

Global Marketing Systems: Benchmarks in the maritime industry

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Dr Anil Sharma, Founder and CEO

Founder and CEO Dr Anil Sharma's vision to evolve ship recycling through sustainable practices has placed Global Marketing Systems at the forefront of international industry-wide change

"Passion is the driving force behind any organisation, initiative or idea," says Dr Sharma when asked about the secret of success behind Global Marketing Systems (GMS). After more than 25 years in the industry, the CEO and founder of the world's largest buyer of ships and offshore assets for recycling cannot single out a day when he feels like slowing down.

His work ethic and dedication towards raising awareness on sustainable practices in the industry has created new benchmarks, with GMS recycling around 30 per cent of total industry volumes - more than any other company in the industry.

GMS didn't start off as the market's leader with a team of specialised experts at its helm. In fact, Dr Sharma was a university professor in the United States when he began GMS in the basement of his house with himself as the sole employee.

"I was a business professor at a university in Maryland back in the early 1990s when the US Navy wanted to sell the old ships they built during the World War. More than 200 of these Naval vessels were mothballed. Meanwhile in India, ship recycling was progressing and requests were pouring in to buy retired vessels.

A new territory for me - my knowledge about ships was limited - however, there was a growing demand and the thought was always germinating in my mind. I started evaluating and studying MARAD, which is the Maritime Administration in the US, and to bridge the gap between shipowners and recycling yards, GMS was formed," explains Dr Sharma.

Over the past 27 years, GMS has successfully expanded their operations to 10 locations worldwide, including one in Dubai, and established three pillars of business. "As traders, we buy and sell all types of maritime assets - the process entails procuring the ships and offshore assets from owners and sending it to recycling yards. Our secondary business is ownership of ships, which includes building our own growing trading fleet. Our third division is projects and finance, where we make investments in various industries. For example, we own a football club in the Indian Super League, which is a passion project to provide opportunities and training for talented youth."

GMS has always been renowned as a pioneer driving positive change in the maritime industry. GMS is the only cash buyer to develop an award-winning Responsible Ship Recycling Program (RSRP), which has initiated significant improvements in health, safety and environmental standards in recycling yards in the Indian subcontinent.

The programme recycles vessels as per Hong Kong Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships guidelines, invests in research and development activities in partnership with an engineering college in India, and conducts monthly training programmes for workers at ship recycling facilities in India and Bangladesh. "Identifying the problems and creating solutions to enrich industry standards was always one of our core values," says Dr Sharma.

"In order to bring about positive change, such as responsible recycling initiatives, we always practice the AIDA principle, which stands for awareness, interest, desire and action."

With its widespread presence in every major recycling market, the industry power player is facilitating seamless solutions to its clients across the globe 24/7. In order to provide further channels of real-time industry news and promote greater transparency in the maritime community, GMS is engaged in various communication initiatives, including publishing the industry's first two ship recycling books and the GMS WEEKLY e-newsletter - the most quoted report in the ship recycling industry with a circulation of almost 16 years and a distribution of more than 900 issues.

Although GMS has already experienced decades of success, it has no plans of slowing down. Dr Sharma's future-focused approach of "think global, act local" gives the growing company an edge that many still struggle with. Bringing a modern perspective into a traditional industry, GMS combines environmentalism with commercialism to consistently drive positive societal change in a pragmatic manner, developing a more sustainable shipping community for future generations.

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