



LIFE AT SEA SURVEY 2007/8

SEAFARER ATTRACTION AND RETENTION SURVEY REPORT
CONDUCTED OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2007



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Conducted October-November 2007

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Preface and Acknowledgements

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The survey report was co-authored by Captain Thomas Brown and Ms Emma Brown of Shiptalk Recruitment Limited.

Thanks are due to Maureen Gilmour and Carl Bennett of Gilmour Research for ensuring that the research was conducted in accordance with *The UK Market Research Society's* standards that safeguard the confidential nature of the responses we received and to Rob Errington for his technical assistance.

Thanks are also expressed to the large number of seafarers from all over the world who took time to complete questionnaires for the first in the series of our Life at Sea Surveys 2007/8. Without their assistance and continued support the success of this project will not be possible.

Co-Authors

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Overview

There is a manning crisis in the shipping industry today but most of the people who make decisions about the industry do not work on ships. There is a very different view of life at sea from behind a desk in an office. So we decided to ask the opinion of seafarers at sea today what attracted them to a career at sea and what keeps them at sea in the hope that we could feed their opinions back into the industry.

[Shiptalk Recruitment Limited](#) is part of the Shiptalk Group of companies and is independent. We are not affiliated to any ship owner or seafarer organisation, charity or government. We do not get donations from any sponsor or industry organisation. We have just one goal. We want to focus the minds of decision-makers on the issues that really matter to people working at sea today. It is our hope that news of our findings from this series of surveys will be widely disseminated in the industry and used to positive effect thereafter.

We have developed five surveys with Gilmour Research who are governed by the Market Research Society Code of Conduct, Gilmour Research have and will ensure that all responses we receive are treated confidentially.

You can learn more about Gilmour Research at www.gilmour-research.co.uk

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and;

www.shiptalkjobs.com/survey_results - to view the results of our latest survey.

1.0 Introduction

The Shiptalk / Gilmour Research *Life At Sea* series of surveys have been designed to obtain up-to-date perspectives on the issues that most concern modern seafarers and to find out what serving seafarers think about their lives at sea. This survey, the first in a series of five to take place, focuses on attraction and retention – what attracts people to a career at sea and what keeps them in a career at sea?

2.0 Method

In October/November 2007 serving seafarers had the opportunity to participate in the confidential online 'Attraction and Retention' survey via Shiptalk Recruitment's website www.shiptalkjobs.com . Participants answered 30 multiple-choice questions.

3.0 Survey Characteristics

This online only survey attracted 229 seafaring respondents all of whom were self-selected. Of the total number of respondents 2.6% were female which is broadly representative of the gender split amongst seafarers at sea today¹.

This was the first in the series of the [Shiptalk Recruitment / Gilmour Research](http://www.shiptalkjobs.com) - Life at Sea Surveys 2007/8 and was hosted by Shiptalk Recruitment's, recruitment advertising website www.shiptalkjobs.com . Visibility of the survey amongst seafarers was largely achieved by promotional efforts made via Shiptalk's family of websites and online publications². The survey is therefore restricted to those seafarers that have a degree of computer literacy, internet access and who may be existing Shiptalk subscribers. This may account for the small number of responses from ratings and other 'non-officer' ranks (2.9%).

4.0 Summary Observations for Discussion

4.1.0 Responder Profile

The respondents do represent a wide range of nationalities. However, the largest numbers of respondents by country are not aligned with the largest manpower supply countries by number. Instead they are broadly aligned with the split of nationalities of seafarer subscribers to Shiptalk's online services. This is directly attributed to the dependence on Shiptalk's self promotion of the first survey. It is hoped that we will see a broader split of nationalities in the surveys that follow in line with the increased third party press coverage that the survey findings will hopefully achieve. Nevertheless the geographical split is sufficiently diverse for the findings to be considered to be globally representative.

Looking at the respondents' personal profiles we find, perhaps not unsurprisingly, that we were looking at an aging profile of predominantly senior officers, 43.2% of which had spent more than 21 years at sea. This is broadly in line with current industry statistics³. Most respondents went to sea at an age between 16 –19 (55.4%), and 57.7% went straight from school or college. Perhaps of more interest was the number going to sea between the ages of 20-25 (38.9%). This may be attributed to the recent push of graduate training schemes in the industry and 23.1% were noted to have gone to sea straight from University. The fact that 5.7% were over 26 years of age when first going to sea may be indicative of the current shortage of officers and the need to recruit from the subset of individuals who may be looking for an alternate career at sea later in life.

4.2.0 Seafarer Attraction

So what attracted our respondents to their present careers at sea?

When looking at how seafarers learnt about a career at sea a massive 42.0% cited the positive advice of friends and family as being influential. Anecdotally, at a recent manning

¹ "Women Seafarers – Global employment policies and practices"

ILO 2003 ISBN 92-2-113491

² [Shiptalkjobs.com](http://www.shiptalkjobs.com), [Shiptalk.com](http://www.shiptalk.com), [Marine-Jobs.co.uk](http://www.marine-jobs.co.uk), [Shiptalk's monthly newsletter](http://www.shiptalk.com/newsletter) and Shiptalk Recruitment's bi-monthly recruitment newsletter "Gangway"

³ BIMCO/ISF Manpower Update 2005

and training conference we attended in 2007, when delegates were asked to raise their hands if they would recommend a career at sea not one single hand was raised. If this negative perception of a career at sea is shared amongst friends and family members then it would seem that the industry is losing its best supporters and a valuable referral network. This negative perception may relate to the life experience of those currently at sea and the messages they convey about their careers at sea when ashore coupled with the overtly negative press that the industry receives following the increasing number of high profile shipping disasters.

