



MC
HOSPITALITY
HIGHLIGHTS

CREATING MEMORIES TOGETHER:

HOW CAMPGROUNDS CAN THRIVE
BY WELCOMING LARGE GROUPS

Conducted by



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LETTERS FROM THE CEOS

Welcome to another edition of MC Hospitality Highlights, our special collaboration with Cairn Consulting Group. I'm Brian Searl, Founder and CEO of Modern Campground. I'm excited to share our latest insights focused on helping you thrive by welcoming large groups to your campgrounds.

We're passionate about providing valuable data to the industry, and this report is designed to help you, as park owners and operators, make informed decisions. By delving into both numbers and real-life stories, we've created a toolkit that shows you how accommodating large groups can yield great returns while building lasting memories for your guests.

In "Creating Memories Together: How Campgrounds Can Thrive by Welcoming Large Groups," we've packed actionable insights at the end of the report. These give you practical steps to use the data at your campground, including tips and real-world examples.

Plus, you can find 10 detailed blog articles on our website, and we'll share key takeaways on social media throughout the month in bite-sized posts.

We always value your feedback. If you have ideas on how to improve our future reports or additional data you'd like us to cover, please reach out to me at brian@insiderperks.com.

Dive in, explore the insights, and let's keep creating wonderful experiences for all campers, big and small.



Brian Searl
Founder & CEO
Insider Perks & Modern Campground

Welcome to the release of MC Hospitality Highlights, brought to you by our collaboration with Modern Campground. I'm Scott Bahr, President of Cairn Consulting Group, and I'm thrilled to share insights from our latest research. Each month, we'll delve into crucial topics impacting our industry, combining firsthand perspectives and data-driven analysis. This month, we're focusing on how campgrounds can flourish by catering to large groups.

At Cairn Consulting Group, we have spent years deeply immersed in understanding the dynamics of outdoor hospitality. Our dedication is to turning intricate data into actionable strategies for park owners, operators, and managers. This report marks the beginning of an exciting journey where we aim to provide you with the knowledge and tools to make informed decisions that will enhance your guests' experiences and maximize your investment returns.

In the July 2024 edition, "Creating Memories Together: How Campgrounds Can Thrive by Welcoming Large Groups," we explore the value of fostering a welcoming environment

for large groups. Our team gathered extensive quantitative data through comprehensive guest surveys and enriched our findings with qualitative insights via long-form interviews. This combined approach ensures you receive a full spectrum of viewpoints to guide your strategy for accommodating both large and small groups of campers.

Our goal is simple: to help you understand the initial return on investment and the long-term benefits of creating memorable experiences for your guests. With this report, you'll be equipped with practical advice and real-world examples to support your decision-making process. I invite you to dive in and discover how embracing large groups at your campground can not only drive growth but also build a loyal community of happy campers.

Happy reading and here's to creating lasting memories together.



Scott Bahr
President
Cairn Consulting Group





CREATING MEMORIES TOGETHER:

HOW CAMPGROUNDS CAN THRIVE BY WELCOMING LARGE GROUPS

This report is devoted to evaluating the accommodation of groups of campers at campgrounds and outdoor resorts. Our approach involved gathering information from various resources to provide guidance for park owners, operators, and managers in deciding whether it is worthwhile to cater to large

groups. This includes considering the initial return on investment and the long-term benefits of enhancing the guest experience via accommodating these groups of guests.

METHODOLOGY

The information provided in this report is a compilation of both quantitative and qualitative information. The primary resources that were utilized include a survey of guests conducted by Cairn Consulting Group that was used to evaluate the views of campers both

from the perspective of large groups of campers and smaller groups; a series of long-form interviews with campers were also used to provide context to the results.

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KEY INSIGHTS

Higher Occupancy Rates:

Large groups often book multiple campsites or larger accommodation options like cabins, leading to increased occupancy and revenue.

Extended Stays:

Groups tend to plan longer trips, especially when the campground offers a variety of activities and amenities that keep everyone entertained.

Family-Friendly Reputation:

Providing a welcoming environment for families and diverse groups enhances the campground's reputation as a family-friendly destination, leading to repeat business and positive word-of-mouth referrals.

