

# Raving

## Raving's Strategic Solutions Magazine

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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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Dear Ravers,

I have been a part of gaming education for nearly 25 years. From my days of running the William J. Harrah Institute of Casino Entertainment in the early 1990s, to the current era of Raving's education offerings (webinars, conferences, keynotes, onsite training programs, etc.), it has been a heck of an "education ride."

And an important education ride – there is nothing more important than knowing and sharing knowledge in our industry. In my opinion, there is not enough of that going on. I guess many of us think we are too busy.

I've always thought I was a pretty damn effective educator and teacher. But late this past year, after more than a decade, I returned to the podium at the Global Gaming Expo (G2E) in Las Vegas, moderating a panel on The Next Generation: Leadership Development in Tribal Gaming. Piece of cake, slice of pie, I thought. I've moderated scores of panels at numerous learning events and been a featured solo speaker at countless more. But then, before the G2E Conference, I was "strongly encouraged" to participate in the G2E webinars on how to be an effective presenter and how to be a moderator that "makes panels pop."

I'll admit to being peeved, sort of like being asked to repeat first grade, when I'd already achieved an advanced degree in educating gaming execs. You know what I mean?

The webinar leader was a lady named Sarah Michel of Velvet Chainsaw Consulting, who claims a brand of "Helping Improve Annual Meetings, Conferences, and Education." Pretty pretentious, I thought. But somehow, I swallowed my pride, tuned into the webinar, and tried to keep an open mind.

And you know what? I learned.

I learned new information on how adults best learn.

I learned that audiences are looking for "solutions not content."

I learned that images trump words and shorter trumps longer.

I learned the 10 Commandments of Effective Panels.

I learned that it's best to start with a "Hot Potato Question" and have panelists introduce themselves by answering the question, "Why should the audience listen to you?"

I learned that the audience should be treated as a panelist, too.



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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The result? Well, you should really ask the 100 or so attendees of my G2E panel session in order to get an honest answer to that question. But for me, I felt invigorated. Engaged. Proud to show off what I learned about effective presentations. Pleased to see the audience and the expert panelists “into it.”

I look forward to building on my new knowledge and applying it to my teaching and facilitation.

And I guess you can teach an old dog, new tricks. It's just as good as teaching new dogs, old tricks, too.

Sincerely,



Dennis Conrad  
Adult Education Student

P.S. Come see my new teaching skills in action at [Raving's 19<sup>th</sup> Indian Gaming National Marketing Conference](#) on January 30 – February 1 at Choctaw Casino Resort in Durant, Oklahoma. I also have a pre-conference seminar entitled, Dennis Conrad's Casino Promotions Learning and Sharing Event for Highly Motivated Indian Gaming Casino Executives. Wordy title, I know, but I named it before taking the G2E webinars on effective adult learning!

*Cover model:* Paul Abajian, Raving Partner and Founding Partner, MantraHouse, assists Raving clients in telling their story through TV, Radio and Digital Media. He's the guy behind the lens that makes the magic happen. With two decades of writing, production and post-production experience, Paul appreciates marketing through story and knows that brands have emotions attached to them. Read his article on [page 12](#).



# The Five Data Decisions That Can Improve Your Casino ROI

*Driving revenue with your data*

By [Tino Magnatta](#)



Most of the time, we have revenue and/or cost savings right under our nose. Yup, it's there – in our own databases! The idea with data is to always manipulate it so that you can use the same data in different ways. After all, you own the data.

**Here are five recommended data services that are inexpensive and easy ways to generate tremendous ROI, or realize major cost savings:**

### 1. Physical Address Hygiene/Correction

Of course, it's standard procedure to do an NCOA (National Change of Address) before you do anything with your data, especially before dropping a direct mail piece. In fact, NCOA is actually required to be performed by the USPS every 90 days to realize significant postal discounts. NCOA not only provides you with the physical address change, but it will also standardize your address to postal standards, and provide you with a deliverability score. This way, you know which records will and will not get delivered beforehand, so you can save on your postal cost. Additional optional processes are available, including what we refer to as "super hygiene" – this process flags your records if they are deceased, in prison, in nursing homes, in the military, etc.

By doing the above, you advance closer to a perfectly clean database producing better ROI since you're not wasting money.

*Quick Tip:* Make sure that after you perform the NCOA, that you update your database in your CMS system and/or Data Warehouse. If this isn't done, within four years, your data will possibly be undeliverable, as the NCOA only goes back 48 months.

### 2. Residential Phone Append

That's right – we're talking about updating the landline telephone! You are probably thinking that no one uses a home phone anymore. In fact, over 40% of customers still utilize landlines, and the majority of those customers are older customers, who are the primary target market for casinos. By performing a residential phone append, you will get all the landline phone numbers that you do not currently have from your customers. This process is

totally legal and has been around for decades – there are virtually no legal restrictions to utilizing landline numbers, as long as you conform to the Do-Not-Call (DNC) laws, and many phone append providers will suppress this info as well (to your existing phone numbers and the appended phone numbers). As long as you have established a business relationship with your customer for 18 months, you can call your guest even if they are on the DNC list, as long as they haven't specifically asked for you not to call them. These landline phone numbers are very valuable, as now your hosts or telemarketing department can call these guests who were not previously reachable by phone. Phone calls have the highest conversion rate of any form of marketing available (including Direct Mail!), so if your hosts are missing landline numbers, they should get them. Another way in which we have seen the effectiveness of phone calls is pre-trip calls, where you contact your guest by phone prior to their arrival. This has two functions: you can verify any info, but you can also upsell them by offering a special promotion if they take the offer when you call them. As an example, a guest is coming on Friday for the weekend, and you offer him and his wife two-for-one tickets to an event or a 20% discount at a restaurant where you want to increase revenue, etc. Not to mention that if your operators are skilled, the customer develops a relationship with the host/telemarketer and feels good that they are being called and asked to come to the casino! Raving's Partner, Engagex, can help with any calls that you can't handle internally.

So get those landline numbers, as they are very valuable!

*Insider Tip:* Although Cell Phone Appends are available, there are numerous laws that restrict you from calling cell phones or sending SMS messages without permission. Cell Phone Appends should only be used to verify information.

### 3. Email Update a.k.a. ECOA (Email Change of Address)

If you look at email the same way as direct mail, you will understand that the same rationale applies to updating email records as with your direct mail records. What this means is that if you have email recipients who have not responded for a period of time (generally 6-12 months, but this can be whatever your inactive frequency is), then it means that the customer has changed their email, just like they would change their physical address, but with email, it happens more often. Take into consideration that most people have 4-5 email addresses and they change them

frequently, so if you have emails with old domains like AOL and Yahoo, the chances are that your customer is not checking that email (even though it gets delivered). An email update will find the up-to-date email that the customer actually opens and BINGO, more revenue! This service is also very inexpensive and easy to do, and the emails are not just the ones that are not responding, but you can also do bounced emails and find the email that works. An email update is readily available and works just like any other data service that we write about – SIMPLE, FAST, INEXPENSIVE, WITH HUGE ROI!

#### 4. Telephone/Email Verification

The telephone and email verification processes are for the phone numbers and emails that you currently have on file. By performing these verifications, you can be better informed and avoid potentially major issues.

A.) Telephone Verification – This process identifies whether your phone number is valid or invalid, and isolates whether the phone number is a cell phone, landline, VOIP, etc. Remember, the rules for telemarketing or sending SMS to cell phones are highly restrictive, but most casinos don't know which number the customer is giving to them, so this solves a potentially huge problem. And by identifying invalid phone numbers, you can save on time and telemarketing costs for your hosts, and then send those invalid numbers for a phone append.

B.) Email Verification – Many times a casino can collect emails – whether it be through kiosks, websites or in person, but they wind up sending these emails out before checking to see if they are deliverable. This process will verify if your emails are deliverable and if they are on any problematic lists, such as known spamtraps. This will alleviate issues such as high bounce rates, unsubscribes, complaints, etc. Again, make sure to perform an email update for those emails that come back as invalid after the email verification.

#### 5. Lifestyle/Demographic Append

When doing any of the above services, keep in mind that you can get a lot more invaluable information about your customers. There are over 100 lifestyle/demographic profiles that you can find, and these are even more inexpensive than the above strategies. Some of the things that you can find out about your customers are:

- Household Income (or even as specific as Disposable Income)
- Ethnicity/Primary Language Spoken
- Music Preferences
- Sports Preferences
- Gourmet Food/Wine Lovers

These lifestyle profiles can be invaluable. For example:

A.) Household Income/Disposable Income Select – This can enhance your current data about the customer, as not only can you find out household income, but disposable income as well, which can be a better predictor for gaming and spending behavior.

B.) Ethnicity/Primary Language Spoken Select – This can provide you with invaluable information about your guests, especially if you want to target Asian gamers, or if you are in an area where specific languages may be more dominant, such as Spanish. This select will allow you to tailor your messages in a specific language and produce greater ROI.

C.) Music Preference is another valuable select, as casinos can actually make decisions about what acts to book based on these profiles, so that they're tailored to your customers' preferences. So if you know which of your clients are Country music fans, you can specifically target a country music act for those guests.

D.) Sports Preferences – This can assist the casino in many marketing programs, such as finding out which of your customers are golfers, or perhaps if you have a UFC or NASCAR event, you can find out which of your customers follow these sports and market to them accordingly.

E.) Gourmet Food/Wine Lovers Select – As we already know, non-gaming revenue is becoming more important to casinos. This select can help you target customers who are interested in the gourmet food/wine experience – so if you're launching a new restaurant, have an existing restaurant promotion, or might have a special winemakers' dinner, you'll know who to target!

Remember, your database is the most valuable thing that you have, and by implementing the above strategies, you'll optimize your revenue and the results will astound you. But there is another thing to consider, and that is

the message. Depending on the medium, the message should always be different, but so many times we send out the same message across all platforms, and most of the time the message does not fit the medium. Take into consideration that a DM piece is read differently than an email; when you see an email, you read the subject line first and then the email. With direct mail, you see one side of the whole piece when you open the envelope, and with social media the content must be much stronger, as you're scrolling at a rapid pace and stop for those messages that grab your eye. Also, inactives should be treated differently than actives, as the offer must be stronger and the message is more impactful when it comes on multiple platforms.

Your data is the engine that drives revenue, so keep tuning it and refining it; never stop and you will see that your revenue will skyrocket. Remember, treat your customers like you're inviting them into your home and they are your personal guests. This will go a long way, and the key is to continually refine your skills in life and business.

Meet Tino and Golly of GT Advertising at [Raving's 19th Indian Gaming National Marketing Conference](#), January 30 – February 1, 2017 at Choctaw Casino Resort in Durant, Oklahoma.

### **Join Golly and Tino for Cocktails, Conversations & Camaraderie**



**TUESDAY, JANUARY 31  
5:00-6:30PM**

**RAVING'S 19TH INDIAN GAMING  
NATIONAL MARKETING CONFERENCE  
JANUARY 30 - FEBRUARY 1, 2017  
CHOCTAW CASINO RESORT, DURANT, OK**



**CasinoEmailAppend.com**

# Ensure That Your Media Dollars Are Working Overtime

*Providing key information about your database to your agency*

By [Mark Astone](#)



If you are a Marketing Director whose relationship with your player database is “till death do us part,” then you are not alone. But what if you are not getting enough analysis, or the actionable analysis you need, to make the most of your media dollars and social effort? In the following few paragraphs, I’m going to give you some good reasons to loosen your

grip on the database (a little), plus some important tips for safeguarding this vital information.