Interestingly, 15.8% of respondents had received advice from careers advisors at school and university suggesting that sea awareness programs such as those run by Sea Vision and the Merchant Navy Training Board in the UK may be beginning to reap a reward. 8.5% of responders learnt of the possibility of a career at sea via the internet. This may seem low. However, if we remember that the internet has only become a relevant source of information on careers at sea over the last 5-10 years.

In making the decision to go to sea 22.4% of respondents simply knew they wanted a career at sea. Only 18.4% of respondents stated that they had wanted to use a career at sea to see the world. Certainly for the younger generation of seafarers this may be understandable. In today's modern age of cheap air travel and the internet the world probably seems that much smaller and more accessible to most school leavers. The option of pursuing a career at sea with its long voyages, short port stays and a lack of shore leave may now seem less attractive than buying a cheap round the world air ticket and embarking on a backpacking adventure with friends in their gap year to see the world.

Money and possibly the tax free status of many of the respondents was a motivating factor when choosing a career at sea (31.8%). In the second of our Life at Sea surveys due for completion on 31/01/08, we will be looking into what people are paid in greater detail.

When applying for their first job at sea over a third (35.4%) of all respondents applied directly to the companies they wanted to work for. Again, given the age profile of our respondents, this is perhaps understandable insofar as when people were applying for careers at sea over 20 years ago, ship owners still assumed the crewing and technical management of their ships and shipping lines were well established in the minds of the general public. Not so today, with the drift towards the outsourcing of the ship management function and the fragmentation of ship owning companies into special purpose companies etc. we have seen a dislocation of the ship owner as employer. This shift may be evidenced by the second largest group of responders (16.6%) who applied via their local crew manager. Perhaps most worrying of all was the fact that 3.9% of all responders confirmed that they had paid for their first job at sea.

We will look in more detail at training in the third of our Life at Sea surveys; for now this survey touched upon pre-sea training and we were surprised to note that more than half of all respondents (52.8%) said that they had to pay for their pre-sea training. Such a financial commitment has to be a further barrier to entry for many new recruits and may push them towards unscrupulous employers who would seize upon this opportunity to loan them the money needed to complete their training, with the associated adverse terms of repayment.

When starting their careers at sea many respondents had high expectations. A little less than half (45.0%) anticipated that they would enjoy a life long career at sea, achieving the highest rank and retiring with a company pension. When choosing their first job at sea almost half of respondents (49.3%) were motivated to become the Captain or Chief Engineer and reach the top of their chosen profession. The remainder, however, were looking at this career move as a more temporary opportunity and/or stepping stone to another career or life choice.

4.3.0 Seafarer Retention

So what keeps people at sea?

As many a seafarer utters the immortal words, "*Another day another dollar*", it is perhaps not surprising that salary was cited by 31.5% of respondents as the most important factor which keeps them at sea. However, reassuringly high on the list of motivators was job satisfaction selected by 20.0% of respondents which was on a par with time on leave (19.3%). Interestingly time on leave was valued more highly than the need for paid leave (12.0%). Promotional prospects were a lesser motivator (6.1%) but this may be due to the fact that 76.4% of respondents had already reached the rank of senior officer. Those motivated by the

ability to see the world dropped by over 10% down to 8.0% when compared with the same motivator at the time when respondents went to sea (18.4%).

Respondents were asked about any employment benefits they received. The results suggest that employers may now be offering a wider range of financial benefits to retain their seagoing personnel, including pensions, savings plans, share options, bonus related pay, seniority pay and paid leave. Personal medical/health insurance plans were received by 35.4% of all respondents with such benefits being extended to their families for 20.5% of all respondents. However, 17.0% of respondents received no additional employment benefits.

When compared with the most desirable benefits we found that respondents seemed to be particularly concerned about the long term financial security for themselves and their families with 63.3% opting for a pension and 56.3% wanting medical/health insurance coverage for their families.

Of all the financial benefits aside from paid leave, seniority pay ranked highest with 19.2% electing to receive this benefit. Again this may be due to the seniority profile of the respondents but it may also suggest that our respondents would respond well to financial recompense and recognition for the time they have served with their company. Maybe company loyalty is not dead and buried after all?

70.7% of respondents confirmed that access to the internet was the most important onboard facility for them. Unfortunately only 38% already enjoyed such access. It would appear from the results that access to onboard email differed to onboard access to the internet as just over 60% claimed to be able to send and receive emails. 65.1% claimed to have access to an onboard telephone and more than one in three (36.2%) had access to satellite television.

Interestingly only 8.3% considered access to a crew/officer's bar to be desirable. This rather shatters the image of the "*drunken sailor*" and may be indicative of the effect of moves towards smaller crew sizes making the need for a bar almost an irrelevance. One negative impact of this may be a move back to cabin drinking of course.

The most important factors to our respondents when considering whether to join a particular vessel or not were the condition and age of the vessel (45.0%) and the standard of the onboard living conditions (38.9%). Not far behind these was the need for the timely payment of salary (32.3%). Perhaps surprisingly, only 8.7% were concerned about shore leave although this came ranked in the top 10 of the worst aspects of a career at sea. Is this because the opportunities for shore leave have become so infrequent that there is an acceptance of the "*get on stay on*" mind set adopted by seafarers to get them through their trip to sea?

Whilst we hear much about paper work, fatigue, criminalisation, lack of shore leave and piracy as being deterrents to a modern career at sea, none compare to the single worst reason for spending time at sea which remains the time apart from friends and family (67.6%). This also ties in with what we have learnt about communications such as internet and telephone being top of the list for desired onboard facilities.

