



Things I Wish I Knew: 8 Experts Share Lottery Lessons They've Learned

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Pursuing a career in the highly specialized lottery industry can be rewarding. After all, you're lending your skills and expertise to help fund vital programs that improve the quality of life in your communities. While lottery careers are indeed fulfilling as far as career paths

go, it's not to be taken lightly that working for a government-regulated entity is serious business.

Lottery professionals must navigate their day-to-day activities with the highest levels of integrity and ethical standards, adhering to regulations, committing to stringent protocols, and ascribing to a collective mindset where team members prioritize goals and collaborate for success. That success can translate to millions—for larger lotteries, billions—of dollars in contributions for good cause programs.

We caught up with eight lottery professionals at Scientific Games—some who began their careers with lotteries, others with vendors and some who have worked for both lotteries and vendors—to learn the memorable lessons they've carried forward along their journey. And of course, practical advice for others navigating careers in the industry today.

Beth Bresnahan, Chief Communications & Brand Officer

20 years



Destiny led Beth Bresnahan to the unique lottery industry. After working in government communications and legislative relations positions, she became the Communications Director at the Massachusetts Lottery. Beth would eventually go on to hold Director positions at both the Mass Lottery and the DC Lottery. She found the intricate art and science behind game development, rigorous security measures, safeguarding every transaction and the good cause programs that benefit from lottery sales fascinating. Looking back, Beth wishes she had sought a strong mentor in the industry to demonstrate how to make her voice heard, despite having earned a seat at the table.

Leaving lottery then returning helped her refine her work approach and build confidence in her capabilities. Besides working hard, the most valuable lesson Beth learned about the industry was the importance of building and maintaining strong relationships. “My success was influenced by the relationships I had cultivated. Those connections helped open doors, provided support and facilitated collaboration,” she says. “It’s a testament to the

power of genuine relationships and the value of treating everyone with respect. In this industry, reputation and your network are invaluable assets.” Today, she continues to challenge herself by taking on new projects and learning new skills. Beth advises, “Be a sponge. Absorb as much knowledge as possible from those around you. This industry is a complex machine, and the best way to understand its inner workings is to listen, observe and ask questions. By combining a willingness to challenge yourself with a commitment to continuous learning, you’ll be well-positioned for success.”

Inspiration: Her grandmother Anne’s words of wisdom.

Jeremy Kyzer, VP, Retail Solutions Sales

16 years



Jeremy Kyzer’s background in printing production set him on a career path with Scientific Games and lottery. He was initially surprised by the sheer magnitude of lottery retail sales, despite the industry being relatively small. Another unexpected finding was the length of time people remain in the industry, which he attributes to the willingness of lotteries to collaborate with one another. “This makes it feel like family,” he says. “The work we do can have a huge impact on our communities, retailers and beneficiaries. There aren’t many industries that have such a high profile.” Early in his career, Jeremy learned that the best salespeople don’t sell; they listen to customers’ needs and offer solutions that solve those needs.

His most valuable lesson has been learning as much as possible about the business, particularly areas outside his scope of work. “Lottery is a complex industry. Understanding the whole business and why things are done the way they are makes you more valuable to your organization,” Jeremy shares. As for the future, he believes the lottery industry has become significantly more advanced in making data-driven decisions, especially as increased gaming entertainment options put pressure on lotteries to drive returns. “Being analytical and willing to act on analytics will be important,” he advises. “Our business is

ever evolving, and new technologies are constantly being introduced. Pay attention to what is happening as it will change how you do business.”

Inspiration: *Win or Die: Leadership Secrets from Game of Thrones* by Bruce Craven

Amanda Cooper, Senior Manager, Systems Business Development

11 years



Natural curiosity and a Journalism degree landed Amanda in the Proposals group at Scientific Games, where she worked as a copy editor and later as Proposals Coordinator. “It was a catalyst for my curiosity in all things related to the lottery industry. How do our systems and technologies work together to enhance the lottery and player experience? Why are the games designed with a certain payout? I was hooked,” she shares. Years later, Amanda is still impressed by the complex technologies and processes behind the sale of a lottery game. Continuously learning about the vast lottery landscape excites her. “Every lottery is one-of-a-kind with different goals, unique challenges and interesting dynamics.”

Amanda wishes she had known sooner how important it is to connect with all kinds of professionals across the industry. “Lottery professionals are passionate. They are innovative, and they will teach you much more than you can learn if you only connect with those inside your bubble.” Her biggest lesson came when she challenged herself to step outside her comfort zone for a career leap into business development. Her advice, “Remain curious. If something interests you, maybe it’s a scratch game concept or sales data analysis, grab onto it and run with it. You will never regret diving in to learn more, and it may even become your next career move.”

Inspiration: *Think Again* by Adam Grant

Blair Johnson, VP, Digital Delivery & Client Services

18 years



There are many good stories surrounding how Blair made an off-the-beaten path move from the music, sports and video industries to lottery. As he tells it, what began as a six-week contract demonstrating lottery retail point-of-sale equipment morphed into a remarkable and rewarding career. Blair immediately loved the passion of those he met in the lottery industry, observing their long tenures in their positions and organizations overall. His passion has always been creating entertainment— scratch games, draw games, digital games or events—and working as a team on the backend of technology to design player experiences.

