

February 2012

Gary's Camping Newsletter

Continuous Improvement for Great Camp Leaders

"The basic needs of children never change. They need love, they need guidance, they need approbation (approval), they need encouragement. They need to feel they are a part of something very important. You see camping isn't pretend. Camping is a real thing." -- *Jean McMullan (former president of ACA; and camping legend)*

Improve Your Interviewing – Here are three ways to dramatically increase the accuracy of your staff selection process. At this time of year, is there anything more important?

- 1.) The original (where I first learned the techniques) and still terrific: "More Than a Gut Feeling" training DVD: <http://www.more-than-a-gut-feeling.com/?gclid=COF8bfSv64CFeQQNAodqkjsfw> for a free, full online preview (It's \$945 to buy the dvd and it's so good it's worth it. But *free* is good place to start!)
- 2.) POWER-Hiring, the groundbreaking self-training funded by the AT&T Foundation: <http://www.garyforster.com/library.php>
- 3.) A *new* video I wrote and directed for www.expertonline.com on "Behavior Based Interviewing" specifically for camps. If you're a member (or if you *join!*) it's included in your service.

She Can DO the Job, But Can We Tolerate WORKING With Her? – POWER Hiring will help you find a staff member who can do the job (and that's no small feat). But just as important is how the new hire will "fit" with the rest of your team. Here's a great article on ways to interview for *that*, too: <http://www.hreonline.com/HRE/story.jsp?storyId=533336119> (Thanks to Chris Thurber at ExpertOnlineTraining.com for this story!)

Web Site 911 – One of my clients is a Girl Scout council with several nice resident camps, but they had an "unfriendly" web site. My usual advice is to "borrow from the best," so I visited over 50 Girl Scout camp web sites and... they were *all* terrible. No photos, no help for moms trying to decide if their child should go to camp; just dates and rates. So I worked with the camp director and council marketing director to define what a "remarkable" site would include... and they created it! OK Girl Scouts, now you've got a measuring stick (and a blueprint) to quickly provide what moms are looking for! <https://www.gssem.org/camp/Pages/Summer-Camp.aspx> Bravo! (and just in time!) Could I help *you*?

Are You Firing Blanks? – "If you were to meet a prospective customer face to face...could you sell him *using only sentences taken from your website?*" That brutal question is asked by "*The Information Highwayman*." Most of us were never trained as writers. If you know a good writer, why not ask for a

favor and have them do a quick edit on your web site? <http://informationhighwayman.com/how-to-create-a-business-website-that-sells.pdf>

Pinterst – Finally, a way to visually share camp ideas. If you haven't heard about this yet, you may hate me for being the one to turn you on to it (because there are so many added every day). It's like an explosion of camp knowledge. I think it would be cool to give this link to all of your summer camp staff as soon as they're hired: http://pinterest.com/zoic/great-summer-camp-ideas-pls-add-yours/?utm_source=sendgrid.com&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=pinterest.com THEY'LL get the daily barrage of cool ideas! It can't help but keep them pumped up for summer, and get them looking for free resources to bring to camp with them. (You have to "request" to be "invited." It's really worth it.)

And here's a free PDF-book on how to use *Pinterest* for marketing, too:
www.hubspo20223-email-l-pinterest-ebook-hst.com/how-to-use-pinterest-for-business/?source=201

Website of the Month –Ooooh I love this! It walks a parent and potential camper through their most common questions; telling a story just like the director was sitting in their living room with a book of photos. You can do this! <http://www.fallingcreek.com/toolbox/index.shtml>

Easy Show-n-Tell – Think maybe Disneyworld knows what they're doing? (I do.) Think maybe moms planning their family vacations are looking for similar things when they surf for a summer camp? (I do.) So how quickly can you get this kind of photo/list on *your* website?
<http://disneyworld.disney.go.com/resorts/animal-kingdom-lodge/recreation/>

Take Control of Your Keys – How many keys are on your camp key ring? If just carrying them makes your one shoulder droop, you've wanted a way to organize your door locks. But that's been a really expensive proposition, until now: <http://www.kwikset.com/SmartSecurity/Re-Key-Technology.aspx>

(Still time to sign up for the **Camp Maintenance Conference, March 20 – 22**, where I'll be doing a toolbox full of workshops: www.campmaintenance.com)

More on Cookin' at Camp (*see the January edition*) – Randall Grayson writes, "At Camp Augusta, CA, campers have free choice daily over the activities they participate in. Out of 140 different choices, there is one called 'Kitchen Help.' It is, by far, our most popular activity! Hand-crafting the food the community eats, and hanging out with the kitchen staff is something they love. We even have to limit campers from doing it more than once, so others can have an opportunity. Campers help prepare food outside of the kitchen to stay clear of regulation details." – *Reach Randy at* randall@visionrealization.com and www.campagusta.org

Parent and Child Craft Memories at Camp – Here's a sweet little project for your next family event: <http://tresfrenchhens.blogspot.com/2010/11/framed-hand-prints.html>

Killer Thank-You Letters – Fill in this blank: "It's easier to ___ a customer than *get* a customer." **Keep** was the answer we're looking for. But just as most camps lose more kids than they gain each year, many lose donors because they didn't SAY THANK-YOU in a *sincere* way. (HINT: those address-

labeled pre-printed postcards some of you send me to acknowledge my gift? You're lucky I keep giving. They piss me off. If *you're* not thanking me, at least use the money in a better way.) Here's the best info I've ever seen (better than any workshop): <http://www.gailperry.com/2011/12/how-to-craft-a-killer-thank-you-letter/> Read it now as you'll want to be collecting your thoughts on the topics she mentions; and you'll be ready when the checks roll in. And again when the kids roll in; and again at the end of the year....

Sharing Kid Testimonials -- "Hi Gary. I saw this website today. WOW!

<http://www.birthdaypartyatlanta.net/what-are-kids-saying/>" -- Amy Bram, "Director of Exceptional Experiences @ Ramah Darom" (Now THAT's a cool job title!)

Hey Amy, I found that guy has another business too, also a good website! <http://gregsnaturalhistory.com/> AND... being the nosey guy I am, I discovered YOU have a very cool web site too!

<http://www.ramahdarom.com/exceptionalexperiences/>

"Survey Says!" – You can make your newsletter/Facebook/webpage interactive by adding a multiple-choice poll that every visitor can take. See <http://pollcode.com/>

"Maximum Brandwein" – I wouldn't let this opportunity pass my camp by: Michael Brandwein is presenting a unique weekend seminar April 13-15, 2012 for camp leadership team members, focusing on in-depth mastery and practice of outstanding skills in supervision, coaching, motivation, training, and making world-class programs that excite campers and really teach invaluable skills for life. Camp leaders will learn to be brilliant bosses and step up to new challenges and responsibilities that will bring maximum value to your camp. It will be held at Sherman Lake YMCA camp in Augusta, Michigan, with great access to five airports including O'Hare, Detroit, and Grand Rapids. Registration is limited; register by March 19 and get \$210 in free Brandwein

books. <http://www.shermanlakeymca.org/cmsAdmin/uploads/Brandwein-Camp-Leadership-Registration-Form.pdf>. For questions write to Seminar@michaelbrandwein.com

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"You can tell whether a man is clever by his answers. You can tell whether a man is wise by his questions." -- *Mahfouz Naguib*

"He who asks a question is a fool for five minutes; he who does not ask a question remains a fool forever." -- *Chinese Proverb*

"If there are no stupid questions, then what kind of questions do stupid people ask? Do they get smart just in time to ask questions?" -- [Scott Adams](#)

Gary

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"Camp Solutions for Great Camp Leaders"

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