

Pressespiegel 2025

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Pokies boss's Vegas meltdown

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Zoe Samios

The chief executive of a major Australian pokies manufacturer has revealed he withheld his phone and deleted text messages requested by Nevada regulators in a blistering interrogation where he was repeatedly accused of being hostile, arrogant, and misleading.

Harald Neumann is the chief executive of Ainsworth Game Technology, an ASX-listed pokies manufacturer founded by billionaire Len Ainsworth. He requires a gaming licence in places where Ainsworth operates, but this week was forced to withdraw his application in the world's most important gambling market: Las Vegas.

A 90-minute interrogation by the Nevada Gaming Control Board paints a messy picture of why his application was withdrawn. The Austrian-born executive was accused of misleading agents, suppressing records, lacking contrition and lying on a visa application by calling himself a journalist.

"Your behaviour is very unusual, to say the least," retired judge George Assad, a member of the Nevada Gaming Control Board, said. "I've got eight different issues here that our investigators say were very problematic for them to conduct their investigation because of your being 'very difficult to work with', 'disrespectful', 'arrogant', 'raising your voice', which you've admitted to.

"You think you have a right to this licence ... We've been here about an hour and a half and your whole attitude stinks. I don't see remorse. I don't see acceptance of responsibility, I don't see acknowledgement of guilt, I don't see any type of contrition," he added.

Manufacturers of poker machines in the city require approval from the Nevada Gaming Control Board.

It is not the only place where Neumann requires a licence to lead operations, but it is an influential regulator in the US gambling industry.

The board assesses probity but also considers a person's character when deciding whether they are suitable to hold a licence. Neumann, who has run Ainsworth since 2021, has previously held a licence but had been seeking

new approvals when he began his new position four years ago.

That process turned awry late last year when Neumann refused to hand over his phone for nearly five months. He said his refusal to hand over his phone to the agents assessing his licence was due to privacy concerns, and apologised for his "lack of candour" in text messages that were ultimately obtained by the regulator.

"There was no intent to hide any information from the board," Neumann said. "No other officer at AGT had ever been requested to do so, and I was also not provided with any reason why the board was asking me to surrender the phone."

He later told the board, led by Mike Dreitzer, that he deleted text messages from his phone every day to remove junk, not to hide information. Dreitzer is a former employee of Ainsworth Game Technology, but said he did not need to recuse himself from the hearing.

Ainsworth has been under intense scrutiny after *The Australian Financial Review* reported that Neumann had been under investigation in Austria since 2019 over allegations related to his time leading a family-owned gaming firm known as Novomatic.

Ainsworth had not disclosed the probe to investors and said it did not need to. Neumann has denied wrongdoing and said he had kept the company's board and compliance committee up to date with the investigation.

The Nevada Gaming Control Board used the hearing to assess Neumann's character, quizzing him about text messages regarding the poor behaviour of his son that could put him in "prison", payments for his on-and-off again girlfriend's flights, and whether he had fraternised with a Sydney-based receptionist with whom he went to dinner.

Neumann conceded he had breached policy by going to dinner, but then called things off immediately.

"I stopped the – let's call it relationship – or the dinners immediately because, once again, I'm completely against any kind of relationship with employees," he said. "We had dinner and then we had a stupid conversation,

and I said, 'OK, it's too much.'"

At one point, he was asked why he applied for a US visa and declared himself a journalist. He said he was writing

an article for a friend who had a newspaper in Austria at the time.

He was also queried about whether he was involved in prostitution or sex for money exchanges because of transactions he made on behalf of a girlfriend who had been visiting him in Las Vegas. His legal counsel strenuously denied the allegations of prostitution.

When Neumann spoke about why he had raised his voice with agents inquiring about these matters, the executive said he was explaining why he wasn't happy and that he was concerned that the officials were not being honest.

"Is raising the voice disrespectful ... that's depending also [sic] on your emotions. If you're emotional, you start to become louder. It doesn't mean that the reaction is different," he said.

"I fully respect the Nevada Gaming Control Board. I fully respect the agents. But nevertheless, what I also expect is that on the other side that the communication is honest."

At one point in the hearing, Assad told Neumann to turn around and apologise for the way he treated the agents who had questioned him. I apologise for my behaviour, and I really regret if it's got a strange feeling for you, sorry. It was not my intention," he said.

The Nevada Gaming and Control Board's third board member, former attorney Chandeni Sendall, said Neumann lost credibility when he

didn't give direct answers. "I'm sure you do a great job in your role. You have a very sophisticated, high-level job," she said. "For you to be in the position that you're in as CEO, it's kind of mind-boggling ... that you can function at such a high level and not have these basic leadership skills and communication skills, and you're not self-aware that you're coming off as argumentative, arrogant, evasive ... difficult.

"This is a privileged licence. This is Nevada. We set the gold standard."

The interrogation led to the advice that Neumann withdraw his application for a licence. His withdrawal does

not affect Ainsworth's ability to operate in Nevada, but he does require it to be the gaming company's chief executive.

If he had not withdrawn his application, and it was denied, Neumann would have been put on a list that would have restricted him from doing business with any licensees in Nevada for at least five years. Withdrawal of his application gives him the chance to reapply at a later date.

What this means for Neumann's leadership remains unclear. Ainsworth chairman Danny Gladstone said the board is reviewing his position. Neumann, who is based in Nevada, has separately faced an investor revolt, with shareholders unhappy about a proposal to sell the company to Novomatic. Novomatic, which owns the Admiral Casino brand of poker machines, offered to acquire the 47.1 per cent of the business it did not already own for \$1 per share in April.

The scheme of the proposal was terminated amid a shareholder backlash, but Novomatic is pushing ahead with an off-market bid that does not require the same level of approval. It now controls 61.5 per cent of the company.

The takeover offer came after a slide in Ainsworth's share price. While it reached as high as \$1.40 last year, it had halved by early 2025. Shares closed at \$1.07 on Friday, suggesting some investors think the deal could fall over.

Dreitzer said he hoped Neumann would use the Nevada licence renewal process as a learning exercise.

I don't see remorse. I don't see acceptance of responsibility.

Retired judge George Assad, Nevada Gaming Control Board member



Harald Neumann, chief executive of Ainsworth Game Technology, was accused of being hostile, arrogant and misleading.

At the hearing

Exchanges between Nevada Gaming Control Board member George Assad and Ainsworth Game Technology chief executive Harald Neumann

ASSAD During the interview process with our investigators, had you been drinking any alcohol during any of these interviews?

NEUMANN I very rarely drink alcohol in general.

ASSAD Were you on any type of medication?

NEUMANN No.

ASSAD Your behaviour is very unusual, to say the least. I've got eight different issues here that our investigators say were very problematic for them to conduct their investigation because of your being 'very difficult to work with', 'disrespectful', 'arrogant', 'raising your voice', which you've admitted to ... We've been here about an hour and a half, and your whole attitude stinks. I don't see remorse. I don't see acceptance of responsibility, I don't see acknowledgement of guilt, I don't see any type of contrition. I see arrogance.

SOURCE: FINANCIAL REVIEW

afr.com, 13.10.2025

Pokies boss resigns after ugly fight with American gaming regulators

Harald Neumann has resigned as chief executive of Ainsworth Game Technology, days after a powerful American gaming regulator told him to withdraw his request for a gaming licence.

The Australian poker machine giant told the ASX on Monday that Neumann, would leave his position effective immediately and be replaced in the interim by chief operating officer Ryan Comstock.

Ainsworth chief executive Harald Neumann has resigned. YouTube

“The Board acknowledges Mr Neumann’s contribution during his tenure as the company’s CEO,” a statement said.

Neumann’s resignation comes after one of the world’s most powerful gambling regulators, the Nevada Gaming Control Board, urged him to withdraw an application for a licence to operate a gaming company in the state.

Manufacturers of poker machines in the city require approval from the Nevada Gaming Board. It is not the only place where Neumann required a licence to lead operations, but it is an influential regulator in the US gambling industry.

The board assesses probity but also considers a person’s character when deciding whether they are suitable to hold a licence. Neumann, who has led Ainsworth since 2021, has previously held a licence but sought new approvals when he became CEO four years ago.

In a 90-minute interrogation by the Nevada Gaming Control Board, the Austrian-born executive was accused of misleading regulatory agents, suppressing phone records, lacking contrition and lying on a US visa application by calling himself a journalist.

That process turned sour late last year when Neumann refused to hand over his phone for nearly five months. He said his refusal was due to privacy concerns.

“Your behaviour is very unusual, to say the least,” retired judge George Assad, a member of the Nevada Gaming Control Board, said. “I’ve got eight different issues here that our investigators say were very problematic for them to conduct their investigation

because of your being 'very difficult to work with', 'disrespectful', 'arrogant', 'raising your voice', which you've admitted to.

Ainsworth has been under intense scrutiny after The Australian Financial Review reported earlier this year that Neumann had been under investigation in Austria since 2019 over allegations related to his time leading a family-owned gaming firm known as Novomatic.

The company had not disclosed the probe to investors and said it did not need to. Neumann has denied wrongdoing and said he had kept the company's board and compliance committee up to date with the investigation.

Novomatic, which owns the Admiral Casino brand of poker machines, is the largest shareholder of Ainsworth. It acquired its stake when Neumann was chief executive of Novomatic.

The Austrian company offered to acquire the 47.1 per cent of Ainsworth it did not already own for \$1 per share in April. The proposal was terminated following opposition from major shareholders, but Novomatic pushed ahead with an off-market bid. It now controls 61.5 per cent of the company.

ggrasia.com, 13.10.2025

Harald Neumann steps down as Ainsworth CEO, Ryan Comstock named acting replacement



Harald Neumann has resigned from the post of chief executive of Australia-listed slot machine maker Ainsworth Game Technology Ltd, the firm said in a Monday filing.

The resignation took effect immediately, the document stated.

The company's chief operating officer, Ryan Comstock, "has accepted the role of acting CEO effective immediately", Ainsworth announced.

"A comprehensive search process is to be undertaken for a permanent CEO, with both external and internal candidates being considered," the firm said.

Last Thursday, Ainsworth stated that an application for licensing in Nevada, in the United States, by Mr Neumann had been "referred back to NGCB [Nevada Gaming Control Board] staff, including a recommendation that Mr Neumann **withdraw his application**".

The Thursday filing to the Australian Securities Exchange added, quoting Ainsworth's chairman, Danny Gladstone: "The board is undertaking a review of Mr Neumann's role following the outcome of the NGCB's meeting and will provide further details to the market once this review is completed."

In its latest announcement, the board of Ainsworth acknowledged Mr Neumann's "contribution during his tenure as the company's CEO".

The new interim CEO, Mr Comstock, joined Ainsworth in 2012 and was promoted to COO in 2018.

He is based in Las Vegas, Nevada.

In June, the Australian public broadcaster, the ABC, reported that Mr Neumann was "under investigation over alleged corruption involving far-right politicians in Austria – allegations he strenuously denied".

Ainsworth is majority-owned by Austrian gaming equipment firm Novomatic AG, a business where Mr Neumann had previously been a senior executive.

In 2020, Mr Neumann **stepped down** as CEO of Novomatic for what the firm said were "family reasons". He had been appointed Novomatic CEO in October 2014. He assumed the **role of Ainsworth CEO** on October 1, 2021.

In early October this year, Novomatic increased its stake in Ainsworth as it **seeks to acquire** the shares it does not currently control, and take full ownership of the business.

The Novomatic group and its founder and owner, Johann Graf, now control 61.5 percent of Ainsworth's shares, following a series of acquisitions since late August, according to a filing dated October 2.

finnewsnetwork.com.au, 13.10.2025

Ainsworth CEO Resigns After Licence Setback



Harald Neumann has resigned as chief executive officer of Ainsworth Game Technology, according to an announcement made to the ASX. The resignation is effective immediately. Ainsworth Game Technology is an Australian poker machine manufacturer and supplier of gaming technology. Ryan Comstock, the company's chief operating officer, will take over as interim CEO.

The board of Ainsworth acknowledged Neumann's contributions during his time as CEO. The leadership change follows a recommendation from the Nevada Gaming Control Board, a major global gambling regulator, that Neumann withdraw his application for a gaming licence in Nevada.

The Nevada Gaming Control Board had reportedly advised Neumann to withdraw his application to operate a gaming company in the state. No further details were provided in the ASX announcement regarding the reasons behind the regulator's stance.

The sudden departure of Neumann raises questions about the company's future direction. Comstock's appointment as interim CEO provides stability as Ainsworth navigates this transitional period.

leadersnet.at, 12.10.2025

Über 500 Gäste ließen die Sieger des Hermes-Wirtschaftspreises 2025 hochleben

Im Rahmen einer glanzvollen Gala in der Wiener Hofburg wurden am Freitag die besten Unternehmen des Landes prämiert.

LEADERSNET.tv war vor Ort und fragte die Verantwortlichen, Gäste und Partner:innen, welche Fähigkeiten Unternehmer:innen heute brauchen, um in herausfordernden Zeiten erfolgreich zu sein, sowie die Preisträger:innen, was die Auszeichnung für sie bedeutet und worin ihr persönliches Erfolgsgeheimnis liegt.



