



Conversations w/Tino

Guest	Scott Sirois
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Tino Magnatta: Well, welcome to another episode of GT Radio, and tonight we have an amazing guest with us. He's a good friend. He has a pretty amazing story. Please welcome Scott Sirois. How are you, Scott?

Scott Sirois: Tino, I'm great. Thank you very much. And thank you for the invitation. I know we've been ... it hasn't been the easiest connection to get me on the show, but I appreciate your perseverance, and thank you.

Tino Magnatta: Okay, thanks for coming out. Scott, when we spoke, I was not expecting the stories that you told me. So you live kind of a transient life with your mom, because she worked the cruise lines, right? Give us a sense what year it was and what was going on.

Scott Sirois: Oh yeah, well the 60 second plus me is that I was born in Minnesota, my father was a tribal member, I'm a tribal member, my mom wasn't. They ended up going in different directions, and I ended up, I think all of whatever it was, a year or two old with my mom, and we ended up in Texas, and lived outside of Dallas in urban Texas for a couple years. And as you just mentioned, my mom was a ... became a server on the old luxury liner crew called the Maxim Liner. And she would sail. So I lived with my ... my sister and I lived with my grandmother. And they would, the ship would sail out for ... and this was the age of the big cruises, like down to Australia. 14, 20 days. And then to Asia, and they were gone, she was gone six to eight weeks a pop, and would come back to port for a week and gone again.

So, and then, my grandmother, we packed up and ended up moving to LA and then my mom was sailing out of Los Angeles and again, we were still living with my grandmother and my mom got married and got out of the business and we bounced back and forth.

Tino Magnatta: And you kept doing that for a while, bopping around, right? Because she'd be working out of different ports, right? So you got to live in different cities and you grew up like that, right?

Scott Sirois: Oh yeah. All over the country. All over, 14 states I think before I turned 18.

Tino Magnatta: Wow man, that's amazing. Unbelievable. So, I know that I've heard some pretty incredible stories on the show about how people got into the business. But you have the most amazing story. So I want you to tell how that happened. And you were what? 14? You were 14?

Scott Sirois: Yeah, exactly. And it was 1974, it was a really tough economy, and we were ... my mom and her boyfriend then were on welfare in the Twin Cities, Minneapolis, St. Paul. And my mom decided she wanted to move back to San Francisco and again, in the worst economy at that time, right during the oil, the first oil shortage. The first oil crisis. Anyway, in that process, they wanted to get jobs and this and that, it didn't work out. We ended up literally living in the back

of a U-Haul for three months on the beach in San Francisco. And when my mom and her boyfriend put their heads together, they said, "Out of all the places we've been, it looks like, it felt like the best prospects for employment was in Reno."

We loaded up the U-Haul, which I actually call an RV, and made that trudge back to Reno, pulled into the parking lot at Boom Town, the truck stop at that time, it was predominantly a truck stop in 1974. And my mom literally walked into the building, got a job, and her boyfriend got a job and I started as a bus boy within a couple weeks, and started school at Reno High School.

Tino Magnatta: And that's how you got into the business literally. Amazing.

Scott Sirois: That literally was my start in the industry.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, and that was at 14 and you'd already started working and certainly understand hospitality. Let me ask you something, you had a lot of life experiences before and moving around and all that stuff. How do you think that helped you?

Scott Sirois: Well it really impressed upon me now, my wife Nola and I have been married for it'll be 35 years this June. I have to tell you, I was absolutely determined that I was not going to put my children through what I, the childhood that I had. And I think towards that end, my wife and I were very, very successful. We have three great daughters that live ... one lives in Tucson, one lives in Baltimore, Maryland, one lives just outside of Anchorage, Alaska. So they're very comfortable and they're doing ... two of them have MBA's and the other one is working on hers now.

So anyway, we wanted that stability, that one component that I didn't have that I really, in my heart I actually yearned for quite a lot. And that's been ... and how that translates into the work environment, at the end of the day, even though I'm giving my age, even though I'm close to 60, I've only, I've been very, very blessed, I've only had five jobs. So I don't ... I want people to feel comfortable with me, and the employees that work where I work, I want them to feel comfortable in their environments, and that's very, very important to me.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, so you like longevity, you like to put in stints in places and not just bop around?

Scott Sirois: Oh yeah, exactly. And if you're gonna accomplish, you're gonna have a positive paying it forward type of experience with the employees that you work with, have that opportunity to mentor employees that you work with, you really have to have that kinda, that connection. And the only way you get it, at least in my experience, is over time. Yeah, you can have some very impactful shared experiences, but it takes time to have that level of trust where that I think that

you can have. Then develop that synergistic relationship of accomplishing when two people can accomplish more than three people would.

Tino Magnatta: Tell us a little bit about the early days in Reno, in Boom Town. What was it like?

