



# GANGWAY

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Welcome to Issue 4 of **Gangway**, where we will continue our exploration of the issues surrounding maritime manning and HR Management.

This time out we shall investigate whether we are truly being rocked by crisis, and if so why?

Do the wealth of new employment options open to talented young people in traditional labour supply nations erode the attraction of shipping?

Does the fear of criminalisation, and the curse of overwork and fatigue mean that people are simply too anxious to go to sea? Do the risks outweigh the rewards, or is there still a real career to be forged at sea?

It seems that in times such as these there are rather more questions than answers – so it's time to rub our crystal ball to see whether we're quite as doomed as so many seem to think.

As ever we hope you find the issues discussed of interest, and please feel free to contact us if you require any further information on maritime manning, or on the solutions offered by Shiptalk Recruitment Limited.

## SEAGOING CAREERS in focus...

### An interview with our MD - Anneley Pickles

**SHIPTALK - ARE YOU CONCERNED THAT THE INDUSTRY IS FACING A 'LABOUR CRISIS'?**

AP - Perhaps the word "crisis" is a little dramatic, but it isn't too far from the mark. The writing is definitely on the wall, and companies must start planning ahead now.

At present, I think the word "depression" probably fits the bill better – there is a depressed supply of qualified labour, and even more worrying there is a depressed supply of people entering the industry.

We need to reassure potential seafarers that there is a really rewarding career path to follow. Once the brightest people can see that they can either reach the very top at sea, or they can move ashore with equal respect and status, then perhaps the trend will be reversed, and the "crisis" will be averted.

Well, at least until the cycle starts all over again, as is the way of shipping.

**SHIPTALK - HAVE YOU HEARD ANY ACCOUNTS OF COMPANIES ACTUALLY HAVING DIFFICULTIES RECRUITING SEAFARERS AND WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ATTRACT NEW RECRUITS?**

AP - Some companies have been quite outspoken in the challenges they are facing. While others like to pretend they are immune to the exodus of people from the sea.



Anneley Pickles  
Managing Director ShiptalkJOBS.com



*Modern day life at sea...*

There are seemingly 3 types of companies at the moment, the good, the bad and the average...as is the norm, it seems it is the average who are being squeezed hardest by this depressed labour supply.

“Good” companies have a high profile, they have big budgets to advertise and they have a reputation for looking after their sea staff – as such they are still able to attract and retain people.

The “bad”, always tend to cope, as they care little about the standard of the people they get. It is a sad fact that such companies are still able to get poorly trained and educated people onto their ships through ruthless, dodgy manning companies dealing with the lowest common denominators.

So it is the “Average” companies that are hard pressed to get the right people. They may not have the profile, the shiny ships or glamorous trades of the “good”, but they need to tap into the same high quality supply of labour. At present “good” seafarers are able to look beyond average employers.

So all companies need to learn from the best, and use their tactics – ShiptalkJOBS works with the likes of Maersk, Viking

Recruitment and OSG, three companies who are able to cast their net far to catch the people they need.

The “average” operators need to wake up, and sharpen their act fast, and it goes without saying that we need to make it impossible for the bad companies to operate.

**SHIPTALK - DO YOU BELIEVE THAT THE NUMBER OF ‘SKILLED SEAFARERS’ IS IN DECLINE?**

AP - Yes, the evidence is clearly there to see. The BIMCO Manpower study says it all and is definitely backed by the anecdotes we hear in the market.

The world has changed, and so too has the desire for people to go to sea.

First those in Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries were exposed to alternative employment and training opportunities, then slowly over the past decade or so the major supply markets, such as India and The Philippines have also undergone economic growth to the extent that people there now have other options.

This may have been fine when seagoing was seen as a proud profession, but the whole life, career and reward system

associated with seagoing has been eroded hugely. As such, clever people have other options...and sadly many have taken them.