Appealing to Multiple Demographics:

By catering to a wide range of ages and interests, campgrounds can attract a more diverse customer base, reducing dependency on a single demographic.

Cross-Generational Appeal:

Facilities and activities that cater to both younger and older generations

can draw in extended families, making the campground a preferred choice for multi-generational trips.

Unique Selling Proposition:

A campground that offers special amenities and activities for large groups can differentiate itself from competitors, becoming known as the go-to destination for group camping.

Enhanced Community Feel:

Organizing group activities and events can create a strong sense of community among campers, which enhances the overall camping experience and strengthens the campground's brand.

Economies of Scale:

Serving larger groups can lead to operational efficiencies, such as streamlined check-in processes and bulk provision of amenities, which can reduce costs and increase profitability.

Planned Scheduling:

With larger groups booking in advance, campgrounds can better plan and allocate resources, ensuring optimal use of facilities and staff.

BENEFITS OF ACCOMMODATING GROUPS OF CAMPERS

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BENEFITS OF ACCOMMODATING GROUPS OF CAMPERS?

Camping tends to be a group activity, with few (less than 6%) campers traveling solo. However, the most common group size staying at a campground is between 2 and 3 guests. Indeed, 83% of groups are comprised of 3 or fewer guests per group. Yet the larger groups can represent an opportunity for the campground, as this set of campers is one of the most loyal (58% plan to camp more often this year), and engaged during their stays (they are significantly more likely to participate in a variety of activities while staying). Demographically, there are some minor, though worthwhile considerations in group dynamics:



- Not surprisingly, **families with children** tend to have the highest number of people in their camping travel groups.
- **Generational differences** show that younger generations (Millennials + GenZ) travel in slightly larger groups compared to Boomers and the Silent Generation.

- **Income levels** influence group sizes slightly, with higher income groups tending to have more people.
- **Ethnicity** shows that Hispanic/Latino and Black groups tend to travel in larger numbers compared to White groups.



- **Type of camping experience** and specific activities such as glamping or RVing impact the average group size, with unique and remote experiences attracting slightly larger groups.



MOTIVATIONS FOR GROUP CAMPERS

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MOTIVATIONS FOR GROUP CAMPERS?

Campers who choose to travel in large and diverse groups, such as families with young children, teenagers, adult friends, and extended family members, have various motivations. Understanding these motivations can help campgrounds better cater to their needs and enhance their overall experience. Here are some of the primary motivations:

Family Bonding and Quality Time

🔥 Strengthening Relationships:

Camping provides an opportunity for family members to spend uninterrupted time together, strengthening bonds and creating lasting memories.

🔥 Shared Experiences:

Engaging in activities and adventures as a group allows for shared experiences that can bring family members closer and foster a sense of unity.

Creating Memories

🔥 Memorable Activities:

Participating in unique and fun activities, from hiking and fishing to campfire stories and stargazing, helps create cherished memories for all ages.

🔥 Photographs and Souvenirs:

Families often capture moments through photos and souvenirs, which serve as tangible reminders of their time together.



Educational Opportunities

🔥 Learning About Nature:

Camping is an excellent way for children and adults alike to learn about the natural environment, wildlife, and conservation efforts.

🔥 Skill Development:

Activities such as setting up tents, building fires, and navigating trails help develop practical skills and self-reliance.

Escaping Daily Routines

🔥 Disconnecting from Technology:

Camping provides a break from the digital world, allowing campers to unplug and enjoy the simplicity of nature.

🔥 Relaxation and Stress Relief:

The natural setting and slower pace of camping offer a peaceful environment for relaxation and stress relief.

Adventure and Exploration

🔥 Outdoor Activities:

The opportunity to participate in various outdoor activities, such as hiking, fishing, kayaking, and wildlife spotting, appeals to the adventurous spirit of campers.

🔥 Exploring New Places:

Campers are often motivated by the desire to explore new destinations, parks, and natural landscapes.



Social Interaction and Community

🔥 Spending Time with Friends:

Traveling with friends provides a fun and social experience, with opportunities for group activities and shared enjoyment.

