propello

Strategies for Improving Gym Member Acquisition, Engagement & Retention

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01 INTRODUCTION

Content Overview

This resource is designed to help you unlock your gym's full potential and drive sustainable growth. From proven member acquisition techniques to innovative engagement strategies and effective retention tactics, we have you covered. Get ready to revolutionise your gym's performance and create an exceptional experience for your members.

Challenges for Gyms - Aquisition, Engagement and Retention

Despite experiencing significant growth in the past decade, the fitness industry faces several issues that could hurt many gyms' bottom lines.

01 | Acquisition

- **Changing consumer preferences:** Gym-goers expect personalised exercise routines, highlighting the need for gyms to offer customised experiences to attract new members.
- **Cost concerns:** Price is a significant factor for potential members. About **8% of male gym-goers and 14% of female gym-goers** quit their membership after a year.

02 | Engagement

- **Motivation:** According to a **Better survey,** lack of time and confidence are key reasons why people do not go to the gym.
- **Monotonous routines:** **The Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology** reports that repetitive workouts can lead to decreased motivation and boredom among gym members.

03 | Retention

- **Membership churn:** Gyms need to keep members to stay profitable. However, the fitness sector has a **28.6% attrition rate.**
- **Lack of engagement:** A study published in the Journal of Exercise Science & Fitness found that **member engagement directly affects retention rates.** Participating in classes and programmes keeps gym members loyal.
- **Poor communication:** Poor communication can lead to member dissatisfaction and increased churn because gym-goers value ongoing interaction much like any other consumer. Over 29% of gym members say having a **sense of community is essential.**

02 ACQUIRING AND CONVERTING NEW MEMBERS

Brand partnerships

This is a valuable strategy for gyms to acquire and convert new members. Create mutually beneficial relationships with brands that have a similar target audience. This could include wellness centres, nutritionists, or sports teams. Offer exclusive discounts or cross-promotions to tap into each other's customer base and expand your marketing reach.

These brand partnerships can also include barter exchanges, where your gym and the hyper-relevant partner brand, such as a protein food supplier, trade goods or services without paying money. The commercial impact of this approach is quite significant and could revolutionise your marketing strategy.

Example Commercial Impact for Gym Brand with Barter Exchange Model

x2 deliveries to 50,000 customers = 100,000 total reach

With a 0.1% conversion rate = 100 new gym members

100 members with an average LTV of £300

= £30,000 in new member revenue p/a

Example Commercial Impact for Gym Brand with Cost Per Exposure Model

Gym brand charges protein brand for exposure to their audience.

Cost per 1000 members exposure = £30

100,000 members

= £3,000 in partner revenue

Example Commercial Impact for Gym Brand with Cost Per Conversion Model

Gym brand charges protein brand for exposure to their audience.

Cost per conversion = £10

100,000 members with a 0.5% conversion rate

= £5,000

Barter Exchanges — How Do They Work?

Let's consider the example of the gym chain partnering with a protein food supplier to leverage reciprocal marketing.

Gym advertisements with sign up offers arrive with protein food orders or in subscription boxes. Email and direct mail campaigns should also be considered to support the initiative.

Offers and discounts on protein products could feature on the gym's digital loyalty and partner programme as a reward for gym members. These offers can also be promoted across marketing channels and within the gym.

02 ACQUIRING AND CONVERTING NEW MEMBERS CONTINUED...

What are the Benefits of Brand Partnerships?

Brand partnerships offer gyms several benefits:

Expanded reach and exposure: Brand partnerships promote your brand to new audiences with similar interests to your existing audience. This cuts down on marketing costs and drives successful conversions.

Improved brand perception: Working with well-known brands can boost the gym's reputation. By partnering with reputable fitness and wellness brands, you enhance your brand's image and attract customers seeking high-quality experiences.

Increased customer engagement: Strategic partnerships allow you to increase customer engagement by offering one-of-a-kind experiences to customers. Engaged customers are more likely to become loyal members and brand advocates. McKinsey found that customer-focused companies experience faster revenue growth than their competitors.

This approach can benefit gyms in several ways:

Cost-effective marketing: It's an affordable alternative to paid advertising. You reduce your marketing expenses while still reaching a wider audience. This works well for small gyms with limited marketing budgets.