**SHIPTALK - DO YOU THINK THAT A CAREER AT SEA IS NO LONGER SEEN AS AN ATTRACTIVE CAREER?**

AP - It is not easy to say whether seafaring is an attractive career, that is purely subjective, but the declining numbers coming into a seagoing career suggest there is a problem.

The simpler view, as we said earlier, is that there are now many more careers on offer to those who may in the past gone to sea. Options which may well be more, or certainly equally attractive.

The OECD has recently undertaken a study into people, or what they now cheerily term, "Human Capital". They have seen, not unsurprisingly that the world's economy is changing.

Globalisation has seen that jobs move from country to country, while computers and advanced communications have, and are changing the ways business works, and even the sort of work people do.

You are no longer likely to follow in your father or mother's footsteps.

The employment market has exploded, to provide options and opportunities that simply did not exist in the past.

The other change is that many nations now see their people not as “cheap exports”, but as a necessary tool to fuel their own ambitions for economic growth and success. So when your nation wants you and your friends to stay at home to build a brave new world, then perhaps there is a certain attraction to that.

**SHIPTALK - WOULD IT BE FAIR TO SAY THAT WHEN YOU ATTEND ANY MANNING AND CREWING CONFERENCE CONCERN IS ALWAYS RAISED OVER THE APPARENT LACK OF SEAGOING WORKFORCE?**

AP - There is an underlying concern from most of the people we speak to, though this isn't confined to presentations and coffee breaks at conferences.

For the majority of our clients it isn't so much about the problem, more about the solutions. They recognise the fight to find the right people, and are employing creative and innovative ways of locating and attracting those that are out there.

As all mariners know you need to alter your course early and decisively to avoid danger, and that is what the most enlightened companies are already doing.

The old ways of recruiting are no longer bearing fruit, so there is an aggressive drive to spread the message about seagoing careers to potential recruits by all means available.

**SHIPTALK - DO YOU THINK THAT SEAFARERS ARE WORRIED ABOUT CRIMINALISATION AND GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY?**

AP - Yes of course criminalisation is a worry. It's often all too easy to forget just how it must feel to be a seafarer in today's legal climate. It's vital therefore that we can empathise with seafarers, and appreciate their feelings of vulnerability.

Seafarers feel that they are all too easily persecuted as scapegoats. So criminalisation is indeed a major concern for many seafarers, and worryingly it appears to be affecting potential seafarers too.

The issue of accountability perhaps is less of a concern. Seafarers have long felt accountable for their actions, and well-trained professionals wouldn't have it any other way. It's when seafarers are no longer capable of being accountable, because they aren't seen as important or skilled enough, that's when the issue of accountability bites.

**SHIPTALK - HOW REAL IS THE ISSUE OF SEAFARER FATIGUE AND DO YOU THINK THE PROBLEM GOES BEYOND MANNING LEVELS AND WATCH KEEPING PATTERNS?**

AP - Fatigue is very real, and is not simply triggered by whether, say, the 2nd Mate has managed to grab enough sleep.

There are issues relating to fatigue which go beyond mere manning or watchkeeping patterns, these factors can simply exacerbate the problem or help guard against it.

Stress, homesickness, onboard conflict, shore interference/indifference, quick turnarounds, cultural environment, entertainment, quality of provisions...all can have a huge effect on a person, and their ability to deal with fatigue.

Though despite the intricacies, a happy, well-fed person, one who has contact with home, who has a laugh, who enjoys the job, and who gets enough sleep is far less likely to feel the effects of fatigue. So perhaps the issue of fatigue isn't so complicated after all!

**SHIPTALK - DO YOU THINK THAT MINIMUM MANNING LEVELS SHOULD BE INCREASED AS SEAFARERS CURRENTLY SERVING ONBOARD HAVE BEEN FACED NOT ONLY WITH AN INCREASED WORKLOAD, BUT ALSO GREATER ANSWERABILITY?**

AP - Minimum safe manning levels are a

real hot potato. It seems the question remains, “when is enough people, not enough”? When something goes wrong!