Many a casino’s bottom line lives and dies by direct mail offers to its player database. Monthly free play and VIP direct marketing are everything. You adjust your tiers and offer structure until you are blue in the fingertips, to increase revenue and trips. The only outside entity that you would *even think* about sharing your “list” with is the company that sends out your mail. Is that about right?

Here is why you may want to share some of your database information with your advertising agency or media buyer. Think about your media budget and marketing plan. It’s quite possible that your media dollars are eclipsed only by your casino’s labor expenses, and perhaps your free play expense. Your annual investment in mass communication is significant because a) media requires a higher out-of-pocket cost, b) advertising is *key* to reinforcing your brand and position, and c) advertising helps drive business for promotions, concerts and events. And let’s face it, maintaining your share-of-voice in a competitive market is essential.

To ensure that your media dollars are working overtime to reach the right audience through the most effective channels based on the core audience’s media habits, your media planner needs key information from your database. Since my perspective is coming from the “agency” side, please allow me to make a case for loosening your grip on your database stats:

1. Your media buyer or the agency buying your media is entrusted with a significant chunk of your budget, and they should have all the tools available to understand your players.

2. On a quarterly, if not monthly basis, your buyer should deeply analyze your audience segments to evaluate and recommend the most effective use of your media dollars to reach your core market.
3. Your buyer doesn’t need to know “who.” Don’t share names, addresses, birthdates, phone numbers, etc.
4. There’s little risk in sharing basic numbers or percentages of players in your database by zip code with Age, Total Trips, Average Trips, Total Theo, ADT or calculated worth, ADW, Offer Level or Tier and Reinvestment rate.
5. With these nuts and bolts you provide, your agency or media planner can sink deeply into research with local market data, audience profiles, media habits, buying behaviors, lifestyle preferences, hobbies, and purchasing patterns. A good share-of-market indicator against your competitors is also revealed.
6. Player data will help identify markets that are performing well, and uncover underperforming markets. Media dollars can be easily shifted to heavy up where needed, and convert the lower-performing markets into profitable areas.
7. Ever have trouble justifying your overall marketing spend to your board or tribal council? Using actual player data and revenue can prove that marketing efforts are successful and generating a strong return on investment.
8. Truly unique insight gleaned from your database and research is a powerful competitive advantage.

A media buyer who is an expert on *your players* can help shape the way that the audience feels about their interaction with your casino, because we know that emotions drive consumer decision-making. Understanding your players’ – your core market’s – beliefs and motivations provides valuable leverage for affecting their behavior. We must speak to them with a message that touches not only their minds, but also their hearts.

Hopefully I have made a convincing case and dispelled some of your concerns about providing database information to your trusted media planner or agency. That being said, it’s surprising how many casinos we have seen



simply email a direct mail list over to their mail house, without a care in the world about who sees it, where it's stored, or what happens to it after the mail goes out.

**Here are a few of our “best practices” for database security:**

1. Do use an SFTP (Secure File Transfer Protocol) to send database files outside of your building. Don't ever email your lists. They can easily or accidentally be forwarded to anyone.
2. Do require your data recipient to keep your valuables off their servers whenever possible. Data stored on an external hard drive that is locked up and taken off property when the mail house is closed is much safer against hacking or break-ins. Make sure that the data is physically returned to you or adequately destroyed upon project completion. Cyber security is of paramount importance today. What would happen if your competitor gets his hands on your players? One disgruntled ex-employee could mean the difference between sink or swim.
3. Do stop by your mail house unannounced for a quick visit. Ask to be shown your most recent data files, and see if they are on a server or an external drive. Are they laying on someone's unattended desk, or under lock and key? Are there piles of your mail pieces stacked on tables in full view of anyone touring the facility? Are there new faces there – a lot of employee turnover? What's their employee screening process like? The security of their physical plant? You can see and learn a lot with the occasional surprise visit. Don't hesitate to ask questions.

Your player database is the lifeblood of your revenue stream, and the difference between success and failure in most cases. See what information you can confidently share with your marketing partner agency, and understand that, even though *you* know the data inside and out, a fresh set of eyes and a different perspective can be invaluable. Review your data security procedures and see if there's a chance that you've become too comfortable in your processes and are vulnerable to cyber theft.

Look me up if you are in Oklahoma for [Raving's 19th Indian Gaming National Marketing Conference](#), January 30 – February 1. We're always happy to discuss what's going on with your casino.

Good luck and, as always, have fun with it!



  
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# Why We Should Embrace the New Multigenerational Workforce

*It's good business and good for our soul!*

By Deana Scott



Long before Wal-Mart greeters, my grandmother, at 75 years old, decided that she was going back to work after being out of the workforce for nearly twenty years. She insisted on applying at Kmart as a greeter (she called it K “mark” – yes, with a “k”). She had never worked a day of retail in her life and, more importantly, she never pronounced the name of the company correctly, even

though we tried to remind her.

Apparently the interview went well, and she soon took her place at the store entrance. Frequently, I would stop by the store when she was working to say hello or take her to lunch. At the time, I was early in my career and intrigued that my grandmother was working in a fast-paced store, where most of the employees were barely out of high school. As the months rolled on, I discovered that not only was she enjoying the experience, but she was impacting the culture of the store. I witnessed customers hugging her, and showing patience with her pace. I even witnessed team members giving her high-fives as they entered the store.

Fast forward twenty-five years, and the multigenerational workforce is commonplace. In some cases, companies are blending five generations. (Yes, Generation Z is already reporting to work!). This means that we have 16-year-olds working alongside 76-year-olds.

Throughout my career, I have worked with people from all walks of life, and who all have unique perspectives and wisdom.

**Generation Z (20 & under)** They are entrepreneurial and tech-savvy. They want to co-create and not be told what to do. They see what is wrong with the world and are already creating solutions to fix it. It's still too early to understand their impact on the workforce, but I can't wait to see how they will contribute.

**Millennials (Age 20-35)** This technology-savvy, multi-tasking generation will drive the way that organizations operate. They truly want to make the world a better



place. A “top-down” management style will not work with this group. It is time to stop bashing the work habits of the Millennials and begin to embrace their perspective. If you don't, you will have a tough time creating organizations that innovate for the market of today and tomorrow.

**Generation X (Age 36-56)** According to some studies, this group makes up 60 percent of the workforce. These workers are educated, loyal, creative, and still interested in learning. In fact, according to [a study done by Ernst & Young](#), Gen Xers were cited as the highest “revenue generators” among all the generations. They are driven and loyal.

**Baby Boomers (Age 57-70)** This group is waiting to offer assistance and advice. This generation has “been there and done that.” They may be returning to work, after leaving the workforce, as a way to contribute and remain relevant. (Check out the movie, [The Intern](#), with Anne Hathaway and Robert De Niro, for a glimpse of what I am talking about. I'm not gonna lie, it's a “chick flick,” but even my husband gives it a thumbs up).

**The Silent Generation (72-93)** This was my grandmother's generation. They grew up during the Great Depression and WWII. As far as I am concerned, this is a group of individuals who deserve opportunity and our appreciation. They consider working a privilege, believing that you earn your way to the top through hard work.

In fact, one of my best hosts was a part of this generation. He started with us in his mid-70s, with no experience, and quickly earned the respect and loyalty of the guests and his co-workers. So much so, that an annual service award was named after him and is still given in his honor years after his retirement.

### Is your casino set up for today's workforce?

Employees of today and tomorrow are not going to settle for organizations whose hierarchy and rules come from the 1950s. They expect a collaborative approach to decision-making, and when done right, this can make a multigenerational workforce even more powerful. Imagine how authentic and impactful decisions about our guests and corporate culture could be if we harnessed this diverse perspective.

#### *Here are a few ideas to consider:*

**Create reverse generation mentor programs** – Let the younger employees create training based on their skill sets. Check out the *Fortune* article, [“How Millennials in the Workplace Are Turning Peer Mentoring on Its Head.”](#)

**Incorporate a 360° strategic planning philosophy** – Ensure that your business objectives include the perspective of the entire organization, not just the executives at the top. This will incorporate the perspective of all levels of experience, age, race and gender, creating a very powerful document that will be embraced by the entire organization.

**Recognize that employees communicate differently based on their generation** – You may want to use multiple communication channels to ensure that you are speaking to the whole team (text message, email, flyers, in-person, etc.). How about asking for volunteers to teach new technology methods in the break room? This may give your Millennials & Gen Zers a chance to assume a quasi-leadership role, and be an opportunity to improve communication throughout the organization.

**Create flexible scheduling** – Welcome students, parents with daycare issues, and those returning to the workforce who may have limited hours that they can work. This will make scheduling a bit more difficult, but you will attract a diverse group of individuals who will appreciate your



willingness to accommodate their needs, creating more loyalty.

**Include a “Tolerance & Diversity Team”** – They’ll weigh in on new policies and topics to ensure that all perspectives are considered. In Native organizations, this could create opportunities for conversations about the importance of elders in Native culture, etc.

In the end, embracing diversity based on age, gender and race in the workforce is good for business. Creating this culture will create happier employees, which equates to a richer guest experience. As we know, happier guests equal greater profits. Aside from profits, I think this quote from American inventor and scientist, George Washington Carver, sums it up: “How far you go in life depends on your being tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving, and tolerant of the weak and strong. Because someday in your life you will have been all of these.”

BTW – Until the day she died, my grandmother still called Kmart – K “mark” (the store management never did correct her pronunciation), which today still makes me smile.

*Deana will be leading an Advanced Workshop on Tribal Leadership at [Raving's 19th Indian Gaming National Marketing Conference](#), January 30 – February 1, 2017 at Choctaw Casino Resort in Durant, Oklahoma.*

# When you get in a jam ... Do you "know a guy?"

*Sure you do. Just pick up the phone and call Raving.*



**When things take an unexpected turn at your casino – say, you lose a key manager, technology needs are beyond your current expertise or you just can't get to where you think you should be ... who do you call?**

**Maybe you just need a couple days of skills training, or a combination with remote assistance, or an ongoing program. Here's just some of the services we offer:**

- Guest Service Training
- Host and Player Development Analysis & Sales Skills Training
- Database Marketing Analysis
- Player Reinvestment & Free Play
- Casino Promotions Development & ROI
- Microsoft® and BI Software Training
- Operational Slot Analysis
- Interim Executive & Management Placement
- Research: Focus Groups, Employee or Guest Surveys and Competitive Analysis
- Strategic Marketing in Highly Competitive and Distressed Markets
- Executive Retreats, Pep Rallies and Motivational Presentations
- Security and Surveillance
- Advertising/Media Services
- Email Append Services and Marketing
- Outbound Telephone Marketing Services
- Marketing and PD Coaching and Mentoring
- Design, Construct & Owner Agent Services
- Mobile Marketing Platforms
- Casino Entertainment Buying and Consulting
- Online Casino Gaming
- B2B Marketing Partnerships

See something that will make your life easier? Contact Amy Hergenrother today at **775-329-7864** or **[amy@ravingconsulting.com](mailto:amy@ravingconsulting.com)** for a quick 15 minute conversation and a free gaming e-book.

