

Raving

Raving's Strategic Solutions Magazine

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Raving's 19th Indian Gaming
National Marketing Conference

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MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Dear Ravers,

Here it is, my first dispatch to you in our Solutions Magazine as the CEO of Raving Consulting. I've been thinking a great deal about this first "official" letter – it's difficult to summarize all of the thoughts and emotions that surround this new adventure.

I consider this role an honor and a huge responsibility. How can I possibly "fill the shoes" of our Founder Dennis Conrad? The guy oozes casino marketing, he is the recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award, and just an all-around great person. And now he is my boss.

He is Raving Consulting!

I have spent many sleepless nights pondering how companies founded by inspirational owners maintain their brand once the owner decides to spend more time golfing.

In our industry, we have many examples of entrepreneurs who created brands that, even after they were gone, continued to grow and thrive. People who had the good fortune to work with these leaders tell personal stories about working for them with such pride. Founders like Benny Binion with the Horseshoe in Las Vegas, Bill Harrah with Harrah's Hotel & Casinos, and John Ascuaga with the Nugget Casino Resort in Reno. These leaders had different management styles, but cared A LOT about every aspect of "their baby." They made it their life to care for and feed their creation. *Dennis Conrad is no different.*

And as I reflect further, I realize that although a visionary founder is critical, I also realize that the success of the brand or company isn't just about this one individual. What? Raving isn't just about Dennis? (Sounds harsh, but stay with me). A large part of the Raving success is about the relationships that have been built over the past twenty years. Our partners and clients are as much a part of Raving as Dennis, Becky, Steve, Chris, Amy, Gency, Toby, and Nicole.



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Even when I was a Raving client nearly twenty years ago, I felt a sense of ownership. The Raving team always made me feel like I was one of them and that my input was valued, even if I was telling Steve that he was out of line!

This sense of ownership became more obvious to me at this year's [Raving's 19th Indian Gaming National Marketing Conference](#). I realized that I wasn't the only person who feels like part of the Raving family. The registration line was filled with hugs, high-fives and "great to see you's." In fact, the conference always feels like a big family reunion. You can read Dennis' view on this signature conference, some of our very special guests this year, and why Raving's work in Indian country has been more about "heart" rather than a "piece of our wallet" on [page 12](#).

So if Raving's success is about a visionary founder, it is equally about its visionary clients, partners and friends. Raving is blessed to have the full package!

Our industry is facing many challenges in the coming years. Aging properties, increased competition and regulation, etc., and together we must face these challenges to continue the growth of our industry.

Although it's not possible for me to fill Dennis' shoes, I can commit to continue to walk in your shoes, ensuring that Raving provides the most forward-thinking solutions in order to solve your problems. I know that together we can create the Raving of the future.

With that having been said, I'd like to introduce you to two new Raving Partners who are featured in this month's magazine. If you are looking to fill positions at your casino, we're pleased to be working with [Marie Maher, Raving Partner, Executive Placement](#). She works with properties to mentor and enhance their executive leadership. See her article on **Motivating Through Value-Driven Leadership** on [page 21](#). Adding to our Raving Analytics Team is [Sarah Procopio, Raving Partner, Data Analytics](#). She gets down to the nuts and bolts of how casinos can use micro-location tracking for smarter player development in her article on [page 6](#). And finally, [Brett Magnan, Raving Partner, Hospitality](#), comes to us with no less than 30 years experience with a comprehensive background in food & beverage and hotel operations. He's tackling that sticky issue of justifying profit loss in your F&B department for the benefit of overall revenue growth in your casino on [page 8](#).

Sincerely,



Deana Scott, CEO, Raving Consulting
deana@ravingconsulting.com

PS – If you're headed down to NIGA, April 10-13, we've got a lot of events happening in San Diego during the tradeshow and conference. Please stop by the Raving booth #1129, or give me a call ahead of time at 775-329-7864.

Cover model: Images from [Raving's 19th Indian Gaming National Marketing Conference](#), January 30 – February 1, 2017, Choctaw Casino Resort, Durant, OK. Images top to bottom: NIGA Chairman Ernie Stevens, Jr. with Notah Begay III; Cherokee Nation Businesses, Tribal Spirit of Giving Award Participants; and Dennis Conrad and Deana Scott.

Just How Much Research Are Casinos Doing?

Results from Raving's 1st Annual Tribal Gaming National Marketing Survey

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



Raving recently released its first national study of casino marketing. The main objective of the study is to give casino marketers a tool they can use to be more successful. By finding out what other casinos are doing with mobile marketing, reinvestment ratios, promotions, or a wealth of other data, it can help you see where you fall on the spectrum, and maybe where you need to be

headed. Casinos in the study are from all areas of the U.S. and range in size from mega resorts to small properties with less than 250 machines. Whether you're with a tribal or commercial casino, the results from this study are a tool to help and inform you.

One of the questions that we asked the 53 casinos participating in the survey was what types of market research they're conducting. This is an important topic because research produces business intelligence that can give casinos a competitive edge. If other casinos in your market have better intelligence than you have, then they're armed to make better decisions.

The chart on the opposite page shows what percent of casinos are doing each type of research listed below:

Database Analysis: 91% of casinos

This is a type of research that uses information you've collected from players to perform statistical analysis so that you can better understand your customers and their behavior. Almost all casinos are analyzing the data from gaming and other business transactions (restaurants, entertainment, etc.). This research is typically performed on an ongoing basis by an in-house database analyst.

BENEFITS: Having accurate database analysis is what makes many marketing programs possible. It's the basis of mail programs, club tiering, couponing, and much more.

Guest Satisfaction Survey: 79% of casinos

This is one of the best ways to listen to the all-important Voice of the Customer (VOC) by measuring how your customers rank every aspect of your property. These are a report card for your property. Guest Satisfaction Surveys can pinpoint problems and measure how serious they are,

and also show you what your customers rank highly so that you know where to focus your efforts. Some casinos are conducting Satisfaction Surveys by using online software and in-house staff, but most retain outside resources.

BENEFITS: This type of survey can reduce customer churn, increase customer lifetime value, and reduce negative word-of-mouth.

Competitive Analysis: 61% of casinos

Knowing what your competitors are doing, how they're doing it, and how well they are doing it compared to your property is vital information. This analysis determines their strengths and weaknesses relative to your property's. Most casinos do at least some monitoring of the competition in-house – signing up for their direct mail, clipping ads, and checking out their social media and promotions. You can also structure this by a professional, objective review from a researcher.

BENEFITS: Formulate a better marketing strategy and plan by leveraging what your property is doing best, and improve key areas that are your weaknesses.

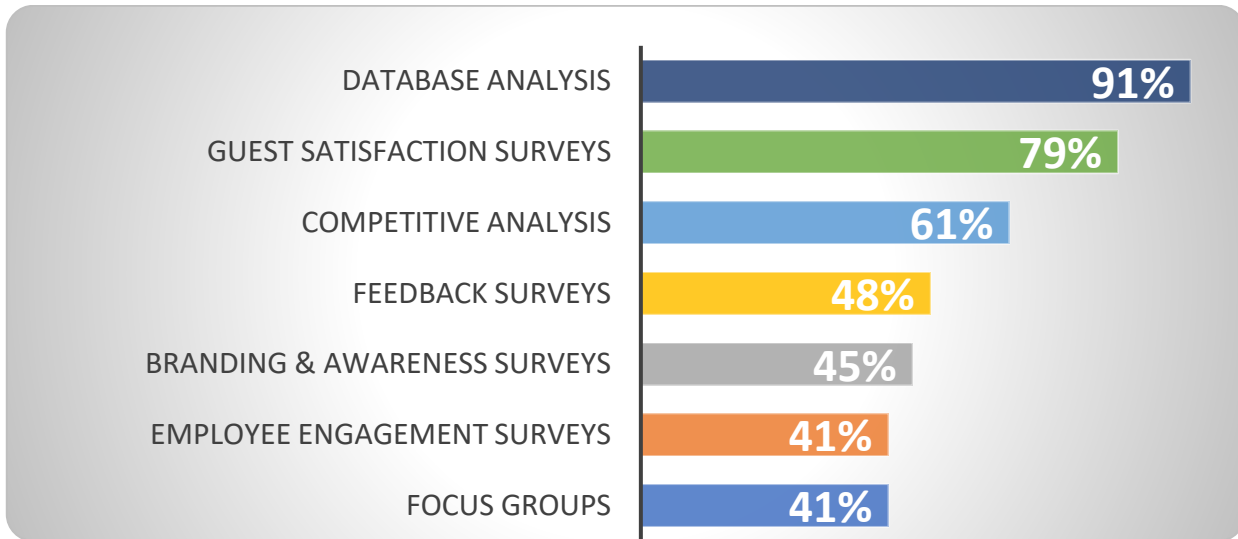
Feedback Surveys: 48% of casinos

Feedback surveys cover a range of categories, but the common thread is that they are all designed to gather feedback from users of products, services, experiences and programs. For casinos, this might be a post-promotion evaluation, hotel stay follow-up, players club evaluation, or just about anything that you're doing that can be evaluated by your customers. Some casinos are using online survey software to conduct these surveys in-house, and others are contracting this out.

BENEFITS: Knowing how your customers evaluate your marketing initiatives allows you to adjust and improve, which increases efficiency and profitability.

Branding & Awareness: 45% of casinos

Branding Surveys; Attitude, Awareness & Usage (AAU), whatever you call them, these surveys take stock of your market and give you an opportunity to thoroughly review your product or service within its marketplace so that you can understand its appeal, strengths, weaknesses, and any gaps in the offering. It also gives you insights regarding



brand perception, and helps you evaluate how your product is known and perceived within the market. These surveys are usually conducted by a professional firm every two to three years, and brief, targeted surveys can fill in the knowledge gaps between surveys.

BENEFITS: This measures how well your brand is performing against competitors, as perceived by your customers, so you can increase performance in areas that count with customers.

Employee Engagement Surveys: 41% of casinos

This type of survey gained popularity in the 1990s to measure a relationship that goes beyond employee satisfaction; an “engaged employee” is one who is fully absorbed in and enthusiastic about their [work](#), and takes positive action to further the [organization's](#) reputation and interests. An engagement survey is usually done annually or every other year by an outside research company.

BENEFITS: Knowing how to increase engagement leads to employees who care more, are more productive, give better service, and even stay in their jobs longer. All of that leads to happier customers, who buy more and refer more often, which drives sales and profits higher.

Focus Groups: 41% of casinos

A focus group is a form of qualitative research in which a group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes towards a product, service, concept, advertisement, idea or packaging. Quantitative research answers “how many,” and qualitative research answers the “how” and “why.” The group members are carefully selected and are led through a specific agenda by a skilled moderator. Some casinos conduct their own informal focus groups, while other casinos bring in a professional research company.

BENEFITS: Quantitative research may indicate an area where you need to understand why you’re getting a certain result. Focus groups let you drill down and find out why you’re seeing certain findings. They can also be used to pre-test your customers before making major changes.

This article lists the main types of research that casinos are doing to help them be more successful. If you’d like information about how Raving can help fill your casino’s research needs, contact Amy Hergenrother, Raving’s VP of Business Development, at 775-329-7864, or email her at amy@ravingconsulting.com.

