

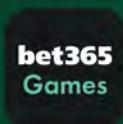
# trafficology

Marketing & affiliate focus by *Gambling Insider*

APRIL 2022

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APRIL 2022

## INSIDE:

**Q&A: N1 Partners Group**

**Nigeria focus, with Bet9ja**

**The latest Craze**

**Play Hard: The Game Day**

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## GAMING 360

**A supplier, operator and affiliate?  
*Trafficology* speaks with Glitnor  
Group CEO David Flynn**

# TRAFFIC REPORT

Trafficology has partnered with data expert Casino City Press, to provide insight into website and traffic trends across affiliate industries – predominantly in gaming but including others. In this edition, we review affiliate programmes per vertical for February 2022. The below is a breakdown of the top 10 sites globally, including both desktop and mobile, sorted by: overall ranking, casino ranking, sports betting ranking, poker ranking, lottery ranking and financial ranking



## OVERALL

Rank	Name	Website
1	bet365Partners	www.bet365partners.com
2	NetHive Affiliate Program	www.nethive.com
3	TrafficOn	afiliadosw.co
4	eToro Partners	etoropartners.com
5	Entain Partners	www.entainpartners.com
6	Best Partners	www.bestpartners.com
7	betway Partners Africa	www.betwaypartner safrica.com
8	DraftKings Affiliates	www.draftkings.com/affiliates
9	Kindred Affiliates	www.kindredaffiliates.com
10	Bovada Affiliate Program	www.bovada.lv/new-bovada -affiliate-program

## CASINO

Rank	Name	Website
1	Gamesys Group Partners	www.gamesysgroup partners.com
2	Stakes Affiliates	affiliates.stakes.com
3	WinBet Affiliates	winbetaffiliates.com
4	TrafficOn	trafficon.io
5	Rajbet Affiliates	pap.raj.bet/affiliates/
6	Betsson Group Affiliates	www.betssongroup affiliates.com
7	Platin Casino Affiliates	partners.platincasino.com
8	bet365 Partners	www.bet365partners.com
9	William Hill Affiliates	affiliates.williamhill.com
10	Buffalo Partners	www.buffalopartners.com

## SPORTS

Rank	Name	Website
1	bet365 Partners	www.bet365partners.com
2	NetHive Affiliate Program	www.nethive.com
3	Entain Partners	www.entainpartners.com
4	betway Partners Africa	www.betwaypartner safrica.com
5	Best Partners	www.bestpartners.com
6	Betfair Partnerships	partnerships.betfair.com
7	Bovada Affiliate Program	www.bovada.lv/new- bovada-affiliate-program
8	Betway Partners	www.betwaypartners.com
9	Stoixman.gr Affiliates	affiliates.betano.com
10	William Hill Affiliates	affiliates.williamhill.com

## FINANCIAL

Rank	Name	Website
1	eToro Partners	etoropartners.com
2	TrafficOn	trafficon.io
3	IG Markets Partners	www.ig.com/uk /marketing-partnership
4	BinPartner	binpartner.com
5	Deriv Partners	deriv.com/partners/
6	Exness Affiliates	www.exnessaffiliates.com
7	OctaFX Affiliate Program	my.octafx.com /open-account/partner
8	XM Partners	partners.xm.com
9	Capital.com Partner Program	capital.com/partnership- programme-lp
10	IC Markets Affiliate Program	www.icmarketspartners.com

## LOTTERY

Rank	Name	Website
1	FDJ Affiliate Program	www.fdj.fr
2	Lottoland Affiliates	www.lottolandaffiliates.com
3	Michigan Lottery Affiliates	playonline.michigan lottery.com/affiliate
4	West Lotto Partners	westlotto.de/unternehmen/af- filiate/partnerprogramm.html
5	LottoStar Affiliate Programme	lottostar.co.za/affiliate
6	The Lotter Affiliates	www.thelotter-affiliates.com
7	MegaRush Affiliates	megarushaffiliates.com
8	Affiliate Empire	www.lottogoaffiliates.com
9	PA iLottery Affiliate Program	www.pailottery.com /p/partners/
10	Banana Lotto Affiliates	www.bananalotto.fr/ affiliation.php

## POKER

Rank	Name	Website
1	WPN Affiliates	www.wpnaffiliates.com
2	Stars Affiliate Club	www.starsaffiliateclub.com
3	Winamax Affiliates	www.winamax.fr /en/affiliates
4	Universal Affiliates	www.universal-poker.com
5	U-filiates	uffiliates.com
6	Entain Partners	www.entainpartners.com
7	bet365 Partners	www.bet365partners.com
8	GGPartners	en.ggpoker.com /partners/affiliate-program/
9	The Spartan Poker Affiliate Program	thespartanpoker.com /affiliate/overview.html
10	CoinPoker Affiliates	agents.coinpoker.com



Rankings are estimated using statistical data and should not be considered absolute ranking values. More than 50 complementary top lists are available on the iGamingDirectory.com website operated by Casino City Press.

