

# Seafarers Happiness Index

Quarter 2 2025



The  
Seafarers  
Happiness  
Index



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# Seafarers Happiness Index Quarter 2

The Q2 2025 Seafarers Happiness Index has once again revealed an industry in a state of constant tension. There remain some seafarers fortunate enough to experience the good the industry can offer, while all too many see the bad, and sadly some are left to cope with the very ugliest of experiences and treatment.

This quarter the overall happiness score of 7.54/10 represents a rising tide of sentiment, and a further quarter of improvement up from Q1's 6.98. However, the words of seafarers continue to paint a picture of systemic challenges that threaten the industry's human sustainability efforts.

As it has done for a decade, the Seafarers Happiness Index takes quantitative data as a barometer of sentiment, weaving it with the human stories at sea, connecting individual experiences to industry-wide challenges that demand coordinated action.

## Voices from the Sea

Within this report we highlight the interconnected challenges facing maritime professionals today.

**Manning Levels and Crew Shortages** have evolved from future concerns to present realities. High quality officer shortages are an issue, and minimum safe manning levels widely considered inadequate. As one seafarer bluntly stated, "Minimum safe manning levels aren't actually safe. Crew are being removed, and no one cares but us." The industry faces a self-perpetuating cycle where reduced crews mean fewer mentorship opportunities, threatening knowledge transfer and leadership development.

The **Administrative Burden** has grown exponentially while manning levels remain static or decrease. Officers spend hours on paperwork that often duplicates information across systems, leading one chief officer to suggest, "What actually is needed is a new position: Administration Officer." This administrative tide creates a dangerous inversion where "paper safety" takes precedence over actual safety practices.

**Fatigue Management** remains critically challenged by traditional shift patterns that disrupt circadian rhythms. Rest hour violations have become normalised, with falsification of records an open secret. The cognitive impairment from chronic fatigue creates risks comparable to alcohol intoxication, yet without equivalent recognition or mitigation strategies.

The decline of **Shore Leave** has transformed vessels into what many describe as "floating prisons." Multiple factors contribute to shortened port stays, including immigration restrictions, and prohibitive transportation costs. The psychological impact is profound, with newer generations of seafarers now accepting as normal what previous generations would have considered extraordinary deprivation.

**Digital Connectivity** remains woefully inadequate in an era of instantaneous global communication. Typical monthly internet allowances create a paradoxical isolation where seafarers are physically separated from loved ones while simultaneously unable to maintain the digital connections that mitigate such separation for other remote workers.

**Compensation** has stagnated despite increasing responsibilities and inflation. "Demands are increasing and salaries have not increased since 2012. Inflation has been growing since then and I am becoming poorer," reports one officer. Nationality-based pay disparities for identical work create tensions within multinational crews, while benefits and allowances have simultaneously been reduced.

**Food Quality** suffers from victualling rates that have remained unchanged despite dramatic food price inflation. "The milk which cost 1\$ in 2005 is now 8\$ but victualing on ship is same," notes one seafarer. The impact on morale cannot be overstated, as mealtimes represent crucial social interactions and one of the few daily pleasures available onboard.

**Professional Development** has shifted toward compliance-focused approaches that prioritise documentation over skill development. Practical instruction has given way to isolated online modules, while mentorship faces structural challenges from reduced manning and operational pressures. Training during leave periods, often without compensation, further erodes work-life balance.

The **Shore-Ship Relationship** suffers from a growing disconnect, with many shore offices staffed by those with limited seagoing experience. Micromanagement has increased with improved communication technology, while a blame culture discourages open reporting and learning from near-misses. Despite office-based executives often having access to the same data as those onboard, there is a trend for officers to be asked to provide information. Thus, exacerbating demands, but without any improvements.

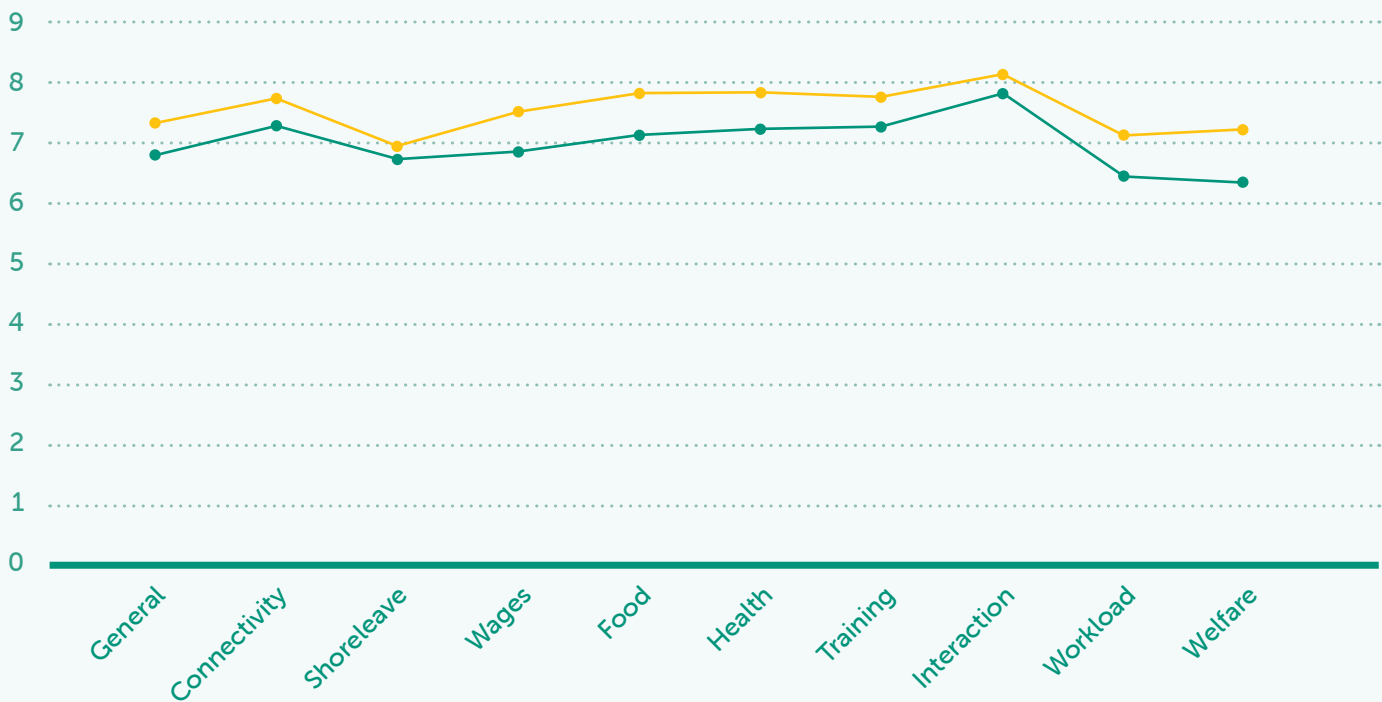
The **Industry Culture** stands at a crossroads regarding workforce sustainability. "The system doesn't want to fix the root problems. Instead, it monetises the symptoms," observes one seafarer. The criminalisation of seafarers and lack of industry-wide welfare standards will inevitably lead to issue around the value proposition of maritime careers.

These interconnected challenges require holistic solutions. The seafarers who identify these issues also offer practical suggestions: additional watchkeepers, dedicated administrative officers, improved connectivity, and shore management with seagoing experience. Their insights represent not complaints but rather a roadmap for creating a more sustainable maritime workforce that will enhance the reliability, safety, and sustainability of global shipping.

# Happiness Data

Q1 2025 Q2 2025

Q4 2024 v Q1 2025



The Q2 2025 results demonstrate consistent improvement over Q1. Most notably, the Welfare score saw the most dramatic improvement. This significant increase reflects the positive impact of our expanded support services and experiences in seafarer centres, or of shipboard visitors.

Food quality and Workload management also showed substantial gains. Food satisfaction increased reflecting the investment in menu diversification and quality ingredients, though issues remain.

Interaction continues to be our highest-performing category, rising from an already impressive 7.81 to 8.12 in Q2. This underscores the strength of collaborative cultures and relationships onboard.

