



Ultimate

Crew for yacht owners

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Yacht Owners need to be aware of the ins and outs when it comes to employing and keeping good crewmembers. The experience you have on board your yacht has everything to do with the people that surround you; it is imperative to find the right people to fulfill the desires you have for your yachting pleasures. Industry professionals within Australia with years of crewing experience throughout the world present you the yacht owner with all the important information you need to know when it comes to your crew.

It's all about people!

Finding and keeping good crew is paramount for all involved in the marine industry. Without the right people, your boats will get older before your eyes or your company will develop a bad reputation, which will affect your boat and / or your business.

Managing people can be harder than keeping a boat maintained. People are not like a bilge pump where you simply throw it out when it is broken and buy and fit a new one. People require efficient communication, respect and guidance. It is important to communicate clearly to your crew about what is required of them, your budget constraints (if any) and your expected standards for them and for your vessel or business.

You will find that the more time, effort and energy you put into your crew from the outset, the quicker they will learn, respond and become one of your greatest assets.

Most businesses are all about their people, however finding the right people, especially in the Marine Industry can be a challenge.

Australia has a host of qualifications that can be acquired but actual hands-on experience is also extremely valuable. Without the right people your boat or business can suffer so it is important to get experienced and qualified people. In saying that, everyone has to start somewhere so for certain jobs, don't discount those with the right attitude and enthusiasm who are willing to learn.

Looking after your crew is the first step to a quality boat or quality marine company. As a skipper or owner your level of professionalism

A few tips in the initial stages:

1. Providing your crew with a detailed job description for their position.
2. Provide them with an itinerary of what lays ahead for them in the season.
3. Provide them with a detailed contract explaining everything that pertains to them including: superannuation, annual leave, rent assistance/live aboard, your home contact details, food and travel inclusions / allowances, extra benefits, rules & regulations, uniforms, dress standards, code of conduct, work times, sick leave etc.
4. Any brochures or photos so they have a full understanding of the boat or business.
5. Any operations manual that they can read through prior to arriving.

Upon arrival:

1. Meet your crew or arrange a pick up.
2. Take them through a thorough induction of vessel(s) and revisit all contracts and information outlined above.
 - Follow up 1 week after arrival
 - Follow up 4 weeks after arrival
 - Follow up evaluation after 3 months service
 - 1 year evaluation

is determined from the outset. Portray a professional image and the crew will follow.

The marine industry in Australia is changing quickly, it has progressed into a professional multi-billion dollar industry. Many years ago people worked in this field for lifestyle and for the love of the water. The lifestyle is still apparent however the marine industry is now serious business. It is far more rigorous and regulated, which in turn demands people to have more formal qualifications and a high level of professionalism.

Vessel Owners and Business Owners are investing big money into their vessels and businesses and have exceedingly high expectations of their staff and crew. In return for the high expectations at work the crew demand high expectations from their company or captain. It is important to provide feedback to your crew and encourage an open communication line between you and your crew so you can work towards a mutually beneficial arrangement. >>

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Where to find crew?

Watercrew is a new company, which launched in Australia in July this year. It is owned and run by people who have been crew, captains and employers. They have experienced firsthand the frustrations of finding the right people, whether it be to meet and greet customers, do sail repairs, service an engine or to skipper a vessel.

If you want to take the hassle out of the search for your crew or if you are looking for that dream job, Watercrew is worth checking out. They can be found at www.watercrew.com.au

Your Questions Answered

Questions that many owners have asked in the past are answered by long time chief crewmember Kate Crulci; her many years of experience on board yachts qualify her to answer your questions.

How can owners make sure they are hiring the best crew?

It is important to be clear about what you expect from a potential crewmember. Your expectations will set the standard of agreement. It is essential for you to be unequivocal in what you are looking for, whether that is relevant qualifications and/or experience in order to find the most appropriately qualified person willing and able to meet your requirements. Initially there should be a clear outline of the terms of employment and itinerary guidelines. A strong contract or agreement will negate most issues both owners and crew face down the track. Seek advice from an experienced crew agent who can offer support, consultancy and solutions on an individual basis. In my experience, following these guidelines can save a great deal of time and money. Where appropriate, it is recommended that the wages should include incentives.

How can owners keep good crew? What makes a happy crew/owner relationship on board?

