



WACO

Wisconsin Association of Campground Owners

AUGUST 2019

Dog Days of Summer, Signs of Fall

In case you didn't know, August was National Picnic Month—its also National Toasted Marshmallow Day on the 30th and International Bacon Day on the 31st! Talk about a few great reasons to create experiences at your campground in the final dog days of summer. Check out more reasons to celebrate in September on page 5. Embracing these little days can be big fun and put a nice charge in your marketing. Having you been making the most of your marketing plan this season? See what ways you can ensure you're on the right track in the feature.

I'M MARKETING. IS IT WORKING?

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Marketing. Such a simple word. By definition: the action or business of promoting and selling products or services. You're probably spending a fairly significant amount on your marketing and advertising annually. More than likely there is time spent sourcing the best options, checking rates, and looking at what methods can be incorporated to identify new prospective customers. Let me ask you this: Do you spend that same amount of time analyzing your results? If no was your response, its time to evaluate your process! Money spent doesn't necessarily mean an immediate increase in seasonal campers or site nights. Spreading your advertising budget across several media buckets isn't always the best idea – and neither is putting all your money in one option. I know you're ready to throw your hands up and say, "well what the heck am I supposed to do – this sounds like a crap shoot!"

There is most definitely a science to your marketing, and unfortunately that science is ever-changing with technology, adjustments to your target market, seasonal impacts, changes in service, etc. Knowing all this,

what is the best strategy to determine your marketing effectiveness? PULSE CHECK! The more you know about what's happening in your market, and results of your current efforts, the better off you'll be. Otherwise, you're literally throwing money in the air and hoping it floats back into your register. Let's take a peek at how to identify your target market and a couple other tips on how to best utilize the business generating marketing pieces you have in place – or ditch those that aren't.

TARGET MARKET:

Before you start advertising, you should identify just who it is you're trying to connect to – this is your target market: The people who really want or need what you're offering. Once you know the people you're attempting to impress, you'll be able to more easily attract those potential customers and build the right message, have the right products in your store, offer the right services or entertainment at your campground, the right price for sites, etc. Essentially building the products and services around their needs.



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1. First, figure out the need for your product or service, focusing on what problem it can solve. Examples here would include: a family needing to spend time, or a company wishing to gather for team building, experiences waiting to be had, etc.
2. Then refine your target market by identifying who has bought your products (in the store, restaurant/bar, or snack shack) or visited the campground already. This includes target demographics, audience type, and any other attributes about your target customer segment. If your product or service is brand new, a good alternative might be looking at your competitors to get additional insights.

The toughest part of this process is you must avoid making assumptions! As you've been living and breathing your business for years, you've become an expert on how to run your campground and probably feel you've got a really good grasp on what campers want. But don't assume consumers know these things as well - they may not even know such an experience awaits them at your campground or that you offer services like wood and food



delivered to their site. Its tempting to just fill in the blanks isn't it? Engaging with your potential customers and conducting as much research as possible is key to getting an accurate read on what you really need to change, calibrate or simply hit harder in terms of communication/marketing. For example, if you do a quick pulse check and no one knows where the game room is, its time to invest in signage!

As your business grows, and as the industry changes, you should continue to evaluate and possibly change the target market because your target market is absolutely dynamic! If you think you're catering specifically to men, when in fact it's the wives and girlfriends shopping for their fellas, you'll be missing the mark.

Knowing who you're targeting, and continually refining it, will ensure you're on the right track.

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER ABOUT YOUR TARGET MARKET:

- What are the features of your business, products or services?
- What are the benefits of these features?
- How do the benefits help the user? (which may not always be the same as the camper who secured the site –could be what a shopper in the store needs or what a gamer is looking for in your game room!)
- How does your target market shop? Do they use online services, call with a phone number, send an email request for more information?
- What is the typical age and gender of your target market? Do they usually have children? What is their average income and education?
- What are their common interests? These can include attitudes, values and lifestyle.
- Is your target market comfortable with online? What web and offline marketing methods engage them?



Need Member Specific Information?

Go to the WACO website and head to the [Members Login tab](#). We are here to help!

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LOOK AT YOUR BUSINESS AND WHERE YOU SPEND YOUR MONEY IN A FRESH LIGHT:

Now that you have some serious insight into who you are selling to, it's time to ask yourself a series of questions.