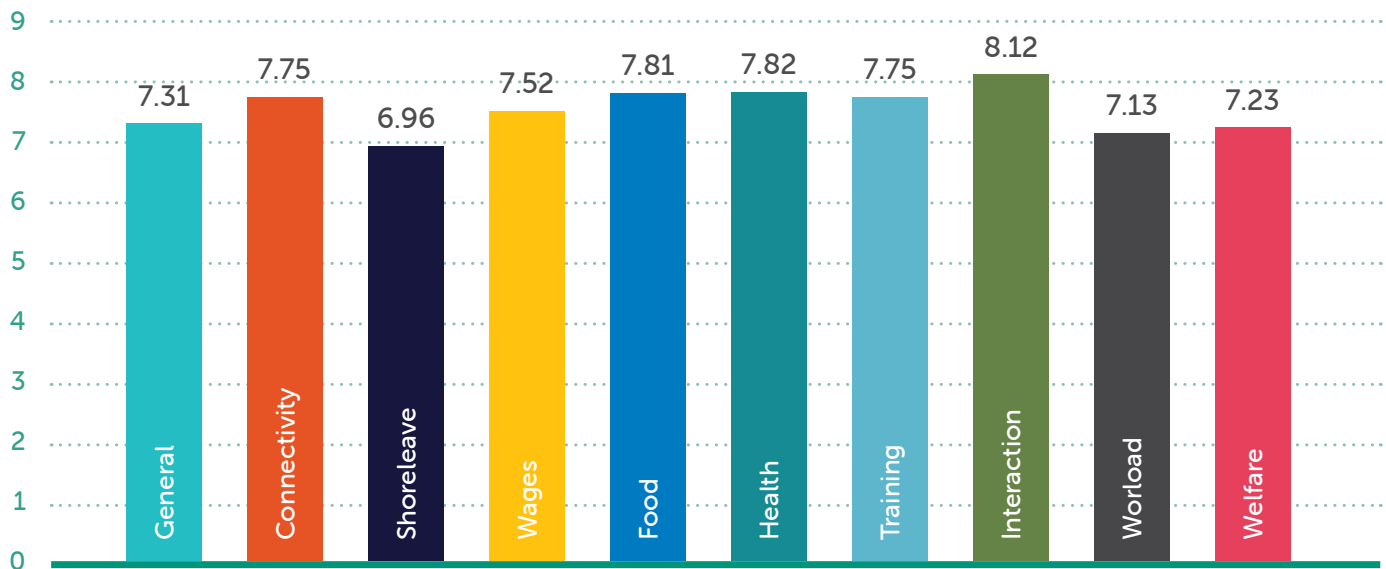
Health and Training metrics also show strong performance, and improvements align with a growing focus on wellness programs and professional development opportunities.

While shore leave saw the smallest improvement (+0.23), all categories now score above 6.9, with most exceeding 7.0. This represents a significant achievement compared to our Q1 baseline.

The consistent upward trend across all metrics suggests that holistic approaches, investment and development do make a difference and do deliver positive results. As we move into Q3, we'll continue building on these successes while paying special attention to areas with the greatest potential for further enhancement. Though, as is the norm, the written responses do tend to focus on areas of most frustration and the negatives experienced.

# Q2 2025 data

## Q2 per Question



## Question by Question

These insights highlight a complex seagoing reality: while strong social bonds and better connectivity can boost morale, unrelenting workloads and insufficient welfare measures continue to dampen overall satisfaction.

Addressing these pain points—particularly workload pressures and the broader scope of crew welfare—will be key to ensuring that the positive strides in other areas truly translate into higher overall happiness at sea.

## General Happiness

7.31 ↑ from 6.8

The baseline happiness measure reveals a workforce that maintains a positive outlook despite industry challenges. This metric serves as the foundation for understanding overall seafarer satisfaction.

Seafarers tell us that their satisfaction and happiness levels are significantly influenced by relationships. Whether that relates to crew interactions or the ability to maintain connections with family. With many seafarers noting that at sea it is a mantra of, “friendship built despite hardship” that remains a crucial factor in their wellbeing.

The relatively high general happiness score suggests that seafarers continue to find meaning and satisfaction in their roles, though this must be viewed alongside specific challenges identified in other categories. Comments reveal that happiness is often contextual, with significant variations between vessel types, with seafarers noting that they feel experiences on vessel types can differ greatly.



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**The camaraderie on board and the culture of being family is extraordinary.**

## Contact with family

7.75 ↑ from 7.29

Digital connectivity remains a critical lifeline for seafarers, and the score reflects ongoing improvements in maritime communications technology. Seafarers increasingly report access to reliable internet services, and there does seem to have been a marked improvement in connectivity.

The feedback reveals that connectivity directly impacts family relationships and mental health, with seafarers describing internet access as enabling “video calling” and maintaining daily contact with loved ones.

However, the wins of enhanced connectivity are not universal. The narrative responses also highlight persistent issues still be experienced, with data limitations and inconsistent service quality. While there were specific calls for “improved internet data limits” and more reliable connections. Which suggests that while basic connectivity has improved, the quality and accessibility of these services require continued investment and attention from operators.



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**I can share daily updates with my family and they can share with me too. It keeps me going.**

## Shore leave

6.96 ↑ from 6.73

Shore leave accessibility represents the most significant challenge identified in this survey, scoring lowest among all categories. Seafarers consistently report limited opportunities to go ashore, with some noting “no shore leaves on LNG carriers” and others describing how “it is hard for us especially that the ship has too few crew.”

This finding reflects the compound impact of reduced manning levels, tight scheduling, and incredibly five years on, the still lingering effects of pandemic-era restrictions. As seafarers are saying, “Ports need to update their COVID procedures now”.

The narrative feedback reveals the profound psychological impact of shore leave restrictions, with seafarers describing the experience of going ashore as making them “feel human” again. This category represents perhaps the most critical area requiring industry intervention, as shore leave directly impacts mental health, family relationships, and overall job satisfaction.

The data suggests that operational pressures and commercial considerations continue to override seafarer welfare needs in this fundamental area.



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It connects to the normalcy of life. You get to see lots of new people, things and places which lets you live life of a normal human being for a period.



## Wages

7.52↑ from 6.86

Compensation satisfaction indicates that while seafarers generally view their wages as adequate, concerns remain about the relationship between compensation and the demands of maritime life.

Positive feedback includes comments about “good salary” and wages being “quite good despite the workload,” suggesting that many seafarers feel fairly compensated for their efforts.

However, narrative responses also reveal deeper concerns about the annual impact of maritime earnings, with one seafarer noting that “when salary is divided into 12 months, it is not worth it.” This comment highlights the unique challenge of maritime compensation structures, where extended contracts and time away from home must be weighed against annual earning potential and career sustainability.

There were also concerns raised about payments taken from seafarers by companies, and the loss of earnings through commissions and exchange rate discrepancies. All too often, there is a sense that companies give with one hand and take back with the other. This erodes trust and impacts the employment relationship.



“

**Wages against inflation and our output are not enough... the sacrifices we make are higher than what we're paid.**

## Food

7.81 ↑ from 7.12

Food quality aboard vessels shows positive performance, indicating general satisfaction with onboard catering. Positive feedback frequently mentions “good food made by chief cook” and “good quality” provisions, suggesting that most operators are successfully meeting basic nutritional needs and maintaining reasonable variety in shipboard meals. Though there were some issues around costs in some ports of provisions, and a concern that some owners were making vessels delay restocking until reaching cheaper areas. This was potentially leaving some vessels inadequately provisioned.

Nevertheless, health-conscious seafarers express concerns about cooking methods and nutritional balance, with comments about “too much frying, not healthy” indicating opportunities for improvement in meal preparation approaches.

The feedback suggests that while quantity and basic quality are generally adequate, there is growing awareness among seafarers about the importance of healthy eating options during extended periods at sea. Some expressed frustration that the situation is not always understood by those ashore, “We get many apps telling us about what to eat, but that means nothing if the food is not onboard”.



