

trafficology

AFFILIATE FOCUS BY GAMBLING INSIDER

MAY 2018

INSIDE

- **TAKING THE GUESSWORK OUT OF CONTENT CREATION**
- **BIG QUESTION: MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS**
- **CASHMIO: LOOKING FOR GOLD IN NEW MARKETS**
- **PLAY HARD: CHRISTIAN STRUTT, LUCKY MEDIA**
- **AFFILIATECON SOFIA - THE ESSENTIAL SHOW GUIDE**

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HITTING THE BACK OF THE NET

Winning strategies for online affiliates during the FIFA World Cup 2018

WINNERS

Goliath Casino launched a new affiliate program in partnership with NetRefer - a performance marketing specialist.

Better Collective expanded into its domestic market confirming the acquisition of all Danish affiliate activities from Xperten Ltd and Xpert Ltd.

EVEN

EveryMatrix rebranded BetNCatch.com platform as Pwr.bet.

Reports in China suggest that all social poker adverts will be banned from advertising in the country. WeChat owner Tencent already removed their Texas Hold'em app.

Russia blocked more than 1,800 online gaming sites in the run up to the 2018 FIFA World Cup.

LOSERS

POINT AFFILIATE TRAFFIC IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION



It doesn't take a genius to tell you that when it comes to affiliate marketing, conversion is king. When affiliates spend such a vast amount of time generating traffic, it's paramount that these links send their visitors to the correct operator landing pages.

Affiliate tracker, Rightlander, finds an average of nine broken affiliate links to landing pages on every site it checks. When was the last time you checked yours?

Rightlander is also welcome news for operators keen to ensure their affiliates are behaving themselves. Operators can provide Rightlander with a list of its affiliate websites and the scanner identifies pages where operator brands are mentioned or linked, any anchor text used, where images used to link are self-hosted and where specific operator-defined words or phrases occur.

With a number of high-profile operators finding themselves in hot water over the past 12 months due to various compliance issues with affiliates, this solution ensures their affiliate partners are keeping on the straight and narrow.

With the UKGC deadlines fast approaching, more and more online gaming operators are taking steps to help them manage the daunting responsibility of ensuring their affiliates remain compliant when marketing to UK punters.

As Rightlander's Founder, Ian Sims, says: "In the eyes of UK regulators, operators are responsible for the affiliates acting on their behalf, but keeping track of their activity is complex and time consuming. We make that process much easier and far more effective.

"Online casino operators understand the onus is on them to ensure the affiliates sending traffic to their sites are acting responsibly, but monitoring and managing all of this is a tall order."

Operators are increasingly putting a greater emphasis on responsible gambling and sustainability, however, it's not always as easy to ensure that affiliate partners will share these values. Nonetheless landing page trackers have the potential to bridge the gap, allowing operators to monitor affiliate activity and ensure that the best code of practice is always in play.

10

The number of industry awards won by XLMedia's latest acquisition, WhichBingo

\$1.6M

The acquisition cost to be paid by Game Lounge to acquire SEO specialists Today'sWeb

25 TO 40%

New member of Income Access' affiliates, Tote Ireland, tiered offerings for revenues share commission

4/10

Loot boxes investigated by Kansspelautoriteit, the Dutch Gambling Authority, were in direct violation of the country's laws



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PASS NOTES

Swedish Gambling Authority



WHO? The Swedish Gambling Authority – they are the authority on gambling in Sweden.

YOU DON'T SAY. SO WHAT'S THE STORY? Well, you probably know that they are re-regulating internet gambling on 1 January 2019. They had regulations, but they didn't particularly like them so are changing their minds.

DO THEY DO THAT OFTEN? Well, let's put it this way. The favourite dish in Sweden is the smorgasbord – a selection of food for people who can't make their minds up. Think fermented herring and savoury sandwich cake.

WHAT HAS THIS GOT TO DO WITH GAMBLING AFFILIATES? Well, the Swedish regulator Lotteriinspektionen is opening applications for new online gambling licences on 1 July. But they might change their mind.

WHAT? Their general director Camilla Rosenberg says even when the government signs off on final regulations, the law might not be clear so will probably need changing.

SO THEY ARE CONSTANTLY MOVING THE GAMBLING GOALPOSTS? Let's just say they are keeping their options open. And those options include changing the rules. You'll have to take a chance there could be a re-regulation, in effect. Which sounds a bit like an Abba song.

IF THEY CHANGE THEIR MIND, I'LL BE FIRST IN LINE. PASS THE SMORGASBORD, WOULD YOU...

QUOTE UNQUOTE

"We are delighted to have acquired such a well-regarded UK brand. WhichBingo fits perfectly into our strategy of acquiring high quality assets across regulated markets."

Ory Weihs, CEO of XLMedia commenting on his company's acquisition of WhichBingo

"We're excited to begin our partnership with Lindar Media, and look forward to playing a role in the growth of their brands. Their innovative approach to the online bingo and casino verticals will make them a dynamic partner for affiliates to work with."

Lorenzo Pellegrino, CEO of Income Access and Digital Wallets at Paysafe discussing a new partnership with Lindar Media

"The addition of 15 eSports teams to our affiliate program, along with the 11 announced just ten days ago serves as further powerful proof that VIE is what the industry has been waiting for. We are proud to provide all eSports fans and teams with a fully transparent eSports wagering platform."

Grant Johnson, Chief Executive of Esports Entertainment, on his company's growing eSports affiliate program

MOVERS AND SHAKERS



STEFFAN OLSSON announced his departure as CEO of Global Gaming after ten years in the role. The company's COO, Joacim Möller, will become acting President and CEO until a new appointment is made.

"I want to devote my days to cutting-edge innovation work, and I therefore look forward to the new role, while others in the organisation can focus on the ability to take care of our growth in several countries and a large number of new shareholders."



VITALI KALESNIK is switching sunny California for rainy old London in a move which sees Research Affiliate's head of equity sent to help with the company's European research agenda.

"There is definitely a lot of room for growth. I look forward to helping increase our presence in the region and to making sure our research and insights are impactful to a European audience."



HEATHCLIFF FARRUGIA has been appointed as the Malta Gaming Authority's (MGA) new CEO, replacing outgoing MGA head, Joseph Cuschieri.



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TIMELINE: CATENA MEDIA'S PERFECT EXPANSION PLAN?



2 MARCH

Catena Media express their intent to remain a rapidly expanding company in 2018 with the appointment of Per Hellberg. Although he is expected to take the reins by 3 September 2018, he was specifically chosen for his 'proven track record in M&A, organisational efficiency and creating strong growth and improving operating profit'.

15 MARCH

Nigel Frith is appointed to lead the company's financial focused vertical to help deliver Catena Media's growth strategy. With a background in performance marketing and finance-related operations the appointment is well suited to guide Catena into the new vertical.

28 MARCH

Looking to strengthen its online gaming affiliate's connections in the US the company acquires BonusSeeker.com. Through the website and its related assets it generates \$450,000 per quarter in sales and with an operating margin of 70%. This expansion solidifies Catena Media as one of the top online gaming lead generators in the US.

28 MARCH

The company reaffirms its strategies for growth in its 2017 annual report. The five growth strategies outlined are- Accelerate organic growth, deepen our customer relations, make acquisitions in new verticals or geographic markets, create a unique corporate culture and create innovative energy.

4 APRIL

Nasdaq Stockholm decides to officially list one bond loan issued by Catena Media. The cycle of raising money from investors continues as they are able to raise funds for future mergers and acquisitions. Repeated strong financial performances coupled with mergers and acquisitions give institutional investors confidence in the business. This allows Catena to refinance its debts and improve its long-term position.

12 APRIL

To comply with its growth strategy of acquisitions in new verticals the company acquires BrokerDeal.de. As one of the top financial lead generators in Germany the deal sees the company expand into the financial vertical. Having begun their foray into the sector in November 2017 the newly acquired BrokerDeal.de bolsters Catena's larger private investor focused portfolio.

17 APRIL

Completing the cycle of appointments, acquisitions and fund raising is the directed issue of new shares. The board approved 63,904 shares at a price of \$14.93 per share. These shares are then used to pay part of the cost for acquiring BonusSeeker.com.

13 APRIL

Catena acquire French-based ParisSportifs.com. Complying with the company's strategy of entering new geographic markets this represented the first foray into the French market. Spreading their risks and becoming less vulnerable to changing regulations or declining markets.

25 APRIL

Announced their latest acquisition of UK based gg.co.uk, a horse racing focused website, for an initial purchase price of \$2.79m. This places the company in a strong position in all three of Europe's largest economies, France, Britain and Germany.



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TRAFFIC REPORT

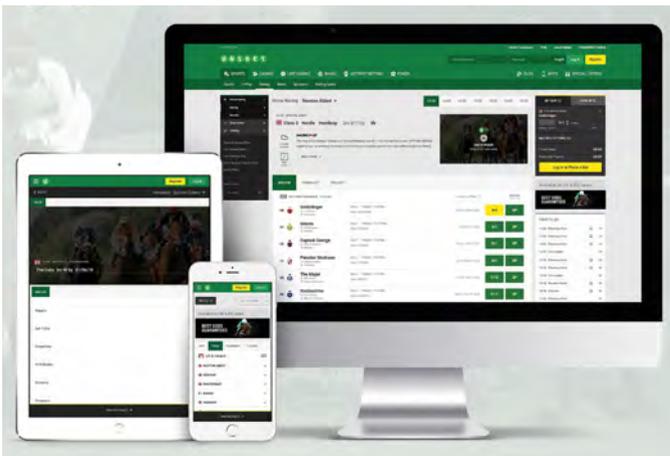
Trafficology has partnered with data experts Casino City Press to provide insight into website and traffic trends across the gaming industry

EUROPE

The bet365 Group retained its leading position in Europe in terms of website traffic, leading the way from an improving Paddy Power Betfair.

Kindred Group (previously Unibet Group) moved into the top three thanks in part to a new casino brand launched in the Romanian market – VladCasino. The new brand was built on the in-house Kindred platform. The group has also recently launched a new racing platform for its UK and Irish platforms which coincided with the Grand National meeting.

"It's been great to finally get the platform out of beta and in front of our customers old and new, showcasing the Grand National meeting to best effect," said Group Head of Global Racing, Ben Colley. "Complementary to the excellent Kambi sportsbook, we expect this new platform for all things racing to quickly become a best of breed example, fully supported by experienced and knowledgeable trading and risk teams in both Gibraltar and Sydney.



