

Spark: The Key to Their  
Success

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Bachelor of Arts

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## **Introduction**

Millennials are committed to maintaining healthy lifestyles by exercising religiously. This generation has developed a fitness focused culture and society has adapted to their generational wants. These trends can be seen throughout the fitness world, with the development of more exercise studios, athletic apparel, health food and beverages (Goldman Sachs, 2018). The birth of Millennials led to the creation of hot yoga, Lululemon, Fitbits, vegan food and juice cleanses. The current generation is in search of an extreme fitness regime that will fit their wellness needs.

In recent years, yoga has dominated the fitness scene. According to a survey from the Sports & Fitness Industry Association, “more than 24 million U.S. adults practiced yoga in 2013, up from 17 million in 2008” (Painter, 2015, para. 3), and the numbers just continue to grow. Yoga has become a growth industry. The Wall Street Journal reported, “some yoga classes are so overcrowded that peace-seeking yogis are getting into fights over mat space” (Painter, 2015, para. 4). However, over the years yoga goers have become more concerned about breaking a sweat than getting their zen on. As a result, yoga has turned up the heat, creating hot yoga to quench Millennials’ intense exercise thirst. People have become obsessed with extreme fitness, “the whole notion of pushing your physical limits — popularized by early Nike ads, Navy SEAL mythos and Lance Armstrong’s cult of personality — has attained a religiosity that’s as passionate as it is pervasive” (Havrilesky, 2014, para. 10). Hot yoga is creating heat junkies, who are “crawling through the desert in search of the oasis of a better body” (Rubin, 2012, para. 11). Therefore, Millennials are intensely working out in the pursuit of health and wellness.

The purpose of this paper is to understand what motivates students to choose a particular yoga studio in the San Luis Obispo area. The four flows of organizational communication will be applied to discover what allows yoga studios to be successful.

### **Background**

Spark is a dynamic hot yoga studio that offers diverse exercise classes, friendly instructors and competitive student discounts to enhance the San Luis Obispo athletic community. The studio is located at 977 E Foothill Blvd, Suite 111, right down the street from Cal Poly making it easily accessible to students by car or foot. The studio offers a variety of classes to appease all kinds of yogis. Spark cultivates an inviting environment with the motto “Smile at Spark” (Spark, 2018) and its’ authentic, amiable staff. The studio caters to Cal Poly students by offering special discounts that makes Spark affordable.

### **Millennials**

Millennials make up a large portion of San Luis Obispo’s population, about 43% (Suburban Stats, 2018), making them an important demographic to reach. Cal Poly Students fall under this generation and are significant consumers, currently they make up 21,306 (Cal Poly, 2018) of the San Luis population, and the numbers will only continue to grow with the installation of the new dormitories and Cal Poly’s stellar reputation. Cal Poly attracts health focused individuals with the desire to maintain healthy lifestyles. Therefore, Cal Poly fosters an athletic environment where students are passionate about their health. Students consistently utilize the recreation center, hike the San Luis mountains and attend yoga studios. Cal Poly students have been instrumental in Spark’s success due to their attendance and constant affirmation. Cal Poly students are more workout oriented than other San Luis Obispo community

members because of their state of the art recreation center, Millennial status, and competitive mentality. Cal Poly students have access to the highest quality gym with racquetball courts, a rock climbing wall, sand volleyball courts, a leisure and lap pool. After speaking with a few students that attend Cuesta College and a student from Hancock College it was clear these schools have much less advanced recreation facilities when compared to Cal Poly. The Cal Poly gym is also open extensive hours to meet the needs of all the active students, as opposed to the YMCA and YWCA which has limited times, “5:30 AM - 9:00 PM” on weekdays, “8:00 AM - 7:00 PM” on Saturdays, and “10:00 AM - 3:30 PM” (YMCA & YWCA, 2018) on Sundays. Cal Poly has the widest range of available times in comparison to other gyms, with hours such as “5:30AM - 12:30AM” on weekdays and “8:00AM - 12:30AM” (Cal Poly, 2018) on weekends. Cal Poly students are driven and competitive, that is why “about 2,300 students participate in about 320 teams in 14 sports, two tournaments annually” (Cal Poly, 2018). Therefore, since Cal Poly is an athletic hub filled with health conscious, fitness fanatics always in search of the next workout craze, it is no surprise they would become invested in Spark.

### **Literature Review**

Various literature looks at organizational communication and how it contributes to the development and success or failure of organizations. Organizational communication theories are used as explanatory mechanisms for unpacking the ideology of organizations (Putnam & Nicotera, 2009). The four flows approach focuses on communication as a dynamic process that builds, maintains, and transforms organizations. McPhee (2008) argues intricate organizations exist only in the relatedness of these four types of flow. The four flows can uncover the

motivations for joining and sustaining membership at an organization and in the case of this study it will serve as a means of understanding the motivators for people to join and remain members at Spark Yoga in comparison to other studios.