“

**A good meal can make the difference between a tolerable day and a miserable one.**

## Ability to keep fit and healthy

7.82 ↑ from 7.22

Physical health and exercise facilities score well, indicating that many vessels are providing opportunities for seafarers to maintain their physical fitness. Positive feedback includes references to “everyday going gym and healthy food” and “good facilities,” suggesting that operators are increasingly recognising the importance of physical wellness in maintaining crew health and morale.

However, challenges remain in providing comprehensive fitness facilities and ensuring seafarers have adequate time to utilise them. Comments about “not complete gym equipment, no time” highlight the ongoing tension between operational demands and crew welfare needs.

Additionally, concerns about sleep deprivation (“not enough sleep”) indicate that health challenges extend beyond exercise facilities to fundamental issues of rest and recovery. As summed up, “You cannot be healthy without sleep, you cannot be healthy without exercise, you cannot be healthy with bad food. We have all three issues here”.



“

**We take engine parts to lift,  
until someone got injured.**

## Training

7.75 ↑ from 7.27

Professional development opportunities receive a solid score, suggesting that seafarers generally feel supported in their career advancement and skill development. Positive feedback includes appreciation for learning opportunities, with seafarers noting “I learn more” and describing training as “informative.”

The narrative responses reveal that much learning occurs through practical experience and mentorship, with seafarers describing “reading manuals and then doing jobs” as primary learning methods. The engagement of fellow seafarers in training and development is a source of great satisfaction and is very positively received.

However, some feedback indicates that formal training could be enhanced, with comments that training “could be more” but acknowledging that “senior officers too busy so it’s understandable.” This suggests that while training opportunities exist, the delivery and accessibility of professional development could be improved through more structured approaches. There are concerns that the promise of modern learning techniques do not always match the reality of the user experience at sea.

There was also a strong sense of frustration that the industry is not heading off the repeated and avoidable accidents which are so problematic. While seafarers feel beholden to others, or to regulations for the wider failings, there needs to be better and training and support to stop the recurring accidents which are all too common. These are linked to working at height, from being struck by moving objects through to enclosed space entries, electrocution, and asphyxiation.

There are felt to be fundamental gaps in safety culture that persist year after year. As was stated “We focus on technology, but what about the day-to-day hazards and mistakes? We need to get back to basics on safety”.



“

**Officers were really interested in teaching me new things and answered my questions.**

## Interaction with crew

8.12 ↑ from 7.81

As is so often the case, crew interactions represent the highest-scoring category. Highlighting the fundamental importance of positive relationships in maintaining seafarer wellbeing.

The strong performance in this area demonstrates that despite the challenges of confined living and working spaces, maritime crews continue to develop supportive professional relationships that contribute significantly to overall happiness.

Positive feedback emphasises that colleagues are "friendly and approachable" and that crews maintain "good relationships." However, written responses also reveal ongoing challenges related to cultural diversity and communication, with some seafarers noting issues with "nationalities clashing" and relationships being easier "if same nationals."

This feedback suggests that while crew interactions are generally positive, continued attention to cultural sensitivity and communication training could further enhance this critical aspect of shipboard life.



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**Life at sea is a constant social experiment. People from different backgrounds in close quarters for extended periods.**

## Workload

7.13 ↑ from 6.45

Workload management scores indicate some issues with work-life balance aboard vessels. However, this category reveals significant underlying concerns about the intensification of maritime work demands.

Written feedback consistently highlights issues with "too much paperwork," "too much workload," and the concerning trend that "workload constantly increasing, resources onboard stagnant/dropping."

These comments reflect broader industry trends toward reduced manning levels and increased administrative requirements that place additional pressure on seafarers. The feedback suggests that while seafarers are managing their current workloads, the trajectory toward increased demands without corresponding increases in crew size represents a sustainability concern for the industry. This area requires careful monitoring and potential intervention to prevent burnout and maintain safety standards.



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**With the reduction in crew, it means the workload is increasing massively.**

## Access to welfare facilities

7.23 ↑ from 6.34

Shore-based welfare facilities score showed signs of improvement, indicating enhanced satisfaction with available services when seafarers do have opportunities to go ashore.

The feedback reveals a mixed picture, with some seafarers describing facilities as “okay” while others note “nothing special there” or indicate they “don’t make use” of available services. Though there was also much praise and gratitude towards people running seafarer centres and visiting vessels. Responses such as “We are so glad to see people who care for seafarers, they make us so welcome”, highlight the importance of these relationships.

This question is closely linked to shore leave accessibility, as even the best welfare facilities are of limited value if seafarers cannot access them. The narrative responses suggest that awareness and utilisation of welfare services could be improved, and that the quality and relevance of available facilities may not always meet seafarer needs and expectations.



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**In medium-sized ports, there are not enough welfare facilities for seafarers. Sometimes ships are docked far from the town and can’t enjoy their shore time.**

# Tell Us More

We have been encouraging seafarers to be more open in their feedback, and the “Tell Us More” question responses revealed a diverse range of perspectives and concerns. We use this open-ended question provided respondents with an opportunity to express thoughts beyond the structured survey questions, resulting in diverse insights into life at sea.

## Key Themes

### Physical Training Weaknesses

The maritime industry’s persistent inability to prevent recurring accidents represents an extremely damaging aspect of seafarer wellbeing. Despite decades of regulatory frameworks, technological advances, and safety protocols, the shipping sector continues to witness preventable tragedies that devastate crews and their families.

Seafarers shared their concerns about the “basic” accidents which are avoidable, but which keep happening. These are safety issues relating to issues such as working at height, seafarers being struck by moving objects, enclosed space entries, electrocution, and asphyxiation.

The respondents felt that these repeated failures reveal fundamental gaps in safety culture that persist year after year. While the industry celebrates technological innovations and efficiency gains, the basic promise of bringing seafarers home safely to their families remains unfulfilled.

This pattern of repeated failures creates a climate of fear and anxiety at sea, especially for seafarers who witness crewmates being injured or killed in preventable accidents while onboard concerns suggest that management ashore continue to prioritise operational demands over human safety.

Basic safety emerged as a key concern across numerous responses. Many seafarers specifically requested:

- Focus on zero tolerance for prioritising operations over safety
- Addressing the hazards which are constant of onboard work
- Ensuring proper preparation and ongoing education
- Creating real consequences for preventable accidents

### “Riding Squad” Circumventions

Over the decade of gathering data and insights from seafarers we have often been at the forefront of identifying issues which have not been fully explored or covered elsewhere. This is the power and the value of seafarers taking the lead and through the Mission to Seafarers being able to have a voice and to have it amplified into industry.

One such issue which has emerged this reporting period is the increasing use of “riding squads” or “technician teams” at sea. There has long been a legitimate and important use of such teams to perform certain tasks, such as repairs or installations which require additional resources or skillsets. So, the problems or potential concerns do not relate to this usage. However, it is being suggested that some owners are turning to non-mariners, and evidence suggests some unscrupulous operators may be exploiting this system to bypass STCW (Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping) requirements by using supernumeraries for extended periods in roles that should require qualified seafarers.

The potential abuse of riding squad systems represents a significant threat to maritime safety standards and seafarer employment. While legitimate riding squads serve an important function in vessel maintenance, the system’s exploitation to circumvent qualification requirements poses risks to safety, regulatory compliance, and the maritime profession itself.

This issue requires immediate attention from regulatory authorities, maritime unions, and industry stakeholders to prevent the erosion of hard-won safety standards and protect the livelihoods of qualified seafarers.

The maritime industry must remain vigilant against cost-cutting measures that compromise safety and professional standards under the guise of operational efficiency.



## Digital Training Concerns

Concerns were raised about the prevalence of e-learning over hands-on instruction. One particularly powerful response came from a long serving seafarer who expressed deep concerns about the industry's shift to digital training. They described witnessing "an industry I care deeply about erode from the inside" with a focus on "driving down labour costs, whatever the human price."

This respondent highlighted how e-learning has replaced classroom or experiential training, with concerns about how this approach was potentially compromising seafarer competence while companies focus on "analytics, completion stats, and cost savings" rather than actual learning outcomes.

## Connectivity and Communication

Internet access emerged as a predominant concern across numerous responses. Many seafarers specifically requested:

- Increased internet data allowances
- Unlimited internet access
- Better connectivity to maintain contact with families
- Access to streaming services like Netflix, HBO, or Disney for recreation

One respondent noted that internet access serves as a "stress reliever" after long workdays, enabling vital connections with family members.

