

**PECULIARITIES OF THE ACTIVITY OF FITNESS CLUBS IN
CONDITIONS OF QUARANTINE RESTRICTIONS**

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Purpose: to determine the peculiarities of the activities of fitness clubs in conditions of quarantine restrictions.

Material and methods: during the implementation of the set goals, the following research methods were used: analysis of literary sources, organizational analysis, questionnaires, methods of marketing analysis (PEST analysis), media research of the Internet audience (Opinion Software Media), methods of mathematical statistics. The study was conducted on the basis of 3 fitness clubs in Kharkov (Pheromone, Malibu, Safari). The survey was attended by managers, administration and trainers of fitness clubs - 57 people. The method of marketing analysis (PEST analysis) was used to analyze the degree of influence of macroenvironmental factors on the efficiency of the functioning of fitness clubs. The study involved 22 people with appropriate qualifications and access to information.

Results: the main factors of the marketing environment influencing the activities of fitness clubs were identified; disclosed the content of the target guidelines for the use of social networks when choosing a fitness club; the reasons for

the interaction of users with the pages of fitness clubs in social networks and with official sites have been determined.

Conclusions: changes that have occurred in the external environment of fitness clubs over the past two years have led to a reorientation of their professional activities. The epidemiological situation forces fitness clubs to look for new forms of training in order to make a profit. The introduction of quarantine restrictions served as an impetus for the expansion of the socio-economic areas of work of fitness clubs on the Internet. This area is actively developing, despite the economic crises and various external and internal obstacles. Based on the results of the study, the features of the activity of fitness clubs in conditions of quarantine restrictions have been determined. The study of the marketing environment of fitness clubs determined a high degree of influence of demographic factors - the state of health of the population and the epidemiological situation in the country and the city (105 points). It is estimated that 42% of users use social media to express their opinions and 39% turn to online sources to read reviews of sports products, fitness services or fitness clubs. Fitness clubs most actively use Internet technologies to receive banking and financial services (87,7%) and interact with consumers (81,6%).

Keywords: fitness club, Internet, Internet marketing, quarantine restrictions.

Introduction

Modern conditions for the functioning of fitness clubs contribute to the widespread use of the worldwide Internet in their own professional activities. It penetrates into all areas of activity of fitness clubs: recruiting, working with the target segment of the consumer, training and increasing the coaching staff, communication, training, advertising. Effective use of the Internet resource speeds up communication and promotes the search for the target audience, as well as the distribution of their services. In general, on-line activities are becoming increasingly important for the economic development of fitness clubs.

The introduction of on-line work completely changes the style of doing business and can significantly reduce the costs of fitness clubs. Leaders need to develop a new direction, such as online marketing, i.e. develop new plans, strategies, organize and monitor ongoing financial and organizational and managerial activities in order to constantly identify the real and potential consumer of the fitness club. Modern conditions require the use and adaptation of new formats for the functioning of fitness clubs, namely: on-line consultations, marathons, webinars, blogging, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ - frequently asked questions), SMM (social media marketing - promotion in social) networks), SMO (social media optimization - website optimization for social networks), display advertising, etc.

Scientific works on organizational and managerial activities of fitness clubs (S.A. Stadnik, 2018, 2019; Yu.A. Leonova, A.S. Bondar, 2020) were of scientific interest for the study; features of the use of marketing communications and mass media in the popularization of mass sports and physical culture and health-improving activities (L.Ya. Zatsna, 2013; A.V. Zinyuk, 2013) [1; 2; 3; 5]. The use of marketing in organizational and managerial activities was studied by Damodaran A. (2016), Crouhy M., Galai D., Mark R. (2020), Crouhy M., Galai D., Mark R. (2020) and features of the use of Internet marketing when building a fitness club strategy [4, 8, 9, 10].

Connection of work with scientific programs, plans, topics. The scientific research was carried out in accordance with the theme of the research work of the Department of Physical Culture Management "Strategic management of the development of physical culture and sports" (state registration number: 012U101012).

