



ARE WE ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS?

Talking to parents so you really know what they want out of their child's summer experience.

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WHERE TO BEGIN

When thinking about your parent connections you should follow some steps. These steps are crucial to a successful redesign when working with parents.

- Willingness to change. Either you have it or you don't. If anyone in your organization is willing to change, take the time to convince them. Without the correct buy in you are just pushing a rock up hill. This process is not a one person show.
- Commit the time that is needed. This is a long process and if you are looking for a quick fix you are going to miss something or even worse; over promise and under deliver.
- Decide, what is the end result that you are looking for? Be specific not parent engagement but to find a way that parents can talk with their child about the summer experience.
- Form a hypothesis; you may be right or wrong but at least you have a goal. Goals are crucial to the success of this process. If you don't have goals you have no target to aim for.
- Look up experts in the field...find a "Ted Talk" or other videos that will help you understand what experts are thinking and saying. Don't just look for people who agree with you look for people who will challenge your thoughts. They are experts too and everyone's opinion is valid.
- Plan out what your process will look like. Sitting as a group from different departments will allow an open environment for discussion. They may not be a "Camp Guy" but their input is important.
- Reach out to your community you want to effect change. Narrow your search. I.e. 10 to 12 year old boys from a single parent home. Not kids at camp.
- Allow open conversation and make them comfortable. You can meet at their house, coffee shop, synagogue or the JCC, wherever makes them comfortable.
- Evaluate what you heard and what you learned.
- Post-it are your friends. They can be moved and grouped on a blank wall and allow you to understand what you are hearing.
- Once you have a plan...lay it out. Storyboard is the perfect way to get done what you heard should be done.
- Perfect practice make perfect...well it will never be perfect but running smoothly works. Try out your plans with a group. Parents are more than happy to get something free so invite them in for a free vacation day or free basketball class. This will allow you to model what you heard.
- Ask for feedback, your thoughts are great but listening to the families that live it will allow you to know if it worked or if it needs to change.
- No one wants to start over but you may find through all of this research that your original thoughts were not what you thought and that is a good result. It is not about you, it is about the families in your community.

Communication, communication, and communication, be open with parents and families about what you are looking to do. Talk to them ahead of time, during the process and after the process. You cannot listen enough to what they have to say.

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SOMETHING TO DOODLE ON:



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