

Create Fun Unique Casino Special Events

By Steve Karoul

Every casino marketing executive understands the reasons why creating unique casino special events is important. However, creating “fun” events is even more important. Unique casino special events have appeal and also attract players. But “fun”, unique, casino special events create lasting memories. Fun is a descriptive word but it is also difficult to define. Many psychiatrists will tell you that fun evokes emotion. They will also tell you that gambling also evokes emotion. Therefore, it only makes sense. If we create multiple experiences that create emotion we have a much greater chance of creating lasting memories. The additional term is “lasting”.

As casino marketers we want to strive to create lasting memories. This is critically important when we wish to also use our customers as our advocates. After all, what is more powerful than positive word of mouth recommendation from one friend to another? It is also one of the best ways for a casino to develop new VIP players. Therefore, lasting memories based upon fun as well as unique experiences stand out more in one’s mind than non-fun experiences. Consequently, my hypothesis is that casino marketing is really part psychiatry and part marketing. The psychological aspects are what will enable one casino to differentiate itself from its competitors. It does not matter how large or how small your casino is. Basic human nature and human emotions are the same for all players or customers no matter whether they play at a large casino or a small casino.

The bottom-line for success with casino marketing is often based upon how creative the casino marketing manager is or dares to be. This is not easy since many casinos are run by financial type individuals who are very good at what they do but not necessarily the most creative individuals. Therefore, a good casino marketing manager must always think like a customer first and a marketing executive second. There is an old expression that says “Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder”. In other words, different individuals view beauty differently. Fun is similar due to the fact that different players or customers will also have different views of what or how they perceive fun to be. There is also another old expression often used in the casino industry that says “Perception is reality and reality is perception”. I can tell you that it is true.

As casino marketing managers it is up to us to create the perception of fun in the minds of our customers. Surprisingly, this is a relatively easy task to accomplish and simply involves thinking outside of the box and adding a dash of creativity. The easiest way to explain this is with examples. One of the oldest and most prestigious resorts in the world also has a beautiful casino as one of its numerous amenities. Casino management wants to increase market-share and also increase its database of VIP customers. Using the information above, my advice to them was to look within first and see what unique amenities or assets they could use to leverage their desire to increase business and to attract new VIP players. This particular resort is a full service resort with numerous resort amenities. However, most of their players or customers view the amenities as that – standard first class resort amenities.

Our goal was to transform one of these standard resort amenities into a fun unique casino special event. This was not easy when one considers that their customer base is affluent, well-traveled and have already experienced just about everything that money can buy. The challenge was to create the perception of fun in the invitation to appeal to these players and to attract many of them who obviously had many additional options available to them for a weekend trip.

We decided to select a different resort amenity to market for that weekend. We selected Fly Fishing. What does Fly Fishing have in common with casino gaming? Actually, nothing at all, other than the fact that the customers will be able to enjoy both while at this particular resort for the weekend. Remembering that “perception is reality and reality is perception” we now needed to create the perception of “Fun” with Fly Fishing. Not an easy task.

Thinking outside of the box, I decided to photograph the casino manager dressed in his business suit but wearing rubber waders and standing in the middle of the stream fly fishing. Needless to say, this was a very unusual photograph and a very unusual invitation.



What do Fly Fishing and Casino Gaming Have in Common?

The answer is absolutely nothing! Both are fun and you can enjoy both at The XYZ Resort. Artie, our Casino Manager, is a city boy and still has a little bit to learn about Fly Fishing. The XYZ Resort is very fortunate to have some of the best fly fishing in the country along with some of the very best instructors who can teach you the secrets to help catch “the big one.” At the same time, maybe you can get Artie to help teach you some of the secrets on Winning in the casino. Never-the-less, this is guaranteed to be another very unique, enjoyable and fun time at The XYZ Resort.

To reserve your complimentary room and to register for this exclusive event, please RSVP to Art at Telephone (xxx) xxx-xxxx.

Details...

Sunday, August 5th at 11:00 AM

Beginners through advanced are welcome

Cash prizes & gourmet lunch (if we catch anything)

It is important to mention contingency plans. One normally associates contingency planning with weather. What do we do if it rains or snows or whatever? However, I caution you to do your homework and really understand all of the dynamics associated with your particular “fun” unique casino special event. For example, even Fly Fishing has some unique quirks. We learned after we sent out our invitations that July and August are not good months for fly fishing. The hot weather forces the fish to look for deeper pools of water and they normally go to sleep during the hot day time. Who would have ever ‘thunk’ that fish would sleep during the day time and especially during our fun fishing event. Needless to say, we had to scramble to purchase some inflatable fish and come up with some fun fly casting and fishing activities.

One additional subtle factor is personality. Every casino has one or two hosts or player development executives who have that unique out-going friendly personality that personifies the image that your casino wants to project to its players. Actively seek out such high profile personalities to see if you can use them as a symbol of fun at your casino. Artie had such a personality and therefore was a natural to use for the Fly Fishing invitation. However, think about upcoming holidays that you may be able to build a fun, unique casino event around. How about dressing someone up as a Leprechaun for St. Paddy’s Day holding a pitcher of green beer? How about a dressing someone up as cupid with bow and arrow, etc. for Valentine’s Day? What about dressing up several staff in football uniforms for Superbowl? Or, how about someone in a diaper with a big 2013 sash for New Year’s Eve? I think you get the idea.

There are actually lots of fun creative ways to develop unique invitations for your casino. It is even possible to super-impose pictures of hosts on the heads of animated cartoons that are orchestrated with music via websites such as www.jibjab.com . Although these are not for everyone or every situation, they do add humor and a certain degree of fun to various invitations or events. One word of caution is to always remember the word dignity. It would be wrong to poke fun at someone who was not willing to participate so make sure that you talk to everyone who may be involved with any humorous invitation. Keep it clean, keep in non-political and keep it as “Fun”. Good luck.

[Steve Karoul is a well-known and respected casino consultant. Steve has lived and worked in many different countries and has conducted casino marketing activities in more than 100 different countries. He understands high rollers, casino junkets, player development, casino special events and all aspects of casino marketing. He is also a gaming industry innovator who openly shares his ideas and thoughts with fellow casino industry executives. For additional information, Steve can be reached at skaroul@comcast.net or www.euroasiacasino.com]