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Marketing to the Mom of the New Millennium

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She signs the kids up for your ice skating lessons. She brings the kids to your rink with their friends on a Saturday when they're bored. She makes sure her son is signed up for your ice hockey team. She books the ice skating birthday party for her child. She writes the check for the new skates her kids buy from your pro shop. Here are some tips for reaching your most important customer - today's mom.

The same mom who schedules a birthday party for her child at your facility will be a promising candidate to schedule other parties at your facility as well as make referrals to her friends, and you own a very targeted mailing list. Why not take your birthday party database and put together a mailing to this list promoting Halloween, Christmas and Easter parties and family reunions?

Ask your female customer what she watches, listens to and reads, and this will tell you where to advertise.

Word-of-mouth marketing is more important than any other form of advertising. That's why it is so important to generate positive word-of-mouth through customer service, a clean facility, entertainment and value-added packages.

Listening is a selling skill. Women, by nature, are emotional and caring, and if you exhibit a concerned and caring attitude, you will be ahead of the game.

Time is the new currency for moms. Will the mom of this decade spend it with you? Save her time and you will get her business. Find ways to accommodate her through easier party planning, scheduling skating lessons at convenient times for her and helping her to understand the best skates to buy for her child's special needs.

Here are some reasons today's mom might choose your facility for her child's party:
Convenience - Making things convenient and easy for Party Mom will always play in your favor. Ask party moms how you could have made their experience more convenient and adjust your services accordingly.

Party variety - Provide Party Mom with a variety of party options to choose from, such as a Mom & Me party for her toddler, ice skating lessons for her young daughter and an ice hockey party for her preteen son.

Extras - Since extras count with moms, you can't go wrong if you create lots of them for your party program. Can she add things to your party for her kids like novelty gift certificates for her guests?

Reputation - Does your facility and party program have a good one? Will Party Mom want to have her child's friends and guest moms at your center?

Care - Do you let her know that you understand her concerns, and want to accommodate her needs?
Value - Does she feel that she is receiving a party experience commensurate with what she is paying and with what your competitor's facility provides?

Cleanliness - Is your facility generally clean? How about your restrooms? Does your center smell

like a dirty locker room? Does your building exterior look inviting, or gloomy? How do your entrance and lobby stack up - cheerfully lighted and neat, or dark and cluttered?

Safety - Will Mom find safety is foremost in your day-to-day activities? How do you convince her that this is the case? Tell her through your signage, flyers, advertising, voice messages and Web site.

Fun - Is fun a big part of your program? If not, what's the point? If your staff members aren't having fun doing their jobs, then chances are your customers aren't having as much fun as they could be.

Engaging - Mom wants to know that your party program is engaging and that her kids are having fun and are involved in activities throughout your party. She won't want to see kids standing around looking bored and waiting for something to happen.

All-inclusive - Give Party Mom the chance to purchase an all-inclusive event that offers everything that she would want in a party. You will be amazed how many moms will be happy to purchase a party that leaves no stone unturned and makes her children happy.

Other tips for being parent-friendly

o Do you provide convenient baby-changing accommodations for moms with babies and toddlers?
o Do you offer Mom & Me programs and other family-oriented programs that bring families together?
o Do you accept all the major credit cards and provide an ATM machine for mom's convenience, or do you make her leave the building to get more money?
o Do you offer Mom menu items at your concessions that she would find appealing, such as brand coffees, low-fat foods, salads and healthy snacks?
o If Mom waits while kids are at lessons, practice or playing sports, do you provide a comfortable area for her to relax? Do you provide coffee, magazines or even an area for her toddlers to play?
o Do you provide activity calendars outlining all your upcoming events for her convenience?
o Do you provide extensive materials for Mom, outlining all the things that will make her experience easier and less foreign to her when she visits your center? These can include information on what age children can start lessons, what they will learn at your lessons, which activity options are available, what age kids can start playing hockey, how to buy the right skates for her child, how to care for skates, etc. Consider putting these details on your Web site too.
o Do you get Mom's e-mail address and send her regular e-mails about upcoming activities, skate shop specials, skate buying information and more?

Author Susan Snyder-Davis of Kids Marketing Factory offers a free family entertainment center marketing tips e-letter available at www.KidsMarketingFactory.com.