

Losing Money to Become a Tycoon: Starting with Games

Chapter 487: A Victorious Start

Guo Licheng felt slightly embarrassed.

Generally speaking, fitness trainers were not supposed to use the gym equipment during working hours.

In most gyms, a trainer's primary responsibilities were coaching clients and selling classes. Maintaining their own physique, comparatively speaking, was considered less important.

Guo Licheng had only told the trainers to try out the equipment because there were no customers today. Unfortunately, President Pei had walked in and caught them in the act.

"President Pei, I was the one who told them to test the equipment and see how it feels. I'll call them back and get everyone ready to work right away..."

Guo Licheng turned around, intending to gather all the trainers.

Pei Qian quickly stopped him.

"What are you talking about? Isn't it only natural for fitness trainers to work out?"

Guo Licheng froze.

"Huh?"

Pei Qian spoke seriously.

"As fitness trainers, you should first and foremost keep yourselves in shape. If you can't even train yourselves properly, how can you teach others with confidence?"

"Besides, the equipment is just sitting there unused anyway. Of course it should be put to good use."

"Let me make this clear: as long as you've completed your duties, all trainers are free to use these machines at any time during working hours."

"And you're the manager—you should lead by example! Your physique should be the best among all the trainers!"

A warm feeling rose in Guo Licheng's heart.

"Understood, President Pei!"

"Then... can we use the equipment outside of working hours as well?"

Pei Qian glanced at him.

"You can use the equipment outside working hours too, but you yourself are not allowed to come to the gym."

Guo Licheng blinked.

"..."

"Because overtime work is strictly forbidden."

Although the statement sounded somewhat absurd, Guo Licheng still felt deeply touched.

The gyms he had worked at before never treated trainers like human beings. Internal group chats were filled with people competing over sales figures—how many memberships someone sold today, how many classes another sold tomorrow. Every month they had to pledge performance targets, and those who failed to meet them could even be forced to shave their heads as punishment.

As for trainers' physical conditioning and health, the gyms couldn't care less.

Most trainers only managed to squeeze in an hour or two of exercise late at night after the gym closed. With such heavy sales and marketing responsibilities, who had the energy to train properly?

But President Pei was completely different.

He placed no performance requirements on them whatsoever and instead cared deeply about the trainers' physical fitness and overall well-being.

Having such an enlightened and considerate boss was truly a blessing.

Meanwhile, Pei Qian watched the trainers exercising diligently and thought to himself:

If Guo Licheng works hard enough to maintain the best physique among all the trainers, that should consume a huge amount of his time and energy, right?

That way he'll have even less time and motivation to manage the gym or attract new customers.

Perfect. The plan is working!

Soon, the trainers gradually gathered around. After greeting President Pei, they began eating lunch.

Pei Qian examined the day's fitness meal.

It arrived in Moyu Delivery's transparent meal containers. Inside were a small portion of brown rice, two pieces of boiled purple sweet potato, chicken breast, shrimp, salmon, hard-boiled eggs, avocado, cherry tomatoes, lettuce, and other ingredients.

Low in oil, low in salt, and large enough to be filling.

In addition, each meal came with fruit and cooked corn as supplementary snacks.

Fitness diets emphasized eating smaller meals more frequently. Having healthy snacks in the morning and afternoon—even something as simple as a glass of milk, an apple, or an ear of corn—could increase satiety, boost basal metabolism, and reduce calorie intake during lunch and dinner, making fat loss easier.

While eating, Guo Licheng gave President Pei his assessment of the meal.

"The ingredients are all very fresh, and the portion size is good. It provides plenty of nutrition."

Pei Qian carefully observed Guo Licheng's expression, as well as the expressions of the other trainers.

Nothing seemed unusual.

There was no moment where someone's eyes suddenly lit up, accompanied by the imaginary swelling of triumphant background music.

That meant one thing:

The fitness meal wasn't particularly delicious.

At the very least, compared to other fitness meals, it had no obvious advantage in taste.

Still, just to be safe, Pei Qian asked one more question.

"How does it taste?"

Guo Licheng thought for a moment.

"It's about the same as most fitness meals. I mean, fitness food is fitness food—it was never going to taste amazing. As long as the portions are large enough, that's what matters."

Pei Qian felt relieved.

As long as these fitness meals had no advantages over other fitness meals on the market besides price and portion size, they posed no threat.

This first version of the fitness meal had been prepared by Moyu Delivery's chefs. Its primary goal was simply to provide the necessary nutrition while reducing calorie intake. No special effort had been made to improve the taste.

And the trainers had obviously eaten plenty of similar meals before. To them, the main advantages of this one were simply that it was free and filling.

If customers were forced to pay for it themselves, most people would probably be reluctant.

Soon, lunch was over.

The trainers cleaned up their meal containers and waited for the delivery staff to return and collect them. Meanwhile, Guo Licheng led Pei Qian on a tour of the gym.

Following Pei Qian's instructions, the gym had purchased a batch of numbered wristbands.

When members arrived, they would receive a wristband from the front desk and use its number to locate their assigned locker. Scanning the wristband unlocked the locker for use.

When leaving, members returned the wristbands to the front desk, where staff recorded the data and manually entered it into the computer system.

This allowed members' workout data to be tracked.

Of course, for now the process relied on manual data entry—a rather clumsy solution. Guo Licheng planned to develop a dedicated app in the future to streamline everything.

But considering the gym didn't even have any members yet, there was little point in investing in that right now.

Pei Qian inspected the locker rooms, showers, restrooms, and other facilities, finding himself quite satisfied.

