

SHIP AGENT: A JOB FOR WOMEN? CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN IN THE SHIP AGENCY FIELD

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ITALY

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INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to give a perspective on the ship agent job, from a female point of view: what it is to be a female ship agent? How many women are there boarding ships for a living? What are the challenges and the opportunities for women who intend to pursue this career? Do women add value to businesses and teams? Why should a student choose this among other jobs in the same or other industries?

I will try to answer these questions, as well as inspire women to join this exciting world.

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

The maritime industry spans a vast array of sectors: first, we have the ship owners with their fleet. Then we have a wide range of services and actors that serve these ship-owners and these fleets: we find ship and crew management to operate the ship; port operations and services, operating in every single port to dock the ship and handle the cargo; maritime organization, port authorities, and port state controls, to perform their surveillance duty. Surveyors, P&I correspondents, shipyards, bunker services, legal, training, and many more.

In this context, we find the Ship agent and Ship broker figures. There is no secondary figure.

The Ship broker connects the ship to the cargo and makes it all happen.

The Ship agent, on the other hand, connects every single actor of the industry and makes the port call possible. It represents the ship owner in the port of call and acts on his behalf.

The Ship agent is responsible for *everything* during the ship's port call: it arranges the berth, it coordinates the berthing manoeuvre with the port services, it deals with all the authorities according to the local laws, it connects communication from the ship to the terminal, receives or delivers cargo, it is in charge of ship clearance for arrival and departure, it prepares and pass all documents related to the call.

But not only. It arranges anything else: provisions, bunkering, crew change, damage reports and handling, transportation, emergencies such as injuries or illness, and claims.

It counsels his principal based on his local experience and really is his man (or in this case, woman) in the port.

Maritime industry, including ship agency and ship brokering and chartering, is historically male dominated.

If we analyse the reason of this, we will find the following answers:

- Jobs in the maritime industry are historically considered to be hard for women, as male strength is thought to be required
- Women culturally tend to choose educational paths in arts, humanities, literature rather than STEM or technical disciplines. This usually closes the door to technical careers

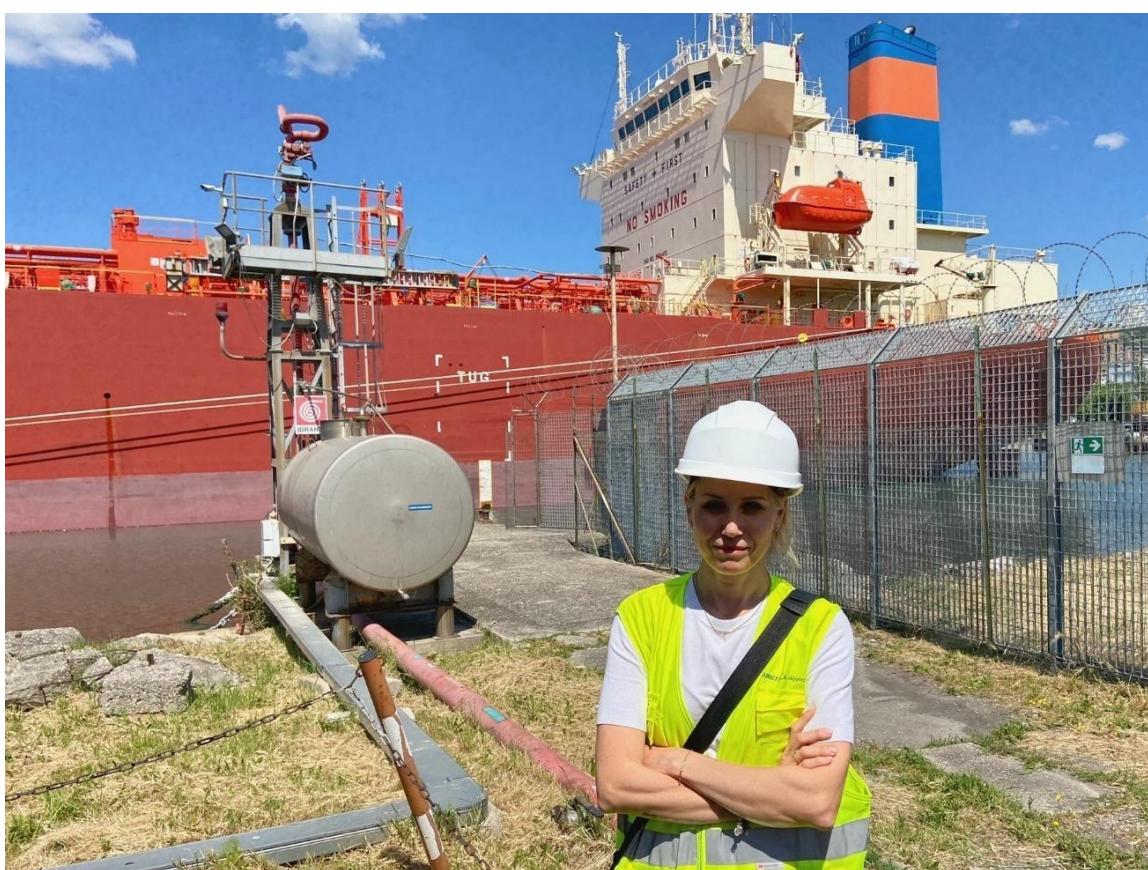
- Being the industry male dominated, this can result in women being discouraged in choosing it

