

THE INSTANT OPPORTUNITY

The unrealised potential of instant win games in the igaming space offers a significant opportunity for operators, argues **Will Whitehead** of mkodo.

Instant win games currently present something of a conundrum for operators. Among the industry, there is a known opportunity to tap into a new client base, however the market has yet to establish a winning strategy to convert ad-hoc players into committed customers.

According to Lottoland demographics, 70% of the UK's over 18s participate in the National Lottery, nearly 45 million people. And, just under of British citizens buy a scratchcard at least once a month, while over 50% buy one at least once in a calendar year. But could this be a potentially lucrative market for those willing to explore it?

There is a distinction between scratchcards and instant wins, the former being synonymous with a retail experience and instant wins being a more involved digital experience providing suspense and entertainment.

Converting scratchcard audiences

Lottery and scratchcards continue to grow in popularity, because of their familiarity and quick-fix of a potential monetary reward.

One of the key ways to draw customers into purchasing their lottery ticket on a mobile device is to offer additional entertainment and transaction opportunities with the purchase experience, for example, the opportunity to play a quick and entertaining instant win game within the same session as purchasing a lottery ticket.

Instant win games are increasing in popularity as the content is improving and offering customers more opportunities to impact the end outcome. Many instant win games offer customers the feeling of control over the outcome and result. For example, answering a series of questions correctly,

or kicking the ball over the rugby posts within the game. This gives the customer the impression they are affecting the end outcome and creates a level of suspense that is less prevalent in traditional slot content.

Instant win games traditionally offer a much lower return to player (RTP) than your traditional digital slot game, with some instant's RTP as low as 65%, in comparison to slot content RTP which can be up to 97%. Despite the decreased chances of winning, the customers' feeling of being both entertained and more in control encourages repeat play.

The engagement game

We have 15 years' experience of working in the mobile gaming world, with casino, sportsbook, lottery and bingo operators across Europe and North America. We have found that companies working in all these verticals are interested in instant win games and feel that their relevant target audience is entertained by the appropriate content.

Operators who make instant win content available must think tactically about where, how and to whom the market instant win content

Do they place instant win content as a link in the receipt page of a lottery ticket purchase or a sports bet? Do they place them in the 'queue' stage of a transaction, such as waiting for a bingo game to start? Or do operators market instant win content as a separate and unique vertical, rather than as an afterthought? In my view, operators now need to be giving instant win games their own platform, their own link on the lobby page, a game genre in its own right. It should not just be seen as an up-sell to existing customers or an 'extension' to the

existing customer experience. They have a clear and valuable role to play as a customer acquisition tool.

Operators should also be focused in 2017 on providing content that is tailored to their specific vertical, locale and customer base. Personalisation of game content based on the target customer's preferences and locality are now crucial for acquisition and retention. For example, if operators are targeting sportsbook customers, the games should be designed to appeal to these consumers, such as the *Kick for Cash* game offered by mkodo. Similarly, when a lottery operator offers instant win games, these should be tailored to the tastes and behaviours of lottery-focused consumers, such as the digital scratchcard title *Rich Food* in mkodo's portfolio.

Localisation of the instant win game content is also now a key business driver for operators. Content themes and genres must appeal within the region where the games are accessible. In the North American market, mkodo has been driving several sport-themed games focused on ice hockey and American football, whereas in the UK, the sports-themed games are more centred around football and rugby. Therefore, operators also need to think about investing in bespoke, personalised game content based on their existing brands in these regions.



Will Whitehead is a Senior Account Manager at mkodo (www.mkodo.com), a global supplier of apps and mobile engagement products since 2001. He is a mobile gaming specialist with over four years' experience in the betting and gaming industry, Will works with major gaming operators across Europe and North America and has primary expertise in mobile sportsbook, mobile lottery, mobile games and the mobile engagement market.