

Standalone Laser Tag

How to compete with FEC's



Doug Willems

Summary

This White Paper addresses the biggest challenge facing standalone Laser Tag Centers. Whereas a Laser Tag Center located in a Family Entertainment Center (FEC) will attract casual visitors simply due to the nature of an FEC, a standalone center has to work to attract every client.

On average, a standalone Laser Tag Center will generate less income than a Family Entertainment Center. However, establishing a Family Entertainment Center is not an option for most entrepreneurs, requiring an initial capital outlay of two to six times that of a standalone Laser Tag Center.

Delta Strike work with many tremendously successful standalone operations around the world, able to attract and retain players. The Delta Strike team have analyzed these flourishing businesses and identified three factors that we believe have secured their solid client base:

- Creating and retaining a loyal following of dedicated players
- Increasing the distance that people are prepared to travel to visit the Laser Tag Center
- Prioritizing efficiency

The Delta Strike Research and Development Team use these findings to ensure that Delta Strike products continue to support standalone Laser Tag Centers. This White Paper shares this information direct to the market, hopefully providing prospective owners of standalone Laser Tag Centers with valuable insights into the challenge that they will face and how best to overcome it.

Delta Strike manufactures award winning Laser Tag equipment and provides a world-renowned support service to facilitate client success. Delta Strike is continually developing its Laser Tag systems to provide you, the Laser Tag owner and operator with the best system possible. Delta Strike's mission: to provide the most entertaining Laser Tag system in the world.

Many of the factors raised in this White Paper are considered in more depth in Delta Strike's free Online Business Tools. Our global network of Delta Strike consultants is also available to assist anyone considering establishing a standalone Laser Tag Center.

Please visit our website www.deltastrike.com to contact your local consultant.

Attracting and Retaining Dedicated Players

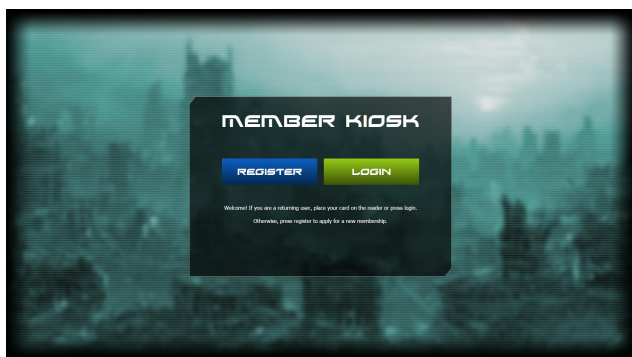
The Delta Strike team have identified that successful standalone centers have a much higher proportion of dedicated players than FECs (see pie-charts). These are the players that love Laser Tag – and they keep coming back. They provide the lion’s share of a successful standalone Laser Tag Center’s income.

FECs have lots of casual players – people who visit for a game of bowling and may decide to play a game of Laser Tag whilst they are there. With standalone Laser Tag Centers, it is a different story. They have to create a desire to visit.

The standalone Laser Tag Centers with a large following of dedicated players acknowledged three factors that they believed kept their clients coming back: membership, a variety of gameplay and a highly interactive arena.

Membership

Firstly, membership fosters loyalty. Whenever members play, they earn points and these points keep accumulating. Kids love to collect and earning membership points, greatly encouraging repeat business.



Secondly, membership stops dedicated players from becoming bored. Members can configure their Laser Tag equipment to have extra weapons and power-ups for their next game. This means that every game has a different dynamic. The threat of boredom is also minimized because members can access other games styles.

From a business perspective, membership is a valuable and free vehicle for marketing, reducing the need to constantly seek new customers by enabling you easy access to your existing customer base.

Delta Strike recommends that a standalone Laser Tag Center invest time in researching the membership software offered by Laser Tag equipment suppliers and ensure that it includes the latest features. Members should be able to personalize their profile and access their accounts via a range of media (app, social networks, browser).



Gameplay

The successful standalone Laser Tag Centers also identified their game offering as a key factor in developing repeat business. A variety of games kept repeat players engaged, excited and challenged.

