and stars in her eyes, she walked into several shipping offices full of hope. But rejection after rejection left her questioning her worth. Her answers were generic. Her posture, unsure. Her voice, nervous.

That's when she connected with iSail Marine.

Recognizing her potential, we first helped Aarushi secure a shore-based role as a Marine Executive with a maritime company. While it wasn't her dream sailing job, it became a powerful learning experience. The exposure to marine operations, documentation, and commercial dynamics gave her a well-rounded understanding of the industry.

But Aarushi never gave up on her sailing dream.

Next, she enrolled in iSail Marine's **Interview Coaching Program**. She practiced. She transformed.

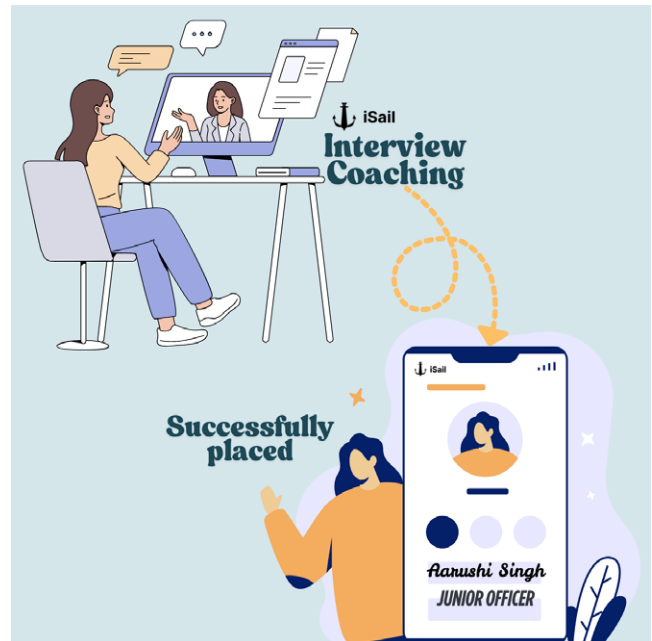
Over 65% of maritime candidates fail early interviews not due to lack of skill but poor self-presentation. Aarushi's journey shows how the right coaching can turn rejections into sailing success.

At iSail Marine, Aarushi learned the psychology behind interviews. She understood how to highlight her sea-time stories, how to align her answers with STCW values, and how to turn "Tell me about yourself" into a compelling pitch. She underwent mock interviews with industry experts, received real-time feedback, and trained for confidence — not just competence.

Here's what Aarushi mastered — and what can change your interview game:

First Impressions Speak Louder Than Words: Interviewers form opinions within seconds. Dress sharp, enter with confidence, and show you are mission ready.

Turn Experiences into Stories: Don't just say "I worked as



a cadet." Share how you responded to a critical onboard situation or learned from an audit finding.

Mindset Matters More Than Marks: Shipping companies hire for attitude. Be adaptable, solution-oriented, and show readiness to learn.

Know Your Employer: Research the company's fleet, trade routes, or safety initiatives. It shows interest and initiative.

Ask, Don't Just Answer: End the interview with smart questions about growth, fleet management, training programs.

Today, Aarushi proudly sails as a Junior Officer with a top shipping company. Her journey is a living example that an interview isn't a test, it's your pitch. And with the right training, you can master it.

Ready to turn rejection into selection?

Write to us at info@isail-marine.com

Visit us at www.isail-marine.com

Your maritime career deserves more than just a CV. It deserves a strategy.



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Bridge Team Management: Navigating Towards Safer Seas

The Imperative of Bridge Team Management (BTM)

In today's complex maritime environment, the significance of Bridge Team and Resource Management cannot be overstated. With increasing vessel sizes and congested shipping lanes, effective coordination among bridge personnel is paramount. Bridge Team and Resource Management focuses on enhancing communication, decision-making, and situational awareness, thereby reducing human error — a leading cause of maritime incidents. By fostering a collaborative environment, BTM ensures that all team members are aligned in their objectives, leading to safer and more efficient voyages.

