



# 10 Mistakes FEC Owners Make

And How to Avoid Them



**Like every decision you make to grow your business, when you select a Point of Sale system for your facility, you face the possibility you will make the wrong choice. In this guide, we'll show you how to avoid this fate by learning from other FEC owners' mistakes.**

**POS systems are a central component of your operations. Your software touches every part of your facility, from guests to the accountant, so you need a solution that can meet all of your needs – including needs you don't even have yet. At the same time, you don't always know exactly what you need until you realize your system of choice lacks a particular function or causes more problems than it solves.**

This might seem like a double-edged sword. With so many POS systems, use cases and unknowns in your industry, how can you possibly make the right choice?

The answer is by listening to your peers. What worked and what didn't for their particular business? You don't have to fall victim to "if I knew then what I know now" syndrome. You can learn right now, from fellow FEC owners, about what the right choice actually looks like.

With that in mind, here are the top ten concerns we've heard from other operators about what they wish they thought of before they selected a POS software.

**#1**

## **"I didn't know I would be adding attractions and would need a more robust system."**

Many operators dream big and plan a park or FEC with the latest attractions in mind but neglect to consider what their business might look like in two to five years' time.

Will you want to start with smaller concessions today but potentially offer a full-service menu in the future? Will you want to add a virtual reality arena or a larger game room with redemption?

If you expand product offerings or attractions, back-end support needs to expand with it.

### Can your POS...

- ▶ Integrate with food & beverage sales?
- ▶ Customize layouts and prompts to improve frontline transaction times?
- ▶ Automate pricing and product availability instore and online?
- ▶ Manage guest capacity?
- ▶ Schedule attractions, party rooms and food & beverage for events automatically?
- ▶ Integrate with liability waivers?
- ▶ Consolidate all reporting for your revenue and cost centers so you can make timely critical decisions?
- ▶ Design complex membership and loyalty rewards programs to help you differentiate yourself from your competition?

If your POS is missing one or more of these functions, this is a tell-tale sign it can't support you as your business grows.

The amusement industry is always evolving, and the competition for guest attention and loyalty never stops. To capture the hearts and wallets of your audience, you must evolve with their preferences. A robust POS system can help you do this.

It's a good idea to review facility management solutions with both the present and the future in mind. *While a smaller solution might meet your current needs, it will limit you when your business starts growing.*

#2

## "I wish I'd thought of cash control and security measures for staff."

Solid cash control is essential, and you need a system that enables you to not only track individual team member labor and transactions in every department in your business but also helps you protect your business from external and internal theft.

You might be thinking, "Theft could never happen at my facility!" But the sad truth is that it happens, and often, which is exactly why many operators are stuck wishing they had considered cash control and security measures when they were selecting a POS software.

So, don't ignore the potential for theft – prepare for it.

The good news: You can protect yourself from theft and other unintentional losses with a solid POS system that not only has security measures built in but has tools that create a culture of honesty and vigilance for team members. Now, you can sleep at night without having to worry about theft – and knowing that, if it were to occur, you have a great POS software to back you up.

## QUICK TIPS!

1. **Enable a security hierarchy.** Every single team member doesn't need access to voids, refunds, item creation and other more complex POS functions. Also, limit your employees' access to tills, the cash room and your banks, and never assign more than one employee to these duties at a time. This provides accountability for any cash overages or shortages.
2. **Integrate biometrics.** Going along with security hierarchy, the best way to ensure team members are where they're supposed to be is by enabling biometrics – that is, a fingerprint login instead of just an ID number. Fingerprints can't be faked as easily as a string of numbers!
3. **Check reports.** Your POS software should provide sales receipt detail reports, discount reports, till summaries and audit logs. If you suspect internal theft, you can review these reports and investigate any suspicious patterns in your facility.

#3

### “I didn't consider the hassle of pulling reports from multiple systems.”

Imagine you have one system for food and beverage, a different one for online bookings, another to run your game room and so on. Have you considered how much time you'll spend each day, week or month trying to get a picture of what's going on inside your park?

This is a reality for many FEC owners who, instead of picking one comprehensive facility management system, cobbled together different systems as they needed them.

