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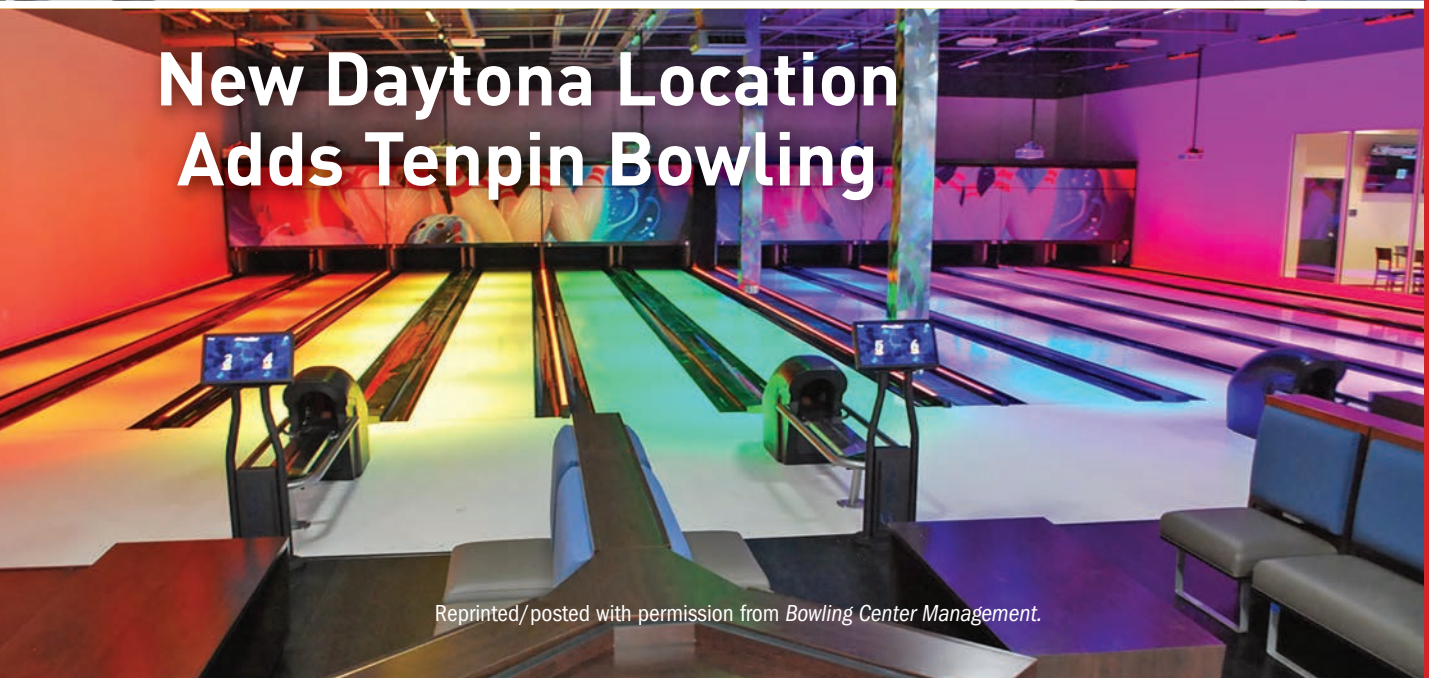
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GAMETIME'S NEXT EVOLUTION



GameTime's
President
and CEO, Mike
Abecassis

New Daytona Location Adds Tenpin Bowling



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The newest GameTime facility, located in Daytona Beach, Fla., features 35,000 feet of family attractions, as well as a solid food-and-beverage program.

Guests for Life

That's what GameTime hopes to create with its mix of fun attractions and cut-above food-and-beverage menu.

By Barry Sparks

THE FUTURE LOOKS bright for GameTime, a South Florida-based chain of entertainment centers. The company recently opened its fifth flagship location in Daytona Beach. Other flagship locations include Miami, Tampa, Fort Myers and Ocoee.

"We were very excited about opening our Daytona location," says Mike Abecassis, President and Chief Executive Officer for GameTime. "We are extremely happy with the way the center has worked out."

The 35,000-sq.-ft. facility features a full-service restaurant, a full liquor bar, more than 60 flat-screen televisions, a mega arcade with more than 100 games and 12 lanes of regulation bowling.

