

I'll Take "Innovation" for \$800 ...

How technology can play an important role with your casino customers

By [Rob Gallo](#)



The answer is, "The single most important thing that you can, and should, be doing in your casino business." Remember to phrase your response in the form of a question ... "What is innovation?"

You've heard the saying that "If you're not growing, you're dying." Well, that's very true in today's ultra-competitive casino industry.

If you are not innovating, you're going backwards. For clarification, it's important to understand that innovation goes beyond the obvious technical advancements you can make to your casino offerings, and in fact, innovation starts at your company's ideology. Where you want your casino's brand to be positioned in the minds of your customers is critical.

Whether you enjoy a geographic monopoly as a tribal casino in a remote location where there is not a competitor within 300 miles, or you're on the Las Vegas Strip, you need to think about innovative ways to be different, better and special. Sure, people in general are creatures of habit, and by and large they don't like change, but small, incremental innovations keep things fresh, and your customers will notice and assuredly appreciate it.

All this sounds easy and makes sense, but let's dive in a little deeper and look at some innovative examples that you can implement:

- 1. Pre-Registration (Online) for a Room.** Step into the lobby of the Bellagio on a Friday at three o'clock in the afternoon, and you'll see the check-in line packed with would-be gamblers. With the advanced level of online technology and services that verify a person's identity before they even arrive, using a service like [icarvision](#) is a great value-add for your customers, not to mention that it gets them onto the casino floor much faster. Alternatively, you can have your greeters armed with iPads to handle pre-registration right on property, again alleviating the congestion and making the check-in process much smoother and faster.
- 2. Skill Games.** While game providers might not be ready for the deployment of new skill-based games just yet, they are on the horizon for the very near future, and casino operators should be prepared.

Think about what a "Candy Crush" type of game would do as a replacement for bar-top video poker machines. These are the types of games that your customers are playing on their mobile devices right now, so the viability of the product has already been tested. Imagine factoring in a house edge or entry fee on every game.

- 3. Online Gaming.** Whether you're located in a jurisdiction that allows real money online gambling or not, there are a multitude of innovative options that you can implement in relatively short order. Since the vast majority of customers who visit your casino will be carrying a smartphone with them, why not turn that into a gaming device with on-property mobile gaming? With geo-fencing technology from companies like GeoComply or Locaid, you can be sure that your players can only access your games if they are physically on your property. Thus, waiting in line for the buffet or sitting out by the pool are new gaming opportunities.

If your casino is in a jurisdiction that does not allow real money online gaming, you should be launching a social, play for fun, type of casino in order to build your online presence, AND generate revenue at the same time. Aside from in-app purchases, the ancillary, and more important, income stream may come from driving more players to your casino floor. For a case study on the effectiveness of this approach, look no further than what MGM Resorts International and myVEGAS are doing. It's quite remarkable.

In actuality, there are many more innovations that you can, and should, be considering for implementation, based on your casino's unique situation. It all starts with a needs assessment and a clear understanding of your company's objectives. When these two pieces of the puzzle are in alignment, you can begin the necessary steps toward worthwhile innovations.

For those of you still playing along at home, the final Jeopardy clue is, "Game Shows."

Name the four games show made famous by these catchphrases...

- 1) We surveyed 100 people, and the top 5 answers are on the board...
- 2) No Whammy, No Whammy, No Whammy...
- 3) Is that your final answer?
- 4) Will the real innovator please stand up?