When asked what would keep our respondents at sea there was a general consensus that more money and increased financial benefits coupled with shorter voyages would be a step in the right direction. They seem to be telling us that if they feel valued by their employer for the work they do and they receive financial recompense which is commensurate with the sacrifices they make in terms of the time spent away from their loved ones then you will have a happy, efficient crew who need look no further for alternative employment opportunities. Unfortunately we cannot begin to estimate how much is enough in terms of additional financial recompense and how much is too little in terms of leave ratio. Strike the right balance and retain a happy efficient and loyal crew. Get it wrong and be faced with high turnover rates of officers and crew with the consequential negative impact on the safe operation of the vessel.

We feel certain from the results of this survey that others can be motivated to stay if their needs and concerns are adequately addressed by their employers with focused investment in the right areas to make a career at sea a more viable and sustainable employment opportunity.

5.0 Survey Results

5.1.0 Responder Details

5.1.1 Gender

Only 2.6% of the respondents were female, (6 out of 229 respondents).

5.1.2 Nationality

The respondents represented a wide range of different nationalities, 35 in total. The largest numbers of respondents were of British, Russian, Indian and Swedish nationalities respectively.

Seafarer Nationality	As % of all respondents	
UK	14.8%	
Russia	13.5%	
India	12.7%	
Sweden	10.9%	
U.S.A.	8.3%	
New Zealand	3.5%	
Latvia Philippines	3.1% each	
Poland	2.6%	
Bulgaria Canada	Croatia Eire	2.2% each
Australia Finland	Romania	1.7% each
Brazil Greece	Norway Spain	1.3% each
China Denmark	Germany Italy	0.9% each
Bahrain Bangladesh Burma Cayman Islands Faroes France	Ghana Tonga Uruguay Yugoslavia Zambia	0.4% each

Table 1: Respondent Nationalities (229 respondents)

5.1.3 Personal Circumstances

The overwhelming majority of respondents were homeowners (89.7%). Over half of the respondents were home-owners with children (52.8%).

Relationships & Lifestyle	%
Single homeowner	10.0%
Single, living at home with parents	9.2%
Single, no fixed abode	1.3%
Single, divorced home-owner with children	3.5%
Married home-owner	23.1%
Living with partner, home-owner	3.5%
Married home-owner with children	48.0%
Living with partner, home-owner with children	1.3%

Table 2: Relationships & Lifestyle (229 respondents)

5.1.4 Current Age of Respondents

Only 1 respondent was under 20 years old, registering less than 1% of the total. Over half of the respondents were aged over 40, with more than 1 in 4 over 51 years old.

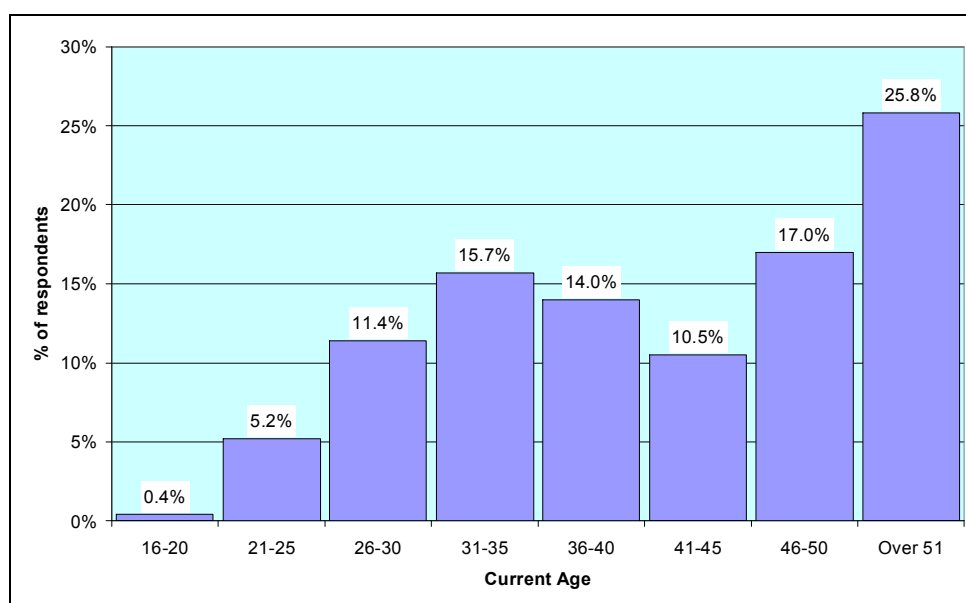


Chart 1: Current Age (229 respondents)

5.1.5 Age Respondents first went to sea

55.4% of the respondents had first gone to sea before the age of 20. 38.9% went between the ages of 20 and 25 while only 5.7% of respondents had embarked on a career at sea aged 26 or over.

