

DESCRIPTION OF SOME FEATURES ASSOCIATED WITH THE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS OF FITNESS CENTERS IN MADRID

Author:
Sonia Garcia-Merino

email:
sonia.garcia@uem.es

Co-authors:
Boned, C.J.

University:
Universidad Europea de Madrid

Faculty:
School of Sports Science

Abstract

Aim of paper

Spain now ranks second worldwide in terms of number of customers in the fitness center even though research in this sector are not significant, so the aim of this study was to determine whether an industry which has a high growth was good management systems, with the target population of Madrid

Theoretical background/Literature Review

The situation of the fitness industry in Spain has been rarely tested in the field of scientific research (Lagrosen y Lagrosen, 2007) Most existing studies are market research and are made with the aim of providing information about the sector from the viewpoint of the business area. Over the past decade, Campos (2000), ASOMED (2004) and Consumer Eroski (2004, 2006) addressed different aspects of Spanish fitness centers but did not fully explain their management systems. Know what management systems are used in this sector, we would improve the quality of existing services in fitness centers and customer satisfaction.

Methodology, research design and data analysis:

The sample unit was a private fitness center located in the community of Madrid. To determine the sample size, a census was performed on this type of facility, since there was not to date any reference that would provide this information (N=409). The random sample was selected and stratified geographically. The result was 49.3% (n = 202) of the sampling, allowing results extrapolated to the entire population with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of sampling error of + / - 5.

For the data collection, an Ad Hoc questionnaire was

developed and administered through a personal interview with the manager of each of the centers with an average interview duration of 40 minutes. The questionnaires of included questions related to the area of services, facilities professionals and thus attempting to cover all fields. Descriptive analysis was performed with the statistical program SPSS 16.0.

Results, discussion and implications/conclusions

Of the 202 questionnaires made to the managers of fitness centers, 29.7% belonged to a chain of establishments, 73.8% occupied a leased facility, 34.7% belong to a recognized professional association and 61.9% were managed through a limited partnership. Regarding customer service, only 8.4% of the centers studied had a specific department to carry out this function, while 61.4% engaged in customer service from the reception center. This information is similar to that found by Consumer Eroski (2006) in a study of Spanish public fitness centers. In addition, 50.0% of the centers developed studies to determine the degree of customer satisfaction with the services provided and 57.9% had mechanisms to detect the reasons why members drop-out.

A similar percentage had a mailbox for complaints and suggestions as a communication channel between the client and the center (51.0%) and only 12.4% had a website where the user could interact beyond the consultation information related to the center. The use of web pages seems to have grown among fitness centers since ASOMED (2004) detected that 30% of fitness centers used the website as a tool for marketing.

In terms of management practices related to work responsibilities, 76.2% of the fitness centers have developed a plan of occupational hazards which is mandatory for all Spanish companies. On the other hand, 55.9% were equipped with a training plan, only 34.7% had a career plan for their employees formally established and 32.2% had defined the functions of each position through a catalog of positions. 59.4% developed communication strategies to periodically inform workers about developments within the company.

Conclusions:

1. Fitness centers in the Community of Madrid are primarily located on leased premises and set up as limited partnerships. The presence of multinationals in this sector is very high and the involvement with professional associations is very low.

2. Customer service within fitness centers is not one of the main features of their management systems because the presence of these specialized departments is low. As such, the mechanisms of communication between the client and the center is poor.

3. Management systems of Madrid fitness centers are not characterized by acceptable management practices in regards to human resources because they do not focus on career plans, training systems, and the existence of clearly defined job profiles as well as communication with in the company.

References:

- Asociación Madrileña de Empresarios Deportivos (2004). Así son los centros deportivos españoles II. *Sport Managers*, 34, 6-11.
- Campos, C. (2000). Industria Española Fitness 2000. *Instalaciones Deportivas XXI*, 107, 8-15.
- Consumer Eroski (2004). Más de la mitad suspenden el examen. *Consumer*, 78, 5-9.
- Consumer Eroski (2006). La atención y el asesoramiento al cliente de los gimnasios siguen en baja forma. *A fondo-Análisis-Informe*, 35-41.
- Lagrosen, S., y Lagrosen, Y. (2007). Exploring service quality in the health and fitness industry. *Managing Service Quality*, 17, 41-53.