

# Raving

Raving's Strategic Solutions Magazine

2018 Quarterly Issue #3



## RAISING THE BAR

KEVIN HUDDLESTON ON  
INCREASING HIGH-LEVEL  
PERFORMANCE — PAGE 21

## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Dear Ravers,

We've been talking about sports betting for years, and now it is here. Do you have a plan? Are you anxious to get started in this new endeavor? States will create a path to regulate and, let's not forget, tax this new, legalized form of gambling. Now for a word of warning. It sounds glamorous; an opportunity to create more revenue. However, don't get lured in without a plan in place to truly understand if this makes sense in your market. Let's use bingo and entertainment as examples; they can be great additions to revenue, if done correctly. If not, they can be costly and a drain on resources. Related to this topic, Kell Houston tackles the issue of maximizing entertainment for your property size on [page 33](#). And Jerry Epstein covers the opportunities of becoming a leader in strategically implementing sports-related promotions – even if you're not ready to jump into sports betting on [page 19](#).



*Change and growth are always on the horizon, right ...*

**whether it's sports betting or something else.** As we enter into the second half of the year, Raving continues to expand our product in the gaming industry to help our clients adapt to what's not only down the road, but facing us today. Raving provides gaming organizations the capability to look at all areas of their operation for overall efficiencies – we call it our Raving 360 Review. Enter Kevin Huddleston, our “cover model” for this month; check out his article on [page 21](#) – where he shows us how we can do a deep dive into our numbers to make sure, as an organization, we're performing at maximum profitability. Another way we look at the “total picture” is evaluating one of the largest controllable expenses impacting Tribes nationally: medical benefit costs. Welcome Raving Partner Tyler Moore of Face Rock Enterprises; in this issue he begins our education by understanding the benefits of self-funded medical plans on [page 5](#). Finally, you can't do a 360 review without a tactical marketing expert; welcome Raving Partner Tom Osiecki. We've asked him in this article to start with the bane of most casino marketers' existences: the dreaded marketing plan, which often goes unused after hours of work, see [page 31](#).

Speaking of change, this past January we integrated new ways of learning into our Analytics and Marketing Conference. It was received so positively, we've taken this concept to our Host Development Conference, July 16-17 at Caesars Palace, Las Vegas – please check out the [agenda](#); we've got all new sessions, plus a team project (we'll be writing about this in our October issue). See, we understand that learning isn't “one size fits all.” As conference planners, we cover the most relevant topics but we can't cover every issue our attendees face in just two days! But what we can do is give you more opportunities to connect with fellow attendee gaming executives who have tried (and sometimes failed) with many of the concepts and issues that you're looking to solve.

I've got so much more to tell you about our team, about new things we're doing here ... so make sure that you're not missing anything and [subscribe to our weekly insider report](#) to receive special invites and reports via email if you don't already.

Although summer is the casino industry's busiest time – I'd be remiss if I didn't say that I hope you're reading this lakeside. Beachside? Blow-up poolside? We all need downtime to recharge and play ... so we're able to offer our team members and our guests our energized selves.

Sincerely,

Deana Scott, Raving CEO  
deana@ravingconsulting.com

*Cover:* Is your organization performing at maximum profitability? When's the last time you had a deep-dive check-up? Check out Raving Partner, Kevin Huddleston's article on [page 21](#).

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## Trending in Media: Connected TV

*Jump on this new TV outreach now*

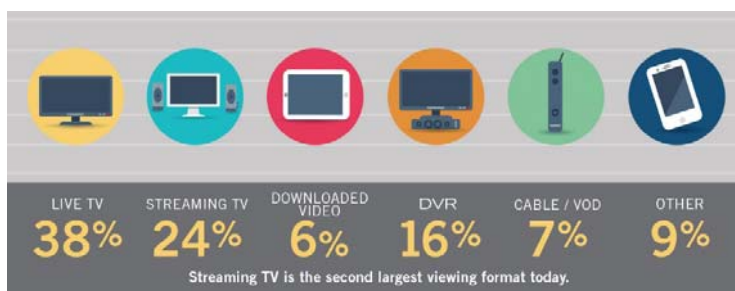
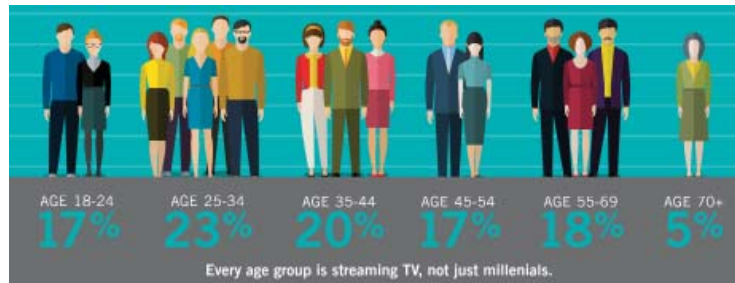
By [Mark Astone](#), Strategic Raving Partner, Branding, Advertising and Media Services and CEO, [Catalyst Marketing Company](#)

Connected TV or Over-the-Top TV has been a growing trend in the last year. This type of TV viewing should not be a big surprise, as consumers take more control of how and when they watch TV. What may surprise you, however, is who is watching. The 55-plus segment makes up more of the Connected TV audience than the under-25 viewers. In fact, 60% of total viewers are age 35 and up, with 35% falling in the 45-69 year-old casino marketing “wheelhouse.” Another surprise is that over 30% of all TV programming is viewed via Connected TV, compared to 38% live TV and 16% DVR. It is the second largest way that TV is watched today.

Many of our clients ask the question, “Are our older, less tech-savvy consumers responding to digital marketing, and will that result in activity on our casino floor?” With the largest two growth segments in smartphone usage being the 55-64 and 65-plus age groups making up over 25% of all users, the answer is yes. This sweet spot target market for casino patrons is embracing smartphone technology and, in turn, viewing TV online. These two behaviors are becoming mainstream in how audiences consume media and a part of everyday life. Just as mobile marketing has become a necessary inclusion of digital marketing due to its dominant usage, Connected TV in the near future will also become a necessary way to purchase a TV viewing audience.

Advertising on Connected TV is a bit of a hybrid. It is purchased like digital marketing by impressions, but viewed like traditional TV. The format allows advertisers to take advantage of a captured audience to deliver a traditional thirty-second TV message. Currently, Connected TV programming has traditional commercial breaks just like live TV, but for now, a little less of them and they cannot be skipped. Unlike DVR viewing, the full length of the commercial has to be viewed, making this an ideal medium. In terms of targeting, demo targeting to a particular age group is possible, but targeting down to actual programming is currently not available. As more targeting capabilities become part of the medium, the advertising dollars in this tactic should skyrocket.

With any new technology or advertising medium, the question becomes, when should we jump in? In terms of Connected TV, the answer is now. Whether you are looking for Connected TV to supplement an existing TV schedule or be the only TV outreach you have, this medium represents a lower out-of-pocket cost to reach a valuable audience. The powerful blend of the visual and audio message that TV



provides is something that every advertiser hopes to include as part of their media mix. However, with TV’s higher out-of-pocket cost, it is not something that every advertiser can afford. Connected TV can change all of that, as the cost of entry follows a lower out-of-pocket digital cost versus higher traditional media costs.

As new formats, devices and platforms come online, there will be more opportunity for cost-effective guest touchpoints through digital marketing. Advertising spend in digital video has grown by double digit percentages, and that trend is projected to continue over the next four years. As many casinos are beginning to work through their FY2019 budget, it is important to understand how these types of shifts are projected to change how media dollars should be budgeted throughout the year.

Understanding the effectiveness of each media channel has become paramount to efficiently allocating your media budget. Now is the time to consider Connected TV as part of your budget moving forward.



*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.*



## Are You Maximizing Your Ability to Manage the Costs Associated with the Employer-Sponsored Health Plan?

*The nuances of a self-funded health program*

Interview with [Tyler Moore](#), Raving Partner, Benefits Management and Partner, [Face Rock Enterprises](#)

In Raving's service expansion over the past 18 months, and as part of our new leadership, Raving now provides gaming organizations the capability to look at all areas of their operations for overall efficiencies. As a Native-owned company, it is especially important that we look at one of the largest controllable expenses impacting Tribes nationally – health benefit costs.

To help our clients address this, we've partnered with Tyler Moore of Face Rock Enterprises. In this first in a series of articles, Tyler will walk us through the nuances of a self-funded health plan.

**Q:** *Basic question here. If I'm a new employee of a casino, how do you explain the differences between a self-funded*

*health plan compared to my last job when I had Blue Cross? As an end-user, will I notice a difference in benefits?*

Tyler: There may be a slight difference in the provider networks; however, we find that most of the time the self-funded plan can include a network that is very close to, if not the same as, the current provider network. In addition, we often find there to be an increase in customer service, both for the employer and the member. Overall, most employees won't notice a difference.

**Q:** *What's the biggest challenge that you see in Indian country with health management: that Tribes are NOT self-funded when they should be OR they are self-funded but not efficiently so?*

Tyler: I believe the bigger challenge is a Tribe that is self-funded, but not properly set up and not partnering with the right administrators and advisors. I find that a Tribe/enterprise that is currently fully-insured offers a huge opportunity to set up a self-funded program that will increase the perceived benefit while saving significant money. We just need to set it up correctly from the start. If a Tribe is already self-funded, but not set up correctly, we need to correct the problems, re-implement with the proper setup, and deal with the negative perceptions.

**Q: How do I know if my health plan is large enough to be self-funded?**

Tyler: If there are over 300 employees enrolled in the health plan ... yes! If there are between 100 and 300 employees enrolled ... probably still yes. If there are under 100 employees enrolled ... probably not, but not out of the question.

**Q: Tyler, some of our readers come from the casino operation side and some work for the Tribe through other enterprises. Typically, does the casino always fall under the Tribe's medical program? Are there instances where the casino is separate? Does it matter if the casino has a low employment rate of Tribal members?**

Tyler: I believe the most successfully ran health programs have the Tribe and its enterprises under the same program, and are managed by a benefit committee with representation from each entity. However, this is not to say that you can't have a successful program with the casino(s) being separate. The principles that create a successful program can be applied to the Tribe and its enterprises if they are together or separate. The highest opportunity for savings is in a population that has a higher percentage of Tribal Members, but there is still savings potential in the groups with a lower percentage of Tribal Members.

**Q: How do I know if my Tribe/Enterprise(s) is taking advantage of all the cost savings opportunities that the Federal Government provides through legislation?**

Tyler: The following is a brief overview of the programs most likely to save the Tribe and its Enterprises money as it relates to health benefit costs:

**Medicare Like Rates:** Tribal self-funded plans are able to pay hospital claims incurred by PRC eligible employees or dependents at the Medicare rate. This would save a self-funded plan around 30-40% above any PPO discounts for these hospital claims.

**Catastrophic Health Emergency Fund (CHEF):** The Tribe and its Enterprises are eligible to receive reimbursement from Indian Health Services (IHS) for any claims tied to

a given incident over \$25,000 during any CHEF plan year (October 1st – September 30th).

**Payor of Last Resort:** Any claims incurred through the self-funded plan are to be paid by any other payer prior to the Tribe and its Enterprises being liable. This includes any coverage through a spouse, Medicaid or Medicare.

The savings associated with the implementation of these programs will vary based on the number of PRC eligible Tribal Members enrolled in the self-funded plan; however, in an average population, you can expect a 30-40% reduction in overall plan costs.

**Q: So, say my Tribe is already self-funded, how do I know if we're taking advantage of the cost-saving programs that you listed above?**

Tyler: As mentioned above ...

Partnering with an advisor that has an in-depth understanding of how to manage a self-funded health plan, knowledge of the laws supporting a Tribal self-funded plan, as well as experience in working with the PRC program.

Selecting a third party administrator with the understanding and capabilities to coordinate the claims payment process and eligibility with the Tribe's PRC program.

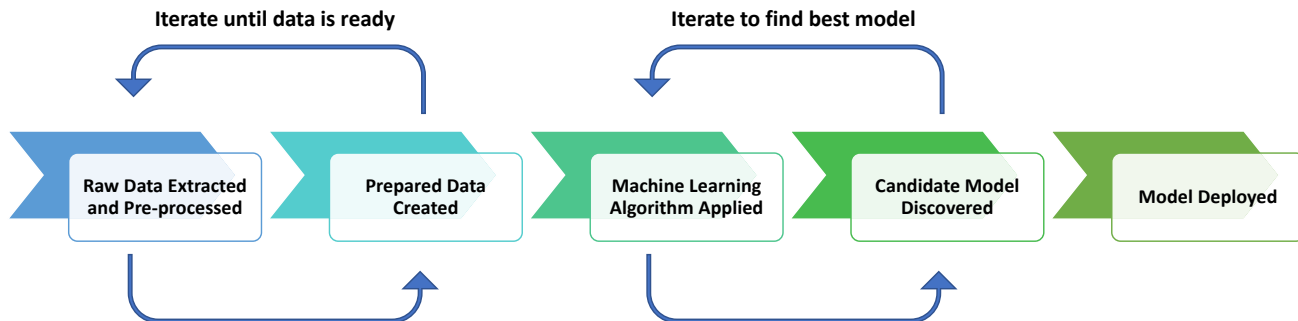
Most importantly, there will need to be collaboration between the health plan and the Tribe's PRC program. If you choose the right advisor, they will be best equipped to facilitate this collaboration.

Thanks, Tyler, and we look forward to future articles. How about you? Not sure if you're maximizing your health plan's savings potential? Please contact Raving for a complimentary review. Contact Amy Hergenrother at 775-329-7864 or amy@ravingconsulting.com for more information. For less than an hour on the phone, you can save your organization thousands.



