

Take a look at a prepared management budget detailing the operation costs for any superyacht, irrespective of her size, and by far the largest figure will appear against the allocation for crew salaries. How much yacht crew cost and what they do for their money is often questioned by those who look in on the industry from the outside, but in order to accurately judge the situation, it is important to understand what is expected by owners and the industry itself.

As the size of yachts increases so does the need for larger and more qualified crew. In common with many things, size does matter: the larger the yacht, the greater the responsibility, and with the resultant rise in crew numbers, the responsibilities of senior crew can be likened to those of the staff of a thriving corporation. Inevitably there are expectations of commensurately similar financial rewards. Payroll figures for a large yacht can resemble those of a small successful company ashore, whose top managers may earn in excess of £100,000 per annum.



SUPERYACHT CREW WAGE ANALYSIS

Who does what?

Generally there are three departments on a yacht: deck, engine and interior. On yachts of 60 metres plus, there are often two additional departments: administration and galley. While the captain is, of course, in overall charge, the head of each department is responsible for that department and the crew working in it. The captain's senior executives or officers are his three department heads: chief engineer, chief officer, also known as mate, and chief steward, often referred to as a purser on the larger yachts. They, together with the captain and the chef, are the higher earners.

There are no fixed rules for the organisation of a yacht, but usually the captain is in charge of the administration of the yacht, assisted by the chief officer and the chief steward. The chief officer heads the deck department and manages the other deck officers and deckhands, while the chief steward heads the interior department and supervises the stewards. On some yachts the galley is also the responsibility of the purser, but it is often a separate department run by the chef who oversees any assistant chefs. The chief engineer is in charge of the engineering department and oversees the assistant engineers.

Frances and Michael Howorth take an in-depth look at what owners' can expect to get when hiring a top quality crew, and what they will have to pay in wages

The captain

Aboard a small yacht, the captain's job is mostly hands on, working as engineer, deckhand, steward and maybe even cook. As the crew size increases, this role gradually shifts from worker to manager and supervisor. The larger the yacht, the more complex the operation, requiring the captain to be skilled in administration, personnel management, accountancy and diplomacy. The only constant is ship handling, which is perhaps the simplest part of the job. It is easy to suggest that a captain only works as hard as everyone else, yet receives much higher wages than the rest of the crew, but a proportion of his remuneration is for the responsibility that comes with the job. A good rule of thumb when calculating a captain's salary is to pay him the same as his chief officer on the basis that they work as hard as each other, but then give the captain approximately 50 per cent extra for the responsibility he carries. Some captains on successful charter yachts also receive a

percentage of the charter income by way of an annual bonus.

Most captains in command of the larger yachts are in their forties and fifties, and like their CEO counterparts ashore they do not just appear at boardroom level. Most have gained considerable sea time aboard merchant or navy ships and many bring experience from the business world, which is invaluable in running a large yacht. Aboard smaller yachts, younger captains with experience gained solely in the private yachting industry are starting to emerge. Training does not come cheap; the United Kingdom Sailing Academy (UKSA), based in Cowes on the Isle of Wight, estimates that the cost of all the courses leading to a certificate to command a yacht would be in excess of £24,000. Expenses do not stop there as certificates have to be kept current. These include radio qualifications, bi-annual health checks and occasional certificate upgrades as laid down by the flag state authorities.

Every captain must have practical experience

BENEFITS

Actual take-home pay for all members of crew varies enormously from yacht to yacht, even when vessels are of similar size. Salary can be affected if the yacht runs with a short crew for the number of guests carried. Apart from size, the other main factors affecting pay are those related to the nationality of the yacht's ownership and her trading programme, including whether or not she charters and how many seasons she works. Salaries aboard sailing yachts tend to be lower than motor yachts and classic yachts pay even less than that. Chartering, or the lack of it, can make a huge difference to the amount of money crew can earn. Satisfied charter guests will generally give a tip of approximately 10 per cent of the charter fee following a successful charter. Captains divide this equally among the entire crew. Research indicates that charter boats tend to be at the lower end of the salary scale.

Benefit packages can include health insurance, life insurance, paid vacations, time off for education and extra bonuses such as end of season, Christmas, loyalty and refit. Health insurance is commonly offered by owners, but given that it is a statutory requirement for an owner to look after the medical needs of seaman in his employ, the value of this as a perk is debatable. While living aboard, all members of crew will also receive food, uniform and on-board expenses such as laundry, soap and linens. Some yachts offer e-mail facilities and subsidised satellite telephone calls, while others have no policy on this subject. There are very few crew who have to dip into their salaries to exist.

