



Synergy in Europe — an organisation on a path to growth

The demands of European shipowners are becoming more sophisticated

Synergy Marine Group has been building its activities in Europe.

Chief commercial officer Martin Ackermann — previously chief executive of shipowner BW LPG — was hired in September last year to lead the group's commercial strategy and transformation from its European base in Copenhagen.

In late 2021, the group opened Synergy Marine Germany's office in Hamburg to be close to local owners. Synergy Marine Germany signed an agreement in December to take over technical management of 17 vessels owned by bulker giant Oldendorff Carriers.

Now the plan is to look for locations for more offices in European cities that have a strong shipowning community, Synergy Denmark managing director Tommy Thomassen said.

He said London and Athens could be candidates, or somewhere else in southern Europe.

Synergy's business in Copenhagen kicked off in 2020 when the group took on technical management of Norden's fleet as part of a joint venture with the Danish owner-operator.

[A year later, Synergy acquired Maersk Tankers' technical management division](#), which led to Thomassen joining the group. He was previously chief technology officer for the tanker firm.

The two transactions typify how attitudes towards ship management are changing, especially among forward-thinking owners that want to decarbonise and digitalise their operations, Thomassen said.

“A lot of our European customers right now are very interested in the services we can help them with within sustainability,” he said.

“We’re looking at how we can develop that as a product to help those customers, so they have an easier access to more holistic sustainability reporting across decarbonisation, environmental issues, facilitation, anti-corruption — all the things that are important for owners.”

Modern shipowners have a trading mindset and want to be able to enter and exit the market flexibly. Thomassen said the cost efficiencies that Synergy is able to create through the scale of its business allows owners to do so.

“They know that when they make a trading decision, they’re not talking more than absolutely necessary, so they can again have the flexibility to step in when the market suits them and they can also decide to step out when the market [suits them],” he said.

Thomassen said conflict in Ukraine should not pose any immediate crewing problems for Synergy. “We have crew from both Ukraine and Russia, and obviously keep a close eye on any development,” he said.