*Tyler has an extensive background in managing benefits for Native American Tribes. He has worked in the employee benefits field since 1999 and has extensive experience in managing self-insured health plans, including underwriting and stop loss placement. Tyler consults on many self-funded plans and continues to work with Tribal organizations on their unique benefit needs.*

## The Machine Learning Process



# ¡Viva La Casino Analytics Revolución! – Parte II

## *The machine learning process*

By [Azam Husain](#), Strategic Raving Partner, Analytics and Systems Integration Specialist and CEO, [Casino Science](#)

In [my last article](#), I introduced how machine learning plays an important role in the new analytics renaissance. I discussed how this technology will change gaming by allowing marketers to discover insights locked away in the casino’s databases. Machine learning enables a marketer to examine large amounts of data, looking for patterns, and then generates the capability to recognize those same patterns in new data. The insights generated can help marketers make better predictions on outcomes. More to the point, machine learning helps you get smarter with the data that you already have. In this article, we’ll examine the machine learning process as a series of executable steps.

At the start, machine learning always begins with data. This data can come from many different parts of the organization (player tracking system, F&B, POS, etc.). The data can also take many different forms, player data (gender, age, address, etc.), gaming data (ADT, tier, frequency, LTV, etc.), promotion data (redemption status, conversion rate, cost of sales, etc.). The more data that you have to frame the question, the more precise the answer.

Choosing the appropriate data to use in the analysis is vitally important. For example, suppose you want to determine with a high degree of confidence that a promotion will lead to redemption. What data will you need to answer this question? Some things will be obvious, like offer/redeemed status, time of redemption, and offer amount. But other

data may also be relevant, such as visit frequency, player worth, or date of last visit. Discovering the most relevant data for a machine learning project is a foundational part of the process, requiring domain expertise from a casino marketer.

Whatever data you choose, it’s often not in the correct form to use directly. Instead, machine learning projects typically require some form of pre-processing. In our promotion redemption example, the raw data might need to be “cleaned” in some way if there is missing or incomplete data. Or the data may need to be structured for better analysis, such as linking the data back to gaming activity. The goal of data pre-processing is to create what’s called “prepared data.” Creating prepared data from raw data frequently takes up the majority of the total time spent on a machine learning project.

Once the data is in the right shape, the next step is to search for the best answer for the question being asked. To do this, a data scientist will use machine learning algorithms to work with the prepared data. These algorithms typically apply some statistical analysis to the data. This includes relatively common things, such as a regression, or more complex approaches with more exotic technical names like multiclass decision jungle. The data scientist chooses a machine learning algorithm that is most appropriate for the question being analyzed.

## DATA ANALYTICS

When a machine learning algorithm is run on prepared data, the result is referred to as a model. A model is a computer program that is a set of steps for recognizing a pattern in data – in our example, recognizing what data leads to a promotion being redeemed. The algorithm implemented by the model itself provides a way to recognize when the pattern is discovered.

It's important to note that machine learning models typically don't return yes/no answers. Instead, a probability between 0 and 1 is presented. So, if the model showed that the probability for promotion redemption is 0.8 when certain factors are present within a player's past redemption history, then a marketer could use that information to select players for a future promotion who exhibit similar characteristics. Knowing what to do when presented with a probability value is a business decision. For example, a marketer could decide against selecting players for a future promotion whose probability is below 0.5. Such a decision could help save on promotion costs while ensuring focus on those players with the highest probability of conversion.

Typically, the first candidate model created isn't the best one. Instead, the data scientist will try many different combinations of machine learning algorithms and prepared data, searching for the one that produces the best model for the question being asked. Each iterative attempt is an experiment, and most machine learning projects will run many experiments.

Once an effective model is discovered, the last step is deploying the model. Deploying essentially means using the model as part of a process or application for answering the question over and over again. In our promotion redemption example, an application could be created that would select those players automatically from the player database who have a 0.8 probability of redemption when certain factors are present.

It's clear that using machine learning to recognize patterns can help marketers discover insights with much greater speed and efficiency. No need to lock your marketers in a room for a week to get answers; partner with a data scientist for a day, and solve the problem with less time and greater accuracy.



*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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# There's a Hole in the Bucket, Dear Liza, Dear Liza ...

## *Cyclical problem-solving*

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

Do you worry? Do you fret? Do you seek solutions, but seem to end up where you started? That's the result of cyclical problem-solving. Cyclical problem-solving occurs when organizations seek quick solutions to surface-level problems. Oftentimes, the problems originate in one program or department, but represent an iceberg of subsurface symptoms that represent larger issues. The process of implementing quick fixes and returning to bad habits creates a volatile and unfulfilling environment internally and externally. It's taxing for leaders and turbulent for customers. Frequently, solutions are thrown haphazardly at the wall only to mollify management and prompt short-term gains.

How do you break out of cyclical problem-solving?

### **Problem Identification**

#### *There's a Hole in the Bucket, Dear Liza, Dear Liza ...*

Liza probably knows about the hole in the bucket before Henry brings it to her attention. She's been doing everything in her power to work around the issue. Now that Henry has voiced his concern, she must own the problem.

Here's the misstep that disrupts the entire song. Liza jumps to a series of solutions before she understands the nature of the problem. She's busy with her own chores. Henry is a nuisance. Problems aren't necessarily voiced by the most proactive members of our team.

The first step in breaking cyclical problem-solving is to ask a series of follow-up questions to get more information. Does the problem need to be addressed immediately? Is the barn on fire? Should we be looking for the hose instead of fixing the bucket? Should Henry be solving this problem for himself, or is this issue indicative of greater resource issues? Is the problem worth solving, or is there an alternative that makes more sense?

Problem identification requires active listening: something Liza must activate before the scenario drives her nuts.

*In a casino marketing scenario, a good example of this*

*would be the angst over the size of Free Play Coupons. Is the problem truly the size of the reinvestment, or the way in which the reinvestment is deployed? Should we focus on the coupon, or the way in which the coupon is received and*

*redeemed? Breaking cyclical problem-solving frequently refocuses our attention on process and deployment, beyond size and frequency.*

#### **With What Shall I Fix It: Dear Liza, Dear Liza ...**

This is where consultants fall short. A consultant may identify a problem, write a report, then wish the client the best as he or she walks out the door. There is a hole in the bucket. That's obvious. The root of the problem stems from *why* there is a hole in the bucket. Many consulting



engagements are finger-pointing journeys to prove or disprove solutions that clients are already aware of. An outsider is needed to confirm and redirect. The existence of a bucket with a hole; is it a problem or a bad habit? The summary of the engagement; is it a fix or is it a plan?

Frequently, a multidisciplinary approach is required: more than one solution is recommended. The strength of the implementation is in the coached progress towards better habits. No party involved will understand the true nature of the engagement until a discovery process that is both quantitative and qualitative takes place. Training and elbow-to-elbow engagement is next: a co-opted approach to gaining buy-in from multiple layers within and across the organization. The crucial final leg depends upon the coached process to follow. Does the team have a resource to gauge progress and help to remove obstacles? Are there quantitative tools to mark milestones and redirect efforts as implementation builds momentum? Those three steps represent reinvestment in the long game, not just a one-shot snapshot.

*In the casino marketing scenario above, the process requires a deep dive into how worth segments respond to Free Play and how reinvestment is used or abused within each bucket of spend. Few properties look at layered costs. After this discovery, change is rolled out methodically over time. A shift in reinvestment can occur that nurtures the customer and rebalances the reinvestment equation in a more sustainable manner. This is not just a coupon change; it may involve multiple avenues of conflicting spend. Redemption and layered spend is monitored over time to measure lift.*

### **Better end-goals.**

There is a reason that Henry and Liza aren't getting anywhere. It's their end-goals that are at fault. Fixing a hole in the bucket isn't an end-goal, it's a patch.

A patch ...

... doesn't motivate,

... doesn't inspire,

... and doesn't provide a beacon around obstacles and through hardship.

Getting water from one place to another is a process that needs tools. If the tools are broken, perhaps it's not the tools that need fixing. If Henry and Liza are planting a flower bed, the context brightens the journey. If the end-goal is a bouquet of dahlias on the kitchen table, that's something both can envision. Both parties will be invested in removing the obstacles to getting the job done. The end-goal isn't a patched bucket, but a bounty of color.

*In our Free Play scenario, the end-goal could be tied to customer comments about feeling valued and appreciated. When working with John Romero, a master of engaging copy, a General Manager gauged the success of Direct Mail by the number of customers who called monthly to apologize for not being able to return that month, or by the number of response letters he received that responded directly to the story he (or rather his ghostwriter John) told in his monthly mailer. Behind the scenes, we can measure theoretical lift and response rates until our eyes bleed. The bounty of color comes from the engaged customer. The engaged customer is something worth removing operational obstacles for.*

Cyclical problem-solving can be broken when bad habits are identified, employees are trained and engaged, and all directives make progress towards clear end-goals that matter to the heart as well as the bottom-line. I'd rather have a bouquet of dahlias on the table in six months than a patched bucket on the porch any day.



*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.*



## Creating new menus?

*Fine... but make sure you remove the dog*

By [Brett Magnan](#), Raving Partner, Hospitality

Creating menus that are exciting and fresh for our guests is a constant focus of most chefs and F&B managers. As they evaluate their menu items, too often personal bias and anecdotal customer comments drive what stays and what goes. This is dangerous and leads to significant inefficiencies in mise en place, as well as waste.

A better way to analyze a menu is through a menu analysis program or MAP. Menu engineering of this type was developed in 1982 by Professor Don Smith at Washington

State University, however there have been many versions adapted from his research. Simply speaking, MAP takes a series of menu items in a named menu category and compares the quantity sold against its profitability. The spreadsheet may also use factors that true up production, based on its menu mix to the overall set or its average contribution margin compared to the overall set.

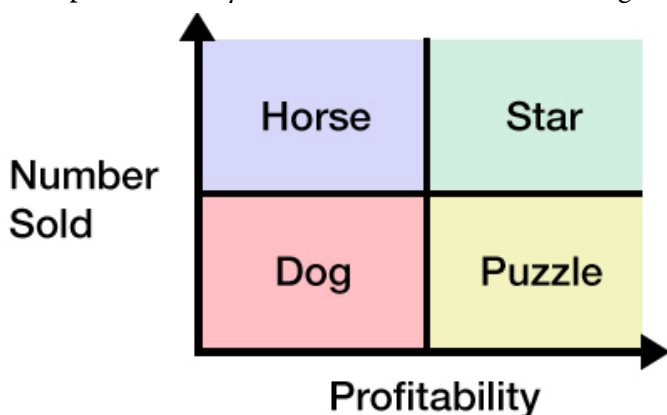
The result is a mapping of those items into classifications for ease of assessment. Those four classifications are **Star**, **Puzzle**, **Plowhorse** or **Dog**.

**Stars** are those menu items which are both high in contribution margin (meaning that they contribute the higher amount of profit per item in that category) and high in menu mix or popularity.

**Plowhorses** are popular, but lower in contribution margin.

**Puzzles** are not popular at all, but when sold, offer higher contribution margins.

**Dogs** are the worst performers in both popularity and contribution margin.



# HOSPITALITY

If we were to show this in a graph, it would look like the chart below.:

Using a sample set of menu items for a period of one month, we insert the quantity sold, plate cost, and sales price data into the spreadsheet as follows. MAP will then compute each category based on this performance data.

Of these 17 menu items for this sample steak restaurant, five menu items are in the Star category for this period of time, four Plowhorses, two Puzzles, five Dogs and one item that didn't have data to compare. So what does this mean?

It is suggested that you maintain offering the Star menu items and remove the Dog items immediately. Although that is fundamentally true, there could be other factors in play that may change your decision on these items. Those reasons could be as simple as requiring an item to remain on the list, regardless of being a Dog performer because it is a request item from a valuable player or frequent guest. Those factors are important to the overall goal of why this restaurant is located within a casino in the first place.

With regards to Plowhorses and Puzzles, it is suggested that these menu items be reworked to move its status up or right in the performance graph. Plowhorses, which are highly popular, may need to have their contribution margin adjusted, either in higher plate price or in smaller or different portions to improve their cost margin to the sales price.

Puzzles are very profitable, however no one is buying them. This might be a simple fix in better sales techniques of the service professionals or through the science of improved item placement on the menu and better menu descriptions. Should the data trend over a period of months even after these adjustments, it is suggested that you remove the Puzzle and add a new menu item in its place that might perform better and ultimately be selected by your guests.

There are many factors and tools to improve your food and beverage operation; menu analysis is just one. MAP should be used in conjunction with labor vs. sales tools, integrated purchasing and effective marketing.

Should your restaurant or casino F&B operation require a detailed analysis, please contact Raving to schedule a review.



*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.*

Using a sample set of menu items for a period of one month, we insert the quantity sold, plate cost, and sales price data into the spreadsheet as follows:

Menu Item	Of Menu	Plate	Plate
	Items Sold	Cost \$	Plate Price
Pork Chop	30	\$11.35	\$34.00
Roasted Rack of Lamb	29	\$22.83	\$36.00
Buffalo Steak	34	\$12.00	\$42.00
Chicken Picatta	48	\$6.40	\$24.00
Filet of Beef	188	\$12.93	\$34.00
NY Strip	140	\$12.65	\$36.00
Ribeye	144	\$16.10	\$43.00
Surf N Turf	57	\$23.62	\$55.00
Seafood Platter	17	\$24.57	\$60.00
Seabass	49	\$16.29	\$34.00
Shrimp Scampi	21	\$15.58	\$34.00
Halibut	47	\$11.69	\$39.00
Seared Scallops	35	\$14.47	\$36.00
Seafood Risotto	24	\$11.00	\$30.00
NY Strip Steak	0	\$18.50	\$42.00
T-Bone Steak	46	\$26.33	\$52.00
Nightly Feature	97	\$12.52	\$41.00
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>1006</b>		

MAP will then compute each category based on this performance data.

