

Connected Experience:

What patched-together technology really costs your center

Remember the last time an app made your dinner plans effortless? You found the place on your phone. You booked in two taps. The map already knew the way. The confirmation landed in your calendar. You walked in, and your table was waiting. You didn't think about any of it. It's effortless!



Now think about last Saturday night. A party of eight stacks up at the counter while the phone rings. A birthday mom waving a confirmation email at an employee who can't find it. A league bowler typing his name into the scoring console for the nine-hundredth time, slowly, one finger at a time.

Your guests live in that effortless world all day with Amazon, with Disney, with the apps they run their lives from. Effortless is the standard they now hold for an evening of bowling.

Here's the part most operators miss. Customers don't compare your reservation system to another center's. They compare doing business with you to doing business with the best-run companies in the world — Apple, Amazon, Google, Disney. Masters of what we call the connected experience.

The encouraging part? Those giants didn't win by owning the most technology. They won because their technology is connected to itself, to their people, and to the exact moment their customer is standing in. It removes friction. It makes the next step feel natural, almost intuitive.

And bowling owns that isn't easily copied: it's social, experiential and beloved. People come to celebrate, to date, to reconnect, to make memories. So, the opportunity was never to make bowling more technological. It's to make the experience more connected so the technology quietly does its job, and **the moment belongs to your guests.**

This paper looks at what those giants do differently, what "doing business the Frankenstein way" is quietly costing your center, and five questions to ask before your next technology purchase.

Your Guests Have Been Spoiled (and It wasn't by bowling)

Technology hasn't changed what guests want from a night out. It has changed what they consider normal.



They expect to book when it suits them, for their information to travel with them, to be remembered when they return, to pay without thinking — and for all of it to work without them ever knowing how.



The cost of getting this wrong is measurable, and it's brutal: 86% of consumers will leave a brand after as few as two poor experiences. Two. ***That's one clunky booking and one slow check-in away from goodbye.***



Nobody expects perfection on a Friday night; guests forgive the occasional slip. What ***they won't forgive is friction they can feel on every visit:*** a reservation that has to be re-keyed, a payment screen from the dial-up era, an employee who can't see what they need, an ordering process that interrupts the fun.



Each one is a small moment. Together, they become the experience and every small moment can just as easily become a small win. Done right, the combined effect is loyalty you can't buy with a discount.



Meet “FrankenCenter”

Every system in the building was bought for a good reason, one at a time, from the vendor with the best answer to a single question: “How do I fix this one thing?” The result isn’t a strategy. It’s an accumulation. Some centers look a lot like Frankenstein’s monster: impressive in parts, stitched together in practice, and held together by whoever happens to be on shift.

Picture this scenario: the front desk re-enters a reservation the guest already made online. The bar’s payment flow doesn’t match the counter’s. The kitchen and the POS see two different versions of the same order. Loyalty doesn’t know the POS exists. At midnight, a manager reconciles three reports by hand, under fluorescent light, questioning choices made.

Every seam looks small. Together they are the experience for your guests, and for your team, who hold the seams together with re-entries, workarounds and “let me check another system.” That time is stolen straight from hospitality. The guest doesn’t blame the software. They blame the FrankenCenter.

The bill, itemized:

- Every re-entry is a chance for an error and someone on your payroll corrects each one.
- Labor spent stitching systems together instead of serving guests.
- Guest data stranded in silos; loyalty, email and gift cards can’t do their jobs.
- Payments handled differently everywhere — more disputes, more chargebacks, more fraud exposure, more reputational damage.
- No single, true, view of the business.
- Pulling reports from multiple places and stitching the data together to reconcile.



An ecosystem is the opposite: unremarkable in any single part, powerful in the whole. A collection of systems asks the guest to adapt to it. An ecosystem adapts to the guest. Information flows, connections stay invisible, and the whole evening feels easier than the sum of its parts. Your guest doesn’t care what runs the show. They care that it runs.

