

# The Ocean Cruise Report Card for Travel Agents

*The Resource for Agents on Ocean Cruise Line Policies*



2017-2018

**travelmarket**  
Voice of the Travel Professional **report**



**MSC Meraviglia**  
**Best New Cruise Ship**

Meraviglia means wonder. From MSC Meraviglia's stunning indoor Mediterranean-style promenade with the most spectacular LED screen at sea to the unique Cirque du Soleil™ at Sea shows, it's no wonder that she was awarded "Best New Cruise Ship" by Cruise Critic UK, the world's leading cruise reviews site.

**#1 CRUISE LINE IN EUROPE  
AND SOUTH AMERICA**



**NOT JUST ANY CRUISE**

Call 844-336-0729  
Visit [msccruisesagent.com](http://msccruisesagent.com)



# “BEST NEW CRUISE SHIP” MSC SEASIDE

- Cruise Critic -



**MSC Seaside**  
**Best New Cruise Ship**

Her iconic design is awe-inspiring. Her spectacular amenities are like no other. That's why *MSC Seaside* was awarded “Best New Cruise Ship” by Cruise Critic, the world's leading cruise reviews site.

**7-NIGHT CARIBBEAN CRUISES  
FROM MIAMI**



**MSC**  
CRUISES

NOT JUST ANY CRUISE

Call 844-336-0729 Visit [msccruisesagent.com](http://msccruisesagent.com)

# LETTER *FROM THE EDITOR*

2017-2018

## **DEAR TRAVEL AGENT,**

Welcome to the second edition of *Travel Market Report's* Supplier Report Card for Ocean Cruise Lines, our inside look at the practices of cruise lines.

Our inaugural edition of *The Ocean Cruise Report Card for Travel Agents* was published in early 2017. This edition, which follows *The River Cruise Report Card for Travel Agents* that was published in early January, includes up-to-date information, different editorials, and more cruise lines than last year's edition (Azamara Club Cruises, and Seabourn have been added).

All of these report cards seek out information about how the major suppliers in each sector of our industry interact with their most important partners, the travel professionals.

With this edition, we hope to provide you with a resource you can use when dealing with your clients who are booking ocean sailings all over the world. We want you to know which suppliers truly have your best interest in mind.

We invite you to take a look and to keep a copy at your desk during your day-to-day dealings with clients and suppliers. Not all of the cruise lines we invited to participate chose to do so, but we're still very excited to show you just how valuable you are to the biggest companies in travel.

We also invite you to write us if you experience a different policy than what the cruise lines listed in the following pages.



Sincerely,

**Daniel McCarthy**  
*Editor-in-Chief*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Letter from the Editor . . . . . 4

**CHART ONE:** Sales Percentage . . . . . 6

**CHART TWO:** Commission Percentage . . . . . 7

**CHART THREE:** Commission Types . . . . . 8-11

**CHART FOUR:** Cruise Accreditation . . . . . 12-13

Editorial: How Important is Training to Agent Success? . . . . . 14

**CHART FIVE:** Commission Payment Schedules . . . . . 16

**CHART SIX:** Overbooking . . . . . 17

**CHART SEVEN:** Non-Commissionable Fees . . . . . 19

Editorial: Selling Ocean Cruises: Part 1 . . . . . 20

**CHART EIGHT:** Website and Commission Issues . . . . . 22-29

Editorial: Selling Ocean Cruises: Part 2 . . . . . 30

**CHART NINE:** Co-op Marketing . . . . . 32

**CHART TEN:** Referral Program . . . . . 33

**CHART ELEVEN:** Fam Trip Policy . . . . . 34

**CHART TWELVE:** Types of Training . . . . . 35

Editorial: Cruise Lines Reveal New Products Debuting in 2018 . . . . . 36

**CHART THIRTEEN:** How to Sell More Cruises . . . . . 38

## PARTICIPATING SUPPLIERS





chart01

### SALES PERCENTAGE

Despite an increase in online bookings in other segments of the industry, travel agents continue to be the most important distribution channel for cruise lines everywhere. Here's what cruise lines had to say about how much of their sales come from agents:

# sales percentage

Ocean Cruise Line	What percentage of your sales are from travel agents?
Azamara Club Cruises	88%
Carnival Cruise Line	Declined to answer.
Celebrity Cruises	Vast majority
Crystal Cruises	Crystal has one of the highest percentages of business from travel agents of any cruise line.
MSC Cruises	Approximately 80%
Norwegian Cruise Line	Vast majority
Oceania Cruises	95%
Paul Gauguin Cruises	90%
Regent Seven Seas Cruises	80%
Royal Caribbean International	Vast majority
Seabourn	Approximately 90%
Silversea Cruises	80% - 85%
Viking Ocean	The majority of Viking's business comes from travel agents.
Windstar Cruises	Travel agents are Windstar's largest and most important distribution channel.



chart02

# commission percentage

Ocean Cruise Line	What is your base commission percentage?	Is there a maximum commission percentage you pay? If so, what is it?
Azamara Club Cruises	10%	16%
Carnival Cruise Line	10%	16%
Celebrity Cruises	10%	16%
Crystal Cruises	10% for non-affiliated, 12% for Crystal-affiliated consortia agencies.	17%
MSC Cruises	10%	17%
Norwegian Cruise Line	10%	Tiered, based on revenue productivity.
Oceania Cruises	10%	17%
Paul Gauguin Cruises	10%	15%
Regent Seven Seas Cruises	10%	17%
Royal Caribbean International	10%	16%
Seabourn	10%	16%
Silversea Cruises	10%	No
Viking Ocean	12%	18%
Windstar Cruises	10%	Declined to answer.



chart03

# commission types

Ocean Cruise Line	Base Cruise Fare	Government Taxes	Ancillary Services	Spa Services	Dining Packages
Azamara Club Cruises	YES	NO	N/A	NO	NO
Carnival Cruise Line	YES	NO	N/A	NO	NO
Celebrity Cruises	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
Crystal Cruises	YES	NO	SOME	NO	NOT OFFERED
MSC Cruises	YES	NO	YES <sup>3</sup>	YES <sup>3</sup>	YES <sup>3</sup>
Norwegian Cruise Line	YES	NO	NO <sup>1</sup>	NO	NO
Oceania Cruises	YES	YES <sup>4</sup>	NO	NO	NO
Paul Gauguin Cruises	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
Regent Seven Seas Cruises	YES	NO	NO	NO	YES <sup>4</sup>
Royal Caribbean International	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO
Seabourn	YES	NO	SOME	NO	NO
Silversea Cruises	YES	NO	NO	NO	NOT OFFERED
Viking Ocean	YES	YES	YES	YES	NOT OFFERED
Windstar Cruises	YES	NO	YES <sup>5</sup>	NO	NOT OFFERED

<sup>1</sup> Depending on the service provided. For example, should a client need to rent a mobility scooter, etc., for the cruise, a commission would be paid by Special Needs Group, but not NCL.

