USA Gymnastics
2016 Survey of the Member Clubs

Conducted and reported by
David Holcomb

The 2016 USAG Survey results are in. Nearly 500 gyms from 47 states across the USA responded (I’m looking at you AK, DE and MS?). This is the fifth time that USA Gymnastics has conducted the survey and I hope the results prove to be both informative and helpful.

The purpose of the survey is to gain and provide general information about the gymnastics industry, develop industry standards, gage how we are doing as the economy improves, collect and share the best ideas from gyms across the USA, and to provide feedback on USAG itself so they can better serve the needs of the Member Clubs across the USA.

The last three surveys identified increased education and training opportunities plus professional support as the most important things USAG could do to help the clubs. USAG responded by pouring resources into doing just that. According to the results from this survey the overwhelming majority of our Member Clubs appreciate and are benefiting from those efforts.

The leadership at USA Gymnastics pays close attention to both the results and the comments. Many times they want to respond directly to those who ask questions or who have issues but cannot because of the confidentiality built into the survey results.

Your ideas are awesome! I am always impressed by the passion and thoughtfulness of the gym owners, managers, and coaches in our industry. That is why a complete report containing most of your responses, ideas and opinions will be sent to those who completed the survey. It is my hope that the results prove to be useful as you make decisions about programs, pricing, organization, and approaches.

100% of the comments collected for and about USA Gymnastics have already been sent to the leadership of the organization. I have shared a few of those comments in this report as well.

Best wishes for a great year in gymnastics!

David Holcomb,
Founder and Owner, Buckeye Gymnastics,
Chair, USA Gymnastics Business Advisors

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## Demographics

### Information about the gym owner:
When appropriate and where it fits I have included results from the survey from prior years (2013 and 10).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>59%</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age of the gym owner:</th>
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<tr>
<td>20-30</td>
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<td>30-40</td>
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<td>40-50</td>
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<tr>
<td>50-60</td>
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<td>over 60</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>College graduate:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Was the owner a gymnast?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Was the owner an accomplished gymnast?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Does the owner manage the day-to-day operation of the gym?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Gym owners who spend time doing the following:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coaching:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front desk:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accounting:</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If the owner had it to do over again, would s/he still open a gymnastics gym?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Is the owner the highest paid employee of the gym?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>On average, how many hours does the owner work in the gym each week?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>10-15</td>
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<tr>
<td>16-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
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<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
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<tr>
<td>31-35</td>
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<tr>
<td>36-40</td>
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<tr>
<td>over 40</td>
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*Note: Information on how much gym owners make will be provided and reported in Part Two of the survey.*
Information about the gym

In what year did you open your gym?

Oldest Gym - 1908
1950's: 2 gyms
1960's: 5 gyms
1970's: 64 gyms
1980's: 75 gyms
1990's: 112 gyms
2000's: 126 gyms
2010's: 107 gyms
2016: 3 gyms!

How many locations do you have?
2016 2013 2010
1 83% 83% 87%
2 11% 12% 7%
3 3% 1% 4%
4 or more 1% 1% 2%

Do you own your building?
Yes 35% 48% 47%

In what type of building do you operate?
2016 2013
Single tenant, free-standing 42% 50%
Warehouse complex 13% 5%
Light industrial 8% 7%
Commercial building 14% 15%
Strip shopping center 5% 5%
Sublease within larger facility 2%

It is interesting to note that in 2006 over half (55%) of the gyms operated out of a warehouse or in a light industrial area. By 2016 only 21% report doing so. Many of us started in these types of buildings because we could rent a larger space for less money. But now many gym owners have moved away from this model and made the decision to operate their business in facilities often closer to the communities they serve.

Do you operate as a not-for-profit business?
2016 2013 2010
No 87% 88% 86%

Do you operate in a multi-sport building complex (exclude cheer, dance, trampoline, and other traditional gymnastics related programs)?
Yes 27% 31% 26%

Is your gym air-conditioned?
Yes 68%

What programs do you offer?
Gymnastics instruction 98%
Team: gymnastics 91%
Private lessons 88%
Birthday parties 87%
Summer camps 75%
Open gym 69%
Holiday camps 54%
Non-select recreation team 35%
Competition team camps 35%
Cheerleading 34%
Special Needs 29%
Dance 25%
Fitness- adult 21%
Team: cheerleading 18%
Fitness- kids 16%
Team: TNT 15%
Ninja 13%
Martial arts 11%
Swimming 7%
Yoga 7%

I'm not quite sure how any “gymnastics” gyms operate without offering gymnastics instruction, but for the first time gymnastics instruction did not come in at 100%. Cheerleading seems not to be a huge factor in the gymnastics community. The sport of cheerleading continues to grow and the programs that specialize in cheerleading are taking over the field. Yoga and Ninja are reflected here for the first time as gyms continue to innovate and add additional programming.

Year of Peak Enrollment?
74% of the gyms reported their highest enrollment ever to be in the past four years since 2012. 39% reported that 2015 saw the highest enrollment. The years of the economic recession (2007-2001) were dreadful for the broader gymnastics community as our enrollments reflected the conditions within the communities we serve. Only 5% of the gyms surveyed reported highest ever enrollment during those recessions years.

Only 13% of the gym reported their highest enrollment prior to 2007.

This result says a great deal about the value that families place on the children's sports, recreation, fitness, and education in general and the support that our gymnastics school have within the communities we serve specifically.

Programs that are doing well for your gym:
Recreational school age gymnastics: 89%
 Competitive Teams: 28%
 Preschool gymnastics: 24%
 Rec-teams: 6%
 Ninja: 5%
 Tumbling: 5%

Programs that are not doing so well:
Preschool: 20%
Boys classes / teams: 18%
None -- all are doing fine: 16%
Cheerleading: 12%
Daytime preschool: 5%

I have done a total of seven surveys for both USECA and USA Gymnastics. In every survey prior to this one cheerleading has appeared in both lists. Gym owners love it or hate it. Sometimes they feel both at the same time. The 2016 survey identifies 12% of gym owners who report that cheerleading is down while only 3% report that it is doing well for them. My guess is
cheerleading growth or decline is heavily dependent on having a couple of terrific coaches. This is true with every program but perhaps most true in cheerleading.

