

Norm Cates' CLUB INSIDER™

The Pulse of the Health and Fitness Club Industry



Greta Wagner, General Manager of The Sports Center at Chelsea Piers (New York City), Photo Credit: Scott McDermott

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The Amazing Greta Wagner...

Leader of the Sports Center at Chelsea Piers

JANUARY 2014

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Norm Cates' CLUB INSIDER™

The Pulse of the Health and Fitness Club Industry

The Amazing Greta Wagner... *Leader of the Sports Center at Chelsea Piers*

By: Justin Cates

Entering the New Year of 2014, I've now had the privilege of conducting cover story interviews and authoring cover story articles for half a decade. In that time, I have had the honor of speaking and corresponding with many incredible industry leaders, and frankly, some true legends. Throughout that time and experience, I have been most fascinated by a natural phenomenon that occurs with so many of those cover story subjects. That phenomenon is: one's personal background and upbringing carries forward later in life into their careers, and what they accomplish

in our industry just makes sense when coupled with who they are, as described by them. That is why I usually begin most cover story interviews the same way, by asking subjects about their upbringing and family.

This month's cover story subject, Greta Wagner, General Manager of the Sports Center at Chelsea Piers in New York City, was very candid with me when asked these questions about her background. As you will read, through a tumultuous childhood that saw frequent moves throughout the United States, Greta learned to be strong and adaptable to change. After a scary and traumatic

experience in New York City while there for school, after a short escape to Penn State, she persevered to pursue her love of New York and developing a life there. Now, years later, she is a key part of a true fixture of the city, while balancing life with a beautiful family with three children.

As a metaphor for life, businesses too, have incredible ups and devastating lows. At Chelsea Piers, from the scary lows of 9/11 and Hurricane Sandy, now to the exciting expansion into Connecticut, Greta has weathered those ups and downs to help steer the company she represents in the right direction. Along the way, she has developed close relationships with



her coworkers, training many of them and promoting from within, and industry-wide, she has developed a network of colleagues she can learn from and also help with her experience and expertise. As has been
(See *Greta Wagner* Page 10)

Henry Polessky

February 28, 1940 - January 9, 2014

VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA - Henry Polessky, a veteran of over 50 years in the health club industry, passed away from cancer, ending a long battle on January 9, 2014 at 7PM. Born in Montreal, Canada, Henry would have been 74 had he reached his birthday next month.

Henry was predeceased by his loving wife, Claudette, who also passed away from cancer eight years ago. And, he was predeceased by his dear daughter, Susan, and his sister, Marianne. Henry is survived by his daughter, Christine; his brother, Nicholas; his twin sister, Elizabeth; his nephews, Michael, Nick Jr., Donald; his Niece, Laura and their families. He also left behind many cherished and long-time friends, including this author (Norm

Cates), Andy and Laura Nemeth, John and Jodi Lovell, Mike Hamill and his treasured "Dream Team."

Henry Polessky had developed, built and operated many health clubs during his career. But, the last group of ten clubs called Fitness World that he and his partner, John Lovell, created in Vancouver, British Columbia made Polessky and Lovell much richer, and they are now best described as multimillionaires. They sold Fitness World to a group headed by Mark Mastrov with NBA Basketball All Star, Steve Nash, as the figurehead owner in Vancouver.

Henry Polesky left a legacy anyone would be honored to have. He was known in the industry he truly loved, the health and fitness club industry, as a very

ethical club owner/operator who treated his employees and his members equally, and that was extremely well. In addition to the deceased and survivors mentioned previously, this is what the **Vancouver Sun Newspaper Obituary** said about Henry on January 11, 2014:

"His success and vibrant personality placed him among the ranks of Legends in the Fitness Industry and earned him the respect of his peers worldwide. Extremely confident, hands on and involved, Henry Polessky credited others for his success. Henry was regarded as the most decent, trustworthy individual known to those who worked with him. Not only was he a

(See *Henry Polessky* Page 6)



Henry Polessky at IHRA 2008

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• And of Course, *Norm's Notes*

Norm's Notes

•**Hello Everybody!** This is your CLUB INSIDER Publisher and Tribal Leader Since 1993 checking in! Boy oh boy, is America a great country or what? Hmm... Hmm... Hmm!!! Folks, as I written this, it's about 6 degrees way down south here in Marietta, Georgia, a suburb of the Atlanta. This global warming thing is rough!

•My most sincere condolences to HENRY POLESSKY'S family and friends, as we lost a great man on January 9, 2014. Be sure to read about Henry on Page #3 this month. May our long-time industry friend, Henry Polessky, Rest In Peace.

•My most sincere condolences to DEAN KACHEL and his wife, SALLY KERR, industry friends from long ago, and to EDUARDO CARRO, husband, as Dean informed me that his daughter, HOLLY CARRO, 44, of Sarasota, Florida, had died from cancer on December 3, 2013. Dean wrote, "I spent the last five months of her life in Sarasota helping her battle cancer. In the end, the chemo and radiation caused her to have a heart attack and extensive brain damage, from which she never recovered." Services for Holly were held at St. Martha's Church on Friday, December 6, 2013. May Holly Carro Rest In Peace.

•My apology to new Contributing

Author, DENEEN LAPRADE, of Susan K. Bailey Marketing and Design, as last month, I accidentally left off her contact info from her Bio. Deneen can be reached by phone at (888) 349 - 4596 or email at deneen@skbailey.com.

•Welcome to our new Contributing Authors debuting this month: LISA COORS and NANCY TRENT. Check out their articles on Pages #6 and #22, respectively. Lisa wrote The Call for Professionalism in our industry, and Nancy wrote about a topic many of you should find intriguing, public relations, in her article PR 101.

•RICH BOGGS of MOSSA (formerly Body Training Systems) informed me that the Xbox people sounded the alarm bell for NASDAQ on January 8th. He said that, right after the opening bell, a huge, 10-story tall Xbox Fitness ad flashed up on the big screen at the famous Times Square... the ad hit the screen 29 times that day! Stay tuned for more updates. See the Press Release on Page #28.

•BIG JOHN MCCARTHY, the highly esteemed and retired IHRSA Executive Director, recently sent out an email to the Augie's Quest Bash Committee, which contained 11 videos showing the brave AUGIE NIETO exercising. Titles of the first few videos, which last from 1 to 4

minutes, include: "I'm moving my arm for the first time in 8 years," "Walking with assistance," "I'm walking!," "I'm pedaling a spin bike." This absolutely totally amazing series of videos of our friend, AUGIE NIETO, exercising after he's been suffering from ALS (a/k/a LOU GEHRIG'S Disease) for eight years is nothing short of mind blowing! Augie and his devoted wife, LYNNE, have made plans for Augie to walk out onto the stage at The Augie's Quest Bash at IHRSA San Diego on Friday Night, March 14th starting at 6:00 PM, and I do hope you will make plans to buy a table for 10 for your club team and be there. Individual seating for a smaller party is also available. To order tickets to the Bash, go to www.augiesquest.org/bash. If you can't make it to the Bash, but you'd like to chip in to help Augie and Lynne Defeat ALS, go to the Augie's Quest Website at www.augiesquest.com. Stay Tuned!

•Book it! Book it! Book It! That is Book your IHRSA Conference attendance with IHRSA at (800) 228 - 4772. Book your Hotel! Book your airfare while plane tickets are still inexpensive! Don't miss IHRSA 2014 in gorgeous San Diego, California as it will be at the 33rd Annual gathering of The International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association where you'll find the world's greatest club owners and operators and companies



Norm Cates

whose products serve everybody in the health and fitness club industry around the world. Call IHRSA at (800) 228 - 4772 or go to www.ihrsa.org/convention and plan to NETWORK... NETWORK... NETWORK and learn from your club industry peers from all across America and around the world as IHRSA has over 9,500 member clubs in 70+ countries. Also, be sure to put RICK CARO's 18th Annual Financial Panel on the top of your TO DO LIST for the show. The IHRSA Financial Panel will provide an in-depth review of the health club industry growth factors and financial sectors and will be held on Friday, March 14th from 11:15 AM to (See Norm's Notes Page 8)

About Club Insider

Established in 1993

21 Years and Counting!

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“Insider Speaks”

The Call for Professionalism

By: Lisa Coors, MBS, ACE-AHFS

Ladies, have you ever gone to get your nails done and noticed a framed copy of your technician's license/certification on the wall? Or, have you gone to your physician and seen a copy of her Board Certification on the wall? What would happen if either of these people hadn't passed their certifications/board exams? Either they wouldn't be practicing or there would be a procedure in place to remove them from their respective industries.

So my next question is this: If someone hires a personal trainer, don't they see their trainer more than they would see their nail technician and/or their doctor? So why aren't personal trainers **REQUIRED** to be certified by a highly credentialed certification? Why aren't they removed from practicing their trade if they don't pass their exam or uphold current certifications? It all comes down to professionalism.

The Women's Fitness Association (WFA) was born in March of 2012

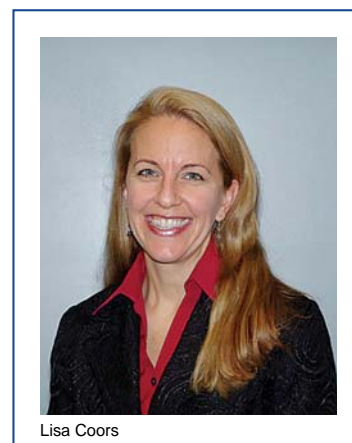
in Cincinnati, Ohio as the answer to this issue, along with numerous other challenges in the fitness industry. Our industry has no choice but to “raise the bar” for fitness professionals to keep up with the high demand for training. With an over-70% overweight to obese population in the United States, fitness professionals are required to connect with medical professionals (physicians, physical therapists etc.) to best train their clients. **Skills needed are: Professional, Business and Technical.** The feedback we have received is that fitness professionals want to either gain or improve these skills. They also want to make sure others are upheld to these same high standards.

Let's dive in to these three major skills and discuss why they are of importance to a fitness professional. We will start with professional skills. Some of you may define these a bit differently, but let's define professional skills to include ethics, character and overall communication skills. To better understand this, let's switch our approach. Imagine

you are the client and are paying a personal trainer \$160/ week for two 1-hour sessions. How would you expect to be treated? Over the years, I have asked my clients, and this is a summary of what they have told me. A trainer needs:

Professional Skills:

- Greet each client and treat them with respect;
- Be on time for a session;
- Create a healthy image by eating right, being fit and exercising;
- Speak clearly and with good grammar;
- Exude passion for what they do;
- Not give their opinion on religion or politics;
- Tell the client what is realistic with his fitness goals;
- Not use his cell phone when training or talk to other trainers etc.;
- Have good writing skills for correspondence (emails etc.);
- Not talk about their personal life.



Lisa Coors

Business Skills:

When it comes to business skills, I have found that the word “business” scares some fitness professionals due to not taking business classes in college and/or never working in a professional business. Some (See “Insider Speaks” Page 7)

...Henry Polessky

continued from page 3

mentor, but he was a hero for a multitude of reasons for which he chose to remain anonymous. He had a heart as big as his personality. Henry Polessky was also a true philanthropist. He shared his success with others, and he was always there for a friend in need. A contradiction in terms, Henry could be extremely private, while inspiring thousands to feel a close connection to him. His joy for life was contagious. He lived large, a true memory maker, while his life was a profound roller coaster of remarkable events. He made a difference, and he was appreciated by many, but especially by those closest to him, his many friends and family. There are not enough words to honor this man who had such a strong impact on so many. Thank you Henry for sharing your life with us.”

Henry Polessky's long-time partner, **John Lovell**, commented to **CLUB INSIDER**:

“I've known Henry for some 40 years. I've been partners and friends with him. We travelled together all the time, and I always learned something new from him. He was a true character. He was a real honest man. I've had about 30 phone calls just today from many, some of whom I haven't seen or heard from some for 10 or 15 years. They're coming out of the woodwork saying how they really respected Henry

and how good he treated them, how honest he was and what great integrity Henry had. That was Henry's reputation. His integrity was second to none. He was honest. He was always there to help. He was the first guy who'd put money in somebody's pockets for their club business if they needed any help. He was a real caring, sharing person without any doubt. He was really good for the industry.”

