

Guidebook for Aspiring Stewardesses/Deckhands

Introduction

Hi everyone, I am Carrie Grant and I have been in the yachting industry since 2009. I first started at the front desk for Luxury Yacht group answering calls but quickly learned to become a crew agent hiring for the Super Yachts. I knew nothing about yachting when I started that job but after six years of finding everyone else their dream careers, I decided it was time for me to work on the boats. Big problem though, I was 43 years old and most likely a laughingstock to anybody who knew anything about getting into yachting. But I am here to inspire you and show you that you too can have a Successful career on boats, but you have to work your ass off for it!

To be successful in anything in life, you have to be OK with starting at the bottom, getting dirty, working uncomfortable jobs, and doing things you don't want to do. These back-breaking tasks build the foundation of an amazing crew member and person. The skills you acquire through hard work and dedication will serve you throughout your life and career. Remember, the stronger and more varied your skill set, the more opportunities will open up for you, possibly even leading to owning your own yacht and having your own employees. Take advantage of every single thing you can learn on these yachts because you never know where the opportunities can lead you. I am living proof of that!!!

Personal Journey and Motivation

For the past nine years, I have been freelancing on yachts under 100 feet, performing a wide range of tasks and gaining invaluable experience. This path has been incredibly rewarding and has allowed me to develop a strong skill set that makes me a valuable crew member. After the first five years, with the skillsets I

learned from yachting, I branched out and started Carrie's Space Organizing for homes and Carrie's Space Outfitting for yachts.

But Hippiekit Green Products I am most proud of, and together we can start a 'green' revolution with leading by example and doing our part to help clean up the yachting industry.

My main goal today is to emphasize the importance of utilizing small boat marinas, accepting low pay to learn and the willingness to start from the bottom and work your way up. The opportunities are there; you just need to hustle, network, and be willing to take on any job to gain experience.

Professional Behavior in Public

1. Be Polite and Respectful:

- Why: In public, you could be interacting with potential employers without even knowing it. Fort Lauderdale is full of yacht owners and captains hanging out at some of the same places as you. You never know who is assessing how you conduct yourself off the boat, looking for signs of professionalism and maturity. Plus with camera phone everywhere, your actions could be caught on film and posted for life.
- How: Engage with everyone politely and respectfully. Maintain eye contact, listen attentively, and respond thoughtfully. Your interactions reflect your character and reliability. Try not to take up too much of the conversation, ask people about themselves, show genuine interest in what people are saying, even if you don't care.

2. Maintain Composure:

- Why: Your ability to remain calm and composed in various situations demonstrates your capability to handle stressful environments on a yacht. Employers look for individuals who can manage their emotions effectively.
- How: Practice staying calm under pressure by taking deep breaths and thinking before you speak. Handling conflicts discreetly and professionally will leave a positive impression.

3. Be Mindful of Your Surroundings:

- Why: Being aware of your environment and adapting your behavior accordingly shows adaptability and awareness—key traits for a successful crew member.
- How: Adjust your volume and demeanor to match the setting. If you're in a quiet café, keep your voice low. In a social setting, engage appropriately without drawing unnecessary attention to yourself.

Proper Dress Code

1. Dress Appropriately:

- Why: Your attire significantly influences first impressions. Dressing professionally indicates that you take yourself and your potential role seriously. Yacht owners expect their crew to represent them well.
- How: Opt for polished, professional outfits over casual or revealing clothing. For instance, avoid cut-off jean shorts and tight tops that might seem unprofessional when attending networking events. Instead, choose tailored pants, skirts, or dresses that convey a clean, professional image.

- Example: Imagine you're at a marina having dinner, and a potential yacht employer sees you in wrinkled clothes or hoochie shorts. They might perceive you as less serious about your career or wonder how you will represent the boat when you are off duty.

