

Simon Reynolds adds a Buzz to the Gambling Business Group Board

There's no shortage of talent and knowledge in the industry - and the Gambling Business Group have just recruited one of those pioneering figures to join its Board, having been a member of GBG for many years. Simon Reynolds, chief compliance officer at Buzz Bingo, has accepted the invitation to lend his experience and honed operational eye to the trade body's policy making forum.

And it's an addition the GBG is particularly happy with. Peter Hannibal, Chief Executive of the trade group, welcomed Reynolds to the fold, stating: "Simon brings a wide and varied skill set to add to the talent and experience we have on the GBG Board. For thirty years he has had led compliance and regulatory teams in bingo, casino and betting in both retail and digital environments and for global big hitting enterprises. We're really pleased that he has accepted the invitation to join the Board."

Reynolds, as you will read from his interview in Coinslot this week, is enjoying his time at Buzz Bingo - the company is one of those with a particularly progressive outlook and one which has ambitious moves going on in its high street venues.

Hannibal is enthused by this: "Buzz Bingo provides a valuable insight not just to the bingo sector, but also the positioning of gambling businesses and the value it adds to the high street. Simon's compliance background will be an invaluable steer to our work with the IOL and the Commission."

Reynolds, an industry intellect with both a degree and a post graduate diploma, also serves as a non-executive director of Gamstop which operates the UK's foremost self-exclusion tool for players looking to control their online playing patterns. And his career roll call also includes the GVC Group, Gala Bingo, Gala Casino, Ladbrokes and Coral.

Hannibal concluded: "The Gambling Business Group has expanded over the years with so many members bringing new perspectives into industry thinking. Compliance and regulatory expertise has been a direction of travel for government, regulators and licensing authorities for sometime now, and we have been able to welcome new companies that understand how business can only grow, and grow successfully, if they master compliance. The likes of Simon help us to ensure we ask the right questions, provide the right answers and make the right challenges to changes being proposed."

TRADE GROUPS

There's a buzz at the Gambling Business Group this past few weeks as **Simon Reynolds**, chief compliance officer at innovative operator Buzz Bingo, accepts the invitation to join the trade body's Board. Here, Reynolds talks to Coinslot about what he hopes to bring to the GBG table, and how the Buzz business is raising the bar.



Simon Reynolds: "Buzz's strengths are its mix of quality venues and creating online experiences that recreate the entertainment delivered by our hosts when playing remotely"

Coinslot: Congratulations on your appointment to the Board at the GBG. What are you hoping to bring to the post?

Simon Reynolds: Buzz Bingo is the largest retail bingo operator in the Britain with an unrivalled omni-channel and digital offering that has won several awards in the last few years. I hope to bring the knowledge, skill set and experience of Buzz to GBG which I personally have been a member of for many years.

Coinslot: When it comes to championing gaming and gambling businesses on the high street, you have been right at the centre of the cause. What's your vision for the future of the UK high street - and more importantly the role that businesses such as Buzz Bingo can play in driving growth?



Simon Reynolds: Buzz's strengths are its mix of quality venues and creating online experiences that recreate the entertainment delivered by our hosts when playing remotely.

Our 5-year plan is to invest in our venues to create even more welcoming and fun customer experiences.

Take our Borehamwood club which we transferred across the road from a 20k sq ft site to a 3k sq ft 'bingo lounge' format directly on the high street. We have equipped it with more modern cafe style seating, seamless tech for our live streamed video bingo as well as a compact slots room.

The venue is situated right on the high street and brings the community closer together in a safe and social space that not only fits seamlessly into the environment, but also revives shopping areas by increasing footfall to surrounding shops.

We'll learn from this and roll out more high street bingo concepts over time to maintain bingo communities and revive the culture of bingo on the high street.

Coinslot: Buzz is a perfect example of opening up shuttered venues, investing six figure sums in refurbishing sites, bringing new footfall to shopping areas and delivering a community-oriented business to a town. With this kind of business model being replicated to varying degrees across our sector, why are we facing resistance, often misguided, from some local councillors?

Simon Reynolds: At Buzz we are absolutely committed to creating safe spaces where members of our community can be together and enjoy a game of bingo or other social entertainment.

Constant screen time means more people, particularly younger generations are seeking ways to stay connected with friends and are looking for safe spaces that are fun, entertaining and accessible.

It is why high street bingo venues present such an exciting opportunity for local communities.

Coinslot: What's on the schedule at Buzz for the rest of the year?

Simon Reynolds: We continue to innovate and focus on delivering our omni channel strategy across both retail and online.

We have a new product launch planned for this autumn and we're onboarding two new clubs into the Buzz family in Northampton and Cricklewood.

Our new Cricklewood site is the largest bingo venue in Europe.

Both clubs have a strong local community following, and are highly complementary to our current estate, so we'll be learning from each other and strengthening our products, customer base and profitability.

We're ahead of the curve when it comes to the implementation of the long-awaited gambling white paper and look forward to legislation that will help bingo communities to thrive and evolve positively into the future.