

SuperYacht

industry



METS 2018

EXCELLENT NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

Slipstream

CHARTER & BROKERAGE

Innovative Approach,
Long Tradition

FOCUS ON GERMANY

PREVIEW INSIDE

NOT-TO-MISS
EXHIBITORS

METS 2018

Game-Changing Technology

BOND TM HAS COME A LONG WAY IN THE 12 YEARS SINCE ITS INCEPTION. HAVING PIONEERED THE FIRST TECHNOLOGY CONSULTANCY, 24-HOUR SUPPORT SERVICE, PATENTED IP-STREAMING DEVICE, AND PROVIDED ADVANCE TRAINING FOR ETOs, FOUNDER WILL FAIMATEA NOW HAS his sights firmly set on cyber security, HVAC systems, and an all-encompassing offering. We took time out with Faimatea at the Monaco Yacht Show 2018 to get his thoughts on where the future of IT innovation in yachting lies.

WORDS BY JULIA ZALTZMAN

Bond has been at the top of its game for twelve years now, how has the industry changed in that time?

The biggest change for me is the validation of the service that we're providing. For the first three or four years of Bond, I worried about the fact we were the only ones doing this; it makes it particularly hard to sell if I'm the only one suggesting that clients need a consultancy. But, drawing on my experience as an ETO, I witnessed owners stepping on to the yachts that I was part of (and I would always arrive on board three months before delivery to get familiar with the yacht on an operational level) and the owner would almost accusingly suggest that I hadn't designed the system correctly or that it didn't represent what he wanted, etc. So, I went away thinking, 'What exactly are they doing in the first months of a project?'

Of course, there is a schedule that needs to be adhered to, but in a commercial world you have consultants that create design specifications, so the concept itself wasn't new to me, but it was a new discipline within the yacht industry. I just thought if there's a company representing the owner's requirements who have the qualifications, experience and are paid by the hour, then this negates somebody coming in and selling particular hardware based on a distribution agreement they have, which, of course, is the commercial business of an integrator, but not necessarily in the best interests of the client.

So, it's putting the owner's requirements and needs ahead of a commercial bias?

Entirely.

And the 24-hour service that you then introduced, is that something that owners requested?

It became apparent that it was needed within our first few deliveries of vessels. I would receive a call late Friday night or on the weekend, because the client knew that we were managing the project, or involved in some aspect, and therefore had a very good idea of the systems in place (probably a better idea than anyone else because we had a global view, and being an ex-ETO I could still remember some of the menus off the top of my head), so we were able to help. I soon realised that the industry was missing a beat because nobody was providing the after-sales service and support.

The 24-hour support was actually much easier to grow than our consultancy. From the manufacturers there is of course a warranty, but that's also something that I still need to decipher for clients; warranty isn't support. The integration companies are in a difficult position, because if they sell after-care support they're expected to fix anything as the client understands it to be covered under warranty. We don't deliver the system, we manage it, so we're far more impartial on the support because we will fix it regardless.

In terms of your consultancy, what is your process in understanding what owners need?

I've been in the yachting industry for 23 years, and there is a certain dialogue of approach, but it's not a cookie cutter approach. I now have four guys who have been with Bond for twelve years, since the very beginning, so sometimes it's selecting the right personality to go and sit with the owner's rep or team, and it's a dialogue you have to establish. We know where we want to get to, but it's the process of questions, and it doesn't need to be a direct question to find out what the owner wants. Does he enjoy classical music? If yes, that's already telling me that a certain level of acoustics and appreciation of music is required. It's a subtle approach, but we have to go through each area of AV, IT, communications, etc. We're ascertaining the functionality of the system and how it should



perform, which then drives us to make a functional specification; it's a picture of what the system should do, right down to where the touch panel to close the curtains should be placed.

How often do you upgrade a yacht in terms of its AV/IT solutions on board?

I'd like to say ten years if it's a Bond specified yacht, because a well-designed system should last, as we have done for some of the large yachts we've been involved with. Of course, big advances in technology on the end-user devices, such as screens, happen within that timeframe, but I would hope the delivery mechanism would last 10 years. There are one or two large vessels out there which Bond has been involved with that are approaching eight years without a major infrastructure change, and I'm very proud of that. But I would suggest five

years would be a reasonable time to reconsider the technologies you have on the vessel.

