

# SOFT SKILLS FOR PROFESSIONAL SKIPPER

in a changing tourism industry

## Skills on Board Learning & Training Course

HANDBOOK FOR TRAINERS



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## INTRODUCTION

This handbook serves as a supporting tool for trainers to facilitate the learning process as based on the Skills on Board learning and training course available online at the Skills on Board e-platform (<http://skillsonboard.eu/online-training/>). The training platform has been designed to support mostly self-paced learning, covering theoretical aspects and practical approaches for upskilling and professionalising of professional skippers. However, the learning process can also take place with the help and guidance of a trainer. In that case, in addition to this handbook, trainers will also use the Skills on Board e-platform.

The aim of this handbook is thus to give out to prospect trainers all necessary information on:

- the methodological approach for the development of the Skills on Board learning material in line with adult education and e-learning principles
- the main goal, objectives and rationale of the Skills on Board training course
- the structure of all the learning modules of the Skills on Board course
- the expected learning outcomes
- delivery recommendations.

The handbook starts out outlining the methodological approach followed for the development of the training course. The aspects taken into consideration during the process are presented, and on the basis of them, a check-table is provided, showing the reported preferences/needs of prospect end-users as identified earlier on in the project. Following that, the structure of the modular sequence of the online material is presented, designating the learning outcomes and the key topics addressed each time.



## SKILLS ON BOARD TRAINING COURSE: AN OVERVIEW

The Skills on Board learning and training course aims at supporting professional skippers in obtaining knowledge and skills key for the professionalization of their services, to make the most of their tourism activities/ businesses and grasp the profit from the emerging sustainable and alternative tourism trends.

The Skills on Board training course objective is to help professional skippers to:

- understand how the new trends in tourism on the demand side are shaping the touristic services on the supply side
- develop of certain soft skills and attitudes for professional skippers, responding to these trends
- improve their hospitality and service culture.

The training course has been structured in two different Parts, as illustrated under chapters 4 & 5 here below.

It has been developed by eight partners from four EU countries (Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, and Spain), experts in the fields of tourism and education, according to the methodological approach presented in the next chapter.

The Skills on Board course is available online through the **Skills on Board learning and training platform** in 5 EU languages (English, Bulgarian, Croatian, Greek and Spanish) for free.



## SKILLS ON BOARD TRAINING COURSE: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

In view of providing the methodological matrix for the development of the content for the Skills on Board training material, four (4) aspects as follows have been taken into consideration:

- the Skills on Board project objectives
- the training needs identified through extensive research under the Skills on Board project
- Basic principles of adult education and e-learning
- Points of interest drawing from the input of potential end-users.

### Skills on Board project objectives

The Skills on Board project is a project for professional yacht skippers with the aim to help them acquire or develop soft skills that will add to the quality of their services, responding to new trends in tourism on the demand side. Central to these new trends are the expectations of the tourists for experience-rich memories, and the gradual abandonment of mass tourism models. In order for professionals in the tourism sector to respond to these new trends, there is a set of soft skills and abilities that should be developed or further enhanced, relating to personal and social competences, complementing job-specific skills.

### The needs identified under the Skills on Board project<sup>1</sup>

The needs identified through the online questionnaires, desktop research and in-depth interviews under the Skills on Board project revealed the following issues:

#### 1. CONTENT:

There has been identified the need to:

- recognize profile and specific preferences of a new tourist
- understand the new trends in tourism
- recognize factors that affect tourists' choices
- understand the parties involved in the tourism business
- understand the cultural context of the yacht trip and its' importance
- learn on 'cultural attractions' of a region
- appropriately and effectively communicate (transfer) this information to the

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed description please see [IO1: Development of methodological framework for training in upskilling professional skippers](#)

passengers on board

- improve tourists' on-board experience
- engage the tourists in various activities
- improve communication with tourists on board
- acquire and develop the necessary set of transversal skills and attitudes at the personal, interpersonal/societal level.

## 2. METHODOLOGY:

Training cannot be successful unless the target learners realize that they need to improve their skills for their own benefit. The challenge is to get the professional skippers to actually use the created learning platform. To this end it is recommended to

- Create awareness of the platform in order to generate a word of mouth recommendation through targeted promotion
- Combine the online platform with classical classroom training, at least initially (e.g. through an introductory module, probably in the form of a workshop), in order to create a critical mass of users that then recommend the platform to others. This introduction explains the reasons why training is of crucial importance for success by presenting benefits, case studies, best practices etc.