Regulatory Mandates and Industry Expectations

The necessity for BTM training is underscored by

international regulations and industry standards.

RISQ 3.1 – Section 2.15

“Does the ship’s manager provide value-added training courses beyond STCW?”

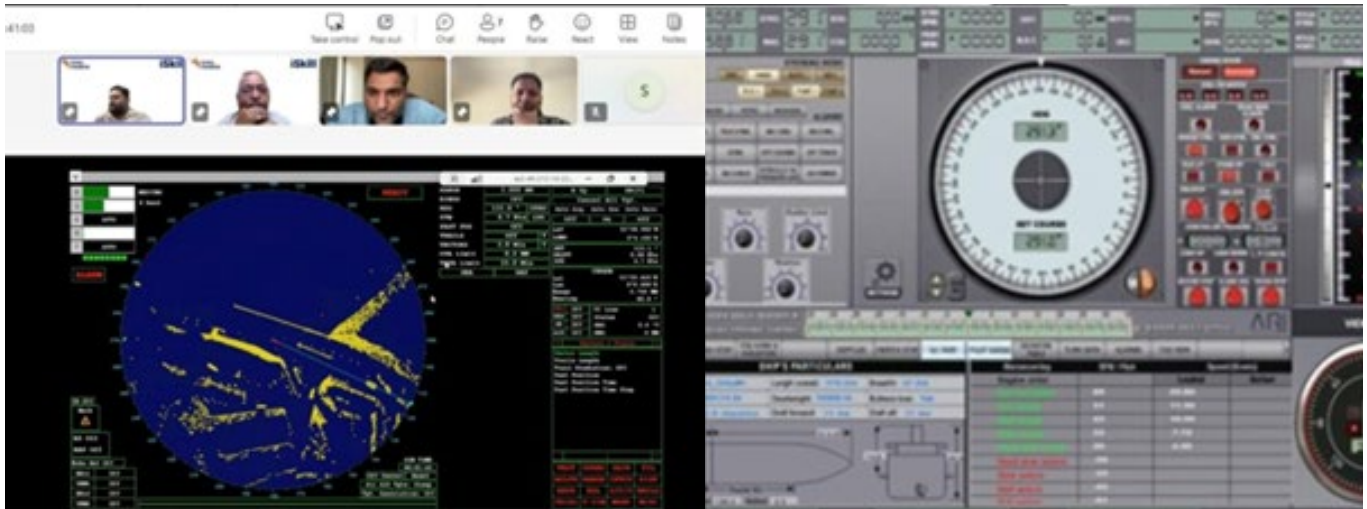
Answer: Yes. Courses must include **Bridge Resource Management and Engine Room Resource Management** as per industry expectations.

OCIMF SIRE 2.0 – Chapter 3.1 & 3.3

“Were officers suitably qualified, and had they attended a shore-based BRM course within the last five years?”

Expected Evidence: Bridge Team Management simulator-based training certificate (IMO Model Course 1.22).





With rising maritime risks, BTM is vital. iSkill's simulator-based training prepares officers to meet real-world challenges with confidence and full compliance.

The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) 2010, specifically Section A-VIII/2, mandates the inclusion of Bridge Resource Management in training programs. Furthermore, the Oil Companies International Marine Forum's (OCIMF) SIRE 2.0 program emphasises the requirement for officers to have completed shore-based BTM courses within the last five years. Additionally, the Tanker Management and Self-Assessment (TMSA) framework, particularly Element 5, highlights the importance of navigation safety through effective bridge team practices. These regulations collectively stress the critical role of BTM in ensuring maritime safety and operational excellence.

iSkill's Comprehensive Approach to BTM Training

Recognising the pivotal role of BTM, iSkill, powered

by STAG Marine, offers a holistic training program that aligns with international standards. The course encompasses theoretical knowledge, practical simulations, and peer interactions to bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world application. Utilising state-of-the-art simulators, trainees navigate through scenarios in challenging maritime regions such as Singapore, Dover Strait, Gibraltar, and Rotterdam. Key modules include watchkeeping, situational awareness, passage planning, VDR-based navigation error analysis, and master-pilot-officer coordination. By integrating real case studies and decision-making frameworks, iSkill ensures that participants are well-equipped to handle the dynamic challenges of modern maritime operations.

