



YOUR ULTIMATE GUIDE TO CAMP REGISTRATION

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INTRODUCTION: WHY DO YOU NEED CAMP SOFTWARE?

One of the biggest frustrations for camps is spending too much time responding to emails and answering calls from parents wondering which forms they need to fill out, how much money they owe and when things are due. Fortunately for camps, there is a solution that can cut down significantly on the active time spent handling these issues **AND** improve your application completion rate **AND** get you paid faster and on time!

If it isn't obvious already, the solution is a quality camp registration software. The reasons to invest in camp software are many. This eBook looks at what qualities of camp software are beneficial to camp and why it's worth it to switch from a paper or inefficient online process to a dedicated camp management software.



There are 6 main reasons to get camp software:

Reason 1: You need to be online!

A successful camp application goes hand in hand with a camp software. You are able to use the best technology has to offer when you move your registration process online. Being online and using a software increases the accuracy and efficiency of your registration process. And to be honest, people just expect it to be online.

Reason 2: A custom experience means less work on your end.

Using a good quality camp management software means you can customize the experience for every family that registers. It allows each family to register one or more children, pick and choose the sessions they will attend and easily see the total owed for the specific set of sessions they've chosen.

An intelligent software knows what forms need to be completed and which do not. This kind of intelligence eliminates issues that come up with a one size fits all software solution or a paper application. This makes the process seamless and straightforward for every family, cutting down time you spend making sense of the process for each family on the phone or via email. Saving time and money already!

Reason 3: Make charging easy!

A camp software allows you to integrate payments within the process, so payments come in faster than with a paper system or with a system that doesn't include a payment feature. Allowing your families to see what they are signing up for, what they owe and to pay all in the same place makes registration a breeze for everyone.

Reason 4: Make reporting even easier!

Once you have your families registering online, all the data they enter is stored in the back end of your software. A good camp software will allow you to easily search, filter and find the information you need and allow you to create an infinite amount of reports for anyone you need. Accountants, counselors, food services, and beyond!

Reason 5: Communicate Better!

A quality software will allow you to set up timed and triggered emails for payment reminders, application completion reminders, payment invoicing and much more. Send emails to the people who need the message, when you need them to see it.

Communicating with families effectively will mean less time spent dealing with questions that could have easily been answered **with** an effective email and more time communicating meaningful with families.



Reason 6: Be professional!

For a camp, the registration process is your storefront. The first thing parents see is your website and your registration, not the camp itself, so you want to make a good first impression. If your system fails or doesn't work properly or is hard to navigate and figure out, that doesn't look so hot from the client's perspective, right? It can also make you look a bit outdated technologically and quite frankly, sloppy. Parents might think, if they can't get this together, what else can't they get together and consider moving on to somewhere else.

This eBook will take you through all the reasons why you need a camp registration software, how to use one, what features are most important and how to evaluate your options so you make the best choice for YOUR camp!

PART 1: COMMON CAMP REGISTRATION PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS



Finding the right software for your camp can be tough, but this eBook is here to help make the process of choosing a software that fits the needs of your camp a bit easier. You need to begin by asking yourself what the most common issues that come up during registration for your camp are and what software features you need to help address and solve those problems.

Remember: The goal of a software is to lower your workload, automate manual processes and provide a great experience for your users. From there, think of specific issues you face during registration and what you need that is specific for your camp.

While there is no one size fits all camp management solution, below are some common problems that camps often face with their registration and management, and how a software with that specific set of features can help solve those issues.

Consider whether these are relevant for your camp and use the logic provided to apply to your own specific issues to figure out what you need from a software to address your needs.



Problem 1: Spending too much time writing emails to families.

Communicating via email is how things are done these days, plain and simple. Parents are busy people and they rely on their phones to stay connected and updated on what they need to do. Email is the way most parents prefer to communicate since it is personal, they can save it if they need to act on it later and more than anything it allows them to take care of it when they have time (maybe they are with the kids right now).

This means you need to communicate with camp parents before, during and after camp via email. It also means that the emails need to be personal and specific. All this together turns email into a real time suck for you!

One of the main issues camps face is how to send out quality communication without having that single task being a full time job. So a solution to this problem is finding a software that automates this process as much as possible, without of course losing the personal touch of emailing your families.

You need a software that will offer you flexibility to set triggered emails and filter through your campers to send the right messages to the right people. With many different variables, a communication system needs to adapt to your specific set of data.

The solution to this problem is to look for a software that auto populates your camper's info into your emails. This basically means you need to find a software that allows you to personalize every email without having to write every single one. So things like name, camp sessions, due dates for items depending on when they are attending, specific product and payment information, etc is all included in the email so it looks personal for them but the same basic structure of every email is the same for everyone. So if you want to send a payment reminder to all campers who have an outstanding payment for a session beginning June 1, you can do that with a few clicks. Just filter that specific set of campers, select the email they are meant to receive and off it goes!

Another solution to this problem is automating a task that used to be done manually! A powerful filtering tool that lets you filter as specifically as you need to so your communication is targeted appropriately and you don't get emails and calls back from families still confused, despite the email you sent out as to

what they owe or what is expected of them. Automation should mean less work on your end, more time to do other things, more completed applications and more on time payments. Sounds like a pretty good deal!



Problem 2: Parents are spending too much time on your application, especially if they have more than 1 child.

The solution here is simple: Family registration! **Any software you use should include family registration so parents with multiple children can easily, and quickly, register their family for your camp.** No one likes to fill out forms, so why should a parent with 2 or more children have to suffer more than someone with 1! You want your registration process to be as quick and easy as possible, and you are looking for those families that are going to send more than one child to your camp. Those are your best clients!

For this reason you need to offer family registration. General information for the family can be entered at the family level and then just specific information for the each child is requested. The key to think about here is making sure a parent doesn't ever have to enter the same information twice. This will save them time and make them much happier to click the "pay now" button when they get to the end of your forms!



Problem 3: Campers returning from last year have to fill out registration all over again!

First of all, returning clients are never really a 'problem'. But it can be really annoying to fill out the same information year after year when that information can easily be repopulated into this year's application from last year. Remember: the key is always saving the registrant time. So auto populating kid's names, their address, and basic info (with the option to update it if any of that has changed) is always a good idea.

You need a great software that will allow parents to keep information that hasn't changed but also making sure they fill out new forms or forms that do need to be done yearly (like medical forms, etc). A system that allows you to set what should be auto-populated and what shouldn't be is your first need. This gives you full control over the information you are receiving and you ensure that you receive the most updated information from campers.





Problem 4: Keeping track of all that data you get from your amazing registration system!

Don't forget to consider the type of reporting tools you need for your camp and what the software you are looking at can provide in this area. Think about what reports you use now that you love, what you feel you are missing and what you could use to make it better! Then compare this list of needs with the types of reports the software offers you.

Having hundreds, if not more, campers is a lot of information to manage. Being able to really use and understand your data will allow your admin responsibilities to improve. A great filtering system that can generate any kind of report you can think of will keep you organized and allow you to optimally manage your camp.



Problem 5: Receiving payments and invoicing is a mess!

Getting payments in on time is always nice and most of the time, pretty much necessary for your camp's cash flow. **A camp registration software that includes a safe and secure integrated payment system is really the only way to go. If it includes the ability to offer payment plans and autobilling, even better!**

If you send parents to a 3rd party site for payment, or still accept checks in the mail (which is a filing nightmare!), you are stuck in the past. People are used to paying for things online and this method allows multiple payment methods, easy recording, simple invoicing and faster payments!

If your registration software includes a good quality communication function like discussed earlier, invoicing is also a breeze when charging online. **This is the way in which a camp software truly saves you time and money, making the cost of the system pay for itself and then some!** Getting paid on time, having correct payments made and cutting down on your admin time managing payments with families are the main benefits of moving online and charging online.

Beyond just the ability to accept and manage payments, a software should give you some great payment options that help automate and optimize your payments even more. Think: scheduled payments, payment plans, multiple payment options, automatic billing, personalized invoice and payment reminder emails, etc. Anything less is, frankly, not worth your time.



