

# Raving

Raving's Strategic Solutions Magazine



## 2019 CONFERENCE SPECIAL EDITION

# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

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Dear Ravers,

I'm not all that keen about making New Year's resolutions, but January always feels new with opportunity. And this January we have two things of particular note that I wanted to share with you.

First, let me introduce you to Lynette O'Connell, our VP of Operations. She came aboard last month and is a major addition to our advanced analytics, marketing, technology and loyalty teams. Her passion for learning has made her one of the industry's top gaming analysts, and we're incredibly lucky to have her join us. Check out Lynette's article on [page 13](#), and read more about her in our [online industry report](#).

Second, we annually kick off the year with our signature event, [Raving NEXT: Indian Gaming Analytics and Marketing Conference](#), January 28-30 at Pechanga Resort Casino. It takes months of planning and our entire team gets involved. This might seem a little corny, but it really is a work of love for us. Why?

As a Native-owned organization, we are in the unique position and are committed to helping Tribes and their team members be successful. A prosperous Tribal organization means more jobs for communities and more resources: health care centers, housing, education, programs for youth and elders. It means a better future and opportunities for all Tribes.

This conference is one way we help team members of Tribal casinos find solutions to issues that are current barriers to their success. We've seen mature executives as well as new managers and our [Tribal scholarship](#) attendees find their "why" at this conference. And that's pretty damn cool.

The attendees who get the most out of the conference, are the ones who leave their busy minds back at their property and engage in the experience and get out of their comfort zones. They're the ones who share with us months later how the people they met, the ideas they were exposed to, truly made a difference.

And that's the hard part, right? In our increasingly demanding lives, how do we find the time to clear our minds and let new ideas come in?

Life sometimes feels like being at the other side of the court with a non-stop tennis ball machine. There's major upheaval at work; someone in our immediate family takes ill; or the unthinkable tragedy happens. Work and home life collide. So we react. We produce. We put out fires. We survive. We cope. We manage. We keep on hitting the ball back to the other side and hope it stays there for a while. We may keep up, but do we make significant strides ahead?

In this type of environment, no doubt, we're powerful production machines, but at the end of the day, where's the heart, where's the fun, where's the vision, where's the creativity? And did we forget our "why" while we were keeping afloat?

I admit it, with the incredible growth and change at Raving over the last two years, we've all done our time with the unrelenting ball machine. So, it was one evening in December, after a very long day, that the team ended up in our conference room. Chris played a video about [Ian Newland](#), a Native American military veteran who will be sharing his incredibly motivating (yet heartbreaking) story at our January conference. We then watched a video about his wife [Crystal Purdy](#), who is a hero in her own right.

We also talked about the grandmother of ten who applied for our conference scholarship program and our other applicants – who are working incredibly hard to advance their careers to ultimately give more back to their organizations.

We were overwhelmed reading about the exceptional generosity from team members to Camp Fire victims and the other 34 (more than double from last year) stories shared in our Tribal Spirit of Giving program (see [page 18](#) for more information).

Being able to share these stories, having the honor to work with incredible people, seeing clients grow and succeed, this is our "why" here at Raving.

We all need a reminder that it's critical to slow down and celebrate the journey. We all need the time to work on a project that we're personally passionate about. We all need the time to clear our heads in order to give creativity and innovative thought a space to flourish. There's a saying out there that, "The answers you seek never come when the mind is busy, they come when the mind is still."

Here's to your journey in 2019 and wishing you a personally successful and blessed year.

Sincerely,



Deana Scott  
Raving CEO

**Cover:** This year marks the 21st Raving NEXT: Indian Gaming Analytics & Marketing Conference! Keep an eye out for the Raving NEXT icon on some articles – these authors will be on-site and ready to chat with attendees and answer questions.

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## FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW

# Gaining a Deeper Insight Into Casino Performance

## *Perspective and expectations of financial reports*

By **Kevin Huddleston, CPA, CGMA, CFF**, Strategic Raving Partner, Accounting and Auditing, and Partner, **Finley & Cook**

Understanding financial statements is not just a role reserved for bean counters, CFOs and your casino's GM. It's important that anyone who wants a seat at the table, whether today or as their career grows, is confident in understanding these reports.

In two previous articles, we've looked at the reports issued in conjunction with the annual financial statement audit. First, the internal control related reports in the article "[Properly Safeguarding the Assets of the Casino and Tribe](#)," and then the audited financial statements themselves in the article "[Understanding Key Financial Statements](#)."

Now we're ready to go deeper and get more detailed insight on what to look for when reviewing any financial report, whether that is the audited financial statements or the monthly financials produced internally. In the end, you may still not LOVE to review and analyze financial statements the way that I do, but you should have enough confidence to do so, and as a result, have a greater knowledge of the performance of your casino.

**There are two things needed to understand financial reports. Neither of them is an accounting degree. They are perspective and expectations.**

You have to have something to measure the numbers against to really evaluate whether they are acceptable, good, or "whoa! what went wrong?" Perspective is a benchmark or yardstick to measure by. Several things can give you this perspective. Budgeted amounts can provide perspective. Is the casino over or under budget? Previous months' or years' numbers also provide perspective. What is the trend we're seeing? Is the casino improving or declining? Industry performance standards are another way to gain perspective. Is our casino performing better or worse than the rest of the industry?

Expectations give you something to use to help evaluate the numbers you see. If you know that the casino had a big promotion last month, you would expect to see a boost in revenues. If not, ask questions. If you know that historically March is the casino's best month of the year, you expect that it will be true in the current year. If the industry average for wages as a percent of revenue is 21%, you expect your casino's percentage to be close to the same. If its 25%, ask why there is a difference.

You can probably see that perspective and expectations are also linked together. Often, having perspective creates some of our expectations. Now that you have those tools, let's dive into the basic financials. For this article we're going to focus on the Income Statement. Everyone's primary interest is "how much money did we make?"

### Income Statement or Statement of Revenues, Expenses, and Changes in Net Position

The Income Statement (see example below) gets the most attention because it tells us if the casino is making money. If given an Income Statement with two time periods presented, we can all determine where revenues and expenses may be up or down. However, to truly analyze the performance of the casino, you need more information than is usually provided in audited financials and in many internally prepared financials. There are a few things you can do to analyze performance. (Please note that the percentages below are benchmarks. Actual performance may vary. If the variance is significant, then ask for an explanation).

- As a quick, general operating statistic, you can calculate Operating Income or Earnings Before Interest, Depreciation and Amortization (EBIDA) in some reports as a percentage of total revenue (OI/Revenue). The higher the percentage, the better. We typically see this number between 30% and 40%. This will give you an idea of how efficiently

XYZ Casino		
Statements of Revenues, Expenses, and Changes in Equity		
	For the Years Ended December 31,	
	2011	2010
<b>Operating Revenues<sup>7</sup></b>		
Gaming	\$13,802,300	\$12,532,100
Rooms	2,100,600	1,927,200
Food and beverage	1,300,300	1,139,700
Other	690,600	542,100
Total operating revenues	<u>17,893,800</u>	<u>16,141,100</u>
<b>Operating Expenses</b>		
Gaming	4,012,100	3,717,600
Rooms	1,800,000	1,600,000
Food and beverage	1,500,000	1,200,000
Other	400,000	300,000
Selling, general, and administrative	3,021,900	2,707,700
State revenue sharing	970,200	818,000
Depreciation	2,602,715	2,597,431
Total operating expenses	<u>14,306,915</u>	<u>12,940,731</u>
Operating income	3,586,885	3,200,369
<b>Nonoperating Revenues (Expenses)</b>		
Interest expense	<u>(2,050,300)</u>	<u>(1,935,300)</u>
Total nonoperating revenues (expenses)	<u>(2,050,300)</u>	<u>(1,935,300)</u>
Income before transfers	1,536,585	1,265,069
<b>Transfers to XYZ tribe<sup>8,9</sup></b>		
Gaming taxes and regulation	250,000	250,000
Other	200,000	200,000
	<u>450,000</u>	<u>450,000</u>
Change in equity	1,086,585	815,069
Equity, beginning of year	19,025,215	18,210,146
Equity, end of year	<u>\$20,811,800</u>	<u>\$19,025,215</u>

# FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REVIEW

management runs the operation. Of course, we want to look at it if it changed much period over period too.

- If revenues and “costs of sales” are presented for various lines of business (LOB), like retail or food & beverage (they are not in the example below), you can calculate their gross profit percentage (revenue less cost of goods / revenue). What percentage is normal will depend on the LOB. For F&B, we like to see 50% or greater. Bar or liquor should be 60% or higher. Retail will vary depending on the products sold, but should be at least 35% to 40%. Tobacco and fuel often have fairly low margins.
- The example below shows revenues and expenses neatly presented by LOB. If you are lucky enough to find this in your financials, you can easily net them together to see how much each line of business contributes to Operating Income. Gaming will likely always have the lion’s share. The thing to watch for are LOBs that contribute little to the Operating Income. Next, you will want to find out if the operating expenses for each LOB include wages and benefits for that LOB. If not, things might not be as rosy as they appear.
- If wages and benefits are shown separately from departmental or general administrative expenses, you can calculate the percent of revenue that this expense represents. If total wages and benefits are more than 30% of overall revenue, your casino is higher than most. If your percentage is significantly different and wages and benefits are presented separately from one another, wages should be in the low 20s as a percent of revenue. Benefits should be in the 6% to 8% range.
- The “Other” or Non-Operating Income (expense) section lists items that are generally beyond the direct control of management, like interest income and expenses. If there is significant interest income, you should see a large amount of investments on the balance sheet. The question for a tribal casino is whether those funds should be held at the casino or transferred to the tribe for them to utilize or invest. If there is a significant amount of interest expense, the footnotes should provide insight into the debt, its terms and any restrictions that may come along with the borrowing.

