



PLAYMETER ARTICLE 3

Game Selection – The Right Games for Your Location

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This month's article is on the third part of the Magic Potion—Game Selection. Just like the last two articles, Prizes Selection and Game Payout Percentages, this part of the potion is vital to a successful business. Without the proper games in your mix you will not appeal to all segments of your customer base, hence you will not be generating the maximum income for yourself.

When either developing a game mix for a new location, or evaluating what you have currently, you need to make sure you have a game mix that appeals to every customer that comes thru your doors. I have seen locations that take the time to look at all aspects of their customer base and buy accordingly. Conversely, I have seen places that bought the games they like to play and wonder why their revenues are not what they thought they would be.

You also need to spend time getting to know each game. Learn about the play of each game. Will the game appeal to your customers? Can you adjust the payout percentage in the case of redemption games? Is there more to this “quick coin” game than just dropping a coin? What is the strategy of the game? Is the game simple to understand and play for my customers? The more you know about a given game the better your purchase will be. Do not be afraid to ask your distributor (and manufacturer) why a game would work well in your location.

Balance Your Mix

The key to a well-balanced game mix is having variety of games at every level. You must have games in your mix that appeal to young kids and their parents. These games will not be your top earning games but you need them nonetheless. These games keep the youngsters occupied so their older brothers and sisters can keep playing the games they like to play. “Kiddie” games are just as important as any others you have as they keep the families in your location longer and spending more money.

Now look for games that appeal to your “tweeners” and teens. This group of your customer base needs to be entertained and challenged. They like to play games they can compete with their friends. They like bright lights and action. These players understand strategy and large Jackpot bonuses. These kids are smart and quick to learn. They are about instant gratification. They want to win tickets to buy the prizes you have in your counters. They will also play cranes that have the products they are interested in. They will spend money so give them what they want.

Do not forget about Mom and Dad!!! I may sound like a broken record but these are the players of “yesteryear”. They grew up on Pong, Pac Man, Donkey Kong, Skee-Ball and the like. They will play games with their kids as well as on their own. Pushers are a great example. Look at the players playing your pushers. Parents will play basketballs, alleys, air hockey and a whole host of other games. They want to be entertained just like the rest of their family. But remember...have prizes in your counters for them to win!



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For the best income producing game package keep a close eye on your redemption to video mix. In the more successful locations the level of redemption games is approaching 80%. This may seem high but think about it for a minute. In this day and age kids and their parents come to your location to play games they can't play at home. This is why redemption games are so popular and are some of your best earning games. Please do not get me wrong. There is still plenty of room for driving games as well as shooting games. You will always need to appeal to those players in your customer base. However, redemption games play a stronger roll in your overall income generation.

The mix of games in our game rooms looks like this:

Normal Redemption	80%	(air hockey, basketball, pushers, quick coin, kiddie)
Video	20%	(driving, shooting, fighting)

Buying New Games

Do not be afraid to buy new games. It is not a crime by any means!!!

I have to say one of the things I find the most during my travels is the number of locations that have not bought a new game in years. **Yes, I said years!!!** It gets better. These same people are the first ones to say that the income from their game room has gone down each year and they just don't know why.

When we buy new games for our Family Fun Parks several things happen. First, we see a jump in our income. New games create excitement and with excitement we see our customers spend more. Second, in most cases we trade a game in so we do not have to spend as much for that new game. Our frame of mind is that if we are consistently updating our games we have more desirable trade-ins, which means we get more money for our games. Third, we want to be known as having the best game selection in town. We want our customers to know that if it is new and good we have it for them to play. Fourth, we don't get that old "run-down look" in our parks with new games. We remain fresh and looking the best we can in our customer's eyes. People do not want to play the same old games. They seek variety and we give that to them!!!

Ask yourself this simple question: would you want to eat a hot dog every time you went out to dinner for three years??? Obviously the answer is no. So why would your customers want to come back to your business and play the same games over and over again for three years or more????

Tip Within A Tip: If you have not bought new games in some time keep an eye open for the high earners you may have missed by not buying on a regular basis. Take advantage of these games, as they are still new to you and possibly your customers.



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Rearrange a portion of your game room every month or two

It is very important to move around your game room. Your goal is to keep the game room looking fresh. Our customers are creatures of habit. They will go to the same games on every trip. You will be amazed how predictable your customers are. By moving games around you will find that some will do much better in their new location. You will also here this comment, "Oh, you have added a few new games!!!" or "I haven't seen this game before it must be new". When you rearrange your game room you will add even more value in your customer's eyes.

There is no real science to moving games around. Simply make a new game pod, step back 10 paces, look at what you did and see if it is pleasing to the eye. If so, move to the next game pod. If you do not like the look...change it again. Remember to not put games teenagers want to play next to your "kiddie" games. This will drive off Mom and her younger kids.

Also, by rearranging your games you will do away with "blind spots". These are the areas that your customers just do not see or walk by for no apparent reason. Change around your games and get the most out of your location.

Note: do these changes when you are closed, as you will need to clean behind games (you do not want Mom to think your location is dirty). Being closed also keeps you from running into kids and hurting them or yourself. You also will be able to concentrate on this task and do a better job.

You can also change the flow of your room by rearranging your games. You can direct your customers to other parts of your location by simply moving a few games around. If you find your customers not going to certain points within your location, strategically move some of your best earning games to those spots. Your customers will find these games and the others around that area. You will be surprised to see the results of this effort.

Tip Within A Tip: The first lesson I learned from my days at Taito America back in 1987 was to not judge a game by what I like to play. It is all about what customers like to play!!! Many times I hear "I love this game and I can't understand why it does not make money..." You work so hard at getting people to come into your location so give them what they want to play. **It is not about you, it's about our customers!!!!**

In summary, update your games to keep your location fresh. Invest in your business and you will see your customers more often and thereby increase your income. For a list of our games and to show you our redemption to video mix please call me (920.497.6991) or email me (jimmychaps@aol.com) and I would be happy to send you this information. See you next month!!!!