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**MARKETING 101 – DEVELOP A
MARKETING PLAN THAT WORKS!**

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MR. JOE WITTERSCHEIN: Okay, here we are in the homestretch, that's the right word for the seminar. Fundamentals of developing a marketing plan. And my name is Joe Witterschein, and I'm vice president with The Innovation Group. A little bit about The Innovation Group. The Innovation Group is a research and marketing firm, specializes primarily in gaming and we've been around for about 16 years and we put together the educational courses here at this particular Symposium as well as G2E and places of that nature.

Within The Innovation Group, we do a lot of operational auditing. Not accounting auditing but operational auditing.

We go into casinos racetracks, racinos, we kick the tires and check the oil and do a report and get back to the board of directors, shareholders, management and say here's what's working, here's what's not working when something isn't working they bring us in to fix and install what isn't working. Usually that's programs, advertising, marketing, player development programs, and that's where I spend a lot of my time traveling the country dealing with our clients large and small and their marketing teams on basically fixing what's broken.

The topic today is not foreign. I'm sure everybody to some degree, you or your staff have written or developed or depend on a marketing plan. So I'm not quite sure who was going to be here. I have an overall view, but we can get down to intimate details if you want when we go to the questions.

So let's begin.

The executive summary tends to be the deliverable that most of the people who are putting together a marketing plan have to nail down so those people that sign your paychecks feel comfortable that and you your staff did your job.

So I want to emphasize, make sure you put a good amount of time aside. Don't get caught at the 11th hour with the draft of your marketing plan and it's due tomorrow and say, oops, I better put together a summary.

Because there are people, whether it's the board of directors or senior management or whatever the marketing plan is going to, no matter what they tell you, they won't read it cover to cover. They want to look at an executive summary and, fair or not fair, judge the quality of your plan at that point by what they can swallow up by the executive summary.

So make sure on the page provides a summary and key insights of the plan. Particularly highlight, if you are in such a market, key competitive environmental trends. Of course, your business goals and key marketing communication strategies. You don't have a to take notes, I will be more than happy to email this entire PowerPoint to any or all of you when I get back to my office. The summary should be written last.

You have the plan together; you reviewed it and pull out the key topics. And then with just a bullet point situation, put down your executive summary, and the approach is, let's assume the people that are going to read the market plan know nothing about marketing, which some people tell me is usually true, but let's just assume that so make sure your executive summary covers the issues so they can walk away saying, okay, I got it, and they understand. Make sure there's an operating mission statement inside the plan and certainly inside the executive summary.

I have a couple rules. Some of them I've made up, some of them I've learned from different people over the years.

Rule one, if you fail to plan, you're planning to fail. I'm shocked to this day how many places I go to where we get in, and in a very expensive operational audit try to find what's going on, the first thing we discover, they don't have a marketing plan. And you say, what are you thinking, how can you not have a marketing plan?

A lot of people are scared about putting together a marketing plan. It doesn't need to be this 70-80 page bible. It can be 20 or 30 pages that cover top items. But have one. It will be a tool that you can work off of as you move through the year. It's a living, breathing thing. Don't create a document that sits on a shelf somewhere. It's got to be a document that you and your staff and people integrated with it are not afraid to pick up and use.

Make notes. If you have special events, key things going on key weekends, make notes, literally, in your copy of the marketing plan and when you go back for the following year nine or 10 months later, and start drafting the marketing plan, you might be surprised, you're halfway there with some notes.

The finished marketing plan is only as good as desire and ability of your team

to use it. So if you write your plan in a vacuum, you're in trouble. Because I can guarantee you no one else you work with or for will bother to pay attention to it. You have to have a lot of people involved, give them an opportunity to have a say. Which goes to rule number three, the more people involved in creating it, the better.

Now, that's easier said than done. I can assure you in most gaming operations you're dealing with food and beverage, operations, finance, and accounting. They have their own problems. You're the marketing person, you worry about it. If you go off on your own and don't involve them in at least creating the marketing plan, they won't pay attention to it. And they won't be your supporters if the heat gets moving on later in the year, when someone says this is not working. You've got to have people in your corner, and that happens by getting them involved.

