

IF I BOUGHT YOUR GYM TOMORROW...

Steve Grant

The First 20 Things I'd Fix

GYM HUB

BEFORE YOU START

If you're looking for another ebook full of Facebook Ads, AI prompts or marketing hacks...

This isn't it.

These are simply twenty lessons I've learnt after owning gyms for more than twenty years.

Some came from getting it right.

Plenty came from getting it wrong.

They're not the only way to build a great gym.

They're simply the first things I'd look at if your gym was mine.

Don't try to implement everything.

Pick one page.

One idea.

One action.

Because reading another business book won't change your gym.

Doing something about it might.

Let's get started.



STEVE GRANT,
AUTHOR

Steve Grant studied a Bachelor of Education in Wollongong before lecturing for 3 years at the Australia College of Physical Education, in Olympic Park.

He opened his first gym in 2007 in Mona Vale with zero members and grew to 10 staff and a million dollar annual turnover within his first 18 months. In 2015, he sold the business for a strong profit and travelled the US and Canada for 3 months, taking a holiday with his wife and 2 kids. On the trip, he visited over 50 high profile gyms, studying their processes. On his return to Australia, set up a 6 month business Mentoring Program for gym owners, named Gym Hub.

Steve has now personally coached 300+ fitness brands like Virgin Active, Anytime Fitness, Snap Fitness, F45, 12Round and Vision Personal Training.

Steve's current gym named Rushcutters Health, was voted best in Sydney in 2024 and was a finalist in the 2026 Australian small business awards.

- 1-** Stop Trying To Be Everything To Everyone
- 2-** Differentiate What Makes You Unique Before Spending Another Dollar On Ads
- 3-** Stop Looking For Marketing Hacks
- 4-** Zig When Everyone Else Zags
- 5-** Focus On Better Leads, Not More Leads
- 6-** Stop Posting Photos Of People Exercising Like Every Other Gym
- 7-** Create More Conversations, Not More Campaigns
- 8-** Stop Competing On Price
- 9-** Get Your Team Closing Sales Without Feeling Salesy
- 10-** Spend Less Time Working In The Gym And More Time Working On It
- 11-** Build A Team That Doesn't Need You For Every Decision
- 12-** Spend Time Developing Leaders
- 13-** Build Systems Before Hiring More Staff
- 14-** Bring Back Old-Fashioned Customer Service
- 15-** Obsess Over Member Results
- 16-** Make Every New Member Feel Like They Made The Best Decision Of The Year
- 17-** Become The Gym Every Member Recommends
- 18-** Track Your Key Numbers Every Week
- 19-** Build A Business That Gives You Your Life Back
- 20-** Take Fridays Off

1. STOP TRYING TO BE EVERYTHING TO EVERYONE

If I bought your gym tomorrow, the first question I'd ask is...
"What are you actually famous for?"

Not what equipment you've got.

Not how many classes you run.

Not whether you've got an ice bath, recovery boots or the latest cardio machine.

What do people tell their mates about your gym?

When we found the commercial space for Rushcutters Health, there were around **65 gyms within a 2km radius.**

And here's the thing...

The competition weren't idiots.

There were some bloody good operators.

Virgin Active had the pool.

Barry's Bootcamp had the incredible nightclub atmosphere.

Other gyms had bigger spaces, newer equipment and much deeper pockets.

We knew we couldn't beat everyone at everything.

So we asked ourselves one simple question.

"What could we become number one at?"

The answer was personal training.

Not just training.

Coaching.

Accountability.

Service.

Results.

That decision has shaped almost every decision we've made since.

People don't remember average. They remember different.

If This Was My Gym...

I'd ask every staff member and five members the same question. "***What are we best known for?***"

If every answer is different...

I'd stop worrying about marketing and start working on our positioning.

2. DIFFERENTIATE WHAT MAKES YOU UNIQUE BEFORE SPENDING ANOTHER DOLLAR ON ADS

One of the biggest mistakes I made early on was thinking marketing solved everything.

It doesn't.

Marketing simply shines a brighter light on your business.

If your gym looks like everyone else's...

More advertising just tells more people you're the same.

Before spending another dollar on Facebook or Google Ads, I'd answer three questions.

What are we best known for?

Who do we help better than anyone else?

What do we want to become known for?

When those answers are clear, your marketing becomes much easier.

Because you're no longer trying to convince people.

You're attracting people who are already looking for exactly what you do.

