

Interview with Tim Johnson – a fourth generation bookmaker, founder of the bellerockgaming group

A fourth-generation bookmaker, Tim Johnson launched his first online sportsbook in 1998 after selling the chain of Demmy betting shops he ran with his father and bookmaker Selwyn Demmy. What followed was what Johnson describes as „two years of sheer pain with technology that wasn't really ready“.

TIM Johnson reinvested in the buy of online operations like the river belle online casino and the gamingclub, then in 2004 created the massive Belle Rock Gaming operations which includes internationally famous online casinos such as the jackpotcity and riverbelle casino. Johnson has not looked back since and just 7 years later the company he presides over represents potentially one of the most powerful online gambling enterprises in the world.

With a childhood spent in betting shops, Johnson is a progressive thinking entertainment provider. You will be surprised by his and Carmen Medias knowledge, expertise and strength in the online industry.

Carmen Media Group has now reached one of the highest positions within the online gaming industry and is sharing the bill with its most reputable household names.

[key:IC], Reinhold Schmitt, editor in chief: Since when have you been in the gaming industry?

Tim Johnson: Well I have always been in it; I actually grew up with it! I started with the gambling industry at the age of 6 on the floor in my family's betting shops. My family has been involved in sports betting since the late 19th century.

[key:IC]: Is the online casino industry reaching saturation point?

Johnson: No, the industry is ever growing with technology. Online casino has a universal appeal and the industry is becoming ever more capable of providing high class gaming to its visitors across the globe. Our casinos are the perfect mirror of this evolution as we have visitors from all over the world enjoying the marvellous look and feel of our casinos. The impeccable reputation we have acquired brings us growing numbers of customers every day. Saturation will definitively not be reached for a long time as players in emerging markets are an additional growth factor to the industry. Our jackpotcity and riverbelle casinos are amongst our fastest growing casino sites and it is a pleasure to see all our players from all over the world enjoying these great casinos.

[key:IC]: What are the dangers of the online casino, what sort of competition are you facing with the online casinos?

Johnson: Reputable online casino's like ours suffer from the bad name that some of the less recommendable sites have given the industry. Generally, these sites are controlled from banana republics and use difficult to trace banking in order to confuse the customer. These offerings tend to prey on the less experienced customers that are lured into the site by overgenerous false offerings and many other tricks.



We know that these bad practices have unfortunately projected a negative image of our industry in the past. However, things are now rapidly starting to evolve for the reputable offerings with the recent emergence of online gaming companies on the stock market.

My tip to the players: Always read the about us before playing on a new casino and you will be able to find out all the information you need. You can research thoroughly on specialised sites and see if the casino enjoys a good reputation like ours.

The casinos owned by Carmen media are audited on a regular basis

[key:IC]: Do you own a valid licence?

Johnson: We are licensed in Gibraltar which is part of the EU, that strictly controls its online casino industry and audits regularly our company to ensure that we respect the strict rules that allow us to keep this licence. We obey the strictest regulations in order to assure our customers the best online casino experience, fair play, Mega jackpots. All these ingredients make us the fastest growing online casino company...

[key:IC]: Will there be in your opinion a liberalisation for the EU-licence holders within the EU?

Johnson: Absolutely all European licensed online offerings will be available for all customers without restrictions in the EU in the near future.

[key:IC]: Are you a transparent organisation?

Johnson: We are regularly audited by the world's most prestigious auditing company, as well as organisations like E-cogra, these regular audits and many other thorough checks allow guaranteeing that our offerings are always up to the maximum level of quality for the customer.

[key:IC]: What are the differences between online casino and sports book?

Johnson: The main difference is that in the casino the player actually relies on himself, in the sports book the person who

places the bet relies on somebody else's performance.

A difference is also in the fact that you can access our online casinos 24h, Sport events are only at a specific time and a given date, you can though access our site 24 h a day to place your bet, you then have to wait for the event to take place to get your payout.

Sometimes bookmakers will offer you to bet on other things as sports such as politics, TV programs and other real life happenings.

On online casinos you can win a big jackpot when wagering small amounts of money. You could also win a large amount of money on a sports book by placing an accumulator at small stakes.

