

Improving Retail Performance

A Recent Sales Force Automation Panel Discussion at the NASPL Professional Development Seminar shared some interesting insights and ideas

The NASPL 2016 Professional Development Seminar held in Pittsburgh in early August featured a Panel Discussion about the practical benefits of Sales Force Automation/ Customer Relationship Management. With a focus on maximizing Retailer performance the panel participants were comprised of Lottery Management and Sales Professionals, and a lottery retailer. The fast paced discussion included insights into how a wide range of lotteries are increasing retail performance including the Pennsylvania, Oregon, Missouri, Kansas, Michigan, and a local Pennsylvania retailer. In addition several lotteries contributed their ideas about how to maximize the value of SFA and retail performance, including Iowa, Kentucky and Florida.



Here are a few of the highlights;

★ Have no fear; move the blockers.

When instant tickets sit too long and take up valuable merchandising space, they are blocking new and other top selling games. Terry Presta, Director of the Kansas Lottery shared his “activist” approach to increasing instant ticket sales. Terry explained that his management team instructs their sales reps to look at those games that have been in an “Activated Status” for 3 weeks and that have less than 25% validations and “move them out” because they are blocking the higher selling games!

“Often reps may be hesitant to move products, but the essence of retail success is merchandising the best-selling products, said Terry. “I want our reps to “Have no Fear! Return the Blockers, the slow movers and move in the best sellers. By using our “8 ball” Intelligent Alert in our SFA platform, reps can show their retailers the top eight selling instant games and the sales potential by merchandising our top games.”

After the formal panel discussion session a number of lotteries approached Terry to better understand the details of his approach.

★ What’s in it for me?

Lottery sales manager know the importance of focusing on the perspective of the retailer. Ashley Carel, Sales Operations Manager for the Missouri Lottery shared the importance of engaging retailers on their level, the way they think and communicating with information that they will understand and use to take

action. With SFA applications and real time information, lotteries can know the retailers business, prepare better and zero-in on critical information. Most importantly, sales reps can show retailers what the financial benefits will be by implementing the recommended actions.

“Focusing on areas of sales growth opportunities, and proving it right then and there with specific and graphical data is a great way to build positive action, said Ashley. In addition to upgrading of our SFA platform, we are reinforcing our DISC Personality Assessment sales training, so our reps utilize the power of SFA with better communication and a better understanding of how retailers think.”

★ Fast activations of new games mean results.

Bryan Torok, a Zone Sales Manager for the Michigan Lottery shared the details of their successful focus on increasing the rate of new game activations. Since implementing their new SFA platform, the Michigan Lottery zeroed in on ensuring all new games are activated as quickly as possible (not more than 3 days).

“The combination of our “NO ACT” Intelligent Alert and our real time visibility into the status of all our instant products lets us contact retailers very quickly to ensure we maximize the impact of all new games,” said Bryan. “This has helped us improve retail performance and increase revenues. In addition, our retailers know that we care and know the details for their business.”

★ Pop-up Parties to maximize social format games like video lottery.

The Oregon Lottery was a pioneer in many areas of lottery games including video lottery, with one of the nation’s most successful programs. Helping retailers improve the social environment in which Video Lottery games are enjoyed is a win-win for the retailer and the Lottery explained Farshad Allahdadi, Chief Sales and Retail Services Officer for the Oregon Lottery. Planning, attending and following up on these parties at the selected locations offers the opportunity for the retailer and the Lottery to work toward a common goal and lets the Lottery participate in being a part of growing their overall business. The Lottery can gain a first hand glimpse at their clientele in a large format and the events often

brings to light the challenges or opportunities our retailers might have with how we are working together.

“By being there and seeing the gaming environment in action we can help optimize play areas, machine and monitor placement, said Farshad. The good will that this generates improves our communication and business relationship, increases player excitement and loyalty and offers an incentive for underperforming retailers.”



★ Using the SFA platform as your Training Channel.

The Florida Lottery shared one of its innovations; the use of their SFA platform as a way to improve sales rep product knowledge and sales skills associated with the launch of new instant ticket games. The Lottery's Marketing Department creates new videos for every major promotional launch—roughly every 4 to 6 weeks, and then makes it available on the Lottery's mobile sales tool prior to game launch. The sales reps are able to review talking points at their own pace and practice so they give the best presentation possible to the retailer.

“A sales presentation can only be considered effective if the end result is one that convinces the prospect to buy, and without product knowledge, including adequately being able to describe the product's features and benefits you don't have a very good presentation and your odds of success decrease dramatically,” said Tom Delacenserie, Secretary of the Florida Lottery. *“While we can't draw a straight line between this and a dollar increase, we just had our highest sales year ever breaking the \$6B mark for the first time so I believe there is a correlation.”*

★ Looking through the eyes of the retailer.

Manny Singh is a Pennsylvania Lottery retailer who views the Lottery as a true partner. Manny joined the panel discussion to share some of his thoughts and ideas. From the start Manny believe retailers should be proud of the Lottery and the good causes it serves; in Pennsylvania it is Seniors and many play because they enjoy it, and to support the cause. Lottery sales representatives that keep his staff up to date with the latest information is essential to their success, and makes it a real partnership. Since 2012, when the Lottery upgraded to its current SFA platform, Manny highly values the real time communications that makes it easier to solve issues and track missing packs right away. This cuts down on the staff churn and resolves problems immediately.

“I am proud of the fact that I have had my staff for over 4 years, and they know many of our most active players. I have a dedicated Lottery clerk for 8 hours a day and we will take written slips and key in every single number. We may even call some customers to let them know their number hit,” said Manny. *“With the Lottery reps so knowledgeable*

about every detail of our business I can manage my store more effectively, from going up to a 32 display vs. 10, to more information about new games. They let us know more about each game and how to sell it better.”

Manny also shared his interest in getting more comparative information such as how his location compares to others and additional marketing and demographic information so he can focus his game facings for his customers.

★ The Power of the First Purchase.

Victoria Holman, Western Regional Project Manager for the Pennsylvania Lottery shared some interesting insights into new research data that will help the Lottery support retailers with enhanced sales strategies. Based on some recent research provided by Scientific Games, the Lottery will be able to focus its promotions and sales efforts to more effectively support players who are most likely to buy additional games after or in combination with their first purchase; offering the right games to the right players.

“This new research is exciting because it will help us target our sales and marketing efforts all the way to the retailer, who we can guide with more precise player buying preferences,” said Victoria. *“Being able to translate and apply these new strategic insights into actionable sales strategies with the help of our SFA Employee and Retailer Portals is the best part.”*

★ Conclusion

The Panel enjoyed the opportunity to share their ideas and best practices, and the Panel thanks NASPL PDS for the forum. As importantly, the Panel discussion engendered a new level of professional relationship and friendships, all focused on maximizing retail performance. The best solutions are built upon creative collaboration, and the Panel was a great example of that in action. Copies of the Panel's presentation slides and the exhibits are available upon request from ccoyle@lapis.com. ■

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