At Rushcutters, we made a conscious decision to become known for personal training.

Not because group training doesn't work.

Not because we thought everyone else was doing it wrong.

But because we knew we couldn't beat every gym at everything.

We could, however, become the gym people thought of when they wanted outstanding coaching, service and results.

That became our lane.

It still is.

Marketing amplifies what already exists.

If This Was My Gym...

I'd ask ten members why they chose us instead of another gym.

I reckon their answers would tell me exactly where to focus.

3. STOP LOOKING FOR MARKETING HACKS

Every year our industry falls in love with something new.

Facebook Ads.

Funnels.

AI.

Six-week challenges.

Whatever the latest shiny object is.

And every year I get asked...

"Steve... should we be doing that too?"

Maybe.

Maybe not.

What I've learnt after owning gyms is this...

The businesses that consistently grow usually aren't chasing the current fad

They're getting the fundamentals right.

They answer the phone.

They follow up.

They know members by name.

They coach well.

They ask for referrals.

None of that is exciting.

But it works.

It always has.

Simple beats sexy.

If This Was My Gym...

Instead of asking...

"What's the next marketing strategy?"

I'd ask...

"What simple thing have we stopped doing consistently?"

I'd fix that first.

4. ZIG WHEN EVERYONE ELSE ZAGS

Jump onto your gym's Instagram.

Now jump onto five of your competitors.

Cover the logos.

Can you tell which gym is yours?

If not...

We've got some work to do.

At Rushcutters Health we made a conscious decision years ago not to look like every other gym.

Instead of posting endless videos of people exercising...

We interview members.

Instead of running another fat loss challenge...

We run compliance challenges where the goal is developing healthy habits

We donate **100% of the entry fees to charity.**

When one of our trainer's best mates had a sick baby, we organised a Backyard Marathon.

Members turned up in droves.

Together we raised over **\$11,500 in one day.**

We've hosted mindset nights with guest speakers and a glass of champagne on arrival.

None of those ideas were about marketing.

They were about creating a gym people genuinely wanted to be part of.

The marketing happened afterwards because people couldn't stop talking about it.

Don't just create content. Create stories worth telling.

If This Was My Gym...

I'd ask my team one question.

"What could we do this year that our members would still be talking about at Christmas?"

Start there.

5. FOCUS ON BETTER LEADS, NOT MORE LEADS

If I doubled your leads tomorrow...

I'm not convinced your business would improve.

I'd rather have ten people enquire who already know who we are than fifty people chasing the cheapest offer.

One thing I've believed for years is this.

A lot of people who enquire today won't join today.

But many of them will join a gym over the next 12 to 18 months.

The question is...

Will they remember you when they're ready?

That's why we've never believed our job is simply to sell to the 3% of people ready to buy today.

Our job is to stay in touch with the other 97%.

Helpful emails.

Useful videos.

Member stories.

Nutrition and workout Education.

Little reminders that we're here when the timing is right.

Because when they finally decide to join...

I want our studio to be the first one they think of.

People buy when they're ready. Your job is to be remembered.

If This Was My Gym...

I'd look at every email and social post planned for this month.

Ask yourself...

"Does this genuinely help someone... or is it just another BS fitness sales pitch?"

6. STOP POSTING PHOTOS OF PEOPLE EXERCISING LIKE EVERY OTHER GYM

Here's a little challenge.

Jump onto your gym's Facebook or Instagram.

Now jump onto five of your competitors.

Cover the logos.

Can you tell which one is yours?

If you can't...
Neither can your future members.

Most gyms post the same things.

Someone deadlifting.

People exercising in a group class

A motivational quote

People already know what happens inside a gym.

What they don't know is what it's like to belong to **your** gym.

Do your members laugh together?

Do they celebrate small wins and support each other?

Do you help people over 40?

Can people picture themselves becoming part of your community?

That's the stuff that builds trust.

Exercises are important.

Stories are memorable.

People don't buy exercises. They buy a better version of themselves.

What I'd Do Tomorrow...

Before posting anything, ask yourself...
"Would I stop scrolling to watch this?"

If the answer's no...

Don't post it.

7. CREATE MORE CONVERSATIONS, NOT MORE CAMPAIGNS

One of the best forms of marketing costs absolutely nothing.

A conversation.

Think about where your best members came from.

A friend.

A referral.

Someone they'd been following online for months.

Very few people wake up on Tuesday morning and randomly decide to join a gym they've never heard of.