Menu Item	Menu Item Classification
Pork Chop	DOG
Roasted Rack of Lamb	DOG
Buffalo Steak	PUZZLE
Chicken Picatta	PLOWHORSE
Filet of Beef	PLOWHORSE
NY Strip	PLOWHORSE
Ribeye	STAR
Surf N Turf	STAR
Seafood Platter	PUZZLE
Seabass	PLOWHORSE
Shrimp Scampi	DOG
Halibut	STAR
Seared Scallops	DOG
Seafood Risotto	DOG
NY Strip Steak	
T-Bone Steak	STAR
Nightly Feature	STAR



# What Are You Giving Back ...

*In exchange for the losing bet?*

By [Steve Browne](#), Senior Raving Partner, Player Development and Guest Service

*Not only is it long-time Partner's Steve Browne's birthday this month, he is fast approaching his 20th anniversary with Raving. Slowing down? Not exactly! He's been with clients all over the globe this year with a stop off at Raving's Host Development Conference, July 17-18 in Las Vegas.*

*Because our road warrior didn't have time to write an article this issue, we're running a "readers favorite" that truly captures his spirit and the passion he feels about the gaming industry. Thanks Steve for leading the way and for believing.*

For 40 years, I have worked either in a casino, or with a casino, to deliver a proper gaming experience to players from all over the world. I have worked in northern Nevada, where I cut my teeth as a break-in lumpy, to just about every other state in the Union, from every province in Canada to both western and eastern Europe, and all the way out to Singapore and the Pacific Rim.

I have sweated in the trenches, mopped and polished hardwood floors, pan and broomed carpets, cleaned up spilled drinks and vomit. I have pitched cards to vacationers from California, called dice for businessmen from Detroit, and written markers for big-shots from New York and San Francisco.

I have made schedules, hired dealers, fired deserving miscreants, and mentored stars where I could. I have often talked too much and listened too little. I have led, followed, and gotten out of the way (when it seemed to be the best thing to do). I have asked for permission and begged for forgiveness.

I have been licensed, badged, fingerprinted and catalogued. I have sweated bullets in front of an executive team, pitched ideas to a visionary, and listened at the feet of greatness (Satre? Romero?). I have stayed in palaces of silk, suites of gold, and rural hotels that barely had running water. I have dined with old school royalty (Jackie Gaughan) and partied with new age innovation (the guys and gals of Barona).

I have studied in the areas of sales and service, written books on my findings and research, penned countless articles in a quest to spread more and better knowledge about how to do it right. I have tried with Dennis to identify who is "one of us," and how to promote them in our industry. I have played more bad golf than anyone would care to admit. I have tarried in private gaming salons, dallied in high limit areas, shadowed hosts and VIPs alike in a quest to discover the secrets of selling to the whales of our time.

## FINANCIAL & PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS

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I have sat in focus groups talking to thousands of frontline team members, players of all levels, and managers and supervisors of every department, trying to get to the truth of our organizations and our business, whatever that truth may be. I have run, walked, biked, carpooled, flown, taken the train, bus, monorail, subway, the tube. I have rented cars and boarded limousines, ridden in town cars and carriages.

In short, it's been a great ride, a forty-year ride of learning and listening, talking and teaching, doing and creating, explaining and yes, even apologizing. And through it all, I have collected a lifetime of memories that I will cherish forever.

But if there is one thing ... after all I have done, been, seen, tried, accomplished, and failed at ... if there is one thing I will carry with me always, one thing that I will continue to promote as the most important thing I have learned, found, taught, practiced, or cajoled out of others, if there is one thing I wish to hang my hat on ... it is this.

**We sell an entertainment experience that enriches our players' lives.**

It is just that important. It is THE ONLY thing. It is everything. And it should be the focus of everything you do in this crazy business. And if it isn't, then just why are you doing it? Please tell me that.

I will continue to bring that simple wisdom to everything I do, to every project I work on, to every product I create for every client I ever work for. Because a long time ago, an aged pit boss with more than fifty years in the business (and who has long since passed away) asked me if I received a paycheck from the casino (I was a craps dealer at the time). I answered yes, and he proceeded to remind me that every dollar in my paycheck had to be pulled out of a gambler's pocket, placed on a table or in a machine, wagered ... and LOST ... before it came to me. That every dollar in my paycheck came from a losing bet. That my paycheck was a loser. He then asked how that made me feel.

"Not very good," I replied, knowing the pain of a losing bet, knowing that I was taking that dollar borne of the pain of losing and using it to feed my family.

"Don't worry about the losing," he replied. "Losing is part of life. We all have to learn to lose. We lose at gambling, at love, at business, hell ... we lose at Monopoly."

"The real question I have for you," he said with somewhat of a grin on his face, "the real question is this. Just what are you giving back in exchange for the losing bet? What are

you giving to your player in return, so that when you take that bet home and use it to feed your family, you sleep well at night, knowing that the books are balanced, equal value has been given, and you don't owe anyone anything?"

**"What Are You Giving Back in Exchange for The Losing Bet?"**

I have been trying to answer that question for forty years. It's a very good question, don't you think? And I truly believe that I now know the answer.

I give back an experience that enriches my players' lives. It's that simple, that complicated, and that important. Everything I have, or have accumulated in the last thirty-five years, from the clothes on my back to my kids' college tuitions, everything has come from the losing bets of gamblers from all over the world (everywhere I have worked and been paid). And I do owe them. I owe them everything. I owe them my very best.

And so, I guess I will end by simply saying this. To those of you in our industry who are "one of us," who care about what you do, and how well you do it, who care more deeply about these crazy gamblers we serve than you do about your own paycheck, who believe with a deep and abiding passion that what we sell is the most important thing you could ever sell to someone, a feeling of belonging, of being important, of being a winner ... to those of you for whom the foregoing has been meaningful and vital, and not just a bunch of sentimental claptrap from an old guy reminiscing about his career ... well, I salute you.

*And I thank you.*

And I look forward to working with you in the future. Together we can change the landscape of our business. Together we can make the industry better. Together we can create more meaning and more value for our players, and yes, for our employees too.

*Together we can change the world.*



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



# When We Blow the Expectation of Excellent Service Even Before Our Guests Step Through Our Doors

*Are you providing five-star standards when your phone rings?*

By [Daniel Wood](#), Strategic Raving Partner, Phone Based Marketing Solutions and VP of Business Development at [Engagex](#)

*“OPERATOR!” I yell into the automated system. I punch ZERO. ZERO. ZERO. “Sorry, I don’t understand,” says the mechanical voice.*

One of my biggest pet peeves is calling a hotel property and going directly into an automated system. From an operator’s perspective, you can tell me all the reasons why it makes sense for your organization and how it is more efficient or saves money. From a guest service perspective, it stinks. And what’s even worse, being on a round robin hold when I’m inside a property and just want to make a reservation or schedule a wake-up call ... I have better things to do when I’m on-property than be on hold in my hotel room.

I recently visited with a casino executive who was explaining her expectation for her team while guests are on-site. Her comment was this: “You better be on point, all the time.” She isn’t the first casino executive who I have heard make that type of statement. As a result, guests will return to your property because of the service they received above all else. So why not start with five-star service before they get there and while they are there?

Do you know how many customers you lose even before they make a reservation? “Concierge” and five-star service should be provided by all of our casino resorts, no matter if we’re a small locals joint or a destination casino.

When was the last time a mid-level manager or executive at your property picked up the phone to see how your property compares to five-star guest service? What about compared to your competitors? Do you consistently check on your performance in order to get a baseline for your property’s performance?

Here is a suggested list of what should be evaluated:

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

## HOST AND PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

5. Was the guest transferred to the correct department?

6. How many guests hang up satisfied? Are they dissatisfied because of wait time, number of transfers or poor guest experience?

	Industry Average
Average pickup time	24 seconds
Question resolved without transfer	20.7 seconds
Answered by Security or like department	32%
Average hold time of a transfer	29 seconds
Percentage of time the one who answered can schedule a reservation (dining, spa, hotel)	14%
Percentage of time the one who answered the phone can answer questions about promotions and rewards	28%
Friendliness Rating (1-5, with 5 being most friendly)	4.1
Professionalism Rating (1-5, with 5 being most professional)	3.9
No Answer (takes over 1 1/2 minutes to answer or never answered)	6.5%

7. How would you rate the overall quality of the call? Are there phrases or jargon that shouldn't be used? Was the call professional? Did the call qualify as a five-star guest experience?

Check out some industry standards to see how your property compares:

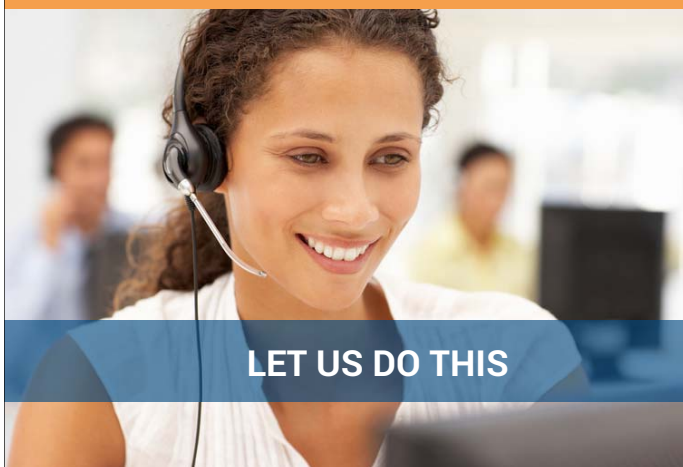
Five-star service isn't always the most economical (e.g., automation). Five-star service takes a commitment from the top down. Five-star service is often ignored in our front-facing systems, just because "it's the way we do things" or "it's a system that works."

Not sure if your property provides a five-star guest experience? Give us a call at Raving; we'd love to help determine where you are currently, and what it will take to get your property there! And guaranteed, we'll answer within 24 seconds!



*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.*

## Don't Have Enough Time or Staff to Connect with Key Players?



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# Are You Giving Your Guest the Best Hotel Experience?

*Take this 14 question survey ...*

By [John Stewart](#), Strategic Raving Partner and Owner/CEO/President at [Encompass Develop, Design & Construct, LLC](#)

We all work hard throughout the year, and enjoy the time that we have away from the office. We may take weeks to plan, schedule and anticipate the experience to come. Most of us have very few days to get away, and we want our time to be spent in a place that is better than we imagined.

As a hotel owner/manager, your main goal is to create an experience that your guests will remember and recommend to their friends and family. Most people have done their research and have chosen your establishment. Make their stay a memorable one so that they keep coming back!

Hotel rooms are intimate spaces. It is where your guests sleep, relax, work, bathe, and sometimes eat. We now know the science behind the creation of not-so-good, good and great memories. How can design be used to directly impact our brain and influence those memories?

Think about it; everything in that hotel room space counts in creating a memory.

Appealing to all the senses is the best way to ensure a memorable experience. What is the story that your guests will come away with after staying in your hotel? That question does not just mean “what does the room look like?” It involves much more. It includes all the senses.

**Take a walk through your hotel room with this article in your hand and ask yourself these questions:**

**1. What is the “Threshold Experience”?** A threshold is a point of transition. Does the opening invite you to go through? When you opened the door, was it like opening the door to a really nice car or more like opening a rusty farm gate? How does the door handle feel in your hand? Did the door rub on the carpet?

**2. What was the first thing you smelled?** Cleaning solution, musty smell, or citrus? Obviously, you want that smell to be something that is pleasant. The sense of smell is one of the most memorable. Can you remember a time when a smell triggered a memory?

## PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

**3. What was the first thing you saw?** And could you see it if it was dark? When people are asked to describe their accommodations, they almost always describe the way it looked. Great sights give us a permanent picture in our brain, so make it a great one!

**4. Where is the light switch?** Believe it or not, it matters. Is it conveniently located and easy to find, or do you have to grope in the dark to find it?

**5. What was the temperature?** Did you immediately run to the thermostat controls and turn it up or down? Did you wish that you had on a short sleeve shirt or sweater?

**6. What was the first sound you heard?** Was it a loud heater or air conditioner, or was it soothing music specifically to reduce stress?

**7. What is your first and then second impression of the bathroom?** Are the toiletries colorful and make you want to pick them up and smell them? Does the bathroom itself have a pleasant scent?

**8. How do the towels feel?** Are they plush and thick, or are they as thin as paper? Do they smell nice?

**9. How does the bed feel?** The bed is one of the most important aspects in the room. Is it comfortable? How do the linens feel? Are the pillows plush? Remember, our skin is our largest organ and we have a lot of area to create memories of touch.

**10. How do the furniture handles look and feel?** Do they feel nice in your hand? Do they have the “feel” that is the reputation your hotel is wanting to portray? Do the drawers slide smoothly?

**11. What does the clock/radio look like?** – Is it a memorable object or just a plastic brick? Are the numbers too bright?

Now that you have been in the room for a while, check out the scent again. Do you smell something deterrent, if so, what?

**12. How is the natural light?** Is there plenty of it, or does there need to be more? Light can affect our moods, our energy level and our sleep.

**13. Is the artwork appealing?** Did you know that according to a study conducted across cultures, a landscape painting or photo with water and a live animal is the most remembered and desired by over 80% of people?

**14. What are the special objects in the room?** What? You don't have any? Come on, create another memory that people will talk about. Fruit, candy, chocolate.

See how sight, smell, touch, taste and sound work together?

After you have done a walkthrough and answered the questions above, ask a few others to do the same. As a group, talk about what you found.

Once you have some agreement, email or call Amy Hergenrother at Raving, amy@ravingconsulting.com or 775-329-7864, and I will make a complimentary visit to discuss how for little cost, simply, and easily you can change things to create great long-lasting memories in your hotel room experiences and have your customers telling stories.

*John Stewart has been selected to speak at the annual Conference of the Academy for Neuroscience in Architecture this September on just this subject. Change your customer experiences by giving him a call.*



*John is an award winning registered architect, licensed contractor, and licensed authority in the gaming industry across the country. John's experience includes project development in industries including gaming and hospitality, restaurant and food service, retail, healthcare, religious, and manufacturing.*

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Sensory design applies the science of memory formation so that all five senses are engaged.

John Stewart, President of Encompass DDC will be speaking on the subject at The Academy of Neuroscience for Architecture 2018 Conference in La Jolla, California in September.

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# The Supreme Court Just Essentially Legalized Sports Gambling in the United States ...

