

Resolve to Show Members That They're Important

BY HEIDI VOSS

With the New Year come resolutions. We all make

them. They usually involve some way to make us better. Working out, eating fewer carbs, spending more time with loved ones and less time at work. They are all good things, and we tend to be model citizens for at least the first two weeks of the New Year.

I know that when I talk with members they are also in tune to these resolutions. That is why it is the responsibility of the club to help to reinforce their resolutions. This can be done in many ways.

The club may want to first look at its menu. Are you serving items that enable the members to eat at the club several times a week and stick to their diets? With low-carb competing with low-fat, this can sometimes be tricky. Is the menu changed often to incorporate fresh foods and encourage members to dine on a regular basis without growing weary of the menu

items? Is your club all about graciously accepting the special requests of members? A few months ago I was at a club in Las Vegas,

and I ordered onion rings with my sandwich. Without batting an eye the waiter took my order and politely left the table. Then my lunch companion whispered

to me, "Well this should be interesting." The club did not have onion rings on its menu. Ten minutes later my sandwich arrived with some gorgeous homemade onion rings. This type of personal service without a hassle makes club membership valuable.

In addition to granting special requests, many clubs are starting to offer cooking classes that teach members how to incorporate healthy foods into their cooking at home. We obviously have a penchant for cooking classes or Emeril, Bobby Flay and — my husband's personal favorite — Rachael Ray would not be household names. Get your chef out of the back kitchen and get them involved with the members.

Next, take a look at your facility. Do you offer a fitness facility and is it up to par? You may need to consider a revamp of tired equipment, or consulting with a fitness expert at how to better arrange your fitness facility to maximum usage. If you don't offer a fitness facility, do you have a ladies' walking group that meets at the club? Some clubs in the mountains that offer golf, alpine and fitness are taking to the outdoors for mountain hikes, snowshoeing, rock climbing, mountain biking, kayaking and many other activities in which members can participate as a group outside of the club. All it takes to make this type of thing work is someone to properly organize the event and encourage attendance.

Some clubs utilize an activities coordinator to do this. Others ask members to host events. If a member is hosting the event, he or she is more apt to call his or her friends to guarantee that it will be well attended. You have to determine how many events you would like to have at the club, how often, and who will be responsible for the success of each event. I have found that an event management

form that outlines the day, items needed, the anticipated budget for the event, and the status of its completion is a big help in ensuring a great event. Find out what activities interest your members and then mold the club around those things. If your club has a card room that is sitting empty five days a week, why not get a contract with a Pilates instructor for one or two days and welcome members to bring their mats and stretch together? The club can offer a few complimentary classes to get the members interested, and then charge a nominal fee to cover the instructor once the members are hooked.

So add to your New Year's resolutions by resolving that you will make your club more valuable, more active all year round and more fun for your entire membership. Then try to stick with it for longer than the first two weeks of January.

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