

League Bowler Development System

Communications



Prepared by
The BPAA League Development Committee

Introduction

The League Bowler Development system provides bowling center owners, operators, managers and other personnel with fast and efficient guidance on the development and retention of league bowlers.

This system will provide you with the tools and techniques necessary to meet your league goals, regardless of the season.

No matter how much or how little skill you have in league development, the guidance in this system will make you a better, more proficient and more confident bowling center owner, operator or manager.

Why Do You Need This System Now?

In the past quarter of a century, America's appetite for entertainment has grown, expanded and become more diverse. Consumers want the latest and greatest, the newest and fastest and they want it now.

As a result of these changing lifestyles and demographic movements, the demand for league bowling participation, especially for traditional 30+ weeks has decreased, making the job of developing new and retaining existing customers even more challenging.

In an effort to get you plugged in to new and exciting ways to build leagues as well as tricks, tips and secrets, this **League Bowler Development System has been designed as a reference tool**, a tool that we believe is even more important than ever and is organized in a way that allows you to choose the topics and utilize the sections most relevant to your current business situation. You will find that the information is well organized and easy to find.

Communications

In This Chapter

- ✓ The Concept of Communication
- ✓ The League Call Back System
- ✓ Surveys, Market Research and Customer Satisfaction
- ✓ Selling League Bowling
- ✓ Lane-to-lane Solicitation and Touching the Tables
- ✓ The Lane Ambassador
- ✓ In Center Selling

In the communications section of the system, you will learn to communicate your league products, both traditional and short season, to specific target audiences.

You'll learn how to communicate more effectively and efficiently than ever before and with the help of this system, you will avoid fatal mistakes. You will have plenty of guides, checklists and templates to help you through the process.

- ✓ The Concept of Communication



Communication is a process by which information is exchanged between individuals.

An example of communication:

You: “Let’s make sure, Susie that we call back league bowlers and find out if they are coming back. Start today, OK?”

Susie: “OK will do”.

Result: Susie calls back the bowlers in the leagues and reports the following to you: “I called most of them back, some said they were coming, others weren’t sure and I left messages for the others. Looks like we will be OK!”

This isn't what you meant at all!

What you meant was to call the bowlers back, find out their intentions for the upcoming season, and record the results of your call in a simple format and to update it daily as she completes each call. For those people that she left voice mails, you wanted her to keep trying those people. You probably also wanted her to call team captains, league secretaries and "dropouts."

But none of that happened because you assumed she knew exactly what you meant. You assumed that she understood your communication. Obviously, she did not!

Communication lessons from this exercise:

- Communication Is ALWAYS created by the receiver.
- The sender can never assume that the receiver knows what the sender means.
- Repetition is vital to communication and the more, the better. With all of the messaging "noise" we hear everyday, you need repetition to break through.



The Rule Of Seven requires that you repeat your consumer message at least 7 times before it makes an impression. It may be less for employees, but the same basic concept applies.

✓ **The League Call Back System**

Fortunately, a system exists to call your league bowlers and determine if they are coming back to bowl next season. While many centers have left this part of their marketing up to their league secretaries, we caution against that tactic...simply because it is your center's customer, your center's league bowler, and your center's business. Why would you leave that up to anyone else?

The Four Targets For Call Back:

1. League secretaries
2. Team captains from last year
3. Last season's league bowlers
4. Dropouts from the previous season

League secretaries should be called first to let them know that you are getting more involved in the league call back process and want to get some information.

Simply stated, tell them that your staff will be calling team captains that she or he HAS NOT CALLED AND based upon that will follow up with individual calls. No doubt, the person may feel that you took over his/her territory, but remember, its your center, your mortgage and your business. Besides, they are your customers.

Exhibit 2.1 League Secretary Call Back Script

You: Hello John, this is Fred from Happy Lanes. Is this a good time to chat with you tonight? It is? Great. I know that the league season will be here before you know it and I just wanted to give you a call to find out if you know what shape your league will be in next year?

League

Secretary: Well Fred, it's a little early, so I'll get back to you in a few weeks.

You: John, that's what we want to talk about. The industry has been losing bowlers, as you know, for over 15 years and now Happy Lanes has been losing bowlers too. This year we want to make an effort to help and find out as early as possible how many bowlers we may be short. Does that make sense John?

League

Secretary: Sure it makes sense, but I would like to contact our bowlers.

You: That's fine, but we will be calling as well and can help you; so let's split the list and we'll call some and you call some and then every Monday we can compare our tallies and get a heads up on

where we are. I'm sure you understand. It's about getting an early warning system in place so we can help you to fill your league or grow it to its maximum strength.

League

Secretary: Well ok, what do we do now?

You: How about if you stop by here one night this week after work. Is Tuesday or is Thursday better for you?

League

Secretary: Uh, Thursday sounds good to me.

You: Great! I'll see you Thursday at 6pm and we will review our call-back assignments, sample scripts and timing. Thanks John. See you then. Good bye.

Team captains should be called next. Call all team captains and ask them if they are planning to come back full and if they be coming back with the same teammates as last year.

If the captain indicates that one team member, Joe Smith, isn't coming back, make a note of that and BE SURE to call Joe Smith indicating that you are "sorry to learn from Kathy (the team captain) that he isn't coming back and wanted to see if there is anything you can do for him."

In this case you must find out if the bowler can

- a. Bowl on a different team in the same league
- b. Bowl on another day in a different league
- c. Is interested in a non-traditional shorter season
- d. Now offer the person a solution to his problem and ask if there is anyone else he would like to bowl with and let him know you would be happy to call that person.

Exhibit 2.2 Team Captain Call Back Script

You: Hello Kathy, this is Fred from Happy Lanes. Is this a good time to chat with you tonight? It is? Great. You're still the team captain of the "Rascals? **If not ask who is and ask for their phone number, say thanks and goodbye, then call the NEW team captain...and pick up here >>** I know that the league season will be here before you know it and I just wanted to give you a call to find out if you know what shape your team will be in next year?

