

Are you ready for 2010?

Have you started re-enrolments for 2010?

Are you maximising your occupancy for a New Year?



Succeed follows on their series of articles on occupancy growth and marketing. This is the second article in this series; "Are you ready for 2010?"

As usual it is sound practical information for owner operators, investors and new buyers alike. You can contact Succeed Consultancy on the numbers provided below or visit the Succeed Consultancy website for more information at:

www.succeedconsultancy.com.au

We all know the cycle of child care centres highs and lows. Currently your Centre will be experiencing a peak in occupancy with the warmer weather and it will be climbing steadily, this will be experienced up until mid November. By mid December families begin to exit your Centre with preparation of their children commencing big school and for Christmas holidays. A decline in occupancy commences in December and continues throughout January up until school commences.

Before you know it and have time to recover from Christmas parties, end of year celebrations and your annual Centre clean, you will find yourself in the middle of January 2010. As all the end of year and New Year celebrations conclude; you take a breath and wham bam thankyou mam your occupancy is now 20% lower then it was in the middle of December. Family enquiries are low or still non existent at this time of the year; **the worry and panic starts to set in...**

The worry and panic starts to set in... we are over staffed, I need to cut staff hours or let some staff go, who can I force to take more holidays, what about the bills that are piling up and all the parent fees that are not being paid as families are on holidays, I need to chase the families who have done runners at the end of the year... The list goes on...

So how do you stay ahead and have a clear focus on next year's enrolments...

You need to be organised! If you haven't started re-enrolments as yet for 2010, **stop everything and start now**. It is simple as developing a short version of your enrolment form and getting it out to parents. The information you want to know is:

- Is the child returning in 2010?
- What days will the child be returning?
- Are they increasing or reducing days?
- What dates, if any will they be absent over the Christmas and January period?

The above three crucial points assists you knowing which children are leaving, gives you clarity to where your occupancy will be at, what place you have available and need to fill and also just as important your attendance during the Christmas and January period to assist you in planing staff's holidays and leave requests.

I hear you say; it's so hard to get parents to return anything and how do I track this.

Make it fun and get the whole team involved through

- Have a prize for the first room who collects all families re-enrolments
- Set a due date.
- Attach a lolly or tea bag to the re-enrolment form, with a little note "have a break on us".
- Have a family fun night or information night, with before you go we would like you to complete your re-enrolment.
- Every family who returns their re-enrolment by a due date can go into a draw for a free gift; be it a days free care, an educational pack, Christmas hamper etc
- Set a table or stall with a staff member each evening for a week and get parents when they come in to collect their child to complete the form.
- Send a self addresses return envelope to the child with the re-enrolment form in the post
- Print of a child or family list and mark it off as families return their re-enrolment.
- Have tracking sheets for each room and complete your confirmed enrolments as they come in.

Did you know that only 10% of Centres track family enquiries?

Our staff at Succeed Consultancy ring Centres continually for market research; our independent research within the industry states that only 10% of Centres actually ask phone and drop in enquiries for family's crucial details such as name, address, phone numbers, email address, child's name and age and how they heard about the Centre.

Are you one of the 90% of Centres that don't collect this information? If you don't take anything else away from this article, please take this away and do something to start collecting family enquiries. This is the most important and crucial factor in maintaining and increasing your occupancy.

Without this information you are unable to stay in contact with families who are interested in moving from their existing Centre or who are preparing to start their journey in childcare.

We all know the majority of movement occurs at the end of the year; families are 10 times more likely to leave their child care centre at the end of the year if they are unhappy

compared to the middle of the year. It is also likely that families who are unhappy will ring Centres through out the year to compare prices and services, imagine if you kept in constant contact with these families, who do you think they will contact first; a Centre that they have previously enquired about and had no further contact with or a Centre that continually maintains contact with them via phone calls, emails, newsletters and invites to the Centre. I know where I would go first; the Centre that I already have a relationship with...

Just imagine if you collected every single enquiry that contacted you via phone or dropped in. Imagine sending them a letter to invite them to enrol for 2010, you have at least 200 leads from your enquiry book you wouldn't have had if you didn't keep this information. I guarantee you if you did this you will convert past enquiries. A simple strategy that just makes sense...

Imagine if you continue to not keep an enquiry book; that's 200 new families you have to try even harder to get in your doors to fill your vacancies from exiting children in 2009. Not only is it hard work; it is costing you more money in time and marketing your Centre. Don't be another typical Centre that leaves everything to the last minute and ends up competing with all the other Centres in your community whilst you all scramble for enrolments in the same panic and in the same way.

You work hard now, I want to make 2010 that little bit easier for you with a few simple strategies to assist you to have more time with more money with less stress.

We hope you enjoyed a few simple tips to maximise your occupancy in 2010. For more information on Succeed Consultancy and our 100% money back guarantee on all of our services please contact us on:

P: 1300 077 248

We also encourage you read our first article; "Do you pay thousands in advertising?" A great article about marketing in your local community.

We often get a lot of emails on how our articles have assisted many owner's and Centres like yours, please feel free to share your successes with us at enquiries@succeedconsultancy.com.au



Erin Allen
Succeed Consultancy.
Managing Director

Date: October 2009

Proudly brought to you by industry expert; Erin Allen from **Succeed Consultancy**.

Email: enquiries@succeedconsultancy.com.au www.succeedconsultancy.com.au

Phone: 1300 077 248

Fax: (02) 4233 1568

