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JULY 2018

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USING THROUGH ESPORTS
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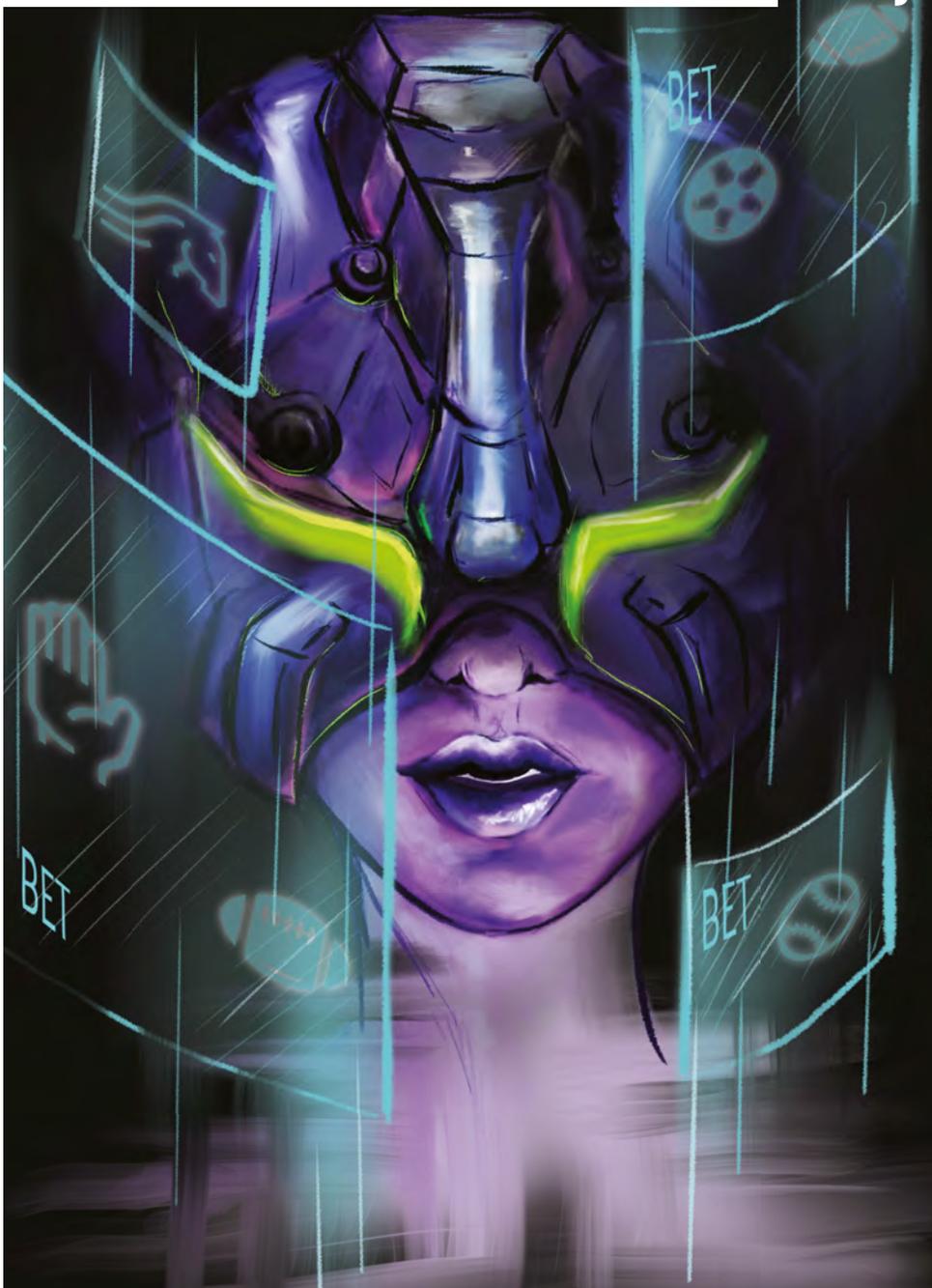
JULY 2018

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MONETISING THROUGH ESPORTS
How to capitalise on the \$6bn market

WINNERS

Sports betting operator 1xBet is looking to provide its affiliate partners with commission on a weekly basis

Zeus Gaming launched its new affiliate marketing program called Bolt Affiliates in partnership with MAP

EVEN

Catena Media acquires €16m (\$18.63m) Italian sports betting affiliate

XLMedia issued a surprise profit warning in mid June estimating 2018 corporate revenues should come in at \$130m compared to \$137m last year.

New York state legislators did not pass sports betting legislation, even after last minute changes to the bill.

LOSERS

PENNSYLVANIA LOTTERY'S NEW AFFILIATE MARKETING PROGRAM OFFERS PROFIT-SHARE INCENTIVE



The Pennsylvania Lottery has launched an affiliate marketing program with Income Access to drive PA iLottery enrolment and give affiliates a share of the profits.

Income Access, the Paysafe Group's marketing technology and services provider, will use its platform to power the new affiliate program. It will be managed by their affiliate team, the same team that managed the Michigan Lottery affiliate program.

"Our technology and affiliate program managers have a strong track record supporting global lottery brands' customer acquisition," said Tara Wilson, General Manager at Income Access.

PA iLottery features online games that can be played on computers and mobile devices. They also offer players the opportunity to win up to \$250,000.

The program, launched in June, will enable lottery retailers and other businesses that drive enrolment in the Pennsylvania Lottery's iLottery online play platform to earn a share of the profits.

For 24 months, qualified partners who sign up with the program can earn a profit share of as much as 20% for each iLottery player they refer to the site.

"This affiliates program provides an excellent incentive to promote PA iLottery," said Lottery Executive Director Drew Svitko.

Qualified partners will earn a 10% profit share for players who sign up through in-store marketing efforts, or a 20% profit share if players sign up using digital marketing efforts.

The program is not restricted to lottery retailers but existing lottery retailers are urged to participate.

"We want existing retailers to understand that building awareness of iLottery can be good for their bottom line," Svitko added.

"New iLottery players can only register once, so do not miss the opportunity to receive credit for referring players. Remember: the more iLottery players you refer, the greater the potential profit sharing earnings."

51%

The stake Raketech purchased in affiliate media company Shogun Media, Raketech's third acquisition of 2018

72.9%

The amount of support Switzerland's new gaming legislation won in a vote to ban foreign online gambling operators

SEK 54

The price per share (\$6.09) for Better Collective's debut on the Stockholm Stock Exchange

10

The number of new affiliate marketing agreements Esports Entertainment Group has signed with eSports teams



2018

WINNER

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GAMING
AWARDS
2017
WINNER
DIGITAL
ACQUISITION
PROGRAM

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Affiliate World Europe

or drop by our stand at the

Amsterdam Affiliate Conference

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PASS NOTES

Italy's plan to ban advertising

SO WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE LAND OF PRINTERS AND PHILOSOPHERS, PASTA AND PIZZA, MEDIEVAL CASTLES AND ICE-CAPPED MOUNTAINS?

Well, the details are a bit vague still but Luigi Di Maio, Deputy Prime Minister in Italy's new coalition government, wants to ban gambling ads.

SINCE WHEN?

On 14 June, Di Maio told an Italian radio station that Italy is planning an "absolute ban" on advertising and sponsorships, but fear not. You can still have all the wine, pizza and spaghetti you want. The proposal – which hasn't been passed into law just yet – would prohibit direct or indirect advertising initiatives, any commercial communication, any sponsorship or promotion of gaming trademarks or products with cash winnings offered both through retail channels and online. Those who break the law face fines between €50,000 (\$58,000) and €500,000.

MAMMA MIA! SO IF THERE'S NO ADVERTISING, WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR AFFILIATES?

Well, it's hard to say. In theory, affiliates won't be able to promote gambling sites but Italy's Parliament has not yet reviewed the proposal, so details are sketchy.

IT SOUNDS LIKE THEY ARE PRETTY ANTI-GAMBLING OVER THERE, WHAT'S IN STORE FOR ONLINE OPERATORS?

Online operators have to advertise sign up offers, so if Italy removes adverts it becomes near impossible for them to do business. Land-based operators would definitely have the advantage. Online operators could be forced into gorilla marketing, which is mighty expensive.

WHY DON'T THEY JUST MAKE GAMBLING ILLEGAL THEN?

Well, Di Maio has insisted that they don't want to eliminate gambling completely as this would allow Italy's organised crime groups to take control of gambling activity, and we've all seen the Godfather films.

SO WHEN IS THIS GOING TO HAPPEN?

Just like the Leaning Tower of Pisa, no one knows when this could come crashing down. Anything is possible.

QUOTE UNQUOTE

"We are happy to announce TVsportguide.de in time for the football World Cup. The launch of a Rakotech product in Germany extends the reach of our content-rich sports media business across Europe and provides new revenue opportunities from gaming companies, television channels and consumer services who want to target an engaged audience of sports fans."

Michael Holmberg, Rakotech CEO on the launch of TVsportguide.de in Germany

"The potential of this vertical, and for Hammerstone, is immense and will contribute to establishing our strong vision of positioning ourselves within the US finance services vertical and extending this globally."

Per Hellberg, CEO of Catena Media on the company's acquisition of Hammerstone Inc.

"We're thrilled to have partnered with Traffic Label. This deal strengthens our multi-brand growth strategy, built around our partners having the ability to launch multiple casino brands quickly and efficiently under one seamless platform and reporting structure."

Claire Osborne, Commercial Director at Nektan, on the company's multi-brand agreement with Traffic Label Network

MOVERS AND SHAKERS



ERIK BERGMAN Catena Media Co-Founder Erik Bergman has quit his position to start a charity dedicated to providing children in western Africa with school and educational equipment

"I want to have a purpose in life. I want to build on something bigger than myself and something that can really add value to the world."



