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## THE ALL BLACK ISSUE

VISITING NZ FOR THE RWC | SAFETY & SECURITY  
GALLEY ETHICS | SELL YOURSELF

NO. 47 | APR 11

# CREW FOR SALE

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## WHEN IT COMES TO LOOKING FOR A NEW JOB, MAKE SURE **YOU DO NOT SELL YOURSELF SHORT**

**THIS IS GOING** to be a busy year in recruitment; the job market wheel is turning again. If the activity crew recruitment agencies have registered in January and February is anything to go by, the Mediterranean season promises to be frantic, with great jobs available at all levels, from deckhands to captains.

This is not only positive and uplifting news for newcomers looking for their first break but also for experienced crew looking to progress. The competition for jobs, however, is going to be fierce, as professional, experienced and motivated crew will be competing for these positions.

So how do you secure this dream job? You have passed the first hurdle of CV selection. You made the shortlist and have been invited for interview. What next? How do you convert this into a job offer?

As usual, it is about preparation. You will need to market and sell yourself, your skills and your personality.

### FIRST ASSESS YOURSELF

Before an interview, take the time to ask yourself: "Why should this captain/owner hire me?" If you do not know the answer, neither will a stranger interviewing you for 30 minutes, and you will have failed to look confident, impress and enthuse them.

Try to learn as much as possible about the job, yacht, owner's likes/dislikes and general philosophy onboard beforehand. Your recruitment consultant can help and brief you; the more ammunition you have, the better your chances of success. I use the word "ammunition" because preparing for an interview is like preparing for battle. Armed with knowledge of the job, you can position yourself clearly and deliver your sales or mission statement with ease.

Writing lists is often a

**"PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW IS LIKE PREPARING FOR BATTLE."**

good start; it's a proven, idiot-proof method to help prepare you. Two columns will do: Why should the employer offer me the job? Why should the employer not offer me the job? Be precise in your answers, list all your selling points and qualify your answer. Writing "I have been a deckhand for three years and I am now ready to be a bosun" is insufficient; you must push and progress that thought. Why are you ready? What real skills

and experience have you acquired that indicates you are ready for the next step? Be precise. Qualify your answers.

### USING NON-YACHTING EXPERIENCE

If looking for your first job in yachting, perhaps as a junior stewardess, do not think you will impress the captain by saying: "I like to travel" – something I know they hear all the time. This is not a reason to hire you; travelling is a commonality to everyone in yachting, so



to travel).

### DISCOVER YOUR STRENGTHS...

In essence, the first part of the list is about you patting yourself on the back and describing why you are great and why you are the best candidate for the job. Some people find it difficult to talk about and to praise themselves. Seek advice from a trusted partner or a trusted fellow crewmember. Why do they think you are great?

### ...AND YOUR WEAKNESSES

The second column is equally as important; be honest, very honest, with yourself. By knowing your weaknesses for any given job you can address them and on the day of the interview you will be prepared to handle objections and even repackaging these weaknesses into strengths. This is about *positive selling*.

Returning to the example of a junior stewardess with no prior yachting experience, how can she compensate this lack of experience, which is a weakness? Sell her work ethic and enthusiasm: "In my last job at X I was often praised for my hard work and commitment. My employer described me as Y because I achieved Z. I am adaptable, an example of this is..." Be precise. "While I do not

have much experience, I feel that I can contribute with my dedication, I can work long hours as my last employer will confirm. In my last job I did X."

If you are a chief officer looking for your first command, you will have to battle with the fact that, in effect, you have not been a captain before, which is a weakness. You will be competing against experienced captains. So, why should the owner choose you? Each situation is unique, so you will need to dig into your history and give a few solid examples illustrating why you are ready and why your current or last captain endorses you and supports your desire to become a captain.

Basically, listing all your weaknesses will allow you to think of ways to overcome them.

### AT THE INTERVIEW

On the day of the interview, it's show time. You need to develop a rapport with your prospective employer, get him/her to "buy" you. Crew work and live together 24/7 so it is all about getting on with each other, being tolerant and a good team player and team leader if it is a position involving crew management. You need to get that message across.

Have a clear and concise mission statement ready: who you are, what you can do, what you can offer – why and how you feel you can meet the employer's expectations.

It is often a good idea to tackle your weaknesses head-on – especially if the weakness is obvious – and bring up the matter yourself without waiting for the interviewer to do so. "I know I do not have

X experience and that you may worry about it. However, I feel that because I can do Y and have experience in Z, I am more than ready for the job." By bringing up your weakness, you show you are confident, have nothing to hide and are not afraid of rejection. You are also addressing the employer's fears and can really convince them that

a few points that were not addressed or were unclear. Here, you can really make it happen, you can really convince someone you are the candidate for the job.

Remember, provided your references are good, your skills sets are sufficient, your certificates are valid and meet the yacht's manning requirements, in the end, employers hire on

emotions, just as any of us buys on emotions. **LCR**

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**"KNOW WHO YOU ARE, WHAT YOU CAN DO AND WHAT YOU CAN OFFER."**

