

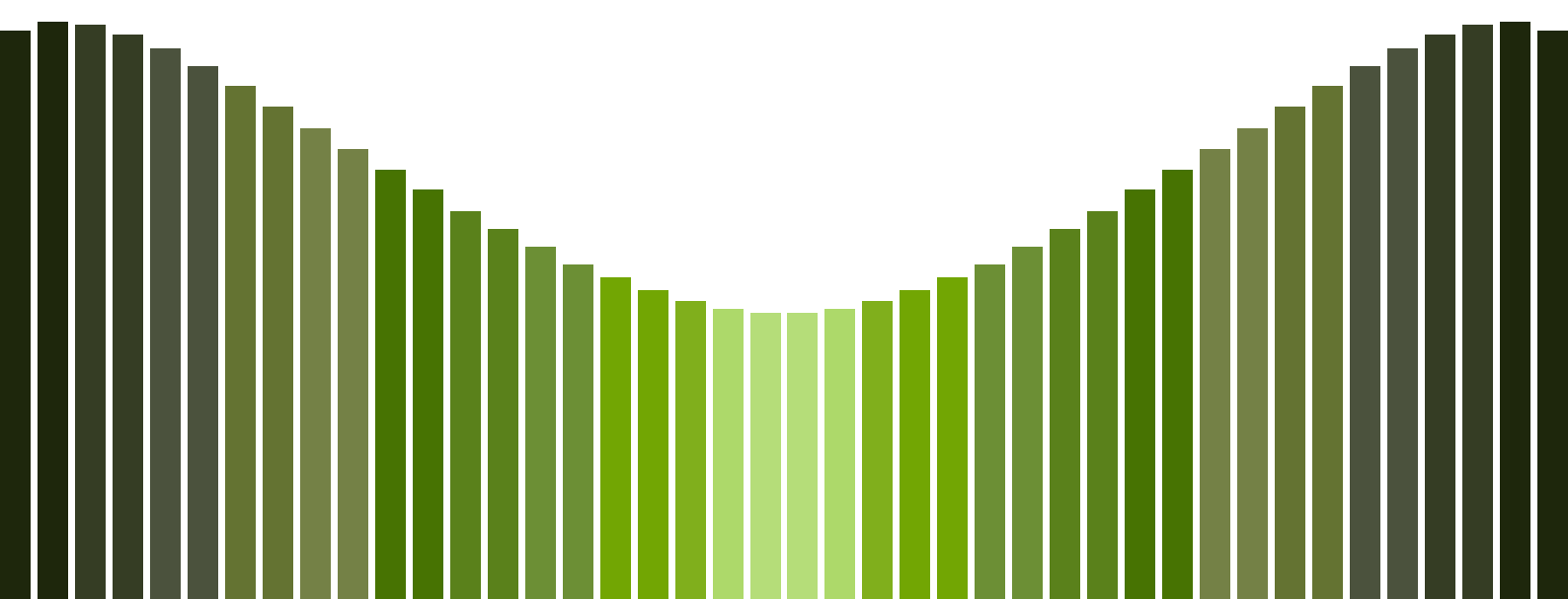


The MPC report on

Kind Leadership

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Maritime Volunteer Service



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- *To promote professionalism and esteem within the British Merchant Navy and those organisations directly concerned with the sector.*
- *To provide a central point from which professional opinion on maritime matters can be offered to the maritime community, industry, government and the media.*
- *To provide independent expert advice and guidance based on our combined professional knowledge and experience unhindered by any financial or commercial interests.*
- *To provide guidance to regulators and employers on the professional training standards adequate for our maritime professionals.*

Members are drawn from the across the maritime community of the UK.

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Executive Summary

1.1. Introduction

The maritime industry in recent years has seen an increasing interest in 'Kind Leadership', the adoption of which transforms leadership and safety culture, and improves the well-being of individuals.

This report sets out the findings of research into 'Kind Leadership' in the maritime industry and the derived recommendations.

1.2. Overview

In 2022, the Maritime Professional Council UK (MPC) undertook an initial pilot study of 'Kind Leadership' in the maritime industry. (See Appendix 1 on Page 23 for the report in full).

The research sought to discover whether 'Kind Leadership':

- Has a place in the maritime industry.
- Could be used to enhance the industry's leadership and safety culture.
- Could improve the wellbeing of individuals.

To find the answers to these questions, The Nautical Institute, an MPC member organisation, invited its members and non-members to complete a survey on 'Kind Leadership', which yielded 119 comprehensive responses.

1.3. Findings

88% of respondents (105 of 119) agreed that there was a place for 'Kind Leadership' in the maritime industry.

The respondents generally viewed 'Kind Leadership' as an effective way of enhancing leadership, safety culture, team motivation, communication and improving the well-being of individuals.

Some respondents advocated the creation of group goals and the elimination of the blame culture in favour of learning from mistakes.

There was a strong belief that 'Kind Leadership' could be learnt and taught in the working environment and through carefully planned activities in the classroom and online.

A prevalent theme in the findings was the impact that onboard leadership practices have on cadets.

1.4. Recommendations

1. It is recommended that 'Kind Leadership' be:
 - Integrated into a modernised cadet curriculum to prepare the maritime leaders of the future.
 - Implemented via companies introducing formal mentoring practices, which are realistically implemented and evaluated in a work-place setting.
 - Used to improve teaching and learning practices during the 'sea phase' placement of cadets, including the introduction of benchmarks and standards that can hold companies to account.
 - An influence within current mandatory maritime leadership and management courses, such as HELM, or equivalent, and any future continuing professional development (CPD) for seafarers and shore-based staff.
 - Part of continuing professional development and other opportunities, which support the sharing and understanding of roles amongst seafarers and shore staff.
2. Leadership training must be focused more on the practical side, complete with practical exercises, with the attending groups being drawn from mixed disciplines, ashore and on board. This will achieve more realistic practices which can be used to drive the forthcoming review of STCW. In this way, stakeholders can argue for the inclusion of tangible 'soft skills' as a competence to be evaluated on the same terms as 'technical skills'.
3. Introduce regular properly approved experiential leadership training throughout a career.
4. Even the most immersive and engaging courses, using both engine and bridge simulators and 'discovery learning' techniques, are by themselves insufficient. It is essential that companies create the conditions for newly acquired behaviours pertaining to 'Kind Leadership' and 'Followership' to bed-in on board by using onboard mentoring and coaching. This commitment will signal that this is the new company work practice and industry standard, and that these behaviours are necessary and measured through an integrated appraisal system. The aim is to facilitate real, measurable, and positive change.
5. Provide leaders with approved training and mentoring in conducting consistent, effective, and useful appraisals. This process, in of itself, encourages the identified desirable behaviours in leaders such as teamwork, empathy, emotional intelligence, effective communication, etc.
6. Evidence in other industries points to the success of 360-degree appraisals, where the outcomes have proved to be positive and desirable. Consider introducing these as part of the drive towards developing an effective, approved, and recognised industry appraisal systems.

2 Full Report

2.1. Introduction

Over the past ten years there has been a growing interest in the importance of kindness and the positive effect it can have within organisations. It is seen as important in alleviating stress and encouraging greater awareness of emotions, feelings, and well-being. However, there has been little mention of the specific impact of 'Kind Leadership' within the maritime industry.

2.2. Background

It was decided to explore whether there might be a relationship between 'Kind Leadership' and organisational functionality, particularly with regards to the safety and welfare of seafarers and shore-based staff.

This is timely in the UK, since in 2022, the Merchant Navy Training Board (MNTB) and the Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA) issued revised guidance for Human Element, Leadership and Management (HELM) training, which requires the industry to change how the programme is delivered. Alongside this, there is a further opportunity to use 'Kind Leadership' to improve professional teaching and learning practices. It was sought to explore how the research findings might translate into actions for creating an effective learning environment for cadets undertaking their sea-phase.