- In the current media that you're using for advertising, will your target market see/understand benefit from your product or service?
 - Will this target market see a true need for it? Will they come back repeatedly to purchase?
 - Do you understand what drives your target market to make buying decisions? And does your current marketing show you how they are assisting with that buying decision?
 - Can your target market afford your product or service? If so, how frequently can they buy?
 - Can you reach your market with your message? How easily accessible are they? What methods are you using and what ROI information are they providing back?



TAP INTO YOUR RESOURCES:

This task, of identifying and really evaluating the target market, as well as the advertising you're spending dollars on, can seem daunting and overwhelming right? While your individual campground will have varied answers specific to your target market, you have an ally available to your disposal in terms of industry specific information – YOUR WACO MEMBERSHIP! The Wisconsin Association of Campground Owners is in place to be that resource, that guide, in terms of where you need to be and assists with the information being in one place – allowing you to focus on your business and not attend tradeshows to distribute information as one example. Here are just a few ways that [WACO is already your partner](#) with advertising:

1. **Website to target end users** – WACO has just gone through a website redesign and is already seeing some phenomenal adjustments to their SEO efforts with updated keywords, changes to their ADA compliance, and blog articles. What does this mean for you?
 - 118% increase in users – campers looking for their next stay information
 - 14% increase in duration online – time spent looking at the right campground to visit, making reservations, etc.
 - ADA Compliance has several legal ramifications, which we've highlighted in previous newsletters – being ADA compliant saves the organizations thousands of dollars in legal fees should any complaints be filed.
 - Guidance of how you can tighten up the SEO, display of images, and ADA compliance on your own site
2. **315,000+ directories distributed a year** – [WACO attends multiple tradeshows](#) annually that are specifically targeting campers who are looking for their next adventure. Having directories in their hands is removing all the guesswork from the target market – they are there to learn more about camping, RVs, the campground industry – the exact folks you want to get your information in front of!



3. **Annual WACO Convention** – the Largest campground trade show in the country. You may think, well this isn't attended by end users! While one could argue there are lots of trade members and volunteers who camp throughout the state that attend the convention, for the most part, you're

right. The [WACO Convention](#) is attended by campground owners and what an amazing space to share successes and failures. To learn what's been working and what's not worth your time or money. Several target mar-

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ket pulse checks include “check out what your competition is doing.” How fortunate we are to view that as a collaboration and inspiration versus a threat!

4. **Newsletter and Blog Articles** – WACO strives to provide its members with the most accurate and up to date information like law changes, tax/accounting data, and to be a true resource by letting its members know about the Tourism Bureau updates and ARVC information as well. We've also been looking at ways to get you information on the latest industry trends – Millennials camping, what campers want to see and do with their seasonal sites, and how to gear your campground and service around those who seek to have access to technology or to be greener are just a few articles we've shared in the past 6 months! Using that industry information to more finely tune your target market, and your media outlets, will make your advertising dollars go a long way!

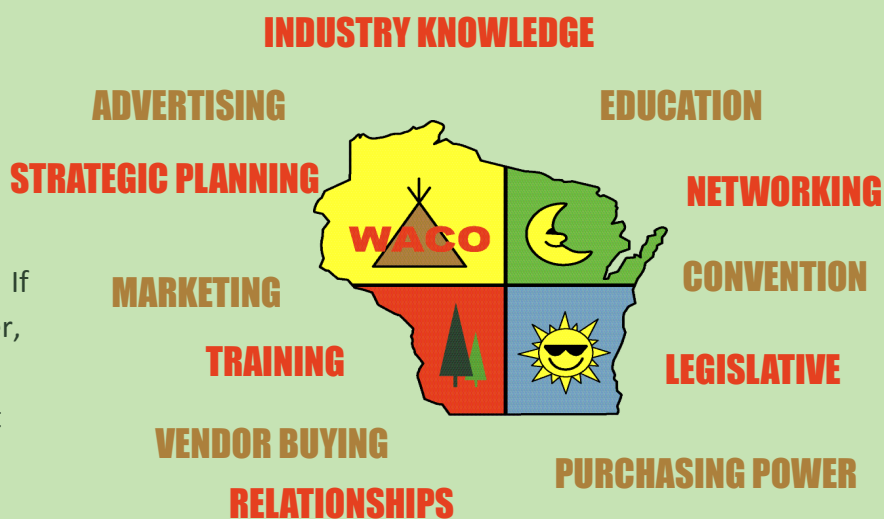


In summary, a great marketing plan is only as good as its execution. Identifying the target market you're trying to reach and then ensuring that you're using the right outlets to reach them formulate a plan for success! Hopefully this article gets you thinking about what you're currently using to reach prospective customers and potentially tweaking a little. Nice to know that being a member of WACO is the perfect supplement to whatever marketing plan you already have in place. For more information on the [WACO Convention](#) or getting others information to [become a member](#), be sure to call the WACO office or [check out the website](#)!

