

"We are by far the world's largest supplier of winch systems for anchor-handling vessels. We are also the oldest in the business."

Ottar Antonsen from Rolls-Royce cannot help but brag a little when it comes to the company's share of the market for winches to the offshore segment. 700 offshore vessels have been equipped with Rauma Brattvaag winches from Rolls-Royce. Since each ship needs 8-16 winches, that makes a total of somewhere in the region of 10,000 units.

System supplier

"We have become a complete system supplier, providing both the winches and control systems which enable the ship to carry out all kinds of jobs," explains Ottar Antonsen, Sales Manager. "Many of the orders we get are for development projects where we work together with consultants, shipyards and shipowners to develop the best system for a ship and the specific tasks it is destined for."

Winches from Rolls-Royce have become bigger and bigger in recent years, largely due to the fact that the offshore oil industry has been moving into increasingly deep water. This, in turn, means that more power and a larger wire capacity are needed to handle anchors and other equipment. It is not easy to compare the pulling power of the various winch types because this depends, among other things, on the size of the drum. Up to now, what are described as 600-tonne winches have been the largest in the product range, but the company has supplied winches with a holding power of over 2,000 tonnes to installations in the Gulf of Mexico.

"Though the largest winches are built by our partner I.P. Huse in Harøya, Rolls-Royce is still responsible for the drive and control systems, and handles sales," says Antonsen.

Last year Rolls-Royce introduced a winch drive system whose hydraulic pressure has been increased to 64 bar. For a winch motor of a given size, this means retaining the traditional benefits afforded by low-pressure hydraulic systems, while obtaining greater power. This will, in general, cut installation costs and weight per installed kW, while providing outstanding speed and torque.

Substantial market share

The large number of winches supplied has given Rolls-Royce an extremely substantial share of the offshore market. "For small anchor-handling vessels operating in shallow waters, we have a satisfactory market share. For medium-sized ships and for the largest anchor-handling vessels, designed to operate at very great depths, we have a higher share in the market," says Antonsen.

One of the reasons why Rolls-Royce has succeeded so well in this market is that it is constantly developing new products. The company recently launched a completely new 350-tonne winch with a new operating system. It is an extremely cost-effective solution that has been specially adapted to the needs of medium-sized anchor-handling vessels.

"We already have orders for ten such winches," says Ottar Antonsen, adding that Rolls-Royce has succeeded in maintaining a high level of winch production in the past few years, despite the fact that demand has generally been less buoyant.

"Sales to the Norwegian market have been reduced for a while, but we have had substantial orders from the Far East which have kept us busy all the same," he says. ■

Winches for 700 anchor-handlers in 35 years



Over the past few years a huge number of winches destined for the offshore market have been shipped out of Rolls-Royce production facilities.

