



Conversations w/Tino

Guest	Carter Pavey
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Tino Magnatta: Hello and welcome to another episode of GT Radio. Man, I've been looking forward to this show all week because Carter Pavey is such a charismatic guy and he's a smart person. Welcome to the show, my friend.

Carter Pavey: Thank you. Thank you, appreciate it.

Tino Magnatta: So you grew up in middle America in a small town in Michigan, right? Tell us a little bit-

Carter Pavey: Yup.

Tino Magnatta: About growing up in your family and all that.

Carter Pavey: Yeah, I grew up in northern Michigan, a small town called [inaudible 00:00:53]. It was your classic, I guess, small Midwest town. My dad was a ... He built log cabins, and through his life he was in and out of alcoholism and had problems with that addiction. And so it caused ... He had a rough life. The one thing that it taught me, though, was I don't want this for my life. I want more. So I made a conscious decision when I was a little kid, and I said, "I'm gonna do more."

So applied myself at school, and decided I wanted to go to college. I was the first kid in the family to go to college. So I went to college, paid for it myself, went to Michigan State University, and yeah ... So I mean, I made a real conscious decision and said, "I want more." I mean, my dad, he gave me everything he could, but there was always ... It was a tough life. He tried his best, and yeah, I wanted to make sure that I was able to provide my family with everything they wanted, and not ever have a time where there was a lack of wanting, or they didn't think I was able to give them everything they needed, I guess.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, Carter, one of the things of the conversations we've had that I really love about some of the things that you say is you always have a saying for something. And I know that the saying, "How can we do better every day," is something that, I think, resonates with me because that's the way I think too. Let me ask you, not everybody has that vision to say, "I don't want this for my life. I want to make a better life." Where do you think that comes from? Is that something you're born with, or is that something that you develop? Why is it that you had that and, let's say, another person didn't? Why is that?

Carter Pavey: Yeah. It's hard to say because my brother and I are three years apart and we all had the same opportunities. We were living up in the same household, everything was the same, and he's living a very similar life to what we grew up to. I don't know. I think it was just you ... I guess statistically I should have gotten in that same boat, but I don't know. I guess I broke the mold statistically, and I just ... I made that conscious decision that I didn't want this. I didn't wanna grow up being a smoker, and I didn't wanna grow up living paycheck to paycheck, and scrounging for how am I gonna pay for the next meal for the kids, and I don't want that.

So I think part of it is you're born with it, and it comes down to your work ethic. So you're born with a certain work ethic, I believe, and the rest is you're instilled with it and it's a learned trait. And my dad, while he had his challenges, he had a hard work ethic. He busted his hump for everything that we did have. So the work ethic is definitely something that I think that you need, and I applied that work ethic to ... Instead of looking at paycheck to paycheck, I applied it to longterm. Let's play the longterm goal here, and work towards the future.

And at the time when I was little, that applied to I've gotta have good grades. If I wanna get into a good school, I need to have good grades. And if I have to have good grades, that means I'm gonna have to do my homework. I'm gonna have to do this. I'm gonna have to keep my nose above water, and don't fall into the trap of a lot of high schools and go to parties, and all that kind of stuff. So ...

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. So even though your dad and your family [inaudible 00:04:40] paycheck to paycheck, you saw this work ethic that he had, and the work he was doing wasn't easy. You were telling me he was carrying logs on his shoulder, and it wasn't easy work, right?

Carter Pavey: Yeah. Yeah, he had logs on his shoulders. He's building log homes from hand for people, and working for companies who maybe didn't have the best OSHA regulations, and a lot of injuries, and I saw the physical toll it took on him from just a physical standpoint. He had cuts and scrapes. His arm got caught in a log peeler when I was little, and mangled his arm to ... It's completely shredded and scarred. And that's not stuff I wanted for myself. Like I said, I wanted more, so I made a conscious decision. And I said, "All right. I've gotta apply myself." And I took that lesson throughout my entire career. I've always said, "All right. I want more." Now it's, "I want more EBITA. I want more coin in." But so taking that lesson and kind of applied it throughout my entire life.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, so even though, like we were talking about, even though it was like paycheck to paycheck, and it was a struggle, you still saw your dad working hard, getting injured, having a good work ethic, right? That stuck with you.

Carter Pavey: Yeah. It absolutely did. When I first moved out to Vegas, I thought for sure everyone worked as hard as I did, and I quickly realized that that's not necessarily the case. A lot of people show up, and come to work, get their paycheck, and go home. And I was like-

Tino Magnatta: Yeah.

Carter Pavey: "I want more." And I remember a story when I was working early in my career. I thought, "I'm 22-years-old, and I've got a full-time job. I'm living in Las Vegas." My first paycheck is what my dad made like in a month and a half. So I'm like, "I'm made. I've made it." And I remember ... So you know, a salaried team member. I was a salaried team member, so I'd come to work at 10:00, and I'd

get my job done, and by 3:00 I'm playing games on Yahoo, and thinking that this is ... I'm done. I've made.

And I remember my general manager came up and she goes, "What are you doing?" I said, "What do you mean what am I doing?" She's like, "Well, I need this report, and you're slacking off. You're goofing off." I was like, "the report's on your desk." "Well, I need this post form." "It's on your desk." "I need this." I was like, "I gave it to you yesterday. Check your inbox. Yada, yada, yada." So she was like, "You know what? Just go do something else. Go work the front desk. Go ... " So I said, "Okay, fine."

So I'd do my job in a very timely and efficient manner, working three or four hours a day doing my actual job in marketing, outside of promotions and giveaways and stuff. But then I would go and learn the front desk, and then I'd follow slots around, and follow the rewards center around, and just kinda ... It was a good lesson for me to reinforce the lesson I learned growing up that there's always more. Right? There's always more you can do. You can always learn more. You can always apply yourself more. So the lesson that my dad taught me inadvertently saying, "Don't settle or this and strive for more," just kinda reinforced throughout my career through different mentors and leadership I had.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, that's great stuff. Now, you have the funniest story about how you ended up in Vegas. Tell us about that.

Carter Pavey: Yeah.

Tino Magnatta: This is a great story.

Carter Pavey: Yeah, so I-

Tino Magnatta: You've gotta tell them.