🔥 Meeting New People:

Campgrounds often bring together diverse groups of people, offering a chance to meet and interact with new friends and other campers.

Celebrations and Special Occasions

🔥 Family Reunions:

Camping is a popular choice for family reunions, providing a relaxed and enjoyable setting for relatives to gather and celebrate.

🔥 Special Events:

Birthdays, anniversaries, and other special occasions can be celebrated in a unique and memorable way through group camping trips.

Cost-Effective Vacationing

🔥 Affordable Accommodation:

Camping is often more affordable than other types of vacations, making it an attractive option for large groups looking to minimize costs.

🔥 Shared Expenses:

Traveling as a group allows for the sharing of costs, such as food, transportation, and campsite fees, making the trip more economical for everyone involved.



Health and Wellness

🔥 Physical Activity:

Camping trips usually involve a lot of physical activities, such as hiking, swimming, and playing sports, which are beneficial for health and fitness.

🔥 Mental Well-Being:

Being in nature and away from urban environments can significantly improve mental well-being, reducing stress and promoting happiness.

Tradition and Culture

🔥 Continuing Traditions:

For many families, camping is a long-standing tradition that they continue to uphold, passing down the experience to younger generations.

🔥 Cultural Practices:

Some groups may have cultural or spiritual reasons for camping, viewing it as an opportunity to connect with their heritage and traditions.

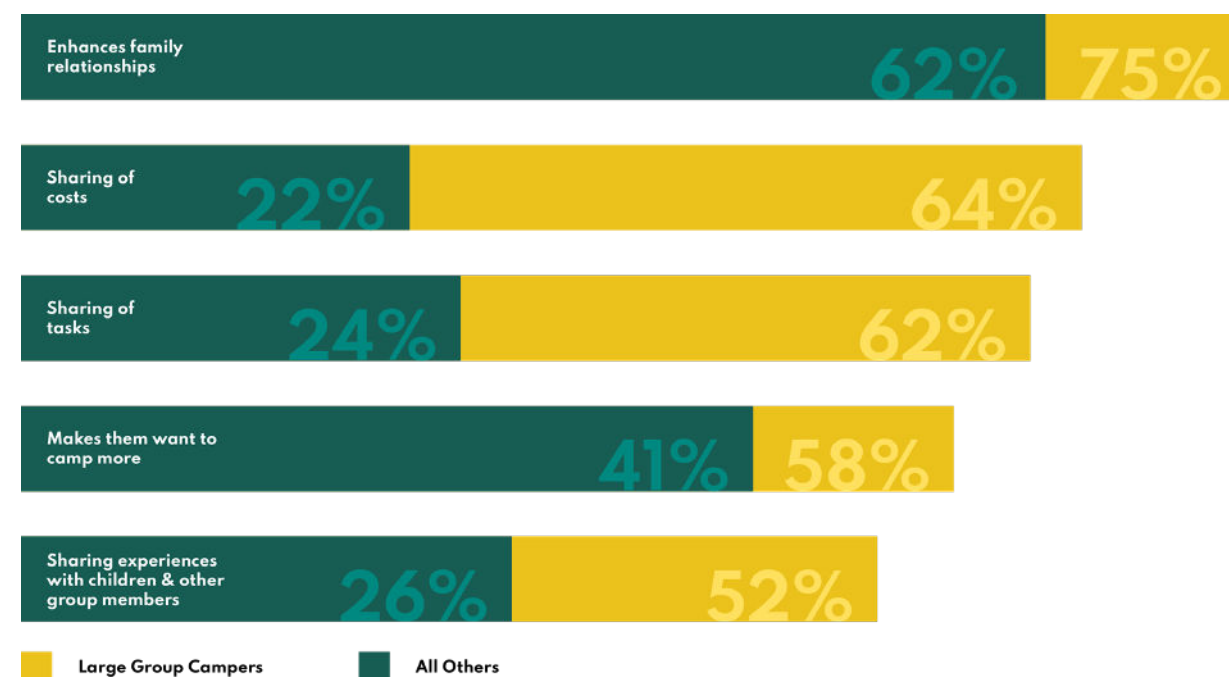


BENEFITS OF GROUP CAMPING ACCORDING TO CAMPERS

WHAT DO LARGE GROUPS OF CAMPERS SAY ARE THE BENEFITS OF CAMPING WITH A GROUP?