# STRENGTH AND RESILIENCE

N1 Partners Group COO **Andrey Akimov** speaks to *Trafficology* about his company's ambitions for 2022, with one particular theme being front and centre



**Hi Andrey. What are your main targets for 2022?**

If we talk about the MGA licence, I will single out Austria, Switzerland and Finland. As for the Curaçao licence, it's New Zealand, Canada and Brazil. We've recently launched N1 Casino in Greece. The plans for the short-term future include launching a project in Serbia.

**What are the biggest challenges you see ahead for 2022?**

The gambling market is dynamic and slightly unpredictable, so the main goal for 2022 is not just to maintain our positions but to grow at least twice in all key indicators. We continue to work on innovation, content improvement and new features for online casinos. And we are not going to stop.

**How do you reflect on 2021 as a whole?**

Last year was very eventful for the N1 Partners Group team – there were many events, I will note the key ones. We have redesigned

several projects, Joo Casino (Curaçao) – a new design and logo, a convenient mobile version, new welcome bonuses and a high roller reload bonus for players.

N1 Partners, an affiliate program, was also Shortlisted for the prestigious Global Gaming Awards 2022.

**What are the main trends you can identify for operators and affiliates for the year ahead?**

I see the development of crypto projects as the primary trend. Although it appeared a long time ago, its popularity does not decrease but grows every day.

Also, I see entering markets with country (not multi-jurisdiction) licences as one of the promising trends.

**If you had one wish for your company right now, what would it be?**

I would like to wish our company strength, resilience and achievement of all our goals for 2022!

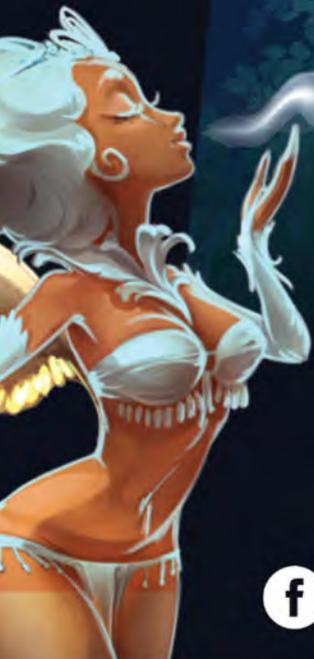
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# GLITNOR GROUP: GAMING 360°

Tim Poole speaks to Glitnor Group CEO David Flynn, following the firm's takeover of affiliate KaFe Rocks



**CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR ACQUISITION OF KAFE ROCKS. WHAT IS IT IN PARTICULAR THAT APPEALED ABOUT THE COMPANY; WHY WAS IT A MUST-HAVE?**

Their appeal was one of the main things, to be honest. From day one, not only the owners but also the management team were absolutely fantastic. We've been looking at the affiliate market for over a year now, and assessing a number of potential targets, all with their own benefits. But KaFe Rocks just stood out, head and tails, from our perspective. In terms of the synergies that we had, the cultural fit of the two businesses and the shared future of the businesses,

this will help us ensure that we're aligned moving forward. This may be surprising as we're looking at two totally different companies. But it's really worked, it's like a hand in glove situation. The partnership fits perfectly.

**HOW'S THE EXECUTIVE STRUCTURE GOING TO WORK? WILL THE EXISTING CEO REMAIN AT KAFE ROCKS?**

Yes absolutely. Simon [Pilkington] will remain the CEO of KaFe Rocks. KaFe Rocks will continue to run their own show, so to speak; they're doing an absolutely fantastic job and have been for years now.



# PARTNERS

**4000+**

Partners  
already working with us

**2M+**

Players  
across our projects

**50+**

Countries

**10000+**

Slots, Live and Table games

**CONVERSION UP TO 70%!**

\*depending on the type of traffic and GEO

## PERSONAL MANAGER

Instant respond  
to your traffic queries



## TRUE PARTNERSHIP

No negative carryover

## AFFILIATE PLATFORM

Detailed and flexible reporting



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## PLAYER RETENTION

Loyalty system  
& multiple bonus programs



## FAST & GUARANTEED PAYOUTS

Payments are made without delay

## OUR BRANDS

CASINO

SLOT HUNTER

FIGHT CLUB

JooCasino

DASISTCASINO

BET

JooSports

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NI.PARTNERS

Our direction for growth geographically is very much aligned, in the sense that our growth profiles are similar over the next four or five years. Simon has quite recently brought on board a new management team over the course of the last 12-18 months, and they're a great team.

#### **HOW APPEALING IS THE US PRESENCE IN YOUR STRATEGY? I'M ASSUMING VERY...**

Good assumption. There are a number of things that we've been assessing over the course of the last few years. Our focus is to be one of the most entrepreneurial and fastest-growing businesses in the iGaming market. Our focus is going to be across operations, game studios and affiliation, or lead generation as we call it. We already have a very strong presence with operations, with leading brands in the Swedish market as an example. We've also launched our B2B business Swintt just over two years ago, which is going extremely well.

This was now time to strengthen our focus on the affiliation piece of the business. The question is why? When we look at the US and several other markets, there's a lot of marketing spend ongoing, a lot of noise around sports betting and a lot of marketing dollars not making the right type of impact from an operator's perspective.