Carter Pavey: Had just graduated from ... Yeah, I'd just graduated from Michigan State University, and all of my buddies were all out at the different bars, living that college life, and didn't have a care in the world. And we're at the bar having some drinks, and friends are telling me that they're moving to Kentucky, and they're moving to Atlanta, and they're moving to Denver, and they're moving to Minnesota, and everyone's kinda rattling off where they're going and all these jobs they have. Well, I didn't really have a job lined up yet, and I guess I told everyone I was moving to Las Vegas.

And the next day, everyone's like, "Man, I can't believe you're moving to Las Vegas. What are you gonna do down there?" And I'm like, "I'm sorry. Come again? What did you say?" And they said, "Well, last night you told us you were moving down to Vegas." And I was like, "Oh. Oh, yeah. No. No. Yeah, I'm totally moving to Las Vegas. Yeah, I don't know what I'm gonna do yet, but I'm gonna

move to Las Vegas, and it's gonna be great." So in a nutshell, I moved to Vegas and started my career because I didn't want to look like an idiot in front of my friends.

Tino Magnatta: Now, I remember a couple more details. You actually borrowed money from your grandma, right?

Carter Pavey: Yeah.

Tino Magnatta: Or something like that.

Carter Pavey: The car I had wasn't gonna make it out of the parking lot, so I had to borrow money from my grandma and I bought a car that would drive me across country. And then when I moved across country, I'd never been to Vegas in my life. To me, I was the quintessential ... I've seen a couple movies, and I thought Las Vegas was the strip and that was it. So I had no idea what I was getting into when I moved out there. I moved out there, realized Vegas was a heck of a lot bigger than I thought, had no idea where I was gonna live. So I end up ... I slept in my car in the T.I. parking lot, or in the parking garage for a couple of days until I ran into ... I found out-

Tino Magnatta: Wow.

Carter Pavey: A friend of mine, her uncle lived out there, so she put me in contact with him, and built a relationship with him, and he kind of helped me find a place to live. And then about a month and a half went by, still didn't have a job, and I was having lunch with him at the Santa Fe Station, and he said, "You've got a job yet?" And I go, "No, I still don't have a job. I'm still looking." He goes, "Hold on a second." He made a phone call, and the director of marketing came down, and he goes, "This is my friend Carter. He needs a job." And a week later I got a job and I was working at Fiesta Ranch [inaudible 00:10:47].

Tino Magnatta: That's amazing. Unbelievable.

Carter Pavey: Yeah.

Tino Magnatta: When you started your first property and you got into it, what were your feelings about what you were doing? This was the first time that you had done this, and you've come from this small town, and your dad in log building, and all that stuff. What did you think when you started? What was going through your mind?

Carter Pavey: I thought it was the craziest thing I've ever done in my life. It was. It was exciting. It was hectic. A lot of it I was like, "I'm faking it until I make it right now." So it was a cool experience. I really jumped in head first. And doing the promotions is what I started doing, the drawings, and coming up with all those concepts, and I really gravitated towards the actual emceeing of the drawings.

And so I started doing that, and that was right around the time, probably a year later, Bob Barker from The Price is Right retired.

Tino Magnatta:

Yeah.

Carter Pavey:

And I went as far as I sent a demo tape of me doing some of the drawings, and announcing, and emceeing the events and all this stuff, to The Price is Right, and letting him know that-

Tino Magnatta:

That's amazing.

Carter Pavey:

I wanted to apply, and oddly enough, I got a letter back from them. The letter said, "We don't know who you are, so we're not gonna consider you." But I got a letter back from The Price is Right.

Tino Magnatta:

One thing that struck me with the conversations that we had is that you're fearless. And I think this is something that I've heard from other people who have started at the bottom and ... Well, most people I've interviewed started at the bottom, worked their way up. Talk a little bit about fearlessness.

Carter Pavey:

Yeah, I think you really need to ... None of us are experts. No one's an expert, and the best thing that you can do, and I try to teach this to my team, the best thing you can do is fail. Try it and fail. There's not too many things that you can fail at that are gonna get you fired. So it's trial by error. It's continuing to try and learning from those mistakes, I think, is what's most important. So yeah, being fearless in the industry is being willing to take a risk, a calculated risk, but taking a risk. It's being willing and ready to be the first in the market to do X, Y, or Z.

But I don't think you can be ... If you're timid, you sit back, and you're waiting for what the competition's gonna do, to say, "All right. I'll follow through," That's not gonna advance you. Now you're following the leader. You're not being the leader.

Tino Magnatta:

Exactly. You have to take risks, and you have to be able to fail, because that's the biggest lessons that you're gonna learn. Correct?

Carter Pavey:

Oh, absolutely. Yeah.

Tino Magnatta:

You spent quite a bit of time at Santa Fe Station, and I think a lot of ... You got some hardcore training there because you were on the strip, things were a little different back then, and I think out of this came a lot of stuff that you talk about now, and some of the sayings that you have. Talk a little bit about these concepts and these sayings that you have.

Carter Pavey:

Yeah, my time with Stations was a great time, and I learned a lot from them. Being in that Las Vegas strip for a non-strip market, you've gotta be competitive. You've got a casino in the gas Station. You've got a casino in the grocery store.

You've got a casino next door to you. You've gotta be competitive. So being competitive with them, I think, is ... You've really gotta be competitive.

And now in my career I'm in Lowell, Michigan. I'm working at Gun Lake Casino right now. Our closest competitor is, what, an hour away maybe, but I don't really view them as our competitor. I view our competitor is what did we do same timeframe last year? What did we do same timeframe last month? What did we do yesterday? It's really putting yourself up against yourself is the best way to really, in my opinion, to drive your fire, I guess. How do you constantly beat your prior day of business? How do you top the promotion you did last month?

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, basically competing against yourself. Right?

Carter Pavey: Yeah, absolutely.

Tino Magnatta: How can we do better every day? Right?

Carter Pavey: Yeah. Going back to your earlier question about one of the lessons I've learned, I've learned over my 15 plus year career that everyone works for marketing. I feel that that's a-

Tino Magnatta: By the way, I love that.

Carter Pavey: [inaudible 00:15:47] when you meet new team members and-

Tino Magnatta: I love that saying.