4 von 6 Bildern V.l.n.r.: Die Sieger in der Kategorie "Klimaschutz" Christoph Neubauer (Director Group CR & ESG, Novomatic) und Florian Saiko (CFO, Greentube GmbH).

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Am Freitag, dem 10. Oktober, stand die Wiener Hofburg wieder ganz im Zeichen rot-weiß-roter Wirtschaftskraft, als im großen Festsaal der **Hermes.Wirtschafts.Preis 2025** verliehen wurde. In Kooperation mit den Medienpartnern *Kurier* und *LEADERSNET*/Opinion Leaders Network (OLN) ehrte das **Hermes Wirtschafts.Forum** dabei auch heuer wieder herausragende Unternehmen, die mit Innovationsgeist, Durchhaltevermögen und Verantwortungsbewusstsein Österreichs Wirtschaft am Laufen halten. Rund 500 Gäste ließen sich die Preisverleihung, die traditionell im Rahmen der "Gala der österreichischen Wirtschaft" stattfand, nicht entgehen und ließen die Sieger:innen der zwölf Kategorien hochleben.

Zehnjähriges Hermes-Jubiläum

Bereits vor der eigentlichen Gala wurde ordentlich gefeiert, als **Crif** zum exklusiven VIP-Empfang lud. Durch den Gala-Abend führten dann schließlich **Andi Knoll** (*Ö3*) und **Sandra Baierl** (*Kurier*). Begrüßt wurden die Gäste durch **Gerhard Schlögel**, Initiator des Hermes.Wirtschafts.Preises, der sich stolz darüber zeigte, dass der begehrte Wirtschaftspreis heuer zum bereits zehnten Mal verliehen wird. Im Gespräch mit *LEADERSNET.tv* erklärt er: "Worauf ich besonders gerne zurückblicke, ist, dass wir es nun schon seit zehn Jahren – selbst in Corona-Zeiten – geschafft haben, der erfolgreichen Wirtschaft eine Bühne zu bieten, sie sichtbar zu machen und auszuzeichnen. Das ist nur möglich, wenn man die richtigen Partner:innen und ein starkes Team an seiner Seite hat – und dafür bin ich sehr dankbar."

Ebenfalls zu Wort kam *Kurier*-Chefredakteur **Martin Gebhart**, der die Wichtigkeit des heimischen Wirtschaftsstandortes betonte. "Warum er den Preis für so bedeutend hält, erklärte er gegenüber *LEADERSNET.tv*: "Der Preis beflügelt, weil man Wirtschaftstreibende endlich wieder fröhlich bei einer Gala feiern sieht – nicht nur jammern oder auf Zahlen schauen, sondern einfach auch einmal das Feiern und die Erfolge genießen."

Das sind die Sieger

In der Kategorie "Immobilien" sicherte sich **IMMOcontract** die begehrte Auszeichnung – und das bereits zum zweiten Mal. Die Freude darüber sei riesig, erklärt **Sascha Haimovici** (Geschäftsführender Gesellschafter, IMMOcontract) im *LEADERSNET.tv*-Interview: "Ich freue mich unglaublich, zum zweiten Mal den Hermes zu erhalten. Es ist der wichtigste österreichische Wirtschaftspreis im Bereich Immobilien, bei dem es darum geht, ein Unternehmen erfolgreich zu führen und gute Ergebnisse zu erzielen. Unsere Mitarbeiter:innen geben dafür täglich ihr Bestes. Gerade in Krisenzeiten muss man zeigen, dass man es wirklich kann – denn bei Schönwetter können viele Rad fahren."

Ebenfalls groß ist die Freude bei der **Energie AG**, der den Hermes in der Kategorie "Industrie" erhielt. "Wir freuen uns riesig – schließlich sind es die fast 6.000 Menschen in der Energie AG, die mit viel Innovationskraft, Zuversicht und Mut Tag für Tag daran arbeiten, einer klimaneutralen Zukunft näherzukommen und für unsere Kund:innen das Beste herauszuholen", so **Leonhard Schitter** (CEO, Energie AG OÖ) gegenüber *LEADERSNET.tv*.

Als Preisträger in der Kategorie "Klimaschutz" ging **Novomatic** hervor. Dass gerade ihr Klimaschutzprojekt geehrt wurde, sei besonders erfreulich, meint **Christoph Neubauer** (Director Group CR & ESG, Novomatic) zu *LEADERSNET.tv*, und ergänzt: "Unser Erfolgsgeheimnis liegt einerseits in unseren großartigen Mitarbeiter:innen und andererseits in einer hervorragenden Unternehmensführung, die es uns ermöglicht, Klimaschutzprojekte sowohl national als auch international erfolgreich umzusetzen."

Weitere Auszeichnungen gingen an **Advokat Unternehmensberatung** in der Kategorie "Dienstleistung", **Softcom Consulting** in der Kategorie "Familien", **IFN Internorm** in der Kategorie "Frauen", **The Fitness Company** in der Kategorie "Handel", **Agatex Feinchemie** in der Kategorie "International", **Saexinger** im Bereich "Logistik" sowie **adamp** in der Kategorie "Employer Branding".

Zwei Sonderpreise

Darüber hinaus wurden die zwei Sonderpreise "Innovation" und "Entrepreneur des Jahres" verliehen. Bei ersterer handelt es sich um eine völlig neue Kategorie, die Initiator Schlögel aus einer persönlichen Faszination heraus geschaffen hat, wie er gegenüber *LEADERSNET.tv* erklärt: "Heuer wurde ein Projekt eingereicht, das mich bei genauer Betrachtung wirklich fasziniert hat. Da dachte ich mir: Für dieses Jahr vergebe ich einen Innovationspreis genau dafür. Dieses Projekt wird demnächst auch in Paris international ausgezeichnet, und ich bin glücklich, dass ich bereits hier in der Hofburg die erste Auszeichnung für dieses außergewöhnliche Projekt überreichen konnte."

Konkret handelt es sich dabei um das Projekt "Projekt GLECO" zur gesteuerten Emissionsreduktion durch Emissionsmessung von der **Österreichischen Post AG**. Im *LEADERSNET.tv*-Interview sagt **Peter Umundum** (Vorstandsmitglied, Österreichische Post AG) dazu: "Die Freude ist riesig, weil es sich um eine wirklich großartige Innovation handelt. Wir sind die Ersten in Europa, die diese Form der CO₂-Messung in der Praxis umgesetzt haben, und ich freue mich sehr, den Preis stellvertretend für das gesamte Team entgegenzunehmen, das hier Außergewöhnliches geleistet hat."

Darüber hinaus ging der Sonderpreis für den "Entrepreneur des Jahres" an **Manfred Hohensinner**, Geschäftsführer der Frutura Obst & Gemüse in der Steiermark. Der visionäre Unternehmer setzte als Erster in Österreich auf Geothermie zur Beheizung von Gewächshäusern. Heute ist Frutura einer der größten Produzenten und Vermarkter von Obst und Gemüse des Landes und versorgt laut eigenen Angaben täglich bis drei Millionen Menschen. "Es ist eine unglaubliche Ehre und Freude, diesen wundervollen Preis erhalten zu haben. Diese Auszeichnung gilt uns allen – denn diesen Weg kann ich nicht alleine gehen. Viele haben mich dabei unterstützt, allen voran meine Familie, meine beiden Partner, unser gesamtes Team und zahlreiche Wegbegleiter:innen", so der Preisträger gegenüber *LEADERSNET.tv*.

Unsere Interviewpartner:innen

Neben **Gerhard Schlögel** (Initiator, Hermes.Wirtschafts.Preis), **Martin Gebhart** (Chefredakteur, *Kurier*) **Sascha Haimovici** (Geschäftsführender Gesellschafter, IMMOcontract), **Leonhard Schitter** (CEO, Energie AG OÖ), **Christoph Neubauer** (Director Group CR & ESG, Novomatic), **Peter Umundum** (Vorstandsmitglied, Österreichische Post AG) und **Manfred Hohensinner** (GF, Frutura Obst & Gemüse Kompetenzzentrum GmbH) holte LEADERSNET.tv auch noch **Gerald Eder** (CSO, Crif Austria), **Wolfgang Scheibenflug** (Geschäftsbereichsleiter Immobilien- und Standortmanagement, Flughafen Wien AG), **Markus Wildeis** (Managing Director, Stellantis Austria), **Paul Grassel** (GF, IG Immobilien), **Doris Bösmüller** (Gesellschafterin & Markenbotschafterin, Bösmüller Print Management GesmbH & Co. KG), **Matthias Hranayai** (COO, *Kurier* Medienhaus), **Wolfgang Kradischnig** (CEO, Delta AG), **Robert Kleedorfer** (Ressortleiter Wirtschaft, *Kurier*), **Alexander Klacska** (Managing Director, Klacska group), **Nicole Fürntrath** (Obmann-Stvin., Fachgruppe Immobilien- und Vermögenstreuhänder, WKW), **Erich Benischek** (Eigentümer & GF, Blaue Lagune), **Nicole Plein** (PR-Managerin, Navax Unternehmensgruppe), **Michael Miskarik** (ehem. Leiter Niederlassung Österreich, HDI Leben), **Thomas P. Jungreithmair** (GF/Managing Director, JU.connects – exhibitions & events), **Evelin Greiter** (GF & Gesellschafterin, Advokat Unternehmensberatung Greiter & Greiter GmbH), **Thomas Rathhammer** (Eigentümer & CEO, Softcom Consulting GmbH), **Judith Porstner** (Managing Director, Opel Austria), **Anette Klinger** (Mitglied der Geschäftsführung, IFN Beteiligungs GmbH), **Gottfried Wurpes** (CEO, The Fitness Company Group), **Friedrich Csörgits** (Herausgeber, *LEADERSNET Immobilien*), **Thomas Maier** (Head of Application Technology, Agatex Feinchemie GmbH), **Kurt Bergmüller** (GF, Continental Reifen Austria GmbH), **Karl & Ivana Böntner** (Geschäftsführung, Saexinger GesmbH), **Markus Kaiser** (Senior Partner, accilium), **Othmar Karas** (Präsident, Europäisches Forum Alpbach), **Andi Knoll** (Moderator, *Ö3*), **Robert Nagele** (Vorstand, Billa AG), **Sandra Baierl** (Ressortleiterin Job & Business, Immo und Mobilität, *Kurier*),

Jasmin Rieser (Verkauf/Sales, BiologoN GmbH), **Martin Rapf** (Head of Department Corporate Banking & Middle Office, Raiffeisenlandesbank NÖ-Wien AG), **Anna Geher** (Head of Valuation, Otto Immobilien), **Christian Zsovinecz** (GF & Gesellschafter, Opinion Leaders Network GmbH), **Bibiane Waldstein-Wartenberg** (Immobilienbewerterin, Spiegelfeld & Wohlgemuth Liegenschaftsbewertungen OG) und **Immanuel Kudlacek** (Leiter Kompetenzzentrum Immobilien, Raiffeisenlandesbank NÖ-Wien AG) vor die Kamera.

Eindrücke vom Red Carpet finden Sie zudem [hier](#), von der Verleihung [hier](#), von der Afterparty [hier](#), sowie vom Crif-Empfang [hier](#).

Die Presse, 12.10.2025

Für wen die Wette immer aufgeht



Im Wiener Prater steht mit dem dortigen Admiral-Wettbüro Europas größte Sportbar. *Picturedesk/Jeff*

Mengoni

Sportwetten sind in Österreich ein Milliardengeschäft. Auf dem Markt gibt es rund 50 Anbieter. Nun wirbelt die Übernahme von Admiral durch Tipico die Branche auf.

VON MARKKU DATLER

Einer hat es schon immer besser gewusst - und auch einen gefunden, der seine Wette zu bestimmten Bedingungen oder Quoten annimmt. Bricht man Sportwetten auf diesen kurzen Nenner herunter, ist man auch schon am Ursprung derselben angelangt. Es gab schon immer Muskelmänner, Gladiatoren, Läufer oder Pferde, die ihren Beobachtern Bewunderung abrangen und für deren Leistungen man bereit war, mehr als nur Hoffnung zu schenken. 4000 bis 3000 v. Christus setzten Ägypter auf Würfel, Brettspiele und die ersten bis dato so definierten „Geschicklichkeitswetten“ wie Wagenrennen und Fechten. Die ersten echten Sportwetten sind bei den antiken Olympischen Spielen um 800 bis 700 v. Chr. dokumentiert.

Logisch, dass dieses Business in der Gegenwart zu einem Milliardengeschäft ausgewachsen ist dank Internet, Markt, Angebot und globaler Events. Erstaunlich jedoch ist, dass Sportwetten auch in Österreich ein sehr gutes Geschäft sind. 2024 notierte diese Branche einen Umsatz von einer Milliarde Euro. In einer von insgesamt 32 Runden in der Fußball-Bundesliga werden etwa bei Admiral und Tipico 100.000 Wetten platziert. Wer in der Welt des Sports um sich blickt, findet in nahezu jeder Liga einen Wettanbieter als namensgebenden Sponsoren oder Geldgeber einer Mannschaft.

Sport und Wetten sind unzertrennbar, in Asien und Amerika ein dicht gedrängter und umkämpfter Sektor, in dem mit extremen Quoten, Kombinationen und Offerten um Kunden geworben wird. Ob Hund, Pferd, Katze oder Mensch - man kann dort auf wirklich alles wetten. In Österreich läuft es freilich kontrollierter ab.

