



**The top 10 marketing
things you must do
to launch a successful
fitness business.**

The top 10 marketing tips when starting your own fitness business

So you have decided to start your own fitness business - congratulations. Owning your own business can be so rewarding, there is nothing like being your own boss. You can set your own schedule, have greater control and turning your passion into your career is something a lot of people don't get the chance to do.

But there are a number of things you need to do before you open your doors - a business plan, financing, equipment, insurance, legalities, registrations and location. You need to decide whether you will run a gym, a personal training studio, buy a franchise, run outdoor classes, group fitness or offer personal training sessions.

One of the major areas you need to consider is your marketing. So to make life a little easier for you, here is my checklist of the top 10 marketing items you need to work out to ensure your business is a success for the long term.

1. Brand and logo

So what exactly is your brand? Think of it as your personality. It tells people who you are and what they can expect from you. So decide how you want to be perceived - funny, professional, tough, caring and so forth. Make sure your brand represents this.

The foundation of your brand is your logo - this is a symbol or small design that represents your business. Have a good think before committing to a brand as this will be represented in all communications you make to your clients, members, leads and the general public. It needs to be consistent, it needs to stand out and it needs to represent the essence of you.

2. Decide what you will offer that no one else does

Whether you call it a competitive strategic advantage, unique selling proposition, core differentiator or just what makes you special, you need to work out what you do better than all the other fitness and sports businesses you are competing with. What gives you the edge over all the other players and ensures you stand out from the crowd?

Once you work this out, make sure that this is the key message that positions you in your local community. Don't be a "me-too" brand or follow the crowd – decide what is the one thing you want people to remember you for.

3. Define your target audience

If you are planning to open a gym or PT business, you need to think about who you are trying to attract as you can't be all things to all people. There needs to be a strong connect with what you are offering and what your target market wants.

Think carefully about your business and what you are going to offer - if you are going to open a mixed martial arts studio or a CrossFit box, you probably wouldn't focus your marketing on those aged over 65 years. Similarly, if you plan to open a 24 hour gym with no classes, there is no point trying to appeal to people who want group fitness classes.

Getting it right with what you offer to your audience will save you money, improve your revenue, increase your brand awareness and give you happier members who will be with you for the long haul.

4. Check out the competition

You need to take a close look at what your competition is doing? How do their facilities compare to yours? What are their fees? What promotions are they running? What do they offer that you don't or what can you offer that they are not?

With more specialised gyms opening up and with the rise of smaller 24-hour gyms, it has become more challenging than ever to attract new members but you need to know exactly what the main players are doing as this determines how you can position and differentiate yourself in the market.

5. Create a Web site

One of the first things people will look at to know more about you is your Web site. This also gives your business credibility, tells people about what you offer, is always accessible around the clock, captures leads, and gives you greater exposure.

Make sure your Web site looks professional, is easy to navigate, has a lots of great pictures and videos of your business, uses a modern design and captures any lead's details.

6. Develop your marketing plan

You would be putting together fitness plans for your clients or members including their background, what they want to achieve, their exercise routine, nutrition meals as well as monitoring them on a regular basis to see how they are progressing. You need to do exactly the same for your new business.

No matter how large or small your marketing budget is, you need a marketing plan to give you direction and to help you manage your valuable time and money. It forces you to look at the big picture, keeps you on track and gives you greater control of your marketing activities.

7. Set up your social media profiles

When it comes to online business branding, the creation of social media profiles is absolutely essential. Whether you are just trying to gain more exposure online, develop greater connection with your fans or followers, or improving your ranking in search engine results when people search for your name, you need to have your profiles set up.

Think of each social media profile as a landing page for your brand. This landing page is possibly the first encounter that someone is going to have with your brand, and you will want to make a great first impression so the visitor wants to know more about you.

So decide what social media platforms you want to be on (such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram etc), set up your profiles for each one and create a post schedule so you know when and what you will say.

8. Collateral and business cards

Though a lot of marketing is done online, you still need something physical to hand out to prospects whether it be business cards, flyers, posters, letters, guest passes or postcards.

Ensure any collateral is in line with your branding guidelines (see the first point), has a consistent look and feel and contains all your contact details.

9. A customer database

One of the most important resources you need to have is a database. You need proper software to hold all the details of your members, clients, prospects and leads.

A database is a great tool to work out the basic demographics of your membership base and help define your target audience. You have a better understanding of your ideal customers and what they look like and this will help you fine-tune your future marketing campaigns.

Any enquiries that come through your Web site, by email, through social media or over the phone must all be added to your database. This will become one of the most important marketing tools you will own.

10. Promoting your business

When you are all ready to go, how are you going to tell people all about you and what you are offering? Online ads, PR, pole posters, Google Adwords, hold an open day, letterbox drops or handing out flyers.

You need to decide what forms of advertising you will use to ensure your target audience knows all about you, what you are going to say, what promotion you will do and what the call to action is.

Yes running your own fitness business can be tough, costly and time consuming but if this is your passion, you are committed and you have all your plans in order, you will reap the rewards of owning a business that reflects your vision and attracts clients that makes every day of work a truly wonderful experience.