

Seafarers Happiness Index

Quarter 4 2024



The
Seafarers
Happiness
Index



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Seafarers Happiness Index Quarter 4

The Seafarers Happiness Index (SHI) is a quarterly survey conducted by the Mission to Seafarers to assess the well-being of seafarers globally. Seafarers rate their experiences of ten key aspects of their life and work at sea on a Likert scale from 1 to 10, while also providing open-ended comments for more detailed feedback.

The individual scores give a sense of how seafarers are feeling, while the written comments reveal common themes and trends, bringing the data to life. This approach helps us not only understand the numbers but also capture the personal stories and experiences of seafarers in their own words.

The latest report, based on data from Quarter 4 of 2024, unfortunately reveals a break in the positive trend seen throughout the year. After steady improvements, the happiness score dropped from 7.16 in Q3 to 6.91 in Q4, marking the first decline of the year.

While some aspects of seafarer welfare show positive trends, the Q4 analysis highlights ongoing challenges in creating a consistently satisfying work environment at sea. The survey's global reach and standardised questions ensure we can amplify the voices of seafarers and help tell their stories.

Good and Bad

On the positive side, many crew members reported strong interpersonal relationships within their departments, fostering a supportive work environment. Professional development opportunities through mentorship and training programs were also highlighted, along with basic connectivity that facilitates contact with family.

Additionally, some companies demonstrated recognition and support for crew welfare, contributing to overall morale.

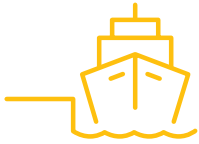
Conversely, significant negative drivers were present, including systemic isolation and restricted mobility, particularly concerning shore leave. Notably, there were concerns raised regarding the role of ports and, more specifically, complaints that some ports are not actively facilitating shore access but rather acting as a barrier to it.

Workload intensification during port calls added to the strain, while compensation concerns, such as stagnant wages and hidden costs, further fuelled dissatisfaction.

Seafarers reported challenges in maintaining a healthy work-life balance, which is exacerbated by increasing paperwork and inspection requirements, ultimately impacting their overall well-being.

Key Takeaways

With the fall in general sentiment among seafarers in Q4 2024, it is important to assess where the key problem areas were identified. We received insight into significant issues related to ports and training.



Port Issues

The challenges surrounding shore leave remain. We heard from seafarers expressing frustration over limited opportunities to go ashore. They also discussed tight schedules and operational constraints.

Particularly significant in this quarter were responses critical about the ports themselves. It has been common to hear criticisms levelled at shipping companies, or even individual masters and chief engineers, but increasingly ports are being seen as barriers to getting ashore.

Ports and some people working within them, it seems, are adding to feelings of isolation and dissatisfaction among crew members. There is a growing perception that if a port isn't actively supporting shore access, it may unintentionally hinder it—an issue that seafarers are becoming increasingly vocal about.



Connectivity Paradox

A persistent issue is ongoing dissatisfaction with connectivity, as unreliable or insufficient internet access limits meaningful communication with family and friends.

Repeatedly, it was reported that free allowances are being granted, but the vessel's bandwidth is insufficient to deliver on these promises, leading to growing frustration. While increasingly generous offers of free access are made, the reality is that they cannot be fulfilled. This situation resembles what might be termed "Schrödinger's Connectivity," where good, free Wi-Fi exists – until you try to use it.



Training Concerns

Another critical factor influencing seafarer sentiment was training. While many appreciated the quality of the instruction received, there was widespread concern that the volume of training was excessive, often disrupting much-needed rest during time at sea, or family time when ashore.

Junior personnel, in particular, noted a lack of hands-on experience, feeling that online training formats were insufficiently engaging and did not adequately prepare them for real-world applications.

This situation appears to have led to increased fatigue and frustration, further contributing to the decline in overall satisfaction.



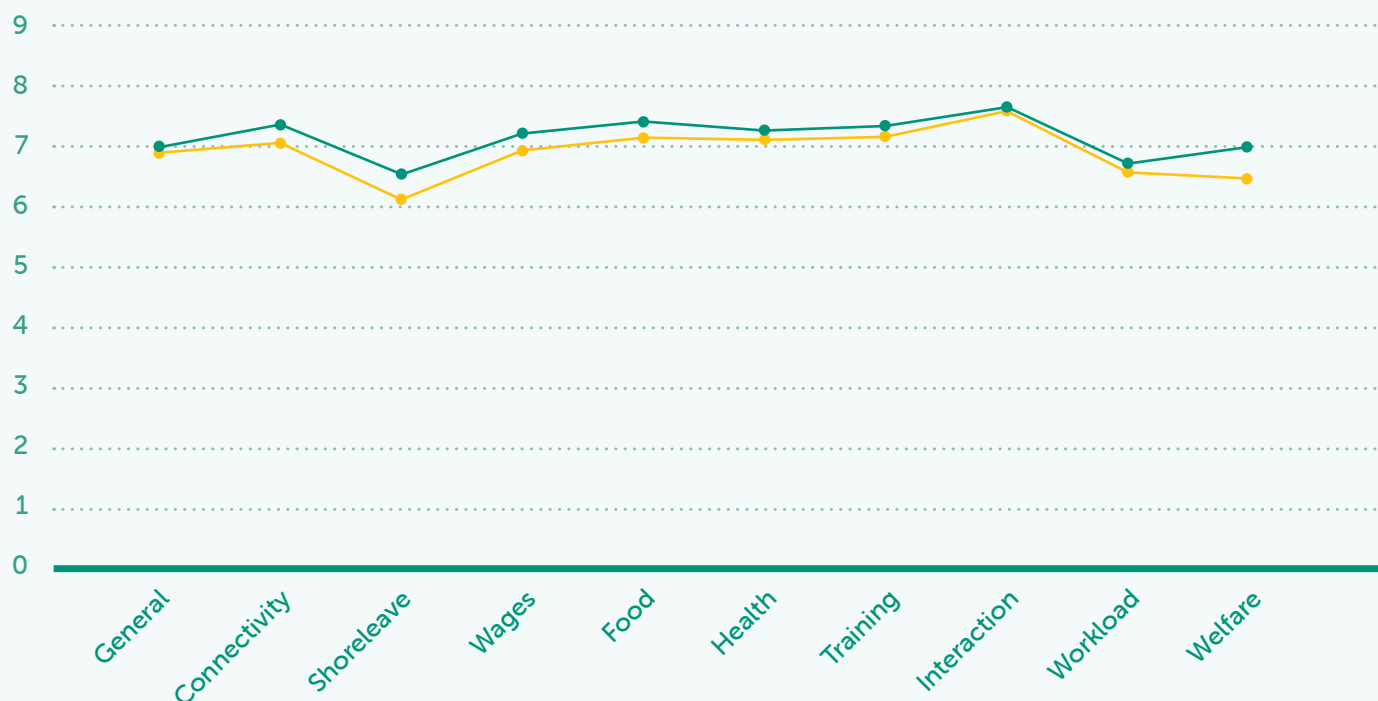
Stagnant or Slow Rising Wages

Additionally, concerns regarding stagnant wages amid rising living costs have been prevalent, adding to the overall discontent.

Happiness Data

— Q3 2024 — Q4 2024

Q3 2024 v Q4 2024



The Q4 2024 seafarer happiness survey reveals a general decline across all question areas compared to Q3 2024.

General happiness dropped from 7.05 to 6.9, signalling a slight decrease in overall satisfaction. **Connectivity** fell from 7.38 to 7.05, reflecting some dissatisfaction with the quality and consistency of onboard communication.