<sup>3</sup> If pre-booked and pre-paid

<sup>4</sup> Included in cruise fare

<sup>5</sup> On select packages





chart03

# commission types

Ocean Cruise Line	Shore Excursions	Port Charges	Insurance	Gratuities	Transfers
Azamara Club Cruises	YES <sup>6</sup>	NO	YES	YES <sup>4</sup>	NO
Carnival Cruise Line	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Celebrity Cruises	YES <sup>6</sup>	NO	YES	NO	SOMETIMES
Crystal Cruises	YES <sup>4</sup>	NO	YES	YES <sup>4</sup>	YES <sup>4</sup>
MSC Cruises	YES <sup>3</sup>	NO	YES <sup>3</sup>	NO	YES <sup>3</sup>
Norwegian Cruise Line	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES <sup>2</sup>
Oceania Cruises	NO	NO	YES	NO	NO
Paul Gauguin Cruises	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES
Regent Seven Seas Cruises	YES <sup>4</sup>	NO	YES	YES <sup>4</sup>	YES <sup>4</sup>
Royal Caribbean International	YES <sup>7</sup>	NO	YES	NO	NO
Seabourn	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES <sup>2</sup>
Silversea Cruises	NO	NO	YES	YES <sup>4</sup>	YES
Viking Ocean	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES
Windstar Cruises	NO	N/A	YES	NO	NO

<sup>2</sup> If clients purchase a bundle package that includes air and/or hotel, transfers, etc.

<sup>3</sup> If pre-booked and pre-paid

<sup>4</sup> Included in cruise fare

<sup>6</sup> On group bookings

<sup>7</sup> If booked through RCI





chart 03

# commission types

Ocean Cruise Line	Airfare	Hotel Accommodations	Pre- & Post-Trip Tours	Other
Azamara Club Cruises	NO	YES	YES	
Carnival Cruise Line	NO	NO	NO	FUTURE CRUISE CREDITS
Celebrity Cruises	SOMETIMES	SOMETIMES	SOMETIMES	
Crystal Cruises	NO	VARIES	VARIES	
MSC Cruises	YES <sup>3</sup>	YES <sup>3</sup>	YES <sup>3</sup>	
Norwegian Cruise Line	YES <sup>2</sup>	YES <sup>2</sup>	YES <sup>2</sup>	
Oceania Cruises	YES <sup>4</sup>	NO	NO	
Paul Gauguin Cruises	NO	YES	YES	
Regent Seven Seas Cruises	NO	YES	YES	
Royal Caribbean International	YES <sup>8</sup>	YES	YES	
Seabourn	NO	YES	YES	
Silversea Cruises	YES	YES	YES	
Viking Ocean	YES	YES	YES	
Windstar Cruises	NO	YES <sup>9</sup>	YES	DRINK PCKGS , INTERNET PCKGS <sup>9</sup>

<sup>2</sup> If clients purchase a bundle package that includes air and/or hotel, transfers, etc.

<sup>3</sup> If pre-booked and pre-paid

<sup>4</sup> Included in cruise fare

<sup>8</sup> Indirectly as the revenue generated from booking air through our Air2Sea program is added into the overall revenue generated (cruise + air) by the Travel Agent; therefore, enabling the Travel Agent to reach the next commission tier faster.

<sup>9</sup> When pre-purchased



chart04

# cruise accreditation

Ocean Cruise Line	CLIA	ARC	IATAN
Azamara Club Cruises	NO	NO	NO
Carnival Cruise Line	YES	YES	YES
Celebrity Cruises	YES <sup>2</sup>	YES <sup>2</sup>	YES <sup>2</sup>
Crystal Cruises	YES	YES	YES
MSC Cruises	YES	YES	YES
Norwegian Cruise Line	YES <sup>3</sup>	YES <sup>3</sup>	YES <sup>3</sup>
Oceania Cruises	YES	YES	YES
Paul Gauguin Cruises	YES	YES	YES
Regent Seven Seas	YES	NO	NO
Royal Caribbean Cruise Line	YES <sup>2</sup>	YES <sup>2</sup>	YES <sup>2</sup>
Seabourn	YES <sup>2</sup>	YES <sup>2</sup>	YES <sup>2</sup>
Silversea Cruises	YES	YES	YES
Viking Ocean Cruises	YES	YES	YES
Windstar	YES	YES	YES

<sup>2</sup> Not required

<sup>3</sup> With copy of appointment letter or certificate



chart04

# cruise accreditation

Ocean Cruise Line	ACTA	ASTA	Consortium Affiliation	Other
Azamara Club Cruises	NO	NO	NO	7
Carnival Cruise Line	NO	NO	YES	6
Celebrity Cruises	NO	NO	NO	
Crystal Cruises	YES 1	YES 1	YES 1	TRUE
MSC Cruises	NO	NO	NO	
Norwegian Cruise Line	YES 4	NO	YES 3	
Oceania Cruises	YES 1	YES 1	YES 1	
Paul Gauguin Cruises	YES	YES	YES	
Regent Seven Seas	YES	YES	NO	5
Royal Caribbean Cruise Line	NO	NO	NO	
Seabourn	YES 2	YES 2	YES 2	8
Silversea Cruises	YES	YES	YES	TRUE
Viking Ocean Cruises	YES	YES	YES	
Windstar	YES	YES	YES	TRUE

1 With proof of CLIA, ARC or IATAN

2 Not required

3 With copy of appointment letter

4 Need copy of TICO license or GST, not ACTA membership, although we encourage same

5 Any agency with a W-9 and business license qualifies to be a new vendor

6 TRUE, ABTA, ATOL, ABN, TTA, Travel Business License or Seller of Travel License

7 Agency verification document and valid W-9.

8 Business license and pseudo number.

# HOW IMPORTANT IS TRAINING TO AGENT SUCCESS? VITAL, CRUISE LINES SAY

by Daniel McCarthy

*New learning opportunities and incentives for travel agents are being offered by almost all of the ocean cruise lines.*

With an increasingly crowded market in ocean cruises, it's more important than ever for travel agents to get to know ships and itineraries, and learn how to sell them. That's why almost all ocean cruise lines are upping their travel agent training options for 2018.

"Travel agents are our most valued partners, and providing them with the right tools as well as the best training is a very important part of our commitment to their success," said Vicki Freed, senior vice president of sales, trade support, and service for Royal Caribbean International.

This year, Royal Caribbean University, the cruise line's travel agent training portal, was relaunched with a new interactive and mobile-friendly program. According to Freed, the portal was specifically redesigned "to be robust and informative while also fun and engaging to serve up education in

an impactful way that complements how learning has evolved."

After graduating the bachelor and master levels of Royal Caribbean University, agents will be eligible to receive a variety of rewards such as CLIA credits, a Passport to Savings booklet, onboard credit, complimentary VOOM WiFi, and opportunities to attend Seminars at Sea and inaugural sailings.

Also this year, MSC Cruises launched its new MSC Academy, which Senior Vice President of Sales Joe Jiffo said, "allows us to educate all travel agents on MSC Cruises' offerings and teach them how to effectively merchandise the brand."

The new program takes agents through training courses, quizzes, and checkpoints that are all designed to get agents up-to-speed on what MSC is offering.

The program offers videos, voiceovers and an audio pronunciation guide to give agents

insight into MSC's brand history, sailing destinations, the MSC Voyagers Club, onboard experiences and more. The academy also offers a forum for all travel agents to pool notes and resources, creating an area to share knowledge with others in the industry.

For home-based agents, MSC is also offering one-on-one time with its business development manager team.

"Travel agents stand to gain from the rapid growth of the cruise industry, with more product than ever before being introduced to the market on an annual basis," Jiffo said. "With new product comes new updates and information, and it's vital for agents to be properly trained and kept up-to-date in order to effectively grow their businesses by offering the right product to their clients."

Also new this year is Norwegian Cruise Line's NCLU, which was



launched just a few months ago. The new program, which is mobile- and tablet-friendly, allows travel agents to earn four different levels of certification — Associate, Bachelor’s, Master’s, and Ph.D. — depending on courses taken. More than 20 electives, including opportunities to earn destination expert status, are available.

“The reception from travel partners has been overwhelmingly positive,” Senior Vice President of Sales Camille Olivere told Travel Market Report. “The new platform is helping us better serve our agent community with user-friendly, concise courses that feature meaningful content that help our partners grow their businesses.”

