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MARINE INDUSTRY

Working remotely from sea presents challenges



Captain Angela Rosenberg, president of West Palm Beach-based Angari Foundation.
COURTESY OF ANGARI FOUNDATION



By Matthew Arrojas
Reporter, South Florida Business Journal
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While many Americans spent the past seven months working from home, some have elected for a different type of remote workplace: a boat.

The uptick in South Floridians interested in working from the sea has generated new sales, said Bob Denison, president of Fort Lauderdale-based Denison Yachting.

“Demand is attached to people looking to spend time - and by time, I mean full time - living and working on a boat,” he said. “If you are one of those people taking quarantine seriously, a boat relieves the cabin fever.”

Working from a boat can work for the whole family, he added. One client Denison sold a boat to proceeded to travel to Tahiti and is homeschooling their children from the yacht, he said.

In it for the long haul

As freeing as a Zoom call from the middle of the Atlantic Ocean may be, boating during a pandemic comes with a new set of challenges, said Angela Rosenberg, president of West Palm Beach-based Angari Foundation and captain of the nonprofit’s 65-foot vessel.

As captain, part of her job is to facilitate a remote work environment for passengers, who can be at sea for weeks at a time on research excursions. Covid-19 has made that task more difficult, she said.

Travel restrictions became one of the more pressing issues for her and her ship, Rosenberg said.

“You used to be able to just say, ‘Let’s go to the Bahamas,’ and go,” she said. “Now there’s a lot more planning and paperwork involved.”

The Bahamas continues to be a sought-after destination among yachters, Denison said. But according to the Bahamian government’s guidelines for private vessels, all boats entering the country’s waters must request permission before arrival and detail the medical condition of every onboard traveler.

Once that hurdle is cleared, Rosenberg still prefers to limit the interactions of her crew and passengers with the outside world.

“We’re not exploring the shores in populated areas,” she said. “We’re isolating with the same eight or so people.”

That’s an acceptable option for many, Denison said.

Part of the appeal of remote work aboard a boat is the ability to self-isolate freely, and it’s the reason so many people are buying yachts in 2020.

Signal boost

Necessary for any work-from-a-boat plan is a solid internet connection. That’s where [Marc Curreri](#), founder and president of Fort Lauderdale-based marine electronics and repair company Marine Professionals, noticed the most new activity for his business.

“Everybody needs to stay connected these days,” Curreri said. “Some just want to check emails, and others want to be able to be on a Zoom call and for the other people to never notice they’re not in the office.”

His and other similar marine companies offer three main internet solutions: a cellular source, a Wi-Fi hotspot or high-speed satellite.

The most expensive option, but the one that works best for prolonged work experiences at sea, is high-speed satellite. It essentially equips a vessel with the same router capabilities as a home, Curreri explained, although the signal needs to be boosted in multiple places on a yacht in order for it to work throughout.

“In a house, there’s one source of internet,” he said. “On a boat, in most cases, we’re providing three sources.”

It usually takes three days to fully equip a boat with satellite internet, as the process involves cutting into the boat to run wiring, Curreri said.

For those looking for a less-invasive option, he said a Wi-Fi hotspot can feed off of the internet near marinas to allow passengers to work from their boat.

Denison said equipping a boat with internet capabilities has been one of the first priorities for new boat owners during the pandemic.

“If this pandemic happened 10 or 15 years ago, it would have been a lot more challenging,” he said. “But, as technology evolved, the ability to work aboard a boat has gotten a lot easier.”

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South Florida Marine Industry Businesses - Employees

Ranked by No. of employees

Rank	Company	No. Of Employees
1	JL Audio	416
2	MarineMax	310
3	Wartsila North America	270
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THE LIST

South Florida Marine Industry Businesses - Revenue

Ranked by 2019 revenue

Rank	Company	2019 Revenue
1	ZF Marine Propulsion Systems Miramar	\$36.50 billion
2	MarineMax	\$630.00 million
3	GMT Global Marine Travel	\$180.00 million
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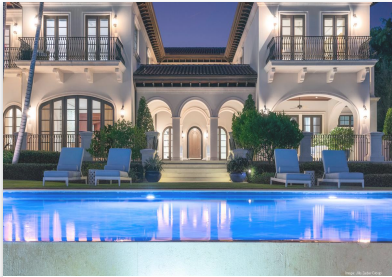
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