

Casinos invest in arcade-style digital games, party pits to attract millennials

Written by Administrator
Thursday, 24 November 2016 23:00 -

By

[Tony Raap](#)

|
Thursday, Nov. 24, 2016, 11:00 p.m.

Email Newsletters

[Sign up](#) for one of our email newsletters.

Updated 50 minutes ago

Slot machines have always ruled the gaming floor at Rivers Casino on the North Shore.

But casino executives are betting on arcade-style games and so-called party pits to attract younger gamblers.

The thinking is that the industry will need to offer games that look and feel different to engage the millennial generation.

“They're so surrounded by awesome technology all the time that the concept of a slot machine is boring to them,” said Marcus Yoder, vice president of sales at Gamblit Gaming, a California company that develops digital games for casinos.

According to the American Gaming Association, young people ages 21 to 35 visit casinos more than any age group. Yet just 2 percent of millennials play the slots.

Casinos invest in arcade-style digital games, party pits to attract millennials

Written by Administrator

Thursday, 24 November 2016 23:00 -

“Even though the slot machines that are out there are beautiful machines with fantastic graphics, it's still the function of pressing a button and waiting to see what happens,” Yoder said. “And that's just not interesting.”

Lawmakers in Nevada, New Jersey and Massachusetts have passed legislation to allow casinos to offer arcade-style games.

Pennsylvania's House of Representatives approved similar legislation in June, but the Senate has yet to act on the bill.

The legislative session ends Nov. 30, after which all bills die.

State Rep. George Dunbar, a Westmoreland County Republican and the bill's primary sponsor, said he likely would reintroduce the bill next session.

“They have to continue to reinvent themselves,” Dunbar said of casinos. “One way to reinvent themselves is to find things the younger generation is used to and want to participate in.”

Gamblit's video games combine skill and chance.

In Smoothie Blast, players fill a blender with fruit. Filling the blender faster with different combinations of fruit results in a larger payout.

There still is a house advantage, but players experience greater wins as they get better at the game.

Casinos invest in arcade-style digital games, party pits to attract millennials

Written by Administrator

Thursday, 24 November 2016 23:00 -

Some manufacturers are developing tabletop games in which two or three people play at one time. Others are investing in virtual gaming.

“All of those could be in our future,” said Andre Barnabei, vice president of slot operations at Rivers Casino.

Research has found that millennials want their casino experience to be social. They often come to a casino with friends and socialize while gambling, said Shannon Redmond, vice president of marketing at Rivers Casino.

Baby boomers are the exact opposite.

“They have no problem coming to the casino by themselves,” Redmond said. “And they like the choice where they can say, ‘I want to sit at this slot machine and not talk to anybody. Or if I feel like being social today, I can talk to my neighbor.’ ”

Rivers Casino has a party pit on Thursday nights that caters to younger players. The atmosphere is more social, and the average wager is lower. You can play blackjack and other table games for only \$5 a hand.

Nick Thrash, 21, of Baldwin Borough goes to the party pit every week with friends. They usually spend about two hours at the casino.

Sometimes, Thrash will play the slots, but he prefers blackjack.

“You feel like you're in control of your money a little more,” he said. “Plus, you get to sit down with your friends and have a few beers.”

Casinos invest in arcade-style digital games, party pits to attract millennials

Written by Administrator

Thursday, 24 November 2016 23:00 -

Many casinos have added nightclubs, upscale restaurants and shopping centers to draw in young people, said I. Nelson Rose, a professor at Whittier Law School in Orange County, Calif., who blogs about trends in the gaming industry.

“Millennials like good food and music, so the bars and restaurants are filled. But the gaming floor is often empty,” Rose said. “They need to figure out ways to either get millennials to go down to the casino floor or bring the casino floor to the millennials.”

Some West Coast casinos have begun handing out portable devices that serve as slot machines. They are about the size of an iPad, Rose said.

Guests can sit in the sports lounge with their friends, and they have a slot machine in their lap.

“They don't want to sit in front of a metal box with spinning wheels in a building the size of a warehouse,” Rose said. “The industry is looking around for whatever they can.”

Tony Raap is a Tribune-Review staff writer. Reach him at 412-320-7827 or traap@tribweb.com

TribLive commenting policy

You are solely responsible for your comments and by using TribLive.com you agree to our [Terms of Service](#)

We moderate comments. Our goal is to provide substantive commentary for a general readership. By screening submissions, we provide a space where readers can share intelligent and informed commentary that enhances the quality of our news and information.

While most comments will be posted if they are on-topic and not abusive, moderating decisions are subjective. We will make them as carefully and consistently as we can. Because of the

Casinos invest in arcade-style digital games, party pits to attract millennials

Written by Administrator

Thursday, 24 November 2016 23:00 -

volume of reader comments, we cannot review individual moderation decisions with readers.

We value thoughtful comments representing a range of views that make their point quickly and politely. We make an effort to protect discussions from repeated comments — either by the same reader or different readers.

We follow the same standards for taste as the daily newspaper. A few things we won't tolerate: personal attacks, obscenity, vulgarity, profanity (including expletives and letters followed by dashes), commercial promotion, impersonations, incoherence, proselytizing and SHOUTING. Don't include URLs to Web sites.

We do not edit comments. They are either approved or deleted. We reserve the right to edit a comment that is quoted or excerpted in an article. In this case, we may fix spelling and punctuation.

We welcome strong opinions and criticism of our work, but we don't want comments to become bogged down with discussions of our policies and we will moderate accordingly.

We appreciate it when readers and people quoted in articles or blog posts point out errors of fact or emphasis and will investigate all assertions. But these suggestions should be sent [via e-mail](#).

To avoid distracting other readers, we won't publish comments that suggest a correction. Instead, corrections will be made in a blog post or in an article.

Read more <http://news.google.com/news/url?sa=t&fd=R&ct2=us&usg=AFQjCNHatR6wNjXfbAHxNfw1YaJR-6cCMA&clid=c3a7d30bb8a4878e06b80cf16b898331&ei=VsU3WPrILOEhQH-vYu4Ag&url=http://triblive.com/local/alleggheny/11482842-74/casino-casinos-games>