

League Bowler Development System

Staffing



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.

Staffing

In this section you will learn how to train your staff to ask for and close the sale.

In This Chapter:

- ✓ The four absolutes in the world of training
 - ✓ Pre-shift meetings and execution
 - ✓ Staff Incentives
-
- ✓ **The Four Absolutes in the World of Training**
 1. All training must be guest focused
 2. All training is not the same. There is a difference between “knowledge based” training and “skill based” training
 3. All training needs to be repeated
 4. All training is dynamic and must change to fit changing times, new products and multiple generations of team members

Let’s review each of these four absolutes.

First, when you train your staff to deliver your product or service, you are really saying, “this is how I want the guest to be treated. You are in effect saying that “on a highly consistent basis” this is what I would expect if I was a customer. This is the method, you the employee should expect if you were the customer. And that is the first element of training; expressing your VERY, VERY SPECIFIC goals, expectations and delivery mode to your employees.

Many progressive proprietors develop mission statements to express their customer service oriented approach. An example of a mission statement could be:

- Happy Lanes will deliver the highest level of customer service in endeavoring to make happy memories for all of our customers every time they visit our center.
- Happy Lanes will be the go to place for customers wishing to experience a higher level of service and will accept only the best. We will always strive to be the best at making our customers' experience the best it can be.
- Happy Lanes promise to our customers: Expect a valuable, memorable and happy experience. Our goal is to make sure they are smiling when they leave our center.



To learn more about developing a mission statement for your business and defining the standards for your guest's experience, be sure to review the Bowling University Online Module "Service Standards" at www.bpaa.com.

To achieve these standards, employees, the same as any athlete in any sport, have to understand their roles and how to execute them. Thus, each position needs to be trained to hone their "skills" as well as their "knowledge."

- **An example of knowledge training** might be focused on center and product knowledge.
- This type of training provides the employee with
 - An overview of the subject matter
 - General idea of how it works
 - **Acceptable standards of knowledge that you expect from employees:**

- **Example:** All employees will be expected to know about and answer questions referencing these topics
 - **Hours of operation**
 - **Location of bathrooms**
 - **All open play programs and pricing**
 - **Birthday party programs**
 - **Company party programs and**
 - **NEW LEAGUES YOU WILL BE STARTING and**
 - Why is a league bowler important
 - What is his/her value to the company and your future?
- In this knowledge based example, we aren't really training people how to deliver the information, but rather are "telling them what the information is and to remember it."
- Unfortunately, this is as far as many proprietors go in training employees. They make the fatal step of assuming that all employees will deliver the information with the same kind and caring attitude that they have.

This is where **skill based training** comes to play and where the very best companies excel.

An example of skill training for League Development might be a curriculum consisting of:

1. Getting the prospect to start saying YES
2. Qualifying league prospects, what to look for
3. Matching a league prospect to a product
4. Answering questions about costs
5. Frequently asked questions about joining a league and its answers
6. Objections to joining a league and overcoming those objections
7. Answering equipment questions
8. Role playing: each employee will take turns being a customer and an employee

So let's build a "starter SKILL level" curriculum for your center which will give you the opportunity to test the curriculum and make modifications that suit your style:

1. **Getting to YES**
2. **Qualifying the prospects**
3. **Creating a problem**
4. **Offer to solve the problem**
5. **Find out objections**
6. **Systematically dismantle every objection**
7. **Ask for the order**
8. **Get contact information**
9. **Ask for the order**
10. **Promise to call in a few days**
11. **Ask for the order again**

Here is an example of a dialogue that could take place in your center:

- Getting the customer to say YES; Most good sales people will always start their conversation **FIRST by introducing him/herself and welcoming the customer to the center and then beginning with phrases like:**
 - How are you?
 - How are you doing?
 - Hope you're having a good day?
 - Nice day out, isn't it?
- By asking a series of questions that we know the customer will automatically answer "yes" to, we are getting the customer in a mindset of continuing to say "YES."
- Once we get the customer into this mind set, we can begin our slow and thoughtful approach



Your approach always starts with a series of questions to find out if the "Guest" is a "Prospect" and could he or she become a League Bowler?

