

What Can We Do To Save Roller Rinks?



Mark Falso

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Disclaimer: This is educational although this is purely opinion of Mark Falso based on experience and based on his creativity mind what should it be done. Also facts were from social media that people have given feedback. You do not necessarily have to follow everything in this book but merely gives you concepts for your business. Like a commentary. Mark Falso is not responsible for any way or forms that gave causes, injuries, or even financial hardship you may have done to you, your business, or even your skaters.

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What Can We Do to Save Roller Rinks?

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Dedication

To all the operators, owners, managers of skating rinks of the past and future past. As well as those presently own successful rinks.

To all the skate patrons everywhere who are crying in their soda cups ever since their favorite rinks gone and those presently skating at still-operational rinks.

And even people in marketing, advertising fields.

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Introduction

I wrote this e-book largely due to my favorite youth passion to do next to Snowmobiling. When there were no snow, I skated at several rinks including defunct Empire Skates East, Empire Skates West, and Sports-O-Rama as well as Camillus Roller Rink by the time I graduated in June 1983 from high school. Empire Skates closed for good in the same month of my graduation. Its timing was sort of perfect for my first home as I graduated. But kept memory alive for more than 35 years. This is where and why I created a website dedicated to defunct rinks such as those I went to. And I realize many others too recalled the rinks they skated for years. I felt the need for all of the rink rats would love to have. Like Mall Rats have a website dedicated with dead malls. And others with Google Architecture, you name it.

This site is much deeper with more detailed about the rinks than a competitive site which is why I started this.

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The e-book I wrote is to offer my views and ideas which is not necessarily required to but suggestive to assist your business while it is a funny economy and the cost of operating is beyond our reach today.

Also this is written based by commentaries people said in social media which many rinks I felt they did not listen. A rink told a lady with cancer she cannot wear a hat and she has to wear something to cover her head. Sure a scarf but maybe she did not have one. This is something needed to be addressed and concerned and it is in this e-book.

I skated at 17 rinks and even worked with one as a Maintenance but did performed everything that every single staff would work. Even managed one evening that that rink manager forgot to show up one session and I had to work all positions at same time! And that night met someone I really was crazy about. Oh well, never seen her again.

I wrote this as more of suggestive and giving ideas but it is not a must text book like a college text book would do. More like a seminar type. I am available as a speaker.

Make America Skate Again!

Mark Falso

Dead Rinks.

Liverpool, NY

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Chapter One: What Can We Do to Save Roller Rinks?

What can we do to save roller rinks? Good question but quite difficult to save roller rinks. It is for a fact that at one time there were over 3,000 roller rinks based on membership for the operators with RSROA-the Roller Skating Rink Operators Association, a one-time governing body for roller skating rink operators that helped operators with their rinks, business practices, join with other rinks for competition sport purposes such as Roller Ballroom Dancing, Figure Skating, Couple Skating, etc. That peak was in the year 1980. Now, the rinks numbered at 800 members with a new body called, Roller Sports Association International. They added other sports including roller hockey, speed skating along with the original RSROA staples they had during the 20th Century.

In New York City during 1950s, the founding home of the skating rinks where James L. Plimpton opened his first true roller rink there after he invented the quads that it was able to steer and turn that the original inline skates could not. Both automobile and roller skates shared similar invention issues that involved with steering. Both inventors in the eighteenth century crashed and damaged something vertically. First automobile in 1770s, without knowing how to steer, crashed into a wall and was first to issue traffic

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ticket. Well, ten years earlier, in 1760s, the inventor of inline skates, John Joseph Merlin did not know how to steer skates and crashed into a rather wall to the floor mirror caused a damage of £500 mirror. Not counting to his violin.

Quads dominated at the first rink in New York City and the popularity was great several times and several times it was downturned. Every time a new invention or an improvement to it, the popularity increases. For instance, the quads was invented in 1860s, exactly a hundred years after the world's first true skates invented, it became popular up to around 1880. It faded as people turned to dancing and underground bars. Skating became popular again in 1935 until mid-1960s. That era was true Golden Era because it was so popular. The Great Depression brought out people to skate as means of cheaper transportation than automobiles but also for youngsters can skate to escape from depressing era. Skating continued to be popular even the world went to war against tyranny of Axis of evil. That did not detour skating at all. And the happier times after the War, people were able to skate and that increased more popular thanks to the parents and the soldiers came back from the War (World War II). It was still that metallic wheels on wooden Maple floor. Its popularity died down because of the Baby Boomers were having nuclear families and others went on to rebel as Hippies. Spending so much time protesting, Woodstock and other music venues, cruising cross America in their Beetles and VW Buses shouting at people, "PEACE!" Skating was forgotten so they had focused on their mischievous ways.

But thanks to a new invention called, polyurethane wheels which produced quieter, lighter, easier, and skate faster with better ball bearing, but also those Hippies lay down their peace signs and donned bell bottom leisure suits and buttoned down shirts and grew their mustaches to follow the Disco Craze. Many saw both the new type of wheels and the disco music was awesome at the time so they put on their skates and roller disco. It became so popular from mid-1970s to very early 1980s. Many rinks were opened during the Disco Craze era from 1975 to 1980.

The inline skates was re-invented again this time in 1980 and that too brought out popularity in very late 1980s till early 1990s but the popularity died down fast because

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many rinks banned inline skates at the time fearing that it would ruin the floor. I recalled by asking operators and managers.

However, the popularity died faster with the fad of inline skates. It was other factors that are forcing rinks to close such as lack of skaters, property taxes, high insurance premiums. But also the insurance companies are asking operators to ask skaters to sign waivers. Many skaters do not like that because if they get injured and really does blame the rink operators, they cannot sue them so people left the rinks.

Not only that, many discovered easier and cheaper way to have fun are spending time at home trolling on their computers, computer games, and home video games. There are more activities as well. Such as cell phones and people prefer to spend time selfing themselves and chat on the phone and not on the rink.

Stricter rules also play roles too. Many are being careless and use cell phones on the rink to talk with someone while skating, Akin to texting and driving.

There is another thing many rink owners and managers did not discuss according to the history of rinks and websites. The switch from Organ music to Disco music was also a rink killer. Organ music goes back to 1800s at rinks and music tastes have changed for more than 150 years now since James Plimpton started world's first roller rink in New York City. In 1990s Gay and self-propelled Organ music were popular then in 1920s, Speakeasy music were popular but also were Big Band Orchestra music were popular which lasted till the returning of the G.I. from the War. Country and Blues were the in music during 1940s but because of those two, Rock-N-Rollers combined them and played Rock-N-Roll during 1950s (from 1949 to the day Rock-N-Roll died when Buddy Holly, Big Bob Richardson, Richard Venezuela were killed in a plane crash. Then in early 1960s, Gospel and Pop music were ushered in thanks to the Beatles, Monkees, and more.

As you can see, different music played during different eras as the rinks remained with Organ music. Was that a mistake? Operators and the RSROA perhaps thought no changes was necessary. It was not until Roller Disco spawned at Empire Rollerdrome

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in New York City to abandon their organ and replaced with a DJ to play albums and cassettes to the tunes of Bee Gees, Donna Summers, and others.

That was quite a huge mistake to switch. It was calculated high risk of ruining reputation of roller skating. Night clubs back in 1920s to 1930s were truly social meet meccas like a forum during the Roman Republic and Empire. Reason for the night clubs were popular because of the orchestra played there. The War stopped that in 1939 overseas and in the United States, 1941. And as they say, night clubs died out. Many became taverns, bars, clubs we all knew ever since. No orchestras, just sometimes no bands, and sometimes, they would have a local music band to play. The fate was quite similar when they abandoned the organs and replaced with a DJ.

Because of this, this alienated most skaters of those era who are more of ballroom skaters, figure skaters, and other competition sports related to roller skates of its time. Roller skating was meant to be for the elites and middle and upper classes.

Disco music brought out younger cliché crowds and even crowds that were never at rinks before including of different ethical backgrounds.

In the 21st Century, quads are back more popular than inline skates. Rarely some rinks are seeing a surge of skaters coming back because of good customer services, location, and well executed marketing plan. But most other rinks due to different economy, lack of skaters, the waivers, and the run downs of the facility including the smell, bugs, and carpet look not vacuumed. Also roof leakages, causing wood floor warped. Each step of problem caused a domino effect. Such as lacking of money, then take risks of no roof repairs to get their floor leaked then eventually ruin the floor.

Taking cue from New York City, there were 28 skating rink in 1950s! That would be quite a bit of rinks for a city of millions plus those from Tri-states area including New York State and Long Island, New Jersey, and Connecticut. Today, New York City only has ONE indoor privately owned skating rink that includes an alcohol bar. ONLY ONE! And that is in Staten Island, New York. Of course, there are two or three outdoors roller rinks owned by the City of New York.

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There are quite a bit of reasons for the demise of the rink in that city which reflexes elsewhere.

Take Syracuse, New York. I live in Central New York. There are no more roller rinks in Onondaga County! Unless you want to count a skate park that has a small roller rink that no one knew about: the Black Mamba Skate Park in a dying shopping mall, ShoppingTown in DeWitt, NY. In fact, there is another rink that no one heard of. It is in the same mall but behind the food court at a room called, The Vault.

How Can We Re-revolutionize Skating Again?

Not easy. We have a lot of work to do. Skating rinks will be back. Maybe just a few. Maybe at least 50 new rinks will be around. Not a whole lot.

There are factors we need to know for strengths and weakness SWOT for the rinks.

Strength:

- The need for the rinks to be around where there are no roller rinks.
- There are needs for having rinks available to public to be able to roller skate such as need for activities such as roller derby teams need to be in town, competitions need to be in town as well such as figure skating, speed skating, roller ballroom, JB, and many more.
- Roller skating is one of the best form of exercise to burn calories. 500/600 per hour depending on your weight.
- Rinks are best options for several non-skating activities including flea market, trade shows, church, press conferences, proms, and many more.
- Rinks are still considered one of safest place avoiding crimes.
- One of best places for all ages. Better than bars, night clubs, and taverns because of age requirement at 21 years.

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-Can be part of entertainment center including theaters, bowling, arcade, bounce houses, laser tags, and more.

Weakness:

-Real estate value that the rink is large. Income and revenues per square foot is much difficult than say, a store or even online store.

-Property taxes are high. This is considered commercial, not residential.

-Advertising expenses that are now more expensive than in the past. Radio, television, newspapers, social media (yes, pay for advertising), and websites as well as in-town activity publications such as event magazines, visitor magazines, etc.

-Membership to the RSA International. They run high around 700 Dollars annually.

-Insurance premiums are expensive.

-Forcing skaters to sign a waiver upon entry. Skaters do not like that (Including myself that I refuse to sign).

-Lack of true Adult skates.

-Lack of classic traditional programs including ballroom skating, trainings, figure skating, and organ music.

-No organs at the rinks.

-Lack of rinks creativity and design

-Dated facilities and looking dirty.

-Poor customer services.

-Inexperienced skaters skating all over the rink while experienced skaters are annoyed those skaters with the training “triangles” wheels are all over floor.

-Lack of opening every day.

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Now, you see so many negatives more than positive? I am trying not to be negative but I am putting out what I see out there through their defunct rinks, Yelp which is a complaining site.

It All Starts With You.

