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My ESVAGT: We have in fact free time for half of the year!

Henrik Gorzelak is pleased with being a sailor in a shipping company where there is still respect for expertise

One thing for sure: if in an interview you can ask the interviewee about his leisure activities, then you know that you have got hold of a company man.

At first Henrik Gorzelak refuses blankly – then he corrects himself:

- Oh yes, I am chairman of the cooperation committee in ESVAGT!

The 46-year-old Senior Officer of 'Esvagt Connector' is extremely pleased with his job in the good old-fashioned way. Not that he flaunts it. If you want to register that Henrik Gorzelak is happy with something you have to do it by noting that he does not protest.

- I am very good at expressing myself when there is something I am not satisfied with. I cannot walk around and hide it. But it is much more difficult to say things when you are pleased with them, which happens in between, he says with a grin.

- But I am, indeed! I am happy when I go to work. I am happy when I have free time, but as you understand, I feel very much at home here in ESVAGT, he says.

Never free

He has been occupied by the shipping company for 11 years – most of the time on

'Esvagt Connector'. The vessel seems to be made for Henrik Gorzelak; the spot market continually gives variation and new challenges:

- We never know what we are going to do next week or in a month's time, and that kind of variation is very pleasant. We are getting around a bit in that way! Next destination will be West Africa – a most exiting job, I am sure. My adventurous spirit is far from satisfied yet, and it probably never will be, says he.

To a great extent Henrik Gorzelak is the image of a real sailor: full of decorations on his arms and a gold ring in his ear and a huge appetite for having a job on the sea.

- From when I was a young man, this is what I wanted. I sailed long voyages as a sailor, and I feel very strongly about getting away and experiencing things, says he.

When he became a father for the first time, he accepted he had to go ashore. But after 18 months with holiday home service "there were a lot of spa's so I did not quite forget the water!" – He had to go back to sea again – or get a divorce.

- I told Vivi that I simply had to. I just could not stand it anymore! Such a job from 7 am to 4 pm was terrible. I felt that I had no leisure. It is better on the sea. When you are away, you are away, and when you come home, you are free, says Henrik Gorzelak.

Tell it as it is

Also at work, the job is full of freedom. Henrik Gorzelak likes that he can decide for himself what his working day is going to be like:

- It is not work, coffee breaks, work, coffee breaks. I cannot work like that. There are functions in all jobs on board, mine as well. But for the most, one can decide for oneself when and how one works. That form of freedom is really enjoyable, he says.

Another asset in the company is the form of address. Henrik Gorzelak is direct irrespective of whom he is talking to. And he appreciates being treated the same way when others want to say something to him.

- Well, it may be too sugary sometimes! The idea of putting little notes with a “good morning” to one another... that is just not me. I like the fact that we can say things as they are. Not impolitely for there is no reason for hurting one another – but just put it simply. We should definitely call a spade a spade; but then again it is nice that we can call one another a spade when we have to! If I walk around and make a fool of myself, I have to be told. Otherwise I cannot learn from it and change my ways. This is the way I think that we should talk to one another. We know perfectly well that we do not mean it that way. We know that there is a certain jargon. We are sailors, and it is quite OK that we speak like sailors, he says.

Respect for seamanship

Today the culture has changed compared with the shipping company he started in 11 years ago. The company has grown to approx. twice the size while he has been there, and that has also required adaptation in the way of behaviour.

- We have to be very professional, and that is impossible if we still work as we did in the old fishing fleet. However, I think that we have done well at preserving some really good things from the old company we used to be. Still we have e.g. a basic understanding that we must have confidence in people, that they know their profession and that they can think for themselves. Even

if we have many procedures for everything – and we definitely must have – then we are still very good at letting genuine seamanship dominate, he says.

And good seamanship is a core competence with ESVAGT and it is still appreciated. Henrik Gorzelak feels this in the dialogue with onshore as well;

- They accept constructive criticism and they comply with it or give reasons why they do not. There is no beating about the bush, and people understand. That is what I like. Good seamanship is always the best argument. I believe that that is a huge strength in the company, he says.

Henrik, in short:

46 years old, lives at Varde, Senior Officer.

Lives together with Vivi with whom he has two children: Natasja (21) and Nikolai (17). Mika the dog is also part of the family.

ESVAGT is a dedicated provider of safety and support at sea, founded on an experienced and well-trained offshore crew and unmatched rescue capabilities.

We support the offshore Oil & Gas industries with a wide range of specialized services: Standby, Emergency Response and Rescue Vessels (ERRV), Oil spill response, Firefighting, Tanker assists, Rig moves, Supply services and Interfield transfer of cargo and personnel.

In 2010, ESVAGT brought the dedicated offshore wind Service Operation Vessels (SOV) to the market. The SOVs provide accommodation for up to 40 technicians, storage for small turbine parts and a workshop, plus personnel and equipment transfer capabilities by either Walk-to-Work gangway system or Safe Transfer Boats.

ESVAGT was founded in 1981 and has a fleet of more than 40 vessels and more than 900 employees on- and offshore.

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