Carter Pavey: Yeah. But when I meet new team members during their orientation process, that's what I tell them. I go, "Ultimately, I'm here for you. Morgan's a resource for the property where if you've got questions, let us know. We'll be happy to assist, but at the end of the day, you all work for me." And I say that because regardless of your position, it's everyone's job. We're in the hospitality industry, the hospitality business. I think that a lot of people view the guest service standards, or making sure the guest is taken care of and that they're entertained, as a marketing function. But I don't care if you're ...Regardless of your department, you're working for marketing. Your job is to make sure the guests are entertained, that they're having a good time, because that's part of the hospitality business.

Guests have choices with their money to go anywhere, and ultimately, when they choose your property, you've gotta make sure they're choosing your property and that they wanna come back. And to do that, you've gotta provide that value. I think guests are ... They're aware that they're not gonna walk into the casino and win money every single time. They know that's not gonna happen, but what value are they gonna get out of that? Are they gonna be entertained and leave saying, "I had a good time?" And that requires any

interaction they had with any team member on property, you have to make sure they had a good time.

So whether it's security when they walk in the front door, make sure they have a good time. It's slot GSA's. Make sure they have a good interaction with you when you're getting them a player's card, or paying them a jackpot, or whatever the case may be. Make sure they're having a good time and that you're keeping them entertained.

Tino Magnatta: It doesn't matter what position. How about the security guard? How does he work for marketing?

Carter Pavey: Yeah. The security guard, in many properties, that's the first person that works for the casino that the guest sees when they walk in the doors, that security officer. I equate it to if you walk into anywhere and the first person you see that works there has their arm crossed and they're scowling, and they don't say hello, and they look like a classic bouncer, you're not gonna feel safe, You're not gonna feel comfortable. You're not gonna feel warm, and welcome, and inviting. So if that's the attitude and the mentality of a security officer, then I'm not coming back. I'm not getting that good vibe. But if I walk up there, and they greet me, and they say hello, they ask me how my day is, they're able to provide any questions and assistance that I have, to me, that's selling the experience. That's the first person I saw, and if that's the first person I saw, boy, I'm excited to see the rest of the people that I'm gonna interact with.

And oftentimes, the security officer's also the last person. Right? What's the last person they see? They're at the door. They're greeting you at the door, and then they're greeting you on the way back. So not only ... What's the old adage? The first impression and the last impression are the most important ones. The security officer has the first impression and the last impression in many instances with the guest, so it's extremely important that they're providing that friendly, upbeat, positive interaction with the guest.

Tino Magnatta: I love that. I really, really love that. It's something that I haven't heard before, and very unique, but coming from you, I expect something innovative like that. Talk a little bit about the happy team thing. [inaudible 00:19:07] you were saying the happy team and what's that about?

Carter Pavey: Yeah. What my philosophy is the whole happy team is ... To me, when you break down the business, it's a pretty simple business plan. If you have a happy team, they're gonna take care of your guests who will be happy, and then your guests are gonna end up taking care of you. So it all starts, if you can have a happy, and upbeat, and team, and you're giving them what they need, giving their pencil, I like to say ... If they need a pencil, get them a pencil. If they need a stapler, get them a stapler. All those small things, the tools that they need to do their job, treat them with respect, be open and transparent with them, communicate with them, don't let them get caught off guard, or make sure that they're aware of what's going on, and they're involved in the process.

If you can create that dynamic with your team members and they'll be happy, they're engaged, they're then gonna take care of your ... Naturally. You don't even have to force it at that point in time. They're gonna take care of the guests, and when the guests are taken care of, the guests feel comfortable, they feel relaxed, they wanna come back, thus they're gonna spend more money with you.

Tino Magnatta: So happy team, and the happy team if they're happy, they're working for marketing, and they're happy marketers is what you're saying.

Carter Pavey: Right. Absolutely. Yeah.

Tino Magnatta: And that's gonna translate into people that are hospitable, and we're in the hospitality business.

Carter Pavey: Yeah. And again, I think people often forget we're in the hospitality business. We're not in the casino business. We're not in the food and beverage business. We're in the hospitality business, and people are coming here to have a good time. And you've got to make sure whether it's a poker room, or table games, or a slot machine, or a hotel, or a restaurant, you've got to treat them like it's your house. They're in your house. Treat them with respect. Treat them with dignity. Make sure they're having a good time and going the next ... "Do you need a water? Can I get you anything? Are you comfortable?" And just making sure that they have those basic hospitable needs and they'll come back.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. It's really simple, but very effective. The job at Gun Lake, you were tenacious about this. You told me a story about sending them notes to them every six months for six to seven years.

Carter Pavey: Yeah. Yeah, so when I was-

Tino Magnatta: Tell us about that story. I love this story.

Carter Pavey: Yeah. So you heard I moved out to Vegas. I got drunk and didn't wanna look like an idiot, so I moved out to Vegas. But ultimately, Michigan is my home. That's my home state. I love the state. So I ultimately wanted to come back. And so I moved out in '04, and I don't know, probably three or four months into my job there I heard that Station Casinos was working with a tribe back in Michigan. And I said, "Oh boy, that'd be great. I got a job. I'm starting to learn the industry, and boy, it'd be wonderful. I'd get to go back and essentially work for the same company and have a job in Michigan." Because at that time, the Michigan market wasn't what it is today. It was a tough market.

So I found out that we were doing this project, and I found out who was in charge of it, and I shot him an email on a whim. Never met the guy before. He was the senior vice president, and I was a coordinator in an entry level salary position. Shot the senior vice president an email saying, "You don't know me. I

understand we're working on deal with a tribe in Michigan. I would love to be a part of it." Didn't hear anything on that email. Six months later, shot another email. Six months later, shot an email. For six or seven years, I shot this guy an email. Never heard from him. Never heard back from him. And then I finally did hear back from him. He said, "Let's talk."

So at this time, I just got promoted to a director. I was over at Fiesta Henderson. I was at Fiesta Henderson. So I went and I met with the guy, and he said, "You know what? You're from Michigan. That's respectable, and you've been with the company for a while now." He's like, "Maybe, maybe, I'll bring you on as my marketing manager." So I left that meeting, and I'm like, "Marketing manager? Are you kidding me?" I've got that ego. I'm like, "I am a director." I've been a director all two minutes, but I'm a director. So I said, "No, no, that's not good enough."

