



Döhle Yacht Crew

Guide to Careers on Superyachts

Introduction

This Guide for Careers on Superyachts has been compiled by Döhle Yacht Crew to provide an introduction for those who are contemplating a career in the remarkable and prestigious world of superyachts. It will also be of assistance to those who are already in the industry who are considering moving up the career ladder.

As the title implies this is a “guide”, it is not intended to be a definitive or comprehensive document – we would need a lengthy book to do that!

In this guide we cover:

- Information on the industry and how it has grown
- How to get into the industry and how to apply
- Basic qualifications
- CV writing and preparing for the interview
- The “Career Tree” – with links to specific job specifications
- Specific information on the types of jobs available
- The Large Yacht Code – the main code of practice which governs the operation of superyachts
- The Maritime Labour Convention and how it affects yacht crew
- Crew Contracts
- Tax and NI
- Useful Links

In respect of detailed information of each type of job available on superyachts you will find links in this guide to Deck positions, Interior positions and Engineering positions.

Further reading which you may find useful is the Dohle Glossary of Nautical Terms, Abbreviations and Acronyms – which may be downloaded from our websites.

Our Philosophy

Those who own and manage superyachts have a right to expect the very best crew.

The Döhle Yacht Crew mission as a professional superyacht crew employment agency is not only to find the right people for the right job, but also to develop long-term relationships with employers and employees. We make a point of understanding an individual’s personal aspirations and help them on their career path in the superyacht industry, and we seek to understand exactly what the owner and/or Captain are looking for.

We will ensure that a prospective employee fully understands the position before we recommend them - if we believe the job will not suit them, we will not recommend it. From the owner’s and Captain’s perspective we will not recommend a candidate if we believe that he or she is not suited to the position.

Essentially we believe in getting everything right:

- **By giving the Right Advice**
- **To the Right People**
- **For the Right Job**
- **In the Right Place**
- **At the Right Time**

Whether you are a Captain looking for crew, or crew looking for a position we can help you. We will help with career advice and pointing candidates in the right direction for obtaining the best and most relevant qualifications.

Sally Aston

Recruitment Manager
Döhle Yacht Crew

What is a Superyacht?

Large luxury yachts have been with us for decades. In the past they were in the main owned by “old money”, royalty, landed gentry and industrialists. Examples are *Savarona* designed American heiress Emily Roebling Cadwallader and built in 1931, *Christina O*, the yacht bought by the shipping tycoon Aristotle Onassis in 1947. The now retired Royal Yacht “*Britannia*” can also be described as one of the original superyachts.

However, “superyachts” as they are now referred to, are a relatively new phenomenon. They are now owned by a whole range of wealthy people including technology entrepreneurs, sports and entertainment stars, oil and mining billionaires.

Basically, a superyacht is defined as a luxury yacht in excess of 24 metres. The term “megayacht” has also entered the international lexicon and has generally been taken to mean yachts in excess of 100 metres.

In the last two decades the number of superyachts in the world has increased dramatically. In 1998 there were 279 orders for superyachts, in 2004 there were 507, in 2008 there were 916 and in 2014 there are 735 orders.

Another indication of how dramatically the industry has grown is the fact that the premier annual superyacht show held every September in Monaco only began as recently as 1991.

Although the global financial crash of 2008 affected the superyacht market as much as any other luxury asset, the market has shown remarkable resilience.

There is debate as to how many superyachts there are currently in the world, certainly there are more than 5,000.

The majority of superyachts are what is referred to as motor yachts; about ten percent are sailing yachts.

Many owners charter their yachts out for other parties to use – the charter rates can be enormous, some yachts can cost over \$100,000 a week to charter.

Superyachts are very expensive not only to build but also maintain. Their owners take pride in their assets and quite justifiably expect them to be run and cared for by qualified and dedicated professionals.

So if you are thinking of starting a career in the superyacht industry remember that you will be responsible for helping maintain a highly valuable asset.

