

Adventure at Your Fingertips: A Case of Royal Caribbean International



Source: Unsplash (2020)

Background

Established in 1969, Royal Caribbean International (RCI) is the world's leading cruise line sailing to over 270 destinations in more than 60 countries (RCI, n.d.). With a fleet of 29 ships and ownership of a private island—CocoCay in the Bahamas, which has been voted the number one private island destination by Travel Weekly for four consecutive years—RCI has spent more than five decades redefining the cruise experience through continuous innovation (RCI, n.d.). For more than 50 years, the cruise line has continued to create memorable experiences for its guests through innovation.

First launched in 2017, the Royal Caribbean app was designed to minimize crowds at drop-off areas and reduce queuing time by allowing guests to self-check-in and choose different arrival times, as well as collecting a digital key to their stateroom (MBW, 2020). In addition, the app reinvented safety protocols with Muster 2.0, a virtual safety briefing that can be completed before boarding (RCI, 2021).

In collaboration with EY Global, Royal Caribbean relaunched their mobile app with the slogan “Adventure at Your Fingertips”. The new app features an interactive map for passengers to discover onboard activities, a virtual chatroom for passengers to chat and share bookings or itineraries with friends and other family members onboard, as well as a gallery function for passengers to preview their photos taken onboard before purchasing them (RCI, n.d.). Through the personalization engine, the app tracks, learns and recommends activities that the passenger would be likely to enjoy (EY Global, 2023).

Additionally, the app enables mobile ordering and reservation with any restaurant onboard. With the order or booking information directly sent to the restaurant staff through the server, a hassle-free experience with minimum contact can be achieved. Moreover, based on information guests input into the app, the app will automatically alert the restaurant of any allergy or dietary request from the customer (EY Global, 2023). This streamlined process not only enhances the dining experience but also ensures that guests feel safe and valued. Finally, the app helps guests

keep track of their onboard spending with their real-time expense account. Guests can also view their real-time onboard spending history, offering full transparency and helping to manage their budgets more confidently (RCI, n.d.).

Challenges

I While the Royal Caribbean app offers a seamless and highly personalized cruise experience, its heavy integration into RCI's services presents challenges for less tech-savvy guests. Those without the app may miss out on faster check-in, activity bookings, and other conveniences, leading to potential fairness concerns. This digital divide may discourage or frustrate older or less technologically inclined travelers, ultimately impacting their satisfaction with the cruise experience.

Discussion Questions

1. How might the integration of technology through the Royal Caribbean app affect overall customer satisfaction and brand loyalty ?
2. What strategies can RCI adopt to ensure that guests who are unfamiliar with technology still enjoy a comparable level of service?
3. What operational challenges might arise from relying heavily on a mobile app for key guest services?
4. What new features or incentives could be added to the Royal Caribbean app to further enhance the cruise experience?

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Keywords

- Cruise
- Innovation
- Mobile Application
- Personalization
- Integrated User Interface
- Spending Monitoring

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