

# NEXT-GENERATION DESIGNS ON TOMMOROW



Jupiter Bowl

## CENTER RENOVATIONS WITH AN EYE ON THE FUTURE

BY DANIEL P. SMITH

**F**or an industry rooted in tradition, bowling has undergone a considerable shift in the last 10-15 years. From boutique centers and an increased focus on food and beverage to the surge of FEC elements and the rapid beat of technology, today's new and renovated bowling centers have evolved into brighter, fresher spaces with a 21st century edge and, perhaps more telling, an unshakable strategic sensibility given the current economic climate.

"Next Generation Design" showcases this shift, highlighting four centers that have brought progressive, forward thinking, and modern elements into their design reflecting today as well as the future.

**TECHNOLOGY PUSHES DESIGN & OPERATIONS**

**West Seattle Bowl**

Seattle, Washington

**Breakthrough: Changing traffic flow through online reservations and technology.**

In tech-savvy Seattle, the throbbing beat of technology is embraced — even flaunted — a reality that gave the 32-lane West Seattle Bowl all the reason in the world to push the high-tech envelope with its 2005 renovation.



**West Seattle Bowl**

At the time, “high tech” for many bowling centers meant a website. Online reservations, social networking and the like had only trickled into bowling. For the then-57-year-old West Seattle Bowl, co-owner Andy Carl and his colleagues figured a shot of compelling technology

could do much to jumpstart revenue, showcase the center’s merits, and appease the local clientele.

“We’ve had a progressive vision, so it was a natural fit to bring technology into the center. We felt we knew where things were headed and worked to take advantage of it,” Carl says.

Alongside changing the center’s physical décor, the center welcomed Brunswick’s Internet Reservation System, which allows patrons to select their lanes, add food components, type the bowlers’ names into the system from home and select the bumper system for their lanes.

Immediately, the system produced results. In the first 18 months, West Seattle Bowl captured \$300,000 in revenue through its internet reserva-



**West Seattle Bowl**

tions, which accounted for 60 percent of the center’s lineage. Not needing a staffer to man the phones, Carl estimates at least \$12,000 in labor savings. To date, the system has hosted over 3,000 reservations and now claims 95 percent of the lineage, which helps the staff focus on the center’s current customers.

“And the beauty of this is that we get data that helps further target our marketing efforts,” Carl says.

Though not technically a design element, the technology’s presence has nevertheless influenced the center’s layout, traffic flow, operations and overall vibe, a fact not lost on the center’s ownership team. A kiosk tied to the internet reservations systems adjacent to the front desk, visible immediately upon entry, frees up the body of the front desk and allows the typical customer to function in the familiar tech-heavy world.

“How you make the building more comfortable has to do with how you position technology to help on the administrative side,” Carl asserts.