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Phil Burke, Managing Director – NOVOMATIC Gaming UK



“ My main day to day focus is always on supporting and helping to develop the tremendous team here ”

NOVOMATIC Gaming UK's MD, Phil Burke, talks to Matt Broughton about the year so far, key current projects, and the importance of being nice to receptionists.

Matt Broughton: Phil, for those not in the know, can you talk a little about your background in the industry, and the path that led to your current position?

Phil Burke: I first joined the industry back in 1998 on a 3-month temporary contract, installing and supporting a new type of AWP machine for JPM, based in Cardiff, South Wales. In all honesty, a big part of why I took the job was that I quite fancied the receptionist when I went for my interview and I was only looking for a short-term contract at the time, however I very quickly became fascinated with the industry and was fortunate enough to be kept on and after a few months I moved over to the Technical

Support department at JPM, as my background was in electronic engineering.

This was at an extremely exciting but turbulent time for the industry as technology was in the early stages of moving from traditional mechanical reel-based machines to the digital screens that dominate the market today. I then worked in various sectors in the company with a wide range of products, finally moving into Technical Sales focused on the International Markets.

After 10 years at JPM I was approached by Astra Games and the opportunity to work for a NOVOMATIC Group Company was just too exciting to pass up; although initially employed to work in Astra's Export Sales, the burgeoning UK Casino slots market was soon my main area of focus.

As part of the restructuring of NOVOMATIC's UK businesses in 2019 I was privileged to be asked to head up establishing the Group's new UK distribution division, NOVOMATIC Gaming UK. Despite, or perhaps particularly because of the challenges of Covid, Brexit and all the other issues we've all experienced in recent years, I couldn't be prouder of the huge success the team at NGUK have achieved.

greatest asset at NGUK is our colleagues, throughout every level of the business.

We're lucky to have some of the most talented and passionate people I've ever worked with here at NGUK and it's one of my greatest pleasures to see that enthusiasm and zeal passed on from our more experienced members to our new recruits and the next generation of industry innovators and leaders.

So, without wishing to sound too sentimental, although my primary responsibility is the company's strategic direction and commercial development, my main day to day focus is always on supporting and helping to develop the tremendous team here at NOVOMATIC Gaming UK, because that is the avenue to long term success.

MB: How has 2024 treated NOVOMATIC so far?

PB: As we approach halfway through the year it's been a period of highs and lows - well, numerous highs and just one low really. We started off the year with two fantastic exhibitions, with EAG followed very quickly by the final ICE show in London, at least for a few years, and the response from our customers was tremendous. We unveiled several new innovations and developments, some fantastic new terminals for both the Street and Casino markets as well as ground-breaking new games such as CASH CONNECTION™ Irish Locks™, Lucky Lady's Charm™ Super Games and the land-based launch of Reel Kingdom's iconic Big Bass Bonanza™. The one disappointment this year has been the delay to the implementation of the Gambling Act Review changes that have been so eagerly anticipated, however that has been tempered by the phenomenal developments we have achieved in the Electronic Table Gaming sector and elsewhere.

MB: As MD, what do you tend to be focused on day-to-day?

PB: I've been lucky enough to work with and for some of the great industry leaders over the last quarter of a century, never more so than currently, some of whom will be familiar names across the sector, many of whom prefer to hide their light under a bushel and work tirelessly behind the scenes without high external profiles. One thing I have learnt, and have benefited from personally, is that effective leadership requires empowering and supporting those around you to make influential decisions and to make sure they have a voice. It's an old cliché and for many it's a hollow sentiment, but I truly believe that our

MB: What has been your primary focus for the first half of the year?

PB: Like so many in the industry, up until the general election was called our focus was on preparing for the new regulations coming into effect, particularly the opportunities in the AGC and Casino sectors. As frustrating as the delay has been, especially as it seems we were so close to the Statutory Instruments being laid, we're hopeful and confident that the fact that the proposals had received wide cross-party support means that they can be implemented early in the new government's term of office, whoever that may be, with little or no additional changes or further delays.



