

trafficology

AFFILIATE FOCUS BY GAMBLING INSIDER

JULY 2017

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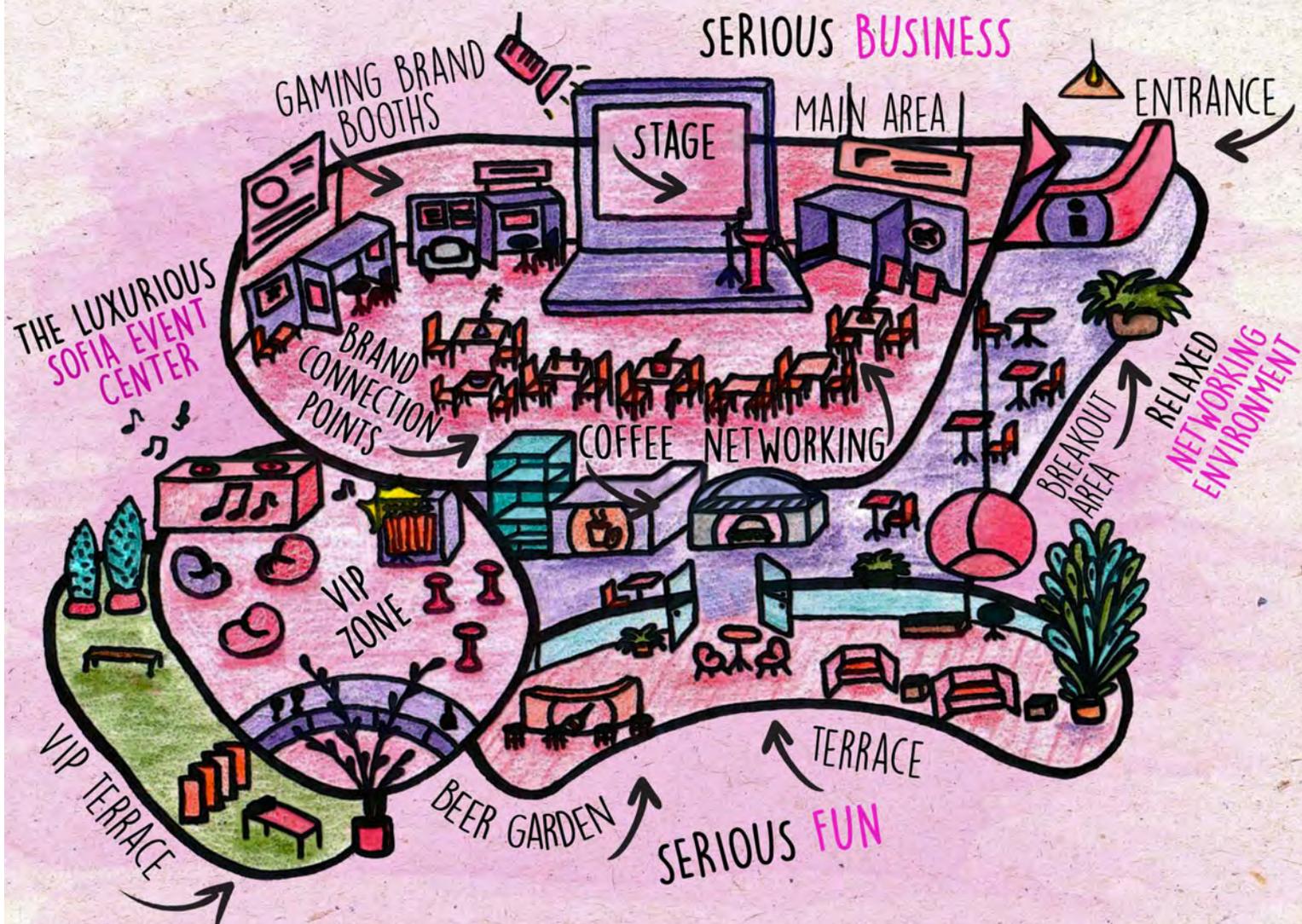
VIP AFFILIATES: KINGS OF THE JUNGLE?

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US FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION SEEKS TO BLOCK FANDUEL-DRAFTKINGS MERGER



Daily fantasy sports (DFS) titans FanDuel and DraftKings have seen their planned merger dealt a significant blow as the US Federal Trade Commission (FTC) filed a suit to halt the deal.

The FTC, along with the attorneys general of California and the District of Columbia, will file a complaint in federal district court, moving to block the deal based on anti-trust concerns.

With a full administrative trial scheduled to begin on 21 November, the FTC has sought a preliminary injunction to prevent the firms from tying the knot.

DraftKings and FanDuel are two of the biggest players in the DFS industry in the US and agreed to merge on a 50/50 ownership basis back in November 2016.

FTC officials stated that the tie up

would take 90% of the DFS business under one organisation. Tad Lipsky, acting director of the FTC's Bureau of Competition, stated: "The proposed merger would deprive customers of the substantial benefits of direct competition between DraftKings and FanDuel.

"The FTC is committed to the preservation of competitive markets, which offer consumers the best opportunity to obtain innovative products and services at the most favourable prices and terms consistent with the provision of competitive returns to efficient producers."

DraftKings CEO Jason Robins issued a joint statement with his FanDuel counterpart, Nigel Eccles, registering their dismay at the development: "We

are disappointed by this decision and continue to believe that a merger is in the best interests of our players, our companies, our employees and the fantasy sports industry."

According to the *New York Post*, the companies plan to appeal the decision.

This is not the first time that both DraftKings and FanDuel have ran afoul of US competition authorities, with their businesses practices being called into question after a huge \$200m advertising campaign in 2015.

At the time several state regulators notably those in Nevada and New York questioned whether daily fantasy sports contravened existing state anti-gambling laws; however no further action was taken against either company.

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JAMAICA LOOKS TO LEGALISE AND REGULATE ONLINE GAMBLING

During the Caribbean Gaming Show and Summit, officials revealed that the Government of Jamaica is looking to fast-track the regulation of online gambling. Governance stated that it wanted to capitalise on the advancement of technology and the rapid growth of the iGaming sector.

Jamaican Minister of Finance and Public Service, Hon. Audley Shaw said the Betting, Gaming and Lotteries Commission is in the process of drafting regulations for a licensing regime as well as providing regulatory supervision for operators working in the interactive gaming industry.

Shaw understood the concerns surrounding the proposed legislation, stating: "Even as we keep pace with developments, we are also mindful of the vulnerability of the industry to be used by criminals for money laundering.

"This is why the government, through the regulator, increased its surveillance of the industry, and will extend all the resources necessary to clamp down on illegal gaming.

"There is still a lot of work to be done to increase the level of compliance in the industry, but I am sure, having witnessed the fallout of de-risking themselves, operators are now taking steps to



improve their own mechanisms to this end."

Government officials hope the bill will be drawn-up and approved before the planned three-way merger of the country's gambling regulators – the Betting Gaming and Lotteries Commission, the Jamaica Racing Commission, and the Casino Gaming Commission.

The three-way merger is expected to be complete by the end of 2017 and would result in a single governing body known as the Jamaica Gaming Commission. The movement was initiated in a bid to improve the region's monitoring capabilities of the industry providing a source of government income from the associated 18% tax.

CATENA MEDIA PURCHASES GERMAN AFFILIATE NETWORK



Online affiliate network company Catena Media has announced another affiliate acquisition with the purchase of iGaming affiliate sites belonging to the German company Delilah Holdings as part of the company's ongoing expansion strategy in Europe.

The acquisition of this latest portfolio of sites comes hot on the heels of the company's most recent purchases of net properties Online Media and Newcasinos.com last month, in deals totalling approximately £23m.

Under the terms of the takeover,

Catena Media is set to make an upfront payment of €4.2m in cash once the assets have been transferred to Catena ownership. Additionally, Delilah Holdings would be entitled to a maximum earn-out of €2.24m based on the transferred affiliates' performance over the next 12 months.

Delilah Holdings own the MrGamez.net and Spielekiste.de affiliate networks, which predominantly service players from Germany and Switzerland.

Catena has said that they expect both sites to generate sales of around €300,000 per quarter, with an operating margin of around 80%.

In a statement announcing the latest deal, Catena Media CEO Robert Andersson said: "The acquisition of MrGamez.net and Spielekiste.de will broaden our German presence and provide further growth in German-speaking markets. With this acquisition we are further strengthening our pan-European portfolio."



