

The Continuing Evolution of Surveillance

By Jen Boss, CSP

Surveillance watches the casino and that's the way it's always been and will always be. Gaming is just too important and so exposed to risk than every other area and department on the property and must be constantly observed and monitored.

Or is it?

I'm not saying gaming isn't important. Of course, it is. We can't afford to take our eyes off of it because something will happen. We know that.

What I am saying is that those other areas and departments we never used to worry about – now have their own issues and concerns. So much so that we have to make sure they get the attention of surveillance that they deserve.

Let's just take a few moments to list some of the concerns Surveillance should be involved with:

- Risk Management: Slip and Falls, Claims, Liability of all kinds, etc.
- Emergency Response: Robbery, Fire, Evacuation, Active Shooter, Workplace Violence
- Hotel: Crime, Prostitution, Sex Trafficking, Domestic Violence, Theft
- Retail: Theft and Fraud (internal and external)
- Nightclubs/Pools/Lounges: Overserving, Drugs, Prostitution, Fights, Regulatory Issues/Fines
- Marketing: Promotion Fraud, Free Play Theft

The above is just an overview of what can happen and maybe already has on your property. The sad fact is that all of these things can happen just about anywhere. Most people think that this is why we have security and it's their role to deter and prevent these things from occurring. That is true. However, Security can't do it alone. That is where Surveillance must come in.

Every item listed above requires intervention, support, or assistance from Surveillance. Let's start with Risk Management: If you don't have video telling your side of the story for a claim or injury you may lose your case or have to settle. The

managing of video to assist your risk manager is extremely important and must be done properly and thoroughly. Are you?

Emergency response until recently was left to Security to handle with no involvement from Surveillance at all in most cases. Shouldn't Surveillance assist and provide information in a fire? Evacuation? Active Shooter? Of course, they should but are they aware of their role? They may not be and even if they are: have they practiced what they need to do during a crisis?

The hotel can be a hot bed of criminal activity especially in some jurisdictions. A large hotel will keep security moving the entire day. Theft, medicals, fights, prostitution, unfortunately, may be almost routine. Security can't be everywhere; you need an active Surveillance operation to assist.

Now add in retail, nightclubs and pools, as well as marketing and everything that can exist in those areas, and probably does in varying degrees, I think you can see why I say it's not just about gaming. Any one of those areas could have a serious incident occur that can become a significant event with grave and/or costly results.

Surveillance, along with Security, must now protect the entire enterprise. Gaming is a critical component of the enterprise, but it isn't the only one. There are a lot of surveillance people that realize this and others that do not. There are a lot of senior executives who don't yet appreciate that our overall security needs and concerns have changed in this world of active shooters, workplace violence, and ever-growing technology that allows criminals to steal more, faster.

Our existing business model for surveillance, and its strategy and tactics must adapt to our changing world.

So, what do we do?

First, Surveillance must involve itself in all key concerns, operations, and transactions on the property.

When a slip and fall occurs, Surveillance reviews thoroughly and provides all the information and video available when it occurs, not two years down the road when the trail is cold and key video wasn't saved.

Surveillance must join forces with Security to develop a realistic emergency plan they can work together with first responders. Training and practicing are critical to responding properly to an emergency and should be done on a regular basis.

Consistent patrol in a prescribed format by Surveillance of all areas of the casino, hotel, retail areas, nightclubs/pools is necessary to locate suspicious or criminal activity or other concerns, or other serious issues and concerns, and will greatly assist security with getting to the right place at the right time.

Of course, we haven't covered everything that can occur or answered every question. We have identified that security can't work alone, and that surveillance must step up to the table. Thankfully, it can be done with the right training and focus. You can start today.