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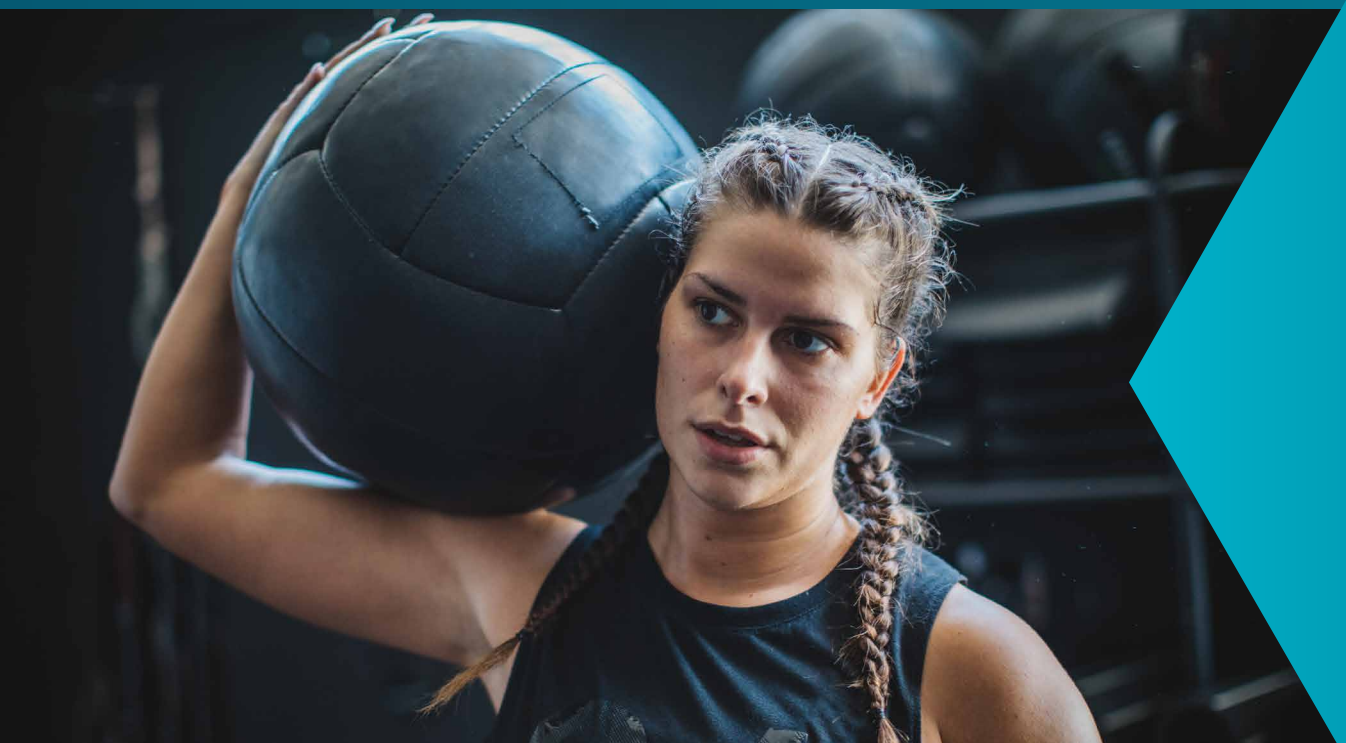
GYM OPERATOR INSIGHTS REPORT 2025 – UK:

Challenges of running a fitness business

What are the biggest hurdles gym and fitness club operators are working to overcome?

This report features exclusive, extensive insights into the shared challenges that operators face across the UK. Plus, words of wisdom from industry specialists.

resamania.co.uk



Stronger together

In today's fast-paced world, it's easy to feel like you're going it alone as a gym operator. Facing challenges in isolation. Unaware that others are navigating the same hurdles – and discovering powerful solutions.

At Resamania, we believe knowledge is power. And when it's shared, it becomes unstoppable.

That's why we set out to uncover the real state of running a fitness business in 2025. So, you can see where you stand and gain fresh perspective.

When we lift each other up, we all move forward.



The headline figures you NEED to know

Short on time? No sweat! This is your summary of the biggest takeaways from operators of privately-owned gyms across the UK:

» **9 out of 10 operators have seen costs rise year-on-year.** Payroll & staff wages top the list of costs that have risen. Followed by business rates/taxes and cleaning & sanitation supplies.

» **68% have increased membership fees** since January 2024. Positively, 76% of those who've raised prices have seen profitability increase as a result. Yet, many also had cancellations and/or received complaints from members.

» **Inability to meet salary demands** tops the list of challenges when it comes to staffing. 26% of those with staff report this. When it comes to recruiting new staff, 56% of those who'd recruited since January 2024 **struggled to find qualified candidates.**

» Operators are confident that they're coming close to being technologically advanced. Most have adopted multiple technologies. 40% said the biggest tech challenge is **getting members to use solutions introduced.**

» **57% of operators are not currently using AI** within their business. The biggest barrier to using AI is lack of time to investigate options. For those who are using AI, the most popular use case is to create content for marketing.

» **Three quarters of operators face local competition.** And over half have seen new clubs open within 5 miles since January 2024. 58% of those facing competition are trying to win the same demographics. Similarly, 58% report that members are switching to competitors.

» 22% of operators surveyed are open 24/7 – and 12% are considering it. For both those opening 24/7 and considering it, **staying in control of access** is the biggest challenge.

» **83% of operators sell memberships in-person**. And 68% of these operators rely on employees to sell memberships alongside other duties. 38% report lack of resources to chase leads as a challenge.

» **Over three quarters (80%) of operators are using email for marketing purposes**. The biggest hurdles faced (and a reason for not using email marketing) are **performance** related. 40% report low conversion rates and 31% struggle with low open/click through rates.

» **42% of operators say new members always have an induction** of some kind. Operators who report that retention is a significant challenge are less likely to always offer inductions. And more likely to feel that inductions aren't working.

» 68% of operators have a digital onboarding journey. And of those who do, **two-thirds are not completely confident that their approach is working well.**

» **82% say retention is a challenge.** Most cite keeping members motivated and resource limitations as the biggest retention headaches.

» 38% of operators always record a reason why members cancel. The most common reason they report hearing is that **members are moving out of the area**. Other common reasons include members **lacking the time to visi**t and memberships becoming **unaffordable** due to redundancy/job loss.

» **Almost 9 out of 10 operators are using Direct Debits** to collect membership payments. **Members cancelling payments through their own banks** is the biggest challenge operators face.

» 38% of operators shared that **finances are keeping them up at night.**

Read on for more detailed insights and to see how your business compares to others.

Let’s get stuck in!

Throughout this report, we’ll share exclusive insights into the challenges that gym operators are facing across the UK. So, you can see how your business measures up.

GO DEEPER

» Finances

» People

» Technology

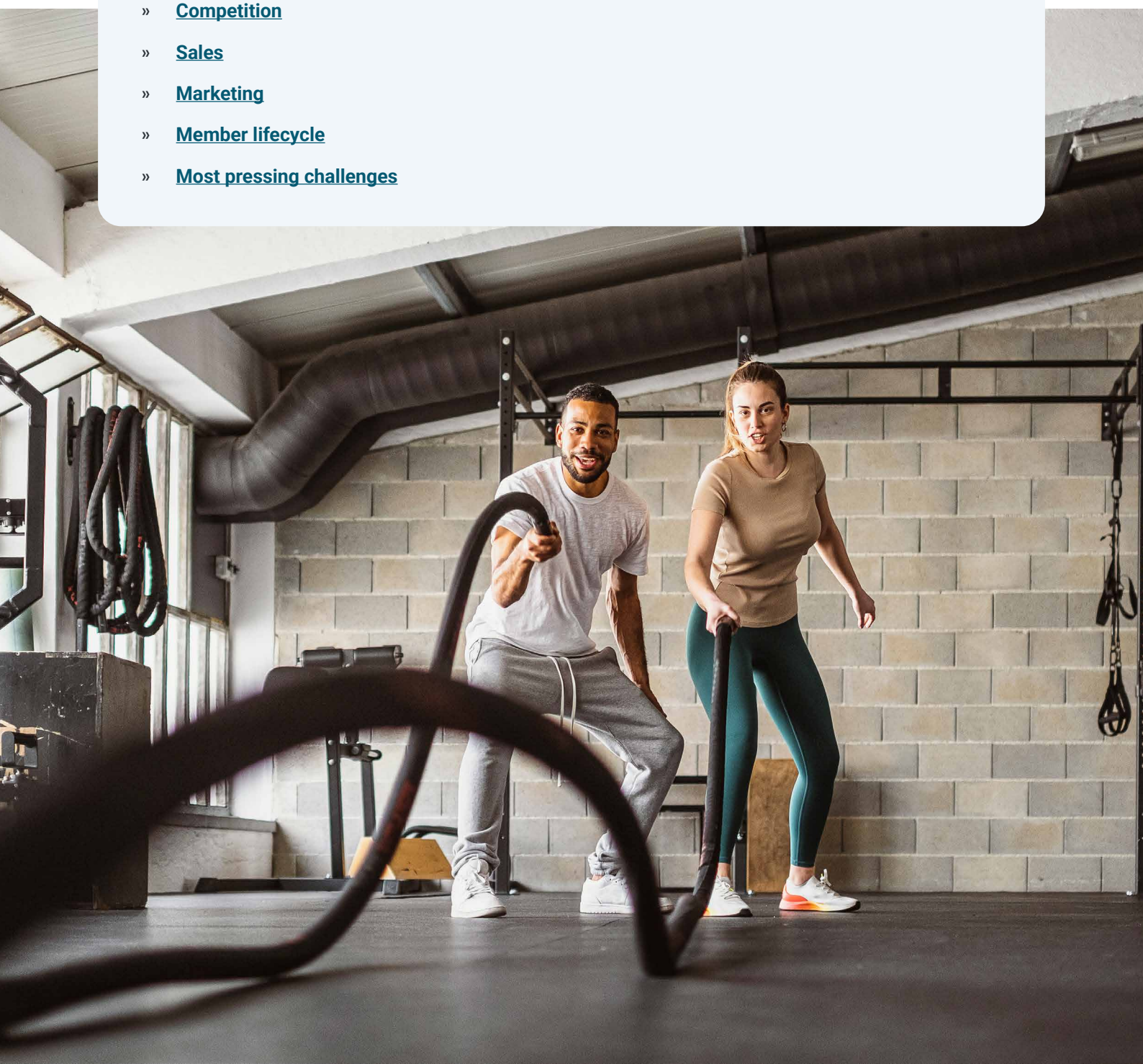
» Competition

» Sales

» Marketing

» Member lifecycle

» Most pressing challenges

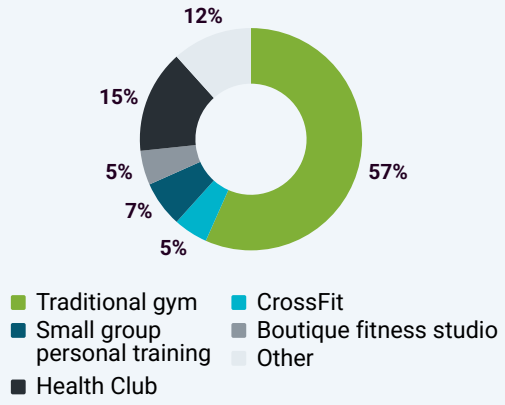


About the data

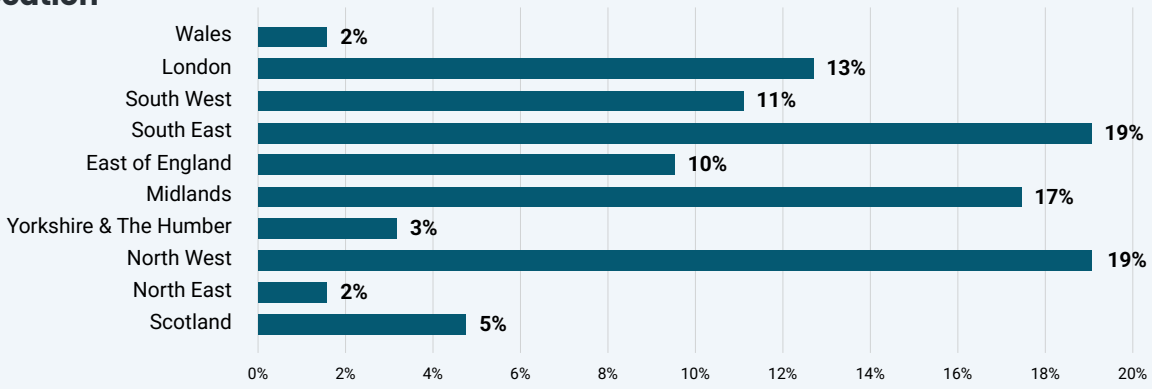
RESAMANIA EXCLUSIVE INSIGHTS

The insights featured in this report are from The Challenges Of Running A Gym Research. This research was conducted between 28 February and 31 March 2025 by Resamania via an online survey of 60 privately-owned gym operators in the UK.

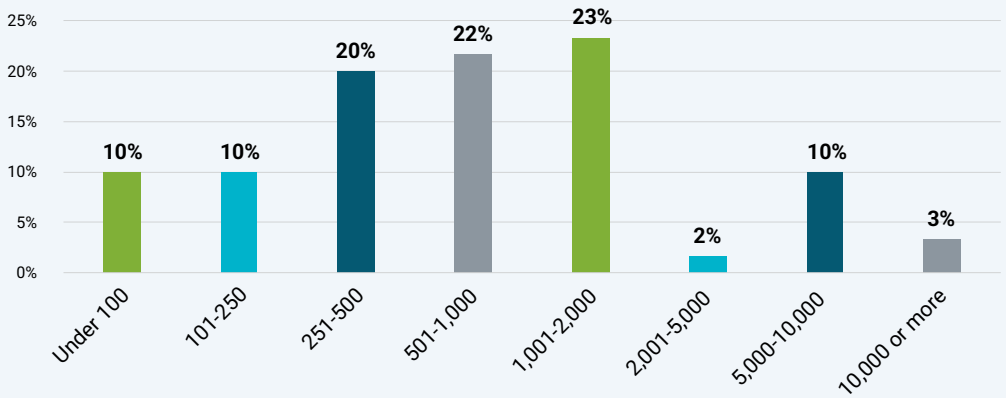
Type of facility



Location

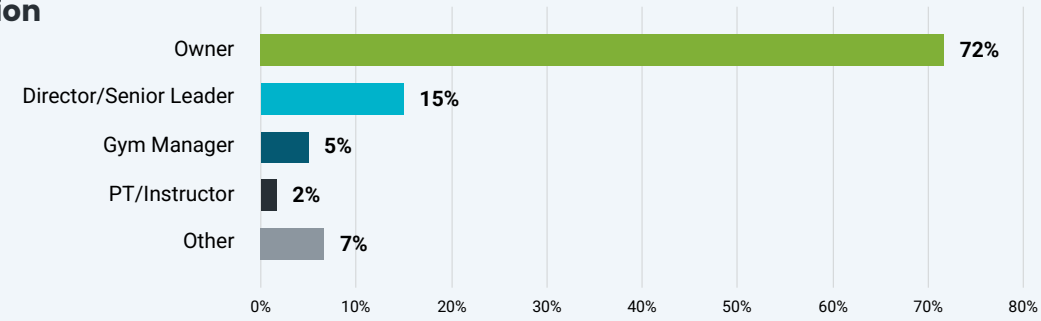


Number of members

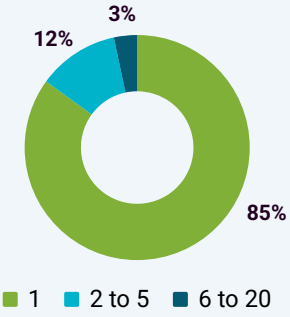


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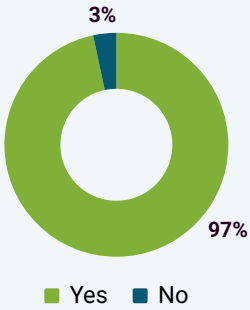
Position



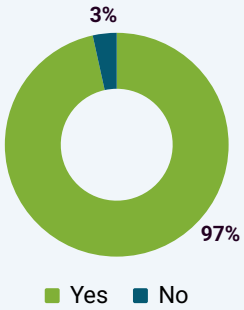
Number of locations/sites



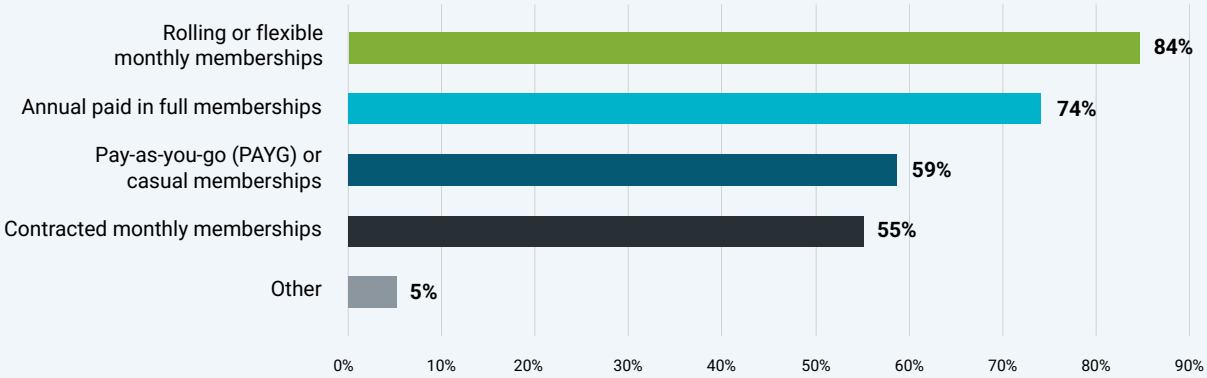
Offer memberships



Memberships are main source of revenue



Types of membership offered (where memberships sold)



HOW DOES THE UK FITNESS INDUSTRY MEASURE UP?

Throughout this report, you'll see how the findings from UK gym operators compare to the findings of the multi-country edition of this report. In total we surveyed 246 gym operators across the UK, France, & Spain.

PART 1:

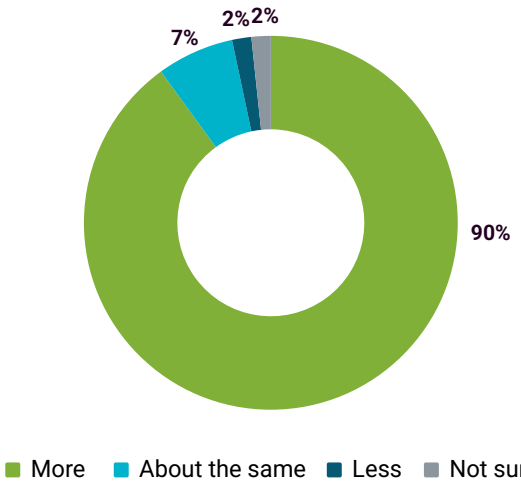
Finances

9 out of 10 have seen costs rise

90% of operators surveyed report the cost of operating is higher than last year.

FIGURE 1

Operating costs have risen year-on-year for 9 out of 10 gym operators



Q: Compared to this time last year, is it more or less expensive to run your fitness facilities?

Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025

Increasing operational costs have hit pretty much every category of spend. These areas were most reported as having increased:

1. Payroll & staff wages – 79%

This is not surprising. The survey ran ahead of the new 2025/26 financial year. Just before changes to employers' National Insurance contributions and National Minimum/Living Wage rates came into force

The rate of employers' National Insurance contributions rose from 13.8% to 15%. And the level at which employers start paying reduced from £9,100 to £5,000 annually for each employee. The Employment Allowance increased for eligible employers from £5,000 to £10,500, allowing some to offset the National Insurance increases. But this will not help all employers.

At the same time, the National Minimum Wage increased for those aged 18-20 from £8.60 an hour to £10 an hour. And for those aged 21+ the National Living Wage increased from £11.44 to £12.12 an hour.

2. Business rates/taxes – 72%

Again, this is not surprising. The new financial year in April 2025 saw changes to business rates.

The Retail, Hospitality, and Leisure (RHL) relief scheme changed. Giving eligible businesses a 40% reduction in business rates (capped at £110,000 per business). Before this, the reduction was 75%.

3. Cleaning & sanitation supplies – 64%

Like many costs, prices for the supplies needed to keep fitness facilities clean have risen recently. This has been driven by factors including increased energy costs, expense and scarcity of raw materials, transport and import costs, and manufacturing costs.

4. Insurance – 59%

> Severe weather. Supply chain issues. Regulatory change. Insurance premiums can be impacted by both local and global factors. These factors push up the cost of claims for insurers. And in turn insurers need to increase premiums.

4. Utilities – 59%

Energy costs have been going up for the past few years. Costs have been pushed up by COVID-19, war, the transition to renewable energy, and wholesale energy market volatility.

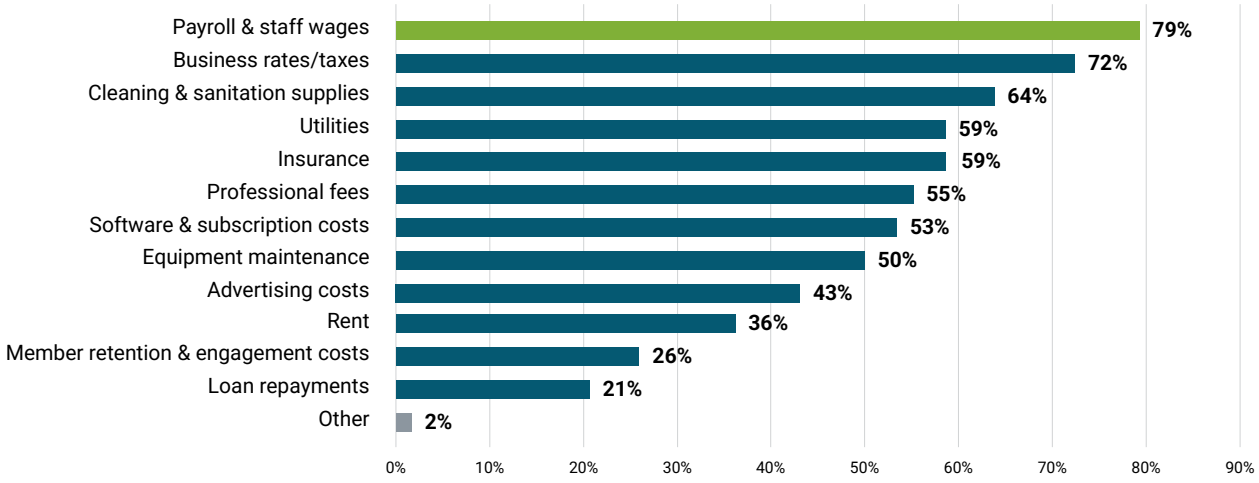
More recently, water bills have increased. Why? Due to required infrastructure investments, higher operational costs, and growing demand on the supply.

Operators are **least likely to report seeing costs of loan repayments increase**. Of those who said operating costs are more/about the same than a year ago, 21% saw loan repayments increase. Reflecting the relative stability of longer-term agreed costs.

Similarly, 26% reported that member retention and engagement costs have increased. Perhaps a reflection of operators running such programmes through other systems and tools with few extra costs incurred.

FIGURE 2

A wide variety of costs have gone up



Q: Which operating costs have increased compared to this time last year? (Select all that apply)

Base: Gym operators who reported that it was more expensive, or about the same, to run their fitness facilities compared to the same time last year.

Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025

Increasing fees boosts profitability

With operating costs increasing for most, it's understandable that many need to pass some of that cost on to members.

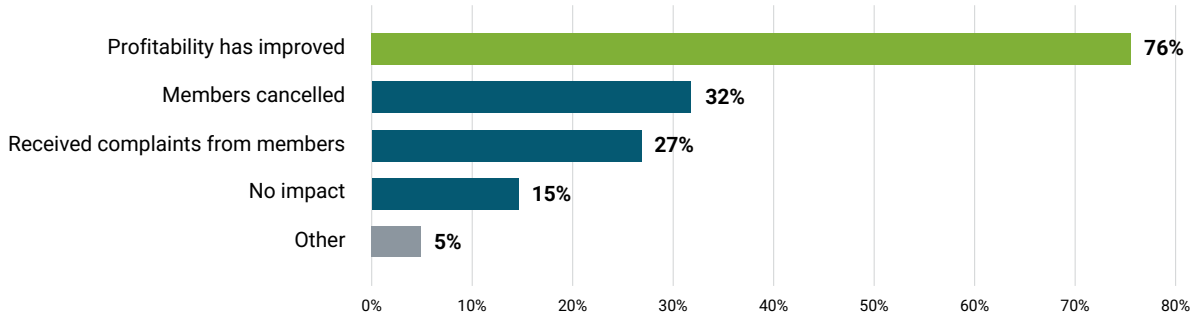
The Leisure DB 2025 State Of The Fitness Industry Report shows that the average monthly membership fee charged by private sector operators increased year-on-year. Up to £48.45 for 2025, from £47.24 in 2024.

Of those surveyed, **68% have increased membership fees** since January 2024. 32% have chosen not to. Positively, 76% of those who raised prices say **profitability has improved as a result**.

But increasing prices has created challenges for some. 32% have **seen members cancel** after prices went up. And 27% have navigated **member complaints**.

FIGURE 3

A quarter of those who increased fees saw a boost in profitability



Q: What was the impact of increasing membership fees? (Select all that apply)

Base: Gym operators who reported that they'd increased membership fees for members since January 2024

Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025



Most feel in control of business finances

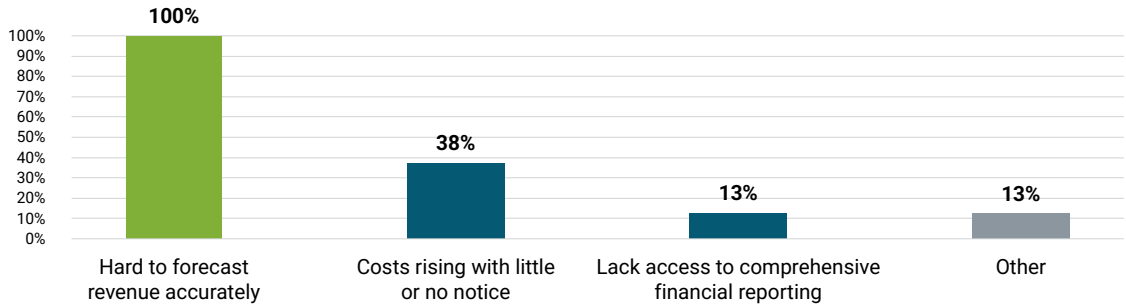
87% of gym operators share that they feel in control of their business finances. **Leaving 13% admitting that they don't feel in control**.

Typically, operators who don't feel in control say that **more types of operating costs have increased** than those who feel in control. And if those who don't feel in control of finances raised prices, they were most likely to be **met with attrition and/or complaints**. And less likely to report increased profitability.

All of those feeling a lack of control over finances say that it's **hard to forecast revenue accurately**. And this group share that retention is a challenge to some extent. Forecasting revenue accurately becomes impossible if you don't have a stable membership base.

FIGURE 4

DIFFICULTY FORECASTING REVENUE WITH ACCURACY CONTRIBUTES TO OPERATORS FEELING A LACK OF CONTROL OVER FINANCES



Q: Why don't you feel in control of your business finances? (Select all that apply)

Base: Gym operators who reported that they do not feel in control of their business finances

Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025

HOW DOES THE UK FITNESS INDUSTRY MEASURE UP?

Looking to the multi-country edition of this report – how does what we're seeing in the UK compare?

» A higher percentage of UK operators report costs have risen compared to last year (90% in the UK vs. 73% overall)

» The top 5 costs reported to have gone up looked a little different outside of the UK:

1. 78% Utilities (vs. 59% / joint position 4 in the UK)
2. 64% Payroll & staff wages (vs. 79% / position 1 in the UK)
3. 56% Business rates/taxes (vs. 72% / position 2 in the UK)
4. 47% Software & subscription costs (vs. 53% / position 6 in the UK)
5. 46% Insurance (vs. 59% / joint position 4 in the UK)

» A higher percentage of operators in the UK have increased membership fees since January 2024 (68% in the UK vs. 49% overall). The positive impact on profitability is also seen by operators overseas

» Positively, a slightly higher percentage of UK operators feel in control of their business finances (87% in the UK vs. 83% overall)

EXPERT INSIGHT:

"Rising costs are hitting almost every gym owner across the UK, from payroll, to insurance and utilities.

It's a tough environment, and there's no sugar-coating that. But what this data also shows is the incredible resilience of our sector.

Gym owners are adapting. Through smart pricing and member value, tighter controls, and more community engagement and many are seeing their profitability improve despite the headwinds.

What stands out in this report is that 87% of gym owners still feel in control of their finances — even with nearly all facing rising costs. That's remarkable. It shows a level of determination and business acumen that deserves more recognition.

Gym owners are becoming more commercially savvy, making tough decisions, and finding new ways to sustain and grow their businesses.

The challenges are real, but so is the grit of this industry."

Robert Handy
Founder
independentgyms.co.uk

INDEPENDENTGYMS

PART 2:

People

Unworkable salary demands top staffing challenges list

9 out of 10 of the gym operators surveyed have full and/or part-time employees. Positively, **30% of those with employees face no challenges** with existing team members.

Of those with staff, **26% reported that they are unable to meet salary demands**. More operators have seen the cost of payroll and staff wages rise than any other category of spend. So, this is understandable.

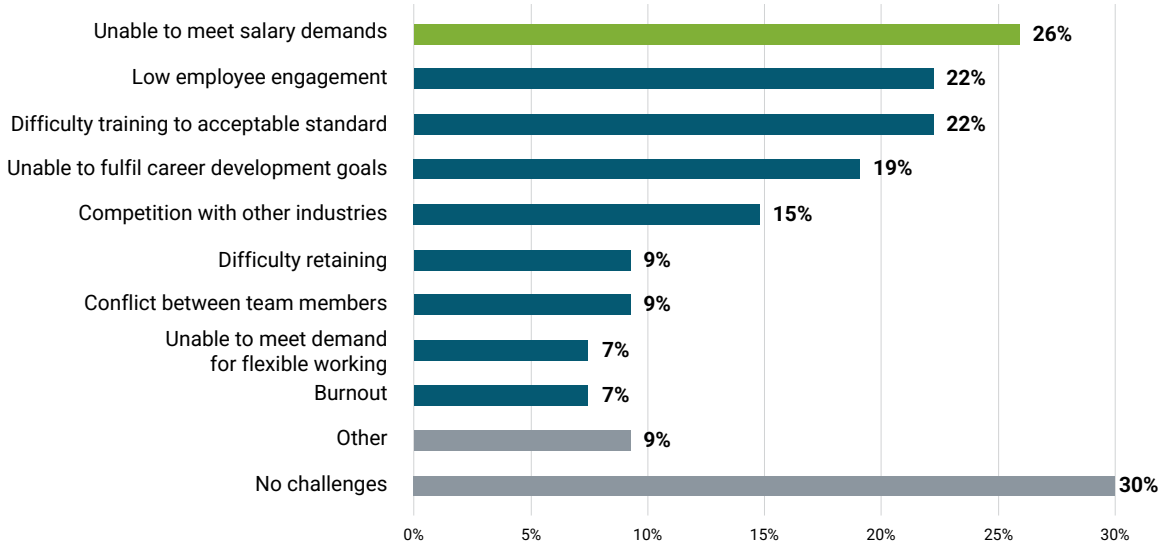
At the same time, for employees, cost of living continues to rise. Prices for products and services keep creeping up.

In this scenario, team members are more inclined to ask for pay rises. And even move on. **Love Recruitment** found that 29% of fitness candidates from the industry were motivated by a higher salary in looking for a new role.

Beyond salary demands, 22% share that **training staff to an acceptable standard is difficult**. And 22% report **low employee engagement**.

FIGURE 5

Unworkable salary demands. Low engagement. Training challenges.



Q: What challenges do you face with existing team members? (Select all that apply)

Base: Gym operators who have full and/or part-time staff

Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025

72% of operators with staff say they've recruited since January 2024. When recruiting, **56% reported that they faced a lack of qualified candidates**.

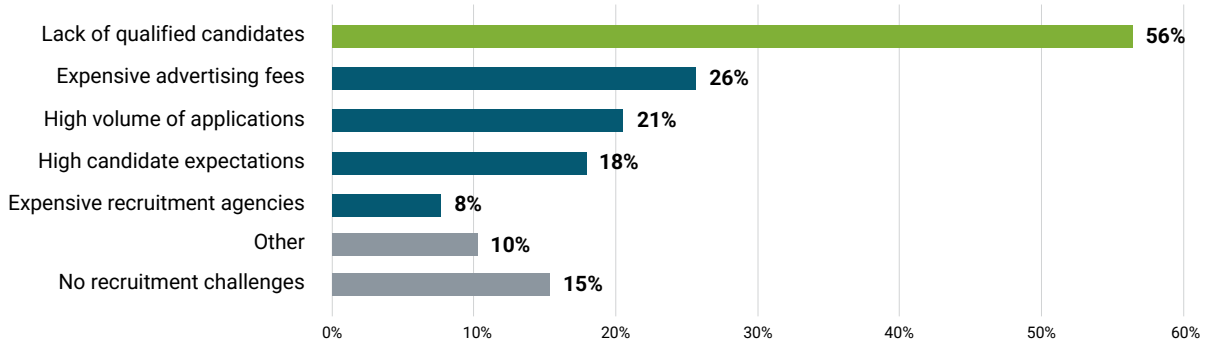
Of those facing a lack of qualified candidates, 32% also have difficulty training existing team members to an acceptable level. This compares to 22% of all operators with employees.

This reflects a wider industry challenge – the **skills gap** as reported by **Active IQ**.

The 2024 research found that there's a lack of accessible, effective professional development opportunities. So, resulting in a lack of qualified candidates.

FIGURE 6

Lack of qualified candidates tops list of recruitment hurdles



Q: What challenges did you face when it came to recruiting new team members? (Select all that apply)

Base: Gym operators who have full and/or part-time staff and have recruited since January 2024

Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025

HOW DOES THE UK FITNESS INDUSTRY MEASURE UP?

Looking to the multi-country edition of this report – how does what we're seeing in the UK compare?

» A higher percentage of UK gym operators have full and/or part-time employees than elsewhere (90% in the UK vs. 73% overall)

» Despite more operators having employees in the UK, the percentages reporting challenges tend to be a little lower than the overall multi-country findings. The top 5 challenges look a bit different:

1. 28% Low employee engagement (vs. 22% / joint position 2 in the UK)
2. 27% Unable to meet salary demands (vs. 26% / position 1 in the UK)
3. 23% Difficulty training to an acceptable standard (vs. 22% / joint position 2 in the UK)
4. 18% Unable to fulfil career development goals (vs. 19% / position 3 in the UK)
5. 13% Unable to meet demand for flexible working (vs. 7% / position 7 in the UK)

» A higher percentage of UK gym operators with employees have recruited since January 2024 (72% in the UK vs. 65% overall). A lack of qualified candidates is a shared challenge (56% in the UK vs. 65% overall)



EXPERT INSIGHT:

"If you're running a gym in 2025, you're definitely not alone in feeling the pressure when it comes to people – and specifically the right people for your business. While 90% of UK gym operators have full or part-time staff (well above the overall average), we are still dealing with some people challenges.

Top of the list? **Unrealistic salary expectations**. Around 1 in 4 operators say they simply can't meet what staff are asking for – and it makes sense. Wages are climbing, the cost of living is biting, and people understandably want more in their pockets. It's also no secret that as a sector – fitness doesn't always pay the best (but has SO many other benefits and reasons why we work in it!). It is definitely not always possible – or sustainable – to simply increase salary banding straight away but there are other ways to show remuneration flexibility. **Bonus schemes, flexible perks (additional annual leave is a great one that doesn't cost you anything), and clear pay progression**— are all ways to show value without just upping the salary.

Low engagement and training staff to an acceptable standard are tied for second place, with 22% of operators struggling here. Simple wins like **regular shoutouts, clear communication, and involving your team in decision-making** can really lift morale and engagement. And when it comes to training, **on-the-job coaching/ feedback loops, buddy systems and bite-size training sessions (to fit around the busy working day) can all work really well**.

Hiring has also been a challenge and of the 72% that have recruited this year, over half have struggled to find qualified people. Whilst this can obviously be a challenge (depending what you require operationally to run your business) – we'd always advise to hire for attitude and train for skill where possible and unqualified candidates doesn't have to be a negative. Growing your own talent and investing in their ongoing development often means higher retention and great cultural alignment!

In summary, the challenges are real, but they're not without resolutions. With the right mix of **people-first thinking, creative solutions, cultural focus**, gyms can build stronger, happier teams – and that's great news for everyone!"

Maddie Cummings
Recruitment Director
loverecruitmentgroup.com

Love Recruitment
Service and Delivery

PART 3:

Technology

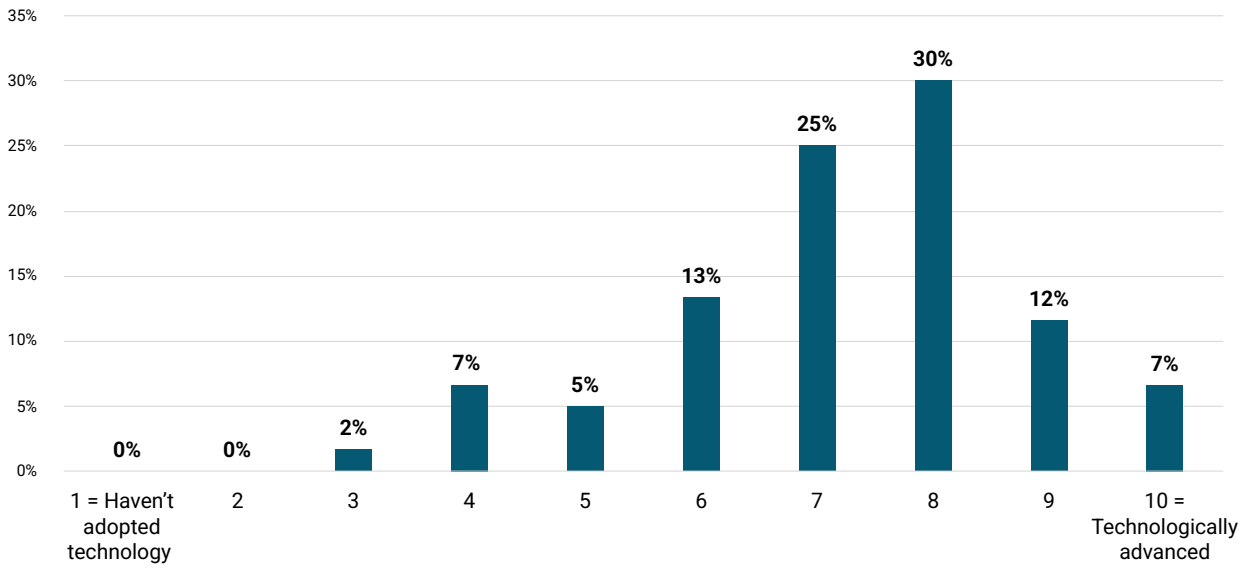
Members slow to adopt tech

UK gym operators were asked to rate their business' adoption of technology on a scale of 1-10 (with 10 being technologically advanced). The average rating comes in at a **healthy 7**.

