

Superyacht Captain Report 2023



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The Superyacht Captain Report

A report by Faststream Superyacht Crew

Contents

Welcome from Faststream Superyacht Crew	3
Welcome from the authors	4
Executive summary	5
Careers	6 - 8
Reward	9 - 11
Well-being	12
Rotations	13
New generations of talent and yachting careers	14 - 15
Crew hiring, retention and management	16 - 17
Final thoughts and recommendations	18
Methodology	19
Participant yacht information	20



The Superyacht Captain Report

A report by Faststream Superyacht Crew

Welcome from Faststream Superyacht Crew



Faststream Superyacht Crew specialises in the search, recruitment, and selection of professional yacht crew for the global superyacht sector. We can aid you in recruiting crew across interiors, deck, engine, medical, and galley.

We have a dedicated and experienced superyacht crew recruitment team who work solely on finding you the right candidates who will suit your experience, qualifications, and personality needs. We recruit for some of the world's largest superyachts and megayachts and have a proven track record of recruiting and selecting the right people.

We partner with our clients across the globe, from the Americas and the Caribbean to Europe and Asia-Pacific, from yacht owners to yacht managers as well as shipyards. Our clients include private yachts and charter yachts, both motor and sail.

We know that some vacancies need to be filled urgently. We have experience in searching, selecting, completing compliance, and carrying out mobilisation in as little as 24 hours.

We are pleased to advise you that we have been audited by the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) at our request and we have achieved the MLC Declaration of Conformity.



We are part of the Faststream Recruitment Group, a people specialist in maritime, shipping, and energy recruitment. Established in 1999, we employ over 100 people across the globe. Our teams focus on specialist recruitment areas to ensure we know you, your business, your marketplace, and the types of people that will your business.

For more details, visit www.faststream.com

The Superyacht Captain Report

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Welcome from the Authors

The surveys and report were conducted and produced by Faststream Recruitment.

Mark Charman

CEO & Founder of Faststream Recruitment



Mark is the CEO and Founder of Faststream Recruitment and founded the company in 1999.

He has a wealth of knowledge and experience in recruiting for the maritime sector globally. As a Fellow of the Recruitment and Employment Confederation, he is a renowned thought leader in specialist recruitment.

Mark's involvement as a speaker, panellist and writer provides a head hunters perspective into human factors in the workplace.

Kelsey Purse

Director of Shipping - Faststream Recruitment Europe, Middle East, Africa and the Americas



Kelsey is the Director of Shipping at Faststream Recruitment and oversees the recruitment of crew and shoreside personnel across the maritime sector. Having joined the business in 2010, Kelsey supports shipping and maritime organisations with senior and executive hiring across regions including Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and the Americas. She is a Fellow of the Recruitment and Employment Confederation and speaks, writes and trains regularly on recruitment issues and advises organisations on recruitment and people matters. In addition, she is an Associate of RINA and is an active member of the Women's International Shipping and Trading Association.

Executive summary

The Superyacht Captain Report

The world of superyachts, with their opulent luxury and breathtaking oceanic journeys, has long captivated the imagination of those seeking a unique and exhilarating career path. At the helm of these majestic vessels stand the superyacht captains, skilled mariners, and leaders responsible for navigating these floating palaces through some of the world's most exotic and challenging waters.

As the allure of superyacht living continues to grow, so does the demand for experienced and capable captains to commandeer these vessels. This report delves into the intricate world of superyacht captain careers, offering an in-depth exploration of the employment landscape, the challenges faced, and the highs and lows of the career.

The retention rates of superyacht captains is on an upward curve, with a decreased number planning to seek a new job this year (40%). The top reason for captains to either job seek or stay loyal was the same. They either needed better work-life balance, or their role already provided it. Work-life balance also featured as their top priority at work, replacing retaining talented crew.

The long-term career longevity of a captain has decreased, with 69% sharing that their current career would last more than five years, a reduction from 88% in 2017. However, 91% said they would still choose their career again. 86% would also recommend their career to young people, fantastic news for the continued advocacy of the sector.

Only 7% believed young people viewed a career in the superyacht sector as a long-term career path, and 91% said they thought social media and reality TV were misleading new generations about potential careers in yachting.

58% of captains had received a pay rise in the last two years. It paid to change jobs though, those who did were more likely than those who stayed with their employer to achieve a 10% or more pay rise, at 52% and 24% respectively.

Over half of captains received an annual bonus, most commonly valued at between five and ten percent of their annual salary. Over half of captains will be asking for a pay rise this year and nearly two-thirds threaten resignation if they do not get it.

Personnel management and guest satisfaction remained the top stress factors for captains, highlighting the complexities of managing people and making guests happy.

A 2/2 rotation was rated as the most desired working pattern, but less than half were working this way. Three-quarters of captains have found hiring crew tough over the last 12 months, and nearly the same number said it was difficult to retain talent for more than three years.

Captains wanted to hire crew with adaptability, initiative, communication, problem-solving, and productivity soft skillsets. They also shared that improving work-life balance and training would have the most positive impact onboard their yacht.

Careers

The Superyacht Captain Report

Retention has become a priority focus across the maritime sector, and retaining superyacht captains, those who lead and manage the vessel and crew is no exception for yacht owners and yacht management companies. We reported in 2021 that retention was on an upward trajectory and were keen to see how the landscape looked in 2023.

Retention remains on an upward curve

The upward curve of retention continues with a decrease in job seeking from 53% in 2021 to 40% this year. 34% wanted a new job on another superyacht, 6% desired a shore-based job within the superyacht industry, 1% were planning to retire and the remaining 59% planned to stay loyal to their employer.

Job seeking was higher for captains working on private yachts at 42%, versus just 33% of captains working on charter yachts.

