



Happy Casino Employees Lead to Happier Guests; Rewards & Recognition Keep Staff Members Inspired

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(PRWEB) September 14, 2006 -- In their quest to create as many guest advocates as possible, casinos must understand that it all starts with happy employees and Robinson & Associates, Inc., a gaming industry consulting firm, recommends an employee reward and recognition program that keeps staff members inspired.

“Casino employees and their managers both play an important role in providing the kind of exceptional service that turns guests into advocates,” says Martin R. Baird, chief executive officer of Annapolis, Maryland-based Robinson & Associates. “Employees deliver the outstanding service and managers who keep their employees happy and inspired help make sure the service is consistently stellar.”

Rewards and recognition change employee behavior for the better, Baird says. “By putting a system in place that rewards the positive customer service actions you want to see from your employees, you are head and shoulders above the competition and more likely to turn ordinary guests into guest advocates,” Baird notes.

Baird offers the following five tips for planning a reward and recognition program.

Tip No. 1. Decide what kind of behavior will be rewarded. “It could be something as simple as smiling or more complex behavior such as using a company slogan when talking with guests,” Baird says. “If you don’t identify the behavior you want, you’ll be rewarding people for doing something entirely different.”

Tip No. 2. Assign responsibility for observing employee behavior. “It’s important to use an unbiased third party,” Baird notes. “This avoids finger pointing and claims of unfair treatment if someone within the casino makes the observations. Use a mystery shopping company to garner ‘real’ people’s input and ideas.”

Tip No. 3. Managers and department heads make lousy observers. “If a manager doesn’t like an employee, it will be difficult for them to see the employee’s actions in a true light,” Baird points out. “Also, you run into the problem of different standards from different people. One shift manager may have lower standards than the next shift manager. Thus, employees on one shift may get more rewards than employees on another shift.”

Tip No. 4. Give the rewards careful consideration. “Many people believe employees prefer cash,” Baird says. “However, studies show that most staff members think a tangible gift has higher value than cash. With the number of gift companies available today, it’s easy to give rewards that people want because you can find so many things locally or on the Internet. Gift cards also make good rewards. The rewards don’t need to be huge. They just need to be consistent.”

Tip No. 5. Present rewards as soon as possible. “If a person is told they did a good job a month after it happened, they don’t have a clear understanding of why they’re being recognized,” Baird explains. “People need to get the positive feedback as soon as possible. If it’s too slow in coming, it’s almost as if it never happened. The faster they get feedback, the more it will affect their behavior.”

Stellar guest service is crucial in today’s competitive gaming industry and employees are the ones who deliver it, Baird says.

“The happier your employees are, the easier it is for them to share some of that happiness with your guests,” Baird says. “Rewards and incentives are the next step for casinos that want to reach a higher level of guest service and generate as many guest advocates as possible.”

Robinson & Associates, Inc., is a global customer service consulting firm for the gaming industry. It helps casinos determine their Advocate Index, a number that indicates the extent to which properties have guests who are willing to be advocates. The company then implements its Advocate Development System in combination with the proven methodology of Advocate Index and best business practices to help casinos create more guest advocates and chart a course for growth and profitability. Robinson & Associates may be reached by phone at 480-991-6420, by e-mail or via its Web sites at www.advocatedevelopmentsystem.com and www.casinocustomerservice.com.

Robinson & Associates is a member of the Casino Management Association and an associate member of the National Indian Gaming Association.

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