***Bet Raving Knows.™***



# How to Create Better TV Spots

*Trends, tips and tricks from behind the lens*

By Paul Abajian



TV is TV. Radio is radio. Print is print. Outdoor is outdoor. What does this mean?

It means that each medium has its own set of rules. We've all seen the outdoor billboard that is basically a busy print ad. Hard to grab what's important in three seconds as we drive by at 70 MPH. The same holds true for TV. It has its

own rules. So what works best for the medium of television? TV commercials work when they elicit some kind of emotion. This is still the most effective way to brand your property, and spots that elicit emotion are twice as effective as spots that are merely factual.\*

### Trends

Right now it seems that everyone is trying to cut costs, and the best way to do that is with your promo spots. Typically casinos shoot gaming footage and pepper in some motion graphics and 3D animation to create their monthly promo spot. We are seeing a trend that emphasizes the concept and the graphics without any gaming footage. If you do use gaming footage, try to replace it each year. The footage does get stale, and the viewer does notice. That goes for all of you who run the same branding campaign for two years. It's a signal to the viewer that nothing new is happening at your property.

National TV spots are looking less and less polished. Almost as if they're aren't lit (even though they are). They look much more natural, like real life or how we dream real life to be. If you are a resort property, this may be the right tone for you to cut through the clutter. When it comes to branding campaigns, learn to sell without selling.

Humor will always be part of the trend, but look out ... you live and die by your talent. If you don't have the budget or the ability to cast well, it's best to forego a humor spot. It also takes a skillful director, so beware.

### Tips

Don't skimp on a great VO. Find someone who can be a unique voice for your property. Avoid the generic-sounding voiceover talent.

Great typography goes a long way. If your production company has no sense of design, then your spot will be

on par with the local car dealer. If you have an agency, then this problem is typically avoided. Bad design elicits almost no feeling, while excitement begins to happen when something is designed well. Look at the frames below to feel the difference:



BEFORE



AFTER

End cards (the end scene with your logo) work well at approximately three seconds.

Naming the promo twice seems to do the trick in a 30-second spot.

If you're shooting your branding campaign for the year on-property, grab plenty of gaming B-roll while you're at it to utilize in your promotions.

Make sure that the audio is professionally mixed. Most video editors have no clue how to mix audio (or how to design graphics). They just fiddle with volumes. A good audio mixer will make the VO pop by using their filters and compression.

This is a simple one, but it can delay production. Check for typos. In the end, it is your responsibility to approve the spot. If they hurry, production companies and agencies all might miss a bad spelling.



BEFORE



AFTER

At some point, too much info on the screen can make our brains check out. Logo and website is all that is necessary at the end of the spot. Even then, viewers will not remember your URL. Our brains are full; that's why Google exists.

## Tricks

Ask questions of the viewer or appeal to their dreams. It forces them to answer the question in their head or agree with you. "Who wants to be a millionaire?" begs the answer, "I DO!" and "You Deserve a Vacation" elicits a "YES, I DO!" in the viewer's head. This means that you're on their side. You understand them. That feeling of understanding becomes part of your brand.

Don't just slap in running footage for your car giveaways. Spice up the footage in post to make it an integral part of your concept. A Mercedes holiday giveaway can be more than a car driving in the snow. It can be part of an entire winter wonderland concept:

Casino spots are like car spots. They all begin to look the same after a while. Know what your competition is doing, and look for something different.

Viewers are more sophisticated than you think, so there's no need to hold their hand. They're way ahead of you. Utilize human curiosity by holding back at times, and develop a reveal that makes them want to watch the whole spot. It's the same reason that we can't seem to break away from videos we see on Facebook. We have to know what happens. It's human nature.

Finally, a good TV spot hits all the right notes. Like a good engine, all cylinders are firing properly. If one thing isn't quite right, the spot suffers. Bad or average talent, an

audio mix where you have to strain to hear the VO, bad typography, or too much info on the screen all make for a spot that doesn't quite land anywhere. The viewer might not be able to articulate what went wrong, but they feel that something is wrong.

Remember, you want to be one of their top choices for entertainment. Just being on that list is a success. The rest is up to you.

*\*2013 study by UK TV industry research body, Thinkbox*



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# My Little Wiki List of Marketing Research

*Which of these surveys should you be doing, and why?*

By [Deb Hilgeman, Ph.D.](#)



Like most people, I love Wikipedia. I rely on it if I need to get a quick shot of knowledge without much effort. Sometimes though, a Wiki definition is way more than I need. For example, I looked up “marketing research” (because that’s what I do, so I wanted to see what Wiki had to say about it) and decided that, yes, I can do better.

You don’t have to take my word for it though. This is the first sentence of Wikipedia’s marketing research page: *“Marketing research is the process or set of processes that links the producers, customers, and end users to the marketer through information – information used to identify and define marketing opportunities and problems; generate, refine, and evaluate marketing actions; monitor marketing performance; and improve understanding of marketing as a process.”*

Say whaaaat?! The rest of the topic in Wiki is just as hard to mentally digest, so I decided to condense a few key concepts for this article.

**So here it is, a basic primer on some common types of marketing research that may be just what you need.**

For a casino marketing person, the concept of marketing research is that you collect specific data to help you better understand your customers. By analyzing this data, you can be more successful in marketing.

Most marketing research is quantitative, such as surveys that measure how satisfied customers are, and the result is that you end up with numbers explaining “how many.” There is also qualitative research that explains “how” and “why.” Most research is quantitative, and focus groups are about the only qualitative research used by casinos. For example, if you conducted a satisfaction survey that showed a 50% reduction in the number of customers who say they are “satisfied” with your buffet, you might conduct a focus group to really delve into why customers are reporting less satisfaction and what you could do to change it.

The three most common types of quantitative market research conducted by casinos are Customer Satisfaction, Competitive Analysis, and Attitude & Awareness

surveys. Your casino would probably benefit from all three types of research, so here is a quick review of each.

**CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEYS** measure how your customers rate every aspect of your operations. You may think that you’re doing great in certain areas, but your customers may think very differently. Just using comment cards or anecdotal feedback from customers to frontline staff is dangerous, because you could end up making decisions based on faulty information.

- Use this type of survey to determine what your strengths and weaknesses are from the viewpoint of your customers.
- I always include visitation questions asking what other casinos respondents visit, why they visit those casinos, and spending patterns at your casino and competitors. This tells you who your competitors are and what their appeal is.
- Ask survey respondents their age and gender so that you can compare differences between different segments.
- Recommended frequency is at the very least annually.

**COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS SURVEYS** help you understand precisely what you’re offering, and what your competitors are offering, to customers. You might be one of the few casino marketers who work at a property with no competition, but most casinos are in highly competitive markets. You’re trying to increase share of wallet to generate more visits at your casino and less at your competitors. The first step is conducting a competitive analysis of exactly what you and each of your top competitors are offering.

- Use this type of survey to drill down into your position in the market.
- List every aspect of your operations – club reinvestment percentages, senior days, military discounts, table game limits, valet, etc.
- Send an objective “shopper” to each property (including yours), and have that person rate each area.
- Raving uses a 100-point competitive review – you should also have this many points of measurement.



- You can supplement this with a quantitative survey sent to a sample from your database.

**ATTITUDE & AWARENESS SURVEYS** can encompass many different areas – advertising, brand positioning, attribute ranking, and much more. At Raving, we tailor these to fit the customer: What do you want to know, and how will you use it? Here are some situations where an A&A survey would answer key questions:

- Use this type of survey if you're planning a new ad campaign. You can measure awareness before and after to gauge campaign success.
- If you have a new competitor in the market or an existing competitor has made major changes, use this survey to find out what effect it has had on your property and customers.

- How well are you communicating with your customers, and how well are your competitors communicating? You spend a huge amount of money on advertising, direct mail, promotions, and other marketing initiatives – are you hitting home runs with your customers, or do you need to change your game?

For more information about marketing research, you can always check Wikipedia. Or contact Amy Her-genrother, Raving's VP of Business Development, at [amy@ravingconsulting.com](mailto:amy@ravingconsulting.com) or 775-329-7864.

Meet Deb at [Raving's 19th Indian Gaming National Marketing Conference](#). She'll be revealing the results of Raving's 1st Annual Indian Gaming National Marketing Survey during the luncheon presentation on January 30, 2017.

## Contributors

**Paul Abajian** — Raving Partner and Founding Partner, MantraHouse, assists Raving clients in telling their story through TV, Radio and Digital Media. He's the guy behind the lens that makes the magic happen. With two decades of writing, production and post-production experience, Paul appreciates marketing through story and knows that brands have emotions attached to them.

**Mark Astone** — Raving Partner, Branding, Advertising and Media Services, is the Owner and CEO of Catalyst Marketing Company. He has spent many years studying and working within the casino industry and understands what it takes to drive gamers to increase a casino's bottom line.

**Nicole Barker** — In partnership with Raving Consulting Company, she works with casinos across the country to harvest potential from patron databases in order to fine-tune the segmentation, messaging, and programming of multimedia and multi-channel campaigns.

**Steve Browne** — President, Raving Service, is known for his gaming savvy, extremely motivational style, and "people focus." These traits have helped Steve to become the premier customer service and player development resource in the gaming industry.

**Carter Buck** — Raving Partner, has served as the CEO of

Engagex since March 2012, having previously served on the company's Board of Directors. Carter's expertise is finding the best way to integrate an outsourced contact center to drive higher marketing response rates and increase player engagement.

**Dennis Conrad** — President and Chief Strategist of Raving, Dennis has over 40 years of casino experience, including keno writer, bartender, dealer, floorperson, gaming instructor, special events manager, casino marketing director, gaming institute director, and corporate vice president of employee training and development.

**Christine Motta Faria** — Raving's VP of Marketing has been the company's core marketing writer since 2001. Chris has a lifelong passion for finding and sharing unique stories of people and places through her travels, business and daily life.

**Janet Hawk** — Raving Partner, Player Development and Marketing, Janet provides Raving clients with continued support and training in the practical skills of marketing, promotions, special events, entertainment, hotel, table games and player development.

**Deb Hilgeman, Ph.D.** — Raving Partner, Market Research, Deb uses her extensive research knowledge and qualifications, combined with her casino marketing management

experience, to deliver superior market research to Raving clients. Deb works with properties to determine how market research can take their operations and profitability to the next level by removing the guesswork in decision-making.

**Kell Houston** — Raving has worked with Kell since 2001, and throughout the years, we have not only valued his friendship, but his integrity. That combined with his gaming savvy approach to utilizing entertainment as a tool to drive folks to the casino floor, makes him a perfect fit for Raving clients. Kell is the Owner/President of Houston Productions, with offices in Las Vegas, Minneapolis, Seattle & Vancouver, BC. Houston Productions is a proven industry leader in casino entertainment buying and consulting. Houston has worked in all aspects of the entertainment industry over the past 30 years, focusing for the last 15 years on Indian Gaming.