Sind in England erst seit 1961 Pferdewetten (1886 entstand mit Ladbrokes der älteste bis dato existierende Buchmacher) etwa legal, waren sie in Österreich seit 1880 populär in diversen Ringstraßencafés. Mit 1920 kam der Ball ins Spiel, Buchmacher, Wettlokale, Schuldner, Sieger und Wettscheine wurden ein Begriff. Freilich braucht alles hierzulande eine alles ordnende Hand, einen Verband. 1994 formierte sich der Sportwettenverband, unter dessen Dach aktuell dreizehn Anbieter als Mitglieder mit österreichischer Lizenz auftreten. Das bedingt ein stationäres Geschäft, also nicht nur Online-Wetten, sondern auch betriebene Wettlokale.

Frage des Föderalismus. Der Föderalismus fördert dazu unterschiedlichste Erscheinungsformen zutage. In Wien sind z. B. in solchen Lokalen Wettautomaten verboten, in Niederösterreich nicht. Daraus resultieren jedoch weniger Einbußen als die heuer binnen weniger Wochen um 150 Prozent erhöhte Wettsteuer (auf fünf Prozent) oder das Begehren nach Umsatzsteuer. Nicht (nur) der Anbieter oder der Wetter gewinnen, sondern letzten Endes auch immer der Staat.

Für Glücksspiel gibt es in Österreich ein Monopol, bei Sportwetten ist das anders.

Klassisches Glücksspiel wie Roulette oder Black Jack ist in einem Monopol verankert, hier sind die Casinos Austria und Online-Tochter Win2day am Zug. Onlinecasinos, die ihren Sitz meist im Ausland haben, sind illegal. Bei Sportwetten ist die Situation föderal: Zuständig sind die Länder. Mit ihrer jeweiligen „Geschicklichkeitsübung“.

Dazu kommen, war aus dem Umfeld des Sportwettenverbandes zu vernehmen, ca. 50 reine Online-Anbieter, die in Österreich in Erscheinung treten. Der erste war die Firma Interwetten im Jahr 1997. Wo all deren Geschäftssitz

wirklich ist, mag von Malta über Gibraltar bis nach Gumpoldskirchen reichen. In einer Wette sind aber alle mit einer gemeinsamen Quote vertreten: Steigt die Wettsteuer auf kolportiert sieben Prozent, drohen Abwanderung und Minussteuern. Österreichs Gebühren sind zu hoch - es wäre ein (weiterer) Verlust für den Staat in Millionenhöhe wie bei der Abwanderung von Billigfluglinien wie Wizz Air oder Ryanair.

Tipico will mit der Übernahme von Admiral groß in Österreich einsteigen.

Lokale Nummer eins auf dem Sportwettensektor ist Admiral mit kolportiertem Umsatz von 200 Millionen Euro und 40-Prozent-Marktanteil. Dass die Tochtergesellschaft des Novomatic-Konzerns, seit Jahren Namensgeber der Fußball-Bundesliga, nun von der auf Malta ansässigen Tipico-Gruppe übernommen worden ist, lässt auf eine Verschiebung des kleiner werdenden Marktes schließen. Es geht nicht mehr rein um „Geschicklichkeitswetten“, aka dem richtigen Tipp auf den Sieger, sondern auch um Glücksspielautomaten, Gastronomie oder rund 200 Standorte in Österreich mit über 1000 Mitarbeitern. Die Marke, der Name allein, reicht nicht, es geht um Vorreiterrollen, Bekanntheit, Angebot, Preis und Quote, natürlich höhere Umsätze.

Axel Hefer, CEO des Wettanbieters und zugleich auch Aufsichtsratsvorsitzender bei Schalke 04, sieht mit der Übernahme Österreich „in Zukunft als den größten Technologie-Standort in unserer Gruppe“. Tipico, in Deutschland unter strengen Regeln (Glücksspielstaatsvertrag, seit 2020 sind Sportwetten legal) führend, will in Österreich ganz klar Fuß fassen. Für den Wirtschaftsstandort wäre das eigentlich ein Gütesiegel, nur eine gewisse Skepsis gegenüber Wetten bleibt, mit lauernden Gefahren wie Betrug oder Spielsucht.

Sportler sind Versuchskaninchen der Industrie, Sponsoring oder Partnerschaften werden nun trotzdem als Abschreckung vor höheren Steuern ausgesetzt bzw. neu überdacht. Als Ausgleich dafür, dass der Staat die Steuern hebt, werden Unterstützungen für Sporthilfe, Verbände oder Ligen gesenkt. Oder, natürlich ohne großes Aufsehen, höhere Margen bei der Wette respektive der Gewinnausszahlung einverlangt.

Der Aufschrei ist groß. Jetzt geht es nur noch darum, mit welcher Quote darauf gewettet wird.

Kurier, 11.10.2025

Die Wirtschaftsträger Österreichs

Hermes.Wirtschafts.Preis 2025. Die Gala der Wirtschaft, Hofburg, Wien.

Ein glanzvoller Abend in der Wiener Hofburg – mit 500 Gästen und zwölf imposanten Kategorie-Siegern auf der Bühne: der Hermes.Wirtschafts.Preis 2025 wurde gestern in Kooperation mit dem KURIER vergeben. Und mit ihm die Leistungen der österreichischen Wirtschaft hochgehalten. Denn trotz anhaltender angespannter Lage: die Klein- und Mittelbetriebe im Land versuchen täglich ihr Bestes, um erfolgreich zu wirtschaften, den Standort Österreich zu halten und mit ihm die Arbeitsplätze zu sichern.

Die Preisträger

Auf der Bühne in Rot-Weiß zeigte sich am Gala-Abend die Kraft der heimischen Wirtschaft. Andi Knoll (Ö3) und Sandra Baierl (KURIER) moderierten durch den Abend, Chefredakteur Martin Gebhart betonte die Wichtigkeit des Standorts Österreich, Hermes-Macher Gerhard Schlögel feierte das 10-jährige Hermes.Jubiläum und es wurden würdige Sieger in zwölf Kategorien ausgezeichnet.

- **Dienstleistung:** Advokat Unternehmensberatung, Wien
- **Familien:** Softcom Consulting, Wien
- **Frauen:** IFN Internorm, OÖ
- **Handel:** The Fitness Company, OÖ
- **Immobilien:** Immo-Contract, Wien
- **Industrie:** Energie AG, OÖ
- **International:** Agatex Feinchemie, OÖ

- **Logistik:** Saexinger, Wien
- **Employer Branding:** adamp, Wien
- **Klimaschutz:** Novomatic, NÖ
- **Innovation:** Post, Wien

Der Sonderpreis für den Entrepreneur des Jahres ging diesmal an **Manfred Hohensinner**, Geschäftsführer der Frutura Obst & Gemüse, Steiermark. Hohensinner sieht sich als „Landwirt mit Vision“, der als Erster die Geothermie zum Beheizen von Gewächshäusern nützte. Frutura ist heute Produzent und größter Vermarkter von Obst und Gemüse in Österreich und versorgt täglich bis zu 3 Mio. Menschen.



Hermes.Wirtschafts.Preis: Sieger sind zwölf heimische Unternehmen.



Manfred Hohensinner, GF Frutura, ist Entrepreneur des Jahres.

abc.net.au, 10.10.2025

Las Vegas licence hearing turns nightmare for boss of Australian pokies giant



Harald Neumann (centre) has faced a nightmare grilling from Nevada regulators. (Supplied)

The boss of an Australian poker machine giant has received an extraordinary public reprimand from US officials, who have branded him "arrogant", "evasive", lacking in "emotional intelligence" and "unsuitable" to hold a licence in the world's most influential gaming jurisdiction.

Harald Neumann's bid to renew his gaming licence as the Las Vegas-based chief executive of Australia's Ainsworth Game Technology (AGT) failed this week, with the Nevada Gaming Control Board urging him to withdraw his application.

"Your whole attitude stinks," one board member, George Assad, a retired judge, told Mr Neumann after [an hour-plus hearing](#) that has threatened his future at the helm of one of the world's biggest pokies manufacturers.

Ainsworth has said it is [reviewing Mr Neumann's role as chief executive as a result](#).

Months after the ABC [revealed that Mr Neumann was under investigation](#) in Austria for alleged corruption — a fact not publicly disclosed by Ainsworth — he raised the ire of the Nevada regulator by his conduct during its "gold standard" vetting process.

Qualifying as a licensed gaming company officer in Nevada is seen as critical to leading a company such as AGT.

But board member Chandeni Sendall told Mr Neumann: "You have to be a person of good character, honesty and integrity, and what I've seen here on the record for the past hour does not support such a finding."

Nevada gaming commission agents described Mr Neumann as "hostile and belligerent", "disrespectful" and "intentionally misleading", saying he failed to disclose key personal information during their four-year investigation of his licence bid.

Greek house and monthly payments to woman not disclosed

These included bank accounts, a house in Greece, a rental property in LA for his daughter, and monthly payments and a credit card to a girlfriend in Germany.

Asked by Mr Assad whether he was "ever involved with that girlfriend of yours [in Germany] in prostitution or a money for sex exchange" — a suspicion that agents had raised — Mr Neumann emphatically denied it.

Mr Neumann also refused to hand over his phone to agents for four months, telling the board he had been shocked at their seizure powers, and that private texts had previously been "illegally" leaked to the media after his phone was seized by Austrian investigators.

Pokies boss under investigation for alleged corruption



Ainsworth Game Technology's chief executive has been in the crosshairs of a corruption probe involving far-right politicians in Austria.

Nevada agents later reported finding messages between Mr Neumann and an Ainsworth staff member in Sydney, with whom he had several dinner dates.

After telling agents it was the kind of thing that happened at "every company", Mr Neumann conceded the messages were "inappropriate" and he had breached the company's fraternisation policy.

'Benefits to politician' in Austria still under investigation

Mr Neumann confirmed he was still under investigation for alleged corruption in Austria, where he was accused of seeking favours from far-right politicians for his former company Novomatic AG.

Mr Neumann, who has strenuously denied any wrongdoing, said it had been "the intention from the state to close the file" but senior figures had insisted the case continue.

"And we have in Austria, a law which ... it's not corruption if you continuously give benefits to a politician without any cause, just to have maybe a better position in the future if something happens — this is currently what is stated [prosecutors] still should investigate," he said.

Mr Neumann said he had "no intent to hide any information from the [Nevada] board, however, I should have given the application process more focused attention".

He said he took "full responsibility" for his inappropriate exchanges with the Australian Ainsworth staff member and apologised "for the lack of candour" to the Nevada regulator.

"I acknowledge these things, and they should not have occurred, and I respectfully ask that it not overshadow my 15 years in the gaming industry and the success of both Novomatic and AGT in the gaming industry," he said.

Mr Neumann admitted raising his voice with agents but suggested they had been dishonest with him at times, including by telling him that the US State Department had confirmed a stamp in his passport showed a visit to Russia when he had actually travelled to Bosnia.

'Maybe in Sydney ... not in Las Vegas'



A licence hearing in Las Vegas this week has turned into a grilling for the boss of Ainsworth Game Technology. (ABC News: Cameron Schwarz)

The Nevada board chair Mike Dreitzer said he had "grave concern" about both Mr Neumann's conduct with agents and his responses to the board's questions.

"In each and every instance, the answers provided were vague, acting as a victim, blaming others, in some cases blaming agents," Mr Dreitzer said.

"I have to draw a big, bright line at suggesting the agents were in any way dishonest. That's just not something I can accept."

Retired judge Assad suggested Mr Neumann "look [the agents] right in the eyes and tell them you're sorry".

Mr Neumann turned to address the agents, saying: "I apologise for my behaviour and I really regret it, I just got a strange feeling from you. Sorry. It was not my intention."

Asked if he believed he had a right to a gaming licence in Nevada, Mr Neumann said, "Yes, I believe."

"Well, I got news for you, you don't," retired judge Assad said.

"Maybe in Europe you do. Maybe in Sydney, Australia. Maybe in Vienna, Austria. But in the United States of America, especially Las Vegas, Nevada, you do not have a right. It's a privilege."

'Argumentative, arrogant, evasive'



Members of the Nevada Gaming Control Board say it is the "gold standard" in gaming regulation worldwide. *(Supplied)*

Ms Sendall said it was difficult to swallow Mr Neumann's explanations for his "multiple failures to maintain transparency" with investigators, given he had been through the process in 2017.

"And especially seeing you here for the past hour answering questions and unable to give a direct answer, it's concerning to me," she said.

"You lose credibility when you don't give direct answers, whether it's about potential prostitution, whether it's about signing a fraternisation policy, whether it's about disclosing a bank account, whether it's about disclosing rental properties, whether it's about disclosing text messages and allegations that there's blocks missing from the copy of the phone that was provided — of text messages that seem to insinuate that some of them were deleted."

Ms Sendall said it was "frustrating [and] concerning" for the board to have to treat Mr Neumann as a "hostile witness".

"This is a privileged licence. This is Nevada. We set the gold standard," she said.

"Unfortunately I'm seeing a lack of emotional intelligence... and for you to be in the position that you're in as CEO, it's kind of mind-boggling honestly to me, that you can function at such a high-level and not have these basic leadership skills and communications skills and that you're not ... self-aware that you're coming off as argumentative, arrogant, evasive to questions asked, difficult."

