

The tinsel or the star: Creating a stand-out Christmas game

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*As the countdown to the festive period begins, **Greentube** UK's design team reveal what makes a Christmas-themed slot stand out from the crowd following the release of this year's seasonal smash hit **Santa's Riches**.*

Every November, the online casino market is flooded with Christmas-themed games. Operators' lobbies are decorated with titles looking to draw players in with twinkling lights and big prizes, with seasonal games being an annual staple of most suppliers' roadmaps.

Year after year, they attract big crowds. But with the increased level of saturation around the holiday period, how do you ensure your Christmas headliner stands out from the crowd?

Delivering the full package is what separates the tinsel from the star at the top of the tree. Players enjoy seasonal content because it adds to the excitement and build-up to the celebration, but it is important that the game delivers what they want. That means hitting all the touch points: not just the graphical and sound assets that bring the

Christmas cheer, but the mechanics that turn a good slot into a great one.

Given the global appeal of this type of content, at Greentube we tend to opt for medium volatility titles that suit the preferences of the mass market. This approach has seen us create multiple successful brands that we have improved upon over the years, taking the mechanics that work well and applying some added sparkle for the seasonal showstoppers.

We believe that this Christmas' release, Santa's Riches, has all the makings of a yuletide cracker. The 5-reel, 20-win line winter wonderland offers all the spirit you would expect from a seasonal

title, adorned with stockings, baubles and crackers, but its unique feature set is what really creates the winning formula.

“...BY TAKING AN ORIGINAL APPROACH TO BOTH THE GAME DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING STRATEGY, YOU’LL AVOID A CHRISTMAS NIGHTMARE”

The game presents players with the chance to unlock an additional reel, win lines and extra features with every win. Landing consecutive wins moves players up the arrow trail above the reels to collect four free spin gift bags, each offering a Christmas present symbol enhancement to bring diversity into the bonus round gameplay.

To give this game an extra push this season, we have done things a bit differently. Christmas titles are unique in that the window for marketing is much shorter. The success of a game is therefore dependent on how well it was promoted in the seasonal build-up.

For Santa's Riches, we have gone the extra mile, dedicating an episode of Reel Reveal to detailing how the game works to players.

This industry-first series of online game previews, which kicked off with a deep dive on Diamond Link: Mighty Elephant, enhances the reach of our games by allowing potential players to view all the best parts of the game and build up excitement ahead of the release.

The concept has been a standout success, increasing exposure of a game and offering a direct avenue to boost brand awareness among players. For operators, the episodes provide much welcomed additional collateral to make a game standout.

With so many suppliers vying for top billing at Christmas, you have to think creatively. Each operator takes a different approach to marketing content and we work collaboratively with our partners to provide for the extra requirements needed at this time of year, which could be anything from web banners to animated tiles.

Competition is obviously high during Christmas so for a title to have impact, investment and timing are key. A huge amount of market

research goes into our seasonal titles to ensure we are in tune with the trends that have emerged over the year.

Whilst there is no guarantee that a yuletide slot will be an instant hit, by taking an original approach to both the game development and marketing strategy, you'll avoid a Christmas nightmare.