

# Management and marketing of a fitness centre

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## Abstract

This article deals with the issues of marketing and management of fitness centres in the town of Nitra, Slovakia. Authors distributed a questionnaire to find out different aspects of visiting fitness centres by inhabitants. They are interested in the reasons why people prefer a certain kind of a fitness centre. Using SWOT analysis we found strong and weak sides and opportunities and threats in the selected fitness centre. The questionnaire was filled in by 252 respondents. Hypotheses were proved – the most significant criteria of selection of a certain fitness centre are: space for performing exercises, modern equipment, distance from the homeplace/workplace, while price does not play an important role when choosing the right fitness centre.

**Key words:** marketing, management, fitness centre, distance from the homeplace.

## Introduction

Management originated based on the necessity to control and understand the system, very often chaotic (McNamara, 2014). Majtán (2008) characterizes management as one of the most important human activities. It is a process, which serves for the reaching of goals of an organization by means of directing the conversion of inputs, the so-called required sources to outputs. Management can be understood also as a process of cooperation among co-workers performing the work in the society. According to Blažek (2014) management is a process, which is in progress between an individual (or group) (managing subject(s)), which is controlling a subject, and a subject (or group), which is controlled (controlled object). Within this process the managing subject sets goals and by means of a mutual activity of the controlling subject and the controlled object the set targets are effectively accomplished.

According to Časlavová (2009) „Sportmanagement“ is divided into two basic roles – sport versus management and commerce. The managerial component and commerce includes not only managerial controlling functions, such as planning, organizing, directing people and checking, but also such spheres as accountancy, marketing, economy, finances and law. From the point of view of sport management the sport component includes the sphere of spectators, who consume the amusement and the sphere of fitness or performance, which is focused on active participation in sport and physical activities.

The word „marketing“ comes originally from the English word „market“ meaning the place of buying and selling. In economic terminology we understand orientation of companies on the market, on their needs and requirements (Baláž, 2005).

Sport marketing denotes all activities taking into account all impulses and wishes of sport customers and their fulfilment by means of a change. Sport marketing developed 2 main lines: marketing of sport products and services related directly to sport customers, and marketing of other customers and industrial products and services used for the promotion in sport (Mullin, Hardy, Sutton, 2000).

Based on the above mentioned definitions we elaborated a questionnaire by means of which we intended to have a closer look at marketing and management issues of three bigger fitness centres in Nitra, Slovakia. The questionnaire consisted of 16 items, in 7 out of 16 the respondents could choose the answer. In the rest 9 questions the respondents could present their opinion (open questions). The questionnaires were distributed in 3 biggest fitness centres in Nitra, Slovakia. Altogether 252 questionnaires were returned (84% rate of return). 160 (63,49%) responses were delivered by men and 92 (36,51%) by women. The three fitnesscentres were as follows: Fitnesscentre Bodyworld situated in the very centre of the town (The Gallery Mall). It is the most complex „open gym“ in Nitra with the acreage of 760 m<sup>2</sup>. Fitnesscentre

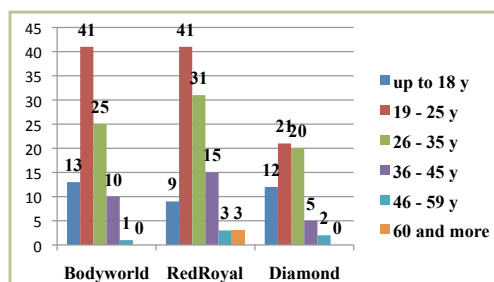


Diamond is one of the newest fitnesscentres in the town built on two storeys covering 450 m<sup>2</sup>. The third fitnesscentre RedRoyal is situated on the outskirts of the town in the sport hall Olympia. It is focusing on the newest trends in exercises – Crossfit. Specialized „crossfit“ exercises are performed on the ground floor and strengthening equipment is situated on the first floor. It covers 598 m<sup>2</sup>.

