

Upgrade Your Club Management Software [management solution]



by Carole Oat

If you haven't had your club management software upgraded in the last three years, it's time. In fact, you're overdue. Ideally, you should be receiving upgrades, free upgrades, from your software provider at least once a year. Make sure you're getting them. Don't let the provider charge you thousands of dollars to upgrade. A lot of new features have come out on the market lately; many of them are very valuable and all are designed to make the management job easier and more effective. This is your investment and some of these new perks can provide great tools for member communication and overall functionality.

Features in most software that has evolved over the last three years include:

- Accounting package interfaces – Quickbooks™, etc.
- Digital paperless contracts with electronic signature capture.
- Affordable touch screen point of sale technology.
- Personal training session & commission monitoring.
- Appointment booking & event scheduling.
- Improved multiple club data sharing
- Background check in.
- Childcare usage & security monitoring.
- Improved employee time clock functionality.
- Improved report writer capabilities.
- Ability to sell & redeem gift certificates.
- Deferred revenue & projected cash flow reporting.

- Marketing abilities.
- Reports for source & interest tracking.

Some of the old software standbys you should definitely have and be taking advantage of include:

- Emailing – to members & prospects.
- Archiving ability – keep track of former members.
- Fitness component – track measurements/assessments & generate workout and meal plans.
- Accounts receivable tracking – generate & print member statements encompassing house and prepaid accounts.
- Truly integrated collections– link with your billing company.
- Company or group tracking – ability to print reports and invoices.

Is your current software now obsolete? Is the company you originally purchased from no longer in business? Are they too small to sufficiently provide the

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software and technical usage support you need? These are important questions to consider. If you're in the market to purchase or change, prepare yourself to do some homework.

You want a program that is easy to learn, simple to use and light on your budget. Look for flexible terms when deciding. The best plans are those that require no upfront investment and no long-term commitments. Similar to when you sell a membership; look for a maximum of a year agreement with an open ended renewal. Expect and get service and support throughout. Demand training, and make sure there is a manual and/or a good working Help feature to refer too. Do yourself a favor; work with a billing and software company. The more things you can bundle, the simpler it is overall.

In addition, when purchasing, make sure you're never limited to a certain number of members or to a certain number of workstations. These are blindfolds and can interfere with your growth. With today's networking capabilities, there should be no controls as to the number of computers you may need your system on. Get something that will grow with you but not for any additional fees.

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