Comparatively speaking, security and customer service are words rarely used in the same context. Could it be possible for these two elements to co-exist in the gaming world? It would seem unlikely, but essentially they must. To make this improbable pair a winning combination, organizations must have a culture centered on customer service. Likewise, security departments must use creative thinking to fit officers into their organizational customer service model.

Typically, most security departments are not trained to provide or deliver customer service as traditionally known. Security officers are trained to react to calls from their dispatchers and perform duties that protect their property’s assets. The appearance of security departments being police like in operation with stern looking officers further complicates the security-customer service relationship.

So, how do security departments become customer service oriented? It starts with the hiring process; focusing on future security officer candidates who display the characteristics and personality traits which emulate the customer service features of the organization.

Training security officers to become customer service providers can be very challenging. Once newly hired officers learn their business culture is centered on customer service, their transition process becomes easier. Human resources training that focuses on customer courtesy, assures security officers are trained in basic customer service-customer interaction skills.

Future customer service training for security officers should include, but is not limited to: knowing who your customers are; what your guests needs are; and what your guests expectations are. During the security officer’s initiation period, managers and supervisors should monitor initial customer interactions and provide feedback. To maintain a band of customer courtesy excellence, security officers should always attend refresher training. The main message every security officer should learn is that every guest is a “golden opportunity.” This means that every security officer to guest interaction could possibly create a positive emotional connection, which could translate to countless repeat visits to their organization.

In order to effectively deliver customer service, security officers must fully understand that customer care is their organization’s main competitive advantage. It is the cornerstone of success that differentiates their venue from all others. To be truly successful, customer service must be embraced by all organizational departments.

Security departments and their officers differ in composition just as much as gaming establishments do. Conveying successful customer service to guests with security teams begins with their placement within the organization.

In the following discussion, an example using four teams of employees will be illustrated. These four teams or combinations of can be found at most gaming establishments – bike patrol officers, cart drivers, valet attendants and security officers. This array of employees is the primary guest greeters for most organizations. Their initial contact with guests is critical to gaming businesses for two very important reasons. First, this preliminary exchange will make a lasting impression on guests long after they are gone. Second, this is when the emotional connection is made. Instantaneously, they will decide whether or not to become repeat customers. Guests will always remember the special treatment they received when they visited any business from the emotional chord that was struck with them.

Bike patrol officers make their appearance in many gaming venue parking lots. They deliver a special form of customer courtesy which starts by extending warm welcomes with friendly hand waves or kind greetings to the guests as they pass by. Bike patrol officers can assist guests who have motor vehicle problems by helping change flat tires, jumping off dead vehicles, assisting guests during inclement weather, and escorting them safely to their vehicles are all great customer service interactions. These small but significant acts are excellent examples for bike patrol officers to build strong organization customer relationships upon.

Additionally, bike patrol officers can assist with minor vehicle accidents; help prevent accidents by guiding guests in and out of parking spots; assist guests with minor injuries and assure their vehicles are protected while they game inside the venue. These caring deeds are reassuring to guests and give them a sense of genuine concern for the safety of themselves and their property. Guests develop a strong devotion to organizations that truly place their well being at the forefront of their stay.

Cart drivers are a prominent group found in most gaming venue parking lots. They enhance their guests’ experience by providing shelter from inclement weather; addressing them by their first names; knowing what type of vehicles they drive; keeping clean, well maintained carts; opening the side panels or doors for them to enter or exit; providing safe passage to and from their vehicles to property entryways; and by engaging in polite conversation with them. These models of individual, personal care will win over guests every day. The memory of their experience will be seared into their mind. The notoriety received by gaming businesses for this special brand of customer service would be tremendous.

Valet attendants are a mainstay at many venues, they are among the first employees guests encounter. In addition to their main duties of parking and retrieving guests’ vehicles, attendants provide additional touches of personal service such as opening and closing vehicle doors every time a guest arrives or departs;
assisting elderly guests by taking their transportation aids in and out of their vehicles, then assisting them in and out of the venue; washing guests’ windshields; sheltering guests from inclement weather by holding umbrellas over them as they depart and re-enter their vehicles; placing floor mats on the floor of guests’ cars when parking during bad weather; and offering complimentary water to departing guests during the summer months. All of these caring actions generate powerful customer experiences that endure. The prestige of gaming venues multiply infinitely.

Security officers are the last group of primary greeters guests will meet when entering any gaming venue. This is because nearly every venue has an officer posted at their entry performing their duties. This officer can reinforce the entire security team’s customer service effort by offering a whole-hearted greeting and departure comment to each guest who enters and departs the venue. Once inside your organization, security officers can bring a unique brand of customer service by assisting physically challenged guests to their favorite games; engaging them in polite conversation; offering to bring soda or coffee to them; assisting with medical calls and assisting with any other special requests made by them. Security officers are a readily available customer service resource. They are in close proximity to guests and can capitalize on customer service opportunities at any given time. They are an asset all gaming organizations can fully utilize to their advantage when customer care is the pillar of their success.

By adding value and providing superior customer service that goes above and beyond expectations, casino security teams can support their organizations by creating warm, genuine and impregnable bonds with their guests. This passion will transcend into a chain of perpetual repeat visits, spawn absolute loyalty, and create a special brand to their organizations.

In an era that has seen a dramatic decline in overall business due to a slow economy, customer service plays a bigger role in organizations. Gaming venues have to focus on their customer service programs to a greater degree to remain competitive and profitable. Regardless of their regional location, large market or small, gaming organizations must use every asset available to increase their bottom lines. They must also focus on making each guest’s visit to their organization a unique, emotional experience. This can be accomplished by a little bit of innovation and utilizing organizational security teams as an extension of their customer service programs.

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