The most important aspect of group camping is that these campers are more likely to say that camping as a group enhances their familial relationships, a result reinforced by research efforts across an array of organizations and perspectives. The sharing of experiences with others is also an important consideration.

There are practical considerations as well, including the easing of costs and workload during trips, but ultimately it boils down to them saying that these group camping experiences make them want to camp more often.

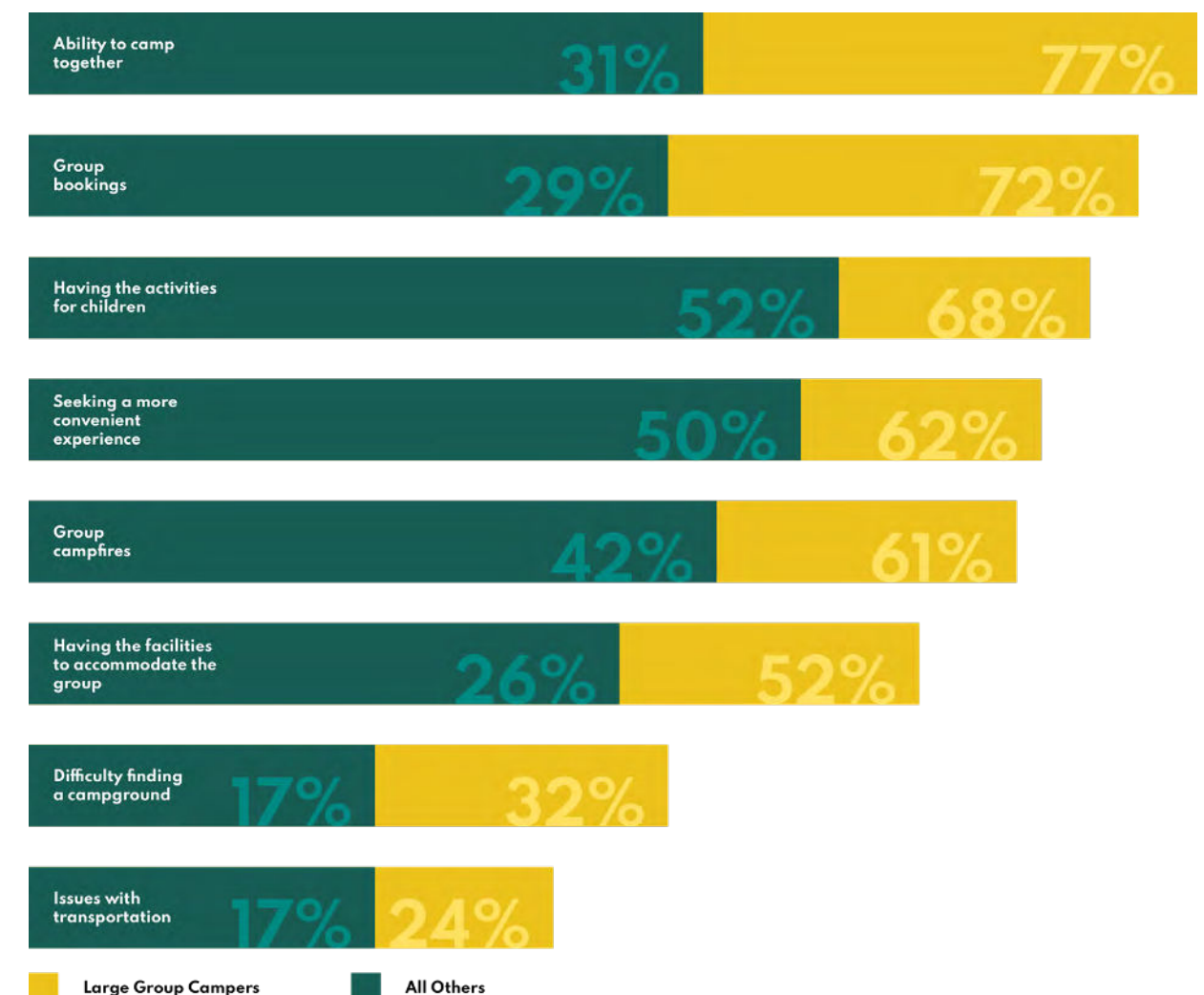


CHALLENGES FOR LARGE GROUPS OF CAMPERS

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES FOR LARGE GROUPS OF CAMPERS?