Health club industry icon and legend, **Ray Wilson** commented:

“Henry was a very loyal person. Long ago, because I had mentored him when he was younger, Henry had a trophy made up for me using one of my muscle posing pictures. He then arranged to present it to me in front of a large audience at one of the IHRSA shows. The inscription read, ‘To my friend, mentor and the founder of the fitness industry.’ I was slightly embarrassed, but I accepted Henry's high complement, and I was very honored by what he did.”

Canadian health club giant, **David Patchel-Evans**, owner of 320 clubs around Canada and the world, said this about Henry:

“After gaining some experience in the United States with some clubs, what Henry had decided to do was to move away from the health spa concept... you know, Norm, that you often write a lot about. He said I'm going to do this ethically, and I'm

going to do it right. He didn't forget how to sell memberships. He just decided he was going to *provide service*, and *he was going to keep people*. So, he sold memberships, but he tried to keep the people and looked after them. By that time, I'd been selling dues memberships for a while in Canada (*no contract term required*), and he adopted the same thing. He was doing quite well out in Vancouver, and I was doing quite well in Ontario. I said to myself, ‘I've got to go see this guy.’ He was about 15 years older than I was, and I thought I could learn from him. So, I decided to give Henry a call and go meet him. He said, ‘Let me show you what I do.’ So, he took me to his back office and showed me everything he did. He asked me if I had any intention of coming to Vancouver. I told him no. I was just growing in Ontario. Back then, I had only 15 or 20 clubs... I've got 320 clubs now. Anyway, we shared ideas, and we got along really well.

I was just learning how to ski at the time, so we ended up going skiing with some other people in the industry. For years, once a year or so, we'd go skiing and share ideas. We kept doing that until he stopped skiing. We even set up a reciprocal arrangement between my clubs in Ontario and his clubs in Vancouver. Here's the neat thing about Henry. What he and I had in common was that our people were the most important thing. We figured, why would our members stay if we didn't look out for our own staff? That's what Henry and

I had in common. That's what we used to talk about the most. We used to share ideas about how to run our clubs. But really, what we used to talk about mostly was how do we go about looking out for our own people? People say to me, ‘but your club group is larger.’ I reply that the amount of clubs he had and how successful they were would have been the envy of anybody. I'm an anomaly. Henry did better than most people *ever* do in the industry. He worked hard. He worked seven days a week. He started early and finished late. He built a whole company based on relationships and good people. I remember walking around with Henry in his clubs, and he'd be asking his people: ‘What's your intention today?’ It was the thing we had in common. We actually believed that we should get the members in shape, and we believed that we should help our staff be successful. That's what he was consistent at. He was a good family guy, too.”

May our friend, Henry Polessky, a man who was a true and very great credit to the health and fitness club industry, Rest In Peace. Celebrate Henry's Life on February 23, 2014, at the Vancouver Convention Center, Jack Poole Entrance, Thurlow Street, Ballroom C and D.

Written By Norm Cates, **CLUB INSIDER** owner and Publisher Since 1993, and long-time friend and admirer of Henry Polessky.

...“Insider Speaks”

continued from page 6

fitness professionals have even asked me if they needed to go back to college and get a business degree. Of course, if you have a lot of time and money, that isn't a bad idea. For those who don't, though, taking classes online or getting a few business books may be of great help. The Khan Academy website has some great online courses. One of my favorite business books is *How to Win Customers and Keep Them For Life* by Michael LeBoeuf, Ph.D. Of course, there are many other great websites and books in addition to these.

There are numerous business skills that would be of help to a fitness professional. Being a seasoned business person, I would nominate marketing as one of the most important skills to have. More specific areas of marketing are: customer relationship management (CRM) and retention strategies. Basically, a fitness professional needs to be able to market their business, retain their clients and make a living doing it. Along with this is the skill of organization. I have seen so many trainers who don't know how to keep a calendar, set goals, plan and follow-through with objectives. This can be the demise of a trainer. Clients want to know that you are organized just like any other professional. There are numerous online and in-person classes on using planners, organizers and online calendars.

Having good computer skills is

also mandatory. Can you create documents in Word, spreadsheets in Excel and presentations in PowerPoint? As you move up the ladder in the fitness industry, you may become a manager, own your own studio and/or do presentations. All these skills are needed and can be easily learned through community college courses and other online resources. Along with computer skills, you need to be internet-savvy by using email, Facebook and Twitter. I have managed several fitness professionals who had zero knowledge of computers, which extended to text messages and voicemail. I know some of you can't imagine this, but as a business owner, I have seen it all.

Technical Skills:

The last set needed is technical skills. First, obtain a certification by a nationally-accredited organization. This doesn't mean you took your test online at home or studied for a week for the exam. This means you spent several months studying, taking sample tests and took your test at a professional testing facility. Once you have your certification, make sure to take your CEC courses to uphold that certification. Along with this is having your updated CPR/AED certificate. The best way to learn new technical skills, besides online resources, is to train other trainers. Think of it as a “laboratory” where you learn from each other. My mentor implemented this at my first training job. It really made us all expand our thought

process. It also makes you more confident in training your clients.

As you can see, there are numerous skills needed by a fitness professional to “raise the bar” for themselves in the fitness industry. We need to be prepared for the needs of our current and future clients. Several years ago, I presented to 30 physical therapists at a local Cincinnati orthopedic center about the need for them to refer to personal trainers. During this presentation, a woman commented that, “Personal trainers are the reason we have patients.” After hearing this, I knew the image of our industry had to be changed.

In conclusion, I hope you are prepared for the increases in “un-fit” clients

coming our way. The disease called obesity is causing numerous health issues, which will require a professional to handle. Many of these clients will not be able to do the popular workouts; most of them can barely get out of chair! Are you ready? Together, we can raise the bar.

(Lisa Coors MBA, AHFS-ACE, CPT-NASM, is owner of Coors Core Fitness and Founder of the Women's Fitness Association. Lisa is a well-rounded fitness professional who brings a diverse array of credentials to her medical exercise business. In 2012, she started the Women's Fitness Association as a resource to mentor and educate women in the fitness industry.)

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Letter to the Editor

Hi Hossein and Norm,

Happy New Year!

Hossein, Thank you for writing such a great article about the shortsightedness of taxing membership dues. I love the contrast between vices like smoking and drinking versus gym memberships.

And, Norm, thank you for giving it such great placement.

While both of you are well aware of the harmful unintended consequences lawmakers' actions can and do have on our industry, it is really difficult to get the message out that these problems exist, that IHRSA is doing all we can to protect clubs from these issues, and that we'd have a stronger message if more clubs and industry people took action with us. Thankfully, we've been incredibly successful at stopping most of this harmful legislation, having stopped 96 harmful bills from passing over just the past over years.

Therefore, I invite you and everyone you know to visit hub.ihrsa.org/grow-promote-protect-report to access the 2013 *Grow, Promote & Protect Report*. By downloading this report, you will gain a better understanding of how regulatory our industry can be, how IHRSA fights to protect health clubs on a daily basis, how important advocacy is to our future growth and how you can help drive the process.

All the best for 2014!

Best regards,

Meredith Poppler
 IHRSA Vice President, Industry Growth

...Norm's Notes

continued from page 4

12:30 PM. I hope to see you and your Team at IHRSA 2014 in San Diego!

• I'm *happy* to write today about two very special **IHRSA Convention Learning Events** that our long-time friend and **CLUB INSIDER Advertiser, DARON ALLEN, and his Visual Fitness Planner Team** are producing. And, our long-time friend and **CLUB INSIDER Contributing Author, Professor WILL PHILLIPS** and his **REX Roundtable Team**, will also be producing a very special learning event.

Daron's Visual Fitness Planner learning event will be held on **Wednesday, March 12th from 2PM to 3:30PM.** During this 1 1/2 hour session, you'll learn from a terrific, veteran panel of club owner/operators about a myriad of topics. They'll provide and share their vast knowledge and experiences with the attendees, and I can tell you, from having attended last year, that this is a great learning opportunity. I call my friend, Daron Allen, "**ROCKETMAN**," in honor of the fast pace the wonderful guy goes at. When I first met Rocketman, he had about 75 clubs signed up with Visual Fitness Planner (VFP). Rocketman made the wise decision

to join **CLUB INSIDER** as an advertiser, and we've published his ads every month for about twelve years now. Rocketman, Daron Allen, and his great VFP Team have **grown The Visual Fitness Planner Company to 1,200 clubs in 12 countries** where they deal with **six different languages.** To say VFP is a roaring success would be an understatement! **Stay tuned** next month for more on VFP, and please do check out their **Ad on Page #21** of this edition.

Professor WILL PHILLIPS, one of the *most experienced* and *prolific CLUB INSIDER Contributing Authors* we have, has announced his upcoming **Club Industry Leadership University** by REX that is launching as an ongoing leadership training university for the club industry. REX has determined that leadership training for club owners and key staff is one of the highest return on investments for improving your club's performance in growth, retention and profit. This too, will be a **Don't Miss Event** event very much worth attending as it will be on **March 11th just before the IHRSA Convention begins in San Diego.** For more information, contact Will Phillips at will@executiveroundtables.com.

• A very warm **Welcome to LISA COORS** and her **Team** from the **Women's Fitness Association** whose entire **Board of Directors** have signed on as **CLUB INSIDER Contributing Author Team Members!** I'm very glad to have these bright ladies join our Contributing Author Team because I have believed for years that our industry is dominated far too much by *the sometimes knuckleheaded men!* That's just one of many reasons that we're very happy to be showcasing this month on our **CLUB INSIDER Cover**, the amazing talent in **New York City, GRETA WAGNER!** Please check out **LISA COORS'** first article on our "**Insider Speaks**" **Page #6**, entitled: **The Call For Professionalism.** And, please let us, **JUSTIN CATES, and I,** know what you think!

• **Don't miss** visiting the **CLUB INSIDER Advertisers** at **IHRSA San Diego** whose names and exhibit numbers follow. You'll be glad you did because they're **all great professionals in their fields** and they will **treat you well!**

Company	Exhibit #
Affiliated Acceptance Corporation	1235
Athletic Business Magazine	944
Club Insider	3054
Club Industry Magazine	4345
GymPoints	3562
GymWipes (2XL Corporation)	3150
IHRSA	1327
iGo Figure	3454
Iron Grip Barbell Company	3144
Jonas Fitness	1523
Motionsoft	3138
Orangetheory Fitness	1349
Sports & Fitness Insurance	2946
Visual Fitness Planner	722

• It is just great to see my long-time friend, **BEN MIDGLEY, President of Crunch Franchising,** interviewed by **CBI Magazine** a couple of months ago, and just the other day getting national exposure on the **Fox Business News Channel!** **IHRSA's JOE MOORE** put the following bulletin out alerting folks about Ben's TV appearance. It read:

National Exposure for Crunch Fitness

The first week of January is always an incubator for stories on people going back to the gym for New Year's resolutions. The good thing for the fitness industry is that many clubs get media attention. Crunch Fitness received some incredible exposure last week when Crunch President Ben Midgley was interviewed on Fox Business News. He was asked what is "*new and hot*" in the industry for those coming back to the gym? "Crunch has always been an innovator and a leader in the realm of group fitness, really fusing entertainment and exercise together," he said during the interview. "It's one of the things that has kept our members coming back for 25 years. What we are doing is trying to continue to stay on that trend, stay with the newest, hippest, most fun activities we can find for our members." Midgley also discussed the reasons to franchise Crunch and mentioned that there are eight new locations opening in January, in Connecticut, New Jersey, California and Pennsylvania.

