



Proud to promote gaming hub



Jonathan Dalli was appointed head of marketing at e-Management in 2009, where he oversees all marketing activities in relation to the group's service portfolio on an international level. He also directs marketing & PR campaigns, event management, brand management strategies, marketing communications and media relations, and strategic collaborations.

Jonathan Dalli, head of marketing at **e-Management**, talks to *eGaming Review* about the evolution of the Maltese egaming market

WITH THE MAJORITY of major gaming companies present in Malta, a booming market offering lower taxes and an attractive lifestyle, the island is a destination of choice for operators and software providers. Jonathan Dalli of e-Management tells *eGaming Review* about this remote gaming hub.

eGaming Review (eGR): Can you give an overview of the Maltese online gaming market?

Jonathan Dalli (JD): The island is an online gaming hub with more than 400 licensees; 40% are online casinos, 27% are poker & bingo operators, and 22% are sportsbook operators that are present locally, along with many third-party software providers, that make up the other 11%. Malta has become a multi-gaming community. In fact, since the Malta Remote Gaming Regulations came into effect in 2004, the Maltese market has matured. While originally this was driven by quantity and was trying to attract the largest possible number of companies to the island, nowadays it's focus is on quality. It has attracted a number of significant companies that contribute to making the jurisdiction one of the most, if not the most, respected jurisdiction in Europe.

eGR: Has the licensing process changed in the past year?

JD: Recently the Maltese Lotteries and Gaming Authority (LGA) has consolidated the licensing process. It has transformed a three-step process into one solid stage of licensing which makes it easier for operators to get full authorisation to operate on the island. Moreover the regulator now immediately delivers full licences, whereas previously applicants were first handed a letter of intent before receiving a licence. Today, operators can go to partners and customers directly with a full licence, which obviously holds more weight; this makes a big difference. This shift has undoubtedly helped Malta grow as a jurisdiction, both in terms of volume and in terms of reputation.

eGR: What are the island's competitive advantages?

JD: First, it is an established jurisdiction, which

undoubtedly gives multi-jurisdiction operators peace of mind. Second, the tax incentives that Malta offers to licensees are very attractive. Such firms are typically eligible to benefit from a 5% tax rate with respect to the local corporate tax. Finally, the licensing process is very fast and very smooth, benefiting from a very pragmatic regulator.

The diversification of Malta's financial services also needs to be taken into account. The financial services sector is a vital contributor to the island's GDP and this is very beneficial for the gaming sector.

Malta also offers a number of state of the art services ranging from telecommunications, infrastructure, internet connectivity and a skilled workforce. The majority of Malta's skilled local inhabitants are bilingual. An incredible range of professional organisations including all the major audit firms and the local and international banks are present on the island, facilitating business set-up and daily management tasks.

eGR: Why should gaming operators consider relocating to Malta?

JD: The two main reasons are the tax advantages and the reputation the jurisdiction enjoys in international fora. Malta's geographical situation should also be considered: it is a Mediterranean jewel with an agreeable climate, over 300 days of sunshine, good hospitality and living standards very similar to continental Europe.

eGR: What market trends do you foresee in the coming year and has Malta reached saturation point?

JD: Today, more than ever, there is a greater need for jurisdictions to engage in bilateral agreements. These will help jurisdictions to recognise each other's strengths and capabilities, as well as possibly facilitate market entry for companies that want to license locally and target a local player base.

Malta as a jurisdiction has already taken a giant leap, especially when you consider that Malta can easily be used as a B2B jurisdiction and not just from a B2C operational point of view.

I don't believe that Malta has reached saturation in its product life cycle; on the contrary, I think it still has a big role to play in the global egaming market.