Also new with NCLU is the NCLU Student Union, a private Facebook group exclusively for agents enrolled in NCLU. “We’ve seen engagement

amongst our community skyrocket, with many partners actively participating in discussions of NCLU content on a daily basis,” Olivere added.

Carnival Cruise Line also has training news for 2018 — a brand new *GoCCL.com* that debuted in November 2017. The website now has an updated design based on travel agent feedback, including an improved navigation bar.

“Agents have really embraced the new *GoCCL.com*. We’ve seen nearly double the users and usage since we launched our completely redesigned travel agent portal last November,” Adolfo Perez, Carnival Cruise Line’s vice president of sales and trade marketing, told Travel Market Report.

According to Perez, the “redesign was a true collaboration between our teams and our valued travel agent

*“Travel agents are our most valued partners, and providing them with the right tools as well as the best training is a very important part of our commitment to their success.”*

*— Vicki Freed, senior vice president of sales, trade support, and service for Royal Caribbean International.*

partners,” including interviews with partners and input from thousands of agents.



chart05

## COMMISSION SCHEDULE

Few things are more troubling for agents than having to track down commission checks that are due them. Most of the cruise lines maintain a strict schedule for paying agents their fair share.

# commission payment schedules

Ocean Cruise Line	What is your schedule for paying travel agents commission?
Azamara Club Cruises	At final payment for FIT and 30 days after sailing for groups.
Carnival Cruise Line	Weekly schedule for commissions earned. For individual bookings, this occurs once payment is made against the full gross amount. For group bookings, commission is paid seven days after bookings sail return date.
Celebrity Cruises	Base commission is paid when booking is paid in full.
Crystal Cruises	Two weeks before sailing.
MSC Cruises	For FIT bookings, once final payment is received and for group bookings, two weeks before departure.
Norwegian Cruise Line	As soon as final payment is made, the commission is automatically sent one week later.
Oceania Cruises	Commission is paid 30 days prior to sailing.
Paul Gauguin Cruises	Commissions are paid out two weeks prior to sailing.
Regent Seven Seas	Commissions are issued starting at 30 days prior to sailing.
Royal Caribbean Cruise Line	Base commission is paid when booking is paid in full.
Seabourn	The commission is paid out after the final payment is made. Typically takes 7-10 business days to process.
Silversea Cruises	Approximately 14 days prior to sailing.
Viking Ocean Cruises	29 days prior to departure date.
Windstar	Commissions begin processing the week that the cruise departs and is generally received by agents 2-3 weeks post-cruise departure.

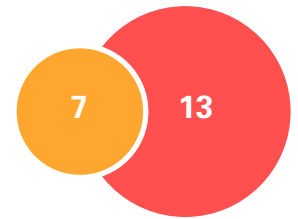




chart06

7 out of the 13

lines who responded to whether or not they overbook answered "no." Of the lines who didn't, all have policies in place that look to protect travel agents commission in the event of overbooking.



### OVERBOOKING

Overbooking continues to be a major issue in all segments of the travel industry. While many of the lines questioned said they don't book over capacity, some still do. Here's the rundown:

# overbooking

Ocean Cruise Line	Do you overbook? If so, how do you handle commissions?
Azamara Club Cruises	No, we do not overbook.
Carnival Cruise Line	Declined to answer.
Celebrity Cruises	No, we do not overbook.
Crystal Cruises	Yes, commission will be paid according to the category paid by the guest.
MSC Cruises	No, we manage to the ship's capacity.
Norwegian Cruise Line	We conservatively and smartly manage our inventory based on past booking trends and current market conditions.
Oceania Cruises	Yes, commissions are paid on sailed business.
Paul Gauguin Cruises	No, we do not overbook.
Regent Seven Seas	Yes, commissions are protected.
Royal Caribbean Cruise Line	No, we do not overbook.
Seabourn	Yes, situation is handled on a case-by-case basis.
Silversea Cruises	N/A
Viking Ocean Cruises	Minimal overbooking and travel agents don't lose commission due to overbooking.
Windstar Cruises	Not currently





chart07

Out of all the participating ocean cruise lines, **ONLY VIKING OCEAN CRUISES** sells a fare without any products and services that aren't commissionable to agents.

### NON-COMMISSIONABLE FEES

No cruise line surveyed pays agents commission on every single item in which they play a role. Here's what cruise lines don't pay agents for:

## non-commissionable fees

Ocean Cruise Line	Do you offer products & services to consumers that aren't commissionable to travel agents?	What services and products are included in your non-commissionable fees?
Azamara Club Cruises	YES	Anything purchased onboard (except future cruise booked while onboard), ChoiceAir, airfare, shore excursions or government fees and taxes.
Carnival Cruise Line	YES	Declined to answer.
Celebrity Cruises	YES	It's just the non-commissionable portion of the cruise price, it's not specifically to pay for anything.
Crystal Cruises	YES	Air and shore excursions on <i>Symphony</i> and <i>Serenity</i> .
MSC Cruises	YES	Anything purchased onboard.
Norwegian Cruise Line	YES	Shore excursions, dining packages and other add ons that are included in part of a promotion are reflected in the cruise fare.
Oceania Cruises	YES	Declined to answer.
Paul Gauguin Cruises	YES	Shore excursions, air and taxes.
Regent Seven Seas	YES	Government fees and taxes.
Royal Caribbean Cruise Line	YES	Declined to answer.
Seabourn	YES	Declined to answer.
Silversea Cruises	YES	Shore excursions reserved in advance and specialty restaurants.
Viking Ocean Cruises	NO	N/A
Windstar Cruises	YES	Declined to answer.

# SELLING OCEAN CRUISES PART ONE: ISSUES FOR AGENTS

by Marilee Crocker

*Discounting by big box stores and OTAs, a deluge of fare promotions, uncertain geopolitics and catastrophic weather events – these are among challenges facing cruise-selling travel agents.*

Ocean cruises have long been the lifeblood of many leisure travel agencies. And for good reason. Ocean cruises are a perennially popular product that agents can count on to deliver high levels of customer satisfaction, repeat bookings and steady commissions.

But selling ocean cruises isn't always smooth sailing. There are obstacles. Some are a direct result of cruise line practices, while others stem from marketplace conditions.

We asked executives from six agency groups what they consider the top issues currently facing travel agents who sell ocean cruises. Here's what they said.

## **REBATING AND DISCOUNTING**

Rebating by big box stores and OTAs probably represents the largest loss of volume to agencies, said Nicole Mazza, chief marketing officer of TRAVELSAVERS, The Affluent Traveler and NEST. "The big box retailers and the OTAs continue to be a problem, with them being allowed to rebate and to offer promotions not in the marketplace or prior to their [general] release."

Michelle Fee, founder and CEO of Cruise Planners, also cited this issue. "Right now, some of the big box stores have an advantage. It's not just that they're giving customers rebates on cruise fares; in some cases, they're doing so with credits or cash cards for use inside their own store, she said. "They're earning dollars on that, where if we give back a credit we don't earn any dollars on it. That is not an even playing field."

## **FLOOD OF PROMOTIONS AND FARES**

Keeping track of multiple cruise line promotions and incentives, then factoring them all in to find the best value for the client is often daunting for agents, said John Lovell, CTC, president of Travel Leaders Network & Leisure Group.

"There's so many offers out in the marketplace at any given time," Lovell said. "From an agent's perspective, it's just a deluge of information. Especially in Wave Season, everybody wants that share of their mind at the same time. The biggest challenge is time management and staying on

top of everything."