It is essential for the training platform to be:

- easy to use
- clearly targeted to specific, relevant goals
- short and modular, provided in small bits ('training pills')
- interesting and dynamic, especially featuring videos and video tutorials
- easy to navigate
- of a high quality regarding the learning contents
- easy to follow the written text
- quick to use.

Furthermore, the online platform offers:

1. Highly motivational layout, content and learning activities
2. Qualitative yet simple content (which implies a high level of segmentation)
3. Practical, user-friendly platform design.

## Basic principles of adult education and e-learning

The training methodology adopted for the training platform has been chosen in order to meet the demand for highly motivating content and mode of presentation. In addition, the characteristics of the learners (age, limited time, diverse learning styles, varying levels of

knowledge and experience) call for training methods that promote problem-solving and self-reflection, while at the same time providing opportunities for authentic learning and case analysis. To this purpose, principles of adult education and the constructivist learning theory have been adopted. Application of e-learning principles follows the methodological approach, since e-learning is a means and not a method or system of training.

## ADULT EDUCATION PRINCIPLES:

- Experience as a resource of learning
- Motivation
- Autonomy and self-directed learning
- Appropriate learning environment
- Different learning styles

## E-LEARNING PRINCIPLES

According to the principle of an appropriate learning environment that balances creativity with cognitive achievements and clarity of purpose, the following e-learning principles apply<sup>2,3</sup>:

- Multimedia principle
- Contiguity
- Redundancy
- Coherence

An important finding of the field research was that both possible users of the learning platform and experts pointed to the need for easy-to-read, concise material in learning “bites”. This is related to segmenting of information. The level of segmenting required is directly connected to the learners’ characteristics and the type of content. Segmenting plays an important role for understanding, readability and user-friendliness.

Some principles are<sup>4</sup>:

- Highly segmented content is easier to process
- Difficult material should be segmented
- The deeper the analysis the more the segmenting required
- The degree to which information is new affects the need for segmenting
- Self-study calls for higher segmenting.

2 Ibid.

3 <http://www.learningsolutionsmag.com/articles/384/six-principles-of-effective-e-learning-what-works-and-why>

4 E-Book: Online Distance Learning, (in Greek), by Sofos A., Kostas A., & Paraschou V. (2015), [www.kallipos.gr](http://www.kallipos.gr)

## SKILLS ON BOARD TRAINING COURSE: STRUCTURE

Two parts have been developed to help professional skippers to make the most of their tourism activities or skipper businesses and grasp the profit from the emerging sustainable and alternative tourism trends.

Part 1 consists of four (4) Modules. Each Module consists of short introduction covering learning objectives. The main section provides skippers with concise learning material in the form of engaging and practical “learning bites”, summarising the most relevant, up-to-date, hot issues under the thematic each unit focus on. Theoretical and practical tips therein are accompanied by examples, audio-visual material, and sources for further reading for deeper understanding, study and learner autonomy.

Part 2 consists of thirteen (13) Modules. The Modules mostly consists of short introduction, case study, lessons learned and a short assessment/test. The assessment provides skippers with short yet concise self-assessment tests in the form of multiple choice questions. Following the assessment they can evaluate their progress (by getting feedback automatically) and diagnose further needs if needed.

For each module there is list of references and/or further reading.

The table below presents the structure of the two parts and modules developed.

Part 1: NEW TRENDS IN YACHT TOURISM	
Module 1	The new touristic profiles
Module 2	The Skipper profile
Module 3	The cultural context of the yacht trip
Module 4	Innovative onboard activities and services



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## Part 2: MY 12+4 ONBOARD SOFT SKILLS

Module 1	Crisis Management
Module 2	Dealing with Stress
Module 3	Problem Solving
Module 4	Dealing with 'difficult' people
Module 5	Interpersonal Skills At Work
Module 6	Team working
Module 7	Work ethics
Module 8	Keeping a positive attitude
Module 9	Courtesy
Module 10	Negotiation skills that make the difference
Module 11	Time management
Module 12	Understanding body language
Module 13	+4 Skills to come across the right way

# SKILLS ON BOARD TRAINING COURSE: TRAINING GUIDELINES

## Definitions

Knowledge, skills and competence at European Qualifications Framework, level four, are described as<sup>5</sup>:



**Knowledge:** Factual and theoretical knowledge in broad contexts within a field of work or study.

**Skills:** A range of cognitive and practical skills required to generate solutions to specific problems in a field of work or study.

