

## 10 Ways to Grow Leisure Programs

With quality amenities and talented staff your club can take actions to realize solid program participation. Here are some ways to see new faces and increase program attendance.

**Use cutting-edge communication systems.** Broad and effective communication must be a top priority, and depending on whom you are targeting some mediums work best. Develop an app for your club. As members frequently look at their smart phone, they can view your club's current programs, make a reservation or book a lesson. Get prominent digital display boards that are easily updated and show text, pictures and videos about all leisure activities. Systematically call prospects and new members. For example, the Fitness Director can work closely with the Membership Director to get current names and contact information for new members. Then, the Professional personally calls each new member, welcomes them to the club and invites to an activity.

**Focus on non-players and novice programs.** The biggest opportunity to grow leisure programs is with the many people who are not involved. Instead of focusing on people who play, grow your base by promoting and nurturing novice players. Make sure you have the right staff for beginners, for not all instructors have the patience or skills to make them feel comfortable. Besides instruction, playing with other beginners is essential. For example, in tennis have a novice round robin where only true beginners are involved and players change partners and opponents. Besides learning the basics of scoring and court positioning, this is a great format for them to make friends – a key for staying involved.

**Get new people involved with committees and programs.** A concern of long-term committee members and staff is their programs can become stale. New people bring novel energy and ideas. Let new people create original formats and take ownership of these activities, for often they will bring new participants. If you have a popular format, like mat Pilates, and only mediocre attendance change instructors and see what happens.

**Consistently deliver fitness orientations.** Do center orientations at least once a month, for these serve operations and program participation. Fitness orientations need to cover the important topics of safety, cleanliness and usage. Besides the meet and greet benefits, people need to know how to safely use all machines including the Automated External Defibrillator (AED). When you watch people lift weights, most make the common mistake of lowering weights quickly and missing the eccentric (elongation of muscle) benefits. A good orientation gives members this essential information which produces twice the workout and better results. When someone sees results they are more likely to return and share their success with others.

**Schedule ROGY events.** This acronym stands is for the color of tennis balls – red, orange, green and yellow. As a child grows and develops they progress from a larger red ball, to low compression and eventually to the standard yellow ball. Unlike many tennis tournaments that require two or more days, ROGY events can be finished in a morning or afternoon. During these events for children schedule complementary leisure programs for parents, so the entire family is participating at the club. 10 and under tennis is a huge trend and presents major opportunities to grow your base of children.

**Rotate days and times of class schedules.** Unless you have numerous offerings, introduce a new day or time for popular formats to attract new people. Are you doing programs that fit the tight schedules of working men and women? Also, introducing a new time can be just temporary to gain new participants. When the new attendees truly like a program, they may adjust their schedule to make other times work. Take the risk of putting a new class on the schedule for a couple of months then review.

**Let people try before they buy.** A Professional, who is very personable and skilled, knows that if someone participates once they will likely have a very positive experience and come back. If your club charges for group fitness classes, let a member “try one on the house.” Proactively inform the instructor about first-timers, so she can insure success. Another example is give free ½ hour hitting lessons. Grow your leisure programs one person at a time with positive initial experiences.

**Get your departments working in concert.** Although golf may still be king, other departments need similar attention. Have all your Directors proactively working together and scheduling complementary programs as much as possible. In the summer have programs like “Junior Superstars” that combine golf, swim and tennis activities for points and prizes. When Directors actively support and are visible in other departments this sends a powerful message to members. Very successful programs are realized through interdependence which serves participation.

**Recognize members who participate.** Recognizing people fulfills a basic need, and a great way to do this is simply say “thank you.” At the end of a program, does your staff sincerely thank the people who attend? Acknowledge members who participate in programs with their names, photos and/or pictures on bulletin boards, newsletters or websites independent of any achievements. Simply recognize people for being present! Truly, this makes people feel important, builds rapport and enhances participation.

**Deliver Wellness Programs.** Wellness is a forward trend and likely the biggest opportunity for amenity programs. There are six dimension of wellness – physical, intellectual, spiritual, social, occupational and emotional. Each spoke on the wellness wheel is huge, so no one is an expert on all six dimensions. The challenge of wellness is its depth and breadth. The good news is you do not need major capital expenditures - just get a Wellness Director. This is someone who is passionate about wellness, can disseminate great information and attract expert presentations. Wellness programs include much more than fitness centers and spa services. Diverse wellness programming can reveal club opportunities, improve everyone’s health and connect members to activities.

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