



Wendi Ni: A Force to Be Reckoned with in the Integrated Resort Industry

The year was 2019 when Chinese-Australian casino veteran Wendi Ni saw an opportunity “to make a greater impact” in the Philippine gaming industry through Okada Manila—the newest, grandest, and most exciting gaming and entertainment destination in Asia touted as “Manila’s Grand Icon.”

The integrated resort then was the youngest player in the market—a fourth placer—lagging behind its early counterparts in terms of gross gaming revenue. At present, Okada Manila has cemented its position at second place with 28% market share, surpassing the more established casino-resorts in the country.

“I’m aiming for Okada Manila to become the number one integrated resort in the Philippines,” Okada Manila’s Vice President of Strategic Marketing said with conviction, adding, “I’m happy to see the growth has steadily increased. That’s an achievement I’m very proud of.”

Okada Manila’s operator Tiger Resort Leisure and Entertainment Inc. (TRLEI) posted strong topline growth in the first half of 2023 at 62%, which is driven by the strong performance of its casino business with gross gaming revenues reaching 387 million dollars. According to Ms. Ni, “It’s not surprising that most of our revenue is driven by gaming. However, our non-gaming businesses have also been improving, and we’re seeing a significant growth compared to 2019.”

The executive oversees analytic and business planning for revenue divisions, which include Gaming, Marketing, Hotel Revenue Management as well as Food and Beverage. Ms. Ni is also on top of the significant improvement in both revenue and profitability across all revenue segments., “We are an integrated resort, and those supporting business units are essential as more people come to the property for the non-gaming activities.”

Ms. Ni describes herself as a “rational and very logical person.” An analyst at heart, she’s data driven when making decisions and delivering measurable business impact, “I base everything from facts. I really digest the information, and then I decide. Other people base decisions from gut feel, that’s not me.”

As a strategist, she gathers ideas, does research, sets clear goals through business planning with the help of her teams, “Within the gaming business unit, there’s a collective effort. The support and coordination of the teams is crucial in the implementation and execution phase. All gaming divisions work closely, and we work well together.”

Prior to joining Okada Manila, Ms. Ni was with Crowne Melbourne for seven years wherein she served as Gaming Analyst and worked her way up to becoming an Analytics Manager for Marketing. “I think marketing in an integrated resort is very interesting. I was exposed to different business units to create various attractions.”

In 2016, Ms. Ni joined Galaxy Macau and served as the Assistant Vice President for Gaming Development and Optimization Analysis for about three years. Amid the high-pressure working environment, she considers her time with the World-Class Asian Resort Destination as the most memorable accomplishment in her career.

“I was able to unite a team of analysts and put focus on their respective efforts towards one direction to push the business forward,” Ms. Ni shared, saying it was tough to deal with her colleagues in Macau as a foreigner facing cultural difference in the workplace.



However, she was able to turn the tables, “It’s not easy, but I gained their trust and respect, and we were able to work as a team. While I was there, I think Galaxy Macau became number one in the market share consecutively. I was really proud of my team.”

Similarly, the empowered executive was able to put together an analytics team in Okada Manila. The challenge she faced earlier was getting the stakeholders’ buy-in, “I think back in the day, no one listens to analysts as they are looked at as ‘reporting machines.’”

In spite of that, Ms. Ni believes the company should have a central strategy and analytics team to act as a reliable source of facts, and to drive the strategy forward, “But now, I think the key stakeholders see the value of the team as we come up with good recommendations and plans.”

The Accounting and the Master of Actuarial Studies graduate is looking to continue promoting data driven culture and develop team capabilities. She also plans to actively take part in transforming integrated resorts and contributing to “small changes” in the industry, “It takes self-motivation, and I want to make sure that everything I do, I give my best.”

“I’m very grateful to my mentors, and I’m lucky they never really hesitated to open my eyes to see the different aspects of an integrated resort. What I learned from them, I’m also passing to my teams,” said Ms. Ni who gives team members opportunities to explore different areas of interest within the business.

The industry force also shared that trusting one’s team and their capabilities, while respecting different ideas and perspectives are key for growth. Actively seeking knowledge and acquiring skills are also important to meet golden opportunities.

Naturally active and inquisitive, Ms. Ni enjoys various experiences in her spare time. She likes sports, fishing, and traveling to eat good food and explore different cultures. Japan, Taiwan, Vietnam, Thailand, the islands in the Philippines, and Switzerland are her top destinations.