



ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OF FITNESS CENTERS IN SAO PAULO – BRAZIL

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ABSTRACT

In the city of São Paulo more and more fitness centers open and close in a short time. This is mainly due to mismanagement and the lack of detailed market research. With this in mind, the present study aims to demonstrate through literature review, how to administer and manage a fitness center correctly. Many entrepreneurs open a fitness center looking for a lucrative business that will bring a quick return to their investment. By thinking only this way, there is a big chance that everything can go wrong and cause the loss of a large financial investment, which is often done through bank financing. One of the key things is good service at the front desk as well as physical education teachers and staff. We noted in this study that many fitness centers hire teachers with little experience in order to pay lower wages, with a false idea of spending less and earning more. This study concluded that factors such as hiring graduate and well-qualified teachers as well as trained receptionists and sales specialists are key factors for the success of the business. We also concluded that good marketing of both the center and its professionals is also of fundamental importance to keep clients at the center and thus succeed in this very competitive market.

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INTRODUCTION

The difficulties faced by a fitness center manager are influenced by the way it is administered and vary widely, ranging from internal to external factors. One must be aware that the success and growth of the business will depend on how it managed. It is important to seek new entrepreneurial ideas that help in the growth of the business, to know the client's profile, and the competition, to be updated in the fitness market to bring news to the public. Always look for improvements to attract new clients and establish a differential to be able to stay in the job market. The work will address issues related to topics such as customer loyalty that helps in membership and keeping the clients. Business plan is a management tool to help the entrepreneur do his planning. As to deal with the public, seek qualified professionals for a good service because that way it is possible to profile the client and thus offer an adequate service.

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The methodology of this article is characterized as a review of literature focused on articles that point out business plans directed to the area of fitness centers. Scientific articles were used and the research was carried out online with the help of Google academic.

Literature review

Gym centers are called fitness centers where students are guided while practicing physical activities. The search for fitness centers is closely related to several factors, such as appearance, fitness or medical recommendation, which are also responsible for the growth of this sector. (Rojas, 2003; Marcellino, 2008). With constant innovations in the market, considering factors such as technological training, modalities and employee management there is an increasing need to implement administrative practices in order to maintain competitiveness (Pereira, 2005). A differential for the success of the business is to be prepared to diversify within the scope of people that practice physical exercise, in order to help them reach their goal, relating them to diet and esthetic treatments.

The problem with this diversification of services is the possible loss of business focus, which on many occasions results in disorderly growth of the business structure. (Chandler, 1990). The constant variation in the amount of clients in the fitness center is a matter of concern for the managers responsible for managing and taking care of the company's profits. These variations in relation to the clientele, generate uncertainties as to the number of students that will attend the center influencing the financial results. Seasonality is a well-known event in the Brazilian fitness centers. (Saba, 2001). Correct management is central in all fitness centers, and applying that kind of knowledge helps minimize many problems faced by managers (Bastos; Mazzei, 2012). Getting loyal customers is the key to the company's profit and success, it is not enough just to attract customers you must keep them. (ALMEIDA, 2002, p.31). Making customers loyal to your products or services is creating a long-term relationship, satisfying your customers on an on-going basis. You need to know your customers, find out what their needs and wants are. This information makes all the difference in creating a reliable link. (Bússolo, 2012). According to Henriques (2006), fitness centers are more than simply a place to practice exercises, they are seen as a place for quality of life and improvement of people's well-being. Kotler (2000) states that the cost of maintaining current customers may be five times less than attracting new customers.

The instructor-student relationship is extremely important because, through it, the student is motivated to go to the fitness center and practice activities regularly. For this reason, the manager needs to be concerned only with the equipment and the physical structure, but also with the resources of the company, since it is a decisive point for the retention of clients (SABA, 2006). Another important factor is marketing, which is seen as a means to promote, create and provide goods and services for customers, whether individuals or corporations. (KOTLER, 2000. P.25). Las Casas (2006) says that marketing is an area that brings together ideas to satisfy the desires and needs of consumers, aiming to reach the objectives of the individuals or organization, relating the impact these ideas have on the well-being of the population. According to Cravens & Woordruff (1986) apud Pitts; Stotlar (2002). Marketing concepts become a philosophy of how to run a business. It consists of three conditions: assessing the needs and tastes of clients and having as a basis that through these needs you can decide what your business will do. Always look for a way to meet the expectations of the consumer/client of your company. Always seek to meet the customer's wishes, and with satisfactory performances in this matter, you gain improvements in your company.

