

# Raving

Raving's Strategic Solutions Magazine



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## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

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Dear Ravers,

It is official! We have been talking about the transition of Raving ownership for the past twelve months, and now it is here. No going back! Raving is now Native-owned, and we look forward to expanding our services and assistance to further support Native American tribes. Pictured is myself and my husband Brady Scott, Coquille Indian Tribe, in our new home in Reno, Nevada.

*So what have I learned in this past year, and why is that important to you?*

I have learned that I am more committed than ever to the vision that Dennis built. As we celebrate our [20th National Indian Gaming Analytics & Marketing Conference](#) later this month, I know that the next twenty will be filled with similar challenges and opportunities. (Make sure to check out Chris' interview with Sam McCracken, Visionary and General Manager of the Nike N7 Program on [page 16](#) – which will give you a taste of how inspiring his keynote speech will be at the conference).

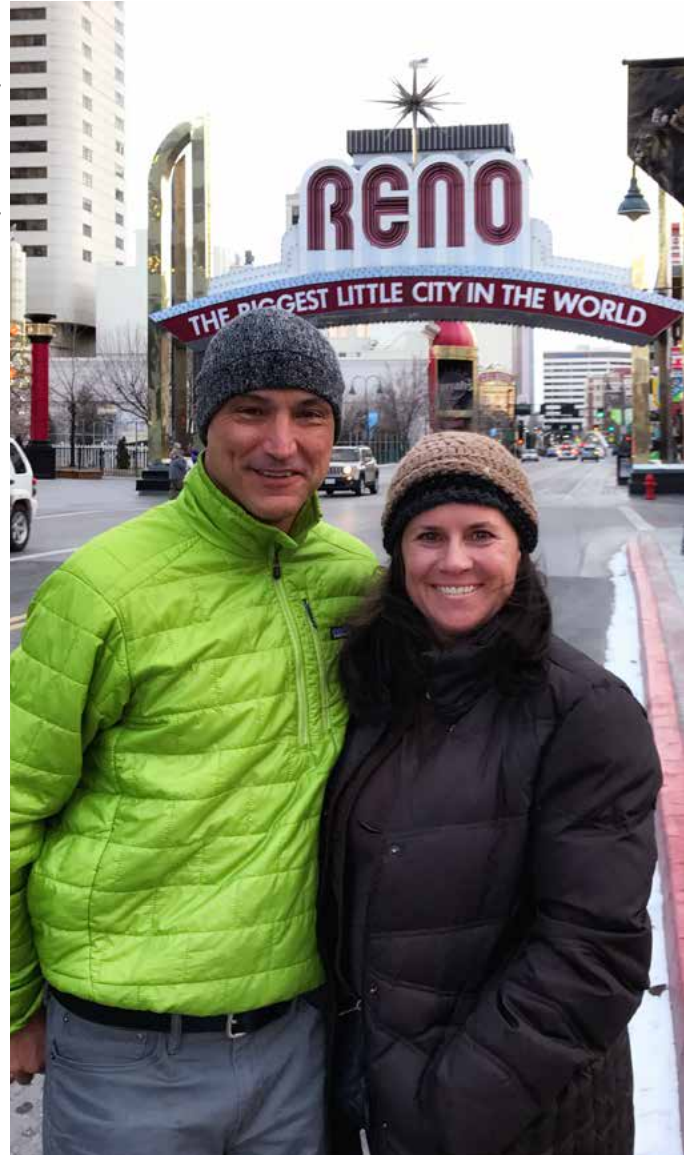
Competition is a fact of life in all business, the consulting and conference business is no exception. I realize that it will be the quality and relevance of our deliverables that will continue to set us apart from our competitors, but it will be the relationships, honest conversations and integrity we maintain that will make us your trusted partner.

For our clients, our commitment to remain ahead of the competition means that we will work tirelessly to create solutions that are relevant to your businesses today and will prepare you for what's coming. The launch of our special one-day program, [Raving NEXT](#), will give you a flavor of where Raving is headed and the expansion of our services.

This means ensuring that we build the best team possible.

We have two new Partners who have contributed to this issue. Welcome Ryan Cullins with Zero 8 Studios and Justin Shank. They are both experts on social gaming, but their experience comes from different sources, giving our clients the best expertise in this area.

Ryan is using technology to create new ways for our guests to game and interact with our properties – he is smart and obsessed with modernizing our industry. As a game developer, he's created a social gaming platform that gives properties, especially smaller ones, the opportunity to increase revenue through social gaming with, really, no risk. Read his article on [page 14](#).



# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

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Justin comes from the property side, and he experienced first-hand how to integrate social gaming with your players club and utilize it as a marketing tool. He knows that part of creating a successful social gaming program is also having the know-how for digital marketing strategy, reputation management, digital advertising, and email marketing. Read his article on [page 12](#).

One common theme that I heard throughout this year was the overwhelming appreciation of the Raving team from our clients. This is not a surprise to me, as I had the same opinion. My appreciation and respect for Chris and Amy have only grown over the past year as they have embraced this transition and the many changes that have come their way. Additionally, they have humored, consoled and encouraged me as I began this journey. As for Gency, I hope that our relationship has evolved from being the scary, new boss, to one of being partners in success. She is our Millennial Rock Star and an example of why you should avoid putting this generation into a one-size-fits-all box.

Finally, I want to officially send a belated welcome to Travis Cooper, Creative Director aka Chief Minion, and Sue Smith, our Finance Manager aka Goddess of Numbers.

Wishing the very best 2018 for you both personally and professionally.

Sincerely,



Deana Scott, Raving CEO  
[deana@ravingconsulting.com](mailto:deana@ravingconsulting.com)

*Cover model:* Read an interview with [Raving NEXT](#) luncheon keynote speaker Sam McCracken, Visionary and General Manager of the Nike N7 Program, on [page 16](#).

# How Continuous Engagement Is Transforming the Digital Customer Experience

*Is your casino using this marketing strategy?*

By Jerry Epstein, Raving Partner and CEO, Engaged Nation

It wasn't so long ago that most businesses relied on a relatively passive, "one-and-done" marketing methodology that utilized traditional tools such as print ads, direct mail, one-off digital ads, static landing pages, and even digital signage to stimulate consumer interest. But successfully marketing to today's savvy digital consumer is all about establishing an ongoing, dynamic and personalized relationship between the consumer and brand. This new Digital Customer Experience (DCX) is a continually evolving process that engages, inspires, educates, entertains, motivates and stimulates.

### It's Personal

When it comes to capturing the minds and wallets of today's digital consumers, it's not just about Facebook posts, hashtags, and clever tweets. According to a recent OpenText™ white paper, "Today's world is an increasingly digital one, and most customers are engaged with brands through a variety of digital means. Digital business is blurring the distinction between the digital and physical worlds and creating digital transformation that leverages the integration of process, people, and things. At the center of this transformation is the customer. Customers are increasingly in control, with multiple channels with which to be heard, they are dictating how business should be communicating."

Marketers must, therefore, transform their thinking about how they interact with customers in the digital space. Instead of "hit it and quit it," continuous engagement creates a rich, ongoing digital conversation between the consumer and brand seamlessly and consistently across multiple channels. Each digital touchpoint should move the customer deeper into a more intimate and personalized relationship with a company's brand, building interest, loyalty, trust and enthusiasm with each interaction.

There are several key factors that should drive the process of continuous customer engagement. First and foremost is to truly understand one's customer. In the past, companies relied solely upon transactional data to plot their marketing strategies. As Paul Gulbin, Chief Transformation Officer of CohnReznick Advisory Group, points out, "Today, consumers prefer to do business with brands that use personal information to make their shopping experiences more relevant. Businesses cannot meet this expectation using transactional data alone." Furthermore, a recent consumer behavior study by Infosys notes that 86% of consumers polled indicated that personalization plays a key role in their purchase decisions.

### Customers Crave Consistency

A whopping 80% of consumers don't think that brands really know them as individuals, according to a recent IBM e-commerce study. Customers want to be understood and to be co-creators in the digital buying experience. Customers also look for an online relationship with a company that's consistent across all digital channels. Indeed, customers can become easily frustrated when confronted with an inconsistent transactional or customer service experience that doesn't live up to their expectations.

### Customers Value Their Time Above All Else

The adage "time is money" was never truer than it is today. Studies indicate that customers want their digital interactions to be as uncomplicated and frictionless as possible. A Forrester Research customer survey notes that more than 77% of U.S. adults believe that valuing their time is the most important thing that a company can do to create a good digital experience. According to Infosys, consumers are 115% more likely to recommend a company's brand if they find that the purchase process is simplified. Consequently, digital marketers should strive to be responsive to customers' needs by creating opportunities to make the continuous customer engagement experience as convenient, hassle-free, and uncluttered as possible.

### Gamification as a Continuous Engagement Strategy

One of the emerging trends in continuous customer engagement is gamification. While the term may be new, gamification has long been employed as an effective marketing and customer loyalty tool. (Think McDonald's Monopoly game, frequent flyer miles pioneered by American Airlines, and retailers cashing in on the recent "Pokémon GO!" craze.)

In its largest sense, gamification is defined as the application of typical elements of game playing to other areas of activity. Technology research firm Gartner describes gamification as "the broad trend of employing game mechanics to non-game environments such as innovation, marketing, training, employee performance, health, and social change."

### Too Much of Too Much

The Yankelovich Center for Social Science Research at the University of California, San Diego, notes that the average consumer is inundated by between 5,000 and 10,000 marketing messages per day, and that 65% of consumers

# EMERGING TECHNOLOGY & GAMES

feel that they are overwhelmed with too many such messages. As Yankelovich President J. Walter Smith states, “The traditional assumptions that consumers can deal with clutter by self-selecting what to watch ignores the evidence to the contrary – that choosing from a super-abundance of options makes consumers less likely to choose at all.”

## Where Games Are Serious Business

Gamification offers marketers an opportunity to rise above this dizzying informational din by incorporating unique incentivized digital consumer touchpoints using fun, exciting and rewarding online games and activities to stimulate trial and maintain interest. Once in place, a gamified marketing program can self-perpetuate, driving a constant level of excitement and interest in a company's brand and products. Incorporating gamification into an overall marketing strategy has been proven to drive new customer acquisition, strengthen existing customer relationships, boost online and social media engagement, and create new ways to reactivate former customers.

## It's Time for a New Digital Continuous Engagement Paradigm

A Gartner marketing spending survey states that by the end of 2016, 89% of companies expected to compete mostly based on customer experience, up from just 36% four years ago. And U.S. companies deemed to deliver poor customer experiences lose a staggering \$41 billion annually, according to a NewVoiceMedia report.

These statistics offer a clear imperative for businesses to adopt an effective strategy of continuous customer engagement that goes beyond conventional “one-and-done” methodologies. It's time to embrace a bold, new paradigm of innovative, continuous customer engagement that resonates with today's digital-savvy consumers and ultimately increases their value over time.

## Casinos Make a Winning Bet

This transformation of the Digital Customer Experience is even more vital for casino marketers, who must constantly endeavor to breathe new life into games that are often centuries old and governed by rules that aren't immediately understandable to modern consumers. Millennials' well-documented aversion to gambling can also be combated with gamified marketing that aligns with the free, skill-based games that are at the heart of an effective engagement paradigm.

Keen casino marketers are already well aware of the interest and excitement that games generate, and see gamification as the perfect tie-in to a business inherently focused on the concept of play. Successful gamified marketing strategies enhance social casinos and educate new players in a way that they just can't experience inside a casino. One casino implemented such a strategy in 2016 that incorporated “edutaining” activities and games that engaged players

daily. They increased online traffic by 543% and generated nearly 12,000 incremental property visits a year by using segmented incentives, trophies, badges, discounts, and other offers. Another casino rewarded players with game credits for sharing a Facebook post about an upcoming concert, resulting in 3,000 reposts from brand ambassadors, which led to one of the fastest concert sell-outs in their history.