In the recent past, we have seen a slight change in the scenario described above.

With the advent of technology, strength is lesser and lesser required in the maritime industry.

More women are starting to choose technical disciplines, and as women start to populate the industry, this draws more awareness, more action, and, in the end, more women.

DIARY OF A FEMALE SHIP AGENT



Arrival clearance on board M/T Medalta Adventurer in 2025

Image 1 source: Pamela Godnig

I started my career as a ship agent in 2005, a few months after graduating as a deck cadet from nautical school “Istituto Tecnico Nautico Tomaso di Savoia” in Trieste, Italy.

I was one of the very few girls graduating every year from the Institute.

I first searched for a job to pay for STCW basic training and found a job with a local ship agent.

In 2005 Trieste was the Italian destination of the “sea highway” connecting Italy to Turkey, and I found job with Samer&Co. Shipping SpA, the general agent of UND RoRo, owner of the ferries that run on the line. In 20 years, the owner changed a few times, the line developed exponentially, as did Trieste port and its intermodal infrastructures. Today Trieste is one of the main ports not only in Italy, but in Europe.

In this environment I moved my first steps as a ship agent. There were not only ferries but all kind of ships and commodities: heavy lifting, crude oil, chemicals, metals.

I vividly remember how it was to board vessels at the beginning of my career: I would show up, a 20 years old girl with long blonde hair and green eyes. The captains would often look at me and roll their eyes as to say “who the hell did they send to me?”

But as soon as I started to unfold the papers on the desk and started dealing with authorities and port services, I could see the change in attitude, and I could feel they trusted me.

In Italy the Ship agent role is regulated under the law 135/1977, in which are defined the Ship agent’s role, requirements, and responsibilities.

One of these requirements is that the person that wishes to act as ship agent (in Italian *raccomandatario marittimo*) has to undergo and pass an exam and be listed as ship agent in the Chamber of Commerce of the port he/she wishes to operate.

I took and passed this exam in 2022 - while working full time, with a 2 year old and pregnant with the second.

It took hard work, strong will, and a real passion; today I manage the Cruise and Tramp traffic of Samer & Co. Shipping SpA - Ship Agency Business Unit.

Did I ever feel uncomfortable performing my job as a woman?

I didn’t. I have never encountered obstructions from my employer or peers. Quite the opposite: everybody was expecting I would act exactly like a man, and most of the times, I did.

