



# Customer churn playbook: the full report

Example: a chain of four gyms. All five stages, from the guided tour.

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## The playbook at a glance

- 1** Who leaves, and when?  
Your churn is concentrated in the first three months
- 2** Who is likely to leave next?  
Customers in their first three months are both the least happy and the group that leaves most
- 3** Why do customers leave?  
The unmet need that comes up most: "Help to build a routine"
- 4** Where does the experience break?  
The experience breaks at "Building a routine", but the fix starts at "First visit"
- 5** Which fixes come first?  
Start with the 3 quick wins, led by "Book every new member a free session with a trainer in week 1"

## Who leaves, and when?

### Your churn is concentrated in the first three months

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Monthly churn: **4.5% of customers a month, which compounds to about 42% a year**

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Where it bunches: **Customers in their first three months: 2.3 times your average rate**

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Their share: **19% of customers, 44% of cancellations**

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Gone within 90 days: **23% of customers who joined in the period**

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Group that leaves most: **Riverside: 1.5 times your average rate**

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Trend: **Steady at around 4.4% a month**

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#### What this may mean

This pattern often points to the start of the experience: a slow or failed setup, a product harder to use than it looked, customers who never build the habit of using it, a first bill that differs from the price quoted, or customers sold a plan that doesn't fit. These problems sit at a few known moments, so they are often cheaper to fix than problems that build up later. Your data shows where churn happens, not why; the next stages find out.

#### Investigate next

Survey customers in their first three months, a few weeks after they join, and interview the unhappy ones. Split the results by branch too, starting with **Riverside**.

At 4.5% a month, about 42 of every 100 customers you start a year with would be gone by year-end. That is less than 4.5% times 12 (54%) because each month's loss comes from a slightly smaller group of customers.

**Riverside** customers are 20% of your customers but 28% of cancellations, canceling at 6.5% a month.

Within 90 days of joining, 32% of new **Riverside** customers are gone, against 23% of all new customers. When early churn is worse in one branch, look at how that group is sold and set up, not only at the product.

## Who is likely to leave next?

Customers in their first three months are both the least happy and the group that leaves most

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Net Promoter Score: **-3 (likely between -9 and +4)**

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Promoters, passives, detractors: **33%, 32%, 35%**

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Lowest score: **Customers in their first three months: -29**

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Highest score: **Customers of more than a year: +15**

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By branch: **Lakeside and Northgate** customers score much higher (around +5) than **Riverside and Downtown** (around -10)

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Against stage 1: **Matches: the group that leaves most also scores lowest**

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Detractors to follow up: **247, 92% with a reason**

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### What this may mean

Detractors are your highest-priority customers to investigate: low scores can signal a higher risk of leaving, though a score alone doesn't predict who will. Low scores early on often point to the start of the experience: setup, the first bill, or expectations set during the sale. The score shows how customer sentiment is spread; stage 1 shows who is actually leaving, and the next stage investigates why.

### Investigate next

Read the detractors' reasons, then interview 10 to 15 of them, starting with customers in their first three months, along with 15 to 20 customers who have already canceled. Ask what happened just before they scored you low, not what they think of you in general.

The score is the percentage of promoters (9 or 10) minus the percentage of detractors (0 to 6): 33% - 35% = -3. Passives (7 or 8) don't count either way; they are satisfied but not committed, so a better offer elsewhere can draw them away.

Because you surveyed some customers rather than all of them, the score for your whole customer base is estimated to lie roughly between -9 and +4, at 95% confidence.

That range covers only the chance of who happened to be surveyed. It does not allow for bias when some kinds of customers are more likely to answer than others, which is common in surveys: very happy and very unhappy customers often reply more readily.