A Career on a Superyacht

A job on a superyacht can be highly rewarding. The financial rewards can be very good as can be the personal and emotional rewards. These beautiful yachts visit some of the world's most exclusive and exotic places – from St Tropez to Fiji, from Porto Banus to Bali, from Sardinia to Singapore.

But to gain these rewards you must adhere to four of the basic requirements of becoming a seafarer:

- **Discipline**
- **Determination**
- **Responsibility**
- **Respect**

If you follow these rules and are determined to succeed in the industry and not just treat it as a “filler” between possibly less demanding, rewarding and varied land based jobs you could go far.

A glamorous industry? Yes of course it is – but it needs professional, dedicated people to ensure that it runs smoothly. Standing on the quayside watching a captain and his crew bring in a 80 metre yacht may look easy to an untrained eye, but it has taken a long time, training and practice to ensure that a multimillion dollar asset is handled with such skill and care. Everything looks easy – when you know how to do it!

Forget nine to five! In the height of the season (the Mediterranean, for example, is generally May to October) you could be expected to work up to eighteen hours a day. But your hours of work are governed by international rules under what is known as the Maritime Labour Convention (MLC). See the sections on Contracts and MLC.

And you will have to be a team player and get on with fellow crew members. (Accommodation for crew is not exactly spacious and you will probably have to share a cabin).

In the section Basic Entry Qualifications we cover what you must have and achieve before you enter the industry. But there are also other attributes you should have before you apply. You should be personable, polite and able to get on with people (no matter how difficult they may be to deal with!).

What can you expect to be paid? We always avoid giving definitive answers as it can depend on the size and type of yacht, what your responsibilities will entail and your experience. However as a rule of thumb a junior deckhand can expect a starting salary of around €2,000 a month and an experienced Captain on a very large yacht could be in excess of €15,000 a month.

How to Get into the Industry

Once you have the basic qualifications (STCW) you can register and apply through any of the reputable recruitment agencies – such as Döhle Yacht Crew.

Another way is to “dockwalk” looking for daywork. This involves quite literally walking the docksides where superyachts are berthed – such as Antibes, St Tropez, Palma and other Mediterranean ports, looking for daywork or temporary positions. But be warned, this can be soul destroying. Captains are busy people and cannot stop what they are doing to interview every prospective employee who passes his vessel. It is a very hit and miss process.

How Long Will it Take to Get a Job?

The Superyacht industry is volatile, things can happen very quickly.

You are dockwalking and meet a Captain who, because a crew member has left and the yacht is sailing imminently, is looking for a dayworker/deckhand to start immediately, so be prepared to drop everything to come aboard.

On the other hand a Captain could be looking to recruit crew looking for long term employment (referred to in the industry as “longevity”). The Captain could be looking to build a particular type of person who will be able to work with other crew members as a cohesive team.

It also depends on the time of year you apply; refer to the section on “Seasons”.

So the short answer is it could be immediate, or it could take months. Be patient, it will be worth it in the end.

“The Seasons”

The yachting seasons vary by continent and annual weather seasons.

The two prime hubs for cruising are the Mediterranean and Florida/Caribbean/Bahamas.

Many yachts (especially “explorer” or “discovery” yachts) do sail in other parts of the world and this is also season dependant.

In the Mediterranean the prime season is from May to the end of September. At the end of this season many yacht depart for the Caribbean and America, either sailing or going by transporter.

The main yachting hubs are in the western Mediterranean; Antibes, Nice, Monaco and Palma de Majorca.

The Caribbean is active all year round but the busiest time is the winter months; October to March.

Florida is also busiest in the winter months. Many yachts leave Florida in the summer months to cruise up the west coast of the US or cross to the Bahamas.

The hurricane season is also a factor for yacht cruising.

The main yachting hubs in the western Atlantic are Fort Lauderdale, Antigua, St Maarten and the other Caribbean islands.

Basic Entry Qualifications

For employment on a commercially registered superyacht, the minimum requirement for all crew is basic safety training. Deck and Engineer Officers must meet the certification requirements in accordance with the vessel's characteristics.

