

# ***BUILDING A PLAYBOOK***

**FOR YOUR FAMILY  
ENTERTAINMENT  
CENTER**

partycenter  
software



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LET'S GROW PARTIES TOGETHER.**

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# INTRODUCTION

Every obstacle is an opportunity for growth. That obstacle can be anything from an emergency at your facility, to an economic downturn, or even a pandemic.

Sound familiar?

Whatever the challenge you're experiencing is, don't despair. As our favorite sales trainer Beth Standlee, founder of TrainerTainment, says: "Don't ask why this is happening **to** me. Instead, ask why this is happening **for** me."

Of course, sometimes that's easier said than done. We might feel like we're at the end of our rope, and as business owners or operators, we certainly feel the weight of the world on our shoulders.

The good news is that there is a way to prepare for those challenges we're bound to face. The answer is by building the right foundation that'll enable us to adapt as things change. And at the core of your foundation is your company playbook.



## WHAT IS A PLAYBOOK?

A **playbook** is a storehouse for all of your company's [tribal knowledge](#). It's a collection of best practices, processes, and procedures. In short, anything and everything related to how you run your business.

Its true purpose is to **enable your family entertainment center to function like a well-oiled machine**, in which almost everything is a repeatable, documented process. This allows you and your team to focus on what's next, like areas to improve, new offerings, or new attractions.

## DOES MY FEC NEED A PLAYBOOK?

Yes. As an FEC owner or operator, the last thing you want to be is a babysitter. You left those days in your teen years.

Unfortunately, a lot of owners spend too much time trying to be everything. They train, teach, manage, host, promote. But, how can you scale (or simply, effectively run a business) if everything lives in your head? Or in the heads of a select few?

In his book, [The E-Myth Revisited](#), Michael Gerber addresses this very topic. He says that as an entrepreneur, you should work **on** your business, not **in** your business. Otherwise, it's just a job!



He also dives into his idea of **The Franchise Prototype**. Meaning that by developing consistency in your business, you create the opportunity to focus on where to improve or innovate.

Now, a real playbook **isn't a glorified manual**. It's a living ecosystem that allows your team to contribute, manage, measure what works, and improve internal processes over time.

If you need further convincing, here are a few reasons why building a playbook will transform your family entertainment center.

### **You'll be able to:**

- Track goals, new initiatives, offerings, and quickly determine what works.
- Avoid mistakes that are the result of failing to follow processes.
- On-board new staff quickly.
- Guide younger staff.
- Encourage staff to build on their knowledge and improve processes by contributing to the playbook.
- Create a [consistent environment for your customers](#).

And much, much more. So if you're ready to jump in, let's get into it.



# 1

# GETTING STARTED



# PERFORM AN AUDIT

Before you start building a FEC playbook, **perform an audit** of what's already documented.

You probably have a training manual or documentation elsewhere in your facility (a stack of papers, perhaps?) that you might want to first organize and then include into your playbook. Consider any gaps and make note of what isn't documented, what should be updated, and what is outdated.

## Now is the time for a bit of spring cleaning!

If you're starting with very little or no documentation, or perhaps you've just opened or are about to open a facility, we'd recommend you start by listing the different areas, departments, and offerings of your business.



## Ask yourself the following questions:

- What does/will my start-of-day opening process look like?
- What does/will my end-of-day closing process look like?
- What are/will be all of the steps of my [hiring process](#)?
- What are/will be all of the steps of my onboarding process?
- What do/will my [sanitary procedures](#) look like?
- What are/will be my greeting processes? Do/will I have scripts for hello, goodbye, and customer handling problems?
- Do/will I have an [emergency procedure](#)? What does/will it look like?
- What does/will my [party booking process](#) look like?
- What are/will be my offerings?
- What are my [revenue goals](#)?



**COMPLIMENTARY GUIDE**

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**3 SIMPLE WAYS TO IMPROVE REVENUE & BOOK MORE PARTIES AT YOUR FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT CENTER**

<http://bit.ly/PCS-revenue>

## IMPROVE REVENUE GUIDE

Looking to improve revenue and grow sales at your family entertainment center?

[Download this](#) complimentary guide today to get started!





# GIVE YOUR PLAYBOOK A HOME

Next, think about **where you'd like to host or store your playbook.**

Sure, you might want to start building your FEC playbook in Google Docs or Microsoft Office, but over time, you're just going to create a bunch of files and this can get messy - fast!

We recommend choosing a digital, cloud-based platform to store your playbook, like [EditMe](#) or [Trainual](#).

EditMe is a wiki website solution that's budget-friendly. It is completely customizable and allows you to easily share content and files. Using a platform like EditMe also allows you to make changes in real-time. You can set permissions and give all or certain team members access to the playbook. Here at [Party Center Software](#), we house our playbook on EditMe.

