

The cruise industry is flourishing, what's not to love?

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With rapid growth comes new competition and new opportunities especially in a people business such as cruising. Lee Clarke of Dynama takes a closer look at the stresses and strains of managing a fast growth cruise company and the implications for workforce management

The cruise industry is big business with the number of new entrants and competition rising annually. Latest predictions show that the sector will attract 40 million passengers by 2027 and generate gross revenues of around US\$60 billion. The order book is also at an all-time high with 106 new cruise ships expected to be built in the next 10 years.⁽ⁱ⁾ This is excellent news for ambitious cruise companies seeking to tap into new markets. However, with opportunities come a new set of challenges as cruise ships of all size, from the largest luxury liners to the latest more intimate river voyages, compete to attract and retain the best crew and deliver exceptional levels of guest satisfaction.

Five Challenges for growing cruise companies

The cruise industry is very much a people business, inside and out from crew to the passengers they serve. Therefore, choosing the right technology to help manage those people and overcome challenges is essential. Challenges include:

- 1) Constant competition – a growing industry means increased competition as existing and new entrants step up their efforts to deliver outstanding service levels to passengers then lure them back for more. Having the right crew in place at the right time is fundamental to passenger satisfaction.
- 2) How to scale the business without escalating costs – the heat is on to add new crew and ships without costs spiralling out of control and to continue hitting margins. Make flexibility and scalability your new best friends.
- 3) Eliminating stress through time and cost efficiencies – relying on a disconnected set of manual processes or cumbersome Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems that are too generic or expensive to configure is no longer sufficient. It's time to ditch the spreadsheets and embrace the benefits of automation to ease the headaches of errors and wasted duplicated effort. Consider your IT department too – why not make life easier for them?
- 4) Crew and passenger safety – with many more people on board, it's time to ensure your safety measures are in tip-top condition and meet strict regulatory requirements. This information should be available at the touch of a button.
- 5) Data security – now that the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is here, take steps to avoid costly fines and keep crew and passenger data safe. GDPR isn't just about finding data and making sure it is secure, it's about capturing the context of that data and being able to prove that everything is being done to protect your crew and passengers' personal information at all times.

Get ready for success with the latest workforce management (WFM) solutions

In the rapidly expanding cruise industry, it makes sense to partner with the right technology provider. The innovative solutions will have automation built into their DNA to help maximize crew talents, make tangible time and cost savings, enhance all-round safety and scale effortlessly as your business grows. Choose a partner that can provide:

- Automation – when it comes to managing entire fleets of cruise ships manned by thousands of crew

around the world, automation is essential. The beauty of modern integrated systems is they capture, in real-time, important information about crew members and activities, the ship they work on and their skills as well as important travel documents like passports and visas – to develop efficient schedules and guarantee the most appropriately skilled and available crew members are in the right place at the right time. This keeps you one step ahead of the competition when it comes to delivering a first-class passenger service

- Flexibility and scalability - the latest automated solutions are innovative, highly scalable and future-proof. They are sophisticated enough to analyse current resource competencies and model for future requirements quickly and efficiently. They can be used to quickly clone existing vessels and positions, making it easy to add new builds to the fleet and manage the wave of new crew required to ensure your expansion doesn't jeopardise quality
- Managed services - make life easier for the people behind the scenes. Many cruise organizations' IT departments are often stretched to the hilt with a limited headcount and an equally limited budget that necessitates a 'do more with less' culture. Outsourcing your workforce management software to a reliable partner with the bandwidth and know-how to make technology work for you will free up your own internal IT resources to focus on more strategic areas, improve response times, cut down on recruitment and training costs, eliminate expensive upgrade costs and guarantee regular maintenance of your WFM system
- Onboard safety - easy access to critical data facilitates the ability to manage a multi-skilled and often geographically dispersed workforce over time, rank and experience. In addition to vessel familiarity, training requirements and licenses held. This clear visibility of crew compliance and assets ensures standards meet stringent International Maritime Organization (IMO) regulations and minimise the risk of financial penalties through non-compliance of safety legislation
- GDPR readiness – these days, data security is just as important as keeping your crew and passengers physically safe and cruise lines control a lot of personal data – from passengers' identities, preferences and health requirements to cross-border tax and immigration laws for large workforces.

Fortunately, the latest workforce management solutions can help in various ways. They link seamlessly to your organization's Active Directory to guarantee the security of all login credentials, the crucial first step to securing crew and passengers' details. Customer screens can be set up to ring-fence any sensitive data that passengers choose to store with you such as credit card details. Finally, superior reporting capabilities make it easy to respond quickly and accurately to requests for information from GDPR assessors and provide a valuable audit trail with the hard evidence to aid compliance with GDPR legislation.

It's time to take control and embrace the challenges and unique business opportunities of today's flourishing cruise industry. By tapping into the full potential of automation and working with the right technology partner, you'll create a solid foundation for success now and in the future, whether you have one cruise ship or an entire fleet.

Lee Clarke is Regional Director – Northern Hemisphere at Dynama (<http://www.dynama.global>)

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About Dynama

Dynama, an Allocate Software company, builds on 25 years' heritage and is a leading provider of

maritime and defence workforce deployment software. Headquartered in London, Dynama has a fully fledged new office in Canberra (Australia) with sales and support in the USA.

Its flagship product, Dynama OneView, is designed to underpin complex workforce management in safety critical and high skill level environments, delivering both safe staffing and productivity savings.

For more information, visit Dynama (<http://www.dynama.global>)

(i) Cruise Industry News

(<https://www.cruiseindustrynews.com/cruise-news/19068-cruise-industry-targets-40m-passengers-and-net-earnings-of-9-billion>)

Editors Contacts:

Press contact:

Mary Phillips

PR Artistry Limited

T: +44 (0)1491 845553

E: mary@pra-ltd.co.uk