Check out the **Crunch Franchise Ad**, now on **Page #5**, and **Stay Tuned, Folks!**

(See *Norm's Notes* Page 20)



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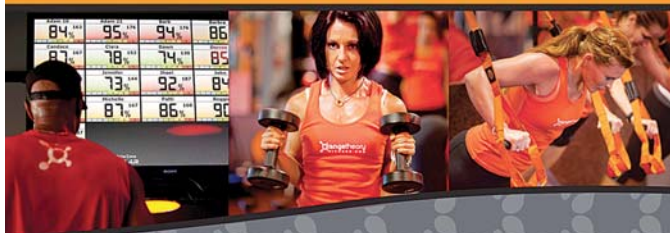
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...Greta Wagner

continued from page 3

written many times in **CLUB INSIDER**, that is the essence of our industry and one of the unique things that makes our industry great.

One of the enchanting things about a New Year is that it brings a new canvas on which to paint a masterpiece, and with that blank canvas comes all the previous knowledge one has acquired through the years. Within this cover story, and the others to come in 2014, you will find some new brushes and colors for your pallet, in which to apply to your canvas, making it better than ever. What masterpiece will you paint in 2014 with your health and fitness club business?

I am now very pleased to invite you to read an in-depth interview with the amazing Greta Wagner.

An In-depth Interview With Greta Wagner

CLUB INSIDER (C.I.) - Where were you born and raised? Where did you attend school?

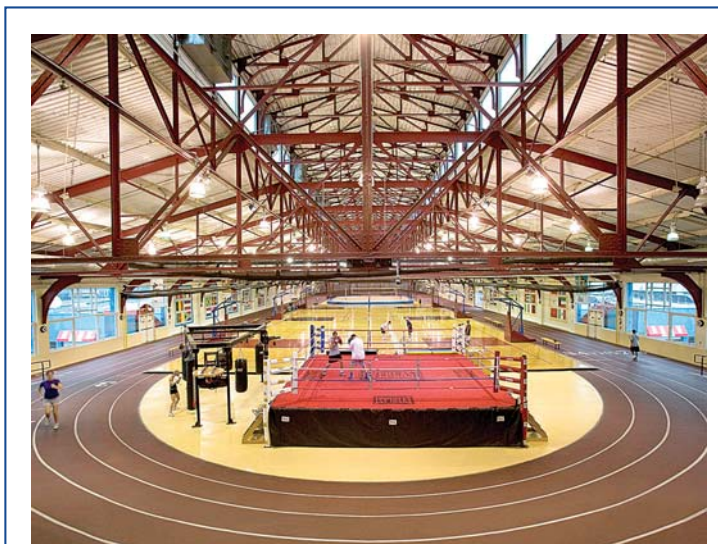
Greta Wagner (GW) - My parents were quite young when they had me, so I was raised by my grandmother. I spent most of my childhood on the move. Before I was eighteen, I moved over a dozen times, from New York to California and half a dozen states in between. I could write a book about the dysfunctional family, but the challenges of my childhood made me easily adaptable to change, and I'm not afraid to explore the unknown.

After high school, I went to the Big Apple on a full dance scholarship. One day, I buzzed in what I thought was a delivery man to my studio apartment. He tied me up at gunpoint and stole what little I had. I was okay, but it shattered my sense of home. I decided it was time to leave the city, so I left to go to Penn State. However, the New York itch quickly

returned, and I moved back and ended up at the City University of New York (CUNY). Professional development is important to me, so throughout my career, as my responsibilities increased, I have taken continuing education classes and certifications at Cornell and NYU among others. I have three children; 12 year-old twins and a 13 year-old, and I always tease my husband that in six years, when they're all at Yale, I'll be following them to get my MBA at the same time!

C.I. - When and how did you get started in the health and fitness club industry?

GW - I've always been very active, and coupled with my dance background, I started teaching dance and aerobics in my teens (I've worked to support myself since I was 15). Early on, I realized that I was a good teacher and got a lot of satisfaction from helping people feel better about themselves. So, I traded in my point shoes for a warm-up suit. I rocked it better than Sue Sylvester (My daughter is a Glee freak, so by default, so am I)! I got certifications from AFAA and ACE and taught group classes and did personal training to finance my way through school. I also worked for Weight Watchers sleep-away camps during summers. That's when I decided fitness was the industry in which I wanted to be involved. Helping teens and young adults with weight and self-esteem issues feel better about themselves really taught me empathy and compassion. I remember one of my first private clients was a top executive at the Audubon Society. She was the first strong female influence in my life. I almost felt guilty charging her for our session because our hours were filled with her giving me management and life coaching advice in between reps. She gave me a firsthand look at how a woman could be strong, smart and a leader. Not quite the message of my youth. From that moment on, I made a point of following women in my industry and others that I could learn from and be inspired by. That's the



Indoor Track and Sports Floor at Chelsea Piers, Photo Credit: Fred George

wonderful thing about being in New York; we are exposed to such an eclectic group of people. My members, colleagues and staff are the most talented, brightest and engaging people in the world!

My first management job was with Harry Macklow Real Estate, running residential clubs. Prior to Chelsea Piers, I was with Mass Mutual commercial and residential, and I also worked for NYU teaching in the Athletics Department. In early 1996, I read an article about the Chelsea Piers complex and decided to visit the site. I was so impressed with what I read and saw I wrote a letter to Roland Betts (CEO of Chelsea Piers) expressing my desire to be involved in any capacity. A few months later, I was on board full-time. Eighteen wonderful years later, I still have the same enthusiasm and passion that drew me here in the first place. I remember after my twins were born I briefly thought about taking a break because I couldn't envision how I was going to balance three babies and a full-time career. It certainly wasn't easy, but I had a great family at home and another here at Chelsea Piers. I found that work and family were just an extension of who I am, and I need both for balance in my life. I'm a better parent and a better person because of my family and this amazing organization.

C.I. - From a macro view, please tell us about Chelsea Piers New York:

GW - The Chelsea Piers Sports & Entertainment Complex is a 28-acre waterfront sports complex located between 17th and 23rd Streets along Manhattan's Hudson River. This \$120 million, privately-financed

project opened in 1995, transforming four historic, but long-neglected, piers into a major center for public recreation and waterfront access. Situated on Piers 59, 60 and 61 and in the headhouse that connects them, the complex features four major sports venues: The Golf Club (four-tiered super-range), The Sports Center (150,000 square feet), Sky Rink (twin rinks) and The Field House (80,000 square feet). There are two dedicated event spaces: Pier Sixty and The Lighthouse, as well as major tenants and ancillary businesses: MarineMax Maritime Center, Bowlmor and Paul Labrecque Salon & Spa. And, there is Silver Screen Studios, Manhattan's largest film and television studio complex. Chelsea Piers is committed to operating the best amateur sports and entertainment complexes in the country, with state-of-the-art facilities, cutting-edge programming, first-rate instruction and a courteous, professional staff. We draw over 4 million unique visitors a year, making us the 4th largest tourist attraction in NYC.


We arrived in Chelsea before it became the hot spot that it is today. We are frequently credited with jumpstarting the Chelsea district. Notable things that have come to Chelsea since we opened include: Hudson River Park and the bikeway/walkway, Chelsea Market, the High Line, dozens of art galleries, the Whitney, Starchitect row (which is all the new buildings along the highway, highlighted by Frank Gehry's IAC building) and the meatpacking district (part of Chelsea) has become a hot night life and shopping area. With the exception of Central Park, we are Manhattan's playground.

C.I. - Please tell us about the history of how Roland Betts and Tom Bernstein came up with the idea.

GW - David Tewksbury and Roland Betts were the two that went looking for the ice skating location. Tom Bernstein was Roland's partner in Silver Screen Studios (See Greta Wagner Page 12)



Cardio Floor at Chelsea Piers, Photo Credit: VirtualTourGroup.com



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...Greta Wagner

continued from page 10

and MLB's Texas Rangers. The three formed the nucleus of Chelsea Piers. Once they saw the space and looked into getting Pier 61, they were told that they would have to bid on the entire 28 acres consisting of four piers. That got them thinking about all the other sports and training facilities that either didn't exist in Manhattan or didn't meet world-class standards --Golf, Gymnastics, Sand Volleyball, Climbing-- and it grew and grew to what it is today.

C.I. - How did a destination-driven concept such as Chelsea Piers work in New York City?

GW - Most New Yorker's don't have cars, so they come to us by foot, bike, roller blade, taxi, etc. In any case, we have ample parking (rare for a business in the city to have so much parking), and there are two cross-town buses that stop across the street from the facility, so there is public transportation. Of course, we have members that pull up in their limos, yachts, seaplanes and sea kayaks as well.

C.I. - More specific to the health and fitness club industry, let's talk about the Sports Center at Chelsea Piers. How and when did you become General Manager of the Sports Center? What do your responsibilities include?

GW - I started as the AGM of the Sports Center in 1996, working with Harvey Spevak, who went on to become CEO of Equinox. Over the past 18 years with Chelsea Piers, I've worn many hats, one of which was as the General Manager of our golf business. In 2009, I added The Sports Center to my portfolio as its General Manager and to direct a major renovation. In addition to the Sports Center, I have my hands in most areas of the complex as one of three Senior Vice Presidents of our organization. I'm responsible for all of our management development and training for

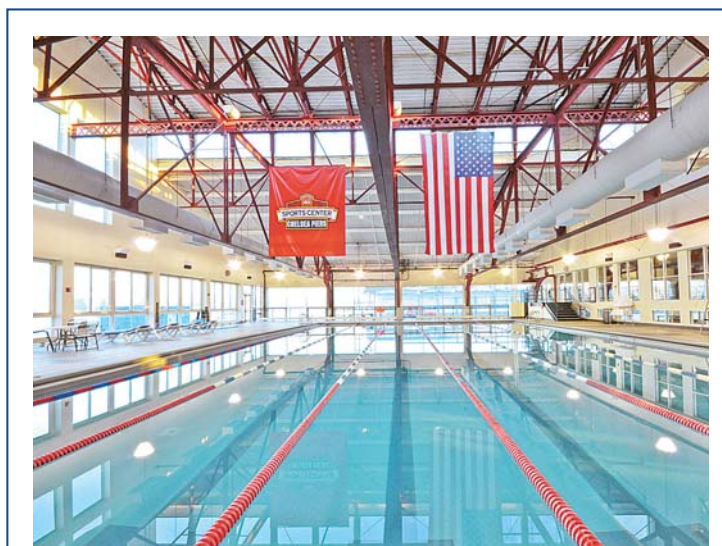
60 complex-wide managers. I also deliver our customer service training to all new hires. We have over 1,200 employees, and I've trained most of them. I couldn't have grown in my role without the support of the owners Roland W. Betts, Tom A. Bernstein and David A. Tewksbury. They've handed me many opportunities and challenges over the years. I've also thrown my hat in the ring on many projects (Lean in Ladies) where I wasn't the obvious choice, but to their credit, the owner's rewarded me with the challenge. Then, I busted my keister to achieve a successful result.

C.I. - How did the Sports Center draw members with no immediate residential market?

GW - The owners of Chelsea Piers employed two theories in building the complex. One was: build it, and they will come. The other was: build the best, and the world will come. They also selected sports and entertainment concepts that were not readily available in NYC. The combination of high quality facilities, variety and a sports complex like nothing that had been offered to the public before attracted New Yorkers to the facility. New York is always growing, and the Chelsea residential market in particular has grown year over year, as more and more high-rise buildings go up. We benefit from being in one of the fastest growing areas of Manhattan.

C.I. - Please tell us about the Sports Center facility (square footage, amenities, services, etc):

GW - Take 150,000 square feet in Manhattan on the Hudson River, pack it with the state-of-the-art facilities, cutting-edge programming and first-rate instruction and you have the Sports Center. Many members join for one of our major sports facilities, such as the **pool**, the **track**, the **boxing ring** or because of our status as the only **USA Triathlon Certified Training Center** in the Northeast, but they stay because of the diversity of offerings



Indoor Pool Complex at Chelsea Piers

and the caring staff that challenges, encourages and supports our exceptional community of dedicated members. By the numbers, we feature:

- 6-lane, 25-yard indoor swimming pool;
- 1/4-mile indoor running track and a 200-meter banked track;
- Cycle Studio with 35+ bikes;
- 11,000 square-foot indoor rock climbing wall;
- NYC's only indoor sand volleyball court;
- 20,000 square feet of cardio and strength training equipment;
- Boxing ring and circuit;
- 3 indoor basketball/volleyball courts;
- 2 Hudson River sundecks;
- Personal training with 40+ certified trainers;
- 150+ group fitness classes weekly;
- 35 weekly yoga and barre classes in our dedicated Mind Body Studio;
- Group training options, including 18 weekly Signature programs and Triathlon Training;
- Full service Paul Labraque Salon & Spa.

