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## Casino Hosting: Back to the Basics

Jessica L. Hobbs

*University of Nevada, Las Vegas*

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Casino Hosting: Back to the Basics

By

Jessica L. Hobbs

Bachelor of Science  
Accounting  
and  
Bachelor of Business Administration  
Finance  
University of Kentucky  
December 2007

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## **PART ONE**

### **Introduction**

The heart and soul of Las Vegas has always been the casino industry. People from all over the world have traveled many miles to put their money on the line in the hopes of hitting the jackpot or just to see the “adult playground” so many have spoken of and viewed in multiple movies. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century the Las Vegas casino industry has competition popping up across the country and all over the world. These new casinos put intense pressure on Las Vegas to attract the “whales” and high rollers to the casinos on the Las Vegas strip. Many foreign gamblers now have casinos close to their home making it an easier, and possibly a shorter, trip for them to successfully scratch their gambling itch.

While the casino companies located in Las Vegas are also building casinos in other jurisdictions, nationally and internationally, it is a priority to attract casino customers to the strip casino. The weapon that casinos use to drive business from customers is the casino host. This host not only entertains the gambler and their entourage, but they also must understand the ins and outs of the casino and make high dollar decisions on a daily basis.

Many casino hosts work their way up to this position through different departments on the casino floor starting as dealers, cage clerks, floor supervisors, etc.; thus having learned a vast amount of knowledge about the casino industry and games. But every casino customer is different, requiring a wide range of diversity and personalities throughout the casino host department. Some of these casino hosts are brand new to the casino industry upon hiring. How does this new employee grasp all of the important information needed to appropriately assist their customers?

## **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this manual is to guide new and experienced casino hosts through important decisions that affect their daily job.

## **Justification**

Casino whales are always treated like kings and queens during their trips due to their ability to win or lose large sums of money. These guests are very important to a casino's bottom line. The individuals that take care of these important guests' requests or complaints are casino hosts.

The casino host is relied upon by the casino to build personal relationships with high stake gamblers and ensure the retention of these players. Since the host is heavily depended upon, it is critical for the host to understand every aspect of the casino and the job starting their first day in order to perfect the guest's trip and make them as happy as possible. While many casino hosts have worked their way up through the various casino departments, some hosts are hired in fresh from other industries or even college. This is because all gamblers are different and require hosts with different personalities. For the new hosts, this manual will offer information and guidance in important areas of the position that are needed to have the customer's accounts ready for gambling action upon their arrival to the casino and to make sure the customer is as happy and comfortable as possible to gain their loyalty to the casino. It is vital that the hosts are knowledgeable the varied tactics of the job and how they intertwine to be successful.

## **Constraints**

One constraint of this manual is that it will be focused primarily on domestic casino hosts. These hosts focus on domestic guests living within the United States (some may venture into regions of Mexico and Canada). There are multiple differences in how international and

domestic casino customers are handled so the majority of casinos divide their casino host departments into both domestic and international categories.

Another constraint is the job description from casino to casino may slightly vary because of the existence of multiple different casino companies. This manual will cover the basic requirements and responsibilities of the casino host position. Some casinos have multiple levels of hosts ranging from junior host to senior casino host to executive casino host to player development host. With each step up the responsibilities grow. For example, a junior host may not have the authority to give out casino credit to a customer while a senior casino host and above can authorize up to a specific amount of credit based on their seniority.

### **Glossary**

**Casino Comps:** Awards of free services and/or items given to a gambler in amounts up to as much as 35% to 50% of a player's theoretical value (Lucas, Kilby, & Santos, 2002).

**Casino Credit:** A credit agreement between the casino and the patron to be used for gaming purposes "extended to players to alleviate a player's risk of traveling with cash" (Hill, 2008, p. 567).

**Casino Host:** An individual employed by a casino to "maintain relationships with valued gaming guests and market gaming experiences to high-limit guests through personal contact" (Hill, 2008, p. 563).

**House Advantage:** "Percentage of all wagers the casino can expect to win over the long run" (Lucas & Singh, 2008, p. 123).

**This Trip Only (TTO):** "A one-time additional credit increase on top of the initial established credit line" (Hill, 2008, p. 568).