One of the most significant declines was in **shore leave**, which plummeted from 6.52 to 6.12, likely pointing to increasing frustrations over access to shore leave and limited opportunities during port calls. **Wages** also saw a notable drop, moving from 7.21 to 6.91, underscoring dissatisfaction with stagnant compensation and potentially hidden costs.

While **food quality** remained relatively strong, it still experienced a decrease, possibly reflecting issues with supply chain reliability or onboard provisions. **Health** and **training** both saw small declines, suggesting some concerns over the availability and quality of resources in these areas.

In terms of **crew interaction**, relationships remained stable with only a slight decrease, indicating that social dynamics on board have not been significantly affected. However, **workload** saw a decline, moving from 6.74 to 6.59, hinting at increased stress due to staffing and maintenance demands.

General Happiness

6.9 ↓ from 7.05

The first question we ask concerns general happiness, serving as an opener that brings out a range of responses. Satisfaction at sea is influenced by various factors, and the question helps uncover issues that may not emerge later in the survey.

A key stressor identified this quarter was contract length. Even with MLC limits, contracts can still be longer than some seafarers prefer. Many respondents expressed that being away for up to nine months is too long to sustain mental, physical, and emotional well-being amidst constant work demands. Extended time at sea can also put a strain on personal relationships and mental health.

Another critical issue was the strong link between leadership and crew morale. Seafarers who report positive experiences with their superiors tend to feel more satisfied overall. In contrast, poor leadership amplifies stress and dissatisfaction, with many seafarers mentioning the positive impact of “calm” leadership.

Frustrations with port operations, particularly garbage management, were also highlighted. Seafarers feel exasperated when they carefully segregate waste, only to see it all dumped together at the port facilities. This is an issue that affects morale, and can make seafarers question what they are doing and how.

There was a notable rise in female seafarer responses, which is encouraging. This provided insight into gender-specific challenges like isolation and the need for better representation and support, emphasising the importance of diversity and inclusivity on board.

The responses on general happiness reveal a mixture of feelings. Many seafarers express a strong passion for their work and the camaraderie within multinational crews. However, the joy of working at sea often coexists with emotional and logistical difficulties that must be addressed to improve overall well-being.



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Isolation, loneliness and pressures from office and charterers hit hard.

Connectivity

7.05 ↓ from 7.38

The quality of onboard connectivity is a crucial factor in seafarers' daily lives, with clear patterns emerging in the feedback. On most vessels, daily data allowances are deemed sufficient for personal use, enabling crew members to stay connected with their families. However, the infrastructure supporting this connectivity varies greatly between ships.

Bandwidth limitations during peak usage times are a recurring issue, often making it difficult to hold meaningful conversations or video calls. This inconsistency in connection quality directly affects seafarers' well-being. Staying in touch with loved ones is vital for emotional support. The strong link between connectivity and family relationships underscores the need for reliable internet services at sea, as they provide a lifeline to the outside world.

Improving the quality and consistency of connectivity would significantly enhance the seafarer experience, reducing feelings of isolation by ensuring that the technology lives up to its promises.

Concerns about privacy on board were also raised. While many seafarers can make calls in their cabins, poor sound insulation between cabins often leads to a sense that private conversations are easily overheard. As one respondent stated, "I can hear everything from the cabin next to me. I presume I can be heard too – which makes conversations with home stressful."



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My company gives 1GB per day, which is more than enough to use, but the internet connection gets slow when crew are actually using the internet.

Shore leave

6.12 ↓ from 6.52

The issue of shore leave remains a significant challenge for seafarers, with several primary concerns emerging. Systematic barriers, ranging from complex port policies to security restrictions, make it difficult for crew members to disembark, even when in port. Short port stays further exacerbate the problem, as tight schedules often leave little time for rest or leisure ashore.

There was palpable frustration, even anger, directed at port operators, with certain ports singled out for criticism. Many seafarers feel that some ports make the process unnecessarily difficult, even though they are legally obliged to facilitate shore leave. A lack of empathy, understanding, and common sense on the part of some ports was a frequent complaint, with decisions such as closing gates near town centres unfairly impacting seafarers.

Another concern is movement around ports, as many quaysides and terminals are only accessible by port-provided buses. According to some responses, these often lack a clear schedule or are difficult to book. They are also frequently dirty as they are used by port workers, causing further frustration.

There is a strong sentiment that ports are not doing enough and need to be held more accountable, especially as new Maritime Labour Convention (MLC) requirements are being implemented. Compounding the issue, competing demands during port calls, such as inspections, cargo operations, and maintenance, often leave seafarers too busy to take shore leave, even when technically available. In some cases, financial barriers, such as disembarkation fees, create additional obstacles.

Seafarers frequently express frustration about the lack of shore leave opportunities, citing excuses from captains and operational constraints. This can lead to feelings of isolation and depression, especially for those who have been on board for extended periods without a break.

Ultimately, shore leave is not viewed as a luxury but as a vital opportunity for rest and mental recovery. There is a pressing need for shipping companies and port authorities to prioritise seafarer welfare by facilitating better access to shore leave.



Port stays are short, and terminals make shore access difficult.

Wages

6.91 ↓ from 7.21

Wages remain a critical concern for seafarers, with several key issues consistently highlighted. Stagnant pay levels, despite the rising cost of living, are a major source of frustration. Many seafarers feel that their wages have not kept pace with inflation or the increasing demands of the job, leading to growing dissatisfaction.

A significant issue is the reduction in overtime compensation, with some crew members reporting that they are no longer fairly paid for the long hours they work. This is compounded by hidden costs, such as fees for documentation or necessary certifications, which further reduce their take-home pay.

There is also a perceived disconnect between company profits and crew compensation. Seafarers' express frustration that while shipping companies may be thriving, their own wages remain stagnant. Addressing these concerns would greatly improve morale and help seafarers feel more valued for their contributions.

While seafarers appreciate being paid on time, those whose wages fail to keep up with inflation and the rising cost of living feel that their hard work is not adequately rewarded.



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Salary increment for ratings onboard is a daydream for so many years, increase \$25 in a year and deduct \$60 from overtime hours. This is what happening for the last 10 years.

Food

7.14 ↓ from 7.41

Food and diet on board present mixed experiences for seafarers, with several factors influencing satisfaction. The quality of meals often depends heavily on the skills of individual cooks, leading to wide variations in dining experiences from one ship to another.

Storage limitations can also affect the availability of fresh produce, especially on longer voyages, where fresh fruits and vegetables become scarce after the initial weeks. Combined with concerns about the quality of provisions from supply chains, this has left some seafarers questioning the standards of the food they receive.

The contract length of cooks plays a role as well, with longer contracts leading to a noticeable decline in meal variety and freshness over time. Many feel that cooks should be on shorter contracts, as the menus and food experiences become repetitive over the months. As one put it, "a change in cook can be as good as a rest".

Budget constraints are a recurring theme, with respondents noting that companies are cutting food budgets, which can negatively impact the quality and variety of provisions. Additionally, some seafarers report dissatisfaction with food vendors/chandlers, alleging they provide low-quality or near-expiration items, and call for a reassessment of suppliers to ensure better standards.

Furthermore, third-party provision management, where food suppliers are contracted externally, has been flagged as a source of concern, with some seafarers reporting that these arrangements lead to poor-quality ingredients or management processes more suited to shore establishments than ships.



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Our company uses a company which intentionally uses us to dump near expiration food. They cater to restaurants who can return items, and they know we are stuck with it.

Ability to keep fit and healthy

7.13 ↓ from 7.28

Health and fitness on board present several primary challenges that seafarers regularly face. Infrastructure limitations on smaller vessels make it difficult to provide adequate space for exercise, with many ships lacking designated fitness areas altogether.