This is your progression series of questions (dependent upon the segment you are speaking to), **for example, we are talking to a Dad and his son:**

You: Hi, my name is Fred, welcome to Happy Lanes. Is this your first time here? (QUALIFIER)

Dad: Uh NO, my son and I come here occasionally, but he wanted to bowl today. (QUALIFIER)

You: Well it is a cold day out isn't it, nice to be inside where it's warm. **(SAYING YES)**

Dad: Yeah, sure.

You: I just noticed; is your son using a house ball? **(SET UP STAWMAN PROBLEM: SON IS MISSING SOMETHING, DOESN'T EVEN HAVE A BALL.)**

Dad: Yeah, we don't come very often so we just use what's around.

You: Do you have your own ball?

Dad: Me? Nope, I had one years ago when I used to bowl in a league but it's been years. Just too long.

You just found out that dad bowled in a league and junior doesn't have his own bowling ball. (GUEST IS NOW A PROSPECT)

You: Sir, I don't know if you know this but we have a special program for dads, moms and their kids where they can bowl for free in a short season program and get a new bowling ball for just \$4 to \$7 per week depending on the ball **(PRODUCT INTRODUCTION TO SOLVE PROBLEM YOU CREATED: NO BALL FOR JUNIOR: WATCH PROSPECTS FACE FOR REACTION)**

Dad: Nah, it sounds like a commitment to me. No way.

You: Well it is. It's a commitment to spend just **8** sessions with your son on Sunday at 4pm starting on (day

date and time). Here is the information. **Hand person the flyer.**

Dad: No long time frame and free bowling? You're kidding me! Free bowling? **(RESPONSIVE AND INCREDULOUS = STRONG PROSPECT)**

You: Nope, it's a program that lots of folks like you are taking advantage of just because of its great value and because it gives parents the opportunity to spend time with their children. **(BENEFITS)**

Dad: Well, I have to think about it

You: **Ok, but could I get your name and phone number?** You guys seem so nice and we already have lots of people interested in this, I would hate to see you miss out on the experience. How about if I add you and your son as a team, reserve a spot for you and then I'll give you a call in a few days, after you think it over. **(FEAR OF MISSING OUT)**

Dad: Well Ok, but no promises! **(OVERCOME NONCOMMITTAL RESPONSE BY ASKING FOR SOMETHING ELSE)**

You: Certainly. Is this your cell number? Ok, if you would like to give me your email, I can add it to our VIP Parents list and even if you don't take advantage of this program I can send you money-saving offers and free games. But I sure hope you and your son join. There will be lots of kids around his age and we'll even throw in a few fun bowling tips as well. **(MORE BENEFITS)**

Be sure to get father and son's name and give him center number and then give him your contact information.

Time for Employee Trainee Test:

Note: You can add questions to this test or delete questions as you see fit. You can also create other scenarios and ask the team to solve the scenario **MAKING SURE THEY COVER THE ELEVEN STEPS OUTLINED ABOVE.**

- **Would you have tried to close this sale differently?**
 - (Is the trainee creative or just doesn't want to follow instructions?)
 - I would have sold it this way

- **What is the step that comes after the "hellos and the yesses"?**
 - **Answer: setting up or creating problem (examples to probe)**
 - Son doesn't have a ball
 - Dad doesn't spend enough time with kid
 - Kid just moved, maybe doesn't have enough friends
 - Kid doesn't play any other sports
 - Can you think of other problems you can offer?
- **Why will your solution satisfy the prospect?**

- **What are the benefits of this program vs the features? Can you list more?**

Benefits	Features

- **What was the key selling benefit to Dad in this scenario?**

- **What other selling benefits would be important to ANY Dad?**

- Spending time with family... because life is so busy we almost have to schedule time to be with our kids.
- Seeing child achieve and happy...because we all want our children to have high self-esteem and feel good about themselves.
- Do something different and get out of the house...because how much time do you want your child to watch TV and play Xbox?
- To have good friends...because this could be a chance to meet new friends with good influences; kids who play team sports get along with other kids better and learn what "TEAM" means.