**Whale:** The "world's richest highest stake, and most pursued gamblers who can significantly

impact a casino's quarter positively or negatively in a single gambling session" (Hill, 2008, p. 565).

## **PART TWO**

### **Literature Review**

#### **Introduction**

Many factors play into the role of a casino host and have very intricate details that must be understood. The two main goals of the casino are to get customers in the door and maximize their overall gaming experience (Mayer & Johnson, 2003). This literature review will provide information on the types of players a casino host works with on a daily basis, theoretical win and how it is calculated, complimentaries and promotional offers, and casino credit. These are all very important to obtaining the casino's goals and to the job of a host. They lead to more gamblers staying in the hotel versus strictly hotel guests. The "more gamblers in the hotel, the more gamblers on the casino floor" (Lucas, 2010, p. 209).

#### **Premium Players**

Every casino offers tables and slots with a minimum and maximum bet attractive enough to lure in the level of casino customer they wish to have playing in their casino. While some casinos may not have the amenities to support the whales, they do have a view of whom their premium players (aka high rollers) are that they focus on building valuable relationships and offering superior customer service. The greater the amenities, the higher the level of player that will come into the casino.

Whale is a term used frequently by those outside of the casino doors who have seen movies or heard rumors of the casino world. According to Hill, a whale is the "richest, highest stake, and most pursued gamblers who can significantly impact a casino's quarter positively or negatively in a single gambling session" (Hill, 2008, p. 565). As previously mentioned, not all casinos have the amenities to support whales, nor the financial security to offer maximum bets

large enough to entice this level of gambler to play at their casino. Some casino's would prefer not to host the whale because they do not have enough other play to support the casino if the whale wins big. These players are highly coveted by large casinos because of their massive funds available to gamble and the limited number of this group of gamblers that exist. Hill also states that these customers have credit lines (discussed later in the review) ranging from 1 million dollars to upwards of 20 million dollars based on their previous level of play and financial history with the casino (Hill, 2008). There are roughly 250 to 300 whales (Lucas, Kilby, & Santos, 2002 ) swimming around the world just waiting for the right casino to give them and offer attractive enough to come gamble at their casino. Some of these whales probably already have casinos where they gamble regularly and it is likely they frequent more than one, since gamblers tend to be very superstitious and casinos are constantly enticing them with lavish offerings.

Since not all casinos want to assume the risk of having a whale play in their casino, they market to a different level of high rollers. The size of the high roller depends on the casino. Some casinos consider a high roller to be a customer that gambles in the range of \$30 thousand to \$50 thousand per trip while a more luxurious casino would not consider a customer a high roller until they hit the gambling mark of \$100 thousand to \$500 thousand per trip. The definition depends on the casino and the gambling stakes they offer at their casino on a normal basis and the amenities can support.

The number of trips per year and length of trip vary depending on if the casino attracts local guests or if it is a destination casino. Most casinos on the Las Vegas strip are destination casinos where a loyal patron may only visit a couple of times a year but the length of the trip spans an average of four days compared to a multitude of one day visits per year from close



residing patrons to the local casino (Lucas & Singh, 2008). Whales and high rollers may differ in number of trips per year. A whale may only visit the casino once per year but gamble upwards of \$1 million each trip. While a different customer may visit the hotel four times per year and gamble \$50 to \$100 thousand each trip. Although the second player would still not be considered a whale, it is very important for the casino and the host to recognize the value of the lower gambling guest and treat them with extreme care and service.

### **Theoretical Win**

Gamblers are tracked based on length of time and level of play. Some believe that a customer must win or lose large sums of money to be considered a whale or high roller. Though this may happen some of the time, the actual win or loss is not the only way casinos assess their players. Casinos use a measurement called theoretical win to value a gamblers level of play to rank their importance. The theoretical value is “the gaming revenue a casino ought to win from a player over time based on statistical probability” (Hill, 2008, p. 565). Even if a player wins big on a trip, they still warrant complimentaries from the casino because of the theoretical value their play accumulated during the trip. For this value to be calculated a player must be a member of the casino’s player rewards program and present their card at the time of play. For table games, the player must play at least a specific minimum average bet to be rated while slot machine players insert their card in the machine each time. High rollers and whales are always tracked with great effort by the casino because of their level of play (Lucas, 2010).