The way to get other departments involved, e-mail them or send them a sheet of paper and say: Food and beverage department, what are your key objectives for 2007? Just give me three, four, five key things, one or two sentences each, that are your key objectives. Have them give you what they foresee are those objectives, adding a new outlet, changing menus, whatever the case may be.

And do the same for all other departments that are basically feasible. Security, operations, however your property is set up, and you compile the information and they have a stake in this and as you begin to pick and choose what's acceptable and what doesn't make it, it forces you in more communication with them.

I would get right into business strategies. This is kind of a template I like to use. And again, the marketing plan doesn't have to be a college textbook, it's pages of information, neatly organized, neatly filed so people that might be less educated than you are or less involved with the operation than you are, don't have as much experience, can go to it.

You have marketing departments out there, some large casinos have marketing departments that are hundreds of people. Some smaller riverboat casinos and smaller racetracks have half a dozen people, three or four of them tend to be seasonal. The people on your staff that are going to be involved with dealing with the marketing plan, they better be able to read it and observe it.

This is the format. List the strategies you are going to employ, such as enabling the client to achieve the goal set forth, address some key implications, and we'll get to the insight implication section in a minute. The what and how of what you are talking about is what you should focus on. Not necessarily the why, but the what and how.

Sometimes the why is, because the chairman of the board told me so or the owner of the company said so or somebody higher up the food chain than me told

me, that's the story, so you don't waste time debating that, just go with this. Here's general gaming for example, capture minimum of 25 percent of top tier carded players that have not visited in 90 days.

Obviously, in certain circumstances if you have a player loyalty club, that's going to be an important, critical item for you. You have customers, the customers tend to do other things with their time and money, are you losing market share, are you losing wallet share from them? You want to be sure to retain the customers.

Start from the top and work your way down, make sure you have a lot of effort in terms of human capital and financial capital involved with retaining your best customers and you build your plan from there. Then you are dealing with the review, insights and implications, you might want different terminology. Just a brief description of key learning and insights that is going to impact the plan moving through the fiscal year or calendar year, however you work. Implications that relate back to each of those insights. What you have to do with respect to this.

Here's another format template, again, with business strategy, I might have five or six different strategies, might be 12, might be 30. On this particularly page, for example, recapture 25 percent of carded play visits from their top tier, across the top I have different action steps.

Now, don't necessarily feel when you use a template format that every box and block has to be filled out. You might get to strategy number two that may have only two or three steps. Don't make things up just to fill in the blanks because, one, you're wasting your time and the people on your staff that have to read and absorb it, you're going to throw them off. Keep the meat on the bones, avoid the fat.

Let's go back to the top. Clean up your database and include national change of address efforts. If you were a group of people that were interested in recapturing lost play, that's the first thing you're going to do. I better have the right addresses and these better be people I can communicate to. Because I can't do anything unless I can communicate to them, I can't communicate unless I know who they are and where they are.

In this case the first action is clean up the database. Then you lead to something like set up a timely review of your active and inactive gaming data with the key departments. What I mean is, if you are in a huge organization, you have the finance department and performance analysis department. You have all these other people to give you information. Use them to give you information. Don't be the captain of the ship on your own on something like this.

So make sure you understand what your resources are and if you are going to depend on other resources to get something done, make sure it's notated in the marketing plan.

And that's the case in step B. Moving to the right, establish a player development counter of events. Now, I'm in the genre of things where I want to capture play, I want to go out and get it, so I want to start to have things to motivate these people to be attached to me.

Now, you may get to a point when you review this plan, and I'll use action step C as an example. When you sit down with key department managers that report to you, or other people in the facility that have a vested interest, and let me point out most of you folks, if you are marketing people, live with this all the time. There are dozens of other people at your property that consider themselves advertising experts, am I right about that, and marketing experts? They always have something to say. They don't allow you to come into the food and beverage department and say the menu stinks. But the chef will tell you, I don't like the ad. That comes with the territory. Use it to your advantage.

