

ASQ Seminar at Sea --- September 2024

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Marc Kelemen



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Key Quality Consulting



John Breckline

Date: Sun, Sep 22 – Sun, Sep 29, 2024 RCL Cruise Line Departing: Port of Galveston, TX

Itinerary:

Sun 22-Sep travel to Galveston – embark ship 12 pm – 3 pm ** depart 4 pm **
Three Days... days at sea – morning Speaker sessions – afternoon Forum topics
Three Days... days in port – Roatan Honduras, Costa Maya Mexico, Cozumel
on your own – excursions – beaches – shopping
Sun 29-Sep return to Galveston – disembark typically by 10 am – travel home



Background:

In 2002 John Breckline, Ft Worth TX Section, was asked, “Doctors do it, why don’t we?” He asked for some clarification, and the member said, “Do professional development on a cruise”. His response was, “Let me look into it”. In 2003 Ft Worth had their first ASQ Cruise. It was a Section sponsored activity and they did a 4-day cruise out of Galveston on Carnival. It was cheap and close to them to cut total costs. They had 17 members and guests in 9 cabins. It was declared successful, and many said, “When is the next one?”

Ft Worth did their second in 2005, similar to the first, doubling participation with many repeat cruisers. In 2007 they decided to do a 7-day cruise, but with the cost going up, the participation went down. Not discouraged, in 2008 they organized a “Texas Cruise”, engaging 4 Sections, and filling 46 cabins with 96 members and guests. Buoyed (a pun) by that success, and time for a change... they booked Alaska in 2010, but again had a drop in participants due to the extra cost of the cruise & air to Seattle. Their cruise in 2014 was a joint venture with HD&L, back to Galveston, with 28 participants in 14 cabins.

The Program:

We offer as much variety as possible on the days at sea (currently three). We do not pay the costs of the cruise for speakers, but once signed on, we ask their interest, qualifications, and topics. We always have a good response to this method and have great feedback on their presentations. We seek topic content that will appeal to a wide audience, like leadership and general personal growth, with a spattering of more specialty topics. With sufficient participation and conference room, we plan for two concurrent topics. This approach permits the scheduling of 60-90 min morning presentations (3 hours total). At noon, we take a 2 hour break and join our guests for lunch.

In the afternoon, we reconvene, and open the sessions to small discussion groups that focus on personal or common theme issues. There is much less structure (you offer a discussion topic, and individuals “sign up” to join you). Often discussions happen in the lounges over afternoon drinks! Some members skip this and join their guests for shipboard activities. We track hours of ASQ participation and issue RU credits per participation; up to 3.0 RU can be earned. At 5 pm we formally break and hold no evening activities... perhaps there may be social time with guests or informal gatherings of the group participants.

In ports (three days), we do no group presentations. All are encouraged to take shore excursions (provided by ship at added costs), go off on your own, or just relax on a nearly-empty ship. Often our participants group-up and do excursions together. It’s your choice, with no structured ASQ activities.

This overall model has served us well, with high rating of the cruise and repeat attendance. Unfortunately we CANNOT tell you in advance of the program topics exact detail... just give you a sample of topics from past cruises. If you attempt to get some payment made by your company, this is you only “sales tool” to convince them of value. Many companies over the years have paid the conference fees and/or some (or most) of the cruise / travel costs. Utilize your Personal Development Plan as the basis for approval and funding, and maybe even on company time as you would get for other conferences. ASK!



Shipboard Life:

Food, food, and more food... all at your discretion. We do nothing to coordinate breakfast or lunch meals... spend time with your guests, or just meet other participants in the dining areas. For dinner, we do have a reserved block of tables where we dine together. Although we are ‘assigned’ specific tables, we often confuse the wait staff by switching tables to get to know others in our group by dining together.

There are many options to consume your time on board. The ship typically offers various free classes. You can work off the food in the gym. There is a library, board games, spas, multiple pools, and various action/fun events. Evening options include stage shows, and a variety of music venues in lounges. There is always something, even if it’s just sleeping on the sun decks. Almost forgot the casino, with standard games and special tournaments.

I must advise... drinks, casino, excursions are all at an extra cost... set a budget and try to avoid blowing it!

Seasickness... always a potential issue, but most people do not have a problem. You can get Dramamine or other meds before boarding or wait until you have some symptoms and get it on board. If you have a major concern, tell the booking agent, and seek a lower deck, center ship cabin that has less pitch & roll. Ships have stabilizers to minimize both.

COVID Protocols. We are sorry if this may deter your participation. They are dynamic as the stock market, but here’s the status as of 11/23/23 as a starting point:

- Royal is requiring vaccinations of all passengers
- Pre boarding testing not required
- As new variants are discovered, they may require masks in indoor spaces (except your cabin and while eating/drinking).
- Any non-vax exceptions must be addresses directly with Royal

We will provide web links to the most current information by Royal.

The Costs:

Conference Fees: \$150 Conference participant – payable directly to ASQ Ft Worth
 \$ 50 all non-seminar guests
 \$ 25 youth / senior guests (3rd and 4th persons in cabins)

Personal costs include the cost of the cabin you choose for you and your guests. All cabins are booked on a per person (pp) cost and require cabin double occupancy or a “solo” supplement. You must also cover your transportation before and after the cruise and may want to book a hotel the night before to assure you're in Galveston on Sailing Date... you do not want to ‘miss the boat’. You will be offered travel insurance that can cover various issues of travel delay or other situations... your risk / your choice.

