

Meet the **EXPERT**



Gary Pink
Design Manager
The Seaking Group

Successful ONBOARDING: Transferring military skills to civvy street

After a successful career in the Royal Navy as a Weapons Engineer, it was time for our **Design Manager Gary Pink** to pack his service bag for the last time and hang up his boots.

We took some time to find out about **Gary's** experience settling into civilian life.



Q1: Tell us about your service career

A: I joined the Royal Navy in 1986 and served for 22 years; leaving the service in 2008. I was on several vessels including HMS York, Leeds Castle, Dumbarton Castle, Liverpool, Southampton, and Albion. I also had several drafts (what we called appointments) to Shore Bases including HMS Inskip, Forest Moor, RN Gibraltar (where my wife and children accompanied me) and RAF Henlow. I was a Weapons Engineer however that does not mean that I worked on weapons all the time. Most of my time was working on either RADAR or communications systems. I learnt my trade (Electrical Engineering) at the Naval Engineering Establishment HMS Collingwood. I worked my way through the ranks eventually finishing off as a Chief Petty Officer; I like to think that I had a successful career culminating in me receiving the Meritorious Service Medal (MSM).

Q2: How did the opportunity as Design Manager for SeaKing Group come about?

A: It came about by chance really. I was originally employed to be part of a service team however, I was put on the 'tools' on a couple of the RFA vessels; to see how things worked with the company then one day I was asked to go to the main office. I was told that the specification writing was increasing, and they needed someone to do it; I was asked, and I accepted. As time progressed, and as other projects came in, I started taking things on to help in the RFA side of things. As the team (Design) started to build we were moved up to our current office. I was asked to keep an eye on what was occurring in the office to see that things were ok. It kind of moved on from there and eventually I was made manager of the team – we are hoping in the future to be able to provide full turn-key packages, from the office to our future clients.

Q3: What do you miss about being in the Navy?

A: If you ask anybody, they will say the lads – they do not miss the job but the lads – this is quite true. Although I am very proud of my service the craic and the banter are what is missed; and whenever we meet up with old friends it just like we saw them yesterday.

Q4: What do you like most about your current position?

A: Although at times the job can be stressful no two days are the same, and every day we seem to learn something new. I also like being able to pass on some of my knowledge, as well as learning from, some of the younger ones who have not long been in the office. I also like it when I see people who have worked in the office move onto other positions within the business.

There are many known attributes that are identified as essential skills needed in the military. Including leadership, teamwork, communication.

Q5: What skills have you transferred over to your current role?

A: Well there is my engineering background of course, and my knowledge of military vessels and the 'language' that ships staff talk (I was told it was one of the reasons as to why I was asked to write the specifications).

You have also mentioned it in the question – teamwork, leadership and communication – all of which was taught to me as I progressed through my career.

Q6: Do you have any tips or advice on a smooth transition to other service leavers?

A: Never sell yourself short and have the courage of your convictions. All the skills that you have obtained are fully transferable. Although it may feel strange when you first leave, civvy street is not all that bad and there are plenty of ex-service personnel out there to help you if required; its always good to talk (and it helps).

The SeaKing Group was established in April 2001; specialising in marine electrical engineering. SeaKing' targets maintenance and project work for commercial ships, ferries, naval vessels, cruise ships and superyachts. The company work across Europe, Asia and the Americas covering many market segments of the marine sector. **Over the years SeaKing have so-far employed over 100 apprentices. SeaKing is certified through Bureau Veritas for the ISO9001 and 14001 management standards.**

To find out how we can benefit you, get in touch

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