



# The expertise of ex-seafarers is crucial for reliable ship routing advice

Understanding is key to building trust, especially in shipping. Service providers should speak the industry language. They must also have a deep understanding of operations. They should know the capabilities and limitations of each vessel and the conditions in which you'll sail.

When it comes to providing reliable, premium routing advice, hands-on experience is essential. At DTN, we employ former senior seafarers and master mariners in our weather rooms, who offer a real-world understanding of vessel performance and sea and weather conditions. Their years of working and living in the industry ensure they have the necessary knowledge and skills to deliver sound recommendations.

**DTN**

"Very high waves and swell on the bow of a ship will affect sailing speed. You may be able to shift the route a bit, causing the ship to lie across the waves for some time. But in doing so, you have to take into account the tendency of a ship to start rolling, swinging. Transverse incoming swell can force a captain to change course to avoid the risk of damage."

"Ten years ago, a route analyst was not yet a familiar concept. Now, it is not only important to avoid rough conditions, but above all, to ensure that ships perform as efficiently as possible. A lot of customers want to understand how their ships are performing, based on fuel use and speed," explained Eefje Verhoeven, a senior route analyst.

"Monitoring is very important because it provides cost efficiency," added Remko Vermeer, a master mariner.

### Choose your preferred level of support

Verhoeven and Vermeer are a part of an extensive nautical department at DTN. Together, with more than 20 colleagues, they form the shipping team. These route analysts are experienced maritime officers. Seven have captain certificates, and most are licensed masters of all ships, also known as master mariners.

Charterers, shipping companies, and ship owners use information from DTN in many ways. There is **SPOS**, a ship performance optimization system that captains can use to calculate optimal routes. Approximately 5,000 ships are equipped with this software. There is also the **FleetGuard** service, where a vessel's captain can send in its daily position and fuel consumption information, and the system will generate an automated vessel performance report. We currently provide daily status reports to more than 800 ships. Those who want advice on finding their optimal

route can choose **RouteGuard**, a routing recommendation service that is employed by about 350 ships.

### Custom routing advice

Those who use RouteGuard are in direct contact with our team of former seafarers. First and foremost, these skilled professionals consult with each customer to determine their exact requirements, and as Vermeer said, "Together with the sales department, we step into the onboarding process."

"A customer will often have several ships that they want to equip with RouteGuard. We then learn everything about their fleet and determine the key aspects of their voyages. Sometimes they want to make the fastest crossing possible. Other times, they need to arrive at a specific, prearranged moment. Or, the goal might be to cover the route as economically as possible."

Verhoeven explained further, "We always start with a trial period to ensure that we can offer what the client needs. In this timespan, the senior route analysts are in very close contact with the customer. It is noted and understood that customers prefer to speak to someone who has worked in a position in shipping."

## From model data to practical advice

All forecasts begin with numerical weather prediction model data that passes a complex in-house, post-processing procedure. This improves data quality and detail for a wide variety of clients. It can then be used and edited by the nautical meteorologists; it is also at this point where the ex-seafarers' expertise can be very important.

They are aware of the routes at sea, obstacles, currents, straits controlled by pirates, and more, and they understand onboard processes. They know very well how the bridge is being used to change routes, fuel, or speed. As Vermeer said, "You cannot advise a different speed or course every hour, so we provide advisories that are feasible in practice."

### Learn more

Please read our case study for an example of the difference the advice of ex-seafarers can make during significant events. Visit [www.dtn.com/weather/shipping/routeguard/](http://www.dtn.com/weather/shipping/routeguard/)