



Please briefly introduce your company.

My name is Peter Edelenbosch and I am working for the Briese Shipping BV In Scheedma / Netherlands and Briese Schifffahrts GmbH & Co. KG in Leer. Both offices are part of Briese Group handling about 140 project, bulk & container vessels and I am mainly responsible for the commercial and technical ship management as well as newbuilding projects.

Corona pandemic: How have working time models and work locations changed in your company?

We have formed fixed groups. Group A could be in the office, group B at home. Then A and B changed again. This procedure was chosen to prevent everyone from being affected by quarantine in case of an incident in the office. Before the pandemic started, the home office rate was at approx. 10%. During Corona it increased to approx. 75% and now we settled down at 25% and found out that home office is working fine in shipping. We are at a point where home office and flexible working hours are no longer privileges for the management. Now also administrative tasks as our job can and must be done from everywhere, we only need to be equipped with respective hardware.

What advantages and disadvantages have arisen in connection with Corona and your professional tasks?

We mainly faced the problem that services, visits, maintenance works on board were not possible due to heavy travel and port restrictions. This also led to huge difficulties in crew changes which is and was a frustrating situation for the staff on board. However Corona has shown to the shipping industry that no fixed working times are needed as shipping never sleeps and our administrative jobs can be done at every time from every place.

Which of the tasks and activities of a shipping company are suitable for home office in your view, which are not?

Sometimes of course it is easier to solve special problems

in the office together with colleagues instead of being home alone. However general administrative tasks, like for purchasing, logistics, inspection, can easily be done digitally.

What advantages and disadvantages do you see in connection with Corona and your company in terms of personnel?

We were able to react very flexibly and quickly ashore. I guess that therefore jobs on land are becoming more attractive but jobs on board have lost a lot of their attractiveness as the situation on board is sometimes much worse. Replacements impossible or delayed, sailing times of several months, risk of infection, shore leave prohibited in many ports.

What challenges do you have regarding the technical realization of home office?

It was and is a big challenge for the in-house IT, they had to take care for rapid provision of remote access also because some employees use private IT devices and systems, not all have company mobile phones and laptops. Generally data protection is more difficult at home.

Do you see differences in the change of working time models between Dutch and German shipping companies?

Basically, tasks and activities are almost the same in Dutch and German companies. However in the Netherlands the working culture is different. In Germany it is rather strict and regulated, in the Netherlands people tend to be more open to innovations regarding working time models. This is not only the case in shipping companies, but also in other sectors. In the Netherlands even before the pandemic, home office was more common.

What are you planning next? What still needs to be implemented in your business?

Of course developing, improving and finding an efficient balance between working from home and from the office.

INTERVIEW

Changing working models in a shipping company

04. November 2021

Jörg Bontjer from MARIKO GmbH interviewed Peter Edelenbosch from Briese Shipping B.V. regarding his experiences with flexible working time and location concepts at Briese.