**Az Husain** — Raving Partner, is the founder and CEO of Casino Science, an analytics software and consulting company. A self-confessed "data nerd," Az helps casino operators make sense out of the vast quantity of casino data. Az helps Raving clients extract the right data from casino systems, enabling marketing and player development teams to make data-driven decisions.

**Tino Magnatta** — Raving Partner, Casino Email Append Services,

Co-Founder of GT Advertising, LLC (GT), along with partner, Golly Prabhu. Tino and his company offer casinos of all sizes the ability to effectively grow their email database, resulting in much greater returns.

**Toby O'Brien** — Raving Partner, Marketing and President of Toby Talks Marketing. After 21 years in the gaming business, Toby O'Brien has launched her own company, Toby Talks Marketing. As a Raving Partner, reprising her nearly 12-year role as a Raving consultant, she assists casinos in building strategies that engage employees, attract guests, and grow business.

**Deana Scott** — Deana Scott has 20 years of casino resort executive management experience. As a Raving Partner, she helps clients with senior level strategic training and coaching, including strategic planning & operational improvement, event & promotion planning analysis.

**John Stewart** — the CEO of Encompass Develop, Design and Construct, LLC, is an award-winning registered architect, licensed contractor, and licensed authority in the gaming industry across the country. John's experience includes project development in industries including gaming and hospitality, restaurant and food service, retail, healthcare, religious, and manufacturing.

# What Casino Marketers Can Learn from the 2016 Election

*Don't get caught off guard with inaccurate or ambiguous data*

By Az Husain



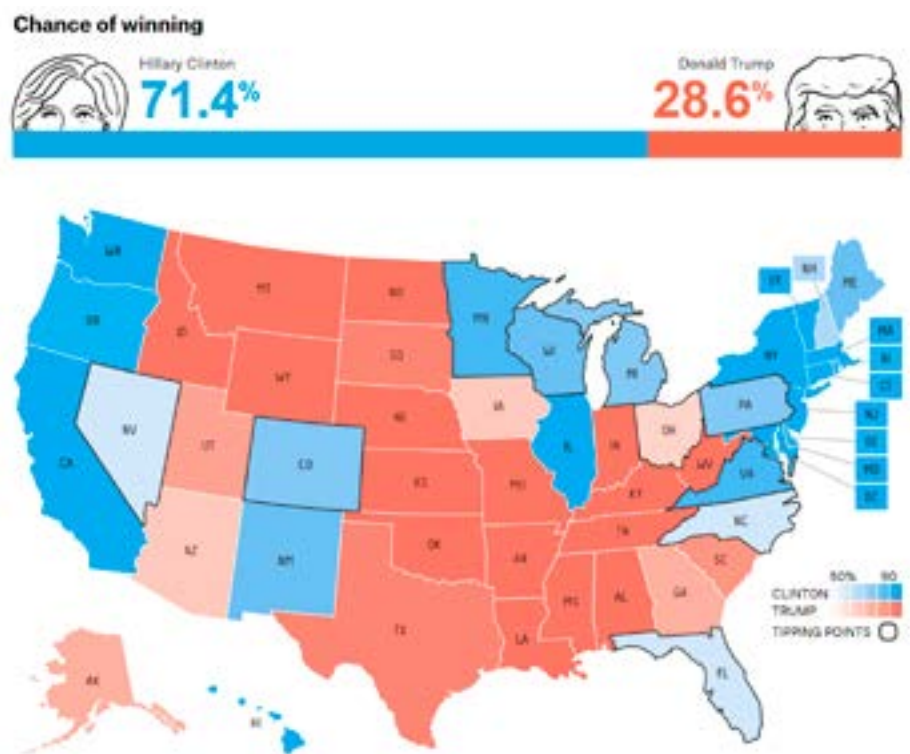
As the 2016 election results swung in Donald Trump's favor, many people were stunned by the inaccuracies in polling. And although the miss was not unprecedented, it did question the use of data techniques to accurately measure voter sentiment. So, what happened and why should the casino marketer care?

During the run-up to the election, polling was used to help campaign staffers understand how their investments were paying off and where to allocate additional resources. This makes polling data a vital tool in understanding the return on campaign investments. But every poll has some statistical error that could affect the data's reliability. Many pollsters will try to reduce this error by aggregating multiple polls together; weaker polls will be combined with stronger polls that use a better sampling methodology.

Sometimes there are more systematic problems that affect the overall quality of the polling. For example, some polls could underrepresent certain demographics of voters – there might be more women represented in the poll, or less white men, or not enough minorities. This could introduce sampling biases that inaccurately represent the voting population. In most cases, these biases can be “smoothed” out when looking at poll data together. But sometimes, state and national polls all miss in the same direction. And regardless of the methodology used or the size of the sample, it produces the same inaccurate result. In this case, national polls overstated Clinton's lead over Trump by almost four points – and state polls, especially in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania, grossly underestimated Trump's level of support with certain demographics.

Of course, there were other factors at play here as well. Voter turnout this election cycle was at its lowest point in 20 years. Fewer Democratic voters came out than in the last two elections. Whereas Republicans, riding a wave of populism, had an easier time bringing voters to the polls with targeted messages that resonated with the demographic. And ultimately, what a voter says in polling matters far less than a voter showing up to vote.

The challenge with inaccurate polling is that not only do you get voter sentiment wrong, but you allocate resources inefficiently. Clinton's campaign team had her traveling to Tempe, Arizona, for a campaign rally the week before the election. Polls seemed to indicate that Clinton had a reasonable opportunity in Arizona. But the data was inaccurate, and Arizona was an easy win for Trump. For Clinton's team, this trip was a bad investment at the expense of shoring up support in Midwestern states.



## How this applies to casino marketers

In gaming, casino marketers have similar challenges in understanding if they are “winning.” The data might give you a false sense of comfort that the investments you are making are paying off. The reality might be very different, and the ramifications of bad resource allocations could prove costly.

For example, let’s say that you run a free play promotion for one month and you see that gaming revenue is up by 5% from the prior month. You may conclude that the promotion investment paid off. However, what if you compared this result to the prior year’s month and saw no material change? Could you still say with conviction that the investment was successful? What if you reviewed the audience who received the promotion and evaluated the spend relative to overall monthly gaming revenue? This analysis might show that the conversion rate for the promotion was only 2%. And of those players that converted and used the promotion, the impact to monthly revenue was marginal because this demographic of player did not respond to the promotion message. This deeper analysis could lead you to a more accurate conclusion.

A distorted view of the success in your marketing investments might lead you to more bad choices, compounding the problem. And if you get it wrong, not only is it a wasted investment, but the opportunity cost had you invested in something else will be very high (remember Clinton in Tempe, Arizona).

## So what should you do to prevent getting caught off guard by inaccurate or ambiguous data?

Be diligent with your analysis – always question the outcome. If it is too good to be true, it probably is.

Know what your goal is and the metrics you will use to track progress towards your goal.

Invest in the skills and technology your team needs to be successful with data.

Remember, the poll that counts is the one where you win.

Meet Az at [Raving’s 19th Indian Gaming National Marketing Conference](#). His *Advanced Data Workshop* will teach you how to pull the data you want with the technology that you already have.

## Are you pulling your hair out trying to effectively utilize all that customer data?

You’re not alone. And it doesn’t matter if you’re using a simple spreadsheet program or have paid millions for a BI system ...

“We have a very small marketing team and our data analyst just left. I can’t pull the type of reports I need – do I really need a system upgrade or do I just need more training on what I already have?”

“When I pull reports, it takes us hours and hours to transform our data into user-friendly spreadsheets (that aren’t a mile long), meaningful graphs and matrices.”

“I really need some advanced training on how to use all this data to make decisions about promotions, player development strategy, reinvestment percentages, free play alternatives or direct mail ...”

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# What We Can Learn from the Leading Slot Supplier in Europe – Part II

*Q&A with Mike Robinson, International Communications Manager, NOVOMATIC Gaming Industries*



In this two-part series, Raving focuses on Novomatic Americas as the “company to watch” as they enter into the U.S. market. As the biggest player in Europe, as an operator and as a game maker, their level of experience and success will bring more competition and innovation to the industry.

**1. NOVOMATIC has a very broad range of gaming products and services, and is even involved in operating casinos. How do you bring all of that together around a single brand identity?**

We have separate brands to distinguish these core areas of business – NOVOMATIC is our B2B brand that covers all aspects of the manufacture and supply of gaming products and services, and our international operations are carried out under the B2C brand, ADMIRAL. Being both a supplier and operator gives the NOVOMATIC Group a unique perspective on the gaming industry. A continuous flow of information between all the companies that make up these brands allows us to test our products in our own locations and fine-tune them for the various markets.

NOVOMATIC has 20 technology centers and 13 production sites around the world, and we have offices in more than 50 countries. ADMIRAL has gaming operations throughout Europe, as well as in Latin America and Africa, and it also operates online casinos. Our initial plan for North America, as we are still relatively new to the market, is to establish the NOVOMATIC brand through our leading gaming products and technology, and there are currently no plans to operate casinos in the U.S. or Canada.

**2. How would you describe NOVOMATIC’s unique selling proposition?**

In addition to our dual strategy, we are a vertically integrated company, which gives us a competitive edge, especially in fragmented markets like Europe. NOVOMATIC has built a global organization based on acquiring market

specialist companies and empowering them to continue their own development while benefiting from the resources available within the Group. This has resulted in a giant international talent pool with local market knowledge fully utilized. The company now has more than 24,000 staff worldwide, and is a major employer in many areas. We are also strongly focused on customer service and have developed a reputation for a high level of technical support.

**3. Do you anticipate any significant differences in NOVOMATIC’s sales and marketing in the Americas, versus Europe?**

Yes, and NOVOMATIC Americas is being developed organically from the ground up with key personnel in sales and marketing from the region who have good local knowledge and experience. There are significant differences between markets in the Americas and Europe, not least due to the predominant demographic in North America being senior female players, whereas in Europe it is younger males. We are therefore adapting the game mechanics of some popular NOVOMATIC titles to meet local tastes and preferences, as well as developing new games specific for the market – and this is all reflected in the sales and marketing.

**4. NOVOMATIC is VERY well-known in Europe, but new to North America and not nearly as well-known – what marketing challenges does that create?**

When we first arrived in North America, we knew that we couldn’t simply bring our top-performing products from Europe and expect them to work. Gradually we are learning more about the nuances of the local markets and developing products with these requirements in mind from the outset. We didn’t, however, anticipate the level of fragmentation across the different niches of the market, and how our longstanding experience in Europe would be of such benefit as we develop in the various sectors. For instance, NOVOMATIC has core competencies in the areas of electronic table games, class II products, skill-based games, VLT and VGT, and we can apply our expertise to these sectors in the U.S.

