

PSIA General Managers Survey 2017

Comments

From your perspective, what are your ski area's biggest opportunities when it comes to your Snowsports School?
◆ 1st time visitors, who require instructors with good communication skills, skiing riding skills secondary.
◆ Attracting more certified instructors and establishing a better baseline for them to teach from.
◆ build new skiers and boarders
◆ children's programs
◆ Conversion and outreach. We can do much better. Also, finding ways to do more lessons in less time, structure and space.
◆ Converting never ever skiers/boarders into becoming lifelong participants to our winter sports.
◆ Create new participants in the sport because with greater skills, they have greater enjoyment.
◆ Creating guest/family loyalty Education-Responsibility code Modeling safety Making it fun
◆ Creating life long customers after an easy, enjoyable experience
◆ Customer contact and revenue.
◆ Developing a new generation of instructors that in turn develop a strong base of clientele to increase snowsports school revenue and repeat business.
◆ Eliminate the many frustrations that never-evers face...some of which they don't know they're facing (poor clothing/fit) Teach them how to 'join the club' of snow enthusiasts. DRIVE RETENTION
◆ Engagement of new people to the sport.Making it rewarding and fun without so many rules. Also have a safety / fun training component to it also. Offer more than one of way teaching ski/ride . People learn differently .
◆ growing more instructors to teach childrens' lessons for ages 4-12.
◆ Guest services and continuing with the TBL terrain based teaching (a non-PSIA initiative). Conversion.
◆ If we had one, it could help us provide a better experience for our guests.
◆ Increase penetration rate
◆ Increase retention
◆ Increased conversion from beginner/never ever to lifelong sport enthusiast
◆ increasing guest retention
◆ Meeting demand of a diverse and rapidly growing market for positive and engaging learn to/beginner experiences
◆ More excitement in children's programs. More focus on specialty clinics and programs, such as women's weekends, etc.
◆ N/A. We contract all training to an outside party
◆ Our biggest opportunities is to encourage our students /parents to come back to our ski area and to tell them what they will gain by taking that next lesson with us.
◆ Promotion of the sport through positive interaction with our guests.
◆ Providing a safe and fun learning experience
◆ Recruiting new instructors, growing the staff so we can provide more/better teaching opportunities for guests.
◆ Retention
◆ Revenue Increasing retention Making a fun lively environment Creating and maintaining company culture
◆ Seasonal and children's programs. We see growth in those areas
◆ Serve the guest,retain the guest, create new riders
◆ Ski school has the most direct contact with customers on the hill
◆ Skier/Snowboarder Conversion

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◆	Teaching children, increasing repeat business/lessons
◆	Teaching the guest how to ski or ride in an enjoyable way.
◆	The opportunity to create memories and have fun participating in winter sports. Promote skiing as a family activity.
◆	very high we are a feeder area
◆	We are a small family ski resort catering to beginner skiers & riders. The Snowsports School provides our guests with the skills and passion to become lifelong skiers & riders. Increased revenue
◆	We pride ourselves on customer service and our instructors really help with that, going above and beyond for the customer. This helps make the guest experience a positive one.

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From your perspective, what are your ski area's biggest challenges when it comes to your Snowsports School?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 1.) Attracting and retaining new guests is challenge. Conversion has proven more difficult to meaningfully increase than we anticipated. We've tried numerous programs and incentives without moving the needle. This is both a company Marketing challenge as well as a SS retention challenge. 2.) Attracting mid-week ski and ride instructors. Our overall SS staff is aging, and especially our midweek staff. Having enough staff midweek for our school programs is a real challenge.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Advanced beginner terrain Reduction of work comp Finding quality younger staff Difficulty hiring international instructors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Aging career-oriented work force
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Aging out instructors Retention of instructors Resistance to Change
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Aging staff and young staff retention. The average age of our staff continues to climb. We have young staff through college years and then we lose them. We have very few staff members joining the staff in their 20's, 30's, and even 40's.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ At our resort, improving all aspects of the rental process and allocating/creating enough beginner to intermediate facilities/terrain to match demand
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ attracting and employee a team that can flex with the weekend/holiday vs. weekday business demands
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Enough dedicated staff to make program successful and enable us to maximize opportunities for interested guests to participate in ski programs. Communication between departments and understanding how each department contributes toward a positive and successful guest experience.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Finding and hiring people
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Finding enough qualified and skilled labor to teach lessons, especially first time lessons.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ finding enough qualified instructors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Finding the right personalities to instruct a variety of skill levels in the same day and sometimes in the same class.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Finding, and retaining this new generation and training them to develop that clientele.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ getting enough staff.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Getting the best teachers to instruct never ever skiers/boarders instead of upper level guests.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Getting them to part w money e.g. Buying a lesson
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Having adequate staff to serve the needs of our area
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ having the guest return
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ High cost of certification.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Instructor recruitment, aging instructors, seasonal nature of the work.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Instructors are very difficult to deal with. Some act as though they are better than other employees - arrogant.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Keeping Instructors trained Retaining the good ones
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ keeping up with demand.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ N/A. We contract all training to an outside party
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ NY State labor laws make scheduling and tracking of hours a nightmare.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Recruiting and retaining qualified instructors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Recruiting young energetic staff as old timers fade away.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Returning qualified staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Staffing Staffing Staffing Flow of the resort
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ staffing & training the weekend warriors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Staffing and retention
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Staffing and then training followed by scheduling staff to the uncertain lesson demand