Effective targeting and cross-promotion: You can reach more potential customers by partnering with brands with complementary customer bases. By sharing marketing channels and communication platforms, cross-promotion between the brands can boost customer acquisition and conversion.

02 ACQUIRING AND CONVERTING NEW MEMBERS CONTINUED...

Referrals

Gym referral programmes reward members for referring friends, family, and acquaintances. These programmes leverage word-of-mouth marketing by using loyal customers as advocates to recruit new members.

Businesses with referral programmes **grow revenue 86% faster.**

SoulCycle, a popular indoor cycling studio, has a successful referral programme called Spread the Soul. They offer a referral code to existing riders and give them a free class when three friends sign up via the code. This programme has been effective in driving new member acquisitions and fostering a sense of community among riders.

What are the Benefits of Referral Programmes?

- Increased trust and credibility: Over **87% of consumers** say personal recommendations from friends and family are the most reliable source of brand information. Referral programmes tap into this trust since referrals often come from customers who have firsthand experience of the gym's services.
- Higher conversion rate: Referral leads have a higher conversion rate **(30%) and lifetime value (16%)** than leads acquired via other marketing channels.
- Cost-effective outreach: Referral programmes reduce advertising costs. 60% of marketers say that **referrals generate a high volume of leads.**

Tips for Building a Referral Programme

- Relevant incentives: Over **50% of buyers will recommend** others for a reward, recognition, or exclusive loyalty programme membership. Give the referrer and new member incentives like discounted memberships, free fitness classes, or exclusive access to additional services.
- Simple referral process: Simplify the referral process for members. This could mean creating personalised referral codes, dedicated landing pages, and easy-to-share referral links.
- Regular communication: Use email newsletters, social media posts, and in-gym signage to keep members engaged in the referral programme.
- Track and reward referrals: Use a tracking system to correctly attribute referrals and promptly reward conversions. This encourages members to refer more people and builds loyalty.
- Recognise success: Publicly thank members who refer new customers. This fosters a gym community and encourages participation.

02 ACQUIRING AND CONVERTING NEW MEMBERS CONTINUED...

Unique Selling Proposition

Highlight your gym's strengths, such as specialised training programmes, cutting-edge equipment, certified trainers, or a vibrant community. Emphasise the value of these differentiators in your marketing materials.

Content Marketing

Create fitness, health, workout, and nutrition blog posts, videos, and podcasts. Share this content on your website, social media pages, and email newsletters to establish your gym as an industry expert and attract new members.

Community Engagement

Participate in community events, sponsor fitness challenges or sports teams, or host workshops and seminars. This establishes your gym as a community participant and builds brand recognition and trust.

Social Media Marketing

Establish a strong presence on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Engage your target audience by posting success stories, promoting classes and events, and encouraging interaction.

Online Reviews and Testimonials

Encourage happy customers to write reviews on Google, Yelp, and your gym's website. Social proof from positive reviews builds trust and attracts new members.

Free Trials and Guest Passes

Give prospective members free trial periods or guest passes to try out your gym. This introduces them to your facilities, equipment, classes, and trainers, increasing the likelihood of their signing up for full membership.

03 MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

Engaged members actively use your gym's facilities, attend classes, interact with trainers, and renew their memberships. **Here are some ways to boost engagement:**