Establish your player development counter events. Which then naturally leads to install voice-of-the-customer component. And I don't want to get off on a tangent too much. But I do want to mention voice of the customer and I have mentioned it in prior seminars. There's nothing more important you can do than making sure the customer, particularly your high-value, high-visitation customers, feel that they have a voice in what goes on.

You know, and I don't mean comment cards on the property where if they really get pissed off, they can fill one out and send it in. You should have that, and if you have that element make sure you are responding to everybody. I'm talking about something like a blue-ribbon panel, which a lot of properties on the racetrack side and casino side do very effectively.

For example, there's a particular property, a casino in Albuquerque, New Mexico, not very large but not small either. They have an active database of about 4,000 people who at least every six months are in their casino gambling what they consider a fair amount of money. That's the active database, the database may be four times that size but a lot is made up of tourists that come in and don't do much.

So now you have your active database, and within your active database you just keep drilling down until you find the people that give you high frequency, if you have the opportunity to track that, a combination of high frequency and high value. That's the cream of the crop. In this case, they might have 500 people. Just to manage it, they are now down in concept to 200. So they have 200 people that belong to the blue-ribbon panel.

Every month they invite 15, 16 people of that 200 in a sit down with the general manager and senior marketing person. Every month faithfully. Sit around the table, doesn't have to be a dinner buffet, nothing more than coffee and danish, set yourself up in the environment where you are listening to what the people have to say.

Originally they start to gripe a little bit, believe me, but once they understand you are really listening to what they have to say, they start to give you certain perspectives of your operation, and your competition, and again, what these people do with their time and money that you want more of, that you need to know.

You invited 15, 16, 17 of these people, you haven't talked to the other 180. You take minutes at the meeting and send out a piece of direct mail specifically addressed to the other 180 to say, here's what we talked about and by the way, here's the action steps. Here's what we're going to do about it.

Now, some of those things that they request are things that can't be done, it's impossible, might even be illegal. Be forthright and say, there was a request that we do this, we can't. Because the State of New Mexico doesn't allow us or whatever the case may be. Be frank with people. If you are frank with them, they will be frank with you. So you are sending out minutes to the remaining 180, next month another 15 come in, and you keep repeating the process.

What you find out over time, the key customers, whatever the number is, those people become extremely loyal to you. You get increased visits from them, they feel more appreciative. And less likely what they call "cost of switching." They are less likely to go do something else because something else doesn't have that rich of a relationship with them.

So I didn't mean to go off on a tangent, but voice of the customer, if you take nothing away from this seminar, you want to go back and say, I want a strong voice of customer element in my marketing.

Action E, launch new direct marketing campaign. If I was looking to recapture visits, I need to communicate with people. I need their address, have events worth talking about. I want to hear what they have to say about it and I want to communicate it to them. Just for demonstrating purposes there's other things on there and I'm more that happy to send this to everyone.

A situation analysis is a chapter, or element of your business plan that is extremely critical. The good news and bad news, bad news, it takes a lot of effort and work to put it together. The good news is it's the perfect tool for involving other people, whether it's people on your marketing staff who are not necessarily savvy enough to sit there and write a lot of marketing plan elements on their own but they want to have something to say, send them out as your mystery shoppers. Use these people to go out in the competitive marketplace and put some information together.

So you're looking for trends and major insights, you want to cover consumer psychology. I don't want to scare you with that term. But basically, top of mind, your senior staff, what do they think the customer thinks, do they like us, not like us, is our facility dirty, what are the things your customers have been telling you directly or indirectly over the years, and you want to cover that section. It's not

going out and hiring a firm to do this analysis for you, your employees, believe me, think for the most part like the customers do. So they will tell you.

Specific trends, demographics and psychographics, a lot of that information is available, it's available on the Internet. The U.S. government has plenty of it with census data. Most state tourism and boards will be more than happy to give you the information. You want to pick out interesting information. You might have a facility in a market that is projected to grow in population exponentially over a number of years. You want to include that information in your marketing plan.

You want to understand the competition, the competitive set, who is out there, and I don't mean if you happen to be a racetrack or casino, strictly other casino operators, I'm talking other major entertainment venues your customer is going to spend their money on. You want to understand what they are up to.

