

# Tips For Successful Events

Organizing and hosting consumer events, whether they are “Cruise Nights” or “Travel Shows,” can be an excellent opportunity to mingle with existing clients and meet new and potential ones. These events also give you the chance to deliver information on new products, itineraries, and destinations, as well as specials or promotions you may be offering. They can be evening functions at a local hotel or restaurant, an afternoon tea, or even an intimate gathering at your office.

With the proper presentation and focus, these events can grow your business exponentially.



## PRE-EVENT PLANNING

### Select your date

- Ideally, allow 3-4 months' lead time
- For best attendance, choose a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday evening or daytime Saturday or Sunday, Sep-Nov/Jan-May
- Avoid conflicts with holidays, sports events, and major civic functions
- Always be sure to include local media editors and travel writers, and prepare a press release
- Block group space so you can focus your event toward a specific sailing

### Plan your guest list

- Decide whether you want a large guest list or a small, intimate one  
*(If you would like me to attend, our mandate is for a minimum of 25 qualified guests)*
- If you have a smaller group in mind, I will work with you to provide collateral materials and support so you can host it yourself
- Start with your existing database. Possibilities include:
  - » Our basic demographic: ages 50-60, household income \$150k+, have cruised in the past 3 years
  - » Experienced clients ready to move up
  - » Non-cruisers who are interested in a boutique hotel or country club experience or who are interested in a small ship experience or the destinations we visit
  - » Corporate accounts
  - » Multi-gen Family Reunions
  - » Celebrating a landmark anniversary, birthday, retirement, or even empty nest
- If you need to look outside your database, look to affinity (common interest) groups, clubs, or organizations with memberships. For example:
  - » Professional: medical, chambers of commerce
  - » Generic: university and college alumni associations, sailing clubs, upscale retirees, church groups, health groups, dance clubs
  - » Upscale florists and garden clubs
  - » Culinary schools
  - » The arts, including ballet and opera
  - » Financial planners or investment clubs
  - » Spas
  - » Active, outdoor, or hiking organizations
  - » Birdwatching group
  - » Naturalist groups
  - » Photography groups
  - » Travel groups
  - » Environmental organizations
  - » Book clubs
  - » Zoos
  - » Charitable giving

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## Plan your guest list *(continued)*

- Why not consider a cross promotion with other businesses who attract the same type of client, hold the event at their place of business, and invite clients from both? Possibilities include:
  - » Premium wines & spirits
  - » Restaurants & gourmet food establishments
  - » Luxury car dealers
  - » Sports equipment retailers
  - » Timesaving appliance retailers
  - » Home theater equipment specialists
  - » SCUBA diving shops
  - » Golf clubs and golf pros
  - » Upscale garden center
- Or how about working the honeymoon/romance angle? Try:
  - » Lingerie stores
  - » Tuxedo stores
  - » Photographers
  - » Jewelry stores
  - » Financial planners
  - » Gown or fashion boutiques

## Select and reserve your site

- For groups of 25 or less, your office may be fine
- For larger groups, consider hotels, higher-end community halls, golf clubs, or any non-traditional meeting space
- Select a venue that reflects the brand
- Make sure the venue is convenient and has plenty of parking; consider reimbursing for parking, if appropriate
- Personally inspect the facility in advance

## Arrange for catering

- For daytime, such as an afternoon tea or brunch, consider pastries or fruit-and-cheese plates, with non-alcoholic beverages
- For evening, you might offer simple hors d'oeuvres and punch or wine, or perhaps dessert and a nice glass of Champagne
- Serve with glassware, serving dishes, and platters that reflect the brand

## Arrange for audio/visual

- Screen—you need at least 6 ft or a nice clean wall to present on
- I have a projector and speakers for up to 50 people

## Establish your theme

- Wine tasting
- If appropriate, decorate the venue accordingly
- Consider adding interest with a fashion show or providing guests with pareos, heis, leis
- You might even invite Tahitian dancers for entertainment

## Collateral

- I will order collateral material on your behalf and supply flyers with the latest offers

## Invitations

- Send invitations 3-4 weeks in advance
- Use colorful letterhead or postcards (Both are available free of charge to order from the Travel Agent Center on our website. Or download images from our website for email invitations.)
- Always include our logo; you can pull various versions off the Travel Agent Center on our website
- When sending invitations by mail, hand-address each one and use actual stamps, not a postage meter
- You may email invitations instead if you prefer

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## Invitations (*continued*)

- RSVPs are a must! Be sure to ask for respondents' addresses, phone numbers, and email addresses. If these are not existing clients, you want to make sure you add them to your database.
- Follow up with a phone call to all invitees a few days or up to a week in advance.

## Ideas for verbiage:

- XYZ Travel invites you join us for our *Tahiti & the South Pacific* presentation featuring Paul Gauguin Cruises
- XYZ Travel invites you to join us to discover the m/s *Paul Gauguin*, a luxury cruise ship specifically designed to explore the unparalleled wonders of Tahiti, French Polynesia, and the South Pacific
- Join us for an informal, yet informative evening and learn about the value of small-ship, all-inclusive cruising

## Tips:

- Take a look at our website, [www.pgcruiises.com](http://www.pgcruiises.com), for more ideas!
- Send your invitation to me for proofing – it is in your best interest to have a second set of eyes doublecheck

## WHAT ARE YOU REQUIRED TO DO?

### Prior to the presentation

- Advise me of a group date or dates, and I will have a contract prepared
- Send the invitation to me for proofing
- If you will be asking for co-op dollars, you must let me know in advance
- Collect RSVP names and contact details (remember we need at least 25 qualified clients for me to attend)
- Advise us of the number of RSVPs at least one week and one day prior to the event
- Call or email everyone to remind them one day prior to the event

### At the presentation

- Show up early
- Check in guests
- All travel advisors must mingle with guests throughout the event
- Introduce the travel advisors and give your positioning statement—why you and your agency? Introduce me.
- Be prepared to interject your personal experiences
- Close the event with a thank you to guests and special offers

### After the presentation

- Add everyone to your database
- Follow up on any leads from the event
- Follow up with a thank you note to all attendees, ask for feedback and ideas for future events
- Periodically direct mail or email Paul Gauguin Cruises offers to attendees

### What will I do at the presentation?

- Arrive at least 1 hour prior to the event and set up AV
- Bring along brochures and flyers with the latest offers and amenity dates, if applicable
- Present the cruise product information for approx. 1 hour, including 15 minutes for questions
- Include a limited-time offer for bookings (usually within two weeks)

**In my opinion, following these steps will bring you success with cruise nights and events. Please contact me if I can assist you with any of your promotion and marketing efforts.**

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