#### **It didn't take long for them to realize their mistake.**

When you use several different systems to handle all of the revenue and transactional data gathered throughout the course of a normal day, you put your business at risk for errors and wasted time coordinating reports and data from all the different systems involved.

Pulling a report should be simple. But when you have multiple, siloed solutions, you must figure out the reporting functionality for each. This means accessing them individually, entering your report parameters and exporting each one into a program. And that's before you can even compare it with data from a different system.

#4

### “I thought customer service would be better and more available.”

Opening a new facility or expanding your current offering is an exciting time. But the excitement can be hampered by second-guessing your software decisions – or realizing that you've chosen the wrong one. That's why, when you're looking for a POS, prioritize customer service. If you take the time to find the right partners (that is, more than just a software package), you will be more confident and satisfied with your decision.

▶ **Just as your facility runs on good customer service, so should your POS system.**

It's true. POS software can offer more than just the software itself. Just as your facility runs on good customer service, so should your POS system. Many facility owners aren't aware of this – or they simply don't anticipate needing additional support beyond setup, especially if their system of choice touted itself as “easy to use.”

Just because a system is easy to use for day-to-day operations doesn't mean you won't need training or troubleshooting down the line.

At some point in time you'll need help with any system you purchase. Be sure to consider service level agreements, what constitutes a high priority ticket item, response times, office hours as well as long-term relationship offerings when choosing.

#### Tip

- ▶ Always get client referrals of the POS solution you're considering.

#5

## “I assumed my other key systems would integrate.”

A lot happens in a family entertainment center – admission and ticketing sales, memberships, food and beverage, party reservations and games. If you're operating on different systems for all of the above, you will lose out on features, functionality and even security.

### How Siloed Systems Make Life Harder

#### Party Booking

Say someone books a group event with a third-party online booking platform. Later on, this entire party will need to be re-rung into your cashless system or restaurant POS, meaning add-ons and deposits may be missed due to accidental manual entry errors. Manual entry also poses a security threat and opportunity for misuse or theft.

#### Integrated Liability Waivers

If your facility requires the use of safety waivers, a third-party solution prevents you from connecting guest profiles to sales data to understand guest buying behavior or perform targeted smart marketing based on spending habits and other unique data.

#### Food Service

Food service should be as easy to offer as every other attraction in your facility. Operating a separate food and beverage system means you create friction points for guests who can't purchase food and beverage along with attractions anywhere they want to in your facility, and it also means you can't leverage the power of varied F&B outlets and mobile ordering capabilities.

Events are a big part of your business, and a disjointed solution means that food requirements don't pass seamlessly from event reservation to kitchen prep reports to final guest invoicing – all of which can cost you time, service levels and, ultimately, money.

When you're selecting a POS software, be sure to consider all of the other operations you run besides physical point of sale. You might need a comprehensive facility management system with tight integration capabilities.

#6

## “I wish we had better online sales options.”

An online store can make or break your guest experience. If you offer a poor online sales experience, it will cost your business money.

While many of your sales will be face-to-face, your POS software considerations should extend beyond the counter to the online experience. Facility owners with a myopic view of operations forget about eCommerce – and how an online sales option can actually save time and labor, while freeing up team members to focus on upselling.

### Can Your POS...

- ▶ Connect to a mobile responsive web store?
- ▶ Update package and pricing online when you've made changes instore?
- ▶ Allow guests to book birthday parties online?
- ▶ Integrate with event and attraction ticket scheduling?
- ▶ Offer a seamless online experience?

You won't be able to maximize your online sales potential without one or more of these POS functions.

Web sales can help you reduce lines, wait times, decrease the number of inbound sales staff and speed up the check-in process. Your POS should allow you to maximize your sales potential – both on and offline.

#7

## “I didn't know how important the group events booking functionality would be.”

You may not realize how complex and nuanced booking birthday parties and other group events can become until you're in the trenches yourself.

But take our word for it.

If you own (or you're planning on owning) a busy facility that keeps guests entertained for hours, expect events to be a major part of your business – it's a compliment! But if you're not prepared to handle the influx of guests, organize attraction schedules, manage wait times and other complex situations, then the overall experience and resulting guest attendance will fall flat.