Kindred moved into the top three in Europe

"Next steps are to continue to develop and augment the platform to reach a point of excellence in our key racing territories of the UK, Ireland and Australia, then to localise and launch the experience for our individual European markets."

Czech betting agency Tipsport enjoyed a climb up the table of four places, matched by Exinvest and Marathon Group.

Interest at the bottom of the table saw Ladbrokes Coral Group leapfrog GVC Holdings – the latter acquired the former in March.

Traffic to traditional UK retail brands like William Hill were no doubt boosted by the Grand National.

The biggest falls in Europe came from Aviator and Cosmos.

LATIN AMERICA

Mexican operator Grupo Caliente knocked bet365 Group off the top spot in Latin America. Caliente says its growth is down to a "philosophy of continuous capital reinvestment and geographic expansion" which now sees it operate in more than 15 countries in Latin America and Europe.

Curacao-based 247SportsInteractive moved up into the top three thanks to its casino brand Rivalo, with Paraguay's Daruma Sam falling four places. This comes on the back of some controversy in Paraguay as Daruma Sam was granted the monopoly on sports betting in the country by the National Commission on Gambling – a decision ratified in March.

Colombian lottery operator Corredor Empresarial moved up nine places into the Top ten thanks to a new sports betting product launched in February.

The gambling firm became the second operator to be granted an online gambling licence by Colombian gambling regulatory body Colijuegos last September.

Betsson continued to slide (a move mirrored in Europe), while Townview Trading had the biggest fall with six places on the list.

AFRICA

There's little change at the top in Africa with Nigeria's KC Gaming Networks leading the way from global giants bet365 Group. KC Gaming Networks' Bet9ja is the leading online sports betting site in Nigeria, and was founded in 2012.

High climbers last quarter included Exinvest, mybet and PEI. Malta-based PEI was founded in 2002 and is a subsidiary of the German publicly listed mybet Holding SE. So why the leap of both mybet and PEI of 17 places?

In January, mybet was informed by NOVOMATIC, without any prior notice, that all NOVOMATIC casino games offered to customers in Germany by the mybet Group would be deactivated with immediate effect. This saw mybet unable to offer live casino games for several weeks until they agreed a deal with NetEnt.

"We're really pleased that after the surprising service deactivation by our former contracting partner we soon managed to find a reliable partner in NetEnt. After all, we've already been in business with NetEnt for many years now as we already have other games from this provider as part of our program. Now, for the first time, we have also included the NetEnt Live Casino in our entertainment program and can now make a live casino offering available to our customers in an even better, genuinely stylish casino atmosphere," said Markus Peuler, CEO of mybet Holding SE.

The mybet group holds several official licenses across Europe and Africa including Malta, Cyprus, the German federal state of Schleswig-Holstein, the UK and Ghana. ►



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DIGITS

EUROPE AFFILIATE PROGRAMS



LATIN AMERICA AFFILIATE PROGRAMS



AFRICA AFFILIATE PROGRAMS



Rank	+/-	Name
1	-	bet365 Group
2	1 ▲	Paddy Power Betfair
3	1 ▲	Kindred Group
4	2 ▼	Gambling Malta
5	2 ▲	Pari-Match
6	1 ▼	Favorit United
7	4 ▲	Tipsport
8	4 ▲	Exinvest
9	3 ▼	FEG
10	4 ▲	Marathon Group
11	2 ▲	PMU
12	2 ▼	Tipico
13	5 ▲	Aviator
14	5 ▼	Cosmos
15	2 ▲	William Hill
16	2 ▲	Panbet
17	2 ▼	betsson
18	2 ▲	Betcliv Everest
19	4 ▲	Ladbrokes Coral Group
20	4 ▼	GVC Holdings

Rank	+/-	Name
1	1 ▲	Grupo Caliente
2	1 ▼	bet365 Group
3	1 ▲	247SportsInteractive
4	1 ▲	Paddy Power Betfair
5	3 ▲	Aquila Global Group
6	-	GVC Holdings
7	4 ▼	Daruma Sam
8	1 ▼	Media Entertainment
9	9 ▲	Corredor Empresarial
10	1 ▲	Codere
11	2 ▼	betsson
12	2 ▼	Exinvest
13	4 ▲	ColBet
14	-	Radon
15	2 ▼	Cube
16	5 ▲	Oring
17	2 ▼	ElectraWorks
18	6 ▼	Townview Trading
19	4 ▲	William Hill
20	5 ▲	Vision Media Services

Rank	+/-	Name
1	-	KC Gaming Networks
2	-	bet365 Group
3	1 ▲	Logispin
4	1 ▲	Gamcode
5	12 ▲	Exinvest
6	-	Betway Group
7	4 ▲	Gaming International Kenya
8	1 ▲	Editec UK
9	6 ▼	LudWin Group
10	3 ▼	Get Altitude Nigeria
11	3 ▼	Over The Top Entertainment
12	3 ▲	Portapa
13	5 ▲	Hollywood Sportsbook Holdings
14	1 ▼	ZEturf
15	17 ▲	mybet
16	17 ▲	PEI
17	7 ▼	M-Bet
18	4 ▼	Merrybet Gold
19	7 ▼	GVC Holdings
20	1 ▲	Gold Circle Group

HOW TO WIN BIG AT THE WORLD CUP

The greatest sporting tournament in the world, the FIFA World Cup 2018, is also an incredible opportunity for affiliates to cash in. But in an increasingly competitive market, and with affiliates around the world all vying for punters' attention, how do you stand out and cash in? *Trafficology* asks the experts



Football, or soccer to our American cousins, is often referred to as 'the beautiful game'. A moniker born of a delight in the skills and artistry of its better players, gambling affiliates and operators have further reason to show their love. That's because sports betting is worth an estimated trillion dollars a year, with football accounting for 70% of that amount.

Last held in Brazil in 2014, the online landscape has shifted significantly in those four short years that have led us to Russia 2018. Taking the UK market as our example, in figures reported by the Gambling Commission, the rise in online gambling has been nothing short of spectacular.

When the World Cup was held in South Africa in 2010, online gambling accounted for just 7.7% of total gambling industry revenue. In 2014, during the last World Cup, that figure had risen to 19.8%. A year later, that figure hit 32.8%, and it continues to rise.

The Gambling Commission's latest stats (to December 2017) show laptops remain the most popular device for online gambling (50%) but the use of mobile phones has increased to 39% (a rise of 10% on 2016). One in four gamblers have bet in-play in the last four weeks.

This is significant for affiliates as the nature of the World Cup means more people are going to be betting online, on their phones and in-play.

There are 32 teams competing in Russia over 64 matches, with the initial group stages showing up to four games a day, every day, with staggered kickoff times meaning more eyeballs on more matches – good news for gambling. More than £1bn was bet on the World Cup in 2014 in the UK alone, and that was without Scotland, Wales, Republic of Ireland or Northern Ireland qualifying. England also failed to make it out of the initial group stages for the first time since 1958.

You could argue that this World Cup is the biggest test yet of a market sector that has boomed in recent years. With so much cash up for grabs from existing punters, and the prospect of many new gamblers discovering online during the month-long event, it's essential that affiliates are on top of their game. So what is the secret to success?

In the modern world, it is key to have a site that is user-friendly for mobile devices as the main method of browsing shifts rapidly from desktop to mobile. The round-the-clock kick-off pattern will also suit the flexibility and convenience of mobile betting and so it is key that all firms within the gambling industry are fully optimised ahead of the big kick-off to secure the best results.

"Events like the World Cup are unique in that the excitement of the tournament captures the imagination of both avid and novice bettors," says ActiveWin Commercial Director, Bernadette Kelly.

"Affiliates with competitive offers and strong organic rankings are sure to see an increase in traffic. What this means, naturally, is a greater opportunity for sportsbook affiliates to earn increased commission. We encourage our sportsbook affiliates to look at how they are using both paid and organic channels on mobile, which can make a huge difference in the amount of traffic they receive."

That said, a handy site design is going to ensure that users have the best possible chance of converting into long-term players for the operators, but content is king, especially during an event like the World Cup. It will be vital that affiliates keep their site as up to date as possible and keep it stacked with relevant information (think about what people will be searching for and try and tailor your content appropriately).

The World Cup will be the betting event of the year and provides affiliates with a huge opportunity to engage new and existing punters. Most will now be putting the finishing touches to their battle plans as they look to leverage the global nature of the tournament and deliver high-value content to bettors in markets all over the world.

But to succeed, they will have to overcome many hurdles, including creating unique content that spans both desktop and mobile, as well as translating said content, all while fending off competition from other affiliates. It's a tough task, but with such a huge prize on the table, affiliates will want to rise to the occasion and get their hands on the trophy.

"The first thing affiliates must do is identify their competition," says Andrew Morgan, International Manager at Independent Content Services. ►

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AFFILIATES

"The World Cup will have an adverse effect on an affiliate's usual content production as the entire tournament will be broadcast across television, radio and online. This means users are more likely to consume information in real-time, and affiliates must be able to compete with other media outlets. In short, it will be a very crowded marketplace.

"To compete, affiliates should look to launch a dedicated betting service which appeals to both the established punter and novice bettor.

"There are many ways to do this, but a combination of written, audio and video content is often the most effective. As well as the usual news, previews and reports, engaging match commentary with a betting perspective can be used to draw potential customers to an affiliate, while Soccer Saturday style TV broadcasts can point people towards good value bets based on the action as it unfolds.

"Affiliates must also be aware of rivals closer to home; the affiliate space is fiercely competitive, so a vast library of unique and valuable content is required to stand out from the crowd. This can include things like exclusive interviews, unique data and analysis, and in-depth guides.

"There should also be a good mix of evergreen and real-time content – with the former helping to build awareness of the affiliate in the weeks leading up to the event and the latter making the affiliate the go-to place for the latest information on the tournament once the evergreen content has built a positive reputation."

Morgan adds a wide variety of content alone is not enough. The quality of the content must be high, which is why it should be created by professionals.

This content must also be accurately translated; the World Cup is global in nature and there is a known demand for content across multiple territories and in multiple languages. For affiliates looking to leverage the World Cup and expand into new markets, good quality translation must be a top priority if they are to engage punters.