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BWIN TO LAUNCH RUSSIAN ONLINE BETTING PLATFORM

Sportsbook operator Bwin has announced that it will launch an online betting platform in Russia, in what would be the first legal entry by a major international bookmaker into the emerging regulated Russian sports betting market.

The business will partner with local businessman Alexander Mamut, owner of Russia-licensed bookmaker Digital Betting LLC and online media company Rambler & Co which operates several news websites in Russia.

It will see the creation of a Russian division of Bwin and the creation of an accompanying Bwin.ru online platform servicing Russian bettors.

GVC spokesperson Jay Dossetter and Digital Betting CEO Dmitry Sergeyev confirmed the news to local news outlet *Kommersant* along with confirming the appointment of Sergeyev to the role of Bwin Russia CEO.

Under the terms of the partnership Digital Betting LLC will provide up to €10m per annum of funding to the project over the next three years, whilst Bwin will provide its technological infrastructure and branding to the



project in return for a percentage of the potential profits generated by the new platform.

The Russian online sports betting market is one of the most tightly regulated markets in Europe, with media regulator Roskomnadzor notably blacklisting a number of international online betting operators, including over 100 Bwin related domains from operating in Russia in 2015.

It also has the ability to issue fines to operators that it deems to be contravening regulations.

Digital Betting LLC received a Russian betting licence in March 2016 and is a member of the Self Regulatory Organisation of Russian Bookmakers, with this partnership representing the next step in its aim to create an online sports betting website in the Russian market.

NETENT GRANTED SUPPLIER LICENCE IN BRITISH COLUMBIA



Industry provider NetEnt has been granted a supplier licence through its NetEnt Americas division by the Gaming Policy and Enforcement Branch (GPEB) of British Columbia.

NetEnt will now be able to supply its iGaming content to the British Columbia Lottery Corporation (BCLC), the sole licensed gaming

and lottery operator in the Canadian province.

BCLC is a crown corporation owned by the province of British Columbia, whose revenues go towards supporting communities, health care and education.

The Canadian gaming market is regulated through separate licensing systems in each province.

British Columbia is the third largest Canadian province by population with approximately 4.6 million inhabitants, with Vancouver being its largest city.

Per Eriksson, President and CEO of NetEnt, said: "I am very pleased that we have reached yet another important milestone in our expansion on regulated markets.

"We are the online casino supplier with the largest presence on regulated markets in terms of number of licenses and certifications that we hold, and entering the province of British Columbia in Canada is another important step for us."

The announcement adds to the solid start to the year that NetEnt has enjoyed.

The Stockholm-headquartered firm reported revenue growth of 15.2% in its Q1 report, rising to SEK398m.

Operating profit also rose, climbing to a total of SEK136m, which represents a year-on-year increase of 6.3%.

NetEnt's games also recently went live in the Mexican regulated market through operator Codere, continuing a stream of global expansion.

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THE DIGITS

Trafficology has partnered with data experts Casino City Press to bring you an invaluable insight into website and traffic trends across the gaming industry. This month we rank the most popular Slot Themes and Slot Game Suppliers on gaming websites

SLOT THEMES

	Theme	Games	Sites	Operators
1	Animals	1236	2511	746
2	Classic Slots	1192	2337	729
3	Fruit/Vegetables	1044	2500	758
4	Adventure	586	2401	725
5	Gold	564	2402	715
6	Treasure	555	2444	733
7	Luck	508	1951	616
8	Magic	486	2378	714
9	Ocean	442	2389	719
10	Fantasy	428	2334	708
11	Asian	423	2056	672
12	Chinese	401	1888	573
13	Ancient Civilizations	388	2132	677
14	Ancient Egypt	352	2439	736
15	Jewels	347	2231	677
16	Action	343	1922	639
17	Royalty	335	2095	662
18	Food	331	2140	655
19	Casino	321	1853	599
20	Nature	313	2137	666

SLOT GAME SUPPLIERS

	Software Supplier	Games	Sites	Operators
1	Microgaming	773	1462	499
2	Playtech	457	1385	408
3	NYX Gaming	357	1432	463
4	Novomatic	340	253	111
5	IGT Interactive	335	746	218
6	iSoftBet	308	228	121
7	Greentube	264	308	133
8	Amaya	234	1548	472
9	SkillOnNet	222	1357	429
10	RTG	204	380	97
11	OpenBet	195	1296	425
12	bwin.party	152	1230	381
13	NextGen Gaming	146	1318	417
14	Rival	146	133	46
15	WGS	145	884	333
16	Portomaso Gaming	144	254	71
17	edict egaming	140	78	43
18	Wirex	138	254	71
19	Williams Interactive	137	483	122
20	NetEnt	132	1318	428

Rankings are estimated based on a panel and should not be considered absolute ranking values.

Over 20 complementary top lists are available on the iGamingBusinessDirectory.com website operated by Casino City Press.



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GOING DUTCH

The Amsterdam Affiliate Conference brings together the brands and affiliates that power the online gaming market



AMSTERDAM AFFILIATE CONFERENCE **Tues 11 - Fri 14 July**

The AAC forms a major part of the iGaming Super Show, a collection of eight iGaming industry networking and learning events under one roof. The AAC is the second affiliate event of 2017, coming after the LAC in London and before BAC in Berlin. Over 4,500 delegates are expected to attend across two days of talks and networking opportunities.

VENUE

The Amsterdam RAI is described as the largest exhibition space in the Netherlands, with the cavernous Hall 8 hosting the show. Amsterdam's Schipol Airport is just a 15 minute drive away and the vibrant city centre is just ten minutes away by tram. Getting to the venue couldn't be easier from the airport – the venue has its own metro and train station, and a speedy bus service is available every 15 minutes. Hall 8 can be accessed through Entrance F.

WHO WILL YOU SEE?

As one of the major European events of the year, you can expect to see the biggest names in the iGaming industry in attendance. As the show is free to attend, it draws in affiliates of all sizes and with the big brands already at the iGaming Supershow it offers huge potential for forging new business relationships as well as meeting up with old friends.

AGENDA

The event takes place over four days alongside the main show, and offers a mix of insightful conferences and networking activities. Spread over four conference rooms, a selection of the industry's brightest minds will tackle topics such as SEO, marketing, acquisition, regulation and compliance, sports betting and finance. See the following page for Gambling Insider's picks of some of the most exciting and well respected speakers who will be sharing their knowledge and experience at the show.

There will be conferences focusing specifically around the business tools that affiliates need in order to succeed. This includes an industry-wide survey of affiliates where Jake Pollard, Head of Content will share and dissect the findings. In addition there will be conferences held surrounding 'New data protection regulation's impact on the gaming industry', 'Bitcoin: What you really need to know as an affiliate' and last but certainly not least the 'Top 10 SEO Mistakes to Avoid'.

NETWORKING

The Amsterdam Affiliate Conference guarantees to keep you busy from the moment you land in Amsterdam. From a networking perspective, the options provided at the event are limitless with four-days of different events. To kick off the celebrations on the first night, there's a networking party

sponsored by UPayCard where attendees will get to know fellow delegates. On the second night, the official networking party sponsored by eMerchantPay will be held at the prestigious Harbour Club. Finally, to conclude the conference there is a party being held in Yip Partners where attendees can have a final catch up with industry friends and colleagues.

OUT OF OFFICE

Otherwise known as 'Venice of the North' due to the vast number of canals, the conference could not be set in a more beautiful and charming city. With endless tourist attractions and a famous nightlife scene, the fun doesn't stop at the conference. ◀



We asked Event Director Shona O'Donnell about her highlights for AAC 2017

We'll be opening the event with presentation setting the scene through a broad overview of what's happening in the industry right now, before focussing in on the constantly changing word of search. We have some great speakers throughout the day but if I had to pick some of the industry heavyweights, Joost de Valk, Bastian Grimm and Chris Cemper are all extremely well-known and I'm delighted to have them presenting. Joost hasn't spoken for us for a couple of years so it's great to have him back.

Chris and Bastian both operate at the leading edge of the industry and together with Andrew Edwards from Madabout Media they will be talking about the impact of the latest Penguin update and the penalties it imposes, which is particularly relevant at the moment.

One subject we'll be covering in more detail this year is app store SEO, and this is the first time we've devoted a whole panel on it to reflect its increasing importance. There aren't as many rules around app store optimisation as there are around Google or internet search in general. As delegates will learn, there are a lot of opportunities for people to bump their apps up the ranking.