He was especially pleased that every shower stall had been equipped with premium shampoo and body wash, just like those found in luxury hotels. The products were dispensed through anonymous soap dispensers, making it impossible to tell how expensive they were.

Spending extra money in places customers wouldn't immediately notice felt like exactly the right approach.

After completing the tour, Pei Qian was very pleased.

"Looks good. Keep it up. I'll be heading out now."

Just as he was about to leave, he suddenly stopped.

Because he noticed a young couple peering through the entrance before pushing open the door and walking inside.

Customers!

Pei Qian glanced at Guo Licheng.

"Go take care of them. I'll stay a little longer."

This location had originally been a high-end gym near a university campus. The location wasn't outstanding, but it certainly wasn't bad either. Although all of the previous gym's members had already transferred elsewhere, it was perfectly normal for new customers to wander in.

Pei Qian decided to stay and see how these two reacted to the gym's pricing before leaving.

Just as Guo Licheng was about to greet them, Li Yaling stepped forward first and gave him a subtle look.

Guo Licheng immediately understood and backed away.

Clearly, when dealing with a couple, the key was winning over the girlfriend first.

Most boyfriends wouldn't want a male trainer coaching their girlfriend, so Li Yaling naturally had an advantage in that regard.

Furthermore, despite her impressive musculature, she had a sweet and attractive appearance. Even male customers tended to find her approachable.

Compared to the socially awkward Guo Licheng, she was clearly the better choice.

Seeing this, Pei Qian couldn't help frowning.

"What's her name?"

Guo Licheng immediately replied:

"Li Yaling. She's an exceptionally capable trainer. At her previous gym, she never even needed to actively sell training packages—her schedule was always fully booked with loyal clients. Since we're friends outside of work, I recruited her too."

Pei Qian: "?"

Never needed to actively sell classes? Loyal clients kept her fully booked?

Who told you to hire a dangerous variable like that?!

And now this Li Yaling has proactively gone to greet new customers.

This was absolutely unacceptable!

If she failed to bring them in, then fine.

But if she actually succeeded...

Hmph. Then I'll just have to find some excuse to promote her out of the position.

Pei Qian remained silent.

He casually picked up a banana from nearby and began eating it while secretly observing the situation unfold.

Li Yaling took the young couple on a tour of the gym and then sat down with them in the lounge area for a chat.

The whole process took only about ten minutes before the couple left.

Li Yaling then returned to Guo Licheng with a somewhat helpless expression.

"It didn't work?" Guo Licheng asked.

Li Yaling shook her head.

"Nope."

Pei Qian was secretly delighted, though he kept a straight face as he asked, "What happened?"

Li Yaling sighed.

"President Pei, everything was going well at first. I introduced our equipment, the qualifications of our trainers, and all of our facilities. Both of them were clearly interested."

"But the moment I mentioned the price, the guy's expression changed immediately. It's obvious he'd bought gym memberships elsewhere before, did some quick calculations, and decided we were too expensive."

"On the other hand, the girl liked the environment here and thought the pay-per-session model was friendlier for beginners."

"At first the guy was considering compromising for her sake, but then I explained our gym's special requirements, and neither of them could accept it anymore..."

"The cost of working out here already seemed expensive to them. Once the mandatory fitness meals were added on top, it completely exceeded their budget."

"So... they left. They're probably checking out other gyms nearby now."

Pei Qian let out a long breath.

What was this called?

A close call? Or a victorious opening?

Sure enough, the customer-deterrent policies he had carefully designed were working exactly as intended. Even with Coach Li Yaling personally handling the sales pitch, she still couldn't keep the couple from leaving!

Still, despite the promising start, Pei Qian reminded himself to stay cautious.

He cleared his throat.

"It's fine. They're only two customers."

"Our gym has a bright future ahead of it. Whether we gain a few customers or lose a few customers doesn't really matter."

"As long as we're patient, customers will eventually come."

"Oh, right, Coach Guo. Have a sign made."

"A sign?"

"Put our pricing and membership requirements on it and place it right outside the entrance. That'll save people from constantly coming in and asking questions, which only interrupts your workouts."

"Anyone who can't accept the conditions can be filtered out by the sign immediately."

"Instead of wasting time answering those questions, you'd be better off improving your physiques. Your bodies are Managed Fitness's best advertisement."

Li Yaling blinked in confusion.

"Huh?"

Putting the prices and requirements right outside the door?

Wasn't that basically asking customers to stay away?

Not handing out flyers was one thing, but actively engaging in what felt like *negative advertising* was something else entirely.

What exactly was President Pei thinking?

Pei Qian stood up.

"Alright, I'll be going now. Get that sign made as soon as possible."

Guo Licheng immediately nodded.

"Understood, President Pei. Leave it to me."

At the moment, Guo Licheng was still very obedient. Although Li Yaling seemed like a potential risk factor, everything would be fine as long as Guo Licheng remained the manager and faithfully carried out his instructions.

Pei Qian left the gym in excellent spirits.

However, he had also realized a problem.

His attention was becoming increasingly stretched.

There were simply too many businesses now.

Worse still, many department heads never reported anything while planning their projects. They would quietly work behind the scenes and only come running to him once they had already achieved success, eager to deliver good news.

It was becoming increasingly difficult to deal with.

More and more, Pei Qian felt that he needed to plant his own eyes and ears throughout every department and strengthen his control over the entire company.

Otherwise, making losses would become harder and harder. Even if he transformed himself into a full-time firefighter, rushing from one crisis to another, he'd eventually wear himself out for nothing.

The time had come to establish Tengda Group's own secret internal watchdogs and informants.

And he needed to get started immediately.