



Short Term Gain & Long Term Pain

Membership Deals and Incentives

The anticipation of a new year always gets us thinking about pressing the reset button, a clean slate, and lofty resolutions that we have every intention of committing to. These feelings of energy and motivation are inspiring, but somehow life gets in the way and it becomes challenging to realize the change we had hoped for. In most cases we fall short because we haven't really examined the root of our issues. We haven't analyzed the circumstances, we don't take a strategic approach and there is no infrastructure to support sustainability.

Often times the same can be said for our membership sales planning. Bringing in the masses through deals, incentives and promotions can be an exciting and speedy path towards achieving our membership quotas. However, much like our resolutions, the positivity isn't sustainable because strategic changes that would support longevity have not been considered or implemented.

Our recent analysis of the membership sales process confirms that 63% of participating clubs offer some kind of incentive or deal to promote membership sales. For many years PCMA has preached the opposite of this statistic, focusing instead on intelligent market positioning. Your brand must be relevant, your amenities must meet needs and your pricing strategically confirmed.

The problem with relying on deals and incentives is that private clubs are not traditionally associated with them and the market recognizes them as a weakness. Additionally, deals and incentives can affect how your members feel about the club and their peers causing divide when some pay more than others for access to the same amenities. They can also damage the integrity of your member referral program and discourage members from referring. Promotions can make members uncomfortable referring people when investment levels are dynamic. Lastly, deals and incentives can actually delay your membership sales process instead of stimulating it. If your club offers promotion after promotion, prospects in the market will recognize that trend and often times choose to wait for the next special offer.

If you are really wanting to explore the idea of deals and incentives, we encourage you to consider repositioning them so they are rewarding your existing members for their loyalty instead of prospective members for seizing an opportunity.

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