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INSIDE

- HAREL FALK OF SOLITICS ON DATA MANAGEMENT AND AUTOMATION
- ACTIVEWIN MEDIA'S WARREN JACOBS ON WHITE-LABEL PARTNERSHIPS
- PLAY HARD: AN INTERVIEW WITH EIGHT-TIME OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALLIST USAIN BOLT

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PERSONAL BEST

How affiliates can lead the race with their branding and personalisation

bet365 Affiliates



A WORLD OF



TRAFFIC REPORT -

Trafficology has partnered with data experts Casino City Press to provide insight into website and traffic trends across the gaming industry. The below is a breakdown of the top 20 affiliate programs by vertical for Q1 2020, in comparison with Q4 2019





OVERALL



CASINO

Rank	+/-	Name	Website
1	1_	Betting Gods Affiliates	bettinggods.com /affiliates
2	1▼	Bet365 Affiliates	bet 365 af filiates.com
3	-	NetHive Affiliate Program	nethive.com
4	-	Yahoo Fantasy Sports Affiliates	sports.yahoo.com /dailyfantasy/affiliates
5	2	Bet9ja Affiliates	affiliates.bet9ja.com
6	5 🛕	IQ Option Affiliate	affiliate.iqoption.com
7	1▼	Betfair Partnerships	affiliates.betfair.com
8	3 ▼	Kindred Affiliates	kindredaffiliates.com
9	1▼	Parimatch Affiliates	affiliates.parimatch.com
10	1▼	William Hill Affiliates	affiliates.williamhill.com
11	1▼	Affiliate Hub	affiliatehub.skybet.com
12	-	1xBet Partners	1xpartners.com
13	3 🛕	Best Partners	bestpartners.com
14	10▲	GVC Affiliates	gvcaffiliates.com
15	2 🔻	Stoiximan.gr Affiliates	affiliates.stoiximan.gr
16	4▲	Uffiliates	uffiliates.com
17	29▲	Betway Partners Africa	betwaypartner safrica.com
18	3 T	Tipico Affiliate Program	tipico.com/en /affiliate-program
19	1▼	FDJ Affiliate Program	fdj.fr
20	3▲	Favorit Affiliates	affiliates.favorit.com.ua

Rank	+/-	Name	Website
1	-	KeyAffiliates	keyaffiliates.com
2	1_	Gamesys Group Partners	gamesysgroup partners.com
3	1_	Affiliate Hub	affiliatehub.skybet.com
4	2▼	Almor Affiliates	almoraffiliates.omarsys.com
5	7▲	Uffiliates	uffiliates.com
6	3▲	Buffalo Partners	buffalopartners.com
7	-	William Hill Affiliates	affiliates.williamhill.com
8	22▲	WinBet Affiliates	winbetaffiliates.bg
9	1_	LeoVegas Affiliate	leovegasaffiliates.com
10	1_	Kindred Affiliates	kindredaffiliates.com
11	5 V	Deckmedia Affiliates	deckmedia.im
12	17▲	CPA Kitchen	cpakitchen.com
13	11▲	GVC Affiliates	gvcaffiliates.com
14	1▼	Rabbit Affiliates	rabbit-affiliates.com
15	1▼	Mr Affiliate	mraffiliate.com
16	1▼	Best Partners	bestpartners.com
17	1▼	Casumo Affiliates	casumoaffiliates.com
18	1▼	Gaming1 Affiliates	affiliates.gaming1.com
19	1_	Videoslots Affiliate Program	partner.videoslots.com
20	1_	Paf Partners	pafpartners.com







SPORTS

П	M	C	n
p	Ш	u	U

Rank	+/-	Name	Website
1	-	Betting Gods Affiliates	bettinggods.com /affiliates
2	-	Bet365 Affiliates	bet365 affiliates.com
3	4 🔺	Bet9ja Affiliates	affiliates.bet9ja.com
4	1▼	NetHive Affiliate Program	nethive.com
5	1▼	Parimatch Affiliates	affiliates.parimatch.com
6	-	Betfair Partnerships	affiliates.betfair.com
7	2 🛕	Kindred Affiliates	kindredaffiliates.com
8	3 🔻	Affiliate Hub	affiliatehub.skybet.com
9	2	Tipico Affiliate Program	tipico.com/en /affiliate-program
10	ı	1xBet Partners	1xpartners.com
11	3 🔻	Stoiximan.gr Affiliates	affiliates.stoiximan.gr
12	16▲	Betway Partners Africa	betwaypartners africa.com
13	7_	Best Partners	bestpartners.com
14	12▲	AfiliadosW	afiliadosw.co
15	2	William Hill Affiliates	affiliates.williamhill.com
16	4	Fortuna Affiliates	fortuna-affiliates.com
17	1▼	Tipsport Partners	tipsport.cz/partner
18	3 ▼	Planet Win 365 Affiliates	affiliates.plan- etwin 365 all.com
19	1▼	PMU.fr Partners	partners.pmu.fr
20	3 ▼	Favorit Affiliates	affiliates.favorit.com.ua