Relationships take time.

That's why we've always tried to create conversations long before someone is ready to join.

Reply to comments.

Answer messages.

Call members you haven't seen for a while.

Ask people how they're going.

Take a genuine interest in their lives.

Technology helps us stay connected.

But relationships are still built one conversation at a time.

People rarely join a gym they don't trust.

What I'd Do Tomorrow...

Challenge every trainer to have one meaningful conversation today.

Not about training.

About life.

You'll be amazed what you learn.

8. STOP COMPETING ON PRICE

Competing on price is a race to the bottom.

There's always another gym willing to be cheaper.

And if someone joins because you're the cheapest...

Don't be surprised when they leave because someone else is cheaper.

We've always looked at pricing a little differently.

We charge enough to keep our studio spotless.

Enough to maintain great equipment.

Enough to buy quality uniforms.

Enough to bring in guest speakers.

Enough to throw a cracking Christmas party.

Enough to pay our team well.

None of those things happen by accident.

They happen because we've built a business that can afford to invest in the staff and the member experience.

I'd rather explain why we're worth more...

Than apologise for charging more.

People don't stay because you're cheap. They stay because you're worth it.

What I'd Do Tomorrow...

Write down everything your members receive because you don't compete on price.

You might be surprised how long the list becomes.

9. GET YOUR TEAM CLOSING SALES WITHOUT FEELING SALESY

I learnt this lesson the expensive way.

Back when I owned my first gym in Mona Vale, I paid thousands of dollars for a twelve-week sales course.

To be fair...
It worked.

My sales improved.

The problem was...
My team hated it.

The old-school scripts.

The cheesy closing techniques.

The constant objection handling.

It just wasn't them.

So I stopped trying to turn trainers into salespeople.

Instead...
We focused on helping people.

Ask better questions.

Listen.

Understand their goals.

Recommend the best solution.

No scripts.

No pressure.

No pretending to be someone you're not.

Today I only spend two days a week in the gym.

Our team confidently gives tours, designs programs and presents tailored solutions in their own style.

Because they're not trying to "close".

They're trying to help.

People can tell when you genuinely care.

What I'd Do Tomorrow...

Ask every trainer...

"If your best mate walked through the door today, how would you look after them?"

That's your sales process.

10. SPEND LESS TIME WORKING IN THE GYM AND MORE TIME WORKING ON IT

Every Friday I work from a café.

Not because I'm taking the day off.

Because it's where I think best.

When you're sitting at reception...

Answering questions.

Fixing little problems.

Being interrupted every five minutes...

It's almost impossible to think about the future.

Changing your environment changes your thinking.

Every Friday I spend time looking at our numbers.

Leads.

Sales.

Cancellations.

Then I plan the week ahead.

Team meetings.

One-on-ones.

Marketing.

What's working?

What's not?

What could we do better?

Sometimes I'll head to a café near the beach.

Sometimes somewhere surrounded by trees.

Getting out of the four walls of the gym helps me get creative

Because my job isn't just keeping the gym running.

It's making sure it's heading in the right direction.

Don't confuse activity with progress.

What I'd Do Tomorrow...

Block out one hour next week.

Leave the gym.

Take your laptop.

Turn your phone on silent.

Then ask yourself...

"If I bought this gym tomorrow, what would I change first?"

11. BUILD A TEAM THAT DOESN'T NEED YOU FOR EVERY DECISION

Here's a question...

If you took the next two weeks off...

What would happen?

Would the gym keep running?

Or would your phone start ringing before you'd even unpacked your suitcase?

Earlier this year my wife, the kids and I went to Japan for a snowboarding holiday.

When we got home...

The gym was firing.

Leads were still coming in.

Sales were still converting.

Members were happy.

The gym was clean.

Sessions started on time.

It was business as usual.

That didn't happen by luck.

It came from setting clear standards, training people well and building a culture where everyone takes pride in what they do.

The goal was never to make myself indispensable.

It was to make the business stronger.

Your business will rarely outgrow your leadership.

What I'd Do Tomorrow...

Ask yourself...

"If I disappeared for two weeks... what would stop?"

Then start fixing those things one at a time.

12. SPEND TIME DEVELOPING LEADERS

One of the biggest shifts I made as a business owner was realising my job wasn't just to launch a website and open a nice-looking facility

It was to recruit and develop great trainers then

It was to develop future leaders.

Anyone can learn how to coach a deadlift.

Leading people is different.