It is slowly being recognised that involving officers at an early stage of their development will inspire them to take forward the benefits of 'Kind Leadership' into their careers and encourage them to influence others to adopt these same leadership skills, which are essential when creating positive working environments.

2.3. Definition of 'Kind Leadership'

As with most new concepts, there is no one universally agreed definition of 'Kind Leadership'. All the varying understandings of the term tend to focus on two areas: the attributes of 'Kind Leadership' and the outcomes for the company and the workforce. For the purposes of this report, the following definitions were adopted:

"Kindness empowers people to lead with positivity, purpose, and an open-mindedness that embraces new ideas. A lot of this comes down to trust. If leaders show kindness, they accelerate trust and in turn create happier, more empowered employees, who will be inspired to deliver better results" (Marsh 2019).

"In order for companies to improve, the people of the organisation have to become smarter and more resourceful and work together more effectively over time. For this to work, people have to care about their work, the company and one another. This requires the expert orchestration of a kind leader." (Baker & O'Malley 2009).

2.4. Context

This research into 'Kind Leadership' was conducted by the Maritime Professional Council UK (MPC) in two stages, namely:

1. A pilot study (see Appendix A), carried out by Steve Cameron and John Wright, which consisted of:
 - b. Fourteen direct interviews with shipowner/operators, seafarers, professional associations, and leadership professionals.
 - c. MPC attendance of two Nautical Institute Foundation (NIF) meetings on leadership, at which the opinions of seven further maritime professionals were gathered.

The full pilot study report may be seen in Appendix 1 on page 23.

2. An MPC member organisation, the Nautical Institute, conducted a survey of both its members and non-members and received 119 comprehensive responses. The analysis and findings of this survey, carried out by Professor Carole Davis, can be found in the next section.

Note: All quotes taken from both the Pilot Study and the Survey Analysis are written in italics to clearly separate the expressed opinions of the interviewees and respondents from any conclusions reached by the MPC.

2.5. 'Kind Leadership' Survey: Analysis and Findings

2.5.1 Overview

119 completed surveys were included in this activity. Demographic data was not judged to be necessarily relevant, as there appeared to be no discernible differences between the beliefs and views held across the different age groups. The data is included in Appendix 2 for interest only.

There were six free text questions that yielded a great deal of rich data. The responses were reviewed and analysed in detail, with the aim of identifying common themes and sub-themes. As the questions were of a broad nature, there was a degree of overlap in responses. The main themes and sub-themes have been identified and are listed in Section 2.5.4 below.

Actual quotes from respondents are in italics: This is to clearly distinguish contributors' opinions from those of the MPC, as set out in this report.

The aim of the analysis is to make the recommendations more decisive and precise.

88% of respondents (105 of 119) agreed that there was a place for 'Kind Leadership' in the maritime industry.

2.5.2. Research Methodology

The survey was conducted as a qualitative study, which sought to explore the experiences and views of seafarers and shore-based staff on 'Kind Leadership'. This was achieved by asking respondents the following questions:

1. What are your general views on leadership, both at sea and ashore?
2. What are the strengths and opportunities of current leadership practices?
3. What do you consider to be the weaknesses and threats of current leadership practices?
4. Is current leadership training sufficient?
5. Is there a place for 'Kind Leadership' at sea and/or ashore?
6. What should leadership skills training include? Could you explain how those ideas might be implemented and what they offer our industry if acted upon?

The questions were distributed widely across the industry.

These six free text questions yielded a wealth of data, with responses being reviewed and analysed in detail to identify common themes and sub-themes.

Commonly held views were explored, and attention was also given to small groups of outliers, i.e., small numbers who held opposite views, which offered important insights into the reasons for resisting the concept of 'Kind Leadership'.

2.5.3. Details of themes and sub-themes emerging from survey questions

Q1: Please offer us your general views on leadership, both at sea and ashore.

Respondents showed a tendency to express views that were either based on personal experience of 'leaders' they had worked with, or on a strongly held belief of what leadership should be and what it was not. Some respondents drew on a combination of experience and theoretical definitions.

Comments mostly referred to leadership on the bridge, as a master or a deck officer, with other contexts at sea and ashore being rarely spoken of.

Followers and their responsibilities, or potential as future leaders, are rarely mentioned, with the primary emphasis being on the actions and attitudes of the leader. There is little emphasis on who is a leader at sea and ashore and little consideration of the concept of 'distributed leadership,' including team leaders.

Models of leadership are referred to, albeit in a limited way. Most respondents favour a more democratic model that promotes 'emotional intelligence', whilst adhering to a clear chain of command. There is a recognition that autocratic leadership, that pays little regard to crew and staff, is obsolete and dangerous.

However, what is interesting is the existence of a persistent cross-cutting theme across questions as to whether leadership can be taught. A small, albeit significant, group of respondents believe that leadership is innate, i.e., either you are a natural leader, or you are not, and no amount of training will make a difference.

Another commonly held view was the existence of differing leadership styles and the need to consider 'follower' characteristics:

Every Captain/Chief Engineer is different, as are their leadership styles. In addition, every crew (member) is different in capability and attitude. When you have a well-trained crew who are self-motivated, not much leadership is required day to day....

It was widely acknowledged that the maritime context requires a very specific interpretation and application of leadership. The complexity and contradictions associated with leadership were widely recognised.

Leadership was not believed to be merely commensurate with an assigned title and set of responsibilities. True leadership is observable and proven through the demonstration of specific behaviours, skills, and mindsets. A clear distinction existed between leaders and managers, with the inference given that leaders were visible and present without being overly interfering:

However, shore management overriding the Master, or not allowing him a degree of autonomy, is demoralising.....

Maintaining safety was seen as a vital outcome of effective leadership. The correlation between the best leaders, company reputation and company profits, was obvious to many respondents. However, an uncomfortable tension emerges, as illustrated in the above quote, in respect of the differences between leadership at sea and onshore. It was suggested that leaders at sea were at a disadvantage in the decision-making processes, i.e., not consulted, not protected, and overruled.

Leadership at sea is quite different from ashore. Due to the harsh hostile nature of sea job activities, the leader achieves results.

It was felt by those at sea that shore management needed to model more positive and empathic leadership when interacting with masters during crises and difficult cases.

There is a sense of a need for transformational change, which one respondent refers to as 'The new era leader'. There is a move away from simply being competent and having years of experience, to focusing on the importance of creating edifying relationships and being committed to capacity building and empowerment.

The qualities thought to be associated with good leadership tended to be universally shared by respondents. This individual is people-centred, accountable, a role model and an effective communicator who encourages dialogue, whilst establishing a clear chain of command. There are suggestions that they need to be conversant with the modernisation agenda, e.g., digital technologies. A distinction was made between technical know-how and a caring, respectful attitude towards team members, whilst acknowledging that the most effective leaders will display both.

It was clear that leadership approaches were situational, requiring agility in response. Dealing with a crisis requires a different approach from that called for in a calm or everyday situation. This suggests that an intrinsic dimension of the leadership skillset is the ability to pivot effortlessly from one to the other to achieve best outcomes:

It is absolutely needed, because in times of panic we need people to keep the group together. But in times of calm, leaders must listen to their team members and take in what they've got to say.

Many respondents acknowledged that the authority gradient grows steeper in a crisis, while it flattens somewhat during normal operations. There was common agreement that they weren't comfortable with a completely flattened hierarchy – and there must be a leader. Nevertheless, in all situations the synergistic leader can still be questioned by a team member and indeed welcomes and encourages that.