Rank	+/-	Name	Website
1	-	Tombola Affiliates	tombola.co.uk/ affiliate-programme/
2	-	Gamesys Group Partners	gamesysgroup partners.com
3	11▲	GVC Affiliates	gvcaffiliates.com
4	1_	Mecca Affiliates	meccaaffiliates.com
5	1_	Rank Affiliates	rankaffiliates.com
6	3 T	Uffiliates	uffiliates.com
7	3 T	Affiliate Hub	affiliatehub.skybet.com
8	-	NetHive Affiliate	nethive.com
9	1_	LuckyJar Affiliates	luckyjar.com/uk
10	3 🛕	Bingo Partners	bingopartners.com
11	2 🔻	Broadway Gaming Affiliates	broadwaygaming.com
12	1▼	Kindred Affiliates	kindredaffiliates.com
13	6 V	RevenueGiants	revenuegiants.com
14	2	William Hill Affiliates	affiliates.williamhill.com
15	3 V	Gogame Partners	gogamepartners.com
16	8 📥	Bingo Affiliates.com	bingoaffiliates.com
17	10▲	Jumpman Affiliates	jumpmanaffiliates.co.uk
18	1▼	Tau Affiliates	tauaffiliates.com
19	6▲	The Bingo Affiliates	thebingoaffiliates.com
20	1_	Vista Gaming Affiliates	vistagamingaffiliates.net









LOTTERY

Rank	+/-	Name	Website
1	5 🛕	WPN Affiliates	wpnaffiliates.com
2	1▼	Stars Affiliate Club	starsaffiliateclub.com
3	1▼	Uffiliates	uffiliates.com
4	1▼	Winamax Affiliates	winamax.fr/en/affiliates
5	-	Affiliate Hub	affiliatehub.skybet.com
6	2	GVC Affiliates	gvcaffiliates.com
7	1_	IDN Partners	idnpartners.com
8	1_	Shen Affiliates	shenaffiliates.com
9	3 🛕	Commission Kings	commissionkings.ag
10	3 T	The Spartan Poker Affiliate Program	thespartanpoker.com /affiliate/overview.html
11	1	Bet365 Affiliates	bet 365 affiliates.com
12	1▼	Kindred Affiliates	kindredaffiliates.com
13	18▲	NSUS Affiliate Club	nsusaff.com
14	1_	Punto Scommesse Affiliations	puntoscommesse.it/ website/FooterMenu/ Promozioni/Affiliazioni.aspx
15	2	Best Partners	bestpartners.com
16	2	Royal Stakes	royalstakes.com
17	7_	ActiveWins Affiliate	activewins.com
18	3 🛕	Intertops Affiliates	intertops.eu/affiliate
19		PMU.fr Partners	partners.pmu.fr
20	3▲	Ladbrokes Partners	ladbrokespartners.com

Rank	+/-	Name	Website
1	1_	IQ Option Affiliate	affiliate.iqoption.com
2	1▼	EToro Partners	etoropartners.com
3	2 🛕	IG Markets Partners	ig.com/uk/marketing- partnership
4	3 🛕	XM Partners	partners.xm.com
5	1▼	The Plus500 Affiliate Program	500affiliates.com
6	2 🛕	Binary.com Affiliate Program	affiliates.binary.com
7	4 ▼	BinPartner	binpartner.com
8	2	KingFin	kingfin.com
9	3 🛕	IC Markets Affiliate Program	icmarkets.com/partner- ships/affiliate-program
10	1▼	Libertex Affiliates	libertex-affiliates.com
11	1▼	Forex Club Affiliate	fxclub.org/affiliate/
12	1▼	Alpari Partners	alpari.com/en/ company/partnership
13	5 🔺	Exness Partner	exness.com/partnership
14	-	FXTM Partners	fxtmpartners.com
15	1_	HotForex Partners	hfaffiliates.com
16	3 🛕	Nadex Affiliate	nadex.com/affiliates
17	4 🔻	InstaForex Affiliate Program	partners.instaforex.com
18	3 🛕	InstaForex Affiliate Program	partners.forex4you.com/en
19	1_	Gain Affiliates	gainaffiliates.com
20	2▲	ZuluTrade Affiliates	zulutrade.com /affiliate-program





PLAY ATTACK

NEW WORLD OF REVENUE



PlayAttack Affiliates







slotv.com



frankcasino.com

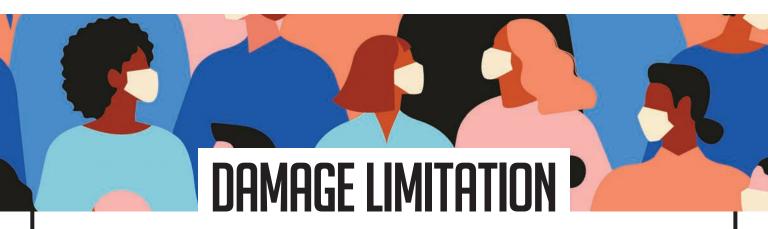


driftcasino.com



casinosolumbus.com

CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC



Tim Poole addresses the unavoidable ramifications of the coronavirus pandemic, exploring how sports betting affiliates can minimise its impact

Amid the current doom and gloom pervading the gaming and affiliate industries – and we don't use that phrase lightly – we have plenty of positive, forward-looking content to present to our readers in this edition of *Trafficology*. Later in this publication, we bring you analysis and insight from ActiveWin, PlayAttack, Solitics, Oddspedia, Braze and CasinoGuru. Plus, who better to generate some positivity than Usain Bolt in this month's Play Hard interview?

