

STAYING IN TOUCH

COVID-19 CHALLENGES LOTTERIES TO MAINTAIN COMMUNICATION

When a Governor tells his or her residents to stay safe by staying at home, suddenly the “blocking and tackling” of lottery advertising is useless. No one driving? Billboards are unseen. Public transportation at a virtual standstill? Posters in the subway make no sense. Foot traffic much-reduced at retail? Sandwich boards and jackpot signs have few eyes on them.

But there are a few avenues of communication that no lockdown can stop – Instagram, Facebook, player’s clubs. While these tools are now used by almost all businesses, lotteries have firmly embraced all of them, with great success.

To make sure these internet-based communications are properly utilized, and the messaging is clear, many lotteries have either hired full-time social media coordinators or elevated the activity around this important initiative within their communication departments. This increased emphasis on direct

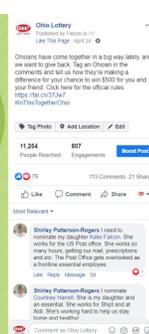


OH Lottery's Facebook site

communication with players has been particularly evident during the past few months. Take for example, the Ohio Lottery.

Ohio has been using a multi-pronged communication strategy to stay in touch with its player:

Facebook, Instagram, Twitter: Frequent posts with updates on at-retail safety, social distancing standards, mobile ticket cashing, salutes to caregivers and first responders, and other pertinent posts.



YOUTUBE: The Lottery’s monthly show – In The Know – moved to an at-home “studio” to keep players up to date on the latest information, including new mobile cashing for prizes between \$50 and \$5,000 and cashing by mail.

OHIO LOTTERY WEBSITE: Customers are kept up to date on important information on the site’s resources page with all changes made due to COVID-19 listed by category. MyLotto Rewards members receive important updates via the site and bi-weekly emails.

“Lotteries have a responsibility to ensure the safety of their players, retailers and employees,” said Ohio Lottery Director Pat McDonald. “While we might not be able to see each other face-to-face, the Ohio Lottery is committed to providing critical information through a variety of avenues. With so many people at home and online, social media and the lottery’s website are quick and efficient methods of communicating to our customers and retailers.”

WE LOVE OUR PLAYERS

Please remember to

WASH YOUR HANDS OR
USE HAND SANITIZER



AVOID TOUCHING
YOUR FACE



MAINTAIN A DISTANCE
OF 6 FEET FROM
OTHERS



WWW.CORONAVIRUS.OHIO.GOV

OH Lottery's Instagram site

The Lottery used its social media presence to highlight the work that medical professionals, first responders and service-industry workers are doing during the crisis. The Get \$500, Give \$500 promotion ran each week in April highlighting each group separately with posts generated by Ohioans and awarding \$500 to four winners each week in a random drawing. This promotion helped share inspiring stories and retain positive sentiment on the Lottery's Facebook page.

The Maryland Lottery has similarly used social media to communicate messages as diverse as responsible play, changes in the multi-state games and reminders to players to return their census forms. Of course, leading the messaging is safety.

Most importantly, the Maryland Lottery strongly encouraged players to purchase tickets only while visiting essential stores to buy necessary items and to follow state guidelines by standing at least six feet apart in line and wearing masks in public places.

"Our Sales Division has maintained regular contact with all of our retailers – calling, emailing and staying connected to help them through this difficult time," said Maryland Lottery and Gaming Director Gordon Medenica. "We know that this "new normal" isn't easy for anyone. Our primary concern continues to be focused on the health and safety of our employees, retailers and players."

In the Southwest, the Arizona Lottery has used its social media presence to highlight the heroic work of front line staff - medical workers, grocery staff, first responders, and others - who have kept Arizonans safe and the state running. The lottery asked online followers to nominate

year and communicates with players and retailers on a daily basis, we have a responsibility to provide clear information."

Edgar has been working closely with Arizona Governor Doug Ducey's office, which charged state agencies with helping the businesses he designated as essential. For lotteries, that meant grocery and convenience stores, two of the major locations for lottery sales which have remained open as essential businesses. While sales representatives were remotely "visiting" the lotteries under their responsibility, the lottery has been sending regular communications to retailers and updating the retailer-only section of the web site.



Arizona Governor Doug Ducey (r) and Arizona Lottery Executive Director Gregg Edgar (pictured here pre-Covid-19 social distancing!) have worked closely on the lottery's efforts during the pandemic.

The Arizona Lottery also took steps to remove one worry from its retail network - license extensions. The lottery automatically extended the license term for all retailers with a license expiration date within the calendar year 2020 for an additional year, to expire on the same date in 2021.

"Lotteries have so many constituencies – players, retailers, elected officials, employees, and that provides challenges and opportunities in our communication," Edgar said. "While we certainly couldn't have predicted a total shutdown, the Arizona Lottery has taken steps over the years to move communication with our players and retailers onto the available social media and online avenues. So we were ready and I think we have done a great job of getting out our message under extraordinary circumstances." ■

PLAY SAFE

Do more with the **Maryland Lottery app**.



-Check winning numbers, fill out ePlayslips and more.

GET THE APP

When social distancing directives were implemented in the state in March, the Maryland Lottery publicized a number of key recommendations for player safety:

- Fill out playslips in advance
- Use the Quick Pick option rather than taking time to select specific numbers
- Use self-service vending machines
- Buy advance-play tickets that are valid for multiple drawings
- Purchase subscriptions, which don't require visiting a retailer

deserving workers for a chance to win \$500 to boost community morale and give thanks. To keep players entertained, the Lottery offered virtual coloring pages, a free play promotion, and even the chance to be photo-edited to don the beard of the Lottery's "Chief Fun Officer" Windfall Willie.

"We want to strike a balance between communicating the critical, serious information that our players need while trying to continue to provide an entertainment outlet," said Arizona Lottery Director Gregg Edgar. "As an organization that sells tickets to millions of players each