Scott Sirois: It was great. It was, a lot of people don't realize in that, it was in the early 70s that Las Vegas and Reno were kinda still very much neck in neck as far as revenue. In fact, it took until the 70s until Las Vegas actually passed Reno in gross gaming revenue. And of course, the definitely have different population bases, beater marks that they were drawing from. But, I think more importantly Las Vegas definitely took a different track than Reno. Reno became a little more ... I don't know, what's the word? Little more conservative about growth. And that was their choice. And that's evolved now. But you know, in the 70s and the 80s, it was great.

It was where I imprinted, so it has obviously extraordinary meaning to me and the experiences I shared, like I said, I was blessed. I spent 25 years at one property there. I got to know people, like it literally like you're married to them.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, yeah, you got to know them really well.

Scott Sirois: Yeah. And we ended up, a lot of us, with the growth of gaming, and we were there through that transition from the owner at the time, fellow named Bob Cashell, and his A team, great guys. That I worked with. Jimmy Medowski, sorta the whole bunch of really high quality, Dick Scott, high quality folks that we were blessed to work with. And you know, they gave a lot of authority to develop people from within. I have to tell you, in the corporate side, it's very much Darwinistic. You just don't ... there's nobody knighting you for a position. You earn it, and they make you earn it, and I don't see that it has been any different since I left.

Tino Magnatta: Right, right, right. That's correct. So you worked at Boom Town, and you worked there for a long time, right?

Scott Sirois: Mm-hmm (affirmative), yeah. 25 years.

Tino Magnatta: 25 years. So you came into the business from the commercial end. And you got, you basically learned everything from a commercial standpoint right? Because you were in one of the major centers, not Vegas, but one of the major Nevada centers.

Scott Sirois: Well, and like to your point earlier, at the time that I started in the industry, Atlantic City hadn't even started gaming yet. So, it was definitely a very, very ... Nevada still had exclusivity until 1978 when Atlantic City voted it in, and then soon thereafter, it started proliferating in Iowa, and Mississippi, and then getting into the late 80s, with the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, it started it's march across the country, both corporate and in Native American country.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. Exactly. What did those days in Boom Town teach you? That 25 years, what are the fundamental things that you learned that you took with you?

Scott Sirois: Numbers. It really, I found that like I said, it was a very Darwinistic environment. But I found the people that were good with numbers, seemed to do, perform the best and I get the best rewards, or the most generous rewards and whatnot. And I think so, and because Reno had such a seasonal market, it went from that peak season, the traditional peak season of Memorial Day until Labor Day, so they garnered that market, Washoe Valley, Reno area garnered probably, I don't know what the number is, maybe it's between 60 to 70% of the revenue that they would generate in a year was generated in those four months between May, June, July, August, September. Five months. So you really had to be very fiscally conservative those other seven months. And you had to become very disciplined about that.

And I think that that's something that is actually a really hard lesson to learn. It takes a while to not just get that imprinted, but really get that kinda it becomes part of your DNA.

Tino Magnatta: Right, right, right.

Scott Sirois: Your management DNA. And then again, I was fortunate, I didn't start off in the gaming industry, I started off in the fuel services. Boom Town was known as a truck stop, and then became a casino. And I ended up running the fuel services division for a number of years. And so it wasn't just counting pennies, it was counting literally tenths of a cent. And anyway, I had a lot of numbers that I was dealing with all the time. That was my day in, day out job. And you know, and what became important to me, Tino, I think the biggest takeaway was not just the data itself, but converting the data into actionable information. So converting data into key performance indicators, KPI's and then putting that in the context that became actionable, so if I wanted something, whether it was a capital expense item or whatever it was, it was very helpful to have really easy to understand information, so that the executives didn't have to waste a lot of time explaining it. It was very, the numbers and the key performance indicators really told their own story without having to rely on a narrative, which is always looked on a little skeptically.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. Yeah, that's right. So the truck stop became a casino, right?

Scott Sirois: It did. It did. Evolved.

Tino Magnatta: So you started there with the truck stop, and then you transitioned?

Scott Sirois: Well I started off as a bus boy and I found that very quickly, that food and beverage was not for me. I wanted to be a little bit freer, I wanted to work outside, so I transitioned over to the truck stop and I spent 18 wonderful years in that department. I wanted absolutely nothing to do with gaming. It wasn't, I

think that stereotype, and I worked at a casino, it's not like I was a hypocrite. I guess I am, I was a little bit hypocritical at the time, but I just thought in my mind, the people that worked in gaming were a little bit pompous and a little arrogant.

And I guess right up until the time that the general manager, a fellow named Jack Fisher, great fellow, called me into his office. He goes, "Scott, we're gonna replace you with this guy, and we're gonna replace that guy with this guy," and I said, "Well what exactly does that mean for me?" He says, "We're moving you into the casino. You'll love it. And I go, "I don't want to work in the casino, I never wanted to work in the casino." And his response was, "Well that's why we're not asking."

