

DEVELOPING AN EMPLOYMENT BRAND STRATEGY FOR THE SHORTAGE OF SEAFARERS: THE CASE IN AUSTRALIA

Vinh V. THAI

Division of Infrastructure Systems & Maritime Studies
Nanyang Technological University
Block N1, Nanyang Avenue, Singapore 639798
Tel: +65 67905331 Fax: +65 67921650
Email: vvthai@ntu.edu.sg

Timothy LATTA

Westlink Shipping
Perth, Western Australian, Australia
Tel.: +679 3315266 Fax: +679 3303251
Email: tim@westlink.biz

Abstract

This research aims to answer two research questions namely how the shipping industry and its associated seafaring careers are currently marketed, and how the shipping industry can be marketed more effectively. Methodologies include a survey with seafarers in-depth interview with HR managers of ship management companies. It was found that the shipping industry has no or negative image in the public while current methods of marketing have very minimal effect. This study recommends the development of an employment brand, providing an initial insight into the first two stages of such a development. It was also found that there is significant opportunity for the shipping industry to differentiate itself from other industries, and change the basis of employment competition for seafarers.

Keywords: Shipping industry, seafarer shortage, employment brand strategy.

DEVELOPING AN EMPLOYMENT BRAND STRATEGY FOR THE SHORTAGE OF SEAFARERS: THE CASE IN AUSTRALIA

Abstract

This research aims to answer two research questions namely how the shipping industry and its associated seafaring careers are currently marketed, and how the shipping industry can be marketed more effectively. Methodologies include a survey with seafarers in-depth interview with HR managers of ship management companies. It was found that the shipping industry has no or negative image in the public while current methods of marketing have very minimal effect. This study recommends the development of an employment brand, providing an initial insight into the first two stages of such a development. It was also found that there is significant opportunity for the shipping industry to differentiate itself from other industries, and change the basis of employment competition for seafarers.

Keywords: *Shipping industry, seafarer shortage, employment brand strategy.*

INTRODUCTION

The maritime industry plays a critical role in the distribution of world trade and thus economic development. Seafarers are employed in this industry to enable the international transport of goods produced and consumed throughout the globe (Mack 2007). The topic area of marketing in relation to maritime careers has arisen in recent times largely due to the current and worsening shortage of suitably qualified seafarers faced by the industry. The shortage of seafarers (mainly officers and senior officers) in the shipping industry is real, and will reach approximately 40,000 by 2010 (Futian 1999; He and Guo 1999; Veiga 2002; International Maritime Organisation 2003; Kokoszko 2006; Fancun and Ruan 2002; Lewarn 2008). The Australian Shipowners Association (ASA) also estimated a current global shortage of 10,000 officers, however this is set to grow to 27,000 by 2015 (Hatch 2008). Reasons for this shortage vary, but include the lack of initial attraction of entry-level seafarers to the industry (through the lack of an industry image), the subsequent challenging working conditions experienced by seafarers which impact retention levels (Grewal and Lewarn 2000; Sohmen 1990 in Spruyt 1994), and problems with officer training (cost and availability).

Because of the above, the shipping industry must immediately work to make internal changes so as to compete more effectively in the fierce labour market for talented employees (Berry & Parasuraman

2000). This research will determine how the maritime industry's image can be improved through 'employment branding' in order to assist in providing a solution to the problematic shortage of qualified seafarers. The paper is organised in four sections. First, a research background is provided with literature review on how the shipping industry is currently marketed as well as alternative options for doing so. This is followed by a detailed methodology framework. Findings are presented next, with academic and managerial contributions are discussed and, finally, concluding comments and future research directions are outlined.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Current marketing of the industry

According to the International Maritime Organisation (IMO 2005, p. 30), shipping probably has the lowest public profile and the least representative public image of all the sectors that make up the global transport infrastructure. Firstly, the maritime industry tends to appear more so as a background industry, as most people have little to no knowledge of its operations and global responsibilities and/or impact (IMO 2005; Gekara 2006). This lack of awareness also translates through to knowledge of maritime careers. Following this, Kokoszko (2006) also finds that the Australian Government has given little attention to the importance of developing a national shipping industry. The Maritime Union of Australia (in Lewarn 2008, p. 5) concludes that 'current policy provides no support or incentives for investment... [and] policy and practice...weakens an already weak Australian coastal sea transport regime'.

