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Left to right: Navigate PR's Mike Elsom and Bill Lines, Witt O'Brien's Tim Whipple and Helix Media's Ed Ion will be providing emergency response media services. Photo: Adam Corbett

Witt O'Brien's buys crisis management firms Navigate and Helix

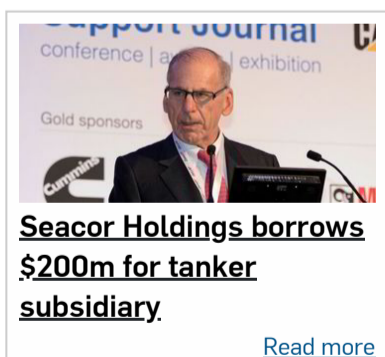
Acquisition expands US company's emergency response services into communications

26 February 2020 11:06 GMT *UPDATED 26 February 2020 11:29 GMT*
By [Adam Corbett](#) in London

Witt O'Brien's, a part of Seacor Holdings, has bought maritime crisis communications companies Navigate PR and Helix Media.

Witt O'Brien's principally acts as an emergency response company for governments and corporations. It specialises in providing emergency response services required under US pollution laws.

However, Witt O'Brien's chief executive Tim Whipple said its clients are increasingly asking for the sort of media response and reputation management services provided by Navigate and Helix.



"Shipowners and managers face an evolving range of disruptions that can put their operations and reputations at risk. These include disease pandemics, cyber-attack, hurricanes and oil spills. We believe the best approach is to integrate outstanding emergency management with effective crisis communications," he said.

Witt O'Brien's provides its services to around 11,000 ships while around 4,000 ships have signed up to Navigate and Helix.

Navigate was established by Mike Elsom and Bill Lines as a specialist marine public relations firm and later branched out into media emergency response through subsidiary company Navigate Response.

The company worked closely with Singapore based Helix, established by former Lloyd's List journalist Ed Ion, in providing emergency response communications services in Asia.

Corporate communications too

Under the deal, Witt O'Brien's will also acquire both Navigate and Helix's corporate communications services. The deal also involves Navigate Response and Navigate Response Asia.

Navigate's Bill Lines said that its deal is the first time operational and media emergency response services will be available to shipping on a global basis.



He said: "This initiative represents a shipping first: the integration of world-class crisis management with a global crisis communications and reputation management capacity, in one seamless offering."