

Operations

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# Staging the Membership Tour

Turn prospects into members by using the following steps for a successful facility tour.

**AMONG MANY** types of membership strategies, fitness center tours produce the highest percentage of prospects from leads, and memberships from prospects. A membership salesperson who has mastered the art of the tour can be assured to generate quality prospects and membership sales. But, there are key steps involved in staging a successful facility tour.

### Start with a Q&A

Begin the tour with a relaxed Q&A session. Sit down in an open, non-intimidating setting and offer prospects water. Then, talk to them about why they want to join, their favorite activities, goals, etc. This information will not only increase the chances of the membership sale being closed, but can prove invaluable in setting up the tour. This feedback can also be used to improve membership growth and retention.

### Find their “hot spots”

Potential members are knowledgeable, and giving them a “canned” tour is one of the worst things you can do. It can turn prospects off, and detract from the level of professionalism of your staff members. The tour should be personalized for each prospect, based on the priorities indicated in the Q&A session. Use that information to identify the prospect’s “hot spot,” and start the tour there.

Introduce prospects to your facility’s experts in their indicated areas of interest. If the tour has been scheduled, arrangements should be made for the experts to be present. If the tour is unscheduled and an expert is not available, the fitness director or an assistant can fill in.



*The tour should include a brief review of the fitness center’s programs and events.*

Never lead off a tour of the fitness area by saying, “this is our cardiovascular room,” or, “we have Nautilus equipment.” These are obvious statements that indicate a lack of professionalism and understanding of the prospect’s specific needs. Instead, focus on what sets your fitness center apart from other clubs, and what those differences mean to the prospect. Focus on the staff, service, members, programming, etc. — not the equipment.

### “Want to try the facility today?”

Give prospects the opportunity to use your fitness center that day. Better yet, connect them with another member or a staff person who can provide any needed assistance.

### Introduce a member

From a sales perspective, nothing

is stronger than the testimony of a member to show a prospect the value of your facility. The introduction between a prospect and a member should be short and brief. A satisfied member can be your best salesperson.

### Provide printed information

Prospects should be provided with the facility’s brochure before the tour begins. This way, they can reference information presented in the brochure during the tour.

In addition, the tour should include a brief review of the fitness center’s programs and/or events. It is important that the prospect gets a feel for the various activities and traditions of your facility. This situation also represents a great opportunity for prospects to ask questions, and gives the salesperson the chance to elaborate on the level of member participation in the facility.

### Ask for the sale

After the tour is complete, the salesperson should sit down with the prospect in a non-intimidating setting and ask if he or she has any further questions. After providing answers, the salesperson should ask for the sale. If the sale doesn’t occur, the salesperson should give the prospect a guest pass, and then follow up at a later date to see how his or her visit to the facility went.

### Steps to success

A well-planned membership tour is one of the most effective things a facility can do to help bring about membership sales. Collectively, these steps can provide fitness centers a pathway to success. **FM**



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