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Your online gaming "NOT To Do" list

The top five things to avoid when starting an online casino

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As a follow-up to the previous top five "To Do" list, sometimes it needs to be clearly pointed out what NOT to do. While some items on the "NOT To Do" list may seem inherently obvious, it's worth it to have them listed in a useful way to act as a reminder of what to avoid.

1. Don't copy thy neighbor
Just because your competitor has an online offering, that does not mean you need to have something similar. As big of a company, and smart as you think your neighbor may be, it does not mean they have chosen the correct solution for their online gaming needs. You don't need to look very far to see this. It is a shame to say, but all too often we see "Big Name" casino companies head down a path and use a platform for their online gaming offering that will not lead them to where they want to be. Many fall into the trap of trying to build a platform on a legacy system that will be antiquated in a year's time. Remember being a kid and saying, "But Mom, all my friends are doing it ..." and hearing the response from your wise mother, "So, if all your friends jumped off the Brooklyn Bridge, would you do that, too?" This may only make sense to fellow New Yorkers, but you get the point.

2. Don't believe in the saying, "If you build it, they will come"
If a tree falls in the forest and no one is there to hear it, does it make a sound? If you

build an online casino (freemium, social gaming style, subscription model, or otherwise) and no one comes to play, will you earn money? The mere act of building an online casino does NOT ensure success. It does not even ensure people will find it, or know that it exists. You must consider your task like that of Bugsy Siegel, in that you are building a casino in the middle of the desert, and then are faced with the challenge of getting people there. While there are billions of eyeballs looking all over the Internet, in the sea of choices and with everything being just a click away, if you are not squarely and continuously in your customer's mind, you are in the middle of nowhere.

3. Don't go at it blindly

If you were at war, you would not charge onto the battlefield to attack your enemy if you were blindfolded, would you? Sure, it sounds like a silly statement, but you would be surprised by how many gaming companies don't properly assess the landscape and fully understand the terrain and surroundings. Don't try to "wing" it. You must carefully plan your best course of action, given your casino group's overall current position, and what you ultimately hope to achieve through your online casino offering.

4. Don't rely on your current staff

There is a terrible misconception of traditionalists in the brick and mortar casino industry who believe that the introduction of online gaming is going to cannibalize your land-based revenue. This is simply not true. Just look at what online poker did for the land-based poker business. Those who hold the cannibalization belief closest to their hearts are the land-based staffers who only see people coming into the casino of their own volition as money makers for themselves and the casino. This is why it is vitally important to hire someone from outside who fully understands the migration of online to land-based casino players, and vice-versa. And while we are on the subject of DON'TS, don't let your current staff be in charge of the selection process; that's like asking the hen to choose the fox to build an extension on the henhouse.

5. Don't suffer from analysis paralysis

If you're an expert marksman, you most likely have a "pre-shot" ritual of careful aiming. You take the wind, distance, humidity, altitude, and a myriad of other factors into consideration before you shoot. And that is smart. But in that case, your target is most likely a stationary object. An online casino offering is far from immobile. In fact, it is constantly on the move, and if you sat and contemplated all of the factors involved in preparing for and producing the ultimate online gaming platform, by the time it hit the market, it might be considered old news. This is not to say that you should go at it blindly (see DON'T #3); it means that building a successful online gaming offering is an iterative process and should be compared to the expert marksman in this way: Expert Marksman (Aim, Aim, Aim, Aim, Shoot) -- Online Casino Offering (Aim, Shoot, Re-Aim, Re-Aim, Re-Aim).

When writing a list of DON'TS, it's hard to not have some double negatives. In fact,

that might be one right there. But getting past the grammar part of it, it can be a useful guide about what not to do. However, as a rule of thumb, when teaching someone something they don't already know, by explaining what not to do, it can be confusing. It's like learning how to drive a car and the instructor telling you, "Don't hit the guardrail, don't drive into the wall, don't cross the centerline ..." OK, great, now tell me what To Do. For that, I refer you to the previous "To Do" list.