# NOVOMATIC AMERICAS

*Knows.*

**5. How is NOVOMATIC thinking about the online and social gaming opportunities in North America?**

We are highly experienced in online gaming, both B2B and B2C, through our interactive division, Greentube, which is behind some of the leading online operations in Europe. The market for real-money gaming in North America at this time is very limited, and therefore does not yet present a big enough opportunity for NOVOMATIC. On the social gaming side, however, the Greentube Pro platform is one of the most competitive B2B social casino platforms in the market, and it was built from the ground up for U.S. casinos. It allows casinos to engage with players when they're outside the facility, with a fully customized online gaming environment, cutting-edge games, and an array of sophisticated marketing solutions.

**6. Five years from now, what would NOVOMATIC consider as "success" in North America?**

Within five years, our aim would be to increase our market presence and be considered as part of what we deem the "top five" manufacturers in North America. Our planned acquisition of a majority stake in Ainsworth aims to accelerate our position in the market and help us achieve this goal. The VGT market is currently our biggest area of growth in the U.S., and we are aiming for continual success in this sector. Over the next several years, we are also anticipating the success of new products and concepts being designed specifically for the U.S. market, in particular, the World Championship of Slots™ competition.

*For more information about Novomatic Americas, call 224.802.2974 or email [sales@novomaticamericas.com](mailto:sales@novomaticamericas.com).*





# Why You Need Both Education and Training for Hosts

*Combining both skills will get you a host who is a guest service expert and skilled at driving revenue*

By Steve Browne



### Education or Training?

Believe it or not, there is a big difference between the two, and it can affect in a very significant way the types of programs that you subject your employees to.

Let's talk training for a moment. You see, training involves teaching someone how to do something.

It is specific to the completion of tasks related to our jobs, our hobbies, our charities, our what-have-you. Every gaming property has a need to train their employees on how to perform their tasks and complete their job assignments. Every gaming property has OJT trainers in each department who are skilled (hopefully) at teaching employees the ins and outs of HOW TO DO THEIR JOBS.

On the other hand, education is about knowledge, about acquiring information and data about a certain subject or area of expertise. It may or may not be related to how you do your job. It may allow you to apply yourself to your job tasks with greater diligence or efficiency or productivity, but it is not directly related to HOW YOU DO YOUR JOB. That's training.

In the past, I have used the old fishing analogy to explain the difference between the two. I can train you on how to bait a hook, cast a lure, reel in a fish, clean it, and cook it for your dinner. Ah, but to be really good at catching the fish, or really good at cooking it in unique and tasty ways, well, that takes education. The more you know about fish, their habitats and behaviors, etc., the better a fisherman you will be. But to simply catch, clean and cook a fish, well, that is training.

And that brings me to the modern Player Development function within today's gaming environment. You see, most hosts are trained in how to introduce themselves to players, build relationships with them through the delivery of superior service skills, and retain their business. These are training skills that most anyone can learn.

But what about education? What about your hosts' education requirements? What must they be educated in that, although not directly related to how they perform their work, nevertheless makes the difference between a host skilled at driving revenue for their casino and one who is simply a guest service expert good at "Taking Care of Players" (which in reality is what ALL of your casino employees should be skilled at).

The difference is in how you educate your hosts about certain subjects, and then use training to show them how to use that education effectively. Without both training AND education, your hosts will fall short in their efforts to be business development professionals for your casino.

We often call the host who is mainly skilled at taking care of players a "Hugger," while those educated in the ways of driving revenue and business are called "Hunters." To be sure, the best hosts are both Hunters and Huggers, and it is a combination of education and training that helps them achieve that level of skill.

That's why here at Raving we have focused on developing both types of programs, educational programs to give them the knowledge base that they need to succeed, and training programs that show them HOW to use their education to achieve the results you set for them.

What are the **EDUCATIONAL** requirements of a good Host Training program?

- Detailed knowledge of your entire casino/hotel property and that of your main competitors.
- Detailed knowledge of all casino/hotel business processes encountered by guests (hotel, check cashing, credit, slot inventory, table game rules and limits, show reservations, restaurant hours and pricing, etc., etc., etc.).
- Intimate knowledge of every aspect of the Players Club and the player reward program.
- Full awareness of all player development opportunities (identifying sales leads via multiple channels of opportunity).



- Knowing the math of the business, how we make money, how we value players, the strengths and weaknesses of our mathematical models, tracking systems and accumulated data, and how math drives the very existence of our industry.
- Soft skills around leadership, ethics, service and psychology (especially player psychology).

What are the **TRAINING** requirements of a good Host Training program?

- Knowing how to use the math skills to develop and prioritize sales goals and targets.
- Knowing how to use the math skills to identify sales leads, prioritize player lists, and categorize players according to strategy.
- Knowing how to use the math and player models to manage a book of business through a step-by-step procedure for organizing and selling to large groups in the most effective way.
- Knowing how to use the soft and hard skills to craft a step-by-step procedure for selling to each new and underserved player in their book (from lead generation, to negotiation, to sales fulfillment).
- Knowing how to use time management and organizational skills to eliminate waste and make their work more targeted and productive every day.

Many have tried to effectively improve a host's skills by tackling one or the other, but it is a holistic approach combining both educational programs and step-by-step training programs that leads to a well-rounded and effective sales professional for a gaming property.

So take a look at the skill sets of your hosts. What training do they need, but more importantly, what education programs should be put in place to make the training effective and usable? Without both, you may find that your hosts are still spinning their wheels and not achieving the sales goals that you set for them.

Here at Raving we can help, because over the last fifteen years we have been developing complete training programs for hosts that include the educational components necessary (mathematics, modern selling strategies and techniques, soft skills and behaviors) and the training components necessary to use the education effectively (selling formulas, step-by-step procedures for managing large groups of players, methodologies for finding and targeting valid qualified sales leads from within your database, etc.).

Education or training? You need both ... that is, if your player development efforts are to be fruitful and catch all that extra player revenue you are currently leaving on the table.

*Steve will be leading an [Advanced Workshop on Compensation Models for the Casino Host at Raving's 19th Indian Gaming National Marketing Conference](#), January 30 – February 1, 2017 at Choctaw Casino Resort in Durant, Oklahoma.*

# How to Make Your Casino Resort Top of Mind for ...

*A girls' night out, couples weekend getaways, and just for the fun of it*

By John Stewart



In a [recent article](#) by fellow Raving Partner, Deana Scott, she asked why casinos are concentrating so much on Millennials, instead of the target market of the 45-60 year old female who has discretionary income. She had several spot-on ideas to more effectively grow this profitable segment.

In that article, she alludes to the non-gambler who spends a lot of money on amenities (even more so than some gamblers). So I wanted to take this conversation a step further and talk about what design elements and services you might be missing at your casino to fully engage this cohort.

Let me ask you this. How many of you personally do not gamble, but have a spouse who does? Do you find yourself killing time instead of enjoying your time at the casino? How many of your friends don't choose your casino for their special gatherings or weekend-aways? And why is that?

**Here are some tips to attract Deana and her friends who have the income to spend:**

### 1. Show that you're more than slots and a buffet

Okay, although it's not a design tip, if your casino has added a new restaurant, brewery or tapas & wine bar, or enhanced the spa, if you're not personally communicating with your non-gamblers, how are they expected to find out about it? If you're not gathering their info or their spending data because they're not gamblers, how can you effectively communicate with them?

In Deana's article she says, *"You're missing a marketing opportunity – Start calculating a player's Total Worth (hotel, F&B, slots, spa, retail), not just the win. I may not spend \$100 in slots, but I will leave your property having spent at least \$1,000 on food, spa, and poolside beverages."*

### 2. Offer a standout fitness center

Deana and her cohort are part of the Gen X population, so you wanna bet that she works out several times a week? [According to Club Industry](#), "adults over the age of 55 visited health clubs far

more frequently than those in younger generations." [According to Yahoo News](#), 60 percent of regular US travelers say that they use the health and fitness facilities at the (hotel) gym; and for wealthier clients, that figure jumps to 78 percent. You say that no one utilizes your fitness center? Most times it's because the fitness center is an afterthought, maybe even a converted hotel room, and it's filled with lousy and outdated workout equipment and technology. Here's [an article from HotelExecutive.com that can help](#).

### 3. Put your bars and restaurants in the center of the action

The leading trend in casino architecture is to have bars and restaurants be integrated within the casino, not on the periphery. Why? The action of the gaming floor is exciting and alluring, great for people-watching – so why dilute that energy? Non-gamers will enjoy the buzz and the energy of the floor, without being separated. Through multiple expansions, you might find that all of your different environments don't actually talk to each other. Think about putting an entertainment bar in the center of your floor. If your buffet is on another level or down a hallway or other portal, you're creating a disconnect. Creating these microenvironments that give more of a social and special feel will create more of those memories that you need to have.

### 4. Create a spa "experience" – not just a one-hour appointment

Why do the gals choose certain spas over others when they want to make a day of it? As an example, the Peppermill Resort Spa Casino in Reno, Nevada, makes it easy with their ["Spa Toscana."](#) They make it so tempting (and at no additional charge) to stay after your treatment and use their hot and cold plunge pools, enjoy eucalyptus steam and cedar wood saunas, and enjoy the secret garden, which has super comfortable, terry-covered loungers where you can relax to specialty music with provided headphones. They really think about all of your senses, from smell to touch. You can also eat lunch outside by the pool, or order a glass of wine while you're relaxing. Taking it to the next level is more than just a robe and water with a cucumber in it.

## 5. Make it easy to “plug in” and connect on and around the casino floor

To cater to Deana and this demographic of non-gamers and gamers alike, you’ll be creating microenvironments within your casino floor, like a bar that is on the gaming floor from one side and the other is in a multipurpose theatre-like space. These can be spaces that show a ball game on the big screen, or have a small band or comedian. And what are people doing during time away from a game or while sitting at a game? They’re talking and they are on their mobile devices, maybe even playing games on their iPad. It took long enough for casinos to have enough outlets in their hotel rooms (that aren’t hard to get to) ... so how long will it take for them to put charging stations and USB connections on the casino floor? Make these gathering spots comfortable and appealing, as well as useful to today’s customer. You can already buy bar-top games with USB chargers built in.

## 6. Show off the WOW factor at your property

If I’m going to get together with some friends, or escape for a weekend with my spouse, there has to be some WOW factor about where I’m going. Maybe the pool has a swim-up bar that reminds me of vacationing in the Caribbean; maybe it’s the [great brewery](#) that always has excellent [live entertainment](#) and interesting beers on tap; maybe it’s the service and the quality in the steakhouse that makes us feel special; maybe it’s the new golf attraction that everyone’s talking about. Do you have a WOW factor? Also ask yourself, “Could my casino be an amenity to my non-gaming guest?”

## 7. Don’t make them choose a beautiful day over your resort

Have you blurred your inside and outside boundaries by creating outdoor spaces for eating and lounging? My company has created several outdoor gaming spaces, but that’s only part of it. Is outdoor seating at your lounges a seasonal afterthought? Could you enhance your outdoor restaurant space with fire pits and comfortable seating, or a brick oven that entices with its aromas?