Abecassis says GameTime developed prototypes for 25,000-sq.-ft. and 35,000-sq.-ft. facilities about two years

ago. The additional space at Daytona presented the opportunity to add the 12 lanes of traditional bowling.

"Bowling will be purely entertainment," he says. "We will not have any leagues. We decided to go with 12 lanes because that's how many lanes we think we need to be at capacity during peak times. Our goal was not to fill the void in regard to the number of lanes in the area."

The 12 lanes feature string-operated pinsetting machines, which cost less than traditional machines and typically require less maintenance.

"Our customers don't care whether our pinsetters are string operated or not," says Abecassis. "Their main focus is fun."

Daytona is the first GameTime location to offer traditional bowling. Three of the other four centers have mini-bowling.



The new Daytona location is the first GameTime to include traditional tenpin bowling, with equipment provided by Global Bowling Inc. Mike Abecassis says it is being offered as another fun attraction; no leagues will be developed.

"Mini-bowling has worked well for us," Abecassis says. "We installed four lanes in our first center, six in our second center and eight in our third center. For us, bowling is a component of our centers. It's another offering in our game format. It's part of the experience, not the entire experience."

Abecassis says all forms of bowling are great fun: "Bowling engages people. It's a fantastic way for friends and family to interact."

GameTime Daytona follows the organization's prototype formula, where the food-and-beverage operation occupies 6,000 to 7,500 square feet, a certain portion is devoted to infrastructure such as offices and rest rooms, and the remaining space is dedicated to games. Color schemes, center design and game layouts are all based on the prototype.

Future plans call for opening GameTime locations in Kissimmee (the first quarter of 2019), Clearwater (the second quarter of 2019) and Plantation (2020).

GameTime's business strategy has been to keep its locations fairly close together in Florida, with the goal of creating a best-of-region brand.

"The proximity generates marketing synergy, training and management efficiencies, and makes it easier to rotate games on a regular basis among locations," Abecassis explains.



Looking ahead, "We see all positive signs for GameTime's future. Our formula has worked in good times and in bad times. We are excited to continue our growth."

Abecassis has been leading GameTime since 2010, when he purchased three entertainment centers from Sega Japan and rebranded them. He is known as a strategic thinker and team builder, with strengths in business development, business evaluation, negotiation, operating procedures and management.

The 43-year-old CEO, who started in the coin-op business in November 1990, describes himself as "a high school dropout who figured out how to make a living."

He says he has earned a Ph.D. in the school of hard knocks by working hard, making good decisions and learning from each experience.

"Every experience prepares you for the next challenge," he observes.

At one point, Abecassis operated games in 80 bowl-



Mike Abecassis is the President and Chief Executive Officer of GameTime, which has prototypes for both 25,000 and 35,000-sq.-ft. facilities.

ing centers. He also has been involved in the building of 70 family entertainment centers worldwide.

Abecassis has benefited from a strong work ethic that he says he got from his father, who worked as a mechanical engineer for Jaguar. His family left Morocco and resettled in Canada before coming to the United States in 1975, when Abecassis was younger than 2 years old.

He says he was fortunate to stumble upon something he was good at early in his career. He is technically inclined, with the ability to fix just about anything mechanical or electrical. This skill served him well in the coin-op business.

"It's like the old saying goes, 'The harder I work, the luckier I get,'" says Abecassis, who typically is in his office at 5 a.m. "I put high demands on myself."

Abecassis's business philosophy is based on long-term planning, learning from every mistake and providing outstanding customer service.

"Today, we make more right decisions than wrong decisions," he says. "For 15 years, however, we had a bankruptcy exercise once a year. That's when we asked ourselves what decisions would we have to make if we were facing bankruptcy. When you are in a dire situation, you can't afford to make bad decisions."

He says companies tend to make their worst decisions in the best of times, and their best decisions in the worst of times. He says the bankruptcy exercise has outgrown its usefulness because the company no longer makes bad decisions.

While GameTime may seem similar to a Chuck E. Cheese or a Dave & Buster's, the core customer is different for each organization, according to Abecassis.

"We offer affordable family entertainment," he stresses. "Chuck E. Cheese is geared toward a younger customer, while Dave & Buster's focuses on adults. A 25 to 34-year-old single male acts very different than a 25 to 34-year-old male who is married and has a family. Their state of mind and the world they live in are very different. What they do and how they act when they are in an entertainment center are very different."