OK, to turn around, it all starts with you (the rink owner and manager). Are you a people friendly person? Are you nice to people? Kind? Has big heart? Creative? Savvy? Understand roller skating and its purpose in life? Are you owning the rink for the need of people or for your own benefits a.k.a. wallet? That question you have to know what you are doing. All of those questions you should think about before you can do anything. If you know you are not really in it, you might as well get out of business. Sell it to someone who has big heart and loves skating and people who love to skate. They are the ones will want the rinks live on for long time. They are the ones will have to work harder to keep the lights on for skaters to skate than those who wants just for money.

Second of all, are your staff friendly? Nice? Has good customer service? Do you have enough staff? There are general rule of knowing how many sections of the facility you will have. Let's cover them all and this is just standard skating rink format, not adding other entertainment segments quite yet.

1. Admission
2. DJ Booth/Organ pianist
3. Skate rental
4. Snack bar
5. Arcade/video games
6. Roller skating rink
7. Administrative office

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Now, you know how many departments or segments of the rink business you have. Mainly you have two major departments: Administration and Entertainment businesses. You as the owner and manager, you are part of the administration, the number seven. The manager would also have to have many hats along with the owner. Both the owners and managers must not just sit down at their desks to do paperwork. They must also get on the floor (the entertainment section of the business) and work on the floor.

Now, the admission would normally be one person but if you know your rink is quite busy, you would have to be involved yourself (role for the manager or operator to work as ticket agent at the door. The admission also have a sub department which is security. Thanks to the ever increasing violence from people involving in political disputes and cultural clashes such as gangs. More rinks today are filled with teenagers and children which are and can be involved with gangs especially with rinks that have teen clubs or teen club-style feelings involved.

For security, this means hiring not one but two. One to do a TSA style pat-downs and metal detectors for knives and guns. The other is a standby watching both checking people and the rink.

Then there is a skate rental. Usually it is one person handling that and it will always be one person because it is usually quick. Quicker than ticket admission as matter of fact.

Then the next thing a skater would do is to put skates on and put their shoes in a locker. Then they skate. There would be a floor guard. Usually one is enough, two is bit plenty but usually one is enough.

Then there is one person handling music. Either a DJ for DJ music or an organist playing an organ.

Then there is snack bar. Usually consist of two people working behind the counter. Work either two choices: one handle the cash register with the other handle the food. Or both handle food and the register.

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Now, if both operator and manager are to work outside the office, one should really handle the admission and the other as snack bar. I recommend that the owner/operator handle the admission so that if there is a crowd, the owner/operator can work in the 2nd window register to process faster. One true case: a skating rink in New Jersey has only one person handle the window and skaters have complained on Yelp that it took them an hour and half to pay to get in because of a very long line and this is in recent years of 2010s. Not 1950s! When they got there, not enough skate rentals in their size and they had to wait like an hour before they could get their proper size skates to rent.

The manager of the rink should also be the manager of the snack bar. That goes in hand to hand. This means just hire a regular snack bar staff while the other handle the management of the snack bar.

Since there are skate parties or birthday parties, they normally have a staff managing that section. That falls under the Snack bar department of the rink. The manager should handle the registration from parents or the host of the party. The party management staff should focus on making food in preparation and bringing food to the table and should really be responsible to make announcement at the DJ booth, not the DJ. After reading in Yelp, many parents were upset that the staff failed to tell DJ the party group their food is ready. The manager should really be the one making announcements by self. Or the manager submit the list of music choice AND announcements AT THE START of the session with the time slots so that the DJ announcer reads what it is on the list following the clock.

That should be addressed.

Then you have one more staff: Maintenance. Someone who repairs, fix, paint, take trash out, etc. To save on cost, all staff working in their departments INCLUDING the administrative department including the manager and the owner SHOULD clean up the rink well.

That is the list of staff and then you need to question about your staff. Are they people friendly? Are they behaving well? Are they friendly? Are they nice to people? Can

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they handle with calmness to remind skaters to behave well following the rules? One rink they had staff yelled at often such as not to hug the wall, use the cell phone, etc all the time. The attitude of the staff are the ones can cause the rink to lose business and they end up getting yelped on the website.

Rules to Obey.

We understand the rules people must comply like they should for driving an automobile such as stop at the red light, turn on turn signals, go the speed limits, etc. Not to go 90 MPH or you would be ticketed. Well, the same with the rink but the difference is skating rink is not a state and federal regulated facility that drivers know they will be killed or at least injured from driving reckless or from drinking or drug using.

Rules on the board are understandable at the admission front door when posted. However, people usually do not read them and still break the rules. How can we handle that without offending people? Kindness. Kind of like when you were little and you got into trouble in school and they wanted to talk to you privately with the principal in the office rather than in front of hundreds of students and teachers? Think that way. Invite those skaters into your office and explain to them kindness why it is not safe to hug the wall or sit on the half wall or "camping" the rink. Camping in motor vehicle traffic violation means going slow in a fast lane. Now, you do not want camping in a faster section of the rink either. Then invite those people in the office and talk gently and indirectly. Kind of like when you want to fire a worker by not saying, "YOU ARE FIRED!" You would get that person very upset and go stressful and cause more trouble. You would say, "Due to the business circumstances we are having lately, we have to let you go." That is softer way of saying that you are fired. Well, same with the skating format.

You would need to say, "While we are a family friendly and fun entertainment center, we are trying to encourage a safe fun activity, due to the circumstances we are having lately, we have to let you go." This means you are asking the person to leave. OR if it is a child without parents present, you say, just this, "We need to talk with your parents, can we please get your parents' phone number so we can call them to pick you up sooner than planned?" That way you are softening them up.

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It would be wise for children under age of 18 say from age 5 to 18 on their own or with sitter or with older sibling or even adult aged relative, it is best you have a waiver that if the child cause trouble, the rink is not responsible for the child's injury, or even the child being involved with criminal activities including fighting with other children, bullying, or even assaults, stalking, harassment, or anything related to that cause. Even sexuality related. The rinks needs to have such waivers and with parents signature.

If trouble rise harder such as very abusive fighting or gang fighting or even sexual assault, you will need to call the police and call the child's parents so that the parents can go to the police department and/or child protection/welfare services where your child will spend the night at. It can happen because it can take hours before releases. It is not like the movies I tell you. Not five minutes. It takes hours to be released from police or CPS to get your child back.

About Admissions.

Now on to other subjects. You need a very friendly front office staff to handle admission and work fast. Needs to be focused. No music to listen. No talking on the phone. Some staff did this according to yelp complaints. You need to make sure your staff are working swiftly. And add yourself to work in another window. If you do not have another window, quickly set up a table and have your security staff direct extra flow of people to your table and you can handle admission as well. Empire Skates East did this in 1978 because it was so crowded. I recalled a wait for about 40 minutes before I can get in the SECOND door, not 2nd admission in the main doors. They opened their emergency door on the side to allow in skaters faster by setting up table. I recalled two staff working the table both handling admissions.

Be sure you have enough money in the drawers! Today many uses credit cards or debit cards to handle admissions. It can be expensive today. Two parents, a child, plus skates for both parents and a child and a walker assistant for your child to skate can run about 40 dollars for a session. In my days of 1980 at Empire, it was three dollars admission. Say two parents. That's six plus a child admission of half price. That was

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seven dollars and fifty cents. Plus a dollar of rental. That was three dollars. That means 10.50 total at the door! Big difference today.

Are the cost worth it? We understand it is necessary to make it survival for your business. None of the skaters seem to really complain about the prices. Many thought it was reasonable. So, that is okay.

Marketing and Advertising at Your Rink.

But you are still losing money. Have you ever thought of partnership with organizations, businesses? Like restaurants have on their paper mats all the name of businesses on them. I know one restaurant in Syracuse, NY that they have advertisements in their menu that are from other businesses. That is a concept you can think about having advertisements. Kind of like all the stadiums, arenas, domes, and convention centers and amphitheaters have. They all have sponsorships. If your rink is a non-profit, you are legally allowed to have sponsors like that. The problem with this concept for businesses that are for-profit. It is against the law. UNLESS there is a way you can do something about it. Speak with your lawyer about corporate partnerships and sponsorships. Imagine you do, like at an ice hockey rink you see so many businesses have their names on the rails of the rink. You can have your teams getting sponsorship. That would work fine. Ask your lawyers for state and federal regulations.

However, if you have seen in bars and restaurants, they do have advertisers' neon signs or advertising on the walls, or even on their servers' shirts, whatever. They usually have those products because they get it from their suppliers and vendors especially beers. And for sports, they get professional teams' names, leagues, etc on because they turn on televisions there to show their favorite sports playing. The Big football championship in early Feb is usually huge on money making for themselves at bars because of that sport. But also they have NCAA and their local college league tournaments as well as the Final Four. They both are big on money making.

Can a rink even have such a big sell out for those tournaments/championship? You need to think outside of the box. As the Bible says, "All things are possible with God."

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Again, find out legally if you can host such special day at the rink and if you have a huge white screen or monitors. You can show those special games. You can even have an advantage than bars do! You ask what is? Again, the box! How? Easy, skating rinks are usually larger space than bars themselves! I do not think any bars today as big as a rink except there was one once before. Mickey Gilly's was world's largest bar. Mickey retired and it's shut down.

Now, you can do the same. Get a liquor license to handle this. If you want to go non-alcohol, that is fine. But understand that NFL will NOT allow any churches to host events and that is the fact. It even mentioned in Wall Street Journal years ago that a certain church for the Deaf in upstate New York (Wall Street Journal did not reveal name of church but I know which one because of a pastor from that church told me) that they fought to have their fellowship for the Deaf to have church with a big screen showing the game in closed captioning. That stopped NFL from further legal lawsuit or send a cease order because bars do not have captions on or not big enough for fans to read it. So NFL has to allow that church to do so.

Again, ask your lawyer for such legal advice. I am not an attorney but pointing out ideas and then ask your lawyer for further discussion.

This idea of having party can really boost your rink income.

Online Store and Shipping.

On your website, you should be allowed to have your store go online. Sell products anytime because even night owls would want to order something when you are not open and can get it locally when you are open or have you shipped it. Having online really can boost your business income. Upon my research in February 2019 by walking in stores including Walmart, Kmart, Dick's, Herb Philipson, Target, and even Ollie's. My finding for roller skates and inline skates are horrible. They do not have good selection compared to online stores and actual skate shop.

In the past, they used to have at Kmart as I recalled in 1989, I found mens black Chicago skates for my size. I have small feet! Size six mens as I recalled on the box. I

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purchased it. It was an Artistic Chicago skates. It was very good skates at the time that was made in the United States. I was glad they had those. It was right next to a few RollerBlades name brand skates at the time. Yes, I recalled that very clear. They only had ONE Chicago skate that I was looking for. I was blessed to have that.

After that, I never saw restocked Artistic skates there. None. Apparently they knew that roller skating was dead. Sure, dozens of bicycles were there, so were fitness stuff, baseball stuff, you name it. Fishing... camping...