PART 2: APPLICATION GUIDE

Whether you do your application on paper, through a simple form online or with a registration software, there is a basic flow every application needs to have. The real goal when creating your camp's application is making sure it flows well, making sure you don't ask more than what you need (everyone hates filling out forms so make it as easy and brief as possible), while also making sure you are getting everything you need.



Every camp application needs the following parts:

Part 1: Guardian Information

Part 2: Camper(s) Information

Part 3: Session Selection w/dates

Part 4: Health Information + Forms

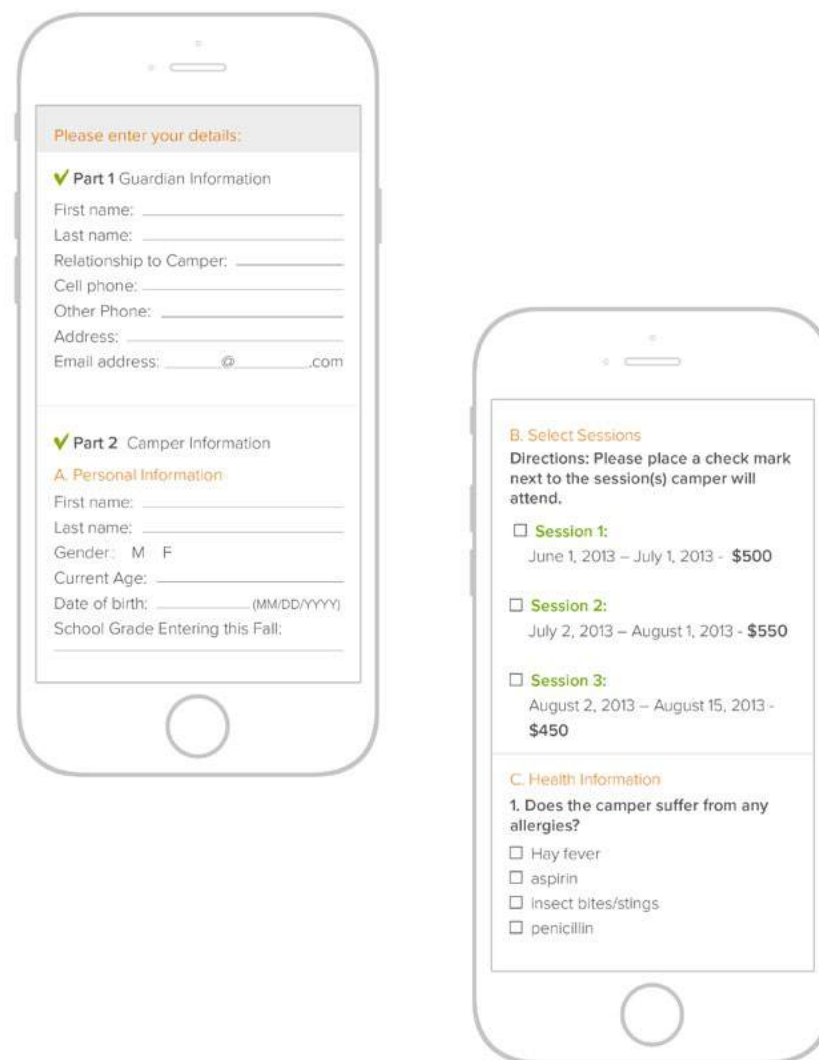
Part 5: Legal - Disclosures, Terms and Conditions, etc.

Part 6: Payment information - balance, due dates, how/where to pay.

We will look later in the eBook about how integrating payments into an online camp application really helps to streamline the process and make registration easy for everyone. Imagine if the application structure above involved multiple campers in the same family and a variety of sessions. Accurately adding up the total amount owed gets tricky on paper and getting paid on time, or even assigning accurate payment due dates if payments are split up, can become a nightmare! So can getting all the necessary signatures for all health and legal forms, and ensuring information accuracy.

Part 3 next will go into more detail about what to ask in your camp application and why each part, mentioned above, is so important.

Sample Camp Application Form:



Please enter your details:

✓ **Part 1** Guardian Information

First name: _____
 Last name: _____
 Relationship to Camper: _____
 Cell phone: _____
 Other Phone: _____
 Address: _____
 Email address: _____@_____.com

✓ **Part 2** Camper Information

A. Personal Information

First name: _____
 Last name: _____
 Gender: M F
 Current Age: _____
 Date of birth: _____ (MM/DD/YYYY)
 School Grade Entering this Fall: _____

B. Select Sessions

Directions: Please place a check mark next to the session(s) camper will attend.

☐ **Session 1:**
 June 1, 2013 – July 1, 2013 - \$500

☐ **Session 2:**
 July 2, 2013 – August 1, 2013 - \$550

☐ **Session 3:**
 August 2, 2013 – August 15, 2013 - \$450

C. Health Information

1. Does the camper suffer from any allergies?

☐ Hay fever
☐ aspirin
☐ Insect bites/stings
☐ penicillin



PART 3: WHAT TO ASK IN YOUR CAMP APPLICATION

When you are looking to move from paper to online, or from a subpar online registration software to a great one – it might seem like just transferring the questions you have from one system to the other will work just fine. But sadly, this isn't the case. The pro of a having a great registration software is that it can help streamline and optimize what isn't working in your current system and often that means the way in which you are asking questions and gathering information.

So, given that, what should you be asking in your camp application? Below are the basics that you are hopefully already asking but should be in case you aren't.

Guardian Information

Make sure you aren't just asking about your camper or campers in the application. More often than not, parents are filling out all the forms so make sure you make it clear what information you are asking. Camper name vs. Parent name, and gather all the information you need about the parents including address, phone numbers, emails etc since this might differ slightly from this same information on the camper.



Terms and Conditions

You most likely have something like this, but make sure it's up to date and covers all of your legal bases. Terms and conditions is broad, as it can include health declaration, or any general "Camp Rules" form that you'd like parents and campers to sign.

The great thing about an online registration software is the ability to E-sign documents. Yes, this is legal! And a great way to get legal and medical issues handled within your registration process.



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the title 'Regpack'. The main heading is 'SIGN AN AGREEMENT' in green. Below it is an 'E-sign' section. There are two radio buttons: the first is selected and labeled 'Agree and Go to Next step', and the second is labeled 'I Disagree'. At the bottom left of the section is a link that says 'Skip this step' in red. At the bottom right is a green button that says 'GO TO NEXT STEP'. The Regpack logo is in the bottom right corner of the form area.

Easy Payment Options

I would advise, and we'll discuss this later in the eBook, to include a payment solution within your registration software. This will seriously improve your on time payment rate and frankly is professional, easy and hassle free.

However, if you don't offer a payment solution online and within your process, make sure it is easy to calculate what the parent owes and how they can pay. Often with choosing different sessions, food packages, etc. the pricing can be confusing so make sure to make it simple, and make it obvious how to pay their final bill (via check, credit card form, etc.) process.

Common Mistakes in Camp Applications

Now that we've reviewed what to include in your application, now we focus on what you shouldn't do when putting together your camp application. **The bottom line here is go online, but just to be thorough, here's an elaboration on that point!**

Don't ask people to mail in an application, or anything for that matter!

Really folks, paper applications are the worst! And they are more common than you think. When done right, they are fine. But too often they aren't done right. People misplace them, they fill it out and mail it but then don't send you the check, you can't read their

handwriting, you input the information incorrectly into your excel doc, and on and on. Please, go online! And no, that doesn't mean upload a PDF of your application and allow people to fill it out, print it and mail it in. Get online FOR REAL!

Less is always more.

People don't like filling out forms. So, they spend the least amount of time actually doing it. Remember this when putting together your application. They will not read a long instruction list, or really much of anything. So make sure your application questions make sense, have easy to answer questions and flow well.

Ask only what you need to ask and nothing more! Clear and detailed instructions win every time. The less confusion you create with your application, the more people will complete and pay!

A online registration system gives you the edge up in this case as it can customize the process for each individual camper. It will ask the questions that make sense for that applicant to make the process unique, easy and quick! For example, if a parent answers that their child has no medical conditions, then all the questions related to medication, problems, doctor info, etc will be irrelevant and won't even show up! Less confusion, less time. And I bet the parent who does have a kid with medical conditions

is schooled in what questions to expect and how to answer, so this part will be a breeze for them too.

