

The iPod of egaming

From my experience being in the egaming industry for almost 15 years, the focus is just on attracting new players and not on keeping them. The recipe so far for online operators to be successful is to make tons of TV advertising and have big bonus offers.

This needs to change and the industry needs to put more focus on keeping the player and making their experience so great that they don't want to go to another site and play. The change has started but is extremely slow. For example, when I started out, I was one of the few in the industry working with user experience – today, almost all egaming companies have UX designers on their team. I believe that it is not enough, and we can and should do more.

Taking ownership

In a 2003 *New York Times* interview discussing the iPod, Steve Jobs said: “Most people make the mistake of thinking design is what it [a product] looks like. People think it's this veneer – that the designers are handed this box and told, ‘Make it look good!’ That's not what we think design is. It's not just what it looks like and feels like. Design is how it works.”

The article also discussed the idea that Apple was not ahead of the curve in its approach to the iPod, as it did not immediately recognise the power of music in digital form and instead focused on the design and simplicity of the product over its ultimate purpose.

My take on what operators need to do next is to start owning the complete player experience. We need to think about every interaction between the player and the operator. Everything from attracting the player, to having them sign up, to placing the bet and their movements after that no matter what

device they use. We need to create some great designs.

The next step

- 1. Hire a chief experience officer (CXO):** The CXO needs to focus on every touch point between the player and the operator, and the experiences they offer. I, for one, am surprised that how we interact with slot machines differ depending on the supplier. It should be the same interaction no matter the supplier. The operator needs to own that touch point.
- 2. Do not work in silos:** Today, many operators are divided into silos and the sportsbook doesn't know what the bingo or casino sections are doing. We need to address this and turn it into a seamless experience for the player.
- 3. Know why your players play:** People play for different reasons; some play to win big, some want to socialise and have fun, while others just want to relax. We need to know our players and create great experiences for them.
- 4. Be bold and innovate:** Innovation is low within the egaming industry. Instead of promoting hygiene factors like registration, deposits and withdrawals, we need to create new experiences to attract new target groups and players.
- 5. Every detail counts:** Your player experience is as good as your worst detail. For example, a “Sign up” button should have the same label no matter what device/channel we are using, and not be called ‘Sign up’ on one and then ‘Create account’ on another.

The successful operator in the future is the one that understands what Steve Jobs said in 2003. Design is not just the look and feel, it is the way it works, and especially how it works together, no matter the touch point. ●

Senior UX designer and consultant Staffan Schröder feels it is time operators shifted their focus onto design to retain customers



Bio

Staffan Schröder is a senior user experience designer and design sprint facilitator at inUse, with a special focus on egaming and user experience. He previously worked at Boss Media as head of user experience and portal product manager.