

Staying Relevant to Make a Difference

In business, as in most aspects of life, relevancy is important, and in today's world of millennials if you are not relevant, you do not matter—worse perhaps, if you are not relevant, you do not exist.

Historically, by the very nature of our industry, lotteries have relevance to everyone both directly through prize payouts and indirectly by revenue to good causes and/or government programs.

But the emotional connection that makes lottery matter to all adult demographics is lacking. There was a time when jackpots were enough, but then again, there was a time when a one-million-dollar jackpot drove scores of people to the local retailers to wait in long lines for their chance to win “big.” Jackpots are now in the billions of dollars. There is no “Jackpot Fever” at the one-million-dollar mark anymore and just as importantly, there is far less mention of lottery in the media as a consequence. In fact, the Multi-jurisdiction US Powerball game increased its starting jackpot to \$40 million dollars. And even at that, significant segments of the population in many lottery jurisdictions do not engage in the mission of lottery, despite the potential to win prizes and despite the fact that they are morally in favor of supporting good causes.

This is lottery's current delta between relevance and having a substance that matters to people, to players.

In this post-internet age of instantaneous, international interconnectivity, people are even more moved by the uncertainty of world security, the desire for human harmony and civility, and the real and pressing concern for environmental protection. Using the power of the purchase to also advocate for community, for social causes, is increasingly becoming one of the primary criteria in the selection of products and companies considered in a purchase decision. Recognizing and staying true to a cause has been at the core of the success of companies like Patagonia:

“Patagonia Mission Statement: Build the best product, cause no unnecessary harm, *use business to inspire* and implement solutions to the environmental crisis.”

“At Patagonia, the protection and preservation of the environment isn't what we do after hours. It's the reason we're in business and every day's work.”

THIS ... is “Big Community” at its best. As identified during the recent EL/WLA Marketing Seminar:

BIG COMMUNITIES: *The strategies and tactics of building and developing communities around lottery offerings ... (this includes) ... using the stories of beneficiaries in marketing operations and benchmarking examples from other industries and new developments in the use of social media.*

In conjunction with Big Jackpots and Big Data, Big Communities is the third significant element that can affect the current standing with the large segment of lottery's missing demographics. Ironically, our industry is already the “do-good” industry in the gaming sector, but we are akin to the flower bulb beneath the soil in spring: the gardener knows it's there, is thankful that it will return each year, but is truly awed only during the short blooming season. Lotteries, both individually and collectively, could benefit greatly by showing the world the true splendor of all that is continually flourishing as a result of the lottery business model.

Of course, generally every individual lottery does exactly that presently, but the communication typically relates specifically to the games with some advertising budget earmarked for mention of support to good causes and/or responsible gaming. But what if the industry began to collectively, and individually, leverage the current desire for activism that is directly impacting consumer behavior.

“That's the crux of successful marketing today: activism is in. Our activism is currently mediated by brands,” says Will Fowler, Creative Director of Headspace. *“Brands are allowing people to pat themselves on the back without them personally having to sacrifice anything. It's true. ... We're all feeling the need to right the wrongs of today's ... world. If a brand can allow (people) to carry on (everyday) living and fuel social consciences” ... that's a win, win.*



SOCIAL MEDIA FOR LOTTO

-  **Twitter** *I'm supporting kids through Lotto*
-  **Facebook** *I like kids but I don't play Lotto*
-  **Foursquare** *This is where you can buy Lotto*
-  **Instagram** *Here's a pic of a child helped by Lotto funds*
-  **Youtube** *Watching a video of the Lotto program*
-  **Linkedin** *I work for that hospital; Lotto helps the kids!*
-  **Pinterest** *Here's a gift holder for Lotto tickets*
-  **Google+** *You can search about the Lotto good deeds*
-  **Klout** *I am buying Lotto to make a difference!*

If the question is “What more can be done to elevate the image of and interest in lottery in the eyes of this activist society, in addition to the current efforts undertaken daily by brilliant operators,” the answer may be to consider an additional use of the power of social media.

People talk ... a lot these days, and in a lot of ways, which can be a great thing when the chatter can also serve some kind of greater good—the Big Communities. If lottery were trending because of the good lottery does past the jackpots and prizes, lottery would matter to people in a whole new way. Despite the differences of cultures and countries, people talk because people are people—a mother is a mother, an artist an artist, a teacher a teacher no matter the geographical boundaries. When something touches the heart, it is universal, as can be seen in these few examples of community building or social success among some successful companies.

HAGKAUP: “PLAY FOR GOOD”

Hagkaup is Iceland’s high end grocery and department store and before Christmas they decided to let their customers contribute to a good cause. A piano was put in front of the store in Iceland’s two biggest (possibly only) shopping malls. For each person who played the piano, Hagkaup donated 5000 kr. (around 40 euros) to a charity that supports underprivileged families. In addition to supporting a good cause, the playing enriched the holiday shopping experience for thousands of Christmas shoppers and created considerable social media buzz. By allowing their customers to be part of the giving experience, instead of simply giving the money to charity directly, Hagkaup made the most of its charitable donation.

WESTJET

In the airline industry WestJet is something of a prodigy in social media success. Their Christmas event has for years been the standard that other annual events are judged by. Seeing is believing. Head over to WestJet’s YouTube page, scroll down to the WestJet Christmas Miracle Videos section and pay special attention to their Real Time Giving and 12.000 Mini-Miracles videos. It’s easy to see parallels with what can be done by lotteries. For additional information on the success of the 12.000 Mini-Miracles, check out the Shorty Awards page for 12.000Mini-Miracles.

KLM ROYAL DUTCH AIRLINES

Another airline deserves a special mention here. KLM’s Bonding Christmas Buffet—is a great, well-executed idea that fits well with the social and coming-together mission of many lotteries. KLM is not a one trick pony and their “lost and found service” video has received over 22 million views since it was released in 2014.

DUMB WAYS TO DIE

What a title and what a brilliant idea. Tired of ineffective safety videos that are simply ignored, Metro Trains Melbourne created this gem of a video. They also created a number of follow up videos and apps that have had over 200 million downloads. The “Dumb Ways to Die” song reached the iTunes top 10 singles chart in the first week after the video’s release. There is also a website: <http://www.dumbwaystodie.com/> where you can buy merchandise and learn more. It is easy to envision a similar video on responsible gaming getting widespread attention and really bringing home the message of playing within your means.

Good news has a universally positive effect, but to win and sustain allegiance and respect requires having the capacity to exploit social media, for example, to create and stay connected to a community. Consider Apple’s success in keeping the iPhone in the hands and in the lives of a large number of smartphone users.

When the iPhone was launched it was a revolution. Now, ten years later, the iPhone, and smartphones in a broader context, are simply part of our lives. The way Apple has managed to stay relevant is by employing modern technology at the outset and then constantly evolving and updating it. Apple has released over 10 major iOS releases and 15 different handsets during this time and added functionality that we take for granted today, such as copy/paste, the app store, a front facing camera and much, much more.

It seems to be becoming interesting for lotteries to engage in long-term technology contracts as a way to manage cost and perhaps avoid the pain of protracted procurement processes. This could be a mistake, imagine you bought an iPhone back in 2007 on a ten-year contract and were still having to use it today. With its much slower network connectivity, lower resolution screen and limited memory etc., you simply would not be in a position to take advantage of the plethora of new applications, now available. This example offers an interesting parallel to 10-year lottery contracts. Succeeding in business both now and 10 years from now, in a world that moves as fast as ours, requires the use of the most modern technology that supports constant innovation and an ability to harness new trends. Together, technical superiority and social relevance will always matter in the formula for long-term business success. ■

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