Even when facilities do exist, the quality and availability of equipment can vary significantly, often leaving crew members with limited options for maintaining their fitness routines. Environmental factors, such as constant vessel movement, can also create challenges for physical activity, making workouts difficult or unsafe during rough seas.

Long-term health concerns are a growing issue, as the sedentary nature of life at sea, combined with irregular exercise and limited access to nutritious food, can contribute to lifestyle-related health problems over time. Many seafarers also feel that companies are not investing enough in health and fitness facilities on board.

There is a strong consensus on the importance of maintaining physical health while on board. Seafarers recognise that regular exercise is crucial for both job performance and overall well-being. Many engage in physical activities, such as gym workouts, basketball, and other recreational sports, to stay fit.

However, significant obstacles hinder their fitness routines. Heavy workloads, long hours, and insufficient rest often leave little time for exercise. Seafarers frequently express concerns about the effects of fatigue and lack of sleep on their ability to stay active, highlighting the need for a better balance between work and personal health.



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No gym or any fitness equipment on board at all, despite repeated requests to office.”

Training

7.17 ↓ from 7.36

Training for seafarers presents a dual perspective, with both positive and negative experiences.

On the positive side, many seafarers report access to quality mentorship opportunities, where senior crew members provide valuable guidance and support. Additionally, professional development programmes are widely available, helping seafarers enhance their skills and stay up to date with industry standards.

However, the negative aspects of training are equally prominent. Many crew members express frustration with redundant training requirements, feeling that they are asked to complete the same courses repeatedly without gaining new insights.

Time management becomes a challenge as well, as training often cuts into rest periods or overlaps with other responsibilities. This raises questions about the practical value of some training programmes, with many seafarers struggling to see how certain courses benefit their day-to-day work. The lack of compensation for time spent on training can add to the frustration.

Balancing the benefits of mentorship and professional growth with the challenges of time, relevance, and compensation would greatly improve the effectiveness and satisfaction of training initiatives.

While some acknowledge the importance of ongoing education, many feel that the amount of training can be excessive and often disrupts their rest or family time. It can also lead to fatigue and detract from operational efficiency.

It appears that there is a strong desire for more hands-on training opportunities, particularly in technical areas. Junior personnel specifically request more operational training related to equipment from certain manufacturers or in preparation for new fuels.

Respondents also note a shift towards online training programmes, which some feel do not always meet their complex requirements. Many believe that in-person training is more beneficial, as it fosters better engagement and learning outcomes.

There is a clear call for more diverse and relevant training options that address the evolving needs of the industry.



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There are so many courses that achieve little. I think I've done the same BRM course 4 times. I get dumber every time I attend one.

Crew interaction

7.6 ↓ from 7.67

Interactions and relationships on board form a complex dynamic, with both positive and negative aspects.

Most seafarers report generally good relationships with their fellow crew members, often describing a strong sense of camaraderie and teamwork. Many refer to the crew as a “family,” which contributes to a positive work atmosphere and boosts morale.

The multicultural makeup of the crew is frequently noted, with many seafarers appreciating the opportunity to interact with colleagues from diverse backgrounds, which can enrich the onboard experience.

However, some crew members note that individuals tend to isolate themselves in their cabins, particularly due to busy work schedules. It seems this has led to a decline in socialising compared to earlier times. Additionally, some respondents highlight issues with gossip and interpersonal conflicts, which can disrupt team cohesion.

High workloads often restrict opportunities for social interaction. While some crew members find time to socialise, many express that their busy schedules leave little room for leisure activities. However, those who do engage socially report feeling happier and more connected.

Social isolation is a growing concern, with many crew members spending more time in their cabins and less time engaging with others. This isolation is often compounded by departmental segregation, where crew members from different departments interact less frequently, further adding to the sense of disconnection.

Additionally, there were reports of bullying, highlighting the need for better conflict resolution and more inclusive policies. The quality of leadership plays a critical role in shaping the onboard atmosphere. Supportive and effective leaders foster a more positive, cohesive environment, while poor leadership can exacerbate divisions and negatively impact crew morale.

Interactions with shore personnel were also mentioned, though this area garnered negative feedback. Seafarers spoke of being treated with a lack of respect in some ports, with gate staff singled out for particular criticism. There seems to be a pervasive culture in which seafarers are treated with disdain when trying to access or exit ports.



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Many of the people are nowadays restricted to their own cabins. Very few will socialise.

Workload

6.59 ↓ from 6.74

Workload on board is shaped by several critical issues that seafarers frequently encounter.

One growing concern is the age of vessels, and the fact that such aging vessels have increased maintenance demands. Older ships often require more upkeep, placing additional strain on crew members. This is compounded by the growing administrative burden, with paperwork and compliance tasks consuming valuable time and energy.

Concern around excessive paperwork and documentation persist. This is especially frustrating as seafarers describe much of the paperwork as redundant and time-consuming, contributing to stress levels.

Frequent inspections and tight port schedules can further increase the workload, particularly during busy periods. Some crew members express that the pressure associated with these demands can lead to fatigue and stress, especially when combined with regular operational tasks.

Underlying these challenges are concerns about staffing adequacy. Many crew members feel that there are not enough people to handle the workload efficiently, leading to longer hours, fatigue, and safety risks. There are ongoing concerns about the removal of certain roles on board, with the ranks of 4th Engineer and Electrician being particularly vulnerable.

Long shifts that leave little time for rest are a reality for many. Reports of 12-hour workdays and unpaid overtime are common, adding to feelings of exhaustion.

A strong, consistent message from seafarers is that hours of work and rest are not being universally adhered to, and that Minimum Safe Manning levels are not aligned with the real-world demands placed on crew members.



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There are not enough hours in the day to deal with all the paperwork from the office, charterers, flag, auditors, customs and officials.

Access to welfare facilities

6.47 ↓ from 6.99

The welfare of seafarers ashore remains a critical aspect of their overall well-being, with support services varying widely depending on region and port. Regional differences in the quality and availability of welfare services are often influenced by local economic conditions, infrastructure, and priorities.

In some areas, seafarers report a high standard of care and support, with the Mission to Seafarers and other welfare providers receiving praise for outreach and services.

However, there is frustration over the consistency of care, as the level of support can differ dramatically from one port to another. While some ports offer excellent welfare facilities, including rest areas, medical services, and social support, others lack even basic amenities, making seafarers' time ashore far less restorative.

Though some seafarers have positive experiences with welfare facilities when ashore, significant barriers still exist that limit access to these resources. Addressing issues such as the inconsistent availability of welfare services and enhancing opportunities for shore leave could greatly improve the overall welfare and morale of seafarers during their time away from the vessel.



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It depends on port, some ports have no welfare, no assistance to us during our stay, but some have good facilities for us.

Q4 2024 Conclusions

While there are some brighter spots in terms of interpersonal relationships and professional development, the overall sentiment among seafarers has declined in Q4 2024. The root causes – such as inadequate shore leave, excessive training demands, connectivity shortfalls, and stagnant wages – must be addressed to restore confidence and improve well-being.

Ports, in particular, should be held accountable for facilitating shore access, while shipping companies need to ensure that workloads, staffing, and compensation are aligned with the realities faced by seafarers today.

Ports

Ports are increasingly seen as barriers to shore leave, contributing to a sense of isolation and frustration among seafarers. Poorly maintained facilities and inconvenient transport options only add to the problem.

Training

While training is crucial, its volume and delivery methods, especially online formats, are disrupting seafarers' rest and family time, leading to fatigue and dissatisfaction.

Connectivity

Promises of free Wi-Fi on board are often not backed by sufficient infrastructure, fuelling frustration.