That's why we give our team opportunities to grow.

Run the team meeting.

Lead an education session.

Film some content

Mentor another trainer.

Will they get everything right?

Probably not.

Neither did I.

Leadership is built through experience.

The more people who can confidently lead inside your business...

The less your business depends on you.

That's good for your team.

It's good for your members.

And it's good for your sanity.

Your team will rarely grow beyond the opportunities you give them.

What I'd Do Tomorrow...

Choose one team member.

Ask yourself...

"What's one responsibility I can trust with my team this month?"

Then let them have a crack.

13. BUILD SYSTEMS BEFORE HIRING MORE STAFF

Whenever a gym gets busy, the first thought is usually...
"We need another trainer."

Sometimes that's true.

Sometimes you just need better systems.

I've learnt that adding people to a messy business usually creates a bigger messy business.

Think about your lead generation.

Your cleaning.

Your sales process.

Your onboarding

Could a brand-new staff member walk in tomorrow and know exactly how you want things done?

Or would they spend half the day asking questions?

Good systems don't remove personality.

They create consistency.

And consistency builds trust.

Your members should have a great experience no matter who's working that day.

Systems create consistency. Consistency builds confidence.

What I'd Do Tomorrow...

Pick one thing your team does every day.

Write the process down in dot points.

It doesn't have to be perfect.

It just has to exist.

14. BRING BACK OLD-FASHIONED CUSTOMER SERVICE

Technology has made running my gym easier.

We automate some emails and sms to warm up cold facebook leads

We have some reminders for members to leave a google review
Follow-up sequences.

They're all fantastic.

But here's what technology doesn't replace.

Picking up the phone.

Remembering someone's name.

Checking in because you genuinely care.

When a new member joins Rushcutters Health, I don't want them feeling like they've entered an automated sales funnel.

I want them feeling like they've joined a community.

While plenty of gyms this year retreated to their office hiding behind a keyboard...

We doubled down on old-fashioned customer service.

Phone calls.

Celebrating wins.

Checking in when someone disappears.

Knowing people's stories.

Technology should support your service.

Not replace it.

The little things become the big things.

What I'd Do Tomorrow...

Think of one member you haven't connected with for a couple of weeks.

Don't send a text.

Pick up the phone.

Not to sell.

Just to ask how they are doing

15. OBSESS OVER MEMBER RESULTS

People don't join a gym because they want another direct debit.

They join because they want a result.

Lose weight.

Feel stronger.

Get rid of back pain.

Keep up with the kids.

Walk into a room with more confidence.

That's the promise we make on Day One.

Our job is to deliver it.

The gyms with the happiest members aren't the ones with the fanciest equipment.

They're the ones producing consistent results.

Because results change lives.

And changed lives create referrals.

Every time one of our members achieves something they never thought possible...

The whole team celebrates.

Not because it's good marketing.

Because that's why we opened the doors in the first place.

Your gym should solve problems, not sell memberships.

What I'd Do Tomorrow...

Think about one member who's had an incredible win recently.

16. MAKE EVERY NEW MEMBER FEEL LIKE THEY MADE THE BEST DECISION OF THE YEAR

The first 30 days are the most important month of a member's journey.

Most gyms do a great job getting someone to sign up...

Then hope for the best.

We've always looked at it differently.

Joining the gym is just the beginning.

From day one we want members thinking...
"I'm glad I chose this place."

That's why we put plenty of effort into onboarding.

Movement screen.

Nutrition consultation.

Tailored program.

Recipe book.

Stretching guide.

Supplement recommendations.

Introducing them to other members.

A check-in phone call two weeks later.

None of those things are expensive.

But together they create confidence.

People don't stay because of one big thing.

They stay because of dozens of little things done well.

People join because they're excited. They stay because they feel supported.

What I'd Do Tomorrow...

Write down every touchpoint a new member experiences during their first 30 days.

Then ask yourself...

"How could we make this even better?"

17. BECOME THE GYM EVERY MEMBER RECOMMENDS

One of our goals has never been to become the biggest gym.

It's to become the gym people naturally recommend.

The local favourite.

The place people talk about over a BBQ.

Like the café everyone loves.

The barber everyone recommends.

Or the local pub where everyone knows your name.

That doesn't happen because you spend more on advertising.

It happens because people genuinely enjoy being part of your business.

We regularly ask members for feedback.

If something isn't right, we fix it quickly.