How important are the following factors to the business success of your gym? 2016

The percentage of those gym owners who agree that this item is important or very important.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keeping the gym clean</td>
<td>99%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Convenient location</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wide variety of classes/times</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open observation of gym activity</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accept credit cards</td>
<td>86%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trampoline(s)</td>
<td>85%</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAG background checks</td>
<td>81%</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAG education offerings</td>
<td>81%</td>
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<tr>
<td>New rec/preschool equipment</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient parking</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tumble trampolines</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAG Safety Certification</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air-Conditioning</td>
<td>71%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Auto-payment</td>
<td>71%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hot Spot, wireless inter-net access</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New competition equipment</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open gyms / open training</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loose foam pits</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resi-pits</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>On-line registration</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money back guarantee</td>
<td>44%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Play area for waiting siblings</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unlimited Make-ups</td>
<td>32%</td>
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</table>

The most effective advertising, promotional activities, or marketing I do: 2016

The percentage of gym owners who agree or strongly agree with the following statements:

- Clean facility: 99%
- Reputation in community: 99%
- Terrific staff: 97%
- Excellent customer service: 97%
- Kid friendly environment: 96%
- Exposure from birthday parties: 78%
- My Web-site: 85%
- Innovative curriculum: 85%
- Facebook: 77%
- Signs and location: 74%
- The extras we do: 72%
- Team achievements: 63%
- Broadcast email: 57%
- Bring-a-friend events: 53%
- Direct mail from my mailing list: 51%
- Facebook ads: 50%
- Shows and demonstrations: 44%
- Google Ad Words / analytics: 27%
- Instagram: 22%
- Twitter: 17%

The survey dropped a number of marketing options that appeared in past surveys. Gone are yellow page ads, newspaper ads, direct mail, tele-marketing, and radio and cable TV ads. This is not to say that these traditional marketing efforts never work. They do work for some gyms in some locations. But the trend is against these approaches. As always the best marketing is to do a terrific job every single day with your customers and students. There is no substitute and no form of external promotion or advertising can overcome a dirty gym, poor teaching, lousy customer service and the resulting poor reputation in your community.
Please respond to the following statements:
The percentage of gym owners who agree or strongly agree with the following statements:

I expect my business to grow and thrive over the next five years. 89%
Gymnastics is a good business To be in. 84%
My business is growing steadily. 75%
My profits are growing steadily. 71%
Enrollment is up 57%
Enrollment is down this year. 23%
Enrollment is flat 31%

The greatest threats facing the gymnastics industry in general and my club in particular:
The percentage of gym owners who agree or strongly agree with the following statements:

Lack of qualified teachers. 84%
Increased competition- kid’s sports 68%
Poor economic conditions 52%
Increased number of gyms 43%
Threat of lawsuits 33%
Gymnastics is not affordable 32%
Gymnastics has become too hard 26%
Negative media exposure 16%
Trampoline Parks 21%

USA Gymnastics serves the needs of my gymnastics business in the following ways:
The percentage of those gym owners who agree that this item is important or very important.

Educational opportunities: 91%
On-line training/certifications: 87%
Risk Management Course: 86%
Coaching certification: 86%
Background checks: 84%
Create rules for J.O. competition: 84%
Create compulsory routines: 83%
Sanctioning meets (insurance): 81%
Strong Olympic Teams: 80%
Member Club membership: 75%
Regional Congress: 75%
Info in Technique magazine: 75%
National Congress: 67%
USA Gymnastics magazine: 67%
Organize/oversee State Boards: 67%
Organize Regional Boards: 66%
International teams- win medals: 64%
National Business Seminar: 50%
On-line classified ads: 38%
Nastia Liukin Cup Series: 25%

USA Gymnastics has improved the educational opportunities offered for gymnastics teachers in my gym?
Yes 80%

USA Gymnastics has improved the educational opportunities offered for gymnastics coaches in my gym.
Yes 86%

USA Gymnastics has improved the educational opportunities that I as a business owner can use to better train my staff.
Yes 81%

I am aware of the courses offered on-line through USA Gymnastics University.
Yes 92%

Should USA Gymnastics require background checks for non-professional members (those not required to be background checks because they are not coaching at USA Gymnastics sanctioned events) employed by USA Gymnastics Member Clubs as a condition of membership?
Yes 50%

Would such a policy help eliminate bad actors from gaining access to our students?
Yes 55%

Comments: Thank you for taking the time to comment! Over 4,000 comments came in and many were thoughtful, on point, and from the heart. I expected nothing less. I have included representative comments on various topics and often both sides of an area of concern was represented. I have included my own thoughts on certain issues that are of interest to me and where I thought another point of view might be helpful. There are many, many interesting thoughts here. Learn, consider, and enjoy.

Background check comments: A strong percentage (84%) of clubs responded that background checks served the needs of their gymnastics business. Yet only 50% felt that background checks should be required for non-professional staff as a condition for membership as a USA Gymnastics club. Here are some representative comments.

Background checks are good but too expensive to do for every young employee who is only working a couple hours a week and may only
work for a few months at a time between high school sports seasons.

My gym conducts background checks on all of it employees from office to coach to cleaners. I often feel that gyms who go above and beyond are somewhat punished for the gym who could care less about policy, rules and simple good business. Every time a mandatory rule is imposed on all facilities because of a few bad apples it effects all facilities financially. Honestly I am not sure if there is a way to correct this. Unless you could dispense an entire gym for misconduct of service. Thank you for asking our opinions.

I cannot afford to background check my age 14-24 year old coaches that I have personally known since they were 3...Silly!

I disagree with requiring background checks for all employees as club owners need to be allowed some discretion...for example, we employ several school teachers. They are already extensively background checked by the school system.