Compare to this month in the year 2019. That was 30 years later. My Chicago is old.. and the shoe lace holes broke over 10 years ago. I hated to use rental again so I looked for similar type of shoes. What did I find? Here is my result of searching:

Kmart: the exact same store in same plaza 30 years later. I see a couple of kiddies skates that you see are bright toy like skates. All plastics. And I see maybe 4 or 5 inlines child size. Real small size right next to skateboards including the 2 wheel boards and scooters. In 1989: they were selling Chicago Skates, child and adult size and actual Rollerblade brand, same-child and adults.

Walmart: exact same results. Same number of products. Mostly kiddie strap on plastics, maybe 3 or 4 inline skates boys/girls size. No adult size.

Target: I found none.

Dick's. They have maybe 3 child size skates. But they have better selection of inline skates however, about half of those products are exactly the same you found in Walmart and Kmart. Horrible selections. But much better than those two 'marts.

Sears: they are closed and gone from my hometown.

Herb Philipson: I checked online before I went to the store and I could not find roller skates available in the store so I did not go to HP store at all because likely they would not have it. They even did not have good selection of Bocce that if you want to play in tournament. Dicks did have the ones I wanted and bought it so I can play it at state parks when we go camping. So, I distrusted HP stores that they may not have it.

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Runnings: Neat store but for roller skates, none I could find.

Gander Mountain (Outdoors): None. Only I could find are ICE skates and plenty of them in adult size. About 10 to 15 of them.

Speaking of ice skates, none of those other stores except for Gander have it at all. It is odd because ice skating is very popular these days and in the same county I live in, there are like 5 ice rinks available to ice skate on and no roller rink at all.

We need to find out why ice rinks are still popular.

Roller skates manufacturers need to start trying to market to stores to stock and sell skates.

So, rink owners, you have an advantage! You can market your skates locally and you can get a bunch of market control.

Now, to compare to those local stores I visited, I went to a skate shop that they have Skateboard Park indoors and a small roller rink with roller court. What I found they have dozens of roller skates! All are adult size. Unfortunately, they have mostly females' artistic skates with old fashioned boot design. Some are white, some are colorful. They do have roller derby shoes skates and plenty of them. They also sell shoes for skateboarders who like to have nice pairs of shoes. They also sell roller skate wheels and skateboard wheels as well as skate boards itself. Helmets and protection gear are sold as well. They also have skate rentals.

Now you can see the difference? This skateboard park place in a dying mall in my town has it all and their store is huge. Biggest one compared to all the local rinks and rinks I have been to since I began at Empire Skates East. Those rinks I went to skate there have very small corner or just the small single counter. Usually seen maybe 4 different skates. That is it.

I can see a problem. Rinks needs to make their stores larger. This is true money making than the admissions itself! To compare size I am going to use a mall store size.. It would be like a candle shop or a card shop size you find in your favorite shopping

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mall. That size store. I know its big but the more you have stuff there, vendors will give you more discount to purchase their fine products, the better you will have something to sell at your own prices and you get more revenues into your pockets!

I worked at a bowling tournament when they were in Syracuse, NY in 2018, they have excellent vendor booths with beautiful bowling balls displayed, etc. I rarely seen a store with skates on display. I saw one rink online that has excellent store layout. Skates on opposing walls to be displayed. Exhibit counters with glass cases to show more expensive skates plus wheels and tools and stuff there.

Now, you know what they are when they are well displayed like you find at a shoe store.

Take yourself a day when you do not have a skate session or lesson, go down to the mall and have some lunch in the food court then go into department and shoe stores both and see how they are layout with their finest merchandise. You will see their problems when they do not have skates or just a couple of kiddie skates and no other kinds at all. And check out shoe departments how they layout... especially shoe stores that they display well. In fact, please do go to Dollar Tree and see how they have balloons, toys, gifts.. all for a buck each. Reason I said to go to Dollar Tree is because you are missing out selling such things because of birthday parties you have at the rink! THINK THINK THINK! You have balloons at your rink? I guess not. (my arms are crossed and give that Mckaley Maroney meme look that she isn't impressed by you not having such a good store!

Also go down to the nearest bowling alley and check their bowling shop and you will see how they are displayed.

Talk with all of the store staff and managers about how they are displayed, how they ordered stuff, how this or that. And for stores, why can't they get their orders on roller skates? Ask them. Please do NOT say that you are a rink owner/operator or manager or both to any of them. They do not like trade secret exchanged and it's against the law.

Add Other Stuff in Your Store.

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You can market such balloons on the spot by asking your customer if they want to add them to their birthday package. Or you can have it as part of the package and raise another at least 20 dollars for maybe just 3 balloons. Now you would have 17 dollars in your pocket! Wow! You can make money! This is before taxes of course.

Dollar toys... maybe each child that attended birthday party can have something to take home. Maybe a Hot Wheel car or the birthday child can receive a gift from the rink from the store... remember they are a dollar product. Easy. But here the trick. You have to raise the price to include the gift and skate shop supplies for the birthday party. In another word, you will NOT have to spend a dime to give a child a gift. It would be all tricky for them, not you. Actually, the parent is buying the gift but will say it is from your rink. UNLESS you want to give the child from your heart. But remember, how many birthday parties per day. Maybe 500 parties per year. You will get those same customers back.

Sadly in Yelp I see many have birthday parties disasters. You have to make sure your staff do it right. And with your gift to the birthday child or even adult, you will be guaranteed you get a repeat customer. Have you seen your Yelp report? One stars? That is embarrassing! You must always watch that and feedbacks. You should start adding on your website a feedback link and they can feedback directly to you their bad experiences.

If you cannot handle this, you better sell the business and do something else.

Please be open minded by listening to the customers. Heard of, "The customers are always right" often? If you do, you know why! Let me list why:

You, your staff, and your management might have anger issues and yelling at customers. Those customers will leave and never come back again. That is what your customers said online.

You need to reply back with them nicely! Be positive! One incident involving a place in Hudson Valley in upstate NY mishandled the attitude of theirs in person that people found very upsetting and they put on Yelp how bad it was and the business even

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attacked customers on Yelp and it really did hurt the business. (Strangely, I cannot find it on the net today for reference but I recalled that very vividly about this.) They had articles online relating to this.

It is more expensive to “repair” business reputation. That is, lawsuits against customers who put negative reviews. It is a freedom of speech and freedom of press that customers have the rights to say negative things about you and your business. This is why it is very important you have a very good attitude, good personality, people friendly, and a very good staff that they love roller skating, not because they need a job. You rather to hire someone who loves to work at the rink. I applied for a job at Sports-O-Rama roller rink back in 1990 because I heard about opening and I needed a job. I got it and loved it. My own hours, able to paint mural during off hours, things like that. Sure I needed money but this job, I applied for, was an act of love.

Sure, there are fake customers who want to put you down. That is a problem. You need an evidence of them being there. Start having a set of cameras at the rink. You have good advantages for this. For both you can watch your staff behave and see the customer behave.

For instance, you have to watch the cash register and credit card fraud. But also you watch your staff behaving. If grouchy, mean, cold, whatever negative personality, you see that on cam, you can warn your staff or fire them. In many states, but not all states, you have the “right to work” state laws to allow you to fire anyone you do not like no matter what and not have to say it. It is a fact. There are no unions for rink staff at all.

But with the video security camera, you can also check on customers for any crimes have done. Law Enforcement would thank you so much for the video evidence that a crime as occurred.

You also need to see the video to see your own attitude. Are you being nice to the customers? If you love to yell at and you wonder why customers are not coming back? Like I said it all starts with you.

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You need to be more apologetic to them. Listen to your customer if there is a problem and correct it! It means say, there are bugs in the “house” at the rink, fix it! Get an exterminator. If there is a leak, get yourself to fix it or hire outside person to fix it.

If they demanded money back because of poor service, you need to do that. Sorry, give them back the money. **DO NOT BE GREEDY!** Give it back to them minus sale tax. If they stayed the whole session and demanded for money back, do **NOT** give them money back. The difference is if they do it **DURING** the session, then please do give money back. When they do, they will less likely not put on Yelp or not report to BBB. So, think about that you have a guarantee on the wall that money back guarantee is warranted but do state some things like end of session, they do not get money back.

If there is bad birthday party, such as no food brought up, whatever, give them half back the money because that half is for food.

Your survival depends on customers' guarantees satisfactions.

To avoid Yelp and BBB, I recommend you have a feedback card on the wall next to the exit door up front so that customers can fill out on the spot and slip it in the collection box and leave or take home the postcard and mail it back to them. Do provide them a space for their names, address so then you can mail them newsletter, flyers, and a thank you letter or email. Also send them coupons for coming back such as free admission back. Do that especially a huge negative or turnoff in the feedback postcards. When you see that, mail them tickets for free admission for the next session good for 30, or 60, or 90 days. Best to mail them a set of four tickets. Two adults, two children.

However, if there is a birthday party disaster, refund their money in person and give them free admission for ten people. Two adults, and eight children under 13. But if the birthday party was for age 13 to 17, ten adult admission tickets free. Have it all in a good envelope with your return address on and listed the host's name who threw the party there. Use a number 9 white envelope. Include that with the money back in cash.

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To avoid financial loss such as this, you must have all staff on good behavior including yourself. Very important!

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Chapter Two: Be Creative!

This chapter deals with you need to be creative with your rink business. We will cover everything that you need to have for creativity.

How does your rink look? Is it updated? It is immaculate by cleanness, no cracks, no warped floor, no molds, no misty smells?

Does your rink have good safety systems such as alarms, signages from fire chiefs and from governments and more?

If not, you need to update the rink. We all do understand the cost is first thing comes in mind that you cannot afford. Today's world, we have a funny economy that is not like it used to be. Banks today are rejecting loans which makes it harder to get your rinks loans. They see you are losing money and they need some guarantees the loans will be paid off. You have the mortgage on top of it.

You need to have a bank account just solely for remodeling and save it. Maybe best to use as CD. That way, you can have more money at the long run. Hotels remodel every

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7 years—average. They are highly successful to do that because they are different kind of hospitality. But not always booked. Still, they do remodel. I live near a hotel district and I understood. There was an old hotel building that the owner torn down and built it up again because he understood what customers wanted from him such as larger rooms, more accommodations, etc. That is what he did. And very modern too.

His other hotel in kitty corner from him was remodeled too and made it ultra-modern looking Googie style hotel. Can your rink do that? One rink did so modern back in late 1960s in Michigan with beautiful grooved cinder-block building both exterior and interior with the 1960s/1970s chafed corners rectangle look. No clutter look. Very business or school appearance. In this certain photo, it looked more like maybe a medical office. Now, they have remodeled and they have painted those walls white. Yuck! But if that is going to work for them, then that is what they did.

Attractive does make the business be more successful. That very Michigan rink (name not revealed) is still thriving. They were in SKATE magazine back in late 1960s. Compare to some dinky rinks, they are closed. Why? People think the place looked old, has damages, bugs, that stinky smell.

That Stinky Smell!

Oh that stinky smell! Did you smell it yourself? You know why? Skaters and sports athletics are usually giving off body odors. Yes, go check fitness centers and you will see what I mean if you cannot smell it in your own rink because your nose is already used to the smell at the rink. Customers do smell that.

You need to do several things with the smell problem. When you are not having sessions, open up all of your doors to let the air in. Even in wintertime because it is cold already. I recalled I was working at Sports-O-Rama in Mattydale, NY, I worked during the winter and had to wear snowsuit even inside the rink with doors closed. No heater on because it is quite expensive! The temperature was pretty much almost the same as outdoors during winter in the snowiest city in the nation. So, might as well open up all doors even emergency exit. We all do understand about crime these days. But they

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know you are at the rink and they would know they would get caught anyway so have cameras face all doors that you are going to open.