MB: What are the other goals you'll be zeroing in on as we continue through the year?

PB: Our focus now is on supporting our customers through this next period of uncertainty; there's undoubtedly been an understandable deferment in commercial decision-making whilst we all waited to see the outcome of the recent review, and that will only be exacerbated by this further delay. However, we're already working with a number of major operators on supportive commercial arrangements to help them to upgrade their estates now with the latest exciting innovations, whilst maintaining a high degree of flexibility for when the new regulations come into force.

MB: Is there one key product or launch that is particularly in your sights as we speak?

PB: It's difficult to narrow it down to one or even a handful of the thrilling recent developments or the very exciting innovations in the current pipeline. Our first 3rd party collaboration with the launch of Reel Kingdom's Big Bass Bonanza™ is certainly high on the list, alongside the ground-breaking Lucky Lady's Charm™ Super Games for the B3 market. From a hardware perspective we're very excited about the new V.I.P. X range, especially what the player response to the utterly unique V.I.P. X Galaxy™ will be.

Another unique element of our business that's going from strength to strength is the NovoLive™ Studio, providing stable, reliable ETG-optimised Roulette, BlackJack and Baccarat live game feeds to our Novo Unity™ terminals in casinos across the UK, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. With well over 1,000 terminals now connected across a number of casino operators throughout the UK, the games from the NovoLive™ Studio have firmly established themselves as the games of preference for electronic live gaming players across the country.



MB: What are your hopes for the company over the next couple of years?

PB: Our intention, and determination, is to continue to build upon the momentum we have generated in recent years. Our customers have come to trust and depend on us to deliver constant innovation, alongside exciting and energising content that their players want to play and industry-leading service across all aspects of their businesses. We realise that the next few years will be extremely challenging, with new market entrants and the potential for significant changes in the UK Casino market at the same time as other sectors we're heavily involved in, but we're excited to meet those challenges and to ensure that our customers get the maximum benefits from these new opportunities, keeping NOVOMATIC as the first

name that comes to mind whenever premium Casino equipment is talked about.

There's so much happening now and we have so many exciting projects underway, we have amazing new TITO redemption terminals, a casino management system due to be launched in the UK, NovoLive™ Studio enhancements, the new Cobra technology platform is being rolled out, Business Intelligence developments and the list goes on and on. Even after over 26 years in the industry I'm always excited about coming into the office in the morning and the enthusiasm of my colleagues for all these new projects is so infectious and energising. I'm so very glad I took that 12-week temporary job back in 1998, and as for the receptionist I took a fancy to before my interview, we celebrate our 21st wedding anniversary later this year, so it didn't work out too badly.

E-Dartteams überzeugen am Nürburgring

Finalisten für die Teilnahmen am Europa- und Worldcup 2025 stehen fest

Nürburg. Die Gewinner der 33. Deutschen Liga Mannschaft-Meisterschaft (DLMM) im E-Darts stehen fest. Insgesamt zwölf Teams konnten sich bei der Meisterschaft, die am vergangenen Wochenende am Nürburgring stattfand, behaupten und dürfen sich über die Teilnahme am und damit auf eine Reise zum Worldcup nach Los Angeles/USA (sieben Teams) und zum Europacup (fünf Teams) im kommenden Jahr freuen.

Mit diesem Ergebnis ist damit eine ganz besondere DLMM zu Ende gegangen. Denn nachdem die Meisterschaft rund 20 Jahre lang auf einem Autohof in Süddeutschland ausgetragen worden war, feierte sie in diesem Jahr eine erfolgreiche Premiere am Nürburgring. 416 Mannschaften waren dazu angereist, um sich an 202 Sportgeräten im E-Darts zu messen und sich auf diesem Weg für die Teilnahme am Europacup 2025 oder am Worldcup 2025 im E-Darts zu qualifizieren (die RZ berichtete).

Insbesondere die Reisen in die USA hatten viele Spieler und Teams gelockt. Neben den regulären fünf Worldcup-Qualifizierungen und den vier Europacup-Qualifizierungen wurden in diesem Jahr insgesamt drei zusätzliche Qualifizierungen (zwei Worldcupteams, ein Europacupteam) ausgelost.