Day Two is more focused on the business tools affiliates need, and one particular highlight will be the presentation led by our Head of Online Content Jake Pollard. We recently conducted an industry-wide survey of affiliates so Jake will be presenting the findings and deep diving into what the results mean in practical terms for our delegates, which I'm sure will be of interest to everyone.

Also on Day Two is a panel that will discuss the practicalities of selling an affiliate business, which is especially pertinent given the level of M&A activity in the industry at the moment. We want to give affiliates all the tools they need to make a clean exit, so the session will look at different possible strategies, from trade sales to operator buy outs, to embarking on a fundraising round.

Blockchains and cryptocurrency have the potential to revolutionise the iGaming industry, providing increased transparency, security and fairness. Information surrounding Bitcoin and its stablemates can be overwhelmingly technical, so we're providing a concise guide to everything affiliates need to know about cryptocurrency and how it can benefit their business. We also welcome one of the partners from Bird & Bird, who will be discussing the forthcoming GDPR changes to data protection and management laws. With less than a year to go before they take effect, it's high time European affiliates started giving this their full attention.

I'm also excited to welcome digital marketing specialist Sarah Sangster to the event for the first time, who will be leading a session on growth through effective use of Social Media and the type of content that works on these platforms. Equally interesting will be Nick Duddy's presentation on viral marketing; he will share his secrets on how you can measure the traction of viral content which will be immensely useful for any affiliate utilising viral content.

Overall I think there will be something for affiliates whatever their background or strategy, and I look forward to seeing everyone there on 11 July.

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BREAKING THE BOREDOM

Casumo's Head of Affiliates **Christian Ferreri** sits down with Caroline Watson to discuss the rapid growth of an innovative company that prides itself on changing the perceived ideas of online casinos with an entirely unique product that's taking the industry by storm



Can you start by telling us a bit about your experience working at Casumo and how you got involved in the affiliate industry?

This is actually my first job within the gaming industry. 10 years ago I worked at a telco company in Sweden working with B2B sales. One day my manager asked me if I could show one guy from their management trainee program how our sales function worked. We had a good day together, held some client meetings and we connected in a very friendly way. We kept in contact for about two years before we got separated through work elsewhere in the world but one day he called me and asked what I was up to. He had just started working at a new gaming start-up called Casumo and asked if I would like to join the company in Malta. Challenge accepted, and three-and-a-half years later I am still here.

They say time flies when you're having fun and so far it has been one hell of a ride. From a very small company with limited resources, when it comes to manpower and budgets, to a fully grown organisation with employees from 32 countries, offices in three cities spread out across Europe, and proper budgets to work with but with the same humble attitude towards our goal, to create a better reality for our many playing customers.

Only founded in early 2012, Casumo has come a long way from its beginnings with consistent year-on-year growth. How does Casumo attempt to differentiate itself in the affiliate market?

Affiliate marketing has previously been something that operators have been more or less committed to manage in a responsible way. We want to turn that around by treating all our affiliates as the real business partners they are. Casumo would not be where we are today without the support we have from our business partners.

From the beginning we said that Casumo has to be a partner that can be trusted, that always pays out commission fast and always stands ready to help out when questions pop up. Through mastering all the basics and going the extra mile for our affiliates we have grown our business from five hard working founders to 230 employees, and in a profitable way. On top of that we have always tried to make affiliation as easy as possible by creating smart tools that all of our partners can use, such as adding demo games to their sites with a few single clicks, creating smart tools for re-sizing logos, making all our links geo targeted and much more.

Thanks to Casumo's innovative approach to online casino gaming with the incorporation of different gamification concepts, you have experienced remarkable growth. What are the other factors that have made your offering such a success?

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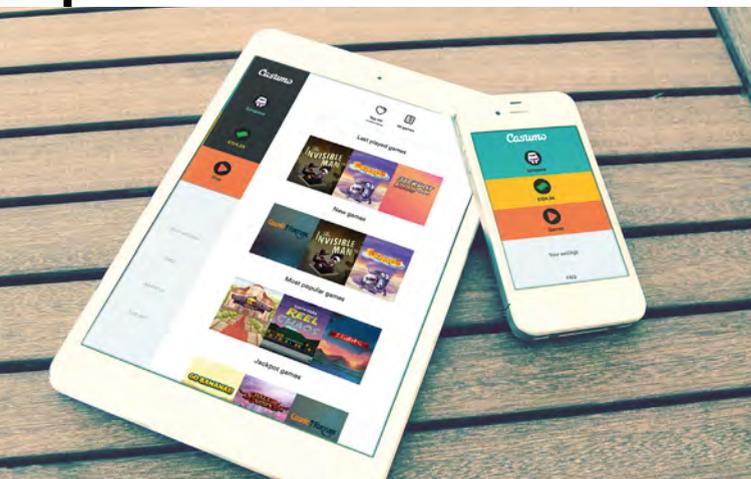
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I think the key factor to our success so far is that everything works at Casumo, it is very rare that we have technical issues. It sounds pretty simple but if you browse around the different casinos out there you will be shocked how many of them that don't present you with a smooth process, you get stuck at signup, can't deposit money, games can't be played, you can't activate your welcome bonus and God only knows what else. Our players trust us with their hard-earned money to have some fun and it is our responsibility to deliver on that trust.

In 2015 you launched in the UK market, taking the company into its first non-Scandinavian market since 2012, have you found any challenges with this integration?

Adding a market like the UK to our offering was one of our biggest challenges so far in itself. Before we went live in the UK people almost told us to not do it since we don't have a sports book: "Without a sports book in the market you will not make it but good luck guys!" is just one example of the things I was told. To us, that was probably the best thing someone could have told us. Casumo has never followed the crowd and we are constantly challenging all of the pre-defined rules out there to create the best casino experience available through innovation and design.

Are there any other markets you are looking to expand into in the foreseeable future?

There is no secret that we currently are in the process of getting a Danish licence. I can't really say how long it will take but it is a work in process.

You have recently signed a live partnership with London's SSE Arena Wembley to expand Casumo's brand profile within the UK gaming market. What were the reasons behind signing with such a huge venue and do you think this deal will bring the desired results?

We think that we have a lot in common with SSE Arena Wembley. One of Casumo's key promises to our players is to erase boredom in their everyday life. We have optimised the Casumo product for happiness, thrills and to make people smile, similar to the experience that the SSE Arena Wembley has delivered for the past 70 years. I am very confident that we, together with the guys at the SSE Arena Wembley can deliver the true happiness and one-off experiences our clients deserve.

Do you think the affiliate industry is in good shape generally? And how optimistic should affiliates be concerning revenue moving forward?

I think it is a good time to plan for different scenarios. In general, affiliates have had some very good years, both in the past and up until today I know that some operators are in fact doing deals that might be hard to make money from and at some point that has to end. More and more markets are getting regulated which will for sure affect us as operators, as well as our affiliates. Our margins will be lower but on the other hand our business will be more secure than before. The operators and affiliates with good products will be the winners in this race. It's important to remember that we are doing this together with our affiliates, this is a new reality for us both.

What are your short-term and long-term targets for Casumo?

Casumo as a product is an award-winning casino, but Casumo as a concept is something bigger, we want to change the common perception of what online casino can be. Through design, technology and innovation we aim to disrupt a young but in many ways immature industry by ignoring preconceptions and rules. That work will probably never be finished.

Our short term goal is to keep making casumo.com as good as we can in a profitable way to get us closer to our bigger goal.

What are the biggest challenges the affiliate market will face across the next few years?

I think it is taking the business to a locally regulated world with everything that means. Together we have to make sure that we are fully compliant and drive traffic in a healthy and responsible way under new economic circumstances. It certainly won't be easy but long-term I think that is the only way forward.

In your opinion, what is the key to maintaining a strong relationship between affiliate programs and affiliates?

I think honesty, transparency and a great product is the absolute key. Just by mastering the basics you can do a

ADDING A MARKET LIKE THE UK TO OUR OFFERING WAS ONE OF OUR BIGGEST CHALLENGES

long way. Who wants an affiliate program with super-fancy marketing features if you can't access all the relevant data you need to optimise your traffic or trust that the stats are correct?

If you could make one sweeping change to the affiliate industry, what would it be?

