

Product Manager (tour designer) – European Riverboats (Office based in CT required)

SUMMARY: Responsible for the design, preparation and implementation of all tour elements and components that are involved in the creation and operation of each tour series. Product Managers are each charged with all matters pertaining to the product enhancements and tour feedback from Tauck Directors, guests and internal staff for a select group of assigned tours. Product Managers should have an excellent understanding of the Tauck Brand product standards and ensure their tours are compliant. Reporting to the VP of Worldwide Operations, Product Managers are also expected to work within a matrix brand team, under direction from the Brand Manger of each brand to meet specific brand goals.

All Product Managers are responsible to meet and/or exceed Cost of Sales and Margin goals collaboratively set with Brand Managers, Purchasing Team and Finance. Product Managers are responsible for creating and executing tour budgets to plan and updating budgets post finalization for accurate financial planning. Product Managers work closely with the Purchasing Team in the management of Cost of Sale for Hotels, Ship and Air charters and Destination Management Companies. Further, they support the Purchasing Team in obtaining the best possible value for guests through creating bids for suppliers and identifying alternative opportunities.

Product Managers also work closely with the Operations Services Team to maintain awareness and understanding of Tauck Director functionality and with the Reservations & Sales team to know what is required to close sales. Additionally, Product Managers work with the Tauck Director Operations team to maintain an awareness & understanding of Tauck Director assignments, budgeting and all operational needs.

In addition to the primary functions of tour product management, Product Managers are expected to respond to questions, problems and crises as they are presented from both internal sources (tour directors, reservations, sales and management) and external sources (guests, travel agents and suppliers). Product Managers must be willing and able to travel frequently; such travel may provide little or no advance warning and may occur over weekends and/or holidays.

Product Managers work in a busy, fast-paced setting. This position requires flexibility and willingness to constantly changing operational conditions which may be outside of their realm of control. As such, this position requires the ability to work flexible schedules including occasional evenings and/or weekends.

Duties/Responsibilities

- ◇ Successfully contribute to the research, design, development, maintenance, enhancement, organization, communication and budgeting/costing of changes to current product and new product opportunities for assigned tours/region. This includes incorporation of the enhancement process in all itinerary revisions and accordingly reporting changes for the broader audience
- ◇ Add part of GM team
- ◇ Successfully maintain and enhance all assigned products/region with respect to cost-of-sale management, quality control, customer service, new/unique opportunities exclusive to Tauck.
- ◇ Oversee and facilitate the general maintenance of each assigned tour/region including, but not limited to, frequent correspondence and follow-up with hotels, suppliers and tour directors, and crisis management
- ◇ Ensure responsive and effective acknowledgement of guest input, ideas and concerns, including responding to guest letters, calls and gifts. This includes active participation in the Guest Experience meetings, reporting on issues and actions taken and updating the GE tool with resolution
- ◇ With Purchasing, successfully negotiate assigned supplier components for assigned tours/regions and facilitate the administration and input of supplier rates in T.R.A.C.S by Finance., in strict accordance with required deadlines

- ◇ Manage creation, maintenance and execution of budgets for each of the assigned tours. This includes creating and regularly updating tour budgets in TRACS with accurate costs. Monitor budget variance reports regularly and address tour cost variances to plan so that they may be recovered from our partners and project variance accurately
- ◇ With speed and accuracy, ensure delivery of appropriate information to all internal constituents to sell the product, including pre/post hotel contracting, technical documents and marketing edits, lexicon, guest requirements, training materials and payable terms. This includes responding to all internal inquiries within 24 hours. These groups include Reservations, Sales, Marketing, Creative, Tauck Directors, Guest Relations and Finance
- ◇ Oversee and facilitate assigned supplier contracts and reservation requirements, system updates, production, review, distribution and supplier fulfillment for all assigned products/ region including, but not limited to, initial requests and any subsequent changes
- ◇ Manage all Tauck Director communications from a “first point of contact” standpoint. This includes responding to all Tauck Director inquiries within 24 hours
- ◇ Collaborate with Yield Management to procure or release inventory in regards to operational deviations.
- ◇ Oversee and facilitate the creation and organization of tour director information for each tour product including, but not limited to, tour field manuals, teleconferences, technical itineraries, tour collaterals, etc.
- ◇ Maintain superior supplier relations through negotiations, routine activities, supplier visitations and industry events
- ◇ Partake in weekend duty rotation and necessary follow-up for crisis management issues
- ◇ Oversee and facilitate the research and fulfillment of special tour requests such as dietary restrictions, handicapped rooms, wheelchair assistance, individual transfers, joining and general itinerary information, and advance pre/post tour hotel reservations for pre-formed groups when indicated by the Sales Department. This includes subsequent communication with Tauck Director staff and suppliers as necessary and appropriate.
- ◇ Ensure the administration of risk management (liability) controls regarding transportation and “adventure” suppliers for all assigned tours/region
- ◇ Administration of post tour communications including resolution and response of Tauck Director and supplier comments, guest comment cards, letters and telephone calls as necessary.
- ◇ Maintain and share with Purchasing Team a thorough awareness of current and potential suppliers for assigned tours/region, and general awareness of all Tauck suppliers, including site visitations and attendance at industry functions and trade shows as necessary and appropriate
- ◇ Maintain thorough awareness of company competitors and their product offerings, including where necessary, competitive analyses
- ◇ Participation in sales programs including but not limited to, product presentations/training to Sales and Marketing staff, Reservations staff, management, and consumer and travel agent groups as necessary and appropriate
- ◇ Other duties and responsibilities as assigned.

Knowledge/Skill Requirements:

- ◇ Bachelors Degree in a business discipline and/or equivalent related applicable experience
- ◇ Proven successful managerial experience in the travel and/or hospitality industries.
- ◇ Demonstrated competencies in PC literacy in a Windows based environment possessing a working knowledge of Microsoft Word and Excel
- ◇ Working knowledge of AS400 operating platform preferred
- ◇ Working knowledge of TRACS preferred
- ◇ Excellent oral and written communications skills
- ◇ Ability to travel 60-90 days per year