Summer time, when it is hot, open up doors even during sessions so that skaters will feel nice summer cool evening breeze. Or if you have early morning sessions, do that also. Open them up. Fresh air helps!

When you have sessions in winter, too cold to open doors and you have heater on. I recommend you buy an industrial air fresher or air recycler equipment so that you can recycle air and have filters that will send off nice scents. Or if you want to buy dozens of air freshers from the store like Glade, you can do that but it can be costly because you have to replace every month! And dozens of them per month because you would open them up every dozens of feet. You also have to remember maybe for some, they have allergies. Check with a medical professional if that is conceivable for you to have freshers in your rink(s).

It is absolutely necessary that you have your skate rental staff be supplied with a Lysol spray or an anti-fungus feet spray into ALL skate rentals. Fungus grows in toenails and I have those so thanks a lot to skate rentals when I was younger. It is vital importance that you prevent from being sued because it is not in the waiver regarding fungus in your skates! This falls under the responsibility of the rink, not the falling down injury.

You should also provide Lysol or anti-fungus spray cans available on the counter at your rink(s) so that customers can spray them if they did not trust your staff who may not done it. OR have your staff spray at every returned skate AND renting out skates.

On days when you are not having a session, you, the manager or operator should also spray them. But there are even better ways! Sprays helps keep them in bay but still.. they DO still grow because it is dark and moist. Skaters do sweat their feet because skating with their feet is most active when you skate. This is why moist retains even with the spray and fungus still grow and the next skater in the next session can absorb fungus causing Athletics' Feet. Medical professional properly called that because most athletics received Athletics' Feet because of sweating and moist in their shoes. For

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instance, football (American and international) do play in the rain and the American version plays in the snow. This wet their shoes inside and players play for two hours or so can receive fungus. Ask any players from Pee Wee to high school to college to professional and they will tell you that truth.

You need to have to spend more money. Sorry! But this protects skaters. It is called, UV Total Recovery Shoe Sanitizer. To learn more about it, read this website page: [UV Total Recovery Shoe Sanitizer](#).

This helps but costly because you would have to plug in EVERY single set of skates. You have like what? 100, 200, 300, or even more skates? Then that would be a problem.

It cost around 85 US Dollars per set. I would say 100 of those to work on 100 or more skates and can be done in 20 minutes. You would finish all 300 in an hour! Do this during non-session time period.

This means would cost you 8,500 Dollars. You have to add sale tax as well. If you can contact a vendor, you can try to deal for lower price for those equipment. Problem is that those bags may not fit roller skates because it is designed for shoes. Ask the vendor if they have extra-large bags because it is required to have bags because of the brightness and to contain to certain area so that fungus can be killed.

Spray can help some. But recommended though.

Lights Out Skating.

Now, lately skating rinks are having completely light out that skaters are to wear glow stick bands. Since I am blind in one eye, black lights and neon lights do bother me. I would NOT recommend lights out skating because of safety reasons. What if someone cannot see skaters that well even with glow stick bracelets? I have had that problem when I was at a harbor fest for the fireworks event and they had lack lights at a fort museum and only lights were down below at the docks. I did bump into people. Another time, at the movie theater, I bumped into people too when they were showing a

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movie to my back and it was dark front of me and I could not adjust my eyes quickly enough.

So, throw out those lights out skating. You can still sell glow sticks as part of your dollar store section for people who might want to buy it. But NOT the lights out skating at all. The requirement you have to have glow stick bands or you cannot skate is really stupid. I read with care in Yelp and people complained about that part. I think you all need to stop having that way. It is like the glow in dark bowling. I refuse to bowl in the dark. I prefer regular bowling lights on shining at the pins and lanes.

I recommend to stop that. Completely stop, please!

When to Remodel.

Now back to remodeling, you can remodel every seven to ten years. You have to keep up with the style. And yes, replace that carpet. Carpets are hard to clean because of dust. I had experience with that and use a huge machine that vacuum it like you push a cart. Yes, a cart vacuum machine. In the old days of rinks prior to Disco era, there were no carpets at all. We understand carpets are there for safety reason to ease the pain of falls and slows down skaters.

The problem is, it does collect dusts, dirt, mold, dew, bacteria. And even fungus. I recommend you might have to start having flooring similar to a boat or a recreational vehicle have: Infinity-Basket-Weave-Marine-Carpet or completely flat waterproof berber carpet. Really thin. Otherwise, square tiles but those are very noisy! I recalled a grocery store that has those floor tile and I push the grocery cart in the store and out of store, they are very noisy! Too loud!

Try concrete or roller mat. Those two are best replacement. Concrete you can wash the floor and really gets the dust up with a mop. Rollermat, same thing, wash the floor.

The Wall Carpets.

Skating rinks from 1960s on used carpets on the walls. The trend back then was to add carpet for rinks but also for any lifestyle of its time that the wall carpets were the rage. It

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was a cool concept with wall carpets. However, the difficulty of maintenance was that the carpets on the wall has to be vacuumed but no rinks ever did that. Second of all, the glue sticking the carpet on concrete walls are not promising to last. At Sports-O-Rama. The carpets may have went up sometimes in 1970s only to be peeled off itself in year 1990. I know so because I was a staff there and had to rip off the carpets myself DURING a session BECAUSE of a row of wall carpet peeled off during an afternoon session so the rest had to be ripped off immediately. It was for safety reasons. The carpets peeled when it was like about 15 years old. The glue lasted that long. This is a concern for rink owners to design to have carpets hung on the wall glued to it. Some rinks already gutted out the carpets in 1990s and replaced with glow-in-dark carpets with crazy designs on it.

This did not completely removed the carpets from the 1970s. Many rinks have replaced the carpets that were on the wall. It was not a great idea unless they will change every 10 to 12 years of remodeling to replace wall carpets.

Those Berber carpets worked well for off rink to slow down skaters but also for safety reason on the wall. However, for much safer purpose, they need are padded walls. Many high school gyms and even fitness centers have padded walls for their safety when performing sports and fitness in such facilities. It may not look beautiful at all but the safest materials needed for a rink.

They can be customized to fit your theme at the rink.

Carpets can be okay. If you prefer, you can use carpettile. They are carpet tiles. Like ceramic tiles you have in your bathrooms and kitchens, you can do the same. Otherwise, the hardest substance that will cause injury on the wall is cinderblocks. If you use wood to build your rink, you will have both injuries to the skater themselves or self AND the building itself which can result in expensive rebuilt. If you know the story of the three pigs. The third one was smartest of all three.

Carpetiles are excellent materials for your rink because they are designed to replace at a certain spot. Say a spilled or God-forbid, bleeding, you can have it removed and

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discard old carpetiles and place new ones on the floor or wall. Any violence occurred, the police will want that section after all. Without much ado to have a loss of carpet if it was standard carpet, you would have to replace that section when they cut it out or replace the ENTIRE section of the carpet or if they do not make that specific pattern design on surface, you might have to replace the ENTIRE floor and walls so titles are best. Be sure have extra to replace more frequent.

Unfortunately, carpetiles are not available in neon/glow-in-dark yet.

Padded on your walls and around the rink are highly recommended if desired.

Décor.

Be creative! But remember, you opened your rink to what market you want them to come in. Is it for children? Is it family theme amusement center? Is it just for adult? Is it for multi-purpose? Those are the factors you need to think about. What kind of audience you want it to be.

Children. Kiddie stuff, bounce houses, children theme look, bright colors, cartoon characters of your own. You cannot copy characters that are already made that are seen on television or movies or even animated film or even comic books and graphic novels. Make your own! I see too many rinks with this same character and why you use that same skating character as every other competitor? Not good. Use shapes on the wall, paint murals that are very focused on children. This can alienate adult skaters because they will think this is a kiddie playground.

Teenagers. Teen loves what in style. They are the main trend makers for everyone. Depending on buying power and what they want. You have to update every few years to be in trend. For instance, The G.I Generation or the Radio Generation were born in between 1900 and 1924 experienced massive wars and they prefer simplicity and solid which means ballroom skating, figure skating, and romanticism of skating, no fancy walls, nothing. Just bare and simple. Then there were the Silent Generation that experienced the war eras as children. Silence, but they were big in post War era of staring families, the 50s, diners, drive-ins, the Bel-Aires, the Googie architecture and the

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ones that brought roller skating popular in Golden era and are the ones like the organ music and Rock-N-Roll music but organ at rinks. Baby Boomers, Born between 1945 and 1965 liked to be different and they introduced Roller Disco and need savvy look. The flow, the freedom. That was the start with having graphics on walls in rinks, more colorful carpets, etc. Also the diamond balls, mirrors, glassy and glare look. But then late Baby Boomers and early Generation X who skated with inline skates and quads are more into Roller Derbies, speed skating, and more would be more extreme. They love extremes and high risks. Hence the derbies and speed skating and stunts with skateboards. The interior would be more neon, bright with black, glow-in-the-dark look.

Generation X also loved that graffiti look. Wall murals, street painting, MTV music videos, like more extreme stuff.

Generation Y (also known as Millennials) are very rebellious and stubborn and highly complaining and sensitive crowd of people but also for many as well are insensitive because they frankly do not care (socialism, tyrannism, and liberalism) because they only care about themselves. They reject anything. For instance, a skating rink used to have American patriotic colors and look in their facility but when it was redone, it was all purple and sky blue colors. The reason for the change of color is unknown.

Right now there is Generation Z or called iGen in referring to iphone, ipad, etc. All focused on computers, phones, anything electronically but the oldest is approaching age 20. So much into selfies. Their taste or theme is still unknown. It looks black and bleak. That is the current generation.

Young Adults. Depending on the teens which will carry on their styles and some abandoned their teen lifestyles. Usually they do that because they are focused on college, and careers that they do not have time for looks to impress and the style. They will look into stores and buy what is in style. For rinks, this is not a good market choice because they are busy with partying at college, attend college sports or focusing on 40 plus hours of employment to meet ends because they are broke and their mommies and daddies cut off lifelines saying, "Congrats on your graduation, you are on your own now! Now, let us enjoy retirement!"

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Adults: They are bit slower, enjoying adulthood, or their children are getting old enough to skate and at first few years, parents will spend time with the children at the rink. This would be Family theme. More related to children or teens section of looks. Might have to come in between. Not too childish but not too adult.

Older Adults: Retirement, have time, and children already left the nest. They would want more graceful and softer skating time. They would prefer to see facilities with more simple design. Maybe some antiques look or retro look. Also they would prefer to hear that organ music for first time because much older adults are already in their 80s and 90s which they were born after 1920s to 1945. They cannot skate anymore. They spend time in retirement home, or enjoying the sun in Florida or Costa Rica.

The Older adults are age 40 to 80. They would want more relax. Some adults at those age really needs to work out as doctor orders, they would have to skate with more rigid movements. They might want to take roller dancing including ballroom. Also non-skating dances. Many older adults like to go to singles dances or ballroom dances. It has been a trend since 1990 that they go to singles dances although it has slowed down a bit because those very same singles found each other and others passed away or cannot attend singles dances on a price of 10 Dollars as they are living on Social Security or pensions or both.

