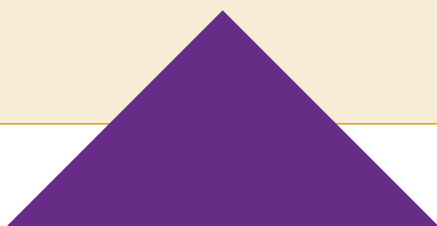


GLOCAL



Vago: cruising needs to go Glocal



*Swapping containers for cruise ships proved no easy task for MSC Cruises Executive Chairman **Pierfrancesco Vago**.*

6 Working in cruising may appear more glamorous than the container business but, having spent my first 10 years at the MSC Group where containers could sit in the sun for making money for 15 days with zero issues, my last 20 years at MSC Cruises taught me something different: a cruise passenger having to queue for just 15 minutes in the sun is simply unacceptable.

At the beginning, it was a challenge for us as newcomers to hospitality to have a B2C mindset when our heritage and expertise was steeped in the B2B world of shipping cargo.

The first time I put a cruise ship in Miami in 2004, I thought it would be perfect for our US passengers to be served freshly-squeezed blood oranges from Sicily. But they had never seen red orange juice before and wouldn't touch it at all.

Those last two decades have seen us – along with the

entire cruise sector – evolve into a more sophisticated industry where customer expectations have been raised constantly by the positive changes we have made in the areas of food and beverage, entertainment, spas, on-board retail and casinos.

There have also been major improvements in environmental protection, safety, security and crew welfare.

Cruising now offers a wonderful experience at terrific value for passengers compared to any other kind of holiday or destination. This applies across all segments from Contemporary through Premium to Luxury, making cruising more accessible than other types of vacation. Effectively, we democratised luxury.

This transformation led to an increase in visibility that has obvious benefits but has also attracted critics with unjustified complaints about the industry's negative impact on the environment and overtourism.

But this industry should be very proud. We have come a long way but we all need now to communicate our achievements to policymakers, regulators and consumers.

We need to take a 'glocal' approach. Although the industry has become more global, we must engage at a local level whether it is a country, a region, port or destination. We must try to understand the local mindset and look to engage and adapt accordingly to help and serve coastal communities, both environmentally and, of course, economically.

We should reflect on our ongoing sustainability initiatives. At MSC Cruises, we amortise a ship over 30 years and so analyse new modern technologies to improve its environmental performance throughout its lifetime.

The cruise sector is leading many other industries with innovations and solutions that will one day enter the cities and neighbourhoods of the broader society. 9