

Nautical & Nice

What's a career in maritime really about?



As the world's largest transshipment hub, Singapore receives over 130,000 ships annually, which carry everything from food to cars and even live animals! There are many job opportunities in this International Maritime Centre abuzz with activities in shipbroking, marine insurance, ship financing, marine and offshore engineering, and more.

Check out what these young people have to say about their choice of a maritime career, and why it is more than just nice, or jobs at sea.

Maritime Singapore in Numbers

VOTED
#1

amongst 15 maritime cities in recent global survey

CONTRIBUTES
7%
to Singapore's
GDP

HOME
TO OVER
130

of the world's top international shipping groups

OVER
5,000
MARITIME
establishments



Charting Their Own Course

These young professionals share their candid views on their choice of a maritime career. One thing is certain, it's never a boring job whether you're based on land or at sea!



Percy Chan (25)
Operations Executive at PSA



During his four-month overseas exchange in Norway, Percy took the opportunity to travel to other parts of Europe, including this trip to Holland.

What made you pursue a degree in Maritime Studies at NTU?

My father piqued my interest in the maritime industry. He works as a Prime Mover Driver transporting containers in and out of PSA's terminals. When I was younger, he often drove past our port to show me his area of work and I was very fascinated with the scale of operations of our port.

Hence, I decided on Maritime Studies after my GCE 'A' Levels as I was attracted to the broad spectrum

of modules, from maritime-related business modules to Science electives. Additionally, the opportunity to go on an overseas exchange to Norway in my third year of study was really enticing!

Why did you decide to apply for the PSA – MaritimeONE Scholarship?

I applied for the scholarship as I wanted to be part of this organisation which has made Singapore world-renowned as a hub port. The challenging nature of operations work is a good fit for me as I like solving problems, and it gives me a huge rush to think on my feet.

The scholarship has also opened up many opportunities for me. For instance, I have benefitted from the student work attachments at PSA where I gained insights to the work behind the world's largest transshipment hub.

The Singapore Maritime Foundation, which administers the MaritimeONE Scholarship programme, also provides MaritimeONE Scholars with various industry networking opportunities. Our lecturers and professors always encourage us to participate in such events to connect with the working world and gain valuable industry perspectives outside the classroom.

And you also got to go to Norway on a student exchange programme for four months as part of your Maritime Studies course.

Our entire cohort attended classes at BI Norwegian Business School. It was amazing to exchange views with maritime students from different parts of the world. The school also arranged field trips to visit prominent organisations in the maritime industry. It was an eye opener as it allowed us to better appreciate what we had learnt in class.

What kind of prospects does a maritime career offer?

There is a wide range of careers so there are definitely many opportunities! Just about anyone would be able to find his or her niche in this industry.

People often think a career in the maritime industry means you must work on board a ship. Well, there are many shore-based jobs in areas such as marine insurance, ship chartering, brokering and port operations. At PSA, I really enjoy working in a dynamic environment which revolves around mega vessels and huge structures.

What does your job as an operations executive at PSA entail?

I am currently based in Pasir Panjang Terminal, and I'm responsible for the planning and supervision of terminal operations in my section. The job requires me to lead a dedicated team of Operations Supervisors, Crane Specialists, Prime Mover Drivers and Lashing Specialists to work together to ensure customers' containers get loaded onto or unloaded from vessels in the most efficient and productive manner.

Where do you see your career in the future?

PSA has a structured career framework and I am likely to be rotated to take on a planning role after two years in control centre/frontline operations. There are several planning departments in PSA — for instance, ship planning, yard planning and logistics. The exposure will certainly broaden my career horizons.

Within the next decade and beyond, we are looking forward to further expansion at Pasir Panjang Terminal Phases 3 and 4 and the start of operations at the new Tuas mega port, where we are implementing innovative technologies, such as automated guided vehicles and yard cranes, intelligent planning systems and green innovations. I am looking forward to such exciting times ahead!



Why did you consider a career in this field?

