

# How Do I Get More Personal Training Clients?

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# "How do I get more personal training clients?"

It's a question I'm baffled by. Every time I'm asked the question I get annoyed, not because I don't know the answer. No. I get angry that people still have to ask it.

A full-time personal trainer needs 15-20 clients to work 30-40 hours/wk considering that the average clients trains 2-3 times a week. *What other business do you know that only needs 15-20 customers to be considered successful?*

## SO WHY ARE YOU FAILING?

When I ask trainers this question I get one of the following responses:

- √ My gym doesn't support me.
- √ I don't know where to get started. I can't get clients in front of me.
- √ I get clients in front of me but don't know how to sell.
- √ Clients never seem to be able to afford personal training.

## Sorry but this is a tough love post.

Even if you're in a rare position where you are an employee of the gym *you must take responsibility over your business*. Building up relationships with your clients is the only way to succeed. They love you, not your gym.

You are your own product. If you found your way to thePTDC you're different and you're better. Irrelevant of how experienced you are the act of spending time researching online to get better sets you apart.

So market the heck out of your product. I have two rules for success. These two rules have been posted on my wall for the past 5 years:

Rule #1 - Do a great job.

Rule #2 - Make sure everybody knows about it.

Stop blaming your gym or anybody else for your lack of clientele. If you want to get more personal training clients the answer lies in marketing. And all you need to know about marketing is that the goal of whatever you do is making sure everybody knows how great you are. I'll show you how..

## Marketing for Personal Trainers 101

Years back when I was struggling for personal training clients I started to read every marketing book I could find. (Note that many of these books have made it onto [thePTDC's book list.](#)) I came to two conclusions:

1. I had to stand out.
2. I had to show my value before clients stepped in the door.

You see I hated cold calling almost as much as I hated canvassing door to door and giving free demos in lululemon (although they gave lots of great free clothing). So I kept reading and tried out every piece of advice I could find to market my services. I wanted to focus on what I did best, train, and not on selling and giving free demos to uninitiated clients that haven't decided whether or not they are ready.

I figured out 4 never fail solutions that I want to share. Any one of these should get a few new personal training clients within a week or two's time.

## **4 Surefire Ways to Get More Personal Training Clients**

All 4 of these points are based off of a couple main principles.

The first is that personal training skill is arbitrary. Clients don't know what good training is and isn't. The perception of skill and expertness in fitness does more to sell your services than actual skill and expertness. (Of course you must be able to back it up.)

The second is that people want to show off not only that they have a trainer but that they have "the best trainer". Having or knowing the best of something is a source of pride and increases one's social equity. Provide people with an opportunity to show off that they know the best (you) and they will market for you.



### **How to Get More Personal Training Clients Tip #1 - Write**

Writing is a lot like the game of poker. The barrier of entry is trivial but becoming skilled takes years of both study and practice. Lucky for you becoming skilled doesn't really matter unless you're planning on writing a book. When you write you become an expert. When you become an expert people go out of their way to train with you and talk about you. Publishing, even self-publishing, written material be it in a pamphlet that you hand out at your gym, on your blog, or even in a weekly email that you send to clients act as marketing materials.

Having literature written by you provides your clients with a way to show off that they have an answer. Imagine this, a member at your gym is at a dinner party with a friend who is complaining of low back pain. The member remembers seeing a pamphlet at the gym and makes a note to take a copy the next day and send it to her friend. All of a sudden you have become the low back pain expert. When you meet the potential client they have already been impressed with your knowledge.

So pick areas you are proficient in and know that a lot of people struggle with and write about them but there's one other thing.

Stop trying to be profound!

You are not a leading researcher. You are not trying to impress other trainers! You are showing your value specific to your target audience. This means that you write in plain English and as yourself. Keep the words short and avoid jargon. Look at any fitness magazine if you want an example. Or better yet, [learn to write for fitness magazines](#).

### **Wondering how to start?**

Starting to write is daunting so here's what I suggest. Start a blog or even a word doc on your computer. As you research or read articles jot down your thoughts on them. When you make dinner write a short article about the dish you just made. You study and research anyway so why not write a short article about whatever you're researching.

As you write more and want to get more proficient the first book you should read is [On Writing Well](#), it will bring you to a different level.