2. Maintain Personal Hygiene:

- Why: Good personal hygiene reflects well on your professionalism and respect for others. Employers value crew members who are clean and well-groomed. So many crew walk into a job agency with their hair in a messy bun, gym clothes and looking like they hadn't showered in days, the crew agents make note of this in your file. Which will definitely hurt your chances because when your file is pulled up for an employer, that crew agent will see over and over again how that crew member always comes into the office looking messy, the employer wants to know everything about what we know and so we give them this information.
- How: Ensure your hair is clean and styled, nails are trimmed, and you use subtle fragrances. Overpowering scents or an unkempt appearance can be off-putting and reflect poorly on you. In addition, smelling like cigarette smoke is always noted in your file as well. Trust me, a non-smoker can smell you coming from a mile away.

3. Accessorize Minimally:

- Why: Simple, elegant accessories enhance your professional look without being distracting. Yacht owners appreciate a polished and understated appearance.
- How: Choose minimal jewelry, such as small earrings and a simple watch. Avoid flashy or overly large pieces that can draw unnecessary attention. This is just my opinion, but when we call in five girls to be interviewed and four show up in a skort and polo with the last one wearing a smart, fitted button down shirt and a pencil skirt with some nice flats, someone who stands out, I will pick that gem first

to go into the interview. To me, you stand out, you are not cookie cutter and in my experience, a standout candidate!

Healthy Habits

1. Avoid Smoking and Vaping in Public:

- Why: We all know smoking is frowned upon in yachting and we all know crew who smoke and lie about it, no biggie. Smoking and vaping can project a negative image and suggest a lack of self-discipline. Yacht owners prefer crew members who maintain a healthy lifestyle and void of bad habits.
- How: If you smoke or vape, do so discreetly and away from potential employers or professional settings. Even if you are out at Tap 42, take it outside. There is nothing more unattractive than watching someone suck on a vape every five minutes or have to leave the table every 20 minutes to smoke a cigarette. If I was your boss or future boss and I was sitting across the restaurant witnessing that, the work relationship would be terminated. People can lose their lives on boats and if my crew isn't of the best sound, mind and body, mistakes are made, so the majority of employers only want the most disciplined.

2. Manage Your Alcohol Intake:

- Why: In addition to the statement above, being visibly intoxicated can also harm your reputation and make you seem unprofessional. Employers value crew members who can represent them responsibly.
- How: When out in public, especially where potential employers might be present, enjoy alcohol in moderation. Aim to stay composed and in control,

avoiding excessive drinking that could lead to stumbling or inappropriate behavior or worse, being filmed and posted.

Finding Work in Small Boat Marinas **Around South Florida**

The yachting industry is highly competitive, especially for junior stewardesses. Yachts over 130 feet operate like the military, with strict roles and limited opportunities for junior crew members to gain diverse experience. Here's why starting in small boat marinas can be incredibly beneficial for your career:

1. Realistic Expectations for Super Yachts:

- Why: Junior positions on super yachts (over 130 feet) are highly sought after, with hundreds of applicants for a single opening. The majority of these applicants have similar qualifications, such as college degrees, hospitality and STCW certifications. That is typically not enough to make it to the top of the pile and with so many resumes to read through, having actual life skills with yachting will help.
- How: To stand out, your resume needs to showcase unique skills and experiences beyond standard qualifications. Highlight any additional skills, no matter how small they seem. For example, being a professional seamstress or having experience in carpentry can set you apart from other candidates. But if you don't have anything special to offer, then maybe it's time to look at a new approach.

2. Comprehensive Experience on Smaller Yachts:

- Why: On yachts under 100 feet, you will perform a wide range of tasks. This hands-on experience is invaluable and makes you a more versatile and attractive candidate for the mega yachts. Plus, they usually never use a crewing agency, so there isn't going to be much competition when applying. Most small boat captains are happy to have a warm body who is willing to work hard and learn, shows up early, is mature, trustworthy and happy.
- How: When working on smaller yachts, typically it's just you and the Captain. You might find yourself driving the tender, handling watersports, assisting with maintenance, washing down, pump outs, walking the dog, eating dinner out with the owners, going on most of the excursions and more. This broad skill set is what larger yachts look for in experienced crew members. Spend a couple of years learning how to maintain a boat from top to bottom then the next time you apply for that Deck/Stew position on a 200' yacht, your chances are a hundred times better.