I have never encountered problems with any other actor of the cluster either: as long as I prove to be professional, every captain, officer, owner representative, inspector and so on, would trust me.

Did I ever experience sexual harassment?

Not a single time. Maybe sometimes I would have experienced it if I had given it space. Key to work in a male environment is to always be friendly but always be very clear on setting your boundaries.

Did I ever feel unsafe performing my job as a woman?

I have never felt unsafe in port or ship areas. Sometimes I have felt unsafe working very late at night, when coming back home. But this can be experienced by women working late hours in any other field.

DATA ON WOMEN IN THE INDUSTRY

When I started to gather data on women in maritime industry, I realized there were not plenty. Moreover, there were no data regarding women solely in the ship agency business.

The biggest source of data for this paper comes from the 2024 IMO-WISTA Women in Maritime Survey, which luckily came out just as of the writing of this paper.

For this survey, data from companies within the maritime industry, and, separately, from IMO Member States' maritime authorities was gathered during the course of 2024 by Wista Association and IMO together. This is the second survey of this type made by IMO-Wista, the first time was in 2021, and a third one is expected to be carried out in 2027.

I'm not going to compare the two in this paper, as in the 2024 survey it is stated clearly that the two surveys are not an exact overlap, as only a small subset of 40 companies provided data for both surveys.

Moreover, in 2021, 513 companies participated in the survey, while in 2024, 608 participated.

I can only report that data is, unfortunately, downward, with a share of women employees by sub-sector of 29% in 2021, and 16% in 2024. Although we are not going to analyse this shift in this paper, it is stated to be probably due to data collecting reasons rather than reasons connected to the real picture.

The survey is covering both the public sector of member states' maritime authorities and the industry sector, but for the purpose of this paper, we are only analysing the industry survey, as we are after the numbers of our sectors "Ship agents" and "Ship brokers and charterers".

INDUSTRY SURVEY ANALYSIS

Within the industry survey, 608 completed responses were recorded from all over the World.

The largest single category of the segments in which the respondents operate, is set as "other", followed by port operations and services, and shipowners.

If we analyse by sub-sector, we find that the largest respondent "other" employees 20% of women, port operations and services only 13% while ship owner employ even less, with a share of 12%.



Image 2 source: Women in Maritime Survey 2024

Respondents span a vast array of other frontline operational sectors: cruise, bunkering, environmental technologies, and the workboat industries, including offshore, towage, and dredging.

Overall, the share of women employees is 16%.

The ship agent sector is above the average with 43% of women employees, based on the records of 24 respondents, while Ship brokers and charterers have a figure of 38% based on the records of 18 respondents.

If we were to make a rank for female employment in the industry, we would find maritime associations and recruiters in the first position with a female workforce of 70%, followed by ESG and decarbonization services, NVOCC/box operators, crewing agencies, and medical services.

Ship agency industry scores in 11th position, while Ship brokers and charterers 13th.

It is very important to have a clearer picture of the situation, to look at the distribution of the ranks that women hold in all sectors. With no surprise, we find that 30% of these women within the surveyed companies work in administrative and support roles, and only a share of 20% in mid-management and technical roles.

Below is the share by sub-sector:



Image 3 source: Women in Maritime Survey 2024



Image 4 source: Women in Maritime Survey 2024

Let's analyse our category, Ship agents and Ship brokers, and charterers:

In the Ship agent field, we see that women make up 48% of the supporting roles workforce, 27% of mid-management, and 44% of core roles.

If we analyse the Ship brokers and charterers, the figures are actually quite different, with 10% of the supporting roles workforce, 40% of mid-management, and the same 44% of core roles as ship agents.

The sector with the highest percentage of women employed in core roles is environmental technologies, with 84% of women employed in such roles, while the lowest is offshore and ship registries, with only 1% of women employed in such roles.

Some sectors have no representation whatsoever of women in core roles, such as ESG and decarbonization services (which, although it boasts 100% of women in mid management), fishing, and weather intelligence services.