Cabin prices are established at the time of the group booking. If we must eventually give up some of the block of cabins, you can still join the group, but the price may change, as the cruise line charges at “market rate” once our block prices have expired. Fortunately, the Royal representative put another 25 cabins on hold for us beyond those we held by deposit. We’ll keep communicating deadlines in general promotional materials. The group may also get special amenities like shipboard credits as part of the pricing, that effectively reduces the real cost below the price you book the cabins at. And based on our ASQ conference budget, we sometimes give you cabin credits to meet our “break-even budget” objective.

In July 2023, we lost the original cabin pricing noted below (reference only):

\$985 Balcony per person (pp) for the 1st and 2nd person in a cabin (without crew tips)

Two-person total was \$1970

\$710 Ocean View pp

If a late booking, the Cruise Line will provide “market pricing” upon booking inquiry.

Tax Deductible: per your tax advisor Children/Parents? – OK at 3rd or 4th passenger half rates above?

Comparative Pricing:

(estimates based on 2024 ASQ LSS conference in Phoenix)

<u>Cost Item</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Cruise</u>	<u>... Cruise Notes ...</u>
Conf Fee (2 day)	1175	150	receive shipboard credits ~\$50 (also a 3rd conference day)
Hotel (3 nights)	765	1295	7 nights (Balcony cabin) --- requires double occupancy
Meals (3.5 days)	250	0	7 days – included in total cost
Total	\$2190	\$1445	plus the fun factor and enjoy the experience with a guest

Reservation Process:

We cannot hold 3 and 4-person cabins. Early booking is the best options to secure one for your party.

The cost pp for these added passengers is about half the above prices.

Additionally, there are Suite cabins available for those who want to upgrade their experience.

Step 1: Register for the conference through the link provided on the ASQ Cruise home page table.

After we receive notification, we provide a planning worksheet that helps you determine your needs and prepare the information the booking agent requires.

Step 2: Using the worksheet, contact the cruise line to choose your cabin and pay the \$500 deposit.

Our Group Block for the current advertised pricing and specific cabins expires 6/22/24.

Passports are required. For non-US citizens, you can be advised by the booking agent about port rules (to secure visas, etc. as necessary).

Our Group Block expires 6/22/24. However, we still accept participants in the ASQ Group. Seminar prices continue, but the cabin pricing is based on availability per the cruise line and reservations will be a “market price” at the day of booking.

And I did not state above, the ASQ Cruise is open to anyone who wants to join us. We’ve had friends of the members join us as well as families (8 to 80... grandkids and member’s parents), cousins, etc. If you find out about us, you can join. Conference participation is not required, and guests are charged a much lower fee than the conference participants. As desired, spouses (plus 1 guests) may join as conference attendees too, for their professional/personal development and education.

We post updates on the most current cabin pricing and program committed on our website. Check here periodically: <http://>: (address to be added)

Itinerary:

Sun	22-Sep	travel to Galveston - embark ship 12 pm – 3 pm ** depart 4 pm **
Mon	23-Sep	day at sea – morning “meet your shipmates” – afternoon Speaker sessions
Tue	24-Sep	day at sea – morning Speaker sessions – afternoon Forum topics
Wed	25-Sep	day in port – Roatan, Honduras, / on your own – tours – beaches – shopping
Thu	26-Sep	day in port – Costa Maya, Mex / on your own – tours – beaches – shopping
Fri	27-Sep	day in port – Cozumel, Mexico / on your own – tours – beaches – shopping
Sat	28-Sep	day at sea – morning Speaker sessions – afternoon Forum topics
Sun	29-Sep	return to Galveston – disembark typically by 10 am – travel home



Master Schedule:

<u>Payment Plan</u>	NOW	– Conference Registration – \$150 per Seminar participant – \$50 per guest
	To Jun 22	– Cruise Reservation – \$500 deposit for cabin payment at reservation time
	Aug 22	– 30 days – final coordinated arrangements for hotel / special transportation
	Sep 22	– departure – Bon Voyage

Reservations Require: full name of passengers per passport travel identification
mailing address, contact information, credit card
Cabins require double occupancy or surcharge for single travelers
ASQ Ft Worth will attempt to match up 'singles' where appropriate

Travel Identification: **Passports are required** for all participants & guests

Registration: Web Page: [Quality Seminar at Sea](#) (\$150/\$50/\$25) - ignore Login – click “**Buy Tickets**”
and send confirmation to jbreckline@att.net, then you'll be
emailed information for making RCI cabin Reservations

Cruise Coordinator: John Breckline Section 1416
817-401-0412 jbreckline@att.net

Note: this Quality Seminar at Sea is NOT officially sponsored by any ASQ Section or Division,
but hosted and planned by three ASQ Fellows who are independent consultants.



Marilyn & Cabin-mate

A large white cruise ship with green accents is sailing on the blue ocean. The ship has "LIBERTY OF THE SEAS" written on its side. Three circular inset images are overlaid on the right side of the ship: "Routan, Honduras" showing a street scene, "Cozumel" showing a sunset over a city, and "Costa Maya" showing a beach with a palm tree and a yellow kayak.

Join us for a Professional Development Cruise