

THE EXPERIENCE EDGE

The Leaders Who Win All Agree on One Thing: **Experience Comes First**

Great businesses don't win because their product is cheaper or more plentiful. They win because they understand how experiences make people feel.

As P. T. Barnum put it:

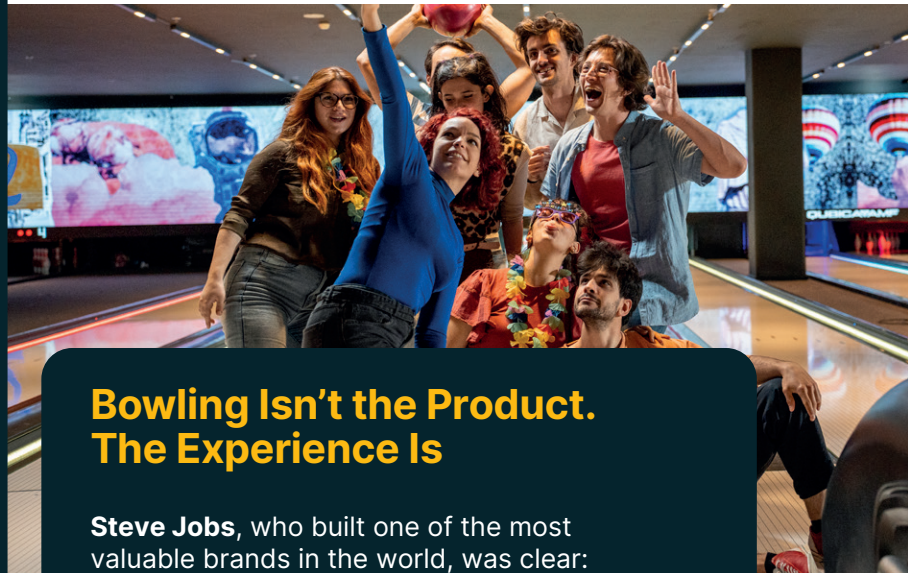


“The noblest art is that of making others happy.”

Nearly 150 years later, that truth defines the Experience Economy, now valued at

\$2.1 TRILLION

and reshaping how guests choose where (and how) to spend their time. Bowling is perfectly positioned to win here, but only if it's treated as an **experience**, not a commodity.



Bowling Isn't the Product. The Experience Is

Steve Jobs, who built one of the most valuable brands in the world, was clear:



“You've got to start with the customer experience and work backward.”

That mindset applies directly to bowling centers. Guests don't come for lanes alone. They come to celebrate birthdays, unwind after work, build team chemistry, compete with friends, and create memories. Centers that design from the **guest's point of view** instead of from operations outward are the ones capturing more repeat visits, higher spend, and stronger loyalty.

Friction Is the Enemy of Premium Experiences

Jesse Cole, owner of the Savannah Bananas, built a cult following entertainment brand by eliminating friction:



“Every friction point is an opportunity to create a wow moment.”

In bowling centers, friction often looks like:

- Waiting without engagement
- Confusing scorekeeping or processes
- Impersonal service
- Technical issues that kill momentum
- Experiences that feel identical for every group

Premium operators don't accept friction as “just part of bowling.” They either **remove it** or **transform it into delight**. That's how bowling becomes entertainment instead of a transaction.



Emotion Is the Score That Actually Matters

As **Maya Angelou** famously reminded us:



“People may not remember what you did, but they will remember how you made them feel.”

Guests won't remember:

- Their exact score
- Which lane they were on
- How many frames they bowled

They will remember:

- Laughing with friends
- Feeling welcomed and recognized
- Feeling celebrated
- Feeling like the night was planned for them

Centers that design for **emotion first** create memories, and memories drive repeat business.

Personalization Is How Experiences Become ShareWorthy

Bowling shouldn't feel onesizefitsall. A date night, a birthday party, a corporate event, and open play all deserve different energy. Simple personalization creates outsized impact:

- Names on scoring screens
- Curated music and lighting
- Thoughtful pacing of food and drinks
- Staff interactions that feel intentional
- Experiences designed around why the group came

As **Sam Walton** once said:

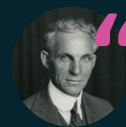


“Make every customer feel like the only customer.”

That's what turns a game into a story worth telling.

Premium Is Not Expensive — It's Intentional

Henry Ford captured it best:



“Quality means doing it right when no one is looking.”

Premium bowling experiences aren't built on flashy upgrades alone.

They're built on:

- Smooth transitions
- Clear communication
- Clean, immersive environments
- Anticipating needs instead of reacting
- Consistent attention to detail

Thoughtful experiences justify higher spend without discounts.

What Winning Bowling Centers Do Differently

Centers that capture their share of the Experience Economy:

- Design from the guest's perspective
- Eliminate friction instead of explaining it
- Treat every group like the main event
- See food, bowling, service, and atmosphere as one product
- Create moments guests want to share and repeat

Or as P. T. Barnum summed it up:



“Whatever you do, do it with all your might.”



The Outcome: Demand, Not Discounts

When the experience is right:

- Guests stay longer
- Groups upgrade more often
- Birthday bookings turn into traditions
- Word of mouth replaces advertising spend

People don't say: **“We went bowling.”**
They say **“You have to check this place out.”**

YOUR TAKEAWAY

The Experience Economy isn't coming.
It's already here.

The question is no longer *if* bowling centers can compete, it's *who will act first*.

Start with one question:

“What will guests remember about us tomorrow?”

Design for that and the rest follows.

Thank you for participating in our Real Talk Live Session and being a part of the QubicaAMF On-Lane Entertainment EduSeries.

Watch your inbox for more great content coming soon.