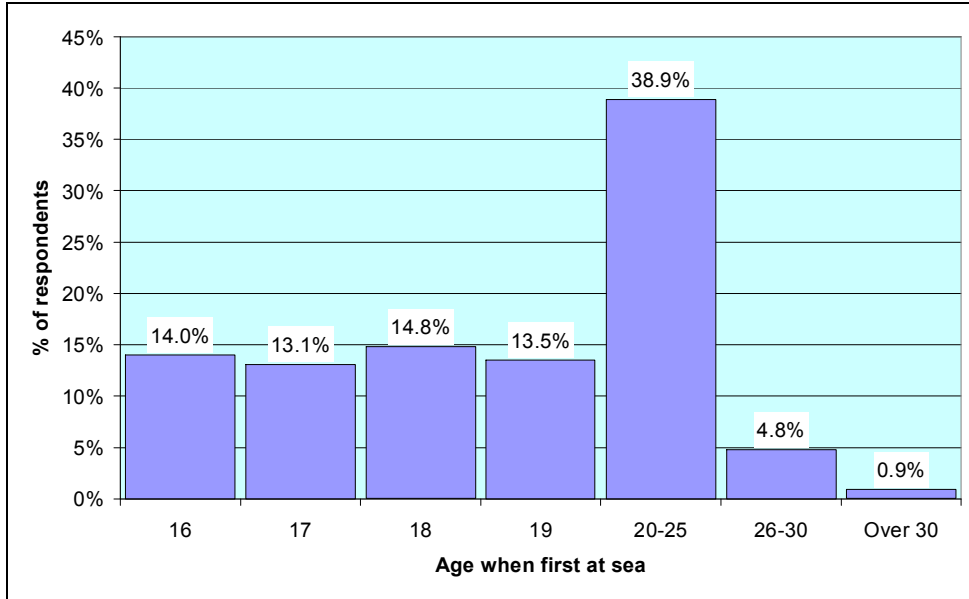


Chart 2: Age respondents first went to sea (229 respondents)

5.1.6 Number of years served at sea

26.1% of respondents had spent 10 years or less at sea; 30.6% between 11 and 20 years; and 43.2% had spent over 20 years at sea.

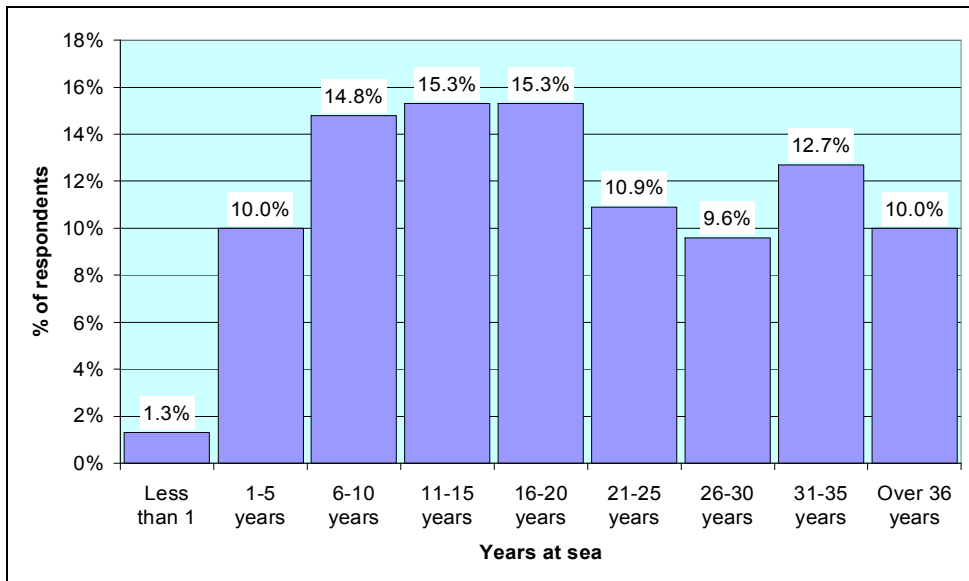


Chart 3: Number of years served at sea (229 respondents)

5.2.0 Shipboard Particulars

5.2.1 Rank & Department

Respondent Rank	%
Captain	34.5%
Chief Engineer	15.7%
Senior Officer	26.2%
Junior Officer	15.3%
Chief Petty Officer	0.4% each
Petty Officer	
AB	1.3%
Other	5.2%

Table 3: Respondent Rank (229 Respondents)

76.4% of the respondents to the survey held senior ranks. More than a third of survey respondents (34.5%) had attained the rank of Captain while a further 26.2% were senior officers. The seniority of rank corresponds to the length of time spent at sea of those who took part:

- 88.6% of those respondents ranked Captain and 83.3% of those respondents ranked Chief Officer had spent over 16 years at sea.
- 70% of those respondents ranked Senior Officer had served between 11 and 25 years at sea.

Almost all respondents worked within Deck or Engine departments:

Respondent Department	%
Deck	63.8%
Engine	29.3%
Technical	3.1%
Dynamic Positioning	1.3%
Hotel	0.4% each
Communications	
Security	
	Ventilation
	Safety

Table 4: Respondent Department (229 Respondents)

5.2.2 Type of Vessel

The respondents were serving on a wide variety of vessels with the largest group working on cruise ships (17.9%).

Type of Vessel		%
Cruise Ship		17.9%
Passenger Ferry		3.9%
Container		10.9%
General Cargo		4.4%
Ro-Ro		3.1%
Bulk Carrier		6.6%
Crude Oil Tanker		8.7%
Product Tanker		8.3%
Chemical Tanker		7.0%
LPG Tanker		2.6%
LNG Tanker		2.2%
Offshore-Supply		4.8%
Anchor Handler		2.6%
Refrigerated Cargo Car Carrier	Offshore Survey	1.3% each
Coaster Tug (Towage) Heavy Lift	FPSO Research	0.9% each
Car Carrier Offshore-Survey	Yacht	0.4% each
Other		7.0%

Table 5: Type of Vessel (229 respondents)

5.2.3 Current Flag

Asked which flag they currently sailed under the top five registries for this survey were Panama, Bahamas, Liberia, UK and USA respectively.