When evaluating the answers of respondents we divided them as to their age into 6 groups (A to F). A=up to 18 years of age, B=19–25 y., C=26–35 y., D=36–45 y., E=46–59 y., and F=60 and over. In question 4 focusing on the distance of the fitnesscentre visited by the respondent from his/her home we formed 5 groups: A=up to 5 minutes, B=6–10 min., C=11–20 min., D=21–30 min., and E=30 and more. In question 6 focusing on the times best suiting the respondent for performing exercises there were 5 groups (A=6:00–9:59, B=10:00–12:59, C=13:00–16:59, D=17:00–20:59, and E=21:00–22:00). In this case respondents could choose more than one answer. In item 7 we divided answers according to the sum respondents are willing to pay (season-ticket) for the visit in the fitnesscentre into 5 groups (A= up to 20€, B= up to 30€, C= up to 50€, D= up to 100€, and E=more than 100€). In item 8, price for a single entry of the respondent was stated – we divided them into 4 groups (A=0–2.99€, B=3–4.99€, C=5–9.99€, and D = 10€ and more). In item 10 asking for nutrition supplement monthly expenses we formed 4 groups (A=0–20€, B=21–49€, C=50–100€, and D=more than 100€). In item 11 we tried to find out what the respondents miss in the fitnesscentre – we formed 5 general categories (A=services, B=tools and equipment, C=personnel, management, and D=others. Also in this item respondents could choose also more than one answer. The item 14 asked for what special respondents find in the fitnesscentre they visit most often (A=atmosphere, B=personnel, C=equipment, and D=others. Respondent could provide more than one answer. The last question tried to find out whether the clients are satisfied with the fitnesscentre they visit most frequently. The majority showed their consent.

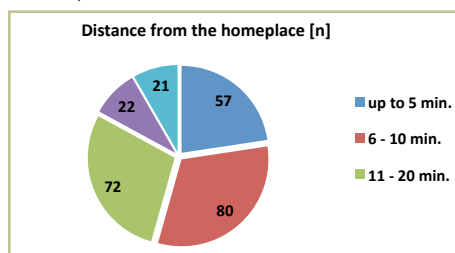
## Results

Distributions of the responses are in tables 1 to 4 and graphs 1 to 4. Graph 1 presents visitors according to their age (mainly between 19 and 25 y.).



Graph 1. Age of visitors of all three fitnesscentres

Graph 2 depicts the distance of the fitnesscentre from the homeplace – 174 were from the town, while 78 were commuting from the neighbouring villages. It is clear that distance plays a vital role for visitors (6–20 minutes)



Graph 2. Distance to the homeplace in minutes

Table 1 presents the way of respondents' transport to the fitnesscentre

Table 1. Means of transport to the fitnesscentre

	By car	By bus	Walking	Cycling	Others
BodyWorld	52	21	30	1	0
RedRoyal	66	11	30	7	5
Diamond	43	7	17	4	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>161</b> (54.58%)	<b>39</b> (13.22%)	<b>77</b> (26.10%)	<b>12</b> (4.07%)	<b>6</b> (2.03%)

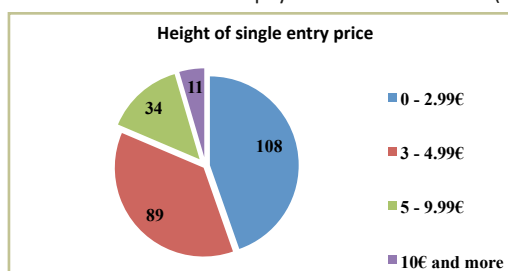
Time preferences among individual fitnesscentres differ. While in RedRoyal and BodyWorld the most frequent time of visit was the period between 17:00 and 20:59, Diamond is visited most frequently between 13:00 and 16:59. It is interesting that in RedRoyal 16 responses were pointed to the period after 9:00 p.m., which is quite unphysiological time for performing exercises.

The financial possibilities of respondents also differ among the fitnesscentres. Respondents of Bodyworld prefer the price not exceeding 30€, while the ones of RedRoyal and Diamond are able to pay max. 30-50€ (Table 2).

