

PROJECT ULYSSES – SHIP TO SHORE – A SYNOPSIS

Introduction

The publication of the Mountevans Report – **The Maritime Growth Study** and in particular recommendation 8 of the study:

Recommendation 8 – Future Skills

For the promotional body recommended in this report **to identify and prioritise the key skills issues facing the UK maritime sector** by assessing the current and future need for wider skills and qualifications across the UK maritime sector as a whole and **developing a ‘skills strategy’** with focused objectives for addressing these concerns.

Caused a group of maritime organisations (Marine Society, Maritime London, Merchant Navy Training Board, Nautilus and Trinity House) with a keen interest in maintaining the UK’s position as a Maritime Hub and in encouraging young people to consider the sea as a career, yet mindful that few would think of any employment as a career for life, to consider how they might best contribute and take this recommendation forward.

Background

1. Together they formed Project Ulysses, or “Ship to Shore” and commissioned the attached report by Navigate PR and Ocean Insight (the researchers). The aim of the project was

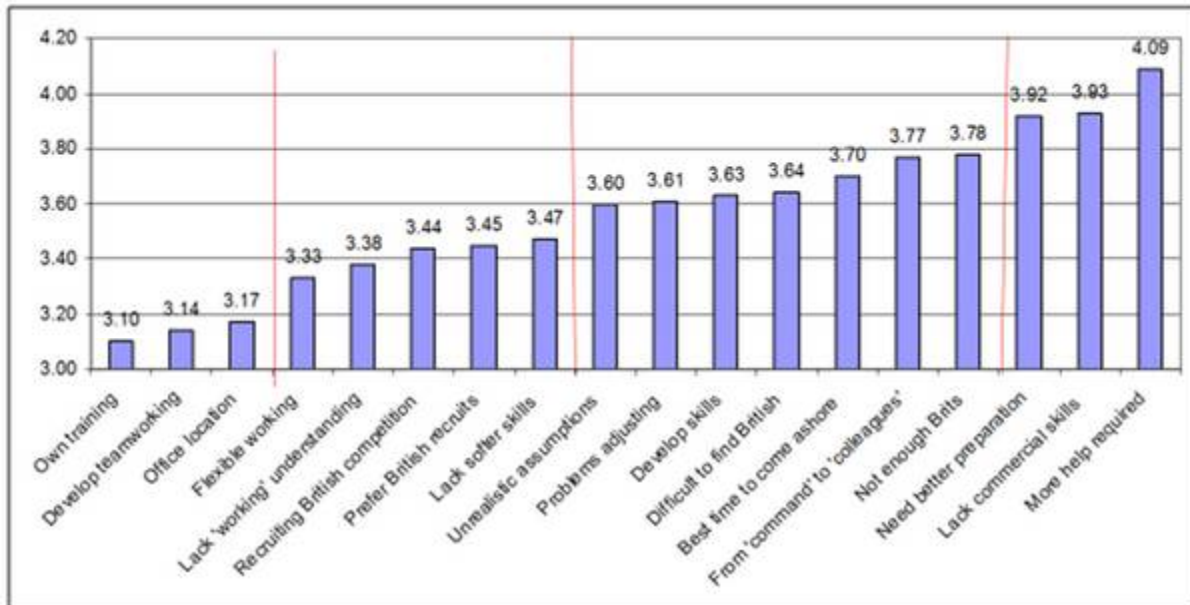
to identify the training and skills needed by British Merchant Navy officers in order to make a successful transition from ship to shore and so sustain the UK as the leading maritime centre into the future.

2. To achieve this the researchers addressed the question in three phases:
 - i. Interviews with three specialist maritime employment agencies: Spinnaker, Faststream and Halcyon to identify key areas that should be built into phase ii.
 - ii. On-line quantitative survey of employers of ex-mariners: Using many thousands of UK maritime contacts from a variety of databases. This generated responses from a wide variety of employers across the maritime industries. Full details of these may be found in the report.
 - iii. Ten follow up qualitative telephone interviews, again across a diverse range of employers, to bring the responses at ii into sharper focus.

Summary of Key Results and Findings from the Investigative Phases ii and iii

3. Phase ii – Engineers 32% of employers wanted an engineering degree, 16% any degree and 12% some additional engineering qualification. However, 30% wanted some shore side experience.
4. Phase ii – Deck Officers Here 24% wanted a degree, 40% some form of additional qualification and 32% again wanted some shore side experience.

5. Phase ii and iii A key part of the survey, Phase ii, asked participants to agree or disagree to a number of statements with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree. The responses are illustrated graphically in the table below.

