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future nautics

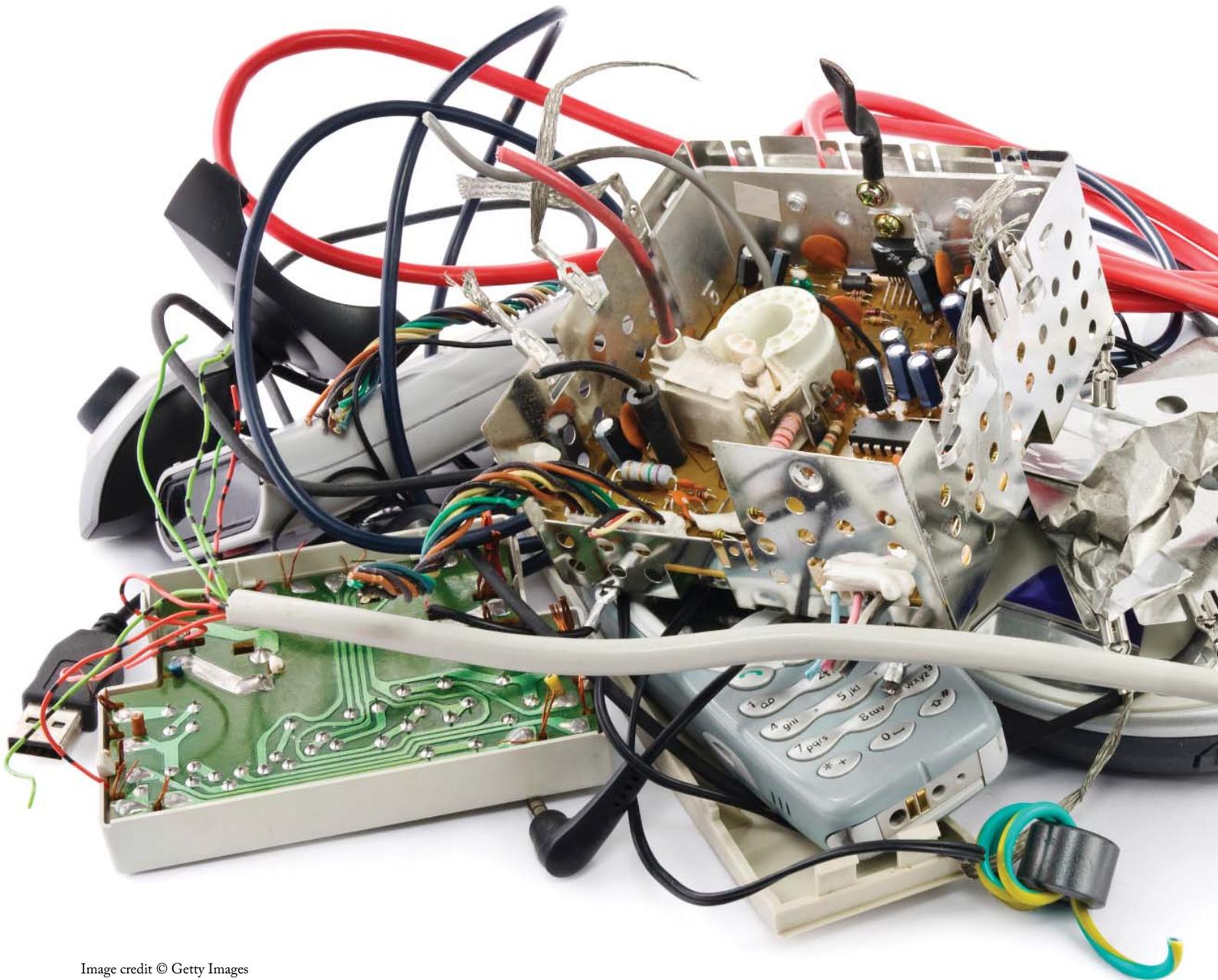
the maritime future



A Faster Horse?

Is shipping innovating, or renovating?

A Pile of Junk And a good imagination



According to Edison invention requires a pile of junk and a good imagination, but it also requires a really compelling problem to solve, says *Martin Kits van Heyningen*.



People always ask me, “What made you think of that?” or “Where do these ideas come from?” Well the truth is, I have no idea. However, I spend a lot of time studying the markets, talking to customers, finding interesting bits of technology, and trying to absorb as much raw data as I can. Perhaps this is the modern analog to Edison’s quip, “To invent, you need a good imagination and a pile of junk.”

Of all the things we do, trying to do something that has never been done before is always the most rewarding—the riskiest, but also the most rewarding. That’s where our company has always excelled. We’ve never been imitators, we’ve always been innovators bringing disruption to an existing market or even

become pioneers, and we all know what happens to the pioneers, they are the ones with the arrows in their backs!

My attitude towards failure is that you must think of it as the opportunity to succeed. When we launch a risky new technology in an unproven market, we do so knowing that by proceeding, we have the opportunity to become successful. If we do nothing, we don’t have that opportunity.

In a technology-driven society, if you don’t accelerate product development, you will already be behind by the time a new product or service launches—it simply will have taken too long to go from idea to final form. So we push, we use automated test processes, we encourage our engineers and design teams to

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creating a new market. We like solving problems, with one caveat: they have to be really difficult problems, the simple ones just aren’t that compelling.

How do you encourage an innovative culture in a company? I’m sure I don’t have all the answers, but I do know that many companies take risks, and many companies have ideas that fail. But if you don’t keep thinking of new ideas, and trying them out, you never move forward.

There are lots of smart people who believe that successful people and successful companies fail more often than unsuccessful ones. Which means that you have to be able to take risks. We’ve always taken big risks as a company—we

think out loud, together, and outside of the norm—every day. Better testing leads to risk-taking by the creative and engineering teams—because failure is caught early and not punished. That’s how you end up with people willing to take more risks.

If you fear failure too much, the organization becomes conservative and innovation is stifled. In the maritime industry, the culture to innovate is extremely strong in some areas and pretty much nonexistent in others. Our company started with an innovative compass product for competitive sailboat racing. This very thin slice of maritime—the world of ocean racing sailboats and America’s

Cup yachts—thrives on pushing the edge. Commercial shipping, by contrast, is more about a traditional way of doing things, but even in that traditional world, innovation is taking hold.

Access to the Internet is changing everything, and affordable high-speed connections at sea are the change agents. Not only do seafarers want access to more content and communications while on a vessel, the operational efficiencies that broadband enables for a ship operator are truly remarkable. Driving our innovation today is a constant thought process about what broadband connectivity can do for a vessel. What are all the ways we can support the professionals onboard a vessel and the systems themselves?

Our IP-MobileCast content delivery

service is a great example. We saw there was a huge demand for more and more data—large multimedia files for the movies or sports clips that crewmembers want to watch, for example.

KVH pioneered a new way to get those large files delivered via satellite network without running up a vessel's airtime costs. We pioneered this new type of service by working through the technological issues one by one, because we knew there were great advantages to using idle network time to multicast large multimedia files to all vessels at once. We now enjoy a commanding lead in this new market.

Knowing that we can deliver large files efficiently and affordably makes many things possible, and we are working

on products and services that can give our maritime customers the benefits of data, both for operational systems and analytical systems.

If there is information that will make it easier for a crewmember to solve a problem quickly onboard, let's make sure they can easily access that data. We are also working on hyper-efficient data upload technologies, so the data from the vessel can be sent off the vessel affordably to enable analytics in real time.

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