

‘Cleanliness
Rated as
a Top
Concern’



Improve Member
Satisfaction By **10%**
Through Creating a
Cleaner Fitness
Environment

Improve Member Satisfaction By **10%** Through Creating a Cleaner Fitness Environment

Introduction

In today's economy the fitness sector is under more pressure than ever to provide added value, with consumers not only seeking more for their money but faced with an increasing number of gyms and other leisure facilities to choose from.

Attention to the cleanliness of facilities can improve customer satisfaction levels. One national fitness club operator has experienced a 10 per cent increase in member satisfaction scores as a result of a more strategic approach to cleaning, linked with adding value for members. High standards of cleanliness can help retain and gain new customers and provide gym and leisure operators with a competitive advantage. In 2012 the Fitness industry was worth almost £4bn, with 12.1 per cent of the UK population, around 7.6m people, being members of a fitness facility, 4.5m in the private sector and 3.1m in the public sector¹. The number of sites rose in 2012 to 5,900 from 5,852 in 2011¹.

Over the last three years, the UK health and fitness clubs market has seen some tough trading conditions with consumers having less disposable income and growth in the industry remaining flat².

Figures show that around one in six adults use a private health club. Almost 40 per cent of British adults have been members of clubs at some stage and 23 per cent are lapsed members. Around 21 per cent have shown an interest in becoming members in the future. By the end of 2012 average revenue per member was just under £500².



23% of
British
adults are
lapsed gym
members



The challenge ahead

Two of the major challenges facing the industry in the next 12 months identified in the Fitness Industry Confidence Survey 2012³ are the economy and member retention.

With many consumers regarding their gym membership as an essential lifestyle choice, what can operators do to retain their members and capitalise on the acquisition of new ones?

Three steps to improve member satisfaction scores:

Step1

Recognise that members care about cleanliness

Step2

Uphold your brand image and retain your members

Step3

Use your club's cleanliness as a means of adding value

21% of British adults show interest in becoming a member of a fitness club in the future

Step 1

Recognise that members care about cleanliness

Cleanliness is one of the most common sources of complaints fitness facilities receive. Amidst the intense competition brought on by cost pressures and an increasing number of operators the standard of cleanliness is a differentiator for operators that requires serious consideration.

A study⁴ among 3,036 adults carried out in the US last year found 88 per cent of adults wouldn't exercise in a gym or athletic facility if they found it to have cleanliness issues.

When asked which specific cleanliness issues would most likely prevent them from exercising or working out in a fitness facility it wasn't just the equipment that was of concern. The survey showed 71 per cent of people would be put off by unclean changing rooms, 56 per cent dirty floors, 46 per cent said spills and stains on the floor or carpet and 36 per cent dusty surfaces.

A HAFOS⁵ survey carried out last year showed that 44 per cent of people would be encouraged to use leisure centres if they had improved facilities. This was seen as more important than better access to transport (29 per cent) and more child care facilities (25 per cent).

Going to the gym is seen as being good for health and well-being yet research has shown that they can be a breeding ground for potentially dangerous bacteria and infections. Bacteria can thrive on gym equipment as well as in changing rooms, on floors and in showers, saunas and steam rooms for days. According to one national newspaper, the Health Protection Agency reported that men and women have even contracted a strain of the superbug MRSA at their gym or sports centre.

44% of people would be encouraged to use leisure centres if they had improved facilities

71% of people would be put off by unclean changing rooms

Step2

Uphold your brand image and retain your members

Providing a clean environment is not only a benchmark for members but the implications of getting the cleaning strategy wrong are huge for the brand.

For example, comments about one gym chain on an online forum revealed that one of the most popular areas of concern and complaint was the cleanliness of facilities. In fact, users of the forum actively discouraged other people from joining their gym on the grounds it was dirty. Mould in the showers, unhygienic facilities, foot infections and general cleanliness were just some of the complaints.

With the strength and speed of social media networks, negative comments have the potential to damage a brand and lose customers in a very short space of time.

Cleaning in leisure environments is a customer-facing role. Operators need to think about how cleaning can effectively combine both people and professional skills to maximise the impact of front-line personnel. Since everyone represents the brand, cleaners who are visible around the premises during the day can be used as a customer service tool.

Whilst business objectives may include reducing overheads, providing good practice in the delivery of cleaning services can be a strong value proposition for a fitness brand that ultimately impacts the bottom line through increased member satisfaction and an increased perception of value for money – a great environment and facilities offered for the cost of monthly membership.

