



The iPhone and cloud technology development were key to Hanseaticsoft starting up.
Photo: SCANPIX

HANSEATICSOFT SENDS DIGITAL MANAGEMENT INTO THE CLOUD

BOSS GROWS COMPANY WITH WESTERN FOCUS BUT AIMS TO MAKE INROADS INTO ASIAN MARKET

Adam Corbett **London**

DIGITAL shipmanagement-solutions supplier Hanseaticsoft was started by a software expert who saw an opportunity in the lack of digitalisation in the business.

Alexander Buchmann began his career in shipping developing digital programmes and information technology (IT) for Hansa Treuhand and NSC Schiffahrtsgesellschaft, and was surprised at the lack of digitalisation in the routine office work of ship operations.

"We were looking for organisational and operational software at the time but there just wasn't any so we started writing our own and that grew very fast," he said.

But the key for chief executive Buchmann in establishing Hanseaticsoft in 2009 was the potential he saw through the development of cloud technology and the iPhone. He saw the chance to make shipmanagement more accessible and mobile. His start-up business required very little capital investment and is still completely self-funded.

Using the cloud meant hardware or expensive maintenance and software upgrade contracts, which had become the norm in shipmanagement digital solutions, were no longer required.

While the company now has 800 ships on its books, including some big-name shipmanagers, Buchmann points to the ease of use and low-cost entry as providing an opportunity for even the smallest companies to get involved. The basic service starts at just \$99 per month.



Hanseaticsoft chief executive
Alexander Buchmann.
Photo: HANSEATICSOFT

"Shipmanagers are able to use it tomorrow, just open a browser and use the software, some of it even works on a smartphone," he said.

Through the cloud-based service, labour-intensive data input, such as recording crewing details, can be outsourced to low-cost countries. Further efficiencies can be gained because employees have immediate access to the same data rather than having to search across departments. The service covers the key management of purchasing, crewing, inspections and disturbance reporting.

But if the cloud is the perfect solution, why are more managers not doing it? Buchmann admits there are other suppliers claiming they have cloud solutions but he views them as hosting rather than being pure cloud-based systems.

Also, he points out, many companies have invested heavily into the traditional hardware and maintenance-based services that they still have to justify and do not feel ready to make the switch. As for suppliers, he says, they will have to start developing their systems from scratch to adapt to the cloud.

Now, after growing the company mostly through western operators, Buchmann wants to make inroads into the Asian market.

As for the system itself, he is keen to develop the product to sync with onboard mobile applications in order to improve efficiency even further.

"One day I'd like to see a mobile revolution onboard, with crew running around with tablets and mobiles," he said.

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