



Phil Horne,
Chief Executive Officer, SG Gaming

Phil has spent the majority of his career working in the betting and gaming industry. Having started out as a trainee betting shop manager with Coral, Phil worked his way up through the ranks to the position of Gaming Director in the mid-1990s, where he set up Coral's gaming division. Working alongside The Global Draw he delivered a new gaming machine concept to the Coral estate (FOBTs). He spent the final year of his time at Coral as Compliance Director before his appointment as Managing Director of The Global Draw in 2007. In 2016 Phil was appointed CEO of SG Gaming UK, overseeing the business across Gaming and Sports Betting. Phil also enjoys a prominent role within the Scientific Games senior leadership team. Responsible gambling and player protection measures are topics that Phil is passionate about. He believes it is essential that all the key players in the gaming industry come together and act as one joined up, positive movement.

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Latest technologies: balancing player experience & protection



There is growing interest in the application of technology to increase player protection. During a session moderated by John Hagan, the panel will discuss the technological applications currently being used to help enhance the player experience and provide consumer protection. G3 took the opportunity to interview panelist, Phil Horne, CEO of SG Gaming about his views regarding the current thinking towards responsible gaming in the UK

Does the implementation of responsible gambling initiatives slow innovation and stifle creativity within the industry?

From a hardware perspective, responsible gambling initiatives shouldn't inhibit innovation. Often, restraints can actually lead to more creative and innovative solutions and help us focus on the needs of the player even more closely. With responsible gambling measures implemented on a platform level, development teams can continue to strive for innovation on a hardware and software front. All of this can be seen in our recent Equinox range of terminals and our constantly evolving content offering.

Are responsible gambling initiatives only possible within the rems of large operators who have access to the financial resources, since Responsible Gambling is perceived as expensive and time-consuming to implement?

Technology is the great equaliser between operators. Innovation helps reduce costs and allows greater implementation of measures to ensure responsible

gambling. Functionality can now be built into the product, rather than solely relying on external factors to measure and support. At SG Gaming, we are dedicated to making sure player protection tools that encourage responsible gambling aren't something that's restrictive within the industry and can be implemented whatever the size of a business or the sector it is in. Independent LBOs are a prime example of where solutions are made available to an individual owner or a multi-site operator.

How does staff training and high staff turnover affect the efficacy of responsible gambling?

As a supplier, we work closely with our customers and competitors to ensure best practice is maintained in regards to responsible gambling. We support all of our customers with up to date information and programmes to help them create responsible gambling training that is appropriate to their particular sector. Staff training is key for making sure that responsible gambling initiatives are implemented soundly, but technology enables us to give our customers easy-to-use tools that monitor player behaviour and flag issues, helping train staff quickly

and effectively and helping guide new and less experienced staff to recognise potential harmful behaviour and react. Our tools provide the data and operator messaging that facilitate meaningful player interactions. It is vital that player-facing staff receive the training that provides the skills for these interactions.

Is poor leadership around responsible gambling due to the fact that organisational culture favours other priorities – and if so how do we address this?

There are a number of issues that need to be addressed when it comes to the subject of gaming regulation and player protection. The frequent use of the "problem gambler" image has politically distracted from the great strides that the industry has already made so far in self-regulation.

On top of this, many within the industry are guilty of trying to gain individual advantages within regulation, rather than encouraging dialogue that benefits the sector as a whole. Both these issues really highlight the importance of trade bodies, regulators, manufacturers, developers and retailers in joining together to find effective solutions more quickly and efficiently.

I'm extremely keen to see this happen, and as a leader in the industry we are doing our best to promote leadership and build scalable solutions.

Are there one-size fits all solutions available and to whom should the industry turn for best practice?

There isn't a one-size fits all solution that will solve every problem within the industry, as every sector is going to require its own solutions to address its individual issues. However, the industry should be working together to ensure that operators are aware of what their options are when it comes to player protection. As a business, we are working closely with our customers across sectors to implement responsible gambling initiatives based on our learnings from what has already been implemented across the LBO sector. Aligning these sectors with the same set of initiatives and controls helps monitor players across their player journey, whether in a casino, LBO, bingo or arcade venue and online.

How can the industry cultivate a culture of ongoing learning around RG in which best practice can be shared and adopted by competing businesses?

It would be advantageous if all of the big suppliers, industry bodies and retailers took a joined-up approach to create a unified movement to help tackle some of the bigger issues affecting the industry – whether it be taxation, regulation, or responsible gambling. This way we can ensure that learnings, experience and insight is shared effectively and

that as a collective we can really make a difference when it comes to shaping policy and key issues affecting our industry going forward. Making sure that responsible gambling initiatives are implemented by the gambling industry across sectors creates a consistent approach that is much easier to monitor and improve, while learnings and key insights from one sector can be taken and implemented to another where relevant.

Should Responsible Gambling messaging be directed to include all players as opposed to just problem gamblers?

We feel there's a balance to strike. All players should receive responsible gambling messages; however, a tailored approach should ensure that low risk players enjoy a less intrusive experience whereas higher risk players should receive specific and/or more frequent messaging. Responsible gambling controls should give options to set limits, enabling every player to self-regulate their playing habits. This approach, combined with on-screen messaging that creates breaks in the game, along with staff-facing alerts, provides a customer journey that allows every player to carefully consider their playing options, without impacting heavily on gameplay. Our focus is on creating a gaming experience that is entertaining, whilst allowing players to gamble responsibly across whichever gaming channel or playing environment they choose.