



CASE STUDY

# Transforming Cruise Line Health Concerns into Marketing Strategy with Quillit

## BACKGROUND

In the face of intense media coverage like the recent Hantavirus news, the ability to adjust messaging quickly can make the difference between mass cancellations and a profitable season for a large cruise company. The recent Hantavirus outbreak shows the importance of this; cruise companies must continuously monitor the perceptions of their potential customers to maintain trust.

This battle for perception is constant, as seen in the widespread outbreaks of Norovirus in late 2025 and early 2026. This case study shows how **Quillit** was used to analyze open-ended survey responses to gain deep perception on customer sentiment regarding future bookings following the Norovirus outbreak, allowing a major cruise line to proactively address fears before they impacted the bottom line.



## THE CHALLENGE

Following the Norovirus surge, the cruise line commissioned a survey to gauge how health risks were weighing on consumer decision-making. The researchers were faced with hundreds of open-ended responses—the "unstructured" data where the most honest fears and expectations reside. Manually coding these responses to distinguish between general travel anxiety and specific concerns about gastrointestinal illness was projected to take weeks. With the booking season approaching, the cruise line needed



## THE SOLUTION

### Real-Time Insights with Quillit

The research team turned to **Quillit**, Civicom's AI-powered research assistant, to synthesize the data and identify the "pivot points" for updating marketing messages.



#### Segmentation

The researchers grouped responses based on participant profiles and survey selections to compare how different customer types viewed cruise-related health risks. For example, respondents who indicated they were "unlikely to cruise" often referenced anxiety in confined environments, fear derived from outbreak reporting in the media, and skepticism around sanitation enforcement.



#### Targeted Sentiment & Theme Analysis

Quillit enabled the research team to categorize the open-ends by sentiment. The analysis identified a critical nuance: while passengers were concerned about illness, their primary "deal-breaker" wasn't the risk itself, but the perceived lack of **data-driven response plans** and **pre-travel testing** transparency.



#### Thematic Coding via Analysis Grid

The researchers used the Analysis Grid to organize responses into themes like "Sanitation Protocols," "Air Quality," and "Refund Flexibility." The **AI-powered Keyword Search** allowed the team to isolate each mention of "Norovirus" to see which marketing messages (e.g., "enhanced cleaning") were failing to resonate versus those that were succeeding.



#### Clickable Citations for Executive Buy-In

To prove the validity of the findings to the cruise line's management, the researchers utilized Quillit's **Clickable Citations**. Every strategic recommendation in the report was linked directly back to the respondent's verbatim quote, providing the transparency needed to validate a pivot to new marketing themes.





## RESULTS & MARKETING STRATEGY

By reducing manual analysis time by over **80%**, Quillit allowed the cruise line to build health-focused topics into its promotional messaging within a few days of the study's completion, with specific responses to customer uncertainties identified in the open-ends:



### Transparency in Testing

Highlighting rigorous pre-boarding screening to prevent pathogens from entering the ship.



### Swift Response Protocols

Communicating the specific data analytics used on-board for early detection and isolation.



### Vaccination & Hygiene Integration

Showcasing how combined measures reduce risk by over 94%, addressing the "safety-first" traveler segment.



## CONCLUSION

By leveraging Quillit, the researcher transformed a potential booking disaster into a strategic advantage. The ability to quickly analyze hundreds of voices meant the cruise line didn't just guess what customers were suddenly prioritizing in cruise decision making - they knew. This allowed for a rapid messaging pivot to preserve the season's profitability despite the challenges of relentless media coverage generating anxiety through narratives on individual illness storylines.

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