

Maximising income through debit cards

HOW to maximise income from using a debit card system in a location was the theme of a seminar which was organised by supplier Intercard during the Dubai Entertainment, Amusement and Leisure Expo at the end of April.

Intercard's CEO Scott Sherrod was on hand with his vice-president of international sales Alberto Borrero and senior technicians from the company, to explain to a very international audience how new applications launched for the Intercard system, can help them increase revenues.

The seminar included a review of the Intercard redemption control package, new point of sale features and how to implement them, plus a live demonstration of new marketing tools, headed by Bob Boyle, for many years a leading operator in Middle East FECs and now a consultant specialising in running locations.

Around 50 senior managers attended the seminar, representing the United Arab Emirates, Kazakhstan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, India, Qatar, Syria, Bahrain and Kuwait.

After running through technical issues with product specialist Charlie Werckle, Bob Boyle took over on key marketing aspects of the system. "In my opinion," he said, "Intercard offers the highest level of technology available on the market today. It used to be that the way to communicate with your customer was face-to-face, but that's not always possible now. This card, however, gives you the best alternative."

Boyle emphasised that the basic foundation of successful FEC operating was

understanding the customer and delivering on your promises. "An FEC has become a social experience and you have to position your image and unique selling points to fit with that. There is intense competition among retail entertainment, so it is critical that you engage your customers, achieve performance goals and, above all, communicate."

Boyle showed how modules in the Intercard system integrated all of these points to enhance the experience for the player and grow loyalty. He covered areas such as value added against discounting, the use of happy hours, timed play, running competitions, building on POS and introducing membership tier levels. Other features available through Intercard such as e-coupons through the email system, tokens – a new feature which offers another form of spend – redemption promotions, group offers, direct offers and internal and external cross-promotions, were all covered in the session.

Building a database of information on players was a most useful tool. It meant that the system would automatically send out date-of-birth congratulatory emails, regular newsletters and promotions. "All of this is very valuable information, giving you the ability to link directly with customers as opposed to television or newspaper advertising." He said that experiments had shown that direct communication with the players had a tenfold improved response than media contact.



Bob Boyle, the principal speaker at the seminar, from Boyle Leisure in Dubai, with Jean Habre, general manager of the Al Hokair chain of FECs in Saudi Arabia, at the seminar



Technicians and senior managers from all over the Middle East attended the Intercard seminar



Scott Sherrod, CEO of Intercard, product specialist Charlie Werckle and Alberto Borrero, vice-president of international sales



Alberto Borrero of Intercard (left) with John Becker, general manager of Tamdeen Leisure in Kuwait