

Hydrography: Teamwork

Our profession is one that carries with it lots of wonderful things. Travelling to remote places, exploring new territories, fighting the elements, providing new routes as well as improving existing ones for mariners, all belong to the uniqueness of being hydrographer.

But these tasks and conditions also demand that hydrographers work very closely together, both in the field and between field parties and the office, to achieve the aims of a survey. Facing adversity as teams of professionals and technicians, along with the hydrographic vessel crew, nurtures very bonded human relations. Relations based upon the shared sacrifice of being away from home for long periods of time, long survey shifts, problem-solving far from any well-equipped shop, getting wet to the bones and, above all, the watchword of getting the job done on time and properly.

In my 26 years enjoying hydrography I have developed unbreakable friendships with many professionals in the field of hydrography, as well as with all parties related to a hydrographic campaign. I have been in both the public sector of hydrography, during my eighteen years with the Chilean Navy's Hydrographic Office (SHOA), and for eight years in the private sector with my company DESMAR. And even though very many things differ from the one world to the other, this one thing of strongly teaming up is something that remains unchanged. Actually, it is a requisite for a job well done.

One by-product, to employ a business concept, of teamwork is the development of fond friendships that last forever. Every time I meet a colleague, an officer or a crewmember from a survey vessel I was in some time ago, the memories of survey times explode out of our souls, allowing us to rejoice in the good times. There are no memories related to adversity to recall, but only the satisfaction of having worked together in an endeavour which got from us all the best we had to give.

Teamwork does not belong exclusively to hydrography. However, it is something that belongs to its definition. Any endeavour in this field, to be successfully achieved, needs the members of the party to be very well co-ordinated, knowing in detail what is expected from them and each member giving the best they have.

Today, technology is making hydrography a highly automated discipline. We all have been experienced a gradual migration from strongly physical efforts to much more computer oriented ways of doing things. Despite of this evolution, the team spirit among Hydrographer remains unchanged and working in a very well coordinated and cooperative manner still is the key tool for a successful survey.

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