Gewinner aus ganz Deutschland

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Muchachos 1" aus Augsburg. Zusätzlich haben sich mittels Auslosung das "Team Bazinga" aus Düren und die Spieler des Teams "WerfDewitt" aus Gründau für die Worldcupteilnahme qualifiziert. Am Europacup 2025 nimmt das Team der "Flying Döwen 1" aus Beldorf teil, die bei der 33. DLMM den ersten Platz in der C-Liga erreichten. Außerdem haben sich zur Teilnahme qualifiziert die Spielerinnen des Damenteam "Bull Eye Fighters" aus Drensteinfurt, das A-Liga-Team "Lucky Double 7" aus Bad Kreuznach und das B-Liga-Team "Joker Ulm 2" aus Aßmannshardt. Zusätzlich hat sich per Auslosung das Team "Copacabana" der Süd-West-Liga aus Düppenweiler für die Europacupteilnahme 2025 qualifiziert.

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Nicht nur für die E-Darts-Teams war die Meisterschaft damit erfolgreich, auch die Nürburgring 1927 GmbH & Co. KG (Nürburgring) freute sich als Inhaberin des Veranstaltungsorts, die Meisterschaft auf beiden Teilflächen des Ringboulevard zu beherbergen. "Es war eine gelungene Premiere", erklärte Nürburgring-Pressesprecher Alexander Gerhardt gegenüber der RZ und betonte: "Über das gesamte Wochenende waren rund 2000 Spieler vor Ort und es war schön zu sehen, wie vielfältig nutzbar der Ringboulevard für Veranstaltungen ist."

Nicht nur für den Nürburgring sei DLMM ein Gewinn gewesen, sondern auch für die gesamte Region. "Die Spieler, die zu uns gekommen sind, haben nicht nur den Nürburgring kennengelernt, sondern die ganze Region." Gerade vor dem Hintergrund,

dass die Region im Tourismus gut aufgestellt sei, sei die DLMM ein Gewinn auch für Hoteliers und Gastronomen gewesen. Die erfolgreiche Durchführung der DLMM habe zudem gezeigt, dass der Nürburgring als Wirtschaftsmotor der Region in der Lage sei, mit Veranstaltungen wie der DLMM neben den traditionellen Zielgruppen auch neue Gäste in die Region zu holen. Vonseiten des Nürburgrings sei es daher durchaus vorstellbar, dass auch künftige E-Darts-Meisterschaften der DLMM am Ring stattfinden.

Mit dem Konzept, das Areal des Nürburgrings nicht nur dem Motorsport zu widmen, sondern auch für Musik- und Sportveranstaltungen zu öffnen, fährt die Nürburgring GmbH ein seit Jahren bewährtes Konzept. Gerade vor dem Hintergrund, dass die Strecke zu 100 Prozent im vermarktbaren Zeitraum von März bis Mitte November ausgebucht sei, sei es eines der Ziele, zu zeigen, dass das Angebot des Nürburgrings über den Motorsport hinausgehe. "Unser Bestreben ist es, das Angebot neben dem Rennsport weiter zu entwickeln", betonte Gerhardt und erklärte, auch in der Zukunft werde es weitere Sportveranstaltungen, etwa im Dartsport, Karate, Judo und auch im Cheerleading geben.

Auch habe die DLMM zum optimalen Zeitpunkt stattgefunden, freute sich Gerhardt und erklärte, neben der DLMM hätten auch Public-Viewing-Veranstaltungen zur Fußball-EM stattgefunden und im Bereich der Touristenfahrten seien die Nordschleife und die Grand-Prix-Strecke zeitgleich geöffnet gewesen. "Es war ein sehr schönes Wochenende, um diesen Mix außerhalb der Motorsportveranstaltungen zu zeigen, den wir am Nürburgring haben." clv

casinobeats.com, 11.07.2024

Greentube: personalisation and localised content key to Dutch success



Image: Shutterstock

*Ahead of iGB Live in Amsterdam next week, **Greentube** CFO Michael Bauer tells CasinoBeats how the Netherlands is an important part of its global strategy and how creating localised and personalised content is maximising its potential there.*

CasinoBeats: We are just days away from iGB Live in Amsterdam. What is Greentube's position in the Netherlands market and how big of a focus do you place on this market?

