

FOODSERVICE EAST PRESENTS

# SECRETS OF **SUCCESS**

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An ongoing series of interviews with chefs, restaurateurs and foodservice operators, Secrets of Success looks at the paths taken to professional recognition and acclaim.



## **Patrick Lyons**

**Principal, Kings Bowl of America  
By Foodservice East**

Patrick Lyons, Principal, Kings Bowl of America, is called the king of Boston entertainment and a hospitality legend for good reason. He transformed an area in the Fenway into an exciting, vivacious destination for club goers and sports bar lovers before branching into restaurants with Sonsie on Boston's Newbury St. in the Back Bay. Today, he's expanding the Kings Bowl America bowling/restaurant outlets, opening as far west as Rosemont, IL. A new, fourth MA Kings will open in Burlington this fall with 30,000 sq. ft. and accommodating 700+ people. Elsewhere, another opens in Raleigh, NC.

# FOODSERVICE EAST SECRETS OF SUCCESS

**FSE: What originally led you into the world of clubs/entertainment/restaurants?**

LYONS: A love of the game of foosball and a desire to meet girls.

**FSE: What were you doing before that?**

LYONS: I ran a paint department in a department store.

**FSE: Since buying the old Boston, Boston in '81, you've created an empire that stretches down the Eastern Seaboard. What are your current growth plans?**

LYONS: Kings Bowling, Kings, Kings, and then some more Kings.

**FSE: On the nightclub side of your business, your clubs at Mohegan Sun are sophisticated and beautiful – any plan for similar venues in Boston? Vista for example (one of my favorite bars anywhere)!**

LYONS: The answer to that is hopefully one of these Boston casino operators will see fit to bring back the iconic Boston club brand, Avalon. By the way, the core of Avalon's audience was North Shore 21-30 year olds.

**FSE: A recent fire at the new Kings in Burlington, MA destroyed the opening this Spring. When do you expect to open at this point and what happened to the people who were planning on starting training the week those plans went up in smoke?**

LYONS: The answer to that question is ouch! Thankfully no one was injured in the fire. We repositioned 195 of the 200 employees within our organization within 72 hours. We are in the process of rebuilding and hope to be open in this calendar year.

**FSE: What do you see as the 'secret' of your success?**

LYONS: Clean living and hard work.

**FSE: Looking ahead five or 10 years, where do you see your company headed?**

LYONS: We'll probably be in the leading edge of design, consulting, and finance of forward-thinking hospitality projects.

**FSE: What gives you the most satisfaction/pleasure in your work?**

LYONS: I love a room full of people with huge smiles on their faces, tapping their feet or their fingers and having a great night out.

**FSE: On the reverse side, what do you like least?**

LYONS: When I'm busy it puts a limit on my ability to play golf.

**FSE: Do you have favorites among the venues you've opened?**

LYONS: Sonsie is a favorite. Game On! is a favorite. Towne is a favorite. But really they're all like children, how can you have a favorite?

**FSE: What is the biggest challenge in opening clubs and restaurants today compared with 33 years ago?**

LYONS: For no good reason the regulatory process has become insane. The only thing more insane than the regulatory process is the litigious nature of the world we operate in.

**FSE: What do you do for r&r?**

LYONS: Travel, travel with my family, enjoy my kids, and an occasional game of golf.