

Women in Shipping

Blue MBA helps to bridge the gender gap

Copenhagen Business School has what is described as the world's only part-time executive MBA in Shipping and Logistics. Programme director **Irene Rosberg** explains why the course is attracting so many women

SHIPPING professionals are on an ongoing learning curve to make sure they keep pace with the developments in this ever-changing industry.

The executive MBA in Shipping and Logistics, known as the Blue MBA, was established to serve the industry.

The maritime industry is Denmark is always referred to as Blue Denmark, and the name Blue MBA was first coined by a journalist from the financial newspaper Boersen.

The course gives a holistic view of shipping, integrating commercial and technological aspects as well as maritime law, supply-chain management and leadership challenges.

It takes students to the top international level in business administration, reflecting the needs of the industry in a world where globalisation, enhanced competition, and the speed of technological changes place ever-increasing demands on executive management skills.

It is obvious that expertise in only one segment of this industry is no longer sufficient for those sitting in a top, decision-making position in different segments of this industry.

The Blue MBA prepares

the participants to face the challenges, take advantage of the opportunities and overcome threats caused by the impact of environmental, political, as well as IT developments, shifts in law and energy technologies on this industry.

The shipping industry has a nature which dictates diversity; this diversity is present in the Blue MBA in the form of internationality (we have students from 12 countries in our class), professional background of the participants, as well as gender diversity.

The Blue MBA today has 25% female participants, the highest number at Copenhagen Business School, this being a much higher percentage than those of the traditional MBAs which have so far attracted female participation.

What are the reasons for so many women being attracted to such an MBA which is specifically designed for a highly male-dominated shipping and logistics industry?

It is simple — the shipping industry is ageing, and in the next few years we expect to see a generation shift on the top management of this industry. Many of those who are sitting in the mid-career

management positions today are female, and these ladies who aspire to lead in this industry have now been given an opportunity to enhance their skills and to prepare themselves to pursue a top position in this industry in the near future.

Another aspect of it is that the shipping industry has always been looked upon as a traditional, old-fashioned industry. This is changing today and this industry is being modernised.

Having women in key positions in this industry is one of the signals of modernisation of the industry. We who are involved in the Blue MBA are proud to be paving the way and building a platform for the next generation of aspiring women to build a career in this industry.

As for the male participants and how they react to this, I believe that the shipping industry is different from other industries, in that there is certainly no struggle between male and female colleagues.

The male participants look at the female participants not as the members of the opposite team, rather they look at them as their allies and their teammates and they help their female colleagues to overcome the barriers they

face in this industry. In fact, I like to say, what has contributed to this positive development within the shipping industry is first of all the passion and motivation of the female participants but equally the encouragement of our male colleagues in the industry who nourish this new development by supporting it.

They have come to realise the continuous importance of the contribution of the women to this industry.

For us at the Blue MBA, having female participants is such a natural development that we do not really think about it in those terms.

We believe that the key to success for the top managers in this industry is to equip themselves with the right management skills that we provide. We take in those with the right background, motivation and commitment regardless of gender, and many in this category turn out to be female colleagues.



Some of the 'students' at Copenhagen Business School

Rita Michelle Bollinger (US/Norway), performance analyst with Exxon Mobil Marine Lubricants, US. She holds a LLM from Oslo University in maritime law, a MSC from Handelshøyskolen BI in energy management, and a BA from the University of Colorado in environmental biology with a specialisation in aquatic ecology.

Mette Helleskov Bulow (US/Denmark), head of logistics and transport at Vestas American Wind Technology, with an educational background at Aarhus Law School, and logistics studies at Copenhagen Business College.

Previous employer: DFDS, where she worked as forwarder for 11 years.

Line Dahle (Norway), marine underwriter with Gard, together with coordination responsibility for the company's Marine and P&I activities in Germany and France.

Hilde Wie Helgoey (Norway), senior shipping operator with Statoil, who studied for a year at London School of Maritime Studies, went to Statoil, and spent five years with Navion Shipping before returning to Statoil in 2003.

Tina Endresen Irvine (Norway), supply manager for Statoil, Norway/Latvia, who has numerous professional qualifications at the Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration. In 12 years at Statoil, she has held various positions including project cost controller, oil product trader in the European cargo market, and currently supply manager for the Baltic states.

Karolina Kjellgren (Sweden), head of trade performance, Atlantic trade, Wallenius Wilhelmsen. During her five years in the company she has primarily worked in cost management. In her current post, she is responsible for analysing profit and loss for the Atlantic trade, and setting financial targets.

Berit Koertz (Denmark), vice-president, Danish Ship Finance, Denmark, is a trained banker, and 20 of her 30 years work have involved ship finance, at first with Bikuben (now Danske Bank).

Kari Svenke (Norway/Argentina) works for Codan Marine Services in Bergen as area manager, Norway. She has worked within the marine insurance community for more than 25 years, first as a marine broker with J Grieg, then as underwriter with Vesta Marine & Energy, before becoming vice-president with responsibility for Gard Marine at Gard Services.

She was the first female chairman of the Norwegian hull committee and a member of the board of the Norwegian Research Maritime Board.

Zhang Tongxin (China), is procurement officer for the United Nations Population Fund, China.

Known as Sandy, she is a graduate of Beijing University of Aeronautics and Astronautics and holds a bachelor degree in control and navigation. Based in Copenhagen, she helps cover 20m annual procurement requests on reproductive health commodities from 23 country offices in the Asia/Pacific region.

Jenssen champions safer shipbreaking

INGVILD Jenssen is co-ordinator for the NGO Platform on Shipbreaking.

