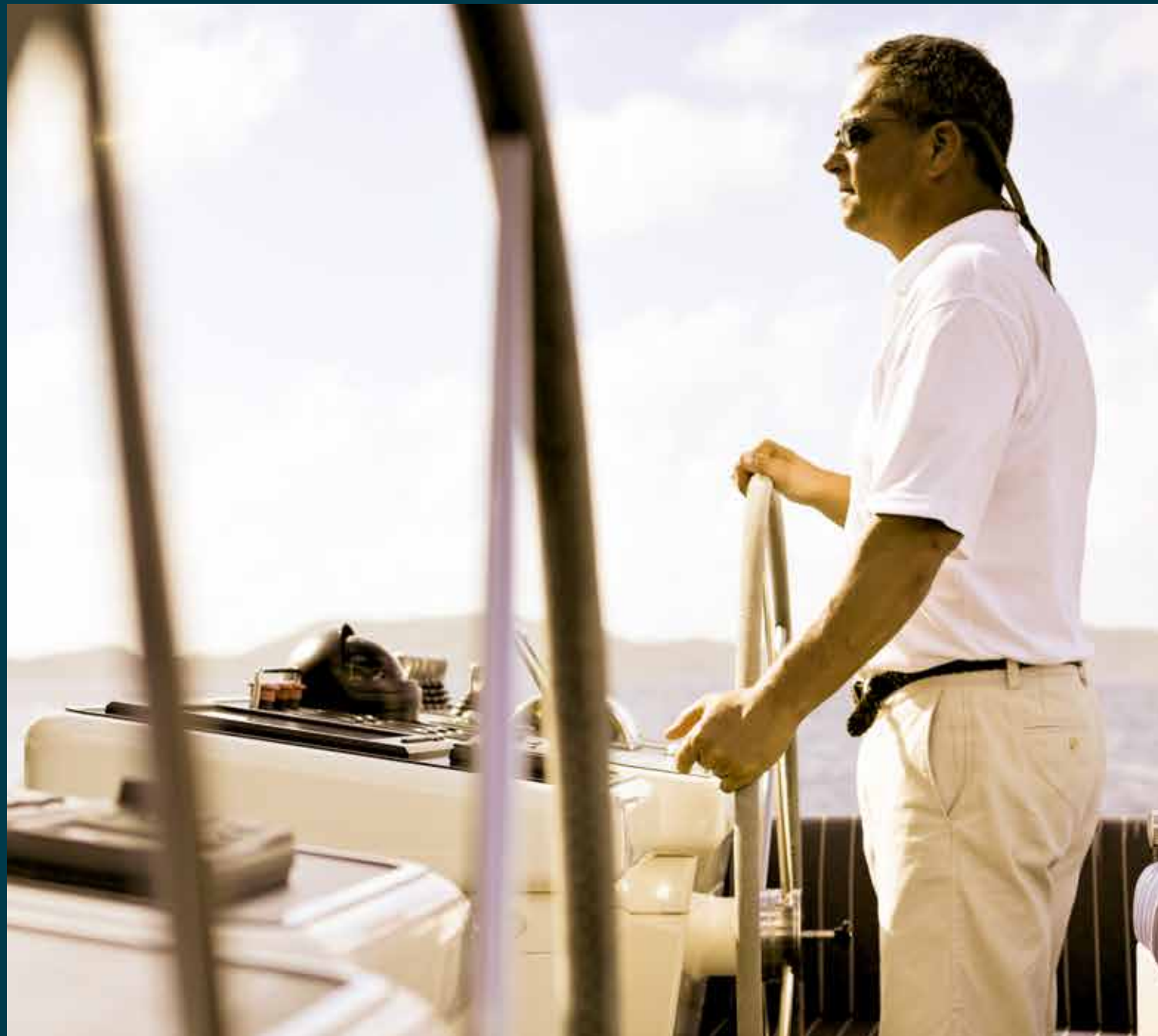


# The Crew

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CAREER • TRAINING • TECHNOLOGY • MONEY • OPERATIONS • ADVICE



# REPORT

## PSYCHOMETRIC TESTING

Is this the new trend in superyacht crew recruitment? And does it work?

## ONE OF THE GUYS

How captains find the balance between being 'one of the guys' on board and remaining a professional leader.

## ONLY AS YOUNG AS YOU FEEL

Twenty-eight-year-old Captain Laurent Blielkast of M/Y *Heliod II* reveals the challenges of climbing the ranks so young.

## GALLEY SPENDING

If guests expect Michelin-star food, chefs need Michelin-star equipment. We look at how to get it in your galley.

