

Hello and welcome to the Approaching Schools Podcast. I'm Keris Kenealy, and I help children's activity providers to build key business relationships with schools and nurseries without having to use cold calling or stalking. I want to help you earn a more reliable and consistent income while building your social impact and enriching children's lives with ease. So join me as I take you on a journey, and let's make a positive difference together.

Hello and welcome to another episode of approaching scores. This episode is kindly sponsored by class for kids, and today I'm talking all about dynamic deadlines. And this is all about how you can boost your response rates from schools and nurseries. Now, the best way to boost a response rate, in my opinion, from your school and nursery campaign is to follow up and to follow up well, and for that, you will need my episode all about following up. But today I actually want to talk about the power of a deadline, and one crucial thing that a lot of children's activity providers don't necessarily realise is hindering their responses. Sometimes the type of deadline you give or don't give could be the reason you're not getting any responses or you're getting limited responses to your campaign. So if you are listening to this podcast, and you are in the position where you feel you are currently being ghosted by schools and nurseries. It could even all be down to something as small and insignificant as you might have thought as your deadline. So let's talk about it today. Why is a deadline important in your marketing to schools and nurseries?

Well, number one, it really sets the expectation. So it creates that kind of level playing field where everybody knows what's expected of them, but you need to make sure that your time frame is clear. It's going to give you a target time frame for each of your campaigns. You're going to know exactly when you can send your next campaign based on the deadline of your last campaign. If you didn't give a deadline in your last campaign, you're definitely going to want to give a deadline in your next campaign, because there are so many things that deadlines can help you with. It allows you time to follow up before the deadline. So you don't want to be making your deadline too short, because you don't want to be following up after your deadline. The types of follow up you do after your deadline will actually be your next campaign. So it'll actually be about having a consistent approach to marketing schools and nurseries all year round, which is what we very much focus on in the approaching schools academy that becomes part of your follow-up.

But what you don't want to be doing is you don't want to be following up after a deadline, because that doesn't protect the integrity of your deadline. You want to make sure that your offer, the existing offer, for that campaign, is only available up until that deadline. So to give yourself enough time to follow up, you need to have a bigger time frame in your deadline, and we'll talk about what that might look like in just a moment. But it also allows schools time to arrange your visit. There is a lot that goes on in a school to arrange you coming in, even if you're simply coming in to deliver a free demo or to deliver a free assembly, for example, because they have to make sure that they can make the hall available to you. They might need to rejig their staff timetable. They might need to go and speak to people further up the school and allow those decision-makers time to get back to them before they can get back to you.

So there's a lot that goes on, and they might be needing to check paperwork and all sorts of different things. And in some cases, they may even be checking with governors about making new decisions around providers coming in. So there are all these different things that need to happen in the background, and if you give too short a time frame, you might not be allowing the school time to arrange your visit. And what you're also not doing is showing them that you respect their time. We know that schools are exceptionally busy places. We

know that teachers are exceptionally busy people. We know that the senior leadership team are exceptionally busy people. You need to show them that you respect their time, and you do this by allowing them enough time to arrange your visit, it's going to help you boost your response rate, because, as I mentioned, these are busy people, and for you. To give a timeline and a deadline is going to make the key decision-making process happen a lot quicker if it's going to happen at all, and also allowing you time to follow up is also going to boost your response rate.

Ultimately, it means you know how long you have to follow up, so make sure you are giving yourself enough time before the next half term holiday, for example, so you've got ample time to follow up. It also means you know when it's time to start your next campaign based on your latest deadline. So when does a deadline not work?

Class for kids are proud sponsors of the approaching schools podcast class for kids, the leading booking software for kids activity clubs say goodbye to admin headaches and welcome streamlined efficiency. With class for kids, you can simplify registrations, scheduling and payments all in one place. Keras exclusive discount save you money. Join the 1000s of kids activity clubs using class for kids already to transform their businesses. Ready to get started? Click on the link in the show notes to seize this amazing offer today.

