THE

# Pre-Sale Playbook

How to open a gym with 500+ members on day one.

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FOREWORD

# Why this playbook exists.

I have spent more than a decade running fitness operations across the GCC and Middle East. I have launched clubs that opened with revenue already on the books, and I have walked into underperforming facilities to fix what should have been built right the first time. The single biggest difference between the two is what happens in the 90 days before opening.

Most fitness founders treat the pre-sale window as a marketing exercise. Run some ads, push a discount, hope volume covers the projection. Six months later they are staring at a P&L that does not work and a renewal cliff they did not see coming. This playbook exists because that outcome is preventable. It is preventable by anyone willing to run their pre-sale like a structured commercial programme rather than a launch promotion.

What follows is the framework we use at Jiwar Movement to deliver pre-sales that produce real numbers. The most notable one, FitnGlam UAE, opened with more than 700 members on day one. The same disciplines have been applied across Fitness First in KSA, across boutique launches in Iraq, and across multi-site portfolios in the wider GCC.

The principles scale. They work for a 1,200-member city club and they work for a 300-member boutique studio. What matters is the discipline, not the size.

Read this once before opening. Read it again at T-90, when the pre-sale work actually begins. And if any of it feels familiar in a way that worries you, that is the right moment to bring in support — not the month after launch.

> *“A pre-sale is not a marketing event. It is the most commercially important 90 days in a fitness business.”*

— Aysha Asfour, Founder · Jiwar Movement

SECTION 01

# Why most pre-sales fail.

And what a real one is supposed to do.

The pre-sale is the single most commercially important window in a fitness business. Done well, it sets the financial trajectory of the club for the next two years. Done poorly, the launch becomes a slow-burning problem that the operator pays for in the months that follow.

Most pre-sales fail in a similar way. The founder treats the 60-90 days before opening as a marketing exercise. Ads are switched on, a discounted founder rate is published, and the team waits to see how many members sign up. The numbers come in soft, the cash flow does not match the projection, and by month four the operator is firefighting churn that should have been designed out months earlier.

A real pre-sale is not a marketing campaign. It is a structured commercial programme that runs alongside marketing, with five concurrent outcomes:

## The five outcomes a real pre-sale delivers

- **A defined member base** committed financially before opening.
- **Predictable cash flow** across the first three to six months of operations.
- **A team trained, tested, and operating to standard** from day one — not learning on real members.
- **Marketing channels validated** with known cost-per-lead and conversion rates.
- **A daily rhythm of tracking and accountability** that carries straight into business as usual.

When these five land, the club opens with revenue on the books, a team that already knows what they are doing, validated channels, and a daily operating rhythm. When they do not, the launch is a delayed start — and the operator pays for that delay through the rest of year one.

> **The honest reframe**
>
> Stop thinking of the pre-sale as a marketing push. Start thinking of it as the construction phase of your commercial engine. The marketing is one input. The engine is the whole point.

SECTION 02

# The 90-day timeline.

T-minus structure. Every phase has a different job.

Pre-sales are measured backward from opening day. We call this T-minus structure. The minimum viable pre-sale window is 90 days. 120 days is better, especially for first-time founders. Anything shorter than 60 days is not a pre-sale — it is a soft opening with a promotion attached, and it will leave membership and cash flow short by month three.

| Window | Phase | Primary Purpose |
|---|---|---|
| **T-90 to T-60** | **Foundation** | Get commercial, operational, and team infrastructure ready. No public marketing yet. |
| **T-60 to T-30** | **Soft Launch** | Convert founder's network and warm leads. Validate offer. Train team on real prospects. |
| **T-30 to T-0** | **Public Launch** | Lead generation at volume. High-velocity conversion. Daily KPI rhythm. |
| **T-0 to T+30** | **Opening Window** | Onboard pre-sale members. Start personal training. Install retention rhythms. |

Each phase has a different job. Compressing them does not save time — it just guarantees one of them is done poorly. Founders who try to launch a pre-sale in 45 days inevitably skip the Foundation phase, and then spend Phase 3 firefighting issues that should never have existed.

> *“If you only have 45 days, you do not have a pre-sale. You have a soft opening with a promotion.”*

SECTION 03

# Phase 1 — Foundation (T-90 to T-60).

The phase where most pre-sales fail before they sell a single membership.

Most pre-sales fail in this phase, before anyone has been asked to sign up. Founders rush past the Foundation phase because nothing visible is happening. There is no marketing, no leads, no excitement. Just structure.