## Statement of Cash Flows

I won’t go into a lot of detail about the Statement of Cash Flows, but it is a good companion to the Income Statement. The thing to remember is that the income and expenses on the Income Statement and resulting net income don’t necessarily have a one-to-one relationship with cash. The Statement of Cash Flows will reconcile net income to cash provided or used by the casino. If your property consistently uses more cash than it generates, sooner or later you will have a problem.

## Conclusion

With the items discussed above, their behavior over time (expectation) and measurement against benchmarks (perspective) can provide you with valuable information about how the casino is performing. It may show you areas where improved performance could enhance the property’s bottom line. There are a number of ratios and statistics that can provide more insight into the performance of a casino. They are often not provided in audited financial statements unless they include a “Management Discussion and Analysis.” Some internal financial packages also may not provide information, such as coin-in, table drop, hold percentages, win per unit, headcounts, and carded play. We’ll delve more into additional ratios and statistics another time.

Hopefully I haven’t overwhelmed you with information. Always keep in mind that anyone can look at a financial report and gain knowledge when viewed through the lenses of perspective and expectations. You don’t need an accounting degree, but knowing a good accountant doesn’t hurt.



*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.*

### NATIVE AMERICAN GAMING

Finley & Cook has been an integral part of the Tribal gaming industry for nearly two decades, assisting both operational and regulatory entities with performing accounting services, internal audits and assessments, drafting policies and procedures, and offering compliance based solutions to unforeseen issues.

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# Customer Journey Management

*Key infrastructure building blocks to get you started*

**Prasanna Satarasinghe, Raving Partner and VP Consumer & Mobility Practice, Savantis Solutions LLC**

What is Customer Journey Management? How does it relate to Native American casinos and gaming? How does it impact business? What can executives do so it has a positive impact on guests, team members, and return on investment?

Native American casino and gaming enterprises are investing heavily in their Wi-Fi infrastructure, POS equipment, digital signage, kiosk equipment, mobile devices used by team members, and back office software applications. They are also faced with the challenge to determine what software applications need to reside on-premise and what can be moved to cloud without jeopardizing the security concerns around customer data.

Every Native American and commercial enterprise wants to deliver best-of-breed customer journey management for their hotel, casino and gaming patrons. Yet, at the same time, they are struggling to concisely relate the investment in the areas identified above with the customer journey and the return on investment.

In this article, we have suggested a simple step-by-step approach to identify the pieces of the customer journey management puzzle and how they can be linked together to address the burning questions faced by gaming operators today.

### Customer Journey Management – Unplugged

#### Step One

It is a must to **acquire an email address** to identify and convert an unknown person to a known guest. Customer Journey Management begins with the acquisition of the email address.

Once the email address is available, it is possible to acquire the mobile number and influence the guest to download a mobile app.

When these three modes of communication are enabled, engagement with the guest can be begin across multiple channels to gathering insight. At this point, guest segmentation can begin.

Seamless, real-time engagement, communication and collection of data should be possible during the reservation process, check-in, the initial connection to Wi-Fi network, a commerce transaction, or the delivery of guest service.

Key benefits:

- Ubiquitous, digital engagement and interaction with the guest during reservation, pre-arrival, on-premise, and beyond the visit to deliver individualized guest amenities and services
- Justify the investment to modernize the guest Wi-Fi network
- Justify the investment of a guest mobile app and modernizing the back-office loyalty & marketing applications

#### Step Two

The next important building block is the ability to seamlessly **identify the location of guests** and connect them spontaneously with the backend IT applications and team members based on their proximity and availability.

Key benefits:

# MARKETING & LOYALTY

- Capture guest insights & casual conversations between guests and team members in real time and act promptly
- Deliver targeted marketing campaigns and superior guest service based on the guests' needs at the convenience of the guests and when they need them
- Increase customer loyalty and revenue per guest
- Streamline and improve the operational efficiencies of team members and IT assets
- Justify the investment of mobile devices for team members and a new suite of applications to support your guests

## Step Three

Utilize the fronted systems such as POS & kiosk equipment and digital signage to not only engage guests seamlessly, but to **deliver a positive guest experience** by offering individualized services tailor-made to each guest's needs. At the same time, you can capture valuable guest interests and insights.

Expand the utilization of team member mobile devices beyond the typical team member functions. This can include sending team members information, notifications, and carrying out work orders.

Key benefits:

- Minimize waiting time for guests to purchase items, check-in for the hotel, and respond to a service request
- Increase revenue per guest
- Enhance guest experience and, in turn, guest loyalty
- Streamline the operations and increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the team
- Minimize fraud and increase guest experience by empowering team members to expand the services they provide to guests by adding new functionality to the mobile devices used by the team members
- Justify the investment to modernize the commerce and digital signage infrastructure and applications

## Step Four

Another key building block is **to have a communication hub** that is tailor-made to plug & play with legacy and modern guest-facing frontend systems and back office applications. The communication hub will also act as the glue and the service broker to bridge any workflow gaps in the legacy back-office applications.

Key benefits:

- Collect and infuse data from disparate frontend systems and applications
- Enrich the guest profile in the loyalty system

- Attract and retain new guests
- Protect current investments and simultaneously have the ability to deliver hospitality/ entertainment 2.0 amenities and services

If this article has you thinking about the customer journey you're working on at your property and you have more questions than answers, that makes sense! Do you have key infrastructure, IT and technical questions? We'll be exhibiting at [Raving NEXT: Indian Gaming Analytics and Marketing Conference](#), January 28 – 30, 2019. We're also just an email or a phone call away. Please contact Jon McClean at [jon.mcclean@savantis.com](mailto:jon.mcclean@savantis.com) or call 831.229.6732.



*Prasanna has over 20 years of IT industry experience in the Entertainment and Hospitality industry. His notable projects and implementation include digital engagement and customer experience management solutions for 2014 soccer world cup stadiums, MLB/ NBL/NFL stadiums, major hotel brands and Native American Resorts & Casinos. He has worked with Raving on several IT assessment projects.*



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# Die, Tiers, Die: The Sequel

*Top ten questions to ask about your tiered card program*

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

I first introduced the phrase “Die, Tiers, Die” at the Raving NEXT conference in 2014. My prophecy hasn’t come true. Tiered card programs haven’t died. And yet, the battle cry remains. The dissatisfaction with tiered card programs is the most recurrent discussion I’ve had in hallways, elevators, and lunches at conferences.

Perhaps a revolution takes time.

The original intent of a tiered card program was to recognize loyalty over time. A card in one’s wallet was a reminder to return. Casinos recognized points earned. Visit more. Spend more. Get more. Cross set thresholds and a patron graduated from one level of status to another. Patrons flashed status throughout the resort to realize heightened levels of recognition, reward, and access.

Then things got more complicated.

The means of earning points expanded. Some points were for spending and some for tier status. Each method of spending came with a different earning schedule. Multiplier days amassed greater spending potential but did not necessarily accelerate tier improvement.

Tiers multiplied as well. From two tiers to three to five and beyond. More tiers. Secret tiers. Entry tiers. Middle children tiers feeling less loved and nurtured. An emphasis on VIP tiers. A dismissal of the lowest tiers.

With internal complexity came external noise. Tiered card programs were the means to demonstrate loyalty with every purchase a patron made. Ubiquity led to market noise. Market noise led to apathy.

With this dismal progression, we must ask ourselves if we have lost our way. Has the support of our own tiered card program taken us too far away from our initial intent? Have we created more busy-work to maintain something few believe in? What can be done?

**Here are the top ten questions to ask yourself about your tiered card program:**

### 1. What is tracked play at your property?

If you want to know whether your patrons believe in your program, look at the percentage of revenue that is tracked by carded play. Trust is hard to gain and easy to lose. Keep moving your targets, and trust erodes.

### 2. How well do you sell your program?

Like the Ronco rotisserie, you may think it’s okay to set it and forget it. Your tiered card program may be on autopilot. A robust tiered card program depends upon two things: clarity and consistency. Clarity simplifies the “ask” of participants. You do x and get y. End of story. This message must resonate across all communications beyond the brochure sitting on the club counter. Consistency



## MARKETING & LOYALTY

marks a place where patrons can get more information about their progress. Do they know where to look? Is there a personalized web portal? A kiosk? A window within the monthly mailer?

### 3. How long do you make them wait?

Is it three months? Is it six? Is it twelve? Do you mark milestones along the way with mini rewards? Why should your best guests have perfect attendance to be recognized with status? How quickly can you recognize progress towards goals you seemingly should both share?

### 4. Are you focusing on the right guest?

Tiered cards were not made for VIPs. That's a Host's job. Tiered cards are there to grant status, provide moderate access, and give a nod to those who will never earn large direct marketing coupons based solely on trip spend. Cumulative the feeds early status. A tiered card program rewards those who are loyal with trips, but not necessarily with daily spend.

### 5. Did you do the math?

Is it worth \$10,000 of additional spend to be rewarded with a 5% increase in discounts for food? There is an art to placing tiers. Graduating from one level of status to the next should follow the unique shape of one's database. Focus less on the zeros and perfect increments of 50,000 and more on the value you're willing to add from one step to another.

### 6. How well do you brand the program?

You may have a promotions calendar. Do you have one that provides a worthwhile guest experience for each tier? Incorporate tiered card program celebrations with a combination of planned events and seemingly random acts of kindness each month.

### 7. How sticky is each tier?

There needs to be one compelling reward from one tier to the next. Something worth fighting for. A long list of entitlements pales in comparison to one golden benefit to mark each rung on your tiered card ladder.

### 8. Do you incorporate an element of surprise?

Think like Willy Wonka. Each tier is a golden ticket to a new experience. Misstep and a patron gets flushed out of the group. Aspiration is more exciting than experience. Give your patrons within each tier something unexpected to brag about.