### **Socialization Practices**

Spark yoga uses effective socialization practices in order to attract and sustain membership at their organization. Spark is able to cultivate a desirable environment for employees and consumers due to their interactive management style, affordability and strong recruitment. Spark is able to give consumers' realistic expectations of their organization due to their solid structural system that allows for instructors to work effectively and efficiently (Klein, Polin, and Sutton, 2015). Therefore, instructors and students have their needs met due to their bilateral relationship with management which in turn enhances their experience at Spark. The organizational atmosphere influences members' attitudes towards the organization and in turn shapes the level of member involvement. McPhee argues that negotiation is not an one-way reception of messages, all parties are involved, "new or old, low-level or top-level" (2015, p. 489). Spark provides student discounts and competitive prices in order to appeal to Cal Poly students and to maintain a high position in their organizational sphere. Therefore, Spark is successful due to their steady recruitment. Jablin (1987) argues that socialization and member recruitment are examples of membership negotiation in a workplace. A member's ability to adapt to an environment is strongly due to the connections they fortify within the organization. Putnam and Nicotera (2009) claim that partial inclusion, commitment, identification, and leadership are factors in determining membership negotiation. Hence, when dealing with issues inside and outside the workplace the amount of built in stability in a community and the core inter-

organizational connections allow for the resolve of problems in an organization (Buzzanell, 2018). Therefore, membership negotiation considers why members of Spark join and sustain membership based on internal and external factors, such as cost of membership, organizational vibes, and schedule compliance are just some of the factors considered.

### **Family Management**

Spark maintains a family management style in order to facilitate structure and increase job satisfaction by minimizing power distance and maximizing interpersonal relationships. Spark places instructors in specific roles within the organization to promote an efficient work environment where employees feel valued. Livi, Theodorou, Rullo, Cinque, and Alessandri (2018) argue that feeling part of an organization by performing a role competently and gaining acceptance from co-workers promote pro-social behaviors at work. Organizational socialization creates an environment in which members “behave in combined synergies” and prevent burnout in the workplace (Livi, Theodorou, Rullo, Cinque, and Alessandri, 2018, pg. 9). Employees’ biggest concerns in an organization include their working hours, job safety and security, relationship with co-worker, esteem needs and top management (Raziq and Maulabakhsh, 2015). Therefore, it is crucial to develop a communal atmosphere by cultivating relationships in a organization and adhering to the needs of employees in order to preserve their membership.

Self-structuring is a means of gaining control of an organization either by strict rules or people’s own personal guidelines. Putnam and Nicotera claim that self-structuring “distinguishes organizations from mobs and neighborhoods” (2009, p. 10) since they create division of labor, work flow sequences, and policies to keep an organization systemized. In the case of Spark, management is relationship based, allowing members to feel as if they have agency. The

minimizing of power distance in the organization results in friendships which provides less of a hierarchical feel. Therefore, self-structuring occurs when members maintain activity patterns, organize work sites, create trust relationships, develop legitimate authority, or gain control (Putnam and Nicotera, 2009). Self-structuring includes formal policies as well as informal behavior and influence. According to Raziq and Maulabakhsh (2015), results show that top management support is positively correlated with job satisfaction and therefore will help sustain membership. Self-structuring is important in maintaining structure at Spark and making the organization run effectively by arranging staff in a hierarchy with a positive, influential manager at the top.

### **Teamwork**

Spark yoga uses teamwork and strong connections to combat issues inside and outside of the workplace. Members of Spark are able to fortify these relationships due to their family oriented management style and low power distance within the organization. Collective commitment is critical in utilizing a teamwork style at an organization and is often found to be socially contagious in a work environment (Lutgen-Sandvik, Riforgiate, and Fletcher, 2011). Therefore, Spark's activity coordination is dependent on their self-structuring; when members are placed in roles within their organization they are tasked with jobs they must fulfill and issues they must deal with, they then look to other members to help them handle problems. In a 1996 study, Babin and Boles found that supervisory support and worker involvement minimized work stress and maximized job satisfaction and performance. Hence, when Spark instructors need a class covered or emotional support they can rely on their co-workers due to their steady network. Lutgen-Sandvik, Riforgiate, and Fletcher found that social support fortifies deep connections

with coworkers, respondents of the study felt if they “ really needed help, they were ‘moved’ and ‘grateful’ co-workers stepped up” (2011, p. 17). Activity coordination also looks at how effectively members communicate amongst each other and if relationships are fostered and maintained inside and outside of the organization (Putnam and Nicotera, 2009). Spark management might cultivate strong relationships by facilitating Spark staff nights where they can all get together and enjoy drinks, go wine tasting, go bowling, or any other kind of team-building activity that can create or sustain connections. These teamwork elements allow for effective problem-solving within Spark due to the cultivating of strong relationships inside and outside of the studio. When instructors feel valued and important they perform their jobs more efficiently and feel the need to get more involved within an organization.

### **Organizational Identity**

Spark excels in their field of business because they possess an organizational identity that is pervasive throughout their institutional culture, extensive outreach to clients, and provide special offers to members. In Posner’s 2010 study, results showed that when a manager’s personal values aligned with the organization’s values there was a higher level of commitment, motivation, personal success and a lower level of anxiety and job stress. Therefore, Spark’s ability to attract and sustain member’s who share the same ideals as their organization serves them well in their line of work. Institutional positioning creates legitimacy by maintaining relations with media reps, suppliers, customers, competitors and investors (McPhee, 2015). Spark Yoga retains their affiliations with clients and instructors by keeping an open-channel of communication between all parties involved. All employees meet monthly to reflect on the organization which in turn makes everyone feel valued and satiated by the constant exchange of