KIRSTY GALLACHER William Hill has signed former Sky Sports presenter Kirsty Gallacher as its new brand ambassador, joining Robbie Savage and Sir Tony McCoy. Gallacher's deal will see her host sporting events and play a part in William Hill's World Cup football activity. She's already hosted the first of the bookmaker's England World Cup parties at the William Hill Arms in St. Paul's, London

TRAFFIC REPORT

Trafficology has partnered with data experts Casino City Press to provide insight into website and traffic trends across the gaming industry

If you are a poker enthusiast, a beginner looking to hedge a bet, or a veteran looking to exchange tips with other players, then poker portals are the place for you. In this day and age, poker players are privy to a huge range of online poker sites, so why shouldn't that be the case for poker portals?

When Chris MoneyMaker won the World Series of Poker event in 2003 he not only took home with him a whopping \$2.5m, but he became the first person to win the event having qualified via an online poker website. This landmark win inspired a whole new generation of poker players, opening up the world of internet poker forums and portals alike.

Back then, these websites were used by people around the world, creating a hub where players could discuss detailed strategies or vent after a difficult loss. Now, however, they are so much more.



Today, a poker portal contains all the information a budding poker player would need to enjoy the game online. From the latest poker news, live streams from tournaments, exclusive videos to tips from professionals, podcasts and so much more.

Now whilst this sounds all very good and well for the player, affiliates have been able to capitalise on these poker forums, creating links to the best promotional offers and lists of the highest-recommended poker websites. Here we take a look at the highest-ranked poker portal websites in Asia, North America and Oceania.

ASIA

Both GipsyTeam and Two Plus Two retained their leading positions in terms of website traffic. Both non-movers managed to see it through the quarter, leading the way for poker portals in

Asia. Two Plus Two has done well to maintain such a high position in the portal rankings after the poker forum, often referred to as 2P2 or "4" in poker circles, was hacked in late in 2016, with the personal data then being offered for sale elsewhere online.

SharkScope climbed up three places this quarter, forcing PokerStrategy, owned by Playtech, to slip down a peg into fourth. In June 2015, PokerStrategy was easily the largest poker community in the world with more than 7m members; however it no longer seems to be the reigning champion in Asia.

The biggest jumper in Asia's ranked poker portals was Official Poker Rankings, which leaped 17 places into the Top 20 list, taking fifth position from iBus Media-owned, PokerNews.

NORTH AMERICA

The top two runners maintained their positions, with Two Plus Two leading the charge in the US, closely followed by National League of Poker (NLOP). Cafrino, a developer and publisher of online social games, acquired NLOP at the back-end of 2017, which aided the company's significant increase in revenue during fiscal 2017.

Led by CEO Mike Murphy, an 18-year veteran of the online game industry, the company is eyeing an even stronger performance in 2018.

"We've only begun to scratch the surface," said Murphy. "We're working hard to make our products the most fun and challenging games available to players. Our primary goal with NLOP was to increase profitability as quickly as possible, while also adding value for the player. That happened much sooner than expected, allowing us the ability to take some time to look farther into the future."

Similarly to Asia's Top 20, CJM Solutions-owned SharkScope went up three places this quarter in the North American rankings, placing it in the third spot.

Other notable movements saw FloatTheTurn climbing 17 spots, placing it in the Top 20 list this quarter, so definitely one to keep an eye on.

OCEANIA

Two Plus Two has proved to have a steady run as a global leader in poker portals this quarter, as it sits in the number one spot, similar to North America.

An interesting mover is The Stars Group's PokerStars School which dropped a spot into tenth place despite getting a facelift at the beginning of the year and an exclusive interview with PokerStars Team Pro Daniel Negreanu.

This portal was once considered a place solely for amateur poker players to learn the basics. Nonetheless, even with the revamp and high-profile content, the site has continued down the slippery slope. It will be interesting to see whether or not we see a comeback from this poker portal in the next quarter, seeing as it ranked fairly low on all three regional lists.

betsson group

AFFILIATES

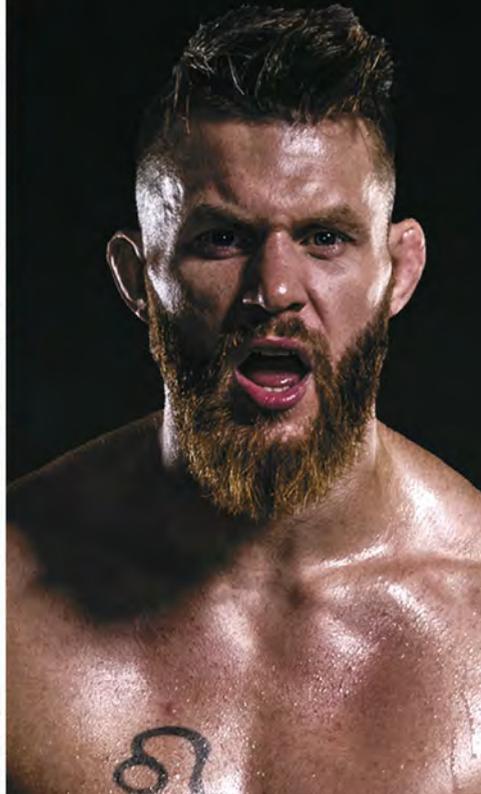
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CASINO

NORGESAUTOMATEN 

SVERIGEAUTOMATEN 

ASIA POKER PORTALS

NORTH AMERICA POKER PORTALS

OCEANIA POKER PORTALS

Rank	+/-	Website
1	-	gipsyteam.ru
2	-	twoplustwo.com
3	3 ▲	sharkscope.com
4	1 ▼	pokerstrategy.com
5	17▲	officialpokerrankings.com
6	2 ▲	cardschat.com
7	3 ▼	pokernews.com
8	1 ▼	pokerprolabs.com
9	4 ▲	highstakesdb.com
10	4 ▲	upswingpoker.com
11	-	pokeroff.ru
12	3 ▼	pokerren.com
13	2 ▲	pokerstarsschool.com
14	4 ▼	thehendonmob.com
15	5 ▲	pokerland-il.com
16	3 ▲	pokeristby.ru
17	1 ▼	cardplayer.com
18	1 ▼	apoker.kz
19	2 ▲	uapoker.info
20	4 ▲	pokerlistings.com

Rank	+/-	Website
1	-	twoplustwo.com
2	-	nlop.com
3	3 ▲	sharkscope.com
4	1 ▼	pokernews.com
5	2 ▲	cardschat.com
6	2 ▼	cardplayer.com
7	2 ▼	pocketfives.com
8	1 ▲	upswingpoker.com
9	1 ▼	thehendonmob.com
10	-	highstakesdb.com
11	-	pokeratlas.com
12	1 ▲	gipsyteam.ru
13	30▲	clubwager.net
14	-	pokerlistings.com
15	3 ▼	officialpokerrankings.com
16	1 ▼	pokerstarsschool.com
17	1 ▲	pokerprolabs.com
18	2 ▼	pokerstrategy.com
19	2 ▼	onlinepokerreport.com
20	1 ▼	fullcontactpoker.com

Rank	+/-	Website
1	-	twoplustwo.com
2	-	pokernews.com
3	3 ▲	upswingpoker.com
4	1 ▲	sharkscope.com
5	2 ▼	cardschat.com
6	4 ▲	highstakesdb.com
7	1 ▲	thehendonmob.com
8	4 ▼	888pl.com.au
9	2 ▼	pokerprolabs.com
10	1 ▼	pokerstarsschool.com
11	-	cardplayer.com
12	-	pocketfives.com
13	12 ▲	floattheturn.com
14	-	pokerlistings.com
15	2 ▲	findpoker.com.au
16	3 ▼	pokerarena.cz
17	2 ▼	pokerstrategy.com
18	3 ▲	pokertube.com
19	7 ▲	professionalrakeback.com
20	4 ▼	top10pokersites.net

Rankings are estimated using statistical data and should not be considered absolute ranking values. More than 40 complementary top lists are available on the iGamingDirectory.com website operated by Casino City Press

EVENT PREVIEW



iGB LIVE! EVENT PREVIEW

17-20 July 2018
Amsterdam RAI, Hall 8, Netherlands

iGB Live! promises to be one of the most exciting events of the year. The four days of conferences and networking opportunities are designed to ensure that all in attendance can make new connections and learn about the latest developments in the world of online gambling.

The AAC, iGaming Super Show and EiG are among the most highly anticipated events in the gaming calendar. Now, thanks to Clarion Gaming, delegates can cover all three of these must-attend events over just four days.

Be sure not to miss out on the start-up competition Launchpad, one of the main attractions of iGB Live! Launchpad began as part of EiG back in 2009 and has grown into one of the highlights of the show. It offers start-ups the chance to pitch their company in front of investor judges. Not only is it entertaining and fast paced, it also gives attendees an opportunity to see and connect with some of the most exciting new companies in the gaming world.

The iGB Live! location and venue reflect the magnitude of this industry-leading event. Amsterdam is the perfect location

to host this innovative and entertaining gathering of gambling industry experts, affiliates, vendors, operators, and suppliers. Its central location means a quick trip on the train for most Europeans, with Amsterdam' Airport Schiphol located just 15 minutes from the venue for those coming from further afield.

Taking place in Hall 8 of the Amsterdam RAI, the largest exhibition space in the country, there will be plenty of different designated areas to visit. These include a new paid for conference area named iGB Live! HQ as well as Crypto Live. There is also an area dedicated to crypto currencies and ICOs. Make sure you don't miss out on the events and key areas by downloading the iGB Live! app which allows you to see the entire events agenda before you step onto the conference floor.