Leave is an area where huge differences exist. New rules that limit the number of hours crew can work in a week may well change this in future. Salary levels tend to be higher aboard American-owned yachts, but leave expectations are certainly lower on average than those on European-owned vessels.

When it comes to travel, some chief engineers and captains are able to specify club or business class travel for all flights over four to six hours. This is a trend that is on the increase following IMO recommendations to ship owners concerning the effects that fatigue and long haul air flights are having on senior officers in the field of commercial shipping.

in all departments and he needs an understanding of what is involved in every job to get the best from his crew. The captain must also be familiar with the regulations that govern the operation of a vessel, including safety, training and environmental issues. With more and more regulations being introduced, captains need a thorough knowledge of International Safety Management (ISM) and International Ship and Port Security (ISPS). Even on a small yacht the captain is required to write a safety and training manual plus his own captain's standing orders.

Training is an important function of a captain's job and any master who cannot impart his knowledge and experience quickly, easily and without giving offence to the recipient has no place aboard a modern yacht. Personnel management and diplomacy skills are essential in an environment where working and living spaces are often cramped. Even a small crew require delicate, yet firm control. Age can be a great benefit, as with it normally comes wisdom and the experience to effectively control, unite and encourage the crew to realise their full potential. The same skills that ensure the captain has a happy and fulfilled crew are also essential when interacting with guests, yacht managers, suppliers, outside contractors, foreign officials and, of course, the owner.

Last, but by no means least, the captain must be able to control an annual operating budget to the complete satisfaction of the yacht's owner. This may run into millions, particularly

if the captain is responsible for overseeing a major refit.

Competition for captain positions is extremely high and obtaining that first command is generally the highest hurdle in anyone's career. Captains positions aboard smaller yachts can be placed by crew recruitment agencies, but most captains get

their positions by word of mouth. Cultivating yacht brokers and managers is generally seen as the best route, although there is also a strong element of being in the right place at the right time. Many of the top captains are head-hunted, which surely must be one of the highest accolades in their career. Once a new captain joins a yacht, big changes are likely among any existing crew. Junior crew cultivate relationships with captains who suit their own style and will move yacht to stay under the same command. This means some existing crew may depart with the old captain. The new captain may choose to completely re-crew the yacht, bringing in favoured people whose working abilities are well known to him. Alternatively he might retain the existing crew, giving them the opportunity to make it or leave. Commonly it is a mixture of the two. Captains can save owners large crew recruitment costs by working their contacts before they resort to using the services of reputable crew recruitment agencies.

Engineer

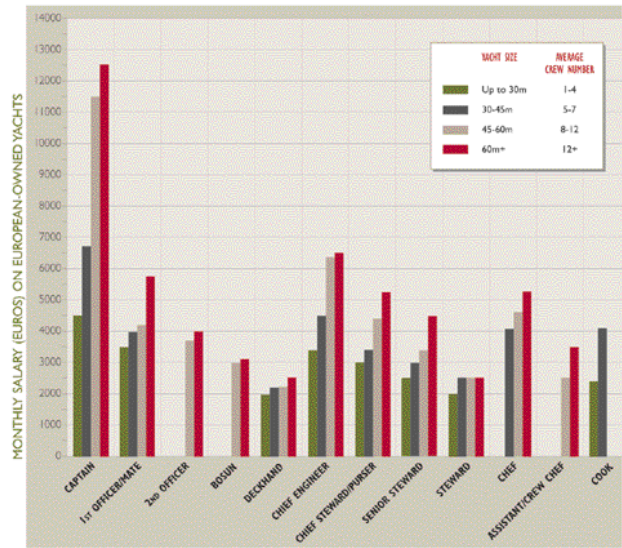
On the smaller yachts, the job of engineer is often combined with that of captain. Slightly bigger vessels have a mate/engineer. Generally only yachts over 30 metres have a dedicated engineer, and on larger yachts there is a chief engineer and maybe one or two assistants in the engineering department. Highly qualified engineers are always in demand and are well compensated for their years of experience. Certified engineers are required aboard Red



Ensign flagged yachts now that new MCA regulations are in force, but the supply and demand for certificated engineers is, at present, fairly balanced. Pressure is mounting on engineers who have no marine qualifications to obtain them, and placement agencies that specialise in engineers are looking to the fleets of the Royal and Merchant navies to supplement the yacht fleet that is hungry for MCA certificated.