So I was literally-

Tino Magnatta: I love that.

Scott Sirois: I was literally drafted into it.

Tino Magnatta: You were drafted, you had no choice.

Scott Sirois: No, no.

Tino Magnatta: Your career path is interesting, because your career path chose you. You never chose your career path. I mean literally, every step of the way, right?

Scott Sirois: Oh yeah.

Tino Magnatta: That's why we're not asking. I love that.

Scott Sirois: And you know, I have to say at the end of the day, obviously by he and by extension those that made that determination to move me, they were right. In fact, I found it suited my personality so well I just absolutely loved the vibe, the energy, the people. I found judging a book by its cover was exactly what I did about the people that work in the industry, and the amount of effort that they put into their craft and their skills. And a lot of people take them for granted, because it looks a lot different from the other side of the table, which is what I was basing my assumptions on. So, it was a very humbling experience for me, I'll tell you that.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, which leads us to kinda this next thing that we were talking about earlier, that you've always talked about social IQ, right?

Scott Sirois: Oh yes, yeah. Definitely.

Tino Magnatta: And that's what we were talking about, this job kinda suiting your personality. And one of the things I've asked you was how do you get to your level? What kind of qualities do you need?

Scott Sirois: Well, you know, it's exactly that. It has to be social IQ. And you have to have a good grasp of the skillsets. But the ability to communicate is invaluable. And being comfortable in communicating. And it was hard. I'm telling you. I mean, I literally, I was as uneducated as you can get, and I ended up finishing emancipating myself and finishing high school on my own, and getting going through the University of Nevada Reno, and God bless them, and that training and education that they gave me. But it takes a long time. It did for me, I should say. A long time before I was comfortable interacting with the executive level, then the public speaking, the terror of doing that.

And I have to tell you, one of the most terrifying moments I've ever experienced in my career are. I had been in senior management already, so you know, but one of the things that terrorized me the most, was the first time I had to deal blackjack at a live game. It was absolutely unnerving and it was ... it's one of those experiences that you never forget. If you have, if you had that experience, I guarantee you it's something that you will never forget. And truthfully that was more terrifying than public speaking. And my initiation to that was we had an awards ... Boom Town had an annual awards ceremony for all of the employees. And it was one of those things that you want promotions, but you really don't know all of the duties and responsibilities until you're actually doing the job.

And I wanted to become the manager, and I wanted to become the director, and then what I found out is, oh you have to give this awards speech to 600 people. I never spoke in a room with 20 people before. So, it was okay the first year. It went reasonably well because I still consumed adult beverages, so I managed to get through that experience. But the second year, it was like Mickey Mouse giving the presentation, I just kept ... I couldn't get rid of that high pitch and the sheer terror I was feeling.

But, you know, you just have to acclimate and so the skills that you need, are you have to earn, nobody gives them to you. You have to do the public speaking, you have to do the P&L analysis, and the data, and the conversions from just raw data to key performance indicators. And give explanations comfortably, and you know, have ... and I think one of the most important things to me is, you have to have empathy for the employees. Truthfully, I cleaned a lot of toilets over the years. You gotta do what you gotta do.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, yeah.

Scott Sirois: And swept for cigarette butts out in the parking lots, I did all of that. Wash some windows. Bumping tires, everything had to do at a truck stop. And busing tables.

Tino Magnatta: Everything.

Scott Sirois: Yeah. You ... well and how that manifests itself in my opinion, in the leadership is you really have to put yourself in the employee's positions and what they're feeling, what the struggles are that they have to deal with day in and day out. And working front of the house Friday and Saturday nights at eight, nine, 10:00 at night is not for the faint of heart. That's not for everybody, because it literally can be a war zone out on that floor where it's mentally fatiguing, it's physically fatiguing and it takes a while to acclimate to those types of environments, especially the bigger the facilities.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. Of course. Tell me a little bit of some of the mentors you've had and what they meant to you and what you took away from them.

Scott Sirois: Well, I had one guy, one person at Boom Town, there were a couple, but one guy at Boom Town, and he didn't tell me this. Honestly for 25 years, it wasn't until my retirement, or my separation party, my going away party, if you will. He told me, and he was the senior vice president of operations. Fellow named Jim Maddock. And he said, "You know when you were in high school, and you were living alone, had your own apartment, living by yourself, and you were obviously under age. I don't know why, but the school district," which was Washoe County and Reno High School, he said, "they called me, and I don't know why they routed the call to me, but they said hey we got this minor that doesn't have any parent or guardian. And we understand that he works for you."