Conclusion

In an era where maritime safety is paramount, Bridge Team Management stands as a cornerstone of effective vessel operation. Adhering to regulatory requirements and embracing comprehensive training programs like those offered by iSkill not only ensures compliance but also fosters a culture of safety and excellence on the high seas.

Article by

Mr Shreesh Shukla
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How to improve the Seafarer happiness index onboard

The Seafarer Happiness Index is a vital measure of crew wellbeing, reflecting overall satisfaction with life at sea. A higher index is directly linked to improved performance, safety, and crew retention. Ship managers and operators play a key role in uplifting this index by focusing on the following actionable areas:

1. Improve Communication and Connectivity

Providing reliable internet access for crew to stay connected with their families is a top driver of happiness. Even limited access to email or messaging apps can significantly boost morale.

2. Enhance Living Conditions

Comfortable accommodation, clean recreational spaces, adequate lighting, and air conditioning make a major difference. Investing in good-quality bedding, clean laundry services, and well-maintained gym or entertainment areas helps uplift daily life onboard.

Improving the Seafarer Happiness Index begins with small, consistent steps. Better connectivity, living conditions, leadership, and mental health support can significantly uplift morale and performance.

3. Promote Mental Health Support

Regular mental health awareness sessions, access to counselling — such as iCare, our in-house counselling and wellness programme — and an open environment where seafarers feel safe to voice their concerns are essential. Confidential feedback systems can also help identify issues early.

4. Foster Good Leadership and Team Culture

Respectful treatment, fair distribution of work, and supportive leadership improve job satisfaction. Senior officers should be trained

to lead by example and encourage teamwork, inclusivity, and clear communication.

5. Ensure Fair Work–Rest Hours

Fatigue is a major factor in dissatisfaction. Strict adherence to rest hours, fair watchkeeping schedules, and time off-duty for mental and physical recovery are critical.

6. Celebrate Events and Encourage Recreation

Recognizing birthdays, festivals, or cultural events and organizing onboard games or movie nights create a sense of community and emotional relief during long voyages.

7. Provide Career Development Opportunities

Offering training sessions, mentorship programs like our Cadet Training Program 2025 and clear promotion pathways boost motivation and give crew members a sense of purpose and progression.

Conclusion

Improving the Seafarer Happiness Index is not just about amenities, it's about building a culture of respect, safety, and support. Small consistent efforts from shipowners, managers, and senior officers can create a profound positive impact on seafarers' lives at sea.



Ed Pearce, Head of Corporate Development at The Mission to Seafarers, met Capt Tanuj Balani at Stag Marine's Dubai office. A joint initiative will be announced soon.



Article by

Yugam Sharma

Crewing Manager



SIRE 2.0 – A Master's Perspective: Seamless Preparedness with STAG Marine's Support

As a seafarer with over two decades of sailing experience, I've seen many changes in the way inspections are carried out. But nothing has been as significant and paradigm-shifting as the introduction of SIRE 2.0. With its human element focus, vast question library, and performance-based approach, this inspection format demands not just regulatory compliance but also crew awareness, Human Factor (PIF) readiness, and documentation precision.

Recently, we underwent our first SIRE 2.0 inspection, and I can honestly say that while the framework was intense, we were prepared — and STAG Marine played a key role in making that happen.

Digital Preparedness with the SIRE 2.0 App

Before the inspection, we were introduced to STAG Marine's SIRE 2.0 readiness app, which became our go-to tool onboard. Unlike traditional checklists or scattered guidance documents, the app allowed us to:

- Review question sets tailored to our vessel type and risk profile
- Log and track compliance actions
- Understand inspector expectations clearly through real-time feedback features
- Having everything digitally organized helped me and my team to visualize our preparedness, monitor weak areas, and act on them proactively.