What inevitably tends to make up society's opinion of the shipping industry is when the world's media reports about a maritime accident or pollution threat/disaster. The negative media attracted by incidents forms public opinion and a perceived image of the industry (Veiga 2002). The poor image that is portrayed of the maritime industry then translates through to those who may be interested in a maritime career: 'The evidence clearly suggests that young people today do not seem to find seafaring an attractive or appealing career' (IMO 2003, p. 22). This lack of image is also, it seems, largely to blame on the industry as a whole. Wilkinson & Cahoon (2008, p. 9) see this as a result of the

'industry's ineffectiveness or lack of desire to communicate and promote their image'. Kokoszko's (2006) research supports this, which provides that employers have not recognised the need to manage a reputation, and that respondents believed the industry's image did not need improving because they were already seen as attractive potential employers – contrary to all of the above evidence. This reactive recruitment "strategy" leads to obvious problems such as a lack of industry awareness, also arising through industry players failing to think and act like marketers, particularly in relation to HRM issues (Berry & Parasuraman 2000). In order to gain a realistic view of the actual situation at hand, the need therefore arises for other sources of objective evidence to be collected and analysed, beyond (but also in conjunction with) the opinions of employers.

Retention of seafarers is also a major problem. These short-term "stayers" (Grewal & Lewarn 2000; Hill 1972) are soon attracted to other sectors of the maritime industry (shore-based positions) or even completely different industries (where their skills are highly-valued; for example, the offshore industry) soon after gaining qualifications and realising the reality of the occupation, while better opportunities exist elsewhere (Lewarn 2008; Gardner & Pettit 1999 & Grey 1998 in Grewal & Lewarn 2000; Kokoszko 2006). Seafarers therefore have the power of choice (Burke 2007), thus making seafaring no longer a lifetime career. This triggers the need for the application of new strategies to tackle the problem, such as the recently discussed employer/industry of choice.

Employer/industry of choice strategy

The employer of choice strategy is one that recognises people as a major source of competitive advantage to an organisation (Nankervis, Compton & Baird 2005). It works to seek out and continually meet the motivational, lifestyle and intrinsic needs and wants of potential employees (Nankervis, Compton & Baird 2005). For the shortage of seafarers in the shipping industry, the employer of choice strategy is not sufficient as the problem does not exist solely with shipping companies. Instead, the industry of choice perspective should be taken as it uses the cooperation between stakeholders to be combined with changes in internal industry practices: removing the gap between expectations and reality in seafaring (Kokoszko 2006). Wilkinson and Cahoon (2008) believe

this must be applied to develop a desirability of the seafaring occupation among potential and existing employees to enforce awareness of the perceived additional benefits associated with the career. Berry and Parasuraman (2000, p. 177) emphasise the importance of effective internal marketing: ‘the best way to attract, develop, motivate and retain first-rate employees is to market jobs worth buying’. In adapting the seafaring position to the idea of a product, marketing implications are evident, and subsequent strategies can be more effectively developed; especially through the concept of branding, which underlies the consumer’s perception of the product and its value (Kotler, Brown, Adam, Burton & Armstrong 2007).

The employment brand developed will establish a connection between the shipping industry and both the general public (which influences the target market), and that target market to which the industry is seeking to reach in order to fulfil recruitment requirements. Branding offers confidence in the product, as well as implying a level of quality (Kotler et al. 2007). Promoting the employment brand both internally and externally is also an important factor in engaging an emotional attachment to the organisation. The purpose of the employment brand is to therefore influence people to make them actively choose/want to work for your firm (Burke 2007): ‘Strong employment brands have a magnetic affect when it comes to attracting and retaining good people’ (Hudson 2007, p. 1). Burke (2007) devises five steps in order to develop a successful employment brand: Analyse, Audit, Aspire, Apply, and Assess. To develop an employment brand for the shipping industry, the first two stages would be of critical importance. In considering the lack of marketing conducted by the industry, how would they know to whom they should target the employment brand? These stages of the framework will be focused on in this study, from an industry perspective.