Purpose of the study is to determine the features of the activity of fitness clubs in conditions of quarantine restrictions.

Material and Methods of research

In the course of implementing the set goals, the following research methods were used: analysis of literature sources, organizational analysis, questionnaires, marketing analysis methods (PEST analysis), media research of the Internet audience

(Opinion Software Media), organizational modeling, methods of mathematical statistics. The study was conducted on the basis of 3 fitness clubs in Kharkov (Pheromone, Malibu, Safari). The survey was attended by managers, administration and trainers of fitness clubs - 57 people. The method of marketing analysis (PEST analysis) was used to analyze the degree of influence of macroenvironmental factors on the effectiveness of the functioning of fitness clubs; 22 people with the appropriate qualifications and access to information took part in the study.

Using the methods of marketing analysis, the degree of influence of macroenvironmental factors, namely quarantine restrictions, on the activities of fitness clubs was investigated. The research of the interests of potential and real consumers was carried out using media research of the Internet audience of Ukraine (Opinion Software Media), based on a user-centric approach. This method analyzes the attendance of web resources and the socio-demographic profile of visitors. The research is based on the work of a permanent representative panel of Internet users on home and work computers.

Results of the research

To analyze the marketing environment for the activities of fitness clubs in Kharkov, the marketing method PEST analysis was used (Table 1).

Table 1

General characteristics of the influence of macroenvironment factors on the activities of fitness clubs in Kharkov (n=22)

№	Factors	Sum Σ	$\bar{X} \pm m$	%	Place
1.	Changes in the legal framework and quarantine restrictions	99	4,47 ± 0,27	89,3	2
2.	Financial support of the fitness club	93	4,20 ± 0,24	84,0	3
3.	Use of advertising and social media marketing (SMM)	90	4,07 ± 0,18	81,3	4
4.	The state of health of the population and the epidemiological situation in the country and the city	105	4,73 ± 0,15	94,6	1
5.	Using the latest techniques and developments in the training process	85	3,87 ± 0,16	77,3	5
		$\sum_{i=1}^n x_{i\max} = 110$	$\sum_{i=1}^n x_{i\min} = 22$		

According to Table 1, it can be seen that demographic factors - the state of health of the population and the epidemiological situation in the country and the city (105 points) - have a high degree of influence on the activities of fitness clubs. The epidemiological situation that has developed today makes physical culture and sports organizations look for new forms of conducting classes and making a profit. The introduction of quarantine restrictions gave impetus to the expansion of the socio-economic areas of the work of the World Wide Web. The next factor influencing the activity of the fitness club is changes in the legislative framework and quarantine restrictions (99 points). In accordance with the Decree of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine No. 33 dated 02.06.2020 "Temporary recommendations on the organization of anti-epidemic measures in some physical culture and sports institutions for the period of quarantine due to the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19)", the activities of fitness clubs depending on from the epidemiological level is limited by the appropriate conditions. Within the limits of the yellow level, it is prohibited to: hold mass events with the participation of more than 1 person per 4 square meters of the building or territory; occupancy of gyms and fitness centers no more than 1 person per 10 sq. meters. The red level of epidemiological safety implies a number of restrictions, in particular, it is prohibited: the work of gyms, swimming pools and fitness centers; holding mass events, except for official sports events and matches of team playing sports without spectators [6]. These quarantine restrictions reduce the efficiency of fitness clubs and require a reorientation of their professional activities in a new format, namely the activation of the Internet.

An important tool for internet marketing is the creation and development of your own website and the promotion of a fitness club on social networks. Creation of your own website, from the point of view of internet marketing, should go through the following stages:

- 1) defining the functions and tasks of the site;
- 2) studying the target audience;
- 3) studying the structure of the site;

- 4) design and style of the site (graphic presentation of the site, which must be effective and effective);
- 5) determination of the navigation model, which should provide ease of access to the information component of the site;
- 6) content and support (information available on the site);
- 7) definition with hosting (this is the place where the site will be physically hosted) [1, 2].

