

HELPING COACHES COACH



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—Iowa State University Research Park

When they launched Camp Marketing Services — today known as My Online Camp — back in 2006, co-founders Don Myers, Andy Priestley and Matthew Mann had a modest

goal: To remove the administrative headaches of running camps for coaches. While the team had a hunch back then that there was a market for their services, they would have been hard-pressed to imagine where they would be a decade later.

"We learned that some of the coaches at Drake University were looking for help with the tasks associated with running their summer camps," says Priestley, My Online Camp's CEO. "We were curious if other coaches had similar needs, so we reached out to Iowa State and a few other local colleges and found a common theme. We felt that if we invested the time to build a scalable web-based product to meet the specific requirements of the college coach, there would be a market for it."

From their offices in the Iowa State University Research Park, the company provides services to more than 2,500 coaches and colleges across the country. From basketball and football to volleyball, soccer, golf and more, they have established a reputation for allowing coaches to do what they do best.

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A Turn-Key Solution

My Online Camp is a turn-key solution for coaches who run camps. The active account management helps coaches, both college and high school, to optimize what can be an important aspect of their program from a recruiting and financial perspective. The primary services offered by the team include:

Custom Camp Website: The websites present a consistent brand to assist with camp marketing. Offering a personalized domain name and submission to the search engines, the websites help increase camp awareness and enrollment.

Online Camp Registration: Instead of coaches having to manage checks and track spreadsheets, My Online Camp offers secure payment processing and online registration.

Camp Management and Reporting: These time-saving tools are designed specifically for coaches, allowing for the easy export of reports in various formats. The reports are loaded with information to aid in the administration of a successful camp. This service also allows college coaches to meet various NCAA compliance regulations.

Regardless of the level of customization the client selects, the My Online Camp team does everything from site design to database management and payment processing. Priestley says it is the team

of 15 fulltime staff members at My Online Camp that has paved the way for the company's steady growth.

"Our hallmark is providing superior customer service," Priestley says. "We feel like we are on the leading edge of offering convenient and efficient camp management. The sports segment is a competitive industry so we push ourselves to continue to innovate."

The Springboard

With offices in the ISURP and access to the talent coming out of Iowa State University, Priestley says he is confident the company will continue to grow and change to meet the specific needs of both coaches and campers. He says the start-up services provided from the Park were instrumental in getting the company started and the access to resources will be important moving forward.

"We used the resources in the Pappajohn Center when we were starting the business," Priestley says. The Pappajohn Center is a resource for new small business owners, tech start-ups and corporate spin-offs. Often, the Pappajohn Center serves as the first step in transforming a technology or idea into a commercially viable venture.

"They provided their ideas on how to get things done and offered valuable feedback on our business plan," he continues. "We are extremely appreciative of them. And the same can

be said of the Iowa State community in general. They showed faith in us early and served as the springboard we needed to launch an idea like this."

The close relationship with Iowa State is a priority moving forward for My Online Camp.

"As a seasonal business, it is important to have access to the type of students Iowa State produces," Priestley says. My Online Camp sees surges of activity in the spring semester as coaches begin to turn their attention to summer camps. "We've had a number of students start with us part-time on a seasonal basis and then transition into full-time employees after graduation."

The Next Step

Priestley also sees a role in the future for technologically skilled Iowa State grads to continue to develop and market the company's newest offering, Ryzer. A mobile web system designed to provide camp and clinic notifications to users, it is part of My Online Camp's strategy of helping coaches grow their camps.

Ryzer.com allows parents to enter pertinent details about their children including age, grade in school, favorite sports and more. As camps in the user's geographical region become available, an alert is sent. Essentially, Ryzer ensures parents don't miss opportunities to enroll their kids in the kinds of camps they would enjoy.

The offering launched in March 2015 and through the end of the year it had more than 200,000 users with a database of more than 12,000 camps.

"Ryzer is a patent pending product that we are very excited about," Priestley says. "It grows with the child and is free to use. It is another way we are extending our reach and expanding the value we provide to coaches and campers."

Looking back at the company's beginnings, Priestley says the journey has been gratifying.

"We've always had big goals," he says. "We have been fortunate to assemble a great staff that has allowed us to surpass our growth objectives while continually providing superior service to our customers."