Five Giants, Five Lessons

1 Lesson One, Apple:

The experience is the product. An iPhone is useful alone. So is a Mac, a Watch, an iPad. Apple's genius is Continuity: start something on one device, finish it on another. The customer never asks "which screen am I supposed to use now?" The ecosystem absorbs the complexity. The lesson for your center: **guests should never know where one system ends and another begins.** Book online, and the reservation should flow into the visit. Check in, and the information shouldn't vanish. Want to add more game time? Nobody should have to start over. *"Your guests shouldn't have to navigate your technology. Your technology should help them enjoy their night out."*

2 Lesson Two, Amazon:

Convenience compounds. Prime isn't a shipping program; it's a bundle of benefits, each reinforcing the next, powered by one relentless question: "What else can we make easier for this customer?" Compare two statements: "We offer online reservations" versus "Our guests can discover, reserve, pay, arrive, check in, order and enjoy the whole evening with minimal friction." The first is a feature. The second is an ecosystem mindset, the one guests reward with return visits.

3 Lesson Three, Google:

Every step you remove matters. The most mundane trick in Google's ecosystem is the most telling: an address in a Calendar event connects straight to Maps. No copying, no switching apps, no re-typing. One connection quietly erased six steps. So evaluate technology differently. Don't ask "What does this system do?" Ask *"What steps does this system eliminate?"* A modest tool that removes ten steps a day beats a glamorous one that only adds features.

4 Lesson Four, Disney:

Connect the memories. Disney's ecosystem isn't software, it's stories. A story becomes a movie, the movie a character, the character a park experience, the experience a memory, the memory another visit. It maps beautifully onto your center, because your ecosystem should connect more than software: Technology + Entertainment + Hospitality + Content + People + Memory = Connected. A visit to a bowling center is never a transaction. It's a birthday, a first date, a league night, a family outing. The technology should make those moments better and then disappear into the background.

5 Lesson Five, Square:

Robust. Square is a great ecosystem on its own; point of sale, payments, hardware and software that millions of businesses already run on. But for bowling and entertainment centers, the real magic happens when you combine the Square ecosystem with the Making Bowling Amazing ecosystem: the customer journey becomes a connected experience. And because QubicaAMF continuously expands that ecosystem with game-changing products and integrated technologies, you have the perfect match; one that ensures long-term success and an unparalleled bowling experience. The result: **an ecosystem that blends** iconic design with integrated technologies to WOW customers by delivering a connected, premium entertainment experience.

Five very different businesses, six shared behaviors: they reduce friction, create continuity, connect experiences, give guests reasons to return, hide complexity and continuous evolution. Notice what's not on the list: owning the most technology. *An ecosystem isn't defined by how much you own. It's defined by how well everything works together.*

Plot Twist: You Already Run an Ecosystem

Walk through a typical visit with fresh eyes. Before arriving, guests search, compare, book, pay, and get confirmation. On arrival: check in, get shoes, find your lane, order food, bowl the first frame. During the night: bowl, play, watch, order, pay, extend, talk to your friends. Behind the scenes: reservations, POS, kitchen, scoring, equipment, management, maintenance, training.

That is already an ecosystem. The only question is whether it's a connected one or a chain of islands your guests have to swim between. Most centers bought the islands one at a time, and most islands work fine alone. The value lives in the bridges: islands create friction, connections create flow.



What “Connected” Is Actually Worth

When your core systems genuinely talk to each other, numerous things change and you can take every one of them to the bank:

- **Fewer chargebacks.** Chargebacks are a tax on disconnected business. When payments run the same secure way everywhere — kiosk, counter, lane — and every transaction attaches to a clean, connected record, disputes lose their ammunition. The rare one gets answered with evidence in minutes, not days.
- **Less fraud exposure.** Every time card data changes hands between disconnected tools, there’s a seam a bad actor can probe. A connected ecosystem narrows the seams: consistent security, fewer hand-offs, card data never re-entered. Tokenized, compliant payments quietly remove your building from the easy-target list and remain PCI compliant.
- **Reporting that tells the truth.** When reservations, lanes, food, beverage, retail and loyalty flow through one connected stream, reporting stops being a midnight reconciliation project and becomes a mirror: which nights printed money, which packages moved the needle, what the Saturday rush really cost — in one view.
- **Loyalty, email and gift cards — in the same system.** One guest profile across everything. Points accrue whether guests book online, buy at the counter or order at the lane. Gift cards sell anywhere and redeem anywhere — so they get bought more often and redeemed faster. Email reaches the people who actually visited, with offers that fit. The membership stops being a card in a wallet and becomes a relationship.
- **One screen, not five.** The quietest benefit is the one your team feels every shift: one interface instead of five, guest information already on screen when the party walks up, no re-entering, no workarounds. More eyes on guests, fewer on screens which is exactly how great service, reviews and repeat business is generated. The ecosystem doesn’t replace your people. It unleashes them.
- **A premium experience that grows your business.** Connectivity is what turns an evening of bowling into a premium entertainment experience — seamless from booking to last frame, with the WOW built in. That’s the kind of experience guests come back to relive and share with family and friends. Every return visit and every recommendation compounds into the most dependable growth there is: a fuller house, earned one memorable night at a time.