The importance of content is echoed by Claire Wellard, COO of Ihre Consulting "Throughout the tournament, content is going to be king and to stand out from the crowd, affiliates are going to have to pack their sites full of unique news, features, analysis, guides and tips," says Wellard.

"This will be a huge undertaking, but a necessary investment - both in terms of time and money - but with such a big prize on the table, a worthwhile investment.

"Content can also be leveraged into cross-sell opportunities with official sponsors outside of the gaming sphere. Source tie-ins and affiliate deals with companies that have an interest in the World Cup - for example, JD Sports in the UK will be selling football kits, and is looking for affiliate partners.

"It is clear, then, that the World Cup provides a huge opportunity for affiliates to go for goal and drive acquisition and retention."

GOING MOBILE

Of all the bets placed during the World Cup, a significant percentage will be done via smartphone and tablet devices. With this in mind, affiliates must ensure their sites are fully optimised, and that the content they create and publish is easy to access via smartphones and tablets.

"Text should be kept short and punchy to avoid excessive scrolling and swiping on the part of the punter; affiliates must also ensure image files are large enough to deliver quality, but not too large that they don't download properly due to bandwidth limitations," says Wellard.

"They should also consider integrating live radio broadcasts of games, as these work great on mobile, too.

"Additionally, affiliates need to identify the best mobile sportsbook operators, and ensure they have deals in place with them. It is no good acquiring a player through

a mobile-optimised affiliate site, and then sending them to a sportsbook that isn't." Morgan agrees that content must be mobile-optimised. "Most people now have access to the internet and we have seen a boom in smartphone penetration across the world," he says. "This is particularly true across key demographics and in high-growth markets such as Latin America and Africa. In many African states, for example, over half the population is under 25 and it is this group affiliates should be targeting.



Vladimir Putin is ready, are you?

"In these regions, content must be created with a mobile first approach. I am talking about short, punchy articles that are easy to digest and don't require excessive scrolling on behalf of the reader. Images and illustrations are great, but file sizes must be as small as possible, particularly as mobile data can be patchy in some countries.

"It is also important to display as much content on the opening screen as possible, hooking people in with a strong headline and opening paragraph in a way that's arguably less important on desktop."

Language is also a major consideration when you are trying to promote the global game, and with teams taking part from diverse countries around the world, from newcomers Panama to reigning champions Germany.

"Translation is just as important on mobile, particularly as this is the means through which the majority of people now consume content," says Morgan.

"Take South Africa, for example, where mobile is becoming an increasingly dominant betting channel. The country has 11 official languages, Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Northern Sotho, Sotho, Swazi, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa and Zulu. Affiliates wanting to create a fully personalised service in this region must translate content into each language, a huge feat in itself."

If you haven't already done your homework on localisation, time is tight to start thinking about translation for different markets but the nature of outsourcing means it is far from impossible. Just make sure your translators get it right to avoid putting off punters who need little encouragement to look elsewhere. After spending so much time and money attracting these punters to your website, the last thing you want is for them to move on and not convert due to simple spelling mistakes. ►

"Affiliates are often trusted by their readers, but when entering new markets this is not a given," says Morgan. "People are naturally suspicious of online sports betting sites and content that is poorly translated – spelling mistakes, poor grammar, etc – deters readers from engaging with them."

"Affiliates should always work with native translators, but also those who understand the betting industry. It is often the case that specific betting terminology simply doesn't translate from one language to another, but knowledgeable native translators will know the correct vocabulary to help overcome this. They can also ensure any message is not lost in translation."

"Quality content and translation are the foundations on which trust and loyalty are built and are vital factors for affiliates looking to engage new readers in new markets."

A little knowledge can go a long way in the World Cup. Let's take Egypt as an example. Pitched in a group that includes hosts Russia and South American stars Uruguay, few may expect much interest from punters in the UK. However, when you factor in their star player is Liverpool striker Mohamed Salah (just voted the PFA Player of the Year) then it's clear to see how affiliates can attract traffic to seemingly unappealing matches simply by tweaking their pitch.

STAYING LEGAL

While special World Cup bonuses will be a powerful acquisition tool for affiliates, they must approach them with great caution, says Wellard. Compliance is a term the affiliate sector is only just having to get to grips with, but will be a major factor in how they market to punters during the World Cup and beyond.

"Affiliates must also ensure compliance with FIFA's own rules and regulations," she adds "The sporting body has put in place a number of protected words and images, including images of the official mascot and the World Cup 2018 emblem. If you are a non-sponsor brand, you are prohibited from using these."

"FIFA's intellectual property also includes trademarks such as 'FIFA', 'World Cup 2018' and 'Russia 2018', preventing brands who are not official sponsors from using these terms in marketing and promotional campaigns. There are ways around this, of course: affiliates may run campaigns around 'A summer of football', for example."

There are sure to be highly attractive bonuses and promotions on offer from all of the major operators during the World Cup, and a significant increase in their own marketing efforts as they strive to attract new customers with unmissable deals and offer in-play deals for established gamblers. However, Wellard offers a note of caution.

"On the subject of identifying the right operator partners, affiliates must also take into account the myriad of bonuses and promotions they will be running," she says. "While these offers and prizes provide a hook for affiliates to draw in new readers, they must also be aware of any changes in CPA to revenue share deals during the World Cup period."

"It is something we saw during the Grand National, where brands such as Betfred and Betfair reduced CPA deals during the two days surrounding the Grand National. There hasn't been word they will do the same during the World Cup but it is always good to be vigilant in the lead up and watch the newsletters for any change in your plans."

It's sure to be a hectic time for affiliates, with 48 group games taking place in the first fortnight of the competition alone. On a typical day you have four matches featuring teams from multiple time zones, meaning it's effectively 24/7 gambling on a global scale.

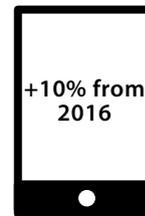
It's also the tournament where live, in-play mobile

gambling is going to hit a watershed moment, with enough money changing hands to make or break any affiliate program. The question is, are you fit and ready to tackle this opportunity and come out on top? ◀

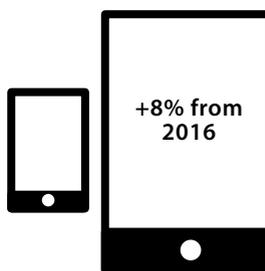
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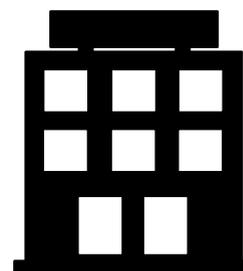
Laptops remain the most popular device for online gambling



Use of mobile phones has increased for gambling (39% in 2017)



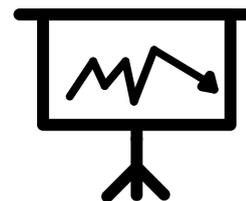
Use of mobile phones and tablets is increasing (51% in 2017)



97% of online gamblers play at home



Those aged under 35 are more likely to gamble outside of the home



22% of online gamblers aged 18-24 gamble at work



The average number of online accounts is four



One in four online gamblers have bet in-play (last four weeks)



6% had bet on eSports during the last 12 months

WORLD CUP STATS

Brazil have won the trophy

FIVE TIMES



with the last victory coming in 2002. Reigning champions Germany have four World Cup wins, level with Italy (who failed to qualify). Argentina and Uruguay have two Cups apiece, with England, France and Spain each winning once



Shocks happen. A handful of punters did bet on Germany thrashing home favourites Brazil 7-1 in the semi final of 2014.



There were 171 goals scored at Brazil 2014, which is 2.7 per game.

JUST FONTAINE

In 1958, Just Fontaine scored 13 goals in six games for France, who finished third.

JAMES RODRIGUEZ

of Columbia was the surprise top goal scorer at Brazil 2014, with six goals.



The record number of goals in a single match is 12, in a match where Austria beat Switzerland 7-5 in 1954.



HOW TO TAKE THE GUESSWORK OUT OF CONTENT CREATION

Barry Carter Editor of the world's largest poker community, PokerStrategy.com explores the problems of decoding the right content approach for affiliate websites

our audience, when they do well we do more pieces like that, when they don't we do less.

For example, for reasons which are obvious when you consider our company name, strategy focussed content performs well for us. 'X player winning Y tournament' pieces rarely get much traction, but 'X player making a huge fold in Y tournament' pieces get lots of views, lots of shares and lots of comments. So, we shape more of our content around strategic analysis, because our audience has essentially told us that's what they want. This is what is known as the Pareto Principle or the 80/20 rule, where a disproportionate amount of your results come from a small percentage of your output.

The obvious concern with an approach like this is that you might end up being too narrowly focussed in your content, which could inhibit growth. You run the risk of being the site that only does live tournament news or only does online cash game hand content. The trick here is to never stop testing content types.

If you look at the content we do, we have everything from high level hand analysis all the way to 'what poker playing dog breed would you be' Buzzfeed-style content. We have also managed to find a way to make content types that do not perform well for us, like live tournaments, engaging for our audience by making the focus on the human-interest stories or strategy side of things, rather than the result. Sometimes this is often as simple as changing the headline, which is a great first thing to start testing with your content that will yield noticeable results.

Among other things, the beauty of this testing mentality is that you don't have to get stressed out working out what your audience want to know and in what format, because they will tell you. We are regularly reviewing the performance of our content internally using things like Google Analytics. It also really helps having a busy forum for our members to help get an idea what they want.

Testing content ideas really helps working as a team because you do not get locked into battles about what the best way to run the site is – everybody makes suggestions about what could work, we test as many as we can, then we go over the results and plan future content accordingly.

Maybe the main reason to test content types is that it is essentially a form of market research. Which content types people click on, which headlines compel them, which ones they comment on and the articles they stay on the page for the longest are all much more reliable indicators (in my opinion) of what an audience wants than asking them in a survey.

You also quickly learn what your audience doesn't want, which stops you sending two people to Las Vegas so that 92 of your members can look at your coverage for two minutes before they go to WSOP.com instead. ◀

Although PokerStrategy.com is primarily aimed at online poker players, in 2012 we had a small team of people covering the WSOP main event in Las Vegas because... well, you have to go to the main event, right?