It made the entire process structured and far less stressful.

Focused Training and Crew Coaching

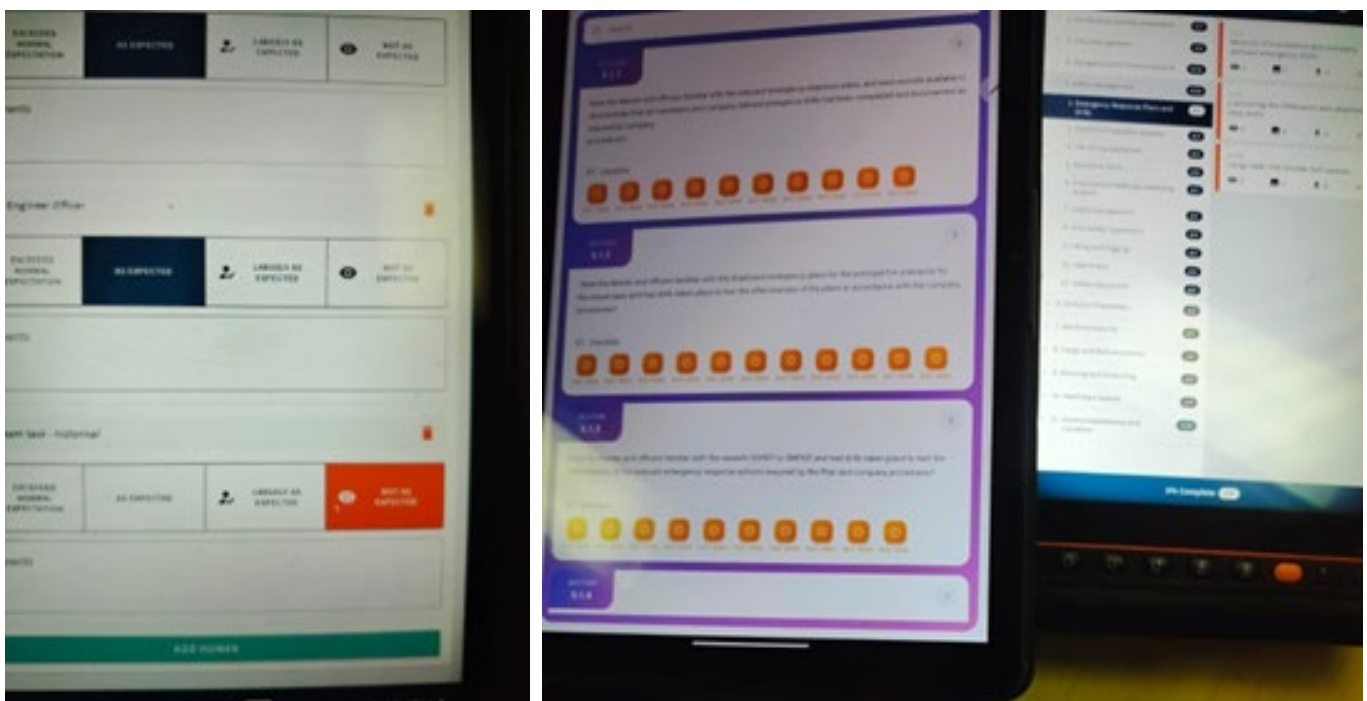
The difference truly showed during the actual inspection. Thanks to STAG Marine's coaching sessions, our officers were confident — not just with answers, but with their body language, operational clarity, and procedural articulation.

Instead of rote responses, our crew explained the *why* behind each process. From explaining safety barriers to demonstrating ECDIS route checks and risk assessments, there was an evident upgrade in how we presented ourselves. STAG's mock Q&A sessions, human factor focus, and emphasis on real-case scenarios made a huge difference.