For us, we see that M&A has been ongoing in the gaming industry for many years. I started out 19 years ago in iGaming, and the first transaction I was involved with was in 2006. So this is not something new but we know it is going to continue at pace, and now that the US is in play it's going to continue with even more vigour. The valuations in the US are also much higher, even with some of the numbers coming down over the course of the last few months. But the valuations are still much higher in the US than anything you'd get in Europe.

I foresee companies in the US that have revenues derived in the US, and have US shareholders and investors, effectively acquiring their way East. We want to make sure we are not the "acquiree" and more so the acquirer.

So KaFe Rocks is important in that strategy. Rather than spending an absolute fortune on marketing, player acquisition, going through into the US to make a US play using our B2C business – this is very much about a US play using KaFe Rocks. Also, the brand Time2Play, that's what we're really focused on in the US market. By doing so, not only are we deriving revenue from the US, but we can rapidly grow that and really understand the market. When the time is right, we'll be ready to enter with our B2C business.

Our B2B business is already signing up a number of operator deals in US states. That will continue anyway. But the B2B revenue cycle is more long term, in terms of signing up and integrating customers, and in terms of distribution etc. Affiliation is immediate, and as a group we now have access to 12 states in the US; and there are another four licences on the way in. The revenues are starting; there's a very strong focus from the team in that regard.



**DAVID FLYNN**

**“SIMON [PILKINGTON] WILL REMAIN THE CEO OF KAFE ROCKS. KAFE ROCKS WILL CONTINUE TO RUN THEIR OWN SHOW, SO TO SPEAK; THEY’RE DOING AN ABSOLUTELY FANTASTIC JOB AND HAVE BEEN FOR YEARS NOW”**

**IN TERMS OF REGULATION, IS THERE NOT A CONFLICT OF INTERESTS? ARE YOU ALLOWED TO BE AN AFFILIATE, SUPPLIER AND OPERATOR IN THE SAME STATE, OR COULD REGULATORS STOP THIS?**

No, there's no particular regulation about the road we're on. At the end of the day, they are separate companies; we have the same holding company but we already have two companies in the US for our B2C and B2B business. And through KaFe Rocks and Time2Play, we have two others. I see it very much as investment into these businesses as opposed to active management.

**TO ZONE IN ON TIME2PLAY, DID THIS BRAND STAND OUT TO YOU IN PARTICULAR DUE TO ITS STREAMING ASPECT, OR WAS IT SIMPLY PART OF THE WIDER PACKAGE?**

I really think Time2Play is going to be a destination for players going forward. We have a dedicated team focusing on that political offering.

It's in its infancy, it's still being developed. But we have great aspirations for that particular brand moving forward.

It's not just about the streaming perspective, that's just one offering, one part of the product that the team has put together, in response to the market need for streaming ability.

**WHAT PERCENTAGE OF THE BUSINESS WILL AFFILIATE REVENUE GENERATE? YOU'VE GOT B2C, B2B, IT MAY BE HARD TO SAY BUT HOW MUCH ARE YOU EXPECTING THE KAFE ROCKS ARM OF THE BUSINESS TO BRING IN?**

I'm not going to give exact figures, but it will be a significant amount for us.

**WERE THERE ANY OTHER AFFILIATE BRANDS YOU LOOKED AT? WHAT WAS THE SEARCH PROCESS BEFORE YOU DECIDED ON KAFE ROCKS... DID YOU ALMOST GO FOR ANY OTHERS?**

We assessed quite a few, maybe up to around 40 different affiliate sites and businesses across the globe. Some were wholly focused on the US market, some partially in the US market – perhaps 5-10% of their revenues. But nothing really stood out.

What was really important for us with KaFe Rocks is that they have such a good product. They really do want to build, and continue to build, sites that offer players the right kind of experience and the right kind of advice. We did this to ensure we were not going to be working together with such sites that perhaps don't follow the rules and regulations that are in place.

As KaFe Rocks says, and as I believe in, it is important to make sure gaming is reputable; and it's important to only work with reputable destinations, websites etc. For players, too, it's important they play games from reputable sources.

**LASTLY, ARE THERE ANY FURTHER ACQUISITIONS THAT YOU'RE EITHER LOOKING AT RIGHT NOW, OR SOMETHING LONGER TERM THAT IS BEING STRATEGISED?**

From a strategic perspective, Glitnor has seen over 100% growth year-on-year since day one. We are also about to turn four years old, and we envisage that our growth path will continue moving forward.

**“AS KAFE ROCKS SAYS, AND AS I BELIEVE IN, IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAKE SURE GAMING IS REPUTABLE; AND IT'S IMPORTANT TO ONLY WORK WITH REPUTABLE DESTINATIONS, WEBSITES ETC. FOR PLAYERS, TOO, IT'S IMPORTANT THEY PLAY GAMES FROM REPUTABLE SOURCES”**

As I said, M&A within the industry is very prevalent, we know that there will be other opportunities down the road for further transactions. We can now look at transactions across all three paths of the value chain, with regards to affiliation, B2B and B2C.

There could be further transactions as well, looking at other verticals and products, and indeed ancillary services to the gaming industry that we aren't involved in today. All of this is making sure we continue to be the fastest-growing iGaming business globally, moving forward.

**IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO ADD, DAVID?**

I'd just like to emphasise what a great team KaFe Rocks has: it's fantastic. I'm really looking forward to working together with them. When we announced the deal, I went round to the office in Malta, joining the team for a few beers and putting a face to the name, so to speak. It gave me a lot of confidence, meeting all the other team members I had the opportunity to meet. So I'm very, very excited about the future.

**HOW FAR IS THE OFFICE IN MALTA?**

They (KaFe Rocks) operate a villa hub, called the oasis. It's very similar to us, we moved into our own villa three months ago now. So, they are around three kilometres away, it's not that far at all. It's a great place where people can come and collaborate.

Otherwise, they operate a remote office, and employ an appointment scheme for their 170 Rocketeers. We also operate a very flexible scheme with our working policies, with our, let's say, Glitnor Gladiators. So now we have Gladiators and Rocketeers!

# AFRICA: THE DATA LOCKOUT

Bet9ja's Senior Marketing Manager, **Olufemi Osobajo**, talks to *Trafficology* about the operator's position in the Nigerian market and how the Nigerian market sits within Africa as a whole



**OLUFEMI OSOBAJO**

## HI FEMI. CAN YOU GIVE US AN INTRODUCTION TO BET9JA? HOW HAVE YOU GROWN SINCE YOU WERE FOUNDED?

Bet9ja started 10 years ago; we were the fourth operator to enter the Nigerian market. The company started as a grassroots movement, meaning it was an offline business, operating in shops and through TV channels. Since then, to recruit more customers, our online offering has been developed and it's going really well, in both offline and online areas.

With the business operating in Nigeria, there were a lot of hurdles to overcome. Many people don't accept gambling and look down on it; it's seen as taboo. So that becomes a marketing challenge, which constantly evolves over time. The main issue for us at the time was how to differentiate ourselves from our competitors, as everyone was advertising the same sort of things. The perception was that all operators were one and the same – so how we've grown bears direct relevance to this differentiation. How do we stamp our own authority? How do we stand out from the noise? These are the questions we ask to set out our pathway for evolution.

Today, the market lacks data. It is still relatively new, and we are behind other international markets because the market here lacks enough data. For example, I can't tell you how many sports betting customers there are in Nigeria in total; we don't have that information. We have our own data, of course, but in terms of data industry wide, we cannot get that kind of information just yet.

We've started to shift messaging away from functional messaging, which is what you'd normally see in messaging containing the best odds, best cash out rates, etc. We're

starting to develop something more emotional, to appeal to people. Because in Nigeria, a bet placed is not just a bet, but it represents an opportunity to change a bettor's life. So tapping into this hope and sharing in a customer's emotions is how we are differentiating ourselves from the crowd. We've been running this new marketing campaign successfully for three years now. But, of course, we are always trying to expand, to bring in more customers. We're currently developing our VIP section, too, to appeal to more affluent customers.

We've developed competition over time, but it's about handling that. One of the ways to get above the competition is by best exploiting television. Big Brother has a cult following in Nigeria, everyone watches it for some reason! So, by having our ads play during the show is a big boost. We're able to get our message out and everyone sees it.

## WE UNDERSTAND BET9JA HAS SOME CSR INITIATIVES THAT HELP THE COMMUNITY. CAN YOU GIVE SOME EXAMPLES OF THESE INITIATIVES AND EXPLAIN HOW THEY HELP?

We have an extensive agent network. So what we do is tap into our agents who operate in different local communities. We have over 30,000 agents in Nigeria now, so they're always looking for opportunities throughout Nigeria. This helps us establish a master brand campaign built up from grassroots. I wouldn't personally know the needs of people throughout Nigeria in local regions, but my agents will. So what we do is give a budget for every agent to come up with an action plan initiative, to provide more support for the local community.

In the master brand which I'm involved with, we try to fight the stigma against sports betting. We try to frame it as a lifestyle choice, tapping into things the average consumer likes. For example, in Big Brother, if you take the fashion and lifestyle choices of the housemates, we can supply clothing to housemates featuring our brand. This is great for promoting the business. In Nigeria it's music, fashion, lifestyle and comedy that consumers follow, so positioning our brand here is great for us. It's a good way to face up to the stigma, as if you're attending a concert, show or sports match that we sponsor, you are somewhat endorsing the brand, without even knowing it. These are the kind of things we do with people on board in our business.

## THERE HAS BEEN A RAPID RISE OF INTERNET USERS IN NIGERIA, PARTICULARLY OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS. THIS HAS OBVIOUSLY HELPED YOUR ONLINE OFFERING, BUT HOW HAS IT IMPACTED THE BUSINESS AS A WHOLE?

This is really helping the market. What's really made an impact is the growing number of smartphones in Nigeria. The incremental rise in smartphones is remaining steady.