### 9. Do you follow your own rules?

Promote often. Demote regularly. End of story. Think ahead regarding the guest experience of different play patterns. Don't build a program where seasonal players earn for a season, enjoy status when they're out of town, and then jump back on the treadmill upon return. Don't force a program that you can't police.

### 10. If you can't measure it, don't include it.

There are ways to recognize patronage with status apart from a plastic card. If you have different businesses that are worth recognizing, then design ways to recognize patrons based upon their siloed spend in ways that make reinvestment sense. A bingo player's patronage can be tiered. A poker player's patronage can be tiered. We don't need to add complexity by making tiered card soup. Circle back to your intent. Recognize and reward. Do what you can with what you have. If it's too complex for you to force a tiered card algorithm into existence that gives a nod to all spend, don't do it. A brilliant reinvestment algorithm will be equally as hard for players to understand it.

We can do this. We can make tiered card programs work. Or we can make recognition work without them. What we can't afford to do is to let apathy devalue our intent to recognize and reward.



*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.*



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## Techniques for Maximizing Hotel Rooms

*Drive more play in your casino through yield management*

By **Brett Magnan**, Raving Partner, Hospitality

Rooms as a tool to increase play in the casino is becoming critically important as operators maximize rates based on demand and measured against player worth on the floor. Simply put, no longer are we just trying to maximize room rates blindly. By taking a holistic approach to the value of each room, while leveraging play, we can make smarter decisions about “whose heads are in our beds.”

The classic casino example is when the hotel is sold out and a host wants to put a player into a room or suite, displacing a cash guest. Casino hoteliers know that this is a good decision as the host will justify the player’s theoretical value as a much greater worth to the property.

Today we look beyond a reactionary decision on rooms and move towards a strategic effort to “incent” tiered players to stay, knowing their value in advance.

By definition, “Yield” is the technique commonly associated with airline seat rates where the earlier you book, the lower your confirmed rate. As demand increases for a finite number of available seats, the rate becomes more expensive with the hopes that they “yield” the highest average rate

for a sold-out flight. Unsold hotel rooms, like unsold airline seats, are the most perishable commodity, as you can’t sell last night’s rooms the next day.

Reservation Managers have now become Yield Managers, often with technical skills in writing and using computer modeling with complex algorithms that signal when rates are open, at which level and when they should be closed



## HOSPITALITY

out to maximize the highest possible revenues based on diminished or compromised supply and a strong demand.

By understanding the tiered value of your players, offers or rates can be designed to entice them to stay in your property when supply is open. When occupancy is high, these offers would be closed to all except the highest worth player.

Understanding your players is the first and most important step. Random attempts at guessing what they want will just waste money and frustrate them. Ask them. Talk to them. The best examples of offers that work are from casinos who know their players. They host events, get to know their preferences, track usage, and evaluate every campaign.

Enticing offers do not necessarily mean that rates would degrade their points, but rather give them a value not available to others below their tier. This is used to build a base of rooms business early when the rates would normally be low and fill the base with people who have the propensity to game, rather than those who stay with you just for the other amenities. The earlier you can fill a base of business with players, the easier it is to raise rates for non-tiered guests who are willing to pay more and won't have much effect on coin-in.

### These offers can be simple:

- 45-15 days prior to specified date – 30% / 20% / 10% of Best Available Rate for three top tiered players. Rates close inside two weeks of arrival or based upon fill of house availability.
- FREE NIGHT STAY – based upon a three-night stay and the first two nights at Best Available Rate at time of booking.
- Bundled stay – a packaged rate where multiple services are included in the package, some of which are lost leaders and the individual pieces could not be purchased for the same price as the packaged price. This helps with generating trial for other operating areas that are less utilized, like the spa, a specific F&B outlet, retail or other entertainment offering.

### Things to avoid:

- FREE PLAY! I know there are many casino properties that use free play to entice players, however I have found that this only grows coin-in and does not necessarily grow significant revenue. It also tends to program the player only to select an offer if he or she gets free play.
- Running offers too frequently or in a set pattern. The idea of an offer is to change behavior during a specific, needed period of time.
- Assuming that it was successful because you increased your bookings. It is essential that following an offer there is an evaluation of

performance. Understanding who selected the offer, what they spent, when they booked and their casino patterns are important factors for what future offers you might want to create.

The success of promotions requires great cross-communication between casino marketing, player development, gaming management, and the hotel yield team. There are many more examples of successful offers and promotions that yield hotel rooms to drive more play in your casino.

Be creative and make sure that you are customizing the offers for what your players want.

Measure success and fine-tune following each offer. You will see an increase in play over time.



*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.*

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Casino City Press

# Are You Getting Enough Juice from Your Digital Advertising?

*Three critical questions to evaluate your program*

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

In the 25 years since the launch of the first clickable web banner, the industry has continually reinvented itself as new technologies have become available. Digital marketing capabilities seem to evolve on a daily basis. This is why it is important to continually optimize and measure your digital marketing to ensure that you are getting every ounce possible out of your budget: to squeeze every impression, click, visit, and conversion eventually leading to trips. Ultimately, the sweet spot lies where technology converges with strategy providing the ability to meld the two.

So, how do we leverage technology to implement a digital strategy, maximizing budget with the ability to measure for success? Well, that may be the secret sauce, but here are a few things to focus on.

### 1. Are you budgeting appropriately for digital, and are you maximizing that budget? How do you know?

Knowing how your spend should be allocated is paramount. Identify how many layers you are going through to get your digital ads placed. If each layer takes even a small cut of your budget before actually placing your digital ad, then there may be efficiencies that could be gained. Eliminating any “middle men” translates to increased digital media weight for your campaigns.

Understanding how your campaigns are performing is also important. Measure how they compare to overall industry averages and casino industry averages to assure that they are having the desired effect.

Follow current trends on how media is being consumed. With digital spend recently surpassing television spend, ensuring the right media mix for your property is key to optimizing your media budget.

### 2. Speaking of measurement, are you targeting and measuring your campaigns effectively?

There are several tactics that allow you to track conversion all the way back to on-property visits, such as geo retargeting, hotel bookings, ticket purchasing, etc.

IP targeting gives you the ability to segment your offers based on player data and deliver targeted messaging. Measuring lift in market segments by tracking back to player data relates directly to the campaign's efficiency.

Leveraging Google Analytics data to measure not just digital but additional forms of media to ensure the effectiveness of overall marketing campaigns.

Utilizing segmentation methods, such as UTM codes, custom messaging and custom landing pages, for unique offers also allows for detailed measurement.

Ever wonder if your digital ads are really reaching the desired target? Third-party companies can help you determine if you really are!

### 3. Are you utilizing all effective forms of digital media to reach your guests?

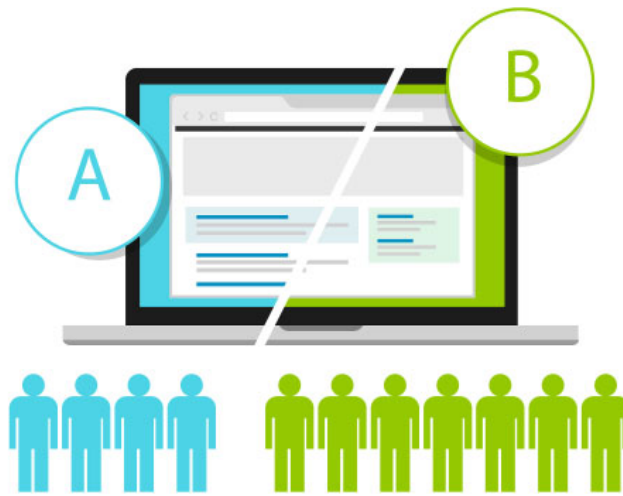
Emerging and somewhat underutilized technologies, such as Over the Top TV or OTT, can be hugely effective in reaching an audience that is viewing their programming via streaming or on-demand platforms. Ads are non-skippable, ensuring content is viewed by the user, and it has increased tracking capabilities as compared to traditional broadcast media. OTT is also effective in supplementing or leveraging broadcast in larger markets, or for properties that have a limited budget. And, it's not only for Millennials, with over one-third of users falling between 45-69 years old, core casino-aged gamers are among the highest users. If you aren't currently using OTT, then there is a significant broadcast segment that you may not be reaching.

Part of the success of a digital campaign lies in the ability to measure and adjust course quickly. At Catalyst we use player data to determine the effectiveness of our clients' digital media as a kickoff to developing their digital media plan. This allows for a 360° view of their campaigns, targeting ability, measurement techniques, and budget efficiency. This assessment reveals what is working well and where there is room to squeeze a little more juice.

When evaluating your own digital program, be sure to ask the right questions and perform the right evaluation, as it goes beyond simple impressions and clicks. Did it drive trips? Did it increase revenue? Was it as cost-effective as it could be? Make sure that you're getting the most out of your squeeze!



*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.*



## Building a Marketing Testing Program

*Nine lessons for better results*

By **Lynette O'Connell**, Raving VP of Operations

I am sure we can all agree that testing is a great thing, and many of you have probably tried it to different degrees of success. But did you get the results you had hoped for?

After decades of marketing and running many A/B Tests in database marketing, I have put together some of the lessons I have learned about creating a culture of testing in Marketing.