C.I. - How many members do you currently have?

GW - 6,000+

C.I. - What are your primary market differentiators?

GW - Our facilities, workout options and open space set us apart from other sports/health clubs in the area. Having expansive river views from every area of the gym, natural light from oversized (and high bay) windows along with 150,000 square feet of column free space (encircled by a 1/4-mile indoor running track) gives our members a sense of space that isn't

normally achievable in NYC. Our club is a destination where our members spend a lot of time. If a potential member is looking for more than a class or treadmill that can be found in any gym, we are the choice option. Our training staff is of the highest caliber with multiple certifications and degrees. Many are former professional athletes and Olympians. We have athletes of all abilities from novice to professionals that train here.

C.I. - Please tell us about your key staff members (name, position, responsibilities and tenure).

GW - Early in my career, I learned that it's important to surround yourself with people who are smart and talented. Whenever I see young managers threatened by employees who are smart or have strong opinions, I encourage them to find a way to engage and harness that talent as a valuable asset to their success and career. I love having a team that can do their jobs better than I could; I want experts in each individual area. My job is getting the best out of them and making it all come together. As a result, I rarely laterally hire, so each member of my team has worked their way up in the organization into their current positions.

•I'll start with my VP of accounting and Senior Director, Jared Deptula. Jared has worked for me for the past 13 years and runs the Member Services department and the main ancillary revenue department (training & programming) and all that is financial.

•Elizabeth Braemer is my Customer Service and Marketing Director. She has oversight of most of the day-to-day operations and creative. She is one of the most dedicated and intelligent staff members on my team.

•Our Group Fitness Director, John Boyd, has been in the business for over 30 years and our members love him!

(See Greta Wagner Page 14)



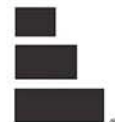
Indoor Sand Volleyball at Chelsea Piers, Photo Credit: Scott McDermott





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STEPFITNESS

...Greta Wagner

continued from page 12

•His colleague, Josh Fly heads up our Personal Training department and was our top trainer for two years prior to taking over as its Director.

•Our Membership Sales Director, Stacey Demar, has been with the company for 10+ years. Stacy started out as our camp director, and I think she knows everyone in NYC! She's a true "connector," which is a wonderful attribute to have when you lead a sales team.

•Our Events Director, Linda Bookbinder, is dynamite and is responsible for 285 events a year, which is one of our largest revenue streams after membership dues and training.

I have many other directors who are wonderful and contribute to our success every day, but I'll stop here because you'll run out of room to finish the article if I don't. I should point out that Chelsea Piers has staff longevity; over 50% of our employees have been here 5+ years, and 50% of those staff members have been with us 10+ years. So, we must be doing something right. I'm very proud of this, and I know employee retention and satisfaction is a primary focus of the owners. Our people make us the premier facility that we are, and we make a point of letting them know we appreciate them!

C.I. - Please tell us about the damage caused by Hurricane Sandy and the recovery efforts since.

GW - We've been challenged before in our history, including 9/11, but Sandy was exceptional. Chelsea Piers sits on the Hudson River. During Sandy, the river crested five feet above floor level throughout our 28-acre complex. When the water receded, we knew we were in for an extraordinary challenge. Everything that

sat five feet and below had to be ripped out and replaced, and I mean everything to the studs: walls, floors, desks, equipment, electric, turf, mats, courts, etc. Over the following five weeks, I was tasked with coordinating more than 200 co-workers and 42 different contractor teams working side-by-side 24/7 to rebuild the entire complex. I'm still catching up on my sleep. We reopened in an astounding five weeks, an achievement that still seems unimaginable! It was the most devastating and the most rewarding experience in my 18 years at Chelsea Piers. So many of our team members stepped up and came through for us in a big way. When I put on my HR hat, I call it the most expensive team-building event ever! We came through it stronger and healthier on the backside. *These are the moments that define our character and keep us a strong, focused and working as a unit.*

C.I. - As they read this, a lot of our readers are in the middle of their New Year's rush in their clubs. What ideas and programs were implemented at Chelsea Piers for the 2014 rush?

GW - We spent the last quarter of 2013 developing new classes and programs that will add value to our members. We are a destination club, so with the ever-increasing competition in our market (we have over 88 fitness options in a 10-block radius, from health clubs to residential gyms and small studios), we need to wow our customers at every level. We will introduce MYZONE in February and plan on having multiple challenges covering all the sports we have here. We also start our "Signature Program," an additional 14 weekly small group classes, in mid-January. Signature Programs are designed especially for our Full Access Members. Consisting of small trainer-led classes and unlimited Mind Body Studio access (barre, Nalini and specialty yoga), this program ensures our members' workouts stay fresh, produce results and keep them excited



Rock Wall at Chelsea Piers, Photo Credit: Fred George

about coming to the gym! The small group training classes are led by Sports Center personal trainers, who developed these dynamic and intensive training platforms to enhance the Full Access Membership. Classes include: kettlebell, TRX suspension training, and bootcamp and sand workouts. We are always looking at our value proposition, enhancing our offerings to ensure member satisfaction. You can't hit the mark with every member, and sometimes, we lose them to other gyms; however, many of them come back after they realize what they had.

C.I. - Please tell us about your competitors.

GW - With regard to our full range of sports and entertainment, Chelsea Piers has no true competitor in Manhattan. However, we won't enjoy this unique position forever, so we're not complacent. Of course, bullet for bullet, we have many competitors. The Sports Club competes with other high-end health clubs. Seasonal skating rinks compete against our Sky Rink, although Sky Rink is the only year-round skating option in Manhattan. The Field House has smaller gymnastics facilities to compete against, as well as preschools and daycare centers. There are some smaller golf simulator facilities in the city, but the full-hitting range and golf school at Chelsea Piers remains a unique offering in Manhattan. Our banquet facilities compete with the very best hotels for traditional events, but who else can put together, as we have, complex wide events accommodating thousands? And, Silver Screen Studios was the home for, among other, the Law and Order television

franchise. They compete on a national basis for movie and television production.

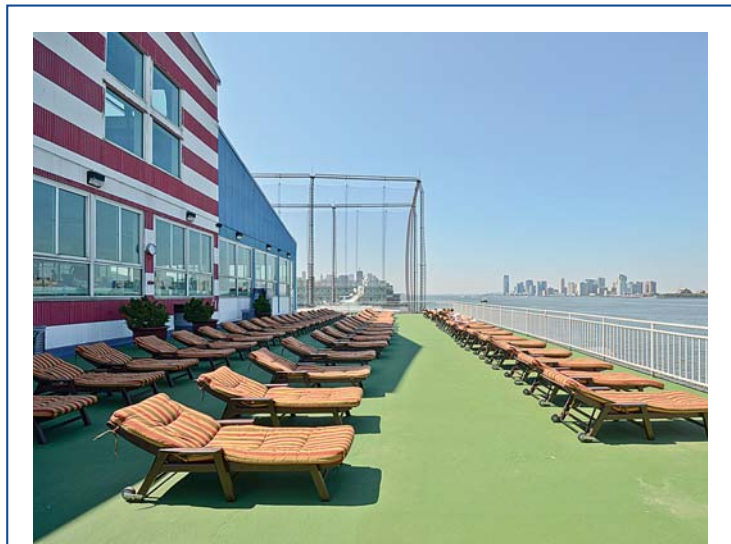
C.I. - What efforts does the Sports Center at Chelsea Piers undertake to build trust and goodwill in the community?

GW - We try to be good neighbors. We work with the local Community Board on many issues, and as a whole, we support various community organizations. The Sports Center, in particular, does some sports-based charity events like swim-a-thons, runs, Zumba classes, dance performances, etc. Two causes that we work with closely are the Laura Beam Foundation and Nalini Kids. There are a wide variety of membership options as well that cater to the student, senior and non-profit communities, making the facility accessible to people from many walks of life. I also make sure that, whenever we are replacing something in the gym and it's in good enough condition, it's donated to a community organization; things such as lockers, yoga mats, small exercise equipment, etc. And, of course, on a personal level, the owners are deeply involved in many charitable organizations and endeavors.

C.I. - Is the Sports Center at Chelsea Piers an IHRSA Member? If so, what benefits does your organization see in an IHRSA membership? Personally, what do you benefit from the most?

GW - Yes, of course we are IHRSA members. IHRSA is such a great organization, and everyone in the industry should be a member. I value the relationships I've developed with people associated with IHRSA, like Rick Caro, Mark Stevens, Pat Laus and many others. I met Brent Darden and hired him and his partner Everett Aaberg from Telos as consultants to work with my Fitness Director, Josh Fly, to bring the Ortho-Kinetics System to Chelsea Piers and certify many of our trainers. Being able to

(See Greta Wagner Page 16)



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...Greta Wagner

continued from page 14

network with so many top rate operators and owners and knowing that I can pick up a phone and bounce ideas, ask questions or just commiserate with like-minded, smart people is incredibly valuable. I'm taking my team to IHRSA in San Diego (I love San Diego; I spent one year living there going to the School of Performing and Creative Arts when I was in high school). It's great to have my team be able to reenergize and see what's happening in the industry. Also, from the relationships I've made being part of IHRSA, I've been able to take various team members to visit other clubs and get an in-depth look at how similar clubs conduct business and trade best practices. I'd suggest more clubs take advantage of learning from others successes and failures; it's invaluable.

C.I. - When and how did Chelsea Piers expand into Stamford, Connecticut? What are the offerings there (facilities, amenities, services, etc)?

GW - Chelsea Piers Connecticut opened in July of 2012 and is in continuous expansion mode. When it's all done, it will include an Olympic pool, two NHL-size ice rinks, 12 squash courts, 7 indoor tennis

courts, a gymnastics facility, 100-yard indoor turf field, two basketball courts/hardwood volleyball courts, restaurant, bar and café, BlueStreak Sports Training, Fly Wheel cycling, Stamford Hospital branch, daycare and preschool facility, water park, trampoline zone, rock climbing, batting cages, and a host of viewing mezzanines.

In addition to my duties in New York, I'm currently working with the owners and Mike Braitto, our complex General Manager/Chief Engineer, overseeing the design and construction of our new 70,000 square-foot health club in Connecticut. To that end, I've been traveling around the country looking at clubs to keep my design palate fresh and up to date. The health club will connect to our squash club. It will be two levels, a ground floor and mezzanine with over 100 pieces of strength and cardio machines. We will offer all of the amenities our clients enjoy at our New York club including six group training studios, a Queenax Functional/suspension Training room, Triathlon training studio with Computrainers, Hot Yoga, Yoga and Pilates reformer studios, as well as a glass atrium studio with 24-foot ceilings for the more traditional group classes. Once construction and installations near completion, I'll turn my attention to staffing.

C.I. - Please tell us about the children's offerings at both locations.

GW - Family is a big part of the Chelsea Piers experience. We work extra hard to ensure that we have enough variety to keeps our kids engaged and entertained so that health, fitness and sports become a lifelong pursuit. There are dozens of sports for children to pick from at both locations.

In New York, children can learn gymnastics, soccer, basketball, baseball, volleyball, flag football, figure skating, hockey, golf, tennis, swimming, kayaking, sailing, rock climbing, dance and bowling.

In Connecticut, they can do all the above and also learn squash, water polo, triathlon and synchronized skating.

C.I. - What is on the horizon for the Sports Center at Chelsea Piers (say 3 to 5 years out)? How about for Chelsea Piers as a whole?

