

innovations

Focusing on innovation in the global cruise industry

CLIA Technology Advisory Forum

Special Report
International Cruise Ship Industry

**INTERNATIONAL
CRUISE SHIP
INDUSTRY**

Focusing on innovation in the global cruise industry
www.cruise-ship-industry.com

In December, 2017, ICE was one of the founder members of the CLIA Technology Advisory Council, which held its inaugural meeting in Miami that month.

Technology services provider and consultancy ICE has since led the new industry body's efforts and direction throughout this year through Council Chairman Ian Richardson - one of ICE's founders

The new body's goals are to address the major challenges that affect the industry through the use of technology.

For a number of years, ICE said it has been trying to raise awareness and focus on technology in the cruise industry. In this digital age, every cruise line has its own digital transformation strategy with some digital departments employing hundreds of technical staff.

Every company, whether they sell cruises or manage cruise passengers at a destination will need to become more digital, by reviewing their processes, changing their organisational structure and implementing software and integrate their systems. Not just at the customer facing level but right the way through the operational departments and back-office.

The cruise industry's main goal is to give their guests memorable experiences in a frictionless way whilst keeping them at all times safe and happy. Technology is paramount in delivering all these goals.

All the council members have agreed that this initiative will not be a platform whereby members can sell their products.

The current membership has decades of collective experience in the industry combined with the best technical knowhow. If the main challenges are agreed upon and understood, then the knowledge and resources can be pooled to try and address those challenges, the Council said when introducing the new initiative.

The Council's main goals are:

- To be proactive towards the industry.



Council Chairman and ICE founder, Ian Richardson

- To pool knowledge and resources.
- Address challenges in the industry.
- Provide insight on technology trends.

Talking with ICSI, Council Chairman and ICE founder, Richardson explained that the initiative is driven by and aimed at primarily the cruise industry, however many of the challenges to be addressed may also affect the ferry and wider travel industries.

Common challenges

He said that the main aims of the initiative were to look at the common challenges that affect all cruise lines and to see how they can be addressed by the best use of technology. A lot of the solutions will be addressing operational issues, not just customer facing. The promotion of digitalisation will be a key factor in these discussions.

Currently, the main three issues being addressed, which will be the focus of an upcoming Miami event, are Internet connectivity, utilisation of Internet of Things (IoT) on board and cyber security.

Addressing the latter, Richardson said that primarily, as ships become more hyper-connected presenting many opportunities for digitalisation and asked - what is the industry doing to address the threats.

The forum will also embrace other technical issues going forward, such as discussions on how technologies, such as IoT, digital twinning, etc, can be applied to improve operational efficiency, fuel consumption, safety and environmental sustainability.

Digitalisation could also help cruise terminal throughput efficiency. Richardson said the cruise industry has been working very hard to improve the passenger flow in cruise terminals and increase the check-in guest experience.

As the size of ships increase, however this is an area that can still be improved, especially in cases where a cruise berth does not have a dedicated terminal and therefore does not have full control of operations on the ground.

This is certainly something that is being discussed within the initiative, Richardson said, as well as issues such as destination overcrowding, which the Council believed the adoption of technology can support.

Steering group

He explained that currently, the forum has around 25 CLIA Executive Partner companies involved, as well as a steering group of four major cruise line representatives.

In the steering group, in order to include the perspective from the wider cruise industry, there are two representatives from large US mass market lines and two representatives from smaller European niche operators.

He explained: "With the steering group in place, this initiative is being driven by the cruise industry and not by vendors. We hope that this will in turn attract the attention of the CLIA Cruise Lines to maximise participation.

"Currently the initiative is only open to CLIA

Cruise Lines and CLIA Executive Partners. We hope to drive interest from more cruise industry vendors so they will see the value in becoming a CLIA member and joining us in this initiative," he added.

As for ICE, Richardson said that due to the company's very specialist domain experience, supporting companies on projects with dedicated analysts and project managers offers most added value, as opposed to companies employing generic consulting companies that have to spend time and cost in learning the business.

However, outsourced IT managed service and application hosting is also becoming more popular, as companies see the value of outsourcing parts of their operational IT to a company that already has expertise in their respective systems.

Answering the question as to whether we have just scratched the surface in digitalisation in the cruise and ferry sector, Richardson said; "Yes - there is so much to learn still from other industries in terms of automation and data management. We are hoping that the technology initiative will enable the industry as a whole to invest and modernise in the right areas and gain the best value from technology."

For ICE's take on cyber security, see Innovations Report on www.cruise-ship-industry.com