- 1. Get buy-in from management.** Changing from “gut feel” to an analytical approach and creating the culture of testing is a change. Getting the support from management and having that communicated from the top down can make the difference in success and getting the help needed.
- 2. Involve more people once you have the management buy-in.** You will need to involve other key people for support. Get supporters from other departments and leaders within the marketing department supporting you. This will be the team you can turn to for brainstorming ideas and support on the execution of the tests. I have found getting influencers from the Players Club, Slots, Finance, etc., can make the difference in the success of the tests.
- 3. Define your testing strategy.** This is a biggie! A common problem is the lack of sound strategy behind testing. *We test solutions to problems, not ideas.*
  - **State your goal.** What am I trying to accomplish? What is the objective of this test? For example – Increase trips for a local, low frequency segment.
  - **Identify the problem: The Why.** Why are guests only coming two trips on average when they are local guests?
- **Form your hypothesis.**
  - a. Guests are going to other local casinos
  - b. Our offer cadence doesn't entice more trips
- **Identify a testable solution: The How.** Brainstorm ideas that could solve that problem. For example, the solution to our problem A is that we need to teach our guests about the benefits of consolidating their play to our casino to earn more rewards through the players club program.
- **Tactical implementation: The What.** Once you have decided on the solution, you can focus on *what* you will do to make that solution come to life. This is the execution process of the test. Again, for problem A – do you change your message to showcase benefits? Do you create an offer related to a club benefit?
- 4. Define your success metrics.** It is essential to define your success metrics and hypothesis before running your test. This keeps you from adding your bias into the results. What one or two metrics will decide that this test is a success? Make sure that your success metrics align with your goal. Again, for the example problem. Trips is probably the critical success metric, but you will want to look at spend also to make sure that the spend levels did not decrease due to the additional trip(s).
- 5. Get enough conversions for statistical significance.** Make sure that you are getting enough guests into the Test segment and the Control segment to have statistical significance. My rule of thumb is to have at least 100 conversions/trips per test segment. That means 100 trips in the Test segment AND 100 trips

# DATA ANALYTICS

in the Control segment. Understanding the frequency of the group helps here. A low frequency segment will need a larger count of guests to create 100 conversions per test segment.

6. **Segment your database accurately for testing.** Segments are important. Different guest types react differently to different versions of tests. Segments should have like guests. Look at Recency, Frequency, Locality, and Spend. Additionally, make sure that you get the Test and Control segments evenly balanced for accurate results. A random distribution in a segment can still create unbalanced Test and Control groups. Double check the average spend in each group to make sure that the difference is under 1% for accurate results.
7. **No such thing as an unsuccessful test.** You will learn from every test. If the test comes back inconclusive, it is still valuable. The test element may not be relevant to your guests, or you need to retest with a more significant or different segmentation.
8. **Beware of the hidden variables that affect your testing.**
  - Do not run simultaneous tests that target the same segment.
  - Look at any outliers that may have occurred. A jackpot winner within the Test or Control group will impact the results.

- Unbalanced Test and Control groups will create invalid results.

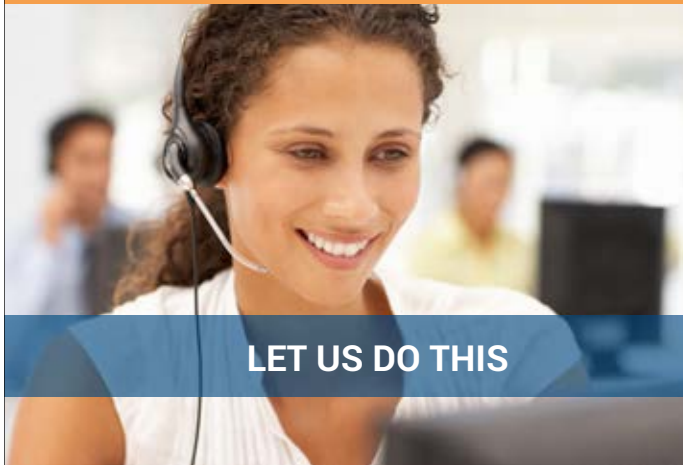
9. **Communicate your results.** As you are performing more tests and learning how your guests react to change, communicate your results. Put the results in perspective for the next 12 months. For example, a 4% lift in trips in this segment was a \$20K lift in Net Revenue for that test. Half of the segment got the test, and had that test been sent to everyone, it would have been a \$40K lift. If this test is rolled out, the next year has a potential \$480,000 lift in Net Revenue. This is big – Marketing your results is key to success.

Good luck with your testing, and if you would like any assistance getting this up and running at your property, reach out to us for suggestions. Raving specializes in using data to help you make strategic marketing decisions.



*Lynette's expertise is comprised of 20 years of high-volume gaming operations experience in CRM, database marketing, analysis, and loyalty club development. Lynette assists Raving clients in maximizing their data including: evaluating marketing and system software, pulling data from this system, and making strategic marketing decisions around that data with easy-to-utilize reports and visuals.*

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



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# Prospecting Strategies for Player Development

*Five steps to finding “new” guests using the phone*

By **Daniel Wood**, Strategic Raving Partner, Phone-Based Solutions at **Engagex**

The debate among Player Development teams will always be a challenge: what is the best use of my time? Nurturing existing relationships or finding “new” guests? While the answer to that question will likely always be a moving target, what I can tell you is that if you are not always prospecting new business, your book of business will eventually suffer as a result. It may be 30, 60 or 90 days, but the inevitable will happen, guaranteed. The telephone has continued to be one of the most effective tools for prospecting new guests. A simple phone call always has been and always will be the most effective tool, because it is the only way to actually have a two-way conversation. How else can you gauge the inflection or tone in your prospect’s voice? How do you know if they are happy, sad, frustrated or lonely? Let’s look at a simple strategy for prospecting new business when using the phone.

To start, let’s first look at what your strategy is. Short-term gain by filling an event, or long-term gain by building loyal players? In gaming, those “new” guests are typically already existing guests who likely visit the property often, but your player development team just doesn’t know them. What if that guest already frequents your establishment three times in a month? What if I told you that it’s not only possible, but very likely that you can get that guest to come more often by simply acknowledging them with a phone call?

One of the things that I have learned about sales over the years is this: people like to be heard and they like to be remembered. If you talk to any experienced sales rep, they all have one tool that almost always works at keeping a relationship going ... it’s called the “I don’t want to be a pest” reference. It works! The reason it works is this: if someone likes you or wants to visit with you, but has been busy or distracted, they are likely to respond when they get this message.

For those PD individuals asking why this article is about sales, here’s a little secret ... Player Development is sales! Yep, you read that right. If you’re a Host or work in Player Development, you are in sales!

Here are five steps to prospecting new guests when using the phone:

1. **Create a targeted prospecting strategy** – These are guests who are NOT in your current book of business. These guests might not be coded or carded players. This is where the database manager becomes your best friend. Their analysis can typically identify several hundred to several thousand prospects for you to talk to.

2. **Acknowledge the guest** – Yep, it’s that simple. A simple “hello,” “good luck,” or “great to see you” goes a long way for those guests who have never experienced that level of personalization.

3. **Be consistent** – Once you start calling these players, don’t let several months go by before you call them again. It’s similar to going on a first date with someone, saying you “like them” and that you should “do this again,” but then you never call them again! Don’t be like that! (We should never date our players, but the same principles of consistent, clear communication apply).

4. **Understand what makes your players tick** – This one is pretty easy, right? They love to gamble, or they love the experience that they have at your property. Maybe they prefer slots over table games, but either way, you should be able to relate with them about why they come to your property. The only way you can relate with them is by talking with them. The phone is a great way to start that conversation.

5. **Give them something to look forward to** – I hear from Hosts all the time that they don’t know what to call about or what to say unless they have an offer. WHAT?! Wait a minute, are you serious? There is so much that you can talk about with a new guest who you have just met for the first time. Start with “Hi, how are you?” Then let them speak. It’s similar to dating ... ask the right question, and they will likely tell you more than you originally hoped!

*For more information about driving more business through on-site training to enhance your PD and guest service departments’ telephone skills, please contact Amy Hergenrother, Raving’s VP of Business Development, at 775-329-7864 or [amy@ravingconsulting.com](mailto:amy@ravingconsulting.com).*



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*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.*



## Fearless Industry Predictions for 2019

*Brought to you by Epstein the Magnificent*

By **Jerry Epstein**, Raving Partner and CEO, **Engaged Nation**

As we welcome in a new year, I thought it would be fun to take off my normal “sales guy” hat, don the turban, and gaze into the future. Come with me as I channel my inner Johnny Carson, hold the envelope to my forehead, and give you *Epstein the Magnificent* and my fearless industry predictions for 2019!

### Envelope One: The Year of Sports

Admittedly, this isn't much of a prediction ... more like a confirmation of reality. Ever since SCOTUS paved the way for legalized gambling, the rush has been on by most state legislatures to get some form of legalized sports betting into law. Sports betting legislation will continue to proliferate and gain momentum, as at least nine state governments and lotteries will begin the process of authorizing legal sports betting, spurred by various forces, including the fiscal needs of states. The sports betting space will also continue to grow and become more crowded in the coming year. Private companies and organizations that have not previously been involved in any form of legal gaming – such as sports bars and restaurants like Buffalo Wild Wings – will seek to offer sports and/or online wagering. In addition, the relatively slow growth of online gaming will speed up in 2019 as legislatures look for ways to plug budget deficits.

2019 will be the time for Tribal casinos to begin looking to the future when they will be offering sports betting. The need to identify and connect with coveted sports bettors will be critical in the coming year to ensure long-term success. Decision makers at Tribal casinos in 2019 will be wise to add sports-themed promotions immediately to start building their databases, while their Tribal leaders navigate the necessary modifications to their pacts with state legislatures.

### Envelope Two: Exponential Adoption of Digital

As I have often spoken and written about, casino operators have been very hesitant to adopt digital methods of guest

retention and acquisition marketing (beyond single touchpoint email), with many still running websites with 5 to 10-year-old designs and technology.

I have seen new, mobile-friendly websites being developed and released more frequently as they understand that their guests access their websites via mobile devices and tablets far more than desktops. This is even true for older guests who are becoming more tech-savvy. That's just a

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small example of a basic need. More casinos will begin to understand the great potential of digital and begin to experiment with new forms of online marketing, even if previous attempts might not have produced the results they were either “sold” or were expecting. Properties will realize that it’s not just about how much you spend, but *how* you spend your digital marketing dollars.