Shipping moves 90 per cent of world trade and Singapore is the world's largest transshipment hub. Our building expertise in the offshore and marine sector is also world-renowned. Not many may know that the maritime industry contributes 7 per cent to Singapore's Gross Domestic Product, and there are more than 5,000 maritime companies employing over 170,000 people.

That is why I decided to further my studies at Plymouth University in UK and do my degree in Maritime Business and Maritime Law after I completed my Diploma in Maritime Business at Singapore Polytechnic.

I wanted to develop my career in an industry which is here to stay, and there are many opportunities given that the maritime industry is a key pillar of Singapore's economy.

I am excited about re-joining M3 Marine this month (with whom I have interned for previously) as a Junior Offshore Broker in the team which specialises in services relating to chartering, newbuilding and sale & purchase of offshore marine vessels.

Did you have any preconceived ideas about the maritime industry before you enrolled in the course?

Honestly, I thought this course would be similar to other business courses but with the additional focus on shipping. However, the experience was totally different. It is much more extensive.

People who have studied Maritime Business would have a better understanding of shipping terms. You will recognise the ships by their structure and their cargo, and what contract terms like FOB and CHOPT refer to. I learnt more about the business for the containers, tankers and offshore sectors, as well as the accounts, legal, technical and human resources aspects.

Emilie Teo (22)
Junior Offshore Broker at M3 Marine



In her final year of studies, Emilie went to Plymouth on a MaritimeONE Scholarship. Here she is in Barbican, a harbour district in the English city.

How did the Maritime Business diploma prepare you for a career in the maritime industry?

We learnt many things in the three-year course. The legal aspect covers insurance, maritime law and law of carriage of goods by sea; the shipping aspect includes basic engineering, offshore marine and bunkering; the commercial aspect covers brokerage, chartering and incoterms; the financial aspect touches on basic finance and accounting; and human resources includes ship management and crewing. Logistics, oceanic routes, ports and their equipment were also introduced.

Are girls a minority in maritime courses?

It would depend on the specialty they take, whether it's nautical studies, engineering or business-related. Generally, the number of female students in Maritime Business classes at the Singapore Maritime Academy in Singapore Polytechnic sees about an equal number of women and men. However, in nautical studies and marine engineering courses, there are fewer women.

What would you say to a young person who is considering his/her career options?

You should consider a maritime career as it is dynamic, exciting and varied. It evolves in response to global trade or events. You will learn how countries change their imports and exports to meet these changing needs. The industry is constantly in need of skilled personnel and such careers offer prospects of travel and attractive remuneration.

The maritime industry is an international one as you could be working with colleagues of different nationalities in Singapore, or flying overseas for discussions with counterparts abroad.

The maritime community here is also like family. The seniors tend to look out for the younger ones.



Milli Koh (25)
Chief Officer at NOL

You've been working on board a ship since joining NOL in 2007 and risen through the ranks to become Chief Officer in January this year. How has the journey been?

I used to associate a maritime career with adventures and travelling around the world only, but it has proven to be much more than that. I started out as a deck cadet on a ship before taking on bigger responsibilities as an officer. My current role as Chief Officer places me as the second-in-command on the ship. In the event of an emergency and if the Captain is unavailable, we take over the command of the ship. As head of the deck department, the Chief Officer is responsible for crew discipline and work performance, effective maintenance of the vessel and shipboard equipment, vessel stability, as well as safe and efficient cargo operations, among others. My job gives me great satisfaction as well as a sense of purpose and importance.

What is a typical day or week like?

My day-to-day responsibilities involve the monitoring of vessel performance as well as planning and delegating of crew duties. In the ports, I oversee the mooring and unmooring of the vessel, as well as loading and unloading of cargo. I also receive visitors, including representatives of port authorities who board our ship, and ensure stringent protocol for the safety of the crew and our visitors on board.

After work, we watch movies, play games or surf the internet on board. Once in a while, we organise parties and games such as basketball, pool, darts and table tennis and so on to keep the crew motivated.

