

May 21, 2007

Inmarsat maritime director joins new GSM provider

Robert Johnson has left his role as director of maritime and aeronautical services at Inmarsat, and has been appointed CEO of newly formed Irish GSM provider Blue Ocean Wireless.

Blue Ocean Wireless was recently set up as a joint venture between GSM technology provider Altobridge and investment firm Claret Capital, and is dedicated to the provision of GSM services to crew members aboard commercial vessels.

Mr Johnson spent nine years at Inmarsat in the maritime and aeronautical sector, and had been a passionate advocate of improving communications services for crew members throughout his time with the company, having been heavily involved during the last two years in the development of a GSM system that would work over the Inmarsat network.

Prior to joining Inmarsat he spent fourteen years in the commercial maritime sector at Racal-Decca Marine, now part of Sperry Marine, where he was responsible for product development of radar and other electronic navigational aids. Mr Johnson also spent thirteen years at sea as a deck officer with Shell Tankers, and is a qualified master mariner.

"Having spent 13 years as a deck officer, I can relate to the need for accessible, reliable and affordable communication while at sea," said Mr Johnson. "Blue Ocean Wireless will, for the first time, provide seafarers with voice and SMS text message capability which will have a significant positive impact on their welfare."

"This will, in turn, benefit merchant maritime companies and the ability to manage and enhance the well-being of their employees. We have a very exciting proposition which will revolutionise communication for crews of merchant maritime ships."

Blue Ocean Wireless says that it will operate together with Inmarsat, a leading Inmarsat LESO partner and a leading GSM network operator to provide voice and SMS to seafarers using their existing GSM handsets and a special SIM card. The LESO in question is expected to be Stratos, with the SIM cards to be produced in the Philippines by Smart.