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Turn the A.I. loose to Strengthen your Brand

Food and Beverage Brand Influencers in Casino Resorts –

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Each year social media, search engines and 3rd party apps are driving comments, reviews and ratings which are influencing casino resort guests more than any advertising campaign or promotion. Casino Resorts are competing for guest entertainment time, especially potential first-time visitors. Guest's social media ratings and engagements are telling the story and shaping the casino resort's "brand." ***Team members providing services are the greatest influencer of the guest's onsite experience.*** The front-line interaction shapes the brand, which the guests then spin out to the world. The concept of "brand" and "brands" are overused and often misused.

Casino resorts need to create new A.I. (Alphas Influencers). These ALPHAS are your team members who interact with, serve, and deliver experiences to your guests. Managers must consistently “promote” all the resort’s services and amenities -(brands and sub-brands) to all team members. If every worker understands how the resort services layer together to create memorable experiences, a foundation is laid for consistent seamless execution.

Layering and overlapping are key elements in seamless entertainment. You have a line up of offerings, but you also must have synergy of people, products, processes, priorities and performance.

Happy Guests – Before, During & After.

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|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Before: | Guests check the phone or computer before they come, what’s going on? |
| During: | Guests pick their spots for gaming, eating, drinks and entertainment during the visit. |
| After: | Guests post, insta, revel and share. |

Using your F&B services as an example, guests' F&B experiences are the resort's operational culmination of hundreds of steps and details that must come together at the right time, the right temperature, and delivered with a smile to gain and maintain the best reputation.

Casino Resort Repeat Guest Circle



Every casino resort is centered around the gaming products which are virtually interchangeable between casino competitors. The food and beverage offerings however are one of the key differentiators from competitors along with entertainment, loyalty programs, and hotel amenities. Casino resorts also compete with local restaurants and bars vying for a visit before or after the casino experience. The goal is simple -earn a reputation as the best in class for F&B experiences. Not just the best Steak House, or buffet, or cookie - but best overall.

No casino resort can be all things to every player every visit but aligning F&B with the five levels of resort services makes a great foundation for your brand. Every resort casino needs to offer its guests different opportunities to complement their visit/ experiences. They are easily categorized into service levels and price range. A smaller or local's casino many only need to offer a couple of these service levels, whereas a complex casino resort must provide all five levels of food and beverage services to maximize opportunities as follows:

1. Snacks /Beverage (\$7.00+)

2. Quick Service Restaurant (\$15.00+)
3. Casual restaurant (\$25.00+)
4. Full Service (Bar & Grill) (\$35-\$80+)
5. Fine Dining restaurants and nightclubs & entertainment (over \$80++)

These five levels represent everything from refueling with a coffee, snack or quick bite to full destination dining and entertainment.

At casino resorts, determining the right line up of concepts/brands and offerings is not purely based on the quantity of player trips, occupancy, or attendance, it also has as much to do with complementing the casino's overall theme/brand as well as providing a catalyst for marketing and promotions.

In addition to programming the optimal food and beverage line-up, the F&B organization must remain committed to keep each operation engaging and "on-brand" for peak and off-peak times throughout the year. For example, fine dining restaurants may excel delivering quality and service to hundreds on Fridays, Saturdays and Holiday peak times, but may struggle to perform on a Tuesday serving only 25 to 40 diners. To keep the restaurant team operating at a higher caliber and output everyday requires the casino's support on slower nights with comps, host dinners, and promotions. The slower days may not need everything open, as long as suitable variety is available. But, slower days need the restaurants and bars to be busy enough to retain a strong staff who also bolster sales during the peaks.

A successful casino F&B program must deliver three things every day for the casino resort to maximize the return on the food and beverage amenities.

1. Keep players and guests in the casino longer, which equates to more gaming (extended length of stay);
2. Entice players to visit the casino resort more often because of a variety of F&B offerings and services they can't get elsewhere, (increased frequency -more trips per month).

3. Loyalty rewards. The F&B offerings should be seen as valuable experiences and rewards which differentiates the Grand Casinos from competing casinos and resorts (player reinvestment).

Enter the “ALPHAS”

The plan is in place, the line-up optimized, It's game time. The team is trained and ready, let the guest's great experiences become positive feedback and let higher ratings begin! Let the shameless cross promotion of resort services ensue. The guest views billboards on the drive, backlit signs in elevators, ads on in-room channels to get them thinking about their options. Now seal the deal, with the influence and power of team members' suggestions and recommendations. No reciting a list or wayfinding prompts, but real testimonials!

At any moment a busy resort has hundreds of team members facing guests. Now launch team members to become part of the resort's A.I. (Alpha Influencers). Team members and managers need to know that influence is not just information. ***Influence is preference, influence is engagement, influence leads to memorable.*** Guests know genuine interaction vs brand speak. Team members need to always own their performance, whether crazy busy or slow, and adjust their interactions appropriately. Influencers should feel their advice, comments and recommendations are the foundation of the best visit ever.

What can an ALPHAS influence at a casino resort?

They can shape opinions or behaviors

They can endorse products, locations or promotions

They can create trends at the resort

They can build trust and authority with frequent guests - (build an onsite following)

Here's what ALPHAS need to know to be effective:

1. Team members should know that being great at their job or assignment, builds immediate guest confidence in the ALPHAS' abilities.

2. If a team member is in sales (servers, bartenders, hotel desk, retail) they already have the training and best practices to maximize revenues and service. They become ALPHAS when they recommend the other resort locations, services, or entertainment.
3. ALPHAS are professional, but more importantly ALPHAS are personable engaging the guests.
4. Through orientation and training, ALPHAS learned the shared the vision and missions of each service or department at the resort and why it is important in the overall casino resort brand.
5. ALPHAS understand that guest influence and relationships are key differentiators from competitors. After 30 years of Native American Gaming the markets are saturated, with casinos often competing for the same customers.
6. ALPHAS know (F&B, Hotel, Spa/Retail, Showrooms) exist to entice players to stay longer, visit more often, and build up loyalty through rewards and comps. APLHAS help leverage the values and offerings.
7. ALPHAS love regular players but know Casinos need new customers every year and need to appeal and attract first-time visitors. ALPHAS help guests see your resort as good use of their entertainment time.

Here are top team member tips for Alpha Influencing.

1. *Ask and listen before recommending, make sure you are clear what kind of recommendation the guest is looking for.*
2. *Make your answers from you but about the guest...*
3. *Always maximize the opportunity for earned discounts, and how to maximize Players Club value and promotions.*
4. *Connect your suggestions or recommendations to the big resort picture, "The meatloaf in the Diner is the best - but get here a little earlier on Concert nights!" or, "My regulars park over in the XYZ lot on show nights."*
5. *If you don't have a recommendation about a particular product or service, let the guest know you will get a suggestion from a manager or trusted coworker.*
6. *Next time you see the guest, remember to ask how you did (on recommendations to them).*
7. *Offer to take pics and or be in selfies with the guests, and when they post, ask them to mention you if you gave great service and recommendations!*

8. *Informal polling, ask guests “Do you use all the services (hotel, spa, retail) and which are their favorites and why?”*
9. *Take suggestions about the resort, and if there is a real problem get the guest together with someone who can resolve it (now).*
10. *Best tip for last, deliver all this interaction and influencing without disrupting the flow of your job and duties. Guests respect and appreciate that you are busy.*

ALPHA ACTION PLAN:

1. Retrain, cross-train and reinforce all your services and amenities with all your team members.
2. Turn the ALPHAs loose.
3. Celebrate the best ALPHA moments and watch your guest satisfaction grow.