Amsterdam offers attendees hundreds of entertainment options to renew old connections or make new ones at some of the most famous clubs, bars and restaurants in Europe. The city's boundless networking opportunities will allow visitors to entertain clients in any environment they desire, whether it be a relaxing restaurant or one of Amsterdam's popular nightclubs.



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INTERVIEW WITH SHONA O'DONNELL, PORTFOLIO DIRECTOR, CLARION GAMING

What was the main reason for combining the AAC, iGaming Super Show and EiG in one event?

It was in direct response to feedback from the industry. The events calendar is increasingly busy with new events being added all the time. This puts a lot of pressure on resources, both time and financial, and we wanted to help clients manage this. By bringing these events together, it allows them to consolidate and focus their marketing campaigns across the year.

What do you believe is the highlight of iGB Live! this year?

They can expect the biggest event globally for the online gaming industry. We expect to see more than 5,400 delegates across four days of conference and networking. This really is the place the industry comes to do business.

There will be a large exhibition floor where delegates can meet with suppliers, operators and affiliates. The free-to-attend content includes two days of affiliate marketing content, and an iMGL Masterclass and Launchpad where attendees can see the brightest new start-ups in the industry. We will also introduce Crypto Live!, where you can see the latest ICOs and ideas in this space.

We are very excited about the introduction of the paid-for conference area called iGB Live! HQ. The HQ includes the Hive, Boardroom, Counsel and Elevator conference spaces as well as a large networking area. This will be an amazing experiential space where delegates who attend our paid for conferences can have meetings off the main expo floor, experience new ways of content delivery and take part in curated networking.

What will be the main topics covered at this year's event?

It is a really exciting time in online gaming, and this will definitely be reflected in the programme. iGB Live! HQ is a completely new area on the show floor and off that we will host content in a completely new way. The Hive will hold curated networking on topics like African markets and US sports betting. These will be accompanied by experiential highlights like wine tasting. In the Counsel we will have debates hosted by the Cambridge University Debates Team to get to the heart of the most contentious issues right now. In addition to this, we will also have key notes in the Boardroom from Nasdaq and Blackstone. Elevator will showcase new innovations and ideas. Around all of this there will be lots of space for networking while enjoying full-service hospitality. On the show floor we also have two full days of affiliate content, including a number of insight reports that have been commissioned for the event, an iMGL Masterclass and Crypto Live!

In what ways are networking opportunities different at this year's event?

iGB Live! will offer more than 15 different networking events over four days, so there is a lot to pack in. Because there is so much happening, with specific events for Bingo, Sports Betting, Slots, Crypto and Lottery, plus all of the main parties, I strongly recommend that people have a look at the agenda on the app and plan their time in advance so that they don't miss anything.

What changes will there be to the Launchpad competition?

The start-up Launchpad has been providing a platform to new, aspiring iGaming businesses since 2009 at EiG and it has always been one of the highlights at the event. We'll be bringing it to iGB Live! in a similar format, with five start-ups selected from a group of about 20 that applied. The start-ups will each get a few minutes to pitch their company (not just product) in front of the investor judges and in front of the iGB Live! audience. The



judges this year are Evan Hoff from Velo Partners, Richard Glynn from Alinsky Partners, Andrew Burnett from Burlywood Capital and Marcel Tobler from innovation21. They are also sponsors of this year's Launchpad and will quiz each startup, but it will be up to the audience to choose the winner. We have selected the start-ups and will be announcing them soon. The quality of the submissions once again has been very strong and, not surprisingly, AI is the prevailing trend we've seen in submissions this time. The Launchpad will be accessible to all iGB Live! visitors, so it's a great opportunity to see the new ideas and trends in the sector.

What are the benefits of hosting iGB Live! in Amsterdam?

Amsterdam is great city, especially in the summer. There are lots of great bars and restaurants so it's perfect for entertaining partners. It's also a great hub making it easy to travel to no matter where you are based. We've been in Amsterdam for five years now so you never know when it might be your last chance to visit.



MONETISING TRAFFIC THROUGH ESPORTS

Peter Ivanov, Head of eSports at UltraPlay, spoke to attendees at AffiliateCon Sofia about how they can capitalise on the \$6bn market in eSports

eSports betting has been around for about ten years, but in the last three or four years the market has really grown and it is being dubbed as the new phenomenon in gaming.

eSports is a product that has been growing on a monthly basis, with more than 25 different game titles to bet on. The three most popular eSports games are Counter Strike, Dota 2 and League of Legends, referred to as the "golden trio".

There are more than 150m people around the world involved in eSports, playing and watching, making it a huge market to appeal to. The eSports demographic are a really young audience, with disposable income that is growing by about 20% on a yearly basis.

The three main groups of people in eSports betting are millennials, eSports enthusiasts and people who spend all of their free time either watching or playing games – that's usually the younger generations – and, finally, the occasional viewers who don't spend much time watching eSports. They tend to tune in to big games or tournaments.

Enthusiasts spend about eight hours a day rather playing or watching video games. They don't have time for TV, sports or social life.

These are the type of people you can't attract with normal advertising methods. We had a conversation with some pro players; they don't have a TV at home. They're not really



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Monetizing traffic through eSports betting

- Esports Betting industry
- Experts say esports betting expected to surpass \$6 billion in 2018
- Gambling operators' turnover has been doubling year-to-year.
- Bigger turnover equals bigger profit – an industry trend.
- Esports has overtaken golf and rugby in terms of popularity among bettors.
- Growing product range to attract gamblers.



"WHEN WE'RE TALKING ABOUT ESPORTS, WE'RE TALKING ABOUT A VAST TERM THAT SHOULD BE BROKEN DOWN INTO DIFFERENT CATEGORIES."

interested in having one either, because they don't have time for it and they don't understand what they can actually get from it. So you won't be able to attract these people through traditional media. You need to find alternative ways to attract their attention and to bring them into gaming.

The best thing to do this is to start thinking as they do, and to try to offer them a product that's really close to their needs and their interests.

When we're talking about eSports, we need to understand that we're talking about a vast term that should be broken down into different categories, because we have different games that are part of different genres. There are first-person shooters, mobiles, and simulated sport like NBA and FIFA. The interests of those people are very vast, and very different from one group to another.

They cannot be grouped together. They are not all thinking in the same way, so it is important to use different methods for different groups in order to be successful.

If we talk a little bit about the current traffic sources, or how operators are getting to the eSports enthusiast at the moment, you would see the only way to get them at the moment is through streaming platforms like Twitch, YouTube, Facebook. Other alternative ways are through big data

providers, like specialised sites for particular games, where users go to find information about matches and players.

You have tipsters, who offer tips about the game, and how they see it. This is very useful for newbies in particular, or players who are not so familiar on betting on eSports. Reddit is also important, the so-called gaming forum of eSports, where all major topics are being discussed and a lot of people are involved not only talking about eSports in general, but very specific things.

Of course, there are the gameplay analysis platforms, where a lot of people try to enhance their game and find better ways to play a particular game. These are five main channels, which we're currently seeing in eSports traffic. This is really small, compared to all the other traffic channels we see in traditional sports. There's huge potential there to attract eSports fans into gaming.

Promotional items vary from traditional media; with players given virtual items, like skins, giving the player some sort of incentive to play the game. There are also competition incentives that send players around the world to eSports events for free.

We see a lot of these tools being used, they are quite successful in most cases, however they are very limited compared to what we see in sports. So, there is a lot of room for improvement, both in traffic sources and promotional tools being used in eSports. It's mainly because it's a relatively young industry and a lot of the sources are not being used to their full potential.

The foundation of eSports is based on Twitch, and its all product. It was sold a couple of years ago for \$200m and now is probably worth five or six times that. YouTube and Facebook were not at the forefront in the beginning, but they're catching up and trying to establish themselves as the medium by connecting people to eSports.

There have been a lot of deals coming from both YouTube and Facebook with major tournament organisers trying to push exclusive broadcasting rights to show these games.

To get an idea of the scale, one of the biggest events watched on Twitch was the League of Legends finals, which generated \$5.5m in ticket revenues.

Another area we've been looking into for the last couple of years is desktop betting against mobile betting. We are seeing around 80% of bets coming through mobiles these days. It is no surprise that with eSports the figure is even higher, as the eSports demographic is very tech savvy. In terms of desktop, the only advantage when it comes to eSports, is the fact that it is live streamed, lending itself more to desktop over phones or tablets. (You need a bigger screen to get a better understanding of what is going on within the game.)

People are always using their phone, using free-to-own apps, and the premium pay-per-view service has not yet made it to mobile, nor is it ready to work with eSports. However, as we are seeing a lot of companies involved in traditional sport moving into eSports, we could see that concept being implemented. Further down the line, we could see people accepting to pay for premium quality content.

eSports has been developing really well for the past few years. It's no longer something for the future. It has already overtaken rugby and golf, and is the fifth or sixth biggest sport in terms of turnover. It's something we have to look at very seriously and it will only grow from here, for two reasons: first, because of demographics, this generation and the new generation are getting more involved in eSports causing its profile to rise further; and second, the whole product is becoming bigger. New games are getting involved in eSports on pretty much a monthly basis.



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AFFILIATES IN CRYPTO

Marc Kenigsberg, founder of CoinJanitor, BlockSmarter and BitcoinChaser, spoke to attendees at AffiliateCon about the underutilised opportunity for affiliates to capitalise on this digital asset

Why do affiliate marketers and crypto-currency need to work together?

When it comes down to online marketing, affiliates are a vital part of achieving marketing success, especially in today's gambling space. According to detailed figures, 9% of the top 10,000 websites use Amazon associates. Ten percent of their sales derive from affiliate channels. The majority of online gambling brands have a significant portion of revenue from gambling affiliates. It's not uncommon to see six-figure checks every month; I'm talking about over \$1 billion a month in global payments across affiliate industries. Apparently, what I didn't know, is that businesses can make up to half a billion a day from affiliate websites.

