



This document reflects 2023 Camp Insights Survey responses related to the following societal trends:



Note that respondents rated each societal trend using the following prompt - **Please rate the extent to which the societal trend below creates significant opportunities or challenges for your camp over the next 5 years** – using a 1 to 5 scale where **1 = Not Significant** and **5 = Very Significant**. *The full list of trends and their ratings can be found in the appendix of the full [2023 JCamp 180 Camp Insights Report](#).*

In addition, respondents were asked to share areas of both strength and growth in their efforts related to each of these trends, as well as **Camper Recruitment and Retention, including Year-Round Engagement/Programming**. This document summarizes the responses camps reported – we hope these ideas help other camps as they determine how to best respond to these societal trends.

### Enrollment

Camps’ enrollment strategies take place in the context of a highly competitive summer recreational and educational marketplace; this trend has consistently been a highly ranked trend and was ranked 7th most significant this year.

Competition for time and attention is seen as a hallmark of the current context. “Families seem to have returned to their pre-COVID hectic lifestyle and are not finding additional time for more activities.” This is occurring while there is a continuing decline of participation in synagogues and Jewish day schools, significant feeders for many camps.

In response camps are pursuing several strategies, as described below.

### *Product Enhancement and Adjustment*

To compete, camps are naturally focused on their product. They are “improving existing programs and facilities.” A number of respondents highlighted the need to “continually brainstorm and innovate new offerings,” including adding new programs and “experimenting with more higher-aged specialty programming.”

Many camps are also exploring shorter session lengths “to accommodate the time constraints on teens.”

### *Target Groups*

Camps are also intensifying efforts with new target groups, e.g.,

- People from small towns
- Israelis
- Persians
- “The 80% of Jewish kids who don’t already attend Jewish camp”
- “The unaffiliated”

In general, camps reported that they are recruiting more broadly, and not relying on historical pipelines, such as movement synagogues.

### *Partners*

Camps are working with partners through to reach their target groups, including schools and JCCs.

One respondent noted “we go to synagogues and day schools for recruitment events and their numbers are dwindling and so many of their kids already go to other Jewish summer camps.” Other camps are continuing to build relationships with synagogues, working with Rabbis and educators as faculty to supports camps’ continuing emphasis on Jewish practice and learning.

### *Promotion*

To reach their target groups, a number of camps reported they were intensifying general promotion, for example “amplifying our marketing” and getting out in the community more “during the school year”.

Some camps are using “ambassadors to talk up camp”, in some cases “leaning more on them rather than visiting synagogues and day schools because many aren't inviting camps in.”

One camp noted they are offering “large first-time camper incentives to hopefully get more of the audience to choose a Jewish camp.”

Many camps are focusing on finetuning their messaging, including “on what we offer and our high level of expertise”, and/or “emphasizing the traditional benefits of camp; another suggested, the “alignment of these benefits with family priorities” while another camp is emphasizing “how camp creates a connection to Judaism in ways few other activities can.”

In addition to general marketing, many camps also are personalizing communication with families including through acknowledging birthdays and social media and calling each family.

### *Events and Year-Round Programming*

To boost enrollment, a number of camps are “trying to engage our camper base year-round and “emphasizing retention through “year-round engagement”. Camps offer a wide range of year-round events, often in collaboration with partners. These include open houses, special PJ Library programs, Purim events, bowling parties, ice cream/desert make-ups, hot cocoa or s’mores family nights, and camper reunions along with taste of camper programs, family camp, and winter camping.

Some camps highlighted a social design strategy of including “a mix of parents, returning campers, and new and prospective campers as that sells camp for us;” others strive to build community and operate events that “creates buzz and gets more new families.”

### *Online*

Camps, especially ones with widely geographically distributed campers, are continuing/intensifying the use of zoom for engaging parents. This includes information sessions, virtual tours, and even interactive games (e.g. Minecraft, Jackbox nights) to engage prospective campers.