In fact, no operators rate themselves at 1 or 2 and very few gave a rating of 5 or lower.

FIGURE 7

On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your adoption of technology?



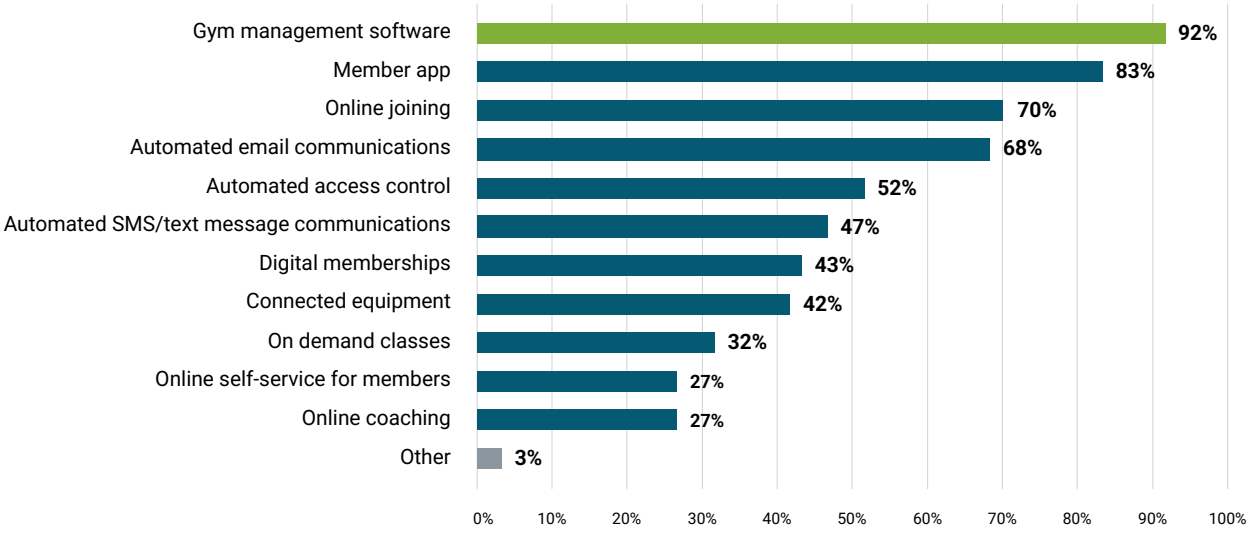
Q: On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your adoption of technology?

Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025

92% of those surveyed report that they use gym management software and 83% have a member app. In all, most operators use multiple types of technology.

FIGURE 8

Operators have adopted a wide variety of tech



Q: What types of technology does your business use? (Select all that apply)

Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025

Most operators face some type of technology-related challenge. Only 18% said they don't face any tech challenges.

82% report facing at least one tech-related challenge. These are the most common tech challenges UK gym operators are facing:

1. **Members slow to adopt – 40%**
   From member apps to connected equipment, members interact with many types of tech in a gym environment.

   Digital fatigue. Not knowing how a new solution is helpful. Old habits that die hard. There are many reasons why members hesitate to adopt new tech.

   For the 7% of operators who rate their adoption of tech a 10 (the highest score) 75% report this as a challenge. They are more likely to have introduced more types of tech than other operators. Seemingly amplifying this challenge.

2. **Lack of integration between systems – 30%**
   Data inconsistencies. Extra workload switching between different systems. More relationships to manage. Tech that works in isolation can cause many headaches.

   Digital Futures research from ukactive found that most operators have a digital experimenter level of maturity. While tech adoption is high, there's a lack of goal alignment and investment. Both of which drive strong performance.

   This challenge is indicative of digital experimenters. Systems are chosen based on features required.

However, foresight is needed to make sure systems 'play well' together.

3. **Lack of time to research and implement – 23%**
   Plus, 17% of operators surveyed say that they're unclear on what tech will be best for business.

   So much tech is emerging, and developments are happening at what seems like lightning speed. Finding the time to identify what's really needed and introduce new solutions is tough for operators who are already busy.

3. **Staff slow to adopt – 23%**

   Coming joint third, this one could be surprising for some. After all, if employers are asking employees to use new systems, compliance seems like a non-negotiable.

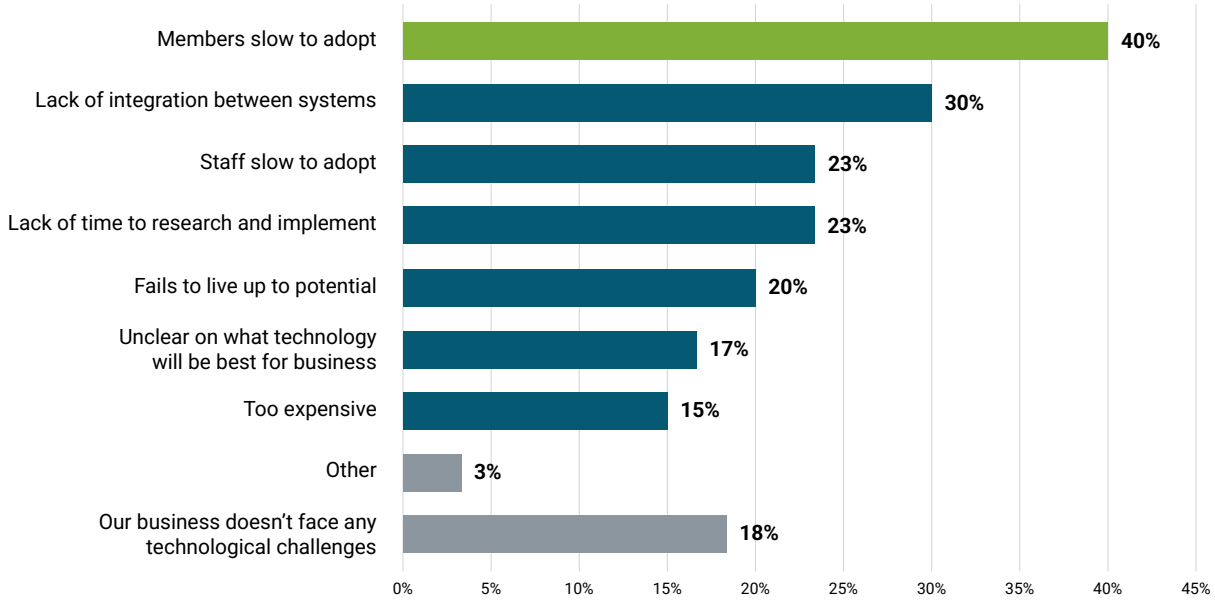
   Yet, staff resistance to adopting tech is well documented. Fear of change. Lack of understanding. Concerns about the technology's relevance. Without the right approach to introducing new solutions, it can be difficult to get sceptical employees onboard.

4. **Fails to live up to potential – 20%**
   From a lot of hype to poor implementation, it's easy to feel that the reality of a new technology just doesn't live up to expectations. Especially if operators don't really know what they want to achieve with a new solution.

   All the other challenges outlined could contribute to and heighten the feeling that solutions aren't living up to the expected potential.

FIGURE 9

82% of UK gym operators report at least one tech-related challenge



Q: What technology challenges do you face? (Select all that apply)

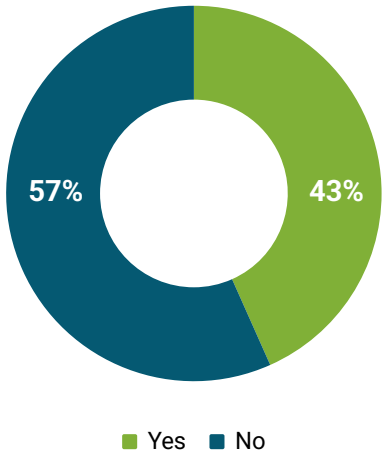
Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025

Less than half are using AI

When asked about artificial intelligence (AI), most operators (57%) aren't currently using it. 43% are using AI.

FIGURE 10

43% of operators are using AI



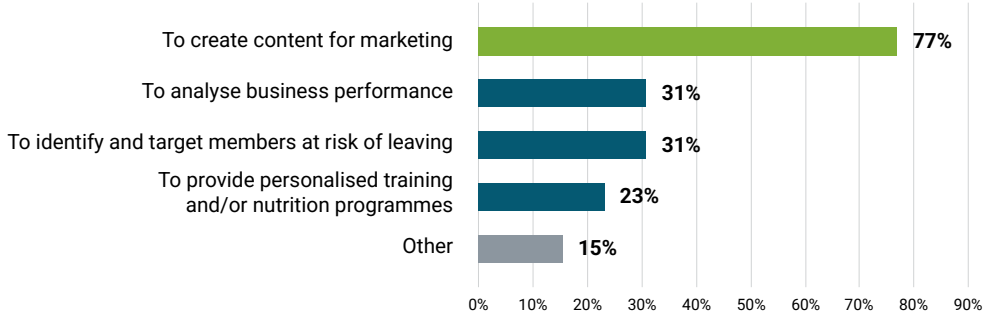
Q: Are you using AI within your business?

Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025

By far, **creating content for marketing is the most popular use case** for those operators using AI. Operators are also using it to understand business performance and to re-engage members at risk of cancelling.

FIGURE 11

Over three quarters of those using AI create marketing content with it



Q: How are you using AI? (Select all that apply)

Base: Gym operators who are using AI

Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025

Of those gym operators using AI, 31% feel they're using it very effectively. 65% feel they're using AI somewhat effectively and just 4% ineffectively. So, there's at least some **room for improvement in how AI is used**.

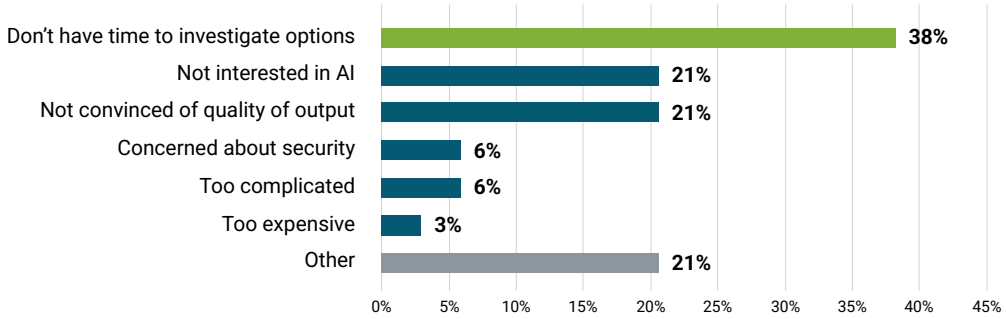
When it comes to the 57% not using AI, the **biggest barrier to adoption is time**.

Many don't have the time to investigate options and work out what's best for their business. This mirrors the bigger challenges when it comes to tech. Reflecting both the lack of time to research/introduce and lack of clarity on what's going to be helpful.

Beyond this, there are signs that gym operators in the UK are **disinterested in and distrustful of AI**.

FIGURE 12

Lack of time (disinterest & distrust) holding back AI adoption



Q: Why are you not using AI? (Select all that apply)

Base: Gym operators who are not using AI (and have never used it)

Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025

HOW DOES THE UK FITNESS INDUSTRY MEASURE UP?

Looking to the multi-country edition of this report – how does what we're seeing in the UK compare?

- Overall gym operators surveyed across all countries rate tech adoption at a 7. However, for UK operators a higher percentage rate themselves 7+ and say they use more types of tech
- Member adoption of tech is a more common challenge for UK operators than overall (40% in the UK vs. 27% overall)
- In the multi-country findings, the top tech challenge is a lack of time to research and implement tech. This came in joint third for UK operators (23% in the UK vs. 37% overall). Likewise, a lack of clarity around what tech will be best for business came in higher at position two overall. Compared to position 6 in the UK (17% in the UK vs. 28% overall)
- A higher percentage of UK gym operators report using AI than across all countries (43% in the UK vs. 36% overall). The top use across the findings remains to create content for marketing. And the biggest barrier to using AI is also a lack of time to investigate options. This is higher than in the UK (38% in the UK vs. 56% overall)

EXPERT INSIGHT:

"It's exciting to see such wide tech adoption amongst gym operators. And interesting to see how operators are taking strides to find practical ways to use AI.

Many of the challenges are ones we often hear from operators who've introduced new solutions. And they're hurdles that can be overcome with the right approach.

A starting point when considering any new tech solution is to clearly articulate what you want to achieve. Often that's a specific type of experience for members.

Next, we recommend operators look at their current tech stack – the solutions in place. Are there features you're not making use of? Or functionality that you could use better? What gaps exist?

By speaking with your tech partners, you should be able to answer these questions. And learn about integrations that could help you achieve your goals without data and task duplication.

Encourage adoption amongst your team by getting key staff involved in decision-making. When it comes to introducing new tech, it goes without saying that you need to allow time for staff training. And your team should have access to ongoing support.

It's also a good idea to appoint champions for your new solution. These team members should encourage others to adopt the tech and can be points of contact for those struggling.

Getting members to use new tech solutions you introduce can be tough – as we see in the findings.

Start with clear and proactive communications highlighting the benefits of any new systems and kit. Communicate across a range of channels – email, text message, social media, in-person, etc.

For some tech, you may need to give members access to dedicated resources. So, helping them get started and troubleshoot along the way.

Set your business up for success. Adopt solutions that combine ease of use with a clear value proposition that meets your specific needs."

James Barter
Head of Partnerships
resamania.co.uk

xplor resamania

PART 4:

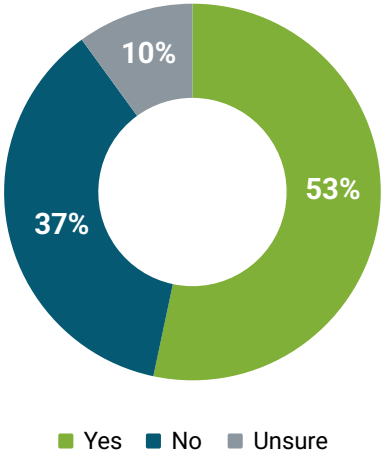
Competition

Competition is fierce

Three quarters (75%) of gym operators have competition locally. And **53% have seen new clubs open within 5 miles of their location(s)** since January 2024.

FIGURE 13

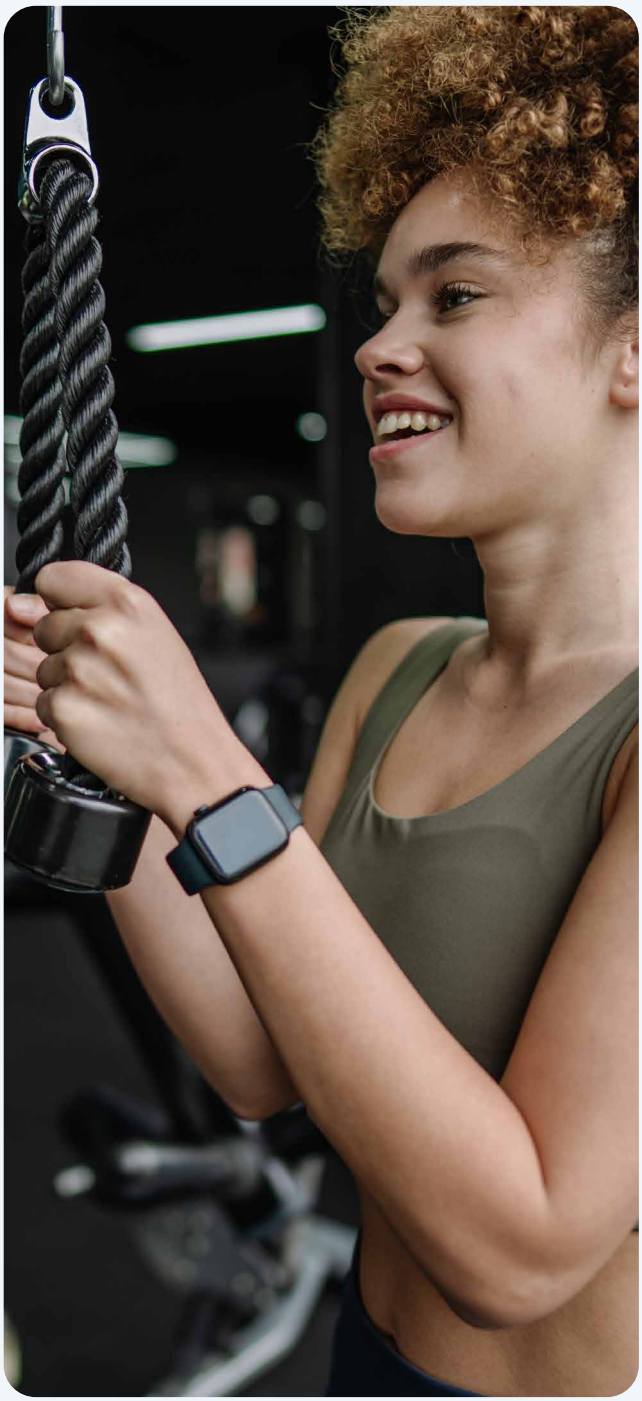
Just over half of operators have seen new clubs open within 5 miles



Q: Have any new clubs opened within 5 miles of your location(s) since January 2024?

Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025

The State Of The UK Fitness Industry Report 2025 reflects this. The **number of privately-owned gyms rose by 4.7%** from 4,513 in 2024 to 4,727 in 2025. And across the country, 155 new clubs opened.



Competing for the same people

Of those with local competition, **over half (58%) are targeting the same demographics** and/or **seeing members switch to competitors**.

Across all privately and publicly operated fitness facilities, the penetration rate sits at around 16.6% (Leisure DB) to 16.9% (ukactive). And has grown year-on-year. Yet, **certain demographics are more likely to hold a membership than others**.

