

For Publication

Project Title
Fitness Garage Rebrand

Category:
Travel & Leisure

Client Company:
Fitness Garage

Design Consultancy:
WPA Pinfold

Date:
26.06.15

Full throttle ahead for new fitness brand



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In its first six months Fitness Garage have been awarded 'Newcomer Gym of the Year' by the National Fitness Awards with specific reference made to the branding.



Fitness Garage is a small independent functional fitness gym based in Sheffield that opened January 2014. It launched into a very competitive market that is dominated by both national and public sector operators –

In its local catchment area, competition comes in the form of a national budget gym brand, a large local authority run leisure club to numerous independent bodybuilding/physique gyms all with an established member base.

the market is currently growing by



Number of new clubs opened in 2014



With competition at an all time high, Fitness Garage had to be something unique and special. To differentiate itself from the big box and budget gyms, the decision was taken to position it as a specialist boutique gym in the mid market tier.

The focus is on personalised service that is accessible to members of all levels – each member is catered for individually and is welcomed into a social community of like-minded people. The brand and the brand positioning create a unique proposition that offers a personal alternative to the big brands with their large marketing budgets.

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Membership
increased by 162.5%,
**exceeding targets
by 62.5%**

Class attendance
is very high with
an average of **90%
capacity** and some
classes operating a
waiting list.

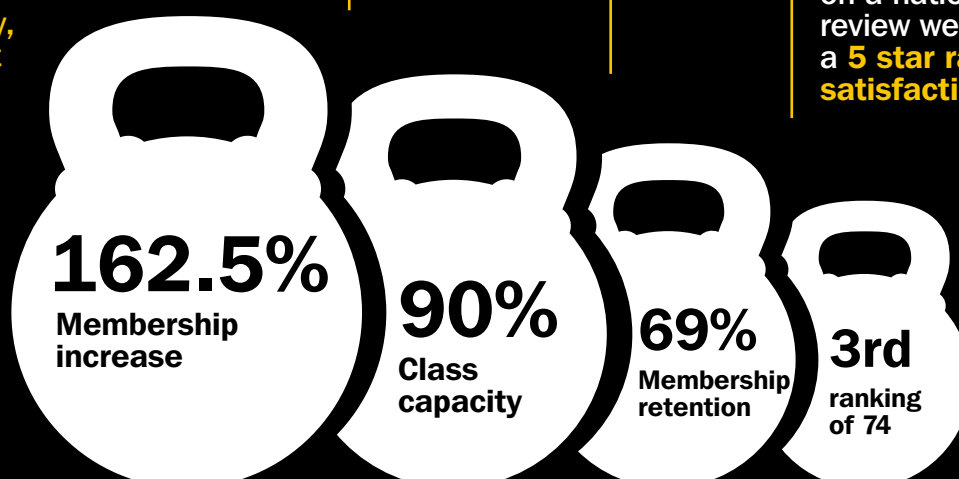
National Fitness Award Judge's Comment

"A really competitive category with some outstanding applications in terms of quality and range of services, products and clothing, depth of knowledge, expertise, support for vulnerable people, team spirit and fundraising.

Fitness Garage showed all this, combined with such a strong branding, online identity, community involvement and progressive, robust business plans."

Member retention
after 18 months is
running at 69%,
**more than double the
industry average.**

Fitness Garage has a strong member advocacy - it is ranked 3rd out of 74 gyms listed in South Yorkshire on a national gym review website, with a **5 star rating for satisfaction.**



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Outline of project brief

Gemma Woodhead has spent her working life in the fitness industry and has always had a passion for making a difference to people's lives in terms of health and fitness. In late 2013 she had the opportunity to take possession of a disused warehouse in Sheffield with the aim of opening her own fitness gym in January 2014. She knew that brand positioning would be important along with a strong brand identity to differentiate from the competition. The gym would be a boutique offering based on the new trend of functional fitness with an emphasis on building a fitness community and an ethos that every member mattered.

The gym would start with a base of no members and had to attract membership away from other gyms as well as newcomers to fitness. Functional fitness is a different concept to the big box gyms and the benefits need to be explained

Scope

Name generation, new brand concept including identity, strapline, product branding, signage, environment branding, promotional material and merchandise.

Strategic thinking

With such a competitive market, limited resources, challenging location and the new way of thinking that is functional fitness, the new brand needed to tell a compelling story.

Business objectives

- Build a sustainable membership base
- Create a fitness community
- Help members reach their fitness goals
- Promote the philosophy of functional fitness

Design Objectives

- Create a proposition and positioning that differentiates in a competitive market.
- Build a brand concept that touches all areas of the business.
- Deliver a scalable brand toolkit.
- Create a brand that is sympathetic to the environment and location of the facility.
- Have great stand out especially online.

Challenge

The location for the gym was challenging as it was based on an industrial estate with no real passing trade and in a catchment area that was already well served by many established gym/health businesses.



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Description

Fitness Garage is a functional fitness gym established in January 2014. Based in the north of Sheffield in a converted warehouse on an industrial estate. It is a boutique gym, offering mid tier membership with classes included. It has a functional fitness philosophy which means it focuses on flexibility, mobility, strength and all round fitness. It deliberately does not have machines such as treadmills, cross trainers or body part isolation equipment.