I think the affiliate industry has come a long way in just a few years. The industry has transformed from something many people did on their spare time to proper companies, in some instances bigger than the operators they are sending traffic to. To continue this transformation and make sustainable partnerships will be key for everyone to succeed on both sides and something I am more than willing to contribute to. ◀

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VIP AFFILIATES: THE KINGS OF THE IGAMING JUNGLE?



For many iGaming site operators, the traffic provided by their affiliate partners is a lifeblood that they could never survive without. How do they reward and retain the very best affiliate partners, their so-called VIPs?

For operators, managing the relationship with their affiliates is an activity that commands significant time and resources. As the number of operators increases and the industry becomes a more crowded environment, the competition to attract and retain the industry's top traffic suppliers has become a heated one, with affiliate managers offering a variety of different incentives to retain their best affiliates.

Some favour a tiered approach to remunerating their partners, as Stephanie Robinson, Affiliate manager at WPN affiliates explains: "We operate a three tier commission payment system for our affiliates: net revenue share which pays commission to the affiliate based on the amount of revenue generated from their players, rakeback which gives affiliates 27% of the net rake that they generate each week and cost per acquisition, where our affiliates are paid when a player makes a deposit on one of our sites.

"On the whole, most of our affiliates elect to be paid via the net revenue method; however most of our affiliates that operate via social media choose to be paid on a cost per acquisition basis due to their inexperience of the poker market."

The lifecycle of the affiliate/operator relationship could be compared to that of your typical gambler; the affiliate is recruited, provides the operator with traffic which generates revenue for the company, then the company analyses the success of that original relationship to determine if the affiliate is suitably lucrative enough to apportion future resources to the development of an ongoing partnership.

As Jelena Isakova, Affiliate Manager at Fruity Affiliates explains: "It usually depends on the affiliate: the source of their traffic and of course most importantly it depends on demand. Usually good affiliates maintain a constant level of traffic, there are slight ups and downs in their revenue generation but these are not always obvious. If we notice that for whatever reason an affiliate's revenue is down we simply touch base with them, establish the reason and see if there is anything we can do to help. We like to keep track of our average success."

Just as players can be divided into groups based on their website participation, affiliates can be likewise classified into those who generate little revenue for their respective operator to those who generate a lot, the so-called VIP affiliates.

BUT WHAT MAKES A VIP AFFILIATE?

In simple terms, determining what constitutes a VIP affiliate requires analysis of the traffic volume they drive and the type of revenue which they generate (occasional big depositors or steady low grade traffic for example). If a revenue trend can be identified then the worth of the affiliate can be assessed and managed accordingly, and clearly those who generate the most revenue will be the most important to their respective operators and would fall into the category of VIP affiliate.

Darco Aivazian, Senior Affiliate Manager at OVO Affiliates considers the process of identifying VIPs who deserve

rewarding is pretty simple: "We review the traffic statistics for our affiliates on a regular basis taking into consideration the signups, depositors and the value of a deposit to see who is performing best. Determining the value of traffic is important when assessing the overall quality of affiliates. Some affiliates may get millions of clicks but very few signups which in turn may mean smaller deposits. Predominately we find that SEO sites generally tend to provide the best player value as these searches come from players who are actually interested in the product rather than those who sign up through popups. This being said, all affiliates irrespective of traffic sources have the ability to send high value customers."

However not everyone is keen on the idea of treating the VIP affiliate differently to the smaller revenue generator in terms of incentives, as Stephanie explains: "We don't really offer specialised incentives to our VIP affiliates, but we do provide our highest revenue producers with a lot of unique content and creative materials. We provide them with exclusive marketing materials, such as exclusive reviews, banners, landing pages and mailing tools."

These comments are echoed by Isakova, who thinks that a VIP affiliate approach "can be really motivating for affiliates, but we felt that an egalitarian approach was a better one as regardless as whether they are new or just growing their business, they are all really important to us.

"In the days after our separation we had regular giveaways of non-financial incentives, things like Apple watches, but not directly involving affiliates you would classify as VIP. Once we merged with a couple of affiliate programs we decided to stop doing this.

"We send gifts to the most productive affiliates and organise events for them, but we don't have a standardised VIP ranking system like other affiliate providers, or any sort of factors that would classify the affiliate as a VIP or a non VIP."

Isakov argues that today's tiny affiliates can become tomorrow's affiliate industry giants and keeping them happy should be a serious consideration in the minds of affiliate managers: "Sooner or later things change and new affiliates can start bringing in significant traffic, there are always surprises, so a VIP approach might not be the best thing in these situations. I think that they should not be led by incentives from brands, they should be free to decide which brands they provide to their players, those which offer a good experience, are reputable and which they can freely recommend based on their own knowledge, not because some affiliate programme provides them with additional incentives or treats them better."

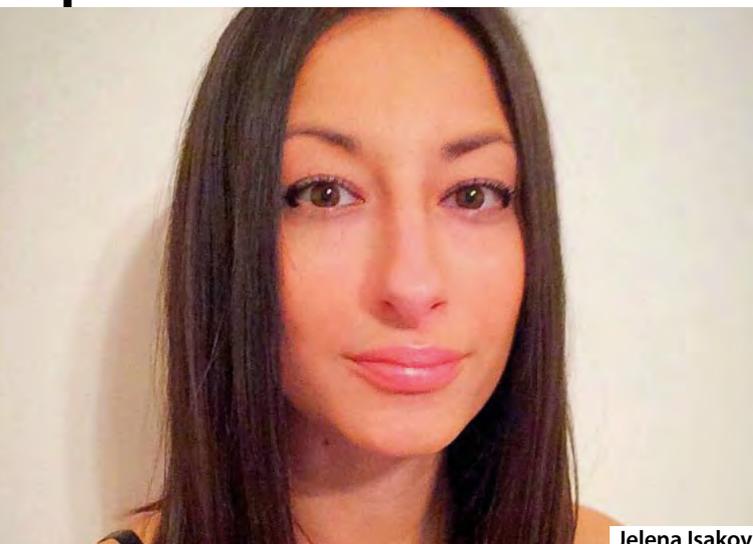
For those that do choose to reward their most lucrative partners, a powerful weapon in the VIP affiliate manager's armory is the non-financial incentive. As there is no current restriction on the incentives available to affiliates, operators are free to lavish inducements on high revenue generating affiliates, often using the money that they save from marketing spend that would have gone on advertising.

Aivazian thinks that those who do well should get their rewards, and he chooses a more freeform approach to recognising excellence: "We like to offer a more bespoke way of giving back our best affiliates, and are open to their suggestions as to what they would like to receive. For example, we'll organise for them to attend matches at their favourite football team or a Champions League game, or arrange a holiday for them and their families. We also like to invite the best affiliates to visit us in Malta as well as fly them out to the various affiliate shows like LAC, AAC and BAC. When they're there we'll take them out for a special dinner to show them how much we appreciate their work."

A personal approach can often enhance the affiliate provider relationship just as much as a financial incentive,



Darco Aivazian



Jelena Isakov

as Isakov explains: "We have a very personal way of dealing with our affiliates; we are always available to speak to them and try to do so every day. It's really an approach we are keen to maintain, in future dealings or in any queries that they may have. We don't want to put any limits on how much contact we have with our affiliates, be it at conferences, calls or dinners."

Robinson agreed: "We mainly meet with them at affiliate conferences, but we do regularly meet with our local affiliates based in Costa Rica at their offices."

Of course the traditional financial incentive still plays a part in recruiting high revenue, high traffic generating affiliates, according to Robinson: "Our in house rakeraces provide an incentive to our affiliates to generate more revenue by offering them the chance to win a progressive cash pot. This is added to every week making the final prize pool higher and bigger, and it is essentially free cash for providing players to our sites." When the need arises to push the best to deliver more, a bonus scheme can help; OVO offers €20-60 on top of payments per player when a traffic boost is needed, and the response is always positive.

It pays to keep an eye on the little guy though, as in an ever-evolving internet landscape sometimes the unexpected can suddenly generate huge amounts of traffic. Aivazian explains: "We have all kinds of affiliates on our books and we certainly don't just rely on the bigger outfits for our traffic. The gaming industry is very fluid in terms of legislation and you never know what can come up. In my mind anyone can be a VIP, it's 2017 and new ideas come up every day, something very simple can generate a lot of traffic. We make a concerted

effort to try and identify those affiliates who show real potential and provide them with the support they need to grow their business. This can be in the form of advice or software, and this has worked very well for us in the past. One of our top performing affiliate was nurtured this way and they are now

WE FIND THAT SEO SITES GENERALLY TEND TO PROVIDE THE BEST PLAYER VALUE

one of our VIPs. It goes to show that if you have a good idea for generating traffic then with a partnership approach and the right investment we can grow together."

