



# Barry Cottle

President and CEO, Scientific Games



**B**arry Cottle was named president and CEO of Scientific Games on June 1, 2018, replacing Kevin Sheehan. Cottle joined Scientific Games in 2015 to lead the strategy and growth plans of the company's interactive group. During his time in that division, Scientific Games acquired NYX Gaming and its sports betting platform, setting the company up for the legalization that occurred last year. The acquisition of Don Best Sports late last year completed the company's sports betting strategy. Cottle spoke with *GGB* Publisher Roger Gros at the ICE trade show in London in February. To hear a full podcast of the interview, visit [GGBMagazine.com](http://GGBMagazine.com).

**GGB: Your first year at the helm of Scientific Games was pretty eventful. The Supreme Court sports betting decision made the decision to buy NYX Gaming very wise, and then the Don Best acquisition solidified your role as a sports betting provider. How did those acquisitions work in your favor?**

**Barry Cottle:** I think it puts us in a great position, really, for three main reasons. Number one, with the acquisition of NYX and Don Best, what we have now is a best-in-class, full-service, end-to-end sports betting solution, from platform through managed trading services that we can now offer as North America begins to regulate. In fact, today we're already in Pennsylvania and Mississippi and New Jersey with Caesars. It puts us in a great position as that market starts to unfold.

The second thing with NYX is that it brought us an iGaming platform. Today in New Jersey, around 50 percent of the iGaming bets come through our platform. As iGaming potentially rolls out, along with the sports betting, again, it puts us in a nice position as that happens.

**You recently oversaw a restructure of top management at Scientific Games. What was the strategy behind those changes, and how**

**has that worked out so far?**

Just recently, we promoted Jordan Levin to be the head of digital, and Pat McHugh to be the head of lottery. And I can't even tell you how excited I am for both of these guys to take this position. Both have proven experience within Scientific Games, within those respective fields, in driving the operations and execution. They are hungry and passionate, smart guys, and I really have a ton of confidence that they're going to drive the business. Additionally, Jim Kennedy will continue to support our lottery group as chairman.

**Scientific Games has always been about the games, and particularly with your brands, WMS and Bally, certainly that's impressive. So, how do you maintain the distribution across all the channels using these games?**

First of all, when we think about building our products, it's a player-first mentality. So, we focus on delivering games that our players enjoy and want to engage with. And we really look at it across all platforms. Whether you're playing in land-based casinos or on a phone or device, we think about delivering that experience, for those franchises, wherever a player wants to play, on whatever a player wants to play.

And then second is the optimal combination of art and science, which is perfectly, appropriately named, since we are Scientific Games. The science piece is really understanding the player behavior and motivations, and then combining that with the fun and the imaginative execution of each game.

And the third is that we create a culture of creative passion across the organization to innovate and deliver on that. The combination of thinking "player" and using both sides of our brain, and doing it across the organization, ends up resulting in us being able to execute on our plans.

**Another hallmark of Scientific Games has always been the innovation. How do you keep your R&D teams on that cutting-edge technology?**

Again, it really comes down to the player focus. We don't innovate just for innovation's sake. But we try to think how we enable a better player experience on two different levels: on the platform or system, which enables the content, and then the content itself. An example of a player innovation is personalization. So, when we talk about SG Vision and facial recognition, that's about understanding the player and being able to customize an experience for them. If you look at one of our recent slot games, the Cash Wizard game that just came out, that actually has social elements. So, we're starting to see that players like the social component within the games that they play. And so, our innovations are really about delivering on what we think the player motivation is driven by.

**We had a bump in the road recently with the Wire Act memo just a few weeks ago. What is your impression of how that's going to impact your business?**

As you know, we deliver our products and solutions across many regulatory environments of all sorts, which are constantly evolving. We just work to deliver the best products and services we can, side by side with our partners, and we'll just continue to monitor it closely, and react accordingly.

**What do you see as the biggest opportunity in 2019?**

There are just a plethora of products and services that we're excited about this year. We have an embarrassment of riches, I like to call it that, going into 2019. The exciting thing is that we have great opportunities across all business units.

We have a nice mix within each business in areas and markets that we can enter. We have four product business lines, where we see what we call "gap upside," and improvements that can be made. And then we have new markets, such as sports betting, or iLottery, or a new business line that we could go into. So, it's nice to have a mix, where you have core growth that can be accomplished across that diverse area.