Team

Captain: Well Fred, it's a little early, so I'll get back to you in a few weeks.

You: Kathy, that's what we want to talk about. The industry has been losing bowlers, as you know, for over 15 years and now Happy Lanes has been losing bowlers too. This year we want to make an effort to help and find out as early as possible how many bowlers we may be short. Does that make sense Kathy?

Team

Captain: Sure it makes sense, but I would like to contact our bowlers.

You: That's fine, but this year we want to get an early heads up on team strength so we want to set up a call-back system to call you once a week and get an updated status to see how we can help and if you have any holes to fill. Would every Monday after dinner be a good time to contact you to get an update? I'm sure you understand. It's about getting an early warning system in place so we can help you to fill your team roster.

Team

Captain: Well ok, what do we do now?

You: Well, I guess you should start contacting your team mates this week and then I'll give you a call to see how the team strength is. If you have some people who aren't coming back, we can then discuss some strategies that will make it easier for you to recruit new people for your team.

Team

Captain: Uh, ok, I guess that sounds good.

You: Great! I'll give you a call Monday at 7:30pm. Thanks Kathy.
Talk to you then. Good bye.

Calling The Individual League Bowlers

As mentioned above, the owner or General Manager will inform the league secretary and team captains that center management and employees will be involved in the league call back process.

Who should do the calling to the league bowlers?

The person in your center with the most knowledge about leagues during a specific day part should call those leagues, for example:

- If you have someone who works with your seniors and ladies during the day, that person should call the daytime people.
- If you have a night time person that works with your adult bowlers, that person or the manager or owner should be calling.
- If you have someone who works with the juniors, that person should be calling.

See Exhibit 2.3, the league bowler call back script on the following page.

Exhibit 2.3 League Bowler Call Back Script

Customer name _____

Customer number (if available) _____

League name _____

League start date and time _____

Time of call _____

Today's date _____

Hello Mr. (name of customer) this is (your name) from (center name) in (location – city and state). Is this a convenient time to talk?

If yes continue to Q1

If no, ask: "What time would be more convenient?" Write it here (day, date and time)

Now schedule this time for a call: Ok, Mr. (customer's name), I will call you back on (day, date and time).

1. Mr. (customer's name), last year you bowled with us on the (name of league) and I just wanted to confirm your participation with us this year. Will you be bowling on the (name of league)?

2. **If yes**, thank the customer and say, "we look forward to having you join us this year."

a. **Now Ask:** Is there anyone you know who might be interested in bowling with us this year, either in your league or perhaps in one of our newer short season programs?

b. Write NEW prospect's name and phone number here:

3. **If no**, say, "I am sorry to hear that Mr. (customer's name). Would another day or time be more convenient for you? We have other leagues that might better fit your schedule."

a. If customer says I don't know or maybe, then ask what other days would be his **FIRST PREFERENCE**

b. Now try to fit the customer to the new league day, date and time

- c. If customer accepts new league, day and time, mark it here _____
- d. **Now ask:** Is there anyone you know who might be interested in bowling with us this year, either in your league or perhaps in one of our newer short season programs,
- e. Write NEW prospect's name and phone number here: _____
- f. If customer still says he doesn't want to bowl, ask if there might be a short season league he would be interested in (then give him choices based upon a day that he might prefer). Know and be able to explain the short season leagues.
- g. If customer chooses one of the short season leagues, write it here _____

- 4. **If customer still says NO**, thank the customer for his past patronage, ask him for his email so you can send him 2 or 3 games to enjoy at the center and then give this form to manager to call back
 - a. Customer's email: _____
 - b. Customer's phone number: _____
- 5. Date given to manager _____
Your signature _____

Where do I get the names of these different types of league bowlers?

Visit www.bpaa.com/customerconnect where you can find information



about your league customers, your dropout league customers and summer league customers.

Information is also available on using "Constant Contact" for emailing, developing custom reports, cleaning your data and a whole lot more.

When is the best time to call?

Between 7pm (after dinner) and about 9:30pm on weekdays and between 11am and 5:30pm on weekends are good times to reach your customers.

Some centers make all of their calls during the day, using a robo call service which broadcasts calls to every league bowler telling them that we will be personally calling them very soon and to expect our call. Here's a sample of what to say during the robo call:

“Hi, this is Fred, the bowling guy from Happy Lanes. The new league season is right around the corner and we just wanted to let you know that, very soon, we will be personally calling you to make sure you will be returning to your league and to reserve a spot for you. Speak to you soon and thank you for listening to this message.”

What do you do if you keep running into voice mail?

Simply leave a voice message that states:

“Hi this is Fred from Happy Lanes. We are sorry we missed you and the purpose of our call is to remind you that the league season will be starting soon and to determine if you are coming back to bowl with your league, which we surely hope you do. You can call me at _____, email me at _____ or text me at _____.”

After leaving that message, and if you have not heard back from the respondent, please call them at least once every 4 to 5 days until you get an answer.

How do I track all these calls and follow ups?

Use an **excel spread sheet** to create column headers across the top as follows:

- League name
- Name of bowler
- Address of bowler
- Phone number
- Email
- Status (captain, bowler or sub)
- Date/1st call results
- Date/2nd call results
- Date/ 3rd call results



Visit www.bpaa.com/customerconnect for information on available CRM (customer relationship management) programs.

Contacting dropouts from the previous season.

Dropouts are defined as someone who bowled in a league one season ago, but did not come back during the season that just ended in May or June.



A one or two month dropout call-back program is not the way to get these customers back. It is an ongoing process.

Dropout marketing should happen all year. These are people who were your customers. You should only stop marketing to them if they moved or if they have asked to be put on a “do not call” list. NO may not mean NO FOREVER. It just means NOT NOW.



