



جامعة الجميع الذكية
EVERYONE'S SMART UNIVERSITY

Everyone's Smart University

Project (Spring 2021)

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Section
Course

Master
(PMG506)

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Code
Thursday

Date

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Advanced project Management

Instructions:

- اخر موعد للتسليم هو يوم الخميس 2021-05-~~820~~ في تمام الساعة 9 مساءً.
- الإجابة متاحة باللغة الإنجليزية أو اللغة العربية مع مراعاة أن تكون المصطلحات العلمية باللغة الانجليزية.
- يتم تسليم المشروع في صيغة ملف . pdf مع الالتزام نموذج الجامعة ولن تقبل أي مستندات أخرى.
- يجب مراعاة أقسام البحث الرئيسية (مقدمة Introduction، دراسات علمية سابقة Literature Review، طريقة البحث Methodology، النتائج والمناقشة Results and Discussion ، وأخيراً المراجع References . وان كان هناك ملحقات Appendices يتم إضافتها)
- يجب الالتزام بـ Theme موحد كما يلي:
- حجم الخط 12.
- نوع الخط Arial.
- لون الخط أسود.
- المسافة بين الأسطر 1.5 line spacing

• عدد صفحات البحث (لا يقل عن ثلاث صفحات ولا يزيد عن ست صفحات).

Instructor's Name: ~~Eng. Amaal Aburumman~~ **Eng. Dr. Akram M. S. Ali**

Project:

You are required to document your role in administering a project. The project may be set in a business, social, sporting, or family environment but must be of a significant size and scale. If you do not have an actual project to write about you may complete the project hypothetically.

This report will be between three to six pages in length. This is a significant research project.

Your report must address ~~each~~ **ONE** of the following issues:

1. Identify and describe the purpose, scope, and objectives of the project. **Display this information using an appropriate tool.**
2. Describe how the team is given an outline of the project.
3. Describe the strategies that are going to be set up to maintain communication with the team members.
4. Describe the tools that are going to be used to monitor the goals, time frames or milestones.
5. Identify project milestones and activities. **Display this information using an appropriate tool.**
6. Create a budget and link the costs to the key milestones for a project.
7. Describe how you are going to divide tasks and resources amongst a project team. **Display this information using an appropriate tool.**
8. Briefly describe how the progress will be monitored.
9. How are current project records maintained? Who has responsibility for this? provide some recommendations on how this process could be improved.
10. Describe the current procedure for finalizing projects. Create your own procedure and identify how you will evaluate the success of the project.
11. Legislation that may affect the project including health and safety, and anti-discrimination legislation.

Best of luck...

المشروع:

مطلوب منك توثيق دورك في إدارة مشروع. قد يتم تعيين المشروع في بيئة تجارية أو اجتماعية أو رياضية أو عائلية ولكن يجب أن يكون بحجم مناسب. إذا لم يكن لديك مشروع فعلي لتكتب عنه ، فيمكنك إكمال المشروع افتراضياً. ستكون هذا التقرير من ثلاث إلى ست صفحات.

يجب أن يعالج تقريرك ~~كل~~ **احد** القضايا التالية:

1. تحديد ووصف الغرض والنطاق والأهداف من المشروع. اعرض هذه المعلومات باستخدام أداة مناسبة.
2. صف كيف يتم إعطاء الفريق مخططاً تفصيلياً للمشروع.
3. وصف الاستراتيجيات التي سيتم وضعها للحفاظ على التواصل مع أعضاء الفريق.
4. صف الأدوات التي سيتم استخدامها لرصد الأهداف أو الأطر الزمنية أو المعالم.
5. تحديد معالم المشروع والأنشطة. اعرض هذه المعلومات باستخدام أداة مناسبة.
6. إنشاء موازنة وربط التكاليف بالمعالم الرئيسية للمشروع.
7. صف كيف ستقوم بتقسيم المهام والموارد بين فريق المشروع. اعرض هذه المعلومات باستخدام أداة مناسبة.
8. صف بإيجاز كيف سيتم رصد التقدم.
9. كيف يتم الاحتفاظ بسجلات المشروع الحالية؟ من المسؤول عن هذا؟ تقديم بعض التوصيات حول كيفية تحسين هذه العملية.
10. وصف الإجراء الحالي لإنهاء المشاريع. قم بإنشاء الإجراء الخاص بك وحدد كيفية تقييم نجاح المشروع.
11. التشريعات التي قد تؤثر على المشروع بما في ذلك الصحة والسلامة ، وتشريعات مكافحة التمييز.

مع تمنياتي بالتوفيق..

Best Practices for Fitness Center Business Sustainability: A Qualitative Vision

1. Introduction

The increasing level of participation in physical activity during the last decades has led to a growing number of sports centers. This progress translates into more than 210,000 fitness centers worldwide, serving over 183 million members [1], and 63,644 clubs in Europe with 64.8 memberships [2].

In this context, fitness centers have become the reference sports facilities, helping sport promotion among society and adherence to physical activity [3,4]. Consequently, the fitness market has acquired greater complexity. The emerging business models, such as boutique or low-cost centers, are some examples of the process of professionalization and diversification [5,6].

