

Meaning of *think outside the box* in English

think outside the box

idiom

to think imaginatively using new ideas instead of traditional or expected ideas



Thinking Outside the Box at Retail

Simon Butler, Chief Executive Officer, Abacus Lottery Everywhere



The retail industry is at a pivotal crossroads. Labor shortages, rising operational costs, and heightened consumer expectations are putting intense pressure on retailers to evolve—and fast. To meet these challenges, progressive retailers are embracing innovative technologies to enhance efficiency, streamline operations, and elevate the shopping experience. That includes rethinking how products like lottery are offered in-store.

Fortunately, lottery remains a bright spot in the retail mix. With sales projected to grow nearly 5% annually over the next five years, the category continues to deliver steady revenue and attract customers to stores. Forward-thinking retailers are tapping into this potential by optimizing the lottery experience for shoppers—and in turn, increasing revenue.

In grocery stores, integrating lottery into the Point-of-Sale (POS) system is helping to grow basket size and overall transaction value. For convenience stores, it boosts impulse purchases and encourages repeat visits. Regardless of format, smart integration of lottery is proving to be a catalyst for improved efficiency, better customer engagement, and stronger bottom lines.

Modernizing the Consumer Experience

Today's consumers expect shopping to be fast, intuitive, and personalized. Convenience isn't a perk anymore—it's the baseline for how customers decide where to shop. Retailers who integrate lottery into a seamless, modernized customer journey are seeing measurable improvements in both satisfaction and sales.

That means more than just offering lottery—it means offering it the right way. Self-checkout integration is a key innovation that is connecting lottery with the modern shopper. Abacus is collaborating with major retail vendors to bring lottery to self-checkout, eliminating long waits at customer service desks and enabling impulse purchases right at the register. Customers appreciate the speed

and autonomy; retailers benefit from increased ticket sales and an enhanced experience.

Linking lottery purchases to loyalty programs further boosts engagement. Shoppers who earn points or rewards for buying lottery tickets are more likely to return, building brand loyalty while driving revenue.

Staffing Smarter with Streamlined Operations

With staffing shortages affecting nearly every sector of retail, operational efficiency has become more critical than ever. Simplifying lottery transactions can ease pressure on staff while improving the customer experience.

Self-service kiosks and integrated POS solutions reduce the need for employee





involvement in ticket sales. That frees up staff for higher-value tasks—like customer service or restocking—while reducing wait times and improving morale. Automation also cuts down on errors, ensuring accuracy in sales and inventory tracking.

A Success Story from Iowa: Easy Play

While lotteries have often taken a conservative approach to innovation, the Iowa Lottery has broken new ground by bringing lottery directly into the checkout lane. Partnering with Abacus, they envisioned a frictionless experience that would boost incremental revenue and reduce queues at the service desk.

The idea was sparked in 2021, when Iowa Lottery CEO Matt Strawn sat next to Abacus' Simon Butler at a lottery industry event. That conversation led to a collaboration with Scientific Games to develop and launch an in-lane solution, officially rolled out in March 2025.

"I cannot say enough about Abacus and Scientific Games as technology partners—both have been fantastic in bringing this solution to market."

— Matt Strawn, CEO, Iowa Lottery

Recognizing the need for customer-friendly language, Iowa branded its in-lane program as **Easy Play**—a name that highlights the convenience of buying lottery while checking out. Launching first with

Powerball and Mega Millions, the future version of Easy Play includes expansion to additional games and retailers, with plans to scale into self-checkout and non-traditional venues like hospitality locations.

Technology as a Growth Engine

Deploying in-lane or integrated lottery systems involves more than dropping in a new terminal. It requires close coordination across multiple partners and a willingness to rethink established workflows. Abacus specializes in helping lotteries and retailers navigate this process with customized, scalable solutions.

Technology is the backbone of modern retail—and lottery should be no exception. Retailers already rely on AI-driven analytics, automated inventory tools, and mobile apps to run smarter businesses. Integrating lottery into this ecosystem unlocks even more potential.

Abacus' platform connects directly to POS systems, eliminating the need for separate terminals. This not only speeds up transactions but also generates actionable sales data. Their solutions support both physical and digital lottery sales, bridging the gap between brick-and-mortar and mobile consumers.

The results speak for themselves: grocery retailers report higher transaction values as customers add lottery to their carts; convenience stores are seeing more return visits thanks to a quicker, easier experience.

The Path Forward

Increasing lottery revenue and profitability requires more than just new tools—it requires a new mindset. By embracing innovation, integrating seamlessly into the shopper journey, and leveraging technology to streamline operations, retailers can future-proof their lottery strategy.

The future of lottery sales lies in embracing change and leveraging technology to create seamless, engaging, and efficient customer experiences. Our mission at Abacus is to be your best technology partner and help you transform your lottery operations to achieve sustainable success. Let's work together to align your business with retailers and the next generation players alike. ■