



EDDY GUZMAN

Interview by Clare Mahon



HOW TO KEEP A CREW FOCUSED, MOTIVATED AND SMILING FOR AN ENTIRE 6 MONTH-LONG CHARTER SEASON

Eddy, as one of the most experienced and long standing charter Captains you know that the crew plays a fundamental role in a successful on board experience for Owners and Guests.

How can an intensive charter schedule impact crew performance?

Drastically. Time off is really key and one of the most important things that I keep in mind when I plan a season. If a person works from Monday to Friday they can look forward to the weekend and thinking about the fun they'll have then.

But if you tell a person: hey, you won't have any free time at all for the next five months, even if you're the best manager in the world you won't be able to get anything good from those people. It's very, very important that the crew knows that between each charter they will have a least one real half day and an evening off.

I usually try to make sure that they have an entire day off because it does make a huge difference.

At the end of the season the owner might look at the time off and say 'we lost a charter' but at the same time you have a boat that can give quality over quantity. If the first charter goes well, you want to keep it up.

You're proud and happy but you have to sleep, have a nice dinner together and get your strength back for another charter. I always want to make sure that my crew is fresh and happy to be working.

As Captain how do you select, train, and organize your crew to be consistent from day one to the end of the season?

As far as organizing, I already mentioned the time off. As far as selection goes I look for good manners, enthusiasm and kindness over a long list of diplomas from yachting schools. When I'm talking on the phone with the candidate I listen for a polite way of speaking and enthusiasm. You can feel kindness, even over the phone, so I let the candidate speak. Some Captains say I have a lot of greenies on my boats, but let's be honest, we're not brain surgeons. The most important part of this job is having empathy for the guests and being proactive and enthusiastic. For this we need kind people and that's the base for my selection.

We are observing a generational change both in crew and guests. From your perspective what are the main differences between now and the past?

Guests are younger and younger, before the average was 55 or 60, now we're getting people who are even under 40.

It's nice because it makes a nice balance between very laidback charters with older clients who just want to enjoy a glass of wine and read and more sporty, active charters with younger people. It's quite nice. As far as crew goes there's a big change in the outlook and expectations of the people who are interviewing.

I went from the Caribbean to the Med. Everybody was expats in Caribbean, away from their families and really into the sea and watersports. Here in the Med 90% of crew doesn't have any background with the sea and watersports.

We are getting more and more requests from people who see being crew as business. It's a word I hear more and more and I hate it. This is everything except a business and it's not an industry either, in my opinion. If you're only doing this for the money it makes it hard for everyone. It's a question of balance.

You want to be well paid but you also have to have a passion for what you're doing. I've seen resumes from 18 year olds who say that for less than 4,000€ they're staying home. It's crazy. I understand not suffering from the kind of Stockholm syndrome you can get working aboard, but this work isn't coalmines. But every year it's getting harder to find good crew.

“AS FAR AS SELECTION GOES I LOOK FOR GOOD MANNERS, ENTHUSIASM AND KINDNESS OVER A LONG LIST OF DIPLOMAS FROM YACHTING SCHOOLS.”

Which were some of the nicest and the hardest moments the past year aboard Thalima?

This past season we had so many great charters and great people it's hard to choose. But here's one that was really cute: at the end of the charter the kids started crying. Seeing that the mother started crying too.

The father looked at me and said: 'right now I'm hating you!' We love making kids cry. The hardest moment was hard for everyone. Our last charter of the season was supposed to be the end of September we sailed from Palermo to Sardinia but the charter was cancelled just the day it was supposed to start. Then we got stuck there, far from shore at anchor in strong winds. It was late in the season, everyone wanted to go home especially because there were no more charters. We were stuck for three days and that was tough.

Do you have any tips for a young Captain who wants to become a good Charter Captain?

It's hard to give advice but one thing comes to mind. Once a crew member asked me why we get such good tips I said to never ever, ever try to seduce a guest.

Our guests are wealthy people, they are so used to people who want to get on their good side. But they aren't used to empathy. If they feel that the crew isn't after money or tips but wants them to feel good and have a good time they'll feel the difference in their bones.

It's important to treat the guests like you would have invited them yourself, and not just like clients, have empathy, anticipate their needs and they'll remember your charters as the best.

ABOUT EDDY

Born in 1973, French

Sailing enfant prodige, Eddy had his first racing experience, aged ten, on an Optimist sailboat, and continued racing on a variety of boats ever since.

After some years as a sailing instructor, he came ashore and worked as a leader of a team in the medical assistance field.

The call of the sea drew him back to his first love – sailing and he decided to pursue the superyacht captain carrier. Captain of SW110 Thalima since 2017, he chartered her extensively since then.

His winning smile and “can do” personality, coupled with his hands-on capability with sailing and mechanics ensure an excellent time for his guests.

Do you have any tips for a charter guest to get the most from their charter experience?

Many! But most of all plan just enough to leave room for improvisation. Sailing boats are for freedom, so don't over plan. Enjoy. And speak with the Captain long before the charter because he will give you better advice than the brokers- sorry brokers! Plan where you start and where you end and in between leave it to the improvisation . Enjoy your freedom.

“ **PLAN WHERE YOU START AND WHERE YOU END AND IN BETWEEN LEAVE IT TO THE IMPROVISATION .**

ENJOY YOUR FREEDOM. ”

