

Overview

Jester FEC is the building team established by the founders of Malibu Jack's Indoor Theme Parks, the Hatton Brothers. Founded in 2013 in Lexington, Kentucky, the team has now built six multi-attraction 100,000-square-foot indoor parks in Kentucky, Indiana, Illinois, and Iowa (coming soon!).

In this CenterEdge client spotlight, we sat down with Noelia Deaton, Controller for the company, and asked her to share a few insights into their leadership, growth, and the CenterEdge tools that have helped them grow from one facility to the next, with more on the way.



Q&A

Question 1: For those who haven't heard about Malibu Jack's, what's the story behind Jester FEC and the Malibu Jack's brand?

Malibu Jack's is a group of multi-attraction indoor theme parks that average 100,000 square feet in size, founded by the Hatton brothers.

The first park opened in 2013 in Lexington, Kentucky, with a smaller footprint, and was so successful that we built the Louisville location in 2016, followed by moving and relocating and expanding our Lexington location in 2019.

Today, our company is Jester FEC, and we have built and operated five parks, with one more opening soon.

It's been really neat to see how we've evolved over the years, going into new communities and transforming huge spaces like old Sears or K-Marts or mall spaces into indoor theme parks, complete with things like bounce beach areas, games, go-karts, bowling, and even indoor roller coasters.

Question 2: What's the Jester FEC mission when developing a new park?

We strive to develop venues that are safe, clean, and fun, that enable communities and individuals to gather and create memorable experiences. We also look for opportunities to "invest" in our relationships within the communities we serve, whether it's through creating jobs, providing donations, hosting events, or utilizing local vendors and suppliers where possible.



Question 3: How do you think your communities would describe your parks?

Our parks are a place for everyone to come and enjoy. We've tried to create a concept that's inviting for all ages. Growing up, as you would go to family entertainment centers, you would come to realize that they were geared at times to specific age groups. With our concepts, all are welcome, from ages two to ninety-two - and then some.

With our different attractions, features, and even our food and beverage offerings, we believe we're a one-stop shop for fun. We know the community is coming in to create these memories with their friends/family/colleagues, so making sure that we develop a safe, but fun experience for them is our highest priority, and I think they can see that.

Question 4: What do you think is an important philosophy when running an entertainment venue?

Whenever we go into a community, we establish at least 120 positions. When you do that, you're caring for 120 individuals who are often high school or college age, or even individuals that have families. You become part of their educational and employment journey, and it's humbling to see how you can contribute to that.

To be successful, it's also recognizing their unique contributions by listening to the team members who have been with you, helping you grow in the journey. That's part of what the Hattons have done and continue to do so well: listening, adapting, and helping us navigate our growth. That continuous learning and adaptation is also kind of how we came across CenterEdge.



Question 5: How did your team come to choose CenterEdge?

One of my group sales team members and I attended a Birthday University event in North Carolina back in 2019. They were looking to learn more about outside sales, and I was just looking to learn how best to scale as we had recently expanded and relocated our Lexington location.



We were going from more of a startup to this grander space and needed to perfect systems and figure out ways to become more efficient.

I spoke to someone at CenterEdge, had a software demo, and came back from the conference saying, "ok, we might need to go in a different direction. I think I've found a system that's exactly what we've been looking for."

For me, CenterEdge was an all-in-one solution that could connect onsite, attractions, groups, and online offerings, which was one of the biggest selling points, along with an easy-to-use POS interface.

Question 6: Besides Advantage Events, what has been the most impactful CenterEdge tool for your team?

Two things, really. With so many team members at a location, security was a big need for us. We appreciate the ability to establish security permission levels and manage the access different teams have within the system quickly and efficiently. With more than 100 team members at a location, user profile consistency is key to maintaining strong accuracy for inventory, pricing, taxes, etc.

Also, for accounting, the Quickbooks integration helped our team tremendously. I can easily create reports, save them, or have them emailed to us daily, which easily uploads into our Quickbooks with everything accurately mapped to the right place. This allows us to automate our processes which in turn can support our growth.



Question 7: What advice would you give another operator making the switch to CenterEdge?

The team at CenterEdge is great, and they're always available. They continue to empower their customers by providing a huge library of self-service tools and knowledge-based articles. Before our first training session, our team was able to go through the CenterEdge Support Portal, read articles and watch videos.



We were able to come fully prepared with questions and, in return, get the most out of our training session. So I'd advise them to take advantage of the CenterEdge team, yes, but also the Support Portal. It's just a great learning tool that you can implement not only in your training programs as you're bringing on team members, but also as you try to prepare for meetings with the trainers.



