

INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH

PAUL RACICOT – DIRECTOR OF MARITIME SIMULATION AND RESOURCE CENTRE, A DIVISION OF CORPORATION OF LOWER ST. LAWRENCE PILOTS INC.

Paul Racicot has been working in the marine industry for more than 38 years. After studying at the Institut maritime du Québec, he worked as a Navigation Officer on both coasting-trade and foreign-going vessels. In 1990, he accepted the position of administrator responsible for the CFMU, which he held for 15 years. Paul then joined the Maritime Simulation and Resources Centre (MSRC) in 2006 to head operations, planning and business development.

He obtained his MBA from the Université du Québec à Montréal in 2007.



A leader in training and development, the Maritime Simulation and Resources Centre (MSRC) has navigational safety expertise that is unique in North America. Can you tell us what makes it stand out?

The renown the MSRC has acquired over the years results from the strategic advantage it enjoys due to its resources' experience and its navigation simulators' high-level performance, which allow it to offer very specialized training and contribute actively to validating marine engineering projects.

The members of the MSRC training team, highly experienced instructors who are experts in simulation technology, are supported by the pilots of the Corporation of Lower St. Lawrence Pilots (CLSLP), all of whom hold command certificates and have extensive navigation experience.

Both the MSRC's trainers and pilots can rely on support from the organization's geomatics specialists, who develop geographic data bases and ship models and are able to design and reproduce any port,

waterway, navigating situation or infrastructure needed for customized training and project validation.

The MSRC's services are internationally recognized and sought the world over. How do you explain this success?

Very few groups of professionals have decided to make as far-reaching private investments to found their own training centre as the 72 CLSLP pilots did in 2004 when they established the Maritime Simulation and Resources Centre.

The MSRC has developed a series of very specialized training sessions that it offers to adapt to the realities of other groups of pilots who use its services.

"The MSRC's success is due to the combined effects of the CLSLP pilots' enterprising spirit and the importance they accord to training and maintaining their skills."

It also models the rivers, ports and channels these pilots navigate so the training mirrors their operational realities. The same is true for the models of ships used.

“Developed here in Québec, this expertise is now sought world-wide.”

perceptions, based on their specific field of professional expertise. It promotes collaboration and allows end users (pilots and ship captains) to make recommendations that can be implemented when the structures are built.

What was initially intended as a training centre for CLSLP pilots has become one for the entire piloting community.

How can the Québec marine industry benefit from the Maritime Simulation and Resources Centre’s services? What advantages can it derive from the MSRC?

In addition to enabling our pilots to maintain their professional skills, thus ensuring an exceptionally high level of safety on the St. Lawrence River, the multidisciplinary navigation simulator can be used to help validate new marine-sector infrastructures and improve practices linked to navigation safety.

In recent years, the MSRC has carried out numerous projects for port authorities, engineering firms, ship operators and government agencies to sanction the construction of new wharves or measure the impact of the arrival of bigger vessels on existing infrastructures, etc.

The simulator allows all stakeholders to see the same end result of a project rather than simply their own

In your opinion, what challenges will the marine industry face in the coming years?

I feel that the biggest challenge has always been human resources. The marine sector offers the potential for incredible careers but the general public knows virtually nothing about our industry. For those who decide to become captains or marine engineers, the career path is long, exacting and governed by a demanding regulatory process.

There are numerous hurdles and those who are less tenacious often choose a more orthodox family life.

Thanks to SODES, the Institut maritime du Québec, the Human Resources Sectorial Committee of the Maritime Industry (CSMOIM), St. Lawrence Ship-operators and others, the marine industry has mobilized to raise awareness regarding our activity sector in order to improve recruiting. We have to continue promoting the industry and get young people interested in working in it. All of my colleagues are happy with the career choices they have made.