In pre-Disco days, with the organ music, skating centers were arched or domed with simple design interior. They had wooden floor throughout the whole facility. Even not the rink itself. Only divided by the steel pipe type of rail. This would be pre-1960s before they had cinder-blocks half walls.

Rinks back then were only having just a diamond ball above or even nothing. Just plain lights on.

That was focusing on dancing and roller skating. Yes, some nights were just dancing, ballroom style. But more focused on skating alone. White walls, or off white would be on the wall. Hard to tell with photographs because many postcards were just painted on picture printing type of cards.

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About Different Kinds of Sessions.

Today rinks seem to forgot or rather forget the way rinks of yesteryear did. They used to have figure skating, roller ballroom, couple skates. And more toward adult skating and there were children training the same as adults for competitions that they used to do with Roller Skating Rinks Operators Association of America. Now, the organization is Roller Skating Association International. It is a global organization for rink owners especially roller rinks to receive educational needs, receive assistance in business and the rink publicity plus to associate with skating competitions.

Today, rinks are too focused on children, kiddies, and teens, not adults because the adults saw that organ music were removed in 1960s to make way in 1970s Disco music and the DJ that the adults disliked and decided not to skate anymore. They seem to abandoned elite skating with the roller dances, ballroom dances (both roller and regular), and more.

They replaced with Roller Derbies that they do not have many members on a team and it is not catching on for spectators to watch. Roller Derbies have evolved from curved short track into flat track since its cheaper that way. Second of all that they have added are Roller Hockey but both Derbies and Roller Hockey teams seem to reject public rinks in favor of having their own. Those are in effectively killing public rinks. Rink operators made huge mistake in 1960s and 1970s for this reason. Had they did not abandoned organ music, would it survive better? I could not find evidence of this reason. None. I am referring to closure of rinks because people prefer Disco. Disco is dead by 1980 quite quickly. Many Disco musicians quickly switched to pop music. Or just faded away. Such as Bee Gees, Village People, Donna Summer, and Cher. They all switched to Pop because of Michael Jackson remained with Pop music. In 1970s, of course Jackson Five and Michael were into sort of Disco but it was Pop later on.

Disco Was The Problem.

There is a reason why roller rinks folded in the early 1970s. According to Wikipedia, Disco was so popular, maybe too popular that there was a public protests, burnouts,

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and Rock-N-Roll fans, Anti-Gay, and Rock music musicians were quite angry at Disco music that they had a controversial Disco albums burnout at a baseball doubleheaders at Cincinnati Reds and in between two games, they had a bonfire to burn albums and tapes and people got very angry and causing riot in the stadium that they damaged the field, chairs, among other things. The police had to be called in and arrested people. Because of this, they could not reschedule the second game so the Reds had to forfeit the second game to the Detroit Tigers. The first game the Reds lost.

This is why they did not allow any other protests like this at a MLB game.

That day was July 21, 1979 was called the day Disco died. Disco dominated the charts for quite a long time in the 70s that none of Rock-N-Roll was on the chart or any other genre.

After that controversy at the baseball game, Disco was never on the charts again except for once around 1986 or 87. Ever since, no Disco.

Rinks made that mistake with choice of going with Disco. Many rink owners at the time thought they found that is what the public wanted: Disco. But they were pushing all Disco and they contributed it to its death. Hundreds of rinks closed immediately afterwards from 1980 on. Too few start up rinks after 1980 death spiral.

Rink owners in 1960s and 1970s made their mistake by joining up Disco and roller skating together and that is what happened that it is a reputation ever since. Yes, ever since that the skates are part of the Disco community, not Disco as part of roller skating. Roller skating before Disco in 1960s was all organ music. People at the time thought of when they heard organ music, its roller skating. Say they heard that on the radio while driving, or at home with those floor mount radio or even portable radio, they heard it, they think of skating and would go skating.

Why did those owners switched? Empire in Brooklyn made that huge mistake to risk the switch to Disco and yes it was popular. Nice thought but there are so many genres they did not think about could replace Disco and sure did on late July 1979. Many rinks followed that.

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Today, many people would not go skating because they think of Disco. Now, this is where we need to erase that and three generations are born after 1979. From Generation X, Y, and Z are anywhere from age day 1 to age 38 now. So, ladies and gentlemen, start mixing music. Have a session with just Country music. Another with Christian, another with just Rock-N-Roll, and stay away from Disco unless you will get a certain crowd that are associated with Disco. Not mean to be racist here but explaining history. Disco was underground music and first genre to have DJ music instead of orchestra bands or regular bands. Second of all, it was very popular with Gay people and with Black people. It was much targeted oriented kind of music for certain kind of people.

The documentary that HBO aired called, "United Skates" showed pretty much black people skating. My research seeing modern rinks are having much black people! That was a huge switch thanks to the 1970s with Disco. It is already labeled that skating is a black thing. And the little ones who skates are pretty much equaled mixed with Caucasians and maybe Hispanics. Not much with Asians at all.

Organ Music and Other Music.

When Disco came in, it killed Organ music, ballroom style, and figure skating. Those were the stable (money making) for rinks to maintain but the switch, it lasted about 10 years till 1979. Today, depends on what rink, I am sure they played Disco oldies and Nu-Disco (21st Century version).

So, my recommendation is to have separate music. Organs today are expensive however, you can buy good used organs, or portable organs similar to what you see in a concert. Start having those again for older generation that might want to get back. They were working fine till operators switched to Disco and those people who prefer Organ got angry at rink owners for switching to Disco and refuse to come back. This is my humble educated guess and opinion. I have seen used organs often on Craigslist! Wow, go for it.

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There are plenty of pianists and organists around. You see many churches? They usually all have organs and at least 5 organists/pianists each church. Go visit a church one Sunday and talk with them. They will be happy to have an extra job to play organ for you at the rink. Do not conflict their scheduled life including their careers during the day and church on Sundays and usually Wednesday nights. Depends on denomination, they can work around with you.

This is a bonus because then they can even play during Christian night skate.

Speaking of Christian nights. Please not once a month. Make it at least once a week. More often. Schedule one night each night with different genre. Say Christian night on Tuesdays (they have church services typically on Wednesdays), Wednesday will be say... Disco night, Thursdays Country Music, Friday nights will be Teen nights so make it top 40s night. Saturday nights, adult skates with organ music. Saturday mornings only open to private birthday parties. Do Children music. Saturday afternoon open matinee session, children and teen music. Bit older.

Sundays because I am a Christian, I believe rinks should be closed like Chick-Fil-A and Hobby Lobby. People are focused on churches and families. Monday nights should be only for private parties. Private parties such as companies that want a Christmas party which usually falls on weekends in December, make that an effort and the regular scheduled weekend sessions will be back to normal in January. Christmas parties are big and money making than a regular session especially in December because teens and other adults are too busy at their church, school, and company parties elsewhere. You can make holiday specials. Very important to your rinks to maintain business. Most rinks already have done this part such as New Year's Even All-Nighter.

Be sure you check with your town for noise ordinance and children/teen curfews. Get permits for that.

Include Other Groups.

There is something I noticed, why exclude Singles? Why exclude College Students? Have a Singles Skating Night! There are a lot of lonely hearts might want to skate.

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Some may have remembered during the Disco era or later that they tried to meet each other but too shy because they were young and no confident in themselves back then.

College students. Oh, yes, play college songs. But be sure it remains non-alcoholic unless your place is already licensed to serve liquor. But remember, College Students can be wild. I am well aware movies painted that picture but I am sure there are more grown up groups can go skating. You might have to hire more police to patrol in your rink because of College rowdy crowds.

Have a reunion party for skaters from the past at your rink. None of the rink does that and seemly to ignore. Please do invite the old timers back. Even if you were not the owner of the rink from far back, still invite them and they should meet you and get to know you and you seeded them to come back more often. It is a fact.

For children, please try to work with schools, both public and private that your rink can be an excellent baby sitter. Most parents do not get home till after 6PM. Children get out of school at 2 or 3PM and gets home between 2 and 4PM. That leaves a space of time for those little ones at home alone. Today's world, both parents and single parents are working. Work a program to bring ALL the children to the rink and then buses and parents can pick up children at 6PM and they get home by 7PM. This lessen the stress from the parents on where about or what the children are doing. This also should be great for your rink is to have volunteer tutor/sitters to work with children with their difficult homework before they get home. This is far better advantage and this can increase children's intelligence. Also already fresh in mind their school work rather than doing it home after dinner because after dinner, they are tired and fall asleep. They do homework at the rink first before they are off to skate. Say, by 4:30PM, music come on and they can skate for an hour and half. Good enough. And because they obey the rules, they can earn credits on the board with stars and earn a free pass. Say maybe two weeks' worth of excellent attendance AND doing homework, earns a free pass coupon for a session on the weekend.

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Report card too. Any As and Bs, earns a free pass. Each A or B is earned, gets a pass. If two, they get two, etc. Empire Skates East did this experiment and because I had so many As and Bs, I had like 50 passes! I used about 10. Bit too many though.

Summertime, skate camp can be good. Keep your rinks open when schools are out. But to a limit time because you will want old timers to come to the rink during the day and they would want to skate to organ music. WITH actual organ! Also for Senior Citizens, they can also do other things that maybe they cannot skate: play games such as chess, backgammon, connect 4, cards (non-gambling) with chips such as Bridge, and more. Many rinks today have those walkers for children, Seniors can have those walkers to skate with. If their doctors ordered them to have exercises, then this is excellent sale pitch to retirement homes. Have them bussed to the rink for a session each day. Every day. This would cut down the cost of city community centers and maybe if you have a contract with the city or county, or even town, make a contract with them and they will add to their website of activities. But also you can receive contract money from the town AND try to make a deal for tax reduction as real estate value goes up. You can attempt to bid for lower taxes when having such contract.

You can also try to have a contract with BOCES anywhere (vocational school if there is no BOCES in your area) and they can provide career training at the rink. Such as management training, internship, if your rink needs repairs, the carpentry class can repair the rink. Consider many possibilities.

For churches, try to make contract with churches that they will host Christian Skates Night. Also for some new churches that needs room for their sermons, a rink is excellent place because you have plenty of room to set up chairs and pulpit for pastor to preach to his flock. Churches can pay you. This also can bring new skaters from those churches. Make this as long term because you do not know how many skaters will come on a Sunday. You would make more money from churches this way. Use a roll up carpet to protect the wood or even any other material on the rink because of high heels can puncture the floor. When a church service is completed, the church themselves have to fold down chairs and roll up carpet and place it with themselves in

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van or truck or if you have huge storage, they can put it away. Also church members have to set up as well before service. Most churches DO have members who are very willing to set up and take down.

This means they will need to use your facility at least 30 minutes after your Saturday night session is over so they can set up within an hour to set up SOME stuff. If they have at least 25 people, that is easy to set up. That means 1 chair per person per minute to set up. That is 25 chairs per minute. Now add 5 minutes. That is 125 chairs. Ok, that would be 15 minutes of doing the chairs including from van or storage at your facility. Carpet down is in five minutes. Carpet first of course to protect your rink. Then add 15. That is 20, maybe 25 minutes if they took time. Then add pulpit and maybe a folding table if they want to use for their offerings or Lord's Supper. So, that is 30 minutes to set up! They could do it in the morning as well. They finish at 12 noon. You have your session at 1:30 PM, an hour and 30 minutes after their church service/meeting is done. Think of potential income from a church that just pays you may be a good 100 to 250 Dollars depends on size of your facility and church itself. Most rinks lost income during that morning because they did not open up for some reason. Think outside of the box.

