

Can video games help boost cruise bookings?

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Cruise ships docked at PortMiami. Credit: kenzo

For travel companies with anemic cruise bookings, video games might be the cure, according to a new study.

Travel agents who completed a video game showing them the ins and outs of the cruise business were more likely to improve their knowledge

of a cruise line's offerings and book more cruises. According to the study, [travel](#) agents improved their performance regardless of age, gender or whether they worked in the United States or Canada.

"We had no idea what was going to be the outcome," said Lizette Calvo, an alumna of the FIU doctoral program in curriculum and instruction, who is the study's lead author and a co-designer of the game.

The game developed for Miami-based Carnival Cruise Line was intended to help agents sell cruises to people who are new to cruising, which requires an agent to know the options available that would appeal to young, single customers or to those traveling with children.

Part of the game's appeal was that it was fun and educational, Calvo said. In fact, various companies already use serious games – those designed to educate rather than entertain – to train employees.

Calvo's game rewarded travel agents with achievements and points that are assigned based on difficulty, accuracy and the speed at which questions were answered.

The cruise line has since developed a second [game](#) aimed at helping agents better understand the experiences available at various ports of call.

The study was co-authored by adult education and human resource development Professor Thomas G. Reio Jr. It was published recently in the [Journal of Management Development](#).

More information: Lizette Cruzie Calvo et al. The relationship between engagement and knowledge attainment in a computer-based training game and job performance of travel agents, *Journal of Management Development* (2018). [DOI: 10.1108/JMD-03-2017-0063](https://doi.org/10.1108/JMD-03-2017-0063)

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