

Difficult to keep positive while communicating the hard issues we face — it's a monthly balancing act



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I thought about this unit report all month. During our board meeting along with my personal and group meetings with elders and members, it seems that a lot do not want to read reports as its political and people get frustrated with attacks and propaganda. It's a fine line what to write and what to keep to myself as an elected official. This communication is our only true form out to the entire membership and it's difficult to keep positive but also communicate the hard issues we face. I don't want to write about all the untruths, hatefulness and political wars we face internally everyday, but I also cannot print that all is rosy within our government. I try to balance and get meaningful, truthful information out in the very little space I have once a month.

As I stated last month, we have many projects going on and with the coming election, you all will have to go through the same promises, hurry up we better do something and the same old hatefulness that comes with election. Truly watch and listen to peoples

words, this will guild you.

We continue to meet and work on recommendations for improvement at our casinos. We have been provided a detailed "SMART goals" list. These are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, time based plans to increase revenue and promote a healthy workplace for us.

The key goals identified and deemed a priority:

MORALE — The measures to increase the morale in the workplace are, appeal policy re-established, policy's upheld with workplace gossip, leadership development training, reduce occurrences of nepotism/favoritism, performance based increases, reduce politics in workplace, positive initiatives in workplace, restructure hiring policy.

DRUGS IN THE WORKPLACE — The measures identified to decrease the drugs in our workplace are, Employee Assistance Program offered for first time offenders, change dates of drug testing, increase our at-hand resources to identify the use of drugs at work, increase surveillance monitoring, drug task force team.

COMMUNICATION — Enforce company communication policy, re-introduce quality control meetings with team members, schedule regular per shift meetings in each department, open forums with team members and management.

CLEANLINESS OF PROPERTIES — Improvement in structures repair, speed up hiring process in positions, hiring qualified personnel, regular inspections.

FOOD QUALITY — Cleanliness of individual departments and work stations, maintain

buffets seasonal, improve quality of presentation, proper food storage standards, provide proper training, ingredients in food.

These are a few of the goals that have been provided to the board with realistic plans to reach the improvements needed, along with a timeline for each. I want to say that, in the past, the board did not have to intervene to this extent and I, for one, do not like to micromanage or have this as a constant discussion, but times have changed and our casinos have lacked in many areas. It's clear through the recommendations provided by outside consultants as well as the team member surveys we completed. The above is just the start of many changes to come and I will expect all to be completed by the timelines given and will be prepared to hold accountable management to get the goals completed. We have had very candid discussions and our improvement plans cannot stall any longer. In closing about this topic, I hope that our planned changes and discussion do not get MIS-read as wanting anyone fired. Change is always hard, but true management and pride within our workplace will advance our properties and make us more successful in operations.

All the members probably do not know, but I managed a business in my past (along with many other life's experiences), it wasn't a high prestige company but rather a small operation that WAS and IS profitable. The position came with very long hours, constant review of savings, no nonsense approach to staff members protection with company policy, open door policy to staff suggestions and input and up front straightforward communica-

tion! I don't normally talk about my experiences, but I do pride myself in my common sense and success for the company I worked for, managing came with responsibility and expectations and once there, you either sink or swim. I loved the job, the challenges and hard work. I do bring that to the table and my expectations for our company's success are priority.

Miigwetch to all team members who work on the front line everyday, our casinos belong to you and the more ownership and pride you take in your positions is what will always make us successful.

We will be having discussions on certain amendments to our constitution. I've been working and recommending this approach from the start. We can discuss with members each and every amendment proposed and plan to accommodate the change as well as financially be able to sustain the change. This will be our discussion now for the next few months and I look forward to it.

Our budgets are balanced for the time being and as always, I simply won't spend money if it's not identified and a priority. I have requested that the administration identify staff that can review and vet business proposals that can increase our revenues, we have had this in the past and, to date, we have no one identified, it's upsets me greatly the stall and steps backwards we have taken with this approach. (I'm trying to be positive but wanted you aware it's a priority for me).

This past weekend a member created a map of all the (IHS) Indian Health Services locations available to our out of the service area members. The map

shows each location and contact information. I will be requesting that we do an article in our tribal paper as well as our own health division communicating this information for members that cannot make it here to our clinics. Look for this coming soon.

In closing, I must touch on the subject of the board's position in regards to bickering, fighting, etc. I firmly state that the board, in my opinion, is well versed in the problems we face and most have the desire to advance our people. We have different thoughts and discussion but, for the most part, it's respectful and we work together. I've voiced to my fellow board that taking the "victim" stance for past mistakes is old and simply is not an excuse anymore. Again, watch closely, members, I am confident you see through the muck and can identify the same old political cries that you have been hearing for years. I assure you I have respect for my fellow board members and most return respect to me in conducting business.

Christmas time — I'm thankful for our families and our tribe. I want to wish everyone a blessed season with you and yours, remember our veterans who especially struggle this time of year and thank them, hug them! Please do an act of kindness or take part in making a Christmas miracle come true, even if its a very small one, I so believe in miracles at this time of year, it kind of gives me goosebumps because I know they happen everyday.

Watch closely, baamaapii.

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