

EYE

EXCITE YOUR ENVIRONMENT

fitness

exercise - equipment - education - exergaming



Do you have community hall, sports stadium, recreation or leisure centre or other multipurpose facility in your council area?

Ever thought about its maximum occupancy and usage?

In my opinion, it is about delivering solutions and diversity in our facilities. We know the stable of sports, fitness classes, Weights and cardio equipment that works well if people opt to perform these regularly. Unfortunately we have a massive epidemic of overweight, diabetic and at-risk people as well as an aging market place that these rituals do not greatly appeal to. As an industry we are seeing an amazing response to 'Zumba' and Curves previously has done wonders in providing solutions outside the current box clubs and regimes above to get people active. The trick is then ensuring there is an enjoyment maintained, social connection, progression measured and provided and variety exposed so people can get results and choose to add exercise based interaction to their schedules. Ultimately this is a win for operators as 'retention' or addiction to exercise.

The club model I love in the US is the huge program athletic club model that offers everything (with progression) from basic gymnastics for kids, learn to swim, dance lessons, indoor sports training and competitions, fitness, group exercise, martial arts, crèche, day spas, seniors programs, you name it. These facilities show us the meaning of diversity, progression and retention. These facilities enable a child to progress through a range of learning and discovery of body awareness related skills, sports and activities. A one stop shop if you will, that benefit the child's learning and understanding of exercise and sport (these are different!), whilst also benefiting the whole family with the ease to participate in a range of services under one roof. This is not just for children but adults and seniors and other specialized community groups where this facility continually serves up variety and opportunity to keep members from infancy till inability. The key to success of this model is the 'program director' which must deliver and utilize and many training rooms, facilities and resources to attract users/members with a combination of traditional results based solutions with innovative engaging methods which double as a marketing platform. Best of all, these are at one location, the true essence of a 'third space' that can be fundamental part of the community. These sites become destination facilities or sites the rest of community can function around.

Whilst we may not have the luxury of such facilities at our disposal we do have community halls, sports stadium, recreation or leisure centre's or other multipurpose facilities in our local council areas that could offer such a system and collective solution. The key here is space utilization and programs that can be offered with minimal storage and not effecting the existing programs in place but yet complementing what they do offer. Not every solution under the sun can be offered or afforded to be offered however a review of your local market and current user groups should identify who is not being catered for and which group, programs would be best to target. Then a program director needs to start rolling out a range of solutions to get users in the doors, progress them to other facilities and services whilst also adding and reviewing the existing programs.

ROI is key to this but unfortunately sometimes you will need to spend money to make money and other times like a 'zumba' could be a cash cow while the hype is there. When looking for diverse options to better utilize these facilities it is important to consider program options that are suitable for multiple users groups at different times.



That is can be used by personal trainers in the early mornings, seniors in the morning, church groups in the afternoon, sports teams/disabled after school period and with a ladies only class at night.

Unfortunately our population of not active people have preconceived ideas about what each of these community facilities and programs might provide so community networking and PR in local newspapers will go a long way to engaging and sharing this message to key members in the community. Work with other health promotion and allied health groups to discuss and implement new and diverse solutions and tapping into key social messages around health promotion through exercise.

Consider these ideas and concepts and put your plan into place today to get maximum usage out of your facilities in the community today.

David Norman (BPhEd) consults to the health and fitness industry and can assist your local facilities in planning, promoting and producing better programs for greater impact and usage of your facilities. Contact David at dnorman@eyefitness.org 1800 771 079