'Your whole attitude stinks'



Harald Neumann is under investigation for alleged corruption in Austria. (Supplied)

Retired judge Assad asked if Mr Neumann had been "drinking any alcohol [or] on any type of medication" during his interviews with agents, which he denied.

"Your behaviour is very unusual to say the least," he said.

"I've never had an applicant come before me and have these issues — not just one or two, but I've got eight different issues here that our investigators say were very problematic for them to conduct their investigation...

"I really don't think you get it. You don't get what this is all about.

"I don't see remorse. I don't see acceptance of responsibility. I don't see acknowledgement of guilt. I don't see contrition. I see arrogance. That's what I see."

The board declined to deny Mr Neumann a licence, a move that would have seen him added to Nevada's so-called "grey list" of people banned indefinitely from the gaming industry.

But it referred his application back to its investigators with an immediate request that he withdraw the bid since it stood no prospect of success in the short term.

igamingexpert.com, 10.10.2025

Ainsworth boss's future clouded by Nevada licence troubles



Image: Shutterstock

The CEO of **Ainsworth Gaming Technology** (AGT), **Harald Neumann**, is facing an exit from the ASX gambling group due to licensing problems in **Nevada**.

AGT informed investors that the **Nevada Gaming Control Board** (NGCB) recommended that the board of directors withdraw Neumann's application to be licensed in Las Vegas.

Neumann, who has led Ainsworth since 2021 and was previously licensed by the NGCB. He was scheduled to meet with the board regarding his licence, which must be renewed every five years, on 11 October.

However, after a meeting with the NGCB, AGT's Chair, **Danny Gladstone**, confirmed that Neumann's position is now in doubt.

"The Board is undertaking a review of Mr Neumann's role following the outcome of the NGCB's meeting and will provide further details to the market once this review is completed," said Gladstone in a brief statement.

Corruption probe

Although no reason has been provided for the NGCB's reluctance to license Neumann, he is still facing a historical corruption probe in **Austria** related to his time leading rival Novomatic AG, the same company that is currently in the middle of a takeover bid of AGT.

In 2019, a series of investigations into more than 100 individuals was launched by Austria's **Economic and Corruption Prosecutor's Office**. Neumann was initially implicated in some of these cases, however, all but one have been discontinued as no further evidence of corruption was uncovered.

He resigned as Novomatic's CEO in 2020 and became a "strategic advisor" for the company before joining AGT as CEO in 2021.

Neumann has always denied any wrongdoing related to the investigations. In June, an AGT spokesperson stated that it was "our understanding that the one remaining investigation is largely complete, and it is anticipated that this will be similarly dismissed".

Takeover troubles

Novomatic's takeover attempt has been anything but smooth, as current AGT investors have hit back at the Austrian company's valuation.

In August, Novomatic tabled a "best and final" offer of AU\$1 per share, representing a 35% premium on AGT's shares.

However, **Kjeruif Ainsworth**, son of Founder Len Ainsworth and the second-largest shareholder, **accused** the company of undervaluing its US property assets and stated his belief that Novomatic's offer should be closer to \$3 per share.

Novomatic's dogged pursuit of AGT centres on its desire to expand its presence in Asia, as well as take control of the distribution of gaming machines (pokies) in Australia.

Since the announcement of Nevada's stance on Neumann's licence application, Kjeruif Ainsworth told **ABC** that if Neumann doesn't have a licence, "he can't stay as CEO".

He added that the US regulator appears to have taken the Austrian investigation into account and that he is "glad the process is working properly".

Other AGT shareholders, including **Allan Gray, Spheria Asset Management** and **Kanen Wealth Management**, have also expressed their disappointment in the \$1 per share proposal, stating that it undervalues the business.

While Novomatic's direct takeover attempts continue to stall, the company has pushed on with an off-market bid, increasing its shareholding of AGT to 61.5% at the time of writing.

sigma.world, 10.10.2025

Ainsworth pulls Nevada licence application for CEO Neumann



Australia-listed slot machine manufacturer Ainsworth Game Technology Ltd has withdrawn the Nevada licensing application of its Chief Executive Officer Harald Neumann, following a recommendation from the Nevada Gaming Control Board (NGCB). The decision, made shortly before a scheduled hearing, has drawn [attention to the company's leadership](#) and regulatory standing in one of the world's most closely watched gaming markets.

In a filing to the Australian Securities Exchange (ASX) on Thursday, Ainsworth confirmed, *"An application for licensing in Nevada, in the United States, by its chief executive Harald Neumann had been referred back to NGCB staff, including a recommendation that Mr Neumann withdraw his application."*

The [statement added](#), quoting Ainsworth Chairman Danny Gladstone, *"The Board is undertaking a review of Mr Neumann's role following the outcome of the NGCB's meeting and will provide further details to the market once this review is completed."*

The filing did not specify the reasons behind the NGCB's recommendation. Neumann was due to face a hearing with the NGCB on 11 October regarding the renewal of his executive licence. That hearing has now been called off after the board advised Neumann to withdraw his application.

Possible impact on Ainsworth's operations

Licensing approval in Nevada is critical for gaming manufacturers operating in the United States. The move marks a significant development for Ainsworth, which has its global base in Australia but maintains a strong operational presence in Las Vegas, where Neumann is based.

The company has been undergoing structural changes amid an ongoing takeover bid by [Novomatic AG, the Austrian gaming giant that already owns a majority stake in Ainsworth](#). The licensing process for all senior executives, including Neumann, forms part of the due diligence requirements tied to this acquisition.

Novomatic's growing control

Novomatic, led by its founder Johann Graf, has steadily increased its ownership in Ainsworth over the past few months. As of 2 October, Novomatic and Graf controlled 61.5 percent of Ainsworth's shares, according to official filings.

Novomatic has been seeking to acquire the remaining shares it does not already own to take full control of Ainsworth. However, this move has faced resistance from minority shareholders, including Kjerulf Ainsworth, son of company founder Len Ainsworth, who claimed that Novomatic's offer undervalued the firm.

Allegations & investigations in Austria

Neumann, who became Ainsworth's CEO on 1 October 2021, previously served as CEO of Novomatic from 2014 to 2020. He stepped down from that role citing "family reasons."

However, in June 2024, Australian public broadcaster ABC reported that Neumann was *"under investigation over alleged corruption involving far-right politicians in Austria – allegations he strenuously denied."*

The investigations trace back to Austria's high-profile Ibiza affair, a political scandal that forced the resignation of former chancellor Heinz-Christian Strache in 2019. As part of the probe, authorities looked into whether Novomatic executives, including Harald Neumann, had tried to influence gaming laws by securing appointments at Casinos Austria, a company partly owned by Novomatic.

While several parts of the inquiry have since been dismissed, one case remains ongoing. Reports in Austria's *Der Standard* also claim that Neumann faces a separate tax-related case connected to alleged payments made to him in 2018 and 2019. He has denied all allegations of wrongdoing.

Ainsworth faces investor pressure

Ainsworth, founded by Australian gaming pioneer Len Ainsworth, has been at the centre of investor unease following reports of Neumann's legal troubles and Novomatic's takeover ambitions. Shareholders, including institutional investors Spheria Asset Management, Kanen Wealth Management, and Allan Gray, have criticised the deal as "opportunistic" and accused the company of not adequately disclosing information regarding ongoing investigations.

The failure to secure a [Nevada licence](#) could now deepen uncertainty about Neumann's future and the company's regulatory standing in the US.

Board review underway

Ainsworth's board has begun a formal review into Neumann's role in light of the NGCB's recommendation. *"The Board is undertaking a review of Mr Neumann's role following the outcome of the NGCB's meeting and will provide further details to the market once this review is completed,"* said Danny Gladstone.

Until the review is complete, Ainsworth has not said whether Neumann will remain in his role as CEO. His decision to withdraw the Nevada licensing application marks a significant moment for the company, coming at a time when it faces both regulatory scrutiny and major ownership changes in the world's biggest gaming market.

shz.de, 10.10.2025

Spannende Duelle bei den Deutschen Gehörlosen Dart-Meisterschaften in Schleswig



Deutsche Gehörlosen Meisterschaften Dart FOTO: O.FÖRSTER

Zum 90-jährigen Jubiläum des Hörgeschädigten-Sportclubs Schleswig richtete der Verein in der Sporthalle des Landesförderzentrum Hören und Kommunikation die Deutschen Gehörlosen Meisterschaften im Dart aus. Insgesamt 97 Dartspielerinnen und -spieler aus ganz Deutschland traten an.

Schleswig, 3. und 4. Oktober – Zum 90-jährigen Jubiläum des Hörgeschädigten-Sportclubs Schleswig (HSC) richtete der Verein in der Sporthalle der Georg-Wilhelm-Pfingsten-Schule (Landesförderzentrum Hören und Kommunikation) die Deutschen Gehörlosen Meisterschaften im Dart aus. Insgesamt 97 Dartspielerinnen und -spieler aus ganz Deutschland traten in den Disziplinen Einzel und Doppel der Herren, Damen sowie Senioren und Seniorinnen an.

An 18 modernen Löwen Dart-Geräten, bereitgestellt von Löwen Entertainment, dem langjährigen Partner des Deutschen Gehörlosen-Sportverbands (DGSV), wurden die Titel ausgespielt. Die hochmodernen Automaten sind vernetzt und ermöglichten dank einer innovativen App die Echtzeitübertragung der Ergebnisse, was für einen reibungslosen und transparenten Turnierverlauf sorgte. Dieses technische Highlight wurde von den Teilnehmerinnen und Teilnehmern sehr positiv aufgenommen.

Im Damen Einzel zeigte N. Binkowski vom HSC eine starke Leistung und erreichte das Achtelfinale, in dem ihre Turnierläufe jedoch endeten. Bei den Seniorinnen konnte sich Norgrid Eckard aus Schleswig das Spiel um den dritten Platz sichern. Sie setzte sich gegen ihre Vereinskameradin I. Brück durch und freute sich über die Bronzemedaille. Im Herren Einzel schieden J. Bernshausen und P. Nau im Achtelfinale aus und konnten sich damit leider nicht für die Finalrunden qualifizieren.

Der zweite Turniertag stand im Zeichen der Doppelwettbewerbe. Das Duo N. Binkowski und N. Eckard musste sich in der Qualifikationsrunde geschlagen geben. Im Herren Doppel erreichten P. Neu und M. Eckard das Viertelfinale, scheiterten dort jedoch an ihren Gegnern. J. Bernshausen kämpfte sich mit seinem Partner bis ins Spiel um Platz drei vor, verpasste jedoch knapp den Podestplatz.

Insgesamt zeigten die Schleswiger Dartspielerinnen und Spieler starken Einsatz und trugen mit ihrem Engagement zu einem gelungenen Jubiläumsturnier bei. Die Kombination aus sportlicher Höchstleistung und moderner Technik machte die Meisterschaften zu einem besonderen Erlebnis für alle Beteiligten.

Herzlichen Glückwunsch an alle Teilnehmer und Gewinner!

Vegas slip risks Ainsworth CEO's job

Zoe Samios

The future of Ainsworth Game Technology chief executive Harald Neumann has been thrown into doubt after the ASX-listed poker machine manufacturing giant abruptly withdrew his application to be licensed in the world's most important gambling market, Las Vegas.

Manufacturers of poker machines in the city require approval from the Nevada Gaming Board. Neumann, who has run Ainsworth since 2021, has previously held a licence but must be re-approved every five years.

Ainsworth told investors on Thursday that the Nevada Gaming Board had recommended Neumann withdraw his application instead. The failure to be licensed in the state would be a serious issue for Ainsworth, the poker machine business founded by the eponymous billionaire family which had already made its fortune with a better known rival: Aristocrat Leisure.

Ainsworth chairman Danny Gladstone said the board was reviewing Neumann's position following the outcome of the meeting. "The board... will provide further details to the market once this review is completed," he said.

Ainsworth has been under intense scrutiny after *The Australian Financial Review* reported this year that Neumann had been under investigation in Austria since 2019 over allegations related to his time leading gaming firm Novomatic. Ainsworth had not disclosed the probe to investors, and said it did not need to. Neumann has denied wrongdoing and said he had kept the company's board and compli-

ance committee up to date.

Neumann is based in Nevada. He has separately faced an investor revolt over a proposal to sell the company to Novomatic, where he had been CEO.

Novomatic, which owns the Admiral Casino brand of poker machines, offered to acquire the 47.1 per cent of the business it did not already own for \$1 per share in April. The scheme of the proposal was ultimately terminated, but Novomatic pushed ahead with an off-market bid. It now controls 61.5 per cent of the company.

The move outraged smaller institutional investors including Spheria Asset Management, Kanen Wealth Management and Allan Gray, which have argued that it was an opportunistic bid by Novomatic and not an acceptable price. They have accused Ainsworth of depressing the share price and misleading investors about the company's true value.

Ainsworth was founded by Len Ainsworth, who sold a majority stake to Novomatic, owned by Austrian billionaire Johann Graf, in 2018. That deal, worth \$500 million, ended his affiliation with Ainsworth and gave Novomatic the chance to grow its presence in the United States. Novomatic was run by Neumann at the time. The investigations into Neumann stem from a 2019 political scandal known as the Ibiza affair, which led to the resignation of Austria's former chancellor and leader of the country's far-right party, Heinz-Christian Strache.

