

Pre-Commitment and Player Services in Gaming The win-win combination of a clever strategy

INTRALOT Gaming Solutions Division

Adding value to the player experience and delivering a raft of Player Services, like loyalty, bonus, promotions, tournaments and more, engages the consumer, and leads to more loyal and frequent player-ship. Pre-Commitment measures on the other hand, are the main tools to engage into a sustainable and Responsible Game and have become a key component to an effective Player Services agenda.

The vast majority of game-play is still transacted at land-based EGMs in Gaming Halls and retail stores. While the offering of Player Services is nowadays the norm in casinos, such transactions in the street/route gaming environments, remain largely anonymous, lack player engagement, and provide no platform for further interaction. Players Services have indeed only recently started to become a trend and gain popularity in that gaming sector.

There are two main drivers behind this trend, drivers that come from opposing viewpoints: on one hand, to provide incentives to players to re-visit a specific venue and increase the money they spend on that venue; and on the other hand, to respond to the social/governmental pressure to minimize the destructive effects of excessive gambling that some players exhibit and to enable players to have full control of their GamePlay.

Most people will regard these drivers as totally opposing, but is this really the case? Can these opposing ends converge?

Government officials in Gaming and Regulators from around the world, although they may never admit it publicly, they do see loyalty schemes favorably, when these are used in combination with responsible gaming and pre-commitment programs. The benefits of introducing responsible gaming, together with loyalty, are multi-fold and provide a satisfactory response to pressures from both sides, social and operational. Such combination works well in many ways:

- Preserving overall gaming revenues and tax levels, despite any pre-commitment scheme in existence;
- Securing player loyalty and visitation;
- Keeping those loyal regular players well-informed about their losses history and providing relevant warnings, or even stopping them from gaming when they exceed their limits;
- Maintaining excessive gaming habits under control.

A Classic Win-Win Combination

To keep up with these ideas, any contemporary world-class player management system, aiming to also meet diversified and evolving regulatory needs in various gaming jurisdictions globally, should offer a set of comprehensive services with multiple and customizable responsible gaming features and options. Such features and options are itemized below:

- Allow both, a Voluntary Scheme, where EGMs can be played by non-registered players, or a Mandatory Scheme, where the use of a player card, with player set limits, is necessary to activate the Games;
- Support Anonymous or Named Registration: either or both options can be active at any installation, but the Named Registration may offer additional services, such as game history reporting and link/re-activation of an account, in case of loss of card and credentials;
- Be configured to Stop Game Play when a limit is reached, or Allow Game Play after that limit, with warnings or no warnings. Players are informed in real time about their gaming activity pre and post limit;
- Offer fully configurable limits that can be switched on and off: Loss, Time, Bet Level, daily, weekly, monthly limits;
- Support configurable warning messaging and warning levels;

- Incorporate self-assessment questionnaires available via a web site to all players allowing them to measure their risk level (green, yellow, orange, red).

From a technology perspective, a system would be best to allow the use of any card technology (Magnetic, Chip, Contactless) and provide support for either an external or built-in touchscreen PUI, or a Picture-In-Picture (PIP) EGM technology (retrofit or natively supported by the EGM). In addition, the system should avail web Links to resources and organizations related to responsible gaming and gambling addiction, while it should also enable combined services with external systems, such as offering of different responsible gaming rules with regards to player classification, based on Risk Levels or Loyalty classes. Finally, the system should provide real-time and batch interfaces to 3rd party systems, using established gaming standards (S2S) and integrate seamlessly with other player services systems, enabling the concurrent service provision by different service providers;

INTRALOT is one of a handful of technology providers that has developed a state-of-the art large scale Pre-commitment system and is certainly the only company that has optimally combined the security, monitoring and control of EGMs with Player Pre-Commitment through its iGEM system. As a matter of fact, INTRALOT has successfully deployed both the EGM-centric and the player-centric features of iGEM in Australia with great success.

Dealing with the regulatory body and participating in the introduction of a massive state-wide pre-commitment program in the State of Victoria Australia, we, at INTRALOT, realized that a key consideration for the State lies in maximising the player take-up in the program. If acceptance were to be low, the State would be faced with strong reaction from the opera-

tors and venues which were required to invest millions of dollars to make their EGMs pre-commitment ready and pay pre-commitment fees. To minimize this risk, a set of smart choices were implemented, to make the investment in pre-commitment most attractive to the industry and the players:

- Centralized and open pre-commitment system and database which allows the limits set by players to be applicable state-wide, in the street venues and in the Melbourne Casino;
- Participation in pre-commitment is optional for the players, but compulsory for the operators: all venues and EGMs need to offer the required service and related infrastructure (card reader and player display on each EGM, links to the system, kiosk, etc.);
- Licensing of 3rd party loyalty and bonusing systems, provided that these systems work in conjunction with the central pre-commitment system and exchange information;
- Loyalty points, for players registered for pre-commitment, accrue only if pre-commitment is used in the same gaming session;
- Sharing of EGM and venue pre-commitment infrastructure (card reader, EGM player display, player card, kiosk, registration terminal, network, etc.) between pre-commitment and loyalty systems;
- Allowing for additional player related value added services (e.g. anonymous card based cashless).

The Pre-Commitment initiative of the State of Victoria is set to go live in December 2015. The initiative involves about 29000 EGMs in over 500 venues throughout the State and the Casino in Melbourne and it is driven by a Centralized Responsible Gaming System based on the iGEM system provided by INTRALOT.

This whole endeavor has been characterized a Great Success. ■

Lifetime Achievement Award: Larry Loss ... continued from page 10

retailers to maximize lottery game selection at their locations. He helped tweak the program to integrate bonuses for locations that sell tickets winning large prizes, and the streamlining of the payment process for retailers.

Larry acts as a mentor both within the Iowa Lottery and the lottery industry as a whole. His counsel and input are regularly sought out by those who respect and appre-

ciate his ability to achieve real-world solutions and explain the benefits to all involved.

Larry has received numerous leadership awards from multiple Governor's Administrations in Iowa, and was honored with PGRI's Outstanding Achievement Award for Quality and Excellence in June 1996. He also has worked to make a difference in his community, being active in many different

organizations through the years from the Iowa Jaycees to Heartland Greyhound Adoption and school booster clubs.

Larry and his wife, Mary, also have been on an amazing personal journey, adopting their son, Sergei, in Russia in 2009 when he was 11. Sergei now a high school teen-ager who loves sports, tolerates the classroom and best of all, is leading a successful life. ■