



Respect, Service and Safety - Everyone Wins!

by William F. Badzmirowski

Gaming professionals are well aware of the highly competitive nature of the industry. Many factors contribute to the success of gaming operations, and one of the most important is customer relationship management.

We typically think about customer relationship management as a technical function but it really involves much more than great software. It includes getting customers' attention, bringing them through the doors, providing a quality entertainment experience, and success in bringing them back.

This delicate process involves coupons that catch their eyes and loyalty programs that keep them coming back. While these incentives are important to the customer relationship, there is nothing more critical than the customer's experience within our gaming venues as well as with all of the products and services that intimately support gaming. These include our hotels, restaurants, fitness centers, shuttle services, airlines, lounges, and a wide range

of other integrated services that collaborate in providing customer relationship excellence to guests.

Customer relationship management includes the human element involved in the relationships that we build with our guests. It begins with their very first contact with us. It continues in their interactions with every member of our many teams—the wait staff in the restaurant, the shuttle bus driver, the flight attendant, the front desk clerk, the security officer, the maintenance staff and the dealer.

Customer relationship management involves both external and internal customers. External customers are the people who pay the bills since they both choose and use our products and services. Internal customers are the “people assets” within the organization who provide a product or service to external customers or who support others in doing so. A positive experience by both customer groups is crucial to gaming profitability.

Whether external or internal, all customers look for a sense of respect, service, and safety all the time. All of our contacts with customers need to involve these guiding principles, even when it is difficult to do. Let's take a closer look at what these concepts mean:

- Respect involves treating others with courtesy and preserving their dignity.
- Service involves meeting commitments and maintaining professionalism.
- Safety involves preventing and responding to danger, risk or injury.

Gaming professionals are well versed in providing both customer groups with a positive entertainment experience. This is relatively easy to do when customers are kind and sensitive to our needs. It is much more difficult when they are not.

We face difficult, challenging, disruptive, and even dangerous behavior in our work every day. This may involve harassment, conflict, intimidation, incivility, disrespect, verbal aggression, and even violence. These situations might show up from either external or internal customers and they could occur at any time.

There are numerous examples of potential challenging and disruptive behavior within the various businesses involved in the gaming industry. Frustrated employees become irrational under the pressures of their work. Angry guests threaten employees with lawsuits for their perception of unfair practices. Arriving travelers insist on a room upgrade even though we tell them that tonight's

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occupancy is over capacity. A customer at the blackjack table screams at a dealer about his right to free parking. A delivery driver smokes in a non-smoking area. Janitorial staff are fed up with what they have to clean up day in and day out. A guest bangs on the slot machine, screaming that it has cheated her again. A dealer's partner makes rude and offensive remarks. A limo driver demands higher tips. Security officers eject a struggling guest who has clearly had too much to drink.

How an organization handles these difficult situations is what sets them apart, and helps define the type of company they are. Respect, service and safety could be the last things that come to our minds under these and similar circumstances, yet professional behavior remains essential to these more challenging areas of customer relationship management. Involving these principles in every area of operations will guide our thinking, decisions, and actions even during potentially dangerous situations.

Top management commitment to these principles is vital so that the philosophy of respect, service, and safety cascades through all areas of the work culture. Some of the strategies to make the entire workplace safer are:

- 1) Adopt and implement policies and procedures clearly outlining expectations for all levels of the organization about respectful, service oriented, and safe interactions at all times toward both external and internal customers.
- 2) Provide skill-building training that will help employees demonstrate respect in all interactions, provide quality service even in the most difficult circumstances, and respond to disruptive and violent situations that impact workplace safety.
- 3) Implement an ongoing training process that provides additional knowledge and practice in translating these values into everyday behavior at work.
- 4) Empower employees to apply these training concepts realistically within their specific work environment.
- 5) Audit the impact of training in effectively reducing the frequency and intensity of disruptive and dangerous incidents.

Everybody wins in a gaming environment where they feel valued and cared for. Workplace cultures that demonstrate respect, service, and safety – even when this is difficult to do – strengthen and preserve valuable relationships with coworkers and customers. This form of customer relations management aids in employee retention and in customer service recovery. ♣

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The advertisement for CYRUN Security and Surveillance Training features a central graphic with a star-shaped logo containing the words 'INTEGRITY', 'EFFICIENCY', and 'RELIABILITY'. The main title 'CYRUN Security and Surveillance Training' is in red, with 'Gary L. Powell, CSP' listed below it. A vertical arrow points downwards through five categories, each with an image: 'Protection of Assets and Liabilities' (hand holding cash), 'Casino Game Protection' (hand with cards), 'Card Cheating' (hand with cards), 'Slot Cheating' (slot machines), and 'Risk Management' (ambulance). The contact information '125 Water St, A2, Santa Cruz, CA 95060 831-458-0949' is at the bottom.