

MAXIMIZING PROFITS

Seasonal Pop-Ups, Branded Goods, and Elevated Dining Drive Revenue

By Brandon Willey

Family entertainment centers have evolved significantly from traditional bowling alleys to multi-faceted venues that cater to all ages, groups, and interests. Family entertainment centers must diversify and enhance their offerings to increase revenue, repeat visitation, and dwell time to keep up with consumer expectations and trends.

By adding themed experiences, selling customized products, and offering a premium culinary experience, centers can create a memorable experience that guests are excited to enjoy and return to.

THEMED POP-UP EXPERIENCES

Pop-up-themed experiences can be particularly effective for capitalizing on short-term trends or local events. You might try a retro gaming night, where you decorate your family entertainment center in an '80s neon style, encourage guests to dress like the 80s, and promote special prices for your retro arcade and pinball games.

Aligning with local, regional, or national sports events, such as the Super Bowl, March Madness, or the NBA finals, by theming the family entertainment center in the colors of the competing or local teams, offering game-day snacks, and broadcasting the match on large screens throughout the venue can also draw in sports fans who wish to enjoy the game while knocking down some pins and knocking back some drinks.

GET THE GOODS

Building brand loyalty and increasing revenue through the sale of merchandise and swag involves creating a memorable experience and offering branded products that resonate well with your guests. This enhances the guest's overall experience and turns them into brand ambassadors who wear and use their merchandise, promoting the center in their everyday lives.

Develop a Unique Brand

First and foremost, you must establish a robust and appealing brand identity that can be seamlessly translated into various types of merchandise. This includes a recognizable logo, a catchy tagline, and a consistent color scheme that reflects the center's atmosphere and general vibe. This brand identity should be prominently displayed and reinforced throughout the venue, from the decor to the staff uniforms to your online presence.

Curate Your Products

The key to successful merchandise sales lies in offering desirable products that your guests will likely use in their daily lives. Here are a few examples to get the ideas flowing:

Apparel: T-shirts, hoodies, socks, and hats featuring the center's logo or trendy phrases and memes that resonate with your guests across age spectrums. These items should be of high enough quality to be worn regularly to maximize the center's exposure in public.

Accessories: Custom bowling balls and pins, branded wristbands, towels, and water bottles are great for frequent bowlers who may appreciate high-quality gear. Customizing bowling balls and shoes can also appeal to your regular bowlers.

Novelty Items: Keychains, bottle openers, stickers, magnets, and even a mascot (if you have one) plushes that are lower in cost can serve as impulse buys.

Placement and Promotion

Merchandise should be strategically displayed to attract maximum customer interest. Eye-catching displays at the entrance or high-traffic areas can draw attention and drive impulse purchases. Clear signage in high-visibility areas that communicates the availability of merchandise and any ongoing promotions can also boost sales.



Introducing promotions such as "Buy a game package, get a shirt at half price," or "Spend \$50 and receive a free water bottle," can significantly increase the average transaction size. These offers can be especially compelling if timed with special events, holidays, and tournaments.

ELEVATE YOUR F&B

Delivering an enhanced and elevated food and beverage program within a family entertainment center transcends the typical offerings of nachos, pizza, and pitchers of beer or soda. By transforming your family entertainment center into a culinary destination, you can attract a wider audience, encourage longer stays, and significantly increase the spend per visit.

Specialty Offerings

Introduce a menu beyond the basics, featuring premium toppings such as aged cheddar, applewood smoked bacon, and homemade sauces. Specialty dishes could include artisan flatbreads, seafood options like grilled salmon or shrimp tacos, and vegetarian or vegan alternatives that cater to all dietary preferences. The key is to use high-quality, fresh ingredients that elevate the taste and appeal of each dish.

Chef-Designed Menu

Hire a chef to design the menu and ensure the culinary standards are consistently high. This move improves the quality of food and allows for seasonal menus, unique weekend dishes, and themed culinary events that keep the offerings fresh and exciting.

Craft Beverages and Signature Cocktails

Partner with local breweries and wineries to offer a selection of craft beers and regional wines. This supports local businesses and gives guests a chance to enjoy their favorite local flavors at your family entertainment center.

Signature Cocktails and Mocktails

Develop a line of signature cocktails and mocktails inspired by the theme of your family entertainment center or the sport of bowling itself. For instance, a cocktail named "The Perfect Strike" could be a visually striking and tasty drink in a unique glass that leads to Instagrammable moments and social sharing.

Seasonal and Themed Experiences

Your family entertainment center can maintain high yearly attendance by continuously reinventing the atmosphere and environment, ensuring repeat visitation and steady revenue.

Seasonal and pop-up experiences enhance the guest experience and serve as effective marketing tools, generating buzz and excitement for your family entertainment center.

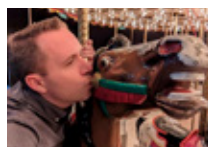
Embrace the Seasons

In the spirit of fall, you might introduce a "Haunted Lanes" event around Halloween, where the family entertainment center is adorned with spooky decor, themed music in the background, and staff members in costumes. Additionally, themed food and drinks, such as pumpkin-spiced treats or Bloody Marys, can be offered to complement the experience.

As winter approaches, family entertainment centers can capitalize on the holiday season by decorating the lanes with festive ornaments, lights, and tinsel. Events like "Bowl with Santa" or "Midnight New Year Bowling" are perfect for drawing families looking for holiday activities. As always, it is essential to introduce unique F&B options that complement the season.

Spring and summer offer the chance to host themed nights, like a pop-up tiki bar, where guests can try exotic cocktails before or after their game. Booking live bands or DJs to play lively summer tunes will enhance the guest experience and create opportunities for repeat visits.

These enhanced services and additional offerings provide diverse and rich experiences for all visitors and create multiple revenue streams for your family entertainment center. By continuously adapting, expanding, and, most importantly, promoting your offerings, you make your family entertainment center a more enjoyable and engaging place to visit and solidify its reputation as a community staple for entertainment and dining. With careful implementation and regular updates to your themes and offerings, your family entertainment center can thrive, attracting a loyal customer base eager to enjoy the experience again and again. ●



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