Are they expanding, is there a new hotel going up something you know can have an adverse impact to you? Or the other way, is something closing down? One area that gets overlooked in the competitive situation is highway traffic construction. Impact-type stuff.

There's a particular property we worked with in the San Francisco Bay area that had a grand plan to expand with a parking garage and these things. They had the money to do with it and the time was right. But nobody checked with the Department of Transportation to find out the exit from the interstate that the traffic was going to come from was going to be closed for 14 months and rerouted. You can't control it, but you can make sure your marketing plan is adjusted to deal with that kind of business interference.

Target markets, you know, geographic communities and scope of mileage, 50-miles 100, 200. What are your opportunities? And it goes back to understanding the database, if you have a database. If you don't, I urge you to put one together. Make sure you run easy software, you can buy something called "Postal Soft" and you can run your database through this and give you zip code penetration. You know, either by purpose or by accident, here's the customers that I have. And here's where they happen to come from, and you may surprise yourself. They may not come from your backyard. There may be pockets of people 40, 50, 70 miles away and that collectively may mean something to you.

SWOT, or "strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats." Competitive situation, possible bad weather if you are up north where you know you're going to be in trouble a couple months a year, get that covered. And then deal with that in a summary aspect, overall insights and implications to your marketing success in the marketing goal section, again, this is to measure specific things. And this could be a very long laundry list. It depends on the type of operation or property that you have.

But just for information purposes, market share overall, do you have the opportunity or ability to understand market share? Market share can be a number

of quantifiable things, head count, in revenue situation, and if you are in a state that makes public all the gaming information, or racing information, have that state association give you a lot of that data. And then begin to understand where you want to be. And map it out moving forward.

Sales, that may be nothing more than banquet sales if you have that operation. It may be hotel sales if you are a property with a hotel facility. And you get to hotel sales, you have multiple segments. You have general transient people and group business and corporate business. However you augment and segment it down, please do. Player development goals, I want this many new sign-ups and conversions of sign-ups, which I broke out as a separate goal.

Conversion of sign-ups, you can knock yourself wacky having all these events and giving a car away and create all these new addresses. Now you have the new addresses, how many of these people 30 days, 60 days, 90 days, are back in your facility actively gaming? So you should set up conversion goals, and if you don't have goals, you lose track of what you are trying to do and your staff will feel undercommunicated to.

If they understand we want 15 percent conversion in the first 30 days, 15 percent of the people we signed up that most have returned and we want to make sure we maintained 10 percent conversion by 60 days and seven percent by 90 days. Unless you stated that, it's not going to happen, you have no chance of making it happen.

Win per unit per day is a very specific gaming issue for people in the racino casino business. You have so many units on the floor, you have 1,300 slot machines, 80 table games, so many seats, so what happens in the casino business, they get a finite number. We want our slot machines to reach \$332 a day, win per unit.

And then you find yourself developing elements of your marketing plan to make it happen. If you have goals to shoot for, you develop a laundry list of items to get you there.

Key strategies here, I like to keep it limited. If you are someone trying to satisfy senior management or board of directors, where they are into the volume thing, the more you have, the better they think you are, maybe you can win that battle by talking them out of it, maybe you can't.

I like to keep it short and sweet. Five or six key marketing strategies you are going to employ. They have to be able to achieve the goals you put on the page. Again, remember to keep addressing the key implications and make sure they are aligned with the facility business plans. Again, if you have a buffet restaurant and you're going to increase covers, you want to make sure there isn't new construction going on around the corner that's going to impact the enjoyment of that venue. You're kidding yourself if you are going to increase covers and these kinds of things.

Again, back to the what and how. Here's a great casino example. Create a compelling product position for VIP services or you can use the name of a club there, but I just used VIP services, in the marketplace by focusing on product-specific tactics.

Brand analysis, again, this is one of those topics that scares people and they run away. I'm not talking about hiring everybody that ever graduated from Stanford University to come in and do a brand analysis for you. A brand analysis can start by getting feedback from the other department. What are we, what do we stand for, what do you think. And back to the blue-ribbon panel thing, ask your customers.