As mentioned above, there are other cloud-based platforms you can use, such as Trainual or [Sharepoint](#), so explore all of the options available and make the best decision for you and your team.



# ORGANIZE YOUR PLAYBOOK

Once you settle on where to house your playbook, start thinking about **how things should be organized.**

How might the different areas of your business translate into tabs, sections, or topics?

Perhaps everything related to birthday parties should exist in one area, under the umbrella topic of “Offerings & Services.”

On the other hand, you might want to split things up by creating another umbrella section called “Processes & Procedures” in which you include all birthday party processes and checklists, but leave the actual package items and prices under “Offerings & Services.”

It’s all ultimately up to you and your team.



# GET TEAM BUY-IN

If you want to start building a FEC playbook, then you'll need to **involve your team from the very beginning**.

Hold a team meeting to discuss your businesses' mission, vision, and values. Discuss the impact you want to have on your customers. How will a playbook help your business create a better experience for your customers? How will a playbook help your business grow?

Remember, if your staff is invested and sees the potential a playbook will bring, then they will use your playbook.

Next, be sure to **assign team captains** for each section of the playbook and **establish clear goals**. Ask your team what they would like to work on and use this time to brainstorm.

Together, you'll be able to create a tool that'll help your business reach new heights.



# 2

## BUILDING A FEC PLAYBOOK



# THE FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS OF A FEC PLAYBOOK

Think of the playbook as the key to your FEC's success.

This key **unlocks your businesses' true potential** and allows for you, the business owner, to translate your vision to the rest of the team and beyond.

Let's get into some of the **foundational items you should include in your playbook**. Remember, this is just a starting point for you and your team.

At the end of this section, we will also provide you with a FEC playbook template.



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HAMMER AWAY:  
**3 TOOLS FOR  
CONSTRUCTING  
A BUSINESS  
PIVOT PLAN**

<http://bit.ly/PCS-pivot>

## **BUSINESS PIVOT PLAN**

When you're ready for plan A, B, and C, [download a copy of this guide!](#)

It's all about helping you to create a business pivot plan to get through the unexpected.



# COMPANY

Let's start with your first section: **Company**.

This area of your playbook should include any and all information about your company. This may include but is not limited to:

- Mission, vision, values
- Value proposition
- Company calendar (staff birthdays, time off, holidays)
- Employee directory
- Organizational chart
- Meeting notes
- Goals and plans
- Training or on-going training

You may also want to celebrate your employees of the month or allow your employees to set their own **weekly goals** in an area under this tab. The possibilities are endless!

And, you might be surprised to find that prior to building out this section, your team may not have been clear and consistent about how to describe your FEC's offerings to potential customers. That's why it's important to include this information in your playbook.



# PRODUCTS & ATTRACTIONS

The next section to consider is **Sales & Services** or **Products & Attractions**.

This section should detail all of your **product types** and possible upsells, **common problems** your FEC solves for its customers, a list of **industry partners or vendors** that help you get the job done, and so forth.

If you have a sales team, or employees responsible for upsells or managing customer relations, it's important to get those top performers involved in building out this section. They're on the ground talking to customers, gathering information, and selling - even if their job title doesn't have "sales" in it.

Ask them to document what works and what doesn't. Ask yourself that same question!



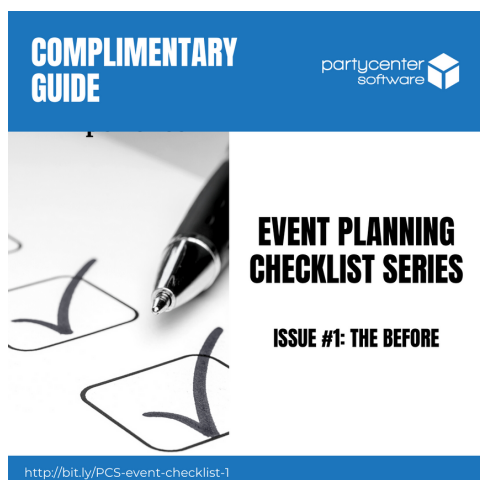
# PROCESSES & PROCEDURES

Following that, you'll want to create a section for **Processes & Procedures**.

What does your setup look like for different events? Do you have an event checklist that addresses what staff must do before, during, and after an event? What about beginning or end-of-day procedures? There is plenty to add here.

Another important procedure to mention is **what your business should do in case of an emergency!** Power outages, technology malfunctions, wifi problems, and health and safety emergencies are just a few.

It's important to document your plan for how your business will deal with the "unexpected."



## EVENT PLANNING CHECKLIST

This Event Planning Checklist series will help you and your team as you prepare, run, and follow-up with your guests.

In Issue #1: "The Before," we share checklists you can use BEFORE your guests arrive for their special day! [Download now!](#)





# MARKETING

Next, we have to talk about the **Marketing** section.