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◆	Staffing on peak days as the peaks get higher. Recruiting and retaining staff is a year round effort.
◆	Staffing, retention of staff and a consistent level of training for the turnover with our instructor staff.
◆	Staffing. We need more instructors and need to figure out how to make teaching work as a career choice.
◆	Terrain, snow conditions, training opportunities
◆	The aging of the ski instructors. Pay. Hiring new instructors and retaining them.
◆	turn over and keeping clinic's updated
◆	We don't have one
◆	Worker Compensation claims from instructors

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Do you have any comments or suggestions on how PSIA-AASI can help to improve your business overall?
♦ Cost of certifications and dues are a bit onerous
♦ Entry-level teaching techniques...when was the last time a review was conducted? Not sure how quickly the PSIA can adapt...I sometimes feel this organization is steeped in dogma. Adult lessons are particularly challenging to grow...short attention spans and little time combined with a perception of expense. We are all thinking about this-not just a PSIA problem.
♦ Focus on delivering a fun experience in the first 5 minutes
♦ Focus their direction more on the beginner lesson...teach consistency in lessons.
♦ Help instructors become more team players. Often they feel that rules and obligations don't apply to them.
♦ Help with organizational challenges faced by mid-sized resorts. Meet with executive team.
♦ I see new energy and effort at the national and regional level. Our SS director actively promotes training and Level 1 certification to build staff for the future and to have a stronger staff. We hope this helps grow our business levels.
♦ I wasn't aware of this group.
♦ Keep skiing/ riding fun as the newer generations aren't interested in the perfect turn.. They are interested in learning a life long outside sport that they can enjoy with their friends and family with confidence.
♦ Make it easier and cheaper to be a member.
♦ No, actually we need to improve our business. PSIA provides the support materials that help our Instructor Staff.
♦ Nope
♦ Not at this time
♦ Not at this time.
♦ Number one would be to simplify the entire education program so new instructors could grasp the basics and stress the importance of making it fun for our guests so they will return and embrace the sport.
♦ Promote the life style, limit barriers to new staff to join the organization, make the process fun and show the new staff why they would want to be PSIA isn't just for the job but the life skills that will help them grow.
♦ Provide more service/sales and recruitment training.
♦ PSIA overrated. The teaching methods & methodology are dated. How about something fresh for both instructors and those wanting to learn.
♦ PSIA should have renewed focus on instructor training, but should also help drive the conversion process discussion. Traditional teaching methodology and lesson structure is not beginner friendly. How can resorts partner with PSIA to curb flat industry growth and change the beginner experience together?
♦ PSIA training seems to make things overly technical
♦ PSIA-AASI could have a big impact on focusing on the soft skills more of being an instructor. Soft Skills focusing on guest experience, understanding that many of the reasons someone is in a lesson could be different than what the instructor was taught mechanically to do. I would love to see PSIA classes/ certifications on 'Starting your lesson out right', 'Review/ Preview', 'How best to invite your guest back', 'Using Social Media / Smartphones to invite your guest back', etc.

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	Do you have any comments or suggestions on how PSIA-AASI can help to improve your business overall?
♦	PSIA-AASI needs to become less technical and jargon-focused in their approach. As I have become more involved thanks to my wife teaching at Purgatory, I wonder why ski teaching has become so analytical and technical. Skiing is a simple sport. Ski teachers should focus on the basics to help people learn to ski better.
♦	Recognize and incorporate industry trends, which are the result of market demand, into curriculum. Become more unified and less isolationist with the industry and current trends
♦	The organization needs to focus more on the importance of the first time and never ever guests. They are the future of our industry.
♦	Too technical. Have fun
♦	Tough deal - they have very part time jobs. Earning opportunities for instructors are periodic and short lived. Because of their knowledge of the sport, instructors could be valuable in all areas of the ski operation. Maybe they could become full time employees- working in ski rentals, retail, food & beverage, etc... it may help them appreciate the rest of the operation as well.
♦	unknown at this time.