

# ***BPAA International Bowl Expo Rocks Vegas Again***

***By Jim Goodwin for the Bowling News Network***

This year's BPAA International Bowl Expo, held June 23-26, was another very special and spectacular event. Held at the beautiful Paris Resort in Las Vegas and the Las Vegas Convention Center, it lived up to its billing, and all who attended had high praise.

My wife, CJ, and I attended on behalf of *Stars & Strikes* and the Bowling News Network, and it was a very busy week. We were especially impressed by the keynote speakers. The Thought Leader Keynote on Tuesday was inspiring. "Happiness Guru" Shawn Achor, author of the book *The Happiness Advantage*, spent more than an hour revealing how the simple act of being happy can make us healthier, more productive, and more successful. His very informal presentation and advice was humorous, honest, and very interesting. Achor has traveled the world making business better simply by improving the attitudes and outlooks of workers in virtually any working environment.

## **Magic Moments**

After two days of very interesting educational seminars that tackled such subjects as social media, building youth programs, digital marketing, group sales, league bowling (yes, that still is a goal), menu engineering, and many more, proprietors and guests were treated to the Thursday morning Keynote featuring basketball legend Earvin "Magic" Johnson, sponsored by Brunswick.

To be honest, we were not expecting anything more than a sports jock bragging about his career, and a spectacular career it was ... but something remarkable happened. Yes, Johnson was one of the biggest stars in sports history, but who knew that he was warm, personable, and one of the most successful businessmen ever after his time on the court was done? Johnson is now 56, and his hands-on approach to business and his work ethic are the keys to his success.

Magic got everyone's attention immediately after being introduced by Brunswick CEO Brent Perrier by coming down off of the stage and walking through the crowd with a hand held microphone. He then picked folks from the crowd and asked them to stand with him. He then proceeded to tell a story about lessons he learned in sports and business while looking them in the eye. After a two- or three-minute story, he thanked them by name and had a photo taken with them. I guarantee most of those shots are now proudly displayed on Facebook and have been framed for office walls.

He did this about 20 times, and at the end of the session, he took questions from the crowd -- some about basketball, most about business to the guy who owns a chain of movie theaters and 150 Starbucks stores, among other enterprises. The last question created an incredibly poignant moment that attendees talked about for the next two days.

A woman stood up and told Magic that her teenage son was a basketball player, but he was struggling with his game and his life, and she asked if he could offer some advice. This is when Johnson turned an ordinary question into a slam dunk that few people who witnessed it will soon forget.

Instead of simply telling the woman what to tell her son, he asked her if she had a movie mode on her smart phone. She did, and he asked her to turn it on. When she complied, Johnson spent what seemed like five minutes talking directly to the woman's son, addressing him by name, and telling him that he and all athletes have down times but sticking with it was the key; fighting through tough times is what brings victory and success.

When he was done, tears were flowing down the cheeks of most of the audience, and Magic just smiled, went back to the stage, and gave a heartfelt thank you to everyone. BPAA President Tom Martino and Executive Director Frank DeSocio were beaming when they thanked Johnson and gave him a crystal pin as a parting gift. They knew he was a big name among all of the famous people who have addressed Expo; we doubt they knew that he would deliver such a powerful and inspiring message.

And can you imagine what that kid thought when his mom delivered Johnson's video message?

The annual Expo trade show followed the Johnson keynote. Attendees were bussed from the Paris to the Las Vegas Convention Center about five minutes away; where they could see just about any product or service available to bowling.

Thursday was a long but rewarding day for yours truly. I had the privilege of working with Phantom Radio Show Host Lenny Nicholson in interviewing a dozen very interesting proprietors in the IBMA Radio booth. Who thought a bunch of bowling alley owners would have such interesting stuff to talk about? It was fun, and we hope a lot of people get to hear what they had to say by going to [www.phantomradioshow.com](http://www.phantomradioshow.com).

On Friday, the trade show continued, and USBC Gold Level Coach Bill Zuben was joined by former PBA Tournament Director Johnny Campos for more radio shows to be aired on [www.gobowlingshow.com](http://www.gobowlingshow.com). Many people don't remember that Campos was a journalist before he worked for the PBA. This was his first Expo.

Friday night, Expo ended in its usual style, with a party /concert sponsored by QubicaAMF. This year, "Club Xpo" was one of the loudest ever featuring the legendary rock band REO Speedwagon. Even the older folks (check the mirror) seemed to be enjoying the classic rock entertainment ... but there is one thing I still don't understand – why do people gather on the floor in front of the stage and just stay there? Do they just feel a need to be near rock stars? Maybe I'd better check my mirror again.

We are already looking forward to next year when Expo lands at the Mandalay Bay Resort in Vegas.

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