

GSSS FOR KEEPS™

GROUP SALES SUCCESS SUMMIT 2018

EXCLUSIVE BONUS

Word-for-Word Transcript Manual (Part 1)

Day One

Day Two

Day Three

Day Four

Day Five

Group Sales Success Summit 2018 | Day One - Day Five

Dear Owners of **GSSS FOR KEEPS 2018**,

May these word-for-word transcripts enable you to absorb and action many more transformational tips, insider secrets and best practices. Congratulations for going the extra mile! Your choice to build a bigger, better group business is brilliant and achievable. *These supplier executives and business coaches expect to hear from you* - I urge you to connect!

Stuart L. Cohen, founder of Group Sales Boot Camp & GSSS

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GROUP SALES SUCCESS SUMMIT 2018: DAY ONE

DAY ONE: A Creative Approach to River Cruise Groups

KRISTIN KARST, Executive Vice President/Co-Owner, AmaWaterways

Hello everyone I'm Kirstin Karst, Executive Vice President and Co-Owner of AmaWaterways. Thank you so much for inviting me to share some of my thoughts on developing group business.

Groups have been our passion and focus since we founded AmaWaterways 16 years ago in 2002. Groups are very rewarding and can drive business and we want to be your partner by having a flexible and sometimes creative approach to groups, charters and part charters.

You all have the potential to make groups a big part of your success, too, and I would like to share my top five steps for growing your group business.

The first step is to be personal and follow your passion. A good place to start identifying prospective groups is by matching current travel trends to your own hobbies or interests. You will always do best when you have a personal connection.

There are four top travel trends we are seeing have a positive impact on group business and especially within river cruising. Food and fine have become such an important part of people's lives. Both have an enormous impact on the way travelers expect to experience a destination.

Another trend my personal favorite is wellness. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is gaining importance among travelers and attracting like-minded groups from fitness or yoga to running or biking groups. Both the culinary and wellness trends are reflected in the popularity of our hosted wine cruises in the growth of finding groups on our regular cruises.

Multigenerational travel is a trend that we have seen in the cruise space for many years but it is growing now on the river. AmaWaterways' active excursions and connecting staterooms really meet the specific needs of family groups. Think about coming on board for a magical Christmas time cruise with your whole family. As a family owned company we consider our guests as an extended part of ours.

The final travel trend we are seeing is personalization of the travel experience. River cruising has a great variety of included excursions that make it very convenient for every member of the group to enjoy their vacation in a very personal and memorable way.

Step 2: Become a specialist. Once you have identified the top suppliers you want to work with you will want to familiarize yourself with their product. You can do this by taking the online training programs like the Travel Agent University, making appointments to see them during trade shows, calling the supplier representative in your area and introducing yourself. Ask if your supply office webinars to better understand their terms, conditions and procedures for

setting up group space and also if you or your Pied Piper plan to escort your groups find out how you can earn free tour conductor cabin.

Step 3: Seeing is believing. Invest in a FAM. Nothing can replace this firsthand experience and confidence it brings you when you are out marketing to your prospective groups. This allows you to personalize your experience and speak from the heart about your cruise and potential clients will more strongly connect with your own words.

We also have beautiful postcards on board so you can send your clients a personal message from the ship and you can send as many as you like. AmaWaterways covers your postage. Nothing is more special than receiving a handwritten note from you to them.

The next step in boosting your group business is to plan your roadmap. Be realistic on the timeline. Some groups can take up to two years from start to finish depending on the size, customization and the amount of marketing you may need such as what special materials will be needed to reach the group members and how much will that cost.

How will you earn income from this group and how will the earned tour conductors be shared? And of course consider your own review dates and deadlines. Follow-up is key. Once you figure this out everything else will fall into place.

Step 5: Build on your own success. It's a lot easier to learn the complexity of group travel by handling all arrangements for a group of 10 to 20 people then to start off with a group of 80 to 100 guests. We really are experts in wine theme groups. With a minimum of 20 passengers we create a themed group package for you that includes two customized winetasting excursions which really personalizes your group experience.

I would like you to meet some of the very special people in our group department that are here on the phones all day to ensure the success of your group.

Some special interest groups that they have had the pleasure of welcoming on board our ships include: religious or choir groups, World War II history buffs, horticulture enthusiasts for Tulip time cruises or our Paris and Normandy cruise visiting Monet's house and garden, sports groups playing with our local teams in Europe, family celebrations like wedding anniversaries, family reunions, milestone birthdays and even vow renewals, special interests or hobbies involving art, photography, knitting and quilting.

If just one thing I want you to take away from today it's that you have the power to boost your group sales just by being yourself. Speak from the heart and share your experience. Use your passion. Listen and connect with your clients and groups will find you.

Thank you and I hope to see you on board soon!

~ ~ ~

DAY ONE: Romance Travel is BIG BUSINESS

HOWARD TANENBAUM, Senior Vice President of Sales, Playa Hotels & Resorts

[Stuart] Howard tell me what you see are the trends or the biggest group growth area for you right now?

Stu, unequivocally in our business, the number one spot is romance travel and destination weddings. We see literally tens of millions of dollars a year coming through our 20 resorts in the Caribbean, Mexico, the DR, Jamaica. It's tens of millions of dollars worth of business. The wedding events themselves are in the millions of dollars a year per resort and tens of millions of dollars a year in room revenues.

[Stuart] What do you see in terms of average budgets that you see I'm sure you have small and huge weddings. What are the budget parameters?

We see pretty much everything and we package up from the budget oriented all the way up to what we call lavish and opulent or really high-end luxury space. So we've done weddings literally just for the two of you they're free and they're free to people who come in and they spend a certain number nights in a certain category room and of course when we talk about weddings or wedding ceremonies I guess we ought to start with just saying that 99% of the time they are symbolic right so people actually are getting married at home with the justice of the peace or clergy of their choice and then they have a symbolic ceremony on the beach or one of our venues so that's most of the time.

We also can do religious weddings but that's the rarity of the two so the biggest trends for us are the destination wedding business in terms of budgets our average spend on a wedding event runs anywhere between \$7,500 and \$12,000. We've got a number of packages that allow folks to come in with the 20, 30, 40 people and enjoy wonderful experience at a very very economical price. And that's part of what I think is driving the destination wedding business. Folks that are going at home it's a pretty much about \$25,000 to do a wedding and at home and it's less than half about to do it in destination and frankly it's a heck of a lot more fun.

Think about going especially when you look at different times of year. So would you rather get married in February in Buffalo or February in Cancun. For me I'd rather be in the warm weather climate.

[Stuart]: How is it less stressful for the bridegroom to do a destination wedding and for the travel agent because I hear agents say, "I hear about it, I keep hearing about it, I don't how to get into it which will talk about a minute but I think they're sort of afraid that they have to be a wedding specialists to. So answer to that?

I think that for the bride and groom it's almost impossible to remove all levels of stress because let's face it is the biggest thing in somebody's life. So you know I think if you're working with a company like ours (and certainly were not the only folks that do it I would say we do it better

than anyone) if you're working with a company like ours we've got folks that are dedicated highly experienced, highly trained. And when we've done thousands of destination wedding so whilst everyone is special for the bride and groom and we make it that way the experience that we have the quality of the of the resorts the quality of the quality of the people quite frankly that we employ -- our destination wedding specialists -- that the travel agent can choose to work with or not choose to work with.

You know with us it's kind interesting. A travel agent can book older rooms make all the normal commissions through their preferred tour operators or they can book directly with our group department whichever they prefer. And they get all the rooms and then they refer the bridal party over to the hotel we take it from there and we still pay the commission on the package to the travel agent and then our professionals, our bridal planners or wedding planners, they step in and they hold the hand of the bride/groom and of course the bride's mom the bride's dad and all the folks that are involved in the decision-making process from the beginning all the way right to the end.

[Stuart]: That's key what you just said. Some of our folks attending this summit Howard are either generally new to the business or perhaps never done destination wedding before so they're afraid. But you have people they tee off to take that up to get into the little minutia details that the agent does not have to worry about.

Golly, gee yes because it changes so much, too. You figure most of the time weddings are booked about a year or so in advance and some come shorter but typically there's a pretty long stage length there. And imagine the amount of I would say change orders that might come through I want lavender linens - no I don't - I want calla lilies - I prefer something else - can you help me get a band I want to Mariachi band - I change my mind let's do something us.

And our people deal with that all day long so this is not surprising is not our first wedding so even though it might be a travel agent's first wedding we can take a lot of the stress and a lot of angst out of that simply by asking the travel agent to let us take over the wedding piece. Again the agent has the rooms in the relationship with the customer and everything else but if they let us take that over we always keep them informed. The agent is the agent is the agent and that's their relationship with their client so we think that we work hand-in-hand so there in the know but they don't have to be the person doing all the little details.

And you brought up an interesting question I think earlier too which is how to get into it? Why is this a really good niche for people to get into. And I can tell you there's two businesses that everybody loves and one is the wedding business and the others the funeral business because at some point in their life you know you're going to need the services of folks that are in that business. At the risk of sounding like a shark tank if you will our good friend Kevin those are really two steady businesses. So obviously we don't do the funeral business but when it comes to the wedding business everybody knows somebody who's married, getting married, want to get married, has a niece and nephew an uncle an aunt. So all of the travel agents in the audience today they all know people that are getting married or thinking about vow renewal or

special lifetime, and it's a 20 on the 20th anniversary or 30th anniversary and they're going to take a bunch of folks down to a resort and they want to have a great time.

For a lot of us and that's really what it's all about. Especially the folks that are coming to our resorts a little bit more and I would say in the upmarket space people - like you and me - we tend to have a maybe a bit more money than time so when we go we want to make sure we have great accommodations, great food, great planning and have a super time of it.

Also, every agent knows somebody who is going to get married and they ought to let everybody know there in the space and not seed the market to somebody else. I think that's the first thing - let everybody know that they're in it. And then there's so many great trade associations just for the destination wedding business that travel agents can invest in themselves by joining one of those associations and really hobnob, network, go down on these destination FAMS.

We do at our hotels we do very specific wedding FAMS where we'll do a mock wedding as part of the training of the FAM so and I know again it's - I say we - but there are others that do similar and so you really need to pick your preferred partners in and do a good job with that. And I think if you do pick the right partners have a very successful career. Like I said let everybody know. Use social media today, Facebook certainly. You know everybody's got Pinterest board is getting married today, it's almost like an old hope chest, if you will, so there's a lot of social media a lot of activity. Low cost not reach out that agents can be doing to let everybody in the community know that there are part of it and that's even before you start to partner with other local merchants whether it's a bridal shop or bakery. You know, get the cake here save \$50 on your destination wedding or your honeymoon. There's lots of cross promotion circles

[Stuart]: Absolutely! Now take a moment to tell us about other categories that are traditional popular group events at an all-inclusive resort - at your properties that you see.

Stu for me we do so much in the group meeting and incentive world. Meetings and incentives are huge. Almost 50% of the companies in the United States today, and actually 46% globally was the last stat I saw, used non-cash rewards to incent their employees and reward successes and behaviors so if you're not in the reward travel business that's another great place to be.

But again just like the destination wedding business you need to invest in yourself as the agent. Take the time to learn and become expert at that. These are ,for us, really really lucrative pieces of business and the trip to just takes a bunch of work to do and once you do it they are very very profitable.

[Stuart]: Before I let you go Howard give us one thing, with all of your years in the business being a tremendous advocate of the travel professional, one thing you wish the travel professional did differently, did better. A common, simple thing that they can just change and have a whole lot more success.

You know what Stu I have to give you more than one because that's how passionate I am about the travel agency community. As you know, Stu, you and I are friends for many years my wife and I owned retail travel agencies for many many years. I have an incredible amount of respect for anyone that's in the retail travel agency business.

Frankly it's a tough way to make a buck with the folks that are good at it really can do swell and speaking on behalf of my company, Playa Hotels and Resorts, I can tell you we literally have built our hotel product and our business through the trade and that in the less than four years that we been in this current iteration.

We've got 20 resorts and we've got great brands like the Hyatt Ziva and the new Hilton Rose Hall, Panama Jack, the Royal Sanctuary - we wouldn't have it if it wasn't for the travel agent. So if there's a couple of tips or hints I can give to a travel agent one would be don't be bashful and be unashamedly self-promoting at all times.

You guys, meaning travel agents guys and gals, you have so much knowledge and you know when we talk about service in one of the tips and we'll give you a little fact sheet to download on destination weddings maybe you can send out for us - one of the things we talk about is response time and being relevant in the moment.

I think travel agents do that better than anybody to get to know their customers well and really able to provide timely, relevant information so I think that's a really big key for agents. And again I would just be shamelessly self-promoting whenever you can the agents are great, they work so darn hard and they bring so much value to the business proposition for us as a hotelier, as a resort operator, and to their customers - don't be shy. Tell everybody why it's great to do business with you because it's great to do business with a terrific travel agent.

[Stuart] Love it! What great stuff Howard thank you very much for your contribution to our Summit.

~ ~ ~

DAY ONE: A Proven Way To Uncover Group Opportunities
MIKE MARCHEV, CTC, President, Head First Sales

"I think you can ask yourself the same question. When people meet you what difference are you going to make in their lives? Because you are you are in position to make a difference. And you need to make a difference. And what the world needs now more than anything else if you have been paying attention is we need people to make a difference in our lives. And you folks are in the catbird's seat to make it difference."

One of the questions I hear a lot from agents is how and where do I find new more profitable group opportunities."

Hi Mike Marchev and I decided to approach Stuart's Group Sales Success Summit from the sales angle. In an attempt to stimulate your imagination I'm going to share with you a single strategy I hope you can connect with. And this leads directly to a bonus reminder. After all is said and done more is said than done. And the translation to that is you are going to hear a great deal of useful information in this program from a lot of experienced professionals.

The Five Second Rule reminds us that if you don't act immediately chances are the idea will pass and you will return to the status quo. Become the exception. Be that one agent who actually springs into motion and becomes more successful as a result of your actions.

Now the strategy I am about to outline is often referred to as planting seeds. All you need is an open mind and a willingness to meet people, and perhaps a couple coffee. This is just one way you can position yourself as the group specialist while beginning the process leading to the next group sales. Reading your morning newspaper (digital or newsprint) can become one of the most productive times of your day. That is, if you know what to look for and how to respond sequentially and in an expeditious and meaningful step-by-step fashion.

Let me give you an example. Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, after years of playing the doormat finally positioned itself on the collegiate football map as a viable competitor. Reading an article in the morning paper you find yourself focusing on a quote written by a fellow who apparently has a Rutgers-related football blog. It really hit home with you. It referred to finding ways to make your football players feel good about themselves.

Here's the quote: "The primary responsibility of a head coach is to do what is necessary to make his players successful."

Isn't it the responsibility of all managers to find ways to help their employees become more successful? This particular quote got your attention. This quote is what I call a **stopper**. You dig a little and find the name of the writer of this particular blog post and a little marketing creativity enters the picture. Let's see if I can stimulate your creativity and get your mojo humming.

Rutgers is finally receiving some positive press thanks to their football team. People are jumping on the bandwagon. This author of the article has a following and a blog. You read his blog and post a few logical comments. You do this for a few weeks while becoming a familiar name to him via his blog. You write a personal email to him asking to meet for a cup of coffee informing him that as a result of this blog you have a few ideas you would like to share. His position coupled to his distribution network, added to the Rutgers movement, might make for a Rutgers group cruise.

He is an ideal candidate to serve as Pied Piper for the group. The distribution is in place. The Pied Piper is in place. The topic interest is in place, and the cruise specialist (you) is in place.

You have absolutely nothing to lose when pursuing these types of opportunities. You will never know where these opportunities might lead until you get into some form of motion. The ball is in your court. Chances are good (sooner or later) those affiliated with the Rutgers movement are going to take a cruise. The question remains will it involve you and your expertise.

Oh and one other thing. Tomorrow morning's paper will contain another five opportunities just like this one. Now get out there and have some fun finding that next group opportunity.

~ ~ ~

DAY ONE: 4 Forces to Creating a Seismic Shift in Your Travel Business – Group Edition!

GERALDINE REE, Coach, Speaker, Author, Founder of Cruise-Shift

Hi my name is Geraldine Ree. I am the founder of Cruise-Shift.com. My passion is helping travel entrepreneurs create a seismic shift in their business. I firmly believe that by focusing on groups your business can be more efficient, more profitable, and yes even more fun than ever before!

Today I'm going to focus on preparing your business to sell more groups. After coaching thousands of agent and hundreds of agency owners in the travel industry I started to notice a trend. There were two things that successful entrepreneurs did that set them apart to become among the top 1% of all travel agencies.

First, they had a winning mindset in good times and bad and they're able to press on towards their goal and they were able to rally all the people around them.

Secondly, and not quite as intuitive, is that successful entrepreneurs are followers. They follow someone else who's already achieved the same goal or dream that they're after. They also follow a plan or system if they have one.

As Jim Rohn says, "Success leaves clues, go find them!"

When I started my coaching business I realized there wasn't a roadmap for independent travel entrepreneurs who are trying to run and grow a profitable business. So I decided to create one. I developed a system called the four forces framework which will help guide you step-by-step and how to make a quantum leap in your business.

This tool has been incredibly helpful for my clients who said things like, "The four forces framework has completely changed the way I look at my business". More, "I'm out of my wall and seeing my business take off like never before". I'm so excited to share this framework with you today.

The first step is a mindset shift. If your stock you want to break free, breakout and build a bigger business, first you have to look internally. What is your purpose? What are you uniquely designed to do?

Simon Sinek in his book *The Why* explains that “People don't care what you do. They care why you do it.” They don't care as much about what you stand for or what your purposes so much that you have one.

So the first step is to **find your why**. If you're going after wine and culinary groups ask yourself why. If you're interested in family cruising multi-gen cruises or any other niche market take time to explain why this particular customer segment really appeals to you.

Second, and critical in preparation, is that in order to make room for selling groups **you need to eliminate before you initiate**. Look for time leaks in your business as well as things that should be delegated. The mistake we often make when we choose a new idea is that we don't stop doing anything that's already going on in our business. So it's no surprise that the first emergency that comes along like an airline strike or one of our top agents leaving that the new idea we were so passionate about ultimately gets put on the shelf.

The next shift is the **customer shift**. In order to create a group program you need to make some key decisions about who your primary customer will be. Groups come in three categories. First, marketing groups. You choose a specific cruise itinerary or destination you'd like to feature and promote it to everyone within your database.

Affinity groups. The ideal customers come together on their own for a common reason such as wine and foodie clubs, first responders choirs, sports groups or school groups.

Incentive groups is the third category. One person pays the entire bill for the entire company to travel. A dentist might take his entire office on a cruise or corporation does an incentive for all their top-performing salespeople.

Getting really clear on your ideal customer is an exciting shift because you get away from having to be all things to all people. The important thing to remember is you're looking for better customers who love you and love everything about you and they're willing to pay you for it.

The third shift is the activation shift. Peter Drucker says, “The purpose of the business is to create and a keep the customer”. The activation shift is to continuously improve the process of proactively reaching out, engaging in converting prospects to customers and to create customers for life.