I think one of the biggest things we brought into the yachting industry is our tender process, because previously someone would put a GA on the table, go to three integration companies and ask them to provide a quote. So, you could end up with a 40% spread on price, and of course functionality, but unless you know the nuances of it you won't know exactly what it does. My aim after starting Bond was to make the end objective as transparent as possible.

Going back a couple of years, explain to me why the Jetstream patent was so impactful for you?

Well, it has commercial value, so if you're wrapping a company to sell it's quite important.

Personally, I had never thought that I'd put myself in the position of being a patent owner. It came as a direct result of being in the yacht industry, and the patent is recognition that it was original. I don't like copying other people's processes or ideas. That happens a lot – even our consultancy and support is being copied – and as they say, 'Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery' – but I'm very proud of being associated with Jetstream. Bond is still responsible for the technical aspects, and it still works eight years since its inception. There are a lot more IP streaming services now, but it seems to stand the test of time.

Tell me about the period of expansion you're going through at present.

Well, we've been exploring new opportunities. Our growth isn't necessarily done from within, >>



because to get specialised skill sets you have to look outside of your own circle. We've partnered with two new companies, one of which is a heating ventilation and air conditioning company called Synergy. And that's very exciting for us because just within the process of how my engineers work with regards to the room design, the HVAC is always part of this, but we've never been part of it. Patrick Voorn approached us and recognised a 'synergy' between the two companies in how we approach the work, and after ten months of discussions we decided to move forward with it because there is more to it than just room co-ordination and air conditioning. We are looking to get into making the systems more efficient, which then translates to savings in fuel costs, which is saving the client money. By volume HVAC is the biggest consumer, so the way our AV engineers work with the GA of the yacht means we can now include the ducting, cooling and all the components of the HVAC system and help to make it more efficient for the owner.

We've also just started to partner with a company within cyber security. I've sat back over the last two years and watched how this has been approached by certain areas of the industry, and how it's being managed, and we're definitely going to take a different approach on how it's served. There will be some subtle nuances on our approach which will work better, because it is still hard to sell cyber security in the yacht industry, despite it being necessary.

It seems to be at the forefront of everyone's mind at present?

It is, but they don't know what to do with it. It's not just implementation of hardware it's having



Will Faimatea

processes and policies in place, and this is a mindset which I think the yacht industry has to want to change. It's an additional expense to implement what is required for cyber security, and to suddenly ask the crew of a yacht to undertake this (which is essentially what you need to do as it's very difficult to do from the outside) is hard. Most of the cybercrime takes advantage of something from the inside; somebody has forgotten to do something, and the hacker is opportunistic enough to wait for somebody to make a mistake, and then bang. Within the yacht industry, no-one wants to talk about it when it does happen, so the statistics on how often it's happening are most likely skewed.

We have a very strong IT division in Bond, and I was looking for partners for quite some time. Obviously the culture and the trust has to be established, and we've found a company now who we like very much, and who we are bringing in as part of the Bond group. We're also introducing cyber and security courses into our Bond training scheme. The syllabus is yet to be finished, so I can't say too much, but we will be doing some interesting things.

So, what other innovations do you think the yachting industry still requires?

I think the most exciting thing, especially from an IT perspective, is the low-orbiting satellites, which will give us far less latency. This will be a significant change in big bandwidth for us, because on some of the vessels that we've seen, the latency has actually impacted the performance of a particular application. The satellite is 336,500km above Earth, so it's almost a 750 milli-second round trip up and down, but if this accumulates over time, you end up with a two to three second delay, and some systems will determine the link to be broken and start again. When you're talking big bandwidth, this performance is quite aggravating for an owner. So, low Earth orbits will bring a whole new line of applications that can be used, as well as the amount of content that can be delivered to a yacht.

In terms of Bond looking to the future, where does your interest in growth and development lie?

I'm not sure I want to give my game plan away! I love the business, and I love the team I'm working with, and I think keeping them and our customers happy is in itself a big part, because who wants to work for or with a company who can't keep its clients and staff happy? I don't want Bond to stand still, because I'm not the kind of person to sit back and let it run. But also, I think it's important for our engineers to see that we're looking at innovation, and are able to build things that obtain a patent. The continuity of our engineers is really important and, in my opinion, increases our professional position exponentially. With technology comes creativity. We work in a very small industry, and when four of us walk in a room, all with twelve years' experience with Bond in AV, IT and communications it's impressive. And it's this sort of continuity that I want to be able to deliver to the client; it's not the sales pitch, but our knowledge that comes across.

i. www.bondtm.com