And Jimmy Maddock said to them, he said, "Look, you're telling me ... I read about kids dropping out left and right, but we've got a kid that works for us, that wants to go to school, and you're telling me you're trying to kick him out?" That was the end of the call. And he said, yeah that happened, and I just never realize what some people do for you to help you, it's crushingly humble how that makes you feel. When you do become aware of it. And it's still extraordinarily impactful for me.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah.

Scott Sirois: The good folks.

Tino Magnatta: That's a great story. I love that story, that's a great story.

Scott Sirois: Sorry, Tino, I was just gonna say. In transitioning to the University of Nevada Reno. I was extraordinarily lucky to study under one of the greatest minds of the gaming industry Professor Bill Pennington. Before he passed away. And thank God. Pardon me, he helped me a lot. And when I went back to school, I was there for ... it took me a while to come to the realization that of course I was there for the education, but if I was going to succeed, I obviously needed a degree, if I wanted control over my own ... or we wanted control over my own destiny. My family and I. That was the ticket to do that. And I went back to the university after 15 years, after high school. It was not easy. I had a lot of skull cramps over that.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, I can imagine.

Scott Sirois: That was a very humble experience. So I would say those couple guys, and certainly some very impactful ... Ernie Stevens, I can't claim him to be a mentor, but I've certainly learned a lot from him.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, Ernie's a great guy. He's a really cool guy. I love Ernie. Tell us a little bit about where you feel the business is heading right now.

Scott Sirois: Well, you know, there's a lot of buzz about market saturation in different areas, and still with some moderate expansion. In California, still some expansion going forward there. The gaming industry, and certainly in Las Vegas, like you and I were talking, just before the show. There's billions of dollars still getting invested in Las Vegas. So I don't think anyone could argue that probably from a gaming perspective, the most saturated market on the planet certainly has to be Las Vegas. But that's not stopping anybody from investing in Nevada, and in Las Vegas's future.

Tino Magnatta: Nope. They're gonna bring more people to Vegas, because they're gonna bring a lot more Asians in.

Scott Sirois: Yeah.

Tino Magnatta: It stimulates growth.

Scott Sirois: And I think that's a good sign for our industry wholistically. Coast to coast, and border to border. I think there's room for both. There's definitely room for growth for responsible gaming. And I think the markets actually reflect that. I think there's obviously some soft markets, however, I would say that I tend to think that it's probably ... I think there's opportunities even in those markets, in my opinion. I could be wrong, and it wouldn't be the first time. That's for sure.

In the devices themselves, the gaming devices themselves, I think are so cutting edge nowadays, and so entertaining, and they're so big. And table games are still certainly in this market, which I'm southwest Louisiana. Louisiana very much a card, table games market. So I was happy about that. And so I think transitioning, moving into the future is about how to attract millennials and all that. But I would say I'm not in angst over that in the least, because I grew up in Reno, and we were having these conversations in 1980, we were worried about the baby boomers and what was gonna ... how they were gonna ... their behavior moving into the future. And every year ... and I think legitimately so. Keep an eye on the future is certainly a legitimate concern.

And I think the point to this is, I think those people on the vendor side of the industry understand that, and work to bring high quality talent in that generation that our industry as service providers in the hospitality side of it look to attract. So, IE, I don't think we can put the cart before the horse. I think the

gaming industry, the growth of it I think is fairly ... will continue and I think the vendor side of it is they are gonna to provide us operators with products that will attract those different generations that we have expressed some misgivings about moving into the future.

Tino Magnatta: What do you tell young people coming up in the business?

Scott Sirois: The most important thing in our business is it's your job to protect your job. And I go into my, and I've been doing it since 2006. I go into every orientation and I go into a little spiel and part of that spiel is the age of ... if you ask an employee, "Why did you do something?" Or this and that, the age of, "I don't know, or nobody showed me or trained me on that." I tell every orientation group, "Look, this is not high school. If you don't know how to do something, it's your job to find that something out."

Tino Magnatta: Right.

Scott Sirois: And it's your job to protect your job. At the end of the day, this is a privileged industry. I take an affirmative responsibility in protecting my gaming license, in fact I think the most salient example of that, I worked in southern California and I was walking through a construction. We were converting a back of the house room into a front of the house room, and I'm walking through the debris, and I was just looking inside the construction to see if there were any surprises, any unexpected expenses that I was gonna have to deal with. And of course I was by myself and I was looking around.

And I looked down in the middle of a pile of debris, is \$100 table game chip. So I pick it up, and I go, "Oh, I wish I wouldn't have done that." So now I'm holding it like a petri dish with the Bubonic Plague in it, I walk out to the gaming floor, and I look for the table games director, and I go, "Hey, is this chip, is this a decommissioned chip? It just hasn't been destroyed? Or what?" And he goes, "I can't touch that." I go, "I know. What am I supposed to do with it?" And the point to that is it really doesn't matter what level you're at, if you don't know something, it's your job to find that something out. You gotta protect yourself at all times.