But at the same time, we can't minimise the severity of COVID-19. The whole world has slowed to a crawl and some industries, like travel and tourism, are suffering fatal blows as a result. While the sphere of online affiliate marketing has a digital advantage over many other sectors, the impact of so many sporting events being cancelled remains huge. Tier-one operators such as Flutter Entertainment, William Hill and GVC Holdings have projected \$100m-plus reductions in EBITDA and, in turn, affiliates will feel the heat from that monumental drop in traffic.

While damage is inevitable, damage limitation can make a huge difference: there is still vital business to be had, after all.

GETTING CREATIVE

It would be naïve to suggest there is a complete solution for every problem thrown humanity's way: just look at global warming. Sports betting affiliates cannot simply rebuild the sporting calendar by themselves, for instance. But it would also be defeatist to suggest there can be no plan of action to improve the situation. Our own experience with AffiliateCon Sofia proves that school of thought.

Originally scheduled for 12-13 May, the third edition of our affiliate event in Bulgaria has now been postponed due to the pandemic. As AffiliateCon Founder Julian Perry said at the time of cancellation, our team had spent two years building the event and hundreds of affiliates were already registered to attend. Now, the event will instead take place on the same dates in 2021.

But crucially, we haven't left it there for 2020. On 12 May, we will be running a virtual AffiliateCon conference, where some of our best speakers will still be on hand to provide their advice and expertise – advice that might be even timelier if everyone

remains homebound come May. This isn't to boast or promote our event, of course, it's simply to show there are ways around the situation currently confronting us all head-on. No strategy can totally defeat or account for the coronavirus – but effective planning can certainly limit its damage.

MAKING TOUGH DECISIONS

Affiliates have reacted to the pandemic in a variety of ways and, like in any other industry, tough measures have to be enforced on a temporary basis to ensure the long-term survival of a business. From ensuring all employees work from home to suspending freelance hours, decisions have to be taken swiftly. Unlike those running hotels or flying passengers around the world, affiliates can salvage their operations in a far more stable manner if the correct calls are made.

Another crucial step, especially for sportsbook affiliates, is to switch to a far more casino/poker-centric model. This may not be what football betting preview sites want to aim for in a perfect world. Equally though, it could end up being a matter of choosing between new channels of revenue or succumbing to no revenue at all. In fact, we have seen online casino and poker thrive during the COVID-19 pandemic – with players looking for more home-based mobile entertainment than ever. This can function hand-in-hand with verticals like virtual sports and esports, too. There's a growing vacuum to fill.

The transition will have to be well-managed – die-hard sports fans won't take kindly to being bombarded about other verticals – while responsible gambling should always be at the forefront of any messaging. Likewise, no customer should feel disturbed by a sudden overload of excess communication. But if you're an affiliate that solely looked towards sports betting prior to this summer, the unfortunate short-term truth is that has become a luxury that's no longer affordable, no matter how strong your brand is.

Alas, we aren't living in a perfect world right now: revenue will fall and businesses will suffer. But, if you're prepared to adapt to the requisite changes, there is light at the end of the tunnel. For an industry predominantly online and not reliant on land-based visits, this storm can be weathered.

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Solitics VP Sales, **Harel Falk**, speaks to **Tim Poole** about data management and automation, while offering advice to affiliates about the opportunities still available during a difficult time



Can you give us an introduction into exactly what services Solitics provides?

Solitics is a data management and marketing automation platform; the company was founded in 2013 and has been working in online industries since 2016. Today, our biggest verticals are online trading and online gaming but we also work in other verticals like e-commerce. We work with big companies like Codere, Delasport and many other gaming operators; what we enable them to do is create the most personal customer experience for their players in real time, based on all their data.

It's a cutting-edge system that gives them new abilities and flexibility. They can use all the data they have, including historical data, to create customer journeys for their players, based on what they do or don't do, with a very personal contextual experience. I'm very proud to say it's done without any big special projects on the brand's side either.

How much of your revenue derives from online gaming?

Online gaming, whether it's both casino and sports betting,

and online trading are the biggest verticals. I would say gaming is over 60% of what we do and the companies we work with.

What measures has Solitics taken in light of the coronavirus pandemic?

Because we're a technology and service company, the answer can be divided into two. As for the company itself, we have adapted and changed the way we work in terms of working from home. But once the whole COVID-19 pandemic started affecting the whole world economy, right away we started looking at our customers and asked ourselves how can we help them. The first thing we did was analyse all the data and we saw right away who was being affected. It was very apparent from the beginning that the whole sports betting vertical was suffering a major crash, naturally because of all the cancelled events. Generally speaking, there was a lot of uncertainty. There still is but now it's what I call a "crisis routine" so to speak. Everyone now understands where they stand and are trying to make the best of it.