Nevertheless, although general levels of physical activity participation have risen, a high prevalence of physical inactivity remains [7]. Almost half of the Europeans state that they never exercise, Spain being one of these countries, with high levels of inactivity (46%) [8]. Therefore, adherence to physical activity programs requires substantial improvement. Fitness centers have the possibility of attracting new demand, positively impacting society

The current interest of the population in fitness center services and its complexity makes it necessary to improve their managerial practices. Successful business management of fitness centers is responsible for the wellbeing of the company and, consequently, for the wellbeing of the customers that engage in physical activity. Organizations that fail to sustain their position in the fitness market increase their chances of disappearing or adapting to new markets. Long-term sustainability of the business is required in the current rapidly changing world, meaning that fitness centers will be viable and stable for many years to come.

Fitness and sports center services have a rich body of accumulated knowledge. However, the scientific traditional approach has been through quantitative data sources. In such a complex market, qualitative design with a holistic approach is extremely useful to conceptualize at an operative level the managerial strategies to follow. Through a global and comprehensive approach, it is possible to effectively manage risks associated with the uncertainty of the fitness industry.

In order to supplement the extensive quantitative data of previous work and to achieve a deeper understanding of fitness centers' best practices that contribute to ensuring the long-term sustainability of the business, this research aimed to identify the best practices in fitness centers for increasing customer engagement and for the long-term stability and sustainability of the business. In view of the aforementioned apparent gap in the literature, the following research question is addressed: Are there certain managerial decisions that determine the stability and success of fitness centers?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Customers of Fitness Centers

The offer of sports services is rising concurrently with the increasing number of individuals demanding physical activity-related services. Customers can now access a wide offer of services and they are familiar with similar ones [11]. This level of knowledge has increased their expertise, making their expectations and perceptions even more complex [12]. In this regard, specific segments of fitness customers have previously been identified according to their exercise motives [13] and sociodemographic characteristics [14]. Additionally, differences in service perception according to gender and age have been established in previous research [15].

The profile of the customer of sports services has been widely addressed. Effects of customer satisfaction [16–18], service quality [19–21], perceived quality [6,22–24], and loyalty [6,25,26] have been of high concern. These contributions have led to the creation of prediction models that forecast the probability of customer dropout [4,27,28]. The previously referred factors affect business stability, not only in terms of members' continuity but also the long-term business sustainability in terms of profitability and financial indicators [29].

2.2. Managers of Fitness Centers

The growing specialization in the fitness industry is also noticeable in management positions. Fitness center managers face problems that require progressively more complex solutions. In this process, accurate decision making is crucial [30]. Despite the different points of view and functions regarding the managers of fitness centers, the most common perspective considers it as the person in charge to lead the organization of the sports services for its success [31].

The effective operation and attractiveness of sports organizations are possible thanks to the correct decisions of managers while conducting the organization. They should proceed professionally in such a competitive environment [32,33]. As a consequence of progressive professionalization, specific sport managers' competencies [33–35] and functions [36] have been studied.

As previously stated, the scientific production on managers of fitness centers is less abundant than research on the customer's profile. Previous research has focused on either the role of the manager of sports services [37] or the profile of managers [38,39]. However, a need to hasten a still scarce scientific production [40] is required to bridge the remaining theory-practice gap [41,42].

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Participants

The sample was composed of 23 managers of fitness centers, aged between 22 and 50 years old ($M = 33.91$; $SD = 9.26$), with an average experience in similar positions of 6.34 years ($SD = 5.32$).

The participation requirements were to conduct privately managed fitness centers located in the Community of Madrid, Spain, not oriented to a simple sport modality or martial arts, with at least one weight room with machines and free weight, and one or more rooms for group classes. Different business models were considered, including low-cost centers ($n = 7$ managers), mid-market centers

($n = 13$ managers), and premium centers ($n = 3$ managers).

The sample size was considered appropriate. As demanded in qualitative studies, the saturation point was reached with 23 key agents, meaning that an increase in the number of interviews would not provide new information or themes [47,49].

3.2. Instrument

Qualitative research with a cross-sectional method was performed through semi-structured interviews.

The first step consisted of a literature review [16,50–54] and a first draft of the interview, involving 18 items regarding personal characteristics, the fitness center characteristics, and the fitness center management. As the second step, the instrument was reviewed by a panel of experts composed of four PhD university professors with a research experience of more than five years, and two fitness center managers with more than five years of experience in similar positions. Afterward, specific questions were refined and added. Finally, a pilot test was conducted on 4 fitness center managers, proving the consistency of the interview. The final instrument consisted of 20 items divided into three sections about the manager characteristics, fitness center characteristics, and managerial decisions and individual opinion.

3.3. Procedure

The participants were contacted personally and invited to voluntarily collaborate in the study. In some cases, the interview was completed at that moment, whereas in other cases, a posterior meeting was appointed. All the participants accepted to be voice-recorded for research proposes, always ensuring the anonymity of their responses. The average duration of the interviews was 17.41 min ($SD = 6.82$). All of them were conducted by the same researcher.