It would seem there are a broad range of approaches operators take when rewarding their VIP affiliates, if they recognise them at all. What is certain is that with ever more operators to choose from, those affiliates with proven track records for delivering traffic will have their pick, and are in the driving seat when it comes to negotiating terms. ◀

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ONE DOMAIN TO RULE THEM ALL

Charles Gillespie has overseen the industry's most famous domain name as CEO of the performance marketing firm formerly known as KAX Media. He speaks to *Trafficology* about the company's rebrand and acquisition strategy, and his future plans for Gambling.com

Charles Gillespie's affiliate business has undergone something of a transformation recently. The most obvious place to start would be the company's re-branding, which has seen the old KAX Media moniker making way for the new Gambling.com Group brand, reflecting the stellar performance of the website that he acquired back in 2011. Making the most of this key web asset makes perfect sense and the move has tied in perfectly with a recent TV campaign aimed at turning the enviable web address into a well-known brand. In February this year, the company closed over €10m worth of acquisitions. These acquisitions included UK focused AndroidSlots.co.uk and three Swedish casino affiliate websites: SvenskaCasino.se, Lyckospel.se and CasinoMobilt.se. Commanding a meaningful share of traffic in the region, the Swedish acquisitions will provide a platform for expansion into the Nordic gaming market. The funds for purchase were raised through a convertible bond issue in Stockholm, which marks a move not only into the gaming markets there, but is also the Gambling.com Group's first foray into the established Swedish corporate finance market.

Doug Peck spoke to Gillespie about the impact of these changes and got his thoughts on a life spent in the affiliate world.

How have you seen the affiliate space change since you first got involved in 2006?

The biggest change for me has been the professionalisation of the affiliate groups. In the beginning, it was a very fragmented marketplace, and then a couple of years ago suddenly XL Media listed on AIM. It was the first publicly traded affiliate, but the float didn't garner much attention because they're somewhat opaque, and I don't think that the significance was fully appreciated at the time. Catena Media followed suit, and since then there's been this ongoing corporatisation of the sector. There's obviously other companies now looking to list so a greater proportion of the overall traffic is controlled by fewer and larger affiliates. This has resulted in the pressure being turned up on the operators, because the big affiliates know all the tricks and how the operators function and so they are not going to be taken advantage of. The operators are going to have no choice but to pay full value for the traffic coming from those bigger affiliates.

The relationship between affiliate and operator has traditionally been a wary one. Is there any more trust now in the industry?

Despite the fact that we are bigger than we have ever been, we still have the same issues that we have always had with operators not

honouring agreements. Operators haven't progressed in their maturity at all from our perspective. I see the same problems as I did ten years ago, so we mitigate and manage those issues now through experience and knowing who to deal with, and equally importantly who not to deal with. If you do CPA deals there's a lot less to worry about, so if they start renegeing on agreements you simply take them off the website and they don't have any leverage over you, but if you send someone a lot of



players on revenue share it can create a lot of awkward situations. Even if it's a listed plc, nobody likes to pay revenue share over a long period of time.

Frankly it's impossibly frustrating; the Holy Grail for affiliates is sending an operator a high roller on revenue share, but even when you achieve that it opens up a whole new set of issues in terms of



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actually collecting that money. They look at it from an effective CPA perspective and if they've got one massive high roller on there it's costing them a huge amount of money, and their effective CPA is going to be through the roof - it's tough for their marketing team to wrap their heads around that. They could have taken that player on a CPA deal, but they committed to a revenue share arrangement when they agreed to acquire that traffic, and they should honour that. There are certain companies in this industry, such as bet365, which have been basically infallible in this respect, time and time again they don't cause any problems but there are other big names that still think they can play fast and loose.

Is there still room in the affiliate world for newcomers or is the gaming world reaching saturation?

Yes and no. You can still build a website, register with an affiliate program and be in business in 24 hours, but it doesn't mean you'll make any money. That said there's always new niches popping up though like bitcoin or e-sports which the newcomers discover and manage to make work. Our bread and butter is casino traffic in the UK and that's extremely competitive but even within that market we see a lot of room for growth for ourselves. I see the competitive areas being more and more dominated by the big boys while the newcomers pick up the scraps on the side-lines. The smaller affiliates do tend to keep finding new niches but it must be getting harder for the one-man bands. Operators aren't choosy about where the traffic comes from as long as it doesn't cause them any legal or PR issues. In terms of quality the values vary enormously but people are still buying low quality traffic because they can still make a profit from it.

Gambling.com is one of the most recognisable, and arguably valuable, domain names available. Do you think you got good value for money when you bought it in 2011?

At the time we thought it was a good deal, and in retrospect it looks like a great deal! I'd love to say that we're some kind of visionary domain investor with calculated strategy but the reality is we were in the right place at the right time, and managed to scoop it up when the previous seller wanted to sell it quickly.

Was the success of gambling.com a driver in your decision to rebrand as Gambling.com Group?

When we did the deal we didn't know if the existing KAX Media business or the new gambling.com business would end up being the driving force of the business. Six years on, and Gambling.com has become the biggest part of the business so we decided to lead with that name. It's an incredible and unique asset, there's only one Gambling.com, and the name change is about realising the full value of that asset. We just want to showcase that and put it out front. However, we still use the KAX Media brand for our internal digital agencies in Ireland and Florida.

Does this mean you will devote more resources to the Gambling.com property?

I would say our resources are evenly split between Gambling.com and our 30 other sites. For example, all of our media buying goes through Gambling.com, there's no point doing this through our smaller sites as they just don't have as strong a brand name, and we'll just get better conversion rates with Gambling.com. The rest of the portfolio is purely for SEO reasons. Gambling.com definitely remains the flagship, it's the big money maker and we still see huge future potential for it.

What attracted you to move the business to Malta?

The company was originally set up in the British Virgin Isles which is fairly typical for the industry, but as the company got bigger it became time to move the business onshore and subject ourselves to European corporate governance laws. So we decided to move the business and redomicile our existing legal entity into Malta along with our IP, and we're very happy to be there, it's a great place to operate a gambling

business even if you don't require gambling license My business partner Kevin and I have spent several months in Malta and enjoy the place immensely.

The key draw to Malta from our perspective is banking. Banks in other jurisdictions that aren't familiar with the gaming industry are less interested in dealing with any form of gambling company, even if, like us, they aren't actually licensed operators. Malta is good for banking because they understand our business model and the industry at large.

As someone with a US background, are you tempted to make in-roads in America?

As of today we make zero money out of the US but the founders of the company are American, we understand the US and we have a US office. The affiliates already established in New Jersey and some of the other American markets are apparently doing all right so there is money to be

**EVEN IF IT'S A LISTED PLC,
NOBODY LIKES TO PAY REV
SHARE OVER A LONG
PERIOD OF TIME**

made there. The market is quite small, NJ is comparable to Sweden in terms of people and GDP. Everyone obsesses over Sweden and I don't think the US has got the same attention as the European market so we definitely think there is an opportunity there.

We deliberately took a wait and see approach as we've been disappointed time and time again by the progress in regulation in the US. We were initially quite cynical about it but we have taken the decision that now is the right time and so we are moving into NJ and the other regulated US states.

Speaking of Sweden, what was behind your decision to acquire three casino sites there?

We closed those acquisitions at the end of February, we've been keeping it quiet! The reason we invested in Sweden is because we see it as strategic gambling market. Sweden is the capital of the Nordic market, and Sweden's regulations are probably going to be the model for the rest of the countries in the region. Stockholm has become the new home of online gambling in terms of corporate finance in particular, and it's where the bulk of the money we raised to do our acquisition came from.

So part of the decision was based on buying assets that make a lot of money at a reasonable price, and part of it was getting a toehold in the Nordics in terms of both future revenue growth and also in terms of being at the table for the corporate finance opportunities in Stockholm.

Where else do you see opportunities for growth globally?

