

It's all about Fun!

When visiting **Gaming Support** recently, Lucien Wijsman found a company that understands how to make casinos successful; deliver fun and entertainment to customers. If your casino is not delivering fun and entertainment to your customers - ask yourself why not!

Wake up guys, because this is where our industry is heading. You can see it with all the resort developments in North America, Asia, South Africa, and Yes, even in little old Europe. Harrah's, HIT, Las Vegas Sands - all the best operators in our industry can and will be bringing world-leading casinos to customers near you, or bringing your customers to them! And not in the distant future either; but PDQ.

Go bury your head in the sand if you want to; it will be just as effective as ignoring the changes driving our industry forward. We are moving from properties that offer people games of skill and games of chance, with the odd restaurant, or shop, or show tacked on at the edge, to properties that offer an experience that everyday people will be happy to add to their "entertainment menu". Spending money in casinos competes for people's entertainment Euros. Our biggest competition is not other casinos, lotteries, online gaming sites, slot arcades or betting shops, but other forms of entertainment, like cinemas and going to the theatre.

Think on this: if we could entice every adult in the EU 25 from the age of 25 and upwards to spend (ie lose) 10 Euros every three months in our casinos that they would normally spend on other forms of entertainment, we would add 12.4 billion Euros* to our industry revenues every year just from gaming.

If the thought of holding a very small percentage of this new and incremental revenue doesn't get you excited, then you shouldn't be working for a casino.

If it does, then you need to be thinking about how you

can attract these potential customers and make them happy to spend their entertainment Euros in casinos rather than in cinemas or theatres or wherever.

We need to change people's behaviour to make "going to the casino" a regular event that they are comfortable with. One way we can understand how to attract and keep more customers is to learn from what other industries and other best-of-breed companies have done to become and stay successful. Companies like Wal-Mart and Coca-Cola, Nestle and Unilever. They have been at the top of their own ziggurats for decades.

They spend a lot of time and energy researching their customers - AND their non-customers. They segment and profile, and profile and segment, seeking to understand what are the key influencing factors that can positively influence buyer behaviour.

They find out what the levers are that

they need to pull in order to change people from being a consumer who may buy their product or service into a customer who will happily come back for more, time after time after time.

Now, it just so happens that one of our own best-of-breed companies has recently been spending a lot of energy finding out what it is that makes people visit casinos; what it is that makes them play slots and table games; what it is that makes them want to come back again and again.

That company is Holland Casino and they have been very busy. Taking a lead from the likes of Wal-Mart, Coca Cola et al they've been researching their customers, and have segmented them into three distinct profiles. These profiles are:



*Lucien Wijsman with Gaming Support's
Nick Hogan, VP Sales and Business
Development*

1. Player
2. Casino Experience Guest
3. Night Out Visitor

Now, we've already got the Player segment pretty much covered. They visit casinos to play the games we offer. They are our bread and butter - we must make sure we always meet and/or exceed their needs so we never lose their Euros to some other form of entertainment.

Where this new revenue lies is in the Casino Experience Guest and Night Out Visitor segments. People in these segments expect fun and entertainment, or they will not come back. The benchmark they will use for their casino experience will be "How much enjoyment did I get from visiting Casino X compared to when I went to Cinema Y?" If we don't at least meet their expectations and deliver a superior level of enjoyment than the cinema, or the theatre, or whatever, then we need to be asking ourselves some tough questions; questions like: "Is my gaming floor delivering fun for my customer segments?" and "How can I make my gaming floor more exciting and entertaining?"

Which brings me back to Gaming Support. Adding fun and excitement is what these guys are great at, and they have some brilliant products to do just that. Sometimes these products are small and simple, other times they're pretty complex. But either way, they seem to work - which is why you should take a look at them.

Consider their new BonusBox concept, for example, which they launched at ICE 2007. This is so simple it's one of those products you can't believe hasn't been around forever. BonusBox attaches to any slot, links into your slot systems and adds a new dimension to jackpots. It keeps floors buzzing and puts prizes right in

front of players' eyeballs, making them more visible and tangible for people.

Or their Super-Kick-Ass Double Down Bonus Poker table game. A variant of that little-known game called Poker (;o), it's got a twist to it that makes it a real attention grabber; as well as a bonusing feature that is noisy and just totally fun-packed. Add Super Kick Ass to your table mix and see if it helps bring new customers into your live games area.

At the other end of the scale, there's JackpotJunction XL, which allows you to use jackpots as the trigger to start a party, cross-promote your other brands or businesses - hell, with JJXL you can do what you want; it gives you the power to create your own media network.

Remembering back, I recall how these types of "fun fillers" started - you can blame them on a T-shirt and a cannon. Yep, Gaming Support developed a T-shirt cannon to fire T-shirts across gaming floors. It was so stupid, it made you cringe. But players loved it. And that's where we've got to move towards to entice ordinary people to add casinos to their entertainment menu - make sure our casinos deliver fun and excitement so that when they leave, they'll have a big smile on their face and be happy to talk about "their night at the casino" when they're at work the next day.

So launch some T-shirts at your customers. Give them a night out to remember. And if you'd like some ideas to help you deliver fun-packed gaming floors that entertain, you could do worse than chat with Gaming Support.

** In the EU 25 there are 310 million adults aged 25+ according to Eurostat. If each adult visited a casino once every 3 months, they would visit a casino 4 times per year. If each adult spent 10 Euro on every visit, new gaming revenues would total:
310 million x 4 x 10 = 12.4 billion Euros*

The Slot Academy

I entered the gaming world as a 25 year-old in 1987 and worked for Holland Casinos for the next 12 years as Slot Attendant, Slot Shift Supervisor, Slot Manager, Assistant to the Slot Operations General Manager, and finally Training and Quality Control Manager for the Slot Department. Then, after three years working for the Gauselmann Group it became clear to me that, although the size and operating environment of slots in casinos might vary, the core process is almost identical. I therefore decided to develop a stronger *process approach* - breaking the slots process down into critical activities and proving that each individual activity is under control.

I believe that I have proved beyond doubt that the process approach is the right approach. As well as being the MD of Slot Operations for the Golden Palace Group, I advise more than 10 casinos - which



together generate slot revenues of over 175 million Euros per year - on how to operate slot machines and how revenues can be increased.

To bring these benefits within the reach of a much wider group of casinos I therefore founded *The Slot Academy* to provide a training programme primarily for Slot Managers and Slot Shift Managers. *The Slot Academy* holds two residential courses each year. Each course has two week long modules. In a pleasant setting, with like minded people, I explain the process approach to slot operations and attendees explore the whole spectrum of skills needed to run an efficient operation.

Finally, *The Slot Academy* is pleased to have the support of manufacturers who recognise that *The Slot Academy* bridges the gap between supply and operations.

*Lucien Wijmsman - Founder
of The Slot Academy*