Respondents were clear that the credibility of leaders was essential to winning respect and trust, i.e., the existence of a meritocracy was deemed to be an indicator of ethics and a cornerstone of career progression:

The new era leader must be approachable and listen to the problems and concerns of the people around him. At a time when life has ever-increasing demands on everyone, there must be the corresponding contact. Limits and measures must exist in every employment relationship, but with understanding and respect for the rights of each employee. The leader must be able to guide and inspire. Fortunately, some of these characteristics are not learned and you cannot pretend to understand the other when you really do not hear him. You can't please the other person when you don't really know what he's offering.

In this section we come across a recurring and vitally important sub-theme in all questions, which is around multi-national and diverse crews. Respondents suggest that leaders can have real impact by creating harmony and understanding amongst different nationalities and by reducing racism.

An effective way of resolving disputes was found to be bringing people together to discuss the issues at hand.

The diverse nature of crews offered a valuable opportunity to:

Try to learn the culture and style of other nations, so that we can try to adapt and align with the needs of particular nations.

Q2: What would you consider the strengths and opportunities of current leadership practices?

In answering this question respondents got into the realm of 'times they are a changing' and the power of role models. Examples of leaders helping others to grow, illustrate how succession planning is playing out in certain sections of the maritime industry. Whilst this experience is not universally shared, the importance of communication is once more the linchpin on which successful outcomes are seen to depend. Good clear commands, with the reasoning behind them clearly understood by all, are paramount to safety.

Here, some respondents voiced their discomfort around leadership approaches being too flexible, with the prevalent style sometimes becoming too laissez faire. The general principles of leadership were recognised by many respondents:

First, there's no fundamental difference between sea and ashore. Any good leader will have a range of techniques that can be applied to any context: for example, urgent/directive, coaching/consensual, listening/supportive. The principles don't change. My general take on observed leadership is that it is patchy, often poorly taught, and insufficiently reinforced at important career stages, or ahead of promotion. There is a lot of 'what' is good in leadership, not enough 'how'. Similarly, there aren't many really good and inspiring role models to show the way.

There is optimism at the adoption of modern-day leadership practices:

I would like to see young leaders who are brave enough to offer changes. A leader who understands technology and is able to integrate it into today's working environments. We need somebody to relieve seafarers from being modern slaves.

There is an interesting line of enquiry here regarding what is 'modern' and what is becoming conflated with change, per se. Are participants talking about 'modern practices' in maritime, or a changing world where the benefits of kindness are better understood?

In this section we see the first mention of Human Element, Leadership & Management (HELM) courses and STCW, with the two often being interchangeable, i.e., HELM exists because of STCW, with leadership covered in STCW through mandatory HELM (or equivalent) courses in some countries.

Again, as with the championing of 'trait theories' by some respondents in the earlier sections, suggesting that leaders are born not made, there are some comments suggesting there are some individuals who can't be taught, or are not able to learn. This introduces the important issue of motivation amongst followers and incentivisation to engage. It also raises the conundrum of whether failure to learn or change is due to a lack of willingness to do so, or a lack of opportunity to be exposed to good role models or professional development.

The following important response challenges the concept of training as a solution to a perceived leadership crisis:

The issue is not necessarily with whether the training content is sufficient or not, the main issue is that a lot of leaders fail to implement what they have learned. The only way I can see leadership being practically implemented is for a company to monitor their leaders in the work environment. Another option is to review the leaders in question by addressing the concerns of those the leader is responsible for. Interventions may be necessary where leadership principles are not being followed.

There is a strongly articulated recognition by many respondents that the industry is changing. One example of this is that dispute resolution within organisations and teams is improving, alongside a more solutions-focused approach to problems. Covid, whilst devastating for the industry, is recognised as a gamechanger in terms of the increasing awareness of the importance of mental health. Responsibility for staff well-being is now recognised as something companies can't and should not avoid without dire consequences.

A theme of intergenerational tension can be seen amongst some of the responses. This is often raised and characterised by the juxtaposition of young and university educated, versus older and experienced.

While this is not a widely shared view amongst respondents, it does further develop the theme of 'difference in background' and how this might be better understood, and tensions resolved, rather than ignored. It is important to state that in the analysis of answers given by different age groups, there were greater similarities than differences across all questions. However, concerns are expressed that not all solutions are working. A widespread view is that HELM course provision is patchy, expensive, inconsistent, and untimely.

Q3: What would you consider the weaknesses and threats of current leadership practices?

A prevalent theme is the impact of onboard leadership practices on cadets, both for better and worse. There is a concern that there is no set of universally agreed and standardised practices to guide the cadet training experience. Leadership practices are believed to have a profound impact on mental wellbeing, progression, and course completion.

Receiving regular constructive and honest feedback, from both on board and on shore, is perceived to be a mechanism for building confidence and competence. Many respondents consider that people learn how to be effective leaders in situ and on the job, facilitated by applying what is learnt in the classroom.

A bleak picture emerging from a critical mass of respondents in this study is that training is either non-existent, insufficient, or ineffective. Prevalent is the idea that courses are a cosmetic measure, providing no real solution.

There is agreement that company indifference is the death knell of positive change, and disquiet that companies are espousing a narrative which promotes positive leadership practices, including Education, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) agendas, when the reality is far removed. There is a recurring concern that extrinsic factors, such as company policy, culture on board ship, commercial pressure, and political factors, can undermine the best leaders:

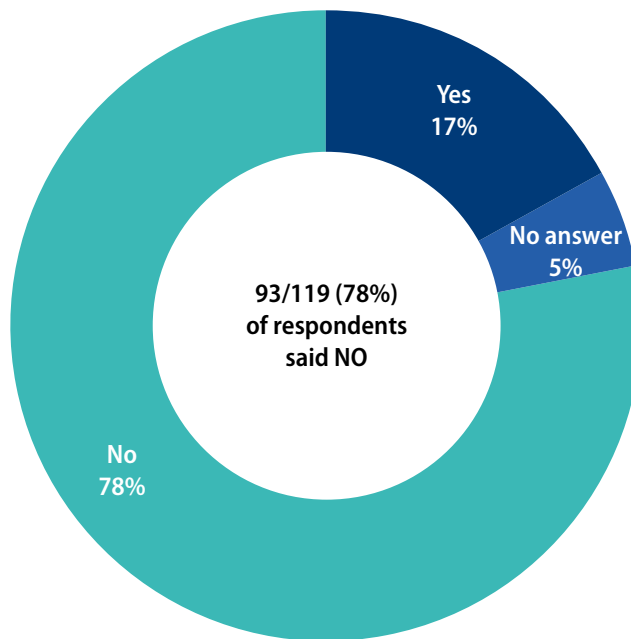
Too much commercial pressure, too many regulations to follow, unrealistic list of jobs to do, with inadequate manpower, which gives no room for kindness.

Some respondents fear that those in leadership positions are promoted too soon and before they have acquired sufficient experience. This raises an interesting question about how experience is measured, i.e., is it measured merely in chronological terms of years served, or is it more sophisticated, based on deep reflection, insight and making sense of experience to change the industry practice?

Q4: Is the current STCW leadership training sufficient? If 'yes', could you explain why you think this to be the case, and if 'no', please can you offer your thoughts on what needs to change and why, and how those changes might be practically achieved?

The ring graph below shows that most respondents believe that STCW leadership training is insufficient:

Is STW Leadership Training Sufficient?



SCTW fully focusses on the “technical part” of the job. BRM on the bridge, firefighting, and lifesaving training courses, are all about technique and are all separate courses and trainings. There is not much of a “holistic” approach included to bring it all together.

