

10 Tips to Get More Clients for your High Intensity Strength Training Business

1. Introduction

Before you invest in **any** marketing tactics, it's first **really** important that you define your target market and your differentiators that are likely to resonate. Listen to [this podcast](#) to learn how to do that first. This is important because your target market should influence almost every single decision in your business to create a culture and service that is tailored to your strategic niche. You can then make an informed decision on which marketing tactics to test that make sense for your target market. For example, if your target market are 45-year-old men, it's unlikely you will get a good return on an investment in Snapchat. You can remove this from your available marketing channels and narrow your focus on channels that are more likely to provide a good return.

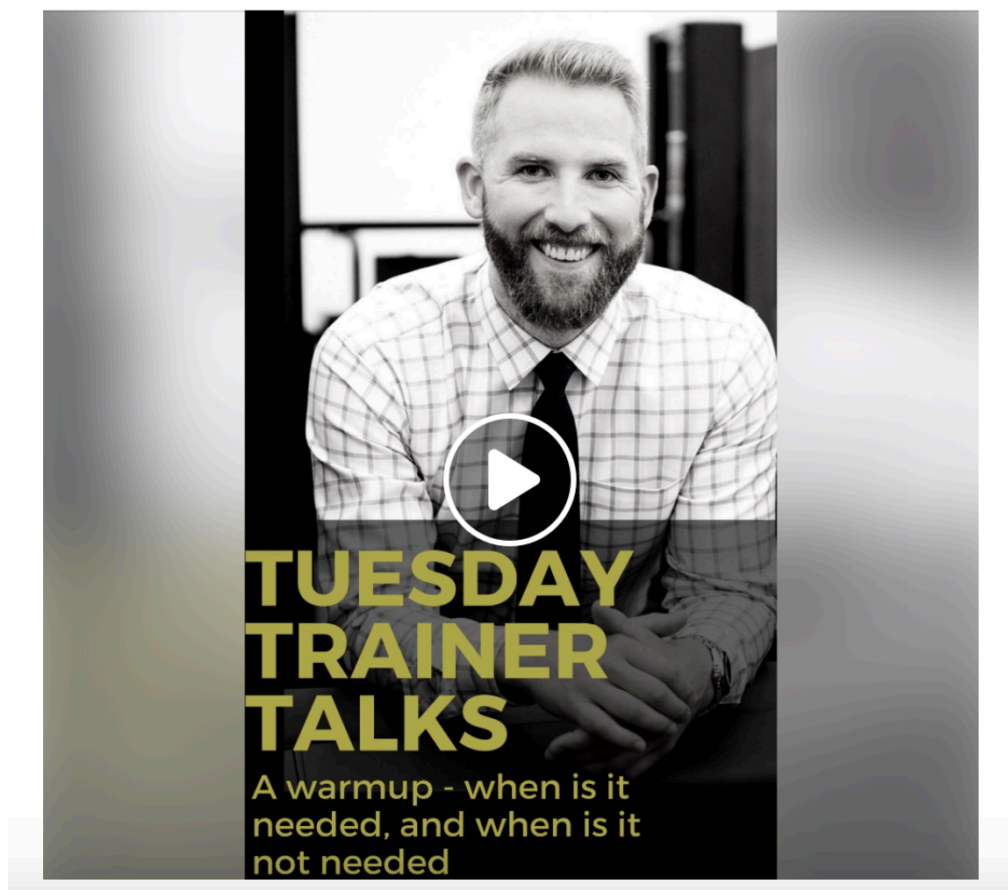
It's important to evaluate your target market on a continuous basis. As you develop a better understanding of your client base, you will be able to refine your focus and optimise your service and marketing for your existing clients and new prospects.

2. Facebook and Instagram Posts

Fast growing high-intensity personal training business, Discover Strength, use social media as an extension to their service. Many of their clients are on monthly auto-pay already and social media is there to provide them with **additional value**, such as training tips, which increase retention and generate referrals.

