

# CLUB NETWORK

The official publication for fitness  
facility owners and managers



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## Could your key staff hold you to ransom?

Let's face it; we train our key people to be able to do what we need them to do. They grow adept at it and we become somewhat dependant on them, which is fine until the day that they announce their plan to leave. Then all hell breaks loose in the club.

When SARS hit Asia, there was no emergency plan. When Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, there was no emergency plan. People looked around and pointed fingers; few acted as they had not previously experienced anything like these disasters. And while losing a key staff member does not come close to the scale of these events, when it happens it can feel like a disaster has hit your business.

You simply cannot afford to slow the business or close for a few days until you find new staff and there's no time for

finger pointing. But this apparent disaster can be averted if you get organised now.

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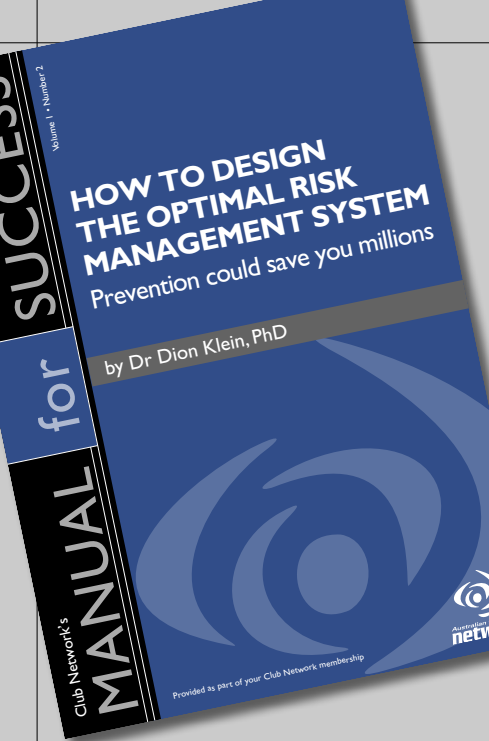
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## Could your key staff hold you to ransom?

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### So what do you do? You take out I.N.S.U.R.A.N.C.E

**I** – In every system in your club you need to change 'I know how to do that' to 'we know how to do that!' More often than not there are a few procedures which only one person in a facility knows how to do, so should they leave, go on holiday or get sick the business is incapacitated. Ensure that more than one person knows how to do every task in your club and provide a manual explaining how each task in the business is done.

**Nobody** – You often hear that our sporting superstars think they are bigger than the game. You may have some staff members who think they are bigger than the club. While each team member has responsibilities and duties, nobody is bigger than your club or business. This is a culture that you need to try and instil within your club; it is about creating teams instead of departments and team members instead of staff. It is always challenging to change a culture or develop a new culture but it is critical to future success that your staff realise everyone has equal importance in the business.

**Simple systems** – Take people out of the equation (with respect to them) and create simple systems. Create systems that are easy to follow, like join the dots. McDonalds is massively successful because it has systems that don't rely on people. If McDonalds' systems can be used by young teenagers to help grow their multinational company, then we should be able to design similar systems to drive our businesses.

**Update** – Our industry is a dynamic one because we deal with people. As a result there are constant changes in our organisations. Your systems manuals should be continually updated in order to maintain your cutting edge in services. This also ensures that you don't let your guard down and have one person who knows everything and others that know nothing.

**Reality** – You will always lose staff. Accept this, and plan for it. Have systems and training in place so that you don't have to face chaos!

**Always ask for help** – When designing your systems, always ask for help. Your team members should help design the manuals and systems so they can take a pride in 'ownership'. The systems will be completed more quickly, without overly-relying on you. The end goals will be clear in your team members' minds, making the systems easier to follow.

**Neglecting the details** – Don't neglect the details in your systems; these can be very important. Ensure your system manual crosses every 't' and dots every 'i' and your business will not skip a beat when sudden staff changes occur. Your manual and the details within it will be vital to maintaining smooth operations.

Enclosed with your **Club Network** newsletter is your **NEW Manual for Success** publication. This booklet is written specifically to help **YOU** increase your facility's safety and profits.

This second issue is written by Dr Dion Klein, PhD and details how to design the optimal risk management system. It includes templates that will help you to run a safer facility, and potentially save you millions of dollars.

Club Network's **Manual for Success** is just another way your Network membership maximises your profitability.



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**Complacent** – If you are trying to keep a good team together, don't get complacent. Take the time to acknowledge each team member's efforts and they are more likely to stay with you. More importantly, don't get complacent with your systems. Just because you have always done something in a particular way, doesn't mean that there is not another, maybe more efficient, way to do the task. Encourage your team to refine and improve your systems.

**Evaluation** – Always evaluate your systems and procedures. As the owner or manager, one of your many roles is to ensure that you are not held to ransom when someone leaves. It is your role to evaluate the systems and ensure they are as efficient as possible and that they are written down.

We hope never to have to use our professional indemnity insurance policy or our public liability. Nevertheless, we can sleep at night knowing our personal assets are protected. We feel at ease that should something occur, a phone call, an e-mail or a fax can help to resolve the situation quickly.

You will have to call on this I.N.S.U.R.A.N.C.E policy at some stage, so take the time and spend the money to establish it today. Just make sure that several people help to write it and that you know where it is kept and your business will weather any staff storm that it encounters. ♦



**Justin Tamsett**

*A former personal trainer, Justin has been in the industry since 1988, and is now the owner of Active Health Club and Director of Active Management, a role which sees him solving the marketing needs of fitness facilities. As facilitator for the Australian Fitness Round Table program, he helps clubs increase profitability. One of Australia's leading fitness business presenters, Justin is a previous Vice-President of Fitness Australia and inaugural President of FitnessNSW.*



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