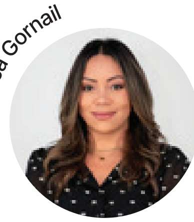
Unlock Revenue YOU ALREADY HAVE

TURN SMALL TWEAKS INTO BIG GAINS

By Brandon Willey

For many bowling and family entertainment centers, revenue growth is often treated like a capital problem. When things slow down, the instinct is to think bigger: new attractions, remodels, expanded arcades, larger marketing campaigns.

In reality, many centers are already sitting on unrealized revenue.



Mica Gornail

I recently caught up with Mica Gornail, general manager of Bowling at ROLLER, to talk about where that opportunity actually lives. **More often than not, it is not about adding something new, but getting more out of the lane inventory, party products, and food-and-beverage offerings already in place.**

That's the logic behind a quarterly revenue reset, a disciplined review of pricing, lane utilization, party packages, and F&B bundling. **The goal is to tighten execution and improve profitability without waiting for a major reinvestment cycle.**

WHY QUARTERLY MATTERS

A quarterly cadence works because a bowling or family entertainment center's business is constantly shifting. Demand patterns move with school calendars, summer schedules, league play, holiday parties, labor constraints, and food costs. Looking at performance once a year smooths over those shifts and hides where money is being left behind.

As Gornail explains, "Each quarter is so different, and your business can get away from you after 365 days." She adds that "a consistent rhythm becomes part of your DNA versus a really big lift."

That is an important distinction. A revenue reset should not feel like an emergency exercise; it should be part of the normal operating discipline of a modern center.

START WITH PRICING

Pricing is usually the first place to look, and often the most overlooked. Many centers are still operating off structures set years ago, with only minor adjustments along the way.

But pricing should reflect current demand, capacity, and guest behavior. A quarterly review should ask a few simple questions:

- **Are peak periods priced to match demand?**
- **Are slower periods being stimulated intelligently?**
- **Are discounts solving the right problem, or just eroding margin?**

It comes down to regularly reassessing what's in place and challenging long-standing habits; just because something has been done for years doesn't mean it's still effective. That mindset is essential.

If weekend evenings are consistently full, the issue is not traffic. It is whether that demand is being monetized properly. On the flip side, if weekday traffic is soft, the answer is not always lower pricing. It may be better value through bundles, booking incentives, or targeted offers.

TREAT LANES LIKE INVENTORY

Lane utilization is one of those areas that's easy to understand but not always easy to stay on top of. Operators know this better than anyone; once an hour of lane time goes unsold, it is gone for good, which is why it helps to occasionally look beyond simple occupancy.

A quick check of revenue per lane-hour by daypart, day of the week, and occasion can reveal some subtle gaps. Open play, leagues, birthday parties, and corporate events all use the same space, but they don't all deliver the same return.

Gornail emphasizes that "capacity management is such a big piece," and notes that this is "data you can action within a few days." In other words, it is less about pulling reports and more about noticing what they are telling you.

WHERE SMALL GAPS CAN HIDE

- Waitlists and queue time
- Dwell time
- Staffing levels
- Booking patterns

From there, adjustments can be made to pricing, reservation rules, or scheduling. Gornail also suggests moving away from a fixed-capacity mindset. A full Saturday night and an empty Tuesday afternoon are completely different situations, and they should not be managed the same way.

RETHINK PARTY PACKAGES

Party packages are worth revisiting regularly. They're often major revenue drivers, yet some of the least updated. Over time, they can drift toward operational convenience instead of margin and ease of booking. The strongest packages reduce friction for the guest while naturally guiding higher spend through add-ons like arcade cards, upgraded food, private lane time, or premium experiences. Gornail emphasizes that a formal review should look at:

- Which packages sell the most
- Which generate the strongest profit
- How often add-ons are attached
- Whether upgrades are easy to see and buy

WHERE REVENUE SLIPS THROUGH

One of the most important parts of a revenue reset is identifying where revenue breaks down between departments. In many centers, the problem is not that each department lacks opportunity on its own, but that the handoffs are weak.

- Parties that do not include arcade cards
- Bowling reservations without food pre-orders
- Corporate events missing premium beverage options
- Guests waiting for lanes who are not directed to the bar or arcade

Gornail describes walking into centers and seeing different laptops set up to run different parts of the operation. That fragmentation leads to fragmented selling. When booking systems, party sales, arcade, and F&B do not connect, upsell opportunities disappear and the guest experience suffers.

On the flip side, even small improvements can create momentum. Gornail notes that strong waitlist functionality can keep bars and attractions active, turning idle time into revenue instead of dead space.

The key shift is thinking of the center as one ecosystem, not separate departments competing for attention.

MAKE GROWTH A HABIT

A strong revenue reset should produce measured experiments, not overcorrections. Operators do not need to rewrite the entire business every quarter. They need to identify the few changes most likely to improve yield and test them in a controlled way.

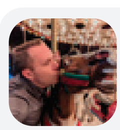
That might look like:

- Tweaking Saturday-night pricing
- Rebuilding one party package
- Adding a single online upsell
- Testing a new F&B bundle for a specific daypart

Gornail emphasizes using dynamic, actionable data to guide these decisions and making changes quickly rather than waiting too long or trying to change everything at once.

THE BIGGER SHIFT

The more consistently a center review and refines what it already has, the more revenue it can unlock without relying on the next big investment. For operators in a competitive and fast-changing market, growth is about building a repeatable habit of small, smart adjustments that compound over time.



Brandon Willey, ICAE, is co-founder of the LBX Collective and Premier LBX Group, co-host of The LBX Daily Show, and founder and CEO of Hownd. Brandon has an intense passion for the attractions industry and extensive knowledge of location-based entertainment. Brandon is the former chair of IAAPA's FEC Committee and now sits on the North American Manufacturers and Suppliers Committee. You can connect with him at LinkedIn.com/in/bwilley.