



## **Calling all Innovators & Leaders**

I'm happy to say that I'm starting to see the tide turning in the practice of responsible gym care. Those that study the law of diffusion of innovation will tell us that there are specific patterns to change and improvement. If you are not familiar with the law, you are probably familiar with some of the terms that promote change. The first 2.5 % of people or businesses are the innovators. The next 13 – 15% are the early adopters. The next 30 % are the early majority which are followed by the late majority and the laggards. Business history tells us that industries change when we get beyond 18 – 25% acceptance. In business those that don't follow usually fail to stay competitive. The gymnastic club business is definitely maturing in a strong business model.

Innovators do things because they either have superior vision of how things will be or how they should be or they just want to be first. The early adopters see the vision, but want someone else to go first. The first two groups create the momentum that eventually changes the remainder of the industry.

The Gymnastic Club business started as the use (usually part time) of any available space with high enough ceilings to allow Uneven bar and High bar swings. The innovators set up permanent gyms that were more available but still had the smell and feel of an old gymnasium or warehouse. Now the innovators are the ones with polished floors, color coded traffic patterns, comfortable and safe viewing areas, clean and updated equipment, and chalk free mats to start every day. We started to see this evolution about 10 years ago where gyms were not just hard core training, they were family friendly, clean, and inviting child care and training spaces.

Those innovators were followed recently by more and more early adopters that are seeing the return on investment of clean safe gymnasiums. Providing a clean and safe learning environment for children is the number one feature being marketed by best gymnastic business of today (the early majority). If your gym hasn't yet adopted a schedule of regular cleaning and equipment inspection, you may be falling into those last two categories of late adopters and laggards. We all know who the laggards are. There the ones that only bought a smart phone because they can't get service for their flip phone.

It's not too late to be an innovator or leader. Take a critical look at your gym today and decide what you could do better. First do better than what you are currently doing, then do better than your competition. I've seen many brilliant coaches who are innovators and early adopters in coaching that are still laggards in gym cleanliness and equipment maintenance. It's not too late to change. As they used to say in commercials years ago... Be the first on your block to.....

Go ahead, take the lead.

*Steve*

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