Adds Abecassis: "We are not the place to go to do shots with friends, but we are the place to go on a football Sunday. We want to be thought of as the place to go to view any special sporting event. GameTime is the perfect spot to cheer on your favorite teams during the season."

GameTime televises sports of all kinds, ranging from the NFL to the UFC. It also features a number of pay-per-view specials with no cover charge. Its \$5 Football Specials, available during live NFL and NCAA games, are extremely popular. The \$5 specials include burgers, chili, six wings, Samuel Adams beer and more.

Abecassis says he always makes decisions with GameTime's core customer in mind. When it comes to games, he usually takes himself out of the equation.

"I typically never play a game to decide if I want to purchase it," he says. "I don't want to have an emotional connection to it. I prefer to watch others play the game. I want to see their emotional responses."

Abecassis's philosophy in regard to games is to have plenty of them. He points out that GameTime's game selection is similar to many other centers, with 50 or so games, but instead of having one popular

"Down the Clown" game, GameTime may have three or four.

"We never lose sight of the fact that games are our main attraction," he says. "It's important to have games available when customers want to play. Customers don't want to wait to play the most popular games."

Abecassis says, as an example, the most "Hot Shot" basketball games he has seen at most entertainment centers is two. GameTime's Ocoee location has four and Daytona features six.

"We respond to the demand of the customers," he stresses.

That approach has paid off as GameTime's game rooms generate an annualized \$350 per foot, which Abecassis believes is much higher than most entertainment centers generate.

GameTime offers all-access and time-based game cards. All-access cards can be purchased in four value tiers, which allow customers to play more and pay less. Time-based cards can be purchased for \$15 for one hour, \$23 for two hours and \$30 for three hours.

Time-based cards

can be used for selected games. The cards do not accrue e-tickets and can't be shared.

The cards are color-coded to help identify which games are eligible for play.

"Time-based play is revolutionary," says Abecassis. "Parents particularly like purchasing the time-based cards because they know their child can't run out of plays for the guaranteed allotted time. Older kids and adults like the time-based cards because it gives them an opportunity to help master a game."

At GameTime Fort Myers, time-based play accounts for 61 percent of the game revenue.

Adds Abecassis: "There are many interactive games that are time-based. Time-based play is a better value for customers and a better experience. We expect time-based play to grow."

Meanwhile, Abecassis says, both all-access and time-based cards are appealing to GameTime's customer base.

Abecassis believes a strong food-and-beverage operation is essential for an entertainment center. GameTime's menu selection is a step above the traditional snack bar food.

"Customers are often surprised by the quality of our food," he says. "Ninety-four percent of our menu

items are fresh. And we are always looking for items that will complement each other. That's easier to do when you are dealing with scratch items."

When Abecassis was a guest on the "Eat This. Drink That. Go!" television program, hosted by former Miami Dolphins player Jimmy Cefalo and Brenda Basset, he brought along some popular GameTime menu items, such as fried mac n' cheese balls, sweet chili and Buffalo wings, fried mozzarella, blackened chicken pasta and a variety of dessert shooters, for the hosts to sample.

GameTime also features menu items such as oven-fired salmon, fettuccine Alfredo, fresh salads (including an avocado caprese salad), a variety of burgers (including a shrimp burger and an all-day breakfast burger), pizza and more.

The Brunch n' Play combo, available every weekend, and the Dine n' Play combo are popular options with GameTime customers. The promotion allows customers to select certain menu items and purchase a \$15 all-access game card for just \$16.99.

"In the past, only 40 percent of

our customers experienced our food-and-beverage selections," says Abecassis.

"Today, however, that figure is up to

75 percent. Our food-and-beverage sales account for

40 to 45 percent of our revenue."

Abecassis says it's important to keep menus fresh and reflective of what appeals to customers.