Discover Strength's Tuesday Trainer Talks on Facebook:

A common question we get asked is - why don't we warm up before we start this intense workout? Well, the simple answer is that it isn't needed. The long answer is answered in the Tuesday Trainer Talk for this week. Have a listen!



Discover Strength Instagram:



Notice how the same advert has different image dimensions and copy depending on the platform. It's a mistake to use the exact same advert for Instagram and Facebook. The image could be the same but the dimensions and copy must be tailored to the platform.

The message and copy should be different. Instagram uses hashtags, is more visual, and has a younger audience and the content must be succinct. Facebook's older audience and higher character limit allows for more elaboration and links, whereas Instagram does not permit links in the post copy.

Make sure you provide a "call-to-action" / a link, from your social media content to your website such as your home page or free introductory workout opt-in form.

Boost posts in Facebook to amplify popular organic content. Be careful and ensure that it is resonating with **new** customers based on historic organic interest. This can be a cost effective way to generate more leads.

Discover Strength always communicate one or more of their 3 uniques (differentiators) in their advertising. One of these uniques is “efficiency”. They have found this to be the most effective “unique” in their advertising, which resonates strongly with their target market (busy professionals).

Use free software, like [Canva](#), to create excellent graphics and tailored content for Instagram, Facebook, and other social media platforms.

3. Join a Networking Organisation

Networking can be a very effective tactic to grow your business in three distinct ways. It enables you to connect with new prospects, generate referrals, and build strategic partnerships.

In the beginning, Live Oak Strength were generating over 50% of their revenue from networking. By offering free introductory workouts to BNI Members, Live Oak Strength, CEO, Owen Dockham, acquired 12 new clients from within his BNI chapter in just 3 months.

BNI Stats:

250K

Global Members

11.2M

Member Referrals
(last 12 months)

8,854

Global Chapters

\$14.2B

Member Closed Business
(last 12 months)

Based on these great results, Abe (Co-Founder, EverStrongSF) and Lucy (Live Oak Strength Co-Founder), have also joined different BNI chapters. Abe is on an even faster growth track than Owen and met an entrepreneurial chiropractor in his chapter who has EverStrongSF brochures on her front desk in her business!

Live Oak Strength and EverStrongSF have seen so much benefit from BNI that they are likely to pay for trainers to join BNI once they've proved themselves loyal.

Networking will help you succeed by keeping you accountable via *givers gain*: proactively finding referrals for others who will reciprocate and help you grow your business.

Networking benefits:

- Acquire new clients for your business
- Giving referrals and helping others grow their business is hugely rewarding
- Improve your elevator pitch and your offer
- Improve your public speaking skills
- Learn about your customers in a different environment
- Build invaluable business relationships with other business owners

Where to network:

- BNI is one of the longest standing global networking organisations that provide the biggest return to its members. [Find a BNI in your area here](#)
- If BNI is not available, most areas will have alternative networking opportunities:
 - Google “[insert your city/town] business working”
 - Search on [meetup.com](#)
 - Search on Facebook
 - In the very unlikely event there are no meet ups in your area, start your own and use a platform like [meetup.com](#) to promote it.

