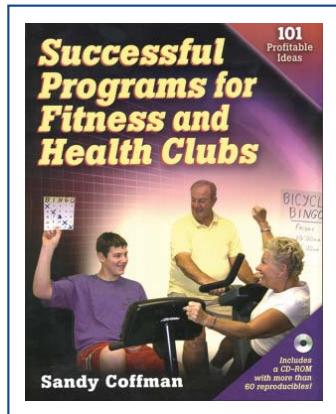


Norm Cates' **CLUB INSIDER**TM

The Pulse of the Health and Fitness Club Industry



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A Special Tribute to Sandy Coffman
The Dean of Club Programming

FEBRUARY 2012

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Norm Cates' CLUB INSIDER™

The Pulse of the Health and Fitness Club Industry

A Special Tribute to Sandy Coffman

The Dean of Club Programming

By: Norm Cates

What do you do for a woman who's 70 years old (hard to believe that!), has been married to her husband Bud for 50 years (as of this July) and has spent 40 years in the health and fitness club industry? That's easy! You do a second cover story about her as a **Special Tribute** to this *amazing lady!* Sandy's first CLUB INSIDER cover story was in our December, 2000 edition, and it carried the beautiful image of Sandy Coffman smiling by a swimming pool. Her story hasn't changed; it's only gotten better and better, but this author has two goals in mind today. They are: (1) To honor Sandy and wish her well as she moves into another phase of

her life without big conference speaking engagements and aggravating airline travel and (2) Through this terrific cover story interview with Sandy Coffman, to sell the idea that programming in health and fitness clubs is an art form that can be hugely beneficial to the bottom line of a health and fitness club. It's an art form that requires a trained professional who understands what a new or existing member should receive as part of his membership and knows how to deliver those things to the member in the club.

Sandy Coffman has assisted some of the best in our industry, and one of those individuals, my friend, Alan Schwartz, the Founder and Chairman of Tennis Corporation of America, had this to say

about Sandy and her career: "When I think of Sandy Coffman, I think of raw energy, gusto and enthusiasm for whatever she is doing and a long string of successes at whatever she undertakes. Sandy Coffman is a credit to our industry."

My friend, Geoff Dyer, Lifestyle Family Fitness Founder, IHRSA's 21st President and long-time industry veteran, said this about Sandy, "Sandy Coffman has always represented what we all love so much about our industry. She is always full of enthusiasm with a beaming smile. She has an infectious personality and greets staff and members with arms wide open, eager to make a friend. I have witnessed Sandy in action on numerous occasions. At

(See *Sandy Coffman* Page 12)



Sandy Coffman Showing Her Book

The “Insider Speaks” *The Spirit of IHRSA*

By: Norm Cates

The *Spirit of IHRSA* is alive and well after 31 years. The *Spirit of IHRSA* is one of *learning through sharing*, and it's important that everyone that is in our industry for the long haul understands how the *Spirit of IHRSA* came about. In short, IHRSA's slogan, "Success Through Association," summarizes the end result that the *Spirit of IHRSA* has achieved.

First, let me briefly review the history of IHRSA for those of you who may not be familiar with it. This brief review will also aid everyone in our industry who

still have not embraced the Association by joining to go ahead and make the decision to *join today*.

IHRSA is the acronym for The International Health, Racquet and Sports-club Association. The original acronym was IRSA, the International Racquet Sports Association.

IRSA was founded in 1981 as the result of a merger of minds and memberships of two existing trade associations, the National Tennis Association (NTA) and the National Court Club Association (NCCA). In 1980, Rick Caro, the President of New York City-based

Management Vision, was serving on the Board of Directors of both the NTA and the NCCA. I was the last President of the NCCA and that year had written a letter to our membership stating that my goal was to double the number of NCCA Member Clubs. Rick Caro, preparing for attendance at an upcoming Board meeting in Chicago realized that both Association Board meeting agendas had virtually the same items. Caro's brilliant mind generated the idea of bringing the two Associations, NTA and NCCA, together to become one... IRSA. I was honored to be one of the seven Founders of IRSA, along with Rick Caro,

Curt Beusman, the late Dale Dibble, Todd Pulis, Jennifer Michele Wayt and Peter Donahue. I was doubly honored when our IRSA Founding Board of Directors elected me to be the 1st President of IRSA, and I served in that capacity in 1981/82.

John McCarthy and Joe Moore... Great IHRSA Leaders for 31 Years!

Importantly, and the best move we ever made for IHRSA, was when we hired John McCarthy to be our first Executive Director. Big John McCarthy did a (See "Insider Speaks" Page 6)

Inside The Insider

- The Fourth Wave of Customer Service - **By:** Will Phillips
- Appreciate Them! - **By:** Misti Burmeister
- Medical Fitness: Is Your Club Part of the “Trend” ? - **By:** Dr. Cary Wing
- Social Media CAN Drive Revenue. But How? Turn Facebook Into an Online Lead Box - **By:** Mario Bravomalo
- A Secret Million Dollar Weapon - **By:** Donna Krech
- Control and Manage Your Money! - **By:** Norm Cates
- Get Your Act Together! - **By:** Sandy Coffman
- Big China Expansion Plans Announced By World Gym Taiwan Operator
- And of Course, *Norm's Notes*

Norm's Notes

•Hello Everybody! This is your CLUB INSIDER Publisher and Tribal Leader Since 1993 checking in! How 'bout those New York GIANTS!

•Is America a great country, or what? Hmm... Hmm... Hmm!

•VERY IMPORTANT: We have new CLUB INSIDER office telephone and fax numbers, so please save them:

Office: (770) 635 - 7578
Fax: (678) 826 - 0933

Please update your records, and from time to time, pick up the phone and give me a call with the news and happenings at your club(s)!

•IHRSA2012 in Los Angeles is right around the corner! Have you made your arrangements to be there yet? **Don't miss the most important four days of the year for the club business!** For more information, go to www.ihsra.org or call (800) 228 - 4772.

•Every year about this time, I write a Note to club owners/operators reminding you that now is the *perfect time* of the year to *make sure* you have adequate club insurance and that your back office operations are up to speed and operating efficiently. For insurance, you can't beat

our CLUB INSIDER Advertiser, **Sports & Fitness Insurance**, and I urge you to check out their Ad on Page #21 and to contact **JENNIFER URMSTROM LOWE** for fresh insurance quotes (She will be at IHRSA Booth #824). For back office operations, check out my article this month entitled, **Managing Your Money**, starting on Page #26 and make note of the four CLUB INSIDER Advertisers that can help you with your back office operations. In alphabetical order, they are: **ABC Financial**, Page #15; **Affiliated Acceptance Corporation**, Page #9; **Fiserv**, Page #5 and **iGo Figure**, Page #24. They are all great folks and will treat you right.

•Long-time friend, **DARON ALLEN**, **Visual Fitness Planner Co-Founder** with **Founder, MARIO BRAVOMALO**, and a 10-year CLUB INSIDER Advertiser, have come up with *something special in the social media world*. I call Daron "ROCKETMAN" in honor of the fast pace I've watched this amazing guy keep while growing VFP for ten years now, to **over 1,000 clubs!** The truth is they have that many clients because they **DELIVER RESULTS for their customer clubs!** Mario's Article on Page #22 and the newest VFP Ad on Page #23 tells about how your club can use **Facebook** to help generate new membership leads. This new VFP development allows clubs to harness the power of brand loyalty through social

media interaction and recommendations from friends and family. They do this by recognizing the two forms of lead generation: (1) Passive and (2) Active. Be sure to visit the **VFP Exhibit #647** at IHRSA Los Angeles!

•**BERNIE CAPLAN** is the fellow in Maryland I mentioned in my December Norm's Notes who had entered into a consent decree related to membership joining fees with the **Maryland Attorney General**. In my opinion, without admitting guilt, Bernie was unfairly forced by the State of Maryland to, and I quote, "Respondents shall cease and desist from charging and collecting from existing members of any club purchased or controlled by Respondents any initiation fee, or any other fee related to commencement or initiation of a health club member."

