



# creating a truly entertaining lottery playing experience

By Marc McDermott, Technical Director, Gaming Standards Association (GSA)

Games should be fun to play. People go to casinos to play games with the hope of winning money but also to be entertained and have fun. Likewise for most games of chance, like lottery. Casino operators and manufacturers of electronic games know this as well as anyone. Slot machines are developed to be fun, exciting, and interesting to a player. From the physical cabinet to the sound system to the massive video display with outstanding graphics, the slot machine is built to stimulate excitement and a positive player response. And it doesn't stop with the cabinet. The game theme and the play of the game are designed to appeal to a player's sense of imagination and to provide entertainment value above and beyond the actual winning and losing of a particular wager. On the other hand, virtually all traditional lottery screens show the standard lottery number grid pattern. I think it's time for the lottery to take some lessons from the slot machine and VLT market to create more and better entertainment value. This will change its relationship with its customers, reinvigorating it with the excitement that was there when you first met. Let's think about ways to deliver true entertainment value for the lottery customer.

Imagine a lottery terminal. But instead of a lottery grid on the screen, the view is of looking out of a semi truck going down the highway; cars and scenery going by as you peer over the dashboard of the truck you're driving. Once a quick pick is initiated, a see-through lottery grid is placed over the windshield so the view out of the truck is now through the lottery grid. As the truck continues down the highway, the inevitable collisions between the windshield and the various insects flying across the highway occur. The lottery numbers are selected by where the bugs splat on the lottery grid. Disgusting? Perhaps, particularly if there is good audio for the bug splats! But maybe some completely random ideas are what will get the attention of a certain player profile that is no longer engaged with the process of going into a convenience store and buying lottery tickets. They want to be entertained. Perhaps their idea of fun includes experiencing something different and unusual, something they can tell their friends about, texting "OMG U hav to C this;" perhaps describing their experience on their Facebook page, "splattering bugs – what's that about? It's disgusting!" Maybe it is a little over-the-top, but if it gets their attention, is fun and funny, is different enough so that they'll tell their friends, then we will have succeeded at making our customer happy, providing entertainment value and maybe a playing experience that will create buzz and viral marketing momentum by recruiting the customer to advertise the new theme. All this can happen without regard to whether the player actually wins or not, without increasing the prize payout percentage or waiting for a jackpot roll-up. At that point, the motivation for playing the lottery has shifted from winning money (which does happen, but not

all the time!) over to having fun. We now have customers who pay for an entertaining lottery playing experience. The potential to win money becomes ancillary to the objective of being entertained.

This same example would also work for players that selected their own numbers. The player could select, by touch screen, the number on the lottery grid on the windshield of the truck. Once touched, a bug would splat on the chosen number. The same process would work for numbers selected via a filled out lottery card. When the player was done, the truck's windshield wipers would wipe away the numbers for the next selection. The actual game may only last a matter of seconds but the player may be talking about it for some time afterwards.

The touch screen also opens the possibility of a skill feature on the lottery. Games like darts or archery are possible as the touch screen can indicate direction, speed, and acceleration of the player input. Of course, the lottery numbers would not be affected by player skill but the entertainment portion of the game could be. In a game of darts, for example, players could get points based on their "throws". Each throw would choose a lottery number and would award the player points based on their result of their throw. The best players could be allowed to enter their initials which would be displayed on the lottery terminal and, possibly on other terminals across the jurisdiction. (There would be no material reward, just the publicity and recognition.) This element of competition could open up the lottery to a completely different type of clientele. People would be playing to have the high score in the lottery venue, the region or the entire jurisdiction. Maybe we could create community-based games and jurisdiction-wide contests with the actual lottery tickets and the prospect of winning money being an ancillary benefit. At this point we have changed the thinking about the lottery.

Of course, there are any number of interesting themes that can be used to select the numbers. Multiple themes could reside on a single terminal with the players able to select their favorite. An option to skip the entertainment game can be available for people that just want their numbers. The statistics on the player choices would provide valuable information to the lottery about what their players want. The marketing department can test different themes to see which are successful. At this point the lottery is able to fine-tune its offerings to reflect what the players want to play.

We talk about competing for the "entertainment dollar". The amazing and wonderful thing about lottery is that the prospect of winning money is a powerful attention-getter that most forms of entertainment don't have. That's a huge competitive advantage. Let's use that advantage to really capture the imagination of the lottery customer with a truly fun and entertaining playing experience. ♦