Typical equipment would be but not limited to kettlebells, rope climbs, monkey bars, tyres for flipping, battle ropes, rowers, plyometric boxes, prowler sledge, suspension training, boxing bags and free weights. To complement the gym side of the business there is also on site facilities for massage, hair and beauty treatments and a shakes and coffee bar.

Project Launch date
January 2014

Overview of UK market

Total market value (public and private sectors combined) is estimated at

£4.8 Billion

up 3.9% on 2013.

13.2% of the UK

population are now registered as members of a private health and fitness club or a publicly owned fitness facility contrasting with 12.6% in the previous year.

Total industry membership base is the strongest growth indicator, up 4.5% to

8.3 million

over the past 12 months

177 new

public and private fitness facilities opened in the 12-month period ending 31st March 2014, up from 167 in 2013.

There are now

**6,112
fitness facilities**

in the UK, up from
6,019 last year.

Source The Leisure database company
State of the uk fitness industry report 2014.

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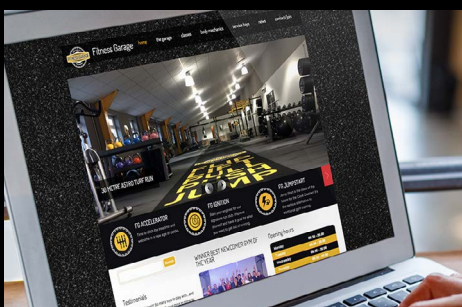
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The combination of the challenges of an industrial setting and a functional fitness approach helped guide our thinking. In a place where you don't train on machines but become a machine, the idea of Fitness Garage was born. Your body is a complex piece of machinery and needs to be maintained and operated correctly. The name Fitness Garage described the place where you can bring your body for its conditioning and where you can 'Fine tune your performance'.

The identity itself takes inspiration from the retro garage signs of 50s but with a modern use of industrial colours of yellow and black, along with a signature motif of a tyre that also represents the functional fitness ethos of the gym. The branding and colour ways give strong visibility and the concept really stood out in a market place of little innovation from a branding perspective.

We wanted the uniqueness of the offer to really live through the branding so the brand concept plays an important role throughout the business. The gym is called 'the bodyshop', all the equipment has been colour co-ordinated to the yellow and black industrial look, steel girders are painted yellow, the gym is zoned and branded towards the different classes and functionality and a central black Astroturf runs down the centre featuring prominent branding (a first for the manufacturer of the turf).

The personal trainers are branded 'body mechanics' and the classes they deliver are all branded to follow the automotive theme: Accelerator (cardio), M.O.T (bootcamp), Ignition (run club), Spare Tyre (ab workout), Turbo-charge (kettle bells), Pitstop (pilates), Suspension (TRX suspension), Jumpstart (plyometrics) etc.



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The treatment rooms for massage and beauty are known as 'service bays' and the refreshment bar serving nutrition, supplements and coffee is the 'refuel bar'. The identity and brand concept instantly created a talking point, told a compelling story, identified a real differentiation and created press and industry interest in the concept. Many visitors thought that Fitness Garage was part of an established multi-site company that had brought its concept to Sheffield, due to the quality of the branding and the concept.

A strong tone of voice and attitude was used throughout to support the concept. With a small promotional budget it was critical that the branding was very recognisable and could create a strong visual presence on social media. We created a look and feel for supporting graphics, a suite of assets that could be used on-line and could be created in house for promotional posters.

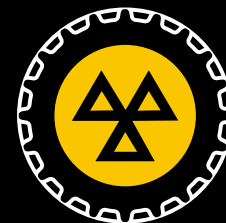
REV IT UP
SPIN CLASSES
SUSPENSION
TURBO CHARGE
(KETTLE BELLS)
PITSTOP
PILATES CLASS
SPARE PARTS
JUMP START
PLYOMETRICS CLASS
SPARE TYRE
CORE WORKOUT CLASS
ACCELERATOR
CARDIOVASCULAR CLASS



FG Rev it up
(Spinning Class)



FG Turbo charge
(Kettle Bell Class)



FG MOT
(Motivated
organised training)



FG Spare Tyre
(Core,
Abs Workout)



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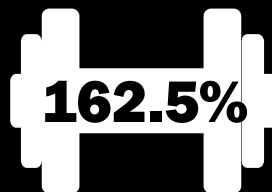
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**Membership
increased by**



**Membership
retention double the
industry standard**



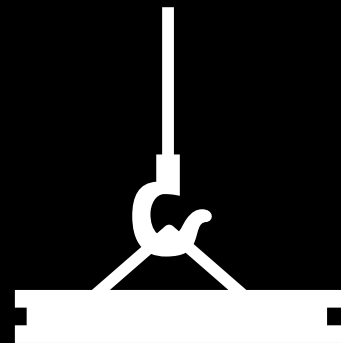
**Newcomer of
the Year award**



**5 star rating for
satisfaction**



Ranking 3rd
in South Yorkshire for
member satisfaction



**Planned expansion
due to increasing
membership**

Bootcamps have been increased
due to demand and there
are plans to expand with the
creation of an outdoor area.