Insert Figure 1 about here.

METHODOLOGY

Methods of data collection

Methodological triangulation i.e. using both quantitative and qualitative methods was used in this study to gain unique and important insights into the research problem. Data triangulation method was

also employed i.e. exploring the perception of both seafarers and their ship-owners and ship managers to provide a complete scope for the study. Specifically, data were collected from current and ex-seafarers to be in-line with the first two stages of Burke's (2007) 'employment branding' model, which requires a study of the 'target market' in order to develop an employment brand. The availability of this resource was quite limited due to the geographic spread of current seafarers, and therefore Australian Maritime College (AMC) seafaring students were used to fulfil this first need. There are also many ex-seafarers at AMC who are completing various degrees or teaching, and could therefore share valuable knowledge on the realistic career a seafarer faces, as well as an insight as to why they have left that kind of employment, and how they think seafaring's image and attraction can be improved.

Data collection from current seafarers was conducted on campus, consisting of a paper survey with an in-person drop-off. Main items included are those of general perception of the seafarer's life, image and attractiveness of the shipping industry and seafaring and other aspects of the employer of choice. Data collection for the ex-seafaring participants was also in the form of a questionnaire; these however consisted of both quantitative and qualitative questions in order to gain the opinions of personal experience to a greater extent. This allowed an insight into the reasons why they have ended their seafaring careers and thus the retention issues associated with the shipping industry. The third section of data collection encompassed qualitative research using a semi-structured telephone interview to gain perceptions and opinions of ship-owners and ship-managers. The quantitative study of seafarers was pre-tested with a number of individuals from the population, while the qualitative study was pre-tested with experienced university lecturers. The questionnaires were pre-coded to ensure the efficiency of the data analysis stage.

Sampling strategies

Due to the nature of seafaring, it would be very difficult to conduct a completely probability-based sampling of current seafarers. It was therefore decided that a more realistic and accessible sample would consist of the seafarers currently studying at AMC. The structure of seafaring courses at AMC

is broken into two groups: deck and engineer. There were three available groups at the time this study was conducted: 26 watch keeper students, 26 chief mate/master students and 24 2nd and chief engineer students. All of these students have had previous sea-time. They were however distinguishable by their status as either cadets (watch keepers) or officers. Out of the above total of 76 seafarers, 47 usable responses were gained; giving a response rate of 62%. Of these, 22 were cadets and 25 were officers. In addition, five ex-seafarers who are AMC lecturers were also included in the survey.

The sampling frame for seafarers’ employers was gained through the “World Shipping Directory (WSD) Online”, as well as through previous industry knowledge of firms. According to WSD Online (2008), there are 751 Australian ship operators and 12 ship managers. A total of 5 employer interviews were conducted; those chosen by way of convenience and availability. The companies were a mix of ship-owners and ship-managers. Specific contact details of the HR managers were gained in order to be able to directly contact those being targeted.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Perception of the seafarer’s life

This section aims to identify the main elements associated with a career at sea. Using a five-point Likert scale, current seafarers were asked whether they agreed with the seven descriptive statements based on their current employment. Ex-seafarers were also asked whether they agreed with these statements based on their previous experience as a seafarer. To contrast these responses, employers were asked how attractive they believed the seven elements were to their current seafarers. For these responses on the scale, ‘1’ represented ‘strongly agree’ and ‘very attractive’, while ‘5’ represented ‘strongly disagree’ and ‘very unattractive’ (for seafarers/ex-seafarers and employers respectively). Table 1 provides the codes for analysis of these seven elements, while Table 2 shows the results of the ANOVA test for each factor to determine whether there is a significant difference in opinions between the three groups of respondents i.e. seafarers, ex-seafarers and employers.

