

APRIL 2020
SPECIAL RELEASE



SURVIVE & THRIVE

A SUCCESS GUIDE FOR
ROCK CLIMBING &
BOULDERING GYMS



We are all in uncharted territory due to the COVID 19 pandemic. This guide was created for the following:

- To share practical strategies to retain paying clients and increase the value you provide for them
- To provide lead generation & client acquisition ideas
- To guide revenue boosting actions (including a plan to generate thousands of dollars in 24 hours)

And it includes a bonus section with marketing tips.



During this time, it is important to be proactive with messaging to your clients. They came to your climbing gym to get fit, to decrease stress, to be distracted, and to have fun.

New potential clients are out there and they are hoping to find a solution to their problems.

Stay on the top of their mind. Use social media, your website, your email list to provide them the solutions albeit in a different (virtual) format.

You can't sit back waiting for the days to pass until you can re-open.

Read the following tips on how to continue to give value to your community and ensure success for your business.

This guide is broken up into 6 sections:

[Be a fitness resource](#)

[Be a climbing resource](#)

[Be a human interest resource](#)

[Be a source of revenue](#)

[Be reviewing your marketing and communication](#)

[Bonus marketing tips](#)

Feel free to share this guide, to reach out to us with questions, and with updates of the success you're having.



Be a fitness resource

Climbers are like most athletes and can fall into the “trap” of just climbing while often ignoring other important parts of their fitness routine. The same is true for runners, cyclists, yogis, and bodybuilders. Use this forced break to your advantage! Help your community build their fitness level so that they come back stronger climbers.

Classes to deliver

- Mobility and flexibility class
- Lower body strengthening
- Grip strengthening
- Core strengthening
- Cardio circuit
- Full body strength
- Kids or youth fitness class

Delivery Formats

Be prepared to run classes in multiple formats and allow current and prospective clients to interact with your gym in various ways.

1. Use Facebook Live or Instagram TV to run class in front of an audience.
2. Set up Zoom or Google Hangouts call. The benefit of these calls is that they require a link so you can make “exclusive” workouts for clients only!
Note: The free zoom account limits call to 40 minutes for groups of more than 2. If you’re running these regularly on Zoom, it is best to upgrade from the free plan.
3. Record the class (at home or at the gym).
 - a. Upload to YouTube; send clients link
 - b. Upload to Google Drive; send clients link
 - c. Post links to your private or public social media groups (we’ll review the difference in the bonus marketing section)
 - d. Upload to your website



Delivery Schedule

Ideally these are consistent so clients know when to look for them. For example, you will release a new exercise video every Monday and Thursday at 10am. Live classes will be available Tuesday and Friday at 6pm. Once the schedule is set and consistent you can add “bonus” classes.

If you have the knowledge and time, offer 1 or more classes per day 5 days per week (ie Mobility Monday, Tough Grip Tuesday, etc).

If that schedule cannot be maintained or is not possible, consider releasing and/or hosting 2-3 classes per week.

It is ok to have classes ranging in length and in format. Sometimes clients will appreciate a 5 minutes hip mobility class as much as a 45 minute full body workout.



Be a climbing resource

- Offer to loan out equipment to clients for them to use at home.
 - This can include weights, yoga mats, yoga blocks and similar fitness items.
 - It MAY also include climbing gear such as ropes, shoes, harnesses, etc.
 - You can offer this for free, for a small fee, or for a refundable deposit

- Think about the information that you can share with your audience via videos, pictures, written stories.
 - Best way to pack your climbing bag or gear
 - What to take when you'll be at the crags all day
 - Knots every climber should master
 - What the heck is the purpose of, and difference between, all of the climbing gear (a "get to know your gear" segment)
 - What's behind the walls, literally, at the gym? Do a tour of the gym showcasing all the areas that are normally off limits to non-employees
 - What does it take to create and set a new route in the gym?
 - Virtual photo album of the history of your gym



Be a human interest resource

People like to learn about other people. We like to feel special and appreciate getting exclusive access to information. Now is a great time to scratch both of these itches.

Interviews are very engaging and captivating for audiences. Create short and long interviews. You can go live with your guest or you can pre-record these interviews (see delivery formats in the “fitness resource” section above).

If you are an experienced interviewer and your subject is very captivating you can do interviews that are 20 or more minutes.

Best practice is to keep the interview to no more than 5-7 minutes.

Break up your interviews into sound bites of 30 to 60 seconds that you can use to drive people to the longer piece and that you can use to engage your audience on social media.

Here are ideas for interview topics.

- Routsetter: what are they thinking!?! How do they come up with routes?
- Local athlete and their journey to success
- Non-local athlete or other well known person connected to climbing
- “Regular” client about why they like climbing and why they love your business
- Gym owner and/or manager about why they love what they do
- Chiropractor and/or Physical Therapist about common injuries or injury prevention
- Nutritionist about best foods to improve performance or for being on the go
- Personal trainer and/or yoga instructor about training for climbing

Ask the community to send you pics or to tag you in pics of their adventures, of their kids, of their pets, of how they are staying sane and anything fun. This is great human interest content that you do not have to create!