SMS Aligned for Real-World Use

One of the underrated wins was our Safety Management System (SMS). STAG had earlier helped our technical managers align the SMS with SIRE 2.0 expectations — making it intuitive and easy for ship staff to follow.

Instead of sifting through volumes of manuals, we had concise checklists, quick references, and integrated job aids. During the inspection, everything



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the inspector asked for — from permit control to muster record analysis — was available, aligned, and understood by our team.

With just one minor observation under SIRE 2.0, STAG Marine's digital tools and coaching proved key to turning a high-stakes inspection into a confident, well-prepared success.

The Result – Just One Negative Observation

After nearly 8 hours of intense observation, interviews, and evidence checks, the result was in: just three minor negative observation on Hardware and Process.

For me, that was more than a tick in a box. It was validation of the hard work by my team and the exceptional support provided by STAG Marine. In this latest regime where 8-10 observations are considered normal, having just one showed that preparation,

coaching, and digital tools do work when integrated right.

Final Thoughts

SIRE 2.0 is here to stay, and it challenges us to go beyond compliance toward professional mastery. It tests not just procedures, but how deeply we understand and execute them.

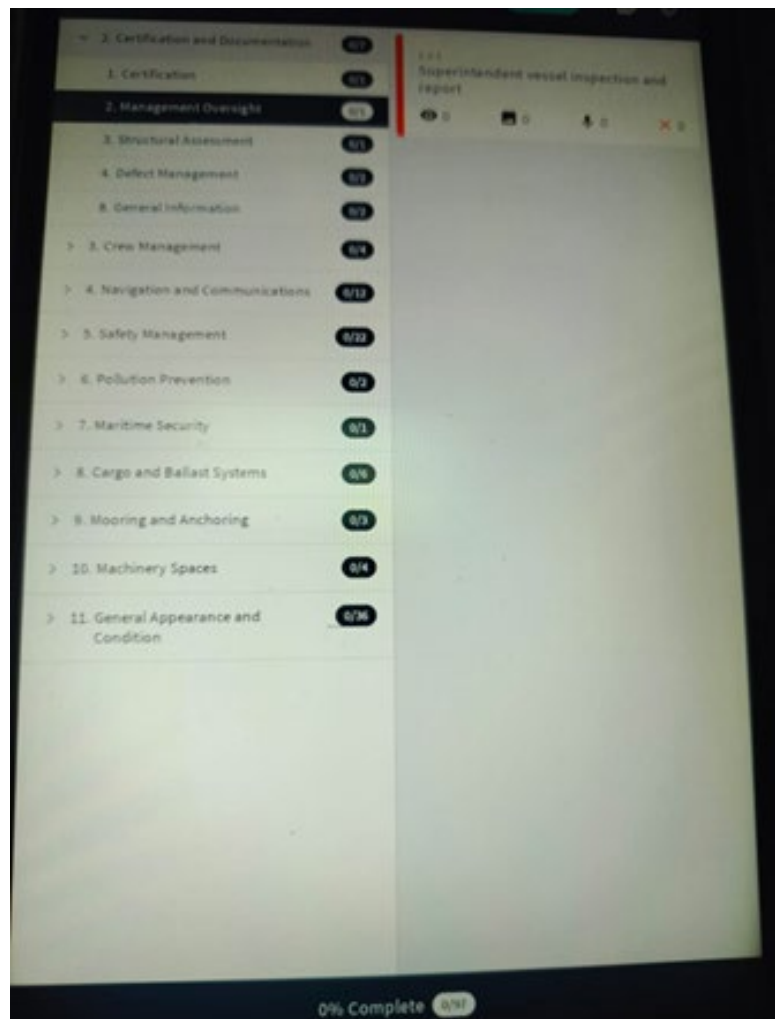
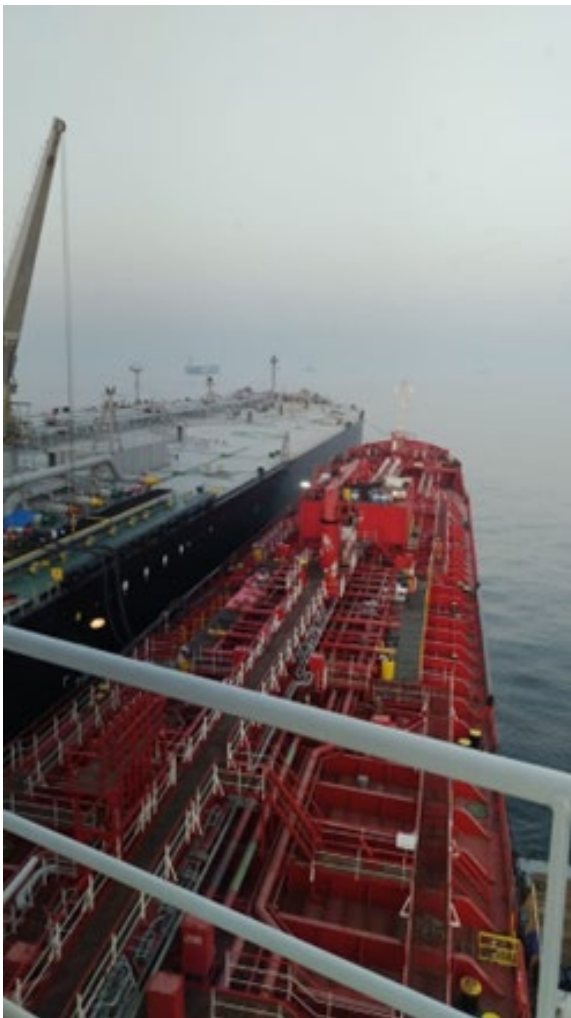
Thanks to STAG Marine's digital tools, focused coaching, and operational alignment, we didn't just pass — we emerged stronger, more confident, and truly inspection-ready.