Belgium, France,  
Netherlands, Serbia, Peru

**Circus**

Colombia

**Zamba**  
APUESTAS & CASINO ONLINE

Portugal

**ESC**  
ONLINE

France

**JOA**

Arkansas, Tennessee

**betly**  
SPORTSBOOK



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**Regulated Brands**



**Generous Incentives**



**Omni-Channel Marketing Tools**  
Animated banners, Banner Schedules,  
Access to Odds Feed, Landing Pages



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Every Time**



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[affiliates@gaming1.com](mailto:affiliates@gaming1.com)

**GAMING<sup>1</sup>**  
— AFFILIATES —

Once you have a smartphone it's hard to go back! You have data automatically; you can network and create your own betting community. Social media offers an introductory means, particularly the likes of Facebook and WhatsApp which advertise sports betting. So the rise in internet use has had a huge boost.

In fact, I don't think we're tapping into the online market as much as we should yet. We're really just scratching the surface; there's so much room for improvement in our online offering and one of our tasks is to take it to where it really should be.

#### **WOULD ONE OF THE NEXT STEPS TO YOUR ONLINE OFFERING BE THE BETTER IMPLEMENTATION OF DATA?**

Yes, the business as a whole – not just online. If you look at fintech, that is huge in Nigeria. Every day there are new things that spring up. Investors are banking on fintech. Let's say, for example, a consumer spends 30% of their income at Bet9ja. The remaining 70%, we don't know how they spend that money; we haven't got the data from other markets. If we were to know how customers spend the remaining 70% of their money, we could better market to these industries and subsequently drive customer numbers up. We can go to a popular store, drive up traffic in partnership with them by offering 10-20% discounts on meals for customers. So, with this more accurate data, we'd be able to better augment this, rather than going to the biggest consumer draws. So we want to offer customers more than the competition, by giving them discounts on things they actually want/like. When we do get more accurate data, the opportunities will be immense.

#### **ARE THERE ANY OTHER MARKETING STRATEGIES YOU'VE INTRODUCED/ ADAPTED TO GET AHEAD OF THE COMPETITION? WHAT HAS HELPED YOU GROW AS A BRAND?**

For me personally, in the first year I joined Bet9ja it was all about sponsoring with Big Brother and getting that deal over the line. Since then, it's been about developing the new marketing campaign, a fresh campaign which is more personal and taps into other things consumers like. If you were to look at our commercials, it doesn't look like a sports betting ad, only at the end do you realise the ad is for Bet9ja. This is how we are differentiating ourselves from the market, by being unique and original; it is definitely a sign of modernisation.

Everything in Nigeria is becoming more modern: modern banking, modern engine oil, modern football applications such as LiveScore. Everyone is trying to latch onto the bandwagon of what is modern, so it's important to stay relevant by evolving constantly. We have to constantly seek out new opportunities so we don't get stuck in the mud. One of the best ways to do this and stave off competition is to strike exclusive deals, in such a way that no other betting platforms can access the same space we occupy. So it's not only about selecting exclusive deals but also the right exclusive deals, to best benefit Bet9ja. Exclusive deals help us to shut out competitors and dominate in a certain space. This helps us to thrive freely.

Our esports platform specifically also has a great market entry strategy, which is to make odds slightly higher to those playing on Bet9ja. But placing live odds slightly higher than the competition draws customers, as people are always looking for the best deal. This has helped us become the most popular

betting platform in Nigeria. Our instant payouts show that we are financially stable as a business, even on really high payouts.

#### **PICKING UP ON WHAT YOU SAID ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF EXCLUSIVE TV DEALS, HOW IMPORTANT ARE SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS BECOMING NOW, WITH THE RISE OF SMARTPHONE USE?**

Yes, we are building partnerships. We're actually speaking directly with Facebook to build our relationship. We already have a couple of promos out on Facebook as we speak, so now it's all about building on this relationship. We're also in partnership with Google, so we're currently in the process of building a relationship with them too.

We've invested a lot into the online space, particularly recently. It has almost become a meme here, where if you click on any given website, the links eventually take you to Bet9ja! So, we've invested a lot in this space to drive up our esports offering, as Nigeria as a whole becomes more modernised.

#### **WE'VE SPOKEN ABOUT BET9JA WITHIN THE NIGERIAN MARKET. HOW DOES THE NIGERIAN MARKET AS A WHOLE COMPARE TO OTHER AFRICAN MARKETS, AND HOW DOES THE AFRICAN MARKET COMPARE TO OTHER MARKETS INTERNATIONALLY?**

In Nigeria specifically, the people who gamble see it as a side hustle, for better or worse. A lot of people see it as a second job, an avenue for making money. This can be problematic, which is why we are personalising the experience, so people will truly feel whether they would like to gamble or not. So, there are a lot of issues with regard to keeping but also banning gambling; as so many people depend on it.

There was talk a few years ago that the Government was trying to ban gambling. There was outrage at this, which actually trended on Twitter, people were saying that they can't ban Bet9ja. People were saying they need gaming, as the Nigerian Government do not provide many employment opportunities. So people were taking to the streets as they sadly rely on successful gambling to make ends meet. Soon after, however, the Government announced they were not going to ban gambling. So that is the strength of feeling for regulated gambling in Nigeria.

In terms of Africa at large, Kenya in particular has a huge gaming market. The Government had banned gambling in Kenya, but once they saw the losses to revenue and tax income, inevitably the decision was reversed. I think Kenya is the perfect example to show that sports betting is never going to die in Africa, as it has a huge following. Sports too, particularly the Premier League, has a massive following across Africa. LaLiga is gaining traction, the NBA and UFC too. So there is a huge sporting environment and it's only getting bigger.

