

The ebb and flow of recruitment



Chloe Collet looks at how the crew recruitment business remains as adaptable as ever during COVID 19 times

The Mediterranean summer cruising season is nearly over and what a different season it has been for yacht recruitment! Following a near standstill in late March and April, in normal years the busiest hiring months, we witnessed an impressive recruitment drive from the middle of May and throughout June with all departments fully occupied placing crew. As recruiters we wore many new hats too as we were asked to solve problems linked to COVID 19 reduced international travel and restrictions. Finding the most suitable candidate in the right place was indeed a challenge and involved using some innovative methods to close the deal.

Considering the amount of successful engagements made these challenges proved once again that using a reputable crew placement service was not only a time saver but a guarantee that when time is of the essence, a necessity. Recruiters are not only highly adaptable and flexible they are also able to give the best advice to clients and candidates in difficult times: clients who need to source crew on board their yacht rapidly and multiple crew who are concerned about their job search and future prospects in an upturned market.

The key to this crisis period is therefore the ability to adapt or as defined by the Oxford Dictionary: "to change something in order to make it suitable for a new use or situation". As recruiters we are constantly seeking new methods of using the current available technology to keep the human touch. The human touch - so vital to our industry - has been even more important when personal interviews are impossible. We have learnt to video interview from our dining room and conform to new safety regulations in the office.

Looking towards and preparing for the final quarter of the year we can only encourage our crew candidates to adopt the same

method and adapt to the 'new normal'. If qualified engineers and chefs as well as the more experienced interior and deck crew have managed to find suitable opportunities, it continues to be a very difficult marketplace for both entry level crew as well as senior officers and captains.

For green or entry level candidates the months ahead for them should be time well spent in enrolling in additional training or specialisations in order to be ready to embark for the next Mediterranean hiring season and the Caribbean or Indian Ocean this winter. For example, completing a yoga instructor or beauty therapy/spa course. Most schools now offer their courses entirely on line and thus training is readily available regardless of location or travel restrictions.

The key to this crisis period is therefore the ability to adapt

Apropos of senior officers and captains, my particular domain of expertise, it could be a period of introspection and personal preparation for a role that may not be the "ideal" job or on the idealised "yacht". Here too additional training can also be of great value as many of the current employment standards applicable in the corporate world can be embraced: training on sexual harassment, mental health issues for instance.

There are several groups in yachting that have started to address these questions too and whilst searching for a position it could be an additional benefit both personally and professionally for senior on board management. Additionally, as we adapt to an ever-changing recruitment environment, we can also use this as an opportunity with our yacht clients to widen selection criteria. To this effect, YPI CREW has recently joined an industry initiative that hopes to encourage increased diversity, especially on deck where female presence remains limited.

Our challenge moving forward is to continue to adapt, to change and create opportunities that help construct a professional and enjoyable workplace on board.