

18th CAI Casino Conference

Changing the name and format of this year's meeting posed us with an unexpected quandary: was it then the 18th or the 1st CAI Casino Conference? As you can see from the title of this article, tradition prevailed in the end – after all, the know-how exchange at the new conference would carry on where its predecessor left off!

To better reflect the purpose of this important international knowledge exchange forum, this year the meeting of CAI Casino Managers held annually in September was given a new name and a new, interactive format. Far more of the input at the 18th CAI Casino Conference came directly from the participants than had been the case in the past, with the number of invited speakers reduced to one expert for each of the focus topics:

- ISO 9001
- Automatic Roulette Machines
- Gastronomy, F&B and other “non-gaming” casino services
- VIP services and activities

VIP Services, Gastronomy & F&B

Both sessions on Tuesday were moderated by one expert: Walter Junger from the consulting company Walter Junger and Friends. Walter Junger is a 20-year hospitality and F&B veteran and has worked for a number of prestigious companies around the globe, including 10 years as Vice President for Ritz-Carlton Hotels and Resorts in Europe and South America. Ritz-Carlton enjoys international renown for its exceptional guest services. Just a few of his career highlights include the opening of the Ritz-Carlton hotels in Singapore, Dubai and Berlin.

Mr. Junger gave a highly informative and insightful presentation on the achieving of excellence in guest services and on how to use this as a USP (unique selling proposition). In a service-oriented industry, people are the real key to success – you have to make sure you have the right people in the right job and that these people have the right attitude. All Ritz-Carlton staff, for example, adhere fully to the following staff motto: “We are Ladies and Gentlemen serving Ladies and Gentlemen.”



Mr. Junger went on to explain that this attitude is the deciding factor in the whole service question – a person either has the right attitude for the job or they don't. If they don't, they should not be working in a service industry. It is a factor that has to be taken into consideration in every interview for every job in an industry like ours.

We then moved on to the VIP Services “exhibitions”, where the participants shared their thoughts and approaches to this topic – from the highly sophisticated VIP systems presented by Dennis de Beer (General Manager, Goldfields Casino) and Clive van Groeningen (General Manager, Casino Mykonos) to the very personal approach taken by Narinder Punj (Director of Operations, Casino Goa) that prompted this issue's Editorial. At this point, I would also like to thank all the participants who went to the trouble of preparing material for this event for their much-appreciated efforts and valuable contribution to the success of this event.

The Tuesday afternoon session focused on another very important issue in the gaming industry – Gastronomy, Food & Beverage and other non-gaming services. It seems all the good food in Greece had had another effect – and F&B services were high on everyone's list of priorities in this session.

In his presentation, Mr. Junger discussed ways of making a casino restaurant special – from the way the food is presented to the way the restaurant is themed. He also presented various ways of theming F&B services from around the world. In their presentations, the casino managers also addressed the issues of casino packages and integrating F&B offers with the gaming product.

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