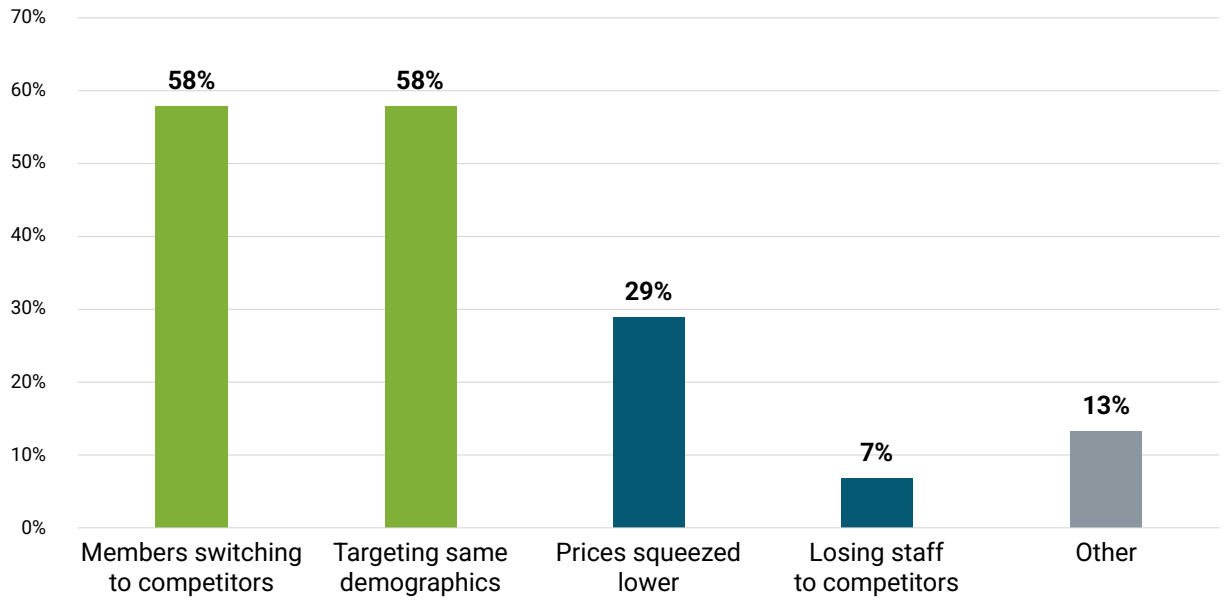
The **UK Health & Fitness Market Report 2025** found that people aged 35+ are less likely to have a membership than those aged under 35. At the same time, those in certain demographic groups (like lower socio-economic groups and those with disabilities or long-term health conditions) are also less likely to have a fitness membership.

Without a strong differentiator or appealing to those not inclined to join a gym, operators are **left targeting the same people**.

These members are easily persuaded to switch clubs. Opting for a club with a more convenient location or a more attractive price. 29% of those facing local competition said that **prices are being squeezed lower**.

FIGURE 14

Competing for the same people



Q: How are you competing? (Select all that apply)

Base: Gym operators who face competition locally

Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025

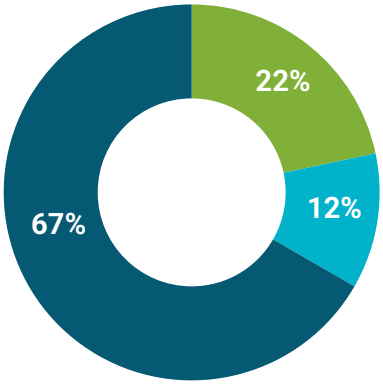
Access control is the biggest challenge of 24/7 opening

Large chains, including many operating in the low-cost category, now offer members round the clock access 7 days a week. So, 24/7 has been a hot topic in recent years. According to Leisure DB, **35%** of private operators now open 24/7 (up 2% year-on-year).

It can offer clubs the opportunity to reach people who want to use the gym outside of 'regular' hours. **22% of operators surveyed are open 24/7. Plus, 12% are considering making the move**.

FIGURE 15

34% are open 24/7 or considering it



Q: Are your facilities open 24/7?

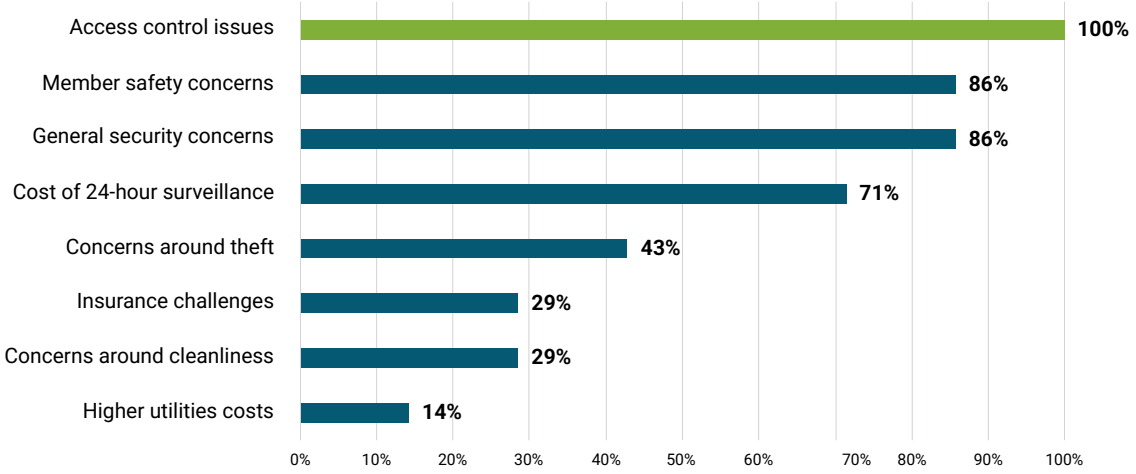
Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025



For those currently open 24/7, 40% report concerns over fraudulent access during unmanned opening hours. This is reflected in the challenges faced by those considering the move to 24/7 opening too.

FIGURE 16

Access control issues hinder transition to 24/7 opening



Q: What challenges are you experiencing in transitioning to 24/7 opening? (Select all that apply)

Base: Gym operators who are considering transitioning to 24/7 open hours

Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025

HOW DOES THE UK FITNESS INDUSTRY MEASURE UP?

Looking to the multi-country edition of this report – how does what we're seeing in the UK compare?

- Competition levels are about the same looking at the UK findings (75% of operators face local competition) and the overall findings (76%)
- When it comes to how operators are competing, the challenges are largely the same. Operators are targeting the same demographics (58% in the UK vs. 54% overall). And members are switching to competitors (58% UK vs. 51% overall). The main difference here is that UK operators facing competition are a little less likely to see prices squeezed lower (29% in the UK vs. 39% overall)
- A higher percentage of UK operators report opening 24/7 (22% in the UK vs. 12% overall). And a higher percentage are considering it (12% in the UK vs. 4% overall). Of those considering 24/7 opening, access control issues are the biggest barrier in the UK. Whereas that is less of a concern overall

EXPERT INSIGHT:

"The latest insights reveal a fiercely competitive fitness landscape in the UK — but rather than seeing this as a threat, we celebrate it as proof of a vibrant, growing sector as we reported in our State of the Industry Fitness Report back in June. However, with 75% of operators facing local competition and over half targeting the same demographics, there's no doubt that operators need to innovate and differentiate to thrive.

At Leisure DB, we see this as an opportunity for clubs to redefine value, focus on community, and reach untapped demographics, particularly those over 35 and underrepresented groups. The growth in privately-owned gyms (up 4.7% year-on-year) and the rise of 24/7 operations (now 35% of private operators) show a willingness to adapt to new lifestyles and consumer expectations.

While price competition and member switching are clear challenges, they underline the need for stronger brand loyalty and personalised experiences. As the industry embraces technology, from AI-powered engagement tools to smarter payment solutions, clubs have never been better equipped to deliver exceptional service, retain members, and expand their reach.

Looking ahead, success will be defined by those who create inclusive, flexible, and tech-enabled spaces that empower people to make fitness part of their lives on their terms. It's an exciting time to be part of an industry that isn't just growing in numbers but in impact.

At Leisure DB, we're proud to support this journey by helping operators understand their market potential and identify new opportunities. Together, we can ensure the fitness sector doesn't just keep pace with change but leads it."

Glen Thurgood
Chief Strategy Officer
leisuredb.com

PART 5:

Sales

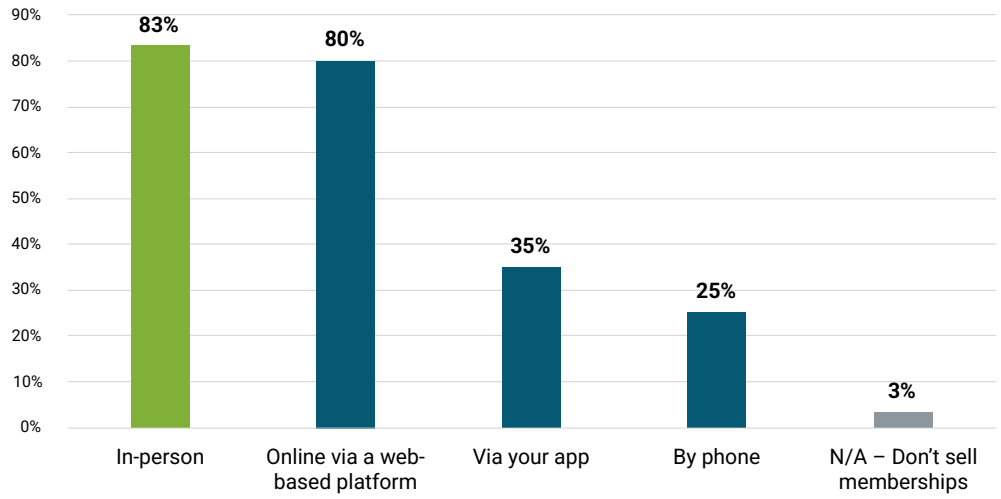
Operators rely on employees to sell memberships alongside other responsibilities

For UK gym operators, memberships are sold via a variety of online and offline channels. **83% of operators surveyed sell memberships in-person**. This was closely followed by online via a web-based platform – 80% sell this way.

Lower proportions of those surveyed sell memberships via an app (35%) or by phone (25%).

FIGURE 17

Memberships commonly sold in-person and online



Q: How do you sell memberships? (Select all that apply)

Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025

Despite many operators selling memberships in-person, **only 20% have dedicated salespeople**. And those that do, have an average of 3 salespeople.

This suggests that online is the main membership sales channel for many. Although only 12% said they solely sell online.

68% rely on employees to handle sales tasks alongside other duties.

Managing the membership sales cycle

How do those with dedicated sales staff, or other team members selling, manage membership sales? **51% use prospecting tools within their gym management software**.

Surprisingly, almost half have no system in place or are working from spreadsheets. So, exposing operators to:

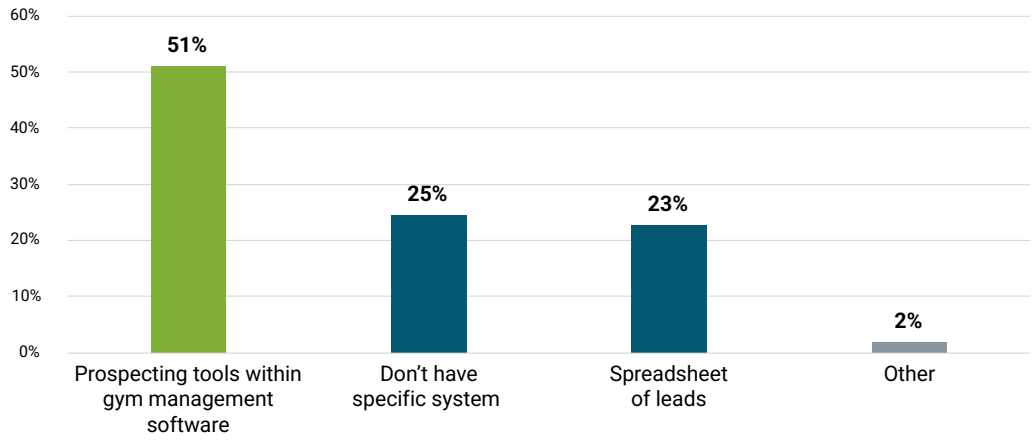
» **The risk of task duplication**

» **Tracking challenges**

» **Missed sales opportunities**

FIGURE 18

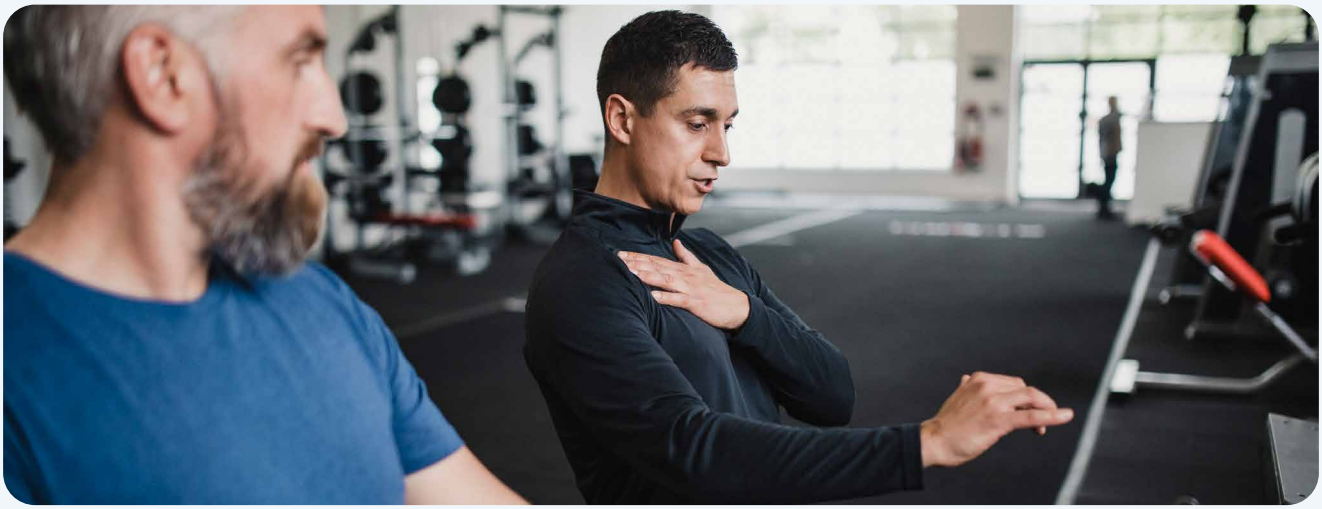
Half of operators manage the sales cycle within their gym management software



Q: How do you manage the membership sales cycle?

Base: Gym operators who have salespeople or other employees managing sales

Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025



Resourcing headaches

With 68% depending on staff to sell memberships alongside other responsibilities, and with so many relying on spreadsheets or luck to manage leads, the top sales challenge is unsurprising.

38% lack the resources to chase leads. 85% of operators who lack resources to chase leads have no dedicated salespeople.

Teams are struggling to juggle everything and likely leaving sales on the table. Best practice suggests that clubs should follow up with leads within an hour of an enquiry. And ideally within minutes.

These are the top 3 membership sales challenges gym operators face

38%
Lack of resources to chase leads

19%
High cost of leads

13%
Poor conversion rates

Q: What's the biggest challenge you face when it comes to membership sales?

Base: Gym operators who have salespeople or other employees managing sales

Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025



Many of these challenges are amplified by the way operators manage membership sales:

- **No specific system of managing the sales cycle** – 46% lack resources to chase leads. 92% of these operators also have employees managing sales alongside other duties, likely exasperating the situation
- **Working with a spreadsheet of leads** – 33% report poor conversion rates as the top challenge
- **Have dedicated salespeople** – 33% struggle with the high cost of leads (25% still say lack of resources to chase leads is an issue)

HOW DOES THE UK FITNESS INDUSTRY MEASURE UP?

Looking to the multi-country edition of this report – how does what we're seeing in the UK compare?

- A higher percentage of UK gym operators are selling memberships digitally. 80% sell online (vs. 47% overall) and 35% sell via an app (vs. 24% overall)
- When it comes to in-person and telephone membership sales, 20% of UK operators have dedicated salespeople. This compares to 22% overall. So, very similar. Likewise, the percentage relying on employees to manage sales alongside other tasks is similar (68% in the UK vs. 70% overall)
- Of those selling in-person, UK operators are slightly more likely to manage the sales cycle via their gym software (51% in the UK vs. 46% overall). The percentages working from spreadsheets or with no system are about the same. No UK operators are using pen and paper, but overall 6% are
- The top challenge remains the same – lack of resources to chase leads (38% in the UK vs. 41% overall)



EXPERT INSIGHT:

"Resamania's findings resonate strongly with what we see every day across the fitness sector. Whether a gym has embraced modern software or still relies on spreadsheets, the core challenge remains the same: without the right combination of time, processes, and accountability, even the most promising sales funnels leak.

Our own research into the UK market echoes these patterns. In our **Time to Reply Study,** we found that many operators take hours or even days to respond to new leads, despite evidence that conversion rates drop sharply when enquiries aren't handled promptly. Similarly, our **Out-of-Hours Study** revealed that nearly a quarter of high-intent enquiries arrive outside standard business hours, when teams typically aren't equipped to engage. These gaps mean that even clubs investing in digital sales channels often struggle to capitalise fully on their demand.

It's easy to assume that adopting the right individual pieces of technology will resolve these issues. But as this report shows, technology without clear workflows, cohesion, and consistent follow-up processes often leads to the same frustrations and lost opportunities. The reality is that sales success rarely hinges on any single system or channel; it comes from the discipline of fast, personalised engagement at every stage of the buyer journey.

Operators of all sizes can take meaningful steps to close these gaps. Whether that's setting clear response time targets, automating routine follow-ups, or implementing tools that unify every touchpoint into a single, always-on funnel, small improvements in process and technology can deliver significant results.

At Keepme, we've seen how adopting solutions like Antares can transform sales effectiveness - providing operators with a connected, intelligent layer that handles enquiries, nurtures prospects, and follows up automatically across channels. For many teams, it's the difference between fragmented systems that leave opportunities on the table and a cohesive sales engine that engages members from first click to signed contract.

Ultimately, the opportunity is enormous. By combining smart technology with a culture of proactive sales management, gyms can meet modern consumers on their terms and convert more interest into loyal memberships."

Steffie Bryant
COO
Keepme.ai

keepme ANTARES



EXPERT INSIGHT:

"A key takeaway from the Resamania report is the dual-channel strategy employed by most gyms, with 83% selling memberships in-person and 80% leveraging online platforms. This hybrid approach reflects a mature use of digital tools, offering consumers greater flexibility and reducing barriers for those with time constraints.

However, the report uncovers a critical issue: the heavy reliance on non-dedicated staff for sales. With only 20% of operators employing dedicated salespeople, 68% rely on general staff to juggle sales alongside their core responsibilities. This fragmented approach contributes to inefficiencies in lead management and follow-ups.

At Proinsight, we see this often when conducting mystery shops, where mystery shoppers encounter locked doors, unattended receptions, or are limited to visiting only during 'staffed hours'—a poor fit for today's consumer expectations.

Alarmingly, nearly half of the operators either use spreadsheets or have no system at all for managing the sales cycle. This exposes them to lead loss, poor conversion rates, and operational duplication. While 51% do use prospecting tools within gym software, the lack of streamlined systems remains a core weakness.

These statistics align with findings from the Proinsight Commercial Benchmark Report, which shows that only 49% of gyms capture prospect data, and a shocking 52% are not receiving a follow-up call after undertaking a tour.