So I emailed the COO of the company, and I said, "Hey, I understand the project's underway. It's starting to move faster now. I really wanna be a part of this. I wanna come out as the director of marketing." And he shot me a note back and said, "That's wonderful. What would your marketing plan be? Put together a marketing plan and a whole proposal of what you'd wanna do. It's a brand new market for us, and they don't have a player's club, so ... " Knowing the market, I put together this pretty extensive presentation, and I said, "It's all done. When do you wanna meet?" And he said, "Well, come to my office tomorrow at the corporate office and we'll review it." So I went to his office, and I presented it to him. He said, "This is great. You're booked on a flight tomorrow to San Diego to go present this to the tribe."

Tino Magnatta: Wow.

Carter Pavey: "Come again?" Yeah, so I went and presented it to the tribe.

Tino Magnatta: Wow.

Carter Pavey: And I think three months later I was packing up and moving to Michigan.

Tino Magnatta: Unbelievable.

Carter Pavey: Yeah.

Tino Magnatta: So the bottom line is you have to be tenacious, you've gotta be fearless, and nothing should be beyond your reach. Right? You shouldn't think that anything should be beyond-

Carter Pavey: Yeah, absolutely. You've gotta shoot for the stars. It sounds cliché, right? But if you want them, you've got to make sure those that work for you, and those that work above you, are aware of what you want. What are your goals? What are your aspirations? Make sure they're aware of them, because they can help you.

And if they don't know, how are they supposed to help you? So yeah, you've got to be fearless, though. And the guy who's never stepped foot in a casino to go to a senior vice president and say, "Hey, I want this job. What do I gotta do?" And then be consistent with that message over the years, and I think that really helped position me into good graces with my senior level leadership throughout the organization and all the different properties I worked at, and speak my mind.

That's one thing ... I might not always be right, but everyone knows where I stand and how I stand because I speak my mind and I make sure everyone's aware. End of the day, You've gotta go with the play that's called, but you should always make sure people are aware that ... Not all people, but your senior level leadership, whether you agree or don't agree, at least make it be known. At the end of the day, run the play if the play has been called, but you should always provide your insight. And that's hard for a lot of people. Right?

Tino Magnatta: Yeah.

Carter Pavey: They can be viewed as going against the grain, as a troublemaker. You've just gotta do it in a professional manner, a professional setting. But at the end of the day, they may know you're against it, but as long as you execute it to perfection the way they want it, they'll never question you.

Tino Magnatta: Carter, people always talk about shifting demographics, right, and how the players are getting older, they're dying off, we've got the Millennials coming up. Everybody's talking about how do we attract them, the new generation, the old? How do you deal with the shifting demographics of our business?

Carter Pavey: Boy, this is the million dollar question, right? If anyone in the industry had the answer, the industry would be in a very different place. So when you're looking at it, the shifting demographic, you've got the older generation is moving out, and you have the younger generation coming in. I think that younger generation is looking for that experience. Like they might not be big gamers, but they're looking for that experience, food and beverage, nightlife. There's a lot of new games out there that kinda create that kind of skill for play type mentality, but they're looking for that experience. And at the end of the day, if you can go back to having the good guest service, and making your property hospitable, that's the experience. That's what they're looking for. They want, "Am I being treated well? Am I getting a good value?" That's what they're looking for.

So it may not be gaming today, but they'll get there. You've just gotta create that experience, and that deem that warm and welcoming. And in the meantime, it's tough. While you're focusing on the younger generation and creating that experience that they want, you also have to take care of the older generation who are playing the slot machines, they have that more disposable income, and so it's a balancing act. That's for sure.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. Yeah. Like you said, it's the million dollar question, right? That's what everybody's talking about. You know, we've got a lot of expansion, a lot of renovations, a lot of things being added to casinos that are making them more and more like resorts all across the country. What's gonna happen in five years when this is all completed, all these new casinos have been built, there's more competition? What's gonna happen?

Carter Pavey: I think it's gonna come down to ... When you look at it, right? So at the end of the day when you look at a casino, they have slot machines. They have table games. They have food and beverage. Concepts might be different. Menus might be different. Some have hotels. You've got concert halls. All of these amenities, there's nothing unique to any property. There's nothing unique because someone else has an attraction similar, if not the same. It might be branded differently, different name, but it's there. It's really gonna come down to, again, going back to that guest experience. How do the guests feel when they walk in your building?

Again, guests are smart. They're not expecting to come into the casino with \$100 and walk away with \$100,000.00. That's not the mentality of the guests. They're looking for that entertainment value. "Am I gonna be able to get a couple hours of entertainment?" And that's not necessarily just play time. But, "Am I gonna be able to get a couple hours of entertainment for my \$100?" That's what they're looking for. So providing that up front with your front line team members, I think, that's what's gonna separate you from the competition, and it's not the amenities. It's not the offers. It's not any of that. That'll help short term, but longterm it's gonna go back to, "Is Property A giving me that consistent experience over Property B and C?"

Tino Magnatta: Exactly. Yeah. Everybody works for marketing. Love that.

Carter Pavey: Yeah. Everyone works for marketing. That's right.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, everybody works for marketing. The young people coming up into the business, what can you tell them that will serve them well throughout their entire careers?

Carter Pavey: Ask questions. Always ask questions. None of us are experts. Even the senior level people, they're not experts. The best thing you can do is ask question, and learn from your mistakes, take chances, take risks, and then really, as you move up your career, hire people smarter than you. Get people who are ... Again, no one's an expert, but get people who are more of an expert in advertising, or slots, or tables, than you are. Get those smarter people and hire them because you're gonna learn from them. Just because you may be over them doesn't mean you can't learn from them. But ask questions. You've always gotta ask questions. I'm constantly asking questions because you don't know what you don't know.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, you don't know what you don't know. That's right. Yeah. That's great. Great stuff. Let's take some calls, okay? This has been really great. Thank you so much.

Carter Pavey: Yeah.

Tino Magnatta: Hang on one sec. Hello, this is Tino Magnatta. I have Carter Pavey on the line. Do you have a question for him?

