



Rethinking the Player Lifecycle: Starting with the Anonymous User

Karri Paavilainen, Vice President of Player Marketing Services, Brightstar Lottery, discusses anonymous players, a meaningful starting point for future growth for lotteries.

Who are the players lotteries may be overlooking today, and why do they matter?

Karri Paavilainen: As much as 60% of the active app audience is made up of anonymous users in some cases. Anonymous users represent a major untapped growth opportunity in lottery websites and mobile apps. They visit regularly, check winning numbers, browse games and promo information, yet they remain outside of traditional CRM programs because they have not registered or shared contact details. Operators miss valuable opportunities to increase conversion and drive incremental revenue growth if they ignore the potential from this audience.

What is the core challenge with relying on traditional CRM strategies?

Traditional CRM strategies depend heavily on email and SMS. But as email opt-in rates sit between

50-60% among registered players, and registered players make up only 40% of all digital visitors, lotteries are effectively only reaching 25% of their digital audience potential. The rest remain active, interested, and largely non-addressable with a traditional CRM approach.

How should lotteries rethink anonymous players within the player lifecycle?

Lotteries should view anonymous users as the first stage, as a prospect instead of a non-addressable audience. That shift opens the door to engaging players earlier, building trust over time, and guiding them toward registration through relevance rather than pressure. It means lifecycle strategy should begin before identity capture. When lotteries engage anonymous players with relevant, behavior-based personalized CRM messaging, they create a smoother path from visit to registration, then onward to deeper engagement and monetization.

If players are anonymous, what can lotteries still learn about them, and how can they segment them?

Even without personally identifiable information, lotteries can see meaningful behavioral signals, such as which screens players visit, how often they return, which games they explore, and how their activity changes over time. Those patterns provide a solid foundation for segmentation. Lotteries can segment by behavior. For example, a player who checks Powerball numbers several times a month shows different intent than someone who occasionally browses scratch games. That difference can shape messaging, content, and timing, even before registration.

Which channels are most effective for engaging anonymous players, and why?

Mobile-first channels are especially effective. In-app messaging can reach active users in the moments that

matter, on the screens they are already viewing. Push notifications also play a significant role once a player opts in, especially for timely updates. In-app messaging creates a direct path to engagement without requiring email collection first. It allows lotteries to educate, assist, and guide players while interest is already high. That makes communication feel timely, useful, and more likely to earn attention.

How should lotteries approach registration prompts for anonymous players?

Registration should be treated as an earned next step. Instead of relying on one-time prompts, lotteries can build contextual journeys that deliver value first. When players see relevance and benefit, they are more likely to register willingly.

What results can this approach deliver, and do anonymous players respond to messaging?

The impact is significant and can be measured across the conversion

funnel. In one North American lottery, an in-app message aimed at gaining push notification opt-ins converted 9.8% of previously opted-out players. Of those who converted, 33% were anonymous at the time. In another North American lottery, 51% of all in-app message clicks came from anonymous players, and 53% of all push notification openers were anonymous. These examples show the impact when lotteries start to build engagement with the anonymous users.

How does this approach improve the health of the player funnel and create downstream benefits?

Over time, registrations increase while the anonymous audience stops expanding out of proportion. That balance suggests players are progressing through the journey rather than stalling at the top of the funnel. This is an indicator of lottery being able to nurture deeper relationships with its players. In some jurisdictions, push-eligible audiences now exceed email-eligible ones, which signals that players see clear value in timely, mobile-first communication.

How does segmentation improve messaging performance, and why does this matter for long-term lottery growth?

Segmented lifecycle journeys outperform broad, generic campaigns because they personalize communication to player behavior and intent. That improves efficiency, reduces unnecessary sends, lowers opt-outs, and helps lotteries to engage players more effectively.



Anonymous players are not a gap in the system. They are the starting point of future growth. How lotteries engage them shapes registration, channel eligibility, and long-term revenue. When that early stage is handled with precision, growth becomes more consistent, scalable, and sustainable.

The path forward is clear: engage players based on behavior before asking for identity. When lotteries treat anonymous engagement as a strategic lifecycle stage, they unlock a stronger foundation for communication, conversion, and long-term player retention.

Karri Paavilainen brings more than 20 years of experience in the lottery industry. He has experience with both lottery operator and vendor roles, where he has developed strong expertise in digital growth strategy and execution. His experience spans strategy development, player analytics, product development, and marketing. Karri leads Brightstar’s global Player Marketing Services and Advanced Analytics and AI teams, helping iLottery customers enhance B-to-C digital player engagement across acquisition, activation, retention, and player experience optimization.



Considering anonymous players has a positive impact on the conversion funnel.