These are just some of the many examples of companies that have successfully employed marketing strategies that rely on personalization, consistency, and – most notably – gamified marketing programs. Digital gamification is no longer a luxury, but rather an essential tool for continuous customer engagement that generates brand ambassadors and enhances existing resources.



*Jerry is a recognized leader in marketing communications management and development with over three decades of experience in branding, new product launches, and digital marketing. As CEO of Engaged Nation, Jerry and his team assist Raving clients by offering interactive products and tools to convert online traffic into revenue generating property visits.*

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## Utilizing an Additional Channel of Contact for Better Results

*How to utilize your staff to drive more trips and impact flat revenues*

By Daniel Wood, Strategic Raving Partner, Phone Based Marketing Solutions and VP of Business Development at Engagex

Casino executives often devote most of their resources to top-end players, while devoting fewer resources to lower valued players, thus missing out on opportunities to grow the middle segment of their database. Chances are that there's a group of players that is just a personal phone call away from becoming loyal customers.

Recently, a valuable client was struggling to fill their expanded hotel rooms to the capacity that they had forecasted. Despite their current marketing promotion program consisting of email and direct mail, response rates were lower than the marketing team desired. In an attempt to increase their responses and fill more rooms, the hotel asked my team of highly trained callers for assistance. They quickly and efficiently went to work to become a seamless extension of their team, making outbound calls as a follow-up to the emails and direct mail marketing. The results were nothing short of astounding!

Simply supplementing the email and direct mail marketing efforts with an additional channel of contact produced extraordinary results for this hotel. They produced nearly twice the number of responses, when compared to the response from direct mail and email alone. The emails and direct mail pieces alone weren't enough, but when those efforts were followed by an outbound phone call, they were better suited to drive responses and fill hotel rooms.

What is the secret behind this marketing strategy? It really isn't complicated at all. I'll simplify it into two points:

### 1. Warm up your guests' interest with email and direct mail.

Email and direct mail are great ways to warm up a guest or potential guest, but they aren't always going to drive the level of response needed. Only the most loyal guests will go out of their way to respond to an offer that they see through the mail or email for the first time. A lot of your guests (even those who are interested in your offer) have the potential to forget about your promotion in a pile of mail on the kitchen table.

### 2. Follow up with a personal phone call from your staff to harvest your interested guests.

A personalized phone call creates a connection with your guests that makes them feel important and valued, and makes it easy for them to participate in your offer. Especially after seeing an intriguing offer in the mail, a phone call from your staff can harvest all the interest felt by your guests that was forgotten about in the days prior.

Senior Raving Partner Nicole Barker recently presented some valid questions about the way that casino executives rely on direct mail and email when she said,

*"Do you ask yourself whether the player feels closer to the casino and its brand after digesting the piece? Monthly, we have a chance to connect with customers. Rarely does the monthly mailer do this as an extension of our brand or as an expression of the property's unique personality."*

Ask yourself, does your monthly mailer really make your guests feel connected to your casino? Is it personal enough? Does it make your guest feel special, important, and like there are unique opportunities awaiting them? In a few cases, mailers may get the job done, but for a lot of guests it won't. So, what can be done to connect with more guests and drive more trips and spending?

When executed properly, adding a personal phone call from your staff will create an extremely intimate and unique way of connecting with your guests. Talking to a real person who can discuss current promotions and have a real conversation about the guest's interests can make each of your guests feel like a VIP! If you are consistent, your guests will look forward to these personal calls, thus increasing their loyalty to your property. This increase in loyalty could result in several additional trips per month.

**Here are three suggested actions that you can take, even with limited staff, to connect with your guests, drive more trips, and ultimately impact the bottom line.**

1. Dedicate a few team members within your call center or player development team to make outbound calls.
2. Provide your PD or Reservations team with accurate data and information regarding the guest, their offers, and the promotions available to them.
3. Cross-train other team members with accurate data.

When personalized phone calls are coupled with mailers, we have found that response rates can increase by up to 180%. If you really want to drive more trips and encourage more spending, coupling personalized calls with your monthly mailer is one of the most effective strategies

for accomplishing your goal. If you need help with data management, designing your campaign, or outbound calling fulfillment, Engagex has an expert team of outbound callers who are experienced in promotional marketing follow-up. Please contact us with any questions that you may have.



*Daniel works with casinos to show how personalized phone calls have the power to increase their players' ADT, win back inactive players, and drive same-month revenue when used to deliver a promotional offer. He assists Raving clients in engaging with several tiers of guests to create repeat business, greater retention, and higher guest lifetime value through the phone.*

## A Player Engagement Campaign ... On Steroids

### How Engagex Helped a Casino Achieve a 12.3% RSVP Response Rate

Regardless of how many mailers or emails you send, what is the best response you can hope for? 4-5%, if you're lucky? Recently, a casino client of Engagex had a huge event and wanted a large portion of their player data base to attend. They had a hefty goal to achieve a 10% response rate. After some discussion, it was

clear that direct mail or email alone would not be able to hit this goal. With three weeks until the event, Engagex helped this casino develop an RSVP program that made their response rate explode. Here are the details:

#### Campaign Details

- Send Direct Mail Event Announcement to Player Database
- Collect InBound RSVPs via Telephone
- Make OutBound Dials to Non-Responders
- Send Updated RSVP List to Print Event Certificates
- Make Personalized Reminder Calls 48 Hours Before Event

#### Results



Next time you are running a promotion or event and want an exception response, contact Engagex. We have the tools, experience, and know-how to turn your promotion into a success.

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[Info@engagex.com](mailto:Info@engagex.com)

**engagex**

# Five Key Ways to Improve Your Food and Beverage Operation (Part IV of V)

*“If you can’t measure it, you can’t improve it”*

By Brett L. Magnan, Raving Partner, Hospitality

So far in this series, we’ve covered [SERVICE](#), [LABOR](#), and [MENU & FOOD PRESENTATION](#) in improving your food and beverage operation.

Proper COSTING and WASTE control are the next processes, following MENU Analysis and FOOD PRESENTATION. Peter Drucker, Management Guru and author, often said, “If you can’t measure it, you can’t improve it.” In the Food and Beverage business, if some basic measurements are not tracked, then we follow Einstein’s definition of insanity, “...Doing the same thing over and over again, but expecting different results.”

Here are some key measurements essential to F&B success:

- **Food Cost per Plate.** This is the cost of each item that is offered on a single plate or included in a single menu price. Every ingredient used in the preparation, including the cost of condiments as an allowance, spices, and extras such as the soup or salad included in the menu price. This is also known as **Food Cost Potential**.
- **Food Cost per Pan.** This is typically required in a buffet or catered area, as portions vary by guest. This is important when measuring the value of food in production and on-floor. Waste is also measured by this method.
- **Food Cost (of Goods Sold) per Inventory.** Cost is computed by an accurate opening inventory, plus purchases in the month, minus the closing inventory, compared to the sales for the month. Without a proper inventory that is designated per outlet, this is nearly impossible to measure.
- **Beverage Cost per Drink.** This is a cost potential, derived by recipe per drink as compared to sale price.
- **Beverage Cost.** This is measured like food cost above, opening inventory of Beer, Wine and Liquor, plus new purchases for the month, minus closing inventory – compared to the sales per month for each revenue item.
- **Revenue per Seat.** This is a fun measurement that focuses on labor efficiency and upselling. Take the number of seats per outlet and divide the total revenue per day for a minimum of thirty days. Increased

complexity can be done by adding in turns per shift or by adding in server information for upselling and sales goals.

Once you have these statistics and can observe trends for an ample period of time, you can determine which areas need correcting. There are not industry absolutes in these metrics. Management will need to understand what goals are desired for each. Too low of a cost percentage might jeopardize loyalty of your guests. Too high of a cost and you might be in jeopardy of losing your shorts. Understand these metrics and you can decide where you need to fall within each outlet.

Outside of these standard measurements, it is important that you track the following as well:

- **Waste Logs.** As you spill or “waste” an item due to spoilage or error, accurate logs will effectively reduce your cost in that area so that you have an accurate measurement. It is also important as a management tool to effectively know if you have unnecessary waste or theft.
- **Refrigeration Logs.** Teaches discipline and prevents the absolutely unnecessary waste of an entire cooler.
- **Transfer Logs.** This is required to keep accurate food and beverage costing per outlet.

With each of these tools, measurement and consistent review by management are the only ways that they are effective for control. Having an accurate inventory per outlet, recipes, transfer logs and waste sheets all contribute to an accurate costing that can be trusted and ultimately used to make effective business decisions in Food and Beverage.



*Brett 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. For more information on Hotel or F&B 360 reviews, contact Amy Hergenrother at [amy@ravingconsulting.com](mailto:amy@ravingconsulting.com).*



CASINO PROMOTIONS DEVELOPMENT & ROI  
 FOCUS GROUPS COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS SURVEYS  
**DATABASE MARKETING ANALYSIS** PLAYER REINVESTMENT  
 & FREE PLAY GUEST SERVICE TRAINING PLAYER SALES SKILLS  
 TRAINING STRATEGIC MARKETING SECURITY AND SURVEILLANCE BI  
 SOFTWARE TRAINING **HOST SALES SKILLS TRAINING** ACCOUNTING  
 ADVERTISING & MEDIA SERVICES PLAYER DEVELOPMENT ANALYSIS  
**EXECUTIVE COACHING & MENTORING** CASINO ENTERTAINMENT  
 BUYING B2B MARKETING PARTNERSHIPS STRATEGIC PLANNING &  
 FACILITATION ONLINE CASINO **OPERATIONAL SLOT ANALYSIS**  
 PLANNING & FACILITATION MOTIONS TABLE ACCOUNTING  
**STRATEGIC MARKETING** REVENUE AUDIT CASINO  
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 PLAYER REINVESTMENT & FREE PLAY **HOSPITALITY** **ADVERTISING & MEDIA**  
**GUEST SERVICES TRAINING** OPERATIONAL SLOT ANALYSIS EXECUTIVE COACH  
 ADVERTISING & MEDIA SERVICES SECURITY & SURVEILLANCE  
 OPERATIONS B2B MARKETING TABLE GAME OPERATION SERVICE

## *Bet Raving Knows*

Contact Amy Hergenrother at 775-329-7864 or e-mail  
[amy@ravingconsulting.com](mailto:amy@ravingconsulting.com) for a quick 15 minute  
 conversation and a free gaming e-book.

**Raving**

# Cluster Analysis Reveals Hidden Insights

*Taking customer segmentation to the next level*

By Deb Hilgeman, Ph.D., Senior Raving Partner, Market Research

How many main segments of like-minded customers do you have in your casino database? Customers who share common attitudes, beliefs and behaviors?

If you have a tiered players club, you're already segmenting your customers by how much they spend. In your direct mail program, you probably segment by recency, frequency and spend, at the very least. Some casinos have more than a dozen ways to segment their customers based on their tracked behavior in the casino.

The type of segmentation that casinos use for a tiered club or mail program is just one tool that casinos can use to understand their customers. Another type of segmentation can help you understand more about your customers so that your club benefits, advertising, promotions and customer service can all be custom-tailored to each segment in your casino.

This type of segmentation can be achieved with quantitative research of your customer base. An online survey can be developed that asks questions about several different areas, with a key area being what motivates the person to gamble. Data from the survey is downloaded and manipulated by advanced research software, such as SPSS or SAS. This software identifies and defines the characteristics of the main groups in your database in a type of analysis known as cluster analysis.

Cluster analysis has been around since the early 1930s and continues to be used because it makes it easier to understand large groups, such as a casino database. There are many casinos and companies using cluster analysis to identify clusters such as Escapists (gamblers who primarily visit casinos to escape from their everyday lives), or True Blues (gamblers who are highly satisfied and willing to pay a premium for their casino of choice), or whatever segments their database contains.

When SPSS or SAS software defines the number of segments in your database and the characteristics of each, it's based on your unique survey data. There is no one set of standard segments and associated behavior that applies to every casino, so when you receive your analysis you can look at the characteristics that broadly describe the type of person in that group. Some casinos may choose to segment based primarily on behavioral characteristics, some may focus on attitudinal characteristics, and yet others may segment based on a combination of these characteristics.