So, after reviewing literally reams of legal documents Bernie sent me, including the consent decree, I've concluded that Bernie Caplan has had enough harassment from the Maryland Government and doesn't need any more from me. Plus, I'm once again going to apologize to Caplan for using his situation as a lead-in example of what our industry needs to avoid and stating that he's out to earn a bad name for himself. So, Bernie, I again apologize. I do sincerely hope you can proceed with your club business without further incidents. Plus Bernie, if you prove me to be wrong again, and do get involved in future activities that need my attention, please do understand that



Norm Cates

even though I don't enjoy this aspect of my job... *I will be back.*

•**IHRSA's HELEN DURKIN** and her **Public Policy Team** are doing a great job for the **IHRSA Member Clubs** and the **non-IHRSA Member clubs** as well. **IHRSA's State Legislation record for 2011 was 20-2!** Victories in **Arizona, Georgia, Illinois and Rhode Island** saved clubs from an **approximately \$30,000 per club tax on health club dues**; in **Connecticut, Missouri and Virginia** prevented clubs from costly litigation resulting from an **AED mandate** without adequate liability protection; and in **Connecticut, Georgia, Kansas, Missouri, New Jersey and Texas** saved clubs from the **operational and administrative costs imposed by**

(See Norm's Notes Page 7)

About Club Insider

Established in 1993

19 Years and Counting!

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... "Insider Speaks"

continued from page 3

magnificent job over his 25 years of service as the IRSA/IHRSA Executive Director. Moreover, after John retired, IHRSA was extremely lucky that Joe Moore was available to step into John's huge shoes. Joe has now served as IHRSA President and CEO for the past five years and is doing a fine job.

IHRSA Board Members Have Made All the Difference!

From day one, Executive Director, John McCarthy, and then President/CEO, Joe Moore, have had the great benefit of a terrific group of over 250 IRSA/IHRSA members who've served the Association on its Board of Directors. These individuals spent countless hours guiding McCarthy and Moore and their terrific staff members in the direction the Association needed to go. Were it not for those Board members, IRSA/IHRSA would not be the same, nor nearly as great as it is today. Those folks, past and present, who served IHRSA/IHRSA on the Board of Directors, deserve great recognition, sincere appreciation and a multitude of thanks for all of their hard work, shared wisdom and time invested on behalf of the entire industry.

IHRSA Name Change Effort Leads to Much Greater Success

IRSA's name was changed in 1993 when the Board of Directors added the word Health to the name, making the acronym IHRSA. That event came after approximately a year-long disagreement between the IRSA Membership and its sitting Board of Directors about the Board's decision in early 1993 to change the name of IRSA to Exercera, which is Latin for "To Exercise." **CLUB INSIDER** has been credited with helping with the reversal of that decision, but the truth

is all we did was publish the letters and comments of IRSA Members who were in opposition to the name choice. The IRSA Members ruled, and the decision to make the change to Exercera was reversed with a 9-0 Board vote. It has turned out well that Exercera was never adopted as the new name for IHRSA.

IRSA, had been in existence for twelve years when the name change, inserting Health, took place. During the first twelve years, IRSA's membership was largely composed of tennis and racquetball clubs or clubs with a combination of those two racquet sports, as well as those with a fitness component. The truth is, compared to these days, IRSA Membership growth was somewhat stagnant and not really growing the way we had hoped during that era. We believed that we needed to reach and attract the health club industry. So, the 1993 installation of the word Health and the "H" in the acronym changed all of that. Today, IHRSA boasts over 10,000 Member Clubs in 70+ countries, and IHRSA is now the world's largest, most influential and most powerful trade Association for health, racquet and sports clubs. It has changed the world of health and fitness clubs by providing education, new ideas and club support of all kinds.

Why IHRSA Exists

It's important for everyone to know that IHRSA exists to serve its member clubs as those member clubs support the Association with their membership dues and their participation and support of the IHRSA Convention and Trade Show and other initiatives. Importantly, the Associate Members are vitally important because they also pay membership dues along with their convention space rental investments. Very importantly, the manufacturers and vendor companies that support IHRSA with their Associate Membership dues and their investment in trade show space rental and sponsorships provide the worldwide



Success By Association

industry with the most extensive and best trade show in the industry. The IHRSA Trade Show is the best because the dues paying IHRSA Member Clubs support the educational conference with great numbers every year, and those attendees make the Trade Show the business success that it is every year by being there and shopping and buying at the show. Importantly, The Spirit of IHRSA is alive and well and goes on display for everyone to see each year in March with the Annual Convention and Trade Show.

Pirates Going the Cheap Route!

However, not all is perfect at IHRSA. This year, there's a special challenge coming during the Trade Show in March. I'll call this the "2012 Pirate Challenge," and the following describes what's going to happen. There are some who do not support the IHRSA Associate (vendor) Membership and Trade Show, and their absence is usually not noticed. However, there is one group in the process of attempting to wrongfully profit off of the upcoming 2012 IHRSA Convention and Trade Show in Los Angeles without being IHRSA Associate Members or registered, paying exhibitors at the Trade Show. This author wishes to discourage such behavior because it's a wholly inappropriate way to do business for any company, much less a new company that's trying to introduce itself and its new fitness equipment to our industry. So, if you're attending the IHRSA Convention and Trade Show this year and you're handed a flyer or invitation to go to this Pirate Company's exhibit in a local hotel, I urge you to give the flyer or invitation right back and say to them, "No thanks, Pirate." This will be our signal to these Pirates that what they're doing is wrong and will not be accepted, nor supported.

IHRSA Convention Educational Lineup

The IHRSA Convention's educational lineup is the world's best and most comprehensive. During these four days, from March 14th to 17th, you and your staff members will be presented with the opportunity to learn more than you can imagine through the Keynote Speakers and Seminar Speakers, not to

mention the Networking Opportunities you will experience. Heck, the Networking Opportunities alone are worth your entire convention investment of conference fees, airfare, hotel and travel expenses. I say that because you will learn more from connections than anywhere else and meet lifelong friends through the IHRSA Convention and Trade Show. These very valuable friendships, over time, will serve as a great asset for you and your club because, any time you have a real problem, great idea or an important issue with your club, you can just pick up the phone or hit the keyboard and speak with or write to your industry friends that you've acquired through the IHRSA Networking Opportunities.

The *Spirit of IHRSA* is always present in our industry 365 days a year. But, the four days the IHRSA Convention and Trade Show (March 14 - 17th) are the greatest learning and networking days of the year, bar none, and you really should not miss them. The *Spirit of IHRSA* at IHRSA 2012 in Los Angeles will change your life in this business, if it has not already been changed from previous attendance. So, I urge you to be there to share and participate in this great Association so that you and your club may experience the *Success Through Association* that IHRSA offers.

In closing, let me urge you to become part of IHRSA, through membership, if you are not already. I urge you to pick up the phone right now and book your conference attendance with IHRSA at **(800) 228 - 4772**.

Like I said at the beginning of this article, "The Spirit of IHRSA is alive and well after 31 years," and it needs you in order to be the best it can be.

*(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 38-year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. Cates is the Founder and Publisher of **CLUB INSIDER**, now in its 19th year of publication. Cates was IHRSA's 1st President, and a Co-founder of the Association 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)*

IHRSA31 Exhibiting Advertiser Directory

ABC Financial - #1037

Affiliated Acceptance Corporation - #2317

Apex Fitness - #610

Club Insider - #826

CSI Software - #1047

Fiserv - #1225

fitRewards! - #607

Gym Wipes - #641

iGo Figure - #533

Iron Grip Barbell Company - #1762

Sports & Fitness Insurance - #824

Visual Fitness Planner - #647

...Norm's Notes

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burdensome government regulation of health club contracts and personnel.

IHRSA's first losses in over two years were privacy bills in **Nevada** and **Connecticut**, where IHRSA worked to offer an amendment exempting health club bathrooms and locker rooms from a gender identity discrimination bill. Ultimately, the bill passed but the amendment failed. In **Massachusetts**, IHRSA was successful in removing public accommodations, including health club locker rooms, from a bill passed extending discrimination

protections to transgender residents.