There is strong evidence to suggest that on certain ships, working certain trades there needs to be more people, but it is never a one size fits all equation.

Perhaps the one area of agreement is in the call to end the two-watch system, (or 6-on, 6-off). The Nautical Institute has been calling for this to be scrapped, and we strongly agree with them.

On the other hand, many modern vessels are designed specifically for small numbers of crew, and regardless of whether we agree with that or not, at least some thought has gone into it.

For such vessels it's a matter of design...a new vessel, with a wonderful array of equipment, and which uses the highest standard officers, all living in comfortable accommodation is very different to a vessel that over the years has simply seen it's manning compliment slashed.

That's when it gets dangerous, when you get a ship that used to have 40 onboard, but which is now expected to do the same and more with half the people. The sums don't seem to add up.

**SHIPTALK - FALSIFYING WORKING HOURS - WHAT CAN BE DONE TO PUT A STOP TO THIS?**

AP - There are numerous issues at play in the fatigue debate, and while much research has gone into the physiological effects of fatigue, we often overlook the psychology of report filing process.

Officers and crews need to understand that the records are there to protect them, and they need to realise just how powerful a tool these records are.

There is much evidence to prove that at the moment this paper exercise just isn't working, as inexplicably seafarers routinely falsify them because they feel they ought to, because there is a traditional culture of “getting the job” done.

In addition to this there is still a culture of distrust with the shore management, even when the Superintendents may tell you there isn't – with the result that in many cases crews would much rather suffer fatigue than face the wrath of the managers if they start to really clock up the hours of work. There is real pressure on personnel to stay under the hours. Despite all the moves away from a blame culture woe betide anyone who allows themselves to work too long, or who makes the cardinal sin of putting the real hours down on paper.

A terrible mess and one that needs major reflection from all sides.

Anneley Pickles, MD  
ShiptalkJOBS.com

## Recent Technical Developments at ShiptalkJOBS.com

We realise that our recruiters have busy schedules that do not always allow time to log on to our website and search for suitable jobseekers to fill their seagoing vacancies. So in response to this concern we have now completed our "Jobs by Email" facility.

This new technical development means that our recruiters and jobseekers alike will have received emails linking them to appropriate jobseekers and/or jobs respectively.

Employers logging on to ShiptalkJOBS.com with their username and password will see we have added a new link to the employers menu namely, "Match Jobseekers".

If they click on this link they will be taken to a page that lists their jobs with the option to automatically match their job with jobseekers.



The screenshot shows the ShiptalkJOBS.com website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for Home, About Us, Career News, Contact Us, JOBSEEKERS, RECRUITERS, and AGENTS. Below this is a secondary navigation bar with links for SHIPTALK.COM, SHIPTALK BLOG, SHIPTALK JOBS, SHIPTALK DIRECTORY, SHIPTALK IMAGES, ST SHORE BASED JOBS, and SHIPTALK SHOP. The main content area is divided into several sections:

- Jobseekers Menu:** A sidebar menu for logged-in users (Anneley) with links for Home Page, Edit Details, Edit Resume, Upload CV, Upload Photo, Search Jobs, Match Jobs, Change Availability, Add Success Story, Delete Account, and Log Out. It also shows "Available for work: Y" and "Show Name: Y".
- Job Match Results:** A table displaying 10 vacancies matching the user's resume profile. The table has columns for Position, Ship type, Salary, and Starts. Each row includes a "Details" link.
- FEATURED COMPANIES:** A section on the right side of the page listing featured companies like Viking Recruitment Limited, Barber Ship Management, Northern Marine Management, and Meersk Marine Services.

Similarly, jobseekers logging on to ShiptalkJOBS.com will now see a new link in the menu namely "Match Jobs". Once they click on this link they will view a list of all the jobs that match their resumes.

We are confident that this new email and online job/jobseeker matching facility will further improve the user experience for employers and jobseekers alike.