## 8. Take care of that smoke

And finally, it always comes down to this. You’re

never going to get that WOW factor from a [smoky, unpleasant environment](#). And I know that, unless mandated, most casinos aren’t going to go for smoke-free gaming areas. There are many systems that provide 100% outside air, and unless someone is smoking right next to you, you can eliminate that smoke smell. *You need to address this today.*

Look, before you hire a spa designer, before you buy new workout equipment, before you consider a new fine dining restaurant, give me a call and let’s have a half-hour discussion. Let’s talk about your entire space, your goals, and your budget: the [entire scope](#) of what you’re trying to accomplish. You can spend way too much money by piecemealing your projects. I’ve done enormous amounts of research for casinos all over the U.S., and I’m happy to share that knowledge.

Meet John at [Raving’s 19th Indian Gaming National Marketing Conference](#), January 30 – February 1, 2017 at Choctaw Casino Resort in Durant, Oklahoma.



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# Ten Myths About Casino Entertainment – Part II

*Clearing up misconceptions about your talent program*

By Kell Houston



In [my last Solutions Magazine article](#), I discussed five of the more common misconceptions concerning casino entertainment. This time around, I wanted to dig a little deeper. Here are the following myths:

### **6. The contract rider is non-negotiable.**

Attached to all major agency contracts is a lengthy document called the contract rider. In this one-sided document, the Artist will list out all of their requests. These include a lot of important information, such as all of their technical/production requirements and their backline needs. They also list a myriad of points concerning what you can and cannot do, including choice of law forum, cancellation, insurance needs, advertising and marketing points, hospitality needs, accommodation requirements, etc.

Here's my point – all of the requests are negotiable. Every venue is unique, and the rider is meant to cover a wide range of venues. Reasonably speaking, these requests need to be addressed and agreed to or amended.

For example, an Artist will have pages of hospitality requests, including alcohol and sometimes some very hard to find food items that are not typically available in some of the tertiary regions where a lot of Tribal Casinos are located. They will also ask for you to stock their buses with a whole list of items, including coffee, Red Bull, bread, condiments, etc. This is where you need to be very clear. I recommend crossing off all bus stock except ice and water. For the dressing room hospitality, you can read through their requests and cross off everything that just can't be done or found locally. I recommend you put in place your own casino addendum, spelling out what you can reasonably provide. Always cross off all alcohol; that's pretty much acceptable to most Artists, and simply speaking, most casinos cannot provide alcohol. For the catering/meal requests, always provide meal comps or vouchers. That keeps things very simple. Give buffet comps to the crewpeople and the band members; you need to provide an amount that would buy them a decent lunch and dinner.

### **7. We have to provide the production that the Artist calls for.**

This is an area where a lot of confusion gets created. There is a tremendous amount of leeway when you start working out the costs of production. This mainly hinges on your in-house or outside production people. The Artist has a basic technical rider, and it's their production manager's job to get you, the casino, to provide all the gear needed for them to put on a great show. It's your production people's job to provide the Artist with what is reasonable and workable for your casino. There is always the wish list and the real list when it comes to production. What actually works best for your room may be a lot less than what the Artist would like to have provided. Your production people need to be on your side, and they need to negotiate, negotiate, and then negotiate again. There is a middle ground. Face it, if you are not a production person, the terminology is very confusing. Your production people need to be your partner, and most of the time they will have strong relationships with many Artists' production managers out there. It's really a very small world. This is where, with the right people, you can save thousands of dollars on each show.

### **8. The right Artist costs a lot.**

There are so many choices out there for entertainment. Picking the right Entertainer/Artist should not be an emotional decision, it should be based on what works best for your property and what part of your customer base you are trying to attract with the show.

Staying within your budget is very important. But putting together a concert/show is about a lot more than the money. By developing a strong strategic plan for your shows and the goals you want to meet for each show, you can better determine your choice of Artist. Let's take an Artist like WAYNE BRADY. Because of his daytime TV exposure as a game show host, he really attracts the age group that is home during weekday afternoons. This is an older demographic, and this show should be promoted accordingly. You will have very strong results. Now a show like RACHEL PLATTEN is going to attract a whole different age group – Millennials. This is going to bring in a much younger demographic. Of course, this age group is still creating a learning curve for casinos everywhere. In between these two examples are a ton of acts. They can all do well if you do your research, have a strong plan, a focused direction, and realistic expectations.

## 9. Ticketing companies – we must pay a huge surcharge and use their website.

It seems like there are ticketing companies springing up everywhere. That makes it challenging to find the right partner. Yes, I said partner. Ticketing today is much more complex, integrated and important to your property. Technology has brought ticketing into an important place within your database and Players Club pool. You need a company that can provide all the additional bells and whistles that are available today. Everyone is talking about the extra charges on tickets. This is especially true with Ticketmaster. You can be looking at up to a 26% surcharge on top of the ticket cost. On a \$30 ticket, you would be paying almost another \$8 in additional cost. Also, many ticketing companies pull people off your website and onto their website to buy tickets to your show. That's not a good thing. So look for a ticketing partner like Etix. They are casino-friendly and great partners for your property.

## 10. We'll get the best turnout on a Friday or Saturday.

But wait, we also do our best business on Fridays and Saturdays. The question here is to figure out the goal of your entertainment program. It should be multifaceted. If you have a show on a Friday or Saturday, will you displace your best players and show a drop in your floor revenues

for that night? How big is your parking lot? Do you have the staff to handle the influx of additional people coming to your property? Will you have more people than you can service with your brand? You sure don't want your customers having a bad experience at your casino.

Every casino has the historic breakdown for each day of the week's revenue. Study this and understand that many casinos are working on building their off-day business. Thursdays and Sundays do work, but you need to build and educate your customer base. For example, the older demographic that is retired and has plenty of spare time, will enjoy midweek afternoon shows that fit their interests. These shows can be late afternoon events, and the older folks will make it a special day. For the younger generation, Thursdays will work if you are getting the right act. They pay very close attention to Social Media. Thursdays will also work for your more name brand act, plus you will pay less money for a Thursday show versus a Friday or Saturday show.

My main point here is that your goals are to maximize revenue, create more customers, and continue to build your brand. If you can make off-nights and days work for your entertainment, then you can have a more well-rounded and balanced entertainment program.

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# Championing \$100 ADT Customers

*Superhero strategies for Clark Kent customers*

By [Nicole Barker](#)



There's something about the \$100 ADT customer. Properties large and small. Locations urban and rural. It doesn't matter, when a player crests \$100 ADT, she reveals something. The stars align. At \$100 ADT, she steps from her proverbial phone booth as a Player with a capital "P." Look closely and the data shows us that most of a casino's *Theoretical* is made near this

*tipping point.*

### Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do we treat our \$100 ADT players like superheroes who shoulder this kind of revenue? No.
- Do we code them to a Host? No.
- Do we flag the customer on the casino floor for personalized attention? No.
- Do we send them decent offers? Most likely.
- Do we eventually grant a \$100 ADT status within our Tiered Card program? Kinda.

It's time to develop a game plan for the \$100 ADT player. The battlegrounds for revenue begin with this Clark Kent customer. Win here and you will grab marketshare right out from under your competitors' noses.

### What the data tells us about the \$100 ADT player

Look at your worth segmentation. If you stack your worth segments in \$25 increments from \$0 to the moon and look at Count, Theo, and Trips, you will see it: The Turn. This is the point when the masses fall away and a cohort of real gamers emerges. Count begins to taper off and Theo builds. The percentage that the \$100 ADT players generate in *Theoretical* is greater than the percentage of their size. This kind of Upside potential may start sooner in your database, but over a hundred snapshots from over a hundred properties pinpoint this spot as the strongest segment.

### Getting to know the \$100 ADT player

At \$100 ADT, the player isn't dinking around anymore. This player came to play. This player is willing to surf the highs and lows of winning and losing. This player has a budget for gaming. This player has a section in her wallet for slot spend. This player can stomach a downturn. This player has stories of jackpots and bonuses, and winning streaks and losing streaks. This player has a favorite game.

Here's the problem. We have aimed our Direct Marketing program at this customer. We have filled her mailbox monthly with Free Play coupons, food, and hotel offers. And then we let the click whirl of our programs maintain the relationship. This player falls through the relationship-building cracks.

Our relationship with any customer is a journey. The redemption of a Direct Marketing offer is only a 2D reflection of what happened in a single moment. Your offer may have driven a visit, but did it drive an incremental visit? Did it change behavior? Did it motivate the pursuit of a Tiered Card, or a deeper level of engagement across all the property's outlets?

### Translate the elements of a \$100 ADT customer into multiple languages

Within a casino, each department speaks a different language. The slot department views the customer according to Time-on-Device, Time-at-Device, and Coin-in. Take this a step further and a player can present himself very differently, according to the volatility of his slot machine choice and his ability to play through wins and losses. The marketing department views the customer according to ADT for Direct Marketing, cumulative Theo for inclusion in events, and Point accumulation towards Tiered Card status. All of these are valid viewpoints. In order to build a strategy for this customer, both the slot department and the marketing department need to understand how this customer contributes to the metrics that the property currently tracks and the metrics that the property should track.



## Map the pathway of the \$100 ADT customer

How many Points does this customer earn during one session? How long will it take and how many Trips need to happen before the next Tiered Card status is earned? If this is such a critical segment, are you asking for perfect attendance over an extended period of time from this customer in order for him to feel the benefits of a higher tiered card? Look at all the touch points made with this customer. At this level of ADT, what do we ask of this customer and what do we give in return? Is it reasonable? Is it attentive? Do the various forms of reward complement each other, or do they cause confusion and frustration?

## Look back at the casino experience from the player's perspective

How much money and how much time does it take to register \$100 ADT? I can guarantee that it is not \$100. A player sees himself and the value that the casino places on his business through the size of his Free Play coupons, his Tiered Card status, and the level of recognition that he receives when he is on-property. In his eyes, he may give you thousands of dollars per month, and you

may see only what the system registers in Theoretical. Theoretical is a marketing tool, but it does not reflect what's in the player's wallet. Only the player knows what he walked in the door with and what he is willing to wager. I have heard the same lament from many players in this segment. They receive glowing packages to visit a casino. Upon arrival, there is no heightened level of service to go with the room, food, and Free Play offers. Or a player has achieved a higher level of Tiered Card status, but gets smaller coupons, fewer hotel offers, and no party invitations because his ADT falls below your hidden programmatic targets.

An audit of the math behind this crucial player segment, a second look at the journey of the customer, and a realistic assessment of the chasm between player perception and benefit delivery will help to reveal where you are succeeding and failing to serve this superhero player.

*Learn more during Nicole's Session, "[Championing \\$100 ADT Customers – How To Develop Targeted Strategies for the Single Most Important ADT Segment of Your Database](#)," at Raving's 19th Indian Gaming National Marketing Conference, January 30 – February 1, 2017.*

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- Steve Neely, Chief Marketing Officer, Casino Del Sol Resort

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# Building Better Promotions

*Pre and post-steps to build into your process*

By Janet Hawk



Marketing has a well-earned reputation for being the “fun” department. Many don’t realize how much work goes into planning all the fun that our guests and fellow teammates see! Yes, there’s the basics of determining the goal of the promotion, diving into the database, selecting the type of promotion, deciding what to give away, and developing the rules

and regulations. But there are some things that should be done that often get overlooked. In the mix of being stressed and busy during daily life, many can forget a few details that can diminish the success of a promotion.

