

Analyzing the five biggest opportunities to help bolster good cause contributions from the Lottery industry for 2026.

Simon Jaworski, Founder & CEO, Lotto Research

“Yesterday, all my troubles seemed so far away, now it looks as though they’re here to stay, oh I believe in yesterday.”

While there is an urgency in moving forward, the risks to lottery proceeds have been moving onto our patch in droves since the legalization of sports betting in 2017.

Let’s do a quick examination of some of the current potent dangers (there will be more people!) and how the Lottery industry (hopefully as a unified industry with shared common goal of providing more money for great causes every year) can react to keep the billions of dollars it provides for education, older Americans, the great outdoors and many more amazing causes intact heading into the World Cup year.

“Help! I need somebody...”

1. The (now) traditional competition of online gambling and social games (see the article I wrote on these in the May/June 2025 PGRI issue) are relentless. As a recent sports bettor, I have 5 apps on my phone, each one offering promotions on a daily basis. Perhaps even more important are the free games they run which encourages daily trips back to the app with the allure of significant increases in bonus bets in the future. The impact is amplified as these promotional incentives are applied to online casino-style iGaming. And who knows what the long-term effects of Predictive Markets will have on the entire games-of-chance industry? The CTFC regulated prediction market has already approved Kalshi, ForecastEx and Crypto.com, so how long before others get the authorization.

So what can the Lottery industry do?

Individual state lotteries could try to explore ways to engage their players on a more regular basis; and if that doesn’t manage to elicit a growth in loyalty, the industry should ensure the launch of a national Powerball app is seen as THE promotional gateway to trying, and hopefully gaining, a more even footing in the Marketing mind of the US consumer.

“Let me roll it...”

2. “Skill” market machines at retail. Pandora’s box is open. From a recent study (2024) that Lotto Research conducted with Texas lottery retailers, more than 10% of convenience stores that sold lottery products, also had games of skill on their property. None of these retailers wanted to answer some fairly harmless questions about these ‘grey’ machines that had mysteriously taken up residency in the front (with most in the back) of their establishments. I call <insert profanity>

I also call on the lottery industry as a whole to find a quick way to have legislations passed as soon as possible to stem this national tide of illegal gambling. How much of the proceeds from these so called ‘games of skill’ go to good causes? None. Zero. Zip. Diddy Squat.

Is the Lottery industry able to take this issue to the national level, and try to get these games of skill banned on a more global basis?

“Listen to what the man says...”

3. The newer threats. Prediction markets / Online Sweepstakes.

Prediction markets, also known as betting markets, information markets, decision markets, idea futures or event derivatives, are open markets that enable the prediction of specific outcomes using financial incentives. They are exchange-traded markets established for trading bets in the outcome of various events. The market prices can indicate what the crowd thinks the probability of the event is.

My recommendation is to hop on over to <https://polymarket.com/> and see the wide-ranging aspects of everyday life you can ‘buy shares’ of. From dates for the government shutdown to end, through to Crypto futures, sports championships and elections, the average American can now wager on practically anything. Even though all the features of gambling are present, Predictive Markets are not regulated as gambling.

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The growth of the Sweepstakes Casino Market has also been explosive. Market revenue, for example, is projected to climb from \$3.4 billion in 2022 to above \$4.6 billion by 2025 according to KPMG. The sector’s growth stems directly from its structural design. The model successfully fills a significant regulatory gap across the USA. Real-money online casinos remain prohibited in a vast number of states. The freemium model, which uses virtual currencies, provides players in these regions a legal way to engage with casino-style games.

“You never give me your money...”

4. Slow modernization via online play, debit and tap payments.

According to data presented at the excellent PGRI conference in Nashville in early November, 57% of lottery transactions are by cash. However, cash accounts for only approximately 12-14% of all U.S. consumer payments by number, although this figure can vary by region and demographic. In contrast, credit and debit cards dominate transaction value, especially for larger purchases.

These data points represent wide discrepancies. They are also where the quickest wins could be sourced for many state jurisdictions (and the big 4 vendors) to gain additional sales with seemingly few barriers, including my home state of New Jersey which currently has only cash payments for its vending machines.