She became involved with the organisation in September 2005 after it was realised by some of the few non-governmental organisations working on the issue "that a broader base of support both geographically and in orientation was needed to challenge the political clout of the global shipping industry, and to work effectively in Europe where solutions are most likely to be born."

Ms Jenssen says that as a result of increased political momentum, in part generated by the platform itself, the coalition has evolved from being a European platform to a global one, including environmental, human and labour rights organisations as well as NGOs based in India and Bangladesh, the largest shipbreaking countries.

As a political scientist, Ms Jenssen had been dealing with human rights and multi-level governance issues. "The systematic human rights abuses linked to shipbreaking and the shipping industry's con-

tinuous evading of political control are among the reasons I got involved with the platform," she explains.

"Though many condemn the current situation, I have met few shipowners willing to pay the price it costs to protect the environment and workers' rights, not to mention lives, even though the 'polluter pays' principle is clearly embedded in both international and EU legislation.

"Even fewer shipbreaking yard owners are taking the necessary steps to improve the appalling workers' situations, partly in fear of losing competitiveness.

"I further strongly believe that the level playing field for which shipowners are so desperately searching will not be attained as long as the flag of convenience system persists.

"A new IMO convention on ship recycling is currently being developed; unfortunately here too the industry's economic interests seem to come first, ahead of impoverished workers in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan."



A woman sifts asbestos at a shipbreaking yard in India. "Though many condemn the current situation, I have met few shipowners willing to pay the price it costs to protect the environment and workers' rights, not to mention lives," says Ingvild Jenssen.

BW's Koh pleased to welcome delegates to Singapore

BELINDA Koh, a senior member of the insurance and legal department at BW Shipping Managers, is delighted to be one of the Wista Singapore committee members who will welcome delegates and visitors from around the world.

She says: "For me, Wista is the ideal networking forum for women in this predominantly male industry. I have always said that the 'boys' have their clubs — why cannot we women have ours too?"

"Unfortunately, most women in the industry here are either in banking, law or insurance. We still have a long way to go in attracting women into all sectors of the industry, but at least it is a start."

entering the industry, I would like them to think that they would be able to obtain advice in their career development and to know that there are other ladies out there who have 'been there and done that'.

"Hopefully, Wista will encourage more women to join the industry, in the knowledge that there is a well-established network support group. I have always said that the 'boys' have their clubs — why cannot we women have ours too?"

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"We still have a long way to go in attracting women into all sectors of the industry, but at least it is a start."

Master of her own career who always had sights set on the sea

How as a determined teenager Malin Andersson shrugged off a horrible first voyage to become one of only four female shipmasters in Sweden

MALIN Andersson has never sailed with a worse crew or shipmaster since her first voyage — but that taste of seafaring life decided her future career.

She went on to qualify as a master for a far superior outfit, Wallenius Lines, and enjoy the respect and generosity of all her other crew companions. Today she is ashore as a port captain for Wallenius Wilhelmsen Line in Sydney.

Ms Andersson comes from a small fishing village in southern Sweden called Skillinge, which in the late 1800s boasted the most sailing ships registered in the country.

"So Skillinge has a very strong tie with shipping," she says. "A lot of people living there work with shipping. My best friend's family were all into shipping at one point of their lives, and I think this is why I got interested.

"I just love the ocean, so when I got a call in 1982 to sign on as OS [ordinary seaman] on a tanker I took the chance.

"I had never been on a cargo vessel before and the first three days on board I

was throwing up the whole time because I was so seasick, even though in hindsight the weather was gorgeous.

"I was on the tanker for one month. It was on this vessel I decided that the ocean and a career at sea was something for me, although I have never sailed with a worse crew or captain ever."

The 1980s were hard times for shipping in Sweden, so there was no chance to go to sea without having been through seaman's school.

"I was the only female in the school and there were some hard times with bullying, pushing and shoving. After two years in school you could join vessels as an AB [able bodied seaman]."

"I worked for two years as an AB on a small coaster. It was the best of times. Every one was really nice, it was hard work but I loved it. We were five people on board and the guys treated me like an equal."

She began studies at the merchant marine academy in Kalmar, Sweden. "We were at that time about one female per class a year, so about one per 60. Now with the new

system there are a lot more.

"After three years at the academy I started working for Wallenius Lines as an AB and then I became the company's first female officer. In Wallenius I have worked myself up the ranks and in 2003 I finally became their first female captain.

"To be honest it has probably taken me double the time in the junior ranks than my fellow male co-workers had to, to achieve the same.

"The problem I have found has been with the office — on land — and not on board the vessels and I have heard the same from other female officers in other companies.

"People ashore think there will be a problem or that we cannot handle it, but usually the women that go that far up in the ranks can handle it. Just give us the chance.

"The crews have always, with the exception of the experience on my first tanker vessel, been respectful and kind.

"I have not had any problems with the guys taking orders from me. What they say behind my back or behind closed doors I cannot say, but they have always behaved

respectfully and in a friendly way when I am present."

She has no objections to the job being called master, but "it would just be nice if everyone just did not assume that there has to be a male behind that title."

Some people have asked her why she took a job as manager of port operations after having attained the accolade of master.

"I am married to a marine engineer and we have a four-year-old daughter whom I really would like to be with as she grows up," she says. "Secondly, I had difficulty picturing me as a master for 20-odd years.

"I wanted to try something new and to move to Sydney with the family, to live in another country and experience something new. I will most probably return to the sea after my time is up here, but then at least I will have learned some new things and acquired more experience."

In fact, her job in Sydney is a lot like being a chief officer again. She attends the company's vessels during loading and discharge operations and she works closely with the stevedores.

