



HOW **vagaro** SUPPORTED A FITNESS ENTREPRENEUR THROUGH COVID:

Reducing Costs, Improving Efficiency,
and Increasing Bookings

Overview

Entrepreneurship requires ambition, strategy, and way more administrative skills than you might imagine when first starting out. Luckily, in today's world, technology can help alleviate that burden. Adam Nijem was searching for that perfect software platform when he transitioned from working as a personal trainer at various gyms to starting his very own business—Star Method Boxing, in 2017. Nijem expected growing pains as he continued to expand his client base, but he didn't expect that a software could make the tedious tasks of running a business even more time consuming and inefficient. So, he set out on a mission to find a platform that truly put small businesses first, thus making his process more efficient, preserving his revenue, and increasing the number of clients served.



Challenges

Too many customers can seem like a good problem to have, but not when it means the founder and sole employee of a new facility can't juggle all the tedious tasks required to run a business on their own. Nijem found that many of his clients worked varying hours, thus making scheduling & coordinating sessions a big chunk of his day. In fact, he found himself on the phone for the same amount of time that he actually spent training. So, he turned to one of Vagaro's competitors, Mindbody, for help. Unfortunately, using the platform itself was a challenge. Nijem said his experience with the software was far from user friendly. "Even if you'd been using it for years, you probably still wouldn't be good at using it," he stated. Once he began hiring employees of his own, he had to spend too much time teaching them how to navigate the platform, once again stunting his professional efficiency. Then came COVID-19.



Clients began canceling appointments left and right. Nijem was understanding of their cancellations, and he expected the same flexibility from his business management platform of choice. He quickly learned that wasn't going to be the case. From the inability to temporarily pause individual functions or features, to drastic price increases, the lack of COVID-friendly options, and a general sense of feeling unsupported as a small business owner in an unprecedented global crisis, Nijem reached out to their customer support in hopes of a resolution. He recalls their reply: "Just because you stopped watching Netflix doesn't mean they're not going to charge you anymore. If you just want to cancel, you can." The lack of support mixed with Nijem and his trainers being overwhelmed while using the software meant he needed to look for a different solution. "[They] give you a lot of information that doesn't even matter and you get very lost in their software. All I can remember is being very confused using their software and I'm like, I don't need to be paying this high price for this company that doesn't even want to work with me coming out of COVID. Like, even the government was working with small businesses."

Approach

Through plenty of research on alternative options, Nijem's main inquiry to sales reps was, "How do you deal with and accommodate clients when something like COVID comes up?" With this being a main concern, he ultimately decided to make the switch to Vagaro. "Vagaro definitely wants to help their businesses succeed and grow. I wasn't getting that feeling from the other [software] I was working with." Nijem credited the decision to learning about Vagaro's flexibility during COVID, such as temporarily offering free service to users. He also considered the process Vagaro used when restrictions began to lift, which was to resume charging clients only once their respective states and counties began allowing businesses to reopen. Additionally, he appreciated the platform's relative ease of use, house call options, and the ability to temporarily pause certain features when not in use.

Results

	MINDBODY	VAGARO
Users	846	1479
Bookings YOY	2,012	2,834
Verified reviews	46	219
Cost	\$4,850 + \$50 per month for separate email service	\$3,580
Transaction fees	\$15,300	\$10,613
Processing fee	3.5% + \$.20 per transaction	2.95% + \$.19 per transaction
House calls	0	50

Conclusion

“Vagaro is supporting me in a way that I was never supported by any other software company before,” said Nijem. Trainers love that they never miss an appointment like they sometimes used to with the previous software due to a laggy app. “Our trainers who have used both softwares find it much easier and they never miss a session now, which is great.” The text, email, and push notification reminders all contribute to a reliable system appreciated by both trainers and clients. Additionally, clients are now able to easily book house call sessions, something they couldn’t do conveniently with the previous platform. This was pivotal for Star Method Boxing, especially during the peak of COVID lockdowns when the facility converted to a fully functional business on wheels to accommodate safety measures. His overall process is more efficient, his employees are satisfied and confident navigating the software, and his clients are happy that the 10-step booking process is down to a simple three. They can now book more sessions more often with ease. Nijem says he’s confident he made the right decision, “I feel like I’m a part of the Vagaro family.”



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