While many could avoid embracing new digital marketing and technology in the past, that time will come to an end over the next year. It is now clear that those who want to catch their competitors, or extend their market dominance, will be diverting more of their marketing budget to digital as they realize that this form of marketing has changed from a “nice-to-have” to a “must-have”. In 2019, digital marketing will give some properties an edge, while others that lag behind will begin to lose market share as online marketing continues to evolve. For these and many other reasons, I feel that 2019 will show an exponential growth in robust and comprehensive digital marketing efforts by Tribal casinos. Seeing you emerge as digital leaders will be fun and exciting to watch.

### **Envelope Three: Reactivation Rules**

There is never a lack of conversation about the difficult task of reactivating dormant players or those who have defected to other properties. The conversation will continue in 2019, but with a new focus on exploring more innovative and profitable ways to overcome this long-standing challenge. Look for the industry to move beyond – or at least add some new elements to – the old, traditional and expensive ways of marketing that are seeing diminishing returns on reactivations as they move to emerging marketing technologies.

Tribal casino operators have come to appreciate that they spent good money to get those guests in the first place, and they shouldn’t let them go without a fight.

### **Envelope Four: Internal Communications**

When you consider that a single, negative interaction between a team member and a guest can have major ramifications, a renewed focus on internal team communications and training will play a more prominent role in 2019. Properties realize that just posting information without an engagement mechanism to generate ongoing participation is, in many cases, a waste of time and money. As such, the trend of properties to make learning fun and rewarding for their team members will take center stage this year.

### **Envelope Five: Talent Pool**

Las Vegas and regional properties, for the most part, held an “us vs. them” mentality. Local properties felt, with valid reason, that candidates for employment from Las Vegas could not relate to a regional property when it came to operations. Yet the playing field is changing when it comes to the rich talent pool that has been cultivated by UNLV

and the Las Vegas casinos. Case in point is the number of people leaving Las Vegas to head up sports books in other states. This has also been the case for the major Las Vegas casinos that relocate top talent to their regional operations. Look for this trend to be even more pronounced in 2019.

### **Envelope Six: The Millennials**

I am very pleased to predict that the quest to capture Millennials as full-time slot playing guests will come to a quiet close. Specifically, plans by regional operators to invest millions – or tens of millions – to draw in that audience with such amenities as a major Las Vegas-style night club, will be a thing of the past. Operators are learning that there are more cost-effective ways to continue reaching out to the Millennial gambler, and those methods will begin to take hold in 2019. And keep an eye on eSports.

### **Envelope Seven: Customization**

In the past, personalized service and customization has either been nonexistent or cost-prohibitive. The big vendors felt they owned the market and could keep their “clients” hostage. I see the pendulum swinging back in favor of the casino, and this swing has already started. Bottom line, no vendor is safe as properties are challenging us to have more of a guest service mindset. I expect this trend to grow in 2019.

### **Envelope Eight: Raving PLAY 2019 Will Be AWESOME!**

In 2018, Engaged Nation developed a customized beta test engagement portal for the Raving NEXT conference called Raving PLAY, and it was an overall success. Well, we’ve taken what we learned from last year’s conference, as well as from other customized programs we’ve developed, and improved it for this year’s conference. I won’t tell you more now – we don’t want to spoil the surprise – but I predict that you’re really going to love it when it launches on January 7th. OOPS ... let that one slip!

That’s all for now, and it’s time to retire the turban and *Epstein the Magnificent* for another year. See you at the Raving NEXT conference at the end of January, and all the best from our family to yours for an amazing New Year and 2019.



*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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**Choctaw Nation**  
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Tackles Breast Cancer



**Chukchansi Gold Resort & Casino**  
Chukchansi Cares Celebration



**Cypress Bayou Casino Hotel**  
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**Cypress Bayou Casino Hotel**  
VIPink: The Pinkest Party in Town!



**Feather Falls Casino**  
Butte Strong



**Feather Falls Casino**  
Working Together to Help Camp Fire Survivors



**Feather Falls Casino**  
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**FireKeepers Casino Hotel**  
Fire Hub Greenhouse Initiative



**Fortune Bay Resort Casino**  
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**Foxwoods Resort Casino**  
Stuff the Bus Holiday Giving Campaign



**Foxwoods Resort Casino**  
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**Rolling Hills Casino**  
Rolling Hills Casino Aids Northern California Fire Victims



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**Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority**  
SIGA's commitment to White Buffalo Youth Lodge



**Soboba Casino**  
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**SouthWind Casinos**  
Taking Care of Those Who Take Care of Others



**Suquamish Clearwater Casino Resort**  
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# Three Powerful Steps to Help Your Property Compete

*So You Don't Have to Attend More of "Those Meetings"*

By **Christine Faria**, Raving VP of Marketing

We've all been in that meeting.

Burning the midnight oil trying to address where the property has gone off course.

The GM is puzzled. The Vice President of Marketing is disappointed. The Operations team feels out of touch. Food & Beverage is bewildered. Human Resources reports morale is down.

Finance validates it all by showing margins are going negative.

Your small to medium-sized casino is facing increased competition from a larger resort casino with bigger budgets and tons of amenities.

The issue might be loss of revenue, shrinking margins, or dwindling market share.

Service benchmark results are dropping like an anvil. Team members sense the confusion.

Worst of all, guests are vanishing. The top players are seen at the competition more frequently, and the middle market is nowhere to be found.

As a leadership team, everyone is working harder, and everyone is feeling more baffled, mystified and stumped.

Casinos and casino markets are complex organisms that bob and weave like MMA fighters. The challenge of casino competition never stops.

### Compete Like a Boss

Introducing Raving Competitive Strategies, a unique, multi-step review of competitive strategies created to help recover lost revenue, increase market share, and improve

margins. Raving Competitive Strategies is a comprehensive program designed to help marketing teams apply best practices for a better return on marketing dollars.

### Raving Competitive Strategies Delivers Three Powerful Results:

1. Understand your property through research and analysis
2. Find your competitive niche
3. Develop competitive strategies that regain revenue and market share

"At Raving, our research indicates that competitive issues are a leading concern, especially for small to medium-sized casinos," said Deana Scott, Raving CEO.

"The goal of Raving Competitive Strategies is to evolve existing marketing programs into a powerful competitive strategy that will grow revenues while targeting the right guests at the right time," Scott said.

"Competing in today's casino environment by using gut reactions and intuition is risky. Once you understand where your property fits, you are better able to develop programs that use unique market niches to generate additional share of wallet against a competitor," Scott added.

Raving has teamed up with Raving Partner Tom Osiecki, who knows a thing or two about regional casino competitive environments and strategies.

Tom Osiecki gained years of strategic competitive experience as a former corporate marketing executive for the Isle of Capri Casinos. "I earned an amazing education assisting up to 16 casinos experiencing competitive issues.

## MARKETING & LOYALTY

One thing I came to understand is that every casino market is different, and every competitive challenge is unique,” Osiecki said.

That education grew as Osiecki spent years leading a regional casino company in New York facing heavy competition from category killer properties with extreme competitive advantages.

“Our competition had every amenity and massive budgets. While operating highly regulated, restricted properties, we had to dig deep to generate market share and understand the differences that made our properties appealing over large competitors,” Osiecki said.

### About Tom, Raving Partner

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.



Contact Amy today (775) 329-7864 or [amy@betravingknows.com](mailto:amy@betravingknows.com) to learn how his strategic competitive experience can be put in play at your casino!

#### Deliverables that Deliver

- ***You'll Know Where You Stand***

Raving Competitive Strategies will review the overall market to ascertain a property's position and review existing market analysis to understand share of market and share of wallet.

The availability of a wide selection of Raving Consulting analysis creates a clear path to decision making. The starting point is a market analysis and market share analysis. Understanding total markets and where a property stands in the market defines overall competitive strategies.

- ***You'll Know Your Strategy***

Raving Competitive Strategies will review key existing company strategic documents and business plans to ascertain the present direction of the company and determine baseline criteria for the competitive strategy.

- ***You'll Know What You Are***

Using research techniques, Raving Competitive Strategies will identify the key differentiators that create a competitive

strategy.

The defining step in competitive strategy is to understand distinctive property brands. Knowing the key market differentiators that set casinos apart creates a competitive advantage.

This method helps reduce wasted, off-target spending and program execution. Brand position sets a clear direction for developing a strategy and allocating revenue and expense in the competitive landscape.

- ***You'll Know Your Niche***

Raving Competitive Strategies will discover unique niches that define competitive strategies.

From there, properties can concentrate efforts on the niche that characterizes a competitive advantage.

Once a unique property niche is defined, properties can select the deliverables and key elements that offer an advantage over competitive properties.

- ***You'll Know Your Tactics***

Once strategies have been developed, Raving will guide casino properties toward appropriate tactics. Tactics used in the battle against the opposition are varied and wide-ranging. The Raving team has deep experience in competitive markets and can help develop tactics that are effective and efficient.

#### A New Plan to Stop Category Killers Cold

Raving Competitive Strategies is a unique, multi-step program using research and analytics designed to help properties understand their competitive environment while applying best practices to regain revenue lost to larger, better funded competitors.

#### Understanding Brand and Market Position

Step one is to know where a property presently stands in the market and understand how a brand is perceived. Reviewing market research, analysis and strategic marketing documents will determine current strategies to understand future directions.

#### Drive a Wedge into the Competition with a New Market Niche

Every property has a competitive niche. Research and analysis will uncover advantages that can be applied to new competitive marketing strategies used as leverage against bigger, better funded competition.

#### Provide the Tactics to Compete

Raving Competitive Strategies will deliver solid, proven programs based on years of competitive experience. Using competitive niches, the tactics developed will help move the needle against larger competition.

