Getting to the Core of Integrated Systems
Technology

With technology powering the new products and channels launched by lotteries this year across North America, what's on the minds of most when it comes to systems technology? Well, for one: It's not your grandfather's system any more.

Players are changing, game entertainment is evolving, and lotteries are on the lookout for technology that enhances the consumer's experience, retailer operations and data security. They're also keenly focused on the ability to bring new products – in some instances, from multiple different vendors – to market as quickly as possible to ensure relevance.

"We're living in a world where integration is driving the player experience, and open architecture is a mandatory requirement" says Walt Eisele, CTO, Lottery for Scientific Games. "Lotteries are charged with maximizing revenues, and to do that they are going to have to bring the best, most relevant game entertainment available to their players, and bring it to them in a seamless, cohesive way no matter which vendor supplies the content or the enabling platform."

Eisele, a product development professional with nearly 20 years of lottery and gaming industry experience, has worked with all aspects of technology in a highly-regulated environment including software, hardware, engineering, and product quality assurance and compliance.

Security First and Foremost
Looking to the future, the core lottery system must be able to integrate different products for a variety of channels. And while integration must be seamless to the player, Eisele says security and integrity is still priority number one.

"Yes, lotteries are bringing new parties to the table with eInstants, sports and other digital content, but they still have to absolutely ensure transactional integrity," he shares. "Third-parties offer exciting new content and capabilities for the lottery ecosystem, but with it comes risk."

Walt Eisele
Scientific Games

With the new Application Programming Interface (API) gateway, data or functionality can be shared in a controlled and secure way. "Now a lottery can plug new products and channels into the core system without launching a major technology project," explains Eisele.

Atlantic Lottery's Omni-channel Approach
In 2017, Atlantic Lottery Corporation in Canada, launched a multi-channel system as part of its next phase of responsible growth. The new system integrates retail, internet and mobile, and delivers a unified player experience for traditional lottery, digital instant games, iBingo, and sports. The system also features a secure, cross-platform Player Account Management system which allows players to purchase all Atlantic Lottery products through a unified experience with one wallet.

"Atlantic Lottery was seeking a lottery engine that was built with transactional integrity, yet feature-rich and robust enough to deliver Lottery experiences across multiple distribution channels. We are now seamlessly delivering those experiences across our retail trade, online and via mobile in a true omni-channel approach," says Byron Bridger, Director of Marketing, Destination for Atlantic Lottery Corporation.

Bridger shares that the new system has surpassed expectations on the project both in terms of financial returns and player-focused features. Next on the horizon for Atlantic Lottery? The complex challenge of maximizing the throughput of content and features to players via multiple integrations across vendors and technology ecosystems.

What will make it all possible is the core lottery system's agility.

Growth Goals
"The architecture of any solution has to be built on modern design principles – and by that I draw a parallel to Google and Amazon. In order to continue to grow, all businesses should follow best practices for enterprise software that allow for rapid integration, and they should choose software products that are not monolithic," explains Eisele.

It's not a 'one size fits all' approach. Eisele says lottery technology products must be easily adaptable to different regions, jurisdictions and gaming environments – whether established or emerging.

Eisele advises at minimum, today's lottery system must operate cross-channel and support the integration of new sales channels and consumer touchpoints – whether digital, in-lane, self-service or other. Different from systems available even five years ago, they must be flexible enough to build the solution an individual lottery needs.

Maryland Lottery's Vision
"If our goal is to increase sales and revenue, it's important to be forward-thinking," says Gina Smith, Deputy Director and Chief Financial Officer of the Maryland Lottery and Gaming Control Agency. The Maryland Lottery has just launched new technology that replaces its 12-year-old system.

"We want a system that is flexible so that, as our business grows, the technology will grow with us. But it's also crucial to have a system that allows us to be more efficient," says Smith. "We're not only looking at how the technology functions for players and retailers, we're also evaluating how it will improve back-office processes like claims and accounting, retail licensing and instant ticket distribution."

Technology teams are increasingly being asked to deliver more quickly on lotteries' new business initiatives – and new regulations like sports betting in the U.S. – coming in to

Byron Bridger
Atlantic Lottery

Gaming Systems

5 Must-Have Features

01 Open Architecture

02 Seamless Integration

03 Data Security/ Integrity

04 Third-party Integration

05 Speed-to-market Agility

MD GO LIVE

Greg Edgar
Arizona Lottery

play. The solutions begin with how the infrastructure of the system is architected and how the software is developed. With that, a lottery can plug in new capabilities like Keno, virtual sports and iLottery because the core system already in place supports integration.

Arizona Lottery's Conversion
"It was paramount that our new system support our aggressive growth strategy, be able to adapt easily to changes in technology and our environment, and provide the tools we need to guide that growth," shares Greg Edgar, Executive Director of the Arizona Lottery, which converted to a new system in 2016 and implemented a back office system upgrade in 2018. "We have had a wonderful collaboration with the Scientific Games teams and are eager to deliver on more of our objectives in 2019."

Lotteries are continually asked to contribute more to their beneficiaries, while simultaneously there is more and more competition for the consumer's entertainment dollar. The challenge to entertain players with games that are fun, relevant and engaging has never been higher – in some cases, regardless of the opportunity to win big prizes.

"At the end of the day, it's about the player – not all the cool technology, and the latest, greatest software or systems architecture," says Eisele. "Take Uber for example. The Uber rider is not concerned with what applications are running or what they are running on, they just want their Uber app to work so they can have a successful experience and get where they want to go. And the lottery industry needs to keep this in mind."

In an era when systems technology has never been more complex or had a more vital role, it still comes down to the most important deliverable at the center of it all: the player journey.

Gina Smith
Maryland Lottery