Don't send your applicants away from your site for payment.

This was touched on earlier, but it always bears repeating. What if you were at a store and when you were ready to pay they sent you across the street for payment? Or asked you to go home and mail a check back. That would sound pretty ridiculous right?

An integrated payment system is a must have feature for any camp management software. Once a parent is in the groove of completing your application, don't ruin the mood by making payment an issue. Have the amount owed easily viewable and understood, and offer a big button that says "PAY NOW!" and watch the cash roll in.

Don't communicate poorly!

Not only does the way in which you communicate information to parents say something about your business and your customer service, it's also smart business on your end. If you communicate well with parents about registration (and about everything really) you will see more on time applications completed and faster payment, will abandon the process!

An online registration system will allow you to automate communication so you spend less time doing it and more time on other important stuff all while parents have an easy time completing your forms and paying you!

A software that will send out triggered emails, for example when someone makes a payment they automatically get an email with an invoice and confirmation, is an invaluable resource. Sending emails to hundreds of campers that are personalized but that only take you a few clicks to send, amazing! A business tool you need in your tool box for sure.

People like to be kept in the loop about things, so when they do an action with you (complete a form, make a payment, have an upcoming deadline), they like to know what's up. Think of your automated communication as a challenge to have NO ONE need to call or email you to ask a question about their status because they will have received timely and informative emails at the right time from you the entire process.

Communication really is the registration process itself, as with a great registration system with great features I'll mention in a second, you are communicating effectively as the parent moves through your process. A progress bar as the parent moves through the process communicates how long until they are finished, and using red and green to show forms that are complete and incomplete communicate what else is left for the parent to complete and serve as a call to action (i.e. clicking on the incomplete form will take them to the form to complete). Triggered emails that go out with a link to what is missing - a form, payment, signature, etc communicate to the parent exactly what is needed.

This type of communication built into your registration software helps to automate this communication on your behalf to your parents, so that registration goes smoothly and you don't waste your time on answering questions or troubleshooting the application for each child because your process isn't making it clear what is due, what is expected, etc.



Don't forget that your registration process is a part of your brand.

Most paper applications include your camp logo and maybe even some of your camp colors. This same idea goes with your online application as well. Make sure that the look and feel of your website carries over into the application, as this is not only professional but helps make everything flow. It might sound weird, but it's true.

If your applicants move from your website to your registration page and they look like totally different spaces, it could foster distrust or insecurity, since they know they will be giving over sensitive information and payment details.

Creating consistency with your brand is not a new idea, but something that businesses often forget. A great feature of a registration software beyond being able to meld with your brand - coloring, logos, etc is to just embed directly into your website!

This makes things seamless, when a parent is on your main page and clicks "Register Now!" they are just taken to another page on your website, not to a 3rd party site. For the same reason sending a parent to a 3rd party site to pay can lose that sale and lowers the trust the user has with your business, the same goes for sending them to another website for your application.

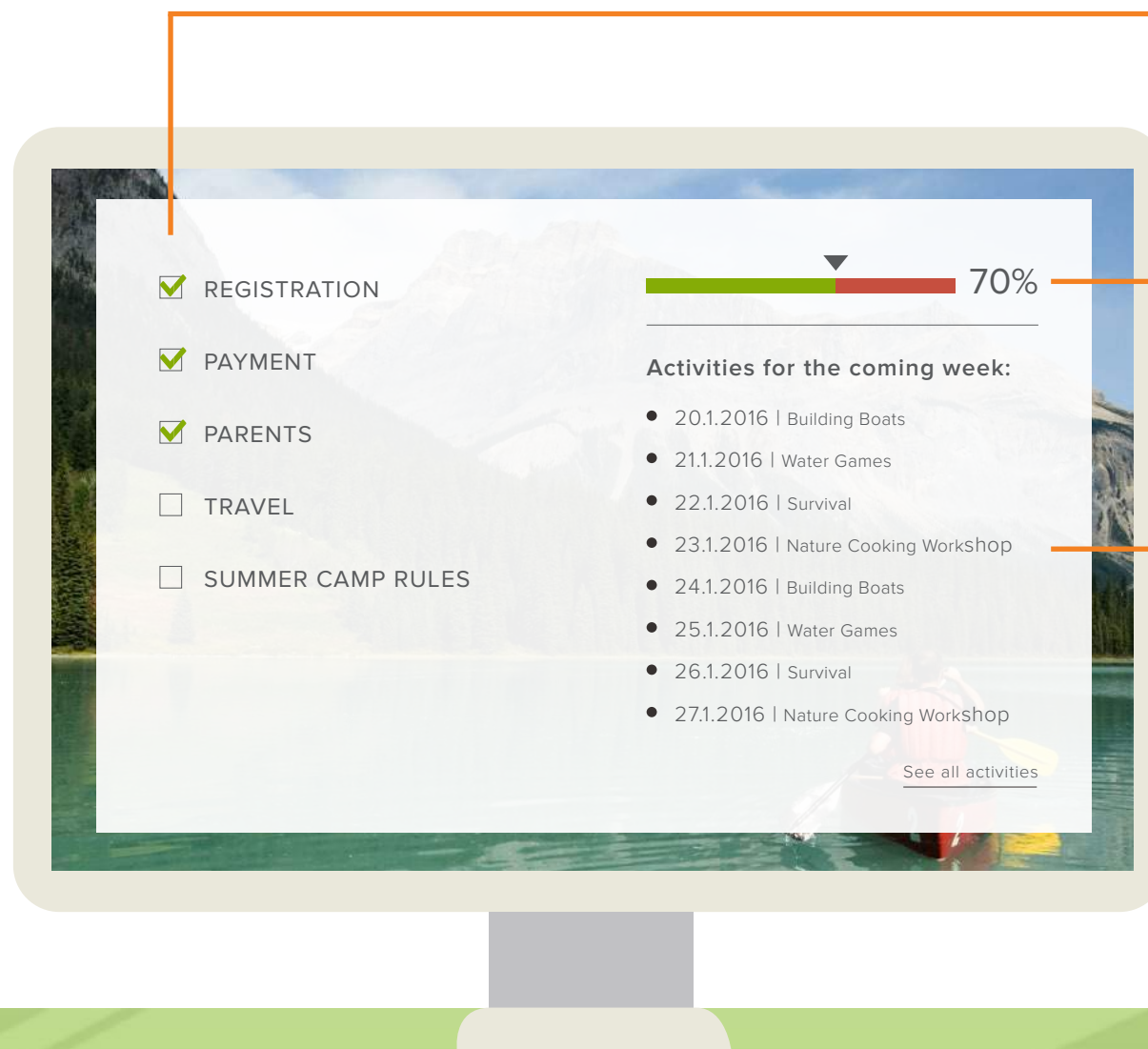
Don't ignore creating a beautiful and functional space online.

While continuing with the theme of continuity of your brand – colors, logo, etc. we will look at the actual style of your application and how making the right choices can optimize your process even more.

Presentation and functionality are key for both the look and feel of your application as well as within the application itself. Consider creating a dashboard space that shows an easy to view status update is a great way to start.



Some features of a dashboard might include:



Check marks next to the completed sections and links to return to each page for review. Same goes for incomplete sections.

A progress bar showing how much the applicant has completed, or has left to complete. Using red and green colors here is great too!

Dates and important deadlines relevant to that specific camper bolded and easy to find on the page so the parent knows what is expected.



PART 4: MANAGING EMAIL COMMUNICATION WITH YOUR REGISTRATION SOFTWARE.

Many of our clients enjoy our email communication functionality because it's really where the cost of a system pays them back in less work and less headaches when it comes to communicating information and keeping in touch with parents.

A camp management software that does not give you easy email capabilities that fit your needs should be passed on immediately!