To require additional background checks would be onerous. Additionally, we often recruit and train coaches from our older team girls--these are kids we have known for years and have basically helped raise. Requiring background checks for them is again, an expensive, onerous requirement.

Currently we have to do separate FBI/State background checks for our employees and then have to do the USA Gymnastics ones for our pro members as well. Isn't there some way to consolidate this?

I answered above about not requiring Background Checks for non-coaches. The reason is that PA requires all Adults who work with kids to have background clearances. As a result, we as a business get hit twice for paying for background checks.

I definitely agree that all employees should be background checked at all gyms. However, we do our own background checks through our agency, so if you start enforcing that, I think there should be an option to provide proof of your own checks. Otherwise we have over 30+ employees that are not USA Gym members and that would be a huge expense to do two checks per person.

The background checks in their current state are awful and worthless. According to NCSI we are supposed to have our staff do their own back ground checks. We will NOT allow our staff to do their own checks and will continue to do them ourselves and get the red light or green light ourselves. There needs to be a better system for back ground checks available to us thru USAG or we should use our own background check service if available.

Thanks for asking those last two questions! We have been doing background checks as a condition of employment for 20-ish years. We use the department of justice via the local police station to have all coaches fingerprinted.

WHY does USAG not accept the DOJ background checks that we already pay for? It makes no sense to have to pay twice for my people, especially because once the DOJ put employees in their system, I get updates on their status if any new contact with police occurs, permanently. It's a better system than whatever you're using, from the gym owners perspective. I'd really like an answer to this question. I'm paying twice as much for something less permanent in the background checks you require. Why isn't USAG using DOJ?

USAG makes a big deal protecting children from sexual predators. I commend them for making this a priority. However, there are other offenders which they choose to ignore. I personally know of coaches that have multiple DUI's who have been arrested on drug and weapon charges or physically and emotionally abuse children that are still coaching children. There is also a hesitance among owners to call out coaches for this type of behavior. These coaches spend more time with these children than most of the parents. It is important that we set a high standard as we are these children's prime example.

I think USAG does a fine job of governing. You are either going to make it as a business owner or not, no matter what business you own. There are plenty of opportunities for anyone to educate themselves if they choose to do so and their staff. As far as the background checks go, since I live in a town where the other gym owner was just put in prison for the rest of his life for violating students in his gym, it's hard to say if that helps. He had a current background check, just hadn't been caught. I think maybe the education should also be about what to look for. Signs of abuse and such so that people are more aware of what is a sign and they should be concerned. But as a parent I never leave my child with anyone. And as a gym owner my staff are never allowed alone with students. As much for their protection as the kids. I do have to say the one disappointment I have in the gymnastics community is that is more about winning then it is about what the kids are learning about themselves.
The greatest threats facing the gymnastics industry in general and my club in particular:

This year, my County Public Schools changed their daily schedules, starting and dismissing school later in the day, impacting the scheduling of after school activities. Parents aren't sure if they can do school, do after school enrichment programs like gymnastics and still get dinner, homework and kids to bed at a reasonable hour.

New minimum wage laws in area that will drive prices higher in my city while other close facilities do not fall under these same minimum wage laws.

Insurance costs especially workers comp insurance is putting a financial stress on our business. Our workers comp insurance is now the single most expensive insurance. It is more expensive to cover my own 25 employees than it is for accident/general liability for over 600 students. Doesn't make sense. The YMCA class code will eventually be coming to every state. CT for example has to pay it. It is over $2.00 per $100.00 in payroll.

Lack of Qualified Teachers?

Not necessarily lack of qualified teachers, the fact is nobody wants to work anymore. People want to get paid, but they don't want to work. Second shift is a hard shift to work if you have a spouse or kids.

All of the above definitely have an impact! Even though I've only been open for a year I've worked at many gyms over the years. Every Gym I've ever worked for always had a huge turnover with coaching staff, therefore you must continuously spend money to certify and still have dependability issues.

We live in a good area with two colleges to draw from. However, we still struggle finding qualified teachers. We have started an apprenticeship program with our gymnasts that are either in High School or have quit gymnastics. Our hopes is to develop good coaches for the future.

Very hard to find coaches that can keep working for us. Their "other, more full-time/day job" ends up taking them away. Can't blame them. We are not full-time. Everyone has to work 2 jobs here.

Expense of the sport and very tough finding qualified coaches that are affordable.

Hire the character - train the skill. (JM) We have a continuous pool of new instructors as our gymnasts, both rec & team get older. We live or die on the local economy.

Honestly, quality coaches are worth money, but not every coach should be paid top dollar. A rec coach shouldn't be expecting $18-$22 an hour for a class that pays $15 per child per class.

Our biggest problem right now is a good one to have -- hundreds of kids on waiting lists and no more space in the gym and no possibility of renting more space in the area because rent is too high when all I really need is twice as much gym weekdays between 330-730 p.m. (and Saturday mornings).

We are always hiring! It is hard to find, hire, train, and develop staff. Knowing this we continuously hire. Having one or more teachers in the gym training during prime time hours not only helps us maintain a pool of quality and trained staff to draw upon when we have an opening, it also provides instant subs when we can't get anyone to come in on short notice and provides teaching and supervision when those little emergencies come up during a class that demand the full attention from the lead teacher. We do not end up actually hiring everyone who starts the training for various reasons including instances when those potential teachers find that do not really want to teach gymnastics. Good to know before we hire them. Yes, we pay a training wage.

It is hard to find qualified coaches. Even underqualified coaches think they are worth more money than our gym can spend.

Lack of affordable labor is our biggest threat by far.

Part time employees are hard to keep. A constant turnover in staff makes it difficult to keep my programming consistent. I spend too much time training new staff members.

The rising minimum wage in our state has hurt our ability to keep costs down and reward more deserving coaches.

Cost of space is big impediment to our growth: most programs run 4:30 - 8:30pm and we're full.

