Making Retail Exciting Again (and Again): Re-engaging Players in the In-Store Experience

Published March 18, 2025

Lottery executives from across the U.S. recently attended an industry conference highlighted by thought leadership from lottery newcomer Mike Cardell, a 17-year tech innovator who **joined Scientific Games** as Senior VP, Americas Systems in May 2024.

Cardell most recently served as VP and General Manager of Next Gen Solutions at Fiserv, where he managed the modernization of enterprise account processing software solutions

and cloud transformation solutions for large financial institutions and financial technology companies. Although he shared his **first 100-day perspectives** last summer, Cardell's recent presentation left no doubt that he is digging in to make lottery retail more exciting again and re-engage players in the in-store experience.

Here's a recap of key thoughts from the presentation to future-proof your lottery's retail landscape.

The Reality of the Retail Today

It's no secret that the relationship between retailers and consumers is not the same as it was five years ago. How retailers operate and interact with shoppers has evolved tremendously in every kind of store, from chain stores to grocery and convenience stores. Self-checkout—once a convenience at the supermarket to avoid lines—has quickly expanded to convenience store environments like QuickTrip and Sheetz. And it's not going away.

Self-checkout is here to stay. 73% of consumers prefer self-checkout over traditional staffed registers.
Source: capitaloneshopping.com

Additionally, we're truly beginning to see success where retailers have invested in blending in-store engagement with digital engagement. Consumers want a streamlined and consistent experience from the digital world to the physical in-store experience, from purchasing selection to payment.

Mobile ordering with store pickups has taken off at most major retailers. Being able to view the store's inventory digitally truly empowers consumers, giving them options and the ability to make choices. The strategy focuses on digital convenience to draw people into the brick-and-mortar store, where they continue to engage with products and loyalty apps.

Starbucks is a Great Example

Retail and digital are converging to deliver enhanced consumer experiences. They're engaging customers in a digital environment and delivering at brick-and-mortar stores.

Anyone who has ever used the Starbucks mobile app to order their coffee drinks or breakfast understands this convenience. Some of us even drive to retailers further away if we discover via our mobile app that the item we want is unavailable at the closest store.

As a lottery example, if a player is looking for the new *JURASSIC PARK* scratch game and it's out-of-stock at one store, we hope they'll purchase something else or go to another location to find it. But what if we could eliminate the unknown so their expectations aren't missed?

The convergence of retail and digital puts power in the consumers' hands. It's the power of knowledge, choice, convenience and saving time. Conversely, it also gives retailers the power of analytics to help them understand store traffic patterns, ensure the right focus to attract customers and maximize their in-store interactions.
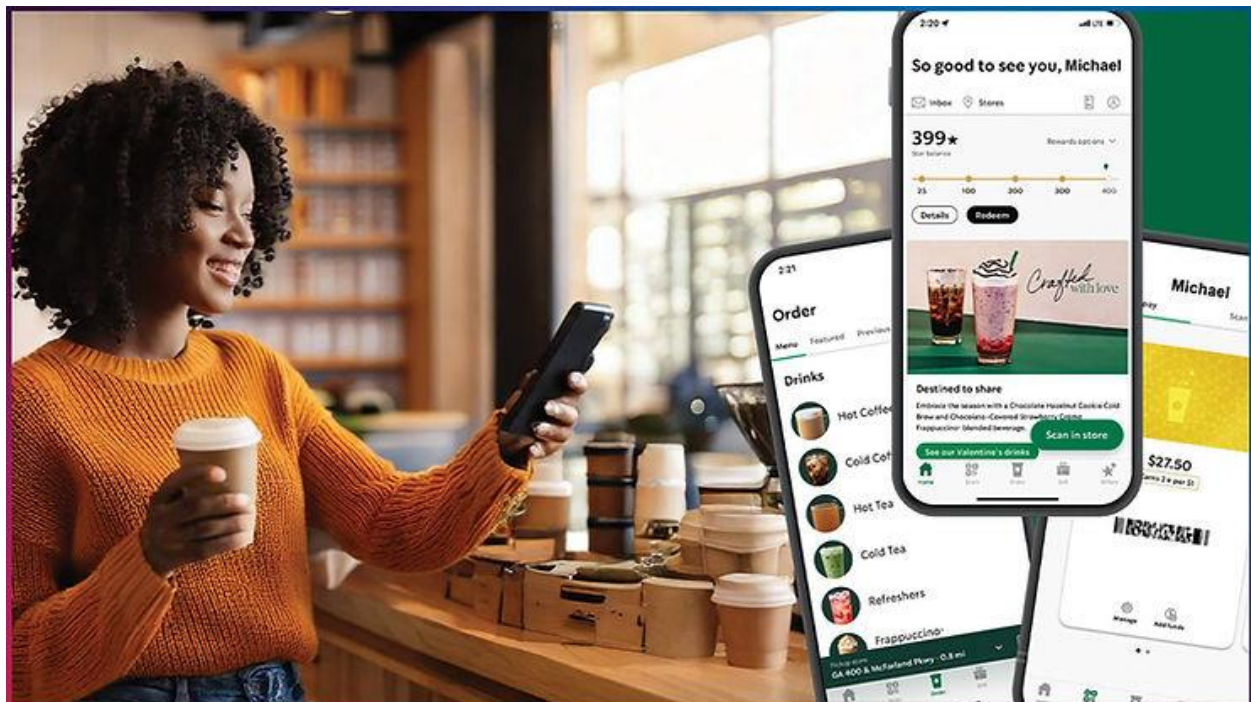
Once in the store, retailers are finding ways to deliver choices with digital menu boards and make it even more convenient with self-checkout, QR codes, touchscreen self-service machines, and payment options.

