



## Giving a new emotional touch to business and customer loyalty

*Want to make a meaningful event for your customers or your staff? Here's the ultimate proposal.*



*Gualtiero Togneri, CEO of MSC Cruises for the Benelux*

The first impression when going on board of the MSC Poesia is an exclusive place in the best all-Italian style tradition. Everything has been done to make MSC Cruises' brand new cruise liner simply exceptional: 300 meters long, 50 meters high, 14 decks, gorgeous ocean-view cabins and dining rooms, weighing 90.000 tons and driven by 2 electric turbines generating no less than 18 megawatts, it can accommodate up to 2.550 persons in unparalleled conditions of hospitality, comfort and security.

Not just imposing by its unusual size, the ship is also an example of service level through a permanent 987 crew experts, a ratio of one crew member to every 2,5 guests. The quantity of art - sculptures, painting, reliefs and borders- both in the public areas and the cabins, create a clear impact and atmosphere. Just add a long series of bars, restaurants, discotheques, libraries, SPA, swimming pools and wellness facilities, and you quickly understand that your trip won't look like any other one.

"Everything on board has been designed to gather the ultimate level of luxury, romance and technology", says Gualtiero Togneri, Chief Executive Officer of MSC Cruises for the Benelux. "But our new generation of cruise liners also offers the most complete equipment and service for corporations to motivate their employees or give their customers a memorable treat".

From the excitement of travel to the luxurious facilities and multitude of options, the new MSC flagship is clearly and definitely for meetings and incentive groups. Whether you want to combine a good deal of business with a great deal of pleasure, such a ship can provide the most productive meeting environment imaginable. Floating conference centers with large rooms, an unbelievable theatre that can accommodate general sessions for more than 1.200 persons in club seats, smaller venues for breakout meetings, and board rooms for executive retreats... cruiser ships today offer the perfect mix of business and pleasure. "MSC Cruises offers a full-service approach to corporations", continues Gualtiero Togneri. "We can accommodate hundreds of guests with fully personalized programs that can even include companies' logos or trademarks. Our ships are fully equipped with multimedia projection facilities, simultaneous interpretation service, telecommunication networks, press office and all the organization needed for international conferences, user groups, product launches, kick-off meetings, press conferences, award ceremonies, etc. For the same price than in a 4 or 5-stars hotel, we provide the romance of sailing, fascinating destinations and superb service that guarantee the success of a commercial promotion, cement the relationship between suppliers and their customers, and re-energize a company staff to face a new business challenge".



Travel and horizons have always been in Gualtiero Togneri's mind. This 44 years old, perfect 4-lingual (IT, NL, F, E) manager has always worked in the travel domain with passion. Having worked for Iberia, Lufthansa and Festival Cruises, he launched the Benelux subsidiary of MSC Cruises in 2004. "A real, although tremendous challenge as I had to start everything from scratch. One of the most difficult tasks was to create the image of the company, nearly unknown in the Benelux at this stage. MSC was mainly known as a container cargo shipper, the cruise division being smaller and younger. So our first target group was the network of travel agencies and we took hundreds of contacts to introduce and position our offering, commission scheme and unbeatable quality of service on board. To demonstrate this, what's better than regularly inviting travel agents on board? In this way, they can see it with their own eyes and make their own opinion. Afterwards, we have to convince potential clients that a cruise is everything but the stereotyped image of old-fashioned ships plenty of old-fashioned rich people. Our guests are 39 years old in average and this is decreasing year after year. But the remaining challenge is to convince people that a one-week cruise is not more expensive than one week in an all-in hotel on the French or Spanish riviera".

### Booming business

Headquartered in Geneva, the family-owned group MSC has the second largest fleet in the world. Its cargo division boasts an imposing 340 ships and an impressive 6.5 million UETs (the unit measure for container cargo) transported every year. Covering 200 routes linking 91 countries and 270 ports, MSC employs 30.000 people through 390 offices. MSC Cruises, one of the 2 tourist divisions of the group, was created in 1987 when the Board decided to broaden the scope of the container cargo activities into the fast growing tourism market. The new millennium coincided with the arrival of Pierfrancesco Vago, a new CEO with extensive experience in both the cargo and passengers business. Gualtiero Togneri: "MSC Cruises has invested almost 5 billion euros in launching ships with cutting-edge design, technology and comfort. The MSC Poesia, launched in April 2008, is our newest and biggest ship for the moment. And in December, we will launch the MSC Fantasia, the biggest cruise liner ever built for an European ship owner. With 330 meters long and 133.000 tons, it will raise

again new standards in luxury and comfort as it will inaugurate the MSC Yacht Club service, an exclusive series of 99 suites with reserved areas and 24 hour personalized butler service. Two other ships of the same size will be launched later, with the objective of sailing 1 million passengers with a 12 ships float by 2010".

The growth on the Belgian market is as impressive as for the whole group. From 10.000 cruises sold in 2005, Gualtiero Togneri expects to be well above the 20.000 in 2008, nearly 45% market share. As cruises still represent less than 1% of travel choices in our country, the potential is enormous and the means are there. "We will also give a particular focus on the corporate market as a cruise offers a unique and exciting business experience, well beyond what traditional hotels and conference centers may offer. And people are more likely to attend work sessions and network with colleagues in the self-contained environment of a ship".



*A new way to reboost the troops: gorgeous view on the ocean combined with exceptional level of luxury, equipment and service*



### Eco-cruise

Energy saving and protection of the sea's ecosystem is a permanent preoccupation for MSC's management and engineers. An example of environmental care and eco-shipment, the ships of MSC Cruises are fully designed to protect the sea and reduce energy consumption to the minimum. When



*133.0000 tons and 3.000+ passengers: future MSC Fantasia will, however, be a role model of ecology*

the MSC Poesia, for instance, is near the coast, it sails systematically on marine gasoil, perhaps more expensive than heavy fuel oil but with a much lower sulphur content. In the other hand, from the usage of special silicon paints that reduce friction and fuel consumption (while being completely harmless for the marine life) to systematic use of recycling materials and natural substances that conform to the toughest regulation, the ship is 100% prioritized with the sea's ecosystem. This genuine concern for environment gives MSC the right to enter severely protected marine areas such as the Norwegian fjords and Caribbean lagoons. Gualtiero Togneri: "A Buddhist once said: He who has mastered the art of living makes little distinction between working and playing, between fatigue and enjoyment, between his mind and his body; his studies are his distraction.

In line with this ancient piece of wisdom, MSC Cruises puts this saying into practice to the very letter and provides the ideal atmosphere for combining work with play, relaxation, fun and socialising".

### Gualtiero Togneri in brief



**First job:** Compagnia Italiana di Turismo

**Favourite dreamcar:** Ferrari California

**Favourite business book:** Peter Schwartz - Inevitable surprises

**Favourite actor:** Roberto Benigni

**Favourite movie:** La vita è Bella

**Favourite gadget:** All possible gadgets that make life easier

**Favourite music:** Italian opera of Puccini

**Hobbies:** Tennis

**Those who inspired him most:** and still do - my wife and kids

**Contact:** gtogneri@msccruises.be