Tino Magnatta: Yep, yep.

Scott Sirois: And I can't emphasize that enough. People make silly mistakes, and it can be harsh. It's a harsh industry. And working on Native American, well not just Native American, you have to declare that. If something happens to your gaming license, you have, that's the gift that keeps on giving. You're gonna have to explain that every job you get after that.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, that's right. Scott, let's take some questions. Hang on one sec.

Scott Sirois: Sure, sure.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, I think we got a lot of people lined up here that want to talk to you. Let me see. Hello, this is Tino Magnatta, do you have a question for Scott?

Bob Belmont: Oh great, Scotty, this is Bob Belmont, how are you?

Scott Sirois: I'm doing well.

Bob Belmont: Yeah. Long time from Boom Town, huh? Pardon?

Scott Sirois: You're fine, it's certainly been a long time since Boom Town.

Tino Magnatta: Did you guys work together at Boom Town?

Scott Sirois: We certainly did.

Tino Magnatta: Wow, that goes way back.

Bob Belmont: Yeah, I'm at Red Hawk Casino in Sacramento now.

Scott Sirois: Oh nice.

Bob Belmont: So where are you at now?

Scott Sirois: I'm in southwest Louisiana at Coushatta Casino and Resort.

Bob Belmont: Wow. That's the big one, huh?

Scott Sirois: Yes it is.

Bob Belmont: Yep.

Scott Sirois: I enjoy it.

Bob Belmont: So who's your main competition there?

Scott Sirois: You know-

Bob Belmont: Is it the Houston market?

Scott Sirois: Well, we're in a, we are a Native American facility. And we are competing with a couple corporate entities. One is obviously, now is Penn National, they own the Verge. And then El Dorado bought Island Capri. And then Golden Nugget.

Bob Belmont: So you're against the Bojer market, huh?

Scott Sirois: Yeah. And Cortina Tillman. He owns the Golden Nugget.

Bob Belmont: Right, right. Oh Lake Charles too then, right?

Scott Sirois: I'm sorry Bob, I was just saying we're right on the periphery of Lake Charles.

Bob Belmont: Oh, got it, okay. So, yeah. So you probably see Keith Henson over there.

Scott Sirois: You know, I called him. He's up in St. Louis, I think.

Bob Belmont: Oh, they moved him, huh?

Scott Sirois: Yeah, yeah. He was down here for 10 years. He was down here for 10 years, then moved him up to ... I'm pretty sure it's either St. Louis or Kansas City. I think it's actually Kansas City.

Bob Belmont: Wow. So my question to you is what type of marketing do you guys do? Do you do radio, TV, social media, or a lot of direct mail?

Scott Sirois: Oh it's primarily a lot of direct mail. Our market is kinda similar to the Reno market and the feeder market being three to four hours away. So we're dependent on Houston. And that getting them in Coshatta, we gotta entice them to drive another 45 minutes past our competitors. So, you know, we have a big place, lot of rooms, it's a lot of direct mail. You can't-

Bob Belmont: I'm sorry I missed it at first. How many slots do you have there, and table games?

Scott Sirois: Just over 2800 slot machines, and just at the I think the number is 75 table games.

Bob Belmont: So that's not ... how many hotel rooms?

Scott Sirois: 900.

Bob Belmont: So you fill those up primarily from Houston?

Scott Sirois: Oh yes. Yes, yes, yes. And we have a full RV park with all those RV park services as well.

Bob Belmont: Yeah, well how many spots in the RV's?

Scott Sirois: Just around 220.

Bob Belmont: Yep, just about the same size as Boom Town.

So yeah, so you had a little experience there. So how do you like being down there as opposed to the California market?

Scott Sirois: You know, that's a great question, Bob. And you know, Tino and I have been talking about that a little bit. I have to tell you, and I may get myself in a little bit of hot water, but I had my ... I had that stereotypical image of the south and I thought I knew what I should expect, but it was an entirely different experience. And a very comforting experience. In fact, the people have been so kind and have extended themselves. You know, guys where I would be a little bit suspicious about that in a little ... from southern California, and even some experiences I've had in Reno, but I'd be a little suspicious of that over the top, good natured, welcoming environment. But the truth of the matter is it was extraordinarily genuine, and it has absolutely been a delight for both my wife and I. And it's very how do I word that?

It made me a lot more optimistic about our side of the business than I've been in a long time. So it's actually very rejuvenating, a very rejuvenating experience for me.

Bob Belmont: Great. How many boys do you have?

Scott Sirois: Oh, right at 2400.

Bob Belmont: Yeah, so you've got, that's a nice size property. You guys growing? Or staying about the same year over year?