**Competence:** Exercise self-management within the guidelines of work or study contexts that are usually predictable, but are subject to change; supervise the routine work of others, taking some responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of work or study activities.



## Initial Face-to Face Motivating session

Although the Skills on Board training course has been designed to be delivered via distance-learning practices (self-paced, asynchronous learning through an online platform), it is highly recommended that trainers lead an initial face-to-face session with the purpose of motivating and engaging skippers to improve their knowledge and skills in this specific field. Although the educational level among skippers varies and they usually lack specialised training in the field, they do not attend any course, nor adopt any approach or technique unless they are provided with tangible results of its effectiveness. Trainers should, therefore, raise skippers' awareness about the reasons why they should attend the course. Using the same online learning platform, trainers should also attract skippers' interest through the use of related real-life examples, testimonials, interviews, case studies and brainstorming activities, demonstrating the need and impact of skippers' skills empowerment. The trainers are also more than welcome to use their own case studies/examples illustrating the specific topic.

5 <https://ec.europa.eu/ploteus/content/descriptors-page>

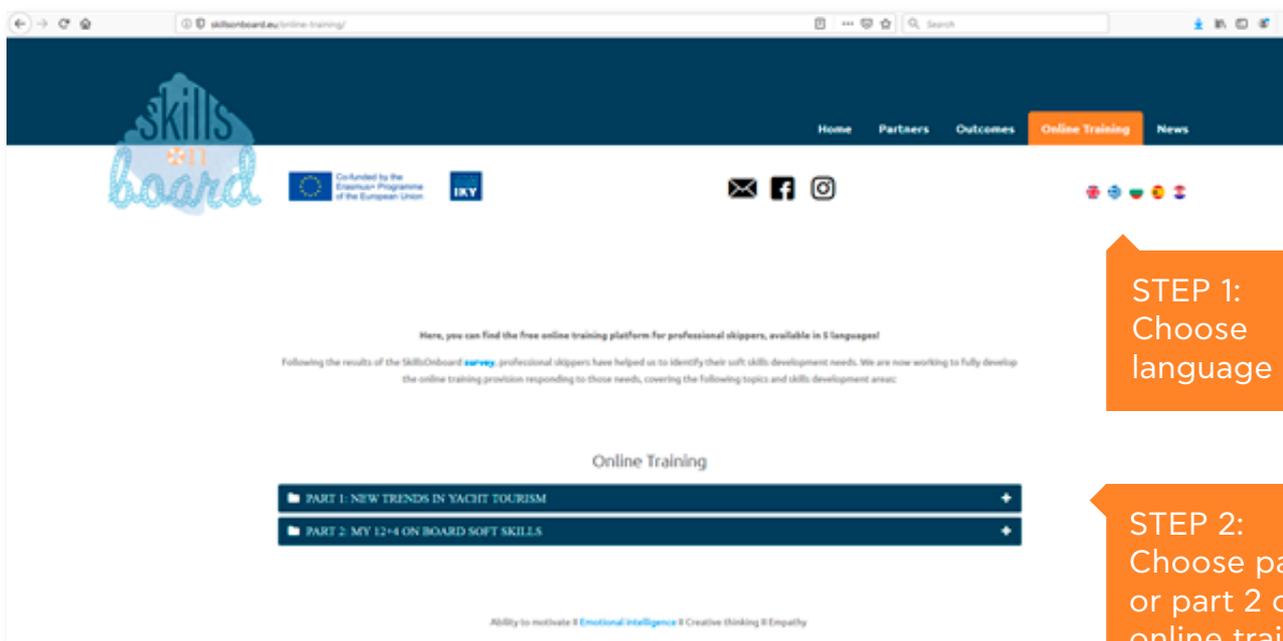
## Skills on Board training instructions

In the next sections, the modular structure of the Skills on Board training material is presented, including a demonstration of the underlying structure of Part 1 and 2, as well as different modules within the two main parts. This will help trainers/facilitators to lead productive sessions with skippers. A summary, learning objectives, time requirements, and helpful instructions elaborating on the main points of learning material plus useful suggestions and tips for further use of resources and material per section and unit are provided to complement the presentation of the platform as it stands.

