

# 10 FRAMES OF GAMING SUCCESS



**BOWLING AND ARCADE GAMES HAVE A LOT  
IN COMMON WHEN IT COMES TO 'AVERAGES'**



**By Frank Seninsky  
President/CEO, Amusement  
Entertainment Management**

Bowling and games go well together but bowling proprietors know exactly what it takes to improve one's bowling average. A 200/game average is considered very good while a 230 is out-

standing. A 100 average is in dire need of improvement. A 130-140 average is the average of most recreational bowlers. It is amazing, but the very same averages currently apply directly to average weekly revenue per arcade game!

\$200/game/week is considered very good while \$100/game/week needs improvement. A large majority of bowling center games are averaging around \$100/game/week. It should only take a minute to figure out what your weekly game average revenue is. If your number falls in the \$130-\$140 range, there is still room for improvement. If your number is closer to \$100, you are missing out on some very easy money.

The best way to improve a bowling average is to start with the proper equipment, and with the help of several tips from a qualified instructor, practice, practice, and more practice. The same process will help increase your game revenue/week averages.

## Below are 12 Best Practices:

**1 Location of game space in center.** Game play is an impulse. The more people that pass by and see the games, the better the chances that they will play. The most profitable space is to the right of the main entrance (when facing the building); the 2nd best space is to the left of the main entrance. Merchandise dispensing games earn well when placed close to the main entrance or on the concourse in the high-trafficked areas.

**2 Doors or half-walls are a 'no-no.'** Forcing a customer to open and walk through a door (even a single glass door or double glass doors) to get to the game zone is similar to a foul when a bowler's foot goes over the foul line-0 points. The more 'open' that game space is, the higher the game revenues. Removing the entire front wall when possible is recommended. Removing a 2nd wall (or opening up more entrances to the game space) is also recommended.

**3 Ceiling height.** Game revenue is also dependent upon ceiling height. Minimum height is 11 feet. Game revenue actually then increases as the ceiling height increases from 11 feet to 16 feet and then is no longer a factor. In some cases, removing the ceiling tiles and grid works well. Games in 8 foot high spaces is like bowling a score of 50.

**4 Layout as many games as possible in clusters.** The games that make the most money are those that are placed in the center of the game floor space rather than lined up against the perimeter walls. Big Bass Wheel is an exception; due to its height it should be placed against a wall. A cluster is one, two, three, or four games that are placed back to back. One multi-player circular game is considered a cluster. Two games of similar height placed back to back are a cluster. A 3rd game placed perpendicular to the two back to back games is a 3-game cluster. Adding a 4th game or a token dispenser then makes a 4-machine cluster. A 4 game cluster is used to go around a column (when space permits).

**5 Game spacing.** Game revenue is higher when each player has enough space to comfortably play while others can easily walk through the game space. Allow 3 feet for player space in front of each game. Some games require more player space: skee-ball-6 feet to allow for the back arm swing; basketball-5 feet to allow for players to bounce the ball

in front of them prior to taking a shot and jumping backwards. Aisle space between player spaces of up to 3 feet is recommended.

**6 Lighting and glare.** Today's game spaces need to be well lighted to attract women and families with young children. Indirect or bounced lighting reduces glare on the games' safety glass or plastic panels. Florescent lighting causes glare unless deflectors are utilized.

**7 Redemption is King.** Redemption games on average earn five times as much as video games. Not having redemption games is like not having the basics to bowl a strike in a single game. Even a minimum of 6 redemption games can deliver a significant increase in game revenues. High end merchandise dispensing games are also great earners, but there are currently 19 states that have prize limit laws in effect ranging from 75 cents to \$25 per play and this trend is growing.

**8 Lines of sight.** The heights of games must be considered so lines of sight from various spectator positions are not blocked. The patrons must be



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To learn more about AEM, contact Frank Seninsky at FSeninsky@aol.com or Jerry Merola at ProfitWizz@aol.com.