A list of drop out bowlers can be generated on www.bpaa.com/customerconnect. Use this report to target these individuals during your call back program and with additional marketing efforts.

Your June, July and August dropout plan

JUNE

- First, decide who is going to head this up. You need someone who can handle rejection. Not kidding.
- These people left you for a reason. Maybe it's because of something out of your control or maybe it was in your control.
- You will need an integrated plan of direct mail, telemarketing, robo calls, and emails if you have them and special event marketing inside of the center.
- See sample drop out letter and postcard (Exhibits 2.4a and 2.4b) on the following pages.

Exhibit 2.4a Dropout Letter

We Really Want You Back!



Dear [first name],

It has been quite some time since you bowled in a league at [center name] and that is why I have sent you this boomerang. We really miss you and want you back!

Remember the Fun of Bowling?

With today's busy lifestyles, does it feel like you just don't have time for yourself?

Life is so fast-paced these days, taking time for you almost feels impossible even to think about. It's time for you to put your foot down and say "YES", I do need some time for myself, some time to get out of the house to socialize and relax with friends.

This letter will help remind you of how much fun you have when you are bowling.

Let me ask you a question: If everything was just right—and you had ZERO short-term risk—would you consider taking 2 hours per week out of your busy schedule to indulge yourself?

Before you answer that question, let me bring you up-to-date and tell you about the great programs developed just for you.

Great Values and Great Fun Just for You

The Boomerang

As a returning league bowler, we will give you:

- [number]% off new equipment in our pro shop.
- If you would rather use the bowling ball you presently own, we will give you a no-hassle maintenance plan for \$X. This plan includes complete resurfacing, oil extraction and finger grip replacement for up to 3 balls for one year.
- 1 hour of coaching to get you back in the swing of things.
- Easy pay option which allows you to pay for the entire season for only \$X. If you choose this option, we will also give you \$30 of [center name] cash to spend while in the center.

Boomerang Special

If you bring back your entire team (5 bowlers):

- Your entire team will get everything in the The Boomerang package.
- **You** will receive:
 - Free bowling for the entire year
 - \$10 of (center name) cash every week you bowl to spend while you are in the center

Boomerang Supreme

If you bring back two (2) teams:

- Both teams will get everything in the Boomerang Special package.
- Another team member will be able to bowl free for the entire year or you can divide it up among your team members.
- **You** will receive:
 - Free bowling for the entire year
 - \$ 20 of (center name) cash every week you bowl to spend while you are in the center

No Fun= No Pay. Promise.

We are very confident that you are going to have a great experience once you get back into bowling, but we want you to know about our No Fun = No Pay Promise. It is very simple; if you bowl for 4 weeks and you just are not having fun and do not want to continue for the rest of the season, we will refund your bowling fees.

We also continue to offer an extensive League Bowler Benefit program, multiple games/pots to enjoy while bowling, and a caring and friendly staff.

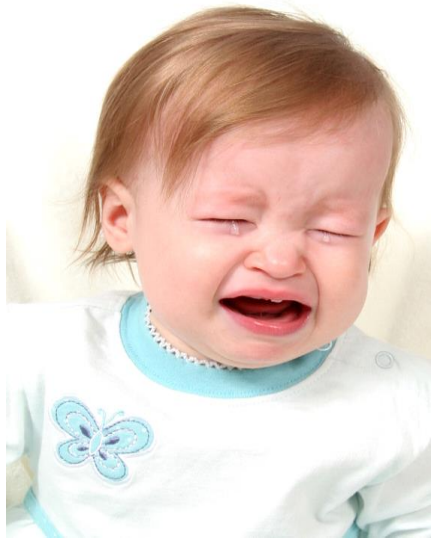
Okay, let's take a crack at that question I asked you earlier. What do you think? I hope the answer is yes and you will be getting in touch with me. Like the boomerang, I really hope you will come back.

Sincerely,
Center Name Owner or Manager

P.S. As you can see, I am very serious about wanting you back. So give yourself the break that you deserve and give me a call at xxx-xxx-xxxx. If you prefer to contact me via email my address is: (_____)

P.P.S. **One more thing. It's important:** We're mailing a letter similar to this one to several hundred former bowlers. We can only accommodate the first 50 people who take us up on this offer. So if you are interested, perhaps you will not want to wait for me to call you.

Exhibit 2.4b Dropout Postcard



We've Missed You

YOUR LOGO GOES HERE

Panel #2

If you haven't bowled in a league with us for a while, here's some good news. We have lots of fun new programs from the traditional to the short season.

Come in and see for yourself, we'll be glad to show you how you can **"Get in the Game"** this season, be part of a team and have a great time.

Please enjoy this \$25 free bowling coupon for you and a friend at Happy Lanes.

Sincerely,
Owner or Manager name

\$25 gift certificate goes here (This coupon entitles you to \$25 of free bowling anytime lanes are available) Please call and reserve your lane in advance and give us promo card D1411

Name
Address
City state, zip

MID TO LATE JULY

You can use this postcard offer or you can make up your own. In any case your postcard or letter offer should convey that:

- You missed the league bowler and value their patronage.
- You would like to offer them the opportunity to join a traditional league or a shorter season program.
- You have set up a special (day or days) for them to come in and enjoy \$XX dollars of bowling, a beverage and a burger.
- If they don't come in, you would still like to speak with them and plan to call them.

LATE JULY TO EARLY AUGUST

- About a week after you send out the postcard/letter, you will send them a series of emails that will tell a story and remind them about their bowling days.
- See Exhibit 2.5 below for a series of emails.

Exhibit 2.5 Dropout Email Series

Email #1

Subject Line: Great memories and good times are still close to home

Remember when having fun was just a few miles away and being with people you cared about and who cared about you was all that mattered?

We do too. We have missed you and invite you to come back to Happy Lanes to catch up with some old friends, meet some new ones and have a real good old time.