Scott Sirois: You know, actually one of the reasons they brought me here, and you know my MO, I do a lot of developmental work, and I like the construction side. And I think that they definitely need some rejuvenation with the physical property. The facility needs a makeover from one end of the building to the other. And it's not going to be a small task. It's going to be a very large project and I think we're probably a couple years out of starting something of that scale. But I'm very comfortable with growing the market. I think the others I know ... you know Iowa is owned by El Dorado, they're making a significant, they've announced plans to construct a land based casino and remove their barge. So that's obviously a significant investment into this market, and I think Coshatta will do well in that market.

Bob Belmont: And how long you been down there?

Scott Sirois: I'm still kinda new, it's only been since June, so about seven plus months.

Bob Belmont: Well it was great talking to you and thanks for the opportunity to throw some questions at you.

Scott Sirois: It's great to talk to you too, Bob. Take care of yourself.

Tino Magnatta: Thanks, Bob. Take care. Really good talking to you.

Bob Belmont: Thank you.

Tino Magnatta: Take care, buddy. Bye-bye. Little bit of a friend from the past, hey?

Scott Sirois: Yeah.

Tino Magnatta: The way past. Not just the past. Is it your guide.

Scott Sirois: Yeah.

Tino Magnatta: Hello this is Tino Magnatta, I have Scott, do you have any questions for him?

Alicia Lee: Hi, this is Alicia Lee the new friend. How are you, Scott?

Scott Sirois: I'm doing really well, thank you.

Alicia Lee: I'm glad. Thanks Tino, thanks so much for taking my call. Again, I really always being invited to ask some questions on this show. Scott, it was great weather this weekend, so I hope you were able to golf a little bit.

Scott Sirois: No, no, no. As much as I wanted to, it's been a very saturated year for the ground here. So, it just hasn't played out in my favor yet.

Alicia Lee: Oh no. Well I'm sure you'll get a chance again. But I just wanted to ask you a question, I know I had heard you talk today and it was very interesting to hear more about your story. I know we had a chance to spend a lot of time together, and I got bits and pieces of your past and your career advancement. But I want to go more on the mentor side. It was wonderful to hear about your mentor when you were going to school. Your mentor at Boom Town, and later on in life. So as someone younger in this industry, that came from the casino side and now the vendor side, what do you think the most important thing to do as far as making those connections with executives like yourself, to have wonderful relationships, but then also be able to have them as mentors to learn more and progress their careers?

Scott Sirois: That's a great question, thank you. And you know, I hate to be so old school, but the reality of it is, what worked in the people that were my mentors, what worked in that generation I think will work, it does work moving into the future. And that's honesty and integrity. There's only one thing I take with me, if thankfully I haven't had to move that frequently, but my integrity, I can't put a price tag on that. So, and the vendors that I deal with and sometimes not all of them want the honesty, if you will. But I think it's important. I am not the kinda guy that's gonna say one thing and do something different.

That's not me. I think that's important. And I think because I don't expect respect, but I think over time, as you deal with both sides of the business, the empathy with the employees and the honesty with the employees, and certainly with the vendors too. I've had the whole range of experiences with vendors. But

it's important to me to keep my integrity and deal with everyone of the vendors kinda the same way. And that's the integrity.

Alicia Lee: So you think that's the best way for us to operate as well, going forward? Always like if someone's ever in the industry, always take our integrity, make sure people respect you and go forward?

Scott Sirois: You can't make them respect you. That's my point to you.

Alicia Lee: Well try to have that.

Scott Sirois: Over time, because truthfully over time, you're gonna earn that. That's kinda my point is every property I've ever ended up going to, truthfully, this is actually southwest Louisiana, Coushatta, it's actually the first property I didn't feel like I had to earn their respect. I think every other property that I've experienced, you've had ... I've had to earn it. I mean work at that. And here they just seemed, it was just different. And there was an expectation that I knew what needed, what this business needed to be successful, and that was different than other experiences that I've had in the past.

Alicia Lee: For sure. Well I'm really excited, Scott. You've made a lot of super positive changes since you've come on board. I'm so excited to try the new Asian restaurant, so I'll be back to visit soon.

Scott Sirois: All right.

Alicia Lee: Thank you so much.

Tino Magnatta: Great, thank you so much for calling.

Alicia Lee: Thank you.

Tino Magnatta: Hello this is Tino Magnatta, I have Scott, do you have a question for him?

Michael Laffy: Hey Tino, it's Michael Laffy, how are you?

Tino Magnatta: Hey, Michael, how are you buddy?

Michael Laffy: Oh I'm not doing too bad. I had a question for Scott that some of the things that keeps us marketing folks up at night is this over expansion and the market saturation, but he kinda already answered that. So, Scott I was gonna talk to you about kind of a recent phenomenon that we're seeing out there in the last few years. When I started out in this business 20 something years ago as a marketing person, you stayed in the marketing department forever. And that's what you did. And Tino, you can attest to this a little bit. But we're starting to see marketing directors migrate over into that general manager position and some of the executive operations positions. Is there something happening today

that just marketing people weren't qualified for 20 years ago? Or is this just something new? Do you have any thoughts on that?

