



Creating the Winds of Change

A new Top Team for a new Corporate Strategy

A Merry Marine Case Study

Apter International is a cutting edge Strategic Capability and Leadership consultancy who work with some of the world's largest organisations, helping them develop strategy and enhance the climate for performance. At the heart of what they do is a major new approach to the scientific understanding of motivation, organisational relationships and performance.



One of *Apter's* key clients was at a watershed. A new executive team had been appointed to turn around the business and have a radical impact in its market in face of intense competition from Global players. *Apter International*, supporting the Business's strategic and top team development, needed an original, high impact event that would encourage an innovative approach to the task and provide an unforgettable backdrop to the initiation of the new business direction. This is how they did it...

Merry Marine was engaged by *Apter* to provide a two and a half day sailing event to provide an original environment for the development of strategy and to start developing and bonding the new team.

The need for a memorable and different environment led us to choose the Dalmatian Coast of Croatia as the backdrop to the event. The outdoor environment and sheltered waters were to provide an ideal alternative to a hotel or corporate boardroom for this landmark event. *Apter's* Consultants are keen sailors and combined with the *Merry Marine* Skipper's considerable business and leadership experience, this provided an ideal crew who could manage the yacht for all aspects of this event and also facilitate the business end of the experience.

Apart from a couple of corporate sailing days, everyone in the Client's team were all new to sailing. With a total complement of 10 people on board, we selected a fast and spacious 52' Sun Odyssey 52.2. This would prove to be ideal for the team's strategy discussions whether they be in the Saloon or outside in the Cockpit.

The team joined the yacht late Tuesday evening in the historic town of Trogir. They had flown directly



from their inaugural board meeting - and for half the team, this was the first time they'd met. They settled into their new environment over a supper of local produce and an informal chat about what the next couple of days would hold.

Wednesday morning brought the boat safety briefing before motoring out around the Island of Ciovo into the Splitski Kanal. During the first hour or so, the team started getting a feel for the boat and then turned its attention to a guided discussion on some of the business challenges it faced. The crew raised the sails

and cruised over to the first lunch-stop whilst the team debated in the most original meeting room that any of them had ever experienced.



The business discussion continued over lunch once the boat was securely anchored in a secluded cove on the Island of Solta.

The afternoon consisted of basic instruction on how to sail the boat. This new learning experience was one of the first times that the group had worked together as a team. This is one task the team faced where there were no 'experts' - everyone was starting from the same level.



The mooring was at Milna on the Island of Brac where the afternoon's experience was reviewed and the team was introduced to

the Apter Motivational Style Profile (AMSP). This profiling tool, developed by *Apter International* helps raise the individual's self awareness by providing insight into the importance of different motivations within the individual's business life, indicating where change may be needed to improve personal effectiveness and fulfilment at work. Dinner followed at a traditional Croatian restaurant by the water's edge.

Breakfast on Thursday was followed by more structured strategy development where, under the expert guidance of the *Apter* consultants, the team was able to undertake some radical free thinking on how to address the challenges it faced.

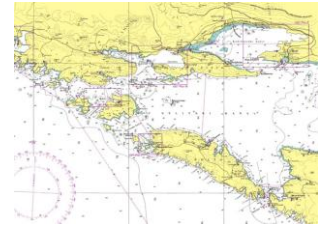
Now it was time to change to a different kind of challenge – the team was given a briefing on various navigational techniques which, combined with its new found sailing abilities, would allow completion of *Merry Marine's* original *Flashlight Challenge™* activity. This is a sailing exercise in which points are scored en-route to a given final destination. We set complex "business" rules from which the team decides the route to take and success is achieved by simulating the business processes of:

- Setting a shared vision
- Setting Strategy
- Having clear objectives and goals
- Having role clarity
- Planning well
- Managing effectively
- Strong Teamwork
- Clear Communications
- Monitoring progress and success criteria
- Adapting tactics (and sometimes strategy) to cater for unplanned events and conditions.

The *Flashlight Challenge™* gave the new team an early opportunity to examine how the different personalities in the team reacted and interacted in a 'raw' environment where they are relying on their core leadership capabilities without being able to fall back on expertise in the role. The team was encouraged to reflect on some of the insights given by the AMSP and other leadership aspects introduced during the event. Again, the team was working together in a very fundamental way – a rare opportunity for such a team

which was really bringing its members together more quickly than they could have ever expected.

The particularly rural Island of Drvenik Veli was Thursday's night stop where the team continued their business planning activity before retiring to dinner at a small restaurant in the hills overlooking the natural harbour.



The following morning, with a fresh breeze powering the boat through the water and the crew handling the sailing back to Trogir, the team set about their final planning session.

Seen to be a complete success, the event has provided a totally different environment which encouraged innovative and free thinking. It was an opportunity for the team to get to know each other and work together in very close proximity giving invaluable personal and team learning. And finally, it has been a memorable, enjoyable and fulfilling experience which has really fast-tracked the development of this top team, providing a solid foundation on which to engage with the challenges facing the business.

"The event provided a unique environment for a critical piece of work, allowing some unrestricted thinking and greatly accelerated team development. In fact, after meeting the new team just 3 days previously, one of the group said that it felt as if they'd been working together for two years. Merry Marine are a super partner to work with - Bill's easy style really helped to draw the whole event together."

Marie Shelton
Director and Principal Consultant, *Apter International*



Apter International provides cutting edge consulting and development in the fields of: strategic capability and leadership performance and employee, customer and market research. *Apter International* also offers a range of profiling and survey tools.

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Merry Marine provides leadership and team development services and specialises in using offshore sailing as a real and challenging environment to reinforce concepts in leadership and management. In conjunction with associated business psychologists and organisational development specialists, we also provide a full range of organisational and people development services.



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