Users of one online forum actively discouraged others from joining their gym because it was dirty

88% of adults wouldn't exercise in a gym or athletic facility if they found it to have cleanliness issues



Step3

Use your club's cleanliness as a means of adding value

An effective cleaning strategy can bring many tangible benefits and should be viewed as a means of adding value, which can generate brand loyalty as well as add to the bottom line.

How to use your club's cleanliness to improve member satisfaction scores:

1. Make cleanliness a priority
2. Focus on cleaning at peak times, when your members will notice it the most
3. Don't be afraid to let your cleaners be seen by your members
4. Monitor complaints and comments about cleanliness and visibly target the problem areas
5. Make sure your service supplier understands your brand values
6. Ask your cleaning provider to share their expertise on what could be improved
7. Put processes in place to ensure all activities are carried out to the desired standard
8. Ensure suppliers have a strong network of cleaners and are adaptable to changes
9. Carry out regular member satisfaction surveys and track progress

There is a demonstrable business case for outsourcing cleaning services

One of the most common areas of complaint is the cleanliness of facilities



Case Study:

Improve member satisfaction scores in practice

One leading health and fitness club operator increased its member satisfaction score by 10 per cent through altering its cleaning service provision.

The fitness club operator has over 450,000 members and wanted to create the best possible experience for its members. All of the staff, including its contract cleaners, adhere to a set of brand standards to achieve excellence in customer service. However, a member survey conducted by the operator showed that members valued cleanliness highly and would prefer to see cleaners on site.

Because of the high importance placed on cleanliness and customer service the fitness club operator worked with their cleaning service supplier, Emprise, to implement a solution whereby instead of cleaning overnight when its clubs were empty Emprise completed cleaning works during the day.

The cleaners now work throughout the day to complete the cleaning of the entire leisure facility including the bar area, gym, locker rooms, changing rooms and showers whilst providing any necessary reactive works. Having cleaners on site to respond to spillages and clear litter delivers the additional flexibility that keeps the clubs looking at their best even at peak times.

Building a strong network of cleaners was critical, as missed shifts are unacceptable when the cleanliness and appearance of the facility are paramount to the client's

brand values. The clubs' locker room attendants were also integrated into the cleaning team.

Moving to a day clean has created significant financial and environmental efficiencies for the fitness club operator whilst enabling the clubs to maintain their high service standards throughout the day, ensuring all members have an excellent experience. The operator wanted the member coming in at 6.00am to have the same quality of experience as the member coming in at 10.00pm and this is what it achieved through engaging its cleaning supplier in the pursuit of improved member satisfaction.

By tailoring cleaning operations to match that of the fitness club operator and encouraging suppliers to adopt the same brand values in service delivery the operator achieved a solution that is sufficiently aligned to its own standards and aids it in meeting its objectives.

Members seeing the cleaning being done had a positive impact and as well as delivering a better customer experience, the operator's costs and carbon footprint have significantly reduced.

Immediately following the move to a day clean the member service scores in the clubs' customer satisfaction survey increased by around **10** per cent when normally a one to two per cent increase would be seen.

Have you also considered?

- Showing your members you care by providing first-aid trained cleaners at peak times
- Implementing a daytime cleaning programme to reduce carbon footprint
- Consolidating cleaning, waste management and washroom supplies to achieve cost efficiencies
- Using innovative cleaning methods to improve the building environment to add perceived value to membership fees and increase member retention
- Developing a policy of monthly deep cleans to improve the overall appearance of your facilities and equipment
- Working with a specialist service supplier allowing you to focus on core business activities



Outsourcing

There is a demonstrable business case for outsourcing cleaning services in the leisure sector.

Professional cleaning services add value to clubs and gyms in a number of ways including significant cost and efficiency savings, flexible staffing, quality control, staff training, an established track record and available resources to cover staff sickness.

Around **65%**
of non-core
service contracts
in the facilities
management
sector are
outsourced

Member retention - working the numbers

There is also a strong financial argument for the industry to develop a more strategic approach to cleaning.

The examples in this paper clearly demonstrate that cleaning contributes to higher levels of member satisfaction. Twenty-three per cent of people are lapsed gym members and the average revenue per member is around £500. If a focus on adding value via cleaning could mean retaining even one per cent of those lost, around 114,681 more members and as much as £57.11m in additional revenues⁶ could be gained for gyms across Britain.

