



FIVE STEPS TO TAKE BEFORE BUILDING OR MODERNIZING

Thinking about putting an addition on your bowling center or building a new one? Proper planning is critical in order to achieve the highest possible return on your investment. Here are some key steps to take before breaking ground.

1. DETERMINE YOUR GOALS

Start by clarifying what you're hoping to achieve with your building project. Do you want to have additional staff to help carry the workload? Would you like to have more freedom to spend time away from the center? Would you like to make more money? Are you looking to increase the value of your business for a future sale? Gaining clarity about your goals will help determine specific parameters for your project — or if building is the right course of action for you at all.

2. CONSIDER THE LOCATION

Whether you're starting from scratch or adding to an existing center, location will influence a number of factors pertaining to your design. What entertainment attractions already exist nearby (and which are lacking)? Will local zoning, your property's size, and parking requirements accommodate your plans? Will a remodeling project require updates to the rest of the facility to bring it up to current codes?

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3. PLAN TO PROVIDE THE BEST ENTERTAINMENT EXPERIENCE IN YOUR MARKET

A market feasibility report will help you decide which additional revenue streams to consider for your center. If you're modernizing an existing center, the report might suggest removing some lanes to add these attractions. In fact, new family entertainment centers with fewer lane beds are currently doing three to eight times the sales of a traditional center. The goal will be to maximize your income per square foot and provide the very best customer experience available in your market.

4. DEVELOP A REALISTIC BUDGET

Your budget will determine the scope of work that can happen. Construction isn't cheap, but the investment can pay off in spades. If your budget comes up short of your dream plans, remember that there's nothing wrong with upgrading your center in phases. Use the additional revenue you make from your first addition to fund future additional revenue streams.

5. ASSEMBLE A TEAM EARLY ON

Don't go it alone. The most successful projects are those where proprietors assemble a team of professionals with experience developing hundreds of bowling-based entertainment centers. Even if you're an excellent business owner, planning and designing a new FEC or major remodel may be outside your field of expertise. Getting a center construction project right takes a team of experienced, talented professionals.

TAKE IT FROM OTHER PROPRIETORS

The Huish family has been in the family entertainment business for more than 60 years, offering such attractions as miniature golf, batting cages, bumper cars, flight simulators, laser tag, rides, and more. In 2016, for the first time, Scott Huish's family entertainment center added bowling to the mix.

"As a company, we're always improving and growing," says Scott Huish, owner-operator of Tukwila Family Fun Center in Seattle. "We wanted to increase year-round attendance with a cold-weather attraction and increase our corporate events business. Bowling is great because it's something everyone, from three- to 83-year-olds, can do."

"Brunswick brought us a one-stop buying experience, and the team at Brunswick is so knowledgeable," Huish adds. "The planning guide they offer was very instrumental in the success of the project; it helped me know exactly what was required in terms of square footage, height, and so on. Brunswick aligned me with industry experts like architects, flooring suppliers, and sound equipment suppliers. If I could go back and do anything differently, I would have brought the Brunswick team into the planning process even earlier and included them in every planning meeting."



Major modernization projects are becoming more commonplace in the FEC space, and in the opinion of proprietors like Sarah Purdy of Ten Pin Alley, these projects aren't just popular — they're necessary.

"Our building was 60 years old, and the mechanicals needed to be upgraded," says Purdy, owner of the Hilliard, Ohio, center that underwent an extensive remodeling, adding 18,000 sq ft including eight boutique bowling lanes. "Our market conditions supported an expansion. We were getting to the point where we were turning events away due to lack of space, and we wanted to provide a scratch kitchen, which meant more equipment and more square footage."

Purdy notes the advantage of having a knowledgeable team in her corner.

"Working one-on-one with the Brunswick team was an extremely important step in our expansion process," says Purdy. "The knowledge and resources I

was exposed to accelerated the definition of our concept. Their team introduced me to key players who would assist us, and it allowed us to see examples of a finished product, so we knew exactly what to expect of this process."

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