**Statistics from website are comparing March 2019 to August 2019, including 2 full months of updated web redesign.*

Reasons to Join WACO

In the next few months, our WACO staff will be traveling across the state, reaching out to those who aren't familiar with our organization, or potentially don't have enough information to encourage them to join. As we meet prospects we will share with them success stories of our current members and demonstrate all the reasons why its so very necessary to be part of this dynamic and awe inspiring group of business owners. If you know someone who should be a member, be sure to get them in touch with our WACO staff, or simply send in the prospects contact name and we'll definitely be in touch!



National Days - Celebrate September

1st National No Rhyme (Nor Reason) Day	2nd National Labor Day *	3rd U.S. Bowling League Day
4th National Wildlife Day National Newspaper Carrier Day	5th National Cheese Pizza Day	6th National Read A Book Day National Lazy Mom's Day *
7th National Tailgating Day * World Beard Day * National Beer Lover's Day	8th National Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Nurses Day National Grandparent's Day *	9th National Wiener Schnitzel Day National Teddy Bear Day
10th National Swap Ideas Day National TV Dinner Day	11th Patriot Day and National Day of Service and Remembrance	12th National Video Games Day National Chocolate Milkshake Day
13th National Kids Over Kitchen Day	14th National Cream Filled Donut Day National Eat a Hoagie Day	15th National Tackle Kids Cancer Day National Linguine Day
16th National Play-Doh Day National Step Family Day	17th National Apple Dumpling Day National Monte Cristo Day	18th National Cheeseburger Day
19th Talk Like A Pirate Day	20th National Pepperoni Pizza Day National Punch Day	21st National Singles Day * National CleanUp Day *
Use these National Days for inspiration for events, food specials, activities and games at your campground!	23rd American Business Women's Day National Girls' Night In Day	24th National Voter Registration Day *
25th National One-Hit Wonder Day National Comic Book Day	26th National Johnny Appleseed Day National Pancake Day	27th National Chocolate Milk Day National Scarf Day
28th National Hunting and Fishing Day * National Coffee Day	29th VFW Day	30th National Chewing Gum Day National Hot Mulled Cider Day

* Indicates this date changing annually—how Labor Day is the 1st Monday in September for example.

SALES TAX—KEEPING UP WITH THE CHANGES

Sales tax is a topic everyone is talking about. An article by Avalara listed twelve tips for businesses to get and stay compliant. I have selected the tips that I think will be most helpful for campground owners. Each tip was selected by an Avalara sales tax expert and is designed to help you stay on top of the ever-shifting sales tax landscape.

Ensure that your process for keeping sales records will help (not hurt) you in the case of an audit

Sales tax audits strike terror into the hearts of many small business owners. What does an audit make you think of? Painful, protracted dealings with state auditors? Dangerous drains on your business resources? Or do you think of audits at all? If you base your sales tax rates on ZIP codes, you risk applying the wrong rates and remitting sales tax to the wrong jurisdictions.

The current economic climate has increased your chances of being audited. With so many states trying to balance their budgets, they are increasing their efforts to find unpaid tax through audits. Audits can significantly drain business time and resources.

But this is not a message of doom and gloom! If you take the time now to review your process for keeping sales records, it will go a long way towards minimizing your costs in the event of an audit (and it will help you sleep better, too).

When you review your process for keeping sales records, look for the following:

Clear and complete information. Ledgers that the auditor might want to review include: Accounts Payable (A/P), Accounts Receivable (A/R), General Ledger (G/L), Federal Income Tax Return(s) (FTR) and any books or records underneath those including, but not limited to: Purchase Orders (PO), paid bills, invoices, contracts and customer exemption certificates.

Easily accessible documentation. If you have the above documentation available or if it can be easily obtained upon request, the auditor will appreciate the cooperation and will require less of your staff's time.

