Turning Up the Volume on Sales

To fine-tune and drive incremental growth, the Georgia Lottery Corporation focused on a program of retail sales and execution improvements.

Founded in 1992 to enhance educational funding, the Georgia Lottery Corporation (GLC) has since established itself as one of the world’s most progressive lotteries, with more than $19 billion returned to the state for Georgia’s popular HOPE scholarship (GLC) and pre-K education programs. In a proactive effort to drive continuing growth, the GLC implemented a series of customized programs to support ongoing enhancement of its retail sales and execution, including:

- A series of training programs to help the successful sales force position new products and get the most from their sales calls
- Customized sales-growth programs especially for corporate accounts and large retailer groups
- Corporate scorecards and other automated reports for more effective chain account management

Refining Sales Execution to Accelerate Growth

Topping your own performance can be a challenge for any lottery, especially one that’s been setting sales and transfer records year after year. Where do you look to improve on previous records? As the second largest lottery in the U.S. in per capita sales and seventh in the world, the Georgia Lottery Corporation is continually looking for ways to improve, and the sales force is as involved as the marketing and operational teams in challenging itself to fine-tune.

At the start of 2016, GLC’s Senior Vice President of Sales, Frank Taylor, reached out to IGT to share the plans that he and Statewide Sales Director, Derrick Shelton, developed to explore new strategic retail priorities in support of the Lottery’s growth plans. This conversation led to a program to fuel growth through a variety of retail sales and execution efforts.

“We asked IGT to share ideas around a set of services they’d designed to help with some areas of retail where we and other lotteries are looking for continual improvement,” says Taylor.

“The Georgia Lottery Corporation is very open to new ideas and perspectives,” says IGT’s Nat Worley, Vice President, North American Marketing. “They have a vision for what they want to do, and they look to implement world-class solutions in everything they do.” The team in Georgia worked in partnership with IGT over the course of 2016 and 2017 to implement a tailored series of retail growth initiatives.

Customized Tools to Enhance Retail Sales and Execution

The first wave of initiatives centered on a multi-part program of targeted sales training to further enhance the GLC team’s sales calls with their retailers.

“The Georgia Lottery Corporation had challenged itself with an aggressive schedule of three new-product launches in one year,” notes IGT’s Danielle Davis, Manager of Sales Enablement, who partnered with Taylor’s team in Georgia to deliver many of the solutions.

“Refining Sales Execution to Accelerate Growth”

“IT can be difficult to engage even an experienced sales force with that many product launches and make sure they have the information they need while still handling all of the other aspects of their day-to-day work.”

To help ensure reps were ready and excited to sell-in the new games and effectively train retailers, Allyson Taylor, Sales Trainer for the GLC, worked with IGT’s Retail Sales and Execution Team to support sales reps using three customized versions of IGT’s LaunchBox program for new lottery-game launches.

“The training incorporated highly interactive learning activities, so our reps were practicing their sales pitches and were ready to go out there, enthusiastic about the new products,” says Allyson Taylor. “Collaboration with our marketing department ensured that the messages were consistent across our training and the tools.”

The Michigan and Tennessee lotteries have since worked with IGT to deploy two new LaunchBox programs with their sales teams. “LaunchBox uses a modular approach, so we can provide as much or as little training and support as a customer wants, depending on their needs and the type of launch,” notes IGT’s Davis.

“Georgia already has a highly successful sales force, and part of their success comes from being receptive to new ways to make an already progressive lottery even more leading-edge,” notes IGT’s Nat Worley. “LaunchBox uses a modular approach, so we can provide as much or as little training and support as a customer wants, depending on their needs and the type of launch,” notes IGT’s Davis.

Georgia already has a highly successful sales force, and part of their success comes from being receptive to new ways to make an already progressive lottery even more leading-edge, “notes IGT’s Nat Worley. The Lottery had been using IGT’s Sales Wizard automation tool (formerly OnePlace) to give the sales force the ability to access retailer-specific sales and inventory data at a glance via a mobile device or web browser. However, reps had not received any recent, formal training on the tool to optimize its use.

The Lottery worked with IGT to develop and deliver Sales Wizard training tailored to the Georgia sales teams’ specific goals. These included using the tool to improve the sell-in of best-selling Scratchers games, analyze the price-point mix, and work with retailers to further improve execution.