The absolute key here is you must monitor this effort. The keys to monitoring are:

- Surprise role playing tests
- Taking written tests
- Mystery shoppers
- Grading employee salary and bonuses based on performance
- Constant, constant emphasis on your role, your center's mission and your employees commitment to excellence



All new employees should go through this type of training program...and retraining every new league season.

✓ **Pre-Shift Meetings and Execution**

- What is it?
- How to develop it?
- How to implement it?

The pre-shift meeting was pioneered by the legendary retailer Wal-Mart but more recently has been utilized in the restaurant industry. It is a simple five to ten minute meeting where the entire shift gets together (before the shift starts) to share information and establish certain goals for the shift. An example of daily goals might be:

- Signing up X# of bowlers
- Getting X# of new data base names
- Getting X# of open play bowlers to bowl for an additional half hour or hour
- Selling X# of your food special

The key element is to have a goal that everyone agrees on (and the owner or manager signs off on) and then to work toward it.

- Once everyone working the shift agrees to **at least two goals**, then the goals are written down and posted by the time clock (or other convenient place for all to see).
- Whenever an employee achieves one of the goals, he or she writes down the accomplishment on the appropriate form (**See Exhibit 5.1**).
- At the end of the shift, everyone checks the results on the form and if verified by the manager, everyone gets credits.
- The shift that achieves the best results (gets the most credits) at the end of the period, gets a reward which could be (just some examples):
 - A dinner at the center or a local restaurant
 - An iTunes gift card for each member for \$10
 - A free car wash
 - Tickets to a movie



Implementing this program should be easy, fun and will create some friendly competition between the shifts. However, the goals must be realistic and of course measured and management must monitor this very carefully in order for it to work effectively.

In addition to the process of pre-shift meetings above, there is a lot we can learn from our friends in the restaurant industry, and not just because more of our sales are in the area of food and beverage.

According to restaurant expert David Scott Peters, **a pre-shift meeting is critical to the long term success of any service business.** While the following example is tailored specifically for a restaurant, it more than applies to our business as well.

Your shift meeting notes are your blueprint to a successful pre-shift meeting. Your notes are really an educational or communications tool. They communicate the following and more:

- Features of the day, including additional notes regarding the features
- Any promotions you have running
- Any contests or incentives you are running
- Policy changes or planned enforcement
- What the daily side work or sanitation duties are and who they will be assigned to
- Tips of the day, from up-selling and menu knowledge, service tips to cooking skills and people skills to self-help

Tips for creating and using shift meeting notes:

- 1) **Spice it up** – no matter what you plan on communicating, you should make it fun and interesting.
- 2) **Remember it's a legal document** – you should keep all pre-shift meeting notes in a binder so that if you are ever in a labor board hearing, you have proof that you had a policy in place.
- 3) **Represent you** – make sure your managers know that this is not a place to doodle or place personal commentary. Rather this is a training document and must be treated as such.
- 4) **15 minutes** – conduct the pre-shift meeting 15 minutes before the shift starts. Require your staff to come dressed and ready. That does not mean wet hair, brush in hand and uniform slung over the arm.
- 5) **Treat the team as equals** – all too often, management only runs a pre-shift meeting for the front-of-house employees. No matter your reasoning for not including those in the back of the house, you are setting yourself up for creating the “us-versus-them” mentality. You are basically telling your back-of-house employees they are not important. If you have to, run a second pre-shift in the kitchen. They need to be communicated with, too, you know.
- 6) **Post it** – some restaurants have staggered starts for each department to save on labor costs. That means that there might not be a time for all the staff to huddle up for a meeting. The answer is to write up your notes and post them. Then require each employee to read the notes and initial that they have done so.

- 7) **Keep 'em** – keep your notes, especially after they have been posted and initialed. Remember, this could be used in a labor hearing or to dispel the old, “I didn’t know” excuse.