Goal-Tracking and Progress Monitoring

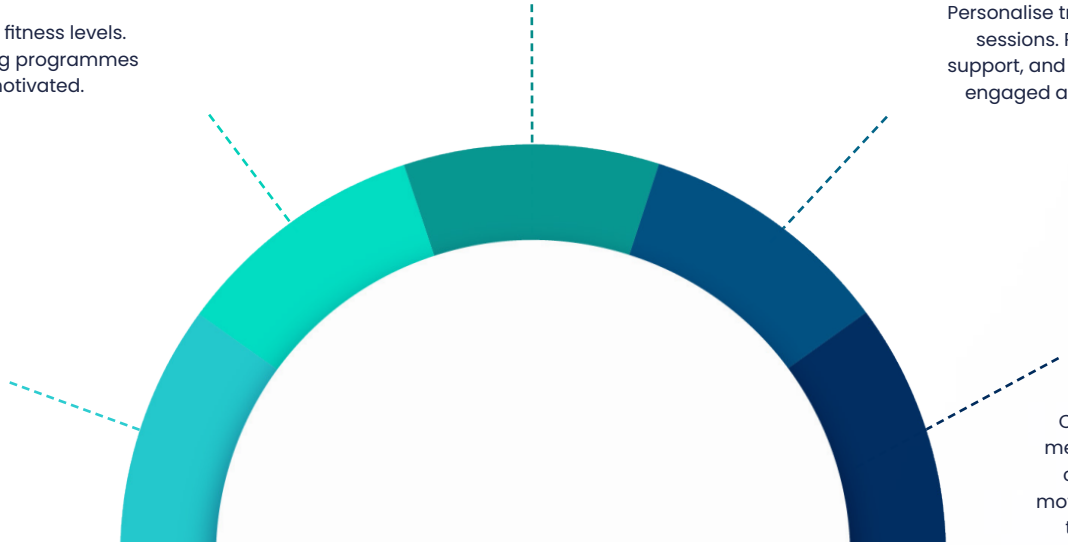
Create a system to help members track their fitness goals and progress. This can include fitness-tracking apps, goal-setting worksheets, and trainer progress checks. Visibility keeps them engaged and motivated.

Varied and Innovative Classes

Offer fitness classes for all interests and fitness levels. Introduce new classes and fitness training programmes to keep members interested and motivated.

Personal Training and Support

Personalise training with one-on-one or small group sessions. Personal trainers can offer guidance, support, and accountability, ensuring members stay engaged and on track with their fitness journeys.



Personalised Onboarding

New members should get a personalised onboarding process that includes gym orientations, fitness assessments, and goal-setting. This establishes a connection with your gym, gives members a sense of purpose, and encourages active participation.

Community Building

Organise social events, group challenges, and member appreciation activities to build a vibrant community in your gym. Create a supportive, motivating environment by encouraging members to interact, connect, and support each other.

03 MEMBER ENGAGEMENT CONTINUED...

Incentives and Rewards

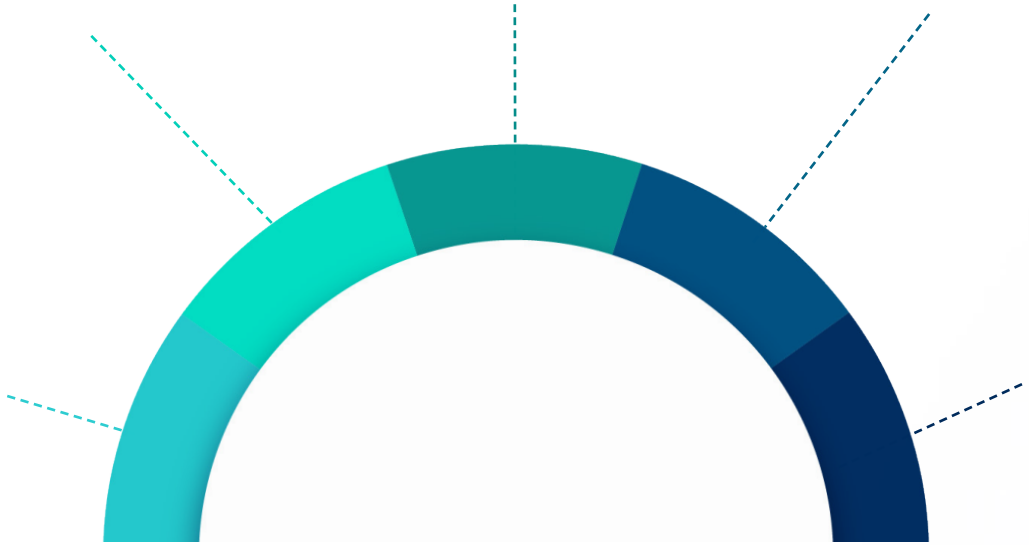
Motivate people to show up regularly by rewarding them when they reach certain goals or take part in challenges. Discounts on group classes and VIP access are possible perks.

Ongoing Education and Workshops

Hold educational events such as workshops, seminars, or sessions with special guests. These events provide a platform to discuss subjects concerning physical activity, dietary habits, and overall health. Your members will appreciate opportunities to expand their knowledge and stay engaged in their health and fitness journey.