GW - Considering the technological innovations in the industry in just the last five years, it's hard to predict that far out. I know we will continue to acquire and integrate the latest technology as it becomes available. Also, we will always present our members with first-rate instruction presented by the leaders in their fields. As for the brand, we are confident in our formula for success, and we continue

to evaluate other areas to design and build similar projects.

• • •

Thank you very much to Greta Wagner for sharing her truly amazing life and club industry story. We wish her and her Team at Chelsea Piers New York and Connecticut the best in 2014! Thank you also to Erica Schietinger and Elizabeth Braemer for their help with photos and graphics. To our readers, Happy New Year! Make 2014 a great one!

(Justin Cates is the President and Assistant Publisher of CLUB INSIDER and grew up in the health, racquet and sports club industry. Justin was born into a club business family in 1985, and from the age of eight, he spent his non-school and sports hours in a home which doubled as CLUB INSIDER Headquarters. He has lived and breathed this industry for 28 years, since his own day one. Now, he is an integral part of the "Story" of Norm Cates and CLUB INSIDER. Justin may be reached by phone at 770-595-6086 or email at Justin@clubinsideronline.com)

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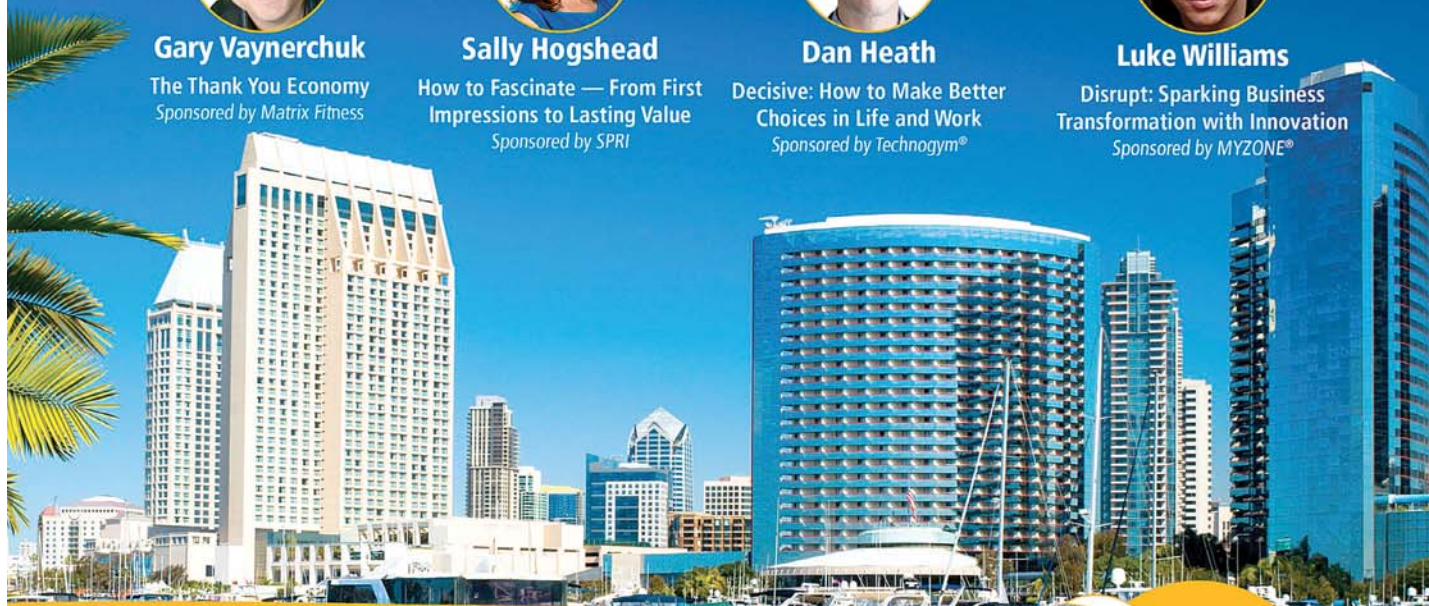
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The Unsolved Problem in Our Industry

By: Will Phillips

Part I

By the time you're reading this, you should have had a great January sales season. Health clubs have solved the *first industry problem*, which is *how to get people to join*. We have not solved the *second problem*, which is *how to get them to stay*.

In fact, as soon as you complete a sale, you have created a serious, hidden problem for every one of your new members. This insidious problem is that no new member had a whole lot of free time they didn't know what to do with and thought they might join a health club to fill their empty hours. Every new member's schedule was packed full before they joined your club. They would go further and say "there is not enough time in the day."

They've now joined your club and have visions of weight loss and fitness dancing in their heads. You know this requires at least two workouts a week taking two hours each when you include the time for their travel, workout and shower. That's four hours per week they have to find in a schedule that was already crammed full. You know what happens to you if you're crammed full of food after a big holiday feast and you try to put in more? It hurts, and your body will reject the extra in one direction or the other. The same thing happens to everyone who joins a health club. The natural, normal human process is to reject this new and extra time demand.

Overcoming this stupendous barrier is called *building an exercise habit*. Probably only 5% to 10% of your members have a built-in *regular exercise habit*. For the rest of them, it comes and goes. REX has been developing a new metric for measuring what happens in the early days of new members. The results across the board are stunning in the number of members who don't show up or who disappear in the first 30, 60 and 90 days. The BEST operators underestimated their usage in the 90 days (and therefore their true attrition!). **Most had 12 - 18% zero-uses after joining.** These early losses actually predict your annual attrition months in advance.

You can do a lot to make members happy, and you probably do so for every new member. You're courteous. The club is clean. You've hired your staff to be engaging, pleasant human beings who provide encouragement. We already know your club facility is beautiful, and you have an extraordinary variety of equipment and possibly even as large a variety in programming to engage the new member

in exercise.

But, unless the client does a number of things on his own, he will not build an exercise habit. You cannot do this for him, and he does not know how to do it. The majority of new members are ready to take responsibility for building an exercise habit and finding the time to exercise, but they have no experience in doing this. Most have never consciously built a habit in their life. So, they don't know how to do it and you're not helping, coaching and encouraging them to do it. *The unsolved question in health clubs then becomes how to change the member's behavior from non-exerciser to exerciser.* It's not which program to take, not which equipment to use, not how many reps to do. We've solved those questions.

There's a certain paradox here because you can't build the habit for your member, but you can coach them into building a habit when the following three conditions are met: (1) You have the right person doing the coaching; (2) you have the right coaching process; (3) you have the right program for habit building. *So, when the right person, process and program are in place, all focused on building an exercise habit, you can solve the second question.*

Significant research has been emerging over the past decade on how humans build habits. These insights are not coming out of the exercise physiology departments but out of psychology departments. This creates a huge barrier for health clubs because we are not oriented to using psychological information and research. We would prefer to use our hunches and beliefs about people rather than the hard-nosed evidence on what works.

A good deal of this hard-nosed evidence has come out of the field of medicine in learning how to help people prevent and solve critical healthcare issues. It intrigues me that the attrition rate for patients taking lifesaving medication for diabetes and cardiac conditions stop taking their prescriptions at the same rate as your members leave your club. This has promoted major research on how to help patients change behavior, and we can learn

from and adopt some of these insights.

A side note on technology: At last count, there are at least ten different technology tools that exercisers wear to track their activity and upload it onto their computer or a club's computer. All of these are exploring the right tracking system, one that really works for people. Each one has *pros* and *cons*. But, more importantly, these are not habit builders; they are meters to keep track of what you've done and record it. Like the GPS in your car, they can tell you where you have been and where to go, but they are not the engine that drives the car. *The engine is the habit; the exercise is the fuel.*

Part II of this article in the February edition of **CLUB INSIDER** will provide descriptions of eight tools on specific things that you can do to help new members build an exercise habit. These are an excerpt from a forthcoming REX workbook for club staff and members on how to build an exercise habit. We are creating this workbook because, even though the technology of habit building is not mysterious or difficult, it is new to almost every one of your staff members. Some guidance will be needed to solve the second big question in our industry.

Having the right person coaching habit building is critical. Your best salespeople are not likely to be your best coaches for this. Nor are your best group exercise leaders or personal trainers. Effective coaching requires an extraordinary amount of empathy, and building empathy means putting yourself at some personal risk.

It also involves designing the right coach-member pairs. Combinations like a 20-year old man coaching a 60-year old woman rarely work. Having a 20-year old man coaching a 25-year old woman is also prone to failure. Assessing the emotional maturity of the coach is essential.

Here's a simple test that you can use to begin with. Just because you've passed the test doesn't mean you're great at coaching. But, if you don't pass the test, it is unlikely you will be a great coach. Take your pointer finger and draw a capital E on



Will Phillips

your forehead. Please do this before you read on.

You can draw the E from two perspectives; from your inner perspective, so you see the E; or from the perspective of someone outside of you looking at your forehead. Neither way is right or wrong, but the perspective you choose indicates how you tend to see the world, from your perspective or from that of others. Great coaches see the world from other people's point of view. This is called empathy. The E test was developed at the Kellogg School of Management. There are other, more in-depth, empathy assessments that can help you identify who is likely to be a great coach. We will cover these in Part II.

To close, let's move on to the skill of building empathy, which at its heart, is the gentle art of asking instead of telling. In experiments around the world in different cultures in trying to help people change behavior, we have a number of options. The first is to simply tell them what to do in a didactic classroom, instructional way. This usually fails. The second way is to order them to do it. This usually works as long as you're watching them but is rarely internalized and has a short half-life. Thirdly, you can incentivize behavior change or habit building. This can get things started, but too often, we game the system. Just go to a Weight Watchers meeting and learn all the ways members game the system. The fourth approach is to understand the current way that your client is managing their life and health and the barriers that may prevent them from building a new exercise habit. This requires humble inquiry, which is the art of asking questions, not telling answers.

I have written a thorough article on these skills, which you can obtain on the REX website at www.rexroundtables.com/wp/humble-inquiry.

(Will Phillips is the Founder of REX Roundtables for Executives and can be reached at will@rexroundtables.com)

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To Draft Or Not To Draft?

It Really Shouldn't Be A Question Anymore!

By: Ron Alterio

From The big boxes to the small studios; from the new kids on the block to the seasoned veterans, inquiring minds want to know... is switching over to a draft-based Personal Training (PT) model right for my business?

Before I answer this question, let's make sure we fully understand what an EFT, draft-based, PT model is. There are several varieties and versions out there. Put simply, it's a business model by which your members pay for their training sessions on a monthly basis. The objective is to create a predictable revenue stream similar to recurring membership dues. Rather than paying for all of their training sessions in packages up front, the EFT model allows the member to finance their solution over time.

When executed correctly, an EFT, draft-based, PT model can be one of the most important and most profitable changes you can make in your PT business. Lower entry points into training, higher closing percentages, greater member participation, longer client tenure, higher margins and a more steady and predictable stream of monthly revenue are just a few of the many and lasting benefits of creating a draft-based PT model.

However, the draft model, like any other business model, requires vital moving parts to make it work. Below are the top three points to consider before deciding if making the switch is right for you.

Top 3 Points to Consider

1. Are you willing to do the work to get your new members in front of your PT sales team?

Clubs have been beating their heads against the wall over this issue for decades. Unfortunately, poor new member book and show rates are the fastest way to kill a draft. The two most common reasons I see for a club's lack of success in the book/show area are as follows:

A. A complete lack of understanding and appreciation for this appointment by the sales department. When positioned and explained properly, this key appointment for the new member actually helps sell more memberships. However, more often than not, I see sales departments looking at this appointment simply as one more thing to add to their checklist. It's a burden, a task to be completed rather than a tool to

be used to create value.

B. An unwillingness by management to change this mindset and hold the sales team accountable. Far too often, club operators create and cultivate a culture that only rewards the membership sale. This only compounds the above issue. The great managers realize that the prospect pool for new members is only going to get smaller with more and more competition. The great managers also realize that training and programming is going to keep the member longer; thus resulting in more total revenue and greater retention. As such, the great managers place just as much, if not more emphasis, on booking the initial appointment as they do on securing the actual membership sale.