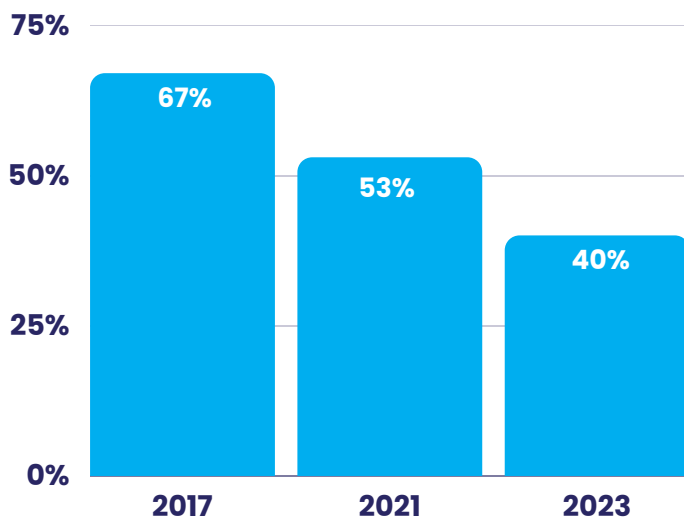
"Yacht owners and management companies are in an enviable position according to these results, compared to many other maritime sectors. Growing retention rates create less pressure to hire experienced and reliable senior talent," says Mark Charman.

With 40% still planning to change jobs, we enquired what their motivation was. Better work-life balance (47%), relationships with the yacht owner/yacht management company (25%), and better salary and benefits (21%) made up the majority of the job-seeking motivations.

Top motivations to job seek

Rank	Top motivations to job seek
1.	Better work-life balance
2.	Relationship with owner/management
3.	Salary and benefits

The percentage of captains planning to change jobs in the next 12 months



"In every superyacht survey we have conducted, work-life balance comes up again and again as an issue for captains and crew alike. Working on a yacht can be all-encompassing at times, with many different facets to continually excel at, leaving little time away from work. I believe that in today's world people simply expect to have some sort of work-life balance in their jobs whatever they do for a living," shares Kelsey Purse.

Understanding the motivations of loyalty is also worth noting, particularly if you are struggling with high turnover rates. Again, work-life balance (49%) came out on top, followed by relationships with yacht owner/yacht management company (29%), and salary and benefits (19%).

Top motivations to stay loyal to employer

Rank	Top motivations to stay loyal
1.	Work-life balance
2.	Relationship with owner/management
3.	Salary and benefits

Careers – continued

The Superyacht Captain Report

Charman says: “Job-seeking motivations and reasons to stay loyal are the same, captains are sharing the ways to make them stay but also how to make them leave, but it isn’t quite that simple. What I have noticed of late is that it is so easy to get things wrong with people. It can be as simple as missing a pay review, expecting captains to work through their annual leave time, or even giving the perception of micro-managing. There is no rule book here, but if job-seeking and loyalty behaviours are based on the same things, then there are three factors that can be focussed on moving forward to get right.”

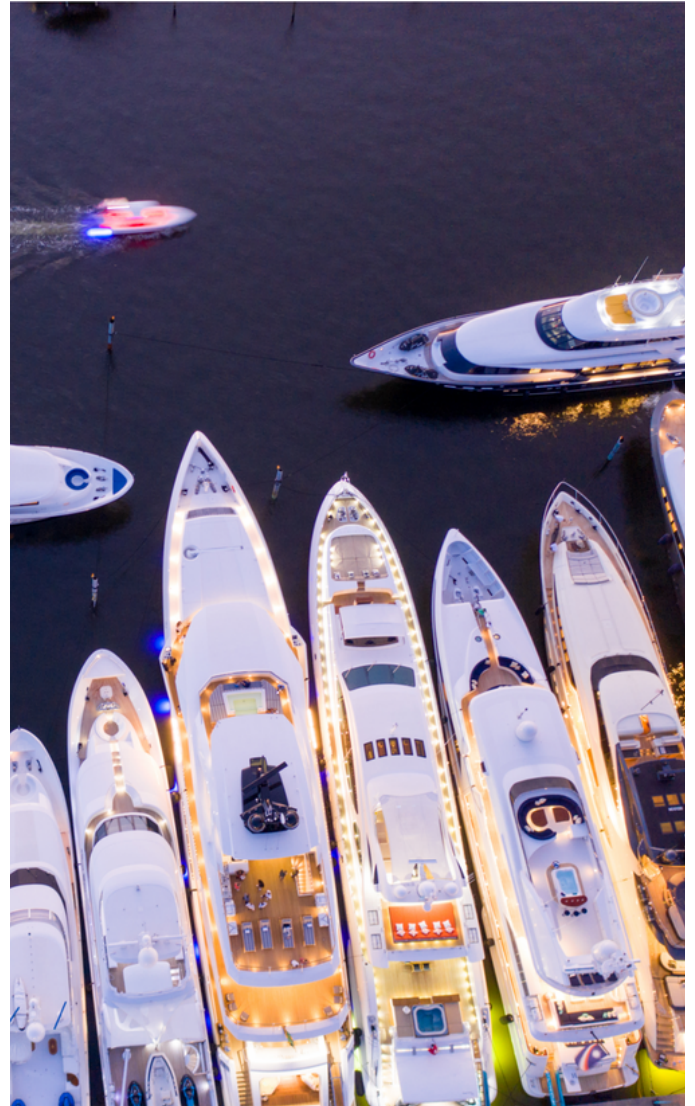
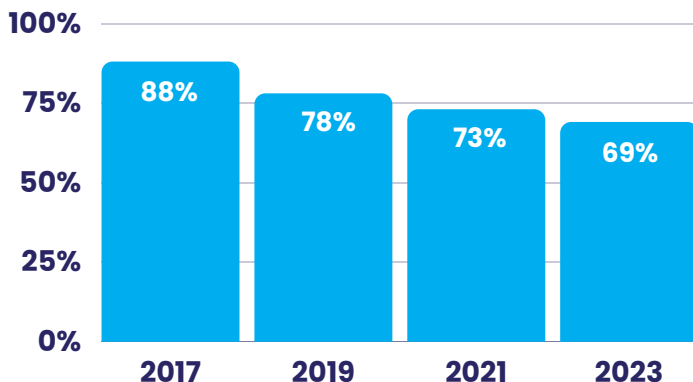
A downward trend in career longevity

We asked superyacht captains how long they expected their career onboard a superyacht to continue. 2% said under 12 months, 8% between one to two years, 21% three to five years, and 69% five years or more. Unfortunately, what we are seeing is a downward trend in career longevity.