ideas and opinions. In a 2017 study, results showed that organizations benefit from reflection because it assists the company as well as all stakeholders by “keeping oneself properly ordered, integrated, and directed” (Atienza, p. 590). Spark uses reflection to brainstorm new ideas and create stronger branding in order to keep positive relations with their clients. Organizations occupy niches and then strive to uphold higher status within inter-organizational systems (Putnam and Nicotera, 2009). Spark achieves higher status by giving members incentives to join, such as wine and yoga workshops, self-defense classes, and acupuncture treatments, at discounted prices. In a 2011 study, Sultan and Larsen discovered that economic incentives are the most important factor in influencing people to join cooperatives, therefore Spark incentivizes their clients in order to maintain membership. Organizations occupy niches and then strive to uphold higher status within inter-organizational systems (Putnam and Nicotera, 2009). Spark maintains a presence, image and communication with other yoga studios in the area in order to ensure high placement in the yoga sphere.

The following study will examine the four flows of organizational communication within Spark Yoga. The purpose of the study is to understand why Spark Yoga is such a successful studio in the San Luis Obispo area.

**RQ:** Using the four flows of organizational communication, why do students attend Spark Yoga over other studios in the San Luis Obispo area?

## **Methods**

### **Participants:**

The subjects were Cal Poly students and yoga instructors at Spark. A total of 42 students participated in an online survey, however 3 did not complete the survey and were not considered in the analysis. All participants of the survey were considered Millennials and Cal Poly students ranging between 18-24 years of age. There were 5 male and 34 female respondents; 5 in OCOB, 22 in CLA, 3 in CAFES, 0 in CAED, 8 in COSM, and 1 in COE. Students responded on a scale, how often they exercise a week; 3 responded 0-1 times a week, 5 responded 1-2 times a week, 14 responded 2-4 times a week, 12 responded 4-6 times a week, and 5 responded 7 times or more a week. Out of 39 students, 29 had heard of Spark Yoga and 10 had not. A total of 3 Spark instructors were interviewed.

**Recruitment:**

Student participants were recruited on Facebook via sorority pages as well as E-mails from professors to their students. Spark instructors were selected based off availability and willingness; meaning interviews were conducted in the studio before or after they taught a class during their 15 minute break. All participants were required to sign a consent form upon participating in the study.

**Procedure:****Survey**

The study began with a survey administered to Cal Poly students, which provided insight on student's opinion of exercise, Spark, and other Yoga studios in the area. Participants were first required to provide demographic information. In regards to this survey, demographics include gender, college, exercise frequency and whether they have heard of Spark Yoga. In total, the survey was 18 questions; 16 were multiple choice most had an "other" category and an option to

choice multiple answers when applicable and 2 were open-ended to allow the participant to express their opinions in greater depth. The survey can be viewed in full in Appendix A.

### **Interview**

To further understand what motivates people to be involved with Spark yoga, interviews were conducted with Spark instructors. The interviews consisted of 6 open-ended questions with 5 probes to help move the interviewee in the most productive direction. Many questions captured one or more of the four flows in their responses. The researcher led the interviews, using a tape recorder (with participant consent) to allow for transcribing. The interviews lasted around 5-10 minutes depending on how extensive the responses were. All 3 interviews can be viewed in full in Appendix B.

## **Results**

The following section presents the results of the survey followed by 3 interviews.

### **Survey**

Results from the survey were counted and reported on Qualtrics. Shown below are the results of the survey questions. The analysis showed specific trends related to membership negotiation and institutional positioning.

There are 18 survey questions, however only questions that aid in unmasking the research question will be discussed. Question 4 asked how often participants exercise a week. Results showed that 80% of Cal Poly students workout at least 2 times a week or more. Question 5 asked participants if they had heard of Spark Yoga before. Results revealed 73.7% of participants had

heard of Spark Yoga before. Question 6 asked how students have heard of Spark Yoga. Results showed 89% of participants (25 of the 28) had heard of Spark by word of mouth. Question 7 asked if participants had ever attended Spark. 65% (22 of 34) had never attended Spark.

Question 8 asked what Spark class(es) have students attended. Results displayed that every class at Spark, with the exception of Spark Barre 45, has been attended by at least 1 student. Question 9 asked participants if they enjoyed their experience at Spark. 100% of participants responded yes that they did enjoy their experience. Question 10 asked participants if they returned to Spark a second time. 92% returned (11 of the 12) to Spark after attending their first class. Question 11 asked participants if they didn't return to Spark what stopped them from returning. 100% of respondents said it was too expensive. Question 12 asked students if they were aware of the student discount. Results showed that 60% of the respondents (23 of the 38) had not heard of the Spark student discount. Question 13 asked students if they would be interested in attending Spark for a monthly fee of \$89 dollars a month with a 3 month contract. 68.42% said no they would not be interested in attending Spark for \$89 dollars a month on a 3 month contract.

Question 13 asked participants if they have attended other yoga studios in the San Luis Obispo area. Results displayed that only 15.8% of students have attended other yoga studios. The following 2 questions were open-ended and required a written response: Question 14 asked participants what studios other than Spark have they attended. The answers consisted of 2 Smiling Dog Yoga responses, 2 SLO Yoga Center responses, and 1 Cal Poly Recreation Center response. Question 15 asked students if they enjoyed the studio that they had attended. Students responded with 1 Yes, 1 No, and 1 Sort of. Question 16 asked if students returned to the studio. 83% of responses said they did not return to the studio. Question 18 asked respondents why they

didn't return to the studio. 100% of participants said they didn't like the class. The survey results show Spark's popularity and students' satisfaction with the organization.