Michael Bauer: Since the market became regulated, we have constantly increased our market share and revenues from it. Nevertheless, it is a very competitive environment and compared to many other suppliers we did not supply content there pre-regulation. The growth potential for us is therefore still substantial and we are placing strong emphasis on it.

CB: What considerations do you need to make for local players in the Netherlands and how do you tailor your games for Dutch audiences?

MB: We have established a formidable position thanks to our strength in curating classic-themed slots driven by historically successful brands and mechanics from the AWP sector. Additionally, we are refreshing these enduring titles by enhancing graphics and gameplay, opening them up to a bigger audience. Where we have still room to grow is in the more universal video slot market. We need to develop awareness of our brilliant games for that segment as well – something we have achieved already in many other European and US markets.

CB: What are the biggest titles that you are showcasing at iGB Live and what makes games such as Piggy Prizes and Diamond Link so popular?



Image: Greentube

MB: In addition to the ones mentioned above we are showcasing two games that fit the summer season perfectly: *Electric Flamingo* and *Shrimp on the Barbie*. What is especially exciting for us is that we are introducing the first game from our new studio Flamingocats, *Barkin' Clusters*, to the market as well.

The essence of our games' popularity is quite simple: we combined a very strong mechanic with engaging gameplay and great graphics. That sounds simple but building such successful games is generally the result of a comprehensive research and development phase.

CB: Greentube has recently made its debut in the Cluster game category with Barkin' Clusters. Tell us about why the Cluster category is of particular interest to you and explain why Barkin' Clusters is set to be a hit with players?

MB: Flamingocatz is our exciting up-and-coming studio and its debut game Barkin' Clusters embodies its wider mission – to create unique and individual games that we felt were missing in our portfolio until now.

The cluster category is a mechanic that we haven't really focused on previously and, of course, we wanted to change that. Moving into this area isn't without its challenges, particularly in terms of the maths that drive these types of games, but we have a wealth of experience in the Flamingocatz dev team who boast a strong maths background. They are very well equipped to deliver a hit game and we have great confidence in their abilities.

Going forward, we will bring more cluster pay games to the market, from partner studios as well as our own proprietary titles. We are positive that players and operators across the board will love them.

CB: You have recently made a significant move to debut in the South African market via an agreement with SunBet. What makes the South African market so appealing to Greentube and what local considerations must you make there?

MB: South Africa has enjoyed a strong land-based casino and route operations market for years. Our parent group NOVOMATIC has a strong foothold there and we can leverage that reputation.

This market entry marks another milestone for us as it is the first time we will bring our new technology stack Mynt to a regulated market. Operators will get access to additional games that are not available via our existing RGS, along with gamification elements we are developing that will help operators to attract and retain players.

CB: Following iGB Live and the business you do there, what can readers expect from Greentube in the coming months?

MB: Alongside the introduction of new technologies and games we've already spoken about, we are of course working on market entries in several other regions such as Pennsylvania in the US LatAm.

During the summer months we will also be preparing for the next event on the industry calendar. We'll have a stand at the SBC Summit in Lisbon and at G2E in Las Vegas.

We are constantly growing and innovating and a big thanks goes to all our teams that are making this possible and driving us forward.

Zwölf E-Dartteams überzeugen am Nürburgring

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Erfolgreiche Premiere

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www.slobodenpecat.mk, 10.07.2024

"Novomatic" will be the new general sponsor of FC Vardar

F.K.

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photo: FC Vardar

According to announcements on Tuesday **football club Vardar** will get a new general sponsor. The Austrian gaming company is expected "**Novomatic**" to take over the sponsorship of the most trophy-winning Macedonian football club.

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The agreement will be signed in the premises of "Novomatic Macedonia".

Meanwhile, the players of coach Gorazd Mihailov are preparing for the new season.