Remember the goal is to provide materials that clients will want to show off. Everybody wants to pass on word that they know an expert. For some reason the act of writing something makes it look like you know it better than the next trainer. I didn't make up the rules, I just understand and know how to use them.

### **How to Get More Personal Training Clients Tip #2 - Identify Mavens**

In every neighborhood there are mavens and they are the key to becoming the go-to trainer in that neighborhood. I first learned about the concept of the maven from Malcom Gladwell's [Tipping Point](#) and quickly put the concept to use netting 2 clients in two weeks that both bought 50-session packages.

Allow me to explain.

Gladwell describes the maven as an "information specialist" and as "people we rely on to connect us with new information". The maven is a a trusted source with a lot of connections. When they like something not only does everybody know, people take note.

## So who are the mavens?

Every neighborhood differs but here's who I have had success with:

√ Real estate agents - Make the top real estate agents in your neighborhood your #1 target. They will probably say that they're too busy to train but your goal is not to train them. They sell houses to all of the rich people moving into your neighborhood looking for a gym. If somebody trusts a person enough to buy a house from them they will take their suggestion for a gym and trainer. To add to this the real estate agent must establish trust. A way for them to do this is to give top notch suggestions. Call the agents and offer to add value to their service. Give them a gift certificate worth \$500 of training to give to anybody who buys a house. Make sure the certificate has a monetary value and doesn't say free sessions. Don't ever devalue you service.

√ Doctors - No surprises here. Doctors can be a good referral source. The only negative with getting a referral from a doctor is that the new client may not be psychologically ready for change (for more on the Transtheoretical model of behavioral change and how it applies to personal training clients [read this article](#)). If you're interested in learning more about generating referrals from medical professionals PTDC coach Dean Somerset produced an excellent product for sale called [Post Rehab Essentials](#).

√ Baristas - The coffee shop fuels the neighborhood in more ways than one. Find the local fancy coffee shop and go there every day in your training uniform to buy a coffee. Give the barista a huge smile, say thank you, and always tip. Ask his or her name and remember it. After a couple days they will ask you if you "work at that gym down the street". After saying yes they'll probably ask you a couple questions about themselves. Answer as well as you can and walk out. Do this for a month, it will cost you \$50-60 (unless you buy the mocha crappa grande chai latte medium hot with light foam (which I'm told means milk) than it will cost you \$1000's.) Write up an article about low back pain or whatever you specialize in and ask them to put it up or leave some cards at the desk.



## **How to Get More Personal Training Clients Tip #3 -Facebook**

Facebook is your list and you have been building it for years. Contained within that list is all of the people who already love and trust you. SO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT. I don't recommend training close friends and family but they serve as trust agents to spread word about you. In my book currently being written and published 100% free online on [viral marketing](#) I explain that people use social media to selectively self-represent. They want to show off to their world that they are:

√ Intelligent

√ Intellectual

√ Attractive

√ Funny

Asking people to share word about you or your gym doesn't allow them to self-represent any of these 4 desirable traits. So in order to get people to share information about how awesome you are they must feel as if others perceive them favorably when they share your post.

In fitness you will probably want to focus on the attractive part. Everybody wants to show off that they are working out. 15% of people reported updating their own status while 22% reported commenting or liking a friend's status in 2010. From this we can extrapolate that it's more effective to say what they already know. The idea is that they will share your post as a way to articulate their own thoughts and show off their knowledge of exercise or participation in a fitness program.

### **Facebook action steps for getting more personal training clients**

1. Create a simple tip of the day. Every day at any time write down a tip. It could be simple like "drink 8 glasses of water today" or a bit more interesting like "did you know that good fats lead to a healthy skin tone? Have an avocado today for better looking skin". At the end of this tip have a soft call to action asking anybody reading it to message you with any health or fitness related questions. Remember that the act of writing something makes you an expert in it.

2. Celebrate your existing clients achievements publicly. If they achieved something in the gym tag them in a post saying "awesome 200lbs deadlift today John". Even if they didn't achieve anything specific but they've been doing well a simple "I just want to take a minute and congratulate John for the amazing dedication he's been putting into his workouts lately. This guy brings it every time!" works. All of John's friends now know he's working out, killing it, and has an awesome trainer.

