

A Campaign so successful, it had to be pulled



Best Short Term Activation

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Starcom

ENTRY DETAILS

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Category

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How The National Lottery sold out all 500k Millionaire Raffle tickets for the first time ever, with a week to spare and 24% less budget YoY.



BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES

The National Lottery closes out the year doing what they do best, making a lucky player a new millionaire. First introduced in 2008, the Millionaire Raffle on New Year's Eve has become a **seasonal stalwart** of the National Lottery's game portfolio and given its timing, it also plays a vital role in realising annual business commercial goals.

At €25 per ticket, Millionaire Raffle is at the most premium end of the Lottery market but as it's a fixed odds game with a limited number of tickets for sale, it does have a unique appeal. Given it is only on sale for 6 weeks preceding the draw, it falls into the peak Christmas retail period. The **seasonal gifting** context considerably widens its competitive set into many other sectors outside of the Lottery or gambling categories; it competes with a bottle of wine for a colleague, flowers for a neighbour and a very broad range of stocking fillers for a partner or friend.

As the Christmas gifting market is so broad, the target audience of all adults 18+ reflects this. Gaining attention within this cluttered period is difficult but given the year, there was an extra push from brands to gush with **sentimentality to cut through**. 2020 also threw up additional challenges for National Lottery in the gifting category with **no option to gift tickets online** and retail restrictions for much of the year. The Irish non-essential retail sector closed due to government restrictions from October to December 2nd, resulting in a surge in online gift shopping (**54% of purchasing online, double vs previous year**) and shopping behaviour moved much earlier to meet postal deadlines (November retail spend +1% YoY in November despite closures).

**MILLIONAIRE RAFFLE
ONE GUARANTEED
MILLIONAIRE**

IT COULD BE YOU



BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES

Over the years, several changes to the game impacted on its appeal and performance, from an **increase in the number of tickets available** from 300,000 to 500,000 in 2015, to a 25% increase in ticket price in 2017. Whilst a revision to the prize structure in 2019 allowed the brand to call out the **'best odds ever'** in communications, even that coupled with the addition of the digital sales channel did not get The National Lottery to the holy grail of selling out all 500,000 tickets available.

The marketing objective was to **sell out the game**, but with no new news in 2020 it wasn't possible to use any of the superlatives that often win in this category like having 'the best odds ever'. That was all done in 2019 and nothing had changed. The communications would need to **cut through** and **encourage more players** to take part by convincing them that they could win, with no additional distribution or new product news.

Objective 1

Sell out all 500,000 Millionaire Raffle tickets by December 31st (previous highest sales of 460k).

Objective 2

Achieve sales of €12.5 million over the sales period.

