



PURE CANADIAN GAMING CORP.

www.purecanadiangaming.com **Headquarters:** Edmonton **Employees:** 1,100

Specialty: Casino operator



PURE Canadian Gaming says the atmosphere inside its casinos are a major part of the reason for its success, and the company is working on a major revitalization effort in all of its properties to further enhance the guest experience.



Playing the Game

PURE Canadian Gaming bets heavily on a strong internal culture focused on customer loyalty. **BY CHRIS PETERSEN**

What's the difference between playing blackjack in a Las Vegas casino vs. playing blackjack in a Monte Carlo casino? According to PURE Canadian Gaming Corp. President and CEO George Goldhoff, the answer to that question holds the secret to success in the gaming world. "In our business, casinos have the same products," he says. "They have the same table games with the same limits and the same rules."

Where casinos set themselves apart, Goldhoff continues, is not through the games but through the customer experience - atmosphere and amenities they offer their guests. Although many casinos approach this through gimmicks, PURE Canadian Gaming has taken an approach that Goldhoff says will create much more lasting effect and greater impact on its casinos' guests. "The most sustained strategic way to do that is through company culture," Goldhoff explains.

PURE Canadian Gaming owns and operates four casinos in Alberta: Casino Edmonton, Casino Yellowhead, Casino Calgary and Casino Lethbridge. The company and all four of its properties underwent rebranding

in 2013, but the company's heritage dates back to 1973, when it was founded as Alberta Bingo Supplies by Heinz Oldach. Although the company's original focus was on supplying bingo halls throughout the province, it began operating its own casino properties in 1981. By 1987, the company had divested itself of its bingo supply operations to concentrate on casinos full-time.

Today, with four successful casino properties under its umbrella and a major revitalization project underway at all of them, Goldhoff says PURE Canadian Gaming is poised to reintroduce itself to gaming enthusiasts in Alberta as the premier destination in the province. "We consider ourselves one of the leaders in western Canada in gaming," Goldhoff says.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Goldhoff says PURE Canadian Gaming is in the middle of a major effort to pump new life into its properties and build stronger connections with their patrons. He says the company is working to create a new culture from the ground up that gives its guests more than just a fresh coat of paint, but a feeling that they are valued and appreciated. "I can put Persian rugs, crystal chandeliers and gold doorknobs in the casinos, but if people come in and our employees don't make a connection with the

