

# IS YOUR CLUB READY FOR THE NEW YEAR?

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THE BEGINNING OF A NEW YEAR IS A GREAT TIME to conduct an annual audit of your club procedures. In these economic times, it is particularly important to maximize revenue potential and increase customer service levels. A scrubbing of your database as well as a review of employees and daily practices are important steps to effectively managing your club in 2009.

Here are a few of the yearly procedures clubs should be conducting:

**Employee Performance Reviews:** Implementing annual performance reviews is a must for any club wishing to perform at peak efficiency and one of the most important steps you can take to ensure your club's future success. Evaluating employees' contributions to the team, their work and personal goals, their attitude and the quality of customer service they provide can be an eye-opening experience for you as well as the employee. Work with unproductive or uncooperative employees who can undermine club goals and progress to bring them up to the service levels required. Resources to help with this task (job descriptions, sample reviews, best practices) can be found online or at bookstores.

**Sales Team Evaluations:** Pay special attention to sales reps. Meet individually with sales team members to evaluate their performance and set monthly and annual goals for 2009. Determine where improvement is necessary; decide what motivational materials or training would help. Ask for feedback prior to purchasing materials — your team will be more inclined to use the materials if they were involved in choosing them. Consider taking your sales team to a conference this year. It's a great way to say "thank you" for their outstanding performance, while boosting their industry enthusiasm and loyalty to your club.

**Create a Facility Evaluation List:** A clean, well-organized club should be the first impression a potential member has when touring the facility. Create a checklist and walk through your club each month with a new set of eyes. Clutter, dirty locker rooms and dusty equipment are easily preventable and should not be on display. Nothing brings more complaints from members or sets the stage for a poor first impression than an untidy club.

**Go Paperless:** Many software packages now offer the ability to go completely paperless. Paperless membership agreements, gift cards, punch-card memberships and classes, program management, bookings for trainers, tanning, spa treatments and courts can all be managed through software without paper. Go green — your members will appreciate your commitment to the environment and you will appreciate the cost savings.

**Review and Revamp Programs:** If you have been offering the same classes, memberships and services for years, perhaps it is time to shake it up! Shop your competition and determine if your club's pricing and programs are competitive. Host an all-



team meeting and brainstorm new ideas with staff. Consider offering buddy memberships, memberships that include personal training, special pricing reductions for additional family members to increase add-on sales and non-prime-time memberships. Becoming more creative in 2009 may determine how well you weather the economic downturn.

**Audit Your Billing and Software Database:** Over time, through data-entry errors and employee turnover, data can become incorrect. Run reports monthly to evaluate the accuracy of your billing file — a first step to ensuring all monthly dues are received. Look at:

**No billing info report.** Monthly dues are not being received from any members on this report.

**Credit card expiration dates.** Look for expired cards. Ask your software/billing provider if they have a credit card updater program to help keep up this information, or see if they can handle this critical function.

**Status report.** Typically, all clients with a status code have a billing problem and their payments may not be received.

**Other important database housekeeping.** Archive cancelled members; purge stale records such as usage, A/R (check with your accountant first), old prospects and point-of-sale charge codes on items no longer being sold. Over time this once-valuable data loses its usefulness and should be discarded. Look for purging utilities in your software to help.

Implementing annual housekeeping procedures will ensure accurate data and billing. A formal review of your employees and club programs and procedures will lead to increased revenues in the coming year. Employing both of these now will help ensure that your club will maintain its competitive edge in 2009. Happy New Year!

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