Insert Table 1 and 2 about here

It can be seen from Table 2 that both seafarer and ex-seafarer groups of respondents generally did not express any negative concerns on the seven aspects of the seafarer's life, i.e. regarding remuneration package, balance of ship/shore time, crew management and HR support, living condition and facilities onboard, work environment, and career options. The average mean responses across seven aspects of the seafarer, ex-seafarer and employer groups are 2.78, 2.46 and 2.40 respectively, which indicate that seafarer and ex-seafarer groups did agree on these aspects as positive to the seafaring career, while the employer group particularly perceived these as attractive to their seafarers in motivating them to maintain loyalty to their company or the seafaring occupation. However, results of the ANOVA test indicate that there is no significant difference in opinions between the three respondent groups (as all p values are smaller than 0.05 which is the chosen significance level). Current seafarer and ex-seafarer respondents were also asked to elaborate on their answer to the aspect on career options that seafaring offers. Some of the most common and important responses are that seafaring provides a high-level of personal development, yet it is however still lacks a "professional status" as some respondents indicated that the transition back to shore-work is difficult.

In order to gain an idea of the leave conditions experienced, current-seafarer and ex-seafarer groups were asked to indicate how many months each year they are/were entitled to paid-leave. While there was no significance difference in the average leave period between seafarer and ex-seafarer groups (3.83 and 3.40 months respectively), there is a significant difference between the mean leave-time entitled to cadet and officers respondents (3 and 4.56 months respectively), with officers entitled to significantly more leave time. Respondents in the seafarer and ex-seafarer groups were also asked to identify what additional facilities or changes to living conditions could make their time living aboard more comfortable. The main themes identified in these responses are cheap or free internet, cheap or free phone calls, better entertainment systems (video games, DVD's, stereos, better quality meals, allow partners to travel on-board, and a greater focus on the social environment. This perception will be further reflected in the below section.

The image and attractiveness of the shipping industry

This section aims to explore respondents' perception of the image and attractiveness of the shipping industry. When asked if they thought many members of the general public had a substantial understanding/awareness of the shipping industry, all respondents in both seafarer and ex-seafarer groups (except one current seafarer) indicated a 'No' response to this question. This provides a strong indication of the image of the industry in the eyes of the general public, as these respondents act as a type of 'connection' between the industry and the public. When asked to identify what kind of image the shipping industry is portraying to the general public overall, the prevailing response from the seafarer and ex-seafarer respondents is that the industry currently has no image, i.e. the public is unaware of it. The positive image of the industry is just minimal as only 4.26% of respondents perceived so. The results are summarised in Table 3.

Insert Table 3 about here

In addition, respondents were asked to elaborate on their perception of the type of image the shipping industry portrays. The main themes to come from this elaboration are that the public generally only see negatives of the industry such as pollution and piracy, and that the public thinks seafarers are drunks, drug abusers or womanisers, or earn a lot for doing nothing. From these comments it is evident that many of the respondents wished to make mention also of the image of seafaring and seafarers. It would be fair to conclude that many seafarers really feel like they are typecast in a way that makes them outcasts in society.

The image and attractiveness of seafaring as an occupation/career

The ex-seafarer group were specifically asked some questions in relation to their perception of seafaring as a career. Specifically, 80% of ex-seafarer respondents were not satisfied with the career options available when they decided to move ashore. However, an equal 80% of ex-seafarer respondents also agreed that seafaring is an enjoyable, satisfying, and attractive occupation especially for new recruits. This result indicates that, although the shipping industry is perceived by ex-seafarer respondents as a good industry to pursue a career in, marketing and HRM policies could have played a

better role in exploring career options for employees and thus enhanced the brand image of the industry.

The image and attractiveness of seafaring as an occupation/career to potential cadets is further reflected in the perception of seafarer and employer respondent groups. A categorical scale with '1' representing 'Very Attractive', '3' representing 'Neither Attractive nor Unattractive' and '5' representing 'Very Unattractive' was used to judge the attractiveness of six elements related to the employment brand to potential cadets (those young people that may or may not be considering an occupation/career in seafaring), namely, *remuneration package, study/sea/leave time mix, career path options/development/choice, living condition aboard, working condition aboard, and overall attractiveness of becoming a cadet*. Table 4 denotes the codes of elements of the image and attractiveness of seafaring as an occupation/career, while Table 5 presents the descriptive statistics and t-test results of the perception of these elements between seafarer and employer respondent groups.

