

5 of the Best Ideas for Marketing Your Boot Camp to Members of Your Gym

By Georgette Pann

So, you've created a boot camp program for your gym. Great move, since boot camps add drive and motivation to workouts and many other advantages that your gym members can't get from a collection of weightlifting machines. But even though you designed a great program and posted flyers all over the gym, members aren't flocking to your boot camp for some reason.

Unfortunately, if you advertise your boot camp the same way you do your other programs and classes, with 8 ½ x 11 inch flyers printed from your inkjet printer—members are likely to overlook the flyers or may not be convinced at what a great deal your boot camp is. After all, it looks like just another class on the flyer and it's probably a lot more expensive. So let's look at some ways to do a better job of getting members' attention and convincing them that your boot camp program is right for them.

The nice thing about having a gym full of members to advertise your boot camp to is that you have a nice, targeted audience who is already interested in getting or staying fit. The down side is that they are already doing something to get or stay fit—they've joined your gym. Now you have to convince them that boot camp is the next and better step. Here are five ways to achieve that goal . . .

Idea #1: Use full-color posters instead of flyers to make boot camp seem bigger and better than anything you've done before.

Yes, it is certainly more expensive to get large, glossy, full-color posters printed up than to run off a dozen flyers on your computer and printer. But it's not as expensive as you think, and if it doubles the number of members who become boot camp members, then it's worth it. Post print shops have wide-format printers available to print your posters and they're even cheaper online. At <http://posters.sircooper.com>, you can get a 24 x 36 inch full-color glossy poster printed for just \$11.25 each.

When creating your poster, use photos of your boot camp or photos that suggest a boot camp atmosphere and blow them up big (but make sure the photo resolution is high enough). Include more information about your program than just dates, times and price. Tell members all the benefits that they'll receive and why it's better than a gym membership alone. Also tell them that, as members, they'll get a significant discount off the normal price or a free week of boot camp—some incentive that non members don't get. The bigger the incentive, the better response you'll get.

It will also generate more interest if you don't include the price or session times on the poster. This way you can get them interested in the benefits of boot camp without scaring them away with a price tag or session times that don't jive with their schedule. It also

forces them to ask you about price and times, which lets you know who's interested. Lastly, if you decide to change your price, you don't have to print new posters.

One last thing, don't use just one. Put up several in places around the gym where people tend to spend time resting or talking.

Idea #2: Send Members a Special Invitation

Sending your members a special invitation to try your boot camp lets them know that they are special and important to you. Don't just send a postcard or email, buy a box of invitations that you can print on your computer. A postcard looks like an advertisement, and invitation sets your boot camp apart from any other program you offer and gets their attention. Include information about the benefits, format and member advantages they'll get, just as with the posters.

If you send the invitation along with a water bottle or other fitness related trinket printed with your boot camp logo, you'll do an even better job of getting their attention. You'll also invoke the principal of reciprocity, which creates a psychological need to give you something because you gave them something. You give them a water bottle with a logo on it, they'll at least give you their attention and, if you've done a good job on your sales pitch, they'll also give you the fee for the first month of boot camp.

If you send just an invitation, mail it to them. This says that they're important enough to you to look up their address, write it on an envelope and pay for postage. Postage is likely to get a little steep if you include a water bottle or similar item; instead, put it in a box, wrap it, put a ribbon on it and hand it to them as their leaving the gym or put it in their locker. This gives a nice personal touch that is appreciated.

Idea #3: Use Multi-media to Attract Extra Attention and Emphasize the Difference Between Boot Camp and Other Programs

Use a camcorder or web cam to create a video or a voice recorder to create an audio recording about your boot camp program and all the advantages that it offers your members. If you have TV's playing around the treadmills or play music throughout the gym, you can insert your video or audio recording periodically. This almost guarantees that members will notice your boot camp.

If you don't have TV's or play music, set up a small TV and VCR/DVD player near the entrance of your gym and run the video on a loop (automatically starts over when it reaches the end). An audio recording won't work quite as well this way, but you can put it on CD's and hand them out to members.

Get creative with your recordings. Add camcorder clips of your boot camp to your video. Add testimonials of current boot campers to both video and audio. Use music to generate an emotional response.

Windows Movie Maker, which comes installed on most computers with Windows XP or Windows Vista, and Camtasia (Available free at www.camtasia.com) will help you put

videos together. Audacity (Available free at <http://audacity.sourceforge.net>) is great for making audio recordings on your computer.

Idea #4: Make Your Boot Camp Exclusive to Create a Sense of Missing Out

Provide some benefit, service or equipment to your boot campers that regular gym members don't get—and make it obvious to gym members without rubbing it in their faces. On the forums at <http://thefitnessbootcampinnercircle.com>, gym owner Stephani Maitland of Gettysburg Health & Fitness told fellow trainers that storing the Lebert Equalizers used only by her boot campers in a place where gym members could see them generated curiosity and interest in her boot camp.

If you account for it in your boot camp fees, you can provide boot campers with T-shirts, hats and water bottles with your boot camp logos on them. Display them around the gym with some sort of notice that they're available only to boot campers. Or include some sort of nutrition or fitness counseling for boot campers at a level that isn't available to non-boot campers. These kinds of things provoke curiosity and a desire to be part of something that results in special treatment. Jealousy is a wonderful sales tool.

Idea #5: Contact Members Personally and Offer a Free Pass to Boot Camp

Nothing works better than personal contact—especially if you run or work in a big gym with hundreds of members, because they don't get a lot of personal attention. Print off passes to a free session or, better yet, free week of boot camp using business cards or invitations formatted for printing on your computer. Then hand them to members when you see them and talk to them about the boot camp program and how they can benefit from it.

Keep track of the members you talk to and when you identify members who haven't been in for a while, call them on the phone and invite them to boot camp—tell them you have a free pass with their name on it waiting for them at the front desk. Make sure the pass really is waiting for them; don't just put their name on a list—a physical pass is so much more impressive and it's not very expensive.

These five ideas should help you get a much better response from your gym members. The key is to first get them to pay attention to what your boot camp is about, and then to create an internal desire to be a part of your boot camp. Use your own creativity, too, and blend or vary the ideas you see here. Let me know what you come up with and how it works for you. If you need additional bootcamp marketing help please check out <http://fitnessbootcampmarketing.com>

About the Author:

Georgette Pann: owner of NutriFitness Personal Training Studio. <http://thenutrifitness.com> She has 20+ years experience in the Health and Fitness field with expertise in fitness bootcamps, woman's fitness, weight loss/nutrition, bodybuilding, and post rehab. She is author and creator of the best selling "Sure Victory Fitness Bootcamp Kit" at <http://thefitnessbootcamp.com> and The Fitness Bootcamp Inner Circle for fitness bootcamp trainers at <http://thefitnessbootcampinnercircle.com>