“Whilst retention rates for the next 12 months at least look good, I foresee a focus on succession planning by yacht owners and yacht management companies. If you fail to plan, you prepare to fail. In an increasingly unpredictable environment, you will need people in your teams who can adapt quickly. Whether you look internally or externally for succession planning, put scenarios together and ensure you either have or make good plans on how you will have the right people in place,” comments Purse.

There is a downward trend in career longevity at sea across all sectors, not just superyachts. As new generations join our workforce, they develop new needs and wants, and a career at sea might not be that attractive anymore.

The percentage of captains who expect their career in superyachts to continue over five years



Work-life balance hits the top spot as captains' priority at work

Understanding what captains prioritise at work is crucial for building a motivated, engaged, and productive team, fostering retention, and creating a positive work environment that supports both individual and yacht goals.

In a step change from 2021, where captains prioritised retaining talented crew, their own work-life balance has moved to the top.

Charman says: “Not only is work-life balance featuring as the top job-seeking motivator and loyalty factor but also their top priority at work. Captains are looking for a positive work-life balance – this does not mean that they don't want to work hard, rather they don't want it to negatively affect their personal life overall.”

Careers – continued

The Superyacht Captain Report

Captains' top priorities at work – 2021 versus 2023

Rank	2021
1.	Retaining talented crew
2.	Pay/Bonus
3.	Work-life balance
4.	Onboard culture
5.	Being a great leader

Rank	2023
1.	Work-life balance
2.	Pay/Bonus
3.	Retaining talented crew
4.	Onboard culture
5.	Being a great leader

Unlike other modern occupations, superyacht captains will never have the luxury of flexi-time or homeworking due to the nature of the role, so how can yacht owners and yacht management companies make work-life balance a reality in the role?

"It is important to remember that work-life balance is subjective and will mean different things to different captains. The consideration from the results is whilst pay, bonus, and benefits remain high in ranking as a priority, we need to consider whether captains would forego a pay rise if they could achieve better work-life balance?" shares Purse.

Captains would choose their careers again

During the height of the pandemic, it was highly publicised that people's wants and needs in their careers had changed for many in this period, with more time to think about what is important to them and what they want to prioritise in their lives going forward.

We wanted to see if this period had any impact on captains and whether they had any regrets about choosing their careers. The result was the opposite. 91% of captains agreed they would choose their career again, an uplift from 87% in 2021.

"Captains have not lost their zest for their careers, and I can only see this as a positive for the sector. When more of those doing a profession are advocates for it, you hear more positive anecdotal sentiments and it encourages others to join," says Purse.



Reward

The Superyacht Captain Report

The superyacht industry has gained a solid reputation for offering tax-free salaries and exceptionally competitive compensation packages. Most employees expect pay rises in their jobs, whether it be in line with their annual review or for hitting targets. Pay rises can play an important part in retaining talent whilst also remaining competitive against other job offers.

"Pay rises are often associated with feelings of value, job satisfaction, commitment, motivation, loyalty as well as happiness at work," says Purse.

58% of captains have had a pay rise in the last two years

We found that overall, 58% of captains had received a pay rise in the last two years. However, 76% of captains working on charter yachts received one versus 52% of captains working on private yachts.

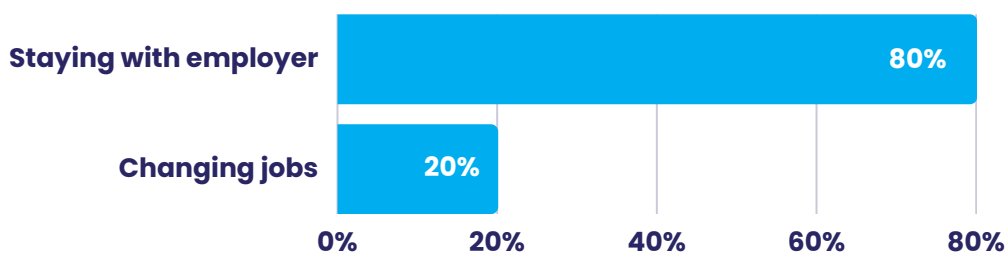
It is interesting to note here that in 2021 74% of captains believed that pay would stay the same, and only 16% envisaged a pay increase. However, the number of pay rises may only be in line with inflation and the cost of living rather than in real terms.

Pay rise recency – average versus charter yacht and private yacht

Recency options	Average	Charter yacht	Private yacht
In the last 6 months	34%	41%	31%
6 months to 2 years	24%	35%	21%
Over 2 years ago	23%	13%	26%
I have not had a pay rise	15%	9%	18%
My pay has been decreased	4%	2%	4%

Pay rises for captains were largely due to staying with their employer rather than seeking a new role.

Did you receive your pay rise by changing jobs or staying with your employer?



But, it pays to change jobs

Whilst the recency of a pay rise is important, so is the percentage. Comparing those working on charter yachts versus private yachts was insightful. Captains working on charter yachts were more likely to receive a pay rise of 10% or more (36%), versus those working on private yachts (27%).