But this is the phase that decides whether the next 60 days work. Without the foundation in place, the public launch is a sieve. Every lead that arrives gets handled poorly because the people, the systems, and the offer were not ready.

## What needs to be in place before T-60

### Commercial foundation

- The **concept is locked**. You know exactly what kind of facility you are opening, who it serves, what makes it defensible in the local market.
- **Pricing is final**. Membership tiers, founding-member offer, personal training pricing, ancillary revenue lines.
- **The financial model is built**. Year 1 revenue forecast, breakeven member count, cash flow projection by month.
- **Renewal economics are designed**. What happens when the founder rate expires? This decision cannot be left until later.

### Sales infrastructure

- A **sales centre** is set up. A temporary site, a partner facility, or a well-presented office. It must be presentable to prospects.
- **CRM is selected and live**. Even a simple one. Every lead is tracked from source to close.
- **Sales scripts are written and rehearsed**. Tour structure, objection handling, closing approach.
- **Reporting templates are built**. Daily KPI sheet, weekly review structure.

### Team

- **The sales lead is hired**. The most important hire of the pre-sale. They own the targets and run the team.
- **2–4 sales consultants** are hired and onboarded.
- **A pre-sale marketing lead** is in place — in-house or agency.

- **Personal training lead** identified, even if other PTs come on later.

### Marketing infrastructure

- **Website live** with working lead capture. Even if rudimentary.
- **Social handles** created and branded. Even if posting has not started.
- **Database of warm contacts** compiled — founder's network, partner networks, advisory contacts.
- **Paid media plan** agreed with budget and creative timeline.

> **Hard rule**
>
> If any of the above is missing at T-60, you delay launch. You do not push through. A pre-sale that starts without infrastructure burns leads — and burnt leads do not come back.

SECTION 04

# Phase 2 — Soft Launch (T-60 to T-30).

Do not go public yet. The first wave should come from warm networks.

The biggest mistake at this stage is going public too fast. Founders see infrastructure in place and want to flip the switch on paid media. Do not.

The first wave of members should not come from cold marketing. They should come from your warmest networks: the founder's personal contacts, partner referrals, board members, advisory networks, anyone who was excited about the project before there were ads.

### Why warm first

- **They commit cash**, proving the offer works at full intent.
- **They become your first ambassadors** when the public launch begins.
- **They tell you honestly what is wrong** — the offer, the price, the experience, the questions you have not anticipated.
- **They give your team real reps** on real prospects, not role-plays.

## What this phase should produce

- 20-30% of your total pre-sale target on the books by T-30.
- A validated, tested offer — pricing tiers, founder rate, PT bundles.
- Sales scripts refined based on real conversations.
- A sales team comfortable with the process before volume arrives.
- A pipeline that public launch can plug into.

> *“Run the soft launch like a closed event. Your VIP guests are paying members. Everyone else is invited later.”*

The benchmark we use: if the soft launch closes at less than 15% of target by T-45, do not move to public launch yet. Either the offer is wrong, the price is wrong, the message is wrong, or the team is not converting. Fix it before opening the floodgates.

SECTION 05

# Phase 3 — Public Launch (T-30 to T-0).

Lead generation at volume. Conversion at speed. Daily rhythm.

This is the visible phase. Most operators think this is the whole pre-sale. It is not. It is the conversion phase of work that started 60 days earlier.

In this phase, three things have to happen simultaneously: lead generation at volume, conversion at speed, and a daily rhythm tight enough to adjust mid-stream.

## Lead generation at volume

- **Paid channels turned on**: Meta, Google, Instagram, TikTok — depending on audience.
- **Influencer partnerships activated** across the local market.
- **PR push** if applicable — regional press, fitness media.
- **Community activations**: pop-ups, demo days, founder events.
- **Geo-targeted outreach** if the catchment is residential.

For a 500-member target, expect 2,500–4,000 qualified leads needed across the window, depending on conversion strength. Cost-per-lead in the GCC ranges from 15-60 AED depending on channel and audience quality.

## Conversion at speed

| Stage | Healthy Range | Warning Sign |
|---|---|---|
| **Lead to tour booked** | 40–60% | Below 30% |
| **Tour booked to tour attended** | 70–85% | Below 60% |
| **Tour attended to close** | 35–55% | Below 25% |
| **Lead to member (overall)** | 10–18% | Below 7% |
| **Same-day response to lead** | 100% | Anything else |

## Daily rhythm

Without a daily rhythm, the team drifts. With it, you can spot a problem on day three and fix it before it costs you ten days. The cadence that works:

- **Morning huddle** (15 min): previous day numbers, today's pipeline, week-to-date vs. target.
- **Mid-day check** (5 min): live update on tours booked, calls made.
- **End-of-day report** (15 min): closes confirmed, pipeline, follow-ups for tomorrow.
- **Weekly review** (60 min): channel performance, message testing, team coaching, week ahead.