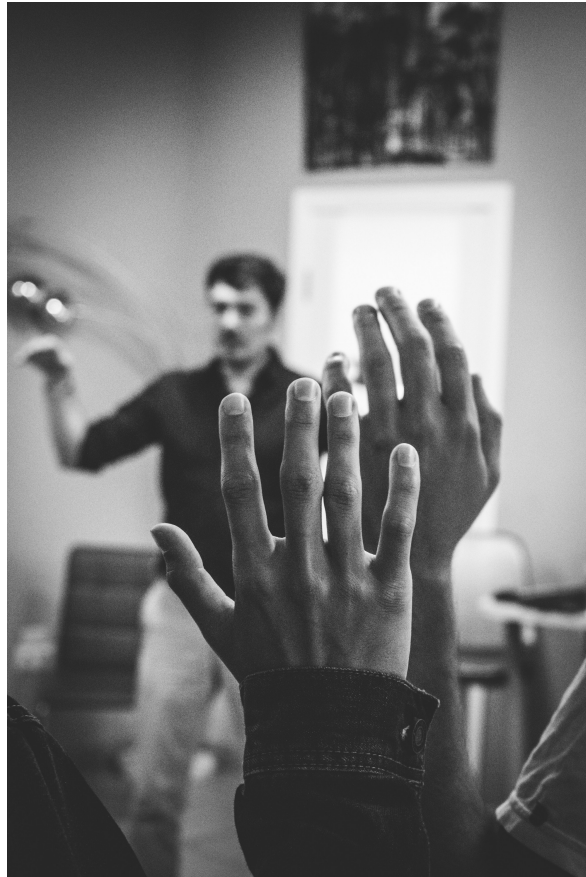
How to network effectively:

- Effective networking is based on **givers gain**: the more you give, the more you gain.
- Be visible (show up on time, ideally a little early), be credible, and you will be profitable.
- Have patience. It's a long process. Give it at least a year. It's worth the reward.
- Commit to 3-5 hours a week to help your network (1.5hrs weekly meeting, 1 or 2 One-to-Ones with members every week). It's easiest to schedule One-to-Ones right after your weekly meeting.
- Use One-to-Ones to build relationships and vet chapter members before you give referrals.

- Be present. Put your phone away.
- Focus on building community and you cannot fail.
- Relationships are like bank accounts - if you aren't going in, making an effort (deposits), on a regular basis, then when you need something (asking for a referral), you might not get it because you can't afford it!
- Ways to make deposits:
 - One-to-Ones are like making deposits
 - Shout outs (e.g. a friend you referred who was really happy about a members product or service)
 - Give a referral
 - Give a testimonial
 - Send a happy birthday text or call (more profound than a Facebook greeting)
- Go to other network meet ups to find referrals for others
- Recommended podcast on networking - [BNi Podcast Episode 358: Who's in Your Room?](#)
- Social media promotion for members (if a natural fit)
- **There are many opportunities to find networking referrals when you're training and learning about your client's needs and wants.**

4. Host A Seminar

Several HIT businesses have found monthly seminars to be a very effective way to generate more referrals and increase retention. Discover Strength have been doing monthly seminars for over 10 years and get in the region of 40-60 attendees to every seminar.



Here's how Discover Strength do it:

- Provide an incentive to attend and give each attendee (current and new prospects) a 10% discount off one month's auto-pay.
- Each location (5) puts on one seminar per month
- Each location hosts the seminar on the same day and at the same time every month but specific location days and times may differ. They typically host the seminar at 12pm or 7:30pm,
- Seminar length 30-45 minutes

- Topics are designed to educate client's to help them better understand the benefits of their workouts and become an effective referrer. For example, Discover Strength hold a seminar called "5 Recent Studies and How they Impact Training".
- There is no sales pitch
- There are no refreshments.
- The seminar is not designed to be a networking opportunity. It's about learning.
- They don't specifically target new prospects although clients may bring friends and often do.

How to maximise seminar attendance:

- **Be consistent** - Choose the same time and day. Pick a cadence that works for you and your target market. If you're consistent, previous attendees are more likely to remember the time and date without the need for a reminder on social media or email. This is one reason why Discover Strength's seminars have grown over time.
- **Have a credible source** - The speaker must be aligned with your brand and your message. Discover Strength do not typically invite guest speakers. The rare exceptions to this are when James Steele PhD and James Fisher PhD are in town or when an opportunity came up for a strength and conditioning coach to talk about protecting the neck.
- **Use variety** - Provide a variety of speakers that are aligned with your brand. Luke Carlson gave all of the Discover Strength seminar presentations for the first 10 years. When other members of the team started hosting seminars, Discover Strength noticed an influx of new attendees. The same happened when Luke returned having not delivered a seminar in a while. This variety seems to increase attendance over time.

