

# IGNITINGPLAY

## GSA Case Study

Casino Charlevoix debuted its Volcan multimedia gaming experience in June.



## Promise Delivered G2S gives Loto-Quebec tool to offer new multimedia player experience

About three years ago, the Société des casinos du Québec (SCQ), a subsidiary of Loto-Québec put forth a vision for the future of its casinos. Integral to that vision was the desire to create a more immersive gaming experience for players. “We really wanted to create an environment where players would see more winning, and the game could become part of the atmosphere within the casino,” said Marie-Josée Parent, manager of new product development for the SCQ. SCQ approached WMS, and the challenge consisted of taking an existing slot machine game, Jackpot Explosion, and projecting winning jackpots on giant screens.

On June 22, Volcan was launched at Casino Charlevoix in La Malbaie, Québec. The challenge consisted of taking an existing slot machine game, WMS’ Jackpot Explosion®, and projecting winning jackpots onto giant screens. In all, 28 slot machines with 14 new themes are connected to each other and to a multimedia installation set up in 2010 by Moment Factory. As the jackpot grows, the volcano’s lava level rises and rumbling begins, fueling player excitement. When a player wins one of the top jackpots, the volcano erupts, producing spectacular visual effects on a 27-screen video wall and four video

projection surfaces on the ceiling of the main gaming area. SCQ Project Manager Marc Santerre enlisted the help of the SCQ multimedia team and Ingenio, Loto-Québec’s R&D arm, to create the unique, immersive experience.

It was no simple feat, and a key issue was how to get real-time information from the game to the system to signal changes in the multimedia display, such as rising lava levels.

The solution? Gaming Standards Association’s Game-to-System (G2S) protocol. “We needed the information from the game to figure out how to connect to the environment,” said Valérie

## Igniting Play G2S enables casino to develop unique product

Messier, project manager, Ingenio. “The most important issue for this project was to take the game inside the machine and bring it out to the multimedia experience, to the whole ceiling of the casino in that area, to see where the progressive was, in what state and in what amount, and to see which machine has won.” Ingenio discussed the issue with WMS, which suggested using the G2S protocol and that Ingenio might want to enlist Reno-based Radical Blue Gaming to develop a G2S engine application to facilitate the plans. With Radical Blue’s product and an application from Ingenio merged to a visual recognition technology to analyze the information and trigger the system in the casino, the problem was solved. Without G2S, “it would have been a lot harder to do this,” Messier said. “There were some solutions that we thought about, but this was the easiest possible solution.” As the first tool created by an operator using G2S, it stands as a landmark achievement. “Casino de Charlevoix wanted to create a promotion with advanced multimedia presentations that would immediately and dynamically communicate directly to customers throughout the casino on large display monitors,” said Russ Ristine, Radical Blue president. “They needed information from existing WMS slot machines to make the promotion work, so we helped them tap into the existing G2S port on the game, created a simple engine application that connected to their new promotion application, and in less than 90 days, their goal was realized.” The application empowers Casino de Charlevoix to communicate directly to customers with a wide range of messages – from jackpots to available seating – all designed to generate excitement and drive traffic. SCQ and Ingenio couldn’t be more pleased with the results, Parent said. “This is one of the first products from our vision that has been implemented, and we’re getting fantastic comments from our customers who are really enjoying the immersive state.” Seats at the games are the first to fill



The Volcan video display at Casino Charlevoix showcases four jackpot levels.

when the casino opens and the last to empty at closing time, she said. Parent noted the casino really wanted to do something new for its customers. “Obviously our customers go to other casinos, and we wanted to create that immersive environment that they don’t see when they visit other venues.” Volcan was introduced during the high summer season. “When the summer season ends and it becomes much calmer, we are looking forward to see how the customers react and if it’s still the hottest game and so forth,” Parent said, noting the games generate much more than house average. In fact, after only 75 days, the 28 units, which represents 3 percent of the slot floor, generated an 11 percent lift. Volcan also has created a new social element in the casino. “Usually when customers play a game and they win, no one knows. Now it’s like a social event. They’re celebrating together.” The whole multimedia experience ups the entertainment quotient throughout the casino, Parent noted. “You have the trembling of the volcano when it starts to rise, and it’s not just the image, it’s also the audio effects, that create excitement among the players.” It’s only the beginning. “For us, it’s a stepping stone to move forward,” she said, noting plans are in the works to go live before the end of the year with similar immersive experiences at two sister casinos in Québec, Casino de Montréal and Casino du Lac-Leamy.

The landmark use of G2S is getting noticed, as it produces tangible results and benefits, Santerre said. “I think it’s a big step for the industry.” In the past, standards have been something that the industry talks a lot about. “We see them on paper, but we don’t necessarily see it happening,” he said. “The great satisfaction at Loto-Québec is that we’re making it happen. We’re very proud of that.” G2S is key to helping casino operators and gaming developers unlock innovation. “The interesting thing about G2S is that once the game supports the protocol, it becomes easy to write applications for a casino or even to have the casino write the applications that work with the games directly,” Ristine said. In a few years, he predicted, the Global Gaming Expo may offer some very different booths next to traditional vendors. “Where we see the industry going is that maybe three to five years from now, an operator will be able to walk down the aisles and see different types of applications that they can try out in their casinos.”

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