"As long as I can remember, I have been passionate about the shipping industry."

My father sailed as an officer in the Spanish Navy, and later continued his career working for the largest shipyard in the Netherlands. From a very young age, I spent most weekends experiencing the arrival and departure of the classic Holland America Line ships from the Hotel New York terminal in Rotterdam. I also paid many visits onboard the Black Prince, when she was trading between Holland and the Canary Islands. Little did I know at the time, that shipping would become such a personal and lifelong endeavor?

For the past 30 years, I have worked onboard ships and been engaged with providing ship management solutions at all levels to owners, charterers, tour operators, financial institutions, port facilities and many others. I have worked intimately and relentlessly with these parties-constantly monitoring the ever-changing trends and philosophies within our industry to consistently push the envelope.

During my tenure within the passenger ship industry, I recognized International Shipping Partners (ISP) as a boutique, pioneering leader in the field of passenger ship management. Their business decisions were always in line with the future of the cruise industry, either as a ship charterer/manager, or as a thought leader addressing the dire needs of small cruise ship operators. This was exemplified by their intent to build small ships at a time when the ongoing focus was constructing large mega vessels.

After many successful years as ISP, the original group returned as CMI Ship Management to focus on the aforementioned values. Kenneth Engstrom and his team have done a tremendous job reestablishing this vision, and now, they’ve made these new build plans a reality under the leadership of Niels Erik Lund. Keep in mind, this is coming at a time when the market demand for expedition vessels is growing exponentially.

On May 1st, I joined Cruise Management International as the new President & CEO and am very excited to be part of this innovative group. As President and Partner, it is my personal mission to prepare CMI for this exponential growth. I have finally found the perfect stage to collaborate with the leaders in passenger ship management, expedition cruising and other market segments. Together, we will continue to challenge the status quo.

Today, our company is recognized as the leader in small ship cruising with a total of seven expedition vessels in operation. However, our sights are aimed toward multi-segment growth, as we currently have two small luxury cruise vessels and two larger vessels under management with several other prospects in the pipeline. The first step in preparation for this anticipated growth will be achieved through the creation of ‘Centers of Expertise’ (CoE) within the organization. The CoE structure will focus on the specialization in the respective areas of Technical Management for:

- Deck, engine and hotel
- Port itinerary and logistics planning
- Safety & quality management
- Recruitment & training
- Procurement & logistics
- Risk management
- Vessel finance management

All centers will be supported by an integrated ship management software and updated procedures. The objective is to focus on efficiencies and improvements in safety, quality management and customer service while growing profitability.

To execute our strategy, we will:

- Announce a clearly defined mission statement and company values
- Improve communication
- Form focus groups
- Update our website and logo
- Reintroduce weekly management meetings
- Increase visits to the vessels
- Establish dedicated shipboard management teams, and
- Create a more effective and integrated office-shipboard support system

I have already visited some of the vessels and engaged with crew, clients and charterers. I pledge to continue these efforts with CMI, as I strongly believe the feedback and relationships with all stakeholders is the key to maintaining our leadership position in the future.

I am looking forward to continue working with you all, as I sense tremendous potential, and have made it my personal objective for CMI to become the “Preferred Passenger Ship Management Company in the World”.

~Jim Barreiro de León, President