



Health Fitness Management

*A Comprehensive Resource for Managing
and Operating Programs and Facilities*

William C. Grantham / Robert W. Patton
Tracy D. York / Mitchel L. Winick

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*A Comprehensive Resource for Managing
and Operating Programs and Facilities*

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PREFACE

Health Fitness Management—A Comprehensive Resource for Managing and Operating Programs and Facilities is the third in a trilogy of books designed to assist students and active professionals in the health fitness field. *Implementing Health/Fitness Programs* (1986), the first book in the series, developed a model for successful delivery of wellness programs in varied settings. The explosive growth of health fitness programs designed to promote high-level wellness began during the early and mid-1980s. This growth appeared in diverse settings, such as shopping centers, corporations, and hospitals, and the industry needed a resource for a generic program delivery model. Moreover, colleges and universities were initiating professional preparation programs for students interested in the health fitness industry. This first book galvanized the delivery concepts in disparate settings and was timely in meeting the book market needs. *Developing and Managing Health/Fitness Facilities* (1989), the second book, provided a model for planning, designing, constructing, equipping, and staffing health fitness facilities. The timely introduction of this book was in the late 1980s, the height of the construction boom in which the number of health fitness facilities increased more than 120 percent during an eight-year period (International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association [IHRSA] 1995). Moreover, professional preparation programs were expanding and needing a text for facility development courses they were adopting. *Health Fitness Management—A Comprehensive Resource for Managing and Operating Programs and Facilities* completes the trilogy by presenting a set of management theories and operational models for health fitness programs.

According to the International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association (IHRSA 1995), during the mid-1990s there has been a 16 percent decline, followed by a recent slow reversal in the number of health fitness facilities across the United States while membership has continued to increase. Owners and operators of single- or multiple-site facilities have adopted their own management and operational

guidelines. Management practices in this industry are varied and without consensus. Individuals with diverse backgrounds, often with no formal training, manage and operate facilities. Marginally operated facilities failing to make profits or achieve program objectives are closing their doors. In short, the industry is maturing and competition is vigorous. Poorly managed programs are perishing at record rates and well-run programs are flourishing. Unfortunately, there is no industry-wide reference to guide managers and operators of these programs. There is also no reference text for the colleges and universities providing students information on health fitness management. We have designed this book to meet these needs and are confident that it provides a valuable resource both for readers' current needs and for future reference.

Health Fitness Management—A Comprehensive Resource for Managing and Operating Programs and Facilities brings conventional business management principles and operational guidelines to the unconventional business of health and fitness. The book introduces the reader to the health fitness industry and its members before addressing management practices and operational issues. The book finally provides a means of evaluating existing programs and strategically planning for the future.

Part I sets the stage for managing and operating facilities. Following an introduction to the field and the type of member frequenting the various program settings, we address some management concepts. Through this process, we review the nature of managing facilities from a contemporary approach. We then present organizational considerations to provide you with alternative viewpoints toward organizational structure. We discuss organizational leadership, emphasizing the importance of dynamic leadership and personal communications for successful program operation.

We make a distinction between *front-of-the-house* and *back-of-the-house* management and operations. The former relates to those activities that directly impact member and guest service, such as member

name recognition, staff attitude, and member service. The latter relates to those operations that are not as apparent in their impact on member service but must be accomplished effectively if programs are to run smoothly and efficiently. Examples of these operations include facility and equipment maintenance, business office management, financial management, legal issues, and insurance matters.

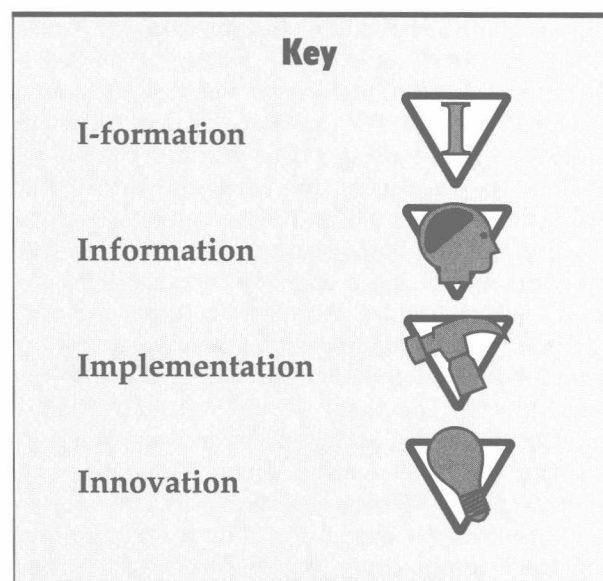
Part II deals with front-of-the-house management issues, which directly impact the member or participant's experience. We discuss topics such as sales and marketing, member management, service desk management, program management, profit centers, as well as personnel management and equipment issues. This section reinforces the importance of member relations and illustrates methods of ensuring quality control in this vital area of running a successful operation.