Look for party booking software that makes planning a big day easy for you (and your guests) and keeps everything in order with full POS integration.

### Book More Parties & Events with Better Group Events Functionality

- ▶ Capture attraction requirements and eliminate overbooking.
- ▶ Easily track changes, special requests and event notes.
- ▶ Collect RSVPs directly and automatically from party guests.
- ▶ Generate game cards, wristbands and more in bulk.
- ▶ Store group and purchaser data for loyalty programs and marketing.
- ▶ Create detailed event reports for continuous improvement and success.

#8

## “I wish we had the ability to create more unique product combinations and coupons.”

Another way to boost revenue is by offering unique product combinations, discounts and coupons.

This doesn't mean offering the “cheapest” attractions or products will win you more business in the long run. What really matters is that you have the highest quality guest experience, regardless of price. Unfortunately, FEC owners slip into the trap of not wanting to offer combinations or special offers because they fear it will devalue their brand. As a result, they don't anticipate needing this functionality in their POS system – big mistake.

Having the ability to repackage your offerings in new and creative ways will keep your guests interested and excited to come back. Even if you don't consistently offer discounts, you want to be able to have this flexibility, just in case a special promotion pops up.

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#9

## “I assumed we could enable recurring billing and membership options – we can't.”

Membership programs boost revenue and encourage repeat business. Programs that automatically bill and renew mean you won't need to spend as much administrative time trying to sell another product or following up on payments. This lets you focus on other ideas that improve your existing offerings.

Membership programs also help you manage the seasonal peaks and valleys, giving you some breathing room in slower times. So, you can imagine how disappointed other FEC owners were when they realized they couldn't set up membership plans and recurring billing with their existing software.

These programs essentially run themselves with little to no manual effort – so you don't want to miss out on this easy way of achieving consistent revenue.

#10

## “I thought I had enough usable data for quick decisions and marketing.”

You can't fix what you can't measure. Many FEC owners struggle because their POS system doesn't deliver mission-critical business intelligence. This can lead to long-term business problems if left unaddressed.

Actionable guest analytics help you learn more about what your guests love, helping you optimize marketing, create targeted promotions and make real-time business decisions – but only if you have a system that delivers usable data.

### Key Data Points Your POS Software Should Deliver (that you can't afford to ignore)

- ▶ Total customer visits and spending data sorted by spending or number of visits
- ▶ Average per capita spending
- ▶ Heatmaps for number of guests onsite
- ▶ Guests' most recent visit in a customized date-range (e.g. who has visited in the last 30 days)
- ▶ Total lifetime spend by customer
- ▶ Specific items guests have purchased
- ▶ Membership and loyalty program participation
- ▶ Pass and discount utilization

## Lessons Learned

When selecting a POS software, always consider the functions you need that go beyond the physical counter. A POS system should do more than just process transactions. In fact, the right solution can enhance your facility in ways you never expected, across more than just one area of your business.

If you're interested in a solution that's already one step ahead of the aforementioned mistakes, CenterEdge can help. We've made it easy for FEC owners and operators by putting everything in one single, easy-to-use platform: point of sale, online ticketing, party and group sales, waivers, memberships, detailed analytics, plug-and-play integrations and more. But the reason it works is because we've listened to, and learned from, our customers. And now we want to pass that knowledge on to you.

For more information about how CenterEdge can help you, contact us at [info@centeredgesoftware.com](mailto:info@centeredgesoftware.com) or visit us at [centeredgesoftware.com](http://centeredgesoftware.com).





## About CenterEdge Software

CenterEdge is serious software for a fun business, offering the same kinds of features demanded by large-scale entertainment destinations in a package that is affordable and user-friendly enough for entertainment, amusement and adventure businesses of just about any size. CenterEdge Software has been enabling the easier and more effective operation of nationwide family entertainment centers, trampoline parks, water parks, museums, large-scale amusement parks and more since 2004. For more information, visit the company at [centeredgesoftware.com](http://centeredgesoftware.com) or follow CenterEdge on **LinkedIn**, **Twitter** or **Facebook**.

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