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# UP TO SCRATCH

How lotteries and instant-win products are evolving to meet customer demand

**L**OTTERIES and instant-win products are among the most ubiquitous and popular forms of gambling in the world, with national lotteries running in nearly 100 countries. The rules are simple and the games seem fair and evenly weighted to give all players an equal chance to win considerable prizes.

But while lotteries and scratchcards are practically and conceptually simple, that doesn't mean the sector hasn't seen huge strides forward in terms of features and mechanics through which they engage players.

"As lotteries introduce higher price points, players expect richer entertainment value - and that expectation is driving innovation in design, materials and gameplay," said Kyle Rogers, VP, instants strategy and licensing for Scientific Games. "Premium print technologies, bold visual



**Matt Whalen,**  
senior vice president,  
global instant ticket services,  
Brightstar Lottery



**Kyle Rogers,**  
VP, instants strategy and licensing for Scientific Games

treatments and new play actions are elevating the scratchcard experience.

"Our new Obsidian line of all-black holographic games is one example of how premium print technology can transform a traditional scratch game into a collectible-quality experience. The player journey also increasingly extends beyond the physical ticket through second-chance opportunities, loyalty integration, digital features like Scratch Connect and other hybrid play concepts that bridge retail and digital."

Meanwhile, Brightstar Lottery - formerly part of International Game Technology (IGT) - introduced its proprietary instant ticket category, Infinity Instants, in 2022. "These revolutionary games are created using multiple patented digital printing technologies that transform and enhance instant ticket design and gameplay," said Matt Whalen, senior vice president, global instant ticket services at Brightstar Lottery.

"We're also looking at ways that our instant tickets can mirror digital offerings for a seamless play experience, such as using high-resolution imaging and proprietary registered holographic features to create added motion and visual impact."

## FAMILIAR FACES

One of the most popular ways of connecting with audiences and keeping instant games culturally relevant is to create products in partnership with IP holders of popular franchises, putting a new and exciting twist on beloved properties.

"Licensed lottery products are a key component of Brightstar's content portfolio, and we work with a variety of licensors to bring their brands to life in compelling forms of entertainment that lottery players instantly recognise," said Whalen.

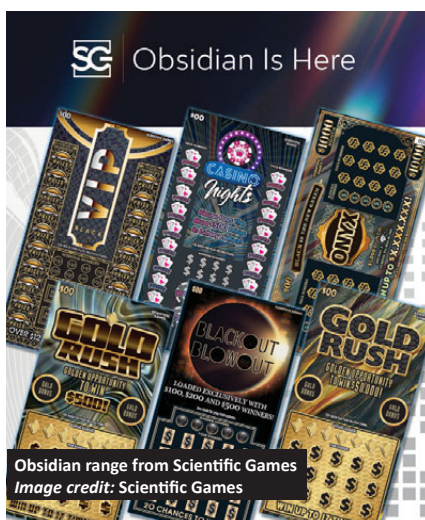
"A few of our most well-known licences include Wheel of Fortune and Ghostbusters. We've leveraged a variety of play platforms and game mechanics to engage players and brand enthusiasts alike. Brightstar offers these licensed themes in Fast Play, e-instants, traditional instant tickets and Infinity Instants games.

"We have also led robust second-chance Wheel of Fortune promotions that include experiential trips for players to attend tapings of the iconic show and see the legendary TV gameshow set in person."

In December, news broke that Scientific Games would be adding a series of Fast & Furious lottery products to its portfolio of more than 100 branded game titles. "Collaboration with our licensing partners is essential to ensuring each game offering truly reflects the tone, visual identity and personality that fans expect," shared Rogers.

"Scientific Games pioneered the use of entertainment brands in the lottery category, and we continue to lead through innovations like Linked Games - national or multi-jurisdiction campaigns paired with immersive, once-in-a-lifetime experiences for winners that bring the brand to life.

"A recent example is The Seven Kingdoms Experience tied to our Game of Thrones-themed game offerings, where winners from across the US travelled to Napa Valley for a fully themed event



Obsidian range from Scientific Games  
Image credit: Scientific Games

**Wheel of Fortune instant games from Brightstar Lottery**

capped by a live jousting finale. Experiences like that are only possible through deep creative partnership and the full support of licensor partners like Warner Bros. Discovery Global Themed Entertainment.”

**COMPETITIVE EDGE**

Bringing new instant-win products to market comes with its own particular set of challenges, the biggest of which, as Rogers explained, is competition for share of wallet.

“Government-regulated lotteries fund essential public programmes, but they increasingly compete with sports betting and unregulated or lightly regulated gaming alternatives, such as grey market machines, which divert consumer spend without returning revenue to good causes,” he said.

“At the same time, the retail environment is transforming. To stay competitive, lotteries must modernise how games are sold, secured, tracked and replenished. Solutions like our SCiQ ecosystem improve transparency and security at the bin level, optimise inventory management and elevate the overall in-store experience for both retailers and players.

“Success in today’s market requires more than great products: it demands modern retail systems, data-driven logistics and marketing partnerships that help lotteries operate with the agility of today’s competitive entertainment landscape.”

Another concern gathering momentum in the public consciousness is environmental friendliness and sustainability. Both Brightstar and Scientific Games have prioritised sustainable practices in all facets of their businesses including the creation of their scratchcard products.

**LOOKING AHEAD**

While lotteries and instant-win games have been staple forms of entertainment in dozens of jurisdictions around the world for decades, the ways players choose to access and interact with the sector is always evolving.

“The lottery industry is always looking for ways to modernise, and the instant ticket sector is no different,” said Whalen.

“Brightstar is keenly focused on opportunities for instant ticket growth in the coming years, and has made significant investments, like our new Tresu Innovator Press.” This newly-added press, Whalen stated, “expands our printing capacity by approximately 40 per cent. It standardises high-resolution imaging, integrates 100 per cent of quality inspection systems and has increased capabilities and responsiveness.

“Our new robotic packaging will also increase our packaging capacity to match the printing capacity of our new press. This equipment incorporates new quality inspection technology to maintain the quality and integrity of every ticket.

“Outside of technological upgrades, Brightstar’s instant ticket roadmap includes developing innovative ways to provide new experiences for players and refreshing player-favourite categories such as Crossword, Loteria, seasonal, families of games and exciting licensed properties.”

Scientific Games too is focussed on meeting their customers where they are and facilitating them, however they choose to access their lottery products.

“We’re moving towards true omnichannel play, where retail and digital experiences reinforce one another through apps, loyalty programs, second-chance promotions and hybrid products,” said Rogers. “Our role is to help lotteries bring those channels together in a responsible way while staying aligned with each jurisdiction’s regulations.

“The future is about expanding – not replacing – the retail experience, giving players more ways to interact with games while helping lotteries maximise returns to good causes.

“Lotteries that embrace data, modern retail solutions and player-focused innovation will be best positioned for long-term growth.” □



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