The Right Offer at Exactly the Right Time – On-Property

Welcome to the era of micro-location tracking

By Sarah Procopio



Have you ever wished that you could hit your players with exactly the right offer at exactly the right time ... while they are still on-property? Of course you have. You may even have a team of casino hosts that do this for elite-level players, which is why you know about the high impact and value this approach can have.

Great casino hosts have a deep connection with their most important players, and they know how to get the right offer to the right player while that player is still on-property – seamlessly. The results? Players stay on-property longer. Specifically, at times that would normally trigger them to leave. For example, after a big win or loss, or following a large ATM withdrawal or credit taken. Good hosts can get them to stay, which generates more revenue for the casino and more profit. Unfortunately, hosts can't be everywhere all the time for all players, and good hosts know how to prioritize, ensuring that high-level guests get the most attention and best treatment.

But what if you could ensure that all your guests get the same treatment?

All guests? Yes, all! Including the mid and lower-level (but profitable) players who often don't receive host attention. Nothing will ever replace the personal contact that hosts provide, but the technology is here that allows casinos to do one of the most powerful things that hosts do for players – hit them with the right offer, at the right time, while they're on-property. Welcome to the era of micro-location tracking! If you don't know what that is, read on to understand how to use it to grow revenue for your casino.

Essentially, micro-location tracking picks up where GPS tracking (the technology you use on your phone to map yourself from work to a friend's house) leaves off. Instead of using satellites and your smartphone to track you like GPS does, micro-location tracking uses hardware called "beacons" and your smartphone to track your location. It might seem like the same thing, however this technology tracks your location more precisely, especially indoors, and casinos can use it to market to players more effectively.

Imagine being a player who just hit an \$800 payout on a

slot machine. This wouldn't typically trigger a casino host's attention. The player cashes out and heads for the exit to go next door to try their luck at another casino. Ten feet before they hit the door ... boom! They are hit with an offer on their phone for \$20 in free slot play redeemable within the next thirty minutes. Amazing, right?

The uses for micro-location technology are endless, and the results are high impact. Some of the key benefits that this technology can provide to your casino are:

- Increased Wallet Share
- Increased Player Retention
- Increased Time On Device
- Reduced Marketing Expenses

Here is another example of how micro-location tracking can be used to your benefit. Imagine a player walks into your casino with the intention of eating at your restaurant, then leaving without playing. While wrapping up their meal, the player receives an offer on their phone based on play level and only has twenty minutes to redeem it. Before they know it, they're sitting at the slot machine, redeeming the offer, and playing with their own gaming budget, even though their intention was to eat and run. Because of micro-location tracking, your casino just locked in an additional play trip from that guest!

Even though this technology has been available for some time, very few casinos are leveraging it to their advantage. You can be one of the cutting-edge few to use this technology to increase the revenue and profitability of YOUR casino. Here's how:

1. Buy beacons.
2. Source a micro-location tracking technology provider.
3. Blend multiple data sources together for maximum impact.
4. Provide more value to your customers through well-timed offers.

Step one: Buy beacons. The more you buy, the more precisely you can track customer location. Beacons are small – about an inch in diameter and as thick as a water bottle cap. You can stick these devices just about anywhere. They com-

communicate wirelessly with your customer's smartphone using Bluetooth Low Energy technology. Beacons detect nearby smartphones. They cost about \$40 to \$80 per beacon. When purchasing your beacons, consider battery life – the longer the life, the better. Beacons work best indoors (most smartphones can rely on GPS when outside). You will need at least three to precisely pinpoint the location of your customers (if your micro-location tracking provider uses triangulation technology to locate your customer).

Step two: Source micro-location tracking technology providers. Micro-location tracking technology acts as the bridge that connects information pulled from your beacons to your business' existing app. It runs in the background so that your customers never actually see it, but they will notice new functionality options in the app fueled by micro-location tracking-technology-provider services, like mapping or special offers.

You will be able to view the provider's micro-location technology online, access services, set up offers, and view analytics provided from it. To handle the sourcing for this technology, find a solid company with a proven track record tailored to your industry. Review a demo, call three of their references, and make sure that you see it working live in multiple locations.

Step three: As with other marketing efforts, the more customized your offers, the higher the impact. Ensure that data about your players is leveraged from your casino-tracking and hotel systems to provide relevant offers based on guest value.

Step four: Provide value to your customers. Just because we see the value of micro-location tracking technology, doesn't mean that you want your customers to feel like "Big Brother" (aka you) is watching them. The key to ensuring guest confidence is to have your players "opt in" to being tracked. Show them that they receive more value by allowing you to track their location.


Usually, the older the demographic, the more sensitive to privacy concerns you will need to be. For example, if a guest is in the hotel gym, the first communication pushed to them should NOT be, "Hi, I see you are in the gym! We just added new protein bars to the vending machine. Buy one now and receive a dollar off." It could be perceived as creepy.

On the flipside, if you send that same message to a younger target demographic, it'll likely be perceived as a "surprise and delight" element that boosts the perceived value of your hotel. A more effective way to initially communicate with an older audience would be to provide a mapping tool to help them get around your property with increased ease. Show value first, and always make sure that "beacon" micro-location technology is opt-in!

Finally, when making a new marketing investment, measure your ROI. It can be difficult to do when rolling out in-app value ads, such as mapping functionality, but it can be measured when pushing location-based offers to your clients by tracking the revenue generated from these offers. Ideally, all the new information you learn about your clients by using micro-location tracking will be used to understand each of your customers better and add to your existing data warehouse.

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Lose Your Shirt, Not Your Shorts, in Food & Beverage

Navigating the truths of a profitable operation

By Brett Magnan



Too often I hear stories from casino operators who lament that their food & beverage operation never makes any money, and why should they continue to fund a losing venture? But without a holistic view of your entire operation, making a singular decision may be dangerous. The days where a good steak dinner is given away in Vegas are all but gone, as casinos there have shifted

the model yet again, and entertainment, defined by their 40 million annual visitors, is more than just gaming. These non-gaming outlets charge handsomely and become viable operations on their own. However, this may not work at a singular destination casino resort.

Deconstructing the incremental gaming revenue generated by having a food & beverage operation is difficult.

Many properties are lucky to break-even in F&B, and wonder if they just cut it back or cut it out, if they would be any better. One thing to realize is that players choose your casino because they feel comfortable. They know that they will be greeted warmly, their favorite game is there, parking is easy, and they can get something good to eat and drink. Once they have a need that is not met, they will leave to go find it on the outside, or worse, at your competitor.

Here are some key benefits that most are aware of when having appropriate non-gaming amenities at your casino:

- Bars and restaurants can keep a player in your casino for several more hours, adding to the cash-in value of their visit.
- Other amenities, such as golf, spas, gift shops, fuel, entertainment and F&B, create reasons for less serious gamers to enjoy your property, either in support of others or for diversity. There has been up to a 20% increase in visits due to non-gaming alternatives.
- Player development and casino hosts can utilize these amenities to incent and thank their guests for their loyalty and play.

- Tribal member work opportunities and diversification of skills, with more offerings increasing participation rates with TERO.

There are some inherent benefits that are less obvious, which might be even more important to consider. **Casinos that have a balanced food and beverage operation can see significant growth in their incremental gaming revenue.** These increases drop much more cleanly to the bottom line than non-gaming revenues.

Consider a casino that has 1,000 machines and three restaurants and bars. With a WPM of \$85, the casino will generate \$31MM annually, dropping approximately 55% to the EBITDA line. The F&B operation makes \$10MM in revenue, but loses \$500K.

Closing the restaurant might seem like an easy decision, except that losing 105% in F&B might be the best decision when you can generate gaming flow through at the rate above.

The traditional model of restaurant performance was always 30/30/30/10, which is that the cost of goods sold was 30%, 30% labor, 30% other, and netting a 10% profit at the bottom line. This is impossible today with labor costs running 45% or higher, requiring operators to be more creative on the food side, increasing menu prices and reducing other costs as best as possible. A 5% bottom line profit is the new successful restaurant story.

Another casino example to consider is one with an efficient host program, with reinvestment in players who keep their redemption dollars on property. Earning points and tiered levels of benefits for more loyal players creates a give-back program that doesn't have a negative impact on the operation. With three levels of player categories, higher tiered players may get complimentary food at the buffet, paid for by their points, while others receive a discount with their points. Non-rated players and non-card holders pay retail.

The accounting for this action is a credit to the food department at an agreed-upon value, and a charge to the casino department (casino marketing, player development, or slots) as an expense. The billed department sometimes fights this as an expense that hurts their individual profitability. Some casinos' leadership leaves the expense in F&B and tracks it

separately to understand its effectiveness and evaluate player host usage. This method will show F&B as even less profitable. Either way, the casino's overall profitability does not change.

Restaurants and bars are an essential part of a casino operation. Providing players with both "fuel" to keep playing and fine dining to celebrate a great experience, F&B and other services are needed for a well-rounded destination.

Comparing to casinos with less non-gaming amenities

shows lower WPM and lower growth in stay times and repeat visits. For these reasons, losing your shirt in F&B might just be the correct formula for growing revenue in your casino and in overall performance.

Contributors

[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](#) — Senior Raving Partner, Database & Loyalty Marketing, she works with casinos across the country to harvest potential from patron databases in order to finetune the segmentation, messaging, and programming of multimedia and multi-channel campaigns.

[Carter Buck](#) — Raving Partner, Call Center Solutions, 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.

[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.](#) — Senior 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](#) — Senior Raving Partner, Gaming Entertainment, Kell has a savvy gaming approach to utilizing entertainment as a tool to drive folks to the casino floor and 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.

[Az Husain](#) — Raving Partner, Microsoft and BI Software Training, 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.

[Marie Maher Ph. D.](#) — Raving Partner, Executive Recruiter, Marie knows gaming leadership from the front lines; she has worked in several properties and mentored many successful leaders. Marie functions from a value-driven perspective and encourages strategy, consistency and passion!

[Brett L. Magnan](#) — Raving Partner, Hospitality, brings a wealth of experience operating high-quality hotels, casino resorts, spas, and food and beverage facilities. He is known for his planning and opening of new properties and is a trusted resource in the gaming industry with his reputation for hard work, innovation, teamwork, honesty, and integrity.

[Toby O'Brien](#) — Senior 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.

[Sarah Procopio](#) — Raving Partner, Database Analytics, Sarah helps clients meld data science and human behavior to grow revenue and increase profit. She was selected as part of Raving's Database Analytics team for her exceptional analytical, quantitative and problem-solving skills and deep experience in data driven marketing.

[Deana Scott](#) — CEO, Raving Consulting, is a patented inventor who has spent her career in Tribal Gaming focusing on Operations, Marketing and Project Planning. Holding strategic positions as a General Manager and Corporate Marketing Executive, she has hands-on experience in the startup and expansion of numerous business ventures.

[John Stewart](#) — Raving Partner and CEO at Encompass Develop, Design & 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.

The Ten Best Tools for Customer Acquisition

Have you tried all of these techniques?