The main responsibility of the engineer is to maintain the yacht's electrical and mechanical systems. His highest priority is to ensure that the engines and generators are all performing perfectly, but a modern yacht has many systems that require the expert touch of a skilled engineer. The list of other areas of responsibility is long, but at the top is probably the refrigeration and air-conditioning systems. Another high priority is a thorough knowledge of the plumbing system aboard the yacht to ensure that water and waste move smoothly through the yacht and the desalination plant is producing copious amounts of fresh water. Hot showers, bubbling spa pools and smoothly functioning toilets keep everyone happy. Next on the list is the engineer's role as electrician in keeping the electrical system functioning flawlessly and utilising generators and inverters to supply lighting and power to appliances throughout the yacht. Finally, a thorough knowledge of electronics is necessary for the running and maintenance of communications equipment, navigation, computers and entertainment systems.

The chief engineer's job is not confined to mechanical and hands-on work carried out deep within the bowels of the ship; inventory and risk management are also important aspects of his position. Inventory control is necessary to ensure that spare parts that are likely to be required are carried aboard and can be located quickly, especially when the yacht is far from its home port or in distant parts of the globe. The chief engineer is also closely involved in risk management and safety aboard the yacht, particularly fire fighting, as the engine room is



potentially one of the biggest fire risks aboard.

On a large yacht, the engineer needs to have personnel skills to enable him to deal with junior crew in his department, and these same skills make him a good team player on smaller yachts. On smaller yachts, where the role of engineer is combined with other jobs, he may also be required to emerge from the engine room, take off his boiler suit and interact with passengers, especially when the yacht is carrying a full complement of guests.

Chief officer/mate

The chief officer or mate's position is generally seen as the last stepping-stone towards the job of captain. Depending on the size of the yacht,

this job might be manager of the deck department, second in command, and, on smaller yachts, combined with other roles such as engineer, deckhand and steward.

A mate must be familiar with all aspects of the yacht because, in the absence of the captain, he is likely to be in temporary command. Most mates are either fully qualified to be a captain or are towards completing their certification, depending on the size of the yacht and the legal requirements. An experienced, qualified mate is often the person offered the captain's position if the existing captain leaves. In a small yacht, the mate often acts as engineer too. Alternatively, especially when the captain doubles as an engineer, the mate may also be the senior deckhand and assistant steward.

On larger yachts, the mate is responsible for the deckhands and their workloads. He is in charge of ensuring that the exterior of the vessel is kept in immaculate condition and that all the deck equipment, including cranes, tenders and rescue boats, is in perfect working order and ready for immediate use when required. The mate acts as transport manager, organising tenders to and from the shore and for guest excursions. This is an important part of the job, particularly in areas where the yacht is mainly at anchor rather than alongside. On a yacht offering water sports activities such as

SALARIES

For the majority of crew, wages have remained static in the three years to June 2005, and there are even signs of salaries dropping for certain ranks, with somewhat predictable fluctuations due to supply and demand. Yacht managers report that owners and captains continue to focus upon longevity and a quantifiable value to the yacht when negotiating wage packages. Employers are always trying to find crew with a proven commitment to the industry and who have a clear understanding of their career path. Any salary augmentation during pay negotiations normally follows a long service record. Salaries for entry-level crew have not increased in the past five years and show little sign of increasing in the near future. Supply and demand, as always, continues to dominate salary trends, but the strengthening of European currencies against the US dollar is becoming a major issue for crew serving on yachts that pay in dollars. Crew on European-based yachts are keen to be paid in euros, but there are still a lot of yachts that pay in dollars, especially those operating internationally in the charter market.

TRAINING

Training and who pays for it is an area that needs clarification before an industry standard can be established. Owners and captains are often reluctant to pay for training because they feel that once trained, a crew member will demand higher wages or will transfer to a yacht where those new found qualifications attract a higher salary. Training fosters professionalism within the yacht's operation and can help the advancement of existing crew into more senior positions on board, presenting more responsibilities and challenges to crew while minimising crew turnover. Training ashore, where crew undertake study courses and hands-on training classes, is sometimes used as an incentive or perk, which enables crew to secure positions in the industry with related certification. In general, the training of crew benefits the industry as a whole, but it is perhaps unfair that the better yacht owners in the industry are being asked to foot the bill for the advancement of all.

scuba diving, water skiing and personal watercraft, the mate is in charge of the equipment, including all maintenance and safety instruction. Whether the yacht is large or small, the mate will be closely involved in the actual sailing of the vessel and will be a qualified watchkeeper.