To my fellow masters — if you're approaching your first SIRE 2.0 inspection, go in prepared. The right support makes all the difference.

Article by

Capt Murali

Oil/Chemical Tanker



Introducing the VIR App: Revolutionizing Vessel Inspections with Digital Precision

At STAG Marine, we believe that compliance is not just a checkbox — it's a continuous, data-driven journey toward operational excellence. In line with this vision, we are proud to introduce our latest innovation: the **Vessel Inspection Report (VIR) App** — **a comprehensive, mobile-first solution designed to simplify, streamline, and standardize vessel inspections across ISM, ISPS, MLC, and other compliance frameworks.**

Whether onboard or ashore, online or offline, **VIR empowers inspectors to perform thorough inspections with ease and generate actionable reports in real-time**, improving response time and boosting inspection efficiency across fleets.

Key Features and Benefits

Uninterrupted Offline Functionality

One of VIR's most powerful features is its **offline capability**, enabling inspections to continue seamlessly even when internet access is unavailable. Inspectors can collect, save, and organize data during the inspection, and **sync everything once back online** ensuring there are no delays in the reporting process.

Intuitive Data Entry and Smart Interface

With its user-friendly design, VIR reduces the administrative burden. Inspectors can:

- Select questions from dynamic checklists

- Mark findings as compliant or non-compliant
- Attach photos and comments for each item
- Use voice-to-text for quicker documentation

This minimizes human error, saves time, and ensures a consistent standard of inspection reporting.

Centralized Dashboard and Inspection Control

Fleet managers and QHSE teams can monitor inspection statuses across vessels using the centralized dashboard. This feature provides:

- Live tracking of ongoing inspections
- Alerts for overdue or pending actions
- And a consolidated view of fleet-wide compliance health

Automated and Targeted Reporting

VIR offers a one-click generation of structured reports, including:

- Summary reports for management
- Detailed non-conformity reports for follow-up
- And specialized reports for departments (e.g., safety, maintenance, navigation)

You can even generate targeted reports for only unsatisfactory areas, enabling faster corrective actions and improved closeout timelines.