Virtual Engagement

Give people the option to participate virtually, especially in situations where physical attendance would be difficult. Provide options for members to stay active regardless of their location or schedule, such as live-streamed classes, digital exercise materials, or online competitions.



Communication and Feedback

Communicate with members through newsletters, social media, or feedback surveys. Keep members informed with updates, special offers, and success stories. Collect and analyse member feedback to understand and improve their experience.

Ongoing Facility Improvement

Regularly update and improve gym facilities, equipment, and amenities to provide a functional and engaging environment. Clean and well-maintained gyms increase member satisfaction and improve the gym experience.

By improving gym membership engagement, you create a supportive, motivating, and inclusive environment where members feel valued and inspired.

04 GAMIFICATION: OUR MEMBER ENGAGEMENT TOP TIP

Gamification can make gym workouts more fun, keep members engaged, and boost morale. It can boost gym membership and retention and create an engaging atmosphere by encouraging competition and support.

Gamification in customer engagement strategies **increases engagement by 47%,** brand loyalty by 22%, and brand awareness by 15%.

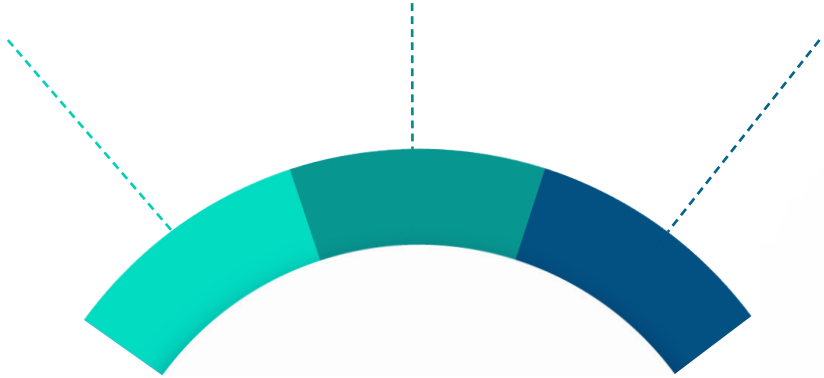
Gym equipment, apps, and loyalty programmes are all viable platforms for adding gaming elements. Here are some gamification ideas to consider:

Challenges and Competitions

Create fitness challenges or competitions within the gym where members can participate and track their progress. This can include challenges for steps taken, calories burned, or weight lifted. Leaderboards, rewards, and recognition can further motivate members to actively engage and strive for improvement.

Rewards Programme

Implement a loyalty and reward programme where members earn rewards for attending classes, completing workouts, or achieving fitness milestones. Accumulated points can be redeemed for rewards that could include gym merchandise, free sessions with personal trainers, access to premium facilities, or access to exclusive hyper-relevant rewards such as protein shakes or other health foods, offered by brand partners.



Virtual or Digital Games

Integrate virtual or digital games into gym equipment or mobile apps. For example, treadmills or stationary bikes can have interactive screens that simulate races or virtual landscapes, making workouts more engaging and enjoyable. Mobile apps can offer fitness-related games or challenges for members to participate in.