Establish and maintain a mutual respect between owner and crew, since the basis of employment and style of arrangement contrasts any regular work environment; a good relationship is both essential to the level of work produced and longevity of your crew. Intense hours over long periods of time are more often required and

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necessary to get the job done. By virtue of this it isn't possible to keep your crewmembers happy all of the time; good crew understand, appreciate and adapt accordingly.

Consistency within a vessel environment, a strong leader and an encouraged emphasis on teamwork, are all mitigating factors in maintaining reliable, happy crew and ensuring their longevity. We have all heard the phrase “It stems from the top”, your Captain is a key player in the functionality of your vessel and its crew, a good Captain simply gets the job done. A great Captain maintains the unconditional respect of their crewmembers and fosters an environment, which generates an elite level, with minimum fuss.

How can owners continue to keep crew trained at the highest level in the industry?

There are numerous examples of contractual arrangements that include a provision for initial and/or ongoing training. Safety is the most obvious example, with STCW95 being the most important certificate for any vessel. The vessel itself should provide regular training, in the form of drills to enhance crew familiarity with the vessels equipment and safety procedures. Your crew should have an acute understanding of your vessel and your personal needs. Any further formal training is of course a benefit to both owner and crew, but not strictly necessary in a private environment.

How can owners utilize crew both on their boats as well as in their residence?

There are numerous examples of crew who are utilized in both residence and aboard an owner's vessel. This is dependent on the nature and duration of the vessels use. Some Captains are required to manage both the residence, vessel and in some cases act as a driver. Chefs can act as a butler/chef, Stewardesses can act as a chef/butler/housekeeper, a flight steward/ess can also act in chef/butler/housekeeping capacity. Of course adaptability is the key here, in addition to relevant experience. Crew who are capable of combining the positions are often very experienced, in short supply, highly regarded and remunerated accordingly. This creates consistency throughout vessel/household environments with benefits for an owner's everyday life. Since privacy and confidentiality is a key aspect of any crew/owner relationship, it is often that this type of crewmember who provides this functionality is utilized. In my experience, this has only ever been a benefit to both parties.

Kate Crulci has been a crewmember on some on the largest

privately owned yachts abroad and more recently in Australia. Her knowledge is up to date and her passion for what she does is inspiring; Kate has launched her shore-based career with a company called Crewbook, which is a fresh page in crew recruitment worldwide.

New Australian Crew Visa

At long last an important crew visa for Australia has been released, this visa will encourage the growth of the Australian Yachting, tourism and marine industry; an overview with a more in-depth look to come in future instalments of Ultimate Crew for Owners.

“A new tailored visa for the crews of superyachts will provide a boost to the tourism industry”, the Minister for Immigration and Citizenship, Senator Chris Evans, said. Senator Evans also said “The new superyacht visa fulfilled a Rudd Government election commitment to create a special visa class to support the growing superyacht industry and assist tourism in areas like Queensland's Great Barrier Reef region”. The superyacht industry is a growing niche market that is an integral part of Queensland's economic and regional development”, Senator Evans said.

“The new multiple-entry visa will allow all crew members to work in Australia for up to 12 months on commercial or private superyachts. “Until now, there has not been an appropriate visa to allow the crews to work on a commercially chartered superyacht in

Australia and this has restricted the growth in this industry.” Existing visas including the Maritime Crew Visa and Business Long Stay (457) visas do not appropriately cover superyacht crews staying in Australia.

Senator Evans said the new visa will come into effect in October 2008. In the interim, the department will make temporary arrangements from May 1 so that superyacht crews will be able to use the Business Short Stay (456) visa, which is normally only available for people arriving by air and staying for less than three months.

The Minister said “The new visa will allow greater flexibility for superyacht operators to extend their stay in Australian waters. We want to make Australia the destination of choice for these 24-metre-plus superyachts and increase their overall economic benefit to the Australian economy.”

Currently, the superyacht tourism industry contributes \$150 million each year to Australia's economy and is expected to grow to \$500 million over the next five years. The increasing numbers of vessels will also encourage training and job opportunities in related industries such as shipbuilding and repair, particularly in regional Queensland.

We already have the natural beauty and the friendly people, now we're going to ensure eligible crew can come here without any visa confusion. ➡



1/2 Page
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