

Module 11 – Contests and Incentive Programs

Contests and Incentive Programs

It is very difficult for people to remain committed to change, which is why it is difficult for some practitioners to retain clients who are committed and compliant. Many people are caretakers; they are accustomed to caring for others and often place themselves at the bottom of their to-do list. In addition, people often turn to food during times of stress or anguish, which may de-rail their plans to live better for the benefit of their health.

Every practitioner is faced with the ongoing challenge of how to convince their clients to remain committed to the process of change. Hopefully, once they begin to experience the obvious benefits they will remain true to their mission. Unfortunately, that is not always the case. It is the job of every practitioner to act as a coach and give their clients the incentive they need to remain committed to their wellness goals today, tomorrow, and forever.

If you have a number of clients who have set a goal to lose weight for example, you may choose to offer regular incentives, such as a 10% discount off their monthly program for every client who loses 10 pounds or a certain percentage of their body weight in one month. Or, offer a free manicure, pedicure or free makeover for the person who reaches his/her health goals. Be creative and choose a contest that allows people to chart their progress. Wall charts are often an effective means of charting progress; of course, you will use only the client's first name and last initial if you choose this method in order to maintain privacy and anonymity.

Also, remember to reward and acknowledge people as they work toward their goals. Using weight loss again as an example, if a person has a lot of weight to lose they may feel overwhelmed at the prospect of such a large number so reward them for their hard work each day and celebrate the milestones. If a client reaches the 20-pound mark, give them a gift certificate for a manicure or a gift card for a local bookstore. Build this cost into your advertising budget, because remember there is no better method of advertising than word of mouth and if you are helping people achieve their goals and realize their dreams, you can be certain that they will be talking about it.

Also, look to external motivators to help clients stay committed as they continue down their chosen path. For example, if their goal is to eat whole foods and exercise more, help them to set a long-term goal you can help them work towards, such as running a marathon in a year. This goal will help them stay focused and they will continue to come and see you as they work towards that goal.

Do not forget that once you have helped a client achieve their objective that does not signify the end of your working relationship with that person. On the contrary, you should check in with them periodically to ensure they have maintained the practices that helped them achieve a healthy new lifestyle.

Action Challenge Eleven

1. Identify common reasons clients do not implement your suggestions and revert to old habits.
2. Brainstorm until you come up with several strategies to combat these common challenges.
3. Create a list of incentives you might offer a client to help them remain committed to change.
4. Create a list of self-imposed incentives a client may choose to help them remain committed to their goals. Self imposed incentives may include wanting to look and feel great for a family wedding or vacation, the decision to run a marathon, the goal of managing ailments or the avoidance of 'lifestyle' diseases that often come with advanced age.
5. Assessing your client's motivation is as important as making the appropriate recommendations to help them achieve their goal. Without that information you cannot help them to remain focused and committed. In addition to being their nutritional consultant, you are also their coach and cheerleader. If you do not know the 'why', you cannot help them to implement permanent change. Re-visit all of your client files and assess the underlying reasons each client came to see you.