Current Flag		%
Panama		16.6%
Bahamas		12.2%
Liberia UK	USA	7.4% each
Norway		5.7%
Marshall Islands		3.5%
St. Vincent & Grenadines Vanuatu	China/Hong Kong SAR	3.1%
Isle of Man		2.6%
Australia		2.2%
Bermuda Cayman Islands	Greece Russian Federation	1.7% each
Denmark Gibraltar India	Malaysia Spain	1.3% each
Albania Canada Finland Germany	Italy Netherlands Singapore	0.9% each
Antigua & Barbuda Barbados Brazil Bulgaria China (Rep.) Comoros Croatia	France Eire Latvia Malta New Zealand Tunisia Ukraine	0.4% each

Table 6: Current Flag (229 respondents)

5.2.4 Trading Patterns of Current Vessel

The majority of respondents (66.8%) were currently serving on Deep Sea/Worldwide vessels.

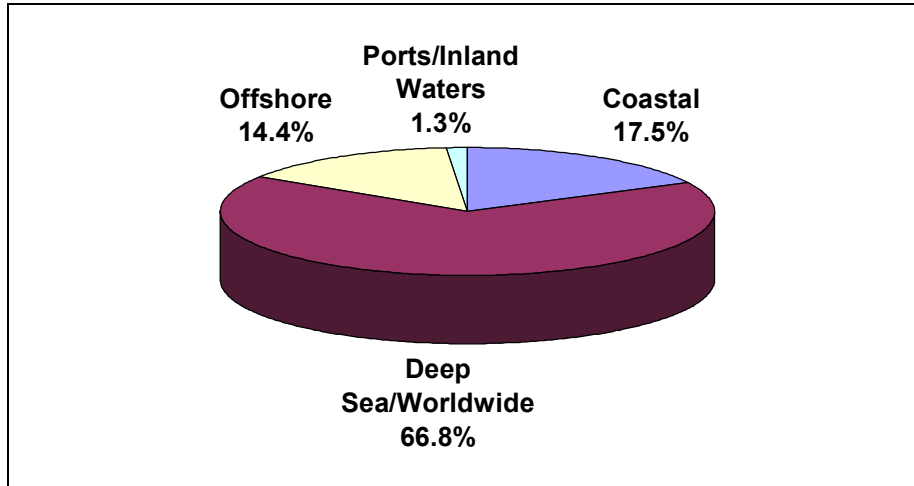


Chart 4: Trading Patterns of Current Vessel (229 respondents)

5.3.0 Attraction

5.3.1 Motivators

Asked why they had chosen to work at sea, the most popular reason given by the respondents was simply that they had wanted a career at sea (22.4%). Other important reasons included wanting to see the world (18.4%) and financial considerations - 16% said they chose to work at sea for the money and 15.8% felt that a career at sea would bring better wages than in jobs at home. Only 4.8% felt that seagoing was well-regarded as a career choice.

Reasons for choosing job at sea	%
To see the world	18.4%
For the money	16.0%
Family tradition	7.6%
I wanted a career at sea	22.4%
Better career prospects at sea	4.8%
Thought life at sea would be less stressful than at home	2.4%
In my country a seagoing career is a well-respected profession	4.8%
Working conditions are better than at home	1.9%
Better wages than jobs at home	15.8%
Other reasons	6.0%

Table 7: Reasons for choosing job at sea

5.3.2 Learning about Employment at Sea

Asked how they learned about employment opportunities at sea, the predominant source of information came from friends and family (42%).

Learning about employment at sea	%
Careers Advisor at school/university	14.8%
Friends & Family	42.0%
Govt. Employment Centre	2.8%
Non-Government Employment Agency	3.9%
TV Recruitment Campaign	0.7%
Local Newspaper	3.2%
Internet	8.5%
Other sources	24.0%

Table 8: Learning about employment opportunities at sea

5.3.3 Method of Applying for First Job at Sea

When it came to applying for their first job at sea, over a third of respondents (35.4%) had applied directly to the company they wanted to work for. 16.6% of respondents had applied via a local crew manager and 13.1% had been assisted by their school or college in finding employment with their first shipping company. Only small numbers of respondents had applied for their first job through manning agents (3.9%), online (3.5%) or in response to a newspaper vacancy (3.9%).

Method of applying for first job at sea	%
Applied via local crew manager	16.6%
Followed government led employment scheme	10.0%
Applied for job with company my father worked for	3.5%
Responded to newspaper vacancy	3.9%
Applied online	3.5%
Assisted by school/college	13.1%
Paid a manning agent	3.9%
Applied directly to company	35.4%
Other sources	10.0%

Table 9: Method of applying for first job at sea

5.3.4 Choosing the First Ship

Asked whether they had wanted to work on a particular type of vessel at the start of their career more than half the survey (55%) stated that they would have been happy to work on any kind of vessel. Among those who did have a preference passenger ships were the most popular option, chosen by 10.5% of respondents.

Ship preference at start of career	%
Any type of vessel	55.0%
Passenger ships	10.5%
Oil Tanker	7.0%
Gas Tankers	3.1%
Bulk Carriers	0.9%
Container Ships	3.1%
General Cargo	8.3%
Chemical Tankers	1.3%
Offshore industry vessels	3.9%
Coastal vessels	1.3%
Port or harbour vessels	0.4%
Ferries	0.9%
Other	4.4%

Table 10: Ship preference at start of career (229 respondents)

5.3.5 Deciding on a First Job at Sea

Asked how they decided what particular job they wanted at sea at the beginning of their careers almost half of the respondents (49.3%) had taken a position as the first step on a career path leading to the position of Captain or Senior Officer. 21% of respondents chose their first seafaring job because they were interested in Engineering. 11.4% simply took the first job they were offered.

