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Joyce Hosier, ECC

Franchise Owner and Travel Professional Cruise Planners

Describe your career as a travel agent. How long have you been in the business? What attracted you to it?

I am happy to say that I will soon be celebrating my ten year anniversary in the travel business. 2010 was perhaps one of the worst times to be starting a new business since the economy was suffering a bad recession, but I did not let that stop me. Travel is my passion. I am fortunate to have traveled for

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business and pleasure my entire life. In 2005, my prior career placed me in Asia for 13 months. While there, I expanded my travel experience to places like Thailand, Singapore, Hong Kong, Australia and New Zealand. I now had visited five continents and had a zest to share this experience with others. A few years later, I decided to leave the high stress corporate world and help people enjoy life.

What is your approach to serving clients?

My business background is in management and customer service. I have learned that customers, and employees, are most happy when I proactively take care of their needs. I build relationships with my clients by making myself available, being responsive and thorough. I also believe that training, education and personal experience are vital to providing customers with a great overall experience, which is why I gained my ECC with CLIA.

What is your biggest challenge when selling cruises and how do you overcome it?

I specialize in groups so I would say my biggest challenge is getting potential group members reserved. Group leaders will contact me to request cruise options for their group. Some are ill prepared for bringing the information on these options to the group and gaining consensus. They may be the person who had the idea to have a group cruise but they may not know how to effectively present the options to get others to commit. To overcome this I do more than just provide options. I advise the group leader to only present these options to a few important group members. I recommend that these few make the decision of which cruise it will be as agreement will not be reached if there are too many decision makers.

I then use Cruise Planners tools to create a page on my website that is dedicated to the group. Potential group members are provided a link to the page to learn the details. I include a call to action and encourage them to contact me. I will also hold cruise nights and invite my BDMs for larger groups located in my area

What has been a career highlight, thus far?

A career highlight was being invited to the Cruise Planners Top Producers Elite Summer in May 2019. I am very appreciative to have had the opportunity to spend quality time with top producers, as well as some of our Cruise Planner and supplier executives. This was a tremendous opportunity for learning and building relationships. To top it off, this took place in Africa which was number one on my bucket list. It was an amazing experience and Africa remains at the top of my bucket list.

How has your CLIA membership and certification helped you as a cruise travel retailer?

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I remember working on my ACC when I first joined Cruise Planners. The training was very helpful in building my knowledge, as was Cruise 360. I thought it would take forever to sell 25 cruises, but I put this knowledge to work and sold those cruises and many more. Fast forward to recent times when I was contacted by a group leader who found me on CLIA Agent Finder. She chose me because she was confident in my knowledge as I had the highest level of CLIA certification. I was quick to respond to her request and wound up booking an 80 person Celebrity cruise group that consisted of mostly sky suites and verandahs.

What consumer trends are you seeing in cruise sales?

When I first began, people were very price conscience. They were looking for shorter cruises close to home. They wanted to get away but did not want to spend a lot. Today people seem less price conscience and more interested in value. They love to get promotional discounts being offered by the cruise lines, but the value added perks are just as important. They also want new experiences, as in new destinations, upgrades or on board activities. I am also noticing a growth in groups as more people are interested in traveling with others, as well as receiving group pricing and amenities.

Now for a little fun... if you were working as a crewmember aboard a cruise ship and you could have any job you want, what would it be?

If I could have any job on a cruise ship I would want to be a backup dancer. I am not a good dancer so I think I could learn a lot from the other dancers. This also is great exercise, which I need. I also think this is one position that would provide me with good opportunity to explore the ports of call. If only I were thirty years younger.