

01 TANK SOLUTIONS:

ITCO

An External Perspective on the Work of ITCO

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In the first of a series of external perspectives on the work of ITCO, Peter Mackay considers the importance of education and training in the tank container sector.

ITCO's recent donation of a tank container to Shanghai Maritime University, to help train students in the technicalities of the business, is the result of collective action by the tank container industry, involving support from several ITCO members. It comes after many months of lobbying by ITCO's board but also marks the beginning of wider cooperation between ITCO and the University.



The tank container will be used by the University for training and education purposes

It is often said that the three most important things in ensuring safety in chemical logistics are: Training...Training...and Training. For the tank container industry, part of that training must involve familiarising trainees with the technical details of tanks – their manufacture, maintenance, operation and cleaning – as well as the structure of the industry itself.

Such training can only be delivered by giving trainees hands-on experience, which means training schools need a tank container on site. But they also need expertise and ITCO will continue to work with SMU to ensure that trainees get access to information that will help them meet international standards once their courses are complete.

"We believe that, by demonstrating how best to handle, clean and maintain tanks, the benefits of transporting liquids in ISO tank containers will be realised," says Reg Lee, ITCO president. "This again helps to prove how ITCO and its members are totally committed to the safe handling of tank containers, for the benefit of all stakeholders, the environment and the public in general."

ITCO has provided SMU with a printed copy of Section 4 of the ITCO/Exis tank container e-learning programme, which covers the maintenance, repair and cleaning of tank containers. It will also support a six-month programme of one-day, hands-on training events, beginning after the Lunar New Year in late January 2020.

At the end of the six months, the ten best students will be provided with free access to the full e-learning programme. ITCO is also in discussions with its members in China, both local and international, with the aim of offering internships to those ten students to help them embark on a career within the tank container industry. Lee says that a lot of members have already expressed an interest in taking on

these students. "We are also helping the next generation to continue the great safety record that tank containers have enjoyed for more than 20 years," he adds.

The donation of the tank container and the provision of training programmes is, though, just a first step. ITCO and SMU have signed a two-year cooperation agreement, which is likely to see further services and advice being passed on to the University by the tank container industry.



ITCO needs to identify a pool of students that will be suitable employees for its members or to work in logistics functions in the wider chemical industry, especially in China, where tank container use is increasing rapidly – not just in intermodal transport but also to replace the country's ageing road tanker fleet.

SMU's role is to turn out those potential employees, and its currency is knowledge, of which ITCO and its members have plenty. Not surprisingly, SMU is keen to tap into that expertise. The recruitment and retention of high-quality personnel is an industry-wide issue and it will take an industry-wide response, in collaboration with training institutes such as SMU, to deliver the young people that ITCO members will need if they are to reap the benefits of that growing demand for their services.

- Peter Mackay

This is the first in a new monthly series providing an external perspective on the work of ITCO. Members are invited to comment to the ITCO Secretariat (hicks@itco.org) or to the author via email on peter@meredithandco.info.