Data Analytics and Compliance Intelligence



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What sets VIR apart is not just the digitization of inspections — but the power of the data behind it.

Trend Analysis and KPI Tracking

- Identify recurring non-conformities by vessel, fleet, or region
- Benchmark vessel performance against company KPIs
- Track inspector consistency and training effectiveness

Predictive Insights

Using VIR's database, you can:

- Detect weak areas before they trigger observations in third-party audits
- Forecast high-risk categories and allocate resources proactively
- Improve root cause analysis based on historical patterns

Exportable Dashboards

- Export compliance metrics for monthly and quarterly reviews
- Share insights with senior leadership and technical teams in real-time
- Integrate reports into your existing QMS or safety management dashboards

Why VIR is a Game-Changer for Maritime Operators

- Standardized inspections across all fleets
- Improves documentation integrity and traceability
- Enhances transparency between ship and shore teams
- Speed up corrective actions and closeout loops
- Builds a data-driven culture of proactive compliance

Your Digital Step Forward

With inspections becoming more behavioural, performance-based, and analytics-driven (as seen in SIRE 2.0 and enhanced TMSA frameworks), VIR is not just a tool — it's your competitive edge.

Whether you're preparing for a vetting, internal audit, port state inspection, or just strengthening your safety culture — VIR ensures you're always inspection-ready, always informed, and always improving.

For demonstrations, fleet onboarding, or integration discussions, feel free to reach out to the STAG Marine digital innovation team.




Article by Team



Maritime Assurance Redefined: The Value of Technical and Pre-Purchase Inspections

TECH SPOTLIGHT: The Value of Vessel Technical & Pre-Purchase Inspections Ensuring Safety, Compliance & Smarter Maritime Investments

In today's dynamic maritime landscape, technical inspections are not just regulatory checkpoints — they're pillars of operational excellence and commercial confidence. Whether it's a tanker, bulker, or offshore unit, regular vessel inspections play a critical role in minimizing risk, maintaining efficiency, and extending vessel life.

Types of Vessel Inspections

- **Routine Inspections** – Scheduled periodically to assess the vessel's overall health and catch early signs of wear.
- **Special Inspections** – Triggered post-incident to identify damage and needed repairs.
- **Statutory Inspections** – Mandated by IMO conventions like SOLAS and MARPOL to verify safety and environmental compliance.
- **Condition-Based Inspections** – Based on real-time system performance using onboard sensors and analytics.
- **Pre-Purchase Inspections** – A crucial due diligence step when buying a vessel, offering a comprehensive overview of hull, machinery, cargo gear, class records, and maintenance history. These inspections safeguard buyers from hidden defects, compliance gaps, or overvaluation.

From safety to sustainability, STAG Marine's inspections offer more than checks; they deliver insight, assurance and a competitive edge at sea.

Why Regular Inspections Matter?

- Boost crew and cargo safety
- Ensure regulatory compliance and avoid detentions
- Maximize fuel and machinery efficiency
- Enable cost control through predictive maintenance
- Prolong vessel lifespan and operational readiness
- Enhance asset value and charter appeal
- Demonstrate commitment to sustainability and pollution prevention

Best Practices from the Field

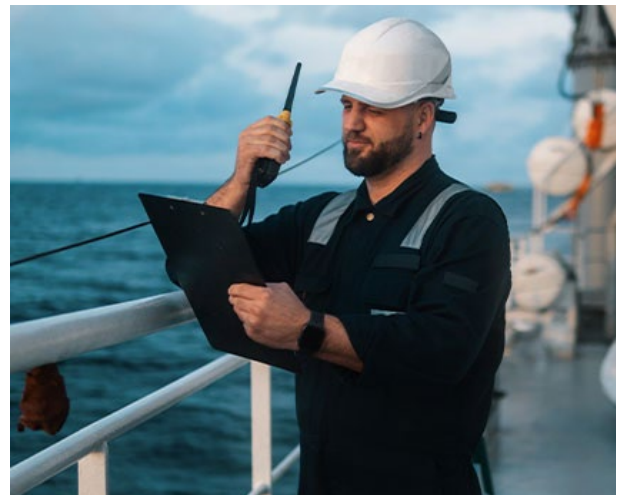
At STAG Marine, we integrate tech-driven inspection tools — drones, ultrasonic thickness testers, digital logs — and bring expert cross-functional teams onboard.

