



# Accelerating Into the Future

**PGRI Introduction:** The long exit from the coronavirus pandemic presents not only challenges but a vital opportunity. Lotteries can use this period to emerge stronger by advancing plans to accelerate retail modernization and employ solutions that also address Covid-related health and safety concerns. Michelle Carney discusses how the company is positioning itself to support lottery customers in this effort to move forward.



**Michelle  
Carney**

Vice President Global Lottery Marketing, IGT

## Paul Jason: What is IGT doing to support lotteries as the pandemic stretches on?

**Michelle Carney:** From the start we've worked closely with customers to solve specific pandemic-related challenges, whether related to points of access, safety protocols, draw and instant sales, payments and more.

There's really been a wide range of targeted needs, depending on the jurisdiction globally. In some cases, we've helped customers with solutions to mitigate temporary store closures or suspended sales at social-environment retailers. In other cases, it was necessary to extend prize-claim periods to help lotteries better accommodate players, or adjust settlement rules to prevent retailers from being charged for unsold tickets during closures or lockdowns. Among dozens of examples, our goal has been to support customers through the challenges and help ensure that their business operations continue on all fronts.

As time has gone on, operators are also revisiting their modernization plans and efforts. We've all seen how the pandemic accelerated consumer acceptance for digital solutions in everything from payments to QR codes to play slips, and everyone has new hygiene and safety concerns. The expectation is that some new preferences and behaviors will remain in effect when the pandemic recedes.

Operators understand that it's an opportunity to offer a more contactless player journey at retail and transform other aspects of the player experience with digital solutions, even for lotteries that cannot yet sell digital tickets. As an industry, we've been talking about this evolution for a while. IGT believes it's even more important to consider now as part of long-term business planning, and we see our role in supporting this effort as being **"Future Forward, Results Driven."**

## What do you mean by Future Forward?

**M. Carney:** Prior to the pandemic, we were already working with customers to pursue some of these opportunities – to sell in more locations and reach more potential players, and to meet changing retail and consumer demands.

In the past 18 months we have brought to market products that improve the accessibility and convenience of lottery games. With self-service, this meant developing an award-winning new vending terminal, the GameTouch™ 20, to meet the requirements of the world's largest retailer, with about 1,900 units now deployed across 15 jurisdictions. We have deployed more than 1,800 GameTouch™ Draw machines with a slimline profile to enable self-service sales of draw games in more retail and social environments. IGT also now has over 13,000 GameTouch™ 28 self-service vending units in the field, with new GUIs and attract

screens to draw in new players. A cashless option has been incorporated into all our lottery vending machines, enabling a wider variety of payment options. We were the first to use the NASPL standard API to enable in-lane sales in the U.S. And as the pandemic accelerates the acceptance of digital payments and contactless transactions, we're ready to support customers with more ways for consumers to play and engage through mobile and digital solutions.

Future Forward, Results Driven means that we're providing effective tools like these that operators can apply today and that also anticipate their future needs. It means we're continuing to build on our history of bringing innovations to market that drive the industry forward, and we are committed to enabling our customers with the latest technological innovations to drive growth.

In asserting this commitment, we're listening to our customers in terms of what is important for their retailers and players, learning from our operator experience, using a range of insights to make investments in R&D and other resources, and developing roadmaps that meet the evolving needs of our customers and their players.

## What else is IGT doing to help customers emerge stronger from the pandemic?

**M. Carney:** We recognize that many jurisdictions will have challenges with state budget deficits due to shutdowns and other pandemic-related effects. In many cases the jurisdiction will look to the lottery as one of its biggest revenue producers and call on the lottery to present new ideas and new ways to generate revenue in support of economic recovery.

We are working with our customers to develop business plans to help generate economic recovery in these stressed times and help them advance with detailed product roadmaps to meet consumers' changing behavior patterns. Along with what we know from our own operator experience in regions around the world, we're also factoring in broader consumer trends and insights from our work with research firms such as Foresight Factory, a longtime partner.

## Tell us more about IGT's approach to enabling an omnichannel experience – where the future is heading.

**M. Carney:** 'Connected Play' is how we refer to IGT's vision for the omnichannel journey that bridges the retail and digital space. Beyond a set of solutions, it's a way of thinking about how retail and digital are going to converge, what trends we and our research partners see coming into play, and creating the roadmaps and investments to make that evolution or convergence as smooth as possible. IGT is addressing these changes and trends ourselves in markets where we are the operator and



applying that experience in the solutions we create.

The front of the Connected Play wave is the convergence of digital and retail, and the digitization of the retail lottery journey: digital play slips, cashless payments and prize redemptions, and digital tickets. As a result, a data point is created for every player transaction, giving operators visibility of retail player behavior for the first time. This allows operators to understand individual player behaviors, needs, and preferences – and even harness the power of AI to build and optimize behavioral models to deliver optimal communications to players, pinpointed to the right time in their daily journey. Finally, the one-on-one relationship with retail players, enabled by the digital retail journey, provides a direct communication path through the app. This means operators have the opportunity to give players a truly connected lottery experience together with improved Responsible Gaming efforts, delivering greater player engagement and more seamless and helpful service to forge new and stronger relationships with players in the future.

Future Forward encompasses all of this – the larger goal for the industry and how we can help customers achieve those priorities and align with new consumer expectations.

## What trends do you see as important in the near future as you look ahead?

**M. Carney:** Good question! This is something we're asked about frequently by customers, especially regarding changing consumer behavior. We have offered trend information and updates in the past, most recently related to the pandemic. The latest insights will be presented in IGT's forthcoming **Lottery Trend Report for 2021**, available at [IGT.com/FutureForward](https://www.igt.com/FutureForward). ■