Younger Americans don't generally carry debit cards, never mind cash. If payment is not available on their precious all thinking, all doing, smart phone, the product probably isn't for them and their current lifestyle. This is a big concern, as the lottery industry has traditionally assumed that younger folk will 'graduate' into lottery players. Gen Z may be the first generation ever that this is not seen as a predictable lock, primarily due to technology.

And speaking of technology, will Gen Z even play a game if it's not easily accessible on their current personal device?

Maybe there is a way for the Big 4 vendors to get an iLottery referendum in all states? Divvy up the costs and collectively reap the rewards, or is that just a pipe dream?

Is there a realistic possibility for the lottery industry to adopt alternative sales channels that already have a potential, and as yet untapped, player base?

“With a little help from my friends...”

5. Winning. Ahh the bane of my very existence.

Could the industry as a whole get better at PR, “earned media”, and otherwise showcasing the sheer volume of winners on a daily, weekly or even annual basis?

Could we make more of the “real” winners - all the beneficiaries from lottery sales? It was more than \$30bn in 2024.

Should we make games that can compete with the explosion of alternative games-of-chance options, maybe expand second chance games and promotions to have more winners, potentially run weekly free games with prizes such as a free ticket to a game the player has never even tried?

The Powerball/NFL crossover game is coming in ten short months. The opportunities are seemingly endless in bringing a new game and potentially a lot

of new players, to the industry we all know and love.

“You tell me that it's evolution, well you know, we all wanna change the world...”

This article is not necessarily about revolution, more about evolution, and how quickly the lottery industry can help evolve in these five areas, with partnerships between vendors (to fight the growing tide of illegal gaming), and the lottery industry as a whole in modernizing and equipping retailers and online platforms with lottery games for players to play, enjoy, win on and help good causes.

Let's hope by the end of 2026, I am not even thinking about writing another Paul McCartney based piece! (He was fantastic in Nashville by the way...) ■

Trust me, I'm a Researcher

Simon Jaworski
Founder & CEO, Lotto Research
simon@lottoresearch.com
C: 609-558-1019

Carmanah Signs Announces Leadership Transition



Carmanah Signs announces that Cameron Waldie, its long-serving President and CEO, is stepping down as part of a planned leadership transition. He will stay on in an advisory role through Q1 2026.



“Serving the Lottery Industry alongside the Carmanah team has been a privilege and a joy,” said Cameron Waldie. “We've grown from a small LED sign company to a global Lottery MarTech provider. A grateful thanks to all our customers, my wonderful team and our industry colleagues.”

Cameron joined Carmanah Signs as General Manager in 2005, assuming the role of President and CEO in 2009. Under his leadership, Carmanah pioneered Wirelessly Updated Jackpot Signs and became the market share leader in the segment.

In 2013, Cameron championed the acquisition of Carmanah by STRATACACHE, the global leader in digital signage, and the rest is

history. Cameron blazed a trail of lottery retail modernization, bringing cutting edge marketing technologies to lotteries worldwide. He built a remarkable team, created a legacy of exceptional customer service, and made many lifelong friends along the way.

“Carmanah's partnership with STRATACACHE has been an extraordinary leap into the future of retail media. Collaborating with Chris Riegel, STRATACACHE's founder and a leader in emerging technologies, has been an incredible journey,” said Cameron Waldie.

Carmanah is pleased to announce that **Jon-Paul Bussoli has been appointed President and CEO**, ensuring a seamless transition with continued



dedication to the success of Carmanah's lottery customers.

Joining in 2007, Jon-Paul distinguished himself as Carmanah's product development

and technical sales leader, most recently serving as the company's Chief Operating Officer. His forward-thinking approach and commitment to collaborative, customer-focused culture position him to lead Carmanah into its next era of innovation.

“Jon-Paul has been a key driver of our success,” said Cameron Waldie. “His appointment ensures continuity while introducing fresh perspectives for growth. I'm excited for Carmanah's future under his leadership.”

About Carmanah Signs:

Carmanah Signs is the Lottery Division of STRATACACHE, the world's leading provider of intelligent digital signage and in-store marketing technologies. Serving 57 lotteries on four continents, Carmanah has over 240,000 networked sign installations at lottery retailers worldwide.

The Carmanah team is made up of retail technology experts and customer experience strategists with deep roots in lottery. Carmanah is your partner in transforming lottery retail to deliver exceptional player experiences – growing sales and responsibly raising funds for beneficiaries. ■