One of the greatest challenges large groups are faced with is having the ability to camp as a group and have their group all located nearby. Similarly, group bookings represent a challenge for these guests.

It is important to consider some of these challenges, and determine the opportunities that are represented with these challenges whether it's making adjustments to the layout, ensuring the group can stay together, or offering activities for the children.



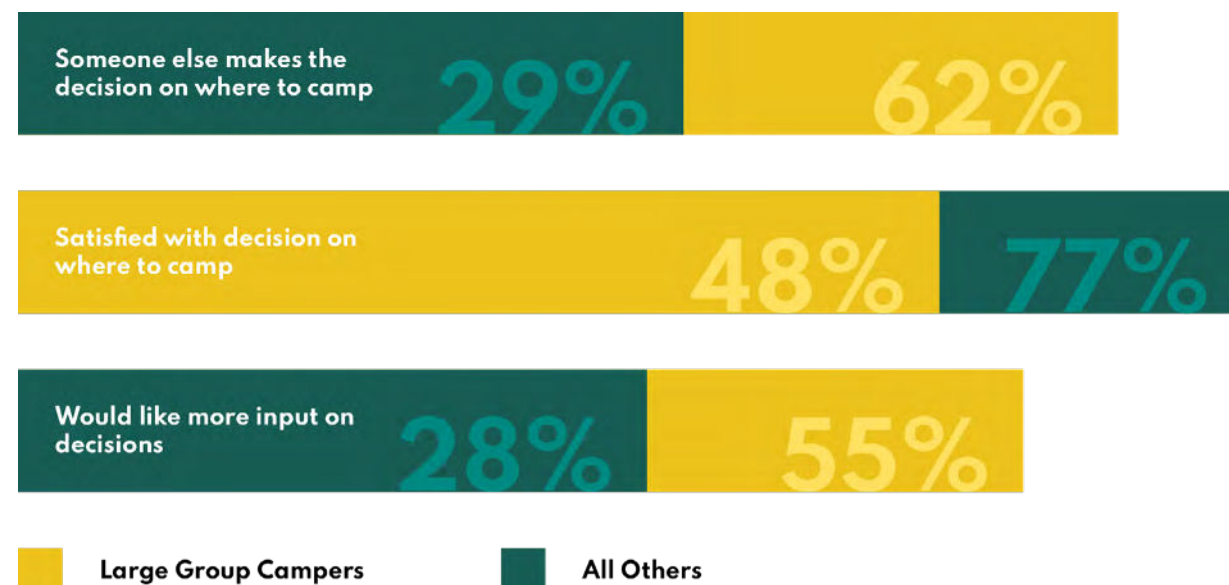
IMPACT OF INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING

WHAT ARE THE IMPACTS OF INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING?

An important consideration when catering to large groups, is that for many in the group, they do not have a large contribution on the decisions surrounding where to camp and what they are going to do during their stay.

Large group campers are twice as likely as other campers to say that someone else makes the decision where they stay (62% vs. 29%), and more than half (55% vs. 28%) state that they would like more input on decisions about where to stay and what to do. Less than half are satisfied with the decision where to camp (48% vs. 77%).

These results suggest that the campground operator may have some challenges regarding managing the group, and importantly, finding ways to engage with other members of the group other than primary contact and decision-maker.



ADVANTAGES OF ACCOMMODATING LARGER GROUPS

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF A CAMPGROUND IN ACCOMMODATING LARGER GROUPS OF CAMPERS?

Campgrounds that are equipped to accommodate large and diverse groups of campers—including families with young children, teenagers, adult friends and their children, adult siblings, and grandparents—can reap significant benefits. Here are the key advantages:

Increased Revenue

🔥 Higher Occupancy Rates:

Large groups often book multiple campsites or larger accommodation options like cabins, leading to increased occupancy and revenue.