A system that easily allows you to filter and find the campers you want to send specific emails to is even better! It allows you to target your communication so emails about completing

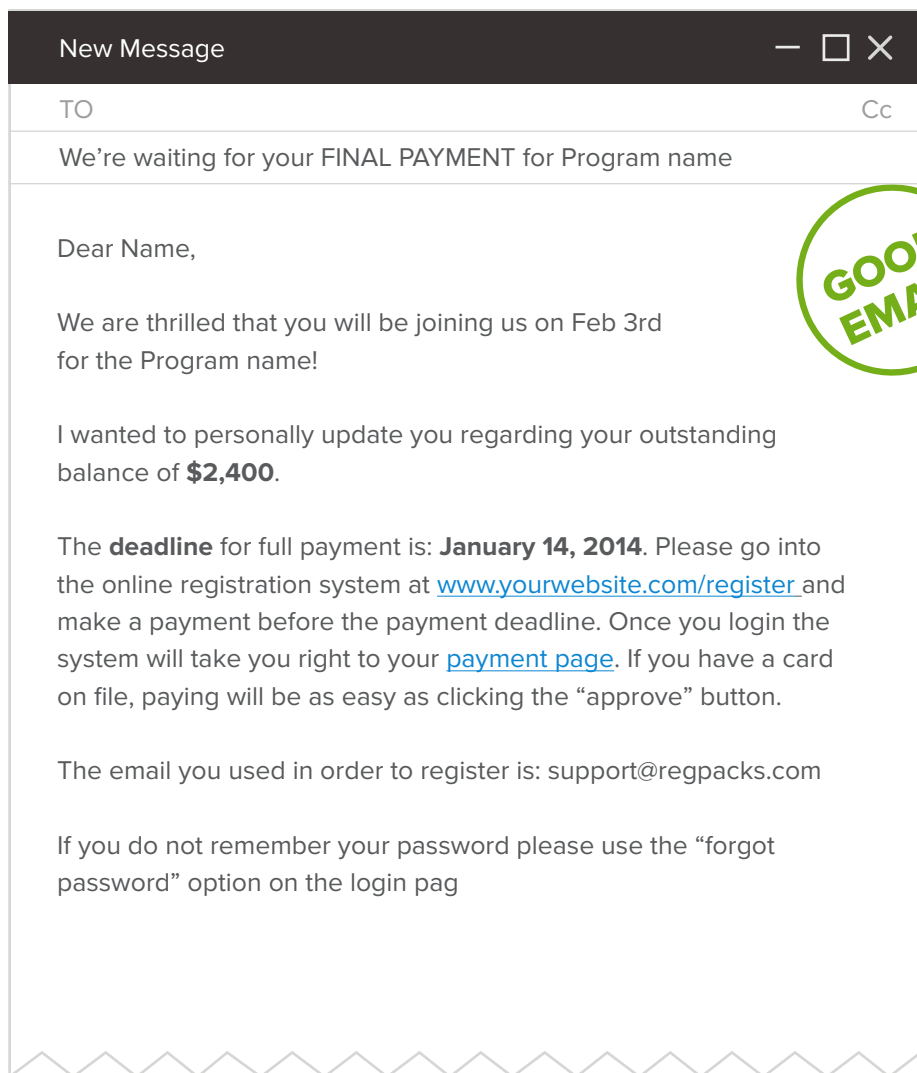
payments aren't sent to the entire session 1 group, but only to those in session 1 with outstanding payments. This cuts down on confusion and those inevitable calls from parents asking why they got an email about payment when they thought they paid in full already!

A system that allows you to view this information (in our example above, who hasn't paid for a specific session) is indispensable. It's no fun to use an excel spreadsheet and go line by line to find who hasn't paid, what they owe, write individual emails or worse, copy paste one generic "please pay" email and then respond to everyone with what they owe when they of course email you asking what their balance is. **Why waste your valuable time when camp software can automate this all for you!?**

So, how can camp management software improve your communication?

A system that allows you to filter and find the data you need to then send a specific message to is great. Be sure your software allows you to then auto populate each recipient's information into the email. Going with our previous example of Session 1 campers who have an outstanding balance, once you have that list, the email that goes out shouldn't be generic, even though you are targeting specific people instead of all of session 1.

Example of a GREAT Registration Emails



The email should include the name of the person receiving it,

their actual balance, including what they have paid thus far and how much they owe, what they owe for (if you have a breakdown of costs like deposit, extra case, extra activities, etc) and when it's all due by. The goal of this email is that the parent reading it will know EXACTLY what is expected of them, how much they owe, how they can pay and when they have to do it all by. You want there to be NO need for them to hit reply to your email or call you because it's clear what's up.

Tips on writing effective emails.

1. You should always try to keep emails and messages as simple as possible!

People receive and read emails on their phone, iPad, etc. Don't weigh your email down with lots of unnecessary information, weird graphics, etc. Your intention of the email is to get them to understand why you sent it (payment due, due date for forms, general information, etc), understand if there is an action item (i.e. make a payment) and how they can go about doing what you want them to do.

A clear and concise email with easy to spot dates, amounts and links is your ticket to winning at emails! The recipient should be able to skim your email and understand what it's about and what they need to do, if anything. **Most people won't read your emails in full, so keep that in mind when you're putting it together.**

2. Personalize the email!

It was mentioned above but deserves a spot on this list to be thorough. Make sure you personalize the email as much as possible. Dear NAME, specific payment amounts, due dates for the sessions they are signed up for and not a list of every session and it's due dates (this will not be relevant for everyone!) and their login information if applicable as a reminder of their email so they can login faster.

New Message

Dear First Name,

Thank you for registering to the Program Title program!

We're writing to let you know that you have not yet completed the registration process and are missing a few important items. Below are the forms you still have left to complete:

- Participant Information
- Parent/Guardian Information
- Medical Questionnaire for Parents
- Passport Information
- Allergy Information Form
- Insurance Beneficiary Designation Form
- You have already completed the following forms (thanks!):
- Behavioral Health Form
- Public Transportation Form



At your earliest convenience, please [log in](#) to your application. I would like to remind you that registration closes on **January 15, 2014** and incomplete applicants will not be considered.

Just as a reminder, the email address you used to login with is: support@regpacks.com.

If you do not remember your password, please feel free to use the "forgot password" option present in the login page.

Please feel free to contact us (by replying to this email) if you have any questions.

Best,
The Project Team

Don't spam your users!

Just because you have a great camp management software that automates your emails doesn't mean you can now send ALL.THE.EMAILS. People don't want or need anything more than the bare bones. More emails doesn't mean more people paying on time and finishing their applications. One or two effective emails can do this without sending messages every other day. Doing this will only annoy parents and also make you look a bit sloppy.



The Personal Touch

Keep in mind despite all the business like tactics that are going into your emails and automation, that you are still YOU. Even though you should be writing short, concise and action specific emails, it doesn't mean your voice has to be lost in the mix of all of this. You don't have to write "Dear Joe" if you feel like SHOUTING "HOWDY JOE!". Keep your emails personal, fun and 'you'.

Setting up all of this - triggered emails, templates, etc might take a little bit of time, it in no way compares to the time you might already be wasting using an ineffective process. Utilizing a great communication system with an online management software as well as tools like visual cues throughout the application process and good branding and consistency of look between your website, online application, etc, you are definitely on track to communicate effectively with your campers! And this my friends, saves you time and saves your sanity.

The goal of these time saving tools and using an efficient management software is so that you now have the time to work on more important and meaningful communication with your families and more time to developing, improving and working on your camp!



PART 5: EFFORTLESS REPORTING WITH YOUR ONLINE REGISTRATION SOFTWARE

Reporting for camps is essential. You need to be able to use your data effectively by passing along the right information to a variety of staff members. A software should include awesome reporting functions that let you put your lists and documents together. Usually a quality software will allow you to create and produce many reports in a small amount of time. **The efficiency of a software that automatically filters, finds and exports data can't compare to filtering and sorting through an excel document and copying and pasting data, then creating the report so it's readable and so on, is priceless.**

But what kind of reporting features exist and what should your software include in order to automate this process and be more efficient? This part will look at static vs. dynamic reports and how you can be using your reports to the fullest!

