

# **Corporate Hospitality At**

## **The Tall Ships Races Port Visit Hartlepool 2010**

### **Observations from Topsail Events**





# Background

- Event Dates: Saturday 7 – Tuesday 10 August
- Visitor Numbers: 970,000
- 63 Ships in the fleet
- 20 Class A (Commercial & Military)
- 14 Class B
- Weather: British!
- 26 hospitality functions
- 50% sailing and 50% at the quay





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# The Positives

- Sales were above target. Programme went very well, great feedback.
- In a deep recession, not a big city port or particularly wealthy area.
- Close cooperation between Hartlepool Borough Council (HBC) and their sponsorship/marketing consultant and hospitality organiser
- Converting leads by matching ship to frequently changing spec. Sales leads are often not the problem correct delivery and good upselling is.
- Developing cruises packages to , shared scheduled corporate and public cruises. Shared risk with HBC but risk minimised by experience
- No-one tried to offload risk onto other party it was all agreed upon
- Practical note: Meeting point marquee with a bar in the middle of the ship berthing area. Interesting things happened there.....





# Working with the Ships

- The offices of most ships very responsive important because ship availability and customer needs change.
- Trust between us and the Tall Ships' offices is important for decision-making – we understand each other's competence.
- At the event officers and crews were very helpful. Cooperation at Hartlepool was very good.
- Ships were clean and tidy and ready for action because they understand what we are trying to achieve: Crew is proud of the ship but also well briefed.





# The Issues for us all to consider

- Remember:
- Many Challenges are result from the event being what it is –
  - Race port visit - long voyage, other ship agenda
  - Limited ship contact immediately prior to event
  - The vessels not being purpose-built hospitality suites. Knowledge of what are they really capable of?
  - Cruises - serious regulatory issues – inspections.
  - 'Green field' site – No logistical track record! Have to work with site management and harbour very closely.
  - Assume nothing - it won't be all right on the night!



# The Issues

- Ships do vary greatly in size, quality, facilities, price, currency, country of origin. Suitability for hospitality.
- Can lead to problems - a change in parameters: for example ship programme or schedule or customer requirements - particularly capacity. Change ship?
- Can't always dictate to customer – find a solution
- You work hard to explain these anomalies to the client and find solutions.



# The Issues

- Bridging different work cultures – different aims
- Ship, Caterer, Local Authority, Site Management.
- Training Foundations, Private enterprise, Public Event, Site Safety
- Hospitality Event Manager has to balance interests.
- Not everything is in your control – but choose caterer
- You never stop learning, a green field site is all learning
- Event Managers who know Tall Ships – very very useful!
- Minimise the chances of stress and problems





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# The Issues

- Everybody wants to be an exception more so than ever:
- Contracts – Ship – Organiser - Client
- Insurance – Ship – Organiser – Client
- Everything assumes worst case and liability but there has to be some uniformity, legal harmonisation for the Port Host
- Regulation – bar never gets lower – MCA check 5 ships



# The Issues

- Office response from some ships could still be improved
- Different commercial response time scales. Client 'yesterday'. Ship as soon as possible.
- Confusion and inaccuracy can lead to blowing the whole deal. Rare but it has happened.
- Office staff should be as well trained commercially as a crew is nautically. Including Topsail, Ship or Council office.



# The Other Issues

- Health and Safety – gangways a classic example - risk if steep - dress codes and manning are essential.
- And companies are very aware of their insurance liabilities particularly regarding staff and guests
- Good awnings and seating – please, please maximise
- Enhance the experience as much as you can, be innovative, ship tour, history, what's your USP?





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# The Challenges

- Which facilities can be used on board and which cannot.
- Full access to a saloon and access to a galley are an enormous help in delivering a good function.
- If we can offer a range of facilities and services the easier it is to sell hospitality on board.
- Minimise limitations – maximise capacity where you can on board, customers don't always understand limits
- A sponsor/client is important to the event – give them the best you can. Hospitality is important to the ship, prioritise as much as you can.



# Why it all worked well!

- Corporate Hospitality is very time-consuming – to do a good job not just in sales lead generation but in delivery.
- Different routes suit different port organisations
- Choice is often portrayed as internal v external.
- Hartlepool was a partnership . Topsail worked very closely with Hartlepool and their marketing consultant.
- Combining local business knowledge with specialist Tall Ship knowledge – using local suppliers all legally bound.
- Topsail in effect became part of the event organisation.
- Saved organisers and ships a lot of time and made sure everyone contributes financially including Topsail, Caterer, Bar Sales, Entertainers – except ship fees



# Corporate Hospitality – Looking Forward

- Greater frequency of return to port by the event helps
- Need greater awareness of event and hospitality potential.
- Always improved service and quality from Ships and Organiser – establish reputation.
- Raise brand recognition of Tall Ships hospitality
- New services: CSR with trainees – sailing cruises – good sales, good animation, good marketing for host port.
- From my perspective here in the UK – the future is Aalborg and building partnerships across the board



# In my Opinion

Forethought based on knowledge and experience is the best way to deliver a successful ships hospitality programme.

But you must always:

- LEARN
- CHECK
- ENJOY





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