When you want to grow your business by adding or building groups you want to be activating your business 50% of the time - yes 50% of the time. That's why, again, it's so important to eliminate before you initiate. You also want to outsource the heavy lifting in activating your business such as sending newsletters, updating your website and posting to social media. They can be incredibly time-consuming and unless you were born to do it it pays to have someone else activate consistently.

Last but not least is the performance shift. There are two important performance shift elements to consider when it comes to expanding into groups. First, consider your best case in your worst case scenario on conversion.

What do I mean by conversion? You want to reverse engineer your goals based on how many people you want to join the group. So for example if you want to get 32 people to join you on Christmas markets cruise, how many people do you need to influence and get exposure to in order to achieve that number?

If you want 32 people, you need to influence at least 100 times that number. If you have a strong affinity it might be less. If you're just getting started it might be more.

The second most important performance tool is to use your calendar to create a work back schedule. The rule of thumb is that further you can work back from the departure date the better. Creating more time gives you the benefit of creating more events, more impressions in marketing, more sales conversions and so on.

That's it! Those of the four forces that create a seismic shift that will help you prepare in getting ready for your group shift. I love coaching entrepreneurs and if you're interested in taking an in-depth look at your business I'm here to help. My program is exclusively for travel entrepreneurs who are looking to truly commit to a new level of business.

I wish you much success in developing your group business and congratulations on taking the giant first step in reimagining your next steps!

~ ~ ~

DAY ONE: Declare Your Niche and Leverage MEETUP to Build Your Business

MELISSA MACKEY, International Speaker & Author & CEO Travel Chicks

[Stuart] Mom, motivator, business strategist, now that intrigues me. Let's start with your travel business Melissa. Tell us when you got started and what your business looked like back then.

[Melissa] Oh wow, that was eons ago, really! So Travel Chicks started in 2010 and prior to that I was actually running two different brick-and-mortar travel agencies. What I realized was that the amount of hours I was putting in and I must state that I definitely credit that business opportunity to teaching me how to run a business, how to hire employees, how to really run a business in the back end. And what I realized was all those hours I was putting in for somebody else I needed to do it for myself. So I decided, end of June 2010 I left the brick and mortar business. I took the summer off. I started into this actual self-discovery journey and somehow I wound back up in travel. And so in 2010, in September, is when Travel Chicks started.

I wouldn't say I had no idea about business because I really had a lot of great training at the brick-and-mortar. But what I learned is that over the years we have kind of morphed and evolved. And I believe that every agent, especially just starting out, whether you're an independent contractor or you're starting your own business. It's ok to have this idea of what you think it should look like in the beginning, but to also be open for the flow of how things go. Because how we started back then, it is nowhere near where we are today.

[Stuart] Right, that's great advice just gotta roll with it. Good to have that vision, have the plan and see where it takes you, right, to secure its roots sometimes. Now today tell us what your travel business looks like today. When you reached out to me, excited about the groups Group Sales Summit and I'm grateful for that. I was just so jazzed to hear about your business. Give us a little a snippet about what your business looks like today. Then we'll talk about your other business that you do as well and then I know that there's something big you want to share with our audience today, a great way to build a group business and engage others. So tell us about your business now.

[Melissa] So Travel Chicks now, our big focus is groups! What a surprise! As we are here on the Group Sales Success Summit! So our big niche target market or client that we go after now is single and solo travelers. That doesn't mean that we cannot serve a family who wants to take an all-inclusive vacation. But we have a real niche target in the market and so we really pride ourselves on being Canada's number one group travel experts. So when I saw this Group Sales Success Summit. I was like I want to go to this. There is such an alignment!

The business today is definitely not what it looked like when we started. And we are continuing to grow. We attend conferences, we attend online summits and we learn new pieces or new tidbits that we then apply in our business and it just helps catapult your business ten times. So you just go with the flow and you be open. Obviously it's important to have the strategic plan in place.

Travel Chicks where we are today, our big focus, is the solo and single travelers. At the end of the day we are solving such a huge problem in the marketplace. And if you think about it so many people want to travel but they don't have the time, they don't have the freedom, and they don't have the friends to attend these trips with them. So the problem that we're solving is what we're helping pair people up to take these epic dream trips with.

[Stuart] I love it! I love your focus and that you're bold enough, courageous enough, Melissa, to have a niche, to declare your niche, and to become the best in the business at it. I have preached to agents for years that they need to be able to stand up in front of somebody, everybody and say with all confidence that they're the best in the world, the best traveler in the world, the best at something.

Tell me quick how did you choose that niche? How'd you choose it and was it tough to say no to other business and just have a focus?

[Melissa] Yes, I would say it is so tough. It doesn't matter what business you're in, when you make that decision and that declaration that this is the number one focus, niche target client, it's really tough to own it because we're thinking in our mind how can we serve these people and what if they come to us and we can't help them. But it's not true; you know that you can help anybody that comes to you.

The way that we decided to own Canada's number one group travel experts focusing primarily on solo and single travelers is: I was on the beach and I was thinking to myself how can I start traveling for free and bringing all these groups of people together, with me? And it was just this idea that evolved into more and more things and one of the platforms that I used has helped me grow the business exponentially and there's been no turning back, because as soon as you make that declaration it's a game changer.

[Stuart] I really appreciate you hitting that one out of the park because I know we have so many agents out there who have this fear of declaring a niche and just going for it. So please hit rewind and hear what Melissa just said to let that be inspiring.

For a minute, before we go to that platform, before we share what that platform is, what everyone is going to love to hear about this. Tell us about your other business that you fell into because people looked at you as such an authority. What else do you do on the side?

[Melissa] Well that's a loaded question! On top of being an independent mama right now and running a few different businesses, I morphed this generating revenue through getting people together. So I have a whole coaching business, on the side, where I host live events, I host live retreats and I host live master classes just online. And I teach people how to follow their dreams and their passions and really come alive in life. Because at the end of the day too many of us are working for the man. You know, we are clocking in and clocking out and we just put our dreams aside and we don't even know how to tap into them again. And that is where I was losing myself, when I was working for a brick-and-mortar travel agency business. I was just like clocking in and doing my job and clocking out at the end of the day. Going home and you know living this almost robotic life. I was like there has to be more. There has to be more and so that's when I started diving into this whole personal discovery journey and I was like both of these businesses go hand in hand with each other. It was a no brainer.

[Stuart] Good stuff, thank you for sharing. Now, reveal the platform you said before, which I think agents should pay attention to and listen to because they may be able to put it to work in their business.

[Melissa] Ok so this platform you might have heard of it before, it's called Meetup.com. Go and check that out right now and MeetUp has really served us on exponential levels because we have actually used it for three different reasons.

Number one, it helps you build your credibility. Number two, it helps you build a database and build members in your own meetup site. And if you do it strategically, this is how you can start

building your email list and we all know that email lists are cash. Email lists have so much opportunity to share and add value to people's lives. And third is at these meetups, would it be okay if I walk you through what happens at a MeetUp event?

[Stuart] Please do.

[Melissa] Okay, so back in 2015 when I decided that I wanted to take a vacation a month. I had an existing MeetUp group that was business focused, it wasn't travel focused. I changed the name of the MeetUp and I started thinking where do I want to travel to. So I would research the trip. I would throw it up on my MeetUp group and then I would have these evenings, which we called Travel Talks.

At these Travel Talks we would share different members travel experiences, we would share different destinations, and we would really educate the public on, just expanding their world horizon. So at the end of these Travel Talks we would offer our upcoming trip. And I tell you I had people sign up right on the spot. And I was like are you kidding me. This is so easy. I would decide where I wanted to go. I would post the trip. I would host a live event and boom there's my vacation paid for. And I am helping all these people's dreams come true because we're helping people partner up. So they are not paying single occupancy rates and they are finding travel mates. How many people want to travel the world but they don't even know what to do because they have no friends that have the time, the money, or the freedom.

I'm telling you, all of you agents out there. This is a brilliant tool and the reason why I know this is so powerful is I was in Vancouver 5 months ago. And I was attending as an agent, an agent industry conference. And one of the sessions I was in was Joint Ventures and Groups and the facilitator, she was having a really bad day. She ended up puking, she had to leave the audience at the back of the room, and she was getting sick. So all of these agents were sitting in the room no one was talking to anybody, so I was like, I am an expert. I am an expert at bringing groups together. I gotta share what I know works for me. So as I started speaking all of these agents were popping up in their chair and they were listening and they were like, whoa, I never even thought of this. And so at the end of the session the woman who got sick, she never ended up coming back because she was just too ill.

At the end of that conference, I had all of these agents from across the country lining up to get my business card so they could ask me, "How do I start a MeetUp, and what do I need to do, and how do I choose a venue?" I've actually put a little cheat sheet together for you which you are more than welcome to download and get yourself. So it is just a step by step system of what you need to do to create your own MeetUp group. And I can tell you if you start doing these MeetUp Travel Talks on a consistent basis you're going to build your credibility, you're going to build your database and you're going to have the opportunity to ask your potential clients who are right in front of you, where do they want to go?

[Stuart] Do you go with, still, with each and every trip? Are you the group leader for all of them or sometimes do you have other leaders lead, I'm curious.

[Melissa] So it's a great question. Prior to me having my baby I was going on all the trips. Now I have to be very strategic on which trips I go. So we either nominate one of our travel MeetUp members to be the group leader and we throw in a few bonus for them or we have one of our agents lead the group. And I can tell you this people love you and people want to go on the trip with you. And I wish that there was doubles of me, but there just isn't!

[Stuart] What I'm hearing though is a confirmation, Melissa that is important. That if an agent can't go, if they're not the leader or they just can't go somebody needs to lead and it might be somebody who is already in the group that wants to do that, that wants to step up so at least there is a point person to make sure everything goes well.

[Melissa] Totally, there definitely has to be a group leader. It's hard to just send a group on their way and you know hope that nothing happens. It's always nice to have that one point of contact person who was going on the group with what you're organizing.

[Stuart] I love it, great stuff. Tell us one thing and I really appreciate that you are going to prepare a document for us so everybody who is attending the Group Sales Success Summit can download it and learn from you.

Give us one thing Melissa not to do on Meetup. What's a no, no with Meetup?

[Melissa] Constantly selling, I would say refrain from constantly selling. The reason why is because you want to really build solid relationships. So some of the MeetUps you may have maybe start discussions, get a conversation going. Don't always be selling because people do business with those they know, like, and trust. And in order to have this whole know, like, and trust you have to be delivering a ton of value.

[Stuart] And a ton of value is information. Information not selling, that is so important and backing up to something you said earlier very, very key is it's all about building your list. Whether it's an email database, whether it's followers in a Facebook group, whether it's a Meetup group. You need to have that list somewhere because the bigger that is the higher the probability of percentage of them will want to travel here, here, or here. That is your model keep building that list.

[Melissa] Yes and I can't stress this enough. It's consistency. So as you're building this list, you gotta email them consistently. And don't always sell. Say, "Hey, here's the top three travel trips when traveling with a toddler." You know, just find an article that you see online and share that in the email. All these helpful tips that are related to the group or niche that you focus on.

[Stuart] Thank you. That's another great point, so many of us have a fear of writing, we write all day long, but when it comes time to write one paragraph that's going to go out we'll sit there frozen, right, and we get paralysis, we just can't do it. Well if that's the problem, if that is holding you back, repurpose, forward something that you read from somebody else, say, "Hey,

I thought this was great," because that writer will love the fact you shared it. I'm sure you write and you love it Melissa when somebody shares your information and that's how it gets out, that's how you build followers.

This is good stuff. Alright, I'm going to ask you for one big take away, we could probably talk for the whole hour. Give me one big take away. You having come into contact with so many other travel professionals who they dabble, they babble about groups but they don't really hit it, they don't really make money doing it. What would you leave us with?

[Melissa] The biggest take away I would say is, this is such a tough one, but it's believe in yourself. Period. You gotta believe in yourself so much so that you wake up, excited to share, excited to add value, excited to be in the business that you're in. Being in the travel industry we all know there's ups and downs, and highs and lows. But you know what, it's any business, it doesn't matter. So you gotta believe in yourself and believe in that decision of whoever you're deciding to target on or focus on own it. Own it. Believe in yourself.

[Stuart] Own it, live it, believe in yourself. It's the law of attraction isn't it? What you believe will manifest. Melissa, thank you, I wish you continued success.

[Melissa] Thank you, Stuart. Thank you for having me on.

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Stuart Cohen's Daily Sales Tip 1

My mission today is to validate what you may already be doing, remind you of what you may have forgotten, and the best of all give you some new ideas you had not thought of before. I hope this covers the gamut of everybody with us today. Some of you have been doing groups for years so you may look at this stuff and say AH, I forgot, thanks for reminding me or it could be all new for you.

#1. Are you dazed and confused why you've never had luck selling groups? What I'm bringing you are the top 20 issues challenges, obstacles, complaints, comments I hear from travel professionals being in the business for so many years.

And you know it comes down to friends? It comes down to trying new things because you know what happens if we keep doing things the same way and expecting different results - we are going to be let down.

The marketplace is entirely different there's this thing called the Internet. Things have changed. When I started was only brick-and-mortar it was no such thing as a home-based agent. I'm aging myself aren't I. So today my friends today were going to try to shift your paradigm, shift your mindset and also shift your habits.

I want to end the slide by saying this - and pay attention to me - more often than not the travel agent who complains to me that they just can't seem to grow their business, blame the consumer. "Why don't they buy from me? Why don't they call me back? I don't understand I had this great idea with the vineyard and I sent them an email and I put a call and I sent a letter and they don't even respond to me!". So we tend to blame them. As your business coach I'm here to tell you things I know you need to hear but you don't necessarily want to hear. It's not their fault. It's yours! But I will give the tools and tricks to turn that around.

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GROUP SALES SUCCESS SUMMIT 2018: DAY TWO

DAY TWO: Tapping Into Special Interest Groups

JOHN CHERNESKY, Vice President, North America Sales Princess Cruises, Cunard Line

Hi, everyone! I'm John Chernesky, Vice president of sales for Princess Cruises, Cunard Line and I'm here to talk today about grapes, not grapes, groups! Get these out of here. Well actually, while we're talking about grapes let's talk about one, more specifically Special Interest Groups.

Now I'm sure you've heard this all before that one of the best ways to build group bookings is to target Specialty Interest Groups. And the best way to do that is to tap into an area that you're passionate about. Whether you're a food connoisseur, art and history buff, birdwatcher, outdoorsman, fitness guru, or you just love marine life. There is a market out there that you can build a group around and chances are you already know of and are part of these circles participating in these activities. Today I'd like to give you some actionable steps that you can take to attract new clients for group cruises revolving around special interests.

To start, begin by canvassing existing clients to find out what their level of interest is. Send out an email or tweet, if you're social savvy, asking, "Hey is anyone here into fine wines? I'm looking to take group vacations to visit some European wineries. Anyone want to come with?" You can also join groups on social media related to your special interest. For example, I would follow pages like Wine Enthusiast that cater to food and wine connoisseurs on Facebook or Women Who Love Wine on Instagram and interact with their page. Like their photos, make comments; respond to other people's comments. Taking an active part of the conversation will not only help you identify potential clients, it will draw eyes to you. It's a win, win.

When designing the trip make sure you provide a clear purpose and idea on the special interest content during the cruise, so that all the participants feel like they've been enriched by the experience. For example, you may be able to sign-up someone on your group who may be able to offer a special lecture or demonstration on their area of expertise. Also consider customized shore excursions that are relevant to the group. For instance, at Princess Cruises, we have a group shore excursions team that can help tailor a special shore excursion to a local vineyard and have an exclusive winetasting with the owner or local sommelier. And best of all you get to mark up the price so you can earn commission on the work you put in.

As you're building your group be sure to keep the members interested with retention emails every other week or once a month informing them on any updates regarding the trip or even just to send an interesting video or article related to the special interest. And why you're doing this is to give yourself plenty of lead time to plan, promote, and drum up interest. Don't hesitate to start 18 months or even two years out. Also, don't be afraid to start small. Give yourself a chance to learn and to control costs with the group just large enough to help offset the cost of escorting the group, if you plan to do that, which reminds me of another important way to book groups.

Escorted travel also known as Pied Piper groups or come-along cruises. The tried-and-true way of building group business that you can truly call your own is groups that you personally escort yourself. If you enjoy the social aspects of traveling with your clients, this is an ideal way to build a loyal following of group members attracted to the ideas of having you, their travel professional, there throughout the trip to keep everything on track, as well as to provide a fun social atmosphere of traveling with the other group members. Some advantages to this kind of group are that you own it because once group members get used to traveling with you, it's very difficult for your competition to lure them away. Group members eventually help you recruit new members and eventually it gets easier over time to build in custom elements that can become additional profit areas like the group shore excursions I mentioned and pre-and post-tours.

Start by communicating with everyone in your world who may have an interest in traveling together to find out what vacations are on their bucket lists. This includes existing clientele, friends, family, social media friends and followers, business contacts. It may also include community members or neighbors. Don't hesitate to ask anyone you know. Spread the word everywhere. Promote in all the usual ways on social media, print, online etc. Don't forget to personally ask everyone with whom your agency comes in contact with to come along. Also promote by holding social gatherings to discuss the departure and stage this in a way that encourages potential members and booked guests to begin social connections. You may even consider offering a referral fee for those people already booked on your group cruise to bring in new guests.

As you're planning a cruise plan several special events, a cocktail party, a ship tour that you lead, a scavenger hunt, socialize and be available. Connect people in the group with each other. Make dining something fun each night by organizing different tables.

Once on the cruise you're hosting, be sure to engage guests. You're looking at developing relationships that will last a lifetime so that your group will want to travel with you as much as possible. Once back home after the cruise, don't forget to keep in touch. Have a get together at your house for travelers to share their photos and wonderful stories and talk more about their next adventure with you. Word will begin to spread in the community about the wonderful time everyone had and others will want to join in the next time.

At Princess we have one of the best group programs in the industry since our LTO's combined with valuable amenities and benefits associated with booking a group such as TC credits. If you're not already booking groups this is a surefire way to grow your business with us.

As always your local business development manager is there to help answer any questions you might have or they can help you start building your group business. You can also call 1.800.PRINCESS or check us out at OneSourceCruises.com for further information. Thanks very much for your support and happy selling.

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DAY TWO: Overcome the 'Fear Factor' of Doing Groups Through Efficient Tools

BARBIE GROVES, Vice President Sales, The Mark Travel Corporation

[Stuart] Barbie, I understand our timing is really great. There's some big stuff going on right now at the Mark Travel Corporation. What's happening as it relates to groups?

[Barbie] Well just a total coincidence but this week we are actually launching the branded version of groups for Mark Travel. So it is going to Groups by Fun Jet so we had just seem to have done such a fantastic job in the last however many months, years getting this group department together. It's running like its own business. So we now got a logo, you know, we got our team in place of technology is working and we are ready to go. So we're just very proud of that.

[Stuart] Tremendous! Now I know, I know that you have always been very focused on groups and giving extra levels of support to the travel agent community to do groups. Would you explain why, what did you see out there that's happening in the community. Sort of the obstacle that's been holding the community back from selling more, being more profitable, being more aggressive in building more group focused business.