2. Are you willing to switch from a trainer-centric sales system to having only one or two key point people selling training?

Consistent and steady growth in your draft happens when you have two separate and distinct functions of the PT department: new client acquisition and existing client retention. Attracting and retaining more members in hyper-competitive markets has never been more difficult. On top of it, you will have to re-commit to improving your book and show rates. Don't blow it by putting them in front of someone who doesn't like, or isn't good at selling, PT. Trainers want to train. They never have and never will want to sell. Additionally, just think about the amount of time and labor it takes to get

a team of trainers selling. Even after the initial training, your work is not done. You have to continue to coach your trainers to ensure they stay focused and sharp. In the end, and after all of the work, chances are you are still selling less PT than you need or want. To truly run an effective EFT draft model, you want your best salespeople to get the "yes" and fuel growth of the draft on the front end while leveraging the talent of your trainers to keep the new client happy and paying on the back end.

3. Are you willing to adjust your current sales process and coach it often?

Selling a solution over time is a completely different animal altogether. You can't succeed in the EFT model by maintaining the same sales process you are using for selling packages. There needs to be a more systematic way of making the focus on the goal, the reason why that goal is important and the timeline it will take to get to that goal. As such, there are key questions that must be asked EVERY time. There is a proven sequence of steps that needs to be followed EVERY time. More importantly, there is a very specific and strategic way PT options should be presented with every potential client. In short, selling a PT solution over time requires not only incorporating the basics of selling like building rapport and creating value but also a deep commitment and laser focus on strategy and proven best practices.

There you have it! Incorporating an EFT, draft-based PT model can provide



Ron Alterio

a myriad of benefits for your PT business. The rewards are plenty, but a commitment to the work is absolutely required to achieve those benefits. Whether you currently have a draft-based system in place or want to incorporate one from scratch, driving the traffic, having the right person selling and using the right sales process will be the keys to your success.

(Ron Alterio is the National Sales Director for the Visual Fitness Planner. He supports a variety of business models throughout the United States and Latin America using the full suite of Visual Fitness Planner products. Additionally, his Sales IQ consulting services can be obtained by calling him at 717-645-3899 or emailing him at ron@vfp.us.)

...Norm's Notes

continued from page 8

• **Best of luck** to my long-time friends, **JILL KINNEY** and **BILL McBRIDE**, as they have partnered up to launch a new group of West Coast Clubs called **Active Sports Clubs**. The flagship Active Sports Club is a 40,000 square-foot location in **Petaluma, California**. Check out their **Press Release on Page #26**.

• **CLUB INSIDER** is a **Paid Subscription-based Publication**. Are you a **Paid CLUB INSIDER Subscriber**? If the words **PROMOTIONAL COPY** appear above your name and address on the cover of this month's edition, you are not a **Paid Subscriber**, and you are definitely missing out and are not enjoying the *full benefits* of a **Paid Subscription** to **CLUB INSIDER**, which includes one

year in print and nine years of Archived **CLUB INSIDER** editions. So, don't delay! Subscribe today for just **\$89** by going to www.clubinsideronline.com/subscribe!

• **My son** and **CLUB INSIDER Assistant Publisher, JUSTIN CATES**, and I, want to wish **you and your family** a **Happy, Healthy New Year!**

• **God bless** all of our troops, airmen and sailors and keep them safe. **Thank you, Congratulations and Welcome Home** to all of our troops who've served in Afghanistan and around the world. **God bless you and your family, your club**

staff, your members and your club(s). God Bless America!

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 40-year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. Cates is the Founder and Publisher of CLUB INSIDER, now in its 21st year of publication. Cates was IHRSA's First President, and a Co-Founder with Rick Caro and five others, in 1981. In 2001, IHRSA honored Cates with its DALE DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award, one of its highest honors. Cates may be reached by phone at 770-635-7578 or email at Norm@clubinsideronline.com)

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PR101: Get Your Marketing In Shape

By: Nancy Trent

My marketing communications firm kicked off its healthy heritage in the late '80s and early '90s by mainstreaming fitness giants like Kathy Smith, Denise Austin, Gin Miller, Johnny G and the game-changing equipment like the Reebok Step, the Body Bar and the Body Ball.

For the last 25 years, I have dedicated my career and my company to taking healthy lifestyle brands from fringe to mainstream. High profile publicity and social media campaigns can take a brand viral and spiral, maximize awareness, enhance credibility and raise recognition. All of this is designed to help open distribution channels and support sell-through to more consumers.

We do it by getting our clients in the hands of celebrities and on the tongues of influencers as well editorial coverage in popular media outlets. We fuel the buzz with social strategies, creative content, brand ambassadors, involved engagement and exposure at events.

In this PR 101 series, I'm going to help you do it too!

• • •

Every brand has an image and followers. Like fashion items, cars, food and beverages or consumer electronics, fitness has an image too. The good news is that you can make it what you want. Let's start getting your marketing in shape.

In order to remain with the times and trends, you need to reinvent yourself every few years. Like celebrities, fitness centers have to stay new to capture consumer attention and earn their credibility. And they need to put a high value on branding to stay in the spotlight.

What are your unique selling characteristics? Who is your brand designed to attract? Profiling your brand takes time and commitment, and your brand personality needs to show in everything you do.

The next step is to make an *emotional connection*. When your fitness center takes on human qualities, it creates emotional connections with customers and potential customers resulting in stronger loyalty. The more needs your brand satisfies, the stronger the consumer's loyalty will be.

A strong brand can:

- Increase customer loyalty;
- Increase flexibility for future growth;
- Increase ability to hire and retain talented employees;
- Increase ability to focus the organization's activities and resources;

- Increase market share;
- Increase overall value;
- Decrease price sensitivity.

Think of your brand as a body. Its vision is its inspiration. Its brain is how it functions. Its face is its public persona. Its voice is how you choose to communicate with customers and staff. Its heart is the soul of the organization. Its lungs are its strategy. Its arms are its members. Its blood supply is its cash flow. Its water is its management practices, and its skeleton is its size, location and framework.

So How Can You Start Defining Your Brand?

- Define your marketplace position by asking yourself, "What is your niche?"
- Define your unique value proposition by asking yourself, "What sets you apart?"
- Define your strategy by discovering and addressing your brand barriers like competition, demand, timing, location and financing.
- Define your brand identity by determining what your image looks like. For example, your logo, tagline, website, service menu and brochures.
- Define your marketing communication campaign by figuring out how you should be presented to the public.
- Define your brand benefits by deciding if your fitness center provides value, innovation or customer service.

Before building your brand, it is important to *define its positioning*. Positioning is defined by consumer values and motivation. Knowing what your company stands for and what about it is unique and compelling to your customer will help brand it.

There are four key steps you need to take to build your brand:

1. **Awareness** - Are key customers aware of your fitness center?
2. **Differentiation** - Is your fitness center different, relevant and compelling?
3. **Availability** - Is your fitness center accessible and convenient?
4. **Connection** - Does your fitness center connect with its customers on an emotional level? Are your brand messages conveyed in media your customers read, watch and listen to?

When creating a brand, all elements must stay consistent. Employees should accurately and consistently articulate its essence and promise. Marketing elements should be integrated to deliver against the promise and key brand priorities of the fitness center. Business processes, systems, networks

of relationships and customer service functions should align with and support your promise of differentiated consumer benefits. Common measures should include key brand measures. Corporate culture should reinforce the brand promise.

Just because you build a brand doesn't mean customers will know about it. Marketing is an investment in your brand, not a cost. Define clear objectives and performance targets for each marketing program you initiate at the center. Allocate marketing resources for brand building in collaboration with sales promotion and use proactive publicity to build the brand. This is one of the most powerful and cost effective marketing tools.

Your brand may have been in business for years and has steady revenue, but you keep hearing about your competitors in the media. Isn't it time to get media attention for your company? If your company is in the media, you are increasing your chances at more business and your reputation will surely improve. Starting a PR campaign can be challenging and exciting, and if strategically planned, great results will come:

Get Motivated - Reflect on the best and most positive offerings that your brand has to provide, research what the competition is doing and look for characteristics that make your facility different, cutting-edge, unusual or better.

Planning - Schedule events, meetings and time for research allowing flexibility for unplanned events.

Lead Times - Consider the specific lead times of all forms of media you hope to reach and map out goals on a calendar; prepare documents for execution at the appropriate times throughout the campaign.

Publicity Brings Publicity - Once stories and news segments come out, more and more media will wish to report on your facility; anticipate this demand and be prepared for quick decision making.

Prepare a variety of press materials and coordinate media opportunities for your fitness center including the following:

Press Kit - Official documents with background information, biographies, fact sheets and story ideas, packaged with images for editors, reporters and producers to peruse and learn about your company and use as a resource.

Media Training - Extensive preparation for your spokespersons involves methods for properly responding to questions and how to present the image of the company overall.



Nancy Trent

Press Visits - This face-to-face opportunity allows the media to interact with your company spokesperson for product/procedure demonstrations and interviews. Invite press to visit your facility.

The public relations team will also have materials available when there is more interest and once the media request more information such as:

- Statistics;
- Case Studies;
- Before and after photography;
- Photography of the facility;
- Tape of the Spokesperson;
- Bios of the managers and instructors;
- B-Roll.

Making news is the most important goal after a public relations campaign has been devised and the public relations personnel have been coordinating interviews and media opportunities for your facility. The following list includes appropriate instances for making news:

Develop a nose for news - Both the fitness center and the public relations contact must be on top of current news for appropriate timing and placement of a story.

Trends - Being aware of current trends in the fitness industry as well as related industries will allow you to tap in on what's hot in the news at the moment and impress a reporter.

Holidays - This is the perfect opportunity to boost sales; the media always notices times of celebration and recognition, so aligning your facility with a holiday will get a lot of notice.

Anything new is news - Consider any changes to your business or industry news; this includes professionals being appointed to new positions, new policies, products, facilities, announcements or events.

(See Nancy Trent Page 23)

LA Fitness is looking for experienced and high energy Group Fitness Instructors!

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LA Fitness Rolling Along As It Acquires Two More Club Groups

BUFFALO, N.Y. - The Buffalo and Rochester Athletic Clubs and Fitness International, LLC announced that they have completed a transaction where LA Fitness has purchased substantially all the assets of the four Buffalo and two Rochester co-ed clubs on December 23, 2013. The BAC/RAC for Women clubs in both cities and the CrossFit BAC Extreme Training facility on Union Road in Cheektowaga will continue to be operated under the BAC/RAC umbrella.

LA Fitness will honor all of the active membership agreements that it purchases from BAC/RAC co-ed clubs, including those for personal training:

Jeremy Heim, BAC/RAC Operating Partner, commented, "It has been our privilege to serve the Buffalo and Rochester communities for the past 33 years, and we are excited about this new chapter in our company's history. We look forward to our continued role in providing excellence in health and fitness training through concentrating our mission on the BAC/RAC for Women." Additional information regarding the BAC/RAC clubs for Women

is available at www.rochesterathletic.com or www.buffaloathletic.com.

Media contacts:

LA Fitness: Jill Greuling - (949) 255-7371
BAC/RAC: James Gillam - (716) 430-6156

• • •

IRVINE, CA/SEATTLE, WA - Fitness International, LLC and Vision Quest Sport and Fitness announced that they have completed a transaction for LA Fitness to purchase substantially all of the assets of the ten Vision Quest clubs in the greater Seattle area.

Initial plans call for the Vision Quest clubs to continue to be operated under the Vision Quest name. All active memberships that LA Fitness purchased from Vision Quest will continue to be honored under the terms of their current agreements. Acquired Vision Quest members will continue to have access to the same Vision Quest clubs they had prior to the transaction.

...Nancy Trent

continued from page 22

Piggybacking on the news - Once a story comes out about your facility, or something related to your business, consider it a great time to share new information or supporting story ideas about your business to an editor or producer.