The report's identification of top challenges—lack of resources to chase leads (38%), high lead costs (19%), and low conversion rates (13%)—highlights a pressing need for better sales infrastructure. Notably, gyms using spreadsheets report higher issues with conversions.

Overall, Resamania's report presents a compelling argument for gym operators to invest in dedicated sales roles and integrated CRM systems. By modernising sales workflows and reducing dependency on multitasking staff, gyms can potentially unlock greater revenue and improve lead conversion efficiency."

Chloe Kinch
Director of Client Success
proinsight.org

Proinsight™
Mystery shopping your customer experience

PART 6:

Marketing

Resources and performance top list of marketing struggles

When asked for the biggest promotional challenge faced in their own words, 65% of operators surveyed shared an answer. Of those answers common themes emerged – challenges relating to resources topped the list.

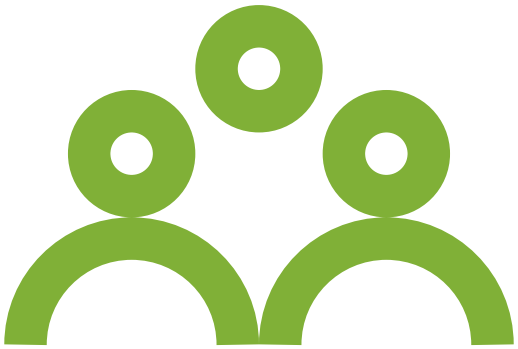
26% of those who shared a promotional challenge said resources are a struggle in one way or another. Examples include:

"Having the time to plan and implement marketing and promotion and not getting tied up in the day-to-day."
– **Gym operator in the South West**

"Having the time and people resource to plan and deliver promotions and follow up."
– **Gym operator in the South East**

"Lack of dedicated marketing staff."
– **Gym operator in the North West**

"The cost and time to create content."
– **Gym operator in The Midlands**



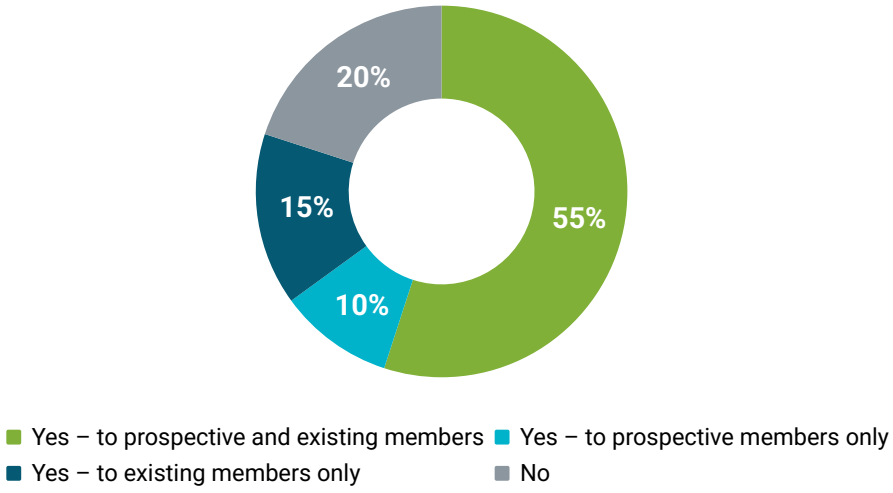
Beyond this, the top themes amongst those who shared a challenge include volume and cost of leads, lack of reach and visibility, and advertising performance.

80% of operators are using email for marketing purposes

Email is a cost-effective way to get your business in front of people who have chosen to hear from you. It's a marketing channel you can own without having to navigate algorithms.

FIGURE 19

80% use email marketing



Q: Do you currently use email to market your business?

Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025



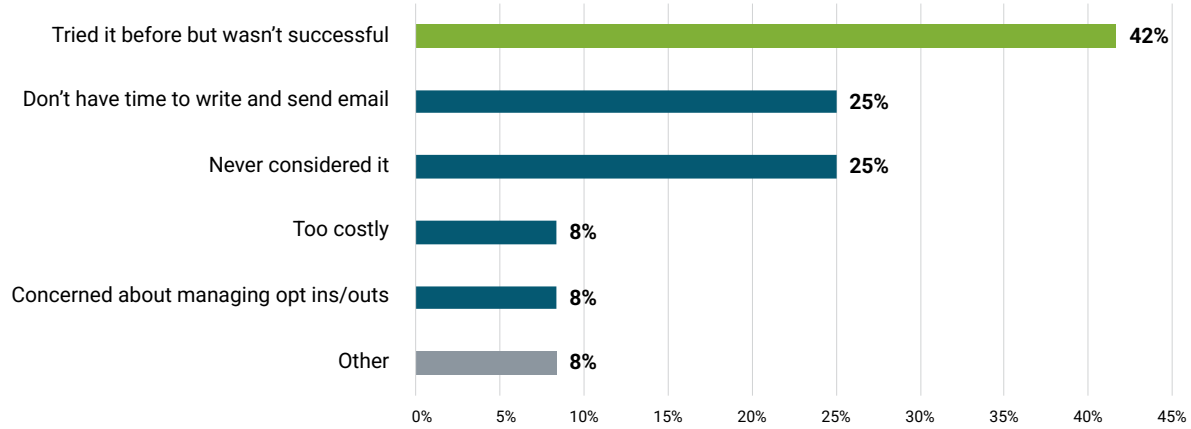
20% of operators surveyed are not using this marketing channel. Why?

42% have already tried it and not found it to be successful. There are many reasons why email marketing can 'fail'. For example, lack of strategy, ignoring deliverability, no personalisation, etc.

Beyond this, the biggest hurdle operators are facing is a **lack of time to write and send emails (25%)**. And a quarter have never considered it.

FIGURE 20

42% of operators not running email marketing have already tried it without success



Q: Why not? (Select all that apply)

Base: Gym operators who are not using email for marketing

Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025

How are the 80% who are using email marketing managing campaigns?

- **58%** are using the email marketing tools within their gym management software
- **35%** are importing data from their CRM into a separate email marketing tool
- **2%** have mailing lists linked to a tool like Outlook or Gmail



Performance challenges

For those gym operators running email marketing campaigns, the biggest challenge is **low conversion rates** – 40%. Plus, 31% are **facing low open or click through rates**.

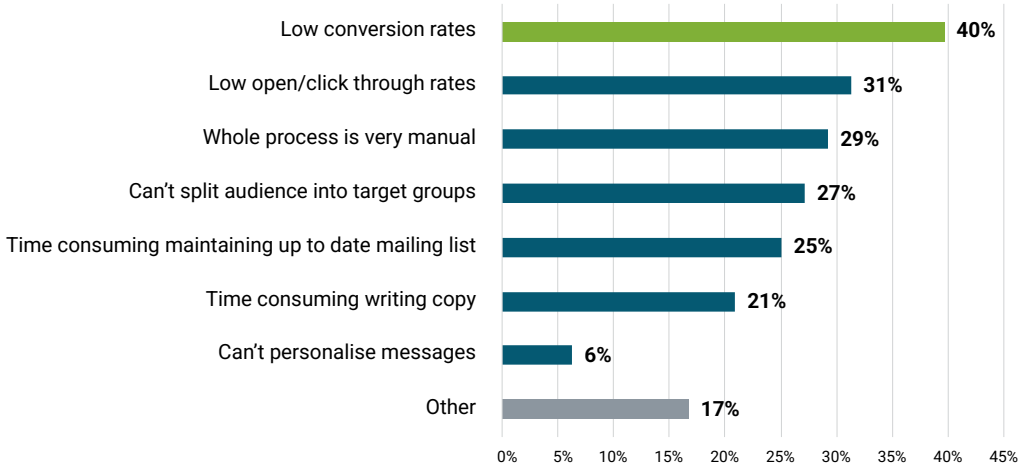
These performance challenges are common hurdles to overcome with testing. Personalisation, sharper subject lines, optimised sending frequency, careful timing, and other tweaks, can make all the difference.

Plus, targeting emails to the right people with the right messaging can drive performance improvements. But **27% of operators using email marketing can't split their audience into target groups**.

29% say the whole process is very manual and/or **25% think it's time-consuming keeping mailing lists up to date**. Working between a CRM and separate email marketing tool, or simply using lists in Outlook or Gmail, will amplify these challenges.

FIGURE 21

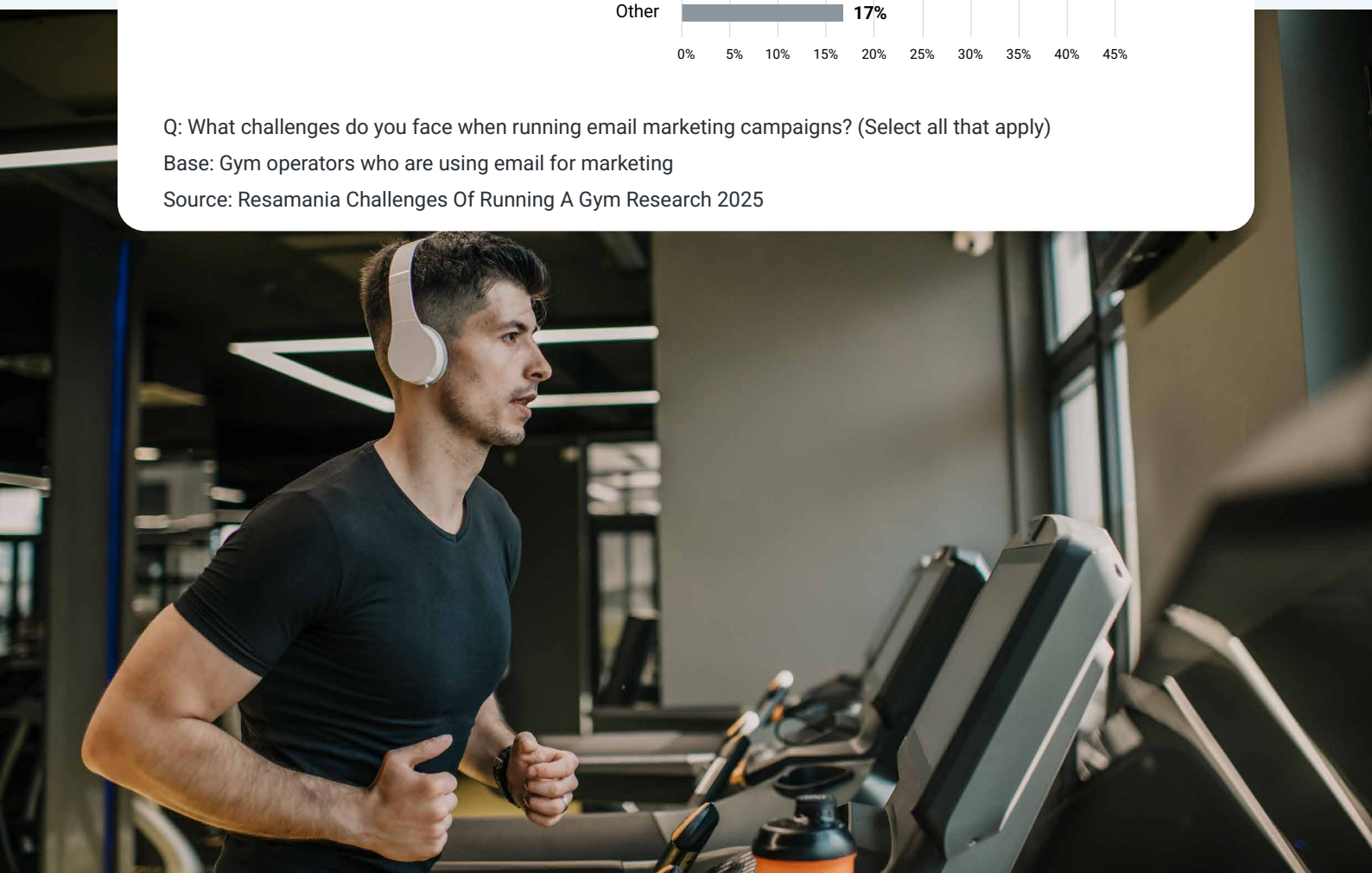
Email marketing performance challenges operators



Q: What challenges do you face when running email marketing campaigns? (Select all that apply)

Base: Gym operators who are using email for marketing

Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025



HOW DOES THE UK FITNESS INDUSTRY MEASURE UP?

Looking to the multi-country edition of this report – how does what we're seeing in the UK compare?

- 26% of UK operators who shared a challenge they face in promoting their business said resources were an issue. Overall, only 15% shared a challenge relating to resources. In the multi-country findings, reach and visibility was the biggest challenge for 31%. For UK operators, 18% of those facing a promotional challenge reported reach and visibility related headaches
- Just as in the UK, across all countries 20% of operators are not using email marketing. Across the findings, the biggest reason for not using email marketing differed to the UK. 40% said they don't have time to write and send email (whereas 25% said this in the UK)
- A higher percentage of UK operators use the email marketing tools within their gym management software (58% in the UK vs. 35% overall)
- The performance challenges faced when it comes to email marketing are shared. Low conversion rates and low open/click through rates are most commonly experienced
- The percentage of UK operators who say the whole email marketing process is very manual is higher than the overall findings (29% in the UK vs. 22% overall). Potentially driven by the lower percentage of UK operators sending email within their gym software





EXPERT INSIGHT:

"Email marketing remains one of the most effective yet consistently underleveraged tools for gym operators. It's direct, cost-efficient, and gives you full control over how you connect with both prospects and members, but only when used strategically. As the findings highlight, time and resource limitations are the biggest roadblocks, understandably so, given that many operators wear multiple hats across operations, sales, and member engagement.

When email marketing underperforms, it's rarely because the channel doesn't work, it's usually down to poor execution. Without clear strategy, segmentation, or personalisation, even great offers fall flat. Many operators also face challenges maintaining mailing lists, switching between systems, or managing campaigns manually, issues that compound when marketing is treated as an afterthought.

Low open and conversion rates are symptoms, not root causes. The real issues are often unclear targeting, poor timing, and generic messaging. Fortunately, these are fixable. Operators don't need to be expert marketers, they need to simplify and automate. Start by mapping the member journey and creating automated emails tied to key behaviours, such as trials, membership enquiries, drop-offs, and renewals. With basic segmentation and focused messaging, performance improves dramatically.

The key isn't doing more, it's doing the right things, better. One well-crafted, timely message will outperform a scattergun approach every time. Smart tech, ready-made journeys, and support from the right partners can take much of the heavy lifting off operators' shoulders.

When treated as a strategic lever, email can consistently drive both revenue and retention. The opportunity is there; operators just need the right systems and support to make it work."

Neil Haughin
Founder & Director
upliftfitnessmarketing.co.uk

UPLIFT
FITNESS MARKETING

PART 7:

Member Lifestyle

Only 7% never give new members an induction

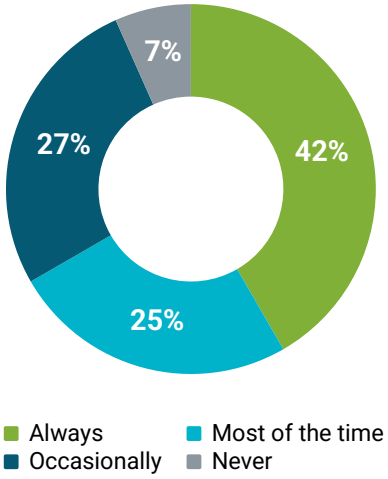
The early days after new members join matter. Get it right and members will stick around long-term. An induction of some kind can help set members up for success.

42% of gym operators surveyed always give new members an in-person induction of some kind. A further **25% do this most of the time** and **27% occasionally**. Given that not every new member needs or wants an induction, this is a positive picture.

93% give new members an induction all the time, most of the time, or occasionally. Good news! **86% of these operators feel that inductions work for their business**.

FIGURE 22

Most operators offer new members in-person inductions at least occasionally

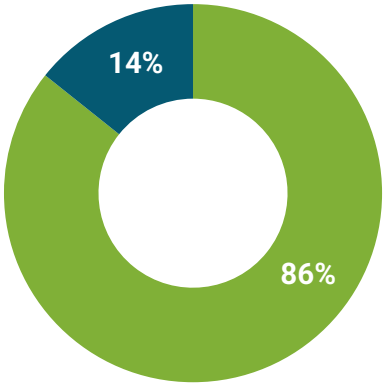


Q: Do new members have an in-person induction of some kind?

Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025

FIGURE 23

Most operators feel that inductions work



Q: Do you feel that inductions work for your business?

Base: Gym operators who offer some kind of in-person induction always, most of the time or occasionally

Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025

Operators were asked how much of a challenge retention is.

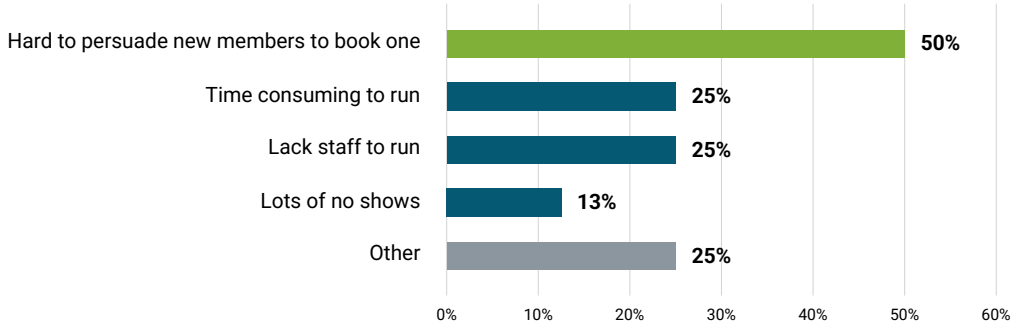
» **18% said that retention was not a challenge** – Of this group, 55% always give new members an induction (compared to 42% across all groups). 91% also think inductions work (compared to 86%) Consistently welcoming new members with an induction pays off!

» **Over a quarter of operators said retention is a significant challenge**. Of this group, fewer always offer an induction (25% compared to 42%) and 20% don't feel inductions work (compared to 14%) Retention appears to be more of an issue if inductions aren't happening consistently

An induction can increase length of stay by 4 months. Meaning members keep showing up and using their membership for longer. When more members stay for longer, member lifetime value increases. So, boosting revenue.

FIGURE 24

Operators who don't feel inductions work find it tough to get members to book



Q: Why are inductions not working? (Select all that apply)

Base: Gym operators who offer some kind of in-person induction always, most of the time or occasionally and said they do not feel inductions are working

Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025

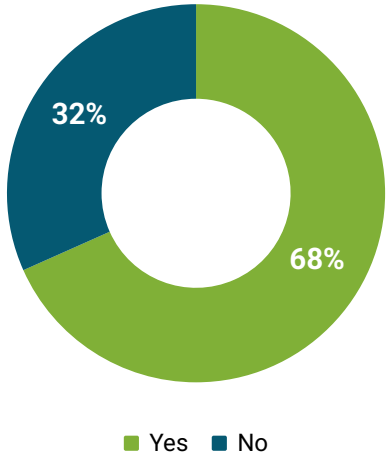


An in-person induction is an important part of a new member onboarding journey. Typically, these last for 90+ days and best practice calls for digital touchpoints during this period.

68% of gym operators surveyed have a digital onboarding journey.

