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Priority Code: CNET

CLUB PROFILE:

Green Apple Wellness Centre, QLD

What does it take to become Australian Fitness Network's Fitness Facility of the Year? *Club Network* spoke to club owner and manager Victoria Gill to find out what made Green Apple Wellness Centre in Brisbane deserved of this accolade in 2006.

Green Apple Wellness Centre

21 Bald Hills Road, Bald Hills, QLD 4036

Ph: 07 3261 1249

Fax: 07 3261 5787

E-mail: info@greenapplewellness.com.au

Web: www.greenapplewellness.com.au

Facilities and services

The centre spans three properties and has outdoor areas which can be secured in inclement weather, making the most of the Queensland climate.

Our weights area includes a variety of free weights, pinweights, hydraulics, and cable machines. There is a separate area which caters to numerous freestyle group classes. We also have cardiovascular equipment, (35 pieces), fitball and core stability therapy, stretch frames, therapy and childcare rooms, a swimming pool, conference room and of course a staff room for our dedicated workers!

Snapshot

- Number of financial members: 670
- Size of centre: indoor 1000m², outdoor 700m² including car park and pool area
- Owned or rented: Owned
- Growth of membership in recent times: 48% over past two years.
- Access to parking: Own carpark
- Population to draw on: 79,900, but we have members from further afield.
- Proximity of closest competitor: 2 kilometres
- Membership prices: \$110.00 joining fee and between \$39.50 and \$52.00 per fortnight depending on membership choice, or an annual upfront of \$966.00

What is the target membership demographic of the club?

Green Apple offers prescriptive exercise, dietary help and natural therapies for people who want to get fit in a non-threatening environment. It is known as a place where doctors and other health providers are happy to refer patients.

What is your staff break down?

6 full-time, 1 part-time and 11 casuals.

What do you look for when hiring staff?

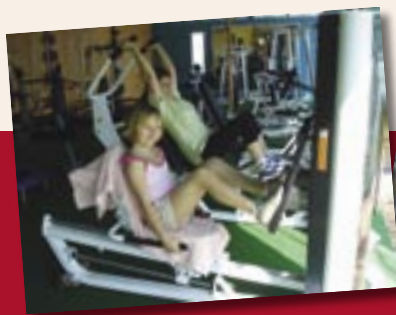
The right attitude, different qualities and skills and preparedness to work at being part of the Green Apple team. Six of our staff members have more than 25 years service; staff only leave the Green Apple to travel, move house or have babies! This staff stability has enabled a strong team culture to develop, an in-house mentoring system and an extensive staff training program.

How do you price yourself in the marketplace?

Green Apple is at the high end of the market in local consumer's eyes. We have a 'non-discount' mentality and increase our fees annually.

What is your most successful retention strategy?

Fostering relationships both among staff, and between staff and members. Relationships among members are so strong that there is a Green Apple Social Committee which meets monthly and arranges events for all other members including weekend winery trips, Christmas in July and the annual Christmas Party.



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Other actions which keep members coming in are our weekly newsletter, social nights every two months, hand written birthday cards to all members, Christmas gifts with added rewards for platinum and gold members, eight-weekly review of program for all members and regular activities to raise money for charity which encourages interaction and feelings of goodwill.

What is your most successful marketing campaign and how did you track its success?

Promotion of our uniqueness through word of mouth. Initiatives to drive this have included our members taking information packs to their doctors, and physios, which has created a marketplace awareness of what we do in some very significant areas.

The other most effective promotional strategy has involved developing alliances with local newspapers and politicians, and paying constant attention to business credibility/integrity. Recently our website has generated a steady flow of leads and we plan to drive this further through strategic linking.

Do you have any programs for special populations? How profitable/successful are they?

We specialise in programs for 'non-gym' clientele and this is our strong point of difference. Our mission is to provide opportunities to stay strong, stable and able from childhood to maturity in a fun, caring environment.

Our vision is to awaken the sleeping giant of seniors' fitness which, within a decade, will be the largest international market for the fitness industry. The scope of this vision extends to programs for children and adults as a preventative measure. Certain programs, such as Chronic Disease Self Management, barely cover costs but they do position us strongly in strategic places.

What non-membership profit centres do you have?

Profit Centre programs include Healthy Eating and Active Lifestyle (HEAL), Exercise and Osteoporosis Course and Splashing Good Time water exercise for special populations among others.

Describe your personal training operation

Personal training is managed in-house with trained staff. At present it is a retention tool rather than a profitable feature, but a strong base exists to build a significant profit centre in the future.

What are your future plans?

The objective in 2006 is to increase the membership base by twenty per cent while maintaining a sustainable wages/income ratio, thereby increasing profit margins. We will achieve the projected membership increase by continuing to develop our sales processes. We will also continue to target market to 'non-gym' prospects and to use our titles '2006 Queensland Fitness Facility of the Year' and '2006 Australian Fitness Facility of the Year' as widely as possible.

What is your biggest challenge?

What to do next! At FILEX this year, guest speaker Geoffrey Dyer advised me to open two more centres. I could do that, or I could follow the advice of the risk assessor from Sportsco who told us that he had never seen a facility like ours and asked whether we were thinking about opening more places around Australia because it would just explode. Who knows ...?



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