During the two-day final table, we had two reporters on location providing colour commentary, interviews and video. Meanwhile, we had four staff members working remotely watching the final table live and cleaning up the content, which was coming in thick and fast. A lot of man hours went into our coverage of the main event final table and we were very proud of the job we did.

It was also around that time that I started to teach myself about Google Analytics and it was quite a seminal moment when I discovered that just 92 people had looked at our coverage, some barely for a few minutes. It was pretty depressing to learn that we had spent that much time and money on something, but it had fewer views than some of our poorest performing regular content.

Why did it get fewer views, I mean, it was the WSOP main event, right? Surely that brings up everybody's views on everything?

Well, no. As I mentioned at the start, PokerStrategy.com is primarily aimed at online poker players. Those in our community who like to follow live poker tournaments already know to go to [PokerNews](http://PokerNews.com) or WSOP.com, who are established in that area and usually have backstage passes to the events.

A lot of media sites would then take the attitude that they would need to focus more on live poker tournaments to improve this clear weak spot in their offering. We took a different approach; we started writing less about live tournaments. In fact, if we did cover a live tournament at all it would have to be a massive event, or a huge name winning or there needed to be a fascinating back story (like a \$1 satellite winner taking down a seven-figure prize).

What was the impact of doing less live tournament content? Our overall traffic increased.

THE TESTING MENTALITY

This is a nerdy thing to get excited about, but something I often brag to my poker media friends about is that at PokerStrategy.com we have a testing mentality towards content. I think it is something we have always done really well as a team. Rather than try and force certain types of content on our audience because they should like it, we brainstorm lots of different ideas, we see how they resonate with

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BIG QUESTION

Is it better to expand an affiliate business through mergers & acquisitions or via organic growth?



JESPER SØGAARD

CEO and Co-founder at Better Collective

“Making the leap into the M&A space is no easy task, which requires you to have an aggressive mentality in order to succeed – you need to think big, and you need to think strategically.”

It's obvious that the expansion of an affiliate business through both mergers and acquisition related activities and organic growth go hand-in-hand. However, it can be said that M&A activity is the catalyst to expanding your affiliate business to a bigger size in a shorter amount of time. M&As can be critical in order to reach a certain size, where you'll also be able to lift your organic performance.

Of course, you'll already need to be an established firm to have the funds to begin acquiring other businesses, which initially comes through organic growth. To reach the next level, M&As are, in Better Collective's opinion, key in successful expansion.

Obviously, the consolidation trend is ongoing. Small to medium-sized affiliates are now ready to sell their business, leaving many strong options available. Thanks to this trend of our industry, we at Better Collective have seen a gap in the affiliate market and are using it to our advantage, which is why we're expanding at such a rapid rate. The M&As we've conducted so far have been crucial to taking Better Collective to the next level, and we plan on continuing to grow in this sphere.

However, making the leap into the M&A space is no easy task, which requires you to have an aggressive mentality in order to succeed – you need to think big, and you need to think strategically.

One of the biggest factors is scalability and being open to change. This factor is pivotal within our industry and the affiliate space, as operators want to work with the biggest partners that also maintain the ability to be flexible. Though, it would be wrong to tell businesses to be overly aggressive and rush to seal the deal—nobody wants to be paying over the odds. Due diligence and a level-head must be kept.

I'm sure we're not the only ones to say it, but at Better Collective we've always taken a quality over quantity approach. Having a

selective process when we consider acquiring companies to join our brand is important, as they must link with our core value of being fully transparent. This is how we differentiate ourselves from others in the industry – keeping us viewed as an attractive proposition.

Even with all of this focus on M&A, it is important not to neglect the need for organic growth. To really build successful products in the future, scale is crucial, as brand-building requires a good product together with a very large reach. M&A has helped Better Collective in this regard.

Having built our own flagship products with a modular infrastructure, we have been able to seamlessly integrate information across our own and acquired platforms. This is a driver for organic growth, and illustrates the shared synergy that can happen between M&A and organic growth—with the added bonus of improving the performance for acquired assets.

We've seen how the affiliate space has matured over the years, but it's taken the necessary time for our sector to become more transparent and honest. Affiliates will no doubt become more powerful in the future as they unite to strengthen their expertise and technical knowledge, which is a positive trend for the overall industry. However, our industry remains ever changing, and it's vital to keep your finger on the buzzer if you want to stay ahead of the curve – which is why M&As are currently crucial for staying at the top.

Jesper is a CEO and co-founder of Better Collective, an affiliate business started in 2004. Better Collective's portfolio includes more than 2,000+ websites and products in areas including betting tips, bookmaker information and online gambling communities. ▶

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JULIAN BUHAGIAR

Co-Founder, RB Capital

“Don’t be in a rush to buy or sell. You can typically extract more organic value from your business if you look internally and be disciplined enough to go through a structured optimisation cycle”

It primarily depends on what stage of business lifecycle you’re in. If you’re in growth stage (determined by organic increases in yearly or monthly KPIs, or recently expanded into new territory and/or product opportunities), then there’s a direct opportunity to stabilise this growth chiefly through business optimisation. A lot of operational efficiency can be gained here, ahead of any next-stage expansion by taking a hard look at what are the main drivers for revenue growth over the last few stages.

Counter-intuitively these growth factors tend to be few not many, such as better SEO strategies, optimal CPA vs. rev-share ratio allocations, or even territory/product profitability. Affiliates often miss this key opportunity to fine-tune their business as they will be hungry to collect revenues and expand into new areas without necessarily focussing on lean and right-sizing structures ahead of expansion.

This stage is optimal for analysing profit margins, understanding what operating costs can be streamlined, taking a hard look at analytics and optimising page views and conversion rates, new keyword strategies etc, together with some aggressive A/B testing to validate any hypotheses.

Properly planned, such an optimisation exercise doesn’t need to be long, typically just a couple of sprints (around 4-8 weeks for those networks are non-technical and/or outsource their operational activities), and once the right optimisation strategy has been identified, lock-in and review for the length of another sprint. We typically work with a lot of our investments at this level to extract an extra level of business optimisation ahead of any M&A activities, and with the right level of rigour a business can enjoy a further 2-3 years of solid organic growth ahead of any significant buy- or sell-side activity.

At a later, more mature stage, metrics start to stabilise and the level of additional efficiency that you can extract from a business starts to plateau. This is a necessary and fundamental stage of any business, where the ability to increase bottom line revenues is no longer dependent on fine-tuning the business or adjusting the operational efficiency. However this is still not necessarily a time to buy or sell; in most cases an opportunity to test new strategies arises.

This is where new territory and product opportunities need to be focussed on, and similar to business optimisation sprints, can be strategically A/B tested to determine risk vs. reward without fully allocating budgets and resources

blindly. There exist key methods to efficiently test going to market with a new product and/or territory whilst allocating not more than 5% of the overall business resources, and reach a sufficiently informed go/no-go decision within a financial quarter. Any less, and you haven’t tested the opportunity sufficiently; any more and you’re wasting resources without necessarily committing.

Beyond organic growth and strategy scoping, M&A then starts to become more cost-effective. This is especially true for larger, publicly floated organisations that regularly need to deliver value back to their shareholders. This is not an exercise that should be taken lightly; if you’re looking to sell your business, then properly scoped it will take 9-12 months to fully extract the maximum potential of a business and ensure its presented the right way for the right buyer.

On the other hand, if you’re on the buy-side, then it should be a 3-4 month process; less if you’re running an entire team dedicated to analysing, acquiring, and (importantly often overlooked by buyers) integrating. Always remember that an M&A process does not end with the signing of the contract; the time post-M&A is as important (more in some cases) than the pre-M&A stage.

So in summary; don’t be in a rush to buy or sell. You can typically extract more organic value from your business if you look internally and be disciplined enough to go through a structured optimisation cycle. Test new strategies with the proper rigour; that way you’ve not expended too much effort on the less profitable scenarios. When all that’s been done and committed, then (and only then) do you look at M&A. And remember; if you’re selling your business you will need more time to prepare for this process than if you’re on the buy-side. Good process and planning are key to great valuations.

Julian is an investor & Co-founder of RB Capital Advisors, a specialist M&A and funding brokerage, combining expertise in growth, investment and M&A across gaming, fintech and media verticals. The company have brokered deals in excess of \$340m. With experience of funding, building and selling businesses, RB’s advisors have held significant strategic and investment positions in several key blue-chip verticals.

The company has expertise of the key issues within affiliate networks, blockchain and digital rights management. Activities include the usage of structured investments, acquisition and exit strategy advice together with assisting smaller businesses with funding, allowing them to grow and become profitable. ▶

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MICHAEL HOLMBERG

CEO, Raketech

“Raketech has a strong acquisition history with a total of 19 acquisitions of varying sizes. The role of M&A is to find suitable opportunities that can be integrated into our business and expand our product offering by strengthening our position in specific geographic regions.”

A successful growth strategy should involve a combination of M&A, organic growth and innovation. M&A has been proven to be a valuable tool for Raketech’s growth over the past few years, and we have a fair bit of experience of finding and executing successful acquisitions.

We have a dedicated team looking for exciting and feasible opportunities that fit with our growth strategy and vision of where we want to be in the future. Creating new products in-house and continuing to grow our core products is very important and M&A helps support organic growth of our existing products, concerning the personnel and platforms we acquire and integrate into our existing business. The integration of newly acquired assets is something we concentrate a lot of time and effort into making a success.

We categorise our product development operations into three strategic growth pillars: M&A, Core and Lab. Core is our existing product portfolio, the Lab is our innovation hub, and M&A refers to recently acquired businesses.

Core is the long-term growth area, where Raketech advances its established product portfolio to grow organically. We continuously review the performance of our Core products and identify the sites that we need to work on to boost performance. One of our flagship core products is CasinoGuide.se. The platform was recently redesigned, better optimised for mobile use and loaded with engaging content, which resulted in an increase in traffic and more conversions for our partners. Lab and M&A products integrate into Core when innovations have demonstrated the potential for sustainable growth.

Lab is our innovation hub and is responsible for developing new products, new ideas and entering new markets. The Lab secures long-term growth through creative thinking that drives the industry forward and enables adjustment of business to

market development. Lab concepts are developed over a set period of time into Core products once they are well-equipped to grow organically. The Gambling Cabin is a Twitch initiative that stemmed from Lab, showing constant growth and is very popular in the player community

Raketech has a strong acquisition history with a total of 19 acquisitions of varying sizes. The role of M&A is to find suitable opportunities that can be integrated into our business and expand our product offering by strengthening our position in specific geographic regions.