[Barbie] Well I always call it just the fear factor. Travel agents who are very experienced in the FIT segment were wildly successful for some reason there is this innate fear of I can't do it, I can't do it. So really what we tried to do is take all the angst out of it and of course there are all of the new people in the industry who really don't know where to start. So we do have levels of support that we do offer depending on what people need. I think it makes all the difference.

[Stuart] I think just hearing those words from you, a respected industry executive; to help remove the fear factor is huge. And I'll tell you why. As agents are signing up right now as we record this for the Group Sales Success Summit, I am asking them a couple of questions and hands down, Barbie, hands down the biggest obstacle that's holding you back from achieving their dreams in the group business is fear. I don't know how to do this, I'm overwhelmed. And I know that that the tools you're providing...could you talk for a minute about these tools. These behind-the-scenes tools that you've purpose built so they can process stuff and be more efficient.

[Barbie] Well, not all of them are behind the scenes. Some of our tools are right up there front and center for travel agents to use. So we have two different types of groups. So the first is Groups Your Way. Now I always think of Groups Your Way as being sort of groups as you go. I mean this is sort of the FIT version of groups. So it's perfect for certain types of programs, so especially where there is flexibility in the guest list. And I love when I say that because quite a few years ago now, I got married in Jamaica and so we had about 50 people, well blow me down if we don't have 200 people, so you know that's a lesson right there, but it can also happen the other way as well.

So we have Groups Your Way which is basically book as you go there's no risk, there's no contract, there's no penalties. All you need is five rooms, minimum of five rooms, going down through a parameter of date period and you still get your group benefits upfront. So there is a promo code and there are free seats depending on how many you book, and depending on which hotels you book you may get group amenities. So there's all of that. So it's very good for a certain type of group but it's also good for our travel agent who is really not too sure of what they're getting into, how to get into it, and what probably scares them more than anything is the thought of that contract. You know the penalties and the risks and all this. Now the downside, and it doesn't have to be a downside of Groups your Way is that you don't get a guaranteed rate and you don't get a guaranteed block of rooms to sell into, but as I was saying, if you don't know how many people are coming anyway that doesn't necessarily have to be a problem. And the wonderful thing about that, and this is why I say tools can be front and center, is because of our custom landing feature we have attached to Groups Your Way it can actually go out to members of the group, who can book their own reservations. The travel agent and the group leader are notified when that happens. So they really don't need to do anything. So that is the way to start if you are really nervous or the way to go as I say, if you have a flexible guest arrangement and not to sure how many people are going to show up.

[Stuart] That's perfect and I know agents watching right now are like, wow! So if their first getting in this is a perfect entry way or if it's a group their not so sure where it's going to come out because it's lower risk but less guarantees and that would work that formula. So give us the other option that contracted concept.

[Barbie] That's right. So we have contracted groups. Now this is perfect if you know the number of people that are going. So these are the other destination weddings not everybody who wants to crash the party but these are the ones you really do have a good idea of how many guests are going to show up. Or a family reunion or I don't know a come along, or a radio trip or something you do have a number of rooms, a number of seats. You may not have the names but that's fine for contracted groups. So there is a contract, there are deposit dates etc. etc. but you have total flexibility within that as to how you're doing it.

Now again technology and this is where I think we are the game changers because we were certainly the first and I still think the operator with the most sophisticated group technology. It's being called a lifesaver by some travel agents. I love that quote lifesaver, game changer; are the two that, you know, that we repeat all the time, that we hear out there. And what does is

once the dashboard is customized for any group then the travel agent can have total access to the reservations, to the inventory, to each reservation that is booked, to the payment that is due, how much commission on each booking. So they have total control as to what they're doing. And from that they have various links that can go out to individual guests, like the payment links etc. So it is all-encompassing module that travel agents can totally be on top of when they're having their groups.

So the other side of that though is you don't have to be an expert, you don't have to be a professional to use this because the way that I just said it, travel agents might think, oh gosh, I really have to have been in this for quite a while before I try this. A wonderful thing about our group department is how they work; and they work in parts. So every part has four people in it, so there is a team lead, there's somebody who is in charge of the air and any deviations there, there's somebody who looks after any change of dates or anything that anybody wants to do, of course that never happens as you can imagine. Then there's sort of the closer, the person that makes sure that all the dots are joined and all the T's are crossed etc. etc.

But what I think is so cool about this is that as soon as a group quote is in play the parties are signed and somebody from that party will call the travel agent and that call is certainly an introduction, you know, "hello, how are you I'm so-and-so you will be working with us." But it's also a call to try to assess just how confident the travel agent is; so how much support are they going to need, you know, what are their biggest fears. And based on that they will get all the tricks and the tips and the suggestions and the recommendations and from there it evolves and then as I say progress starts. But this group is there the entire time by phone or by email or by whatever for any help or support that's needed along the way. So right there is a security factor.

[Stuart] So with the affinity group, with a true affinity group, where the agent has a real good idea of the opportunity, the total group of prospects that should be booking. The contracted group way is probably the way to go because it has added benefits: It's higher risk but added benefits but the more affinity, the more...and agents please this is really important we're talking affinity groups here, not just speculative, you may be better off it's more speculative promotion, right Barbie, probably better off in the uncontracted.

[Barbie] Now if you're looking at our dashboard, our contracted group dashboard, it's really quite fascinating because you have the rooms, you have the total amount of money for the group, and as people book into it money is just drawn down, and the names are just drawn down so that you can see the pull from the total. It is really quite a fascinating thing to watch. And of course, these manifests can be emailed, printed off, distributed whatever. Gone are the sort of the pencil and paper and rubber and you know, people typing in names. All of that is taken out of it. And of course contracted groups get the best group amenities and benefits. Groups Your Way certainly does get their benefits too, their upfront promo code etc. but contracted groups are going to get the best benefits. They are going to have a lower deposit, depending on air there is a free air benefit, and depending on what hotel you know there could

be additional bonus cash in it. So all in all it really is a very profitable and lucrative way of doing business.

[Stuart] Absolutely, now everyone is talking destination weddings, of course, it is more and more and more. It's growing and growing which is great. But talk to us about trends. What do you see at the Mark Travel Corporation in terms of trends beyond destination weddings, what's happening out there.

[Barbie] Well I am going to make one comment about destination weddings is that you know you used to do it, and I'm talking from experience here, you used to do it when you thought that you were on a budget and this was going to be the cheapest way to do it. But those days have gone. So now what we're finding is that people are spending as much or even more on a destination wedding than they would if they were at home having it in their local village. So that's one myth to sort of get away from if your taking on a destination wedding that you're not necessarily talking 20 or 30 people. You could be talking 50, 100, or 200 people. So that is something just to bear in mind.

But as far as trends are concerned, I think what we're finding is wherever there is a passion, wherever there is an interest in something there can be a group around that. So when we were chatting earlier I just, off the top of my head said smoothies, I mean where I got that from I really don't know. But I mean I can quite imagine a whole lot of people who drink green juice going down to, Cancun, say because of all of the flora whatever and having a group around that. Everything, obviously people are into yoga, people are into anything. If there is passion there can be a group it's just like minded people getting together wanting to do something a little more than just sitting on a beach. And we are finding that all of the time.

[Stuart] Thank you for that encouragement. All right, let's bring it home, the information you've shared thus far is fantastic. Let's bring it home all your years in the industry's working with so many agents and being on the inside especially of a growing group, and I do you need to give a shout out to Dan Miller because he, I have seen him personally do his presentations and clearly the passion, the commitment, the dedication that you will have to helping agents grow their group business I need to highlight. Shout out to Dan. What would be your final word that you want to share with the agent community right now to help inspire them to go achieve those big group dreams?

[Barbie] Well I'm going to cheat and I'm going to kind of say two things here. One is as a follow-up to kudos to Dan. Is that Dan and the group department do do every week at least two webinars, two live webinars on groups and they sometimes do groups 101, sometimes they do more complicated groups. They've even got a video that they share going through a group contract, so there is no excuse not to get it touch with Dan and his group for him to talk you through it.

But seriously, I think the main thing that I would have to say is any travel agent out there right now who is not in the group business is really letting a lot of money go, money off the table. I

really think that that is the way to go. It can be as small or as large as you want it to be, it can be as simple as or as complicated as you want it to be but I really do think you're missing out on a big piece of the business if you don't try it. I think as I have tried to explain, it's not difficult, it doesn't have to be difficult and if you're booking it through the right people, the right company, they are going to make it easy for you and talk you through it. And I think you will very, very quickly find that it makes a major difference.

[Stuart] Well, thank you and your company for helping remove the fear factor in building a thriving group business. Barbie, thank you for sharing and thanks for being here in the Group Sales Success Summit. ~ ~ ~

DAY TWO: A Successful Mindset For Selling Groups

MEREDITH HILL, Founder of the Global Institute for Travel Entrepreneurs (GIFTE), President of Gifted Travel Network (GTN) and ASTA 2016 Entrepreneur of the Year

Hey, I'm Meredith Hill and I am the founder of the Global Institute for Travel Entrepreneurs and I want to talk to you today about adopting a successful mindset for selling groups. So why would I want to talk about a mindset? I'm sure you're watching lots and lots of videos and getting a lot of content on the mechanics of selling groups and the strategy for selling groups and lots of other parts of filling groups. But I think one of the most important things you can do if you want to sell groups is to adopt a successful mindset first. And the reason why is because what you focus on expands. So I have three tips for you today on how to shift from maybe not necessarily successful mindset into a successful mindset for selling groups.

Going back to the why, it's another way to say how you get into the zone, right? So you have athletes that know how to get into the zone. Well selling groups is a whole lot of fun and it's a very, very lucrative way to run your business. You can make great money on it and continue to have a great quality of life all at the same time, but if you don't have the right mindset for selling groups you'll never really get into the zone like great athletes do and ultimately be successful.

All right, so let me give me the three tips I have for shifting your mindset into a successful one for selling the groups. The first tip I have is: To shift from a place of getting to a place of giving. It can be easy to want to sell groups for a lot of get type of reasons but it's time you own your value and you recognize that the reason, deep down there's probably a really good reason why you want to sell groups that has to do with being of service to the person you're selling the group to, as well as the people who travel in the group. And if you're coming from a place of getting when you are pitching a group or trying to fill a group, the people that you're speaking to are going to pick up on that vibe that you're coming from a place of getting and it's going to repel them. Let me give you a really good example that I'm sure you can relate to.

Have you ever been in the mall and in the middle of the mall there is those kiosks in they're selling all kinds of random things and you have someone who comes chasing you with a hair straightener or some new nail polish that's going to make your nails very strong and long. And if you've had that experience, the question I want to ask you is when that person comes chasing

you with whatever product they want you to try, what is your response? What is your immediate natural response? It's to pull away and say no thank you. I don't need help. I don't want what you're having. I don't want what you are offering me. The reason why is because that person typically is coming from a place of getting. In all honesty they're not really; they don't really care about your hair and how straight it is and how nice it looks when it's nice and straight. They want to sell you a hair straightener. They probably have a quota and they probably want to get more sales so they can get their quota met and they can get more things for themselves or their family or whatever, but in the end they're coming from a get place.

And when you show up with a potential joint venture partner, affinity leader, tribe leader, whatever it is and go to pitch a group concept, group travel concept. If you're coming from a place of getting because you really want to make the sale; you really want to get a top producer status with someone; you really want to finally get those bookings on such and such river cruise line that you've always wanted to book. They are going to pick up on that immediately and they're going to pull away as opposed to be drawn in. So the way you shift from a place of getting to a place of giving is to own your value. Is to recognize that you actually have a gift, something special a set of skills and talents that is going to help them in having an experience they probably want and have probably been asking for. So own your value, own your gifts and realize that you have them for purpose and that is to actually share them and apply them to other people so that you can actually make a difference in other people's lives. So that's tip number one: Shift from a place of getting to giving by owning your value and realizing that whatever your offering is absolutely of service and going to have a positive impact on them.

My second tip for shifting your mindset to a successful mindset when it comes to selling groups is: To reframe the concept of a no or rejection. And the reason why is in all likelihood you're probably going to get a lot of no's and if you haven't prepared yourself for that and haven't done this kind of a shift the no's are really going to bother you. But I think number one when it comes to the reframing rejection and reframing no, realize, expect that you only need one yes to have a really good group and what if you get one or two yeses a year? That's a business all in and of itself.

So another way, one of my favorite reframes on the concept of rejection, is that rejection is God's protection. And what that saying is that when you get a no, which again you're probably going to get a lot of them. I know people who send out 40 different emails at a time to different group, potential group, leaders and they get 30 no's and they get a lot of no replies as well and maybe get one yes. And that's just for a meeting. But when it comes to this reframe of rejection is God's protection, it really is, all its saying is this is not a match right now. And so you don't want to spend time, energy, resources, even money on something that's not a good match and so when you get a no or a no thank, just remember it's a protective way of the universe saying this is just not a match right now. And it may not even be a no forever it might just be a no for now. So it also another way to think about it is not yet maybe later and keep moving forward.

Alright, so my last tip for shifting into a successful mindset for selling groups is: To stay focused on the road ahead as opposed to what's going on right now. So if you think about it when you drive a car there's a reason why the windshield, the front windshield, is a whole lot bigger than the rear view mirror. And I know it's natural and it's probably going to happen for you that you're going to naturally look at the results and take score. You know you sent out 40 different emails to pitch, for just requesting a meeting with a potential joint venture partner and you're going to keep score on the kind of responses you're getting. And my tip for keeping that successful mindset intact is when you take score too soon you're going to get very down on yourself, you're going to feel disappointed and so that's why I encourage you to stay focused on the road ahead as opposed to what you've got right now.

Another way of saying that is spend a little bit more time focused on what you want instead of focusing on what you've got. Don't take score too soon; don't worry about the results right now. Explore what it is that you want and tap into how it feels when you have what you want. That's a really good way to stay focused on what you want is to tap into or tune to the feeling of having two or three successful groups ready locked loaded and ready to go.

So those are my three tips for you for shifting into a successful mindset for selling groups. #1 is shift from a getting placed to a giving place. #2 is to reframe rejection by realizing that rejection is God's protection and #3 focus on the road ahead instead of the road behind or what you've got right now. Stay tuned to what you want and the feeling of it.

So if you like this conversation, if you like this these tips I've been giving you and you want some more information I have a really great article that I want to share with you. It's all about filling groups the easy way instead of the hard way and if you want to get access to that all you have to do is go to www.getyourgifte.com.

Thank you so much and enjoy good luck!

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DAY TWO: Travel Agent Spotlight

MARA HARGARTHER, Chief Experience Officer, Franchise Owner, co-owner of DreamVacations

[Stuart] Mara, what year did you get into the business?

[Mara] 1994

[Stuart] Tell us, what did your business look like then, when you first started out, those early years.

[Mara] Well I had three children under four. I took a short cut, I had twins and I was just looking for a little part-time job. And I thought okay, you know, we had gone on a cruise my 30th birthday, fell in love with cruising. I traded in my briefcase from Wall Street for a suitcase and went into the travel business. So I started out, I left Wall Street, had my kids and decided I have

to go do something now. So at that time I joined Cruises Inc. and my office was in my bedroom. I had a desk and a phone and I started and I did a lot of networking. I went after first time cruisers. I went after the people that were not cruising. People that were taking their families to resorts and I spent the time because I didn't have any clients, wasn't going after family and friends and really explained the value of cruising. And one by one got first time cruisers and that's really how I built my business. And I did it part-time for about 8 months and the evolution of the business became a full-time job. I did \$1 million my first year, full-time. And I graduated from my bedroom to the laundry room. That's a true story!

[Stuart] That's wonderful! Alright now, fast forward from the late 90s to today: what does your business look like today?

[Mara] Well today it's in Florida and I have palm trees outside my office, so that's a good thing. Right now we are on target this week to hit 3 million in sales. Last year we did over four, so we are up about 25% for the year which is really fabulous. I'm very pleased.

[Stuart] As you should be congratulations. Now what's your business mix? What kind of business do you do?

[Mara] So luxury, premium, contemporary, basically; I'd say we're 90% cruise 10% land.

[Stuart] Okay and individual versus group?

[Mara] I think we're 40% group 60% FIT.

[Stuart] Okay 40/60. Now you and I have seen each other at numerous events, particularly at the Dream Vacations annual conferences. We just saw each other again at Fort Lauderdale at the Dream Vacations Group Summit and every time I am impressed that you give back as well. You'll come up before the audience you'll sit on a stool and you'll just take questions and share tips and I love that about you, you're paying it forward. I'm really amazed at the group business, the affinity group business that you've started. Tell us how that got started, what it looks like.

[Mara] Well you know, as opposed to a lot of people, a lot of people go after existing groups. I believe that if you create it they will come. So I build it and then I promote it. For example, I do a lot of fiber arts, knitting, crafting type cruises and that seems to be my niche. I'm not good at it, I don't really do it myself but I seem to have become, that's what I'm known for. So I would literally just walk into a quilting store, not knowing a soul, walk in and ask to speak to the owner. The owner comes forward; this happened to me on my first quilting group, I was in the area, saw a quilting store, and pulled in. The owner came out and I introduced myself and I said have you ever thought about doing a quilting cruise. She looked at me and she said you know about a year ago I called a travel agent because I thought I would want to do one and they never called me back. And I said well I'm here. I'd love to talk to you about it. I'd love to build a cruise around you. So basically, you tell me where you'd like to go and then together we work on a program. I have a formula that I will work with you and together we will promote this

cruise to your audience and we will have a successful cruise. And you will make money in the process. I don't really talk about them cruising for free. That's not a primary motivator but I talk about how they can earn money by charging for what they are offering to the attendees: which basically makes it not apples and apples with anything that could be compared to when people are shopping.

[Stuart] Right, right, so it's a special package you create. Value added, it cannot be shopped, which we talked about at length, about creating the package. Now, how many of these do you do average a year. And about how many guests participate?

[Mara] So we do on average probably six a year and the typical sweet spot seems to be about 60 to 70 people. We've had them over 100 but they seem to be easier to manage in the 60 range and we have a lot of what I call serial bookers; they always book the future cruise, they don't really care where it's going, they just want to be a part of it.

[Stuart] Now you mentioned before that, you personally, that's not your hobby, that's not necessarily your passion. So do you bring on experts?

[Mara] So that's part of the build it formula. What I do and this could go with any industry or any niche, but I take people that want to be in front of other people and I put them all together. So for instance, in the craft industry I typically have an instructor or a teacher that is well known, that has an audience. I pair them with a store that wants to sell yarn and crafts. So people come because they want to be in a class taught by this individual and they buy the materials for the projects from the store. So the store sponsors the cruise and the audience is brought in from the instructor, and from the store, and from my clients because I promote it as well on our Facebook page. As a matter of fact that's another hint that I would give to anybody that's doing a group; is I have a closed Facebook page for anyone that's going on our upcoming cruises. And this way they can get to meet the people that are going on board, and then afterwards they become friends, and they get to commiserate, and show their projects once they're finished. A lot of our audience is solo travelers and they like being with other people and that's one of the reasons why I think our cruises are so popular because we make them feel a part of something from the very beginning. We check in on them about the process.

