



Notes from PYA Chief Steward/ess Summit

Antibes Yacht Show
Thursday 7th April

- Welcome from the President of the PYA Andrew Schofield
- Procedure of events - Presentation by Joey Meen and comments from the panel, then a Q&A session with the audience
- Our aim: to create an industry standard for interior yacht crew
- Introduction of the panel by Norma Trease
 - Joey Meen - Honorary Secretary, PYA
 - Josephine Ive - Director, Magnums Butlers
 - Jacqueline Lyne - Director, Edmiston Yacht Management
 - Ian Biles - Director, Maritime Training Academy
 - Louise Sydbeck - Wine Consultant, Riviera Yacht Support
 - Peter Vogel - Managing Director of SSS Consultancy
 - Caroline Viljoen - Active renowned Chief Stewardess

Joey Meen:

Why have you been invited? We need your help to develop the course and contents.

Your feedback will help us develop this training course.

Our aim is to create a structure similar to that of the deck and engineering departments. Interior crew are the frontline, the success of a charter depends on them, and yet they receive little training.

The Continuous Professional Development workgroup of the PYA has been working on this idea for a while now.

This training will not be obligatory but we would like to set an industry standard working alongside training partners to produce a unified certification process recognised as an industry standard.

Developed for you, with your input.

We are looking at including modules such as hospitality management, first aid, uniform management, environmental awareness, etc...

- Each member of the panel were invited to give their views as follows:-

Ian Biles:

People will benefit from access to information. They are busy. We need to be told what people are expecting in terms of training and knowledge.

Do we need to cover technical aspects + Insurance requirements?

Caroline Viljoen:

It is important that interior crew are aware of the technical aspects of a yacht and have some knowledge of first aid. If not they are walking around blind. The captain must pass on rules and information to all of his crew.

When Caroline recruits interior crew, for her personality is more important than skills. She can train the skills to the right person. However Egon (her husband and Captain on M/Y Legend) says that it is important that crew have some record of what they have done and courses completed. He wants to see a minimum standard. A structured course would be a great help for his recruitment.

John Wyborn:

The interior department should have the same technical training as the deck & engineering departments.

He would like to see a standard set that all training providers can follow. Who should decide what the crew should be trained in? Not the trainer. The standard and structure should be set by a third party and the PYA are the right association to do this. Crew should keep a log of their sea-time.

Peter Vogel:

On cruise ships crew are forced to keep a record of their training and sea-time.

Joey:

Presented the Crew Work Book. It was also been suggested that a Training Record Book be developed for interior crew.

Caroline:

She is happy to share all her knowledge with her department. This gives them credibility, something that interior crew lack at the moment.

John Percival:

The course would be a financial commitment and would therefore show a certain commitment to the yachting industry from the crew who enrol.

- Comments - Question & Answer session with the audience

John Percival:

Does the industry see this course as necessary?

If the course is not compulsory will it be seen as credible? A more formal training path is definitely needed for interior crew.

There are reservations about the course's credibility if it is not enforced by the MCA or insurance companies.

There are so many different requirements from the interior crew depending on the size of the vessel; will the course be encompassing enough to cater for all?

Cyd Mansell:

Training cannot be mandatory. The record book for interior crew is a very good idea, crew should invest in their career. Would definitely like to see a course like this.

Alison Rentoul:

Will the training encompass sea-time? Is a certain amount of sea-time required at each level of the course? Answer: Yes.

Will the PYA be taking onboard the idea of a training book for interior crew? Answer: Yes they will.

Jacqueline Lyne:

How do we make this into a career? We need to develop a steward/ess course and adapt it to shore based employment so that crew can continue to work when they leave yachting. We lose great people at a key stage with all the knowledge in this industry because of a shelf life on interior crew... It is a shame to lose all that knowledge; it is not always passed on. They need to be prepared for a shore-side job.

Do we undervalue the skills required to be a Chief Stew? The hardest position to fill is that of the Chief Stew with experience.

Josephine Ive:

Butler training takes a very long time. You start with room service, then food & beverage, reception, concierge, junior butler... There must be a similar framework in yachting. And you must be able to record training and sea-time.

Chief Stews must to be prepared to train people – so we need to train the trainer - this must be included in the PYA's motive. It's a motivation tool.

Rob from Triple S:

How will the accreditation fit into the program?

Joey answers: the PYA has an accreditation procedure in place. We use the same process as the MCA does with their training providers (ISO requirement). The course will be developed, governed, and controlled by the PYA. Any trainers used will have to be accredited by us.

Peter Evans:

The MCA will not approve any interior courses, this is not their field.

His recruitment process would be made much easier if interior crew were equipped with a Crew Work Book/Service Record Book, as a proof of what they have done. And it shows that they are serious.

Peter offers ongoing training for crew and has a healthy budget for this on his yacht, however there is not much out there on offer for interior crew so most of the budget gets swallowed up by the deck and engineering departments. They would definitely welcome a structured course for interior training.

Audience member:

Stewardess has a high level of hospitality experience and none of this has been recognised in yachting. She would love to see a course like this to be recognised for her experience.

Alison Rentoul:

Interior crew are not staying as long as they should and we are running out of good senior crew. A course like this is very much needed to bring junior crew up to the required level.

Sheila (Environmental Yacht Services):

There is a lack of environmental awareness, especially with interior crew. If crew learnt about such issues they could not only protect the environment but also prevent a lot of health issues.

Joey replied:

Under the new STCW Manila amendments there will be a provision for Environmental training. We intend to incorporate this within the scheme as a minimum.

Audience member (chief stewardess):

She thinks this course is a very good idea. She is trying to set up her own training scheme onboard and would welcome the support of a course like this to help her train and select her steward/esses (train the trainer).

Louise Sydbeck:

There is very little awareness in the industry of wine knowledge. Would like to know how important wine training is on a yacht?

Alex Bowman (Steward):

Has worked in the industry for 9 years and is amazed at how little emphasis there is on interior running on a yacht. The idea of this course is fantastic. But it must be tied into an internationally recognised course. Interior department is in charge of some very important wine to be stored in the worst place possible...

Peter Vogel:

Has seen a very high turnover of interior crew when he started in yachting in the interior department. So he recruited butlers, bartenders, professionals from the hospitality industry for better level of service and length of service.

Have the panel considered mentoring? They have a lot of combined experience to share.

Joey Meen:

We have written the outline for this course, now we want the audience to fill in the gaps/how can they do this? Through the feedback form. The PYA will keep the audience informed on the progress and a workgroup will be set up after the meeting. We aim to launch the course at the Monaco Yacht Show 2011.

Louise Sydbeck:

Would crew be interested in a distance course for wine training? Answer - Yes.

Do interior crew have budgets and allocated time off for training? Answer - not often

Alex Bowman:

How does the PYA deal with the notion of 'undervalued' interior positions that is such a big part of yacht culture in his opinion?

Answered by John Percival: he has worked with very professional interior crew. We need to show interior crew as the professionals that they are. This course will allow that. In 1995 people were driving yachts without any professional qualifications; things have come on since then. This is the same situation.

To close the Q&A session, John Percival asks the audience to put their hands up if they are in favour of this course. 100% of attendees put their hand up. Both captains and interior crew want this.

- Andrew Schofield closes the summit by thanking the audience for their attendance and contributions. We have set ourselves an ambitious task.