> **The discipline that wins**
>
> Numbers reviewed daily, not weekly. Sales people who are not measured daily lose 30% of their performance within two weeks. Sales people who are measured daily lift it by the same amount.

SECTION 06

# Phase 4 — Opening Window (T-0 to T+30).

Opening day is not the finish line. It is the start of the retention work.

Most operators relax once the doors open. The pre-sale closed strong, the membership count looks healthy, the team is on the floor. They turn their attention to fixing the espresso machine and forget that the launch is judged six months later, not six days later.

Operators who think the pre-sale ends at opening lose 30-40% of their pre-sale members in months two through four. The reason is always the same: no structured onboarding, no PT sales kick-off, no retention rhythm.

## Three priorities for the first 30 days

### 1. Onboard every pre-sale member properly

- Every pre-sale member gets a **welcome session within their first 10 days**.
- Goal-setting conversation, induction, introduction to the team.
- Booked into a class or PT within the first 14 days.

### 2. Start personal training sales immediately

- Members who book an induction are **4× more likely to buy PT in week 1** than week 4.
- PT sales begin on day 2 of operations, not month 3.
- Every member journey conversation includes a PT introduction.

### 3. Install retention rhythm

- Attendance tracking from day 1.
- Reach out to any member who has not visited in 14 days.
- Member journey check-ins at 30, 60, and 90 days.
- First milestone moment (small win) inside the first 30 days for every member.

> *“The launch is judged six months later by retention, not by sign-up volume. Design retention before opening, not after.”*

SECTION 07

# The seven most common pre-sale mistakes.

Each one has a specific fix. None of them are theoretical.

These are mistakes I have seen repeatedly in the GCC market — across founder-led projects, investor-backed launches, and multi-site rollouts. Each one is named, each one is preventable.

### 1. Discounting the founder offer too deeply.

**What happens:** Founders get nervous and slash the rate. This anchors the brand cheap and creates a renewal cliff when offers expire.

**Fix:** Build value into the founder offer — extra months, PT credits, freeze rights — rather than cutting the headline rate.

### 2. Going public before infrastructure is ready.

**What happens:** Ads run, leads come in, team is not ready, follow-up is patchy, conversion is 8% instead of 35%. The leads are wasted and the founder pays twice for the same outcome.

**Fix:** Hard rule — no public launch until soft launch numbers prove the system works.

### 3. Hiring the sales team too late.

**What happens:** Some operators wait until T-30 to hire sales. By then there is no time to train. The first weeks of public launch are spent learning on real prospects.

**Fix:** Sales lead at T-90. Full team at T-60. All trained and rehearsed by T-45.

### 4. No CRM or no discipline using it.

**What happens:** Sales happen on WhatsApp, on memory, on scattered notes. Half the leads vanish. Pipeline is invisible. Coaching is impossible.

**Fix:** Any CRM is better than none. Logging every interaction is a daily standard, not a request.

### 5. Treating the pre-sale price as the long-term price.

**What happens:** The founder rate becomes the de facto rate because no one renews at a higher price. Year two revenue collapses.

**Fix:** Design the renewal economics before launch. Communicate the price step-up clearly at the point of signup, not at renewal.

### 6. No PT strategy until after opening.

**What happens:** Operators focus only on membership in pre-sale, ignore PT entirely, and then struggle to start it post-launch. PT revenue lags by 6 months.

**Fix:** Position PT in the sale from day 1. Sell a founder PT pack alongside membership.

### 7. No retention plan.

**What happens:** All attention on new sales. Month 3 hits and pre-sale members start leaving. The team is still chasing new leads instead of saving existing ones.

**Fix:** Retention rhythm built before launch — attendance tracking, journey conversations, milestone moments. Not optional.

SECTION 08

# Pre-sale readiness checklist.

If more than three items are unchecked at T-60, delay launch.

Print this. Walk through it with your team at T-75 and again at T-60. Every box that cannot be ticked is a risk to your launch. Three or more open boxes means you are not ready — and you should change the timeline, not push through.

