

Case Study

Rolling Video Games of New England



As presented by



Introduction

Rolling Video Games of New England took advantage of the growing mobile gaming industry when they started in 2010. They entered the market with one video game trailer and haven't slowed down since. They currently service a 60-mile radius covering parts of Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New York.

In 2011 they added laser tag, starting with a fleet of Barracudas from iCOMBAT. Archery tag was introduced in 2012, followed by a second game truck in 2014.

"We started with 24 Barracudas right off the bat to offer laser tag to parties, and we had to buy that many in order to book all the party requests," explained Cindy, one of the owners.

Despite a number of both mobile and non-mobile competitors in the New England area, Rolling Video Games has been able to succeed and grow every year.



Challenges

Like most new businesses, Rolling Video Games faced a number of challenges and problems as they looked to grow and expand.

1. They only had one source of income with their single game truck, which was not quite enough to sustain business in the long term. It also limited to them to a single party at one time. With set up and break down times, it was taking too long to run an event. "We were turning away customers due to a lack of party options," mentioned Cindy.
2. "We had a hard time finding good employees. High school kids were not reliable, and the older kids did not want to work on weekends," explained Cindy.

3. "Laser tag was something completely new to us, so we had to get educated with the industry," said Nick. "We did not know how to run a laser tag event or care for the equipment."
4. Laser tag had a perception in the area as being old school and not very fun. Parents and party planners didn't know they could throw a modern laser tag party in their own yard.

Nick and Cindy started to think about how they could improve the business. They looked into zorbing, the human hamster balls, but found that it was not practical in their area. There was not much space and the zorbs did not stand up to use. Some even got torn up by glass and junk on the ground.

Seeing that video games were currently their main attraction, they added more video games and systems. This gave players more options and helped, but it did not solve their main problems.

Prior to purchasing iCOMBAT laser tag, they looked at a variety of other systems from other laser tag suppliers and compared them. "We tried a variety of laser tag systems but nothing met our requirements until we saw iCOMBAT," said Cindy.

Solutions

So how did Nick and Cindy solve their problems? They tackled the issues one by one and were very smart about spending their hard-earned money on expansion items.

1. Rolling Video Games added more party options. Laser tag was the main one because it appealed a wide variety of players and party types. It also allowed for quick turnaround, meaning more parties per day, including at night. They also added archery tag and a second party truck. Laser tag replaced the giant inflatables and they obtained enough to run more than one party at once.
2. They took a more aggressive approach when it came to finding good employees. "We are always posting jobs, talking to friends, and searching on Facebook to find people. We started spending more time with the business as well," proclaimed Cindy. College campus recruitment has also yielded better results.
3. There were a number of successful competitors nearby, so Nick and Cindy studied how they ran laser tag parties. After seeing that they too could be successful, they chose a laser tag system that was acceptable to the public in wake of several public shootings. iCOMBAT was familiar to people who have played paintball, and it was also less expensive than systems from other manufacturers.
4. Heavy marketing alongside the mobile gaming concept let the general public know they could run laser tag in their own space. Rolling Video Games adopted a flat party rate, making it easy for parents to coordinate a laser tag party without having a player count.

Cindy said she realized that iCOMBAT laser tag was the answer after seeing it next to similar gear from competitors.

“The Barracuda had a good balance between realism and a toy look, which was what I wanted. Going with something too realistic didn’t work and I didn’t want a cheap plastic toy either,” Cindy noted. She also liked the fact that the system did not require a vest or headband on the kids.

iCOMBAT was also less expensive than other systems and was very user friendly. Both employees and players could easily learn how to use the system and set up a variety of games.

The Barracuda system’s look and design, the lack of a vest and headband, and the attractive price are what specifically ruled out equipment from competitors.

Results

Cindy and Nick named a number of their favorite features of the iCOMBAT system after using it for a good amount of time.

- “The earlier software was tough to use at first, but once iCOMBAT updated and improved everything, we were able to run the games we wanted and could do what the parents wanted,” said Nick.
- It was very user friendly. Staff and players could easily learn the system and use it in whatever way they wished.
- “The game screen is a big hit with people not playing,” said Cindy. People could see what was happening while waiting for their turn.
- The system’s ability to use removable, rechargeable batteries. This saves a lot of money and allows guns to instantly return to a game if they die.
- Gun2Gun mode is a good back up plan in case the computer crashes. “We would rather use the computer because it’s so much easier, but a backup plan is better than nothing,” noted Cindy.

Currently, they average about 35 laser tag parties per month year-round. In the busier summer months, that means 2-4 parties per day on the weekends.

They went on to explain that iCOMBAT systems could easily benefit other similar businesses in a number of ways.

“The startup costs were not high at all and we could fit everything we needed for a party into a single vehicle.”

- Mobile capabilities allows customers to play laser tag wherever they are
- Overhead costs are less expensive when no building or single location is involved
- Insurance is also typically cheaper in the long run

Obtaining iCOMBAT equipment and offering laser tag parties led to an increase in sales right away. More athletic kids starting booking parties, and the video gamers started booking laser tag events the following year.



Recommendation

What is the single biggest reason why Nick and Cindy of Rolling video games would recommend iCOMBAT laser tag to others?

“The equipment has held up very well and repair costs are very reasonable. The quality of the guns is very nice.”

In fact, a friend and similar mobile game truck (UMG of Massachusetts), also added laser tag from iCOMBAT to meet demand after seeing their success.

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