Speaker 6: Hi. This is [J. Z. 00:31:33] from Clarisoft [inaudible 00:31:34]. How are you guys doing?

Carter Pavey: Good. How are you?

Tino Magnatta: Good. Good, J. Z. How are you? Good to hear you?

Speaker 6: Great. Great. I love the interview, and Carter, you are absolutely right when you say everything comes from the experience of what you're providing, because everybody does have the same machines. Everybody does have those same amenities, but who you hire, and you hit the nail right on the head. So my question for you right now is I find that working in the gaming world is just as addictive as a player coming into the gaming world. What is it about gaming, Carter, that keeps you motivated, and coming in every day, and making yourself from a marketing coordinator now to an AGM on the property? Was it working out on the strip, grinding when you first started, or was it presenting in front of the tribe your marketing plan? What was it that motivates you to come in every day?

Carter Pavey: No, Tino and I were talking about this earlier. It's really it comes down to every day is different. I've got buddies in various other industries who Monday is Monday. Tuesday is Tuesday. Wednesday is Wednesday. Thursday is Thursday. Friday is Friday. They know that going in, they go to their weekend, and they know the next week is gonna be the exact same week. Whereas, our industry, it's different. There's never a same day. Everything's always different. There's new challenges to face. Everything's different. You never have that mundane day, that mundane week.

I think the other thing is is just that challenge, that challenge and that drive to say, "How do we do better than last year? How do we do better than last month? How do we do better than last week?" And really being competitive with yourself, not being competitive with the casino across the street, not being competitive with the casino down the road. Be competitive with yourself, and beat yourself, and use that as your benchmark, not what's happening down the road. Benchmark against yourself and strive to be better than you were yesterday.

Speaker 6: Well, that's great. That's exactly how I felt when I was looking for a job. My original background was from the hotel industry, and then when the casinos started popping up in the Midwest, that was the very first question that I asked myself was, "Where am I gonna go where I can do the same thing but it be different every day?" And that was my immediate thought was, "Oh, let me go to the gaming world," and just kind of build myself up from there. So I'm glad that we share that same experience, and thank you so much for letting me ask the question and be a part of the show today.

Tino Magnatta: Oh, no problem. Call in any time. That was a great question. Really appreciate it.

Speaker 6: Great, thank you, guys, so much.

Carter Pavey: Yeah, thank you.

Tino Magnatta: Have a nice night.

Speaker 6: Thank you, you too.

Tino Magnatta: Bye bye. Okay, let's get another question here. Good question. Hello, this is GT Radio, Tino Magnatta. I have Carter Pavey. Do you have a question for him?

Luigi: Hi, Tino. Hi, it's Luigi. Thank you for taking my call.

Tino Magnatta: Hey, Luigi. How are you?

Luigi: Really good, thank you. Hi, Carter.

Carter Pavey: How you doing?

Luigi: Really good. I wanted to ... I'm enjoying the interview, first of all. I think it's very interesting, especially the culture of happiness. I love that for your operation. Where in Michigan are you from? I may have missed that.

Carter Pavey: I'm originally from Greenland, Michigan, which is about an hour south of the Mackinac Bridge.

Luigi: Oh, yeah. Okay. I'm from Michigan myself. I just wondered what area you're from. Mount Clemens is where I'm from, and the ... Yep.

Carter Pavey: Okay, yeah.

Luigi: So I know you transitioned from Station to the tribal world. Did you find it, or do you still find it difficult to present your ideas and sell your ideas to the tribe when you need to get something done, or is it a smooth process these days?

Carter Pavey: No, to me, it's a very similar process. I go up there, and if I have an idea, I present it. I say, "Are you free? Let's talk." And I throw it out there. It's not out of disrespect, but I go straight to the source. If you're gonna be making the decision, I'm gonna go talk to you. I'm not gonna go through the channels. I mean, I always keep my superiors in the loop, you know? But I'm a firm believer of you've got to step out on that branch, and you've got to make that challenge. So it's actually been fantastic working with the tribe here. They're very open and receptive. This is their first casino, so they're in that boat of they ask great questions. They wanna learn, so they're open and willing when I present.

And I'm a firm believer that you can present a solid case, and you can present some supporting figures and facts behind it. If it makes sense, it makes sense. And if it doesn't, poo. I'm not one to say, "All right. Well, I've gotta go sit in a corner now because my pride is hurt." It's, "All right. What do I gotta do to make this so it does make more sense? How do I tweak this, and edit this, and re-present it to be better than it was?"

Luigi: And once it's sold and they all have consensus, do they execute quickly, or is there a waiting period?

Carter Pavey: No, they're pretty good at getting thing executed pretty quickly. Again, if it makes sense, it'll make sense. And what I've experienced a lot over ... Whether it was with Stations or in Indian country, is a lot of people will present ideas, and it's almost in passing. "Hey, Luigi. Let's do this." You're not selling anything there. So what I do is say, "Hey, Luigi. Do you got time to ... Let's have lunch. Let's have a meeting. And then here's charts, and graphs, and supporting data that justifies why." Some people like all that stuff. The other people don't. But you gotta know your audience, I guess. And have your plan thought out and written, documented, yes, of course.

Luigi: Okay. Another question I had for you is basically when you were talking about Gen X, Gen Z, and the Millennials, and how they're gaming, and how that whole world is changing because on one hand we have to pay attention to the Baby Boomers because they have most of the money right now, but that's slowly fading away. And it's transitioning over to the other generation. So social media and virtual gaming, is that a part of your operation, and monitoring the social media as well as any type of virtual gaming and sports betting and all that for the future?

Carter Pavey: Yeah. Yeah. We've got the play for fun casino, and we've got the social media, and we're pretty active, involved, in both of those. And it's providing relative content that the players wanna see, and it's speaking to them, and showing them they want ... This is an odd concept, but they don't really care what drawing you have going on this weekend. If that's what you're posting on your social media, they've got the choir. They know what's going on. They wanna see who's winning. How much is winning? What games are winning? That's what they wanna see. That's the social aspect of it is, "Boy, that could be me." So we post a lot of winners' photos, and we've done a really good job with our slot

department getting those photos, and engaging guests, making sure that you're answering their questions when they have questions, you're writing them back, and you're liking their comments, and being responsive. Social media's 24/7, so making sure you have a person, or a team of people in mine since I have a couple people who help monitor social media, that-

Luigi: [crosstalk 00:39:29].