[Stuart] Okay you said I want to pick up on that, it sounds to me, Mara, like you escort; you go with these groups?

[Mara] So I have kind of this has been work in progress, Stu, I've been doing this for over 10 years now and I have decided that I have come from being the travel agent for the group, to actually hosting the group. So I cohost the group with the store owner, and the instructor, and together; I'm really like the MC, kind of like you do; and I bring it all together. I'm the glue. I make sure everything is, you know, from our first meeting on board with the onboard event coordinator, we go through everything once we're on board, make sure we know everything set up the way it's supposed to be, no questions asked. I usually get the group leaders walkie-talkies and give them from the event coordinator I don't really want one, but I give it to them so

if they need something they can call and say; oh we need a wastepaper basket in the room or something like that.

[Stuart] So this is really important. I just want to stress this to all of our agents watching right now. Number one, you personally don't have to be that hobbyist, it certainly that's an opportunity if you are but you don't have to be. But if you get the right partners and clearly you do strategic partnerships, joint ventures, you bring a couple of parties together and then what happens is that everyone has their own list. So there's another opportunity to bring list and then you go because you know, Mara, that if something could go wrong it will so you're there to make sure it doesn't go wrong. And in the process people get to know you they love you, they feel safe and secure and confident that you there. And I love the word that you used "host" because you have a designated group leader, if you will, they're coming to see these instructors but the word host to me is very special; it gives a whole other meaning and why on earth would they ever think of doing this event without, Mara, the host.

[Mara] Well if the group isn't large enough I don't always go. So it has to be worthwhile for me to go and be out of the office, okay. But here's another really key important thing: if you don't go you really lose an opportunity to meet the people you've been dealing with. And these people that come on this cruise, they cruise and you're going to get in front of them and you're going to have the opportunity to really earn their business, build a relationship, take them to dinner, and find out about their habits. And I'd say that 70% of the people that go on my knitting cruises book their other travel with me.

[Stuart] You become their travel agent, period; for all things travel.

[Mara] Can I give you a funny story?

[Stuart] Please! Absolutely!

[Mara] So my last transatlantic knitting group we went to Ireland from Miami and my first day, on my first day in class, one of the cruisers came up to me and she said, "Mara, I wonder if you can help me?" I said, "Sure what do you need." She said, "Well we just came back from a Regent cruise last month. And you've done more for me since I first came in contact with you, than our travel agent for 10 years has ever done for us. And we made an onboard booking on that cruise, but we didn't turn it over to that travel agent. Would you mind taking over that booking for me?" I say, "Well, okay let's see. From the middle of the ocean, I said do you have any information about it?" She handed me the paper, I called Regent from the middle of the ocean, they transferred the booking and it was a \$29,000 booking. Does it pay to be onboard? Absolutely!

[Stuart] That's a great story, a great anecdote. Agents listen Mara is doing it. She's not just talking the talk, she's walking the walk. Give us a few tips, Mara that you've learned along the way. A system, a process, something that all of a sudden you discovered and man it just made it better, more efficient, or you sold it out faster. What comes to mind?

[Mara] So one of the things I do is if somebody says they want to do a group, I don't just take it. I basically interview them as opposed to just saying oh yeah I'll do your group because I don't want any failures. I only want my groups to be successful for everyone involved. So I basically interview the group leader. I ask them really important questions and in this business the most important thing you can do is not talk but listen. And listen with your brain to what they're saying. So I interview them, make sure that everybody's going to do their homework and so we can make it successful. If they don't have a big enough database, they don't have a big enough social media reach. Then I tell them go back, get more names, build your list and let's talk again in a year.

Key factors would be: give yourself enough time. I always try to shoot for a year and 1/2 in advance. I also try to remove any possible negatives like hurricane season or holiday, over a holiday because there can be advantages or disadvantages, religious holidays, the Jewish holidays. You know, some people want to be away, some people don't want to be away things like that. For the first time around with a group try to do close by, don't have a \$1500 airfare involved, you know, for Europe. Sometimes the Caribbean is easier because it's less expensive for them first time in.

The other thing that's really important before I do a group is that I make sure, with the cruise line that I get the best space I possibly can and I secure that with the cruise line before we even start. One of the things that my groups love majority of the time, because we do one particular cruise line, am I allowed to put in a plug, or no?

[Stuart] Sure!

[Mara] So with the Solstice class ships, they have these beautiful windows in the conference room and people don't feel like they're missing anything on the sea days, which is when we do our classes, when we're in Alaska because they can look out and see the glaciers from those windows. Other ships have just four walls and they can get kinda creepy in there. But always look for a place that we can call our own for the duration of the cruise. That's really important. Other things: as far as getting the business or keeping the business?

[Stuart] Being the host versus the word escorting, creating a package, that they can book direct with the line, but they can't come participate in your event because it has to be booked through you, and you don't wave out the carrot of free travel but you work a financial arrangement, and you figure out what it is they need. Why do you think they do it? Do they do it because they want to generate more customer loyalty with their own customers, because they like making extra money because we all know that group travel solves a problem?

[Mara] So that's actually the first thing I ask is: What's your biggest challenge? First thing I ask because that's my opportunity to come in there and help them. So in this industry, in particular, as well as most others they meet; they have meetings, they have retreats, they call them or meetings at sea. So I explained the benefits of doing it at sea and having a captive audience, it really works well with incentive groups that I do as well. You have everybody in a place they

can't get off the ship and you have their attention. Let's make the most of it while you have them.

And you know the one big thing to do I think that makes a huge difference is before we go I discuss, with the group leader, the next cruise and we have that secure and we keep it a big secret all week long. They're doing their best try to find out, what's it going to be, what's it going to be and we build so much excitement around that and we don't release it until, typically, we used to do it the last day, now we do it the second to last day. Because sometimes they have to call home or check the schedule. But what I do is I have the onboard group coordinator come to the cocktail party that I have; where we announce it, with all the forms ready, have the group coordinator do a presentation about all the advantages of booking on board, so that they could book our group cruise or something else. And then they take the forms and they bring them back the next day. And if our repeat passenger rate from this cruise is better than 50%. So more than 50% of the people will book at least one of the cruises that we have. And we started promoting the other ones that we already have so we'll have flyers for four cruises at that event. Some of these people who already have been booked on them but some will not.

[Stuart] So you're running a schedule already. It's not necessarily one a time; you have a schedule so if they can't go this date they can go that date.

[Mara] We're out into 20 now and we're waiting for fall of 20 to come out because people are asking and the other thing we do is we send out a survey about every two years to the people that have been on our cruises asking them, what do you want? Do you want a longer crew, a shorter cruise, is itinerary important, instructor, destination, all of these things. What's important, price? We found out from our surveys that the people really don't care where they go, they don't care. They want to just be a part of something and we built that something that they want to be a part of. And you can do that in any industry. You can do that in golf. You can have a supplier with a pro with a golf community. You can do it in the hair products industry: you can have hairdressers with manufacturers and hairstylists. Anybody that wants to be in front of somebody you can do this with.

[Stuart] Beautiful, this is old sage wisdom an old experiential. You've done this you've walked the walk, I wish you continued success. Is there one thing you want to leave us with, an inspiration? Because I already know agents watching this, part of the Group Sales Success Summit, are all jazzed up getting ideas. Oh, by the way, quick question for you, did you ever reveal your TC policies, your TC's with the group, with the group leader?

[Mara] Never.

[Stuart] Thank you I had a feeling you were going to say that. Listen and learn from Mara, friends. Give us one nice take away.

[Mara] I'm going to tell a quick story. I mentioned earlier about listening, how it's really important. And you know we're all salespeople, we're type A we love to talk but one of the things I love about this business, and next year it's going to be 25 years for me, I still learn every day. I still get excited with the three day cruise as much as I get excited with a 23 day cruise. I find that the more I'm in this the more listening is valuable.

So last week I had a client call me up and they wanted to go on a cruise with some friends that had already booked with me that had been booking with me for more than 20 years. And this gentleman said he wanted to go on this cruise he's never been on this cruise before, this cruise line. So I started asking him some questions and listening and asking questions is what I'm shooting for here. So I said to him, "Why are you going on this cruise?" And he goes, "Well my wife passed away last year and I would like to, I cruise a lot, we used to travel a lot together." So I said, "What cruise line do you like?" So he goes, "We always go on Royal." I said, "oh great, that's great." And I said, "So you must have really great travel agent." That's what I say because I don't ever want anyone to take away my client. Because I know my clients wouldn't go or at least I like to think that. I'm sure some of them cheat, but... So he says, "No as a matter of fact I don't." Listen, listen, listen. So he said, "I once had a travel agent and she was terrible. I couldn't do anything I wanted to do with my reservations. Everything had to go through her."

So if you listen to that, this is somebody who wants to have control over his reservation. So I said, "You booked direct?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "Wow, you should never do that, I can always do better for you than the cruise line. You know we are here 7 days a week, we answer the phone every day, when you deal with us you're going to just speak with me or one of my associates. You are not speaking to a call center. You call at 9 o'clock we're going to answer the phone." So I said, "Let me ask you something, how would you feel about sending me what you've booked?" And he said, "Oh, I'd be happy to." I said, "Send me a list of what you have on the books and what you paid for it. Maybe I can do better for you."

Next day, I get an excel spreadsheet. He's got 145 days of cruises booked, multiple back to back, with the pricing. Only two of them I was able to get better pricing because he booked these a long time ago. I called him up and I said, "You know, I would love to service your bookings and I got permission from the cruise line to be able to take these over. And in return, you will never get better service. Anything you want to do, you call me, I am your concierge. I didn't offer him any money, I didn't offer him any wine, but I said to him, tell me this, what is important to you on a cruise?" Because before I give him anything I want to know what's important to him. He says, "Well, I don't drink, don't send me wine, I don't do shore excursion. I really like to just get out of the cold in Michigan and just enjoy the ship. I like a balcony and I want to get on there as inexpensively as possible." I said, "Ok, that's what we're going to do for you. I don't know what I'm going to do for you but I'm going to do something for you for transferring all your bookings to me. But I'm going to do something for you."

So you see he doesn't want onboard credit, he doesn't spend it. He doesn't want to drink. But I'm just going to WOW him with my service. I touched base with him let him know he was going to get a bunch of emails. We turned everything over and I have a really happy new client.

[Stuart] Beautiful, service the key thing was service. You stay loyal to him, he knows you're in his pocket, you're in his corner, you're on his side. There's a trust there's integrity and he doesn't have to worry anymore.

[Mara] That was the other thing, Stu, was I told him about our policy about checking prices. That if the rates went down we would call him, he could stop checking. That was a big deal that was really a big deal. So it was the listening part and asking the right question. If I didn't say to him, "You must have a travel agent." I never would've known that he booked direct.

[Stuart] Right just asked a question.

[Mara] It's about listening and asking.

[Stuart] Right and we can't assume what's most important to them until we ask. They'll tell us, they'll tell us everything. We just have to play a little bit of detective. Mara, very inspiring anecdotes, we appreciate this. I have a feeling a lot of agents are on fire right now they're like wow this is great stuff they've taken notes. Thank you.

[Mara] Thank you for asking me to, it was my pleasure and I wish everyone great success and I hope that they love the business as much as I do.

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Stuart Cohen's Daily Sales Tip 2

For those of you who've been on our Facebook community for a while you probably got to catch some of my Facebook LIVE tips. That's my most comfortable environment. I love just improvising like that and especially when I can bring you something that has meaning in the moment to make something that I've experienced.

I love observing other businesses and other business people. I like to learn the things they do right. I try to emulate that and of course learn things they do wrong to make sure I don't do those things! Then I come back and I love to share with you.

So today for the tip of the day I bring you an experience that just happened truly. So I received an instant message from somebody who is enrolled in our Summit and believe me I say this in a loving way I'm not you or embarrass anybody I just want to help and share because there will be a moral of the story so stay with me.

I received an instant message and it was quite long in fact it was 683 words excluding salutation and greeting. Well I didn't read it at the time because it was way too long especially for a guy that got ADHD I have a limited attention span especially when I'm so busy now with the summit.

Instead of deleting and I went back to it an hour later because what if there's an opportunity? What if somebody had an opportunity for me to do a keynote speech?

So I didn't want to just delete it without giving it a shot. I don't know if other business owners would have given it a second shot but I did. So I simply wrote back thanks for this message I'm slammed right now would you mind sending to me via email and just giving me one line headline so I know what it's all about.

The person responded back right away and said of course. I did get the email but it didn't contain the one line headline which would have set the table for me so I knew what was about.

It was the same 683 word text. I deleted it. But I put it back in my INBOX because I just want to show you that I'm a nice guy and maybe there is an opportunity in there.

Here's the moral of the story friends. Have you ever put your big ideas in an email and you write it out beautifully eloquently and you send it off and you believe in it it's a great idea. But you never get a response. They hit delete or they just write back saying no thank you or REMOVE.

So let me explain something to your friends there's two problems with that concept. #1 Your selling your idea because it solves your problem. You have no idea if it truly solves their problem. No I haven't read that long email just yet I have no idea if it solves my problem because this person doesn't know me -- how would they know if they're solving my problem? Perhaps I'll buy what they're offering number

#2 They spilled all the beans. They've laid out the big idea and if I did read it it would give me a chance to say NO.

So what's the moral of the story? Two things. #1 If you've got that big idea don't put it in a long email because you're spilling the beans and you're just giving that person easy out by not responding or hitting DELETE.

#2 Consider your big idea. Whose problem does it solve? Yours? Because you're in the group business, you want to book a group with them, you can see it happening and you know would be great.

Or are you solving their problem because at the end of the day -- now here's the punchline friends -- at the end of the day group travel works because it solves a problem. That organization, that association, that group has got a problem. That group trip, that group journey, that group tour, will solve that problem.

We'll talk more about this over the next few days but I want to lay that out their friends to give you some stimulation, information, inspiration so you don't go sending off that big idea and feeling all let down because you didn't get any bite

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### GROUP SALES SUCCESS SUMMIT 2018: DAY THREE

**DAY THREE: Have No Fear Of Doing Groups!**

**PAULA HAYES, Vice President of Sales, Globus Family of Brands**

[Stuart] Consumers in general know where they want to go, right but especially when it comes to a group and everyone has different ideas, and different expectations, and desires and tastes. They have no idea how to put it together, how to make it happen. So they turn to an agent and that's the travel professional's job, to know to make these suggestions, that's going to make their dreams come true. Now you told me that you've got three new products that specifically have been very attractive and very successful with groups.

Let's go through each one and if you would, Paula, tell us so our audience, so they understand why, what's making them so attractive and then of course how the agent can leverage that in their business, should they get these kinds of requests and can make these recommendations. First is Avalon Active Discovery Cruise.

[Paula] Okay well this was a surprise to us, that it was so interesting to groups. We designed it to attract a more active type of cruiser because, as we know, river cruising has a perception of maybe being a little passive and not as active, so we thought let's shake it up a little bit and create these Active Discovery Cruises, fantastic. What we didn't think about but makes so much sense is groups often struggle with the idea of how can I have something for everybody, how can I make sure that everybody that's traveling in this group is going to find something that's interesting to them. So in the three different excursions; whether it's a discovery and you want to do a painting class, or it's an active where you want to do some jogging or hiking or a classic where you just want to go see the iconic sites. Agents are loving this product because they know for sure that everybody's going to find something to do that they really enjoy.

[Stuart] What's critically important here is that when the agent goes to present a concept like this A: they make sure that the consumers, the members of the group, have already expressed interest in doing these kinds of cultural experiences, this kind of immersion. Part 2: that they talk benefits, not just features. What am I going to do? Right, what can I do? And everything you just said is an activity, so that's perfect. I love that.

The second one is Undiscovered Italy and that's with Global. So what's the attractiveness there for the agent and for the group?

[Paula] Well, Italy, as you now is not a one and done destination. So it's a great option for a group who has already been to Rome, Florence, Venice. Which is normally where everybody starts, right? Or for a group who's never been to Italy but maybe thinks that they'd like to see some of the more off the beaten path or as we call off the beaten piazza areas of Italy. So that's one thing we love about it; is the fact that Italy is kind of an evergreen destination but the other

thing that makes a tremendous amount of sense for groups is these off the beaten path and were talking Sicily, and Napoli, Tuscany. They're a little bit difficult, logistically, to get around. So the benefit of having a tour is that you don't have to worry about the infrastructure, the roads, the how's the best way to get from here to there, the quality of the hotel's, a restaurant that can accommodate a group, a large group. We've got that all planned, so it's very easy then for the agent to propose a destination that these folks may have dreamed about, maybe haven't even heard about that becomes very intriguing to them. And then the agent isn't sweating it and trying to figure out how am I going to put all of these components together? We've done it for them.

[Stuart] And, you know, this reminds me back in the day, you and I have been in the business a couple years, back in the day before we had so many package tours like this. Where we had the FIT agent, right, and that was you know it was artwork, it was creativity, it required enormous time and energy and knowledge and so forth, but what you've done here, what I'm hearing here, is that it's done of course with some flexibility, however, you know to pick out the exact itinerary and so forth, but especially for a group, I see the agent, the smart group agents, not presenting it, oh here's their product still walking it through every day as if they're the ones that are putting this together. They don't have to give you the credit, they just have to give you the business, of course, you've done the heavy lifting the hard-work and when it comes to a group, when you guys, we turn it over to you and put together this is incredible itinerary and you take care of all the details. That's the beauty of FIT, sort of, made simple for groups.

[Paula] Yes, efficient and profitable because as you said trying to put this together on your own will take hours and days and then if you're trying to piecemeal it, there will be certain things, attractions for example, that you might not make any commission on at all or hotels that don't pay an aggressive commission. And when you're booking it through us, of course, the whole thing is commissionable. It's already set in stone. We can be flexible and something we should probably remind the audience, as we do do custom tours that's becoming somewhat of a, I don't know, lost art. You can take any of the tours you find and customize them for us. But again it comes down to is this an efficient transaction and is it a profitable transaction and then does it deliver for the client?

[Stuart] Right exactly, efficient, profitable. Because when it comes to groups we all know, Paula, that the beauty of group business is, you should not, your level of work should not rise in tandem with the number of guests or the complexity of the trip. The whole idea is you're doing a group and it's more efficient because no matter how many people you're dealing with, you're dealing with everything in a much more efficient basis: the marketing process, the sales process, the service process, and the delivery process. Everyone is going together and sometimes when we give people too many choices they get confused, right? So I love the fact that that you do have set components and some options.

Now speaking of more custom, am I correct in assuming that monograms, which is number three, the your way. Tell us how that works for groups, but I just want to make sure that our participants in the summit right now stick around because we had a conversation about

consumer events and I have seen so many events fail sadly but a handful been incredibly successful. So clearly there are some agents who know how to do very successful group consumer events and you've got some secret sauce, secret tips to share, but let's go back to monograms. Tell us the opportunity there with groups.