It also paid to change jobs. Those who did were more likely than those who stayed with their employer to achieve a 10% or more pay rise, at 52% and 24% respectively.

Reward – continued

The Superyacht Captain Report

Pay rise increase – average versus charter yacht and private yacht

Percentage increase options	Average	Charter yacht	Private yacht
Under 5%	20%	15%	23%
5 to 10%	50%	49%	50%
10 to 20%	18%	24%	15%
Over 20%	12%	12%	12%

Over half of captains receive an annual bonus

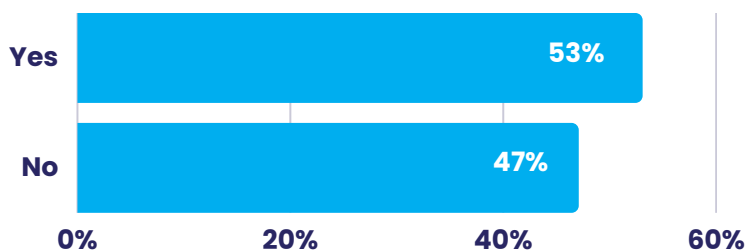
Bonuses can be a great retention tool, as well as a way of rewarding captains and demonstrating how valuable they are.

“When bonuses are annual it can help retain someone for that little bit longer. Unless a signing-on bonus is available, many will be motivated to wait it out to get their bonus rather than changing jobs,” says Charman.

53% of captains shared they received an annual bonus. Captains working on private yachts were more likely to receive a bonus than those working on charter yachts, at 54% and 50% respectively.

Those who did not receive an annual bonus were more likely to be planning to change jobs with 55% sharing these sentiments.

Do you receive an annual bonus?



Bonus amounts did vary with 13% receiving a bonus equal to under five percent of their salary, 44% five to ten percent, 29% ten to twenty percent, and 14% over twenty percent.

Expected bonus amount (percentage of salary) – average versus charter yacht and private yacht

Bonus percentage amount	Average	Charter yacht	Private yacht
Under 5%	13%	5%	16%
5 to 10%	44%	41%	44%
10 to 20%	29%	36%	27%
Over 20%	14%	18%	13%

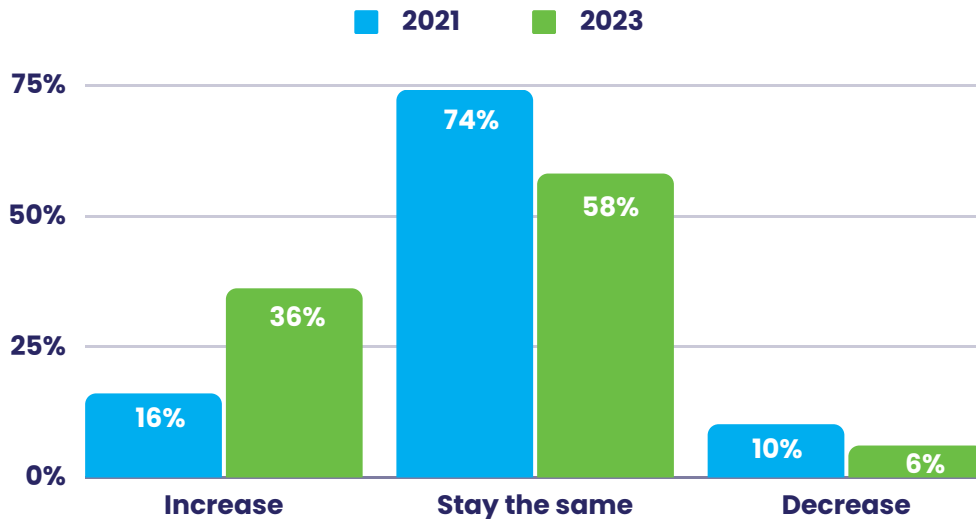
Reward – continued

The Superyacht Captain Report

The future looks brighter for captain reward

The future of reward looks brighter than years before. Only 6% saw it decreasing over the next two years, with 36% believing it would increase and 58% saying it would stay the same. The sentiments of captains believing reward will increase has notably shifted in a positive direction.

Over the next two years, do you think reward for superyacht captains will increase, stay the same, or decrease? 2021 versus 2023



“Considering that two years ago we were still in the throes of the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic, you can understand that captains were not feeling positive about the future,” says Purse.

Whilst it does look brighter, more than half foresee it remaining static.

Charman considers: “My concern is if reward does stay static in real terms, new job offers with competitive packages might impact the retention levels of captains. However, as we have previously mentioned, if work-life balance is improved instead, we could see retention levels rise even further.”

Captains threaten resignation if they don't get a pay rise this year

More than half of captains said they would be asking their employer for a pay rise this year. Those working on charter yachts were the most likely to be demanding a pay rise (69%), versus 52% of captains working on a private yacht. 62% said they will job seek if the pay rise is refused.



My concern is if reward does stay static in real terms, new job offers with competitive packages might impact the retention levels of captains.

MARK CHARMAN

Well-being

The Superyacht Captain Report

Stress and well-being are regularly covered in the media, predominantly based on the crew and not their leaders, the captains. The emotional state of captains is critical because they set the tone for the whole yacht and can have a ripple effect. High-stress levels or negative emotions can hinder leadership effectiveness. Being less stressed with time for your personal life can create more positive onboard cultures and in return often create higher levels of retention.

Balancing stress and success

It would be reasonable to assume that the stress levels of any leader would be high, due to the nature of their roles and responsibilities. The job of a captain comes with unique pressures and demands that could elevate stress levels higher than their crew.

"I think being a captain is a balancing act – you want to be a good leader, retain your crew, and make guests happy but at the same time you have to think about safety, budgets, refits, repairs, and administration," says Purse.

