

## Bright Ideas

### CASINO MARKETING – PERCEPTION OR REALITY

by Stephen J. Karoul

Casino marketing is a nebulous term that is often misunderstood. In today's modern casinos is casino marketing perception or is casino marketing reality? Actually, perception is reality and reality is perception. The key issues are what are your objectives or what are you trying to accomplish. This may sound confusing but one trick is to always break down your goals into the simplest terms. You can then get a much clearer picture of what you are actually trying to achieve and what methods are available to you to help achieve your goals.

For example, one of your goals for next year may be to increase international or domestic ethnic market share. Here is where "perception is reality and reality is perception" begins to become more meaningful. The first thing you need to determine is how your property or casino is perceived by both existing and potentially new international customers. Are you currently perceived as a casino capable of "satisfying" a mixed customer base of both domestic players and international players?

Perceptions are normally related to visuals. What do customers see when they look around your casino? Do they see public signage in different languages indicating that you already serve an international clientele? Do they see brochures or printed materials being available in different languages? Do they see restaurants or menus offering a variety of foods to be able to satisfy a variety of domestic ethnic and/or international tastes?

By breaking down goals to the simplest terms we can better analyze the basics. Often times, we face the scenario of which comes first, the chicken or the egg? In the situation mentioned above concerning increasing international market share one of the primary basic or simplest factors is probably location. In most instances, location dictates that you try to increase domestic ethnic business first and use these marketing efforts or plans as a springboard to go after the more costly true international or overseas business.

Bearing in mind that "perception is reality and reality is perception," one of the first things that I would do is modify internal signage. This is one thing that can be done quickly and at a relatively low cost. Strategically select your target languages and then mix and match these languages into various signage or posters throughout the property.

You have now instantly created the perception that your casino caters to players that speak those languages or come from those cultures. Combine this with menus, food, and some selective media advertising and the perception becomes even more magnified eventually leading to word-of-mouth recommendations from domestic ethnic or international players that become attracted to your property. Henceforth, perception, in effect, becomes reality.

These same principles can be used in so many different areas throughout your casino. Stop and think for a moment. How do I increase dollar slot machine play? How do I increase roulette market share? How do I increase mid-week business? Remember, break every goal down into the simplest terms and you will then have a much clearer picture of what is perception and what is reality and how to make perception into reality.

Good luck.

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