

Case Study: Thuraya MarineComms Maritime Broadband

Client: Devor Technologies

Product: Thuraya IP/SpaceComm

Application: Anchor Handling Tug Supply vessel

Area of Operations: Gulf of Thailand

Thuraya and Devor Technologies beat the clock to bring reliable, high speed connection to offshore maritime operator

Thuraya MarineComms and Singapore-based service partner Devor Technologies recently joined forces to assist an offshore vessel operator in urgent need of a reliable communications solution.

Heavy weather in the Gulf of Thailand meant the VSAT system installed on an anchor handling tug supply vessel was not performing reliably threatening to breach the terms of the vessel's charter.

Kenny Koh, Business Development Manager for Devor Technologies took a call from the operator, based on a referral from another supplier.

“We were told that the operator needed a reliable internet connection as the VSAT onboard was working very erratically. The operator was obligated by their charter to provide internet connection of 512 kbps and even though the speed was OK, the connection was not stable enough to connect to the shore,” he says.

Koh notes that Ku-band VSAT networks can suffer from high contention in the South East Asian region with bad weather and distance from earth stations commonly causing intermittent or slow connections.

To hold to the terms of its charter, the operator needed a reliable alternative in a very short time frame. A replacement VSAT system could take at least two weeks to deliver and would take further time and additional manpower to install.

Koh immediately suggested the Thuraya Maritime Broadband solution, comprising the Thuraya IP terminal and Spacecomm antenna.

“The Thuraya IP terminal was the obvious choice. It is small and tough but easy to install and commission so the client could avoid a potential logistics nightmare and quickly establish a high speed internet connection. We were able to convince the client that Thuraya could give them the speed and performance required and very soon they came back with confirmation to proceed.”

Thuraya Maritime Broadband provides standard background IP throughput at speeds of up to 444 kbps, meaning that maritime users can take advantage of fast connectivity for business-critical and crew welfare applications. The Thuraya IP broadband terminal and Spacecomm antenna have been proven in maritime applications over many years and are tried and tested in the challenging maritime environment.

Koh arranged for priority shipping and the equipment left the Singapore office on Friday morning, reaching the vessel the next day. Despite the weekend, the client needed immediate installation and Koh and his team were ready to assist remotely and by phone as the crew commissioned the terminal.

The package delivered included connection diagrams and user guides and the Thuraya Customer Care Team quickly responded to the last minute request to arrange activation of the SIM card by Sunday. The client emailed on Monday morning to confirm that system had been installed and was working to specification.

“I asked the ship’s master to perform a third party internet speed test and results showed very good downlink and uplink speeds,” says Koh. “We agreed with the client that confirmation on the purchase depended on the charterer’s acceptance of the system. Three days later we received confirmation that the charterer was satisfied that Thuraya was giving them the connection they needed.”

Koh’s client, a leading maritime offshore services supplier operating over 100 vessels in platform supply, AHTS, emergency response and rescue and subsea-support sectors, also endorsed the performance of Thuraya Maritime Broadband.

“The Thuraya solution has been very stable and feedback from the vessel is that signal strength is 85%-95% and we have not witnessed a single outage during three months of operation. The main requirement onboard is to connect to the corporate VPN. The crew also share the system and are happy with uplink and downlink speeds. The Thuraya IP satisfied our requirements for both business and personal use.”

“The other key advantage of the Thuraya IP is its simple and portable hardware, which is very easy to install even by our ship’s crew who had not installed one before. Customer support is fast and when we had issues, crossing our usage limit or querying the billing, Thuraya were quick to help solve the issues.”

“We were also impressed by the low hardware cost, which worked well within our budget. Devor gave us the chance to test the system onboard our vessel, before making the outright purchase. That clearly showed the confidence Devor has in their product’s performance, which convinced us that we could become a long term customer. Within a few days of usage, we were convinced that the Thuraya solution could deliver.”

Koh adds that the success of the installation demonstrated the credentials of the Thuraya Maritime Broadband offer in an increasingly competitive market. Many communications suppliers make claims that look attractive on paper but are either unreliable in operation or slower than promised.

“There was once a perception that Thuraya was not designed for maritime but the solution we provided is one of hottest offers around for the offshore and small boat markets. What owners want is a product that is easy to install and configure and gives them reliable throughput speeds. The Thuraya IP terminal is truly plug and play and the available capacity on the network means that we can be confident that clients will get what they pay for,” he adds.

Koh says other clients in the offshore sector interested in examining the Thuraya solution now have a reference to its capabilities for business critical communications. As a further confirmation of success, Koh says the following week the same client phoned to place an order for a second terminal.

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