

# What's In a Title?

## THE VP OF HUMAN RESOURCES



For those of us mature enough to remember 8 track tapes, vinyl records, and cars with wing-windows, technology in the last 30 years has really been mind blowing. Not only can you physically see

who you are talking with on the phone live, you can also get emails on your wristwatch! For most of us, the younger generation seems to have adapted much better to this technology, and in my opinion they adapt better to other changes as well.

A couple of industry titles that were constants but have changed over the years are Comptroller, now Controller; and Personnel Director, now Human Resources (HR) Director. The HR executive has taken on more responsibilities besides hiring, time-keeping, and counseling. To explore this role, I reached out to an industry expert for advice. Annette Aguirre is the Chief Human Resources Officer for Morongo Casino Resort & Spa. Prior to this, she was the VP of HR with Penn National Gaming, and has also worked for Tropicana Entertainment, Boyd Gaming, and Park Place Entertainment.

**G&L:** Tell us about Morongo Casino Resort.

**AA:** Morongo Casino Resort & Spa was opened in late 2004 and is one of the largest and most successful tribal gaming facilities in the nation. The luxurious resort is located 20 minutes west of Palm Springs and 90 minutes east of Los Angeles. Morongo boasts 310 deluxe rooms, 32 suites and six oasis casitas. Our casino boasts over 150,000 sq. ft. of gaming action to include approximately 2,800 machines, 60 table games, and a private poker room. Additional amenities include the oasis sandy beach pool, waterslide, lazy river, full service spa, state-of-the-art fitness center, full service salon and multiple restaurant choices.



Annette Aguirre  
Chief Human Resources Officer for  
Morongo Casino Resort & Spa

*"We want every hire to be a win-win for both the team member and the company." - Annette Aguirre*

Our 2,250 team members are proud to offer AAA four diamond service to each and every guest!

**G&L:** Tell us about the organizational chart for your department.

**AA:** Morongo offers a full service human resources team that is strategically aligned with the needs of the business. The various departments within HR interact with each team member throughout their career at Morongo. Recruitment ensures the right fit. We hire for personality and train for skill. We believe that a great attitude and enthusiastic demeanor is not taught, it is innate! Once the right fit is selected, our training department kicks into gear teaching the skills necessary to

be successful at our property. Our comprehensive compensation plan offers a rich benefits program, which is self-funded and managed internally by our HR team as well. Having a competitive compensation program is vital, but just as important is having fun at work! We also have a dedicated staff focused on engagement of our team, and ensure communication is open, accurate and often — it flows up, down, across departments, and across positions. In addition, we find plenty of time to share good times at and outside of work with events such as picnics, talent shows, and recognition programs. Finally, our team member relations department is focused on ensuring our managers are fair, consistent, and great leaders.

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

**AA:** Schedules vary with business needs, however our priority is to be available when our team members need us. Being in a 24/7 business, we are on call at all times, and are available to anyone — either in person or phone at any hour. In a typical day, our HR team is managing several diverse issues; we could be having a team member giveaway, celebrating an anniversary, renegotiating an insurance program, investigating a problem, training a team of managers, new-hire orientation facilitation, reviewing labor needs of the organization, or simply out on the floor shaking hands and telling our staff "thank you" for the great job they do!

**G&L:** What are some of your top departmental challenges?

**AA:** Our biggest challenge is finding talent in our geographical area. We are located in the middle of the desert and a very large percentage of our team members commute from the surrounding 60 mile radius. As with all casi-



**AA:** Human Resources is the nucleus of the organization. Our managers are trained to

AA: We are on the path to a completely paperless environment. We currently use an

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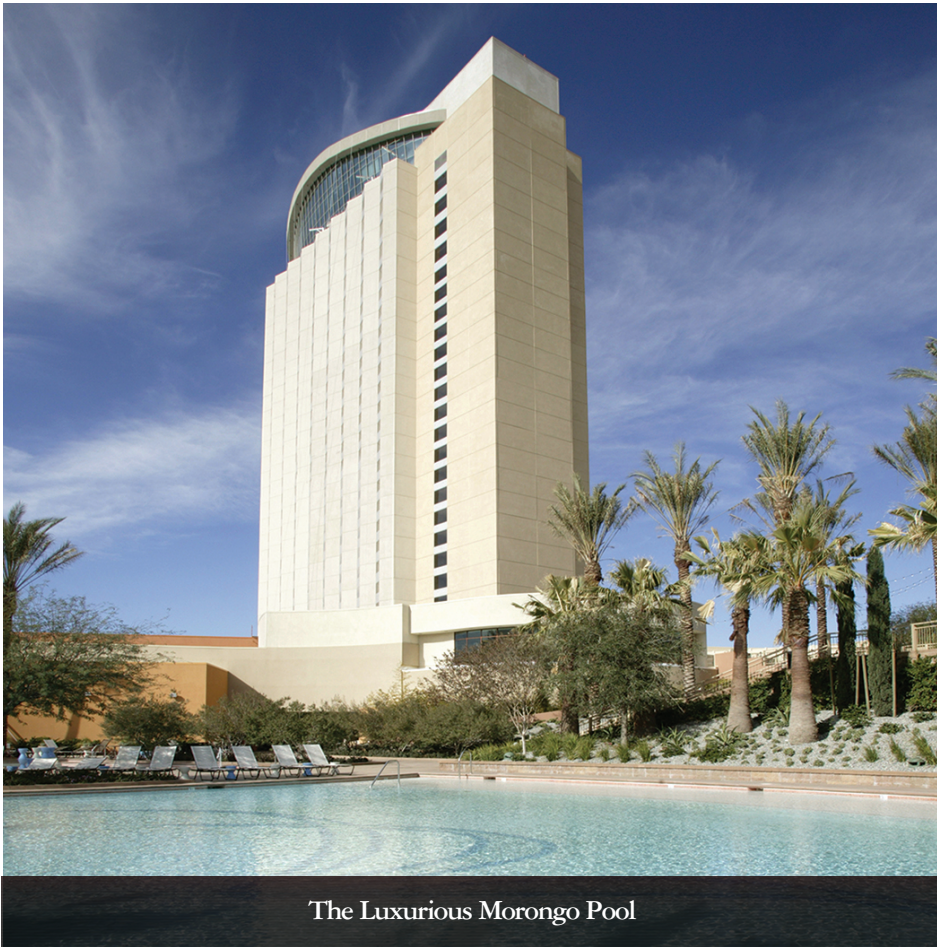
- due to lost paperwork
- incorrect addresses
- ownership changes
- overpayment errors and more!

***YOU*** receive the check!

A large pile of crumpled US dollar bills, representing cash. The bills are mostly green and white, with some showing the number '100'. They are piled together in a messy, disorganized way, suggesting a large sum of money.

## 855-50-Audit





applicant tracking system that allows the applicant to input his or her own personal information. This information is automatically transferred to our Human Resources Information System (HRIS) once the applicant is hired. At this point, each team member's personnel file is created and stored electronically. We are working on creating a paperless document for every action that goes into a team member's file. Our goal is to be completely paperless in 2014!

As you can see, HR touches many departments, and can encompass many responsibilities including: Employee Relations, Labor (Union) Relations, Benefits, Compensation, HRIS, Payroll, Policies & Procedures, Diversity, Recruitment, Organizational Development (OD), Training, Employee Wellness, and Work/Life Balance Programs.

We wish to thank Annette for her insightful comments, and as always would love to hear from you with any questions or comments.

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