SAMPLE POSTING SCHEDULE

Sunday	Community Sunday Funday Pics
Monday	Mobility Monday or Fitness Resource
Tuesday	Climbing Resource Tips
Wednesday	Human Interest Story
Thursday	Fitness Resource
Friday	Nothing....Plan for following week
Saturday	Kids focused community posting



Be a source of revenue

- Offer membership incentives for either members or non-members to drive them to purchase “today” or “this week”. Examples include:
 - Run a 24-48 hour “flash sale” with aggressive discounts and limited supply. These flash sales are a great way to generate a lot of revenue in a short amount of time.
 - Pay 12 months in full, get 6 months free (Limit 5 people)
 - Pay 6 months in full, get 3 months free (Limit 8 people)
 - “Normal” membership sold at a slighter lower price
 - One to four weeks free added to “normal” membership
 - Free t-shirt
 - Free rentals
 - 50% off gear purchase
- Offer incentives to purchase trials “today” or “this week”. Drop ins and punch cards are considered trials.
 - 2 for 1 passes
 - 12 visits for price of 10
 - Free t-shirt
 - Free rentals
 - Discount off retail items
- Run a virtual 50/50 raffle, set a deadline and draw a winner.
 - You keep half of the money generated, winner gets half
 - You keep half, you donate half to local charity
 - Winner gets half, you donate half to local charity
- Offer to sell your retail items. This can include anything in your retail area. Pay special attention to perishables such as food items. Expect items branded with your gym name to be the most popular.
 - Either ship to them or set up “curbside” pick up



Be reviewing your marketing and communication

- Ask owners and managers to record a client check in and client appreciation video. You will have a better and greater response to these videos vs sending an email or other written message.
 - Email or direct message the recording to them
 - If the file is too big, upload to Google Drive or YouTube and then email or direct message the link

- Prepare and plan for necessary actions you will need to take when you can re-open
 - Staff retraining
 - Grand Re-Opening Party
 - Member appreciation event
 - Promotions
 - Online and offline marketing

Note about re-opening date

It is critical that you have a plan in place now even though nobody has a good timeline of when opening will occur. At least have a loose plan in place so that filling in details becomes easier. Do a bi-weekly review to see if you need to change or add anything to your plan.

- Review and update (or create) all automated communication
 - Client welcome & check in emails, text, etc
 - Guest check in & thank you emails, text, etc
 - Post event (ie corporate events, birthday parties) follow up

- Review and update employee training manuals

- Create or update social media posting schedule (to use during “normal times”)

- Create or update newsletter schedule (to use during “normal times”)

- Create or update your team member interview questions and interview process



Bonus Marketing Tips

- Who is your audience? Existing Clients vs Potential Clients
 - You must look for ways to keep bringing value and a sense of “privilege” to existing clients. This can be done by putting some workouts, interviews, raffles, etc behind a “member only wall”. Examples of this wall include
 - Private Facebook groups
 - Private whatsapp chat groups
 - Sections on your website that require login
- Ask members to “invite a friend” to a members only workout or event.
- Run “virtual team building events” for other businesses. Use your list of contacts or ask clients to connect you with their employer.
 - Exercise class
 - Exercise challenge (for 7 or more days)
 - Invitation for in person event at your facility once you open
- Use the information in this guide to run public facing events for non-members.
 - Have guests (non-members) “register” for events by having them fill out contact form or by having them like, follow, and tag you on social media
- Consider paid social media advertising to
 - Get non-members to events
 - Gain more social media followers or website opt ins
 - Increase brand awareness
- Make sure you can track and capture the “digital breadcrumbs” from website and social media visitors to your pages. With this tracking information you’ll be able to market to these visitors with ads. Tracking can be done via:
 - Your website
 - Google Analytics
 - Facebook Pixel



Conclusion

Right now you can choose to sit at home and wait for this to pass or you can be bold, be brave, be creative, and have fun. You need your climbing community, but during these times they need you more than ever.

“It doesn’t have to be fun to be fun.” – Barry Blanchard

“Turn your brain off and send.” – Chris Sharma

Please reach out if you have questions and when you have success implementing some actions from this guide.

me@leadershipandleads.com | 909.258.9121



About the Author



Manny Escalante is a mediocre climber, avid runner, occasional beer drinker and owner of Leadership and Leads Business Coaching.

Over the past 20 years, he has worked in almost all capacities of the fitness industry including front desk attendant, personal trainer, owning and operating his own fitness facilities as well as managing gyms.

He's been a business coach and consultant for gyms, personal trainers, studios, and other health/fitness related businesses. He has written and presented extensively on sales, marketing, and leadership for the industry.

Business growth is simple: Get clients, keep clients, be a good leader of yourself and others, enjoy the journey. Simple. Not easy. He can help.

Find him at www.leadershipandleads.com and on [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/businesscoachmanny) @businesscoachmanny.