Sports marketing is a process that brings creative ideas to attract customers that can be in the form of affordable, quality care, promotions, but always trying to satisfy the consumer's wishes, while achieving this goal of winning the competition means that your product is satisfactory. The marketing never ends because it is an ongoing process that always will have news. (PITTS, STOTLAR, 2002). According to the authors Sarmiento and Pires (2001), the introduction of the physical education professional in the administrative area is the result of the expansion and evolution of sports, which has been constantly growing over the years through industry and commerce. This has made it more competitive, that is, with a greater need for complementary knowledge. With the possibility of the physical education professional opening his

own fitness center, besides the specific knowledge in the area, there is a need for managerial skills to achieve results, both in the health related objectives for the entrepreneur and client, as well as financial and social (Azevedo, 2009). The professional in this area who wants to run fitness centers business needs to be aware that the success of the company and its growth in the fitness market needs marketing to make the product profitable, making customers look for your service and product. (MAGRO, 2002). The customer service done by the reception team is primordial and fundamental to the get new students. The reception is the business card of the fitness center and through a good service clients are attracted, since these clients choose the fitness center for their well-being and health, and the reception influences the loyalty or not to the establishment. (1998). Employees who are always in a bad mood, unwilling to work, with negative attitudes impede the success of the fitness center. The professional should have a positive attitude, always be on hand to help, be in good mood. These are positive factors that lead the fitness center to success. (PEREIRA, 2005).

Paz (2005) comments that one of the factors that generate dissatisfaction in clients is the attention given by teachers, and their motivation to teach them, whether it is good or even bad, is one of the primary factors. A professional who is motivated and helpful to the students is an important aspect of a good attendance procedure. One of the suggestions to stand out in the market is to create a differential in the services rendered, be it creative and innovative, which could result in more clients for the establishment. Using resources that already exist and new ideas that make it possible to create activities without additional costs, generating customer satisfaction with the services provided. The fitness center needs to become the place where the student most likes to be, as if it were his second home. Where you know you will always be well received, not only for the practice of physical activities but also for your interaction with others. The professional must always be available to the student not only to guide him but to create a link between them. For example, talking about the current situation, stimulating the clients during the exercises, making them achieve their goals and showing concern in his absence, the client is shown that he is important in that environment, with good chances of making him a student faithful to this fitness center (SABA, PIMENTA, 2008).

In provision of services, sanitation of the fitness center is a secondary but not less important part. Students do not choose a fitness center just because it is clean and organized, but they would rather attend an environment that is clean and adequate rather than an unhygienic environment, as they seek a place for their health and well-being. (HENRIQUES, 2006). Ramos (2015) says that when we talk about quality, this term can be related to the various ways in which it is interpreted, taking into account individual perception and how they can apply that concept. We, as customers or service providers, when asked what "quality" is all about, bring to mind: quality of service, material, usability, durability, price, brand reputation in the market and customer satisfaction. When it comes to trade and service provision, quality can be defined in several ways.

- "All the features of an entity that enable it to meet the implicit and explicit needs". (NBR-ISO, 9000: 2000)
- Quality is everything that improves the product from the point of view of the customer ". (DEMING, 1993)

- "Quality is the correction of problems and their causes throughout the series of factors related to marketing, projects, engineering, production and maintenance, which influence user satisfaction." (FEIGENBAUM, 1994).

Las casas (2004) defines quality as the act of following the quality standards defined by a company and applying these methods in the best possible way to achieve satisfactory results and also to exceed the expectations of the clients. Maximiano (2000) points out that quality is generated by every employee of a company, who must provide a great service and a product that meets the needs of the client. When a company's quality standard is uncorrupted automatically the quality of the product and service delivery remains intact and with a high approval rating. ZEITHMAL (1985) says that being aware of the flaws in service delivery is extremely important and the service provider must have a self-critical feeling to know where the process has failed and to improve it in the best way. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985), have created a method called Gap analysis, which has the function of facilitating the identification of failures in service delivery and company assisting managers improve such failures.

The Gap is based on the authors as follows:

- **GAP 1:** Discrepancy between users 'expectations and management perceptions of these expectations.
- **GAP 2:** Discrepancy between management perception of user expectations and specification of quality of services.
- **GAP 3:** Discrepancy between quality specification of services and services actually offered.
- **GAP 4:** Discrepancy between services offered and what was communicated to the user.
- **GAP 5:** Discrepancy between what the user expects to receive and the perception he has of the services offered.

Conclusion

It was concluded with this study that factors such as hiring graduated and well qualified teachers who can offer a differentiated and personalized service as well as trained receptionists and sales specialists are key factors for the success of the business. We also concluded that good marketing of both the fitness center and its professionals is also of fundamental importance to keep the fitness center clients and therefore be successful in this extremely disputed market.

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