**"WE TRY TO FIGHT THE STIGMA AGAINST SPORTS BETTING. WE TRY TO FRAME IT AS A LIFESTYLE CHOICE, TAPPING INTO THINGS THE AVERAGE CONSUMER LIKES"**

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# THE LATEST CRAZE

**Adrian Schembri**, Director & CEO, Excitable Gaming and **Mark George**, CMO, speak to *Trafficology* about the company and its brand Craze Affiliates

**HI GUYS, THANKS FOR TALKING TO US. TO START OFF, COULD YOU GIVE US A BACKGROUND AND SOME INSIGHT INTO CRAZE AFFILIATES?**

**Adrian Schembri:** Craze Affiliates started when CrazePlay started. CrazePlay is the main brand and was actually the first; it's where Craze Affiliates comes from. We came up with the name for Craze Affiliates in August 2019, which became an instant hit for the brand and the programme itself.

I think our best weapon is transparency, something we have put into the Craze Affiliates programming. There's nothing to hide from anyone so it's quite easy to work with us; that would be our main strength. I remember dealing with affiliates back in 2019, as I have some background in affiliation.

Craze Affiliates has grown into a good affiliate programme which endorses other brands. We have many partners currently and our portfolio is getting bigger every week. We are targeting different areas frequently and everything is going really smoothly right now.

**Mark George:** I'd just like to emphasise what Adrian said, which is that the brand has been really well received. Now, at CrazePlay, we operate another three brands from the same affiliate programme. We're seeing nice growth month-on-month, year-on-year. We're hoping to keep the momentum growing while we focus on new ideas and new projects.

**AS:** Something to add on this, we are currently looking for long-term partnerships in our affiliate programmes; partners who are willing to share the burdens of the industry with us. The industry trades pairings all the time, unfortunately. And, of course, there are those select few who try to get rich when you try to make a deal with them. For obvious reasons, we are not involved in that kind of relationship with anyone. Markets evolve, so affiliate programmes need to evolve and adapt to these evolutions. Sometimes things can evolve on a monthly basis, but one size should not fit all. However, we are open for opportunities with anyone and we have a great affiliate team. We are ready to deal with anyone, so we're open for business for all suitable brands.

**FOR THE BOTH OF YOU, WHAT ARE YOUR DAY-TO-DAY ROLES AT THE COMPANY?**

**MG:** My role is pretty much marketing, across the board. From a nitty gritty perspective, I focus on retention marketing for all our brands. Of course, I involve myself in the acquisition stage of things. We work a lot with affiliates directly to try and improve their conversion, as soon as they send us traffic. We touch base from a retention perspective with our affiliates. So, we open the door

**"2021 WAS A VERY IMPORTANT YEAR FOR US. WE TOOK SOME BIG DECISIONS, GROWING FROM A TEAM OF FOUR PEOPLE TO A TEAM OF NINE"**

to help partners who are not doing so well in a particular month.

We try to accommodate them, our partners, but also focus on us, to improve the profitability of the deal and target retention in partnership with all our affiliates. So, in short, my role would be retention, numbers, data and covering every aspect of CRM. However, as we keep growing, my responsibilities have started to evolve into business development, as new opportunities are coming in from different continents.

So, we are in the process of expanding our efforts in Latin America, for instance. It's much more complicated to find partners there, a lot of work needs to go on underground to find the right partners. This is essentially an exercise to broaden marketing which is a little bit different than what I am doing at the moment. I can do this because the numbers are pretty good at the moment, it's looking good day-to-day.

**AS:** From my end, I've always been on the tech side of things. I've been on the developmental side for 13 years now, I think. So, I take care of more technical aspects and some design work. What I'm doing now is alleviating my responsibilities in these aspects and taking more control of the general day-to-day running of the company. I try to co-ordinate employees, explore business opportunities with Mark and make sure I'm at events such as ICE. There are various other aspects that are required on a day-to-day running of the company.

**MG:** Just another point on us as owners, although we have different roles, that doesn't mean we don't work together. Adrian is just as involved with marketing as he is with the tech

stuff. That is our strength, we try to be as unified as possible and everyone is encouraged to push their ideas. This is how we're growing on a daily basis and we hope to keep it this way.

**YOU'VE MENTIONED ICE. AND WE'RE APPROACHING Q2 FOR 2022. HOW DO YOU LOOK BACK ON THE START OF THIS YEAR AND 2021 AS A WHOLE? FOR THE COMPANY AND THE INDUSTRY?**

**AS:** 2021 was a very important year for us. We took some big decisions, growing from a team of four people to a team of nine. Some other decisions include exploring new opportunities in other markets, with the addition of sports. We also launched our second brand in 2021. With more staff, we've been able to delegate responsibilities to our colleagues, which means we've been able to focus on other things that will help us grow further in 2022.