Lastly, it is very interesting to analyse where these women are employed regionally:

Region	Total number of employees in the private maritime sector (men + women)*	Total number of women employed in the private maritime sector	Percentage of women employed in the private maritime sector
Africa	9,151	923	10.09%
Arab states and Mediterranean region	22,220	1,062	4.78%
Asia	34,755	5,748	16.54%
Caribbean	311	197	63.34%
Eastern Europe	139	66	47.48%
Europe	71,402	15,411	21.58%
Latin America	15,404	2,989	19.40%
North America	18,108	1,191	6.58%
Pacific	1,201	405	33.72%
Grand Total	172,691	27,992	16.21%

Image 5 source: Women in Maritime Survey 2024

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN

Working in a male-dominated environment can be challenging, as well as surprisingly, present some great opportunities, especially nowadays.

I will list first the challenges, so that I leave you with the positive vibes of the opportunities in the end.

CHALLENGES

Commitment: working as a port agent is not a 9-to-5 job. It requires availability, most of the time 24/7, flexibility, and sacrifice. This can be particularly challenging if you are a woman, and even more if you have a family to take care of.

Gender bias and discrimination in the profession: Gender bias is the tendency to prefer one gender over another. It occurs when one individual attribute certain attitudes and stereotypes to another person or group of people.

Typically, gender bias refers to the preferential treatment given to men, and it describes the prejudice against women solely based on their sex.

Women may have to constantly prove they are just as capable as men in performing their jobs.

Gender roles: Gender bias often led to expectations that women should take on more "nurturing" roles, like organizing office events or taking notes in meetings, regardless of position.

Bias in Recruitment and Promotion: Women may face doubts about their capability or technical and leadership skills.

There can be a perception that women are "not tough enough" or that women disrupt team dynamics.

Lack of mentorship: Mentoring is often viewed from a hierarchical perspective, where a senior individual provides needed information to a mentee.

Fewer female role models can make it harder to see a clear career path.

Mentoring plays a key role in skills development, career advancement, success, and socioemotional support.

Cultural gender bias: shifting our attention away from the profession itself, being a working woman is much harder than being a working man. The reason for this is that women disproportionately shoulder the burden of home-related responsibilities. When there is a family involved, the situation for the woman is even worse, as women are culturally considered the primary caregivers for children as well.

This result is an enormous workload, and we see that very often women who decide to have a family have to choose between family and career.

This pattern varies from country to country, but it generally is deeply rooted in societal norms worldwide, and it continues to influence modern family structures and career choices for women.

OPPORTUNITIES

A great profession: working as a port agent is *fun!* Port agent does not have fixed working hours, and, despite the challenges listed above, this results in not having to sit in front of your computer all day or see the same faces every day.

You will have the chance to gain and improve specific skills such as real-time decision-making, organizational strength, crisis-handling abilities, logistics expertise, competence in maritime and port regulations, international trade law, customs regulations, maritime and port operations, and many more.

It can also open the doors to the maritime industry: if you haven't taken studies in a specific field, sometimes you can get there and get the job based on your experience.

Skill Recognition Over Bias: Male-dominated environments often emphasize performance. When you deliver results, you gain respect quickly.

Sometimes being in the minority can even play to your advantage and make you more visible. This, paired with competence and confidence, often leads to faster recognition and advancement.

Tough and Hostile Environments Build Reputation and Skills: Thriving in a tough environment shows grit.

It takes skills such as resilience, stamina, boundary setting, adaptability, confidence, problem solving, and self-control.

You will not only have the chance to learn them, but to practice them on a daily basis.

That builds a respected personal brand within your company and the industry, and in general, will turn you into a successful and mentally strong individual.



Image 6 source: M/V Queen Anne

Kelle Di Lazzaro, DPFSO of TTP, Captain Ingerd Klein Thorhauge, and Stefani Lito, executive assistant, during the plaque exchange for the maiden voyage of Queen Anne in Trieste

MIND THE GAP. WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

There is ample evidence that investing in women is the most effective way to lift communities, companies, and even countries.

