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I came away from the RSA Convention and Trade Show in Reno feeling excited about the industry, where it is going and the enthusiasm prevalent among attendees old and new. Not only is there a lot of interest in roller skating, there is plenty of action in the development of new roller skating-anchored centers.

The “evolution” of skating is on with numerous new centers leading the way; launching new concepts in rink design and merging attractions that are complimentary with each other. The new centers are raising the bar for an entire industry.

The roller skating market is broad, crossing generations with a target market of ages 5 to 55 years old. The multi-generational activity creates feel-good stories and conjures up fond memories about roller skating.

Embrace the future of roller skating and enjoy your success

The amusement and roller skating industry is ready for a growth cycle as recessionary times have proved families do not have to venture far from home for fun. The trend will continue as the economy recovers because lifestyles have changed; close to home is “in” again.

However, the consumer today is demanding new and fresh concepts. Their choice for dining and play mirrors their lifestyle. In the technology age, the pace at which people live life influences everything they do.

Businesses successful in creating “a sense of place” and a functional interactive social environment are enjoying unprecedented success, like Panera Bread Co., Lucky Strike Bowling Centers, The Movie Tavern and Jon’s Incredible Pizza.

The amusement and entertainment industry is a multi-billion-dollar per year business. The specific market under which roller skating falls generates annual revenues in excess of \$15B. There has been a disparate growth in the number of actual actors in the industry in correlation to the growth in revenue generated. During the five-year span between 2006 and 2011, the number of businesses grew only three percent while overall

industry revenue grew by over 30 percent. The revenue growth is attributed to concerted efforts to consolidate core market attractors.

A prime example of this is the resurgence of bowling as a “cool” activity. Lucky Strike Bowl, Main Event and 300 Bowl have all done an outstanding job of remodeling the attractors of the bowling industry. However, what has been accomplished is the launch of an entertainment center that features bowling as a core activity attractor. Combined

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with upscale food selections and full upscale cocktail service, these facilities have played a key role (although they are not wholly responsible) in the increased revenue associated with the collective market. Other organizations have experienced similar success by repackaging themselves and

capitalizing on other socio-economic lifestyle (SEL) trends.

The roller skating industry has proven to be recession-resistant. Roller skating is experiencing a resurgence in popularity as new and remodeled centers like Sk8 City, Rigby’s Entertainment Complex, Starlite Skating Center, and The Castle Fun Center are re-shaping the industry. The new and remodeled centers offer multiple attractions and are more about entertainment and atmosphere than just skating around the rink. They are breathing a new kind of life into roller skating. That is good for everyone in the industry.

The new skating center design includes cashless POS and card systems, state-of-the-art lighting, sound and video systems and glow-skating. It also includes a new café concept featuring healthy, fun foods and arcades filled with the latest and best video and redemption games, private party rooms and birthday party facilities that are among the best in the amusement and entertainment industry. Added attractions include mini-bowling suites, laser tag arenas, playground systems, climbing walls, inflatables, karting raceways, bumper cars, and batting cages.

When we examine concepts that have stood the test of time, we find some commonalities. First, food and beverage is at least 25-30 percent of total sales when the F&B portion of birthday party and group sales are included. Second, party and group sales are a substantial portion of the business. And when it comes to family and adult-oriented concepts, the attractions are multi-player and multi-participant that facilitate highly interactive social encounters between the members of the group.

The human beings are what make the activity and social experiences change from one visit to the next. We call it repeat appeal. Roller skating helps facilitate the social experience. That accounts for why roller skating, bowling, laser tag and miniature golf have stood the test of time.

The bottom line is that to be truly profitable, new roller skating centers need to be developed with concepts and programs that are fun, have long-term repeat appeal and don’t require major capital investments in new attractions. Both new and older roller skating centers can fulfill all of the above, and I am excited for all of you as we go forward into the future.



The unique exterior of the new Sk8 City in Pooler, Ga., draws attention.