Explaining cruise fares or revised rules to clients is also time-consuming. Libbie Rice, co-president of Ensemble Travel Group, cited the recent addition by some cruise lines of nonrefundable deposit fares. "The cruise line might have two prices, one more amenity-driven, one price-driven. First, you have to explain that to the consumer. Then, there's another layer of 'if you pay now it's cheaper but it's nonrefundable.' It's not a bad thing – agents like the nonrefundable fares – but it's a little longer sell time, a little more explaining," Rice said.

## **DIRECT BOOKINGS**

Persistent consumer misperceptions about the cost of booking through an agent are a hindrance, Fee said. "There's so many cruisers out there who feel that by going direct they're going to get the better deal, the better amenity. I feel that this challenges the travel agent community the most," Fee said. "As an industry, we need to be doing a better job of coming together and making the public more aware."



In some cases, the cruise lines themselves are the problem. In-house sales teams at certain cruise lines are overly pushy when it comes to consumer-direct sales, even when the customer already has a travel agent, said Mazza.

“If the consumer has called the cruise line, even if it’s to get a little information, or if they sign up for emails, they get a call within 30 minutes,” explained Mazza. “Even if the client says, ‘I’m working with an agent,’ they are extremely aggressive [with offers].”

#### **GLOBAL CONDITIONS**

From geopolitical turmoil and terrorism to catastrophic weather, the unpredictability of global conditions is always an issue.

“Vacation choices are often influenced by environmental and economic factors. Depending on the current state of the world, this can impact where customers choose to go on vacation, the sort of vacation they choose, or even if they decide to go on a vacation at all,” said

Matthew Eichhorst, president of Expedia CruiseShipCenters.

“For example, in the wake of the devastating hurricanes last fall, customers didn’t have the confidence to travel to the Caribbean, which impacted many travel agents offering cruises to the region,” he said.

In the Caribbean example, the media focused on the devastation, with little if any reporting on the many areas that were spared, and that exacerbated the problem. In fact, cruise clients are still confused about whether the Caribbean is open for business, said Rice. “Consumers are calling trying to understand what’s the status of the Caribbean and is the cruise line going to change my itinerary.”

#### **ATTRACTING NON-CRUISERS**

For Drew Daly, general manager of network engagement and performance for CruiseOne, Dream Vacations and Cruises Inc., the top hurdle facing cruise-selling agents also represents their top opportunity – educating the traveling public

about the benefits of cruising.

“Roughly 80 percent of the population has never cruised. The biggest challenge is how to raise awareness for the value of a cruise vacation with those that have never cruised, and create excitement and demand. To me, it’s the core of everything,” said Daly.

“It’s up to [agents] to be active in their communities and talking about it. The best thing you can do as a small business owner is always be a communicator of that product and what it provides.”

#### **CONTINUING TO GROW**

Whether they’re selling cruise or non-cruise vacations, the most pressing issue facing agents today is to grow the business, said Lovell.

“The true challenge is to remain relevant. The agent needs to really work hard to attract new clients. The business owner is looking for growth. The way you grow is to attract and maintain new clients on an annual basis.”



chart08

# website & commissions

Ocean Cruise Line	Does your website have a travel agency section that allows agents to register and track bookings and revenue?	Does your website offer white-label solutions for travel agents?
Azamara Club Cruises	YES	YES
Carnival Cruise Line	NO	YES
Celebrity Cruises	YES	YES
Crystal Cruises	YES	NO <sup>5</sup>
MSC Cruises	YES	YES
Norwegian Cruise Line	YES	NO
Oceania Cruises	YES <sup>17</sup>	YES
Paul Gauguin Cruises	YES	NO
Regent Seven Seas Cruises	YES	YES
Royal Caribbean International	YES	YES
Seabourn	YES	NO
Silversea Cruises	YES	YES
Viking Ocean	YES	YES
Windstar Cruises	YES	NO

<sup>5</sup> Not currently, but is planned.

<sup>17</sup> Bookings tracked not revenue.



chart08

# website & commissions

Ocean Cruise Line	Do you currently take consumer email addresses from travel agent bookings to use for direct-to-consumer marketing campaigns?	Do you run promotions to encourage consumers to book their next trip onboard and retain agent commission?
Azamara Club Cruises	NO	YES
Carnival Cruise Line	YES 11	YES
Celebrity Cruises	NO	YES
Crystal Cruises	YES 11	YES
MSC Cruises	NO	YES
Norwegian Cruise Line	NO	YES
Oceania Cruises	NO	YES
Paul Gauguin Cruises	YES 11	YES
Regent Seven Seas Cruises	NO	YES
Royal Caribbean International	NO	YES
Seabourn	YES 11	YES
Silversea Cruises	NO	YES
Viking Ocean	YES 11	YES
Windstar Cruises	YES 11	YES

11 Only to past guests and we always include a "Contact Your Travel Professional" call to action.



chart08

# website & commissions

Ocean Cruise Line	When marketing to agency clients, do you include the booking agency's call to action?	If you do direct-to-consumer marketing, do you include a "call your travel agent" call to action all of the time?
Azamara Club Cruises	N/A	YES
Carnival Cruise Line	YES	YES
Celebrity Cruises	YES	YES
Crystal Cruises	YES	YES
MSC Cruises	YES	YES
Norwegian Cruise Line	YES <sup>11</sup>	YES
Oceania Cruises	YES	YES
Paul Gauguin Cruises	YES <sup>1</sup>	YES
Regent Seven Seas Cruises	YES	YES
Royal Caribbean International	YES	YES
Seabourn	YES	YES
Silversea Cruises	YES	YES
Viking Ocean	YES	YES
Windstar Cruises	NO	YES

<sup>1</sup> Only if they're part of the co-op program.

<sup>11</sup> Only to past guests and we always include a "Contact Your Travel Professional" call to action.





chart08

# website & commissions

Ocean Cruise Line	Is your commission range different if an agency belongs to a marketing group or consortium?	Do you offer other channels (OTAs, for example) a different commission range?
Azamara Club Cruises	YES	NO
Carnival Cruise Line	DECLINED TO ANSWER	DECLINED TO ANSWER
Celebrity Cruises	YES	NO
Crystal Cruises	YES	NO
MSC Cruises	YES	NO
Norwegian Cruise Line	YES	NO
Oceania Cruises	YES	NO
Paul Gauguin Cruises	YES	NO
Regent Seven Seas Cruises	YES	NO
Royal Caribbean International	YES	NO
Seabourn	NO <sup>19</sup>	NO
Silversea Cruises	YES	DECLINED TO ANSWER
Viking Ocean	YES	NO
Windstar Cruises	YES	NO

<sup>19</sup> Our commission structure ranges from 10-16% and changes based on revenue earned, not based on marketing group or consortium.



# website & commissions

Ocean Cruise Line	Do you allow agencies to mark up any cruise fares?	Do you allow agencies to rebate to their clients?	Can commissions be netted against checks in a weekly summary?
Azamara Club Cruises	NO	YES	NO
Carnival Cruise Line	NO <sup>6</sup>	NO <sup>6</sup>	YES <sup>7</sup>
Celebrity Cruises	NO	NO <sup>18</sup>	YES <sup>9</sup>
Crystal Cruises	NO	NO	YES <sup>15</sup>
MSC Cruises	NO	NO	YES
Norwegian Cruise Line	YES <sup>16</sup>	NO	NO
Oceania Cruises	YES	NO	NO
Paul Gauguin Cruises	NO	NO	YES
Regent Seven Seas Cruises	YES	NO <sup>14</sup>	NO
Royal Caribbean International	YES <sup>16</sup>	NO	YES <sup>12</sup>
Seabourn	NO	YES	NO
Silversea Cruises	YES <sup>13</sup>	NO <sup>14</sup>	DECLINED TO ANSWER
Viking Ocean	NO	NO	NO
Windstar Cruises	YES	YES <sup>2</sup>	NO

2 Not encouraged.

6 All rates other than Approved Rates require the express written authorization of Carnival before being offered in any media.