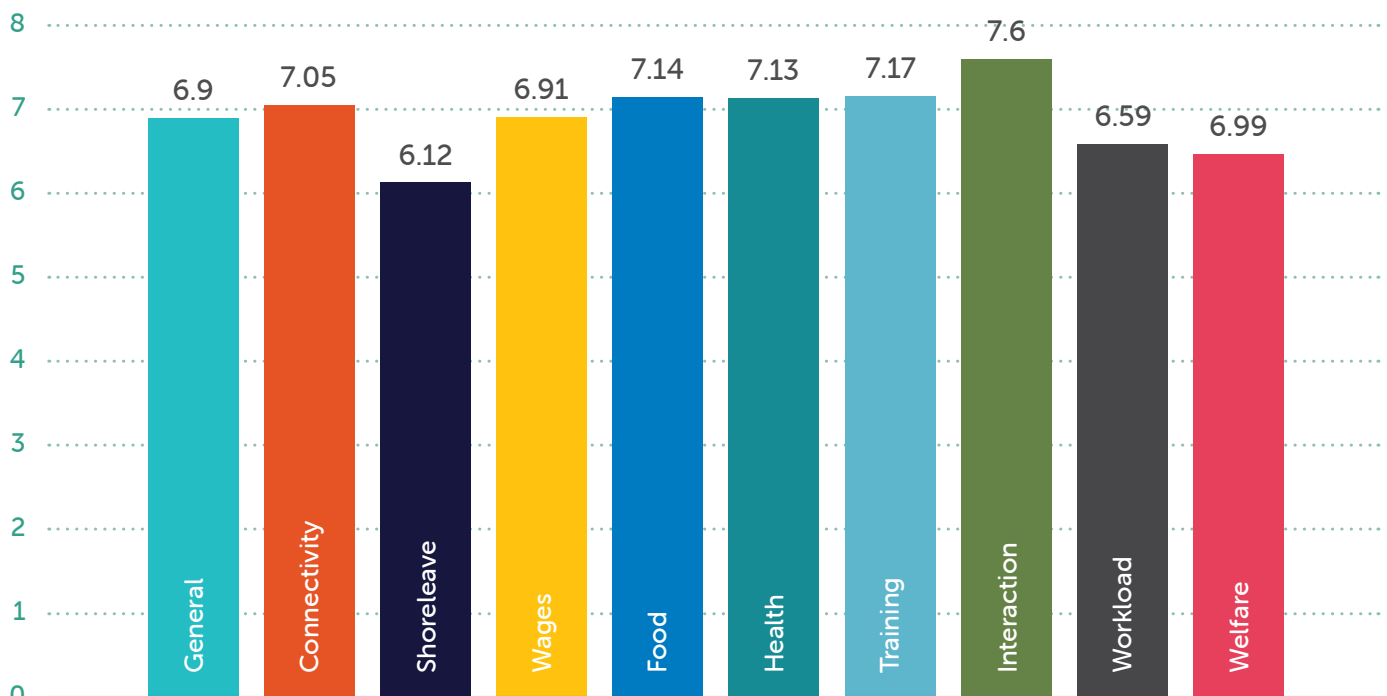
Wages

Stagnant wages, combined with hidden costs, are eroding trust in the industry's compensation models.

Workload and Fatigue

Long hours, inadequate staffing, and growing administrative burdens are contributing to increased fatigue, putting both well-being and safety at risk.

Q4 2024 Average Happiness Scores



Q4 2024 Demographics

Analysis

Career Stage Patterns

Mid-Career Peak: Highest satisfaction levels appear in the 35-45 age group (7.10), suggesting that experience and career establishment contribute to workplace contentment.

Experience Paradox: Those with 20+ years' experience report the lowest satisfaction (6.22), indicating potential burnout or career fatigue.

Early Career Resilience: Newer entrants show relatively high satisfaction levels (7.07), suggesting initial career enthusiasm may offset challenges.

Career Stage Optimisation: Peak satisfaction in mid-career suggests a need to better support both early career development and late career retention.

Regional Variations

Geographic Disparity: Clear regional differences exist, with seafarers from Oceania (7.15) and South America (7.14) reporting the highest satisfaction levels.

Developed Markets Performance: Mixed results in North America and Europe indicate that economic development can have a negative impact on crew satisfaction.

Regional Support Requirements: Significant regional variations indicate a need for targeted support strategies in different geographical areas.

Role-Based Insights

Impact of time spent on board: Those on board for less than three months, and those who have been on board for over six months are the least satisfied.

Technical Role Satisfaction: Second Engineers and technical crew members report higher satisfaction levels, suggesting that clear, skilled roles contribute to job satisfaction.

Leadership Pressure: Captains' lower satisfaction scores (6.94) indicate that responsibility levels may negatively impact wellbeing. This indicates a need for better support systems for those in leadership positions.

Gender

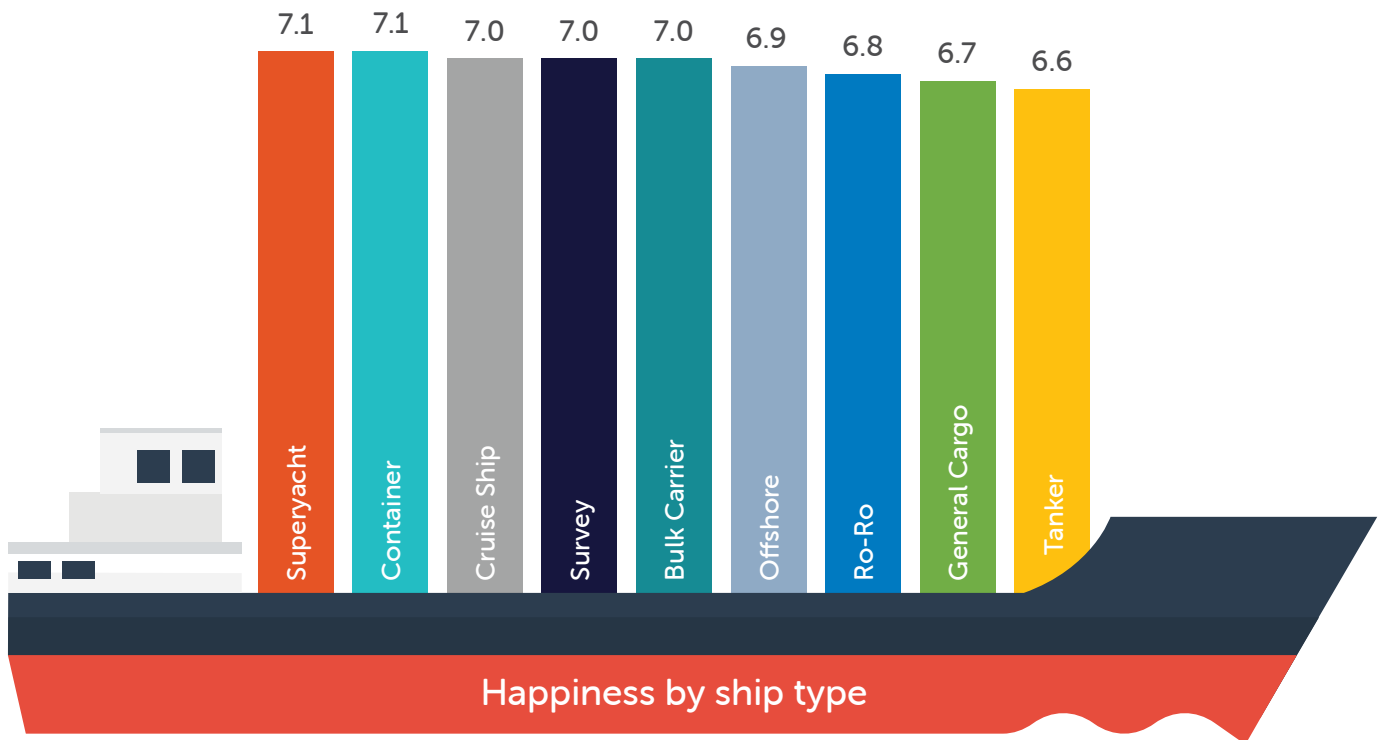
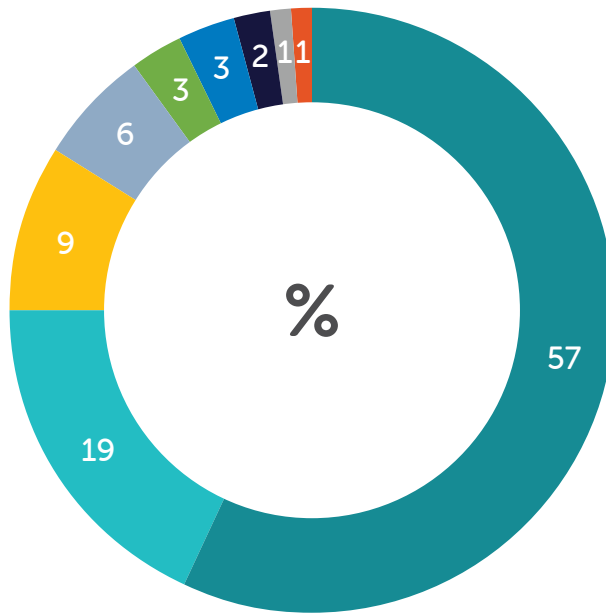
Female seafarers: While scoring marginally lower in satisfaction than their male counterparts, a higher than usual percentage of respondents were female. .