IHRSA also dedicated time during 2011 to health promotion opportunities that, in promoting healthy lifestyles, would drive traffic to the health club industry. Such bills include tax credits for healthy lifestyles and wellness, offering clubs tax credits for maintaining an AED and repealing state sales tax. IHRSA sought passage of 51 bills. Other IHRSA Public Policy Highlights include:

- 100 legislative email alerts sent to members in 2011;
- Launched 5 grassroots advocacy campaigns;
- Testified at 7 committee hearings;

• Met with 5 lawmakers (in addition to daily lawmaker meetings conducted by IHRSA lobbyists);

• Provided legal and legislative counsel to 78 member clubs on a wide variety of issues, including AEDs, automatic renewal, bonding, childcare, contract restrictions, personal trainer regulation, privacy, sales tax, single gender clubs, tax credits, tax exempt competition and waivers.

All of this work in government does not come for free and is paid for by **IHRSA Member Club owner donations**.

We urge all of you, IHRSA Member Clubs or not, to chip in for this cause. Someday, you could wake up needing legislative help for your club(s) in a real hurry, and IHRSA will be the **ONLY PLACE** to turn. So folks, go ahead and do the right thing, contact **IHRSA's MEREDITH POPPLER** and make a donation to the Public Policy cause for our U.S. health and fitness club industry! Call (800) 228-4772, Ext. 129 to reach Meredith. Thanks to Helen and **AMY BANTHAM**, Deputy Vice President of IHRSA Government Relations and Health Promotion, for providing **CLUB INSIDER** with this Public Policy update. Also, mark your calendar for **IHRSA Los Angeles, Thursday, March 14th** from 2 to 3:30PM to attend the **IHRSA Public Policy Meeting**.

• **JON RYDBERG** was named the Professional Tennis Registry's (PTR) Wheelchair Professional of the Year and will receive the award during the 2012 PTR International Tennis Symposium, to be held February 24 - 28th at the Hyatt Regency Grand Cypress, Orlando, Florida. Rydberg, of Oakdale, Minnesota, has earned quite a few gold and silver medals, including **Doubles Gold** at the 2011 ParaPan American Games in Mexico. The 2-time Paralympian has been a member of the **U.S. World Cup Team ten times**. Rydberg has captured multiple **Singles** and **Doubles titles** on the **ITF NEC Wheelchair Tennis Tour**. He has been ranked as high as **#1 in the USA** and **#11 in the world**. In 2001, Rydberg was named **Player of the Year by the USTA**. Rydberg, who has been a PTR member since 2008, also coaches tennis. In addition to conducting clinics at the **University of Minnesota's Baseline Tennis Center**, Jon is the **Head Coach** for the **Girls Tennis Team at East Ridge High School in Woodbury, Minnesota**. Rydberg also excelled in basketball. In 2006, he was a **National Wheelchair Basketball Association All-Star**, representing the **Minnesota Timberwolves**, and in 1997, he was a member of the **Intercollegiate Wheelchair Basketball National Championship Team** at the **University of Texas**. Congratulations, Jon!

• **IHRSA 2012** in Los Angeles will feature its **3rd Annual Women's Leadership Summit** on **Wednesday, March 14, 2012** from **2:00PM - 5:00PM**. The Summit theme is **Success Through Vision, Value & Verve!** and will feature a panel discussion moderated by **DEBRA SIENA, President, Proactive Parkers, A Division of TCA Holdings, LLC; JANET FRENKEL, Chief Operating Officer, American Council On Exercise (ACE); JILL STEVENS KINNEY, Managing Director, Clubsource; and PATRICIA LAUS, Chief Executive Officer, The Atlantic Club, Inc.** This will be a lively panel discussion by some of the most distinguished women in the industry, followed by panelist-led roundtable discussions aimed at fostering camaraderie and professional growth for women.

Panel moderator, Debra Siena, commented on the event, "I am very excited about this year's Women's Leadership Summit. We have changed the format so that the panel presentation and roundtable discussions will be interspersed throughout the 3-hour workshop. Participants will have the opportunity to hear from the industry's best on how to create a vision and strategic plan, what values and standard are mission critical for a leader and how to take calculated risks and manage change for the business' success. The new format will allow participants to take these learning's, discuss them with their peers in the industry and apply them to their own careers."

• I received two very nice emails during our February deadline, and I want to share them with you. The first is from **MIKE GENNUSA, Owner of Anytime Fitness in Somers, New York**. Mike wrote:

I just have to say I find your magazine to be the most insightful, well written, content rich and important business publication I read each month, and that's coming from a guy who is a CPA by trade. I look forward to its arrival and read it cover to cover. Now that I have subscribed online, it will be easier for me to use it to motivate staff, revisit future planning and to stay abreast of trends. Well done!

Thank you very much, Mike.

The second email was from my long-time friend, **BOB McLENNAN**, now a **Planet Fitness Center** owner in the **San Francisco Bay Area**. Bob wrote:

Norm, I received my paper today, and I have to say that it puts a smile on my face each time I receive it. You represent such a great part of our past, and I so enjoy reading the Insider scoop. Anyhow, I just wanted to say hi and tell you that I think about you often because I know the passion you have, and I admire it, let alone the Irish whiskey we have put to our lips. Good Job Norm, love ya!

Hey Bob! Thanks dude! Hard to believe how fast 35 years can fly by, isn't it! Love 'ya, too, Bob!

(See Norm's Notes Page 8)

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...Norm's Notes

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•**IHRSA 2012** Los Angeles' events will be capped off on Friday night, **March 16th** with the **7th Annual Augie's Quest Bash**. Help AUGIE and LYNNE NIETO find the cure for ALS! For information, go to www.augiesquest.org/bash.

•**CLUB INSIDER** Advertiser, **Affiliated Acceptance Corporation**, has named **BRUCE KENNEDY** as their new **Director of Sales**. Best of luck, Bruce!

•**Long-time friend**, and former **CLUB**

INSIDER Advertiser, **GAIL deLEEDDE**, owner of **Active XL Promotions**, has placed an ad in this edition announcing her alliance with **TED "BUMP" DAVIES**, a promotional marketing "guru" with over 31 years of experience and accounts such as **Kawasaki, McDonalds, Wells Fargo, Ray-Ban, Disney, Chevron** and more. Davies' agency will be providing innovative resources and creative campaign development to Active XL's customer base. This Alliance provides ActiveXL with a strategic growth initiative that will include a team consisting of creative director, copywriter, graphic artist, print buyers, project manager, program

administration and fulfillment services. The Mission is to take proven successful promotional campaigns and tweak them to fit the needs of fitness club owners and managers. The result will be to provide a "mix" of resources, ideas and solutions to design and execute successful marketing and promotional programs that drive prospective members to their facility, retain existing members and establish stronger brand awareness. Check out Gail's New Ad on Page #26.

•**Speaking of people** with the last name **deLEEDDE, TONY deLEEDDE**, Gail's former husband, has invited his son **EVAN**, a recent **University of Alabama** graduate, to move to **Australia** to assist Tony with the growth of his new chain by serving as a "working partner" in Tony's new club chain, **Fit 'N Fast**." So glad to see my mate from Down Under reuniting with his son, Evan, who used to park his car in my driveway while attending **Walton High School**. Good luck to **EVAN** and **TONY** down under!

•**Cybex CEO, JOHN AGLIALORO's Christmas card** to me had a hand written note on it that said, "**Don't count Cybex out!**" and John meant it. Breaking news this week, first reported by **Editor PAMELA KUFAHL** in **Club Industry's Newbeat** email blast, announced that Cybex had settled a product liability lawsuit with **NATALIE BARNHARD** for **\$19.5 million**. Kufahl reported that Mr. Aglialoro commented in a memo to shareholders and supporters, "Though we remain convinced that Cybex was in no way responsible for this tragic accident, we believe it is in the company's best interest to resolve the lawsuit at this time." **Congratulations** to Mr. Aglialoro and the **Cybex Team** on getting this behind you!