Scott Sirois: Yeah, you know, that's a great question Michael, because the truth is, I think it touches a little bit about what Tino was asking about as far as kinda the skills that you need to be an effective leader in our industry. And it's all about communication. And that in my opinion, that transparency and to be able, that kind of gift, if you will, of taking extraordinarily complex scenarios and explaining them and explaining them well. And I think that is an absolute natural for marketing people. I think the marketing folks that have done their due diligence and who have database analysis and data minding and converting that to actionable information, whether it's a successful direct mail campaigns, or whatever. You have [inaudible 00:45:38]. Whatever. I think that transition, that stretch, if you will, from that mentality to that leadership of the whole kit and caboodle, it's not as big as a stretch as it used to be.

And I think the other skillsets that are a necessity overseeing finance and all, I was fortunate in the sense, Michael, that I was not an expert in any one field, but I spent an awful lot of time in a lot of different departments. So, but I think marketing has that tendency to work with all of those other departments too. So I think for the people that work in marketing, and if they're paying attention to the departments that they're working with and understanding not just what those departments are asking for, but why they're asking for it and the results they're expecting, I think that makes that stretch even easier to go into senior vice president, general manager, those types of positions.

Michael Laffy: Yeah, I tend to agree with you. It seems like today, marketers, especially directors job is to get involved and know the players just as much as they know the message that they're trying to put out there on TV or direct mail. It's just that connection with the players is not always in your office, it's out on the floor. And out on the floor is where the operations people live. So maybe that's part of that transition thing is we're understanding that that relationship with the guest is the ultimate importance right now.

Scott Sirois: Amen.

Tino Magnatta: Yep, that's great stuff. Did you have another question?

Michael Laffy: All right, thanks for your time guys. No, no, that was it. Totally answer it, thanks Tino, and I'll see you guys later.

Tino Magnatta: Thanks for calling in.

Scott Sirois: Great questions, Tino.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah. Really cool. Hello this is Tino Magnatta, do you have a question for Scott?

Hatey Antesana: I certainly have. Good evening gentlemen, it's Hatey Antesana.

Scott Sirois: Hey, Hatey, how you doing?

Hatey Antesana: Oh I can just see Scott's big smile. That just lights up every room. But, it was awesome seeing you just the other day, Scott.

Scott Sirois: Thank you. It was great to see you Hatey. And Nick as well.

Hatey Antesana: So very quickly, just for anybody that is on the show tonight, I can vouch for Scott's integrity. He had to present a project on my behalf to the board, and afterwards I found the HR director and I said, "Oh my goodness, how's it going?" She said, "I've got bad news, Scott's moving away from the property, he's resigning, but the good news is he made sure he presented your project before he left." And that just shows this man's integrity. I have to say that.

Tino Magnatta: Wow, that's cool.

Scott Sirois: That's very nice, thank you so much.

Hatey Antesana: So, one of the questions I had for you tonight was you've been involved in I think two expansion projects at this stage of your career, is that right, Scott?

Scott Sirois: A lot more than that, but two big ones, yeah.

Hatey Antesana: Okay. Two big ones. So what would you say is critical, if you could name one or two things that are critical to ensure that your expansion development project will be successful?

Scott Sirois: Oh, I think right sizing for the market. I think Michael actually touched on it a little bit on his question a little bit earlier, about market saturation. It's hard like in the operator side of the business, you kinda tend to gravitate toward that Midas mentality where you think everything that you're gonna touch turns to gold.

Hatey Antesana: Right, right, right.

Scott Sirois: And maybe become a little bit too dependent on market feasibility studies and the optimism of that. So I would say right sizing for the market is probably the most important component and everywhere I've ever worked, every project that I've ever done, that is my affirmative responsibility and where I'm very comfortable interacting with the architects to keep it reasonable, the general contractors to keep the materials reasonable, and the owner's representative to ensure that the interest of the entities are what's top of mind for everybody on the project. So right sizing to the operation and successfully interacting and holding people accountable for the budget.

Hatey Antesana: Right, right. And a second question I had, and this I thought about really carefully. So, if you had to start in Indian gaming today knowing what you know now, what would you do differently?

Scott Sirois: What would I do differently?

Hatey Antesana: It doesn't have to just be Indian gaming, it could be all gaming.

Scott Sirois: No, no, no. I get it. Well I'll tell you one thing I wish I would've done earlier is I wish it wouldn't have taken me 15 years to go back to school.

Hatey Antesana: Oh, I love it.