There really isn't a large scale of penetration from an affiliate perspective. The vast majority of businesses that are using crypto-currencies – such as Bitcoin – don't value this. Unfortunately, a lot of businesses, both large and small, don't fully understand how to get the most out of affiliate marketing. While affiliate marketing is very effective for businesses, affiliates don't understand what they could be earning by working with some of these top brands. Missed opportunities like this lead to regret. There's a lot of opportunity for long-term growth. There are ton of Bitcoins being left on the table in the space. The most pressing question is: how can we do something about this? And how can we hopefully get rid of it? As of right now, thousands of the crypto-currency companies don't know some of the fundamentals when it comes to establishing a relationship with affiliates. A great affiliate influencer can build your brand's reputation and drive repeat traffic, which is important for any business looking to grow.

Another common problem in the crypto-currency industry is that there are no tools for tracking existing crypto-currency. Most, if not all businesses, have no experience working with affiliates, so the idea is to put up a referral link and make people take it. There's a lot of verticals that can expose the market and from an affiliate perspective. There are a lot of affiliates who have the chance to get into the crypto industry, but they don't understand revenue attention or understand how traffic can help predict price movements in the crypto-currency industry.

Is crypto-affiliate marketing a new industry?

Crypto-currency is a new industry that is beginning to gain traction and affiliate marketers need to be able to deal with these new verticals. Bitcoin has rapidly penetrated the popular lexicon unlike any other technology, especially in the gambling space. There are affiliates that can make money using Bitcoin programs on their own. Bitcoin has never been so robust. There are a lot of options for affiliates to explore, such as: gambling, trading, exchanges, mining, and ICOs. The vast majority of brands out there still don't accept affiliates and those that do, treat it as something that's unimportant, as opposed to really nurturing affiliates like we see in casinos and other verticals. Affiliates could be doing a lot more with crypto-currency and that's without even thinking about all the new things



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that are coming. If you're thinking about using crypto-currency, you have to ask yourself the question, how can you capitalise?

As an affiliate, if you have an existing business or a particular vertical, the first thing to do is do some research. You have to figure out what's going on in the space, what popular brands are accepting affiliates, and then sign up to a couple of programs. I'm not suggesting you go and create a whole new website but if you're a casino affiliate and you have a payment method section, add a dedicated page about Bitcoin and use that as an entry point for bringing more visitors to your website. There are a lot of smart ways for affiliates to drive in traffic and a lot of affiliates are using search engine optimisation for their affiliate campaigns. If you're competing and you have good authority, then you could very easily add traffic by just adding relevance to Bitcoin or adding a section for crypto-currency to your website.

As an operator, adding Bitcoin to a business requires a little bit of intelligence. You have to look at things such as payment settlements and finding out whether crypto-currency such as Bitcoin is legally permitted in your country. When it comes to adding crypto-currency as a payment method to your websites, it's important to check if it's legalised in your country. Changing your entire brand and adding "Bitcoin" or "Blockchain" to your company's name is probably not good for your business, but adding a Bitcoin payment gateway to your list of payment methods that you have and offering it to people who are interested in it could drive more traffic to your website. In terms of deposits, people who have problems with credit cards exchanges can use e-wallets as an alternative, but this needs to be checked out properly. At the end of the day you have to find something that fits with what you're doing and you have to check whether crypto-currencies are a vital tool for your business.

As things stand now, there are only three types of advertising and affiliate networks in the crypto-currency market. The first form of advertising is traditional affiliate network, advertisers like commission junction and trade juggler. There's a couple that are trying but there's really one affiliate network at the moment. That network has thousands of affiliates on it which may sound like a lot, but in the gambling world a couple of thousand affiliates is really not that much. There are ad networks that offer a good quality in the ad space or on the publisher's side, but they're very expensive mostly because of the rise of ICOs.

Back when Bitcoin first started, one of the challenges was how to get people to use it. One way to help people learn about the concept of crypto-currencies was on Bitcoin's forum. In exchange for your email-address, the Bitcoin faucets were a free source to earn Bitcoins instantly. However, the majority of people who use those faucets can claim only a little amount, but there's a huge amount of traffic on these kinds of websites. Affiliates work on a CPA (cost-per-action) based model at a range of about 12 cents, whereas premium networks pay recipients at about \$7 and that's if you're a small website. That's something we have been working on for so long but it's not very established.

How to market your crypto-currency website for increased traffic and visitors?

If you want to continue operating in the crypto-world and you want to create traffic and conversion targeting those who viewed your website, you have to provide users with value. If you provide value to your users, you will be rewarded with traffic and engagement. Let's face it – getting people to actually sign up isn't easy – but if you want more people to sign up via email or subscribe to your services, you have to make the process easier for users. A successful affiliate marketer can find ways to generate traffic and create value for users.

Why crypto-currency is the future

I firmly believe that crypto-currency has the ability to change how much of the world functions. As you all probably already know, the

internet is the most important tool for affiliates. When it comes to internet marketing, both affiliate networks and publishers believe that VPN, security, and web hosting are very important tools to help promote an affiliate product. I strongly believe that crypto-currency is going to be a huge industry and in my opinion it's going to be bigger than any industry we have seen before. The crypto-currency industry is constantly growing larger but it will need support from other industries. Right now they don't exist, so we're going to have to create new industries just to support the proliferation of crypto-currency.

Interested in getting more involved in crypto-currency and what some experts coin as "the largest wealth our generation has ever seen?"

The first thing you have to do is to develop your knowledge of crypto-currencies such as Bitcoin, and be increasingly aware of all the news surrounding the crypto-currency industry. Crypto-currencies, as of today, are still growing, and we all have to develop our knowledge to fully understand the space. I personally believe it's fascinating to see an increase of wealth, innovation and technology. There's no better time than now to invest in a project you are passionate about, especially when your crypto-currency industry rewards you for your work, in the form of virtual coins!

So buckle up, and watch crypto-currency and affiliate marketing alike reach feverish heights in the years to come.



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SPORTS BETTING 101

Just what exactly does it take to thrive as a sports betting focused affiliate in today's market? **Harrison Sayers** takes a look at the latest developments, opportunities, and tried-and-tested techniques that will help you get acquainted with the vertical, ready to take on a post-PASPA world



CONTRIBUTORS

Warren Jacobs, MD ActiveWin

Gary Myers, Head of Affiliates Betsson Group

Intertops Affiliate Team

Sports betting has become the buzzword of the entire gambling industry following the US Supreme Court's decision to repeal PASPA on 14 May 2018. As affiliates thrive on driving traffic to gambling sites, now is the perfect time to start capitalising on the increased public interest in sports betting. There are now more reasons than ever to establish a successful sports betting affiliate site, especially one that intends to be US-focused.

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But before you make any hasty or half-hearted decisions to delve into the sports betting market, there are some key points you need to know. These include the content appeal and relevancy of your website to your target audience, and evaluating the pros and cons of alternative affiliate programs. These are but a few of the crucial factors that could determine whether your foray into becoming a sports betting affiliate will be as successful as you desired.

Prospective affiliates must do their research before they get started. You will need to be aware of the differing legal and regulatory obligations which you will have to uphold. You must avoid at all costs driving traffic to illegal offshore sites or any other dodgy operations. All too often people see the affiliate industry as an easy way to make a quick buck before considering the legal backlash that they might receive from promoting illegal gambling activities. However, the rewards for establishing a successful and fully compliant sports betting affiliate site will more than justify all of your hard work and preparation.

"Because the US market is opening on a state level, it will be more complicated for affiliates. However, we know there's a huge appetite for gambling in general and sports betting in particular in the US. In May 2018, over \$24m was generated through casino and poker in New Jersey, which gives a good indication of possibilities for operators and affiliates", said Gary Myers, Head of Affiliates at Betsson Group.

"I think what you'll see are some of the larger affiliate networks dip their toe in the water and make some acquisitions. There's currently so much unknown in terms of what will be allowed and which states will regulate sports betting, that smaller affiliates will initially wait. You also need to remember that there are affiliates already in the US market promoting casino and poker and they will potentially have a head start on everyone else.

"The fact that each state will have their own regulations will make it complicated for affiliates. They will need to work out quickly how they can promote brands state-by-state and be fully compliant.

"My biggest piece of advice would be to do research and understand what you're getting into. The days are long gone when an affiliate could simply put up a few pages and generate traffic. This is a competitive market and affiliates need to have a complete strategy if they want to enter the US sports betting market. Which states allow sports betting? Which sports will you cover? Do you have the ability to generate relevant content and to update this on a daily and even hourly basis? These questions scratch the surface, but should give an indication that this is a question that shouldn't be taken lightly."

It is sometimes easy to forget that the underlying driving force of any successful affiliate is the content which they provide. That means deciding on what kind of sports betting you will be promoting, whether your site will cover sports in general or if you will choose to focus on sports in particular such as horse racing, football, basketball etc. If you intend to run the affiliate site either by yourself or with a small team, you should always pick a sport or topics that you have a good understanding of. It won't take a football or any other sports fan long to know if your content offers any valuable insights. So focus on what you know when producing content for your site, then you can begin to focus on making your site stand out from the crowd.

Warren Jacobs, the Managing Director of ActiveWin, explained the need for standing out from the crowd, commenting: "Any affiliate looking to break through to the upper echelons of sportsbook needs to have something new and different that readers don't get on other sites. Being a

'me too' is not enough. The benefit of starting anew is that there are a lot of advancements made in building sites, which were not available a few years ago. Sites must be constructed with SEO in mind, so you can start indexing on the search terms with the most volume. Have a video hub with unique content in the form of podcasts. Be very active on social media and interact with your followers. Update content constantly. If a fledgling affiliate site can't commit to these



WARREN JACOBS

activities, they should expect to struggle to gain site traffic from those who do."

