

Overview

What started as a nod to a beloved family memory, Colorado Canyon soon became a thriving business and community icon that still creates delightful first impressions some 21 years later.

The oasis in the heart of oil country is the culmination of two brothers' lifelong passions for food, games, and creating incredible family memories. We sat down with co-owners Dennis and Leon Moncla and asked them to share a little about their history, unique brand, and how CenterEdge helped along the way.



Q&A

Question 1: For those who don't know Colorado Canyon, can you tell us the story behind it

We've been partners for 21 years now. It really came out of a need. Our background was in catering, and years ago, we also bought and restored pinball machines. So we had the food side and the arcade side down.

We noticed that our local mini golf course business, which had been here for many years, was closing, and the owner was retiring, so we built Colorado Canyon. It kind of combined all three of those things - a need, our food background, and our game background - it all just kind of fit.

Question 2: What made you decide on the theme of bringing Colorado Canyon to Beaumont, Texas?

Well, years ago, our parents bought a piece of property in Colorado near Pagosa Springs. Near there is a place called the Durango and Silverton Railroad. We love that area and used to go as kids. So we named it Colorado Canyon for the alliteration, and our two courses are Durango and Silverton.

Beaumont is an oil town, and many things around here are themed after oil so we wanted to bring something different to the city. Feeling like you were coming to Colorado seemed like a great idea instead of just rehashing all the oil things here already.

We built this 12-to-13-foot-tall waterfall with streams that run through. We put a bunch of evergreen trees out, such as cypress trees, which would grow here yet mimic the types of vegetation you might see in Colorado. It looks unlike anything else in town. It really stands out.

Question 3: How do people react the first time they come in?

Amazingly well. We've been here for 20-plus years, and it's still funny to have people walk in the door and go, "Oh, we didn't realize you were over here." While Beaumont is small, it's still a town of 120,000 people, so it's easy for a business to hide no matter where you are.



Question 4: What do you think helps drive that wow factor when guests come in besides a Colorado Oasis inside Oil Country?

One of the things we do is to provide unique experiences they can't get anywhere else. We're Colorado Canyon, so we offer gemstone mining. Guests purchase a bag filled with dirt and stones, which they take to our mining sluice and pan for stones with screen trays in front of our big western town theme.

We buy high-quality bags that guarantee some nice stones in each bag. We keep it creative by offering mystery bags or themed bags. So now they'll get a fire bag, with many rocks in reds, oranges, and yellows, or an earth bag with yellow and white stones, or a pirate bag where they might find a doubloon. They're loving them.

Also, operationally, we keep the place clean. That is the number one key. Everybody still comes in and compliments how clean and fresh the place looks. Even though we've been here 20 years, it still looks close to the day we opened. The secret to that is diligence. Staying on top of things and getting employees that actually care about the place. It's not just a job for them.



Question 5: Hiring and retention are major struggles facing operators these days. How do you maintain such a conscientious team?

It's not easy! Interviewing helps a lot. We handed the reigns over to our manager, who does a great job. Once hired, we rate them pretty quickly, and we rate them A, B, or C. We try to have as many As as we can. You're not going to have 100%; we'll have some Bs, but for any Cs, we look to help them get better or find a replacement when necessary. Interviewing is important, but honestly, there's no foolproof method. You have to be ready to coach and just have fun. Many of our A employees have become managers and gone on to other careers. They still come back and talk about how much fun working here was.

Question 6: How do you keep your team happy and engaged?

As strict as we try to keep the place clean, we try to make the place fun. We want them to have a good time while they're here. And if they're having a good time, still being professional, and taking care of the customers the way they should, everybody wins.

We try not to micromanage our managers. We let them make decisions, and then if it was way out of line, we'll let them know, but we would rather them make the decision on the spot with the customer than trying to call us on the phone. We give them a lot of flexibility in their decisions, and they treat the team with the same philosophy. They understand the job market, which has changed over the past five to six years (not to mention the last 20!). As a small business, we can't afford to pay \$20 an hour, so we have to go out of our way to make it a fun job where they want to come to work and feel like they're part of a family.

Question 7: Everyone talks about culture, but what actions or behaviors from you help drive your culture and retention success?

We grew up in a family business, which helped us tremendously. We feel like if we become friends, to an extent, with our employees and make them feel like they're part of a family, they'll treat the place and job better.

We don't hide in the office; we're out front talking to them and getting to know them and their family lives. We go out of our way to find out things about them and talk to them about their lives while they're here working. We run on a small crew, which gives them more hours, which they want.

Question 8: What does onboarding look like at Colorado Canyon?

Our manager handles that for us and then the two of us will step in where needed to see if there's something they're not quite getting right. We like that you guys have a training mode so they can just type in whatever they want. It doesn't mess up the actual day-to-day activity.

We don't want to overwhelm new staff. Typically, we start new team members in Redemption, and they learn to scan everything [with Advantage Redemption], which is the easiest position and very useful. We move them around slowly.

After Redemption, they'll learn how to prepare the food, then go to the point of sale, and then to party booking, which is usually the last thing they learn on the software side.

Question 9: What made Colorado Canyon choose CenterEdge all those years ago?

We've been users since before you were CenterEdge, when you were Pathfinder. We followed Johnny over. We love him. Our last software provider went out of business. Johnny contacted us, and the system sold itself. CenterEdge had the point of sale, parties, and redemption all in one software package. The system sold itself. It made our lives so much easier.

Question 10: What has been the most impactful CenterEdge tool?

Probably, the [Advantage Events] application. The calendar layout for the way we have party rooms, porch, and areas scheduled works the best for our situation. With other solutions, the visual layout just doesn't work as well as CenterEdge does.

We can go in and pull up the month or day and see what areas are blocked in use, what parties we have, when they're starting, and what they're doing, with all of the event information at a glance. It's easy and saves a tremendous amount of time.



Question 11: What advice would you give to a new operation or facility starting out?

With CenterEdge, we love the simplicity of it. There's a lot of technology in the background, and if you take the time to set it up correctly, it's worth it.

As far as starting in the industry, you can't do enough due diligence. Even though you think you're ready, you're not. You'll come to a point where you just have to jump in with both feet. But don't just go in with a feeling that "our town needs this."

Make sure you've done the work and hired someone to do a feasibility study. We went to our local university's business department, and they helped us get the right size for our town so we would not overbuild and go out of business quickly. We built to this size for a reason. We wanted to have a massive entertainment complex, but instead, we built to suit our town, and we've been here for over 20 years.



Conclusion

Through dedication to high operational standards, a personalized team culture, and the humility to ask the right questions at the right time, Colorado Canyon has not only stood the test of time but also created a distinct identity in Beaumont. With 20 years of success, they continue to offer unique experiences, drawing inspiration from their Colorado ties and maintaining a fresh, fun atmosphere that keeps guests coming back. And we're proud that they've partnered with CenterEdge for the journey.



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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