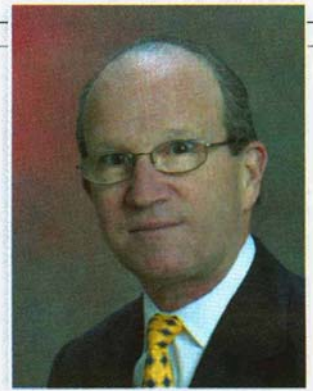


Advanced Management

UNR's Executive Development Program prepares executives to excel



by Dean Macomber

It may be argued that the goal of learning is either to improve oneself for reasons of personal satisfaction, or to sharpen one's abilities to perform at specific tasks.

For the latter, much learning is undertaken to be able to do a better job, to nurture career advancement or to justify higher levels of compensation. However, in the modern business environment, there is always tension surrounding taking "time off" to learn, versus applying that time to your job.

An important option on the "time off" side of this debate is the University of Nevada Reno's Executive Development Program, which since 1991 has been offered by the Institute for the Study of Gambling and Commercial Gaming at UNR, founded by Professor Bill Eadington. One only has to spend a short amount of time in and around the EDP to realize that it is Eadington's commitment and passion for learning that acts as the catalyst for the program.

This is what makes the EDP so powerful and valuable as a learning experience. It is infectious. It breeds individual and collective commitment to be and to do the best. As one participant recently quipped, "Granted, I came expecting to attend seminars and to learn, but by the second day I was caught up in the enthusiasm of the both the faculty and the delegates alike."

Inaugurated in 1991, the ongoing objective of the Executive Development Program has been to create an opportunity where senior gaming managers and executives from around the world can gather and be exposed to the most advanced and sophisticated management strategies in a time- and cost-effective manner. Attendance is typically capped at 64 participants, who are accepted on a qualifications basis.

The delegates who participate in this program contribute much to the flavor and value of the program. Typically, they are about 25 percent Americans, 25 percent Canadians, and 50 percent from Europe, Latin America, Asia, Australia and Africa. This permits substantial cross-pollination of expertise, experience and sharing of ideas. The much vaunted "glass ceiling" for women in the gaming industry was broken some time ago at EDP.

In 2007, 30 percent of the delegates were women.

A number of companies and organizations have sent their key executives to the program over the years. EDP alumni include senior executives from Harrah's, Foxwoods, Mohegan Sun, Hyatt, SIGA, Barona, Tabcorp, Isle of Capri, Holland Casinos, Genting, Las Vegas Sands, Olympic Gaming, Gateway, HIT, British Columbia Lottery Corporation, MGM Mirage, Ontario Lottery and Gaming, and many other gaming companies, government entities and tribal organizations.

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The Executive Development Program takes place in the serene and beautiful mountain setting of Lake Tahoe, Nevada, a venue with four important casino resorts. But delegates should not go to the EDP thinking this will be a vacation in the guise of learning. The program delivers a full agenda of seminars, study sessions and interaction.

The program is structured around about 25 sessions that cover a broad range of executive-level subjects. These topics address issues such as global trends in gaming industries, new technologies, casino marketing, strategic management, leadership, casino math, crisis management, casino architecture and design, responsible gambling, casino security and regulatory challenges. The seminars are highly interactive with many insights generated during the discussions that interlace the prepared lectures.

Professor Eadington is the conductor of the EDP, but he has always shared that role with an industry insider serving as co-moderator of the program, to strike a balance between the theory and practice of gaming management.

In the first decade of the EDP, this role was filled by the late Nigel Kent-Lemon, a London-based consultant who had extensive global gaming corporate experience. For the last decade, Andrew MacDonald—a senior gaming executive whose résumé includes stints with Adelaide, Jupiter's, Sky City, PBL, and currently Genting—has served as co-moderator.

The EDP faculty have been among the most knowledgeable in the world in their own areas, and have included Gary Loveman, Phil Satre, Glenn Schaefer, Chuck Atwood, Peter Bernhard, Jan Jones, Jerry May, Larry Barton, Glenn Christenson, Paul Steelman, Bill Friedman, Larry Lewin, Bill Galston, Bruce Rowe, Richard Schuetz, Sean Monaghan and Harry Curtis.

The program has as a critical component: an intense and competitive case study which focuses on a topical issue that poses a variety of management challenges. Each delegate is assigned to a team, and team members work together throughout the entire 10-day program. Each team represents a gaming company, and each company is faced with a challenge structured to parallel the reality they are likely to encounter in their day jobs.

The program is always scheduled in the fall in the week that precedes G2E. This allows international delegates to attend both EDP and G2E with only one air fare. Applicants should hold a relatively senior position in their organization, and English language skills, both written and oral, are important in order to gain the most value from the program. Prospective delegates should also be computer-literate at the level expected of a senior manager/executive.

Additional information about the course is available at www.unr.edu/gaming, or by calling Judy Cornelius at 775-784-1442.

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