
Lakbay Shipping Lines on the Go

During the peak season of the holidays at the port area of Batangas, passengers enjoy going to visit the provinces, or vice versa to Manila, via an inter-island vessel of Lakbay Shipping Lines, Inc. Most of the passengers ride by bus for almost three hours, going to Batangas from Metro Manila to reach a ferry. Each day, Cruise Operations Officer Don Maginoo goes about his normal routine, managing his post to oversee the 116 crew of M/V Divine Grace ferry.

At the ticket booths, many passengers patiently wait their turn to get a ticket. Each passenger has a packed bag, together with their “pasalubong” or gifts for their friends, relatives, and family — a common scenario in any port of the country during holidays.

Ticket transactions are completed manually. Lakbay Shipping is open six days a week from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Each branch ticket booth has two to three staffers. Critical transactions include getting up-to-date schedule lists and ticket reservations.

Looking around, Maginoo wondered why there were long lines of passengers, when they could have booked ahead of time. As he walked through the queues, he noticed that there were people approaching the passengers offering them previously bought tickets. These people were called “fixers.”

Upon his entry into the terminal, Maginoo saw that the passengers’ waiting area had been filled to capacity. He observed the congested area and that all seats were already taken.

Boarding the ship, passengers formed long lines again. And as the passengers got on board, most of them were asking for the location of their accommodations. The ship’s crew assisted each passenger to his or her respective bunk, and had mechanical counters to tally up the number passengers. Maginoo

roamed around each deck of the ship and noticed that some passengers had the same ticket numbers causing conflicts.

The number of domestic tourists was increasing as they availed themselves of special package deals. As part of these packages, discounts were given to travelers when they travelled as families or in groups. As with any form of transport, some tourists also availed themselves of premium or deluxe rates.

Maginoo challenged himself to be of service to the company. He asked himself what would be the best way for Lakbay Shipping to manage passengers' concerns. Maginoo wondered if a computer program could facilitate easier access to and administration of passenger information. Perhaps the program could also help Lakbay find a solution for its long waiting lines. The company also needed solutions for handling ticket reservations and monitoring luggage and passenger accommodations. Maginoo imagined a well-managed database considering the attributes of each trip.