

Happy crew, happy guests

Dietmar Wertanzl highlights how CMI Leisure can help shipowners, charterers and operators to manage crew, food and beverage, hotel services and more in a conversation with Rebecca Gibson

Providing high quality hotel services on land is relatively easy, but delivering them onboard cruise ships that sail to multiple destinations and remote regions of the world is much more challenging.

“The basic functions of providing hotel management services and interacting with customers are the same on land and at sea, but there’s one fundamental difference,” says Dietmar Wertanzl, president of CMI Leisure. “Staff at land-based hotels go home when they finish their shift, whereas crew members live and work on the same ship for months at a time. Consequently, it’s essential that shipowners, charterers and operators ensure crew remain motivated to perform well.”



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The trick to maintaining morale? Treating crew like guests, advises Wertanzl.

“We create a supportive place where crew can flourish, both professionally and personally,” he explains. “We offer competitive crew packages and internal promotion opportunities, and set up a welfare committee that hosts nightly social activities in a designated leisure area. Plus, we have cultural enrichment programmes so they can learn about the destinations or try new languages.”

Based in Miami, US, CMI Leisure can help shipowners, charterers and operators with much more than just crew management. It can deliver end-to-end turnkey hotel management services, or oversee individual areas such as food and beverage, crewing, administration, housekeeping and logistics.

“We’re an approachable and financially strong company with a hands-on team of experts who deliver customised hotel management services to operators in the expedition, small and mid-size cruise ship markets,” says Wertanzl. “Over 20 years, we’ve established great relationships with port agents, suppliers, shipowners and crew hiring partners worldwide. We’ve achieved excellent guest ratings and client feedback.”

CMI Leisure’s main goal is to understand each client’s specific requirements and work with them to develop hotel services that really differentiate their brand.

“We don’t just copy and paste solutions from one cruise line to another, and we’re

very flexible so we can quickly act on customer requests,” Wertanzl comments. “New IT solutions are making planning logistics even easier, so we’re a great partner for operators sailing to remote destinations.”

Currently, CMI Leisure provides a variety of services to several different clients.

“We manage all hotel services for one client, food and beverage programmes for another, and just crew management for a third,” Wertanzl remarks. “Recently, we helped Island Pro Cruises to design a food and beverage offering that features local Icelandic delicacies and ingredients to immerse guests in the country’s culture. We’re also talking with clients about refurbishments and newbuilds.”

Wertanzl also aims to develop a dining and bar concept that CMI Leisure can offer as a concession to cruise lines for their onboard restaurants. “Guests want different dining experiences every day, so we could offer a customisable concept that operators can roll out whenever they want in partnership with us,” he says.

Noting that outsourcing hotel management services is now a viable option for most shipowners, charterers and operators, Wertanzl adds: “The cruise industry is constantly evolving as new source markets (like Asia) and passenger demands emerge, and as more operators replace older tonnage, or join the small ship and expedition cruise markets,” comments Wertanzl. “It’s an exciting time for CMI Leisure.” **C&F**