Very quickly it was evident that, while sports betting was suffering significantly, online casino and slots were picking up. Providers of these suddenly had to deal with a lot more work while at the same time, their employees were less available; some of them couldn't even access the work from home for various reasons such as security and so on. They had a lot of new traffic and new engagement. So they needed help with automation and data management – the automation was a key part in this. The gaming vertical is very cutting-edge and people know how to adapt. People in the industry know how to change what they're doing to make the most out of situations.

Right away, it was obvious sports betting companies could see where it was going and they started focusing all their efforts on the casino side of the business, if they had it. We're still doing our best to help them do that, moving automation to that side of the business and helping them transfer and connect data, transferring players and so on. We worked around the clock with sports betting companies to move towards mostly the casino side of the business. Other companies, who don't have casino, tried to find other outlets like virtual sports and esports.

Have you had any business with land-based casinos looking to strengthen their online arms?

Yes, part of Solitics' specialty is connecting offline data

sources and online. We work with brands that have both online and offline operations. There was definitely a huge attempt from the brands to connect all that offline data and bring customers into the relevant online realm.

For most of the companies working with us, it wasn't actually as big of a challenge as we have already connected those data sources and it was available for them to use right away. Setting up campaigns, customer user journeys and promotions for offline and online customers was relatively easier and more seamless than it would have been if they didn't already work with our platform.

How does data management help operators, specifically in times of uncertainty like this?

Generally speaking, I can tell you through data management and automation that personalised user journeys can be created based on what players do and don't do in real time, which increase conversion as well as retention. It's very contextual, based not just on current actions but all of a player's historical data. For example, a player that made his first deposit yesterday, is playing today and loses half his despoit, has a much higher chance of churn if the operator doesn't respond to such an event relevantly and contextually on the spot.

This is true in general and even more so at times like these, when there's more demand and employees are less able to meet it. You're not relying only on the human factor, or all these automated messages that are preset, which is crucial. A lot of our partners have extended this to the sales and support aspects of their company.

What verticals do you think will prosper the most?

It all depends how long this crisis goes on. You could say the online casino and trading verticals are lucky for now. Not only are they unaffected, this has brought in a lot of increases and new traffic from offline and other verticals, too. In the short term, assuming the COVID-19 pandemic is not going to be more than two to four months and the economy will start to recover, online trading will definitely be the biggest winner as it thrives off volatility. In gaming, I can't say whether it'll be casino, slots or other verticals but there's definitely a great opportunity for those companies. In fact, I believe when this whole thing ends, the sports betting companies smart and fast enough to focus on other verticals such as casino will enjoy the fruits of their labour when major sport does finally return.

If they play their cards right and generate a good experience, a lot of casino players are going to stay with them, so if the crisis will be resolved in the short term, there are great opportunities. People who like gambling and sports are definitely looking for new outlets. There's an opportunity to advance virtual sports and esports more into the spotlight. However, if this goes on longer, people keep getting laid off, are forced to take unpaid vacations and the economy keeps spiralling down, players will have to make a hard choice and everyone will suffer. If it comes down to a choice between buying food and playing online, obviously they'll buy food. In my opinion, if this goes on for too long, we'll start seeing a decline. But we'll have to see what happens.

What advice would you give to affiliates to help get through this time?

It's pretty obvious to say their source of income has changed. There's an expression that goes "the cheese has moved" and my advice to both operators and affiliates would be there are tons of opportunities out there. I've heard of online trading companies generating more turnover over the last few months than all of last year. I'm sure there are loads of players searching for new outlets. Affiliates should take them to new verticals and shouldn't sit on the sidelines. They should increase the range of what they're doing, the verticals they're working in, and try to take those opportunities. Because the demand is there, it's just a question of tapping into it.

In the short term, anything related to food and the immediate necessities people buy has moved onto the online world, so there's another opportunity there. And I think affiliates really do have a wide selection of companies to work with. Obviously affiliates gain the most from operators and casinos that know how to convert the traffic they bring. Those conversions are substantially higher the more companies use smart methodologies and utilise their data. So I would say to affiliates choose who you're working with well; go for companies who don't just rely on dumb luck and human efforts; and work with operators who have automation, personalisation and operate in a smart way. We see the increase in conversions and lifetime player value now with companies who use real-time automation versus companies that don't.

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BRANDING: ACTIVEWIN

FAIL TO PLAN, PLAN TO FAIL

ActiveWin Media Managing Director **Warren Jacobs** walks through the imperative steps to setting up a white-label partnership



While online gaming is crowded with legions of casino brands trying to make their mark on the industry, that doesn't mean newcomers to the space should be discouraged. There's always room for an engaging brand on a robust white-label platform built to entertain players in a safe environment.

White labelling lowers the barrier of entry for responsible investors, without the expense and hassle of acquiring a separate UK gambling license and building the platform from scratch. Nektan, for example, has been a provider of this service for many years and is familiar to most people in the gambling industry. The big question remains: Why have so many new sites floundered while others are unquestionably successful in such a competitive market?

