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2010 is the Year of Growth

This is the year of opportunity. For fitness centers that have a targeted strategy that is well executed, this will be a year of growth, with the focus on one member at a time.

Here's what we are doing to help improve the success of our centers:

Differentiation, Messaging and Communication

Redefine your niche. Run your demographics. Shop the competition. Position yourself according to who your target market is. Utilize electronic media as much as possible. Update your website; use tags and keywords. Get to the top of search engine lists.

Member Retention

A professionally trained and educated staff will retain members. It's that simple. Provide open channels for member feedback. Develop programs to integrate new members, and to link members with others with like interests and goals. Know whether or not they are achieving their goals and whether they are happy with their experience – BEFORE they leave. Assign staff member accounts to call every member at least each month. Email members minimally monthly with events and personalized notes.

Sales Processes

Implement daily standards and expectations. Set up an easy to use dashboard through your software to proactively track prospects and production. Bring in a professional sales trainer for the sales team and your sales manager. Hire mystery shoppers. In our experience, when we shop a club, more than 97% of the time we are never contacted.

Programming, Facility

TRX, youth sports training, BeamFit™, group boot camp training and similar programs should yield significant ancillary revenues with proper execution. Survey your members at least twice each year to plan effectively. Upgrade your facility with a few pieces of equipment, paint, flooring, or renovations.

Leadership

The leader creates the culture of the club. Find a mentor. Attend a conference. Make this the year that you are inspired to achieve great new things, so that you can do the same for your staff. Become intimate with every statistic in your facility. Know when to hold the course, and when to make changes. Challenge yourself and your team every day to push farther than you ever have, then celebrate each success.

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Standardized Fitness Certifications

Although there are many important issues, I feel that standardization for fitness certifications should be a top priority for the entire industry, not only in 2010, but also throughout the next decade. Although several international organizations are working together to create a worldwide standard for competency, (and I commend them), currently, certification recognition and portability do not exist at the global level. For the industry to grow, and for fitness professionals to gain recognition not only from their peers, but from consumers as well, worldwide standardization is a necessity.

Currently I am creating new educational lectures and workshops for fitness professionals, and am putting the finishing touches on my first book!

Personally, wherever I go, I will continue to educate people about the benefits of a healthy life-style, and how to achieve them by making small changes in activity and dietary habits. Unfortunately, many people are under the assumption that they must engage in a formal exercise program in a health club, and be on a strict diet to stay in shape. Although I hope (for the industry) that more

people will buy memberships at health or fitness clubs, I also want the average person to be aware that there are other options available for getting in shape, such as walking, riding a bike or gardening. I would also like to help clarify some of the misconceptions that people have concerning basic nutrition. People just need to understand that small changes in these two areas can make a big difference in their lives.

An individual alone can't change the entire landscape, but if all health and fitness professionals contribute to a common goal of educating average people to the benefits of exercise and healthy eating, collectively we can impact the state of health across the globe.