Scott Sirois: I wish I would've done that a lot sooner. So if I was ... if the environment was different and I was just coming out of whatever, high school or whatever and I ... or just turned 21. I would be committed to that education. Because what I realized is after all the interactions I've had and all of the people I've dealt with, that I've been fortunate enough to deal with, it really does come down to taking control over your personal destiny and Hatey, you're a great teacher for that. Is taking control over your look, your personal presentation, and part of that is certainly going to be confidence and I think a lot of that is derived from in my mind, your comfort with your education, and your comfort in your own skin.

And I think I really do, and I don't mean to be evasive about what would I do in 2019. But I definitely wish I would've went back to school sooner.

Hatey Antesana: No, absolutely, I get it. And I'm sure a public speaking course at the age of 14 would've done you really well too. Like you mentioned.

Scott Sirois: Oh yeah.

Hatey Antesana: Awesome. Thank you so much. Thank you, that was a great answer. Thank you. Have a good evening. Thanks, Tino.

Tino Magnatta: Thank you Hatey, really appreciate it.

Hatey Antesana: Sure.

Scott Sirois: That was great.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, she's great. I really like Hatey. Hello, this is Tino Magnatta, we have Scott on the line, do you have a question for him?

Bobby: Yeah, hi Tino, this is Bobby from Las Vegas.

Tino Magnatta: Hey Bobby how are you?

Bobby: Great to be on with you. Terrific guest as always. Hey Scott, you used a word very early in this conversation that I am guessing has a whole lot to do with the great success you've had over a great period of time. And that word was empathy. And you talked about empathy for your employees, and I wonder if you could expand a bit on how relationships with your guests, and empathy there through your marketing side, and empathy on the operations side with your employees comes into play?

Scott Sirois: That's a great question, Bobby, because you as part of that social IQ is I'm very much convinced that there's definitely a lack of true caring about people and I was really, really fortunate to work at Boom Town when I did. There was times when I wasn't second guessed about the decisions that I made, and you heard earlier, I was drafted into gaming, and I remember going out on table games and people that were, in my mind, over served. And I'd tell them. I'd go, "Hey, we're gonna be here tomorrow. You're done for tonight, I'm happy to walk you to your room. But at the end of the day, we're not looking to hurt anybody here. We want you to have a good time." And I'd send them off. And take them to their rooms.

And so, having that kinda honest dialogue. I'll tell you one experience, that I did catch a little flack for was I remember a couple. And they were elder, they were older than I was. And they had gone into our steak house and had a bad experience and they were telling me all about it. And I said, let me tell you, and in excruciating detail. And I said, "You know, what here's the thing. You go into town and go to any place you want to eat and just bring me the bill back. I said, you don't have to waste your time explaining to me how bad the service was. I get it, I'm sorry. Nothing I can say is gonna help make it any better. But go on and get yourself a good meal, and just bring me the check back and I'll pay for it."

And they did. And I don't think those people ever forgot that. I know I certainly haven't

Bobby: Yeah, that's cool.

Scott Sirois: And I think Bobby, I think the other direction, if you will, is it's awful easy for us, especially the Native American country, and certainly I was guilty of it in corporate when I worked there for 25 years, critiquing the people that were the leadership and second guessing all of their decisions, but it was a whole new world when I stepped into those shoes. And realized how challenging that was. Like my example about public speaking. I was happy to criticize the manager and the director I worked for. And when I found out what they had to do, it almost brought me ... I almost didn't take the job, it scared the hell outta me. I mean, and I still feel that today for Tribal Councils. I don't think people really understand how tough it is to do that job, to be accountable every day for every tribal member on your reservation. And be accountable for them. And I know it's the same in Las Vegas.

Those people have a lot more pressure to deal with, a lot more results-centric than the average bear. And those are very humbling lessons to learn, and so, having that empathy going upwards and sideways and for all of the employees, I think it's the cornerstone of my success. Truthfully.

Tino Magnatta: Yeah, that's great, great stuff.

Bobby: That it is, thanks very much.

Scott Sirois: Thank you, Bobby.

Bobby: Thank you, thank you so much.

Tino Magnatta: All right, Scott, it's been a great interview. Thanks for being on the show, you are absolutely fantastic, and I want you to come back on sometime.

Scott Sirois: And Tino, thank you so much and all your previous guests, I learned a lot from Conrad, and certainly from John and all of the great people that you bring on the show. Thank you for doing what you do.

Tino Magnatta: Thank you man, I really appreciate that. And we'll talk to you soon.

Scott Sirois: All right, thanks Tino. Bye now.

Tino Magnatta: Take care. Bye-bye.

All right, that was great. Scott, very interesting story and what a journey he had. Basically fate found him and he got into the business. Thursday I have Lisa Miles and she's gonna be on our show. She's an amazing lady, she has a great story to tell, and she's from Lucky Eagle Casino. And remember everybody's got a story to tell, you just have to have time to listen. Have a good night, and we'll see you Thursday.

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