*Now's the time to position yourself as a leader in sports engagement*

By [Jerry Epstein](#), Raving Partner and CEO, [Engaged Nation](#)

On Monday, May 14th, the Supreme Court struck down a 1992 federal law that effectively banned commercial sports betting in most states, opening the door to legalizing the estimated \$150 billion in illegal wagers on professional and amateur sports that Americans make every year. In writing for the majority in the 6-3 decision, Chief Justice Samuel Alito stated, "Congress can regulate sports gambling directly, but if it elects not to do so, each State is free to act on its own. Our job is to interpret the law Congress has enacted and decide whether it is consistent with the Constitution. PASPA is not."

That's a lot of money that casinos and even more so – the states that they reside in – will be scrambling to grab as quickly as they can. In fact, the experts at the American Gaming Association cited in a conference call that morning, that New Jersey should have its sports gambling operations up and running in about two weeks – which means that by the time you read this, sports gamblers could already be placing bets in sportsbooks in Atlantic City. Delaware, West Virginia and Mississippi will be right on their heels.

Nearly 20 states, like Pennsylvania, Oklahoma, New York and Massachusetts, already have laws on the books, or have introduced legislation, and a 2017 report from Eilers & Krejcik Gaming estimated that as many as 32 states could offer legal sports betting within the next five years. A caveat to all of this is that Congress could act just as quickly to prevent it by writing and enacting a new law against sports gambling that could pass constitutional muster ... but there has been almost no indication that they are even considering it.

One key element not directly addressed in the SCOTUS decision was the online sportsbook component, such as being able to reside in one state and place a bet in another, or betting online in the same state where it is legal. However, on the same AGA conference call, it was thought that online gambling would be included as a natural extension and they were prepared to litigate that portion as necessary.

It will also be interesting to watch how each state approaches tribal compacts and/or the potential for added tax revenue that sports betting will undoubtedly provide.

Naturally, we could continue to speculate until the cows come home. The real question is what a tribal casino can and should do right now to take advantage of the ruling and position yourself as a leader before it becomes "official" for your location.

Position yourself as a leader in sports engagement right now

Just because you may be in a state that hasn't formally passed legislation, doesn't mean that you have to sit on the sidelines waiting. You should take advantage of the SCOTUS ruling by immediately engaging your customer base – and seeking out the tens of millions of untapped sports gambling customers – by strategically implementing sports-related promotions. This applies to all those who either plan to enter the legal sports betting market or not. Why? Obviously, if sports betting is in your plans, you will want to begin building a following and a qualified database. If you are not going in that direction though, there is no

## CASINO MARKETING & PROMOTIONS

lack of opportunity to add new players—from millennials to boomers—to your roster. If you don't, there is a strong likelihood that one of your competitors will.

Whether it involves the Triple Crown, Stanley Cup, MLB, NBA, NASCAR, NFL or college athletics, there are plenty of sports-related promotions that are fun, exciting, easy to implement, and proven to produce results that will help establish you as a “go-to” location when the inevitable tsunami ensues. But when dipping your toe in the water, we recommend going with the highest profile sports and events that garner the most interest and participation.

For example, we recently completed our Million Dollar March Mania Challenge promotion for a number of casinos, including Palms Casino Resort in Las Vegas, Morongo Casino Resort and Spa in Southern California, and Gun Lake Casino in Michigan. The results were outstanding.

Our clients had thousands of players actively engaged every single day over the three weeks of the NCAA men's basketball tournament. From filling out their “Million Dollar” bracket of 64 teams and the chance to win \$1 million if it was perfect, to playing fun basketball-related games like trivia and quizzes and crossword puzzles, our clients tapped into the sports obsession of their customers and acquired plenty of new ones along the way. Some of the most impressive stats include:

- 26,102 brackets earned and awarded online and on-property
- 46,108 total games and activities played online
- 13,605 property visits generated during the tournament
- Over \$800,000 coin-in generated to unlock additional brackets

One property was extremely innovative as it allowed their customers to obtain additional “Million Dollar” brackets for over a week prior to the start of the tournament through earning a minimum amount of daily base points, as well as allowing them to trade in actual Players Club points. This strategic move allowed them to eliminate more than \$11,000 of point liability off their books, in addition to incremental visits and bottom line revenue. Even better was that this decision to incorporate on-floor play made the entire promotion nearly *expense-neutral* before the promotion had run its full course!

We have also just introduced our \$2 Million Pro Football Frenzy promotion, which actively engages customers over the 17 weeks of the pro football season and drives them into your property in order to be eligible for cash and prizes. With our optional *Playoff Frenzy* and *Big Game* challenge add-on, a casino is able to grab the attention of sports gambling enthusiasts for almost five consecutive months ... a true win-win for everyone involved.

It's these and other promotions available in the marketplace that all casinos should consider. These types of programs will help pave the way for cultivating new customers that have turned to others—from illegal betting to sports fantasy sites, and the occasional trip to Las Vegas in the past. It's a fact that these customers are going to go *somewhere*. It might as well be you and your operation.

### Additional Resources to Explore

NY Times – “Supreme Court Ruling Favors Sports Betting”

Competitive Enterprise Institute – “Supreme Court Ends Sports Betting Prohibition—Now What?”

Forbes.com – “Explaining the Supreme Court's Recent Sports Betting Decision”

Washington Post – “What the Supreme Court's Sports Gambling Decision Means”



*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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# Increasing High-Level Performance Company-Wide

*When do you know if you're only attaining minimum standards?*

By [Kevin Huddleston](#), CPA, CGMA, CFF, Strategic Raving Partner, Accounting and Auditing, and Partner, [Finley & Cook](#)

I'm sure most of you have heard it said that sometimes you have to tear something down in order to build it up. It seems harsh and a little counterintuitive. It's a concept used in athletic and military training. The idea is that to make something better, you have to first take apart or tear it down and rebuild it. A great illustration of this is top fuel drag racing. Top fuel dragsters and funny cars are some of the fastest wheeled vehicles on earth. They can cover a quarter mile in less than four seconds, achieving speeds in excess of 300 miles per hour. I think most would agree that is "high performance." Achieving this high level of performance requires a lot of work. Each car is equipped with diagnostic equipment that provides data on the car's performance. Between races, the data from this equipment is analyzed and the entire engine is torn down and rebuilt. The process of dismantling and inspection determines what kinds of tuning or adjustments need to be made. Through this process, performance is maintained and improved.

*We in the casino industry would be wise to adopt this methodology.*

When was the last time your property was thoroughly analyzed, torn down and rebuilt? Figuratively, of course. I know that many perform some analyses, but few, if any, truly tear things down then take the difficult steps necessary to increase performance. Below, we're going to talk about analyzing, taking apart and rebuilding some key areas of the property.

Just like a top fuel car, every casino has many systems that are collecting data. We collect information on machines, guest demographics and spending habits, promotions, hotel activity, as well as F&B. A "numbers nerd" can get lost in this sea of data, but we have to turn it into meaningful, actionable information. We do this by calculating statistics on revenue performance, as well as on expenses, particularly key expense items for each department or area of the property. There are several benchmarks we can compare our results against. When you compare your results to established or recommended standards, it becomes easier to see whether your performance is reasonable or if perhaps there are areas that may need to be investigated further. High-level statistical analysis is useful for pinpointing problem areas, but it won't yield enough information to formulate a plan of corrective action. That's why we must take things apart and inspect more closely.

### **Look at personnel costs.**

Volume and price are significant factors in generating results. We normally associate this with revenue, but it is also true for personnel costs. Hours worked, supervisory overhead and pay rates all factor into your ultimate personnel costs. Oftentimes, personnel costs are high as a result of inefficient processes. In a regulated, cash-intensive business like a casino, we frequently perform needless tasks because we believe they are necessary for internal control or compliance purposes. Technology marches on, but we hang onto "the way we've always done it" to make us feel certain that we're in compliance. We need to utilize technology at every opportunity to improve our efficiency and reduce our staffing needs. There can also be low-tech ways to do this as well. We just have to be willing to carefully examine each step and make sure that it is being done in the most efficient way possible. Just like the mechanic on a top fuel car makes sure that each part is functioning at its peak.

Optimizing the air and fuel mixture is important in getting the most out of a top fuel car. This same kind of balance is needed in your properties. The right people operating efficiently will produce optimal results. Staffing for peaks is usually considered, but are you appropriately staffing for the valleys? Also, are you staffing an entire shift at peak levels when the peak only lasts two or three hours? Look carefully and make sure that staffing is done thoughtfully.

### **Personnel benefits are given the "hands-off" treatment in many operations.**

Health insurance has received a lot of attention since the passage of the ACA or Obamacare, simply because it has been brought into the spotlight. In many cases, the cost of this coverage has increased significantly. Dental, life and disability insurance costs have also seen increases. There are strategies and ways to manage these costs. Seeking guidance from a trusted advisor is a good idea in this area ([see Tyler Moore's article on page 5](#)). Let them "audit" your plans and see where you may have opportunity for savings or improving benefits with little added costs. The same holds true for 401(k) and other retirement plans. Some operations also have bonus plans that add to overall personnel costs. All these benefits can add up to a huge cost if not monitored and managed carefully.

## What about the gaming floor?

As I mentioned earlier, price and volume fuel our profitability or lack thereof. In gaming areas, the hold percentage may be viewed as the price. While this is true to a degree, we also need to consider the “entry price” to play. The denomination of the machines and the minimum bets on both machines and tables factor into our entry pricing. Both of these must be actively monitored and managed to achieve higher volumes. Pricing discounts, such as free play, must also be carefully used to realize the goal of increased revenues through increased volume. Volumes can also be impacted by placement of the product on the floor. Keeping the floor fresh can be important to boosting volume. Many players have their favorites, but new games give everyone a reason to come and check things out regularly.

## Oh, and then there’s marketing.

The obvious main driving force behind volume is marketing. We can have the greatest, most exciting games around, but if no one knows, no one will come. What are we doing to attract and retain guests? Are we doing it in a cost-effective way? Is anyone truly evaluating the effectiveness of each promotion and campaign? Marketing can be a tremendous tool to help attain high performance, but it has to be monitored and evaluated like every other department to ensure it is operating efficiently and effectively.

The umbrella over all of this should be teamwork. Every racing team has a pit crew that analyzes, tears down, inspects and rebuilds the car before every single run. Your casino may not have a single group of people dedicated to analyzing, breaking down and inspecting all the parts of the property, but those people who are doing these things in each area should be working together to get the most improvement in performance. Slots, Tables, F&B, Finance, Marketing, Hotel, and every other department must work in concert with one another just like the parts of a finely tuned engine.

I’m not suggesting that you constantly tear things apart to the point of disruption. Sometimes this process is a special project, but we should incorporate the methodology and thought process into the culture of our properties. We should constantly analyze and periodically re-evaluate everything we do. The concept of continuous improvement has been used in manufacturing and other industries for years. We need to have that same mindset of asking

ourselves regularly, “Are we doing things the best we can today?” The answer may be yes, but unless we continue to frequently ask, we won’t outrun our opponent every race and may end up with a blown engine.

*Does your organization need a 360 review? We’ve got the team to help you evaluate the performance of your entire organization, including slot and table performance, benefits, marketing, and more. Contact Amy Hergenrother at 775-329-7864, or amy@ravingconsulting.com, for more information today.*



*Kevin, a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, provides outsourced accounting and consulting services for Native American Tribes and casino clients. Through his nearly three decades of working within the gaming industry, he is an expert in integrating the many financial systems unique to the gaming industry.*

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# Seven Powerful Things I've Learned

*From some of the most successful gaming companies*

By Toby O'Brien, Senior Raving Partner, Marketing

Prepare to be amazed! After 24 years in the gaming industry, 15 of which were spent as a casino marketing consultant, I finally have some useful information to share. (C'mon, I'm joking). Honestly, one of the great benefits of working with scores of gaming companies across North America, was the chance to learn while I taught. For every idea I shared, every strategy and tactic I helped develop, every plan I encouraged building ... I learned something incredibly useful. Because I worked with management, marketing, and operations teams, I acquired a variety of applicable concepts from all areas of the industry. And then, I was able to add those to my arsenal, combine them with my own ideas and those from other casinos and other industries, and share them with clients. They were able to expand their businesses, they were able to maximize their teams' knowledge, they were able to better serve their guests, and ... I was able to grow and add to my personal, intellectual and industry resource bucket.

**So, here, in a nutshell of an article, are some of the most valuable things I have learned from the gaming industry and from my most successful casino clients.**

**Borrow and tweak.** I have often been asked where my most creative promotions ideas come from. And I have always been forthcoming with my clients ... I believe there are about five or six types of casino promotions ... everything else I've ever seen, experienced, or created has been a tweak or version of those. Carded hot seats, earn entries for a cash or prize drawing, acquire points and get a gift, attend an event with benefits, compete in a game with select winners, swipe at a kiosk; virtually every casino promotion is a derivative of one of those concepts.

The goal is to understand who your guests are and what motivates them, what your revenue and visitation needs are, and match them up with promotions, offers, themes that appeal to your guests and drive business when you need it. Borrow what works ... make it your own. (By the way, this isn't just true for marketing promotions. It's true for employee development and recognition programs, communication processes, direct marketing programs ... if you see something good in the industry or any industry, steal it, massage it, apply it).

**Use your brain trust.** One of my most effective consulting tools is to hold a meeting with the management team. I usually go around the room, asking for names, titles or job responsibilities past and present, and how long each person has been in the gaming industry and at that casino. Invariably, the total years are astounding! So, why, in department meetings, executive management meetings, marketing meetings, do people rarely use their own brain trust to solve the myriad of problems that casinos face? The most successful casinos throw their greatest challenges on the table and ask their extremely experienced employees (including frontline team members) to dig in and create solutions. Consultants and outside professionals are terrific resources, but seriously, why not ask your own people, with hundreds of cumulative years of experience, to solve the problems they are faced with every day?

**Share information, missions, goals.** Does everyone in your organization know what you're trying to accomplish? Is every one of your managers, directors and team members aware of your business mission and your goals? Do you have a percentage of revenue increase in mind overall and by department? Are you looking for a bump in visitation on

slow days? Are you trying to create a fun environment on your floor? Do your employees need a motivational boost? Leverage meetings, employee events, staff newsletters, back-of-house signage to let your team know what they can be doing to increase and improve business. The whole really is greater than the sum of its parts ... when you share what's going on, your expectations, and how every employee's role fits into the puzzle, you will drive more effective cross-marketing between departments and enjoy the results of improved communication and teamwork throughout your organization.