### **Interview**

Results for the interview were transcribed from a recorder. Shown below are the results of three separate interviews. The analysis showed specific trends related to self-structuring, activity coordination and institutional positioning.

The interview transcripts showed instructors are extremely pleased with Spark due to the positive management style and supportive community. The management is extremely helpful and understanding of all members' needs. An instructor referenced Steph, the manager of Spark, when she stated, "She makes us want to pack our classes and push really hard and make Spark successful..." (Interviewee 3). All instructors feel as if they have cultivated strong relationships with other Spark members and feel valued by their organization. An instructor attributes their "real friendships" to "Spark staff nights where we could go out and they would treat us to like taco tuesdays and stuff like that" (Interviewee 2). Most instructors are passionate about teaching and work full-time as instructors therefore they work about 5 days a week and teach roughly 7 classes. Overall, members of Spark are passionate about their connections, their leadership, and their work.

The results of the interview can be viewed in full in Appendix B.

Overall, results show that students attend Spark yoga over other studios in the area due to strong word of mouth advertising, satisfaction with classes offered, innovative teaching styles, and a convenient location.

### **Discussion**

Cal Poly students are the most advantageous consumers of yoga in the San Luis Obispo area. These fitness focussed Millennials are constantly in search of the next exercise trend. From this study, results show that students are consistently working out. Therefore, the four flows of organizational communication was applied to Spark Yoga to uncover how they attract Cal Poly students and sustain such a successful organization.

### **Socialization Practices**

After identifying the socialization practices at Spark Yoga, many trends arose. One trend was that students felt as if Spark was too expensive for their financial situations. Results depicted that many students were not aware of the student discount, however after being informed they still were not interested. The reason for their disinterest can be explained by an article in the New York Times which reported that only “4.0%” of Cal Poly students are part of the top 1% whereas “15.6%” of Cal Poly students are part of the bottom 60% (Aisch, Buchanan, Cox and Quealy, 2017, para. 3). Therefore, Cal Poly students don’t necessarily have a lack of interest in Spark but rather they lack the social capital to afford it. Researchers, Atkinson and Permuth-Levine, found that young adults are aware of the health benefits of practicing yoga and believe that yoga provides positive health effects, disease prevention potential, and social/psychological benefits (2009, p.6). Therefore, Cal Poly students likely possess academic capital regarding yoga benefits

and feel that attending Spark will be advantageous for them. Hence, it is clear that students do not lack knowledge regarding yoga's benefits nor do they not desire to attend Spark but rather they can not attend for financial reasons. Since Cal Poly students receive free membership to the Cal Poly recreation center, Spark can be a hard sell, however they have one of the best student beginner discounts in the area and Spark should capitalize on that.

Another common theme that evolved from the study was that word of mouth created the strongest form of brand awareness for Spark Yoga. According to Ouardighi, Feichtinger, Grass, Hartl, and Kort the power of positive word of mouth "can intensify attraction of new customers so strongly that it may singly enable the building of a brand image, and even exempt the business from having to expend an advertising effort" (2016, p. 325). Results supported this claim by showing that a majority of students learned of Spark from their peers, orally. However, when it came to having knowledge about Spark's student discount most students were unaware of the deal. Therefore, Spark should allocate their advertising budgets towards promoting their student discount since Cal Poly students are their most critical consumers.

### **Family Management**

After studying the management style at Spark, many trends arose. The interview results showed that Spark has a vertical style of management and each member has their role within the organization. Steph and Nick run the organization and are at the top of the hierarchical structure and then instructors are below them and at the bottom is the front desk staff. Instructors typically teach 7 classes a week which creates structure in the organization internally. These defined roles allow the organization to function productively and enhance opportunity for success. Even though Spark maintains a vertical management style the managers are dedicated to provide an

open environment that facilitates conversation and discussion. The open channels create a family management style allowing all members to feel equal. Lutgen-Sandvik, Riforgiate and Fletcher (2011) claim that workers that feel recognized by their managers feel more interpersonally significant, special, and needed. Spark's family management provides a sense of mutual respect and allows equal treatment. Managerial climate is crucial for employees that want an open, honest, and encouraging environment. A study in 2011, argues that having an admirable boss is gratifying and gives workers a sense of security, allowing them to fortify "a place where [they] feel at home" (Lutgen-Sandvik, Riforgiate and Fletcher, p. 18).

### **Teamwork**

After analyzing the teamwork mentality at Spark, many trends arose. The interviews showcased how members interact positively inside and outside of the organization. Fineman (2011) defines work environments as more than a place that people congregate to finish tasks but rather a social arena filled with emotional drama. Spark instructors use socializing as an agent to create friendships, maintain clients, and deal with issues that arise in the workplace. Lutgen-Sandvik, Riforgiate and Fletcher (2011) claim that the feeling of belonging and connecting correspond to the positive work experiences workers have, expressing "the importance of social embeddedness through relationships, social support, and teamwork" (p. 16). Social relationships at work create feelings of belonging, love, and value. Instructors suggested that they foster strong relationships with all members of Spark and that they cultivate connections due to being like-minded and sharing common interests. A study in 2016 found that "higher levels of interaction and common life points are related to higher levels of connectedness" (Sanchiz, Ibarra, Nikitina, Baez & Casati, p. 5). Therefore, Spark instructors generate bonds due to sharing common

interests and having meaningful interactions. These convivial relationships result in an environment that attracts and sustains membership and is conducive to dealing with issues that arise in the workplace.

