

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

CASE STUDY 4

THE SINGLES

Jeff Adams and Chris Rodriguez, both 28, work for McTownen Advertising in Atlanta: Jeff is an associate account executive and Chris is a graphic arts specialist. Typical of the advertising arena, their jobs are high-pressure, deadline-oriented posts that demand long hours and, all too frequently, weekend duty.

Following a particularly grueling project period, the friends decide to take advantage of an upcoming 4th of July long weekend, by going on a get-away vacation. They're looking for a change of pace and scenery from their usual weekend activity, which consists mostly of bar hopping to popular singles' spots, catching rock bands at area venues, and occasionally (with the frequency of a solar eclipse) going on dates.

They come to see you hoping you can put together a relatively inexpensive 3 or 4-day trip. From the moment they enter your office, Jeff does most of the talking. He says they'd like to visit a beach resort where there's plenty of sun, fun, and activity. "You know," he adds, "like in Jamaica or the Bahamas, someplace like that."

You ask Jeff if he's ever been to one of these islands. He says that when he was a teenager he went on a family cruise that visited St. Thomas and San Juan. "That was with my parents and little brother, so I don't remember it being too wild," he remarks. You pose the same question to Chris, who, speaking for the first time, says he's been to Bermuda, but only for a short business trip.

You ask them what they like to do for fun. Jeff mentions their "singles" activities, and adds that he likes to go dancing. "Of course, getting Chris out on a dance floor is a Herculean feat," Jeff kids. Chris just smiles and notes the obvious: "Unlike my buddy, I'm kind of your shy, retiring type."

You continue to gain a feeling for the likes and dislikes of your new clients by asking them what sports they enjoy. It's no surprise that Jeff mentions team sports such as softball and volleyball, whereas Chris prefers to keep in shape by jogging and swimming. "What activities do you expect to do on your vacation?" you ask.

Jeff responds with a grin: "Meet women," he says. "That's why I had in mind an island resort, especially one that caters more to a younger crowd, you know, danceclubs, constant activities, an energetic, 24-hour party atmosphere..."

Suddenly Chris jumps in. "Actually, I wouldn't mind a little time to relax and just kick back, also. We've been working hard lately, and..." You can see that Chris is becoming a bit overwhelmed by his friend's proposed vacation social schedule. Jeff and Chris may share some similar goals for their trip, such as getting away to a sunny place and

meeting people their own age, but they also have very different ideas for how they might spend their free time.

“Have you given any thought to a cruise?” you ask. They respond with a barrage of questions that show their misconceptions: “Aren’t cruises expensive?” “Won’t there be mostly couples and older people?” “Aren’t cruises kind of boring?” “Aren’t you ‘stuck’ on the ship?” “Aren’t things like meals, entertainment and activities rigidly scheduled?”

“You’d be surprised,” you respond. “I think a cruise may be just the vacation you’re looking for.” You begin to address their questions when Chris adds, “We may have another problem with the cruise idea. Our work schedule can change at a moment’s notice. I thought you had to book cruises way in advance – what if we had to change plans?”

“I’m sure we can work out a flexible travel plan for you,” you reply confidently, “and we can put in place safeguards to protect your investment. Let me give you some examples...”

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

- Give at least three reasons why a cruise might be a better vacation alternative for Jeff and Chris than a land-based trip.
- What cruise line(s) would you recommend? What itinerary? Why?
- Based upon Jeff’s profile, what features would you present to him to “sell” the cruise idea?
- What features would you present to Chris?
- If Jeff and Chris remain unsure that a cruise will meet their “social” desires, what else can you do to persuade them? What advice would you give them?
- How would you respond to their mistaken perceptions about cruising?
- What arrangements could you make to help maintain flexibility in their travel plans?