



**Bruce Carter**

# Renovations Can Make A Big Splash for Little Cost

**I**n today's challenging economy, clubs need to show that they have added value. People know they need to do something about their weight and health, but getting them to act can be difficult.

Generally, people act—or don't act—out of emotion. What people see and experi-

you fit into the market, and how you must change to stand out.

- Don't "shoot from the hip" with your renovation decisions. Instead, work from a plan that details where you are and where you want your club to be with its new design. Your budget may require you to renovate in phases, which means that you must decide what to do in each

ors are popular today, because of the growth of the "green" movement.

- Add special finishes. Look for materials that stand out, such as metal laminates, stone, granite, vinyl wall coverings and colored Plexiglas.

- Add plants, natural light and accent lighting. A recent University of Kansas study shows that the presence of plants lowers people's perception of pain—a perfect fit for health clubs. Add more windows to let in natural light and add accent lights, such as wall sconces and hanging pendants. Also, look into stage lighting for group exercise and Spinning.

- Change old TVs to new flat-screen units, and consider increasing the level of entertainment in your club.

- Remove clutter, especially in the front desk area. Create shelves and put all your boxes of protein bars, papers and other items in an organized space. Take all papers off the wall and find one or two attractive display areas for them.

- Get rid of odors, especially in the locker rooms, by adding deodorizers.

- Put fresh flowers on the front desk every Monday.

In a rapidly changing market and economy, people need an extra stimulus and an emotional boost to get them to part with their money. An inexpensive yet dynamic renovation can be one of the key methods of providing that stimulus and helping you succeed in today's economy. ■

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ence often is one of the most powerful ways to stir those emotions into action. Therefore, learning how to renovate a club by changing it into a beautiful, exciting and inspiring environment is important.

Renovations are one way to increase sales and retention. You can make a seemingly major change without spending a lot of money. Many clubs that have gone through cost-effective renovations have had increased sales without dramatically changing their debt service, thus increasing profits.

But how can you renovate for minimal money? Following these steps can help:

- Figure out how much money you can spend on a renovation.
- Check out your competition's space and design before you make any decisions. As obvious as this sounds, it is not done enough. You want to know how

phase and how to harmoniously tie together each phase.

- Determine what should be done first and whether you should add facilities such as basketball courts, racquetball courts and/or a pool. Obviously, your decisions depend on your space and budget.

- When making changes, decide what you want to keep and what you want to change. Changing everything that people see is the best way to create an "Oh, my God" response from members. This in turn gets them to talk about your club to their friends. If your budget doesn't allow you to change everything, then decide what to keep and work from there, making sure that any new interior choices, such as colors and finishes, work well with what already exists.

Here are some affordable changes you can make:

- Repaint and change the colors throughout the club. Earth col-

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