7 Only for commission overages on a respective booking with this condition.

9 Must submit an agency check for the net amount prior to the final payment date of booking.

12 If a Travel Partner wishes to pay the net amount due on the booking, they must submit an agency check for the net amount prior to the final payment

date of booking. Net payment does not include commission and must be submitted by agency check.

13 If the agency is packaging cruise with land.

14 However, they can offer a value add that does not exceed 5% of the cruise.



chart08

# website & commissions

Ocean Cruise Line	Do you add a surcharge on credit cards to cover merchant fees?	Do you prominently display the agency's name and phone in confirmations and documents?
Azamara Club Cruises	NO	YES
Carnival Cruise Line	NO	YES
Celebrity Cruises	NO	YES
Crystal Cruises	NO	YES
MSC Cruises	NO	YES
Norwegian Cruise Line	NO	YES
Oceania Cruises	NO	YES
Paul Gauguin Cruises	NO	YES
Regent Seven Seas Cruises	NO	YES
Royal Caribbean International	NO	YES
Seabourn	NO	YES
Silversea Cruises	NO	YES
Viking Ocean	NO	YES
Windstar Cruises	NO	YES

15 A group summary can be requested and it shows commissions.

16 For groups.

18 We allow funded value add ons as a booking incentive.



# AUTHENTIC ADVENTURE TRAVEL

**Your Clients Will Sail With a Team of 11-19 Experts of the Highest Caliber**  
They will enjoy lectures, workshops, zodiac trips and guided nature walks.

**One of the Highest Crew to Guest Ratio in the Expedition Cruising Industry**  
The team includes a variety of experts such as biologists, naturalists, anthropologists, geologists, historians, and photographers hand-picked for their knowledge. As well as butlers and distinguished staff.

**Get Ahead With Group Programs**  
Fastest growing segment of the travel industry, a lot of first time cruisers interested in expedition, repeat business, and high commission.

**Reap the Rewards of a High-Value Transaction**  
Silversea pays commission on more.

**Invaluable Support Programs**  
Take your agency to the next level.



## SILVERSEA EXPEDITION'S ALL-INCLUSIVE LIFESTYLE

All-suite Accommodations | Butler Service in Every Suite | Fine Dining Options Wines and Spirits throughout the ship  
Onboard Gratuities | Complimentary parka for polar expeditions | Excursions and activities, including explorations by Zodiac®

---

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL SILVERSEA AT 888.978.2856,  
OR VISIT [SILVERSEASPECIALISTREWARDS.COM](http://SILVERSEASPECIALISTREWARDS.COM)



chart08

# website & commissions

Ocean Cruise Line	Do you pay commissions on non-refunded cancellation monies paid?	Do you make your product and prices fully available in all GDSs, B2B websites, call centers, and other portals?
Azamara Club Cruises	YES 10	YES
Carnival Cruise Line	YES	YES 8
Celebrity Cruises	YES 10	YES
Crystal Cruises	YES	YES
MSC Cruises	YES	YES
Norwegian Cruise Line	YES	YES
Oceania Cruises	YES 4	YES
Paul Gauguin Cruises	YES	NO
Regent Seven Seas Cruises	YES	YES
Royal Caribbean International	YES 10	YES
Seabourn	YES 10	YES
Silversea Cruises	YES	YES
Viking Ocean	NO	YES
Windstar Cruises	YES 10	NO 5

4 Only on 100% penalized bookings.

5 Not currently, but is planned.

8 Qualified partners who complete relevant data, security and technology reviews.

10 Only within the full cancellation period.

# SELLING OCEAN CRUISES PART TWO: ADVICE FOR AGENTS

*by Marilee Crocker*

*Agency group executives offer travel agents practical tips on how to successfully increase their ocean cruise sales.*

Develop close relationships with selected cruise lines, stay current with product and promotions, and talk up the value of using an agent. Those are among steps travel agents can take to succeed in selling ocean cruises in the face of persistent obstacles like rebating, aggressive consumer-direct sales and challenging global conditions, according to executives of leading travel agency groups.

To be fair, the conditions for selling ocean cruises are arguably better for travel agents today than in recent memory.

For one thing, ocean cruise lines more consistently support the travel agency channel, and they do a better job of minimizing cross-channel conflict, agency group executives told Travel Market Report.

"They used to forget to add the tagline 'Or call your travel agent,'" said Michelle Fee, founder and CEO of Cruise Planners. "The cruise lines have come a long way over the last few years in better understanding that we all have to work together."

But that doesn't mean some ocean cruise lines aren't overly aggressive about selling direct to consumers. Because intimate knowledge of their own promotions allows in-house sales staff to be particularly tactical in their approach, agents need to work hard to stay current with cruise line product and promotions.

## **FOCUS YOUR EFFORTS**

"An agent needs to educate themselves almost daily," said Nicole Mazza, chief marketing officer of TRAVELSAVERS, The Affluent Traveler and NEST.

Given the flood of often short-term promotions, it's nearly impossible to stay current on all cruise lines, so Mazza advises agents to focus on a small handful of cruise line partners and to build close relationships with them. "Choose one or two cruise lines and ensure you know their promotions every morning. Be a really good partner to them so you can build their volume and work on special incentives."

## **KNOWLEDGE IS POWER**

Matthew Eichhorst, president of Expedia CruiseShipCenters, considers the global geopolitical climate and the constantly evolving nature of the cruise industry as the two biggest issues facing agents selling ocean cruises. In both cases, he said, "the remedy is for agents to educate themselves."

"If agents are aware of the global geopolitical issues, they will be in a better position to provide their customers with vacation options. For example, Europe is a popular vacation destination, but there is a vast difference between Turkey and Norway from a tourism perspective these days," he said.

"In another example, there were many islands in the Caribbean that were spared from the hurricanes. Agents who were aware of this would be able to offer their customers alternative Caribbean holiday plans.

"Likewise, if agents keep up-to-speed with new ship innovations, cruise line offerings and promotions,



they will be knowledgeable enough to offer their customers a high-value vacation suited to their needs," Eichhorst said.

Regarding geopolitical issues, particularly the threat of terrorism, Drew Daly, general manager of network engagement and performance for CruiseOne, Dream Vacations and Cruises Inc., noted that agents are always faced with customer concerns about safety and security. He urges agents to remind customers that "a cruise vacation is the safest vacation."

#### **PROMOTE THE VALUE OF CRUISING**

For Daly, the most pressing challenge for agents selling ocean cruises is spreading the word about the value of a cruise vacation to members of their communities who have never cruised. "It's almost as if an agent today has to go back to the basics of how agents 30 years ago built their businesses on cruising by doing cruise nights," Daly said.

Remember to be active on social media during your own travels, Daly advised agents. "Remind customers socially when you're traveling. Share that on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. That's going to help people visualize themselves consuming."

#### **TALK UP THE BENEFITS OF USING AN AGENT**

Agents also need to be vocal about the value of using a travel agent. "When the consumer goes direct, it's largely because the agent hasn't made an extraordinary experience for them. They need to be professing that travel agents save you time, energy and money, and that a cruise vacation offers a great value alternative over a land vacation," Daly said.

#### **MAKE THE RIGHT MATCH**

At the end of the day, the agent who does their job well delivers value to the client and to the cruise line, and

that goes a long way to ensuring the agent's continued relevance to consumers and their cruise partners.

