

Article reviews

Don't have time to read all of those business publications that keep landing on your desk? Fear not, *Club Network* has done the work for you. Following is a summary of the key points of three must-read articles that have been published over the last few months.

'More lessons: applying the experience economy to your business'

By Jeff Bensky, *Club Success*, April 2007, pp4-5

To be read by: Club owners and managers

Using the metaphor of theatre, Bensky discusses the various elements in the performance of the business of fitness. Firstly, he addresses the 'stage' (i.e., the fitness facility and the way it can contribute to the customer experience). Customers, he claims, are demanding a move away from traditional static environments, to ones which can adapt to each customer; 'from an operation perspective, you want to avoid at all costs having your customers say, "been there, done that"' he writes. From the stage, Bensky moves on to the play itself, and the need to make it personal. He elaborates on the need to understand and remember the personal preferences of each customer. Clubs also need to modularise their offerings, putting them together for each person in such a way that they feel their experience in your club has been made especially for them. Although he acknowledges that personalising each customer's experience takes time and commitment, Bensky firmly advocates its value. ■

'7 strategies of winning websites'

By Stephen Jack, *Can-Fit-Pro*, May/June 2007, pp16-17

To be read by: Club owners

The author launches straight into his rundown of winning web tips with the advice to firstly procure a 'strong URL' (or web site address to you and me) which clearly explains what your business does, giving the example of www.ptmentorship.com. A strong, emotionally engaging headline is next up, reflecting the needs of, or benefits available to, your target market. In addition to the headline, a 'freebie' of some description is also recommended to capture the reader's attention within the crucial first ten seconds. It may seem like an obvious tip, but 'great content' is next on the list. Interestingly, according to Jack, we all read at about seventh grade level when online, so content should be full of information, but jargon-free. Continuing in this vein of simplicity, he advocates plenty of white space and step-by-step processes. Strong testimonials from happy customers make up the sixth point, and the use of multi-media rounds off his strategies; 'Nothing raises credibility or stickability ... like a good video or audio' Jack concludes. ■

'Develop a reputation for delivering value-added results'

By Valerie Washington, *Fitpro Business*, June/July 2007, pp20-21

To be read by: Club managers

Addressing the issue of lost leadership opportunities, Washington asserts that being a leader is 'not about the title you have but the decisions you make and the actions you take'. Taking control of projects and finding solutions to problems develops a reputation for providing value-added results. This results in the ability to influence your environment and the actions of those around you. The author proceeds to list ten steps to take in order to assume leadership skills, engage others and maintain focus. She kicks off with looking for leadership opportunities, which are present wherever a problem exists, and follows this with the advice to build a bridge between today's challenge and tomorrow's opportunity. After researching the problem and clarifying the goal, a list of viable options should be developed with the input of the team. The leader should then select the best option. Washington advises that all unnecessary roles and tasks performed by the team (which can become habit) be removed if they cannot be shown to be crucial to the accomplishment of the goal. Finally, she recommends quantifying all results, and reporting all lessons learnt from the process before getting straight on with looking for the next opportunity; 'Success' Washington says, 'is a moving target'. ■

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