

THE FRICTIONLESS GUEST JOURNEY AUDIT

15-POINT CHECKLIST

A practical, self-rating audit for bowling center operators. Complete it in about 30 minutes to identify hidden friction across your guest journey — from online discovery to post-visit follow-up.

WHY THIS AUDIT EXISTS

Your guests won't tell you why they didn't come back. They just... don't.

Research on experience-based businesses is consistent on one point: friction is the silent churn driver. It isn't one big problem, it's a dozen tiny ones. A confusing website. A wait at the front counter. Fumbling to figure out the scoring. Standing in line to order a drink. Standing in line again to pay. Each micro-hassle chips away at the memory of the fun your guests just had and quietly reduces the odds they'll return.

The good news: friction is measurable, findable, and fixable.

This 15-point audit walks you through every stage of your guest journey, from the moment someone first considers visiting to the moment they share their experience online. In roughly 30 minutes, you'll be able to identify exactly where your center is losing time, revenue, and repeat visits.

How to Use This Audit

- Walk through your center as if you were a first-time guest.
- Score each of the 15 checkpoints honestly on a scale of 1 to 5 using the "what to look for" section as suggested areas evaluation
- Total your score and use the diagnostic guide at the end to prioritize fixes.
- Re-run the audit every 90 days to track progress.
- Have key employees perform the audit to get a different perspective.

Scoring Scale

- 1 = Major friction
- 2 = Noticeable friction
- 3 = Acceptable but needs improvement
- 4 = Smooth experience
- 5 = Fully frictionless



1 BEFORE THEY ARRIVE

A strong guest journey begins before the visit, with clear online discovery, simple booking, and helpful pre-visit communication.

Checkpoint 1_Online Discovery

The question: Can a first-time guest find, understand, and get excited about your center within 30 seconds of landing on your website or social profile?

What to look for:

- Homepage clearly communicates what makes your center different (immersive experiences, technology, atmosphere), not just 'bowling and food'
- Recent photos and video that reflect current experiences (not stock imagery or 5-year-old snapshots)
- Pricing is visible or at least clearly explained and not embedded in an image which prevents AI from finding it.
- Mobile experience loads fast and looks professional
- All new features and offerings are clearly represented on the website

Friction signals: Outdated photos, no pricing information, no video, generic 'bowling alley' positioning, slow mobile load times.

Score: _____ / 5

Checkpoint 2_Booking Experience

The question: How many clicks, taps, or phone calls does it take for a guest to reserve a lane?

What to look for:

- Online booking available 24/7 without requiring a phone call
- Clear lane availability displayed in real time
- Package options (standard, premium, VIP) presented visually with what's included
- Confirmation email arrives immediately with all relevant details
- Booking flow works on mobile in under 2 minutes

Friction signals: Phone-only booking, no real-time availability, confusing package descriptions, no confirmation, mobile-hostile forms.

Score: _____ / 5

Checkpoint 3_Pre-Visit Communication

The question: Do guests receive helpful information before they arrive that makes their visit easier?

What to look for:

- Reminder email or text 24 hours before the reservation
- Clear directions and parking guidance
- Arrival instructions (what to expect, scan code on kiosk for quick check in)
- Pre-arrival prompts (shoe sizes, add names to reservation in advance, upload a photo for your birthday celebration)
- Bring or wear socks

Friction signals: No pre-visit contact, no directions, no ability to modify the booking, no engagement before they walk in.

Score: _____ / 5

2 ARRIVAL & CHECK-IN

A smooth arrival experience starts with a welcoming entrance, efficient check-in, and a lane that feels ready for the group.

Checkpoint 4_Parking & Entry

The question: Does the moment a guest steps out of their car feel welcoming and effortless?

What to look for:

- Clear signage directing guests to the entrance
- Clean, well-lit exterior
- Parking lot in need of repair or cleaning (walking over trash sets the tone for a bad experience)
- Doors that open easily for families carrying children, gifts, coats
- Immediate visual cue that they've arrived somewhere special (welcome screen, glimpse of LED wall, immersive lighting, energetic atmosphere, lively music)

Friction signals: Confusing signage, dim entrances, dated exterior, no 'wow' moment on arrival.

Score: _____ / 5

Checkpoint 5 — Check-In Speed

The question: How long does it take from 'I've arrived' to 'I'm at my lane'?

What to look for:

- Digital check-in or streamlined counter process
- Reserved lanes assigned and displayed automatically
- Staff can handle check-in without paging through a booking system for 5 minutes
- Personalized welcome (welcome message on scoring monitor, name or photo on LED wall, custom greeting for birthdays or events)
- Target: under 5 minutes from door to lane for pre-booked guests

Friction signals: Long counter lines, manual lane assignment, guests standing around waiting for staff to figure things out, no personalization at arrival.

Score: _____ / 5

Checkpoint 6 _First Impression at the Lane

The question: When guests reach their lane, does the experience begin immediately or do they have to wait?