For example, we acquired BetXpert.com in 2017 to gain a foothold in the profitable Danish sports betting market. We also use M&A to enter new business areas, such as financial comparison affiliation site lånapengar.com, which we successfully integrated into our business and recently won an iGB Affiliate award for best financial website.

The assets we acquire will eventually integrate into a leading Core product. A more recent success coming from M&A was the acquisition of leading Nordic sports TV listing website TvMatchen.nu. This is our biggest product in terms of unique visitors and we recently expanded the same concept into the UK launching tvsportguide.com.

So to summarise, we chose to grow via M&A if that is more efficient and delivers what we are looking for, rather than building new products or entering new markets and channels. We develop new products that can grow organically via in-house innovation in the Lab when that makes more sense.

Michael is CEO of Raketech, which started in 2010 as an online poker affiliate focussing on the Scandinavian market. Now based in Malta the company operates a wide range of casino, sports betting, poker, online community, and financial comparison products. ◀

DO YOU HAVE A BURNING QUESTION YOU WANT TO ASK?

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LANDMINE OR GOLDMINE?

Tobias Regnestam, Chief of Happiness (COO) for online casino affiliate Cashmio, illustrates how to tell the difference between a CPA and a revenue share opportunity in an “about to be regulated” market

We have a lot of opportunities in front of us in the online gaming industry today, but also plenty of challenges. One of the biggest challenges for all of us at the moment is that a significant part of this industry's core-market is being regulated or might be regulated within a few years. Straight off the bat, we are looking at; Sweden in 2019, Finland and Norway are likely to follow Sweden's example and Holland and Germany are big question marks.

This challenge will, of course, change the way we work, and from an affiliate point of view, also how to evaluate risk in relations with the potential deals that are out there.

Anyone can make a deal but not everyone can make a profitable one and only the best will be able to evaluate the deals or opportunities to truly maximise the potential profit over time. These next three years will sort the affiliates who have a short-term point of view and those who are truly playing the long game. The question becomes 'How do we tell the goldplated landmines and the goldmines?'. As an affiliate you need to make sure to find your way to the true goldmine and that you don't get blindsided by empty promises or the quick win.

Looking at the landscape as it is today we can see hundreds of casinos all targeting the same markets and I believe this will change. As the amount of regulated markets in Europe keeps growing, all the casinos are trying to do the last land grab before they have to pay a significant increase of tax on the profits as well as comply with legal demands. Affiliates that have been collecting revenue share tagged players and sending them to the wrong casinos could potentially lose it overnight. In addition, should any one of the casinos that you have sent revenue share players to choose to not pursue the local license and close down those player accounts, years of hard work could suddenly go to waste. ►



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The risk concerning disappearing revenue share accounts might encourage affiliates to go straight to the fixed fee/CPA alternative to secure, at least some, payment. Doing this across the board without a deeper evaluation of the risks and opportunities in front of you would be a great mistake looking at it from a long-term profitability perspective.

This shift in the industry simply adds a layer of evaluation that you as an affiliate must go through when you evaluate the deals. When considering which casinos are best suited to cooperate with.

You will have to ask yourself: 'Will this casino try to get the license at all?', 'Will this casino be able to get the license?' and 'Is this casino big/good enough to handle the added tax, legal requirement and other demands that the license would bring?'

I believe that many smaller casinos will focus their efforts on one or a few markets in the near future. I also believe that many of the big casinos will grow in size across the board as a direct result of the regulations but as we all know. It is harder to send traffic to someone who has already been in the marketplace three-five-seven-ten years.

As casinos focus their effort on specific countries and leave others behind, we will see fewer operators in each market

and an absolute growth for those casinos who choose to remain where other casinos don't. If these casinos manage to capitalise on the vacuum created and as the 'lost players' try to find a new casino to call home it would most likely lead to an increase of their share-of-wallet from the players.

In addition to that, inactive players in these areas would probably become active again and increase the value of the players that are already active in the casino. Any one of the casinos that remain might very well turn into a goldmine with a significant increase in conversion, customer lifetime value and most importantly commission and making a revenue share deal the smartest play from an affiliate point of view.

Cashmio as a brand is in a position where we are able to convert players as we're only 18 months old but at the same time GiG would be one of those giants that will pursue Swedish (and every other license that might show up) from day one. Making us one of those casinos where a revenue share deal would make sense today as your tagged players would only go up in value as the regulation starts to apply, country for country.

In this situation what all of you need to do is to ask yourselves: Is this casino that you are contemplating a deal with, a landmine or a potential goldmine? ◀

CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF REGULATION?



SWEDEN

Weather Report: Swedish regulators are currently in the process of adopting a bill which will require all operators to acquire an authorised licence or face being shut

down. To acquire a licence, operators must meet conditions relating to social responsibility and data protection.

Chance of precipitation for affiliates: 80%- If the bill is adopted, those online operators who do not meet conditions will be shut down, taking their affiliates with them.



FINLAND

Weather Report: Finland's online gambling opportunities are currently restricted to state owned and controlled monopoly operators.

Chance of precipitation for affiliates: 25%- With other Scandinavian nations regulating and opening up to affiliates, how long with those restrictions stand.



NORWAY

Weather Report: A coalition of four Norwegian parties has presented the country's legislature, the Storting,

with a set of measures aimed at better protecting Norsk Tipping's monopoly over the provision of gambling services and at blocking unlicensed international operators from targeting local players.

Chance of precipitation for affiliates- 0%,with online gambling still illegal in Norway, regulators will most likely impose stricter conditions stopping international operators from targeting Norwegian citizens.



GERMANY

Weather Report: In November, the Federal Administrative Court in Leipzig, upheld an existing ban on online casino, poker, and scratchcard games

was compliant with German constitution and did not violate EU treaties for the free movement of services across the union. The licensing process for online sports betting is currently stalled, pending a review by the German Federal Administrative Court.

Chance of precipitation for affiliates - 50%, although many online operators including 888 Holdings are reportedly considering exiting the German market.



HOLLAND

Weather Report: Passage of the Remote Gaming Bill, which would create a licensing regime for online gambling operators looking to operate in the Dutch

market will reportedly occur in July 2018, opening up the market to licence applications from operators.

Chance of precipitation for affiliates- 75%- although newly licensed operators may find the 30.1% tax rate on remote gambling prohibits entry, at least until 2019.

CLOUD AND PROUD

Jason Bamford, Director at GiBVault, on why the time is now for affiliates to embrace Cloud solutions

Five years ago, public Cloud adoption among the online gaming community was minimal for a number of reasons - technical, commercial and legal.

From a technical perspective, the community are typically demanding, needing lower latency, and high throughputs running CPU intense workloads.

From a compliance perspective, five years ago online gaming activities were considered a violation of the acceptable use policies by many of the Hyper-Scale Global Cloud providers, closing them off to the industry. Fast-forward to 2018 and there are very few organisations in the industry that haven't embraced the flexibility of Public Cloud in some shape or another. Their ability to rapidly scale infrastructure to meet peak demands, control costs and maximise on business agility has been a significant innovation in the online gaming sector.

So what changed - previously, Amazon's cloud platform, Amazon Web Services (AWS), counted gambling products among a list of 'illegal activities' that were not permitted to use its platform but in 2016 they removed this clause.

The move aligned Amazon with its main rivals Microsoft and Google, however the significance of what Amazon has to offer the gaming industry marked a turning point in Cloud adoption. In simplistic terms, Amazon's new stance is that if what you're doing on their platform is legal in the jurisdiction in which you're doing it, you can run it on their platform.

To comply with AWS's gambling policies gaming businesses still need to run portions of their operation within the territory of their license - such as the offshore economies of the Isle of Man, Channel Islands, Malta or Gibraltar. These territories have become home to many of the big names in our industry who have amassed sizeable self-built infrastructures over the last decade or so.

The US-owned, hyper-scale providers such as Google, Amazon and Microsoft are unlikely to deploy their own points-of-presence in these offshore areas of specific demand from a single industry.

These territories are now seeing a flurry of activity with specialist providers building significant Cloud platforms to capture the emerging markets of 'in jurisdiction cloud'. But the shift to Cloud for the gaming backend won't happen overnight. The big operators have significant capital investments tied up in IT equipment in these territories and we're more likely to see a granular shift as they lifecycle out this existing equipment.

Emerging "in jurisdiction" Cloud for affiliates is a big thing right now. Game providers and affiliates typically need to deploy in-jurisdiction infrastructure for their ventures to comply with licensing and integrate with operators. For affiliates, Cloud avoids the need to invest and deploy physical equipment in locations where they have no on-the-ground staff or other presence, saving them cash and enabling them to be agile.

Some of the data centre providers are getting smart and have woken up to this new market opportunity. Cloud deployments are starting to emerge in close proximity to the existing fixed infrastructure operators. The more advanced ones are starting to offer private dark fibre cross-connects directly between Cloud and their resident operators.

Think of them as 'meet me' areas where affiliates and operators can come together in a flexible and elastic manner. The no commitment, pay-monthly models of Cloud also lower the barrier to entry for affiliate deals to happen without the previously needed upfront investment for ventures where the success of the venture can't be fully understood at the outset.

Take Gibraltar as an example of a new in-jurisdiction Cloud provider. The main data centres provider in the territory has gone "all-in" with a fully flexible Cloud model. They partnered with Cloud specialists from the UK to build a platform at the



core of their data centre fabric that can be linked with private fibre to any existing tenant with ease.

Some jurisdictions have taken different approaches. Their licensing authorities' knowledge of Cloud sometimes lags behind the industry and they've required in-jurisdiction Cloud platforms be 'certified' for online gaming at great cost, effectively eroding the commercial viability of them.

Other Cloud entrants have over engineered the technology stack underpinning their environments, driving up their cost and driving down their ability to offer flexible models.

In summary, public Hyper Scale Cloud is an established and mature building block which has changed the face of our industry in just a few years. The area to watch is the rise of in-jurisdiction Clouds that are emerging from specialist providers able to deliver flexibility and with a focus on eGaming.