### **Organizational Identity**

After uncovering Spark's organizational identity, many trends arose. By researching and analysis of the study, Spark can be compared to various other yoga studios in the San Luis Obispo area. However, in comparison to other studios in the area Spark is most comparable to Smiling Dog Yoga which was one of the studios referenced in the study. Smiling Dog has similar pricing, class variation, and time availability as Spark, however Spark still has slightly better pricing and location than Smiling Dog (refer to Appendix C to see price listings and class schedules for Spark and Smiling Dog). Spark should advertise their discount in comparison to Smiling Dog in order to attract potential clients. They need to exploit their strengths in order to increase their position in their organizational system. Nonetheless, Spark maintains a high place in the social sphere but growth is always achievable. In fact, Spark's popularity has forced them to have to expand, with the extension of a second studio opening in April 2018. However, Spark will continue to uphold success by keeping their organizational identity and their member's self-identities aligned. Organizational identity binds a company together and puts them on a path, therefore organizational members are a direct reflection of an organization. People choose to engage in activities that coincide with their identity and they tend to support institutions that exemplify those identities (Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Luckily, Spark's members share similar values to the organization allowing them to stay on the path to success. A study in 2012 showed that the relationship between cultural identity and organizational commitment are intertwined

due to people's need to choose organizations that comply with their personal identities (Hechanova). Identity is highly valued in organizations as well, Atienza (2017) argues that organizational identity is the foundation and guiding force of what an organization does. Therefore, Spark must retain members that support their organizational identity in order to maintain their organizational superiority.

### **Limitations**

Although the study showed perceptive findings concerning the success of Spark Yoga in relation to other studios in regards to the four flows of communication, there were some limitations. First, the survey participants should have included a wider range of genders since the respondents were primarily female which could have caused biases in the data. Second, the survey and interviews should have been more extensive and warrant more insightful responses. The survey should have included an open-ended component to "other" answers as well as providing more open-ended questions to generate more astute responses. Questions pertaining to student's socioeconomic status and the involvement of other community members such as students at Cuesta and Hancock should have been implemented and considered in order to better understand students' motivations and the exercise attitudes of other community members in comparison to Cal Poly students. During the interviews, questions regarding the instructors salary should have been included to further understand their motivation for working with Spark. Lastly, the survey and interviews should have provided more questions pertaining to the four flows of communication in order to gain stronger insights about Spark and its members.

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## Appendix A

### Survey Template:

Gender:

1. Male
2. Female
3. Other: \_\_\_\_

College

1. OCOB
2. CLA
3. CAFES
4. CAED
5. COE
6. COSM

How often do you exercise a week?

1. 0-1 times
2. 1-2 times
3. 2-4 times
4. 4-6 times
5. 7+ times

Have you heard of Spark Yoga?

1. Yes
2. No

If you have heard of Spark yoga, how did you hear about them? (choose multiple if applicable)

1. Word of mouth
2. social media
3. flyers
4. events
5. other: \_\_\_\_
6. N/A

Have you ever attended Spark Yoga?

1. yes
2. no
3. N/A

What class(es) did you attend? (choose multiple if applicable)

1. Spark Sculpt

2. Spark Hatha
3. Spark Vinyasa
4. Spark Barre
5. Spark Barre 45
6. Spark Power
7. Spark Restorative
8. Inferno Hot Pilates
9. n/a

If yes, did you enjoy your experience?

1. yes
2. no
3. n/a

Did you return a second time?

1. yes
2. no
3. n/a

If you didn't return what stopped you from going back? (choose multiple if applicable) (applies to flow of membership negotiation)

1. didn't like the class
2. too expensive
3. didn't work with schedule
4. other: \_\_\_\_\_
5. n/a

Have you attended a different yoga studio in San Luis Obispo?

1. yes
2. no

What studio was it? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you enjoy that studio? \_\_\_\_\_

Did you return?

1. yes
2. no
3. n/a

What made you not return? (choose multiple if applicable) (applies to flow of membership negotiation)

1. didn't like the class
2. too expensive
3. didn't work with schedule
4. other: \_\_\_\_\_
5. n/a

Interview Template:

1. How long have you been at Spark Yoga?
2. What drew you to this studio as opposed to others in the area? (applies to the flow of institutional positioning)
3. How long have you been involved in this industry?
4. How often do you teach classes a week? (applies to the flow of organizational self-structuring)
5. Have you worked at other studios in the area?
  - If yes, what was your experiences with that studio?
  - Why did you leave?
6. Do you hang out with other yoga instructors outside the studio? (applies to the flow of activity coordination)
  - If yes, so you would say the workplace is a friendly environment?
  - Would you describe your management more vertical or horizontal?
  - How do you guys manager or resolve problems that arise in the workplace from time to time?