After years of working within the white-labelling space with dozens of brands, my team and I have seen the very best (and worst) of newcomers to online casino around the world. We have seen a clear pattern emerge that lays the foundations for how well a brand will perform. Analysing the collective intelligence gathered over time, our formula of success is the driving factor for my decision to recently launch Grace Media and share our knowledge with *Trafficology* readers. There are four components to consider when developing a white label:

BRANDING

Today's online consumers expect to be visually engaged with any site and casinos are no different. The very nature of a white-label

site is that you're buying a template to build upon, but this is the first hurdle many brands stumble on and never recover from. Your white label will live or die by its brand, so it must resonate with your players. Every aspect, from the name and logo to the tone of voice and the brand guidelines, should be carefully considered. Hire a professional branding team if you don't have the in-house skillset for this crucial first stage; it's a worthwhile investment.

EDUCATION

Knowledge is power and content is king, so get to know the games that convert and retain players, while generating the highest lifetime revenue in the industry. Since most players use mobile devices, research how top competitors perform on mobile, and note what works well and what doesn't. Google has announced 100% of sites will be ranked on mobile performance, so there's no hope of organic ranking with a poor mobile experience. An established white-label partner that can offer expertise and recommendations should be at the very top of the list of requirements before investing in launching a new site.

PLAYER EXPERIENCE

All the branding in the world can never make up for a poor online experience, so knowing your customer journey beforehand will put you in the mindset of the players you wish to attract. If you find the site is slow, or awkward to navigate or register/deposit, it's guaranteed your players will too. With so many other options and a tiny window of a few seconds to capture their interest, you must rigorously test your site to ensure any glitches or bugs are ironed out. Following the launch, you should A/B test to optimise UX and implement a strong CRM strategy for ongoing engagement.

MARKETING

If you build it, they will come, right? Wrong. That's where marketing comes in. Without a well-planned marketing campaign, even a custom-built site is unlikely to capture traffic. The first year of a new brand is make or break, so investing in a fully realised marketing strategy is imperative. Campaigns must be multi-channel, incorporating PPC, SEO, affiliate, CRM and social marketing to reach your target audience. Not budgeting for marketing is the biggest factor in failed white-label sites I have seen over the years.

CREATING THE RIGHT DIGITAL FOOTPRINT

They say if you fail to plan, you should plan to fail. When launching a new online casino or bingo site, focus on ways to differentiate yourself with strong USPs, and develop a great marketing strategy, ensure a solid relationship with your white-label provider, and always keep player safety as your top priority.

BROADCASTING YOUR BRAND: WHY VIDEO IS YOUR BEST FRIEND

The Helmet Guy, Brand Ambassador of PlayAttack Affiliates, discusses the importance of branding and why businesses should focus on video as part of their marketing strategy



What do M&M's and KFC have in common? Regardless of your country of origin, your education level or economic status, you all recognise the M&M's spokescandies when you see them and your mind is trained to recognise Colonel Sanders on the KFC logo. That's the power of branding.

Branding is often viewed as a luxury that only "the big dogs" in the industry can afford. This idea has become so deeply ingrained in our minds that businesses choose to focus their efforts elsewhere when designing their marketing strategy – if you're asking me, very mistakenly so.

Sure, the chicken and the egg dilemma will always be there, and it's difficult to determine whether it's the branding that made the business popular or vice versa. But the abundance of choice we're experiencing today may lead to confusion, which essentially translates into lower conversion rates. There are simply too many options for your business to afford to remain in the shadows.

It's important for businesses to understand a brand is way more than simply your logo, the colours you choose or how your website looks. Surely you've done your homework, your business brings something new to the table and your attractive offers might gain you a competitive edge. But that's how all businesses think. Remember – it's the brand people are buying from you.

And here another important aspect comes into play: how to choose the right medium for your brand. The key is to determine what the trigger for your audience is. PlayAttack Affiliates is putting its bucks into video. Here's why:

1. We live in a "video-first" world

According to a study published by Cisco, over 80% of all traffic will consist of video by 2021. While this might seem a bit ambitious, it certainly highlights the importance of video as a medium of communication between businesses and their audience.

This shift towards video content is dictated both by the demand of the customers, who find videos easier to digest, and by the prevalence of social media that encourages easy-to-share video content. According to a study published by Hubspot, 97% of marketers claim "videos help customers understand products."

2. Videos give your brand a distinct voice

Think about the amount of information you can fit into a single video frame. It's incredible. You get to transmit your brand colours, brand persona, tone of voice and sell your product at the very same time. This is very difficult to achieve in writing or static images. Using a video to promote your brand is like an all-inclusive package – and everyone loves these!

3."One good video can lead to a massive social following" I borrowed this quote from Mike Henry and he's right. We've all seen a video that's gone viral. I attribute this to the "stickiness factor". This term was coined by Tipping Point author Malcolm Gladwell and refers to the phenomenon of how something "sticks" in the minds of the public and influences behaviour. It's up to you to produce videos that "stick" but video is your best friend when it comes to getting your message across.

4. SEO Loves Video and Businesses Love SEO

I bet you can identify the logical chain here. Similarly to a written piece, you still must be smart about the usage of relevant keywords, and script good titles and meta-descriptions to please search engines. But whether you're creating a how-to piece on your product, sharing interesting tips or wrapping up the latest developments in the industry, video is a great medium. Having videos on your website might also increase the time your visitors spend on your platform. So when you're designing your SEO strategy, think about your video content too.