Countries with more gender equality are proven to be more prosperous:

The World Economic Forum has, since 2016, been tracking the progress of numerous countries' efforts towards closing the gap.

The Global Gender Gap Index annually benchmarks the current state and evolution of gender parity across four key dimensions (Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment).

According to the Global Gender Gap Report 2023, the top nine countries are:

Iceland, Norway, Finland, New Zealand, Sweden, Germany, Nicaragua, Namibia, and Lithuania.

If we look at the Prosperity Index 2023 developed by the Legatum Institute, the top nine countries are:

Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Iceland, and Germany.

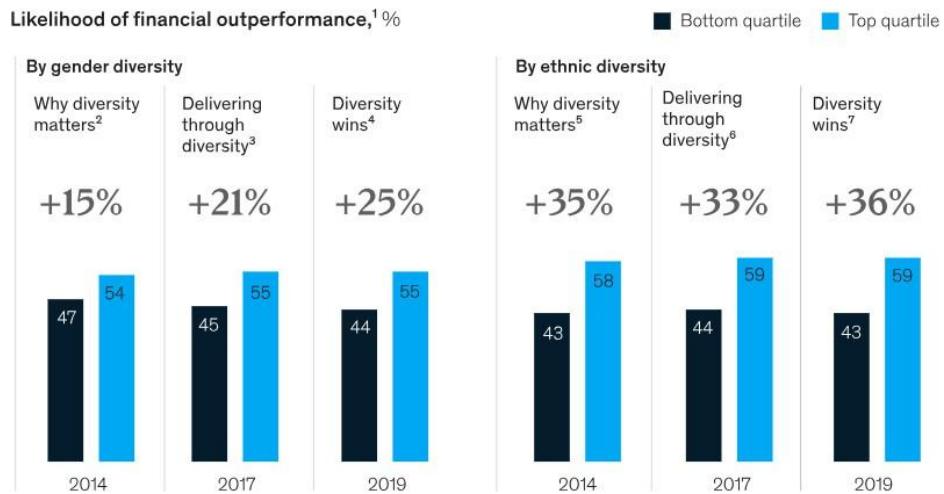
New Zealand ranked 10.

Companies with more women leaders perform better:

Companies with more women in leadership roles tend to perform better across several key metrics, including profitability, innovation, and employee satisfaction.

According to a 2020 McKinsey & Company report found that companies in the top quartile for gender diversity on executive teams were 25% more likely to have above-average profitability compared to those in the bottom quartile.

The business case for diversity in executive teams remains strong.



¹Likelihood of financial outperformance vs the national industry median; p-value <0.05, except 2014 data where p-value <0.1. ²n = 383; Latin America, UK, and US; earnings before interest and taxes (EBIT) margin 2010–13. ³n = 99; Australia, Brazil, France, Germany, India, Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, Singapore, South Africa, UK, and US; EBIT margin 2011–15. ⁴n = 1,039; 2017 companies for which gender data available in 2019, plus Denmark, Norway, and Sweden; EBIT margin 2014–18. ⁵n = 364; Latin America, UK, and US; EBIT margin 2010–13. ⁶n = 589; Brazil, Mexico, Singapore, South Africa, UK, and US; EBIT margin 2011–15. ⁷n = 533; Brazil, Mexico, Nigeria, Singapore, South Africa, UK, and US, where ethnicity data available in 2019; EBIT margin 2014–18. Source: Diversity Wins data set.

Image 7 source: McKinsey & Company, May 19, 2020 report “Diversity wins: how inclusion matters.”

Gender-diverse teams make better business decisions up to 87% of the time, as stated in Cloverpop's paper titled “Hacking Diversity with Inclusive Decision-Making.” This study analysed over 600 business decisions made by 200 teams across a range of companies. It found that inclusive teams—those diverse in gender, age, and geography—made better decisions up to 87% of the time.

