



SOKANA

A Q88VMS customer case study of Sokana

A true commercial management system to empower chartering and operations



Meet the user

Sokana is a commercial tanker management company renowned for operating and trading excellence. With a lineage dating back to 1989, their company was re-inaugurated into the market in January 2020 as a joint venture between Lars Ebbesen and the Interunity Group. This joint venture has expanded their global footprint with offices across Europe and the United States. It has also helped position the company as a full-scale operator led by one of the world's top trading teams and supported by an expert team of operators and port captains.

Sokana re-entered the market at a time of remarkable change. In recent years, the transportation industry has undergone rapid transformation due to increasing global tariffs, new sanctions, refinery closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, and technological innovations that allow easy data access. Having assembled a team with industry experience, agility, and skill, while investing time to build and nurture close relationships with its key suppliers, Sokana is able to thrive in this complex market and deliver sustainable above-market returns.

A Flexible System to Supercharge Productivity

Sokana entered the market with only two ships in their fleet but aimed to grow fast. In order to implement a robust operational framework for post-fixture delivery, they required a best-in-class Commercial Management System that would grow with them and be flexible to adapt to their foreseeable fleet expansion and organizational growth plan – essentially a platform they could be empowered by to control workflows, not be controlled by the system.

After a rigorous review process, Sokana partnered with Q88 in early 2020 and implemented Q88VMS. Sokana's aggressive expansion plans have increased fleet size to 48 ships and 880,000 dwt of committed tonnage within 1.5 years. In this short timeframe, team members have seen noticeable improvements to operational workflows. Alex Schulten, Senior Operator, has almost two decades of professional operations experience and has used many Commercial Management Systems in the past. Schulten has a unique perspective on how business success is dependent on having the right systems in place.



"Generally speaking, the information one can receive from a Commercial Management System is relatively the same, but in my personal experience there is a noticeable difference in how we are able to manage vessels on Q88VMS; Q88 provides answers in less time, requiring less amounts of work. It's also an intuitive and supportive platform, enabling us to shape voyages any way we need (chemical tankers with 10 parcels for example) with the confidence in knowing the system will be flexible and adaptive to our existing workflows and any new ones that arise. Q88VMS is uniquely customizable."

Easy on the Eye: An Intuitive User Interface

Amongst others, Q88VMS integrates with DA desk, so teams can see Profit and Loss (P&L) in real time, see port costs in real time, and with endless itinerary requests, they can export ship itineraries for all their chemical tankers. Although having similar functions to other Commercial Management Systems, Q88VMS has a much more pleasing aesthetic. Schulten explains this further:



"One of the most impressive and meaningful features of Q88VMS is how easy it is to access information necessary to perform our job well and efficiently. All of the pertinent information is right there for us, on a single main screen, in a way that makes sense. This may sound simple, but other Voyage Management Systems in the market require so much clicking – drop down screens, new window pop ups, etc. – and I have come to realize just how much time can be spent trying to find information. Now that I work within Q88VMS every day, I have such a deep appreciation for how much work their team has invested in the system design. It helps me do my job easier."

Q88VMS is a fully cloud-based platform that centralizes information and allows unlimited new users to connect, access, and share information regardless of where they are located – two attractive features for Sokana, since their operations team is comprised of members in Germany, Greece and the United States. Because all information is within a single platform, the main estimates page and the main voyage page look very similar. Therefore, communications between operations team members, between chartering members and between

operations and chartering teams has vastly improved since implementing Q88VMS. Operations and chartering teams can more easily discuss the details of a voyage and more easily identify potential issues or missing details upfront. Prior to Q88VMS, knowledge of missing information took much longer to realize, delaying a voyage and potentially accruing additional costs. Schulten reflects:

"We are now having more upfront dialogue between teams, ultimately improving overall productivity throughout a voyage"



In addition to Q88VMS, Sokana has subscriptions to Q88.com and Milbros, which facilitates the seamless flow of information Sokana can access through Q88 systems to include data interface for the world tanker fleet and the complete Q88.com dashboard – further enhancing their competitive advantage for their commercial team in the marketplace.

Integrating Systems to Optimize Workflows

Piggybacking on an earlier statement in which Sokana is very particular about the systems they integrate with, Sedna has been a valued product implementation improving email communication and functionality within their organization. In addition to being a highly reputable and adaptable system, the existing partnership between Q88 and Sedna meant the integration to streamlined data and communications was achieved without endless revisions.

In fact, Sokana was one of the first Q88 customers to integrate Sedna systems with Q88VMS. Schulten recalls the implementation process:

"Connecting Q88VMS and Sedna was incredibly easy, and the way these systems talk to one another is essential to our operator workflows. The voyage number generated in VMS is required to connect to Sedna, and once connected, information flows seamlessly between the systems; data in VMS only takes about 10-15 seconds to reflect and update in Sedna."

In addition to the way Q88VMS complements a system like Sedna, it also offers add-on features to further enhance operations. Shortly after implementing Q88VMS, Sokana activated the integrated vessel message system using the StormGeo Onboard feature, to provide noon reports, arrival and departure reports and even port logs. Schulten explains:



Chris Charter, Global Head of Operations further explains:

"We connect both the DA Desk and Sedna to Q88VMS, enhancing how DA's flow into voyages and keep PNL up-to-date at all times. The connection between Sedna and Q88VMS has improved efficiencies in how vessel names and voyage numbers are automatically exported to our internal email filing system, which in turn automates our folders and tagging capabilities."

"There is no doubt this is a fantastic feature; when end of sea passage reports and commencement sea passage reports are received directly from the ship, for example, we receive email and/or message notifications that this information is now inside the Q88 system, eliminating the need for us to manually monitor and check in for updates. We are automatically notified when new data is ready to view and use."

As a cloud-based platform, Q88VMS supports chartering and voyage operations to improve how communications and data are managed in a single workspace, requiring less IT interaction and no need for a test environment prior to release.

Fritz Heidenreich, President of Q88 LLC says:



"Q88VMS is built by people with chartering and operations experience and is designed to empower its users, catering to real-world industry dynamics. Using technology to maximize returns has greatly benefitted Sokana, and we urge other owners and operators who rely on sophisticated systems also to consider the benefits of Q88VMS."

Need further information?

Should you require more information, don't hesitate, please contact us.

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About Q88 LLC

Q88 LLC is the platform used by shipping professionals to conduct business. Founded in 2001, Q88 LLC is the leading SaaS technology provider to the maritime industry. Q88's mission is to make the global shipping industry more open and connected. People use Q88 products to share information and work collaboratively, to access disparate information, and to turn static data into powerful insights. We believe that with the right technology guiding the right people, the possibilities are endless.