You can certainly attract attention by focusing on paid advertising, but you'll have to ask yourself: does my brand stand out and is my product "sticky" enough to influence behaviour? If your answer is no, you might need to rethink your brand strategy.



PERSONALISATION: PRAGUE GAMING SUMMIT



In his 'Personalisation in the age of privacy' talk at the Prague Gaming Summit in February, **Magith Noohukhan**, Product Evangelist at Braze, looks at the best ways to boost customer activation

In the last 10 to 15 years, there's been a fundamental change in how consumers play games and how they engage with gaming brands, and also how brands engage with customers as well. As consumers, they have multiple opportunities to interact with your brand and play, whether on a mobile phone, desktop tablet or on television, and there are multiple ways to interact with your brand.

As a brand, you and your clients have the opportunity to interact with your consumers through multiple channels like email or push notifications on both web and mobile. On top of that we have SMS and platforms constantly evolving such as Facebook and Instagram. When platforms like this evolve, brands are collecting more and more data from the

consumers as well. Brands are trying to collect as much of it as possible but it fails to create personalised and relevant experience to their users. That's why we as a brand really believe in forming human connections between consumers and the brands they love, and creating memorable experiences.

As a client of yours, they should be very careful with the data they're collecting and inform your users what they're collecting the data for, and what the purposes are.

Communication is key. Consumers want to be spoken to normally and helped to understand why they should be engaging with your brand. Also, if a client of yours could establish the communication in a more human and

personalised way, it's more likely their customers will be more satisfied with the brand, but also more likely they would recommend the brand to friends and contacts. Having loyal customers is really important for retention.

The main question to ask your clients is are they creating this brilliant customer experience. One of the first things to talk about is to have a great product plus experience, a combination of these two will create a lot of relationships.

The key topics around customer engagement include activation. The moment when someone signs up with any gaming app, be very honest and ask them to give you permission to use their data. For instance, when users download your app, it doesn't mean they're giving you permissions to send push notifications. If they don't, just don't send it. On the other hand, you can send an in-app message saying would you like to opt in for push notifications and if they say yes, you have the right to send them. It's basically respecting the privacy of the users from the very beginning of when someone starts to use their app.

Also important is focusing on the experience level of the player, which starts with collecting information of their experience, if they're a beginner or an expert in the particular game they are going to play. Based on that, you can create messages in a way that you can focus more on the beginner level, so it's more personalised, more tailored to that single audience, rather than putting a million audiences in one segment and sending a batch or blast message. This would create a much more relevant experience where users will think the gaming brand is utilising all the data provided in creating an experience that's more relevant to an individual, rather than them targeting a whole other market with their message.

It's about creating trust. As a gaming industry, I believe there's a lack of trust when people start to play because that's coming from the culture of gambling. If you could establish the trust from the very beginning, there's a high chance people will trust your brand and also they would understand you respect their privacy and create a more relevant experience.

These are the steps in terms of activation. Try to build trust, respect your user's privacy, if you're collecting data then make sure you are collecting data for the right reasons. And use their data to build a more meaningful conversation.

Another big challenge is trying to make your customers keep coming back. People churn because they're not interested in the game and if they don't have enough materials to be winning in that particular market, then they don't find it that entertaining. There are a lot of materials you can use to target those customers, with articles that are related to that gambling market, so you make them want to come back, which is all about personalisation. You want them to come back and not churn after a certain amount of time.

The best practice we see with companies using push notifications is to create a range of prices so people have an option to buy one of those, and which we think is bringing much more conversion to the industry than

before. Finding the right channel to engage with all these users in the gaming industry is vital to keep them active and wanting to come back.

Pre and post purchases are important too – what you do before and after they purchase. In terms of pre purchasing, it's important to add value to the items you're trying to sell. Nobody wants to spend money unless they know what they're getting out of it. For example, if I was putting in \$10, I would expect a return of at least \$20 in gambling, that's how it works. On the post purchase part, you have to help them understand through tutorials, to make repeat purchases. It's not about one purchase, it's about constantly making them come back and re-purchase.

Data is also crucial. If you don't put forth the best use of data, then there's a high chance your client's customers won't stay long, because platforms, channels and devices constantly evolve. Much more personal devices will be developed that will be available in the next few years but brands always have to think of the consumers because consumers change with the evolution of devices; the preferences and behavior of consumers will change at a much faster pace than companies can adopt to. How companies prepare themselves to target the customer is essential because that person is the most important person for every business.

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LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

Aleksey Kisyakov, Head of Project Management at Oddspedia, discusses why geotargeting is becoming a must-have for international affiliate projects



Geotargeting is not only a very important part of product personalisation, but also for online marketing in general. Each product has its niche, and that niche has its own characteristics that vary depending on the geolocation of the customer. It's no secret that users in different regions have different preferences. In odds comparison, for example, it's important to provide users only with current bookmakers working in their jurisdiction. It's also crucial to only attract users with an actual bonus for their location to convert traffic.

