



The
Seafarers
Happiness
Index

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EXECUTIVE CREW WELFARE ROUNDTABLE

INDUSTRY REPORT



Standard Club
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As we celebrate International Day of the Seafarer, we are pleased to present a review of the outcomes from the recent Mission to Seafarers Executive Roundtable on Crew Welfare held in Singapore. The event focused on identifying solutions to the challenges faced by seafarers.

The Roundtable saw active and valuable participation from a range of industry experts and stakeholders, and we are immensely grateful for their valuable insights.

This report highlights the extensive work that lies ahead, as we look to develop the fixes needed. As we identify gaps and work to support efforts which are already ongoing, there is much to be done.

It is time to set our course and navigate towards the desired outcomes. With the support of seafarer welfare champions like you, we can overcome these challenges. By leveraging our collective energy and engaging with the right individuals and organisations, we look to drive meaningful change in seafarer welfare.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude once again to all participants for their invaluable contributions.

Steven Jones
Founder
Seafarers Happiness Index



WE GOT THROUGH A LOT...

The Roundtable explored five key areas that significantly impact the lives of seafarers: access to shore leave and connection with loved ones, mental health and wellbeing, package security, diversity, career progression, living and working conditions, and support and management on board and ashore.

Participants engaged in open discussions, and it proved to be a valuable platform for exchanging insights and proposing potential solutions. In a collaborative space for industry stakeholders highlighted the multifaceted challenges and underscored the urgent need for proactive measures and innovative solutions.



WORKING THROUGH

In the first crew welfare area, participants highlighted the difficulties seafarers face in accessing shore leave and connecting with loved ones. We discussed various factors, such as visa restrictions, port security measures, and limited communication facilities.

We also covered the importance of addressing these challenges and suggested solutions such as developing standardised shore leave policies.

Next, participants discussed the impact of mental health and well-being on seafarers' lives and the need for greater awareness and support for mental health issues. We also shared best practices, such as providing access to mental health resources, training for mental health first aid, and creating a supportive work environment.

In the third area, participants discussed issues related to seafarers' reward packages, security, diversity, and career progression. We highlighted the need for fair and equal treatment of seafarers regardless of who they are. There were also discussions of ways to improve career prospects and training opportunities for seafarers.

In the fourth area, participants discussed living and working conditions, and the impact they have on seafarer health and well-being. We discussed the need for better accommodation, food, and recreational facilities on board ships.

Finally, participants discussed the support and management provided to seafarers on board and ashore. They highlighted the importance of effective leadership, communication, and conflict-resolution skills in creating a supportive work environment.

The aim was to provide a platform for constructive discussions and knowledge-sharing among participants. The insights and recommendations generated from the exercise will inform efforts to improve seafarers' welfare and working conditions globally. We then took all the ideas, innovations, suggestions and discussions and developed them into work streams to be addressed and developed.

PULLING THINGS TOGETHER

Translating the roundtable exercise findings into tangible work streams requires finding the right action plan, developing strong partnerships, and with targeted goals. With a concerted effort, these initiatives can lead to real outcomes that improve the lives of seafarers globally.

We produced a staggering amount in the two hours we were together. As you can see we have alighted on a vast array of potential changes, fixes, developments and ideas.

We are now assessing how best to potentially attack the issues. There are follow-up meetings planned, perhaps as part of London International Shipping Week (LISW) in September, and a return to Singapore in 2024 to see what we have managed to achieve thus far, and to try and build on the project successes.

That gives a year to try and really drive the changes that seafarers want, need, and may even begin demanding.



1

ACCESS TO SHORE LEAVE AND CONNECTION WITH LOVED ONES

- Reach out to flag States on key/essential worker status
- Reach out and engage with all industry bodies, IMO and UN
- IMO/ILO Number for seafarers
- Coding of seafarer issues – abandonment, stowaways, piracy, terrorism, smuggling, shore leave
- Cross reference between codings, seafarer numbers, vessel numbers and DOC
- Promulgate connectivity options in commercially neutral manner
- Options to better understand and manage pressures on seafarer and the standards which impact them
- Work with port/terminal operators on the importance of shore leave or even of alongside rest days. Encourage discounted rest time in port or anchorage
- Work with small owners. Engage them on the issues, and advocate for seafarers and foster better links and relations
- Treat crew as grown ups! Foster better respect, recognition and empathy from all ashore towards seafarers
- Form of SIRE approach to seafarer wellbeing
- Spread the message to the world about the importance of seafarers. Advocate on their skills, and the things they do. Make sure people know and understand, so they can appreciate
- Get owners, managers, charterers aligned on costs and issues
- Port Metrics on seafarers and their use of facilities and access to shore leave
- Port city approach to local community beyond industry to engage and make sure they know and understand seafarers, and develop means of supporting and welcoming

2

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

- Encourage use of awareness of the tools currently available
- Use data to develop the tools to address real issues
- Make sure industry champions help the development of any missing
- Innovate within apps etc to ensure maximum sharing from seafarers
- Understand the barriers to engagement – address survey lag
- Find the triggers to encourage seafarers – tokens to spend at airports on their way home to make them open up about their time that trip
- Remove social barriers and stigma around mental health
- Get industry leaders to talk about their own mental health issues or challenges. Get them to open up and the rest will follow
- Physical condition monitoring
- Hydroponic fruit and vegetables grown onboard
- Mandatory training on mental health – how to manage their own, to recognise issues and to help others
- Manage connectivity – have safeguards, but also alternatives to make life better without the retreat into the cabin mentality
- Share industry best practices. Have a roster of champions who are proud of the results they get
- Mental health check – similar to ENG1 status, but on an ongoing basis
- Mentorship programme – not just Senior leaders down, but up and across too – make sure everyone understands the problems, but also the fixes
- Leadership management training mandatory to consider seafarer welfare
- Ask seafarers for their solutions to make life better – prizes and competitions for best ideas
- Use ships as test beds for solutions – learn from "maritime culture labs" launched by a range of shipping companies

