



# Your future in the boating industry





## Introduction

The leisure boating industry is very diverse and there is a huge range of opportunities available. The industry covers everything from large luxury powerboats to sailing boats, narrowboats, personal watercraft (such as Jet Skis) and small wooden dinghies. There's also all the associated equipment and services that go with these, such as engines, electronics, equipment, marinas and watersports centres. Whilst much of the industry is located in coastal areas there's also a thriving waterways industry based around the country's extensive network of canals, rivers and lakes.

There is no set career pattern in the industry. People tend to specialise in particular areas and expand their experience, qualifications and ability as time goes on. Some people develop their careers in one company whilst others move from firm to firm. Take a look at the whole industry before deciding what you want to do and then find out what skills are needed for your chosen career. The boating industry values people with a wide range of skills and practical experience and those who are prepared to work hard and use their initiative. People skills are especially important for some jobs.

## Entry routes and qualifications

If you are looking at a career in the leisure boating industry there are several entry routes available.

### COLLEGE COURSES

School leavers can look at doing one of the college courses available, such as BTEC Nationals and City & Guilds courses. You can also do higher qualifications such as HNDs and degrees. There are a number of colleges, universities and training providers around the country that offer boatbuilding, marine technology and related courses. Check their entry requirements, visit several before you decide where you want to go, and check on the relevance of the course to boating industry needs and what their record is on past students gaining jobs. You may also be interested in these courses if you are considering a career change into the marine sector.

You can find a list of these colleges and courses on the BMF website or contact the Training Department for a copy.

### APPRENTICESHIPS

Alternatively, if you are aged between 16 and 24, you might want to consider doing an Apprenticeship with a company; then you'll get paid while gaining valuable on-the-job experience as well as qualifications from a college/training provider. Marine Apprenticeships are designed to cover the following occupations: boat building, maintenance and repair; marine engineering; electronics and engineering maintenance.

For more information on Apprenticeships, visit the BMF website or contact the Training Department.

### MARINE JOBS

If you wish to look for a job or apprenticeship in the industry visit the 'Careers and Jobs' section of the BMF website.

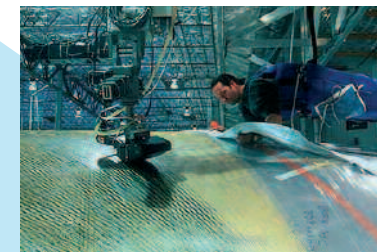
## Boatbuilding and Maintenance

Boatbuilding takes on several different forms. For example, most modern boats are built using glassfibre or new composite materials in a factory environment, however there are also specialist craftsmen who build traditional wooden boats or steel narrowboats for the inland waterways. A large proportion of the build time of a modern craft is spent fitting the boat out with accommodation and domestic systems, engines, electrical and electronic systems. This is the area in which carpenters, joiners, plumbers and electricians work.



## Skills and entry routes

Boatbuilders either enrol on a boatbuilding apprenticeship or specialist boatbuilding course, or come into the industry with other skills and qualifications such as carpentry, joinery, engineering, welding, plumbing and gas fitting. The following section gives more information on some aspects of boatbuilding.



### BOATBUILDER: GRP/FRP

Glass or fibre reinforced plastic is the most common way of building a boat and skilled laminators, moulders and repairers are needed in the industry. Specialist boatbuilding colleges run courses in GRP lay-up and repair. Some also instruct in the advanced composites used in masts, high tech surfboards and high performance boats.

### BOATBUILDER: METAL

Aluminium is used in the construction of Superyachts and is a strong and lightweight material.

Steel is another popular option and is exceptionally tough and can be used for added strength. It is often used to build the hulls of narrowboats but can also be combined with Aluminium in significant Superyacht projects.

### BOATBUILDER: WOOD

There is still some demand for boatbuilders with traditional skills, for whilst only a small number of new boats are built in wood each year, there are wooden boats that may need repair and restoration. Training courses cover both the traditional and modern methods of construction in wood. Students at specialist boatbuilding colleges learn and practice how to build and repair wooden boats to the same high standard achieved by generations of craftsmen before them.

### CARPENTER/JOINER

As a Carpenter/Joiner you would be responsible for making and fitting internal accommodation, such as cabinets, lockers and furniture.

### SAILMAKER

Many new sails are cut by computer to a sail designer's plan but sail lofts also repair, alter, design and make new sails for dinghies and yachts. Approach a sailmaker in order to learn the trade.

### PLUMBER

Many boats have sophisticated plumbing, including hot and cold water, showers, central heating, air conditioning and engine cooling systems. Many colleges run general plumbing courses; these skills can be transferred to boats.

### WELDER

Welders are needed to build narrowboats for the inland waterways, small commercial craft and other boat equipment. Most colleges, whether marine based or not, run welding courses.

### GAS FITTER

Laws require gas fitters to prove that they are competent to work on boats. A few colleges run instruction courses. Gas fitting normally forms part of a wider boatyard job and fitters learn their skills at work and college before gaining their professional qualification.