[Paula] Monograms is the perfect product for multi-gen groups. And again this is something we did not anticipate when we launched monograms we envisioned it to be more of an individual type of travel. It's an independent travel package, as you know, basically we like to call it all of the logistics of a tour without a motor coach and a guide. So everything is taken care of for you, you just have your independence throughout the day. Wow! When this product started hitting the streets we started seeing multi-gen after multi-gen family, big families traveling on the product because they loved the idea of having the grandkids go one place to do what they wanted to do during the day, the parents could do something else, the grandparents could hang around the hotel or do the spa or whatever they like and everybody gets back together, almost like a cruise ship mentality, at end of the day and share their experiences. So this is turned into a very easy sell for agents to communicate with these multi-gen families, these large families who have somewhat of the same struggle as any group, how am I going to make everybody in the family happy? This is the answer, this is the answer and again you're not hurting your head about the logistics. The transfers, the admissions, you get into the happy lines to see all the sites, we have restaurant recommendations, the hotels all preselected to have centrally located addresses. So it's a really easy way to solve what can be sometimes a complex problem for families that are looking for that perfect vacation.

[Stuart] And the words you've just used, the agent can use with their customers, with their consumer. You know I always tell agents and I know you'll agree with this Paula, that they serve three purposes: number one - to reduce stress and risk, that's what your product does; number two - to add value and convenience, that's what your product does, perfect for a group and; number three - just to transform the entire experience, the agent saying I've got you covered, I'll take care of the details. Everyone's going to be happy.

Now let's switch gears to the consumer events. Would you share some secret sauce here, tips? I know you do over 700 of these a year. What makes them work?

[Paula] Well I'll start with timing is everything because if you do not allot enough time to do the promotion for your group it will not be successful and I know that different products have different booking cycles but for us you really need to get in front of your audience about nine months prior to the departure date, even a year to nine months prior, in order to create the excitement and get their attention during a time when they're ready to start planning and will have the financial ability to pay for this in a year. So we love our agents that are very organized and most of our agencies that we work with closely have a calendar that's already out through 2020, for example, of what groups they are going to be executing and how they are going to promote them.

The second thing is, it's great to have the timing but if you don't have the right venue, people

aren't going to come. Simple things like if you're going to do an Italy group, go to an Italian restaurant that's open for lunch and dinner. And guess what, they are very slow between 2 and 4 in the afternoon. Chances are they can do a killer deal for you with some nice appetizers, their wait staff stays busy, they get a few tips, the dishwashers stay busy, and you get this beautiful venue practically all to yourself that ties into the theme that you're trying to present and create this picture about, right?

I do really strongly advise and encourage all agents to work with our sales team. You have a local sales team. We have 22 VDM's across the country, we have another 12 people here in our inside sales team that have a lot of knowhow on how to get these things done, whether your first time at doing a group or multi times and you just want some advice, we've got it. And if we can we will physically be there to present with you, so that you can focus on answering questions and keeping the group excited about the destination; where we can do some of the heavy lifting in terms of explaining the finer details and points of the product.

[Stuart] That's great, and it's no doubt Paula, that when an agent can put on the invitation, on the announcement, on the RSVP; special guest, you know, an expert from that just adds more value, that adds more integrity to the event. And I know they've all got busy calendars and schedules, which is a great reason to support your suggestion: plan early, give everybody enough time, especially so that your professional can make the date on their calendar to be there, to help them with the event to. And I always tell agents don't go spending all kinds of crazy money on printing stuff and that there's so many materials that are already done and they are available for you. So you have things that agents can take advantage of? I wonder do you sometimes wish they would call upon you more and use them more, and what are these materials?

[Paula] We sure do. We have everything from social media posts, to invitations, to direct mail, to customizable emails, videos, we've got so much material and it's all available on our travel agency portal. It's [globusfamilypartner.com](http://globusfamilypartner.com). If you haven't used our portal or it's been a while since you visited us please do. Just login create a password and you will find a treasure trove of material, information, and very easily organize. For example, when you log on to the portal you'll see a section that is for groups and it will answer all your questions; about group policies, and where our groups go, and what our tips are. We have a printed piece and it's also an electronic piece called Get Your Groups To Go and it actually gives you a day by day kind of calendarized approach to how to get your event done from start to finish, to be successful.

And then the source which is where we have all our marketing materials is also there as well. And that is where you can just pick and choose anything you want to that suits your marketing strategy. Some people and more and more people these days are relying so heavily on social. It works well; it works particularly well in a group environment. We've got all the images everything you need to make that easy for you.

[Stuart] I love it. That's great. So agents, I hope you've been inspired by this talk with Paula and Paula let me just end it by asking you two quick questions; confirmation that your business,

your company, very much relies on, needs and wants, groups.

[Paula] Yes, they are a huge part of our success because and I think probably, we look at this the way agencies that do groups do. This is a perfect way to build a foundation of business a year prior. Because we never know what's going to happen during the year that we're trying to sell, right? If you get a good bulk of business on your ships, or on your motor coaches, or in your hotels, you can be a lot more flexible throughout the year and a lot more confident about what your results are going to be. So you're absolutely right it's a huge, huge part of our compensation plan for our VDM's, and for our, let's say, let us sleep at night going into the year. Sleep better at night knowing we have that group space filled.

[Stuart] Right, that's great. Basically a big, big endorsement and encouragement for the agents, that if they're not bitten and smitten yet by the group bug, they gotta do it. And the fact that you have an array of products that sort of take all the FIT complexity and just put it all together it's a winning combination. Thanks Paula.

[Paula] Absolutely, thank you Stuart. This has been a great opportunity and thank you all agents and give us a try. I think you'll be very happy.

[Paula] Well a trend we're finding is that these new-to-industry folks are they have no fear of doing groups. They are formerly business people or they've maybe ex-school teacher, former military, realtor. They have a network and these people are crazy about the idea of going and traveling with their friend in a group. We are shocked at the number of these people that are new to the industry that don't have any fear or intimidation of doing groups. It's like, Yeah, I've got 20 people I can put on that motor coach or on the cruise. It's perfect. It's so motivating to my team because we are always looking for those little diamonds in the rough and that's one of the first places we go now.

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### **DAY THREE: What Do The Most Successful Travel Professionals Have In Common?**

**DENELLA RI'CHARD, Senior Director, Trade Communications & Engagement, Holland America Line**

Hello, I'm Denella Ri'chard, senior director of trade communications and engagement for Holland America line and congratulations to you for embarking upon this amazing journey to take part in The Group Sales Success Summit. Today I have a few tips for you, just a few and key insights that I've learned over the years of being in this business.

You know, we recently asked our sales support team. What do the most successful travel professionals have in common? And the unanimous answer was they sell groups. Not only do they sell groups, a third of their business is comprised of group business. Groups generate repeat business. So imagine whether it's the church group, maybe it's a family reunion group, or maybe it's a music affinity group, but imagine you grow that business maybe the first year

you only have 50 guests, but the next year you do it again and now you have 100 guests because those people told their friends and brought someone else along. And over the next few years, maybe five years from now, you look up and you actually have a full ship charter. Imagine that.

In terms of trends, what are we seeing? One area in particular that's really growing is the continuing education groups. Now those are your doctors, and your lawyers who have to get so many credits every year to keep their certifications. And normally these groups went into the university classroom or they took their classes at a hotel in one of their meeting rooms. Well now we are seeing more of these groups are coming to sea.

So my tip for you and my call to action to you is find out from your local university if they are offering continuing education classes and if they're offering those classes at a university classroom or in again hotel meeting room. Then ask them to give you that business and allow you to take that business to the classroom at sea.

How else can you make it profitable? Well think about the TC's. So you're tour conductors when you book groups. So if you do not use the TC for a free cruise or free birth you can actually take the TC as cash and add that to your bottom line. So what does that mean? More money for you. Now when you're booking groups on cruises, cruise lines always have different programs that will give you extra added benefits, for example, with Holland America line, let's talk about small groups. We have a program called connections, yes, the connections program. And we give you an accelerated TC so that's 1 for 10 TC versus the 1 for 15 and in addition to that we'll give you two additional gap amenity points. So you get two additional points for specialty restaurant cocktail party or whatever you want to use it for. Then there is another advantage, we have our Gap Plus program. Now that's a one percent additional commission on select dates.

So visit the cruise lines that you love, that you have a preferred relationship with like Holland America line and find out how you can get the best advantage for you and your clients through programs as I mentioned like the connections program or where you can get the most gap amenity points on select sailings.

Thank you for joining the Group Sales Success Summit. I hope my tips and insights were helpful to you. Happy selling.

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**DAY THREE: Why group travel is ultimately very, very profitable**  
**KEITH POWELL, The Business Revivalist**

How to develop group travel business both land and cruise to be super successful and that means very profitable. Many of you know me that I like to have a quote to open with and today's quote is this, "Great minds have purpose, others have wishes." See to develop group

travel you've got to have a purpose and that purpose keeps you focused and on target. So let's talk about why group travel is so great to be ultimately very, very profitable.

First, it's very targeted and that means that it's focused. It's easier for you to put your focus on a single target and I'll get into some of those targets in just a moment. Then there's less price competition if you do it the way that I'm going to suggest it, which is theming it. Meaning that every single group has to be customized and themed and when you do that you are going to be less likely to have customers be able to price shop you. Sure they can go to that destination, they can maybe even go to that particular hotel or resort, they can go on that cruise line, but they can't go with the value added prospects that you put on which is your special theming, your special customization.

Now to be profitable today you want to look at all costs and this is one of the areas that a lot of agents have trouble with in developing your group. You want to build in all the costs that you have in operating that group. So you don't want to be taking your gifts that you going to be giving the clients, out of your commission or your profit; first of all with the gross profit and then the net profit. So you want to keep it very straight forward. Add in anything that you're going to be putting into that particular group; I'll give some examples in a moment.

So part of the process of developing the group is to theme the group. So where do you find group business? We call it affinity, but you look for people that have an affinity, birds of a feather flock together. Some of you know that I developed quite a group theming and group customization in the boutique artisan wine industry. We run winemakers cruises where we bring the winemakers and the winegrowers on board and then bring the wine lovers, which is our target market; on board to get those added benefits and values. This is the unique selling proposition; the people who want to go may have an interest certainly in travel but this kind of travel connects to one of their affinities, in this case wine. There are tons of those kinds of affinity groups out there. Some of the ones we've seen in the past of been everything from Star Trek, to dancing, of course wine, I mentioned, culinary, any kind of group that centers around a particular theme. Then you develop that program as a part of your travel package and it can also be on land. And we do that, we do programs that are geared for land type tours as well but again extremely themed.

Now where do you find these people? Well just about everywhere. Just begin to look around at organizations and clubs. You may be using a Pied Piper. A Pied Piper is a person that already has a following and they may have a following around one of these kinds of affinities. It can be people that like antiquing, it can even be people like to go to sports events; to see the sports event, and there's others that want to participate, such as cycling. That's a big thing right now, people taking tours and they want to cycle when they get to their destination and even cruises offer that; both river cruises and even some of the big ships as well, when they get to a particular port. The other side of a Pied Piper, now a Pied Piper is a person that actually goes with the group. Leads the group, brings the group and they're doing all the stuff that is related to the travel experience.

The other more important one to understand today is a Tribe Leader and a Tribe Leader is a

person that has a tribe, like a following, in their sort of the leader, their the “big cheese”. They’re the people that others flock around and maybe around a particular interest and then you use that particular Tribe Leader to bring you the group. But here's the difference between a Pied Piper and a Tribe Leader: the Tribe Leader does not want to be involved with all of the travel details of the trip or the cruise or the tour. They want to be there, show up for the event, in the case of our things, show up for the wine tasting. Have the wonderful fare of wine and food and culinary experience but they do not want to be the one setting up the venue. They do not want to be the one checking people in. They don’t want to be the one making sure the people are making their transfers whether it's a bus or train or a cruise or whatever it is. They just want to show up. So in those cases can be very good and we use a lot of Tribe Leaders today in our business; namely wineries, where they bring their following or their wine club or the people they’re marketing their product to, on board this particular program. But they don't want to be the ones handling the details. So we have to supplant that, we have to bring somebody in to do that.

And the other thing to keep in mind is what we're talking about here is selling on value rather than on price and I call it SOQNOP: Sell On Quality, Not On Price. We’re talking about the added value, these are not programs that are price driven. Now when I say that, sometimes agents, particularly newer agents, get little bit; I want to always offer the lowest available price. That's not our program and that's not the specialty programs. People will pay for the specialization and the additional amenities and additional experience. Really we’re an experience economy. So keep that in mind. Hit a target market, less price competition, and they’re more profitable.

Now what makes them more profitable is also that many of the suppliers will give you added commission. That's one way, they'll also help you oftentimes with marketing, particularly if you develop a trend. I gotta tell you that our winemakers cruise is now in year 11 and year 11 on the cruise has always been one particular cruise line. That's a huge opportunity for the cruise line to have that continued revenue. Now we do that because they do it well but it also helps us along the way because it allows us to be able to develop that relationship. So do they help with marketing? Absolutely. Does that help cut my cost? Absolutely. Does that keep my profit bigger my net profit at the end of the program? Sure. So look at those kinds of ways. Learn to sell quality, learn to sell higher value, and learn to work with your suppliers.

Now in future programs I'm going to talk about choosing the right destination: whether that's a ship or a land program and also how big should your cruise or tour be to be profitable. They do not have to be very large and I'll just mention right here that I have a program that has 20 people and is hugely profitable. Another one that's 30 that is very successful and very profitable. So don't feel that you have to develop huge groups, particularly when you start.

The other thing I'd like to mention on profitability is that it's the quality of the program. So you got value added and you're charging for that value added and they’re also higher priced products, so you're making a larger revenue stream all the way around and then you have repeat business. So a great portion of our programs are repeat people back every year that want to continue without affinity group and have that really super experience.

So in future programs we'll be talking about what you need to do in the back office and keeping your staffing minimal. You do not need a large staff, you can do it yourself but you have to have certain things in place, in your back office, back of the house, the paperwork end of your groups. And I will help you with that in future programs.

This is Keith Powell known as the business revivalists. So remember; theme, target market, and you will have a very successful cruise or land tour program. Till next time this has been Keith Powell.

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### **DAY THREE: Travel Agent Spotlight**

#### **JENNIFER DONCSECZ, CTIE, Owner & President, VIP Vacations Inc.**

[Stuart] Jennifer, tell us about your business. When did you get started and what did your company look like then?

[Jennifer] Wow, well Stuart, about 26 years ago I was slowly working as a corporate agent and booking corporate air tickets and then I was placed on site at a company and started to do, the sales people that were there, their travel and after 9/11 the company I was working with kind of pulled back on their air and their corporate agreements but those young guys who had booked all their honeymoons still wanted to travel. So I kind of shifted and started to work on what we used to call elopements, which have now become destination weddings and honeymoon's and then in 2005 my company, VIP Vacations, won top-selling group agency for Sandals and Beaches and I kind of realized there's something there to doing group trips. We call it the whale and fish follow the whale and then you can book a couple honeymoons from people that go or even their family vacations. I think the evolution of travel starts with that romantic first honeymoon or destination wedding and so we really focused on handling groups. It was something that wasn't done in 2005 or they were big companies that just did groups. So now we're doing a lot of destination weddings and we've won a lot of awards for our work with destination weddings.

[Stuart] I would say, underscore, a lot because you are on many advisory boards. In fact, you and I shared the stage of doing a keynote at a global Palace conference even, to showcase what you have built. So you're in a pink building not just a little retail storefront. Tell us about what your company looks like today, would you?

[Jennifer] So we're in Bethlehem, PA and we work from a pink Victorian and my agents drive pink cars and we were for a very long time known as, the Pink Ladies, but I have several gentlemen that work for me now, so they would not like to be referred to that way. But that was really what branding was about. It wasn't just about the color it was more about what do people think about you as a company when you mention your name and I had said a long time ago that there is effective colors that represent emotions and even back to Roman times love

was pink, it wasn't red, it was pink. So even if a bride says she can't stand the color pink, she's more drawn to it. So that's what we started several years ago and it's grown, we have three stories and we have 10 full-time agents, so it's been good.

[Stuart] That's beautiful, congratulations on your success. Now having built your company up over these years and I know you, Jennifer, we're friends that you pay it forward. You love interacting with other professionals, with colleagues, and I would ask you this question. What do you see if you could tell agents right now, one thing to help them overcome an obstacle to achieve higher success to grow and enjoy the success that you are today. What would that be? What would that subject be?

[Jennifer] You know it's funny. I think a lot of travel professionals focus on a destination, they focus on knowing the resorts, they focus on sales techniques, but if a building doesn't have a strong foundation, then it's going to fall apart. So I think, knowing the business and understanding your marketing plans and putting your business together so that it can withstand, and have this firm foundation is key. But if you are going to groups it's about how you organize that because we have so many hats and you know whether you're trying to work with a client directly or send invoices it's a lot and I've seen sadly through some agents that desks are just piled with stuff and they spend all this time going through things or trying to find it, or an invoice or trying to find a last payment, or taking the calculator and doing like the addition, five times and the math still being wrong. I joke and I say there's an app for that, which it's not really an app, but Excel has so many amazing functions. And people might say, "I don't have time to learn Excel or I use it." But you're not using it the way it might be intended or you can take some really great classes, and that's an investment in your business, which will send you so much further. Just understanding the efficiency, your productivity can go up immensely; between creating formulas and even using the Sum, the function tabs, the toggles, the drop downs, the hyperlinks. There are so many things that you can do in a second if you know how to do it right and if you don't know how to do it, the next time you're going to hire somebody. You know, I always try to hire somebody who is a little better than me at something. You know, surround yourself with people you can learn from and grow, and that might be somebody who is really a whiz at Excel. But that will organize you for sure.

[Stuart] Right, and that person, for instance, if you're watching right now and listening to this wisdom, if you're not comfortable with Excel, well don't go crazy and let it be a distraction to what your passion is, what you are comfortable doing and that person whose great at Excel doesn't have to be a travel professional they just have to know Excel and as long as you guys talk and connect.

Now to your point, Jennifer, we have a special Facebook group for our group summiteers, and I'm asking them a question if they wish to share, "What is your biggest obstacle?" And I would tell you to this point overwhelmingly people are saying, time management. I don't have enough time. How do I do more groups? How do I grow? I can't even keep up with what I have. So what I'm hearing is the gems you just shared will free them up to do more sales, to do more destination stuff, if they have that foundation of organization and efficiency. Are there any

other tools that you use? Do you use, for instance, on the supplier end, do you use their booking sights, their booking engines, do you use forms in general?

[Jennifer] Through Excel we created our own invoice. So we have the master spreadsheet and then we have tabs along the bottom with their first and last names and along the master spreadsheet you can do a hyperlink with their name. So if you have 100 rooms you're not going to go through all the tabs on the bottom you just click on their name and it sends you right to their invoice. And if you use the Sum key, right, you will know that when you hit the Sum it will show up on the master invoice in the front who owes money and who doesn't.