## Why do customers leave?

The unmet need that comes up most: “Help to build a routine”

Conversations: **30: 18 who canceled, 12 unhappy current customers**

Comes up most: “Help to build a routine”: 11 of 30

Next: “Classes at times I can make” (8), then “Help on the first visit” (7)

Leavers and detractors: **Both put “Help to build a routine” first**

Among customers in their first three months: “Help to build a routine” comes up most (3)

### What this may mean

These counts come from 30 conversations, so read the order as a guide rather than a measurement: a need several people raise is real, but a difference of one or two mentions is not.

### Investigate next

Take the top 4 needs, with the customers' own words, into stage 4, which maps the customer journey to find the moments where each one goes unmet. Start with “Help to build a routine”.

A conversation can raise more than one need, so the counts add up to more than the number of conversations.

## Where does the experience break?

The experience breaks at “Building a routine”, but the fix starts at “First visit”

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Low points: **1 of 5 stages: “Building a routine”**

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Most customer evidence: **“Building a routine”: 14 mentions in 30 conversations**

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Weak spots: **“Booking classes”, “Renewing or leaving” and “First visit”, scored 2**

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Fix starts earlier: **The break at “Building a routine” is fixed at “First visit”**

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Fixes written: **9 ideas across the map**

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### What this may mean

Low points are where customers feel worst and where most decide to leave. A problem often shows up later than it starts: a surprise on the bill is felt when the bill arrives but is created when the price is quoted. Fixing it where it starts usually costs less than handling the complaints where it shows. The evidence under each stage counts mentions from 30 conversations, so read it as a guide: a stage several customers raised is real, but a difference of one or two mentions is not.

### Investigate next

Take the fixes into stage 5, which weighs each one by the value it brings against the effort it takes, and picks the quick wins to start now. Start with the fixes for “Building a routine”.

A conversation can raise more than one need, so a stage's mentions can add up to more than the people who mentioned it.

## Which fixes come first?

### Stage 5 diagnosis

Start with the 3 quick wins, led by “Book every new member a free session with a trainer in week 1”

Quick Wins: 3: “Book every new member a free session with a trainer in week 1”, “Send a “we miss you” message after 10 days without a visit” and “Let members freeze their membership instead of canceling”

Major Projects: 2: “Start a six-week beginners’ programme with a coach” and “Add early-evening classes at Riverside”

Fill-Ins: 2

Thankless Tasks: 2: “Build our own fitness-tracking app” and “Rebrand all four gyms”

Most customer evidence: “Book every new member a free session with a trainer in week 1”: its problem was named in 12 of 30 conversations

Fixed earlier than it hurts: “Book every new member a free session with a trainer in week 1”

### What this may mean

Quick wins are cheap and worth doing, so they go first. Major projects bring the most value but need a budget and a plan; take them one or two at a time. Fill-ins can wait for spare time, and thankless tasks should be dropped, however appealing they look. Value here comes from the customer evidence in the earlier stages: a fix whose problem many leavers named is worth more than one the team likes. The scores are judgments, so read the matrix for order, not precision.