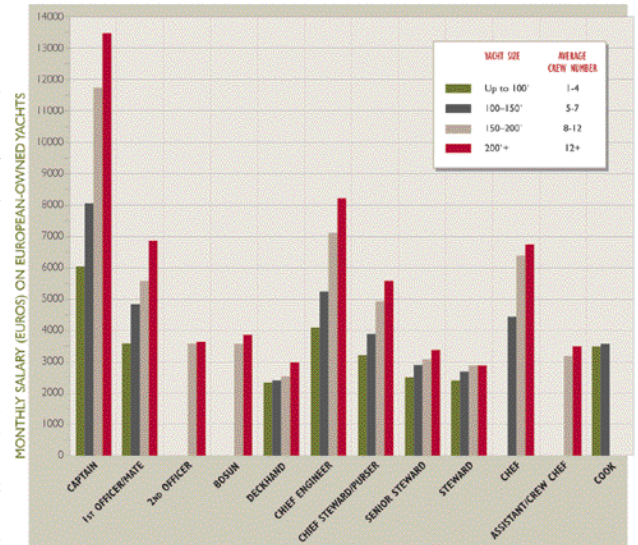
Purser/chief steward

The chief steward is to the interior of the yacht what the mate is to the exterior. She is responsible for the inside of the yacht and the comfort of the guests. While there are no formal prerequisites or qualifications, most chief stewards have plenty of practical experience, and the best have business experience and training, often in the hotel or other similar service industries. The job involves the supervision and organisation of the junior crew who act as waiters, laundry attendants and personal staff for the guests, ensuring 24-hour service if necessary. The job frequently involves teaching.

The chief steward has more to do than just keeping the interior immaculate. The job often calls for interior decorating skills and many chief stewards find that they are also required to source and purchase additional or replacement furniture or items reflecting the tastes of the owners. Computer skills are almost essential for interior inventory control. The better pursers all have some knowledge of and experience with accountancy, especially when the yacht is available for charter. Professional watchkeeper qualifications are an added bonus, particularly on a small yacht where certificated crew may be in short supply.

Chef

The galley is often a separate department with a staff of one on most yachts. Only large yachts have a second person to help, usually an assistant whose main responsibility is to cook for the crew. A yacht chef's job involves more than just planning menus and cooking; the chef is also responsible for everything related to food aboard the yacht, including the purchasing of ingredients and cleaning up afterwards. Many captains hire a willing



executive chef from a five-star resort and train him in all the eccentricities of working aboard a yacht. On yachts below 30 metres, the two jobs of chef and chief steward are often combined into a single position, with a steward as an assistant, and these two crew attend to all interior tasks aboard the yacht.

Entry level junior crew

Deckhands and stewards are the starting positions for professional yacht crew, and are the entry levels into the industry.

Little or no experience is required to join a crew as a junior, but there are indications that flag states will insist on pre-sea training for all crew. Already, having a STCW95 Basic Safety at Sea certificate is seen as a prerequisite for a job aboard a large yacht.

A major part of the job of a deckhand involves exterior cleaning, polishing or painting. On large yachts, the deckhand's immediate boss will be the mate, and the job may be almost exclusively working on deck. On smaller yachts, where roles are less well defined, the deckhand may also be assistant to the captain or part-time steward, helping the chef serve the guests. Most yachts provide plenty of opportunities for a deckhand to learn basic seamanship and navigation and even to become a watchkeeper on long passages.

STATUTORY & FISCAL OBLIGATIONS

Crew sign on to a yacht on a self-employed basis, and are, by definition, responsible for their own taxes. Given that they sail the world, where do crew bank so that they can get their cash wherever they are? How do they manage their savings? What is the best currency for them to use? Many assume the captain is a font of knowledge on these matters and ask him for guidance, but the giving of sound independent financial advice is fraught with disaster and best left to experts, so most captains are wary of doing this.

One captain approached his own personal financial advisor for help and it was not long after that the Bristol-based Pall Mall Investments created two distinctly separate products specifically designed around the needs of professional crew. The first is a complete package that captains can hand to crew who want to open tax-free offshore bank accounts with Internet access and cash cards. It comes with lots of extra bolt-on features such as kit insurance and loss of income benefit for those who want to purchase them. The second package is tailor-made around the personal needs of higher earning senior crew who may need pensions, mortgages and other investment advice.