The link to the Skills on Board learning & training platform is:

<http://skillsonboard.eu/online-training/>

The platform is easy to navigate, straight-forward and user-friendly. The homepage of the platform is shown below. Choose language (step 1) and then choose the part 1 or part 2 of the online training course (step 2).



The suggested length of the modules within the part 1 and part 2 of the training course is presented in the table below, followed by detailed description of each module component.

Time requirements of the Skills on Board training course:

PART / MODULE		LENGTH IN MINUTES
<b>Part 1: NEW TRENDS IN YACHT TOURISM</b>		<b>90</b>
Module 1	The new touristic profiles	15
Module 2	The Skipper profile	15
Module 3	The cultural context of the yacht trip	30
Module 4	Innovative onboard activities and services	30
<b>Part 2: MY 12+4 ONBOARD SOFT SKILLS</b>		<b>180</b>
Module 1	Crisis Management	10
Module 2	Dealing with Stress	15
Module 3	Problem Solving	15
Module 4	Dealing with 'difficult' people	15
Module 5	Interpersonal Skills At Work	15
Module 6	Team working	15
Module 7	Work ethics	15
Module 8	Keeping a positive attitude	15
Module 9	Courtesy	15
Module 10	Negotiation skills that make the difference	10
Module 11	Time management	10
Module 12	Understanding body language	15
Module 13	+4 Skills to come across the right way	15

# Part 1

## NEW TRENDS IN YACHT TOURISM

PART 1: NEW TRENDS IN YACHT TOURISM	
Summary and objectives	<p>The objective of the first part is to help skippers to better understand how the new trends in tourism on the demand side are shaping the scope and purpose of the touristic services on the supply side in general and within the leisure yachting industry in particular.</p> <p>The first part consists of four modules dealing with:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Profile of new tourists</li> <li>2. Skipper profile</li> <li>3. Cultural context of a yacht trip</li> <li>4. Innovative onboard activities and services</li> </ol> <p>Each module starts with a short introduction to the topic and learning objectives. References and/or links to video and/or to materials for further reading are also given.</p> <p>Objectives (what trainers should cover in the course under this part) are described per module (below).</p>
Expected learning outcomes	<p>After the end of this module skippers should have acquired knowledge and understanding about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— new trends in tourism</li> <li>— factors that affect tourists' choices</li> <li>— parties involved in the tourism business</li> <li>— new skipper profile</li> <li>— the main differences between the old and new skipper profiles</li> <li>— cultural context of the yacht trip and why is it important</li> <li>— 'cultural attractions' of the region</li> <li>— where to find information on the cultural context of the sailing area</li> <li>— how to appropriately and effectively communicate (transfer) this information to the passengers on board</li> <li>— how to make the boat trip more interesting for tourists and how to improve their experience on board</li> <li>— how to engage tourists in various activities on board</li> <li>— how to improve their communication skills on board.</li> </ul>

Duration	90 minutes
Trainer skills and roles	VET trainer/consultant with expertise in tourism sector
<b>Part 1 // Module 1: The new touristic profiles</b>	
Instructions	This module introduces skippers to the new tourists' profile. The characteristics of the traditional – old fashion tourist are presented initially, including the main purposes of travel. Next, the differences between the old/traditional tourist and the “new” tourist are presented in comparison to one another. Finally, the factors that affect the current tourists' choices are presented.
Duration	15 minutes
<b>Part 1 // Module 2: New trends in yacht tourism</b>	
Instructions	Tourism is changing and these changes demand new skill sets from the modern-day skipper. The modern skipper profile will need to adapt by learning these new skills and the aim of this module will give a comparison of the typical profile of the traditional skipper vs the modern-day skipper. This module is presenting the role and responsibilities of the traditional skipper and showing in comparison how the demands of the modern tourist, who enjoy skippered charter as part of their holiday experience, has changed the role and skill set of the modern skipper.
Duration	15 minutes
<b>Part 1 // Module 3: The cultural context of the yacht trip</b>	
Instructions	The emerging trends in (yacht) tourism point to the fact that there is a growing interest in history and culture among modern tourists today. Furthermore, tourists are becoming more and more demanding. They are no longer satisfied with the so-called 'sun and sea' offer only. They seek new adventures and experiences while on holiday. They seek a unique, local experience. They want to be immersed in local culture, 'to do what locals do and to eat what locals eat'. They want the 'once-in-a-lifetime' local experience. Since you will be the first person to whom your passenger will refer to if they need any help, including questions about destinations they are about to visit, you need to be well prepared to give all information they need. You also have to know how to properly do that in order to fulfil their expectations, enhance their sailing experience and increase their overall satisfaction with the yacht trip.
Duration	30 minutes