We have many new leagues to fit your busy lifestyle; short seasons, every other week leagues and even once a month leagues. Plus, we offer many different forms of the traditional league bowling season.

We invite you to visit Happy Lanes on (day, date and time) to enjoy free bowling and (other benefits go here) _____.

To reserve your spot, just reply to this email or call us at (123 4567) and tell us the time you would like to bowl and if you will be bringing friends or family members.

We look forward to seeing you.

Email #2

Subject Line: Don't miss out: FREE bowling during Fall Back to Bowling Days

About 7 to 10 days ago we wrote to invite you, your friends and family members to visit Happy Lanes to enjoy free bowling and to introduce you to our new bowling leagues: short season leagues, every other week leagues, even once a month leagues as well as lots of new traditional league programs.

Please reply to this email or give us a call at (123 4567) to reserve your time. Tell us how many friends you will be bringing to Happy Lanes on (day, date and time) during "Fall Back to Bowling Day(s)."

Hope to hear from you soon.

Email #3

Subject Line: Fall Back to Bowling Days – only 5 days away!

"Fall Back to Bowling Days" is only 5 days away - don't miss out on good times at Happy Lanes with your friends and family. We are offering free bowling and _____ . Please join us and let us show you all the new league formats we offer, from every other week to once a month to some great new traditional bowling programs.

Let us show you how great memories and good times are just a couple of miles away.

Please reply to this email and tell us when you would like to bowl and how many people you will be bringing to Happy Lanes on (day, date) or please call us at (123 4567), if more convenient.

MID AUGUST

Event days are a great way to welcome back an old friend to your home who you haven't seen for a while and to put on your best face. Try to do it before the kids go back to school during a weekday evening where you might have lanes available (please avoid the weekends).

At this event you can offer prizes, a food buffet and bowling balls to be awarded in a drawing. Drawings are a great way to collect email addresses, but the form must be designed so that they know they are giving consent to receiving communications from your center.



You may choose to have several different event days. For example, an event day just for dropouts or an event day that invites dropouts and league bowlers at the same time. There is no one “best way”, but we do suggest that you use multiple event days for more days/opportunities to sell.

See Exhibits 2.6 and 2.7 on the following pages for sample August Event invitation letters targeting dropout and league bowlers.

Exhibit 2.6 Invitation Letter to Dropouts for Mid-Week August Event

Dear Friend:

The smell of autumn is in the air; the big box stores have been advertising back-to-school specials for months; you see the high school football team finishing practice as you drive home from work and as you stop in the hardware store, you notice the new display of rakes, leaf blowers and leaf bags right at the front entrance. Yup, autumn is close.

But something is missing, you think. And finally it hits you; it's another new league bowling season start up. Only you're not in a league and in fact you haven't bowled in while.

Then you get this letter and you read about **an open house at Happy Lanes on (day, date and time)**. You get up and go to the closet and look at your bowling balls and bags and it hits you, "Yeah, I'd like to give it a shot and see some of the old gang too."

And that makes us happy because we have lots of new traditional leagues, short season programs, every other week programs and even once a month leagues.

Please call us and let us know you will be coming. There will be free bowling, refreshments and fun door prizes. Let us show you how great memories and good times are just a couple of miles away.

Please reply to this invitation by calling us at (123 4567). Let us know when you would like to bowl and how many people you will be bringing to the open house at Happy Lanes.

We look forward to seeing you!

Sincerely,

Exhibit 2.7 Special VIP Event Letter to League Bowlers AND Dropout Bowlers

Dear Friend,

We're inviting you to a FREE VIP Party with a chance to win \$10,000 in CASH!

Why Would We Do This?

1. It's our way of saying "thank you" and "welcome back" to our valued customers
2. We would like to introduce you to our great new league programs - short season leagues, every other week programs and even once a month leagues. We have programs to fit almost any lifestyle. Join us to find out which one fits you 😊

Our first annual VIP party at Happy Lanes will be held on (day, date and time) and in addition to your VIP pass, we have enclosed a few guest passes so you can bring friends or family members to get in on this great event.

What Can You Expect at Our VIP Party?

Our VIP Party is an exclusive benefit only available for our great customers, their friends and family members. Your VIP party will include FREE bowling, FREE barbeque sandwiches, FREE soft drinks and FREE popcorn. So reserve your lane now. Just call us at 123 4567 890 or email us at happylanes@gmail.com and we'll make sure you have a lane reserved when you want it.

Your tickets to our VIP PARTY are attached and feel free to bring additional guests – everyone is welcome – league bowlers and non-league bowlers alike.

The VIP Party Schedule

- ✓ Bowling starts at 10 am.
- ✓ BBQ buffet begins at 4pm.
- ✓ Beer Garden opens at 6pm with live music featuring (The Name of Band) which will start at 9pm.
- ✓ And just before 9pm, VIP bowlers and their guests will have a chance to convert a 7-10 split for a \$10,000 prize (based on a draw of 10 lucky people).

Thanks Again For Bowling with Us

As we get ready for another busy bowling season, we just wanted to say **thank you and welcome back** to all our great customers, families and friends. We hope to see you at our VIP Party on (day, date and time) and don't forget to RSVP for this event at www.happylanes.com or email us at happylanes@gmail.com or call us at (123 4567).



As an added attraction at an event, some proprietors award a \$10,000 prize to a bowler for making a 7-10 split. Check with your insurance company to find out the cost of a premium payment for this event and to determine the requirements (you may have to film it, get affidavits signed, etc.). Check out the details before you do it!

✓ **Establishing Your Call Back (Direct Marketing) Strategy**

The purpose and goals of any direct marketing effort can be multi-faceted, such as:

- Make a sale
- Qualify a lead
- Discover information
- Get an appointment to see the prospect
- Get a reference
- Create a new lead
- Inform a guest they won XYZ from your center
- Confirm an event, party, date etc.

In Exhibit 2.12 on the following page, we have outlined various strategies that can be used to target new and existing customers with direct marketing efforts.

