



PROMOTING your business

In the last issue, international presenter Lincoln Bryden explained how to become a local “fitness celebrity”. Now, in the final part of the series, find out how to promote your business – offline.

Whether you run your own classes or work for a gym or leisure centre, you need to promote your classes so that people know that *you* are the person to go to if they want to get into shape, lose weight, feel better about themselves, or whatever you've identified as your "elevator pitch".

You need to try and do something on a regular basis, so that you are always in people's minds. Although I am a massive fan of online tactics, one of the fastest and easiest ways to get maximum exposure for your fitness classes, boot camps or PT business are via offline methods. It may be an old method, but it's still a good one.

Promoting locally

One of the main strategies I used to build my Ceroc Modern Jive business from 25 to over 250 people was working out which businesses already have your ideal customers, and then marketing to them. In the first article in this series (*Fitpro* October/November 2010) I covered who your ideal customer is, so now you need to make a list of where your ideal client/class participant would go. For example, for women aged 40+ with disposable income, you could make the following list: nail salons, hairdressers, day spas, tanning salons, bridal shops.

Now you can start the promotion, but please don't just stick a load of A5 word processed flyers on the front desk. In my experience this does not work, plus you may find that half of your flyers end up getting "filed" in the bin.

Try to strike up a working relationship with local businesses so that they see there is mutual benefit in sending referrals your way. This is a very powerful strategy that can get your fitness business in front of a lot of new customers very quickly.

Do this by constantly promoting these

businesses in your classes or PT sessions, and continually strive to give them new referrals. You could also offer these local business owners free fitness training or boot camp sessions. In exchange, you then give them your cards to hand out to their customers. The more referrals they give to you, the more sessions they get for free, and as they're attending your sessions, they'll be giving great testimonials.

Promoting to influential people

Another way of obtaining "foot soldiers" is to go to influential people in your area and offer to train them in exchange for referrals. This was very successful for me. For example, I became personal trainer to the ex mayor of Cheltenham and made sure that I gave an A+ service, leading to some great results. Not only did I end up being a personal trainer to the rest of his family, but he then referred me to other high profile people in Cheltenham, and within two months I had all the clients that I needed at that time.

This can also prove valuable with the local media. I invited BBC Radio Gloucester to my Ceroc nights for free in exchange for them doing a review of the night on the radio. The result? Not only did I get personal referrals from them but, unbeknown to me, on the day of my Ceroc night, they broadcasted all the details of the class, and all for free.

Promoting at live events

If you are not sure about approaching local figures, you could attend live events. For example, each year I hired a float and took part in the Cheltenham carnival. A few of my dancers jived on a lorry through the streets of Cheltenham, while I gave out hundreds of flyers, giving free entry if the flyer was used within that month. That way I could track whether the promotion was successful or not. You could see if you could take part in something similar in your area.

Also, if your town has music festivals, why not see if you could do a demo there?

During the Cheltenham music festival, not only were we allowed to do Jive and Streetdance demos in the street, but I was able to teach a Ceroc class to hundreds of bystanders for free, which was amazing for both exposure and offering people a free trial session.

If you combine these offline tactics with the online methods I suggested last issue, i.e. building a website that works and getting involved in social media, it will not be long before you have all of your classes busier than you can imagine, while being your local fitness "expert". **fp**

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Kathryn Cullen



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