Strache was caught offering government contracts in exchange for campaign help from a woman he thought

was the niece of a Russian oligarch.

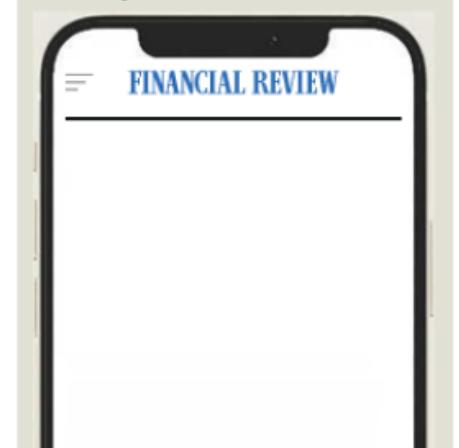
The scandal led to a parliamentary inquiry as well as several investigations by the Economic and Corruption Prosecution Office. The criminal investigations involving Novomatic and Neumann related to allegations of corruption and influencing changes to gaming laws through targeted board appointments at a company that it part-owned, Casinos Austria.

Most of the investigations related to Neumann and Novomatic have been dismissed, but one is ongoing.

According to a report in Austria's *Der Standard*, Neumann also faces claims relating to potential tax evasion.

The matter has been in court since 2023, and relates to payments made by Graf to his employees, including two payments of €1 million (\$1.8 million) allegedly made to Neumann in 2018 and 2019. He has denied any wrongdoing.

How the *Financial Review* broke the story



ggrasia.com, 10.10.2025

Ainsworth withdraws Nevada licensing application for its CEO Neumann



Australia-listed slot machine maker Ainsworth Game Technology Ltd said in a Thursday filing that an application for licensing in Nevada, in the United States, by its chief executive Harald Neumann (pictured in a file photo), had been "referred back to NGCB [Nevada Gaming Control Board] staff, including a recommendation that Mr Neumann withdraw his application".

The filing to the Australian Securities Exchange added, quoting Ainsworth's chairman, Danny Gladstone: "The board is undertaking a review of Mr Neumann's role following the outcome of the NGCB's meeting and will provide further details to the market once this review is completed".

The statement didn't mention the circumstances of the recommendation for a withdrawal of his licensing application.

The recommendation to withdraw Mr Neumann's licence application in Nevada came just two days before he was scheduled to appear in a hearing for it, according to media reports.

In June, the Australian public broadcaster, the ABC, reported that Mr Neumann was "under investigation over alleged corruption involving far-right politicians in Austria – allegations he strenuously denied".

Ainsworth is majority-owned by Austrian gaming equipment firm Novomatic AG, a business where Mr Neumann had previously been a senior executive.

In 2020, Mr Neumann stepped down as CEO of Novomatic for what the firm said were "family reasons". He had been appointed Novomatic CEO in October 2014. He assumed the role of Ainsworth CEO on October 1, 2021.

In early October this year, Novomatic increased its stake in Ainsworth, as the former seeks to acquire the shares it does not currently control in Ainsworth, and take full control of the business.

The Novomatic group and its founder and owner, Johann Graf, now control 61.5 percent of Ainsworth's shares, following a string of acquisitions since late August, according to an October 2 filing.

gamblinginsider.com, 09.10.2025

LEGAL & REGULATORY APPOINTMENTS SLOTS

Ainsworth confirms it is reviewing Harald Neumann's role as CEO

The Nevada Gaming Control Board has recommended that Neumann remove his application for an executive licence in the state, with his position now under internal company review.



Key points:

- Neumann was supposed to have a hearing regarding a new executive licence in Nevada this week
- Following a meeting between Ainsworth and the NGCB, this hearing will no longer take place
- Ainsworth Chairman, Danny Gladstone, has shared that the board is reviewing Neumann's role at the company

As part of Novomatic's ongoing takeover bid of Ainsworth, a process to acquire appropriate licences for all executives is underway, though there appears to be a roadblock in that regard for Ainsworth CEO Harald Neumann.

Neumann was scheduled for a hearing with the Nevada Gaming Control Board (NGCB) regarding his licence on 11 October, a meeting that appears to no longer be going ahead.

Ainsworth has shared a public statement suggesting that in a meeting with the NGCB a recommendation was made that Neumann's application be withdrawn in advance of his hearing.

Danny Gladstone, Ainsworth Chairman, commented: "The Board is undertaking a review of Mr Neumann's role following the outcome of the NGCB's meeting and will provide further details to the market once this review is completed."

Until his resignation in 2020, Neumann was CEO of Novomatic but left the company following the beginning of investigations in 2019 into political and economic corruption in Austria, citing family reasons.

The following year, he replaced Lawrence Levy at Ainsworth where he has worked ever since.

Good to know: Harald Neumann spoke to *Gambling Insider* earlier this year at IGA 2025 to discuss the difference between operating in the UK and the US

From his base in Las Vegas he has led the Australian manufacturer and supplier of slots.

Over the past year the company has been subject of a takeover bid from Neumann's old company Novomatic.

The bid has not been universally popular with all shareholders – minority shareholder Kjerulf Ainsworth, son of founder Len Ainsworth, suggested that the final offer from Novomatic undervalued the company.

Whether Neumann will be able to continue in his role seems up in the air, and it is possible that the historical corruption probe in Austria, which has been investigated by US regulators, has thrown up complicating factors.

intergameonline.com, 09.10.2025

Ainsworth considering future of CEO Neumann

October 9, 2025

by Jonny Whitfield



Subscribe

Ainsworth Game Technology says it is reviewing CEO Harald Neumann's future after the company withdrew his application for another licence in Las Vegas, Nevada, US.



Ainsworth, as per company requirements, held a meeting with the Nevada Gaming Control Board (NGCB) on Thursday to discuss a new licence for the gaming supplier's chief executive.

But after looking into the application, the state regulator recommended Neumann withdraw his application.

"The board is undertaking a review of Mr Neumann's role following the outcome of the NGCB's meeting and

will provide further details to the market once this review is completed," Ainsworth chairman Danny Gladstone said.

next.io, 09.10.2025

Ainsworth CEO's future in doubt as Nevada regulator recommends licence withdrawal



The future of Ainsworth Game Technology CEO Harald Neumann hangs in the balance after the Nevada Gaming Control Board (NGCB) recommended he withdraw his application to renew his licence application.

Neumann, who is based in Nevada, already held a licence in the state but licence holders are routinely required to reapply, typically every five years.

The five-year renewal cycle allows authorities to keep a close eye on licensees and continually monitor their suitability to work in the gambling sector.

In a press release shared with investors today (9 October), Ainsworth advised that "following the requirement to continue to pursue licensure for all executive officers of the company, a meeting before the Nevada Gaming Control Board (NGCB) was held earlier today.

"At this meeting Mr Neumann's application was referred back to NGCB staff, including a recommendation that Mr Neumann withdraw his application."

Ainsworth chairman Danny Gladstone added that: "The board is undertaking a review of Mr Neumann's role following the outcome of the NGCB's meeting and will provide further details to the market once this review is completed."

Tough year for Neumann

The update follows revelations in June that Neumann had been under investigation by the Austrian Economic and Corruption Prosecutor's Office (WKStA) over corruption charges.

The investigations related to Neumann's time as CEO of Novomatic, and examined his possible involvement in the so-called Ibiza affair, a major political scandal in which opposition politicians were secretly filmed agreeing to provide lucrative government contracts in return for positive media coverage.

At the time, Ainsworth defended its decision not to disclose the matter to shareholders earlier, arguing the investigations were preliminary and insufficiently definite to warrant disclosure.

The company added: "Based on information from WKStA, we are advised that all (except for one) of the investigations involving Mr. Neumann and/or Novomatic AG have been discontinued with the necessary approvals being received from the relevant Austrian regulatory authorities with no findings of wrongdoing.

"Current information available on the one remaining investigation indicates that WKStA will finalise its examination on the established facts prior to submitting its proposal to the necessary Austrian regulatory authorities for approval to have this last investigation discontinued."

More controversy at Ainsworth

Meanwhile, tensions have risen this year as a result of an attempt by Novomatic, already a major Ainsworth shareholder at the time, to acquire the remaining stake in Ainsworth in April.

The deal faced significant criticism from minority Ainsworth shareholders, with Kanen Wealth Management arguing the A\$1 per share offer "materially undervalued" the company.

Kjerulf Ainsworth, another shareholder in the company and son of its founder Len Ainsworth, also slammed the proposed deal, arguing the shares were worth closer to A\$3 each.

Speaking to Australia's ABC today in the wake of the Nevada licensing revelation, Kjerulf Ainsworth said if Neumann "doesn't have a licence, he can't stay as CEO. It's that simple."

gamingamerica.com, 09.10.2025

Ainsworth to review position of CEO Harald Neumann



The Nevada Gaming Control Board has recommended that the Ainsworth CEO withdraw his application for a gaming license in the Silver State.

Key points:

- Neumann is CEO at Ainsworth and formerly served in the same role at Novomatic, which now controls around 60% of Ainsworth
- He left his role at Novomatic in 2020, shortly after an investigation into alleged corruption in Austria began
- Neumann's bid for a new gaming license in Nevada has been obstructed by the NGCB, with Ainsworth evaluating if he can continue in his role

Harald Neumann's position as CEO at Ainsworth has been put in doubt after the Nevada Gaming Control Board (NGCB) seems to have been deterred from issuing him with a new gaming license.

The Ainsworth executive and former Novomatic chief had been seeking a license in the state in view of the **ongoing takeover bid from Novomatic**, with Ainsworth now required "to continue to pursue licensure for all executive officers of the company."

In a brief statement released today, Ainsworth Chairman, Danny Gladstone, has confirmed that following a recommendation from the NGCB that Neumann's application be withdrawn, the Board of Directors will be reviewing Neumann's role.

In due course the company will share any details from the outcome of this review, but for the time being it seems that an Austrian corruption probe involving Neumann may have cast a shadow over his future at Ainsworth.

In 2019, a series of investigations into more than 100 individuals was launched by Austria's Economic and Corruption Prosecutor's Office – Neumann, at the time CEO of Novomatic, was initially implicated in some of these cases, though it was later reported that all but one had been discontinued without having uncovered definitive evidence of corruption.

Whether the de facto rejection of Neumann by the NGCB is due to its own evaluations of the credibility of the one remaining case is not certain, but it may be a situation where the risk was not considered to be worth the reward for the state regulator.

Good to know: This year at IGA 2025, Ainsworth *celebrated its 30th* anniversary as a company

Novomatic's takeover of Ainsworth has been a protracted and controversial affair in its own right, with public disharmony rife between significant minority shareholder Kjerulf Ainsworth and Novomatic, which is seemingly intent on purchasing all remaining shares of the company and removing it from the Australian Securities Exchange.

In August, Novomatic exclusively told *Gambling Insider* that the "very good" bid it had made for the remainder of Novomatic stock was its final offer – Kjerulf Ainsworth, son of Founder Len, believed the bid, which valued the business at approximately AU\$336.83m (US\$217.82m), was an undervaluation.

Nonetheless, at last report, the bid has progressed to the point where Novomatic controlled around 60% of the company.

newsnet5.com, 09.10.2025

Ainsworth CEO's Future in Doubt as Nevada Regulator Raises Licensing Issues



Concerns Raised by Nevada Gaming Authorities

Ainsworth Game Technology (AGT) is facing a potential leadership crisis after its CEO, Harald Neumann, encountered significant challenges related to his gaming license application in the United States. The Nevada Gaming Control Board (NGCB) has highlighted ongoing concerns linked to Neumann's past, urging him to withdraw his licensing request due to unresolved questions about his ties to a European corruption investigation.

Background on Harald Neumann and Past Investigations

Harald Neumann, who took over as CEO of AGT in late 2021, previously led Novomatic AG, an Austrian gaming company. During his tenure at Novomatic, Austrian authorities conducted an investigation into alleged corrupt practices involving Novomatic executives and far-right political figures. The probe centered on accusations that the company exchanged certain concessions for favorable treatment of its gaming operations.

Although AGT points out that most allegations against Neumann and Novomatic were dismissed, the Nevada gaming regulator remains cautious. The recent recommendation from the NGCB, released shortly before a key hearing, has led the AGT board to initiate a review of Neumann's standing within the company.

The official statement from AGT reflected the board's serious consideration of the issue, noting that NGCB staff advised Neumann to withdraw his application.

AGT Chairman Danny Gladstone acknowledged the potential impact of this development on the company's leadership structure, stressing that all executives need valid gaming permits to operate legally in the U.S. Additionally, Kjerulf Ainsworth, a significant shareholder and son of the company founder, stressed that without a license, Neumann's continuation as CEO would be untenable.

Implications for AGT's Leadership and Future

Neumann's career has been marked by controversy. Earlier this year, he was implicated in the so-called "Ibiza affair," a significant political scandal in Austria, and faced a corruption investigation. In 2019, authorities raided his home as part of a broader inquiry into alleged bribery and unlawful political contributions.

