

Thought you knew how to determine customer demand on the gym floor? Think again, says Rory McGown, founder of GYMetrix.

Your club is unique



Rory McGown

Club demographics and customer demand

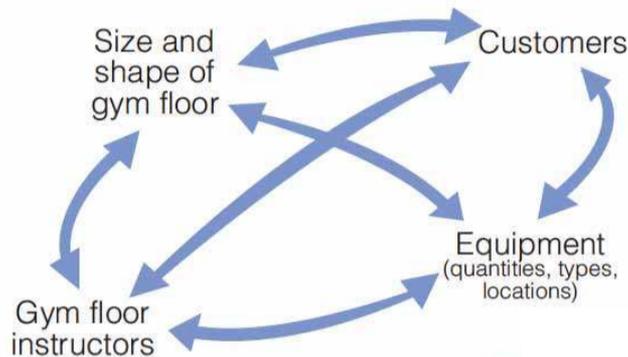
Understanding customer demand levels for kit is key to satisfying customers and maximising the potential of your gym, but it's not as simple as we're led to believe.

The first studies ever conducted by GYMetrix challenged our thinking about the demand patterns of gym floor customers. Until that point, we like most other people in the industry, believed that a club's demographics determined demand for equipment.

But our studies of two Glasgow Life gyms showed that this was not the case. The two sites were located close to each other, served similar demographics and were stocked with similar types and quantities of equipment. That being the case, we expected to measure similar, if not

Viewing Gym Floors as Ecosystems

We view each gym floor as an ecosystem. In every Ecosystem there is an interdependency of the different elements, on the gym floor the primary interdependent elements are;



identical, demand patterns. In fact, we found that they had very different patterns of demand, with one gym experiencing shortages of some equipment, while the very same kit was under-utilised in the other facility.

The clearly showed that the demographics of a club did not determine the demand patterns of its customers, and this is something we have seen time and time again in subsequent gym studies.

Each gym demand pattern is unique
One of the most important lessons we have learned from conducting hundreds of studies of gyms, is that

no two clubs have the same demand pattern. Yes, they may share similarities, but each gym's pattern of demand is totally unique, which leads us to an interesting question: what does determine the demand pattern in a club?

Understand the ecosystem of your gym
Likening your gym to an ecosystem is probably the best way of understanding the variety of factors, and the interdependency of those factors, that affect the demand patterns on the gym floor.

The primary interdependent elements on the gym floor are customers, instructors, equipment and the size and shape of the gym floor.

And as you can see from the diagrams, there are a myriad of different factors which influence these primary elements ranging from the age and gender of customers to the location of equipment and the levels of interaction of between instructors and users. It's only when you have considered all of the potential factors that can influence the customer's choice of equipment that you can appreciate why no two gyms have exactly the same demand pattern.

Forgot the one-size-fits-all approach
This means that the one-size-fits-all approach adopted by so many operators is flawed. It will always generate shortages of equipment, which frustrates customers, as well as

under-utilised kit, which means operators are wasting money on excess equipment rather than investing it in solving shortages of equipment that their customers actually want. But it's not all doom and gloom. The good news is that we can measure how all of these factors come together and produce an ideal ratio of equipment to suit the unique demands of each gym. Operators can also influence customer demand through instructor interaction with customers to affect their equipment choices to help to even out demand patterns.

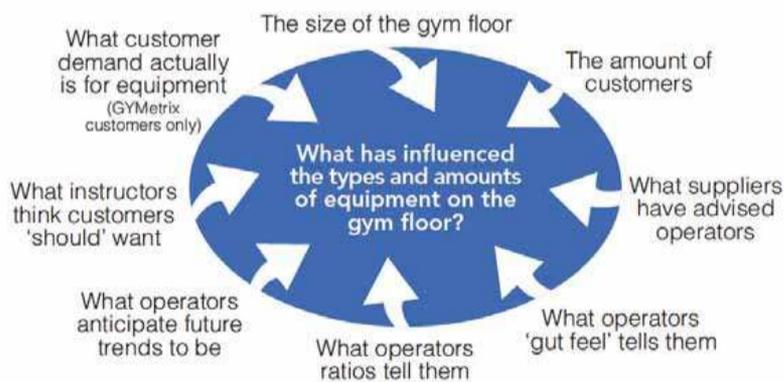
What about new-builds?
All of the above is fine when working with existing sites, but how do you accurately predict how all of these elements are going to come together in a new site?

Well, the best that can be done in this situation is to have a 'best guess' and build your gym, but only put in 80% of the kit, this allows for flexibility to accommodate future change. It also mitigates the risk of the gym not getting as busy as you hope.

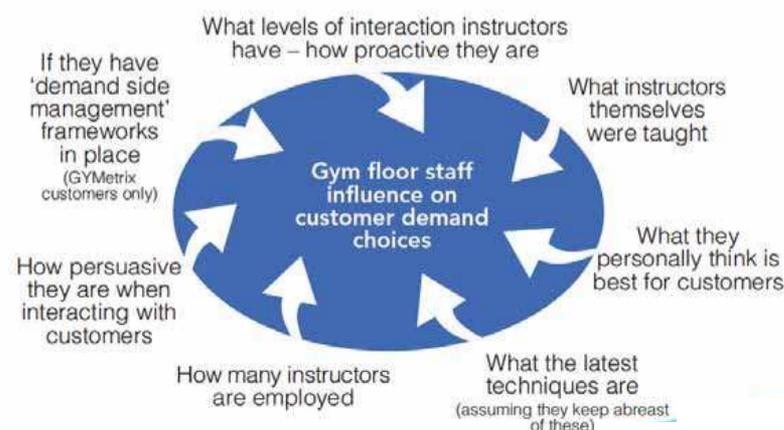
Once your gym is operating, and its own unique ecosystem has been established, you can measure its performance, calculate the ideal equipment mix, and make the necessary adjustments with the final 20% of kit to match customer demand.

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What has influenced the types and amounts of equipment on the gym floor?



Gym Floor Staff – What determines the influence Gym floor staff have on customers demand patterns?



Customers – What Influences customers Choices in the equipment they use?