If we are to focus only on gender, gender-diverse teams made better decisions 73% of the time, while all-male teams only 58%.

Team Composition	% Better Decisions	N	p-value
All-Male	58%	95	0.07
Overall	66%	566	-
20+ Year Age Range	72%	127	0.13
2+ Office Locations	72%	240	0.04
Gender Diverse*	73%	217	0.05
Geographically Diverse**	75%	117	0.04
Gender Diverse, 2+ Locations	79%	173	0.0005
Gender Diverse, 20+ Yr Age Range	80%	94	0.005
Gender, Geographically Diverse	87%	69	0.0002

Image 8 source: Clover pop research “Hacking Diversity with Inclusive Decision-Making.”

Companies with more women in leadership also tend to have stronger environmental, social, and governance (ESG) profiles, which are increasingly linked to long-term success, McKinsey & Company has shown.

In their 2023 report “Diversity Matters Even More,” McKinsey analysed 1265 companies across 23 countries and highlighted that companies with greater gender and ethnic diversity in leadership not only outperformed financially but also demonstrated stronger social and environmental impacts, indicating a positive correlation between diverse leadership and ESG performance.

While McKinsey's reports establish a strong correlation between gender-diverse leadership and enhanced ESG outcomes, it's important to note that these findings are based on observed associations and do not necessarily imply direct causation.

These studies suggest that female leaders are more likely to prioritize long-term environmental sustainability over short-term gains and often place higher importance on climate-related risks and sustainable business practices.

We have, in fact, seen in our analysis on pages 6 and 7, that the ESG and decarbonisation industry employs a very high percentage of women, and ESG services have 100% of women employed in mid-management. This proves the strong link between these topics and the interests and results of women.

Companies with women in leadership usually promote broader diversity and inclusion policies while also tend to support initiatives related to work-life balance, fair labour practices, and community engagement.

Gender-diverse boards are linked to stronger corporate governance, reduced fraud, and better decision-making, and often have more transparent reporting practices.

Female leaders are often associated with inclusive workplace cultures, which can boost employee engagement and lower turnover.

GENDER DIVERSITY WITHIN SHIP AGENCIES

As we have discovered, gender diversity can significantly improve a company's performance. Let's see how this can be applied to our field:

Improved Decision-Making: Ship agencies coordinate complex logistics, liaise with diverse stakeholders (port authorities, customs, crews, shipping lines), and operate under tight time and budget constraints. Effective, timely decisions are critical.

Women may approach problems with different risk tolerances, communication styles, and collaborative approaches.

Diverse teams are less likely to fall into homogeneous thinking, resulting in better, more thoroughly vetted decisions, as we have seen in picture 8.

Women often bring high emotional intelligence, which improves negotiations and client relations—key for dispute resolution and stakeholder management in ports.

Enhanced Innovation: The shipping industry is undergoing transformation: digitization, sustainability demands, and changing global trade patterns require innovation in service delivery and technology.

Teams with gender diversity are more likely to generate a wider range of ideas, from tech solutions to workflow improvements.

Stronger Financial Performance: Efficiency, operational excellence, and customer retention are essential for profitability.

With more women in the team operation's efficiency could be boosted due to their well-known multitasking and organizational skills.

A diverse team reflects a broader customer base, increasing trust and satisfaction, and creating an overall better client relationship.

Diverse leadership tends to implement more inclusive and sustainable practices, which often lead to better resource allocation and team productivity, with efficiency gains.



*Performing her ship agent duty on board M/Y Vive La Vie in Durres Port while pregnant in her 8th month. Image 9
source: Resi Misa*

HOW TO FILL THE GAP

We've now seen why filling the gap is important, but how do we actually do it?

Let's have a look at what can actually be done to take more women to work in the ship agency and maritime field in general.