What is the position of that brand and of the desired brand, or do you feel in your heart of hearts you have a particular property that's the best entertainment venue in the market? But in reality, it's not the case. Be honest and look to see where you want to go.

And different brand attributes. What are the outstanding distinguishing features about your property? Easy to get to, easy to park, very clean, friendly, whatever those things may be, what are the success stories you know you already have, and make sure you are not losing sight of them. Keep on point with those things.

A core position statement is important. If you don't have the core position statement, then the marketing plan is not attached to something, so the core position statement in certain cases, we want to increase EBITA by X percent.

You may not like the statement. You may disagree with the CEO but if that's being pushed to you, that's the core statement. God bless them. That's the core statement and we'll build our marketing plan from there.

Implications, and then the creative strategies. Creative strategies, make sure you break down what you're going to ask and rely on your staff to handle and what you're going to farm out.

So if you work with an advertising or ad agency, have a good understanding of what they are going to touch and a good understanding of what your team deals with.

Here we get in the action plans using the VIP services that I talked about, create a compelling position for VIP services. We have an action step. We're going to create specific television and radio spots and print ads to position our club in the marketplace. I'm going to assign that responsibility to someone. There's a woman by the name of Julie, she is our player development manager, that's her, her stake in this, and I'm going to put some timing on it.

Now, on March second you're not going to beat her over the head about it if

it's not happening. But as the head of the department or senior marketing person, you certainly want to give your people enough latitude to get things done with the clear, precise instruction of what they should be doing and have them keep communicating with you. You may get there by February 15. And you have dates of this nature all the way through, and some of those dates you'll hit and some you won't. And some of those dates you don't hit may be totally out of your control.

What you thought was your budget as you moved through the year starts to get taken away a bit. It's more common than not common and you have to deal with it. And your additional action steps, and you include this process through each of your strategies.

Creative strategy, back to the particular example. We want to grow the market share of our VIP players. So in this particular market and I'm not trying to force it on you, in this particular market I use, an example, males 35 to 55, particular household income. So I know exactly, it's a bull's eye, define the bull's eye, you're not going to hit the bull's eye unless you know what it is. Define it.

Then the desired action. TV, radio or print. I'm not talking about the percentage, I'm not talking about the money involved, but I know it's the high level I'm going to communicate to these potential people through these mediums. The XYZ club is the single place where the players recognize and reward it. So the name of that club, that's my, the Ford Motor's "quality is job one" kind of mission statement. That's the mission statement related to the creative. Any creative you do, make sure it's feeding back to the mission statement.

If some staff graphic artist or some external ad agency that loves to charge you for their time keeps sending you something, you have to look at it and judge, does it hit the bull's eye with my statement? Is it really hitting what I want it to hit? If it doesn't, send it back. And you have a creative agency that keeps missing the mark, you have the wrong agency.

Support, reason to believe. That's to be determined in this particular case. There's an illustration, don't feel that in every equation or question or topic in the marketing plan that every I and every T is always dotted because it's not. Because as you move through the year, certain things that were not obvious in the fourth quarter when you were putting it together might not happen until week 14 or 19 or 20 of the year. Feel free to make sure that the marketing plan is a living, breathing thing and you are not afraid to go in and add and adjust and delete.

Personality. Exciting, personal, active. Three words here, some places like to use five words. Again, it goes to creative. One of the best things to do with a creative campaign, come up with three or five words that you feel have to be conveyed in everything that's done.

But Borgata in Atlantic City, I use this as an example because it's such a big place and they do it as well as anybody. There's not a single item in that property, down to the soap in the hotel rooms that does not meet the four or five words they

have attached that define their facility.

Sit around with your management and come up with the three or four or five words that say what we are. Value, clean, whatever those things may be. Then those words are bedrock, those words are bedrock and everything that takes place, every promotion, every T-shirt printed every piece of mail sent out, every radio spot played, all of it ties back in exactly to those words.

Media goals and strategy, objectives and strategies, this is just a template. Meeting planning parameters, timing and seasonality. Comes into play if you are a facility like John here, where you have a poker room all year long but you have a race season, you have adjustments in communication.