Now there are so many different ways people use Excel and so we got from different tour operators and they don't quite mesh with what we do but at least if you have the basis of it, it's a wonderful thing and we will send like a snippet to the bride and groom when it's booked and you know, and here's all their info, boom. So it will have, you know, the room number, their travel dates, their names, you know, their room category and they love it. We'll say you have guests and they tell us it's like getting a Christmas gift every time they see, you know, somebody loves me, somebody's coming to our wedding. But that's all about organization and that doesn't take long. I remember years ago a couple calling me and saying, who's booked? And literally going, this person, this person, and this. I mean now nobody's calling me. I'm sending them, they will respond after they travel it was so nice to get daily updates about...that would take a lot of time if you didn't have it right there at just a click.

And that also can help with managing your commissions because you can put all the commissions down and then when you get your commission check see what was wrong. Or payments you can put all the payments in there date wise. So I know there's some suppliers that show like just a grid with the last four of the credit card and the amount. But if you have it the same way you can kinda balance it out and the harder part, you booked the group, yay! You can just see the commissions coming in and you love the destination they're going to. So you are passionate about it. But then it's all this behind it and you can be such a good travel consultant but if you mess up on that, if you're not charging them the right money, you lost commission. Or they're upset because you overcharged them. You know, and then the entire process looks bad where it could have just went beautifully, because what was wrong? It was the business part of it.

So my pearls of wisdom would be, get the business right. You will be so respected not only by your clients, but by tour operators. They come in and they say I have your numbers, and your like you don't have my numbers, I have my numbers. And that's the way it should be because it's your business you need to take control of that. And if somebody said something and you know firm you're doing it the right way and hey, I see your payment was on this date. Oh, okay. It makes you feel so much more competent which again can help you build your business even more because competence is key, right?

[Stuart] Absolutely, so you come in every morning, and you feel good, you feel organized and it's not scatterbrained. The customer, the client, they feel this, they know this, they respect

you, they love you, because you've got it all taken care of. It's all done and that's the role of a travel professional because if we're not doing it, if you're not doing that stuff, well why do they need you? Why does the consumer need you? Well because you provide that level of service and information and then from, of course, from the brand perspective, the supplier perspective; be it the cruise ship, be it the hotel, resort, tour operator they love working with an agency who is organized.

One question I used to ask, still do. How much money did you make on that group? Well I don't know I should have a couple bucks left in the checking account, I'm not sure. So this solves that problem. You'll know your profitability in facts and here's a question, Jennifer. Do you set your own profits? Do you only make just the commission or do you do something like netting down and marking up to make the profit you expect that you need?

[Jennifer] So what is unique about our office is one of my agents was asked a couple of months ago what her sales were? And I think she said something like, you know 200,000 as an example. And they were like, oh. I have taught my team not to go by the dollar of the vacation but by the commission. So she was meaning her commission for the year. That's the way we work because I have agencies who have sold 30, 40 million and couldn't make it. So we take it down to what are we making in terms of our sales, that's our profitability. That's what we're looking at and then we also try to work with suppliers that obviously are paying us the high commission. So you might have one supplier that might not give you commission on the taxes or might charge you a percentage every time you swipe a credit card. These are things you have to kind of look at and we will. We'll use two and say, ah look at this we didn't get commission on the transfers but we got commission on the taxes because they're all different and you really have to look at it. We don't usually charge up and it's a funny line to because sometimes we have groups where they get the TC's, or the tour conductor space and then you just make nothing on that room also. So we use that as something to our discretion if the bride was wonderful, obviously, or if we say okay here's the real value of what we're (...) because we still had to sell these five rooms that might've been free. We also will fight for our clients. Sometimes the TC's are based on the lowest room category for the shortest amount of stay. And we'll say, hey let's split this group in half because you'll get double because the rest of your guests all stayed 7 nights. So we definitely try to work with it and work the numbers to make the client happy first of all. That's the number one priority. If we see that there is a price match situation and they will lose that room which could be a free. We might not make anything on that room to keep the room part of the group, so that they can get that free. And we are very verbal with our clients because if they don't know you did this then how are they going to thank you for it? So communication, that's the magic ingredient in every relationship. And if you want your client to be your forever client then you have to have really good communication, because you want that relationship.

[Stuart] Customer centricity, well, Jennifer I'm really grateful that you came here, took time out to share with us about your business in some of your secrets to success. I know that everyone watching now who is part of the Group Sales Success Summit is grateful that you're here and gave us some golden nuggets, thank you.

[Jennifer] Thank you for having me, Stuart.

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**DAY THREE: Travel Agent Spotlight**

**MARA HARGARTHER, Chief Experience Officer, Franchise Owner, co-owner of DreamVacations**

[Stuart] What'd you leave out?

[Mara] I wanted to talk about partnering with cruise lines and the importance of that. When you start out as a business you do, you're learning, you're cruising, you're trying to learn as much as you can about every cruise line, but there's going to be ones that are going to become your favorites. And there's going to be ones that you really enjoy working with their BDM's, district sales managers, whatever you call them. And you're going to want to give back to them.

So what I always recommend is building the relationship I can't get over when I go to these different regionals and I hear people saying I never heard from my local BDM well pick up the phone and call them. They're going to help you. So pick up the phone, maybe they don't know you're out there. Build a relationship. I always take them to dinner or them to lunch because I don't want to be the one that says are there any free cruises or vamps coming up. I'm not like that; I don't want to do that. Never ask a BDM to send your client a bottle wine or \$25 onboard credit. Save your favors for big things that you may need. Ask them what they need help with. They are given goals like you have goals and they may need help with particular itinerary for sailing. Ask them what they need help with. And if you can show them that you can sell some cabins on that. Let me tell you, you've earned a partner for life.

So find cruise lines that you're going to basically recommend because after you're in the business for a while you're going to stop being an order taker and you're going to actually have people come to you and ask you what you think they should do. And you're going to be the one to steer them towards what's best for them. But choose ones that you partner with best because if they have a problem, you have the resources and the contacts to fix it. So concentrate on a handful of cruise lines, maybe 3, you work best with and build a relationship with those. This will really help your business.

[Stuart] I entirely agree, having been on the cruise line side, not only as a back in the day DSM and then being a director of Key Account Sales with Celebrity, one of your favorites. What you just said is absolutely sage advice. That's a partnership, there as well and your success is their success, their success is your success.

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### **Stuart Cohen's Daily Sales Tip 3**

All right I'll start a quote from a very famous group guru who once asked this question:

“Are group leaders letting you down? Well it's not their job to hold you up!”.

Ouch! I know what you're thinking. You probably said YES they let you down. Based on so many of you, as you enter this Facebook community, I asked what your biggest challenges were and it was mostly about group leaders.

It's the same thing I've heard for years. We blame the group leaders. They're not doing their job. They don't bring in the people, they don't follow through. I'm here to tell your friends that's YOUR job. They hired you to do that!

Now granted as the Pied Piper (the group leader) they have a certain influence over others they have a certain level of responsibility. of course. But at the end of the day it's you who need to manage them so that they perform successfully.

So what's the secret to success? You need to take control. You need to earn your wings. You need to do your job. The travel professional 'group expert' that you are because they're relying on you to know what to do.

Now this may be a little bit of a tease but I'd like to get your feedback. I have a series of brand-new modules that I'm producing for my group boot camp members. If you want, I'll produce it over the weekend and share with you. It's about exactly how to control the group leader - in a good loving way. And also how to pick the winning group leaders from the get-go.

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## **GROUP SALES SUCCESS SUMMIT 2018: DAY FOUR**

**DAY FOUR:** Small Steps Big Wins

**ADOLFO PEREZ, Senior Vice President of Sales & Trade Marketing, Carnival Cruise Line**

Hi everyone! My name is Adolfo Perez and I'm the Senior Vice President of Sales and Trade Marketing for Carnival Cruise Lines. I wanted to thank all of you for spending some time with me today and I hope you enjoy today's presentation.

So first of all, I'm going to ask you, even though I can't see you, I'm going to ask; How many of you out there have a dream? I'm sure some of you are raising your hand right now and yes it's great. Dreams are things that drive us to be better people to be more creative to work harder. You know, maybe you want to pay off your loans, maybe you want to buy a summer vacation home, or maybe you want to send your kids to college. But sometimes, if you think about it,

those dreams can be paralyzing to. You get so confused, like where do I start? What credit card do I pay off first? Do I do a consolidation loan? Like how do I get to get this dream done in my life? And unfortunately when we get overwhelmed we can get paralyzed. So I'm going to introduce you to three different people today. They're totally unrelated to each other but I think that their story really illustrates how important it is to make small little changes that will eventually lead to you getting your dreams.

So the first man on here is Jadav Payeng and he is from India and then we have Nathan Barry and he is an author and then on the other side we have Sir Dave Brailsford and he is a biking coach for the UK team. So let me go ahead and demonstrate how these three stories can really help you break down your dreams into small bite-size pieces that will help you achieve those dreams. So watch this video with me.

How did one man transform a barren island into a thriving ecosystem? Our story begins in Majuli Island it used to be a flourishing oasis for wildlife, but over time the trees got cut down, the land went barren. Majuli Island is also home to this man Jadav Payeng. In 1979, Jadav walked to a spot on the barren land and planted a tree. The next day he came back and did it again. Day after day, year after year, he kept planting more trees. Today, 38 years later, this is Majuli Island. Thanks to Jadav much of the island is home to 115 elephants and herds of deer, rhinos, and tigers. The forest is twice the size of Central Park. Now known as the Forest man of India, Jadav single-handedly turned a wasteland into an oasis, and he started with just one tree.

So that's a pretty amazing video. Every time I've seen that video I actually still get emotional. I think it's amazing that this one man was able to make such a huge impact where he lived. And I don't think that for 38 years he was thinking, oh in 38 years I'm going to create this beautiful oasis that was once barren land. No he just took one tree, planted that tree every single day. He did the same thing over and over and over again and eventually this is what he had. This beautiful forest twice the size of Central Park and he didn't focus on the big things, he focused on the one step at a time, which was the tree. So think about the things that you want to achieve in your life. What's that one tree that you can plant and eventually fulfill your dreams? So like I said the dreams are out there, the goal, the big dream is out there shining, but if you don't take each step along the way you're never going to get there. So now I'm going to play another video for you and this is Nathan Barry and his story is a little different but still makes the point.

How did a software designer revolutionize his creative process? Nathan Barry wanted to write a book about his craft. He didn't necessarily subscribe to the idea of holding himself up until he finished his book, like other writers before him. Instead he tried a new approach. He gave himself an achievable goal: write a thousand words per day. And after 253 consecutive days he wrote enough content for not one, but three books, all of which were published and earned him over \$300,000. He stayed consistent, he never gave up, and he accomplished his goal a thousand words at a time.

So his approach was pretty cool. He decided he wasn't going to get overwhelmed with figuring

out how to set his book up. No he decided he was going to write a thousand words a day, two pages of type every single day and he did that. And you saw what he accomplished. He accomplished three books, made \$300,000 and just a smart guy overall. Now he runs his consulting firm that is worth you know millions and millions of dollars. So you can see how taking these little steps can really make you realize your dreams. I've been in this industry for a long time, I've thought about writing a book before and I've been overwhelmed with the idea of how do I start? What chapter do I start? With how do I organize it? But if you take this guys approach, there's definitely a way to get this done and really managing it into little bite-size pieces.

So this was actually the story that inspired this presentation because my team in the UK was working on this project called marginal gains and this is what Sir Dave Brailsford was working on marginal gains. He wasn't focused on winning the Olympics he was focused on every single little thing that they could do to make their team better. So whether it was making the tires a millimeter thinner, or shaving off some of the bike to make it lighter, or not letting the teams shake hands at the Olympic village. Those were all these little tiny things and he says that their team was obsessed it became part of their culture is finding all these little things. So when you add up all these little changes look how quickly they ended up winning the gold medals. In the 75 years prior to this Olympics where they won the first time, the UK bicycling team only won one gold medal and you saw how many they had one in those three Olympics . So pretty amazing what you can do if you just focus on the little things.

What does washing your hands have to do with winning Olympic gold? Just ask Sir Dave Brailsford, the coach of British cycling team sky. When the team first started their dreams of winning Olympic gold felt impossible; Brailsford scrutinized every aspect of the cycling team's experience and his idea was simple. Instead of focusing on the end result Brailsford made small changes: they kept germs and infections at bay by using antibacterial gel, they transported their own mattresses to ensure they could get the best night's sleep possible, and Brailsford standardized the way the mechanics measured the bikes, down to how tight a bolt should be on every single bike. Over time the team got better and better, their goal of winning got closer and closer. Team sky won gold at the 2004, 2008, and 2012 Olympics. They focused on small changes and eventually their dreams came true.

So where do you start, right? So before you disconnect this webinar, think about the thing that you can do. What's that one thing that you can do? That one tree that you can plant over and over and eventually gets your dream. It's, you know, sometimes we'll do something over and over and it's the wrong thing and that's okay, you can change it too but it's just about being consistent, picking that thing that could help you finally achieve those dreams and focusing on that rather than the big nebulous dream at the end of the road.

So we are going to start with one small task. You're going to stay consistent, keep doing it, again, change it if it's the wrong thing, it's okay. And do what's right in front of you. Again don't focus on the big dream you know what the dream is there you know that that's what guides you, that's what's motivating you. But taking these little steps along the way is really what's

going to help you achieve those dreams.

Now I'm going to show you a few tips from our travel agents. These we actually put on our Facebook and they gave us some tips. They're not earth shattering but I think they're really, really special.

So this one from Linda Maze, she talks about making her bed every single day before leaving her house. I personally do that I cannot leave my house if my bed is not made. And it sounds like such a simple little thing but it's something that sets the tone for the rest the day, you accomplish something, and then when you get home you have a really nice bed to lie in. So think about that.

Get up an hour earlier. That's something that I had started doing many years ago and you don't have to get up an hour earlier to do an hour more of work. What I do is I like to get up, I like to make coffee, watch the news, maybe read the news, and really take my time so I'm not rushing out of the house. Because we all know what it's like when you get up late, you have to run into the shower, get dressed, and you rush to work, you forget stuff, and it just sets the tone for the day.

And then the last one is from Karen Kulow and she says something that I wish I did more. That's doing a random act of kindness more often or every day. And it's not only good for the person that you're helping but it's also good for you, it makes you feel good. You know if you pay for somebody's toll that's behind you or you let somebody in front of you in a lane. God knows how many times I've tried to cut people off who try to pass me and what do I accomplish. So just doing these little random acts of kindness not only help you, but they also help everybody else and if everybody does it then we'll be living in a better place, that's for sure.

So as I said really the theme of this is small changes yield big results and I'm going to leave you with this last video. I hope you enjoy it as much as I do.

That's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind. Nothing is achieved all at once. You need to take little steps to get to the big dream and taking that first step is key. You could start with a planted tree that leads to a forest or a single word that becomes a novel or a little idea that makes Olympic gold a reality. No matter where you are or what you do those ordinary steps are needed to achieve the extraordinary.

"In your life's blueprint you must have as the basic principle the determination to achieve excellence."

"Doesn't matter how small the improvement, we're going to do it. We're going to energize each other."

"Start believing, that having a dream, will lead you to the fulfillment of your dream, if you're willing to let every step you take move you in that direction."

“Dreams without goals, remain dreams.”

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**DAY FOUR: Video & Social Ads – Are They Worth Your Time?**

**CATHERINE HEEG, Customized Management Solutions, Tourism & Hospitality Social Marketing, International Speaker & Trainer**

The other day at the airport I was browsing the magazine rack and was drawn to this gorgeous cover photos and the inspiring images inside. It made me want to change my flight and escape to an exotic locale. Then I was in the gatehouse, scanning my social feeds and I realized I was drawn to some posts and videos over others. For some of the same reasons as I was when I was at that magazine shop. Plus all the videos made me linger even longer. Are you like me when you pick up a magazine or start watching videos you get so engaged that pretty soon 45 minutes has flown by? No pun intended.

You're not alone I bet your clients, your group tour clients, are doing exactly the same thing with your content. Just imagine how many photos and videos are uploaded to Facebook and the other social sites each and every day. Let me ask you this is a photo still worth a thousand words? That old adage that a photo is worth a thousand words and proven again and again. Yet, how well are you using your visuals in your group tour marketing. Are you getting your thousand word impact?

Let's go back to that magazine rack and online story. What grabs your attention as you're scrolling through your own social timelines? Is it images, videos, photos of people? Do those images inspire you to travel? I find myself drawn to images of exotic destinations, people I know or quirky attractions. It used to be that any old image would earn eyeballs. Now images and videos really need to pop. Photos, graphic images, and videos that tell your story better and evoke emotions will pop. Maximizing their impact can be as easy as using filters or adding text. Maybe in marketing your next group tour you choose to invest in awesome images and/or an image editing tool.

Do you know what's worth 1.8 million words? It's been said that one minute of video is worth 1.8 million words. Wow, that makes that still photo look absolutely antique. Facebook has changed their algorithm to rank native video and a live stream video more highly. This means that video of any type will be shown to more people. Taking your video up a notch to gain more reach may involve a better camera, microphone, and lighting. Then the magic of engagement happens when you spend a few dollars on a well-placed video social add. Not sure who's really watching videos? Let's take a look.

Have you heard some sources say we see over five thousand ads each and every day. In this era of pay to play inspiring ads garner much more than simply collects. In our industry and with group tours social ads are essential in five ways: 1. Brand and awareness building. 2.

Storytelling. 3. Driving traffic. 4. Growing engagement and 5. Amplification.

Speaking of social ads, how well are your ads helping you reach your goals? To spread the word even more effectively, split testing helps us understand how fans respond to our messaging. By changing one feature within an ad we're able to test how well a certain photo, video, text, or even ad launch timing impacts the ad success. Not sure which text or visual will work better with your audience? Dynamic ads are the answer.

While the town crier had a specific corner in the village to amplify his message, we now have a variety of platforms and placement options in our advertising. Combining the power of video with well targeted, strategic, social ads will help you grow your group travel business. Happy marketing.

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**DAY FOUR:** Tapping Walter Mitty

**RICHARD EARLS, Publisher, Travel Research Online, Travelhoppers, Travel Professional Academy, Voyager Websites**

Hey there, I'm Richard Earls. I'm on the publisher of Travel Research Online. I want to begin by thanking Stuart for this very innovative way of bringing us all together and I want to thank you the travel professional for taking the initiative to come here, spend your time, and elevate the entire profession by enhancing your own skill set. So it's just a tremendous effort by everyone all around and it's greatly appreciated.

I'm going to talk about something little bit unconventional, maybe even something a little magical. I want to begin talking about Walter Mitty. Our clients are excited to be going on vacation, or to be traveling, to become the explorer and simultaneously they're frightened; they're scared; they don't want to pay too much. They're going into uncertain circumstances in their travels, they know that glitches happen and that's why they need the security of a good, solid, travel consultant. But if you can't make it past the accountant that's guarding the gates, then you're going to have a problem when it comes to giving your clients the experience they really deserve.

And so we have to learn to become great storytellers; and that means talking about travel in a way that romances it, that hits all the emotional high buttons. The story of Walter Mitty is a perfect metaphor for the way that most of us lead our lives. We want to be explorers, we want to have adventures; and yet most of us find ourselves confronted by the day-to-day obstacles to travel: finances, time, our jobs. And so Walter Mitty's escape into fantasyland, in many ways, is repeated by each of us every time we think about travel. Even travel professionals sometimes forget that travel is not just logistics. It's not just moving from one point to another. Rather travel represents something deeper to our psyche; it has an emotive effect and it's that we need to tap into, as travel professionals.