Sales Wizard includes service-history management tools, project management functions, and comprehensive reporting to give management insight into their employees’ performance and areas of opportunity. Notes GLC’s Frank Taylor: “The training not only helped to empower the sales force, it’s also providing more key information to our sales managers.” IGT has since delivered additional Sales Wizard Training and is working with Allyson Taylor of the Lottery to become a superuser and onsite trainer.

A series of customized LaunchBox trainings delivered highly interactive learning and tailored activities to support an ambitious program of new-product launches.

Customized Training on the Sales Wizard automation tool supports sales reps with specific goals such as selling-in games and analyzing the price-point mix while providing a greater amount of actionable information to sales managers.
One of the Georgia Lottery Corporation’s priorities was to provide sales staff with a comprehensive, updated sales handbook that could be accessed digitally on iPads as well as in a physical format.

“We wanted to give our reps a one-stop shop for everything related to their work, from procedures such as returning instantaneous tickets, to broader policies and our code of conduct, to HR-related information,” says the GLC’s Alyson Taylor, Sales Trainer.

For a central part of the overall training initiative, the Georgia team worked with IGT and third-party vendor Speak to develop customized sales-skills training and coaching. This award-winning approach, delivered by Speak, uses real-world examples from the field to further develop best-in-class sales forces through a mix of individual and group activities.

The training for lotteries can encompass a wide range of improvements, for example, creating a high-standard and a common model for preparing, selling, and executing at retail; clarifying team members’ responsibilities and expectations; improving employee engagement; delivering leadership training for managers, and more.

“The lottery industry, Speak works exclusively with IGT to provide training,” notes Alyson Taylor. The Georgia team is now engaging in a second round of Speak training to build on the success of the first.

A Second Wave of Strategic Retail Initiatives

“One of Georgia’s key requests was a corporate scorecard,” says IGT’s Melanie Washburn, Senior Marketing Manager. “The Lottery had been tracking corporate performance in a time-consuming manual report, with people typing numbers into more than 40 spreadsheets.”

Working on-site with the Lottery, IGT designed an automated corporate scorecard for the Lottery’s existing Business Intelligence system. With the Lottery now using the data from its BI systems to assist in retail execution, the corporate accounts staff spends dramatically less time preparing account updates manually.

The IGT team is in the process of delivering a tool that will help the Lottery track planogram performance and assist the reps and managers with other data needs.

“The more we can automate our manual reporting, the more time we have to focus on our other initiatives,” says Bill James, Director of Corporate Accounts and Retail Development for the Georgia Lottery. “I was totally impressed with the depth and detail of the corporate scorecard. This will be a terrific tool to help move chain accounts in the right direction.” The IGT team is also in the process of delivering a tool that will help the Lottery track the performance of Scratchers game planograms, which the Georgia Lottery uses primarily in chain retail locations.

In addition, the Lottery wanted to evaluate strategic sales-growth opportunities with its chain accounts. “One of the benefits of our collaboration with IGT’s Retail Sales and Execution Team has been the opportunity to leverage existing relationships with retail associations, specifically in Texas, to facilitate discussions with our partner groups in Georgia,” says the Lottery’s SVP of Sales, Frank Taylor. As a result, the GLC plans to develop both a co-op promotion and an in-lane scratch merchandiser pilot for corporate accounts based on similar deployments in Texas.

Another goal of Frank Taylor and Statewide Sales Director Derrick Shalton has been to continue to improve the Lottery’s merchandising at retail, both to increase consistency across stores and to fulfill the requests of sales reps to improve stores that haven’t previously qualified for special merchandising initiatives.

“Now that our sales teams have received the training to make more strategic use of our sales-force automation tool and be even more successful with new-product launches and communications, the groundwork is in place to execute the merchandising initiative,” notes Taylor.

The multi-step process involves delivering the right tools and information to enhance in-store merchandising. To better understand the retail environment beyond anecdotal conversations with sales reps and managers, the IGT team conducted a curb-to-counter execution survey to learn everything it could about the Lottery’s retail network, enabling the team to analyze the data and understand the main pain points and the best place to begin making improvements across the network.

Together, a merchandising standards tool and project execution training will provide sales reps with a clear picture of the perfect store. “In previous execution surveys, one of our major findings has been that, often, what sales reps see is very subjective,” explains IGT’s Danielle Davis. Using the merchandising standards tool, the Georgia Lottery Corporation’s sales reps will establish consistent standards for its retail point of sale and merchandising execution.