- **Use an effective seminar title** - Put yourself in the clients shoes and think about what's in it for them?. What's going to retain them, get them better results, and make them fall in love with your brand? Discover Strength use titles like "How To Get More Out Of Your Strength Training Workout" focused on intensity, form, protein intake, and recovery.
- **Don't make a sales pitch** - It's not about you. It's about how to enhance your client's experience. The more education and value you provide, the more you will improve retention and generate referrals.
- **Offer an incentive** - This is the **only** time Discover Strength offer a discount. They provide 10% off one month's auto-pay for new or existing clients. This is really effective at getting people to attend their first seminar. However, the discount is not what gets clients to regularly attend seminars. This is determined by the value they experience.
- **Keep it short** - People like the seminars because they are short (~30 minutes). They may only have 30-minutes during their lunch break. If you can't get your message across in 30-minutes, refine it down.

How to get attendees to your seminars:

- Send a personalised email to your clients regarding the next seminar.
- Make sure your trainers make time for a "promotional focus" during every client workout and use this as an opportunity to promote the next seminar.
- Create events on Facebook for the seminar. This provides a head count, shows interest, and enables users to share and comment.
- Use Instagram stories to promote your seminar

- When posting on social media, ensure that your advert / post title and body copy is succinct and compelling to the user. Why is the speaker credible? Why should the client attend? Where is it? When is it?
- Never post content on Facebook without an image
- You don't necessarily need to pay and boost your social media seminar posts if they are mainly targeted at your current clientele. If you want greater reach and to target new prospects then you may need to invest in boosting your posts.
- Do not insist on a sign up process. This minimises friction to the potential attendee. All they need to know is the place, time and date. People can then register when they attend so you can record discounts and attendance.
- See how Discover Strength create content on Facebook to promote their seminar [HERE](#). Here's an example of a Facebook video giving a preview to the seminar from the speaker (TTT stands for Tuesday Trainer Talk):