Cloud may be forecast, but it is a good thing for affiliates and the wider online gambling industry. ◀

EVENT PREVIEW

AFFILIATECON SOFIA SHOWGUIDE

WHEN: 15-16 May, 2018 **WHERE:** Sofia Event Center, Bulgaria



ABOUT

AffiliateCon Sofia is an affiliate convention destined to become the industry standard for how the online gaming industry meets new and existing affiliates. With hundreds of affiliates descending on Bulgaria's capital on the 15-16 May, those attending will get to experience an entirely new way of conducting business with industry peers. AffiliateCon is the must-attend event for affiliates wishing to get updates on technological innovations and the latest gaming verticals, setting a benchmark in affiliate networking and education.

The event is free for affiliates to attend, and rather than being a trade show with big, intimidating stands, it will provide a relaxed, informal environment where selected, high-profile brands will get the opportunity to discuss potential partnerships with a wide range of affiliates from around Europe.

A number of industry-leading affiliate brands have confirmed their attendance at the event, including the likes of bet365, LeoVegas, ActiveWin, LVBet and Kindred Affiliates, to name but a few.

If you are an affiliate looking to expand your knowledge on key industry trends and grow your network of industry peers in an informal and relaxed setting, then AffiliateCon Sofia is the event for you.

THE SETTING

The layout and structure of AffiliateCon Sofia is unlike any other affiliate-focused industry event. The event will be hosted at the luxury Sofia Event Center, which could not be further away from a warehouse style exhibition hall. It is located on the top of the Paradise Center, Sofia's premium shopping and entertainment location in the city.

The main space for the convention will consist of a number of small booths and connection points for participating affiliate brands, together with a stage for keynote presentations and entertainment. It also features a special VIP affiliate area where guests will be pampered with a chill-out zone and private outside terrace.

Extensive break out areas, refreshment points and a massive balcony make the venue a relaxing environment in which to conduct business. A mere twenty-minute taxi ride from Sofia International Airport with regular flights from across Europe, it is also easily accessible by public transport - Cherni Vrah Blvd, Henrik Ibsen St, Todor Kableskov Blvd, and a thriving metro line makes getting to the center a breeze. ►

KNOWLEDGE

A number of keynote speakers have been confirmed to offer their insights to affiliates on some pertinent industry topics, including Tal Itzhak Ron from Tal Ron, Drihem & Co. Law Firm, who is set to hold a seminar on legal challenges and opportunities in Europe for affiliates. Marc Kenigsberg, Founder of BitcoinChaser.com, will educate attendees on the future of cryptocurrencies and the opportunities for affiliates in this field.

Peter Ivanov, Head of Trading at eSports betting giant UltraPlay, will be speaking to affiliates about the opportunities that are available in eSports, with particular reference to those opportunities available to affiliates and operators alike. He will also participate in a Q&A session following his talk.

Chris Snell, Industry Manager in the Performance Markets team for global search heavyweight Google will also deliver a talk on the subject of the 'future of the mobile web'. Additionally, SEO expert Bastian Grimm, Director of Organic Search at Peak Ace, who has over 15 years experience in online marketing, will deliver an exclusive talk on how affiliates can increase their traffic and position in the market.

See further into the Showguide to read more about the speakers who will be offering their views and insights at the event.

NETWORKING

In addition to the various educational elements, the event is the perfect spot for affiliates to network, with plenty of networking opportunities available to attendees.

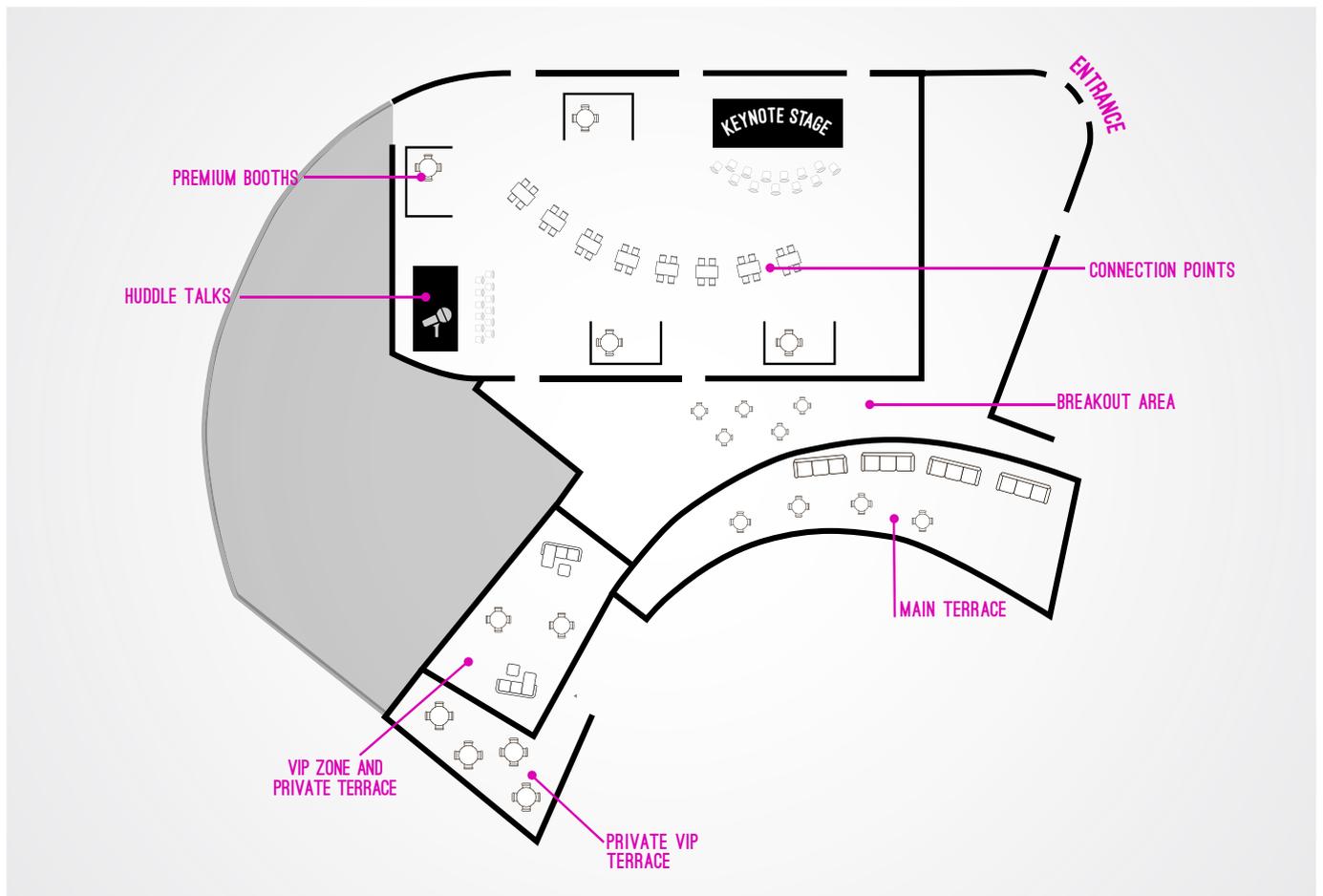
Affiliates will also be treated to the Mixology networking party, sponsored by *Trafficology* magazine.

AFFILIATES WILL ALSO BE TREATED TO THE MIXOLOGY NETWORKING PARTY, SPONSORED BY TRAFFICOLOGY. THE PARTY WILL BE HELD AT THE STYLISH CARRUSEL CLUB IN THE HEART OF THE BULGARIAN CAPITAL'S VIBRANT ARTS DISTRICT.

The party will be held at the stylish Carrusel Club in the heart of the Bulgarian capital's vibrant arts district. The two-floor club is the perfect venue for guests and brands to meet and mingle over drinks after day one of the convention.

In addition to complimentary drinks and canapés at the party, exclusive entertainment will allow guests to let their hair down after a productive day of networking at the event.

Entry to the Mixology networking event is free for all AffiliateCon Sofia guests and brands. ►



THE SPEAKERS

An introduction to the industry experts sharing their knowledge at AffiliateCon Sofia



BASTIAN GRIMM | CEO & DIRECTOR OF ORGANIC SEARCH, PEAK ACE

Bastian Grimm is Director Organic Search at Peak Ace and a renowned expert for large scale, international SEO – handling sites of almost any size in highly competitive industries. Having a background in software development and more than 15 years of experience in online marketing, Bastian still hugely enjoys all aspects of technical SEO.

Having spoken all around the globe at almost every major industry event, Bastian

enjoys travelling and meeting new people. Prior to running his own companies, Bastian set up and trained in-house SEO teams for brands such as Fox Mobile Group, overseeing their SEO activities in over 25 countries and catering for over 100 websites.

At AffiliateCon Sofia, Bastian will deliver an exclusive speech on SEO, titled 'Ok Google, What's Next?', in addition to hosting an affiliate huddle afterwards.

MARC KENIGSBERG | FOUNDER, BITCOINCHASER.COM

Marc Kenigsberg, Founder of BitcoinChaser.com, is a veteran of the gambling industry with 15 years of experience in various marketing roles, including being responsible for marketing at some of the largest Playtech and Microgaming licensees.

Marc is an advocate for blockchain and the technology's ability to change the world, and has been a firm believer in cryptocurrency

since 2013. Marc also runs TheCoinversation podcast, where he educates and updates the digital currency community.

Marc will give attendees a lesson in the biggest content trends within the crypto industry, in addition to a Q&A huddle afterwards, where affiliates can speak one-on-one with the expert to ask any pressing questions.



PETER IVANOV | HEAD OF TRADING, ULTRAPLAY

Peter Ivanov, Head of Trading at eSports betting giant UltraPlay, is set to offer attendees his insights into monetising traffic through eSports betting.

Leading the company's sports betting and eSports team of traders, Peter has solid expertise in setting up and developing the trading department, including pre-match & live trading, odds

compilation, and odds movement training as well as managing UltraPlay's daily trading process.

Peter will be speaking to affiliates about the opportunities that are available in eSports, with particular reference to those opportunities available to affiliates and operators alike. He will also participate in a Q&A session following his talk.

TAL ITZHAK RON | OWNER, TAL RON, DRIHEM & CO.

Tal Itzhak Ron from Tal Ron, Drihem & Co. Law Firm will hold a seminar on legal challenges and opportunities in Europe for affiliates. The session will give attendees an in-depth look into the complicated legal minefield in Europe, outlining grey markets and different markets of potential growth.