Retaining 1% of
lapsed members
= **£57.11m**
additional
revenue

88% of
adults wouldn't
exercise in a gym
or athletic facility
if they found it to
have cleanliness
issues

Conclusions

There are several major benefits for implementing an effective cleaning strategy to improve member satisfaction scores:

- Improved facilities and cleanliness are shown to be key drivers and performance indicators of customer satisfaction
- Working with a specialist cleaning provider delivers a range of additional benefits and outcomes
- Cleaning can make a visible difference in customer satisfaction levels
- Clean premises are a big issue for consumers
- Regular thorough cleaning is the only effective solution for keeping potentially harmful bacteria and superbugs in check
- Cleaning can potentially increase members' perceived value
- Member satisfaction influences brand loyalty and customer retention
- Working in partnership with suppliers to drive change and innovation can lead to cost savings and increased revenues
- A good cultural fit between the client and cleaning provider will support brand values
- Cleaning strategy can be a successful means of differentiation and provide organisations with a competitive advantage

High standards of cleanliness can provide competitive advantage

The business case for ensuring high standards of cleanliness as a means to improve member score is clear. Cleaning is a big deal for consumers who, in these health and money conscious times, are constantly looking to justify the cost of gym membership and will actively avoid somewhere they deem to be unclean. The cost benefits of providing effective cleaning makes a compelling argument for improving customer satisfaction levels as well as contributing to the bottom line.

About emprise

Emprise is a leading support services company specialising in cleaning and security since 1986. The company has a turnover of £90 million and employs 7,700 members of staff.

Emprise has been working with leisure facilities from national premium clubs to 24-hour value gym chains to council partnership leisure centres for over 25 years. Consequently, we have the experience and expertise required to design and deliver the best possible cleaning solutions for leisure environments, ensuring both quality and cost.

Emprise continually develops its operational model and delivery methods to ensure the company continues to meet clients' diverse and evolving needs. This involves working to output specification models offering efficiency and flexibility and helping many organisations manage their environmental impact via green cleaning services.

Emprise clients include Pure Gym, David Lloyd Leisure, Fitness First, Fusion, John Lewis, Waitrose, Hilton, De Vere, the National Theatre, Royal Albert Hall, Derwent London and DTZ.

To find out more about Emprise or for an informal discussion with a member of our team please call us on 020 7549 0800 or visit our website www.emprise.co.uk



References

1. 2012 State of the UK Fitness Industry Report, The Leisure Database Company Ltd www.theleisuredatabase.com pages 20, 24-26 the Health Club Management Handbook 2013 www.healthclubhandbook.com a Leisure Media publication. www.healthclubhandbook.com/digital Tel: +44 1462 431385

2. Mintel Health and Fitness Clubs report - UK November 2012; average revenue per member is expected to be £498 at the end of 2012. Mintel, a leading market research company <http://www.mintel.com> pages 28-30 the Health Club Management Handbook 2013

3. Fitness Industry Confidence Survey 2012 Leisure-net Solutions <http://www.leisure-net.org/index.php/company-news/106-leisure-nets-predictions-for-2013> page38 the Health Club Management Handbook 2013

4. Study carried commissioned by the Cintas Corporation www.cintas.com and conducted online by Harris Interactive December 2012

5. 2012The HAFOS (Health and Fitness Omnibus Survey) 2012 has now been carried out by Leisure-net Solutions www.leisure-net.org for over 10 years, and continues to be the only regular industry barometer of UK consumers' attitudes and perceptions towards, health, activity and the active leisure sector. Page38 the Health Club Management Handbook 2013

6. Population figures from 2011 census = 49.86m x 23% = 11.47m x 1% = 114,681 x £498 = £57,111,138 (£57.11m)

ONS says England and Wales adult population is 45.5m. 83 per cent of people living in Scotland are aged 16 or over. Population of Scotland is 5,254,800 according to Scottish government figures x 83% = 4,361,484 = 49.86m

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/census/2011-census/key-statistics-and-quick-statistics-for-wards-and-output-areas-in-england-and-wales/sty-how-people-are-living-in-england-and-wales.html>

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2012/08/scotlands-population02082012>

Contact Emprise today on:

020 7549 0800

Or visit our website

www.emprise.co.uk

Emprise Services plc
186 City Road, London, EC1V 2NT
info@emprise.co.uk

 www.twitter.com/EmpriseServices



 **emprise**