

Skyrocketing Expansion, Beating Manufacturers' Trends

Smartplay International finds itself in new, little-explored markets in the midst of an impressive period of growth. New customers in traditional casino gaming and internet lotteries are seeking equipment from Smartplay, giving them traction in markets beyond the original traditional drawing machine.

There is untapped potential as the gaming industry commingles with lotteries and internet games. "Historically lotteries, especially in the North American market, have distanced themselves from the traditional gaming industry," observed Tom Markert, Executive Vice President, Smartplay. "Around the world, especially in south Asia, you're starting to see the development of online casinos and online lotteries. We've decided to embrace it."

Smartplay pioneered innovative drawing machines from its inception. One early creation was a lotto-based draw machine resembling a racetrack. Based on that design, Smartplay created a new car racetrack-themed draw machine for a Philippine lottery. "It is a unique car racing game," explained Markert. "The cars will actually be balls racing every 15 minutes. The winning numbers will be identified using radio frequency identification."

Smartplay execs note an interesting paradox: technology relying on traditional, mechanical drawings. Internet-based lottery games such as those starting in the Philippines recognize the entertainment value and integrity of live draws instead of a RNG system. "I find it interesting that a lot of high tech organizations going into online gaming want to use a traditional ball machine rather than any type of digital system," said Markert.

Smartplay offers customers highly secure RNG products, too. The Origin System, used by many lotteries including Illinois, is a complete package of 1080p (HiDef) graphics and social media reporting. "Origin renders fully-animated movies, compressing them down to an MP4 file that can be distributed to any media—traditional TV stations, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and websites."

These gains have led to a need for more hands in the shop. "When we started Smartplay 25 years ago we thought 15 employees was as large as we could ever get," said President David Michaud. "We are up to 36 with plans to add more." And the New Jersey-based factory is packed with hardware that would make any shop teacher envious.

Expansion has come despite the decline in U.S. manufacturing. Markert attributes the company's growth to great customer service and a tightly integrated value chain. The company employs creative tradespeople, designers, programmers, industrial designers, electrical engineers, machinists and printers under one roof. "Having the design and engineering in-house allows us to efficiently design something that we know we can build so we keep our costs down," said Markert. "And it makes it more efficient because we know our limitations and capabilities and we design it to work."

as seen in **la fleur's magazine**