Tal graduated from the University of Haifa Law School, while also holding a B.Sc. in

Computer Science from the University of Haifa and an M.Sc. in Computer Science from Bar Ilan University. He has a great deal of experience in public speaking, serving as a lecturer at the University Of Haifa Faculty Of Law, while heading the firm he currently runs. He has a long and colourful history of speaking at events and this is sure to be a talk not to be missed by attending affiliates.



CHRIS SNELL | INDUSTRY MANAGER, GOOGLE

Chris Snell, Industry Manager in the Performance Markets team for global search heavyweight Google, will deliver a talk on the subject of the 'future of the mobile web' to affiliates attending the event.

Snell has a history of working in the internet industry with knowledge and experience in areas including digital

strategy, mobile advertising, advertising, integrated marketing, and media buying.

He has previously worked as brand & digital planner at Carat & WPP, before moving to Google to work in the travel and finance sector. In his current role, he works with high profile gambling industry names such as PaddyPower and Betfair while also meeting and mentoring start-up businesses. ►

MEET THE BRANDS

Which industry leading affiliate brands are attending AffiliateCon Sofia? *Trafficology* gives you the lowdown

AffiliateCon Sofia offers affiliates access to some of the biggest brands in the industry, with networking opportunities spaced out through its affiliate huddles, networking parties and with the events many exhibitors themselves.

However with just two days to get the most out

of the event, planning your meetings and networking is crucial, so we want to give attending affiliates a head start by letting them know who is going to be there.

With a stellar line up of affiliate brands attending here is a list of the attendees who will be winging their way to Sofia.



ACTIVEWINS



Powered by ActiveWin Media, the ActiveWins program is managed by a team of affiliate marketing experts and offers access to some of the biggest brands in the gambling industry, including: Betfred Sports, Foxy Casino, Totesport and Prospect Hall.

ActiveWins is celebrating five years in the industry in 2018 and has come a long way from its humble beginnings, coming from a team of three people solely representing Betfred to employing 130 digital experts and managing the affiliate program for multiple brands. With this sort of experience, they present a great opportunity for attending affiliates to learn how to grow their business and learn some crucial industry lessons.

LEOVEGAS AFFILIATES



Created in 2012, the LeoVegas Affiliates program aims to deliver a variety of slots and other casino games including titles from NetEnt, Play'n GO, and Microgaming, among many others. LeoVegas does not currently accept players from the US and some other restricted regions.

Partners of LeoVegas Affiliate are automatically enrolled in a revenue share plan. Through this structure, the affiliate is paid a percentage of the net revenue that his or her players bring in. This is calculated as gross gaming revenue minus bonuses, fraud costs, progressive contributions, and network fees.

BET365 AFFILIATES



bet365 Affiliates is the casino affiliate program responsible for the bet365 Group, one of the biggest and most widely used online casino brands in the world. It includes both the flagship bet365 Casino as well as the newer Vegas bet365 Casino. bet365's offering gives players with access to some of the industry's leading casino games, sports betting, bingo, poker, and financial betting.

All partners of bet365 Affiliates receive commissions through a revenue sharing scheme. Under this plan, the affiliate receives a portion of the net revenue generated from all of their tracked players. Unlike most programs, bet365 Affiliates pays on a flat percentage basis. There are no revenue tiers, so commission rates do not vary based on performance.

LV BET PARTNERS



A multi-platform site, LV Bet Partners features slots and other casino games from Microgaming, NetEnt, Merkur Gaming, and many others. Most affiliates choosing LVbet Partners earn commissions on a revenue sharing basis with members receiving a percentage of net revenue brought in by referred players.

This figure is calculated as gross revenue minus bonuses and taxes, as well as any chargebacks on player accounts. The exact commission paid is based on revenue tiers; affiliates who bring in more each month get a higher share of that revenue as commission. ►

IHRE CONSULTING



Ihre Consulting are a highly experienced affiliate marketing agency operating globally from 3 major cities: London, Stockholm and Tel Aviv.

In a departure from the standard affiliate network model, Ihre Consulting instead works as in introducing broker, helping affiliates to get the best tools and deals from affiliate operators. Ihre Consulting helps companies (operators, media companies, technical providers etc) and affiliates find mutually beneficial partnerships which will add growth and better margins to their business.

Services offered to affiliate operators include programme set-up, affiliate recruitment & retention and market analysis.

With an extensive network of experienced contacts in the areas of fraud & payments, online & offline design, translation, recruitment & brand management, Ihre consulting is an invaluable affiliate contact for those wishing to grow their business.

INTERTOPS AFFILIATES



Intertops offers a variety of products, from sportsbook to casino to poker, coupled with an aggressive refer-an-affiliate program. It compensates its partners through a revenue sharing plan with commissions being based on how much net revenue an affiliate brings into Intertops Casino each month.

Intertops Affiliates makes it possible to get extra income by referring others to the program. They accomplish this through a typical 2-tier "super affiliate" scheme. All partners who participate get paid a monthly fee equal to a flat share of all direct sub-affiliates' commissions.

The basis for this calculation is gross gaming revenue across all products minus bonuses and royalties. The exact percentage the affiliate gets is based on which revenue tier he or she reaches within the month. More monthly net revenue means a higher share of the profits for the affiliate.

KARAMBA AFFILIATES



Karamba Affiliates offers access to slot and casino gaming brands, including Karamba.com and Hopa.com, as well as the dedicated Scratch2Cash.com gaming sites. Its portfolio of gaming includes more than 200 slots, scratch cards, instant win, casino gaming and features leading regulated brands in a number of European markets including Karamba.dk, Dansk777 (Denmark), Grand Games (Belgium) and Mondo Fortuna (Italy).

Karamba Affiliate partners are able to access personalised commission plans offering up to 50% revenue share and CPA where required. Its schemes are constantly updated and provide affiliates with the latest localise marketing materials which are available in ten languages, helping them to monetise their traffic and reach high conversion rates.

GOWILD AFFILIATES



Founded in 2007, GoWild Affiliates showcases the GoWild and Wild Jackpots casino brands. GoWild Affiliates offers several different commission schemes to meet affiliate preferences.

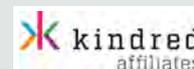
All new affiliates enter the revenue share plan as a default with commissions being calculated based on net revenue. The exact percentage of this revenue an affiliate receives increases as referred revenue goes up along multiple tiers. New affiliates receive a flat 50% commission for their first two months. All commissions are paid on a lifetime basis with no phasing out or un-tagging of players.

L&L EUROPE LTD



L&L Europe Ltd was established by two industry veterans with more than 20 years of combined experience working within the industry. With experience from different areas including the affiliate, the operator and the player, the company possesses a unique understanding of how the industry works and this makes them an essential meeting for any affiliate attending AffiliateCon Sofia.

KINDRED AFFILIATES



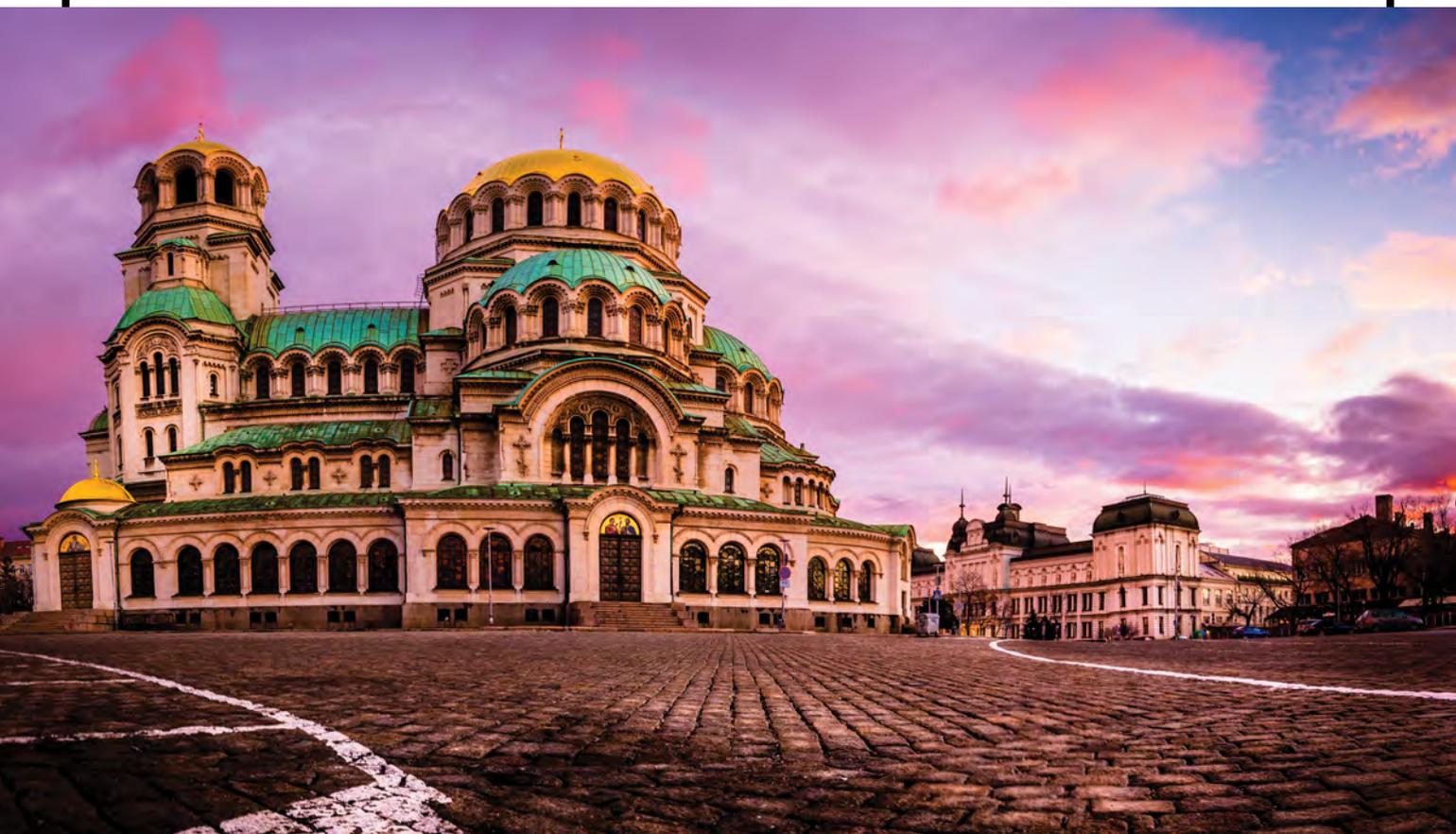
Kindred Affiliates is an affiliate program that offers affiliates access to 11 online gaming and betting brands, fully licensed and regulated across Europe and Australia. It is supported by a team of 20 Affiliate Marketing professionals and is now in its 12th year of operation. The two-tier Kindred scheme enables affiliates to place affiliate tracking links on their websites and get paid based on direct sub-affiliate performance.