FIGURE 25

68% OF OPERATORS HAVE A DIGITAL ONBOARDING JOURNEY WITH MULTIPLE TOUCHPOINTS



Q: Do you have a digital onboarding journey made up of multiple touchpoints using communications like email and text message?

Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025

Of those with a digital onboarding journey, 32% are very confident it's working successfully. That leaves just **over two thirds somewhat confident or not confident it's working**.

There's room for many more operators to make use of digital onboarding journeys. And for those using them to refine approaches.

HOW DOES THE UK FITNESS INDUSTRY MEASURE UP?

Looking to the multi-country edition of this report – how does what we're seeing in the UK compare?

- A lower percentage of UK gym operators always give new members an in-person induction (42% in the UK vs. 58% overall)
- A slightly lower percentage of UK operators feel that inductions are working (86% in the UK vs. 92% overall)
- A higher percentage of UK operators have a digital onboarding journey made up of multiple touchpoints (68% in the UK vs. 39% overall)
- And a slightly higher percentage of UK operators feel their digital onboarding journey is working (32% in the UK vs. 27% overall)

EXPERT INSIGHT:

“Digital Onboarding: Enhance the Human

The report shows that 68% of UK operators now offer a digital onboarding journey. That’s well ahead of the 39% overall average. But only 32% of UK operators feel their digital onboarding is working well, so there’s a clear opportunity to refine it.

Nudge with Purpose

If a member misses or declines their induction, your digital tools should step in. Send timely reminders that:

» Reinforce the benefits of onboarding

» Highlight that most members do it

» Include a direct booking link

Don’t be shy; repeat the message if needed. Repetition builds conversion.

Make It Interactive

Avoid one-way communication. Digital onboarding should involve your members.

Use:

» Simple polls

» Feedback prompts

» 5-star ratings with space for comments

Measure open rates and click-throughs, yes, but also act on what members tell you. Close the loop by responding or adjusting based on feedback. Let members know you’re listening.”

Guy Griffiths
Owner
ggfit.com

GGFIT DATA MOTIVATION

82% say retention is a challenge

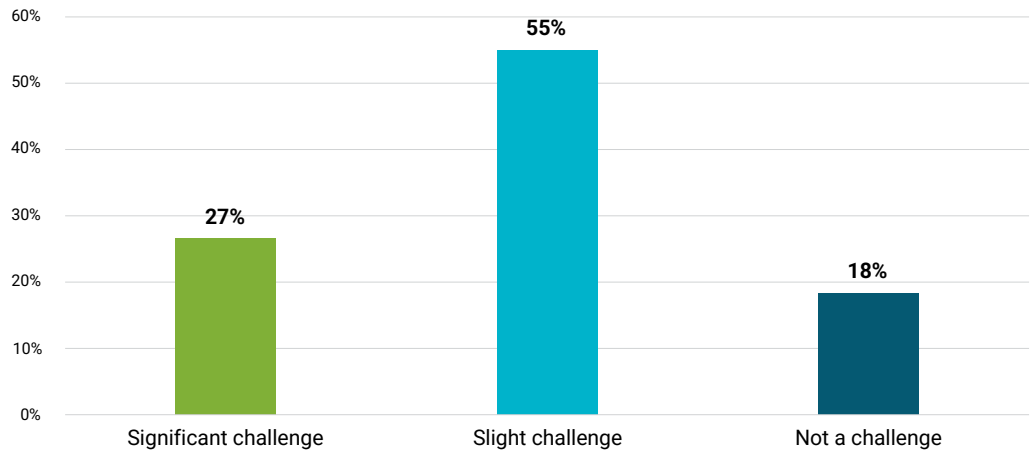
When asked how much of a challenge retaining members is, **27% of operators shared that it's a significant challenge**.

While it would be great to see this at 0%, this is actually impressively low! A sign that the operators surveyed are taking the right steps to keep members loyal.

The **majority (55%) say retention is a slight challenge**. That means retention represents some level of challenge for 82% of operators.

FIGURE 26

Almost all operators face at least some sort of challenge retaining members



Q: How much of a challenge is retaining members for your business?

Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025



Of the 82% who face some sort of retention challenge, **63% don't know what their current retention rate is**. By comparison, of the 18% who face no retention challenges, only 9% don't know what this performance metric currently sits at.

Knowing their retention rate (and even attrition rate) can help operators feel in control and on top of retention.

Operators were asked to share their biggest retention challenge in their own words. 67% shared. A few common themes emerged in the answers given:

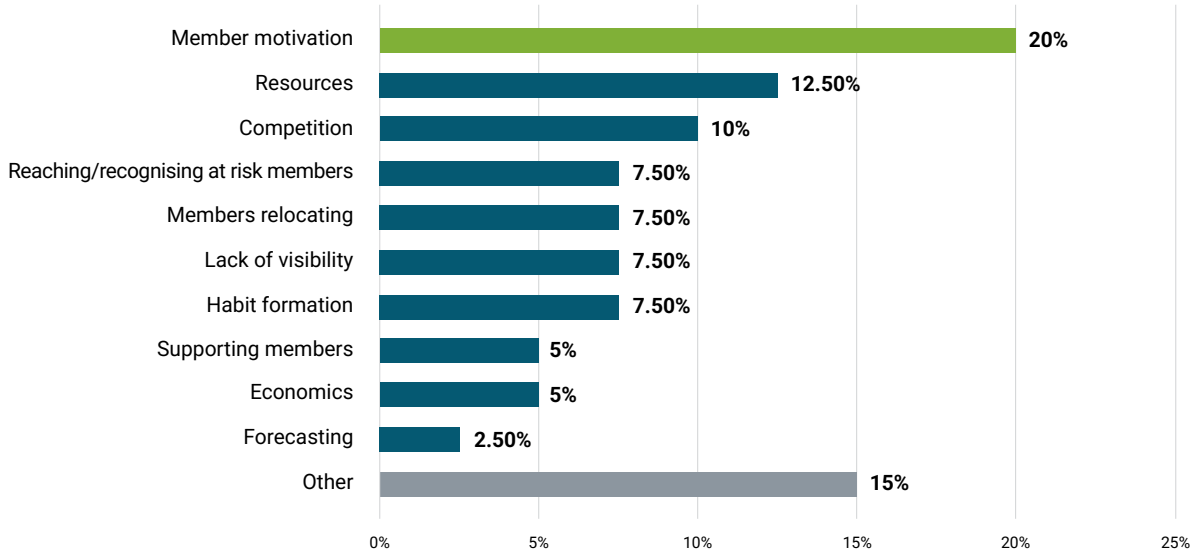
» Maintaining member motivation

» Resource limitations

» Keeping up with the competition

FIGURE 27

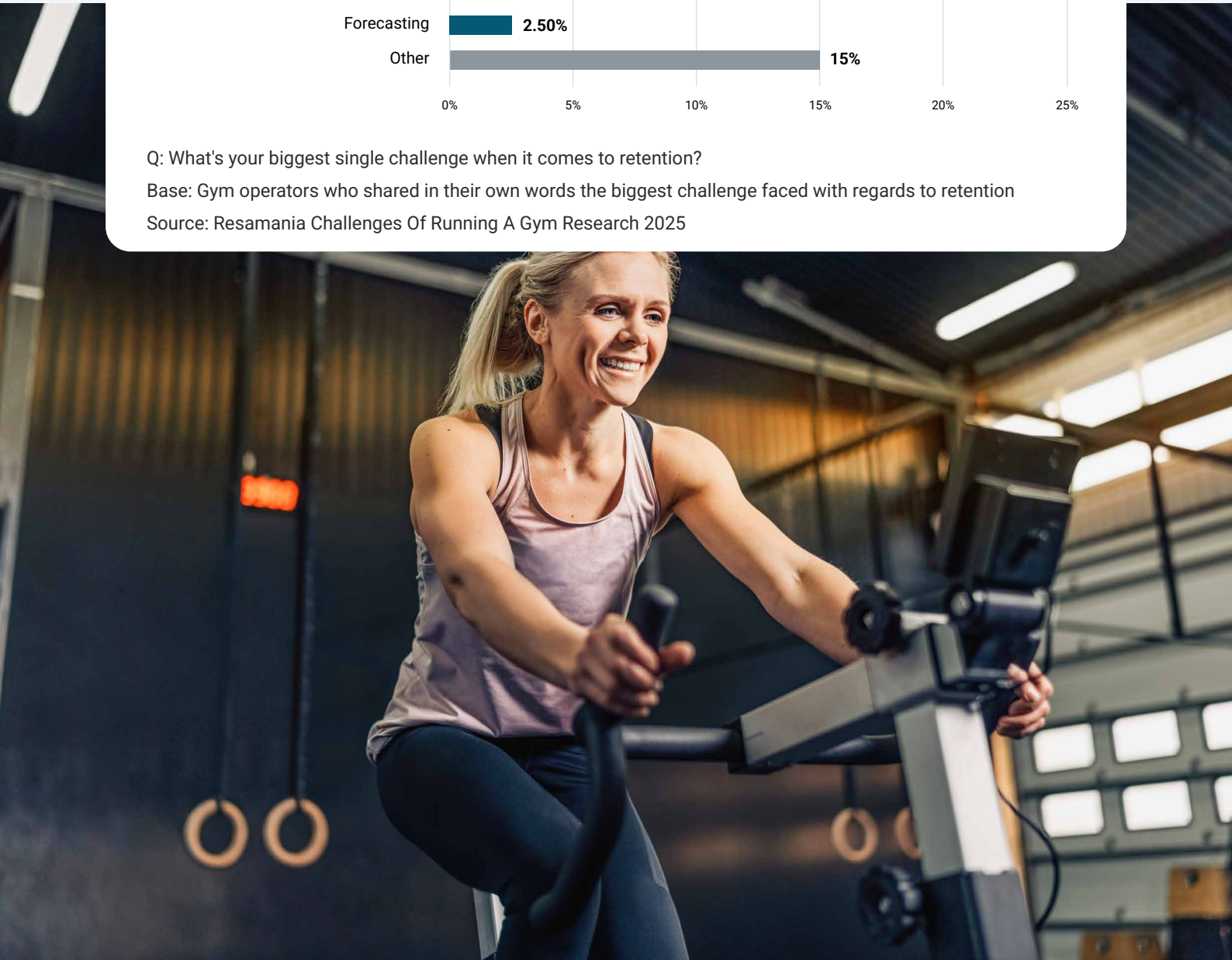
Keeping members motivated challenges operators



Q: What's your biggest single challenge when it comes to retention?

Base: Gym operators who shared in their own words the biggest challenge faced with regards to retention

Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025



Here are some of the retention challenges shared:

"Keeping members motivated."
– **Gym operator in London**

"Engaging members to maintain visits."
– **Gym operator with locations in the Midlands, South East, and London**

"People not understanding what they can achieve. Motivation is something that people have in varying capacities at different times. I don't believe people value their health enough."
– **Gym operator in the South East**

"Current job losses in the market seem to be a more reoccurring factor."
– **Gym operator in the South East**

"Following up, checking why the member has left and attempting to save – once again, time constraints. Need more automation."
– **Gym operator in the Midlands**

"Churn with young people."
– **Gym operator in Wales**

"The amount of effort required on all fronts is huge. It's the right way to do things – keep facilities in working order, keep venues clean, update kit, learn and use names, walk the floor. It's all the right things to do, but it does take relentless effort – which is fine!"
– **Gym operator in the South West**

"Staffing resources to commit to retention."
– **Gym operator in London**

"The amount of other gyms in the area, offering 24hrs etc., while we can't do that."
– **Gym operator in the Midlands**

"Cost of living is killing gyms as people do not prioritise their health above anything, even takeaways etc., etc... We educate on these things, but people are easily led to be lazy."
– **Gym operator in the East of England**

"Getting new members in to the habit of showing up."
– **Gym operator in the North West**



HOW DOES THE UK FITNESS INDUSTRY MEASURE UP?

Looking to the multi-country edition of this report – how does what we're seeing in the UK compare?

- A much lower percentage of UK gym operators say retention is a significant challenge (27% in the UK vs. 61% overall)
- A slightly higher percentage of UK operators know what their retention rate is (47% in the UK vs. 33% overall)
- Member motivation is the most common retention challenge reported (20% in the UK vs. 22% overall)
- A lower percentage of UK operators who shared a retention challenge spoke to difficulties recognising at risk members (7.5% in the UK vs. 11% overall)





EXPERT INSIGHT:

“Inductions: The Retention Engine

42% of operators claim to offer inductions. That’s encouraging, but there’s room to go further. Inductions are a critical retention interaction. They don’t just help members get started, they can increase member length of stay by up to 4 months, directly impacting your bottom line.

Sell the Induction

Members who attend onboarding appointments stay longer. It’s that simple.

Your team must know to confidently sell the session. If a member skips the induction, you're potentially losing £200+ in lifetime value (based on £50/month). That’s a real cost for a missed conversation.

Offer choice:

» A 30-minute full induction for new members

» A 10-minute restart/refocus session for returners or those who claim to be “experienced”

Don’t let experienced members off the hook; they may need it more than anyone, having left at least once before!

Make sure staff know what the session includes: goal-setting, body composition, app setup, etc. not just a tour or programme. And ensure every team member has experienced your onboarding process themselves.

Stories sell. Collect feedback from members, especially those “experienced” ones who ended up loving the session. Their testimonials can help win over the next new joiner.

Measure What Matters

Track uptake. If 100 people join, how many have an onboarding session?

Then compare behaviour; first-month visits (FMV) are a great early indicator. Members who attend inductions typically visit 6+ times in their first month. Those who don’t average 3 or 4 FMVs.

Fewer visits, lower engagement, higher risk of drop-out.

This data is a powerful internal tool to convince teams, justify resources, and improve processes.”

Guy Griffiths
Owner
ggfit.com

GGFIT DATA MOTIVATION

EXPERT INSIGHT:

“While it's encouraging to see that only 27% of operators consider retention a significant challenge, the fact that 82% still report it as a challenge—whether slight or major—signals a common and important issue: retention is too often symptomatic of a deeper communication gap.

Retention tends to become a problem when an operator hasn’t clearly articulated or communicated its promise—not just to members, but also to the staff responsible for delivering the customer experience. If your team doesn't fully understand what makes your offering valuable, distinctive, and worth coming back for, it’s unlikely your members will either.

That’s why we believe it's time to shift the mindset from “retention” to engagement. Retention is reactive; engagement is proactive. Engagement starts from the moment someone joins your community. Your strategy shouldn’t hinge on long-term tricks or gimmicks—it should be built around a simple but powerful principle: every time someone walks through your doors, they should leave with a desire to return—ideally once, but preferably twice within the next seven days.

When engagement is done right, retention takes care of itself.

It's no surprise that “maintaining member motivation” emerged as one of the most common retention challenges. Motivation isn’t something that can be handed to members—it’s something that needs to be nurtured through meaningful interaction. When staff consistently engage members in positive, personal, and purposeful ways, they help shift motivation from being purely extrinsic (driven by outcomes like weight loss or fitness goals) to intrinsic—where members simply enjoy their time with you. That enjoyment leads to return visits, return visits create routine, and routines turn into long-term habits. That’s when your facility becomes a real, lasting part of someone’s life. Utilising consumer insight to understand motivations will help you support your member and design experiences that will lead to active members – data from the ukactive Consumer Engagement polling shows that the top 3 motivating factors for joining a gym include to improve physical strength/fitness, closely followed by improving mental health (including anxiety and depression) and to improve physical appearance – these driving factors again reinforce the importance of inductions.

While it’s always wise to be aware of the competition, the biggest gains come when you double down on your own customer experience. This means having robust channels for both reactive and proactive feedback, and tracking meaningful metrics like Net Promoter Score (NPS) to gauge how well you’re delivering on your promise.

Data from the Active Insight Customer Experience Survey in Moving Communities reinforces this: of over 46,000 people surveyed, 99% said that alongside cleanliness, the most important factor in their experience was friendly, helpful, knowledgeable staff. This makes it clear—your ultimate competitive advantage isn’t your equipment or even your programming. Your USP is your people.

When your team focuses on engaging members meaningfully—every single visit—you don't just improve motivation and retention; you build lasting loyalty.”

Julie Allen
Business Development Director
active-insight.org

Active Insight

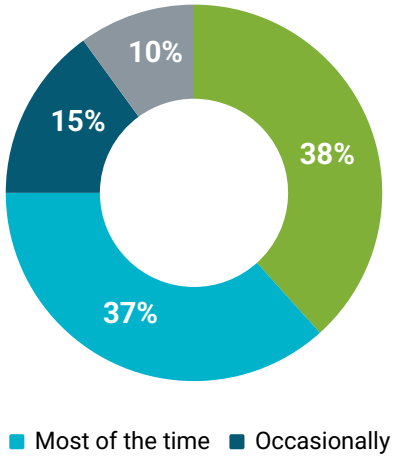
Why do members leave?

Knowing why members cancel and identifying trends can help gym operators make changes to boost retention.

Many UK operators report that they record leaving reasons as memberships end:

FIGURE 28

The majority of operators record a leaving reason all or most of the time



Q: When members end their membership, do you ask for and record a reason for leaving?

Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025

It's positive that **38% always ask for a reason** and just 10% never ask.



It's not you, it's me

What do those who record leaving reasons at least occasionally hear from members?

When asked how commonly they hear typical leaving reasons, 78% said it's very common or common to hear that members are **moving out the area**. And 78% hear that members **lack time to use their membership**.

These two reasons are followed by 67% who hear that members have **secured a job in a different area** very commonly or commonly.

It's hard to address a move away or job in a new location. But a lack of time (along with a lack of motivation) can be addressed with the right tactics during onboarding and throughout a member's journey.

57% say it's very common or common to hear that members **cannot afford their membership due to the rising cost of living**. Similarly, 52% are hearing that members **can't afford their membership due to job loss** very commonly or commonly.

It's not surprising to see affordability as a common leaving reason both due to cost of living and job losses.

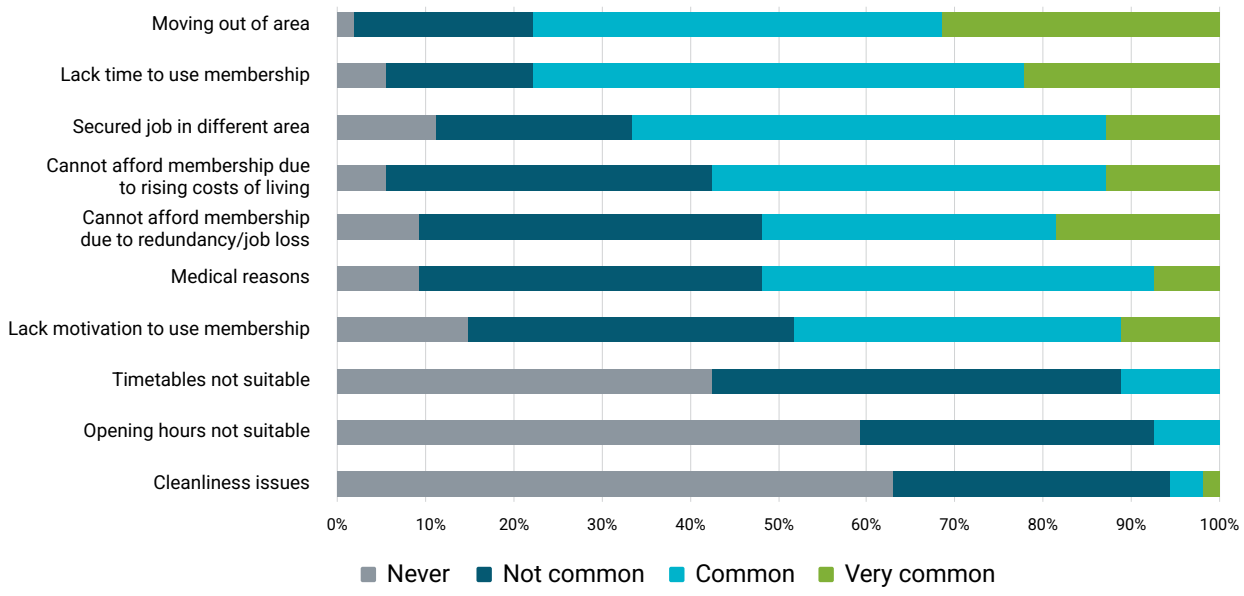
In March 2025, YouGov reported that **56% of Britons had been affected by cost of living pressures**. And **40% have had to make cuts to spending and expect to do so again**.