A skating rink that just closed in KY had very unusual set up: bicycles, peddle cart, skateboard, whatever. The owner who owned it for more than 40 years since 1976 had a good idea. It sounds bit odd to add those features at the rink. He separated his original rink which was perhaps world's longest rink and split it into three parts and he had one section for bicycles and other wheeled toys there. The other section is for beginners and the main rink for regular skaters. He was trying to reinvent skating rink purposes. Apparently it did not work. I am not sure because I did not see his bookkeeping. By the look of videos, not too many people. His other problem was that he did not include the snack bar which is a huge income necessity according to one person on a social media site.

Social Media Reputation.

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It is very important you have a good reputation. Words gets around, yes. The old standby with gossip. Now Gossips have found its way into the mainstream globally called the internet. Facebook, Yelp, TripAdvisor, BBB, among other complaint related sites. It can damage your reputation if you do not do it carefully. There are PROs and CONs to this. It is not easy. If you have an attitude or your staff have an attitude which include rudeness, political favoritism (such as anti-Trump or anti-Obama by forcing someone taking shirt or hat off), screaming at children and adults, the nodding of your head (it means you are letting it go through one year to another and bobble your head like you don't care). There are more! As I said before about rental skates. It got fungus, mold, and sweats from previous skaters that thrives in the rental and you do not take care of it to destroy the demons of living in dark and damp area of skates that can grow and is communicable. Also you are not taking care of skates. Some of you do not. There was one I read in several social media sites about that one dead rink that just closed in 2018. The owner GLUED pieces on the skates. GLUE!? Never ever glue them. Glues are not exactly perfect science regarding the skates are made. There are skates that are made with tools to pieces together by wrench and parts you need especially ball bearing that makes the wheels move quickly to skate.

Skate patrons had to tell the world about the owner who glued pieces together on the skate rentals. That can be his liabilities that if it falls off of the rental and a skater is hurt, he would have to pay for insurance for that victim, not the victim's insurance. Any damages you caused on the skates, it is on you, not skaters that you forced them to sign waivers. You will be sued because the language of the waiver did not cover your poor job repairing. If you need to know how to repair, go take a class with RSA or US Roller Sports. They will help you when you sign up and pay for class. Go to the conference and trade show and talk with them and they will tell you the right way. If you prefer to cut corners especially with skates, you are going to be out of business and out of pockets even worse than doing the right thing. Otherwise, you are going to be listed as terrible owner and operator and manager of that rink on social media. That owner who glued his own skate rentals is mentioned on social media and that can hurt reputation.

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Another was you have balance the cost for everything for patrons. For instance. One person who worked with a group of kids and he felt that the per child price is bit too costly and he found out other places were much cheaper but that specific rink was chosen maybe because closer? Because of the non-profit groups usually do not have that kind of money that is where it hurts them because rink owners wanted to charge so much per child. I believe that this man who wrote in social media had like 200 children or so and it cost him 5 Dollars per child. He found out other places were more kind to have much lower price of 3 Dollars per child. A saving of 2 Dollars per child. That is 400 Dollars saving!

That is quite a bit of money saved for the non-profit but a loss for the rink owner but did you forget that with such group like this, you want a data mining? Database? It is very important you have lost 400 Dollars that session but you will gain a patron for LIFE as long as that supervisor or director of that group have built a potential business relationship with you. You will gain more than 400 Dollars or earned back that money in other ways and means such as snack bar which is actually biggest money making. It cost like 10 cents per cup of soda for the venue however, you earn 1.40 Dollars per cup of soda. That cost is 1.50 per customer per cup... maybe small size. 2 Dollars for medium and 2.50 for Large. Think about that potential. How many times they usually buy? At least two to three times in a single night. I skated back in the 70s and 80s and I recalled I only purchased once each session I ever skated. Rarely twice maybe 10 times out of those 10 full years of every Friday and Saturday nights I skated at Empire and Sports in Syracuse, NY. It is not a loss this way. You are actually gaining much more money. True you have to pay for the cup and sale tax for the soda to your state. That would perhaps be 20 to 25 cents per cup (taxes, cup, and soda. You are making 1.25 for small size. Still profitable.

Skate rental too are profitable. Maybe 25 percent of skaters have their own skates. That is unfortunate for you but you have 75 percent of skaters renting. They will still be money making. It is true that it is expensive to pay for the skates which cost you a good 75 Dollars per pairs of skates. Rental is now around 3 to 4 Dollars per skate set. That

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amount pay off in just (depending on how many sessions you have) in few short months. Say you have 6 open sessions per week, same skate rented 6 times that week, based on 3 Dollars rental. That is 18 Dollars! Wow, that is pretty good money you are getting it back. It would be paid off in just a MONTH! Too many skaters complained on social media that skate owners kept those rentals too long. Needs to update. Now, because it takes just a MONTH to pay off. Why not every 6 or 9 months to replace skates? YES! REPLACE them every SIX or NINE months! If you do that, you will hear less complaining at this point with new skates. They will be very happy and come back.

What to do with the old ones? Trade it back if the vendor does take it back. If not, sell it on ebay. You might be surprised you will get more money back! Wow! In just few short days, you will actually get more money. Anywhere from a loss of sold at 1 Dollars or you will get that 75 Dollars back by selling at that price. Best you sell at the price you want to sell. Maybe sell it at 35 Dollars per used skates. You can even sell them at your store on the rink.

Attitude is important. I covered that in the beginning. Are you kind enough and love people? Do you have anger issues?

They are important because if you expose yourself emotionally, you will lose customers and be exposed on social media. Even they would send it to the news.

Sometimes patrons may go overboard and they are the ones injured themselves. That is the case with another rink that she wanted to invite 150 people to her skating party but the owner said 75. Whatever the size but she spread it out invitations and she invited 300 people to attend. That is way too many. And not enough security. She needed to get security and she said she did however, the security company would not come. Perhaps she not paying them or fell through.

Because of safety reason, no security, and the way she invited people to come. It is not like you know your group coming, you just think an X number of people coming you invited this Y number of people and it can be dangerous with this Z number of people.

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So, the owner had to cancel it. By the way of articles online I read recently about this just closed rink as of January 2019, a month ago, this incident was in 2014. She filed suit against the rink and filed a complaint due to racism. It has nothing to do with racism. The world today is weird and “funny” by means of weird, oddity. Sometimes they will want to try to set you up. Maybe a black person will use racism against you if you deny. Remember you are right, management has rights to reject any customers. But with this college age woman wanted a skate party at this rink. But hers was cancelled due to safety and the way she invited people online. What if those 300 became 3,000 patrons coming to the rink that night? It would be out of controlled and can cause a riot. This is what similar happened to a teen night club in DeWitt, NY that a riot broke out because it has to do with two gangs over a girl. Like Helen of Troy. Same thing. This is called Trojan Horse Invasion Syndrome. I came up with this which means when gifted or invited in, then they destroyed your establishment. Like with Helen of Troy case, that Troy received a gift, a huge horse and overnight, the enemy army soldiers that were hiding in the wooden horse sneak out and slaughtered everyone. That owner of this rink was smart to reject her. I could not find any fate of that case.

Please be careful when you are on social media because with discrimination you made. The perfect example with an ice rink in New Jersey that an eighth grader with the Cerebral Palsy wanted to ice skate but she needed a customized walker. The rink refused to allow her to use it. That is clearly a violation of ADA law. ADA stands for Americans with Disabilities Act that President George H.W. Bush signed in 1990. This occurred in December 2018. It was on the news. Your rink could end up on the news. News are usually in very negative light.

This is why ever since both roller and ice rinks now have walkers. But that rink in New Jersey was in violation because they forgot it is accessible necessity and the law. Likely with this case, the eighth grader will win compared to the first case with the party she invited.

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Another case, back in 1950s and 1960s, lifestyle were so strict that one rink even required boys and men to have a certain length of hair to be allowed in. This boy had hair OVER his ears just ONE cm in length too long and was told to leave immediately. The boy could not use the phone in the rink to call his mother so the boy had to walk a bit of his way to a gas station where a kind operator allowed him to make an emergency phone call. His mother was so furious about that silly rule and campaigned against the rink by going all points out by telling the newspapers, the television news stations, and radio. This was the old days long before internet and social media. The boy and his mother were lucky to get the town attention to vote against the silly hair rule and make sure no one discriminate because of silly hairdo or length. Her husband was a mayor but the council voted against the hair length "law."

As you understand today, the world is way too sensitive and you have a set of rules. They too will tell the world about your strict rules and so-called "silly" rules. Rules are rules, of course.

The Rules are Rules.

Rules are made to ensure safety. We understand that. But the rules are also sometimes bit trivial that are not really necessary. One rink owner refused to allow tattoos and piercings at his rink in past few years before he closed his rink last year. I do not like tattoos and piercings on face or body except for ears either. We may not like them but need to accept them if you want good reputation. I would have to accept them however, be smart. Maybe cover up sleeves? But you can keep the no vulgar languages rules. Do not forget you are being a hypocrite if you allow rap and rock music that have vulgar language or political hate in it.

If they are wearing vulgar shirt on, with the finger on it or the four letter words or jargons that are filth, then you can ask that patron to remove and wear something else. Provide him/her a t-shirt that says, "Oh, this shirt isn't mine. I had to wear it!" something like that to make patrons rather not to come in wearing what they want to wear and to avoid same bothersome. And they can keep it. Make sure you order real plain looking t-shirts that are cheap to wear. Maybe some from the dollar store and iron on those words and

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they are under 5 dollars. If he wears it second time, then its time he gets the boot out of the rink. Third, banned for life.

The Security.

If you have security at the door like night clubs have theirs. That would work. Do have your security at the door outside no matter what weather it is out there. They can check shirts, pat downs, and maybe do metal detector wand. You need to have a sign for them to see that it is required. Say something like this in larger fonts, "For everyone's safety, we ask you to allow security check for your own safety. If refused, you will not be allowed on premises. Thank you, the management." Night clubs have such security and bouncers. Large and all. There was one I did not do anything wrong a long time ago and all of sudden he removed me? This is how mistakes can happen. You need to hire more friendlier but still tough. There are men who think of authoritarianism...in another word, machoism is above everything. Being Narcissism is not the answer. Hiring good men you can hire. Not on steroids. Perhaps that one who kicked me out for no reason was on steroids. Do background check and drug tests on them!

Sometimes bouncers get the wrong idea when they see a fight. In this case that is known and I heard that when a group of guys I knew went to a well-known night club on college campus. This occurred in late 1980s. There was a young legal age bully picked on boy named "A" in this group that I know. Then another boy named "B" got upset at the whole thing and he and his friends confronted that bully and then the bouncer saw this boy named "B" who confronted the bully and the bouncer went after the wrong boy! He went after the boy, "B" instead and started to fight. The boy "B" was only 180 pounds and the bouncer was taller and bigger weighting 300 pounds. The boy, "B" actually knocked down the bouncer and lifted the 300 pounds bouncer and threw him into a wall.