Deciding on job type at start of career	%
Family Tradition	8.3%
Restricted for health reasons	0.9%
Job as rating suited my qualification	7.4%
I had an interest in engineering	20.5%
Wanted to become a Captain or Senior Officer	49.3%
It was similar to my job on land	2.2%
I did not decide, I took the job that was offered	11.4%

Table 11: Deciding on job type at start of year (229 respondents)

5.3.6 Pre-sea Training

Over half of the survey group reported that they had paid for all of their qualifications (52.8%), while 44.1% of respondents had had their training cost met in full by their employers. A small number of respondents (3.4%) had covered their training costs through a loan from their employer.

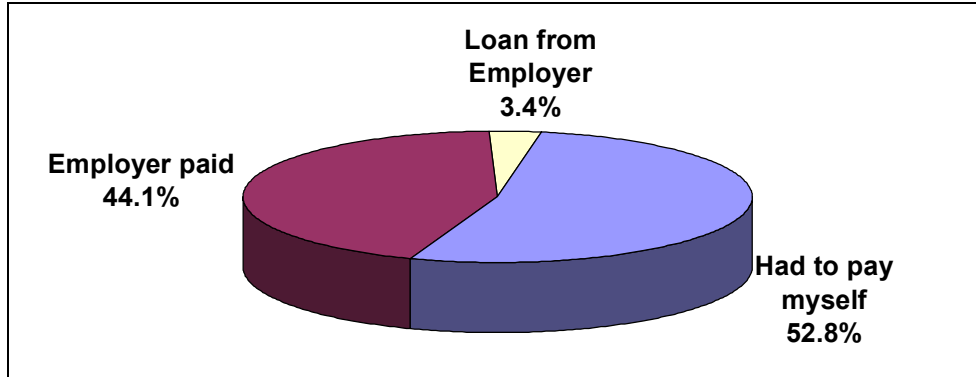


Chart 5: Pre-sea Training Costs

5.3.7 Previous work experience

The overwhelming majority of respondents embarked on a career at sea straight after a school, college or university education.

First went to sea	%
Straight from school	31.9%
Straight from college	25.8%
Straight from university	23.1%
Worked ashore and went to sea after redundancy	1.3%
Several jobs ashore then went to sea	7.9%
Jobs at sea and ashore then went back to sea	5.7%
Other	4.4%

Table 12: First went to sea (229 respondents)

5.3.8 Life and Work Expectations

The survey group was asked if when they began their career at sea they thought of it as a job for life. Nearly half of the survey (45%) went to sea with the intention of it being a lifelong career leading to retirement and a pension. At the same time, 30.6% of respondents had thought of seafaring as a good opportunity to get some qualifications and experience before returning to a shore-based job.

Financial considerations were important for small numbers of respondents - 5.7% saw their seafaring career as very short-term, undertaking one or two trips to earn some quick money before finding a job ashore; 5.2% wanted to stay at sea long enough to save money for when they returned ashore; and 6.1% specifically wanted to earn enough money to buy a house and then move back ashore.

7.4% of the surveyed group had foreseen a time when family responsibilities would end their seafaring career.

Did you consider your career at sea as a job for life?	%
I thought of myself progressing through the ranks and retiring with a pension after a full life career at sea	45.0%
No I just needed to earn some quick money, maybe complete one or two trips and then find a job ashore	5.7%
No I wanted to remain at sea long enough to obtain some qualifications and experience and then look for a job ashore	30.6%
I wanted to stay at sea long enough to buy a house and then move back ashore	6.1%
I wanted to stay long enough to save money for when I am back ashore	5.2%
I knew when I had family responsibilities I would have to give up my life at sea	7.4%

Table 13: Life and Work Expectations (229 respondents)

5.4.0 Retention

5.4.1 Reasons for staying at sea

All respondents were asked why they stayed at sea. The most common reason, given by 27.5% of respondents, was because they earned a salary that they would be unable to match onshore. High levels of job satisfaction kept a further 17.8% of respondents in their careers at sea and meeting career goals of sailing as Captain or Chief Engineer provided the motivation to stay at sea for 12.4% of respondents.

Reasons for staying at sea	%
I earn a good salary that I cannot match ashore	27.5%
I enjoy a high level of job satisfaction	17.8%
I have a large number of dependents who rely on my salary	5.4%
I am saving my salary to start a career/business ashore	5.7%
I am saving to buy a house before moving ashore	4.3%
I want to sail as Captain/Chief Engineer before coming ashore	12.4%
Working away from home suits me best	5.9%
I want to work at sea until I retire	11.3%
Other	9.7%

Table 14: Reasons for staying at sea

5.4.2 The Most Important Factors of Seafaring

When asked which factors about their career at sea were the most important to them, salary was cited by 31.5% of respondents. 20% of respondents said job satisfaction was the most important factor, while for a further 12% it was having paid leave. Wanting to see the world was relevant only for 8% of the survey group and only 3.2% thought it was important that their job earned them the respect of their peers at home.

