

Special Report: **Marketing & Sales**

fitness

MANAGEMENT

ISSUES & SOLUTIONS

ISSUES

FEBRUARY 2008

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Methods to Increase
Participation and Revenue

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Cooper C.O.R.E. COOPER AEROBICS CENTER AT CRAIG RANCH, MCKINNEY, TEXAS

Unlike most exercise incentive programs offered at fitness facilities, the Cooper C.O.R.E. program at Cooper Aerobics Center at Craig Ranch lasts all year long. The goal of the program is to help members Commit to a new

healthy lifestyle, help members Optimize their workouts and valuable time, Retain members by offering programs and services they won't find elsewhere, and Encourage members to use and make the most out of the facility. "We want to get our members involved by challenging and educating them on how to set and meet their fitness goals," says General Manager Jason Barth. "We also want to create a sense of family and teamwork so our members

feel welcomed and supported."

The C.O.R.E. program is comprised of four different challenges, each lasting 30 days beginning January 1, March 1, June 1 and October 1. The idea behind this schedule, says Barth, is to target different times of the year when members usually lose motivation and taper off their workouts. This allows the facility to continue encouraging members throughout the year. The challenges each have a unique theme, such as

"Be a Star," "March Points: Basic Training," "Climb Mt. Cooper" and "Octoberthon: CooperFit State Fair," as well as unique logos and incentives. Participants are provided with goal setting/attainment and monthly physical activity challenges,

and their progress is tracked through the facility's E-Log system. Developed by Dr. Kenneth Cooper, the E-Log system associates an "aerobic point value" to each exercise.

At the end of the program, if the members achieve their goals, they are presented with prizes. Also provided are cooking demonstrations and nutrition lectures by a registered and licensed dietician, and lectures on program goals by degreed and certified personal trainers.

"When we first started the C.O.R.E. program," says Barth, "we only anticipated a 5 percent participation rate. By the fourth program component, we doubled our expected participation to 11 percent." Each month, the lecture attendance and number of members using the E-Log have increased, and the facility has increased membership retention from 73 percent to 87 percent. The facility has also increased new members during the past year by 56 percent, resulting in \$52,240 additional revenue for the year. And, further, during C.O.R.E. challenges, personal training revenue increases. "The facility as a whole increases revenue during each of the corresponding C.O.R.E. program months," says Barth. **FM**



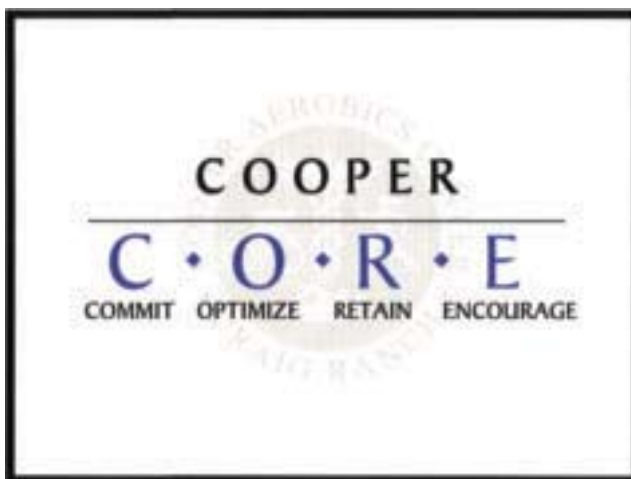
2007 Cooper Basic Training

If you want to increase your current exercise level or add a new challenge to keep you motivated, it's time to battle with this year's March Points challenge, 2007 Cooper Basic Training.

This annual program encourages members to attain a set exercise goal. No registration is required and participation is simple. Just enter your daily activities into E-LOG March 1-31, and at the end of the month your aerobic points will be totaled. The last day to log your points is Wednesday, April 4, 2007.

Level One—Sergeant, 135 points
Level Two—Colonel, 380 points
Level Three—General, 625 + points

How you can earn extra points:
 Attend Cooking demo on March 6 at 6:00pm for 75 points
 Attend Fitness Lecture on March 15 at 6:00pm for 50 points
 Attend Nutrition Lecture on March 22 at 6:00pm for 50 points
 (Reservations required, reserve your seat with our Concierge)
 Attend a special "Boot Camp" aerobic class for 15 points for each class (see service desk for current schedule)



Cooper C.O.R.E. is a year-round exercise incentive program that has resulted in increased membership, retention rates and personal training revenues.



What is the N7 Rest of the Best?

These innovations were entered into the 2007 Nova7 Facility Awards competition. While they were not judged to be winners or runners up in FM's annual awards program, they do deserve recognition for their outstanding creativity in helping to motivate individuals, both members and non-members, to exercise regularly and safely, as well as their achievements in growing their fitness centers' success. To enter the 2008 Nova7 Facility Awards competition, log on to www.fitnessmanagement.com/nova7/.

General Management Council MERRILL LYNCH FITNESS CENTER, JERSEY CITY, N.J.