Living Conditions

Onboard Facilities Matter: Vessels with better facilities and resources consistently show higher satisfaction scores, indicating the importance of physical working conditions.

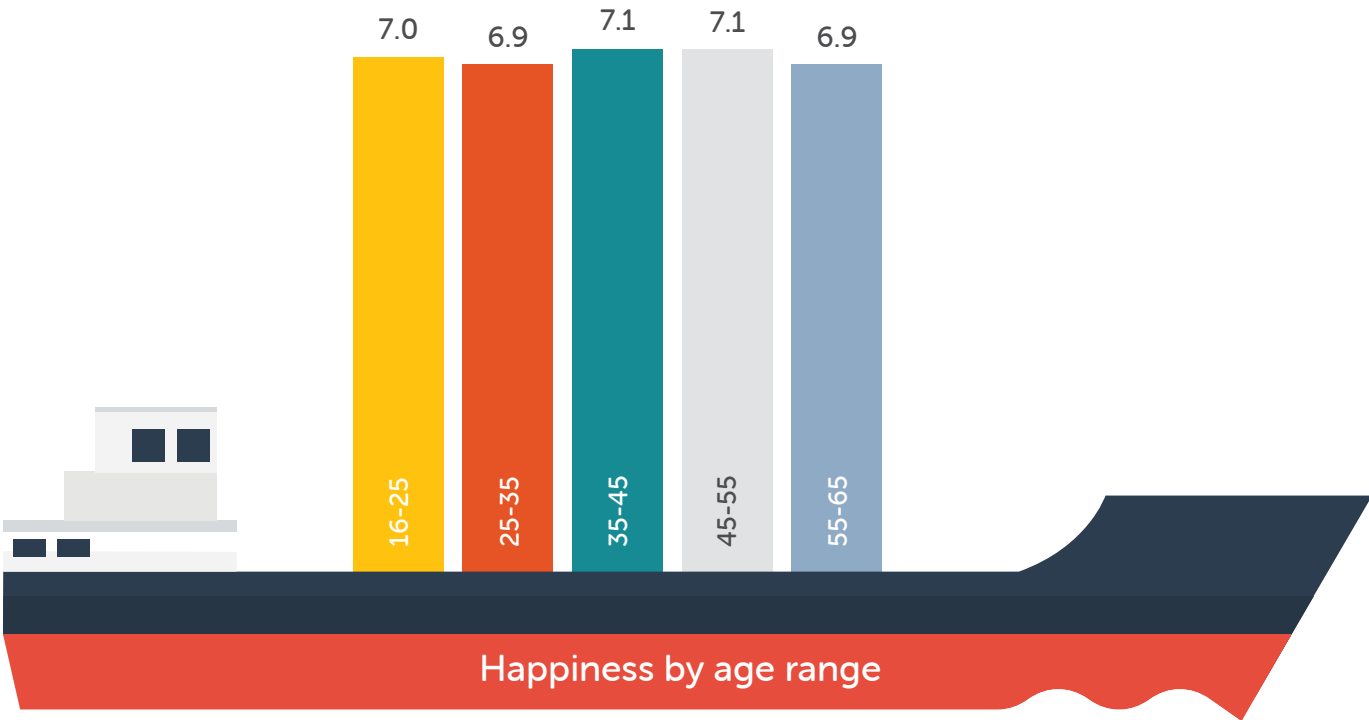
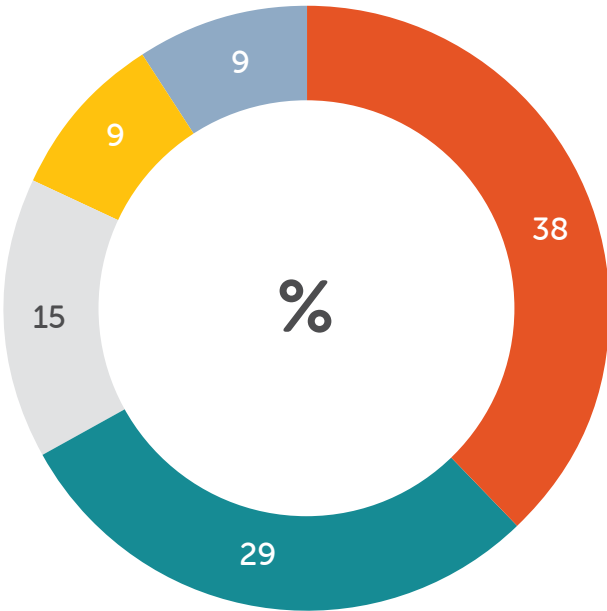
Ship Type

- Bulk Carrier
- Container
- Tanker
- Offshore
- General Cargo
- Ro-Ro
- Survey
- Cruise Ship
- Superyacht



