



Below The Waterline Being Ignored As A Prime Lever In Shippings Drive To Decarbonise

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Fuel consumption delta between a clean, smooth hull and a one with significant degradation can be as high as 8% – making hull performance central to achieving decarbonisation goals.

COPENHAGEN, 26 October 2021 – Leading global towage operator, Svitzer, has today highlighted the need for the shipping industry to prioritise hull performance and standardisation in hull management practices in its drive to decarbonise. Recently, the company has established a new Hull Performance Services business unit, Svitzer HPS, to support its customers to increase operational efficiency and reduce their environmental footprints.

While shipping companies invest millions of dollars in engine technology and real-time performance monitoring, focus on holistic hull performance is arguably being lost, Svitzer argues. The company also posits that while the industry is spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on hull coatings to both drive down its operational expenditure whilst also maintaining environmental, social & governance (ESG) goals, it might not be tackling the root causes of performance degradation below the waterline.

There is a poor understanding of the immediate impact that good hull performance can have on fuel consumption and emissions, Svitzer said, particularly compared to its relative simplicity and cost-effectiveness.

Recent research from the Green Ship of the Future coalition indicated the average delta in fuel consumption between a well-managed and poorly managed hull is as much as 8%, the equivalent to hundreds of thousands of dollars per year in bunker fuel costs. Fuel is already the single largest operational cost for a vessel owner and operator, but hull performance will take an even more central role once new, low carbon future fuels become mainstream, as their cost could triple an owner's fuel bill.

The picture is further complicated by a patchy and fragmented market for assessing hull performance, with most hull cleaning or inspections service providers traditionally unable to operate at the required scale to support customers across the global shipping industry.

Henrik Sanglen, CEO, Svitzer Hull Performance Services, said: "Current hull inspection and performance operations are fragmented and localised, even for global ship operators. This means applying and translating outcomes and recommendations from hull inspections across a global fleet can be extremely challenging. With the availability of many new solutions promising more efficient ship performance, ship owners need to have a global, standardised understanding what is happening under the waterline of their hulls.

"Technological advances like using remote operated vehicles (ROV) for inspection offer the opportunity to collect standardised data on hull fouling. They also lower the cost and time required for the activity, allowing for more frequent inspections, and filling in data gaps that can be used to support other digital tools used in performance analysis."

Gareth Prowse, Head of Decarbonisation, Svitzer, added: "Good hull performance is a low hanging fruit for an industry desperately in search of solutions to decarbonise whilst also minimising costs. We are talking about clean technology-equivalent savings at a fraction of the cost; savings that will only become more relevant as fuel bills increase over the coming decade.

"Perhaps more important is what good hull husbandry says about our ambitions as an industry. With consumer and customer pressure increasing, prioritising hull health and minimising the impacts of biofouling may well become part of our sector's societal 'license to trade', meaning that there is no better time than today to find out what is happening beneath the waterline of your fleet."

Svitzer's new Hull Performance Services business unit has been created in response for the need for global, standardised information on hull health. Svitzer HPS is initially launching by offering ROV-based underwater inspections in four key global ports: Algeciras, Rotterdam, Gibraltar and Panama.

About Svitzer Hull Performance Services

Building on Svitzer's footprint as leading global towage operator and part of Maersk, Svitzer Hull Performance Services offers value to the hull husbandry segment with standardised, transparent and impartial underwater inspection services. We put our customers' hull health needs in focus as their go-to partner towards decarbonisation.