I wrote an entire eBook on Facebook marketing for personal trainers. It's 100% free. Follow the link below and put your email in the form that appears on the page and I'll send it to you right away. You also get tons of subscriber only info that will help catapult your career.

<http://www.theptdc.com/resources/freebies/>

### **How to Get More Personal Training Clients Tip #4 - Asking for Referrals the Right Way**

The first step is to ask. A kitten dies every time a trainer neglects to ask their happy client for a referral. And you don't want kittens to die do you?

Don't be worried about hurting your existing relationship with your client. They love you and want to support you. They might also enjoy the opportunity to show off that they have hired a trainer.

I realized early on that *my clients didn't understand how the business worked*. That's why they weren't sending me referrals. Once I told them that my success is dependent on referrals they jumped at the opportunity to bring me new clients. Yet a lot of trainers feel awkward asking so I'm providing you a script:

### **How to ask for referrals**

Note: Do this at the end of the session. If you stretch your clients then it's a perfect time to bring up the topic.

Me: "Thanks again for your great work today! You really smashed those deadlifts. There's something I'd love to have a quick chat with you about." (Make the compliment specific)

Client: "Of course."

Me: "I've noticed that I'm going to have some gaps in my schedule coming up due to some personal issues with a couple other clients. I'm asking my clients first if they know anybody who might be interested in training. I want to make sure I keep the spots open to look after my clients friends and family first before marketing to the outside world. Do you know of anybody who might be interested in training?"

Client: "Actually yes. My sister was talking about working out but is afraid because she's had an old shoulder injury, I think it's tendinitis."

Me: "Great! I have a lot of experience working with shoulder injuries and am happy to get in touch with her physio to get all the details. Do you mind asking her permission for me to call her?"

Client: "Not at all. I'll ask her tonight."

Me: "Thanks. I appreciate that. Here's a card for a complimentary meeting and week membership that you can give to her."

Always have printed material with your phone number and email for a free meeting ready to hand out. On the card write down an expiry date to give the new client a sense of urgency.

### **Most of the time you will never hear about this lead again.**

Your clients are busy and they forget to pass along your info. Don't make it awkward by asking them again and again. Instead follow my "referral ensure" system.

Without telling them you're going to send it find a great article on whatever condition was mentioned and how to rehab it. Double points if you wrote it yourself. Send it to your client asking them to pass it along to their friend later that night or the next day.

The material adds value to your services and provides a non-intrusive nudge and reminder to your client to pass along the info. Once your client does pass on the info they will surely preface it with "my trainer asked me to pass this on to you" or better yet "*my awesome trainer* asked me to pass this on to you. In the email ask the client if their friend will give you permission to call (because they probably won't call you). When you get the ok make the call and arrange a time to meet. *Boom -- Lead!*

## **All it takes is some foresight**

*Every 2 weeks take a look over your schedule. Take note of any possible holes that may open and plan ahead. Be proactive. Start generating leads in advance and always have a couple potential clients in the pipeline.*

**Do you know somebody who is looking for clients? Maybe you're a manager or a gym or have a co-worker who is struggling. Please email this article or send the eBook to them. There's no reason why skilled personal trainers can't fill their schedules.**

Sign up free today to download "Facebook Marketing for Fitness pros" and "101 Personal Trainer Mistakes" as well as get access to tons of subscriber only info. Follow the link below and put your email in the box that appears and I'll send you them right away.

<http://www.theptdc.com/resources/freebies/>

### **Related posts on thePTDC:**

[Your personal trainer marketing sucks: Benefits vs. Features](#) - Jonathan Goodman

[These are my personal training secrets](#) - Jonathan Goodman

[Client Behavior Change: A Key to Personal Trainer Success](#) - Mark Young

### **Resources mentioned in this article:**

[How to Get Published: Writing Domination in the Fitness Industry](#)

[On Writing Well](#)

[Tipping Point](#)

[Post Rehab Essentials](#)

[www.viralmoments.com](http://www.viralmoments.com)

**Reference:** [http://www.slideshare.net/nich\\_marketing/pip-social-networking-sites-and-our-lives](http://www.slideshare.net/nich_marketing/pip-social-networking-sites-and-our-lives)

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