

**Cruise Lines International Association:
Master Cruise Counsellor Certification Program**

CASE STUDY 3

THE “CHALLENGED” CRUISER

Greg Printz, 45, recently received a \$3,000 bonus for being named employee of the year with the Houston Power and Light Company. A computer specialist, he oversees the massive grid that regulates electric supplies throughout the city. One of Greg’s coworkers recently returned from her first cruise – a vacation you had sold to her. Her rave reviews and referral led Greg to contact you.

During a phone conversation, Greg expresses his interest in a 7-day cruise vacation for him and his wife, Emily, who also works for Houston P&L as a comptroller. They can only take time off for a mid-August cruise. He mentions that he feels quite uncomfortable in hot climates.

You begin to ask the standard “qualifying” questions, when Greg cuts you short. “I should tell you before we get too far along that I have a disability – I hope this doesn’t mean I should start planning a disabled van tour of Yellowstone instead of a high seas adventure,” he says with a laugh.

Greg, you discover, was born with Cerebral Palsy, which limits his movement. He can walk for short distances with the assistance of crutches, but prefers to use a motorized wheelchair. In the office, he uses an adapted computer keyboard that offsets his uneven hand motion by locking in correct keystrokes. Though physically challenged, he has always found ways to overcome barriers – little has held him back from leading a full, active life.

“Forget Yellowstone,” you kid. “The question is not *can* you go on a cruise, because many ships have highly accessible facilities, but will you want to leave the ship when the cruise is over!” You ask if he can describe the extent of his disability, explaining that the more you know about his physical limitations, the easier it will be to select an appropriate cruise line, ship, cabin, and even destination. You state, for example, that many cruise lines, for reasons of safety and passenger comfort, require disabled passengers to travel with an able-bodied companion.

Feeling more at ease, Greg tells you about his mobility problems and his perceptions and concerns about cruising, which include: narrow hallways, small cabins and even smaller bathrooms, those “lips” at the base of doorways, and crowded public rooms. “In addition to my own difficulty getting around, I certainly don’t want to be in people’s way.”

Again, you quell his worries by saying that many ships have cabins designed for passengers who use wheelchairs. “Honestly Greg, don’t be concerned about accessibility. Thousands of physically-disabled passengers take cruises every year.

“So, let’s first discuss where you and Emily want to go and what kind of cruise you desire – then I’m sure we can find a ship that meets your needs. You ask Greg what leisure activities he and his wife enjoy doing. He says they are big movie buffs and often go to the theater or rent movies. They’re also avid readers and particularly like the mystery/thriller genre. And they love music of all kinds: he’s a fan of the classic 50s sound, and Emily loves big band music. He notes that Emily even sings occasionally with a small orchestra that performs at weddings.

“Well, Greg,” you reply, “based on what you’re telling me, I think you’ll love a cruise vacation. I have several cruise lines and destinations in mind, and if they match your schedule and budget, you’ll soon be on your way.

Greg fills in the particulars. He explains that he and his wife don’t vacation often, so they have been saving to take a more upscale trip. He also mentions his bonus, which he intends to put towards the vacation. They plan to take two weeks off from work, but don’t want to be rushed in their travels, which is why they have a 7-day cruise in mind.

“I’ll tell you what,” you respond. “Why don’t we meet. We can take a look at ship diagrams and cabin layouts to find accommodations in which you would feel most comfortable. Plus, we can review videos and brochures that sample the destinations you’ll visit.”

In your essay, answer the following questions based on the scenario described above:

- Where should you schedule to meet with Greg and his wife – your agency, their office or their home? What benefits and/or problems does your choice present?
- What additional sales points might you present to Greg to convince him that cruises are appropriate vacations for people with disabilities?
- What might you say to overcome Greg’s concerns about physical barriers?
- What important specifics would you need to know about Greg’s disability before selecting a ship and cabin?
- What destination and itinerary would you recommend? Why? Should you try selling up to a trip longer than 7 days? What back-up itinerary and place would you offer?
- Which cruise line would you recommend? Why? Which ship(s)? Why? (Please be specific)
- What extra steps could you take prior to departure that would make Greg and Emily’s vacation more convenient?
- What land arrangements might you add to the cruise to expand their vacation package?