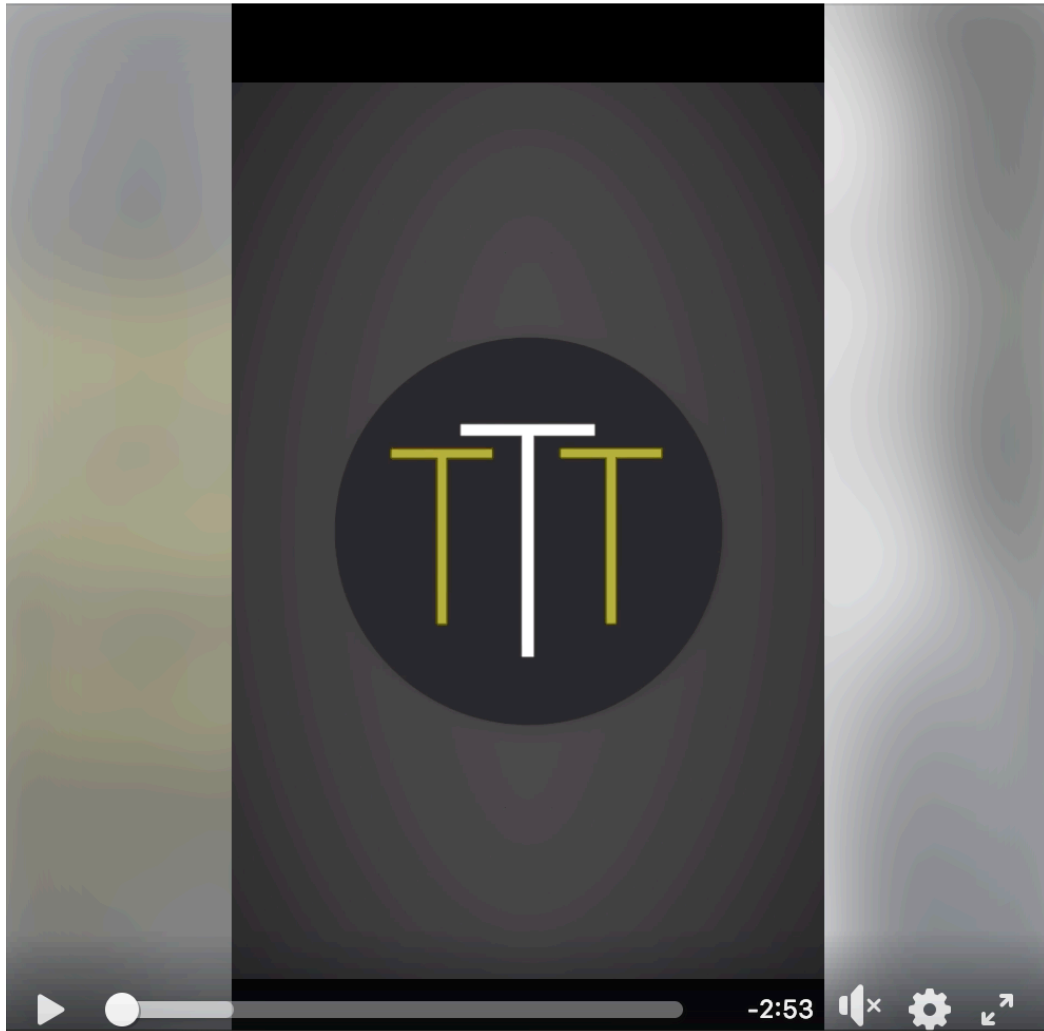


DiscoverStrength



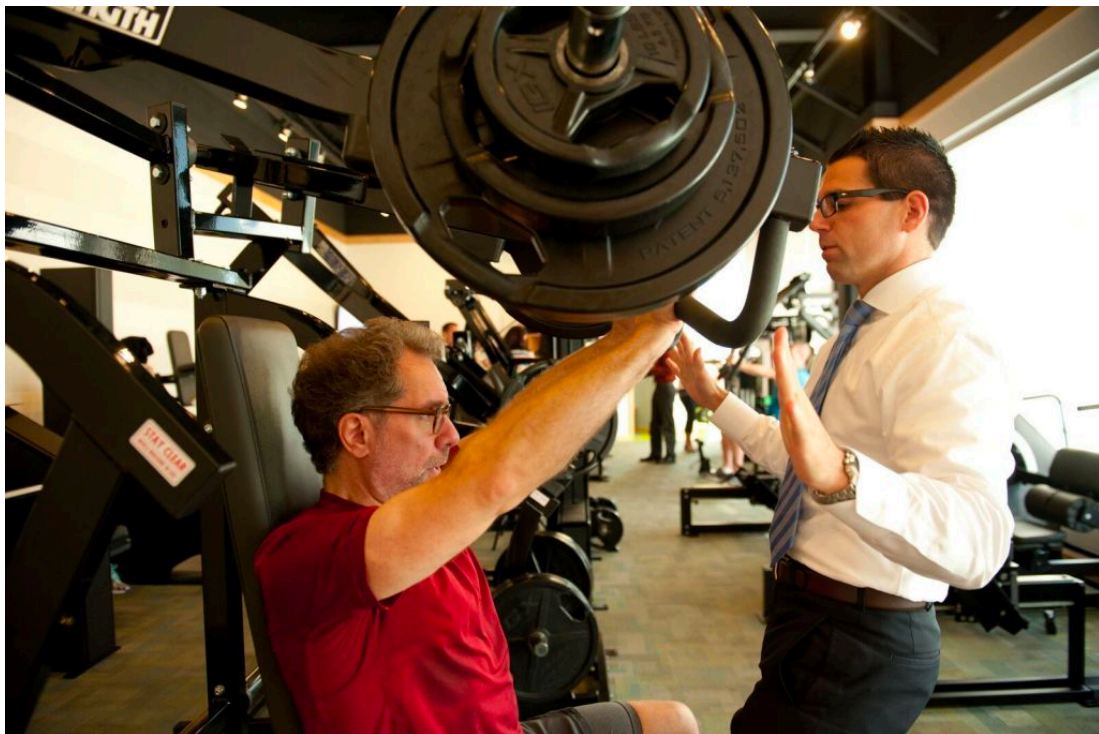
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In this week's [#TTT](#), Kelsy, Certified Exercise Physiologist, discusses different factors that can affect weight loss during menopause.



