

**Insights/Opinion**

**The power of partnership in New Zealand**

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***Two years in the making, Lotto NZ and Scientific Games come together for bold omnichannel systems conversion***

There's a spirit in the air in New Zealand, where "Kia kaha" – which means stay strong – is often used as a national affirmation. When it comes to the technology powering Lotto NZ for the future, you can bet the Kiwi nation is in a position of strength.

Lotto NZ and Scientific Games just completed a successful systems technology conversion, making a bold plan for the Lottery's future a reality and ensuring continued contributions to good cause programs benefitting New Zealand communities.

In 2022, the Lottery embarked upon the transformation of its digital and retail platforms and the way game entertainment is delivered to its players. Following an effort that

shortlisted potential technology partners, Lotto NZ issued a Request for Proposals, ultimately selecting Scientific Games after a highly competitive procurement process.

“The technology supporting our gaming system had been in place for around 20 years and was at the end of its contractual life,” shares Jason Delamore, chief executive for Lotto NZ. “More importantly, we wanted to look at the path forward in an increasingly competitive digital market.”

Lotto NZ knew collaboration would be key as it sought an omnichannel technology partner to execute its future-forward vision in 2023.

### **Selecting a Tech Partner**

“Scientific Games ticked a lot of boxes for Lotto NZ. They are a global leader in providing digital products and services for government-sponsored lottery programs. We were looking for a system that brought our retail and digital channels together,” explains Delamore. “On top of that, they offer quality digital game content and access to more choices through a content hub. They also promised a high level of collaboration.”

And so, the real work began to replace the Lottery’s existing core gaming system and online gaming system with new, integrated technology that included a lottery retail system, retail point-of-sale technology, digital lottery platform and a digital content aggregation hub.

“Lotto NZ always had a very clear idea of what they were seeking in terms of their new gaming system, but also in the type of technology partner relationship they wanted for a highly complex implementation that touched every part of the Lottery’s business,” says Michael Conforti, president of international for Scientific Games.



The company has served as Lotto NZ’s exclusive provider of Instant Kiwi games since 1989. In the past nine years, Scientific Games completed more than 50 systems implementations and conversions, including 12 from legacy suppliers. Three more are currently underway.

### **Meticulous Planning**

To ensure there was excellent communication and alignment throughout the two-year Lotto NZ project, a team of 30 Scientific Games technologists were activated on the ground, co-locating with the Lottery.

“Our biggest challenge was the sheer scope of the project as it encompassed digital and retail systems and replacement of all the in-store equipment,” shares Sarah Thirlwall, chief transformation & technology officer for Lotto NZ. “We were undertaking a significant technology update and switch to a new [systems] vendor and synchronizing the execution with the rollout and installation of physical hardware in more than 1,100 retail stores across New Zealand.”

Delivered through the company’s Momentum ecosystem, the technology overhaul would bring together Scientific Games’ advanced SYMPHONY central gaming system, WAVE Contour retail point-of-sale terminals, the SG PAM player account management system and advanced logistics supported by the company’s patented SciTrak technology and gem|Suite lottery retail management system. Scientific Games also implemented the SG Content Hub, offering Lotto NZ a portfolio of premier digital games from SG Studios and other partner studios.



The complex switchover from Lotto NZ’s legacy systems involved multiple database migrations and third-party system integrations. Scientific Games tapped longtime Lotto NZ partner Datacom, the country’s largest IT consultants, to roll out point-of-sale terminals at retail outlets, provide data center hosting services for the central system infrastructure and support the company with field services,

maintenance and repair.

### **Countdown to Go-Live**

“Scientific Games was a responsive, engaged and supportive partner. Their teams worked hard across different time zones, and literally on either side of the world in the months leading up to go-live,” Thirlwall shares. “During the weeks leading into delivery Scientific Games increased their physical presence in our head office in Auckland, further enhancing their ability to support Lotto NZ and instilling confidence that go-live would be successful.”

With a September 29, 2025 go-live date in sight, all teams completed prep work ahead of the cutover, with data migration parallel runs, production verification testing and practicing of cutover procedures. A ‘war room’ was set up to respond to issues that might arise.

