

Squandering Sales Opportunity's Is A Sin!

By: John M. Brown

Without a doubt, the most troubling real, day-to-day problem facing the club industry is not that we don't have enough customers, but the true and incontrovertible fact that we "waste" or "miss" the opportunity's that exist right in front of our noses everyday.

With all the talk about 100 million members by 2010 and guru after guru pontificating about why we will or why we won't reach that milestone, has anyone stopped and looked around to actually see what is occurring in clubs day after day? As a professional advisor, better than average observer and one of the best critical analysts around, I can tell you that a lot of the 100 million members we want and seek are slipping through our fingers like sand.

If you don't believe or heed one other thing in this article, believe this, because most of the time this advice costs lots of money to get and in general is probably given more than any other.

1. More people don't join your club than do join your club.

2. The "failure to recognize" sales opportunities in clubs is "pandemic"

3. Most, I repeat, most clubs today do not habitually "reconcile" even their most basic telephone inquiry and guest records at the end of the day. This fact also adds to the reality that

most clubs "can't" reconcile their prospect records for a plethora of reasons and excuses.

4. Most clubs' actual records of the basics, meaning the records about who called today wanting information about the club and who actually came in today to visit the club, are either non-existent, incomplete, illegible or worse, the information never made it onto the records in the first place!

5. On at least a 3:1 ratio, more sales opportunities are lost, ignored, misplaced, mishandled, or just plain pass you by than are ever "made" or "converted"

6. Because sales managers and sales people are so busy with work in their offices, they think nothing is happening or worse yet, they think everything is "under control". Trust me, everything is *not* under control. Here's a hint. Get up out of your chair right now and go inspect, review and reconcile whatever "Master Appointment" system you have or use. Go do this right now and then come back and read the next sentence that follows here. Now tell me, can you actually reconcile your "Master Appointment" book? Are there any appointments on it? If there are appointments, is the information written down specific? (Name, phone, time of appt, staff initials)? Are the appointments on there even "real" or are they just "phantom appointments" to keep from getting yelled at or "hope and prayer" appointments? I rest my

case.

7. Because of some, if

not all of the above, many club owners, managers and operators have acquired what I describe as a "rationalized" vocabulary. For a full day, just one full day, write down what you said every time you find yourself or your staff saying the following :

- "I'm not sure."
- "I don't know."
- "Let me check."
- "I can't tell."
- "What guest?"
- "Which guest?"
- "What TI?"
- "Which TI?"
- "They didn't (join, make an appointment, etc.)"
- "I forgot."
- "I don't know what happened."
- "I don't know where they went."
- "I lost them."
- "I never talked to them."
- "I don't know who that is."
- "I can't remember."
- "They must of just walked out."
- "They weren't really interested."

You get the idea. If your yellow pad is not full by the end of the day, then either you're not being honest, or you're running one hell of a tight and profitable operation.

8. Because of some, if not all of the above, many of you don't "know what you don't

know". This makes you powerless to do anything about it because you have to deal with conjecture, guessing, rationalization and confusion instead of facts.

The "sin" lies in the fact that the above is the "rule" not the "exception". The sin is that many or most of you have your "ass in the sling" and you're not able to reach or achieve your goals or even your needs. The real sin is that we are squandering "real people" and the privilege of dramatically changing, enhancing and positively affecting their lives and the lives of those around them! The money is "in the people" not the "people in the money". I'm going to quit preaching and give you some practical, "use today" guidance that will not only improve your free cash flow position, if done well and more importantly, consistently, will sustain you through good times and bad.

1. If you don't have a "system" then get one. The simpler the better. But get one.

2. If/When you get a system, then USE IT! If your system isn't working, remember that most times systems work "if the people use the system."

3. Quit accepting excuses and guesses as answers to questions you ask that should have *direct, timely* and *exact* answers. Remember that these are "people" we are trying to help and keep track of, not "*pork bellies*" or some other

commodity.

4. If your records are not complete, legible, up to date and timely, then you don't have any records! Strive to be different! Most club record keeping is a contradiction of terms, kind of like "government intelligence". Some day when you may want to sell your club or retire, remember that people (excluding stupid people) only pay you for what you can prove, not what you "think".

5. Reconcile your records every day! Just like a bank. Are they complete? Are they exact? If not, then they're wrong!

6. For the love of God, if people don't join your clubs, at least know *why!*

7. Make your staff accountable for their time. Train them, teach them, coach them. But make no mistake, they won't *manage themselves*. If they are not producing, then it's your fault! Get them out of their offices and show them how, where, when to find and convert sales opportunities occurring right now in your club.

8. Check, recheck your systems, controls, procedures and the people who are supposed to be using them. Get out of your office and watch, observe, listen and see for yourself. If you lead from the front they will follow you. People who lead from the rear get results that are at best, average. Work to improve your awareness and conversion of all "sales opportunities." Don't settle for the standard "they don't count" school of thought. They all count!

Finally, don't succumb to the everyday numbness of dealing with people to the point that you ignore the individual's extrinsic as well as intrinsic value. It is in seeing and reaching each individual that true wealth is created.

(John Brown is a nationally known consultant, speaker and author. A club industry veteran of over 25 years, he owns, operates, manages and consults with over 80 facilities across the USA and South America. His company, PCM Fitness Inc. is a leader in training, managing, funding and developing clubs. PCM has been in business over 15 years. John may be reached at 281-894-7909 or email PCM4life@aol.com)

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