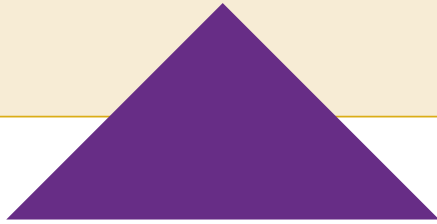




Sommer: an architect of NCLH success



*Some timely fatherly advice put NCLH President and CEO **Harry Sommer** on the right track to realise his boyhood dreams.*

6 As a kid growing up, I just wanted to be an architect designing skyscrapers and city roads that transformed New York and made a positive impact on people's lives. I could dream about that and doodle for hours.

But, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, New York was experiencing financial difficulties so my father urged me to become an accountant because they always have jobs.

His advice served me well as, through a fruitful three decades in the cruise industry, I have seen the industry evolve, ships become more spellbinding and technology transform the crew and passenger experiences.

In the early 1990s when I first started in cruising, computerised reservation systems were almost nonexistent, with nearly everything performed by hand from payroll to passenger reservations. There were paper boarding cards with handwritten passenger details. It all resembled an old accountant's ledger with each entry in different handwriting. And if there was a cancelation, it would simply be deleted with an eraser.

In 1994, I had one of my first big projects: implementing a new shipboard electronic payroll system across our eight-ship fleet that I designed using Microsoft Excel – which at that time was arguably the coolest piece of office software around.

I stepped onboard in a suit and tie but, within two days, I had abandoned my tie and was learning things I would never have learned shoreside. I also witnessed firsthand the relentless commitment, grit, unity and camaraderie of those on board.

I saw the numerous doors the cruise industry opens for so many around the world and learned much about diversity and the myriad benefits it can bring. I also found out the

challenges ship life brings, especially for women who had unique challenges in the shipboard workforce. It opened my eyes to the opportunities there could be to improve.

While I only spent a few weeks living as a crew member, I hold those experiences and lessons to this day and they help shape my commitment to diversity and inclusion.

Fast forward two decades to 2015, when I was appointed to lead international business for the newly formed Norwegian Cruise Line Holdings – the combination of Norwegian Cruise Line with Oceania Cruise Line and Regent Seven Seas Cruises. It meant I was soon travelling the world and meeting people from all different walks of life.

The lessons of my early career served me well in valuing what different people bring to the table and it helped influence our product in subtle ways. I loved the process of fixing translations with my favorite example being when we realised that we had translated the 'heatshots' offered in the photo study into the German language as "we will shoot you in the head".

Designing menus was even more fascinating as I got to taste dishes popular throughout the world. My New York-based palate had definitely expanded.

One of my favorite memories of that time was in winter 2018. Our team was visiting the Meyer Werft shipyard in Germany to see the progress of *Norwegian Bliss* and announce its Tony and Grammy Award-Winning musical headliner. I was awestruck by the colossal size of the indoor facility and the precision it took to build such a complex vessel. It wasn't the first time I had visited the shipyard, but this time felt unique.

There was an assembly line of massive cruise ships being built one after the other, all under a ceiling so high birds had room to fly indoors. As impressive as it was from the ground, looking up from the top of the ship was even more stunning. It reminded me of a Hollywood movie set and also that a new ship creates tremendous opportunities and lasting memories for its crew and passengers worldwide.

I may not have become the architect I once dreamt of being but the cruise industry has still allowed me to make a positive impact. Instead of roads, I design memories and as NCLH President & CEO, I have the opportunity to amplify this impact even further, whether it's for our near-40,000 team members, the roughly 3m passengers we welcome each year, the more than 35,000 suppliers we work with, or our partners at the more than 700 destinations we visit worldwide.

And that opportunity is priceless. 9

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