And please, share stories! Encourage your team to exchange success stories about their interactions with guests or reaching goals or helping other team members. One of the best ways to get mediocre team members to be outstanding team members is for them to see how it's done.

**Make it fun!** For goodness sake, please remember ... people in the casino industry don't work in hospitals. Or banks. Or mortuaries. We represent the best of the entertainment field, and I promise you, if your team members aren't having fun at their jobs, your guests aren't having fun either! Casinos that incorporate team member promotions with guest promotions, that engage team members in planning events, creating memorable moments for guests, and celebrating financial and service achievements are highly successful. A team member dining room filled with laughter often yields great outcomes.

And speaking of fun, *user-friendly* matters to your guests! Every line a guest stands in is a boring, frustrating and costly waste of time. KISS truly applies here. (Keep It Simple Stupid). If guests don't understand what you want from them, and they don't know how to engage with your product (slots, tables), your marketing (how do I enter this drawing or use this kiosk or earn and redeem club points?), or your staff (who is my host and what do they expect from me?), the gaming experience isn't fun or rewarding. Want your guests to return? Give them an entertainment experience they'll remember.

**Recognition is the #1 motivator.** I hear it all the time ... "We love our guests!" "We love our employees!" But the companies that do it best are the ones that actually walk the talk, not just saying it but **SHOWING IT**. Yes, it really is true ... the most successful casino management teams believe that happy team members mean happy guests. And happy guests mean a better bottom line.

What can you reward? Guest longevity (ten or twenty years in your club). Guest frequency (parties for guests with low ADT but high frequency). Guest birthdays and anniversaries. Hosts' sales achievements. Team member longevity (I've seen some very impressive team recognition dinners, parties, holiday events). Employee volunteerism and meeting advanced education goals. Outstanding guest

service. Hey, what makes you feel appreciated? Start there.

**Don't bury yourself in data.** Back in the early days of gaming, marketing tactics were tied to impressions, to feelings, to favorite customers, to what the GM liked, to guesswork. Nowadays, data has become the tool by which we make almost all decisions. What was the return on investment of that program? Let's look at the daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, annual revenue numbers and compare them to yesterday, all corresponding days of the week, last month, last season, last year. Let's evaluate the trends with pie charts and graphs and flip charts and PowerPoint slides.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not suggesting that management should ignore the incredible access to data and comparative reports and psychographic player information and on and on. But I am suggesting that if you don't get down on your casino floor and talk with your players and your team members, get a feel for what it's like to walk through your property (do you feel lost and confused and overwhelmed?), eat in your restaurants, sleep in your hotel beds, stand in your customer lines ... you will never get the complete picture.

**Listen.** Our world is so full of communication. We are bombarded daily by the Internet, TV, radio (hey, some people still listen to the radio), snail mail, email, phone calls, frontline team members, guests, managers, family members, friends ... it gets easier and easier to want to tune out, shut down, escape, enjoy a moment of silence. Treat yourself to those breaks, but do take the time to learn to be an active listener. That means asking the right questions and listening, truly listening to the answers. Your solutions are often in front of you, with information fueled by knowledgeable people who manage your business, engage with your products and services, see your strengths and limitations, and want you to succeed.

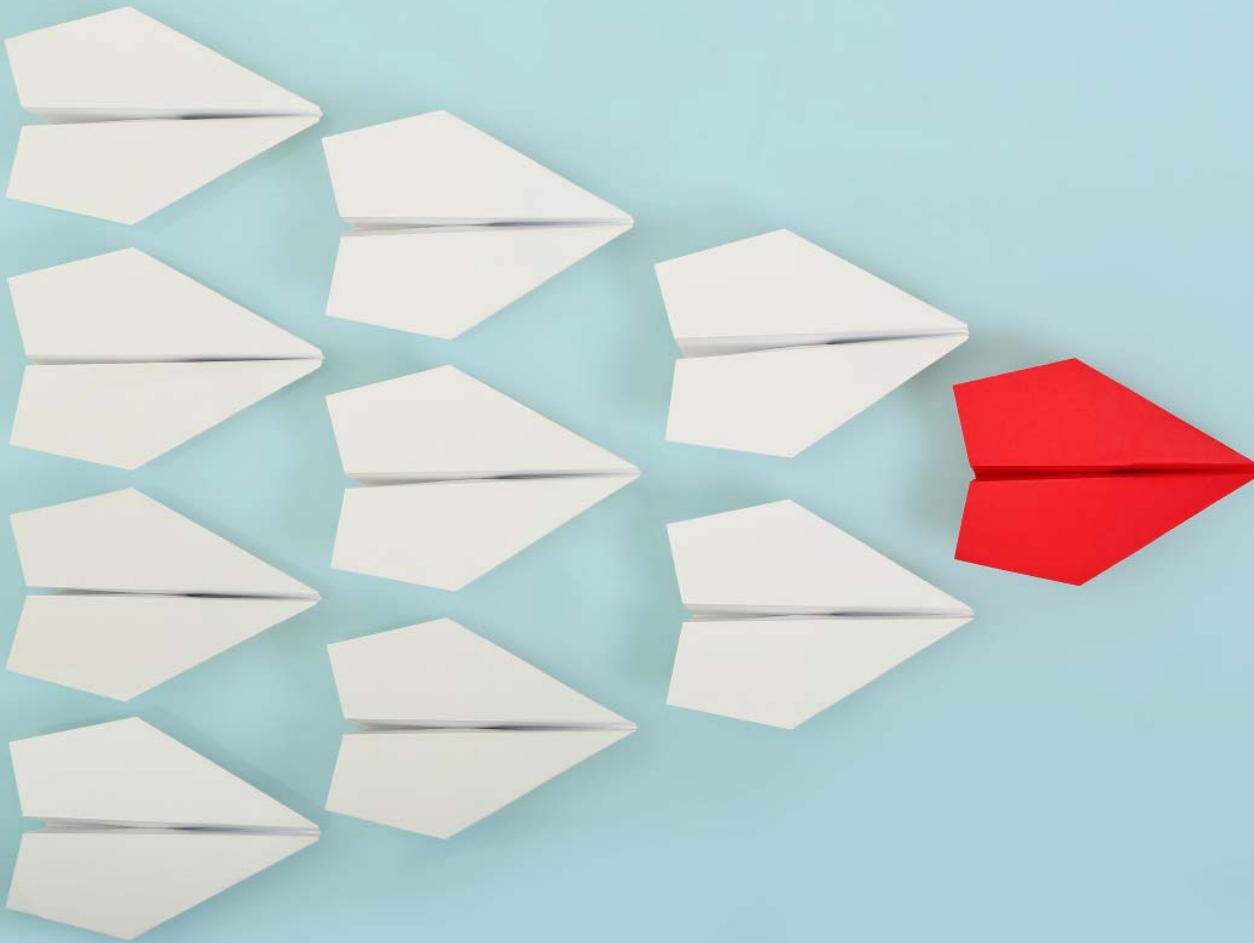
The most successful gaming companies have tools in place to listen to their guests and team members (no, not a suggestion box, but open office hours, frequent quantitative and qualitative surveys, and one-on-one interactions with influential people). They have managers who understand that everyone's opinions have value and that two-way communication is significantly more meaningful than unidirectional commands.

Take the time to listen ... you always have room to learn.



*Toby O'Brien — Through her 21 year career in the gaming business, Toby has helped gaming organizations implement customer-focused, strategic marketing plans aimed at driving revenue while creating an outstanding entertainment experience. She has provided marketing expertise, mentoring and training for many commercial, Native American and government casinos throughout North America.*





# Eight Steps to Creating a Leadership Program – Part I of II

*Why everything starts at the “top” for a culture of incredible service*

By [Paula Allen](#), Raving Partner, Leadership & Development

When I talk with executive leadership teams about what it is they are looking to accomplish with a guest service program, I’m usually told the same answer, “We want our frontline team members to create loyalty with our guests.” It has been my experience that this is a mindful, strategic process that takes time, dedication and hard work.

I’m in a unique position that not only have I had the experience of integrating a guest service program and leadership program into my organization, 7 Cedars Casino, but I’ve had the opportunity to work with other resorts on this process. Through mistakes at our own property, we have been able to develop a powerful leadership program that in turn has created an environment in which our team members desire to exceed guest expectations, creating loyalty.

Let me take you back to our first steps. We hired an outside organization to help us develop a branded guest service program, and I was being coached on how to be our in-house trainer. The implementation of this program seemed to go well; we were very excited to have a strategic way of training our team members for sustainability of the program.

**We never anticipated the resistance we received from our frontline leaders and team members.**

Our frontline leaders felt like it was one more thing on their already-full-plates, and team members felt like they could barely keep up with the mechanics of their jobs, let alone develop a relationship with our guests. One of our table game dealers said to me, “Paula, we like this program, but in all honesty, I deal cards based on who is standing behind me.”

# LEADERSHIP & HUMAN RESOURCES

That got me thinking: all frontline team members in all departments have “people standing behind them.” Do these supervisors and managers truly “lead” their teams? Are they coming from a “coaching” point of view? Or are they focused on the mechanics of their job? What did we do to develop them and their leadership skills in preparation of supporting our new guest service program?

**It was right then that I knew we had a leadership development issue. Back to square one.**

After researching the best leadership development programs, we settled on a program that not only gave the tools for frontline leaders to develop relationships with those they lead, but the program also helped develop them as leaders, placing the relationship part of their job before the mechanics of their job. The program has the “Disney philosophy”; every person in a leadership position at Disney is required to spend 70% of their time coaching and giving feedback to those they lead. Okay, 70% is a strong number, so we strive for 30%.

Following are the eight steps for creating a leadership program that I’ll be sharing with you in two articles:

**Step One: Kick off the program with the “Senior Leadership Team” of the organization, the Executive Team and Directors.**

We create a baseline view of the organization, establishing key metrics, taking leadership inventory, and agreeing on where the organization is at this moment and collaborating on goals for the future. During one of my consulting jobs, I had a CEO tell me that it was so helpful to have his entire team on the same page for the first time, collectively and independently. As an example, if the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) decides turnover is an issue at this time, each department will work on the issue in their respective departments. The director collaborates with the managers and supervisors, putting a plan in place to reach the goal that the SLT has put forth. We supply tools to be able to accomplish these goals, again, focusing on the relationships in the departments. If I’m a newly-hired dishwasher and my supervisor asks how training is going, is there anything else I need at the moment, and more importantly, what are my aspirations for the future, I am much more likely to stay with an organization that is investing in my future.

**Step Two: Establish a vision, philosophy, and common message as it pertains to leadership.**

What do we want every person in a leadership position to know and, more importantly, communicate throughout the organization? I have had team members tell me time and time again that they can ask the same question to three different supervisors and get three different answers. We strive to create consistency throughout the resort.

**Step Three: Create a blueprint or game plan.**

How will we implement this program throughout the resort, concentrating on systems, communication, development, accountability, and support? Every client I have worked with has said that communication is an issue organizationally, department to department, and internally. We have proven methods to help the communication issue. Development is an area that we like to focus on as well. Each team member should have a development program. Remember the dishwasher? He told his supervisors that he actually would like to become a prep cook, so let’s create a plan to get him there in the next year or so. Holding people accountable is instrumental for any organization. I had a supervisor tell me that one of their team members is always late for her shift, and I asked why she is able to get away with that. When people are not held accountable, it can lead to chaos. We also like to take a look at our support systems, paying close attention to any deficiencies in IT, Marketing, HR, etc.

**Next Steps**

Want more? Look for the final steps in Part II of this article; we’ll talk about the most interactive part of the program, when we create a leadership summit with the Senior Leadership Team running the show.

*Through my partnership with Raving, we’re helping casino clients across the nation build stronger organizations from the top down. This primes the organization for a long-lasting culture of service throughout the entire business. Want more information before Part II? Contact Amy Hergenrother at amy@ravingconsulting.com, or by calling 775-329-7864.*



*Paula has extensive experience working at all organizational levels creating, promoting, and delivering training solutions designed to support the organization’s goals, business plan, and mission. As an enrolled Tribal citizen of the Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe, she feels a responsibility to formulate programs for Tribes that put more focus on relationships with guests and coworkers, rather than the mechanics of the job. Paula, with full support of her Tribe, now offers her skills and services to other Tribal enterprises as well, always focusing on meeting the strategic needs of the organization.*



## Best Practices in Email Marketing – Part I of II

*A crash course for building a solid framework for success*

By [Tami Jones](#), Strategic Raving Partner, Direct Mail and Digital Printing and Director of Sales and Marketing, [CSG Direct](#)

Whether you've just started your email marketing program or have been at it for years; if you're increasing your frequency or changing providers, there's a lot to know about delivery, open rates and permissions. What was the rule of thumb a decade ago, has changed. What rules were in place in the past, but ignored, are now being enforced. If your program was grown organically throughout the years, you may not even know what's required as a business using this marketing vehicle.

As you continue to develop your email marketing program, following are best practices that provide a solid framework for success.

### Getting Started

Research and become very familiar with the CAN-SPAM rules to be sure that you have a solid understanding of what you must and must not do. The acronym stands for Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing. You may find the entire CAN-SPAM Act of 2003 at [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov) if you want all the legalese. Here are the highlights:

Include your physical address on all emails. This illustrates that you are not a fictitious entity and gives individuals a way to contact you outside of email.

Every email should include an easy and free method for opting out (unsubscribe) of receiving future email communications.

Honor unsubscribe requests within 10 days.

Do not make false claims in the "From," "To" and "Reply to" fields. Do not claim to be someone you are not.

Monitor all emails at all times, especially if a service sends out emails on your behalf. You are ultimately responsible for what goes out into the world.

Do not add anyone to your list without getting their permission.

Do not share or sell the email address information in your list.

Fines and penalties for violations of CAN-SPAM are hefty. Staying true to the path of compliance will keep you free of scrutiny and will keep your domain (your .com) from being labeled as spam.