We find it hard to get consistent staff. We have good staff but some are high school and college students and their schedules change. Health insurance for our full time staff is becoming very expensive and effecting our bottom line. We try to offer health, dental and vision. A policy available through USAG to give buying power would be helpful. Liability insurance is also expensive and we have a very good rating.
Unfair and predatory sales taxation by our state is the biggest threat to our business. The state robbed us blind and now we have to charge sales tax for offering a service to the community. No other gym in our area charged sales tax so customers think we are trying to scam them into making them pay more! I am personally involved with trying to get the sales removed, but all the bills put to congress so far have failed.

USA Gymnastics has a group specifically working on this and other legislative challenges that affects our gyms throughout the USA.

Bottom line ... the cost of renting / owning a large facility makes it difficult to hire full time employees.

Biggest concern I have is the price of renting appropriate space while keeping costs low enough to remain affordable to middle income families.

Trampoline Parks:

Trampoline parks are a problem due to injuries to our students

I have a tramp park within 5 mi. of my gym and don't feel this is a threat at all. I think people do this as a "special" play day or b-day party.

We have a trampoline gym near our second location. They have had more injuries and broken necks then I have ever seen so it has created a scare with clients.

A Tramp Park opened up within 5 miles of us last year. Hurt our Open Gym initially. Don't even realize they exist now.

And those trampoline parks- let's just call them "come here if you want to break your leg" parks. Geez.

Trampoline parks are just for fun. They do not offer the gymnastics instruction or team experiences. Parents are smart enough to know the difference.

Customer's compare trampoline parks to our gymnastics facility, and fail to recognize the distinct difference between curriculum based, instructor lead, trampoline; and reckless and dangerous trampoline parks.

There have been numerous accidents at the Trampoline Park down the street from us. Every week parents tell us their kids are becoming afraid of the sport due to the injuries sustained there. ’

Trampoline parks give our industry a bad reputation and some of our clientele refuse to have their children do any trampoline activities (recreation departments, home school groups etc,

It has become very bad PR for our sport! Trampoline parks should not be USAG members.

Why do you allow them to tarnish our sports reputation that we have worked our lifetime to build?

trampoline / bounce house opened near us about 16 months ago and closed quickly due to poor management and high insurance

The greatest risk is not providing a place for everyone to feel successful - like soccer and volleyball. Children need to receive more recognition for learning a basic skill - like a flip flop.

Shift in emphasis in preschoolers attending all day educational preschools and starting at an earlier age has dramatically affected our day time preschool gymnastics enrollment. Has caused a shift to evening times where we have limited space to accommodate them due to our large enrollment in a small size gym.

How much power does USA Gymnastics Have?

Too many gyms opening too close to others causing coaches and kids to gym jump. Coaches should NOT be paid a stipend to steal kids from another gym. USAG needs to implement Member Clubs service territory boundary much like the YMCAs and park districts do. Prevents duplication of services, lack of coaches and turmoil/drama in the communities. Some gyms are a mess and struggling because a gym opened with a former coach and kids across the street from them. NO OTHER BUSINESS ALLOWS THIS!

I have been in the business for over 20 years and I have seen gyms come and go for several reason. The hardest thing to watch and deal with are gyms that open too close to one another. We are experiencing that right now. A gym opened 5 miles away. USA Gymnastics should monitor USA Gymnastics Certified gyms and make it a requirement for the gyms to be at least 10-12 miles away. This would add to the success of all gyms old and new.

USA Gymnastics has no authority over gymnastics schools, individual coaches, children moving gyms, or anything else having to do with the operation of a gymnastics school until and
unless the gym in question chooses to participate in a program or service offered by USA Gymnastics. Then and only then does USA Gymnastics have some limited authority to impose requirements upon the ability of gyms, coaches, teachers and athletes to participate in those programs or services. For example, if a gymnastics school makes the choice to participate in USA Gymnastics sanctioned competitions, then the coach(es) must be a professional member of USA Gymnastics and that professional membership requires certain certifications, a background check, coursework, the payment of certain fees and an obligation to follow rules governing ethics and behavior among other things. But plenty of gyms in this country have no connection to USA Gymnastics. They go their own way. I do not think many of these independent operations have anywhere near the professionalism or success of USA Gymnastics Member Clubs and affiliated teams. But they are out there and they continue to survive.

I'm not sure if gymnastics is unaffordable?? There are different levels of gymnastics in our area, depending what you want. I guess it's all with what you want and how much you have to spend

Our primary concern would be the economy in our area. Thus far, we have had stability and have increased enrollments and profits from year to year.

Optional level gymnastics is very difficult, making being competitive extremely difficult and time consuming=expensive. It is hard top charge enough to pay higher level coaches enough.

I think the only threat to gym not being successful is the owners themselves. I find it easy to run a successful business because I like what I do, care about my clients, and above all I have common sense. Too many gyms do not clean, take care of equipment properly, and don't train their staff effectively. You have to have a strong program for your staff to follow and you have to be a good leader. As for the advertising, I don't advertise. I just do a great job and use word of mouth, it's free!! (Yes!! See The most effective advertising, promotional activities, or marketing I do above.)

High cost of living in my area which leads to challenges of attracting qualified individuals and generally well rounded individuals that understand the importance of working with and strong enough to participate in the JO program a chance at competition.

Affordability and economic conditions are relative to each gym's demographic

Good practices, good training and good insurance insulates you from lawsuits. This may be true for a lot of items, but our gym in particular are not affected by many of these issues

Many people think gymnastics is not affordable, but in reality, most sports are expensive, parents just haven't been exposed to many yet with their children.

We follow the thought of "easy to start, easy to take a break" we have a ton of students that take a break for seasonal sports (soccer, etc) and then are back after those short seasons. We market gymnastics as a great 'off season' activity and that has helped students return. Staffing continues to be a major issue. Not hard to find people who want to work with kids and learn but very hard to find qualified people who want to work 4-8pm.

I make it affordable. That is my success.

I do not believe that gymnastics has become too hard, I believe the children of today have become too lazy.

