

SHINING THE LIGHT ON POWERBALL – THE NEW TEAM APPROACH TO PROMOTE AMERICA'S JACKPOT GAME



Gregg Edgar, Executive Director of the Arizona Lottery, and MUSL Marketing and Promotions Committee Chair

The Marketing and Promotions Committee is one of seven standing committees at the Multi-State Lottery Association. Over the past year, the committee has built a successful working partnership with Dick Clark Productions, implemented new Powerball® brand guidelines and recently launched a new Powerball draw show. Now, under new leadership, the committee is working with the larger Association to bring a data-driven approach to the management of the Powerball brand.

In July, Gregg Edgar, Executive Director of the Arizona Lottery, succeeded Rebecca Paul Hargrove, Tennessee Education Lottery President and CEO, as MUSL Marketing and Promotions Committee Chair. The committee, which consists of 13 lottery directors from various geographic regions and jurisdiction sizes, oversees all national marketing and promotional opportunities for the Powerball Product Group. One of its biggest accomplishments this year – the debut of a new Powerball draw show in late September.

Edgar along with Beth Bresnahan, DC Lottery Executive Director, and

Brian Rockey, Nebraska Lottery Executive Director, served on the subcommittee that was tasked with enhancing the show. The iconic draw show had remained largely unchanged since the Powerball drawings were moved to the Florida Lottery draw studio in 2012. One of the most noticeable updates to the show is the rollout of new Halogen II drawing machines and solid foam ball sets from Smartplay International. This marks the third time in Powerball's 28-year history that the drawing machines have been replaced due to evolving industry standards, and the first time that official ball sets included solid foam balls instead of hard rubber balls.

“We wanted the focal point of the new draw show to be the winning numbers and Powerball branding,” said Bresnahan, who chaired the draw show subcommittee. “The additional production elements were chosen to create a fresh, modern backdrop that captures the energy and excitement that is synonymous with America's big jackpot game.”

The subcommittee changed the show's color palette from dark blues to Powerball's signature brand colors of red, black and white. The opening animation was also designed to pay homage to Powerball's signature trademark of “It's America's Game®” with white balls rolling across a map of the United States and stopping on Powerball's 48 selling jurisdictions. In addition, original music was composed to build the anticipatory excitement leading up to the drawing of the winning numbers.

The subcommittee, which got started on the project in late January, had initially planned to debut the new draw show in late April. Then in March, COVID-19 hit. Despite numerous challenges presented



by the public health crisis, the subcommittee was able to continue its work on sourcing the music with the assistance of OH Partners, Arizona Lottery's agency of record, and the graphics and animations with the assistance of Mike Vasilinda Productions, the Tallahassee-based production company of Powerball drawings. The subcommittee met several times to review assets in calls facilitated by Barb Niccum and Anna Domoto from the MUSL staff and Lou Ann Russell, Executive Vice President of Marketing and Advertising at the Tennessee Education Lottery.

The Marketing and Promotions Committee is now moving forward on another top agenda item – the formation of a working group of marketing professionals. Starting this fall, the marketing directors of the Marketing and Promotions Committee lotteries will meet monthly to provide fresh insight on MUSL initiatives. The calls will also be a platform for the marketing leads to share case files of successful promotions and best practices that could be replicated by other lotteries.

“The working group concept is designed around bringing the marketing professionals in our industry together to solve the challenges that the brand has been seeing, but also to generate learning opportunities across jurisdictions,” Edgar said. “This will not only help us expedite conversations, but also ensure certain initiatives aren't lost in translation between directors and staff.”

The committee plans to use the working group as a sounding board

for evaluating potential partnerships for the Powerball brand. This role will be especially vital as the committee works to produce and distribute new information about its RFP process. From past experiences and pitches, the committee recognizes the need to share more background on its decision-making process and timeline for approval. While Powerball is a world-renowned brand, it is collectively owned by 38 member lotteries that operate under different rules, regulations and authorizing legislatures.

“We are working to build flexibility into our process and help other brands understand our complexity so that we can get better alignment for Powerball promotions,” Edgar added.

The committee is working alongside the Association to bring a data-driven approach to how it gauges potential partnerships, promotions and line extensions. Part of that assessment is defining what factors determine success, e.g. sales, social media impressions, brand exposure, etc. The metrics may vary by MUSL committee, but for the Marketing and Promotions Committee, defining success and its top objectives could lead to greater buy-in from the Powerball Product Group and speed line the process of rolling out a new national promotion.

“Ultimately, our goal is to better serve players,” said Sarah M. Taylor, MUSL Board President and Hoosier Lottery Executive Director. “By organizing, examining and understanding the data, we can effectively identify trends that help us highlight our strengths, innovate with partners and promote Powerball.” ■