There are noises being made about the potential of Japan which we're looking into, but just as an interested observer at this point. I think South America is also very interesting, medium term that will be a growth area for us but frankly there are a lot of opportunities left in Europe, even in the UK where we can substantially grow the business. We're not trying to cast the net too wide at this point, we're trying to keep the focus on what has been working in the markets we know. We don't need to be first in all of these emerging markets. ◀

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THE STATE OF PLAY IN NJ

The iGaming market in the state of New Jersey has taken flight over recent years, and operators and affiliates are really starting to take notice



Dr. Alan Meister of Nathan Associates and Gene Johnson of Victor-Strategies analysed financial and sociological data accumulated since New Jersey legalised online gambling in 2013, and produced a comprehensive economic impact white paper. The results submitted to the iDevelopment & Economics Association (iDEA) underline the potential of New Jersey's regulated iGaming market.

The full report can be found at iDEAgrowth.org.

BACKGROUND

The rocky road to iGaming legalisation in New Jersey began in January 2010, when Democratic Senator Raymond J. Lesniak proposed the first legislation, later added to by assembly legislation put forward by Assemblyman John J. Burzchelli. Both bills expressly permitted interstate iGaming, slots and casino games but excluded sports betting.

The proposed legislation gave the New Jersey Casino Control Commission the power to create regulations which allowed bets to be placed within state borders, avoiding

pre-existing restrictions set out in the 2006 Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act.

Legislation worked its way through the New Jersey state legislature before being passed by the state assembly in January 2011. However in March 2011, Governor Chris Christie vetoed the legislation citing concerns that "allowing customers to bet through any computer terminal left open the chance of commercial businesses such as nightclubs and cafes becoming gambling hubs around the state".

With this veto, iGaming in NJ entered a state of flux for the next 12 months until a Department of Justice (DOJ) memorandum published in December 2011 finally signaled a reversal in its position on the Interstate Wire Act, 1961.

This reversal of the DOJ's position had the effect of giving back to the states the right to make their own determination regarding gaming and subsequently re-energising state legislation enabling iGaming, iPoker, and online lottery ticket sales.

The ripple effect of this was most notably felt in New Jersey, where Governor Christie changed his stance on iGaming, paving the way for new bills to be introduced in the state legislature.

The second concerted drive towards iGaming legalisation began in earnest over the next two years, culminating in the passing of revised bill 2578 by both houses on February 26th 2013 after which the bill was signed into law by Governor Christie.

However this was not the end of the battle, as a number of critical concerns were raised during the debates about the potentially negative impact of legalising iGaming in the state. Principle concerns included: underage gambling, preventing problem gambling and fraud, player protection, payment processing, money laundering and the negative effects that it would have on the state's casinos.

The burden of developing a highly complex regulated iGaming market that would address these concerns fell on the New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement (DGE), which had to achieve the balancing act of developing and testing technical standards & software online while creating a strong policy and regulatory framework that would effectively govern iGaming operators choosing to operate in the state.

THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

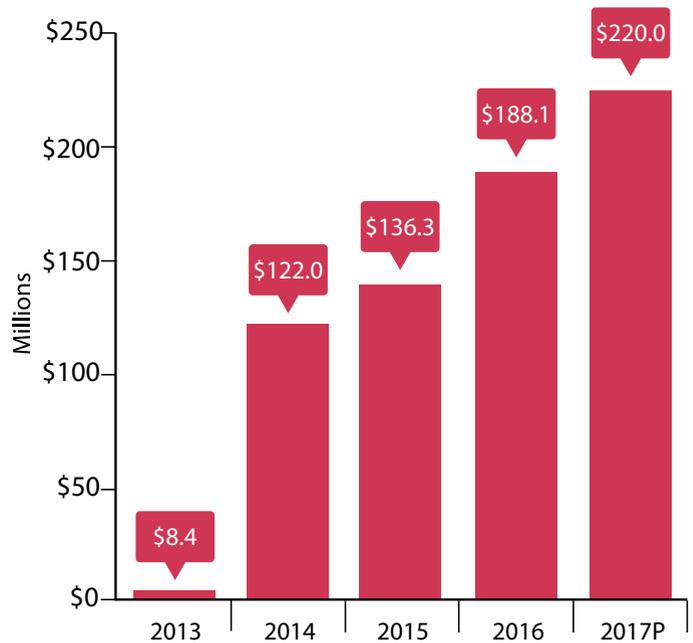
New Jersey's task was by far the most difficult amongst US state jurisdictions due to a multiplicity of platforms and products. This was due to the densely populated areas in close conjunction with adjacent state borders, and the high regulatory and compliance standards required for the land-based casino industry. Collectively, participants in the New Jersey iGaming industry overcame these obstacles and established one of the most successful iGaming business models to date in the United States.

From both a business and regulatory standpoint, the legalisation of iGaming in New Jersey has been a monumental success. Player protection measures are working, and there have been no significant public incidents of fraud, cheating, money laundering, or any other crimes that would indicate criminal activity associated with iGaming.

Although geographic fencing initially experienced some implementation issues, it works effectively today and errs on the side of caution along state borders. KYC procedures are among the most rigorous instituted by any iGaming regulator, and while they may seem cumbersome for some customers, they have proven just as effective if not more so at preventing underage gambling and money laundering than those currently in place for land-based casino gaming.

Most importantly, the legalisation of iGaming has added to incremental revenue for Atlantic City casino operators, equal to approximately 9% of land-based revenues in

2016. The city is still reaping the benefits from the newly implemented industry as it has attracted new customers, increased economic output, created new jobs and wages, and generated new tax revenue in the state, just to name a few.



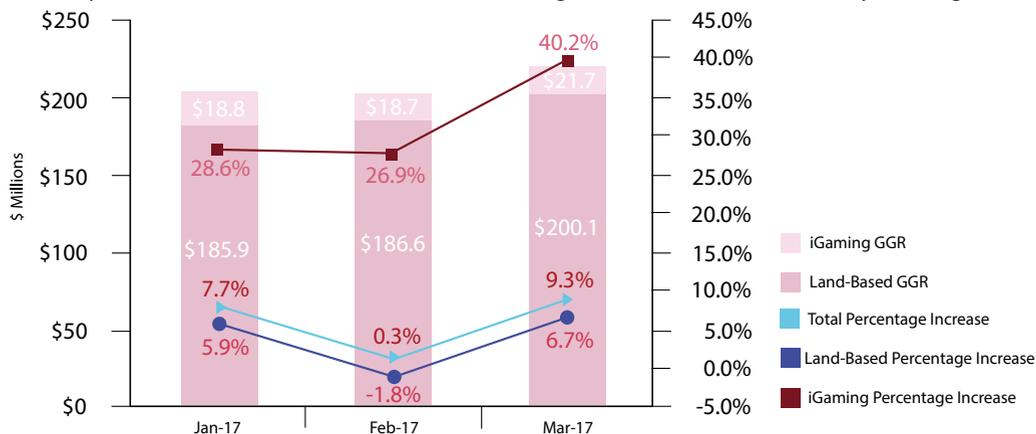
NJ iGaming Net Revenue (New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement)
Source: Nathan Associates/Victor Strategies analysis

From the player's perspective, legal iGaming has provided a safe and reputable environment for New Jersey consumers to enjoy regulated online entertainment that they can trust. Multi-channel engagement is successfully acquiring new customers for land-based casinos, increasing brand loyalty, growing gaming revenue and taxes, and offering the gaming customer more convenience and greater personal choice.

One measure that exemplifies the success of this new environment from the player's perspective is illustrated by player retention rates, often twice as high as commonly experienced internationally. Clearly US players see state regulated iGaming as a positive development and an attractive entertainment option for those seeking to enter the industry.

THE TYPE OF IGAMING MODEL MATTERS

The New Jersey iGaming model is clearly producing the greatest amount of revenue, jobs, wages, and tax revenue of



New Jersey Casino and iGaming Q1 2017 GGR and GGR Growth over Q1 2016
Source: New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement

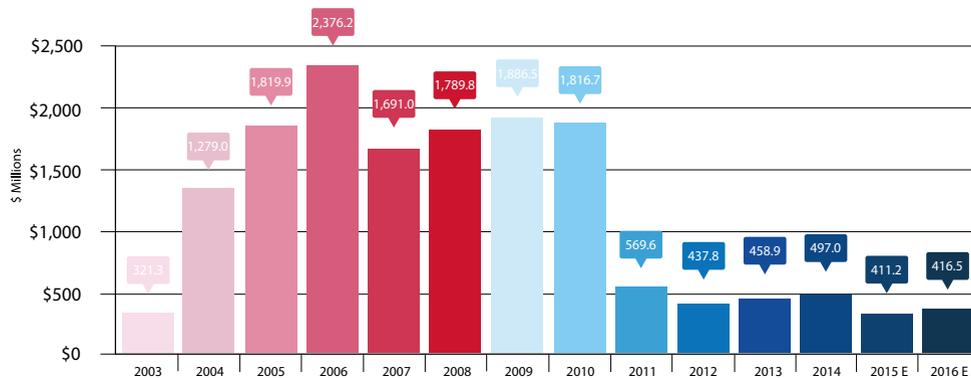
the three states that have legalised online gambling. Internet poker-only wagering in Nevada and the lottery administered platform in Delaware have been much less successful and notably so.