Following the raid, media reports surfaced revealing messages suggesting that Neumann sought to exchange political donations for legal assistance related to Novomatic's business interests in Italy. Neumann resigned from Novomatic shortly afterward, citing family reasons. His appointment as AGT's CEO came without public disclosure of the ongoing investigation related to his previous role.

This situation adds complexity to AGT's ties with Novomatic, which remains a major shareholder, especially as a notable acquisition by AGT is anticipated to conclude later in the year. With regulatory confidence in question, the board's decision on Neumann's position will be crucial in determining AGT's ability to maintain stability without leadership changes at the top.

abc.net.au, 09.10.2025

Future of pokies boss hangs in balance after US gaming licence troubles



Harald Neumann, chief executive of Ainsworth Game Technology, is under investigation for alleged corruption in Austria. *(Supplied)*

A cloud hangs over the future of an Australian pokie machine company boss whose bid for a gaming licence in the US has met hurdles after revelations he was the subject of a European corruption investigation.

The ABC [revealed in June](#) that Harald Neumann, chief executive of Ainsworth Game Technology (AGT), had been under investigation in Austria over an alleged scheme with far-right politicians to win favours for his former company Novomatic AG.

One of the world's biggest pokie manufacturers, AGT had not publicly disclosed Mr Neumann's role in the investigation.

It told the ABC at the time that "all (except for one) of the investigations involving Mr Harald Neumann and / or Novomatic AG have been dismissed".

But the company revealed on Thursday that it was considering Mr Neumann's future after the US' most influential gaming regulator recommended he withdraw his application for a gaming licence.

In an announcement to the Australian Stock Exchange, AGT said that "following the requirement to pursue licensure for all executive officers of the company, a meeting before the Nevada Gaming Control Board was held earlier today".

"At this meeting Mr Neumann's application was referred back to NGCB staff, including a recommendation that Mr Neumann withdraw his application," it said.

AGT chairman Danny Gladstone said the Australian company's board was

"undertaking a review of Mr Neumann's role following the outcome of the NGCB's meeting and will provide further details to the market once this review is completed".

The recommendation by the board of the US regulator that Mr Neumann pull his licence application came just [two days before he was scheduled to appear in a hearing for it](#).

Kjerulf Ainsworth, the son of AGT founder Len Ainsworth and a significant minority shareholder in the company, said if Mr Neumann "doesn't have a licence, he can't stay as CEO".

"It's that simple," he said.

Speaking to the ABC from the US, Kjerulf Ainsworth has recently battled alongside other minority investors resisting an attempted takeover by Novomatic AG on Mr Neumann's watch.

Pokies boss under investigation for alleged corruption



Ainsworth Game Technology's chief executive has been in the crosshairs of a corruption probe involving far-right politicians in Austria.

Mr Ainsworth said with US regulators appearing to have taken the Austrian investigation into account, "all I'd say is I'm glad the process is working properly".

"The regulators' job is to keep it all clean," he said.

"People need to be held to account."

Mr Neumann, who is based in Las Vegas, has "strenuously denied all the allegations" under scrutiny by Austrian prosecutors, the company previously told the ABC.

House raids, texts

His house was raided in August 2019 as part of an investigation into suspected bribery and illicit political funding by the Austrian Central Public Prosecutor's Office for the Prosecution of Economic Crimes and Corruption.

The investigation has examined an alleged deal involving the country's then-chancellor Sebastian Kurz and vice-chancellor Heinz-Christian Strache to influence an appointment to the board of state-controlled regulator Casinos Austria.

It was alleged the board then signalled concessions for changes to small-scale gambling laws that would favour Novomatic.

In February 2020, anti-corruption police reportedly raided the home of Austrian finance minister Gernot Blumel, and the office of Novomatic, which denied making any payments.

Austrian media published text messages between Mr Blumel and Mr Neumann, in which the then-Novomatic boss apparently sought help arranging a meeting with the chancellor in 2017 to discuss a donation and help with a foreign legal case against the company.

"Good morning, I have a request: I need a short appointment with Kurz (firstly because of a donation and secondly regarding a problem that we have in Italy! Do you think it will work out this week??" a translated message from Mr Neumann said.

In another chat, in January 2018, Mr Neumann asked for help scheduling "an appointment with SK ... the topic will be gambling in general but also Casag [Casinos Austria]".

The same month of the raids and the publication of the texts, Mr Neumann resigned as Novomatic chief executive, citing family reasons, and became a "strategic adviser" for the company.

AGT made no public mention of the investigation when the Australian company appointed Mr Neumann as chief executive in October 2021.

At the time, AGT chairman Mr Gladstone said the company was "fortunate to be able to appoint Harald as our new CEO ... the former successful CEO of Novomatic AG, our major shareholder".

An AGT spokesperson told the ABC in June that it was "our understanding that the one remaining investigation is largely complete, and it is anticipated that this will be similarly dismissed".

intergameonline.com, 08.10.2025

Novomatic launches Magic Games Premium

October 8, 2025

by Richard Hollis



Subscribe

At GAT Bogotá 2025, Novomatic Gaming Colombia officially launched the new Magic Games Premium HD Ed. 5, showcased on the FunMaster 2.27 cabinet.



The solution combines more than 40 multi-game titles with the Magic Play functionality, integrating individual jackpots. This feature, Novomatic explained, turns Magic Games into a "disruptive proposition" within the multi-game segment.

Novomatic accompanied the launch with an exclusive promotion, offering the product at a special price along with favourable financing conditions in

a campaign, which runs throughout October.

"With Magic Games on the FunMaster 2.27 cabinet, we are taking another step forward in our mission to democratise access to Novomatic technology in all gaming halls. This unbeatable offer provides operators with an innovative, competitive and profitable solution that combines our multi-game tradition with integrated jackpots in a single product," stated Manuel Del Sol, CEO of Novomatic Gaming Colombia.

gamblinginsider.com, 07.10.2025

NOVOMATIC sets a milestone at GAT Bogotá 2025 with the launch of Magic Games Premium HD

Demonstrating its strong commitment to the Latin American market, NOVOMATIC Gaming Colombia made a remarkable impression at GAT Expo Bogotá 2025.



The company took center stage with the largest booth at the event, featuring an outstanding portfolio that raised the bar for gaming technology and entertainment.

At GAT Bogotá 2025, held at the Hotel Sheraton Bogotá, NOVOMATIC Gaming Colombia delivered one of the most outstanding highlights of the show: the official launch of the new Magic Games Premium HD Ed. 5, showcased on the FUNMASTER 2.27 cabinet.

The event brought together key players in the gaming industry in the region and provided the perfect stage for NOVOMATIC to introduce a solution that combines more than 40 multi-game titles with the innovative MAGIC PLAY functionality, integrating individual jackpots. This feature turns Magic Games into a disruptive proposition within the multi-game segment, offering a "2-in-1" concept that enhances player experience while optimising hall profitability.

The FUNMASTER 2.27 cabinet was chosen for this launch due to its versatility, robustness, and adaptability to the needs of operators of different sizes, which combine to make it one of the company's most competitive market offerings.

To reinforce this initiative, NOVOMATIC accompanied the launch with an exclusive promotion, offering the product at a special price along with highly attractive financing conditions. This campaign, which is available throughout October, aims to facilitate operator investments and reflects the company's goal of democratising access to NOVOMATIC solutions, bringing top-level technology to large, medium, and small gaming halls alike.

"With Magic Games on the FUNMASTER 2.27 cabinet, we are taking another step forward in our mission to democratise access to NOVOMATIC technology in all gaming halls. This unbeatable offer provides operators with an innovative, competitive, and profitable solution that combines our multigame tradition with integrated jackpots in a single product," stated Manuel Del Sol, CEO of NOVOMATIC Gaming Colombia.

One of the most symbolic moments of the day was the official opening ceremony of GAT Bogotá, which took place this year at the NOVOMATIC booth. In recognition of the company's leadership role, the organisers invited Manuel Del Sol to take part in the ribbon-cutting ceremony alongside industry authorities and stakeholders.

In addition to Magic Games, NOVOMATIC consolidated its appeal to operators and players by showcasing a selection of products that demonstrates the diversity and strength of its portfolio, including the Ruby Package, which combines the GLOBE LINK™ Xtension Volumes 1 & 2 progressive with the impressive BLACK EDITION II 1.49J cabinet; the Superia CASH CONNECTION™ Volume 2, displayed on the BLACK EDITION II 3.27 with high-performing progressive jackpots; and the NOVO LINE™ GOLDEN LINK™ Edition 2, presented on the MASTER SL™ 3.32.

With this participation, NOVOMATIC reaffirmed its commitment to innovation and close collaboration with customers in Bogotá, strengthening its leadership not only in Colombia but also throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

isa-guide.de, 07.10.2025

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(Photo: NOVOMATIC Gaming Colombia)

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(Photo: NOVOMATIC Gaming Colombia)

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For more information, visit: www.novomaticclub.com



(Photo: NOVOMATIC Gaming Colombia)

isa-guide.de, 07.10.2025

Spielbank Berlin feierte 50-jähriges Bestehen mit Gala im Theater am Potsdamer Platz

Kai Wegner: Spielbank Berlin ist verlässlicher Partner für das Land Berlin – Prominente Gratulanten aus Sport, Kultur und Gesellschaft

Festakt mit Politik, Wirtschaft und Kultur

Auf den Tag genau 50 Jahre nach dem Start der ersten Spielbank im Berliner Europa-Center feierte die Spielbank Berlin am 1. Oktober ihren 50. Geburtstag mit einer glanzvollen Gala im Haupthaus am Potsdamer Platz sowie im Theater am Potsdamer Platz.

Ehrengast des Events der Extraklasse war der Regierende Bürgermeister von Berlin, **Kai Wegner**, der die Spielbank Berlin als verlässlichen Partner für das Land Berlin würdigte: „Die Spielbank Berlin ist ein verantwortungsbewusstes Unternehmen, das sich für soziales Miteinander und urbane Vielfalt in unserer Stadt einsetzt. Ob bei den Spielen unserer Proficlubs oder beim ISTAF, bei der Verleihung des Deutschen Filmpreises oder beim Hoffest im Roten Rathaus - überall, wo etwas los ist in der Stadt, ist die Spielbank Berlin mit dabei. Zum Portfolio ihres Engagements gehören der Breitensport ebenso wie die Kulturförderung bis hin zur Stadtteilarbeit.“



V. l.: David Marek (Prokurist Spielbank Berlin), Gerhard Wilhelm (Sprecher der Geschäftsführung Spielbank Berlin), Kai Wegner (Regierender Bürgermeister von Berlin), Mehmet Celicoglu (Geschäftsführer Spielbank Berlin) und Marcel Langner (Geschäftsführer Spielbank Berlin). (Foto: Dirk Lässig)

50 Jahre Tradition, Sportförderung und Verantwortung

Gastgeber **Gerhard Wilhelm**, Sprecher der Geschäftsführung der Spielbank Berlin, betonte: „Fünf Jahrzehnte Spielbank Berlin – 50 Jahre lebendige Tradition, Innovation und Gastfreundschaft. Dieses Jubiläum ist für uns nicht nur ein Grund zur Freude, sondern auch ein Moment des Innehaltens: Wir blicken zurück auf zahlreiche Höhepunkte und Veränderungen – und zugleich voller Zuversicht nach vorn. Seit ihrer Gründung prägt die Spielbank Berlin die Hauptstadt und bietet Gästen aus aller Welt einen Ort der Begegnung, der Spannung und des verantwortungsvollen Spiels. Dies wäre ohne das Vertrauen unserer Gäste, die Treue unserer Geschäftspartnerinnen und Geschäftspartner und vor allem den unermüdlichen Einsatz unserer 600 Mitarbeiterinnen und Mitarbeiter nicht möglich gewesen. Ihnen allen gilt unser herzlichster Dank. Heute blicken wir auf 50 Jahre bewegte Geschichte zurück – geprägt von Berliner Wandel, internationalen Gästen und unzähligen Glücksmomenten. Vom Fall der Mauer bis zur Wiederbelebung des Potsdamer Platzes: Die Spielbank Berlin ist Teil der Stadt, ihrer Geschichte und Gesellschaft geworden, mit unseren vier Standorten in der ganzen Stadt, mit unserem Engagement im Sport, in der Kultur, in sozialen Projekten und mit einem klaren Bekenntnis zum Spieler- und Jugendschutz. Das 50-jährige Jubiläum ist für uns Ansporn, auch in Zukunft Maßstäbe zu setzen: in Sachen Gastfreundlichkeit, Service, Innovation und gelebter Verantwortung in und für Berlin“.



V. l.: Manfred Stoffers (Merkur Group), Dr. Franz Wohlfahrt (Novomatic AG), Regierender Bürgermeister Kai Wegner, Wirtschaftssenatorin Franziska Giffey, Sprecher der Geschäftsführung Spielbank Berlin Gerhard Wilhelm, Dipl.-Ing. Ryszard Presch (Vorstand Novomatic). (Foto: Dirk Lässig)

Neben vielen Spitzensportlern und Gästen aus Wirtschaft, Kultur und Gesellschaft erwiesen auch Wirtschaftssenatorin **Franziska Giffey**, Berlin Partner-Geschäftsführer **Dr. Stefan Franzke**, der Präsident des Landessportbundes Berlin, **Thomas Härtel** (O-Ton: „Die Spielbank Berlin hilft seit vielen Jahren, dass Berlin im Sport vorn mitspielen kann“), Berlins Olympiabotschafter und BR-Volleys-Manager **Kaweh Niroomand** und Hollywood-Legende **Ralf Moeller** (Gladiator) der Spielbank Berlin ihre Reverenz.

