

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ORGANIZING A BOOT CAMP

Help Your Boot Camp Clients Reach Their Goals

By: Georgette Pann

Introduction

If all your clients were robots, running your boot camp would be simple. Everyone would have the same goals, the same fitness levels and they'd come to your camp for the same reasons. All you'd have to do is focus on your training sessions without worrying about what's going on inside your trainees' heads.

However, it doesn't work out quite so easy in real-life. In order to effectively train your clients' bodies, you need to understand their mindsets. And that's exactly what you'll discover how to do in this article...

What Attracts Clients to Your Boot Camp?

Understanding your clients starts with understanding the reasons they're attracted to your particular boot camp. After all, there are likely other boot camps in your area. And there are certainly other fitness opportunities to choose from, ranging from lifting weights to jogging to yoga classes.

But your client chose a group setting (your boot camp) and chose you to help him reach his goals. Before you can effectively do that, there are two things you need to understand about your client's psychology:

1. External vs. Internal Locus of Control.

People who have an internal locus of control believe that they control what happens to them. That means if they gain weight, they know it's because they allowed themselves to eat too much and not exercise enough.

These people are the easiest to train, because they believe that in order to see results, they need to take responsibility and put forth effort. Chances are, most of your clients will have an internal locus of control (otherwise they likely wouldn't have joined your boot camp).

However, from time to time you'll have clients with an external locus of control. These people believe that outside forces have an effect on their fitness, and that there's little they can do to change it. For example, they might believe that they're overweight because they have a slow metabolism.

Obviously, it's more difficult to train these people, as it's difficult to convince them that their health is directly related to the effort they put in. Whenever possible, encourage them by linking their efforts and their results.

For example, you might say something like, "Your hard work last week caused you to lose two pounds of fat – good job!" Or, "Because you've been training so hard, your cardiovascular health is getting noticeably better!"

2. Extrinsic Vs. Intrinsic Rewards.

People who are motivated by extrinsic rewards enjoy things like ribbons, certificates of achievements, trophies, praise and the other tangible rewards. On the other hand, those motivated by intrinsic rewards thrive on their own feelings of self-worth, enjoyment of the boot camp and other typically non-tangible rewards.

You're likely to have both types of individuals in your camps. The difference is, those who're motivated by intrinsic rewards are more likely to continue with the camp because they're "self driven."

That's why you need to help those who thrive on tangible rewards. You can do so by generously offering praise, offering tangible rewards for completion of the class (such as certificates), and offering tangible (visual) indicators of your client's success. For example, you can create a graph that charts your client's weekly progress towards his or her goals.

How to Make Your Clients Better Trainees

Understanding your clients' locus of control and reward system is the first step in being better able to help them. But you also need to make them comfortable in your class so they don't drop out (and this not only helps them reach their goals, it also helps you reduce refunds).

Here are two things you need to consider...

1. Organize your camp by goals and fitness level.

You could advertise a boot camp, attract clients of all fitness levels and different goals, and try to train them all at once. But believe me, that would be a nightmare. At the very least, you'd find that some of your trainees wouldn't get as much out of the boot camp as they should.

A better idea is to organize and advertise different camps at the marketing level. That means you group your clients by goals and fitness levels BEFORE the camps start.

To do this, you may run specific classes such as "Bride Boot Camps" for women needing to lose 10 pounds and "Bride Boot Camps" for women needing to lose 25 pounds. Other groups might be for men wishing to improve their cardiovascular fitness, middle-age people looking to stave off diabetes, young people looking to get in shape before joining the military, and so on.

Even though it may take a little extra time and money up front to create and organize these specific goal-oriented classes, in the long run you'll pocket more money and have happier, fitter clients.

2. Improve your clients' self-efficacy.

The second thing you can do to help your clients feel comfortable is to improve their self-efficacy (AKA self confidence). To do this, simply have an optional "orientation session" for those boot camp clients who're anxious to know what an actual boot camp session is like. You can demonstrate the typical sorts of exercises they'll perform, plus you can let them become familiar with the equipment.

TIP: This can also work as a marketing tactic to help bring in more clients. Specifically, you can offer a free orientation and training session to new clients so they can try out the class for themselves before they spring for an entire boot camp. The bonus is the free trial session works to boost confidence in your new clients!

How to Motivate Your Clients

Finally, remember that personal fitness is tightly tied to the person's mindset and level of motivation. If the client isn't motivated, he'll drop out before he starts seeing results.

Here is a list of things you can do to help motivate your trainees:

- Help your clients choose their short term, mid term and long term goals. Then create a plan with them to help them achieve these goals.

Be sure these goals are measurable so that clients can easily track their success.

- Get clients to find an emotional reason to meet their goals. Then ask them to imagine daily how they'll FEEL when they succeed.
- Ask clients to take "before" pictures on the first day of boot camp. Then take progress pictures every week thereafter.
- Ask clients to keep a fitness journal and perhaps a food log (because fitness doesn't stop when the boot camp is over).
- Tell clients to get an accountability partner who asks about their progress and keeps them on track. This person could be another boot camp trainee, or a trusted friend or family member.
- Ask clients to sign motivation contracts. These "contracts" state the client's goals and lays out how the client intends to meet these goals.
- Create reward systems, especially "deposit" reward systems. This is where the client deposits money or something else valuable, and gets the money back in increments as he meets his goals. (Again, this could be implemented with a trusted friend or family member.)
- Encourage clients to use imagery (visualization) and affirmations. Earlier we mentioned asking clients to imagine how they'll feel when they reach their goals. Here, you want people to visualize meeting their goals and say affirmations in the present tense (as if they've already met their goals). For example, *"I am so grateful that I can run a mile without getting winded."*

Conclusion

As you've already discovered, your clients' mindset and psychology is tied tightly to their level of success in achieving their fitness goals. If you consider their psychology and train their minds first, then training their bodies is a walk in the park.

Georgette Pann Creator of the [Sure Victory Bootcamp Kit](#) and the [Fitness Bootcamp Inner Circle](#)