Exploring the games on offer from your Laser Tag equipment supplier is time well spent. Look not only for a good selection of games but modern, up-to-date games. Dedicated players are frequently video gamers and they expect a similar level of interactivity.

Also, look for a range of levels from beginner to advanced. As with computer games, players attain a certain skill level and, once they have mastered it, they want to move to the next level of complexity.

Some Laser Tag software also offers the option to modify games and create your own games.



Interactive Arena

The other success factor identified by our standalone Laser Tag Centers dated back to when they initially designed their arenas. They all invested in interactive arena components. These operators felt that this had paid dividends, consistently keeping the games fresh for their dedicated players.

Interactive arena components are electronic devices that can be installed onto walls and partitions within the arena. They can include Base Stations, Wall Targets, Laser Shooters and Gateways. They incorporate sound, computerized voices, bright flashing lights and light columns which dissolve from one color to another. Most importantly, they can do many different things, depending on the game being played. Some sample uses:

Types of Arena Components

Interactive Prop Kits

A Prop Interactivity Kit will bring your prop to life. Theme Parks often use props such as rockets, generators, UFOs, dragons or similar. Interactivity kits can control lighting, animatronics, lasers, relays and more.



Energy Gates

Perfect for implementing a dynamically changing doorway e.g. if the spotlights are green, then only green team members may pass through this gateway, other team colors will be tagged.

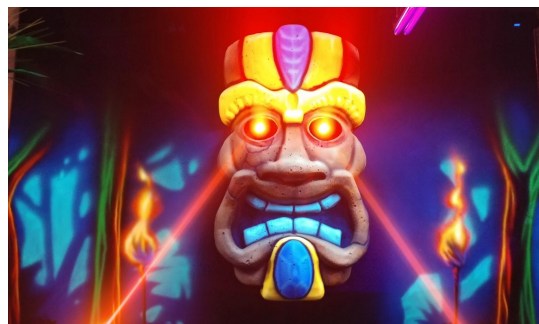


Types of Arena Components Ctd.



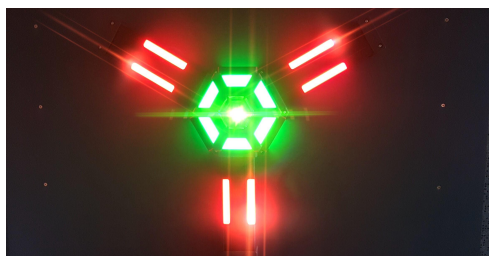
Targets

Targets can be used to activate third-party props in your arena, as well as set off audio and voice messages, and power other lighting devices.



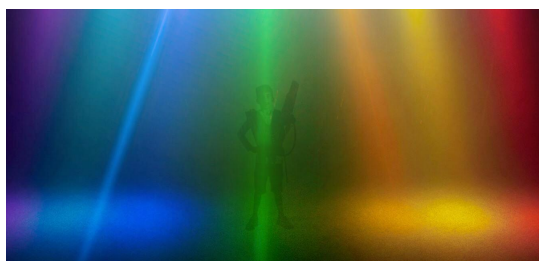
Laser Shooters

When the laser beam sounds a warning, players know the turret is about to tag them. With certain games, players can also fire back to disable the laser turret.



Base Stations

Players can tag the base station and capture it. It will change to their team color and can earn points for the team. Some special bases can even fire back at players.



Spotlights

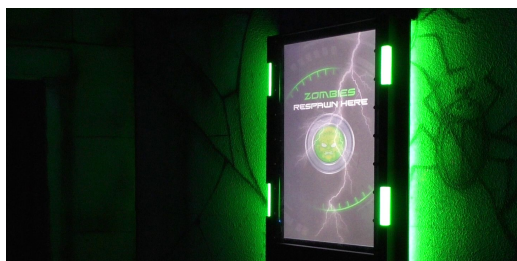
Spotlights are used to project colored light and can be used to light up walls, props and other features in the arena. They can flash, dissolve, dim and strobe between colors, all depending on what is happening in the story. These can be used in combination with a haze machine for optimal visibility.