Part 1 // Module 4: Innovative onboard activities and services

<p>Instructions</p>	<p>This module is dedicated to helping learners finding different approaches towards what creativity and innovation is. The subject of this module is the presentation of 8 innovative activities and services which are designed to be performed on board of boats for tourist services. Some of these activities/services could be included in the program for the boat trip and announced to the tourists before the start of the trip. The rest of them have the potential to be used by the skippers in case of unfavorable conditions onboard, like bad weather, unhappy tourists, a lot of kids on board, and/or an audience with high expectations.</p> <p>The 8 activities and services which will be explained in details in this module are innovative and are not part of standard tourist programs for boat trips.</p>
<p>Duration</p>	<p>30 minutes</p>

## Part 2

# MY 12+4 ONBOARD SOFT SKILLS

### PART 2: MY 12+4 ONBOARD SOFT SKILLS

#### Summary and objectives

The aim of the first part is to help skippers to acquire and develop the necessary sets of transversal skills and attitudes at the personal, interpersonal/societal level of the professional skippers.

The modules of the second part are as follows:

5. Crisis management
6. Dealing with stress
7. Problem-solving
8. Interpersonal skills at work
9. Team working
10. Work ethics
11. Keeping a positive attitude
12. Courtesy
13. Time management
14. Negotiation skills that make the difference
15. Dealing with 'difficult' people
16. Understanding body language
17. +4 Skills to come across the right way
  - a. Emotional intelligence
  - b. Creative thinking
  - c. Empathy
  - d. Ability to motivate

Each module has one or more case studies that illustrate the use of a soft-skill, a link to video and/or links to materials for further reading, and a short assessment/test. The correct answers are also given.

Objectives (what trainers should cover in the course under this part) are described per module (below). General objectives include the following:

- Principles of verbal and non-verbal communication
- Soft skills important for the tourism sector
- Principles of professional behavior
- Strategies and techniques for resolving communication problems
- Dos and do nots when dealing with 'difficult' people
- Techniques to understand guests' needs and expectations and motivate them

Expected learning outcomes	<p>At the end of this module skippers should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply the principles of effective verbal and non-verbal communication</li> <li>• Monitor their own behavior in terms of professionalism, friendliness, politeness and hospitality</li> <li>• Handle in a professional and constructive manner misunderstandings, complaints and demanding guests</li> <li>• Take into consideration and respond to the special needs of impaired clients</li> <li>• Understand the guests' needs and expectations, and motivate them in order to make their sailing experience as good as possible</li> </ul>
Duration	180 minutes
Trainer skills and roles	VET trainer/consultant with expertise in communication skills (sociology, psychology, human resource management)
<b>Part 2 // Module 1: Crisis Management</b>	
Instructions	<p>Crisis management is the application of strategies designed to help an individual to deal with a sudden and significant negative event. Through a bad weather case study the module explains a human element of stress and a need for crisis management skills. The module also introduces skippers to a crisis manager role.</p>
Duration	10 minutes
<b>Part 2 // Module 2: Dealing with Stress</b>	
Instructions	<p>The ability to manage stress is one of the key abilities to deal with multiple human problems, both internal and external. At the end of this module skippers should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surround himself/herself with positive energy</li> <li>• Talk to colleagues</li> <li>• Take breaks</li> <li>• Simply say no</li> <li>• Find the good side of things</li> <li>• Avoid gossips</li> </ul>
Duration	15 minutes

### Part 2 // Module 3: Problem Solving

Instructions	<p>The aim of this module is to understand how to solve a problem between the skipper and the guests on the yacht. The following methods of resolving complaints and conversation techniques are explained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes-but</li> <li>• Defects – benefits</li> <li>• Reciprocal question</li> <li>• Opening up</li> </ul>
Duration	15 minutes

