

BY APRIL DURRETT

Mixing Innovation and Outstanding Service

Attention to detail and an obsessive focus on nurturing and pampering clients have kept Dave Parise's business vital for 19 years.



SUBJECT: Dave Parise
COMPANY: Results Plus,
Hamden, Connecticut

Types of Clientele. The majority of the company's clients are in their 40s–70s. “When you market to an upscale demographic as we have, it is much easier to maintain those clients, as long as you provide the level of service they are used to,” Parise says.

Booking Sessions for Trainers. Parise, who has been in business for 19 years, focuses his efforts on running his business and helping his 15 trainers. He has cut down on the number of clients he personally trains. “The number-one concern of myself and the vice president of Results Plus [Krista Parise, MBA] is fostering a great working relationship with our trainers,” he says. “We make sure all clients are setting their appointments—three per week. We want the trainers to worry only about training plus some administrative work. The rest we take care of so they can do what they do best! We fill all open time slots as often as possible to keep our trainers' paychecks steady.”

Providing Exceptional Service. Parise says he has built a successful, profitable

business because of excellent customer service that has contributed to the company's strong reputation. “Customer service is all about creating a pleasing atmosphere,” he says. “When a client enters our facility, his towel is waiting for him on his cardio station, next to his labeled water bottle filled with ice-cold spring water. A fresh, cold piece of washed fruit is available before or after his session. We have cold towels with organic oils for the more intense clients to use to keep them cool and in motion. We clean the equipment and clean and dry the showers after every client. In the rainy season we may greet clients at their cars with an umbrella and escort them to the front door or they are welcome to borrow an umbrella on their way out.”

Weathering Potential Slow Times. Parise prides himself on making proactive choices for his business. “The month of August is slow in the personal training industry. [This past year] we worked on positive customer experiences during June and July, and that effort snowballed. In August we grossed over \$70,000 in client renewals and new retainer fees.”

Working With Medical Professionals. Parise says that the “value of your services increases tenfold when medical professionals work with you. I believe a trainer's role is to design the right series of functional corrective movements based on the client's present condition, and then fire a cannon of motivation! The neurology of why a client is not complying is left for the physiologist; the

total health profile and blood lipids for the endocrinologist; and recommendations for food are best formatted by the registered dietitian.”

Using DVD Business Cards. Parise utilizes mini DVDs as business cards “to be creative and to set ourselves apart,” he says. “When we hand out these DVD cards, people are amazed. Pictures speak louder than words.”

Why Clients Like Training With His Trainers. Why has Parise's business been able to reach the million-dollar mark in client retainers? One reason is the clients' devotion to his trainers. “Clients [like training with us because of] our attention to detail and our obsessive focus on nurturing and pampering them,” he says. “We create innovative ways to keep exercise fresh and exciting and to make our business a great place to train.”

Why His Work Inspires Him. After 19 years, Parise still looks forward to going to work. “I challenge myself every day,” he says. “I've found that the obstacles that get in the way of being a great leader, mentor, trainer and small-business person are only created by your mind. I've found that I will move toward whatever I dream and dwell on.”

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