

Lindo shipyard played key role in design innovation

Maersk's Lindo yard in Denmark may be struggling financially but Bo Cerup-Simonsen says it has played a key role in enabling innovation for the giant Danish shipowner, and that it could continue to do so.

"There are many good examples - Lindo was the first to build double-hull tankers and with the Emma Maersk [13,000 teu, built 2006], the yard broke several records in terms of size and energy-efficiency," he said.

Maersk's double-hull tankers put the company ahead of the market. "The thinking was that by being more environmentally friendly we would have access to parts of the market that our competitors couldn't reach.

"The same line of thinking could be followed in the current wave of environmental concerns," he added. "The question is, however, which environmental aspects to focus on and how far to go in environmental performance.

"This is where we work with major cargo owners to understand how to elevate environmental performance throughout the supply chain." Cerup-Simonsen sees shipyards are having to compete harder on fuel efficiency and environmental compliance.

"While it may have been difficult to negotiate fuel-efficient solutions until now, we see this changing. The yards will have to compete for the business in a new setting where the buyer is in renewed demand, and many of the yards will try to differentiate themselves by offering environmental, fuel-efficient ships." Easy opportunities for improving fuel-efficiency - and thereby reducing the environmental impact - remain.

"There are still some fairly low-hanging fruits related to fuel-efficiency that you can pick - engine-tuning, hull cleaning and anti-fouling paints, crew awareness and voyage planning," he said.

"There are some substantial savings to be found in those areas and even if it doesn't require large investments, it still requires very careful engineering analysis and planning." For example, until now, the practice with slow-steaming - or low-speed steaming - has been to go down to only 40% to 60% of power load. But Maersk has found that most of its ships have been able to go down to 10% minimum load without jeopardising the technical condition of the machinery.

"This makes an enormous contribution to fuel saving because all of a sudden we can operate our ships at any speed down to very low levels, whenever the scheduling allows us to."

And in a clear message to the major engine builders, Cerup-Simonsen added: "When the engine manufacturers accept the low-load policy on a general level, our work on low-load operations will benefit the entire industry and its carbon footprint."

By Julian Bray Copenhagen

www.tradewinds.no

01-05-2009