- 8) **Repetition is a good thing** – whenever you are introducing a new menu item, a new policy, etc., you will want to make sure it is covered every shift, every day for at least a week. This will ensure that every employee has heard the message at least once if they are part-time and that you have been crystal clear with everyone else.

Exhibit 5.1 Pre-Shift Meeting

GOAL # 1 SHIFT (day____ date____ shift____)

Team member	Action: Describe what you have done in detail for specific goal of:
SUSIE	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
HOWIE	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
MELODY	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
ARLO	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Manager Verification. (Signature, Time and Date)

GOAL # 2 SHIFT: Shift Meeting (day____ date____ shift _____)

Team member	Action: Describe what you have done in detail for specific goal of: _____
SUSIE	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
HOWIE	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
MELODY	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
ARLO	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Manager Verification. (Signature, Time and Date)

✓ Staff Incentives

While specific examples of staff incentives are covered in the Marketing Section of the League Bowler Development System, we would like to speak to incentives in this section from a strategic viewpoint.

In our business model, most of our team members are hourly staff that are earning entry to mid-level retail wages. Coupled with that, the majority of these team members are part-time as well. For most, that means that the vast majority of your staff could leave your facility and find equivalent work for the same (or more) wages.

So why do team members stay (or not stay) at your facility? While there are many factors that fall outside of the scope of this project, creating incentives that satisfy both intrinsic and extrinsic needs play a big role.

Design your incentive program by thinking of your employees as belonging to one of three groups. The combination of knowledge, skills, attitude and natural abilities creates a wonderful mix of individuals in each organization. The performance of each person in any specific position can vary due to these and other factors. An outstanding incentive program can help address these areas by applying a blend of factors to help individuals rise to new levels of performance.

Here's a suggested macro view of your team to consider when designing your program, which divides your team into three categories:

- **Your Top 5-10%** - Typically, your highest performers are highly-motivated and highly competent. Outstanding incentive programs will reward and recognize these employees as models of outstanding performance so that your middle 80-90% wants to emulate them. As your most valuable employees, you will also want to help these top performers reach even higher levels of success, job satisfaction, and company loyalty.
- **Your Middle 80-90%** - The middle performers in your company commonly offer the greatest opportunity for improving overall performance. An outstanding employee incentive program helps to build motivation and skills that will help propel an employee to new and higher levels of performance. Outstanding programs are designed to significantly bring into focus what's important, and to keep that focus there, in a way that is fun, positive and highly

motivating. By quickly rewarding each higher level of performance, great incentive programs help your employees to culture new habits for higher and higher levels of performance.

- **Your Bottom 5-10%** - Some of your lowest performers may simply be lacking the focus, skills, training or motivation to perform at a higher level. An outstanding incentive program will create an extra impetus for these people to move into a higher gear. The presence of the incentive program may reveal those employees who are not currently well-suited to their positions.

Avoid the Common Incentive Traps

By taking care when designing your program, you can help avoid the common pitfalls that hurt incentive program success. Try to avoid these traps:

- **The contest trap** - This is a scheme that pours your budget into a few prizes for the top performers and leaves the rest of your team without a reward. Sometimes it's hard to resist creating a first-second-third prize scenario; after all, it's so easy to budget. But the results can leave employees who poured their heart into increasing their performance feeling unappreciated. Better than a contest, offer the same rewards to everyone who meets a certain goal, or a variable number of reward points based on performance. This type of program levels the playing field and treats all employees like winners, and invites everyone to perform well and be rewarded.
- **The one-gift-fits-all trap** - Here's another trap that's easy to fall into. A manager or management team decides on a great reward to offer employees for a certain goal. This is so appealing because it's so easy; no muss, no fuss. The only problem is that not everyone has the same tastes. It may seem "obvious" to management that everyone will want a video camera or a dinner at a certain restaurant or a vacation at a certain destination. But you immediately discount anyone who isn't motivated by the chosen reward. A better solution is to give reward points which participants can use for small gifts or large gifts, for merchandise or travel. You can highlight certain selections from the reward collection as examples of what they might

earn, but leave it up to each participant to select the gift he or she might like best.

