

THE POWER OF THE DUAL LAUNCH



Launching new instants simultaneously in physical and digital forms can provide a host of benefits for lotteries, says IWG CEO Rhydian Fisher



You don't need me to tell you that the biggest challenge facing today's lottery industry is appealing to a player base that is spending an increasing amount of time online.

There has been plenty of talk in our sector about the importance of digital innovation and building a suite of products that resonates with the much sought after millennial demographic.

What I have not seen is much advice on the practical benefits of a coherent digital strategy and the synergies that can be gained when that digital strategy complements an existing retail offer.

This path is well-trodden by our cousins in the private sector; a number of casino operators have stressed the importance of omni-channel releases – simultaneous launches of new titles across land-based machines and online – for a number of years.

While retail sales will remain the priority for most lottery retailers for the foreseeable future, they need to diversify and bring in revenues from other channels.

Dual launches of instant win games can provide a major boost to nascent digital operations, and it is an area we at IWG are expanding rapidly following a number of successful roll-outs with Loto-Québec, Norsk Tipping and ONCE in Spain.

The halo effect

The benefits of a dual launch are far-reaching. Launching a physical ticket that shares the same prize structure and design as its digital equivalent creates a halo effect in marketing, giving players a wider range of options to respond to the same campaign, in turn boosting ROI.

It also helps operators drive traffic between the channels. In Québec, a call-to-action was included on the physical ticket, suggesting players visit a URL to play the same game online.

Loto-Québec's head of online Sovanna Phan said that the simultaneous launch of a game across retail and online, known as a 'Brick N' Click' launch, allows the operator to leverage sales on both channels.



I believe one of the main benefits of doing a Brick N' Click launch is to capitalize on the brand awareness among our customers. They are able to find their favorite retail scratchcard online and vice versa. We're really pleased with the result.

Phan added that two such launches, Mots Cachés and Slingo are among their best performing instant games online.

And this is just the start. There is room for more advanced retail to digital cross-selling strategies, such as QR codes that allow customers to scan and play in an instant on their mobile device.



Doubling down on digital

Digital lottery is at a real coming-of-age moment, and is finally in a position to assert itself within the broader sector.

Historically, the only titles that tended to get dual launches were blockbuster branded games,

Cash Buster has been a hit online for some time, and the planned physical ticket in Québec is a rare example of a physical game taking its game mechanics and design from the digital world. I predict this is something we will be seeing a great deal more of in the coming years.

Ultimately, the lottery sector will have to take a far more channel agnostic approach to the way it rolls out new content. While regulation will play the decisive role in how quickly this transition takes place, it is possible to put the framework and practices in place now.

IWG's dedicated RGS now makes digital launches – and the possibility of linking these to simultaneous retail launches – easier than ever. This is critical in a market where the constant refreshing of content is central to success.

On top of this, popular digital titles can help bring the next generation of players into the retail environment.

Prize pools are another area that can benefit from a dual launch. While regulatory requirements differ depending on jurisdiction, we have found that there tends to be scope to offer larger prizes if a game is launched in both physical and digital form than if it is a digital-only product. Certification also tends to be smoother.

Aside from regulatory concerns, the ability to share a prize pool between two channels also empowers the operator to offer bolder headline prizes.

such as Monopoly. In many of these instances, dual launches were in reality re-launches of a popular retail game.

This is quickly changing, as we will soon demonstrate with the dual launch of our hugely successful Cash Buster instant win game.

A number of our operators are already enjoying the benefits of dual launches. With boosts across marketing, cross-sell and prize pools to be had, it is time more lotteries tap into the power of the dual launch.