5. Offer A Free Introductory Workout And Ask For The Sale

Discover Strength believe that one of the most important tactics to getting more clients is to offer a **free introductory workout**. They believe that you have to demonstrate value and uniqueness, and the best way to do that is with a free workout. They've found that, in most cases, clients are totally sold on the service in only a few minutes because they can **feel** how it's different and unique. No amount of trying to talk a client into high intensity training can compare to a the experience.



Before commencing a free introductory workout, Discover Strength will talk about their Proven Process (covered in section 7) and begin the process by learning about the prospect's goals and interests in order to tailor their workout.

The trainer will then take the prospect through the introductory workout. This is the most important part of the process. If executed correctly and with great instruction, it allows the prospect to experience the feeling of an effective high intensity training workout. They will **feel** the value and the uniqueness, which is critical for closing the sale later.

During the workout, it's important you don't overwhelm or alienate the prospect. Meet them where they are, and pay attention. There is nothing worse for a prospect than having a trainer preach "their way" to them when they're not ready for that. Instead, drip-feed information during the workout that is relevant to the clients goals and interests, which you should have identified at the beginning.

The goal of the workout is to take the client through a full-body routine (6-8 exercises) and demonstrate the unique proposition and the trainer expertise.

After the workout, a lot of personal trainers and sales people make the mistake of not directly asking for the sale. They might tell the prospect their service options and wish them a good day without ever asking directly for their business. **This seemingly trivial detail is a huge reason why many HIT studios and fitness businesses alike, don't close more sales.**

At the end of the introductory workout, you should ask the prospect:

"How would you like to get started? In our 1-on-1 workouts or small group workouts?"

Let the silence do the work and don't say any more. Don't talk yourself out of the sale. Let them think and respond.

If they've had a good experience during the workout and you've done your job properly in terms of aligning the experience with the prospects goals and interests, they are likely to choose one of the options. However, there will always be some who will object and who might say "I'm not ready to make any commitment yet". You can respond with "I appreciate that, what is your biggest concern that I can help answer?"

A common objection might be “it’s too expensive” or “I can’t afford your services”. You may respond by offering a less expensive package with a lower training frequency or small group training that is more tailored to the client’s situation and needs.

If they give a reason why they are not ready and you cannot provide an appropriate rebuttal, show empathy, invite them to come back if they reconsider, and wish them a good day.

The best way to drive introductory workouts, is to create a basic website and make the introductory workout call-to-action the main purpose of the website.

6. Bring A Friend Week

Bring a Friend Week has been Discover Strength's **most effective marketing tactic** at attracting new clients over the last 10 years. For 2 separate weeks in the year, clients get a free workout when they bring a friend for a free introductory session.

Here's the formula and statistics from Discover Strength:

- They run the promotion 2 times per year
- The referrer gets a free workout even if their friend doesn't join
- Even if they don't join, referrals will talk about the experience with their friends and family (your potential prospects).
- For Discover Strength, the promotion generates 60-90 free introductory workouts (13.5 is a normal week as of Aug 2018)
- They acquired 33 new clients from their last Bring a Friend Week (as of 2018)

In the lead up to your Bring a Friend Week, promote it heavily internally, to your team, and externally via social media and mass email. It is you and your teams responsibility to mention the promotion several weeks before to every client who comes in for their workout.