By [Tino Magnatta](#)



There are a lot of different tools out there to acquire new customers at your property. So which ones should you use? Here's an analysis of what's out there and how to use it.

1. Google Search

Google (Paid "Adwords" as well as "Organic Search") is one of the most powerful tools in your arsenal for customer acquisition. It is highly

effective and inexpensive, if used properly. Google is especially effective for getting hotel room bookings and filling other non-gaming venues, such as restaurants and concerts/events. Once the campaigns are set up, you can also optimize them even more.

2. Behavioral Targeting

Online advertising utilizing behavioral targeting is very effective and especially powerful since people tend to shop around for hotel rooms, and don't make their decision immediately. Behavioral targeting allows you to "follow" these potential customers online when they leave your site and serve them ads for your property on different websites. These programs are highly cost-effective and scalable.

3. Prospect Direct Mail/Email Campaigns Using Profiling/Modeling

This is the technique of profiling your best customers who have responded to offers, and modeling their traits and matching them up to opted-in 3rd party databases to find "look-alikes." For instance, in simplified terms, if your best customer lives in a 40-mile radius, enjoys golf and has household income of >\$200K, then those are the parameters that are used to find the new prospects. Of course, modeling is more complex than that, but you get the idea. The DM or Email campaigns are designed specifically to get customers in for the first time, so it's best to offer these customers more value.

This process is a little costlier as you have to pay for profiling/modeling, list costs, creative and DM/Email costs, but it is extremely effective if done properly.

4. Facebook/Social Media Advertising

Most social media platforms have advertising that you can buy to acquire new customers, however the Facebook platform is the most effective. Facebook possibly has the most relevant data on customers, so you are able to buy ads and target people who fit into your customer profile. Facebook allows you to also target customers who have visited your website, as well as those who are on your email list so that you can serve them ads on Facebook, and even further, allows you to build broader customer audiences that match the profiles of your current customers. Other platforms like YouTube, Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest can also be utilized, but Facebook definitely is the most effective.

Also remember on social media, that content is the most important. All of your staff should be taking photos, showing people the staff and how happy they are and all the activities at the casino, as well as encouraging customers to post on their favorite social media sites. It is then up to you to get the user to your website or on your email list so you own that relationship.

5. Affiliate Marketing

An often overlooked marketing tool for customer acquisition, Affiliate Marketing provides hotel/casinos a network of publishers that promote your offer on different websites and online media channels. One thing to remember about Affiliate Marketing is that it is performance-based advertising, not just Cost-Per-Click (CPC), but Cost Per Acquisition (CPA), so the better the commission for the advertiser, the more they will promote you. Sometimes this can be more effective than other online advertising channels. This channel is again most effective for hotel rooms, shows and concerts/events where an online sale can be tracked.

6. Email Marketing to Customers of Travel-Specific Websites

There are not a lot of prospect email databases that work, but there are a few travel deal websites that have collected responsive email databases, upwards of 20MM+, and they work very well when good or "exclusive" deals are provided. These programs are also great for hotel bookings, restaurants, shows, and other non-gaming venues. No specific company is endorsed here, but most ad agencies or direct response

marketing companies will know about these options.

7. Prospect Gaming Database

Most of the customer acquisition tools that have been listed in this article are for non-gaming, since there is no database out there for casinos that has the ADT or true gaming worth of a customer, unless that list has been stolen! However, there is one prospect direct mail database out there where you can extrapolate the player value by reviewing their Credit Card Cash Advances made at competing casinos. The volume of cash advances, average amount and frequency can give you a general guideline for their expected ADT. This database isn't available to everyone, so contact your ATM provider to see if this is available. This program is the only true gaming database that's legally available, and although it is somewhat costly, the ROI is tremendous when done correctly.

8. Strategic Partnerships with Casinos

Strategic Partnerships can be a great way to leverage your player database and another company that has a similar database, but that you don't really compete with. Case in point – most people who gamble in casinos around the country go to Las Vegas at least once a year, so it makes sense to partner with one of these casinos to exchange players. Make sure that if you do a program like this, that it is mutually beneficial and that your casino is getting the best value. Specifically, this means that you should be able to select players from the partner database who reside close to your property, but haven't played there. This program shouldn't have any additional costs besides the mail costs, but opportunity costs may have to be evaluated.

9. Strategic Partnerships with Credit Card and Other Related Companies

Strategic Partnerships can also be created with other companies, such as credit card, hotel, rental car, and other travel-related companies. Many of these relationships will only apply to bigger properties, such as in Vegas, but there are certainly many Indian Casinos and other commercial properties outside of Vegas that can take advantage of these partnerships. For example, a partnership with a credit card company's marketing division can get you access into their database of customers who have made hotel transactions at competing properties. And sometimes your credit card partner will even give you marketing dollars in order to do this, since they benefit from the additional volume of credit card transactions. Yes – this is possible! You just need to be a little creative.

10. Reactivation of Your Inactive Customers

Believe it or not, your best Customer Acquisition option is sitting right in your own database! How is that possible? Well, most casinos only market to their active database, so basically 80% of their database doesn't get marketed to. The reason we don't market to these customers is that direct mail has become too expensive, and some databases are well over 1MM+ and you certainly can't send DM to that many people. The solution is to perform an email append to these customers, so that you get the email addresses of all these inactive customers. The cost of sending an email is so small, that you can send an email to 1MM+ customers without incurring a major cost. The ROI on this is tremendous, as it's always easier to get an old customer back than getting a new customer in.

In conclusion, most of the above Customer Acquisition programs are tried and true, and they all generate ROI. Most of them are also very easy to implement and maintain. Of course, you will have to experiment and see which ones work best for you. Now go out and get some new customers!

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**CASINO MARKETING:
CUSTOMER ACQUISITION
& RETENTION IN THE DIGITAL ERA**

TINO MAGNATTA LAUREN WESTERFIELD STEVE NEELY SIMON FARMER

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I'm Glad to Have the Celebrities, but Proud to Support the Cause

Dennis' wrap up and take on Raving's signature marketing conference

By Dennis Conrad



At Raving's recently concluded [19th Indian Gaming National Marketing Conference](#) at Choctaw Casino Resort in Durant, OK, a longtime friend and colleague whispered to me, "Wow, you really have some big names in Indian country at your event this year!"

And he was right. Ernie Stevens, Jr., the NIGA Chairman, was there for the first time. Notah Begay III, the

Native sports hero and philanthropist, gave the Luncheon Keynote Address, and the President and CEO of Notah's NB3 Foundation, Justin Kii Huenemann, was there throughout, learning, sharing and networking. Sheila Morago, the Executive Director of the Oklahoma Indian Gaming Association, was gracious enough to attend. And so many other leaders. Janie Dillard, the Executive Officer of Operations for the Choctaw Nation. Pam Shaw, the CEO of Kaw Gaming. Joe Nayquonabe, Jr., the Commissioner of Corporate Affairs for Mille Lacs Corporate Ventures. Bryan Hayes, the VP of Financial Analysis and Planning for Foxwoods, along with his talented CEO, Felix Rappaport.

Yes, I'll admit, I enjoyed the "celebrity" aspect of this year's Conference. But what I REALLY liked was the realization that Raving has made a difference in Indian gaming and for tribal organizations.

Raving's efforts at the Conference helped raise nearly \$30,000 for the Notah Begay III Foundation to assist in its work addressing obesity and type 2 diabetes among Native youth. The new [Tribal Spirit of Giving Awards](#) put a spotlight on the magnificent generosity of tribes, which often goes unnoticed. And the Conference sessions and discussions continued to address issues that are both real and important to tribal marketers at their tribal casinos.

So, while I liked being able to call Chairman Stevens, "Ernie," and walking the tradeshow floor with Notah like a wide-eyed groupie, I know it's really about "the cause," however you and your company define it.



Because you can "sell" or "operate" in Indian gaming, or you can choose to be a part of it and make a difference. I know what Raving has chosen, and I am proud that a "piece of our heart" trumps a "piece of our wallet."

Say hello to Dennis and the Raving team at the National Indian Gaming Association's Convention and Tradeshow, April 10-13 in San Diego. Stop by our booth #1129, attend the Marketing Master Class or the two workshops we'll be moderating. And don't forget to buy your tickets to the 2017 [Native Strong Comedy Slam](#) benefiting the Notah Begay III Foundation, Wednesday, April 12, 2017, doors open at 8:30 PM for VIP Guests. For more information about Raving's activities at NIGA, email chris@ravingconsulting.com.

Group Sales: The Unsung Heroes of Our Operations

A story of band-aids and bolt cutters

By [Deana Scott](#)



All hail the Sales Department for creating guest engagement long before guests walk through the door. Let me explain.

Let's be real: in most casino operations, the Slot Department gets what they want. This isn't a criticism, it's just fact. Slots drive revenue, blah, blah. Yes, it is true that we must make sure we focus on our primary product. However,

imagine if we have two rooms filled with slots, one with just the games and one with the amenities, which one is going to survive over time? Clearly it's the one that offers the guest a complete experience.

One department that helps create this experience tends to operate in the background by enhancing the guest experience, and even introducing the property to new and diverse groups. Today I want to salute the unsung heroes of the Group Sales Department. These multitasking, relationship building, crazy people never get credit like the Slot Department, but they deserve recognition, and at least some conversation about what might happen if we took them seriously.

I know we here at Raving have been "raving" about our experience at Choctaw Casino Resort during [Raving's 19th Indian Gaming National Marketing Conference](#) this past January, but I feel like we could all use more to celebrate, and maybe we could learn something about creating loyalty and engagement with our guests by using them as an example.

The sales team has the opportunity to engage with the guest long before their arrival.

This means that they have the ability to make a guest eager to arrive or dreading the decision to come. A great team understands how to showcase the entire property, and how to customize each group's experience. Having managed Group Sales in the past, I understand how much time this requires. Many times these groups begin the sales process years prior to arrival. The property gets one chance to execute on the dream of a perfect event. Unfortunately, too many times I've heard the operations team discount the

importance of this piece of business. I've heard, "oh, that's a hotel thing; they aren't gamers, etc."

When done correctly, sales can enhance your host parties, drive off-season business and create community support that brings more business than you ever expected.

These groups typically come during the business week when we are slow. Most of us need business, right? ***Here are a few ideas for how other departments can help drive product engagement and repeat business:***

- How about using the empty slot tournament machines to host a free slot tournament to get these 200+ people on the floor? Table Games could do the same.
- Slow F&B outlets could offer group themed dinners or happy hour, group trivia or wine tasting. This helps your pre-dinner revenue.
- Players club can offer a sign-up bonus following active play on the final day of the conference.
- We have bowling alleys, theaters, bars, etc. It's time to get creative. It doesn't take much to show these groups you recognize that they bothered to come.

You get my point.

Finally – A final (maybe) shout-out to the Choctaw team. Here a few of the special touches that still make me smile, and make me even happier to celebrate our 20th Anniversary Indian Gaming National Marketing Conference with them next year:

1. The property assigned Chris, our master orchestrator, a conference coordinator, strictly to check in and give support if there were any holes (there were not, but she tells me that it was nice to have a "runner" if she needed one).
2. The airport shuttle waited for us even though we were twenty minutes late, and then Casino Host Nick greeted us by name as we boarded the shuttle. After a long day of travel, that felt amazing.
3. Our shuttle driver pulled over at one of the most amazing convenience stores I've ever seen, and let us grab a snack and stretch our legs. He didn't even need gas.

