



Perfectly placed

Laurence Lewis reflects upon the months of hard work involved to ensure that crew are placed and working for the summer season

Summer time in the Med, it's show time for the yachts and crew; for us, the recruiters, it's when we know we have successfully sailed through another intense few months of trials and tribulation; most crew are placed and working, we can breathe and rejoice in the fact that we have survived without turning into a group of neurotic wrecks....just!

Every year, from March to June, the pressure is enormous, we need to achieve so much in so little time and every minute is precious, literally. Between the months of March, April and May we witness, year in, year out, across all departments, between 1550 and 2100 new crew registering. In addition to these new registrations, we are of course, also looking after the hundreds of crew from Deckhands to Captains and Engineers who have reactivated their profile looking for a new job for the season.

What is a day of a recruiter like in the middle of the season? It's simply human nature to underestimate other people's challenges in their place of work; Deckhands and Junior Stewardesses have no clue on what kind of responsibilities and challenges a Captain is facing on a day to day basis and likewise, most crew and clients do not realise what goes on behind the scene in a recruitment office. It's all so easy I hear you say, "You just press send and off the CV goes"... if only it was that easy. The fact, recruitment is a tough and competitive business.

Our biggest challenge during the pre season is time management. Recruiters are, by definition, "people's persons" and in a niche industry where we all have many contacts, one could easily spend the day in the numerous candidate meetings, chatting to people on the phone but achieve absolutely nothing. It's essential to remain focused on our goal, and that's to fill the jobs our clients

entrust us with, as diligently and efficiently as possible. That's why clients and candidates like us after all, because we can solve their problem. The best recruiters in our industry are those who nurture this fragile combination of efficiency and friendliness with a clear sense of urgency. And a sense of urgency is definitely required to deal with the hundreds of jobs coming through on a monthly basis.

Our days during these few months are a blur of meetings, phone calls, emails, reference and certificate checks, organising interviews, closing deals; all this at a frenetic pace. The wheel keeps on turning, the momentum is carrying us through, like being in one of those hypnotic Cy Twombly line paintings.

The days invariably offer a roller coaster of emotions, from the excitement when a great job comes in to the satisfaction when a candidate gets offered a job (especially so when it's the underdog who gets the offer, the one we really had to lobby hard for, just to get them an interview) to the disappointment when the best candidate interviewed badly or when, after hours of time invested in a search over days, possibly weeks, our candidate gets pipped to the post.

And then, there's bewilderment overhearing what is said in the waiting room: This Deckhand left his last yacht in the middle of the Caribbean season, a charter yacht. "It was way too busy, I had enough and quit" ah... "and what are you looking for now?" asks the other Deckhand sitting there "another charter yacht would be great"! The last I know, he's still looking for that perfect job....

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