"Webmasters that provide unique, insightful content to readers will be able to reap rewards for their hard work. Running a successful sportsbook affiliate site takes a tremendous amount of dedication and resource, and the payoff for that effort comes in the form of increased commissions from operators. Those who take a half-hearted approach can expect to get back what they put in. Like any other job, hard work is rewarded."

An additional aspect of content to consider when establishing your sports betting affiliate site, is the advertising banners which will adorn your site. These banners will be

"THE DAYS ARE LONG GONE WHEN AN AFFILIATE COULD SIMPLY PUT UP A FEW PAGES AND GENERATE TRAFFIC. THIS IS A COMPETITIVE MARKET AND AFFILIATES NEED TO HAVE A COMPLETE STRATEGY"

provided to you by the sites which you are driving traffic towards and will be your most important links in terms of generating revenue. You will have to ensure that the placement and design of the banners is suitable to your site. The process of finding what works best could entail some trial and error. But don't be deterred. Getting the placements right and ensuring that they are up-to-date and relevant will enable your site to attract and retain customers more easily.

It's time.



Picking the right affiliate program can be one of the most challenging aspects of establishing an affiliate website. Like most crucial business decisions, a whole host of factors should come into play when making your choice. Of course it is important to find a program that is financially rewarding, but there are also other aspects to consider. Does your first choice affiliate program offer the similar content to your own? Is it well known? Does it offer your customers the best odds? And is it a respectable company to do business with? All of these factors could affect your returns in the long run.

Once you have reached the stage of selecting an affiliate program to become a part of, you should already have established what your website content will include. You should also be aware that many affiliate programs can assist you with complying with the regulatory requirements that your site will be expected to adhere to. Most large-scale affiliate programs will offer their expertise as part of their allurements. This should not be overlooked when establishing your first affiliate site as they can offer vital information that can help you avoid making costly mistakes.

"We've had to adjust to the tremendous amount of regulation that has rolled out since the last World Cup. We've produced a series of compliance guidelines to use internally, and have built a special in-house compliance team to review everything from banners to T&Cs," said Warren Jacobs. "To help affiliates understand the change, we published a blog on our site to guide them on the major points for promoting the World Cup. There is a new compliance hub on the ActiveWin's site as well.

"Any affiliate who has the opportunity to expand in the States should grasp it with both hands. Careful planning will be essential though. As in the UK, there are strict compliance guidelines, and it's made trickier by the fact that different states have different laws. It's also important to bear in mind that the sports we are so accustomed to reporting on in the UK hold little appeal to an American audience. Football (or soccer), cricket, darts and snooker pale in comparison to baseball, basketball, hockey and American football. You'll have to be proficient in your knowledge of these games in order to attract readers to your site. Don't blag it... your audience will immediately be able to tell that American sports is not your area of expertise. Stick with what you know."

"ANY AFFILIATE WHO HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPAND IN THE US SHOULD GRASP IT WITH BOTH HANDS"

Nowadays, another factor to consider is the fact that affiliate programs are also far more aware of their affiliate's activities, meaning that if you aren't up to date with your compliance standards and content you will struggle to join any respectable affiliate program.

In the United Kingdom for example, during 2017 the UK Gambling Commission (UKGC) began a crackdown on affiliates, punishing the affiliate programs that worked alongside non-compliant websites. It saw BGO Entertainment fined a hefty \$395,000 for misleading advertising on both its

own and three of its affiliates websites. They had breached the 2015 Licence Conditions and Codes of Practice, a testament to the need to stay up-to-date with all the latest regulatory updates. The crackdown even led to one of the UK's largest gaming operators, Sky Betting & Gaming, announcing the end of its affiliate marketing program, with the company stating 'growing regulatory concerns' for their departure from the market.



GARY MYERS

If affiliates are looking to establish sports betting focused sites available in the US, or anywhere else for that matter, they must before all else make sure that they are completely up to date and aware of all regulatory obligations. Only then will they be able to ensure that they have a site which will be able to operate in their desired jurisdiction, with their desired affiliate program. It is also important to remember that the US is still a new market and must be approached with caution. There could be more hassle than reward in the country as the dust has not yet settled with regards to the just how affiliates will be affected by PASPA's repeal.

The Intertops Affiliate team explained: "One of the toughest questions these days is how can the gambling industry benefit from the repeal of PASPA in the US market. Indeed, the answer is not that simple.

"Regulating such a huge market in cooperation with the big association (NBA, MLB, etc...) might end in a complete mess and result in future taxation for the end consumer, the sports bettor.

"Building up a successful website from the scratch means a lot of important parameters have to fit together and it takes a while for a site to start producing traffic. Why give away your traffic to one-hit-wonders who boast unrealistic lifetime deals and then disappear the following year? At the end of the day the operators pay for the commission, so "Trust The First" and get paid like every other affiliate has been paid for the past 20 years at Intertops. As we never tire of telling our affiliates: both sides have to benefit from a good business relationship."

Whether or not you choose to focus on the US sports betting market or a more established market such as the UK's, it is clear that you must understand the regulations. Then you can begin to create the content that will drive the most traffic to your site.

This will allow you to select the right partners for your advertising banners and potential affiliate programs. Follow these steps and you will be on your way to operating a successful sports betting affiliate site.

BIG QUESTION

“On the face of it, affiliate networks seem like a win-win solution for operators seeking to reach a larger audience, requiring minimal effort. However, what are the challenges that come with relying on these networks to direct consumers to your site? And do you think the advantages outweigh the costs?”



ANDREAS LILJA

Operations Manager, Matching Visions

“Being the middleman between operators and affiliates, a good affiliate network must find ways to effectively communicate the needs and wants from all parties.”

Danish-founded affiliate network Matching Vision opened its doors in 2014, aiming to turn the affiliate world into a safer place for operators and affiliates. At the time, affiliates were often faced with chasing late commission payments and sometimes didn't get paid at all. At the same time, some affiliates were only in it for a quick cash grab, indulging in fraudulent activities at the expense of operators.

Affiliate networks often possess a vast network of industry contracts along with a large number of affiliates. Because of this, networks can act as a protective cushion for their affiliates, making sure that commission is paid on time. And, by adopting a thorough know your client (KYC) procedure, networks can get to know their affiliates better and sometimes detect suspicious affiliate activities even before the operator's fraud teams detect them. This is a good example of how affiliate networks can help safeguard the affiliate industry.

In addition, networks provide affiliates with a perfect solution, especially for new affiliates who may not have the resources necessary to create and manage accounts with each single operator that they want to promote. Within a network, they will find everything they need.

The key to achieving all of this is clear and frequent communication. Being the middleman between operators and affiliates, a good affiliate network must find ways to effectively communicate the needs and wants from all parties. Failure to do so might leave both operators and affiliates with a feeling of frustration and that they're being restricted by having to go through a middleman for business to flourish.

At Matching Visions, affiliates access all marketing materials for all of their brands, inside their Matching Visions' account. This means that the network is solely responsible for making sure all marketing

material is updated and accurate. Any successful network must ensure that each operator informs them of their current and upcoming promotions and all affiliates are aware of updates and changes. Failure to do so could lead to false advertising, loss of income and even lawsuits.

Lately, the iGaming industry has come under intense scrutiny from governments all over the world, forcing companies to improve their KYC and compliance procedures. This adds yet another element to the complex role of being the middleman for an affiliate network. But rather than seeing this as a problem, we believe this is an opportunity for us as a network. In addition to the benefits of working within a network, this is yet another opportunity for networks to prove themselves as a total solution for both operators and our affiliates.

A couple of months ago we initiated a KYC procedure and requested personal and business documents from affiliates. Thanks to trust and our close relationship with affiliates, this massive task was carried out and completed with minimal effort.

This means that operators in our network can rest safely, knowing our affiliates have been fully verified. So instead of operators having to ask affiliates for these documents, they can request information directly from us if needed.

Similarly, for affiliates, instead of having to complete this procedure for each brand they promote, all they need to do is to upload these onto our site, and they're instantly verified with operators in our network.

By continuing to prioritise strong relationships and effective communication, we're extremely optimistic that networks will play an even bigger part in the future of affiliation.



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TOM GALANIS

Director, TAG Media

“Beyond the UK, networks and master affiliates carry more value and importance. They have the ability to ease the workload of generally overstretched operator business development and account management teams”

In virtually all other affiliate marketing verticals, affiliate networks play a key role in delivering publisher-driven traffic to merchant websites. From a fairly early stage, online gaming chose a different path, preferring to centralise traffic through in-house affiliate operations. Be that as it may, there has always remained scope for smaller affiliate networks and master affiliates to operate in the space, but are market forces further marginalising the role either or both play in acquisition?

Regulatory pressure in the UK market has seen operators such as Paddy Power Betfair heavily restrict business from networks that cannot clearly specify traffic sources. Fear over advertising compliance infringement and ePrivacy of potentially self-excluded customers has seen almost every operator in the UK market seek to gain more control over publisher activity and this is squeezing out network traffic, even through the mobile channel where networks have been more widely used historically.

Beyond the UK, networks and master affiliates carry more value and importance. They have the ability to ease the workload of generally overstretched operator business development and account management teams. Quite often the staff behind these services – particularly master affiliates – possess experience far greater and more broad than can be found in operator affiliate teams and this is where their true value can be found.

Aside from obvious traffic benefits, a master affiliate will offer a fresh line of thinking focused on delivering marked improvements in player conversion and lifetime value, which are the two key metrics determining pick up and sustainability of the partnerships they set up.