12 Elkins Road, East Brunswick, NJ 08816 - (732) 254-3773 - www.AEMLLC.com







## 11 Separate game categories.

The three main categories of games (redemption, merchandise dispensing, video) need to be separated. Parents with young children are not comfortable being with teenagers. Teenagers like to be in their own space. There will always be some overlap, but try to locate the redemption games in the area of the RPC and the video games in the back of the game space and farthest away from the RPC. The merchandise dispensing games earn higher revenues when they are near the perimeter of the redemption game space, next to the token dispensing machines, and near the entrance/exit of the bowling center.

able to see the redemption prize center (RPC) or automatic RPC from almost any position in the game space or near the game space. The RPC is the 'eye candy' that drives redemption revenues.

**9 Maximize throughput.** Throughput is defined as number of game plays per hour. Having enough player positions and several quick play games is necessary to maximize revenues during peak days and peak hours without requiring additional games. Select games with multiple player positions. A good rule to follow is that the total number of player positions is at least 50% greater than the number of games. For example, 30 games should have at least 45 player positions. A Pharaoh's Treasurer has four player positions. A Big Bass Wheel has one player position.

**10 Token Action Games.** Also known as quick coin games, these games that require a token to be rolled, dropped or shot, take in more money when they are placed in the middle of the game space but close to the redemption prize center. When players need to win more tickets to redeem the prize they desire, they are most likely standing at the RPC and do not want to walk far to get to the high ticket payout/quick coin games.

**12 Heading towards cashless.** As of the end of 2012, only 10% of consumer spending was by cash. Having an ATM and a credit card token dispensing machine does not guarantee that a majority of patrons will go through the time and effort to obtain what is referred to as 'impulse cash' to play a game that they were just attracted to. New technology exists (USAT e-port System) that inexpensively solves this problem. Placing a wireless debit/credit swiper unit on a regular token dispensing machine or a game currently costs approximately \$329 for the swiper, 2.5% + 10 cents per transaction, and \$10/month for the open cell line and data management system. The minimum transaction is \$2.00. A customer could then play a 50 cent crane (located by the main entrance/exit) four times with just a swipe of their debit or credit card. This is an easy way for bowling proprietors to take advantage of the cashless trend, especially if implementing a debit card system is too costly for a smaller number of games. Splitting the cost of an e-port system with your game vendor makes a lot of sense. For more information about USA Technology's e-port system, go to [www.betson.com](http://www.betson.com).

The above list need not be tackled all at once. Work on those best practices where your score is low and check the game averages each week and see if there is any improvement. As the averages start increasing, take on a couple of more steps. When you carry a \$200 average (or above), you know you are doing well! But don't stop there. Some of the top game zones are averaging \$500/week/game. But then we game operators have heard that bowling back to back 300's has also been accomplished.

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**Frank Seninsky** is president of the Alpha-Omega Group of companies, which includes a consulting agency, Amusement Entertainment Management (AEM), two nationwide revenue sharing equipment suppliers, Alpha-Omega Amusements, Inc. and Alpha-BET Entertainment, and Alpha-Omega Sales, a full line game & related equipment distributor. Alpha-Omega Sales is the new exclusive distributor for GameALERT. All are headquartered in East Brunswick, New Jersey.

During his 44 years in the leisure entertainment industry, Seninsky has presented nearly 400 seminars and penned more than 1500 articles. He has served as President of the Amusement and Music Operators Association (AMOA) from 1990-2000 (on the Board of Directors for 22 years) and as the President of the International Association for the Leisure & Entertainment Industry (IALEI) from 2005-2006 (Founding Member and on the Board of Directors for 11 years).

His columns regularly appear in Tourist Attractions & Parks, RePlay, Vending Times, and Bowling Center Management. Frank is co-regent for Foundations Entertainment University and editor of 'The Redemption & FEC Report' e-newsletter that goes out to more than 26,000 readers worldwide.

**Frank Seninsky, President/CEO**  
**Amusement Entertainment Management**  
12 Elkins Road, East Brunswick, NJ 08816  
732-254-3773 (Ph)  
732-254-6223 (Fax)  
FSeninsky@aol.com



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