

Tailormade Seafarers Assessment

Handing over a multimillion dollar shipping operation to a Master you do not know is a decision some ship owners nowadays have to make more and more reluctantly, forced by the ever growing shortage of skilled seafarers. It is no secret that ship owners have great difficulties in finding skilled, well trained and motivated crew to operate their vessels.

Some decades ago an officer started to work for a company as an apprentice. Making his way up through the ranks the company's Human Resources department received evaluations from the officer in question made up by various Masters. In this way a well balanced picture was obtained whether the officer was ready to be promoted to a commanding position at the fleet.

Unfortunately, today it is often the case that only after a short visit to the office Masters are given the command of a vessel. Human Resources officers are confronted with unclear foreign certificates and untraceable letters of recommendation. Psychological testing of candidates could be a solution but only provides limited information because the candidate is not tested in his daily working environment. It is also often not feasible to have a nautical quality manager available to examine the Master during the first days of his assignment on board a vessel.

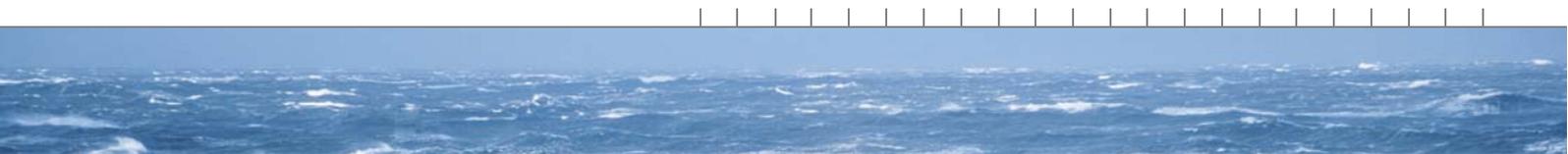
It needs no elaboration that the first link in the error-chain has been closed, leading to a marine disaster followed by astronomic claims.

In close consultation with its clients MARIN has recognised this problem and has developed a full-mission simulator assessment for Seafarers at management level.



Description

During the assessment, the candidate is put into a situation that strongly resembles daily practice. The candidate is observed carefully, followed by an extensive evaluation. This assessment has been specially designed to test the candidate's ability to sail as Master on deep-sea vessels. The candidate's profile for this test is Chief Mate or Master. In contradiction to most assessments this test has been highly standardised and validated which prevents the test from being subjective.



Set-up

During the test the perceptible behaviour of a candidate is observed as closely as possible (Does the candidate do certain things? and Are his actions appropriate in the given situation?). A Master is responsible for a safe and sound navigation of the ship. To do so he has to inform himself about the present situation and compare this to the intended navigation plan. In this process we can distinguish several stages.

At first, a Master has to be able to detect any (future) deviations. In order to do so he has to have full *situational awareness*, meaning that he has to have “grip” on the navigational state of the bridge and any present and future dangers which he is likely to encounter. Therefore, he must be able to gather information and assess its value in order to make the right *decision* - what to do or not to do. Before taking any action he has to *communicate* with the other bridge team members, which is a key factor in preventing shipping incidents. Subsequently, a Master has to *lead* his team and give his orders loud and clear, which may not always be well taken. Last but not least he has to be able to cope with the *stress* which his job exposes him to.

Scenario

The assessment scenario has been designed in such a way that a candidate is able to score on different measurement scales:

- Situational Awareness;
- Decision-making;
- Communication;
- Leadership;
- Working under Stress.

It is important that testing is done as much as possible in the daily working environment of a candidate: he is doing his job while sailing in a real-time simulator. This also indicates whether the candidate possesses sufficient basic nautical skills to be Master.

The scenario and the various testing elements can be adjusted to meet the companies’ demands.

Evaluation

During the test a candidate is observed by two independent assessors. The evaluation is done by way of filling in a questionnaire every item of which has been previously discussed with the candidate. The questionnaire covers the scenario, the expected actions of a candidate including the possible alternatives.

After the simulator run, the two filled in questionnaires are combined into a final consensus list.

The test has been standardised by using the scores of several ‘test candidates’, all being experienced Chief Officers and Masters.

The testing and evaluation of candidates can be done in co-operation with a company representative participating or witnessing. However, if desired by the client MARIN can also test candidates independently.

Duration

The duration of the assessment is approximately 2.5 hours.

For more information please contact MARIN’s Nautical Centre MSCN,
T +31 317 479 911
E MSCN@marin.nl