Static vs. Dynamic Reports

Instead of just thinking of a report as a list of information, for example: Name, age, session, and emergency contact information. A static report is just that, a specific set of information (all those points) and “ran” for a specific date range or for all campers in a specific session. Instead of thinking about this report as your “emergency contact report”, think of this report as a template of information that is put together in a specific way. You can create an emergency contact report for any set of data units - people from specific countries, states, etc. All campers coming for just 1 session, all campers coming for **multiple sessions**.

The options are endless with a great software. If you think about reports dynamically you have a powerful method of creating an infinite amount of reports with infinite amounts of data. A static structure of reporting is unchanging but dynamic reports change according to the information you are seeking in any given moment.



So what does a good report look like?

Depending on what you are looking for and what kind of data you are looking at, a report can be charts, rows and columns of text, graphs, or a list of monetary figures. If you are using financial data, you can create a report on one session of camp, the money you have earned so far for this session and the money that is still outstanding. You can create graphs of monthly or quarterly income and expenses covering all sessions. If you transport campers in any way, you can create reports for the person in charge of coordinating transportation with arrival information, address information, etc. A bunk counselor coordinating placement can receive a report with a breakdown of boys and girls, ages, any special needs, etc. The options are truly endless!

How do dynamic reports or “views” benefit you?

Views just mean the sets of information you need for different purposes. Views allows you to run reports on any set of data you can think of. For example, you can do a food allergy report for all campers coming in session 1. Or all campers coming for multiple sessions. Or all campers coming in every session throughout the summer. You can easily create this report and send it over to the food coordinator so they can produce the right type of food at the right times.

The ability to generate dynamic reports are invaluable, especially when they demand a small amount of time on your end to produce. This allows you to get the right information to the right people, and also have time leftover to focus on other demanding tasks you have on your plate. An intelligent registration and management software with a dynamic applicant database makes filtering, finding and generating quality reports easy!



Is there a difference between a “normal” report and a multi-dimensional report?

The difference is similar to static and dynamic reports, with a small difference. A normal report is flat, basically like one huge excel document with all of your data plugged in. Someone looking for a certain type of data has to search through everything to get what they need. This is the most common kind of report I see of many camps who aren’t using a good registration software. This type of report gets messy, and fast. Which document is the most recently saved, has the most updated information, etc?

Flat reports aren’t a big deal when you aren’t dealing with a ton of information. They still aren’t ideal, but they can be functional. But I’m not sure I’ve met a camp that has just a little bit of information so a powerful filtering feature and report generator is kind of a big deal for camps. If you have more information than can fit in a regular view of excel (without having to scroll one way or another) a flat report just won’t cut it.

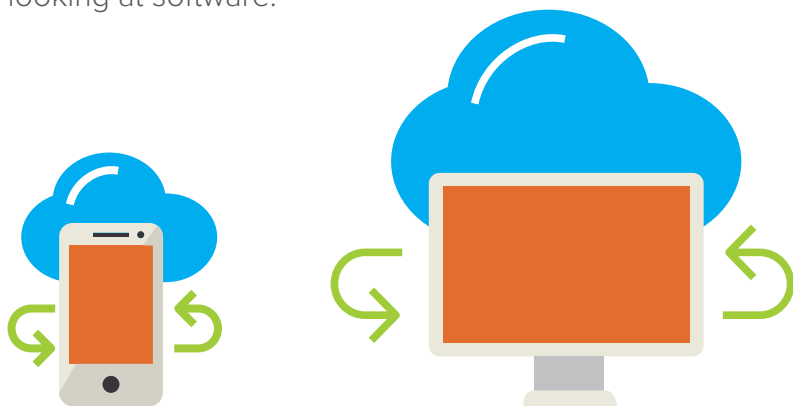
A multidimensional report is a report created with a great database with information that is on demand. You get the data you need without all the data you don’t. You have the ability to group sets of data and user information together according to whatever parameters you need and set. Think about how much your accounting department will love you when you give the cost breakdowns for every session, the entire summer, breakdown by session, every applicant, etc.

The whole point of a powerful system that gives dynamic and multidimensional reports is to save you time and to ensure the essential information is getting to the right people so they can do their jobs as best as possible.

What specific reporting features should I keep an eye out for when evaluating camp management software?

1. The ability to run reports from anywhere.

This means having access to your data all the time. How does this happen? When your data is stored in the cloud as opposed to a server located in your office. The ability to access your data and run any number of reports while at home, on the train or on site is invaluable. Besides for reporting, data stored in the cloud vs. other options is always a great idea and a feature to consider when looking at software.



2. The ability to run reports on any set of data.

As discussed above, you should be able to run a report with any parameters you want or need. You should be able to choose any set of data and run a report with any other set of data and create an endless amount of reports. The software should also allow you to export in a variety of formats, including excel, PDF and allow you to create charts and graphs easily.

3. The ability to take reports and turn them into stats and action items.

Being able to use your data to run statistics and learn more about your business and process is a way the cost of software pays for itself! Use reporting to see your income month by month to stay on top of your growth. Run reports on filters you've already created to see how your information changes over time.

You can also use reporting and statistics features to judge your marketing. Where are your leads coming from? If you are spending money on Facebook ads but you have virtually no leads from Facebook - stop wasting that money!

You can also use reporting as a Q&A tool for your application process. What parts of your application are working? Which aren't? You can achieve this by tracking user actions and learning about your users in order to improve your process.

Reporting is an important and often overlooked aspect of your business. Having the ability to gain a clear picture of your business and learn from it is invaluable. Being able to sum up your data and see it in action can ease the burden of how you can make sense of all the information you have at once.

With all the data I have, won't the reports I run also be huge and overwhelming, even if they are dynamic?

Remember: less is more. The point of a report is to take away the burden of the reader from sifting through mounds of information and giving them only what they need. You need to create a report that is digestible so remember that less is always more. How can you filter and present the data that will give the answer to the question the report is answering.

In some cases, analyzing your digestible data and providing a 1-3 sentence summary helps the report become even more effective and relevant to the recipient if you feel the amount of data even in your 'less is more' report seems like a lot.

For example, if you have a report about income from the previous session you might have tons of campers and therefore lots of names and numbers. Total it up and at the top write "In

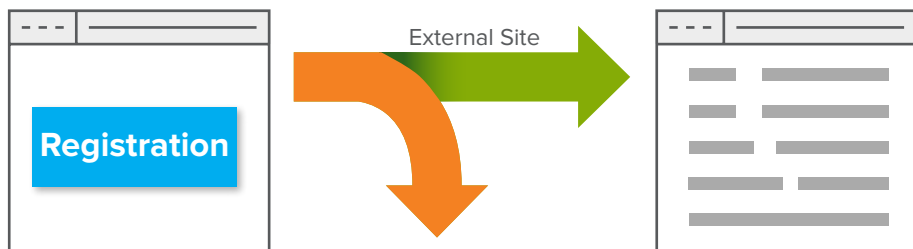
Session A from 6-1-2015 to 8-1-2015, earnings were \$100,000; expenses were \$50,000, for a total NET PROFIT of \$50,000." This way the reader understands the final point of the report and then has the data to back it up that they can sift through themselves.

Having a database that produces reports in real time with up to date information is always going to achieve the 'less is more' goal because it's the most accurate information you can provide. You aren't just creating and sending reports using the best information, but it's tailor made for your specific criteria. With an intelligent and flexible database you can order up a list of campers for a certain time period or who have some criteria you want to know about. From that list you can filter it again to receive more specific data you need, like their email addresses. From there, generate a new report with a different set of information - those continuing on to another session, those doing specific extra activities. Whatever you want! **This kind of flexibility allows you to put together amazing and varied amounts of reports for your team. Better reporting leads to better communication with campers, parents and your staff.**



PART 6: REGISTRATION PAYMENTS AND BILLING

The best way to boost your payment rate and see more on time payments is by choosing a management software that integrates payments into the process. You do NOT want a payment page to redirect to a new website, outside of your process.



27%

of people will leave the registration process when it's on an external site!

The real point of integrating the payment into the process is to keep the process simple and streamlined. If the user is redirected, it can be confusing and a certain amount of trust is lost. Integrating into your website also means that sending invoices and payment reminders is much easier.

