

Where customers lead cruise lines follow – 5 Tips for resourcing success

Lee Clarke of Dynama explores the complex matrix that determines cruise ship deployment

LONDON, UK, August 15, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- An effective crew mix for cruise ship destinations is a top priority and the latest strategic workforce planning technology holds the key to success.

According to the latest figures from the CLIA, the cruise industry is projected to grow throughout 2019 with an estimated 30 million travellers expected to cruise, up 6% from 28.2 million in 2018. What is more, the sector continues to make a positive impact on communities around the globe, by sustaining 1,108,676 jobs equalling \$45.6 billion in wages and salaries.[i] Without a doubt, these numbers reflect the rising popularity of cruise travel. They also underline the perennial challenge of achieving 'right crew, right place, first time' that is essential to serving today's cruise travellers.



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Lee Clarke, General Manager, US/EMEA at Dynama

Cruise companies follow the money
Just when you thought managing large crews of people was complex enough, along comes a fresh set of challenges driven by the dynamics of a fast-moving industry. For a start, take a closer look at passenger demographics. These are changing at speed from holidaymakers in search of a traditional, luxury cruise experience to the adventure-seeking Instagram generation drawing inspiration from the latest expedition ships.

How do cruise lines decide where to focus their business

and where to send their ships? While destinations ultimately come down to where customers want to go, the pressures of operating in an increasingly competitive sector mean many cruise companies are moving their ships to where revenue is highest and the port experience is best. This involves a lot of behind-the-scenes decision-making that is based on a complex matrix of numbers, including fuel costs, accessibility, geopolitical issues, onboard spend and both local and international environmental regulations.

Ensuring the right number of crew are in the right place at the right time is no longer enough. Cruise companies need to find new ways to optimize their crewing and resources, achieve economies of scale and win market-share in one of the world's fastest growing leisure sectors.

5 Tips for resourcing success

Cruise organizations have relied on workforce management (WFM) to manage entire fleets of

cruise ships and schedule thousands of crew for many years. Here are five ways strategic workforce planning technology can help to create an effective crew mix for cruise ship destinations;

1. **Take control of travel management** – automated travel administration when built into the core workforce planning platform provides a birds-eye view of travel management across different departments – no more duplicate bookings on flights or hotels! With information all in one place, personnel information, travel policies, itineraries and crew rotations are effectively captured while any changes are instantaneously flagged up to those most impacted including travel administrators, fleet personnel and, of course, crew. The latest WFM solutions also integrate with the world's leading travel booking systems to find the best deals in a timely manner to minimize travel costs and keep within planned budgets.
2. **Simplify tax affairs** – first, integrate your workforce deployment system with back-office accounts applications to ensure payroll always has the most up-to-date information. Secondly, use automated workforce planning solutions to assign specific tax sectors to selected cruise ships, track the exact location of crew members and how long they have worked on a particular ship for any given period in time. This data can then be passed to your preferred payroll to reconcile staff timesheets and ensure individuals pay the correct amount of tax in their country of origin.
3. **Take compliance management to the next level** – ensure your cruise ship complies with important local environmental regulations, stringent health and safety legislation or Working Time and employment laws. Automated resourcing solutions help minimize the risk of damaged corporate reputations and heavy financial penalties by capturing and reporting on a ship's end-to-end compliance activities. They provide a robust audit trail and the hard evidence necessary to demonstrate compliance at the click of a button.
4. **Be ready for change** - a powerful and strategic attribute, the latest employee scheduling solutions manage big data and transform that information into valuable business insights. Spotting trends and variances in demand, in real-time, improves proactive decision-making and boosts business agility. Using the data you capture to interrogate and extrapolate into 'what if' scenarios allows managers to build a variety of schedules and check their effectiveness against different timelines and associated costs before a single dollar is spent.
5. **Revolutionize IT** - many cruise organizations' IT departments are already stretched to the hilt with a limited headcount and an equally limited budget that necessitates a 'do more with less' culture. Why not consider a managed services approach? Outsourcing your strategic workforce planning software to a reliable partner will free up your own internal IT resource and add certainty to budgeting requirements. You no longer have to recruit, train and pay for internal resources to manage your technology and regular maintenance, upgrades and other improvements are usually included as part of the managed service contract. Combine this with cloud-based technology for speed, cost-effectiveness and high levels of data security across your entire IT infrastructure.

Moving ships and resources to where customer demand is highest isn't new in the cruise industry, however the demands are changing and process more complex. Follow these five tips and transform crew planning, scheduling and resourcing challenges into business opportunities and revenue.

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