

# The "5 Rules" of Summer Camp Marketing

(Actually no "Rules")



Summer Camp is...



Summer Camp is...



# Roadmap

## Objectives:

- Reset your thinking about Summer Camps
- Revisit what we know about decision makers/criteria
- Reveal your distinct advantages
- Restore your confidence that you can win
- Renew your passion for telling your story



# “What if...?”

## Summer Camps...

- Became a primary tool in your Marketing arsenal?
- Could be used a recruiting tool for Fall enrollment?
- Were a showcase for your teachers?
- Connected you to your community?
- Introduced you to a new group of prospects?



# The Challenges...

- Competing with limited resources
- Profitability
- Parents expectations
- Kids expectations
- And...



# Optimism

- We control many of the variables
- We have distinct advantages
- We have access to the audience
- We can influence thinking
- We can build cost effective, timely strategies



# 4 Things To Know...

1. Summer Camp: It's not what it used to be.
2. The Competition: It's not who it used to be.
3. The Decision: It's not what you think it is.
4. Winning: It's not as hard as it seems.





# The “New” Camp



# The “New” Summer Camp

- Programs
  - Themes, specialized and “guilt reducing”
- Facilities/Amenities
  - Gyms, pools, fields and “athletic centers”



# The “New” Summer Camp

- Expectations
  - Parents/Kids
- Marketing
  - Aggressive, multi-facted and really good



# The Competition



# The Competition

- Churches
- Schools
- Athletic Programs (training facilities)
- “Summer Only” Event Organizers (Boosterthon)
- Other Child Development Centers



# The Competition

The reality... Licensed or Exempt



# The Competition

“Unlicensed care is not inspected; therefore, the health and safety of children in this type of care is unknown... In reality, many operate with little oversight by any state entity.”

- Child Care Aware of America (Industry Report, March 2012)



# The Decision





# The Decision

- The Decision Maker
- Demographics
  - ZIP codes
  - Financial
  - Physical location



# The Decision

- Psychographics - The “how” and “why” are as important as the “who”.
  - Prestige
  - “Keeping up with the Jones””
  - Perception
  - Where do they find info?
  - How do they make decisions?



# Winning



# Beating the Competition

1. Understand the individual decision making criteria
2. Leverage your advantages
3. Be consistent
4. Position - Trusted Advisor
5. Platform - Safety



# Leveraging Your Strengths

- “Daycare” vs. Development
  - Reputation
  - Accreditation
  - “Licensed” vs. “Exempt”



# Licensed Care

State Regulations/Inspections - to our advantage (for once)

- Ratios
- Water safety
- Background checks, finger-printing for management
- Corrective discipline
- Education/certification requirements for staff/caregivers



# Exempt Care

- Can operate up to twelve hours per day
- Not required to meet state rules for disciplining children, proper hygiene, staffer training, serving nutritional food
- Not subject to state inspection
- Compliance with licensed care requirements is optional
- Parents required to sign release statement acknowledging exempt status - Do they know what it means?



# Strategy





# 5 Keys

1. Control the variables
2. Communicate your distinct advantages
3. Leverage having access to the audience
4. Influence thinking through education
5. Build cost effective, timely strategies



# Control the Variables

- No “arms” or “drag race” to build programs
- Focus the discussion on the competitor’s vulnerability
- Create opportunities for discussion (captive audience)
- Compete on your terms (Licensed vs. Programs)
- Create a more educated consumer that will become an evangelist



# Communicate Distinct Advantages

- Early and often (15+ touches)
- Own the “Safety” position (think Volvo)
- Leverage “Trusted Advisor” position - Focus on benefits of “Licensed Care”
- Create leading questions based on gaps in “Exempt Care”
- Personalize the discussion to leverage your relationship
- Teach your team to tell the story to re-enforce the points



# Leverage Audience Access

- Early and often (15+ touches)
- Talk to parents one on one
- Have teachers introduce info and refer to you
- Make it part of all of your communications
- Get the kids excited about it



# Influence Thinking

- Early and often (15+ touches)
- Help establish decision making criteria
- Use third-party validation (GCCA, Web resources...)
- Create tools for parents - checklists, Web resources, etc...
- Create specific communications (email, flyer, conversation)
- Give them a reason to care and share



# Cost Effective, Timely Strategies

- Early and often (15+ touches)
- Use existing tools
- Focus on telling the story not fancy presentation
- Everyone tells the story
- Repeat messaging through multiple tools



# Tools

- Licensed vs. Exempt Chart
- AJC - Opt Ed
- GCCA “Protect”

Downloads - PureFUNinc.com and the GCCA Web Site