And in May 2025, the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) found that **24% of employers planned to make redundancies within the following three months**. And **27% had conducted a redundancy programme in the last year**.

While approaches need to be tailored to individual business circumstances, there are ways to help members impacted by financial troubles to keep up their membership.

FIGURE 29

How commonly do members tell you they are ending a membership for each of these reasons?



Q: How commonly do members tell you they are ending a membership for each of these reasons?

Base: Gym operators who record leaving reasons all the time, most of the time and occasionally

Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025

Operators who record leaving reasons are **less likely to hear that the problem is something they've done**:

» **63%** never hear members are leaving due to **cleanliness issues**

» **61%** never hear members are leaving as they're **not satisfied with the workout options available**

» **59%** never hear that **opening hours are unsuitable**

» **43%** never hear **timetables are unsuitable**

Is this British politeness kicking in or a true reflection of reality?

HOW DOES THE UK FITNESS INDUSTRY MEASURE UP?

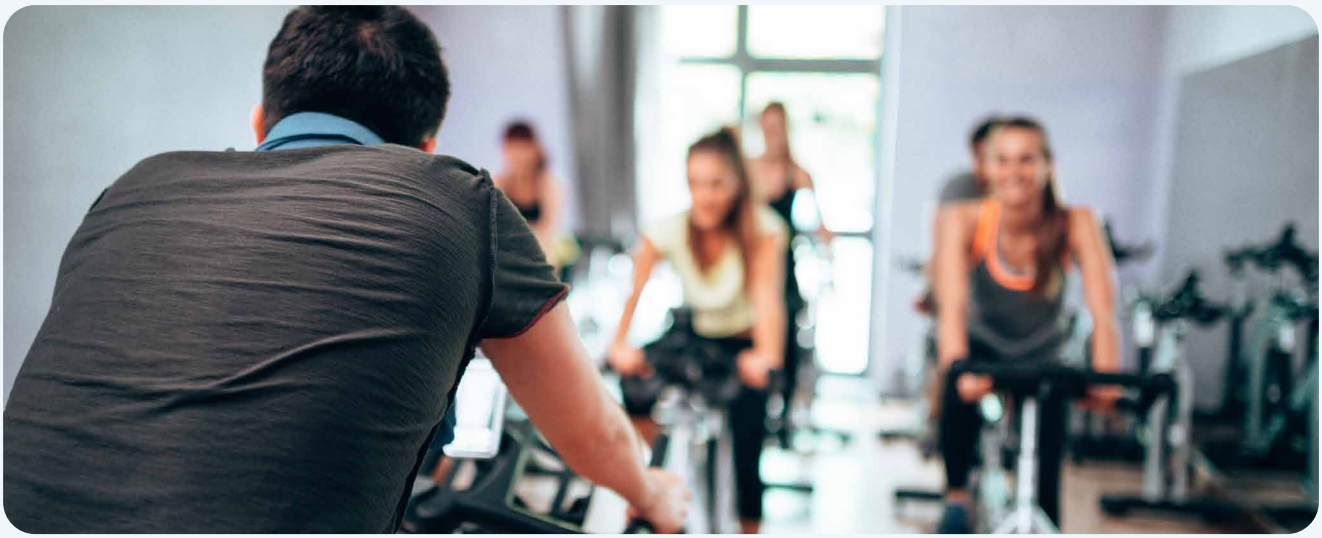
Looking to the multi-country edition of this report – how does what we're seeing in the UK compare?

» The percentage of UK operators who always ask for a leaving reason is very similar to across all countries (38% in the UK vs. 41% overall)

» A slightly lower percentage of UK operators never ask for leaving reasons (10% in the UK vs. 14% overall)

» Of operators recording leaving reasons at least occasionally:

- Lack of time to use a membership is very commonly or commonly heard in the UK and across all countries. The percentage of UK operators hearing this is higher (78% in the UK vs. 68% overall)
- While 78% of UK operators report hearing members are moving out the area very commonly or commonly, this percentage is lower overall at 61%
- Affordability is reported to have been heard less commonly across all countries than in the UK
  - Cannot afford membership due to rising cost of living very commonly or commonly heard by 57% of UK operators recording leaving reasons vs. 45% overall
  - Cannot afford membership due to redundancy/job loss very commonly or commonly heard by 52% of UK operators recording leaving reasons vs. 33% overall





EXPERT INSIGHT:

"While the data suggests that relocation and lack of time are the most commonly cited reasons for cancellations, experience—and deeper insight—tells a more nuanced story. The reality is, people are often just being polite.

Through our work with the Active Insight Consumer Insight Panel, we consistently see a clear truth emerge: the majority of people (8.5 out of 10) want to be more physically active. So when members cancel, it's rarely due to a complete loss of interest. More often, it's because their experience didn't live up to the promise that was made when they joined. Saying "I'm relocating" or "I don't have time" is simply easier than explaining that the gym didn't meet expectations.

This is why it's vital that operators go beyond face-value responses and start measuring customer experience (CX) from day one. Tools like the Net Promoter Score (NPS) provide a reliable, quantifiable view into how members actually feel—giving early warning signs of disengagement long before someone cancels.

Promoters—those who rate their experience highly—not only stay longer, they visit more frequently. In contrast, passives and detractors show patterns of infrequent use that often precede silent cancellations. Our NPS platform highlights these trends and provides operators with real-time, actionable insights. This enables fast, data-driven decisions to improve the experience, close service gaps, and address issues like lack of motivation or connection before they become reasons to leave.

Ultimately, focusing on honest feedback, consistent CX measurement, and meaningful member engagement will do more to reduce attrition than accepting surface-level reasons at face value. It's not about blame—it's about visibility, accountability, and the willingness to improve. When operators deliver on their promise, members stay."

Julie Allen
Business Development Director
active-insight.org

Active Insight

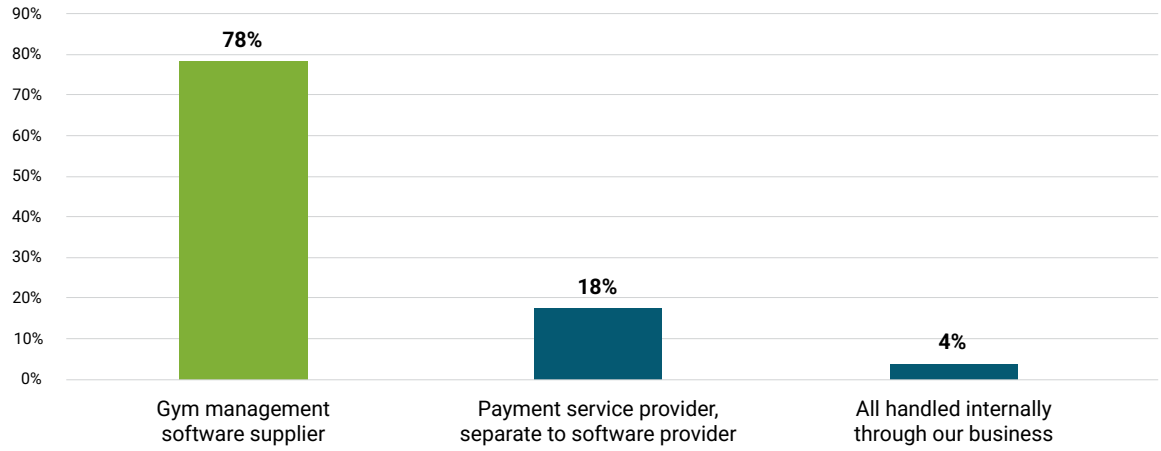
Payments fuel silent cancellations

Many UK gym operators do ask members why they're cancelling. But we know from that for a proportion of former members asking is not an option.

88% of UK gym operators surveyed use Direct Debits to collect memberships paid for on a recurring basis. For this group, just over three quarters manage these collections via their gym management software partner.

FIGURE 30

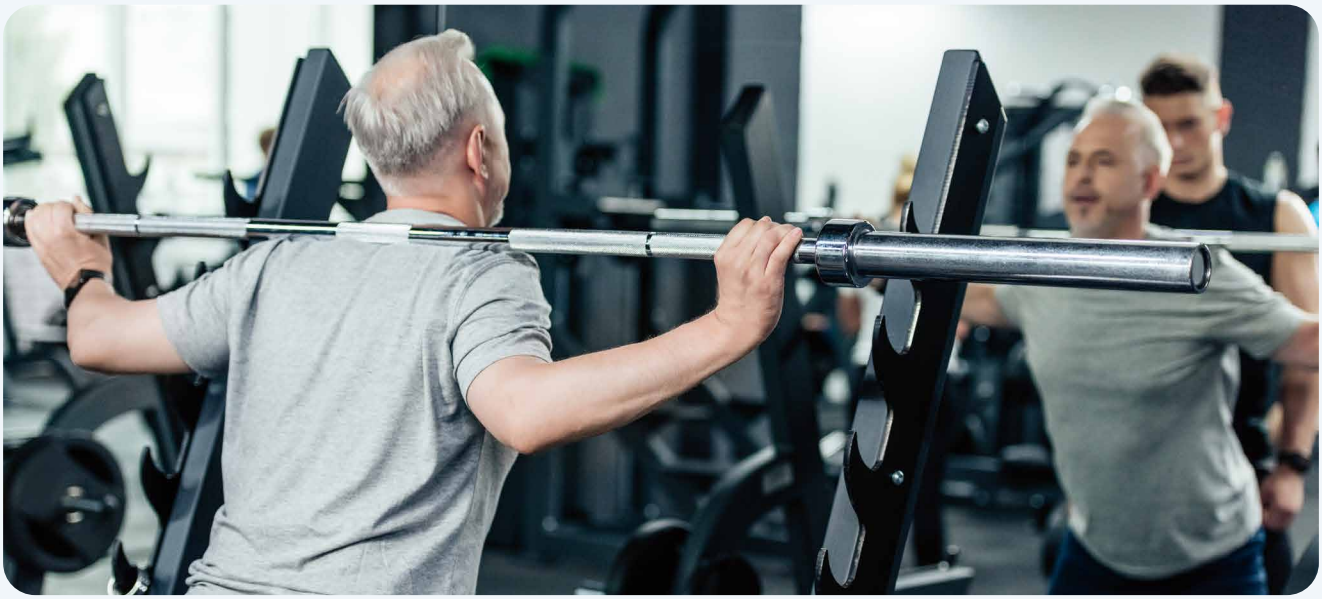
Three quarters of operators manage Direct Debit collections via a gym management software partner



Q: How do you manage Direct Debits?

Base: Gym operators who use Direct Debits to collect payments for memberships paid for on a recurring basis

Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025



For operators collecting recurring membership payments via Direct Debit:

» **49% say payment failures due to members cancelling with their own banks** have a very significant or significant impact on their business

» **34% say payment failures due to insufficient funds** have a very significant or significant impact on business

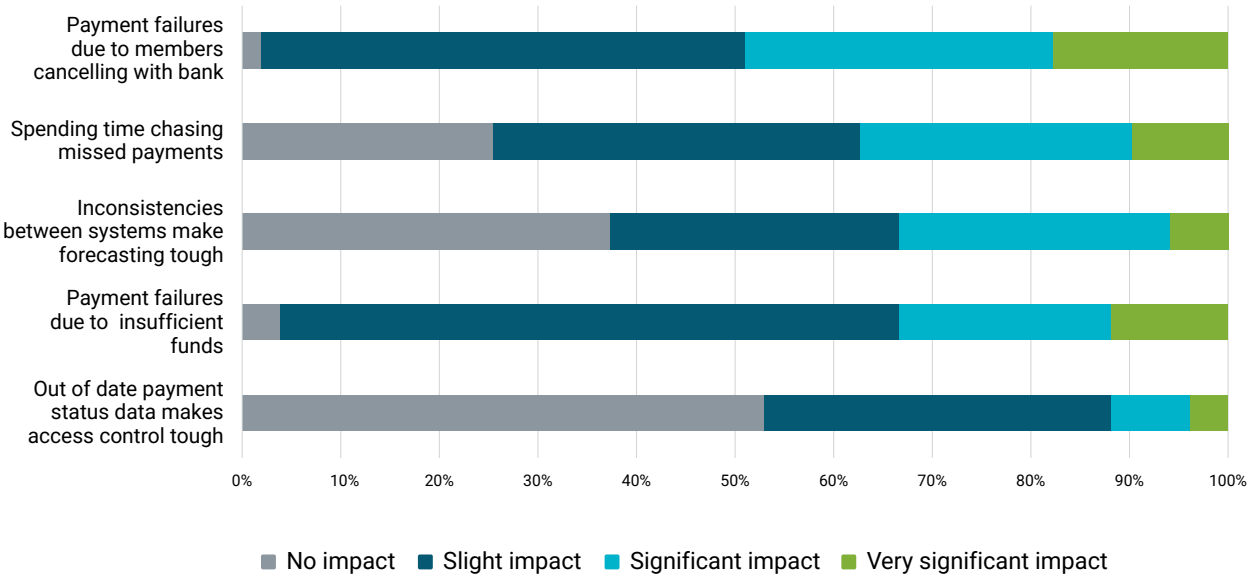
Both types of payment failures commonly cause operators to terminate memberships. These members leave clubs silently, without providing addressable feedback.

Time spent chasing missed payments is slowing operators down. 35% of those using Direct Debits say that chasing missed payments has a very significant or significant impact on business.

Beyond this, **inconsistencies between systems makes forecasting tough**. Having a very significant or significant impact for 33%. And out of date payment status data makes access control challenging. Having a very significant or significant impact for 12%.

FIGURE 31

How much of an impact do each of these membership payment challenges have on your business?



Q: How much of an impact do each of these membership payment challenges have on your business?

Base: Gym operators who use Direct Debits to collect payments for memberships paid for on a recurring basis

Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025

HOW DOES THE UK FITNESS INDUSTRY MEASURE UP?

Looking to the multi-country edition of this report – how does what we're seeing in the UK compare?

- About the same percentage of UK gym operators are using Direct Debit compared to overall use of BACS/SEPA Direct Debit to collect memberships (88% in the UK vs. 89% overall)
- Of those using Direct Debits, a lower percentage of UK operators are managing these via their gym software partner (78% in the UK vs. 87% overall). A higher percentage of UK operators are working with a separate payment service provider (18% in the UK vs. 7% overall)
- A slightly higher percentage of UK operators using Direct Debits find that payment failures due to members cancelling with the bank have a very significant or significant impact on business compared to across all countries (49% in the UK vs. 43% overall)
- And a slightly lower percentage see payment failures due to insufficient funds having a very significant or significant impact on business (33% in the UK vs. 37% overall)



EXPERT INSIGHT:

“Direct Debits are a reliable, efficient way to collect member payments with benefits to both parties.

It’s great to see so many UK gym operators managing Direct Debits through their gym management software. With the right partner, this approach has many benefits. It avoids data duplication to prevent inconsistencies. And makes accurately forecasting revenue straight forward.

Our attrition research found that **40% of membership cancellations happen after a payment failure**. So, it’s understandable seeing that payment failures due to members cancelling via their own banks or due to insufficient funds are impacting operators.

These needn’t lead to the end of a membership though.

Your software should flag when mandates are missing. Letting you follow up with members who've cancelled at the bank ahead of payment collections.

It should be easy for members to update their payment info, catch up on missed payments, and reinstate cancelled mandates. Ideally, you’ll have access to a team of experts who can help your members with any payment queries they might have.

And, particularly in the case of failed payments, your software should automatically notify members about the issue and reattempt the collection.

When a payment has been missed, you should be able to choose to automatically restrict access until you’ve received payment.”

Ollie Flegg
Commercial Director – Gym & Payments
resamania.co.uk

xplor resamania

PART 8:

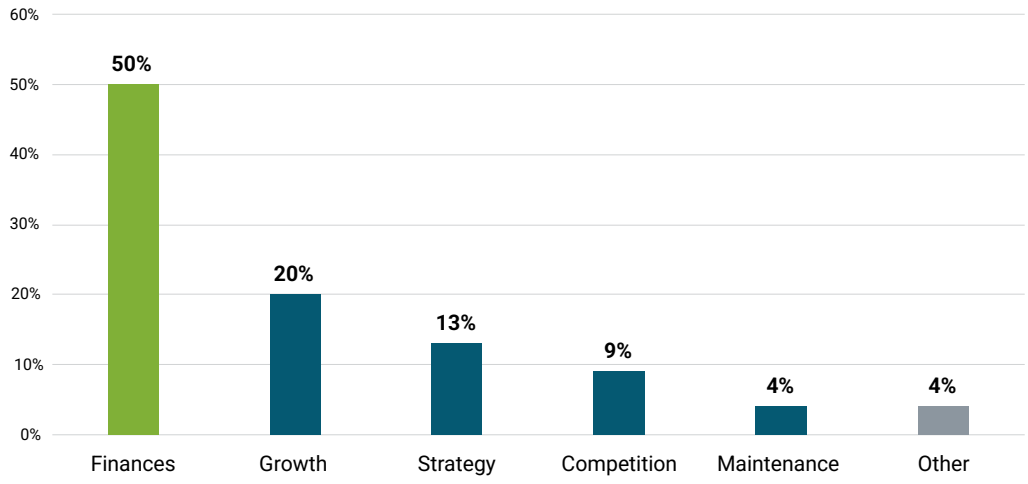
Most pressing challenges

At the end of the survey, gym operators were asked about the number one challenge keeping them up at night when it comes to business. Three quarters left a response (77%).

The answers received can be categorised into common themes. **Challenges around finances were most prevalent**.

FIGURE 32

UK gym operators are most likely to be kept up at night worrying about finances



Q: What's the number one challenge in running your business that keeps you up at night?

Base: Gym operators who reported having a challenge that keeps them up at night

Source: Resamania Challenges Of Running A Gym Research 2025



Half of the most pressing challenges shared by operators relate to finances. This accounts for **38% of all UK gym operators surveyed**.

Given that 90% of operators saw operating costs increase, and with the survey timing ahead of the 2025/26 tax year, this isn't surprising.

Many of the responses reflect this. Here's a taste of what operators had to say:

"Costs just going up and up and up."
– **Gym operator in the East of England**

"Rising costs vs membership price concern from leads."
– **Gym operator in the North West**

"Keeping the membership numbers/ revenue streams high enough to keep the business viable is our biggest challenge.

