

UNLOCKING THE POTENTIAL OF LOTTERIES ONLINE

As 2014 comes to an end Instant Win Gaming will remember it as a year of significant milestones for online lotteries. Instant Win gaming (IWG) have been involved in two major online launches this year in Europe and North America and have been key to the development and launch of instant win games on mobile in the UK, Norway and soon in the USA and Canada. Not that the pace of innovation is anything new to a company whose principals have been working in digital



for over 15 years, and as lotteries continue to move their products and communications online, the experience of IWG will be crucial to their customers. "It has been a really exciting year for the industry, there's absolutely no doubt about that, but our job is to make sure that we know what will be happening for the next two to three years and the only way we can do that is to really learn from our past experiences" said Rhydian Fisher, C.E.O of Instant Win Gaming.

Experience with online lotteries is something that IWG can offer in abundance having been heavily involved in the online launch of the UK National Lottery back in 2003 and since then having been a supplier to Camelot that has seen them design, build and deliver in excess of 150 online instants. Most recently

IWG have delivered their content to Norsk Tipping via their partnership with GTECH and also the Minnesota Lottery with Scientific Games for the online launches of both lotteries.

"Obviously a significant part of what we do is create content for our partners and customers, but that's just one of the pillars of the business" said Fisher. "Our offering to lotteries is much broader than simply being a provider of content. We have developed a large portfolio of Flash and HTML5 games for mobile and tablet that allows us to provide an entire launch solution for a lottery customer but there

performed in the commercial environment. Their belief is that there is always an opportunity to learn and improve, and this includes understanding the wider experience of their players. This, in turn, has helped drive innovation on the content side but also provide some very valuable lessons on how to continually improve the experience of the player and therefore help drive engagement.

Simon Bucknall, C.O.O commented "We've witnessed the online offering of lotteries develop at an incredibly rapid rate since we first became involved with lotteries, especially, most recently, on

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are other services that we provide beyond that to help understand, retain and grow an audience".

IWG have spent years fine-tuning their offering based on feedback and research on how their games have

mobile. When we first started looking at how lotteries could and should exist on mobile it involved sending the player text alerts with the weekly winning numbers. Now mobile is fast becoming the primary method of engagement for





players of draw and instant games, especially with that elusive and highly desirable younger audience. Consumers adapt to new technology very quickly and therefore lotteries have to work hard to keep the pace, which at times can be challenging”.

Challenging it may be, but taking their products online offers lotteries numerous opportunities to develop a much closer and therefore more rewarding relationship with their players. Players are no longer anonymous. You know who they are, how old they are, how much they play, what they play and when. Key to developing a successful strategy is analyzing all of the above and finding out what a player's key motivations are.

“Our focus over the last 18 months has been on how can we make the most of the tools that online has to offer to improve the content and the player experience. That means responding to player behavior based on sales and analytics and optimizing the offering accordingly”, said Fisher. “When we speak to a lottery about online we make it clear that whether you are launching an entire portfolio or refreshing what you’ve already got you need to look at the blend and the balance of content to reach the widest group of players possible. You need to look at how you are delivering your content in terms of the user

experience on your website, whether it be on mobile or desktop. How are you promoting your games and how often are you refreshing and updating your content? All of these elements can have a very significant impact on sales so it pays to get that right.”

As well as ensuring content is delivered in the appropriate way IWG also have a very strong understanding of the

importance of prize structures, price points, RTP and jackpots. As part of their consultancy offering IWG are advising their customers on developing the optimum prize structure for their games, which is very important to get right the more games you add.

Jonathan Drysdale is Game Development Manager at IWG and has worked extensively on defining the right approach to developing a successful blend of Prize Structures. “The prize structure, hit rate, RTP and the distribution of value throughout the prize tiers has a huge effect on the players’ experience and subsequent

success of a game. It’s important to ensure all these elements are finely tuned to fit with a game. A certain combination of these elements that works well on one game won’t necessarily work well on a different game – a whimsical, involving game for example will likely need a very different solution compared to a functional click and reveal game. Ultimately you can have an amazing looking game, but without a carefully planned prize structure attached to it, the game won’t achieve its potential!”

Delivering the range and frequency of content that IWG do has to be supported by a rigorous approach to testing, which is now a significant responsibility given the constant developments in the mobile world. Notoriously fickle and ever changing, the lack of stability in mobile is one of the reasons that the industry has taken a cautious approach to launching. The path to confidently launching on mobile and tablet for IWG has been long but their commitment to making their portfolio work across desktop and mobile in HTML5 is being

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rewarded as the data from customers is showing that the players are ready.

The instant success of mobile comes as no surprise to Fisher; “The data we have seen from the launches this year that have included mobile show that not only are the players ready to access content on mobile and tablet, but there are also a considerable amount of new players who are playing, so desktop play is not being cannibalized. Lotteries have seen a significant uplift in sales following the launch of mobile games. To have that kind of knowledge and to be able to react to it in terms of the content you offer is exactly

focusing on the online offering is of such huge importance to lotteries. The ability to be able to analyze the data and adapt your offering to deliver what your players are showing you they want is incredibly exciting”.

IWG can now offer the kind of scale that lotteries need to adapt to their customers needs. With a portfolio of just under 100 games available to customers, around 70% of which are available in HTML5, the aim is to offer a solution that allows a lottery to launch on multiple channels and then quickly grow that player base. “We have worked with numerous gaming platforms over the years and as a result of these partnerships we have developed a proprietary framework that allows us to



integrate large amounts of games in the quickest possible time. If a client comes to us and says they want 20 games in flash then we are able to deliver them in a matter of weeks. The same is now true of mobile. We’ve invested a huge amount of time refining the mobile offering across multiple devices because there is a huge demand for proven mobile content” said Bucknall.

With all of the boxes ticked in terms of the right games, the right presentation & promotion and a considered approach to prize structures, IWG are now looking towards innovation, and this is taking them beyond the parameters of game development. Although continuing to deliver games across channels and the ability to innovate with themes and

mechanics is a very vital part of what they do IWG have evolved their offering

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to work at a much more engaging level. Their games now include features and mechanics that offer far greater rewards to players, either through additional features or simply by rewarding loyalty to a particular game or platform. Again, there are learning’s from the wider commercial sector both online and offline that are informing the development of lotteries online.

Fisher went on to say: “Our past experience has shown us that the next phase of development for lotteries is about genuinely adding value to the player experience so that they can help drive growth by rewarding, inspiring and connecting players in a meaningful way. We really want to give players a reason to come back and engage with lotteries

side will ultimately benefit the player and the lottery alike because we will

be able to offer player data and the kind of insights on their behavior that really has not been offered before.”

So, no let up in 2015 by the sounds of it, but if Lotteries are going to keep up with the demands that consumers place upon them then there won’t be any quiet years for the foreseeable future. The key to making it work will be drawing on the extensive knowledge and experience that already exists within the industry and to make sure the experimentation and innovation is tested and proven before hitting the market.

“It’s really rewarding and exciting to have seen online reach maturity in the industry but there’s so much more that we can do to benefit players. We’ve really enjoyed working closely with lotteries to help make this happen and we are extremely aware of the importance of not taking chances with the loyalty of the players and the lottery brands. Forging open

“What we are driving towards beyond the content side will ultimately benefit the player and the lottery alike”

beyond just using up some of the remaining funds in their wallet after buying a ticket for the main draw. We have the games that can offer this, games that take the best elements of social and casual gaming. What we are driving towards beyond the content

and lasting partnerships with our customers is going to be absolutely vital in continuing the kind of growth and innovation we have seen this year. It’s exhilarating to be part of it.”