

## **Technology with a Purpose...Now Available for Passenger Vessels** by ITC Global staff

The earliest ocean-going vessels that really had any concern with the comfort of their passengers date all the way back to 1818, when Black Ball Line in New York began offering regularly scheduled service from the United States to England. Even then, it wasn't until the mid-1800s when true "pleasure cruises" began. It would be almost 100 years later before the world would see the first ever scheduled flight with a paying passenger. The cruise and commercial air travel industries have certainly come a long way since those days.

Although their histories began a century apart, it is easy to see that the demands of the airline industry closely align with the needs of the cruise market. This is especially true in the case of passenger experience and connectivity, in which both require worldwide, reliable, high-speed satellite coverage; high levels of service and bandwidth capacity; data security; live TV and entertainment options; customized solutions – all at a reasonable cost. To accomplish all of this, the industry relies on the latest in digital technologies and the very best in broadband connectivity.

### **Technology with a Purpose**

Panasonic Avionics Corporation has been providing "**Technology with a Purpose**" to the airline industry for over 35 years, currently servicing over 1,000 aircraft and 70 percent of major airlines. Our purpose has been to provide connectivity and entertainment to international air travelers, even as their flights cross major oceans at extremely high speeds. As a result, we've developed the world's most comprehensive satellite network and the technology to effectively address the needs of today's airline industry. Panasonic is excited about bringing this "**Technology with a Purpose**" to the cruise industry.

Where does the "purpose" come from? Where did it originate? The purpose usually arises from someone asking the question, "Wouldn't it be great if...?" My experience with the cruise industry goes back to the early 1980s at Norwegian Caribbean Lines – when a phone call from a cruise ship was made from the radio room and cost \$16.95 per minute, and all on-board purchases were cash only. My boss asked me, "Wouldn't it be great if the passenger could buy a drink from the bar or by the pool and just charge it to their stateroom? Your job is to figure out a solution." Of course, this was before networked computers or high-tech cash registers. The purpose was to make it easy for the passenger to buy a drink, and the resulting benefit to the cruise line was greater passenger satisfaction and a 30 percent increase in onboard revenue. This is a classic example of a purpose-built technology.

What other questions have prompted technology advances over the years?

"Wouldn't it be great if..."

- I could send and receive email on the ship?"
- I could get cash from an onboard ATM?"
- my cell phone would work onboard, even in the middle of the ocean?"
- I could watch the Super Bowl from a ship in the middle of the Atlantic?"
- the passenger manifest could be uploaded automatically?"
- we could track the ship's position and speed in real time?"
- we could clear the ship for immigration and U.S. Customs automatically?"

- we could off-load passengers and open embarkation by noon?”
- I could upload pictures to Facebook while onboard?”
- I could talk to my family by Skype from my stateroom?”
- we could monitor the fuel consumption and engine performance remotely?”
- the onboard medical staff could have access to a specialist doctor shore-side for information and support?”
- my favorite news channels were available on the ship just like they are at home?”
- I could access the Internet and stream my favorite channels to my personal device while I’m on the ship?”
- we could provide a communications experience to the passenger and crew just like they have at home?”

These “what ifs” have inspired the development of new technologies. Those technologies introduced new capabilities for cruise lines, crew, and passengers, who consequently benefitted from improved guest experience, increased revenue, and lower operating costs.

### **What About the Future?**

Each scenario mentioned above has varying technological requirements, but all of them rely on a secure, worldwide, and powerful satellite network. Bandwidth capacity demands are growing exponentially to keep pace with requirements for security, passenger satisfaction, crew welfare and retention, ship operations efficiencies, and governmental regulations. In particular, the explosion of personal device use by passengers is a key contributor to this major growth in demand.

### **Panasonic and the Cruise Industry**

Wouldn’t it be great if we could deliver multi-language live TV; accurate weather forecasting; greater than 50 mbps of guaranteed bandwidth; a crew welfare network solution delivering internet, live TV, news from the crew’s hometown, and so much more? Panasonic’s existing global network and plans for capacity expansion will make all of this possible, while positioning us to meet the needs of cruise lines today and into the future.

Panasonic’s current satellite network provides service to 100% of cruising regions worldwide. The growth of Panasonic’s network capacity will enable cruise lines to scale their business to meet evolving bandwidth demands without the need to invest in new onboard technologies.

Panasonic’s philosophy is to innovate everywhere, all of the time. This applies not only to the passenger environment and experience, but also to ways that positively impact the customer’s key metrics based on their particular fleet, brand operations, and business requirements.

Panasonic takes pride in its ability to anticipate the future and stay ahead of the curve. This is driven by our “first-to-market” approach to entertainment and our communications product development that pushes the envelope in cabin innovation, integration, and communications solutions.

The pace of technology change is accelerating. Panasonic is bringing the experience, leadership and knowledge of the commercial air travel market to serve the cruise industry. We’re bringing the best practices, financial stability, and long-term commitment to work with

each cruise line on their “Wouldn’t it be great if . . .” list, to develop solutions that align with their purpose now and in the future.

To learn more about Panasonic’s expanding Ku-band network, live TV capabilities, 4D weather forecasting, and 3G and 4G cellular services, visit [panasonicmaritime.com](http://panasonicmaritime.com).