STCW

The basic safety training is known as Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW). This safety training was developed by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO). The full course comprises four modules/certificates:

- Personal Survival Techniques
- Fire Fighting and Fire Prevention
- Elementary First Aid
- Personal Safety and Social Responsibility

All four of these modules must be completed. They can be taken as individual courses or all four together, which takes some 4-6 days.

Some privately operated yachts may accept applicants who have not yet completed STCW training, however there is also a growing trend even within this category of vessel to employ crew who have their STCW. However, we strongly recommend that newcomers to yachting complete the basic training before applying for any positions to enhance your prospects for employment.

The STCW Convention and Code was amended in 2010 contained new security training requirements which came into force in 2014. This training is required by all seafarers employed on board vessels to which the ISPS Code applies. The relevant course is the Proficiency in Security Awareness and is normally a one day course.

Detailed information on STCW may be obtained from the Döhle Yachts website:

www.dohle-yachts.com

Medical Certificates

Depending on which country the yacht is registered under you may need a valid medical certificate (i.e. a seafarer certificate). Some employers will also expect this, regardless of which flag the yacht flies, as it may be a requirement of the vessel's insurance policies.

We strongly recommend that any new comers to this industry undertake a medical examination with a view of obtaining a valid medical certificate such as the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) approved Medical, known as ENG1. The list of MCA approved medical practitioners can be obtained from the MCA website. Or contact us for advice.

The ENG1 has to be renewed on a regular basis.

Other Qualifications

In order to prove your determination to succeed in the industry we recommend that you take other courses before you apply for a job aboard. This is not absolutely necessary, but they are courses that you will have to take anyway as you progress up the career ladder.

Courses you should consider include: Royal Yachting Association (RYA) qualifications such as Day Skipper, Power Boat Level 2 and VHF/SRC Radio Operators Certificate or IYT Tender Driving. The MCA approved Yacht Rating Course is acceptable.

Pre-experience in yachting, even if it is only for leisure pursuits, will be an asset as it will show that you have some of the basic understanding of the sea.

Experience in other fields which have relevance would be useful, such as; engineering and the leisure and service industries.

Knowledge of other languages other than your own will be an asset.

As you progress up the career ladder each new role will require new skills and qualifications. In the linked guides we do not give detailed information on the qualifications required for each role as this will vary by the type of vessel you will be working on or applying for. We recommend that once you are in the industry you make enquiries regarding which qualifications/courses are best suited to the position and which will best suit your career progression.

Preparing Your CV

Your curriculum vitae (CV) is very often the first impression a prospective employer will have about you. The decision to shortlist you, or indeed to interview you, for a job on a superyacht will be taken on the strength of how your CV is presented, the content and quality of writing.

A CV is your selling document, a personal presentation of your experience and objectives.

An employer will probably have dozens of CVs for any one job so yours must stand out. It must be concise, clear and communicate to your potential employer why you will be an asset to the vessel/company.

As well as being concise your CV should not be lengthy, even if you have had many posts. Ideally it should not take up more than two pages of A4.

What Your CV Should Contain:

Personal Details:

- Name
- Date of birth
- Nationality
- Visas held (e.g. B1/B2)
- Marital status
- Smoker/non-smoker
- Shore address
- Landline phone number (If any)
- Mobile phone number
- Languages spoken and degree of fluency
- Recent head and shoulders photograph
- Health (Certificates)
- Tattoos/body art if any

Qualifications and Education:

Detail all relevant qualifications

Experience and Employment History:

List all positions held with the most recent posting first. This should be in the following format;

- Dates
- Position Held
- Name of Yacht
- Size
- Number of crew and passengers (Optional)
- Commercial or Private
- Responsibilities: (Brief outline of your role aboard, two lines maximum)

Also detail any relevant shorebased roles you have had.

Additional Skills:

Detail any skills/qualifications that you have which may be relevant – computer skills etc.

Hobbies:

List hobbies, leisure activities and interests - especially if they are related to the position you seek – e.g. water sports.

References:

- Name
- Occupation/Yacht Name
- Address (If possible)
- Phone Number (Land)
- Phone Number (Mobile)
- Email

AND...always check the spelling and grammar and have at least one other person read through your CV – and use a spell checker.