## Work-Life Balance

Several comments addressed the challenges of maintaining work-life balance at sea:

- Requests for shorter contract periods
- Better scheduling of crew changes
- More shore leave opportunities, particularly for ratings who typically serve longer periods
- Recognition that "life on board is not easy as it may seem"

## Welfare and Recognition

Seafarers expressed desires for:

- Better recreational facilities, including "better gym equipment" and industry guidance on minimum standards for recreational spaces
- Improved food quality and variety
- Recognition of their contribution to global trade, with one noting "we are vital to world trade and yet we are an afterthought"
- Better personal support systems, with one

respondent wishing for "contact information or a professional to speak to about your personal, mental/emotional state"

## Management and Hierarchy

Seafarer's comments addressed relationships with management:

- Requests for two-way evaluation systems where crew could evaluate senior officers
- Concerns about disrespectful treatment of ratings by some superiors
- Appreciation for captains who prioritise crew welfare

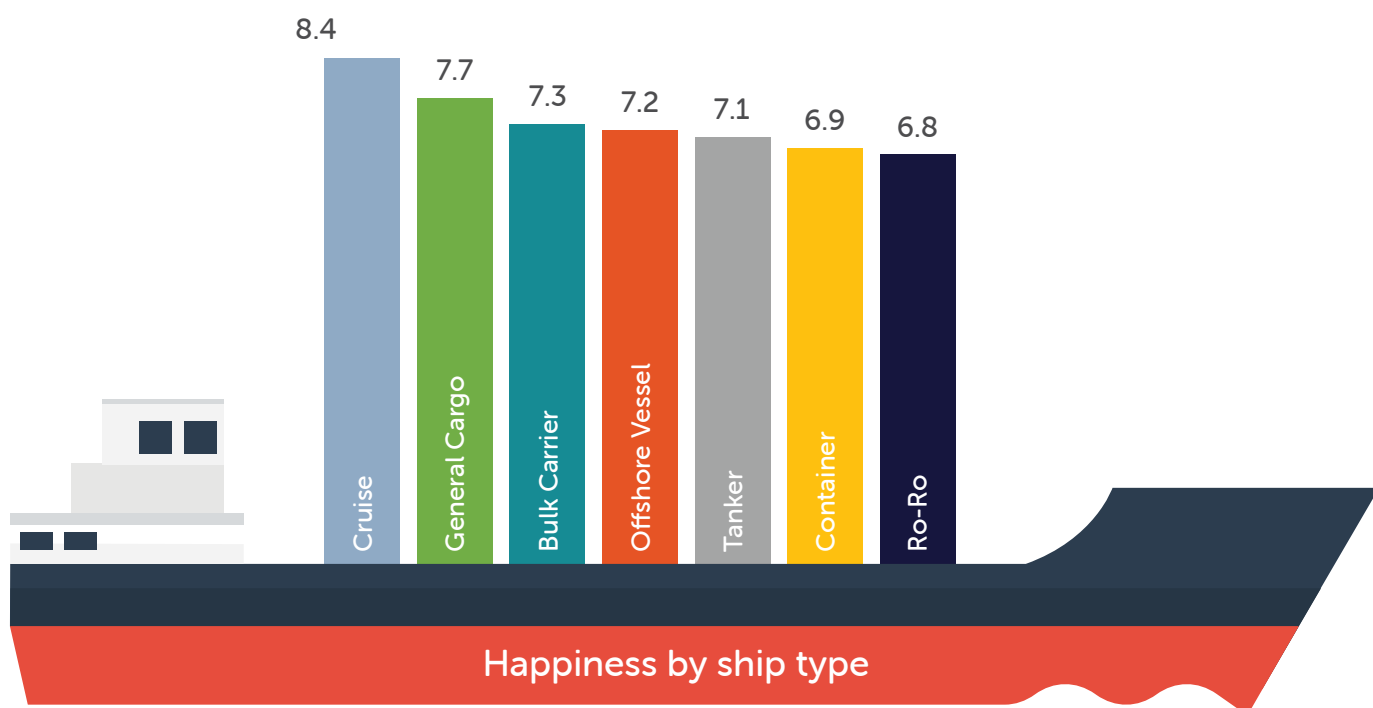
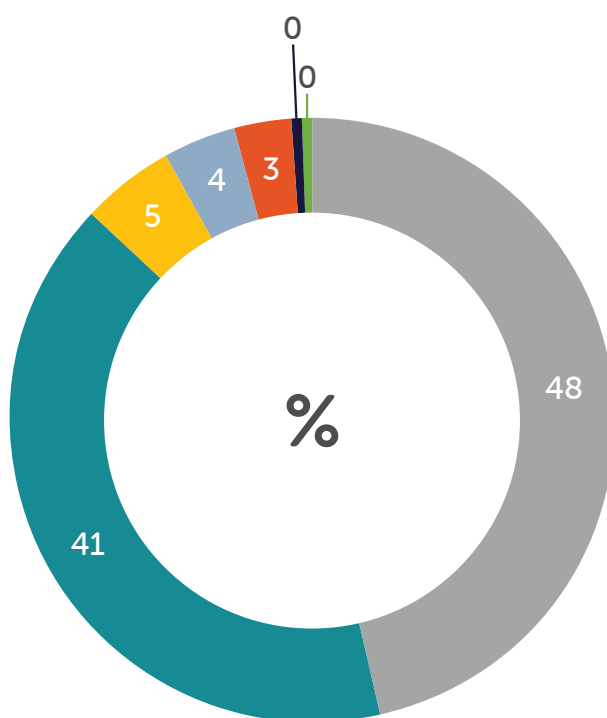
## Positive Perspectives

Despite challenges, many respondents shared positive outlooks:

- "Be proud of being a seafarer"
- "Be good and all will flow good...Pray for all"
- "Enjoy life at sea, be happy, avoid negative thoughts, think positive always"
- Multiple mentions of good teamwork and harmony among crew