04 GAMIFICATION: OUR MEMBER ENGAGEMENT TOP TIP CONTINUED...

Team-Based Challenges

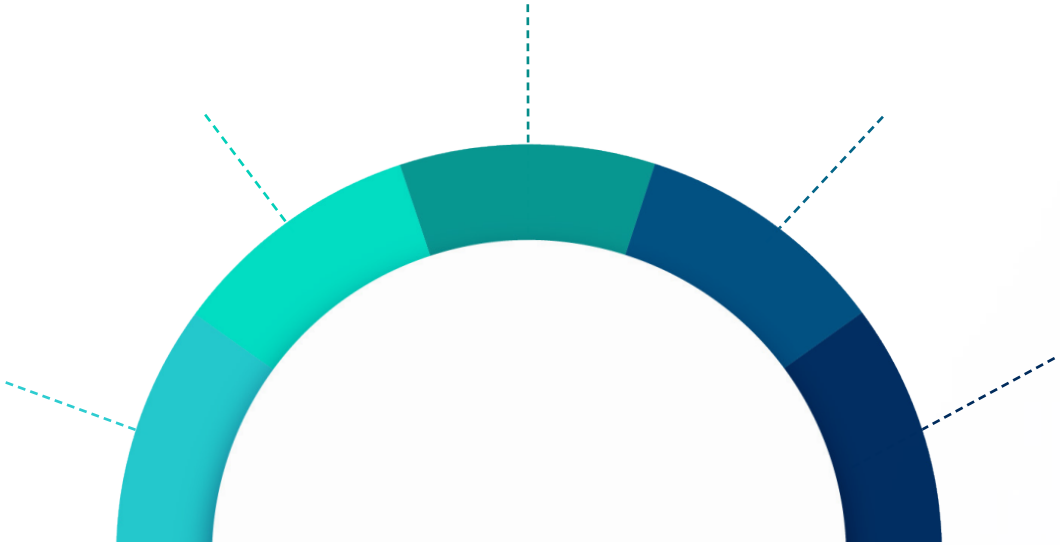
Create team-based challenges or group workouts where members work together to achieve collective goals. This encourages social interaction, friendly competition, and accountability among members, increasing engagement and fostering a sense of community.

Goal Setting and Progress Visualisation

Incorporate goal-setting features into member profiles or apps, allowing members to set fitness goals and track their progress visually. Progress bars, charts, or graphs can visually represent their achievements, motivating members to continue their efforts.

Rewards for Attendance or Streaks

Offer rewards or incentives for consistent attendance or workout streaks. For example, members who attend the gym a certain number of times within a month can receive a small reward or exclusive access to a special class or facility.



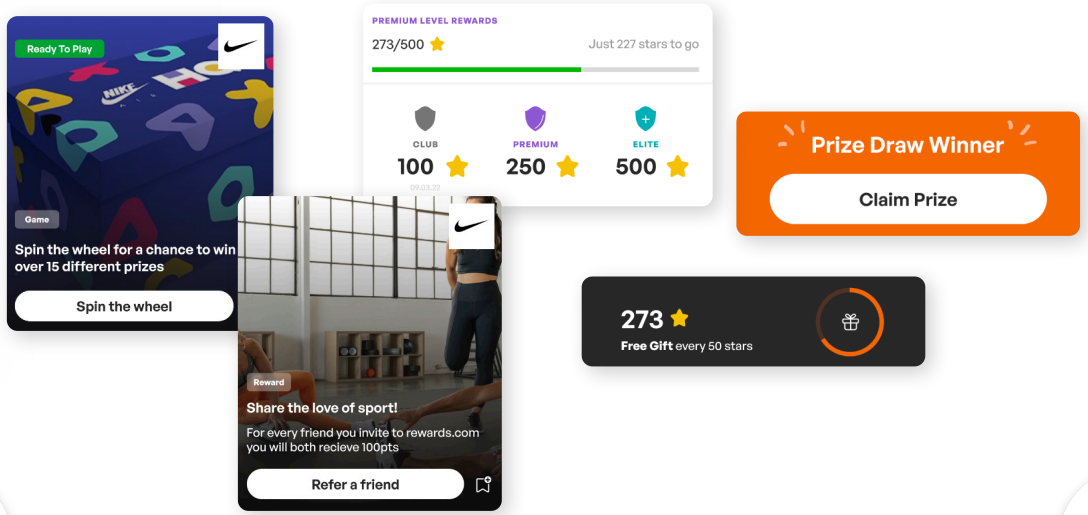
Progress Tracking and Badges

Provide members with digital badges or achievements to reward their progress and milestones. These badges can be earned for consistent attendance, reaching specific fitness goals, or completing certain classes. Members can display their badges on their profiles or share them on social media, fostering a sense of accomplishment and encouraging others to engage.

Interactive Group Classes

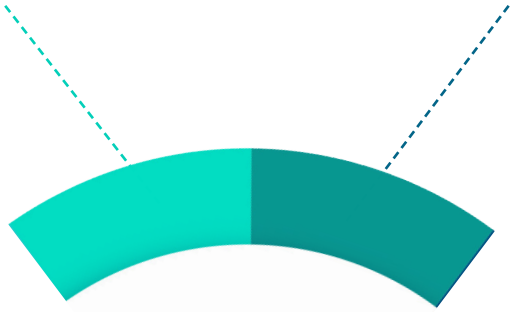
Make group classes more interactive by incorporating elements like music synchronisation, interactive screens, or real-time performance tracking. This enhances the overall experience and encourages members to actively participate and challenge themselves.