As mentioned previously, respondents conflate STCW leadership with HELM courses, which are not universally undertaken or available. It is reported by several respondents that good courses do exist; however, they are in the minority. Concern is expressed that existing courses are very deck focused, and should be available to all disciplines on board and ashore if the industry is to be truly inclusive, to provide further understanding and appreciation of others’ roles:

HELM (M) does not give sufficient preparation for seafarers and there is a lot of variability in content and quality amongst the current training providers.

Two short HELM courses are woefully inadequate to even scratch the surface of the skills needed to be a good leader. Additional practical and theoretical training could be effectively woven into cadetships or subsequent Mates/Masters courses at Nautical College. As an “outside the box” idea, how about sending every UK MN cadet onto a proper, large Sail Training Ship for a few months as a trainee? The leadership skills that can be learnt (along with all the other positives) during a short immersive experience like that would be vast and would stand all cadets in good stead as their career develops.

The sense of unfairness is seen here, along with the negative perception of shore staff:

STCW to be applied to shore staff as well, in order to create equal opportunities for ship's staff. Usually, all jobs ashore are taken by unqualified or less qualified people.

The belief that courses alone do not make for good leadership training and development is held by many respondents. There are suggestions for onboard resources, ongoing formal and informal training, together with structured mentoring programmes. It is implied that it is the responsibility of course participants to apply what they have learnt, and of their employers to ensure they are supported in doing so in their working context. Respondents place a good deal of emphasis on work-based learning in a structured fashion, which in turn is focused on reflective practice, feedback loops and evaluation.

Developing leadership skills is an ongoing process, which only works if there are opportunities to apply them in real-world and real-time scenarios. This suggests that workplaces should be incubators for learning as individuals and as teams. A preference for practical learning is seen here, which is relatable and perceived to be useful to maritime. With taught courses, the right tools need to be used, namely, immersive learning approaches.

Learning about leadership training from other sectors is considered, with the Royal Navy being the most popular choice, followed by aviation. Several respondents held the contrary view that the maritime industry fixates on other industries without acknowledging its own uniqueness, and that you can't impose a blueprint from somewhere else.

There is a view that Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for Leadership training should be mandatory and renewable every two years:

There is always room for improvement for leadership in both spheres and one should never rest on one's laurels. I feel that it is important we get the leadership at sea piece correct, by greater preparation of our future leaders.

The widely held perception is that STCW is a minimum standard, and to develop effective emergent leaders it is necessary to be aspirational and to develop robust frameworks and guidance, which are known to have impact.

Q5: Is there a place for 'Kind Leadership' at sea and/or ashore? If 'yes', please can you offer your ideas on what needs to happen to achieve this? If 'no', can you explain your thinking and offer your ideas?

105 out of 119 respondents felt there was a place for 'Kind Leadership' at sea and/or ashore, in principle. They were able to suggest ways of implementing this, whilst recognising successful implementation was dependent on several factors, including an accepted definition of 'Kind Leadership' being widely adopted:

We gain strength when we are prepared to engage in dialogue that creates and leads to a collaborative environment.

There was a consensus that cadets should be prioritised. For the sake of the leaders of the future, it is clear that the learning experiences for cadets in respect of leadership training should be fully addressed both ashore and onboard. This is reinforced by the following quote:

Kind leadership has its place ashore and at sea, as all those in a position to learn should be treated with similar kindness and respect. To achieve this, learning should be mandatory for vessels that accept cadets, so they are treated appropriately.

It was strongly felt amongst respondents that companies should be held accountable for the quality of the cadet experience onboard.

There is a cynicism surrounding companies introducing leadership programmes:

It seems to be largely left to the companies to provide leadership training. This tends to be a knee jerk reaction to events that have taken place, i.e., harassment. Companies would never admit this and would rather be seen as proactive. My experience suggests otherwise, given the sudden and intense periods of training that leaders receive after various incidents.

It was felt that feedback should travel up as well as down, with a suggestion for 360-degree feedback for leaders from their direct reports, whilst recognising that such activities need to be well-managed and led. (See Recommendations).

There was seen to be a clear difference between HELM courses and 'Kind Leadership' courses or classes:

There is always a place for "kind" leadership. Working with IMO and other organizations, we can begin to develop classes/courses based around "kind" leadership and what it means.

However, the evidence points to a perception that there is a different level of holding to account and leniency when shore teams make mistakes and until this is resolved 'Kind Leadership' will flounder:

Kind leadership can work only when the shore team is equally held responsible for its actions. Example by way of P&I Clubs and other insurance underwriters to follow clauses after amendments in STCW or SOLAS (ISM) then the grey areas will be covered, which the shore team has been operating in!

What seems essential is that the definition and meaning of 'Kind Leadership' as a concept must be clearly established and disseminated. A significant number of respondents were confused by what was meant by the term, whilst others recognised the principles as being aligned to other leadership approaches, such as 'mindful leadership'.

A kind leader is not a weak person. Kind leaders when firm and fair, can achieve a lot more than the dictatorial leader. Dealing with human beings is complex and hence a lot of understanding and compassion is needed.

It became apparent that 'Kind Leadership' is sometimes viewed with suspicion and discomfort, which leads to a reluctance to engage. A theme around 'culture wars' emerged, either in respondents seeing 'Kind Leadership' as a symbol of 'wokeness', or 'kind leaders' being rendered ineffective by company culture. However, most respondents were adamant that future leaders must be nurtured and encouraged. It was acknowledged that future leaders must learn how to manage change.

Also, it was acknowledged that working environments were beginning to be kinder and fairer places:

The world is a very different place, where the youth of today, who will be our leaders of the future, have extremely different levels of tolerance.

Everyone should know that they are not alone and are able to report any bad behaviour in their work environment to an organization that will be responsible for it. A good idea would also be for the shipping companies to create an electronic evaluation of leaders / superiors from the employees.

Making a case for a direct correlation between 'Kind Leadership', safety and productivity becomes of paramount importance, along with rewards and recognition for effective leaders:

We all have to have the courage to make unpopular calls.

It is suggested that leadership abilities and practices should feature as a required competency on appraisals and testimonials. These are skills which can be developed through applied learning and teaching approaches on HELM courses, which include the ability to self-assess and be reflective.

The above implies the necessity to train leaders in the skills needed to conduct consistent, effective, and useful appraisals.

Q6: What should leadership skills training include? Please can you explain how these ideas may be practically implemented and what they would offer our industry if acted upon?

The consensus amongst a significant number of respondents was that cadets will only be treated in an acceptable and professional manner onboard when and if all onboard leaders have been properly trained in leadership, with their behaviours having been coached in to ensure compliance with and competence in this vital skill.

Many of the suggestions are dependent on a cultural shift, which includes valuing emotional intelligence as being of equal importance to technical knowledge and experience. Others advocate the creation of group goals and the elimination of the blame culture in favour of learning from mistakes. The appreciation that the majority of accidents and near misses feature human error(s) in the causal chain is viewed as a catalyst for creating an environment which is predicated on empathy, good communication, coaching techniques, allyship and looking out for others. There appeared to be a strong belief that these could be taught and learnt, mainly in the working environment and through carefully planned activities in the classroom.

The scarcity of time was recognised, whilst encouraging a willingness to seize those teachable moments at work which could be so incredibly transformational:

Ships can be wonderful leadership labs. Every day there are new challenges and new opportunities for technical and personal growth.

There was a sense that if current leaders were role models in refusing to tolerate sexual assault, harassment, and racism, then 'leaders in waiting' would emulate that. There was an admission amongst respondents that bringing about cultural change was not easy:

We must follow servant leadership principles on board as well as ashore. The shore should serve the needs of the ship's staff, so they can carry out their job safely, without any undue stress and without taking risks.