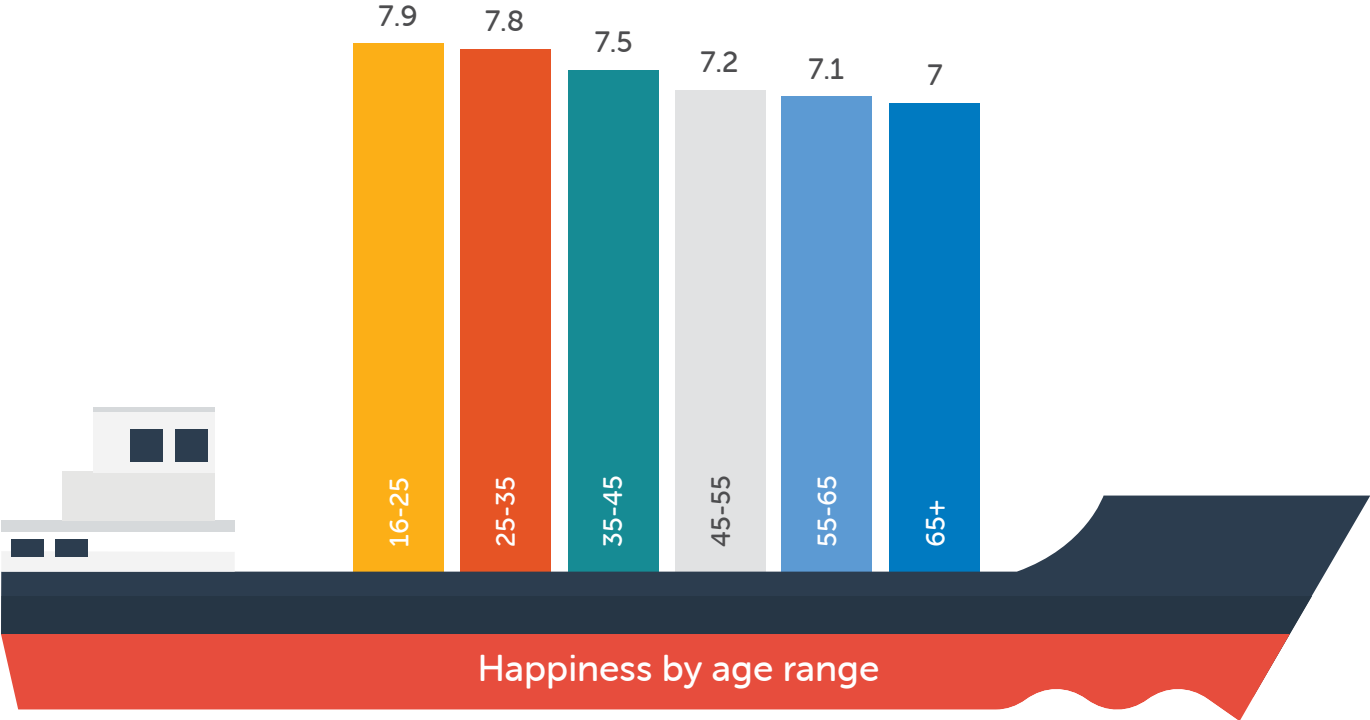
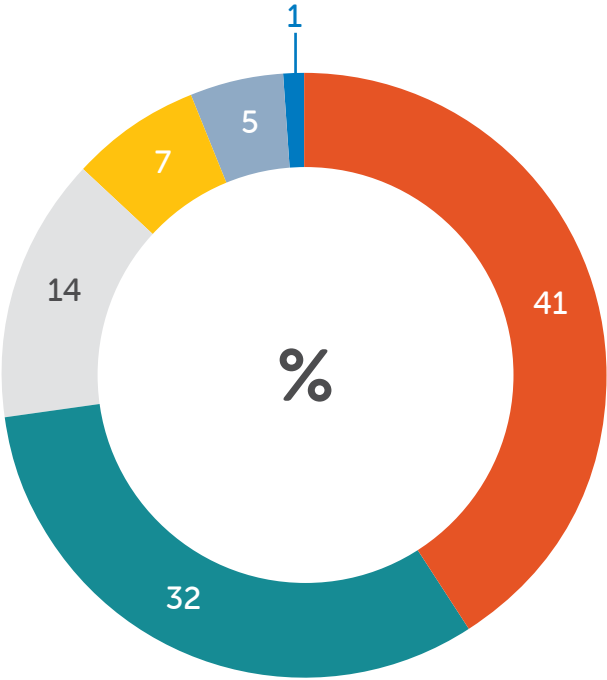
## Ship Type

- Bulk Carrier
- Container
- Cruise
- General Cargo
- Offshore
- Ro-Ro Vessel
- Tanker



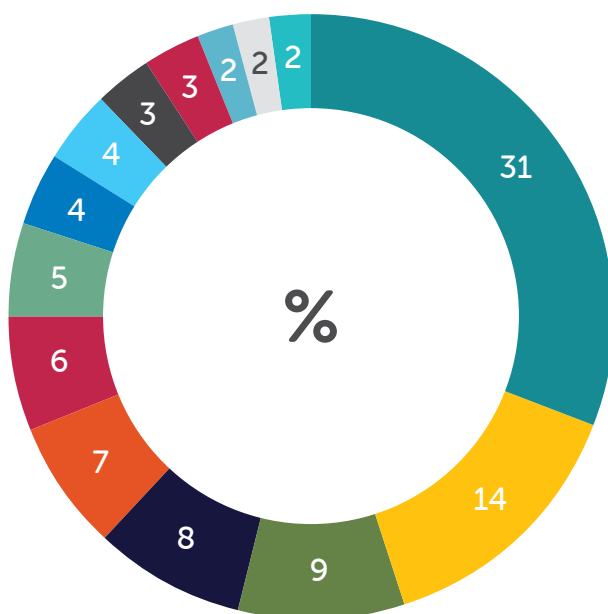
# Age Range

- 16-25
- 25-35
- 35-45
- 45-55
- 55-65
- 65+



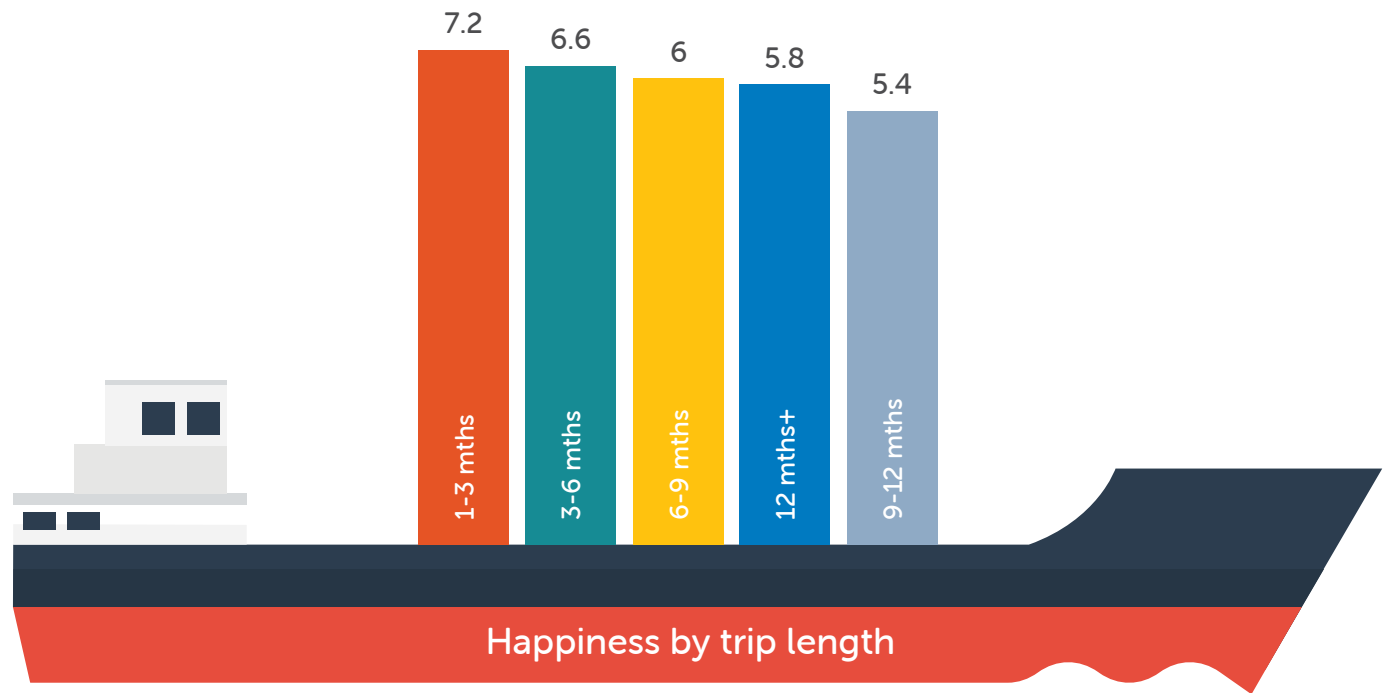
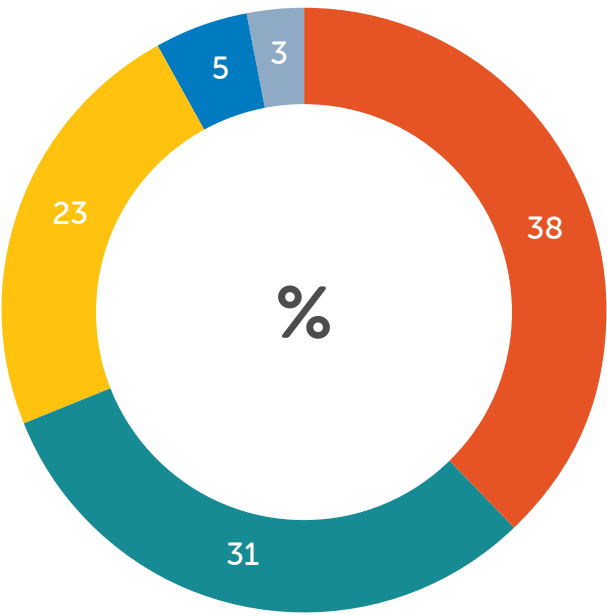
## Rank

