

Case Study

Dover Downs Gaming & Entertainment, Inc.



The Client

Dover Downs Gaming & Entertainment, Inc. (NYSE: DDE) is a diversified gaming and entertainment company whose operations consist of Dover Downs Slots – a 91,000 square foot video slots casino complex; the Dover Downs Hotel and Conference Center – featuring luxury, four-diamond accommodations with conference, banquet, fine dining, ballroom and concert hall facilities; and the Dover Downs Raceway – a harness racing track with pari-mutuel wagering on live and simulcast horse races.

The Situation

When the current Dover Downs management team assumed control of the company in 1999, they quickly realized that they had some real employee relationship issues that needed immediate attention. Employees were openly griping about work conditions, benefits and management responsiveness to these problems, resulting in annual employee turnover rates approaching the 90-percent mark. The costs to the company were both tangible and intangible – while the bottom line suffered because of high HR and training costs, as well as decreased customer satisfaction and retention rates, perhaps more telling was the potential damage to the company's reputation. As the major employer in a small town, Dover Downs was concerned that the word on the street would be "don't go to work there." Dover Downs attempted to address the situation with a paper-based employee satisfaction survey beginning in 2000, but found the reporting function too slow to address the pressing issues they were facing and the survey itself too inflexible to meet the dynamic needs of Dover Downs.

The Solution

In the summer of 2004, Dover Downs approached LRA about designing and implementing an electronic survey to systematically study Dover Downs employee engagement and to be able to react quickly to employee feedback. After working closely with the Dover Downs Human Resources Department to design the survey, LRA administered the eSurvey at both the parent company location in Dover, as well as several satellite locations across the United States via e-mail invitation, electronic kiosk, and a customized, dedicated survey Web site.

The results were nearly instantaneous. "In the past it had taken us at least three months to begin to get any sort of data—with LRA we were able to get results immediately," explained Robin Roberts, Dover Downs' Vice President of Human Resources. "It allowed us to take the data and get back to our employees to work on the issues that they had identified in three weeks, rather than three months. Taking the survey was fresh in everyone's mind, so our employees felt a direct connection between taking the eSurvey and tangible action plans from management."

LRA Helps Dover Downs Design and Implement an Employee Engagement eSurvey, Reducing Turnover and Human Resources Costs.

"The Employee Engagement eSurvey has been an absolutely fantastic tool, from beginning to end. And 'absolutely fantastic' describes our experience with LRA as well. Throughout the entire process the LRA Team really listened to our needs and adapted the product and its delivery to our culture and environment. It has been a truly effective business partnership—exactly the way a consulting engagement should work."



*Ms. Robin Roberts
Vice President, Human Resources
Dover Downs Gaming & Entertainment, Inc.*

The Results

Dover Downs was able to access real-time results as the surveys were administered via a customized Web-based reporting suite. In addition, the Human Resources team in charge of the project could track participation rates by location and department online, allowing them to encourage involvement from certain departments in order to meet predefined participation goals; as a result, the overall participation rate was far higher than it had been in previous survey attempts. Most importantly, the analysis and reporting provided by LRA allowed Dover Downs to focus on improving only the weak areas that were truly important to its employees; in the past, the trouble areas addressed were those that scored lowest, regardless of their role in employee satisfaction.

Where annual employee turnover rates had approached 90-percent, Dover Downs is currently in the 40-percent range. Correspondingly, Human Resources costs (the cost of hiring, training, etc.) have dropped substantially, allowing the Employee Engagement program to identify a concrete Return on Investment. In addition, Customer Satisfaction scores have risen since the employee measurement program was implemented.

Likewise, Dover Downs has revised its compensation structure to reward managers who successfully implement the action plan resulting from the Employee Engagement eSurvey. As Dover Downs gathers more data in subsequent iterations of the eSurvey, the plan is to tie a portion of management compensation to employee satisfaction and engagement levels benchmarked against previous years. Dover Downs' management views the Employee Engagement eSurvey as a significant sign of its commitment to its employees.

"[The Employee Engagement] eSurvey has been an absolutely fantastic tool, from beginning to end," Roberts continued. "And 'absolutely fantastic' describes our experience with LRA as well. Throughout the entire process the LRA Team really listened to our needs and adapted the product and its delivery to our culture and environment. It has been a truly effective business partnership—exactly the way a consulting engagement should work."



LRA Worldwide, Inc.

300 Welsh Road
Building 1, Suite 200
Horsham, PA 19044.2263 USA

T 215.957.1999

F 215.957.6570

E info@LRAworldwide.com

W LRAworldwide.com