

LOTTERIES GET CREATIVE TO ENGAGE TODAY'S PLAYERS

SMARTPLAY'S NON-TRADITIONAL MACHINES ENGAGE & EXCITE

Jim Acton, Lottery Industry Consultant

The traditional act of players simply entering tickets into a web site to determine second chance winners might not be enough to attract tomorrow's players. With so many gaming options, players want exciting, engaging game play combined with more value for their purchases. You might say they want the excitement of a casino or online gaming site brought to lottery.

That was one thought of the South Carolina Education Lottery (SCEL) when they were making their 2021 game plans. With instant ticket sales enjoying strong sales, they were looking for a promotion that would both support a family of tickets and attract a range of players – current and new. After researching different ideas, the lottery reached out to lottery supplier Smartplay about The Big Spin® wheel.

Fast forward to early 2021 and the SCEL launched its family of The Big Spin® games - \$1, \$2, \$5 and \$10 tickets. The centerpiece of this ticket launch was to use The Big Spin® wheel to support an attractive promotion. Players that revealed a SPIN symbol on their ticket scanned that ticket into the lottery's Players' Club where they then played a virtual The Big Spin® wheel to reveal their winning amount. The big draw was that a lucky group of players who won the opportunity to visit the lottery's headquarters in Columbia, SC, for an exciting winners' event. Players spun a six-foot high The Big Spin® machine. For each group of winners from each of the four ticket groups, the winning dollar amounts were swapped out. Players could possibly win from \$1,000 to \$1 million.

"We are always looking for new ways to



SCEL's Amy Beattie presents a winner's check to Tyrone F.

offer our players exciting and engaging opportunities to win money," said Ammie Smith, Director of Product Development with SCEL. "With The Big Spin® games, we were able to provide the opportunity to see the act of winning money in a live setting. We brought together the traditional scratch ticket win, a robust promotion and a live studio event. We used YouTube Premier on our page to bring the actual wheel spin event live to our viewers. The level of excitement is unlike anything we have seen before."

Three years earlier, and more than 600 miles north of South Carolina, the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation (OLG) was also looking for something to spice up its instant ticket portfolio. They created The Big Spin® game category, which has now been used the world over. A couple of years later, they developed the Plinko®

game to augment an additional game. Instead of being used for a promotion, wheel and puck drop games were actually grand prize mechanics for entirely new scratch card initiatives.

In 2017, OLG launched The Big Spin® and Plinko® tickets, both \$5 games. When a player revealed SPIN or PLINKO® when scratching their ticket, they took the ticket to retail. At retail the ticket was scanned, a virtual version of each machine was activated, and players won a minimum of two times the ticket price (\$10) or the chance to participate in a live game. Players scheduled an appointment to visit the lottery's claim center in Toronto where The Big Spin® wheel and Plinko® machines are permanently on display, waiting for top prize winners to try their luck at each game. The winning money was between \$100,00-\$500,000.

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“It’s absolutely magical to see lottery players win large prizes live,” Adam said. “It’s not something we get to do in the lottery industry. The reactions are priceless. We broadcast the activities on Facebook Live

“These non-traditional games require the same accuracy and security as any other lottery system,” said Tom, “and that’s why we’ve been fortunate to be a part of this category of lottery games.”

Non-traditional prize mechanics are growing in popularity both online and off as a way to cut through the clutter and offer something more engaging and unique. Smartplay is busy meeting this need, creating new game mechanics that meet a lottery’s strict requirements. “We’re being challenged by companies both online and off to develop new and unique concepts that can be applied in lottery and gaming environments,” said Darrell Smith, Smartplay’s Vice President of Sales. “It’s an exciting time in our space and there are many opportunities for new games which generate traffic and revenue for lotteries.

Smartplay, a privately-owned company located in central New Jersey, supplies lottery drawing equipment and digital draw technology to more than 500 customers in 123 countries. What began in 1993 with the “simple” construction

of ball draw machines has grown into a global company developing the most modern traditional draw equipment as well as their widely used Origin® Digital Draw System, which is deployed in 31 jurisdictions in North America as well as to MUSL. To date, more than 5,000 Smartplay lottery systems are in use worldwide. ■



Barclay Y. celebrates his win in OLG's Plinko game

The original The Big Spin® and Plinko® games were so successful (the most successful launches in lottery history) that OLG has included the games in its permanent rotation, now joined by the \$10 The Bigger Spin® ticket.

“We were astounded by the results,” said Adam Caughill, OLG’s Director of Lottery Innovation. “The tickets featured engaging gameplay and the spin or Plinko® drop being part of the game was a new twist. That really added to the excitement of the games and is certainly one source of their longevity. In fact, we have created a new category of tickets – Scratch/Watch/Win.

and then send the clips out to all our social media channels so the ancillary marketing is off the charts. The machines have absolutely added another dimension to our games and have resulted in incredible sales numbers. I imagine that The Big Spin® and Plinko® will be two of our most popular games for many years to come.”

The Big Spin® is not the first non-traditional lotto game for Smartplay. “We worked with the Irish Lottery over 25 years ago,” said Tom Markert, Smartplay president. “But OLG and the SC Lottery have taken it to the next level with their scratch cards and engaging prize events.



Smartplay Project Manager Frank Foulks stands between two The Big Spin machines made for Française des Jeux, France's national lottery