### Data

It is essential to keep all contact data as accurate as possible (I feel like I've said this before ... hmm). This will assure the accuracy of any verification processes or appends you perform.

Collect email addresses at any outlet where there is direct interaction with a player/guest. This includes the players club, the hotel, kiosks, websites and social media pages. Make every effort to link those email addresses back to an account in your player system so that you can keep everything consistent and up-to-date. Having your data all in one place, as much as is possible, will make it easier to manage and keep accurate.

# CASINO MARKETING & PROMOTIONS

## Email Appends and Opt-In Emails

CAN-SPAM rules discourage the purchase of email lists. You can't just start sending email to people who do not already do business with you. An email append to your existing data paired with an opt-in email satisfies the CAN-SPAM rules regarding purchased lists because you are starting with an existing player/guest record. A data append uses the name and address data of your player/guest to find additional information about those individuals; in this case, an email address associated with that player/guest. A clean and up-to-date database is essential for a successful append.

Every first email you send to a player/guest should be one that asks for permission to continue sending emails. Whether you've been collecting emails for a period of time, you've just done an email append, or your program has been up and running and you are accumulating new email addresses, send that first email out and get that official opt-in.

That first opt-in email is also a great time to gather information from your player/guest about their preferences; how often they want email, what topics they are interested in, etc. A short survey link with 3-5 questions would be ideal for this purpose. Oftentimes, an offer of some kind may be used as motivation for opt-in.

## Unsubscribes

Every email you send out must have an easy and free method for opting out of receiving emails from you, otherwise known as unsubscribing. You must comply with that unsubscribe request within 10 days of receiving it. Keep a running suppression list of unsubscribed emails to make sure that you don't send to those addresses in the future. Using an outside company or agency to help with your email marketing program can help you manage your opt-outs and invalid email addresses as your program progresses.

Stay tuned for more best practices relating to email subject lines, text formatting, the use of graphics and videos, and variable content.



*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, 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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# Is Your Table Games Mix in Need of a Rehab? – Part I of II

## *Adding a new table game to your pit*

By [Kevin Parker](#), Raving Partner, Casino Operations and Technology

During my days as an operator, conferences with expos gave me the chance to network with others in similar job roles and to also see what else was out there beyond the walls of my own casino. To be honest, some of the tribal facilities I was employed at were located in the boondocks, quite a distance from a large population base and other operators.

I basked in the excitement of a big game installation or pit reconfiguration. I'd jump in headfirst, only to look up weeks later and realize that while I had a great game mix, I may no longer be offering the latest and greatest games on the market to my loyal player base. Offering a balance of traditional table games with a mix of specialty games is the key to happy players, engaged dealers, and increased revenues within the department.

This two-part article is going to offer a little advice and some suggestions regarding the adoption of a new table game for your pit.

Updating content in your table game operations is just as important as it is in slots. Offering new and exciting games of chance not only provides your existing players with a chance to learn a new game, but it can also be instrumental in attracting new players. You are exposed to new games all the time, in gaming publications, at conferences, and through vendors visiting your property.

**How does one go about evaluating a new game for your pit, you ask? I am going to highlight a few questions that you can start by asking yourself:**

*How does this game meet the needs of my players and department?*

# GAMING OPERATIONS

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*Does my nearest competitor offer this game or one similar to it?*

*Will it bring in new business and increase revenue?*

While we all understand that creating new players is key for long-term growth, you need to see results and satisfy budgeted numbers today, right? If I can offer an experience that is similar to my competitors, but with more attractive payouts and superior customer service, I will likely have the opportunity to steal players from my neighboring competitors. Similarly, if I can offer a brand new experience with favorable payouts and that same great customer service, I can also capture a share of their play. Either alternative allows me to fill my new tables from the start, with customers who are just being introduced or reintroduced to my property.

**Is the game you are reviewing fun for the players and easy to deal?**

Many of the new games on the market are increasingly complex, as their designers try to be everything for everybody. They are adding side bets, multi-game layouts and game in game features. All that is enough to give the dealers a headache, while simultaneously confusing the players. Every time we add a new game to the floor, we add to the responsibilities of our dealers and supervisors. Before considering anything else about the game, I want to know:

*How smoothly does the game play?*

*How many steps will my dealers have to make in order to complete a hand?*

*Keep in mind the old adage, “The more moving parts, the higher the chance of failure.”*

To test the game, I would gather employees from different departments to play for several hands. When they became restless, bored or ran out of time on their break, I would pepper them with questions to collect information about what they liked and did not like. Watching the employees learn the game and interact with the dealer allowed me to see any inefficiencies of the game, and it also gave me the opportunity to see how easy or difficult the game would be for people to learn to play.

**Now that we have determined the game is fun to play and easy to deal, we can move on to the next steps:**

How much does the game cost?

*Does the game require supporting equipment?*

*Does the theoretical hold of the game meet your revenue requirements?*

How much is it going to cost to offer this game on my floor? When you figure the costs related to the addition of the game, the lease is only a part of the equation. The game vendor will provide you with the price of the lease and let you know what is included in that price. If signage is required for the game, it should be included in the fee. Does the game require a shuffler? If so, do you have a shuffler available for the game, or do you need to acquire one? What is the cost of the time and resources necessary to train your staff on the game? How about the costs associated with marketing the game to the public? Be sure to also factor in the cost of the layouts, discard racks, markers, cards or dice. These amounts, along with any fixed costs, must be combined to determine the true cost of operation. I know, I threw a lot at you in this last paragraph, but there really is a lot to evaluate when measuring true cost.

Next you need to have a clear understanding of game rules and how they work in the favor of the house. The house advantage of each pay table is based both on the rules of the game and the payouts offered. Be sure to ask the vendor what they predict for the average number of hands per hour and the average length of play per session. These factors, when combined with the average bet, will allow you to estimate the theoretical hold percentage of the game under the stated conditions. Ensure the hold percentage you select matches the needs of the property and the customer base. If the game over-holds, your table patrons will see little value in playing it, and if it under-holds, your department will be leaving money on the table. New game vendors should provide several variations to their pay tables, and it's relatively simple to pick the pay table that best matches your needs.

Look for Part II, wherein we'll address the regulatory requirements that must be addressed prior to a new game installation. For your own custom table game audit and review, contact us at 775-329-7864 or email amy@ravingconsulting.com.



*Kevin is a registered member of the Chippewa Cree Tribe of the Rocky Boy Reservation in Montana. Serving the industry for more than 20 years, he offers a diverse background ranging from dealer to director of casino operations.*

*Kevin specializes in slot and table games operations, bingo, technology integration and operational optimization.*



## Leading Trends for a Relevant Casino Marketing Plan

*Hint: bigger is not better*

By [Tom Osiecki](#), Raving Partner, Strategic Marketing

I'm guilty.

I'm sure many of you are guilty too.

Guilty of working with marketing teams for untold hours to produce marketing plans that are hundreds of pages long.

Everyone worked late. The team placed correlated pages into huge presentation binders in an ordered line on the conference room table. Copy machines overheated. Pizza was consumed.

A companion PowerPoint was created.

The result was an enormous, well thought out document, beautifully illustrated.

The presentation was flawless.

And, not a single person referred to the plan again ... until next year.

Sound familiar?

Join the movement to create comprehensive marketing plans for the short attention span, digital age.

A concise marketing plan delivers a solid strategic thinking process, with goals benchmarked throughout the year to track revenue streams and departmental progress. All in a format that gets right to the point.

That's right ... a marketing plan that you can use.

First things first:

Remove old material jammed into the plan year after year, with slight updates. This includes old demographic studies, repeated market analysis, outdated market studies, promotional photos, articles, maps and repetitious market research.

Start clean, be brief, with relevant information only.

Let's start with the core plan elements.

### **Where is your property now and where is it going?**

Situation Analysis – In the Situation Analysis, use your market knowledge to show where your property fits and how your strategy will take it forward.

Describe the market situation. What is the current state of the market and where does your property stand? Are there changes in the market? Is new competition on the way? Are you mired in a mature market looking for a way to stretch market share? Are you introducing a new product into the market?

State how your marketing strategy performed in the past year and how it will redirect next year's strategy.

SWOT Analysis – Use a SWOT analysis to demonstrate the thinking behind your future strategies.

# MARKETING

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A SWOT analysis is a proven method of revealing the market and your property's standing by examining Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. This is the best opportunity for you to direct key company leadership in a session that generates true collaboration and buy-in.

Competitive Analysis – One of the best predictors of the future is how your competition acted in the recent past.

Tracking promotional programs and understanding the competition's public offers is a necessary first step. Your property should be conducting competitive shops to understand the competition's direct marketing offers, entertainment plans, special events, digital, and social media programs. A fair share market analysis will also show your exact position in the market.

Customer Analysis – Analysis of players and changes in year over year revenue behavior will focus strategies on guests who produce the best return on investment.

Whether you're a high volume major resort or a heavy repeat local property, understanding your customer is an important step. Review your database to define player demographics and geographic origins. Use database analysis to understand changes in revenue sources by player segmentation, theo, frequency, etc. Review your non-rated player percentage.

## Objectives and Strategies Using Benchmark Timing

The trend towards digital age marketing plans focuses on quantitative benchmark attainment models. As discussed above, keep the traditional strategic thinking up front in your plan. A benchmark attainment marketing plan assigns trackable goals for all revenue streams, channels and marketing departments. The goals become the focus of condensed departmental action plans.

Spread the goals and benchmarks over four quarters and hold quarterly reviews with each department head to ensure your plan is on track and successful. Keep track of what works and what does not work to review for next year.

Objectives and Strategies – Every marketing plan starts with meeting the financial goals for revenue and expenses set by the company. You will also be asked to meet operational goals and standards such as player sign-ups, player retention, sales department goals, digital and social media lead conversion, etc.

Remember to compensate for seasonality when spreading your departmental goals, based on property history.

Executive Summary Strategies – The first segment of your marketing plan is the last section you create. It is a culmination of your strategic planning.

By using benchmark attainment, your marketing strategies are based on quantitative, trackable, measurable performance standards. These strategies are then based on achievable goals spread over each departmental function.

## Departmental Action Plans

Once established, a marketing leader using attainment benchmarks can track the progress of each department every quarter.

Assign each department benchmark goals distributed over four quarters. Goals can be financial and operational. Examples are reducing database churn by x%, increase top tier visits by x%, expand sales revenue by x%, and grow hotel occupancy by x%.

This quantitative method of benchmarking will set standards in each department that will help make quarterly reviews and annual team member performance reviews relevant.

The ability to track progress using benchmarks will give you the tools to respond to issues quarterly, and catch and react to changes early.

## Putting it all together 1-2-3

The best advice for a benchmark marketing plan is to pay particular attention to customer engagement targets and sharpen your focus on the guest. By using the three-part benchmark process, marketing departments can provide casino companies with succinct marketing plans that remove the unnecessary noise of large, oversize documents.

By basing marketing plans on benchmarked financial and operational goals, digital age marketing departments can be clear and to the point when contributing to the company business plan.

Your marketing team and copy machine will thank you.



*As a highly accomplished casino operator and marketer, Tom has a proven track record of effectively analyzing casino markets and implementing strategic planning that yields optimum EBITDA using customer focused tactics. He is adept at organizing strategic marketing plans through the execution of branding strategies, channel management, media, digital, corporate communications, database marketing, sales, promotions and agency management.*



# Maximizing Your Entertainment Strategy

## *A budget and market guide for casinos*

By [Kell Houston](#), Senior Raving Partner, Gaming Entertainment

In the close to two decades I've been writing for this magazine and even more years I've been in this business, there are some principles of entertainment that haven't changed much. Pricing may change, faces and acts change, but the real challenge comes down to understanding where your property "fits" in the market. Time and time again, many smaller properties see a big property doing something and it proves costly.

In our business assisting casinos, we are constantly adjusting to each property's needs and expectations. A critical part of our job is really understanding our client's position in the market. Here's an overview to help you determine where your casino may fall:

### **Three types of properties, three types of entertainment strategies:**

#### **SMALL PROPERTY**

Typically located in a small secondary or tertiary market.

Definition is a local 20-mile radius draw – locals.

No hotel, but plans to add one. May or may not have upscale dining.

There is usually a small lounge that brings in local and regional dance bands on weekends.

This kind of property may have a small multipurpose event center and can occasionally do small concerts or special events quarterly.

Some of these properties may consider doing a couple outside concerts in the summertime, but they are very inexperienced about those costs.

#### ***Entertainment examples and costs:***

Regional bands will range from as low as \$500/night to \$2,000/night.

They will typically play from 9 PM – 1 AM and do three to four sets, with 15-20 minute breaks.

They will ask for buffet comps.

They may need to bring their own sound and lights, since not all small properties have production in-house.

They will provide their own backline.

They will typically commute from home to the casino each night for the job.

They will need to be given a basic casino addendum, telling them about the property and what they can or cannot do.

Any outside venture is very intimidating, because of the costs, risks and inexperience.

You have to create an entire infrastructure outside and staging, production, etc., gets very costly.

Generally speaking, the outside shows can be a lot of fun, but with weather factors and costs these can end up not being profitable.

#### **MIDSIZE PROPERTY**

Typically located in a larger secondary market.

Small hotel on-property. Usually has a nicer upscale restaurant.

Definition is a strong regional draw – typically a 50-mile radius.

There will be a lounge that will not only offer weekend dance bands, but may also expand to a comedy night once a month, or other different kinds of entertainment.

There is a multipurpose room, where they can hold close to 1,000 people for concerts, 500 people for seated dinners and special events, as well as the ability to break the room down for smaller community events.

This size property will tend to do 10-14 concerts in a year. They may look outside for a show or two, depending on how their parking lot is configured.

This size property wants to be branded as the destination for special occasions, concerts, a weekend getaway, etc. They will probably have access to a local golf course and may even have a small spa and swimming pool on-site.

#### ***Entertainment examples and costs:***

This size property will spend more on their lounge entertainment, \$1,000+/night.

Casinos of this size will have a lounge with sound and lights in-house, and oftentimes will have a person dedicated to managing the entertainment.