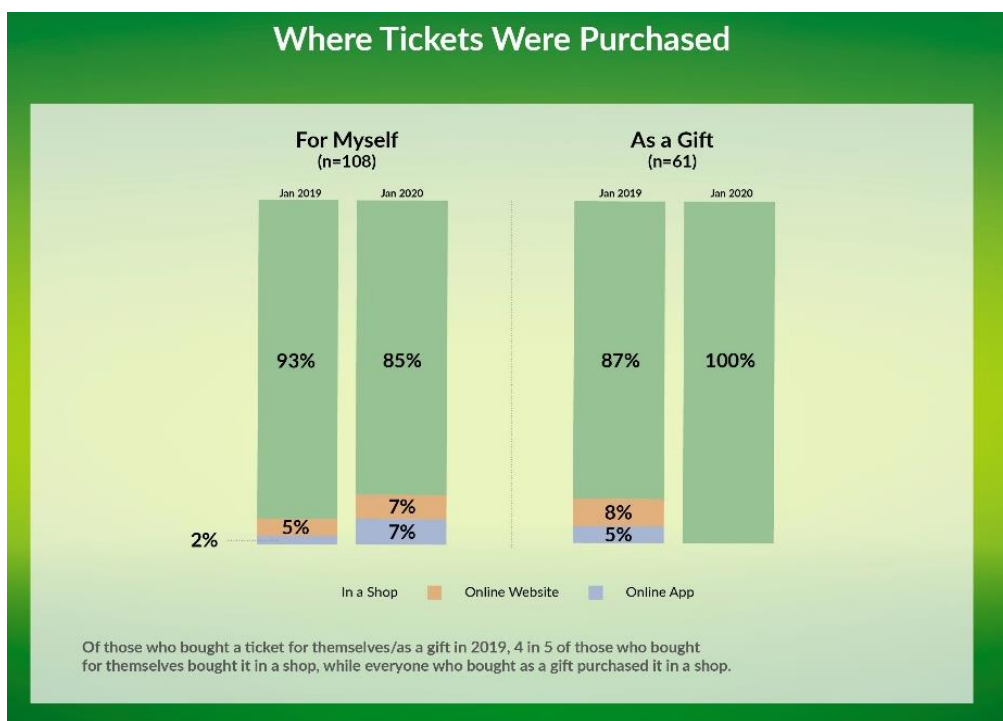
Objective 3

Increase Win Belief scores (as tracked by Red C).

With **24% less media budget**, severe government restrictions on retail in place and no new product news, Millionaire Raffle comms needed to drive desire like never before and combat negative perceptions around Win Belief to achieve a sell-out.

Each year, there is a steady incline in Millionaire Raffle ticket sales in the run up to Christmas, with a **significant spike** on the **last shopping day before Christmas**. With roughly **60%*** of sales generated in the **two weeks before Christmas**, it was clear that people buy tickets with Christmas gifts for their loved ones in mind. (*average sales 2016-2019 inclusive, also depicted in Red C research below)

Post-Christmas Day, as the New Year's Eve draw date neared, there was another big spike in sales, and disproportionately so in online and app sales which told us that people also **wanted to be in with a chance to win themselves**, as there were technical limitations to the website that meant there was no option for gifting tickets purchased online



We knew we could do more to leverage these consumer insights to **drive more sales** than ever. We needed to entice more people to purchase Millionaire Raffle tickets as Christmas gifts for others, and **not forgetting** for themselves.

THE STRATEGY

Across draw-based games like Lotto, National Lottery saw more of a **shift towards online play** (9% to 14.6% share YoY), outstripping the predicted growth trajectory of the channel. While this offered an **opportunity to cross-sell** the Millionaire Raffle game to the growing online player base, gifting online is not possible as players need to be registered with their own account and 2020 was no different. Delivering the sales target required a big push in physical retail sales, where **90% of sales** had been generated in the previous year.

The first critical part of the strategy was to **firmly establish** Millionaire Raffle as an ideal **Christmas gift** for your loved ones and for yourself, one you would go out of your way to buy in-store.

To achieve this, we needed to create:

1. **DESIRE to buy**
2. **PERMISSION to gift**
3. **BELIEF in winning**

Millionaire Raffle is your best chance to win a million euro versus any other National Lottery game. This creates a **tension for the gifter**: could they be unknowingly handing over a million-euro gift on Christmas Day?

Our strategic idea was born of this insight: **“With a million euro guaranteed, this is the gift you may not want to give away.”**

It was clear from previous research that despite the odds being better in this game, people still didn't believe that they could win, and that was a major barrier to play. For the audience to feel the tension of possibly giving away a million euro, they needed to believe that the ticket really had a chance to win that million. **Win belief** was the major barrier identified in 2019 research and was the second crucial part of our strategy; reinforcing the chances to win at a high frequency.

THE PLAN

In order to create both **'desire to buy'** and **'permission to gift'**, communicating the key benefits of the game in a charming and compelling way was imperative. The lead TVC entitled 'The Handover' told the story of Clodagh and Danny exchanging gifts at a family Christmas gathering. In sharp contrast with other Christmas TV advertising, which tends to lean on the nostalgia and generosity of the season, **"The Handover"** contradicted these warm fuzzy feelings by dramatizing the angst that lies at the heart of the proposition.

If you're going to give the guaranteed chance of winning a million to someone special, maybe that special someone should be you?



The comical tug-a-war that ensued between the two lead characters brought the attention of the viewer to the object of their desire, the Millionaire Raffle ticket in its branded gifting envelope. Bucking the trend of media investment moving towards online channels, we chose to **lead with TV** and Millionaire Raffle **investment in TV increased by 171% YoY** despite the 24% budget decrease overall.

