

How to Leverage Your Software to Increase Registrations and Revenue

An ever-tightening economic climate requires that your community organization get creative with its programs and services. Now it's more important than ever to take a close look at the data you capture of your customers, uncover trends, and leverage that information to create targeted marketing campaigns and offers to keep them coming back and to attract new customers.

Below are a few tips on how your parks and recreation software can significantly help to find new customers and retain existing ones to ensure that your organization continues to thrive for the long-term.

1. Build a Meaningful Database

By capturing relevant information about everyone who visits your recreation center, you are building a database that holds valuable information that can significantly impact the growth of your organization.

i. What Information Should You Capture?

Go beyond capturing basic information such as contact details, birthday, and demographics. Capture key interests, past sign-ups, or reasons why residents selected your rec center instead of going to a neighboring gym. This type of information will let you know why customers leave before they actually do, how you can improve their experience, and what keeps them coming back. Leverage this data to create targeted, effective marketing campaigns.

ii. How Do You Capture Information?

To capture the data, consider giving something of value away in exchange for feedback and information. This can be complimentary tickets to an upcoming event, free fitness class pass or a discount. Provide survey forms to every customer, ask questions on registration forms, call your customers, or simply send them an email. No matter how you go about securing the information, try several different methods to ensure you're connecting with every single customer.

iii. When Do You Capture Information?

The answer is every time you interact with your customers. Right now you take contact information down when new families register or at the start of a new session. Capture information during Front Desk transactions and from everyone that attends a special event like a workshop.

By capturing this important customer data into your database, you will be able to direct your existing resources to the activities that your customers really want, and save money by eliminating the things they don't value.

2. Analyze Data and Uncover Trends

Once you've collected all of your customer data, generate reports and analyze your findings to start making more informed business decisions. Through reports you may uncover trends on what age group participates in which activities most frequently, how families are hearing about your classes, and when your facility has the most sign-ups. For example, you'll know to email special offers for certain class registrations during your slower months or during a customer's birthday month.

The benefits of analyzing this data is that you will reveal new revenue opportunities, improve business oversight, and equip your staff with the knowledge necessary to connect with customers in a more personalized and timely way.

Example: Target by Interest

Through your database, you discover that 11-year old Mary Smith goes to the local public school and has registered for your Tiny Turtles Swim Summer camp. You also know that 14-year old Jane Rogers goes to the same local school as Mary and has registered for Holiday day camps.

Knowing this information, you need to ask yourself what programs and offers you can interest Mary in when she isn't in school, and what programs Jane might be interested in during the summer. If you know their birthdays, send them a complimentary t-shirt or a special price on their registration cost. Chances are, they will come back to your facility because of how personalized and targeted your marketing efforts are.

3. Garner Attention

Once you have the data, understand what it means, and decide how you can use it to generate more revenue, tell your customers and prospects about your services in a multi-touch yet targeted way.

i. Website

With the data you've collected, update your Website with relevant messages that appeal to your customers and prospects. Parks and recreation organizations should develop sites that include pictures and images, class openings and sign-ups, new events and services, as well as a customer account log-in page.

Once you have a Website, it's of the utmost importance to promote it. Mention your Website address on your voicemail greetings, in staff email signatures, on membership cards, on receipts and invoices, in ads and marketing collateral, on business cards, and even on social networking sites, such as Facebook and MySpace.

ii. Email Marketing

Emails are one of the most cost-effective and time-efficient methods to market your message to a large audience. Use automated list building tools in your parks and recreation software to segment your list by demographic, interests, sign-up history and send customized emails. Keep members updated on your schedules, promotions, and offerings via an electronic newsletter. Make it easy for your email recipients to understand the purpose of the email, access more information, sign up, and then share the opportunity with friends. Of course, make sure that you are sending emails to only those who have opted-in to receiving such emails.

iii. Direct Mail Campaigns

Share news and announcements to customers through brochures, flyers and postcards sent directly to their mailboxes. From new class schedules, and event announcements to special offers and thank you cards, stay in communication with customers and create awareness for prospects through ongoing, targeted and personalized direct mail campaigns.

There are many ways to market your recreation center, but with the right parks and recreation software, a meaningful database, and a bit of creativity, you'll be able to use the data you've collected to market more effectively than ever before.