Some of these properties may run five to seven nights of lounge venue entertainment, depending on the market and brand demand. This can easily include a comedy night.

Groups will ask for accommodations and will usually settle for double rooms.

Groups will ask for buffet comps or meal vouchers.

Groups will carry their own backline, unless you are bringing in a more major act, like a bigger Tribute Artist. In those cases, you will need to provide backline, sound and lights.

For Concerts/National Artists, budgets will tend to range from \$15,000-\$50,000 – for the event center.

All production needs to be brought in for each concert. In some cases, the event center will already have a stage built-in, which keeps your costs down.

An outside ticket company would be necessary.

Doing an outside concert or event will tend to come up, and some of these properties will give them a try. But the costs can easily outweigh the benefit. Typically, this will have to be staged in a parking lot. Weather can be prohibitive.

### LARGE PROPERTIES/RESORT PROPERTIES

Located in large secondary markets and some major markets, close to major freeways and larger cities.

Hotel on-site will have 200+ rooms, several restaurant offerings, a highly rated steakhouse. Many times, there will be a connected high-end golf course, spa, outside pool.

This property is a branded destination and resort getaway. They can tend to market all across the country, but mainly within a specific region, like the Northwest or the Southwest, for example.

Properties of this size run multiple entertainment venues and programs.

Many of these properties also have an amphitheater on-site, with capacities ranging from 2,500-5,000 capacity. Concerts you will see here are major touring shows and expensive Artists. These will typically be a May – September series of shows, due to weather.

Inside venues at this size property will have 1,500+ capacities and run year-round.

In addition, they may have a lounge with live music several days a week, and even smaller lounges with piano bars.

### *Entertainment examples and costs:*

This size property is very brand-focused. Every entertainment option needs to be exceptional and pretty high-end.

The lounge entertainment needs to be dressed well and very professional in how they look and how they sound and behave on-property.

Budgets will range for multiple nights, from \$1,000-2,500/night.

They will also require accommodations and meal vouchers or buffet comps, and in most cases are not locally-based.

The lounge will have entertainment up to seven days a week, and the casino will have a person with a small staff to oversee and manage the entertainers.

The inside event center will look at midsize concerts - \$30,000-\$75,000 cost and will focus their program year-round, with a lighter schedule when their outside venue season is in play.

The outside venue budget will range from \$75,000-\$500,000, depending on location, casino entertainment budget and brand.

A major outside ticketing company is mandatory, and the benefits an outside company can provide are important.

As every guest is unique, so is every casino property. With that having been said, there are best practices that every casino can adapt to make their entertainment strategy fit their market.



*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.*



# When Was the Last Time You Asked, WHAT IF?

## *Preventing millions in losses at your casino*

By [Jen Boss](#), CSP, IACSP, Raving Partner, Security, Surveillance & Fraud Investigations, COO, DJ Boss Associates

On average, employees steal nine dollars a day from their company, which equates to \$3,285 a year per employee. For a property of 1,000 employees, the loss is \$3,285,000 USD annually.

How does a company avoid such a loss? All areas are susceptible to theft. Theft of merchandise, theft of funds, theft of time, theft of equipment ... the list goes on. There is no one answer to prevent theft by employees; however, there are several ways to detect and even deter such actions.

Questions to ask yourself about your property ...

***When was the last time you looked to see what access your employees had on the Point of Sale (POS) terminal?***

*What if an employee could combine transactions without a manager override? What if an employee left a comp open for hours just to continue to add to the comp (fill the comp) and pocket the cash that should've been tendered? What if...*

Fraud Analyst Frank noticed that a nightclub server, Jill, had the ability to combine transactions. Jill would combine cash tender checks into a comp check to use unused amounts from previous guests and pocket the cash.

***When was the last time you reviewed the use of a manager's card on your property?***

*What if the manager allowed the employees to use the manager's card? What if the employees obtained an illegal copy of the manager's card? What if the manager was using the card for ill-gotten gains? What if the manager didn't double check why overrides are needed before swiping the card? What if the manager's card isn't password-protected? What if the password never expires? What if...*

Fraud Investigator Victor reviewed manager overrides in the café on-property and noticed that quite frequently the manager's card was being used seven days a week and on all shifts. Research revealed that Alan, the manager, had misplaced his card about six months prior and had been

issued a replacement. His original card was found by a server and then shared with other servers for personal gain by performing voids on cash checks.

***When was the last time you verified refunds for an outlet?***

*What if employees failed to sign out of the POS when leaving their station? What if no one verified to ensure refunds were carried out properly? What if...*

Fraud Analyst Sara noticed the spa at her property had several refunds over the course of a few months. Sara was perplexed about why a spa would have such an excessive amount of refunds. It appeared that one of the desk clerks, Brian, was performing most of them. Upon closer inspection, Brian had failed to log off the terminal and Sara was able to determine that Tim, the Spa Manager, was using the terminal while Brian was away to refund transactions to his personal debit card. Tim had been performing the transactions over the course of approximately 18 months and had taken over \$83K.

***When was the last time you performed an unannounced mid-shift audit of a cash drawer in one of your outlets?***

*What if an employee was tracking cash that they intended to take? What if an employee was keeping personal items in their cash drawer? What if...*

Fraud Investigator Julio performed a mid-shift audit on Isabella, a bartender, which verified that she was charging the normal price for cash tendered drinks, but ringing in items of much less value, causing her drawer to be over by a significant amount.

***When was the last time you checked the electronic journals to verify when discounts were being applied?***

*What if an employee charges a guest the full amount and then applies a discount to the check? What if the discount is warranted? What if the employee is earning rewards for the discount (players club)? What if...*

Fraud Analyst Ralph pulled electronic journals (EJs) for Bartender Chad, who showed excessive discounts. The EJs verified a pattern of discounts being added to the check after it was printed and within seconds of being tendered to cash. Chad was pocketing the difference after applying a 30% discount to cash tendered checks.

***When was the last time you did inventory in your outlet?***

*What if no inventory record exists? What if no one checks it regularly? What if third party employees are granted unrestricted access? What if product par doesn't match items sold? What if...*

Gift Shop Manager Erica noticed that she was having to reorder cigarettes at an alarming rate. When Fraud Investigator Taylor asked for the inventory records, Erica confessed that the vendor dropped off cartons of cigarettes in the storeroom without being checked or inventoried at any time.

You have to inspect what you expect! Know that employees, even the most accomplished, may steal from you, and that you have to have ways to detect such theft and also ways to deter it! What methods do you have in place? How often are the detection methods actually utilized?



*Jen has fifteen years in the gaming and hospitality industry beginning her career as a Surveillance Agent and holding positions such as Security Training Manager, Risk Manager and Corporate Fraud Investigator & Analyst. She has worked as corporate liaison with federal and state law enforcement as well as regulatory agencies. She co-authored the IACSP white paper "Video Review, Investigation and Retention in Gaming Environments" and is on the Board of Directors for IACSP.*

## MARKETING

# Phonebooks, Facebook and Change ...

*Coming to grips with the digital age*

By [Justin Shank](#), Raving Partner, Social Gaming and Marketing

Remember when we used to advertise in phonebooks? If you're under the age of 30, this may be a bit of a foreign concept, but phonebooks were a necessary piece of our advertising puzzle. We advertised in them because they were an important resource for people (customers) in the local market. If you needed to contact a friend or call a business, you opened up the phonebook and flipped through the pages to search for answers. Looking for a nice restaurant to enjoy on Friday night? Who can deliver pizza tonight? How do I contact Deana Scott? Where does Steve Browne live? What's Dennis Conrad up to these days? All these answers could be found by searching the phonebook.

Earlier this year, I took a picture of a phonebook that had been thrown onto my driveway. It was wrapped in a clear plastic bag and tossed from a moving vehicle. The art glistened in blue and orange colors behind the sheen of the plastic and driveway dust with an advertisement for a local plumbing and HVAC company. I picked up the book and walked it over to the recycling bin and took another picture, then posted a side-by-side of that phonebook sitting in the driveway next to its final resting place in the recycling bin on my Facebook and Instagram profiles.

Here's my point ... advertising is an ever-changing endeavor. There is absolutely no purpose for spending your budget on phonebook advertising in 2018 – our customers are not using them to find information about our business. They search online, look to social media, and use voice applications on

their smartphones to find information. Your money could be more effectively spent on Social Media Marketing (SMM), Search Engine Optimization (SEO), Search Engine Marketing (SEM), and Online Directories. The point of advertising is to be where our customers are, to reach new customers, to find our gamers and leisure travelers. Consumers are bombarded with advertising messages all day every day. As marketing and advertising professionals, it is our job to find our potential and existing players, appeal to them, and effectively influence them to visit us.

Understanding where we can find our customers requires ongoing training, research, and evaluation of our efforts

One frequently occurring discussion point in conversations with industry friends and clients is regarding the appropriate budget to allot for SMM, SEO, SEM, and online directory marketing. There is no simple solution to your approach here. Each property has different needs, budgets, and circumstances for effectively advertising to customers. I can confidently tell you that an ineffective solution would be to continue advertising in phonebooks. Look to digital marketing and social media to find your customers.

SMM is an appropriate channel to redirect some of your advertising budget. According to Pew Research Center, 69% of U.S. adults use at least one social media site. By age, the usage breakdown looks like: 88% ages 18-29; 78% ages 30-49; 64% ages 50-64; 37% ages 65+. The research goes



on to show the most widely used platforms and various additional segmentations of those users.

When I started in this business, our advertising budgets looked toward radio, TV, billboards, newspapers, magazines, maps, phonebooks, telemarketing, and brochures. Now our advertising budgets might include all of the above, plus social media, digital signage, search engine optimization, mobile ad networks, streaming media, online banner ads, pay-per-click, mobile apps, and more. We have a plethora of options and need to make some tough decisions for effectively utilizing our advertising budget.

Testing the effectiveness of these new advertising channels requires some flexibility and a willingness to try something different and new

In most cases, we are trying to drop one advertising channel to add another in order to reallocate funds to support a more viable solution. In practice, this looks like eliminating the once popular phonebook ads in favor of SEO, SEM, SMM, etc. It may include cutting back your TV or Radio budgets to add Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and Search Engine Marketing (SEM). It may include dropping one billboard in favor of boosting posts on Facebook. No matter how you cut it up, marketers are asked to use the same budget, with more possible advertising channels.

One benefit of these new digital advertising options is that they provide a very robust data set for evaluating the effectiveness of your efforts. While we used to rely on estimated data provided by our sales rep, phone call tracking, or coupon/offer redemptions at the property, we can now look at data and analytics. SMM, SEO, SEM campaigns provide you click-through rates (CTR), conversions, demographics, reach, impressions, and more. If you advertised with an offer, you could see the ad stats plus redemptions and calculate an estimated ROI for your stakeholders.

What do your budgets look like today for digital marketing? Are you using Yelp Ads, Google AdWords, Facebook/Instagram Ads, Online Banner Ads, Mobile Apps, Mobile Ads Network, and SEO/SEM? How much of your total advertising budget goes toward digital vs. traditional channels?

I want to be quite clear in that I'm not suggesting we completely drop all our former advertising techniques. Billboards, TV, Newsprint, and Radio are still effective ways of reaching our customers. Much like Direct Mail (DM) is still an effective direct marketing technique and works extremely well in conjunction with Email Direct Marketing (EDM) and Mobile Marketing. The question is how much of your budget is being spent on untracked shotgun advertising techniques when compared to the results of targeted advertising and analytics through an SMM program. For some reason, we are still willing to allocate thousands of dollars for traditional marketing channels, but only a fraction of our total budget on digital marketing. Using a similar budget in a social media environment may help you reach exponentially more customers than your traditional advertising efforts.

We need to look at the effectiveness of social media marketing. Provide incentives through online promotions (pending approval from your regulatory agency) to drive visits and test conversions. Run promotions and include offers in your digital marketing channels. Consider increasing your online/mobile marketing budgets and dropping your phonebook ads.



*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.*

# Staffing Challenges: Our Industry's Number One Problem

*What are you doing to solve it?*

By [Deb Hilgeman](#), Ph.D., Senior Raving Partner, Market Research

One of the new questions that we added in Raving's 2nd Annual Indian Gaming National Marketing Survey was to determine what the biggest challenges are that casinos will be facing in 2018. As you can see from the chart below with survey data, staffing challenges are a clear number one problem.

Every business needs a quality workforce, and that is especially true in the hospitality industry where employees are the face of a property. Mediocre employees will only lead to poor guest experiences, and those guests will take their business to the competition. However, retaining great employees has become more difficult. People are spending less time at jobs than they have in the past. A new generation of employees has entered the workforce with different wants and needs, which aren't always clear to management.

Raving's survey data also shows that 80 percent of casinos say they are in competitive markets, and this just makes staffing challenges even more, well, challenging. The more job opportunities that your employees have to choose from, the more likely they are to defect from your property, especially if there are conditions that they don't like.

What is clear is that once you get great employees, it's important to keep them from going elsewhere. Talented team members have a greater capacity to be more efficient, bring value to other departments, and can continuously evolve in their area of expertise while expanding on new skills and talents. They are the drivers behind successful

casino operations that ensure guests will return to a property.