## Commercial foundation

- ☐ Concept and positioning locked
- ☐ All pricing finalised (membership, PT, ancillary)
- ☐ Year 1 financial model built
- ☐ Breakeven member count known
- ☐ Founder offer designed (value, not price)
- ☐ Renewal economics designed and documented

## Sales infrastructure

- ☐ Sales centre operational and presentable
- ☐ CRM live and team trained on it
- ☐ Sales scripts written and rehearsed
- ☐ Tour structure defined and practiced
- ☐ Daily KPI sheet designed
- ☐ Weekly review structure agreed

## Team

- ☐ Sales lead hired and onboarded
- ☐ Sales consultants hired (2–4)
- ☐ Marketing lead in place (in-house or agency)
- ☐ PT lead identified
- ☐ All team trained on the system before public launch

## Marketing

- ☐ Website live with working lead capture
- ☐ Social handles set up and branded
- ☐ Database of warm contacts compiled
- ☐ Paid media plan agreed with budget

- ☐ Creative produced for first 4 weeks
- ☐ PR and partnership outreach mapped

### Operations

- ☐ Class schedule designed for opening month
- ☐ PT team in place or pipeline confirmed
- ☐ Front-desk SOPs ready
- ☐ Member onboarding journey designed
- ☐ Retention rhythm and tracking system ready
- ☐ Opening week communications planned for every member

SECTION 09

# When to bring in support.

An honest framing of what external help is and is not for.

Most operators try to run their pre-sale alone or with their marketing agency. That works if you have done it before. If you have not, three things tend to happen.

### You overestimate what marketing alone can do

Pre-sale is a sales operation, not a marketing one. The agency drives leads. Someone has to convert them. Without a senior person owning conversion, the leads pile up and the close rate collapses.

### You underestimate the speed

Pre-sale moves in days, not weeks. A team that has not done it before takes longer to catch up than the timeline allows. By the time they have figured out the rhythm, you are already in Phase 3.

### You miss the operational handover

The systems built for pre-sale need to translate into the operating business — same KPIs, same rhythm, same standards. Without someone overseeing both phases, that translation breaks and the post-launch operation has to rebuild from scratch.

## When to consider external operator support

- You are 90+ days from opening and the Readiness Checklist (Section 8) has more than five open items.
- You have never run a pre-sale before and the financial model assumes one.
- Your team is strong on marketing but light on sales operations.
- You are an investor backing an operator, and you want an experienced eye reviewing the plan before capital is committed.
- You are a regional brand entering a new market and the local team is forming for the first time.

> *"The right time to bring in support is before the pre-sale starts. The wrong time is the month after launch."*

SECTION 10

# Next step.

If the playbook has been useful, the strategy conversation is the next layer.

This playbook gives you the framework. A strategy conversation gives you a view on your specific project — what stage you are at, what is in place, what is missing, and what realistic pre-sale numbers look like for your concept and market.

## What a strategy conversation covers

- Where your project is today and what window you are operating in.
- What your pre-sale realistically needs to deliver for the business model to work.
- What is in place from the readiness checklist, and what is not.
- Whether you need full pre-sale support, advisory oversight, or a one-off review.
- An honest, operator-level view — not a sales pitch.

## Book a Strategy Conversation

90 minutes. No templates. We look at your actual project.

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ABOUT

# About Aysha. About Jiwar Movement.

Built beside founders. Built beside teams. Built beside communities.

## Aysha Asfour — Founder, Jiwar Movement

A business and operations leader in the fitness industry with experience across the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Jordan, and Iraq. Specialising in gym launches, pre-sale strategies, operational transformation, and performance-led team environments.

### Selected impact

- **700+ members** delivered ahead of FitnGlam UAE launch through a structured pre-sale.
- **+176% operating profit growth** across Fitness First KSA portfolio, recognised by the board.
- **Scaled monthly revenue +25% on average** at FitnGlam UAE, with peak months at +65-70%.
- **#1 Ladies-Only Club** at the REPs Awards 2024 — Fitness First UAE.
- **Consistently top 3** across Fitness First GCC clubs in P&L performance.
- **Established Iraq's first official HYROX-affiliated fitness club** through full concept and operations development.

### Foundation

- Executive Mini-MBA — London School of Business & Finance.
- Business Analytics for Leaders — University of California, Berkeley.
- Licensed Emotional Intelligence Coach Practitioner.
- Certified Organisational & Development Coach.
- Certified NLP Practitioner & Neuroscience Coaching.

## Jiwar Movement

Jiwar is an Arabic word meaning neighbourhood, proximity, and protection. It reflects closeness, presence, and responsibility — the act of standing beside someone, not observing from a distance.

Jiwar Movement is built on that meaning. We exist to build beside founders, teams, and individuals as they grow with structure, clarity, and discipline. We operate at the intersection of business performance and movement culture across the Middle East.


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