Filip Najdovski is a new addition, and the cooperation with the Serbian international player Dejan Djuric has been extended.

If last season's goal was survival, it is expected to enter the new one with greater ambitions and the club is fighting for higher positions in the first league championship.

E-Darts: DLMM mit erfolgreicher Premiere am Nürburgring

Mehr als 400 Teams und über 3.000 Darterinnen und Darter traten vom 5. bis 7. Juli 2024 bei den Deutschen Liga Mannschafts-Meisterschaften (DLMM) im E-Darts an. Erstmals fand das größte E-Darts-Turnier Europas am Nürburgring statt. In sechs verschiedenen Spielklassen - von den Damen über die C- bis zur Bundesliga - traten die Teilnehmer an. Zu gewinnen gab es neben Preisgeldern auch Reisen zum NDA Team Worldcup of Darts in Las Vegas und zum Europacup nach Bratislava im Jahr 2025. Insgesamt wurden Preise im Wert von 160.000 Euro vergeben, meldet Löwen Entertainment in einer Pressemitteilung.

Löwen Dart war Hauptsponsor des Events und unterstützte die Veranstalter VFS (Verein zur Förderung des Sportautomaten-Sports) und DSAB (Deutscher Sportautomatenbund) mit 200 Löwen Dart-Geräten. Darüber hinaus verlost die Löwen anlässlich des 75. Firmenjubiläums im Rahmen der DLMM zusätzlich drei weitere Teamreisen. "Der legendäre Nürburgring bot einen idealen Rahmen für Europas größtes E-Darts-Turnier. Es waren drei phänomenale Tage mit viel Spannung und großen Emotionen bis zum Schluss. Für unseren Löwen Dart HB10 konnte es kaum eine bessere Kulisse geben", sagt Stefan Mathes, Leiter Löwen Dart.

Die DLMM zählen zu den vier nationalen Highlights des E-Darts-Sports in Deutschland. Im August folgt das Bundesliga-Finale in Troisdorf und im November die Masters of Masters (MoM) sowie die Deutsche Meisterschaften (DM), beide jeweils in Geiselwind. Auch die DLMM gastierte fast drei Jahrzehnte Geiselwind und fand in diesem Jahr erstmalig in der "Grünen Hölle", wie der Nürburgring auch genannt wird, statt.

Ausführliche Infos zu den Deutschen Liga Mannschafts-Meisterschaften gibt es in unserer August-Ausgabe. Sie wollen nichts verpassen? Hier geht es zum kostenlosen Probe-Abo.

www.automatenmarkt.de, 09.07.2024

"In Bingen zuhause, den Betze im Herzen"

"Wir sind Novoline, der neue Hauptsponsor unseres Vereins", so informierte Löwen Entertainment in einem 43 Sekunden langen Videoclip auf Youtube die breite Öffentlichkeit darüber, dass das Bingerer Unternehmen als neuer Hauptsponsor beim 1. FC Kaiserslautern eingestiegen ist - der AutomatenMarkt berichtete online Ende Mai.

Prominent auf der Trikotbrust der Roten Teufel prangt seitdem die Kernmarke von Löwen Entertainment. Der kurze Clip endet mit dem folgenden Satz: "Gemeinsam stark, gemeinsam für den FCK, gemeinsam für Lautra". Das vollständige Video kann hier angeschaut werden.

www.asgam.com, 09.07.2024

Tecnet Asia's Suat Sirin: Elevating gaming in Asia with Novomatic, Ainsworth and Apex



by Newsdesk — Tue 9 Jul 2024 at 14:32



Tecnet Asia President Suat Sirin at IAG's The Industry Party at MGM Cotai in June

In a recent interview, Suat Sirin, the President of Tecnet Asia, shared his strategic vision for the brands represented by his company. Suat emphasized that Tecnet's mission extends beyond short-term gains or unilateral partnerships; instead, they aim to cultivate enduring, mutually beneficial relationships with their brand partners.

"We aspire to infuse color and elevate quality in the markets we serve," Suat stated with conviction.