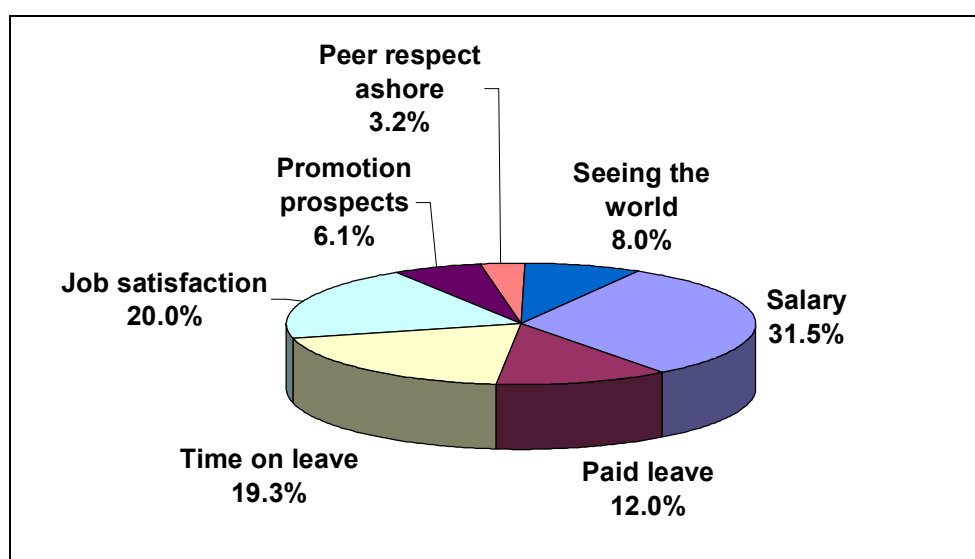


Chart 6: Most Important Factors of Seafaring (229 respondents)

5.4.3 Employment Benefits

Participants were first asked which employment benefits they received from their employers. The most widely received benefit was paid leave (45.9% of respondents). Only just over a third of employees received medical or health insurance for themselves (35.4%) and less than a third benefited from a pension plan (31%). 17% of the respondents did not receive *any* of the benefits listed.

Actual benefits received from employer	% receiving this benefit
Medical/health insurance for employee	35.4%
Medical/health insurance for family	20.5%
Pension	31.0%
Savings Plan	10.0%
Paid study leave	15.3%
Paid spouse/dependent travel to join you onboard	10.0%
Unpaid spouse/dependent travel to join you onboard	17.0%
Share options in company	10.0%
Bonus related pay	27.5%
Seniority pay	30.1%
Paid leave	45.9%
All of the above	1.7%
None of the above	17.0%
Other	4.8%

Table 15: Employment benefits received from employer (229 respondents)

5.4.3 Employment Benefits contd....

Participants were then asked which three of the employment benefits listed they most wanted (regardless of whether they received them or not). The top priority for respondents to this survey in terms of most wanted employment benefit was an employer's pension, chosen by 63.3% of the survey group. In second place came medical/health insurance for family at 56.3% followed by paid leave at 43.7%.

Benefits most wanted from employer	% wanting this benefit
Medical/health insurance for employee	21.4%
Medical/health insurance for family	56.3%
Pension	63.3%
Savings Plan	14.4%
Paid study leave	14.4%
Paid spouse/dependent travel to join you onboard	13.5%
Unpaid spouse/dependent travel to join you onboard	1.7%
Share options in company	10.5%
Bonus related pay	16.6%
Seniority pay	19.2%
Paid leave	43.7%

Table 16: Employment benefits most wanted by employee (229 respondents)

5.4.4 Onboard Crew Facilities

All respondents were asked which onboard crew facilities existed onboard their current ships. 65.1% of participants had telephone access, with a slightly lower number being able to send (62.4%) and receive (61.6%) emails. 60.3% had access to a DVD library and over half had access to a gym or exercise equipment (52%). 5.7% of respondents did not have access to any of the facilities listed.

Existing onboard crew facilities	% with these facilities
Internet	38.0%
Access to a telephone	65.1%
Swimming pool	21.0%
Gymnasium/exercise equipment	52.0%
DVD library	60.3%
Book library	41.9%
Satellite television	36.2%
Crew and Officer's bars	24.0%
Electronic games consoles	15.3%
Electronic/fax daily news service	28.8%
All of the above	4.8%
None of the above	5.7%
Can receive emails	61.6%
Can send emails	62.4%
Other	2.6%

Table 17: Existing onboard crew facilities (229 respondents)

Participants were also asked to choose what they considered to be the most important onboard crew facilities, regardless of whether they existed or not on their current ship. By far the most important facility, identified by 70.7% of participants was access to the internet. This was followed by telephone access at 46.3%.

Most important onboard crew facilities	% choosing these facilities
Internet	70.7%
Access to a telephone	46.3%
Swimming pool	7.9%
Gymnasium/exercise equipment	29.3%
DVD library	10.5%
Book library	12.7%
Satellite television	27.9%
Crew and Officer's bars	8.3%
Electronic games consoles	1.3%
Electronic/fax daily news service	5.7%
Can receive emails	30.6%
Can send emails	27.1%
Other	4.4%

Table 18: Most important onboard crew facilities (229 respondents)

5.4.5 Most Important Joining Issues

All respondents were asked to pick the three most important issues affecting their decision whether or not to join a ship. The most important consideration, identified by 45% of respondents, was the condition and age of the ship. The second most important consideration was onboard living and working conditions (38.9%), followed by the type of ship to be joined (34.9%). The least important issues when deciding whether to join a ship included where the ship traded at 10%, followed by shore leave and crew nationality, both at 8.7%.

Most important joining issues	% choosing these issues
Ship type	34.9%
Trip length	30.6%
Leave ratio	33.2%
Crew nationality	8.7%
Ship condition/age	45.0%
Company safety/security record	26.6%
Geographical trading pattern	10.0%
Shore leave	8.7%
Standard of food served on board	13.1%
Onboard living/working conditions	38.9%
Timely payment of salary	32.3%
Crew rotation to ensure sailing with same crew on return from leave	4.4%

Table 19: Most important joining issues (229 respondents)

5.4.6 The Worst Aspects of a Career at Sea

Participants were asked to select the worst aspects of a career at sea. The table below ranks the responses in terms of the percentage of participants who chose a particular aspect.

Top of the list by far came the long time spent apart from family and friends, chosen by over two-thirds of the participants (67.6%). In second place came the amount of paperwork involved in the job today, chosen by over a third of participants (34.1%).

