

ENTERTAINMENT CENTER REPORT

Perspectives on a Vendor: Swipe Cards Offer Solid Performance

Sacoa Swipe Card Systems have brought game operation into a whole new world of smooth and sophisticated operation. For this article, business owners offered their perspectives on the system, and Sacoa also weighed in.

At YaYa's Island of Paducah in Paducah, Ky., Owner David Pace just recently added Laser Tag to his indoor FEC's offerings. He also provides technical support for Sacoa in the United States.

Why did he make the switch to a swipe system? For three main reasons, he explained. "We switched to eliminate ticket and token jams, to reduce the cost associated with tech expenses and ticket cost, and to drive revenue up," he reported. The system has been a success in all of these areas he reported. "All of this has happened in the past year that we've been using Sacoa." Long term, Pace said he hopes to achieve a 20 percent overall growth in his gaming revenue. "We also hope to take full advantage of the online party booking, Lasertag scheduling software, and customer registration data base through the Sacoa system, to streamline our online sales and party reservations." YaYa's new laser tag arena is already benefitting from the Sacoa system. "The scheduling software is working well to get customers in quickly and efficiently," he asserted. And Pace can use the support - YaYa's Island hosts approximately 40,000 children a year, and has increased business sales from 2014 to the present by over 30 percent. "We credit the card swipe system with 80 percent of this growth, along with new games and attractions added on a



Sacoa's Director Sebastian Mochokowsky. The company has been working with swipe cards for a quarter century.

yearly basis," Pace noted.

At Sam's Fun City, Inc. in Pensacola, Fla., President Richard D. Sanfilippo discussed his switch to swipe cards. "I am a fossil in the industry," he laughed. "I have watched everyone switch over, but I have been a hold-out, looking at the systems for a long time but not making a move. I know Sacoa's Sebastian Mochokowsky, and I wanted to make the change, but felt reluctant. I finally made a decision last fall, felt really good about it, and had it installed in February."

Sanfilippo explained that he was afraid children would dislike not receiving tickets and tokens. "But the opposite happened. Everyone likes the system. I am Sebastian's happiest customer," he said. "The system went up easily,

and it's been flawless since it was installed four weeks ago. It took just four days to get it up and running."

Sanfilippo said he is actually amazed at the whole experience. "We have thousands of guests who used the system in our first month, and out of that only two guests even had any kind of nostalgic comments about the old system. I'm in a mid-size market in Pensacola, and we're the first to have the system here. Some people in our market are still using quarters, never mind tokens. People use our system, they understand it, the kids understand it. We do have a kiosk set-up to answer any questions," he added. "The most amazing thing is that the amount of service we are providing our customers now that we can avoid coin jams and reloading tickets is incredible."

Sanfilippo related that his customer service overall has improved significantly, and his sales are up. "Our

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ability to focus on our customers versus focusing on keeping the machines stocked and having enough tokens is wonderful. Now that energy is applied to interacting with our guests. I don't want to credit every good thing that has happened in the last month to this system, but I really feel it has had a major positive impact on the facility."

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- Richard D. Sanfilippo, Sam's Fun City, Inc., Pensacola, Fla., commenting on his attraction's swipe card system

Long term, Sanfilippo sees a lot of potential in the system, too. He plans to eventually use it for ride entry. "Now that the system operation is completely wireless, we can use it very easily. Our real goal is to build customer loyalty and improve the customer experience that our guests have at the park here." He added that his is not a typical FEC arcade. "The arcade is a smaller part of our business, in fact it was our fifth or sixth generating profit center overall - until the last month, when it has moved up to the fourth highest generating. That's significant. It was entirely unexpected."

Overall, the facility's annual visitation is up since getting the system. "In general we had a good first quarter related to having plenty of pretty warm weather here in the Southeast," he related. "But in regard to the arcade, which was directly affected by the system, the system is generating revenue itself."

In Springfield, Mo., at America's Incredible Pizza, Founder and CEO Rick Barsness concurred with Sanfilippo that going to a swipe card system has been an asset to his business. Barsness has, however, had a system in place a lot longer than Sanfilippo. He's had a Sacoa system for 15 years in all six of his family enter-

tainment centers. "I would never choose anyone else other than Sacoa," he asserted. "I switched to swipe cards because we were tired of using coins and tickets. We heard it would be much better to work with swipe cards. I am really old school, and I initially felt the other way, but Sacoa showed me the numbers, facts and figures, and we did it. It was perfect." Barsness said long term he hopes to be able to analyze all his company's games, rides, and attractions to see which ones

do the best using the swipe card system. "The system allows us to do that," he said.

Sacoa's Director Sebastian Mochokowsky said the company began working with swipe cards 25 years ago. "At that time it was read-only technology. All the competitors in this market then and now follow what we had chosen to do as a trend. Now for example we have radio frequency in the game, and the cost to install a system is

not cost-prohibitive anymore." Sacoa is dedicated to helping its customers. "We like to find good technology at a reasonable cost for clients. Today the swipe system is more affordable than ever before." Mochokowsky said his clients' long term goals overall are to add control to their businesses and give benefits to their clients. "With our system they can give clients more customer service, and be more relaxed. They don't have to count tokens or deal with jams anymore, or even manage orders of paper tickets in advance."

Mochowsky sees new trends ahead in swipe card technology. "We're moving into a more standard platform like Android and the ability to use technology in your hand like a phone, to activate a game. In five years of course I have no idea where we will be, just that we will always follow the best options for our clients in terms of quality and performance at a reasonable price."

In short, swipe this: swipe card technology is here to stay and positively changing the environment at family entertainment centers and other venues. ☺