

It's better in Groups!

How to increase profits with Pilates

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During these challenging economic times, Pilates studios may be continuing to thrive, but it's an important time for the industry to accommodate changing needs by becoming more creative. The International Health, Racquet & Sports Club Association (IHRSA) reported in 2009 that 47 states are currently facing budget deficits and taxing services such as health clubs, so it's no secret that club operators are feeling the wrath of financial struggle and looking for new ways to make up for lost revenue.

One solution is for clubs to add more group sessions to their itineraries to meet the demand for lower prices and more convenient schedules. This serves the dual purpose of retaining membership of people requiring budget-conscious options, and of concurrently increasing the club's bottom line.

Personalized training with instructors is key to a successful Pilates training regimen ~ allowing facilities to maintain revenues through tough times. After all, it's no secret that Pilates participants continue training to keep healthy and many are keeping their private sessions, but will add additional group sessions to their schedule if the price is right. In this economy, some have been forced to take a more fiscally conservative approach, supplementing private sessions with group sessions.

If you've been considering creating or expanding your Pilates program, now may be the ideal time. Pilates Reformer Group Training can generate incremental revenue ranging from \$75,000 to \$215,000 per year! Whether you're a facility that offers Pilates equipment training or whether you're only recently thinking of alternative ways to boost your income ~ consider, for example, that ten group sessions with four participants might provide additional revenue to a club in excess of \$6000 per month. It's even possible for Pilates Reformer Group Training to generate incremental facility revenue ranging from \$75,000 to \$215,000 per year.

Finding the right instruction

With your own Pilates studio, you can offer internal and external instructors part-time or full-time positions according to the studios' demand. Facility owners will ultimately increase non-dues revenue, while instructors have the ability to earn more income. Consider recruiting and training your existing quality personal trainers and group exercise instructors to be Pilates instructors. Personal trainers can subsidize their current client base with alternative training methods and grow their personal training clientele.

"Much of the growth in the areas of equipment-based exercise is due to professional trainers gaining knowledge of and confidence in the results they are achieving

with their clients," explains Carol Tricoche, Executive Director of Full Solutions™ for STOTT PILATES®. "Highly-skilled instructors can bring a plethora of exercise variety to your facility and cater to those who may feel intimidated to try Pilates at their age. Qualified instructors will also look out for the safety of your clients which is pertinent to the owner and exerciser."

Pilates education doesn't stop after certification. It is also important to make sure that your instructors are attending continuing education courses and workshops at specified fitness venues – or you can host workshops at your facility to keep your programming fresh and retain your numbers in the long term.

Attracting new clients

Group sessions can appeal to a wider audience because they're economical and there are infinite themes, specialty classes and unique programs to attract a larger following. For example, courses can be tailored for golf or athletic conditioning. Studios or clubs that offer private or semi-private classes may consider investing in lightweight stackable equipment.

"The very versatile V2 Max Plus™ or SPX Max Plus™ Reformers add challenge and variety with the addition of a vertical frame," adds Tricoche. "Many facilities we equip today with state-of-the-art Pilates equipment are offering Group Reformer pro-



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gramming in their mat or mind-body studios with a different twist or price point – the variety and convenience is what’s attracting a lot of new clients.”

Facility owners are also offering lower prices than their regularly scheduled sessions in their Pilates studios in particular to bring in more patrons watching their budgets, and it’s working. Such facilities are also realizing the benefits of creating extra attention to their location which is bringing more people through the doors.

Do you have the space?

Industry surveys suggest that most club members want equipment-based Pilates programming, which ultimately takes up a lot of room. As a result, clients are paying for these services outside their regular fitness facility which is not ideal. So in order to keep members from seeking Pilates elsewhere, it’s important to find a way to make space within your location to accommodate their needs.

“The space needed to establish a designated Pilates studio can be as little as 400-800 square feet. The 800-square-foot

space is approximately the size of a racquetball court and can comfortably accommodate a fully-equipped Pilates studio, including four Reformers, two Cadillac Trapeze Tables, four Stability Chairs™, two Ladder Barrels and other accessories,” says Tricoche, who has consulted with numerous facilities on equipment implementation.

“On the flip side, a smaller, 400-square-foot studio can hold approximately four professional Reformers so at the very least, you can offer programming associated with this one essential piece of Pilates equipment.”

Once you find the perfect space to implement your in-house Pilates studio, make sure to remain realistic about the amount of equipment that you can fit in the area. Choose equipment that is versatile and offers maximum programming to keep your Pilates program fresh, challenging, and adaptable to your changing members’ requests.

The key to your success

So remember, just because the economic environment these days requires some people to make different choices about how they

spend their money, they don’t have to make a choice about the level of quality training they receive. There’s something for everyone and the opportunity is out there, in equal opportunity, to take advantage of this popular form of exercise and continue growing as a business! □

For more information on certification or how to build a Pilates program ideal for your facility, call our STOTT PILATES® Full Solutions™ team at 1.800.910.0001, extension 203 or e-mail fullsolutions@stottpilates.com.



Lindsay Merrithew, together with Executive Director of Education of STOTT PILATES® Moira Merrithew and a team of physical therapists, sports medicine and fitness professionals, have spent over two decades refining the STOTT PILATES® method of exercise and equipment. This clear and detailed approach forms the basis for STOTT PILATES® training and certification programs.