

# Effective crewing for small ship cruise lines , by Dynamia

*New smaller luxury ship cruises present fresh challenges for the industry - workforce optimization solutions can enhance crew and guest experiences*

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Many passengers are looking for a more intimate cruising experience and to visit less tourist dominated areas, without giving up the luxury amenities of a large ocean liner. The increased demand for river cruising is just one example that reflects the rising popularity of a small ship experience.

The number of UK and Irish travellers choosing a river cruise hit an all-time

high of 150,300 in 2015 representing an increase of more than 10,000 passengers compared to the previous year.[i] This eight percent increase was mainly driven by the large number of new river ships being launched. In 2015, 184 Cruise Line International Association (CLIA) member river ships were sailing with another 18 new ships on order in 2017, an increase of around 7 percent.[ii]



Releasing the power of today's automated workforce deployment technology can engage crew members and deliver an exceptional guest experience"

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Rapid growth, two major challenges

A trend to smaller, luxury ships is having a major impact on cruise lines bringing with it two major challenges:

1. Finding the right people – the small ship cruise model has built its reputation on being an intimate experience that delivers a highly personalized service from onboard customer service to off-ship sightseeing excursions - all of which are driven by people. Not having the right mix of crew can spoil

the cruise experience. Finding and then keeping the right people is a top priority for operators.

2. The need for speed – with rapid expansion, the more exclusive cruise operators need to overhaul and expand their operations quickly, evolving from boutique companies that could manage crew schedules with something as simple as a spreadsheet or as part of their enterprise resource planning (ERP) system into a larger, dynamic enterprise that requires a dedicated automated crew and resource planning solution to improve planning horizons, take on more vessels and enable more exotic and appealing itineraries.

So how can the smaller, more exclusive cruise lines improve the happiness of their crew to reinforce a positive culture that translates into enhanced guest satisfaction? What are the best strategies to overcome corporate growing pains and expand your fleet without significantly increasing the cost of

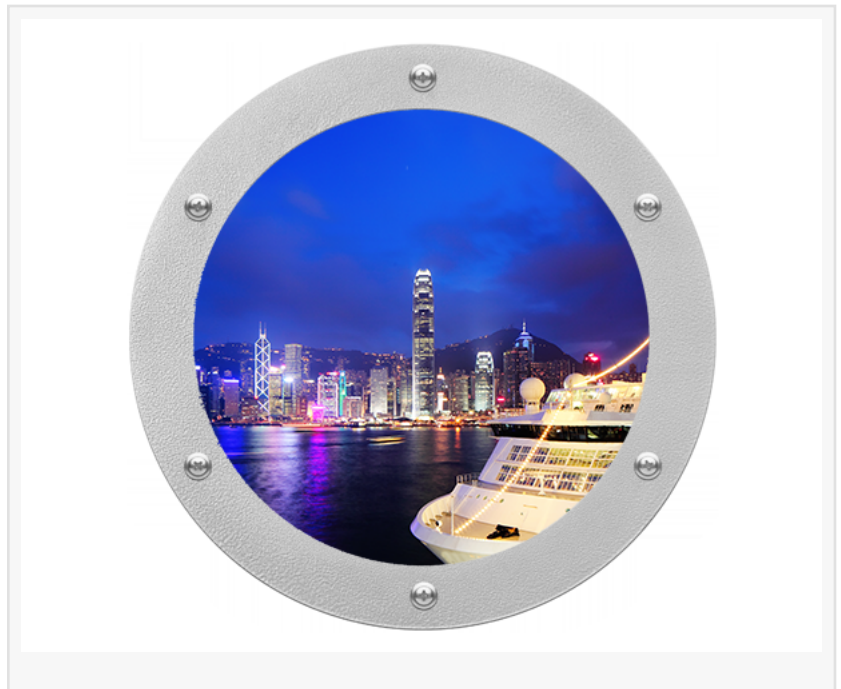


back office crewing functions?

Fortunately, the latest workforce optimization solutions can help. By maximising automation, today's smaller cruise operators can achieve the same high levels of crewing and resource planning as their larger ocean-going counterparts. Dedicated workforce optimization can be used to:

Retain the best crew

- Maximize talent and schedules – modern integrated systems allow managers to develop an effective and balanced skills matrix for each role, encompassing factors such as language skills, individual qualifications, previous experience and availability over set periods of time. This aids the development of efficient schedules and maximizes the use of talent where it is needed. Providing career opportunities is essential to boosting morale and retaining staff in an industry where skilled crew is at a premium
- Empower crew to help themselves – self-service allows crew members to access and update personal information, view forthcoming rotations and travel arrangements and request time-off, removing unnecessary and manual back office interventions to obtain and update crew details.



Add speed and agility to crewing activities

- Spring-clean those spreadsheets - the old way of managing crewing by spreadsheets is very definitely a thing of the past. Spreadsheets are time-consuming and often inaccurate the moment they are created. Modern technology combines powerful workforce optimization (WFO), travel management and itinerary planning into one package. Cruise lines can manage their workforce and ensure regulatory compliance using a single platform while simultaneously removing duplicated effort, administration burdens and staff costs. What is more, ensuring regulatory compliance requirements are met by staff, crew and the organization as a whole leads to motivated personnel allocation and a happy ship
- Bird's Eye view – use one single integrated platform with real-time data to obtain a complete picture of crewing activities including; skill shortfalls, travel needs including medicals, passports and visas as well as availability and training. This enables the development of efficient schedules and guarantees the best available crew are deployed to the right place at the right time
- Flexibility - this is especially important for growing sectors of the cruise industry that will need to accommodate larger numbers of crew and guests in their future planning. The latest WFO systems are designed with the capability to scale with an organization whether as a result of new brands, larger vessels, business purchases or other market requirements
- Solid foundation for the future - the latest innovations in workforce deployment are highly scalable and future-proof. They are sophisticated enough to analyse current resource competencies and model for future requirements quickly and efficiently. A longer planning horizon leads to better crew scheduling and performance, and ultimately improves the overall guest experience.

Cruise lines collect masses of data about passengers' identities, preferences and health requirements. In addition information is held on both employed and contracted workers. Therefore the need to ensure data protection is essential. With the added requirements of the EU General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) technology is needed to create a strategic data management framework for now and into the future.

- Tangible ROI - cloud-based technology has changed the way the cruise industry does its scheduling and asset planning, it provides a powerful business case for managers looking to maximize their return on investment (ROI). The cloud means that overall expenditure can be reduced as the delivery of solutions by way of Software-as-a- Service (SaaS), reduces initial outlay and incorporates support and update cost in the annual subscription.

Release the power of today's automated workforce deployment technology to engage crew members and deliver an exceptional guest experience – without a spreadsheet in sight!

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[i] <https://www.cruisecritic.co.uk/news/news.cfm?ID=6885>

[ii] <http://cruising.org/docs/default-source/research/clia-2018-state-of-the-industry.pdf?sfvrsn=2>

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