

# SHIP MANAGEMENT

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Can shipping's image  
**only be 'sexy'**  
if it's visible?



# How I work

SMI talks to industry leaders and asks the question

**How do you keep up with the rigours of the shipping industry?**



**Terry Gidlow**

*CEO, WaterFront Maritime Services*

With the shipping industry facing some of the most difficult times it has seen and the falling of commodity prices, most people would regard the launch of a new global ship agency as a daring, if not illogical, move.

However, it has not stopped the start-up of WaterFront Marine Services, a new venture born from the joining of forces of Middle East and Asian port agencies

Sharaf Shipping Agency and Ben Line Agencies and spearheaded by new CEO Terry Gidlow.

Indeed, Mr Gidlow believes the timing is now ideal based on a number of drivers in the market.

**“Chains are only as strong as the weakest link”**

He explained: “A lot of people have asked me ‘why would you go and start a service business at a time when the shipping market is down in the doldrums?’

“We have looked at a few different drivers and first of all it is population. By the end of last year, the world population had grown by 86 million people. To us, that translates into 86 million more mouths to feed, more energy and more infrastructure and that then translates into an increase in demand for more materials which means more demand for ocean freight and ships hence for solution providers at both ends of those transactions.

“Irrespective of where the markets are, volumes are growing and more freight being moved on.”

Solution provider is exactly the term that Mr Gidlow believes sums up WaterFront Marine Services which went live as a company on 1st April and is headquartered in Dubai with commercial offices in Singapore and Miami as well as operational hubs in Jakarta and the UAE.

Drawing on his experience from senior positions with Inchcape Shipping Services,

LBH Group and Chemoil Energy, he is driving forward the business with the knowledge that the two agency shareholders involved in the venture – both private, family-controlled companies - also have a great heritage in what they do. Indeed, Ben Line has a history of 191 years in the shipping business and Sharaf, 41 years.

Mr Gidlow said the drive behind the setting up of the new venture came mainly from Ben Line and Sharaf who saw the ability to combine with other ‘like-minded’ players to tap into a whole new market.

“That gives us a very solid foundation not just in the terms of the geographic framework and network but also in terms of expertise and commodity expertise and exposure to various different commodities and markets,” said Mr Gidlow.

“This isn’t a merger of the two companies. They are retaining their existing brands and their existing identities, however, we can leverage off the office network that they’ve got and the expertise they have got and we see this adding value to the existing customers, not diluting their value.”

WaterFront Maritime Services has 299 proprietary offices across 49 countries and has also set up a network of third party offices, which have been vetted rigorously. Mr Gidlow said it was important not only to find good people but the right people and to then monitor and manage the network.

“Chains are only as strong as the weakest link,” he said.

With the launch of the new company, third parties have been announced in South America, North America and Europe. Mr Gidlow explained: “If we are talking to somebody about crude oil we

need to be able to have coverage in the US Gulf, Venezuela, Nigeria, Angola and Middle East countries and obviously key countries in the Far East.”

He said one of the benefits of the new service would be bulk buying.

“Between the two shareholders we’ve got over 28,000 port calls a year being handled already. This can then lead to them negotiating better rates on a number of different services.”

Mr Gidlow said a full year was spent making sure the fit between the shareholders was right and making sure the correct processes and procedures were in place.

Can he see more agents following in WaterFront’s footsteps and there being more

consolidation between shipping agencies?

“I sincerely hope this doesn’t sound arrogant but I think there possibly would be but I think it would be very difficult, near impossible, for somebody, say in my type of role, to find two shareholders who have got the scope and services and pedigree and history,” he said.

“Will there be consolidation? I think there will be consolidation. Will you see small players going out of the market? I think that is inevitable. I think one of the challenges we face as an industry is credit risk.”