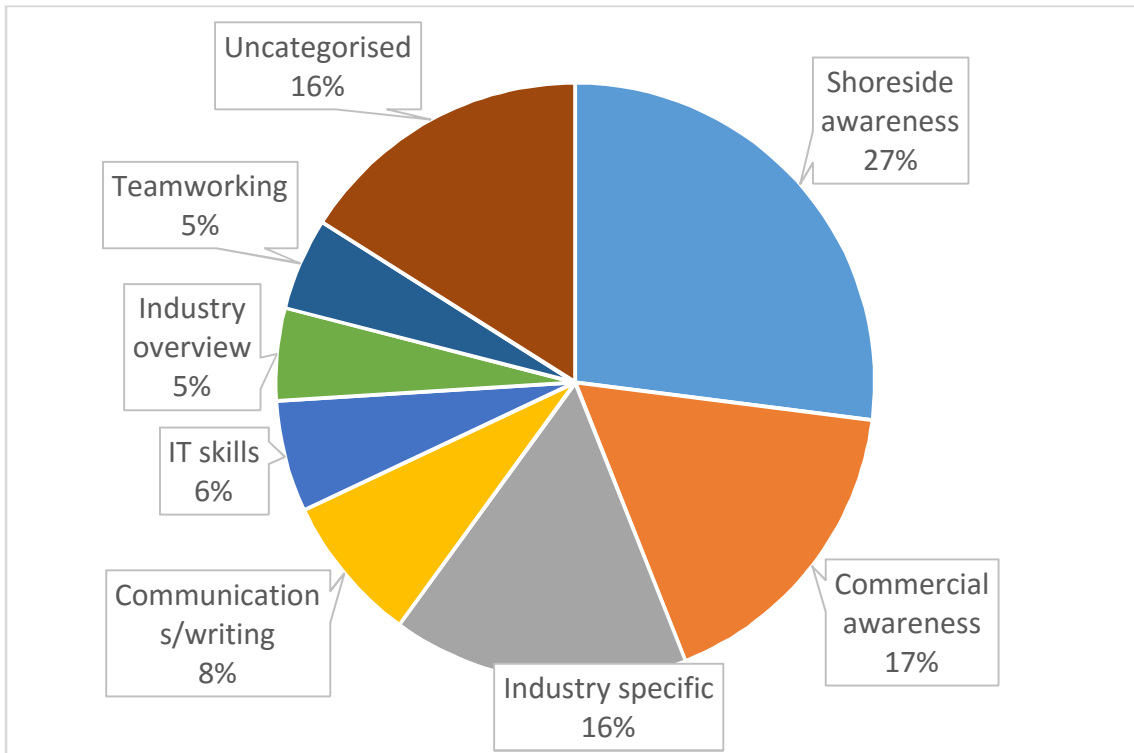


6. From this it may be considered that those scoring over 3.5 are important and those around 4 or above very important. These may be grouped further as follows:

- a. **Unrealistic Assumptions and Problems Adjusting:** These comments tended to focus around the changes in remuneration, working hours, commuting and commitments at home and at work.
- b. **Develop Skills and From Command to Collegiate:** Mariners should consider developing their management skills and leadership skills before coming ashore. In particular they should understand the change in management techniques from command at sea to a more collegiate approach ashore.
- c. **Difficult to Find British and Not enough Brits:** Not enough British young people have sought a career at sea to meet the requirement ashore. It should be noted that two of the key reasons for employing British nations were that English was their first language and that they had right of residency in the UK.
- d. **Best Time to Come Ashore and Need Better Preparation:** For some roles coming ashore after time in command may be too late to achieve a worthwhile career ashore. Mariners need to plan the career path they would like to follow when they consider when to "swallow the anchor" and seek to improve the skills and qualifications it will need before coming ashore.
- e. **Lack of Commercial Skills:** In essence, commercial, budgeting and communication, including writing and IT, skills.
- f. **More Help Required:** It was felt that it would be helpful if there was a single point that mariners could go to, to find out more about the type of opportunities

that were available ashore and the skills and qualifications needed to take them up.

7. Diagrammatically these responses may be represented by the pie chart below where “Uncategorised” refers to those answers which did not fit in with the other groupings that the other responses could be placed in and Commercial Skills has been broken down into Commercial Awareness, Communication Skills and IT Skills.



8. Phase iii tended to produce a series of views and positions which, while more specific, re-enforced the findings of phase ii. Further details of these responses may be found in the report pages 7-11.

Conclusions

9. The Project Ulysses team reviewed the report’s findings and concluded that while all the findings were valid not all of them were susceptible to solution through provision of generic support to the mariner. However, it was felt that findings 6a - **Unrealistic Assumptions and Problems Adjusting**, 6b - **Skills Develop and From Command to Collegiate**, 6d - **Best Time to Come Ashore and Need Better Preparation** and 6e - **Lack of Commercial Skills** might be covered by some form of courses and or secondment to a post ashore.
10. It was considered that 6c - **Difficult to Find British and Not enough Brits** lay outside the scope of the project and it was felt there was more to be done, such as improving SMaRT Funding. In addition, while the report outlines the perception that there is a shortage of young people wishing to go to sea this is not borne out by the MNTB’s experience; though there may well be a shortage of “Brits” coming ashore reflecting the low cadet numbers in past decades and this shortage is perhaps irreconcilable.

11. Finally, finding 6f - **More Help Required** the suggested single point of contact for information on a second career ashore seemed potentially one of the most useful but also one of the most difficult to construct a model for.
12. However, the team also concluded that the two most important findings of the research were that 'mariners should be encouraged to better prepare themselves for working ashore' and also that 'more needs to be done to help seafarers find out about shore-side opportunities' – the latter point being the more significant.

Way ahead

13. In order to explore the above and identify the particular work strands, how they can be achieved and which organisation might best take the lead in facilitating any particular strand, it has been agreed to convene a seminar for this purpose in the autumn. This will be held at 1330 on Monday 17 October 2016 at Trinity House.
14. **Registration** for this event is through the Maritime London Website. If you have any questions on this event please contact Olga Jaques at Maritime London (Enquiries@maritimelondon.com)