•**Fit Brands**, a new company composed of seasoned veterans, **JOEL TALLMAN, CHARLEY LINDSEY** and **TIM GODWIN**, has a new 20,000 square-foot club to be called **Max Fitness** under construction in **Fort Wayne, Indiana**. Additionally, in the same market, the group is converting two closed **Cardinal Fitness Centers** to Max Fitness operations. Membership rates for the clubs begin at \$9.95 per month, with month-to-month terms and no long-term commitment. For \$19.95 per month, premium members can gain access to all of the Fort Wayne clubs 24 hours a day, seven days a week, as well as use of a variety of club amenities that vary by location. **Good luck guys!**

•**Club Industry Magazine** is moving along with their plans to relocate the long-running **Club Industry Show from Chicago to Las Vegas**, and I hope you'll make plans to be there **October 12 - 14, 2012**! The **Trade Show** will be at the **Los Angeles Convention Center**, and the base-hotel will be the **Las Vegas Hotel** and

Casino. Check out www.clubindustry.com for information and **Stay Tuned!**

•The **American Council on Exercise (ACE)** has announced the addition of **ANTHONY J. WALL** as **Director of Professional Education** and **DR. ADAM BORDES** as **Senior Health Strategist** to their Team. For more information on ACE, or to learn about the **ACE Integrated Fitness Training Model**, please visit www.acefitness.org.

•**COLIN MILNER's ICAA** (International Council on Active Aging) has sent out a call for educational presentations for the upcoming **ICAA Conference 2012**, to be held **November 29 - December 1, 2012** at the **ERNEST N. MORIAL Convention Center** in **New Orleans**. The deadline is **February 26, 2012**. Contact Colin at **(866) 335 - 9777, (604) 763 - 4595** (cell) or colinmilner@icaa.cc.

•**Johnson Health Tech, Inc. (JHT)**, manufacturer of **Matrix Fitness, Vision Fitness, AFG, Horizon Fitness** and **LIVESTRONG** Fitness equipment, announced its year-end sales results, ending December 31, 2011, showing a gain of 26% over 2010 worldwide. Global commercial sales, led by the **Matrix Fitness** brand, increased by 37% in 2011 over 2010. International commercial sales reported a 47% increase over the prior year. In North America, total 2011 sales improved by 23%, with the retail segment experiencing a 38% growth in Q4 sales over the prior year. "We're pleased with the outstanding growth JHT experienced globally and domestically in 2011," said Nathan Pyles, President of Johnson Health Tech North America (JHTNA), a subsidiary of JHT. "Each quarter yielded increased sales across all channels, including commercial, specialty and sporting goods markets. Our ongoing investment in quality product offerings, world class customer service and creating a best-in-class workplace has afforded us extraordinary gains in market leadership."

•This month, in my **Page #3 Insider Speaks Article**, entitled **The Spirit of IHRSA**, I refer to a "Pirate" situation coming up at **IHRSA Los Angeles** where an upstart equipment company headed by a former tennis player will be renting a room in a near-by hotel to show their equipment. This is not in the "Spirit of IHRSA" that has given longevity to the 31-year old Association, and for them to be walking the trade show giving out flyers inviting the conference and trade show attendees to come to their hotel exhibit just isn't right. To pirate business generated by IHRSA's Member paid dues and convention fees, is an awful way to try to launch an equipment company. So, as I mentioned in my article, if someone approaches you with such a flyer, just give it back and say, "**No thanks, Pirate!**"

(See Norm's Notes Page 10)

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...Norm's Notes

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• To close out this month's Norm's Notes, I want to go back to IHRSA's Public Policy efforts and give you just the headlines of some of the upcoming challenges facing club owners in States across the country. These headlines should give you every reason to support IHRSA's Public Policy effort with a contribution of at least \$100. Someday, you could be very GLAD you DID! Upcoming challenge headlines include: IHRSA Opposes Harmful South Carolina Bonding Proposal; Florida Legislature Proposes Personal

Trainer Licensure; Georgia Lawmakers Consider Mandating Defibrillators in Health Clubs and Legislation Introduced to Reward Iowa's Healthy Small Businesses. Contact Meredith Poppler at IHRSA, (800) 228 - 4772, Ext. 129 today.

• The cyber world has made it possible for everyone of you to become a CLUB INSIDER Reporter, and that's what I want to do. Check out the little ad on Page #30 that invites you to send your business news and photos to us for coverage. If it has to do with the health, racquet and sportsclub industry, we want to hear about it! Just

remember to cover the "Who, What, When, Where, Why and How" of your story very briefly for starters, 250 words max. And, be sure to include your name and contact phone number so we can reach you if we need to. Thanks!

• Some may not know that CLUB INSIDER is a Paid Subscription-based Publication. Are you a Paid 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 are not enjoying the full benefits of a Paid Subscription to CLUB INSIDER. Don't delay, subscribe today by going to www.clubinsideronline.com/subscribe.

• God bless all of our troops, airmen

and sailors and keep them safe. Congratulations and Welcome Home to all of our troops who served in Iraq and have now come home! God bless you and your family, your staff, your members and your club(s). God bless America!

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 38-year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. Cates is the Founder and Publisher of CLUB INSIDER, now in its 19th year of publication. Cates was IHRSA's 1st President, and a Co-founder of the Association 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)

Big China Expansion Plans Announced By World Gym Taiwan Operator

World Fitness Asia (Hong Kong) Limited (WFAL), the largest fitness operator in Taiwan and largest Franchisee in the World Gym system, is launching its first mainland China clubs this year with plans to open 100 stores within five years. "We have obtained a dominant position in our market, making it relatively easy to expand rapidly in greater China," said John Caraccio, WFAL founder and President. "At the same time, China's primary cities are ready for fitness, yet no operator has established a leading position. We intend to fill that position."

Michael Sanciprian, CEO and partner of the company that owns and operates 24 fitness clubs across Taiwan says, "We intend to double the size of our Taiwan operations within two years, growing to 47 locations and to over \$97 million (U.S.) in revenue.

The mainland China plan targets 16 cities with per capita middle class income of over \$16,425 (U.S.) per year, including first tier megacities such as Shanghai, Beijing and Shenzhen. "After several trips and vetting, we have determined which cities to enter and which cities we would not target anytime soon. The most attractive markets are without a doubt the first tier cities," said Sanciprian.

World Gym Taiwan added a total of nine fitness centers in 2011, bringing total stores in Taiwan to 24. The company believes high consumer growth rates are propelling demand for fitness in greater China, lifting same store sales and driving expansion. "Greater China --Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore and China-- made a V-shape recovery after the global recession and that recovery is being carried forward by the consumer," said Sanciprian. "The only impediment to growth is finding suitable real estate. Basically everything we've opened in the past 18 months has been a home run from the day it opened!"

This month, the company opened its second "World Gym Elite" club in Taipei, following the success of the first one at the world's second tallest building, the Taipei 101 Building. The Elite clubs boast a modern, sleek feel, executive lounge, swimming pool and spa amenities and charge 30% higher than a regular World Gym membership in Taipei.

"The Taipei 101 club put us on the map in Asia, since so many Asian tourists pass through there every day, especially from mainland China," said Sanciprian. "It's become a natural extension that we go into China, given the language and cultural similarities with Taiwan."

Sanciprian, who has led the company's operations for five years based out of Taichung, Taiwan, also sees a big shift towards consumption. "Today's Asian consumer spends just as much on monthly dues, personal training and retail items as their counterparts in the United States," said Sanciprian. "People have huge savings out here, even middle class folks, and they are slowly becoming American-style consumers, which is good for us."

World Gym Taiwan charges between \$45 (U.S.) and \$65 (U.S.) per month for a membership, depending on the city, with clubs averaging \$97,000 (U.S.) in personal training revenue per club per month, up from just over \$74,000 U.S. per club in 2010.