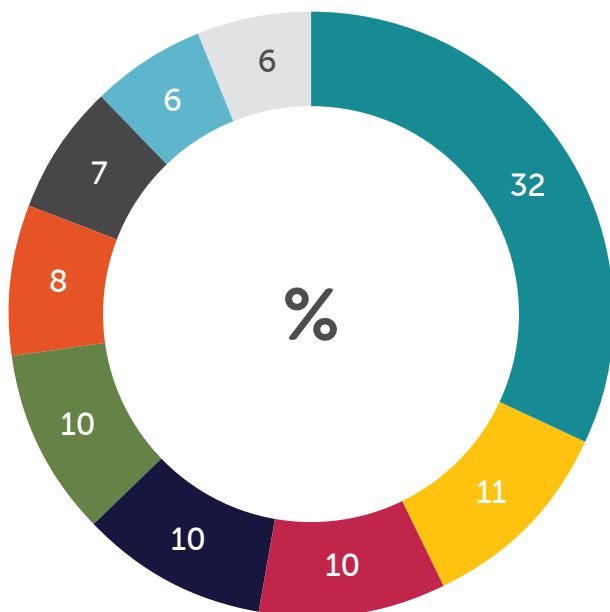
Age Range

- 16-25
- 25-35
- 35-45
- 45-55
- 55-65



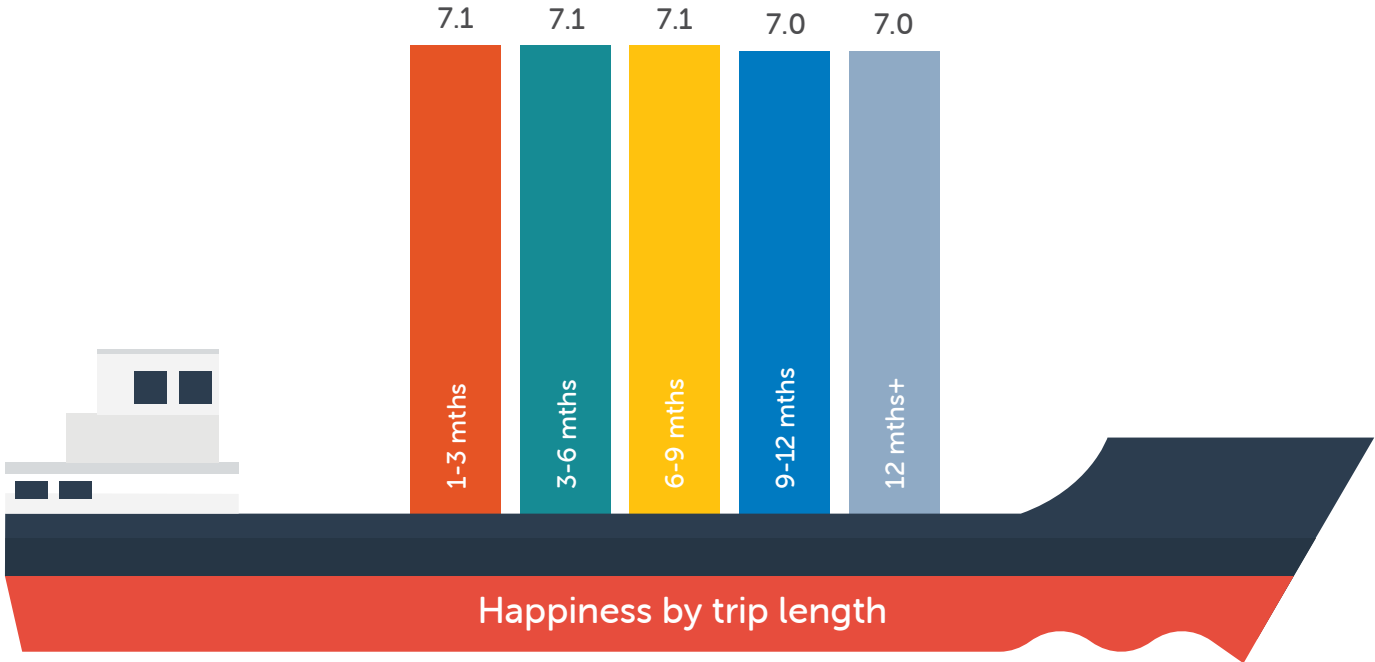
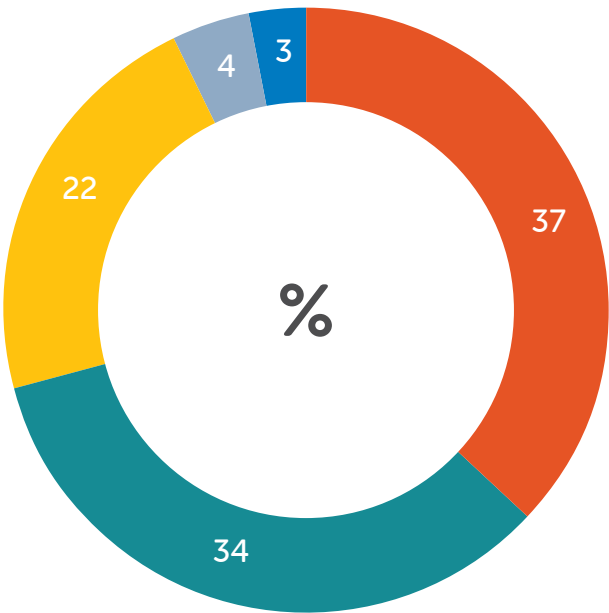
Rank

- Captain
- Catering Department
- Chief Engineer
- Chief Officer
- Deck Crew
- Engine Crew
- Second Engineer
- Second Officer
- Third Officer



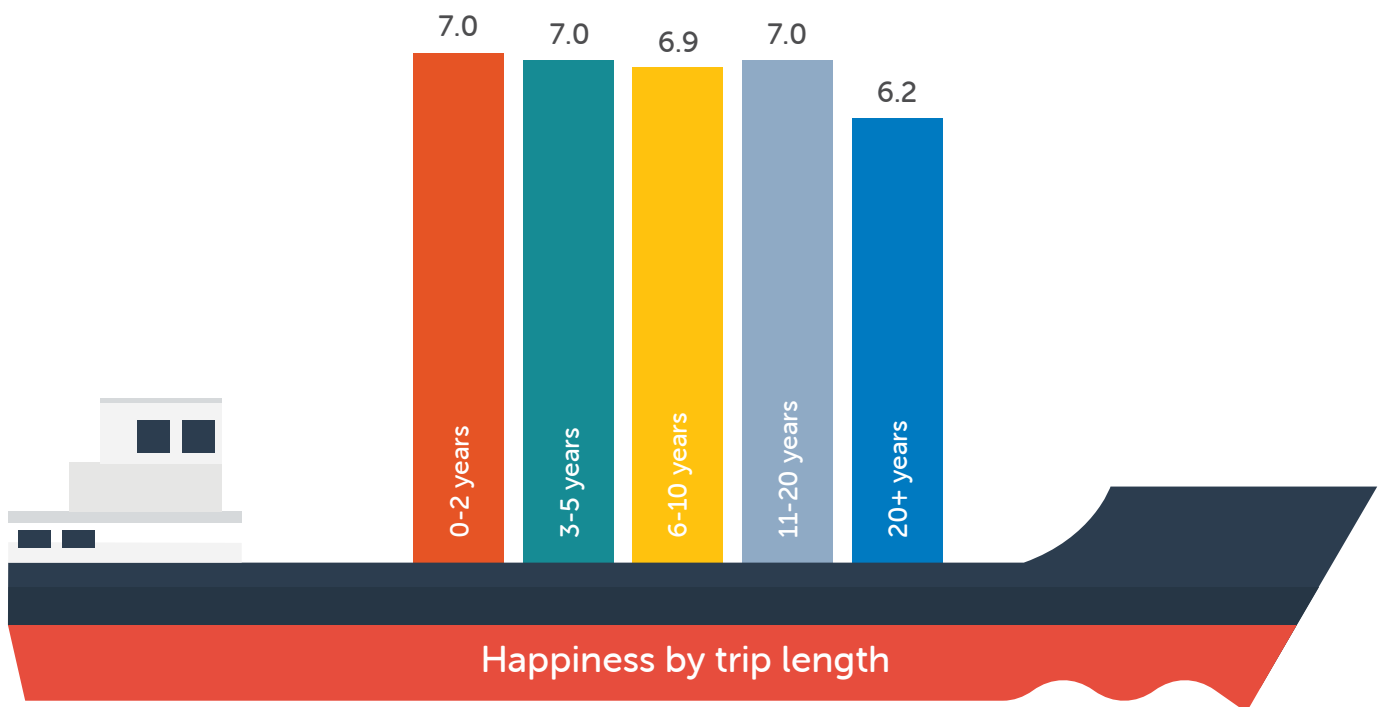
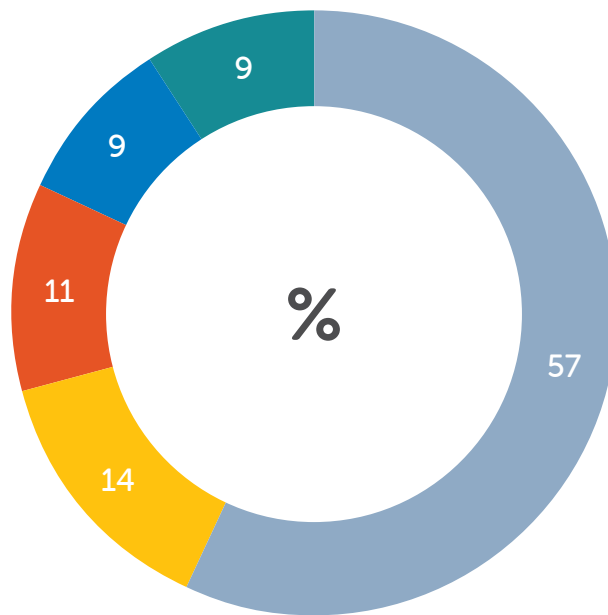
Trip Length