## Appendix B

### Interview Transcript:

#### Interviewee 1

**Interviewer:** How long have you been at Spark Yoga?

**Interviewee:** Let's see, I've been at Spark Yoga for a little over three years.

**Interviewer:** What drew you to this studio as opposed to others?

**Interviewee:** Well I have a dance background, so I was drawn to barre initially because of that and I use to go to a different studio and put my membership on hold when I went to Thailand and Vietnam and when I got back I decided it was a good time to try out a different studio and I had taken classes with Steph years before that and so I decided to come in and try her barre class and I from the first class I took I felt elated and just so good leaving the heat I was hooked.

**Interviewer:** Can you tell me the other studio you use to work at?

**Interviewee:** It was Assets.

**Interviewer:** And that is San Luis Obispo too?

**Interviewee:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** How long have you been in this industry in general?

**Interviewee:** A little over three years, so I came in around February I told her within a couple months that I was interested in getting trained and she had me trained in I believe September of that year.

**Interviewer:** So that's for Spark but in general when did you start teaching?

**Interviewee:** Spark is where I started.

**Interviewer:** Oh! So before you were just attending Assets, I got it. So how often do you teach classes a week here?

**Interviewee:** 7 regularly and then I end up subbing probably 1-3 times a week.

**Interviewer:** How many days a week is that typically?

**Interviewee:** 5, Monday-Friday.

**Interviewer:** What is the work environment here like? Would you say everyone here hangs out?

**Interviewee:** Oh absolutely!

**Interviewer:** Everyone's really friendly?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, like-minded, similar age group. We definitely all hang out outside of Spark and I've built a lot of friendships that started here as students or co-trainees or other teachers so yeah definitely.

**Interviewer:** How would you describe the management style here? Is it more vertical or horizontal?

**Interviewee:** So Steph predominantly well Steph and Nick are in charge and then we have our front desk staff that kind of handles the day to day with that. So if we have questions or anything or students have questions I just tell them to shoot an email to Steph and she kind of wears many hats and takes care of everything.

**Interviewer:** And then do you feel like it is very comfortable communication between management and workers as well, like a very open channel?

**Interviewee:** Yeah, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Okay perfect! That's all I had to ask, thank you so much for your time!

**Interviewee:** Yeah of course, you're welcome.

## **Interviewee 2**

**Interviewer:** How long have you been with Spark?

**Interviewee:** So, I've been with Spark since 2015, so almost three years now. I started with just a vinyasa class on Saturdays and quickly got another one on Wednesdays with a candle flow and it was my first real place I ever really taught at.

**Interviewer:** What drew you to this studio as opposed to other ones in the area?

**Interviewee:** I met Steph because I use to work at Mindbody and she was teaching an on-site class there, a sculpt class and she was super infectious, her energy was ridiculous and then I started coming here and I did my newbie specials everywhere actually tried out a lot of studios and nothing really hit me like this studio. I felt instantly comfortable here, I love the heat too so

that's a huge factor. Everyone here has just been really awesome so yeah that is definitely what motivated me to ask about going through the interview process and auditioning which I thought was going to be the scariest thing ever but it was actually like the easiest thing because Steph is basically just a giant smile the whole time you are auditioning.

**Interviewer:** How often do you teach classes?

**Interviewee:** Well so I teach here, I also teach at Slo Op right now the new rocking climbing location they just opened, teach two classes there. So I teach Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday so every day but Friday and Sunday.

**Interviewer:** So you teach 5 days a week?

**Interviewee:** Yes, 5 days. Hopefully with the expansion next door it will grow, I teach 8 classes a week right now for everything included and I am hoping to get up to like 13 or 14 once the new space opens.

**Interviewer:** What is new rock climbing location?

**Interviewee:** Slo op rocking climbing gym, the new location they just opened over by the Graduate. It's awesome it's called the Pad Slo they have one in Santa Maria and one here too but they do sculpt, regular yoga, barre, a lot of our teachers actually teach over there like Liz Crosby because it's awesome you get to climb for free.

**Interviewer:** Do people here normally work at multiple studios?

**Interviewee:** I don't know about everybody. Kayla doesn't, but a lot of us do this as a career so we have to kind of because everyone wants to teach here all the time obviously because it is so amazing but there are not enough classes around for every single person so some of us, like me, this is our main source of income we kind of have to spread ourselves around in order to survive. And it's our passion so this is what we want to spend our time doing so we are willing to teach almost anywhere. I mean it has to have a good feel at the place we don't just want to teach at a place you don't feel like it's going to work for you or you don't feel valued but yeah I would say most teachers here teach all over the place. But I think most of us love it here the most.

**Interviewer:** Where are you from originally?

**Interviewee:** I am from North Attleborough, Massachusetts out by Boston. Yeah, so I've been out her for about three years.

**Interviewer:** What brought you here?

**Interviewee:** Mindbody actually was the first thing. I use to work for their east coast location and then their headquarters is here in Slo so I moved out here and it's a wellness industry software company and so I've always kind of been in the wellness thing, I use to manage a yoga studio back in Rhode Island when I was getting certified but then when I moved out here I discovered Spark and I discovered Steph, I was like this is what I want to do. So I quit the whole full time gig with benefits and everything and started teaching full time.