We see that high-stress levels have declined since 2021. This year 28% rated their stress level as high versus 41% in 2021. In correlation lower stress levels increased in percentage from 23% in our last survey to 43% this year. The remainder rated themselves as having medium stress levels.

"Some captains will never feel stressed, they have developed ways to manage and mitigate what might seemingly contribute to it. Others might feel the stress through the sheer complexity of their role as well as the level and responsibility. I think that we should also consider the isolation that can be felt in the top job onboard a yacht. Yes, they may have a great chief engineer but there are some things they may feel they can't share that challenges or concerns them," says Charman.

What is the most stressful part of your job? 2021 versus 2023

Rank	2021
1.	Personnel management
2.	Guest satisfaction
3.	Refits, repairs & yard projects
4.	Administration duties
5.	Budget management

Personnel management remains the top stress factor

Understanding what might stress a captain is the first step to doing more to address the situation. Prevention can often be better than the cure. If a captain's mental health is being impacted by stress, the yacht owner or yacht management company may want to provide more resources to them.

"It is worth noting that it can be seen as a taboo for captains to speak up about their mental health. Yacht owners and yacht management companies' role is not to be the fixer per se, rather they should be the connector to other resources that will benefit the captain or other crew," says Purse.

Personnel management and guest satisfaction remained the top two stress factors. Administration duties moved up the stress factors as did budget management.

Purse says: *"The best and worst part of working with people is that every person is different. We celebrate individuality but when it comes to managing people and making guests happy, it can become complex."*

Could personnel management become even more complex as new generations join our workforce? Or should we acknowledge more of the similarities and experiences that all generations in our workforce have faced?

Charman says: *"I think it is more about getting to grips with what motivates our people, what they care about, how they want to be communicated with, how they view loyalty and reward, and what they look for in their leaders. This shouldn't just be about new generations, but about all of our team."*

Rank	2023
1.	Personnel management
2.	Guest satisfaction
3.	Administration duties
4.	Budget management (joint 4th)
4.	Refits, repairs & yard projects (joint 4th)

Rotations

The Superyacht Captain Report

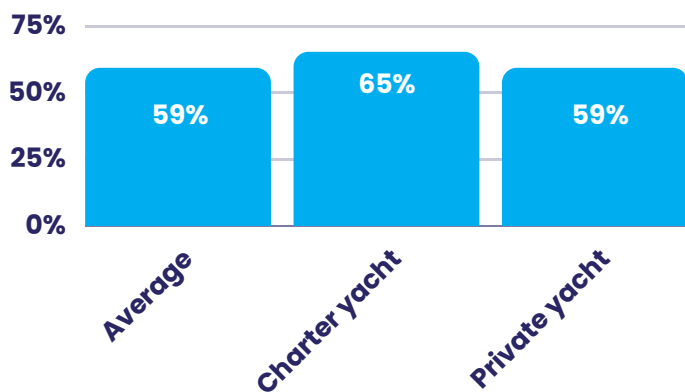
Rotations are an important part of a superyacht captain's package, especially as it can have a direct impact on their work-life balance. In a sector with a reputation for long working hours with high demands, is this realistic?

We continue to have conversations with our clients, both yacht owners and yacht management companies, who want to know what rotations other yachts are offering. In our experience, captains are equally as keen to understand what a potential employer's rotation pattern is.

60% of captains are satisfied with their rotation pattern

When we asked whether captains were satisfied with their current rotation pattern, 60% agreed that they were. Breaking it down further, 65% of captains working on charter yachts were satisfied, whilst 59% of captains working on private yachts were satisfied.

Percentage of captains satisfied with their rotation pattern – average versus charter yacht and private yacht



2/2 rotation patterns are the most desired

When we gave captains the option of choosing the most desirable rotation pattern, a 2/2 rotation was rated at the top at 74%, with a 3/1 rotation being the least attractive.

Other desired rotation patterns mentioned in 'other' included 3/3, 10 weeks/10 weeks, 1/1, 6 weeks/6 weeks, and 2/4. We also had a few answers from captains who said they did not work rotations and had high levels of annual leave instead.

The most attractive rotation patterns – average versus charter yacht and private yacht

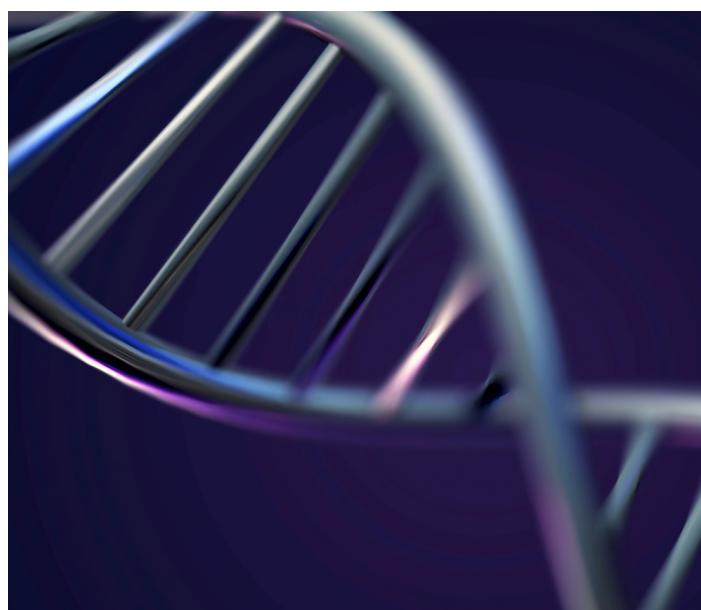
Rotation	Average	Charter yacht	Private yacht
2/2	13%	5%	16%
3/1	44%	41%	44%
4/2	29%	36%	27%
Other	14%	18%	13%

Less than half are working a 2/2 rotation in reality

Whilst the majority of captains wanted to work a 2/2 rotation, the reality was that less than half were working this way. It was even worse for those wanting a 3/1 or 4/2 rotation with no captains within this desired rotation achieving it.