**THERE'S BEEN A LOT OF GROWTH IN IGAMING OVER THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS. WOULD YOU SAY GROWTH IS SLIGHTLY SLOWER NOW THAN IN 2020, OR DO YOU THINK GROWTH RATE IS STILL RISING CONSISTENTLY?**

**MG:** Well, for a company like us, who have just got over the start-up phase, each year we experience big growth compared with the last. In general, if we're talking about the industry as a whole, 2021 definitely had a lot of challenges from a licensing perspective. A lot of things changed, particularly in Germany, Netherlands, etc. We had to reinvent our geostrategy due to all these licensing changes. So, we've had to invest a lot more in other aspects of our offering, including player protection. This is something which, not to sound cliché, is very close to us because we see ourselves as an entertainment company first of all. We want to offer a product that is safe for our customers and we strive to keep improving these elements of our website on a daily basis. In 2021, there were other challenges particularly in terms of acquisitions and the processes of diversifying acquisition channels. We don't plan to be completely dependent on affiliation, but to get business more directly from our organic issue, our programmatic strategy and other collaborations. Challenges are always there, but with challenges comes opportunities. We had to discover new GEO's, so nowadays we are getting good numbers from specific countries that we weren't particularly strong in in the past. So, 2020 on the whole was a little better than 2021, but 2021 brought with it challenges that today, in 2022, are coming to fruition – we are seeing results.

**CURRENTLY, IN TERMS OF MARKETS, WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST MARKETS FOR YOU GUYS?**

**MG:** At the moment, we're seeing exponential growth in the Canadian market, together with the New Zealand market

where we are doing pretty well. We are in the process of expanding our operations in Latin America, as aforementioned, so there is a very clear strategy there. Currently, we are collating and getting what we need to make a proper market entry. Those would be our main markets and main objectives for 2022/23.

**AS:** I mean, the industry is going there (Canada). So, we have to explore all the licenced markets and go and get the best out of them. We need to start accessing these markets in the most profitable way. Of course, there are certain areas where the market will be less profitable than others.

**I COULDN'T HELP THINKING ABOUT CANADA WHEN YOU MENTIONED IT. THERE'S A HUGE RUSH TOWARDS CANADA, PARTICULARLY ONTARIO WHICH IS OPENING IGAMING. WHAT ARE YOUR EXPECTATIONS FROM THAT MARKET IN PARTICULAR?**

**MG:** I believe Canada has enormous opportunity. We've heard of Canada's potential for many years, but few have managed to breach the Canadian market. Luckily, we are investing in a diversified acquisition strategy which is bringing us results. Canada is not your typical GEO to tap into; if you look at Germany back in the day it was quite straightforward.

They had specific affiliates, you partner with them and you're up and running. Canada is not that straightforward, but with patience and the right acquisition, it is a great GEO for everyone looking to move into that market.

**I'VE GOT ONE FINAL QUESTION FOR THE BOTH OF YOU, IF YOU HAD ONE WISH FOR THE COMPANY, WHAT WOULD IT BE?**

**MG:** It may sound cheesy but we don't actually have wishes. We plan things and we actually try to recoup on what we plan. The wish I suppose, or more the way forward for the next months and years, is definitely going to be the proprietary platform that we're developing. We aim to have not just a good, competitive platform, but, if possible, the best platform out there with the best functionalities available to operators. We operate ourselves; we know what platforms need to be good, because we've seen the shortcomings in the various platforms we've worked with. We aim to tap into and fix that market gap in the gaming industry, by offering something that is truly foolproof.

**AS:** As Mark said, the actions we take are bigger than our actual wishes. Of course, we have big ambitions, but if you sleep on them and you don't act, then these wishes are pretty much useless. So, having said that, my one and only wish at this stage would be that the investments we're currently doing - there would be ROI there straight away without any hiccups. So, you know, the perfect flowers and rainbows scenario! I know it's not going to truly be like that. There will be ups and downs and that's why together we take on the things that the industry throws at us. I'd like to give a big shoutout to our team, as without them we wouldn't be in the position that we are today.



# LOW FEES, HIGH TRACTION

MiFinity Co-founder and CEO **Paul Kavanagh** speaks to *Trafficology* about the growing influence of eWallets within the iGaming market

## TELL US ABOUT MIFINITY; WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT DO YOU DO?

We're a global payments provider with over 18 years of experience in the online payments space. We launched the MiFinity eWallet in 2019, an eWallet designed for the iGaming industry; which I'm proud to say has the biggest geographic reach of any iGaming wallet. We have seen record growth in the last 18 months in terms of users, transactions, operators, services and geographic reach, which is why we're excited to launch our affiliate programme this year.

We've got a fantastic team to help us do this, with a dedicated affiliate team supported by our marketing and customer service teams. I think we're in excellent shape to take this next step, and really add value for our merchants and iGaming affiliates.

## CAN YOU EXPLAIN, IN SIMPLE TERMS, WHAT MIFINITY OFFERS?

The MiFinity eWallet is effectively a digital bank account. We are a regulated and licensed online payments company and our eWallet can be used to pay online, receive funds and send money around the world.

First and foremost, our users are global iGaming customers who can use their eWallet at any of our merchants' online sites, currently over 300 live brands. However, they can also use it to send money to almost anywhere in the world with instant eWallet to eWallet transfers, and via money transfer. What's more, they can purchase eVouchers from Dundle, OffGamers and ReloadHero.com to deposit funds or send as a gift; or get a free virtual IBAN to top up their eWallet with no fees to pay (currently EEA and UK users only).

