



## Why Entertainment Works

by Anthony "Bert" Bertino

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Depending on the size and demographics of a casino's individual region, offering entertainment brings gaming and non-gaming clientele through the door. Such enhanced foot traffic means increased gaming revenue and an increase in non-gaming outlets such as hotels, restaurants, bars, lounges, convenience stores and retail spaces.

Capacity is an important factor. If a casino has the capacity for 1,000 people (slot and table spots), that property can afford to offer entertainment to 1,500 – 2,000 customers. On the other hand, should a casino only have gaming capacity for 500 people, inviting this same number of people would cause undue burden on outlets, and most guests would depart without enjoying a facilities' full range of services. This therefore would not be worth the cost of the entertainer and auxiliary costs.

An additional benefit of entertainment is the advertising and marketing/public relations potential that can impact individuals who normally would not frequent the facility, while reinforcing the casino's brand to loyal patrons.

### Entertainment is Important

For some, entertainment is the only reason they would walk through a casino's doors. Should a lounge or showroom be showing a certain act that attracts this person's interest, they may have no choice but to frequent the facility or miss the show. Negative opinions about gaming can often be changed based on the entertainment menu.

Gaming is a form of entertainment, but without offering a full array of entertainment options, a facility cannot be established in the public's view as the "go-to place" to enjoy a wide variety of fun. It is true that the better the food offerings and options, the more that patrons will frequent the facility. The same can be said for entertainment. If a property offers lounge, variety, headliner and private events in the proper measures, the varying customer base and surrounding traveling bases will be attracted.

### Strive to Be the Place for Shows

When a facility is in the discussion of, "What should we do tonight or next weekend," that facility has become a go-to place for people. The better the entertainment, the better the facility option can and will be. A facility can become the place to eat, have an overnight stay, and yes – a place for gaming and live entertainment options. This

full-circle of flavors can contribute to many facets of a property's bottom line, not just one.

### The Cost of Entertainment

Entertainment costs vary from area to area and especially venue to venue. Many entertainers (but not all) charge a premium for playing a casino. The options of entertainment vary as greatly as the customers a casino wishes to attract. For the in-town-casino, a nightly (or a few nights weekly) lounge may attract the crowd looking for a leisurely cocktail/dinner/meeting option.

Headliner entertainment in a larger venue is of course more expensive, but will attract many more patrons to a facility. If a casino has a showroom or event center, there is a cost associated with keeping it dark, and if a casino property is a go-to entertainment-option, then regular shows are extremely important.

The costs include the entertainer and their production/staging, which depending on the act may be quite expensive. These costs, or a majority of them, can be recouped by ticket sales. The advertising costs of letting the patron know is the cost of doing business and allowing the outside world be advised as to a property's entertainment options. This advertising will reinforce a property's full-service-entertainment facility and provide a large leg up on other entertainment options that are offered in a community.

### Why Entertainment Works

If done correctly, entertainment will draw patrons from throughout a community and become an option for those that are visiting from other areas looking for something to do. Done successfully, this increases the bottom line across the board.

If not financially successful, entertainment will still reach out as a publicity tool to make the surrounding community aware of a property. The difference is to constantly monitor who is being booked, and fine-tuning the entertainment that represents the property's brand and can draw a consistent group to a facility. ♣

*Anthony "Bert" Bertino is the CMO for Dakota Nation Gaming Enterprise and the Exec. VP of Marketing / COO for Casino Excursions Resort Gaming Group. He can be reached by calling (609) 892-1298 or email bert@casexc.com.*