

## Overview

For over two decades, Hickory Falls Family Entertainment Center has stood as a beacon of entertainment in Central Pennsylvania. This creative and fun indoor and outdoor facility offers an extensive range of attractions including laser tag, mini golf, go-karts, virtual reality, games, and so much more.

We recently sat down with Nichole Myers, General Manager of Hickory Falls and asked her to share some of her insights about management, CenterEdge, and operations. Discover how the Hickory Falls team keeps the fun alive and spirits "Hickory Falls Happy" in this CenterEdge Client Spotlight.



## Q&A

### **Question 1: For those who haven't heard about Hickory Falls, what's the story behind it?**

We've been in business since 2002 and I've been here for 10 years. We have great parties and attractions, a bit of everything: go-karts, mini golf, soft play, and games.

When it first started, the previous owners just had a dream of opening a miniature golf course, so we've evolved a lot since then. We've had paintball and bumper cars, adding laser tag and then ultimately replacing a few of our earlier attractions with go-karts, which is one of our core attractions that's indoor and outdoor.

### **Question 2: What's your facility's mission?**

We've had two sets of owners and I think both have had the vision of trying to keep a place where community kids can come, stay out of trouble, and just have a safe place to have fun. So over time, we've changed things to always keep them first in our minds.

**Question 3: How do you and the other members of the Hickory Falls Leadership team bring the mission to life in daily operations?**

We have a motto of keeping things “Hickory Falls Happy,” and we try with staff to impart through training the importance of just being natural and having fun with guests. Having a good time and creating those memories just lets everything fall into place with that.



Special moments like when we bring our mascot, Hickory, out are a good example of that. Adults and kids both smile and have a good time laughing with Hickory around. We try to help staff feel how rewarding being part of that is.

Operationally, we try to make things as easy as possible. We actually created our own videos on the POS system, so staff knows where to go and how to clock in. We have simple ones like that or broader ones about the POS system where they can go to find our different attractions and how to ring them up.

Staff gets to watch them before they start, but, overall, it’s pretty simple to do their jobs so we focus the most on having fun, while still having guidelines and processes and holding people (including ourselves) accountable.

**Question 4: You’ve been CenterEdge users for a long time. How do the software tools differ from what you’ve used in the past?**

It’s all really easy. Point of Sale, Groups, scheduling, it’s easy for the team and managers, nothing requires too many keystrokes. It’s definitely more simplified than other tools I’ve worked with.

For scheduling, it’s so much better. I’ve used paper or other complicated systems in the past. I’m able to create schedule templates for different times of the year based on the staffing needs during those times. Then it’s simple to create schedules based on those templates and make adjustments where necessary. It’s a whole lot simpler.



### **Question 5: What has been the most impactful CenterEdge tool for Hickory Falls?**

The labor reports are the best! I get them text messaged to me and emailed to me. Outside the facility, I can review and tell, when, we're really busy and I need to check in on the team or they're not busy, let's make sure everything is going as planned.



We also use the End of Day Reports and other sales reports like category and subcategory reports so I can keep track of how much we're selling each week to compare year to year. That's great for staffing and of course forecasting.

### **Question 6: What is a change you made to your park made a huge difference to your operation?**

When I came on board, the cafe was running off of kitchen receipts and calling the order number off the top of the receipt in our PA system. With my background in foodservice, it was important to me to run more efficiently. So we reached out to you guys, and you gave us some options that we could program in our system with CenterEdge. Now it works flawlessly, orders pop up on the screen.

You can even check off individual items when you complete them or give them to a customer. So if they don't want everything off their ticket right away, we can check it off that some of it's out but not all of it. So it's definitely evolved as far as efficiency. We're not remaking or missing product. Having the KDS and bumpbar system has definitely made us more efficient, accurate, and more timely as well.



**Question 7: What about revenue or cost savings? Has CenterEdge helped you in either of those areas?**

Yes. When we made the move to CenterEge Payments to have everything all in one, that helped us save money and make everything more seamless. But when Dual Pricing became available, we definitely wanted to reap the cost savings benefits.

As we continue to look at finances and ways to cut costs so we could continue to build and buy new games, and so on, we needed to find avenues for savings. CenterEdge gave us that option in Dual Pricing.

**Question 8: What advice would you give to a new operation or facility starting out?**

The hardest part is finding good talent. Finding individuals who want to represent your goals and mission is key. We try to embody "Hickory Falls Happy," and I think as long as you have a mission and goals of what you want to get out of your business, that's what it's all about.

Being family-oriented and someone who your employees feel like they can come talk to you, no matter what, is so important.

You have to help these young adults grow into their next steps in life and always look at it from that perspective.

You never know when you'll find that diamond in the rough that might stick around, helping you better your business with their bright ideas, if you're open to those ideas as well.

**Question 9: How do you foster that culture of approachability?**

When giving feedback, it's always giving a positive with a negative, always supporting them to the best of your ability. Also coaching them to do the right



things, maintaining structure and policies, and following up to ensure everyone stays on the same page. Follow-up is key.

Once you say something, you also have to follow up with what you're doing so they know you keep your commitments as well. I think that really helps anyone, no matter what business they're in, to mold and create success out of that.

## Question 10: What are the plans for the future?

Right now, I've had a goal the last year and a half to implement a rewards program. So I've been researching and learning more about different programs and have already had one meeting with the CenterEdge team to learn what's possible.

I'll definitely want to schedule some more time with a trainer when we get ready to launch that!

## Conclusion

With the Hickory Falls team's commitment to the mission of keeping the community's children engaged and entertained while fostering a sense of belonging, they sure make "Hickory Falls Happy" look easy.

With continued dedication to improvement and plans for future enhancements such as a rewards program, the facility remains poised to deliver even greater experiences for the future.



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

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