Carter Pavey: You're responding back to people in a timely manner. If it's sitting there for days on end, you've lost that person.

Luigi: Oh, yeah, especially with complaints. I agree with you. If there's some major complaint going on, and there's a pattern, and there's several people complaining, and no one's monitoring, of course. You're losing it. Right.

Carter Pavey: Yeah.

Luigi: So in the virtual space, the virtual casino world, are you allowing people to ... Online gaming isn't legal in Michigan yet, but in the next couple years, I guess, there's gonna be 22 more states that are gonna legalize it. I saw the [inaudible 00:40:03] Show. So is Michigan one of those states? I don't remember if Michigan was one of them or not.

Carter Pavey: Yeah, we've gotten on the ballot this November.

Luigi: [crosstalk 00:40:10].

Carter Pavey: [crosstalk 00:40:10] Michigan in the ballot this November, so we're gearing up, and getting ready for that.

Luigi: Excellent.

Carter Pavey: And again, it's finding the value. It goes back to you need to have that value, and they're not on property, you can still provide that guest experience by finding the right partner who's gonna support you and your business needs. It's gonna be, when there are issues, because inevitably there's always gonna be issues, that you're quick to respond, you're quick to resolve. And don't get into the blame game of, "Oh, it was our third party vendor, or it was person, or you didn't do this in time." At the end of the day, take care of the guest. Point fingers later. Take care of your guest, make sure that they're happy, and then figure out what happened.

Luigi: Ultimately, yeah. I agree. And let's just fast forward real quick online gaming being legal in Michigan which is eventually gonna happen, I think, in all over the country. But do you think that when people play virtual casino at Gun Lake and they earn their points and rewards online, is that an easy transition for you, do

you think, to allow people to redeem their points and rewards for whatever, cash, or comps at your property? Is that-

Carter Pavey: Yeah, I think, again, it goes back to that value. Am I getting my value for my time played? Whether it's on property or off property, I think you're gonna have to be able to provide them some sort of value. If I spend \$10,000.00 on a virtual casino, what am I gonna get out of that? Invite them to the property, and then what you're gonna do over time is you will start, especially this younger generation, you'll get them exposed to the casino, and they'll start navigating, probably, away from the social and start migrating into the building.

Luigi: Then play the real thing. Exactly. That's what I was-

Carter Pavey: Right, and I think having the right partner that has the same games ... You've got the game on property, you've got the game on the virtual casino, and being able to partner up and have those promotions, and utilize your analytic teams. Say, "Who's playing Game A on the virtual casino? Let's invite them to the property to play Game A in real life."

Luigi: Right. Okay. Good. I'm glad to hear that you're ... I was just wondering if the virtual casino easily, slowly transitions over into the brick and mortar gaming. And in many cases, I agree with you. I just think that some places aren't offering virtual casino points and rewards to be transferred into real comps and rewards, and it doesn't kinda make sense to me. Why not? Because they've already earned points and rewards.

Carter Pavey: Yeah, there's a lot of jurisdiction issues. Yeah, you've gotta be careful. There's a lot of jurisdiction issues that once you start providing something, is that considered ... Are they actually gaming now? So you've gotta be familiar with your state laws and your compacts and all that stuff to make sure you're not crossing any lines.

Luigi: True. Okay.

Carter Pavey: Yeah, you've definitely gotta provide something other than just spending money and leave. We do stuff where we invite players in for a free buffet, or whatever the case may be. You've gotta be careful with what your regulations state.

Luigi: Okay. Understood. Very good. That's a good point. Okay. Well, good luck to you. You're doing great, and we're happy to hear that you've got this new culture of happiness going on over there. I love that.

Carter Pavey: Thank you. I appreciate it.

Luigi: Congratulations.

Tino Magnatta: Thanks, Luigi. We really appreciate it.

Luigi: Thanks, guys. Thank you.

Tino Magnatta: You're welcome.

Luigi: Okay. Bye bye.

Tino Magnatta: Hello, this is Tino Magnatta. I have Carter Pavey. Do you have a question for him?

Speaker 7: Good evening. How are you guys doing?

Carter Pavey: Good. How are you?

Tino Magnatta: Good evening. Very well, thank you.

Speaker 7: Outstanding. Well, I enjoy these so much, and I enjoy what I'm hearing tonight because I've always been a believer in organizations that hire the best, and if they're better than you, then ... I'm in Wisconsin, so you hire Aaron Rodgers, and even I could coach decently, I think. But what I'm wondering about, I built my life out of what I call naïve enthusiasm, which put me into rooms that I just walked in, and then I had to kinda save my life to get through. But I also feel a vibe right now, and I wanna ask on this. What do you do to relax and de-program? Because you have a really ... I always joke that your mind is the hard drive, and your hard drive is pretty darn full. And you're going at-

Carter Pavey: I have a nine-month-old daughter right now, so she's my unwind. I come home and when she's awake, she's my world. My wife, her and I are ... We enjoy drinking wine and all that stuff. My wife and my daughter are ... And I'll tell you, it's hard. It is hard. There's times when my wife's like, "We just got home. Can you put your phone down?" I'm like, "Yeah. Yeah. I'm just trying to finish ... Nope. You're right. I need to stop." So it is. It's hard to find that balance especially in an industry like ours when we're 24/7. But my wife and my daughter, they're my entertainment. Whether it's going for a walk around the neighborhood or trying a new restaurant, hanging out with them is my time to unwind.

But it is challenging. I can't say that I'm perfect at it, because there are times where I've got one more email, or I've gotta finish this report, or I've got this presentation I've gotta do, or I've got this phone call from the guest op that's happening. So it's trying to balance that as much as you can. It's tough. I will admit it 100%. It's tough.

Speaker 7: And I think that over time that's probably gotten tougher in the last 15 years because everybody's into immediate response, and if you don't answer immediately, they think you've lost touch with gravity or something.

Carter Pavey: Yeah, and what we've done with my team is we've done, with my director team, and we did this a few years ago, we instilled kind of parameters. And the parameters are the expectation from us as a team of directors, as an executive team, is respond to an email within four hours up until 9:00 at night. At 9:00 at night, if we send you an email, don't respond until the next day. But it's kinda setting those boundaries as a team, and then make sure you hold each other accountable.