The company also credits its implementation of new training programs, such as TRX and Purnotion, to getting people excited about fitness and spending more on personal training. "We try to get the newest, greatest programs up and running out here, as soon as they're introduced in the United States, to stay on the cutting edge. The world is a smaller and smaller place and people, especially our staff, know what's cool and the response has been great," says Sanciprian.

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...Sandy Coffman

continued from page 3

our trade shows and conferences, she will fill the room sharing her wisdom as to how to answer the phone, how to greet a member when he enters our doors and how to make fitness fun. She is a master of the fundamentals of our industry, the blocking and tackling so to speak. If we all did what Sandy tells us to do, we would all perform at a much higher level. Sandy, you will be missed at our trade shows, but you are not leaving our industry. So stay connected and share your wisdom with all of us, so we can provide the best experience for our members and coworkers."

Geoff also made the following suggestion, "Norm, we should reach out to IHRSA and suggest they create the **Sandy Coffman Customer Service Award**. Sandy deserves this recognition, and we should identify the true ambassadors of our industry."

I want to reply to Geoff, and say to IHRSA, that I think that's a great idea! I hope the IHRSA Board of Directors will consider establishing such an honor for great customer service.

During my 33-year friendship with Sandy Coffman, she's consulted with hundreds, if not thousands, of club owners and operators all across America to help them advance and improve their clubs. For example, way across this great country in Salem, Oregon is John Miller, President of the Courthouse Athletic Clubs. John weighed in about Sandy with these comments:

"Sandy is the only consultant the Courthouse has ever hired. She visited our clubs several times over the course of many years. I remember her first visit in the early '90s. Sandy first spent a couple of days just hanging out, observing our management team in action. At the conclusion of that first visit, she shared her assessment of our team. I remember being startled by how revealing and how 'dead on' her assessment

was. I was amazed that she could make so many accurate conclusions in such a short amount of time. You figured out pretty quickly that you might as well just be yourself with Sandy. She was going to see right through any airs one might put on in an instant and would see the real you anyway.

I think we shared a common vision with Sandy for what a club could be, for the role a club could play in a person's life. Prior to every visit, I remember feeling eager to show Sandy all we had done since her last visit and thinking how impressed she would be. I came to learn that no matter how hard we worked, though progress had been made, a visit from Sandy was going to leave me feeling like we still had a lot of work to do. The work she left us with never felt like a burden, though. Instead, I was always energized by it.

Michael Jordan talks about having never played the perfect game. I don't think we'll ever run the perfect club, but the idea of what a perfect club is, what we're striving for still, I first heard from Sandy. Sandy believes and teaches that every member must be engaged by his experience in our club and that every member should be connected to a staff person and other members through programs. She believes that members should constantly receive an invitation to start again and to make a new commitment to the kind of life they want to live."

This **CLUB INSIDER** author first laid eyes on the walking, talking bundle of energy known as Sandy Coffman in 1979 at a 2-day racquetball club programming seminar I attended and she conducted at the West Allis Racquetball Club in West Allis, Wisconsin, a suburb of Milwaukee. At the time, I was a partner in a chain of racquetball clubs called Courtsouth based in Marietta, Georgia, a suburb of Atlanta. The Racquetball Club of West Allis, where the seminar was held, is now known as one of the six Wisconsin Athletic Clubs that are owned by Keith Nygren and Ray O'Connor. Ted retired from day-to-day

operations a few years ago, and Keith and Ray now lead the company.

My mission was to learn as much as I could about programming for racquetball clubs. Suffice it to say, after two days with Sandy speaking on the subject, I departed full of new ideas and excitement for the future. Sandy and I have been friends ever since. It's with this special **CLUB INSIDER** Tribute to Sandy Coffman that I bid farewell to Sandy, as she plans to enter into what she calls her "first phase" of retirement after the IHRSA Convention in March. But, Sandy was quick to point out that Phase 1 of her retirement only involves her stopping the ever so frequent travel to the six big conferences each year, such as IHRSA or Club Industry. She still wants to be viewed as a *resource* for people in our industry.

I had the pleasure of interviewing Sandy Coffman again by telephone. What follows is that interview along with some comments from a few of Sandy's many longtime friends and clients (With Sandy,

they're always both!).

An Interview With Sandy Coffman

CLUB INSIDER (C.I.) - Sandy, you're preparing to move into another phase of your life called "retirement." Tell us what you and your husband, Bud, have planned for this phase? I think it's fair to point out to our readers now that you've recently turned 70 (hard to believe, Sandy), you've been married to your wonderful husband Bud for 50 years and you've been involved in the club industry for 40 years. So, for you to be stepping aside from the rigors of all that grueling airline travel and attending and speaking at all those conferences, is a phase of your life you've totally earned! Congratulations, Sandy and good on 'ya!

Sandy Coffman (SC) - Norm, let me start out by saying I definitely am going to be retiring from all of the major conferences, but I want to remain a *resource for the industry*. I really don't call the next phase

(See *Sandy Coffman* Page 14)

Comments From Keith Nygren

Keith Nygren, co-owner of the six Wisconsin Athletic Clubs in the Milwaukee, Wisconsin area, recalled a few of his experiences with Sandy:

Sandy Coffman was definitely responsible for creating the situation where we were awarded the outstanding racquetball program in the country 20 years after she started here. When we started the Wisconsin Athletic Club in 1976, Sandy was one of our four original employees. She worked the front desk. I always remember her coming up with the audacious idea of her getting off the front desk and doing nothing but organize leagues and bring in women for our racquetball program. At the time, racquetball was all we had. The idea of somebody who did nothing but try to program people to play racquetball was scary because we didn't have a whole lot of money to deal with. She prevailed! She created what to my knowledge was the country's, if not the world's, greatest racquetball program specifically for women. In those days, we would have all kinds of different events with the big one being the sponsored league banquet, and we would get 300 people to attend, clearly in response to her. It was so cool because here was a chance for these women to get all dressed up and their spouses were in the background. Sandy ran those events, got the sponsors, gave out trophies, etc. She *made it happen*.

She would run events, and I remember one in particular. One night, I was walking past her, she was on the phone and I said, 'Come on let's go.' She said, 'I can't, I've got to finish these phone calls.' I said, 'What's it for?' She said, 'Well, I'm running this event called Pin the Tail On the Donkey, and it's based on how you hit certain shots.' She had three names written down so far. I said, 'How many people are you going to get for this?' She said, 'twenty'. I asked, 'How do you know that?' She answered, 'I'm not leaving here until I get twenty people!' And, she did! She would tell people what she had to tell them to get them there. The one thing she absolutely guaranteed, and I know this is one of your mantras, and she would "Make it FUN!"

Watching her teach racquetball, I have never in my life seen anybody with the patience she had. Some of them were not gifted athletes. She was actually an extremely good coach and racquetball teacher in addition to her organizational skills in terms of bringing the people in for the leagues and all of the different events that she had. As I said, she demanded that they have fun, and they did! They kept coming back. We still reap the awards from that today. Much of it has to do with management manuals that she had plenty of input in way back in the 1970s. Sandy also has some catch phrases that I still use and feel would be appropriate to mention here. For example, 'The condition of your face is not optional. If you can't do that, then you can't work here.' Another term is 'Aggressive hospitality' and another is 'Treat everybody the same by treating everybody different.' This meant to try to give people something that's significant to them, rather than something that is commoditized like many clubs are today. Sandy is as positive of a person as you would ever meet.



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...Sandy Coffman

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'retirement' at all Norm, because my career has been such a big part of our everyday life, not only to me, but my whole family. We moved to Florida. We live in a golf community. I play tennis twice a week. I play golf twice a week. I swim, ride my bike and attend Zumba and Yoga classes. We've got old friends, new friends, two kids and three grand kids who visit. The fitness industry has been part of my daily life, so I don't mind taking phone calls, emails or questions. I'm very appreciative of those who have attended my seminars, but I'm ready to put those presentations in retirement.

C.I. - You have an amazing list of clients from your career. What would you like to say to them as a group?

