



What If You Get Hit by a Bus?

Building the operating system that runs your gym without you.

Most affiliate owners are the single point of failure in their own business.

This piece breaks down what an Operating System actually is, why leverage without a system is just chaos with extra steps, and what it takes to build a gym that survives — and thrives — without you.

Tony · FitFiliate · 2025

Who Needs an Operating System?

The goal of an Operating System (OS) is not only to get you out of the business but to turn it into a business. Can the business be sold? If any part of the business needs you, the answer is no.

Do the people who do the things know exactly how to do the things? Or do they do them just enough? At what point are you the solution to a problem? If the answer is anything less than 3 degrees of separation, it's time to proceed.

ACTION STEP

Assess your current situation. Are you the solution to most problems in your business? If so, it's time to create an OS.

Entrepreneurship vs. Ownership

The purpose of a business is to increase the owner's quality of life — freedom. There are lots of ways to make money with less risk than being in business. The exchange for the risk is in the return or potential return. The

problem for most business owners is that they never realize the return. Why? They fail to understand leverage.

Leverage is your ability to not trade your time for money. You can use software, trade, labor, and systems instead. The difference between ownership and entrepreneurship is leverage, and leverage needs a system.

ACTION STEP

Identify areas in your business where you can leverage software, trade, labor, or systems to free up your time.

Leveraging the System

In order to maximize leverage, there must be a system. Otherwise, you will be trading your time maintaining the system, negating the value of a system at all.

Imagine a water machine. This machine mechanically scoops water up and delivers it to a holding tank. The villagers pay you per gallon, and the pump can run all day. The catch? Someone has to crank the pump. Naturally, you could do it — bad idea — or you can get someone to do it in shifts. But if the crank system is complex and you still have to stand there and explain how to crank it, you are no better off. If you got hit by a bus, the village gets no water. Everyone dies.

Most of you who have employees are in the second example. An Operating System makes the cranking easier so it can run without your input.

ACTION STEP

Document your processes in a clear, step-by-step manner so anyone can follow them without your input.

Split Happens

Somewhere along every business journey, split happens. This split is where success or complexity forces the business to focus on what vs. why — it loses who it is, just trying to keep up or stay afloat.

An Operating System doesn't just tell how to do things. It sells why we do them. It's not just step-by-step how to turn the lights on; it explains why we turn them on like this. Because when split happens, the business is at risk. Most often, this split is the absence of the owner's attention or presence. And that's not the point of business.

ACTION STEP

Include the "why" behind each process in your OS. Explain the reasoning and importance of each task.

Doesn't Anyone Have Common Sense Anymore?

We've heard it a thousand times. The exasperated owner, confounded by the stupidity of the employee. "Can you believe what they did?" To which we usually reply: did they know exactly what they weren't supposed to do?

An operating system removes the chance for error. Not only does it explain why and how we do things, but it also explains what not to do. Leaving things to error because it's common sense is only common sense to you.

Happiness is the intersection of expectation and experience. Control the expectations clearly, and you'll control the experience.

ACTION STEP

Include clear guidelines on what not to do in your OS. Don't assume common sense; spell it out.

Can You Hand It to Me and I Run It?

An OS is meant to give each department, division, shift, and service a clear outline of each task, clear expectations, what not to do, and what to do if it goes wrong. It is a live document that is always evolving. But it has to start somewhere.

Test it by handing it to someone unfamiliar with the task. If they cannot run it, you are not done.

Indoctrination

Upon completion of this OS — which if we're clear, is never complete — it's time for distribution. Make it digital. Attach a test. It lives on and will always be updating, so investing in print is costly and wasteful.

Most importantly: it must be omnipresent. It should infiltrate all conversations, be referred to regularly, reviewed regularly, and taught regularly. Do not let it live on a hard drive. Otherwise it might as well live in your head.

ACTION STEP

Make your OS digital and easily accessible. Incorporate it into training and regular operations. Update it continuously.

1 Month Sabbatical: What It's All For

The goal for every 1:1 client is an annual sabbatical — one month each year where they remove themselves from the business completely. We do this technologically, financially, organizationally, and psychologically.

The Operating System is the central nervous system to that possibility. It should be your goal too, whether you take it or not. You should at least be able to — and for more than a month if you wish.

ACTION STEP

Set a goal to take a one-month sabbatical from your business. Use your OS to make it possible.