4. We needed a Sunday evening walkthrough of the event. We didn't hear that they don't work on weekends. The sales team, maintenance and IT were available and eager to help (managers and supervisors, too).
5. Our videographer had requested a cart to carry his gear. He is still gushing about the delivery and quality of the equipment. (Honestly, they may have spoiled him a bit too much).
6. We had a vendor who needed bolt cutters, and guess what? They appeared (check out the photo).



7. I asked about help for turning a room, and a sales army flooded the room to assist. I must admit that I was a bit embarrassed, but thoroughly impressed.
8. We had a conference attendee who needed bandaids, and guess what? They appeared (check out the photo).
9. Our famous millennial Raver, Gency, broke her phone while on site. The Valet Front Services Manager, Jesse Carney, drove her to the shop, and then even stopped at one of the local tourist sites so that she could snap a selfie.
10. Robes, slippers, water and calming oil were delivered for turndown service.



11. Casino Host Tam Ho hosted a slot tournament for attendees. It did get us on the floor. We did sign up for cards, and I saw attendees at slots and table games.
12. The bars and restaurants were filled with attendees laughing, drinking, and even singing. (BTW – If you ever hire our Raving Partner Janet Hawk for an engagement, make sure that the contract requires her to [sing a classic rock song](#) for you. OMG!).

I am sure that there are more. For those of you who attended the conference, please share some of your standout moments on [our FB page](#).

This is engagement. This is what we strive to build with our guests. Creating this level of experience does not happen with just one department. It is possible when a property creates a service of culture from the top down, and gives the team the freedom to take care of the guest.

So I challenge operators to take a trip to the sales office (it may take you some time to find it, but try!). First, say thank you for all that they do. Then find out how you can build experiences within your department that take advantage of these guests who visit your property.

PS – Kudos to the hotel team! Love the note under the bed that read “Yes, we even cleaned under here. Yes, I looked.”

Your Website – Is It Working for You or Against You?

Don't "set and forget" your most responsive medium

By [Mark Astone](#)



Hard to remember life before the Internet. But I do. Fast forward a couple decades and many light years through the digital technology universe, and today your casino website is absolutely essential, and can be a powerful tool in your marketing arsenal – or it can work against you. Here's why:

Like so many, I am an Internet super-user, from finding addresses and phone numbers, to booking hotel rooms and making dinner reservations. If I can do it online, I will – it's a pure timesaver. And there's no doubt that I am loyal to, and spend my money with the businesses that make my life easier and keep me interested. I can tell you in a heartbeat what my favorite and least favorite websites are, and I bet you can too. For example ...

Amazon is great because of the easy and comprehensive Search function. Lots of info and pictures, and I love that your shopping cart doesn't "expire" if you come back the next day to complete a transaction. My least favorite site has a horrible Search function, provides zero detail about its products, and is as visually exciting as craigslist. You couldn't pay me to spend money with this company just on general principle, because they have so little regard for my time or sensibilities. Just thinking about it makes me mad. They could care less about their customers' online experience.

But you care about your customers and recognize that it's important to create and maintain a living, breathing website that will strengthen – not repel, your casino's bond with its audience. Here are some tips to help you get the most benefit from your casino website:

- **Do a comprehensive website audit.** Start with proofing the nuts and bolts. Look for words that are misspelled, bad grammar, inaccurate or (heaven forbid) outdated information. I don't know about you, but I have real trust issues with a company whose website looks like it was carelessly written, or written by a 6th grader.

Incorrect information, like restaurant hours or show times, can result in an inconvenience for guests, and even cause hard feelings. And having *anything*

outdated, such as a promotion that ended yesterday or a holiday buffet from last week, just plain looks bad. And will no doubt drive your boss *crazy!* If someone has to physically log in to the admin side at 9 p.m. on a Saturday to pull down the concert promo, it's worth it!

- **Check for functionality.** How easy is it to make a hotel reservation? Apply for a players club card? Make a dinner reservation at the steakhouse? Do your navigation titles make sense? Do you list hours for outlets? The "Contact" page had only an email form. Check your website's experience with toggling between pages, load speed, responsiveness, etc. Does it navigate you away from the casino website for any reason? I actually could not find a *phone number or address* on a casino website the other day! True story.
- **Stay current and fresh.** Add new content *before* people start looking for it, which means before the first marketing message hits the TV, the mail or Facebook. And if it's out there in advertising, it better be somewhere on your home page, or one may think they have the wrong casino. Remember, your website *supports your marketing messaging*. When someone sees an ad about a promotion or concert and wants more info, chances are that they will go right to your website. What they find when they get there could make or break the conversation that can lead to a visit. Don't let them down (and shoot yourself in the marketing foot).

One of the biggest mistakes we see made with casino websites is "setting and forgetting," which is great for slow cookers, but not great for the most responsive medium on the planet. You want your audience to visit your website often, so keep it interesting by rotating or updating the header images, restaurant images, etc. Promote new slot games. Feature a new winner every day. How about a weekly steakhouse recipe or chef's tip? If you have a major two-month promotion that's driving revenue, it's really important to keep it fresh: update the artwork, add qualifiers or winners' pictures or candid shots of last weekend's huge crowd. *If it's not fresh, then it's stale.* Plus you are telling the audience that *no effort is being made* to entertain them online.

- **Stay on brand.** Your website should be a strong brand ambassador for your casino and reinforce its personality, “voice” and messaging. Whether your brand is hip and cool, refined and elegant, or a hometown hero, your website wants to reflect this. Consistency across all channels – especially your website – strengthens your brand, inconsistency weakens it.
- **Fresh eyes.** It’s very effective to have someone who does not sit and look at your website every day, do a website audit for you, because if you look at something enough times, you stop seeing it. In my circle there are a few go-to people who love to visit casinos and are great sounding boards for me when I need fresh eyes and a player’s perspective. Find your fresh eyes.

If your website is a pleasure to visit, then visitation time and number of pages per visit will be high, which is all information that you can check through Google Analytics.

Your casino’s website wants to be the number one resource for your customers to have their questions answered and learn what you want them to know today, which will hopefully lead to a visit. If you have an engaging, attractive, informative and functional website that keeps your audience engaged, it can inspire real loyalty. Like Amazon.




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What Unique Food Experience Sets You Apart from the Local Competition?

*Big, bigger, biggest ... the **POWER** of food!*

By [Toby O'Brien](#)



For years, my casino marketing consulting experiences frequently wandered into the realm of food. I've championed leveraging food as a guest magnet; a way to bring new customers to properties, to drive incremental visits, to delight players. Native American fry bread handcrafted live on the gaming floor; fresh beignets in a bakery showcase, exploding with powdered sugar as

addictive as cocaine; a seafood buffet boasting unlimited lobster tails dripping with clarified butter; a have-it-your-way, ice cream sundae bar near the players club; pushcarts overflowing with Nathan's Famous hot dogs (IMHO, the **ONLY** real hot dogs) and soft pretzels accompanied by warm, gooey cheddar cheese; really big cinnamon buns available every day for breakfast, oozing that just-short-of-sickeningly sweet, white icing. Yes, the orphaned boys in *Oliver* knew what they were singing about ... **"Food, Glorious Food!"**

Casino marketing and management professionals frequently ask me how they can get drive-by tourists to stop in and visit their properties. My answer: what unique, original product or experience can you offer that nobody else offers; something that sets you apart from the local competition (which, by the way, isn't just other casinos)? How can you create the attraction of the world's tallest thermometer in Baker, California? Or the highest, fastest rollercoaster? Or the biggest diamond in the world? Or the longest saloon bar?

Well, check this out. A few weeks ago, during my first-ever trip to San Antonio, I was introduced to some of the most attention-grabbing, trial-inducing, feature-laden food treats that you can imagine! While Texas isn't known for its CASINOS, it is known for everything **BIG**. So, I bring you the Big, Bigger, Biggest food ideas that are ripe for the picking. Steal or tweak 'em, folks ... it's what us marketers do!

Big Lou's Pizza. Our group of five intentionally visited this famous San Antonio pizza joint during off-hours, because we understood that the ordering line at this place can wrap around the building at mealtimes. Yes, you can order the pizzas small. But you can also order a pizza that's 42-inches in diameter, eaten at a special table created just for groups that can handle that much crust, sauce, cheese and endless toppings. We settled for the 20" and still took home half of it. We did see the colossal pizza being consumed by eight

20-something guys, and they hadn't even made a dent. By the way, very important when it comes to food, size does matter, but it also tasted delicious!

Lulu's. When friends heard that I would be visiting San Antonio, they told me not to miss this little, unassuming diner/cafe. So I put it on my travel itinerary, and our local hosts knew exactly why I was being sent there. It wasn't until I walked in the door that I saw the signs advertising the **3-pound Cinnamon Roll**. A few people were dining at tables, but most were just standing in line at the small counter, waiting to order the absolutely **HUGE** bun! Our party of six waited along with the rest for our roll to be delivered, took it out to the car and with just a small plastic knife in hand, proceeded to tear into the mountain-sized monster. Again, not just **BIG**, but baked perfectly through, even in the very center. None of that uncooked, doughy stuff disappointed us in the middle. Delicious ... but I still wonder, how **DO** they get the frosting in every bite?!

Round Rock Donuts. Round Rock, just outside of Austin, is home to the gigantic donut. When my cousin walked in with us and ordered "a donut," the guy behind the register asked if she meant a dozen donuts, but she replied, "No, just a donut." And then we saw it ... a mega-donut, actually bigger than our heads, slathered in chocolate icing, made from the dough of ... wait for it ... wait for it ... a dozen donuts. The photo on the next page, taken of Marge and me by my cousin, was just before we dug in. Only complaint? No knives, not even plastic ones, to use at the picnic tables outside; we had to sever off pieces with the end of a coffee stirrer. And yes, we took 2/3 of it home. Everybody goes to Round Rock Donuts ... locals and tourists; the parking lot is filled to overflowing, cars lined up in the driveway and flooding into the street.

Central Market. In San Antonio, this is the **SHRINE** of food shoppers. It's not just **BIG**, it's a true experience. The displays are phenomenal ... you really can't keep your hands off the food. I think you can buy anything there; picture a combination of Trader Joe's, Whole Foods, your local farmers' market, Total Wine, a wall of freshly-baked bread that could make a gluten-free person cry, a cheese emporium, a seemingly endless wall of candy, a guy offering tastes of a selection of just-brewed coffee, and a café area where you can pick up or order almost anything in the store and eat it, including a variety of gelato. Plus, there's live music. We were in San Antonio for a week ... and visited Central Market

four times. Why do I mention this here in a casino marketing article? Do your slot machines scream out “Try me! Play me! I could be the next big payout!”? Is your slot floor inviting, do signs point out recent winners? Are your slot attendants and dealers showing players how your newest slots and table games work? Do your employees offer tastes of your latest restaurant offerings?