Theoretical win is calculated by:

Average bet \* # of hands per hour \* # of hours played \* house advantage = Theo Win

For table games, this calculation relies very heavily on manpower. When a gambler sits down at a casino table, the pit boss records the time the customer arrived, average bet while

playing, and the length of time and amount of money won/lost when the customer departs. Each detail is very important details to the calculation of theoretical win. Some players jump from table to table depending on their luck making it more difficult for the pit boss to track the player unless the player tells them they are moving. There are multiple players that the pit boss is watching at any given time, plus having to deal with other daily issues causing variation in the way gamblers are assessed.

The average bet is exactly that. It is an average of the amount of money the player gamblers each bet during that session. If a player starts out at \$25 per hand but varies up to \$75 per hand, most likely the player will be given an average bet of \$50 per hand depending on the amount of time each bet amount was played. This aggravates some customers because they remember the higher stakes at risk and may not agree with the average.

The house advantage (HA) “represents the percentage of all wagers the casino can expect to win, over the long run” (Lucas & Singh, 2008). HA also varies between game types and for some games vary on the player’s skill. The HA of Blackjack (21) will vary based on the rules of that specific table, the number of decks used, and the players skill level. An average player, with little to no skill, plays with a HA of 2%, while a very skilled player that uses basic strategy decreases the house’s curve on only 0.5%, the best odds in the casino. Other than skilled blackjack players, craps gives players the best chance of winning with a HA of less than one percent. Roulette has multiple percentages that are based upon the number the bet is placed. Single-Zero Roulette (single number bet) has an advantage of 2.7% while the same bet on Double-Zero Roulette has a house advantage of 5.3% (Hammond 2012). The HA is very important to the calculation of theoretical win because games with a higher HA are not in the players favor thus generating a much larger theoretical value.

Theoretical win is often confused with actual win. One of the main differences between theoretical win and actual win is that even if a player loses money on the trip, the theoretical win will always be positive because it is the sum of money that the casino should win from the customer over a long period of time based on the customer's gaming habits. Actual win is the amount of money the customer really wins or loses on a given trip. Theoretical win is important to the customer because the complimentary offerings from the casino are largely based on the theoretical value, for the present trip and future trips.

### **Complimentaries (aka Comps)**

Complimentaries (comps) are given to gamblers based on their present or previous trips. Theoretical win is based on the customer's gaming habits, not a specific win or loss amount, and casinos use this value to predict how much the customer will play on their next trip. This value represents the amount of money the casino should spend to market to the player to get them back in the casino and at the tables or slots gambling so that the casino will still profit off the customer. Some customers receive free meals or discounted rooms while others receive lavish offerings, such as expensive, hard to get, event tickets. Other complimentaries include unlimited free food and beverages, show tickets, promotional chips (gaming chips to use while gambling at tables), tickets to invite-only events thrown by the casino and offers as lavish as travel by private jet and hotel accommodations in a Casino Villa (rooms averaging from 2,000 to 7,000 square feet with private pools and spa treatments rooms). The purpose of these casino comps are to appeal to the gambler to convince them to come back for another trip. From research by Lucas in 2004, it shows that there is a significant relationship between headline entertainment and an increase in blackjack drop. (as cited in Lucas & Tanford, 2010) This research shows how important it is for players to be informed of events going on in Vegas to draw them back even

when they weren't planning a trip. There are a lot of options when it comes to casinos to visit so the casino offers appealing comps to the customer to retain business. Researchers have also found that patrons that dine in the casino's restaurants are more likely to return than those who do not, but these customers also recommend the casino to others (Lucas & Tanford, 2010). Roehl confirms that there is no argument that these incentives and extravagant offerings are necessary to attract premium guests (as cited in Salmon, Lucas, Kilby, & Dalbor, 2004.).