Much of the work of a steward involves cleaning, vacuuming, washing and ironing, bartending and serving at table. Any additional skills, such as flower arranging and cooking, are a bonus. Those who are also qualified as hairdressers, manicurists or masseurs do expect higher salaries. It is particularly important that stewards are discreet and remain out of sight, anticipating needs and never intruding on guests. On larger yachts, stewards do not do much work on deck except when the yacht is entering or leaving harbour, when generally every crew member has to act as mooring line or fender handlers. On small yachts, the job may be that of steward when guests are aboard and that of deckhand when the crew are alone.

The future

Crew turnover continues to be the principle concern of many operators. All are very aware that the crew accounts for approximately 40 per cent of the operating budget. Replacing crew costs extra for fees, fares and uniforms, but far more importantly, it can play havoc with morale and training programmes. There is an increasing trend on larger yachts for managers to hire what is called a swing crew. These are extra crew members over and above the normal on-board complement, and having them facilitates crew leave rotation and training opportunities without affecting the efficiency of the yacht.

Another trend is the infiltration of officers from the merchant fleet. Many such officers are attracted by what seem to be outstanding salary levels, little realising what the true hourly pay rate is when the comparatively low leave is taken into account. With the increasing size of yachts, a surprising number of owners are now either having to employ captains with unlimited certificates because tonnage rates are exceeded, or are choosing to do so because they feel these captains are better qualified to command. More Middle and Far Eastern owners are opting to employ British

commercial masters even though they are not obligated to by tonnage restraints.

While it is accepted practice for yacht crew to serve for up to 10 months without a break, these commercial officers are not always prepared for this amount of time away from home, and the yacht industry will need to look at this if they want to maximise the potential of commercially trained officers in order to retain the best individuals. Changes in manning levels

are beginning to manifest themselves; several of the larger yachts operate job-sharing schemes, whereby senior officers are rewarded with between three and six months leave a year.

Realistically, good crew get paid what they are worth and we are not suggesting owners should alter in any way what is working successfully aboard their yachts. This article is simply reporting the factors that have influenced crew wages over the last few years. Over time changes do occur; wages rise and fall in line with supply and demand factors. Moreover, although research may find evidence of wages at a certain level for one particular person, this does not mean that remuneration should be the same for everybody across the board. Any crew member who looks at the tables published here and decides he is underpaid will get what he deserves if he quotes these figures and demands equality without further research. There are many factors that go towards the make-up of a professional crew members salary. Among these, loyalty and trust are two of the most important and it is no coincidence that both of these take time to develop and prove.

CREW AGENTS

COMPANY	LOCATION	CONTACT DETAILS
Blue Water Yachting	France	www.bluewateryachting.com
Camper & Nicholsons	UK, USA & France	www.cnconnect.com
Carole Manto	USA	www.carolemanto.com
Crew Asia	Philippines	crewasia@cebu.pworld.net.ph
Crew Finders	USA	www.crewfinders.com
Crew Force	UK	www.marine-recruitment.com
Crew Unlimited	USA	www.crewunlimited.com
Crewseekers	USA	www.crewseekers.com
Elite Crew	USA	www.elitecrewintl.com
Freedom Yachting	France	www.freedomyachting.com
Fred Dovaston Crew	Spain	www.yachtjob.com
Hanseatic Yacht Care	Germany & Cyprus	yachtcare@hanseatic.com.cy
International Crew Recruitment	France	www.intl-crewrecruitment.com
JF Recruiting	UK	www.jf-recruiting.com
Just4Engineers	UK	www.just4engineers.com
La Casse Maritime	USA	www.lacasseservices.com
Luxury Yacht Group	USA	www.luxyachts.com
Manx Yacht Management	UK	info@maxwell-yachting.com
Monaco Equipage	France	www.me.mc
Nigel Burgess	UK, USA & France	www.nigelburgess.com
Nu Wave	UK	www.nuwavepersonnel.com
Palm Beach Crew	USA	www.yachtcrew.com
Sea Gem	UK	seagem@compuserve.com
Sealife Crewing	UK	recruitment@sealifecrewing.co.uk
Seamanager	UK	recruitment@seamanager.co.uk
The Crew Network	UK, USA & France	www.crewnetwork.com
Thirty-Seven South	New Zealand	www.37south.co.nz
Viking Recruitment	UK	www.vikingrecruitment.com
Yacht Engineers	Spain	www.yachtengineers.net
YPI Crew	UK & France	www.ypicrew.com
UKSA Crew Placement	UK	www.uksa.org