

10 Tips to Outsell, Outlast, and Beat the Competition

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Intro:

According to the SBA, 590,000 businesses opened and 576,000 closed. Michael Gerber says that every year over a million people start a business and by the end of their first year 40% will be gone, and within 5 years 80% will have failed. Then, within five more years 80% of those businesses will close. What can we do? I'm going to give you 10 tips to help ensure that doesn't happen to you.

10. **Don't be afraid to change**- Your name or tagline. My tagline is: *Where we bring out the champion in your child and make learning fun*. My mission statement is: *Create Happiness*. My philosophy is: *To teach quality gymnastics, dance, and swim in a fun, positive environment*. Change your prices but only once a year. I prefer fall or January where it feels like the beginning of a new year. Change your staff. *New blood is good!*

9. **Keep your gym clean**—seriously!! In the immediate area there are **seven** dance schools and two other quality gymnastics schools. I know that customers appreciate that we keep our gym so clean. *At the first Business Conference Steve Penny, then the VP of Marketing, said parents sometimes make a decision on where to take their kids based on cleanliness.*

8. **Have a management team** with one person absolutely in charge when you're not there—GM, Sr. Vice President, Big Kahuna... whatever you want to name them. Have a senior management staff with managers leading your departments. I literally am in the gym once a week if I'm in town.

7. **Be organized**- I loved the book, *The E-Myth Revisited*, by Michael Gerber and from there designed an Organization Chart and Position Contracts for all jobs. The staff members doing those jobs wrote the "how-to's". I also use a Critical Calendar *based on my Position Contract* and a Default Diary. We use checklists for such things as apparel, cleaning, registration, opening and closing the gym, what gymnastics teachers should do before and after class.... basically document, devise, systemize, and then re-visit all systems and ways of running your gym. *Run your business like you're going to franchise it.*

6. **Have great marketing material** including an accurate, up-to-date website and all social media channels. Keep your brochure up-to-date. Forget the full color printed brochure with schedules in it. We put more money and time into ensuring our website is up to date. That is time consuming. My marketing manager leads our marketing team. They meet once a week. She keeps a marketing binder, budget, and tracks everything.

5. **Have personality at the front desk!** Hire personality—train the skill. To create raving fans, you have to create a relationship with each and every customer. Five years ago we hired a customer service manager who makes calls to families who have missed classes two times, haven't been to class for two weeks, or who might like to return after not being there for three months. In the past, we also hired a hostess for the front door during the daytime and a high school girl who dressed like a princess for preschool evenings to welcome them at the door--invaluable!!

4. **Use sales scripts and tour scripts-** Know your average sale and increase it, and doggone it-ASK for the sale! *For instance with merchandise, you could use bag stuffers each month. Ask them, “Do you want a bag with those shoes, or a pair of those really cute purple Tumble Butt shorts to go with that pink leotard?”*

3. **Have a hiring and training system in place-** Use OneBox.com and a Fast-Track Training System like I have. OneBox.com is a service that you pay for a toll free number... and you program it to say something like, “Thank you for calling, we are presently looking for two gymnastics teachers for evenings and week-ends. Answer these few questions: Your name and phone number, experience, and why your lifestyle is suited for this job.” Then have a group interview to weed them out faster and pick the best one. Our Fast Track Training System is my #500 videos and books that I use to first train any new gymnastics teachers.

2. **Add more programs to bring in more revenue-** Gone is the gym named, “Just Gymnastics”. Those are now known as “Long Gone Gymnastics”. The name of my gym is “Patti’s All-American-The Leader in Gymnastics, Dance, and Swim”. But, we also have specialty programs such as Gym-N-Learn, (fitness based educational preschool), Ninja Zone, Kid’s Night Out, Parties, Day Camps, and Holiday Camps. We also have done Back Handspring Clinics, Lunch Bunch, YogaBears, Leaps & Turns, and Boys GymBears. We also tried new classes in our dance school such as Leaps and Turns, Mini-Hip Hop, and Mini-Lyrical. In our gymnastics school we tried classes in the summer called Double Mix and one called Triple Mix having the students only working at two or three events in a single class. *You must be innovative. Innovate or die.*

And the #1 tip is:

To keep an eye on the three keys to success in this business:

1. Staff

Love them, build them up, and trust them. Know the difference in motivation and inspiration. Motivation comes from within and can be promoted negatively or positive. For instance, “Take attendance or you’re fired!” Inspiration comes from an outside source like you leading by example, telling the truth, working harder than anyone else, and your trusting them!!

2. Facility

It must be clean, bright, colorful, and have the best equipment. Get rid of the dusty trophies, put flowers outside, have great signage, and always be updating the look of your gym!

3. Curriculum

The students must learn and they have to have fun, because what does every mother ask when her child gets in the car? “What did you learn and did you have fun?” Hopefully your students learned a great deal and left there with a smile on their face.

If you do some of these things and stay on top of your business, you WILL

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