Many casinos offer anywhere from 25% to 40% of the theoretical win in comps to a customer. These awards can be given prior to the arrival of the guests (as a promotional offer) or at the end of the trip (based on the players history with the company). Some players get confused and think the comps are covered by the gambling action from the previous trip. Although the comps are offered at the beginning of the trip based on the play history, all comps are covered by the gambler's play during the current trip. For example, if a customer is given a free room and food based on history of play but neglects to gamble up to historic average, the customer will not receive this kind of offer the next trip due to changing habits and not covering the comp value in theoretical win.

This leads into potential harm and loss to the casino of offering promos and comps to players at the beginning of a trip. There is always the possibility the customer will not play to their previous level. Also, a very important detail that needs to be examined is if the player was winning or losing (actual win) on the previous trips. When a gambler is winning, they are no longer gambling with their own money but with the money they have won from the casino so they do not feel the same amount of risk as if it were money from their own bank account. This will cause a theoretical win and average bet to dramatically increase. Although this will not (and should not) be an issue in distributing comps during the current trip, it should be evaluated prior

to future offerings because if the same player does not win on the next trip they may not bet as high or play as long affecting their theoretical value.

### **Casino Credit**

One of the most high dollar, discretionary aspects that a casino host must make decisions on is casino credit. Casino credit is a loan from the casino to the gambling customer from the casino institution with no interest. Casino credit is offered to customers who have a gaming history with the casino or a strong personal relationship with the casino host so that they player does not have to travel with large amounts of money to be able to gamble them at the casino. This credit may only be used for table and slot play and is tracked very carefully by the casino management and surveillance teams. Lucas and Kilby (2008) distinguish that a player is not required to lose the funds extended to them through casino credit, but if the player does not risk the funds, the amount of credit can be decreased or revoked all together.

Multiple components go into the decision process of a issuing a customer casino credit, and if they receive credit, how much they are authorized. The payment terms for casino credit also depend on the player's gaming history, financial history, and relationship with a casino employee (host). Back in the old days, the only thing a casino had to go on was the players word and relationships; Now the casino uses a credit report (Experian), Central Credit Report (shows gaming credit history with all casinos) and a contact from the customer's bank stating the date the account was opened, current and average amount of funds in the account (Lucas & Kilby, 2008). The strength of the customer's relationships is still extremely important because the payment terms are based upon this as well as any amount above the sum in the bank account. ]

On the credit report the host reviews the consumer credit history, real estate purchases,

any delinquent accounts or liens. Although some of these details do not go hand in hand with a gaming loan it is important for the casino to understand the consumers payment habits.

The Central Credit Report is important because it shows how many casinos the customer has credit accounts with. This report also shows the status of these accounts such as how much the player owes each casino, the highest amount of credit they have ever taken out from each casino, and the last time each credit account was used. This is important so a casino does not allow a player to extend their credit too broad with multiple casinos and become unable to pay the amount they owe. Each of these reports is critical for the casino host to analyze to aide in their decision.

The payment terms of the loan vary from payment due upon departure from the casino, seven days, to 30 days, the most commonly used terms. A casino host has the authority to decide payment terms for their customers that they share a personal relationship. It is the host's responsibility to collect the amount for the loan once issued. The casino does have signed authorization from the customer to "drop" the marker (casino credit issued check) in the customer's bank if not paid by the specific terms. When the customer signs the marker prior to receiving the chips, they are authorizing the casino to take funds from their bank account on file if they do not pay by the specific terms.

Another part of casino credit is this trip only (TTO) extensions of additional funds to the gambler. A TTO is issued when a gambler loses all of the existing credit line and wants more money to gamble. The host/customer relationship is a major key to this issuance of extra funds because it is important for the casino not to over extend the gambler. A TTO is usually only given after a couple of trips where casino credit is used and only issued up to 20% of the original

credit line. Gamblers get on a role and often chase the lost wages, so it is important for them not to get lost in the game and lose more than they are financially able to afford.

At the end of a customer's trip, the credit line is closed and will not be reopened until the customer pays the amount owed. If the customer returns to the casino prior to the date the payment is due, the account is required to be cleared in order to release more of the funds.