**Interviewer:** Would you say you hang out with other yoga instructors outside of the studio?

**Interviewee:** We all want to but it is hard sometimes because we are all so busy. We try to make plans and Steph is pretty cool about trying to make things for us all to take part in like she's really awesome with our front desk people, the meetings are basically just like a social gathering. We were for awhile having like Spark staff nights where we could go out and they would treat us to like taco tuesdays and stuff like that, it was really nice, but it has kind of fallen down just because of the fact there is so much going on right now with the new studio expansion, all of the finances are tied up that and the construction and how long it has been taking, it is a little challenging but I love all the ladies and men that I teach here like family practically and we are all really close even if we don't get to spend a lot of time together outside. I am talking to them all the time anyways. The friendships are real forsure, it's not just business acquaintances. It's not like being at your office and talking to about your weekend in small talk over a cup of coffee, we talk about real shit together, all the time.

**Interviewer:** What is the management style like here?

**Interviewee:** Steph runs everything. It is her baby, so she doesn't like to give away any responsibility which is so much for her to take on. She also has amazing front desk staff, all the girls that work here have been trained very well, they all know what they are doing and they are all super passionate about the studio everyone loves it here so much. So they provide a really great support system for Steph when she can't be here, they cover everything, from student needs and brings it to Steph's attention immediately. She gets super involved whenever she needs to. So it is run really well plus the teachers are all really good at communicating with each other which is another big thing which I think helps her as well because when we need class covered or there is something missing for props or we need something done we all communicate really well and we keep her in the loop and I think the communication through all departments, between her, the front desk staff, and the teachers is a really big factor in staying solid. It just makes us happy to have this big thick community full of amazing students that come in, we just all love it here so much that we are motivated to make this place what it is.

**Interviewer:** Well thank you so much. That was awesome.

**Interviewee:** Of course

**Interviewee 3**

**Interviewer:** How long have you been with Spark?

**Interviewee:** I have been here 14 months.

**Interviewer:** What drew you to this studio as opposed to other ones in the area?

**Interviewee:** My yoga practice started with Bikram so super duper hot, structured, strict practice. Then I wanted to see what else was out there so I started taking vinyasa and hatha and sculpt and other classes here. Then I became a certified Inferno Hot Pilates instructor and I brought that to Steph's attention and asked to audition with her and then I got that class going.

**Interviewer:** So you brought hot pilates here?

**Interviewee:** Yes. I'm the first one to bring it to Slo.

**Interviewer:** How were you introduced to pilates?

**Interviewee:** I started at Bikram.

**Interviewer:** Where is that?

**Interviewee:** It is in Slo. It is the other hot studio but they focus on Bikram and they have other things now they do a fit flow, they do inferno and then a bootcamp class as well. I think is where they are at now.

**Interviewer:** It is called Bikram yoga studio?

**Interviewee:** Actually, it is called Ryan Bikram's yoga studio now.

**Interviewer:** How did you like working for them?

**Interviewee:** I am freaking stoked on Spark. Steph the way she manages, how involved she is, the community here, the support here. It is night and day here from that place. And I love that place that's how I got started with everything there but the community here just blows the ceiling off. I basically use to manage that other place for the owner. I had to do everything at that place to make it what it was.

**Interviewer:** Was Bikram the only other studio you worked at or have you worked at others?

**Interviewee:** No, rep Slo fitness, it's a gym. Cal Poly. I use to do private lunch hatha classes at a therapist office for the workers there. And now I am at Soul Yoga as well. And I also do private classes as well.

**Interviewer:** Where are you from originally?

**Interviewee:** Here, Slo.

**Interviewer:** Oh wow. So you just stayed?

**Interviewee:** Well I went to school in San Diego and then I came back because everyone comes back.

**Interviewer:** Would you say Slo is kind of a fitness culture?

**Interviewee:** Oh yeah. 100%, for sure.

**Interviewer:** Would you say you hang out with other yoga instructors outside of the studio?

**Interviewee:** It can be hard at times but if we are not physically together we are supporting each other and helping each other always. We all know each other on a deeper level. It's challenging what we do, as easy as it might seem because we put it on, but physically, emotionally, mentally it takes its toll. And we are all there for each other if anybody needs a break or something happens we got each others back 100%. Any time I have needed emergency covering for a class like everybody has raised their hand and offered, so it is a pretty amazing community to be a part of.

**Interviewer:** What is the management style like here?

**Interviewee:** Well Steph runs it all. It is all out of Steph. But the one thing I would say is just how involved and how present Steph is, is awesome. I've worked at a million places and I have never had a boss/teacher be super supportive and there for you for anything. So the management is on point which I think is the reason why Spark is so successful. She makes us want to pack our classes and push really hard and make Spark successful because when the manager or the owner doesn't care why would we care. That is the demise of so many places.