The macro history of mankind is about a vast, never ending, migration from one continent to another. We have been explorers, adventurers, pilgrims, refugees, and travelers. Coiled up in our DNA is the urge to move beyond the horizon. On an individual level, it's a rare person who has not felt moved and even changed by their travels. We go seeking, the unfamiliar, and we instead find some hidden part of ourselves in the faces of the people we meet, in the cultures we encounter, and in the languages with which we struggle. I raise this point here, to remind you of the wonderfully amazing opportunity you have to play an important role in the lives of your clients.

I think their request of you may actually be bigger than you suspect. A truly great travel consultant will take a keen interest in their client's dreams. Think about it, you have clients who have never seen the Alps, who don't know about the Inca trail, and who have heard of Prague but don't know exactly where it is. Help your followers dream a bit; take them beyond what's familiar and comfortable. Inspire them with great stories, with great photography, videos, and testimonials. Let them know travel is possible, not just for a few wealthy individuals but for them. Empower your clients; help them get in touch with their inner Walter Mitty. A few of those clients will travel farther for your efforts and some of them will travel with you.

So let's delve just a bit deeper into the psychology of travel. I know something about your clients; on the right side of your client's brain lives an explorer, on the left side of your client's brain lives an accountant. These two cerebral imps have an uneasy relationship in everyone's psyche. The explorer side of your mind wants to talk about adventure, love, memories, and romance. The explorer gets the concept of value. The accountant however likes numbers, logistics, itineraries, and schedules, and only understands the idea of cost. Now, you want your clients to see new sites, experience all the wondrous destinations, and taste strange, new foods. The problem too many of us encounter, however, is the tendency to speak to the accountant when we should be speaking, first, to the Explorer. When we allow our clients to control the direction of the conversation, too often, the accountant is driving and steers us right down to the bottom line, to the subject of cost, and that's an abysmal place from which to plan a journey. Your clients may live in the routine, logical, workaday world, but they really want to be explorers. It seems a shame then to let the accountant be in charge of the travel planning exercise. So here's what you do: speak to the explorer first and win him over, that way when the accountant finally shows up he's going to have a better attitude.

When we learn to paint a picture, of a trip, in words or photos; when we romance a memory, a destination, or an activity, we move far beyond the logical, rational impediments to travel and into a more mythical emotional realm. Without your help, your clients are going to approach their travel planning from the same rational, logical mindset they used to purchase a washer or a dryer. Thinking about features, logistics, and numbers locks the mind in a straight line, both originating and terminating in, the budget.

We have to become great storytellers. We have to learn to place the client in the destination in the travel experience. When we do that, the cost of the vacation, the pricing becomes almost irrelevant. Your clients want to be explorers. Give them that opportunity by addressing them

through the emotional connection we all share as a community of travelers.

I'm going to leave you with a couple of great examples. Bye, Bye.

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#### Stuart Cohen's Daily Sales Tip 4

Do you know the difference between a speculative (or promotional group) and an affinity group? Do you really know the difference because there's a huge difference and really friends the majority of this summit is a talk about affinity groups.

I know it's happening right now those of you who been in the business a bunch years you get it, you know it, and you realize that the affinity group business is so much better because it builds your business exponentially. Not only by passengers or clients or guests but financially, too.

A promotional or speculative group is what it is! You're taking a shot. There's much less of a chance of success so let me explain the difference. In the case of an **affinity group** there needs to be a compelling reason for those people to want to, desire to, travel together. It's a glue that binds. It's something that is so important, so compelling that it's going to convince people that they need to travel at a time when they are not normally travel. Go to a place they may not normally travel to. Pay a price they may not normally pay.

Basically, an **affinity group** is a big ask because somebody really really really wants to go. And just so you know they don't necessarily need to know everybody. If it's a passion around a hobby what one of those kind of groups that get together because they share something and they don't know each other well that's where they get together to meet one another.

But let's flip it now and go to the promotional side. On the promotional side maybe you're going to get a deal. Maybe you take out some space or maybe your supplier gives you space and you promote it, you market it.

Maybe you'll sell a few here and there but understand friends that you don't say that you're holding group space. That would be the worst thing because those people are like what if I don't like the people traveling with? So it's a deal, an opportunity and if it fits their time and they want to travel, and if it's a good price it will work.

And normally you've got to pay some money to promote that to put it out there. And you just put it out there and see who bites. But with an affinity group, friends, you not just putting it out there. With an affinity group you really don't need to spend any money on advertising. That's because there's a list. You go where they hang out, where you can reach them and talk to them. And that's why affinity groups are better. There's a magnet for guests to want to travel together but also a financial magnet for you too!

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## GROUP SALES SUCCESS SUMMIT 2018: DAY FIVE

### DAY FIVE: A Suite of Information To Elevate Your Groups

#### **CHRIS AUSTIN, Senior Vice President – Global Sales and Marketing, Seabourn**

Hello, I'm Chris Austin and I lead global marketing, sales, brand, and public relations for Seabourn. Welcome to Seabourn's global headquarters here in Seattle. Today we're going to talk about the Seabourn difference. I'm also going to give you a few tips on the opportunity for booking group business with Seabourn. Come and join me now.

So let's talk about the Seabourn difference. Seabourn today, has five ultra-luxury ships. In May this year, we launched Seabourn Ovation which brought our fleet to the most consistent ultra-luxury fleet in the industry. Recently, we also signed to build two new ultra-luxury Expedition ships, which will bring our fleet to seven. Seabourn sails, this year, to over 470 hidden harbors and Maki ports around the world, in 103 countries: we traverse the oceans of the world and visit all seven continents. Our suites are all oceanfront. On Odyssey, Sojourn, and Quest 90% of our suites have full verandas but on Ovation and Encore 100% of our suites face the ocean and have full verandas.

Your clients will enjoy a very intimate atmosphere on board our ships. Service is a key differentiator and service on board Seabourn is very intuitive. In fact your clients have probably said it's almost clairvoyant. We try to remember guest names within the first day of a guests being on board, and of course our bar teams remember your client's favorite drinks as well. All your clients are welcomed with a bottle of complimentary champagne but never fear our bars never close and of course we pour wines throughout the day and with lunch and dinner. Tipping is neither required nor expected on the Seabourn.

Our ships are masterfully designed by the world's preeminent hospitality interior designer, Adam Tihany. He's actually designed Seabourn Ovation and Encore from bow to stern and he's now adding his very special touches to Odyssey, Sojourn, and Quest.

We have some amazing partnerships which help differentiate and also drive an amazing experience for your clients as well. Our partnership with Chef Thomas Keller is exceptional. He operates The Grill by Thomas Keller. In The Grill it's a throwback to the 50s and 60s with tableside service. Think of those Caesar salads and the dressing being made from scratch and a gorgeous wooden Italian bowl. Also our spa experience, actually in partnership with Dr. Andrew Weil, you can wake up for a morning meditation or yoga class and of course finish the day with a more traditional spa experience. And in the evenings, our evening experience, which is being curated with Sir Tim Rice, is truly a spectacular event. Of course there are other entertainment options throughout the day.

Our Seabourn conversationalist sail on every single cruise and that conversationalist continue throughout the day. You may listen to a conversationalist in the grand salon but you can also have the opportunity of having a cocktail at the bar, or even enjoy lunch or dinner, or having

them join you on a shore experience.

And talking about shore experiences; Adventures by Seabourn is a true differentiator for Seabourn. These are optional land-based experiences, in select destinations. We have 11 expedition team members on our ship. Think about zodiacs, kayaks, hiking, and again those conversationalists. If I use Alaska, as an example, the expedition team will point out all the natural beauty; the animals, the plants, the flora in Alaska, truly bringing your holiday experience to life.

So let's now talk about the benefits of booking groups on the Seabourn. And a question you may be asking yourself, actually, is: Well I don't offer a lot of groups at land-based resorts and luxury hotels so why would I consider groups on a Seabourn cruise? Well I think that Seabourn is the world's finest ultra-luxury cruise line but we're also the world's finest ultra-luxury resort. And a big difference, of course, is that we'll take your clients to multiple destinations during their voyage. Think also of the pre- and post-opportunities; adding, actually, that ultra-luxury hotel or resort pre-and post to the voyage actually does increase your guest experience and of course increases your profit potential, your commissions from the group.

Think then, everything I've told you about the Seabourn difference: the welcome champagne, the unlimited bars that are open all day, wines poured with lunch and dinner throughout the day etc. All of these things are inclusive, so your groups will enjoy the regular service onboard Seabourn. If your group also wants to actually have a private meeting, then we have meeting facilities on board. From of course small meeting rooms, beautifully appointed, to larger grand salon; the same space we use for our primary evening entertainment experiences. In these facilities we have AV, in a hotel you have to pay for that, onboard Seabourn it's all included.

So what are the different types of groups that you could actually be booking on Seabourn? There are incentive groups, affinity groups, and then the celebration and milestone groups.

Let's start quickly by looking at the incentive group market. 50% of all incentive groups are actually booked by retail travel professionals. It's a \$14 billion market in the US alone. I think if you can do that quick arithmetic, 14 billion and 50% being booked by travel professionals, you can see there's a huge opportunity for incentive groups. Most companies that have annual revenues of over \$1 million actually do operate incentive groups. So again, wow, a huge opportunity for all of you.

The second area is affinity groups. These, actually, are groups that share a common trait, a special interest that's brought them together. For example, we have food and wine groups; country clubs; maybe groups of high-end consumers that have come together; charities, as well, often operate in group travel. Now in the affinity market, obviously, we like to keep our groups to a certain size, but the smallest group that we actually will have on our ships, are regardless five suites. So think of that opportunity; five suites only and you have a group.

The last category, as I said earlier, is the category of celebration and milestone groups. So this

speaks very much to the multigenerational families, which of course, is a huge trend in travel today. Multigenerational families could actually have 5 suites, 6 suites, 7 suites. There's a wonderful opportunity here as well. Book for the grandparents, that beautiful winter garden or that signature suite; it provides a gathering place for all the family to come together, where they can all plan the next day's activities.

So how are you going to find these groups? Well, I think, there is a simple answer. Just ask that one additional question to the same clients that you deal with each and every day. For example, in the affinity group space by just asking your transient, vacation travelers: Are they members of any clubs, any societies, any groups, and then actually joining them at those events, could suddenly unearth a wonderful affinity group opportunity. In the celebration and the milestone group opportunity area, just be a lifestyle planner, as I call you. Make sure you know when your clients are gonna have a big monumental anniversary dates, when they are planning to actually celebrate maybe that 50th anniversary and take along all the kids and all their extended family. And for incentive travel, again just think of your existing clients. Ask where they work, does their company actually organize any incentive travel trips. By just asking that one additional question, each and every day you will unearth group opportunities like you've never seen before.

So what's in it for you? I think you can conclude, actually, that by just asking for that group business you're going to drive your profits much higher. You'll also introduce new to cruise guests. An affinity group is a great example of that actually. You could be bringing new to cruise guests as part of that affinity group. Also in the incentive market maybe the corporate account you're working with is rewarding their workers by putting them on a cruise. It could be their very first time to cruise and then you may have earned a guest, a client for life as well.

At Seabourn we make it really easy for you. We have wonderful tools to help you close business. Our global sales teams will help you, will even join you, actually, at group presentations. Our reservations our whole group coordination team are here to support your business. We like to make life easy for you and we'd like to help you grow your group business with Seabourn.

Thank you so very, very much! We wish you great success and of course, thank you for your support each and every day at Seabourn.

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**DAY FIVE: 3 Steps to Making Sure You Have Found the Right Partner**  
**VANESSA MCGOVERN, CEO and Co-Founder, Gifted Travel Network**

Hi! I'm Vanessa McGovern with Gifted Travel Network and I'm really excited to be a part of this amazing group summit! Today I am going to share with you some information on how to make sure you have found the right partner for your group business. I have had the absolute pleasure and privilege of working with hundreds of travel professionals on the subject matter of groups. I

have seen it all, the good, the bad, and the ugly. I've been training agents on groups for so many years because I really feel that the path to profitability in this business largely rests in getting a group.

So in my, you know, endeavors and all of my involvement with so many different travel business owners: from highly experienced, to brand new to the industry. I have found that the biggest common denominator, when it comes to a group strategy and ensuring that it is executed successfully, always comes down to the travel professionals ability to secure the right partner. This is really the key ingredient to everything. If you don't have the right partner: whether it's a B to B strategy, I like to say joint venture, in that case; or whether it's a Pied Piper because it's somebody with a very strong following, and lots of great influence, and tons of people that want to travel with them. If you don't have the right partner, Pied Piper or joint venture, you don't really have a strong group strategy and there are some key steps to ensuring that you have found the right partner and I want to talk to you today about 3. Three steps to making sure that you've truly found the right partner.

So step number one, let's talk about how to even find the right partner, right, because sometimes we have a great idea, we get a stroke of inspiration, and maybe we talk to somebody in our community, or at a social event, and we start, you know, the wheels start turning about, oh, this could be a great group idea. Sometimes you're all out of ideas and you're wondering I definitely want to do groups but I just don't know how to find the right partner. So a few things, I want to talk really broadly, like on a national level, on how to find the right partner with affinity groups and I want to also talk locally as well. So regardless of where you're at in your travel business journey hopefully this will give you some ideas.

First of all, the best way to find the right partner is obviously to get very specific. You know, there's a tagline a sort of cliché term that the "riches are in niches". So you want to find an affinity, or also known as a niche, group of people that have a special interest in a common activity. So let's give you a few examples: I see a lot of travel professionals working with food and wine groups or golf groups or cultural heritage groups or something even as specific as square dancing. I've seen a travel professional successfully execute a group cruise for hundreds of square dancers. Those are very specific, so say you live in an area of the country that there is just, you know, there isn't a square dancing group or there isn't really food and wine groups, the way that there might be in a big city. You could go online and look for food and wine type conferences and festivals nationally. Or say you want to do golf groups. You can start googling golf conferences or golf association conferences and you can start seeing events that you can attend either as an attendee, so that you can meet the exhibitors and start building rapport and identifying the right partners, or you can also exhibit yourself. If you're not willing to make that big investment in a big show, another big show, actually, that I thought of for a travel professional once is, you know, you want to do scuba diving trips to the most amazing scuba diving locations of the world. You can attend an actual scuba diving conference that exists; it's in Vegas every year.

So you want to think broadly in terms of, or more nationally, in terms of the special interest.

But if you're not really sure you want to go that big and you still need some inspiration, you know what I really, what I tell my travel professionals that I work with to go get some inspiration on, is go to your local bookstore. Go to your local bookstore, go to Barnes & Noble, go to a bookstore and go to the magazine section and go and look at special interest magazines, like a golf magazine, or there's like whiskey magazines, or very specific magazines. See what you gravitate towards, of course, you always want to do something that you have an affinity for as well. And look inside the magazine for the companies that are advertising in those magazines. Even a photographer's magazine, a cooking magazine, whatever the magazine is, see what companies and businesses are actually advertising because those companies are also in front of people who like that interest and those companies will have an influencer; whether it's the owner of the company or just a personality of that company, a celebrity of that company. It could be a small company, so that's even better to work with smaller companies. You can target those companies as potential partners as well. So those are two ideas.

Another idea in terms of finding, getting inspiration, finding the right partner, getting you know getting inspired on in terms of that is: think local. There's tons of clubs and associations where you live. You know, where we live, here in North Carolina, there's tons of cycling clubs. You know, constantly when I'm driving to work, I'm seeing groups of cyclists, constantly, on the road. You know, if that's something that you're interested in, even if you're not a cyclist, but you see there's groups of people doing an activity together in your community, find out who is the person leading that activity and figure out a way to get in front of that person. Whether it's to sponsor an event, or maybe go to the store where the bikes are being sold, or do something to be able to get to know that group. So there are a lot of events for special interests that are specific to your community, especially if you live in a part of the country with lots of golf clubs, you can get with a golf pro and find a partner that way. So getting inspired for making sure that you're working with people with specific interests is really important.

Alright, so number two is, now that you found an interest, a group of people that are obviously you know bonded with some activity and that they would make for a great group for travel. You want to do your research. So that's number two. Alright, the second point here in the three steps to making sure you found the right partner, number two, and that's research. So research is critical and this is definitely a blind spot with travel business owners and I think, it's just, it's normal because you get so excited and caught up in the moment and you found this amazing person that's gonna do this, do that, do the other, and we rush to present ourselves and the opportunity. Take a step back and do your research.

And, now, I mean a variety of things when I say research. So research could also mean in the phase where you're looking for the partner. Research could be googling, going to their website, do they have an online presence, what do their social media channels look like, do they have strong followings, and more importantly, even if they had like 20 or 30,000 likes or followers or fans you definitely want to know are those people engaging on social media, do they have an email list? This is a big one, when you're doing your research and you go to their website for online presence, which I should hope that all your partners do have one, you want to look to see do they have an email list; if they do have one subscribe to their weekly newsletter,

monthly newsletter, whatever. See the kind of content that they're sending out. It also might give you a clue as to whether or not they've traveled together because they might talk about that in their newsletter. And also, a point about newsletters, with a partner social media is obviously very important but you also want to pay close attention to the fact that social media is a rented platform versus emails you own the marketing asset. So a business or Pied Piper that actually has an email that they can hit send on to their potential people that would travel with them is so important. So if you find a partner in your research, ask the person when you're talking, qualifying whatever. Do you have an email list? How big is it? How often do you email this list? If you hit send on email right now how many people would get it? You know these are the kinds of questions you can ask the right partner.

And number three, for how to make sure you have found the right partner for your group business, is understand that and I just touched on this too, but it's really important to make a point of it, is that lots of followers, doesn't mean a following. So I've come across a lot of travel professionals that are like: this is amazing; I found this yoga instructor; they're on Instagram; they have, you know 200,000 followers. That's great but if they haven't actually traveled together, or maybe this person doesn't have a product that they're actually selling, if there's no common bond beyond that individual person. That could be a red flag, that this is not exactly the right partner. Where the partner will put it out there to their community and say let's go on a yoga retreat to Costa Rica for \$4000. Who's with me? If their audience isn't used to spending that kind of money, they never traveled with this kind of person that might be a sign that that's not the right partner as well. This goes back to number two which is research. Making sure that you have properly qualified the right partner, to make sure that the people that are following the Pied Piper or the business are actual true followers, and they're loyal, and they would travel with them, and spend money with them, as opposed to just following them, right.

That's why we love at the Gifted Travel Network the wine club example because in a wine club example people are actually paying a monthly fee to be included in this wine subscription. So that tells you that A. They have to come to the business to get their wines, so they're bonded in that way. They meet, they talk, they socialize, and they have to pay. So that's a good qualifying factor.