Percentage of captains working their preferred rotation

Rotation	Yes	No
2/2	47%	53%
3/1	0%	100%
4/2	0%	100%
Other	30%	70%



New generations of talent and yachting careers

The Superyacht Captain Report

We are in a time when many yachts could have four generations in their teams. Generation Z is here already, and it is forecast they will make up 27% of the global workforce by 2025.

"I like to call Generation Z by another name, Generation Choice. Career options are nearly limitless for these people. The Institute for the Future (ITF) predicts that 85% of the jobs in 2030 have yet to be created. Not only is the superyacht sector competing against other industries and professions today but also potential new jobs we don't even know about yet," shares Charman.

When we asked captains if they would recommend their career to young people, 86% agreed that they would, fantastic news for the continued advocacy of the sector.

Captains shared their commentary on their answers:

- I would advise them to go into engineering. AI self-driving vessels will eliminate the captain's career. **Captain working on a 30m to 50m private yacht**
- Yachting has to me been exciting, having the opportunity to cruise within remote areas of the world. Working with a young energetic crew of mixed nationalities/cultures has also been a highlight. Being a captain on yachts, there are more responsibilities; making cruising itineraries, selecting crew, retaining crew, giving crew opportunities to grow, not least working for/with some amazing owners. **Captain working on a 91m plus private yacht**
- Fantastic industry, dynamic, adventurous, and challenging at times. **Captain working on a 30m to 50m charter yacht**
- I think the industry is generally attracting young crew looking for money and mixing with the rich and famous rather than for adventure and experience. This is a huge simplification and there are many exceptions to the above statement, however, I feel that the 'exceptions' are getting harder to find. **Captain working on a 51m to 90m private yacht**
- Yachting has changed a lot since I started but still a rewarding and interesting non-desk-style career. **Captain working on a 30m to 50m charter yacht**

- I would only recommend it to people who are suitable and keen to do the job. It is not a career for everyone. I would also advise you to get another skill outside of yachting in case your circumstances change, and you wish to move ashore. **Captain working on a 51m to 90m private yacht**
- It is a good career to earn (and save if sensible) money quickly when you're young. It gives an insight into other countries and cultures if you mix within a multicultural crew and with local services/suppliers. It teaches you discipline, high standards, and work ethic. It is a good platform to step off from to do other things if you do not choose to make it a lifelong career. It should only be a long career for deck officers aspiring to become captains and chief engineers. Other roles will grow stale and become monotonous. **Captain working on a 30m to 50m charter yacht**
- I've worked over 30 years at sea and would not change a single day. Even the bad ones. **Captain working on a 91m plus private yacht**
- There are pros and cons to working in the superyacht industry and it certainly isn't for everyone, I've learned that it does take a particular type of person to do this long-term. **Captain working on a 30m to 50m private yacht**



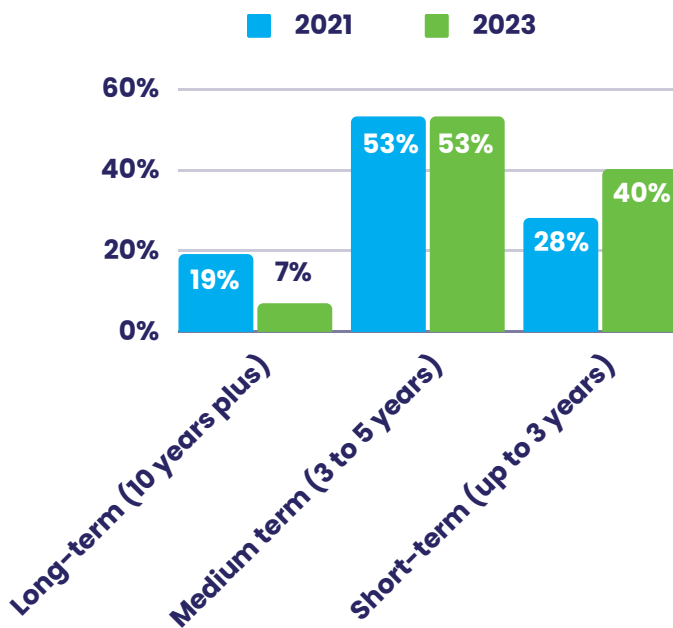
New generations of talent and yachting careers – continued

The Superyacht Captain Report

Captains don't believe young people view yachting as a long-term career

Whilst the majority of captains agreed they would recommend their career to new generations; they did not think they would view it as a long-term career. 40% said they thought they viewed it as a short-term career (up to three years), 53% a medium-term career (three to five years), and just 7% a long-term career (ten years plus).

How do you think new generations of talent view a career in the superyacht sector?



Social media and reality TV are misleading new generations about careers in the superyacht sector

The new generations of talent wanting to pursue or progress their superyacht careers, will in years to come potentially be the captains sailing the world's superyachts. With rises in popularity around reality TV shows and the dominance of social media, we sought out whether captains felt they were misleading new generations about careers in the superyacht sector. 91% agreed that they were.

Purse says: "The realities of working on a superyacht can be a mix of glamour, hard work, adventure, and challenges. The portrayal on social media and reality TV has tended to highlight certain aspects while downplaying others, which can create both unrealistic expectations and an incomplete understanding of the career if we aren't careful."

