



Photo courtesy of Globecommm.

Delivering excellence at sea

With a solid reputation in several key vertical markets, Globecommm is ramping up its maritime offering with tailored solutions to meet the needs of this diverse market segment. Through acquisitions and careful thought about their customers' needs, the company is going from strength to strength on the high seas. Helen Jameson speaks to Keith Hall, President and COO of Globecommm, about their offerings.

Question: Can you please begin by telling us about Globecommm Maritime and the company's decision to move into this sector of the satcom industry?

Keith Hall: Globecommm has been very much focused on building a world-class managed services company, leveraging on our core engineering capabilities and our global network of communications solutions. We operate across a number of different market verticals and the satellite centric maritime market fits our profile, is part of our history and we know it very well. The key factor is that it is very difficult to enter a new market with a need-to approach or with a commodity-based offering. What we saw in maritime sector was a big shift in appetite for broadband services and that allowed the industry to take a new VSAT-based approach and provided an opportunity for new players. For years the market was supported by narrowband solutions. What we did was to supplement our core value proposition, our global networks and our engineering talent with acquisitions. We began with the purchase of Mach6, a global maritime VSAT plat-

form, and two other companies – Evosat and Telaurus, who have strong industry relationships and several value-add back office applications. So when we look at that in its totality – Mach6, Evosat and Telaurus and Globecommm – we have developed a maritime team that will provide innovative and unique solutions to the market.

Question: What services are you offering to the maritime community?

Keith Hall: We provide a family of maritime communications services across all the available technologies including Inmarsat, Iridium and VSAT. At our core, we are a communications solutions company and our key differentiator is our ability to customise. We are technology agnostic and we focus on providing best-in-breed products and solutions to each of our customers, who have very specific needs.

To complement solutions that use terminals from the likes of Iridium and Inmarsat, we have developed a unique suite of management software called se@com. se@com provides messaging compression and

encryption and reduces the costs of the user by more than 50 percent. It also offers features such as fully itemised billing detailing each and every email sent/received which allows not only for effective cost monitoring, but also gives Ship Manager's the ability to recharge owners, charterers and other third parties for costs incurred by them. We also have a full suite of value-added services such as se@REMOTE, which provides fleet IT personnel with remote access to onboard computer systems, regardless of location, for remote diagnostics and trouble shooting. We also offer se@FLEX which provides always-on broadband and automatic switching between satellites as well as between VSAT and L-band services to provide seamless connectivity around the world.

Question: Are there any particular sectors (such as container ships, leisure craft etc) of the maritime industry that you are targeting through the company or are you looking at the whole maritime market?

Keith Hall: Having a full suite of service offerings, and being technology agnostic al-



Keith Hall, President and COO of Globecom.

lows us to target all maritime sectors. We can serve fishing vessels all the way through to commercial fleets that count for the lion's share of the market. Commercial fleets tend to be our number one target. We're also looking a lot at the military maritime sector. Globecom has a strong background in providing military solutions and we feel that we can now apply our capabilities to the military maritime market. I would say that the commercial fleets are our core focus and the military would come second but we are involved in all sectors that make up the overall general market. We are very committed to the maritime market and we have been in the government and other commercial sectors for a very long time. We leverage our global network and our technology offerings. We secure the quality, reliability and core foundations so that we can supply both sides of the maritime market, both commercial and military.

Question: Maritime communications are a hot topic for the satellite industry at the moment, so what sets Globecom Maritime apart from its competitors?

Keith Hall: I think that, at our core, we are a communications solutions company and our key differentiator is being able to provide customised solutions for very specific customer needs. We always identify the needs of our customer and we work to apply a very specific solution for them. We have great experience in the other markets we serve such as the media, enterprise, the wireless sector, the government sector and we can use this experience to deliver this value proposition to the maritime industry.

