

CHRISTMAS LOTTERY DRAW: A STORY OF MAGIC AND HUMAN VALUES

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PGRI INTRODUCTION: I would like to thank María Núñez from SELAE for turning her wonderful presentation into a wonderful article that we can share with our readers. Ms. Núñez' presentation was part of the EL/WLA Marketing Video-Seminar on February 2 and 3 of this year. Visit websites european-lotteries.org and world-lotteries.org to see the educational seminars, informational resources, and services offered by the European Lotteries (EL) and the World Lottery Association (WLA). Visit european-lotteries.org to view Ms. Núñez' presentation. That is highly recommended as the TV commercials provide a special insight into the true meaning of the Spanish Christmas Lottery.

María's presentation followed Ray Bates' whirlwind exposition celebrating the last twenty years of lottery marketing, with a serious look at the underlying changes to the way brands are connecting with their audience. Probably more casual than planned as an introduc-

tion to Ms. Núñez' presentation, Ray used some TV commercials of the Spanish Christmas Lottery to illustrate the shift from feature/benefit advertising towards human values and emotion-based communication – and how to capture the hearts and minds of a world in search of meaning and purpose. And what could be more representative of that shift than the Spanish Christmas Lottery. After all, it's not just a draw game – it is truly a social phenomenon. It's an extraordinary story about an extraordinary brand. And Ms. Núñez tells it beautifully.

The Spanish Christmas Lottery (officially Sorteo Extraordinario de Navidad or popularly known as Lotería de Navidad) is the most special draw of the Lotería Nacional, the weekly national lottery run by Spain's state-owned Loterías y Apuestas del Estado (SELAE). The special Christmas draw takes place every December 22 and it is the biggest and most popular draw game



of the year. Lotería Nacional, with its first draw held on 4 March 1812, is the second-longest continuously running lottery in the world.

Though other national lotteries have bigger individual top prizes, Spain's "El Gordo" is ranked as the world's richest lottery in total prize money. The literal meaning of El Gordo is "The Fat" or "The Fat One," which is the Spanish shortcut for saying first prize.

want to share with you the wonderful story of the history-making Christmas Lottery, whose first draw was held in Cádiz in southern Spain in 1812. Over these last 210 years, the Christmas Lottery has come to represent much more than an exciting draw game. It has become a tradition that is a part of Spanish society and culture, an event that we associate with the special moments and historical events of our lives. For this reason, we say that the Christmas Lottery belongs to the Spanish society. So, let's please try



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to bring back the Christmas spirit for the next fifteen minutes. Think and feel, right now, the spirit of emotional connection, of community, of sharing and love that the Christmas spirit evokes and that will help us understand the special role that the Christmas Lottery holds for the people of Spain.

What makes the Christmas Lottery unique in the world is that it is all about SHARING. El Gordo is like no other lottery in the world because people play the Christmas Lottery for the very purpose of joining together in the shared experience of giving, receiving, and expressing friendship, love, and caring for one another. Insofar as you may not be viewing my video presentation, you may want to watch “Spanish Christmas lottery commercials” on YouTube to see how the commercials connect us with the spirit of giving, of sharing, of doing our part to spread happiness and love. For the last 20 years, the commercials all tell a story, creating dream-worlds that spark the imagination, that inspire us to have faith that the impossible may become possible, that cause our hearts to open and feel the joy of others. The commercials also change with the times, telling a story that lifts us up from the troubles of the world to embrace hope, optimism, and the joy of giving. The Christmas Lottery is not intended to be played on your own, or even with the goal of winning a big prize. It is meant to be enjoyed with others, to be shared with friends, loved ones, extended family, workmates – as a community who looks



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out for and cares for each other. Many of the tickets are simply gifted to friends and loved ones.

Last year, Christmas Lottery sales hit a record, reaching more than € 3 billion for the first time ever. The top prize of € 400,000 was paid out 1,720 times.

A Newsweek Magazine article (27/08/2021) explains “A true Spanish success story, the lottery’s history is deeply intertwined with society. It has evolved over the centuries, launching the National Lottery in 1812 with the signing of Spain’s constitution, and introducing the Extraordinary Christmas draw that year.”

By tradition, children of San Ildefonso school sing the lottery results every year in a ceremony that has kept its traditions and unique liturgy since 1812.

The essence of El Gordo Christmas Lottery is TRADITION. In Spain, we think of the Christmas season as officially starting when the ‘El Gordo’ ad is released. And, even more important, Christmas officially starts

when the children of San Ildefonso sing the lottery results, as they have every year in a ceremony that preserves bicentennial elements. .

The mission of the Christmas Lottery has been integrated into the culture of Spanish society. Probably, the biggest success of an institution is achieved when the society you belong to integrates your company into its culture. There are many examples of that in the Spanish public lottery company, whose profits go back to society. That mission is deeply founded on the human values that bring us together in a spirit of kindness, of giving and sharing. The Christmas Lottery draw is a joint celebration, the nation-wide anticipation of the draw reminding all of us about the things that matter most. On December 22 of every year for the last 210 years, Spanish society attention is bound to an event that celebrates the human values of equality, solidarity, and generosity. It is the lottery that brings us together. We invite all of you to celebrate and share with us! ■