CULTURAL AND SOCIETAL SHIFTS

I put the cultural and societal shift first in the list, as in my opinion, it is the single most important yet probably the most challenging shift that must be made to fill the gender gap.

We can employ women, we can put them at the top of the corporate hierarchy, we can give them power, responsibility, and appreciation, but it doesn't work if we don't change the cultural environment around them.

There should be policies to cancel the cultural bias, or meanwhile to help women deal with it.

We need to change the concept of "maternity" into "parenthood", something that can be done by both genders.

We need to create more paternity leave; in fact, we need equal paternity and maternity leave and make it normal in societies. The most advanced and prosperous societies already have this mindset.

We need to acknowledge that women work twice as much as men, if not more, due to their burden with home-related responsibilities and childcare.

We need to provide tools to lift the extra burden women are carrying, i.e., creating social benefits to pay for childcare and help with household tasks.

I would go as far as saying that working mothers should be paid more.

In fact, we have seen this in Italy with the law n. 213 dated 30/12/2023, which stated that all workers who were mother of 2 or more children aged 0-18 should be exempted to pay for social contribution. This amount has been covered by the Government not by the companies, and in the end, it resulted in more money for these mothers. Unfortunately, this was an experimental measure and ended on 31/12/2024, but in my opinion this was a great measure to foster both childbirths and working women and should be applied permanently.

EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING INITIATIVES

In my opinion this is the second most important point, and very closely linked to the first one.

We need to get girls to choose technical institutes, STEM disciplines, fields related to maritime technology and engineering.

How can we employ more women if there are no women?

As I already mentioned, women culturally tend to choose educational paths in the arts, humanities, and literature.

Depending on country to country, generally, this is because society pushes them in this direction.

Look at small boys and girls playing. Boys usually play with trucks, balls, construction, and strong role models such as superheroes. Girls, on the other hand, sip tea with their dolls, chat, draw, and you can even see them with small strollers carrying dollies, while we don't see boys do that.

The result is that youngsters are growing up in a socially bias.

It is highly probable that a boy will choose an educational path in engineering, science, sport, and whatever else he has been playing with his whole childhood, knowing that the world expects him to act as some kind of superhero, therefore showing strength, authority, a strong will, and power.

A girl on the other side will probably choose something more suitable to her childhood environment, such as art, humanities, literature, and think that what is expected from her is to turn into a caring and nurturing beacon.

Families also encourage their daughters in this direction and sometimes clearly discourage studies or training in more technical fields, fearing this would lead to a potentially dangerous work environment or a lack of job possibilities due to their gender.

We need to change this from below, and I see that this is already happening: we need to talk to our children inclusively. We need to encourage girls to develop their technical side, as well as encourage boys to develop their artistic and emotional side.

And most importantly, children learn by example. Both boys and girls need to see working mothers, need to see their dads taking care of them, the house, the meals. They need to see caring fathers and practical mothers. This way, girls will learn that they can do that too. And boys will learn that household and childcare are not a female prerogative: they are common spaces and duties, and everybody must take care of them, regardless of their gender.

If we shift our spotlight to Institutes and Universities, they should promote STEM and technical studies among young female prospects, showing that these disciplines are not only for men.

This can be done using female role models and representatives in the promotion and using visual content that depicts both genders.



Image 10 source: Alessia Lonza, 2nd officer on board M/T Elisa in 2010

MENTORSHIP AND NETWORKING

As Institutes and Universities should promote STEM and technical studies to female prospects, we should do the same promotion in the industry: we need to show women that this industry is for them as well.

Not only are women suitable for this industry, but they are also *welcome*.

The maritime industry can promote itself using female role models and representatives, and use visual content that depicts both genders, but most importantly, we should do our part:

We all women in the industry should rise and show what it is to be a woman working in maritime. We should rise and talk about it: the good and the bad.

People need to know that there are women around here: men need to know, so it doesn't sound so strange, and women need to know, so that they can network, empower each other, and attract more women.