We can leverage on the core attributes of our maritime capabilities but also bring in the knowledge and technology that we have from our wireless segment and GSM solutions and apply those to the maritime indus-

try. Our global VSAT, our L-band capability, our seamless beam switching connectivity and very unique back office applications are all hugely attractive to the maritime sector. We are a one-stop-shop for shipping companies. We have a 3G Ericsson switch at our facility, we have a global 24x7 network monitoring centre, a long expertise in L-band and VSAT technology, and a global lifecycle support team. We also have a global presence and a great reputation which all helps.

Question: Do you believe that the maritime industry fully understands what satellite communications can do for them?

Keith Hall: In terms of generic satellite, I would say that the maritime industry more than most understands what satellite can do for them. This is because satellite is truly the only really viable communications medium for the ocean. The advances in satellite, and especially in terms of VSAT broadband, involve the adoption of change and change is always difficult and has generated skepticism. However, over time, the users come to recognise the power of the technology and the services available for better fleet management. This should help them to overcome any doubts.

The point about Globecom is that we approach things knowing that things will take time and adopting new technology does take time. The downturn in the economy has come into play and has affected all markets. Ship builds are down and the market has had to lower their expectations a little. There have also been some interim changes in the industry and this is responsible for slowing adoption of satellite services down, but I believe they see the value in satellite communications in general.

Question: The shipping industry itself has gone through a very rocky period as a result of the global recession. Is this affecting adoption of satellite-based services or are they viewed as an investment that will bring good level of return?

Keith Hall: Yes I think at times, companies do look at this as a big investment, but I believe it is our job, as an industry, to show them the return on that investment and to show them the benefits that they can gain and the capabilities that the technology will provide for them. Again, I think the economy has a tremendous effect on things and I think that companies have become more conservative in what they can spend but we are seeing this in all markets, not just in maritime. This is a major technology shift for maritime and it is taking hold.

You can dream, and think about the potential of the technology and what can be achieved with it – and that is where Globecom excels. We come into our own when we are building solutions and driving ROI for our customers.

Question: How do you see Globecom maritime evolving in the years to come?

Keith Hall: The maritime industry is going to go through major changes due to technology advancements. As part of our goal to provide ship owners and managers with true 'one-stop' shopping, Globecom is focused on providing customers with true alternatives ranging from scalable, user-configured, pay-as-you-go solutions through to flat rate "all-you-can-eat" solutions. Globecom has a distinct advantage because we can leverage our private Global Network and customise this environment for customers. Technology has done well during this harsh downturn. It sends a signal that what we do is important for global commerce. So we will continue to develop new maritime-centric applications using our heritage of finding technology-driven innovations for new markets and new users. We strongly believe that the trend of seeing distances "flatten" will continue. There is little question in our view that owners will view ships as another "office," and they will want their onboard IT performance to match what they have in their onshore office. In addition, seafarers will expect the same access to communications, whether it is email, web access, social networking sites or any type of Internet experience. Globecom intends to be at the forefront of helping owners, managers, and seafarers achieve these objectives.

Question: As a newly launched entity, what will Globecom Maritime be looking to achieve over the next year?

Keith Hall: Globecom Maritime is comprised of several entities and coherent acquired capabilities designed to allow us to innovate constantly to put more applications into the market. The key word is innovation. This means that we are not looking to be a commodity-based maritime provider. We seek to leverage all of our capabilities and our experience as engineers and service providers.

The legacy that has allowed us to build networks in almost every environment is now going to sea! This will ultimately bring the cost efficiencies and user experiences to the maritime sector. If you study our history, you will see that we are considered to be at our best when asked to sort through complex customer needs. This is true in every vertical we serve, from government to media. Entities like Showtime and the Federal Aviation Administration in the US, for example, rely on excellence.

We have worked hard this year to shape and package our offerings to incorporate these high standards. Our teams in the US, Europe and Asia now feel there are many opportunities on the table that fit within our overall vision and value proposition as a 'customised communication solution' provider. FY12 is shaping up as truly breakthrough year for Globecom Maritime.