

SMART, Blue Ocean Wireless launch network for global maritime GSM service



At the formal launch of the Blue Ocean Wireless (BOW) Network Services in Manila, photo shows (from left to right) SMART International & Carrier Business Group Head Ramon S. Fernandez, PLDT Chief Financial Adviser Chris Young, SMART Chief Wireless Adviser Orlando B. Vea, ePLDT Managing Director Atty. Ray C. Espinosa, SMART President & CEO Napoleon L. Nazareno, SMART Global Access Group Head Tina Z. Mariano, BOW Chairman Dómhnaí Slattery, BOW CEO Robert Johnson, BOW Chief Operations Officer Claus Karthe, BOW Chief Financial Officer Tariq Islam, BOW Chief Technology Officer Ian Walter and BOW Adviser Daire O’Criadain.

FEBRUARY 2008/ MANILA Leading wireless services provider Smart Communications, Inc. (SMART) and Dublin-based affiliate Blue Ocean Wireless (BOW) recently inaugurated a network facility that will enable seafarers to use their GSM mobile phones even while in the middle of ocean waters.

At the formal launch of the BOW network services in Manila, SMART president and CEO Napoleon L. Nazareno said the innovative service will make communication simpler and more convenient to more than 1.2 million seafarers, of whom 40% are Filipinos.

“BOW’s service will enable seafarers to bring their GSM mobile phones onboard their vessels and use them to send and receive text messages, and make and receive calls, just as if they were at home or roaming in other countries. They can have more

private conversations with their families and loved ones," he said.

"We could not have created this amazing innovation without SMART as our core partner. The partnership is a technological feat. We want this to be a success not only from a profit perspective but from a human perspective as well. Filipinos work hard around the world for their families. Through our service, they will be able to keep in touch via SMS from ships all over the world," said BOW chairman Dómhnaíl Slattery.

"Filipinos, in general, are very familiar with SMS, and are fond of sending text messages to friends and loved ones. With GSM-based services now possible even at sea, our seafarers will be able to enjoy more options for keeping in touch," added SMART Global Access Group head Tina Z. Mariano.

The new service is currently being piloted in 25 ships consisting of at least 20 crew members per ship, added SMART's Mariano, including two Dobson ships, where majority of the crew members are Filipinos.

Robert Johnson, CEO of BOW said there are more than 25,000 deep sea ships that regularly sail outside of the coastal coverage of a GSM network, and a number of companies managing some of these vessels have already signed up for the service.

"The deep sea merchant market has embraced the BOW application to GSM-enable their ships for crew welfare and retention. By the end of the year, we'll have the BOW service installed on the vessels of over 50 shipping companies globally," said Johnson.