Photograph

Your photograph should be a head and shoulders shot in colour. Dress smartly, if possible wear a uniform or plain shirt, neat hair. Have the photograph taken in a neutral background, no one else in shot.

Accompanying Letter

The letter/email that you write to accompany your CV. It should be brief and be tailored to the position which you are seeking.

The Interview

Your first interview could be with a recruitment agency, if they are sufficiently impressed with you they will then probably search their database for suitable position(s) and then refer you to the Captain.

When given the opportunity for an interview with a Captain find out as much as you can about him/her and the yacht. You can do this by asking the agency, talking to others who have served on the yacht or under the Captain and by researching via the web.

It is also useful to make sure you understand the industry's terminology. The Döhle Yachts Glossary of Superyacht Terms and Abbreviations is a good starting point. This can be downloaded from our website.

Top Tips:

- Be punctual
- First impressions are vital. So it is important to not only look good but also comport yourself with confidence
- Dress smartly, sensible shoes, no flip flops or dark glasses. Mobile phone switched off
- Smile and be yourself
- Body language is important - sit upright, Keep control of your hands, don't fiddle with a pen and touching your hair can be distracting
- Have a positive attitude, but relax and maintain eye contact
- Show that you are an individual but also remember that you are going to be part of a team and prepared to work closely with others and take direction. Being a team player also involves the crew's social life, it's not for loners
- Listen to the questions. If you do not understand any ask for clarification. Do not hesitate over your answers. Answer directly, don't waffle
- Show that you are interested in the position by asking questions about the yacht, your duties, the crew, the itinerary
- Be honest about your ambitions
- If asked why you left your previous role be honest, it is a business with close contacts between all involved in the industry
- Don't exaggerate your abilities and skills
- Ask relevant questions – an interview is a two way process. Prepare some questions in advance
- Think how you can differentiate yourself from other likely candidates

And...

- Bring a printed copy of your CV with you

Finally...

- At the end of interview thank the interviewer, smile and shake hands

The Career Tree

There are three main routes for entering the superyacht industry:

- **Deck Roles**
- **Interior Roles**
- **Engineering Roles**

Deck

The entry level is normally as a Deckhand. From here you can progress up through the ranks – e.g. Lead Deckhand, Bosun, Officer of the Watch, First Mate/Officer to eventually Captain.

Interior

Entry level is normally Steward/ess progressing to Chief Steward/ess and possibly, should you chose, to Purser. Chefs may join a yacht without working though the Steward/ess ranks.

Engineering

Smaller yachts have one Engineer, the larger yachts have more than one; Chief Engineer, Second Engineer etc. Deck crew who obtain the necessary qualifications can progress to become an Engineer.

There are also specialist roles in Engineering: Electronic Technical Officer (ETO) and Audio Visual and Information Technology Engineer (AVIT). These two roles do not necessarily have to have previous experience on yacht, but it helps.

Detailed Information

For detailed information on roles within the industry you can download the following documents from our website:

- Deck Positions
- Interior Positions
- Engineering Positions

In addition the following roles are available within the industry:

Aviation Positions

Many of the larger yachts have helicopters. These are also used by the owners for transporting themselves and their guests to the yacht from shore (or from another yacht).

The normal licenses and experience for helicopter operations are required plus experience in platform/vessel landing experience.

Shorebased Positions

When leaving or retiring from a career at sea on superyachts there are a number of positions that you could consider should you wish to remain in the industry – such as:

- Technical Managers
- Project/New Build Managers
- Charter Brokers
- Yacht Management Companies
- Crew Recruitment Agencies
- Crew Training Agencies

If you are considering a career in a charter of management company, as well as the experience you have gained on board superyachts, a qualification you may consider is the ***Diploma in Superyacht Operations*** - see useful links.

Tax and Social Security

It is not our policy to give advice on tax matters or social security.

You will probably find that your salary is paid tax free so it will be your responsibility to seek advice on where and how you should pay your tax liabilities.

In respect of social security (or country equivalents) we recommend that you check your SEA.

