

TECH IN ACTION, PROFITS IN MOTION

How One Operator Used Tech To Transform His Business

By Stephanie Davis

Greenacres Bowl in Greenacres, FL, is a crowd magnet. With 60 lanes, a buzzing arcade, laser bowling, billiards, and a full-service lounge, it's no wonder it keeps earning "Best Bowling Center in Palm Beach County" honors year after year. But even the busiest, most beloved centers run into a common problem: keeping operations smooth when customer demand is anything but predictable.

That challenge was top of mind for Chris Arbour, Greenacres' operating partner since 2007. "Our old food and beverage ordering process wasn't built for scale," he says. "There were too many steps and running around; it wasn't working anymore. 'I'm a numbers guy,'" Arbour says. "I track everything and the data told me we were leaving money on the table and needed to streamline without sacrificing the guest experience," he says.

That's when he started exploring automation and digital tools to make the operation run more efficiently. What followed was a full rollout of Brunswick's Sync system. The implementation began with self-service kiosks for food and drinks, then additional kiosks for selling and reloading game cards. Next came OrderNow tablets at every lane, allowing guests to order and pay without leaving their space. The final step was adding Sync Pay to streamline all transactions across the center.

Today, guests have 66 different access points to order food and drinks. "It's seamless," Arbour says. "You place an order, the kitchen gets the ticket immediately, drinks start being made, and if it's a game card purchase, the card prints out so the kid can head straight to the arcade. The convenience factor is huge, and we've seen it encourage larger orders." According to Arbour, the results have made a noticeable boost to the bottom line.

BY THE NUMBERS

Over the past year, Arbour has been closely monitoring transaction data. Unbelievably, the team at Greenacres Bowl brought in over \$100,000 in gratuities directly through digital orders, boosting staff wages by an average of \$3.50 per hour! "It's helped us retain great people and makes hiring easier, too," says Arbour. Tipping jumped as soon as the kiosks and OrderNow launched, and it's still trending up.

- Sales stayed strong in a slow season. Even during a seasonal dip in May, with open play down about 5% and league play down 15%, food and beverage sales still rose 4.5%, thanks to a 4.7% increase in kiosk and OrderNow usage. "The automation helped us stay profitable in a soft month," Arbour says.

- Tech encourages tipping. 86% of kiosk orders include gratuity. For orders placed at the lanes, it's even higher—96%, which Arbour credits to the social nature of group ordering and a frictionless checkout process.
- OrderNow boosts check sizes. Guest check averages through OrderNow are 28% higher than kiosk orders—a strong sign that convenience and group ordering at the lanes lead to bigger tabs.

Even more impressive: none of these numbers include alcohol sales through the mobile platforms. Arbour plans to add beer and wine to the OrderNow system soon, a move he expects will significantly boost revenue and drive check averages even higher. "If the numbers look this good without alcohol," he says, "just imagine what happens when we turn that switch on."

BACK-OF-HOUSE WINS, TOO

Order accuracy and efficiency in the kitchen and bar have improved significantly. "Orders are printed immediately at the correct station, so there's no delay or miscommunication," Arbour explains. Refunds, comps, and chargebacks have all gone down." Plus, add-ons like sauces and extra cheese weren't always rung up consistently when staff took orders. Now, every item is tracked and charged correctly.

Because the ordering data flows through the same system, tracking inventory and cost of goods is easier than ever. "I already run a tight ship," Arbour says, "but now it's even tighter." He's also a big fan of Brunswick Pay's merchant rate, which he describes as "better than anything we've used in the past! It's real money saved."

FINAL ADVICE FROM A DATA GUY

"This technology has been a win across the board, but to understand how it fits into your operation, you've got to step back and look at your numbers. That's where the insight is." Arbour encourages fellow operators to step back from the daily grind to analyze their data before they start shopping. "If you don't know your data," he says, "you can't properly evaluate how you invest in your business, and you're flying blind." ●



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