Throughout the campaign, we utilised the unique strengths of broadcast ATL channels such as TV, OOH & Radio to drive mass awareness and comprehension of the game prize structure, as well as a tactical presence across Press, Display, Search and Social to drive ticket sales.

Our TV flighting was key when it came to planning. We needed to ensure we had strong coverage from the 1st of December – 24th December as we knew sales during this period were crucial. We planned a heavy weight 4+ campaign across TV and front weighted the activity pre-Christmas. We delivered a **4+51%** for this campaign against **ads 25-44**, and our programme access for this campaign was instrumental in helping us deliver our coverage.

We were able to negotiate significant value within this campaign, and secured a spot within the strangely timed 2020 December **All Ireland Final** within our schedule which should have cost us €25k.

As a seasonal product it was important to lean into the weight of the **Masterbrand** via use of **distinctive brand assets** which are the cornerstone of The National Lottery's communications. This included a Christmas themed set immersed in the brand's green world (**47% brand recognition**, as per Red C tracker) and a re-orchestrated Christmas version of the well-recognised Elvis track "If I Can Dream" (**87% brand recognition**, as per Red C tracker). '**The Handover**' was designed to deliver broad awareness of the product tension and land the gifting/self-gifting proposition via heavy weight **TV, VOD and OOH** to entertain people and capture attention (75% of total budget).

If I could dream



87% Brand Recognition

There was also a specific budget designed to **drive 'belief in winning'** by communicating the rational benefits of a fixed odds game via high frequency Radio, Digital Audio & Social. Print & Digital POS reminded shoppers to pick up their tickets at points of purchase.

Online and in-app sales were supported via performance Display, Paid Search, Email Marketing, on-site & in-app banners, with messaging focused on a call-to-action for self-purchases.

THE RESULTS

The Millionaire Raffle didn't just sell-out all **500,000 tickets** for the first time, it did so **with a week to spare**, on December 24th. The final phase of the comms strategy to create urgency, before the draw through countdown messages wasn't even needed in 2020. In a year that the brand grew digital channel share significantly, it was retail that drove the last-minute Millionaire Raffle frenzy, processing **€5,000 sales per minute** during periods of Christmas Eve

This level of product interest was reflected in research, with **59%** of people saying they felt that Millionaire Raffle was getting **more popular** despite no new news and severe restrictions on creating talkability due to a country-wide lockdown during this time. This popularity was clearly reflected in the sales for the period, creating an **unprecedented peak** in the days before Christmas

Millionaire Raffle sales by day



THE RESULTS

16% of the Irish population were involved in playing the game by buying for themselves and/or receiving it as a gift. The broad reach and general likeability of 'The Handover' set up the audience tension.



The combination of emotional connection to the possibility of winning, reinforced with high frequency rational prize value messaging **increased win belief in the game; the highest scoring product** in the National Lottery portfolio for Win Belief.

Win Belief Graph



THE RESULTS

A note on considerations around other factors:

The National Lottery's increased emphasis on investing in **brand building, changing perception** and **establishing distinctive brand assets** from mid-year, created an improved foundation to execute the 2020 Millionaire Raffle campaign. The insights and assets were all leveraged as part of the campaign and no doubt contributed to its success.

While **digital play grew** during the pandemic (from 9% of total to 15%), the primary sales channels was still retail where shopping missions declined significantly during lockdown periods. This was further impacted due to the Millionaire Raffle product not being available for online gifting, during a Christmas shopping period where online shopping doubled YoY.

The short-term revenue: **net media investment was 27:1**, up from the 18.6:1 in 2019 for the same period and product due to the increased sales, taking into account a budget 24% lower than 2019