Association with elite athletes
including world boxing
champion, professional rugby
and football teams



Franchise opportunities
discussed with
industry figures

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Increased membership and retention

Original membership targets were set: this target was met within the first six months and continued to increase after the first twelve months. In addition to the membership target as a whole, premium membership (which includes attendance of fat loss bootcamps) was above target, representing 30% of all memberships.

Industry figures show that gym membership in the UK for private and public membership retention erodes to 74% after six months, just over 50% after a year and under 34% after 18 months. A study in 2008 of gym membership retention showed there was a strong correlation between brand perception and gym membership loyalty.

Fitness Garage has an industry beating retention percentage at 69% after 18 months, that is more than double the UK average.



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National Fitness Award Judge's Comment

"Fitness Garage and all the finalists show anything is possible, with customer care and quality of service."

Colour coordinated
equipment and
class branding

Industry recognition

After only six months of operation Fitness Garage entered the National Fitness awards for Newcomer Gym of the Year, a category open to any gym/fitness facility that had been open less than two years at the application date. Fitness Garage was shortlisted along with eight other gyms from around the UK.

In December 2014 at the award ceremony Fitness Garage, despite being the most junior entrant by a long way became Newcomer Gym of the Year. In particular the judges mentioned the brand identity and brand concept as a key factor in the judges decision.

As a result of this win Fitness Garage have been approached by a London based fitness company and have discussed possibilities of franchising the concept in the South East. They have also been approached by many equipment manufacturers to test out and promote new equipment.



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Brand loyalty and advocacy

Fitness Garage members have a strong advocacy rating. The gym is rated five stars for satisfaction and ranked third in South Yorkshire (behind two well established gyms) on the GymBuzz website (a national gym review site). In a recent membership survey 96% of members said they would recommend to a friend or family. A high percentage of members have purchased branded merchandise prompting multiple re orders of t-shirts and hoodies and requests have come in from non-members and overseas who want to buy the products on the brand alone. Social media is an important medium for connecting with its members and future members with current followers at over the 3k mark.

Professional sports associations

Kell Brook 'IBF world welterweight champion' is a regular visitor to the gym along with other professional and Olympian boxers. The facility is popular with rugby players, with both Rotherham Titans RUFC and Sheffield Hallam University RUFC completing pre season training. The gym has a premiership footballer as a member and is used for rehabilitation work by the SWFC squad. Triathletes, Paralympic GB cyclists and local cycling clubs also use the gym as a training base.

Increased staffing and training

To service the increased membership it has been necessary to recruit three new body mechanics and train up four existing staff members to increase their fitness qualifications.

Kell Brook 'IBF world welterweight champion' signs in at the refuel bar



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Gemma Woodhead
Director Fitness Garage

“For a small new business the branding budget was a large percentage of our start up costs, so we knew we had to get it right. The end result has played a significant part in our early success and an investment that will continue to keep paying dividends for years to come. So many people have commented that they thought we were part of a national franchise and attributed the brand concept as part of the reason for joining Fitness Garage.”

Fitness Garage was developed from a standing start - a new name and a new concept in a new facility with no transferable membership. It had very small advertising budget for launch to include local community newspaper and magazine advertisements, direct mail letterbox drop, hand delivered by team members to local residents. A strong presence was built up on social media to build interest pre launch with a teaser campaign built around the branding and fit-out.

Budget gyms

Although the fitness industry is experiencing a year on year growth, the market has seen aggressive pricing strategies and promotions adopted by budget gym chains to attract mass membership.

Tour de France – The Grand Depart 2014

July 2014 saw the Tour de France visit Yorkshire for the first time with the riders passing within 2 miles of the gym. Thousands of people lined the route, millions watched on TV and an upsurge of interest in cycling was very noticeable. Fitness Garage needed to catch this wave as it was a once in a lifetime opportunity, but also a potential threat as this would be an alternative attraction for keeping fit, which did not involve gym membership.

In the run up to the Tour, Fitness Garage promoted the Wattbike training bike (developed by British Cycling) as the training tool of the

professionals, and that they were one of two facilities in Sheffield area to have one. The local cycling clubs were encouraged to come down to undertake test sessions and extra spin bike classes were timetabled for members. On the day the Tour arrived Fitness Garage took the Wattbike to a local Tour de France festival/campsite where cycling enthusiasts could try the bike for themselves and staff handed out flyers to the gathering crowds. By the time the professional cyclists were heading up the hills of North Sheffield, Fitness Garage had got their flag attached to the Bradfield summit marker and a Fitness Garage branded vehicle was in prime viewing position.

Social media

Twitter and Facebook have played their part in promoting the gym. The use of the striking colours and graphic led content along with the impactful colours and graphic feel of the facility, have delivered a strong on-line identity, which tells a compelling story.

References

Source

The Leisure database company
State of the UK fitness industry report 2014.

Retention for UK Private and Public Gym members from 2009-2012.(UK national retention report, Dr Paul Bedford)