

HOW DO CASINOS ATTRACT TOURISTS?



There's no doubt about it, many economies around the world rely heavily on tourism to keep them afloat. This is significant both in terms of the cash that it brings into the country in question as well as the number of businesses it supports and the number of people it employs. For example, in Spain almost 3 million people are employed in the tourism industry worth 64 billion euros a year to the country – and that's around 6% of the population.

On a more micro scale, there are also many leisure-related businesses that rely on tourist income to make them profitable. Naturally, hotels and bars are obvious choices but there is another sector that is almost as reliant and that's casinos. One only has to look at places like Las Vegas to see just how important the tourist industry is to the gambling sector – and that's why it tries so hard to attract visitors year after year.

It seems to be doing well at the moment, with over 42.5 million people visiting the city in 2017. However, in a place like Vegas, there are always going to be many other attractions vying for visitors' attention, not to mention cash, so casinos really have to up their game. It's also an increasingly tough environment for them to operate in with even cities like Macau working hard to develop even more non-casino attractions. Some of this surely has to do with the increasing appeal of online casino with more and more people choosing to play online. In fact, even if visitor numbers to Las Vegas have been steadily increasing year on year, the casino revenues have been falling over the exactly the same period.

Of course, for some casinos their sheer fame and history are enough to keep the punters coming through the door, but others have to try a little harder and use a number of techniques to keep the slots and tables busy.

The perfect holiday attraction

Admittedly, it's easier for casinos to do this than for some other businesses for the simple reason that, for many, they're a perfect addition to some holiday fun. For a start, there's more than a hint of luxury and exoticism to a casino which is a very unusual kind of environment for many people to find themselves in. Plus, people are often looking for a very different kind of experience to the everyday when they're on holiday and the casino is the perfect place to enjoy one. The fact that a casino is a social area where groups of friends can meet up and share in each others' wins and losses also makes them the perfect environment for some escapist activity.

One other aspect that plays perfectly into the casinos' hands is that holidaymakers tend to be a bit more extravagant than when they're at home so they're probably a little more willing to splash the cash about while they're away, even if there's a good chance that they'll end up losing at least some of it.

So these are some of main reasons why casinos are naturally appealing to tourists but they also have to use some tried and trusted techniques to get even more of them through the doors.

Money talks

The first, and most effective of these, is to offer special bonuses for first time players at the casino and these work especially effectively because often it really is a case of giving effectively free money to start them playing in the hope that they will then go on to spend more and more once their welcome bonus has run out. These bonuses are vital when it comes to beating the competition, both land-based and online casinos are in constant competition with another, and the best way to get ahead is through making their customers feel valued. It's a technique that's perfected throughout the industry, many of the top online sites offer free spins on their most popular slots. There can also be special promotions once you start to play which arrive as unexpected, but very welcome, surprises.

Another area into which land-based casinos put a lot of their effort is in supplying comps to players. This operates like a sort of points system, quite like a supermarket loyalty card, where the more that you spend, the higher the rewards will be. In today's casinos this is quite easy to administer as most players are given a card when they register at the casino and whenever they are playing on the slots or at a table game this is recording the length of time that they've been playing and the amount that they've been spending.

The more they spend, the bigger the complimentary gifts and treats can be, from free meals and drinks at the lower level right up to hotel rooms and even a chauffeur-driven limo service to and from the airport. The person running the gaming floor, the so-called pit boss, also often has the discretion to hand out these rewards to any players who they think deserves them.

Putting on a show

There's also a final key way that many of the bigger casinos in the world lure in players and that's through staging spectacular stage shows in their hotel and casino complexes. In fact, Las Vegas has become almost as famous for its shows featuring stars as diverse as Elton John and Britney Spears to Celine Dion and Donny and Marie Osmond. It was a tradition that first began in the 1960s with Frank Sinatra and the rest of the Rat Pack and is responsible for attracting millions who might not usually head for a casino but may well do once they're in Vegas to see their favourite stars.

So, as you can appreciate, there are several ways that casinos try to make themselves extra appealing to tourists and all have proved to be successful in the past. But with so many other attractions after their tourist cash, not to mention the ever-growing threat of their online rivals, it's could be an uphill struggle for the bricks and mortar casinos in the future. As to how well they're going to cope with the issue, we'll just have to wait and see.

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