

Superyacht Captains Share 3 Key Yacht Crew Management Tips

Crew turnover is at an all-time high, and whilst everyone is discussing the reasons behind this, we're revealing 3 key yacht crew management tips. After all, keeping your crew happy, while making sure you get the most out of them plays a major factor in being a great leader. This not only goes for Superyacht Captains, but also for chief officers, heads of departments, and yacht management teams.

We spoke to a handful of Captains to narrow down what skills are most important as a leader, so you can assess if you have what it takes to be a great yacht captain:

1. Communication is Key

Just like any working environment, good communication is a key skill to managing productivity and maintaining working relationships. Whether they're senior crew or junior crew, a good captain will regularly speak with their crew and build a trustworthy relationship where yachties feel at ease to speak about certain situations/problems on board. By investing your time into the crew, the more effectively they can execute tasks.



Image by Superyacht Captain Tristan Mortlock

Captain [Tristan Mortlock](#) elaborates:

“Whilst not on charter we had daily meetings before work started. Everybody had an opportunity to talk about anything they wanted: Any issues, ideas to improve the running of the boat or daily tasks, things they liked and things they didn’t. By giving all crew members a voice, they felt heard and valued, improving the overall morale onboard. I’ve always said that a good crew have great channels of communications.”

2. Support and empower your Crew

Have you ever been in a job where you felt you were putting

your all in, and receiving nothing back, not even the slightest gratitude? It sucks. Now, compare that to a situation where you've done something good and someone has recognised you for it and shown their appreciation – it made you feel good, right?

The point we're getting at here is that no matter how high up the hierarchy you are, you should always value others and the work they're doing. The main reason is that they'll not only want to continue working for you but will also work harder because when people feel appreciated, they thrive.

"I speak to everyone the same way, whether he's the garbage man or the president of a university" – Albert Einstein



To further extend, [Captain Luke Hammond](#) shares his advice on yacht crew management tips:

“I think there are more than enough stories of people saying that yachting would be great without crew. But, in retrospect, it’s the crew that make or break any good yachting program.

Managing people is a hard enough task. But to elevate that to

living and working together 24/7 can sometimes be a little overwhelming. Looking from the outside in, I don't think enough credit goes to those Yacht Captains that maintain a happy safe crew.

Managing crew is fairly simple, as you can't rule from the top. You have to give the power to the crew, but have them understand that the Captain has final say. And trying to implement procedures when it's not wanted, doesn't work. They just get forgotten, neglected, or worse off, people lie. Which isn't the type of behavior or environment you want to live and work in.

I find that empowering the crew to make decisions (of which you already know the outcome), gives people a sense of empowerment. It allows them to be a part of the discussion. By giving ideas, they feel it's their idea and they'll work harder to maintain the status quo.

Another is direction, or better yet, purpose. Everyone is there to make money and travel. However, without purpose or direction, they wander. A clear outline of their role, but also the steps to how to move forward to their next role is important for a captain to make them aware of.

I always give people time lines... eg after X number of years you should have learnt what's necessary and then it's time to move on and learn from someone else. No one is getting fired, but if they realise that you as the Captain and the boat actually care, they stick around much longer.

We all started at the bottom with dreams and hopes. No one is bolted to the yacht, so they can come and go should they choose to. By empowering crew to make the right choices means you get the most out of them. They then go onto their next role with far more self-confidence."



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3. Make sure your crew are enjoying themselves

To conclude our three yacht crew management tips, let's talk about the importance of enjoying your job. There's nothing worse than being in a job you hate, working for someone that you also, hate. Put yourself in the shoes of a crew member that's working 14+ hours a day, for a Captain who's never once spoken to them about anything, apart from doing their job. Let us tell you now... You won't be retraining your crew for the long haul.



Image by Captain Louis Simon

Captain Louis Simon explains the importance of being “an upright and fair-play Captain”:

“First of all, it is essential to be an upright and fair-play captain. By giving to your crew, the crew themselves will give back to you.

In fact, when you are too strict with your crew in terms of

permission or time off, the latter will slip through your hands quickly. On the other hand, when you manage to reconcile work with time off, your crew follows you from boat to boat. Like a real family.

I also think that we're in an activity called in 'French pleasure commercial boat'. Meaning we have to enjoy ourselves in what we do. Therefore, it is essential that the crew feel good and that they have a smile. Because, a disgruntled crew is a showcase of the captain's management and the customers see this directly.

We are here to provide quality service to customers, as well as entertain them. And as I often say: "you don't have to be serious to do a good job"

It is essential to keep a hierarchy and that everyone stays in their place and at their position. But also, that the respect that relates to it is present because otherwise, it would be anarchy. However, to consolidate the bonds between the crew, it is important to share moments together (restaurants for example). By doing this, it shows them that we are there for work, but that we remain human also – although there are limits."

If you have any other thoughts on yacht crew management tips, send us an email at – Hello@superyachtcontent.com

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