SC - Norm, when I looked at that list, I thought 'Wow! These are wonderful people in the industry!' I'm proud to say that my clients hired me over and over through the years. The names I provided are still running great clubs now, more clubs than they had to begin with or they sold their clubs for a profit. I'm very proud to have worked with these people, but I will tell everyone in this industry that you can never get too comfortable! We're confident that we know everything about fitness and we've got the best equipment available in the market. If there's anything in this industry that I don't believe in, it's the 'build it and they will come' mentality. We've got to invite people into our clubs and give them a sense of belonging. We've got to constantly be selling what we do and prove to them that we are the leaders they can count on. Never rest on your laurels.

I would add, 'Always re-examine

the programs that are successful in your clubs. The most valuable members are your new members, the inexperienced members and the members you don't know. Always be aware of how they perceive your programs. They are the majority and will leave if they think you don't understand or care about their needs.'

C.I. - How, when and where did you first become involved in the health club industry?

SC - I became involved in the industry in 1972 when I was teaching racquetball at a YMCA, and I met a man named Harry Jordan who played racquetball with me. He was a chiropractor, an entrepreneur and an investor. He decided to get some investors together to build the first 'for-profit' club. He asked Bud and me to be investors, and he asked me to be one of his full-time employees. That's how I got started 40 years ago, and it's been a beautiful journey ever since. Harry is 90 years old now and lives in Arizona. He was the founder of the Racquetball Club, which is now one of the six Wisconsin Athletic Clubs.

C.I. - Looking back on your consulting with all your clients, what single item of advice do you think you might have repeated to your clients most frequently?

SC - They heard it over and over... Who do you hire and how do you train? I tell them to hire people *on teeth and eyes!* It's been my mantra. Personality is at least as important as your knowledge. In the end, people care about what you do and who you are, not about what you know. Teeth and eyes begin with a genuine smile and friendly eye contact which results in trusting relationships. Keep your culture alive with a constant and consistent customer service training program. Your

leaders have to perform every single day and must be held accountable for that.

C.I. - When you started *Programming For Profit*, did you have any idea your career would last for over 40 years?

SC - I honestly never thought about it that way because it became a way of life for me. I knew that it was what I was here to do, and I never even thought about quitting. I still don't think of retirement as quitting. This is what I do.

C.I. - Let's talk about the differences between programming for big, multisport clubs and fitness centers. What similarities do you see? How can the owner of a fitness center without racquet sports create and employ club programming to increase his business and become more attractive to consumers because of its programs, combined with its equipment and fitness services?

SC - This is something about programming

that I've talked about for many, many years and very few clubs have gotten it or done it, and that is, if you look at your fitness centers as a recreational sport, there is very little difference. I always talked about forming fitness leagues. If you can have a running club outdoors, to me, you can have a running club on treadmills! Working out doesn't have to be an individual thing. Group circuit training classes and group workouts on weights all become what I call fitness leagues. So, my whole concept of programming was the concept of *clubs* to begin with, giving everyone a sense of belonging, knowing who they are and caring about them. Whether you have a big club or a small club, a program is putting a group of people together who are enjoying an activity with a leader that's giving them encouragement, motivation, inspiration and education. If you form that, you've got programs which are *clubs within clubs*.

If you have a small club, your
(See Sandy Coffman Page 16)

Comments From Reis Hans

Reis Hans, Owner/Manager of Sioux Empire Fitness in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, commented:

I first hired Sandy in 1982 after she taught a class at the Hilton Hotel in New Orleans. Prior to that, I had spotted her after she taught a class at the Tropicana hotel in Las Vegas in 1981 that I attended during the IRSAs convention. There were 20 of us in the class. The only men with me were Dale Dibble and John McCarthy. The club I was managing only had tennis and Nautilus with a few Lifecycles, but we were interested in starting aerobic classes. She came to do an aerobic kickoff at our club in St. Cloud, MN (Augusta Health and Racquet Club). We promoted it, and she taught an aerobic class of over 200 people on our three tennis courts. She also gave a customer service workshop for our employees. I moved to Sioux Falls, SD in 1984 to take over a bankrupt club, and Sandy was just beginning to leave West Allis Athletic Club. I gave her a 2-year contract to fly to Sioux Falls once per month for 3 days and 2 nights to help guide our club through front desk customer service, racquetball programming, aerobics and fitness, along with retention. She gave me 100% all of the time. She continued with us periodically, and then, we formed a consulting partnership called Retention Works and worked with clubs in Fargo and Grand Forks, ND for about 8-10 years. As I was going through a divorce, we split ways in business, but kept our friendship alive and well, along with her husband, Bud.

I was attracted to Sandy and sought her guidance for four reasons and they were:

1. Her HONESTY about the industry. The four most honest people I have met in the industry since 1978 are: Alan Schwartz, Sandy Coffman, Jerry Noyce and Dale Dibble. Each one was very valuable for me staying in business for 34 years.

2. Her PASSION for the industry. The energy Sandy has for people and the club industry is genuine and second to none. Our high energy and passion brings much joy along with many laughs and also many tears. People who can laugh and cry are very unique, which makes her special.

3. Her SIMPLICITY for the business and industry. Our goal has always been to help a member's experience be a positive event, a "home-away-from-home" experience. Some examples of simplicity would be: Know your member's name; say "Hi" to your member; provide a "program" for your member (in other words, tell your member when to come to the club, where to go in the club and what to do at the club); and "Follow-up" with your member.

4. Her PROFESSIONALISM within our industry. Sandy is always consistent. She is always prompt, she is always dressed properly and her attitude is always good (in other words, she is always on stage at the club). She always follows up. She is always courteous and personable.

Comments From Jay Kell

Jay Kell, former partner in Sports Clubs of Canada and Wellbridge and club business consultant, commented:

I hired Sandy to work with us at The Sports Clubs of Canada and also at Wellbridge. Sandy's energy and passion for group member programming and service is off the charts. The lessons that she learned about group programming from her racquetball days are as pertinent today as they were 30 years ago. Sandy cares passionately about member service, retention, and most of all, group member programming.

Sandy teaches that members may leave a club if they don't know anyone and have not made any new friends; however, they won't leave a club if they are involved in progressive group programs that have a beginning and an end with likeminded members who become their new friends. Not only do Sandy's programs increase member retention and referrals, but they also become a great profit center.

Sandy's content is only beat by her amazing delivery. She is one of the best public speakers I have ever heard. Our staff would be bouncing off the walls after hearing her speak. Sandy also has great follow up to ensure that her ideas are implemented at the clubs to improve member programming and service which improves retention and creates a strong profit center. It can't get any better than that!

I feel fortunate to have worked with Sandy several times during her illustrious career and am truly sorry that she is retiring. All the best, Sandy!

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...Sandy Coffman

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programs become more intimate. The people are participating in just a few different programs or activities. If you have a multipurpose facility, all you do is form clubs within the club depending on the department that you're programming. Whether it's ages, personalities, schedules or genders, putting people into niches and forming groups and friendships will keep your members coming back.

C.I. - Let's discuss the "Profile" of a great Club Program Director. What personality traits and other attributes do you advise club owners to look for?

SC - It starts with *high energy* and *enthusiasm*. I'll give you a list of *ten things* to look for: *High energy, enthusiasm, just being a happy person, leadership, organizational skills, telephone skills, teaching skills, selling skills, communication skills* and they have to be *success-oriented*. Even in a large, multipurpose facility, one person as a Program Director can make sure that the programs of every department are successful. *The Program Director keeps the personality of the entire club in the forefront of the eyes of the member.*

C.I. - More on Program Directors, what advice can you give someone who has the traits and attributes you describe above so they can be successful in their effort to *program for profit*?

SC - Some club owners think that everyone is a Program Director! *Everyone can't be a Program Director*. You need one high energy, enthusiastic personality that becomes the *icon* of your club... *absolutely the leader with a personality that provides a fun enjoyable atmosphere every day*. *FUN* is the bottom line of our entire industry, and without it, there is not a club that's going to be as good as it could be.