There is a 2010 national study of U.S. casino gamblers that identified seven segments. The study used a sample from the Market Metrix Hospitality Index (MMHI). The MMHI is a national indicator of customer satisfaction, emotions, loyalty, and price sensitivity regarding hospitality industry facilities and services available to consumers. Study participants were people who had stayed at least one night in a casino hotel.

The final study sample of 4,894 responses was put through numerous iterations of cluster analysis in order to separate the data into logical segments that were sufficiently differentiated from one another. The eventual output produced seven distinct segments – three are summarized below, although the actual characteristics of each segment are more detailed. These segments were also defined using High, Medium or Low Visit Frequency as a main characteristic.

### Segment Descriptions

#### High Frequency Visitors:

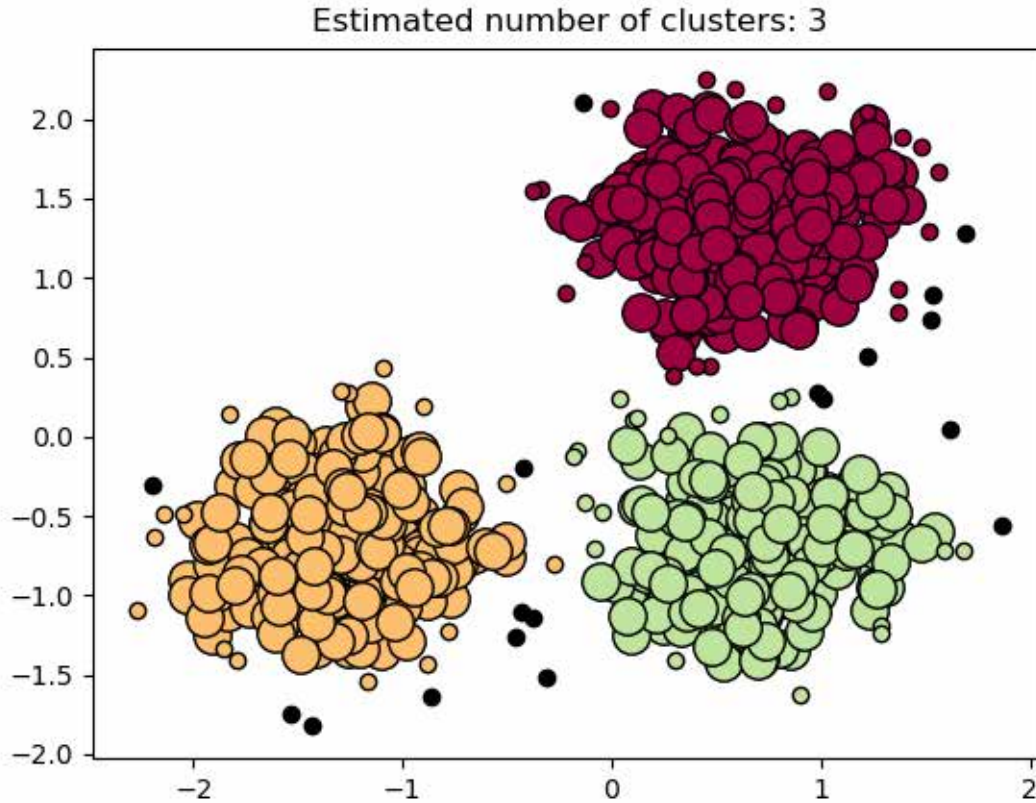
**Elder Elites** – This group represents about eleven percent of the consumer market and predominantly includes members of elite loyalty programs. These persons take advantage of these programs with a high number of trips. They are mostly male and have a relatively high income, but are considerably older than average. The Elder Elites are very satisfied with casino service, but not very optimistic about their perceived odds of winning, especially considering their loyalty and frequent visits.

#### Medium Frequency Visitors:

**Unmoved Members** – The Unmoved Members comprise an entire third of all casino customers. They are loyalty club members who take a few trips per year, but do not stand out very much with their behavior in contrast to other segments. Their income and spending are lower than other loyalty club members. They are more pessimistic about their odds of winning and less satisfied with casino service.

#### Low Frequency Visitors:

**Happy-Go-Lucky** – Accounting for nine percent of all casino guests, these customers tend to be younger, with modest incomes, who thoroughly enjoy their experience. They perceive their odds of winning as good, and express a willingness to recommend the brand they selected.



Although they are not loyalty program members, they are quite willing to return again.

A significant finding of this cluster analysis is that for potentially very lucrative segments, loyalty and the willingness to pay a price premium are not always highly correlated with participation in loyalty programs or high visit frequencies. The Happy-Go-Lucky segment serves as the best evidence of this observation, since its members reported some of the highest satisfaction scores and a willingness to return and recommend their selected brand, without having already built a connection to the property or brand through frequent visits or the perks of a loyalty program.

These are the types of insights that cluster analysis can provide for your casino. If you would like to find out what segments are hidden in your database, Raving can do the research. For more information, contact Amy Hergenrother, Vice President of Business Development, at 775-329-7864 or [amy@ravingconsulting.com](mailto:amy@ravingconsulting.com).

#### ARTWORK:

Shown above is a depiction of how software such as SPSS can take all the variables in a survey – age, gender, spending, visit motivators, satisfaction factors, competitor visits, or whatever questions you want to add to your survey—and sift through them until it finds commonalities. The number of segments is based on the data at each casino. Each colored circle is a characteristic of that segment.



*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.*

# Standalone Revenue Center or Integrated Marketing Tool?

*Your options for social gaming at your casino*

By Justin Shank, Raving Partner, Social Gaming and Marketing

There are generally two schools of thought when it comes to onboarding a social casino at your property: a) Create a standalone revenue center; b) Integrate with your players club and utilize as a marketing tool.

Brick and mortar gaming operations have to make the distinction early in the process in order to set clear goals for the product after launch. A property launching a standalone revenue center may have the budget to support advertising, marketing, and hiring a dedicated team of employees. While properties integrating the platform as a marketing tool into their players club may allocate the work to their marketing team and integrate the platform into their marketing structure.

Casino properties have an advantage in that they should have an existing database full of casino gamers. There are people in your existing database who are actively engaging in social gaming, an estimated \$4 billion industry. These players will have the opportunity to interact with your brand while they're onsite, in their hotel room, or sitting on their couch at home. Some of the games in the platform may also be available on your gaming floor, or perhaps the platform is loaded with entirely different games. There have been incredible advancements in the social gaming space with technology, new integrations to player loyalty systems, and superior mobile apps and social gaming platforms.

The standalone revenue center would be managed and evaluated in the same way as any other amenity at the property, like a new restaurant or gift shop. The team responsible would have their operating budget and a team to get the job done. One benefit is that they may be more agile and creative when it comes to new user acquisition taking place outside the existing player database. You may even decide to hire game designers and create your own games that directly reflect your property or brand.

By evaluating your options and answering the questions below, you'll be equipped to determine the best strategy for your property. Then you can set realistic benchmarks for operating the social gaming platform.

Consider the following questions:

- What are your organizational goals for the new platform?
- What internal resources do you have to manage and operate the platform?
- Are you looking to enhance your loyalty program and provide existing players a new way to interact with your brand?

- Are you trying to reach a new demographic of players outside your current database?
- What is your monthly budget for advertising/marketing the social gaming platform?
- What will your vendor provide in terms of support and marketing?
- How will you measure the success of the social gaming platform?

In my role at Swinomish Casino & Lodge, we evaluated these questions and determined that the best course of action was to launch the platform as an integrated marketing tool. Then we began to work on strategizing the roll-out to our players. Our first approach was to heavily promote within the organization. We set up demonstrations of the platform for our employees, then empowered them to share information with our guests. We created an acquisition promotion for employees by providing each of them with a unique promotional code for free credits for new users they recruited to the platform.

By the time we rolled out the advertising campaign, we had acquired thousands of new users simply by providing our team members with information. We promoted through our existing marketing channels, allocated an advertising budget to the platform, and dedicated marketing resources for data analysis and user acquisition.

For some properties, the best course of action is going to be the integrated marketing tool approach, but there's nothing stopping you from turning that into a standalone revenue center down the road. The key is to meticulously evaluate your organizational goals prior to signing the new social gaming deal.

You'll find more information about the standalone revenue center option in an article by fellow Raving Partner Ryan Cullins on [page 14](#). We'll both be speaking at [Raving's 20<sup>th</sup> National Indian Gaming Analytics & Marketing Conference](#) this month – so come and learn more!



*Justin is a marketing expert specializing in social gaming and digital strategy. He helps clients integrate social gaming into their overall strategic marketing plan by considering partnerships with vendors, internal communication staff training, and choosing the right platform to meet their goals.*

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# How Small Casinos Can Turn Social Gaming into a Revenue Stream

*Understanding the difference between embedded and non-embedded sites*

By Ryan Cullins, Raving Partner and CEO, Zero 8 Studios

Social gaming has become a powerhouse in the technological world. In 2017 it was estimated that the social online games market in the United States was worth 2.15 billion U.S. dollars and sources predict this figure to surpass 2.4 billion U.S. dollars in 2020, according to Statista. Every single consumer has a cell phone on their person. They refer to this device throughout their daily life. Yet this market remains largely untapped amongst brick and mortar casinos.

As a game developer and a Raving Partner, my goal is to educate you about your options and give you an insider's glimpse into the game developer world. In future articles, I'll share with you what games are working the best. Did you know that there are more profitable games than casino games? There is so much to take into consideration when analyzing which games are the most popular with different age groups, and more.

In this article, let's start from the beginning. Just how do you use social gaming as a revenue stream, and what do you need to know to develop it into a lucrative asset for your property?

### **Two approaches to social gaming – which is your strategy?**

Do you want to:

1. Create an additional revenue stream, or
2. Drive more foot traffic to your land-based property?

As you consider adding in social gaming for your casino, you need to decide why you're doing it. In both cases, however, the same is true: social gaming allows even the smallest casinos the ability to expand beyond their property lines. Players want to be entertained, and social games create a simple and noninvasive way for them to always be engaged with their favorite casinos every single day without losing revenue from brick and mortar.

Fellow Raving Partner Justin Shank tackles the pros and cons of both in his article on [page 12](#). For the purpose of this article, I'm going to assume that you've decided on a strategy and your casino's goal is to make it an additional revenue stream.

### **Embedded or Non-Embedded Social Gaming Sites**

Small properties can benefit from social gaming if they don't get hung up on needing a fully embedded solution. Complex and costly integration time has always been an issue for smaller properties, so let's talk about your options.

#### **What is a fully embedded solution?**

Pros:

- Seamless branded transition for your players into your existing app.
- Less expensive rev-share.
- No download of additional third party app.
- Allows your players to play games that they already play on-property.

Cons:

- Arduous process of getting signed in as a player at risk of losing players, lower rate of acquisition.
- Typically simple games, very little on the market in the way of newer and more compelling content that players are already playing.
- Property resources needed to help support and integrate the product.
- Months of integration time built into existing site/app with an ongoing need to support.
- Possibly slower game load times depending on the platform, a risk of losing players.
- Possible risk of lost revenue on-property by playing the same games on social.
- Can include an upfront cost.
- Game content is typically limited to only casino games.
- No offline mode.
- Has the possibility of being perceived as yet another property app.

#### **What is a non-embedded solution?**

Pros:

- No upfront cost.
- Less headache than embedded.
- White-labeled for your property.
- The property owns the data.
- Offline play supported.

- No support needed from property aside from what they choose to promote in-game.
- Nearly instant startup time, less than 48 hours.
- Direct access to player analytics.
- 100% maintained by the developer.
- Quick load times, players only download what they enjoy playing.
- Newer, more compelling content that players already enjoy outside of just casino games.
- Less risk of lost revenue with games they can only play on the platform.
- Drive traffic to the property through promotions, in-game advertisements, and branding.
- Less risk of losing players with instant content and IAP gratification.
- Ongoing monthly games and updates by developer.
- Socially connected games, leaderboards, achievements, and more.
- Simple software licensing agreement.
- Gives your players an incentive to play games, not just download your app.