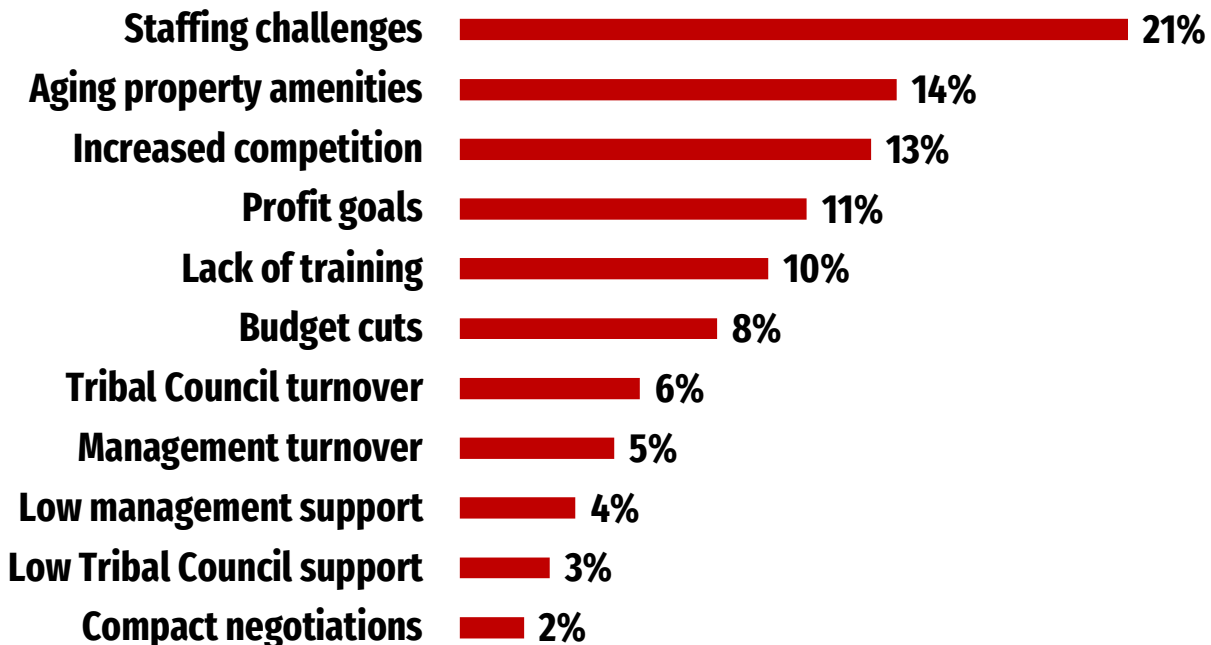
Knowing how your employees rank key aspects of their employment is critical in being able to attract and retain the best possible people.

Having an accurate way to measure this is the reason why a relatively new branch of research known as employee engagement surveys has exploded in popularity. Employee engagement is an emotional commitment to your employer and it involves loyalty, commitment, satisfaction, advocacy and going the extra mile. Using a series of specific survey questions, all employees are classified as Engaged, Passive or Disengaged.

*53% of casinos in this year's study say they are conducting Employee Engagement Surveys*

Disengaged workers are more likely to look for other opportunities, or worse, drag down the productivity of the rest of your team. Unfortunately, every casino has disengaged employees who don't know what promotions are going on because they don't care, frontline staff who provide minimal customer service because they're only there for the paycheck, and employees who are so unhappy at work that it affects everyone around them.

By increasing employees' willingness and capability to provide truly first-class service, you can differentiate



## RESEARCH

your casino and gain an edge in the market. Employee engagement surveys measure just how your workforce ranks on the engagement scale, and what factors are driving those feelings. That way, targeted actions can be taken to improve organizational performance by increasing employee engagement.

Do you want to increase employee retention? Then increase engagement.

Highly engaged employees are 87 percent less likely to leave the organization.

If you decide to do an employee engagement survey, keep in mind that trust is a cornerstone of the employee survey process. In particular, employees must believe that expressing their opinions in a truthful manner will not result in a backlash from senior management. This can be done by guaranteeing employee confidentiality and collecting only a limited amount of demographic data. Hiring an outside agency to conduct and process the data also cultivates trust in the system because employees feel safer revealing their opinions to a neutral party.

### AFTER THE SURVEY

The guiding principle of employee surveys is that you should not conduct them if you are not going to act on the data. You'll end up damaging relationships with employees if you raise their hopes and expectations that management is seeking their input and will use it to make the organization better, then nothing happens.

Although moving from survey results to action is the most important part of the survey process, it's also the part where many organizations drop the ball. The ideal situation is for general survey results to be shared company-wide. Directors, managers and supervisors of each department should also meet with their teams to discuss specific results from their area, identify the top two or three areas that most require improvement, then create action plans that will be implemented and reviewed regularly.

### WANT MORE INFO?

This article is just the tip of an area of research that can have a major impact on your bottom line. For more information about how to bring employee engagement surveys to your property, contact Amy Hergenrother, Raving's VP of Client Services, at 775-329-7864 or [amy@ravingconsulting.com](mailto:amy@ravingconsulting.com).



*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.*

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# The Casino and Hotel Disconnect

*Are you providing a total guest experience?*

By [Janet Hawk](#), Raving Partner, Player Development and Marketing

How is the connection/communication between the casino and hotel? Marketing and the hotel? What about the PD team and the hotel? This communication is vital, not just for getting information to the guest, but the overall success of the property as a whole! Sometimes the first point of contact is at the hotel check-in. This is an important interaction. Especially for those properties that have a hotel that is run by a third party vendor or doesn't have a hotel, but has an agreement with an off-property hotel chain. You could be missing several opportunities to sell all the amenities, benefits, events and promotions that your casino has to offer!

The guest experience should always be seamless. The guest doesn't care who runs what part of the property or who owns what. They just want to have a good time and a great experience. From the moment they arrive on-property until they depart, everyone should be involved with selling everything that the property has to offer and providing the best guest service possible. This is especially important when the hotel is either owned/run by another company or off-property.

As stated above, many times hotel check-in (or valet) is the first point of contact for a guest. They have (hopefully) been trained to ask for the guest's ID and credit card after a friendly, verbal greeting. But, do they also ask if the guest is a member of the players club? This is an excellent question! Not only will it begin the conversation about the benefits of the players club card and get the guest to sign up for one, but if the guest is already a member, it could remind them of certain benefits that they either forgot about or didn't know.

A perfect example: we were conducting a guest service training with a new client for two weeks. At this particular property, the hotel is owned and operated by an outside company, different from the casino. We arrived somewhat incognito and pulled up to valet. I was asked if I needed help with my bags and I responded, "yes." As we went to check in, the bellman, Frankie, collected my bags. I received my keys and looked for Frankie. He introduced himself to me and we headed to the elevators. He asked how long I was staying and immediately followed up with "do you have a players club card?" I didn't want to blow my cover, so I continued to listen. He then proceeded to explain all the benefits of getting and using the players club card, including discounted rooms, comps, free play offers, and the current truck giveaway. It was awesome!

We later met with the executive team and found out that the casino and hotel rarely interacted. It was a complete "us" versus "them" situation. This bellman took it upon himself to "sell" the property as a whole! We were later able to incorporate that into the training.

**Here are a few things that will help this process if you find a separation between the hotel and other departments:**

Is everyone properly trained on how to sell the property?

Proper sales techniques are important. No one wants to be treated like an infomercial participant or like they're being attacked by a telemarketer or shady used car salesman. There are important methods that need to be used in order to enhance the guest experience, not overwhelm or misinform. This includes how to explain each benefit by tier, promotion and event accurately and effectively, along with the ability to answer any questions the guest may have. Cheat sheets are a MUST!

Does everyone have the most up-to-date information?

There is nothing worse than trying to inform a guest about benefits, promotions and events and finding that you are giving incorrect or out-of-date information. Trust will be broken between the guest and the property. Create small promotional cheat sheets that every team member has easy access to, and update them as changes occur. Use pre-shift meetings to reiterate current promotions and/or promotions of the day.

Have you cross-trained with the hotel?

This one is a little difficult, but the outcome is amazing! I personally did this in order to better understand how my decisions and requests as a host affected those other departments, specifically the hotel. There seemed to be a serious breakdown in communication between PD and the hotel at one property I worked at in my career. So, I arranged with the hotel manager to do some cross-training. This was an eye-opening and valuable experience! I learned why the hotel would get frustrated when I asked for an early check-in or late checkout. The hotel team learned why I asked for these and other special preferences. We were able to work out some compromises and processes that worked well for each department and, ultimately, our guest!

# HOST AND PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

Are you all on the same page with guest service?

In those cases where the hotel is either run by an outside management company or owned and operated by a third party vendor, it is vital that both executive management teams share a common guest service vision. If one succeeds, the other will. Even when it is a situation where the hotel is an off-property agreement. Make sure to take the time to discuss the guest experience so that both parties can best take care of the guest while on-site, as well as SELL all the amenities and benefits that each property has to offer. I once used an off-property hotel that had a wonderful points program, so we would get our guests to sign up for that program and the hotel helped get sign-ups for our players club! You scratch our back, we will scratch yours! Both win!

Keep in mind that we are promoting a total guest experience, so whenever we fully leverage our benefits to make each guest's visit something special, we are doing just

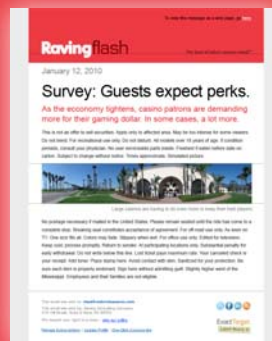
that! The more the guest understands what we have, the better that experience can be and THAT will result in more visits, more revenue. Selling the property is everyone's job, not just marketing or the players club. Let's get everyone onboard and make it fun! Check out fellow Raving Partner Daniel Wood's article on [page 15](#), for another way to give cohesive and great guest service.



*Janet started her gaming career almost 30 years ago in Las Vegas as a Keno Runner and quickly moved to management within Slot Operations. She 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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# RAVING CONFERENCE & EVENT SCHEDULE

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## Raving's Host Development Conference

July 16 – 17, 2018, Caesars Palace, Las Vegas, NV

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



## Raving @ Casino Marketing & Technology

July 17 – 19, 2018, Caesars Palace, Las Vegas, NV

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



## Raving @ OIGA Conference and Trade Show

July 23 – 25, 2018, Oklahoma City, OK

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



## Raving @ NNAHRA Annual Conference

September 24 – 26, 2018, Talking Stick Resort, Scottsdale, AZ

[www.nnahra.org/annual-conference/](http://www.nnahra.org/annual-conference/)



## Raving @ G2E 2018

October 8 – 11, 2018 Sands Expo Center, Las Vegas, NV

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



## Raving @ AIGA Expo 2018

October 2018, Scottsdale, AZ

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



## NB3FIT Week

November 5 – 12, 2018, Nationwide

[www.nb3foundation.org/nb3fit-week/](http://www.nb3foundation.org/nb3fit-week/)



## Cutting Edge Table Games Conference

November 5 – 7, 2018, Paris Las Vegas, Las Vegas, NV

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



## Raving NEXT: Raving's National Indian Gaming Analytics & Marketing Conference

January 28 – 30, 2019, Pechanga Resort & Casino, Temecula, CA

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



## Tribal Spirit of Giving Celebration Luncheon

January 30, 2019, Pechanga Resort & Casino, Temecula, CA

[www.ravingNEXT.com/special-programs#tribalspirit](http://www.ravingNEXT.com/special-programs#tribalspirit)



## Raving @ NIGA

April 1 – 4, 2019, San Diego Convention Center, CA

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



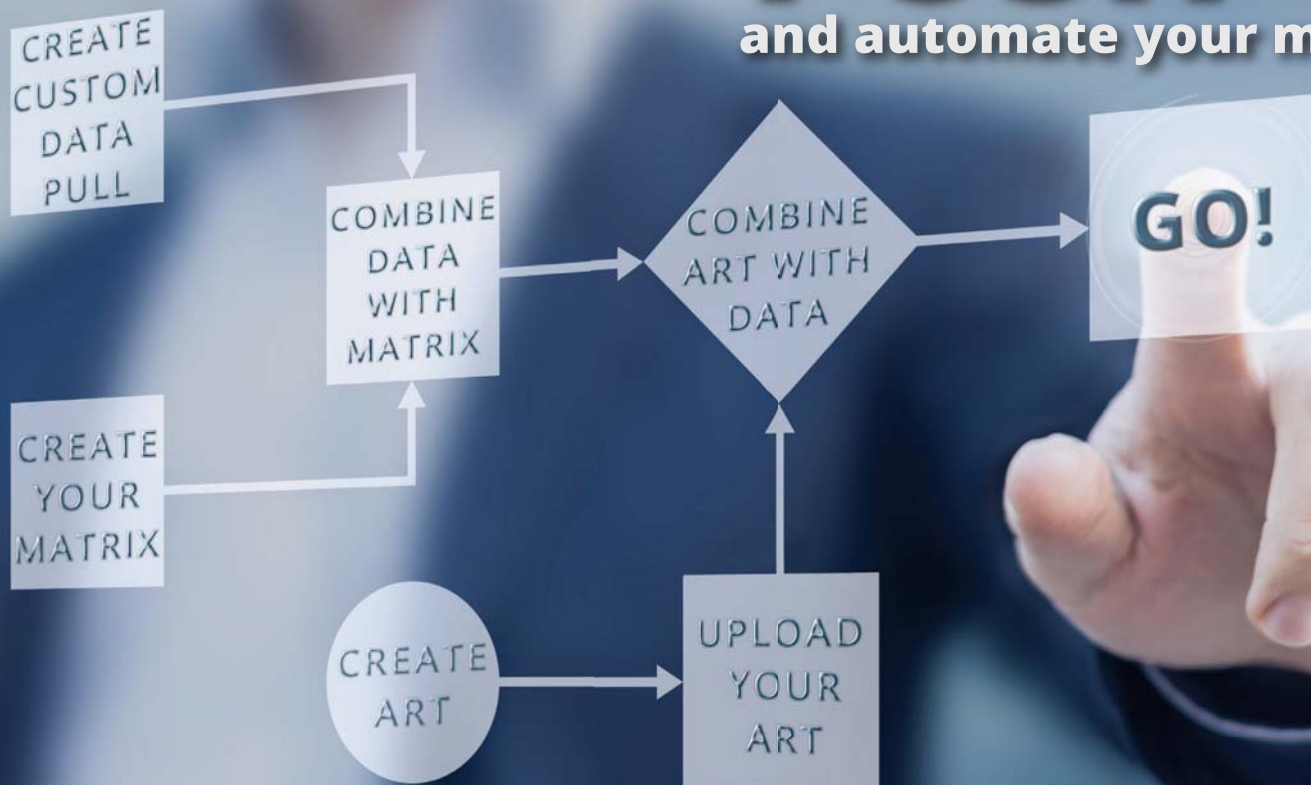
## Native Strong Comedy Slam

April 3, 2019, Hard Rock Hotel San Diego, CA

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

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