We are hiring: **Team Lead Product Development and Operations** (m/f/d) **full-time** at **VIVA Cruises**

Department: Product Operations

Brand: VIVA Cruises

Reports to: Director Product

Direct Reports: Product Development Managers and Product Operations Managers

Position: Full-time

Location: Düsseldorf, Germany, with regular coordination with the Baar, Switzerland office

About VIVA Cruises

Behind the VIVA Cruises brand is the renowned Swiss shipping company Scylla AG, which currently owns a fleet of 40+ ships. With VIVA Cruises and our company headquarters in Düsseldorf, we are establishing ourselves as an international river cruise operator on major Euopean waterways. We take pride in our commitment to quality, customer satisfaction, and continuous growth.

Please send your application, including your earliest possible start date and salary expectations to jobs@viva-cruises.com.

Position Summary:

We are seeking a Team Lead, Product Development and Operations to lead our established team of Product Development Managers and Product Operations Managers. Reporting to the Director of Product, you will coordinate their work from product development through launch, live delivery, and ongoing improvement. Working across our Düsseldorf and Baar offices, you will bring the managers, Cruise Directors, Guest Services, Marketing, Finance, suppliers, and shipboard leaders together around clear handovers and consistent service standards. You will advise the Director of Product on guest experience, operational feasibility, and commercial performance.

Key Responsibilities:

Product strategy and team leadership

- Translate the VIVA Product strategy and priorities into team plans for itineraries, shore experiences, extensions, and onboard guest programs.
- Lead, coach, and review the Product Development Managers and Product Operations Managers; set individual objectives, balance workloads, clarify decision rights, and establish a shared planning rhythm.
- Review the product portfolio and recommend launches, changes, and withdrawals to the Director of Product using guest insight, market evidence, feasibility, and financial performance.

Development and launch

- Guide the Product Development Managers in shaping itineraries, excursions, and guest programs that reflect the destination and can be delivered consistently.
- Review concepts for routing, timing, capacity, accessibility, supplier readiness, cost, guest appeal, and responsible use of local resources.
- Approve product briefs and launch readiness within delegated authority; ensure a clear handover to Operations with confirmed specifications, supplier commitments, training, and guest communications.

Operations and guest experience

- Guide the Product Operations Managers on departure readiness, excursion and program delivery, supplier quality, and timely coordination with ships and shore teams.
- Join the assigned emergency duty rota as required, including outside regular office hours; support product-related incidents with the shipboard and shore response leads, arrange operational alternatives, and escalate decisions under agreed procedures.
- Use guest feedback, reports, inspections, and operating data to resolve recurring issues and improve the current and future product.
- Work closely with Cruise Directors and onboard teams so the experience ashore and on board remains coherent and responsibilities are clear.

Commercial and supplier partnerships

- Manage delegated budgets across product development and operations; review forecasts, costs, supplier terms, variances, and excursion performance with Finance and report to the Director of Product.
- Provide senior oversight for key destination and excursion partners, significant negotiations, supplier performance, and continuity risks.
- Partner with Sales, Marketing, Revenue, and Finance on inclusions, product content, pricing inputs, and launch timing so commercial commitments match delivery.

Role Success Criteria

- New or revised experiences launch with a clear guest proposition, realistic operating plan, confirmed suppliers, and complete handover to the delivery team.
- Guest programs and excursions meet agreed quality standards across sailings, and significant disruptions receive coordinated responses.
- Guest satisfaction, participation, service reliability, and supplier performance improve through a documented feedback and action cycle.
- The portfolio meets agreed budgets and commercial objectives, with risks and variances reported early and acted on.

Key Individual Traits

- **Strategic judgment:** Connects guest insight, brand goals, operational realities, and commercial outcomes.
- **Leadership:** Develops managers, sets clear expectations, and builds accountability across both teams.
- **Collaboration:** Creates alignment among office colleagues, shipboard teams, and external partners.
- **Adaptability:** Makes sound decisions when conditions change and supports teams through disruption.
- **Service orientation:** Keeps the guest experience central to product and operational choices.
- **Attention to detail:** Ensures concepts, contracts, content, and handovers are workable in practice.

Experience and Expertise:

- Substantial leadership experience in cruise, tour operating, multi-destination travel, or premium hospitality; European river cruise experience is strongly preferred.
- Experience leading experienced individual contributors, developing guest products, and improving live service delivery across teams.
- Strong knowledge of European destinations and waterways, itinerary feasibility, excursions, port logistics, and supplier management.
- Commercial judgment in budgeting, contracting, cost and margin analysis, and performance reporting.
- Clear written and verbal communication, sound judgment under pressure, and confidence using Microsoft Office and product or operations systems.
- Fluent written and spoken English and German; Italian or French is an additional asset.

Travel and other Requirements

- Travel within Europe and spend time onboard for product reviews, site inspections, and team engagement.
- Flexibility to work outside standard office hours when operational needs or the scheduled emergency duty rota requires it.

Equal Opportunity

VIVA Cruises is an equal opportunity employer. We welcome applicants from all backgrounds and consider qualified candidates without regard to race, colour, religion, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, national origin, genetics, disability, or age.