



Maximizing Camp Enrollment

INTRODUCTION:

- Camp enrollment is best measured in camper weeks, as measuring total campers does not factor in whether a camper attends 1 week or 8 weeks.
- Enrollment is based on three factors; returning campers (retention), new campers and weeks per camper. Camp enrollment will be most successful when it is successful in each of these areas.
- Metrics and tracking - knowing your metrics inside and out will help camp. The more detailed the metrics the better. Total campers, camper weeks, returning campers, new campers, male, female, grades, schools, neighborhoods, etc.
 - For camps that open registration during the summer, start tracking registrations early.
 - If camp does a parent day visitation day enrollment, track your enrollment on that day each year
 - Some camp data management systems can provide an instant snapshot of how registrations track on any given day, week, month, etc.
 - Some camps track campers on a twice a month basis, often on the first and 15th of the month beginning when registration opens.

PROCESS: Retention, Recruitment, Weeks per Camper

1. Retention:

- To calculate retention rate, start with the list of previous campers, remove those who have aged out, and what remains is what you base your retention rate on. If you have 125 campers and have 25 campers age out, you have 100 campers eligible to retain. If 65 campers return, your retention rate is 65%
- Early retention: Camps often begin its registration with signing up returning campers and it is recommended that camps do so as soon as possible before other options are considered. Think cruise ship - they want you to register for your next cruise before you get off the ship so you don't consider other vacation alternatives. Incentives for parents and campers:
 - For parents, often the best incentive is financial and the most typical one is to lock in previous summer rates if campers enroll by an early registration date, i.e. September 1. This pricing should be the best pricing offered to returning families and will decrease as the year continues
 - For returning campers, one-of-a kind swag is an incentive. Beach towel, beach blanket, pajama bottoms, sweatshirts etc can be handed to a camper upon enrollment for everyone to see and want.

- Ongoing retention: Increasing retention occurs throughout the entire year and even into camp itself. What is your plan? Here are some approaches:
 - Take previous summer's registration list and ensure that camp reaches out to all potential returning campers to know their upcoming summer plans. Don't rely solely on emails - nothing beats the personal touch.
 - Incentives
 - Reach out to campers from previous summers
- Camp 365

2. Recruiting New Campers

- **Attrition:** How many new campers do you need to replace graduating campers and campers who choose not to return?
- **Early recruitment (camp in session)**
 - The best time to showcase camp is while camp is in operation.
 - Consider an in-season open house and regular private tour days for parents to check out camp in action.
 - Don't wait for them to find you - seek out prospective families and invite them to visit. Use whatever lists you can - PJ Library, your agency's preschool, etc. Target those parents who often lead the way.
 - "Preschool Goes to Camp" Days, inviting graduating preschool classes, synagogue and other preschools to visit camp
- **Throughout the Year**
 - Camp Open Houses
 - Camp Fairs
 - Private tours
 - JCC Open Houses
 - Are you part of an agency that offers pre-school? Do you track your penetration rate?
 - Is a pre-school camp offered by your agency? How do they feed into camp?
 - If you are a JCC camp, what is the penetration rate for your membership and how can you increase it?
 - Do you have access to the PJ Library list in your community? How can you tap into that year-round and for camp?
 - Are your camp families pediatricians? Pediatric dentists? Teachers? Speech therapists? Tutors? Realtors? How are you helping them to promote your camp?
 - What else?



3. Increasing Camper Weeks

- Increasing your weeks per camper may be an easy way to increase enrollment.
- Does each week of your program build on the last, without excluding the new campers?
- What is special each week at camp that a camper will not want to miss? Carnival Week? Ruach Spirit Week? Maccabiah Color War Week? Lip Sync? Israel Week? Camp Show Week? What else? Highlight these! Add more if needed.
- Prior to the summer and at the beginning of each camp week, identify for what weeks each camper is not registered and target them for adding each week.
- Involve counselors in the process to encourage (not harass) campers to want to extend. Campers should feel special and wanted.
- Reach out to parents to invite them to add more weeks. Let them know that their kids love camp and camp loves them. Explain that the more weeks of camp one attends, the more they are part of your camp community.
- Make it easy for parents to sign up - if they fear the pain of your camp data management system, find a way to make it simpler.
- If they receive financial assistance but not for a given week, automatically extend that weekly rate to them without overcomplicating

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