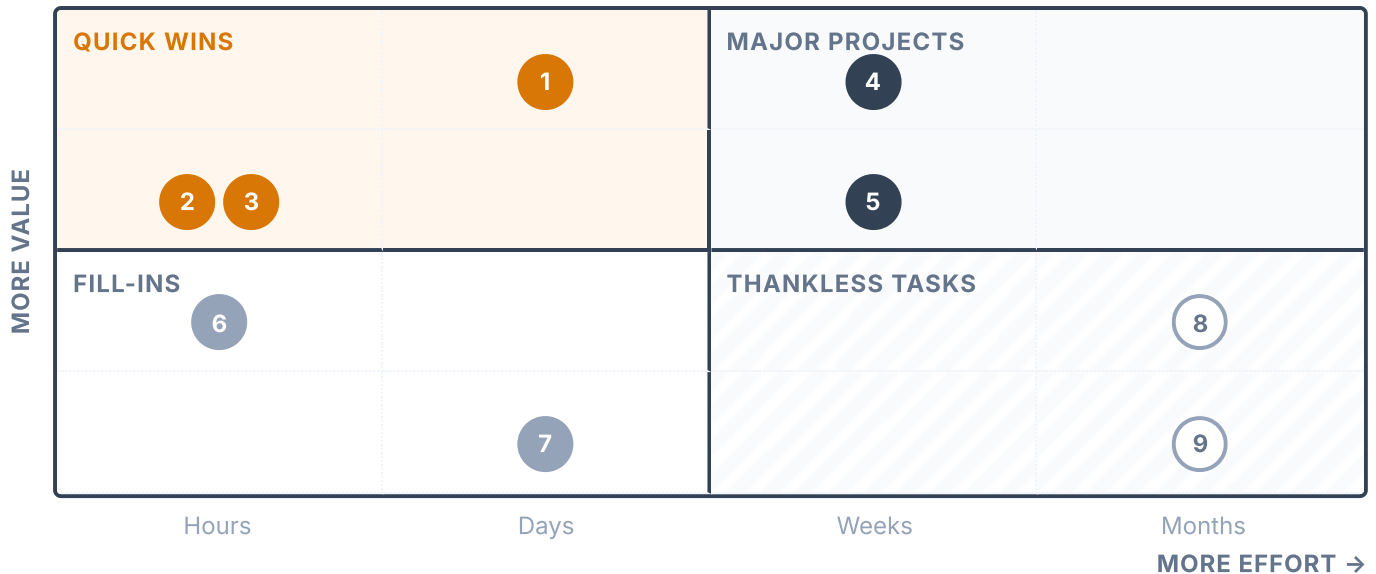
### Investigate next

Start the quick wins this month and give each one an owner. Write a short case for “Start a six-week beginners’ programme with a coach” and fund it properly. Then track churn every month, split the same way as in stage 1, to see whether it falls for the customers these fixes are for.

Value and effort are best scored by different people: value by whoever owns the result, effort by whoever will do the work. When one person scores both, the matrix tends to confirm what they already wanted.

The customer evidence for each fix counts the conversations that named a need placed on the stage where the fix applies. Fixes on the same stage share the same evidence.

## The matrix



Each number is a fix, numbered in the order to take them. Higher means more value; further right means more effort.

### What to do with each fix

#### Quick Wins High value, low effort

##### Start this month

- 1 **Book every new member a free session with a trainer in week 1**  
A great deal value, days of work; named in 12 of 30 conversations; up to about 36 customers a month; fixed at First visit
- 2 **Send a "we miss you" message after 10 days without a visit**  
A lot value, hours of work; named in 12 of 30 conversations; up to about 36 customers a month
- 3 **Let members freeze their membership instead of canceling**  
A lot value, hours of work; named in 8 of 30 conversations; up to about 36 customers a month

#### Major Projects High value, high effort

##### Fund it, and plan it properly

- 4 **Start a six-week beginners' programme with a coach**  
A great deal value, weeks of work; named in 12 of 30 conversations; up to about 36 customers a month
- 5 **Add early-evening classes at Riverside**  
A lot value, weeks of work; named in 8 of 30 conversations; up to about 21 customers a month

## Fill-Ins Low value, low effort

**Do it when there is spare time**

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### **Give new members a welcome pack**

Some value, hours of work; no customer named it

7

### **Add a "new member" badge in the app**

Very little value, days of work; no customer named it

## Thankless Tasks Low value, high effort

**Not now**

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### **Build our own fitness-tracking app**

Some value, months of work; named in 12 of 30 conversations; up to about 36 customers a month

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### **Rebrand all four gyms**

Very little value, months of work; no customer named it

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Made with the free Value vs Effort Matrix Tool at [whichframework.org/tools/value-effort-matrix.html](https://whichframework.org/tools/value-effort-matrix.html). Figures are from your data; the diagnosis describes what such patterns often point to, not proven causes.