



How to Overcome the Challenges of Owning a Multi-location Fitness Business

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You've taken your business to the next level

And it's time to make sure you're doing things the right way.

We're not going to sugarcoat it: Running a single location is hard enough, let alone managing more than one. But savvy fitness business owners run multiple gyms and studios all the time — and make it look easy! What's their secret?

The answer: They've done their homework. They've reviewed their original business plan and thought strategically about how they could expand their business to additional locations. They've done market research to find prime real estate with a great base of potential customers. They've taken a formula that works and expanded it to new areas, with entirely new audiences. These business owners are prepared, and they dive head-first into any surprise issues that come up.

You can, too.

Running multiple locations is tough, but you're ready to do it. This guide will help you tackle some of the biggest challenges you may encounter.

Let's get started.





How to maintain a consistent brand across multiple locations

Whether you're moving across the street, across town or across counties, consistency is key to building your brand among your new customer base.

You've done a great job creating a recognizable brand at your first location — way to go! Now, you can play to the strengths of your new location while still keeping your brand consistent.

For example, you may want to adjust your classes based on the expectations of your new customer base. One location may have lengthy yoga classes for parents who need a break, while another may have short HIIT options for busy professionals with little time to spare.

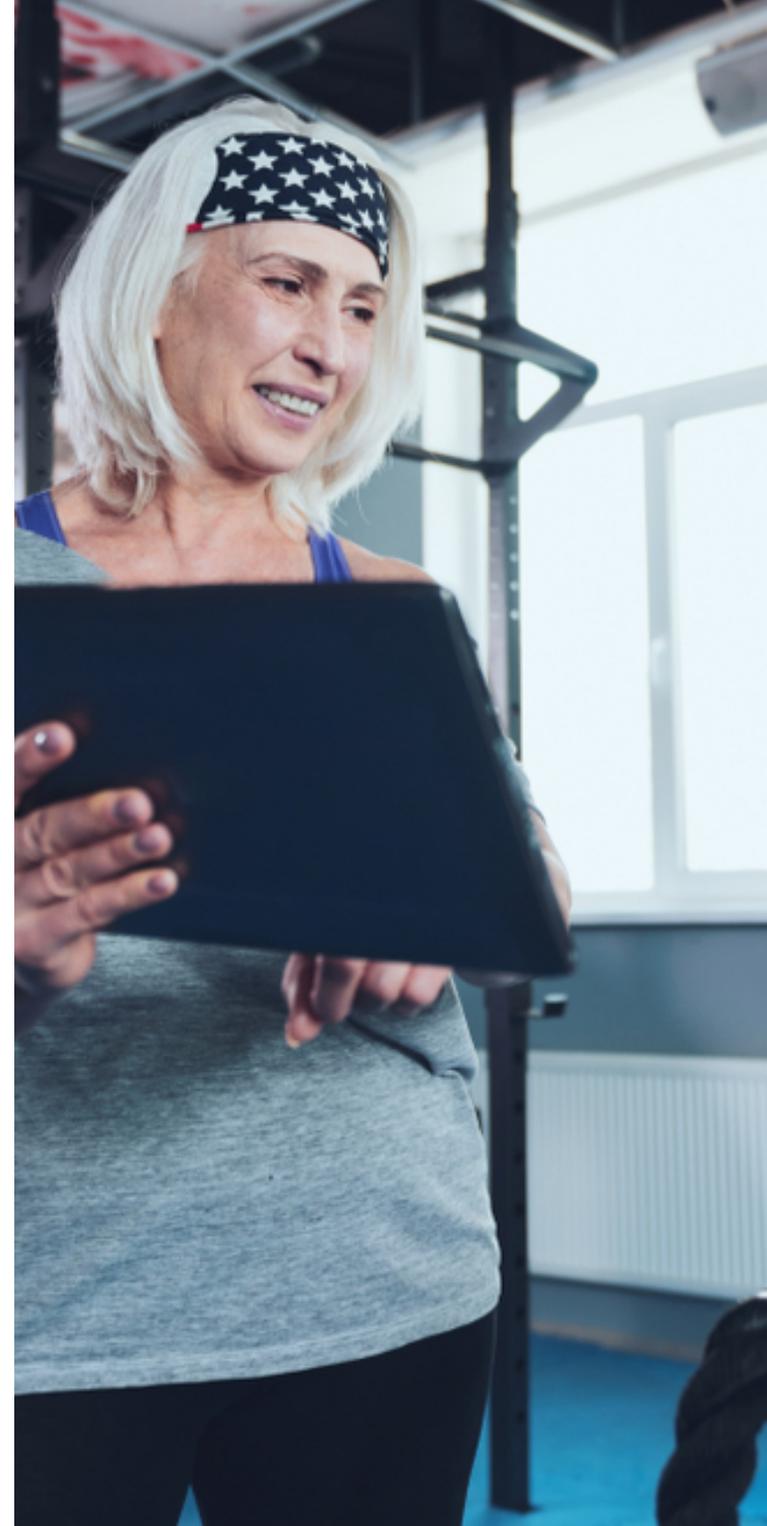
How to manage staff in more than one place

It's time to face the facts: You can't be in multiple places at once. Sure, it seems like you'll be able to manage all of your studios equally, but any business owner who's tried quickly realizes this isn't the case.