Exhibit 2.12: Targets, Goals and Suggested Strategies.

Targets	Goals	Direct Marketing Strategies
League secretaries, officers and team captains	To discover information, to determine status of upcoming league seasons.	Direct mail to invite secretaries and officers to an event at the center. Phone call follow- up to confirm their attendance.
Team Captains	Find out who is coming back on their specific team.	Phone call to get information.
Individual bowlers	Find out their intent to bowl in the upcoming season. Find out if they can recommend a NEW person interested in bowling.	Direct mail to invite to bowling event. Follow up with individual phone calls.
Dropout bowlers	To join a short season league program or join a traditional league.	Direct mail to invite to special event. Phone follow up to all bowlers from 2 seasons and 1 season ago.
Companies, organizations, non-profits, clubs, etc. that have had parties at your center	To get them to accept a free or discounted party so you can have a “selling situation” and offer them X league product.	Direct mail to party host, followed up with phone call to get them in center.
Religious groups	To set up a fundraiser event and bring people in to sell an “every other week or once a month” fundraiser league for their organization.	Direct mail to the organization, followed up by phone calls.
Schools and youth organizations (boy scouts, girl scouts, kids groups)	To get as many school age youth to attend your gala junior registration day.	Direct mail to parents of former junior bowlers, after school bowlers, birthday party kids to invite them to the event. Telemarketing to follow up.



You may have other strategies and means to find a suspect, turn her into a prospect, test her to see if she is a qualified lead and then make her a customer. You should be testing and combining different strategies to achieve your goals.

✓ Surveys, Market Research And Customer Satisfaction

The purpose of any survey is to discover “usable” information to guide your marketing, management or financial decisions for your business.

Below are some examples of specific marketing surveys which can help you to determine:

- Degree of customer satisfaction with a product, service or facility
- Desire for a specific product or service you are thinking about introducing and the target market for that product
- Motivational research; what makes the potential customer buy
- What is the best way to communicate to the target market about your product or service and how frequently would they want to get information



The most important task in designing a survey is to VERY CLEARLY establish the goals of the survey.

Some example goals are as follows:

- Product attribute discovery – what do potential customers want in a product?
- How important are these attributes? What’s mandatory and what’s optional?
- Measuring your customer service implementation with existing customers (and even past customers) and how it can be improved.
- How big is the market for a new bowling program amongst 21 to 34 yr. olds?

www.SurveyMonkey.com

This is a survey tool that will help you to design unbiased questions, send it to your email data base and tabulate the results. Just go to www.surveymonkey.com and follow the instructions. **It will probably take you less than an hour to create a professional survey.**

Let's say you want to find out if your idea for a new 9pm league has some merit, you would simply formulate a series of questions, for example:

How interested would you be in joining a 12 week Happy Lanes league on Tuesday January __ @ 9pm where, every week, you would get to taste different craft beers and the cost would be just \$12 per week?

Very interested _____

Somewhat interested _____

Not interested _____

If you are interested in this new league, would you also bring a friend or family member to join it?

Yes _____

No _____

For this example, let's say you send out the survey to your 21 to 34 year old list, 65 people complete the survey and 30 of the respondents say they are very or somewhat interested.



Based on this example, not only do you have a “go” signal on the league concept, but you have just created “qualified league prospects” as well!

Exhibit 2.11 Learn-to-Bowl Sample Program Survey

Required Question(s)

1. **How interested are you in a training program to help your child learn to bowl?**

Very interested _____
Somewhat interested _____
Neutral _____
Somewhat uninterested _____
Very uninterested _____

2. **How important are the following features of this proposed training program? (1 = least important, 5 = most important)**

A FREE Bowling Ball to each child who completes the program _____
Classroom video training to teach proper technique _____
Low students/coach ratio on the lanes _____
Day of week program is offered _____
Overall cost of the program _____

3. **When is the most convenient time for you and your child to participate in this program?**

- Weekdays after 3pm to 6pm
- Saturdays 9am to noon
- Saturdays noon to 3pm
- Saturdays 3pm to 6pm
- Sundays 9am to 12 noon
- Sundays noon to 3pm
- Sundays 2pm to 6pm

✓ Lane-to-Lane Solicitation and Touching The Tables

This tool, actually approaching customers, has been used for ions to “sell” open play bowlers and/or league bowlers on joining a new league or coming back for another season.

Like so much we have discussed before, no one size sales strategy fits all segments; but first recognize the segments to which we are trying to sell the league experience.

- Winter league bowler – traditional
- Winter league bowler – short season
- Summer league bowler
- Open play couples
- Open play families
- Open play groups, organizations, fund raisers
- Seniors
- Juniors (5 to 17 yrs.)

The Winter League Bowler

By the middle of February you should have a pretty good handle as to who is coming back next year, who is not coming back and why. If you don't have a clue as to which bowlers are coming back, then you should start to distribute a **Team Information/Commitment Card**.

A team information/commitment card is a 3 x 5 card that is completed with the team on the lanes. It provides written confirmation as to who is coming back and who isn't.

Exhibit 2.13 Team Information/Commitment Card

We hope you are enjoying your bowling experience at Happy Lanes. In order to better serve you, please check the appropriate line to indicate your league status next year at Happy Lanes. If you are unsure of your status, please indicate that as well. Thank You Very Much.

Team name _____ League _____

Team Captain _____ Yes ___ No___ Not Sure___

Bowler 1 _____ Yes ___ No___ Not Sure___

Bowler 2 _____ Yes ___ No___ Not Sure___

Bowler 3 _____ Yes ___ No___ Not Sure___

Bowler 4 _____ Yes ___ No___ Not Sure___

Bowler 5 _____ Yes ___ No___ Not Sure___

Comments _____



On your initial trial, you will probably get about 65% of all the information you need, not a bad start, but you can get more by repeating the process.