We're proud to have won the 2024 Sydney Small Business

Awards and later finish as a Top 5 finalist in the 2026 Australian Small Business Awards.

But the awards aren't the goal.

They're simply a by-product of trying to create a great experience every single day.

I'd much rather hear...

"A mate told me to come here..."

...than...

"I saw your Facebook ad."

The best marketing still happens one conversation at a time.

What I'd Do Tomorrow...

Ask yourself...

"What are we doing this month that's worth talking about?"

If nothing comes to mind...

Create something.

18. TRACK YOUR KEY NUMBERS EVERY WEEK

You don't need fifty reports.

You need a handful of key numbers you actually look at.

Every week I check the same scorecard.

- Total New enquiries.
- Rank the source of enquiries in order
- Total Sales.
- Total Cancellations.
- Average member weekly spend.

Those numbers tell me exactly where the business needs my attention.

If enquiries slow down...

We focus on marketing.

If sales slow down...

We review our sales process.

If cancellations increase...

We start making phone calls.

Running a gym without knowing your numbers is a bit like asking a member to lose weight without ever stepping on the scales.

It's pretty hard to improve what you're not measuring.

Don't confuse activity with progress.

What I'd Do Tomorrow...

Choose the five numbers that matter most in your business.

Review them every Friday.

Keep it simple.

19. BUILD A BUSINESS THAT GIVES YOU YOUR LIFE BACK

I'll be honest...

There was a time when I thought working more hours made me a better business owner.

I was wrong.

These days I think about success a little differently.

Thursday night is date night.

Sundays are watching my daughters soccer and family.

We book holidays months in advance.

I make time to train every day. I ocean twice once a week

I Challenge myself to develop a new business skill.

Not because I don't love the business.

Because I do.

But I've learnt something over the years.

If the business needs me every minute of every day...

I've built myself a job.

Not a business.

Your family deserves your attention.

Your team deserves a fresh leader.

Your members deserve someone who practises what they preach.

The gym is a huge part of your life.

It just shouldn't become your whole life.

Build a business that supports your life... not one that takes it over.

What I'd Do Tomorrow...

Book something in your calendar that's got nothing to do with work.

Dinner.

A weekend away.

A family holiday.

A run with a mate.

Protect it like you would an important meeting.

20. TAKE FRIDAYS OFF

This one usually gets a few funny looks.

"Steve... I'd love to take Fridays off."

I get it.

I used to think exactly the same.

But here's what I've learnt.

The goal was never to work harder forever.

The goal was to build a business that didn't rely on me doing everything.

That's why every Friday I leave the gym.

I head to a café.

Grab a coffee.

Open the laptop.

Review the numbers.

Plan the week ahead.

Think.

Because it's very difficult to think clearly when someone is knocking on your office door every five minutes.

Working **on** your business is just as important as working **in** it.

Create time to lead.

Not just react.

Success isn't measured by how many hours you work. It's measured by how well your business works without you.

What I'd Do Tomorrow...

Block one hour in your diary next week.

Leave the gym.

Turn your phone on silent.

Then ask yourself one question.

"If I bought this gym tomorrow... what would I change first?"

ONE LAST THOUGHT

If you've made it this far...

Thanks.

I hope one or two of these ideas challenged the way you think about your gym.

The funny thing is...

None of them are revolutionary.

In fact, most of them are pretty simple.

That's because after more than twenty years of owning gyms, I've become convinced of one thing.

Great gyms aren't built on clever marketing.

They're built on great people.

Great leadership.

Great service.

Great member experiences.

Done consistently.

Week after week.

Year after year.

Don't feel like you need to change everything.

Pick one page.

One idea.

One action.

Start there.

Because simple beats sexy.

And better execution beats another bright idea every day of the week.

I genuinely hope your gym becomes the place your members can't stop talking about.

See you inside the Gym Hub community.

Steve Grant

READY FOR A FRESH SET OF EYES ON YOUR GYM?

If this playbook got you thinking...

Imagine what we could achieve by spending 60 minutes together looking at your business.

In your complimentary **90-Day Gym Growth Plan Session**, we'll identify:

- Your biggest opportunity for growth
- What's holding your gym back
- Practical ways to improve your marketing, sales, retention and team
- The next few steps I'd take if your gym was mine

No fluff.

No pressure.

Just a practical conversation between two gym owners.

Book your complimentary 90-Day Gym Growth Plan here:

<https://gymhub.com.au/90-day-gym-growth-plan/>