Sidebar — One ecosystem, always expanding

Not every vendor sells an ecosystem. Most sell point solutions: one system for scoring, another for management, another for payments. **QubicaAMF’s “Making Bowling Amazing” ecosystem is the exception — built on one belief: the connections between technologies create as much value as the technologies themselves.**

And it never stands still. Industry-changing products and deeper integrations keep extending what a connected center can do, which is exactly how an ecosystem protects and grows your investment for the long run.

When two robust ecosystems, such as the Square ecosystem and the QubicaAMF ecosystem, come together, the result isn’t a bigger technology stack. **It’s a super ecosystem where the whole delivers more value than the sum of its parts.**

That’s what a robust ecosystem is worth: less risk, better decisions, stronger relationships, a team finally free to focus on hospitality and growth that compounds on its own. The technology was never the point. The WOW is.

The Part of the Ecosystem Guests Should Never See

Not every valuable connection is guest-facing. Equipment health, maintenance guidance, training resources, performance data and operational alerts all run backstage. Picture a diagnostic system that flags an issue on Wednesday, before it becomes a dark lane on Saturday night, and walks your technician through the fix. Guests will never know it exists. That's the point. The best technology sometimes succeeds by preventing guests from ever knowing there was a problem.

Never Forget the Humans

One caution: technology is not the objective. The guest is, and your employees remain the heart of the experience.

**So the best ecosystem isn't Technology → Customer.
It's Technology → Employee → Customer.**

Let technology handle bookings, payments, reminders and data. Let your people handle the welcome, the read of the room, the hospitality that turns a lane into a memory. A connected ecosystem makes your team heroes: better informed, faster on their feet, more present.

Five Questions to Ask Before Your Next Technology Purchase

The next time you evaluate a system, don't stop at the feature list. Ask five bigger questions:

- **Does it remove friction?** What unnecessary steps disappear for guests and your team?
- **Does it connect?** What other systems can it talk to and what does that unlock?
- **Does it help the guest?** Is the experience easier, faster or more enjoyable?
- **Does it help the employee?** Is your team more informed, capable or available?
- **Does it create future possibilities?** Can it evolve as your business and guest expectations change?

Those questions shift the conversation from "What does this technology cost?" to "What value can this connection create?" Then ask one deceptively simple question: ***"Where does the guest have to stop and think?" Every pause is a leak in the experience and in your revenue.***



The Invisible Advantage

The best ecosystems share one quiet quality: they become almost invisible. The last time technology worked exactly as you expected, you probably didn't notice. You simply got what you wanted. That's the goal.

Technology shouldn't make your center feel more technological. It should make it feel easier, faster, more personal, more memorable. And because connected systems teach you how guests actually behave — what they buy, when they visit, what brings them back. A returning guest never feels like a stranger, a league bowler never gets first-timer treatment, and a birthday guest feels celebrated. In a business built on memories, intentional beats lucky every time.

Bowling already owns what most industries would trade heavily for: it's social, experiential and memory-making, and people already want to be there. The opportunity was never to become Apple, Amazon or Disney. It's to understand how they think and apply it to an industry with a head start.

A center doing business the Frankenstein way counts its systems and the seams its team holds together every night. A center building an ecosystem counts its connections because every connection makes the next one possible.

Your guests don't experience your technology as individual systems. They experience one journey. The question for every operator: what kind of journey are you creating?