Nevada and Delaware are both constrained by smaller populations than New Jersey, but the single product business model in Nevada and the legislative requirement in Delaware to surrender the first \$3.75m in iGaming revenue to the lottery handicap these states even more. The New Jersey structure of full casino gaming, poker, and bingo operated by casino licensees with multiple platform and technology providers,

Anecdotal evidence from interviews with Atlantic City operators asserts that land-based casino brands are currently generating the majority of iGaming revenue in New Jersey due to their existing databases and ability to attract online gamblers with land-based amenities. Third party research confirms that the land-based casino operators are generating between 60% and 85% of total revenue.

CONCLUSION

As a result of the regulations and procedures now in place, anyone located within the New Jersey border that enjoys



North American iPoker Revenue, 2003-2016E
Source: H2 Gambling Capital

all regulated by the state gaming authority, has proven the most successful U.S. state iGaming business model by far.

LAND-BASED BRANDS CAN COMPETE ONLINE

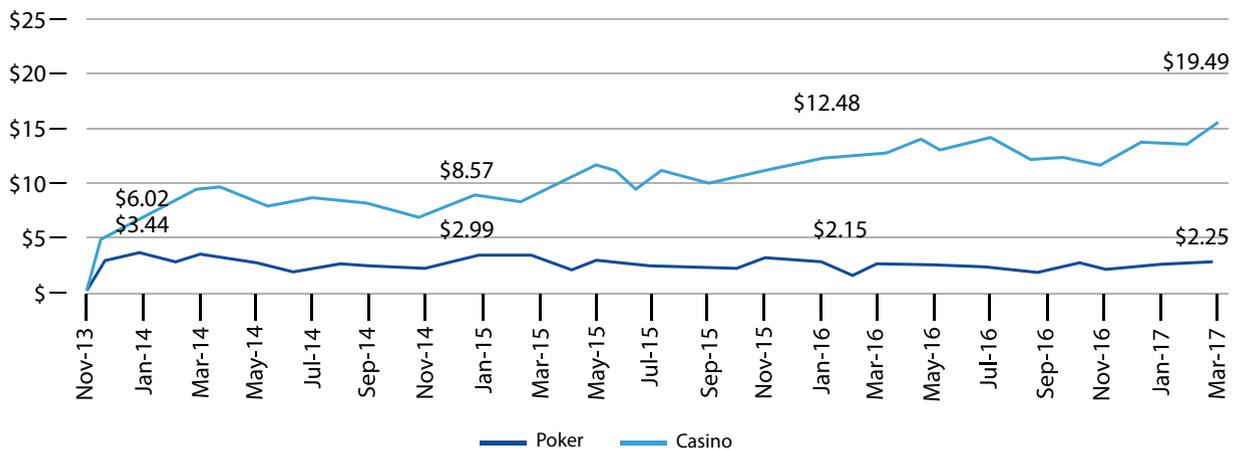
Internationally and in Europe, iGaming has developed in a fashion largely disarticulated from land-based casino brands. In New Jersey, a number of interviews have revealed that the land-based casino brands are performing more successfully than Internet-only brands.

Initial concerns that casino licensee brands could be quickly eclipsed by more experienced online operators have been put to rest as land-based brands such as the Borgata, Caesars, Golden Nugget, Resorts, and Tropicana have more than held their own against well-known competing online wagering firms such as Betfair, GVC/Bwin, PokerStars, and 888.com.

playing casino-style games over the Internet has the ability to do so in a legal, regulated environment with the assurance of trusted brands and strong player protections.

Legal, regulated iGaming allows these players to avoid offshore sites, which were estimated to generate \$5.9 billion from U.S. citizens in 2008.

The New Jersey model has proven that iGaming can be successfully operated under very stringent regulation in a single-state environment. New Jersey's experience provides valuable lessons for other U.S. states considering iGaming legalisation in the future. Its successful operating environment and regulatory structure could be adapted to suit the individual needs of other state jurisdictions, accelerate implementation, and more quickly realise the benefits of legal, regulated iGaming. ◀



New Jersey iGaming revenue by month and game type
Source: New Jersey Division of Gaming Enforcement

BUILDING AFFILIATE TRUST

Hamest Safaryan from Betcartpartners talks about the relationships they try to build with their affiliate partners



How do you identify the right affiliates to sign agreements with?

By their seriousness and acceptable business value. We know affiliates and we want to give them a customer service which includes effective consulting and help on content creation. It's about quality and not quantity for us - we want to choose our affiliates and have them choose us, not only for our build your own commission program, but because they see an increase in their volume.

What is the key factor in maintaining strong relationships between affiliate programs and affiliates?

Trust and availability, from both sides. And to listen to each other: we are always asked about our UX experience, how we activate our players and our CRM plans. Our products are highly competitive, that is why our affiliates can maximise their revenue long term.

How much support does Betcartpartners offer its affiliates?

Most of our affiliates have their manager's direct contact details and always speak to the same small, experienced team. Apart from being available over the phone and internet, we always encourage meetings when possible, we really value face-to-face time with our affiliates.

M&A in the affiliate sector appears to be picking up. What is your take on the pace at which this is taking place, and how has it affected your business and strategy?

Becartpartners is completely independent and so are its verticals. This will never affect us and I think this also gives us a lot of points and more trust. M&A can unsettle affiliates that might fear that the personal touch might be lost, but in our industry, especially lately, this is completely unavoidable.

Do you localise your offering for different regional markets? And are you targeting any specific markets in 2017?

Yes, localisation is key. From how customers sign up from different countries, to language, offerings, to currency, bonuses, customer service, design consulting and integrating payment methods based on the affiliate needs. We know this and pride ourselves in taking it all into account. We are working on several licenses at the moment and one we will be looking at more closely is the UK, for example.

What are you most looking forward to about this year's Amsterdam Affiliate Conference?

Meeting affiliates, friends and having fun!

What is one thing you would change about the affiliate industry?

We strongly believe that affiliates should focus on long term partnerships, rather than merely going towards appealing short term collaborations. ◀

What is the USP you offer to affiliates, to differentiate yourselves in a crowded marketplace?

We are now in the process of revealing our Build Your Own Commission exclusive scheme. Affiliates need to realise that long term partnership is the key, not attractive commission plans. That's why we allow our affiliates to choose and build their own commission plan and we scan them to see if that ensures and reflects a long term partnership. We work together in building a tailor-made plan that works for them, as we believe in setting the right foundations. Also, at this year's Amsterdam Affiliate Conference, we will reveal our vast selection of verticals, which we believe to be one of the biggest in the industry, so that our offering will be highly competitive.

How will you aim to develop Betcartpartners and its offering in the coming months?

Apart from the points mentioned above, we also believe that affiliates have lacked the freedom to choose what is best matched to their business. So, for example, we are in the process of creating a build-your-own marketing material platform, which will also be revealed at AAC2017.

IT'S A MARATHON, NOT A SPRINT

ActiveWin Media Business Development Director **Bernadette Kelly** explains what actually gives the VIP affiliate value and how anyone has the potential to reach this status



Another common thread of heavy-hitting affiliates is the ability to generate player conversions throughout the year consistently, versus a month or two of high-value returns followed by a prolonged period of inactivity. The most lucrative deals often have triggers in place, and top affiliates go out of their way to meet acquisition goals to max out on monthly commissions.

Of course, no affiliate would be successful without players. Top affiliates understand that they need to engage with their own VIPs personally, much like the way operators look to schmooze and chase them for their continued patronage. It is this face-to-face interaction that makes the difference. Emails, Skype conversations and phone calls are perfectly acceptable ways to stay in touch. But the very best way to understand each other is by meeting in person and learning what makes each other tick. Their likes and dislikes, their industry interests, any concerns or queries – these are all things that can be discussed over a long lunch, a session at the pub or attending an in-demand event together.