Insert Table 4 and 5 about here

There are several observations from Table 5. Firstly, the seafaring as a career was generally not seen by seafarer and employer respondent groups as unattractive one (as the mean responses of both groups across six elements are less than 3) taking into consideration all aspects of remuneration, study/sea/leave time mix, career path options, living and working condition aboard and overall attractiveness of becoming a cadet. However, the employer group perceived it relatively more attractive than did the seafarer group (overall mean responses are 2.13 and 2.44 respectively). Specifically, there is a significance difference in the perception of seafarers and employers towards the overall attractiveness of becoming a cadet (p value of t-test is 0.02), in that employers believed becoming a cadet is more attractive than did seafarers. This 'gap' in opinions is important and will be further discussed at the later stage when comparing the difference between seafarers' expectations and their experience (reality). Furthermore, the ranking of the most and least attractive elements of the seafaring career is also different between seafarer and employer groups, in that the most attractive element from the view of employers is remuneration while seafarers believed career path options to be

the most attractive to them being a seafarer. This is also in line with the results from section 4.1 above in that employers believed seafaring offers both onshore and offshore career options but seafarers expressed a neutral opinion on this aspect.

In an effort to gain a greater understanding of the above elements of attractiveness to potential cadets, seafarers were asked to elaborate on their answers to identify any other factors which could be implemented to increase the attractiveness of seafaring. The main themes derived from responses are that better marketing especially in/to schools could have been conducted, better support from the government is needed, there should be higher status and professional recognition for the career e.g. a degree, more action from companies to recruit cadets as there is a shortage but it is not easy to get employed, and that long and short term employments should be considered. What could be understood from the above are that the conditions associated with an actual cadetship could be improved, as well as could the social environment. The actual training model in-place is also a critical point, since if cadets who did a pre-sea course cannot get placement on ships for sea-time, they will generally move into another line of work.

Marketing and HRM practices

This section aims to explore more characteristics of the seafarer and ex-seafarer samples, particularly in relation to those potential or actual marketing and HRM practices conducted by employers. Firstly, the seafaring group was asked to indicate the main source for their interest in a career at sea. Table 6 presents a summary of response frequency to this question.

Insert Table 6 about here

As can be seen in Table 6, the two main sources of interest are ‘family or friend influence’ (46.81%) and ‘personal interest in shipping’ (36.17%). It is worth noticing that apart from the self-interest, word-of-mouth is the most effective method to attract people to the shipping industry. This however indicates that other marketing means such as career advisor and media advertisement did not generate any effect in attracting people to the industry, while other methods such as career fair and related-

industry position play a very minimal role. In addition, when asked how they first came into contact with their first employer, 66% of seafarer respondents affirmed that they did so through unsolicited contact while only 34% of them were approached by the employer proactively. Respondents from both seafarer and ex-seafarer groups were also asked whether the expectations built by the employment brand of seafaring equalled the reality experienced in the seafaring occupation during employment. Interestingly, 49% of respondents indicated that the reality did not equal their expectation. Although this is inconclusive to a certain extent, it is however true to say that there is a significant proportion of seafarers who experienced something different to what they expected. A follow-up question was asked to all those respondents who answered ‘expectations did not equal reality’ to determine whether this difference was positive or negative. To this end, 74% of respondents perceived that the employment brand did not properly represent the reality of seafaring believing that the difference was ‘negative’.

Seafarer and ex-seafarer groups were also asked whether they would recommend seafaring as an occupation/career to others. Table 7 summarises the findings from this. It can be seen that although the word of mouth communication about the seafaring occupation would generally be quite positive, there is still a significant proportion in each respondent group who would not recommend it or are currently unsure.

