

Building Positive Employ



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A customer once said I was lucky to be in the gymnastics business. When I asked why he said, "Because you are in the happy business." He's right! Gymnastics clubs should be happy places for children and parents, and that can only happen if you have happy employees. Building positive employee relations is key to maintaining a quality gymnastics program.

★ **Create a well-planned employee orientation.**

A major factor in retaining an employee over 90 days largely depends on how they were treated the first two days. Make sure the job description is clear and objectives defined. Assign mentors to help them be successful.

★ **Communicate, communicate, communicate!** It's the glue that holds your gymnastics business together. Be available and be a good listener. Focus on the issues and avoid arguments. Encourage and provide feedback. Meetings should be short and only scheduled when necessary.

★ **Open communication and flexible scheduling are often ranked as higher priorities than salary.** Seek ideas from all levels of employees. Issue periodic surveys to your staff to learn what their preferences are in your business. Engaged employees are happier if they have input in the guidelines for new programs and procedures.

★ **Smile often... It's contagious.**

Welcome all staff with a friendly hello and be sure to say goodbye as they leave. Be aware of your body language and be an example of keeping professional distance from customers and co-workers.

★ **Be available.** Spend time in the staff break room to address daily questions and concerns.

Your leadership is key to guide staff when they have problem students and events. Helping provide positive dialogue with parents helps them grow as a professional.

★ **Build trust.** Empower them with decisions that improve their performance. Learn the art of "timing" and "readiness" with your staff. This helps monitor employees' competency as assignments are made.

★ **Be fair and avoid giving special treatment to favorites.** Spread your time amongst all staff.

★ **Encourage on-going positive feedback.**

Schedule periodic performance sessions to exchange ideas on how it is going and learn more about the employee and the direction he or she wants to take with their career.

★ **Review your benefit packages and provide the best possible opportunities for your employees.**

Consider offering safety and education clinics, medical insurance, 401K, bonuses, paid vacations, tuition discounts for their children, weekly fun drawings, plus more.

★ **Keep snacks in the break room.** Gymnastics coaches love to eat! And maybe plan occasional nights out at a favorite restaurant.

★ **Show appreciation with a well planned recognition system.**

Service awards can be issued at an annual event to recognize 3, 5, 10, 15 years and more. Take photos and make copies for them with a thank you card following the event.



Employee Relations

Plan short presentations for staff with longer years of service.

★ **Develop an atmosphere of positive respect amongst employees.** “Catch them doing something right” from Blanchard and Johnson’s *One Minute Manager*. Never undermine a co-worker in a group situation. Treat all levels of employees with respect.

No one is “just a class coach.” Defuse negative comments regarding co-workers. Praise employees in front of their peers.

★ **Recognize personal milestones like graduations, engagements, promotions, birthdays, family additions, etc.**

★ **Maintain a healthy sense of humor and learn to laugh at yourself.**

The gymnastics business will always be a people business. There will be a variety of personalities you will have an opportunity to work with through the years. Find their strengths and foster professional relationships that can hopefully be with your program for decades!



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