C.I. - Sandy, let's talk about your speaking career. How many presentations would you guess you've made to members of our industry worldwide during your career? How many countries have you spoken and worked in? What do you see in common between these different cultures?

SC - I have no idea how many presentations I've made. There are six major conferences that I've always presented at: IHRSA, Club Industry, Athletic Business, ICAA, USTA and Can-Fit Pro. Several of those have more than one conference a year, plus many of them are associated with Regional Meetings at which I've spoken. For many years, it was weekly airline travel with presentations worldwide. I really loved *every minute of it!*

I've spoken in twelve countries and am incredibly appreciative of those years. It was wonderful being part of the international development of the fitness clubs, and I learned that there are more similarities than differences when it comes to our industry.

C.I. - Your book is dedicated to Bud, your loving husband of 50 years, and that Dedication says, *"I dedicate this book to my husband, Bud, who has encouraged me to teach others what I love and do best. He has been my biggest fan and best critic, and his guidance and support are never ending. I am so very thankful and appreciative of him and my career. It's been a wonderful journey."*

Sandy, let's talk about your book, **Successful Programs for Fitness and Health Clubs: 101 Profitable Ideas**, a powerful work in which you compiled your 40 years of club programming experience into one easy-to-read guide for Program Directors. Please provide a quick overview of your book. May our readers still obtain it by going to www.human kinetics.com?

SC - I am *incredibly proud* of my book! When you ask, 'How long did it take you to research it?' Let me point out that this

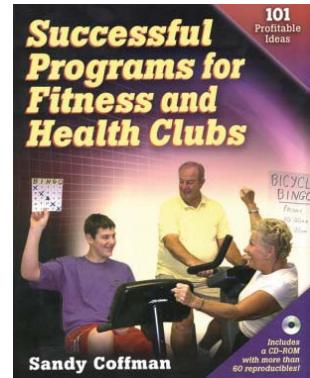
(See Sandy Coffman Page 17)

A Book Foreword By John McCarthy

A Foreword by John McCarthy for Sandy Coffman's Book
Successful Programs For Fitness And Health Clubs: 101 Profitable Ideas

This is a book about programming for health and athletic clubs. It is written by a person whom every veteran in the health and athletic club industry acknowledges to be the foremost expert on this subject. But, I would go further than that. I would say that no one understands or can articulate the heart and soul (I use those words advisedly) of the health and athletic club industry better than the author of this book.

The reason for this is simple. For Sandy Coffman, successful programming is an art that serves a deeper and more profound function. For her, programming is a tool to turn "outsiders" into "insiders." For her, programming is an expression of hospitality. It is a means, and she would argue that it is the optimal means, of making health club members feel appreciated, recognized, accepted and cared for. Above all, it is a means of bringing enjoyment and camaraderie into the experience of being a health club member.



The great philosopher of running, the late Dr. George Sheehan, said, "No one can continue for long to do anything, no matter how good it is for them, unless it is fun, unless it is enjoyable, unless it is social." This applies to running. It applies to exercise. It applies to membership in any health or athletic club. Unless the experience of being a health club member is fun, enjoyable and social, no one will continue to be a member for long.

For Sandy Coffman, programming is fundamental to membership retention, and every experienced club owner would agree with her. It is fundamental to developing a happy, energized and enthusiastic membership. Without outstanding programming, a so-called health club is merely a storehouse for fitness equipment.

Let me go one step further. Although this book is about programming, it is even more about *programmers*. It is about the men and women who provide the programming. On this subject, Sandy Coffman takes no prisoners. For her, if the people running the programs are not hospitable and welcoming, if they are not upbeat and enthusiastic, if they do not take the time to recognize and show their appreciation to every single person in their classes, then they are simply not fulfilling the function as it was meant to be fulfilled.

Truly great programmers are the pied pipers of their clubs. They breathe life and spirit into all that they do. People leave their classes feeling uplifted, encouraged, motivated and inspired. Their entire message to every person in their programs is not only "you can do it" but also "this is fun."

I have watched Sandy Coffman instruct programmers on how to provide programs for 8-year olds and for 80-year olds. I have never left one of her sessions without feeling more joyful, more energetic and more lighthearted.

Sandy Coffman is, in short, this industry's ultimate ambassador to all who would be fit and to all who would exercise if only it were fun. If Sandy Coffman's message is taken to heart, the health club industry in America would not be approaching 50 million members, it would be approaching 100 million members.

It is my privilege to recommend this book to you without reservation or qualification.

John McCarthy
 Past Executive Director for 25 years of IHRSA

Sandy Coffman's book was Published by Human Kinetics.



Sandy Coffman Making It Fun!

Make It Fun!

...Sandy Coffman

continued from page 16

book was written about everything that worked in my career. Human Kinetics wanted me to write just 101 Programs, but I refused to do it. I said, 'I needed to write about how important leadership is and how programs can create growth and retention. My husband, Bud, lived the life of the book with me and did much of the editing. He says anybody who really wanted to be a Program Director in this industry could read the book from cover to cover, do what it says and they'd be a success. The book is guaranteed to help you avoid the mistakes that people make and focus on what worked. Although the book is for anybody who wants to be a Program Director, it should be read by every club owner and manager so they'll know how to keep their people accountable for retention, programs and customer service. I'm proud to say it was copyrighted in 2007, and it's still selling at every conference. The second part of the book is 101 proven programs. This book isn't theory. It is a book of work. The third section is actually a CD-Rom that gives you evaluations, flyers and logos that can take all the guess work out of setting up and promoting the programs.

Publisher's Note: Sandy Coffman will be speaking twice at IHRSA Los Angeles. Her first presentation is on **Wednesday March**

14th at 11AM and the title is **Developing Programs that Increase Your Bottom Line**. The second is on **Friday, March 16th at 2PM** and the title is **Profitable Programming Fun, Fitness and Financial Success**. Sandy also told me this about her last IHRSA presentation, "I want to emphasize that were I ever to rename 'Programming for Profit,' I would change the name to 'Fun, Fitness and Financial Success.'" This will be Sandy's last IHRSA presentation folks, so do arrive early to avoid the standing room only situation that's very likely to happen! And folks, CLUB INSIDER has invited Sandy to appear at our **IHRSA Los Angeles Booth #826** to autograph this **Special Tribute Edition** on **Thursday, March 15th** from **1PM to 3PM**. We invite you to attend Sandy's last two IHRSA seminars and drop by our **Booth #826** for a personal visit with Sandy.

C.I. - Sandy, I know you've been an IHRSA supporter and speaker at many IHRSA Conventions over the years. I know you're stepping out of the big conference speaking world and Los Angeles will be your last IHRSA presentations. Tell us about your feelings about the value of IHRSA for club owners/operators.

SC - I always tell people in every one of my presentations that they should go to the conferences: IHRSA, Club Industry, Can-Fit-Pro, Athletic Business/ICAA, etc.

Comments From Debra Siena

Debra Siena, President of Proactive Partners, a division of **TCA Holdings, LLC**, commented:

Sandy Coffman is a pioneer and legend in the health club industry. She has been an inspiration for so many of us as a mentor and role model. I first heard Sandy speak at a Club Industry conference in 1986. I was so motivated by her, I set myself a goal to be a presenter. Her energy, passion and drive helped pave the way for me and countless women to be a success in our business.

Norm Cates' **CLUB INSIDER™**

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You not only learn things from speakers, but the conventions are venues where you meet your peers and take advantage of networking opportunities. IHRSA, for example, brings the best of the best together for a 4-day period each year. How can you *not* put that in your budget?

C.I. - Sandy, I refer to you as the **Dean of Club Programming** because there's nobody on earth like you, and in my view, you're the best in your field by far and have been for many years. So, my final request to wrap up this great interview is for you to just make any closing comments that you'd like. **SC** - I've had a joyous time. I could sing the song, 'I'm the luckiest girl in the whole USA!' I truly believe that. I'm tearing up just saying that because I can't believe that I found this industry and this industry found me!