04 GAMIFICATION: OUR MEMBER ENGAGEMENT TOP TIP CONTINUED...



Social Challenges and Sharing

Enable members to share their achievements, workouts, or challenges on social media platforms directly from the gym's app or equipment. This not only promotes the gym but also allows members to celebrate their accomplishments and engage with others.



Personalised Progression and Tiers

Members progress through different levels or tiers based on their achievements and consistency. Each level can unlock new challenges, rewards, or advanced classes, providing a sense of progression and continuous engagement.

05 MEMBER RETENTION: VALUE ADDED SERVICES AND CREATING A COMPELLING POINT OF DIFFERENCE

Look no further than customer loyalty programmes if you want to provide value to your customers and encourage their loyalty. Over **90% of companies have a loyalty programme.**

It is a proven marketing strategy that businesses use to promote loyalty among their clientele, encourage repeat business, and increase customer engagement. It is designed to encourage repeat business by rewarding loyal customers. This is crucial since **65% of a company's revenue** comes from repeat customers.

These are some features of loyalty programmes that deliver exciting benefits.

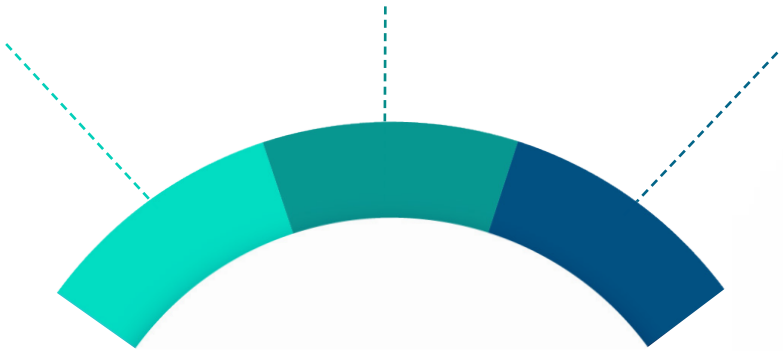
Upselling Opportunities and Membership Upgrades

A loyalty programme could offer exclusive rewards of increasing value depending on customer spend and participation. This encourages members to consider upgrading their membership level, increasing their lifetime value and your retention rates.

Hyper-Relevant Brand Partner Rewards

With a loyalty programme, you can provide relevant rewards that address your customers' pain points. This allows you to add more value to your service delivery via unique partner brand offers that go beyond your core offerings.

These rewards motivate members, increase their sense of accomplishment, and strengthen their emotional connection with your gym. They also provide additional value and help offset the cost of membership, leading to increased member retention.



Integration with the Referral Programme

Your loyalty programme can be linked to a referral programme to give members extra rewards for referring friends and family. Members get loyalty points, subscription discounts, or exclusive access to member-only events when they refer new customers. This integration boosts member engagement, word-of-mouth, and acquisition.

