

Losing Money to Become a Tycoon: Starting with Games

Chapter 524: The Management Trainee System Begins to Show Results

Friday, May 20

Managed Fitness Gym

There weren't many people in the gym that morning, making the place feel rather empty.

Out of the entire row of treadmills, only four female members were working out, while the rest sat unused.

The free weights and machine area wasn't much better. There were only six people there, and three of them were fitness coaches training themselves.

After finishing his workout, Guo Licheng wiped the fine beads of sweat from his forehead with a towel and sat down in the lounge area.

Lately, being the gym manager had kept him extremely busy.

Several new branches were being prepared simultaneously. Naturally, Guo Licheng couldn't handle everything himself, so he selected several fitness coaches from the flagship Managed Fitness Gym—people he knew and trusted—and promoted them to branch managers.

All of the new locations had purchased the same models of exercise equipment. Moyu Delivery had already coordinated with Rui Yuchen so that nearby stores would provide meals for them. Those parts were easy.

The only troublesome part was hiring staff.

Guo Licheng established strict hiring standards for every branch, faithfully carrying out President Pei's instructions.

When recruiting coaches, the first thing to evaluate was their physique and muscular development. If someone's body wasn't up to standard, then no matter how eloquent they were or how persuasive their sales pitch sounded, they would be rejected.

As a result, a huge number of applicants were eliminated because their physiques didn't meet the requirements.

Fortunately, President Pei was extremely generous with salaries, so despite the high standards, plenty of qualified trainers were willing to leave their previous jobs. Everything at the new branches was progressing smoothly.

Within the next couple of days, the various Managed Fitness branches should begin opening one after another.

The branch at Mingyun Mountain Villa seemed to be opening first.

Guo Licheng had been so busy that he hadn't had time to visit yet, so he had no idea whether business was going well after opening.

Based on his own judgment, however, he doubted things were very optimistic.

Just look at how the flagship store was doing.

Besides managing the branch openings, Guo Licheng also had to train hard every day according to President Pei's orders. He was afraid that if he

slacked off for even a couple of days and his physique deteriorated, President Pei would notice and criticize him.

But that also meant he had no spare time to recruit new members or promote the gym.

Things had been better when Coach Yaling was still around. Every day, new customers would sign up specifically because of her.

Now that President Pei had transferred Yaling elsewhere, the gym felt even quieter than before.

"Manager, the Fitness Meals have arrived!" the receptionist called out.

Looking up, Guo Licheng saw two Moyu Delivery couriers take the insulated boxes off their backs. They quickly removed the meals inside, neatly arranged them on the long table, and hurried away.

It was almost lunchtime, and the couriers still had many other deliveries to make. Since Managed Fitness was one of their own affiliated businesses, there was no need for formalities—they simply dropped off the meals and left.

Guo Licheng called out,

"Time to eat!"

"...Okay..."

Several weak, listless responses came from around the gym.

Guo Licheng sighed helplessly.

He knew exactly why everyone lacked enthusiasm.

No one was excited about the Fitness Meals.

The Fitness Meals provided by Moyu Delivery were much the same as those sold elsewhere on the market. They mainly consisted of salads. Although nutritionally balanced with both meat and vegetables, the flavors were undeniably bland.

Eating one once in a while was fine.

Eating them every day was another story.

After a while, even the smell of instant noodles could make your mouth water.

The few members training at the gym were among the most loyal customers—people with exceptionally strong determination. Otherwise, they would have given up long ago.

They had been eating healthy meals for a very long time.

To them, eating these meals had become little more than a daily check-in task.

After finishing their workout, regardless of what the Fitness Meal contained, they'd casually take a few bites just to satisfy the requirement—essentially tricking their stomachs into believing they'd eaten.

Naturally, no one looked forward to it.

Since there weren't many people in the gym, there was no need to eat in shifts.

Everyone gathered around the table and opened their meal boxes.

The moment Guo Licheng lifted the lid, however, he froze.

"Did they deliver the wrong meals?"

Inside the lunch box, one half contained mushroom and chicken breast braised rice, while the other half held steamed tofu with tomato and egg.

The mushroom chicken rice used brown rice as its base. On top were diced chicken breast, carrots, corn kernels, mushrooms, and green peppers. Everything had been lightly stir-fried with a small amount of oil before being steamed together with the brown rice, allowing the flavors of all the ingredients to soak into the rice itself.

Steamed tomato, egg, and tofu, on the other hand, was prepared by first lightly pan-frying the tofu with a small amount of oil. Beaten eggs were then poured in over high heat, and once the eggs were fully cooked, they wrapped evenly around the tofu. Finally, a small sprinkle of chopped scallions was added as garnish.

These two dishes were the latest creations from Moyu Delivery's Food Laboratory.

- The mushroom chicken breast braised rice contained 320 kcal per serving.
- The steamed tomato, egg, and tofu contained 398 kcal per serving.

By serving half a portion of each together in one meal, the overall nutritional profile became more balanced.

Rui Yuchen felt that these two dishes were the first meals that truly met his goal of creating a Fitness Meal that people could eat over the long term. So he arranged for them to be delivered to the flagship Managed Fitness Gym that day, hoping everyone would taste them and provide feedback.

However, he hadn't specifically informed the delivery couriers, and they were extremely busy, so they forgot to notify the gym.

Guo Licheng heard someone swallow audibly.

After eating salads for so long, people were already salivating at the mere smell of instant noodles. The aroma of barbecue skewers was practically torture.

Now, with steaming hot, fragrant, normal food sitting right in front of them...

Who could possibly resist?

Yet no one dared pick up their chopsticks.