Understand that journalists are very busy, and consider it a privilege that they take the time to listen to your story idea. Remember they are doing you a great service if they consider your story. Be sure to keep in mind all of the following when working with a journalist:

Know the journalists you are pitching

- There are specific writers for a variety of beats; make sure you know as much about what this journalist covers and what he or she is currently working on prior to contacting them.

Know what they need - Ask what the journalist is currently working on; this

includes what issue, the time, specific articles and projects and offer story angles that fit with their needs.

Give them what they want when they want it - More often than not, public relations teams contact journalists more often than the journalists seek public relations people; when the journalist wants something, this is the time to shine and have everything prepared for a story opportunity.

(Nancy Trent is a writer and speaker, a lifelong health advocate, a globe-trotting trend watcher and the founder and President of Trent & Company, a New York-based marketing communications firm. She is a recognized expert in PR with more than 30 years of experience creating and managing highly successful campaigns. Nancy can be reached by phone at 212-966-0024 or by email at nancy@trentandcompany.com. You can also visit www.trentandcompany.com.)

Media contacts:

LA Fitness: Jill Greuling - (949) 255-7371
Vision Quest: Brad Swartz - (253) 315-3777

Additional information can be found at www.lafitness.com.

Donna Krech Honored With Quilly Award

HOLLYWOOD, CA - Business builder, coach and owner of a national chain of weight loss and wellness facilities, Donna Krech, has combined her years of experience in motivating clients, along with the views of a select group of leading business and human development experts to write *Never Ending Motivation - Eliminating the 7 Obstacles that Prevent You From Achieving Any Goal!*

The result is perhaps one of the greatest compilations of ideas, strategies and methods for achieving goals from people who have proved it works. To give readers this rare opportunity, Krech worked closely with several luminaries, including best-selling author and speaker, Denis Waitley.

In her book, Krech identifies the seven exclusive obstacles, or motivation assassins, that prevent people from accomplishing what they really want to achieve. Whether readers want to lose weight, publish the book they've always wanted to write, start a business or create more time for the things in life that matter to them, Krech provides a system to identify which of the seven motivation assassins is holding them back.

Simple steps for clearing each obstacle are then shared.

After overcoming her own insurmountable odds, Krech created a business that now spans the globe with over 100,000 members in her online and offline programs, more than 100 wellness facilities using her "systems for success" and 5,000 different businesses applying them. She has been referred to by many as the go-to expert on eliminating barriers that keep people from reaching their dreams. Now, as a Celebrity Expert® author, Krech gives her readers the proven methods and tools they need to finally achieve their goals.

Donna Krech released *Never Ending Motivation - Eliminating the 7 Obstacles that Prevent You From Achieving Any Goal!* on September 16th, 2013 through CelebrityPress™, a leading business book publisher. Within a day of release, the book achieved bestseller status in six **Amazon.com** categories including:

- Business and Investing;
- Business Management and Leadership;
- Business References;
- Career Guides;

- Careers;
- Systems and Planning.

The National Academy of Best-Selling Authors also recently recognized Donna's bestseller status with a Quilly® Award (See **Photo on This Page**)

Donna will donate royalties from her book sales to the *Entrepreneur's International Foundation*, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to creating unique launch campaigns to raise money and awareness for charitable causes.

To order a copy of *Never Ending Motivation - Eliminating the 7 Obstacles that Prevent You From Achieving Any Goal!*, go to **www.donnakrechstore.com**.

(Donna Krech is the founder and CEO of The Donna Krech Companies. Starting as a penniless, depressed mom, Donna is now a CEO of several multimillion dollar companies, best-selling author, speaker and media personality. With over 100,000 members in her online and offline programs, more than 100 wellness facilities and 5,000 locations using her "systems for success," Donna is dedicated to inspiring and equipping entrepreneurs



Donna Krech Receives Quilly Award

and professionals and has helped millions of people reach their dreams in both their business and daily lives. Having overcome her own insurmountable obstacles, Donna believes that people achieve their greatest success when they bring purpose to the lives they touch. Donna can be reached at by email at **donna@donnakrech.com**.)

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The Secret To Successfully Capturing The Overweight Market

When I bought the license for Thin&Healthy's Total Solution (THTS), my view was, "This is going to be an additional profit center. We're going to be able to offer weight loss." I quickly learned, thank God, that this thing really is the "hub" for your club.

It's easy to say I built my club way too large. We had a decent client base before THTS, but we're in a town of 10,000 people and we didn't have enough "gym" people to flourish. Without THTS, we never would have helped as many people as we have. We understand if we want PT to grow, THTS is what will help us to thrive.

The better THTS does, the more success we see with people's bodies, weight, and life. The minute that person comes in and loses 10, 15, even 100 lbs., the more they want to do. They want to

tan, they want to train and buy other things in your club. It feeds itself when done correctly.

Many club owners spend their career marketing to the 13-14% of the population that will join a club. Thin&Healthy's Total Solution hits the other 80-90% of the population. It's a simple law of numbers, so you are going to have more candidates for PT. THTS feeds PT at about day 7. Over 60% of my PT clients come out of my THTS members. It's just a law of numbers.

An overweight person feels scared to death about going to a club, and they are not going to come if we don't have THTS. That is a different way of thinking for us, and helping the folks who needs us the most has made all the difference. From a membership standpoint, we have roughly around 3000 members in Washington. When we launched THTS, we had about 1200 members. The biggest change outside of THTS has certainly been in

personal training; we will see growth of over 20% in 2014.

Before we put Thin&Healthy's Total Solution into our club, our EFT was \$22,000 per month. As of December 2013, the EFT at the Washington club is about \$120K monthly, and we're going to do somewhere in the neighborhood \$2.3-\$2.4 million this year. Through the third quarter, we were at \$1.5 million. To give you some perspective, we did \$1.6 million in all of 2012.

We are in week 6 of our 2nd club in Williamston, and our EFT is almost at \$25K, which we're really proud of. It's a much smaller club with just 6000 square feet, versus the 20,000 square feet in Washington. Williamston is a town of just under 7000 people, so we're excited about the first quarter of 2014 there. We're going to grand open in February. Our goal is to have that club at \$60K EFT by the end of first quarter 2014.

The first thing we tell a new hire is what THTS is and what it means to us and to this community. We have to make sure our employees know what THTS is, that it's not just a weight-loss program. I think that is why our launch in Williamston was such a success. When we launched in Washington, we had this huge database of people (we had fish in the pond). In Williamston, we went in cold turkey with no database, and before we opened our doors, our draft base was almost \$15K.

I tell people all the time, I did this wrong for 10-11 years. I still kick myself that it took me so long to grasp, but I've got a hold on it now, and I'm not letting go. X

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- AUSTIN THOMAS



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How We Make A Difference In People's Lives

By: Jason Reinhardt

This is the time of the year to reconnect with your staff, guests and members and remind them how we impact and make a difference in their lives. Enthusiasm fuels success, and when you have your staff, guests and members excited about your club, it's a great combination! I've always said that the last four letters in enthusiasm stand for **I am sold myself**. If you are excited about something, it comes across that way in your speech and body language. January is the month to capture the fun in our business and create great habits that will last the entire year. When you create a great experience for guests, great atmosphere for members and a fun environment for the staff, you will have a winning culture at your facility! When you have a winning culture in your facility, you will make a difference in the lives of all that enter.

1. Making a difference with your staff:

It's the best time of year for your staff. You've hired staff members that are difference makers and reflect you and your facility. Now is the time for them to shine through their actions. Set your team up for success early in the New Year. Small victories will result in big victories down the road. Celebrating the small things will help create a winning culture in your facility top to bottom. Make sure your team knows you want them to win and that they know you are available to help them succeed. Higher goals in January are standard, but a detailed plan on how to attain them is not. Team contests and incentives are a fun and easy way to create

a healthy competitive environment that will result in higher production. At the end of the day, your team is what will set the tone for each and every day. Invest your time and energy in them, and they will be the ingredient that makes a difference for you and your facility. An excited team that believes in what you offer and is having fun while changing the lives of your members will be a successful team.

2. Making a difference with your guests:

Every day you have guests that walk in your club, you have a chance to create a lasting first impression. What do they think and say to their friends, family and co-workers about your facility when they leave? People are looking for a feeling, a culture, an experience and a place to call home when they visit your facility. Remind your team to connect with the guest and not to just hammer them with the features your club offers. Teach your staff to really dive into where the member or guest has been, where they are now and where they'd like to be in the future. Have them connect with members and guests on a personal level and find out their *WHY*. If you connect and find out why someone came to your club, you then have a chance to earn their business and have them refer your club to others regardless of whether they join or not.

The industry has taught us only to ask for referrals from those that join. I'm here to tell you that you can earn referrals from any guest, *even if they don't join*. If you connect and create an experience for your guest, you have earned the right to ask them for referrals before they leave as a non-member. Just think about it for a second. We all know that we have more

people walk out as non-members than we do as new members, so *why wouldn't you ask them for referrals?* The reason is some staff members have not been taught to see value in a non-member. That's why you have to train and develop a winning culture on your team that looks for opportunities from every guest. The goal is to have every guest walking out of your facility talking to all their friends, family and co-workers about the great experience they had while at your facility. When they do that, they then inspire others to make a difference in their life. Create a referring environment in your facility through every guest that comes in and you'll make a big impact in your community and your bottom-line!

3. Making a difference with your members:

Members are the life, atmosphere and personality of your facility. Members come in to your facility to make a difference in their life. It's our great privilege to serve each and every member to assure they have a great experience, which keeps them coming back. A member that has a great experience will use the facility, get results and be a promoter of the facility, which will lead to new members.

In January, the facility experiences higher traffic, creating an opportunity to be seen by more members. Walking through the facility at different times of the day will give you an opportunity to say "Hi" to different members, clean the club and make sure the facility is at its best for the member experience. At a minimum, the members deserve a clean club. Be proactive and show that, as a leader, you will get your hands dirty and assure the club is clean for your members. That will



Jason Reinhardt

make a difference in their eyes and create a reason to refer your facility. Provide a great experience, a clean club and a variety of offerings, and you'll earn a loyal referring member.

(Jason Reinhardt is the Founder and Owner of Go M.A.D. Fitness LLC in Monroe Michigan (Go M.A.D. stands for Go Make A Difference). Reinhardt is formerly the Vice President of Sales for Sport&Health in Washington D.C., Maryland and Virginia, Regional Vice President of Sales for Merritt Athletic Clubs and District Sales Manager for Lifestyle Family Fitness Centers. Reinhardt spoke at IHRSA in 2012 and 2013 and will be speaking at IHRSA San Diego. Check out www.gomadfitness.com or email info@gomadfitness.com)

Bill McBride Teams Up With Jill Kinney to Launch a New Health Club Brand: Active Sports Clubs

PETALUMA, CA - Bill McBride, former President of Club One Fitness, and last year's Chairman of the IHRSA Board of Directors; and Jill Kinney, Founder of Club One Fitness and former IHRSA Board Member, have teamed up to launch a new club brand called Active Sports Clubs.

The flagship club is a 40,000 square-foot location in Petaluma, California and additional sites are expected to open in 2014. The leadership team includes CFO/CTO Carey White, formerly with Club One, and Ken Brendel, accomplished Club One and Itrim General Manager, to become General Manager of the location in Petaluma. Bill McBride serves as the President and CEO and is responsible for all aspects of the operations, and Jill Kinney will serve as its Chairman.

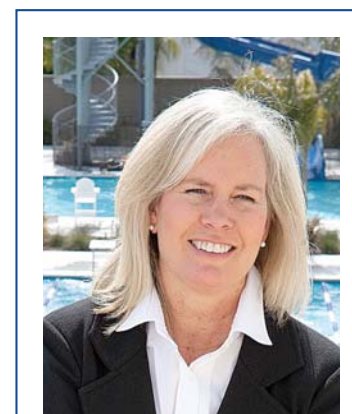
"I'm excited about working with

Jill Kinney, an industry icon; Carey White, an extremely accomplished CFO and strategic thinker; Ken Brendel, one of the best general managers I have ever worked with; and our full team of business and fitness professionals. This new endeavor is a compliment to BMC3's work over the last few months, serving a valued, existing clientele with an emphasis on the priorities and nuances of their local markets. Together, this new team provides added resources, services and expertise that will allow us to grow beyond the 20 sites I'm currently serving," said McBride.