"The travel agent's job is to make sure that the client who wants to take a deep water cruise is getting on the right product at the right time and finding the best possible price and amenities out there. That's where the agent serves a great need for consumers, cutting through and finding what brand is right for a particular family. That's where the travel agent really does provide great value," said John Lovell, CTC, president of Travel Leaders Network & Leisure Group.

Cruise lines recognize this value as well, said Fee of Cruise Planners. "I think the cruise lines agree that if you put the customers on the right product, they're going to have a better experience, and they'll have more repeat cruisers. It's about a total experience, and I think we can provide that better than going direct or online."



chart09

100% of lines surveyed do offer some co-op marketing. Most require a conversation with a business development manager or an approved marketing plan to take advantage.

# co-op marketing

Ocean Cruise Line	Do you provide co-op marketing?	How does an agency qualify?
Azamara Club Cruises	YES	Prior sales with Azamara, as well as potential opportunities discussed with local Strategic Business Development Manager.
Carnival Cruise Line	YES	Declined to answer.
Celebrity Cruises	YES	Based on conversation with Celebrity Sales Manager and a marketing plan.
Crystal Cruises	YES	By contacting their Strategic Business Development Manager and providing a market plan that shows viability for both partners to invest funds likely to result in a favorable return on investment for both parties.
MSC Cruises	YES	The agency builds and comes up with an agreed upon marketing plan together with their BDM.
Norwegian Cruise Line	YES	A conversation with a Business Development Manager, illustrating a business plan or a plan against a specific revenue goal, or proven revenue productivity.
Oceania Cruises	YES	Review the opportunity with the local Regional Sales and Marketing Director or Business Development Manager for approval.
Paul Gauguin Cruises	YES	The Directors of Sales have a co-op budget which enables them to develop marketing plans with individual agencies.
Regent Seven Seas	YES	Any agency qualifies for co-op marketing, and we analyze all plans submitted for effectiveness, however, the decision to participate is managed by our Directors of Sales and Marketing or our Business Development Managers using variables such as the medium, target audience, reach and level of agency production.
Royal Caribbean Cruise Line	YES	The territory strategic account manager and the agency owner review their marketing plan and co-op advertising opportunities and agreed-upon marketing initiatives.
Seabourn	YES	Agency to submit Marketing Plan to Business Development Manager for review. Generally, one determinant for plan approval is revenue from previous year.
Silversea Cruises	YES	We look at the sales potential of the agency.
Viking Ocean Cruises	YES	Contact their Director of Business Development who will assist in creating a marketing plan.
Windstar Cruises	YES	Agencies should submit marketing plans to their Regional Sales Manager for review.





chart10

# referral program

Ocean Cruise Line	Does your website/ company have a travel agency referral program for preferred agencies?	If yes, how do agents get onto the referral/preferred list?
Azamara Club Cruises	YES	Based on sales.
Carnival Cruise Line	Declined to answer.	Declined to answer.
Celebrity Cruises	YES	To qualify for this listing, an agency must have a minimum of \$5,000 in sailed revenue for the Celebrity Cruises brand, during the previous 12 months, and reservations must be booked under their own agency phone number, not a host phone number.
Crystal Cruises	YES	We offer an Agent Locator on our website that allows prospective guests to find an agent via a zip code search.
MSC Cruises	NO	N/A
Norwegian Cruise Line	YES	If they are registered in Norwegian Central, they will be included.
Oceania Cruises	NO	N/A
Paul Gauguin Cruises	YES	PEARLS Partners selling \$25,000 or more in revenue per year are featured on the "Find an Agent" tool on our website.
Regent Seven Seas	YES	The request would need to be reviewed by the Director of Sales and Marketing. Agencies are considered on level of production and commitment to selling Regent Seven Seas Cruises.
Royal Caribbean Cruise Line	YES	To qualify for this listing, an agency must have a minimum of \$5,000 in sailed revenue for the Royal Caribbean International brand during the previous 12 months, and reservations must be booked under their own agency phone number, not a host phone number.
Seabourn	YES	Agencies qualified based on revenue.
Silversea Cruises	YES	Based on revenue.
Viking Ocean Cruises	NO	N/A
Windstar Cruises	NO	N/A



chart11

# fam trip policy

## Ocean Cruise Line

What is your fam trip policy for travel agents?

<b>Azamara Club Cruises</b>	Must have sold at least one booking in the past 12 months on any of the three brands: Azamara, Celebrity and Royal Caribbean International.
<b>Carnival Cruise Line</b>	Discounted travel agent rates are distributed to all individual travel agents who are signed-up to receive Carnival e-mails (agents may sign-up at GoCCL.com). Rates are subject to availability and are available on a first-come, first-serve basis.
<b>Celebrity Cruises</b>	We have Seminar at Sea availability throughout the year to help travel agents learn and experience our product. Travel agents must work with their Celebrity Sales Manager to learn how to join us on one of these seminars.
<b>Crystal Cruises</b>	We post agent rate cruises on our agent site year-round.
<b>MSC Cruises</b>	MSC offers seminars at sea multiple times throughout the year as well as ship tours when any of our ships are docked in their homeport. All can be coordinated through the travel agent's BDM.
<b>Norwegian Cruise Line</b>	At BDM discretion or offered to travel partners through headquarters. We want every travel partner to experience our product.
<b>Oceania Cruises</b>	We offer travel agent reduced rates and more information can be found in our Travel agent center at <a href="https://www.oceaniacruises.com/agent/agent-login/">https://www.oceaniacruises.com/agent/agent-login/</a>
<b>Paul Gauguin Cruises</b>	We offer reduced rate travel to industry partners with verification of employment. Confirmation is typically given inside 30 days of sailing.
<b>Regent Seven Seas</b>	All agent partners may submit requests for reduced rates with confirmation from 30-7 days prior to sailing. Agent rate depends on agency production.
<b>Royal Caribbean Cruise Line</b>	We have land familiarization events that are planned through the local Strategic Account Manager. Typically an invitation is sent to the travel agency advising them of the fam opportunity. In addition, we provide a Seminar at Sea experience which creates and combines both classroom learning and the cruise experience. Travel agents can partner with their local Strategic Account Manager for an invitation throughout the year.
<b>Seabourn</b>	FAMs are invitation based for agents registered for the Insider (TP Newsletter) who completed the Seabourn Academy.
<b>Silversea Cruises</b>	Travel Agent Center of our Website offers list and form of Travel Agent Reduced fares. Fares vary by category and voyage.
<b>Viking Ocean Cruises</b>	Fam trips are available based on availability and demand. Travel agents can contact their Director of Business Development and/or Inside Sales for availability.
<b>Windstar Cruises</b>	Windstar regularly offers reduced rates for our travel agent partners. A downloadable PDF of the most current rates as well as the terms and conditions of this offer is available via our Agent hub: <a href="https://agenthub.windstarcruises.com">https://agenthub.windstarcruises.com</a>



chart12

### TRAINING

Training is the bedrock on which agents build their business. Knowing a product inside and out is the first step toward being able to recommend and then sell it. Here's what the cruise lines have to offer in terms of training for travel agents:

## types of training

Ocean Cruise Line	Seminars In Agency Office	Regional Training Seminars	Video Training	Tele-conference/ Webinar Training	Certification Program As Specialists
Azamara Club Cruises	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Carnival Cruise Line	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Celebrity Cruises	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Crystal Cruises	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
MSC Cruises	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Norwegian Cruise Line	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Oceania Cruises	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Paul Gauguin Cruises	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Regent Seven Seas	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Royal Caribbean Cruise Line	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Seabourn	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES
Silversea Cruises	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES
Viking Ocean Cruises	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Windstar Cruises	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES

# CRUISE LINES REVEAL NEW PRODUCTS DEBUTING IN 2018

by Jessica Montevago

*From new ships and itineraries to over-the-top entertainment and amenities, the cruise industry is offering something for every guests' taste and budget.*

## **AZAMARA CLUB CRUISES**

The line's newest ship, *Azamara Pursuit*, will go into a wet dock in Belfast, Northern Ireland, this spring. Following renovations, the ship will be fitted to accommodate 690 guests. The official christening will take place on a short sailing from Aug. 28-30, 2018.