Well, definitely it doesn't work when it's too short. In fact, one of the biggest reasons schools and nurseries might not have got back to you in the past, it's not just because you perhaps didn't follow up, but also because perhaps you gave them a really, really short deadline. Sometimes when I'm running the approaching Schools Challenge, I see people trying to give schools seven days notice, and it's not enough time, and the school is most probably looking at your email or your letter, seeing that deadline and thinking, well, I couldn't possibly arrange to get them in at such short notice, so they don't bother replying, and that could be the reason you feel you're being ghosted by your schools and nurseries. But just as much as we don't want to make the deadline too short, we also don't want to make it too far in the future either.

Why? Because the longer it takes a busy key decision maker or busy teacher to get back to you, the less likely they will not because they don't want to, because they're so busy, and their to do list just keeps on getting longer. They might be thinking, well, that's so far in the future. I haven't got time to think about it now, but I know what external providers always follow me up. I'll wait until they follow up. And of course, then if you haven't followed up either again, it could be another reason why they're not getting back to you just now. We need to make it relevant. The deadline also creates a small amount of urgency. It's there for a reason. It's very much there, because you need to know how many schools and nurseries you've got capacity to take on within the timeframe that you've offered. So it's important that it's there.

It's definitely not a fake urgency, but it does create urgency by definition. So it's a good idea to always be including a deadline, but make it so that it's relevant. So your deadline could be a date, it could be the next half term or school holiday, or it could be like a special Awareness Day or a celebration week, if that's something that you're tying your campaign in with because that makes it relevant. It gives them a reason why they would get back to you now before your deadline, rather than leaving it to a future campaign, or perhaps not at all, because if you've got a special awareness week coming up, so for example, we have national school sports week coming up soon, and a lot of the sports providers and physical activity providers that I work with will be creating campaigns towards that. And of course, that happens at a certain time in the year, and this gives a

very, very relevant reason for them to get back to you now, rather than waiting until after the summer holidays, because after the summer holidays, we won't be having school sports week. So that can be a very, very good reason for putting a deadline in. And it's also a very, very good reason for them to get back to you now rather than leaving it until after the summer, for example.

So how might you articulate your deadline, then what might this look like in an email or a letter? It's going to help you with your call to action. It's going to make it more likely that they'll get a response, that you'll get a response. Because a lot of the time, I see people composing emails to schools and nurseries and not telling the people how to claim the offer, and the problem with that is we're dealing with such busy people, they are skimming to the end. If it doesn't immediately jump out to them what they've got to do next, they might not take action because they're getting distracted by the next thing on their list or the next email in their inbox. So you might. Say, for example, to claim your free demo.

Simply reply to this email by such and such a date. Or maybe you would say to arrange your visit. Please email this address before the next half-term break if half-term is coming up, for example. Or maybe you would say to discuss in more detail, please call this number before all the slots are gone. Again, you're giving a reason, okay, because you only have limited capacity. Again. It's not fake scarcity. You only have capacity to deliver to a certain number of schools before the next half-term break. So it makes sense they would want to get back to you before those thoughts have been taken by other schools or nurseries. Another example to claim your workshop let us know your preferred date during National School Sports week or during whatever special week you are marketing around. And remember, you always want to protect the integrity of your deadline. The last thing you want to do is be offering spaces beyond that deadline for the same campaign. You might be producing another campaign with a completely different offer, solving a different problem, having a different theme, but you don't want to be following up the old campaign beyond the deadline.

Why? Because next time your campaign comes round, they'll think, oh, I don't need to respond to this yet, because they always, they always follow me up beyond the deadline anyway. You want to protect the integrity of your deadline. Make it clear that if they want to claim that particular offer, they need to act. You might want to operate a waiting list then for anyone who's coming in after the deadline. So it makes sense that some schools and nurseries might not have the capacity to get back to you straight away, but they might still would like to claim your offer. So if they come back to you beyond the deadline, you could very much operate a waiting list. There's no issue with operating a waiting list for schools and nurseries. I have some clients who have 10 or 12 schools on their waiting list now, yes, they could improve their cash flow.