Part III addresses back-of-the-house management issues, which are less visible to the member but critically important to the successful management of a program: health and safety standards, maintenance, finance, compensation, legal, insurance, and computer issues. This section underscores that no number of smiling faces or name recognitions can overcome member discontent associated with such things as dirty locker rooms or constant billing problems. We present practical information and tactics to minimize these back-of-the-house problems.

Part IV presents the evaluation and planning processes and includes areas such as facility, personnel, program, marketing, and financial evaluation. We provide an easy-to-use instrument to facilitate program evaluation. By focusing on strategic planning and issues for the future we hope to ensure that the ongoing evaluation of programs can forecast change for optimal development.

The book uses many examples from for-profit commercial environments because this is the largest sector of health fitness settings in the industry. Moreover, for-profit environments address both revenue production and expense management issues. Most nonprofit programs, on the other hand, primarily deal with expense management regarding financial issues. Thus, considerations surrounding sales and marketing, membership dues, and other revenue issues may not seem as relevant to readers interested in nonprofit health fitness settings. Keep in mind, though, that both for-profit and nonprofit institutions need to hire and train quality staff; keep facilities clean, safe, and operational; and service members with good programs. These topics dominate the content of the book.

We have also introduced a management model for the health fitness industry. In addition to the traditional scheme of planning, organizing, leading, and controlling functions of management, we have included the thought that this core of management theory must include the concepts of information gathering, innovative thinking, and implementation that we have identified as the I-formation management model. A thorough discussion of this model is presented in chapter 4 and will clarify our thinking on the subject. Throughout the book we have included the icons to reinforce the I-formation management model.



We have highlighted key points throughout the chapters to focus attention on main issues. These key points are set off by the I-formation icons mentioned above and presented in detail in chapter 4. Each chapter also highlights and discusses key terms and lists them at the end. We designed these key points and key terms to help the student quickly recall new terminology and important concepts presented on the chapter topics. The book includes sample forms and checklists that you can adapt to site-specific requirements for a cross section of health fitness facilities. These ready references should prove helpful to the practitioner seeking quick solutions to ongoing management and operational problems.

We have designed this book for you to use both as a reference tool and as a classroom textbook. The professional health fitness facility owner or manager will be able to use the checklists, forms,

illustrations, and graphs to develop or improve specific operational guidelines. In fact, we recommend that practitioners start using the book with an evaluation of their programs. Chapter 20 provides an instrument for this purpose. The practitioner can then clarify any deficits observed from this evaluation and make improvements using the book. The college instructor of an organizational or an administration course in health fitness management can use this book as a primary text. We have organized the content logically and designed it for the teacher to present following the order of the book. This book should also be a helpful reference to those seeking professional certifications. Some certifications are now expecting that candidates have a working knowledge of managing and operating facilities. Certainly, the material in this book should prove helpful for those seeking such health fitness management information.

RECOMMENDED READINGS

International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association (IHRSA). 1995. *The 1995 IHRSA report on the state of the health club industry*. Boston: IHRSA

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PART

I

INTRODUCTION TO HEALTH FITNESS MANAGEMENT

The Health Fitness Industry

The *fitness boom* arising during the last half of the 20th century has created an explosive growth in the health fitness industry. For decades participation in physical activity, membership in health clubs, and expansion of fitness facilities increased exponentially. The result has been that more than 20 million Americans frequent health clubs plus a 82 percent increase in home exercisers from 1987 through 1996. Even with this explosive growth, nearly 80 percent of Americans fail to get enough exercise to enhance quality and quantity of life. It is this sedentary group that represents a tremendous market potential for the health fitness industry.

The explosive growth in facilities and memberships in the health fitness industry has abated. This slowing growth gives us pause to examine the industry, define some of its essential characteristics, and position ourselves for the new marketplace. Currently, the health fitness industry can be divided into four distinct segments, described as commercial, corporate, clinical, and community settings. Although each setting is distinct, there are many

The Health Fitness Movement

Contrasting the Health Fitness Settings

Growth Patterns and Trends

Commercial Programs

Corporate Programs

Clinical Programs

Community Programs

Management Functions

Commercial Programs

Corporate Programs

Clinical Programs

Community Programs

Practitioner's Roles

Facilities

Program Modifiers

Program Objectives

Commercial Programs

Corporate Programs

Clinical Programs

Community Programs

Target Population

In Closing

Key Terms

Recommended Readings