#### Cons:

- Higher rev-share.
- Requires use of an external app.

#### What is the best solution for your casino?

Now you know the difference between embedded and non-embedded. For many smaller casinos, a non-embedded platform makes more sense due to the financial aspect, staffing requirements, and time commitment. Still not sure? This can be a short-term strategy to test the waters. If you decide to take the non-embedded route, here are some questions to ask a potential vendor:

- What are the startup costs?
- What type of commitment do I need to sign?
- Option to white-label or embed?
- What's their lead time to get the platform up and running?
- What's their content commitment?
- Do they maintain the platform socially through contests, tournaments, etc.?
- Are they dedicated to this platform? Or is it just considered an add-on in a large lineup of other products?
- Does their library of games venture beyond traditional casino games?

#### How does no start-up costs and no headaches sound to you?

With the process of deciding which is the best fit, it helps to detail an excellent audit list with which to start your search for a social gaming vendor. It doesn't have to be that painful, you just need to know your options and the right questions to ask.

Recognizing this, about two years ago, I came up with a solution to help casinos avoid the headaches and enter casual social gaming without an initial investment. For many casinos, both factors have been a barrier for them earning additional revenue.

My company, Zero8 Studios, offers this platform integration at no cost to the property. We believe so much in the power of this product and its ability to gain revenue that the start-up cost is free. In-app purchases, real money exchanges being made for virtual property, and customers' excitement to come to the casino and enjoy real-life gameplay will speak for itself. We provide a fully structured and refined gaming platform that is white-labeled for any casino brand. This platform can be loaded with similar games to the ones that are topping the charts in the Apple Store and the Google Play Store, all with a personal casino brand. The incredible part is that this meets the needs of today's players. If you have questions about what Zero8 can offer, just email me at [ryan.cullins@zero8studios.com](mailto:ryan.cullins@zero8studios.com), or stop by my booth at [Raving's 20th National Indian Gaming Analytics & Marketing Conference](#), January 29 - 31, 2018.



*Ryan has a history in games dating back to the mid 90s. Ryan's company, Zero 8 Studios, offers Raving clients the opportunity to engage their players through social games from anywhere in the world; while constantly exposing their brand to new players daily. Ryan's social gaming platform also collects the information from players with a complete BI solution that can be used for targeted marketing purposes.*



# An Interview with Sam McCracken, Visionary and General Manager of the Nike N7 Program

*Celebrating the Tribal gaming community and its workforce who are dedicated to improving the lives of their communities*

By Christine Faria, Raving VP of Marketing

We all have the power to change lives and make the world a better place. Not feeling empowered? Read on.

Look around. Daily there are individual acts of kindness, homegrown movements, and corporate initiatives that make a difference. From the gal who delivers fresh fruits and vegetables to elders in remote tribal reservations, to the elementary school kids who write letters to our men and women overseas for the holidays, to the casinos that provide shelter to first responders or donate a much-needed ambulance or medical equipment to the community. It happens all around us, every day.

And at the very heart of any act of giving is the one person who realizes, “I can help. I can change this situation. I’ve got an idea. This is not okay. Why not?” It’s that one person who will take the first step to make someone smile, fill a hungry belly, or change several lives. There’s that one person who starts the ball rolling.

This month, Raving is celebrating the Tribal gaming community and its workforce who are dedicated to improving the lives of their communities. We’re standing up for those who have given their time and their hearts to their employees, their communities, their elders, their youth, their shareholders. Read more about the Tribal Spirit of Giving Celebration and Keynote Luncheon [here](#).

We’re honored that we have “one of those people” who said, “I can help” as our keynote presenter during Raving’s 20th National Indian Gaming Analytics & Marketing Conference at Choctaw Casino Resort, Durant, OK.

Please meet Sam McCracken, Visionary and General Manager of the Nike N7 Program:

*Chris:* For the folks who are not familiar with the N7 program, what’s your elevator speech? What would you want every household to know about N7?



**Sam:** Well, the mission of N7 is to inspire and enable 1.5 million Native American and Aboriginal youth to support physical activity. How we intend to do that is through the sale of the N7 collection, and the proceeds from the collection go directly back to the fund. The fund has granted \$4.6 million in grants since 2009 and affected the lives of about half a million kids to date. If I was asked, “What is N7?” – I’d say it’s really a brand that encourages and inspires Native youth to dare to rise.

**Chris:** Okay. Your N7 products are found right alongside other Nike products in retail stores, correct?

**Sam:** Yes. Yeah, so the distribution strategy for those products, to raise money for the fund, is pretty unique with regard to that we do have it on Nike.com. We have our own landing page and we’re part of the NikePlus app. Which is the new technology that we’ve released about how we engage consumers with our products, as well as we have a very unique wholesale partnership with Hibbett Sports in the US and Sport Chek in Canada.

**Chris:** Is the look of the N7 products different than the other Nike products?

**Sam:** Absolutely. The look and feel of our products is really, truly inspired by our athletes, our athlete ambassadors, who have all agreed to the mission and vision, which is to inspire Native sport for Native American youth. The rest of this current collection that is in the market, and holiday ‘17, Native American Heritage Month, was inspired by a young lady who is a basketball player by the name of Jude Schimmel, from the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian.

Jude is a tremendous inspiration to young girls all across Indian country. Every collection is inspired by a different Nike N7 athlete or ambassador.

**Chris:** Okay, so compared to the other Nike products, what do people say that they like most about the N7 products?

**Sam:** Well, I would say that would be the graphic story, because graphics are an important part of our collection. When we have amazing graphics on the products that really speak to the heart of our consumer and our native communities.

**Chris:** When you first approached Nike with a business plan to help Native Americans through their programs, you were working in the warehouse. Did you have marketing experience?

**Sam:** No, I did not. I was just a guy with a lot of passion and a vision, and Nike believed in me. A lot of my background and my organizational skills were from being a high school basketball coach.

I just kind of relied on that skill set to help get me through,

and then to be really candid with you, Nike gave me every opportunity to succeed. They gave me the training classes that I needed, public speaking training, media training, marketing training, strategic planning.

**Chris:** What is one of the biggest lessons that you’ve learned through this journey, about yourself, about life, about people?

**Sam:** Yeah, when I was speaking to some folks yesterday, I believe that the creator works in very mysterious ways. And there’s no rhyme or reason for why I was anointed the guy who was given the opportunity to write this plan. Things just happen. And I didn’t have this large vision of this brand, logo, product, and athletes. That was never part of the equation when I originally wrote the plan. It was really about the community I care about, the Native American community.

I was telling these folks yesterday that I was not working on behalf of myself or my family, I was working on behalf of the 4.5 million Native American Indians in the United States. And if I failed at my job, I failed them. And so I was really driven by that mentality of I have to do well in this role because I’m the instigator of the opportunity. So if I fail at this opportunity, I’m failing our native community.

Because now tribal communities have a very unique opportunity that most communities don’t have, which is direct access to the Nike brand.

**Chris:** As General Manager, I’m sure that you get tied down with meetings, paperwork, emails, and people calling you for interviews. How do you keep in touch with these kids and the communities that you serve? How do you make time for that?

**Sam:** Well, you know, it’s really important that I’m accessible. I think I’ve prided myself on that since the very beginning. And you can ask all the people who know me out in the community, that they know that they can pick up the phone and call me. I try to attend as many events out there that I can.

So, these different events where I know that Native youth are going to be, I’ve got to make myself available and accessible. And it has been very humbling to see how receptive these young people are and appreciative of me, because it was never my intent to have this celebrity status. These college kids, they come up to me, they want to take a picture with me. That’s very humbling for me; it was always about community first.

**Chris:** Was there any one moment that you said, “This is why I work so hard, this is what brings it all together for me”?

**Sam:** Well, I think that I could capture several moments. Or I could go back to an email that I received from an individual who was wearing the Air Native shoe and

thanked me for saving his life. I had nothing to do with saving his life. We created a product that worked for him, and he was able to get out and be more active. And now he's overcome the battle of type 2 diabetes.

**Chris:** What do you see as the biggest challenges to the Native community today? And do you feel that your company and companies like NB3F are headed in the right direction? What more do you need?

**Sam:** I just think it's bringing more awareness to the challenges. I was just talking with Notah. We were chatting in regard to the work that we want to continue to do together, through his foundation. And really address childhood obesity and type 2 diabetes with our kids.

And for us, at N7, we really want to be an inspiration for that work. And that's why our tagline is called Dare to Rise, because we're really challenging our kids to rise above whatever is holding them back, to become the person they know they can be. And that's what we continue to do.

**Chris:** Raving has been involved with NB3Fit for the last two weeks. It was a really big deal, an "event" to get all these kids moving. Does it come down to something as basic as having the money to fund regular exercise programs?

**Sam:** That's what the N7 fund grant program does, it creates opportunities for communities to apply to receive grants for \$10,000 to \$20,000 dollars (or larger) to get native youth moving.

I think it comes down to having somebody in those communities be their champion. Sam McCracken can't be everywhere, Notah can't be everywhere to inspire this to happen. You need that one person in the community to say, "Hey, I live here, I care about these kids, and I want to put together the infrastructure that's going to allow them to have more access to physical activity." And with the correct infrastructure, that community champion can then apply for the funding to make it happen.

You can meet Sam McCracken at [Raving's 20th National Indian Gaming Analytics & Marketing Conference](#) at Choctaw Casino Resort, Durant, OK. For more information about the conference, please go to [www.ravingconference.com](http://www.ravingconference.com).

For more information about the Nike N7 Program, please visit <http://n7fund.com/>.

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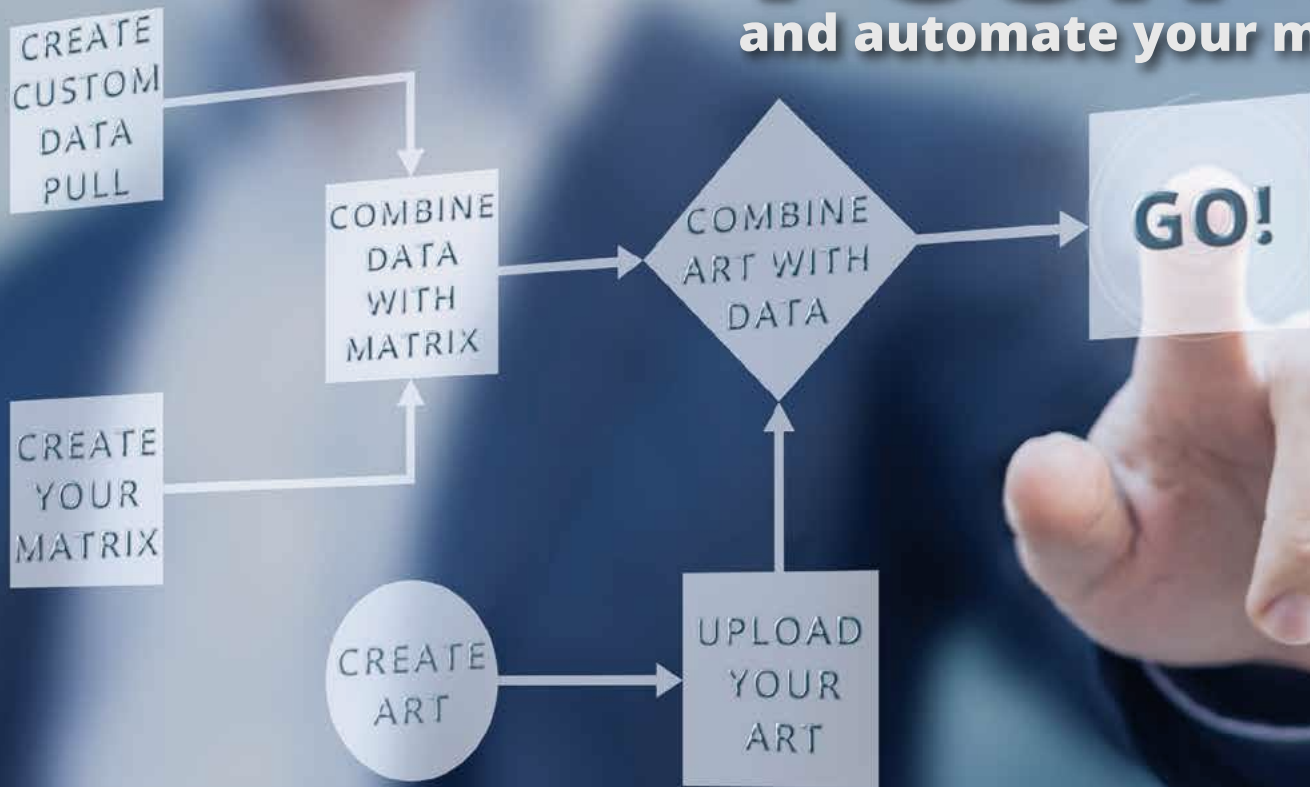
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# Are There Holes in Your Most Valuable Asset?

