

# INSTANT HOLIDAY CAMPS FORMULA

## Finding the Best Leaders

### Transcription

Let me share with you something on the topic of finding the best leaders. I have never, ever, ever spent a single cent on recruitment. Now promise me one thing. Never, ever, ever pay a single cent for recruitment. Not for placing an ad. Not for anything. You have a total pool of talent at your disposal right now. You just need to know where to tap it.

The leaders are going to make or break your camp. In my opinion, the leaders are the absolutely most important feature of the entire operation. Their energy and passion will set the tone. You can be in a run down hall in the middle of nowhere, in the cold and rain with 10 kids but if you have leaders with the creativity and fun and enthusiasm to give these children the best five days of their entire life you can bet that those 10 will go home and next camp you will have 20 kids and so on and so on. It comes back to the leaders.

When you are looking for a particular leader, for example a singing leader, well the easiest way, the quickest way is to email the nearest university or conservatorium. Fax or email them a poster for them to stick on a notice board advertising what you are looking for. The students who have already chosen a career path in the industry so those studying education, creative arts, performing arts, Bachelor of Music Education as I did, many appreciate paid work experience in their holidays. So it is a bonus for them and for you.

This being said, the method I use most often and rarely fails to produce results is by talking to your existing staff. Not surprisingly, most young, fabulously talented teachers who perform on the side on the side of their teaching, tend to know other fabulously talented performing arts teachers. There is one thing to remember though, which you may have encountered over the years. A really talented performer does not necessarily make a really talented teacher. There can be a big difference between someone who is brilliant at their art and someone who is able to communicate this in a way that is accessible and fun in a way the children love children. Ideally, choose leaders who have taught children in the past.

I tend to use leaders between the ages of 19 to 25 as they have lots of energy, enthusiasm and creativity, the kids think they are really funky and often are often studying and need holiday employment so they are available, repeatedly.

That being said, some of the older staff have been the most creative and inspiring with the children - their experience makes them know what works straight away perfectly and how to engage and maintain their attention. And just as a little side note, as a trained teacher, I know that it is tempting to go into school mode in terms of requiring the children to be perfectly behaved at all times. You know, sit in straight lines, hands in laps, sitting up straight. This is a

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holiday camp and it is important for the leaders to remember this. It has to be fun! No child should ever be yelled at and while boundaries for behaviour are very important for everyone's safety, and should always be observed, the kids shouldn't feel like they are at school. There has to be a different vibe.

In terms of paying your staff, always veer to the side of generosity and pay promptly after the camp. If you treat your staff well, they will give more of themselves to the camp. Show up with coffees or buy some biscuits for them - they will appreciate it and it just makes everything go nicely! Also, by paying modestly, but still generously, they are likely to come back to you for regular work as opposed to picking up a few extra shifts in the café they work at, which is fantastic as the kids become very attached to their leaders – and they come back to the camp because they know “Oh Jack, he was so much fun, he was so cool, I can't wait to see him again,” this is a really important aspect for gaining repeat business. The leaders are an asset to your business, 100%.

Sometimes, this is a really good tip, when running the camps it is handy to have an extra pair of hands around, just to run little jobs and errands. There might be children in your camp who you have had coming along for years and then comes the sad day when they are too old to participate anymore! They've outgrown it. Instead, invite them to come back to the camp, but as a junior leader. Their parents will probably be thrilled to have them engaged in such a positive holiday activity at that age, it's ideal for them. The child can join in all the activities, but also help to look after the little ones and help out the team leader when required, generally help out around the camp. They will love the responsibility and a token of some kind, money or a gift at the end of the camp wouldn't go astray to thank them for the work they've done. It's a brilliant way and really rewarding for the junior leaders as well.