Your marketing efforts are fueled by your customers. More so, they're fueled by **what** you offer and **how** you present your offerings to your customers.

## That's why you should include the following items in your FEC playbook:

- Buyer personas
- Branding kit (colors, font styles)
- Content plan
- Content calendar (for social media and your blog)
- Email marketing processes & best practices
- Remarketing strategies
- Marketing materials or collateral (files, links to website)
- Any technology tools or solutions you use to grow your marketing efforts (descriptions, how-tos, and any workarounds!)



# CREATING BUYER PERSONAS

Remember, at the core of your marketing strategy are your **unique buyer personas**.

A **buyer persona** is a semi-fictional representation of your ideal customer. They help you, as a marketer, attract and nurture the right leads for your business.

If you haven't created any buyer personas yet (or, you'd like to update them), here's how you can start:

1. Look at any **trends present in your contact database**. If you're a Party Center Software Customer, [you can generate various reports in your software](#). Contact your Customer Success Manager if you need any help pulling reports on customer details, loyalty, or any other data.
2. **Ask your team for feedback**. After all, they deal with your customers on the frontlines, so they will be able to identify any patterns.
3. **Conduct field research**. Ask customers what they like best about your FEC or to share an experience they had. Encourage honest feedback!



# CREATING BUYER PERSONAS

Next, **build your buyer personas** based on the information you compiled.

This is a **great exercise** to start working on during your next team meeting:

1. Fill in some **basic demographic information** based on your research. What is their age? Where are they located? Then, **make a few assumptions** about their character and background. Be sure to also give your persona a name!
2. **List their motivations.** What are their goals? What are they looking to do at your facility? What are their common problems? How do you solve their problem?
3. From there, **connect them to your messaging.** How should you describe your offering to this persona? How would you sell your offering to them?

This persona will help you align your sales and marketing efforts, create the appropriate messaging, and attract new customers.



# TECHNOLOGY & SOLUTIONS

The last foundational element of your FEC playbook is the **Technology & Solutions** section.

What solutions or tools does your company use and why? What are the support services for those solutions, in case anything happens?

**Be sure to include any and all links necessary.** Listing how-tos is also important.

How can a new employee get quickly onboarded to using your version of Party Center Software? Again, include any and all links, descriptions, or workarounds. Put yourself in a new employee's shoes and **be as descriptive as possible!**



# THE FEC PLAYBOOK TEMPLATE

As promised, here is a template you can use to develop both the pages and sections of your unique FEC playbook.

## PLAYBOOK PAGE TEMPLATE

**01** Title or topic being addressed.

*(Ex. What does this FEC do?)*

**02** The “Why” behind the page or the “Overview.”

*(Ex. We are a family entertainment center that hosts themed birthday parties for children ages 3-8. Our attractions include a foam pit and an indoor playground.)*

**03** The “How” or directions, SOP (Standard Operating Procedure), best practices, or tips.

*(Ex. Our story: We started in 2002 with a simple premise. We wanted to create a safer play-time environment for younger children...*



# PLAYBOOK SECTION TEMPLATE

## COMPANY

- Mission & Core Values
- Employee Directory
- Organizational Chart
- Quarterly & Annual Goals
- Company Calendar (Staff Birthdays, Time Off, Holidays)
- Meeting Notes

## STAFF

- Onboarding Checklist
- Training Materials
- Sales
- Marketing
- Processes & Procedures (including Safety & Emergency Procedures)

## MANAGEMENT\*

- Hiring/Onboarding Processes
- Training Materials
- Sales
- Marketing
- Processes & Procedures (including Safety & Emergency Procedures)

## OFFERINGS\*

- List of Attractions
- Attraction Responsibilities
- Safety Details
- List of Offerings or Services/Packages

## VENDORS

- List of Vendors



# PLAYBOOK SECTION TEMPLATE

## SALES\*

- Competitors
- List of Attractions, Offerings & Prices
- Customer Success Stories
- Common Problems We Solve
- Call & Email Etiquette or Scripts
- Technology

## MARKETING

- Buyer Personas
- Branding Kit
- Content Plan & Calendar
- Email Marketing Processes & Best Practices
- Re-marketing Strategies
- Technology

## TECHNOLOGY & SOLUTIONS

- List of Technology Tools & Solutions
- "How-Tos"

*\*"Management" can be renamed to "Operations."*

*\*"Offerings" can be renamed to "Attractions" or "Services."*

*\*"Sales" is useful if you have a sales team/role and can also be renamed to "Event Coordinator." Other topics you can add to this section are: "Asking for Referrals," "Networking & Events," or "30-Sec Intro."*



# 3

## MANAGING A FEC PLAYBOOK





# TIPS FOR MANAGING YOUR PLAYBOOK

When it comes to managing your FEC playbook, we first have to **address your timeline** for build-out and how you'll ensure that progress is being made.