“In the four weeks leading up to go-live, we had over 60 technologists in Auckland working together with Lotto NZ teams. There was a real buzz in anticipation of the big day,” says Mark Lee, General Manager, New Zealand for Scientific Games.



The lead-up to go-live went well and the success of the day was down to the detailed planning, discipline and the methodical approach taken to the cutover activity. The teams were well-prepared due to the series of dress rehearsals.

### **Switch-Over Day**

Go-live day was very structured, thanks to months and months of planning by the Lotto NZ and Scientific Games teams.

“Overall, I was really impressed with the sense of calm and focus on the day,” expresses Delamore. “The teams responded well with the volume of activity, with no issues experienced that were critical to our operations.

The vast majority of Lotto NZ retailers experienced no difficulty in switching over to the new Scientific Games systems. Where issues arose, they related to retailers’ initial mistakes with logins and passwords—the “human factor” as Delamore describes it.

### **Post Go-Live**

“Our [retailers] seem to be settling in well with the new technology, which in large part is down to the extensive training we offered in the lead-up to go-live,” says Paul Divers, Chief Retail Officer for Lotto NZ. “We’ve also received some great feedback about the modern new look of the retailer terminals, and the way in which they’ve lifted the aesthetic of the counter and stores.”

### **Lotto NZ Retailers**

*“Congratulations to the Lotto NZ and Scientific Games team for an exceptional rollout of the new terminals and software. I’ve been through a number of new technology rollouts in supermarkets, and they always have a number of technical issues. This rollout at our store was 100% seamless – didn’t need to call the help desk once! The new training mode is exactly what we needed for putting team members through their paces on a new system and having a modern terminal that fits the look of our shop. Looking forward to seeing what Lotto NZ can come up with now.” – Mike, Gisborne*

*“We thought that the whole process of the technology upgrade was well-managed from training through to installation and activation. It is a credit to those who planned and implemented the whole project.” – Paul, Oamaru*

*“The new terminals have been working well and are definitely helping to improve the customer experience. Putting Lotto, Powerball and Strike onto a single ticket has been especially well received, and customers seem to appreciate the new look set up.” – Anne, Auckland*

### **Omnichannel Success**

As for the digital component of the technology modernization, Lotto NZ re-launched its digital games, selecting titles from the SG Content Hub and giving the category a good marketing boost with the introduction of 13 new games to entertain its players.

“The SG Content Hub provides Lotto NZ with a broad range of new and modern games for our [players] to enjoy. The [player] experience is strong, and the gameplay is interesting. We’ve been impressed with how well the games run on our website and apps and continue to closely monitor performance,” says Delamore.

### **TOP-PERFORMING DIGITAL GAMES SINCE GO-LIVE**

#### ***SG Studios Games:***

1. Mega Money Match
2. Wild Double Crossword
3. Jungle Quest
4. Merry Match
5. Cash Crater
6. Crossword Spin
7. Deep Sea Double Crossword
8. Castle Royal Riches
9. Spin It To Win It Sports
10. Tropical Crossword

*(Based on wagers as of December 31, 2025)*

Leah Neilson, Chief Marketing Officer for Lotto NZ, reiterates: “The new digital games have been a hit. We saw an immediate sales uplift from the Instant Kiwi portfolio in light of the new games, with nine of the 10 most-played titles coming from the latest releases.”

Scientific Games has a comprehensive roadmap, including the introduction of new eInstant games from SG Studios and partner studios, which proves the content aggregation value of the SG Content Hub. Currently, the company’s games from SG Studios represent 31% of digital titles in market in New Zealand, but 54% of the rounds played.

Matt Lynch, president of digital for Scientific Games, shared excitement about the success of the Lotto NZ tech modernization project, the smooth integration of the SG Content Hub and the popularity of the new digital games from SG Studios.

“We’re thrilled about our partnership with Lotto NZ that culminated in a smooth technology upgrade – and that players are truly enjoying our games,” says Lynch. “Trusted, secure, state-of-the-art Scientific Games technology is now powering retail and digital sales in New Zealand. The Lottery can expand its games and how and where its players play. Looking to the future, Lotto NZ can continue to meet its goals and sustain good cause funding to benefit all New Zealanders. This entire project’s success has been a testament to the power of partnership between Lotto NZ and Scientific Games.”



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