Mentoring and developing self-awareness was seen as an essential strategy for developing future leaders, whilst also supporting current leaders:

A good leader, who from time to time does self-introspection and does his own SWOT analysis, would be a good thing so that he could improve his own performance for the benefit of the team. This, in itself, is a strength and an opportunity.

Leadership is the core of a strong bridge team: The outcome of a voyage rests in the ability of a leader to evaluate risks and to enhance the motivation of the whole team.

'Kind Leadership' is visceral, as shown in the following quote:

At sea, kind leadership should be seen and felt by the crew. Seafarers work hard for their families ashore. They are far away, so good and kind leadership could be a factor to ease the longing of each crewmember onboard.

In terms of content for 'Kind Leadership' training, the following ideas are suggested:

At sea we all have to live as well as work together. Getting a crew, often from different cultural backgrounds, to work effectively over long periods of time, requires an innovative leadership style founded upon dignity, respect, and a shared sense of purpose.

The importance of team building as the foundation on which effective 'Kind Leadership' rests, is further illustrated in the following quote:

The need to create and foster a long-term team that works well together.

It was recognised that because there was much investment of time and resources in sending individuals on training courses, these training courses needed to utilise applied and engaging approaches. It was also suggested that motivation and reward should feature:

Practical leadership exercises and role-play; and - especially - by making effective leadership an explicit criterion for assessment and scoring within companies' appraisal and reward regimes.

Some responses offered practical approaches to breaking down barriers between sea and shore staff:

Perhaps, they [seafarers] should be rotated to carry out shore functions on a regular basis to better understand how the commercial aspects of operations are being done. On the other hand, the shore leadership should visit the fleet regularly and understand how the vessel is being operated.

The environment at sea has traditionally been based on the concept of hierarchies, so training opportunities in situ were viewed as a way forward:

BRM was one of the great opportunities to enhance leadership practice at sea, as it opened / formalised channels of communications between ranks, which did not exist before. This, in turn, assisted in changing the way colleagues were perceived beyond the hierarchical system under which ships' crews operate.

Constructive feedback was viewed by many respondents as an effective means for developing future leaders, as well as improving general expertise. The most important beneficiaries of this were deemed to be cadets. It was felt that an essential skill for a 'kind leader' was appropriate wording and delivery of feedback to achieve constructive criticism with clear instructions relating to desired outcomes:

Time appropriate explanations and learning that reflects a cadet's time in school (1st and 2nd year cadets cannot be expected to have the same knowledge as a 3rd year cadet). This can be achieved by outlining the achieved courses by the cadet, so an officer is not going to have unreasonable expectations of their knowledge. The above offers the industry a kinder environment that doesn't scare cadets the way they have been at times.

This research points to the requirement for an element of leadership learning consolidation to form part of every subsequent career course. Leadership competence should be explicitly assessed and recorded in annual appraisals and factored into reward decisions. Through formal training, backed by informal coaching, mentoring and self-reflection, a culture of good leadership would become gradually but persistently embedded into the industry. These things would offer greater team loyalty; improve productivity and discretionary effort; improve mental well-being; enhance safety; and probably reduce personnel turnover. Evidence demonstrates that companies who create these conditions are also the most successful at managing safety.

Leadership skills training should include a framework for self-understanding and development. An understanding of one's own strengths and weaknesses will help leaders to develop strategies for interaction and enable them to better respond to the demands of the environment in which they find themselves, at sea or ashore. This will help us develop more rounded leaders who understand that people are our greatest asset, but those people need to be motivated and empowered to succeed at what they do.

2.5.4. Summary of themes and sub-themes emerging from survey questions

Aspects of general leadership

- The impact of different styles of leadership on outcomes.
- The relationship between 'followers' and 'leaders'.
- The extent to which leadership can be learnt.
- The distinction between leadership and management.

Aspects of 'Kind Leadership'

- People centred.
- Demonstrating accountability.
- Creating harmony across diverse teams.
- Balancing dialogic communication with clear chain of command.

Reforming cadet education

- Lack of standardised guidance and practice for sea phase.
- Vulnerability.
- Parity between effective learning environments and reality for cadets.
- Sharing best practice.

Leadership in a maritime context

- Characterised by complexity and competing demands.
- The emergence of the 'new era leader'.
- Multi-national and diverse teams.
- Need for agility in situational response.

Positive outcomes of 'Kind Leadership'

- Maintaining safety.
- Capacity building and succession planning.
- Empowering others.
- Role modelling as a form of teaching.

Enhancing current leadership training

- Introducing structured mentoring opportunities.
- The role of applied learning.
- Strategies to ensure participant engagement.
- Recognising leadership development as an ongoing process.
- Providing opportunities to apply leadership skills in situ as part of learning.

Managing transformational change

- Creating more aspirational and relevant training programmes.
- The centrality of 'soft skills' training in the revised STCW guidance.
- The need for a cultural shift.
- Seizing teachable moments in the workplace.
- Embedding continuing professional development in leadership as a mandatory requirement.

3 Recommendations

1. It is recommended that 'Kind Leadership' be:
 - Integrated into a modernised cadet curriculum to prepare the maritime leaders of the future.
 - Implemented via companies introducing formal mentoring practices, which are realistically implemented and evaluated in a work-place setting.
 - Used to improve teaching and learning practices during the 'sea phase' placement of cadets, including the introduction of benchmarks and standards that can hold companies to account.
 - An influence within current mandatory maritime leadership and management courses, such as HELM, or equivalent, and any future continuing professional development (CPD) for seafarers and shore-based staff.
 - Part of continuing professional development and other opportunities, which support the sharing and understanding of roles amongst seafarers and shore staff.
2. Leadership training must be focused more on the practical side, complete with practical exercises, with the attending groups being drawn from mixed disciplines, ashore and on board. This will achieve more realistic practices which can be used to drive the forthcoming review of STCW. In this way, stakeholders can argue for the inclusion of tangible 'soft skills' as a competence to be evaluated on the same terms as 'technical skills'.
3. Introduce regular properly approved experiential leadership training throughout a career.
4. Even the most immersive and engaging courses, using both engine and bridge simulators and 'discovery learning' techniques, are by themselves insufficient. It is essential that companies create the conditions for newly acquired behaviours pertaining to 'Kind Leadership' and 'Followership' to bed-in on board by using onboard mentoring and coaching. This commitment will signal that this is the new company work practice and industry standard, and that these behaviours are necessary and measured through an integrated appraisal system. The aim is to facilitate real, measurable, and positive change.
5. Provide leaders with approved training and mentoring in conducting consistent, effective, and useful appraisals. This process, in of itself, encourages the identified desirable behaviours in leaders such as teamwork, empathy, emotional intelligence, effective communication, etc.
6. Evidence in other industries points to the success of 360-degree appraisals, where the outcomes have proved to be positive and desirable. Consider introducing these as part of the drive towards developing an effective, approved, and recognised industry appraisal systems.

4 Summary

It is believed that this research shows that 'Kind Leadership' could be used within the maritime industry to:

- Positively transform safety culture within the maritime industry.
- Improve the health and well-being of the workforce, both onboard and ashore.

Many of the recommendations depend on a cultural shift within the industry, whereby the possession of emotional intelligence is given equal value to technical knowledge and experience. By understanding their strengths and weaknesses, leaders will be inspired to develop strategies for interaction that enable them to better respond to the demands of the environment in which they find themselves, whether at sea or ashore. This will help the maritime industry to develop more rounded leaders who understand that people are the industry's greatest asset and that those people need to be motivated and empowered to succeed at what they do.

Finally, businesses will appreciate the direct, positive, and proven financial improvements that will result for those that fully embrace these changes.

