



6 Steps You Must Take Before Interviewing Your Next Club Management Software Vendor

Industry Best Practices White Paper

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About the Author



Al Noshirvani is Chairman and co-Founder of Motionsoft, a club management software pioneer with integrated billing and back office support services that helps fitness, health, and wellness firms obtain operational excellence with industry leading member insights and analysis tools. As an industry thought leader on technology, Mr. Noshirvani speaks at numerous events on the business value of technology. He is also the host of the annual industry conference [The Motionsoft Technology Summit](http://www.motionsoft.net). Mr. Noshirvani is a charter member of IHRSA's Innovation & Technology Advisory Council. Learn more by visiting <http://www.motionsoft.net> or calling 1-800-323-1005.

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Selecting a club management software platform for your business is one of the most important decisions that you and your staff may ever make in the evolution of your club. Unfortunately,

for far too many years, club management software has been viewed solely as a cost center for clubs as opposed to a revenue generating investment.

Why? Three things:

1. Startup costs or software migration fees skew software perceptions as an operations cost rather than an investment that can generate returns.
2. The intangibles of a software conversion such as the value of member data and how to leverage that information is seldom considered.
3. Club management software buyers are sometimes not as well informed as they need to be when making decisions that will broadly impact their business.

Club management software touches every aspect of your business from apps and web-enabled member services like scheduling and online membership sales to billing, and front desk operations. Your club software is not just another point-of-sale (POS) or standalone check-in system for your front desk, it impacts your members and drives how your staff will engage with them.

As a charter member of IHRSA's Innovation & Technology Advisory Council, my role is to serve the innovation and technology needs of all club professionals. The Council's mandate is to provide information and education to club operators to aid them in making sound innovation and technology decisions.

To support that mandate, I've created a club software vendor assessment checklist.

Over the course of the past 20 years, I have literally done thousands of demos for organizations of all sizes. I am often surprised by the lack of diligence that club operators perform in selecting a vendor. The fact of the matter is that this decision is one that you and your members will live with for many, many years and, if you are a club that is migrating from an existing solution to a new one, a process that is quite frankly unpleasant and often disruptive.

The good news is there are three simple steps club operators can follow as a guide to help them become better informed technology buyers of club management software solutions. Those steps include:

1. Identify your near term and long term needs because they will change over time.

- Before you start calling potential vendors, spend some time thinking about your needs today vs. where you want your business to be in five to ten years.

- Many startup club operators rush out to simply find the first vendor that provides a turnkey solution for their immediate needs. Club software buying best practices always seem to get lost in the mix of handling all the other priorities of opening a new club from equipment lease negotiations, promotions, and finding group fitness instructors.
- While collections, member services, CRM, check-in, and POS may be needs now, the fact is that as you grow, you will add to these needs and your software should be able to grow with you.

In 1999, when Equinox first selected Motionsoft, our company was their system of record (SOR) for all things member-related. Today, Equinox relies on our solutions for contracts, billing, access control, personal training/series sales, and today have deployed Salesforce as their SOR that Motionsoft integrated via an application programming interface (API). For Equinox, finding a vendor who could grow with them when they only had five clubs with a vision of opening 500 locations was critical.

2. Identify the data your business “must have” vs. would “love to have.”

Before you start doing demos, create a list of the data sets or reports your team is going to need to be successful. They may include:

- Daily/weekly and monthly operational reports by department.
- Financial reports that answer questions you have about your business today.
- Data that can assist you in better servicing your members and improving retention.
- Billing and collections information that maximize your draft collection AND collectability.

3. Be prepared to make business process changes to accommodate your new software.

- Every gym software vendor is going to wow your team with features that look and sound impressive. What’s important is to ensure that your business will be able to continue to support the business processes that you use to run your club on a day-to-day basis.

- The most successful club operators purchasing club management software are often those organizations that take the time to document their requirements in a request for proposal. If you need an RFP example, [we've provided a sample here](#) that you and your team can use.
- As a club operator, I strongly recommend that you get ready to address operational changes your new software solution will introduce into your business so that you can educate, train, and manage staff expectations.

Your Club Software Assessment Checklist

- Before you start calling potential vendors, spend some time thinking about your needs today vs. where you want your business to be in five to ten years because your needs will change over time. While collections, member services, CRM, check-in, and POS may be needs now, the fact is that as you grow, you will add to these needs and your software vendor should be able to grow with you.
- Many startup club operators rush out to simply find the first vendor that provides a turnkey solution for their immediate needs. Don't let club software buying best practices get lost in the mix of handling all the other priorities of opening a new club.
- Identify the data your business "must have" vs. would "love to have." Before you start doing demos, create a list of the data sets or reports your team is going to need to be successful. They may include:
 - Daily/weekly and monthly operational reports by department.
 - Financial reports that answer questions you have about your business today.
 - Data that can assist you in better servicing your members and improving retention.
 - Billing and collections information that maximize your draft collection AND collectability.
- Be prepared to make business process changes to accommodate your new software. Every gym software vendor is going to wow your team with features that look and sound impressive. What's important is to ensure that your business will be able to continue to support the business processes that you use to run your club on a day-to-day basis.

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Summary

Download our [RFP sample now](#) as a first step so that you can guide your club's unique needs. Remember these recommendations are a starting point that you as a club operator should consider as you embark on assessing your club management software and member experience needs. Need help? If you need more information or have questions, send me an email - al@motionsoft.net - and my team or I would be happy to discuss additional recommendations so that you get the greatest return on your club management software investment.

Product Spotlight



Technology for Running Fit Clubs

“As a gym owner, I have to wear many hats; manager, salesperson, payroll, billing, etc. Motionsoft gives me the tools to accomplish these tasks in a very efficient and effective approach so I can actually spend time away from my business.”

Derek Sanborn

Lady of Livingston Health & Fitness

The “No Sweat” Software to Manage Your Club

Motionsoft offers a unique, innovative, and modern software platform especially designed to automate front and back office administrative operations of small-to medium-sized gyms and fitness centers so that you can reach your business goals, and take off early on Fridays.

How do hard working club professionals pull it off?

Growing fitness brands and club operators are choosing Motionsoft because it can have an immediate impact on:

- Automating routine, time consuming front and back office functions, allowing staff to focus on providing member services and creating great member experiences.
- Improving member satisfaction through convenient self-scheduling via online access to review available classes, services, and club news.
- Gaining member insights from the biggest collection of reporting reports in the industry.

Running a fitness business isn't easy. Motionsoft takes care of the drudgery of running your business—the billing, tracking, scheduling, and reporting functions essential to successful club operations so you have more time to focus on why you got into the club business—to improve the health and wellness of your members.