We heard from the captains with their thoughts on what impact they thought social media and reality TV have had on perceptions of a career in the superyacht sector:

- 'Below Deck' has ruined newbie crews. **Captain working on a 30m to 50m private yacht**
- It is as similar as Big Brother is to a normal person living at home. Most yachts look to reduce drama and increase safety as does every professionally run vessel. **Captain working on a 30m to 50m private yacht**
- Funnily enough, social media portrays a very glamorous environment that doesn't highlight the hard work, nor the negative aspects of the yachting sector of the maritime industry – whilst the reality TV perspective gives a somewhat tainted yet relatively realistic insight into the human element. Between the two, there is a somewhat vague 'picture' of what it's like, perhaps 40%. **Captain working on a 30m to 50m charter yacht**
- Most yachts do not offer what social media posts portray, and this leads to a great deal of junior crew dissolution with their first few seasons in yachting. **Captain working on a 91m plus private yacht**
- 'Below Deck' type programs are an absolute travesty, they show not an ounce of reality and make the industry look like an under-crewed bunch of idiots on a permanent bender. Instagram is destroying rational itineraries. People think a photo taken in the off-season, on a perfect day, in an inaccessible location, and endlessly retouched is a realistic request as a destination. Instant gratification. "Why can't we do this now". Ugh. **Captain working on a 30m to 50m charter yacht**
- Young crew think they are entitled to high salaries and lots of time off etc. because they are lucky enough to work on a superyacht. They forget they need to prove themselves as there are thousands more willing to replace them. **Captain working on a 30m to 50m private yacht**
- Below Decks is demoralising the professionalism of the crews that I have worked with. **Captain working on a 51m to 90m private yacht**

Crew hiring, retention, and management

The Superyacht Captain Report

Crew management is an important part of a captain's role, particularly concerning the retention and hiring of crew. We shared earlier in the report that personnel management was our surveyed captains' top stress factor at work. Have captains found it challenging to hire crew over the last 12 months or have we seen an improvement since our last survey?

Three-quarters of captains are finding it tough to hire crew

Unfortunately, the situation has got worse for captains with three-quarters now sharing they are finding it tough to hire crew, up from 68% in 2021. We were keen to understand why the situation had got worse and asked for captains to share their experiences:

- It is getting more and more difficult to find a good crew who actually want to work. **Captain working on a 30m to 50m private yacht**
- Junior crew members are much more entitled than ever and have insane demands that can't be met. You must earn your stripes before asking for rotation and other benefits awarded to senior crew. **Captain working on a 51m to 90m charter yacht**
- Too many inexperienced crew and salary expectations are too high. **Captain working on a 51m to 90m charter yacht**
- 75% have poor skills, have no loyalty to the job, and want everything for minimal input. **Captain working on a 51m to 90m private yacht**
- High expectations and low performance are not uncommon among newcomers. Chefs continue to be the real problem with erratic temperaments. **Captain working on a 30m to 50m charter yacht**
- Quality crew members are hard to find, as is staying power. The skillsets are becoming harder to find too. An extraordinary lack of references being chased up is becoming evident. **Captain working on a 51m to 90m private yacht**
- Despite the abundance of crew available, it's hard to find quality candidates with the required skills and attitude. **Captain working on a 30m to 50m charter yacht**

- The crew has different needs from before the pandemic. The crew members' idea of longevity is very different from what it was five years ago. **Captain working on a 51m to 90m private yacht**

A blueprint for employee skills and competencies

When hiring new crew members, captains shared their blueprint of the employee competencies and skills they desired. Adaptability, initiative, communication, problem-solving, and productivity were rated as the most desired soft skills.

Adaptability feels like a skill every human needs in today's world. Past, present, and future changes mean we must learn to adapt. We need to feel empowered to navigate challenges, seize opportunities, and lead more fulfilling lives, whether at work or home.

Charman shares: *"I think what captains are identifying in adaptability is the speed and openness to it, rather than the complete lack of it. People will generally adapt eventually but captains need people to do it quickly, especially if they are trying to sort a guest request or dealing with a safety issue."*

Communication can come in many forms, from verbal to body language, and is required with different stakeholders onboard a superyacht. It is essential to safety, guest satisfaction, teamwork, and efficient operations. Effective communication not only ensures the smooth functioning of a superyacht but also contributes to a positive and memorable experience for both crew and guests onboard.

"In my experience, the initiative skillset is highly valued because it contributes to efficiency, problem-solving, safety, guest satisfaction, and overall professionalism. Crew members who take the initiative often play a pivotal role in ensuring the success and smooth operation of the yacht," says Purse.



Adaptability is the most desired soft skill in new crew hires

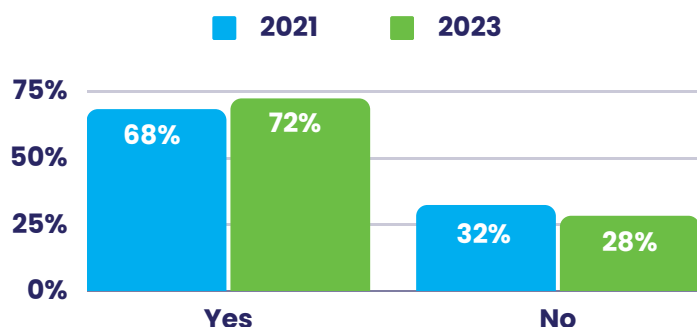
Crew hiring, retention, and management – continued

The Superyacht Captain Report

Captains find it harder to retain crew

If captains are finding it hard to hire crew, are they also finding it difficult to retain crew members for more than three years? Yes, they are, and more so since our last survey.