Aspects such as fatigue (22.3%) fear of criminalisation (19.7%) and the standard of onboard living conditions (18.3%) were judged as negative by a significant number of participants.

The lower end of the list showed that there were few concerns about lack of privacy (4.8%) and piracy (4.4%) and a very small percentage (0.9%) identified bullying as a negative aspect of working at sea. None of the respondents identified lack of respect for their religion as an issue.

Rank	The Worst Aspects of a Career at Sea	%
1	Long time spent apart from family & friends	67.6%
2	Too much paperwork	34.1%
3	Time spent away from children	29.7%
4	Fatigue	22.3%
5	Fear of being treated like a criminal	19.7%
6	Onboard living conditions	18.3%
7	Difficult to keep in contact with home	17.5%
8	Lack of shore leave	15.7%
9	Crews are too small to share workload	14.8%
10	Few career opportunities	10.0%
11	Loneliness	9.6%
12	Concerns about accidents at sea	7.9%
12	Lack of onboard recreational facilities	7.9%
14	No privacy	4.8%
15	Piracy	4.4%
16	Bullying	0.9%
17	Lack of respect for my religion	0.0%

Table 20: The Worst Aspects of a Career at Sea (229 respondents)

5.4.7 Crew Retention

All participants were asked to choose three factors which would keep them at sea. The factor chosen by the most participants (66.8%) was simply earning more money. Financial considerations were also evident in the second highest rating factor for crew retention which would be to receive more financial employment benefits, such as a pension, chosen by 57.6% of participants. The third factor to keep seafarers at sea would be shorter voyages (44.1%).

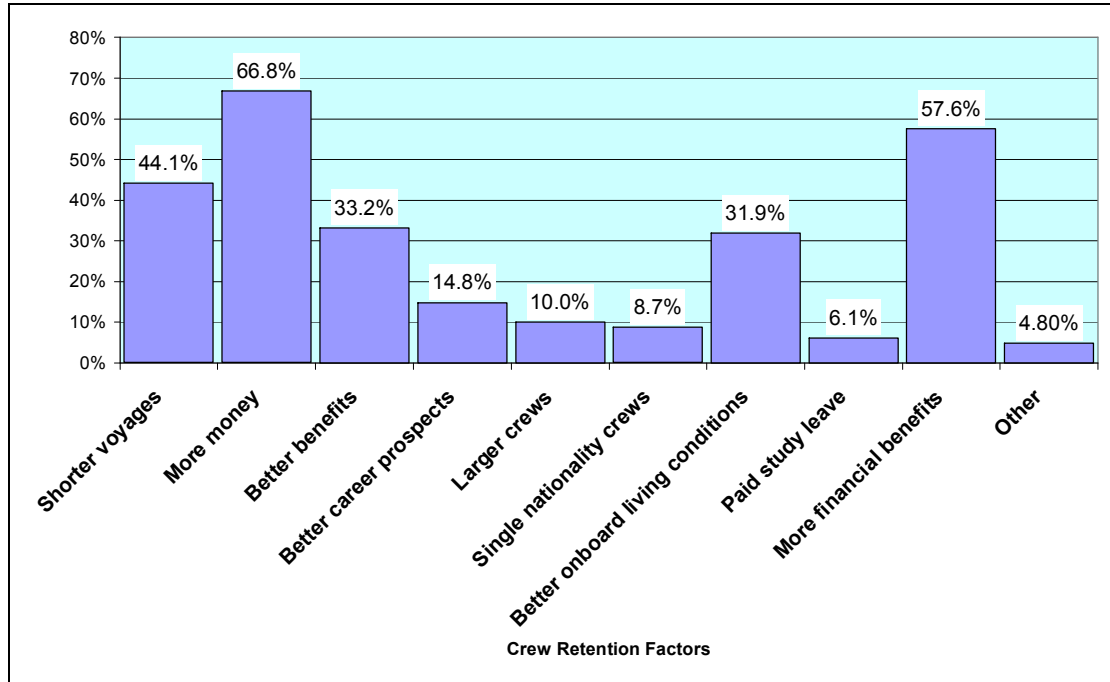


Chart 7: Crew Retention

5.4.8 Intention of staying at sea

Participants were asked how long they intended on staying at sea. Almost a third (32.3%) intended on staying at sea all of their working lives. A smaller group of 19.2% stated that they intended on staying at sea for the least time possible. The remaining respondents had their own individual timescales for leaving worked-out to suit their own personal circumstances, such as buying a home, paying off debts or future family commitments.

How long do you intend staying sea?	% choosing these issues
All my life	32.3%
The least time possible	19.2%
Until I finish my cadetship	0.0%
Until I qualify as a senior officer	7.0%
Until I pay for a home	6.1%
Until I pay off my debts	3.9%
Until I get married	1.7%
Until I have children	3.1%
Other	26.6%

Table 21: Intention of staying at sea (229 respondents)

6.0 Further Research

We are planning five surveys this year:

Survey	Title	Starts	Ends
1	Attraction/Retention - Choosing to Work at Sea	28/09/07	30/11/07
2	Salary and Employment Benefits - Payment, Wages & Rewards	01/12/07	31/01/08
3	Qualifications and Training - Learning & Experience	01/02/08	30/03/08
4	Career Progression - Rising Through the Ranks	01/04/08	01/07/08
5	Regulatory Effect - Governments, Laws & The Seafarer	02/07/08	30/08/08

Chart 8 – Further Research

Each of these surveys will be hosted by [Shiptalk Recruitment](#) at the website

URL: http://www.shiptalkjobs.com/common/about_survey.php

7.0 Contact Details

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