- Captain
- Catering Department
- Chief Engineer
- Chief Officer
- Deck Cadet
- Deck Crew
- Electrical Department
- Engine Cadet
- Engine Crew
- Fourth Engineer
- Second Engineer
- Second Officer
- Third Engineer
- Third Officer



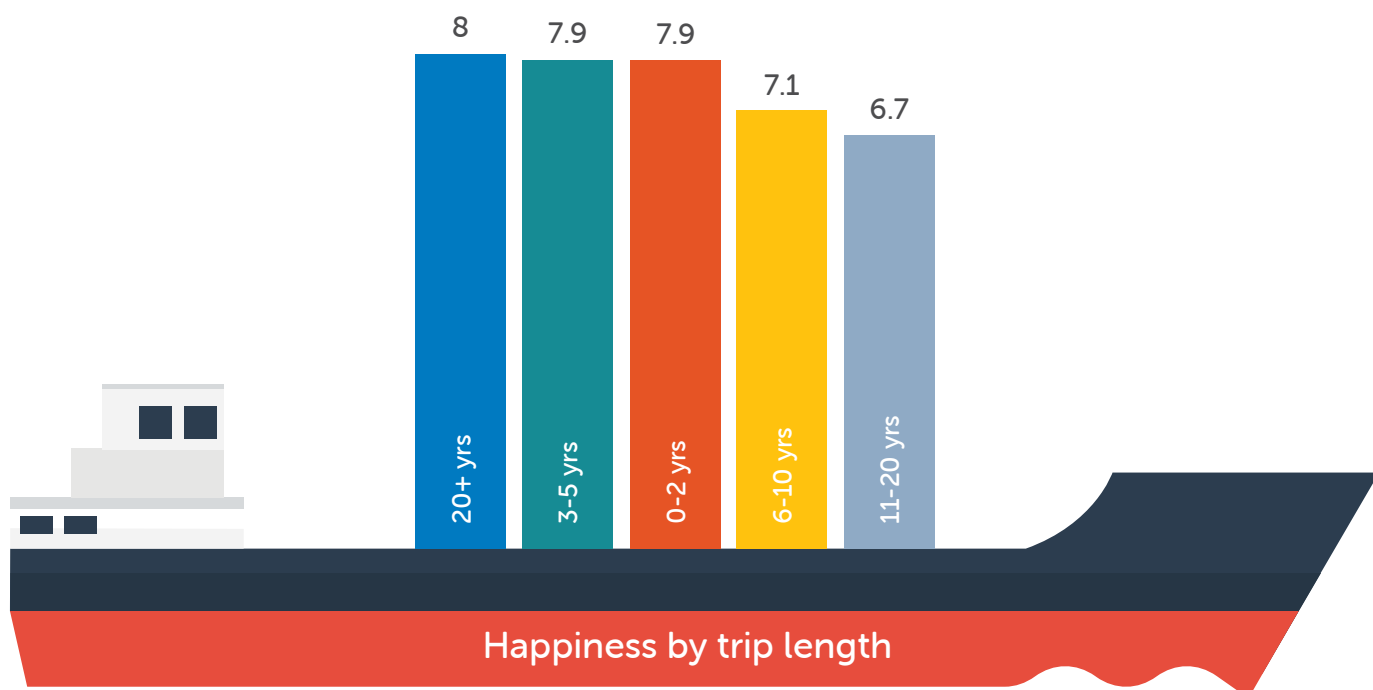
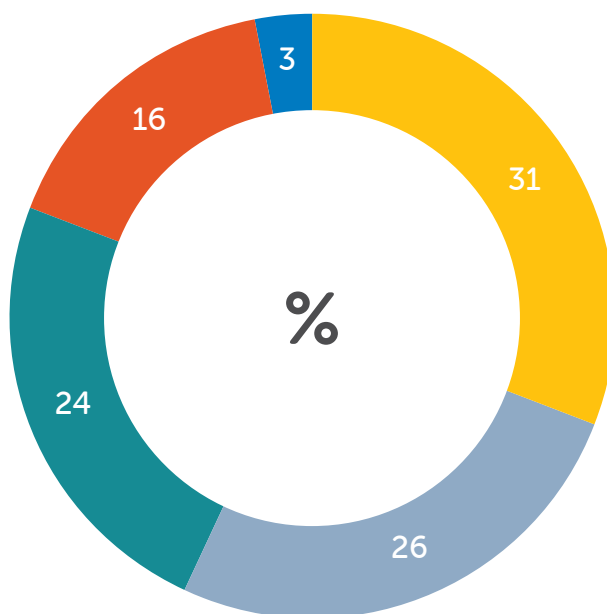
# Trip Length

- 1-3 months
- 3-6 months
- 6-9 months
- 9-12 months
- Over 12 months



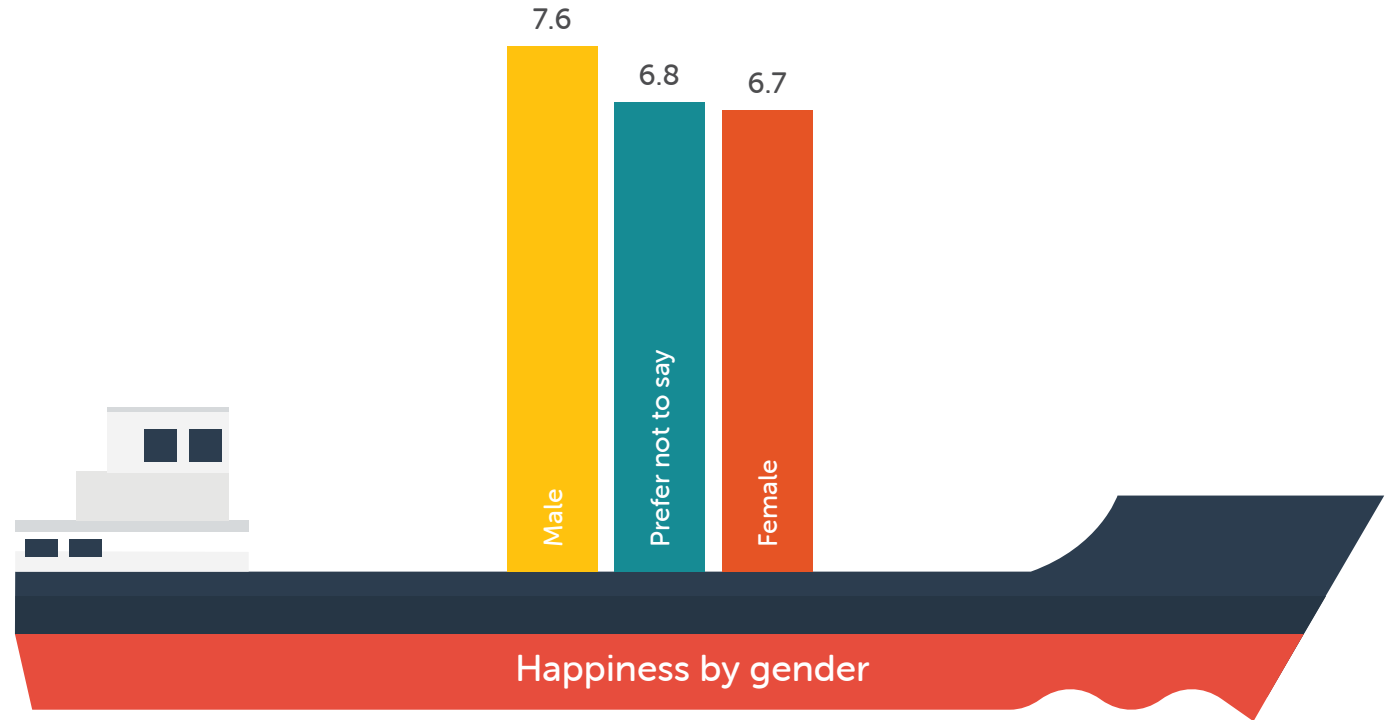
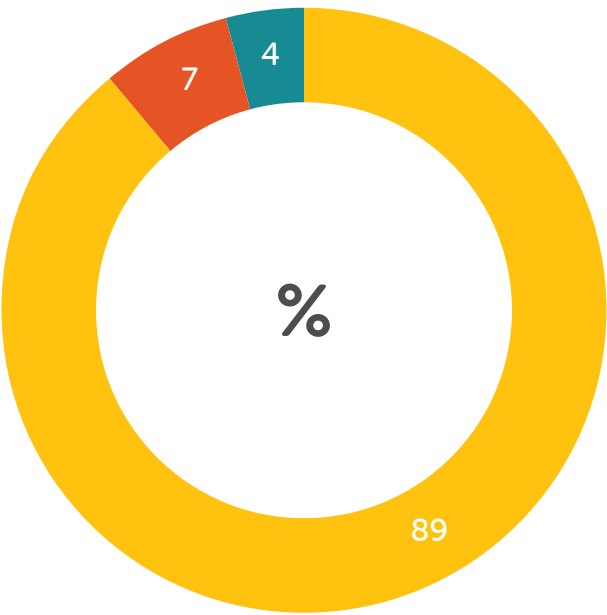
## Age of Vessel

