

“We believe Svenska Spel is listening”

The Swedish National Association of Gambling Addicts is a federation of societies for gambling addicts and relatives who work to prevent and counteract gambling addiction. Kim Grahn is the Chairman of the association. She feels that the dialogue with Svenska Spel works well, but that there is more to be done.



Kim Grahn, Chairman of the Swedish National Association of Gambling Addicts

The responsibility for the care of gambling addicts lies with the state. Does this work well?
 “The treatments that exist today are inadequate. It works quite well in large cities, but it is worse in provincial areas. Since the responsibility lies with the State, the level of knowledge is lower in municipalities and there is often no knowledge on how to treat gambling addiction. It should be stated clearly in the Social Services Act that gambling addiction is on a par with other forms of addiction, so that it will be natural to offer treatment to those who need it.”

How has your dialogue with Svenska Spel been through the years?
 “We have a healthy dialogue with Svenska Spel through various channels. We sense an inquisitiveness on their part, they are interested in knowing how we feel work should be conducted to counteract and handle gambling addiction. Our opinions are not always well received, although we feel that Svenska Spel is listening.”

Is Svenska Spel doing enough to counteract gambling addiction?
 “No, we naturally feel that there is always more that can be done. We feel that their advertising

is too extensive and that they should be more open, for example when reporting winning odds. Another problem is the games on Vegas machines, particularly because they exist in alcohol-serving environments.”

“We would appreciate seeing Spelkortet connected to Vegas so that customers must set up a limit for how much they will play, or that measures are taken to help players pause and break the pattern.”

Do Svenska Spel’s customers receive enough information to make sensible decisions?

“That is a difficult question. There is a lot of information, which is good, but the difficulty lies in reaching the right target. Those who need information and tools are probably not the ones who are most receptive.”

“The Internet is the best tool for in-depth information, but for raising awareness of the risks with gaming, advertisements are probably the most effective channel to convey such messages. Svenska Spel should definitely develop that kind of advertising further.”

“Sometimes I get caught up in the moment...”

The gaming experience is the whole point for Tony Zingmark, who works in advertising and has been a loyal customer of Svenska Spel since age 19. He was one of the first to use Spelkortet and participated in tests of Svenska Spel’s Internet gaming site before its launch.



Tony Zingmark, customer

What games do you prefer?
 “I usually play Tipset, Lotto and Bomben, for approximately SEK 200 per week. I have also been playing some Internet poker for a while, mostly small sums, but it’s going much better and soon I will raise the stake a little.”
 “Sometimes I am a little impulsive and incur unnecessary losses because I am inattentive after longer periods of playing, but it seldom involves excessive amounts of money.”

Why do you choose Svenska Spel?
 “It feels safer than playing on foreign Internet gaming sites, which goes hand-in-hand with Svenska Spel’s image and the knowledge that the state stands behind the website as the owner. I know that I am not being cheated, that the money ends up where it should, and that they contribute to the state treasury.”
 “Then it is a matter of self-awareness since I am used to playing on the website – it is simply comfortable.”

Does Svenska Spel do enough to help you control your own gaming?
 “Regarding Internet poker, there is information about the risks and the gaming clocks are very visible. On the other gaming sites, they are somewhat tucked away. It is easier to get caught up in the moment and bet quickly when playing poker, so for that game I use both the gaming clock and the budget to check on myself. It works very well.”
 “On the other hand, it doesn’t feel particularly credible when Svenska Spel constantly launches new games and advertises its games in the media, while simultaneously warning about the risks. It’s a difficult balancing act.”

Do you think it is good that Svenska Spel is owned by the State?
 “Yes, since we live in Sweden and the State is trustworthy, it feels good. But Svenska Spel should do more to report on the payback to players and the size of the contribution to the Treasury. I do not doubt that this is in the Annual Report, but it could be communicated better to customers and the general public.”

“We have a natural responsibility”

Jacob Aziz has owned the Limerick restaurant in Södertälje since 2006 and has had Vegas VLTs on his premises all the time. He talks constantly with his customers and staff about the risks for gambling addiction involved.

As a business partner, how do you approach gaming responsibility?

“Moderate gaming is entertaining, but – just like alcohol – there are people who cannot handle it in moderation.”

“Naturally, we have a responsibility not to exploit any customer’s gaming problems and we talk every day about the risks of gaming and how it can adversely affect them.”

What tools do you have at hand?

“We impose high demands on our employees and inform them constantly of our responsibility as a partner of Svenska Spel. We also explain the demands that the gaming laws impose on us. In consultation with our Vegas representative from Svenska Spel, we hold

training courses and try to use as much information as possible via Svenska Spel’s website for business partners. We also make sure that information is visible and available to our customers at the VLTs and the bar.”

How well do you think Svenska Spel manages its responsibility?

“I think they handle it very well and do everything they can to cooperate with us business partners in managing gaming in a responsible way. They provide information and training and carry out test purchases a few times a year. There are serious penalties for those who do not take their responsibility.”



Jacob Aziz, restaurant owner and Vegas business partner

“Working to strengthen our gaming responsibility”

Marie Avander is head of Svenska Spel’s Vegas business area. Strengthening responsible gaming is at the top of her agenda. Vegas VLTs are currently installed at 2,230 restaurants and bingo halls nationwide in Sweden.

What are the major challenges presented by Vegas?

“Some stakeholders are concerned about Vegas. It’s a game with a higher risk compared to Triss or Lotto, for example since you know almost immediately whether or not you have won, and can bet again. We’re aware of this risk and are working to strengthen our responsible gaming and develop the business based on the expectations of our stakeholders.”

“Currently, we pursue on-site communication with players in order to make them aware of the risks. Responsible gaming brochures are available as well as the number to the Helpline. The next step is to integrate purely technical tools to allow players to set a time and stake limit on their gaming.”

Why are the VLTs installed in environments where alcohol is served?

“We have a mandate from the government to offer games on VLTs. Legislation states that our VLTs may only be installed on premises with an alcohol or bingo licence. The unregulated actors have exploited the fact that we cannot be active on the whole market. There are currently a large number of illegal gaming machines in the Swedish market.”

“The Swedish Gaming Board issues the licence for the Vegas VLTs in consultation with the municipal administrations and there are strict requirements regarding the orderliness of the gaming venue. Also, gaming on VLTs must never account for an excessive share of the restaurant or bingo hall revenue.”

What requirements do you impose on your business partners?

“We impose strict requirements, particularly that they must ensure the observation of minimum age limits. We demand that at least one person at each gaming venue undertakes our gaming responsibility training and spreads

know-how to other colleagues and new employees. Our representatives make frequent visits to our business partners and we conduct regular test purchases to monitor compliance. If we note that a business partner does not meet our demands, we discuss it and if the situation does not improve, we terminate the contract.”



Marie Avander, manager of Svenska Spel’s Vegas business area