- 1-3 months
- 3-6 months
- 6-9 months
- 9-12 months
- Over 12 months



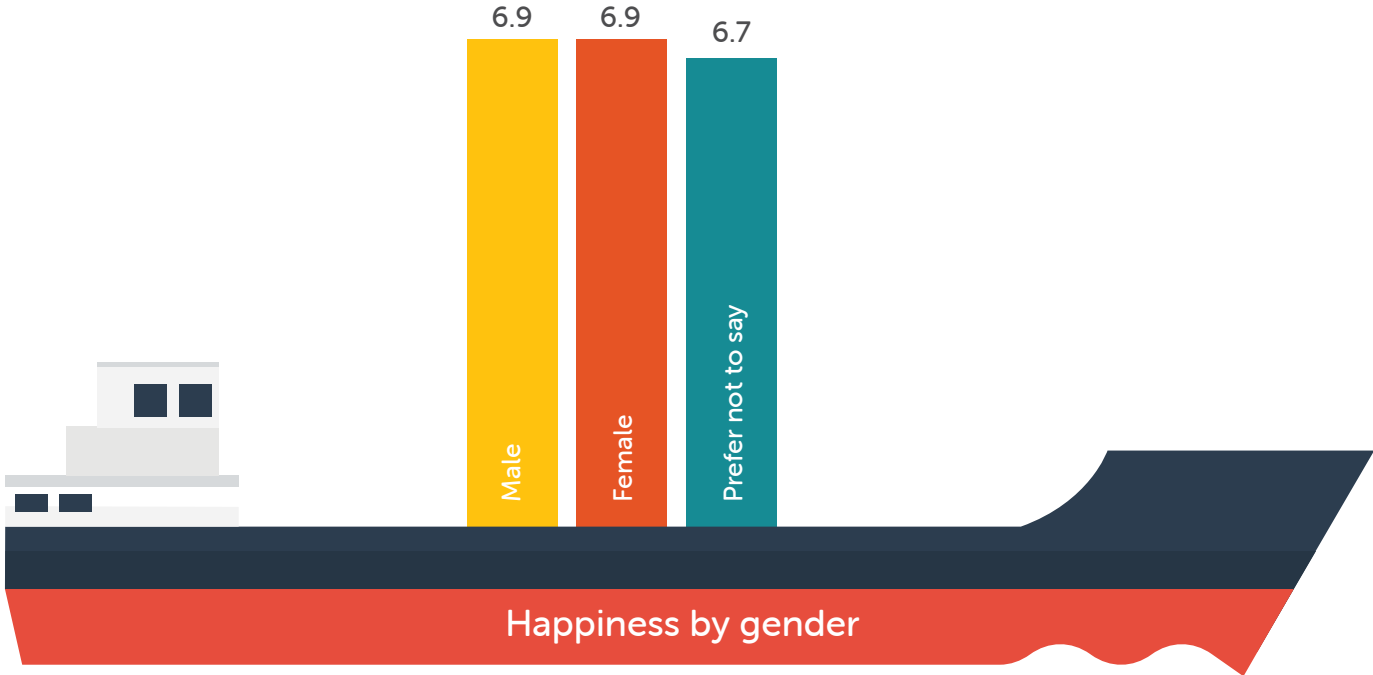
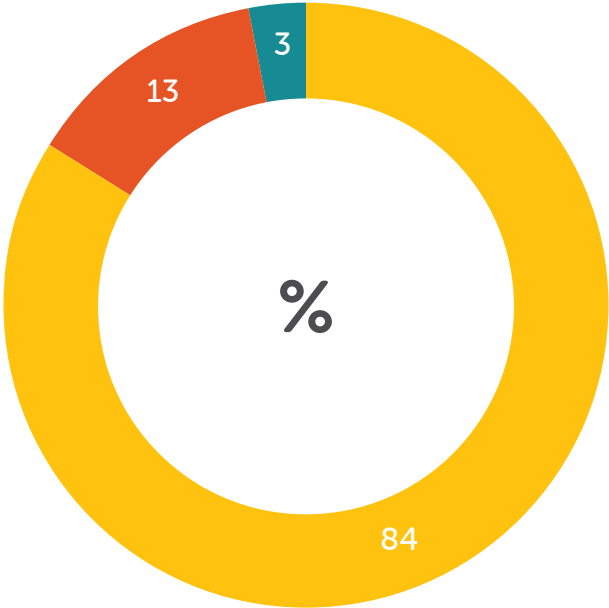
Age of Vessel

- 0-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-20 years
- 20+ years



Gender

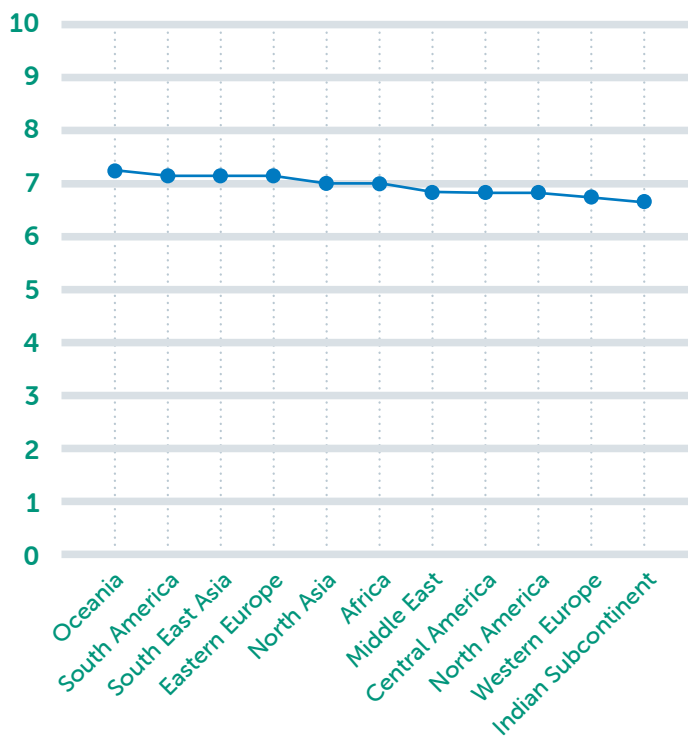
- Male
- Female
- Prefer not to say



Where

5%
North
America

Regions and happiness





2024 in Review

The Seafarers Happiness Index has fluctuated throughout the year. In Q1 2024, the average score was 6.94, rising to 6.99 in Q2. Q3 2024 saw a more notable increase, with an average of 7.16 suggesting improvements in certain areas of seafarer welfare or onboard conditions.