05 MEMBER RETENTION: VALUE ADDED SERVICES AND CREATING A COMPELLING POINT OF DIFFERENCE CONTINUED...

Personalised Onboarding

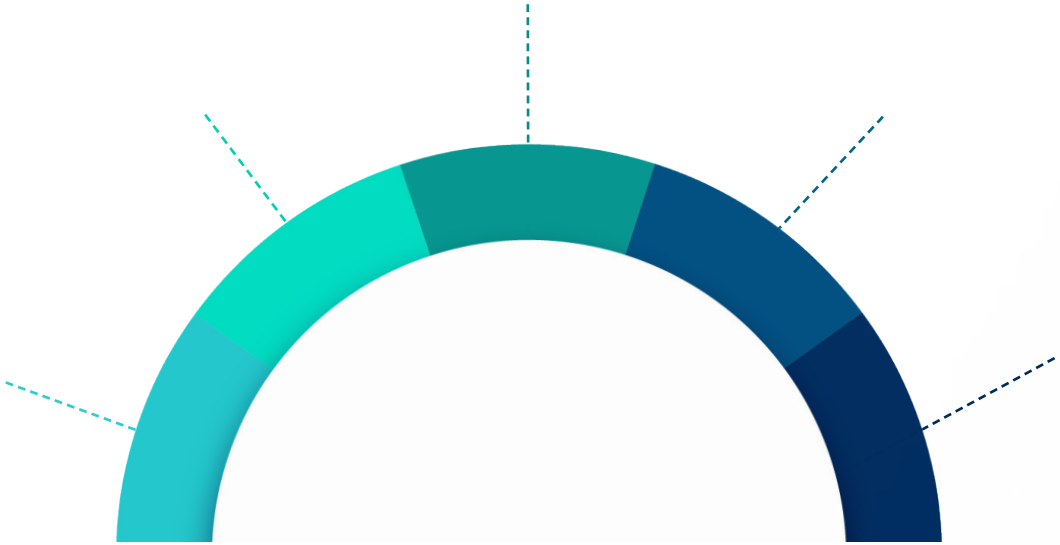
Provide a personalised onboarding experience for new members, including gym orientations, fitness assessments, and goal-setting sessions. Understanding their needs and goals from the beginning helps create a strong foundation for long-term engagement.

Excellent Customer Service

Prioritise exceptional customer service by training staff to be friendly, attentive, and responsive to member needs. Members who feel valued and supported are more likely to stay engaged and renew their memberships.

Ongoing Communication

Maintain regular communication with members through various channels, such as email newsletters, social media updates, and in-gym notices. Share relevant information, upcoming events, new classes, and member success stories to keep members engaged and informed.



Win-Back Incentives and Rewards

Loyalty programmes can be an effective retargeting and remarketing strategy for businesses. You can convince former members to return by offering incentives like discounted reactivation fees, exclusive promotions, or personalised offers.

Personalised Workout Plans

Offer personalised workout plans and programming based on individual goals, abilities, and interests. This individualised approach shows members that their specific needs are considered and increases their motivation to continue their fitness journey.

05 MEMBER RETENTION: VALUE ADDED SERVICES AND CREATING A COMPELLING POINT OF DIFFERENCE CONTINUED...

Regular Programme Updates

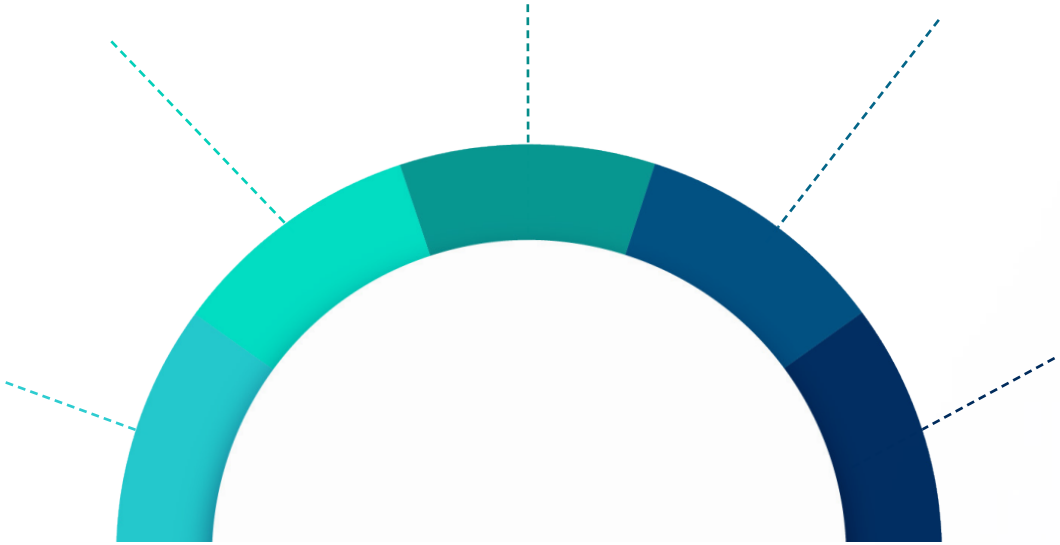
Continuously update and refresh gym programmes, classes, and equipment to keep members engaged and interested. Introduce new fitness trends, innovative classes, or equipment upgrades to provide a dynamic and engaging experience

Personal Training and Support

Provide personalised training options, such as one-on-one sessions or small group training, to help members set and achieve their fitness goals. Personal trainers can offer guidance, support, and accountability, enhancing member engagement and progress.