I usually work with a multi-national crew. There was one time when I had to sail with colleagues of more than eight nationalities! There are usually about 20 of us on board and like a family, we talk and share our stories, and work closely together during the few months of sailing.

I'm usually away from home for a period of about five to six months each time. Time away from family and friends is the trade-off in this job but when I'm back, I get a break of a few months. I use this time to rest or go on a vacation before starting on my next assignment.

What do you love about your job?

As there are relatively few seafarers in Singapore, I feel a sense of pride being one of them. I love making friends with the crew of different backgrounds and learning about their cultures. These are unique experiences that not many would have in their lifetime. When the ship calls at the various ports, I look forward to the local food and shopping!

I also take pride in training and watching my cadets and juniors develop their skills to become good officers. I also feel a sense of achievement



Milli, second from the left, with VIPs including Singapore's First Lady, Mrs Mary Tan, at the naming ceremony of NOL's largest and most environmentally friendly container ship, APL Temasek, in 2013.

whenever the crew and I complete a difficult task or respond appropriately to an emergency situation. It is really satisfying to see great team work and camaraderie among the crew and team mates.

Do you prefer a sea-based or land-based job? Why?

I prefer a sea-based job because it suits my adventurous personality. My focus currently is to become a ship captain — the height of my seafaring career — in two years. I have a Diploma in Nautical Studies and I am now planning to take my Certificate of Competency (CoC 1) at the end of this year to work towards that.

Beyond that, I hope to follow in the footsteps of my seniors and take up management courses to prepare for my career on land. Positions such as superintendents, harbour pilots, port masters, surveyors and managers are available, and the list goes on. I could also further my studies and build my maritime career in the business, legal or insurance-related functions.

YOUR PHONE'S JOURNEY

The latest smartphone will be launched next week and you can't wait to get yours. Ever thought about how it got to Singapore? Take a look at some of the maritime professionals involved.



How Should You Embark on Your Maritime Journey? *Start with these courses offered locally*

Degree

- **Maritime Studies**
 - **Maritime Studies with Business Major**
 - **Mechanical Engineering** (Specialisation in Naval Architecture & Marine Engineering)
 - **Civil Engineering** (Specialisation in Offshore Engineering)
 - **Mechanical Engineering** (Specialisation in Offshore Oil & Gas Technology)
 - **Economics** (Maritime Economics Concentration)
 - **Engineering with Honours in Marine Engineering**
 - **Engineering with Honours in Naval Architecture**
 - **Engineering with Honours in Offshore Engineering**
 - **Engineering with Honours in Electrical Power Engineering**
- Offered at NTU, NUS, SMU and SIT University (in collaboration with Newcastle University, UK)*

Diploma

- **Maritime Business**
 - **Marine Engineering**
 - **Nautical Studies**
 - **Marine & Offshore Technology**
- Offered at Singapore Polytechnic and Ngee Ann Polytechnic*

Higher NITEC

- **Marine & Offshore Technology**
 - **Marine Engineering**
 - **Offshore & Marine Engineering Design**
 - **Shipping Operations & Services**
- Offered at ITE College Central*

No Maritime Qualification?

The maritime industry employs over 170,000 people and professionals from various specialisations are welcome!

It's a bonus if you have maritime qualifications, but if you don't, you can still be a part of the Singapore maritime workforce as these qualifications are also highly valued – Accountancy, Arts & Social Sciences, Business Administration, Economics, Engineering, Information Technology, Law and Logistics.

MaritimeONE Scholarships

The MaritimeONE scholarships are sponsored by the maritime industry, supporting over 20 maritime-related degree and diploma programmes offered locally and abroad. Since 2007, a total of 238 MaritimeONE scholarships valued at more than S\$6.5 million have been awarded to outstanding and deserving students. Email scholarship@sgmf.com.sg to find out more.

For more information, visit maritimecareers.com.sg

Brought to you by