Learn more about Bring a Friend Week from Discover Strength CEO, Luke Carlson, [HERE](#)

7. Create a Proven Process

The purpose of the Proven Process, as used by several high revenue HIT businesses, is to communicate to clients that they are **buying an entire journey and not just a single workout**. The Proven Process differentiates your service and provides an opportunity to demonstrate your expertise. It is a critical part of the sales process and it enables the trainer to identify the clients problem and needs and offer a solution. It is highly effective for increasing sales conversions as well as retaining clients over the long term.

To use Discover Strength as an example, the Proven Process starts with a prospect coming in for their introductory workout.

1. At the beginning of the Proven Process, the trainer or sales person will ask the prospect about their goals, interest, and motivation.
2. The trainer will take the prospect through each of the six steps of the Proven Process graphic in the studio:



1. **Introductory workout** - Starts with the introductory workout (covered in section 5)
2. **Formulate the exercise prescription** - After the introductory workout, the trainer will formulate an exercise prescription for the prospect based on their goals and unique physiology.
3. **Supervision and instruction** - Every workout at Discover Strength provides supervision and instruction by an educated, expert trainer. The research shows that supervised training delivers better results.
4. **Analyse the experience** - Both the trainer and client will analyse the client experience. The trainer will give feedback on performance and how to improve, and the client will provide feedback on their experience. This feedback is captured in sessions, during progress assessments (every 20 sessions) and in a Listen 360.
5. **Share progress** - The trainer will share progress with the client in session and via long term assessment and body composition assessment.
6. **Modifying the plan** - The trainer will amend the plan on the fly and overtime based on injuries, shifting goals, performance, and client feedback.
7. **Circular process** - The Proven Process moves in a continuous circular manner to generate the best client results over time.
8. **Guarantee** - Since their goal is to become the best customer service company in the world, Discover Strength offer a 5 Star Service Guarantee. You don't need to offer the same guarantee, but you should provide some kind of guarantee that aligns with your core values e.g. "the best strength

training workout you've ever had" or "the most efficient workout you've ever had". Obviously, you must deliver on it every time.

A Proven Process will differentiate you from your competition and increase the value of your services, which will increase sales conversions. Moreover, existing clients will be able to see how the Proven Process helps to get them results overtime making it more likely they will be retained long term.

8. The Body Comp Challenge

The Body Comp Challenge is used in various forms by a number of HIT businesses to generate more revenue from existing clients. In the case of Discover Strength, the challenge introduces clients to body composition services like the Bod Pod, cardio exercise, increased strength training frequency, and protein supplements.

The Body Comp Challenge also helps to re-motivate clients who haven't exercised for a while and are at risk of cancelling their membership. For clients who might be struggling with regular training, a 4-week challenge looks more realistic and can be successful in helping clients to resume regular training over the long term.



The Body Comp Challenge can improve retention and increase client revenue both short and long term. For example, at Discover Strength, the average client monthly spend is \$432 (as of 2018). The Body Comp Challenge costs \$730. This means that for the duration of the challenge each client who participates is spending an additional ~\$298 and are more likely to continue with services such as the Bod Pod and higher frequency training following completion of the challenge, increasing monthly recurring revenue. In August 2018, Discover Strength had 136 clients sign up for the Body Comp Challenge.

MEDFitness use a similar approach and use it as an opportunity to up-sell high margin meal replacement services that provide ongoing recurring income.