🔥 Extended Stays:

Groups tend to plan longer trips, especially when the campground offers a variety of activities and amenities that keep everyone entertained.



Enhanced Customer Satisfaction and Loyalty

🔥 Family-Friendly Reputation:

Providing a welcoming environment for families and diverse groups enhances the campground's reputation as a family-friendly destination, leading to repeat business and positive word-of-mouth referrals.

🔥 Tailored Experiences:

Offering customized activities and amenities for different age groups ensures all members of the group have an enjoyable experience, fostering loyalty and return visits.

Diversified Customer Base

🔥 Appealing to Multiple Demographics:

By catering to a wide range of ages and interests, campgrounds can attract a more diverse customer base, reducing dependency on a single demographic.

🔥 Cross-Generational Appeal:

Facilities and activities that cater to both younger and older generations can draw in extended families, making the campground a preferred choice for multi-generational trips.



Community Building and Brand Differentiation

🔥 Unique Selling Proposition:

A campground that offers special amenities and activities for large groups can differentiate itself from competitors, becoming known as the go-to destination for group camping.

🔥 Enhanced Community Feel:

Organizing group activities and events can create a strong sense of community among campers, which enhances the overall camping experience and strengthens the campground's brand.

Operational Efficiencies

🔥 Economies of Scale:

Serving larger groups can lead to operational efficiencies, such as streamlined check-in processes and bulk provision of amenities, which can reduce costs and increase profitability.

🔥 Planned Scheduling:

With larger groups booking in advance, campgrounds can better plan and allocate resources, ensuring optimal use of facilities and staff.

Positive Environmental Impact

🔥 Consolidated Impact:

Hosting large groups can lead to a more consolidated environmental footprint compared to many smaller, separate groups. This can make it easier to manage waste, conserve energy, and maintain facilities.



Expanded Marketing Opportunities

Group Packages and Promotions:

Offering special group packages, discounts, and promotions can attract more bookings. Marketing these packages effectively can reach a broader audience.

Social Media and Word of Mouth:

Happy campers, especially in large groups, are likely to share their experiences on social media and through word-of-mouth, providing free advertising and attracting more visitors.

Increased Ancillary Revenue

On-Site Sales:

Larger groups are more likely to spend on ancillary services and products such as camp store purchases, equipment rentals, and food services.

Activity Fees:

Offering specialized activities or guided tours for groups can provide additional revenue streams.

Flexibility in Facility Usage

Versatile Use of Space:

Facilities that can accommodate large groups can also be used for events like family reunions, corporate retreats, and school trips, providing additional revenue opportunities throughout the year.

Scalable Services:

Campgrounds can scale their services up or down based on group sizes, ensuring that facilities are used efficiently and are always meeting the needs of the campers.

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES TO ATTRACT GROUP CAMPERS

WHAT ARE THE TYPES OF EVENTS & ACTIVITIES THAT CAN ATTRACT GROUP CAMPERS?

Campgrounds can attract large and diverse groups of campers by hosting a variety of events tailored to the interests and needs of families, friends, and multi-generational groups. Here are some event ideas that can appeal to such groups:

Family-Friendly Events

🔥 Family Movie Nights:

Outdoor movie screenings with family-friendly films create a fun and relaxing evening activity for all ages.

🔥 Themed Parties:

Events such as holiday parties (Halloween, Christmas, etc.), costume parties, or themed nights (e.g., pirate night) can be exciting for children and adults alike.

🔥 Scavenger Hunts:

Organizing nature-based scavenger hunts encourages exploration and teamwork among family members.

Educational and Interactive Activities

🔥 Nature Walks and Guided Hikes:

Educational walks with a naturalist or park ranger to learn about local flora and fauna can be engaging for all age groups.

🔥 Craft Workshops:

Arts and crafts sessions where campers can create souvenirs or work on collaborative projects.

🔥 Stargazing Nights:

Hosting astronomy nights with telescopes and a guide to point out constellations can be an educational and enjoyable experience.