According to the results of a study by the Ukrainian internet association and media research of the Internet audience (Opinion Software Media) [11], in 2021 the population of Ukraine most often turned to the Google search engine – 85%. The most popular social networks among the population are facebook.com (50%) and instagram.com (27%) (Fig. 1.). Focusing on research data, creating your own personal pages is an integral part of work in conditions of on-line and quarantine restrictions.

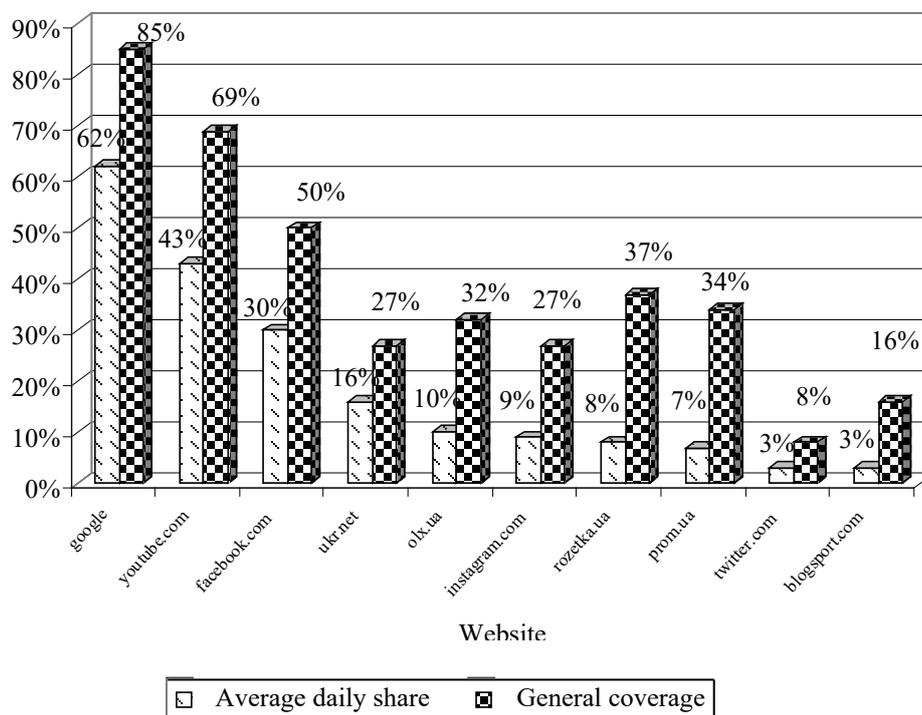


Fig. 1 Top 10 sites in Ukraine in terms of frequency of visits, according to the results of a study by the Ukrainian internet association and media research of the Internet audience (Opinion Software Media) [11]

According to the results of the analysis of the macroenvironment, employees of fitness clubs determine the use of advertising and marketing in the social network (SMM) as one of the factors that have a high degree of influence on further activities. Among the reasons for using social networks, "communication with friends and family" undoubtedly dominates, that is, the processes of socialization of society are deepening. At the same time, the circle of "friends" is constantly expanding due to the network itself (Fig. 2).

However, a study of social media marketing communications found that 42% of users use social media to express their opinions; 39% of users – read reviews of sporting goods, fitness and sports services or fitness clubs; 23% – to get acquainted with the activities of fitness clubs, the services they provide with a pricing policy and subscriptions. This indicates that the influence of social networks on the consumer behavior of users is significantly increasing, which means that fitness clubs should use relevant means of interacting with their audience on these Internet platforms.