Securing high-quality brands that align seamlessly with Tecnet's mission and vision was no small feat. Among the notable brands Tecnet has partnered with are Novomatic, Ainsworth and Apex. These well-established names boast strong identities and proven track records in their respective markets. However, their presence in the Philippines and other Southeast Asian countries remained limited – until now.

Tecnet Asia is on a mission to change that narrative. By introducing Novomatic, Ainsworth, and Apex to new audiences, they aim to offer players an enriched, diverse, and high-quality gaming experience.

Suat delved into the specifics of each partnership:

Novomatic: Renowned as one of Europe's largest slot machine producers, Novomatic stands at the forefront of the industry. Their hardware prowess is matched by sophisticated software solutions, such as the Novovision CMS. Suat expressed confidence that Novomatic's popular games will resonate with Asian players. Tecnet has rigorously tested Novomatic's offerings in prestigious casinos like Solaire, and soon, a significant number of Novomatic cabinets will grace the Philippine gaming landscape.



The Tecnet team graces the Novomatic and Ainsworth booth at G2E Asia in Macau

Ainsworth: With over two decades of leadership in the Australian market, Ainsworth brings a wealth of experience. Suat personally encountered Ainsworth's games and cabinets during previous collaborations. Impressed by positive feedback, Tecnet signed a distributorship agreement and strategically placed AGT cabinets in top-tier casinos like City of Dreams Manila and Solaire North. Suat acknowledges that success won't happen overnight, but he trusts in Ainsworth's product quality and Tecnet's industry expertise.

Apex: Suat recounted a memorable experience from his Cyprus visit last year. APEX machines, particularly the game "Clover Link", captivated casino-goers. He added, "I literally waited for one and a half hours to experience it myself."

The engaging gameplay, simplicity and popularity of Clover Link left a lasting impression. Tecnet Asia promptly decided to introduce this hit game to the Philippines and other Asian markets. The recent showcase at G2E Macau generated excitement, and Tecnet is actively testing Clover Link in the Philippines.

Beyond Clover Link, APEX offers efficient shufflers (Shuffle King 6 & 8) and TITO machines. Suat observed their widespread adoption in Cypriot casinos. Tecnet now proudly offers these products in the Philippines and other operational markets.

In closing, Suat expressed satisfaction with the robust lineup of partner products. Tecnet's portfolio exudes vibrancy, aligning seamlessly with their commitment to exceptional service. With efficient distribution channels and unwavering technical support across Southeast Asia, Tecnet anticipates these brands shining even brighter under their stewardship.

8 July, 2024

Delivering change: the importance of green initiatives in gambling

Christoph Neubauer, Head of Group CR & ESG at Novomatic, sheds light on the increasing importance of Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) in the gaming sector and reveals measures the supplier is already implementing



Tell us a little about yourself, your role and experience within ESG?

I have been in this position at Novomatic for almost three years now. Before that, I worked in the financial sector for over 10 years. I have been involved in environmental, social and governance issues for many years and have been following the development of this area for a long time. From this, it has become clear to me that significant changes have taken place.

How do you measure your ESG indicators to ensure continuous improvement? A topic like this is not as tangible as, for example, a financial report.

We have an annual report that contains a report on ESG that is voluntarily audited. This report is prepared annually together with the financial report. As of September 2023, we no longer have any listed bonds and are not required to publish the report on our website, but we continue to prepare internally. We have also implemented numerous initiatives both at our headquarters, as well as at our subsidiaries. These measures cover a broad spectrum, from player protection to human rights and employee interests. Our annual reporting serves as a common basis in which we document all figures and quantitative measures.

“ This allows us to continuously track our progress, and successes and highlight them.

How has the importance of ESG developed for gaming companies?

From a core business perspective, ESG has become increasingly important. In the past, the industry often relied on attractive images and promising texts, but without implementing significant changes. We have left that behind us. At Novomatic, player protection and the safety of the players are fundamental to our core business, so we have created a comprehensive ESG framework around these priorities, encompassing environmental, social and governance guidelines.