Our approach emphasizes pre-audit coaching, system diagnostics, and post-inspection feedback loops.

Thinking of Buying a Vessel?

A Pre-Purchase Inspection is your best insurance. Get the full technical picture, understand compliance risks, and negotiate from a position of knowledge.

Stay shipshape. Inspections are no longer a box to tick — they're your strategic edge at sea. For audits, inspections, or pre-purchase support, connect with the STAG Marine team today.



Article by

Shashi Ganghas

Managing Director,
Senior Technical Superintendent



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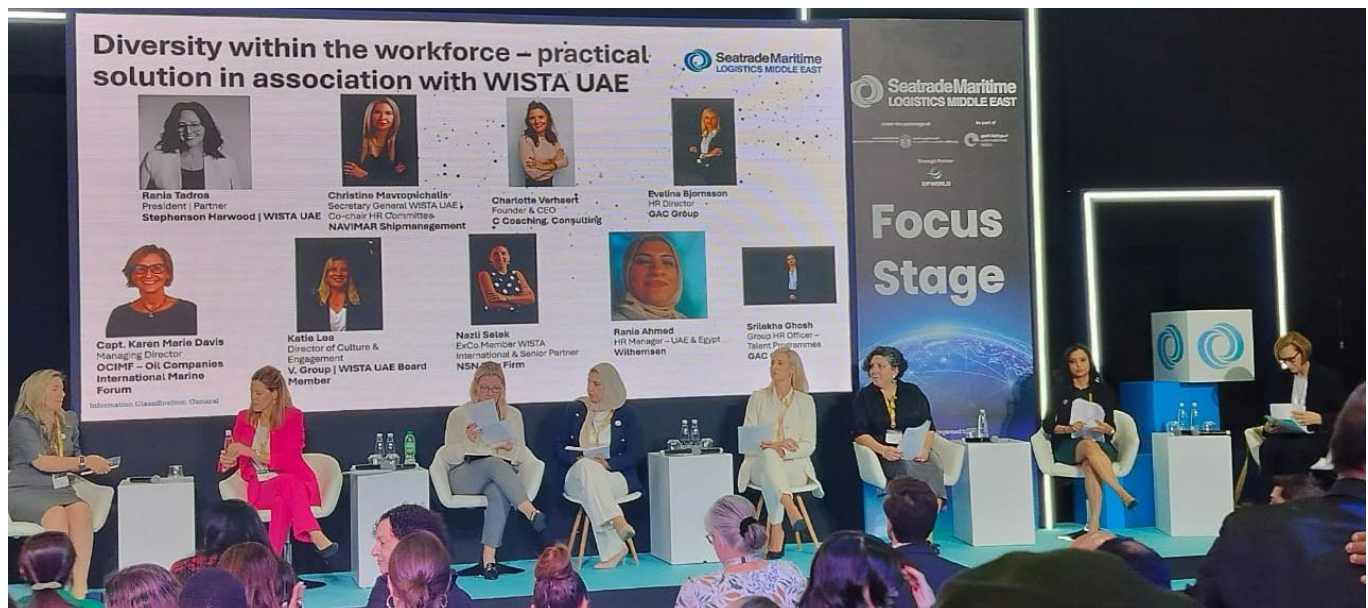


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UAE Maritime Week 2025 & Nautical Institute UAE Marine Ball




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Benefits of the Interview Coaching & Placement Program:

1. Improved interview performance and clarity.
2. Higher chances of selection in top shipping companies.
3. Confidence to face shore and sea opportunities.
4. Personalized career guidance and mentorship.



“Ready to turn rejection into selection?”

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