### **Conclusion**

There are many aspects of a casino that are extremely important for a casino host to understand. Unfortunately, there is not much literature printed to teach and explain the areas of the casino that are needed for a casino host. Theoretical win, comps, and casino credit are essential for the host to know from day one in order to perform the job. Some of the knowledge will come from literature, while even more will come from experience. Knowing how to play the games and read the personality of the gambler will come with time. Knowing what to look for when issuing credit or giving comps is very important, and possibly costly to the casino that needs training immediately so the host works in the best interest of the casino.

## **PART THREE**

### **Introduction**

Casino hosts are extremely important to the bread and butter of casinos: the premium players. Casinos have multitudes of small players that go unnoticed, but thrive on the premium players that spend tens of thousands of dollars on any given weekend. Casino hosts build relationships with these customers and offer an experience that a premium customer can get from no other place, leaving them wanting to revisit that property to get the same exceptional experience with a friend they have made with their casino host.

Each premium player comes from a different background with different desires, therefore wants a casino host different from what another player would want in a host. Casino marketing departments are compiled of a very diverse group of individuals in order to accommodate the various personalities of players. Some prefer men, while others want a woman host; some prefer young and fresh in the business, while another may want a host that has risen through the brackets of the casino. Whatever type of host the player prefers, the casino is most likely to have an individual that will work well with their personality and their wants from a casino host.

No matter if the casino host is fresh to the business or has worked their way through every department, it is important to understand the basics of hosting premium players. This ensures that the host will service these customers with the casino operator's best interest in mind while also being loyal to the customer in order to build a lasting and trusting relationship.

### **Day in the Life of a Casino Host**

There is not a clear description of a normal day for a casino host. It will change based on the time of year, the events in town (or coming in town), and the promotions the casino is offering. No matter what is going on in the casino, a casino host has two main focuses. One is



retaining customers, staying in touch and building strong bonds with them. The second focus is to grow their customer base. Both are extremely important to the success of the host.

### **Current Customers**

Building a trusting relationship and giving exceptional service is how a casino host maintains their customers. Many things go into nurturing this relationship. A host is more than just a friend to their players, they are a way of making life easier for the customer so they have nothing to worry about during their stay except for having a good time from the planning stages of the trip to the flight home.

### **Promotional Offers**

Premium players receive offers for promotions and invites to world-class events throughout the year. A casino host will also be a host to players that are not considered premium but that are still important to the casino. Depending on the level of the player, an offer or invite will be mailed out to lower level players and the low end of premium players. While whales and high-end premium players will receive a direct phone call or email from their casino host. This is an important part of the relationship between the host and player for the host to understand the preferred way of communication.

All of the promotions offered by the casino are tiered by the player's historical theoretical value ranging from a discounted room rate to RFB comp, which means that the room, food and beverage are all taken care of by the casino. As mentioned in the Literature Review, promotional offers are given based upon the customer's history of play but must be covered by the current trip.

Although a promotional offer outlines a specific deal, it is the discretion of the casino host to alter it how they deem appropriate in order to get the customer to the casino without

altering the profit line in the negative direction. A customer may be enticed by receiving one free night while paying for the other nights, while another guest will appeal more to free spa services. This is another part of the casino host's job, to read the customer and what is important to them. Some will be persuaded through free rooms while others would happily pay for their room if they were offered a nice meal comped by the casino. This goes back to every customer is different.

## **Events**

Casinos hold invite-only events throughout the year in the form of sporting event viewing parties, gambling tournaments, or celebrations, such as a New Years Eve party. Depending on the size of the venue, only a specific number of the top players get invited. These events normally come with a free room for the weekend, comped food and beverage, and two tickets to the event (or a seat at the gaming table for a tournament). The casino host must communicate these events with the customers, securing a spot since there are a finite number of seats or tickets available.

The other scarcity that comes with invite-only events is the number of hotel suites available. Most premium customers are custom to staying in a specific type of room when they visit the casino for a regular (non event) weekend. When it comes to events, a large group of the casino's premium players are all gathered in the same casino, suites must be given out according to the level of play of the guest, thus changing the normal accommodations for some of the guests. The casino host is there to aide this decision and fight for the customer as to why they should receive a specific room and also to try to make up for it with the guest during their stay and make it an enjoyable experience even if the accommodations are altered.