Sports and Adventure Activities

🔥 Team Sports Tournaments:

Organizing sports events like soccer, volleyball, or softball tournaments can be great for groups to engage in friendly competition.

🔥 Adventure Races:

Obstacle courses or adventure races that challenge different age groups and fitness levels can be thrilling and fun.

🔥 Fishing Derbies:

Hosting fishing contests can attract families and friends who enjoy fishing together.

Cultural and Community Events

🔥 Music Festivals and Concerts:

Live music events featuring local bands or themed music nights can create a lively atmosphere.

🔥 Cultural Festivals:

Celebrating different cultures with food, music, and activities can attract a diverse group of campers.

🔥 Food Fairs and Cook-Offs:

Hosting events like BBQ cook-offs, pie-eating contests, or food truck festivals can appeal to food enthusiasts.



Wellness and Relaxation Programs

🔥 Yoga and Meditation Sessions:

Offering yoga classes or meditation sessions in a natural setting can attract those looking for relaxation and wellness activities.

🔥 Wellness Retreats:

Organizing wellness retreats with activities like massage, fitness classes, and healthy eating workshops can cater to adults seeking rejuvenation.

Holiday and Seasonal Events

🔥 Holiday Celebrations:

Special events for major holidays such as Easter egg hunts, 4th of July fireworks, or Christmas light displays can be very appealing.

🔥 Seasonal Festivals:

Celebrating the changing seasons with events like fall harvest festivals, winter snow sports, spring flower festivals, or summer beach parties.

Educational Camps and Workshops

🔥 Survival Skills Workshops:

Teaching essential outdoor survival skills like fire building, shelter making, and orienteering can be both educational and exciting.

🔥 Wildlife Photography Workshops:

Offering classes on wildlife photography for different skill levels can attract photography enthusiasts.

🔥 Environmental Conservation Projects:

Engaging campers in conservation projects or community service activities to protect the natural environment.

Competitions and Challenges

🔥 Talent Shows:

Encouraging campers to showcase their talents, from singing and dancing to comedy and magic, can be entertaining for everyone.



🔥 Cooking Competitions:

Holding contests for the best campfire cooking, with categories for adults and children.

🔥 Campground Olympics:

Organizing a series of fun, camp-themed competitions like sack races, tug-of-war, and relay races.

Special Interest Gatherings

🔥 Bird Watching Excursions:

For nature enthusiasts, guided bird watching tours can be a fascinating activity.

🔥 Photography Contests:

Encouraging campers to capture the beauty of the campground and rewarding the best photos.

🔥 Book Clubs and Reading Groups:

Set up a cozy area for book clubs or reading groups to meet and discuss their favorite reads.



DEVELOPING A LOYAL FOLLOWING OF GROUP CAMPERS

HOW DO YOU DEVELOP A LOYAL FOLLOWING OF GROUP CAMPERS?

Campers who travel in larger groups are more likely to be loyal to campgrounds that can effectively accommodate their unique needs for several reasons:



Comprehensive Facilities and Amenities

Campgrounds that provide comprehensive facilities and amenities tailored to large groups, such as spacious campsites, group picnic areas, and multiple restrooms and showers, make the camping experience more comfortable and enjoyable. This level of convenience and consideration encourages repeat visits.

Diverse Activities for All Ages

Offering a wide range of activities that cater to different age groups and interests ensures that everyone in the group has a positive experience. Whether it's playgrounds for young children, sports fields for teenagers, or relaxing areas for adults and seniors, meeting these diverse needs fosters a sense of satisfaction and loyalty.

Family-Friendly Environment

A family-friendly environment that emphasizes safety, cleanliness, and fun for all ages appeals strongly to large groups, particularly those with children. Campgrounds that prioritize family-centric features and create a welcoming atmosphere are more likely to see return visits from these groups.



Creating Lasting Memories

Campgrounds that facilitate the creation of lasting memories through special events, unique experiences, and beautiful natural settings become cherished destinations. The emotional connection formed through positive shared experiences is a powerful driver of loyalty.



Cost-Effective Group Options

Providing cost-effective options for large groups, such as group discounts, family packages, and shared accommodation options, makes camping trips more affordable and appealing. Economic benefits combined with quality experiences enhance loyalty.