NEW REGULATIONS AND GEOTARGETING

As the legal landscape continues to evolve, gambling companies need to react on a daily basis to remain competitive. The gambling scene saw an unprecedented amount of reports from legal regulators in 2019, with bookmakers and casinos urged to comply with the changes in different locales. As gambling laws and legislation shake up the industry, volatile dynamics are sure to emerge, especially when it comes to marketing. Changes range from betting companies pulling their brands from whole locales to how bonuses are marketed to the public to meet the compliance criteria. All of this naturally affects affiliates who have to keep up with the market and amend their products in real time.

ODDSPEDIA'S GEOTARGETING RECOMMENDATIONS

To tackle the above-mentioned challenges, the Oddspedia team recommends a complex system for geotargeting consisting of several elements:

- Forming localised language versions of the product for main markets. This allows affiliates to both improve product quality and expand local audiences in the targeted countries.
- Each bookmaker operates in a certain set of countries. This list is dynamic, as bookmakers can gain or lose licenses in certain jurisdictions. A good geotargeting system provides a high-quality comparison of bookmakers filtering out white noise by comparing only those bookmakers who are active in the specific country. This feature allows affiliates to flexibly adapt to constant changes of rules and regulations in the industry, to which internationally operating bookmakers are prone.
- One of the most important bookmaker marketing strategies to attract new customers is bonus campaigns. Campaigns from a single bookmaker can vary across countries. Affiliates face the challenge of having to implement the correct information based on the user's country to convert successfully. An effective geotargeting system allows affiliates to incorporate all information from a bookmaker and subsequently display only the proper bonus offers, or promotional codes, which are relevant to the user.
- Marketing departments at bookmakers often create customised page branding for each individual market. That branding may be conducted with the help of hired sports stars or famous models to make them more attractive. It could also present a specialised offer for a particular market that's just locally available.

By adding geolocation features to products, affiliates can deliver a substantially improved customer experience, followed by increased traffic growth and higher customer conversion rates. Further steps include personalising sports, leagues and even individual matches and events for each of an affiliate's clients, as well as expanding language coverage.

THE FINAL WORD

Geotargeting is a tactic that takes personalised marketing to the next level by leveraging real-time data, to deliver relevant content to a target audience at each stage of the sales funnel. With the right tools in place, a company can leverage geotargeting tactics to gain valuable information about its target audiences, such as location and data. It can use that information to optimise its communication approach by delivering the right content to the right person – and at the right time.

PERSONALISATION: CASINOGURU



Affiliate manager at Lithuania-based affiliate site CasinoGuru, **Gytis Miliauskas**, talks to **Iqbal Johal** about breaking into new markets and the best ways to gain customer trust

Can you give us some background on CasinoGuru, how it's unique and how it stands out in the market?

We have two Lithuanian sites: CasinoGuru and Lazybuguru, but we also have Smart Betting Guide, which we are keen to push. The main idea is we focus on reviews and gambling tips. We want to make it so when you look for a game like blackjack, you can find all the gaming companies that have that game, and can search by country and location. We have moved more into educational content and answering beginner questions, to give players a perspective of what to look for in a company whose games you want to play, what to be careful of, and basic game rules. We also give some predictions, but we mainly try to keep it educational and fun. As the saying goes, teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime, so our message is similar to that.

Our owner, Zigmas Pekarskas, was a professional poker player and is quite famous in Lithuania. He knows how to be a beginner and how it feels to look for information or learn new games. To this day, it really helps us that he has that knowledge of the industry.

What our site is really liked for is his connections and networks. We get inside interviews with famous industry players. Not everyone can offer that. It's unique and builds trust with the customer and shows them we know our

industry, so we pivot towards that a bit. That has given us success but still, there are a lot of players who look for simple stuff like rules, good bonuses or best places to play. In our market in Lithuania, it's really helped us that we always show our faces and interact live with our customers. So the trust and interaction really separate us from competition.

What is the company's preferred model, revenue share or CPA?

We always look for revenue share deals; we prefer getting a better rev share deal instead of CPA. Our players are quite profitable; they play a lot and they come back so it makes more sense for us to get a better rev share deal; but we're looking at CPAs as well right now as we wait for our New Jersey license. There, we want to try CPA first because we don't know that market yet. But apart from the US market, right now we're only interested in rev share and it's a model that works perfectly for us.

How do you use engagement and personalised messages to generate traffic?

We send newsletters to our players if there's some news related that could affect the customers, such as all the stuff surrounding coronavirus. We would also send player



information and if there is a special deal from casinos. We mainly use newsletters but we're trying to send only relevant information and not spam messages.

It's important to make use of these materials, especially for us as we're completely focused on existing players. We're not interested in attracting new players through emails or any other form of communication but instead want to just keep the relationship going with the current customers to let them know we're still here, we're still active and have relevant news for them. It's important, I believe, to let them know we're still working and trying to bring them value, which is one of the best ways they can see it.

What other methods do you use to acquire customers?

We only run organic traffic, like SEO. We have people who have skills in it so we're more interested putting our energy into that. Organic traffic is something that has worked for us and we work a lot looking for key words for optimising our website and our newsletters, while we're looking at our competition and what they're doing and just try to improve our backroom profiles.

