

# THE TWO WAY STREET

*Laurence Lewis looks at the role of a recruitment consultant and how managing expectations for both the potential recruit and the employer is an essential part of the process*

These days we all have high expectations, all the time. We expect better jobs with better salaries, on better yachts, with better crew and colleagues, better social and family life with more rotations, better wi-fi, better food, better crew cabins, better tips, better heads of departments, better absolutely everything.

Employers and employees have access to vast amounts of information through social media, crew know what is going on elsewhere onboard other yachts and therefore, expectations come at you from every angle. Managing and addressing those expectations is paramount to ensure a successful recruitment procedure.

Also in this picture is the recruiter, that trusted middle person whose role is to advice both parties and navigate towards a common ground and positive resolution, managing expectations because, most of the time .... recruiters know best (of course we do, it's our job, we spend our days talking to crew, to clients, to the market).

Getting off to a good start will often involve writing down a good job description, a concise summary of the role with some insights into the specifics of your yacht, the culture and value onboard. This is often an overlooked process, yet, once done the job description will become a valuable and reusable tool only requiring minor updating from one season to the next. Recruiters love professional job descriptions and will use them to truly champion your jobs with candidates.

Your recruiter will discuss your expectations and how they fit with the market. Will it be a struggle to fill the job because of an unrealistic salary in a candidate short market? Is your leave package competitive enough? Are you asking too much in terms of skills when perhaps onboard training can be a solution? Recruiters know unicorns don't exist and will be transparent with the client.

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One must also consider the necessity of building a strong team on board. So the environment amongst the rest of the current crew is an important element to discuss and evaluate. Looking at individual strengths and evaluating what the new crew member will deliver into an already successful team, at any rank, can be vital.

Recruitment is a two way street and just as the client is assessing the candidate, candidates should also evaluate their potential new employer - first impressions count. Keeping the line of communication open is important and any delays or change of plans in the interview schedule have to be addressed / discussed quickly and a new plan of action set up. Once the momentum is lost, it is very hard to regain it and the candidate could have found another job, elsewhere.

Recruiters of course also manage candidates' expectations and we have endless discussions on salaries, leave, rotation and whether the grass is supposedly greener on the other side.... We can help and guide a decision making process and make suggestions. And yes, absolutely, sometimes the 'first job that comes along' is the best job, nothing wrong with that, just as the majority of yachts are private, so why wait for that elusive charter yacht? You need to weigh up the benefits of both situations. Make a list of the pros and cons for charter and private yachts, and also think about future career progression.

Managing expectations on all sides is part of the recruiter's remit. Only naive recruiters will stick to the candidate and client's brief. Decision making always involves an emotional dimension and thinking outside the box and championing the underdog, is often what will make the difference and bring two sides together.