Yes, they could grow their business quicker if they got those schools off the waiting list as soon as they could, by hiring more team or rearranging their schedules. But in reality, it's because they're busy. It's because they followed this process and they've got themselves fully booked for now. Now my job in the Approaches Schools Academy is to help people not be fully booked, because I actually don't want them to be stuck if they would prefer to be scaling their business. But that story is for another episode, I think. But the point here is that it's no bad thing to have schools on a waiting list. Okay? So for my clients, they've got 10 or 12 schools on a waiting list. It shows that they're in demand. It shows that there's a reason for when this waiting list becomes available again, for the school to take you up on your offer. Okay? So you can very much operate a waiting list, or you can give them priority for your next campaign.

and future campaigns will become your future follow-ups beyond this deadline. So you don't have to think that you can never contact a school again because you offered a deadline and they didn't take the offer. Next time, it's a new offer with a new deadline. And as I say, this time it looks different this time. It's a different theme. It links in with a different topic. It links in with a different special event on the school calendar, for example, it solves a different problem. It points towards a slightly different service of yours in some way.

So there are some people who might have multiple different sales outcomes at the end of this process, and maybe I'll take some of my yoga providers. For example, I work with a lot of yoga providers in the approaches, schools, Academy, and for some of them, they are doing some campaigns that solve problems around physical development and physical activity in children. They're doing some campaigns that involve mental health and well being and emotional well-being in children. But they're also, in some cases, doing some campaigns that are around teacher well-being, and also some campaigns that are around teacher CPD and upskilling teachers in yoga and physical activity as well. So they have a number of different offers that they can put out all year round based on those services. So whilst they're not approaching the school with the specific service, because they don't know yet whether that school wants or needs that particular service, they are making an offer.

And of course, one campaign may be more around mental health and well-being for children, and the next campaign is more around well-being for teachers. And different campaigns are going to pique different head teacher and PE lead and well being leads interests around the year. And this is one of those things where it. Essentially each campaign looks different. So whereas they might not have claimed your offer helping children the least active children with their physical development in PE through yoga, but they might respond to your one that is helping teachers feel less stressed through well being. So you need to remember that you have different problems that you solve in your business, and all is not lost. If your first campaign is not responded to, you can try solving a different problem in your next campaign. That way, you are still following a school up. They're still getting a number of touch points from you, but you've protected the integrity of your deadline for your last campaign, because that offer isn't available anymore, but now you've got something new for them. So to sum up, you will want to have a deadline in your next campaign.

You ideally want to make your deadline as close to the next half-term holiday as possible, and if you are following the process that we follow in the approaching schools Academy, you'd be giving yourself at least three or four weeks to follow that campaign up before the next holiday. So you start working on a half termly cycle with your school and nursery campaigns throughout the year, and then you will always have time to follow up before your deadline, and your deadline will always fall before the next half term. It doesn't always work when we want a little bit longer to work towards a special week. For example, maybe you want to market your offer in time for art week, and you would actually like some paid workshops to be happening by then, then you might want to be doing your campaign a little bit sooner and then following up again after half term. So it doesn't always work within this cycle.

If you've got a special week that you want to market towards, but even so, you always still want to give yourself at least three or weeks to be able to follow your campaign up before that that specific date happens. And if you are marketing to private nurseries who don't rely on term times and are open all year round again, you might still want to adopt this kind of six weekly approach to your cycle, just to help you keep everything systemized, because then you know that each school or nursery has the same deadline for their campaigns, and therefore you know how which weeks and which time frames you've got to follow those campaigns up. So let me know if

you have had any aha moments. Is this different to how you've been marketing so far? Are you going to make sure that you have a deadline in your next campaign, I would love to know, please come and join my free Facebook group, the approaching schools community. Let me know what you are going to do next as a result of listening to this episode.

Thank you for listening to the Approaching Schools podcast. If you've enjoyed this episode, do come and let me know in my free group for children's activity providers approaching schools, so that I can make more content like this that you'll love. You can find me on my socials at Charis Keneally, and my inbox is always open. I would love for you to leave a review on iTunes and hit subscribe on your favourite platform so you can be the first to know when a new episode is ready until then, chat soon. You.