So I hope you enjoyed my three steps to making sure you found the right partner and that you got some great nuggets out of this. I have a full 60 minute presentation on a group strategy that actually works, where I talk about this and so many other important considerations and topics, when it comes to group business. So all you have to do is go to [VanessaMcGovern.com](http://VanessaMcGovern.com). You'll see the URL here and opt in to get my full presentation. Thank you so much for the opportunity to deliver this presentation and its content. I hope to see on the other side of Vanessa McGovern.com, thanks everyone and go after those groups.

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**DAY FIVE: Today's Top Trends to Direct You Where the Business Is**  
**JEFF GAYDUK, Publisher, Leisure Group Travel**

Hi, everyone. Jeff Gayduk, publisher at Leisure Group Travel magazine. I'm excited to take part in the inaugural Group Sales Success Summit and share with you some insight into trends that are shaping the group travel marketplace.

At Leisure Group Travel we're committed to the group market 52 weeks a year and have built our entire business around helping groups navigate the travel industry. A big part of that help comes in identifying where the industry is headed and that's why we're delighted to sponsor the annual group intention survey. Here we ask 20,000 group coordinators what's happening in their business. We analyze the results; tabulate each answer to identify trends within the group travel industry. I want to share with you some of the results from our most recent survey and later invite you to become part of our community.

The first item of note is that most group leaders operate less than 10 trips annually. Our studies show that nearly 3/4 of the group universe is made up of these types of group travel leaders. While 12% of our survey respondents operate over 30 trips per year. This typically falls into the larger cultural institutions, alumni, banks, and credit unions.

How long do they travel? Well, obviously, every group is unique, but we're seeing some interesting trends. Traditionally, the group market was considered more of a long haul, like extended trips; however, in recent years we're seeing a trend towards shorter vacations being planned. Perhaps you're seeing this too. Our studies indicate that over one in three group trips planned is of three nights or less; interesting food for thought.

Where are they going? You might be surprised that US destinations are most popular with preformed groups. The majority of our survey respondents indicate a keen desire to travel throughout the United States with top draws being: the Northwest, Northeast, excuse me, with pinnacle destinations such as New York, DC, and New England. The southern US continues to be popular with: stalwarts like Florida; theme parks; beaches; Kennedy space Center. Being matched by city getaways such as Savannah, Charleston, New Orleans; as well as, a rich music and civil rights history. Big cities like Chicago in the Midwest are popular, as is rural tourism, which starts to pick up on some of the trends that we'll cover in just a bit. Finally, the Western US: from Alaska, to the Pacific northwest, down the coast to California, to the desert communities of Arizona. These destinations have staying power. On the international front we're seeing strong preference for Europe, followed by Canada, and a growing interest in Latin America.

Group sizes worth noting. The industry trend is moving toward smaller, more manageable group sizes: something that's been picked up on by major tour operators and cruise lines. For example, 31 to 50 passengers would be considered in the average group size; however, we've seen the number of groups that big shrink from 52% to 45% in just the last two years. At the same time small groups, defined as 15 passengers or less has grown from 12% to 16%. Last

thing about this trend is a lot of unique opportunities open up with small group travel. You can do dinner parties, unique transportation options, plus getting around in small groups and homogenizing is easier than when you have 45 to 50 travelers. Not that we don't like big groups, their wonderful, but ignore the trend of small group travel at your peril.

One of the catchphrases we use at Leisure Group Travel is, "The riches are in the niches". And that's apparent looking at some of the niche markets that our audience covers. For example, 30% of respondents plan faith-based trips; local community church based organizations, religious trips, weekend getaways to develop spirituality, or to take a pilgrimage overseas. A very popular part of the preformed group market. 24% of our audience participates and plans active adventure type trips; it's a very broad industry, but certainly growing among our group organizers. 33% organize multigenerational trips, 24% organize culinary, 43% cultural, 33% educational, and nearly 20% girls or guys getaways. And that's just part of it.

I invite you to learn more about Leisure Group Travel and become a subscriber today. Our print publication comes out bi-monthly, complemented by a weekly newsletter: Insight from Leisure Group Travel. And if you're planning trips for families, religious groups, sports tournaments, student or youth, we have publications, websites, and e-newsletters that serve all of these different markets. Check out our various niche platforms at [ptmgroups.com](http://ptmgroups.com). To subscribe directly to Leisure Group Travel visit [www.leisuregrouptravel.com](http://www.leisuregrouptravel.com), and click on the subscribe button.

I welcome you to our community and I hope you found some benefit of this seminar today.

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#### **DAY FIVE: Every One Of Your Groups Needs A Business Card**

##### **KEITH POWELL, The Business Revivalist**

Today's marketing tip for groups is on business cards. You know when I'm coaching clients on marketing their groups one of the first things I start with is you need to have a business card. Now that may seem obvious to you but I'm talking about a very specific business card and I'm holding a few here that I'm looking at from some of the groups that I do.

First thing I want to tell you is that every one of your groups needs an individual business card just for that group. Not everybody's doing it, it's my personal twist but I gotta tell you it works. I have a coaching client that's gone from no groups to three groups and working on a fourth already, so it's possible.

What I need to tell you about the business card though, is extremely important. The first thing is; is that the card is specific to that group, and use both sides of the card. The second thing that is important is that you are not the focus of this particular business card. You're going to have your agency business card. This is all about the group and all about the theming of that group. So if someone looks at that card, it should scream the theme that you're marketing that

particular group about and that particular cruise or land program that you have. So keep it very, very focused on the group.

Use both sides of the card, make the card interesting and here's where it gets kinda scary sometimes for some people, but again, trust me this does work. You do not want to put the information about your agency and about you on the card we did a number of cards for our wine cruises where we didn't even have our name on the card. We now do it but we do it an interesting way. We'll say things like, your cruise ship advisor, or your cruise line advisor: being a travel advisor versus just a travel agent. I prefer the term advisor. The other part about the card is that it's not about marketing your agency at this point, everything is about the theme. In the case of what we do it's about wine and cruises or wine and land tour programs. So keep it very, very tight and focused. Use as much information on the card.

The whole idea about the card is to get that prospect to go to your website or to contact you. You should have the website on there, maybe both front and back and you should have your contact information, as far as phone number. The rest of that you can put onto your website; all about the agency, you can have a link there, when you get there they can see all your background and the rest of that. So focus on the group. Not expensive today, to get cards. This is a very effective and inexpensive way to market your programs.

Also when I go into a networking situation I only have one program in mind; that particular group that I'm marketing. So make it very interesting; we have ones with pictures of cruise ships and wineglasses because we're marketing wine cruises and tours; we have ones with just wineglasses on there; we did a beer cruise so we have beer mugs on there; all kinds of interesting programs. We had some that were non-cruise travel this is one or not cruise travel but non-wine travel: celebrate life and survivorship for cancer survivors and again the card is about that. You can put your seller of travel information on there but make it small, readable.

Again keep it focused on your theme and on the particular travel product that you're marketing. Everything else will be on your website. Then when you're working on your marketing program, make it a goal to hand out 20 of those cards every single day, or if you go to a big event, or you have a table or a booth space. These cards work magic.

Now I happen to like a two-sided card but you can certainly do a four sided and I have one of my coaching clients that is using a four sided, a folded card, so they actually get four different spaces. The concept behind this is your business card becomes a mini brochure.

So this is your tip for this marketing process of groups of both cruise and land. Make your business card stand out, be different, all about the theming, and the group that you're going after.

Till next time, this has been Keith Powell, The Business Revivalist and I look forward to hearing about your great group success.

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**DAY FIVE: Today's Top Trends to Direct You Where the Business Is**  
**STACEY RAY, CEO at Groupit Travel Host Agency for Travel Agents**

[Stuart] Stacey tell us when you got started in the business and what did it look like then.

[Stacey] So I actually officially got started and I open my business in 2014. And I knew that I wanted to specialize in groups because that was my background, in doing event planning and then I was a case manager in the hospital for 20+ years; and it's all about the logistics and I just knew that groups was my thing. But starting in the business, who were going to be my groups? So I decided to do promotional groups and I had a large following because I was such a traveler myself and so I just started putting groups together and I was nervous but they worked out. And that was the start as they say.

[Stuart] So when you start out like that and you said promotional groups, did you go, did you accompany, did you escort, or host or you just sold into key dates? How did that work?

[Stacey] No, I actually hand-carried in my own itineraries and one of the things I advertised was, you get to travel with me. And so, while that may sound a little arrogant, with the friends and colleagues that I had from so many, you know, I worked in a huge public hospital and the joke there always was, where in the world is Stacey Ray because I was always traveling. And I would come back and talk about my travels and everyone would say oh, I've gotta go there and then I started unofficially helping people put their trips together. So when I started the groups, people actually did want to travel because I would be there. Kind of gave them a sense of security, shall we say because everyone knew that I would be on the trip, to provide that safety and security for them, especially for people who haven't traveled before or gone to a particular destination. And then a big thing that I did, that kind of really got me started being known in the industry is I put together a sand trap to Iceland. I was going to Iceland before Iceland was cool. So I hear all these agents on the different boards that they have gotten requests for Iceland, they didn't know what to do. And I decided, you know, I'm gonna do it. So I put together, we had 80 people, go on the fact. That was, yeah, and it was a very funny story although not funny to me at the time. The only person who didn't get to go was Moi, because I had pneumonia and I wasn't allowed to travel. So but because I had great leaders to escort the trip, it was great.

[Stuart] Okay, so you started off and you figured, the best way to get into groups because you knew, in your prior life as an event planner, that's what you love doing. Right? You love; you love the logistics of that. You already had lots of friends, a following just because of who you are, and you said, "Hey, I'm going here who wants to come with me?" And you laid out the reasons why they came with you.

Alright, fast forward now, that was 14. So you only started a couple years ago, what does your business look like today?

[Stacey] So my business, well my first year in business, I booked over \$1 million and I quickly got to the point where I knew I couldn't do it by myself, with all the bookings, and travel, and

training, and what have you. So I slowly started to add some agents, subagents and our volume kept going up. But then I decided in 2016 that I really wanted to have a host agency that is full-service. I mean we work with all kinds of agents, but I really wanted to be the only host agency, in the country, that specializes in agents who want to do group travel. And so I started in 2016 and I'm very proud to tell you that as of today, we have 80 agents.

[Stuart] That's magnificent. So I love the fact that you knew that for your own business you needed to grow and at the same time, hey, let's bring in some independent contractors and let's just continue to worship this this niche of groups. Tell us what are some of the things along the way you've learned and other agents are learning or need to know to be successful? First things that come to mind because I'm sure you've seen failures and successes. Can you give us some examples and some ideas?

[Stacey] Well, the first thing that I will say is a common question that I ask agents, which you yourself certainly stress, is why? You know, you come up with this great idea and you have to ask why? Why would people want to travel with you, to that place, on those dates, for what reason? What's in it for them? Quite frankly, they could do that on their own, anytime they want. So that's a big one.

The second one is that I try to stress that if you are sure that this group is going to be a winner, you need to take it down a notch because everybody wants to go until it's time to pay the deposit. So I always remind agents that if there's money coming out of your pocket, we need to do a lot of discussion and accounting before you lay that out of your pocket, on a whim.

And then I think the third thing that I stress, all the time is about detail. Groups sound so sexy, and oh my, gosh, I can make a lot of money. But guess what, it is such hard work and requires such attention to detail that if you can't focus on the minute detail, it comes down to even; how are you going to seat people at dinner? Who may not be talking to who? I've had clients say, I'll but not if so and so is going. And so what do you do with that? You're gonna have to play a lot of roles in order for your groups to be successful. Now, of course, there's affinity groups, promotional groups.

I also do net groups. And I train people to do net groups because the income potential is far greater.

[Stuart] Explain, net group?

[Stacey] So net groups would be where you're getting 100% net pricing from whoever, whatever suppliers you are using and it could be a DMC that you're working through or Mom and Pops, but in the end you've got this magnificent spreadsheet of all your real costs with some buffers in there. And then you say how much do I want to make, and how much will the market bear? And so that is your greatest potential to make the money that you want to. Now for a lot of people who are with host agencies, that may not be possible; most host agencies don't allow that. We actually do, under the right circumstances.

[Stuart] So just to pick up in case anybody's listening, and says what's a DMC? Destination Management Company. That's when you're perhaps a more of an FIT group where you're piecing, you're crafting, you're the creator, you're the tailor, the designer of the group, and you work with local, little local companies that you definitely want to make sure you can trust, that will deliver on their end. And one of the things, as you know, I teach in group boot camp is net it down and mark it up to the profit you deserve, that you need to earn.

[Stacey] Absolutely, absolutely, and I want to bring up one more thing, the biggest faux pas, shall we say, that all of us can be guilty of, is when we design a trip for a group, we forget that it's not about us and what we like, it's about what would our clients love. So it's very important to, while putting yourself in the mix, it's important to take yourself out of the mix because it's not about whether I want to climb to mount, you know, whatever. It's about, what would my clients like and who is my ideal client for that group?

[Stuart] That's a great point; especially everyone's says, oh, luxury we want to go luxury. Well everyone, everyone on this planet defines luxury differently. What your budget is for luxury and mine could be entirely different. So, right, we have to take out our own, right, likes and desires, and our own budgets, and listen to hear because they may spend stuff, big money, on stuff that you and I would never think of. But that's what they do.

[Stacey] But that's what I tell everybody. Stop selling out of your wallet. You can't sell out of your wallet and be successful in this business.

[Stuart] I like that mantra. Give us your mantra?

[Stacey] So my mantra really is: if it ain't perfect the first time, there will be no second time. I'm a big believer in that, you have one shot to make it perfect, and it's better to take longer and work harder on all those details because it is all in the details. And you brush something through because, you know.

So in my host agency, what we do is we collaborate a lot and we mentor and so we make sure that everyone has an opportunity to have success but we don't want people just running out, unqualified because it sounds so attractive. We want to make sure that it's perfect for them. So we mentor.

[Stuart] That's beautiful and clearly when you when you have a group whether it's 6 people or 66 people, it's gotta be perfect because the beauty of group business is that, the goal is it grows your business exponentially that group rebooks, gets bigger, they come back with individual bookings. It's exponential growth, which means, it ain't gonna happen if you don't deliver a spot on, perfect product.

[Stacey] I know my agents get tired of hearing me say it but it's true.

[Stuart] Well we always need to be reminded of that and a quick question about efficiency. You said its hard work, its detail. Anything come to mind right away about how you and how you mentor agents, coach agents, to work a group efficiently. Give us an idea.

[Stacey] Well one of the big things is that you have to know how to use a spreadsheet; and if you don't know how to use a spreadsheet that's fine because we can provide them with one. But you need to know every single dollar of your costs, right down to, anything that you're going to include. If you're going to pay the gratuities to a driver, on an excursion, you need to know what you're going to pay that driver. It doesn't matter what the expenses, it's got to be on that spreadsheet. Because I've seen way too many agents, and believe me, I'm not immune to it, I made a big mistake a while back, on a fee that I forgot to put in to my spreadsheet and it cost me out of my pocket. You know you've got to know your numbers.

[Stuart] Yes, you've gotta know those numbers because you cannot go back to a client and say oops, you need to pay more. You need to know before you go. And I always say, that if you're not comfortable with numbers, find somebody who is, who you can partner with. And once you build this spreadsheet, whether they use your template or build their own it becomes a boilerplate, they can reuse it every time and plug in the new numbers.

[Stacey] And you're just maybe changing pieces of, you know, what the expenses are but then you can really look at that but it also helps after work. You can go in and note did you do it? Where you actually made the profit that you projected? Or did it end up costing you money or you can also look at the pieces and go you know what, next time I'm not going to include that. It was meaningless. You know, there are a lot of reasons to have that.

[Stuart] It tells a story, it's a pro forma; it's a P&L. It's important, it is especially in groups. It has to be the backbone of your business; so you know where you're gonna come out. Good stuff. Stacey leave us with a big thought, an idea, something, here's your chance to talk to a whole lot of travel professionals, who are either doing groups or want to kick it up a notch from good to great. Or they want to get in the business. Is there something you see, a consistent failure, that you can help us get right? Or something you just want to help us champion?

[Stacey] I think what I would like to champion is that groups are great. They can be so much fun. They can be exciting but not everyone has the skill set to be successful in groups. And so, if you don't, it doesn't mean that you can't do that. It means that it's time to think about collaboration, or mentorship with people who can help you. I'd rather see an agent split commission 50/50 with another agent who knows how to do it, than to not have it at all because they're afraid of the group. And I've seen a lot of agents turn away group business because they're scared.

[Stuart] So partnering and sharing is a great way to either get started or that could be your constant to always work with a partner.

[Stacey] Absolutely, we have agents who, and not just in my host agency, but you know that I

even work with on our Facebook page. You know the group travel best practices. We have agents there who really don't want to turn away the business but they know they don't want to do the group. So we try to help them, connect them with an agent, who can really help them either get started or do it all the time.

[Stuart] I love it, collaboration. So if you're that expert, be that mentor or coach for somebody else and then find that person who is willing to give. That's what's beautiful about our industry; I find most people are giving and generous to help each other, because there's enough business out there for everybody.

[Stacey] You know, I want to tell you and I want to give credit where credit is due. I don't know if you know Kristin Perry. She wrote about abundance mentality and scarcity mentality. This was very profound for me last week. And I live in abundance mentality, which is there's plenty for everyone. I don't have any competitors. I don't consider anyone my competitor and I know that everybody can get their piece of the pie. Versus the scarcity mentality, where you know you feel so threatened, that you gotta undercut, and undercut, and undercut, because you're so afraid you won't get the business. And I just love that and so that's my, probably my, biggest advice is what you just said. Live in the abundance mentality because there is plenty for everyone, as long as you believe in your own value.

[Stuart] Well said, that's beautiful and it's a perfect time for us to come to a close here. I think everything you've shared here is really, really great stuff. And you're not just talking the talk, you're walking the walk. You've done it, you're doing it, and you're helping others do it as well. I want to thank you for allowing us to honor your success in the agent spotlight here in the Group Sales Success Summit and I wish you continued success, Stacey.

[Stacey] And you as well, Stuart, thanks so much.

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### **Stuart Cohen's Daily Sales Tip 5**

In April 2017 my wife and I hosted a group called Friends & Family of Stuart and Kimberly. We cruised a river cruise with 23 of our best friends and family. It wasn't just a group it was actually a partial ship charter on board at that time the brand-new AmaKristina. So in case you were wondering if this guy is just talk the talk but does he also walks the walk - that's only my most recent group. That was our third river cruise adventure because we love it, you probably due too.

But the point in me telling you this is to ask you when's the last time you led a group?

Everyone seems to be so focused on finding group leaders out there. Why don't you do it? Do you have friends and family? Are you an influencer? Do people like hanging out with you?

Friends, a lot of times when you just tell people that your travel professional that doesn't mean much but if you tell them "Hey come with me, come with us, and I'll show you all, take you all, guide you! We'll explore together. We'll have fun together.

Things become magical and it could become an annual trip! Sometimes twice annual. And the thing is you go where you want to go. The places you want to see, with the people you want to hang with. We also said invited friends to bring their friends and family BUT they must be FUN and INTERESTING or stay home! It's my vacation too. As your tip of the day -- you go be group leader!

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GROUP SALES SUCCESS SUMMIT 2018: DAY ONE - DAY FIVE