Insert Table 7 about here

Another interesting finding is relating to respondents’ perception of the marketing of the employment brand. When asked whether sufficient marketing of the employment brand was being conducted by employers and shipping associations to effectively attract people to a career at sea, 85% of seafarer and ex-seafarer respondents indicated a negative answer. This finding is consistent with the above result in which respondents perceived that current marketing means did not generate any substantial attraction. To follow on from this, ex-seafarers were further asked to identify the main factors that need to be addressed in the shipping industry in order to attract and retain seafarers more effectively. A major theme involved in respondents’ answers was the need for better overall packages. This includes wages of a seafarer, increase of leave period (flexible leave option/long service leave), and

financial incentive for coming back from leave on-time. Ex-seafarer respondents were also asked to identify the reasons for leaving their career as a seafarer, and the results are summarised in Table 8. Apart from family reasons as the most substantial cause of leaving, it is worth noting that other causes also play a major role, such as lack of career path options and better opportunities elsewhere. This is again very consistent to the above analysis.

Insert Table 8 about here

In addition to the above, employers were asked what length of time (on average) they were able to retain seafarers. 60% of respondents believed that their companies could only retain their seafarers for only 3-5 years, while those who could keep their seafarers for over 10 years only account for 20% of respondents. Again, this finding of retention problem is in line with other earlier findings on the effectiveness of the current marketing and human resource management practices.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Although employers indicated that remuneration and leave are the main factors to seafarers, it has been found that there are other “controllable” factors that seafarers want, which are not currently being met. A significant proportion of respondents indicated a negative difference between the expectations of seafaring and the reality they experienced during employment. It is of utmost importance that this gap be closed. Potential seafarers need realistic expectations of the career; otherwise they are more likely to leave earlier. This is important on both an employer and industry scale.

It has been found that there is significant room for improvement in marketing practices for employers, as very little is conducted by individual employers or the holistic shipping industry. From this, it was found the image of the industry is either negative or non-existent. Also related to marketing is the issue of the target market. It can be concluded from this study that many potential segments are not currently being targeted or reached; including those already in the industry to some capacity and those school-leavers who do not attend those careers fairs.

In addition to the above, this study also aims to identify employment factors of most interest to seafarers to understand what the potential audience actually wants. A greater focus on these factors is recommended in order to maximise the attraction and retention ability of the shipping industry both in general and in more-effectively adapting specific conditions and facilities to each segment's preferences. This is particularly important for those seafarers who shipping companies really want to retain. Figure 3 therefore identifies the main factors that this study has found to be of significant value to seafarers.

Insert Figure 2 about here

A point that needs greater emphasis from Figure 2 is that of the living conditions on-board. The nature of seafaring leads to this being a very significant variable in the attraction and retention of seafarers. The elements of these living conditions that current and ex-seafarers identified such as internet facilities are essential to stay in close contact with friends and family. Additionally, if the factors of on-board living can be improved to the extent that employees actually look forward to their on-board experience to a greater extent or are even comfortable in their environment, then a greater emotional attachment to the organisation/industry can be gained. It is therefore recommended that employers take on a differentiation focus of improving elements which make the seafaring career more attractive in terms of recruitment and retention rather than simply monetary incentives. Greater overall creativity in developing employment packages for seafarers is also an important recommendation to come from this study. Individual employers, as well as the industry as a whole, need to make "seafaring" into a high-quality, positively talked-about, and well-known brand. Potentially from this development, seafarers will feel less like outcasts and more like the responsible professionals that they are, who play such a critical role in Australian and global trade.

