



## Matthew Righton: Spirit of adventure

Named one of the industry's rising stars at the recent G2E Asia Awards, **Matthew Righton** details his pathway from Sydney to be part of the Scientific Games team as Regional Account Manager for Asia.

By **Oscar Guijarro**

**Oscar Guijarro:** Great to talk to you Matthew. Can you tell us about your background?

**Matthew Righton:** I grew up in North Ryde, Sydney, and my parents always pushed us a lot into sport, so sport was a massive part of my life. I played mainly football, or soccer as we call it in Australia.

I played from the age of four right until I left for Macau. I actually played quite a few different levels. I started in the children's league and then I made it up to the semi-pro league, I played reserve grade for Ryde too so I obviously enjoyed football.

School and university were another thing that my parents were big on. I was school captain at my primary school and a prefect at my high school as well. I really didn't want to go to university but it was one of the best things I ever did. It's something you need to do these days to be able to compete in a professional environment and have the right skills and training. I guess that is how I grew up.

**OG: Is that competitive spirit still inside of you?**

**MR:** Yes, playing all kinds of sports like cricket and football definitely instilled a competitive instinct in me and I guess that's why in the business world I am motivated to beat the competition. It's important to do so in a respectful, friendly manner, but you still want to beat your competition. That's very much something that drives me.

**OG: Do you miss playing sport?**

**MR:** I missed it when I watched the World Cup this year. I was like, "It would be fantastic to get back into" but unfortunately, I can't commit to doing something and when I do something I want to commit 100%. With my travel regime and the amount of time I am on the road with work, I find it quite hard to be able to commit to the training so it would be tough to do.

**OG: What made you want to join the gaming industry?**

**MR:** There were two family trips that did it.

I was quite fortunate that my father's work allowed us to visit many places around the world and the year before I visited Macau for the first time, we went to Las Vegas. We'd been to Hong Kong a few times and my parents said, "Hey let's go to Macau!"

I didn't really know what Macau was or was becoming at that time, but when we came over I drew an alignment with Las Vegas. Getting older you start looking forward to going out to pubs and clubs and all this kind of thing, so when I saw Las Vegas and Macau I realized, "Wow, you can get this entertainment side too." For adults it's all about that entertainment side

of gambling and I thought it would be great if you could make a career out of doing something like this. So that's really when I started to focus on getting into gaming.

**OG: How did the dream become a reality?**

**MR:** When I was finishing high school I wanted to get into business so for my last years of study I focused on doing business courses in order to get into university to do a business degree.

At university, during my first year, I contacted some people from the industry. I started working in an RSL, which had

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gaming there. In Australia you can work in gambling and drinking venues at 18. I started working there while I was at uni because the club was open to about 3am or 4am, so I could go to university during the day and study and work at night. That provided me with a lot of flexibility.

During that time I contacted a few people in the industry and worked at some of the trade shows like AGE just to get exposed to what was happening in the Australian gaming market.

I also sent my application in to Aristocrat – who were the largest slot machine company in Australia at that time – for their graduate program two years before I finished uni.

When I did actually finish uni I sent my application for the second time to let them know that I was interested and the first time

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I went to the interview I was accepted for the job.

That’s where I began to learn more deeply about slots.

**OG: What are your future goals?**

**MR:** It’s fantastic to be doing exactly what you want to, for sure, and I’ve probably got a bit more learning to do – learning and maturing in this position for a few more years until other opportunities come along, like Japan which is obviously going to be a huge opportunity for Scientific Games and myself. That’s something I’m working towards. Most definitely my future is in gaming and with Scientific Games.

**OG: What motivates you on a day-to-day basis?**

**MR:** It probably sounds a bit clichéd but





for me it is delivering for our customers. I know that sounds clichéd but it is the truth. Your reputation is on the line and the company's reputation is on the line when something is not going well or something's not performing or there's a problem with your products. For me it's about keeping customers satisfied and doing the best for both Scientific Games and the customers to create a win-win. Not letting them down is definitely something that drives me.

**OG: What is the most challenging part of your job?**

**MR:** The most challenging part of the job would definitely be time management because there are only so many hours in the day. I look after a wide region with Cambodia, Vietnam, Saipan, Laos, some of Macau and Korea. I cross over a fair amount of regions and many, many customers so it's making sure that I'm in contact with them as much as possible and allocating my time efficiently.

**OG: After visiting so many countries, do you have a favorite among them?**

**MR:** When I first came to Asia five years ago I went on a trip with one of my colleagues around each of the markets just to get an understanding. Singapore is fantastic

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but still by far my favorite place would be Korea. Korea is just a fantastic place to visit. The people are so friendly and you know the food is amazing. It's such a clean, respectful culture. It's definitely one of my favorite places in Asia that I've visited.

**OG: Do cultural differences impact your way of dealing with customers? Is there a different Matthew in each county you visit?**

**MR:** That's a very good question because

what anyone should do when they go to another country is try and respect the culture and their ways of doing things. A lot of our customers are great in that they understand we may not know about their traditions or their culture in terms of doing business. By the same token you should be checking it out before you go and visit.

You know, in Korea there is a little bit of a difference in how they do business there and it does help if you try to learn a couple of words to adapt slightly to the environment.

One of the biggest things is not dictating to customers but listening to them and providing solutions rather than telling them what they should be doing.

**OG: What do you like to do when you are not working?**

**MR:** My fiancée and I love to travel around on weekends when we don't have time to go to another country. We love travelling overseas but what we do like to do is visit Macau, Hong Kong, some of the islands or explore Shenzhen, which is a city that's changed so much over the last 10 years. And even Zhuhai, we just love trying different types of foods and getting out of the house. iag