Blair reflects on his career, “I now know that it was important to take time to

explore areas of lottery that didn’t necessarily fit into my job descriptions. Forming a well-rounded view of the industry and the many disciplines that power it is crucial.” Blair also emphasizes the importance of curiosity. “Reach out to everyone from interns to executives to ask about their careers, what they are doing now, and what they’ve learned. You will gain insight into what this industry is all about, how it moves and the talent that is here like you never imagined. Foster that curiosity and it will be rewarded.”

Inspiration: His family and *Disrupting the Game* by Reggie Fils-Aime

Meghan Kiss, VP, Strategic Account Management

14 years



Meghan joined a non-profit organization before bringing her passions to help drive funding for the many good causes that lotteries support. Her lottery career has included the unique experience of working on the vendor side of the business with Scientific Games, as well as for the Georgia Lottery, before she returned to SG. With perspectives from both sides of the relationship, Meghan looks forward to every day being different and, most of all, celebrating successes with the lottery customers she serves. “I love the creativity, the data, the math and the integrity I get to be part of working at Scientific Games,” she says.

Early on, Meghan wishes she had been more patient with herself when learning about the industry, which can take some time to understand fully. Her most valuable lesson is that every lottery is unique. “Yes, there are many similarities across all lotteries, but each state does things differently, and it’s important to learn and be cognizant of all the nuances of each lottery.” Taking on a VP role was initially intimidating, but she is grateful for colleagues, mentors and customers who supported her. Meghan believes it’s essential to lean into change, be progressive and rely on data to make decisions that can positively impact the future. She ascribes to the adage: If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again. Her colleagues and customers continue to inspire her learning on a daily basis.

Inspiration: *Emotional Intelligence for Sales Leadership: The Secret to Building High-Performance Sales Teams* by Colleen Stanley

Tim Menzia, Director, Market Research

13 years



With 25 years of experience in consumer insights research, Tim came to Scientific Games through the acquisition of WMS Gaming. He jumped when he was eventually given the opportunity to move to the lottery side of the company. In 2022, SG became 100% lottery-focused. “The fact that lotteries support so many beneficiaries and truly care about their players was particularly important to me,” he shares. Tim’s work helps game creators, marketers, retailers, lotteries and others make important decisions on how to develop, market, sell and improve the games so consumers continue to have a positive, fun and responsible form of entertainment.

Tim wishes he had understood sooner how different research in the gaming industry is from other sectors, such as consumer packaged goods or healthcare, where he gained most of his research experience. When adding the chance to win or lose into the equation (with lottery), purchase decisions change in ways that require distinct research approaches. Tim’s most valuable lessons have involved learning everything involved in the lottery play experience, from the consumer’s shopping trip to in-store signage, other retailer elements, the game mix, what players do with their winnings, how they choose the next game to play and how they talk to others about their lottery experience. “Watch people make decisions at retail. The more you understand, the better you can make the overall player’s experience,” he advises. “Be inquisitive. Do the extra and don’t settle for the status quo. Exploring better ways of doing things is the only way to progress.”

Inspiration: Quirk’s market research and insights-focused monthly publication

Danielle Hodges, Senior Director, Global Product Development & Innovation

13 years



Delivering pizzas to Scientific Games’ global headquarters when she was a student introduced Danielle Hodges to lottery. She joined the company as an administrative assistant on the Instant Products team, and gained an invaluable understanding of how scratch games are created, secured, and delivered worldwide to lotteries—each with its specific requirements for games. The complexities of game security surprised her the most. “We’re producing games where at least one ticket is worth millions of dollars. Our technology runs at 900 feet per minute with 20+ layers of secure coatings and graphics that include tamper-evident features and encrypted barcodes regulated by strict guidelines to ensure fairness and prevent counterfeiting and fraud,” she explains.

Danielle’s creativity soon led to positions in instant game innovation, where she now leads a global team of innovators. “We have a great culture fostered in trust, which I think is the most important characteristic of an innovation team. Without trust, your colleagues may not share their ideas, and that leads to stagnation,” she says. She learned early in her career to strike a balance between work and life. “Your career is a marathon, not a sprint. Enjoy the journey,” Danielle advises. She believes the most important approach for lotteries in the future is to learn about players and their motivations and be open to new ideas while

maintaining integrity. Her mantra is ideate, create, validate. “There is nothing better than when a player, lottery or retailer loves a new product,” she shares.

Inspiration: *Harvard Business Review* and *Fast Company* magazines

Joe Fulton, Senior Director, Product Management

7 years



An engineer by degree and trade, Joe Fulton has spent most of his career in the retail technology space. When he first came to Scientific Games and the lottery sector, he observed that the industry was complex—not only from a technology standpoint, but from a market and commercial perspective. The opportunity to transform and grow the industry excites Joe. “We often think of technology as an agent of change, but I believe the market, our players, retailers, and other stakeholders are the most powerful agents of change. It’s our job to shape solutions to fit those needs,” he says.

Joe has learned to keep moving forward, even in the face of obstacles. “Learn from feedback, pivot often but always

move forward,” he shares. “In this industry, there is always another angle, another challenge or another problem to solve. Just when you begin to think you’ve finally got it all figured out, that’s usually when you’ll find the next gap.” Joe appreciates that more and more professionals from outside the lottery industry are bringing new perspectives and expectations to the business. His career advice: “Always do work you are proud of. Set a high standard for yourself even with small, everyday tasks. Discipline and diligence are contagious.”

Inspiration: *Extreme Ownership* by Jocko Willink and Leif Babin; *The Three Questions* by Leo Tolstoy.