



LOTTERY FOCUS

Making technology easy

By outsourcing their IT infrastructure needs, gaming company can ease the burden of technology and benefit from the knowledge of IT specialists such as Ardentia

BY VINCENT HUCK

As we all know, technology plays a great role in a gaming company's success or failure, but the diversity of applications and technologies in the industry makes it difficult for operators to keep up. Thus gaming operators have found that outsourcing their IT infrastructure needs to a specialist can be more beneficial than developing in-house IT skills, a trend that is spreading rapidly throughout the industry.

Ardenta, one such IT specialist offering their knowledge and expertise to the gaming industry, has seen a progressive increase in demand in the last few years. Neil Truby, founder and managing director of Ardentia, believes this trend comes from an increasing number of applications and technologies available as well as the companies not wanting all of the different IT skills in-house.

"Most gaming companies understand their trade perfectly but aren't necessarily IT specialists," says Truby. "Outsourcing enables them to pass on one non-core function to a specialist so they can concentrate on what they do best."

Among their customers, Ardentia counts leading operators including Ladbrokes, Blue Square and Victor Chandler among its clients. For these customers, the Ardentia managed service is more focused on specific applications and technologies, Truby adds. "Then there are other operators who perhaps have a core business

in say, running a successful poker site, but may be trialling a games platform and since they have no skills on the requisite infrastructure they would come to us for their additional IT needs," adds Truby.

The Health Lottery chose to outsource its IT infrastructure service provision to Ardentia from the start. It was launched at the end of September last year and has become a highly visible brand in this short time. David Wall, the Health Lottery's IT and operations director, explained that the lottery differentiates itself from other lotteries by the nature of its price structure.

"We have fixed prices so if you win a prize your winnings are not shared with other players. Second, we have a very good low level prize of £50 for matching three numbers. And we are also proud to have a single-minded good cause

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which is health, so all the money raised on behalf of 51 society lotteries goes to health related good causes across Great Britain.”

Lotteries have unique IT demands in a sense that it is a product that can easily fall out of favour with customers due to failures with the infrastructure. For instance, should a customer not be able to buy a ticket one week, they may not want to buy one the following week. So an isolated unsatisfactory or bad experience on the part of the customer can have a degrading effect on his or her involvement in the future.

“It is preferable and advantageous for us to outsource all of our IT infrastructure to a company like Ardentia who have the expertise and experience to be able to give us the best possible service and have all the right resources on hand to deal with any issues we may have,” adds Wall.

The Health Lottery services are offered on a 24/7 basis which represented a great challenge for Ardentia – who consequently had to design and maintain systems that perform strongly and consistently with minimum chance of outages. As Truby explains:

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The partnership between the gaming company and the IT specialist has been beneficial for both. The Health Lottery has registered a staggering 81% brand awareness only a few months after its launch and is expecting to see further growth in the coming months.

Ardentia has received positive feedback from its customer. “The Lottery has had good feedback from its customers, and I often Google through the specialist magazines for the retailers and there have been no complaints at all about the technology itself,” says Truby.

Despite these recent achievements Ardentia has no intention of resting on its laurels and has plans for further developments in the coming months. “We are trying to focus more and more on managed service around technologies and applications that are of interest to egaming clients,” explains Truby. “From a business progression point of view we want to continue to build our managed service business up.”

Drawing on a core pool of expertise Ardentia wishes to create a ‘virtuous circle’ of more cost effective and knowledgeable services through economies of scale where possible. The IT specialist intends to further develop its ability to deliver solutions that support the growing trends within the industry for more events, more complexity, better system performance and 100% availability.

Ardentia is confident for the future, as Truby adds: “Not everyone can be experts on everything, if egaming companies can find a specialist who can take the pain away of managing the technology for them, and this can be delivered cost effectively, it really should be a no-brainer.” ♦