Everything with the most SEO we're really big on because we like when we get customers from organic traffic as it's a bit cheaper and we can maintain that more easily. Now it looks like the market will go through a lot of changes with the coronavirus outbreak, but we're in a good position that we focus on organic traffic; because we don't need to cut our advertising tracking or anything, which is why we focus on this.

What are the biggest challenges you face in the near future?

We don't know how the coronavirus will change player habits online. We look for the positives and the big companies will have to cut their advertising a bit and it might get cheaper, so we can try to push there and track players from buying traffic too. Now, we weren't doing that before because we thought it was better to focus on SEO and organic traffic. But now we kind of see it might be an opportunity.

If everything goes badly, you can see benefits like workforce will be cheaper, so you can hire more people in a variety of roles. It will be cheaper and you can do more, like get cheaper

advertising and expand in that way. But in terms of the coronavirus, I would just want to wish everybody well and for everyone to stay strong. No one's sure how things are going to look in a few weeks but look for opportunities and try to stay positive would be our main message.

We're working on our New Jersey license so there will be a lot of challenges there because it's new for us, like buying traffic will be. We're growing little by little, organically and naturally so there's nothing huge in front of us that's too big of a challenge. Of course regulation is something that's always going to be there and you have to be aware of it. But everything is fine.

Is breaking into new markets the next big thing on the horizon?

Yes it is and it's quite challenging because it's really different country by country. The new markets we are targeting are our neighbours such as Latvia, which won't be too difficult as it's a similar market. Then Finland as well, because it's not too far away and we know the customer base.

It's challenging because we don't have leverage of famous people in the market like we do in Lithuania with our founder, so we'll have to work differently and come up with different approaches. For example, we'll get to know which different players are in Finland, and what they prefer. Gathering knowledge and knowing how it's there is a challenge. Here, we know first-hand everything about our customers. We don't need to research much. But when you go into a new market, you need to find people who know the market well so they can give you a correct picture.

We are really looking forward to the US market. We're going to try different things there like CPA, and try to get organic traffic not just from Google but from Bing and other platforms too. I think we aren't too far away. When we get a license there, we'll try to buy traffic so we'll see how we're doing immediately.

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PLAY HARD



PLAY HARD

Usain Bolt, the fastest man in history and eight-time Olympic gold medallist, speaks with **Tim Poole** at a Ganapati press gathering about how fast he'd run the 100m now and who his toughest-ever opponent was

He was the face of global athletics for so long. Now Usain Bolt is the face of his own online slot game, courtesy of Japanese games provider Ganapati.

Everyone remembers where they were the first time Bolt won the first of his 100m Olympic gold medals at the 2008 Beijing Summer Games, just as they do every time he broke the 100m and 200m world records thereafter.

Thanks to Bolt's involvement with gaming, however, everyone at ICE London 2020 will now remember exactly where they were when the Jamaican star graced the gaming trade show with his presence in February, even performing his own DJ set.

On the Wednesday afternoon of ICE week, Bolt met with assembled members of the media and for *Trafficology*, this was not an opportunity to be missed. We've had CEOs, affiliates, account managers, Champions League-winning footballers and more featuring in Play Hard over the years. Now, we have the fastest man in history.

For our first question, we asked Bolt how it feels to have his own online slot game as, after all, it's not something that happens every day – even for a man of his stature. An "excited" Bolt spoke of his desire to broaden his brand and described how gaming has been a part of his nature his entire life.

But how did the beginning of this partnership compare with his first few days working with other companies and in other industries? "For me, it always starts out the same," Bolt told *Trafficology* at a gathering of reporters in a Ganapati media room. "You get in contact and try and build a relationship with a big brand. You try to help them as much as they help you. You do your research and want to work with people who are on the same timeline, work at the same level and have the same goals as you do. I'm excited to do a lot more things with Ganapati in the years to come."

As regular *Play Hard* readers may guess, though, here was when we broke away from any business or industry-related questions. It was time to get to the serious topics.

HOW FAST DO YOU THINK YOU'D RUN THE 100M NOW?

I've been having a debate with my coach about this. I was saying 10.3 seconds but he said 10.7 seconds. For me, 10.7 seconds is really bad. I've been retired for over two and a half years but I miss competition.

DO YOU EVER SEE SOMEONE BREAKING YOUR 100M RECORD AND, IF SO, DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA WHEN?

The possibility is there. But I haven't seen that person yet, personally watching the competition. We'll see.

WHO WAS THE TOUGHEST OPPONENT YOU EVER FACED?

I think Justin Gatlin, because he was a competitor just like me. He loved competing, he wanted to compete and he was always ready to compete at the highest level. I always take my hat off to him. In the last five years of my career, he kept me on my toes, so I have much respect for him.

IF YOU COULD TRADE IN ALL YOUR OLYMPIC MEDALS FOR CHAMPIONS LEAGUE AND PREMIER LEAGUE MEDALS WITH MANCHESTER UNITED, WOULD YOU DO IT?

Ah. If I was to get a chance to play in the Premier League – I've watched football so intensely throughout my career. It's something I've always wanted to do. But track and field is my life. I've really enjoyed it and it's been with me since I was the age of 10. It's something I've always done. So for me I couldn't trade it in – but it's so close!



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