

WHAT'S IN A TITLE? MARKETING DEPARTMENT



CRM. SEO. CMO. Alphabet soup acronyms within the marketing department can certainly be confusing, so within this Q&A (there we go again) we'll try to pass along some good info:

- CRM- Customer Relationship Marketing
- SEO- Search Engine Optimization
- CMO- Chief Marketing Officer

In these challenging economic times attracting and retaining new or current customers is paramount within the gaming industry. To help us get more detailed insights into the marketing areas we reached out to Brian Bork, Vice President of Marketing Strategy, MGM Resorts. Brian has more than 4 and half years with MGM, as well as experience with Harrah's and Accenture. He has his MBA from Pepperdine, and a Masters degree in Information Technology from the University of Denver. Here are Brian's insights:

G&L: Tell us about the MGM properties.

BB: MGM Resorts boasts over 40,000 room nights per day, ranging from our most luxurious properties such as Aria, Bellagio, and Mandalay Bay, to our more economical properties such as Luxor, Excalibur and New York-New York. To appeal to the non-gaming customer we have properties that are solely resorts such as The Signature at MGM Grand, Vdara at CityCenter, and THEHotel at Mandalay Bay, that embody all that Las Vegas has to offer while excluding the casino atmosphere. However, our customers are able to go to any of our properties and enjoy any of our outlets while being globally recognized as an MGM customer. Our offers allow our customers to book at any MGM property while still being recognized by the property they visit the most. We also have beautiful properties that are best-

in-class in their respective markets such as MGM Grand Detroit, Beau Rivage on the Gulf Coast of Mexico, and Gold Strike in Tunica, Mississippi, that just received an \$80 million renovation.

G&L: Tell us what is currently on your front burner.

BB: We transformed Loyalty Marketing into Strategic and Relationship Marketing (SRM) to better align ourselves with the vision set forth by our CEO and CMO. Our leadership has a strong desire to advance our marketing and will enable MGM Resorts to implement 1:1 Marketing, which is easier said than done. In order to achieve this we needed to know more about the customer's transactions, their preferences, and the channel/manner in which we should communicate with them. One thing we knew for sure is our customers wanted more transparency around our Players Club, so we gave it to them. At a high level we now have a program where customers understand how to earn comps and point play, and how tiers have associated service benefits. Our program also supports offers that incent cross property visitation.

In order to launch M life and begin down the 1:1 marketing road, technology enhancements became essential, which are currently underway. To make the most of these enhancements we needed a team that could help drive initiatives across all efforts; therefore, we have aligned ourselves around Analytics, Relationship Marketing, and Marketing Operations. The SRM team is designed to build better capabilities and tools for property consumption, which now includes the use of Aprimo, our campaign management, and trigger-based tool, new approaches for understanding customer value, and reports that

allow a better understanding of reinvestment and opportunity.

G&L: What are the main differences in responsibilities between Marketing the Casino, and Marketing the Hotel?

BB: Our company actually generates more non-gaming than gaming revenue, but our initial efforts are focused on the casino side. The biggest challenge in our company is the limited amount of hotel data we have in comparison to the rich data we comprise on the casino side largely due to M life Players Club. With the expansion of online travel agencies (OTA) such as Expedia, Orbitz, and Hotels.com, the customer is owned by the OTA, not the hotel with which they stay. With that in mind, price is perhaps the biggest driver of where to stay, as everyone is looking for deals; therefore the brand may take a back seat. For casinos, loyalty revolves more around the comps and where they most enjoy playing.

G&L: Describe a typical day in your work schedule.

BB: Two words – committees/meetings. Our company has a philosophy that all properties should be represented and all brains should be in the game; therefore, it's rare that any one decision is made by a single person, but rather by representation and input among all properties. Other topics that I focus greatly on are CRM technology used to achieve better mar-

Salary Ranges

Casino Size	Manager	Director	Vice Pres
Small	55K-65K	65-80K	80K-110K
Medium	60K-75K	75K-110K	110K-130K
Large	70K-90K	95K-125K	125K-175K
Mega	75K-95K	100K-150K	160K-250K

Job Titles and Ranges subject to change

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keting, the development of analytical frameworks and reports, and the additional phases around M life. No one day is the same, and I am fortunate that I have a great team to work with, and peers who are the smartest people.

G&L: What are some of your top departmental priorities, and challenges?

BB: Our priority is to create a better customer experience by understanding the customers' needs and desires. This of course leads back to better analytics, messaging, and offers that resonate, and the behavior patterns that offer opportunities. This in turn leads to enhanced technology and resources across the board. All requires capital, and determining how much is typically the biggest challenge any company comes across. Our other big challenge is that as a company we only started down this road a few years ago and this kind of change does not hap-

pen overnight. Our industry, especially Las Vegas, is looking for this economy to roar back strong, and when it does we believe we will be in a better position to take advantage.

G&L: Has the slowdown in the economy noticeably affected your department?

BB: Our department (SRM) has actually grown in head count to support our company vision. However, that doesn't mean that budgets grow as they are normally a function of revenue. The economy has not treated our industry or Las Vegas too kindly, and to ensure our long term growth we've all had to learn how to operate smarter. The properties have all implemented campaign management and added staff accordingly, so this is just the start to better marketing.

G&L: Where do you see the future of the industry going?

BB: Server-based gaming has always been the chatter, but that's a large capital investment. In the meantime new channels, such as social media, mobile marketing, and online gaming, will add new ways to capture revenue. I also think that international gaming will continue to grow and at some point, Vegas-like markets will populate throughout the world.

I want to thank Brian for his time and comments. Over the decades Marketing and Promotions have gone from gut feeling/hit and miss, to a science and analytics. We wish Brian, MGM Resorts and M life all the best!

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