Burckhardt Compression

Optimizing global service delivery networks through strategic partnerships

Compressors for a Lifetime

In the maritime industry, the ability to deliver services consistently across locations around the world has become a defining competitive advantage. Shipowners and technical managers operating in an increasingly globalized environment expect uniform processes, proven quality standards, and reliable outcomes, whether their vessels are serviced in Europe, Asia, or the Middle East. As global supply chains expand, maritime transport of freight and energy products continue to grow, driving a need for improved maintenance facilities.

Roberto Pérez Sueiro, Manager of Operations in South-West Europe for Burckhardt Compression, looks at the opportunities to improve these facilities and the expertise supporting dry docks for the benefit of all maritime operators.

Global trade depends on the interconnected trade routes that cross the world's oceans. Operators are always looking to maximize efficiency and reliability, which means that optimizing the time vessels spend in dry dock is crucial. At the same time, corporate strategies to reduce the industry's carbon footprint and improve fuel efficiency are also impacting ship design. For example, there has been a surge in new orders for vessels powered by liquified natural gas (LNG), including container ships, tankers, and cruise liners, with the aim of reducing emissions, which means that operators' demand for gas compressor maintenance expertise is also rising.

Partnerships as a driver of change

Meeting these expectations, however, is far from simple. Some regions boast mature infrastructure and highly skilled labor pools, while others still face significant gaps that can tempt operators to cut corners. The risks of inconsistency are substantial, but this means there are opportunities to make improvements. Through carefully designed strategic partnerships, service providers can elevate underdeveloped regions to global standards while also unlocking new efficiencies in mature markets.

Strategic collaboration is emerging as one of the most powerful levers for transforming global service delivery networks. By joining forces, global market leaders and local players can deliver high-quality services at competitive cost levels and eliminate the inefficiencies that often accompany fragmented approaches.

Such partnerships often require a shift in traditional growth strategies and governance models. They demand a willingness to share responsibility, align business development goals, and foster transparency. However, when they are executed well, the results are striking.

Shipyards, for example, provide physical infrastructure and logistical advantages that few other partners can match. Original equipment manufacturers (OEMs), meanwhile, offer technical precision and the assurance of compliance with international manufacturing standards. Bringing these two types of partners together creates a service delivery network that not only meets expectations but often exceeds them, providing shipowners with reliable, cost-effective, and timely support.

Building the foundations of a global model

The key to making these partnerships work is trust. This trust enables genuine collaboration, the sharing of business opportunities, and the confidence that each stakeholder is committed to long-term success. In this sense, partnerships are not merely contractual arrangements but ecosystems that thrive on mutual benefit and a shared vision.

The service model that has emerged in the maritime sector rests on several interdependent pillars. Direct contact with shipowners in their country of origin is one of the most important. This ensures that the voice of the customer remains central and that the monitoring of equipment installed on their vessels is handled with care and precision.

Local precision maintenance facilities optimize compressor reliability and performance

Trained operations teams, embedded in the regions where services are typically delivered, provide the next layer of capability. These teams combine local responsiveness with global expertise, making it possible to execute complex projects efficiently and reliably.

Achieving the highest standards

Equally vital are the agreements forged with local suppliers and partners. By working closely with shipyards and service companies in the places where maintenance and repairs are carried out, providers can secure the resources they need while keeping costs under control.

Finally, partnerships with OEMs safeguard quality and traceability. Whether these agreements are struck at a local, regional, or global level depends on the structure of the manufacturer, but their purpose is the same: to ensure that every service intervention upholds the highest technical standards.

Unlocking the potential of shipyard collaboration

Shipyards are perhaps the most visible and strategically important partners in this ecosystem. Their facilities, personnel, and proximity to vessels undergoing repair make them natural hubs for service delivery. When collaboration is structured effectively, the benefits are substantial.

The speed of project execution improves dramatically when resources are available directly within the yard, reducing downtime for shipowners and ensuring that unexpected issues can be resolved without delay. Logistical and administrative costs also decrease, since the need to transport equipment and materials outside the yard is minimized.

This has been exemplified by several projects in Spain, where Burckhardt Compression has been working with Navantia in their Ferrol and Cadiz shipyards, the main naval group in Spain, which operates 12 dry docks in its various shipyards, and is one of the world's most important shipyards serving the LNG market. Following lengthy discussions, a formal agreement was signed, creating a framework model for collaboration that has since been extended to other nations such as China and Turkey. The results have been transformative, not only for the service provider but also for the shipyard itself, which has been able to enhance its own capabilities and offer a broader range of services to customers.

Revitalizing shipyard infrastructure and elevating regional capabilities enables service hubs to better serve the market

Across Europe, the general situation presents both challenges and opportunities. Many shipyards still possess large, well-equipped facilities, but these have often lain dormant for years due to economic changes dating back to the 1980s. The outsourcing of specialized services left these resources underutilized.

Revitalizing them through strategic agreements allows shipyards to reclaim lost capacity while enabling service providers to expand their competitiveness. For shipowners, the net effect is greater flexibility, reduced costs, and access to a wider menu of services, all delivered under the assurance of global quality standards.

Preserving technical integrity through OEM partnerships

While shipyards provide scale and efficiency, partnerships with OEMs that have global service networks anchor their technical credibility. Maintaining quality and traceability is a non-negotiable requirement in the maritime industry, particularly when dealing with highly specialized equipment such as cryogenic gas compressors. For this reason, services are delivered either by OEM personnel who have been trained and certified, or through the manufacturer's official service and distribution network.

