

# YOUR GUIDE TO EFFECTIVE YACHT MANAGEMENT

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In recent times, increased workloads and a plethora of regulations occupy much of a captain's time; therefore it is becoming increasingly common to hire a yacht management company. They can provide support and service to the captain and crew in the day to day running and overall management of the yacht.

However understanding what a management company can do, and how they can help is paramount – as you'll need to make sure you choose the right company for your needs.

However it's not always that simple; you may not actually need a management company, and if you do, you'll need to make sure you pick the right company to ensure the smooth running of the yacht.

## What services can a yacht management company provide?

Let's start with the basics; some of the main services yacht management companies can provide include:

- Safety management (ISM and ISPS)
- Crew management and recruitment
- Operational support
- Technical management and support
- Financial control and services
- Logistical support
- Certification and compliance
- Marketing
- Administration
- Project management (including new construction and refits)

However the list is endless as Franc Jansen, director of global yacht management company [Hill Robinson](#) explained, "If I have to describe all the services we provide the answer will be far too long.... In a nutshell you could say that as a management company we are selling our expertise, time, systems and also the responsibility that we take on our shoulders. As a management company we provide services that help both the crew and the owner in the running of the yacht; whether this is financial, operational, crewing, technical or flag and class compliance."

## Crew services – a best kept secret

[Hill Robinson](#) explained how a yacht management company can also provide high quality crew services, including recruitment and training.

Franc Jansen stated, "This is one of the best kept secrets in the industry. We have a large fleet and we always have over 30 vacancies in all ranks and on all types and sizes of yachts. We are constantly searching for good crew. Because we are a management company our focus is completely different from ordinary crewing agencies. Our crewing department is mainly focussed on finding crew for our managed fleet. Therefore the placement fee is not the most important, it is actually getting the right crew for that particular yacht."

## What makes a good yacht management company?

According to Gibraltar based management company [Sea-Alliance](#), a good yacht management company should, "Find the fine

line between managing the vessel according to the safety, class and fiscal regulations and bringing all components together to enable the vessel to be seaworthy and operative at all times for the benefit of the owner and charterers from one side and the crew and captains on the other.”

## Which management company should I choose?

**Hill Robinson** recommended some important factors to bear in mind when choosing a management company.

### Experience and expertise

A good company will have a wide range of experienced staff on hand to help. This means master mariners, naval architects, marine engineers, accountants, administrators, recruitment and human resources specialists as well as in-house IT staff. The company needs to have sufficient people in place to deal with the day to day operation of their fleet so having a look at the available resources wouldn't hurt.

### Efficient management systems

Ensuring the management company that is hired has high-quality management systems, which the captain is happy with, is also important. A quality system which is easy to use can improve the smooth running of the yacht.

### The contracts and the cost

A good yacht management company should offer a huge range of packages and contracts to suit the needs of each yacht. Many companies will have existing procedures for all services provided, but they still need to be made yacht specific.

Franc Jansen, director of **Hill Robinson** commented, “The number of packages is endless. Any combination of services is possible. The length of the contract varies. We have loyal clients that have been with the company since its conception. The cost of yacht management depends on the amount of expert time needed, the systems that are selected and the liability that we need to carry for the owner.”

## What to bear in mind

### Is a larger company better?

**Hill Robinson** explained how a larger yacht management company has more resources; if there are more people in the company there is a better chance that you get the assistance when you need it. Bigger companies have a wider range of specialists available. Since yachts are travelling over the world a wider geographical spread of offices is handy.

However, **Sea-Alliance** explained how a yacht management company can provide a top quality service even if they are smaller. Ella Wigelman claimed, “We believe the best is to be big enough to deliver and small enough to care”.

### Is the location of the company important?

This can make a difference, however it's not a major problem and management services can be carried out just as well from afar. When posed the question is it important, Franc Jansen of **Hill Robinson** commented, “Yes and no. No because there are planes and you can get anywhere in the world in a reasonably short time. The communication by email and phone is also very good so it is possible to maintain communications. Having said that, popping over to the boat to have a face-to-face chat with the captain, engineer or chief stew is much better than an email and a formal report. Although I am available 24/7 on my phone, and so are the captains, communication is much easier if you are in a similar time zone.”

### How much control does the captain have?

According to **Sea-Alliance** the captain and the management company should work together very closely as a team. The captain has a lot of say regarding what happens on the vessel including maintenance and daily aspects, whereas the management

company deals with the big picture of the accounts and budgeting, owning company, registration and relationship with the owner.

Hill Robinson explained how everybody, whether they work on board or ashore have a job to do. Each position comes with its own responsibilities and authority. Good management companies have defined the responsibilities and authority of everybody involved both ashore and afloat. The captain because of his position will always have extensive authority to make decisions with regards to the running of the yacht.

## Importance of close communication

The captain and the management company should also maintain regular communication in order to ensure that all parties are working toward the same goals; the safe operation of the yacht to the complete satisfaction of owners and guests.

Franc Jansen, director of Hill Robinson commented, "Of course everybody needs to work closely together. That is the only way to make it work. The most productive relationship is friendly, professional and respectful. And that needs to come from all parties."

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With thanks to Hill Robinson and Sea-Alliance