

Fundamentals of Tribal Casino Gaming Regulation – A Primer for Regulators

Top 10 Tribal Casino Regulatory Insights

1. A high-performing Tribal Gaming Regulatory Agency (TGRA) is dependent on a clear mission, vision, and organizational values that incorporate respect, integrity, inclusion, and a commitment to excellence. Practicing Servant Leadership ensures that TGRA personnel have the resources, guidance, support, and encouragement they need to fulfill their essential role in the organization.
2. A comprehensive Strategic Plan developed in collaboration with all stakeholders, including the casino operator, ensures that the TGRA remains proactive in exercising regulatory compliance rather than reactive as casino gaming technology and amenities evolve. Forecasting the future ensures that budgets, training, personnel needs, and regulation modifications remain at the forefront of change.
3. The key to effective casino gaming regulation is possessing a thorough understanding and working knowledge of the tribal gaming ordinance, TGRA regulations, applicable NIGC regulations, tribal-state compact sections, tribal internal controls, and casino policies and procedures. The effective regulator is a life-long learner who is perpetually inquisitive and never satisfied with the status quo.
4. Effective casino gaming regulation is built upon a foundation of mutual respect, proactive collaboration, shared goals, and unwavering honesty between the regulator and the regulated. The interests of the tribe in ensuring the integrity of gaming, the protection of tribal assets, and securing the safety of patrons, employees, and visitors should be at the forefront of every regulatory discussion.
5. Investing in technology skills will prepare the TGRA for unending complexity, technological challenges, sophistication, system integration, and increasing reliance on automation in all aspects of casino gaming and associated processes. Evolving technology creates yet to be imagined possibilities for the casino gaming industry, but also yet to be recognized vulnerabilities. TGRAs that embrace evolving technology as a reality to be mastered and leveraged for the benefit of the regulator will be better prepared to address the challenges and potential misuse of technology to corrupt gaming operations.
6. Challenges and threats in the casino gaming industry are rarely unique to one gaming operation or a single TGRA. TGRAs that recognize the value of information

sharing, collaboration across tribal, state, and federal jurisdictions, and leveraging the combined knowledge and experience of the gaming regulatory industry as a whole equip themselves to prepare for the unseen threats and react quickly when events threaten the integrity of gaming and the safety of those who participate in casino gaming.

7. Tribal gaming operations do not operate in a societal vacuum nor do they occupy islands that insulate them from the environmental and societal dynamics impacting the surrounding community. TGRAs offer benefits to the surrounding tribal and non-tribal community by sharing knowledge and skills developed within the casino environment which have potential impact on communities surrounding the casino. TGRAs should partner with community-based organizations, health and public safety agencies, and tribal government organizations to help educate on issues as widely varied as responsible gambling, human trafficking, personal protection, substance abuse and the opioid epidemic, and emergency preparedness.
8. TGRAs that strategically invest in staff training and development not only fuel their employees' passions to excel in the performance of their duties but also save precious budget dollars by ensuring that the return on the investment in training exceeds the cost of the training, including the time away from the employee's primary duties. TGRA investment in focused skill development results in personnel developing subject-matter expertise in areas of gaming regulation sought after by conference providers and the publishers of trade journals. TGRA conference presenters and article authors raise the reputation of the TGRA, establish industry best practices, and benefit the TGRA during interactions with state and federal gaming regulators.
9. High performance TGRAs embrace traditional business concepts like Six Sigma, Total Quality Management, and Continuous Process Improvement as strategies which maximize the TGRA's effectiveness in delivering exceptional customer service, peak performance in ensuring regulatory compliance, and a work environment where employees feel valued, engaged, and respected.
10. Gaming commissioners of effective TGRAs understand that they are integral to the success of the organization, that they influence staff attitude and enthusiasm more than anyone else, and that the management practice of respect, inclusion, and unwavering integrity begins and ends with them.

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