

# Yacht Crew Rotational jobs: Good or Bad?

Yacht crew rotational jobs have almost become the norm these days. Looking back 10 years it was only experienced crew or those in short supply who got rotational positions onboard Superyachts. But things have changed and the trend on many yachts is now towards rotational jobs. Although we all love to have paid time off, there are pros and cons to this and not everyone will agree that there is a negative to having this much paid time off but here goes...



Image by [MGMT Yachts](#)

## The pros:

**Longevity:** Lots of us (have) worked on Superyachts for quite a few years. My final job in the industry was rotational and, as a senior crew member, I felt I had earned it. I had done 10 years + and the fact my job was rotational probably kept me in the industry for a few more years.

**Reward:** A lot of people view yacht crew rotational jobs as a

reward for experience and qualifications.

**Commitments:** Rotation can be a great opportunity for the older crew amongst you who have families etc, as It allows you to stay in the industry for longer AND get on with your life.

**Money:** It goes without saying that opting for a rotational job on board can essentially double your salary while working half as much for the same amount of money (in a lot of cases).

## **The Cons:**

**Entitlement:** A lot of yacht crew, no matter what level they are feel they should have a rotational position. This will negatively impact the industry, but more details on that shortly.

**Experience:** The more time you have off, the less experience you get. Therefore, as junior crew rotation is not always a good thing for your career.

**Expensive:** Rotation quite literally doubles payroll costs for yachts and so owners need to see a genuine benefit for this.

**Falsely inflates salaries:** If everyone has rotation all crew are effectively getting paid the same amount for half the work. This therefore falsely creates a very high salary base.



The Crew from M/Y Zeal

## **Is it the way forward?**

In a lot of cases, the answer appears to be yes. However, you have to look at both sides of the argument. Owners are happy to pay for extra crew if they see the upside as well as the expense. So, as a yacht owner, you would expect to see a more dedicated crew, longevity, and an improved work ethic. Surely, if you are getting paid the same amount of money for half the time on board you should be working twice as hard? We know this isn't possible but do you get what I mean here?

## **Yacht Crew rotational jobs for heads of department only?**

Maybe rotational jobs should be strictly limited to heads of departments who have "earned" their rotation? To find yourself in a Captain, Chief Officer, Chief Engineer, Chief Stewardess or head chef position requires a good deal of commitment and

time on the job. So, should it be a goal to strive for? And with the position comes the perks...

## But what about yacht crew rotational jobs for Junior recruits?

I was talking to a very experienced Captain recently who believes that time on/ off rotation for the junior crew can have hugely negative effects. Imagine you are in your first year on yachts and get a 2:2 rotation. Although it's not a common thing to happen when it does, it has a few knock-on effects:

- **You are spoilt for life.** You would never even look at another job that doesn't offer rotation. Maybe a good thing for the yacht you work on but not for career development.
- How do you get any **sea time**? 6 months off per year doesn't get you as many days at sea.
- **Experience?** It's very hard to learn anything if you are only at work half the time!
- **Savings.** Most crew these days set financial goals (ask [Crewfo](#) about this) and make an "escape plan". Does rotation mean that it takes twice as long to do this? If so, will you be yachting for a lot longer in order to achieve the same thing? Will you ever save any money?
- **Qualifications.** If you don't get the sea time and can't save, how can you do courses and progress? Will you be the eternal deckhand?

Of course, this is a bit exaggerated but makes sense. The same application doesn't suit every instance.

## Yacht Crew Agents and rotational jobs:

There are plenty of Crew Agents out there who will happily promote the benefits of rotational positions to owners and managers. To a degree this makes sense but there are a lot of

exceptions. If I were cynical I would suggest that the promotion of blanket rotation for all crews by crew agents is a simple way to earn more money. Possibly without regard for the long-term effect on the industry. Or owners' pockets for that matter. But, on the other hand, there is a strong case for pushing this. For all the reasons mentioned earlier. However, one approach does not suit all.

## **Is there a sensible way to do this?**

Yes of course, but it involves looking at all of the following and deciding what is appropriate:

- Yacht itinerary
- Needs of the owner
- Number of crew
- Budget
- Current crew turnover
- Current crew retention programme
- Onboard structure and departmental setup

Once you have reviewed all this you should have a better idea of what works.

## **How do you decide if a rotational job as a yachtie is right for you?**

As crew, it is worth remembering that what works for some may not work for all. If you are a junior crew member, in your first yacht job, it is very rare you will get a time for time rotation, **BUT**, it is not unheard of.

However, please bear in mind that this is not the be-all and end-all of yachting. If you are in a position where you need to learn, gain experience and qualifications this type of thing may not work for you until you are in a more senior position. And remember, not everyone has rotation. Far from it in fact. There are literally 1000's of crew and hundreds of

yachts that don't do this, as it is not practical or relevant.

My advice for green yachties is always to work hard, aim high and consider getting a rotational job later!

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