*To find out more about Raving Competitive Strategies, contact Amy Hergenrother, Raving's VP of Client Services, at 775-329-7864 or [amy@ravingconsulting.com](mailto:amy@ravingconsulting.com).*



# Fraud Reduction in Non-Gaming

*Are you following these best practices?*

By **Jennifer Boss**, CSP, IACSP, Raving Partner, Security, Surveillance & Fraud Investigations, COO, **DJ Boss Associates**

On average, casinos lose 9 USD per day, per team member, to internal theft and fraud in gaming and non-gaming areas. For an organization with 1,000 team members, the total loss is near 3,285,000 USD annually!

As a surveillance/security professional, it is my opinion and firm belief that there is more theft and fraud in non-gaming areas than there is in gaming areas. This is true in all the gaming properties that I've worked in or consulted for across the country and around the world, commercial or tribal.

The reason for the increased frequency and cost of crime in the non-gaming areas is primarily due to the lack of internal controls and/or the failure to enforce controls, policies and procedures in those areas. As we all know, the gaming areas are heavily regulated and monitored by specific personnel and agencies preventing or limiting illicit activity in the gaming environment. In fact, most surveillance and security departments are almost exclusively focused on gaming and do not check on non-gaming areas at all.

Help reduce loss in your non-gaming areas by performing the following steps:

### **House Banks/Funds when department retains the house bank:**

- Main Bank counted at least weekly, daily preferred.
- Running total sheets should be retained in the safe.
- Beginning and ending shift sign-in sheets should always be utilized.
- Supervisors should count and verify banks on due backs of more than \$100.
- Due backs should not be held more than one day. On the last day of the month, the due backs need to be exchanged at the end of the shift.

### **House Banks/Funds when the team member is assigned a house bank:**

- Cage should randomly audit the bank quarterly.
- Department should count the team member's bank on variances of \$100 or more.
- As a signature should be required for due backs of \$250 or more, the supervisor should count and verify the bank.

# SECURITY & SURVEILLANCE

## Tenders – Room Charges:

- Last name must be printed legibly on the check.
- The check must be signed.
- Cashier/Bartender must make certain that the name on the check matches the name in the system.
- The property has to be correct if there are multiple.

## Tenders – Credit Cards:

- ID should only be requested when the card is not signed or the name does not match the gender. If the ID does not match, do not accept the card. It should not be permitted to record any ID information on the check or voucher.
- The credit card voucher is the most important document. It is more important than the check when there is a dispute.
- All credit cards approve 25% above the amount of the check. This is determined by the credit card companies, not the property.
- There are always two postings to the guest's credit card account. One is an authorization, the other is a settlement. It can take 5-10 business days for the second charge to drop off. The issuing bank makes that decision, not the property.
- If a guest disputes a charge, DO NOT reopen a check unless it is the same business day and you have a copy of the check in your hand. Often the property's records department can obtain the check. If the transaction was more than 30 days ago, the guest may need to contact billing assistance or a similar department.

## Tenders – Rewards Program:

- Only the cardholder should be permitted to use the card. Not the wife, mother, brother, son, etc. **NO EXCEPTIONS!**
- The guest must have a valid ID.
- If tendering to Rewards Program, it cannot be used with any discount offer unless there is a special offer.

## Admin Comps/Coupons:

- Used for coupons with an imprinted code or management/executive team member.
- Admin compors should only be able to sign for tips at a maximum rate of 15%.
- Admin compors should not be allowed to use any discounts when tendering to admin comp or coupon.

## Direct Marketing Comps:

- Guest must present a Rewards Program card when using a voucher.
- The Rewards Program card should be swiped, if available.
- Only valid until the date that is printed on the voucher.
- Cannot be used with any discount offers.

## Discounts – Team Members:

- Should not be allowed to use with comps.
- Team member discounts should only be used when the team member is dining with the party.
- Cannot be used with the Rewards Program by team members.
- Cannot be used with coupons. Team members should **NEVER** have coupons.

## Reopen Checks used to address an issue with a closed check:

- Incorrect tender.
- Incorrect tip.
- Apply discount.
- Address a service recovery issue.
- Quick serve (remove items added to check).
- Guest changed mind before being seated.

## Reopening Checks:

- If cash is part of the settlement, the check must be reopened on the cashier's terminal.
- The only voids on a closed check should be an item not served or made. Service recovery should be used for all other issues.
- Do not void a credit card settlement on a reopened check, as this will cause you to lose the credit card information.

## Voids:

- Do not share POS cards. The owner of the POS card is responsible for all activity that occurs with their card.
- Voiding items should **ONLY** occur when you can verify the reason for the void.
- Rule of thumb for voids:
  - If the item hits the table and cannot be re-served, it should be settled to waste/spillage or the like.



# SECURITY & SURVEILLANCE

- If the item did not leave the kitchen and can be re-served, it's a void.
- Void reasons should always be mandatory and verified:
  - 86.
  - Guest changed mind.
  - Package reduction.
  - Cashier error.
  - Duplicate check.
  - Wrong check.
  - IT test.
  - Order error.
  - Server error.

## Under-ring:

- Occurs when a team member rings an item that is cheaper than what the guest received, or the team member never rings an item in the system.
  - Quick serves/Bars – Cashier rings the items on the terminal, announces a total to the guest. When cash is the method of payment, the items are voided. A lesser priced item is added, or all items are voided off and the check is settled to zero.
  - Casual/Gourmet Dining – Likely occurs with beverages or items that do not print to a kitchen printer.
  - Buffet/Brunch – A check is created, reprinted and presented to several different guests.
- Prevention:
  - Open check report hourly.
  - Table touch a few checks and see if what's on the table is on the check.
  - For outlets with kitchen printers, only items that come up on the printer come out of the kitchen/bar. Only a supervisor can get an item that does not print in the kitchen.

## Split Items and Checks:

- Used to move items from one check to another, or give a table individual checks.
- A manager's override is not required in all outlets.
- Fraud: Moving items from one check paid with cash to one that has comp/coupon funds available.
- Fraud: Having the supervisor void something that was actually consumed.
- Fraud: Adding buffets to an open check, then splitting those buffets to a check over and over again.

## Combine Checks:

- Used traditionally to add bar check to restaurant check, or put two tables on one check.
- Fraud: Guest had extra funds on a comp or coupon. A food item can be added to the check for consumption or a small cash check can be combined and the server takes the cash.

For more information on improving your gaming and non-gaming audit processes, please contact Amy Hergenrother, Raving's VP of Business Development, at [amy@ravingconsulting.com](mailto:amy@ravingconsulting.com).



*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.*

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# Forget Polished Graphics for Social Media Marketing

*Why pictures of your players will drive more engagement*

By **Justin Shank**, Raving Partner, Social Gaming and Marketing

Why do people go on social media? Most would say that it is to consume content. Sure, connecting with family and friends is nice too, but that doesn't drive the billions of dollars in revenue required to keep these companies running.

As marketers, knowing that people go on social media to consume content is a given. However, we often forget to ask ourselves the far more important follow-up questions:

- Why does **our target guest** use social media?
- What do they **expect or demand** from their experience?

While I'm not going to dive into the minutiae of what the answers to those questions are and how they can vary from one property to another, I will tell you that the **one thing that no user wants as part of their experience is your marketing graphics.**

### Why z one-of-a-kind creative underwhelms

We spend quite a bit of time collaborating to create content with our marketing teams, graphic designers, content writers, videographers, ad agencies, and every stakeholder who gets to review creative content. Once the image or video has been approved and we have a polished piece of creative, we can begin to publish.

We order the images and videos formatted for the appropriate marketing channels and proceed to update our websites, digital signage, posters, slot toppers and billboards, and schedule posts on Facebook, Twitter, Google My Business, Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, and everywhere else that we publish content. After spending so much time and effort creating all this content, it is natural, and very understandable, to want to publish everywhere and sit back and hope for excellent results.

Unfortunately, all too often after we publish this one-of-a-kind piece of creative content on social media, we are often underwhelmed by the response from our audience. We may need to put some advertising dollars behind a boosted post or ad in order to expand the reach. This scenario is one that we have seen many times with casinos all across the country.

Marketers see far less interaction and engagement with these polished images and videos than from organic content, like jackpot pictures. We are amazed to see the

picture of Marge B. from Middleton, Tennessee, smirking as she clasps a large check after winning a \$1,400 Jackpot playing CATS, reach more people than our beautiful promotional flyer that took three weeks to approve.

### Why is it that a jackpot picture outperforms the polished graphic design work?

People tend to respond better to organic and REAL content. Real images and videos of real people doing real things. This is not to say that our efforts are unwarranted on the creative content. Rather, it goes back to what I mentioned at the beginning of this article. People go online to consume content, and they expect it to be organic and relatable, not blatant advertising. This type of creative is much more tolerable on digital signage, fliers, etc., because when guests visit our properties, they expect to be informed about everything that is going on. Their expectations are different, and that requires using different types of content.

## Kell Houston takes home the 2018 IEBA Award

Members of the IEBA (International Entertainment Buyers Association) awarded Raving's Entertainment Partner, Kell Houston, the 2018 IEBA Award for Top Casino Buyer of the Year!

Did we mention he's also been awarded it in 2016, 2014 and 2012?



## Congratulations Kell!

Trying to find the right entertainment to fit your casino's demographic? Kell has a savvy gaming approach to utilizing entertainment as a tool to drive folks to the casino floor and makes him a perfect fit for Raving clients.

Contact Amy today (775) 329-7864 or [amy@betravingknows.com](mailto:amy@betravingknows.com) to schedule a call.

## MARKETING & LOYALTY

Our thinking should be the same when it comes to social media.

