



Gaming and Entertainment = TIME

by Kell Houston

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According to several experienced and successful marketing directors out there in the gaming business, it's all about time. Your customer has a certain amount of time allotted for fun and entertainment when they walk through your doors. It's very important that their experience is pleasurable and enjoyable and profitable for the casino. There are only so many hours in the day and with things being the way they are in today's world, there is not enough extra time or money lying around. When your customer enters your casino they come with the hopes of winning some money, but in reality, they are coming to get away from it all and have a good time. They will spend time in your restaurants, your lounge, your gaming floor and your entertainment venue. If you have a hotel, golf course or spa, they will be enticed to make it a getaway weekend. Each part of their casino experience is a use of their time. When you factor in entertainment in the form of a concert, you can only expect a small return from ticket sales and a lot of those tickets may be comped tickets, so getting your customer in and out of the concert in a timely manner is important. Your gaming floor is where the money happens; you want your customer spending most of their time on the floor.

The scenario you want to create with your concert entertainment is to keep it in the 60-75 minute range, and that means no opening acts. The experienced acts that have played casinos successfully have learned this over the years and will typically have a set length that works within those timelines. You want to make it easy for people to take in a show and also have time left for dining and gaming.

Many casinos would like to drive business on weekdays. However, the kind of concert you are presenting will help make that decision for you. A show catered to your older clientele needs to be finished up early enough so those folks can drive home safely. Most of that crowd prefers not to drive at night. Those same people tend to avoid the weekends and they have more time on their hands. This customer is looking for value and will really be attracted to a package deal that includes a meal voucher or buffet pass. Plus you can always give them match play coupons with their purchased concert event ticket. Building a weekday afternoon program for

these seniors might take some work, but in the end you can really help your midweek business. You will find that they will come and make a day of it in your casino. That's great for your business.

You know your weekends are going to be busy, so when you put a show on a Friday or Saturday night, you are going to be swamped. Keeping the show start time early means your customer will more than likely hang out after the show, since it's too early to go home and too much of a hassle to go somewhere else. For a Friday night show, you would want to start a little later, say 9 p.m., so people have enough time to get home from work, clean up and head out. Saturday has always been considered more of a date night so you tend to have more couples out together. A 7 p.m. or 8 p.m. show time works well on Saturdays. This allows people to get there for a dinner reservation, see the show and hang out on the gaming floor. Again, keeping the show in the 60-75 minute range and getting people in and out of your event center is the goal.

The younger generation will flock to your cabaret or lounge, especially if you have a good dance band playing. Typically casinos run bands Fridays and Saturdays in these cabarets from 8 p.m. or 9 p.m. – 1 a.m. Keeping the breaks a little longer (around 30 minutes) allows more movement in your cabaret/lounge. Customers tend to meander in and out between the gaming floor and dancing. A good live music program with great bands is worth your time, energy and investment. The good bands will help you by marketing themselves to their fan base. When they play your casino, they bring their fans. Those fans can become regular customers. When you try to put cheaper or lower quality bands in your cabaret to save money, you can very easily ruin your brand and your reputation.

Remember quality and consistency is important when building your brand. Your customer has many choices for his or her time and dollars. Make every minute in your casino a great experience for your customer. This guarantees repeat business. ♣

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