Hollywood-Star Ralf Moeller nutzte die Gala für eine besondere Nachricht: Er steht derzeit für die internationale Produktion „Dragonlord“ vor der Kamera, die in Helsinki und Budapest gedreht wird.

Die Spielbank Berlin ist seit ihrer Gründung eng mit dem Sport verbunden. Gegründet von Eishockey-Legende **Gustav Jaenicke** und über viele Jahre begleitet von Sportfunktionär Manfred von Richthofen, war ihr die Sportförderung über die Jahrzehnte stets ein Anliegen.



V. l.: Gerhard Wilhelm (Sprecher der Geschäftsführung Spielbank Berlin) erhält von Thomas Bothstede (Geschäftsführer Eisbären Berlin) ein Jubiläumstrikot. (Foto: Dirk Lässig)

So konnten in bester Tradition die Gesellschaftervertreter der Spielbank, **Dr. Franz Wohlfahrt** (Novomatic AG) und **Manfred Stoffers** (Merkur Group), einen Scheck über 10.000 Euro an die Manfred und Reinhard von Richthofen-Stiftung übergeben, um damit Windsurfer **Jakob Ditzen** zu unterstützen, der sich für die Olympischen Spiele 2028 in Los Angeles qualifizieren möchte.

Souverän moderiert wurde die Gala von der amerikanischen Entertainerin **Gayle Tufts** in ihrem legendären „Denglisch“ und Sportmoderator **Matthias Killing**, die durch ein Programm mit musikalischen und akrobatischen Highlights führten.

Das Jubiläum zeigte es: kein bedeutendes Sport-Event ohne die Spielbank Berlin. Egal ob ISTAF, die Berliner Champions Gala des Sports, die Hauptstadt kicker Hertha BSC und Union, die Füchse Berlin oder die Eisbären, ihnen allen steht die Spielbank Berlin als verllässlicher

Partner zur Seite. Fühse Berlin-Geschäftsführer **Bob Hanning** brachte es auf den Punkt: „Zur ersten Deutschen Meisterschaft hat auch unser Premium Partner, die Spielbank, beigetragen.“

Stellvertretend für viele geförderte Ausnahmeathleten stehen Diskus-Olympiasieger **Robert Harting** oder die Para-Olympiasiegerin **Elena Semechin**, die - in der Babypause - der Spielbank dankte für „ein starkes Zeichen von Vertrauen und Wertschätzung“. Für ihr vorbildliches Engagement im Behindertensport dankte **Özcan Mutlu**, Präsident des Behinderten- und Rehabilitationssportverbands Berlin, der Spielbank, die „echte Teilhabe und Inklusion“ ermögliche. Eisbären Berlin-Geschäftsführer **Thomas Bothstede** erinnerte an den VIP-Saisonauftakt bei der Spielbank Berlin – ein „unglaubliches Event, von dem auch heute noch viele sprechen.“



V. l.: Moderator Matthias Killing, Hollywood-Schauspieler Ralf Moeller und Entertainerin Gayle Tufts bei der Jubiläumsgala der Spielbank Berlin im Theater am Potsdamer Platz. (Foto: Dirk Lässig)

Dankbare Erinnerung auch bei **Martin Seeber**, Geschäftsführer TOP Sportmarketing und Meetingdirektor ISTAF und ISTAF INDOOR: „Ohne die Spielbank würde es das ISTAF, das älteste Leichtathletik-Meeting der Welt, nicht mehr geben. Sie ist bis heute Hauptsponsor der Veranstaltung.“ Eine Parallele zum Veranstaltungsort zog ALBA Berlin-Geschäftsführer **Marco Baldi**: „Im Sport wie im Spiel kommt es auf den richtigen Einsatz an – und genau den bringt die Spielbank Berlin seit vielen Jahren für unsere Stadt.“ Sein Kollege beim 1. FC Union, **Jan Boysen**, beglückwünschte den Jubilar als „langjähriges Mitglied der Union-Familie – und das ganz unabhängig vom Spielglück in einer jeden Saison.“

Kultur, Gesellschaft und Showprogramm

Aber auch in Kultur und Gesellschaft, das wurde auf dem Event einmal mehr deutlich, leistet die Spielbank einen unverzichtbaren Beitrag in und für Berlin. Etwa als „ein langjähriger, verlässlicher Partner des Deutschen Filmpreises“, wie **Claudia Loewe** von der Deutschen Filmakademie betonte. Gleiches gilt für Kulturklassiker wie das „Classic Open Air auf dem Gendarmenmarkt“ oder die „Pyronale“, wie Berlins Top-Veranstalter **Mario Hempel** betonte. Und **Dr. Christian Ceconi**, Direktor der Berliner Stadtmission, hob die modellhafte Unterstützung des Jubilars „für Menschen in schwierigen Lebenssituationen“ hervor.

Im Spielcasino direkt neben dem Theater am Potsdamer Platz begeisterte die Gäste auf allen Ebenen sowie dem Vorplatz ein internationales Showprogramm mit Live-Band, DJane sowie Food Court. Bei Sonderauspielungen, Glücksrad, Tombola und Gameshow konnten hochwertige Preise, darunter Apple-Produkte, gewonnen werden.

Unisono hieß es nach diesem 50. Geburtstag: Berlin und seine Spielbank – eine Erfolgsgeschichte, die als Leuchtturm weit über die Stadtgrenzen hinausstrahlt.

igamingexpert.com, 06.10.2025

Greentube: how to stand out at competitive iGaming events



Ida Malagic, Head of Marketing at Greentube, explains exactly what it takes to stand out from the crowd at iGaming industry conferences. Fresh off the back of SBC Summit 2025 and heading into G2E this week, Greentube offers a glimpse into the planning process and ensuring that games stand out in a busy hall.

iGaming Expert: Firstly, Greentube was an exhibitor at SBC Summit 2025. What products did you exhibit there and were there any key takeaways from the event?

IM: This year's SBC Summit 2025 in Lisbon was a great success for Greentube. It was our second time as an exhibitor in Lisbon and, once again, it was a fantastic opportunity for us to really showcase our dynamic portfolio of new and top-performing titles that really reflect our commitment to innovation and player engagement.

The major focus of this year's event was our brand-new release, Lucky Luchadoras, a vibrant tumbler slot inspired by Mexican wrestling. Creepy Candy, a Halloween-themed 7-reel game packed with tumbling wins and multipliers was also a big highlight, as well as Starlight Jackpots™ Captain's Catch™, which offers 243 ways to win and a compelling cash collection feature. These titles were complemented by fan-favourites from our Diamond Link™ series, including Mighty Cleopatra, Mighty Viking, and Mighty Buffalo.

There was a lot to take away from SBC this year but what really stood out to me was just how competitive this industry has become, with new



Image: Greentube

companies and suppliers entering the market almost daily. That makes it increasingly challenging to stand out, and, in my view, the key lies in finding the perfect balance between entertainment and win potential through games and themes that really resonate with your player base.

Another clear takeaway is the growing importance of differentiation beyond the game itself. Whether it's through branding, partnerships, or how you present yourself at events, companies that manage to create a distinctive identity are the ones that will stay top of mind in such a crowded landscape.

iGX: Next up for Greentube is a trip to Las Vegas for G2E. What is the key to keeping people engaged at booths for conferences and what is the recipe for a successful conference week?

IM: First of all, before you even get to the point of engaging with visitors, you need to attract them to your booth. You need to get eyeballs on your booth amongst hundreds of others. We therefore try to make sure our booths are aesthetically eye-catching without being a sensual overload, and offer visitors an experience, something to both attract and keep them at our booth long enough for us to get our key messages across.

We focus on creating interactive zones where visitors can explore our games hands-on, speak directly with our product experts and immerse themselves in the stories behind our titles. Of course, we also have plenty of surprises and entertaining add-ons to attract the casual passerby which helps us maintain energy and excitement throughout the event.

I don't think there is a single recipe for success, we look at each event as a new dish that is to be served, with its own special ingredients and secret sauce. But the foundations do stay the same – preparation, preparation and more preparation. Ensuring everyone involved in the organisation is fully briefed and knows every facet of our strategy, to ensure that our product experts can shine during the event. These events are also about celebrating the brand—from hosting networking events to showcasing our culture and values. G2E is not just a showcase; it's a statement of intent.

iGX: What will be your main focus at G2E this year?

IM: We recently went live in Pennsylvania and Delaware, meaning we're now live in all key jurisdictions for Greentube, so our main focus for G2E is to continue to solidify our footprint in the region. Thanks to our US studio, we're presenting a US-first strategy that highlights content tailored specifically for American players. We'll be unveiling new titles developed with local preferences in mind, and we're leveraging this opportunity to deepen relationships with key operators and explore new partnerships.

G2E is truly a fantastic chance for us to meet our US clients in person and strengthen these relationships and further build brand trust. It's about showing—not just telling—how we're ready to lead in this market.

iGX: In this in-between conference phase, what marketing industry trends are you noticing in the slots sector and what do they tell us about the industry?

IM: There really isn't a lot of time between SBC and G2E to do that much research into current trends as we're very much in G2E preparation mode at the moment, with our focus shifting from Europe to the US. So, for us, it's about understanding the customer expectations in that market and how they differ from Europe, and how we can translate that into our booth and our marketing activities. As a brand, we're not as well known in the US compared to Europe, so we're always looking at what games are gaining traction and what we can do to further increase our brand recognition in the region.

iGX: It's been a very busy period for Greentube, but what's coming up in the pipeline as we get close to the end of 2025?

IM: As we approach the final quarter of 2025, Greentube is gearing up for a strong finish. We have several high-profile releases scheduled, including a new Holiday-themed entry to our Piggy Prizes game family which we think players are going to love.

Beyond content, we're investing in AI-driven personalisation tools to increase the potential output of our marketing activities. And with G2E starting, we'll be using the event to preview some of our plans for 2026, which we're keeping close to our chest for the moment.

iGX: What are the biggest challenges for you as a marketer for a company with such a global scale and how do you overcome these?

IM: One of the biggest challenges we face as marketers operating on a global scale is managing the sheer complexity of our stakeholder landscape. With teams and audiences spread across different regions, we're constantly navigating cultural nuances while striving to maintain a unified brand identity.

This becomes especially demanding when organising large-scale exhibitions like ICE and SBC. Each event needs to be tailored to the specific market and product focus, which means we're often planning multiple events in parallel in order to meet the deadlines. With a lean team, that requires a high level of discipline, organisation, and cross-functional collaboration to ensure every detail is executed flawlessly.

Löwen Entertainment: Sitzkomfort mit Magic und Cosmo

Löwen Entertainment präsentiert mit Magic und Cosmo zwei neue Stuhlmodelle. „Der Stuhl Magic ist in der Variante mit Armlehnen in den nächsten zwölf Monaten exklusiv bei Löwen Entertainment erhältlich“, so das Binger Unternehmen.

In schwarzem Kunstleder gehalten, sorgen beim Magic goldfarbene Partien an den Seiten sowie den Armlehnen für farbliche Akzente. Die Sitzhöhe des Stuhls beträgt 68 bis 84 Zentimeter mit dem Fußteil „High“ und 57 bis 65 Zentimeter mit dem Fußteil „Low“. Die Rückseite des Stuhls kann mit einem Novoline- oder mit einem myNovo-VIP-Logo bestickt werden. Auch eine individuelle Bestickung ist möglich.



Der Stuhl Cosmo besticht durch eine geschwungene Sitzschale mit einer Sitzhöhe von 68 bis 74 Zentimeter in der Variante „High“ beziehungsweise 57 bis 65 Zentimeter in der Variante „Low“. Die dekorative Steppung auf der Rückenlehne setzt ein optisches Highlight. Bei beiden Stuhlmodellen sorgen ein chromfarbenes Fußteil mit Fußring und ein gusseiserner Fußsteller (55 Zentimeter Durchmesser) für einen stabilen Stand.

Die Rollen sind inklusive, bis zu 300 Kilogramm belastbar und für Teppiche und Hartböden geeignet. Das synthetische Leder der Stühle ist vom Hersteller speziell für die Anforderungen in Spielhallen entwickelt worden. Es ist strapazierfähig, scheuerbeständig und besonders pflegeleicht. Die Polsterung aus gegossenem Schaumstoff bietet zudem optimalen Sitzkomfort.

INNOVATING FAMILIARITY

Executives from **Bluberi**, **Novomatic Americas**, **Ainsworth** and **Konami** share insight into the latest supplier strategies and slot innovations on the casino floor.



ANDREW BURKE, CEO, *Bluberi*

As CEO, Burke is focused on building a high-quality and fun company that emphasizes creating innovative products, designed with the intent to create market disruption and entertainment for players. Burke instills the philosophy of pushing the company and himself to be 1% better every day, while creating a positive company culture that encourages employees to deliver their best work and have a good time doing it.



