

Player Socialization and Community-Based Gaming in Video Lottery

By Victor Duarte, Chief Operating Officer, Spielo, a GTECH company

As players' backgrounds and attitudes are changing, manufacturers need to cultivate value-driven, revenue-generating products for all player demographics, particularly new and growing segments.

The players who are driving new trends in the industry are people who've been exposed to more media and entertainment choices than any other generation before them. As a result, they have higher expectations for content, often shorter attention spans, and are more comfortable incorporating technology as part of their social dynamic; this is the generation of instant messaging and Facebook. That's why community-based gaming, as an example, is so attractive—it responds to player needs to interact and enjoy gaming as a social experience.

With that in mind, we're seeing an increase in demand for social gaming experiences, especially with enhanced entertainment. Lotteries want to add value to the gaming experience beyond the traditional VLT environment. Spielo has established a multitude of products and content to appeal to these players. Our technology and systems are responding to that with new features that draw multiple players together as a group. These are the same players who like relaxing around a table at a bar or restaurant with friends—they also want to enjoy vivid, compelling games together.

The concept of community gaming has been around for a long time—think wide-area progressives or slot tournaments, for example. But there are exciting new ways to add diversity to community gaming content. For instance, some of our European clients are requesting multi-play options, where two players compete and/or cooperate on a single game on a single machine. We could soon see this approach in the North American market, too.

In some markets where regulations don't permit a live dealer, electronic table games can conform to existing laws while responding to previously unsatisfied player demand and to players' desire for a group gaming experience. As a result, many markets are showing great potential for electronic table games. For instance, Spielo and Atronic are introducing Alfastreet to the Rhode Island and Delaware jurisdictions, where table games with virtual dealers fit into their lottery legislation.

In terms of hardware, our WinWave=2 0Vu™ cabinets boast value-added features that will attract the newest generation of players and allow them to experience the games in a more social way. For instance, dual play buttons offer flexibility and the potential for two-player games. Also, the remote play button means as many as three people can participate on a single game.

In addition, players are coming to expect a wide-screen image like the ones that are standard in television and film. The WinWave Vu cabinet features dual wide screen 19-inch LCD's—big enough for a player and friends to gather around and watch together.

Comfort is another key feature. Ergonomically, the WinWave Vu's remote button allows players to relax and sit in whatever position is more comfortable for them. They're able to enjoy the game more fully as a result.

We're also bolstering entertainment value through downloading and dynamic game content. There was a time when operators refreshed games once every few months. Now, that can happen multiple times per day. The WinWave Vu is a completely downloadable VLT, including the digital glass and digital button boards. Being nimble when it comes to content helps respond to these players' desire for the latest and the best, and the WinWave Vu allows that without requiring servicing or downtime on the operators' part. Lotteries need strong-performing, well-built machines, and that's why we built the WinWave Vu.

Our new prodiGi Vu™ cabinet is aimed at venue-based markets, but can be used in some distributed jurisdictions. The prodiGi Vu responds to players' entertainment expectations with dual 22" LCD screens, enhanced multi-channel sound, remote button, and multiple button board options, so more than one person can comfortably use one machine. And it's fully upgradable to server-assisted gaming.

The powerful sensys™ platform gives both cabinets remarkable horsepower. Sensys has the memory and capability to provide the sophisticated game content players expect.

GTECH's expertise in central systems is also helping us respond to the need for heightened entertainment value and multiple-player participation. We expect the Intelligen™ central video system to be the leader in its class. It's the industry's first wide area GSA standards-based product, which leverages the functionality of the G2S-distributed and S2S protocols. For distributed markets, its application software and control enables new gaming solutions in social, tournament, and community gaming, as well as a linked progressive capability.

Finally, it's important to note that players might find the latest bells and whistles interesting, but technology won't keep them at a machine if the content is lacking. Our developers know that enhanced features only work if there's a solid bedrock of proven content underneath it all. No matter how much players change over time, Spielo will always put its emphasis on great games. ♦