Special Accommodations and Services

Offering special accommodations and services, such as group reservations, organized group activities, and personalized services, shows that the campground values large groups. This attention to detail and customization fosters a strong sense of loyalty.

Consistent Quality and Service

Maintaining consistent quality in facilities, activities, and customer service ensures that large groups have

a reliable and enjoyable experience each time they visit. Consistency builds trust and encourages repeat visits.

Positive Word-of-Mouth and Recommendations

Large groups often include individuals from various households who are likely to share their positive experiences with others. A campground that successfully caters to their needs benefits from positive word-of-mouth and recommendations, further solidifying loyalty.

Supportive Community Feel

Creating a community feel through group-oriented events, social activities, and communal spaces helps build a sense of belonging and attachment to the campground. This community atmosphere can be particularly appealing to large groups, promoting loyalty.



CONCLUSION

By accommodating large groups of campers with tailored facilities, activities, and services, campgrounds can significantly enhance the camping experience, fostering loyalty and encouraging return visits. Creating a family-friendly environment, offering special packages and discounts, facilitating easy group reservations, and maintaining high standards are crucial strategies. Additionally, leveraging positive word-of-mouth through social media engagement, reviews, and referral programs can attract new campers and solidify the campground's reputation as a preferred destination for large groups.

FROM REPORT TO REALITY: TURNING INSIGHTS INTO ACTION

As campground owners, you now have a wealth of data and insights from this report to help transform your business. The recommendations provided herein are designed to help you take actionable steps in implementing the strategies discussed, ensuring a thriving environment for large groups. Below are several key strategies you can apply to bring the concepts from this report to life.



Enhance Facilities and Amenities

A major factor that influences the loyalty of large groups is the availability of comprehensive facilities and amenities. Consider expanding both the range and number of campsites to accommodate larger parties. Invest in group picnic areas, additional restrooms, and showers to ensure comfort for all guests. By making these improvements, you create a more convenient and enjoyable experience that encourages repeat visits and fosters loyalty.

Diverse Activities for All Ages

Large groups often consist of members of varying ages and interests. Offering a wide array of activities that cater to different demographics can ensure that every guest has a memorable experience. Consider adding playgrounds for young children, sports fields for teenagers, and relaxing areas for adults. Organizing themed events such as family movie nights, craft workshops, and team sports tournaments can further enhance the group camping experience.

Customize Packages and Discounts

Providing cost-effective options through group discounts, family packages, and shared accommodation options can make camping trips more appealing and affordable for large groups. Implement group booking reservations and special accommodations to show these clients that they are valued. This approach not only increases booking rates but also builds loyalty among guests.

Create Lasting Memories

Facilitating the creation of lasting memories is a powerful driver of customer loyalty. Organize special events like holiday celebrations, birthday parties, and family reunions. Unique activities such as stargazing nights, nature walks, and wellness retreats can create special moments that guests will cherish and share, promoting positive word-of-mouth reviews.

Maintain Consistent Quality and Service

Consistency in providing high-quality facilities, activities, and customer service is crucial. Ensure that staff are well-trained and that amenities and activities are always up to standard. Consistent quality will build trust with your guests and encourage repeat visits. Regularly gather feedback from guests to continuously improve and tailor your offerings to meet their expectations.



Leverage Technology for Group Engagement

Large group campers often express a desire for more input in decision-making processes related to their stay. Use technology to engage with all members of the group, not just the primary decision-makers. Implement online tools for activity booking, feedback collection, and personalized recommendations to enhance the sense of involvement and satisfaction among your guests.

Foster a Supportive and Welcoming Community

Creating a community feel through group-oriented events and communal spaces can significantly enhance the overall camping experience. By organizing social activities and communal gatherings, you help build a supportive environment that appeals to large groups and fosters a sense of belonging. This community-oriented approach will differentiate your campground from others and attract more loyal customers.

By adopting these recommendations, you can turn insights from this report into actionable strategies that not only cater to the needs of large groups but also drive the success and growth of your campground. Implementing these strategies will help create an exceptional experience that guests will remember and return to for years to come.





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