Facility Maintenance and Upgrades

Ensure that gym facilities, equipment, and amenities are well-maintained, clean, and up-to-date. Regularly assess and upgrade equipment to provide a positive and comfortable workout environment.



Group Classes and Community

Foster a sense of community within the gym by offering group classes, team challenges, or social events. Encourage members to connect, support each other, and build relationships, as the social aspect can significantly impact member retention.

Feedback and Surveys

Actively seek member feedback through surveys, suggestion boxes, or in-person conversations. Gather insights about their experiences, preferences, and suggestions for improvement. Addressing member concerns and incorporating their feedback can lead to increased satisfaction and loyalty.

05 MEMBER RETENTION: VALUE ADDED SERVICES AND CREATING A COMPELLING POINT OF DIFFERENCE CONTINUED...

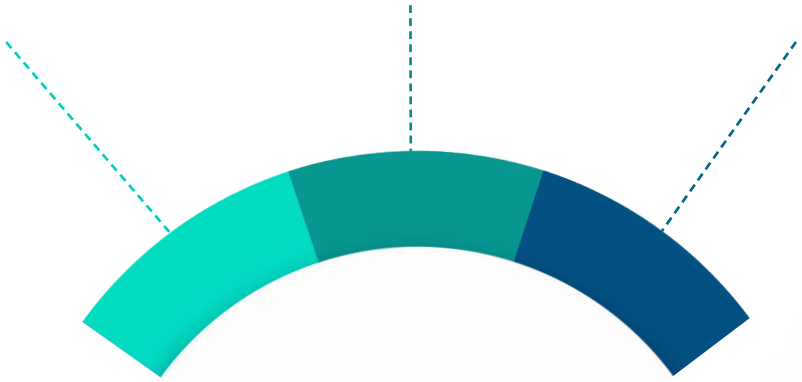
Continuous Education and Workshops

Offer educational workshops, seminars, or guest speaker sessions on various fitness and wellness topics. Members appreciate opportunities to expand their knowledge and learn new techniques or approaches to fitness.

Special Promotions and Offers

Offer occasional promotions, discounts, or special offers to reward loyalty and encourage continued membership. These incentives can be seasonal, referral-based, or tied to specific events to keep members engaged.

Remember that every gym has its own unique member base and should tailor retention strategies to suit their specific needs. By implementing effective retention strategies, gyms can foster member loyalty, create a positive gym experience, and reduce member attrition.



Flexible Membership Options

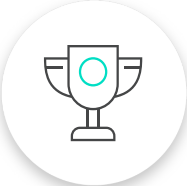
Provide flexible membership options to accommodate members' changing needs, such as short-term or month-to-month memberships. This flexibility allows members to adjust their commitment level based on their circumstances.

06 KEY TAKEAWAYS

Acquiring, retaining, and engaging customers is difficult in any industry, and the fitness industry is no exception. You can overcome these obstacles and establish a distinct competitive advantage by adopting effective strategies and trying out innovative approaches.

Here's a brief recap of how you can achieve this, including some key points we've discussed above.

Brand partnerships and referral programmes are powerful strategies for acquiring and converting new members. These strategies help save on marketing costs, build trust, and showcase the value of the gym's offerings.



Gamification is an effective tool for boosting member engagement. Challenges, rewards, progress tracking, and friendly competition can make gym workouts more fun, motivate members, and provide a sense of accomplishment.

Customer loyalty programmes can help differentiate a business. A loyalty programme offers several exciting benefits, including helping you retain existing members and reduce churn rates. It also encourages repeat business and increases member engagement.

07 READY TO SUPERCHARGE CUSTOMER ACQUISITION AND LOYALTY?

Want to transform your gym business and join the leading forces in the fitness industry? Your journey to increased customer retention and revenue growth starts with a robust gym customer loyalty programme.

There's no better time than now.

Contact us now and let's design a programme that aligns with your brand, engages your members, and drives tangible results.

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Contact us today for a quick 20 minute demo **Book a demo**