Insurances are way too expensive and there is no difference in rates for those of us that have great facilities and take a great deal of time and energy and money to keep the facility state-of-the-art, clean, and safe.

I think the biggest threat are parents who are too overly protective and do not allow their children to play and learn independently. Children are being allowed to quit if something is a little hard. They have no backbone or grit to face new challenges. Parents in general allow their children to go from one activity to another because when activity gets a little hard the child is not taught to stay and learn. In the long run the child has poor coping skills in handling challenges in life.

People will do just about anything for their kids happiness and their sports. I have seen mothers skip getting their nails done so that money can be put towards their kids sports. We need to keep educating our staff and make sure our gyms are good, qualified facilities instead of providing sub-par training.
What is the most effective thing you have done to increase revenue in the past two years?

Focused on training, education and investing in coaches. More focus on long-term, full-time staff. Retention has increased, and quality of programs has grown each year.

We have begun to realize that small increases in our programs add up to big payoffs. We are doing more promotion via social media and also placing more special events. There is a huge amount of interest in special programs, and it seems to help keep our families feeling engaged and more bonded to the program.

Offering lots of choices for camps and classes, and being extremely flexible with payment options. Offering a Level 2 team that competes increased team base and going into the Xcel program helped keep team girls enrolled who play other sports/activities.

Overstaffing for training purposes. Enables the ability to add classes as needed. Also, cross training all staff. Everyone should be able to teach preschool through beginner level team.

Down sized our facility and overhead on 1/2015. Which increased our revenue. We maintained all our clients while moving.

1. I converted to Monthly tuition rather than 8 week sessions.
2. I stopped teaching class kids and hired another recreational teacher which allowed me to focus on building the business instead of teaching. My enrollment increased in both classes & Team.

Start a 3 month training class for team interested gymnast. It is promoted in December. Starts in January and ends in March. Tryouts are April and had 19 new kids try it and 17 joined team. It's a great feeder program. Did it again this year thinking last year was just a fluke and had another 16 join. I have a very small gym. About 200 kids, small town. But have over 50 on team. Recently started a Loyalty Program and offered raffle tickets to families who pay their tuition early. I will do drawings for monthly prizes and so far people have been receptive to it.

Continuing to educate our staff. Keeping them fresh and excited about their jobs is key! Another great help has been in our girls gymnastics (non-competitive classes only) we started teaching routines and offer "meets" in January, May, and August each year. They are $40 to enter and get 4 ribbons and placement on events and a medal and placement in all around and a meet t-shirt. Our judges are our level 8-10 kids and XCEL platinum and diamond kids who also get a t-shirt for "judging". It has helped get kids motivated to move up and see why we do what we do! It has also helped our XCEL team double in size every year for the past 2 years! No one is required to participate in the meets, but we always try! The ones who do the meets are the ones who stay in the program and move up and move to team. We are now seeing those kids return as teenagers to do tumbling classes for cheer because they had a positive experience as a younger child!

The thing we did that was HUGE for our gym was go to a true year round schedule. We used to have a school schedule (September to May) and then a summer schedule (June to August). Students were dropped at the end of the session and had to enroll for the next session. This year we did not do that and my summer enrollment was up 30%. This is a game changer for us.

We have donated to our local schools PTA fundraisers. We give gift certificates that the winner can use for any of our classes or open gym. It has increased our name recognition and parents prefer to "shop" at the businesses that help support their children's education.

We make it mandatory that team kids participate in one full week of summer camp. This assures that our summer program stays full. We have also staffed our preschool thru age 7 with our best and most experienced staff. We do not separate team coaches and class coaches. All staff coach all programs. Bonus program in place for recreational gym classes. Bonus for returning students.

Cut staff hours and realize that day-time preschool is vanishing and it's not coming back. Also realize that higher level competitive gymnastics is done for the average/small sized clubs. It's something that the majority of people have no interest in for their child.

Conduct courtesy calls to see how classes are going for parents and students.

Questions may be answered, problems resolved before they become an issue. Also some amazing ideas can come out of these conversations.

We went (finally) from sessions to monthly class and also to auto debit. It's been quite an adjustment as the gym is in a lower socioeconomic area where asking people for a debit/credit card to keep on file is not easy. A lot of our families do not have a credit card. BUT in
just 4 months I can say it’s one of the best business decisions I have ever made.

I began offering pay-as-you-come classes for junior high and high school aged students. The freedom from an 8 week commitment has actually increased enrollment to more than I get from some classes with 8 week commitments.

We began offering drop in classes. A drop in class is where no enrollment is required in advance for all levels. Additionally we offered American warrior obstacle course and ninja zone to attract more boys to our program.

Offered more multi-age classes for home school children all at the same time during the day to accommodate families.

Built a new facility that is new, clean, comfortable and visible location.

We designed and launched a continuing education program for our recreation staff. It includes meetings, hands on and video training. It also includes having the coaches do observations of each other from the parent viewing area. Very enlightening to them! Although this may appear to be a cost, the ‘return on investment’ has been substantial. Our enrollment this season, the 4th year of the quadrennial, is up 161 kids from the same time last year.

Creating class caps and an event rotation schedule. In the past, we kept to the class ratio, but would add additional coaches onto classes. It created too much chaos in the gym during certain class times have increased ratios according to instructors experience.

The most effective thing we have done is incorporate a better training program for our coaches and staff. It is and will always be a work in progress, but we ensure all staff knows not only how to spot but how to read and follow lesson plans, work a birthday party or other special event, interact with parents and children, incorporate customer service into their daily habits and ensure everyone knows the importance of safety and how to ensure everyone follows the rules/policies.

Our facility is relatively full. Our biggest challenge has been to maximize space efficiency or getting the most kids in the gym at one time, comfortably. We’re looking to expand this summer to accommodate more. Our gym space is close to 6,500 square feet and we run over 725 kids with only 24 on a team.