Food. It’s not just the way to a man’s stomach. It can be the highway for first-time guests and loyal customers to help you drive visits and revenue! **Check out our Raving Hospitality Partner Brett Magnan’s operational look at food product on [page 8](#).**



Social Media Just a Time Waster? Not So Fast ...

Using social media data to learn about your players

By [Az Husain](#)



I have a good friend who spends a lot of time on Facebook. She posts interesting anecdotes about her daughter's school activities, hilarious family vacation stories, and lots of pre-meal pictures of food. Most of my friends know that I spend very little time on social networking sites. But when I do have some time to indulge in online social voyeurism, I actively seek out her posts because of the hilarity and wittiness of her writing.

I asked her one day about where she finds the time to post as often as she does. She explained that she usually posts on the go from her phone, because she wants her friends to feel like they are active participants in her life. She reasoned that her online social presence was a logical extension of her physical presence. When she posts something new, she immediately gets feedback from her friends through likes and comments that amplify and validate her social presence, which is similar to if she were actually in the presence of her friends.

This feedback loop allows her to judge the effectiveness of her online message. If she tells a funny story, she expects and receives a high number of comments and likes. But if the story falls flat, she won't see the "love." And she needs this feedback to create better posts.

Data analytics in disguise

As I listened intently to my friend's explanation of her online behavior, I suddenly had an epiphany – my friend was using these signals of data to evaluate how effectively her message was resonating with her audience. Moreover, she uses this insight to better create new messages that allow for deeper engagement. I was stunned. She is a data analyst in disguise!

Your casino's online social presence is a logical extension of the on-property casino experience. What you say and how you interact has implications for player engagement. But to understand that engagement and to influence behavior requires that data be harnessed in a way that creates insight.

Data analysts use various techniques to understand the effectiveness of messages shared through social channels. The data captured is used to find ways to better engage with audiences. Social analytics allow for the collection and aggregation of social media data in order to discover meaningful

patterns that may lead to actionable insight.

Data to insight: Using social analytics to evaluate progress of investments

When you execute a marketing program, you will often run a social campaign in parallel. Many times this is done to spread the message to a wide audience within social channels. However, in addition to a "louder mouthpiece," social campaigns return data signals that can be mined, allowing you to better understand the impact of your investment. Likes, shares, retweets, views, responses, etc., can help you craft a story that explains how the investment is playing out over time. And to truly assess impact, this data may be tied back to on-property engagement in order to evaluate current or future game play.

You can also see a historic view of social media followers you have gained each day and compare that to the followers of your competitors. This type of comparative analysis, which is especially helpful in hyper-competitive markets, can arm your marketing team with key indicators that showcase relative performance. You can also gauge the impact of your followers by assessing their social influence. If your follower base is high and they mention your property, the social impact of the message can be more broad-based.

Although these techniques are not a complete assessment of the true reach of all your property's messages, they can serve as a useful proxy to help guide the impact of investment decisions.

Insight to action - Social analytics help you better allocate resources

The ultimate panacea for a marketer is to apply action from learned insight that saves money, and increases revenue. For example, upcoming entertainment and gaming promotions usually have some correlated social response. Marketers can create targeted offers to social media influencers who could further amplify your message to their large networks of followers. Additionally, Facebook and Twitter data can return who your followers are. And in some cases, the tweets can be geocoded to show where users are physically located. This may help you create geo-targeted messages for your audience.

There are also advanced ways to evaluate the sentiment of social posts over populations of users. Your patrons are telling you something: "Your free play promo is awesome!" or

“I hate your chicken wings” or “Your hotel bathrooms need more soap.” Whatever the message, your patrons may be using social networking methods to communicate with you. Sentiment analysis is a type of data automation that simplifies the process of evaluating the tone in Twitter or Facebook messages. For example, if patrons complained about the food in the casino bar and consistently talked about it on social media, you can use that data to identify where the negative sentiment is coming from, address the problem internally, and follow up with directed messages to the complaining patrons.

Where to start

Use free tools – Start by using the analytics tools within the social media networks themselves. [Twitter Analytics](#), for example, tells you at a glance your number of tweets, tweet impressions, profile visits, mentions and followers. [Facebook Insights](#) gives you page post metrics, such as the number of people that posts have reached, clicks and reactions. And all of this can be exported to Excel.

Analyze your followers – Many of your social users are players who will spend money with you. Take the time to get to know who they are and how they respond in social interactions as a population.

Analyze reach – Evaluate how your posts are performing. Shares, likes/favorites, retweets, views, etc. It is best to evaluate this performance over time.

Identify influencers – Influencers don’t necessarily have to be famous or spend money with you. They can be people hidden in your list of contacts who create a disproportionate amount of activity. Use your social data to identify these people in order to amplify your messages.

As for my Facebook friend, I can’t stop reading her posts. I just finished watching a video that she posted of a leopard caring for a baby baboon. Well ... I suppose not all of her posts are witty. But I sure do come back for more every time.

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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Motivating Through Value-Driven Leadership

Why fake concern and phony efforts to motivate are dead giveaways for manipulation

By [Marie Maher, Ph.D.](#)



One of the most enjoyable aspects of executive recruitment is that I spend most of my workday talking with senior leaders in major businesses throughout the United States and Canada. They often talk with me about their leadership effectiveness challenges, and ask for my thoughts and mentorship on complex issues around motivating their teams. I

frequently open the discussion about being genuine – how people can, and do, sense if you are being authentic. I cannot stress enough how much this matters in leading and motivating others. Haven't you ever thought, "Yeah, right. She wants me to do as she says, not as she does!" I'm sure that you've had bosses who you simply cannot respect, and haven't you found it a challenge to do as they wish?

For many years, I have engaged with diverse workplace teams to enhance their productivity and effectiveness. There are people in every audience who want a "quick fix" to dealing effectively with people. These are the same people who want to read about a thirty-minute solution, or think that they can learn in a seminar everything needed to effectively [motivate](#) people forever in work and daily life. I often think that these are the same people who used to say "do it because I say to, or you're fired," until times changed and that became politically incorrect. They still have that same perspective, but want a safer quick fix to make people do what THEY want them to do.

All of those quick fix solutions are superficial. They don't make for a lasting, systemic, positive change in your workplace team. There simply is no one set of rules to address being an effective leader and motivator. Leading other people effectively is not a "one size fits all proposition." Don't believe me? Then I suggest you go to the Amazon website and type in the search words: leadership, management, motivation, or team building. How many "experts" are there who stand ready to give you all the answers? Many more than you have the time to count, let alone read! Logic and [common sense](#) tell you that if any single one or group of these books had the one key magical solution, all good leaders would be using that special tool. But there isn't one solution, because there isn't one type of team, or leader, or organizational dynamic.

Really becoming a motivational [human being](#) that other people will respect, appreciate, and ultimately want to follow, is a lifetime journey. Key pieces fall into place as we learn, grow, and mature in life. Motivational styles are not separate from personality, values, choices, and beliefs. This constellation of attributes is what makes some leaders, both in the workplace and in the community, highly effective and respected individuals.

So many of our greatest motivators are unpretentious people who are authentic and engaged with their life and tasks in a way which others find encouraging and inspirational. These are the genuine people who have little need to point out their own strengths to others, and who usually find doing so off-putting.

I am sure someone comes to mind in your own life who fits that bill. Don't you have a colleague who always goes beyond expectations and doesn't require public kudos? Don't you volunteer with someone who always seems able to pick up the larger burden, and does so self-effacingly? People like this do so because it is who they are, who they have chosen and created themselves to be throughout their life journey. They are genuine and authentic. They are worthy of respect. They're the real deal. And don't kid yourself. In any workplace, in any community, these people are always valued and they are truly appreciated, sometimes more than they know. They have made conscious choices about what matters to them, and they enhance these choices with personal values every day. They live their lives [consciously](#).

In a very real sense, being a motivational leader is about who you are, not what you do. Your colleagues KNOW when you are not being real with them. They see fake concern and phony efforts to motivate them as you being manipulative. At the end of the day, people may have to work, but they don't have to be manipulated. If they think you are doing that, they will not perform as desired.

I'd like to recommend an excellent book written by Fred Kofman, Ph.D., *Conscious Business: How to Build Value Through Values*. His premise is that productive leaders, workplaces, and teams practice authentic, value-driven behaviors consistently. That may seem simple. You say, "well, who doesn't do that?" Dr. Kofman believes, as do I, that most companies, leaders, and teams do NOT do this.

Dr. Kofman uses the terminology “Integral Business,” meaning business that is conscious and respectful of both inner and outer worlds, and which takes into account body, mind, spirit, as well as self, culture, and nature. This calls for mindfulness, and a holistic sense of understanding that the workplace is not just a place where a person goes to earn a paycheck. Rather, it is a canvas upon which an aspect of a person’s life is drawn and expressed regularly. By consciously involving concepts such as self and culture, we can constructively build upon effectiveness in mixed ethnic teams, as well as mixed age cohorts. Issues of cultural and tribal understanding become easier to grasp, as do the reasons why colleagues make the choices they do. Understanding these aspects is vital to understanding other human beings with whom we interface daily.

Within this construct, obviously the idea of “do it or get fired” is so irrelevant as to be shamefully ludicrous. As a belief system, this is a dinosaur that is, and should be, extinct in our lives today.

Ask yourself: in my job and community, can and do I express and practice conscious, value-driven behaviors and choices daily? Am I allowed and encouraged to lead a value-driven team? Is my own superior in the reporting chain someone whom I would classify as a value-driven, fully conscious, and authentic human being? Do I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day? Do I give others that opportunity? Do I relate with others in an authentic manner as a genuine human being all the time?

Dr. Kofman says, “Conscious employees require conscious managers if they are to fully commit their energy to organizational goals.” To put this in different terms, he is saying that if you are an authentic, value-driven employee, you need to see those traits in your management, or you will feel disconnected. And we know what happens when team members disconnect, don’t we?

Leadership is a gift and a challenge. Those of us fortunate enough to have this opportunity must strive to emulate the best in value-driven motivation.

Welcome to the Raving family!

Our new partners offer expanded resources and services for casino clients



Sarah Procopio, Database Analytics

Sarah was selected as part of Raving’s Database Analytics team for her exceptional analytical, quantitative and problem-solving skills and deep experience in data driven marketing.



Chris Keenan, Tribal Artist Program and Retail Optimization

With her vast experience in retail and Tribal economic development, Chris can help clients build a new retail enterprise from start to finish, upgrade their current program, or custom build a Tribal Artist Program specific to their needs.



Marie Maher, Executive Recruitment

Marie started her own successful executive search firm specializing in Gaming, Hospitality, and Tribal Leadership positions. Raving clients benefit from Marie’s experience in gaming as she utilizes that knowledge to find the best fit possible.



Brett Magnan, Hospitality

Brett was asked to join the Raving Hospitality Team because of his strong leadership and managerial skills and his wealth of experience operating high-quality hotels, casino resorts, spas, and food and beverage facilities.

Contact Amy Hergenrother to learn more about how Raving’s newest team members can help your property.