Affiliate network models differ. There is less of a personal touch and a reality check that as an operator account manager, you lose control over the quality of inbound traffic as well as the ability to personalise player acquisition journeys, offers and promotions to those

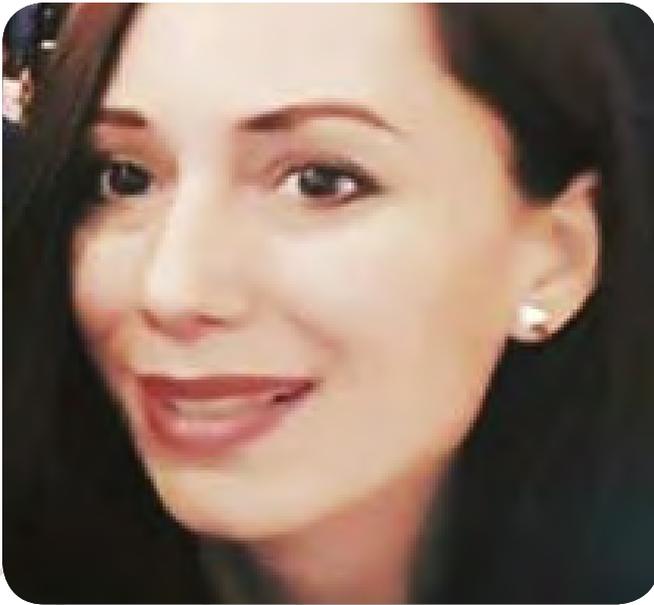
publishers in question. In order to fully optimise the efforts of an affiliate network, an affiliate account manager must still go to similar lengths to understand the traffic sources, user flows and return on investment. Then there is the question of untargeted, often blanket affiliate commissions, whilst all the while factoring in the network's override charge, and quite often networks go out of their way to prohibit contact between publisher and merchant for obvious reasons.

Another consideration is integration with networks. Invariably multiple pixels or server to server tracking iterations are involved and there are a few CTOs out there that forcefully rule out these integrations citing security concerns. Furthermore, if you wish to link the network to your internal affiliate software, your platform will need to support an API integration and with some providers, this comes at a cost.

We must not ignore the upsides of affiliate networks. They can assist hugely in the volume game and experience in dealing with high volume/low value, often incentivised traffic. I can tell you from experience that the highest grossing online customer I have ever seen came through a £10 CPA deal with a cashback site, so you never know... It is absolutely vital that if you plan on running this sort of traffic through networks, that you have an onboarding and CRM journey that focuses on cashback.

A further benefit to both master affiliates and networks can be found when exploring new markets, using either or both to gain market traction, knowledge and volume without overstressing your business development resource – and indeed taking the step of employing a local language account managers.

In brief – set up and managed with due thought and diligence, both networks and master affiliate relationships allow operators vehicles to grow their businesses beyond simple volume, but must not – in particular reference to networks – be left unchecked.



GEORGIA EZEANU

Affiliate Manager, PUNX Media

“While the general view over the affiliate networks has been long idealised in being the ones that harness the work of affiliates who have the traffic in favour of the casino websites who are looking for traffic, we see now how hard it is to stay on top of the game.”

Working as an affiliate network has never been as full of excitement as it is nowadays. Read “excitement” as an extreme roller coaster, where the ride is with ups and downs and can still surprise you with unexpected turns. While the general view over the affiliate networks has been long idealised in being the ones that harness the work of affiliates who have the traffic in favour of the casino websites who are looking for traffic, we see now how hard it is to stay on top of the game. It is worth mentioning the ever-changing regulation policies that vary from country to country, complying with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) that sets new rules regarding user data protection, or dealing with Google’s updates and SERP changes to keep a higher ranking – all of which can seriously impact on all stakeholders involved in online gambling scene.

Challenges also come from working with casino affiliate programs, part of which still don’t allow on their tracking platforms access to valuable data for creating the player persona. Not getting too deep in details such as demographics and behaviour patterns, but at least country and real-time stats would be very useful. How can a network optimise their traffic flow if the data is not available? That’s why keeping in close communication with affiliate managers is best and wise to have. What to do when the affiliate manager is not responsive? Or worse, lets you understand that things are not supposedly working well just at the end of the month when traffic was delivered and payments are expected.

These are only a few frequent issues happening on the day-to-day business operations, which can be overcome with a positive attitude and lots of hard work. Sadly, there are even more extreme cases, when payments are being delayed or even suspended, and reasons invoked may differ from casino take-over with new ownership to suspicious – but yet to be proved – player behaviour, or even disputes over the accounts’ rightful holder.

From the operators’ standpoint, the demands of affiliate networks might be perceived as a bit uncomfortable, as most often they are being asked for higher and higher pay-outs on CPA deals (cost per

acquisition), CPL (cost per lead) and hybrid (a mix between revenue share and a smaller CPA), leaving revenue share at the bottom of the list. Some tested methods for maintaining a profitable business partnership are to keep an eye on the ongoing deals and optimise the campaigns, sorted by specific traffic sources. On the other hand, operators must take into account that their partners in lead generation – affiliate networks – have to carry on with making further payments to their affiliates, publishers or media budget for PPC/CPM advertising.

The rewards make the effort worthwhile in a symbiotic relationship, where the mechanism appears to be simple enough, as the main role of an affiliate network is to drive traffic on casino websites and to convert sign-ups into players.

The traffic can be and it is built from scratch – from creating few up to hundreds of websites targeting casino or sportsbook players, or just being bought from others in what we see now as a major consolidation process, made possible through repeatable mergers and acquisitions.

Catena Media or Better Collective or BlexR are most relevant to this great display of force, where big chunks of market share are being disputed and divided. Also, there are some surprisingly agile affiliate networks that only rely on affiliates and third parties for sending leads, one of which is PUNX Media – a performance-based marketing company, founded in 2017, which extended its coverage to related areas like managing the affiliate programs for private casino projects. This dual perspective enables the company to be knowledgeable and committed to both affiliates and operators’ business goals.

In the end, there is a quote that best describes the profitable yet fragile partnership between affiliate networks and casino operators which goes like this: “There are three sides to every story: yours, theirs, and the truth somewhere in the middle.” As companies are continuously searching for new ways to gain leverage in a mature market, creativity and out-of-the-box thinking, doubled by a strong work ethic, are invaluable assets that must be nurtured for a sustainable growth and development.

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COMING TO AMERICA

The US Supreme Court finally repealed PASPA, leaving the whole affiliate industry eagerly waiting to see the land of opportunity unfold before them. **Marc Frank Pedersen**, Director of Business Development at Better Collective, offers the affiliate perspective on how the American sports betting market may develop



CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Better Collective, of course, see a lot of potential in this market, but it's important to keep a cool head and review the potential challenges and opportunities we can leverage. I've done my best to outline some of the challenges that we may see occurring in the US.

For one, we need to understand how the regulation will work. This will be a state-by-state decision, meaning every state can implement different types of regulation. It becomes crucial that we remain knowledgeable on each state's own unique regulation so that we can be as compliant as possible. Also, since the states are starting from scratch, it will not be straightforward to predict the challenges that we may

encounter, especially compared to the currently established markets that we already know so well.

This state-by-state regulation will also create difficulties for the operators themselves, as they will undoubtedly have to deal with heavy operational costs. I think that, due to these costs, we will begin to see that each of the states will be dealing with different operators across the country – which is a big difference compared to the European online gaming space, where we see the same operators acting across the individual markets.

From the affiliates perspective, we of course have additional challenges. One major challenge is the influx of competition. Since we are incredibly excited about the repeal of PASPA, we

can be sure that all of the competition is feeling similar jitters. There will also be brand new competitors coming onto the scene, but it cannot yet be said to what extent – nor can we predict exactly what to expect, so right now everyone is in the same position.

Plus, let's not forget that we are dealing with an entirely different audience than we are used to. The American punters are looking for different things than the audiences we have become used to – and that means they will likely observe different betting patterns as well.

However, there are many opportunities in the American market that we can all look forward to. For one, the audience in America is predominantly new to online sports betting, meaning they will be very open to reading up, and educating themselves, on their options within sports betting.

That's where affiliates really have an advantage – affiliates are well positioned in this market when it comes to providing earnest user reviews and user-generated content to help new punters find the best operators for their specific needs. That is something that Better Collective is strongly including in our strategy moving into the states.

BETTER COLLECTIVE AND THE US

As Better Collective begins to enter the US market, we have a few areas of focus that we want to execute. One of these is bringing our pre-existing products over to America and its new audience.

As mentioned, affiliates are well positioned to help the new American punters educate themselves, and teach them the ropes of how to choose the bookmaker that is most relevant to them and their needs.

I have reason to believe that the American culture is much more open to using affiliate platforms before opening accounts with operators – mainly due the heavy use of peer reviews in American online culture. We need to remember, this is the culture that created Yelp, TripAdvisor and Google reviews – they've engrained complete peer-to-peer platforms, like Uber and Airbnb, into their lives that predominantly built on giving and getting good reviews so that they can social-proof themselves when others are engaging with them for the first time.

Although other markets also look to reviews, I would say that the process of looking for recommendations is more deeply rooted in the American culture. This is why I feel positive about Better Collective entering the US market. The majority of our products are built upon honest reviews of operators, and our flagships, such as bettingexpert.com, include user-generated advice and content relating to sports betting – so we already have the core competencies that bode well for an American audience. Hopefully we can bring these existing products to the US market, as well develop new products based on our expertise.

However, beyond the Americans' approach to reviews online, it is also important to recognise that they have a completely different sports culture compared to other markets. There are some differences in that the odds are different, and punters are looking for considerably more in-depths stats than they are seeking in the EU, for example.

