

## The Pilates Marketeer A Magical Pilates Moment: Keys to a Successful Pilates Demo Program

by Nico Gonzalez

Do you remember the first time you heard about Pilates? How about when you actually did Pilates for the first time? Was it memorable? Was the experience meaningful enough to produce a positive response?

Our job, as studio owners, program directors, or any other type of Pilates professional, is to ensure a memorable and positive initial Pilates experience to produce revenue. Here are some tips for creating a magical Pilates moment once you have a potential client in front of you.

### #1 - BE PREPARED

Know who you are working with! If possible, get some information on your prospect ahead of time. At the Mercy HealthPlex, we like to use the "Quick Q&A" sheet. When someone signs up for a complimentary introduction, we run down the Quick Q&A sheet right there and then with the member. The very first piece of information we ask for is their name. The magical moment begins with this very personal touch of an instructor knowing each and every potential client's name BEFORE they meet. Other information on the Quick Q&A include:

- Current fitness activities
- Fitness goals (aesthetics, stress management, weight loss, tone, flexibility, decrease stiffness, etc.)
- Age
- How long have they been active/inactive?
- Health history
- Medical conditions/medications
- Hobbies

Arm yourself by making sure your Quick Q&A inquires about their fitness goals. Try not to make your inquiries too detailed. However, get the information you need to make the moment worth both your time (current fitness activities, medical conditions/restrictions, etc.).

### #2 - BUILD RAPPORT

Here's where you put your information to good use. Let your prospect know, if applicable, how you train people just like them. Make them feel comfortable and confident about your ability to lead them through their initial Pilates experience.

Sit down and review the Quick Q&A. Verbally go over their fitness goals again. This will show your client you have taken the time to prepare for his/her arrival.



### Nico Gonzalez

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Building rapport is just like teaching Pilates. We not only use verbal cues, but visual ones as well! Much can be said without speaking a word. When asking questions, let your client speak without interruption from you. Remember, this time is all about them. Your unspoken words will be much louder than anything you say during this critical time. You'll have plenty of time to WOW them with your vast knowledge momentarily. Right now you need to prove that you are genuinely interested in their health and wellness.

### #3 – GIVE THEM MORE

Excellent service is what every client wants but few truly expect. Give them the unexpected! Our Pilates instructors are provided with a Health & Wellness information sheet that they must review during each and every demonstration. This sheet gives general information on what Pilates will and won't do for prospective clients. Why would I want people to know what Pilates won't do? Because, I'm not only being honest with them, I'm giving them realistic expectations of the program. THAT builds rapport and will be key to retaining them down the line.

### #4 – FILL THE SHOPPING CART

What does the above phrase mean? Picture your clients at the grocery store shopping around for Pilates. They are contemplating whether to place you, the Pilates service, in their shopping cart. As you and I know, once an item is in the shopping cart, it usually stays there. The hard part for them is picking the right item (you) off the shelf among the many other offerings. Our job is to gingerly place small components of the magical moment in the shopping cart without them even knowing it. Here is a scene from one of our magical moments at the Mercy HealthPlex:

Amy (Prospective client): I've been watching some of your Pilates sessions - they look very difficult. I feel that I can't do some of those exercises because my body doesn't move like that.

Pilates trainer: Many of my current clients also felt the same way Amy. What we have found, through working on many of the fundamentals together, is that everyone has challenges and will find they like different aspects of Pilates. Some of my clients need help with flexibility while others need to build abdominal strength. The beauty about Pilates, Amy, is that almost everyone can feel improvements in their bodies as they progress through our sessions. Does this sound like something that would be of interest to you?

### #5 – TASTE TEST THE BUFFET

Now is the time to let your prospective client see and feel what Pilates is all about. Walk them through the buffet of exercises, use the Quick Q&A to instruct them toward movements you know they will enjoy.

You are the director of this magical ride, keep them hungry by tantalizing them with little morsels of exercises that will challenge them, but not overcome them physically. Don't forget the "feel good" exercises to show the softer side of Pilates. Of course you will walk them through very specific work that focuses on everything you discussed in the Q&A. Remember, you are continuously trying to build rapport while placing things in the shopping cart! Continuously ask, "Is this something your body can benefit from?" Remember, the buffet is only tantalizing if you direct them to the morsels that match their taste buds!