I'm not sure what I would do if I wasn't doing this, so it keeps me up to imagine that I'd have to find another job or business if we cannot earn enough to stay viable."
– **Gym operator in the South West**

"The new budget costing me over £30000 per annum more..."
– **Gym operator in The Midlands**

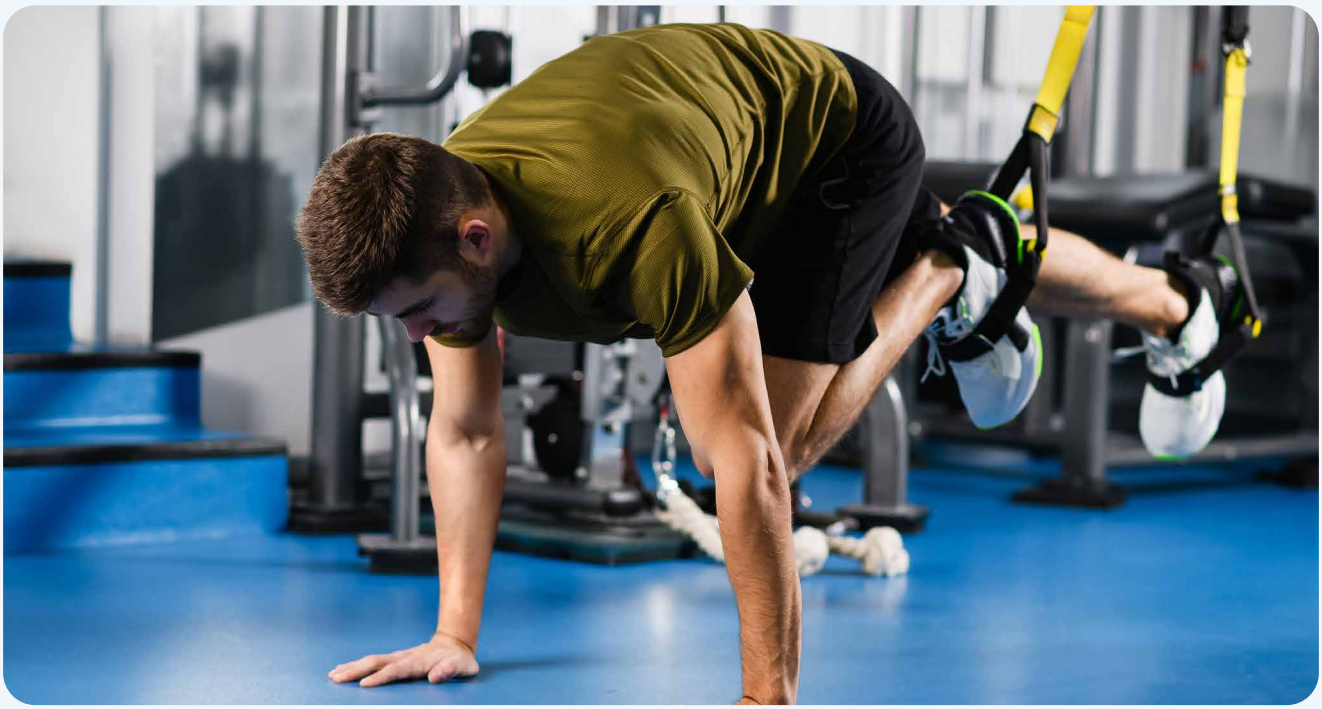
"The constant rising costs. We've only been open 4 years and the operating costs have more than doubled in that time with no end in sight.

If I knew what I do now before I opened, I wouldn't. I would run an online business even though I prefer face to face coaching.

The stress and hassle of running a brick-and-mortar business is just not worth it in this economic climate.

Even when we are running a premium, successful and highly respected business."
– **Gym operator in Scotland**

"Dealing with increased cost of outgoings, whilst trying to not over-charge and yet still make a good living!"
– **Gym operator in the North West**



20% of those who answered this question gave challenges related to growth. From attrition to logistical headaches, responses included:

"How to bring in more members and get our business to a point where neither me or my partner have to work other roles as well as the gym."
– **Gym operator in the South West**

"Losing members and not signing enough up. Knowing that as a franchise memberships should be the same as the rest of the gyms in the country, yet we are in a working-class city and high-end prices are not affordable."
– **Gym operator in Yorkshire & The Humber**

"Being at capacity and knowing the lease still has over a year to run before we can move to a much bigger location. Managing member expectations is hard at capacity so will lose occasional members until we move."
– **Gym operator in the East of England**

"Reducing member attrition as the cost of acquiring new members is high."
– **Gym operator in the North West**

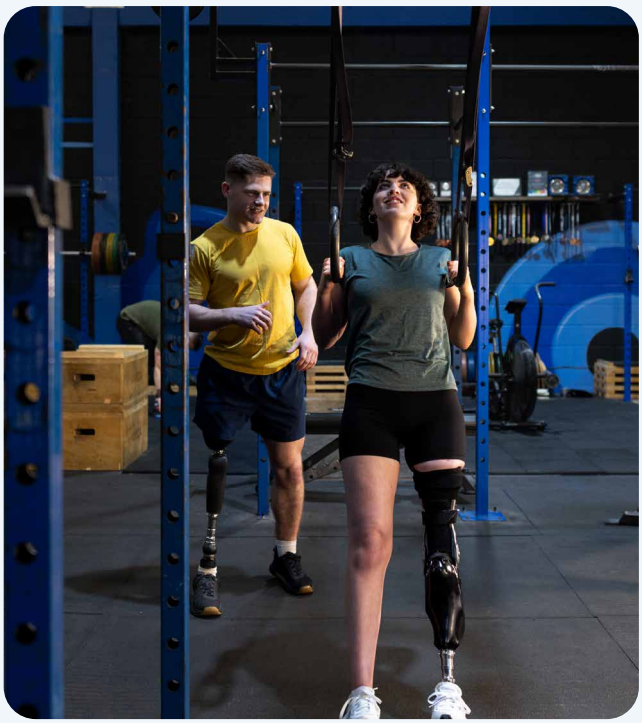
"Keeping membership base growing – we're only 25-30 off capping the membership, but it's been like this for circa 2 years."
– **Gym operator in the South West**

A large proportion of those surveyed were owners (72%). This was reflected in the challenges keeping some up at night around business strategy. Challenges shared included:

"Working too much in the business rather than on it. And not knowing what to do within it to grow it"
– **Gym operator in the North West**

"Sometimes it is hard to see through the noise and make the right decision for the business. Sometimes members can become quite opinionated and resistant to change, making implementing new things tricky at times."
– **Gym operator in The Midlands**

"Being dragged into working in the business and not having enough quality time to work in the business... the business not being where I know it has the potential to be."
– **Gym operator in the South East**



HOW DOES THE UK FITNESS INDUSTRY MEASURE UP?

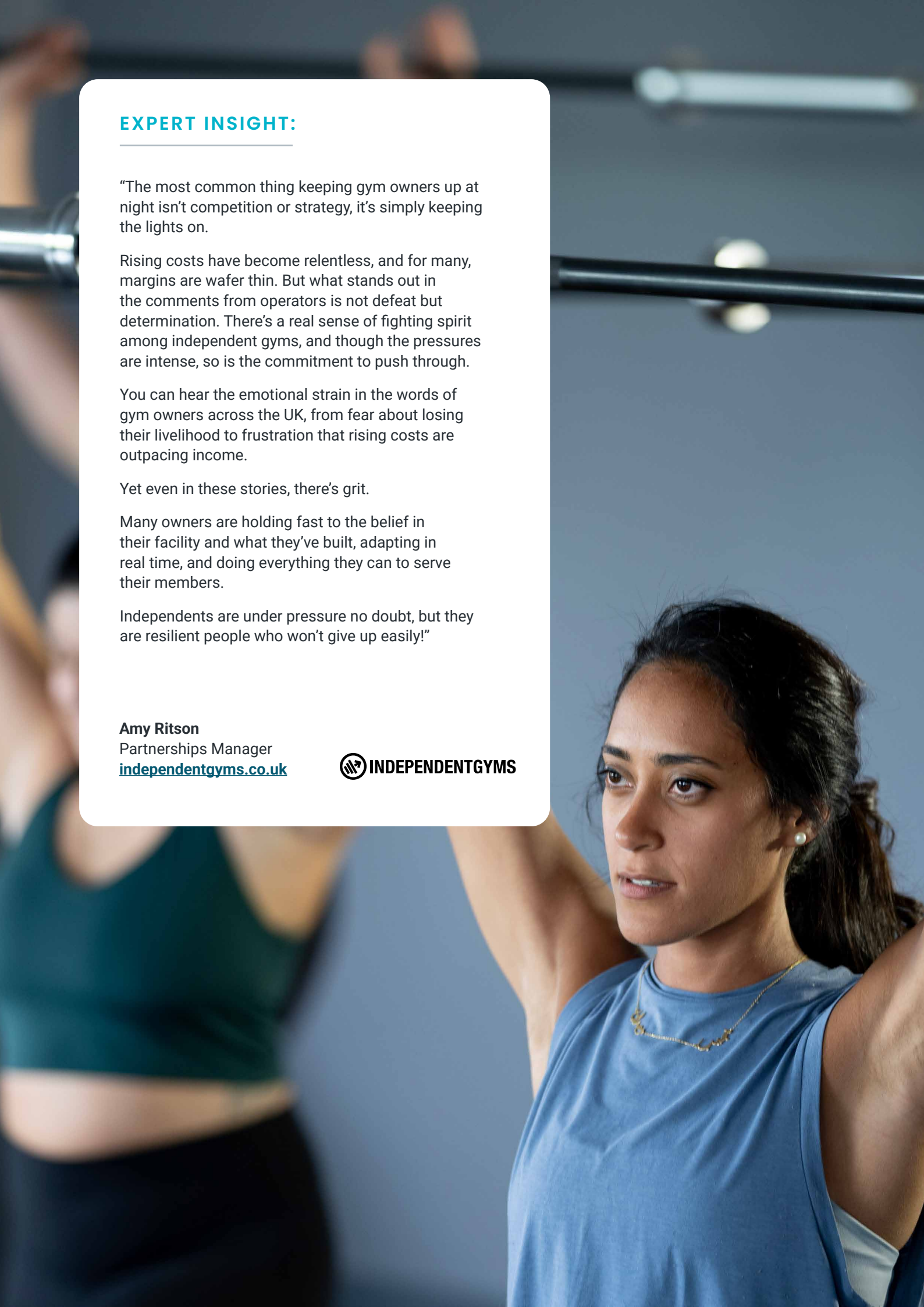
Looking to the multi-country edition of this report – how does what we're seeing in the UK compare?

» A higher percentage of gym operators in the UK are up at night worrying about finances compared to operators across all countries surveyed (50% in the UK vs. 27% overall)

» With minds busy navigating financial challenges, a lower percentage of UK gym operators are concerned with growth (20% in the UK vs. 29% overall)

» Outside of the UK, gym operators are also kept up at night thinking about recruiting and motivating team members. As well as the demands of day-to-day club management





EXPERT INSIGHT:

"The most common thing keeping gym owners up at night isn't competition or strategy, it's simply keeping the lights on.

Rising costs have become relentless, and for many, margins are wafer thin. But what stands out in the comments from operators is not defeat but determination. There's a real sense of fighting spirit among independent gyms, and though the pressures are intense, so is the commitment to push through.

You can hear the emotional strain in the words of gym owners across the UK, from fear about losing their livelihood to frustration that rising costs are outpacing income.

Yet even in these stories, there's grit.

Many owners are holding fast to the belief in their facility and what they've built, adapting in real time, and doing everything they can to serve their members.

Independents are under pressure no doubt, but they are resilient people who won't give up easily!"

Amy Ritson
Partnerships Manager
independentgyms.co.uk

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The wrap up...

From rising costs to intense competition, gym operators and owners are facing significant challenges every day. What can you do to address these?

Operating costs keep increasing

Operating costs have increased year-on-year and for many the increases keep coming. Find ways to optimise and automate everyday tasks. Saving you time and reducing overheads where possible.

Raising membership fees is another way to offset high operating costs. With a careful approach you'll minimise attrition, while increasing profitability. And that's the key to a sustainable, successful business.

Look for new ways to bring in extra revenue. New membership tiers. Premium format classes. Wellbeing focused services. Get creative and work out what makes sense for your unique business.



Attracting (and keeping) talented team members is tough

Investing in training and helping employees map out career paths in (and out of) your organisation can boost engagement. Engaged staff are more likely to stick with you.

Find ways to boost profitability and reduce the resource needed to complete daily tasks. So, freeing up cash to reward your team with competitive salaries and other benefits.

When hiring, consider those with transferable skills as well as exact qualifications. With the right attitude, and the right training, you'll be able to upskill new employees as needed.

There's a lot of noise around tech and AI

Most operators have the basics in place when it comes to tech. For example, gym management software and gym member apps.

However, with so many solutions, it's hard to know which is right to invest in. Often operators lack the time to put in research – the same goes for AI.

Start by looking at your gym management software. Are you making the most of the features on offer?

Then think about the experience you want members to have. Speak with your software partner about how they can help you make this a reality. Look both at existing features and tech that integrates seamlessly.

Competition is fierce

Most are facing local competition (plus, competition from other fitness options). Leaving operators competing for the same members.

Go back to basics. Analyse your competition against your own business. Identify strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Look for ways to lean into your strengths, pursue opportunities, and protect against threats.

That might mean doubling down on your target audience to offer the most value. Or it might mean expanding your offering to reach new, untapped demographics. Get creative.

Leads go neglected

Selling memberships is a priority for most operators. While many sell online, most operators still sell some memberships in-person. And most rely on employees who also hold other responsibilities to do this – commonly leaving a lack of resources to follow up with prospects.

Prospecting tools within your software will often make follow up easier by automating email and SMS communications. And handily reminding your team to call prospects when needed.

After enquiring about a membership, prospective members often expect a near instant response. Find AI solutions that integrate with your gym software to answer common questions (and even call leads for you). So, helping you respond fast without the need for a dedicated staff member or team

Poor marketing performance

Operators are struggling to cut through the noise. And when it comes to email marketing in particular, performance is an issue.

Cutting through the noise and encouraging your prospects and members to open your emails, starts with the subject line. Avoid spam trigger words. Write compelling subject lines that both entice recipients to open and reflect the content of your email.

Target and personalise emails wherever possible. Your software should make this simple. Taking this approach can help you avoid unsubscribes and maximise conversions.

Members keep leaving

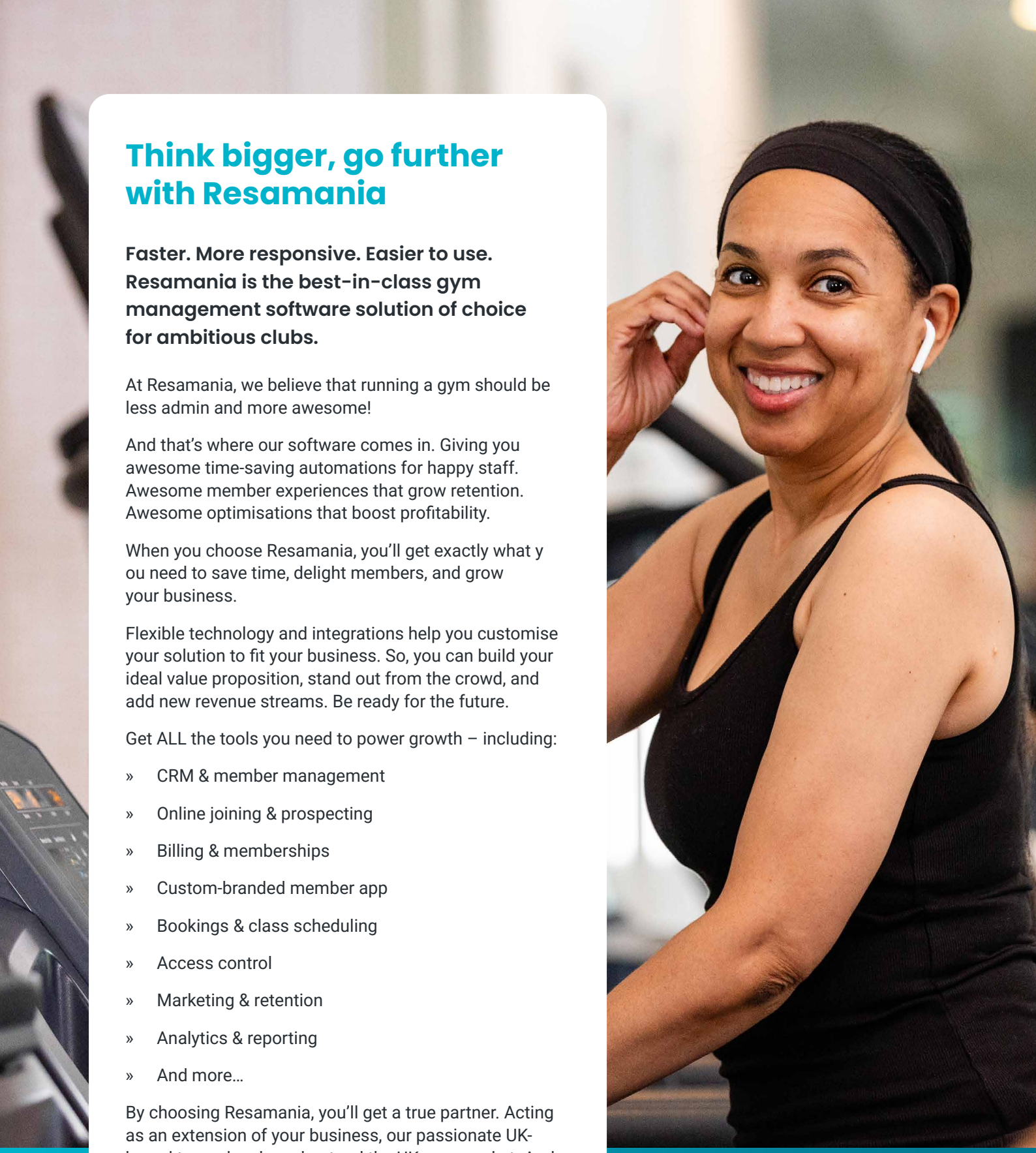
Retention is a consistent challenge for operators. The early days matter. And while many offer in-person inductions, there are opportunities to improve how you welcome members.

Your gym management software should make it easy to build targeted digital onboarding journeys. Journeys built around milestones to enhance the in-person experience.

And for members who've been with you a while, use your software to look for signs that they may cancel soon (like a change in visit habits). Create workflows to follow up and encourage at-risk members back in fast.

Motivation and prioritisation are two of the most heard reasons for cancelling a membership. Throughout a members' journey with you help them create a habit of visiting. And arm them with strategies to help them get back on track when life happens.

Gamification. Community. Special offers. These can all add value and help keep members motivated to stick with you for the long-term.



Think bigger, go further with Resamania

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At Resamania, we believe that running a gym should be less admin and more awesome!

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Get ALL the tools you need to power growth – including:

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- Bookings & class scheduling
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- And more...

By choosing Resamania, you'll get a true partner. Acting as an extension of your business, our passionate UK-based team deeply understand the UK gym market. And will be on hand with the right solutions and knowledge to help your business succeed.

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