

Industry – Communication

Charitable Gaming Conference – 2006 *Courtyard by Marriott – Toronto*

What an exciting two days earlier this week when the Charitable Gaming Sector convened in Toronto for the Sixth Annual Conference at the Courtyard by Marriott Hotel.

The quality of the speakers and the content was, *if I may say*, excellent. We reviewed the E-Gaming Pilots from every angle and heard first hand from the Charities and Commercial Operators about their *challenges and experiences* that have faced them in their path to ensure the success of this initiative.

It was encouraging to listen to Mr. Ron Ko (Director – Bingo Gaming, OLG) and hear from the Municipal position on how they are dealing with the impacts and re-alignment of the local/community factors. The clear message which came through by *all partners* was the level of co-operation and collaboration among all stakeholders. It is this real sense of partnership that is making a genuine *on-the-ground* impact and delivering true and positive change to our sector.

As the opening *Key Note Speaker*, Mr. Jean Major gave a very fair and open assessment of the '**Modernization of Charitable Gaming**' and the pre-agreed principles/commitment of the Industry to be an active partner in the scope of change, which is not easy.

There needs to be a clear understanding that we all have to undertake and deliver on our various parts of this structural change. The AGCO stands ready to assist the Industry but the Industry needs to ensure it is producing on a timely basis on the commitments it has collectively made. There has been a vast amount of work undertaken by the AGCO for the Charitable Gaming Sector even though they have a full schedule on the liquor side of their business portfolio.

Jean then echoed the achievements and the *positive impacts* the Industry has made, complimenting the industry on the development of the Break Open Ticket Development Fund (Pocket Slots Branding), the Interim Revenue Model and other minor changes that were undertaken by the AGCO over the course of the last year. There was a true commitment by the AGCO to generate real structural change to transform the current platform and bring it in line with the present day business environment *without* undermining the principles of Charitable Gaming and integrity of those engaged in the Sector.

The presentation given by Ms. Marsha Walden, (Vice President-Bingo Gaming, BCLC), on the need for building and enhancing the experience while *developing a brand* was extremely interesting. The focus on *Research, Understanding, investment and Customer*

Service, combined with a staff (or people) development strategy to communicate a clear message to our customers of the offering was well noted.

Sharing in her session the power and value of a brand with the likes of Coca-Cola, Starbucks, West Jet and the latest (Canadian) brand icon, Tim Hortons, were all reminders of the value and impact of their power in the marketplace.

The British Columbia direction, with the introduction of the '**Chances Brand Concept**' into the marketplace and all the various components that go along with it, is breaking new and exciting ground that keeps BCLC on the leading edge of Bingo Development in Canada.

Mr. George Sweny (Senior Vice President-Lottery & Bingo, OLG) brought greetings from the Organization and directly the CEO – Mr. Duncan Brown. He went on to re-cap the various initiatives that have occurred since we last convened. He reaped praise of the Charity Association, Municipal Partners and Commercial Operators for their continuing approach in **working together** while forging new structures of operating.

The sector, with all of its challenges, sits on the threshold of new opportunities. It continues to remain focused and committed to both the proposed changes in 207:1:a and 207:1:b initiatives. There remains a vast amount to do but together, working hand in hand, we can best be prepared to meet the competitive challenges of the future.

It was pleasing to see George who has a very busy schedule and made a special effort to be at the Conference, which was certainly appreciated. He has always been able to communicate a positive message which he continues to do. George took the opportunity to introduce his colleague, Mr. Larry Flynn (Senior Vice President – Gaming), who gave a **rip-roaring** presentation on the need for customer service and its value to the business. 'Reaching out to our Guests, Making Connection, Delivering on the Experience and thus building the loyalty to the Brand' one connection at a time. However, you saw the vast amount of investment and commitment the OLG put forward to deliver on its brand promise through the seven key behavior promises, which was extremely interesting. It is this focus on the People (Employees) that is so important in delivering an Excellence in Customer Service.

In conclusion, the Conference was once again a good opportunity to bring the Industry together to review where we have been, where we are and where we are going. There is no one solution for every marketplace but the platform within the Charitable Gaming Sector has continued to build and is one of options or choices. However, the future requires your engagement and input. All stakeholders have a role as we continue to transition forward.

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