Do you find it difficult to retain talent for more than three years? 2021 versus 2023



We were interested in what was impacting long-term retention. The surveyed captains shared their thoughts:

- Three years is a decent commitment. If everyone stayed longer, there would be no progression possible. **Captain working on a 51m to 90m private yacht**
- As people want to progress, they need to move to vessels where they can get more responsibility. **Captain working on a 30m to 50m private yacht**
- Boats that can hold crew for three years or more are few and far between. Crew ideas of longevity have evolved. It's more about what the yacht will give rather than what they can offer the yacht. **Captain working on a 51m to 90m private yacht**
- 'The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence' mentality means that people are demanding change. It's usually the more senior crew who require/desire stability. **Captain working on a 30m to 50m charter yacht**
- Crew members are consistently impatient to move up and move on if a promotion isn't offered as quickly as they feel it should. **Captain working on a 91m plus private yacht**

- Keeping senior crew is a key goal. After a few years in the industry, crew members tend to be looking for a better work/lifestyle balance. Junior positions should stay seasonal or short-term, this will encourage them to work towards a better balance and career opportunities, which will then have a big impact on crew retention and longevity. Subsequently, there will be a long-term benefit to owners/operators, for what in the big picture is a relatively small increase in operational costs. **Captain working on a 30m to 50m private yacht**

- Our Chef and Stewardess are seasonal positions only so, unfortunately, this yacht is treated as a good, experience-building stepping stone towards other more attractive jobs (better salary, longer-term prospects, etc.). Holding on to a good Engineer is also problematic if they are following their career/qualifications path, after they have earned their sea-time with this yacht (engine size) they naturally want to progress on to yachts with larger engines. **Captain working on a 30m to 50m private yacht**

Training and development become a higher priority in improving life onboard

With many captains citing retaining their crew as difficult, we wanted to find out if there was anything they could do to improve life onboard. Out of five factors, captains shared what they thought would have the most positive impact on their team.

For the second year running, work-life balance came out on top. However, what was more interesting is that training and development has increased as an area that they can do more on to improve life onboard.

Charman says: "I found this interesting as I have been talking recently about the concept of micro-markers and its impact on retention. People want to see their careers grow and make progressive steps. Learning opportunities, training, more responsibility, and projects can go a long way in making people feel challenged in their roles and that they are progressing upwards."

Final thoughts and recommendations

The Superyacht Captain Report

Yachting continues to stand out as one of maritime's most dynamic and rapidly evolving sectors. Within this dynamic environment, the role of superyacht captains has never been more challenging. With superyachts increasing in size, incorporating cutting-edge technology, and adopting eco-friendly practices, the expectations placed on these leaders have reached new heights. Their pivotal role in meeting the ever-expanding demands of the owners, management, guests, and the crew has never been more pronounced.

As the hiring marketplace for superyacht captains and crew, as well as the ability to retain them becomes increasingly competitive, people strategies will remain important. Attracting new generations has been talked about in detail over the last five years, but the switch to how they will be retained in the future is going to become more prevalent.

We have produced a selection of recommendations to consider for the future, including:

- Embed a renewed focus on reducing stress and improving work-life balance for captains
- Create micro-markers to help improve retention rates among crew members
- Consider succession planning sooner rather than later
- Re-recruit your captains and offer pay rises in line with what would be available with a new employer
- Consider implementing a 2/2 rotation (or the preferred rotation type of your captain)

It has been our privilege to share the thoughts and feelings of superyacht captains and we would like to say a personal thank you to everyone who took part. We are pleased to have been able to create and share this with the superyacht community and we hope the insights have been interesting and thought-provoking.

Mark and Kelsey



Methodology

The Superyacht Captain Report

The Superyacht Captain Survey was conducted over a five-week period. A total of 191 captains participated in the survey, an increase from 138 in 2021.

Survey design

The survey was designed to include superyacht captains from both charter and private yachts, a variety of experience levels and geographical locations, and all vessel sizes.

Respondents were able to answer the survey questions anonymously online using Survey Monkey, a widely recognised survey platform. Each respondent was asked to complete 30 questions, and all responses were treated with the utmost confidentiality.

No personal data that could identify individuals was associated with the answers.

Data collection

The survey was promoted through several channels, including the Faststream Recruitment website, email communications, and social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook.

Data analysis

The collected survey responses were thoroughly analysed to identify significant trends and points of interest in the research. We also utilised our findings from our Superyacht Captain Survey 2021 to highlight trends and reflections from the past 24 months.

Our team of superyacht recruitment experts reviewed the data to ensure that it accurately reflected market realities and global trends. We believe that this report provides a comprehensive and representative view of employment and benefits trends and opportunities in the superyacht captain profession worldwide, thanks to the survey's extensive scale, reach, and our market expertise.

Please note, that all quotes from respondents represent their thoughts and views and not those of Faststream Superyacht Crew, Faststream Recruitment or their employees.

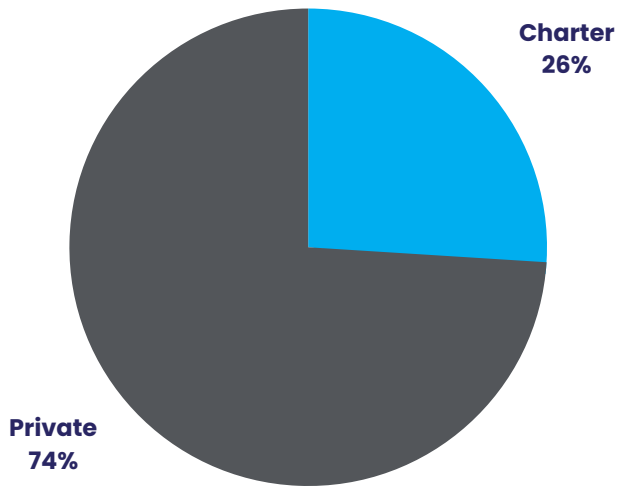
This report was created internally by Faststream Recruitment.

Participant yacht information

The Superyacht Captain Report

These charts illustrate the yacht voyage type and size of yacht of the captains who took part in the survey.

Yacht voyage type



Size of yacht