George Goldhoff
president and CEO

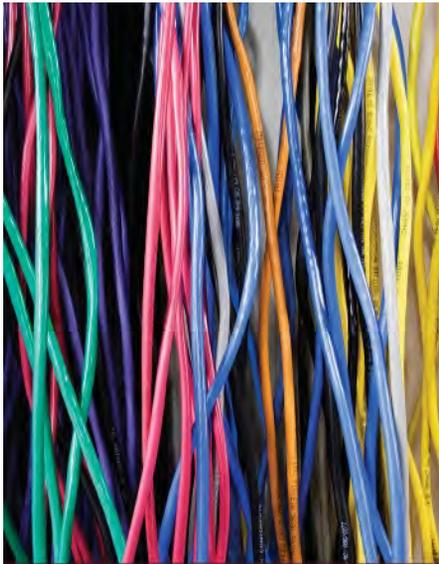
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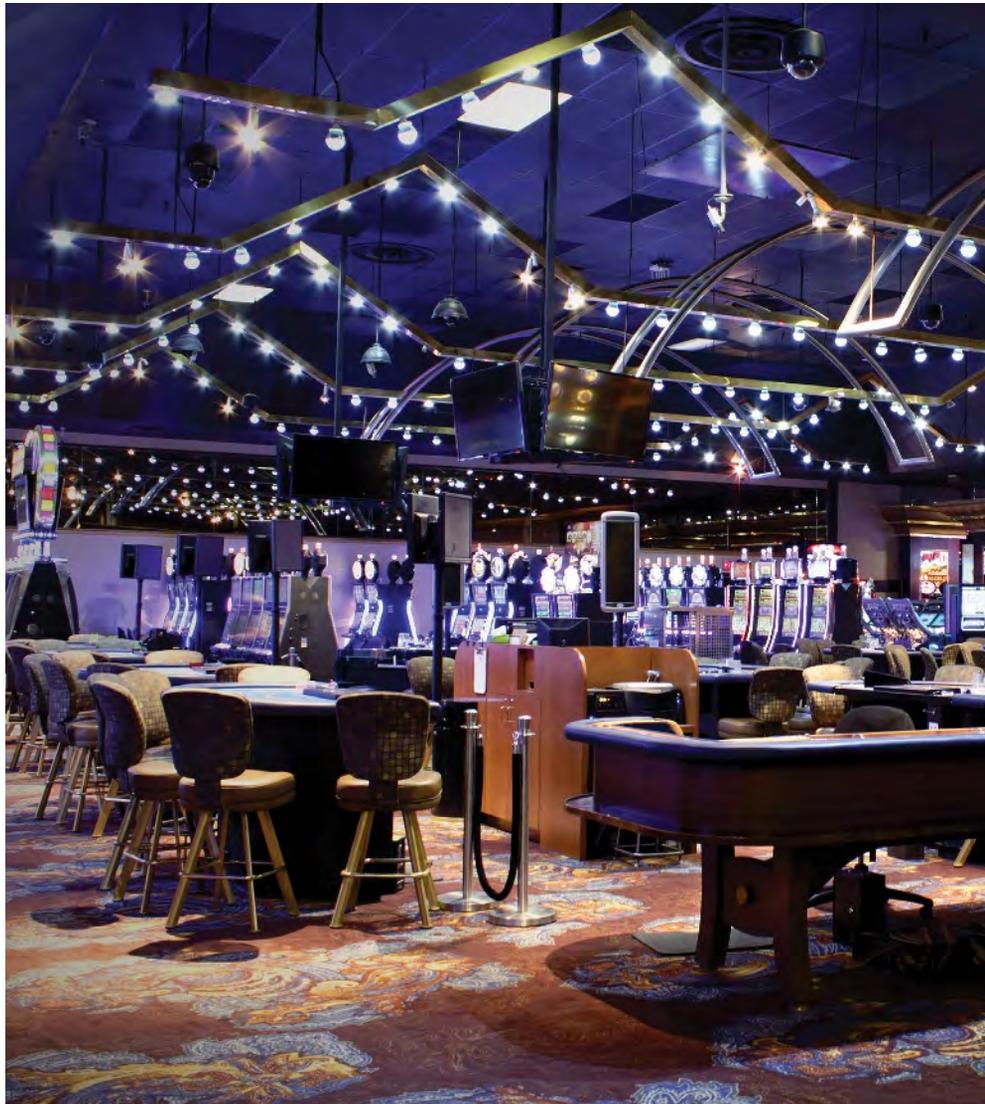
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players, then all of that investment is for naught,” Goldhoff says.

Building that connection begins with recruiting and training the right people. Goldhoff says one of the main areas of focus for the company over the last few years has been creating an internal culture that encourages employee engagement and rewards those who go out of their way to enhance the guest experience. The company’s casino

hosts are always circulating through the properties, checking in with customers and making sure all of their needs are met. “That’s been a very large part of our success,” Goldhoff says.

PURE Canadian Gaming also has the richest customer loyalty program in Alberta. Through the Pure Rewards Players Club, casino guests earn points by playing that can be redeemed for designated services, products or cash. Club members also receive free tickets for entertainment at PURE Canadian Gaming’s properties and a 10 percent discount at its restaurants and gift shops.

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PURE Canadian Gaming concentrates on building an internal culture that emphasizes engaging with the guests in multiple ways, and it rewards employees who go out of their way to make sure guests are having a good time.



NEW LOOK AND FEEL

Although PURE Canadian Gaming has placed much emphasis on the culture and atmosphere inside the company, that doesn't mean it has ignored the physical aspect of its casinos. Goldhoff says reinvesting in the company's casinos has been another prong in PURE Canadian Gaming's rejuvenation efforts of late.

That includes changing up things the guests see – such as the carpeting, lighting and even the chips used in the table games – but it also applies to the things they might not notice right away, like upgraded HVAC systems. “Anything that the customer sees, tastes, touches, hears or smells, we've changed the environment,” Goldhoff says.

Goldhoff says the biggest challenge for PURE Canadian Gaming right now as it works to improve in every area of its operations is that it has to compete for a small labor

pool with the oil and gas industry, which is booming in Alberta at the moment and attracting many people to the abundant jobs it has created. Continuing to build and strengthen its internal corporate culture is going to be the highest priority for PURE Canadian Gaming.

“Our business thesis has always been to hire, develop and recruit excellence, and so it's really an internal focus on improving our facilities and our employees,” Goldhoff says. “Hopefully the stars align on the other part of our business thesis, which is to grow through acquisition.”