27:1

Short term ROI – up from 18:6:1 in 2019

15%

Digital sales – up from 9% in 2019

500k

Tickets sold out by the 24th Dec

CLIENT INVOLVEMENT

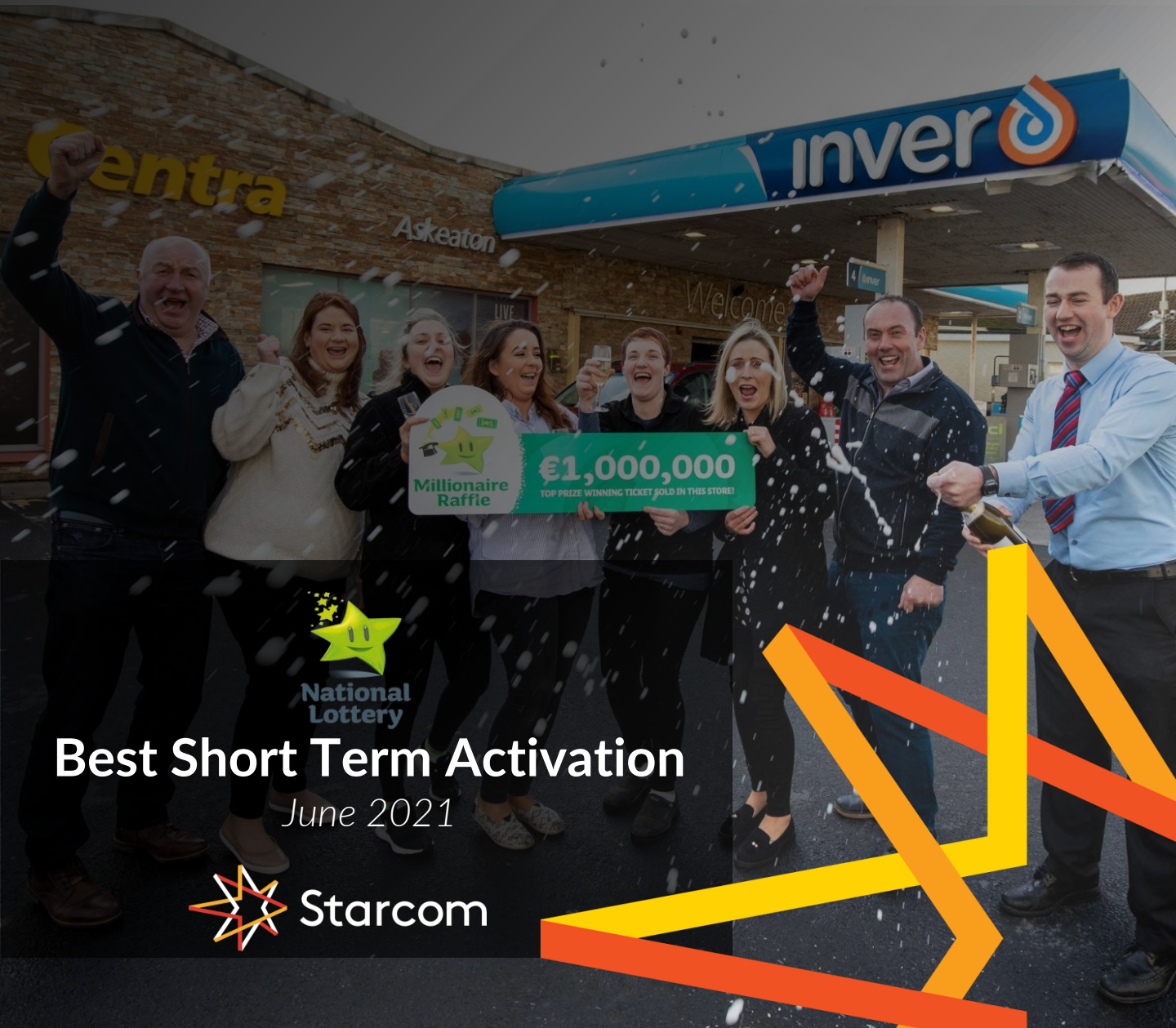


'As a once per year seasonal product, advertising is critical to the success of Millionaire Raffle. I am a strong believer that sales activation campaigns should still be entertaining, especially in this category and there is no more effective medium than video to achieve this. In 2020 we created a new ad that dramatised the product tension of whether to gift a ticket or not and doubled down on our investment in video; both longer form 40' TV and shorter entertaining 20' footage for VOD and frequency building. We also ensured brand linkage through distinctive assets built up through our other communications throughout the year and featured the product envelope. The results speak for themselves; the first time we've ever sold all 500,000 tickets.'

Paul Dervan,
CMO The National Lottery



Thank You



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