



STRING

NEVER LOOKED

SO GOOD

By Paul Lane

Denmark Chain Converts 17 Centers, Cites Cost Savings & Positive Feedback

When Steffen Larsen, the chairman of Bowl'n'Fun, began observing the trend in Europe and the U.S.A. of replacing free-fall machines with string machines, he researched the concept to determine if string machines would be a viable option for Bowl'n'Fun. Steffen took this a step further and installed three brands of string machines in a 16-lane center, which he assessed for a year.

STRINGS FOR THE WIN!

Steffen determined that the test results demonstrated an improvement in terms of guest satisfaction with none-to-minimal stoppages, employee satisfaction, reduced employee costs, plus a substantial reduction in electrical consumption.

The results were so encouraging that he installed string machines in all 17 Bowl'n'Fun centers. "String machines represented a better price for a huge deal, as we needed to prepare for less activity after COVID-19," said Steffen.

"Our long-term projection indicates the ROI on our investment will be realized in three to four years."

- Steffen Larsen

BACKGROUND INFO

Bowl'n'Fun, founded in 1992, owns and operates a chain of 17 FECs in Denmark. Their first FEC with mini-golf, laser tag, and karting opened in 1999, with Softplay Playland introduced to the mix of attractions in 2009.

While Bowl'n'Fun remains the core brand, MAXIMUM is the sub-brand for new venues. Bowl'n'Fun, The Grill, Game Over Escape Rooms, Cube Challenge, Laser Hero, Jump'n'Fun Trampoline Park, Happies Legoland, and Golf'n'Fun are but a few of their featured attractions. The most recent venue, the 145,465-square-foot MAXIMUM Aalborg, which opened in 2020, offers a dozen different attractions.

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While all of the string machines performed admirably during the trial period, ultimately, Bowl'n'Fun chose QubicaAMF's Edge String Machine. "For our operations, the Edge machine offered top quality for a good price. The brand provided great test results overall with few stops and, to us, the best savings all around."

The estimated total savings is about 75% from a traditional pinspotter, including the reduced cost of highly paid qualified technicians, electricity, machine parts, and downtime.

DRAMATIC GROWTH IN STRING BUSINESS

Claus Roed, Bowltech's district sales manager, based in Denmark, told us, "Bowl'n'Fun's purchase of 262 string machines for their centers, along with confirmed orders we have in house, will bring the total number of string machines installed in Denmark to 400 by the end of June. Two years ago, there were none!"

That's 35% of all centers in Denmark operating with string machines. And Claus expects that percentage to exceed 50% within the next two years.

"For new investors, it is never in doubt that they will choose string over free-fall machines," added Claus, "because the savings and ease of operation make it an easy decision." Since December 2021, five Bowl'n'Fun centers have converted to string machines, with the remaining 12 installations to be completed by June 2022.



Steffen Larsen, Bowl'n'Fun



Claus Roed, Bowltech

GUEST FEEDBACK

Steffen conducted guest surveys to get reactions to the conversion to string machines. He told us, "Entertainment bowlers made very few comments and none that were negative, the guests were happy with almost no stoppages. Sport bowlers, on the other hand, were skeptical at first, but, after closer examination, there were no complaints at all."

As the only chain operator and industry leader in Denmark, Bowl'n'Fun's decision to convert 17 centers to string machines will have a major impact and influence with independent proprietors, as well as new investors. And, as Bowl'n'Fun believes, the best impact will be on the customer experience. ●

OTHER TRENDS TO WATCH

Bowl'n'Fun's in-house barbecue restaurants, The Grill, serve more than 750,000 guests annually. Guest surveys revealed that guests visit because they can enjoy a combination of fine dining and the various attractions Bowl'n'Fun offer. Food and beverage sales represent 60% of Bowl'n'Fun's business.

Behind bowling, the children's Softplay Playland and escape rooms are the most popular attractions.



Claus Roed (Bowltech), Gian Avraam Anestis (QubicaAMF), Steffen Larsen (Bowl'n'Fun), John Eggert (Bowl'n'Fun), Flavio Taddia (QubicaAMF)