Show the flow of each transaction. An auditor must be able to follow the trail of each transaction and match up all the documents pertaining to each transaction. Watch for items like charge-backs or returns that you may not have adequately documented. First impressions matter! If the auditor sees that you can effectively show what they ask for, you will save money from penalties you might have otherwise incurred for incomplete or incorrect documentation.

If your process doesn't support the above points, then take steps to ensure that it does now, before you get that audit notification.

Update the filing frequencies on your tax calendars

The beginning of the year is a great time to make sure you know how often you'll be required to file your sales and use tax returns. Jurisdictions typically send notices to taxpayers several months in advance of their filing frequency changing, however if you don't receive a notice, that does not mean the new filing frequency doesn't apply.

IN THE KNOW

Take care of any notices

Have you received any notices from a jurisdiction? You may have filed and paid in a timely fashion, yet the jurisdiction made errors when processing your return and payment. If they do not read your postmark properly or if they apply a payment to an incorrect account, you will receive a notice.

Failing to respond to notices in a timely manner may result in a levy to your bank account, a lien on your corporate officers, or suspension of your business license so you can't do business until it is resolved. Notices should not be taken lightly!

Verify that all checks you have issued to the DOR have cleared the bank

While this may seem unnecessary, a misplaced notice from the bank or the Department of Revenue might result in an outstanding sales tax balance. Be sure to review your process for receiving and sorting incoming documents, especially if you employ part-time staff. Do you know what lurks in your stack of papers or filing cabinet?

Make sure you understand the taxability of new product offerings

Offering a new product? What are the taxability laws? Identify the unique laws in each jurisdiction where you have nexus and plan to sell your new product. Moving into a new state? Product taxability laws are not consistent across state lines—what may be taxable in one state, may be exempt in another.

Check customers' tax-exempt status is updated and agrees with the term of their exemption certificate on file.

Have any of the exemption certificates you have on file expired? You will need to replace those exemption certificates to continue not charging tax to your customers.

If you have changed your company name or acquired a new company, you may need new exemption certificates from all your customers. Check with each of your jurisdictions to find out.

Consider Sales Tax Automation

Our final sales tax tip looks at the big picture. Sales tax collection and remittance is not a profit center. It doesn't make money for your business.

Therefore, the name of the game is to minimize your risk of an audit while maximizing your efficiency. This will 1) save you significant time and resources in the event of an audit, and 2) allow you to redeploy resources to business areas that increase your revenue.

More and more businesses are turning to sales tax automation to help them accomplish these goals. Our cloud-based sales tax software, AvaTax, reduces audit risk with sales tax services that calculate rates, manage exemption certificates, file forms and remit payments.

Information provided by Christine Metcalf, CPB of CSAW Associates, LLC and Coulee Region Bookkeeping and Tax

About Avalara

Founded in 2004, Avalara pioneered a service-based platform for sales tax and compliance automation and has been recognized for years as one of America's fastest growing technology firms. The company's cloud solutions help thousands of customers stay focused on their core businesses by providing automated end to end compliance services including sales and use tax calculation, exemption certificate management, filing and remittance, and a broad array of related services.

INDUSTRY INFORMATION

REVIEWS - REST TO THE RESCUE!

When your customers post a review about your business, they want to know they've been heard. Prospective customers want to know you take feedback to heart, too — it can be the deciding factor when they're trying to choose between spending money with you or with your competitor down the street.

There's no better way to let them know you're listening than to reply to their reviews — the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Here are a few easy steps for handling any review that comes your way:



The Good

Keep it simple. Simply acknowledging the reviewer with something like “Thanks! We appreciate your business and we're glad you had a great experience!” works in most cases. Extra credit: consider offering incentives for happy customers to come back, since repeat customers spend up to 67% more.

The Bad

Follow the R.E.S.T. model:

R—Respond quickly: A single negative review could cost your business 30 customers. Reply quickly to add your voice to the conversation ASAP.

E—Eliminate the emotion: Try not to take it personally, and stay calm in your response. Keep in mind that prospective customers may be reading your reply, and you want to put your best foot forward.

S—Say you're sorry: You don't have to admit guilt; even saying “sorry you had a bad experience” can go a long way towards taking the reviewer's guard down and helping prospective customers to see you in a positive light.