### Part 2 // Module 4: Dealing with 'difficult' people

Instructions	<p>The aim of this module is to learn how to effectively cope with people known as 'difficult' people while maintaining a healthy work environment. Using short explanatory video and case study, at the end of this module skippers should be able to use the following techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to their side of the story</li> <li>• Stay calm</li> <li>• Do not take it personally</li> <li>• Be natural</li> <li>• Try to understand</li> <li>• Allow them to say everything</li> <li>• Do not say they are guilty</li> <li>• Try to agree with them</li> <li>• Ask for their help</li> <li>• Suggest a solution if theirs doesn't work.</li> </ul>
Duration	15 minutes

### Part 2 // Module 5: Interpersonal Skills At Work!

Instructions	<p>The module focuses on the two communication skills (verbal and listening skills) and the persuasion/influencing skills. At the end of this module skippers should be well prepared for appropriate verbal communication, for careful listening what people on board wants and tactics for persuasion.</p>
Duration	15 minutes

### Part 2 // Module 6: Team working

Instructions	<p>The aim of this module is to explain terms team and teamwork, and to explain benefits of teamwork approach. Further, module introduces skippers to five key things they can use to promote better teamwork on board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback to and from one another</li> <li>• Willingness to back fellow members up</li> <li>• Feeling as a group whose success depends on interaction</li> <li>• Fostering within-team interdependence</li> <li>• Team leadership affects the performance of the team.</li> </ul>
Duration	15 minutes

### Part 2 // Module 7: Work ethics

Instructions	<p>The set of values comprising one's Work Ethic leads to enhanced professionalism, higher productivity, solid self-respect and personal work-life balance. By the end of this module the skipper will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand the meaning and importance of Work Ethics</li> <li>• List the factors that affect his/her Ethical values and priorities</li> <li>• Better understand how to sustain and/or improve their efforts in order to attain a higher, socially accepted Work Ethic.</li> </ul>
Duration	15 minutes

### Part 2 // Module 8: Keeping a positive attitude

Instructions	<p>The aim of this module is to explain how to maintain a positive attitude in the workplace, regardless of whether it comes naturally or not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surround yourself with positive people</li> <li>• Fill your mind with positive input</li> <li>• Control your language</li> <li>• Create a routine for the day</li> <li>• Be nice to other people</li> <li>• Don't rely on an outside source of positivity</li> <li>• Assume responsibility and choose your response</li> <li>• Decide your reaction to known problems ahead of time</li> </ul>
Duration	15 minutes

### Part 2 // Module 9: Courtesy

Instructions	<p>Courtesy is the use of polite manners. A courteous person is respectful and considerate of others. This module introduces skippers to fundamental Do's and essential Don'ts.</p> <p>Do's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respect your customer</li> <li>• Be Honest</li> <li>• Take Responsibility</li> <li>• Always Put Yourself in The Customer's Shoes</li> <li>• Express Your Gratitude</li> </ul> <p>Don'ts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't Make Things Overly Complicated</li> <li>• Don't Be Indifferent</li> <li>• Don't Treat Clients as Transactions</li> <li>• Don't Ignore Client Feedback</li> <li>• Don't Be Afraid of Complaints</li> </ul>
Duration	15 minutes

### Part 2 // Module 10: Negotiation skills that make the difference

Instructions	<p>Negotiation is a method how compromise or agreement is reached while avoiding argument and dispute. The aim of this module is to introduce skippers to the following steps of the process of negotiation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation</li> <li>• Discussion</li> <li>• Clarification of goals</li> <li>• Negotiate towards a Win-Win outcome</li> <li>• Agreement</li> <li>• Implementation of a course of action</li> </ul>
Duration	10 minutes

### Part 2 // Module 11: Time management

Instructions	<p>The aim of this module is to help skippers to balance conflicting demands on his/her time. Both, time management skills and team/guest time managements are covered. The module also introduces skippers to some of the skills he/she will need in order to make the chosen method of time management successful.</p>
Duration	10 minutes

### Part 2 // Module 12: Understanding body language

Instructions	Body language is referred to the means by which humans convey information through conscious or subconscious body movements, facial expressions and gestures. The module focuses on techniques how to improve body language at workplace.
Duration	15 minutes

### Part 2 // Module 13: +4 Skills to come across the right way

Instructions	<p>This module covers four additional soft skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to motivate</li> <li>• Emotional intelligence</li> <li>• Creative thinking</li> <li>• Empathy</li> </ul>
Duration	15 minutes

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