Two things have helped us the most. First, I implemented a structured staff training program utilizing you tube so we could use training videos online for all staff to see and reference. This has created a better prepared staff which has resulted in fewer drops. Secondly, we started an exhibition team and sought occasions to take them out into the community. At our exhibitions, we hand out flyers and take registrations on the spot using jackrabbit class management and an iPad.

We have started to bill recreational classes as "easy to start, easy to break" and that has helped us have students take a short break for seasonal sports (soccer, etc) and then return. We talk about gymnastics being a great between season activity.

We have also started running classes and event notifications on a TV in our lobby. This has increased our enrollment in events and special classes. Over the past few months we have really focused on improving our communication through Facebook.

We have created open time in the gym for "Toddler Time." We allow parents to create quality memories with their children during our down hours. This has been brilliant. We have numerous kids attending between the hours of 11:15am and 12:45pm. We have been focusing on great service and creating family memories.

1. Offering recreational level 2 and 3 classes for kids who want to move up in skills but not compete.
2. Being very flexible with summer camp days and times that they can pay for such as 1/2 days can be morning or afternoon and they can mix and match with 1/2 day, full day, & multiple day pricing.

We began an intro to gymnastics class where all of our free trials start. They are introduced to our language, very basic skills and positions, our expectations and gym rules. Kids remain in this class on average 1-3 classes then move into our level 1 classes. They are excited to move up quickly. This is great for the kids, as well as for our coaches who don't have to cater to a brand new gymnast in a level 1 class who doesn't know the very basics.

We are actually ending a two year plan for increasing revenue and growing the weaker programs. The first thing we did was identify the weakest areas and times. Secondly we went through and evaluated people to reassign them based on strength and weaknesses that may have shifted since hire. We also made some
tough decisions to let go some of the staff that were not vested 100% into change.

Once we did that we reevaluated marketing and throughout all marketing that was general in terms of distribution like newspaper, ECFE catalogs etc. We went specific using a google partner to help target digital via google, facebook and Youtube. Lastly we went to a very user friendly front end which gives great referral discounts, 100% refund policy at anytime, unlimited makeups whenever they want them and the biggest change was offering different levels of membership to lock people into year round commitments.

We went to a one time family registration instead of session or annual sign-ups. This kept everyone enrolled unless they dropped. We found that "registration periods" made the customer have to re-register so it gave them a way out -or- we lost those too lazy to come back in.

After purchasing our business from the previous owner, we knew there were a lot of changes to be made to the program, staffing and facility to help the business grow. We started by remodeling some the facility after the purchase. However, the negative image stuck with the name, so in late 2013, we renamed the program and started with a fresh image to let the community know it is under new management. We also replaced some poor quality employees, and invested more time in the training of our staff. Since then, our program has increased by over 100 students, and is continuing to grow. We continue to remodel more and more as finances allow, and develop our instructors as much as we can. Our reinvestment into the business has truly been the best thing ever!

We have upgraded the number of stations in regard to almost every aspect of our program. Both competitive teams, recreational gymnastics stations, preschool area, birthday party area, and equipment for hosting invitational meets.

We just opened two years ago. Most effective thing we done to increase program is have successful seasons and advertise through local schools. We also offer a "customer appreciation day" that let our parents businesses come line the street offering whatever they do and streamline live competitive cheer or gymnastics on jumbo "inflatable" TV. Free for the public and parents!

I make sure that every employee is on the same page in coaching: from the way they talk to students to the way they structure the class. They all are USAG members and have all their certifications.

We added summer day camps focusing on our preschool to 10 year olds which has helped crossover into our preschool/Kindergarten classes and help boost those during the summer and school year. We also added more camps on days off but the biggie was the summer camps. Just half day (8:30 - 12pm) and they get structured gym time, a 15 minute break with snack, then crafts, and then game time which includes fort building with the mats (kids LOVE this), relay races, obstacle course and other fun stuff. Sometimes we will though in a theme for the day (i.e. super heroes or animals but we never do theme weeks as some people may not want a whole week of super hero and you don't want to turn someone away because that is the only week they can do but they don't want that theme.) We offer discounts off of summer tumbling if they do a camp and make sure sibling discounts are meaningful so our larger families can afford the camps as well. We took the time to really train the camp coordinator too.

Hired quality coaches / offered raises based on longevity / education etc . Paid for all associated staff fees /education / travel etc. Hired better cleaning staff

Parents Night Outs. I just added these and as a small gym with less than 300 students total, we usually have upwards of 50 children at a drop off day. We do at least one per month and they are even increasing enrollment since non-members are invited as well.

Provide a Large, CLEAN facility, good customer service with a staffed front office and provide a quality class with a low student teacher ratio.

We started an Xcel program 2 years ago that has increased revenue significantly. It has extended some JO Athletes careers when they were thinking about retiring and it has allowed kids not strong enough to participate in the JO program a chance at competition.

We offer free PE classes for the public and private schools in our area. We warm up with cardio, stretch, and teach 3 gymnastics obstacle courses. The focus is promoting physical fitness. We give everyone flyers to join our program.

We began offering drop in classes. A drop in class is where no enrollment is required in advance for all levels. Additionally we offered American warrior obstacle course and ninja zone to attract more boys to our program.
Having a great front desk, answering the phone and getting back to customers quickly and having staff that is motivated and seasoned.

Stopped offering trial lessons and started offering a money back guarantee.

Raise prices. Also coach education.....took as many as possible to national congress and it made a huge difference in our recreational coach morale and recreational class satisfaction. Our beginning gymnastics classes stayed full over summer for the first time.

Large banner signs for special priced programs and standard programs

I have lowered prices in 2 of my gyms when enrollment was low. The end result is that enrollment doubled and revenue increased. This gyms are in economically depressed areas. However, there are plenty of children in these areas. People couldn't afford the same price as the wealthier areas of the city. I kept same quality instruction and customers enrolled much more than before. A good example: At one of my 2 week summer gymnastics camps I had 11 athletes registered in 2013. With my change of lower prices I maxed out at 60 registrations for the same camp in 2014. In dollars for those 2 weeks it went from $990.00 to $3,600.00.

