

[FREE GUIDE](#)

# The Complete Guide to Opening a Sim Racing Center

Everything you need to know — from finding the right location to filling seats on day one.

KARBON AGENCY

# 01 Market Research & Location

Find the right market and the right space before you spend a dollar.

## Know Your Market First

Not every city is ready for a sim racing center. You need a population base with the right mix of motorsport fans, gamers, corporate offices, and families looking for entertainment. Start by mapping the competition within a 30-mile radius. If there are zero sim centers, that could mean opportunity or it could mean the market isn't there yet. Look at related businesses: go-kart tracks, VR arcades, and gaming lounges all share your audience.

## Location Checklist

You want 2,000 to 5,000 square feet depending on your rig count. High-visibility strip malls and entertainment districts are ideal. Look for locations with strong drive-by traffic, easy parking, and proximity to restaurants or other entertainment. Avoid second-floor spaces and locations that are hard to find. Your signage visibility is part of your marketing.

## Lease Negotiation Basics

Always negotiate tenant improvement allowances. Sim centers need specific electrical requirements (dedicated circuits for each rig), climate control, and potentially soundproofing. Get a commercial real estate broker who understands entertainment venues. Push for a lease with a 6-month ramp-up period at reduced rent while you build out and launch.

## 02 Rigs & Buildout

The equipment and layout decisions that make or break the experience.

### Choosing Your Simulators

The rig is the product. You have three tiers: entry-level (Playseat + Logitech, ~\$2K each), mid-range (Trak Racer + Fanatec, ~\$5-8K each), and professional (custom rigs + direct-drive wheels + motion platforms, \$15K+). Most successful centers run 8-16 mid-to-high-end rigs. Start with a number you can fill consistently rather than a number that looks impressive but sits empty.

### Floor Plan Design

Your layout matters more than you think. Create a wow-factor entrance that draws people in. Arrange rigs so they face a central viewing area. Add a lounge space for spectators and waiting customers. Include a small reception/check-in area. Leave room for expansion. Every square foot should either generate revenue or enhance the customer experience.

### Essential Infrastructure

Dedicated 20A circuits per rig. Commercial-grade internet (fiber preferred, minimum 500 Mbps). Proper HVAC for heat from multiple PCs. LED ambient lighting. Large display screens for leaderboards.

### Software Stack

iRacing, Assetto Corsa Competizione, and F1 24 cover most customers. You need booking software, POS system, session management, and waiver/liability signing. A leaderboard system adds competitive engagement.

# 03 Staffing & Operations

Build a team that delivers a premium experience every time.

## Who You Need to Hire

Start lean. You need a venue manager (ideally someone who knows sim racing), 2-3 part-time experience hosts, and yourself covering the gaps. Experience hosts are your most important hire. They set up customers, explain the rigs, run events, and create the atmosphere. Hire people who are genuinely excited about racing and gaming. You can't train enthusiasm.

## Pricing Strategy

Most centers charge \$25-45 per 30-minute session for walk-ins. Offer packages: 3-pack, 5-pack, and unlimited monthly memberships (\$99-199/month). Corporate events are your highest-margin revenue stream at \$50-100 per person. Birthday parties and group bookings should have set packages. Always price for value, not for cheap volume.

## Day-to-Day Operations

Build repeatable processes for everything: opening checklist, rig maintenance schedule, customer check-in flow, session management, closing procedures. Use booking software to manage scheduling and avoid overbooking. Track key metrics daily: total sessions, revenue per rig, walk-in vs. booked ratio, and membership conversions. What you measure, you improve.

## 04 Marketing & Launch

The difference between a packed opening and an empty room.

### Pre-Launch (30 Days Before Open)

Your marketing starts before you open the doors. Build hype with a "Coming Soon" landing page and email list. Set up Instagram and TikTok with behind-the-scenes buildout content. Run targeted Meta ads to motorsport fans, gamers, and entertainment seekers within 15 miles. Partner with local businesses for cross-promotion. Get on local news and community event calendars. Host a soft launch for influencers and local media.

### Ongoing Customer Acquisition

Paid social (Meta + Instagram ads) is the most reliable channel for consistent bookings. Target specific audiences: motorsport fans for enthusiast sessions, parents for birthday parties, HR managers for corporate events, gamers for competitive leagues. Run different creatives for each segment. Retarget everyone who visits your website or booking page. Build an email list and send weekly updates with race results, events, and promotions.

### The Hardest Problem? Bringing People to Your Door.

We've driven over 20,600 bookings for sim racing venues with Meta & Instagram ads.

Average cost per booking: \$5.03. That's what we do.

### Ready to Open Your Sim Center?

We handle everything — location, lease, rigs, staff, marketing, and 30 days of operations training.

The business is 100% yours. We don't own it. We don't operate it.

[Book a Free Consultation](#)

