

Knud E. Hansen A/S wants to get ahead of the shipping companies

Article from Shippingwatch.dk

Even though things are looking good in regards to revenue and orders, shipping engineer company Knud E. Hansen A/S finds that it has to bring new ideas to customers more now than in the past. Environmentally efficient installations, feeder ships, and offshore supply ships are among the latest additions.

Knud E. Hansen A/S did not receive a lot of orders in the beginning of 2012, but things have improved over the summer. In spite of sound revenue, and the fact that the shipping engineer company's designs are in demand around the world, the company still has to rethink its business in order to ensure the future.

"Just five years ago, we would not be developing a design without a customer for it. We are doing that now. We are trying to figure out how the market will develop, and we are trying to predict what our customers will need," says Finn Wollesen Petersen, CEO with Knud E. Hansen A/S since 2003.

One guess is the ship design Bangkokmax, planned as a feeder ship with a capacity of approximately 3000 teu. The ship is intended to support the market that will emerge after Maersk's Triple-E ships start sailing next year. Bangkokmax is not yet in production, though another design is – a small oil recovery ship, which has been built. A third idea involves taxi ships for the offshore market.

"We have to do our best to think correctly, so that we have an inventory ready when the time comes for the companies to make their investments. It's fairly cheap to build the ships now, which is something we can benefit from," says Finn Wollesen Petersen

Presence in key locations

The almost-75 year old company has traditionally tied its business to passenger ships. Things have changed, though, and over the last ten years offshore and energy efficient designs have become the primary development areas for Knud E. Hansen A/S. Similarly, the focus has shifted to involve just as many rebuilding designs as designs for newbuildings.

"We've become stronger in ro-ro, ro-pax, ro-con, and in addition to this, there is a lot of demand for rebuildings. Today, designs that optimize energy consumption, and designs to strengthen the ships, are becoming increasingly important. Energy optimization is important these days. In addition, there are designs that fit with offshore installation of windmills, offshore maintenance ships, and everything related to offshore," says Finn Wollesen Petersen.

The latest project is the collaboration with Chinese Hudong-Zhonghua, in which Knud E. Hansen A/S works on ro-con designs. The contract was signed on August 10th of this year, and occupies several of the company's 62 employees.

Besides its headquarters in Elsinore, Denmark, Knud E. Hansen A/S has a presence in Odense, Denmark, Greece, London, Florida, the Faroe Islands, and Australia. Though the company works a lot with Chinese companies, in addition to the new Hudong-Zhonghua contract, Knud E. Hansen A/S is not yet looking to open any new offices.

"Our end customers are the shipowners, and that's who we're focusing on. We need to be where they are, not where the subcontractors are," says Finn Wollesen Petersen.

As a result, Knud E. Hansen A/S is putting offshore destinations such as Brazil and Nigeria on hold for now, though many other subcontractors are focusing in on those destinations. The demands of those places are too big for Knud E. Hansen A/S, which is, after all, a small company. This means that Russia, too, has been scrapped as a possible office location. Finn Wollesen Petersen expects to hire on, thus reaching 70 employees over the next couple of years.

Article written by Louise Vogdrup-Schmidt