Another option is to use www.surveymonkey.com. Send a questionnaire to your league bowlers asking them if they are planning to come back next year to their existing league.

Questions are as follows:

How likely are you to return to your team and bowl in your existing league next year?

Highly likely _____

Somewhat likely _____

Not likely at all _____

If you marked somewhat likely or not likely, please check all appropriate answers that contribute to your answer above.

Didn't score well _____

Didn't like some team mates _____

I'm changing jobs or moving _____

League finished or started too late _____

Machine operation held us up _____

Didn't like league rules/same teams always won _____

League officers were _____

Other

On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being the highest, how would you rank your league bowling experience at Happy Lanes (please check one number only)

1_ 2_ 3_ 4_ 5_ 6_ 7_ 8_ 9_ 10_



The reason for asking this question is to better understand your league bowlers' perception of your center and, when you call them back, you can follow up on their responses (both positive and negative) .

For those people who rated their experience as a 9 or 10, you can thank them and then ask for a friend's name (phone and/or email) who they think might like to bowl with next season. You would then follow up and call the friend referencing the league bowler who recommended them.

For those that provided lower rating, you can follow up with them to better understand the areas of concern to make potential improvements at your center.

The Open Play Bowler

Given that your typical open play bowler only visits your center two to three times per year, you have a limited amount of time to ask them if they are interested in joining a league.

In today's environment, developing, introducing and following up on league bowler programs is something that needs to happen 12 months a year...not just in August and April/May.

You have to be ready to ask for the sale (joining a bowling league). To effectively communicate your league programs to your open play bowlers, you need to be able to understand the needs and wants of each type of open play bowler and then match him, her or the group to a league program you are offering.

Exhibit 2.14 below provides examples of typical open bowling segments and potential programs to match to the market.

Exhibit 2.14 Example League Programs Matched to Customer Segments

Segment	Applicable League Programs
Families or ONE parent and children bowling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult/child have a ball, less than 12 weeks; EOW adult child if parent is divorced • Couples program if both parents are present.
Couples 21 to 34	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glow and music based leagues, travel leagues, 9 pin no tap leagues, ladies bowl free leagues • Possible adult/child • Weekend at casino or romantic hotel setting, etc.
14 to 18 yr. olds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teenage league where participants can win electronic gear, iTunes cards, gift certificates to Best Buy, Game Stop, and Walmart. • Fund raiser leagues for high school teams, bands, local charities • Tickets to concerts, sporting events, free bowling equipment • Girls bowl free league and boys pay full price (girls pay \$5 for shoe rentals)
25 to 44 females with kids under 13 yrs. of age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family leagues • Fund raiser league for school or community charity • Adult/child have a ball leagues • Education league, free trips to museums, local exhibits, class trips
Company party participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morale building once a month league • Fundraiser league once a month • Team building league once a month
Seniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional 16 week season, have a ball promo (1/2 price on a new plastic or inexpensive urethane ball) • Charity fundraiser league

I have identified my targets, what do I say?

1. Like any good sales person, you want to double check and identify the target and its matching product
2. Match the product to the market segment
3. Explain the benefits of the product to the potential customer
4. Find out objections
5. Overcome objections
6. Look for closing signals
7. If no signals, keep looking for objections, then
8. Keep overcoming the objections
9. Look for closing signals
10. Keep repeating steps 7 thru 10, until you get a close

Recognize that you only have a finite amount of time to make the sale so you may only get thru step 3 or 4. That's Ok, just make sure you have permission to come back and speak to the person after he or she completes a game.

In order to communicate the benefits of league bowling, you must recognize the objections to league bowling. Below are just a few objections you may face:

1. **"I'm not good enough."**
2. **"I don't have the time."**
3. **"It's too expensive"**
4. **"It's boring."**
5. **"I don't know anybody else who bowls."**
6. **"I travel a lot."**
7. **"I have two jobs, no time."**

Exhibit 2.15 Overcoming Objections

Below are the answers to the objections listed numerically from above.

Always start with, "I know how you feel Mr. _____, other people feel the same way until they found out....."

1. **Nobody was good enough when they first started bowling**, or golfing or hunting or fishing or swimming. That's why we have rookie/beginner leagues that go for 8 to 10 sessions and include a new bowling ball and instruction, plus you will be bowling with other beginners just like yourself so you'll fit right in.
2. **In this world** with high speed technology, it seems we have even less time than ever. And that's why it's so important to stop and unplug every now and then even if it's for just an hour and a half each week with friends or family or both. Otherwise you have to ask yourself, "Hey don't I deserve a break too?" And the answer is a resounding, absolutely, positively YES!!!!
3. **Not as expensive as a movie, popcorn and a soda.** We have programs that start at less than \$10 per week and include your very own new bowling ball.
4. **Then why not ask some friends or family members**, maybe even form your own team. I was just talking to a friend and I mentioned to him that I spend a lot of time at work and we ought to get together more often. He said, yeah, yeah I agree. And then I reminded him we had this same conversation 6 months ago and nothing happened!! So I'm suggesting to you (and to me too, I guess)...isn't it time you and I spent some quality time with the quality people in our life, once a week, every other week or even once a month? Sure it is and bowling in a league or club makes it so easy to do so."

5. **Sure you do.** You probably haven't asked, but with 70 million people bowling every year, the odds are about 1 out of 4 people you know have bowled. Besides, part of the fun of joining a new team is to get to know new people, make new connections and have more fun.
6. **I know. I used to travel too,** but because of the league roster system, your team will have substitutes that can take your place for that week. And if you really travel a lot, you might be interested in a once a month or every other week league, maybe on a Saturday with the family, just with the kids or with another friendly couple.
7. **I know people who have two jobs** and they need as much downtime as those of us with one job. In fact, they need it more. Can I tell you about our once a month league? I know you can find one to two hours of fun time in your schedule. It may take some effort, but you look like someone who can do it.