What to look for:

- Seating area is clean and well maintained
- Lane is ready, shoes distributed, screens welcoming them by name or group
- Zero waiting for setup or configuration
- Scoring screens already displaying content tuned to their group (birthday theme, corporate branding, chosen environment)
- Any pre-uploaded photos or messages already loaded and visible

Friction signals: Waiting 5+ minutes for staff to set up, blank screens, having to explain the reservation again to a different staff member.

Score: _____ / 5

3 DURING THE VISIT

During the visit, the best guest experiences keep the fun flowing through intuitive technology, low-friction service, and memorable moments.

Checkpoint 7_Choosing the Experience

The question: How easily can guests select the environment, theme, or game format that fits their group?

What to look for:

- Console is easy to navigate
- Guest can browse options visually
- No need to call staff over for explanations
- Clear preview of what each environment looks like
- Segment-appropriate suggestions (family-friendly for kids, competitive for skilled bowlers, party themes for celebrations)

Friction signals: Guests confused about what to pick, staff constantly interrupted for questions, one-size-fits-all environment for every group.

Score: _____ / 5

Checkpoint 8_Understanding How to Play

The question: Do casual and first-time bowlers feel confident within their first frame, or intimidated?

What to look for:

- Automatic bumper adjustments where needed, no staff intervention
- Scoring is visual, intuitive, and self-explanatory
- Handicaps, game modes, and rules explained on-screen where relevant
- Guests can start playing without a staff tutorial
- Guests can view how to play from their phones by scanning QR code

Friction signals: Guests waiting for staff to explain scoring, kids frustrated by rolled gutter balls, confused adults pretending to know what they're doing.

Score: _____ / 5

Checkpoint 9_On-Lane Ordering

The question: Can guests order food and drinks without leaving the lane or interrupting the fun?

What to look for:

- QR code on the lane leads directly to a mobile ordering menu
- Orders delivered to the lane without guests having to flag down staff
- Payment handled digitally without a walk to the counter
- Menu is visual, current, and easy to navigate on mobile
- Signage makes customers aware of the convenience of on lane ordering

Friction signals: Guests walking to the bar and waiting in line, missing turns because they're getting drinks, servers difficult to locate, paper menus with outdated pricing.

Score: _____ / 5

Checkpoint 10_Session Extension

The question: When guests are having fun, is it effortless for them to keep bowling?

What to look for:

- Extension can be purchased digitally from the lane
- No need to walk to the counter, wait for staff, or interrupt the group's momentum
- Prompt is helpful, not pushy — a gentle 'want to keep going?' moment

Friction signals: Session ends abruptly, guests have to physically find a staff member to extend, the 'moment of fun' is broken by the transaction.

Score: _____ / 5

Checkpoint 11_Handling Small Problems

The question: When something goes wrong, a pin doesn't clear, a screen glitches, a drink is spilled how and how quickly is it resolved?

What to look for:

- Guests have a clear, obvious way to signal for help without leaving the lane
- Staff response time under 2 minutes for most issues
- Technology issues resolved remotely or with minimal disruption
- Staff empowered to comp small items (a drink, a game) without a manager approval loop
- Staff members easy to identify

Friction signals: Guests standing around waiting for help, technology outages that last 10+ minutes, staff who have to 'go check with a manager' for every request.

Score: _____ / 5

Checkpoint 12_Celebration Moments

The question: Do special moments like birthdays, first strikes, personal bests, milestone frames feel special?

What to look for:

- Recognition of guest of honor upon arrival
- Birthdays get themed environments, on-screen celebrations, and personalized moments on the lanes
- Personalization on the screens
- Guests who can't attend can still participate (e.g., via QR-code selfies displayed on the wall)
- Group photos and moments are captured automatically without asking guests to pose

Friction signals: Birthdays feel identical to open bowling, no on-screen recognition of milestones, no capture of memorable moments.

Score: _____ / 5

4 DEPARTURE & BEYOND

The guest journey does not end when the last ball is thrown. A strong finish helps turn one visit into the next.

Checkpoint 13_Checkout & Payment

The question: Does paying feel like a natural end to the visit — or a chore that undoes the good mood?

What to look for:

- Pay-at-lane option available
- Digital receipts sent to email or text automatically
- Tips handled digitally with clear, non-pressure prompts
- No line at the front counter to pay
- Group splitting handled easily

Friction signals: Long checkout lines, paper receipts only, awkward tipping situations, guests killing 15 minutes at the end of their visit paying.

Score: _____ / 5

Checkpoint 14_The Post-Visit Moment

The question: After guests leave, do they have something in their hand (or phone) that reminds them of the experience?

What to look for:

- Personal follow up thank you with code to book next visit
- Reason for guests to return (bounce back offer)
- Personalized recap sent automatically with scores, photos, and highlights
- Delivered while guests are still in the 'afterglow' within a few hours of the visit, not days later
- Easy to share on social media with one tap

Friction signals: No post-visit communication, generic 'thanks for coming' emails, no shareable content, no reason to remember your center by tomorrow.