Instead, everyone looked expectantly at Guo Licheng.

He swallowed as well.

After clearing his throat, he said, "It looks like they delivered the wrong meals. Well... there's nothing we can do. We can't waste food. Go ahead and eat—but we'll do extra training afterward."

"Awesome!"

Everyone immediately lit up with smiles, hugged their lunch boxes, and dug in enthusiastically.

Guo Licheng tapped the table.

"Slow down! Chewing thoroughly helps digestion. Eating more slowly also makes it less likely you'll gain weight."

Only then did everyone slow their pace.

Two of the girls alternated spoonfuls of the rice and the tofu dish.

Their eyes even glistened with tears.

This was so moving.

At last, they no longer had to graze on "grass."

They could finally eat food fit for human beings!

Guo Licheng himself thoroughly enjoyed the meal.

He had to admit that warm, flavorful food was on an entirely different level from salad.

As he ate, though, he couldn't help feeling puzzled.

Although it seemed like the wrong order had been delivered, all of the ingredients were exceptionally healthy.

Very little oil had been used, and the brown rice, carrots, green peppers, corn, chicken breast, eggs, and tofu were all nutritious ingredients.

Then again, Moyu Delivery had always promoted healthy eating.

Even their ordinary meals tended to use less oil and salt than typical takeout.

So Guo Licheng didn't dwell on it.

He figured he'd ask Rui Yuchen about it when he had the chance.

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Saturday, May 21

The weekly Management Trainee meeting began on schedule.

The trainees from each department reported one after another.

Whenever something caught Pei Qian's interest, he would ask a few questions. If nothing seemed unusual, he simply moved on.

"The various Managed Fitness branches have now opened one after another. However, just like the flagship store, they're extremely quiet and attracting almost no customers."

"On Friday—that is, yesterday—the Fitness Meals delivered by Moyu Delivery appeared to have been mixed up. However, Coach Guo had everyone do extra training afterward, so it didn't have much of an impact."

The management trainee from Managed Fitness gave the report matter-of-factly.

The wrong meals?

Pei Qian immediately sensed something wasn't right.

Would Moyu Delivery really make such a rookie mistake? That doesn't seem likely.

Rui Yuchen and his team aren't incompetent. If they were capable of making such an elementary mistake, I would have found out long before now.

Pei Qian turned toward the management trainee from Moyu Delivery.

Sure enough, that trainee—who worked as a staff member in the Food Laboratory—raised a hand and said,

"It wasn't a delivery mistake. That's actually the new Fitness Meal developed by the Food Laboratory."

Pei Qian: "?"

Warning bells immediately went off in his head.

"Explain in detail," Pei Qian said, as though facing a formidable enemy.

The Moyu Delivery trainee explained,

"Mr. Rui felt that the previous Fitness Meals tasted too awful and didn't suit Chinese eating habits."

"So after researching the issue, he decided to strike a balance between flavor and health."

"This version of the Fitness Meal has a slightly higher calorie count than the previous one, but it's healthier overall. Um... of course, the production cost has also increased."

Pei Qian's expression had begun to darken.

But upon hearing the phrases "higher calories" and "higher production cost," his face visibly relaxed.

Higher calories meant that gym members would see results more slowly from their workouts.

Higher prices would also discourage even more customers with tight budgets.

That... didn't sound like such a bad thing.

"How much has the price increased?" Pei Qian asked.

The management trainee from Moyu Delivery replied, "The cost of each Fitness Meal has gone up by a little over 3 yuan. Since members eat two meals a day under the program, that's about 7 yuan more per day."

Pei Qian did the math in his head.

An extra 7 yuan per day meant that someone who trained three days a week would spend nearly 1,000 yuan more per year.

Hmm...

That would push the price of Managed Fitness even higher.

The gym's membership fees had already filtered out a large number of potential customers. Now that the meal costs had increased as well, even more people would probably be discouraged.

That actually sounded pretty good.

"So," Pei Qian asked, "how does Rui Yuchen plan to handle the pricing?"

The Moyu Delivery trainee answered, "Mr. Rui plans to let members choose between the original salad and the new Fitness Meal, with each option priced separately."

Pei Qian immediately shook his head.

"That won't do!"

If members could simply eat the cheaper salad whenever they wanted to save money, then occasionally spend a few extra yuan on the new meal when they got tired of salads, the higher price would no longer discourage anyone.

In fact, it would have the opposite effect.

The shared gym experiment had already proven that raising prices was an effective way to drive customers away.

Since the strategy worked, they should obviously keep raising prices.

"Our gym is called Managed Fitness. The key word is managed!"

"If customers get to decide what they eat, then what's being managed?"

"Tell the Food Laboratory to keep investing heavily in developing Fitness Meals. I don't care how much they cost—bundle the entire cost into the gym's fees!"

The management trainees from Moyu Delivery and Managed Fitness exchanged a glance before replying in unison, "Understood, President Pei."

"Wait."

Pei Qian suddenly realized something and raised a hand.

"You two aren't to say anything. I'll personally notify the department heads myself."

The existence of the management trainee system couldn't be exposed.

Within their own departments, the trainees were supposed to remain effectively invisible and avoid arousing the department heads' suspicions.

"All right, next."

Pei Qian signaled for the meeting to continue.

The management trainee from Fright Hostel stood up to report.

"President Pei, regarding the Fright Hostel project, President Li and the investors have just signed a contract with President Chen."

"The investors have jointly agreed to fund the construction of a large shopping mall as part of the Fright Hostel project."

"Half of the profits from the mall will belong to us."

Pei Qian fell silent.

A moment later, a giant question mark slowly seemed to appear above his head.

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