But I've always struggled with the work/life balance, but I think with the birth of my daughter, it's ... Well, and again, I'm not perfect, and my wife would probably say I'm far from perfect, but it's finding ... I feel like with the birth of my daughter, I've gotten a little bit better at finding that balance, and making sure that I'm there for them and present. I try my hardest to leave at a certain time so I can come spend two or three hours with my daughter before she goes to bed for the night, and then my wife and I will hang out. When she gets tired and goes to bed, there will be times where I'll say, "All right. I'm gonna stay up another hour or so and work a little bit more." But it's tough in this industry. It really is.

Speaker 7: Well, again, you're in a way of life, not a job. I agree, and that's what I always wonder, and I deeply respect and admire your passion, and commitment, and knowledge. You've achieved great success at this, and it's just awesome to be able to get on and listen to your thoughts and how you're doing. And so thank you so much for sharing, and bless you for the baby.

Carter Pavey: Thank you. I appreciate that.

Tino Magnatta: Thank you so much. You have a good night.

Speaker 7: Will do.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, children will definitely change you, that's for sure. Changed me.

Carter Pavey: Yeah, absolutely.

Tino Magnatta: That's the one force you can't combat, that's for sure. This is GT Radio. It's Tino Magnatta. I have Carter Pavey on the line. Do you have a question for him?

Bobby: Hi, Tino, this is Bobby in Las Vegas. Hello, Carter.

Tino Magnatta: Bobby, how are you?

Carter Pavey: Hello.

Bobby: Good. Good. I think the Price is Right's loss was the gaming industry's gain, Carter.

Carter Pavey: All right, appreciate that.

Bobby: That's great. I love that story, and I love how you were so tenacious in getting the job. Kinda good to hear every once in a while. I was curious just about how you liked doing the promotions and being on the mic. Did you have any terrific promotions that you recall, or disasters, or do you still get on the mic?

Carter Pavey: I still get on the mic. Absolutely. My team still has to tell me like, "All right, can we do our job now? Can you get off the mic?" Because I still get up there and I steal the mic. [crosstalk 00:49:48]. So we ... Which I had a talk about earlier.

Bobby: I had a feeling maybe that was the case.

Carter Pavey: Yeah. We just talked to an earlier caller about how the industry's changed, and people want the immediate gratification and all that stuff. So one promotion that we've done over the last few years is we've taken it back old school where you get drawing entries. And my team hates the promotion because it's so much work, but they love it because it produces such great results, and we do the manual tickets. We've got the Big Bertha Drum.

Bobby: That's great.

Carter Pavey: We do the manual tickets for various things.

Bobby: I love it.

Carter Pavey: And the guests really, really resonate well with that. Again, it's very labor-intensive, and it's tiring, and it's exhausting, especially because everyone waits till the end to collect all the manual tickets. And by doing that, though, guests can physically see, "This is what I have," and they're more apt to believe that the computer's not rigged when they have the actual ticket in their hand. Right? I'm not saying computers are rigged, obviously, but that's the perception that they have, slot machine's rigged, the drawing's rigged, the ATM is rigged. You name it. Everything's rigged.

When you have a physical ticket, it really creates that sense of value to the player. So by doing that, and we've been able to engage all aspects of the property. Buy two buffets and get a ticket. Have a \$50 dinner in our café, get a ticket. Go buy something at the gift shop. Have a \$50 bill in the gift shop, get a ticket. Experience this in our entertainment lounge, get a ticket. So we're able to kinda navigate and expose the guests throughout the property, introduce them to things that they may not be familiar with, by giving them a ticket. And then you win a jackpot, you get a ticket, win a jackpot in our high winners, get a ticket. If you're this tier, you'll get a ticket on Tuesday. If you're this tier, you get a ticket on Wednesday. If you're this tier, you get a ticket on Thursday.

We'll have electronic drawings for tickets. I mean, we really create it so that the ticket is what you really ... I mean, that's ... We'll give you a small, little cash prize or free slot play prize, but you want that ticket because at the end of the day, that ticket is gonna be ... Or at the end of the month, I should say, that ticket's worth \$100,000.00. We do a drawing where one person wins \$100,000.00.

Bobby: Wow.

Carter Pavey: Every year, we've done this promotion. Every year we've done this promotion, we've set a new record. The day we do that \$100,000.00 drawing, we're busier than New Year's Eve.

Bobby: That's crazy.

Carter Pavey: Yeah.

Bobby: I love this.

Carter Pavey: So that's probably the best drawing that I've ever done. I would say the worst drawing is we were doing a drawing, and I can't remember the specifics of the drawing, but the computer crashed, and it messed up the drawing, and it was frozen, and it took, I think, 45 minutes, 50 minutes, to get everything back up and running. Meanwhile, another drawing was supposed to have started by now, so I had to do two or three drawings back-to-back to get everything caught up, and people were not happy.

Bobby: How many tickets were the Big Bertha Drum when you gave away \$100,000.00 that one time?

Carter Pavey: There was a lot. I would say there was probably over 100000.

Tino Magnatta: Wow.

Bobby: That's unbelievable.

Carter Pavey: So you can that people at your player's club are like, "I hate you. I have to write them all by hand- "

Bobby: Yep.

Carter Pavey: "I hate you."

Bobby: Yep.

Carter Pavey: "Why are you doing this?" But they see the fruits of the labor, and to a certain extent I share how the day did and how the day performed formed to the front

line team members, and that really invigorates them so that next time you do it, they're really engaged and excited because they're saying, "All right, well, we know what we did last time. How do we beat that this time?"

Bobby: Well, that's great. Tino, another great show. Thanks so much, and thank you, Carter.

Carter Pavey: Thank you. I appreciate it, Bobby

Tino Magnatta: Thanks, Bobby. We really appreciate it. Thank you so much. So while we were talking to Bobby, one of your friends and one of my dear friends just texted me and said that you are the absolute best. Her name's [Lauren Westerfield 00:53:44]. She apologized for not being on the show, and she says, "I miss my Station's crew, the young bucks running marketing," she says.