Score: _____ / 5

Checkpoint 15_The Invitation Back

The question: Do guests have a clear, compelling reason to book their next visit before they've even forgotten the current one?

What to look for:

- Employees personally thank them for their visit by name upon leaving
- Post-visit communication includes a specific reason to return (new environment coming, weekly format schedule, upcoming events)
- Loyalty or frequency incentive is clear and easy to redeem
- Booking the next visit takes fewer clicks than the first one did
- Communication feels personal, not mass-marketed. Handwritten messages make a lasting impression.

Friction signals: No follow-up at all, generic promotional emails that feel like spam, no clear reason to return, no easy path to rebook.

Score: _____ / 5

SCORING SUMMARY

Add up your scores by stage, then total your overall audit score.

STAGE	CHECKPOINTS	SUBTOTAL
Stage 1 — Before They Arrive	1, 2, 3	____ / 15
Stage 2 — Arrival & Check-In	4, 5, 6	____ / 15
Stage 3 — During the Visit	7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12	____ / 30
Stage 4 — Departure & Beyond	13, 14, 15	____ / 15
TOTAL AUDIT SCORE		____ / 75



INTERPRETATION GUIDE

60 - 75

Frictionless Leader

Your center is operating at a level most competitors can't match. Guests are staying longer, spending more, and returning more often because their experience is effortless from start to finish. Focus on maintaining consistency and identifying the last few points of friction.

45 - 59

Solid Foundation, Meaningful Gaps

Your fundamentals are strong, but 3 - 5 specific friction points are likely costing you measurable revenue. Prioritize the lowest-scoring stages first, usually check-in, on-lane ordering, or post-visit follow-up and expect visible ROI within 60-90 days of addressing them.

30 - 44

Significant Friction

Guests are enjoying their visits, but friction is quietly eroding repeat business. You're likely losing spend-per-visit and return-visit frequency. This is the most common range for centers running on legacy scoring systems and manual processes. Modernization typically produces the largest ROI at this level.

Below 30

Every Visit Is Working Against You

The good news: the upside is enormous. Small changes at this stage produce dramatic revenue improvements because friction is compounding at every stage of the journey. Start with the two lowest-scoring points and rebuild from there.

THE 3 HIGHEST-LEVERAGE FIXES

Based on hundreds of guest journeys across bowling centers globally, three friction points tend to produce the fastest ROI when addressed.



On-Lane Ordering (Checkpoint 9)

Guests who don't have to leave the lane spend 15 - 30% more on F&B and stay longer. This is often the single highest-ROI change a center can make.



Session Extension (Checkpoint 10)

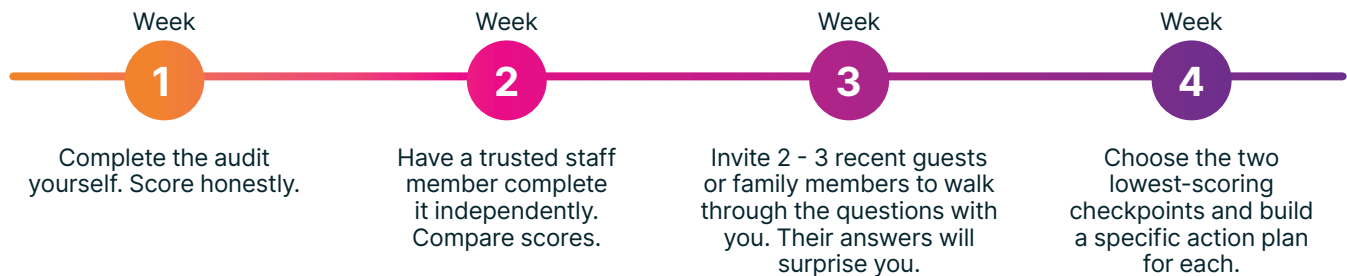
Automatic extension prompts capture impulse revenue that manual upselling misses entirely. One well-implemented extension flow can turn a \$40 booking into a \$120 visit without adding staff.



Post-Visit Recap (Checkpoint 14)

A branded, shareable recap becomes organic marketing at zero incremental cost. Every share puts your center in front of a new audience who trusts the recommendation because it comes from a friend.

YOUR NEXT 30 DAYS



Then re-run the audit 90 days later. Track your total score over time. Watch it climb and watch your repeat visit frequency, average spend per visit, and social sharing climb with it.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Guests don't remember every detail of a visit. They remember the feeling. And that feeling is built or broken in the small moments most operators never notice.

Removing friction isn't glamorous work. It doesn't produce a splashy grand-opening announcement. But it compounds relentlessly, quietly turning first-time guests into regulars and regulars into advocates.

The centers that win the next decade won't necessarily be the ones with the most lanes or the newest building. They'll be the ones where every stage of the guest journey feels effortless because effortless experiences are the ones people come back for.

The QubicaAMF EduSeries Encore is a proprietor education resource. To explore how modern on-lane entertainment technology addresses each of the friction points above, book a personalized demo or explore the full EduSeries + Encore library.