Obviously there's a budget. You want to know the target audience, and if you don't have a media buying service doing this for you, make sure you have put effort into understanding the units or buys that you have, the media makes, in the budget and analysis process and timeline.

The key with advertising, half of it works for you, half will not work. You may never know which, but you better do the best you can to understand if you are running special radio spots or direct mail or you have particular run of press newspaper going on that know after the fact what drove, was there new business, particularly increase in handle, were there more cars parked? As many quantifiable elements that you can bring to the table. You might not hit the mark on every one, but as many quantifiable elements that you can list for every particular ad campaign, the better you feel as you move through the year. If someone starts to beat you up about the marketing expenses you have something to fall back on and it will help you for next year.

Back to the budget. Have the prior year data ready to go. Too many people get to a marketing plan and they haven't really digested what took place in the past year, all of that quantifiable information that you know you need and you know your property well enough, in some cases, cars parked, attendance, midweek versus weekend, covers in the individual restaurants and all the other financial information. You better have it.

Also flush out any and all capital expense issues, don't get surprised. If senior management has something on their hidden agenda, it's time for them to share it with you.

And you've got to let them know to speak now or forever hold their peace, you don't want to find out three months into the year that there's something major going on with money, because the money they are going to use for that, guess where it's going to come from, it's going to come from your marketing budget.

Don't guess on the new numbers and the dollars, and I like to call this low-hanging fruit. Have everyone involved in the marketing plan agree on the low-hanging fruit. This goes back to CAP expense, meaning if you get the phone call and or you have a Monday morning meeting, you know the \$30,000 you had set

aside, we need that because we need to put in a series of new pizza ovens. So as the marketing person at that moment in time, you don't want to have to go back and bring the troops together and figure out what are we not going to do. You want to have that done at the beginning the year. So rank your programs in order from top, meaning "over my dead body is this going," to the low-hanging fruit.

When you start to lose money, which is going to happen, you have already decided, with everybody's buy-in of the list of those it's, when something has to go, we know what it is, it's gone, here's the next thing on the list. Don't try to do that during the year as you are operating.

People get too emotional and you make major mistakes. Risk and contingencies, I show it as a template. It can be as long as want. You want to summarize each of your primary tasks with the plans. Competitive actions, legal issues, state gaming control board or state casino are going to have things coming around the corner that are new to you, that didn't exist the previous year, make sure you have those things laid out.

For any of those particular risks highlight what you are willing to do and what you can do to prevent it and minimize the impact if it happens. It may mean budget reallocations or some new activity.

Ron Sulzemeier was talking the other day about a major special event, a Countryfest at Saratoga. The decision was made not to have it. At least they knew it going into the year and built their plan accordingly. You may be in the situation where you plan to have a Countryfest and 12 weeks out something comes down the pike, heat from the community, or change in the zoning laws, whatever, you can't have it. This kind of "how do we handle the situation" is drafted in the your marketing plan.

To end it, I call it easy steps to follow. Again, make sure you have a project vision statement and everybody is bought in on it. You don't want to publish a marketing plan and not have the senior people on the property have bought into what you are trying to do on an overall vision statement.

Make sure you include your marketing objectives and strategy, followed by the tactics.

Position statement. Key strategic initiatives, this is where you get the other departments involved. Food and beverage, what are two, three, four key things they are going to do. Operations department, the key things they are going to do, racing department, however many departments have a hand in your operation, have them feed you up front their key strategic initiatives. That's when you can lay them all out and see you are not on the same page. And believe me, you would rather know it in November moving into a calendar year than in March.

SWOT analysis, it's not only a necessary element of the Marketing plan but one of the best tools you have to engage your staff. Let them have fun with that.

Individual department objectives, tied to strategic initiatives, and then accurate statistics and data, don't make stuff up. If the food and beverage manager can't tell you how many buffet covers he had on peak weekend dates last year, then I would suggest in your marketing plan you're going to create a system that allows that kind of information to come, because you need it.

Well that's that, and again I'll certainly be more than happy to take all the time you need on questions, and if you would like me to email this PowerPoint to you when I get back to my office over the weekend I'll send it right out.