### Pre-event proforma

So many miss this crucial step! Completing a proforma before the event will assist you with the focus of your promotion and identifying the best segments to involve. Aligning it with the four key marketing strategies (acquisition, retention, growth and reactivation) is an important step as well. Your promotion needs to have a purpose AND a focus. The great thing is that a promotion can support more than one strategy, depending on the segment.

For instance, a *play and get* gift promotion can be a retention strategy for your upper segments, but if set up correctly, it can function as a growth strategy for lower segments. When I set up a play and get gift promotion, I like to set a daily point threshold, along with a separate monthly point threshold. With a T-shirt *play and get*, the daily point threshold could be set at 250 points to earn the T-shirt, or earn 1,000 points in a month to earn a T-shirt. Your proforma (along with appropriate database analysis) will help you set the appropriate point thresholds.

The proforma will show you your best ROI and keep you focused on a projected outcome. If the numbers don’t add up, don’t do the promotion! So many times an idea is presented that sounds good, but the numbers don’t add up. The proforma will save you from wasting time and effort on an event or promotion that doesn’t meet your financial goals.

### Meetings

After you complete your proforma, it’s time for your first meeting. But we have TOO many meetings, you say! The type of meeting that I am suggesting rarely gets done, and it can cause a lot of dissension across the casino (and have a direct line to the ear of your guest!). Get feedback from every department in the casino. Create a committee of representatives from every department. Include frontline, management and back of house, and present the event/promotion to the group. No offense to the bigwigs, but they can sometimes be out of touch with the floor. I have seen promotions that looked good on paper, but failed miserably when implemented.

One promo that comes to mind involved all frontline employees distributing “casino cash” (funny money) every hour to guests actively gaming or eating in the casino. This was done over a considerable length of time (90+ days, 24/7), and depending on different scenarios, guests could get anything from \$20 in casino cash to \$10,000. The guests collected their money and, in the big finale, they could use the casino cash to bid on a wide variety of items. There were several problems with this promotion, but for this point, I will focus on how difficult this action was for the frontline staff. This was before TITO, so for the slot department, this was a nightmare! Especially on a busy night! It was also difficult for security, food and beverage, and the pit. They were required to drop everything and start handing out money. The other side of this was the guests who saw the loophole and would approach staff claiming that they hadn’t received their casino cash. Employees were stressed further, and guests had a bad experience. Not good!

The best part of this promotion is what we learned NOT to do moving forward. We developed a promotion committee with representatives as I described above. We presented all our promotion ideas to the committee, and would adjust them according to the recommendations. Not only did we solve most problems before they happened, making our promotions much more successful, but everyone loved to be included in the marketing FUN, which helped improve my next topic ...

## Communication!

So many times we think that we are doing a great job in communicating our marketing efforts. Some of you may be, but some aren't, and even for those who are doing a good job, there is always more that you can do! Emails don't always get passed to the frontline staff, and even if a memo is printed and posted, it doesn't always get read. So, what to do? Why not treat your employees like your guests?! Create back of the house rack cards, posters and mailers that focus on the information you want them to know. Figure out how to hold a similar promotion for your employees. If you are having a slot or table tournament, have one prior that's just for the employees. The prizes don't need to be identical. Use gift cards or leftover items from previous promotions ... get creative! When your employees experience the same excitement and fun that your guests do, they will be great marketing ambassadors, thereby helping the communication with your guests! It is also a great way to test your promotion and fix any weak areas. Definitely a win-win-win!

## Timelines and checklists

These help with organization and accountability! Having a detailed list of who does what, when and by what time is vital in planning and executing a successful promotion or event. I'm a big proponent of lists. As I have stated before, it is so easy to get overwhelmed, stressed and off-task with the day-to-day of working in a casino. Especially when those unexpected situations pop up! So the use of a timeline and checklist can help you stay on track.

## Testing and cheating

I get a lot of weird looks when I tell people that I try to cheat my own promotions. It's something that not everybody thinks about. As much as we want to see the best in people, there are plenty of scammers out there looking for an opportunity to take advantage of or beat the system. I have been to several cheating classes throughout the years and have always been fascinated by how many ways people come up with to cheat a casino, both internally and externally! Even with advances in technology, there are those people who will try to take advantage of the system. It is an important step to consider when designing a promotion. Talk with your security and surveillance people and have them assist with plugging loopholes in your pro-

motions. Your operations people will also be an excellent resource. Make sure that you are doing everything you can to prevent any type of illegal activity.

In coordination with preventing cheating, test your promotion! As I mentioned before, holding employee-based promotions can assist in testing for weak areas in your promotion. Their feedback is like gold! Also, many of the system-based promotions can be easily tested before you go live with your guests. These tests help to ensure that all the settings are correct and prizes are set appropriately. A crucial step in the success of any promotion!

## Follow-up

When all the balloons are popped, the prizes given away and the fun had, a follow-up meeting is important. Involve as many people from other departments as possible to get their feedback about what worked, what didn't, and what can be done better. Compare the pre-event proforma with the post-event analysis that includes all costs associated with the promotion/event. Use the gathered information to improve future efforts! So many don't take this step, and just go on to the next thing. Following up is as important as any other part of a promotion.

Take the time to cover every step of the promotion. It takes a lot of time and effort, but in the long run, your promotion will be better from the work your team put forth.

One last bit of advice ...

## KEEP IT SIMPLE, AND HAVE FUN!

Meet Janet at [Raving's 19th Indian Gaming National Marketing Conference](#), January 30 – February 1, 2017 at Choctaw Casino Resort in Durant, Oklahoma.



# The Best Business Advice I've Ever Received

*How to keep it simple, from a 9-year-old*

By [Carter Buck](#)



I love my kids. Without even knowing it, they help me to understand so many things about myself, my marriage, and sometimes even my business. A few years ago, I found myself in the middle of a very intense game of charades with my two oldest daughters – who were 9 and 11 at the time. Caroline is the younger of the two, and it was her turn to act out a word. Needing some

help, she turned to me and whispered, “Dad, give me a job to act out. Not *your* job, but something I know – like a doctor or firefighter.”

Until that moment, it hadn't occurred to me that my own kids didn't even really know what I did for a living. The very thing that put food on our table and clothes on our backs was a complete mystery to them. It's not like we hadn't talked about it. I know they'd heard me talk at length with my wife as I sought her advice regarding our latest strategy or how to solve a complex business problem. Heck, they had even visited me countless times at the office, both during and after work hours. How could they not know what I do?!

I felt the need to help my kids understand what my work-life was all about. Could I explain in simple terms to my 9-year-old daughter what our company does and how it helps our customers? Here is our conversation, more or less:

**Me:** “I can tell you don't know what my company does ... let me explain. We make phone calls – lots of them – for our customers. We are usually calling people who have already purchased something from them. When we make the phone calls, we are asking people if they want to buy more things from our customers. We tell them that they have special offers that they can take advantage of, but they have to hurry and use them. We don't just make phone calls, we also receive phone calls. People who call us usually want to stay at our customer's hotel or participate in a special event. So we help them sign up.”

**Caroline:** “Why do *you* make the phone calls? How come your customers don't just make the phone calls themselves?”

**Me:** “Great question! When we make the calls, it is a lot cheaper for our customer. We can also make a lot of calls in a short amount of time when our customers don't have the manpower to do it.”

**Caroline:** “Do the people think it is you (Engagex) calling, or do they think it's your customer?”

**Me:** “They think it's our customer. We train our people to be just like our customer, and we use software that makes it seem like we're calling from their office.”

**Caroline:** “Okay. Why haven't you ever said it that way before? That makes a ton of sense. Whenever you and Mom are talking about your work, it all seems so complicated. **Just keep it simple!**”

What great advice! Just keep it simple!

As I explained our business to my daughter in the simplest terms that I could, something strange occurred ... I felt liberated. I felt like it reset, in my mind, the whole purpose of what we were trying to achieve for our clients. Throughout the years, I had grown accustomed to using complicated business terms and industry jargon to explain what we do. In my moment of clarity, I realized that it was potentially causing confusion for our employees, our customers, and certainly my family.

Caroline unwittingly taught me a very valuable lesson in business. In order to create focus in our organization and value for customers, we should be able to boil down what it is that we do and how we do it into basic terms. We should just keep it simple!

I believe that this holds true regardless of which company you work for or what your role is. Defining what your business does in its simplest terms helps you cut through the clutter and eliminate what's not essential. It becomes even more powerful when you measure your daily activities against that basic standard. In essence, it creates a mini mission statement that can guide how you do business and – most importantly – how you build value for your customers.


Don't get me wrong, there is a level of complexity to any business. For example, at Engagex we employ a team of talented software engineers who have created (and continue to improve) the software that helps us inte-

grate directly with our clients' systems – allowing us to be a seamless extension of their business. We also have a rigorous hiring and training process, constant employee evaluation and improvement, and a secure environment that meets the high bar of HIPPA and SSAE16 compliance standards. The list goes on and on. But all of these complex things support the “how” of our business. But the “what” and “why” of our business remain simple and powerful: *we make phone calls for our customers, because it's more cost-effective and scalable than our customers doing it in-house.*

As business owners (or operators), we should be clear on what it is that we do. We should be able to keep it in simple terms in our own minds as a way of helping to create focus. We should be able to succinctly communicate it to our team members so that it can help guide their daily actions and decision-making. We should be able to communicate it to our customers to help build value and remind them of why they do business with us.

I will always be grateful to my daughter for helping me learn the importance of keeping it simple as I describe our business. With such sage advice, I secretly hope that Caroline grows up to make her mark on the business world – as a marketing guru, a prolific business consultant, or a high-powered casino exec. If that doesn't work out, however, I'm prepared to support her in a less flashy profession ... as a doctor or firefighter, perhaps.

*Meet Carter and the Engagex team at [Raving's 19th Indian Gaming National Marketing Conference](#), January 30 – February 1, 2017 at Choctaw Casino Resort in Durant, Oklahoma.*



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# How to Progress and Be More Successful in 2017

*Work resolutions to kick off the New Year*

By [Toby O'Brien](#)



Happy 2017! Have you made your New Year's resolutions? Going on a diet, getting more exercise, hand-writing personal letters, keeping in better touch with your family and friends, saving more money, donating more blood, getting involved in politics? After making your Christmas list and checking it twice, the end-of-year holidays are often a time to relax, reflect and ponder

where you'll be going next.

And then, January hits with a bang (like, geez, didn't I know this was coming?! All those piles of unfinished work on your desk. All those unanswered emails. All those directives from The Boss. All those passionate plans waiting to be executed. Where will you start? What will you accomplish? How will you keep from feeling so overwhelmed that you freeze and do absolutely nothing? So as you start the New Year, what resolutions could help you make progress and feel more successful in 2017? What might your work/career resolutions look like?