That prompt the state liquor license authority to investigate and fined the night club and real shortly after that because of the suspension for 30 days of no license to sell beers and liquors, they went out of business and the same owner who owned that bar lost business in another town about 8 miles away because reputation spread around and

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people knew he was troubled. And as for the bouncer, he was ticketed for a little crime. Something I cannot remember because this was back in 1980s. The police were called in that night. Sometimes security is not always there and you had to call the police. That was why they had to and be exposed and the bar got shut down for good. That location became something else then in 2018, it was torn down to build new apartment complex for the college.

So, there are PROs and CONs of having such rink security but security is usually better judgement than not having at all. This isn't 1950s or even 1930s when they had no security at all and they were more behaving than they are today.

I recommend security but reputation of those men must be well checked and do better. Please do not call the police! You will be exposed on social media with those troubles. Or worse, a lawsuit. Sometimes you have to if it is really dangerous or causing more trouble. Like with that woman who invited 300 or so people to the rink. The owner had to call the police and kicked her out. And that major fight over a girl at a teen night club in late 1980s that brought 56 police cars. About 56 to 102 officers!

You need to hire understanding but big guys.

We do understand the cost of having security and that is a problem. You would have to raise like 2 to 4 Dollars per person more to pay for security and security equipment. Look into all this by talking with security agencies or even TSA if they are willing to talk with you.

Staff Too!

Hiring a good friendly customer service staff is required. Not some teenager age 16 who does not really want to be there. No. Since rinks today now have children age 2 to 18 more often than before. The era of elite roller skating is gone because rinks wanted to go with Disco. Disco brought out young adults and teenagers. After the Disco dead, then teenagers came and now, seemly young children and teens skates and a few adults (especially leagues including Roller Hockey and Roller Derbies). The demographics changed with skating. So, my recommendations is do not hire teenagers

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or people who do not really wanted to be there. You will have higher turnover. So, my recommendations is you hire experienced adults likely age 28 to 55. I know there is anti-age discrimination laws but they are more of better figure of age. Like in horse racing you hire Little people and for NBA, you hire Tall people and only men. Big men into other sports. You get the idea. Your staff should have parental and buddy experiences. This is to show they are more mature, more desire to work, and have that parental attitude with joyful personality to be more suitable and flexible to patrons there.

They will be more likely not to scream or scold. If there are social workers who needed extra cash, hire them. They are good with people. People with church background such as bi-vocational pastors (pastors do not make money preaching but has a secular job to make a living) can be excellent choice. They are people friendly.

We understand the situations with professionals working in religion and education background that they have been caught or arrested for sexual activities that are not proper. Lately, pastors (non-Catholic), priests, school teachers, and adults with background working with children are being heard in the news a lot lately. Even actors and producers are being caught a lot lately too.

You need to have rigid background check on your new hires and candidates. I understand it is expensive but in long run your investment comes in a long way.

When you do hire good people, your establishment will likely bring more customers in and likely be able to come in more often.

Smile Always!

Smile, please! And you need to have good attitude with it. You need to smile, listen, and be friendly with the customer. If there is a problem such as bad skates you did not purchase to update, apologize to them and offer incentives. If you do not want to give money back or whatever, you need to update the skates! Offer incentives! Maybe refund the skate rental but not admission and offer another set of skates if the other is broken. When you have the broken skates, set aside or into a bin where you will have to repair during off hours and MUST repair PROPERLY! NEVER resshelf them! Your

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patrons will see if you do that, they will walk out and put on social media what you did! NEVER EVER DO THAT! EVER!

Then this is why you smile and put those skates in a bin that you will repair them next day before next session. Too bad! DO IT!

Maybe another concept is give them a coupon for half off or even a free pass to come back next time without need to pay for the admission to make that disappointing customer come back.

Have your staff SMILE! And say friendly things like the admission, "Hi! Welcome to this ABC Skates tonight! How are you?!" Then customer will say, "Hi, oh, thank you! I am fine! Now, I have two kids here and I am not skating. Just to sit and watch."

Then you or your staff doing admission reply nicely, "Ok, that will be this XX Dollars for the two children and as for you, we will give you half off but you need to wear this red wristband that tells us that you are not skating. Now, the total is XX.XX Dollars and have a great evening here at ABC Skates! Thank you!"

Does that sound like friendly? Yes. But what if there is a long line, try to shorten and do say nice things though.

The snack bar and skate rental counters staff must also smile too! Always have them say, "Hi! How can I help you?" For skate rental...can be the same but can be this way, "Hi, what kind of skates or size you like to have?" When you or your staff are reaching, please do talk with your patron at the same time. Say, "How are you tonight?" Then when the skates are on the counter, do not release and say this, "You are going to have fun! Lockers are this way. (point the direction) and if you have any problems with the skates please by all means come back here and we will exchange skates for you, ok?"

I heard some story on Yelp that the owner was inspecting a child skate that a patron brought in with his son and showed angry and THREW skates and offered the rental instead. NEVER EVER throw someone else's skates! NEVER! THAT IS NOT YOUR PROPERTY! If you want to inspect, that is fine because you want to be sure no stones

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caught on the skates. Offer this way instead. If there are worn wheels, offer better friendlier solutions. **DO NOT THROW ANYONE ELSE'S SKATES!** Offer this: you can clean their skates free of charge! If you do not have time, **MAKE TIME!**

DO offer that or give them the alternative while you can clean their skates. You can also attempt a business marketing fused into this by offering new wheels replacement if the customer likes to make a purchase. AND you can be glad to replace them free of charge. OFFER FREE skate rental for that night while you or your staff can replace wheels. If your staff doing this, offer them a 5 Dollars commission for every wheel or 10 Dollars for every set of skates sold! This will encourage staff more motivation and friendlier face.

Your floor guard should also be friendlier. And wear referee shirts or brightly colored shirt that has word, STAFF upon the shirts. They need to know First Aid and CPR. They will act as both referee and medical. Hire medical experienced staff. At least with those certified. For instance, you can hire EMTs to work for you. They are not always on call. When they do, let them go and they can do their job saving lives. EMTs, personal care, caretakers, and medical assistants are excellent to hire. Not LPNs, RNs, and Doctors because have full time jobs and stressful enough saving lives and helping lives. Your security staff should also know First Aid and CPR as well. And pay for their retraining and recertification every two years as required by law.

The reason for this is to make them updated and aware of any incidents occurred to avoid any lawsuits at your rinks even when patrons signed waivers (which I hate).

As the Boy Scouts say, "Be Prepared!"

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Chapter Three: Marketing.

You know about marketing. You need to market your rink. You also need to market yourself. Make business cards. Attend trade shows especially several kinds: the RSA and Roller Sports trade show and conference. Well aware how expensive it is.

Also attend your local chamber of commerce show. This is huge potential for marketing concept. Rent a booth. You can do that so that your potential patrons that walked by will likely stop and see your booth. Have nice skates that are for sale on display. Have coupons printed out. Have prizes there so that they can drop in a box or basket. They are YOUR POTENTIAL data mining. Database is necessary for survival of your business. Why? When you have their cards, you can send them emails such as coupons to come in for a free skating session or free skates or all. Then you can email them newsletters.

You can gain patrons this way. Also make deal with them to have their company parties at your rink. Think Christmas parties... or in summer, cookouts at your rink! If you own an entertainment center or even amusement/theme park, you can really get many to

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come. I know of a company did that annually for their staff. Companies do want moral boost or energy boost with their staff. Explain that to those potential patrons. We are talking about not one person. We are talking about from 10 to thousands of employees. Explain that your rink has far more room and nicer to have all tables and chairs set up for Christmas party with buffet. I love buffet. The rink can work out as a dance floor.

Offer your own DJ for such parties.

Also when you are in need to walk around during the same local chamber trade show, DO drop off cards not because you want to win that basket full of your favorite college team merchandise. You want to drop off so the company will see your card and may can contact you for such events. Or maybe just you need something like printing flyers for your database. Something.

Do set up a booth but it is expensive to have at the state fairs. Here in New York State Fair, it cost about 3,000 Dollars for a 13 days event with a 10 X10 booth. You can have at the booth a signup sheet for newsletter subscription. That is your database!

And offer them a coupon for a free admission because they signed up. With all that signed up, you can gain all that investment back within a month or two. In New York State Fair, 1 million fairgoers attended and this means a potential 10 percent. That is 100,000 new or returning skaters. That means a good Million Dollars on a 3000 Dollars investment. What you think? It is good investment!

County fairs are bit cheaper but you would more likely get that same demographics attending your rink. And potential new ones. Do the same at any kids' fairs.

When you have a booth, you can even sell skates and supplies at the fairs. I saw how marketing of many different merchandise worked at the fair and they sell thousands of dollars at the fair. That is your money payoff for the rental of booth space.

This is huge marketing expenses. It is totally understanding it can be expensive. And lack of much staff because you have like three of you working together up to 20 or more for a larger place. You have to split time between the sessions and the fair. Fairs are

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like 16 to 18 hours a day each day operations. For those times, your staff might have to work full time basis during the Fair(s).

You can even be creative for the fairs. Why not built a temporary rink using roller court and have extra skate rentals at the fair and you can see potential hundreds of skaters at the fair! Understand that it is expensive to rent space. I know that. But it pays off. If you are a skate park owner as well, excellent, just easy get boards up and have a temporary skate park at the fair. Kids and teens love both kinds of skating.

You can even have special events such as a skate show. That is. With your artistic team or roller hockey team, speed team, Roller Derby team or even skateboard stunt team all have demonstrations at the fair. That can generate spark of interests to new "lost" generation. Since it is the State Fair, or even county fair, you can ask other rink operators in the state or county, respectively to join with you to pool in expenses for the large space (may can run into about 10,000 Dollars for a large space especially hockey rink size). This concept can be paid off. Also check with your tax professional if it can be a tax write off. Any trade shows, can be a write off.

The competition is good. Your rink and other rinks have teams (artistic, roller hockey, roller derby, skateboard stunt teams) can compete at the Fair. Demonstrations or make it like a state championship. Or because State Fairs are usually in the fall or even late summer, this means back to school season, it means leagues are starting up so it is good training season at the time. Or a tournament like a Final Four bracket style. Right down to the championship on final day of the fair. Fairgoers will want to see how and what this is all about.

If the chamber show has enough space, you can set up the same just for a day. Have your staff wear skate outfit or your team players within any roller sports can wear it and do it. If they have more space available, have a mini rink there.

For Amusement Park Owners...

You have a skating rink, right? And you operate a theme or amusement park. That is a huge marketing potential. You have better advertising dollars than a standard skating

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rink. You can advertise more with your rink along with your park. Even if you are just an entertainment center that includes just go-kart, mini-golf, arcade, and batting cage and that is it. Well, put all into one basket which is only one you can do that. But you can separately advertise for each.

If you have amusement park, maybe for e-tickets, say that the skating session is for free or just for a dollar if the admission to the rink is through the park. If not, offer a coupon with the park at a discount rate of maybe 50 percent. This function will boost advertising and admissions to the rink. Also do the state/county fairs concept I explained in previous page.

Targeted Media Format.