One of the most important rules of lane-to-lane solicitation or touching the tables (especially during open play bowling) is to make sure that you just don't stop there one time during the night. You are building a relationship with your open play bowlers.

- Stop a second time and see if the person has any questions about the league offering you told him/her about
- Or stop by and ask if you can follow up with a call or email to the person about the program or to inform him/her of another program
- Stop by to find out how their experience is and if they would rate the center on a 1 to 10 basis with 10 being "would definitely refer to a friend" vs 1 "would definitely not refer to a friend"
- The more information you get, the more you know about your prospect

✓ **The Lane Ambassador**

Who is this person, why should you hire him/her and what does he/she do?

- **A lane ambassador is “anyone” who loves the bowling center** and is a real aficionado/advocate of the business.
 - The person can be a retiree, a stay at home Mom or even a younger league bowler (18 to 25 yrs. of age) or a junior bowler (13 to 17 yrs. of age).
- **Your job is to harness this person’s enthusiasm for league bowling** and show him/her how to get other people (league bowlers, open play bowlers and even non bowling friends) to join a new league or another league.
- **Review the following sales tools** with your lane ambassador so he/she will know what, how and to whom they are selling.
 - Features and benefits of bowling in a league
 - Understanding the differences in league benefits for different types of prospects
 - Lane-to-lane sales presentation
 - Telemarketing sales
 - Outside sales presentations
 - Sales plans and weekly results
- **Based upon an understanding** of all these elements you will now have this person “shadow” you while you do every step in the process while the “trainee” takes copious notes.
- **Compensation:** There are many different ways of compensating the “lane ambassador.” Some proprietors try to compensate the ambassador with free games, bowling equipment or even food from the snack bar.

For recruiting NEW bowlers who haven't bowled in the center for more than a year, we suggest that you base the compensation on 15% of the NEW bowling revenue.

- Examples:
 - 1 bowler bowls 36 weeks at \$10 per week = \$360 in NEW bowling revenue. Compensation to ambassador is 15% of \$360 = \$48
 - 1 bowler bowls 14 weeks at \$12 per week = \$168 in NEW bowling revenue. Compensation is 15% of \$168 = \$25.20

Hire smart so you don't get someone who is just in it for a couple of weeks of expense money.

Some people may want a salary. You can then offer to pay these people on a **weekly draw**, e.g., \$150 per week

- If you go three weeks with them, they will then "owe you" \$450 so the ambassador wouldn't get "new incentive money" until he pays you back 10 regular bowlers bowling 30 weeks at \$10 per week, i.e. NEW bowling revenue per bowler = \$300. 15% of that = \$45 x 10 bowlers = \$450



Don't be afraid to ask for references for Lane Ambassadors as well.

✓ **Team Lane Ambassadors**

Instead of hiring one or two lane ambassadors why not hire an entire team (up to 10 people) that you can supervise as your sales agents?

You would hold meetings, offer weekly incentives, host special dinners for them, get motivational speakers to talk to them and constantly train and retrain them.

The Team Lane Ambassador group would now be functioning as an in-center and out-of-center sales organization and, instead of having just two part time sales people (you and a manager or a family member), you would now have 8 to 10 part time sales people.



Check Exhibit 2.17 below for a quick review on inside sales. For owners and managers especially, existing employees, new employees, team ambassadors and anyone else who works in the center.

Exhibit 2.17 A Primer on Training People for Inside Sales

Philosophy/Overview

Inside sales is the act of getting prospects to make a decision to buy within the confines of the bowling center, either in person or by telephone. Inside sales people do not physically leave the facility to make sales. They usually interact with customers on a one-to-one basis.

Inside sales is one of the best methods for developing more bowlers, more lineage and more revenue. Here's why:

- Only around one-percent of the U.S. population bowls in leagues. That means for every 100 people, one participates in league play and 99 do not.
- Over 67 million adults 18 and older bowl each year in America, making bowling the largest participation sport in the U.S. That means 18 times as many people who are not league bowlers will visit your bowling center annually.
- What does this mean to your bowling center? It means potential! A 20-lane bowling center, for example, with 750 league bowlers will have the opportunity to sell to 13,500 non-league bowlers every year.
- Plus don't forget...the inside sales process does not only pertain to selling league programs to non-league members. It is also trying to get existing customers to spend more during their visits.

Inside Sales will be effective when you:

- hire people to be marketers
- train your staff to sell
- identify your prospects
- determine what you are selling
- know when to sell
- remember the importance of the telephone
- monitor the inside sales process
- recognize and reward employees for outstanding performance

First Things First!

Part of inside sales includes building your customer database. Obtaining the names, addresses, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, birth dates, and permission to communicate with your customers will aid your inside sales efforts.

Your bowling center needs a mechanism (form) to collect the customer data and your front desk employees need to be trained to ask the customers to fill out the data card. This is best done by using the card for monthly prize drawings and to advise the customers they will be sent special offers and coupons.

Who Does Inside Sales in the Bowling Center?

Every employee has a role in inside sales! It isn't just the front desk people selling league programs. Every employee who comes in contact with a customer should be conducting inside sales. Consider these inside sales opportunities/examples:

- Customer Service/Front Desk Personnel - sell league programs, open bowling programs, birthday parties, company parties, fund raisers, food & beverage, pro shop, game arcade and billiards.
- Foodservice Personnel - upsell food & beverage and sell league programs.
- Party Attendants - sell parties.
- Housekeepers/Other Personnel - sell league programs.
- Employees Who Answer the Telephone - sell whatever is being inquired.

Because every employee is involved in inside sales and inside sales is a critical function, during the hiring process applicants should be advised that inside sales (marketing) is part of their job responsibility.

Inside sales will flourish when your bowling center makes this activity a daily part of your business culture.

Who Are Your Bowling Center's Prospects?