- **The money trap** - Someone may come up with a brilliant idea: why not just give money? It's easy, it's simple, and no one has to decide anything. After all, everyone loves money, right? The only problem is that people are typically more motivated by a specific item that appeals to them than by the amount of money that pays for that item. And people get more excited and motivated about specific items that they see in a reward collection than by the money it takes to buy that item. You might tell people that if they work real hard for three months and accomplish a special goal, you'll give them an extra \$2 a day. Or you can tell them that if they accomplish a certain goal in 90 days they'll get enough points to get their choice of a digital camera, a DVD player or one of 100 other great rewards. Which one do you think will work better?
- **The gift certificate trap** - This is just another version of the money trap (please see above).

Design a Great Incentive Program

We suggest that you design your program with these principles in mind:

- **Keep it simple** - Avoid complicated schemes and long lists of goals. Select one goal (or very few, very important goals) and put your focus there. Over time, you can update the goals, or exchange some goals for other goals.
- **Use reward points** - Instead of rewarding with specific gifts, award points that your employees can redeem for their choice of awards. Use an excellent incentive company to manage the gift collection and shipping for you.
- **Design a program that everyone can win** - Avoid giving awards to only the top performer or a few top performers—or similar schemes. Design a program that everyone can win if everyone performs. This doesn't mean that you should set easier goals; it means that you should invite everyone to perform at an excellent level, and then reward that performance.

- **Focus on the positive** - Make the program fun by emphasizing the positive, cheering people on and celebrating success. Use the success of individuals in the program as an excuse to have meetings and events at which you can review the goals, applaud individual successes, and help others learn how they can rise in excellence.

10 Steps for Creating Your Employee Incentive Program

Chances are that you already have at least partially completed some of the steps below.

1. **Select Your Goals** - Your goals may be to increase fall bowler count, increase food or bar sales, improve customer service or a wide variety of goals. You may choose to have several goals, and are likely to have different goals for different groups of people.
2. **Decide how you will measure the achievement of your goals** - You may use a variety of metrics, such as customer satisfaction ratings, levels of revenue, first year league bowlers, etc.
3. **Decide your award budget for the achievement of each goal** - For example, \$20 for every first year league bowler and \$10 for every returning league bowler.
4. **Decide what you will reward** - You will want to offer merchandise, and possibly travel, or even customized items. Outstanding programs commonly avoid cash or cash equivalents such as gift cards so that the rewards become specific goals that each person selects, such as a video camera or a weekend vacation package.
5. **Determine how you will promote the program** - Decide how you will get people excited about the program and how you'll keep the enthusiasm going.
6. **Secure budget approval** - You can make this easier on yourself by creating a list of different results and charting your costs and benefits at each level of success. If you can show that it's a win-win at various levels of performance, it will be easier to secure approval.

7. **Finalize Details** - Decide who's eligible to participate, how participants will select their rewards and define/finalize the program rules.

8. **Choose a start date**

9. **Kick off the program in a big way!** Get people excited about the program at a kickoff meeting or special announcement, use emails, posters, newsletters, etc.

10. **Keep the excitement alive!** Get people more and more excited by announcing the successes of your top achievers. Let people know what's possible by sharing the success stories of their counterparts. Although your biggest promotion should be at the beginning of the program, it's important to keep promoting the program. This is where program managers often neglect their program because they get busy with other things. By pre-scheduling your program promotion, you can keep the program running at full speed with the least amount of effort. Use the success of your best performers to inspire others. Keep it fun, upbeat and positive, and enjoy the success!

Staffing Summary

Every member of your center staff plays an important part in your league development program. It is essential that staff members are trained properly and understand their roles to ensure that they know what they are selling and how to identify and engage league prospects in the sales conversation.

In the staffing section, you learned how to:

- ✓ Train your center staff to be guest focused:
 - Knowledge based training
 - Skill based training
- ✓ Conduct pre-shift meetings
- ✓ Develop and implement staff incentive programs