REFERENCES

- ASA (2006) Australian Maritime Industry, Australian Shipowners Association, <http://www.asa.com.au/upload/news/Australian%20Maritime%20Transport%202005.pdf>.
- Berry, LL & Parasuraman, A (2000) Services Marketing Starts from Within, *Internal Marketing: Directions for Management* 173-192.
- Burke, P (2007) *Forced Focus: The Essence of Attracting and Retaining the Best People*, Messenger Publishing, Australia.
- Dunne, PA & Barnes, JG (2000) Internal Marketing: a relationships and value creation view, *Internal Marketing: Directions for Management* 192-220.
- Fancun, K & Ruan, W (2002) Probing into the Acquisition and Maintenance of High-Quality Seafarers, in *Proceedings from the 3rd general assembly of the IAMU*, 23-26 September, Rockport.
- Futian, W (1999) Establish An Army of Highly Qualified Seamen and Face the Challenge of the New Century, *Qualified Seafarers for the 21st Century* 31-35.
- Gekara, V (2006) Recruits in need of a better deal, *The Sea*, May/June, <http://www.sirc.cf.ac.uk/The%20Sea/181%20may-jun%2006.pdf>.
- Glassman, M & McAfee, B (1992) Integrating the Personnel and Marketing Functions: The Challenge Of The 1990s, *Business Horizons*, May/June, 35(3): 52-59.
- Grewal, D & Lewarn, B (2000) Sustaining a Maritime Career: The Role of Maritime Education and Training, in *Proceedings of the 2000 AMETIAP Conference and AGM*, 27-30 November, Tasmania, Australia.
- Hatch, T (2008) Securing Maritime Skills into the Future, Maritime Skills, Shortages and Training Forum, *Maritime Transport Policy Centre*, Australian Maritime College, Launceston, Tasmania, http://www.amc.edu.au/system/files/Skills+Shortage+Forum+Synopsis_3.pdf.
- He, X & Guo, Z (1999) The Challenge and Opportunity Facing Seamen Service Market, *Qualified Seafarers for the 21st Century* 56-62.
- Hill, JM (1972) *The Seafaring Career*, Centre for Applied Social Research, Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, London, U.K.

Hudson (2007) Employment branding, Hudson,

<http://au.hudson.com/documents/AuEmp-Career-Mgmt-Emp-Branding.pdf>.

International Maritime Organisation (2003) IMO: Committed People Working for Safe, Secure and Clean Seas, IMO News, International Maritime Organisation, no. 3,

http://www.imo.org/includes/blastDataOnly.asp/data_id%3D8014/IMONews_Iss3.pdf.

International Maritime Organisation (2005) International Shipping – Carrier of World Trade, IMO News, no. 3,

http://www.imo.org/includes/blastDataOnly.asp/data_id%3D12826/IMONews_305.pdf.

Kokoszko, N (2006) Exploring Employer of Choice Potential in the Shipping Industry: an organisational perspective, Honours Thesis, Australian Maritime College, Australia.

Kotler P, Brown L, Adam S, Burton S & Armstrong G. (2007) *Marketing*, 7th edn, Pearson Education, Frenchs Forest, New South Wales, Australia.

Lewarn, B (2008) Submission to the House Standing Committee on Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government: Inquiry into Coastal Shipping Policy and Regulation, Parliament of Australia,

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/itrldg/coastalshipping/subs.htm>.

Mack, K (2007) When seafaring is (or was) a calling: Norwegian seafarers' career experiences, *Maritime Policy and Management*, 34(4).

Nankervis A, Compton R & Baird M (2005) *Human Resource Management: Strategies and Processes*, 5th edn, Nelson/Thomson Learning, Southbank, Victoria, Australia.

Sasser WE & Arbeit, SP (1976) Selling Jobs in the Service Sector, *Business Horizons*, June, 19(3): 61-65.

Skei, OM (2005) Future Manning & Training Developments: Speaker 1, in *Proceedings of the 6th LSM Asia-Pacific Manning and Training Conference*, Lloyd's List Events, Manila.

Spruyt, J (1994) *Ship Management*, 2nd edn, Lloyd's of London Press Ltd, London, U.K.

Thomas Miller P&I (1995) *The Human Factor: A Report on Manning*, UK P&I Club, Bermuda.

Veiga, J (2002) The vital question of shipping's image, *The Sea*, March/April, <http://www.sirc.cf.ac.uk/The%20Sea/156.pdf>.

Wilkinson S & Cahoon S (2008) The Shipping Industry as an Industry of Choice? Extending the Employer of Choice Strategy to Overcome Labour Shortages, in *Proceedings of the IAME Conference*, 2-4 April, Dalian, China.