- 0-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-20 years
- 20+ years

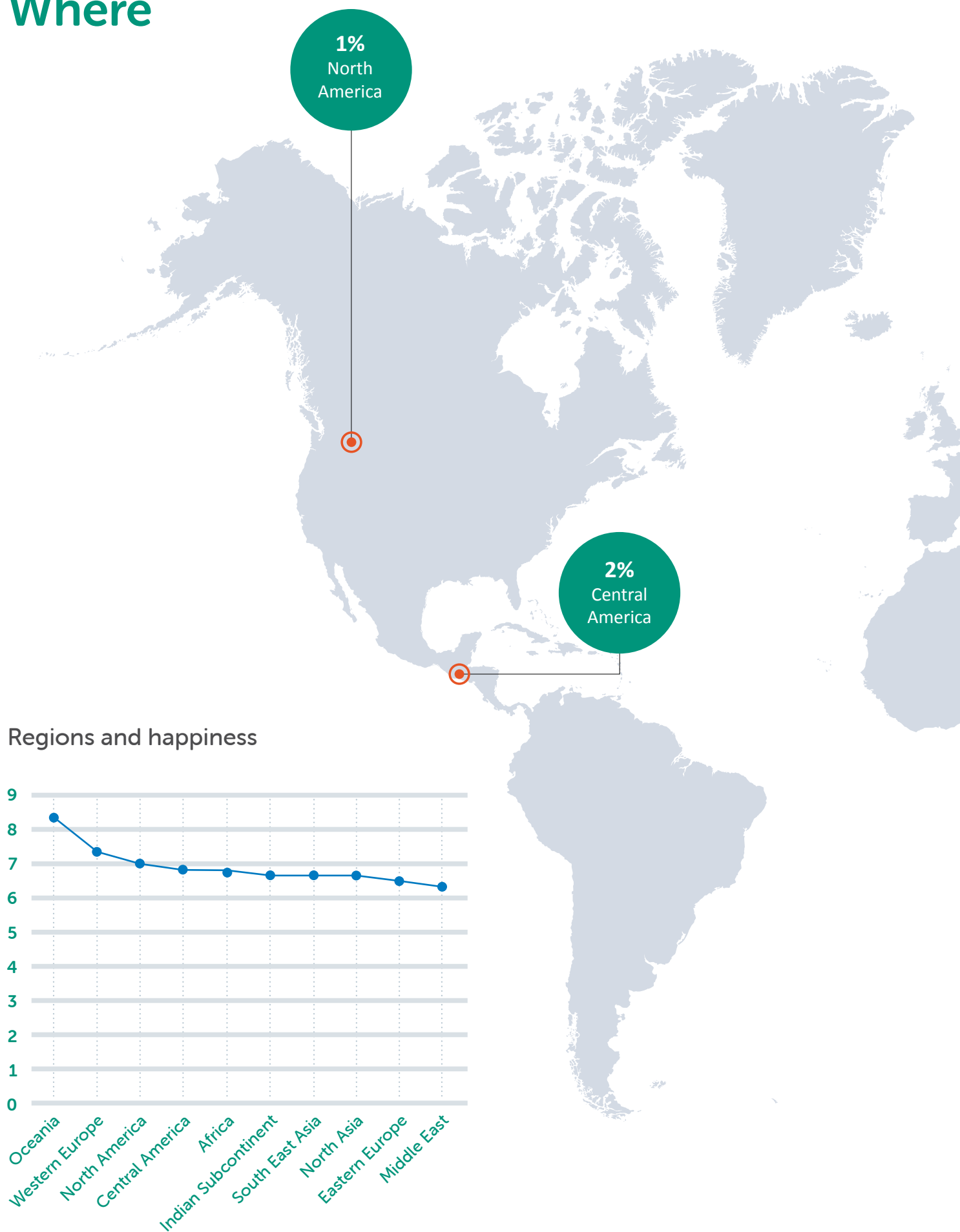


# Gender

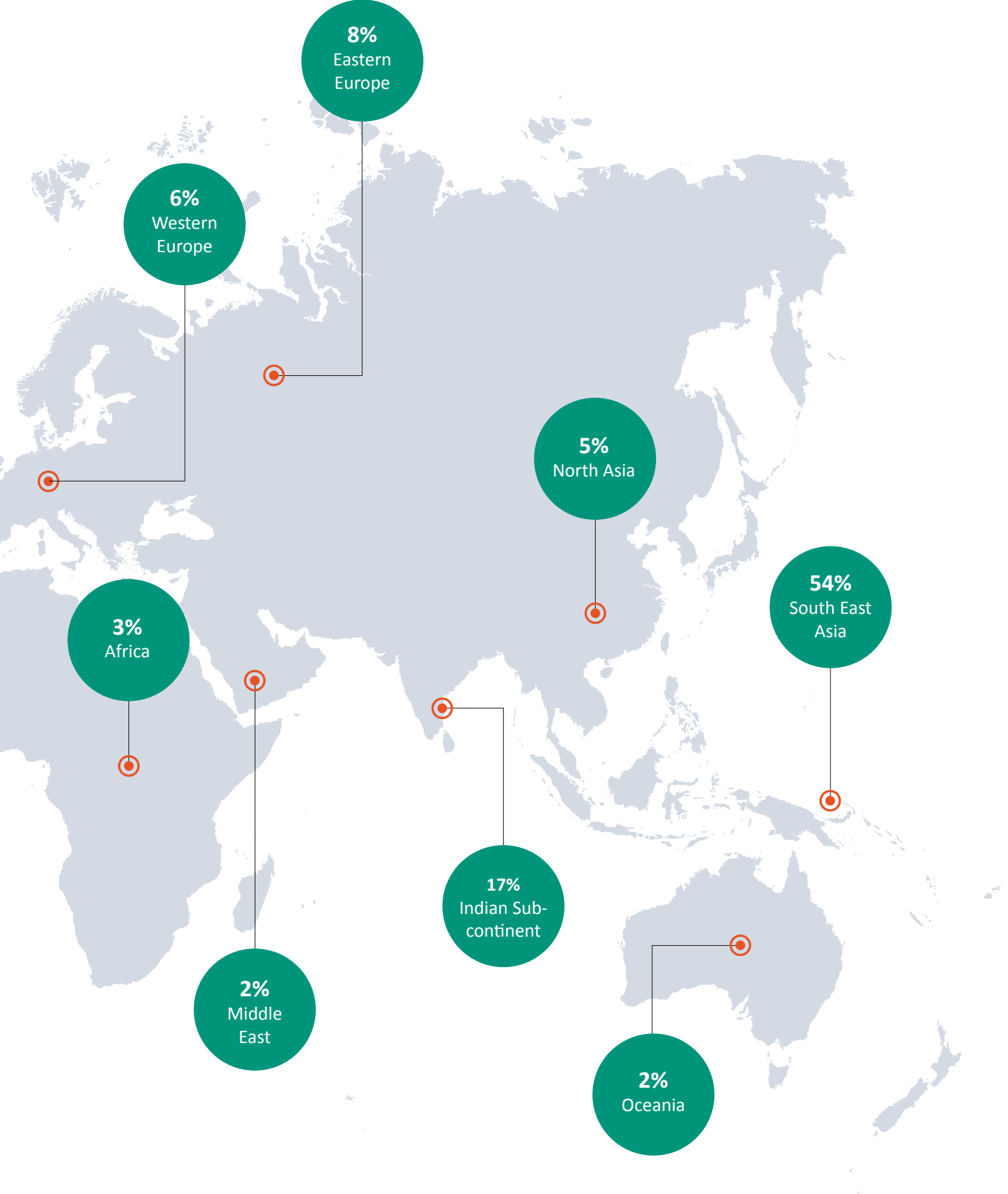
- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say



# Where







# Key Findings with Demographic Analysis

## Gender Distribution and Happiness Patterns

Male seafarers made up the vast majority of responses. As is sadly the norm, this distribution reflects the ongoing gender imbalance at sea, though the presence of female voices in the survey provides valuable insights into their specific experiences.