Coordinated compressor maintenance in dry-dock is crucial for long-term efficiency and reliability

This approach ensures that maintenance activities not only meet compliance requirements but also optimize performance. To achieve this, service providers have invested heavily in developing both centralized and local supply chains. Training, certification, and long-term agreements with suppliers have become cornerstones of this effort. In Burckhardt Compression's case, the scope of equipment covered is extensive and includes all the equipment in a vessel's compressor room, such as safety and control valves, heat exchangers, electric motors, and lubrication systems.

Furthermore, the integration of digital services, such as remote monitoring, enables all partners to work with the same data. This enhances data accuracy, which is crucial in compressor diagnostics, and boosts project speed and efficiency. Together with embedded OEM expertise in service contracts, providers guarantee that every intervention is traceable, every component is verified, and every outcome aligns with global benchmarks. This gives shipowners confidence that their assets are being maintained to the highest standards.

The rise of regional marine hubs

Geography exerts a powerful influence on service delivery. LNG vessels typically undergo major overhauls on a five-year cycle, and while this work can technically be performed anywhere, certain regions dominate. China, Singapore, Korea, Northern Europe, Southwest Europe, and the United Arab Emirates are among the most important. Recognizing this, service providers have established marine hubs in these regions, creating a global footprint that combines local support with international reach.

These hubs are strategically located near the busiest shipyards, enabling providers to respond quickly to customer needs and minimize vessel downtime. They also serve as centers of excellence, housing trained personnel and specialized equipment that can be deployed across multiple projects.

The hub model illustrates the balance that defines modern service delivery networks. Global oversight ensures consistency and quality, while local execution ensures responsiveness and efficiency. Together, they form a structure that is greater than the sum of its parts.

Compressors: The beating heart of the system

At the technical core of these networks lies compressor technology, particularly in the handling of boil-off gas from LNG tanks. Compressors prepare this gas for reliquefication or direct use in engines, handling pressures that range from very low levels required for boilers to as high as 350 barg for advanced M-type, electronically controlled gas injection (MAN ME-GI) engines. Surrounding these compressors is a suite of auxiliary equipment, such as heat exchangers, filters, pumps, valves, lubrication systems, couplings, and control and monitoring systems, all of which must function seamlessly to maintain vessel performance.

The application of these systems spans LNG carriers, bunkering vessels, and LNG-fueled containerships, cruise ships, and ferries. Given their importance to vessel operations, the reliability of these systems is paramount. This is precisely why OEM partnerships, rigorous certification, and strategically positioned service hubs are so vital. Together, they create the conditions under which compressors and their associated systems can be maintained to the highest possible standards, wherever a vessel may be operating.

Burckhardt Compression can deploy experienced personnel and their equipment to support planned maintenance in shipyards, ports or at sea

However, planned maintenance and a vessel's working schedule may not always allow work to be carried out at a regional hub. In these cases, flexible service providers, such as Burckhardt Compression, can deploy experienced personnel and their equipment to a ship while at sea. During the voyage, the technicians can complete the routine maintenance and identify any issues that may need to be remedied at the next inspection. These 'in-motion' maintenance projects ensure compressors and their auxiliary equipment continue to deliver optimum performance with a minimum of inconvenience.

A strategic imperative for the future

The maritime industry is at a crucial point in its evolution. As global trade continues to expand, environmental regulations are tightening, and the transition to new fuels is gathering pace. Against this backdrop, the demands placed on service delivery networks are only becoming more complex. Relying solely on organic growth and in-house resources is no longer sufficient. It is now more important than ever to build strategic partnerships to provide the flexibility, scalability, and resilience required to meet the challenges of the future.

This requires a model of collaboration that blends global standards with local execution. By revitalizing underused infrastructure, elevating regional capabilities, and creating frameworks, shipyards and major OEMs can adapt and better serve the market. Shipowners can be confident that wherever they take their vessels the services they receive will meet the highest levels of quality and reliability.

The example project in Spain and others in regions where partnership-driven models have been established demonstrate that this approach is not only feasible but transformational. They illustrate how the maritime sector can overcome disparities in global infrastructure and labor capacity, while simultaneously driving down costs and improving service quality.

The task now is to extend this mindset, moving beyond transactional relationships to embrace long-term partnerships that create value for all stakeholders. In this way, the industry will not only optimize its global service delivery networks but also set new benchmarks for resilience, competitiveness and excellence in the years to come.

Burckhardt Compression

We love to provide services that matter. Hands-on.

Personal, passionate, powerful: this defines us. Meet technical experts with decades of engineering excellence and an outstanding customer-first mindset. Rooted in over 180 years of OEM expertise, we offer the full range of services for your compressors and auxiliaries throughout the entire lifecycle – regardless of brand or challenge.

We put safety first in all we do and support you with energy-efficient, sustainable solutions. With a strong local presence around the globe, we focus on building reliable and trusted partnerships that last, ensuring mutual success. At the forefront of digital innovation, we are constantly pushing boundaries to deliver faster, more efficient and advanced solutions that prioritize the highest safety standards and support your sustainability objectives.
As a global leader in our field, we support you with unmatched engineering know-how.

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