This is an informed assumption on my part, but statistics are so much more ingrained in the American sports culture than in others. If you look at basketball, American football, and specifically baseball, everything is measured and reviewed. This means that there will be a big appetite for stats before bet placements, and this in itself offers new opportunities for affiliate products like those that we have here at Better Collective.

On top of our existing products becoming more tailored for the US market, we will also begin to develop new

products for the new audience. We've already executed on this strategy through our newest product, us-bookies.com, which gives a complete state-by-state breakdown of which bookies are available where. Sites like this will become truly valuable, considering how varied the regulation will be from state to state.

Another thing we will continue to see is the trend of M&A activity extend to the US market. Since we were recently listed on the Nasdaq in Stockholm, we have been



MARK FRANK PEDERSEN

"THE AMERICAN PUNTERS ARE LOOKING FOR DIFFERENT THINGS THAN THE AUDIENCES WE HAVE BECOME USED TO – AND THAT MEANS THEY WILL LIKELY OBSERVE DIFFERENT BETTING PATTERNS AS WELL."

able to raise capital fund our M&A strategy – Better Collective will definitely be conducting new acquisitions in the US, aiming to work with brands that already have an established user base and brand.

When the field is clear, our next move will likely be to acquire sport betting licences in the different states, allowing us to facilitate bet placements with our operator partners much like we do in currently in the UK.

214  **EMPLOYEES**

 **24+**
SITES

 **14**
YEARS IN BUSINESS

 **3K+**

TIPS POSTED DAILY

250+  **AFFILIATES PARTNERS**

2K+  **WEBSITES**

 **450K**
REGISTERED USERS

8  **ACQUISITIONS IN 2017**

"IF YOU LOOK AT BASKETBALL, AMERICAN FOOTBALL, AND SPECIFICALLY BASEBALL, EVERYTHING IS MEASURED AND REVIEWED. THIS MEANS THAT THERE WILL BE A BIG APPETITE FOR STATS BEFORE BET PLACEMENTS, AND THIS IN ITSELF OFFERS NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR AFFILIATE PRODUCTS."

However, until the horizon clears for the market to open up, and sports betting licences are acquired, our main focus will remain with our American M&A strategy, as well as organic growth through our already existing products and the creation of new ones.

THE FUTURE OF THE AMERICAN MARKET

The expansion of sports betting in America is now in the hands of the states themselves. Anyone who is hoping to see the market opening up in one big nationwide swoop will be disappointed. There has never been, and most likely never will be, any general federal regulations. It will likely always stay at a state level, and will be dependent upon the decisions of respective states on how to further approach the Supreme Court's decision in May.

The process has begun but we cannot realistically determine how long anything will take. It is fair to say that everyone hopes for California to open up, but it's not likely going to happen anytime soon. In the long run, states will surely look towards those who have already done it and will see the revenue that it produces, thereby realising the appeal and benefits of following suit.

Over the next couple of years, I expect other US states to follow in Delaware's footsteps, with gambling on sports becoming legalised on a slightly wider scale, expanding the American market.

In five years' time, I expect many more states to follow which, in turn, will create a much more regulated sports betting landscape.

The usual suspects within Europe will also continue to launch in the US. I suspect that in most cases, the European operators will enter the markets via partnerships with pre-established American casinos or racetracks. An outlier of this is obviously the strategy taken by Paddy Power Betfair who decided to partner with fantasy partner DraftKings – but I am not convinced that this will be a common strategy.

We cannot forget though, that this is still the beginning and so we will have to monitor the situation closely as it unfolds and act accordingly. However, there is no denying that the opening up of America is a new beginning for regulated sports betting and it has huge potential. If it develops as well as we hope, it could well be unprecedented in nature.

NO SUCH LUCK, ONLY HARD WORK

Jan Möller, CEO and Co-Founder of LuckyLabz, tells *Trafficology* how he managed to navigate his way through the industry to run one of the largest German-focused companies today



I met my business partner and LuckyLabz co-founder Jeton Kodia when we were students at the poker tables. What was first considered a rivalry fast became a strong friendship, and from this there came LuckyLabz.

Both Jeton and I have been involved in sports betting and gambling since we were 18... maybe even earlier. We both have a strong passion for sport in general and, in particular, football.

As a student, and not the most profitable poker player, I discovered the Affiliate Program button at my favourite poker platform Party Poker. Soon after I started as an affiliate by printing PartyPoker vouchers with my affiliate code on, then distributing

them in the mailboxes of my whole neighbourhood in Kassel, where I studied.

It goes without saying, but this was not a great success. However, it encouraged me to try a different approach using Google Adwords, which still allowed gambling keywords in Germany at the time. If you were searching for a "PartyPoker bonus" on Google you would be directed to my single-page affiliate website describing the aspects of the PartyPoker bonus.

This was somewhat more successful than my mailbox approach, and consequently spurred me on to finance my education through this method, with the hopes of potentially becoming a millionaire.

Nonetheless, this dream was pretty short-lived and, after six months of this, the click prices had become so expensive that it was no longer profitable for me. And shortly afterwards, Adwords banned gambling terms in Germany anyway, so my money-making dreams were thwarted but at least I had a brand new, shiny flat-screen TV in my student apartment to show my work didn't count for nothing.

A few months later, just for fun, I started my own website where I would publish all my own betting tips. While my football tips were not up to much, I had better luck with ice hockey. From this tipping success I realised there was no website dedicated exclusively to ice hockey so I decided to start my own.

After a few months, Betfair contacted me via the ice hockey tips site, wanting to advertise their product and asked for a price. The website had about 100 unique visitors at the time and I didn't have a clue as to how much I should be asking for.

I knew I had to seek some advice so I spoke with a gambling affiliate, and he suggested asking for €250 (\$290) per month as a fixed fee. Instead, I asked for €500 and surprisingly Betfair agreed. This influx of money per month doubled by BAFöG (money the German government pay every month to finance studies) and I felt I had seriously hit the jackpot big time.

I told my friend Jeton about the site and the Betfair deal, both of which he was fascinated by. If ice hockey could generate so much money, what would be possible with football tips? He suggested trying it and splitting the revenue.

From this point onwards we brainstormed new ideas, websites and what people might search for. We then went on to launch even more tip sites, for sports such as tennis, basketball and even handball – all of which made us some nice side income as students.

When it was time to look for my mandatory, six-month internship as part of my studies it was obvious that it wouldn't be worth my time to apply to Volkswagen, Porsche, BASF or any other of the big German companies that every German student wants to intern at. I wanted to get experience at a bookmaker.

I sent out loads of applications to all the sports betting sites I knew. The first and only one who responded was Bet-at-Home, one of the biggest operators in Germany at the time. They invited me to Linz in Austria for an interview and convinced me to join their marketing team and not the human resources or management assistant roles I originally applied for.

I happily agreed under the condition that I could support their affiliate marketing (which was done by only one person at that time) and because of my experience in the field they agreed.

After four months as the assistant to the one-man affiliate team, the 'Head of Affiliates' resigned which opened up the position for me. Going from an intern to a management position in only a few months was like a dream come true.

Jeton and I discussed the situation, realising quickly that I wouldn't have much time to devote to our projects, so we came to the conclusion that he should look after them with me contributing when I had time at weekends and evenings.

This lasted for one and a half exciting but exhausting years. During this period, our projects started to generate enough money for Jeton and I to make our affiliate activities into a serious, legitimate business.

After a long, whiskey-fuelled night brainstorming, the idea for LuckyLabz was born. We both moved to Hamburg, rented a little office there which was otherwise known as "Chicken Box" by our neighbours.

From here we continued to grow our business and, after one year, it was finally time to get some help, employing our first member of staff. However, Germany is a very expensive place to operate for a small and growing business, so we decided to look further afield to see if we could get a little bit more value for our money.

After some research we decided on Varna, a beautiful city on the Bulgarian Black Sea, which is where the LuckyLabz HQ is still situated today.

Our aim is to build the most user-friendly, beautiful and value-added information websites about online betting, casino

“AFTER A FEW MONTHS, BETFAIR CONTACTED ME VIA THE ICE HOCKEY TIPS SITE, WANTING TO ADVERTISE THEIR PRODUCT AND ASKED FOR A PRICE. I KNEW I HAD TO SEEK SOME ADVICE SO I SPOKE WITH A GAMBLING AFFILIATE, AND HE SUGGESTED ASKING FOR €250 PER MONTH, AS A FIXED FEE. INSTEAD, I ASKED FOR €500 AND SURPRISINGLY BETFAIR AGREED”



JETON KODIA AND JAN MÖLLER

and poker for our customers with our main market being German-speaking countries.

Although we are amongst the leaders in this market, we realised that if we wanted to continue to grow, we needed to explore and open new markets to acquire new customers. This is something that we've been focused for the past several years.

For me, as a person, every single detail is important. It's not just about getting the job done. Every single job should be done perfectly. My employees know that I am very critical, but the devil is in the detail. If our projects are not unique and professional then the project is only half done. Online gaming is our destiny and we expect the same from all of our employees.

We have been in Varna more than five years with over 60 full-time employees there, about ten in Sofia and another ten in different countries around Europe. Additionally we have countless freelancers working for us.

The last few years have been very exciting and we feel that this could be just the beginning. The market is consolidating itself a lot and there are not so many independent serious companies left which haven't already been acquired. We are looking forward developments in this industry and you best believe that we have big plans for the future.

A MOUNTAIN TO CLIMB

With the need for affiliate compliance creating huge workloads for operators, **Aparajitaa Rao-Counter**, Rightlander Operations Manager, explains why so many are turning towards automation to help them come to grips with this time-consuming task

Compliance has become such a huge undertaking for operators that, in reality, there simply isn't enough time in the day to ensure they meet all of the rules and regulations in just one of the markets they are active in, let alone in others that have started down the regulatory path.

