

The 7 P's of Marketing

Way back in 1960, a concept called the 4 P's was introduced as a model for marketing a business. The P's stand for product, price, place and promotion. And while all of those things are still important, the model itself is made almost completely irrelevant without a few more additions to the list; people, processes, and participation. This is especially true in the fitness industry.

People

People have become wise to all the things we do to market our businesses. They know that if they don't choose your facility, there are a dozen more to choose from down the street. They know that if your salesperson doesn't give them everything they ask for, they know another salesperson will. We know that they're more likely to join where their friend joins, and we know that the people in their lives are more powerful than the direct mail piece that we send.

The first person you need to focus on is the prospect, but you also have to consider the interaction they have with their friends and family, your staff, your competitors and you. With all the marketing noise in the world, it's the human relationships we have, the conversations we share and the networks we keep that influence what we buy and what we don't buy.

Processes

You could also make the argument that another P, processes, could be added to the mix as well. The systems that we have for getting and keeping members are more often than not, broken. When your processes aren't solid, you and your staff will fail to follow up properly, your members will be neglected, your renewals will expire, your expired members will never hear from you again, and you'll find yourself constantly focusing on the promotion. Generating new members is only important if you are not keeping your existing members. If you build relationships with your members through systematic follow up, your dependency on the other P's diminishes.

Participation

Another P that falls in line with people and processes is participation. In the traditional sense, this comes by way of loyalty programs, group exercise and many times, simply making it to the gym. But in today's increasingly connected Internet world, this also includes online social media networks as well. Facebook, Google, Twitter, and others have forced us to reexamine the way we participate and interact with one another. To ignore the social connectivity of the web and its affect on your business would be unwise. It is a huge part of our society and will be for a long time. Those are my additional P's I've added to the list. I hope you consider these additional P's when following a traditional marketing model. When planning your marketing, you have to consider the additional P's. As health club memberships have become more commoditized, the only way we can compete in the interconnected world is to stay connected ourselves, and capitalize on the ability we, as human beings have to effectively influence each other.