5 Conclusion

Based on the findings, all stakeholders are called upon to invest in further research and consider how an element of leadership learning consolidation can be a part of every subsequent career course. Leadership competence should be explicitly assessed and recorded in annual appraisals and factored into reward decisions. Through formal training, backed by coaching, mentoring and self-reflection, a culture of good leadership would become gradually but persistently embedded into the industry. These things would offer greater team loyalty; enhanced productivity and discretionary effort; improved mental well-being; enhanced safety; and probably reduced personnel turnover. The final words are left to one of the respondents:

Leadership skills training should include a framework for self-understanding and development. An understanding of one's own strengths and weaknesses will help leaders to develop strategies for interaction and enable them to better respond to the demands of the environment in which they find themselves, at sea or ashore. This will help us develop more rounded leaders who understand that people are our greatest asset, but those people need to be motivated and empowered to succeed at what they do.

Appendix 1

Summary Preliminary Report on 'Kind Leadership' (August 2022)

The following Appendix contains a preliminary study on 'Kind Leadership' that was undertaken by the MPC in 2022 prior to the main activity. It is provided as background only and does not form part of the main report, which stands on its own merit.

The authors have included this report here because it contains relevant quotes from direct interviews with shipowner/operators, seafarers, professional associations and leadership professionals, that collectively make a worthwhile contribution to the arguments and conclusions reached by the MPC in its main report.

1. Introduction

This research was carried out for and on behalf of the Maritime Professional Council UK (MPC) and was triggered by the recent treatment of seafarers highlighted by the media, and the need to promote the professional standards required of leaders, both at sea, and ashore. It is hoped that this report stimulates industry debate and commitment on how training is transformed, to focus on leadership skills and the ethos of same, rather than on today's mostly technical focused training.

2. Approach

14 direct interviews with shipowner/operators, seafarers, professional associations, and leadership professionals were carried out. Two Nautical Institute Foundation (NIF) meetings on leadership were attended, with seven other maritime professionals, and their opinions are included in this report. Thus, this makes a total interview count of 21. (See the breakdown in the table below).

The reader should note that all quotes are written in italics to clearly separate the expressed opinions of the interviewees from any views of the MPC.

Respondents	Ship		Prof.	Leadership	Total
Activity	Operators	Seafarers	Assoc.	Professionals	
Ship operator	1				
Ship operator	1				
Ship owner	1				
Ship owner	1				
Navigation Officer		1			
Navigation Officer		1			
ex Master Mariner		1			
ex Master Mariner		1			
Prof. Maritime Body			1		
Event on leadership			7		
Fleetwood Nautical College			1		
MNTB			1		
Leadership Consultant				1	
Chartered Organizational Psychologist				1	
Educational Development				1	
Total	4	4	10	3	21

3. Executive Summary

The MPC has found that stakeholders interviewed, including those associated with the Merchant Navy Training Board (MNTB), generally agree that Human Element, Leadership & Management (HELM) training, as it is currently delivered in the UK, and the International Convention on the Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping as amended in 2010 (STCW), with its technical focus, are insufficient, and that leadership skills with a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) pathway, are needed to support career progression from cadet to senior officer. Respondents complained that with shipping lines focusing on cost, rather than value, it is difficult to get many of them to accept this need to invest in leadership training.

However, this initial research has already identified three examples of how leadership training can provide reduced risk, and/or increased profitability. From incidents onboard its ships, one shipping line has identified gaps in competencies and in management training. They identified the need for management training to provide the skills to empower staff to challenge, question, intervene and stop work. One large shipowner, as part of the input into changing its culture, focused on ensuring employees felt that their welfare, and going home in one piece every night, was genuinely management's priority. This translated into changes in operating approach, which improved performance and profit margins. The Loss Prevention Manager of a leading P&I Club stated that *"89% of collisions, and 90% of groundings are due to human error". This provides evidence of the need to invest in leadership training and avoid fatigue.*

The research has clearly identified that leadership is also about ethics. A group of leadership consultants, working across different industries said, *"Start with doing no harm - this puts you in the lane of ethical leadership. It's not score cards, and best practice: It's investing in people that allows discussion and the capture and sharing of knowledge."*

This view was also shared by another group of leadership consultants, some of whom had worked with the MNTB, *"We have many industries and academic studies that have identified all the issues our industry faces. Our training regulators need to look at the already available best practices and research and consider which best suits our future needs. We need to provide leadership & management courses that equip seafarers with the understanding and skills for future roles ashore. We need to train executives ashore, so they lead by example."*

A MNTB representative mirrored the conclusions from the research. They said, *"We need to build transferable skills, critical thinking, strong management, and leadership skills. MCA / MNTB may not know everything, but they do have unique access to expertise across the board." They also flagged that: "We make the mistake of cramming so much into the cadet programme, because the shipowners need the cadets to have the necessary skills to work on board, but in reality, there are certain elements that could be delivered on board by the shipowners, once the cadet has qualified."*

Another leadership consultant noted that, *"Leadership includes the adoption of ethical principles, social justice and collaboration, human to human. It's also about building trust not transactional processes. These same leadership principles need to be adopted by stakeholders ashore, so that with the same shared values, the relationship between ship and shore staff can succeed."*

A ship operator opined, *"It's key to get more representatives of shipping lines onboard at the MNTB to drive the change. There is an over-reliance on colleges, allowing them to set the training agenda, when this should be driven by the training needs and skills audits of shipowners. The current eight-to-ten-month long trips has produced fatigue. There is short termism by crewing agencies. How can you expect crews to take on ownership of responsibilities when employed on single trip contracts? There is too much disaggregated decision making."*

This summary concludes with quotes from two respondents:

"STCW is the bare minimum. It's dull and not working, because it's treated as a process, rather than something that adds value. It just creates greater learning requirements, but without delivering value."

"There are still too many people who don't know how to lead. Leadership should be direction, inspiration, and guidance. Good leaders exhibit courage, passion, confidence, commitment, and ambition. They nurture their people and build teams committed to achieving common goals. It's seldom one sails with these types of people." (See full quote in Section 4.3 on Page 27).

The Maritime Professional Council supports the majority views of the respondents replicated here, that leadership training is required both at sea and ashore, if our industry is to be fit for purpose. We need to inspire debate and construct a practical 'passage plan' for the future, which has the genuine capacity to allow our industry to successfully progress. To that extent, the MPC needs your feedback to this report and ideas on how we move forward. (See Section 5, 'How are we going to take this forward').

4. Extracts from Respondent Interviews

4.1 Comments on STCW standards & HELM training

"HELM is operational. STCW is the bare minimum standard. It's dull and not working, because it has been treated as a process rather than something that adds value. We keep adding subjects, to the extent it has become very modular and just creates greater learning requirements but without delivering value."

"We need to consider what we need overall, in terms of defining current and future leadership skills, and developing a CPD pathway to support one's career progression from cadet to senior officer."

Cadet training: *"We need to build transferable skills, critical thinking and strong management and leadership skills, so seafarers can move from sector to sector."*

"Colleges set their prospectus, so their training meets current STCW requirements. They talk about leadership, but what they mean is technical training. One college takes cadets off campus into the countryside on leadership and teamwork training. The cadets use what is learned throughout the course, i.e., how to live, work, and share, with others. Where colleges recognise the need for leadership training, and include it in their curriculum, they find that many of their customers still make the final choice based on price. This makes it difficult to compete in the global market when they include these additional leadership courses."

"Today, there is not enough exam preparation. It's unusual for lecturers to have master mariner tickets. They do not have enough sea time experience. Companies are given SMarT [Support for Maritime Training] funding but don't really care about training - UK cadets suffer, but the company gets funds and tax-breaks."

