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Jon Chaplin is joining Anil Sharma's GMS. The Dubai-based group claims to be the world's biggest cash buyer. Photo: Spencer Tan

Sharma hires Chaplin to promote GMS as scrapping looks to clean up its act

World's biggest cash buyer of end-of-life ships hires former TradeWinds staffer as new communications head

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By [Julian Bray](#) in **London**

Former TradeWinds staffer Jon Chaplin has been recruited as spokesman for Anil Sharma's GMS, which claims to be the world's biggest 'cash buyer' of end-of-life ships and rigs.

Chaplin will join GMS at the start of 2022 as chief communication officer as the company adapts to the changing commercial landscape in the ship demolition business with mounting pressure to improve environmental and labour standards.

Sharma, who founded GMS in 1992 said: "I have known Jon for over a decade and have admired his authenticity and deep commitment to excellence in whatever he does...I am excited to welcome Jon onboard."

Dubai-based GMS says it has negotiated the recycling of over 4,000 vessels over the last 39 years and accounts for up to 50% of the ships and rigs scrapped in the yards of the Indian sub-continent.

Vocal advocate

Sharma is an outspoken and at times controversial advocate for the ship scrapping industry. He has backed higher environmental and labour standards in Indian yards but has faced criticism from environmental campaigners and court disputes over some commercial deals.

'Cash buyers' have become important intermediaries in recent years between shipowners and demolition yards. However, they have been criticised by some for enabling owners to avoid taking responsibility for the safe disposal of their old ships.

Chaplin headed TradeWinds' commercial team before moving into events and launching the influential TradeWinds Ship Recycling Forum in 2009 along with other conferences.

He said: "An important shift in attitudes towards ship recycling is taking place, both at the waterfront and now in shipping board rooms.

"Dr Anil Sharma and his highly capable team are at the forefront of these positive developments, supporting yard improvements and helping owners meet increasingly stringent ESG requirements."

Authenticity

Sharma said he admired Chaplin's authenticity and commitment to excellence.

"The ship recycling industry is an integral part of the circular economy, and Jon has many years of experience in media and this industry. He will be a valuable conduit between the several external stakeholders — shipowners, capital providers, regulators, auditors, class societies — and the ship recycling yards.

Since leaving TradeWinds in 2018, Chaplin first worked in maritime recruitment before joining Henning Gramann's GSR Services in Germany where he gained formal hazardous materials training.

More recently he worked for UK testing and inspection specialist Lucion Marine where he helped clients achieve Inventory of Hazardous Materials (IHM) Certification and recycle their ships according to the Hong Kong Convention.

Former IMO recycling head and architect of the Hong Kong Convention, Nikos Mikelis, is a non-executive director of GMS.

Chaplin said: "The pace of change is set to quicken in the next few years, both on the regulatory landscape and with decarbonisation targets pushing owners to recycle uneconomic vessels. It is an exciting time to be involved in recycling and offshore decommissioning, with much at stake."

GMS has a sustainable ship and offshore recycling programme (SSORP). "GMS works very closely with like-minded ship owners and offshore clients to help them deliver responsible recycling solutions without destroying asset value. I'm looking forward to communicating the benefits and helping to take the business forward" Chaplin added.

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