At Discover Strength, the Body Comp Challenge consists of:

- 8 training sessions over 4 weeks (2 training sessions per week).
- A Body Composition test using a Bod Pod at the beginning and end of the challenge.
- Captains meet with each client for an initial 15-minute consultation
- Packages:
 - 8 x 1-on-1 strength training sessions, cardio, consultations and body composition assessment = \$730
 - 8 x 1-on-1 strength training sessions, consultations and body composition assessment = \$582

How to promote your Body Comp Challenge:

- Promote it internally to your entire team during a weekly meeting, and make sure that the Body Comp Challenge is promoted several weeks before during every client training session during the promotional focus.
- Promote the Body Comp Challenge via social media and mass email.

9. Use a Blog and Search Engine Marketing

If possible, and assuming your strength is not Search Engine Marketing or Content Creation, I advise you outsource this aspect of your business to a trusted agency. If low on budget, a great tip is to trade services with a local agency. Offer free workouts in return for marketing services. This can be a natural outgrowth of business networking.

If you decide to tackle this yourself, please read on.

Search Engine Marketing (SEM) is a form of internet marketing that involves the promotion of websites by increasing their visibility in search engine results pages (like Google) through Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) and Pay-Per-Click Advertising (Google Adwords).

SEO means that you will appear higher up the rankings when people submit searches on search engines related to your business, such as “[insert town or city] Personal Training”.

One of the most powerful ways to improve your website SEO, is to provide valuable high quality content via a blog.

A great way to identify potential blog post topics is to build a list of frequently asked questions (using something like Google Sheets) from prospects and clients. You can then write blog posts to answer their questions. For example, let's suggest a prospect asks you the following question: “why do I need a personal trainer?”. You can write a blog post which describes when a personal trainer is a good fit and cite research that shows supervised training to produce better results.

This drives relevant traffic to your website and adds value to your current base of clients and prospects who may also share your content with their network.

Pro tip: I take every single niche-related question I receive in-person, via email and social media, and add it to my Google Sheet. Once I've addressed the question using content (typically a podcast or blog post) I colour the cell green = done.



Discover Strength's Learning Center is an excellent example of content marketing that is primarily designed to add value to their existing clients who may then share and generate referrals. Word of mouth is the best source of quality referrals for your business. You can optimise word of mouth referrals by serving your target client's wants and needs again and again, and a blog or YouTube channel (such as MEDFitness's Train Like a Champion) can be an effective way to do that. Again, it's important to understand your target market's preferred medium to help determine the best content format for your business.

10. Gift Cards

Rock Solid Fitness discovered that some of their clients don't want to be pressed for referrals, even happy clients! Some clients just want to use your service and get on with their day. These clients aren't overly interested in helping you grow your business, and that's fine.



However, some clients are the total opposite. They can't stop talking about you and referring you to their friends. They're excited to share their experience.

A really effective way to supercharge these true fans is to offer them gift cards to give to friends and family. Every now and again, Rock Solid Fitness will reward these clients with a \$250 gift card, and twice a year, they will offer a Give One Get One promotion. This means that if a client gives a \$250 gift card to a friend, they will give that client a \$250 coupon for them to use on themselves.

All of the Rock Solid Fitness clients are aware that they will always be rewarded for referrals, but focusing on the top referrers with a gift card strategy has produced

great returns. A \$250 investment in a gift card pales in comparison to the lifetime value of their average client.

11. Client Parties

For clients who they identify as a strong referrer and brand advocate, Rock Solid Fitness (RSF) will occasionally hold a client party.

For Cancer Awareness Month, RSF, hosted a party for all of their cancer survivors to celebrate their survivorship. They asked each client to invite 5 friends. Clients and staff enjoyed food and wine, and developed new relationships inside the training studio. Of course, it doesn't have to be in aid of a charity, it could simply be focused on celebrating someone's weight loss and results, a client's 10 year anniversary with your business, or a seasonal get together like a Christmas party. It's best to decide on events which are a good fit for your business culture.

It's important to not make this about you and your business. It's about what you can do for your guests and your community.

This is a great way to give back to the local community, develop new relationships, and generate referrals for your business over the long term.

Build your \$1,000,000+ HIT studio and [Join HIT Business Membership](#)