



To give great customer service, you've got to OWN-IT

by *Elisabeth Daniels*

Boyd Style is all about delivering an unforgettable customer experience. And that comes down to happy, productive team members who are rewarded for going above and beyond. In other words, team members who "OWN-IT."

"OWN-IT is a comprehensive, incentivized customer service program," says Corporate Team Member Relations and Development Director Karl Johnson, who helped to create the program when he was Director of Human Resources at **Sam's Town Hotel and Casino** in Shreveport. "It incorporates a fresh look at customer service," Johnson said, which is why it is fast becoming a best practice for the Company.

Sam's Town team members, managers and supervisors alike learn to OWN-IT with training that includes leadership and administration basics. "We have a two-day OWN-IT Brand Camp," says Wesley Garcia, Team Member Relations Manager at Sam's Town Shreveport. "The training really revolves around branding and why good customer service is important."

The program celebrates results. As performance improves, so do the rewards. In departments that meet 100 percent of their goal, everyone receives a gift card. With performances above 100 percent, team members receive gift cards of greater value – providing an incentive to meet and beat your goal.

An excellent interaction between a team member and a customer is the perfect opportunity for an OWN-IT card. The team member's extraordinary efforts are noted on a perforated card that tears in two, with one half going to the team member's manager and the other going into a drawing. Every quarter, there's a huge celebration, and a grand prize is drawn. Team members have won iPads, laptops, flat-screen TVs and more. There's also an OWN-IT Wall of Fame, celebrating high-achieving team members. It's a way of recognizing those who exemplify the outstanding service customers expect with Boyd Gaming.

And if a customer's experience isn't up to our high standards, there are procedures in place to help make it right. "Our managers, supervisors, directors and certain leads have the ability to immediately comp up to a certain dollar amount at any food outlet," Garcia said. "It turns a negative into a positive right there on the spot."

One of the most important elements of a customer service program is determining whether it's effective. "We implemented our own mystery shopping program utilizing our managers, directors, and supervisors," explains Garcia. "It's the OWN-IT Accountability Program, and it uses 'Inspect What We Expect' forms to create a performance snapshot every quarter."



OWN-IT works because once a team member is recognized, they remain committed to the outcome and that enthusiasm spreads. As Sam's Town Vice President and General Manager Kim Etland notes, "it really keeps them engaged in how we're doing."