On average, **building a foundational playbook can take anywhere from 12-18 months**. Yes, it sounds long, but it all depends on you and your team.

We recommend that you start the process by **setting clear expectations**. Assign teams of 2-3 people with a designated team captain to every section of your playbook. **Schedule frequent meetings** to evaluate their progress, as well as workshop meetings wherein team members dedicate themselves to working on a section for an hour or more.

As the leader of the whole operation, be sure to **set some clear deadlines**. Perhaps sections X & Y should be completed in 2-3 months. Or, this particular series of topics should be completed by the next quarter. Keeping a deadline might help move things forward. Be sure to **get your team** involved in the creation of some of these deadlines, otherwise, you might be assigning too little or too much!



# TIPS FOR MANAGING YOUR PLAYBOOK

And since you do own or operate a family entertainment center, making the process fun wouldn't hurt! **Use prizes as an incentive** for the team to finish a section. **Track team progress** on an Excel spreadsheet and use it as a digital "sticker chart" that'll highlight whoever is on top of their game.

**Remember, your playbook is an ever-evolving tool that is supposed to change as your business grows.**

If it doesn't, it'll quickly lose its value and become obsolete. Encourage your team to periodically **remove or update any content that's no longer relevant.** Outdated materials, announcements, processes, and other activities should be looked at on a quarterly basis.

This process allows you to **make way for the new.** Be sure to add any new content that may be missing! Encourage your team to add things as they see fit. Allow them to take ownership of this tool.

Lastly, **keep a list of areas that might need to be changed in the future.** You can't fix it all at once, so refer back to this list when your playbook is due for an update.



# CONCLUSION

You may be an FEC owner, operator, or part of the staff. Regardless of the role, your contribution matters and enables this business to grow.

Your facility doesn't just provide an hour of fun. You're not just a rollercoaster or an ice skating rink. **You're in the business of helping families create memories and of helping people live fully and in the moment.** Leading and participating in the build-out of this tool will not only help you do your job better, it will also allow you to **make a meaningful impact** on someone else's life.

As an owner or operator, it'll free up your time to develop creative solutions, test new attractions, and continue to adapt your business for generations to come. As a staff member, it'll help you grow along with the company and provide an unforgettable experience to your customers.

**The purpose of building a playbook for your family entertainment center is to build a foundation that'll sustain your business for years to come.**







# ***FREE RESOURCES***

***FOR THE FAMILY  
ENTERTAINMENT  
CENTER INDUSTRY***

At Party Center Software, we're dedicated to helping our industry overcome adversity and emergency situations. We've prepared a few guides to help you plan ahead with your business.

**COMPLIMENTARY GUIDE**



**IN CASE OF EMERGENCY:  
AN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS GUIDE TO HELP YOUR FEC OVERCOME THE UNEXPECTED**

<http://bit.ly/PCS-emergency>

## **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS GUIDE**

If there's one thing we can never do enough of as business owners, it's planning. This guide will help you plan for emergency situations in your FEC.

**COMPLIMENTARY GUIDE**



**HAMMER AWAY:  
3 TOOLS FOR CONSTRUCTING A BUSINESS PIVOT PLAN**

<http://bit.ly/PCS-pivot>

## **BUSINESS PIVOT PLAN**

When you're ready for plan A, B, and C, download a copy of this guide! It's all about helping you to create a business pivot plan to get through the unexpected.

**COMPLIMENTARY GUIDE**



**HOW TO USE INSTAGRAM  
TO GROW YOUR FEC PARTY & EVENT REVENUE**

<http://bit.ly/PCS-Instagram>

## **INSTAGRAM GUIDE**

Looking to improve revenue and grow sales at your family entertainment center? Download this complimentary guide today to get started!



# ON-DEMAND WEBINARS

Want to learn from some amazing industry leaders? Click the images below to watch these on-demand webinars:

**INSIGHTS TO GROW BUSINESS:**  
CEO TIPS TO INCREASE YOUR FEC REVENUE, IMPROVE PROCESSES, & NURTURE STAFF

FEATURING

 **BETH STANDLEE | TRAINERTAINMENT**

 **SCOTT DRUMMOND | PARTY CENTER SOFTWARE**

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COMPLIMENTARY WEBINAR

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ON-DEMAND WEBINAR

**HEALTH CHECKUP:**  
**5 WAYS TO MAXIMIZE**  
**REVENUE & PROFITABILITY**  
**THROUGH OPERATIONS**

FEATURING

 **Dave Wallace**  
Turfway Entertainment





Want to see what Party Center Software can do for you? Discover how our platform can help you book more parties and streamline your business.

By requesting a demo, you'll get:

- A personalized tour of the software and how it can meet your specific needs.
- Pricing options based on your needs.
- A Q&A with one of our Customer Success Consultants.

**REQUEST DEMO**