Carter Pavey: Yeah, we ... For a while there, there was young bucks.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. Yeah. And she's great, and I didn't even know that you knew her. She's a very dear friend, and I see now why we click too. So this is great. Now her question is, what's the key difference in operating a regional property in Michigan versus the Vegas market?

Carter Pavey: You know, the key difference is ... It's really in Vegas ... I mean, again, casinos really dime a dozen. They would drive up and you'd have properties around the corner, but here you've gotta create a reason for people to come because it's not a short drive. There's a lot of others. Especially in Michigan, we have a very small window of good weather where people want to be outside, so it's being able to compete against that. I mean, really that's our biggest competitor at the end of the day. It's not the casino that's an hour, hour and a half away. It's the weather. But it's taken along those lessons that I learned in Las Vegas where it was extremely competitive and applying them here, and maybe it's not as competitive of a market, but utilizing, though, that competitive nature against yourself. I'm a firm believer of at the end of the day the biggest competitor is your own property. And so taking those lessons of being competitive, and applying it to everyday business is the main difference. But similarities, a casino runs when the casino runs, but it's really applying how do you do better, and how do you beat yourself? And utilizing those lessons is very similar. The guest service is the guest service, and you should be learning that at any property you're at.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. Yeah. Great. Okay, we have time for one more question. Let me patch this in. Hello, this is Tino Magnatta from GT Radio. I have Carter Pavey. You have a question for us?

Michael: Hi guys, [Michael Glaser 00:56:03] from Catalyst Marketing. Thanks for having me. Great to meet you.

Tino Magnatta: Hey, welcome Michael.

Carter Pavey: Hello, [crosstalk 00:56:06].

Michael: Doing great. Doing great. Staying warm here in California. So-

Tino Magnatta: Great.

Michael: There's a couple things that are funny, a couple things that very similar things have happened [inaudible 00:56:22] promotions, so some funny stories to hear, and could certainly relate to a lot of them. Tino, you might not even know this is why I ended up moving to Vegas was similar kind of decision process if you'd buy that. I was supposed to go out with a girl one night. She blew me off to go out with a friend of mine. I decided after a couple cocktails that night it was time to get out of Atlantic City. So ...

Tino Magnatta: Didn't know that.

Michael: Yeah, so similar-

Tino Magnatta: That's great. Great story.

Michael: Way that the ball got rolling there. But that question for you is up in your neck of the woods, I guess besides the weather, what's the biggest challenge that you face as a marketer up in that area?

Carter Pavey: I think that it's with ... It doesn't matter what market. The biggest challenge is how do you get one more trip? How do you get one more dollar from the player? And I don't care if you're in Las Vegas, or you're in Atlantic City, or you're in Mississippi, or Michigan. It doesn't matter. That's always the biggest challenge is how do you get just one more, right, one more hour, one more trip, one more dollar from a player? And it's being ... You've gotta try. It's a lot of trial and error. There are some things that work. There are some things that don't. And what worked today doesn't mean it's gonna work tomorrow.

So it's always ... it's being innovative and thinking outside of the box, thinking outside of the norm, so to speak, the mystery norm, and doing things unique and different, and learning from those. And being willing to ... Even if it failed today, be willing to try it again. Maybe make some modifications, but try it again tomorrow, so to speak, in hopes that it'll work a little bit. But I think that's the challenge with any property, regardless of where you're located. It's how do you get just one more?

Michael: Certainly appreciate that. One more if you've got time, Tino. Is there something in your-

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, absolutely.

Michael: Yeah. Carter, is there something in your current role ... What's a project or something you've done since you've been in your current role that you're most proud of?

Carter Pavey: Well, my current role is I just got promoted about a month ago to AGM, but I think ... I've been with the property since it was a concrete slab. I was the very first person hired for the project. So to me, the biggest thing I'm most proud of is that in the casino we've gone through three expansions-

Michael: [crosstalk 00:58:50].

Carter Pavey: In the last eight years. To me, that's my baby. Watching that property to where it is now is my baby, and I think the thing I'm most excited for in my new role is really working with the various departments that report to me, working with them, and working more importantly with their front line team, and continuing to develop those front line team members and that mid-level management to really kind of embrace my philosophies and get them going. I think I've done a great job with the marketing team that I was responsible for, but now it's working with the other departments and really getting them to buy in, and to live and breathe the same philosophies that I'm known for at the property.

Michael: That's good. Well, much success in your new role.

Tino Magnatta: Great.

Michael: Thanks for taking the time to talk to us [crosstalk 00:59:36].

Carter Pavey: Appreciate it. Thank you.

Michael: Thanks guys.

Tino Magnatta: Thanks, Mike. Appreciate it. Carter, this has been fantastic. There's a lot more calls, but we've run out of time. I really appreciate it, and definitely wanna have you back on the show at some point. Thank you so much for [crosstalk 00:59:54] on the show.

Carter Pavey: Yeah, absolutely. I'd love to be. Yeah. Thank you, man. I appreciate it.

Tino Magnatta: All right, and I guess you'll be hanging with your little baby now, right, and your wife?

Carter Pavey: No, she's already went to bed. I'm gonna go down and-

Tino Magnatta: Oh, okay.

Carter Pavey: Have a glass of wine with the wife.

Tino Magnatta: And then wine. That's good, buddy. Okay.

Carter Pavey: Yeah.

Tino Magnatta: Thanks so much, and we'll be talking soon. Good luck to you.

Carter Pavey: Hey, thanks, Tino. All right.

Tino Magnatta: Okay, bye bye.

Wow, that was fantastic, so many great stories, great callers, and definitely Carter is a character. Thursday I have a great show, Luisa Woods from Delaware North, and Luisa's a little different than ... Well, all of our callers, all our interviewers are different, and all our callers are different, but the people that we have on the show, they have a variety of stories, and Luisa has a very unique one. She did not start at a casino. She started in the online world, and she spent many years as a pioneer in the online world, and now she's at a bricks and mortar company that was an online [inaudible 01:01:03] too. So Thursday, 5:30 to 6:30 Pacific Standard Time, Luisa Woods. Please join us, and remember, everybody's got a story to tell. You've just gotta have time to listen to it. Have a good night, and we'll see you on Thursday. Ciao.

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