Azamara also expanded its Cuban itineraries, adding four new sailings and two additional maiden ports of call in Cienfuegos and Santiago de Cuba.

## **CARNIVAL CRUISE LINE**

The 3,954-passenger *Carnival Horizon*, sister ship to the *Carnival Vista*, will take its maiden voyage on Apr. 2. The ship boasts a Dr. Seuss-themed water park, 800-foot-long sky ride around its top deck, and IMAX Theater. New on *Horizon* will be a Guy Fieri-themed barbeque eatery and Japanese-style Teppanyaki restaurant. It will sail four- and eight-day itineraries out of New York to Bermuda or the Caribbean, until it moves to its final scheduled homeport of Miami at the end of September.

## **CELEBRITY CRUISES**

In November, the *Celebrity Edge* will sail seven-night itineraries in the Caribbean. The ship boasts the new *Edge* Stateroom with an infinite veranda and first-ever Magic Carpet,

a platform cantilevered off the side of the ship. The *Celebrity Eclipse* will begin five sailings in Dublin; and the *Celebrity Constellation's* seven-night Mediterranean itineraries are back. In addition, *Celebrity Solstice* in Alaska has a longer season and more time spent in port.

## **CRYSTAL CRUISES**

Set for redesign, the *Crystal Serenity* will go into dry dock from Oct. 14 to Nov. 10. The ship will get 36 additional Penthouses and two additional Penthouse Suites, plus new restaurants and other improvements. Crystal's other ocean vessel, *Symphony*, completed its renovation late last year. Onboard both ships, Lido Café is getting replaced with a marketplace during the day and a Brazilian-style restaurant at night. Crystal will also provide unlimited complimentary WiFi to all of its passengers.

## **MSC CRUISES**

Sister-ship to the brand new *MSC Seaside*, *MSC Seaview* will sail seven-night itineraries in the Western Mediterranean. Extra-wide promenades will provide ample outdoor space, in the form of eating and lounge areas. Designed for warm-weather destinations, the top deck will offer an Aqua Park with

four waterslides, ropes course, and ziplines. The 4,132-passenger ship will feature 11 eateries, including an upscale seafood restaurant and a steakhouse.

## **NORWEGIAN CRUISE LINE**

The 4,004-passenger *Norwegian Bliss* will begin sailing this summer in Alaska, becoming the largest vessel ever to cruise to the state, before moving to Miami in November. Offerings range from a 1,000-foot-long go-kart race track – the largest at sea – to a laser tag area on the top deck, to water slides that go out into the ocean. Several new dining concepts will be introduced, including an upscale version of authentic Texas barbeque, an a la carte chocolate-themed dessert eatery, and Norwegian's first full Starbucks. Like sister-ships *Joy* and *Escape*, *Bliss* will have Tony Award-winning production shows including *Jersey Boys* and a restaurant-line boardwalk.

## **OCEANIA CRUISES**

Oceania Cruises will offer a complete circumnavigation of Australia on the 684-passenger *Regatta* on Dec. 13, 2018. The 34-day voyage will begin in Sydney with port stops including Brisbane, Alotau, Komodo, Perth, Penneshaw (Kangaroo Island),

Adelaide, and Melbourne, as well as visits to Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. It will be Oceania's third circumnavigation cruise of Australia.

### PAUL GAUGUIN CRUISES

The 332-guest *m/s Paul Gauguin* will be the first cruise line to visit the port city of Vairao in Tahiti Iti, the smaller, eastern peninsula of the archipelago. Tahiti Iti is scheduled on the seven-night Society Islands & Tahiti Iti voyages and a special 10-night Society Islands & Tuamotus.

Paul Gauguin Cruises will also begin offering wedding ceremony and vow renewal packages at Motu Mahana, the cruise line's private islet off the coast of Taha'a, or in the glass-bottom overwater chapel at the InterContinental Bora Bora Resort & Thalasso Spa.

### REGENT SEVEN SEAS CRUISES

The Seven Seas Wellness program will be expanded from the Mediterranean to other global regions, though those are yet to be determined. It launched aboard the Seven Seas *Voyager* with 11 excursions, ranging from Vinyasa yoga on Monte Carlo to hydrothermal therapy in the Thermal Baths of Popes.

The all-suite, all-balcony *Seven Seas Mariner* will go into dry dock in April for a bow-to-stern ship-wide refurbishment. When it reemerges in May, it will debut completely refreshed suites and a new modern French specialty restaurant, as well as reupholstered soft furnishings of all public spaces.

### ROYAL CARIBBEAN CRUISE LINE

The world's largest ship, *Symphony of the Seas*, will make its debut in April. Onboard, passengers will find the Ultimate Abyss, the tallest slide at sea; Hooked, Royal Caribbean's first dedicated seafood

restaurant; and new Broadway-caliber entertainment, including Hairspray and an original production. For families, the two-level Ultimate Family Suite has everything from a slide to a floor-to-ceiling LEGO wall to a theater-style TV room, complete with a popcorn machine and a library of video games.

Royal Caribbean will also roll out new itineraries. Cruises sailing

---

...the cruise industry  
is offering  
something for every  
guests' taste and budget.

---

to Cuba will include overnights and new ports in Cienfuegos and Santiago de Cuba, with *Majesty of the Seas* and *Empress of the Seas*. It will return to New Orleans for the first time since 2014, with *Vision of the Seas*' seven-night cruises from Galveston, Texas.

### SEABOURN

The 600-guest *Seabourn Ovation* will make her debut, sailing in the Mediterranean and Northern Europe in the summer and fall before moving to Asia for the winter. Like sister-ship *Seabourn Encore*, *Ovation's* contemporary interiors were created by regarded designer Adam D. Tihany, who drew from the feeling of a private yacht. Each of the 300 cabins will be suites with private balconies. *Ovation* boasts a Wellness Spa with Dr. Andrew Weil, restaurant helmed by Chef Thomas Keller, and casino. On the ship's top deck, there is an Observation Bar and a cabana area with a hot tub, spa cabana, and lounge chairs. Restaurant options will range from Seabourn Square, a cafe area; a sushi restaurant; and the Colonnade for casual dining.

### SILVERSEA CRUISES

Culinary- and wine-themed Enriched Voyages kick off this year, offering passengers guided market-to-plate excursions, cooking demonstrations, special tastings, and private tours to vineyards and wineries. Over a dozen itineraries feature the culinary enrichment program, including on the *Silver Muse*, *Silver Wind*, and *Silver Cloud*. Four sailings offer wine voyages.

Silversea Cruises also introduced the inaugural 2018 Couture Collection, a portfolio of nine pre- and post-cruise land programs of five- to 11-day journeys, as an extension to select Silversea cruises. It includes activities ranging from private helicopter service in Mongolia to vintage rail in India, and Gulfstream jets in and out of Antarctica. Each program is fully escorted and includes most meals and luxury accommodations.

