

Change Your Thinking

To
increase
your aquatic
bottom
line

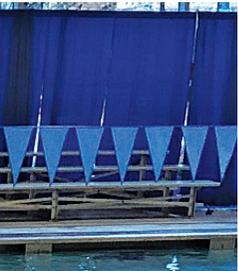
BY MICK AND
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Want to increase your aquatic bottom line? Pricing can have a huge effect on profits and your ability to have a sustainable facility. First and foremost, aquatic facilities must simply break the mold of pricing that has been carried over from the past.

OUTDATED PRICING METHODS

- 1 Price Takers/Price Makers.** In the recent past and even currently, the people who are going to use the service are the ones setting the fees. There must be a difference between the price makers and the price takers.
- 2 Comparative Pricing.** If you are in business to collect fees rather than offer a service, this is probably the system that set your original pricing. However, the pool down the street is probably in as much of a tentative financial situation as you are, so why copy averageosity? Plan to offer a superior service and set your pricing so you can afford to do so.



3 Traditional Pricing. We have always charged this much, so that is what we must go with! This is propagated by the fear that customers will leave if prices are noticeably raised. This mindset does not consider that utility prices have doubled in the last 20 years or construction that used to cost \$28 a square foot now costs \$128. We also have new equipment and technology that are necessary if a business is to compete. Salary requirements have increased over 30 percent in the past 20 years, not to mention benefits. Traditional pricing simply cannot keep up.

4 Shared Funding Pricing. This is perhaps the most common and most dangerous form of pricing. It assumes the patron or client is not responsible for paying a fair share of running a facility. This is common in a municipality or university/school setting. Somehow, the actual cost of building the facility became synonymous with the cost for programming. This is a sure-fire formula for negative cash flow and eventual financial failure. If tax dollars or activity fees built the facility, that was what was accomplished. The facility is now there for the community to use. Programming must be designed so the operational cost of the facility and staffing of the programs is paid for as a separate “business.” Even non-profit businesses should not lose money. Operational subsidies are becoming a thing of the past.

PRICING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Valued-received pricing is a method of establishing a price based on cost—not just the cost of the program, but all operating costs. Value-received pricing is based on the following ideas when compared to local or regional competition:

Wet-Side Programming Examples

1. Develop water exercises that address all components of fitness.

- Include health themes to match the exercises.
- Include exercises in shallow, deep, or transitional water, or a combination.

2. Develop challenging water activities.

- Biking club (engages the total body)
- Ai Chi Day
- Water walking (for balance and posture)
- Olympic Day with aquatic stations



3. Specify swimming skills.

Dry-Side Programming Examples

1. Combine nutrition and exercise (i.e., cooking classes).

2. Study chronic pain and exercise (i.e., pain management and active support).

3. Note members' health accomplishments (i.e., fitness evaluations).

4. Help members become comfortable in the water (i.e., a lifelong skill).



■ You will hire a more prepared and competent staff and make sure you advertise their certifications and or licenses.

■ You will make sure the facility offers more and better amenities that are not available elsewhere.

■ You will make “customer service” your motto and train staff members accordingly.

■ You will offer the best programs available and make sure clients and staff members believe in these and deliver.

■ You will make sure the facility is always super-clean, super-accessible, and super-friendly.

TOTAL-BODY WELLNESS PROGRAMS

One way to increase the bottom line as well as to increase the participation numbers is by offering total-body wellness programs. This method teaches that fitness is not only about exercising on land or in the water, but there is a wellness component to the program. Providing cross-training in the water and adding preventive-wellness programs on land is called “dry-side and wet-side programming.” Experience has shown that adding supporting wellness programs will keep participants engaged in balancing the total body. Members stay engaged for longer periods of time when programs keep their minds and body active. Every aquatic facility will be a little different in developing a program, depending on the needs of the community.

BE BRAND SENSITIVE

In recent years, program developers have seen success by naming programs “vertical aquatics” or simply aquatic exercise and addressing all components of fitness. Members are more likely to join an exercise program if they understand more about the health benefits achieved by exercising in the water. Engage the community by displaying a vivid description with images of the water session or class.

Many individuals who go into the water assume they will not be doing any type of aerobic exercise. They relate “aerobic” with bouncing and jumping, which is one reason they choose the water—to have less impact on joints and muscles. People must be educated about the different ways to exercise the heart

An Introduction To Ai Chi

Ai Chi is a water-based, total-body strengthening and relaxation progression that bridges Eastern and Western philosophies, integrating mental, physical, and spiritual energy. It combines Tai-Chi concepts with Shiatsu and Watsu techniques, and is performed standing in shoulder-depth water and combining deep breathing and slow, broad movements of the arms, legs, and torso. The Ai Chi progression moves from simple breathing to the incorporation of upper-extremity, trunk, lower-extremity, and finally total body involvement.

Ai Chi was created to help aquatic practitioners (including exercise instructors, personal trainers, and therapy and rehabilitation practitioners) and students enjoy the water in a flowing yet powerful progression. It is an efficient exercise program that increases oxygen and caloric consumption through correct form and positioning in the water, a perfect relaxation technique for highly stressed or over-challenged clients, and a model for creating improved range of motion and mobility.

—INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE NATIONAL CENTER ON HEALTH, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND DISABILITY





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without bouncing while in the water. One can play in the water and exercise at the same time, with biking or challenging games. One of the reasons that people quit exercising, on land or in water, is boredom. And doing the same routine over and over can have both good and bad points. By doing the same routine, participants become effective in those skills, but they also start to lose attention. Don't be afraid to mix it up!

BELIEVE IN YOUR PROGRAM

After analyzing many programs across the country, we have determined that aquatic exercise has many myths:

Myth 1: You must be injured to exercise in the water.

Myth 2: You must know how to swim.

Myth 3: Your hair will get wet.

Myth 4: Only older people exercise in the water.

Myth 5: You cannot get a tough workout in the water.

Myth 6: Pools don't make money.

Establishing a total-body wellness program will not only help dispel these myths, but it will also help spread the word that your aquatic facility is on the cutting-edge of programming. **PRB**

RESOURCES:

- TAP <https://totalaquatic.llc>
- AEA <https://www.aeawave.com/>
- WECOACH <http://waterexercisecoach.com/>
- Aquatic Resource Manual
- Regional Build & Program A Pool Conference

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