Video Base Stations

Video Base Stations are the latest in arena components, introduced to the Laser Tag industry by Delta Strike. They provide onscreen guidance with voiceover, to explain each arena component as encountered. Since it is a video image, it can potentially be used as any of the following:

- Ammunition or Power-Up dispenser
- Weapons dispenser
- It can be a base station or a goal
- Players can pick up collectables
- In-game hints



Increasing your catchment area

Most Family Entertainment Centers will entertain people for at least an hour, and the majority will aim to keep people there for two hours or more. Why? Because the longer you entertain your customers, the further they will travel to visit your site. If you double the distance a person travels, you can quadruple the customer base.

While an FEC entertains customers for in excess of sixty minutes, a standalone Laser Tag Center offers games lasting 6 minutes to a maximum 20 minutes.

A standalone Laser Tag Center needs to focus on increasing the time that people are kept entertained so they will travel further to reach the center. There are three strategies employed by successful standalone Laser Tag Centers



Repacking Games

The number of games that are played per hour varies greatly from center to center. Looking at the lucrative standalone centers around the globe, and based on research we have conducted into optimum game time, we have reached the following conclusions:

Avoid long game times

from our experience in the industry, long game times tend to reduce income and profitability. In our experience, after 8 to 10 minutes of high octane excitement and exercise, players need recovery time. The adrenaline high starts to decline and after 15 minutes, the game ends on a low.

Max number of games per hour

One would think that customers would complain bitterly at such short sessions. However, from our observations, this is not the case. These centers support their model with a pricing structure that allows customers to purchase multiple games at cheaper prices.

Insert Breaks in Multi-Games

Your standalone Laser Tag Center will still be running the same number of games per hour but will have one group on a break. This lengthens the entertainment time, thereby increasing your catchment area. Plus, it provides opportunities for additional income to be earned through arcade games or refreshments.

Additional low cost services

Easy to implement, additional services will extend entertainment time and provide extra income. Many standalone Laser Tag Centers that Delta Strike works with have incorporated birthday party facilities and arcade machines.

Birthday Parties

With 50 to 60% of Laser Tag businesses catering to the birthday party market, Delta Strike highly recommends including birthday party facilities, if you have the space, to meet the demand in your area.



Arcade Machines/Coin-Op

It's always worth looking at arcade machines- these have a dual purpose. They entertain players while waiting for a game and they also bring in extra income.

The initial investment cost can be very low and most cities have a local provider who will deliver, install, and maintain the machines for free in return for a profit share.

Other Attractions

There are several other low cost attractions that could serve as revenue boosters and in between game time management tools. Some of those include, mini-golf, soft-play areas, and light floors.



Prioritizing automation and efficiency

The highest cost in running an entertainment business is employing staff. FEC's have an advantage in that they can share staff between the different services i.e. when one service is quiet, staff can help out at the busier services. Stand-alone Laser Tag Centers do not have that luxury.

Successful standalone Laser Tag Centers work hard at being extremely efficient. On their busiest days, they all operate as smoothly as on a quiet day without requiring significant numbers of additional staff.



Automation

Automation is very important part of running a successful stand alone laser tag facility. At the push of a button, a Laser Tag system needs to:

- **Start the Laser Tag vests**
- **Start the music**
- **Activate the arena lighting**
- **Operate haze machines**
- **Create game events during the game**
- **Stop the game**
- **Stop the arena music**
- **Announce the game is over**
- **Print score sheets**
- **Display the score on the score screen**

When the Laser Tag system ticks every box, a standalone Laser Tag Center can operate with significantly lower staff overheads, meaning a better bottom line and a Return on Investment nearing that of a Family Entertainment Center.

Winning with a stand alone Laser Tag center

If you have any questions on how to set up your laser tag business, you can call us direct - simply go to the **contacts** page on our website, www.deltastrike.com and call the sales representative closest to you.

We hope this paper has been helpful and informative. There are many other white papers that can be downloaded free of charge from **Downloads** section of our website.

All the Best,

Doug Willems

CEO

Delta Strike