Which brings me to fees. One of the reasons why the MiFinity eWallet user community has grown significantly is because of our highly competitive fees. Transaction fees should not be a barrier to paying online or transferring funds, so we've done all we can to keep our fees super low; so that our users have more to spend and complete control over how they spend it.

## ICE IS FAST APPROACHING. WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO LAUNCH A NEW AFFILIATE PROGRAMME?

I've really missed events like ICE and iGB Affiliate, following last year's Covid-enforced cancellations and postponements. However, ICE is back this spring and the team can't wait to meet old and new connections at our stand (N5-402, please come and say hello!)

As this is the first time back in London since February 2020, it seems like the perfect opportunity to launch the affiliate programme, and have new conversations about how we can support our merchants and iGaming affiliates. It's great to have some good news to share.

## HOW WILL THIS AFFILIATE PROGRAMME PLAY INTO YOUR EXISTING BUSINESS?

For MiFinity to grow and be successful, we need to support the growth of our merchants and work with them to increase conversions. We already do this by making transactions easy and secure, and by building great relationships with our user community. By working closely with merchants and iGaming affiliates, via our affiliate programme, we can do even more.



PAUL KAVANAGH

## WHAT MAKES YOUR AFFILIATE PROGRAMME DISTINCTLY UNIQUE FROM THE COMPETITION? IS IT TO DO WITH YOUR ROOTS AS A PAYMENT SOLUTIONS PROVIDER?

Companies join affiliate programmes for two reasons. To improve conversions and to create additional revenue streams. We can help our merchants and affiliates do both. We pay the highest commissions in the industry, so you'll be earning more with us than elsewhere. And we have a highly experienced affiliate marketing team, who provide bespoke campaigns for all our merchants and affiliates – to boost conversion rates and generate more revenue.

## LOOKING AHEAD, WHAT'S IN STORE FOR MIFINITY IN 2022?

The MiFinity team is constantly innovating, from product developments to new initiatives and incentives, so there's lots coming up in 2022.

We're all very excited about attending ICE as it will be great to see people face-to-face, while we're also revealing our rebrand and the affiliate programme. It's been a tough couple of years for everyone, personally and professionally. So we are very proud that against this backdrop we've seen significant growth and have so much to celebrate.

**Bio: Paul Kavanagh is CEO and co-owner of MiFinity. Prior to his appointment in July 2016, Paul held many senior management positions spanning a 30-year career, including CEO of MLB Ltd (trading as Sportingbet) and Hertz, among other high-profile companies. Paul is a strong proponent of initiatives that drive diversity and building balanced teams in the workplace. He is a champion for staff engaging at all levels within the organisation, not as an end in itself, but because of clear evidence of the positive impact of diversity on a company's performance.**

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# PLAY HARD



**Olivia Witherite**, VP Social Media at The Game Day, shares all with *Trafficology*, from her beginnings in the industry to what she gets up to on a Saturday night in New York City!

**How did you get into the gambling industry?**

Working at The Game Day is actually my first real foray into the sports gambling industry. I got my feet wet years ago with daily fantasy, but have since gotten more into gambling since it was legalised online in New York. I have, however, always been a big sports fan. I have always worked in the sports industry, and I used to work in baseball. Go O's!

**What is one thing you cannot live without?**

My Apple Watch! And I hate the way it looks. I use it every day for workouts, the calendar feature, the remote camera, etc. I've ruined many cute outfits with it and often joke that I'd have to be a literal billionaire to stop caring about how many steps I take a day or how many calories I burned during a workout. Maybe if my bets keep hitting I'll finally switch to a nice watch, but I think I'll always care about the rings of my watch more.

**Are you a cat person or a dog person?**

A dog person! My parents have had two goldendoodles, and I'm obsessed. I live in a small New York City apartment, so no dog for me right now, but I'm very tempted every time I see someone walking around their pup in NYC. The Game Day has a really fun environment so maybe I will start a campaign for a company pup in the office. I'd probably end up taking the pup home every night though because I'd get too attached.

**Do you have a dream holiday destination that you plan to visit one day?**

I was born in South Korea, so I'd love to go on a month-long trip to Seoul and Busan in Korea, plus Tokyo and Singapore. I also really want to move to Portugal for a bit.

**Head out partying, or chill on the sofa in pyjamas on a Saturday night?**

It really depends on the Saturday, but I tend to be more of a going out person. The nights out look a lot more chill than they used to

though. I'm relatively new in New York City. I just moved to NYC about a year ago, and I love the amazing food and cocktail scene here.

I love Korean food and just took a few of my employees at TGD to Korean BBQ in K-town. They loved it, but all you can eat BBQ and soju are hard to beat. The best thing about New York is that you can eat at a different place almost every day so I try to not go to the same spot too often.

**How do you spend your free time?**

It's such a lame answer, but in addition to my role at The Game Day, I'm also a part-time MBA student at Johns Hopkins University (Carey Business School.) So, a lot of my "free" time is spent reading and studying. When I'm not working or studying, I love to travel, eat, explore New York City and read.



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