4.2 Gaps in Training

A major shipping line said, *"There is a gap in management training and gaps in competencies, as identified by us from incidents onboard. We need management training to provide the skills to empower staff to challenge, question, intervene and stop work. BRM, CRM are good, but delivery is so varied and fragmented in terms of quality of content. There are no long-term objectives and strategy. The industry doesn't seem to be speaking from the same page."*

"What we have is good, but it is outdated. Time to review orals. We are still testing with wooden ships when more can be done with online simulators. Too much training consists of hours in the classroom. We need to train seafarers to mentor their colleagues."

4.3 Leadership training is needed at sea and ashore

"There are still too many people who don't know how to lead. Leadership should be about direction, inspiration, and guidance. Good leaders exhibit courage, passion, confidence, commitment, and ambition. They nurture the strengths and talents of their people and build teams committed to achieving common goals. It's seldom one sails with these types of people. Leadership is about making sure people feel valued. We need these values at sea, and we need management to embrace these values and lead by example if leadership training is to be successful."

"The first master I sailed with recognised that cadets need to experience life at sea and involved them in briefings as part of the professional team. Shore leave was expected, so cadets experienced new cultures. The Master spent time having coffee with crew and engineers. Weekly BBQs were held to give the chef a break and to bring everyone together."

"The next master worked crew hard: No shore leave. Drills were a 'tick box' exercise. It was an unhappy team. A kind leader makes for a happy team and removes the barrier between the master and the crew. It's the crew at the sharp end that have the good ideas on making things more efficient and safer."

"People at sea still think authority tinged with fear is the best mix for effective leadership. But some of the best leaders are the quiet and kind. They achieve respect because they showed an interest in all the crewmembers individually, whom collectively would do anything to support the captain."

These quotes clearly identify the benefits of good leadership and disadvantages of not doing so. Implementing them is the key to success.

4.4 Interviews with Generic Leadership Consultants

"We have very few leaders that can lead. MBAs are not the solution. Leadership needs to be elastic and more visionary. 'Box ticking' is not enough, as it doesn't mitigate risk, or provide robust systems. So why is there such an emphasis on processes and box ticking? Leadership is about ethical principles, social justice, trust and collaboration, human to human. It's about:

Building trust, not transactional processes.

Meticulous effort over time, allowing people to understand change.

Knowledge sharing.

Not surrounding yourselves with others with the same 'group think', who will agree with you, because you all share the same psychometric profile. In this case you get yes men.

It's also about:

IQ = you need intelligence.

EQ = you need emotional intelligence.

SQ = social intelligence and how to interact.

You need curiosity, courage, the ability to ask the right questions, and to do good."

Among other things, this comment highlights the dangers of 'group think', which is often a product of autocratic leadership, and /or selecting staff for their similar profiles. The space shuttle Challenger disaster was an unfortunate product of this.

4.5 The need to change - perceptions of shipowners

Part of the solution lies in demonstrating the cost benefits of training and risks and disadvantages of not doing so. P&I Clubs have the accident data and associated costs to quickly debunk the shipowners' myths that... *"Training is expensive. Suppose we train our people, and they leave. Suppose we don't train our people and they stay."*

The Loss Prevention Manager of a leading P&I Club stated that: *"89% of collisions are due to human error and 90% of groundings are due to human error. This is evidence of the need to invest more in leadership training and avoiding fatigue."*

"Ship operators and associated stakeholders are still too focused on processes and price, and not on value and ethics. A new MD brought in to 'turn around a business' is not going to be able to change a leadership culture in 12 months, it takes a few years of dedicated focus. If we want to get it right on our ships, we need to educate and stimulate this change in values, so they are adopted by our leaders ashore."

One interview with a ship operator yielded the following: *"The new management recognised it was essential that employees needed to understand and believe that their health, safety, and welfare were a genuine priority, to send everyone home safely every night, as part of the input into changing the culture. Over a period of years, this translated into changes in the operating approach and safety standards, which improved performance, profit margins, and gave employees a desire to support the company and improve its performance. Consequently, there was a queue of quality people waiting to join the company. It took ten years to achieve optimum progress towards a genuinely changed company culture. There are no quick fixes here. To achieve a truly changed operating culture, trust is the most important commodity that can take years to establish, but which can be lost overnight! It took years to get traction. However, once achieved, lost time injuries and damage to equipment reduced and profits went up dramatically. Once employees care about the company, they look after each other and become 'their brother's and sister's keeper', while caring for the company and its equipment. This all flows down to an improved bottom line. Today, people & their Boards, want quick fixes. They don't want to hear it's going to take time."*

"Start with 'do no harm' - this puts you in the lane of ethical leadership. Unfortunately, one governs based on the law of averages. It's not score cards and best practice. It's about investing in people that allows discussion and the capture and sharing of knowledge."

"In the UK we have many industries and academic studies that have identified all the issues our industry faces. Our training regulators need to look at the already available best practices and research and consider which best suits our future needs. We need to provide leadership & management courses that equip seafarers with the understanding and skills for future roles ashore. We need to train executives ashore, so they lead by example. We need to reach the stage where those at sea no longer receive emails that start with the sentence, 'I fail to understand....' We need to put right this failure of leadership to understand."

"The Master 'top down' method doesn't work anymore. There needs to be empowerment. Ship time should be four months on board. The current eight to ten months has produced fatigue. There is short termism by crewing agencies. How can you expect crews to take on ownership of responsibilities when employed on single trip contracts? There is too much disaggregated decision making."

5. How are we going to take this forward?

The Maritime Professional Council, (MPC), is an umbrella organisation representing nine major maritime professional associations¹, providing a central point from which professional opinion on maritime matters can be offered to the maritime community, industry, Government, and the media.

To carry this project forward and avoid this being just another conversation piece, the MPC now seeks direct input from seafarers and stakeholders. Harvesting ideas and solutions will be invaluable, will move the debate forward and enable the MPC to suggest a 'passage plan' that facilitates real industry progress and success. Please do respond with your feedback on this document, and any offers of help you may wish to make to the undersigned providers of this report.



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¹ **Members:** The Honourable Company of Master Mariners; The Nautical Institute; The International Institute of Marine Surveying; The Institute of Seamanship; The Professional Charter Association, Trinity House, InterManager, Maritime Volunteer Service and Cameron Maritime Resources.

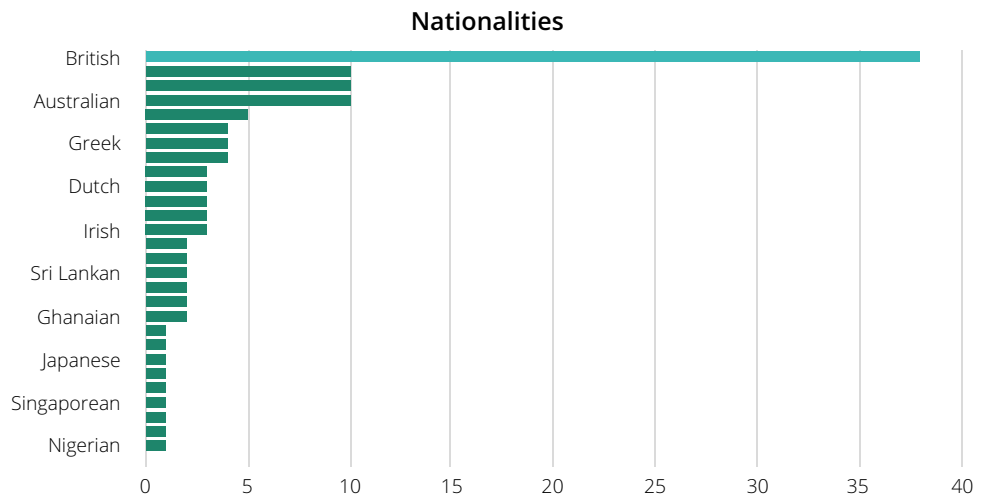
Supporting Organisations: UK Maritime Pilots Association and Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology.

