

## Individual Competence that Supports BRM – Enhancing Competence of Inexperienced Navigation Officers

*Capt. Shigeru Kojima, Japan Captains' Association*

### **Basic Concept of BRM**

It is said that 70-80% of all marine accidents can be attributed to human error. Bridge Resource Management (BRM) was created based on the premise that “To err is human”. The purpose of BRM is to ensure the safe navigation of the ship not only by breaking the chain of human error but also by enhancing the competence of every bridge team member.

BRM seeks to ensure the effective use of all resources available to the bridge to achieve a singular goal – ensuring safe and efficient navigation of the vessel.

BRM identifies two types of “Resources”: “Human Resources” such as the navigating officers who make up the bridge team . . . and “Material Resources” such as the variety of instruments, equipment and documents used by the team. When implementing BRM, the navigating officer is responsible for managing both types of resources.

Each and every member of the bridge crew must have the capacity to make full use of all material and human resources.

But an unskilled officer lacking the required level of competency can hinder the smooth flow of navigational watch keeping tasks.

The safe navigation of a vessel should never be left to the commander in ship handling alone. Each member of the bridge team must demonstrate sufficient competence that they can properly advise and support the commander.

That said, the competence levels of individual bridge team members could vary significantly according to their practical experience. As the team leader, the commander in ship handling must bear this fact in mind while demonstrating his/her management ability.

**Abstract:**

In order to enhance the performance of the bridge team, each member of the bridge team must make sure to execute the tasks requested and ordered by the master, and report the result of his/her achievement to the master. Also, they need to understand the master's intention on ship handling correctly, provide the effective information actively and make proper inquiries and/or suggestions if needed. That is, each and every navigating officer is required to acquire sufficient competence to take the necessary actions mentioned above.

The phenomenon that the competence of the navigating officers, as team members, affects the performance of the bridge team has been observed frequently not only in the training of BRM/BTM with the ship handling simulator, but also on board. The inexperienced officers are often unable to understand the master's request and orders in ship handling fully. In that situation, the master and the experienced officers have to redeem the tasks unachieved. This means that the performance of the bridge team will become extremely lower, if an officer whose fundamental competence is insufficient joins the bridge team as a team member. As a result, the more the navigational difficulty increases, the more the safe navigation cannot be maintained.

Almost all of existing DVDs of BRM/BTM focus on the team leader and team member. In contrast, the DVD being introduced will focus on the followership of the navigating officers as team members, especially the inexperienced officers. On the DVD, it is recommended that the specific guidance and the effective method to help navigating officers improve their knowledge and competence as a requirement so that they can take proper actions to enhance the performance of the bridge team.

The DVD is intended to help the inexperienced officers, as bridge team members, acquire the necessary knowledge and competence to exercise effective followership. Moreover, for realizing the above-mentioned, its purpose is to ensure the appropriate support and advice to be given by the master and the experienced officers.

Therefore, in order to preferentially improve the insufficiency in knowledge and competence revealed by the result of the research that has been commonly observed among the inexperienced officers, a "Checklist for Self-Assessment and Improvement" is provided so that they can assess their knowledge and competence. In addition, the commentary on the effective use of a checklist is also included.

Besides, in one instance of an ideal BRM/BTM, it is expressed comprehensively, by showing the activity of the bridge team, what the inexperienced officers, as team

members, have to do on their own to improve their insufficient knowledge and competence, and what the master and other officers as team members should do for their support.

For further information on the availability of the DVD please contact Japan Captains' Association.