Look, we need to have our brochures and fliers for the upcoming promotions and events with all the pertinent details available for our guests. But, in the context of social media, we should be spending more time publishing organic pieces of content. Things that are not 100% polished and perfect. Use your jackpot pictures, take a boomerang of a bartender mixing a drink or a server delivering an order. Spend some time walking the property and creating content by taking pictures and videos that you can utilize later when content is a bit light and you need something to go up. People using social media are interested in keeping it real.

**Most properties that I talk to about social media strategy are immediately concerned about getting this type of content, but it really doesn't have to be as complicated as a lot of people think.**

Do you have a member of your team skilled in videography and photography? This might be a good opportunity to identify some talent that can help create and gather content internally. If you don't have someone like that, most modern smartphones can make anyone look like an award-winning photographer if you download the right apps and spend time familiarizing yourself with their capabilities.

**You may need another department's help sourcing content.**

If that's the case and communication or execution has been challenging, I would encourage setting a meeting to discuss the task at hand, then walk them through your expectations and offer some suggestions for improving the content and communication workflow. Work together to develop a more comprehensive strategy that sounds reasonable to both teams. During that process, take the time to help everyone understand why you are asking for their help, and emphasize the importance of their work. People want to feel like a part of something, and by demonstrating the value of being a part of the content collection process, you will be very pleased with what your newly empowered team will help deliver to your audience.

**Some properties are concerned with how company policy, internal controls, and regulatory restrictions may impact their ability to capture this kind of content.**

All are valid concerns, but the reality of the modern casino is that almost every guest (or every guest) is walking around with a phone in their pocket capable of taking pictures, recording audio, and shooting video. Advances in modern casino security continue to work at keeping your floor secure, and your regulatory body may be accepting of changes to outdated photography policies, provided that they understand the purpose and are included in the process. Their job, and the purpose of these policies, is one

of risk management, which we marketers tend to disrupt on occasion. We want to be sure that our property can continue to support and enforce a fair and safe gaming environment. Before undertaking a plan to curate more first-person organic content from your casino floor, reach out to your regulatory team and include them in the process every step of the way. This collaboration will help create a more cohesive approach for capturing all the rich, dynamic, organic content that exists on the casino gaming floor.

**Making a commitment to capturing and using authentic and organic content in your social media marketing is a proven strategy capable of providing you and your guests with a number of solutions to poignant problems.**

You need rich and cost-effective content to promote the unique value propositions of your brand to your guests, followers, and potential guests. Organically sourced content is capable of accomplishing those things. Your guests, followers, and potential guests need content that doesn't make them regret their decision to use social media and to follow your brand. They use social media to consume content, but they expect to be entertained, enlightened, and educated during the process. Organically sourced content is capable of accomplishing all of those things as well.

**74% of people use social media as a tool to research and inform purchasing decisions.**

Competition for the entertainment dollar is fierce; it always has been, and it always will be. In response, casinos all over the country have vowed to provide the highest possible level of guest service by anticipating and catering to our guest's every need, and to hold their opinions in very high regard. Isn't it time that we made the same commitment to our guests online? If our commitment to guest service doesn't extend to how those people interact with our brand online and the type of experience that they have with our content, then our commitment to guest service does not go far enough. In today's noisy world, one of the most precious things that a guest can give us, besides their money, is their attention. It's time we start taking that seriously.



**Raving**  
**NEXT**

*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.*



# Six Ways to Use Market Research to Improve Your Business

*How will you boost your performance in 2019?*

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

We're at the start of another year, so it seems like a good time to remind everyone about how market research can help you make better and more informed decisions about your casino marketing and operations. This article lists six types of research that you should consider adding to your plans so that you can boost performance in 2019.

### 1. BRANDING

Do you know how your guests perceive you? Does their image of who you are match with what you're trying to project?

Branding research also compares your property with your competitors. Which casino is perceived as having the best guest service, best food venues, best entertainment? Is it you or someone else? This can be especially important if you or a competitor has added a new amenity or launched a new program. This type of activity can shift market positions.

You can also conduct consumer research to collect feedback on marketing content, such as your website, billboards, monthly mailers, promotions, and more. Do they align with and reinforce your brand image? How do

your guests and potential guests perceive and rank your property's messaging?

Most casinos can't answer the questions I just listed. If your casino isn't an expert on your own brand, then you should consider a brand survey to give you insight.

### 2. GUEST SATISFACTION

We get a huge amount of information about casino guests because we capture it when they use their players club card. But there is also important guest information that you can't get from your database, such as how satisfied they are with your club benefits, your parking convenience, cleanliness of your property, and other aspects that can affect visitation and spend.

If your guests aren't satisfied with something about your property, then it could lead to you losing them to a competitor. Satisfaction surveys show you what you're doing well and where you're doing poorly. If something needs to be fixed, a satisfaction survey is a good way to have an "early warning system" before you have a mess to clean up.

# RESEARCH

## 3. COMMUNICATIONS/ADVERTISING AUDIT

The ways that people prefer to receive communications is in rapid change mode. Smartphones are being used more and more for just about everything.

A communications audit will help you understand how to most effectively reach out to your guests and potential guests with your messaging. Which segments prefer all of their communication to be via email? Text messages? Is there certain messaging that guests prefer to receive via print mail and other types via email?

How about paid advertising? Are you sure that you're buying ads in the right space and with the right messaging to influence your guests the way you're trying to achieve? Is the look and feel of your marketing messages as effective as it can be?

With a huge amount of marketing budgets spent every year on messaging, and with consumer preferences changing rapidly with technology advances, a communications/advertising audit can help you allocate your dollars where they'll be the most effective.

## 4. PRE-TEST BEFORE COMMITTING

What do you do if your new F&B director thinks that adding a 24-hour coffee shop is a great idea? Or wants to scrap your existing steakhouse menu and add all new items that were successful at the last place he/she worked at?

Whether it's adding or changing an amenity, a new promotion you're planning, or a club overhaul, you can potentially save a lot of money by pre-testing your plans with your guests before you commit to an idea that may not be popular or the best use of marketing dollars.

## 5. COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

Another type of survey is a comprehensive competitive analysis. Raving developed a 100-point competitive analysis, and this is the broad scope that you should include. Familiarize yourself with everything about your competitors – from their signage to their tier benefits to attendance at their free Monday slot tournaments.

There is a good chance that many of your guests are also visiting your competitors. That's why it's so important that you know what your guests are experiencing when they're visiting a competitor instead of you.

## 6. TEAM MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

This type of survey normally falls under the HR department, but it affects the entire operation of your property. Team member engagement is the extent to which team members feel valued and involved in their everyday work. At its core, it comes down to whether

team members feel invested in their company's mission and its success.

Running a team member engagement survey doesn't just measure how happy team members are – it measures how dedicated they are to the mission and outcome of your company. Measuring team member engagement, then, is even more crucial: It's an important indicator of the health of your business and a good way to spot areas for improvement.

*Which of these six types of research is your property going to be conducting in 2019? If you need help or just want to discuss research options, contact Amy Hergenrother, Raving's VP of Business Development, 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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# Client Spotlight: Kickapoo Lucky Eagle Casino Hotel

*Making a Difference to Their Guests: The MAD Program*

By **Janet Hawk**, Raving Partner, Player Development and Marketing

What an idea. A crazy, mad, wonderful idea!

A little background on this property: Kickapoo Lucky Eagle Casino Hotel, located in Eagle Pass, Texas, is proudly owned by the Kickapoo Traditional Tribe of Texas. It is one of only two casinos in the entire state. The property is three hours outside of San Antonio with no other large cities/towns nearby, right on the Mexican border. The hotel is managed by the Westin Group, yet both management teams do all they can to make sure that separation is as invisible as possible. They are great partners!

So many businesses claim they give excellent guest service or desire to teach their team to be better at guest service. But it seems the definition isn't clear ... most of it involves "being friendly" and, when that is the definition, the business will continue to fall back into "the work," not service. The team at Kickapoo Lucky Eagle (both the Casino and the Hotel) decided they wanted to be better, to do better. To see a team truly desire to make a difference, to focus on great guest service, knowing that by creating a service culture it will not only make their property a great place to work, but it will also help increase loyalty, thereby increasing revenue, is just one of the reasons that I love what I do. For Kickapoo Lucky Eagle to do that, create a culture that is guest-focused, or as they call it, Guest-centric, they needed a plan ... a program that encompassed everything they wanted to accomplish.

Under the leadership of General Manager Scott Eldredge, they brought together members of their management team to take part in designing a program and mapping out their objectives. First, they created a mission that would become

their focus:

"We honor each other, our Guests, community, and the Kickapoo Traditional Tribe of Texas with integrity. We strive for innovative teamwork and results driven by a vision of excellence to create a fun, Guest-centric experience."

Along with their mission, they had a goal:

*... To Make A Difference With Great Guest Service!*

A strategy to achieve their mission and goal:

*... To Empower Every Team Member To Make A Difference With Great Guest Service!*

They call their program MAD, which stands for Make A Difference. And in less than a year, they have continued to build their program to truly Make A Difference to not only their guests visiting Kickapoo Lucky Eagle Casino Hotel, but each team member, the Kickapoo Traditional Tribe of Texas, and the surrounding community!

This all seemed like a HUGE task, almost overwhelming, but a quote from *Alice in Wonderland* summed up their desire:

Alice: This is impossible!

The Mad Hatter: Only if you believe it is ...

And they believe it is possible! There isn't an easy road either. The team at Kickapoo Lucky Eagle have some interesting opportunities. They were not going to let that deter them! For well over 50% of their team members, English is a second language. They have some who only

## GUEST SERVICE



speaking Spanish, as well as some who speak only Kickapoo Traditional. Their tribal language is alive and well! This was also true for those guests who visited their property. So they needed to make sure that everything they did within their MAD program had to be communicated correctly in order to include everyone, both internally and externally. I believe they are doing an awesome job of doing just that! They incorporate MAD in EVERYTHING! I think the best part is that they have the complete support of their entire Executive Team and Tribal Council. That support is really the foundation of their success so far. The MAD training team, Sandra Maldonado, Monica Cantu and Keenon Valdez, continue to lead the MADness and ensure the consistency of the program. So many of their team members really dove in and had a real passion to Make A Difference. For the Security team, it became a heartfelt endeavor. It has been a wonderful thing to witness!