Appendix 2

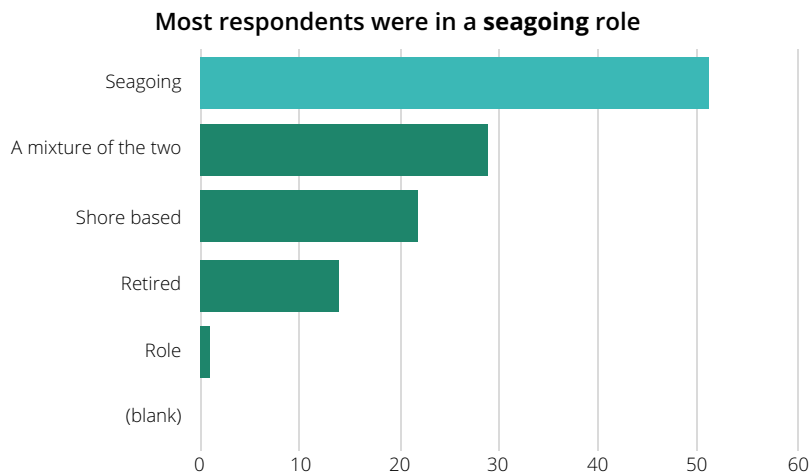
Demographic Data from the Leadership Survey (main report)

Profile of Respondents

The majority of respondents (38) were British, with the next most represented nationalities being Canadian and American at ten each, although not shown on the chart. Given the small numbers of other nationalities and lack of representative samples, it was not deemed appropriate to give significant weighting to responses.

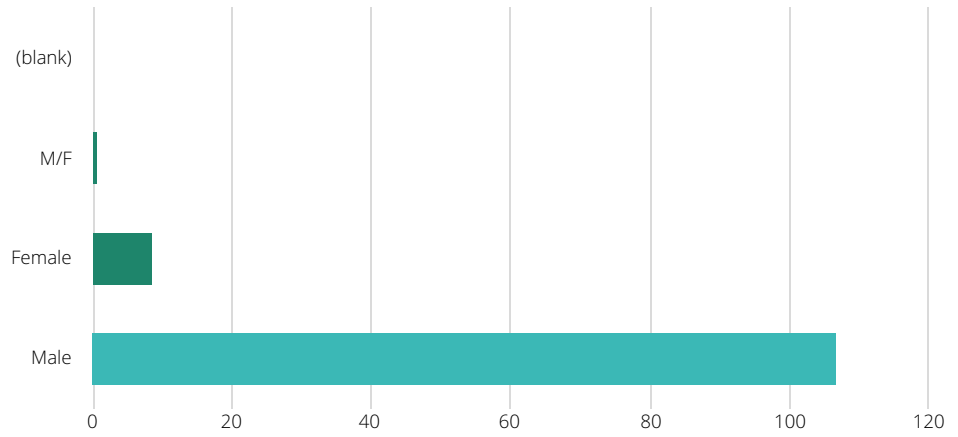


The majority of respondents have a seagoing background, with the next biggest group being a combination of seagoing and shore based.

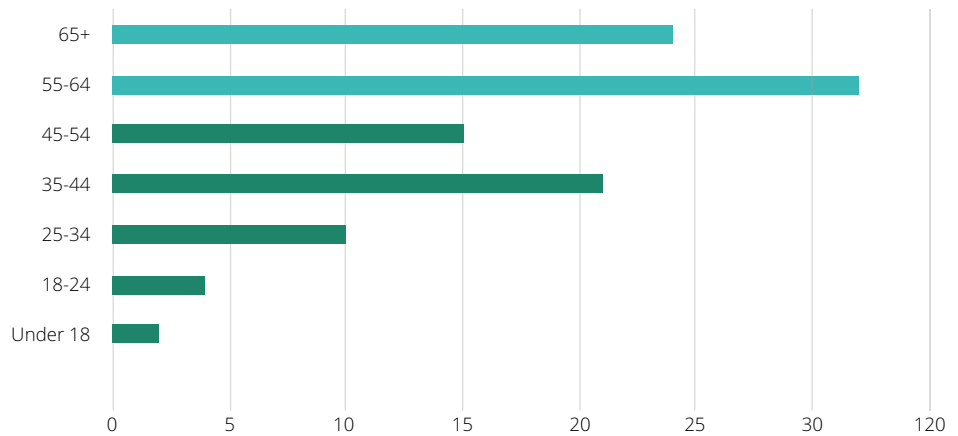


Typical of the maritime industry, the vast majority of respondents were male.

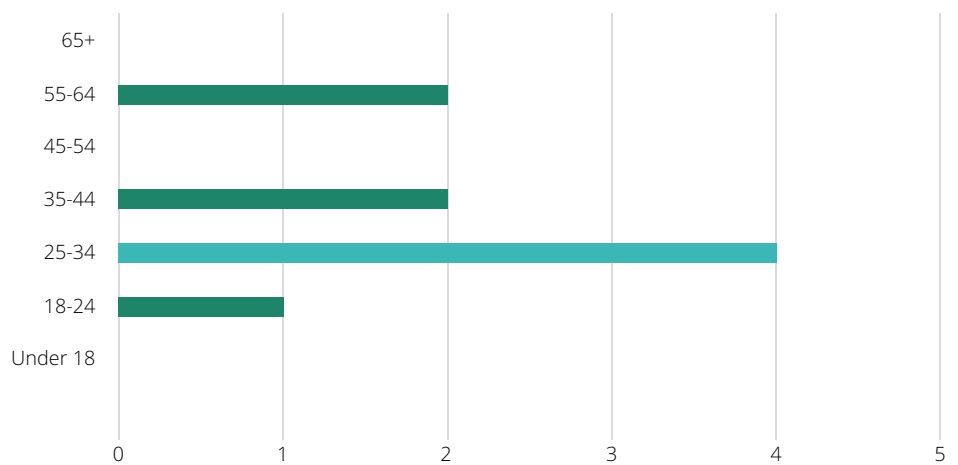
The majority of respondents were male (108/119)



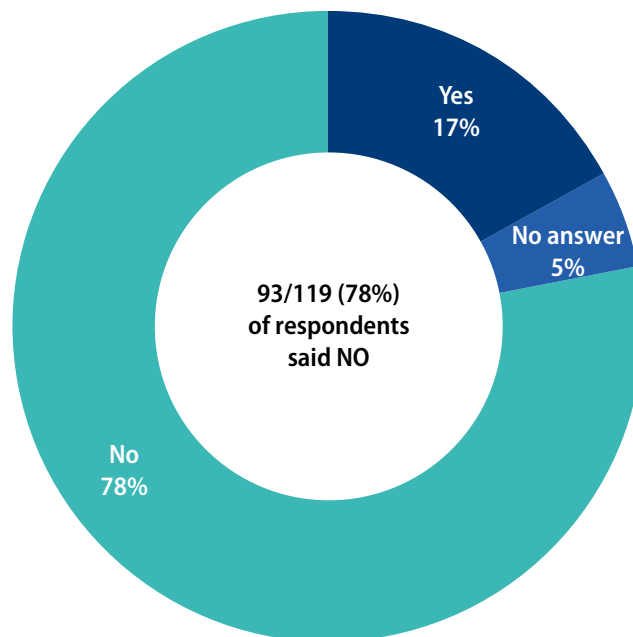
Most male respondents were 55 or over



Most female respondents were 25-34



Is STW Leadership Training Sufficient?



There appeared to be no discernible differences between the beliefs and views held across the different age groups.