Sending Payment Invoices

If you've already chosen a camp management software that has create email communication tools, this part is easy! Sending strategically timed payment reminder emails helps close the deal with parents who haven't paid yet and thorough and straightforward payment invoice emails after completed payments keep parents in the know as to the status of their application.

Below are two great examples of a payment request email and a payment invoice email.



Example of a Payment Invoice Email :

New Message

To

Cc

Thank you for your payment for Program name of \$350

Dear Joe,

Thank you for registering for Program name!

We have received your payment for \$350 that you submitted on date. The payment has been authorized and approved.

This is your current order:

Name	Price	Status
domestic flight	\$450	Paid
Application Fee > Application Fee	\$100	Paid
Program Fee > Program Fee	\$2,410	Outstanding

Your overall order is: \$2,960 Please note that items are considered paid only when they are paid in full. If there is a balance remaining, the cost of the item will be presented as “outstanding”.

This is your payment history:

GOOD EMAIL

Trans ID	Method	Date	Amount	Status
44768	Cash	Tue, 11.6.12	\$100	approved
54044	Check	Fri, 3.1.13	\$100	approved
65619	Grant	Wed, 5.22.13	\$1,000	approved
74305	Credit card	Tue, 7.23.13	\$1,155	approved
76175	Refund	Thu, 8.8.13	\$-100	refund
87694	Credit card	Mon, 12.16.13	\$350	approved

Your current balance is: \$355

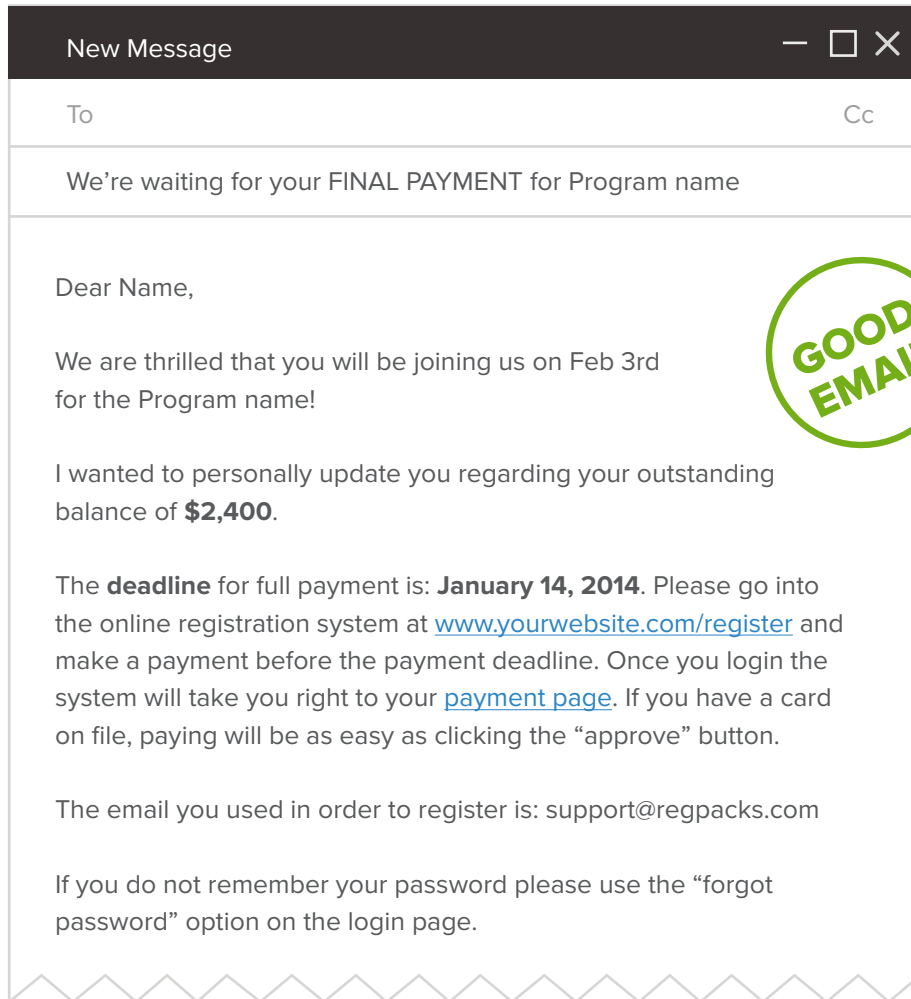
If you wish to close your balance now, please go login to your account through our online registration system at www.yourwebsite.com/register and make a payment.

The Deadline for final payment is: January 10, 2014!

Please make sure not to miss the date. You can also view in your account your current balance by going to “My Payments” from the main account page. The email you used in order to register is: clientname@gmail.com If you do not remember your password please use the “forgot password” option on the login page. The system will send you an email with instructions on how to reset your password.

If you have any questions or just want to chat, feel free to reply to this email :-)

Example of a Payment Request Email:



What's great about these emails is they are personalized and detailed. Name, session information, balance due, exact payments paid with numbers are visible and links to make a payment or view your dashboard are easy to find.

You don't want to keep your parents guessing as to who, what, where, when, why of payments. Confusion slows down the process and prevents you from getting paid on time! Regpack clients have seen:



Faster payments
by 15-30 days!



35% more payments, as
compared to offline transactions.

Scheduled Payments and Payment Plans

A great software will allow you to easily offer scheduled payments, automatic billing and payment plans to parents.

With the high cost of camp these days, some parents don't feel comfortable or simply can't afford to pay their full bill all in one shot. If an alternative plan isn't offered, they might put off payment until they gather the funds, which sometimes works without you nagging them but most often results in you nagging them and getting paid at the last second.

Why go through this with all of your campers!? Set up the payment plans that work for your business in terms of cash flow and then allow parents to set it up while they are registering. The payment plans should charge automatically, and send an email after every transaction, so this shouldn't be any more work for you or the parent than if they had paid in full. This solution means you get paid more money faster and on time in the end, without any effort on anyone's part. Parents don't have to remember payment deadlines and you don't have to spend time reminding them!

Do I really need to offer online payments? It's expensive and seems complicated!

Yes, you do. The cost to process payments online is less than the money you are losing both in business and in the time of your employees facilitating the payment issues and process manually. Offering payments online also allows your camp to be 'open' 24/7.

Payments can be made any time, invoices are sent automatically and multiple methods are available to ensure payments can be made easily by parents without issue.

Online payments also means easier accounting for you and your staff. Easily view your income and balances still owed so you can focus on important tasks that can't be automated!

Plus, let's not forget the real reason to use online payments - it's easier! People love the easier option. It's easier to input your credit card info, which many know by heart anyway, than it is to go get your checkbook, write a check, put it in an envelope, find a stamp, take it to the mailbox, and hope that all the info is on the check so you can match the check to the camper! Whew, I'm tired just typing that. But seriously, online payments is better for your clients!



PART 7: PARENT AND CAMPER EVALUATIONS

So now you've moved your paper or mediocre online registration process to a great camp management software. Awesome! Yay! Why then, are you not utilizing it to conduct your camp evaluations!? It seems like a no brainer when it's said, but many camps who are using a great software are still using paper for evaluations.

I can almost guarantee that paper isn't doing for you what your software could be doing for you! Sure you get some responses back and often times they are enlightening and helpful. Get the most out of this feedback to make positive changes to your camp and improve upon some aspects that are clearly not a hit with everyone.

The first benefit to using your registration software for evaluations is that it's just easier. The second benefit is, you will most likely get way more responses than you ever had before. And the third, is all the benefits, which will be highlighted below, to using what data you gather to benefit your camp.

Evaluations through your software are easier!

With a great system that allows you to create forms easily and in any format you want, with the added bonus of a communication system that can easily personalize and send out emails to every camper and their families, is a cinch. **Don't create a form, print it, mail it or hand it out and expect a ton of response. Too many steps! Send out an email, with a link and watch the responses pour in!**

You can also do fun things with the software that will help you get the most out of evaluations. For example, make sure the software saves each answer immediately so if the parent abandons the process in the middle, you still have the questions they did answer on record.

The forms can also pre populate with the camper's and parent's information to make the process easier and quicker for the person filling it out. The session they attended, counselor they were assigned and any other relevant information can be added automatically to make the process flow. If you want your

evaluations to be anonymous, then make sure things like session dates and counselor information is there so you can connect the comments to the right staff.

