

TEAM Building

Not Just for Kids Ten Pin Eatery Is Venue For Corporate Team Building

By Douglas Karlson

Don't underestimate the power of a well-formed team, and the value of team-building exercises. Those exercises help forge trust and communication, and, if they're held at the Ten Pin Eatery at Cape Cod Mall, they're fun too!

Ten Pin Eatery already has a reputation as a successful venue for corporate parties, often held at the end of the working day. Now, slowly but surely, Bill Campbell, principal at Ryan Family Amusements, owner of Ten Pin Eatery, is trying to get the word out about Ten Pin Eatery as a unique venue for corporate team building or business retreats, where work is mixed with play.

Meetings, such as one recently held for Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce, usually begin in the Eatery's VIP Room, which consists of a bar, bowling alley and tables for business meetings and meals.

Last month, the town of Barnstable's recreation department surprised about a dozen employees who arrived for their annual meeting. On the agenda: planning the budget, analyzing operational efficiency and team-building exercises.

After a round of work and discussions, the group divided into two teams, red and blue, and played laser tag, then went back to work on the budget. Their next break sent them to an escape room, where the teams worked together to find clues to allow them to find their way out.

That was followed by lunch, then more meetings and finally a round of competitive bowling.

According to Campbell, it was a very productive meeting in more ways than one. Work was completed on the budget. And the participants were energized, motivated and further bonded as a team. "They couldn't have thanked me more," he says.

Patti Machado, Barnstable recreation director, says the competitive and cooperative nature of the meeting spurred discussion, generated ideas and was a key to the day's success. "It was completely different from any team building we've done in the past."

When the participants returned to their planning and brainstorming session, she says "there



The VIP Room at Ten Pin Eatery serves as the meeting space for team-building exercises.



The VIP Room has its own bowling lanes.

was more laughter, there was more discussion. I couldn't write fast enough. It was a constant flow. It was just awesome. I couldn't begin to tell you how much it helped our division."

"Organizations use it to break the ice," explains Campbell. "If you think of it, you probably spend more time with your colleagues than with your family," although the time spent with colleagues is on a strictly professional level. By offering fun and competitive games, however, co-workers begin to see colleagues in a different light and that strengthens them as a team, he suggests.

Ten Pin Eatery team-building retreats can be customized according to the desires and budget of the clients. Activities include bowling, laser tag, arcade games, virtual reality and an escape room. All activities can be scored on Ten Pin's "In it to Win it" score card, and at the end of the competition, medals can be awarded to participating teams. The design of the events depends on the goals of the meeting and the desired mix of games and business.

Participants should expect to spend several hours at Ten Pin. "I think you need a minimum of two to four hours to accomplish what you want to accomplish," recommends Campbell.

He says the venue is especially good for multi-day meetings, as it allows participants to have a little relaxation.

Ten Pin Eatery, which opened in 2018, is further evidence that Cape Cod Mall is evolving and growing in the wake of the decline in brick and mortar retail.

Noting the recent opening of Target at the mall, Campbell says "It's got a pulse now. The mall is upticking." So is Hanover Mall, he notes, where a second Ten Pin Eatery is expected to open in 2021.

As in many malls, entertainment centers are taking the place of big box stores as anchors, attracting people to the mall.

The venue is open, airy, contemporary, and very well appointed. In addition to the gaming rooms and VIP room for special events, there's a full bar, 300-seat dining area serving everything from pizza and sandwiches to full entrees, and high def TVs. Don't call it just a bowling alley, Ten Pin Eatery is categorized as a Family Entertainment Center, or FEC in trade lingo. Its slogan is "Food. Fun. Adventure. That's how we roll."

Campbell believes that getting away from the office or workplace to engage in fun activities and dining is important to do occasionally and during working hours. "We think there are a lot of businesses that argue they'd be more productive if they had fun events," he maintains.

Machado would agree. She says the town's Human Resources Department and the town manager were very supportive of the day, and were interested to see the outcome." Since completing the exercises, she says departments in other Cape towns are reaching out to her to find out more about it so they can duplicate it.

"The team building changed the whole attitude of our division toward one another. It built pride," she says.

She noticed this two days later, walking through the office. She saw people who normally didn't talk to each other working together on a project.

So far, Campbell is promoting the idea of using Ten Pin Eatery as a team-building venue through word-of-mouth.

"What I'm trying to do is introduce adults to our activities and entertainment one group at a time," Campbell says. "The biggest challenge is educating businesses that we're not just for kids."

But, he adds with a smile, "Every adult has an inner kid. Ten Pin Eatery lets it come out. Every group we have says 'I didn't realize we could have so much fun.'" 