## *Protecting and maintaining your player database with regular checkups*

By Tami Jones, Strategic Raving Partner, Direct Mail and Digital Printing, and Director of Sales and Marketing, CSG Direct

Another year has gone, and a new year has taken over. You've recovered from the New Year's Eve festivities (maybe), you have your new budgets, and things are gaining speed. Postage rates have gone up (January 2018), so it's time to look at your data once again and make sure that it is accurate and no money is being wasted.

I sound like a broken record. I say this every year at this time, but I can't say it and you can't hear it enough. The data you have on your players is your MOST valuable asset. It is imperative that you take care of it, maintain its accuracy, and don't waste any of your hard-fought marketing budget paying for things that get thrown in the trash (yes, the post office throws away marketing mail that won't deliver).

Why do I repeat myself in this regard so often? **Because we see your data.** We know how many times we've done NCOA (National Change of Address is a secure dataset of individuals, families and businesses who have filed a change-of-address with the USPS) for you and you haven't imported the changed data back into your databases. The USPS keeps NCOA records for a rolling 48 months. After that 48 months, the addresses for those players are lost to you. NCOA won't be able to find them any longer. We see the number of bad address records (non-CASS, which means nonexistent) that are in your data. We see the number of addresses you are mailing to that the USPS says are vacant, undeliverable as addressed, or have no such occupant. What can you do? There are plenty of things you can do, but you have to make the commitment to do them regularly to keep up. Once in a while is nowhere near enough.

**NCOA is now required by the post office, so you should be doing that every quarter, but it isn't enough by itself.**

NCOA only catches those people who told the post office they were moving, when they were moving, AND provided the address to which they were moving. What about those people who move and don't tell the post office? Or tell the post office they are moving, but don't provide the new address? We aren't required to tell the post office we are moving, and many people don't. They notify their creditors (or at least the ones they want to have the new info), move utilities, and tell family and friends on their own. There are other move update and resident verify options that you should be looking at to help find the ones that NCOA can't find.

**Do you know every time one of your guests passes on?**

How many that have passed are you still mailing to? Oftentimes you don't know that they have passed until a very angry and hurt surviving relative calls and begs you to stop sending their deceased loved one offers from your casino. The post office does not have an active deceased file, so you need to look for other sources of that data and run that process a minimum of once a year to cleanse your database. You will be shocked after the first time you run that process how many records from your database need to be archived and purged due to death. If it was 3-7% of your database, how much money is that over the course of one year in print, mailing services, and postage costs? How about other marketing costs for those guests?

**Are you suppressing vacant addresses, addresses with a nationally registered no-mail flag, prison or correctional facility addresses, nursing home addresses, or players who are in bankruptcy proceedings?**

Are you updating player records that are missing apartment numbers (did you know they were missing)? If your property mails to Canada, are you standardizing and updating those addresses to get maximum deliverability within Canada Post?

**How many duplicate records by exact individual are there in your database?**

An individual who has an address in their account that has "aged-out" of NCOA may have another record in your database that you don't know about. You don't have a complete picture of that player, as some of their info may be assigned to another account. Perhaps they should be getting \$10 more in free play, which might motivate another visit each week. What if they were 86'd at one point, and now you are back to inviting them to events and giving them free play? This can cause serious problems for a security department.

**It isn't all doom and gloom, folks.**

Keeping your data up-to-date and accurate makes it more valuable. You will have accurate information about the players you most want playing your machines and table games without gaps in loyalty. That same accurate information can be used to track down those valuable inactive players who would really be a boost to the bottom line if they started playing again.

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Accurate and up-to-date data produces the most successful appends for things like email addresses, geographic location, phone or mobile numbers, and consumer demographics that make your data even more valuable. This, in turn, provides more ways and reasons to communicate with your players. The more you know about your players, the more personal you can make their experience at your property. And that will keep them coming back.

**The process begins with training your staff about how valuable your data is to your property.**

And that means all staff, from the frontline hotel front desk attendant to the security staff. And especially the staff who have face-to-face contact with your players and access to the player system. Confirm the information that you have for each guest with them standing right in front of you. Ask them how they want to receive their communications, and then be sure that the contact information you have is correct. When missing information is detected, flag the account to remind your staff that new information is needed the next time that player is in front of someone.

Make sure that the IT department and the marketing department have a mutual understanding regarding the value of the data on your players, and that they communicate

well with each other. It has become increasingly important that these two departments work closely together in this Information Age. Your IT team is there to help with downloading data that needs to be cleansed, and then uploading data that has been updated back into your systems. Making changes by hand on a mass scale is no longer practical with today's technology.

Make today the day that you start taking really good care of your most valuable asset. You have a lot to gain.



*In her 20+ years of casino, direct mail and management experience, Tami has worked for three different casinos, a home health corporation, and her current employer, CSG Direct Mail, a direct mail and digital printing company. She specializes in helping casinos optimize their direct marketing programs by evaluating actual mail pieces and scheduling practices, data hygiene practices and more.*

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## Casino Analytics Is Entering a New Renaissance

*From carded play to machine learning*

By Az Husain, Strategic Raving Partner, Analytics and Systems Integration Specialist and CEO, Casino Science

As Caesars Entertainment emerged from its \$18 billion bankruptcy as a different company, it's interesting to reflect on the valuable parts of the business that were contested in negotiation. The most valuable of the individual assets that was fought over by creditors was not the company's Romanesque resort at the heart of the Las Vegas Strip; it was the customer data collected through the company's Total Rewards program.

The Total Rewards loyalty program sealed Harrah's (and ultimately Caesars) reputation as an innovative pioneer in "Big Data" marketing, even before the term had been coined. Total Rewards became the Gold Standard for casino loyalty programs that others copied. Today, carded play has changed the way casinos look at players, their preferences, and their spending habits.

In the years following the introduction of carded play, new data science technologies have emerged. Casino analytics is now entering a new renaissance that will empower and embolden the next generation of casino marketers to digest even greater insight from player data.

Data science is the application of scientific processes to extract insight from data. It goes beyond the presentation of simple summary analytics by applying mathematics and statistics to understand the insight within the data at a much deeper level. It also leverages tools from computer science, like data mining, machine learning, and artificial intelligence, to solve otherwise complex problems that cannot be solved using simple tools or dashboards.

Data science tries to answer questions that are future-forward, using historical data as a benchmark to predict a

future outcome that the business can then try to influence. For example, database segmentation is a common casino marketing activity. To do this with precision requires evaluating months of historical data and applying statistical methods to quantitatively discover the optimized number of player tiers and allocate the right number of players within each tier. The outcome of this activity is not only greater accuracy with player segmentation, but lower marketing costs with a higher probability that players will respond to casino messaging and generate a significant return.

More sophisticated data science tools like machine learning and artificial intelligence are now seeing application in gaming.

Machine learning is the process of examining large amounts of data to look for patterns and then make predictions on outcomes. It gives a computer the ability to “learn” without being explicitly programmed. Once a pattern is detected, that discovered insight may lead a marketer to take some action. For example, imagine creating a capability to identify the probability that a player will respond to a promotion message. Armed with that information, you could focus promotion messages on those audiences that have the highest probability of conversion. Or you could look at those low probability conversion players and find cheaper methods to engage them.

Artificial intelligence, or AI, is the application of computational techniques where a machine mimics some cognitive function that can be associated with the human mind, such as learning or problem solving. In gaming, AI can be applied to solve problems that require some “learned” optimization that would be very difficult for a human to solve in a short amount of time. For example, imagine trying to optimize your slot floor by mix of machines and spatial arrangement with the goal of maximizing profit. A slot manager could try using heat maps to look for opportunities to better reconfigure the floor. But a small number of reactionary changes to layout will likely have minimal impact. An AI-driven approach would evaluate thousands of potential layout configurations using months of gaming data and player behavior to understand and propose a fully profit-maximized floor.

Clearly these new technologies will radically alter casino operations, just as Total Rewards changed player marketing forever. But the obvious question is, how should you take advantage of these technologies today without overinvesting in the hype?

Some things you should consider when making data science investments:

1. Ask yourself, what problem are we trying to solve? And be clear on what you expect as a desired outcome.

2. Invest in new data science skills for your team. New skills will help transform your organization and better prepare for this next chapter in marketing analytics.
3. Look at the current portfolio of products you have already invested in before considering additional technology purchases. You may already own some data science technologies and not realize it, or you may find that those existing investments are underutilized.

You may find that solving specialized casino marketing challenges in a focused way will yield a greater return. Regardless of your approach, ensure that you can get utilization out of your investment.

The next generation of analytics will allow analysts to predict and forecast future outcomes with incredible precision. That’s too late for the old Caesars, but not so late for you.



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

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# The Sharper the Knife, the Less You Bleed

*Rethinking data analysis with siloed thinking*

By Nicole Barker, Senior Raving Partner, Database & Loyalty Marketing

Cutco makes fabulous knives. Customers pay a premium to have a knife for bread, a knife for steak, and a knife for mayonnaise. Yes, a knife for mayonnaise. If you've ever made a sandwich with a spatula spreader, you know what I'm writing about.

To our peril, we've been using a meat cleaver for everything, and it's time to stop.

Here's how to take a Cutco approach to database analysis. Slicing and dicing data needs a fresh mindset and better equipment.

### **Why are we slicing and dicing in the first place?**

With strong conviction, we commit ourselves to being data-driven organizations. But what's our intent? Are we looking to buy the business or court the business? A transactional mindset drives us to slice, dice, and segment according to ADT alone. We single-mindedly determine

one thing – what kind of coupon shall we throw at the customer to win the next trip? Data-driven marketing can live beyond the confines of comp, coupon, and promotion determination. It can feed recognition, prioritization, access to amenities, and attention that will drive customer engagement further. There are more ways to slice and dice to drive greater engagement with the guest. Engagement breeds loyalty. Loyalty drives revenue. Revenue from loyal customers can weather seasonal change and competitive threats better than an active customer base entitled to transactional entreaties.

### **Anything can be segmented**

Irrespective of how much we like or dislike the measures we live by, I can rank absolutely anything. I can segment slots like apples, bingo like oranges, and bananas like table games. If you ask me to, I can rank mangoes, kumquats, and persimmons. That's not hard.



# PLAYER REINVESTMENT & FREE PLAY ANALYSIS

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## Serving up the perfect fruit salad

To treat our players differently, we have relied on two choices: a fruit salad and a smoothie. Now that's hard. Our first attempt at slicing and dicing serves up a loyalty fruit salad. We load all our parts into a bowl and then reinvest as if each morsel has the same value to the customer. We've been trying to give apples to bananas, and turn oranges into apples. The emphasis in this situation is on couponing. We assume that if we send it, a player will switch from one gaming silo to another.

