

How to Become a Casino Junket Rep

By Steve Karoul

Many readers are probably old enough to remember a very famous “advice column” that was around for years titled Dear Abby. Readers used to write to the newspaper to ask Abby’s advice about numerous different subjects but mostly related to their love life. As a Casino Consultant, I also get numerous letters from readers asking for my advice as well. Many of their questions relate to “How do I become a Junket Rep?” I think answering questions about someone’s love life might actually be easier to answer than questions related to Junkets but never-the-less I will try.

A typical letter received would be:

Dear Steve, I read your advice online and am very interested in becoming a casino junket rep. I have traveled to Atlantic City on a few junkets and feel it could be both a rewarding job as well as a fun job. I am not a heavy gambler. I mostly play slots and blackjack, but never felt the need to gamble more than I set aside for any given day, therefore the temptation to bet my house is not a problem. I did however notice that on most of these junkets I have been on, there is very limited interaction between the rep and the player. I feel if the reps got more involved in making the trip enjoyable, they could get more repeat business. I have no clue how to become a casino junket rep and could use some advice in how to get started. Do I contact the casino? Is there a license I have to apply for? Is there a school I need to attend? I have found many sites for travel agents, but none for casino Junkets. Any advice you can offer would be great. Thank you so much, John.

Unfortunately there isn’t a school or university that teaches Junket Rep 101. Therefore, the first thing that one has to learn is to understand exactly what being a Junket Rep means in real terms as well as in financial terms. In real terms, a junket rep is a hybrid cross between a sales man or a saleswoman (yes there are some female junket reps – good ones too), a casino host, an advisor and a gaming resource. In financial terms, a junket rep is usually financially successful because the good ones have the ability to earn a lot of money from lucrative commission programs offered by casinos. Legitimate Junket Reps are not loan sharks, mob enforcers or gangsters preying upon innocent naïve gamblers.

Junket Reps are basically service providers. Junket Reps provide services to both casinos and to their customers. The services provided to casinos are basically marketing services. Junket Reps

help to promote the host casino to new players so in effect, they provide the prospecting aspect of player development for various casinos. They also provide marketing services because they are informing qualified players about upcoming casino special events, gaming or golf tournaments, headliner entertainment or shows, etc. Junket Reps also provide a special service to their customers in the way of access to these non-public or private events, shows or tournaments. Junket Reps provide “one stop shopping” to their players.

Convenience is important as well as access for many busy players. Junket Reps make it very easy and convenient to book a gaming trip through their Junket Rep. Once the player commits to attending the event their Junket Rep handles all of the details for them which may include booking their hotel room or VIP suite, booking their show tickets, arranging transportation, reserving starting times for golf or spa / salon treatments, booking restaurant reservations and getting their player access or VIP seats to the casino special event, show or tournament.

Expectations:

Casinos expect that anyone invited by the Junket Rep will be a “qualified” player meaning that the Junket Rep knows the player personally as well as their past play history at other casinos and therefore knows that their level of play will qualify for an invitation to such event. Therefore, Junket Reps provide background checks and verifications that a casino would normally have to do prior to inviting a new player to an expensive special event, show or tournament. Casinos almost always set event criteria for each event which may include a certain level casino credit line or cash deposit, a certain number of hours play per trip at a minimum level bet or higher, a past history of documented wins or losses at other similar size casinos and possibly some background on the customer’s skill level or playing style for the game played. In the case of slot players, the casino would also want to know if the customer plays slots versus video Poker since Poker holds less money for the casino, coin denomination played and average dollar amount of coin in during a normal gaming trip. Most casino management systems compile all of these details and summarize them in reports which reveal the players ADT (average daily Theo or theoretical win). Theo is a standard casino statistical formula comprised of average bet x time played x house advantage per game x number of decisions per hour. Most casinos recognize ADT which allows them to then prioritize suites or room assignments, VIP seating or a host of other details that may be capacity or space controlled. The simple fact is that the best players get the best accommodations, etc. and everything else trickles down by either ADT or a Junket Reps strong recommendation to casino management.

Gamblers or players expect to deal with a Junket Rep who is very familiar with the host casino and their staff so that they may receive VIP treatment upon arrival as well as throughout their entire trip. Players also expect that their Junket Rep will be able to get them access to the special events, shows or tournaments as well as VIP seating. They also expect that their Junket

Rep will have made all other reservations for the duration of their trip so that they do not have to worry about any details and basically will just go to gamble and have fun. In other words, they want a stress free trip other than from the Win or Loss on the gaming tables or slots. Players often view their Junket Rep as their casino Concierge. They rely upon their Junket Rep to take care of everything for them for that particular casino trip.

Most casinos in regulated jurisdictions require Junket Reps to be licensed with either the State or the Gaming Control Board. The applications can be quite lengthy and detailed and often require a full financial disclosure with copies of your past three years of income tax filings. One concern of the gaming regulators is obviously to keep organized crime and criminal elements out of the casino industry. Junket license fees depending upon the State or jurisdiction can range from \$100 to several thousand dollars. The license fees are used by the regulators to conduct a complete and thorough background check on all applicants. Finger-prints are checked via the FBI and other law enforcement agencies.

So how can one start? Unfortunately there is no easy answer. Most casinos normally want to engage experienced Junket Reps that are already established in their territory or region who have large lists or databases of qualified players. In the old days, many of the Junket reps were actually book-makers who knew who the local gamblers were. However, today, many of these former old time book-makers probably would not get licensed. Therefore, individuals who want to become Junket Reps have to think creatively. One method is to actually try to go on a Junket or two and talk to the Junket Rep to see if they may be looking to hire additional staff. Another way is to try to get a job at a casino to learn from the inside out. Working at a casino in an area such as their Players Club or in Casino Marketing will enable one to learn how a casino actually functions and also give one an opportunity to work with gamblers or players. Ultimately, the goal is to understand how casinos operate and then begin to build your own database or portfolio of qualified players. I know many Junket Reps who did this and started with as few as 50 qualified players and built up from there.

It is important to also point out that the better Junket reps that survive and prosper do so based upon their reputations. Therefore, one always wants to operate with the highest level of integrity. It is a privilege to be invited to a casino along with your customers for an event. I have unfortunately observed many Junket reps self-destruct by trying to steal players while on the casino floor or from other Junket reps while attending such events. Once you get "Black Listed" from a casino it will be very difficult to get hired by other casinos.

A key point for aspiring Junket reps is that you need to start slowly and carefully. Once you get licensed and accepted by a casino as a Junket Rep it is normally fairly easy to get accepted by additional casinos in different gaming jurisdictions. Many Junket reps normally are licensed at minimum in Las Vegas, New Jersey, the Caribbean, in their own State, a cruise ship, etc. That

way they can develop their own distinctive marketing strategies which may involve direct mail, website marketing, telemarketing as well as direct sales using recommendations from existing satisfied customers. Being licensed in more than one casino also affords you the opportunity to offer your players access to many additional exciting events or shows across the country or internationally. Junkets vary as well around the world. Junkets in Asia are quite different from Junkets in Europe or North America. Many Junkets in Asia actually supply credit to their customers and therefore are also responsible for the collection of this credit. Therefore, one has to carefully research their market to better understand if they will actually qualify as a Junket Rep or be able to function successfully as a Junket Rep. If you really want to become a Junket rep you will need to be persistent. It is not easy but it can be done and the rewards or compensation can be quite lucrative. 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 both casino operations and casino marketing. Steve has also worked as and for Junket Reps around the world. 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]