KATHLEEN MCLAUGHLIN, VP of Marketing, *Novomatic Americas*

McLaughlin brings decades of firsthand casino management and global gaming experience to her role as VP of Marketing at Novomatic Americas. She has worked across every facet of casino operations, from slot product strategy to floor optimization, in markets ranging from Las Vegas to Macau, to Tribal gaming and VGT routes in the US. That blend of local insight and international perspective gives her a unique lens on how innovation is shaping the North American gaming floor in 2025.



KEITH KRUCZYNSKI, VP of Studios – North America, *Ainsworth Game Technology*

Kruczynski is a veteran game designer and R&D executive, having spent 12 years as Director of Game Development for Bally Technologies – prior to stints at IGT and as the first-ever VP of Game Development for Gaming Arts.



ERIC SCHULTZ, VP of Studio Operations, *Konami Gaming*

Schultz was appointed VP of Studio Operations at Konami Gaming, Inc. in 2023, backed by more than 20 years' experience in casino games engineering. In this role, Schultz is responsible for the leadership and direction of Konami's overall game development operations, including new product development, future product enhancements and existing product lifecycle support. He oversees skilled engineering and design teams spanning game software development, art design, sound design, math design and project management.

Andrew Burke: 2025 has been a tale of iteration and reimagination on popular game mechanics more so than a story on innovation. If you study the highest-performing titles from 2025 you will see a lot of player-favorite elements including three pot fillers, cash on reels and hold and spin. Fortunately for both us and players, there are almost endless ways to reimagine and combine the best gaming mechanics. At Bluberi we spend a ton of effort trying to understand where the market is and how players respond to the latest and greatest mechanics. Our latest Devil's Lock & Shark Lock games called Slice n' Dice really highlights the Bluberi approach to creating products. In these games we have expanded upon and reimagined both cash on reels and hold & spins in a unique way. Presenting something familiar in a new and exciting way is what we believe results in the best products.

Kathleen McLaughlin: In competitive North American markets, where players are surrounded by choice, these cabinets function as anchor points. They are the high-end retail displays of the slot floor. The size, the light spill, the content choreography, they command attention in a mass of standard cabinets. From the operator's perspective, they set the tone for a section of the floor and create an environment where players settle in for longer sessions. From the player's perspective, ergonomics matter: reclined seating, expansive visuals, and intuitive control panels make the experience feel personal. When you get that balance between spectacle and comfort right, you are turning a five-minute trial into a thirty-minute or more session. These cabinets are not just innovations; they are floor economics and loyalty machines disguised as art. Feature rich gameplay economics, especially advanced multi-level progressives, are also on the rise. In the North American market, the strongest performers are combining cinematic animation, dynamic progressives and multiple trigger bonuses. Pair that with a well-known brand and you have a proven formula for both revenue and brand loyalty. Omnichannel and branded content continue to be powerful drivers, with games launching in both land-based and online formats to extend reach. Data integration is also accelerating, as live play data connects directly into loyalty programs, enabling a more tailored experience for players.

What types of innovation have been gaining popularity among retail slot players in 2025

Keith Kruczynski: We have been seeing a lot of perceived perception, such as the ever-popular three-pot games, for a while now, and they don't appear to be going away any time soon. Coming up with new ways to display that mechanic and enhance it in different ways, by adding more "pots," for instance, is proving to be a popular way to extend the life of those games. The Symbol Catch mechanic, where players collect a certain symbol to gain more rewards or larger rewards is gaining popularity, a few games featuring that come to mind and have been receiving a lot of attention lately. It has been around a very long time but when you find a new way to display it to players, such as with hold & spin, which we feature in quite a few of our games, we're able to give an older mechanic a breath of new life.

Eric Schultz: Digital entertainment across all industries is more interactive and dynamic, and the gaming industry is no exception. More than any time prior, players are focused on getting into bonus features that are new and engaging. Concurrently, games are becoming more character driven. We are seeing more whimsical characters that are closely intertwined with interactive features. An example of this is Konami Gaming's new What the Duck game. Animations of the game's cowboy duck character help anticipate, deliver and celebrate various feature events throughout the game play experience. Other game play innovations continue to iterate on popular "what you see is what you get" and "cash on reels" reward systems. These mechanics are appealing to players because they clearly communicate what they've won, and how. One recent release that leverages this type of mechanic is Buzzr, based on the vintage TV game show channel. Random credit prizes appear on the center reels, awarded in conjunction with a Buzzr symbol on reel one. If this occurs with credits on all center reels, players also have the chance to hit a bonus Card Sharks or Family Feud symbol on reel five, taking those credits into bonus events and boosting the prizes even higher.



Andrew Burke: In recent years there has been a major push to extend internal franchises. The results speak for themselves, but players are playing titles that they are familiar with. At Bluberi we are certainly leaning into and building our own brands. This includes our successful Devil's Lock franchise as well as our newest hits including Timber Jack and Honey Bomb. In many ways extending a brand just makes good business sense. Our teams can start from a place where we already have a strong player recognized theme and can focus on just enhancing the play experience for players. However, it is important to have a balanced approach between extending existing brands and creating new ones. It's a fine line and it's hard to predict when players will be fatigued on a specific theme. We are committed to our biggest brands but are also working on several new concepts at any given time. We have recently released three great games in Raging Red, Dancing Pots and Berry Bucks. All these themes contain the elements that would make them ripe candidates for extension.



Kathleen McLaughlin: There is always a balance between innovation and familiarity. New titles, especially those on premium cabinets, create buzz and pull in players looking for the latest experience. But reintroducing proven titles, especially with strong IP, taps into nostalgia and reduces rollout risk, provided the math model is strong. The most notable floors use a measured hybrid strategy. You anchor with titles players know will deliver, then inject standout new games to maintain excitement and drive interest. No matter how beautiful the hardware is or how strong the brand, the mall drives the success and performance dictates footprint.

Is there a strategy behind choosing to develop completely new slot titles for casino floors versus re-introducing a more familiar game



Keith Kruczynski: Here at Ainsworth, we follow the 80/20 rule. 80% of our games are based on previous successes, whether ours or something we have seen in the field that resonates with players, and where we can maybe incorporate a popular feature into a new game that we are creating. We try to make around 20% of our games completely new and innovative. We have seen some success with that, such as Dragon Legacy. We debuted that game with a feature that has never been seen before at IGA this year, and plan to show an improved version of it at G2E. Also, the way our Neon's Bonus Blast interacts with its sign package is completely new and unseen on casino floors. Another focus of ours has been brand extension; taking some of our most popular and recognizable titles and adding on to them with new games that combine some of what made the initial game popular but add some new art and features to take it to the next level. You'll see that at this year's G2E with games such as San Fa Fortunes and new titles under our Triple Treasures family, for instance.



Eric Schultz: It is very common to see recognizable game brands return, because everyone benefits. Players enjoy it because it's familiar, but with some new components added. Casino properties appreciate it, because it's less risky than an unknown theme. And game companies like it because it allows them to dip into their existing intellectual property while providing something new for the market. At the same time, it is important to maintain a healthy balance of entirely new game creations and brand extensions. Leaning too heavily in either direction is a risk, either of game product obscurity or game product oversaturation.



Andrew Burke: Increasingly we are seeing a future where all of our games will end up online. Today it is not a one-for-one transfer because of the effort required to port our games from land-based to online. As a result of that effort, we only try and send our best products online. At our core at Bluberi we believe in quality, and we just won't do something if we don't see a path to quality. As a result of this commitment to quality we have been very focused on our land-based business, but we are not naïve. We believe online will be a much bigger part of our strategy over the next several years.



Kathleen McLaughlin: Without question. In today's environment, game launch is rarely land-based only. Operators want that title to appear online quickly so they can leverage brand momentum. Increasingly, content that begins on online channels is being adapted for the physical floor. Piggy Prizes, Wand of Riches, is an example of our Green Tube online performance translating into a land-based product rollout for Novomatic Americas. This approach is particularly effective for brand reinforcement and player loyalty marketing, where player engagement spans both in-person and remote channels. It is about giving players the same entertainment value and brand experience, whether they are sitting in a VIP chair on the casino floor or playing from home.

When creating these new titles, has it become a requirement to integrate land-based games into an online format in recent years?



Keith Kruczynski: It is not a requirement to integrate land-based games into an online format, but it's definitely a good practice. For a company of our size, doing that makes us more competitive. It is a good way to introduce our titles to a whole new audience, and if it catches on in the online space, maybe when those players go to a brick-and-mortar casino they will recognize it and play it there, too. We can also gather a significant level of data from online games to let us know if a title is resonating, and that can help us create better games for both markets. We saw a lot of success with the omnichannel debut of our San Fa games last year, even being honored for Top Performing Omni-Channel Slot Game, so we are focusing on bringing more of our games to both mediums.



Eric Schultz: Online delivery is a requirement to consider as we're developing games. To accommodate the different form factors, our development teams are continually exploring new design solutions. Land-based media is innovating at the same time as we're looking to accommodate online delivery, which requires additional planning and development on our part, in order to translate that unique land-based content to online channels. But it's a challenge that is manageable and we're targeting our first omnichannel release with K-Pow! Pig Brilliant Buddha. Even beyond the new titles, Konami has a long legacy of popular land-based slot content, spanning hundreds of themes over two decades. We've only just scratched the surface on the amount of proven popular content we have available to deliver online. The more top titles we bring to more formats, the greater the opportunity for players to enjoy their favorite slots however they enjoy.

Andrew Burke: Operators continue to want variety in their products. At Bluberi, variety is extremely important to us. We look at each product roadmap like a portfolio of investments the business is making. Like all good investment portfolios, you want to be diversified. This gives you the best chance of creating games that will resonate with players when competing with a limited pool of resources. Our competitors invest several times more in R&D, but rather than matching their spend, we focus our resources on delivering exceptional quality and bringing truly unique games to market. If we bring products that are effectively the same as our competitors, we are giving our operators very little in the way of variety.

Kathleen McLaughlin: Performance has always been the baseline. If a game does not meet stringent performance targets, it does not stay on the floor. That is true in North America and in all markets. We have seen the minimum performance threshold continue to rise; and what continues to evolve is the demand for acquisition flexibility. Operators want sourcing models that fit their capital strategies: a mix of purchase, lease and lease-to-own. They expect seamless integration with loyalty systems and backend analytics so they can track and personalize play in real time. And we have seen a shift in bet structures, with floors offering a broader range from penny to dollar-plus denominations in the same cabinet to appeal to both casual and high-limit players. The other thing that has evolved are more LED display designs with transparent LED displays and synchronized, lower profile bank backdrops that transform a game by delivering game centric content right at player level to keep sightlines clean. These shifts reflect a heightened, more sophisticated and data-driven approach to floor management in North America. Operators here are looking for innovation that is not just flashy, but measurable in performance and adaptable to market demands. That is the sweet spot where long-term loyalty and profitability meet.

Are there ways in which specific requests from the operator have shifted in 2025

Keith Kruczynski: Operator requests have not changed, per se, but we have seen more variants in what they are looking for. Player groups and tastes can vary widely from market to market, and even from casino to casino within a specific market. Operators know their players very well and are looking for games that will resonate and excite their specific players. We do our best to honor those requests and design games that will appeal to a wide variety of players. We have recently been performing some focus groups in different markets for that reason: to get a better understanding of what we are doing well and what we can do better, what players across the country like and don't like in a game, so we can create games that will make players happy and operators successful.

Eric Schultz: Working closely with our casino customers, we often receive feedback that directly impacts product. Game configuration options are one of the biggest areas we hear feedback from operators, because market appetite for different setups can evolve rather quickly. This can include bet level, denomination or progressive reset options, to name a few.

This feedback is one of many reasons we value our close relationships with casino customers, to help inform future products, so that we're set up for success and it ultimately benefits all involved – properties, players and the manufacturer.

WHAT'S NEW?

Gaming America assesses new products hitting the casino floor, featuring Galaxy Gaming, Interblock and Ainsworth.

AINSWORTH – NEON'S BONUS BLAST

Ainsworth is proud to present Neon's Bonus Blast, the company's first premium game. The game's hero, a little green alien named Neon, takes players through three separately themed worlds – Blazen, Lumina and Geodia – filled with unique and attractive art to truly set the tone in each theme. Each game is complete with bonus features and fun animations, including four progressive jackpots and Neon's friend, EX-7, a robot who will come out occasionally to expand the player's reels to either four, five, or six high, giving them more chances to win.

When credit symbols appear on the reels along with one Neon symbol, Neon will start blasting symbols to increase the player's credit rewards, and if the reels have expanded, that means even more chances to blast up high rewards, maybe even a massive win! In the Bonus Blast feature – a truly unique feature to the industry – the Neon character can send a signal to the attractive custom sign package, blasting up the player's rewards to make their wins even bigger.

Neon has two blasters – a red one and a blue one – which will fill up as the game

is played. When one or both blasters are full, the Bonus Blast feature will trigger, awarding the player free spins with a twist! The Red Blast adds red symbols to the reels, which, when landed, will lock in a prize for every subsequent spin. The Blue Blast adds a blue symbol, which will add credit amounts to all other prizes on the screen, including

the red symbol, if both Blue and Red have been triggered at the same time.

This Blast feature, combined with the spectacle created on the sign package, adds a level of wonder and anticipation to this game, attracting players from around the floor to come over and give Neon's Bonus Blast a try! ◀