Increasingly, affiliates with a strong social media following can leverage their popularity amongst followers to push acquisition offers. Affiliates like BBCSport (a spoof BBC account with tens of thousands of followers) perfectly balances the latest sports-related viral videos, sprinkled with offers from top operators like Betfred and SkyBet. There are dozens of similar sites that cater to sportsbook, casino and bingo players, and they all follow this same highly-effective formula. Increasingly, we see top VIP affiliates utilising various social channels to drive players to online offers.

Despite what doom-and-gloom-sayers have been touting for years, the demise of email marketing is far from reality. In fact, email marketing is enjoying a re-emergence in the digital sphere as an effective channel when done right. VIPs ensure their email campaigns are conducted under strict guidelines, and it is the difference between growing your database and mass-unsubscribes. Sending emails for the sake of sending something out to suit your own schedule (without a strong call to action) is a recipe for disaster. New offers, new games or promoting a new brand should be the primary reason to communicate with your readership. Over-egging the pudding with excessive emails several times a day or week will likely lead to a depletion of your database. Pick and choose your subject matter carefully, as top affiliates will be able to tell you.

Online gambling accounts for 33% of all gambling in Britain, as revealed by the UK Gambling Commission in their November 2016 report. Between April 2015 and March 2016, online gambling operators generated a Gross Gambling Yield of £4.5billion. In fact, online gambling is the largest gambling sector in Britain: over the same period, the National Lottery generated £3.4billion, £3.3billion by the high-street betting retail locations and £1billion by land-based casinos. As such, there is a considerable amount of commission up for grabs among affiliate webmasters. When executed properly, any affiliate has the potential to merit VIP status. ◀

Whatever we do in life, we typically want to achieve the best we can. Whether it's doing well on a test at school, hitting the back of the net in a game of five-a-side with your mates, or getting a promotion at work, reaching the top of our game is something people commonly aspire to.

Affiliates are no different. Those who put in the time and effort reap the benefits of handsome monthly commission paid out by gaming operators. Driving large volumes of quality acquisition is the way of catching the attention of the wider gaming community, and puts affiliates in the unique position to pick and choose who they want to promote.

Consistency is key in the affiliate game. Affiliate marketing, like most other industries, has its ups and downs. What makes a VIP extremely valued is their ability to achieve results when the going gets tough. Recent changes in gambling compliance (and the hefty fines leveraged by the UK Gambling Commission) affect everyone operating in the online gaming space, and top VIP affiliates keep a keen eye out for ensuring they are promoting offers that meet the latest regulatory guidelines.

A typical trait we commonly see in VIP affiliates is the willingness to go the extra mile to promote new offers and brands. Getting in touch with their account managers to fully understand the benefits of the gaming provider and passing that information on to their readers and players is a hallmark of top VIP webmasters.

A TASTE OF JAPAN

Michael Golembo, spokesperson at online casino LuckyNiki.com, shares how the operator offers players an authentic Japanese experience



stunning and eye-catching, but also instantly recognisable as a Japanese product.

To take this to the next level, we have an in-house Japanese art director who has overseen the entire design of the site. He has also been responsible for developing our protagonist Niki, and building out her back story.

Niki is friendly and relatable; she is the face of the product and service we offer and will be the first point of contact for most players, so must provide a warm welcome.

We have brought Niki to life through the use of video; this is another area where we are leading the charge. Video features heavily throughout our site as we believe it is the best way to engage players and transport them to Japan.

From the video at the top of our homepage showcasing the bright lights and vibrant atmosphere of Tokyo, to the more cartoonish short detailing Niki's back story via Niki herself talking through all the different games we offer, it is a major USP for us.

We believe video is a better medium for introducing players to our brand and proposition than written text. Confucius said a picture is worth a thousand words, but video is even more powerful.

It makes it much easier to explain to players how top slots and casino table games work and what they can expect from them. Instead of having to scroll through reams of text, they can simply watch a short 20-30 second video.

Video will also help us engage the lucrative Millennial demographic, and communicate with them in a way they understand. Social features such as FaceTime and Skype, as well as Instagram stories and Snapchat, have seen a spike in the use of video.

And we want to leverage the medium to tap into their psyche and guide them towards our brand and product offering, which provides the right mix of gaming and entertainment they are seeking.

Video also allows us to unlock the power of social media. Each video we produce is uploaded to YouTube, allowing our players to share it with their friends and followers on Facebook and Twitter. We believe this will help build brand equity through word of mouth.

This approach is in-line with our Japanese DNA; Japan is a country renowned for pushing technological boundaries and trying new and innovative things, and we plan to continue this deep-rooted tradition.

The online casino sector is overcrowded with sites claiming to offer players something different. And while some do, most fall wide of the mark.

We know Japan and we know gaming, we know technology and we know innovation. And by bringing all these factors together under the LuckyNiki brand, we have created an online mobile casino product that captures the spirit and personality of Japan, and one players will love. ◀

Japan is very much on trend right now. Its vibrant culture and rich history are being celebrated and enjoyed all around the world and like never before. From sushi to sake via manga and anime, people can't get enough of the land of the rising sun.

This is particularly true when it comes to technology and entertainment, and here at LuckyNiki.com we have combined the two to offer players a truly authentic Japanese gaming experience.

But we are not the only operator looking to use these ingredients to launch an exciting and innovative online casino destination, so competition will be fierce. With that in mind, we have gone the extra mile to ensure we stand out from the crowd.

To do that, we have done things a little differently, using Japanese design, technology and philosophy in everything we do. By doing this, we can offer slots and table game players, as well as sports bettors, a truly authentic product.

The team behind LuckyNiki is well-experienced in working in Japan; this means we have a deep understanding of the country, its culture and points of interest, and how best to showcase them to a truly global audience.

In terms of the design of the site, we have leaned heavily on manga and anime. Not only does this mean LuckyNiki is visually

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AFFILIATECON: SERIOUS BUSINESS, SERIOUS FUN

AffiliateCon will transform the way affiliates and operators connect and build their business partnerships



When: 12-13 September

Where: Sofia Event Center, Sofia, Bulgaria

With an aim of setting a fresh industry standard for how the online gaming industry meets new and existing affiliates, the inaugural AffiliateCon will bring the industry together for two days of "Serious Business, Serious Fun". Among the brands already confirmed as attending this year's landmark convention are Ladbrokes Partners, Spillere, ActiveWin and Kindred Affiliates.

THE VENUE

Conveniently located for European travel, the show will be held at the state-of-the-art Sofia Event Center, a location that could not be further from the traditional warehouse-style exhibition hall. The main space for the convention will consist of a number of intimate booths and connection points for participating brands to meet affiliates - a departure from the traditional tradeshow model where brands compete to spend the most on stands - together with a stage for keynote presentations.

The hall will be complete with a special VIP affiliate area, along with extensive break out spots and refreshment points. A spacious and leafy balcony will be the icing on the cake of a conference hall that is both relaxing and conducive to business.

Sofia is centrally located in Eastern Europe, surrounded by markets where the iGaming affiliate industry is flourishing. The Sofia Event Centre is a 20 minute taxi ride from the airport, while public transport links to the hall's doorstep are plentiful and easy to use.

WHAT'S ON THE AGENDA?

The first of its kind event aims to provide a relaxed networking environment with well-equipped private meeting areas, offering a fresh and relaxed take on the traditional conference experience. Doors will open at 10am on both days, commencing two hours of networking and meetings before keynote speakers take to the stage at midday. Further networking opportunities will follow after a 1pm lunch, before drinks and entertainment to end each day.

A sensational evening of entertainment will bring day one to a close, with a networking party kicking off at 8pm. This will give attendees the chance to catch up with friends old and new, and reflect on a show that will have no shortage of talking points.

THE CITY

For any attendees looking to spend some extended time in Sofia once the conference has come to a close, there is plenty in the city to hold a tourist's attention. The Bulgarian capital is home to a rich and varied selection of cultural attractions, with the gold-domed Alexander Nevsky Cathedral among the city's most significant religious and architectural institutions. Sofia's National Historical Museum is among the largest museums in Eastern Europe, housing more than 650,000 artifacts.

Home to a whole host of excellent bars and nightclubs, those looking to test their luck in the city also have a number of options at their disposal, with the Viva Casino and Royal Palms both located within walking distance of the city centre. ◀

Register at: www.affiliatecon.com

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