## Solving it with a smoothie

The alternative is to pull out a blender. Let's blend all the gaming spend together. If we're smart enough, we can convert table games, bingo, poker, and keno into points, then blend it together with slots into a loyalty smoothie. Then we dole out rewards based upon a customer's profitability to the property. We can concoct the perfect indices that only make sense to one or two people in the back office. The math will be perfect and the deployment a sloppy mess. Well done.

Our expectations for quantitative review have taken our eyes off the prize. We've made the math about us instead of about the customer.

## The third option takes reinvestment off the table

It shifts the focus from our operational math to the math of customer experience. It's a new version of a fruit plate. The object is to add all spend together, and then give out property benefits based upon the entirety of the platter. I like this idea. There's an element that makes sense to me. If a guest walks in the front door and spends money for entertainment in the form of food, hotel and blackjack, we honor that spend. The guest knows the size of his wallet when he entered and the size of his wallet when he left. He could care less about our margins. He just knows that he dropped cash and we should appreciate that. The size of the platter does not determine a transactional exchange. It does determine access to property benefits, events, and special attention. This is the realm of player development and tiered card benefits. This analysis is not a precursor for coupons or comps, where profitability plays a dominant role.

## Siloed thinking

Everything I have learned about gaming, I relearned from BINGO.

There is a time for siloed thinking. If we work as skilled data chefs, we utilize our cadre of Cutco knives to slice and dice each gaming type and outlet spend individually. We rank the spend to find Sweet Spots, Thresholds, and to determine VIP spending. The first step is to determine whether the most spend within each silo comes from

guests who are dominant to that silo. What percentage of blackjack players only play blackjack? Does the size and contribution of this audience merit niche-level marketing efforts? We can easily reinvest within a silo with similar incentives. That way, we avoid sending slot coupons to a roulette player. Likewise, we can rank Bingo players and entreat the guests to tiered rewards within the silo. Oftentimes, we use our slot thinking to send bingo coupons to a bingo player when the margins cannot support this kind of activity. The Free Play couponing model works for slots, but let's not assume that discounting works for other game types. The Bingo player is a social animal who thrives on recognition. Operating within a silo allows us to personalize the method of engagement, the size of reinvestment, and configure our communications to fit a unique set of player profiles within each silo.

## Niche upon niche

When we try to blend table games with other forms of spend, our table games players feel like bruised bananas. They feel manipulated or forced to play slots in order to get attention. Likewise, within the table games environment, no two bananas are the same. Treat a blackjack player like a Cavendish and a poker player like a plantain, and they will appreciate your siloed thinking. Each group needs to be studied by three people sitting in one room: the marketer, the data analyst, and the operations expert. Get to know the different holds amongst the table game types. Constantly question how value is determined and recorded on the floor and tabulated by the software system. Study the ways to cheat the system. Understand the margins that determine profitability. Build profiles of why the customer enjoys each game and the unique ways that he or she likes to receive rewards.

It's only when we do the slicing and dicing to better understand each fruit, that we can reinvest appropriately. Our reinvestment is not only determined by the coupons we throw at a customer to incent the next visit, but by the labor we put towards getting to know each customer better. If we calibrate our efforts better by keeping siloed understanding in mind, we can connect better with the guest.

Serving the flip-flopers and crossover players is another blend requiring yet another set of knives. As any other chef will tell you, top-notch cuisine begins with proper knife skills. The sharper the knife, the less you bleed.



*Nicole works with casinos across the country to harvest potential from patron databases in order to fine-tune the segmentation, messaging, and programming of multimedia and multi-channel campaigns.*



## Is It Time for a Rebrand?

*Five steps to successfully navigate this process*

By Mark Astone, Strategic Raving Partner, Branding, Advertising and Media Services and CEO, Catalyst Marketing Company

When many properties think of a rebrand, they jump to thoughts of their logo, colors, and perhaps their messaging. They tend to focus on the outcome of the creative process, as it is visual and tangible. However, a brand is not just a logo and a tagline, it is the fusion of complex human perceptions formed over time. A brand isn't something that should be reinvented every few years, but rather sustained and supported by creative campaigns that keep the image fresh while reinforcing the brand positioning among the audiences served. From messaging to delivering on guest experience, properties can influence brand perception, but they do not control or own their brand, their guests do.

While creative development is an important part of a rebranding process, it is not the starting point. The first decision is "When?" When is the right time for a rebrand? Has the property's messaging become stale? Is the look of the creative dated? Has anything changed on-property,

new hotel or venue? What outside factors in the market necessitate an update? Are there any major changes in the competitive climate? What is the value of a rebrand in terms of potential revenue increase? These are some of the pointed identifiers that guide when it's the right time to embark on the branding process.

Once a property has determined that a rebrand is required, the first step is gathering data and doing research to determine what elements of a rebrand are needed. Beginning with an analytical approach allows the property to identify which brand modifiers resonate with their guests, the general market, their employees, property management, and in the case of tribal gaming, the tribe itself. Research such as Catalyst's CATapult™ process allows properties to identify key insights where there is continuity or disconnect between these groups, leading to a 360-degree view of the perception of the property's

brand. Understanding how your property is viewed will dictate what areas need addressing.

Rebranding can consist of an update to messaging or a complete overhaul of messaging, creative, and in-house training. It's imperative that the ability to deliver an experience matches the message. Ensuring that team members understand their role and how it applies to the property's brand and messaging can be critical to a successful branding exercise. Communication plans for rebrands should address both internal messaging, as well as the customer-facing interaction. Rebranding is called a process because it is just that:

**A step-by-step path that identifies where player perception can be modified or enhanced to have a positive impact on brand awareness and loyalty.**

1. Identify the need for a rebrand
2. Conduct the appropriate research
3. Determine the depth and breadth of the rebrand
4. Develop brand positioning and messaging
5. Develop a campaign, creative, and a communication platform that will resonate with guests, employees, vendors, and the local community

Rebranding done correctly can be a significant investment in resources. Not just the time and effort in the process, but the financial commitment to developing a brand plan and standards, then extending the brand throughout the property and community. Changing property collateral alone can sometimes turn into a capital investment, so being mindful of the complete investment in research, messaging, collateral and training is a must.

Plan, research, budget, trust the process, and build a brand to believe in!

*Interested in rebranding? Join Catalyst at [Raving's 20th National Indian Gaming Analytics & Marketing Conference](#), January 29-31, when they present the workshop:*

**REBRANDING RELOADED – DEVELOPING A ROADMAP BEFORE YOU JUMP INTO THIS EXPENSIVE MARKETING VENTURE**

*It happens all the time. New leadership comes in and says, "We need to do a rebrand." The CFO knows that it is much more than changing out the logo or updating the tagline, they've been through this time and time again and it drives them crazy. When is the right time or is it necessary for a rebrand at your tribal casino? How do you evaluate the hidden costs before you start your process? And what is*

*the process? In this hands-on workshop, you'll leave with a strategic roadmap to understand when/how to perform a complete rebrand that resonates with your gaming guests to drive continued and new business. Rebranding is a major marketing feat and every executive should understand what resources are required when tackling a project like this. You will leave prepared to impress the CFO & GM with your plan to rebrand.*

*Workshop leaders: Mark Astone, CEO and Josh Williams, Business Development Manager, Catalyst Marketing Company*



*Mark 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. Raving has partnered with Mark and his team at Catalyst to help our clients with solutions for branding, advertising and media services.*



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## Benefits of Choice Architecture

*How to guide player choices for maximum profit*

By Sarah Procopio, Raving Partner, Database Analytics

### Architect Player Choices

If you work in the casino business, you know that no matter what division you work in, you are responsible for getting the player to make decisions the benefit that property you work at. In order to run the most financially successful property possible, we need to engage in choice architecture. We do it every day in our daily interactions. Choice architecture is the way that we structure and present the possible choices (in this case, to the guest or the player) and the impact of that presentation on their decision-making. If we present the choices that we ask our guests and players to make in a more thoughtful way by using the concepts of Behavioral Economics outlined here, choices go in the property's favor and revenues increase. Benefits of Choice Architecture via leveraging BH principles include:

1. Increased revenue
2. Improved profit

### Behavioral Economics in Play

In gaming, we use principles of behavioral economics with such ease that we might not even realize it. Here are a couple examples in play:

**The Priming Effect** – Priming happens when a person is exposed to stimuli (visuals, words, smells, etc.) that activate associated memories. This process (e.g., priming) then influences them in their performance of subsequent tasks. For example, a guest has the intention of calling it an early night after they check into their hotel. After having to walk through the casino floor on the way to their room and sensing the excitement, they drop their bags off in the room and head back down to the blackjack table. In this scenario, the priming effect is in full effect. If the guest didn't have to walk through the casino to get to their room, they would have likely stuck with their original plan.

# DATABASE ANALYSIS & PREDICTIVE MODELING

**Zero Price Effect** – We all know that “free” has additional pulling power – the casino environment is the home of the comp. However, did you know that people perceive something as more valuable when the price is reduced to zero – even if the alternative price is almost nothing? The power of free is so high that even if something is \$.01 or \$.15 instead of free, it drastically changes the consumers’ perceived value of it (e.g., it isn’t as valuable or as exciting as free, even when it costs very little). Take this into consideration the next time you are creating offers for your lower level player worth segments. It is better to give them something of little value for free than it is to give them something of greater value for a small cost. Strange but true.

## Are You Doing It Wrong?

Here are a couple key Behavioral Economics principles and ways they are being used that create a poor player experience and a negative outcome for casinos:

- **Choice Overload** – People love choices, right? Wrong. Too many choices are *not* a good thing. The greater the number or complexity of choices offered, the more likely a guest is to become overwhelmed, get decision fatigue, and generally have an unhappy experience. When this happens, often guests avoid making a choice at all, which is exactly the opposite of what you want. The good news is that choice overload can be counteracted by simplifying choice attributes or the number of available options – think Sam’s Club or Costco. They have minimal options available for each product for this very reason.
- **Decoy Effect** – The Decoy Effect is tricky. When used correctly, all the guest’s choices can go in your favor, resulting in a major financial payoff. When used incorrectly (which is usually a product of being unaware of how powerful this principle is), guests will make choices that are not in the property’s favor. Here is why. The options offered have a big impact on a person who is making the choice. I might like a Ferrari to drive, but my choices are a Nissan Altima or a BMW 525i, so I choose the BMW. This mindset is in play with the Decoy Effect (in this instance, the Nissan Altima is the decoy). It occurs when someone’s preference for one option over another changes by adding a third (similar, but less attractive) option.

## Next Steps

So what next steps should you take to put this new knowledge in motion and use it to increase gaming revenue and profit margins for your property?

1. Walk the property with the outlined principles in mind. Observe where they are being used to benefit your business and where they are hindering it.

2. Put together a plan to change the hindrances that currently exist, and overlay it with a scientific approach to measure results (create a hypothesis, ensure that there is a measurable outcome, keep a control group, etc.).
3. Examine your results, refine your approach, and repeat. The beautiful thing about BE principles is that there are many that don’t require an additional investment and can be executed with little effort by the operational team. Use this to your advantage.

*Want to learn more about the concepts of Behavioral Economics as they apply to your casino operation? Meet Sarah at [Raving’s 20<sup>th</sup> National Indian Gaming Analytics & Marketing Conference](#), or email Amy Hergenrother at [amy@ravingconsulting.com](mailto:amy@ravingconsulting.com) to find out how we can assist your team.*



*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.*



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# The Ultimate Host Model ...

## *A hybrid of hunter and hugger*

By Janet Hawk, Raving Partner, Player Development and Marketing

*The Godfather* is one of my all-time favorite films. Especially after I moved to Vegas. The mob mystique, stories the “dinosaurs” told, pasta, passion, (did I mention pasta?) really piqued my interest. When I was young and just breaking into the casino business, there was a certain line from that movie that I repeated to myself and became a mantra: “it’s not personal, it’s business.” It was an important lesson that one of my first mentors in the industry really beat into me.

