

Marketing for Guest Services

“...As a philosophy, [marketing] is based on thinking about the business in terms of customer needs and their satisfaction...Marketing differs from selling because ‘Selling concerns itself with the tricks and techniques of getting people to exchange their cash for your product. It is not concerned with the values that the exchange is all about. And it does not, as marketing invariably does, view the entire business process as consisting of a tightly integrated effort to discover, create, arouse, and satisfy customer needs.’” - www.businessdictionary.com

Their Needs Meet Your Abilities

There is a wide range of group types with a wide range of needs. You have to find the groups whose needs you can effectively meet. To do this you must understand their needs. Ask them, don't assume you know what is important, they might surprise you. Then constantly shape yourself to meet your target markets needs more effectively.

Target Market

The constraints of your facility, staff and location dictate a particular group type and target. There is give and take in this. You can form your abilities to serve a particular type of group, but the groups you serve will form you abilities.

Relationships - Friction vs Smooth

A primary driver of your ability to serve groups is the health of your relationship with them. Positive relationships mean that you see each other as partners in ministry. In other words, this is not just a client/vendor interaction, you have to want your groups to succeed, and see their success as your success.

Friction vs Smooth

There are positives and negatives in every relationship and interaction.

Friction - Friction is things that drag a relationship down. In our case a poorly designed website, a difficult booking process, an unresponsive staff, bad food, poor first impressions.

Smooth - Smooth are things that bring the relational level up. In our case great pre-retreat communication, well tended grounds, helpful staff, great follow up.

Friction and Smooth act cumulatively. If you add up a bunch of friction, even if each one is small, groups leave unhappy. And some things are more important (remember meeting needs). A frustratingly broken link on the web site, a bad mic cable, and a cold meal might not be huge deals on their own, but taken together the cumulative effect may be enough to keep a group from coming back.

This idea is a direct descendent of "Don't Make Me Think" by Steve Krug. A book you should read.

Smooth



Friction

Ben West - www.PoolHouseBlue.com

Please distribute, copy, and riff on this document. It can be downloaded at www.poolhoused.com/free-stuff

Filling Capacity or Getting People to Come

Returning Groups

If you meet needs and have great relationships people will come back.

Groups Sent by Your Fans

There are people who like your camp. They may be current group leaders, camper parents or campers.

They also have the ability to tell others about you. You should take advantage of that.

Be Great - if you don't do a good job, nobody is going to want to recommend you

Ask for Help - people might not naturally think that you could use some help finding new groups. So, ask for help. It's ok

Equip - Give people tools to tell others

Give Incentives - or some helping out will be incentive enough. but, buddy bucks and world fame go a long way.

People You Recruit.

There are people out there who have influence in your target market. First you need to figure out who they are, then you have to find ways to connect with them. Sending a letter or brochure is one way.

So is calling. Find ways to minister to them, to serve them, and get them on your side. If you truly see them as potential partners in ministry and just minister to them they will probably come when the needs are right.

Consider finding ways to demonstrate what you can do to people with influence. For example, do a seminar on team building at a local pastor luncheon. If you can show what you are able to do while serving and ministering you will open a lot of doors to great conversations and relationships.