3

PACKAGE, SECURITY, DIVERSITY, CAREER PROGRESSION

- Mechanisms to enhance job security
 - Move to permanent contracts where possible
 - More accountable owners – issues of pensions addressed
 - Compensation issues – fix the lag between on-time repatriation and salary triggers
 - Rolling contracts to provide more certainty
 - Improve working condition, better connectivity
 - Manage career progression – perhaps seniority payments even if not promoted
 - Provide benefits such as insurance for families
 - Invest in upskilling – better access to online training
 - Leadership training
 - Provide the skills needed for shore jobs
 - Provide better links to shore based professions
 - Ship to shore transition career programmes
 - Improve recruitment focus – make a message attractive to younger generation
 - Make sure psychological safety is given as much priority and emphasis as physical
 - Engage school children – sponsor a ship schemes
 - Engage with teachers and STEM subjects
 - Tax breaks for seafarers – drive policy change
 - Change the reality for female seafarers – but also understand the barriers for men, the fears and stresses they are experiencing. Get a dialogue going
 - Digital twin seafaring
 - War gaming careers, social interactions and relationship scenarios
 - Develop incentives and re-joining benefits to come back
 - Audit the industry find out extent of seafarer welfare activities and develop best practices and guidance
 - Learn from Navies globally. The Royal Navy and US Navy, as examples, have done much work in these areas
 - As AI potentially impacts white collar employment in traditional maritime supply nations, set about offering skilled people with careers at sea once more
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4

LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS

- Talk to seafarers, listen and survey. Understand the issues on ships. Already being done with SHI and Idwal – how can we ensure a meta data approach
 - Ensure living wage
 - Assist with the flow of costs between time at sea and ashore
 - Expand definitions and responses to health on board to include mental health
 - Also “radio medical advice” expanded to reflect mental health
 - Provide a psychological “safe space” to talk and share - with access to professional guidance and support
 - Minimum victualling allowance
 - Minimum standards benchmarking
 - Ensure the right engagement and buy-in from industry
 - Ensure seafarers feel a sense of trust across the vessel – they can talk to seniors and be heard
 - Make sure on boarding/familiarisation includes talk of what they do to socialise and enjoy life
 - Improve vessel designs for improved homely vessel environments. Make ships a nicer place to live
 - Mattresses and bedding are part of MLC – but realistically who is testing ?
 - Explore shorter contracts
 - Explore maternity leave and rotation patterns
 - Access to sanitary products and ability to dispose
 - Access to correctly fitted and sized PPE
 - Provision of changing/bathrooms rooms for women
 - Stop the culture of rumour and gossip. Build a team approach
 - Ensure no one feels isolated, unsupported or alone
 - Online social network on board
 - Change narrative from cost to opportunity – welfare as risk management and excellence. Seafarer Capital! If you don’t have this, you don’t have a business
 - Mechanism for seafarers to report positives. They have to feedback and share what is going well. What are the changes which are making an impact and improving life
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5

SUPPORT AND MANAGEMENT ON BOARD AND ASHORE

- Global promotion of seafarers and their importance
- Humanising shipping
- Emphasise cultural currency of shipping – its importance and get images of ships and seafarers into art
- Create trust, respect and empathy between ship and shore, but also within structures at sea and into wider world
- Potential for UN Special Seafarer Rapporteur. A neutral focal point
- Balance the move from ship to shore – make seafarers feel valued at all stages
- All seafarers to be heard, and their issues...also their impact to be understood
- Harness and focus on soft skills
- Develop mechanism to build better ship to shore dialogue
- Make some consistent conditions with shore
- Apply the same ethos on team building ashore with at sea
- Review processes to see how things can be made better for seafarers
- Change the language to emphasise people – example is minimum safe manning
- Asking whether there is genuinely respect and appreciation
- Issue of minimum safe manning levels. The workload impacts need to be explored and understood
- Minimum Safe Manning (+) designation
- Stop culture of women being seen as less competent. Create a level playing field
- Better preparation for new joiners into industry
- Ensuring that all cultural differences are explored, and their impact managed
- Better Onboard environment and recreation
- Budgets and spending – ensuring that seafarers have the budgets for their needs and payments to agents, chandlers, suppliers are on time
- Education and outreach in labour supply areas – to ensure awareness of rogue agents and scams...“friends don’t let friends sign up to Gmail manning agents”
- Business students studying seafarer issues to ensure costs of welfare can be mitigated
- In event of accidents or incidents use trauma informed care and management

THANK YOU

Without the willingness of those who attended and their determination to find solutions the Roundtable would not have been possible. The focus has to shift to delivery and the mechanisms to drive positive change. So, now it is your turn to get involved.

See www.happyatsea.org for more details on how you can get involved.



Attendees of the Mission to Seafarers Executive Roundtable on Crew Welfare in the NorthStandard offices, Singapore.

Let's take these solutions, explore what can work and make good things happen..