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How to Design Happiness (Part 1)

How your property can capitalize on anticipation

By John Stewart



The importance and influence of design is becoming more and more mainstream. You can design your dream closet, your Paleo-friendly meal kit, your own personalized Nike shoe, and there is even a whole philosophy about designing your perfect life and career. So what if I told you that there is a way to design happiness for your customers? It's not that much of a stretch, really; Disney has been

designing happy for decades.

So, what is happy, and how do we design to it? Think about this a little deeper with me. In reality, we can only describe an event after it takes place. So, dissecting the experience, we can think of it as a story with three different chapters. 1) The **anticipation** of the experience, 2) the **actual experience** itself, and 3) the **memory of the experience**.

As operators and designers, we need to get laser-focused on each chapter of the experience, and the opportunities each provides to design happiness for our customers. In the first chapter of this three-part series, we will take a look into the mysterious and compelling force that is anticipation.

Chapter 1: Anticipation

Anticipation is a powerful emotion that many psychologists believe is an integral part of the happiness equation. In fact, studies have shown that most consumers get more satisfaction out of the anticipation phase than the acquisition phase. Put yourself in your guests' shoes for a moment, and think about booking your next vacation. As soon as the trip planning begins, the excitement begins to build. You tell friends. You start to picture the ocean, hearing the waves, feeling the splash of water on the deck of the catamaran excursion you booked, or tasting the diver scallops at the beachside restaurant. We tend to experience more intense emotions about future events than those in the past, so there is a key opportunity here to build up the hype to happiness for your customers by engaging their imagination.

Tapping into the anticipation emotion is part of designing the customer experience, prior to the experience itself. This part of the journey is all about creating curiosity, fantasy and exclusivity.

Think about this in terms of your web, social and direct mail marketing. Evoke your customers' inner curiosity by giving snack size previews of experiences to come. Have a hot new act? Post a few-second teaser video that hints at, but doesn't quite reveal the artist. Offer a first glimpse into a new venue or hint of a big giveaway, but withhold the full reveal for the call to action or in-person experience. What can you hide to build excitement during this phase? Cultivate an air of secrecy and intrigue to fuel anticipation.

Tempting your visitors by highlighting the promise of good things to come is another way to build anticipation.

In preparation for the launch of The New Revolution Galactic Attack, the world's first virtual/augmented reality roller coaster, the Six Flags Magic Mountain website offers a first-person glimpse into that virtual world, as experienced by the roller coaster rider. As an added kick, they offer an "exclusive chance to be one of the first to ride."

Or take the Fiat Live Store in Brazil, which gives online visitors an inside view of cars and features through the store's live webcam. What can your casino reveal that gives customers something to look forward to? Happiness experts at Stanford have proven that anticipating a pleasurable experience feels as good as finishing an important task.

Timing

Creating a sense of urgency and scarcity is nothing new in provoking anticipation; "limited time offer" and "while supplies last" works for a reason; we are hardwired to desire what we perceive as exclusive. It makes us feel special. But let's look at this from another angle. Take an emerging trend in the hospitality industry, The Branded Experience. Wyndham Hotel Group started offering discounted or complimentary experiences for its loyalty members, like street food tours in Mexico City or an indoor skydiving experience in Orlando. Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts offers more than 40 different "Extraordinary Experiences," from reliving the film *Pretty Woman* in Beverly Hills, to traveling around Southern France and Italy by vintage car (a 1960 Giulietta Spider, for you car buffs). Now, while most can't offer this elite level of exclusivity, think of how this could translate to your property. **What "curated" or branded experience can you offer your customer to continue the anticipation fantasy, and make them feel like they are part of an exclusive club?**

Don't drop the ball

Okay, so the rooms are booked and the excitement has been mounting, but the anticipation stage doesn't stop there. Remember, your guests have been hyping up this experience for some time, so don't let the hype plummet before they put their bags in their room. How does your front entry, lobby and guest services continue building upon the excitement and evoke the feelings of curiosity, fantasy and exclusivity?

Energizing, fun music as you pull up to the valet or parking structure can keep that momentum going and draw your guests inside with anticipation. Take a look at your landscaping and portico. It should be meticulous, speak to your brand, and create an enticing feeling of entering somewhere new. Is there a unique, recognizable scent that greets you upon entry? Scent is our most powerful memory sense, which will come in handy later ([see my article on the five senses challenge](#)). Is your lobby designed to give you an alluring hint of what's around the corner, or does it give it all away at the first glance? Are there teasers of great things to come, like photos of a delicious dinner at the fine dining restaurant, the new 3D slot machine, or the signature drink at the center bar? And are your employees just as excited about offering personalized experiences and services to your guests?

You want the initial guest experience to live up to or go beyond their expectations. They should feel enveloped and transported upon entering the property, eager to live out the trip they've been imagining for weeks. Again, think about happy as a three-part story. By successfully creating the feeling of anticipation, your guests are led seamlessly into the experience itself, leading to a more fulfilling, gratifying customer experience.

Look for Part II (How to Design Happiness: Focus the Actual Experience) in a future Raving publication.



The New VIP Experience

The challenge for casino operators to accommodate these superfans

By Kell Houston



There is a growing trend in the concert industry business that is beginning to impact casinos offering concerts. The VIP Experience is an add-on service that numerous Artists have brought on board to enhance the concert experience for their fans and fan clubs, to increase their fan base, and to push their own revenue stream.

Let's call it an enhanced or elevated fan experience.

And to complicate this even more, this type of add-on is handled directly by the group's management, an outside company, or you may even find that the Artist's agency takes on this service. So you have another entity in your mix to manage.

Most casinos offer their own VIPs (players and shareholders) a meet and greet, perhaps some additional swag. This new, elevated fan experience is geared for superfans who are most likely not your VIPs.

So, here's some challenges for casino resorts:

- How many prime seats do you need to surrender? How does this impact your overall ticket sales and marketing?
- How do you manage these separate events so as not to confuse your own VIPs, or cut into your own schedule?
- What if your own VIPs want the same enhanced experience? What if concert-goers have a poor experience?
- How can you profit from these VIP experiences?

Here's an example for a "THAT'S MY KIND OF NIGHT LUKE BRYAN VIP EXPERIENCE":

- One (1) premium reserved ticket in the first (20) rows of the lower bowl or one (1) general admission pit ticket*
- Invitation to 'Luke's Lounge' before the show, featuring:
 - Two song acoustic pre-show performance by Luke Bryan
 - Complimentary snacks and a cash bar**

- One (1) exclusive Luke Bryan VIP merchandise gift
- One (1) commemorative laminate
- On-site concert concierge

How do you manage these separate events so as not to confuse your own VIPs, or cut into your own schedule?

Included in almost all of these packages is a meet and greet with the Artist. They will want to do this "Fan Club"/"VIP" meet and greet along with your casino meet and greet (that you've negotiated), so keep in mind that this can become a little lengthy and confusing. Sometimes it will require finding a separate room that they can set up in as well. In most of these packages, they will be giving the "fan" some merchandise from the Artist. This merchandise is often shipped in separately. A recent experience I had was that the merchandise never arrived, so the people who had paid extra for all of this got quite upset and pushed blame on the casino.

How many prime seats do you need to surrender? How does this impact your overall ticket sales and marketing?

The packages vary greatly, but the bottom line is that they need to get involved with your ticket sales, and they ask for you to hold your announce and on sale dates, to coordinate with their client's (Artist's) fan club pre-date. They ask you to hold a certain number of your prime seating for them to sell and include in their enhanced experience for fans or customers who want more than just a ticket to the show. Depending on your marketing region, the number they ask for can be as many as 50 tickets or more. They do pay for those tickets at your listed cost, as they sell their packages, but often times they want those prime seats held up until very close to the actual show date. Typically, these prime tickets are already being held for your own VIPs and Tribal members, so you see how this can become an issue.

What I am suggesting to our properties that we work with, is that we limit the number of tickets we will hold in our best seating sections. For example, we will hold (10) tickets initially, and then if those are sold, we will open up another (10) tickets. Holding the large number that some of these people request is ridiculous.

How can you profit from these VIP experiences?

As mentioned above, these “resellers” pay retail for these prime tickets, so overall, this does help your ticket sales. One of the big questions floating around is should this be a revenue share situation, like selling Artist merchandise at your concert? This remains to be determined, but initially there is a push back from these companies and Artists regarding any revenue split.

What if your VIPs want the same enhanced experience? What if concert-goers have a poor experience?

You can always offer this to your own VIPs, by directing them to the outside people, or you can cut your own deal with the outside company to buy a certain number of these tickets for your VIPs, giving them that extra special experience. There are a lot of creative options available for you to consider.

With regards to poor experiences, you need to make sure that you manage these outside services’ onsite and online presence. Their actions and way of doing business directly impact your casino image and brand. These outside companies or “add-on” services need to be held accountable. Be very clear about what you will do, how it will be managed, and what your expectations are. Make sure that you have a direct contact person and a paper trail. Get everything in writing and make sure that they understand how your casino does business.

Keep in mind that we are all trying to create good partnerships and successful events. Your customer is also a fan, in most cases. So it is important that your customer is pleased with their experience, since it reflects directly on your casino.

This will be an ongoing and developing story. Stay tuned.

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Looking Beyond the Point of Redemption to Better Connect with Customers

Lace up your hiking boots; we're going for a climb

By [Nicole Barker](#)



Our relationship with our customer is a journey. The Monthly Free Play offer is only a split second on this pathway. It's a fleeting moment in time. And yet, we agonize over the size of the coupon. We fixate on the redemption rate. We let the reflection of ROI from the Direct Mail program measure our efforts to drive business throughout the month.

It's time to recast customer relationships beyond a 2D result.

Think about mountain climbing. Unless you have a helicopter, mountain climbing is a journey from the base to the peak and back again. So too is the journey for a player from card usage to coupon redemption and back again.

First, our player gets her gear on to forge a path to our door. She signs up for a card. We send her an offer. The Free Play offer is at the top of the mountain. How long does she get to stay at the top of the mountain? The air is too thin. An oxygen-deprived climber gets minutes after months of preparation. And then it's over and her weary muscles make the descent. We hope it was a winning experience. We hope the skies are clear. We hope the celebration runs deep. But the journey down is as long as the journey up. Except this time, on the way back down, the journey is known and without the redeemed offer, and without the rush at the top.

Currently, the only measure and understanding we have of the customer is at the point of redemption. In the click-whir environment of Direct Mail, that's not enough to justify the expense and make a memory. Did we win the day with our offer? Frankly, I don't care. I am in the relationship business. I want to win the next trip and the next trip and the next trip. Loyalty marketing is based upon the anticipation leading up to redemption, the moment of redemption, and the aftermath of redemption. We can't leave our climbers hanging in an oxygen-deprived environment, placing the impact of our endeavors solely on one touch point.

Our relationship is a give and take of touch points orchestrated by the marketer and behaviors as measured by trips and spend by the customer. Let's track this trek to develop better insights into how we can build a relationship that is fruitful and ongoing.

Conditioning

In order to get an offer from us, a player has to establish a value. That's their way of conditioning for this journey. The spend during one trip sets the valuation of ADT for upcoming Free Play offers. Months of play determine the basket of benefits proffered by the Tiered Club program.