Table 2. Price of monthly season tickets

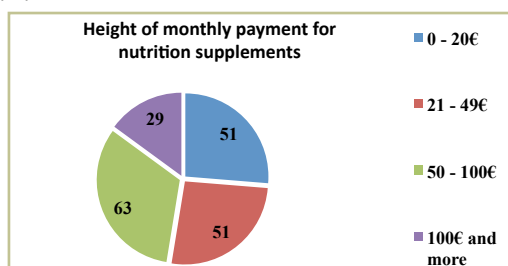
	Up to 20€	Up to 30€	Up to 50€	Up to 100€	100€ and more
BodyWorld	42	35	12	0	1
RedRoyal	15	42	41	2	0
Diamond	8	38	15	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>

A single entry to RedRoyal for more than 5 € is preferable for 35 visitors. In BodyWorld 59 respondents would pay max. 2.99€ and 33 respondents from Diamond would pay between 3 and 4.99€ (Graph 3).



Graph 3. Height of single entry price

The height of monthly payment for nutrition supplements is presented in graph 4. 194 clients regularly buy supplements, 52.58 % are able to pay between 49€ and 47.42% more than 50€.



Graph 4. Height of monthly payment for nutrition supplements

69.44% of respondents do not miss anything in the fitnesscentre, while the rest 30.56% of them that they miss something. The opinions differ from fitnesscentre to fitnesscentre. The replies showed that the most significant insufficiencies are in all fitnesscentres in material equipment. Respondents of BodyWorld require more treadmills, rowing mills, inclined benches and bigger variability of machines. The most requested machines are multipress, hamstrings, hacken dregs, prowlers, machines for abdominal muscles, lower extremities, triceps and back. The most decisive factor when choosing a fitnesscentre is its position. Second choice was equipment, while price ranked third. Very important is also the possibility of parking nearby.

Table 3. Priorities when selecting fitnesscentre

	Position	Price	Equipment	Parking	Other
BodyWorld	73	46	58	35	3
RedRoyal	58	29	61	28	10
Diamond	40	32	45	27	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>14</b>

When answering on the question „What offers you the fitnesscentre which is different from the others“ respondents from BodyWorld presented perfect atmosphere, amenity, comfort and spaciousness, independence, size and closer contact with the facility. They appreciate the willingness of personnel to help. Positive were also about group exercises. Respondents from RedRoyal presented large and spatial place for performing exercises, cultivated personnel and fair atmosphere. They also appreciated complexity of equipment and for Crossfit. In fitnesscentre Diamond answers were similar. They like the gym which is always at their disposal. As marketing factor we were interested in how respondents got to know about the fitnesscentre (Table 4). In Table 4 we can see that the most frequent source was „recommendation by relatives.

Table 4. Frequency of answers – marketing

	Friends, relatives	Advertisement, leaflet	Internet, Facebook	Other
BodyWorld	55	16	17	16
RedRoyal	70	11	20	15
Diamond	30	13	18	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>42</b>

## Conclusions

The aim of the study was to find out various marketing and management issues in three Slovak fitnesscentres. Based on the results of questionnaire investigation we came to the following conclusions: The most frequent age of visitors of fitnesscentres in Nitra is between 19 and 35 years. Only 26.10% of respondents said that they walk to work/school and only 4.07% cycle. 60.32% of respondents need 6 to 20 minutes to get to the fitnesscentre. Up to 76.98% of respondents buy supplements. Only 19.60% of respondents stated that price is very important when choosing a fitnesscentre. Equipment of a fitnesscentre was also one of the most frequent reasons for choosing a fitnesscentre (30.04%). More than 30% of respondents were not contents with the material equipment of the fitnesscentre they visit. Among positive features belong spaciousness, good position in the town and serious and professional personnel. From the point of view of marketing of a fitnesscentre, analysis of conditions on the market is extremely important for the sake of creating a suitable strategy, promotion and effective realization of a competitive fitnesscentre. The more satisfied the clients are the more content the manager of the fitnesscentre is.

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