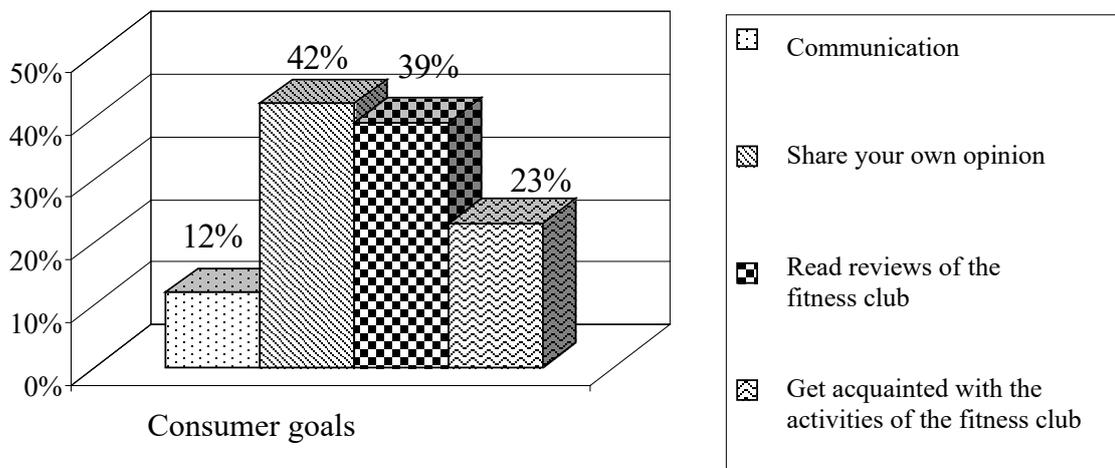


Fig. 2 Targets for the use of social networks, based on the results of our own research

Social networks can solve such communication tasks as raising awareness of the target audience, introducing new positioning, promoting individual promotional offers, incentivizing purchases, interactive communication with the audience within complex communication projects. As noted above, about a quarter of users interact

with a fitness club on social media. Let us consider in more detail the reasons for this interaction (Fig. 3).

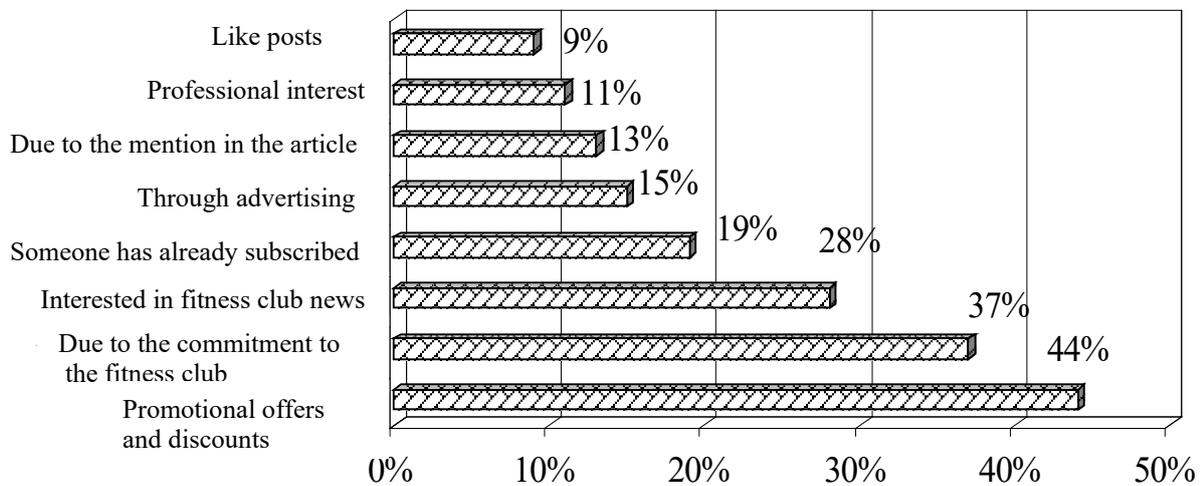


Fig. 3.Reasons for user interaction with the pages of fitness clubs in social networks