Significantly, the data reveals a concerning happiness gap between male and female seafarers. Male seafarers report an average higher happiness level, while female seafarers report being notably less positive.

This difference suggests that female seafarers face additional challenges that impact their overall wellbeing and job satisfaction. This finding demands urgent attention from industry stakeholders, as it indicates that efforts to increase female participation in maritime careers must be accompanied by targeted improvements in working conditions and support systems.

This data underscores the need for gender-specific welfare initiatives and policies that address the unique challenges faced by women in maritime careers.

## Age Demographics and Experience Patterns

The age distribution reveals a workforce concentrated in the prime working years. The concentration in the 25-45 age range represents 73.7% of all responses, indicating a mature and experienced workforce.

However, the relatively small representation of younger seafarers may signal challenges in attracting new talent to maritime careers and does show that we need to work harder to engage with these seafarers.

## Rank and Hierarchy Satisfaction

The rank distribution shows strong representation across all levels of the maritime hierarchy, from deck crew to senior officers and masters. This comprehensive representation provides valuable insights into how position and responsibility levels affect seafarer satisfaction.

## Vessel Type and Operational Context

The vessel type distribution reveals a survey population primarily from tankers and bulk carriers, representing the backbone of global maritime trade. The dominance of these responses is significant as the narrative responses indicate that vessel type significantly impacts the seafarer experience.

We heard explicit recognition that "life on a tanker, bulk etc is quite different to life at super yachts and cruise." This acknowledgment suggests that welfare initiatives and industry policies must account for the diverse operational contexts within the maritime industry.

## Geographic Distribution

The geographic distribution shows strong representation from South-East Asia and the Indian Subcontinent, reflecting the global nature of maritime labour markets and the significant contribution of these regions to the international seafaring workforce. While European representation and other regions provide additional perspectives on regional variations in seafarer experiences.

This geographic diversity incorporates perspectives from different cultural backgrounds, economic contexts, and maritime traditions. The strong Asian representation is particularly valuable given the region's central role in global shipping and seafarer supply.

The cultural also connects to the earlier finding about crew interactions, where some seafarers noted challenges with "nationalities clashing" while others emphasised positive multicultural relationships. This suggests that while cultural diversity can create challenges, it also contributes to the rich interpersonal experiences that many seafarers value in their careers.

# Celebrating A Decade of Insights

As we celebrate a decade of the Seafarers Happiness Index in 2025, and ahead of the release of a comprehensive assessment of ten years of data, we felt it important to highlight the persistent challenges that continue to affect maritime professionals worldwide.

The longevity of our study has provided unprecedented insights into the seafaring experience, demonstrating both the resilience of seafarers and the industry's ongoing struggles to address fundamental welfare issues, ensuring the human element remains central to maritime industry conversations.

This pioneering initiative has compiled valuable data on seafarers' experiences, establishing happiness not merely as a nicety but as a critical metric that serves as a leading indicator of safety, retention, and resilience in the maritime sector.

Throughout the decade, one consistent finding stands out: the critical importance of respect and recognition. The data reveals a troubling "crisis of respect and reward," where seafarers often feel unacknowledged for their extraordinary efforts despite shipping companies reporting record profits. When seafarers feel valued, they demonstrate greater motivation to overcome challenges, while perceived disrespect from "empathy-deficient" shore-based management fosters disillusionment.

Mental health has transformed from a taboo subject to a priority concern. The SHI documents increased awareness and support, with periods of heightened focus correlating with improved satisfaction scores. However, implementation remains inconsistent across fleets, leaving many without adequate resources while facing the psychological challenges of confined environments and extended deployments.

Global events have significantly impacted seafarer wellbeing over the decade. The COVID-19 pandemic created a crew change crisis that stranded thousands at sea, reflected in plummeting SHI scores during 2020-2021. Conflicts like the Russia-Ukraine war and Red Sea crisis have disrupted employment security and vessel routing, while economic fluctuations from shipping bankruptcies to cost-of-living crises have consistently affected wellbeing. Maritime accidents have further underscored the industry's vulnerabilities and the human cost of such incidents.

Technology has proven to be a double-edged sword. Internet access emerges as a polarising issue, with reliable connectivity significantly boosting happiness while its absence breeds discontent. Automation enhances efficiency but raises job security concerns, requiring continuous upskilling. A concerning digital divide has emerged, creating a two-tier system that exacerbates inequalities between seafarers.

Shore experiences significantly influence happiness, with reports of hostile port environments, denied shore leave, and unreliable transport. Despite society's return to normalcy, post-pandemic restrictions persist in some ports, while bureaucratic barriers like complex visa requirements further hinder access to shore leave. The relationship between seafarers and shore is changing, with faster turnarounds and economic considerations often leading crew to remain onboard rather than venture ashore.

Fatigue remains a chronic issue, with minimum manning levels often becoming the ceiling rather than the floor. The troubling trend of falsified records to pass inspections creates perverse incentives that compromise safety. Increased workloads from new regulations and technological changes, without corresponding staffing increases, compound pressures on seafarers.

The data clearly demonstrates that vessel condition directly correlates with crew welfare. Good ships foster positive environments, with rising welfare standards enhancing both ship quality and crew resilience. Happiness serves as an early warning system—a "canary in the coal mine"—for potential issues, emphasising the need for robust welfare support.

As the industry pursues decarbonisation, seafarers face both opportunities and challenges. While environmental initiatives offer professional purpose, they also increase operational complexity and stress. Training gaps for new technologies and fuels create anxiety, underscoring the need to balance sustainability with seafarer wellbeing. The decade of SHI data reveals a profound truth: when

seafarers thrive, shipping excels. Happiness is not just a welfare issue but a crucial indicator of the industry's health and sustainability, a business necessity rather than a luxury. As the maritime industry navigates environmental pressures, automation, and geopolitical changes in the coming decade, keeping seafarers' voices central will ensure solutions that are sustainable for both the industry and its workforce.

The data is clear: unhappiness is unsustainable, and prioritising seafarer wellbeing is essential for a resilient maritime future.

# Thank you

We offer our heartfelt gratitude to the seafarers who generously contribute their personal stories and perspectives to the Seafarers Happiness Index. These authentic voices from the frontlines of shipping provide crucial insights into maritime realities and illuminate pathways for meaningful change. Their honest reflections form the backbone of our analysis and drive the creation of more targeted policies and industry practices.

Our appreciation also extends to the progressive shipping companies and shore-based management teams who actively facilitate crew participation in this research. Their commitment to openness and ongoing enhancement sets a powerful precedent that we hope will inspire others throughout the maritime community. We encourage more organisations to embrace this collaborative approach, understanding that honest conversation is the catalyst for substantial advancement.

Moving forward, we seek to expand our reach across every corner of the maritime sector, welcoming voices from all seafaring professionals. Each new perspective strengthens our collective understanding and amplifies our capacity to champion transformative initiatives. To shipowners and operators, your ongoing commitment to supporting and facilitating crew engagement remains fundamental to achieving our shared objectives.

The path ahead demands collaboration from all maritime stakeholders. When we place seafarer happiness and well-being at the centre of our priorities, we tackle immediate concerns while simultaneously laying the groundwork for a more robust, productive, and forward-thinking maritime sector.



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