When I began as a floorperson on the slot floor, Mark was my shift manager and trainer. His first lesson? “If I see you cry on the floor, I will kick your \_\_\_!” I’m a Montana girl. I was raised on a ranch and had never considered myself as overly sensitive at work. So I laughed and told him “not to worry.” He looked at me very seriously and said, “Trust me. You are working with the public. Most of whom are losing money. Things will be said and done to you, and you will want to cry out of frustration. Leave the floor, do what you need to do, then collect yourself and hit the floor again with your head up.” Yeah, yeah, yeah, I thought.

Guess what? It happened! More than once. I was so thankful for his advice! So, “it’s not personal, it’s business” became my silent meditation, especially during dispute resolution situations. I also shared that advice when I trained others in the business. That is, until I read an article a few months ago that triggered my “AHA” button in a BIG way. What hosts do IS personal! If it’s not personal, you aren’t doing it right. What I realized is that I was using the mantra as protection, and it was contradictory to everything I did and trained my team to do. So, I decided to change my mantra: business IS personal. For any business to be truly successful and deliver exemplary guest service, it had darn well better be personal! It’s about developing relationships, and to have ANY type of relationship, we have to get personal. And in business, good relationships create loyalty.

### **So, how can we balance personal and business in everything a host does?**

For the PD department, it is vital to what we do. Let’s take this new mantra and design the ultimate host model. Often, hosts are divided into two separate categories:

1. Hugger: the touchy-feely host who is more concerned with making the guest happy.
2. Hunter: the revenue-focused host who makes every decision based on numbers. Whether it be for comping or reinvesting in the guest, to even who they will spend time on. It’s all about the money.

My ultimate host is a combination of these two types, a hybrid. The host who takes the time to honestly build that relationship with their guests, and uses the information mined from the database for leads, proper reinvestment parameters, goals and strategies for the best result for both guest and property.

These hosts are aware of all their guests’ preferences and idiosyncrasies, and can also help properly manage comps/points so that the guest:

1. Has an enjoyable gaming experience
2. Stays profitable for the casino
3. Keeps the balance between reinvestment in guest from becoming entitlement

The hybrid host does most of their work behind the scenes. Most people don’t see all the work they do to stay on top of their book of business. They don’t let you “see the strings” of the puppet show. They just want the guest to have a good time, and if the guest has an issue, they do their best to help fix it.

How do they do that? Here are a few examples:

### **They are organized!**

- They utilize a calendar system like Outlook, smartphones and alerts/reminders to keep on track.
- File folders, post-it notes, whiteboards, journals, event outlines, arrival and departure reports, etc., are your friends! Make a habit of writing things down!
- They fully leverage the technology available (or create a workaround!). This not only includes Outlook and smartphones, but your CMS, hospitality systems, or any other system your casino utilizes. If you don’t know the systems well, ask!
- Take notes and, if possible, enter them into the CMS. This not only helps you stay on track, but if you also include player profile information, you stay on top of all your guests’ preferences and personal characteristics within your book of business.

### **They are experts at managing their time!**

- Make a schedule and FOLLOW IT! What you don’t make time for will get overlooked.
- Make a game plan and set goals ... be proactive!

**They have a thorough knowledge of their book of business and use analytics to strategize!**

# HOST AND PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

- Hosts need to know everyone they are coded to, or at least be in the process of getting to know them.
- Make it a point to review all reports concerning your book of business. If you don't have access to these reports, make friends with your data analysis department. By dividing your list into sizable segments (high frequency/low ADT, high frequency/high ADT, low frequency/high ADT), you can more effectively manage your list and make clear goals and strategies.
- Use the analysis to develop a sales campaign for each player in your book of business.
- Set sales goals based on the analysis and hold yourself accountable!
- Take the time to LISTEN and LEARN all you can about your guests. It's not about you!
- Know your casino inside and out! The more you know about your product (the casino), the more you can help your guest have a more personal experience.
- Check, check, and check again ... then, follow up! Every single time!

## **They build relationships with teammates!**

- No one can do this alone, and you can't do everything! The relationships you have with other departments and your PD teammates are as important as the one you have with your guests. Teamwork makes for the ultimate guest experience, because everyone is equally invested in taking care of the guests.

## **They know that the more touches (contacts with the guest) they make, the more revenue they make!**

- It's the little things you do as a host that can make the greatest impact. As you continue to get to know your players, you will be able to create unique guest service experiences and make an unforgettable impact on your guests ... whether they are onsite or not!

## **They know how to have fun!**

- Have fun with your guests! Have fun with your team! Have fun with every department that helps you do your job and takes care of your guests!

The ultimate host uses all the tools they can to help the guest have a better experience while they gamble. That personal touch is really the key to all relationships, but, as I so negligently ignored, really important in business as well. Sorry, Don Corleone, but a successful business IS personal.



*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.*

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# Casino Communications 101

*Recognizing your own limitations and locating resources to optimize your business*

By Andrea McCurry & Kevin Parker, Raving Partners, Casino Operations and Technology

*“Knowledge isn’t power until it is applied.” – Dale Carnegie*

Last month, my family and I attempted to attend a Golden Knights hockey game at the T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas, NV. When we arrived at the front of the line to present our tickets, we emptied our pockets, allowed our bags to be searched, and passed through the metal detectors. It was at this point that a security officer informed us that they could not allow us into the arena with a stroller.

I must admit, I was irritated that the security personnel allowed us to get completely through the line before informing us that we would have to utilize a stroller locker that, in the words of the security officer, was located “maybe over in the parking garage, or possibly in the New York-New York Casino.”

Not wanting to miss the game, we rushed off in the direction of the parking facility to locate the stroller lockers. We did not find the lockers in the parking garage, nor was there signage indicating that we might be near our destination or even an employee to direct us. Next we headed off to New York-New York Casino in search of the stroller lockers. Again, we could not locate any directional signage and out of the three employees that we asked about the location of the stroller lockers, two of them offered up puzzled looks, while the last employee directed us on a wild goose chase that led us to the lockers at the Big Apple Coaster and Arcade, which are NOT designed as stroller lockers! It was at this point that we called it a night and headed home without even a glimpse of the game. We were really looking forward to our first hockey game, paid for our parking, paid for our tickets, hoped to see a game, and left completely frustrated.

*The above scenario, which could be mistaken as a rant, is a real-life experience of the McCurry family from the perspective of Andrea, the mom and the customer. In this article, Andrea and Kevin will discuss the importance of teamwork, with communication being the epicenter.*

You have one shot to make a first impression for each of your guests, and this experience is a perfect example of how a lack of communication can turn a promising family experience into a nightmare evening.

### **How this applies to your property**

Effective communication between departments is essential to the smooth and profitable operation of a casino resort. When one department has no idea what the others are

requiring of it, the lack of communication negatively affects your bottom line. As a casino professional, you must be able to successfully communicate your needs to other departments and believe in their ability to make your vision a reality.

For the purpose of this article, let’s say that your role as a slot professional is defined by the tasks you must accomplish to enable the casino to operate profitably. While you can maximize performance on the floor by rotating games, titles and hold percentages, the most effective way to market these changes to your customers is probably beyond your comfort level or expertise.

While we understand that dealing with other departments can be trying at times, it’s important to recognize that they don’t want to fail any more than you do. If a marketing campaign fails, it wasn’t because the marketing staff didn’t wish to do the best job possible supporting your initiative; it is often because they are operating in an informational void. They don’t have the knowledge or expertise you possess, and if you haven’t adequately expressed your needs and provided the background information for them to build a campaign, the failure is as much yours as it is theirs.

Think of it this way; if you instructed a person to drive to a location, but they had no directions to get to the location, or no idea how to operate a vehicle, they have no way of completing the task you require. You can’t assume that support departments can meet your needs if you haven’t fully explained your requirements and your goals.

### **If you don’t like the results you are getting, change your approach!**

Take the time and put forth the effort to educate other departments about your floor design.

- Explain not only what you have done, but why you have done it and how it is important to revenue creation.
- Express to the marketing team why you picked the games or titles you want promoted, and give them your ideas about why they are marketable.
- Outline your expectations for the project and the overall results you expect to create.
- Lastly, be sure to share the outline and vision with the entire team involved.



Too often we allow frustrations from our last marketing initiative to get the best of us and decide to push the marketing of a project in one direction, while refusing to consider the suggestions of the marketing professionals. I mean, if it's coming out of my budget, we are going to do it my way, right? It is little wonder that these promotions often end disastrously. While we clearly understand what we want to achieve, many of us are simply not marketing personalities and are too close to the project to objectively assess the needs of the promotion. What we as slot personnel believe is most important to a project may have absolutely no benefit in the eyes of the customers who we are attempting to attract.

Slot personnel can often get bogged down in the details, because details are what slot professionals do best. If you need to establish an additional power and data run for a new bank on the floor, do you do it yourself? No, you almost certainly have the maintenance department or a subcontractor take care of this so that you can keep the project on track and moving forward.

How about making the determination to remove a customer from the floor for a security-related violation? Although you may be capable, you do not have the time,

formal training or certifications to accomplish these tasks. Just because you possess the managerial ability to perform a task, doesn't mean that you should.

## Your department as part of the larger picture

No one person has a skill set varied enough to perform each job required in a complex casino environment. Each department is diverse and requires a unique skill and personality set to optimize its performance. Understanding your own department's attributes and how they relate to the overall property is as important as any aspect of your job. Equally important is your ability to recognize your own limitations and locate resources that can best optimize your efforts.



*Kevin and Andrea are Raving's experts when it comes to casino operations, technology and regulations. They have partnered together for the last 15 years specifically opening new casinos, rehabilitating existing properties, and developing new technology to enhance player experience.*

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## What You Need to Know About the Entertainment Contract Process

*Terminology to protect your event and your casino*

By Kell Houston, Senior Raving Partner, Gaming Entertainment

In the entertainment industry, there is a lot of terminology that can seem confusing. As Tribal Gaming has evolved into a \$32 billion dollar business, we have more and more attorneys involved, and it has become even more convoluted. Whether you handle all your entertainment booking in-house or if you use a buyer, being familiar with the following is critical.

Here are some of the main points that you need to understand about the “Contract & Rider:”

### **Offer/Authorization**

This is your submission to the agency for the Artist you are looking to hire for your show or concert. All the pertinent points need to be included:

- Fee you are offering
- Date and time of performance – include any length of show requirement
- Venue location and address
- Capacity of the venue

- Ticket scaling – how much you are going to charge for each tier
- The announce and on-sale dates
- The contact person and the signer for the contracts
- The production company/contact person
- The radius clause – this gives you exclusivity for a period of time. Pretty common to be 90 days prior and 30 days following your date, within 100-150 miles. No public plays can occur or be advertised inside your radius clause. This is very important for your “brand.”
- Expiration date – this is the date that you have determined when the offer expires if it is not accepted in writing. Also very important, because it allows you to move on to another option. Always make sure that you have a reasonable expiration date on any offer.
- Any important points that your casino property specifies as deal-breaker points

In your offer, it’s important that you cover as much information in advance as possible, so that you can get quickly to a “yes” or “no” answer.

## Contract

This is the basic agreement, and it is typically a boilerplate. It is issued after the Artist accepts your initial offer (above). All agencies use their own standard contract template. This basic contract will indicate the venue info, the date, how the Artist is to be billed, an overview of production info and catering, transportation and accommodations requests, compensation or fee you are paying and the terms for payment, plus any special provisions. There will also be a place for you (the buyer) to sign, as well as a place for the Artist to sign.

Along with this contract will be a terms and conditions addendum that will vary from agency to agency. These terms will include the following points:

- Ticketing – prices and requests
- Force Majeure
- Insurance/indemnification
- Controlling Provisions
- Liability
- Default
- Cancellation issues
- Billing/promotion
- Merchandise
- And more

All of these terms and conditions need to be reviewed. Keep in mind that all of the agency contracts you receive will be heavily one-sided. All of these points can be reasonably negotiated.