What should I ask?

If you already like the questions you're asking, then just translate it appropriately, with the help of your account manager, to an online space. If you haven't created one before or are looking for some fresh ideas, below is a list of questions to consider.

Start with wide scale questions, for example questions that can be answered 'on a scale of 1-10' or "Strongly agree - agree - neutral - disagree - strongly disagree". A question like "My child liked his counselor" should be a scale of 1-10 instead of "Yes or No" since it will give you a better tool to compare your counselors and compare the feeling campers had for their leaders. You can consider for these questions, to offer a text box for more information if answers are below 3 or above 7, to learn more about why they loved or hated their counselors. You can use your software here to make the process quick and unique for everyone. They will only see this additional question if their answer is below or above the limits you set. If it's below, you can have a statement like, "We're sorry you didn't like your counselor. Can you explain why?". This helps make the process more personal and will garner you more honest feedback.

Here are some examples of Yes/No and wide scale questions.

- Was this your first session at camp?
- How was your registration experiences?
- How would you rate your child's experience?
- How does your child rate their experience?
- Did you like our staff?
- Do you feel you got what you paid for?
- Where did you learn about our camp? (Give set of answers plus an other option so you can target this for marketing!)

You can move towards more lengthy answer type questions or mix it up with some simple yes and no. You want to aim for an evaluation that will reasonably only take 5 minutes, maybe more if you have a parent who likes to give feedback in the text boxes, but if not, the answers to the questions will still give you what you need to know to grow. Remember some of the questions you might want more of an answer if they answer a certain way like if they answer "no" to "Did you like our staff" open the opportunity for them to explain more.

If you have several yes/no and wide scale questions, make sure to throw in 1-3 questions at the end that are text based. These are optional but give you some of that personal feedback to read

through with information you don't always get from the other type of questions.

- How can we improve your experience for next year?
- What was your favorite part of camp? Least favorite?
- Would you recommend us to other families?
Why or why not.

What can I do with my data?

The data you collect through evaluations can produce tons of statistics you never knew you could get before!

For example, if you want to evaluate your counselors, you can easily filter through your evaluation data by counselor and by which questions you want to know the answer to for THAT counselor. Create an evaluation report on each counselor to easily read over and present to each counselor, or to use during a meeting with them to recap the summer. These results will also help you rank your counselors and decide who is doing a great job and should stick around and who might be a problem.

If you are always looking to add new activities or want to know how a new program went this summer, easily see the popularity of certain events or programs based on the responses from parents and their kids.



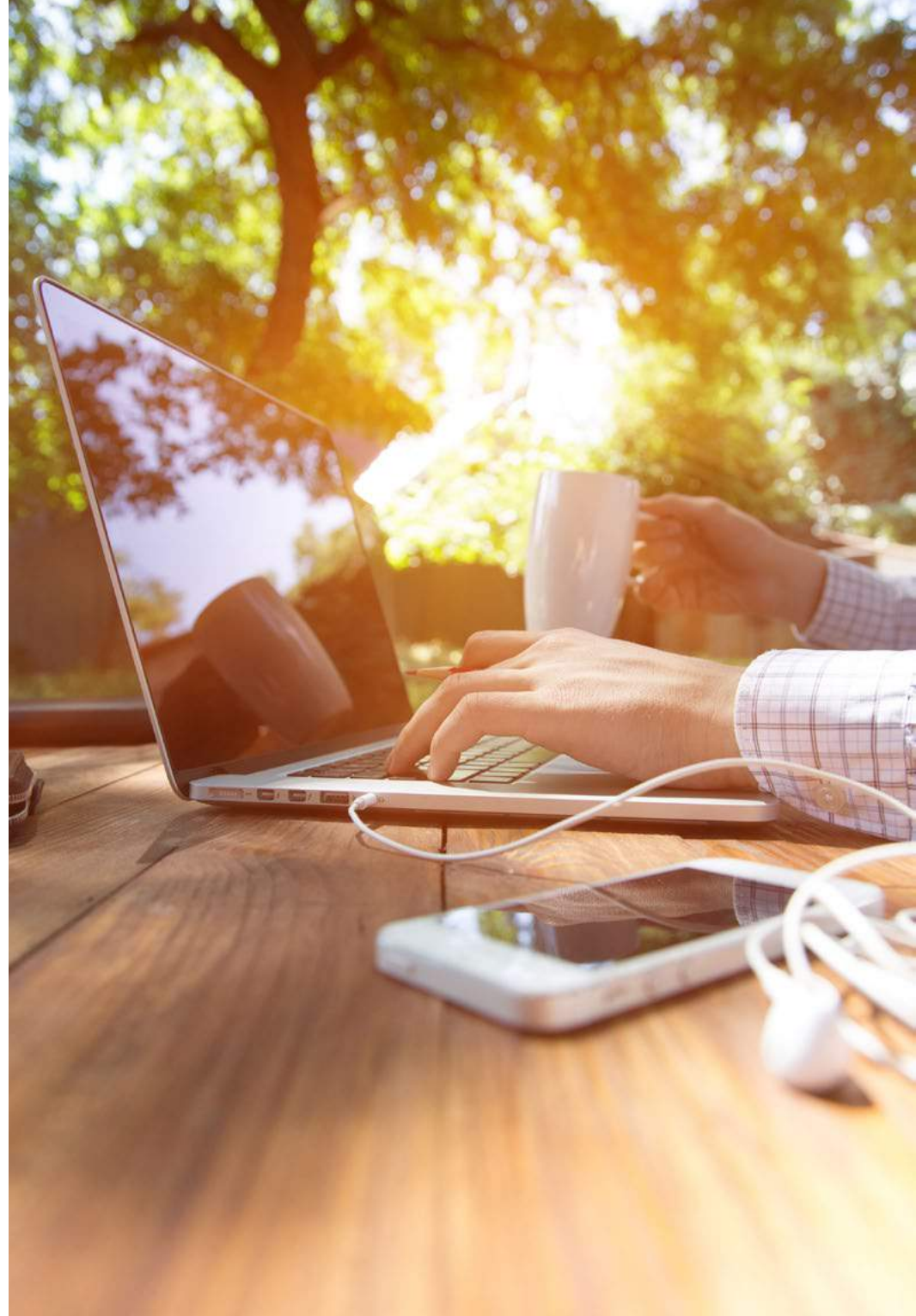
If you ask in your evaluation where the parent heard about the camp, you now have great marketing information to move forward with your marketing plan for next summer. If everyone came from your Facebook ads and your ad in the local school district flier, but not from your Google Ads, save your google money and redirect it where you are getting more results. **There is no way to get this information unless you a. ask for it, and b. can easily understand the data you get in.**



PART 8: USING YOUR SOFTWARE IN THE LOW SEASON

When you think of your camp registration software, you think an active process for registering campers leading up to summer. But did you know, your camp software can act as a sales platform to help you manage your data, design your future marketing strategy and help you better prepare for your next summer?

You collect a ton of information during registration, and the possibilities with what you can do with the data is endless! Besides just saving it to roll over to your next registration season, you can capitalize on the information you've received and make it work for you.



What do you do with all the information you've collected?

Using the filtering function in your registration software is the best tool you have! Once you've collected information about your campers, and families, you can use it to understand how your camp performed, target specific groups of parents to connect with, and lock in your families year after year.

Using your software's email tools also plays a huge role. Here are a few scenarios on how to use your camp software to complete your onboarding:



Target parents that started, but never completed their applications by sending them an email inviting them to finish the process. Email them to check out what you are offering next summer to encourage them to come back. This group of users is a sales opportunity that shouldn't be missed!



Filter parents who have answered a question in your application about camp sessions they'd like to see in the future. You can generate a list of ideas from this information to improve your camp options for next year. Essentially, you can evaluate what campers and their parents loved, what they want to see, and what people didn't like so much to grow and improve for the future. (See Part 7 above for more on using your software for evaluations).



Use your software's timestamp and recent actions tools to see which parents haven't logged in a while and create an email promotion to reengage with them.