Everyone who comes into the bowling center is a prospect to join a program or buy more. These customers are good prospects because they have had an experience with your center and they may be more predisposed to bowling. It becomes a matter of qualifying the people and matching what you have to sell with the appropriate market segment.

Examples are:

You Are Selling

Best Prospects

Adult Leagues	Adult men and women
Senior Leagues	Senior men and women
Youth Leagues	Youth (and parents)
Adult/Youth Leagues	Adults & Youth
Birthday Parties	Parents of party guests
Company Parties	Employed adult men and women
Fund Raisers	Adult men and women in non-profit groups
Food & Beverage	Existing inside customers
Game Arcade/Billiards	Open play bowlers & waiting list
Pro Shop	Adult league bowlers
Tournament Entries	Eligible league bowlers

By understanding the importance of targeting the proper segment, your staff can be more successful in inside sales. For example, if you are promoting a mid-season adult/youth program, promotional fliers and verbal invitations should be extended to youngsters and/or their parents. Snack bar customers should always be asked if they want the largest size when there is a choice and if they would like a side item with their order. Customers on a waiting list can be encouraged to play billiards or arcade games while they are waiting for their lane.

What Is Your Bowling Center Selling?

Your bowling center is selling pleasure (fun, entertainment and a good time) in the form of a game of bowling, a related activity, or food and beverage. Typical “products and services” your bowling center should continually be selling are:

- League programs (fall/winter, mid-season, spring/summer) for all age segments
- Open bowling programs (reservations for next visit)
- Parties (birthday & company) and fund-raisers
- Food & beverage (suggestive selling at point-of-sale and possibly lane service)
- Ancillary revenue areas (directive selling)
- Tournament entries

There is always something, and usually numerous items, your employees can be selling as part of their job responsibilities.

When Should Inside Sales Occur?

The old saying states, “There is a time and place for everything” and the same holds true for inside sales. People have to be approached, given information and asked to buy at appropriate times. The following matrix suggests best times to sell.

<u>You Are Selling</u>	<u>The Best Time to Sell</u>
League Programs	Lane-to-lane when people are bowling and when open bowlers pay for their visit
Open Bowling Programs	Up sell packages to open bowlers at time of check-in and ask for future reservations at the end of their visit
Birthday Parties	At the end of the party
Company Parties	When you learn there is a prospect in the center

Fund Raisers	When you learn there is a prospect in the center
Food & Beverage	All the time at the point-of-sale and lane service during busy times
Game Arcade/Billiards	Announce to open play bowlers and suggest to people on waiting list
Tournament Entries	Lane-to-lane during league bowling

How Do You Conduct Inside Sales?

After receiving inside sales training, the employees will be ready to implement a six-step process whenever they are on duty. The steps are:

1. Know the products.

The employees need to know the current program priorities being marketed, be able to communicate information about the programs and answer any questions the customers may have. Maintain a current list of what is for sale and provide that list to the employees.

2. Use promotional materials.

In many instances there will be printed materials which explain the programs. Those items should be used during the sales process.

3. Approach the customer.

The approach can be on the lanes or at the point of sale. This is the most critical point of the entire process as the employee wants to build a relationship with the prospect. Say hello and introduce yourself with a smile and in a pleasant manner. Explain that you will only take a couple minutes of the person's time and that you would like to give them information about a program in which they might be interested.

4. Present the information.

Unless the customer says no, provide the person with verbal information and any support printed material. Be sure to state the benefits of the program.

5. Listen, discuss and overcome objections.

The prospect will probably have some questions or objections. Questions will be regarding some additional details, while objections are obstacles to them deciding to buy. It is important that the seller listen and be able to respond with information and overcome any objections.

6. Close the sale.

Ideally, the employee can persuade the prospect to make a decision, for example, to join a league. If the person wants more time to decide, make sure the person takes information with them and their name and telephone number is obtained.

How important is the telephone?

Effectively handling telephone inquiries is an integral part of inside sales, as callers are frequently seeking to make a purchase such as booking a party, reserving a lane or joining a league. It is extremely important that your staff be trained on how to sell over the phone. You don't want your employees responding with, "Sorry, the person who handles that isn't here right now." That might send potential revenue away forever!

Worst case scenario, with that ineffective situation in mind, if your employees can not make a sale over the phone due to lack of knowledge or time, instruct them to get the name and phone number of anyone who is calling to make a purchase. Keep a special pad by the phone just for this purpose. Do not let any hot prospects get away! They might never return again.

How Do You Monitor Inside Sales?

The best way to monitor your inside sales efforts is MBWA — management by walking around. Ownership and management should spend time observing, and helping if needed, the inside sales process. This way you can see if it is being executed and how effective it is.

Second to MBWA will be actual results, such as signed league bowlers. It is recommended that for specific programs like leagues or special events that you create and display a chart showing the results progress. The chart would identify the name of the project and tally the sign-ups. The chart could also list every employee and show his/her results.

In regards to personal observation, your center could also use a mystery shopping service to evaluate the inside sales efforts when the owner and manager is not present.

How Do You Recognize Employee Performance?

A pat on the back goes a long way so you want to recognize and even possibly reward employees for a job well done. Verbal praise in a group setting is highly effective plus you could place congratulatory notes in the employees' pay envelopes. You could also structure an incentive in which cash or merchandise prizes are awarded for attaining specific inside sales objectives.

Communications Summary:

Through the Communications section, you have received the following guidance to effectively communicate and sell your league programs to your various target audiences.

- ✓ Develop and implement a league call-back/retention system
 - Retain current league bowlers
 - Contact dropouts from previous seasons
 - Host league appreciation events to create selling situations
- ✓ Conduct surveys, marketing research and customer satisfaction studies
- ✓ Sell through lane-to-lane/touching the tables
 - Matching programs to your targets
 - Overcoming objections
- ✓ Hire, train and understanding the roles of the Lane Ambassador and Team Lane Ambassadors
- ✓ Overview of the inside sales process