Focusing on quality and healthy environment building a good name for the gym and getting referrals from current students. Works much better and was much cheaper than advertising in local paper

Simply put - raised our rates to a comparable level as our competitors in the area. We began charging what we think we are worth, not what we think people will pay.

I added the Ninja Zone program about 6 months ago and picked up 100 new boys to the program. We have a dedicated marketing person working on our public image on social media. This person has tied all of the various marketing campaigns together in a cohesive way with strong results in what had been a weak market for us.

Increased prices to cover costs of running my operation and ignored what competitors where charging, this included doing away with a free trail class and moving to a flat fee for a trail. Basically we stopped giving away our product and put a value to everything we did. We are in a super competitive market with 5 gym within 10 minutes of each other. So we took the approach of you get what you pay for and raised our prices to reflect the value our programs offer.

Honestly, we continue offering the best instruction at a solid facility. We do not have the most state of the art facility in our area, (we are also not the cheapest) but we do strive to have adult, professional teachers in every program- we believe that this is our competitive advantage to other clubs that utilize teen-age teachers as their primary staff.

We added a "stay and play" program that gets more kids in during the day. It is a 2 hour gymnastics based program that allows the parent to drop off without calling ahead. We provide a loose structure, some gymnastics activity and mostly organized play time.

Added Ninja Zone. We are reaching a whole new demographic. We used to have maybe 12 boys in our gym between boys classes, and tumbling classes (during high enrollment times), now we have 37 boys in Ninja Zone alone plus we still have7 others in boys or tumbling class. And we have boys on the wait list. Working hard to hire and train more staff to accommodate the demand. Ninja Zone currently represents 11% of our total enrollment!

Add an Aerial Arts program. This program takes up the same amount of space as an 8 inch mat and runs 97% full.

Added a Combo class that cross trains for Ninja warrior and aerial awareness for snowboarders and freestyle skiers

Since I retired from coaching I have been able to focus more on effective marketing and trackable social media. This has a pretty big return.

I have also looked at each location and cost per sq/ft per operating hours and income per sq/ft per operating hours to have concrete numbers as to where we need increase enrollment.

Increased the price of classes- it allowed me to hire better coaches and pay my staff more, as well as (very) slightly reduced total number of students. Given that we are space limited currently, that has made scheduling easier, as an added benefit.

Providing an Xcel competitive team. This takes class children that now train double hours and pay double. They GET to compete. Parents want their kids out their competing now, they don't want to have to wait for anything, they don't have the patience for REAL team efforts. People are used to getting things NOW, that is how their lives are...cell phones a prime example, they get immediate everything!! Parents of cheerleaders are on FB bragging about their kids and posting
millions of pics... the gym moms need to do that too... they don't want to wait years for their kid to be good enough to compete. This is why Xcel is perfect for those "McDonald's" parents that want what they want and they want it NOW!! Besides all this... Xcel keeps kids in the gym that my otherwise have left the sport because of time constraints. For my gym, Xcel is the most lucrative program that I have had since I owned a gym for the past 20 years.

Get rid of bad instructors. The saying "it is better to be understaffed than poorly staffed" definitely applies. We are in an area where it is very difficult to get instructors with any experience; therefore, we basically have to train someone from the very beginning. Several years ago, we hired two instructors that had "cheer" experience and we tried very hard to train them in our methods. We felt we needed to keep them on staff because we couldn't find replacements. When we let them go, we cut our overall number of classes and slightly increased the student-teacher ratio in the classes of our master instructors. Parents and students are much happier.

Restructured our birthday parties and advertise as a party hall. Based our restructure on how a few party halls close to us offer their customers. ie balloon structure, popcorn machines, snow cone machines and length of party time.

We removed a 5000 square foot soft play area, removed two dance rooms and increased our gymnastics and tumbling areas, so that we could better serve our recreational classes. This allowed us to increase revenue through added classes.

**USA Gymnastics helps my gymnastics business in the following way(s).**

When I first started coaching (many years ago) gymnastics coaches were not well educated. There were gymnasts doing skills that were downright dangerous! USA Gymnastics has organized and educated not only the people who actually take care of the children involved in this sport, but the general public as well.

It aids in the exposure of gymnastics and help with putting it on television and news and media on a platform that I cannot do. It helps instill into the hearts of young minds that they want to become gymnasts, which drives the parents to take them hopefully to my facility.

Advertising the sport during the Olympics with asking people to look for member clubs in their area is helpful. Perhaps this could be done at other times also and not just every 4 years.

We compete Xcel - we love it. We do not use the compulsory routines nor go to the Liukin meets but all national and international competition feeds us too as kids get excited to see the top gymnasts!

I do think the increased promotion of professionalism has gone a long way to help clubs flourish. It also helps to protect us from bad hires.

Coaching Certs continue to improve - keep going! Efforts to improve accessibility and ease of use should continue. I don't see where the oversight of State and Regional Boards occurs and on the boys side here in my state its virtually non-existent oversight as far as I can tell.

All of these things either help to educate me and my staff or motivate our students to strive for excellence.

WE don't utilize all your training, but we should. Not all rec coaches are certified, we are working on that. The articles often do provide some creative insight to the industry best practices or confirm what we are already doing. But hands down, the Olympics team is such a great source of excitement and I know kids look up to those girls so much, so they start in our classes!

The education component is one cornerstone of our staff continuing education. The media exposure when our international teams do well is paramount to getting new individuals to try gymnastics. It is up to the club to keep them interested!

It's great to have a governing body that tracks all of the athletes and professional members, as well as sets the national standard/rules for the program. I previously coached competitive cheerleading, and at the time, there was no governing body. So every competition had different rules, there was no way to register the athletes, and there was nothing that regulated the progression or advancement of the athletes. I thoroughly appreciate the organization that USA Gymnastics brings to our sport!