## **Reservations**

Casino hosts make reservations and change reservations many times a day and at every hour of the day for their guests. Before the customer's trip, the host makes a hotel reservation and reserves multiple dinners and shows. Transportation from the airport must be set up and secured that the driver will meet the player when they arrive at the airport. A casino host not only builds relationships with their customers but also builds relationships internally in order to get things done efficiently and fluidly. It is important that a host checks to make sure all reservations are complete and correct prior to the arrival as to keep from having any complications for the guest.

Once the customer arrives, reservations may be changed to fit their schedule or new ones made that had not been decided prior to the arrival. The host makes sure everything is in order to the customer's liking and works with their plans to rearrange if necessary. Making life easier for the customer helps the bond grow stronger because the customer senses that their host is looking out for them and their best interest.

## **Entertaining Customers**

The job of a host has always been portrayed as glamorous because of the entertaining facet. It is a usual occurrence for a casino host to attend a nice dinner, drinks, sporting event, and even a night out to the nightclub with customers. Wining, dining, and spending time with customers also increases the bond and relationship between the customer and host. There are some customers that do not want the additional attention of the host except to make reservations or give them invitations while others desire the host to spend as much time as possible with the guest during their stay. Both build the trust in the host because the host is helping the guest but respecting their privacy while another guest wants to spend actual time and get to know each other.

Most customers view their casino host as their friend so they enjoy spending time with them. It is not uncommon for the casino host to meet the customer's family and friends and be invited to events outside of the casino world with them (i.e. golf tournaments in their home town).

There are times (such as event weekends) when a host has multiple players in town and must be spread thin in order to give a meaningful amount of time to each customer. It is important for a host not to ignore a player that usually gets quite a bit of time for another player. It is important to make customers feel like they are special and very important to the casino even if larger customers are in town.

### **Distributing Comps**

As mentioned in the literature review, one of the main components (aside from casino credit) that can hurt the casino is the amount of comps a casino host distributes. The typical distribution is between 25% and 40% of a player's theoretical value for the current trip. Comps are given before the start of the trip through promotional offers and if the guest is substantial it is to guests that a casino host feels they know well enough to trust to gamble an amount large enough to cover the comps given up front.

For new customers or customers that a casino host does not know very well, it is safe and smart to discuss with the guest that anything charged to the room (food, spa, etc.) can be taken into consideration for comps at the end of trip once play has been completed and evaluated to see what the player has earned this trip. It is not uncommon for the gambler to not play enough to cover the comps given up front but be disgruntled that they are not receiving more. This is a result of misunderstanding or miscommunication that the comps given up front still have to be covered and were not taken care of by a previous trip.

## **Liaison between Guest and Casino**

The casino host is a liaison between the customer and the hotel. If there is ever a dispute the casino host must be the middleman and try to take care of the issue for the customer. The casino host does not only take care of customers during their stay but anything that may come up before or after a trip. If there is a discrepancy of the hotel bill or casino credit, the host investigates. This is another important reason for the host to build internal relationships throughout the casino. It will be much easier for the host to get things accomplished with the help of the experts in each department.

The act of being a liaison is very important because the host has to be very professional in order to stay loyal to the casino and act in the best interest of the customer. Sometimes the customer and casino do not agree on specific comps that are not given for room or club charges. This is when the host must have difficult conversations with the customer regarding not playing enough to take care of all charges this trip or clear up the uncertainty between the casino and the customer without ruining the relationship they have worked so hard to build.

The hardest liaison position for the casino host is when it involves casino credit. As discussed in the literature review, casino credit is a loan between the casino and the customer to use for play at slot machines or table games only. Conversations that are common include not using casino credit for other activities even if inside the casino. Credit is not to be used for poker or sports betting. Some guests see it as their own money because they must pay it back. Since there is no interest charge the casino only allows it for the benefit of gambling and must enforce this rule.

Another tough conversation to have with a customer no matter how close the relationship is when a customer has neglected to pay the outstanding credit balance in a timely manner

previously agreed upon. Although customers agree on a payment term, things happen that may cause a customer to be late or miss the payment. Whether it is forgetfulness or lack of funds, the casino host must have the conversation with the guest to find out why the payment has not been made. Depending on the customer and situation, a payment plan may be able to be worked out instead of a giant lump sum at once. If this payment plan does get set, the customer's credit line will most likely be revoked or lowered considerably. This is an example of another situation where the host must act in the casino's best interest while trying to explain and smooth things over with the customer.