Exasperation

The climb to prove one's worth has its perils. It may take too long to be recognized. The way a player plays may not match the way the program is set to recognize worth. If a player plays every day in lower amounts, she most likely will not benefit from Free Play coupons or Points.

Anticipation

This is why a player plays: not for the jackpots or the bonus rounds. A player plays for that moment before an anticipated win. She chases the bounty. She imagines basking in the windfall. It's at this point when the brain releases dopamine. The thrill is at its peak before the summit when Free Play is redeemed or the machine's bells go off.

Surreality

In the moment, at the summit, at the point of redemption, watching the bonus reels spin; it's the eye of the storm. This is a surreal moment when time stops. It's not fun. It just is. There's a reason why a slot player keeps her finger on the button. She's ready to climb again. We may speak of wins and losses, but it's the pursuit that we feel.

Exhilaration

After the win, after the point of redemption, after the chase; it's the time when a player looks around for witnesses. A player concocts a story that she will tell her friends. In

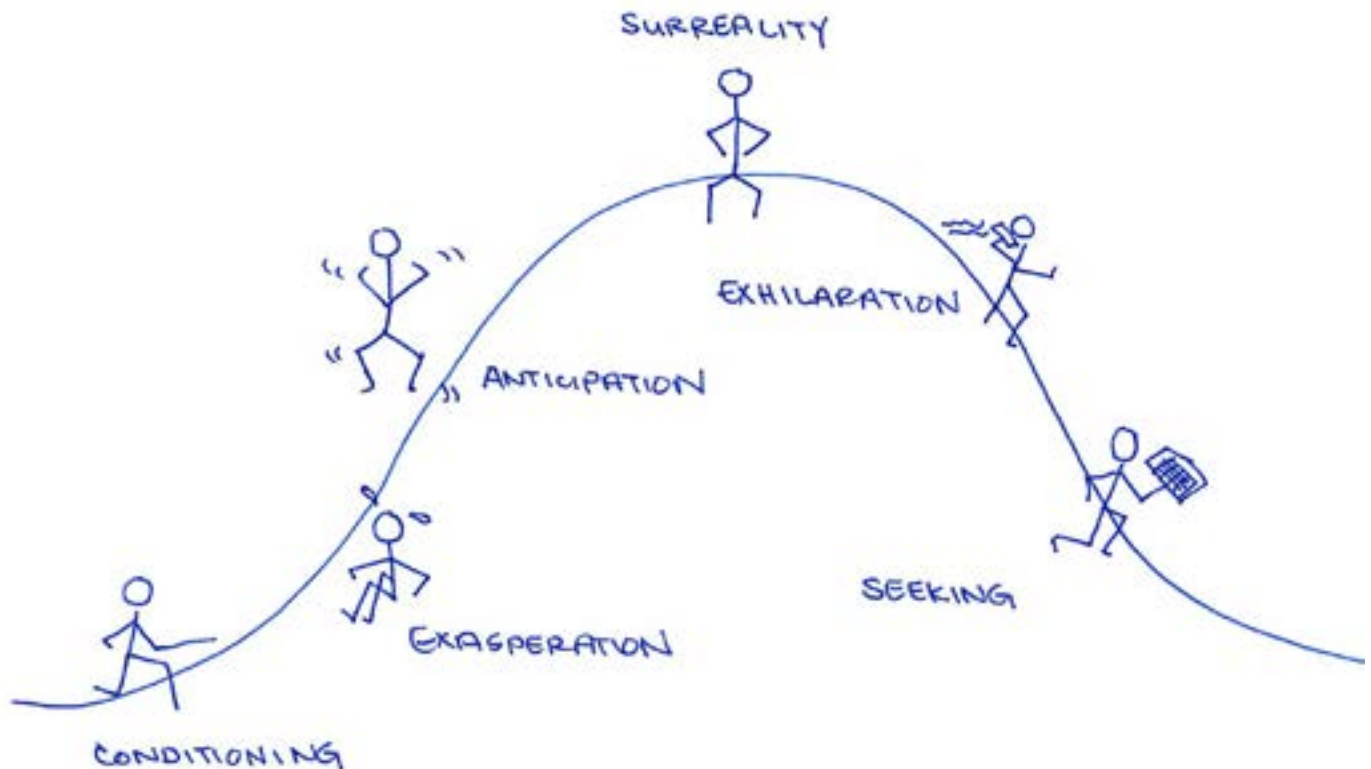
many ways, life is in the telling and not in the living. This is where we store the fuel for the next pursuit. This is where we either have buyer's remorse, or an increased sense of self-worth. When a person leaves a movie theater, we don't think of buyer's remorse. When a person leaves a casino, we assume that remorse for losses takes a larger role. Both people spent money. The difference is that the moviegoer now has a crafted story to tell. She can equally have a critique that she can feel as passionate about sharing. The same can be true of the gamer. She had a much more active pursuit of a story to tell. The question is whether she has a cohort to share it with.

Seeking

When the dust settles, it's the memory of the pursuit that will either prompt or dissuade the next visit. Mountaineers relish the peaks that took several attempts to conquer.

There is respect for a result that isn't always within reach. The question is how many obstacles are in the way of provisioning for the next expedition.

Each of these milestones offer a treasure trove of opportunity for marketing touch points. These are now new channels for buying the business. But do we need to buy it to facilitate loyalty? Recognizing the customer, cheering them on, and giving them avenues to share their stories are all means to put value into the journey. Fortunately, we have robust data to set triggers for interaction along the journey and many means of connecting with the customer beyond the monthly mailer.



How the Worst Promotion I Was Ever Involved in ... (Part I)

Was the best thing that ever happened

By [Janet Hawk](#)



So many times we design a promotion or event, and it looks so awesome ... on paper. You've picked the perfect title/theme, the prizes are amazing, and there is just NO WAY that your guests won't have a great time, and the ROI will be THROUGH THE ROOF! Right?!

Well, not always.

Years ago, in another century and a galaxy far, far away, I was involved in a promotion that appeared to meet all of those criteria. It was however, to this day, one of the worst experiences I ever had in a casino, and one that I will never forget, because it helped me transition from operations to marketing, and taught me several important lessons.

This was back in the days before TITO, downloadable credits, and free play. In fact, the industry had just begun the journey into technology with casino management systems and players cards. In many ways, we were still dealing with countless manual processes, including comp issuance. More on that later ...

The premise ...

The promotion SEEMED simple: the promotion would be run at two properties (sister properties located approximately 30 miles apart), a system of "funny money" would be created ("Casino Cash" for purposes of this article) that guests could earn in numerous ways over a 90-day period. The finale would be held at the larger property. A huge tent was erected in the parking lot, where there would be an auction that included a real auctioneer to add to the excitement. Guests would bring all the Casino Cash they were able to collect during those 90 days and use it to bid on a variety of items, from small tchotchkes to a brand new car. Awesome!

Now a few details ...

The Casino Cash was broken down into several denominations, from \$20 bills all the way to \$25,000 bills, and eve-

rything in between. There was no requirement for having a player card. Guests could earn their cash in a variety of ways within the casino. A few examples:

- Any transaction at casino restaurants, hotel, spa, gift shop, or any other onsite venues.
- Hopper fills, hand-paid jackpots, buy-ins on tables, cage transactions, etc.
- Valet parking their car.
- Hourly, actively playing on slots or tables.

Each activity or transaction was "assigned" a specific dollar amount for the guest to receive. For instance, a hopper fill would earn the guest \$50 in Casino Cash. We were instructed to be extremely conservative with larger denominations, such as \$5,000 and above. In other words, only management could approve those larger denominations in order to try to "control" distribution.

There were considerable problems that occurred with this promotion, which you will likely see. For both parts of this article, I will focus on three specific problems that caused the most grief, but taught the biggest lessons.

Problem #1

The issuance of the Casino Cash was pretty much left up to the discretion of the employee. While we were given a basic outline, there were too many opportunities for deviation, and it was really a manual process with no solid auditing trail. As long as there weren't too many requests for additional Casino Cash, nothing was said. So if you were a "favorite" guest, you could receive extra cash. If you were considered a high maintenance guest, you could get slighted. It wasn't based on play.

Also, there was a big difference between the two properties in terms of size, amenities/venues in which to earn the cash, and add to that the fact that the larger property had no competition within 20 miles, while the smaller was surrounded by larger properties in a highly competitive area. Even though they were owned by the same company, they were separate entities and had vastly different marketing strategies.

LESSONS?

- The first and most obvious: Always require a players card to participate in a promotion. I know times have changed, but I still see some who overlook this requirement. If we would have set this up as a “play x, get y” style promotion, based on play, we could have alleviated the discretionary distribution of the Casino Cash, which literally blew up and caused a HUGE problem during the auction (more on that in Part II). Might there be occasions where you don’t make that a requirement? Maybe, but that is the exception, not the rule.
- Requiring a players card and basing all issuances on play would have made it more consistent and clear on how to earn Casino Cash, as well as increased revenue. You play more, you get more.
- It would have given us an audit trail for dispute resolution, not to mention a more accurate analysis of the success (or lack thereof) of the promotion. As it stood, any analysis done wasn’t specific, merely general, and couldn’t be directly tied back to the promotion.

Problem #2

Remember, this was back in the days before TITO and all the wonderful things that have come along through advancements in technology and gaming systems. The slot department, specifically, was kept busy enough due to multiple manual processes in order to take care of players. To have the team stop everything, every hour, to run through the casino and issue Casino Cash to those “actively gaming” was a nightmare! Other departments (Security, Housekeeping, F&B) were added to distribute the cash and support, but that didn’t correct the problem. It just exacerbated it.

The scammers had a field day, especially on high traffic shifts! They quickly caught on that there were “opportunities,” and took advantage where they could. Participants knew that we had to issue the cash every hour, so some would sit at a machine and put one coin in when they saw an employee coming. Others would just claim that they were missed and would usually just be given the cash. It was just easier to give them the cash than argue.

LESSONS?

- Again, like above, requiring a players card to participate would have stopped the abuse. The biggest lesson for us was to get input from every department from the beginning! In all honesty, I’m not sure who yelled louder at the poor Marketing Department: guests or fellow employees. It really was a dispute tsunami that went on for 90 days. Our marketing department took responsibility, LISTENED, compiled detailed notes, and discussed possible solutions. Because of the gaming jurisdiction we were in at that time, no changes could be made to any promotion. So we had to ride it out.

But afterwards, a promotion committee was established that had representatives from every department, and not just management! We asked that we had people from frontline AND back of house, including surveillance. This really helped fine-tune future promotions from every point of view. It is a method that I use (and have written about) to this day. Not only does this help avoid some of the problems experienced in this particular promotion, but it gave others a chance to participate in all aspects of the promotion process. By involving all departments in this process, they developed a sense of ownership. A definite bonus!

I will save the best (or worst) for last! The finale was another experience that I will never forget. I blame some of my hearing loss on this promotion, but more on that later!

How to Measure Player Engagement vs. Property Performance ...