The biggest and most effective association of women in the industry is without any doubt Wista.

Established in 1974, Wista is the "Women's International Shipping and Trading Association", a global organization connecting female executives and decision-makers around the world. It connects more than 5100 female professionals from all sectors of the maritime industry worldwide.

It is present in 62 countries with the “National WISTA Associations”, whose mission is to provide regional networking, business and skill-building opportunities, corporate visibility, and also facilitate relationships within the industry.

I am a member myself of Wista Italy for only a few months, and since I joined, I have had the opportunity to take part in several events and already feel the benefit of being part of such a vibrant group of female professionals.

POLICY AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES

When it comes to the work environment, inclusive practices should be respected, such as gender-neutral job descriptions, equal pay for both genders, a work environment free from stereotypes, harassment, and hostile behaviours, and inclusive infrastructure (i.e., ensure that there are enough facilities for women, even in spaces where there are mostly men).

To ensure that gender equality is respected, a tool such as a “gender equality certificate” can now be used.

A gender equality certificate is an official recognition awarded to companies that meet specific standards promoting equal treatment and opportunities for all genders. These certifications are usually granted by governmental bodies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), or international institutions to encourage and verify efforts to reduce gender-based discrimination, close pay gaps, promote inclusive policies, and support diversity in leadership.

In Italy, the government has implemented the “Certificazione della Parità di Genere” (English for “gender equality certificate”), but similar programs can be found worldwide, i.e.

- EDGE Certification (Switzerland, global reach): A leading international certification for workplace gender equality.
- UN Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs): Not a certificate, but a globally recognized framework for companies.
- Australia’s Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA): Offers employer of choice citation for gender equality.

Since I live in Italy, I want to spend a few words on my experience with the Italian certification.

The Italian Gender Equality Certification System is regulated by specific national Laws (No. 162 of 5 November 2021 and by Law No. 234 of 30 December 2021) and is requested from businesses on a voluntary basis.

The certification process is available to companies of all sizes and is based on the gender equality practice UNI/PdR 125:2022, which defines the guidelines on the management system for gender equality.

The practice provides for the measurements, reporting and evaluation of gender data in organizations with the aim of bridging existing gaps as well as incorporating the new gender equality paradigm into the DNA of organizations and producing sustainable and lasting change over time.

To ensure a comprehensive measurement of the performance level, six strategic assessment areas are identified for different variables featuring an inclusive and gender-equal organisation: culture and strategy; governance; human resources (HR) management processes; opportunities for growth and inclusion of women in business; gender pay equity and parental protection and work-life balance.

The Company I work with has recently successfully obtained the Italian “Gender Equality Certification”, and since then I have noticed that they have been running campaigns of awareness, surveys on employee’s welfare focused on gender equality, parenthood and work-life balance, organized courses for employees on sensitive matters such as gender parity, stereotypes, maternity, respect, discrimination.

CONCLUSION

The Maritime Industry, including Ship Agent and Ship Brokering Field are male dominated, and it is not easy for women to access these careers or thrive in it.

This is due to a variety of reasons, mainly due to cultural gender bias and lack of societal policies that help women balance their work and family life.

It is a pity, because maritime careers are interesting, fun, well paid and absolutely suited for women. Moreover, it is shown that more women in the team and in the leadership boost companies' profiles in many ways.

Nonetheless, I think the era we are living in, is a great era for women: while women are working harder than ever, both outside and inside the house, there is lots of awareness on topics such gender equality and women empowerment.

Despite the difficulties, never like now there have been so many opportunities for women to disrupt and get their place in the male lines.

We have tools such ESG policies, Gender Equality Certification, organizations such Wista, to help them join, navigate and thrive in the maritime industry.

Governments, Institutions and companies should act in the direction of inclusion, while women should take the opportunity to jump on board, figuratively and literally!

I think *now* is a great moment to be a woman working in the maritime industry.

And you? What do you think?

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