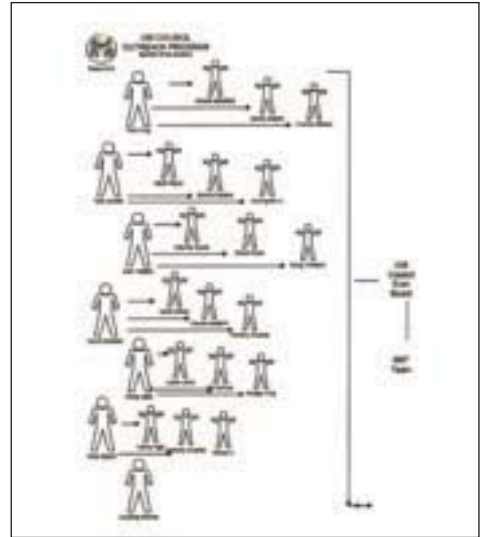
Believing that more-skilled, happier employees translate into quality customer service, the Plus One management team, which manages the Merrill Lynch Fitness Center, implemented the General Management Council. The purpose behind the council, according to General Manager/Council President Laura Giordano, is to provide “top-to-bottom communication for general managers at 65-plus sites across the country.” The idea, she says, “was born out of the need for general managers to ‘connect’ with one another; share valuable, strategic information; and motivate and inspire one another to exceed member expectations.”

With the implementation of the Council, outreach coordinators make monthly calls to the fitness center to connect with the general manager. “The regularity of a phone call from a familiar coworker to ask, ‘How are you?’ ‘What do you need?’ and ‘What are your challenges?’ is both efficient and effective,” says Giordano. “It also facilitates information delivery from the site to the senior management

team and back again.”

The Merrill Lynch Fitness Center used two ideas supplied through the program to meet its customer service goals. First, the facility improved retention by using the Council’s idea to use its enrollment system to place notes in members’ profile pages to track active/inactive members, as well as any action items in the system. Second, it allowed the center’s staff to connect with other sites to host Get Active America, and share best practices resulting in increased participation.

To judge the effectiveness of the Council, Merrill Lynch staff surveyed its members, resulting in 527 responses. Eighty-seven percent of respondents were very satisfied to somewhat satisfied overall with the facility, 85 percent were very satisfied to somewhat satisfied about fitness staff knowledge, and 81 percent were very satisfied to somewhat satisfied about fitness center maintenance and cleanliness. **FM**



The General Management Council implemented by Plus One, which manages the Merrill Lynch Fitness Center, improved and enhanced communication between the senior management team at Plus One and the onsite management team at Merrill Lynch, resulting in improved communication with members.

Summer Triathlon Training Program THE ATLANTIC CLUB, RED BANK, N.J.

Providing sport-specific training programs in fitness facilities is becoming ever more popular, so The Atlantic Club knew it would be successful by implementing a triathlon training program for both members and non-members. But, the goal of the Summer Triathlon Training program was not only to “give triathlon novices an opportunity train for a sprint triathlon with a group of other prospective athletes,” says Fitness Director Evie Gonzalez, the staff also wanted to provide participants “training that would encompass the physical, mental and educational aspects of triathlon training.”

The eight-week program was run by certified triathlon coach Brittany Rutter, and was open to members for \$889, and non-members for \$1,099. Six training sessions were offered each week, including swim sessions, bike sessions, running sessions, brick workouts (swim/bike or bike/run) and educational seminars. Participants were encouraged to attend at least four of the six sessions each week, and class times varied to meet participants’ schedules. Participants also received weekly emails with workouts and tips for triathlon racing. The program provided each participant with special workouts appropriate for their ability.

By training in a group atmosphere, Gonzalez says that participants were given the opportunity

to get the feel of doing swimming, biking and running in a “crowd,” just as it would be in the actual triathlon. Educational sessions focused on everything from changing a bike tire to monitoring heart rates.

As of the deadline, seven individuals had signed up for the program. While that seems small, Gonzalez says the facility only needed four participants for the program to be profitable. And, she says, “the program has already benefited our facility, as it has advertised the fact that we have a certified triathlon coach on staff.” The program has also given members the opportunity to take their training to the next level, and it has allowed members who had been interested in “trying a Tri” the extra incentive to do so. **FM**

LOOKING TO RACE A TRIATHLON THIS SUMMER?

SUMMER TRIATHLON TRAINING

Triathlon Training Program Details:

- 12 Weeks of group workouts, including swim, bike, and run sessions
- 12 Training Sessions available over the course of 12 weeks per week. (Some sessions will include a brick workout)
- 12 Educational Seminars (including: nutrition, injury prevention, and more)
- 12 Open Water Swims
- 12 Bike Sessions
- 12 Run Sessions
- 12 Brick Sessions
- 12 Personal Coaching Sessions (with a coach on your own time)
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July 24 - September 15, 2007

- Morning, Afternoon and Evening Workouts will be available
- Weekly emails with workouts and tips for triathlon racing
- Assistance with choosing a bike, running shoes and a watch if needed!
- An Atlantic Club Triathlon Training t-shirt!

Members: \$889 (Non-Members: \$1,099)

Reservations: 609-398-1234

THE ATLANTIC CLUB

5, 2007

The Summer Triathlon Training Program provided novice triathlon participants with the physical, mental and educational aspects of triathlon training.