VISTA GAMING AFFILIATES



Vista Gaming Affiliates is responsible for four online casino brands including CyberBingo Casino, BingoSpirit Casino, BingoFest Casino and Vegas Crest Casino. These brands offer a diverse selection of casino games from Saucify (BetOnSoft) and Vista Gaming, while Vegas Crest Casino also offers titles from Rival software. Vista Gaming Affiliates accept players from all over the world including players from the US.

As an affiliate, you earn money by promoting the brands of Vista Gaming Affiliates. Once you have signed up to the program, we will give you your specific links/trackers to identify all passing traffic. When a paying customer registers through your link/tracker, it will be counted on your affiliate's account. Then you'll receive a commission according to the agreement between yourself and Vista Gaming Affiliates. ►



24 HOURS IN SOFIA

Trafficology's guide to the best that Sofia has to offer outside AffiliateCon

Sofia is one of Europe's oldest capital cities, with a history going back more than 2,500 years and is replete with beautiful architecture spanning the city's extensive history.

Founded because of its naturally occurring mineral springs, the city still retains its links with vitality and wellness, with over seven springs still present in the city.

In the administrative centre of the city, the streets are covered with a specific yellow pavement, laid in the beginning of the 20th century and were a present to the Bulgarian Tsar Ferdinand for his wedding from the Austria-Hungarian royal family.

The Sofia Public Mineral Baths are another must see attraction, having been on the site of a natural spring since the early 1900s.

The city's main airport is a mere 9km from the centre of town and affiliates attending AffiliateCon Sofia will be able to easily navigate around Sofia on its buses and metro line trains.

MUST SEE

Completed in 1912 and serving as a war memorial to the 200,000 soldiers who died during the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878), the St Alexander Nevsky Cathedral has since come to be seen as the symbol of Sofia. One of the world's largest Eastern Orthodox Cathedrals, its gold dome stands 45 metres high and serves as a beacon shining across the city's skyline.

The interior of the cathedral is a real showcase for the finest craftsmanship that Europe has to offer, featuring lights made in

Munich, gates from Vienna and mosaics from Venice. Replete with Brazilian onyx, Italian marble and gold religious inscriptions cover the 34,100 sq ft space which can hold up to 10,000 people.

Those brave enough to climb the 53-metre high bell tower will be rewarded with excellent views of the city.

SOFIA ON A SHOESTRING

The Free Sofia Tour is in English, runs twice daily, first at 11am and then 6pm. Beginning at the Palace of Justice on Vitosha Boulevard, this free two hour tour takes in over 35 important sites, including the Bulgarian National Bank, the Banya Bashi Mosque, the Mineral baths, the Communist Party Headquarters and with no need to book, this tour is the ideal way to see all that Sofia has to offer for those with only a small amount of time on their hands.

EATING AND DRINKING

Fine Dining - Cosmos

With a modern conceptual design, Cosmos is a restaurant that would not seem out of place in New York or London. The restaurant regularly plays host to temporary exhibitions and its large windows give the restaurant an open plan feel. Featuring an eclectic international menu which includes crispy veal brain, spicy beef tongue and octopus, all served in a variety of strange and interesting ways, diners can expect to be visually ►

and gastronomically stimulated by the food and surrounding ambiance. In Cosmos, like in the majority of the Bulgarian restaurants, the menu peculiarly lists the portion sizes in grams.

Moderately priced - Raffy Bar & Gelato

A popular restaurant with Sofia natives, Raffy Bar & Gelato, located in the up and coming area of Bulvard Vitosha features dishes to cater to every type of diner, be it those seeking snack foods, those looking for a main meal or those seeking to indulge their sweet tooth with the restaurant's wide variety of gelato related deserts.

Networking meeting - Chefs

With a mix of light lunchtime food and meals that would not be out of place in a Michelin star restaurant, this restaurant is perfect for lunchtime business meetings or intimate dinners. Menu highlights include quail stuffed with goose liver, octopus grilled with olives and traditional white sheep cheese with tomatoes.

Alternative tastes - Bagri

Sustainability is a philosophy which underpins everything that this restaurant does. Sourcing its products from Bulgarian farmers,



Club Baskerville

that have become a virtual prerequisite in places like Prague and Barcelona at a fraction of the price.

Sofia's main night spots are located in either side of Bulvard Vitosha and latterly in the up and coming area of Ulitsa Rakovksi. Bulgarians partying the night away often go to the Bedroom Premium Club, with its avant-garde spectacle and playful atmosphere. Its multi-level amphitheatre setting features high-tech lighting, stunning sounds and often plays host to some of the world's most popular DJ's, who will help you party until the sun comes up.

If raving the night away isn't your scene then head over to Club Baskerville on Denkoglu Street, open until midnight, this warm and inviting bar serves well crafted cocktails as well as local Bulgarian beers and tasty snacks. Be warned though, Bulgarian public transport stops between 11pm and 5:30am, so those who don't leave early may well find themselves walking home.

If all that partying has left you needing your own space, there is no better place to do so than one of the city's many parks. The oldest park in Sofia is the Borisova Gradina, named after the Bulgarian Tsar Boris III, which was renamed 'Freedom Park' during the Soviet era but reverted to its pre-war title in 1989.

It features many open spaces and is the perfect place for that post-hangover siesta. If you are looking for something a little closer to the heart of Sofia, head to the Sofia University Botanic Gardens, where you can smell the roses, peonies, orchids, clematises and many other varieties of plants as you stroll beneath the acacia trees. ◀



Bagri

Bagri's mission is to show your food's route "from seed to plate". This up and coming restaurant offers natural cheeses and meats only from pastured animals and ecologically produced fruits and vegetables. In Bagri you'll find brown rice from the Trakia region, small chickpeas, very old variety from Ivaylovgrad, and authentic bean strains like 'popski', 'dobrudzhanski', 'smilianski' and goat beans.

Local charm - Chevermeto

Those seeking more traditional Bulgarian cuisine need look no further than Chevermeto, one of the oldest folk style restaurants in Sofia, having been welcoming diners for over 20 years. Located within the National Palace of Culture building, Chevermeto is popular with tour groups and offers a traditional folklore programme including the jolly 'horu' dance which all guests are invited to join in with. The Bulgarian word 'Cheverme' means spit-roasted lamb, however, this is far from the only offering on a menu which features stews, grilled meats, salads, appetisers and vegetarian dishes.

Night Life

With its cheap drinks (£1.10 a pint) and late opening hours (some as late as 5 or 6am), Sofia is swiftly becoming the go-to location for those wishing to avoid the crowds and hen parties



Carrusel Club

PLAY HARD

Christian Strutt, Managing Director and Owner at Lucky Media, tells *Trafficology* what he enjoys about work and outside the 9 to 5



WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB?

My first job was selling energy to companies and business energy brokers, for leading Scandinavian company Fortum.

I made my competitive advantage by providing the quickest quotes in the industry; and undercutting my competitors prices by selling three-year contracts with out-clauses. I was also a waiter at university before that, but I don't think that counts as a 'proper job' in a credible magazine like this.

WHO HAVE YOU LEARNED FROM THE MOST IN YOUR CAREER?

I am grateful to have learned most from those people I work closely with at other companies, affiliates and operators alike. Working on a revenue share basis together, there's every reason for marketing partners to share ideas; intelligence and best-practice marketing strategies with view to ultimately achieving the best results together. I am also grateful to have learned a lot from work colleagues, friends and family along the way as well. Online gaming and digital marketing both have very dynamic, ever-changing landscapes, so the steep learning-curves never stop in this business.

WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE PASTIME?

Watching, playing, and betting on football. This World Cup I think Germany will win, unless Ronaldo or Messi play at the top of their games every match; in which case either Portugal or Argentina could win.

WHERE DID YOU GO ON YOUR LAST HOLIDAY? AND WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO GO NEXT?

I took my family down to a holiday park in Brighton in the south of the UK as the smaller children's activities are top notch. This summer they'll be old enough to comfortably journey abroad, so I'd like to go to Disneyland in Paris.

FAVOURITE FILM? AND YES YOU CAN ONLY PICK ONE.
Pulp Fiction.

IF YOU COULD HAVE ONE SUPER POWER WHAT WOULD IT BE?

My one choice of super power would be a 'Jedi Super Thumb' that you could press on your computer screen, and it would move anything on that screen, but in real life. You could then quickly and easily shift a load of cash and resources to some needy people, and have some fun with it after.

OVER THE YEARS, WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BIGGEST LESSONS YOU'VE LEARNED?

In recent times both online gaming affiliates and operators have faced third party market challenges such as regulatory compliance tightening up as governments update their gaming laws. GDPR, various markets closing and taxes on net gaming revenue are slowly being introduced across Europe it appears. Casino affiliates have also had to be a lot more wary about casino affiliate programs closing their accounts down in recent times as well – with the main reasons from casino operators for this being 'compliance', 'change of ownership', 'player quotas' and 'just plain corporate BS' frankly. Moreover as lots of mergers and acquisitions have taken place while the industry matures, this risk has just increased substantially, as some bigger companies appear to make a habit of buying smaller companies with the purpose of turning over their customer bases.

Perhaps the biggest lesson I have learned in this industry is to spread your risk, resources and energy. Do this between as many marketing channels, brands and markets as you can afford to minimise this risk. Work closely with those people you like and trust in this industry, and value these relationships highly. ◀



bet365 Affiliates

Enjoy gambling responsibly. BeGambleAware.org 18+



A WORLD OF OPPORTUNITIES

SPORTS

BINGO

POKER

CASINO

VEGAS