

Nomination for the 2020 NAGRA Excellence in Gaming Award

Nominee:

Personnel Registration (PREG) Team
Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch (GPEB)
Ministry of Attorney General
Victoria, British Columbia
Canada

Team Members:

Kim Bruce, *Executive Director, Registration and Certification Division*
Bob Pilot, *Director, Personnel and Lottery Registration*
Erick Pay, *Senior Project Manager*
Ron Johnson, *Senior Investigator*
Warren Muttersbach, *Investigator*
Ronald Fairweather, *Investigator*
Eric Jin, *Team Lead - Registration*
Sarah Smackowdy, *Registration Clerk*
Amanda Prenger, *Registration Clerk*
Bonnie Wyville, *Registration Clerk*
Melrose Kim-Boado, *Registration Clerk*
Sherine Doolan, *Registration Clerk*
Shelley Hovey, *Registration Clerk*
Younus Bahadshah, *Manager, Compliance and Quality Assurance*

The Personnel Registration (PREG) Unit works with gaming service providers and gaming worker applicants to ensure they comply with the terms and conditions, rules and policies, outlined in the Gaming Control Act and Gaming Control Regulation. The unit sits within the Licensing Registration and Certification (LRC) Division of the Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch (GPEB). The unit typically processes 7,200 gaming worker registration applications per year.

Nominator/Contact:

Name: Erick Pay
Title: Senior Project Manager, GPEB

Award Category:

The identification and implementation of significant efficiencies in regulatory processes or procedures.

Reason for the Nomination:

“Transformation” may seem like a buzzword these days, used liberally to describe process improvements of all sizes and scope. But when it comes to the recent changes made to British Columbia’s (BC’s) gaming worker registration process, transformation is definitely an appropriate description!

In BC, all gaming workers must submit an application to, and be registered by, the province’s Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch (GPEB) as a condition of employment. However, gaming workers, service providers and GPEB staff alike acknowledge that the previous registration process was in dire need of improvement. While its effectiveness in ensuring the integrity of gaming workers was never in question, the application process was outdated and inefficient: the process was paper-based from start to finish, requiring documents to be mailed or couriered between parties and creating unnecessary work and delays for everyone involved. As the demand for registrations increased, GPEB staff often found themselves unable to process the applications within a reasonable timeframe. In fact, the turn-around time was so slow that in some of the more competitive job markets in the province, service providers reported losing prospective employees while waiting for GPEB to process the gaming workers’ registrations.

Change was needed, and the Personnel Registration (PREG) team delivered!

In 2019, GPEB - led by the PREG team and in close consultation with stakeholders - conducted a comprehensive and inclusive review to identify the process changes required and develop a new service delivery model. (The approach is described in greater detail in the next section). A new, streamlined registration process was piloted beginning December 2019 and launched province-wide in July 2020. The new model allows applicants to submit their applications and fee payments electronically. As well, rather than waiting for GPEB to produce and courier their ID/registration cards, service providers now produce those cards on-site once the registration has been approved. Regulations that did not add value were eliminated, such as the requirement for gaming workers to register each time they wish to work at a different location, even at sites owned by the same service provider. Finally, internal processes were changed to include more systemic tracking of application information in a database format, replacing management of paper-based information.

The results were evident immediately:

- A reduction in the turnaround time for applications from 11 days to less than one day
- An 8% reduction in the overall number of applications requiring processing by GPEB
- An estimated \$90,000 savings on postal and courier costs for both GPEB and service providers

The impacts on participants have also been significant:

- For gaming workers
 - *A faster registration process that lets gaming workers get to work sooner.* The majority of applicants (~90%) are registered and eligible to work within one day of submitting their application to GPEB.
 - *Increased mobility to work at different sites.* Once registered, gaming workers are eligible to work for any service provider and at any location in the province.

- For gaming service providers
 - *Ability for new employees to begin work much sooner.* A much quicker turn-around time for gaming worker registration, including the ability for service providers to issue ID cards on-site, means that most new employees can start work within one day. This allows service providers to remain competitive with other employers in tight job markets.
 - *Greater flexibility in the deployment of employees across sites.* Service providers no longer have to wait for the gaming workers to be registered at each of their sites before they can work there.
 - *~\$45,000 cost savings.* The new process eliminates all courier service costs relating to the delivery of paper applications to GPEB.