## Yacht Design

Designers produce the plans for boats, including hulls, decks and interior layout and styling. These boats can range from small dinghies or workboats to luxury cruisers and superyachts. Designers usually specialise in a particular aspect of boat and yacht design, rather than designing from start to finish.



### Skills

Yacht designers need technical design skills, and frequently use computer design programs. Most designers also have a knowledge of practical boat building and need to have a keen interest in boats of all kinds and a practical knowledge of boatbuilding materials. A knowledge of regulations covering boat design is necessary, including construction and stability, electrical and gas systems. Interior designers also have an important role as boat interiors are finished to a very high standard.



### Entry routes

Most designers have a relevant qualification such as a degree in yacht design or naval architecture. Many go on to obtain professional qualifications. Interior designers get into the industry having gained a general design or interior design qualification.



## Electrics and Electronics

This is a rapidly expanding area of the marine industry. Many modern boats have sophisticated electrical and electronic systems ranging from engine electrical systems, pumps, navigation and interior lights to radar and satellite navigation and communications equipment. Increasingly many boats have modern computer systems for both operational use and pleasure. All need skilled technicians to install, service, repair and upgrade them.



### Skills

This area combines the latest modern technology and is for those with an interest in computers, electrics, electronics and technology. It is an area where the demand for people with the right skills is high.



### Entry routes

An electrician or electronics engineer learns their skills at college or through an apprenticeship.



## Engineers

There are several different types of boat engines. Inboard engines vary from petrol engines in high performance sportsboats to diesel engine installations in motor cruisers and yachts. Outboard engines are found on sportsboats and dinghies. Water jets power personal watercraft whilst electric engines power some inland craft.



### Skills

The industry needs people with high levels of competence in the practical and technical skills required to install, service and repair engines. It requires engineers that work with inboard and outboard engines and transmission, propulsion and steering systems.



### Entry routes

One of the best ways to enter this sector is by undertaking a Marine Engineering Apprenticeship. Opportunities also exist with engine manufacturers, inland waterways hireboat fleets, marinas, boatbuilders, overseas flotilla companies, service agents of manufacturers and on small work boats or large pleasure yachts. Skills can be learnt at college or on the job. Sometimes experience gained in other industries can be transferred to the marine sector.




## Marinas

Marinas provide berthing, mooring and dry storage facilities for yachts and boats and are found both at the coast and on the inland waterways. A small marina may have few moorings and some shore-side facilities such as petrol and diesel pumps. Larger marinas are likely to be much more complex; they may hold up to 1,000 boats and be part of a multi-million pound development by a major international development company. The shore-side facilities at these larger marinas may include fuelling, equipment for lifting boats out and storing them for the winter; specialist engine, rigging, brokerage and sailmaking companies and often a chandler's shop and café/restaurant.



### Skills

Marina managers must be good with people and must be able to manage the marina staff, manage contracts for on site concessions, understand local government planning regulations, health and safety rules, environmental issues, marina law and budgeting. Marina staff may also be responsible for the maintenance and dredging of the marina, need an understanding of local tidal and weather patterns, be a qualified VHF radio operator and will have confidence in boat handling under sail and power. The ability to speak a foreign language is also useful. In addition to marina managers, marinas require staff with wide ranging skills. Dockmasters, boat handlers, security staff, crane operators, engineers, boat repairers, brokers, administrative and managerial staff, retail staff, electricians, riggers and restaurant managers are all needed.



### Entry routes

Marina managers tend to start off in more junior marina positions and work their way up to manager level. Some marina staff start off in temporary positions, such as a summer job, before finding permanent positions. Many marinas take on staff with qualifications in subjects such as maritime leisure management. Marina staff may have the opportunity to develop their careers by taking industry courses such as the Marina Operatives course and Intermediate and Advanced Marina Management courses. Skilled craftsmen can find jobs with companies providing shore-side facilities.




## Brokerage

Brokers manage the sale and purchase of second-hand boats. They act for both the buyer and the seller, and negotiate price, assess value, check on the ownership of the craft, the liability for VAT and frequently organise finance and insurance. They are adept at import and export, and arrange practical things like access for viewing at marinas or berths.



