

Instantaneous Information!

Advances in club-management software expand and expedite all-points access

As technology evolves, the pace of business and the expectations of consumers continue to multiply. In response, health clubs are embracing ever-more-powerful club-management software to increase memberships, retain current members, cut costs, and boost revenue—even if it means learning new systems and abandoning the paper trail.

“Club operators are seeing the value of technology and the impact it can have on the bottom line,” notes Hossein Noshirvani, the founder of Motionsoft. “The ‘self-service is the new full-service’ mantra is playing out in our industry.”

For members, self-service comes in the forms of online and mobile access, enabling them to purchase memberships, schedule services, register for classes, manage accounts, and pay bills.

“Online interaction improves the member experience and increases touch points with members, all of which helps drive retention,” observes Mark Hutts, the vice president of sales and marketing at Fiserv.

For club managers and staff, self-service translates to immediate access to all-important schedules, communication, and club data.

“The buzz is cloud-based computing, in which programs move to an online platform instead of a traditional, license-based, desktop package,” explains Rachelle Dodge, the marketing director of ASF International. “It empowers club owners by connecting them to members and financial data, whether they’re in their office, at home, or out grabbing a cup of coffee.”

Having one vendor supply a range of club management needs can ultimately save money and streamline business for club operators.

“Club managers are asking for a complete package that includes sales, follow-up, member retention, and collections,” points out Glen Bendixen, the CEO of Paramount Acceptance.

Data warehouses are also becoming more important. “Clubs are now implementing tools that objectively analyze and report on data in order to come up with new revenue streams and find operational efficiencies,” adds Noshirvani.

Bendixen predicts that data-mining will become more prevalent as well. “Clubs will target specific markets within their membership and promote additional services to them.”

Certainly, the technology landscape is ever-changing—with the proliferation of mobile apps, computer tablets, and social media.

“Today, software needs to integrate with Facebook; you must be able to access club data from your tablet while on an airplane; and you expect answers about your business, simply because you thought of the question,” Noshirvani contends. —