

THE OPERATORS' NUMBER ONE CHOICE

InterGaming

THE SPECIALIST INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE FOR LAND-BASED CASINOS

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BEST IN SHOW

TAKE AN EXCLUSIVE LOOK
AT WHAT YOU WILL FIND
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WHAT'S IN A NAME?

InterGaming asks what pull big brand names have for the gaming industry

SOME lottery and gaming suppliers virtually specialise in licensed products, others produce generic games only and still more offer a mixture of the two.

The age-old debate continues. A game themed on a popular film, TV show or music act stands a greater chance of attracting more attention than one that isn't, but the licence comes at a cost and world-renowned brands do not come cheap.

So there is a balance to be attained. The manufacturer has to be confident that their chosen brand will resonate with players to such an extent that the licensing outlay can be covered and exceeded. Not all achieve the success of IGT's Wheel of Fortune, which has shone in the market for decades.

"IGT has a range of considerations when creating new licensing partnerships," said Jennifer Fales, the company's VP global licensing and social casino. "First, we believe that a brand should organically associate with winning, success or entertainment.

"There is no better example of this than IGT's Wheel of Fortune and Let's Make a Deal slot games. Akin to the namesake TV game shows, these slot games are associated by viewers and players alike with prizes and fun.

"Second, we evaluate how well the brand resonates with the core demographic of slot players and to what extent our studio teams have a creative passion for the brand and can visualise bringing it to life in a slot game. An additional consideration is the depth and breadth of the asset packages that IGT will be able to access.

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Jennifer Fales, IGT

"It's important that our games deliver rich bonuses and stand out on casino floors; a key component to that success is a robust asset portfolio that can be leveraged across multiple games. Finally, as a leading omnichannel content supplier, it's ideal when IGT can leverage a brand across its entire game portfolio, as in the case of Wheel of Fortune."

The relationship between the manufacturer and the licence holder is also key. "Some of our licensors are highly involved in game development, while others take a more hands-off approach," said Fales. "In both scenarios, IGT is



Scientific Games' The Price Is Right lottery products



committed to upholding each individual licensor's brand standards and ensuring that all parties are comfortable with and confident in the final product. "Sometimes, a movie may not be authorised to license the likeness of individual actors or actresses within a film. Limitations of this

nature are commonplace and have not impacted the quality or appeal of IGT's games.

"We believe that maintaining productive relationships with partners and vendors is an integral component to long-term success, so our relationships last for the entire duration of the contract and through the full lifecycle of the licensed products.

"In addition, IGT often develops several games with a licensed property. In the case of Sony Pictures Television, we have maintained a highly collaborative and productive partnership for more than 25 years and have recently announced an agreement to continue working together through 2034.

"There is an abundance of mutual respect, collaboration and ideation across the two enterprises. Part of what makes IGT's Wheel of Fortune slot games so authentic and resonate so deeply with players is a direct result of our collaborative partnership with Sony."

THE NAME GAME

Licensing also applies to other areas of gaming, including lotteries. Kyle Rogers, vice president of North American instant products at Scientific Games, told *InterGaming*: "We were the first company to bring licensed properties to lottery games and we currently feature over 100 brands in our portfolio. Everything we do is science-based to help government-regulated lotteries drive maximum proceeds to their beneficiary programmes like education, health and welfare, the environment and infrastructure.

"So we have always conducted a great deal of research before committing to a brand. We test the brand's awareness, likeability and appropriateness for the game category. Lottery games are played by a variety of adult consumers around the world, so it's important that any brand we license appeals to a broad spectrum of players. To give you an idea of the scope of the industry, in 2022 lottery games generated US\$348bn in retail sales globally.

"We also consider what elements are available that will help create a compelling product for either physical instant scratch games or digital lottery games, including second-chance games and instant games. The brand must possess iconography or recognisable elements.



IGT's Wheel of Fortune Lucky Coins slot game

/// FEATURE: LICENSED PRODUCTS



/// “WE FIND THAT THE BEST PRODUCTS COME ABOUT WHEN THE LICENSOR IS OPEN TO NEW, DIFFERENT TREATMENTS OF A BRAND THAT RESPECT THE INTEGRITY OF THE BRAND”///

Kyle Rogers, Scientific Games

“Finally, we are always very mindful of responsible gaming responsibilities. When we test for appropriateness, the goal is to ensure that we are appealing to an age-appropriate portion of the population.”

On the question of who approaches who in the first place, Rogers said: “There’s no one answer to this question. Generally, Scientific Games makes the first approach to the licensor. This is because we have already done our research and we know what brands we want to offer.

“However, because of our long-standing and strong relationships with licensors, it does happen that licensors will approach us with an idea or new brand we had not previously considered. Sometimes this occurs while they have new intellectual property in development, which is always exciting. Because lottery games are so ubiquitous, they can generate quite a lot of impressions for a brand, resulting in great value to a brand owner.”

Rogers also stresses the value of those strong relationships. “Brand owners are very protective of their intellectual property. They also know best what consumers and fans love most about their brand. So they have a good deal of input into the design of the branded lottery product.

“Having said that, there are certain parameters that define a lottery game. We find that the best products come about when the licensor is open to new, different treatments of a brand that respect the integrity of the brand. Everything we do is fully approved by the brand owner at multiple stages throughout development.

“Lottery games are somewhat different because each lottery market (state, provincial or national jurisdiction) is an individual sale. Scientific Games serves 130 lotteries in 50 countries and, as such, there is rarely a one-time ‘launch’ that covers the entire industry.

“While we may all agree on the basic look and feel of the product, there are inevitably variations in each market. Scientific Games works hard to keep our licensing partners fully informed of what is happening through the sales process, from game development to launch, and through the full product performance in the marketplace. Our relationships with licensors are often long-term (decades long in some cases) so it is very important to us to ensure we maintain true partnerships of mutual respect and, of course, success.” □

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