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CITY OF DREAMS
DEBUTS IN MACAU
AS HE ESTABLISHES
HIS OWN REPUTATION

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Get Your Message Across

Consolidated casino media-management systems elevate marketing

by Todd Sims



We are witnessing the advent of an exciting, efficient and instant communication strategy within the gaming industry—one that could revolutionize how casinos market to and inform players and guests throughout their properties.

In today's world, smart phones, text messages, Twitter and Facebook foster immediate communication. In a casino, these technologies could allow real-time alerts to players about promotions, winners and last-minute specials for items such as show tickets, dining, and even discounted rooms.

The concept is simple, but the application hasn't been. While reader boards, direct mail and looped messages provide scripted information to targeted guests in and outside of a property, applications generating real-time messages have been limited.

There are gaming devices that do possess instant-message capability. Products like Bally's iVIEW Display Manager, which is an extension of its iVIEW player-communication network, empower casino operators to deliver content on the main game screen and the top game display, with split-screen capability so game play is not interrupted. The information can be customized in real time to identify offers, bonuses, tournaments, and even to give players the option to order a drink or have a car brought to valet.

Although exceptionally effective, the messages are still limited to slot players. Additional systems are needed to communicate with guests in other areas of the casino and in non-gaming locations.

Until recently, no one system could push messages to a property's complement of electronic displays and message systems. Devices typically required a tailored version of each message. Developing and implementing new content required days, even weeks.

The solution is a single media-management system that links to all message devices throughout the property, and pushes content to each without the need to create multiple versions of the same information. This relatively inexpensive option communicates information quickly to guests, and enables marketers to drive consistent messages throughout the property.

It can also provide content to interactive way-finding directories and kiosks, back-of-house electronic message boards, in-machine displays, in-room TV, and even mobile devices. Guests on the casino floor, in the elevators, or in their rooms can learn about gaming promotions, food-and-beverage specials, and available packages at sister properties.

Real-time communication also has the ability to generate or increase excitement during game play, a feature Linda Devine, senior vice president of marketing at Barona Resort and Casino in California, has noticed.

“Real-time communication has the ability to generate or increase excitement during game play.”

“Our guests are certainly more aware of the resort's promotions since we installed the media-management system late last year, and the messages are creating a new level of excitement on the casino floor,” Devine says. “For instance, when they use the media manager to announce a winner for the casino's Rapid Fire promotion, guests begin asking staff when the next one will begin.

“Our system contains a content creator that enables us to develop message content on the fly. What used to take us hours to create now takes seconds. And the system resizes the messages and animations for all of our digital-display screens, including our 50-inch monitors, LCD and plasma screens, and message windows on our gaming machines.”

Barona can also establish a series of triggers to generate specific messages. A trigger is simply an external result or event that tells the media-management system to issue a message. For example, if a progressive jackpot machine reaches \$50,000, the system issues a notice to all guests.

Devine says they create messages that contain

graphics, animation and sometimes sound. They've done countdowns when they know someone is going to win a promotion, which helps build anticipation and excitement among players.

For casinos, presenting and sharing gaming information that encourages a lucky feeling is vital. The instant-messaging availability helps create the aura of a winning environment for players. This kind of an atmosphere motivates players to stay and play longer.

The new Sands Casino Resort Bethlehem in Pennsylvania installed a media-management system as part of its overall design. Jason Nibauer, vice president of brand marketing, says the casino wanted a system that dynamically presented information to its guests and employees. The media-management system works with existing products and offers future integration with other communication devices.

In addition to using the media-management system on the casino floor and in the food court, the Sands Bethlehem casino communicates information to employees in back-of-house areas. In the staff lunchroom and employee entrances, employees receive news about multiple topics including policies and parking changes.

What's more, the system is tied to the resort's bus terminal to provide destination and departure information to waiting patrons. Bally customized this feature for the property.

“We have a cost-effective, user-friendly system that is expandable, scalable, and simplifies our operations,” Nibauer says. “In addition to installing additional monitors around the resort to further our communication reach, we intend to extend its connections to our conference center and the hotel side.”

Media-management systems are more than a just a high-tech communication tool. They are becoming the industry standard for taking casino communication, marketing, branding and guest relations to the next level.

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