### VIKING

In July of this year, Viking's fifth ocean ship, *Viking Orion*, will debut. She will spend her maiden year sailing itineraries in the Mediterranean, before making her way to Asia, Australia, and then Alaska. Additionally, Viking recently announced the name of its sixth ocean ship, *Viking Jupiter*, which will sail new itineraries in South America in 2019.

### WINDSTAR CRUISES

Six new Signature Expeditions will give intrepid passengers an up-close experience of Alaska, including a hiking tour through Wrangell, Zodiac tour of the Inian Islands or Kenai Fjords National Park, and kayaking expedition through Misty Fjords. Starting in May, six expert guides will be onboard each of Windstar's cruises in Alaska for the entirety of the voyage, where in addition to leading the excursions, they will provide commentary and insight.



chart 13

# how to sell more cruises

## Ocean Cruise Line

What can travel agents do to more effectively sell your product?

<b>Azamara Club Cruises</b>	Engage with local sales manager; participate in monthly webinar series; complete the Azamara World Academy; follow @AzamaraClubCruises and @LarryPimentel on social media; review travel agent rates on CruisingPower.com; take advantage of our turn key trade tool kit hosted on CruisingPower.com.
<b>Carnival Cruise Line</b>	Participate in Carnival Passport learning program, available on GoCCL.com; Join a Carnival Conversations event (Schedule available at GoCCL.com), Attend a ship inspection or join Carnival's e-mail list to receive the latest calendar; Subscribe to Carnival's e-mail list to read Carnival's Onboard with You agent newsletter.
<b>Celebrity Cruises</b>	Work with their Celebrity Sales Manager and register for Five Star training. Learn about our brand to build their business; leverage all the tools and resources that Celebrity Cruises provides such as Cruisingpower.com.
<b>Crystal Cruises</b>	By being a focused partner with regard to ongoing staff training, product promotion, and marketing in as many media as the agency has the ability to do so effectively.
<b>MSC Cruises</b>	The number one thing travel agents can do is work with their BDM to become educated on all things MSC Cruises. The BDM will help them put together a sales and marketing plan.
<b>Norwegian Cruise Line</b>	Most important: That we build our promotions around value, not price. They are intended to give travel partners something to base their conversations on other than the 'cheapest cruise'. Our Free at Sea promotion gives agents what they need to increase commission earnings by opening the door to a value conversation versus price. Other important things to remember: Enroll in NCL U and learn everything about the product and the brand – and possibly earn a free cruise. Reach out to your BDM and build a business plan. Sail with us, or if not possible, visit one of our ships in a home-port near you.
<b>Oceania Cruises</b>	Become a specialist by completing our Oceania Sales Specialist Academy that can be found at our Travel Agent Center: <a href="https://www.oceaniacruises.com/agent/agent-login/">https://www.oceaniacruises.com/agent/agent-login/</a> . Travel Agents should also connect with our sales team to create a customized marketing plan.
<b>Paul Gauguin Cruises</b>	Participating in our PEARL's program will give an agent the knowledge, marketing support and ongoing training to better sell Paul Gauguin Cruises.
<b>Regent Seven Seas</b>	Highlight our inclusiveness and compare it with the costs of our included items on other premium and luxury lines. Our value proposition resonates with our guests who appreciate the ease of booking and having most everything included in one price. Familiarize themselves with our Travel Agent Center, which provides many sales and marketing resources including training courses, product videos, sales tips, agent spotlights and the ability to order current brochures. Our Travel Agent Center also offers Marketing Central, a platform providing the ability to customize flyers, email, and other advertising templates as well as social media posts they can share.
<b>Royal Caribbean Cruise Line</b>	At Royal Caribbean we have many resources and tools to assist any travel agent to learn about our brand and to build their business such as partnering with their Strategic Account Manager and Business Development Specialist; leveraging all the tools and resources that Royal Caribbean provides such as Cruisingpower.com, <a href="http://www.LoyaltoYouAlways.com">www.LoyaltoYouAlways.com</a> (Travel Partner website), new education site within <a href="http://cruisingpower.com">cruisingpower.com</a> called – Royal CaribbeanUniversity, utilizing Espresso (Royal Caribbean's booking tool), participating in regular webinar events and more.
<b>Seabourn</b>	Market to luxury-travel based guests and be knowledgeable about promotions.
<b>Silversea Cruises</b>	Participate in our training programs and webinars by reaching out to their local Area Sales Director. Also become certified by taking our Travel Agent University course online.
<b>Viking Ocean Cruises</b>	They can contact their Director of Business Development for marketing support and product training support. Viking also recommends travel partners register and complete all available courses on the Viking Travel Agent Academy.
<b>Windstar Cruises</b>	Learn more about us! Take our Star Specialist program, available on our Agent Hub <a href="https://agenthub.windstarcruises.com">https://agenthub.windstarcruises.com</a> . Join us onboard for a FAM. Reach out to your Regional Sales Manager for individual or office training. Agents should learn about what sets us apart so that they can properly match their clients to our brand.

# travelmarket

Voice of the Travel Professional **report**



The Cruise Report Card for Travel Agents was born during a meeting of Travel Market Report's Editorial Advisory Board. In the course of brainstorming ways TMR might be of service to our readers, they suggested it would be helpful to have one reference book that contains all the details of all the policies of all the suppliers in the travel industry. So, we began our research project in 2017 with the release of Volume One of the Ocean Cruise Report Card. Volume Two, which covered River Cruise Lines debuted in January, 2018, and here you now have our Third Volume, the second Ocean Cruise Report Card. By the time we are done, we hope to have a multi-volume reference you can keep at hand and consult any time you want to check the policies of any supplier with whom you deal. We should point out that after these suppliers respond to our surveys, our travel agent advisory board reviews for accuracy. We hope you find our report cards useful to your business. As the Voice of the Travel Professional, our goal is to be your advocate.

## AND IT'S ALL THANKS TO:

- Marlys Aballi**, *Connection to Cruise, Redlands, CA*  
**Sandy Anderson**, *Riverdale Travel, Coon Rapids, MN*  
**Jennifer Doncsecz**, *VIP Vacations Inc., Bethlehem, PA*  
**Tony Fragapane**, *Voyages Concierge Deluxe Travel, Quebec, Canada*  
**Colleen Gillette**, *New Paltz Travel, New Paltz, NY*  
**Scott Koepf**, *Avoya Travel, Vista, CA*  
**Jennifer Lee**, *Travel Planners International, Maitland, FL (2018)*  
**LuAnn Lisell**, *Lisell Travel, Plano, TX (2018)*  
**Andi McClure-Mysza**, *Montrose Travel, Montrose, CA*  
**Kate Murphy**, *Wings Travel Group, Blue Bell, PA*  
**Craig Pavlus**, *Pavlus Travel, Albuquerque, NM (2018)*  
**Norman Payne**, *Uniglobe Enterprise Travel, Ontario, Canada*  
**Christen Perry**, *Classic Travel Connection, Birmingham, AL (2018)*  
**Theresa Scalzitti**, *Cruise Planners, Coral Springs, FL*  
**Gary Silverstein**, *Mann Travels, Charlotte, NC*  
**Lynda Sinclair**, *Vision Travel Services, Toronto, Ontario, Canada*  
**Richard Vanderlubbe**, *tripcentral.ca, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada*  
**Jennifer Wilson-Buttigie**, *Valerie Wilson Travel, New York, NY*

*Disney Cruise Line, Cunard Line, Holland America Line, and Princess Cruises were also given the chance to participate in the Report Card but declined and/or could not meet the deadline.*

*Travel Market Report will update this document on our website if or when information changes or another cruise line chooses to participate.*



**travelmarket**  
*Voice of the Travel Professional* report