"For years, it seems that we have focused on building uniformity in a club brand, which has often resulted in missed opportunities and the loss of connection with customers in a local market," said Kinney. "Bill's philosophy is to build a



Bill McBride



Jill Kinney

brand consistency but focus primarily on enhancing the customer experience

and profitability through highly localized (See *Active Sports Clubs* Page 27)

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...Active Sports Clubs

continued from page 26

marketing and management. The team has the skills and experience to execute this creative and personalized management approach."

In addition to this unique management approach, the company focuses on adding appropriate, proven partnerships that expand the club's services. "I'm particularly excited about adding Itrim weight loss centers to clubs," said McBride. "This is a concept from Sweden that Jill brought to the United States last year. It's doing remarkably well as a retail concept, and we expect it to be a huge addition to the clubs, adding new members and revenues that we haven't been able to significantly reach before. Itrim is a healthy, active approach to weight loss that offers a quick and lasting solution. It's comprehensive and includes a personal health coach, group support, exercise and meal replacements with a strong focus on lifestyle improvement. The best part is that it's a turnkey business solution that comes with the skilled Itrim staff and their ten years of internationally published science. We've never been successful at weight loss until now."

About Active Sports Clubs: Active Sports Clubs is building a strong reputation as the leading health and fitness provider in the markets we serve. We are committed to continuously improving our services, facilities and programs and are dedicated to innovation, impeccable upkeep, progressive fitness and lifestyle enhancement for a wide range of families and individuals. For more information, go to www.activesportsclubs.com or contact Bill McBride at BillMcBride@BMC3.com.

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Microsoft Corporation's Xbox Fitness Rings The NASDAQ Stock Market Opening Bell

NEW YORK CITY, N.Y. - Microsoft Corporation's [MSFT] Xbox Fitness, a new online fitness service exclusive to Xbox One that takes the world's most popular fitness videos and makes them interactive, will join NASDAQ as part of the 3rd annual NASDAQ "Fit Week," a week of bell ceremonies featuring companies which help Americans lead healthier lifestyles.

In honor of the occasion, **Dave McCarthy**, General Manager of Lifestyle Entertainment for Xbox at Microsoft and celebrity trainer, **Tracy Anderson**, whose content is featured on the service, rang the Opening Bell on January 9, 2014.

Founded in 1975, Microsoft is the worldwide leader in software, services and solutions that help people and businesses realize their full potential. Xbox is Microsoft's premier entertainment brand for the TV, phone, PC and tablet. In living rooms or on the go, Xbox is home to the best and broadest games, as well as one of the world's largest libraries of movies, TV, music and sports. Your favorite games,

TV and entertainment come to life in new ways through the power of Kinect, Xbox SmartGlass and Xbox Live, the world's premier social entertainment network.

Xbox Fitness is an online service that takes the world's best fitness videos and makes them interactive with the power of Xbox One. It features an extensive library of videos from fitness brands, including Jillian Michaels, Tracy Anderson, Beachbody's P90X (Tony Horton) and INSANITY (Shaun T), Anchor Bay (a Starz company) and MOSSA. As you work out, Kinect reads the distribution of your weight and the explosiveness of your movements, provides an analysis of the areas of the body you are working and tracks your pulse, touch free. Xbox Fitness is free with your Xbox Live Gold membership until January 2015, only on Xbox One.

"Xbox Fitness is part of a larger value proposition around our Xbox Live service. It is free to all of our Xbox Gold subscribers through 2014 as an added perk



Dave McCarthy and Tracy Anderson Ring NASDAQ Opening Bell on Behalf of Xbox Fitness

to getting onto our Xbox Live service, and that service is of course a huge part of our business overall at Xbox. We're very thankful for the millions of consumers that

make themselves a part of that community," said Dave McCarthy on CNBC.

Sources: NASDAQ, CNBC



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Stairmaster/Schwinn, Susan K. Bailey and Coastal Social Media Group Join AFS

CHICAGO, IL - The Association of Fitness Studios (AFS) proudly announced special relationships with three major fitness industry organizations, including:

•**Stairmaster/Schwinn** has joined AFS at the Silver Sponsor level that will afford the company a wide variety of exposure and benefits to access AFS members and prospects.

"We like what AFS is doing, the target market is right on for us, and we believe in the people behind it," said Merrill Richmond, VP of Sales and Marketing for Stairmaster/Schwinn. "We look forward to a long and mutually beneficial relationship."

•**Susan K. Bailey Marketing & Design (SKB)**, the well-known marketing and design agency with over two decades of experience in fitness branding and marketing has joined AFS as an associate member, sponsor and marketing consultant. Their how-to advice for studio owners will appear regularly on the AFS website (www.afsfitness.com). See the **Susan K. Bailey Ad** on **Page #27**.

"AFS has identified a fast-growing, yet unserved niche in our

industry," said Deneen Laprade, Marketing Coach at SKB. "Everywhere we go we interact with small studios struggling with various aspects of running and growing their businesses. AFS can definitely help these fitness professionals and we're eager to help AFS accomplish their mission."

•**Coastal Social Media Group (CSMG)**, a growing social media agency, helps companies of all sizes successfully leverage the social network as part of an integrated marketing plan. CSMG has been designated AFS' official social media marketing company.

"We're thrilled AFS selected CSMG to handle their social media activities," said Stephanie Neil, CSMG's managing partner. "We've already developed significant engagement on Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook for AFS with much more to come. It's a very exciting partnership with huge potential."

"We're very pleased that these three very diverse industry leaders have reviewed the AFS mission and elected to join our efforts," said Brad Elson, AFS co-founder and CEO. "We anticipate several additional high-profile companies to be on board soon."

As its tagline suggests (*Helping great fitness professionals become even greater business owners*), AFS is dedicated to building the community of studio owners by providing a wide array of business-specific products, services and

benefits enabling them to more effectively manage and grow their businesses.

For more information, go to www.afsfitness.com, email info@afsfitness.com or call (312) 361 - 1144.

Tilton Fitness Expands Partnership With Meridian Health

LINWOOD, NJ - Tilton Fitness Management (TFM), a nationally-recognized leader in health club operations, has announced an expansion of its partnership with Meridian Health, the leading not-for-profit health care organization in New Jersey. In August 2012, Tilton Fitness Management partnered with Meridian Health to manage and operate Meridian Fitness and Wellness in Hazlet, New Jersey. Beginning in January 2014, two of Tilton Fitness Management's South Jersey locations will likewise operate in partnership with Meridian Health, Tilton Fitness Northfield and Tilton Fitness Galloway.

In addition, there are two brand new facilities under development within the Tilton Fitness/Meridian umbrella. Meridian Fitness and Wellness Jackson, a 32,000 square-foot facility located at the Meridian Health Village in Jackson, New Jersey is scheduled to open in February 2014. Meridian Fitness and

Wellness Brick, located in close proximity to Ocean Medical Center, is anticipated to open in January 2015.

This announcement represents the next steps in a growing affiliation between Meridian Health and Tilton Fitness and is consistent with the rising number of hospital-affiliated fitness centers nationwide. There is a good reason behind that trend, according to Tilton Fitness President and CEO Sam Young.

"At Tilton Fitness, we have long embraced the concept of exercise as medicine," said Young. "In the future, hospital and health system reimbursement will be increasingly tied to the health status of the communities they serve. Exercise will be a prescriptive element in everyone's care plan. Because of this, fitness facilities [...] will be an important component of the continuum of care."

Programming For The “Fun Of It!”

Success Template for Creating Profitable Programs

By: Laurie Cingle, M.Ed.

Turn your ideas into successful, profitable programs by using the following template as a guide to creating new programs or to giving a facelift to existing programs. Most programs should contain these five components:

1. Goal Setting and Assessment

Appointment - Each participant should have a one-on-one Assessment and Goal Setting session pre- and post-program at a minimum. Conduct a periodic review of the goals and reassess progress on a schedule appropriate for the participant. Everyone is different and has different needs.

2. Structured Tool - Provide a tool (something concrete) that participants can take home and use as a resource during and after the program. This is usually nutrition-based, but it will depend on the program:

- Health eating plans can be purchased that contain menus, recipes, grocery shopping lists.

- Popular diet books can provide easy-to-follow details that participants can make fit their lifestyles.

- For sports-oriented programs, provide a log book or a resource describing techniques to improve.

3. Exercise - Regardless of the type of program, a structured exercise component is a must. This may include small group strength training, special group exercise classes for program participants only or one-on-one training.

4. Education - Education should be consistently provided and can be delivered in many ways:

- Live group sessions that are scheduled on a set day/time (weekly, bi-weekly);
- Handouts;
- Websites specific to the program;
- Group conference calls so participants don't need to leave their home or office.

5. Organizational/Informational Meeting

One to two weeks before the program start date, schedule an organizational meeting that provides: (A) a bit of education, (B) explanation of the benefits of the program outcomes, and (C) details regarding the components of the program. People will decide if they will participate based on what they hear and what they see (specifically, program leaders, other participants, the structured tool they will take home, past participants' testimonials, etc.).

At the completion of the presentation:

- Waivers, contracts and health history forms are completed.

- Initial Assessment and Goal Setting appointment is scheduled.

- Payment for services is collected.

To ensure your best chance for program success, consistently use this template when creating programs so participants are



Laurie Cingle

receiving the structure, support and tools necessary to experience change!

(Laurie Cingle, M.Ed. is a fitness business success coach, club consultant and a member of the Leadership Team at Akron General LifeStyles. Her specialties include creating successful club program champions through coaching, developing and operating non-dues revenue profit centers, establishing club market differentiation and designing programs that result in profit and retention. Laurie can be reached by email at laurie@lauriecingle.com.)

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Thanks and Appreciation

At CLUB INSIDER, we are excited to be celebrating our 21st Anniversary of this home-based health and fitness club trade newspaper! The thought that this newspaper was *founded to serve an industry I truly love*, and so that *I could become a Mister Mom for my son, Justin*, is still *intriguing and amazing* to us. I wish to extend our most sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to everyone that's made this amazing run possible.

A very sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** go to Rick Caro, Dr. Gerry Faust and the Faust Executive Roundtable #1 for helping me decide in 1993 what my home-based business would be. **Thanks and Appreciation** to my long-time friends, Ron Hudspeth and Cathy Miller of Atlanta's Hudspeth Report for the tremendous assistance they provided us during our first 8 years of publication. **Thanks and Appreciation** to all of the folks at Walton Press in Monroe, Georgia. They've done an absolutely excellent job for us all these years and have printed every one of our monthly editions! **Thanks and Appreciation** to all of our READERS. Sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to our CLUB INSIDER Advertisers, past and present, for their kind and dedicated support of this publication. It's amazing to know that we have several advertisers with over 15 years of continuous advertising with us. Plus, we have one advertiser, National Gym Supply, with over 18 years advertising with us and one, Affiliated Acceptance Corporation, with over 19 years as they have advertised in every single edition of CLUB INSIDER since the first month that we sold advertising in June, 1994! We also want to say sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to all of our CLUB INSIDER Contributing Authors, past and present, who've contributed *hundreds and hundreds* of excellent articles to help our readers with their Best Business Practices. **Thanks and Appreciation** to IHRSA for all it does.

Sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to my son, Justin, who started working part-time for CLUB INSIDER when he was just 8 years old (helping with mailings). This young man, pretty much behind the scenes for 20 years now, has truly been a fantastic partner for his Dad in CLUB INSIDER. Justin does our editing, publication layouts, all of our website design and maintenance, all of our bookkeeping and subscription processing work, as well as archive management and anything else that needs doing, including writing eight cover stories per year.

Last, but surely not least, this writer who refused to fear failure when many told him he didn't have a chance of surviving the publishing business for even a year did survive. He would like to give sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to the power that made that survival happen: **God**.

Very sincerely, with love in my heart for you all,

Norm Cates, Jr.

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