Before the player steps on site

By [Carter Buck](#)



Wait, did I read that correctly? “How to measure your player’s engagement versus your property’s performance ... before the player ever steps on property.” Sounds contradictory and a little crazy, right? Let me explain by asking you a series of questions:

- How do your future players/guests contact your property?
- How do your new or existing players contact you to get answers or service?
- What is the experience like when these guests call the number on your website?
- Is the guest put on hold? If so, for how long?
- When the guest is transferred, what is their wait time? Do they reach the department or destination in a timely manner?
- Did the guest get the answers and/or results that they were looking for?

If you hesitated or had to stop and think about these questions, you’re not alone. Most properties deal with these same issues. Similar to how a Marketing Department evaluates its promotional offers or a PD Department evaluates its player reinvestment strategy, it only makes sense that you evaluate your player engagement process and performance BEFORE the guest steps on property. It sounds simple, right? An ideal phone call might look something like this:

1. Guest calls the property’s main line.
2. Guest asks to speak to someone about Player Rewards.
3. Guest is transferred to Rewards Center.
4. Rewards Center helps guest.
5. Guest hangs up happy.

The challenge for most properties’ phone engagements with guests is establishing a consistent experience for the guest. If every phone conversation sounded like the one above, we’d be all set. But anyone who has spent even a short period of time as a manager knows that it takes time, training and resources to get your team up to par with their job duties and department expectations. But what about their ability to direct the guest to other departments? Do they embrace the company culture? Are they aware of the current offers and promotions? What happens when they leave the property or transfer to another department?

So what does all of this mean, and how can I improve player engagement before guests step on property?

The first step in identifying areas of improvement is to evaluate how well your property is currently performing. Here are six simple questions that you can ask your team:

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1. Who is answering the calls? PBX system operator? Host? Security department?
2. How many calls do you get per hour? Per day?
3. What is the average wait time per call?
4. How many calls that come in get transferred to another department?
5. Was the guest transferred to the correct department?
6. How many guests hang up satisfied?

Ask yourself these six questions, then ask your team. Give them some time to think about the answers, and then bring everyone together. Make sure that they see the value and understand how crucial it is to engage players before they step on property. With some teams, simply bringing awareness like this can drive behavior; other teams may require

additional training and education. If you have the capacity, dig into these questions. Find out how well your property performs or doesn't perform. From there you have the metrics for how the property has been performing, and you can start to monitor them from month to month.

Have additional questions or want to chat? Feel free to reach out; we'd love to help! Contact Amy Hergenrother at 775-329-7864, or email her at amy@ravingconsulting.com.

CASINO PROMOTIONS DEVELOPMENT & ROI
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 DATABASE MARKETING ANALYSIS PLAYER REINVESTMENT
 & FREE PLAY GUEST SERVICE TRAINING PLAYER SALES SKILLS
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 FACILITATION ONLINE CASINO OPERATIONAL SLOT ANALYSIS
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PROMOTION ANALYSIS GAMING AND NON-GAMING

OHIO

Eldorado Scioto Downs (Scioto) Crappy Beer Night!



Last year, for a period of time, on Tuesdays, Eldorado Scioto Downs held “Crappy Beer Night” from 6-10 PM at their new Brew Brothers Restaurant and Brewery. \$1.50 Crappy Beer cans included Miller High Life, Natural Light, Pabst Blue Ribbon, Busch Light and Rolling Rock. They also offered an \$8 Chef Special “PooPoo Platter” that featured Fried Mac and Cheese Bites, Onion Rings, Fried Pickles and Chef Geno’s Brew Pockets. According to Eldorado Scioto Downs management, the target of this promotion was Millennials, and the main purpose was not to drive direct gaming revenue but to drive visitation to the property and begin to establish relationships with a younger clientele. This “Blue collar beer at a blue collar price” promotion helped to drive an average 15% increase in counts on Tuesday nights. Crappy Beer Night was part of the Brew Brothers broader strategic goal of attracting a Gen X and Millennial demographic to the Scioto Downs property, and since the opening of the Brewery, the 25-40 year old players club sign-ups have more than doubled. This is especially impressive for a racino property in Ohio that doesn’t (yet) have traditional table games, usually important for attracting Millennials.

“We discussed this promotion in some length at my Promotions Conference prior to Raving’s Indian Gaming National Marketing Conference at Choctaw Casino Resort in Durant, OK in January. The session was on marketing to Millennials and how to attract them intelligently and cost-effectively, without ignoring a casino’s ‘bread and butter’ customers, i.e. Baby Boomers and Traditionalists. To sum up the gist of that session, we highlighted that Millennials:

1. *Do carry heavy debt loads but their earning power will greatly increase and they stand to inherit great wealth from their Boomer parents.*
2. *Are more predisposed to gambling than any generation in history.*
3. *It’s not that Millennials currently AREN’T gambling,*

they just aren’t currently gambling on the games (slots) that we want them to gamble on, which they find boring compared to their smart phone games and Esports.

4. *Will come to a casino around such draws as food, drinks, entertainment and social activities.*

“So somewhere between ‘Ignoring Millennials until they have money to gamble’ and ‘falling all over them with promotions that don’t have a good ROI’, is a strategy that starts to ease them in to the casino experience, as Eldorado Scioto Downs is doing with its catchy Crappy Beer Night. Like anything else in the casino marketing game, pay attention to what your customers want. In the case of Millennials, it would appear that food specials, cheap beer, cool nightclubs, beer pong, Esports, UFC fights, and a Rachel Platten concert, all might work (including Crappy Beer Night!). Slowly, work in the activities that make the most sense and you might have a leg up on the next generation of casino customers!” – DC

MARYLAND

Maryland Live (Hanover) Out Of This World!



Last year, Maryland Live launched a contest in which all Live! Rewards Cards members could earn entries for a chance to win a trip into outer space, using one of several companies currently testing their flight vehicles. The trip is subject to approval by the FAA’s Office of Commercial Space Transportation. Four trips were awarded by drawing on each Saturday in March and the promotion was kicked off by a special casino appearance from Buzz Aldrin, the second astronaut to walk on the moon. A similar type of promotion was first conducted by Seminole Casino Coconut Creek in 2008, with its “Extreme Dream Million Dollar Summer” featuring a grand prize of a “\$200,000 space flight.”

“Maryland Live’s Space Trip Giveaway is another in a long line of what I like to call ‘wild, wacky and wonderful’ casino

promotions that several 'out of the box' casino marketing departments have utilized over the years at Seminole Casino Cocount Creek, Lake of the Torches Resort Casino, Soboba Casino, Club Cal Neva and various others. Other promotions of this genre have included La Tomatino (a tomato fight in a public plaza area in Reno); a Bernie Madoff Rolex watch giveaway ('We Made off With Bernie's Watches'); a Guinness World Record for the largest number of people panning for gold at one time; shooting a slot machine into space; and much, much more.

"I'll admit my bias here. I believe that 'crazy and unique' can really work with casino promotions. They can inject fun into the casino, they can differentiate a casino property and sometimes they can be hard to copy (do you want to go to the trouble to shoot a slot machine into space??). Still, you must also pay attention to the Principles of Effective Casino Promotions, to insure that 'crazy' is still 'profitable.' So from this crazy marketer, here are my keys for being crazy but crazy like a fox:

1. *Make sure that whatever you decide to try or give away really is a 'Wow.'*
2. *Survey your customers (and your employees) about your crazy promotion idea before you do it to make sure that it will resonate with them.*
3. *Once decided upon, make sure your employees are an integral part of the execution of the crazy promo; after all, they have to sell it to the guests.*
4. *If it's a big idea, do it as 'genuinely' as you can, and don't be cheap about it.*
5. *'Crazy promos' work best if they can become a 'brand,' something you become known for, rather than being a crazy, 'one time shot' out of the blue that never gets replicated.*
6. *Even out of the box promotions need to appeal to your best customers to be successful, so figure out how to make sure they participate. In the 'slot machine into space' promo, they had a 'launch party' at the casino, and afterwards each VIP received a special, limited edition, players club card that was actually in the space capsule with the slot machine.*
7. *Be ready to leverage social media, it plays into the hoopla that you are creating.*

"You may not have to give away a space flight like Maryland Live did, but if you find out your own 'wacky but wonderful' promo, your own results may be out of this world!" - DC

NEVADA

Caesars Palace (Las Vegas) Elton's Lounge!

A couple of years ago, Caesars Palace opened a two-story Champagne Lounge (between The Coliseum and The Forum Shops) called Fizz. It coincided with the 67th Birthday of Elton John, husband of Fizz's creative director, David Furnish.



Fizz was a personal project of Elton and David, with the walls featuring photography from their own collection, the kitchen being home to their own chef, the speakers playing their own playlists, and the tabletop candles having their own design. Other VIP touches include the "Fizz Deluxe cocktail" combining three rare ultra-premium spirits; a private single table VIP area available for rent upstairs; and Fizz custom ordering a guest's favorite bottle, with 24 hours notice. The champagne bar and lounge was selected as the winner of the 10th Annual Hospitality Design Magazine Award in the Nightclub, Bar and Lounge category.

"Ok, there are lots of trendy and fancy nightclubs and ultra lounges in Las Vegas, and Fizz is certainly one of them. But this item is not meant to highlight 'ultra chic' but rather, the celebrity connection of Elton John. Now I don't know to what extent the 'Elton and David touch' adds to the success of Fizz or how that translates into popular appeal for the Caesars Palace venue. But let's assume that connection (and a hefty promotional fee) helps to drive Fizz's business. Now certainly most casino properties can't afford Elton John for a nightclub, bar or restaurant endorsement. But they have been able to afford Toby Keith, Don Shula, Sinatra (I know he's long past) and many others for their casino venues. Even those probably have expensive licensing and franchising fees involved.

"But where I see opportunity is in the local or regional celebrity. You know, the owner or chef of the great restaurant that has the best pizza, Vietnamese food, or rib eye steak in the area. It could be the popular local DJ or sports celebrity that can attract a crowd to the casino Super Bowl Party or Kentucky Derby VIP Event. And it might even be a VIP customer whose name adorns their favorite slot machine, buffet recipe, or luxury suite - all things I have seen at casino properties. Think 'celebrity,' even if you can't get Elton John!" - DC

Raving Conferences & Events Schedule



Raving at NIGA

San Diego Convention Center, April 10 - 13, 2017

<http://www.indiangamingtradeshow.com>



Native Strong Comedy Slam

Hard Rock Hotel San Diego, CA during NIGA, April 12, 2017

Produced by Raving Consulting Company and Participating Sponsors

<https://www.ravingconsulting.com/conferences-and-events-schedule/native-strong-comedy-slam/>



Raving @ Southern Gaming Summit/BingoWorld Conference

Mississippi Coast Coliseum & Convention Center, Biloxi, MS, May 3-5, 2017

Produced by BNP Media

<http://www.sgsummit.com/>



Raving @ Northwest Indian Gaming Conference & Expo

Tulalip Resort Casino, Tulalip, WA, June 19-21, 2017

<http://www.washingtonindiangaming.org/tradeshow.aspx>



Raving's Host Development Conference

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

Produced by Raving Consulting Company for BNP Media

<http://www.hostdevelopmentconf.com>



Raving @ Casino Marketing & Technology Conference

Bally's Las Vegas, 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



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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