The results of the survey indicate that the majority of consumers (44%) visit the personal pages of fitness clubs on social networks to find discounts and promotional offers. This reason requires the focus of the heads of fitness clubs on the formation of the range of on-line information products and services of fitness clubs. On-line activities of fitness clubs should be carried out taking into account such basic criteria:

1) the quality of sports products and physical culture and sports services. The main goal of marketing is to meet needs and build long-term relationships with them, and the provision of quality products and services is one of the most important factors in achieving this goal. The desired result of quality confirmation is approving reviews or user comments on the fitness club page in social networks, or on the website in the interface options provided for this;

2) reliable information about sports products and physical culture and sports services. The site of the fitness club should post comments on the benefits of using

certain sports products or services, as a means of increasing their social value. At the same time, it is important to provide information that corresponds to reality, since the discrepancy between the level of consumer expectations leads to a significant decrease in their contingent;

3) an attractive image of a fitness club in the on-line environment is closely related to the quality and comfort of remote service. In this regard, the task of the fitness club is to form its own style, which is based on the tasks of ensuring full and prompt satisfaction of the information needs of consumers of physical culture and sports services;

4) monitoring the correspondence of the assortment of on-line products and services of fitness clubs to the information needs of users on the basis of systemic marketing research, continuous expansion of the technical capabilities of on-line services through the website of the fitness club;

5) proper design of the website of the fitness club and the information products and physical culture and sports services posted on it, which are perceived primarily visually through reading information from the screen or multimedia;

6) website content updating. Information posted on sites tends to become outdated, so you need to constantly monitor its relevance and promptly update the content if necessary [4, 5].

The analysis of the websites of popular fitness clubs in Kharkov showed that the leaders have already begun to implement the specified components of Internet marketing. It should be noted that fitness clubs are actively modernizing their websites, expanding the range of on-line products and services, constantly striving to achieve the site's compliance with the requirements of search engines, which allows them to occupy leading positions in the results of information search by users. However, there are certain drawbacks that can negatively affect the degree of user satisfaction, namely: a rather complex structure of sites, which, firstly, reduces the ease of navigation, and secondly, requires a significant amount of time from users; not very attractive website design that does not reflect the peculiarities of the

corporate identity of the fitness club; low level of multimedia content and interface interactivity.

Research data indicate that fitness clubs have sufficient technical conditions to develop online marketing and reorient their professional activities in accordance with modern conditions. The most active fitness clubs use Internet technologies to obtain banking and financial services (87.7%); customer interaction (81.6%); obtaining information (80.5%); to analyze the activities of competitors (66.6%). At the same time, the Internet is used to the full in the marketing activities of modern fitness clubs.

Conclusions / Discussion

The obtained results of our study confirmed the opinion of other authors [3, 8] that the changes that have occurred in the external environment of fitness clubs over the past two years have led to a reorientation of their professional activities. The epidemiological situation forces fitness clubs to look for new forms of conducting classes and making a profit. We agree with the opinion of Yu.A. Lenova, A.S. Bondar, S.A. Stadnik that the introduction of quarantine restrictions was the impetus for the expansion of the socio-economic areas of work of fitness clubs on the Internet. At the same time, this area is actively developing, despite the economic crises and various external and internal obstacles.

Based on the results of the study, the features of the activity of fitness clubs in conditions of quarantine restrictions were determined. The study of the marketing environment of fitness clubs determined a high degree of influence of demographic factors. In particular, the state of health of the population and the epidemiological situation in the country and the city (105 points). It was determined that 42% of users use social media to express their opinions and 39% turn to online sources to inquire about reviews of sporting goods, fitness and sports services or a fitness club. The most active fitness clubs use Internet technologies to obtain banking and financial services (87,7%); interaction with the consumer (81,6%).

Prospects for further research in this direction consist in the development of a marketing program for the development of fitness clubs, taking into account modern conditions.

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