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WORKING IN A SEA OF OPPORTUNITIES

STORY & PHOTOGRAPH BY
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At a young age, Shu Lim had already set her sights on being part of the Singapore's maritime industry. The colourful history of Singapore's humble beginning as an entrepot, painted by her textbooks, aroused her interest to find out more about the maritime industry.

“Singapore's growth and development from entrepot to its current prominence as an international maritime centre did not happen by chance. I knew I really can't go wrong in choosing a career in the maritime industry,” she explained.

Shu was right. As a significant player in the global maritime industry, Singapore is home to 5,000 maritime-related companies which employ more than 170,000 people and contribute about 7.5 per cent to Singapore's Gross Domestic

Product (GDP).

Currently working as an Assistant Manager at A.P. Moller Singapore Pte. Ltd., the Singapore-based shipowning arm of the A.P. Moller - Maersk Group, Shu had nothing but praises when The RIDGE asked her to share on her working experience in the maritime industry.

“Often, people have the misconception that the maritime industry is one that is male-dominated. I beg to differ as I do know many females who are working in the industry and are doing well in the industry. At my workplace, I am empowered to make key decisions for the benefit of the company for areas within my control. Gender bias is relatively unheard of at the workplace,” Shu said.

Shu's job scope involves handling newly built vessels

and registering these vessels under the Singapore Registry of Shipping as well as sale and purchase of vessels. She has also been tasked to handle the corporate social responsibility portfolio for A.P. Moller-Singapore, to look into finding worthy charitable causes to support. Despite having a seemingly 9-5 desk job, it is obvious that Shu truly enjoys her work.

“One aspect that I like about my job is the fact that I am always on the move to meet different people in the maritime industry. For instance, when I work alongside with brokers to sell and purchase vessels, I get to interact with lawyers, notaries and representatives from the various embassies.”

Shu has been in her job for less than a year, but has already been sent to Hong Kong to learn from her counterparts there on ways to optimise and streamline the newbuilding and Vessel Sale and Purchase processes.

To those who think that the maritime industry is a sunset industry, Shu contended, “The maritime industry may not be seen as ‘sexy’ as compared

to the biomedical sciences or the banking industry. However, there are vast job opportunities for many as the maritime industry is constantly growing in breadth and depth. Around 90% of world trade today is carried by the international shipping industry.”

She also emphasized that the maritime industry features a myriad of exciting career opportunities and that many of them do not require employees to hold specialised maritime degrees.

Shu shared, “I have friends, who graduated with degrees in engineering, working in the sales line. There is no hard and fast rule to this. For instance, graduates from any discipline can take up jobs in Operations, if they possess excellent coordination and multi-tasking skills, or in Corporate Communications, if they have a flair for writing.”

Shu's own career path is a proof to this point. Upon graduation with a bachelor degree in Computing Information Systems from the National University of Singapore in 2004, she joined the Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore (MPA) as a Systems Analyst, but in subsequent years, took on manpower policy planning and promotional positions there as well.

In this respect, she advised all graduates to “capitalize on their ‘fresh’ status and not shut themselves out entirely from the maritime industry.”

For those who are keen to find out more about educational and career opportunities in the maritime sector, visit www.maritimecareers.com.sg.