3.4. Data Analysis

The data analysis was performed following previous research [47,48]. The interviews were completed and literally transcribed simultaneously, as required by the Constant Comparative Method [55]. Afterward, ATLAS.ti v.7.5.4 for Windows was used to organize the gathered information.

As recommended by previous work [56], an inductive approach was followed. The codes emerged from the interviews and they were later classified into families

4. Results

The results are presented through diagrams. Additionally, detailed information and extracts from

the interviews are provided. The findings are revealed organized into five sections:

- Customer service: the set of strategies developed by fitness centers through their employees to optimize the interaction with users.
- Offered service: including the core services, basic sports services that are fundamental for the business, and supplementary services, not essential, but adding value to the core service.
- Marketing: regarding the strategies and tools used by fitness centers for acquiring or retaining customers.
- Facilities: the physical environment where the activity of the fitness centers is developed, whether intended for sports activities or not.
- General terms and conditions: requirements or clauses accepted by the customer during his membership.

5. Discussion

The identification of the best practices in fitness centers services is valued information for long-term sustainability. The high level of competitiveness and level of professionalism in the fitness industry makes imperative to have truthful information to make better decisions. This paper aimed to reach a deeper understanding of fitness center management and the best managerial practices for success.

The findings showed that customer service is an issue that concerns managers. As they develop their professional activity on the provision of services, and not product delivery, they understand that the interaction between employees and users is essential for all business models (low-cost, mid-market, and premium), above the tangible elements and physical environment. Despite the instructors interacting frequently with customers, the staff in reception also plays an essential role. These results show consistency with previous work, where human interaction emerged as the most relevant in health and fitness service-quality evaluation [57].

Even with appropriate customer service, complaints can arise. According to the managers, different sizes of centers lead to diverse strategies. On one side, the strategies in small centers are based on personal contact with users through direct questions. This usually happens in proximity-based centers with a mid-market orientation. The reliability and transparency allow employees to know the instant perceptions of customers about the service. However, in previous research, this feedback is perceived as scarce or non-existent by the customers [48]. On the other side, most of the low-cost centers are usually large in size. Their strategy is based on standardized procedures. Previous specific research denotes that large low-cost fitness chains manage suggestions, complaints, customer relations, and all payments by employing online platforms [6]. Regardless of the strategy, Rodríguez-Cañamero et al. [48] underline the importance of letting the customers know the complaints and suggestions process. Additionally, the existence of loyalty programs, through rewards or similar strategies, has been proved to be an efficient method for improving the long-term permanence of customers [58]. An efficient customer retention method is beneficial in operative and financial terms [25].

Finally, it is worth mentioning the current state of the fitness industry. The COVID-19 pandemic has generated a radical change in sports services. However, this event has some associated opportunities that do not necessarily confront our findings. The presence of technology and digitization generates an opportunity in the management of sports facilities, easing managing processes. Despite the social distance, customer service must continue being warm. Regarding the cleanliness and the necessary disinfection protocols, they will continue being necessary for the post-COVID-19 era.

6. Conclusions

This research provides useful information for avoiding customer dropout, improving member acquisition, and better service provision in fitness centers through the implementation of the best practices. Specific managerial decisions were proved to be determinant for fitness centers' success and for long-term sustainability. Firstly, kind customer service from both reception and instructors is demanded. For that purpose, loyalty programs should be extended, increasing customer satisfaction and raising retention. Secondly, the intangible side of the service is essential but should be completed with good tangible quality, which translates mostly in clean and hygienic activity spaces and locker rooms. Thirdly, the quality and trendiness of group classes highly influence the perception of the offered service, where technology is increasingly adding value to the activities. Regarding marketing, more online strategies should be applied through social networks. Finally, a fair combination of monthly membership, according to the received service, and location, with a maximum of a 15-min

trip, should be guaranteed. This research tried to bridge the existent theory-practice gap. On one side, there are profound managerial implications for the people in charge of fitness services. Fitness centers should consider these findings for better operation in their daily activities. Managers need to articulate a series of strategies for increasing customer engagement as a guarantee of business stability. On the other side, it has scientific implications, since this work supplements previous quantitative data, giving the full picture of the industry.

However, this work deals with some limitations. Firstly, the availability of time of the key informants was occasionally limited. Their lack of time caused some of the interviews to be shorter than desirable. Although all the foreseen topics were addressed in all of the interviews, the ideal length would have been occasionally longer. Another limiting factor was the inclusion criteria, which was focused on managers of private fitness centers. Therefore, when extrapolating the conclusions to public organizations, the conclusions may be limited to the characteristics of the sample characteristics.

Future lines of research could address the best managerial practices for fitness centers' sustainability and continuity from a longitudinal approach. This way, the extent to which the identified elements are affected over time or remain constant could be checked. Additionally, the group of key informants could be increased with participants from diverse nationalities or with other target groups, such as employees or customers.

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