Whatever your game is, you will always be welcome on our sites as we offer Sports, Casino and Poker.

[key:IC]: Is poker one of the focuses for the future for your company?

Johnson: Well it is already a strong focus for us as we enjoy a privileged position with the www.gamingclubpoker.com. The Gaming Club Online Poker Room software, is powered by Microgaming. As one of the most trusted name in online gaming, we set the standard in fair play, transparency initiatives and the promotion of responsible gaming.

Like all our products The Gaming Club Online Poker Room incorporates cutting-edge technology and rich interface features to bring our players the best online Poker games.

We are currently enjoying strong growth in player numbers from emerging markets as well as a strong uplift in established markets, with online poker and online casino.

[key:IC]: Are locals and tourists allowed to play online or in local casinos?

Johnson: Locals and tourists are not allowed to play on online casinos and or place bets online of Gibraltar based companies. They may if they wish play online and place bets on site that are not based in Gibraltar. Of course everybody of legal age is allowed to play at the beautiful land based casino in Gibraltar.

[key:IC]: Customer Safety, Security & money laundering what can you tell us about these themes?

Johnson: All our brands are reviewed on a regular basis by PricewaterhouseCoopers, one of the top four accountancy firms in the world. Payout percentages are also reviewed, and with an average 97% payout ratio, players can expect better returns than that from a land-based casino.

Carmen Media Group is proud that seven of its flagship casinos have been awarded the e-COGRA Players' Seal of Approval. e-COGRA is an independent, non-profit organization based in the UK, and this accreditation is given in recognition a casino's compliance with e-COGRA's high standards.

For full details of the assurance eCOGRA brings, visit their site at www.ecogra.com (eCommerce and online Gaming Regulation and Assurance).

We have also implemented advanced fraud management software called Risk Sentinel which protects our customers from online fraud.

We ensure all necessary measures are in place to avoid any form of money laundering. We are regularly audited by different organisations and the Gibraltar government. In addition, the applicability of local anti-money laundering

legislation and anti-money laundering guidelines that are published from time to time by the Financial Services Commission of Gibraltar (FSC) as well as adherence to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) standards all ensure the protection of registered players and the general public.

[key:IC]: Can people visit your company and look behind the scenes?

Johnson: Well of course, [key:IC] is already behind the scenes we answer with pleasure everybody's questions, Journalists are welcome to visit us. We also provide information's on carmenmedia our company's web site where you can find information on all our activities. We are a transparent organisation and are welcoming questions. Our Press Office section on our website provides a full support service to journalists and other interested parties and an archive of press releases as well as industry news.

[key:IC]: Do you support charities?

Johnson: Carmen Media has always supported various local and International charities such as Cancer Relief, Action Aid, The Samaritans. We always like to help where we can.

[key:IC]: What sort of measures are you putting in place to combat addictions to gambling?



Johnson: At Carmen Media Group we are committed to being the very best online entertainment group in the world. This means doing everything in our power to give our clients an enjoyable playing experience, whilst recognizing that for some players gaming can cause problems. All our websites have a section purely dedicated to help prevent addictive gambling with Guidelines for players to follow and a Questionnaire to

assist the player in determining whether he shows signs of compulsive gambling. We also advise players that they should contact support groups if they are experiencing difficulties with their gambling.

[key:IC]: What languages are spoken in your company?

Johnson: We offer customer services spoken in the English, German, French, Italian, and Japanese languages. These are only a few of the languages that are spoken in our international company; we have people from all over the world working with us.

[key:IC]: What is the first thing that comes to your mind when you think about something fun in your business?

Johnson: The moment when you hand over the huge cheque from the mega jackpot to the winner is always such a huge moment of happiness for everybody, one that makes me really enjoy my position. It is always a privilege to be face to face with the winner of our Mega Jackpot,

[key:IC]: What do you do when you are not working?

Johnson: We are moving forward very fast with Carmen Media Group and we are busy preparing for its future.

We are making sure that our sites are the best on the market

and are always looking for new ideas and technology. At present I have little time anything other than working in the great environment that my company is; I enjoy working with my numerous colleagues from all over the world.

[key:IC]: Thank you very much for the interview.