# I INDUSTRY COLUMN

*"It's just about being fair"*



Every captain has been in this situation: you're looking to fill a position and 50 CVs arrive at lightning speed from agency A. Several days later, you receive two well-researched candidates from agency B, but they're already in the pile from agency A. Who gets the fee? Laurence Lewis, director at YPI Crew, looks at our industry's recruitment protocols and the ethos of best practice.

WORDS: LAURENCE LEWIS

Sometimes recruitment drives us recruiters completely insane: in what other job do you spend so much time and effort in return for such little reward? At the end of a bad day it can feel like fruitless work. I am talking about the recruitment industry here, not the yachting industry. I have been working in recruitment for more than 20 years, first in secretarial then medical, before moving to the Cote d'Azur in 1998, so I know my subject pretty well.

Each recruiter deals with hundreds of candidates whom he or she meets, interviews, discusses plans and goals with, keeps in touch with, checks references for and so on. Without good time management and discipline, the day would drift by without anything productive taking

place: for recruiters, this means talking to clients, organising interviews and making placements. That is why candidates come to us in the first place.

While recruiters juggle with candidate meetings, follow-ups and ridiculously large mail inboxes on the one hand (and a lot of administration tasks I will not get into), on the other, agencies are competing for clients' attention and, often, we each get only a fraction of this. Recruitment agencies are sometimes called upon as an afterthought, once everything else has failed to deliver. At times we are put in such competition that there is as much chance of making a placement and generating a fee as there is of winning the lottery.

What recruiter has not heard, after spending hours working on an assignment to build a shortlist of interested, suitable, reference-checked, available and basically 'on brief' candidates, "I received that CV from someone else this morning, so you're out", or "A friend of mine has recommended this candidate. I am already familiar with them"? Sometimes the business of recruitment can really seem quite dysfunctional.

So what about protocol for using crew agencies? Is there one? Should there be one? What are the rules and what is good practice?

Good practice is to reward the recruiter who gives added value. Clients sometimes think naively that by putting several

agencies in competition they will get a better service. In reality, it's the complete opposite taking place as speed becomes more important than quality. That's when the client gets bombarded with a lot of CVs as recruiters race to send candidates, regardless of whether they are suitable, available or even interested; the idea is to get there before the other agency does. Of course, the recruiter who focuses on quality and does a search, trying to match skills and personalities to present the five most suitable candidates for any given position, will come last as this work is often time-consuming. Should the recruiter not be awarded a placement because of that? Of course not, as therein lies the recruiter's true added value and *raison d'être*. A client is paying a fee for an intelligent selection of candidates that will result in a placement, not for a mountain of CVs under which the successful candidate's CV is lost and buried.

These days, CVs are everywhere and many clients have their own LinkedIn profiles carrying their own mini databases, so clearly the asset is not the CV itself; the asset is the act of selecting and identifying the best people to interview. Many clients have hundreds of LinkedIn connections, but do they have time to meet them all, talk to them and check their credentials? Do they even know them? Of course not, they are often just connections who happen to be there, tickling our ego by the hundreds. My point is that technology identifies and gathers profiles but only professional recruiters can recruit, and business models not focused on service will miss the boat, as the future of recruitment across the board, not just in the yachting industry, is more clearly focused on providing the best possible service.

Apart from the above consideration on the level of service you settle for, crew agencies have new duties under the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC), and the ones operating in France, for example, have a legal obligation to be registered with the French government before they can supply crew. This obligation to be registered with the government supersedes any other accreditations from private organisations, so if you are a commercial yacht, make sure you ask your French crew agency for their certificate issued by the French administration.

A side comment, not too remote from the topic of protocol, is my conviction that the recruitment industry has done a 180-degree turn and we are back to picking up the phone to get our message across instead of hiding behind emails to represent our candidates. Emails are not the quickest, nor the most effective, way to communicate; they may be perceived as the easiest and the default choice, and I myself am as guilty as anybody else, but I am working to change that.

In summary, recruitment protocol can be disarmingly simple and it's just about being fair. Sometimes being fair is acknowledging that perhaps two good recruiters from competing agencies have each tried their very best to assist in representing and championing the same candidate. If this happens, you'll find that both agencies will probably agree with you that a split fee is the best way forward. ■

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TO COMMENT ON THIS ARTICLE, EMAIL [LULU@THESUPERYACHTGROUP.COM](mailto:LULU@THESUPERYACHTGROUP.COM) WITH SUBJECT: TCR 74 IT'S JUST ABOUT BEING FAIR

## Fiona's Atelier

Interior & Outdoor Furnishings for Yachts  
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