- For GPEB
 - *Rebalancing of staff workload to optimize the investigators' time.* Increased capacity was created through the reduction in application volumes and the time required to process the applications. This allows for valuable staff time to be directed to work of higher priority (e.g., investigations) rather than administrative tasks (e.g., filling in the gaps created by errors and missing information on the application forms).
 - *Greater flexibility and scalability.* The more efficient process and increased capacity enables staff to respond to any increases in application volumes while still maintaining fast turn-around times. This will be important when all gaming facilities eventually open at the same time following COVID-19 pandemic-related closures.
 - *~\$45,000 cost savings.* The new process eliminates all costs relating to the production of gaming worker ID cards and the processing of paper-based applications, both of which required the use of courier services.
 - *Extendability.* The lessons learned and processes implemented as part of this business transformation are being utilized in improvement projects in other areas of BC's gambling industry – online applications for corporate registrants, for lottery retailers, and for Horse Racing workers are all benefiting from the PREG project.

Faster turn-around times, improved worker mobility, reduced costs, increased capacity - these are all outcomes of the operational transformation that PREG has implemented to benefit gaming workers, service providers, and GPEB staff for years to come!

The Approach:

The approach taken by the PREG team was both comprehensive and inclusive. There were two main components to the review:

1. LEAN Project

The PREG team employed LEAN methodology to guide the transformation of BC's gaming worker registration process. As LEAN principles focus on client satisfaction and the elimination of waste in work processes, this project was driven by the needs identified by front-line staff and stakeholders through extensive internal and external consultation. Consultation methods included:

- *Two focus groups with over a dozen gaming service providers and the British Columbia Lottery Corporation (BCLC).* Overall feedback to GPEB's proposed changes was positive.
- *A survey of gaming workers.* Results showed high levels of support for the proposed changes, particularly with respect to the proposal to increase work mobility by reducing registration requirements.
- *A pilot of the new system and process.* A several month pilot of the new system and process with one of the larger service providers in the province allowed for real-time problem solving and process refinement prior to full-scale launch. Lessons learned were incorporated into IT systems, operational processes, and support/training materials used for industry-wide launch.
- *Pre and post-launch information sessions.* These sessions were held in advance and shortly following the July 1, 2020 industry-wide launch. The discussion and ensuring questions were added to existing training and support documentation and posted to the website for all to access, as needed.

2. Regulatory Review

To ensure that the new registration was designed for maximum operational efficiency, all applicable provisions of the *Gaming Control Act* and Gaming Control Regulations were also reviewed as part of this project. Several regulations were changed or eliminated in order to reduce requirements that created unnecessary work and delays – but did not add value - for both GPEB staff and stakeholders.

We have no doubt that it is this approach, and in particular the focus on stakeholder collaboration, that is responsible for the extraordinary results of the new gaming worker registration process. The pre-launch conference call was attended by over 170 service providers. Such a high level of participation, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, reflects the high level of stakeholder support and enthusiasm for the new process.

The Feedback:

From start to finish, feedback about the transformation of the gaming worker registration process has been overwhelmingly positive. Here is a sampling of some of the early comments received:

“The new online application process will help to streamline hiring processes and allow the Service Providers to onboard new hires more efficiently. Throughout BC and especially in the lower mainland, hiring continues to be a challenge for us. The new online process as well as the move to registering gaming workers independently of Service Providers or facilities, will help to support us in our recruitment efforts.

The initiatives that you and your team are implementing will benefit all parties involved by ensuring the integrity of the gaming industry while supporting the operational needs of the Service Providers.”

Parq Casino (Service Provider)

“This morning I received the approval letter for my new gaming badge. Thanks again for the new online speedy process ... I’m impressed. “

Randy, River Rock Casino (Gaming Worker)

“Thanks again for having me on this LEAN project. It was such a great experience as I had been wanting to make changes to registration procedures for a long time. I cannot wait to hear the feedback getting from clients to GPEB.”

Shin (GPEB Staff)

Additional testimonials and/or stakeholder contacts are available on request.