Something which you should consider is applying for the **Ehic** – The European Health Insurance Card.

The EHIC allows the holder to get state healthcare at a reduced cost or sometimes for free. It will cover the holder for treatment that is needed to allow the holder to continue a stay until the planned return. It also covers the holder for treatment of pre-existing medical conditions and for routine maternity care, as long as you're not going abroad to give birth. The EHIC is valid in all European Economic Area (EEA) countries, including Switzerland.

For further information visit the UK website: www.ehic.org.uk

or the EU website: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=559>

The Large Yacht Code

With the rapid growth of the number of superyachts in operation it was deemed necessary to introduce a code of practice which governed the operation of these vessels.

The UK's Maritime and Coastguard Agency's (MCA) "Code of Practice for the Safety of Large Commercial Sailing and Motor Vessels", or LY1, was introduced in 1998.

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) launched the new Large Yacht Code (LY3) at the 2012 Monaco Yacht Show.

LY3 was developed by an industry working group in order to keep up with developments in the industry and amendments which have subsequently taken place with the international conventions for which the codes provide an alternative means of achieving compliance, more suited to these particular types of vessels.

Detailed Information

Detailed information on The Large Yacht Code may be downloaded from our website.

Maritime Labour Convention and Seafarer Employment Agreement

The Maritime Labour Convention 2006 came into effect on 20th August 2013.

This has a profound effect on all commercial shipping, including commercial superyachts and those who work on them.

It has two primary purposes:

- To bring the system of protection contained in existing labour standards closer to the workers concerned, in a form consistent with the rapidly developing globalised sector
- To improve the applicability of the system, so that shipowners (including superyacht owners) and governments interested in providing decent conditions of work do not have to bear an unequal burden in ensuring protection

The MLC also introduced the Seafarer Employment Agreement (SEA). This is important to you, so we treat the subject in depth.

Specifically in terms of crew employment, the MLC requires each Flag State to have a clearly written and legally enforceable contract for each crewmember, not a general crew agreement. This is known as a Seafarers Employment Agreement or SEA.

The MLC Regulations state:

- *Every seafarer has the right to a safe and secure workplace that complies with safety standards*
- *Every seafarer has a right to fair terms of employment*
- *Every seafarer has a right to decent working and living conditions on board ship*
- *Every seafarer has a right to health protection, medical care, welfare measures and other forms of social protection.*

And:

- *The terms and conditions for employment of a seafarer shall be set out or referred to in a clear written legally enforceable agreement and shall be consistent with the standards set out in the Code.*

Detailed Information

Detailed information on the MLC and Sea can be downloaded from our website.

Useful Links

Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA):	www.dft.gov.uk/mca
Royal Yachting Association (RYA):	www.rya.org.uk
Institute of Hospitality:	www.instituteofhospitality.org
The Hospitality Guild:	www.hospitalityguild.co.uk
Merchant Navy Training Board:	www.careersatsea.org
Maritime Skills Alliance:	www.maritimeskills.org
Maritime Training Academy:	www.maritimetrainingacademy.com
UKSA:	http://uksa4-px.rtrk.co.uk
Warsash Superyacht Academy:	www.warsashsuperyachtacademy.com
Hoylake Sailing School:	www.hss.ac.uk
Diploma in Superyacht Operations:	www.maritimetrainingacademy.com/all-courses/superyacht-operations/
The Crew Academy	http://www.thecrewacademy.com
Professional Yachting Association:	www.pya.org
Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI):	www.padi.com
Maritime Society:	www.marine-society.org
Dockwalk:	www.dockwalk.com
The Crew Report:	www.thecrewreport.com
Yachting Pages:	www.yachtingpages.com
Superyacht UK:	www.superyachtuk.com
International Superyacht Society:	www.superyachtsociety.org
Mediterranean Yacht Brokers Association:	www.myba-association.com
European Health Insurance Card UK:	www.ehic.org.uk
European Health Insurance Card EU:	http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=559

Additionally you will find many more links and downloads or relevant documentation on the Döhle Yachts website Knowledge Centre:

www.dohle-yachts.com



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