

A Welcome Upside for Social Space Retailers

New Jersey's recent rollout of vending units in social spaces reveals how self-service can engage and support retail partners, drive incremental sales, and improve the player experience – even when least expected.



The pandemic upended plans for everyone in 2020, particularly the operators of social spaces, who have been operating at limited capacity throughout the past year.

But by harnessing the many advantages of self-service, the **New Jersey Lottery** was able to turn disruption into an opportunity to support the state's lottery retailers and players in ways that will continue to be beneficial even after the pandemic has receded.

For the past few years, the New Jersey Lottery has been focused on expanding Quick Draw, its version of keno, a monitor game drawn every four minutes that lends itself to play in social spaces.

As part of that effort, New Jersey had planned a major rollout in March 2020 of slimline **IGT GameTouch™ Draw vending units**, optimized for self-service sales in social environments.

The ensuing pandemic delayed the launch of the self-service units. Not only that, as was the case around the world, the related lockdowns and limitations on indoor activities took a toll on daily business for the state's bar and restaurant owners.

When the Lottery was eventually able to roll out the first wave of GameTouch Draw units in late September, the many advantages of the new machines were immediately evident to retailers.

From Downturn to Upside

• Adds Entertainment Options

Restaurants and bars that received the self-service machines could now offer patrons a whole new option for fun and entertainment when traditional offerings like karaoke and trivia were no longer possible.

• Removes a Major Barrier to Entry

Given that most establishments are still operating at reduced capacity, owners appreciate that the self-service units add revenue for their business without using staff to sell tickets.

- **Supports Success** The Lottery's strong onboarding and promotional support familiarizes patrons with the machines and helps ensure the retailers' success over the long term.

Built to Ease Channel Expansion

IGT's **GameTouch™ Draw** self-service vending unit helps overcome a major **barrier to entry** with social-space retailers by offering **a new way to attract and entertain patrons without requiring staff to sell tickets.**

The machines were key to a successful strategy by the New Jersey Lottery to gain incremental sales, offer players new entertainment options, and support social-space retailers during the pandemic.



"The majority of owners of social spaces want the staff's main focus to be food and beverages, so a vending machine like the GameTouch Draw is also an exceptional tool to **help recruiters get new social spaces** and expand the lottery footprint," noted **Emilio Regis, IGT Sales Strategy and Planning Manager.**

Further Advantages

"Even with bars and restaurants at 25% capacity in New Jersey, the productivity from the new machines far exceeded our expectations," said **Adam Perlow, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Northstar New Jersey**, the Lottery operator.

The state's GameTouch machines sell not only Quick Draw but also the full range of in-state and multijurisdictional draw games. This variety provided another advantage when the large jackpots for Powerball and Mega Millions were rolling in early 2021.

"Whenever you have huge jackpot runs, vending plays an extremely important role," said Perlow. "In the weeks when the rolling Powerball and Mega Millions jackpots affected sales, the new GameTouch Draw machines were averaging **\$2,300 each per week, per machine.** And since these units were for the most part placed with new retailers coming into the network, **nearly all those sales were incremental.**

Self-service lottery is an attractive opportunity for social-space retailers to add entertainment for patrons and revenue to the business without relying on staff – especially when bars and restaurants are operating at reduced capacity.

What's more, ticket sales during the jackpot runs weren't limited to the GameTouch Draw units in bars and restaurants.

"The Lottery's GameTouch™ 28 self-service machines in Wawa, QuickChek, and other convenience stores were selling those tickets," said Perlow. "The GameTouch™ 20 units in Walmart were selling Powerball and Mega Millions tickets. **All those retailers benefitted as well.**"



Effective Retailer & Player Support

The Lottery also launched a successful **Ambassador program** to help onboard retailers and staff and familiarize players with the GameTouch Draw machines.

Explained **John Hodor, Vice President Sales, Northstar New Jersey**: "We have a group that recruits social-space retailers, and after the onset of the pandemic we created a separate group of Training and Promotions Representatives (TPR) with responsibility for onboarding them. When roll-out began, the TPR group trained



- Play all New Jersey Lottery Draw Games.
- Select your own numbers right on the screen, use a play slip, or play Quick Picks.
- Watch Quick Draw and CASH POP Drawings.



Quick Draw promotional materials from the New Jersey Lottery



not just the owners and the bartenders, they also went back to make sure the entire staff was trained."

The group created a questionnaire to determine the retailers' busiest shifts and was on-site to support retailers three or four times each week over a six-week period. An important piece of the puzzle was

helping players get acquainted with the new machines. To engage patrons, the Lottery ran promotional activities, including giveaways of small items with the Quick Draw logo. All the activities were planned and carried out in adherence to COVID best practices.

“Sometimes we held events outside the venues, which also helped to pique people’s interest,” explained Hodor. “We would share details of upcoming promotions through the Lottery’s VIP club and social media channels, and we got quite a following for the promotions.”

To promote winner awareness, the Lottery used a special picture frame with photographs of winners, and the marketing team promoted those on social media channels as well. “It’s a production,” Hodor noted with a laugh. “It’s a little more than a promotion. But we want to make sure we’re maximizing the opportunity. We really amped it up in terms of sharing our expertise and providing activities and training to create an atmosphere of fun and excitement.”

Going forward, as pandemic restrictions are lifted, the new GameTouch Draw machines will continue to offer advantages. “The restaurant and bar owners’ mindset is a little bit different today than it used to be,” observed Perlow. “They recognize that self-service gives them another opportunity to provide fun to players and income for their business. We’re sharing the success

stories with potential retailers, and we now have a solid template we can leverage for expansion not only in the current environment but what we perceive the environment will look like eight, 10, 12 months from now.”

There’s a lot of fun and excitement to be had, and **Northstar New Jersey is willing to share its process for onboarding retailers with interested lotteries.** Contact: Adam.Perlow@NSNJ.com

Bigger Sales at Big-Box Stores and More

Want to know how self-service is driving growth with large chain retailers? [Read more on the Lottery Blog at IGT.com.](#)

You can **hear much more about the new world of retail** when **Paul Riley, IGT Vice President Retail Innovations & Partnerships,** and **Adam Perlow, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Northstar New Jersey,** join other panelists for a discussion on the subject during the **PGRI Live conference, April 12-13.** ■

The family of IGT GameTouch™ self-service vending terminals provides the option for cashless transaction functionality with support for NFC-based payment systems such as Apple Pay and Google Pay.

IGT also provides sophisticated, protective tools across all distribution channels, such as optional age-verification technology to help ensure responsible growth for customers and responsible entertainment for players.