T—Take it offline: Up to 70% of complaining customers will give you another chance if you resolve their concerns — don't miss out on that business! If a customer is really upset, you may want to try to set things right privately, so be sure to provide an easy way for them to contact you directly (for example, an email address or



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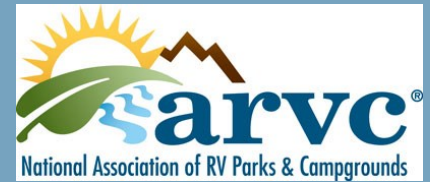
INDUSTRY INFORMATION

LEGAL Q & A

We know you have legal questions—it seems like one can't go a week without something coming back that makes us question, "Hmmm, how should I REALLY handle that situation?" To ensure you're getting real answers to questions specific to your situation, WACO is working on establishing a "Legal Hotline" so to speak. Watch for more information on this and meanwhile, get those questions ready!



ARVC UPDATES



GET YOUR GROOVE ON...LEGALLY!

Music is used by our industry for so many reasons and for the most part, ARVC sites it as "one of the best ways to keep your guests entertained, enthusiastic and relaxed. ARVC's Music Licensing Program makes it easy and affordable for your campground to play the hits, with the best rates in the industry for ASCAP/BMI and SESAC. Plus your campground is protected from copyright fines that can reach as high as \$150,000/song. As a member of ARVC, you have access to this licensing program! And if you're looking for new ideas on how to integrate music at your park or resort, Woodall's Campground Management has a [great article](#) to check out!



SHOUTOUT

Meet the newest member of the Wilderness Campground family. Welcome to the world Connor Joseph Wegner!

Born 8/21/19 at 12:10 pm

8lbs, 9 oz and 21"

Momma and baby are doing well!



WACO MEMBER VISITS



Reorganized Kitchen at Scenic Ridge - Read more about how new equipment can save you money in the long run!



Remodel and Repurposed Laundry and Restrooms at Scenic Ridge



Recently at Scenic Ridge, they did some great remodeling in their kitchen, lounge area and restroom/laundry room. For the kitchen, they focused on organization and efficiency/compliance by labeling everything. Purchasing new appliances, and coolers, freezers made the most sense for Scenic Ridge, as Julie stated, "That way we had warranty included and less hassle if we ran into any problems." If your budget can allow, this could be a money saver in the longer run versus spending time and money on previously owned equipment.

In their lounge/seating area, Julie wanted to create more of a snack shack. They took apart old pallet boards

and created shiplap walls by gluing them to secure them – this saved them a ton instead of purchasing the shiplap outright! Corrugated roofing was used to trim out bar/seating area and they created signage with pieces, hanging with lanterns to finish off the look. Julie said, "We had the materials and thought, hey we could repurpose that!"

In the restrooms and laundry area, they used plywood, cut into different lengths and different widths, then stained in various colors and alternated them over brick, affixing with industrial glue.

Thanks for sharing your successes Julie!



WACO FACEBOOK MEMBERS

WACO has a Campground Member Facebook group for members to stay current with important information, receive updates on deadlines, and network easily with our members. To join this group visit <https://www.facebook.com/groups/wacomembers/>.

WACO MEMBER VISITS

So great to be out and about visiting some of our members this past month. Scenic Ridge Coconut Grove, Whitetail Bluff Camp, and Fort Atkinson—THANK YOU for your hospitality and sharing your changes for the season with us! These images are sure to inspire your fellow members!



Coconut Grove
Fantastic views and great store layout!



Fort Atkinson knows how to stay cool



Whitetail Bluff Camp
Great Restrooms - parents love changing stations!



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Next Month

WATCH FOR THESE STORIES NEXT MONTH!

Checklist for Final Months

Industry Updates

WACO 2019 Advertising

WEBSITE AD SIZES

Banner Ad: 1200 x 120

Side Ad: 200 x 200

PLEASE NOTE!

All Photoshop work should be actual size with a resolution of at least 300 and saved as a layered .tiff in CMYK. It can also be saved as a PDF.

WACO MEMBER LOGIN

Username: member

Password:
born2camp



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Patricia Lombardo - Director

Equity Lifestyle

Email

312-533-7255

Scott Grenon - Director

Tunnel Trail Campground

Email | 608-435-6829

TEXT CLUB

Are you a part of the WACO Member Text Club? If you are not, consider joining! The WACO office uses the text club as a way to communicate urgent messages, deadlines, important information and more. To join the text club, text the word "WACO" to 25827 and your number will automatically be added. After adding, you are able to stop the messages at any time by texting "STOP" in reply to a text.