Lotteries must end the construct that digital lottery ONLY means selling games online.

Competing in a Digital Age without iLottery

Re-engaging players in the retail experience moves lotteries to modern consumer interactions that take place all day with other brands and products that are a part of their lives.

It's called a digital retail strategy. Imagine building loyalty and interactions similar to the Starbucks experience—without selling online.
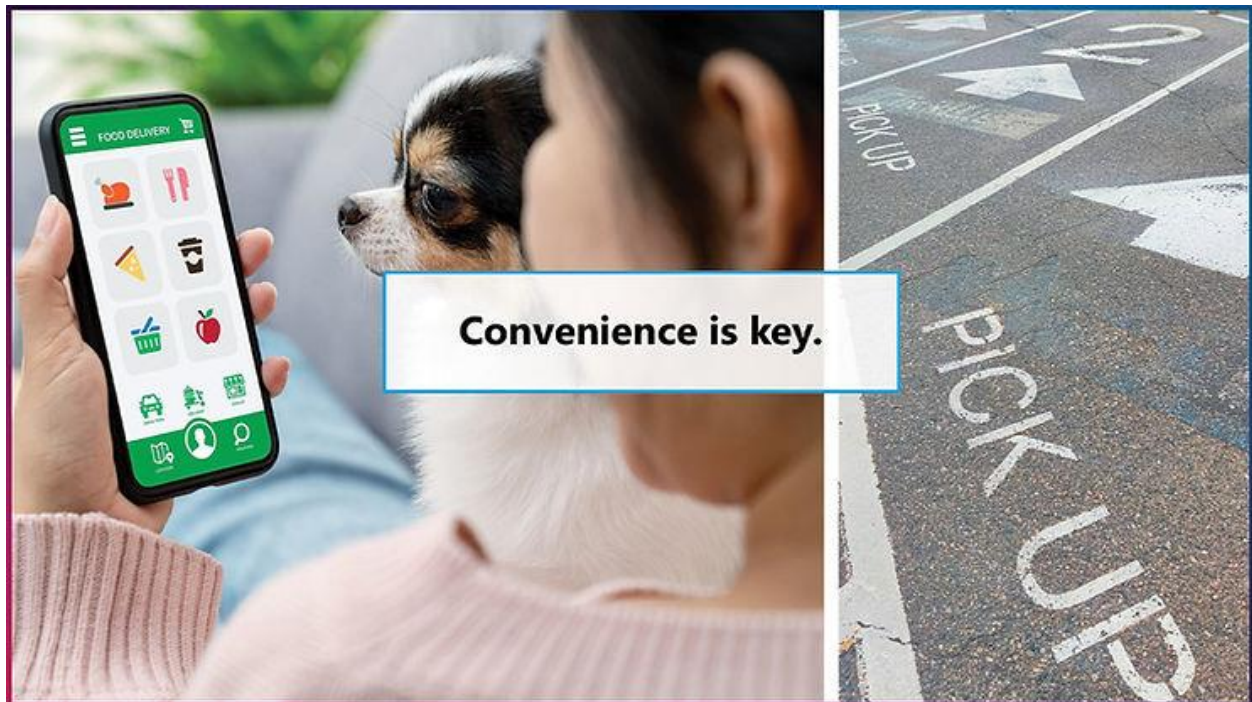
Imagine that a player walks into a store that always has their favorite games in stock—thanks to real-time inventory technology like *SCiQ*—having already built their order through their mobile. No missed opportunities from out-of-stocks. They conveniently pay for their purchase with a mobile wallet through their digital player account tied to the lottery's gaming system. And best of all, they earn loyalty points and benefits from the lottery.

Taking it a step further, the player picks up their physical scratch games and begins playing in-store, then moves their play online to second-chance and digital extensions for more value and opportunities to win.

The player validates their prize winners, and the winnings go right back into their mobile wallet or player account. It's a simplified, easy transaction with the right payments solution.

Owning the Digital Retail Experience

Guiding the player's entire journey between digital and retail is the way to compete for entertainment dollars. It's the way to the future. The lottery must own overall player engagement from the mobile device into the store and back to mobile. Digital also provides stronger guardrails for responsible, healthy play.

And one day, if state legislators want full iLottery sales of games online, the lottery has already built a highly engaged digital community of consumers connected to its retailers. Digital relationships with players are already strong, and the fear of retail cannibalization is no longer an issue. Digital and retail coexist to the benefit of the lottery, as they work in tandem to benefit brands all over the world.

Digital

Retail

Eliminate the digital vs. retail mindset.

Where We're Heading

Digital is informative. It informs consumers so they can make educated decisions about engaging with the lottery. Once engaged, they move through a hybrid journey between digital and in-store and back to digital for payment options. It's bridging mobile interactions with brick-and-mortar stores.

Clicks to bricks and back again.

With planning and the right technology partner, you can prepare your lottery for the future with a ready-to-go digital foundation.

For more information on future-proofing with a retail digital strategy,

contact Mike Cardell

Michael.Cardell@scientificgames.com