Over the years I can see how USAG really works hard to promote the business that I am in. Trying to put all the clubs on the same page is a daunting task and I have come to appreciate all that USAG has given and is continuing to give to make my business better.

It is great the USAG has made material available for parents to read but many are not aware of the available information. It would be helpful if USAG would communicate and update parents more on
the upcoming gymnastics events worldwide and encourage more participation and becoming more knowledgeable of the sport.

Please keep costs down. This shouldn't be a rich kid sport.

As a very small gym it is difficult to come up with a lot of the fees associated with running a gym and one of those that I found challenging this year was the $160.00 fee for my club membership. I unfortunately had to pass that fee along to my team kids which was even hard for them to come up with. Maybe you could make the fee more equal to how many kids you register to actually compete.

It is getting more and more expensive to do business with USAG each year. Professional memberships, background checks, safety certifications, U100 (it is free, but still have to pay for staff time to complete it), required member club membership, etc. It all adds up. I want as many of my coaches as possible to be certified, but next year will be the first year that I start to limit how many I sign up due to the cost. We get two "free" Instructor Memberships as a Member Club, however the background checks are still required and are not free. Since all of our staff are already background screened, this is redundant. Even the Xcel program, lauded as a more economical option to the JO program, has meet entry fees that have quickly escalated to nearly $100 per meet (plus $15/adult admission at the door).

I think education for our staff is number 1. And, we don't use a lot of USA Gymnastics material because of the price. I have one to two people take it and then teach others what they've learned. Perhaps consider a way to give a discount to gyms that want to certify more people, or a one-time cost to have unlimited certifications in one year for a specific course. We have been very happy with the courses offered, but cannot afford to certify all our staff. We currently have 25 coaches with an average turnover rate of 24 months.

The single most frequently encountered comment that I read was a positive "thank you" to USA Gymnastics, the staff, the programs, the training opportunities, organizing the rules of competition, recognition of the improvements made in the past several years, the direction of the program, the website, and on and on.

Thank you for offering so many tools for all disciplines of gymnastics and not "just" focusing on high level artistic gymnastics (which we also love). We have been very impressed by the updates to the website, the resources for parents and especially the Special Needs information.

We love USAG. Over the Last 25 years we have been in business we have seen such growth in the organization, development of programs, information, and training's. I think USAG is always striving to be the best they can for not only the Olympic level athlete, coach or elite gym. But you are now involved at the ground level, helping gyms be the best they can be. We love the new university training and educational opportunities. Tie that in with Congress and other training opportunities, and gyms like mine can grow, increase profits, network and hire employees from across the states and beyond.

I think you are hard-working people that have a heavy responsibility to try and satisfy every concern.

USA Gymnastics seems to continue to improve each year and I respect and like that you ask for our help.

You are doing better all the time. Make sure you keep all the small clubs in mind when you make decisions and maybe find a way to reach out and to them more and make education more accessible. I also think there should be more separation between the elite track and the JO track......so many hopes/pre elites/retired elites competing in JO program it's discouraging to the average "good" gymnast.

I love the addition of Xcel gymnastics and think it's great for the retention of lower level gymnasts or gymnasts who wish to also be involved in other activities.

Bravo! One of the most organized sports I've been affiliated with (I'm a soccer mom!). I appreciate the effort of our nation-wide volunteers and the home office. The clear guidelines for competition and the clear message of wholesome coaching and teaching continue to enable us as owners to be professional and valid in our communities.

I would like to congratulate the Club Services (Loree Galimore) and member services (Lynn Moskowitz-Thompson) for their parts in increasing the knowledge of what most Club owners and Members have been asking for. There are so many to thank in USA Gymnastics but since this is targeted for Club owners and our programs these 2 individuals need to be commended.

I am very thankful that we have an organization like USA gymnastics. It keeps everybody on the
same progressions throughout the country and it all makes sense. I have kids come from all over the country to workout at our gym, because we live in a resort town and it is so easy to have a gymnast show up and tell me what level she is and off we go. It makes the parents more comfortable knowing we know exactly what a gymnast needs to work on. I have the confidence to tell a prospective parent that we are all certified and have background checks and safety certs, to add to our approval rating. I appreciate everything USAG does.

I love the progressive approach of the compulsory program. I especially love the app that we can purchase with videos, photos and written text. I only wish that the app would provide push notification and updates about changes to scoring or changes to the routine. If the app already does this, then I would hope that you make it more obvious. I think USAG is a very well run organization compared to other professional organizations I'm involved in. I've studied through USAG University all the way to women's U300 and the training is excellent!

The One Thing that I would like to tell USA Gymnastics.

This is an important question, perhaps the most important question in the entire survey. This question gives the membership of USA Gymnastics an opportunity to speak directly to the leadership of their organization. It is customers talking to management.

In all, 329 gymnastics school owners or managers took the time to answer this question and share their thoughts. I read every single comment. This took some time and though the hours were long it was never tedious. These comments came from my peers in the gymnastics community and they were often impassioned, serious and straight from the heart. How could such words ever be tedious?

While I have summarizes and share representative comments in this report, the report I share with the leadership of USA Gymnastics will include both this report along with every comment. All 329 comments will be shared with the leadership of USA Gymnastics.

I am not an employee of USA Gymnastics and I was not compensated for doing the survey. USA Gymnastics has done a great deal of help and support for me, my gym, and for the sport of gymnastics. I take time away from my gym to get this done in an effort to both pay back and to pay forward. I hope that the information provided by the Survey will be helpful to you in your own gymnastics business.

I am a huge fan of USA Gymnastics. But being a fan does not mean that I think the organization is perfect. Your comments make perfectly clear that there is still work to do and improvements to be made. The leadership of USA Gymnastics has embraced the messages revealed in the comments from prior surveys and have poured resources, time, energy and passion into making the organization better. I feel certain that your thoughts and comments will be carefully considered this time too.

Thank you for taking the time to make USA Gymnastics a better organization.

That time is greatly appreciated.

David Holcomb, Owner and Founder, Buckeye Gymnastics Westerville, Ohio