Also keep in mind that the goal is to always find a working compromise in a short amount of time.

## Rider (Attached With The Contract)

This document can run from a few pages to 30+ pages. It lists all the additional terms, requests, needs, etc. It is totally negotiable. It usually comes in a couple parts:

1. The basic terms and conditions, which talk about all sorts of scenarios, naming who's responsible, who controls what, etc. This is pretty much a duplication of the terms and conditions found within the Artist boilerplate contract, it's just more specific to the Artist you are working with.

2. Hospitality includes all sorts of meal and food requests – all negotiable. Acts need meals, so use meal comps; Acts request liquor – say no. Acts request green room hospitality – limit this to what you can realistically provide. Touring acts will request Bus stock – simply tell them that you can do ice and water only.

- Accommodations are pretty firm and simple. Rooms onsite are best, but sometimes moving them offsite is the best option. Always keep them informed.

- Ground transportation – keep it limited to your airport of choice. Be careful about getting stuck with an airport much farther away.
- Day of show runner, can be negotiated and provided as needed.

3. The production part of this rider needs to be given to your production team. Make sure your production people understand that they work for you, not the Artist. They speak the language and can simplify a lot of the costs and requests by just doing their due diligence.

- However, the group needs to sound and look good, and you need to find the middle ground that doesn't compromise the show and doesn't cost you a lot of extra money.
- Your production people can save you a lot of money if they are properly doing their jobs.

I recommend that you create your own casino addendum, indicating your terms and conditions as well. This will help level the playing field. Make sure you keep it as simple as possible and specific to the terms and points that are deal-breakers for your property.

The goal is a successful show with the least amount of hassle. Once the attorneys get involved, it becomes a battle of terminology with a lot of legalese that will confuse everyone but the attorneys.



*Kell has a savvy gaming approach to utilizing entertainment as a tool to drive folks to the casino floor, which 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.*

# Dennis' *Vintage*, Sure-Fire, Personal Casino Promotions (Part III of IV)

By Dennis Conrad, President Emeritus, Raving

Well, here is the third in my four-part series, which some have called "Dennis toots his own horn." I would care about that perception, BUT THIS STUFF ALL DROVE MEASURABLE RESULTS! Read 'em and reap!

*Category* : TABLE GAME TOURNAMENTS

*Name* : "FUN 21" AND "FUN CRAPS"

**Description:** Early in my career, table game tournaments were one of the few promotions for the tables (other than the occasional coupon in a "fun book"). The larger casinos would tend to have major tournaments (usually blackjack events) with significant entry fees, buy-ins with live money play and large grand prizes, usually in the \$25,000 – \$100,000 range. But several casinos also had what were commonly called "mini tournaments," with entry fees ranging from \$10 - \$35 and grand prizes of \$500 – \$1,500. They were run in a tight timeframe with elimination rounds that lasted 20 or 30 minutes. Players "knocked out" of the tourney could "re-enter" into the preliminary round for another entry fee (which increased the prize pool or helped to defray expenses). The overall goals of the mini-tournaments (we called ours "Fun 21" and "Fun Craps") were to create activity in a slow part of the casino, attract (or develop) some dedicated table game players, and pick up some table game play in the main pits before, during and after the minis.

**Dennis' Take:** I always liked this mini-tournament concept for table games, but they were the most scrutinized and questioned of all our casino marketing activities. There was a significant expense for tournament dealers and a tournament host (who had to be VERY proficient in the table game itself, plus the tournament concept and execution). Some tournament "sharpies" never played anything else in the casino except for the tournament. Dealers tended to not like the tournaments because they made fewer tips working them. While the tourneys were designed to be fun (casual dress, themed nights, lively interactions, etc.), disputes were inevitable, because, after all, prize money was still significant and tournament players demanded fairness in the tournament proceedings.

Nonetheless, while "Mini Tournaments" are not huge direct revenue producers (major tournaments CAN be), they created a buzz in the casino. They gave our hotel guests a gambling activity that kept them in OUR casino (and not another one down the street). It did develop a few new table game players (and hotel guests) for the future. And they were, truly, FUN. And god knows that back then, and even now, table games could use a spotlight on it.

So, if you are considering if "Fun 21" should be in your table game marketing mix, remember that it is not a huge, immediate revenue driver, but it can develop some longer-term table game business and should help bring your casino floor to life. And in my mind, that's not a bad marketing result.

*Category* : AFFINITY GROUP PROMOTION

*Name* : BOWLERS PROMO

**Description:** To understand the Bowlers Promo, you need to understand the background. It was the mid-1990s and the City of Reno cut a deal to host the major men's and women's national bowling tournaments for a period of 20 years at Reno's then-new National Bowling Stadium. This meant that the ABC (Men) and WIBC (Women) would each bring tens of thousands of bowlers to Reno once every three years, not all at once, but for six months of that year there would be 5,000 – 6,000 bowlers in town (all coming and going) for the National Finals. Many of the bowlers also brought (non-bowling) guests. These were huge events that brought business to Reno for extended periods during its slowest business season.

# CASINO PROMOTIONS

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A dozen or so Reno-area casino properties knocked themselves out to attract bowlers to their properties. They got aggressive with their room rate packages. They created bowler coupon books with rich offers for bowlers. Three properties (one was mine) created a joint slot tournament promotion, which created incentives for EACH bowler to visit EACH of the three properties EACH day. It is this “three-property” co-op slot tourney that I wanted to highlight.

Although it was a cooperative venture, each of the three erstwhile competitors knocked themselves out to get more than their fair share of the bowlers at THEIR property. Two of the properties used giveaways, fancy environments, etc. (READ: EXPENSIVE!), to attract the bowlers to their slot tournament component.

We tried something else. We hired some actors from a local Reno theater group to conduct our slot tournament for the bowlers each day. They wore bowling shirts, used bowling lingo, and were generally very laid-back. Ours was certainly a different experience.

**Dennis’ Take:** I guess this is called DIFFERENTIATION. Our property couldn’t compete with LAVISH and EXPENSIVE, so we chose to compete with the EXPERIENCE we provided at our portion of the bowlers’ daily slot tournament. The innovation was in contracting with the local theater group. Had we tried to hire our own “Joe and Mary Six-pack” bowler-types (I realize this is a stereotype) as part-time employees, I’m sure that it would have fallen flat. But in costume, in a role, our actors pulled it off. The bowler/slot tournament players loved our experience the best. They talked about it, they played more often, and they stuck around our property more.

All in all, the “Three-Property Joint Bowler/Slot Promo” was probably too expensive, too focused on a low to mid-worth gaming customer, and too much of a distraction from all our other marketing. But if you ever want to scoop the competition, focus on the GUEST EXPERIENCE rather than on how much you can give away.

*Category* : SLOT/ROOM PROMOTION

*Name* : WINNER WONDERLAND

**Description:** Back in the day in Las Vegas (and even now in many casino resort markets), the time between Thanksgiving and Christmas is typically soft for business, and hotel occupancy rates are often some of the lowest of the entire year. I was faced with that circumstance many years ago, and the typical response to these “doldrums” was to reduce staff for a month and minimize expenses. But I was convinced that we could drive business during this time by using the otherwise empty hotel rooms and a strong offer to gamblers. At the time, we had a daily slot tournament, which was successful and offered a relatively small first place prize of \$500. It occurred to me that we could dress up the slot tournament, add some prize money, and use that as the “gambling hook” to draw slot players. Throw in a couple of free room nights (in our otherwise half-filled hotel) and voila, we had a simple event called “Winner Wonderland.” Invitees received two free room nights and two chances to compete in the slot tournament, which had \$3,000 per day in daily prize money.

**Dennis’ Take:** Winner Wonderland not only moved the needle, it almost broke the meter. Occupancy doubled, gaming revenues soared, and I won a company award for Innovation for such a shockingly simple concept – pair a free room offer with a free slot tournament offer. But as with anything, the success is in the plan and the details.

We were faced with 500-600 empty hotel rooms for a nearly month-long period, and I instinctively knew that whatever Winner Wonderland was, it had to be aggressive in order to fill that many rooms. So rather than target our best customers with the Winner Wonderland “two room nights, two slot tournament entries” offer, we targeted our players two and three tier levels below that, as there are LOTS of these players and we needed VOLUME (we did invite our VIPs too, and some certainly did show up, but it was not the lavish offer that they would usually get, so their response to Winner Wonderland was soft).

We used a 9-month period to promote Winner Wonderland. We did wave after wave of direct mail. Jackpot winners on the floor received a Winner Wonderland invitation with their jackpot payoff. Hosts could offer invitations to any new players who seemed pretty decent. It is fair to say that any player in our database who had an Average Daily Theoretical worth of at least \$50 was invited to Winner Wonderland. And fifty bucks was about what it cost to use an (otherwise unoccupied) room at that time. And certainly most of the players played well beyond \$50 ADT, PLUS, they typically brought another guest with them, who spent money in their own unique ways, and were often gamblers themselves.

# CASINO PROMOTIONS

In my mind, the key to success for Winner Wonderland was targeting a group not used to receiving such a strong offer as free rooms and free tournament entries. It is not often that circumstances allow “strategic reinvesting” in our casino players, but the dead period between Thanksgiving and Christmas was one of those times for us.

Winner Wonderland proved to me that mid-level customers will respond to offers seen as normally reserved for VIPs. The volume of that response from these masses of “grind” players can make for outstanding results. It was a springboard for my marketing career, and several casinos nationally now do something similar when faced with bleak hotel occupancy periods. Just be careful not to do your own Winner Wonderland so often that you make it an “entitlement” for these players. And yes, later in my career, I made that mistake.

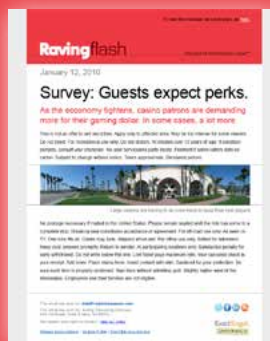


*Dennis is President Emeritus of Raving Consulting Company, and has over 40 years of casino experience, including keno writer, bartender, dealer, floorperson, gaming instructor, special events manager, casino marketing director, gaming institute director, and corporate vice president of employee training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

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# SAVE THE DATE

## Raving Conferences & Events Schedule



### Webinar: How to Effectively and Efficiently Increase Revenue From Mid-Level Players Using the Phone

Presented by Daniel Wood, Raving Partner, Phone-Based Marketing Solutions and VP of Business Development at Engagex, January 25, 2018

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



### Raving's NEXT Conference: Innovative Strategies that Drive Profit

Choctaw Casino Resort, Durant, OK, January 29, 2018

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



### Raving's 20th National Indian Gaming Analytics & Marketing Conference

Choctaw Casino Resort, Durant, OK, January 29 — 31, 2018

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



### Tribal Spirit of Giving Celebration Luncheon

Choctaw Casino Resort, Durant, OK, January 31, 2018

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



### Raving @ NIGA

Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, NV, April 17 — 21, 2018

[www.indiangamingtradeshow.com/510/indian-gaming-tradeshow-home.htm](http://www.indiangamingtradeshow.com/510/indian-gaming-tradeshow-home.htm)



### Raving @NOISE - Northeastern Oklahoma Indigo Sky Expo

Indigo Sky Resort and Casino, Wyandotte, OK, May 21 — 23, 2018

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



### Raving @ WIGA - Northwest Indian Gaming Conference & Expo

Tulalip Resort Casino, WA, June 2018

[www.washingtonindiangaming.org/tradeshow.aspx](http://www.washingtonindiangaming.org/tradeshow.aspx)



### Native Strong Comedy Slam

Las Vegas, NV during NIGA, April 19, 2018

[www.ravingconsulting.com/conferences-and-events-schedule/native-strong-comedy-slam/](http://www.ravingconsulting.com/conferences-and-events-schedule/native-strong-comedy-slam/)



### Raving @ OIGA Conference and Trade Show

Oklahoma City, OK, July 23 — 25, 2018

[www.oiga.org](http://www.oiga.org)



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