Your most important staffing decision will be your manager. Whoever runs your next location must be attuned to your goals and leadership style, making sure your brand remains consistent, keeping teachers and trainers aligned and on schedule, engaging customers and just about everything else.

You'll want to document your key processes to make sure there is consistency across your locations. This includes things like welcoming new clients to your business. In this way, staff in every location should follow the same set of steps, including greeting the new client when they walk in, giving them a tour of your facility and answering any questions they might have, and following up after the class to get their feedback.

Still, as the owner, you'll want to maintain oversight into how your staff are performing no matter which location they're at. You must make time to regularly check in with each location and, if you can, view performance reports as you're on the go.



“We use MINDBODY’s online certification; all candidates have to take the test before we bring them in for an interview. Candidates also have to take classes at one of our studios before they’re considered. We want to ensure our staff know both MINDBODY and our culture.”

— Marc Floyd, Co-Owner, Real Results Fitness

Make sure your front desk staff is MINDBODY certified. Head to our [Software Certifications Page](#) to find out more about this FREE program.



How to create a cohesive customer experience across locations

Now, there are some things that may prevent you from having a completely consistent customer experience throughout all of your locations. These may include:

- Differing city, county or state business restrictions
- Various building layouts
- New customer expectations

The key to consistency is to repeat the same elements wherever you can. The most obvious are your branding elements: names, logos, colors and the like. But you can go above and beyond with features like a branded mobile app, email newsletters and more.

In fact, you can even keep your instructor list the same across locations, assuming the addresses are close enough for your staff to commute to easily.

“We try to be like an enterprise: one brand in two locations. We have a dedicated marketing manager responsible for this. Our main business page is one brand, but we’ve got social media pages for each so people can choose the correct one when they tag us or check in.”

— Rachel Vickhouse, owner of MVP Dance Fit

How to allocate marketing funds

You'll need to attract people to your new location, which means adjusting your marketing budget. Questions you'll need to answer during this process include:

- Should we split the budget evenly among locations, or allocate more funding to a specific business?
- What should we do if one space needs more marketing buzz than another?
- How can we create distinct marketing strategies while maintaining our brand voice?

Your new location's business plan will clue you into the answers, as well as your market research. Keep in mind that the marketing efforts that worked at your first location may not deliver the same results for your second. Start with the strategies that were successful at your first location, but make sure to monitor your results and adapt. You may need to adjust your approach to better suit the new location and a new set of customers.





How to keep customers engaged and increase retention

Here's the thing: You want to make sure the customers at your new location aren't the same ones from your original space. The idea isn't to transfer clients; it's to bring on even more.

Sometimes you'll get lucky, and new members will flock to your grand opening. Other times, you may have to work a little harder to get clients in the door. Try things like incentivized trial offers and retail discounts to fill your classes with new people. You can also offer free 'community classes' on the first day to get the ball rolling. Your second location can use this as an opportunity to have a soft opening, while bringing new faces into the studio and helping instructors adjust. Once people in the community have experienced your studio, engage them with flexible memberships, branded emails and personalized messaging (send a message on their birthday!).

On this note, consider how you'll handle these memberships. Will you have unique offers specific to each location? Or will members be able to attend the gym or studio of their choosing? How about both options? Your offers may evolve as time goes on, but they're definitely something to consider before you open.

How MINDBODY supports your new location

We at MINDBODY are here to support your business, whether you operate one location or 50. We've seen our clients expand over the years, and we've made sure to create tools to help every single one of them grow — including you.

We can provide you with:

-  • Integrated [marketing features](#) to inform potential and existing customers of your new location
-  • A [scalable point-of-sale system](#) so you can easily expand your sign-up and retail options
-  • Dozens of [reports](#) so you can check in to see how your staff and products perform, no matter where you are
-  • [Personalized reminder emails](#) to engage customers across your locations
-  • [Flexible memberships](#) with terms you choose to best support your customers

"We weren't able to put the right technologies on how we're going to market and touch our clients regularly, or even potential clients, and we could tell that was already built out and automated in MINDBODY. It was something we were lacking and that was probably our biggest driver of our move to MINDBODY."

—Mark Page of Zyn22





Grow your business with MINDBODY

You've done a great job in getting to this point, so congratulations! Running a single business is a reason to celebrate, but the fact that you're considering opening another (or already have a few under your belt) is reason to feel incredibly proud of yourself.

We want you to succeed, which is why we've compiled these crucial tips to help make your new location a success. Remember, before you open, you should think about what you're doing when it comes to:

- Keeping a consistent brand
- Managing staff
- Creating a consistent customer experience
- Growing your client base

"Just being involved with MINDBODY and understanding all the things MINDBODY can do and help with is what allowed us to grow and build our business."

—Marc Floyd, co-owner of Real Results Fitness

If you are planning on opening a new location, give us a call. Our Customer Success Specialists can provide you with the information and tools you need to help you on the road to success.



For more educational resources, including webinars, guides, conference presentations and online courses, visit www.mindbodyonline.com/resources.

To learn first-hand how MINDBODY can position your business for success, schedule a guided tour today at www.mindbodyonline.com/fitness, or give us a call at [877-755-4279](tel:877-755-4279).