Anybody have any particular question they want to comment?

A VOICE: How far in advance do you start, say it's 07?

MR. WITTERSCHEIN: How far out? Depends on how dysfunctional you are as an organization. And I don't mean to be funny. It depends on, you may have a good understanding of how long it's going to take you to get through the approval process, let's say you have a year that works on a calendar year.

So and you need to have a marketing plan in place on January one, so you move backwards and say we should have a signed off and approved plan by December first, which means, working back to November, we need to have a couple drafts, now I'm in October or late September to really getting my act together.

Now, you would push the calendar further back if there was serious financial implications to the overall budget of the property. As you know, I worked down the street and worked at a place where marketing spent significant money, into the \$40 million a year category, \$40 million marketing expenses, all the approval of that had better taken place, because what we got or didn't get is going to impact other departments, and as you know, we had to deal with tribal issues and everybody had a say. It depends on your own operation.

Keep in mind, you are dealing with humans, people on your staff with families, it's tough in most markets to get in strategic planning in August. Because people are in summer vacation mode and getting kids ready to go back to school. Post Labor Day, again, if you work off a calendar year basis, is when the focus starts to come together. But you'll help yourself if you have kept serious notes from the prior year. And you have heard the term thrown around, post forma, after an event large or small, get the key people in the room and just talk it through and make notes.

Maybe you did a car giveaway, and by all accounts of the 12 or 13 things you did, nine of them went well, two were okay and the rest were horrible. Well, that's nice when you talk about it two days after the event. When August or September rolls around and you say, let's do the car giveaway again, you start to reach in your mind what worked and what didn't work and you start to lose track of things. So keep good notes.

A VOICE: You were talking about developing a media plan, and a lot of us in this industry we're finding decreased access to marketing channels, in a situation like that would you develop the plan as an idealistic thing and then develop contingency plans in case you don't have access to the marketing channels? How would you go about that?

MR. WITTERSCHEIN: Contingency plan, for sure. I'm assuming you are talking about the ability to communicate to the customers in the way you traditionally do with sensitive gaming information.

A VOICE: More just access to newspapers, TV, etcetera.

MR. WITTERSCHEIN: Well, what you certainly would look to do, and again, you get into the implication section, so if you say, okay, I do billboards X amount of dollars, radio X amount of dollars, print, even break print down in categories. You need to make sure you understand which of that list, all other issues aside, you can least afford to lose. Once you have understood which one you can least afford to lose, the one at the top of the list you start to develop major contingency plans for.

And then have that down, and sometimes the contingency plan, I advertise on billboards and there's a potential the county or state I live in is going to have a major greenspace billboard law come out. So all these key billboards I have on the interstate highways leading to my facility there's a 90 percent chance by the time I get to the middle of my year they are going to go away. If you know it now, start to put your plan together. So you don't get the phone call, state senator so-and-so just pushed through this law, the billboards are gone. And then you're scrambling.

Because, for example, if the billboards are gone, it's going to affect not only you but other advertisers, potentially. So whatever media space is out there is going to be tight and everybody is running for it and the people who sell you the advertising know that and supply and demand comes in and you are paying more. So fall back on that.

I would certainly make sure if you don't have a direct mail program of any degree in your facility you get one moving. Direct mail is certainly the most efficient way of communicating with key customers, and it may be a small part of your operating plan now, but moving forward, if the base is there, you can dump more in it, so to speak, pretty quickly. Anything else?

A VOICE: How would you incorporate blog in your marketing?

MR. WITTERSCHEIN: First thing, what is the penetration in the marketplace of your customers demographically and is there a comfort level with that?

In the blue-ribbon panel I talked about, I would attach that, if you have a Web site, have an opportunity to where customers can give feedback directly off your Web site and keep your fingers crossed and let it be set up in a situation where other people can see it. I would make sure a lot of advertising that you do

in whatever format is built around testimonial advertising. That puts the message out there, because you can control it. Positive things, and when you have positive things out there, the people that have bad experiences at your property, and that's sure to happen, they are less likely to run quickly and beat you up.

Anything else? Okay. Ten minutes to spare.

(Applause)

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