Try to focus on printed media publications that are aimed for children, parents, and stay local! You can do newspapers but not many read newspapers. How about e-newspapers? You can advertise it there. They do have sports section of the papers online. Advertise it there.

In fact, you can make income using clicks. For every click, you make money.

Another thing. Be sure you have good UPDATED websites. I have seen websites for rinks that are still in 1990s format. Websites have updated look now. Really cool ones and even have live video banners, etc. Not like that old animation that looked outdated from 1990s. Not anymore. No one likes to use those animation clipart anymore. Very professional now. Please do yourself a favor, go check websites of anything. Check your skate vendors, shopping malls (modern updated malls), grocery stores you go to, e-newspapers and your local news and more. What they look like? Modern? Good. A rink that just closed months ago (at this time of writing, it is February 2019), they had a 1990s website that they just closed up for good. I was able to capture that and put it on my dead-rinks.weebly.com website.

Open up accounts in all social media websites. Facebook can be good but terrible and controversial website that they have rights to remove if they feel you are not good enough. My recommendation is to STAY away from Facebook. Try Pinterest,

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Instagram, YouTube, and business related sites. They are not heard of much but never know they will gain popular. Like Facebook did after MySpace was once popular and so was Friendster. Friendster folded.

Twitter is kind of okay but what is wrong with them is that they are like Facebook: can remove posts and they are controversial when they remove things. So I caution you using those two formats. I feel other sites are better for you.

YouTube faced similar problems as it does with Facebook and Twitter. All three are not that great in terms of business relationship with those media companies. This is why I prefer old standby, broadcast email, and use other sites. Make your own social media! Start a blogging page or a forum website. You will get potential members. It is in your TOTAL control. If you feel you do not have the time, hire a staff who works at the rink who is also computer savvy can do media website maker/monitor/Original poster. I have my own social media website which is a forum. This is in my total control. That is the best format.

Rinks are gone because they did not update everything! Like their 1990s style website, their rinks are same way.

Appearance Draw Skaters.

You need to update your rink. Every 7 to 10 years. This is major update. I mentioned some before. But this is important and I am saying it again on this page. Important you do update. If you do not have money, then that is not a good idea to run the rink like an airplane running on fumes (out of fuel). I have watched YouTube on real life pilots flying major planes such as Boeing, and Airbus planes and enjoyed watching it. I learned they must land if they are out of fuel. Therefore, you should also know you must update your rink. Every 7 to 10 years.

There was a rink from Florida that was featured in old SKATE Magazine and they ran same rink within two years in their articles. They showed updated version two years later and they looked so refreshing in that 1970s with a theme. They really masterfully worked hard to have it very much of a theme and luxurious looking place. In Michigan,

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they did the same as well as one in Tulsa, OK. Those rinks were well designed. With modern looking furniture (snack bar area), colorful walls or bricks. They actually had bricks. Real bricks or cinderblocks! The rink that showed styles in Florida are gone. Because of new owner and put up walls around the rink instead of open rink. They also made it look so plain. Walls and half walls are in white. Boring color. Blue valance around the rink and snack bar area. I could not see that same location near where the snack bar is in that YouTube video.

They did not make it unique. Why is that? They went from luxury theme to plain boring hockey rink look. I understand they now have roller hockey and derby teams. But still... they could have at least have nice modern looking facility. And never mind the hockey rink walls. Can it be removable? And reinstalled when there is a hockey game or derby playing? I am sure they can come up with something like that. It made the side of the rink look very narrow as I can see in the videos.

If they are not playing hockey, why are the nets still there when having a regular skating session one night? Should have been removed for safety!

Anyway, check Pinterest and Instagram websites for awesome ideas. Sure, they have many old photographs of old rinks. But that should fuel ideas for modern. There are some modern ones that are very nice. So new. Like a rink in Buffalo. They have both roller and ice rinks in same building. Their roller derby plays there. Their roller rink is small but enough to skate there. It sits by a river in Buffalo. Type in search words such as "Modern roller rinks" I just did this now and I found so many beautiful rinks! Like the one in Brooklyn, find that rink with the blue ceiling and cursive lights. Beautiful one! Oh, a cruise ship has a roller rink! So MODERN! Wow! There are about 50 percent of the pictures with true modern clean looking rinks. Other half is regular rinks. Ignore those because I am talking about really creative ones.

Have you ever thought of a new shape? Ok, before I go on with that. You remember you swam in your swimming pool out back yard that is rectangle shaped with a diving board and all. Or your community pool or the pool in your school. All rectangle shaped. Pretty boring until you saw how groovy and cool swimming pool when you went on your

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honeymoon or spring break from college? Nice right? Now, let's get back to rink. I did design one time for Sports-O-Rama a design to expand the rink to add the rear of the property to include more skating floor. It would have had a bit of a boomerang look or an L shape rink with exposed beams and greenhouse for daylight to shine in onto the rink to save cost. But cool to see at night. Also a dance floor above the rink. Convert the dance center into a garage for the plow, blower, shovel, tools for fixing the place, and fixing skates. My boss loved it and wants this. Never happened. Oh well. But the idea is right. He saw that potential.

Now, what about you? Reshape the rink! Be sure you have ample space on your property for expansion so you can create shaped like a pool skating rink! Boomerang shaped, snowman shaped, water theme park faux river shaped, or any other geometric shapes. Research shapes online especially for math students and professionals. You will find they are quite interesting for your rink. Oval is good too. Or egg shaped. Anything!

This is a major next generation for rinks after that rectangle shaped rinks been around since James T. Plimpton invented a roller rink.

Here is another thought. I know it's expensive. Why not expand to include ice rinks. Set up several kinds of rinks. That is right. Wood, concrete, roller court, and ice. But also one for practice for little kids with their walkers/skate mates, another for regular skating, another for motorcross style rink, a skateboard park rink, a BMX bicycle park rink, a Scooter park, roller hockey rink, a derby flat rink (they have specific size), derby traditional curved rink, and of course, ice rink and ice speed rink (Olympic). Of course millions of Dollars! You would need several acres. Maybe try 10 to 20 acres or more. This means a purchase of a dead mall and convert into a rink park complex. You can charge per rink usage for your skaters. Or one big price for all. Have championships there as well as tournaments. Work out deals with schools for their teams to play there. Even professional hockey teams can practice there. This is a big draw for fans to get to know your facility and skate there.

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I understand you have very limited family owned rink. Maybe just remodel to a nice theme. Young skaters would love to fantasize they are in another world. Have exoplanetary look. Or a tropical island look... that would be Polynesian Tiki or even Mayan look. Something! Go to a huge theme park in Orlando or in Los Angeles and get ideas of what their parks are like. Create your own cartoon character. Not that same guy I see on every single skating rink website. It makes me think it must be same owner for all of those rinks. Stay away from that. I think it is from RSA. Try something else. Make your own characters. If you cannot draw, hire an artist. Or a college student and then you can use it.

When you do have that character. Maybe have same artist to paint murals with this character. And then down the road, you can have it manufactured by a toy company to make your products based on that character and sell them! Stuffed toy or a doll-like for little kids to play and it rolls on the floor in their playrooms at home!

Also it's good you should update the exterior of the rink building. Many modern rinks are quite warehouse look. Maybe you should think about adding stone veneer, nice rich color to the walls. Maybe add more plants and trees up front. They will make great shade on a hot summer down south for skaters waiting to go in the rink.

Have a garden with flowers and bushes.

Those are good ideas. Also in your office, you should add a small first aid station. It is better to be private for those really injured waiting for the ambulance to arrive. Or just to give a skater a Band-Aid.

Be Creative with events!

Today many rinks just have a session and nothing to be exciting about. Try to schedule different themes to it. Please at least once a week have Christian Skate night. Another with Country Music. Have Friday or Saturday night open to public for teens and older. And again, Friday or Saturday night for Singles and Adult age (18 and up).

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Another night for Roller Derby competition. Or they can do it on an afternoon. Another night for Figure/Couple/Ballroom. Try to bring that back. And do have an organ to play Organ music.

During the day, like on Sunday mornings, rent out to a church that needs a facility. God bless you for that. Saturday and Sunday afternoon for family time-young kids. Saturday mornings, toddler and practice lessons for young kids and those with walkers/skate mates.

During the week, in mornings and early afternoon, great for community needs such as seniors activities, lessons for adult skaters involving with figure/couple/ball room. You can also have dancing without skates lessons there as well as fitness lessons (Yoga, Tae-Bo, Martial Arts, etc). After school care. You can do that too. From 2 PM to 6 PM and have tutors there for their homework needs. Or have entire days for day care and the little ones can take skate lessons. Something like that. Fill up all of those schedule dates!

In early mornings, try to take Mall Walkers to the rink! And joggers too! And play nice soothing music for them to listen while they walk, quick walk, and jog. Free admission for those people because they go to the mall for free. So, we have no choice but provide them FREE coffee. And advertising because their children or grandkids might want to go skating. Then that is your income! Your revenues.

So, now you know what to do.

Any questions or comments or want to add for future edition, please do email me at deadrollerrinks@gmail.com

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About Mark Falso

Mark Falso who is a published author, artist, designer, webmaker, and for recreational, his passion includes roller skating. Mark first skated in March 1978 at defunct Empire Skates East roller rink in DeWitt, NY. Mark fell in love with skating since and has skated 16 more rinks. More than half of the rinks closed and others remains. In fact, Mark worked for Sports-O-Rama Roller Rink in Mattydale, NY, a suburb of Syracuse, NY.

Mark has had retail experience in retail stores and automobile dealership. Mark worked at Sports-O-Rama as a Maintenance but he included front tickets, floor guard, janitorial and some repairs. One time, the manager forgot to show up for Christian Skate night one December night in 1990, Mark was only staff present and he had to open the rink for the night, did tickets, check the rink, and snack bar all at once. Since Mark had no keys for the vault where cash were located. Mark cleverly asked about 20 skaters who arrived at same time at 7 PM scheduled time opening for quarters because first skater came with a twenty Dollars that needed to break. So Mark had to build up starting with Quarters because that session admission was 2.50 per person. Eventually after with

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Quarters, then asked for Dollar bills, then Five and a Ten then the first person in was last person (20th) person to get in. He was a little upset but paid to get in.

About two hours later, the owner of the business came in and was surprised and was going to teach Mark. But never did.

Mark also did murals for the rink.

For art including murals, flyer design (both web and for print outs), cartoon character design, and even architectural renderings and concepts, you can hire Mark Falso to do work for your rink, theme park, amusement park, and/or entertainment center. Mark can design new rink course, mini golf course, rides ideas. Then you can submit to your architect (Mark is not licensed architect or Interior designer) but can do renderings for you to grasp the idea of what the facility will be like. Mark still can design ideas and you can built them for certain things. Others you can hire Mark to work with a professional who can design and built such as an amusement park ride, building design, etc.

Mark Falso also can be speaker and host seminars for all rink owners, operators, managers and staff.

Mark Falso resides in Liverpool, NY, a suburb of Syracuse, NY.

You can reach him at deadrollerrinks@gmail.com for further details.

What Can We Do To Save Roller Rinks



Mark Falso

Mark is a published author, artist, designer, CAD drafter, Speaker, and skated since 1978 and even worked for a rink for a time.

A commentary e-book on skating rinks and what Mark has learned and suggest changes that are needed for the survival and sake of skates. A must read.

