

# Pivotal Mistakes You Do NOT Want to Make! Part 1

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**Over the years**, through my Boot Camp experience as well as through personal observation, I have identified a few gym club mistakes that I consider pivotal. By pivotal I mean, mistakes that will "make you" or "break you." In other words, each of the following mistakes can literally define your business.

**Failure to have your phone answered by a friendly, caring person 9 a.m.- 9 p.m.** Lately, I have had occasion to research local clubs. Please read and ponder what I observe in Cincinnati – the small, struggling clubs don't have their phone answered during the daytime and sometimes not in the evening when classes are in session; the medium clubs do a marginally better job, and you can almost always talk to a human being in the evening and on occasion during the daytime hours; the big clubs have their phone answered ALL day, EVERY day. One might concoct a chicken or egg argument that the reason the big clubs can do this is because they are big...and one would be wrong. Small club, medium club or big club, it makes no sense for a business to spend good money advertising yet fail to have a provision to serve perspective clients at THEIR convenience. Not convinced? I can quantify that the cost of a ringing phone, left unanswered, is \$8.20. And if the ringing phone is a perspective client the value of a phone call skyrockets to \$500-1,000!

**Believing in Theory X rather than Theory Y.** Get a copy of Douglas

**McGregor's The Human Side of Enterprise.** Distilled into one sentence, Theory X Managers believe that people are basically lazy and seek to avoid responsibility and must be coerced into acting responsibly. Theory Y Managers believe that people are basically self-directed, self-motivated and will exercise good judgment and initiative to accomplish tasks to which they are committed. OK, so which Manager is right? Both are. Think about it.

**Valuing talented children more than non-talented children.** Notice I didn't say "paying more attention to teams over classes." It goes deeper than that – some clubs just don't care about non-athletes and despite their lip-service about every child being a winner, their true feelings will show through. Not only does this make for a lousy business model, it is simply wrong.

**Failure to have adequate, appropriate, bright, neat, clean, inviting viewing area for parents.** Remain stuck in the 80's and ignore this reality and you will cut your potential business down in ways that cannot be measured. At Kids First, 18% of our total square footage is public space, and we have devoted great resources to making it inviting.

**Confusing relegation for delegation.** Relegation means handing off tasks; delegation means giving responsibility as well as the authority and accountability that goes with responsibility. The difference is huge and one that many

business people never grasp. This one mistake will stop business growth in its tracks as well as lead to burn-out. A business simply must get this right! (Come to BOOT CAMP in May!)

**Focusing on policies rather than procedures.** Policies demand the client "do it this way because we say so." Procedures inform the client that "we have chosen this process because it makes sense." Black and white, policy-oriented employees turn clients off and away from your business. Firm yet flexible is the paradoxical mantra the great businesses seek. Difficult? Yes. Worthwhile? Yes, ESSENTIAL!

**Simply not being FUN to do business with.** I'll bet you have had your own personal experience with a business that is not easy to do business with; additionally, I'll bet you have voiced your lousy experience to friends and family. Think about it. Do you have your phone answered so the client can conduct business at their convenience or yours? Do you have multiple payment options (credit cards); do you have friendly employees that know how to talk and laugh with your clients so they feel like FAMILY? Do you offer flexibility to clients when situations allow? Here is the cold reality – the public will choose a business that is easy and fun to do business with over one that is not. ✘

Make it a great month! Jeff Metzger



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