“ This framework is also essential for securing and maintaining our licences.

Operating in any market requires a solid foundation and ESG issues are of huge importance today. On top of this, penalties for non-compliance have increased dramatically, underlining the importance of maintaining these standards.

How can smaller companies put ESG initiatives in place, compared to bigger organisations (like Novomatic) who have greater resources to allocate?

I would say being small is not always a disadvantage. If you are a smaller company, focus on the opportunities you have. With fewer employees and a smaller number of operating companies, you often have the opportunity to implement projects and measures more quickly. I always compare a large oil tanker with a speedboat, but of course you can't apply this directly to projects and processes, but neither one is always at an advantage or disadvantage.

How has the release of your Novovision™ Casino Management System gone for the company so far?

Excellent, we have some 30,000 EGMs worldwide currently running on the system and the numbers are constantly growing. At the core of the Novovision™ access solution is a biometric registration process, which means you produce a template from the customer's fingerprint or facial scan. Once the initial identification, blacklist checks and registration of the customer are completed, they can enter the premises fast and easy with a quick fingerprint or facial scan, where their unique and untransferable biometric characteristics are checked against the template in the database. So you know exactly who is coming, who is leaving and who is joining the game. It's a very strong tool to facilitate player protection and responsible gaming, by ensuring your guest is an adult and not a minor, and that they are legally permitted to take part in gaming.

You've already touched on this in that last answer but, on a wider scale, what role does biometrics play at Novomatic?

For us, it's very important to know who our customers are. Are they above a specific age? Are they above 18 years or above 20 years old in the respective legislations? It's very important to ensure that our customers are above the legal age for taking part in the gaming offers in our operations. Biometrics guarantee the unique identification of customers, fast, easy and discreet – and are much more reliable than a traditional player's card. Novovision™ is a powerful tool, which goes far beyond biometrically supported access solutions – it is a fully fledged casino management system that fulfils GDPR compliance, KYC compliance and AML regulations and it's also audit-proof. So, with Novovision™, you can prove your results to auditors and all other relevant entities in the right way.

How did you react to the new CSRD (corporate sustainability reporting directive) for EU companies from 2025?

The CSRD and EU legislation represent major challenges. We are already preparing for implementation for the fiscal year 2025. Not an easy task, because there are several hundred data points, hundreds of topics and subtopics, disclosure requirements and so on. And this runs through the entire Novomatic Group. It's a huge amount of work, but we're managing it step by step and I'm sure we will be successful across the group.

With all the departments you have mentioned, is it difficult to streamline the implementation of new directives across all your teams?

It becomes more difficult the larger the organisation becomes, because you may already have information in a different organisation, but we have to transfer that to the new framework and build it from scratch.

Can you tell us all about your latest photovoltaic installations in Austria?

It represents a very important topic and we are increasingly focusing on green energy in the future. We have already installed photovoltaic systems in a number of smaller markets and subsidiaries in our core markets. This year, we will be commissioning the largest rooftop photovoltaic system in Lower Austria, with around 5,000 photovoltaic panels on around 20,000 square metres at our headquarters in Gumpoldskirchen. We have over 2,000 megawatt hours of peak power here. The new system will enable us to save hugely on CO2 emissions, over 1,100 tons per year. As we are not only an operator but also a manufacturer, we have our largest production facility in Austria, where our headquarters are located, and we want to use the green energy generated by our plant for production.

You mentioned earlier that, in the past, there were plenty of pretty pictures and words without too much action. For any company looking to step up their ESG strategy, how would you advise on the best way to actually make change, rather than just making it look like change?

I would say that the most important progress has already been the new regulations. They really focus on transparency. With the new requirements, every major market player has to be transparent on key settings and issues. I believe we will be seeing significant progress in these areas coming out of this as well.

Are there any final messages you'd like to conclude with?

Looking at the ESG sector, I would say we are facing major changes and the challenges they bring. But, in my opinion, you can only improve from challenges. By recognising weaknesses, you can use these challenges as a turbo to emerge bigger and stronger. I am happy to be working in this field and all of us can play a part in contributing to this important area.