3. Networking and Job Opportunities:

- Why: Small boat marinas are abundant in South Florida, providing numerous opportunities to gain experience and make connections. Networking is key in the yachting industry.
- How: Use resources like daywork123.com to find freelance opportunities. Call and email marinas with your resume, then follow up with a visit to introduce yourself. Demonstrating initiative and enthusiasm can lead to full-time positions. If you don't have transportation, request a video meeting.

Personal Experience and Insights

When I ventured into yachting nine years ago, at 43, I had no boating experience, just a desire to get away from that office desk, a killer work ethic, an extensive hospitality background and the determination to prove everyone wrong...and that

I DID! This path has been incredibly rewarding and has allowed me to develop a strong skill set that made me not only me a valuable crew member, but also provided me with the knowledge, reputation and contacts to branch out and start my own, related businesses. Here's a detailed look at my journey:

1. Starting with One Family:

- Why: Building a long-term relationship with a single family can lead to continuous opportunities and growth.
- How: My first year, 2015, I took every, awful job I was offered with the worst pay. Most of them, I had no idea what I was doing but small boat Captains are usually pretty ok with teaching. It was July, when all the big boats and crew have left town, which made me a busy girl. I worked 25 days a month, average 16 hours a day for tons of boats and was taken advantage of with pay more times than I want to count. More importantly, I was building relationships and a reputation. By 2016, word was out about this go getter crew member and the next thing you know, I have repeat captains and clients. I started working for this one family on their 78-foot yacht as the Stew because they had their deck crew all set. Over the years, they upgraded twice, each time hiring me to transfer everything from boat to boat, including their most recent purchase, a brand new, 2023, 100-foot Horizon. Because they trusted me so much as their Stew on their smaller boats, they put me in charge of the interior each time they went bigger. Although it freelance position, they have only used me as their stewardess since 2016. We spend about 10 weeks in the Bahamas, New England and the Keys every year, this is one of many stories like this.

2. Taking Advantage of Every Opportunity:

- Why: Even seemingly small or undesirable jobs can lead to significant opportunities.

- How: I took a job cleaning an engine room for \$20 an hour. The New York Italian captain was so impressed that he offered me the sole Mate/Stew position for the summer on that 78-foot yacht in Montauk, where the clients only came on the weekends, and the captain lived in the city. When the summer ended, I did such a great job maintaining that boat that we made a deal where I lived on their vessel for free all winter in Turnberry Marina in exchange for maintaining it. They only used the boat about twice a month for a 4-hour afternoon cruise all winter and still paid me on those days. The same New York captain passed me along to all of his New York captain friends. I worked for so many of them that they considered me family and even said if anyone gives me any problems, let them know!

3. Career Growth:

- Why: Starting on smaller yachts allows you to build a strong foundation of skills and experience. Instead of performing the same task over and over again for years, with small boats, you learn how to do everything and in a short amount of time. This makes you a more attractive candidate for larger yachts in the future.

- How: After gaining experience on smaller yachts, you can confidently apply for positions on larger yachts. Your diverse skill set and practical experience will set you apart from other candidates. A career in boating can lead to so many unexpected life. Look at my situation: Working on yachts I learned that I am very good at organizing, so I eventually created an organizing business where I am paid by the hour, not the day. In addition, because most of the new yachts I freelanced for were always missing things from forks and wine glasses to backup sheet sets. In a short amount of time I acquired the ability to notice right away when the boat was lacking in items so I created a yacht outfitting company. Then, in just the last year, because I was disgusted at how much pollution and harm boats cause to our planet, it inspired me to create Hippiekit Green Products!

4. Every Day is Different

Why: When I took that desk job at Lux Yachts, I loved helping crew so much, I thought I would never leave. But after six years of watching others live life at sea, I took that leap of faith, left a solid job and tried my hand at yachting.

How: Because I discovered so many new skill sets, I didn't know I had, (organizing and outfitting) there was an opportunity to use those newly uncovered skills and start my own businesses. Let's face it, interior crew eventually get too old to work on yachts and if you don't have a backup plan and you didn't save all your money while living and working on those boats, you'll be in a pickle.

Remember, even if you start with low pay, the experience and connections you gain are invaluable. I started at 43 years old, making \$150 a day working freelance and turned cleaning toilets into my own little empire!!