



Introduction to Sport, Fitness & Management

Community leisure: centres and PR

On screen text: Jon Argent CEO, Halo Leisure

Jon Argent

Halo is a leisure trust; we are part of the social enterprise sector, the third sector, as the government calls it. We're a not for profit organisation and also a registered charity. It's also very important that we're run by and for the people of Herefordshire, that's what a leisure trust is about, in whichever area it's operating in. So our board, for example, are made up of people within the local community.

On screen text: Rose Customer Anne Customer

Anne

The staffs are so friendly and helpful because they have made it easy for me to come because I'm quite sort of shy and nervous and I don't think I would have come if they hadn't been welcoming.

On screen text: Abi Roberts Receptionist, Halo Leisure

Abi Roberts

We always give them a good smile, greet them, make sure they know you've taken notice that they're in the centre. If you're busy, just tell them that you'll be with them in a minute.

Jon Argent

I think the increase in health and fitness has been quite substantial over the last ten years and in some respects I think the importance that customers place in certain elements of customer care has increased because of that.

I think customer care is potentially the differentiator between organisations. I think that a leisure centre is pretty similar to another leisure centre but what differentiates it is the way that people are treated.

On screen text: Hadyn Roberts Centre Manager, Halo Leisure

Hadyn Roberts

Customers like to receive a nice friendly welcome the moment they walk through the door. They like to feel that they're part of the centre that the staff want them to be there. On top of that they want to see it clean, it's safe, it's tidy, it's presented very well it looks clean and fresh.

Commentary

To meet customers' needs and expectations the staff at Halo have firstly to understand what their customers look for and want in a leisure centre.

On screen text: Scott Rolfe Head of Operations, Halo Leisure

Scott Rolfe

We spend a lot of time on customer feedback; our main customer feedback that we promote heavily within the centres is called Tell. Basically we encourage people to talk to us at the centres.

They can write to us, they can email us, they can text us, there's also a dedicated hotline as well where people can leave recorded voice messages. We measure, evaluate how many responses we get each month and we also set targets at how quickly we should respond to those.

On screen text: Louise Pinnell Marketing Co-ordinator, Halo Leisure

Louise Pinnell

We also have Smile which is a quarterly customer forum where customers are invited to come and give their feedback. And we have an opinion meter, an annual customer survey which is an automated questionnaire, we call her Penny and she goes round the leisure centres annually.

Scott Rolfe

It's a cordless system, we can plonk it in any area, changing room, the reception, gym and we can ask people random questions and they can give us responses and we can collate that information.

Jon Argent

We have to recognise that however good an organisation is problems do occur. When they occur it's important that they're resolved as quickly as possible, at the lowest possible level within an organisation. As I was saying a moment ago, I don't think there's any real benefit in saying to somebody, we understand your problem, however, here's a form in quadruplicate that we need you to fill out and I need to speak to somebody who'll speak to somebody and maybe in three weeks time then you'll get a response.

Commentary

The Oops card is given to an unhappy customer as an immediate apology on behalf of Halo.

Jon Argent

If somebody has a problem staff all carry these Oops cards and they can immediately say...

Scott Rolfe

We're really sorry Mrs Smith please have your money back for this activity but we'd like to go one further, here's an Oops card it gives you three complimentary passes for the next couple of weeks.

Jon Argent

Not only has that been dealt with immediately and quickly, but actually a complaint is a second opportunity to get things right.

One or two things have probably not gone quite well, maybe the music was a bit loud or we didn't have a café open when we'd finished swimming etc. and we wrote all this down and they listened to us and we feel really that we're part of it.

Commentary

Halo uses several customer profiling systems to target potential customers and retain existing members.

Louise Pinnell

We employ a third part organisation called the leisure database company to provide us with demographic information about our target customer and our target market using the mosaic profiling system and also we use the local council sports development plan to specifically identify target groups.

Commentary

Halo also monitors their membership database by using EPOS, electronic point of sale:

Scott Rolfe

This basically is our front of house till, membership management system: The data we gather within that really covers everything from how many people have used the facilities, when has Mrs Smith used the facility, how often, how long has she been coming, when did she join, when did she stop using us and we can interrogate that database to tell us pretty much anything we want to know about customers.

Commentary

Herefordshire is now a popular place to retire to and as a result there is a growing older population. Aware of this, Halo tries to match this demographic with the service they offer.

Scott Rolfe

I think we need to do a lot of consultation; we'll need to listen to the kind of services that older customers will want

Anne and Rose

We were hoping that they would introduce yoga, (Yes, yes) and I think they are trying to but of course they have to get people to take the classes and we realise that, the other thing is of course being senior citizens anything that's sort of geared towards us is very welcome.

Commentary

Halo also acknowledges that some of customers have medical conditions and therefore require specific fitness programmes.

Hadyn

We actually run something called the Lift programme that is where customers will be referred by their local GP, using basically a prescription, so rather than prescribing medicine, they prescribe exercise, really great service. People come in, they make an

appointment with a specifically qualified member of staff who will do an assessment on them, what their needs are, take into consideration any medical conditions and then basically create a programme that runs from 6-10 weeks, taking into consideration that person's needs and wants.

On screen text: Peter Customer

Peter

Being as I had a heart attack I'd like to know that if anything did happen again there would be staff here to look after me and that.