A further technical development allows Employers to set up to three mandatory requirements, which the jobseeker must fulfill if they are to be permitted to apply for the vacancy. If the employer has any particular requirements for their individual jobs they are now invited to complete up to three optional requirement fields.

Examples of typical requirements are given below.

**OPTIONAL REQUIREMENT A**  
Example: Do you have current US Visa?

**OPTIONAL REQUIREMENT B**  
Example: Do you hold a dangerous cargo endorsement?

**OPTIONAL REQUIREMENT C**  
Example: Do you hold a DP license?

If the jobseeker is unable to answer "yes" to the employer's mandatory requirements then they will be unable to apply for the vacancy. We believe this will assist with the filtering applications.



## This month's featured companies



MNR represents the "one stop shop" recruitment specialist company enabling seafarers of all ranks and shore based staff to review and seek new opportunities within their chosen careers.

Focused on the Oil and Gas industry, MNR is established as a premier recruiter for the Oil Majors, FPSO companies and Drill/Rig operators and thus are able to offer security of employment with career development prospects for officers and crew of the highest calibre.

MNR is also able to offer crew administration, relief programme, travel and training services and solutions to clients and welcomes enquiries from interested parties.

MNR's Directors are highly respected in the marine sector having gained valuable and extensive experience working with International Ship Owners and Managers.

This respect and the professionalism of their staff allows MNR to form very close working relationships with a select group of Clients. These Clients operate in the most dynamic sectors of the marine/offshore industry thus providing a wealth of exciting vacancies.



We are pleased and proud to welcome to ShiptalkJOBS one of the world's great cruise companies, Carnival UK.

Carnival UK is the UK division of Carnival Corp. and encompasses five of the biggest selling cruise lines P&O Cruises, P&O Cruises (Australia), Princess Cruises, Ocean Village and Cunard, and operates some of the world's greatest and most famous ships, including the QE2 and Queen Mary 2.

Carnival UK prides itself on being "The World's Most Popular Cruise Line", and as their fleet continues to grow, and as the company goes from strength to strength, we at ShiptalkJOBS hope to play a part in keeping Carnival UK at the top of their game by sourcing the very best seagoing personnel for them.

If you have the skills to make the grade as a senior cruise ship officer, and want to be a part of this great success story visit [www.shiptalkjobs.com](http://www.shiptalkjobs.com) and apply today.



## The 8th Asia-Pacific Manning & Training Conference

Returning once again to the Philippine Plaza Hotel in Manila, Lloyd's List Event are delighted to announce the 8th Asia-Pacific Manning & Training Conference.

Supported by other events during a full week of manning & training activity the conference will address the reality that shipping is facing greater challenges in manning & training than ever before.

Training & retaining sufficiently well qualified seafarers & preventing further erosion of maritime skills will be the key focus of the conference - already a major concern for the industry with shortages leading to spiralling wage costs.

The conference will cover the need for investment in human resources plus corporate, social & environmental responsibility. Industry leaders & experts will also assess the regime of increasing & changing regulation - even criminalisation - which seafarers have to contend with.

After the main conference, against the backdrop of crew quality issues in the wake of manning shortages, an interactive workshop will undertake an 'Assessment of Crew Competence'.

As well as the educational benefits of the pre & post event workshops, the conference & accompanying exhibition will offer outstanding opportunities for you to network & discuss common issues with leading industry experts & peers.

Manning & Training week is enhanced by the first IFSMA Forum on the Revised STCW. The Philippine Manning Convention will also host their own event preceding the 8th Asia-Pacific Manning & Training Conference.

*For more information:* <http://www.lloydslistevents.com/lm1960>



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tel: +44 (0)191 469 0877  
email: [enquiries@shiptalkjobs.com](mailto:enquiries@shiptalkjobs.com)  
web: [www.shiptalkjobs.com](http://www.shiptalkjobs.com)