Question 8: What are the plans for the future?

Besides our new facilities, we're continuously evolving. Right now we are working on continuing to improve our food and beverage offerings.



We've been diving into Advantage Food & Beverage and learning how to build out our recipe cards within the system so that we can better track our food and beverage inventory and sales. The [CenterEdge] team continues to be extremely supportive throughout all of our locations.

We're diving into that new space and we're really excited, but it's definitely uncharted waters. And the [CenterEdge] team has been excellent.

Question 9: Besides Advantage Food & Beverage, are there any other CenterEdge features you're excited to implement?

So many! We are CenterEdge Payments users and there are lots of programs we're looking into. But one of the features through CenterEdge Payments I was thrilled to learn about was Click to Pay.



Like I said, parties are a big part of the reason we chose CenterEdge, and having the ability to quickly send a deposit link to guests through email or text is huge for us, and has allowed us to improve interactions with our guests. While also assisting us to remain PCI Compliant.

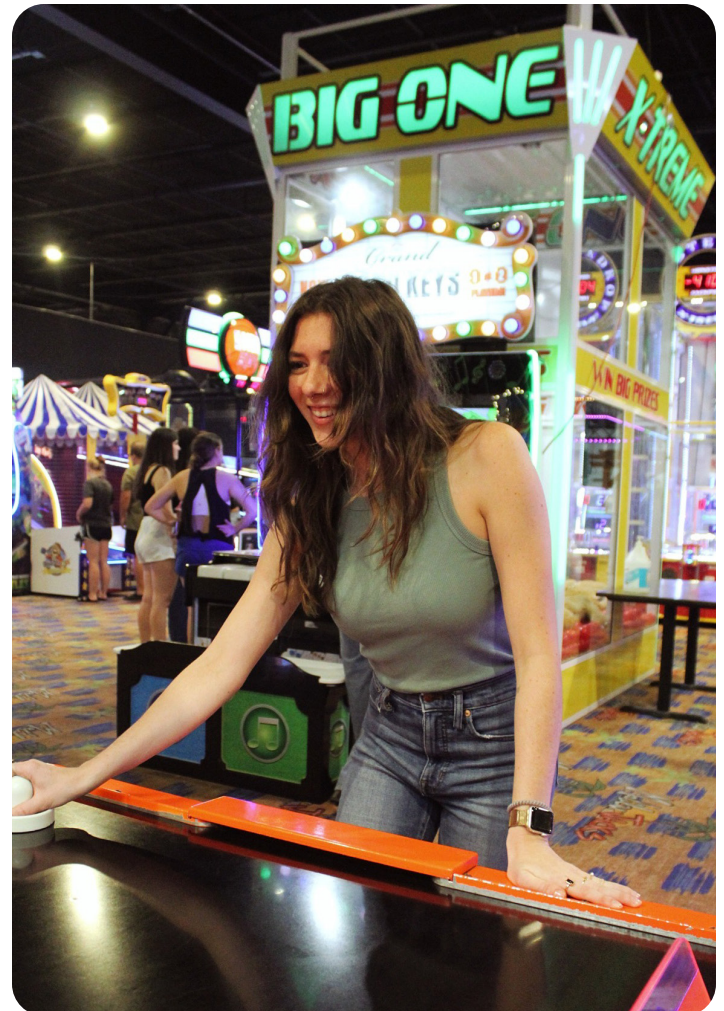
We are able to eliminate asking guests to provide credit card numbers over the phone or to come in to make a deposit, it's simple. "I'm going to send you a link from our email address, just click on the link and make your deposit. It's secure, it's encrypted and, you'll get a confirmation right away." It's great and I think as we continue to expand our dining options, Pay at the Table could become an option for us as well.

Question 10: Any last advice that you'd give others who are new to the industry?

Sit around the table and make a plan. It is crucial to outline and set goals for your guest and team experience as well as what you value as an organization.

Once you accomplish that, go back to identifying the systems and procedures you will need and how they will look and work in the real world.

You will come to realize that sometimes it's a give and take, it might be a little bit more costly to implement one process over another, but efficiency at the park level is essential.



Conclusion

The team at Jester FEC is well on their way to crafting one of the industry's most iconic brands. Through the transformation of old retail spaces into expansive indoor theme parks, they've made a splash in their communities in some very serious ways. We're honored to be able to power these facilities, enabling them streamline their operations and build a strong operation one facility at a time.



CenterEdge is a fully configurable software solution that empowers the world's top FECs and startups to orchestrate successful, scalable operations.

Contact us today to see how we can help your facility.

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