He concluded: “At the end of the day with the local presence we have in all of these locations, we have our finger on the pulse in terms of what happens there.” ●



## Brent Bruun

Chief Operating Officer, KVH Industries

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As COO of the global satellite communications provider, KVH Industries, Brent Bruun needs to juggle a variety of roles from staff manager, corporate strategy developer and satellite communications advisor to solutions-seeker and problem-solver.

Mr Bruun joined KVH as Vice President of Global Sales and Business Management in 2008 from the satellite provider GE Americom where he was SVP of Strategic Initiatives. KVH had just introduced its mini-VSAT Broadband service and TracPhone V7, the first satellite communications antenna for the mini-VSAT Broadband network. “Coming from the satellite industry, I saw the innovative approach KVH was taking, and was excited to play a role in the growth and expansion of the company’s product and service offerings,” he said.

As Chief Operating Officer, Mr Bruun has direct responsibility for KVH’s strategic corporate development, as well

as operational responsibility for mobile connectivity products and services. “With maritime being such a global industry, we have offices around the world, and the need to look at things with that global perspective is very important,” he said.

Mr Bruun is based at KVH’s headquarters at Middletown, US, and works with KVH staff in their offices in Singapore, Japan, Denmark, the UK and “everywhere in between” he said. “We emphasise the importance of the full customer experience— from how we manufacture our equipment, through its sales and marketing and customer onboarding, to how we service and support them long-term—and my team plays a lead role in that entire customer lifecycle,” said Mr Bruun.

How does the COO manage his staff? “I try to find a good balance between a hands-on type of boss to a delegator. There are times when you must dig in directly to help close a big deal with an important customer or run some numbers on a new initiative. The rest of the time I’m very much a delegator, and I believe that people need to take charge of their own responsibilities to solve problems and get results. I like to hire top-notch people, let them know I believe in them and that I expect great things from them, then let them take it from there,” he said.

“There’s a need to make sure our teams have everything they need to get the message across to owners, managers and fleet IT directors that there is a simple

solution available from one company, namely KVH.

How large a part does travel play in his role as COO? “With our global presence, I travel often, not only to meet with customers around the world, but also to spend time with our regional teams. The international aspect of the job allows me to continually improve my understanding of the global aspects of the maritime industry, while also helping me appreciate local and regional variations,” he said.

What does Mr Bruun view as his key challenges? “Making sure we are solving our customers’ problems is always paramount, and we must do so by providing innovative solutions that keep us ahead of the competition. Some of the biggest challenges in the maritime industry are external, such as economic uncertainties. Against that backdrop, ship owners and ship managers are evaluating many technological developments that are still evolving rapidly. For example, as the industry sees the benefits of broadband connectivity for everything from communications to crew welfare to big data and analytics, there are challenges and opportunities in helping the industry take full advantage of those offerings.”

He said the most exciting part of his role as COO is the chance to “direct KVH’s consolidated effort and to provide our customers with the absolute best in training, content and connectivity.” He said he was eager to “take full advantage of the synergies in commercial maritime

that come from acquisitions of such leading maritime services and brands as NEWSlink, Videotel and others.”

How does he view KVH’s role in an increasingly connected maritime sector? “I look forward to seeing KVH continue to grow and attract customers, particularly as connectivity services become essential throughout the maritime industry, and the move to VSAT and high-throughput satellites (HTS) accelerates. I’m thrilled that we’re able to provide such a complete solution, with big benefits for the customer. That includes the broadband connectivity for operations and crew; data collection and analysis to help vessel managers attain operational efficiencies; news, sports and entertainment content that can help reduce recruiting and retention costs; our unique IP-MobileCast content delivery service; and, industry-leading maritime training from Videotel.

“I hope to see customers benefiting from all our services, and realising the ease of working with one provider on a global basis,” he said.

When he is not working, Mr Bruun likes to spend time with his family “whether it’s a big reunion with extended family or a simple vacation with my wife and daughters.” He also enjoys watching US college football and professional baseball – and following Premier League football games in the UK. He also enjoys skiing and “continuing to work on my golf game.” ●