### **New Customers**

All customers have a specific lifetime in the casino. Some move on to other hobbies while others go broke and can't afford the casino lifestyle any longer. It is important for a casino host to continuously build their customer base because it is never clear when a casino guest will suddenly stop making trips. There are multiple ways for a casino host to increase their clientele.

A casino host is tracked by the players coded to them in the casino's player rewards system that tracks each player's theoretical win. A host may code the player to themselves after there is evidence that the host has worked with this customer and started to build a relationship. It is important to the success of a casino host to make sure that the player is coded to their name so they get credit for the hard work they put in getting the customer on the casino floor and into action.

### **Referrals**

One of the best ways for a casino host to build their customer base is through referrals. When a current customer refers their friends, family, or colleagues to their casino host, the new customer already has a perceived trust in the new host based on the referral alone without even a

meeting the host. This is also the best route to getting a high roller. It is very uncommon for high rollers not to have a casino host before they walk in the front door. They will usually have one from a previous property or from a referral.

Once a casino host is referred to a customer it is crucial for the first trip to go smoothly. They are representing themselves, the casino, as well as the customer that referred them.

### **Cold Calling**

Another way to obtain new customers is to cold call guests that have not yet been to the casino that is in the corporate database (depending on access availability) or call a guest that has not been back to the casino in a long period of time. This is the most difficult way to obtain new customers because of obstacles such as wrong contact information and lack of knowledge of customer and their experiences prior to contact.

Similar to cold calling, a host can blind email former customers of the casino but an issue with this is a lot of the older players do not use computers therefore do not have nor check email or some file it as spam. Customers may be retained after years using this method of contacting customers but it is very difficult.

### **Un-Hosted Players in Casino**

There are many un-hosted players that play in casinos every day. This may be because the player is unaware of the qualifications of having a casino host or may not know about the player rewards program. Casino hosts can find these customers playing in the casino at any time of day and connect with them using their business card and signing the guest up for the player rewards program.

This is another aspect of the casino host position where internal relationships are critical. Through teamwork between the dealers, pit bosses, and casino host, players are watched to

determine play. When a player does not have a player's card but is betting at or above a specific average bet, the casino host will be called to come speak with the player about their options. The relationships the casino host has with these co-workers may determine whether they get the call or another host is asked to speak to the potential customer.

Players always have to start their gambling career somewhere. Every whale did not start out losing millions of dollars in the casino their first trip. It is important for the casino host to treat every new customer with respect and as if they are extremely important to the casino. That customer could be the next premium player or have a family member or friend that is itching to get to the tables with a large bankroll.

### **Conclusion**

Casinos employ casino hosts to take care of their most precious assets. It is important for the casino host to understand who they are handling and how to appropriately service them to ensure they exceed the expectations of each guest every trip. A casino host must be able to make a trip fun whether the player is winning or losing in the casino. A losing trip can turn into a good time for a gambler if every other part of the trip is enjoyable, exciting, and goes smoothly. It is important for each casino host to understand the basics of reservations, entertaining their guests, comps, casino credit, etc. It builds their credibility with the guests as well as makes it easier to guarantee a smooth and enjoyable experience for the customer.

### **Recommendations**

Each casino host is different in how they handle their customers. There is a lot of gray area of what is right and wrong when it comes to invites to events, comps, casino credit, etc. Determining whether the customer was profitable on that trip could not be fully understood until months later once the casino credit is paid in full or another trip is planned. There are many



factors in the decision of a successful trip. It would be beneficial to management and the casino host to have more of a standard for comps. As mentioned in the literature review 25% – 40% is a wide range, if it were narrowed down it would be easier to estimate a profit margin for future trips and not give the guest too high of expectations if one trip they get 40% and the next they only receive 25% of their theoretical in comps.

Another recommendation would be to tailor the offers based on generational differences. Gamblers and hotel guest that are in the baby boomer generation want different things and have different priorities than Generation Y. This would be smart to entice the different generations by what interests them.

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