The program was designed by a team of not only executives, but managers and supervisors. Once the initial install (training every single team member!) of the MAD program was completed, this team transitioned to motivation. Because they realized that for anything to succeed, you must constantly work at it. So they became the MAD League! Their focus is to not only motivate, but inspire. They help organize community projects, team projects, and keep the MAD engines rolling. Recently, they participated in the Veterans Day parade. They decorated one of their shuttles and everyone wore their MAD T-shirts. They also participated in the Feast of Sharing, a yearlong commitment by H-E-B (the Texas grocery store chain) to fight hunger, which is an annual event in Eagle Pass, where they volunteered to help serve a Thanksgiving meal all decked out in their MAD polos. Again, staying true to their mission.

Another favorite part of the MAD program is the MAD Lab. This is a computer room at the casino open to all team members where they can focus on self-improvement. Team members can take several online courses to expand their personal skills, such as improving their reading aptitude, language capabilities (such as learning English or any other language they may be inclined to learn), and office skills (such as learning Outlook, Excel and Word).

Management also identified those within their organization who are passionate about their MAD program and called upon them to take a lead in perpetuating the MAD Great Guest Service Standards (a.k.a. GGSS or GG's). This team of fearless leaders truly believe in the program and range from all aspects of the organization (frontline team members, supervisors, back of house, etc.) and have a VERY important title: the Agents of MAD! Their objective is to search the property far and wide, finding those teammates who are exhibiting MAD Guest Service (in other words, catch them doing something good) and reward them on the spot! The Agents are well-trained and are available to assist should anyone have any questions.

Kickapoo Lucky Eagle





continues to come up with new ways to support their team, community and the Tribe. Many of their activities the guests can see and get involved with as well. For instance, during football season, they had special jerseys made up with the MAD logo that team members wear. This begins the conversation about the program. The guests will then help the team be accountable to the promises of the MAD program. They also have numerous contests and celebrations to reward those who

are great examples of the program. A favorite was a contest where those who answered MAD related questions correctly were entered into a drawing for Walmart gift cards. There were 20 winners and it was done right before school started to help with school supplies.

They are currently planning a MAD Welcome Day. Where the MAD trainers, MAD League and Agents stand at the Team Member Entrance with tacos, muffins and cookies during the day and say, "Hi, welcome to work, have a taco and a great day!" as team members are coming in. What a great way to start the day! Who isn't happier with a taco?!

The team at Kickapoo Lucky Eagle is truly dedicated to their mission and continue to Make A Difference With Great Guest Service! Have they all gone MAD? I'm afraid so; they are entirely bonkers. But I'll tell you a secret ... all the best people are!



*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.*



## Want more Raving?



### Five Steps to Add Business Intelligence to Your Marketing Segmentation

By Lynette O'Connell



### Our Guests Are Somebody's Mom

By Deana Scott



### A Primer to Creating a Better Wine Program (Part I of III)

by Brett L. Magnan

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## How to Avoid Racking up Thousands of Additional Dollars in 2019

*Surprise, it's time for the January postal rate increase*

By **Tami Jones**, Strategic Raving Partner, Direct Mail and Digital Printing and Director of Client Services, **CSG Direct**

In keeping with its own tradition, the United States Postal Service is proposing to raise rates at the end of January. Oh, who are they kidding? It's not a proposal, they *will* be raising rates, but by how much, and what can we do as marketers to make sure that we get the most bang for our postage buck?

The increase that draws the biggest gasp is the increase from \$.50 to \$.55 for a first-class Forever stamp. Seems like a huge jump, and it is, but they lowered the cost for additional ounce weight in first-class pieces from \$.21 to \$.15 per ounce to help offset the stamp increase. Other increases vary, depending on the product you are looking for. The product we care most about in the Casino Industry is Mailing Services, and that will increase 2.9% overall.

Here is an abbreviated look at the changes in the most common Marketing Services per piece rates:

1 <sup>st</sup> -Class Post Card Stamp (4.25x6 max size)	\$.350	\$.350
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As you can see, none of the sorted rate changes are as drastic as the stamp, but over the course of a year's worth of direct mail, you could rack up an additional several thousand dollars in postage.

**The first place to start for increased postage savings is in the use of Marketing Mail (this is the new name for Standard Mail) instead of first-class.**

This requires diligent planning and scheduling to allow more time for travel through the mail stream, but saves over 30% in postage costs. Try to keep the use of first-class mail to a minimum, unless you are sending out a 4.25x6 post card. A stamp for this size mailer is only \$.35 and the sorted rates are even less; no increase in pricing for this product this year!

**The next item to review for increased postage savings is the quality of the address records in your database.**

Are you mailing to your players at their correct addresses? National Change of Address looks at individuals who told the post office they were moving and provided a new address, but it is only a rolling 48-month record. What about individuals who moved more than 48 months ago, or the ones who moved but didn't tell the post office? This happens more often than you think; they moved and left the catalogs behind, called their creditors themselves, and updated their address with the essential services. There are affordable options to help find these individuals as well. You can also audit your data for deceased individuals, those who have moved to nursing homes, and even those who are in jail or prison. No sense mailing to any of these individuals. Make sure you are not.

Letter-Size Products	Current Rate	New Rate
1 <sup>st</sup> -Class Forever Stamp	\$.500	\$.550
1 <sup>st</sup> -Class Non-Automation Presort	\$.458	\$.459
1 <sup>st</sup> -Class Automation National Rate	\$.424	\$.428
1 <sup>st</sup> -Class Automation 3-Digit Sort	\$.408	\$.412
Marketing Mail Automation National Rate	\$.287	\$.291
Marketing Mail Automation 3-Digit Sort	\$.274	\$.281
Marketing Mail Automation "Local" 3-Digit Sort	\$.243	\$.253

## MARKETING & LOYALTY

Here are some other areas of consideration to increase postage savings:

- Send out mailers that speak to the recipients; offers they care about. Not every player needs to get every mailer if it doesn't offer something they want.
- Make sure the players you are mailing to have enough value to pay for the mailers you send them. Over the course of a year it all adds up.
- Verify that your mailers are the proper size for the lowest postage rates.
- Carefully consider practicality in the creative of the mailers; only use colors and fonts compatible with postal machinery in the address area.

Postage rates will continue to go up every year, but there is no sense in paying postage that is not necessary. Be diligent

with your data and design. Work with your mailer to make sure that your mail pieces meet all postal automation requirements. And, as I always say, your data is your most valuable asset. Take care of it and use it properly, and you will keep all your costs in check.

Go to [csgdirect.com](http://csgdirect.com) to download a free listing of the updated postage rates for 2019.



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*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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Contact Christine Faria, Editor  
Raving Solutions Magazine  
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# RAVING CONFERENCE & EVENT SCHEDULE

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Raving NEXT: Indian Gaming Analytics & Marketing Conference  
January 28 – 30, 2019, Pechanga Resort Casino, Temecula, CA  
[RavingNEXT.com](http://RavingNEXT.com)



Tribal Spirit of Giving Celebration Luncheon  
January 30, 2019, Pechanga Resort Casino, Temecula, CA  
[RavingNEXT.com/special-programs#tribalspirit](http://RavingNEXT.com/special-programs#tribalspirit)

Raving @ Western Indian Gaming Conference  
February 4 – 7, 2019, Harrah's Resort Southern California, Valley Center, CA  
[wigg.cniga.com/conference](http://wigg.cniga.com/conference)



Raving @ RES Conference  
March 25 – 28, 2019, Paris Las Vegas, Las Vegas, NV  
[res.ncaied.org](http://res.ncaied.org)



Raving @ NIGA  
April 1 – 4, 2019, San Diego Convention Center, CA  
[indiangamingtradeshow.com](http://indiangamingtradeshow.com)



Native Strong Comedy Slam  
April 3, 2019, Hard Rock Hotel San Diego, CA  
[NativeStrongComedySlam.com](http://NativeStrongComedySlam.com)



Raving @ Northeastern Oklahoma Indigo Sky Expo (NOISE) Conference  
May 20 – 22, 2019, Indigo Sky Casino & Resort, Wyandotte, OK  
[noisegaming.com](http://noisegaming.com)



Raving @ WIGA – Northwest Indian Gaming Conference & Expo  
June 17 – 19, 2019, Tulalip Resort and Casino, Tulalip, WA  
[washingtontindiagaming.org](http://washingtontindiagaming.org)



Raving @ NCAI Mid Year Conference & Marketplace  
June 23 – 26, 2019, Nugget Casino Resort, Reno, NV  
[ncai.org/events/2019/06/23/2019-mid-year-conference-marketplace](http://ncai.org/events/2019/06/23/2019-mid-year-conference-marketplace)



Raving @ OIGA Conference and Trade Show  
July 22 – 24, 2019, Tulsa, OK  
[oiga.org](http://oiga.org)



Raving Loyalty and Player Development Conference  
July 22 – 23, 2019, Caesars Palace, Las Vegas, NV  
[www.hostdevelopmentconf.com](http://www.hostdevelopmentconf.com)



Casino Marketing & Technology Conference  
July 23 – 25, 2019, Caesars Palace, Las Vegas, NV  
[www.casinomarketingconf.com](http://www.casinomarketingconf.com)



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ahead  
of the  
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INDIAN GAMING ANALYTICS AND MARKETING CONFERENCE

January 28<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019  
**Pechanga Resort Casino**  
Temecula, California

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL **775-329-7864**

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