



TABLE TALK: A hire cause

by Greg Marquart

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What makes a player stay at a table?

While a dealer needs to be able to color-up, pay and collect, deal, follow gaming rules and regulations, run equipment properly, and maintain control of the game; none of these things are what make players stay at the table. They don't create memories. They don't build guest loyalty.

Aside from winning, it's the dealer's attitude and personality that are going to determine whether a player is going to stay and keep playing. We know this, and yet when it comes to recruiting and hiring, we tend to focus on an applicant's ability to perform task-driven duties and enforce the rules rather than on their ability to provide an outstanding guest experience.

The primary job of a dealer is not to be an enforcer; it's to be an entertainer. If you keep this in mind throughout the recruiting and hiring process, or, more specifically, as you create dealer job descriptions and conduct interviews, you will have a much better chance of bringing on board dealers who will deliver the experience promised by your brand and your marketing.

PROPER DESCRIPTIONS

While you should include the obvious duties and requirements of a dealer in a dealer job description, the focus of your job description should be on strong interpersonal and verbal communication skills.

How likely do you think you would be to attract candidates who are naturally friendly and have a genuine desire to interact with guests if the only requirements listed in your job description are things such as: "inspect all decks of cards prior to use," and "shuffle and deal cards," and "ensure game protection?"

While you should include the operational tasks and other duties required of a dealer in your description, you should lead with service-related requirements such as: "create a fun environment at the game," and "create positive gaming experiences for our players," and "customize the gaming experience to fit the needs of the players."

In addition to helping you attract the best people for the job, job descriptions are your first opportunity to set employee expectations. Take full advantage of them by leading with the service skills and behavioral qualities you require rather than the perfunctory skills that are easier for managers to train and much easier for employees to learn.

INTERVIEW SKILLS

Asking well-designed, service-oriented questions during candidate interviews is a great way to predict with a high degree of confidence whether or not a potential hire has the ability to deliver the desired guest experience once they get out on the floor.

Often, we hire people whose attitudes and personalities don't align with our service culture either because we feel we have to fill gaps quickly or because we are swayed by the way an applicant appears on paper. We need to fill positions with warm bodies, so we pick people who appear to have the required skills and knowledge to do the job, only to find ourselves watching these dealers' lack of enthusiasm and communication skills suck the life and fun out of tables a short time later.

One major mistake interviewers tend to make when interviewing candidates for service positions is asking questions that are too general to be useful. Asking, "Do you believe it is important for a dealer to be friendly?" for example, isn't helpful because it doesn't require much thought on the part of the candidate, who will most certainly answer in the affirmative, and because it won't lead to your gaining an understanding of what constitutes being friendly in the candidate's mind. Instead, ask questions like, "How do you create a fun environment when you deal?" or "How do dealers impact the guest experience?" or "How would you describe your dealing style?" When candidates have to reason their way through their answers, their answers tend to be a lot more telling. Interviewers who ask the right questions can usually determine within a few short minutes whether or not a candidate should continue to be considered.



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While you may think you are saving time and headaches by hiring someone with more experience rather than hiring someone with a better psychological profile who may require more operational training, the reality is that you may actually be hiring employees who will soon become burdens to you, your guests, and your organization as a whole. By taking the time to create and develop service-driven job descriptions and interview questions, you can avoid hiring employees who are a drain on your casino, and instead, hire those dealers for whom being an entertainer is second nature.

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