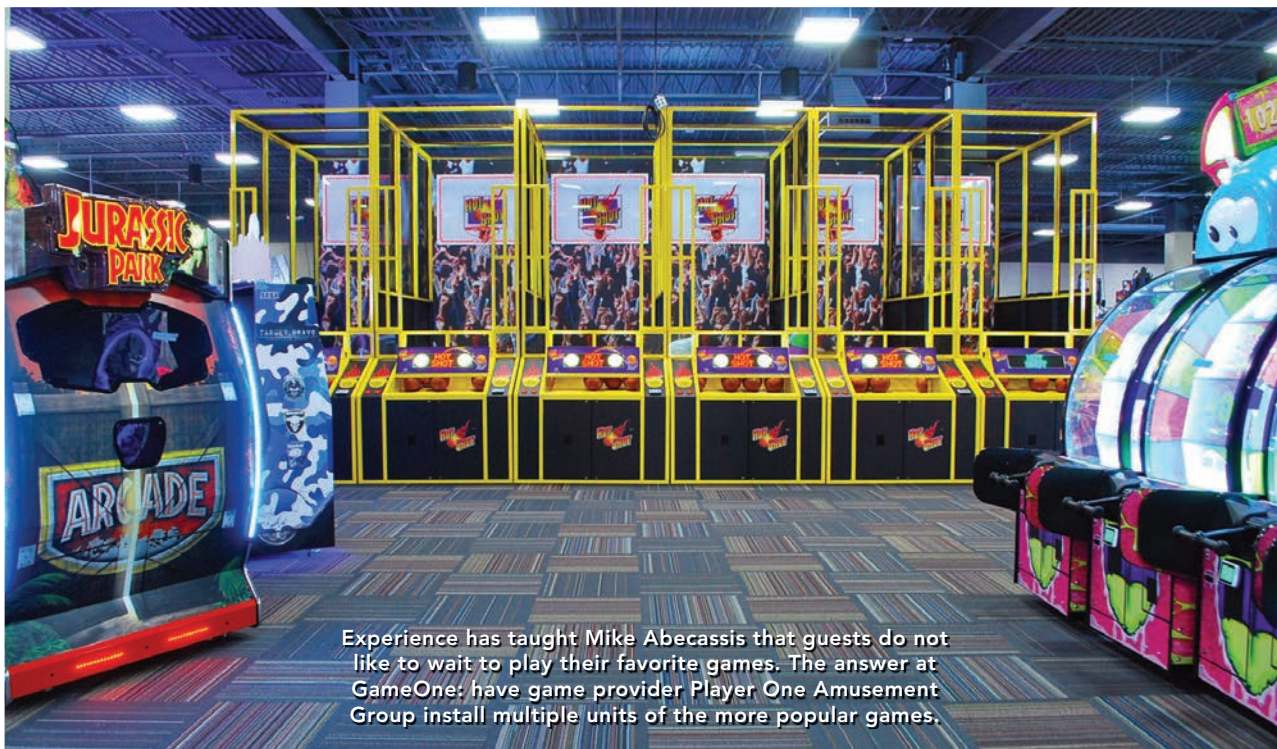
"We look closely at sales for each item," he says. "To us, sales are like votes from our customers. Those items with a lot of votes stay on the menu; those with few votes are eliminated."

Even though wine may not be a big seller, Abecassis says GameTime continues to grow its wine selection, targeting a smaller segment of customers. The goal, he says, is to slow down the customer experience.

"When a table orders wine, that adds at least 20 minutes onto their experience. And the longer they spend at GameTime, the more money they will spend."

While juggling the various aspects of operating an entertainment center can be challenging, Abecassis says hiring quality employees is one of the most challenging duties. GameTime held a job fair prior to the opening of its Daytona location. The result was an impressive turnout that produced many job candi-





Experience has taught Mike Abecassis that guests do not like to wait to play their favorite games. The answer at GameOne: have game provider Player One Amusement Group install multiple units of the more popular games.



dates who were hired for a variety of positions.

GameTime conducts full background checks and credit reports on all job candidates.

"We believe people work the way they live their lives," he says. "Any insight you can gain about an applicant's life will help predict what kind of employee they will be.

"We don't get many career employees. For most people, it's their first or maybe second job. But our managers do some life coaching. We value our

employees and we invest in them."

Looking toward the future, Abecassis says he believes much of GameTime's success will be derived from becoming a "second living room" for people.

"Our biggest competition is the couch," he says. "The challenge is to get people off the couch and out of their house. Once they are in our building, we want to immerse them in our fun, family environment, engage them and get them to commit time to us. We want to turn our customers into guests for life."