However, the positive trend did not hold into Q4, as the score dropped to 6.91. This dip suggests that potential challenges resurfaced or worsened toward the end of the year, warranting attention to reverse this downward trend and address underlying concerns affecting crew morale.

Experiences Through 2024

As we look back across seafarer satisfaction in 2024, a story emerges of stark contrasts and mounting challenges. Last year, both fixes and flaws in seafarers' work lives were identified.

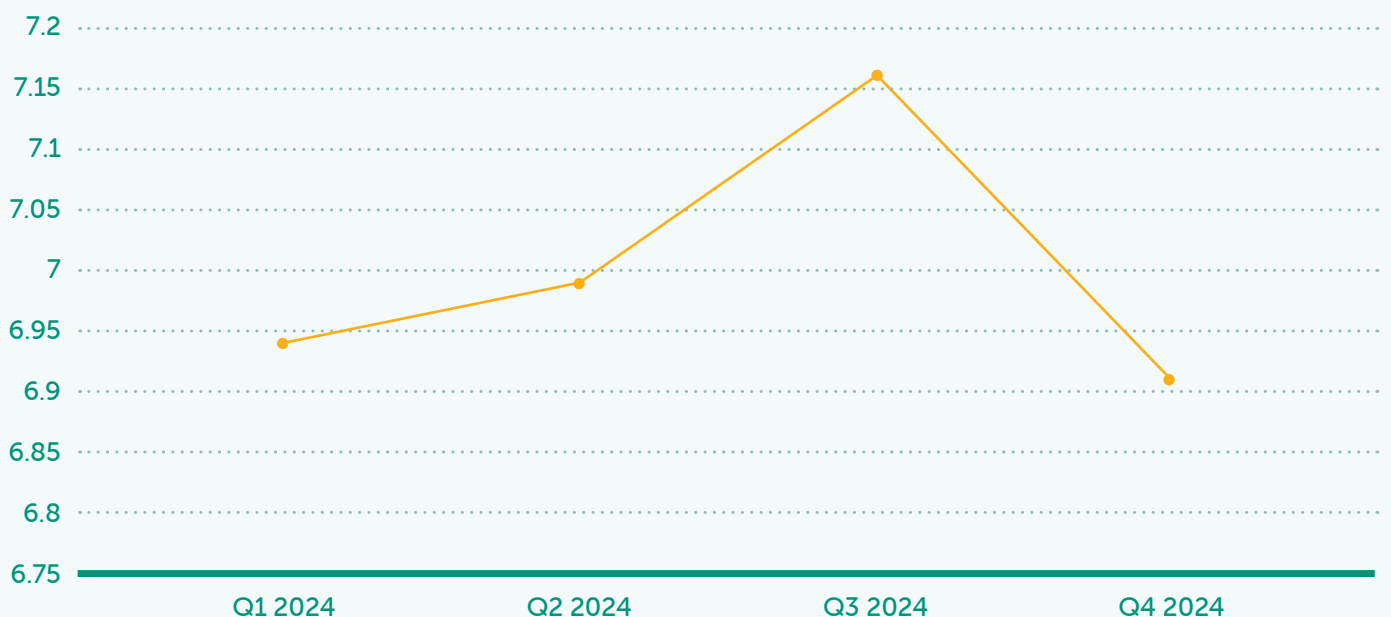
On the positive side, financial security, job satisfaction, strong company support, and better connectivity stand out. Seafarers value fair pay, teamwork, good leadership, and the ability to stay in touch with loved ones. Shore leave, recreational facilities, and cultural respect also boost morale, while career growth and training opportunities remain highly appreciated.

However, challenges persist. Seafarers report long working hours, inadequate rest, poor living conditions, and stagnant wages. Connectivity issues, limited shore leave, and poor management further contribute to stress and fatigue. Discrimination, isolation, and a lack of support ashore also weigh heavily on their well-being.

Improving life at sea hinges on addressing these flaws while leveraging the positives. Focus on better pay, work-life balance, leadership, mental health support, and shore leave policies is crucial to creating a more fulfilling and supportive environment for seafarers worldwide.

What is becoming increasingly apparent is the emergence of a two-tier maritime industry. On one side, we see vessels where crews enjoy good connectivity, adequate manning levels, quality living conditions, and regular shore leave. These seafarers receive fair pay, professional development opportunities, and most importantly, respect.

Average Happiness Q1-Q4 2024



The other side of this divide, however, paints a far darker picture. Here we find seafarers struggling with expensive or non-existent connectivity, skeletal crew levels, and poor living conditions. Shore leave becomes a luxury rather than a right, training opportunities are scarce, and payment issues are commonplace.

The management of work hours remains a persistent thorn in the industry's side. The chronic underreporting of working hours, driven by fear of punishment and operational pressures, creates a dangerous cycle that impacts both mental health and safety. We need honest, transparent reporting mechanisms that don't penalise truth-telling.

The emergence of "dark fleets" has only served to push these standards even lower, creating an ever-widening chasm in our industry. The media can be quick to condemn seafarers, and to call them "shady" when things go wrong, whatever the root cause.

Technology, often heralded as the solution to our industry's challenges, is proving to be a double-edged sword. The push toward remote operations in 2024, including "Chief-to-Shore" functionality, raises serious questions about safety, accountability, and the future of maritime careers.

In addition, the gradual elimination of positions such as 4th Engineer and Electrician, signals the further trend toward reduced crew sizes. This not only impacts workloads, but means the loss of mentorship and knowledge transfer of practical experience.

Yet amidst these challenges, 2024 has brought an unexpected silver lining. The rerouting of vessels due to Red Sea security concerns has inadvertently created opportunities for better work-life balance on longer voyages. These extended journeys have allowed for more social activities, improved crew relationships, and enhanced training opportunities. It is a stark reminder that when we give seafarers the time and space they need, positive outcomes naturally follow.

Looking ahead, shipping faces several critical tasks. Transparent reporting systems for working hours would make a real difference, while the impact of automation on crew welfare requires careful consideration, and there remains a real training gap for future fuels.

Most fundamentally, we need to better recognise and respect seafarers' contribution to global trade. The challenge lies not just in maintaining high standards on the best-operated vessels, but in ensuring these standards become the norm across the entire industry.

The tale of two industries witnessed in 2024 cannot continue indefinitely. As we move forward, we must work to bridge this divide, ensuring that all seafarers – regardless of their vessel or company – receive the respect, conditions, and opportunities they deserve. Only then can we truly claim to be an industry that values its most important asset: its people.

Thank you

We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the seafarers who generously share their experiences and insights with the Seafarers Happiness Index. Their feedback is invaluable, enhancing our understanding of the challenges faced at sea and revealing potential areas for improvement. These first-hand accounts are the foundation of our recommendations and play a crucial role in shaping more effective policies and practices.

We also appreciate the support from shipping companies and shore managers who have facilitated and encouraged participation in this survey. Their commitment to transparency and improvement sets a commendable example for the industry. We encourage more organisations to follow their lead, recognising that open dialogue is vital for meaningful progress.

As we move forward, we strongly urge broader participation from seafarers across all sectors of the industry. Every voice adds depth to our understanding and strengthens our capacity to advocate for meaningful change. To shipowners and operators, your ongoing support in promoting and enabling crew participation in these initiatives is essential.

The path ahead requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders. By prioritising seafarer happiness and well-being, we not only address immediate challenges but also establish a foundation for a more resilient, efficient, and innovative maritime industry.

To complete the survey, visit:

www.seafarershappinessindex.org



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