Offer automated discounts for doing more business with you. This includes early bird and late bird pricing.

Camp Software as a Complete Sales Platform

Your camp registration software is really a long terms sales solution for your camp. Your software should not just collect information for you, but give you access to a backend to really work with and manage your data.

When you think about registration as a way to gather all the data you need to improve your marketing and grow your camp, you can see how your registration software plays a vital role as a sales platform.

When will I have time to do all of these great things?

Your low season is the best time to do this! You finally have a chance to breathe and relax. You are probably reading this eBook in your low season because you finally have the time! **Often times, camps assume that their registration software isn't needed during their low season since they aren't "registering" anyone. When you understand that your**

registration software is also a sales tool, your off season is THE time to evaluate your past events, make changes, reach out to families and design a fresh marketing strategy going forward.

Your low season is an opportunity to:

- Deal with finances and address any missing payment issues.
- Generate statistics from the previous session to learn more!
- Understand who your audience is - if you are a camp and had a large number of 8th graders this year, next year that means you will have a large amount of high school students next summer - PLAN FOR THIS IN ADVANCE!
- See which programs were full, which weren't and then adjust your schedule for NEXT year based on turnout and feedback THIS year.
- Email parents with information on upcoming events and programs, new offerings, etc. Basically, keep them in the loop. Forget email marketing software - simplify your processes and use one platform for it all!
- Optimize your forms and questions on your application. Ensure you are asking all the questions you want and getting the information you need. Make sure to include where they heard about you (so you can evaluate your outreach), what they want to see more from you (so you can tailor your offerings to what campers actually want and will register for), etc.

The goal of any paid software is to get the most out of it for the money spend on it. Understanding that registration software provides much more than registration management will allow you to get the most out of your software. Not only that, you will improve connection and communication with clients and use feedback to enrich your camp and understand what you're getting right, and where there is room to improve.





AFTER CONCLUSION: WHY SHOULD YOUR REGISTRATION PROCESS BE ONLINE?

If the answer isn't clear already after this entire eBook, or if you're like me and skimmed over each section and came here to get to the meat of things, there are **FOUR** reasons why, **YES**, your camp should be using an online registration process.

Reason 1: It's cost effective!

Yes of course, a software costs money. More money than making your own application and sending it off to parents or allowing them to download a PDF online. That work's just fine for our needs, many camps say, so why pay? **From years of experience working with camps, I have never had a client say they want to go back to paper after experiencing the online process.**

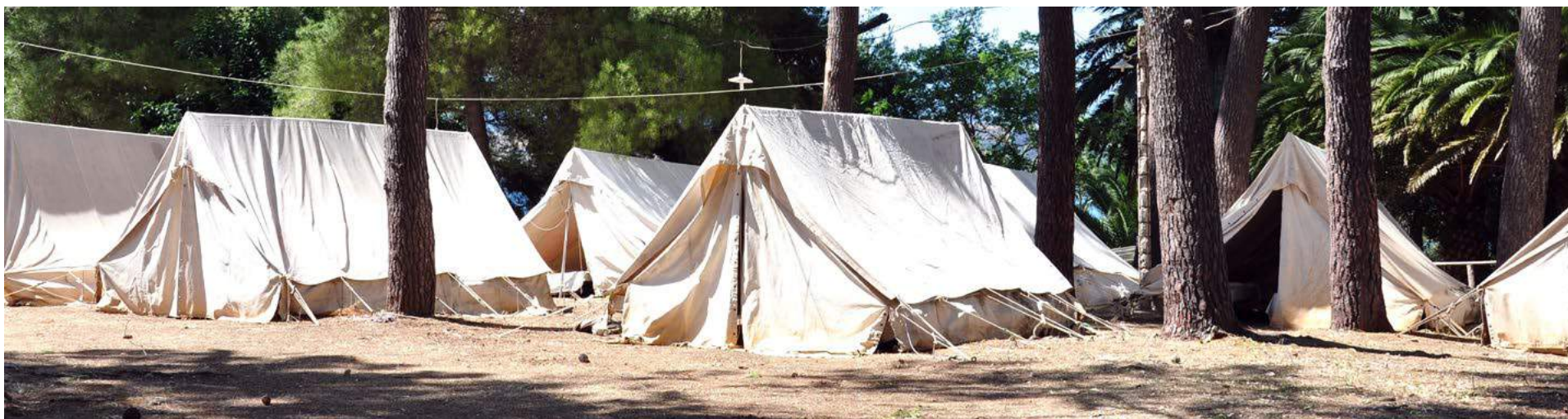
Reason 2: Going online can improve your business!

Providing registration online makes your process easier, gets you paid faster, and will net you more completed applications.

It pays for itself in admin time you would be spending on your registration that can now be spent on other things. Try it, you'll see!

Reason 3: Improves communication, payments, and reporting.

A software that automates emails, payments and invoicing, and makes reporting easy and valuable is worth its weight in gold. A system that makes registration easier for your parents and your staff, keeps everyone on task and up to date and helps your bottom line, saves everyone times and gives your parents a positive service experience with your camp before they even show up on day 1!



Instead of wasting hours emailing due dates to parents, following up on missing forms, creating payment receipts, processing payments, entering tons of data manually into spreadsheets and copying and pasting into report after reports for every member of your staff - use a great camp management software! It's really that simple! A camp management software serves you every step of the way - from before camp starts, through camp, into evaluations, into next summer and beyond!

Reason 4: It makes the process personal and easy for every camper.

Paper applications are usually long and full of forms that aren't always a match to each camper as everyone's registration is

going to be slightly different. Some families have multiple children attending and some only are enrolling one child.

Going online means creating a unique experience for each camper during registration. Show the forms that they need and nothing more. Make registration easier, streamlined and get parents on the way to finishing and paying as fast as possible!

The first impression anyone has with your camp isn't on the day they drop their kids off but when they visit your website and begin your registration process. If you present a confusing, out of date application, you will spend too much time responding and addressing issues instead of communicating meaningful with parents and prepping for the summer. Build trust in your brand by putting your best foot forward and using a great quality camp management software from the start.

A camp client of Regpack said about using camp management software:

“The campers and especially their parents, are essentially customers. I don’t think anyone in the camping world likes to necessarily think of it like that but more or less it’s a customer service industry and we want these customers having the best possible experience from the get go, from the minute they express interest, which is pretty much the sign-up point, to the minute they finish camp.

In order to have that great camp experience, you want a flawless system. [A camp registration software] is the first step in that experience, since it is just so user friendly and clean, works perfectly and it looks good. To have something as simple as the aesthetics of it and creating a registration that is simple and user friendly, that’s huge.

[Using] the back end of the camp management software makes the staffing side of it so simple since you can produce any sort of report you need within minutes. The system allows us to get in contact easily with parents and campers either before the summer or while the summer is going on. The system is so easy to use and you have a database right at the click of the finger, that’s what makes [using software] worth it. So you have the great customer experience that makes it so much smoother for everyone. And ideally it helps get more kids in camp.”

Your camp is a business and it should be run as such when it comes to payments, communication and the application process. From the second a parent expresses interest in your camp, you need to provide an excellent experience. Just because campers have a great time and you run an awesome camp doesn’t mean that doesn’t extend to your registration and data management tools.

You never want there to be a flaw in your system - whether it’s about your application or your outdoor activities. You want parents to think of you - whether about registration or your camp experiences - wow, this camp has it together! They are awesome. They are on top of it. They are great!



There are lots of choices out there when it comes to camp management software. Which is the greatest for you and your camp? In order to find out, sit down and really evaluate your process and what your individual needs are. What are you missing from your current process? What works great about your current process? What doesn't work great? Make a list arranged by priority and then find the software that ticks the most boxes at the top of your list (and your entire list if possible!) In general, you should be looking for a software that:

- ✓ **Automates your communication.**
- ✓ **Automates your payments, including scheduled payments and payment plans.**
- ✓ **Offers flexible form creation.**
- ✓ **Allows for family registration.**
- ✓ **Looks good and integrates easily into your website.**

There are tons of camp management softwares out there and they are all pretty great. But which one is the greatest for YOU? This eBook is a great starting point to evaluating your process and choosing the best software for you.

