Lottery in Every Lane: How POS Integration Can Boost Lottery Sales

The lottery has long been a cornerstone of state revenue and a steady source of traffic for convenience stores. But as retail technology races forward, something important has been left behind at checkout: visibility.

About half of U.S. adults buy at least one lottery ticket a year—fueling $113 billion in sales in 2024, with 68% happening in convenience stores. Yet according to Abacus that number could be much higher if not for a quiet shift in shopper behavior.

"The retailers we've spoken with all report the same thing," said Mike Purcell, Head of Retail for Abacus. "Once self-checkout lanes go in, lottery sales fall between 10% to 40%. It's not that people don't want to play, they just don't see it anymore."

"Retail, especially in the c-store environment, is evolving fast, where self-checkout, mobile pay, and frictionless transactions are the new normal, while lottery terminals remain fixed at manned counters." said Simon Butler, Abacus CEO. "Lottery has to evolve with it."

The Winning Play: Bring Lottery to Where the Shopper Already Is

The fix isn't to retrain customers; it's to meet them where they're already shopping.

"It's all about convenience," said **Paul Lawson,** the company's CTO and chief security officer. "For decades, the lottery lived at a single counter in the store. Our job is to break it out of that corner and make it part of every shopping experience."

That vision traces back to an initiative launched nearly a decade ago by NASPL. The goal: create a universal standard that would allow lottery to be sold directly at retail checkouts rather than dedicated terminals at customer service desks.

"NASPL realized that large retailers needed one consistent integration across all jurisdictions," Lawson said. "They called for a common API, and that's where Abacus entered the picture."

Already operating across Europe, Abacus worked alongside industry leaders to define a common API, embedding lottery directly into existing point-of-sale (POS) software.

"It took years of testing, regulation work, and collaboration with every stakeholder," Lawson said. "But today, we can make any cash register function as a fully compliant lottery terminal. The outcome is more visibility for lottery and a checkout experience that's fast, seamless, and intuitive for the customer."

Simplifying the Complex: One Gateway, All Systems

Behind that simplicity lies a remarkably tangled infrastructure.

"For a retailer operating in multiple states, connectivity can be overwhelming," Butler said. "There are 45 separate lotteries, three major central system providers and then countless POS vendors. Our job is to unify that."

Abacus does so through a single transactional gateway. "One connection to Abacus links you to every relevant lottery, every provider, and every POS partner," Butler said.

Integration also simplifies accounting. "Traditionally, retailers have to reconcile lottery as a standalone transaction," Lawson explained. "By merging it into the POS, they can treat it like any other sale in the back-office system."

And the visibility advantage is significant. "Retailers can now see lottery performance in real time," Purcell said. "Not just at one store, but across the entire chain—whether that's two locations or a thousand."

Beyond Tickets: How Lottery Grows the Basket

Lottery may not be a high-margin item, but it drives traffic—and traffic drives sales.

"When jackpots climb, lottery brings people through the door," Butler said. "Once they're there, they're more likely to grab a snack, a drink, or fuel. That's the real multiplier."

It works both ways. "If you can sell a Powerball ticket right alongside someone's coffee and breakfast sandwich, they're more likely to add it," he said. "You're catching that impulse moment, instead of asking them to go to a separate counter."

It also unlocks loyalty and promotions that traditional systems can't support. "Lottery can finally join the same digital marketing ecosystem as everything else in the store," Purcell said. "That's huge."

The Next Big Draw: Expanding Access and Reach

Lottery isn't always a top-priority category for retailers juggling thousands of SKUs. "It's understandable," Lawson said. "Lottery's one line on a very long sales report. But the IT teams immediately see the potential. It improves customer experience, increases visibility, and gives retailers far more control."

Abacus already operates in more than **80,000 retail lanes across Europe.** North America is quickly catching up. "We just launched with a major grocery chain," Purcell said. "And Harnois, which runs 400 c-stores in Canada, is rolling out the system right now."

Major U.S. brands are next. "We have one national c-store chain that's about 90 percent complete with its rollout," Purcell added.

The technology's potential doesn't end at the checkout. "We're exploring how to extend lottery to ATMs, kiosks, and online eCommerce platforms," Lawson said. "Imagine buying or redeeming tickets through multiple channels while keeping commissions local."

For c-stores seeking incremental growth in a tough retail landscape, that's a compelling proposition. By embedding lottery directly into the shopping journey, Abacus isn't just keeping a legacy category alive, it's turning it into a modern engine of engagement and traffic.

And that, as Butler put it, "is what winning the future of retail looks like." ■