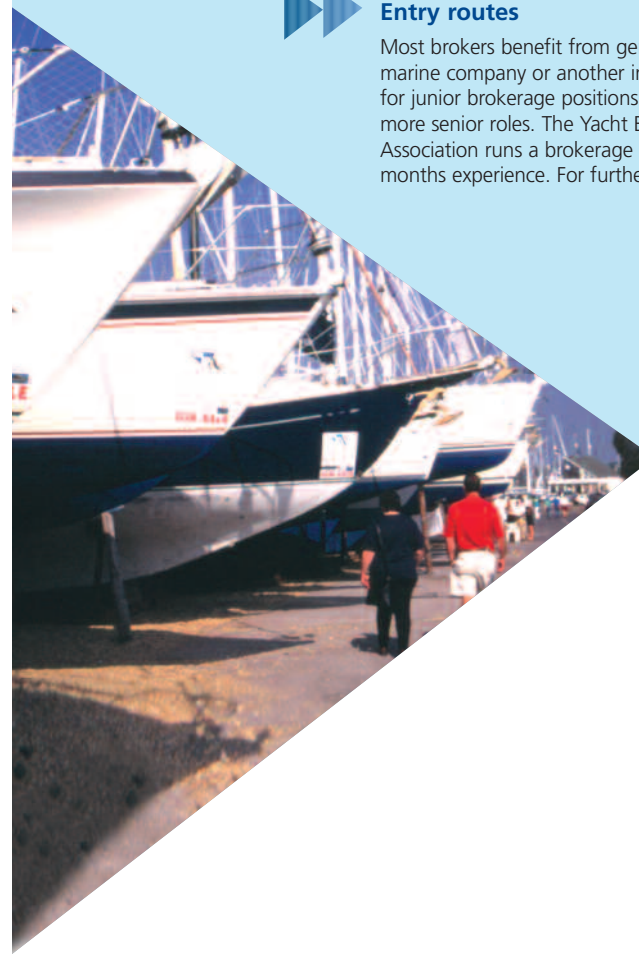
### Skills

Brokers need a detailed knowledge of a wide range of boats, so that they can assess their condition and value. They rely heavily on experience in the boating industry and will build up a pool of clients with boats for sale and also of clients looking for boats. Brokers need marketing skills and to be able to negotiate in a friendly and effective manner.



### Entry routes

Most brokers benefit from general sales experience, either from a marine company or another industry. Companies often have vacancies for junior brokerage positions with the opportunity to progress to more senior roles. The Yacht Brokers, Designers and Surveyors Association runs a brokerage course aimed at those with about 6 months experience. For further information see [www.ybdsa.co.uk](http://www.ybdsa.co.uk).





## Management, administration, accountancy, sales, human resources, public relations, marketing and IT

The marine industry, especially the larger companies, needs all the service skills found in other industries. Companies may need general managers, production managers, export managers, administrative and IT staff. Large companies may employ specialist human resources, marketing and public relations staff. However, many of the firms in the industry are small and owner managers are the norm in these small companies; most owner managers have a background in practical, hands on work and have gained management experience by doing the job.



### Skills and entry routes

Many of the people employed in these positions by marine companies learn their skills outside of the industry before finding a position in the marine industry. Very often these people are keen sailors and boaters and therefore have a particular interest and knowledge of the marine industry. Nationally recognised qualifications in management, accountancy, IT and other sectors are all accepted by the marine industry.

## Yachting and Watersports

Career opportunities available are Sail/Power cruising Instructor; Yachtmaster Instructor; Yachtmaster Examiner; Dinghy/Windsurf Instructor; Skippers/Mates; Crew and Watersports Assistant to name but a few.

### WATERSPORTS INSTRUCTOR

If you're looking to become a watersports instructor then you'll need to gain instructor qualifications in your chosen area, whether this is powerboating, sailing or windsurfing.

For details of sea schools and training available contact the National Federation of Sea Schools [www.nfss.co.uk](http://www.nfss.co.uk) or The Royal Yachting Association publishes detailed information about careers in yachting and watersports. See the RYA website [www.rya.org.uk](http://www.rya.org.uk) (look at the Training section) or call 0845 345 0384.

## About the British Marine Federation

The British Marine Federation is the trade body for the UK marine industry and represents the industry both domestically and abroad. It has over 1,500 members, representing some 90 per cent of the industry's turnover, many of which are small businesses. The Federation works to promote boating and the boating industry to the public, government and other stakeholders and is recognised by the government as the voice of the UK boating industry.

The British Marine Federation training department provides a range of training courses aimed at improving the performance of marine companies and their personnel. It is actively involved in promoting the industry as a career. The British Marine Federation also operates a subsidiary company, National Boat Shows Ltd, which runs the following UK Boat Shows:

- ▶ London Boat Show, January. One of the UK's largest public events and the world's best known boat show, with 800 exhibitors and around 150,000 visitors. [www.londonboatshow.com](http://www.londonboatshow.com)
- ▶ Southampton Boat Show, September. One of Europe's largest on-water boat shows, with around 800 exhibitors and attracting 140,000 visitors. [www.southamptonboatshow.com](http://www.southamptonboatshow.com)

## Looking for a job?

Check out the regularly updated 'careers & jobs' page of the BMF Website.

You can also register as a 'Jobseeker' by sending your C.V. to the Training Dept.

### Check out [www.britishmarine.co.uk](http://www.britishmarine.co.uk) for:

- ▶ More detailed information on Apprenticeships
- ▶ Job Search
- ▶ Contacts in the marine industry
- ▶ List of colleges
- ▶ And much more...

## For anything else please contact the Training Dept.

[training@britishmarine.co.uk](mailto:training@britishmarine.co.uk)

### Alternatively call them on

01784 473377.





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