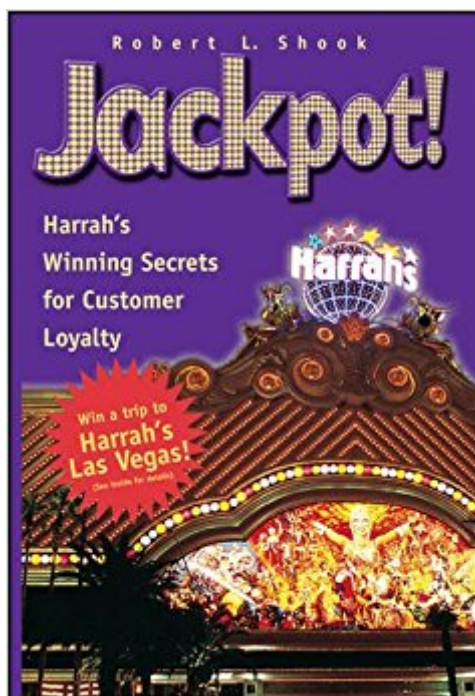


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Jackpot! Harrah's Winning Secrets For Customer Loyalty



Synopsis

The inside story of the gaming company that hit the jackpot playing by its own rules Robert L. Shook, a New York Times bestselling author, delves into the business behind one of the world's foremost gaming and entertainment companies, Harrah's. Since Bill Harrah took over a small card game business in 1937, Harrah's has become a top casino, dominating Nevada and beyond. The first gaming company listed on the New York Stock Exchange, Harrah's is a \$4 billion-dollar business driven by smart marketing and smarter leadership. This book is the first to examine Harrah's and its leader, a man who dominated an industry and amassed a staggering fortune while refusing to deal with mobsters and corrupt politicians. Though Bill Harrah died in 1978 and the company has since been sold, Harrah's has retained its sense of history and remained an industry leader. Following the company's growth, Shook uncovers rich business lessons about marketing and customer loyalty, increasing market share in fiercely competitive industries, and maintaining a sense of integrity in a cutthroat business world. This is a compelling and intriguing story of a company that gambled and won, and it offers business readers an opportunity to benefit from the hard-won lessons of a paragon of the entertainment industry. Robert L. Shook (Columbus, OH) is a seasoned business journalist and the ghostwriter behind several New York Times bestsellers. He is the founder and former CEO of Shook Associates and the American Executive Life Insurance Company. He is the author or coauthor of thirty-five books, including *The IBM Way*, *Mary Kay on People Management*, and *Mary Kay's You Can Have It All*.

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Customer Reviews

Tourists who visit many casinos are considered "promiscuous." How, then, does a casino foster "customer monogamy"? Business book veteran Shook (coauthor, Longaberger) examines gaming behemoth Harrah's to find out. Based in "clean" Reno (as opposed to "dirty" Las Vegas), Bill Harrah began in the mid-1930s, combining a risk-friendly outlook with customer-service fanaticism. Indeed, Shook attributes Harrah's success primarily to its founder's ironclad adherence to the golden rule. Harrah insisted that his casinos ban "shills" (house players), instituted detailed employee background checks and installed the "eye-in-the-sky," all of which eventually became Nevada gaming law. Harrah's is a transitional organization, bridging shady Las Vegas with legitimate, family-oriented corporations. After the founder's death in 1978, pragmatic successors Mike Rose and Phil Satre shepherded Harrah's toward wider expansion by partnering with Holiday Inns, moving into new territories, imposing a corporate structure and using IT to track customer activity. Among the book's lessons: think long-term, understand your market and, most emphatically, watch that customer—he has much to teach you. Largely a story of horizons identified and conquered, there's virtually no conflict here. But Shook spins a well-researched, focused account that offers uniformly sound advice, although its applicability to other fields is open to question. At times the book reads like a product of Harrah's own PR department, perhaps an unavoidable pitfall for a book about a company as worthy of emulation as this. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

How does one casino differentiate itself from another? Harrah's does it by developing customer loyalty instead of theme casinos. Shook, a prolific business writer, has detailed the history and business strategy of the Harrah's casino organization, from its 1937 founding to the present. If the reader can ignore the exclamation points at the end of many sentences, this book provides a fascinating look inside the gambling industry. The author arranges the story in three sections: Part 1 covers the establishment of Harrah's first casino in Reno, Nevada and the running of the company until the death of its innovative founder, Bill Harrah. Harrah's took its first risk by establishing itself in Reno when all other casinos were in Las Vegas. Part 2 chronicles the sale of the company to Holiday Inn and its expansion into Atlantic City. Part 3 details the spinning off of Harrah's into a separate company again and its continued growth as more states legalized gambling. Throughout the book are extensive interviews with Harrah's employees from top management down to card dealers and wait staff. An index would have been useful, but this is otherwise an excellent purchase for business collections of all libraries. Stacey Marien, American Univ., Washington, DC Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

If you are going to spend any time in a casino, you need to know how the games are played. I don't mean the ones on the floor with the flashing lights... you can lose on those, and still come out far ahead!

I have read other books by Robert L. Shook, and he is an accomplished writer of business books. He's at his best with Jackpot. This book is both informative and entertaining. Shook takes his reader behind the scenes at Harrah's, a gaming company with 26 casinos and reveals how the company is able to compete so successfully against billion-dollar properties in the Las Vegas market. Harrah's secret, as the subtitle states is how it wins customer loyalty and does it better than its competition. This is an excellent book for any business reader engaged in a highly competitive industry, and, in particular, goes head to head with the big boys. Shook's writing style is superb--he interweaves anecdotal material that makes for a fascinating read. True, this is a business book, but at times, it's such a page-turner, you feel you're reading a novel.

This book tells in an easy, readable fashion the story of Harrah's from the humble beginnings of a small parlor in Reno to the multibillion dollar behemoth it is today. Although the primary focus is on Harrah's, of course, the book covers the growth of the industry in the US overall from the early days, through the mob years in Vegas and the entertainment explosion that happened, to the proliferation of boats, reservation gambling and other gambling alternatives such as the lotteries through many US states. This is a great book to read for reminders on the basics of "getting it right" when it comes to customer service, treating employees right, thinking strategically and executing on a vision. It is amazing what Harrah's has done in the area of parlaying customer information into long term, profitable relationships! I have read many business books, this is my most favorite in recent months, for sure. Read on, and watch out for that river card :)

This book is about an outstanding culture that is culminated from the founder's passion, integrity and leadership. Jackpot provides cutting-edge lessons and ideas that are being exposed for the first time in topics such as: marketing and customer loyalty, building market share, and preserving high integrity. Harrah's placed its chips on integrity and serving the customer. It's no wonder they are so successful.

Great book -- the lessons taught are for all service based organizations. Learn how to create

customer loyalty and enjoy your business more. Must read!!

This book is a riot! I could not put it down. One of the funniest books on gambling I have ever read.(and I've read 100 books on Vegas/Gambling.Go straight to page 43 first- "there is no underworld presence today in Las Vegas"- this author really knows how to write satire.The book is just filled with one funny story after another about how everything now in gambling is on the up & up.Robert Shook is more humorous than that Connecticut Senator whose trying to protect children from the entertainment industry.Another fun thing to do with his book- circle the word "lawyer" and then underline all the Federal & State laws that his book exposes.God Bless America! We should all feel blessed to have a comedy writer like Robert.D.Matthew HaydenauthorVegas Stories

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