World Shipping Directory Online (2008) <http://directory.lrfairplay.com/default.aspx>

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Figure 1: Brand Pyramid



Source: Burke (2007, p. 121)

Table 1: Coding of the perception of the seafarer's life

Code	Factor
REMUNERATION	Satisfied with remuneration
TIME BALANCE	Satisfied with ship/shore time balance
HR SUPPORT	Crew management / HR support is/was available and flexible
ONBOARD CONDITIONS	Living conditions and facilities on-board allow/ed a comfortable lifestyle
SAFE ENVIRONMENT	Seafarers work in a safe environment
FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT	Seafarers work in a friendly and social environment
CAREER OPTIONS	Satisfied with the career options that seafaring offers/offered (on and off shore)

Table 2: ANOVA test for the perception of the seafarer's life

Factor	Seafarer		Ex-seafarer		Employer		P value
	Mean	STD	Mean	STD	Mean	STD	
REMUNERATION	2.87	1.19	2.00	0.71	2.80	1.30	0.29
TIME BALANCE	2.98	1.17	3.00	1.00	2.40	1.14	0.57
HR SUPPORT	3.06	1.03	2.80	0.84	2.40	0.89	0.35
ONBOARD CONDITIONS	2.51	1.00	2.20	1.10	2.40	0.89	0.79
SAFE ENVIRONMENT	2.85	1.18	1.80	0.45	2.20	0.84	0.09
FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT	2.83	0.94	2.20	0.45	2.60	0.89	0.32

CAREER OPTIONS	2.36	0.87	3.20	1.48	2.00	0.00	0.09
----------------	------	------	------	------	------	------	------

Note: (1) For seafarer/ex-seafarer: 1=strongly agree 5=strongly disagree
 (2) For employer: 1=very attractive 5=very unattractive

Table 3: Type of Image Portrayed by the Shipping Industry

Perception of image	Seafarer	Ex-seafarer
Positive	4.26%	-
Neutral	34.04%	20.00%
Negative	19.15%	40.00%
No image (public are unaware)	42.55%	40.00%

Table 4: Coding for ‘The Image and Attractiveness of Seafaring as an Occupation/Career’

Code	Factor
REMUNERATION	Remuneration package
TIME BALANCE	Study/Sea/Leave time mix
HR SUPPORT	Career path options/development/choice
ONBOARD CONDITIONS	Living conditions aboard
SAFE ENVIRONMENT	Working conditions aboard
FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT	Overall attractiveness of becoming a cadet

Table 5: The Image and Attractiveness of Seafaring as an Occupation/Career

Elements	Seafarers		Rank	Employers		Rank	p value of t test
	Mean	STD		Mean	STD		
REMUNERATION	2.11	0.89	2	1.60	0.55	1	0.11
TIME BALANCE	2.38	1.21	3	2.20	1.64	4	0.82
HR SUPPORT	2.06	0.84	1	1.60	0.89	2	0.32
ONBOARD CONDITIONS	2.79	0.78	5	3.00	1.00	6	0.66
SAFE ENVIRONMENT	2.81	0.88	6	2.60	0.55	5	0.48
FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT	2.51	1.00	4	1.80	0.45	3	0.02

Note: (1) 1=very attractive 5=very unattractive; (2) Relative ranking is based on mean responses

Table 6: Main Sources of Interest in a Career at Sea

Source	%	Source	%
Family or friend influence	46.81%	Media advertisement	0.00%
Careers fair	4.26%	Personal interest in shipping	36.17%
Related-industry position	4.26%	Internet browsing	0.00%
Careers advisor	0.00%	Other	8.51%

Table 7: Recommendation of seafaring as a career

Option	Seafarers	Ex-seafarers
Recommend	57%	60%
Not-recommend	13%	20%

Unsure	30%	20%
Total	100%	100%

Table 8: Reasons for Leaving a Career at Sea

Reason	%	Reason	Frequency	%
Family Reasons	27%	Social Environment	2	13%
Lack of Career Path Options	20%	Remuneration Package	1	7%
Bored / Need Career Change	20%	Study/Sea-time Mix	1	7%
Better Opportunities Elsewhere	20%	Retirement	1	7%
Amount of On-shore Leave	13%	Injury / Health Reasons	1	7%

Figure 2: Employment Branding