First, don't start with a long list that will leave you feeling frustrated and ineffective. In fact, for starters, why don't you pick just one? Here are a few recommendations for kick-starting 2017:

**Take a fresh look.** Enter the front door of your casino and really LOOK at it. Is the entry welcoming? Is signage clear? Would brand new guests know where to go and what you want from them (are they instantly directed to your players club)? Are employees looking guests in the eye and ready to help with absolutely anything? Task your team with correcting areas that you know are lacking.

**Review your reports.** Are you getting information that you truly need from your departments and databases to help you make decisions? Do you live in a flood of unnecessary spreadsheets? Think about your most critical needs and limit your reports to ones that support finding out how to make those changes. Ask your managers and analysts to streamline based on common goals.

**Take care of your best employees.** When was the last time you had an individual face-to-face with the members of your team that most effectively drive your results? (Not your problem children, but your cream of the crop). Set up a few meetings with THOSE VIPs, listen to what they think, get them interested in your plans, hear their ideas,

and energize them with challenges and attention.

**Reconnect with your most valuable and influential guests.** Request two lists: your top 20 guests (based on ADT) and top 20 guests (based on frequency of visits). Commit to talking with each of them over the first quarter. Find out what they love about your casino and what makes them most frustrated. Ask them how they'd like to be recognized for their loyalty. The answers should assist you in all your decision-making processes.

**Clean out your office.** Get rid of the stifling mess. Add a few items that would catch the attention of your visitors. Print and post some quotes that motivate you. (One of my favorites: *"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."* – Margaret Mead). Display mementos of successful casino events. Display a couple of personal items, which can be great conversation starters (your most cherished bowling trophy, your favorite book, your Volunteer of the Year award from your charity of choice, a picture of your Big Catch). Discard (or put away) outdated reports, pictures of terminated employees, in fact, anything that doesn't make you say, "Onward and upward!"

**Recharge your team.** Especially in departments with longtime employees, work responsibilities, deadline stress, complacency, and petty conflicts can demotivate and disconnect people. This is an opportunity to start fresh. Gather the group, develop goals together, assign tasks (keep an open mind; consider letting team members choose their projects ... igniting new or untapped skills is a great way to discover untarnished ideas). Ask employees to share their unique interests outside of work; you'll uncover surprises and find creative input that you didn't even know existed.

**Get on the floor.** A few hours a week, work with your frontline employees in their departments. Marketing? Sign up new members in the players club. Entertainment or promotions? Seat guests at dinners or shows. F&B? Serve drinks to slot players, bus a few tables in a restaurant, or host the complimentary breakfast buffet. You'll connect with your staff, observe opportunities for improvements, and see the reaction to your "walking the talk."

It's 2017. We can all use a fresh start. Clean out, renew relationships, energize people, and leave the dusty past behind. In the words of Peter Allen from the film, *All That Jazz*, "Everything old is new again!"



## CALIFORNIA

### Chicken Ranch Casino (Jamestown) - Zombie Takeover!



Chicken Ranch wanted a promotion that was different and would bring attention to the facility and attract a new, younger clientele, yet still entertain older, loyal guests (wouldn't we all like that?). At the time, Chicken Ranch was installing a popular new slot game, a "wide area progressive" called The Walking Dead, themed after the largest cable TV show ever watched. They turned all Chicken Ranch employees into Walking Dead figures, by hiring professional makeup artists who specialized in such transformations. They decorated the building exterior with hanging zombies and large point of sale signage. Guests, too, were given a chance to be a part of the show. Drawings were held to see who would be the first to play The Walking Dead slots and players club members earned "Zombie bucks" that could only be cashed on the day of the event. Coin-in for that day increased 65% and the number of unique players club members visiting that day was up by 137% compared to an average Wednesday. Some of the messaging for The Walking Dead event included "It Pays To Play Dead," and "Everyone's Dying to Play."

*"I have never watched The Walking Dead on cable channels, but I have watched thousands of new slot themes be introduced to casino floors, usually with very little fanfare, at least not near the level of hoopla created by the Chicken Ranch Casino and its Walking Dead rollout. Sure, sometimes a slot vendor will give the casino slot guy some tchotchkes to pass out on the floor when a new, branded slot game hits the floor. Sometimes they may even have some sexy girls make an appearance (e.g. Bally's Playboy machines). But only rarely will you see a casino really leverage, really merchandise, really SELL the new slot games to their players. And that is a true missed opportunity."*

*"Grocery store retailers offer free tastes of new food items to shoppers. Fashion retailers have VIP product launch parties, or at least, strong coupons and advertising when*

*they introduce hot new items. But 'slot retailers' seem to be content to let the game itself, with its bells and whistles, be that main marketing tool. Or, occasionally, they might put a 'Hot New Game' sign above the introduced slot game.*

*"But wouldn't you want all of your new slot players to try every new game that you buy? Wouldn't you want every game to have a big-to-do made about it, whether it was based on a hit TV show or not? Wouldn't you want to give your core slot players more cash registers at new, fun playing experiences? Wouldn't you want to attract new players with your new slot products? I think the answers are all a resounding 'Yes.'"*

*"You may not have to go to the lengths that Chicken Ranch did with its Walking Dead rollout, but you should be thinking in terms of 'how do I leverage every new slot game that hits our floor and get the maximum number of current and potential players to try it?' Answering that question should lead you to some pretty exciting and innovative roll-out tactics, as well as some improved slot revenues." – D.C.*

### Sycuan Casino (El Cajon) – Military Freedom



A while back on Memorial Day Weekend, Sycuan introduced a patriotically themed "Freedom" players club card. Membership was open to active military members and veterans and included special benefits, discounts and military-only offers. Also, Sycuan team members were trained to say "Thank you for your service" whenever the Freedom Card was presented. The Freedom Card members soon formed an affinity to their card and appreciated Sycuan's recognition. Within several months, 11,000 Freedom members had "enlisted" and visited Sycuan nearly one time more per month than other Club Sycuan "non-military" members and accounted for 10% of the total Club Sycuan carded theoretical win.

*"I have seen a number of casino marketing programs honoring veterans and military members, but nothing quite as comprehensive as Sycuan's Freedom Card program. Usually, these nice military gestures include just a free or*

*discounted meal on Memorial Day, Veteran's Day, or the 4th of July. But Sycuan made it a whole program, with a special theme and core benefits that included dining, retail and concert ticket discounts.*

*"The results of Sycuan's award winning program would suggest that the idea was a good one – increased club sign-ups, higher participation and better player gaming profile, not to mention the feel good, PR value of a program honoring vets.*

*"While it may be a challenge to run 'concurrent loyalty programs' (one for the military and one for everyone else), it seems like there might be an upside if you could. A special card for millennials? How about one for seniors? Locals versus tourists? Club Loco (one for Hispanics)? Etc., etc., etc. While this has the potential to become a little convoluted (what club am I in anyway?), I would think that the key to success is having products and services that resonate with each affinity group, as well as trained employees that treat them all special no matter what group they are in. We already segment and tier by spend (and we should) with our Gold, Silver and Bronze levels and the like. Maybe it's time to start grouping our players by how they naturally identify themselves. And maybe the ultimate answer is taking our 500,000 customers and finding a way to treat them as 500,000 groups of 1." - D.C.*

## WISCONSIN

### Lake of the Torches (Lac du Flambeau) – Bingo Love!



Lake of the Torches Resort Casino held a special appreciation event to reward its loyal bingo players who had visited the Bingo Hall in the past six months. A postcard was mailed to these players offering a day of prizes and extra amenities, plus special drawings to win a share of

\$2,500 in cash. Players also received a complimentary bingo dauber, double club points and a lunch special. Bingo attendance on that day was up 185%, session income increased 128%, and gross profit increased 1600%.

*"Ah, the bingo player endures, especially at tribal casinos that have a long and rich history with bingo in the early iterations of tribal gaming. And the challenges with bingo remain the same – the game plays slow, players can bet small, and with the advent of the ubiquitous slot games, bingo has taken a big back seat and rarely produces much real revenue (except perhaps in casinos with high stakes bingo that still can attract masses of players). Most of the casinos with bingo that I am familiar with keep bingo either because many tribal members still enjoy playing it or because of the EFFECT IT HAS ON SLOTS between bingo sessions.*

*"Still bingo endures, and a special event or VIP event for bingo players can be a tricky proposition. It's hard to justify the expense for a relatively low value group, and if you try to give rewards to just the few bingo players that have a high slot ADT, well, you upset most of the bingo player base who can be very vocal. I don't know how Lake of the Torches carved out its offer to its bingo-playing database to insure profitability, but here's what I liked about the promotion:*

1. *It recognized a group usually ignored and used an 'appreciation' theme.*
2. *It was simple – some cash, a food special and some drawing prizes.*
3. *It had a very targeted and inexpensive gift that bingo players love – a dauber!*
4. *It was held on a Sunday in December, which fit with the 'giving season' theme and also was held on a day of the week where most players could attend.*

*"It's not just bingo players that present this marketing challenge for casinos, there are many customers that have high frequency and low spend – keno players, race and sports betters, penny and video poker players, buffet goers, morning socializers that come for just the coffee and donuts. Yet, they all have a need to be appreciated. So take a page out of Lake of the Torches book – give them enough to matter, make it authentic, give them the kinds of things that they would be interested in, and be sure to say thanks. They may just be 'grind players' but where you add 'em all up, the total 'lifetime value' can be impressive, and boy, can a bingo player deliver great word of mouth." – D.C.*

## Raving Conferences & Events Schedule

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### Dennis Conrad's Casino Promotions Learning and Sharing Event for Highly Motivated Indian Gaming Casino Executives ONE-DAY SEMINAR

Choctaw Casino Resort, Durant, OK, January 30, 2017

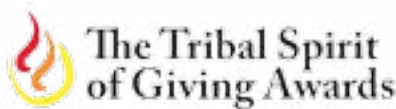
<http://www.ravingconsulting.com/indian-gaming>



### Raving's 19th Indian Gaming National Marketing Conference

Choctaw Casino Resort, Durant, OK, January 30 - February 1, 2017

<http://www.ravingconsulting.com/indian-gaming>



### The Tribal Spirit of Giving Awards Luncheon

Choctaw Casino Resort, Durant, OK, February 1, 2017

<http://www.ravingconsulting.com/tribalspirit>



### Raving at NIGA

San Diego Convention Center, April 10 - 13, 2017

<http://www.indiangamingtradeshow.com>



### Raving's Host Development Conference

Bally's Las Vegas, NV, July 17 - 18, 2017

Produced by Raving Consulting Company for BNP Media

<http://www.hostdevelopmentconf.com>



### Raving @ Casino Marketing & Technology

Bally's, Las Vegas, NV, July 18 - 20, 2017

Produced by BNP Media Gaming Group

<http://www.casinomarketingconf.com>



### Raving @ OIGA Conference and Trade Show

Oklahoma City, OK, July 24 - 26, 2017

<http://oiga.org>



### Raving @ G2E 2017

Sands Expo Center, Las Vegas, NV, October 3 - 5, 2017

[www.globalgamingexpo.com](http://www.globalgamingexpo.com)



### Cutting Edge Table Games Conference

Paris Las Vegas, Las Vegas, NV, November 14 - 16, 2017

Produced by BNP Media Gaming Group

<http://www.tablegamesconf.com>



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