From "player protection" to "know your customer" (KYC) protocols via marketing restrictions and stringent reporting requirements, operators have had to rapidly increase the size of their compliance departments to keep pace.

When Rightlander launched in January 2018, we noticed that the job of affiliate compliance landed in the lap of the affiliate program

but also help operators ensure they are leveraging the valuable data they have at their disposal.

Take affiliate compliance specifically. This is a relatively new area that operators have had to quickly get to grips with - the UK Gambling Commission has made it clear that operators are ultimately responsible for the material affiliates use to promote their brands on their behalf.

This means operators must now monitor affiliates - including those they might not be aware are representing their brands - to ensure they are promoting them in line with the rules and regulations in each market they are active.

This can be done manually, or through automated platforms that scan affiliate websites and compile a list of where their brands are mentioned and linked to. The Rightlander platform, for example, also searches for certain events and conditions defined by the operator.

These can be inclusive or exclusive and specific to the individual operator. Our technology also captures images and the content of anchor text used to link to the operator's brands and creates a variety of custom reports and alerts for the operator.

This helps our clients discover affiliate websites linking to their brands that they are currently unaware of, allowing them to ensure the affiliates sending traffic to their sites are acting responsibly.

Automated tools such as Rightlander are becoming the "go-to" method for monitoring how affiliates are representing brands, and for other aspects of compliance.

For the busy affiliate manager or compliance officer, receiving alerts when instances of potential non-compliant content are found rather than having to trawl through a site, page by page, is an attractive proposition.

There is another challenge faced by operators, too: that of geolocation and the differing standards and guidelines set by the appropriate regulatory authorities in each jurisdiction.

This is one area that automation is perfect for. Third party technologies have the power to scan content via proxies and VPNs in territories all around the world, ensuring compliance in each individual market.

Operators certainly have a mountain to climb when it comes to compliance, but by using automation they can lessen the staff hours required while also ensuring they don't drop the ball. The penalties for doing so are more severe now than ever before, after all.

Of course, there is a caveat to automation and that is the need for the human touch. While automation can do much of the leg work, compliance experts are still required to understand what the data is showing them, and to take the necessary actions.

Automation helps make it a lot easier to identify compliance issues and some platforms make decisions automatically, but they should always be overseen by a compliance officer.

So it's not a case of man versus machine, rather man and machine working hand in hand. Together, they can conquer the compliance mountain.



manager. While that is still the case in many instances, we are seeing more and more operators now assigning dedicated staff to compliance activities.

Operators are required to gather and store huge volumes of data to demonstrate that they are doing the job required by the regulators but the scale and scope of the information collected means it is impossible for compliance teams to effectively segment, analyse and act on data without the assistance of third-party solutions and automation.

Data collected under the guise of affiliate compliance, for example, also has a lot of value to the operator from a marketing perspective, revealing where their brands are represented and pages and areas of affiliate websites where there may be opportunities. The problem is that there is not enough time or resource available to realise its full potential.

Automation will never perform 100% of the compliance task but it is a powerful tool that can not only save hundreds of staff hours

THE AGE OF INSTANT GRATIFICATION AND WHERE WE FIT

In modern-day society, consumers are able to access nearly everything at the click of a button. **Ethan Brunso**, Copywriter at Delasport explains why it's paramount that affiliates meet the sophisticated demands of today's consumer



You must stand as a pillar of professionalism no matter how far from the truth. Make sure your audience repeats your answers with awe instead of asking more questions.

Carry your brand and streamline all of your products and services the right way. Make your statement by getting the more expensive service that will ease your journey. Find the very details that make a target group approachable and immerse yourself in their outlook.

Empathy can take you a long way. Find meaning where there is visibly none.

Advertise strongly on a full moon. Approach with care on a low tide.

Be mindful of trending changes that pull at people's heartstrings. Few predicted the massive boom we've been experiencing with LGBTQ acceptance the past couple of years, a movement that inspired many to re-evaluate their values individually and as a whole.

Instant gratification is here to stay. Automation has come to an almost utopian level and we are part of the change.

Feed the machine, enhance the consumption of your service and streamline your brand to co-exist with the madness that is present-day reality. Understand generations X, Y and Z to a tee.

Seems like day after day we're all taught that wanting something means you should have it, like... now! Memes? Now! iPhone 14? Now! Universal health coverage? Maybe... ask again tomorrow.

Why oh why did we teach our kids that consumption is the answer, the mass digestion of every nonsensical thing that comes within their view? Because we want to sell things, and we want to do it quickly and constantly.

Welcome all to the age of a globally integrated economy. Make sure that you are up to par with every possible ludicrous act and demand that everyday consumers have and target your audience accordingly.

Artificial intelligence is looking to kick up a storm once proper implementation is viable. We've already seen how it's reshaping web search, advertising, e-commerce, finance, media and more.

Be prepared to develop yourself and your brand to instantly provide any and all answers to your hard-earned customer and partners.

If the "Wolf of Wall Street" teaches us anything, it's that a bird in the bush is worth more than two in the hand.

Sell more than you're worth and you'll land in the black, make the market dynamic your friend and, if you can't, then just wing it with a smile!

At Delasport, we are avid advocates of instant gratification and all that it brings to business.

Want a plug-and-play Asian sportsbook? Have it instantly!

Want a flashy looking white label with features filled to the brim? Easy as pie!

Want something we don't even offer? No worries!

A well thought out, clever branding strategy will take any product and shape it into the "go to for you" purchase of your client's dreams.

How unsettling, and at the same time absolutely wonderful, it is to have your life in your hand – or in your phone, to be exact.

It offers total and instant access, tailor-made to suit almost any whim. With your phone, you hold a clock, camera, radio, torch, music system, map, credit card, language translator, game console and so much more.

Shout your life story from the rooftops with Twitter. Share everything you see with Instagram and Pinterest, or reach anyone and everyone through Facebook. All of these are available and executable with minimal effort because that is the standard so many of us have joyfully accepted.

How can we possibly gain the favour of someone who can have anything, at any time?

It's not as difficult as we make it out to be. No amount of market saturation will ever eclipse sheer, original IPs that know how to adapt and also change the very business of people.

Why even bother assimilating to this "I want", not "I need" mentality?

Because that is where true inventiveness carries forward. Media has become more and more dynamic in a constant attempt to try and outshine itself, giving us the opportunity to bend our services and products to shape our target audience.

Think of what your competitors are doing incorrectly. Exploit and show class and poise to their clients if needed, or whit and whimsy when warranted.

Know what sets a target audience off. There is no excuse for minimal research and indifference.

It would be wrong to approach your clients and partners with the same uninterested and tired mood that many consumers have.



PLAY HARD

Tal Itzhak Ron, Chairman & CEO at Tal Ron, Drihem & Co. Law Firm tells *Trafficology* what he enjoys outside of his work day.

an amazing vegetarian and fish restaurant. And last, but certainly not least, The Siam, which is located literally on the water, with a sophisticated yet very friendly setting.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE STREET FOOD?

My favourite street food is a very popular Israeli dish called "Sabich". It's made of eggplants, Israeli salad, hummus, and hard-boiled eggs, among other condiments, in pita bread. It's not ideal if you're on a diet, but it's exceptionally tasty.

IF YOU COULD OFFER ONE PIECE OF CAREER ADVICE, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

There is no substitute for passion towards your profession. In order to truly succeed in your profession, whatever it should be, you have to be exceptionally passionate about it and enjoy every second of it.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE GADGET AT THE MOMENT?

My BlackBerry Secure smartphone. I believe there are not many fans of the BlackBerry today, however, I am happy to be one of those remaining few.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU?

Challenges. I like challenges and like to find the most creative and legal way to solve them for our clients – whether it's legal, banking, and technological or compliance challenges. Being a computer scientist and a lawyer, I find many similarities between law and computer science, as in both industries there are challenging problems to be solved.

HOW DO YOU START YOUR DAY OFF IN THE MORNING?

I pick up my children and take them to school, normally I do so by bike. In Tel Aviv we have good weather nearly 300 days a year. Then, four times a week, I do one hour of exercise in the gym with a private trainer, plus one time on my own. I started that six months ago and enjoy it very much. And on Thursdays, I am joined by colleagues for a sports class at our office.

WHAT WERE SOME OF YOUR BIGGEST INSPIRATIONS GROWING UP?

As a child, I really liked to listen to music. It is still one of my favourite hobbies, together with travelling, sports and food. I also enjoyed programming the computer. In the mid-eighties I enjoyed playing and programming the British-made Sinclair ZX Spectrum, which was popular in Israel at the time, and also the Atari. These days, in my office I have a vintage Namco arcade console in fully usable condition made in 1981, which I purchased directly from a collector, and it is used to entertain our guests. I also have lots of 80s memorabilia which I have collected over the years.

WHERE IS YOUR FAVOURITE PLACE IN THE WORLD?

My favourite city would have to be Tel Aviv, which is a very cosmopolitan city, where I live with my family and work with my legal team, which is also another kind of family.

My second-favourite place is Bangkok. It is a truly crazy, exceptional and interesting city. I am about to visit it for the third time this year with my wife.

IN BOTH OF THESE CITIES WHERE ARE YOUR FAVOURITE PLACES TO STAY?

The best hotel in Tel Aviv is The Norman. It has a very local feel in its architectural style, yet its food, rooms, quality of service and amenities are very international. I also like its rooftop pool which has a nice view of the centre of Tel Aviv.

In Bangkok I have, to date, three particular favourites. The Mandarin Oriental is a classic, old-school hotel with an exceptional location and facilities. The next would be Ariyasom Villa, located in the trendy Sukhumvit area at the end of a leafy alley. It also has



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