



THE BUSINESS OF CAMP

# TOOLS FOR PLANNING FOR A DIFFERENT SUMMER



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



GRAPHIC DESIGN BY



# LET'S HAVE THE CONVERSATION NOW

My Camp - Our Camp - Our Camps... **our camps in Canada are facing the biggest challenge in the history of our profession.** The future is uncertain, the timeline is unknown, there are policies and procedures and predictions and processes in place right now, but as of today, no one knows for certain what "Camp in the Summer of 2020" will actually look like. **We just know it will look different.**

Those of us who have dedicated our lives to "creating good citizens through a camp experience" are the first to honour 'social distancing', the first to help our elderly neighbour, the first to come together as a camp community to share ideas, the first to have hope that a 'world in chaos' is a temporary state of mind.

**So, what should we do?** Many of us have been in touch with our camp families to reassure them that we are here for them. Many of us are running virtual campfires and singsongs and scavenger hunts and we need to keep doing this. We may be the very best social networking contact many families have right now.

But **what should we do about our camp business?** We are likely holding close to our hearts the overwhelming question "Will my camp survive this?"

**So - let's have the conversation now about tools and tips and ideas that can help ensure we ALL survive.**



A vertical teal bar runs down the center of the page, flanked by stylized oak leaves and branches in a matching teal color. The leaves are scattered around the bar, with some at the top and some at the bottom.

## FOR CAMPS PLANNING NOT TO OPEN IN 2020

There are some camps across our great country who may declare they are “Not Open”. They could be seasonal operations, some may have not yet begun registrations, some may have no fulltime staff, some may have incurred few expenses to date, some may be sponsored primarily by donors... so the decision to remain closed for this season could be, while heartbreaking, a smart business decision.

## FOR CAMPS PLANNING TO OPEN IN 2020

There are some camps across our great country who have already incurred expenses for the 2020 season. They may have fulltime staff in place, they may operate year-round on their site, they may have made major purchases or committed to major capital development projects that are ‘too far along to cease’. They may be using 2020 deposits and fees already collected to pay off-seasonal bills. They may have a line of credit that carries them through the down months but always gets paid when spring “Final Fees” come in.

These could be the businesses that face the biggest question: **“Will my camp have the cash flow to survive if the season of 2020 does not happen?”**

# ASSESSING THE HEALTH OF YOUR CAMP BUSINESS

NOW is the time to explore options for cash flow. Here are some ideas that might prove useful in this difficult time:

---

**1.** Offer **credits** for 2021 rather than giving refunds for 2020.

---

**2.** Talk to your **insurance company** to understand your options

---

**3.** Defer **non-essential payments** to later in 2020. Call vendors and partners to negotiate terms and conditions.

---

**4.** Talk to your clientele. A summer with no cash could mean there is no summer ever again - you might be very surprised at “who might step up to the plate” to help:

- It could be a **third-generation camp family** with young grandchildren just approaching camp age and that family wants to see your camp survive.
- If your camp is religiously affiliated, it could be a **member of your congregation**.
- If your camp is an agency it could be a **local supporter** who has seen the value of a camp experience.
- This is a time to call upon **your alumni** for help and support. The reality is - you will never know unless you ask.

---

**5.** If possible, gain access to **more credit / loan opportunities**. You may not need them, but if you do later on, they will be in place to support you.

---

**6.** Your cash flow is determined by the start of your **next season's registration**. Calculate accordingly.

---

**7.** Explore every **government option** - municipal, provincial, federal - to make sure you are taking advantage of every form of assistance available to your category of business.

---

**8.** Create a **budget plan** that looks at the following scenarios for 2020:

- Summer operation (and potential fall operation, for some camps) with 50%-75% capacity
- Shorter length programs for the month of August.
- The summer is cancelled.
- It is important in these scenarios to examine your financial requirements if you operate or not, AND to understand your fixed and variable expenses. You may progress through these scenarios and realize that even a partial summer may not be financially viable for your camp. Or, it may be very viable.





## WHAT WOULD A SHORTER 2020 SEASON LOOK LIKE?

If your camp gets the health go-ahead to open:

- Could you operate for a **shorter period of time** this summer?
- Could you cut your session length in half to **accommodate more campers**?
- Do you know the absolute capacity of your site so that tents or temporary shelters or RVs could be used to **increase the number of clients you can serve**?
- Could you talk to Alumni and parents about **volunteering their time to help** if more staff were needed?
- Could you add a **family camp**?
- What does an **online camp community** look like for your camp if we do not have the health community's approval to open?
- How would campers **check-in daily**?
- What are **daily camper challenges** we can create?
- How can we modify our programs for a **home environment**?



## LET'S START THE CONVERSATION NOW.

We know that a summer camp experience will be the best medicine ever – if you begin **NOW** to think outside the box, to get creative, to talk to your families, your staff, your alumni, your supporters, your suppliers... if you work together to “see what a new version of camp could look like” then you will be ready. Let's be the first profession to be ready, **our services are critical to the future of our children.**