**Interviewer:** Thank you so much, that was perfect.

**Interviewee:** Of course, no problem.

## Appendix C

### Spark Yoga

#### Membership Options

<p><b>Newbie Special</b></p> <p><b>\$30</b></p> <p>First time members of Spark get their first month for \$30! Sign Up today.</p>	<p><b>Drop In</b></p> <p><b>\$15</b></p> <p>Drop in for a class at Spark</p>	<p><b>10 Class Pass</b></p> <p><b>\$119</b></p> <p>Class Packs may be redeemed for regularly scheduled classes</p>	<p><b>Monthly Unlimited</b></p> <p><b>\$129</b></p> <p>Unlimited access to regularly scheduled Spark classes</p>	<p><b>AutoPay Unlimited</b></p> <p><b>\$109</b></p> <p>Unlimited Access to regular classes with other perks and discounts</p>
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MON MARCH 5, 2018	CLASS	INSTRUCTOR
6:15 am - 7:15 am	Rise and Sculpt	Robyn Gimler
7:30 am - 8:30 am	Spark Barre	Michelle Houston (sub for Steph Young)
9:00 am - 10:15 am	Spark Hatha	Marty Budingier
10:30 am - 11:30 am	Spark Sculpt	Steph Young
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm	Noon Flow	Jennifer Loves
1:15 pm - 2:15 pm	<b>SIGN UP</b> Spark Hot Pilates	Carly Salucci
3:00 pm - 4:00 pm	<b>SIGN UP</b> Spark Sculpt	Kyle Dundon
4:15 pm - 5:15 pm	<b>SIGN UP</b> Waitlist Only Spark Barre	Kyle Dundon
5:30 pm - 6:30 pm	<b>SIGN UP</b> Waitlist Only Live Music + Vinyasa	Kelley Treiber
6:45 pm - 7:45 pm	Spark Barre	Michelle Houston
8:00 pm - 9:00 pm	<b>SIGN UP</b> Spark Yin	KJ Jones
TUE MARCH 6, 2018	CLASS	INSTRUCTOR
6:15 am - 7:15 am	Spark Barre	Kyle Dundon
7:45 am - 8:45 am	Spark Sculpt	Kyle Dundon (sub for Britni Acker-Soe)
9:00 am - 10:15 am	<b>SIGN UP</b> Spark Vinyasa	Liz Crosby
10:30 am - 11:30 am	<b>SIGN UP</b> Waitlist Only Spark Barre	Steph Young (sub for Demi Betschert)
12:00 pm - 12:45 pm	<b>SIGN UP</b> Power Flow (45 min)	KJ Jones
1:00 pm - 2:00 pm	<b>SIGN UP</b> Spark Hot Pilates	Brooke Warner
3:00 pm - 4:00 pm	<b>SIGN UP</b> Spark Vinyasa	KJ Jones
4:15 pm - 5:15 pm	<b>SIGN UP</b> Spark Hatha	Victoria Kronhout
5:30 pm - 6:30 pm	Spark Sculpt	Steph Young
6:45 pm - 7:45 pm	<b>SIGN UP</b> Spark Restorative	KJ Jones (sub for Jennifer Loves)
8:00 pm - 9:00 pm	<b>SIGN UP</b> Candle Flow	Robyn Gimler

Smiling Dog Yoga

Yoga Class Rates	Price	Per Class*	Expiration
New Student Special	\$60	-	60 days of unlimited classes. New students are eligible to purchase once every 2 years.
Unlimited Membership (Monthly)	\$80	\$10 (2x/wk)	Details below. 3 month minimum commitment, lots of perks, unlimited classes, charges monthly.
Once-a-week Membership (Monthly)	\$48	\$12	Details below. 3 month minimum commitment, lots of perks, 4-pack, charges monthly.
10-Class Pack	\$130	\$13	1 year
5-Class Pack	\$75	\$15	1 year
Drop-In (Pre-Register Online Only)	\$18	\$18	1 month from purchase date
Drop-In (In Studio)	\$20	\$20	1 month from purchase date
Gift Card	-	-	Buy the gift of health and wellness for your loved ones. You pick the denomination.

Mon Mar 5, 2018	Class	Instructor	
6:30 am - 7:30 am	YOSculpt	Chandra Hardestar	
9:00 am - 10:15 am	Hatha	Alexis King	
10:30 am - 11:45 am	Yin	Ahmed Fahmy	
12:00 pm - 12:45 pm	Plates	Alison Zikratch	
4:00 pm - 2:30 pm	Bare-Basics-Series	Class is Cancelled	
4:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Inferno Hot Plates	Corlese Todd	<a href="#">Sign Up</a>
4:00 pm - 5:15 pm	Yin + Yoga: A 5 Week Solar & Lunar Class Series	Ahmed Fahmy	<a href="#">Sign Up</a>
5:30 pm - 6:45 pm	Hatha	Sera Melini	<a href="#">Sign Up</a>
6:00 pm - 7:15 pm	Yoga Basics	Britt Mortimer	<a href="#">Sign Up</a>
7:00 pm - 8:15 pm	Strong Vinyasa	Deborah Light-Pacheco	<a href="#">Sign Up</a>
Tue Mar 6, 2018	Class	Instructor	
6:30 am - 7:30 am	Inferno Hot Plates	Chandra Hardestar	<a href="#">Sign Up</a>
9:00 am - 10:00 am	YOBare	Chandra Hardestar	<a href="#">Sign Up</a>
10:30 am - 11:45 am	Hatha	Sera Melini	<a href="#">Sign Up</a>
12:00 pm - 12:45 pm	YOSculpt	Corlese Todd	<a href="#">Sign Up</a>
4:00 pm - 5:15 pm	Restorative	Kevin Hauber	<a href="#">Sign Up</a>
5:30 pm - 6:45 pm	Pre-Natal Series	Deborah Light-Pacheco	<a href="#">Sign Up</a>
5:30 pm - 6:45 pm	Sweet Vinyasa	Chelsea Leiby	<a href="#">Sign Up</a>
7:00 pm - 7:45 pm	YOCone	Deborah Light-Pacheco	<a href="#">Sign Up</a>