THE IMPORTANCE OF A STRONG E-INSTANTS GAME PORTFOLIO IN DRIVING E-INSTANTS SUCCESS

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Introduction: ZEAL introduced online lottery to the German market more than 25 years ago and has since become the market leader for online lotteries in Germany. The ZEAL Group's business model is distinct, incorporating various approaches beyond traditional lottery distribution. For instance, ZEAL Instant Games develops and markets eInstants and Slots games, distributing its portfolio through a network of partnerships.

Alex Green is a proven performer in the lottery industry and has been responsible for the ZEAL games unit since 2024. Prior to joining ZEAL, Green has spent the last 20 years in various roles for the UK National Lottery, working for the previously official operator Camelot, and more recently for the new official operator, Allwyn UK.

WHY A STRONG E-INSTANTS GAME PORTFOLIO IS IMPORTANT

Digital instant games of chance, often referred to as eInstants, Instant Win Games, or similar, will invariably become a core component of the modern lottery portfolio.

As current and future lottery consumers live and engage in an increasingly digital world, it's becoming less a question of if, and more a question of when eInstants will match (or surpass) retail scratch card sales. The digital channel offers multiple benefits for operators when it comes to selling instant games including an enhanced responsible gaming infrastructure, player data and personalization. There are also many benefits for players to play digitally, such as enhanced responsible gaming tools and convenience, not to mention that many digital instant games typically have higher payouts.

Many lottery operators around the world now offer eInstants within their game portfolio, and each of them would have faced many considerations before going live. For example, how to effectively drive awareness of the new game category amongst target audiences, determining the best approach for cross-sell and overseeing how to best set-up the end-to-end eInstants category experience on the website and potentially within an App.

But a key enabler to eInstants success is undoubtedly the strategy for launching and managing the range of games. The aim is quite simple, to construct a portfolio of games that collectively maximizes appeal by individually meeting the needs of different player segments.

eInstants, like other consumer products, should be managed with the same strategic intent. For example, grocery retailers put an incredible amount of thought and planning into how they build ranges of chocolate bars. While many people enjoy chocolate, individual preferences vary widely. That's why retailers stock a diverse range of chocolate products including different brands, shapes, sizes, flavors, and price-points.

The same principle of 'product differentiation' applies to building an effective eInstants portfolio, which must offer variety and include a range of propositions that meet the different needs of current and potential players. In other words, a portfolio of games that contains a mix of top prizes, prize structures, play styles, bonus features, themes, names and colors.

HOW TO SET UP A STRONG STARTER PORTFOLIO

A starting portfolio of at least 12 games is recommended. With fewer games in the early days, it's even more important to ensure that each game offers players something different. Lotteries should consider including some digital scratch cards, that replicate the bestsellers at retail, as the familiarity will likely give some players the confidence to purchase. Lottery vendors will likely be able to help with launching omnichannel instant games too, such as a retail scratch card that offers additional play value through a digital feature to drive players online. It is important to request case studies of past successes to help assess whether any investment is justified.

Lotteries are also encouraged to make sure the starter portfolio includes some games that really showcase the interactive nature of eInstants in the digital channel. For example, games that are more immersive than simple tap and reveal games.

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It's essential to include games that appeal to different player segments. People who have never played eInstants are likely to be more responsive to games that offer familiarity and simplicity such as seasonal games, licensed games and versions of scratch cards they might have seen at retail. The prize structure strategy will be crucial for these types of games, particularly given that winning a prize will be a big factor in determining repeat-play from players purchasing an eInstant for the first time.

Players who become loyal will likely desire games that are slightly more complex, with longer odds of winning a meaningful prize. Loyal players will likely try many different games, especially newly released eInstants, before establishing which ones become their 'go-to' games.

EXPANDING THE RANGE OVER TIME

Once the initial eInstants range is established the focus needs to be on expanding the portfolio. Just like with scratch cards, loyal players in particular love to see new games introduced and will likely try to see what they think. The importance of category management for the games becomes increasingly important when the range surpasses 50 titles, at which point a lottery might want to consider moving to a '1 game in 1 game out approach' as fresh games are launched. The selection of new games should be guided through a process of continuous learning, by understanding player behavior and the performance of previous games, individually and collectively. ∎