

Product Research – Minigame in bowling centres

Who is our audience?

Our audience ranges from young to old, but they're all people who enjoy bowling. According to a study, the following is true: "The highest bowling participation is among children and younger adults and with those in higher-income households. Bowlers in the 7 to 44-age category represent over 81% of all bowlers age 7 and older. These of course are the two largest target markets for bowling – families with children and young adults." This means our product needs to be easy to understand, accessible, fun, and interactive to make it appropriate for use in bowling centres.

Why do we want to develop this product?

The game of bowling dates back to ancient Egypt, around 5200BC. In modern history, it's known that English king Henry VIII (around 1511) was an avid bowler. Indoor bowling alleys as we know them were also found back in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Yet all this time, the game has mostly stayed the same.

Our main goal in making this product is to give a new, modern take on bowling so that it becomes more popular again in this day and age. We want to make it fun for families with children, as well as teens who are looking for something fun to do on a day out.

Gaming is one of the most popular ways to spend free time today, with a huge 3.24 billion people playing games across the globe. Here's where the idea of combining digital games, with the physical aspect that is bowling, comes in. The possibility to play minigames while competing with your friends and using your physical skills in bowling is meant to add another level of competitiveness and fun to the ancient game. The target audience of bowling alleys, where the majority of users are between 7 and 44, matches with the audience of video games as well, where around 72% of users are under the age of 44, according to a 2021 survey.

Which similar products are there on the market?

There are very few similar products on the market. One example I could find online was a system that offered [variations on bowling](#). These however don't add separate games, but rather alter the existing system to change the game rules.

[This](#) is the most well-known, and possibly only other system that adds real minigames to the bowling alley. QubicaAMF is a company that offers a wide variety of services within the bowling industry, including but not limited to bowling furniture, equipment, maintenance, and software.

User feedback and my view on their minigames have proven them to be too difficult to immediately understand for the occasional visitor of bowling alleys, which takes away from the fun and simplicity of bowling.

QubicaAMF systems are used widely across the globe and are therefore a major competitor. However, the scoring system of my client, Megatechholland, is very popular in the Netherlands, where our minigames will be released. This is the reason why I think our plan has a realistic chance of succeeding.

Survey testing the idea of a minigame at the bowling alley

I've conducted a survey, asking the participants several questions regarding their general views on bowling alleys, and asking what they'd think of a minigame that can be played while bowling. I have surveyed teachers, friends, and family and received a total of 17 replies as of writing this.

One of the questions was how often the person filling it in visits a bowling alley, to which the most common response was "once a year". My main question, however, was what the participant's thoughts on a playable minigame would be, proposing the idea of a racing game on the screen of the bowling alley. Approximately 60% of the participants stated that they'd enjoy it more, versus 40% saying their opinion would stay the same. No one stated that they wouldn't like it as much as regular bowling.

For the participants who answered that they'd enjoy it more than regular bowling, some of the reasons why are:

- It makes it more fun and challenging.
- It would be more appealing to younger audiences.
- It visualises competitiveness.
- It makes it more of a "team-building" experience.

Lastly, there was also a question asking users if there's anything that could further improve their experiences at a bowling alley. Some of the best replies to this question are the following:

- Maybe making it a bit more fun and exciting to the people who aren't as good at bowling and only do it occasionally, then a game like this would be very useful.
- In-game choices being made by which pins fall first (or similar methods, making the game more interactive). Making it a true game instead of just a score that triggers animations.
- More games!

Conclusion

I think that our product will have a decent chance of succeeding, considering there are very few similar products. Along with that, it'll be fairly easy to implement on the existing scoring systems of my client. This way, we will develop a product that'll enhance bowling for all users, modernising the game and bringing back more attention to it. We will make sure our products are accessible and easy to understand for all users.