C.I. - I feel your IHRSA Spirit, Sandy! **SC** - Norm, you know that *spirit* you talk about is really something I still have. I get excited when I hear people tell me that I made a difference to them. I know I made a difference to thousands of people in their own personal lives of fitness or wellness. But, more importantly, I know that I made a difference in future leaders. That's why I'm so comfortable leaving the major conferences now. I'm happy to remain as a resource for anybody that wants continued

inspiration or motivation from me, and I'll stay tuned. Create fun experiences for your members. Suddenly, workouts won't be work anymore.

• • •

CLUB INSIDER wants to thank the one and only Sandy Coffman for her time in production of this **Special Tribute Cover Story**. Most importantly, we want to thank Sandy for all that she's done for our industry and our world. **THANK YOU, Sandy Coffman!** We appreciate you and all you've done... and will continue to do! Thanks also to Alan Schwartz, Geoff Dyer, John Miller, Keith Nygren, Debra Siena, Jay Kell, Reid Hans and Jane Riddell for their comments about Sandy.

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 38-year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. Cates is the Founder and Publisher of CLUB INSIDER, now in its 19th year of publication. Cates was IHRSA's 1st President, and a Co-founder of the Association 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)

Comments From Jane Riddell

Jane Riddell, Chief Operating Officer of David Patchel-Evans' Goodlife Fitness Centers in Canada, commented:

Sandy Coffman began working with us years ago when we were struggling with how to maintain a culture of service during one of our rapid expansion periods. We owe her a great debt of gratitude as she taught us that, if we simply treated our members well, we would be successful. She was right. Sandy is one of the most passionate and energetic people I know and it has been an honor and a privilege to work with her.

The Fourth Wave of Customer Service

By: Will Phillips

Part I

In 45 years of consulting with businesses of all kinds, I have seen customer service evolve into what I would now call its Fourth Wave. The first wave was, "Here it is; take it or leave it." The second wave emerged as businesses discovered that a welcoming and pleasant manner could give them an edge. During the 1970s, the third wave of customer service emerged, which focused on fixing problems and handling returns better than anyone else. There are many apocryphal stories of phenomenal customer service, such as the little old lady returning a pair of car tires to Nordstrom and having them accepted. In the 1980s, companies made such service policy to gain a competitive edge. Now, such service is necessary just to stay in the game. Consumers expect easy returns at any retailer now.

Only a few industries continue with offensive policies about returns and cancellations, such as banks and cell phone companies. They do this because, in the short run, it does contribute to profits, but the frontier is wide open in a search for finding an even higher level of customer service. This is the fourth wave. There are at least three different aspects of customer service emerging on this frontier. One of them has to do with designing the whole way that you do business to make it easy for the customer, removing the hassle factor completely. When you order shoes from Zappos' online shoe store (and you

should just for the experience!), and you're unsure of your size, they'll happily send you six sizes and allow you to return the ones that don't fit. You'll have up to a year to make the returns at their expense! That's about as low a hassle factor as you can reach.

On a recent REX roundtable field trip to Zappos Headquarters, they explained that, each time it extended the permissible return time, sales increased. They realized that hassle reduction design increased revenue. Amazon has reduced online hassles to 1-click buying. When I want to buy some obscure product, I will search the web, but when I find what I want, I'll go to Amazon and see if they carry it because it is so much less of a hassle to buy there.

People not only don't have enough time in their lives, but they are impatient with even the slightest delays. How long do some of us wait after pushing the elevator button before we push again? Or, even worse when your laptop does not respond, how quickly do you get upset!?

Polaroid, the powerhouse of high-tech, instant photography, went out of business because a minute was too long to wait for an "instant" photograph. Customers thought "instant" should mean "now." Thus, Polaroid missed the digital camera revolution.

Best Buy realized that there was a horrible customer experience in the assembly of many of their products, such as a simple computer system, or a complex stereo system. Customers would go home and get frustrated. As a result, Best Buy created the Geek Squad to help remedy this solution.

Apple recognized the customer frustration in having to buy 15 songs when they only liked one and the whole CD cost \$15 or \$20. This led to iTunes and the ultimate destruction of the traditional music recording industry.

Now, let's talk about the hassles in health and fitness clubs. For instance, several industry sales consultants strongly believe that not all customers need the typical club tour when they walk in and express an interest in joining. For most clubs, close to half (if not more) of their walk-in prospects have already been members of a club, possibly even a previous member of that club, and having to take a tour adds hassle. I've also noticed in many clubs that a number of things are designed for the convenience of the cleaners, the maintenance people and the staff, but not necessarily for the member.

There are also hundreds of small areas where no one has yet to really notice these members' hassles. For example, when I worked out yesterday, two of these popped up again. On most cardio equipment with a screen, it takes two, three, four tries to insert my headphones into the jack. Why is it hidden from sight? I can think of all kinds of reasons for hiding the jack underneath and having it point down, such as collecting less dust and cleaning fluid, making it longer. But, as a customer, that's not my concern. My concern is just the little aggravation every time I insert my headphones. After showering, I went to weigh in, and there was no place to put my towel except on the floor.

Each of the retail examples



Will Phillips

already discussed are about changing the design of business to eliminate customer hassles. Sure, you need a good product/service at a good price with a smiling staff. But, more and more, companies are now getting the edge by eliminating all the hassles.

Here is how: First, the design of your business should be treated as top strategy. Few things are more important, and this is not architectural or interior design. It is the way you do business with a member. Second, design is a process, not an event. Design thinking and process needs to be embedded in everything you do and happen on a daily basis. You need to live it, believe it. You need to manage it. Third, if you truly design from the customer's experience, it will lead to changes you never thought of. It may be challenging,

(See Will Phillips Page 19)

Appreciate Them!

By: Misti Burmeister

For someone who's not big into shopping for clothes, doing so during the holidays is... Well, you can imagine.

In order to avoid the large, crazy masses, I wandered into a smaller clothing store and was greeted immediately by Mary, a woman who clearly loves her job. I was there to buy a black dress shirt, but she somehow got me excited about all these other pants, blouses and even jewelry, which I've never understood how to match up. Considering how hard Mary was working to help me understand fashion and find something I really liked, I thought this store must take very good care of its employees.

Mary helped me find several items I really liked, but I was running late for an event and had to leave before I could

finish my shopping spree. "Mary," I said, "You're awesome, and I appreciate you very much. Give me your business card, and I'll come back to see you."

She responded, "Tell my manager that. I'm only as good as my last sale. They treat me poorly here, and I'm thinking about quitting."

I was dumbfounded. On my way out, I found her manager and shared with her how much I appreciated Mary's high-quality service.

"Yeah, yeah," she said. "What are you buying?"

I held back from drop-kicking her, and instead, said, "I don't have time right now, but I'll come back."

"You can always return items you don't want," she said. Of course, Mary had already informed me of this policy, which nearly every clothing company offers!

I left wondering if Mary's manager has any idea just how much more Mary, who is passionate and driven despite poor leadership, would produce if she felt appreciated and how many more sales she'd make with a shift in focus. Instead of demanding sales, powerful leaders focus on appreciating their employees and customers. Imagine how much more inspired Mary would be if her manager simply said, "You're doing an excellent job, and I appreciate you." Imagine how much more inspired I would be to buy from that store with a simple, "Thank you. We do attract awesome people." I really liked the clothes, but more than that, I loved Mary's passion for fashion, something I lack severely and a good reason to come back to this store.

Leadership is about inspiring, not about manipulating. It's about appreciating,



Misti Burmeister

not forcing. It's about guiding, not demanding. It's that simple!

...Will Phillips

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scary and a bit uncomfortable because you are not just getting out of the box, you are getting out of the building. Read or listen to how smart business people reacted to the founder of Zappos, Tony Hsieh, when he said free shipping and returns up to a year... for shoes!

If you have concerns about distinguishing your club(s) from competitors, or if price competition threatens your business, this fourth wave of customer service gives you a specific direction and guidance on becoming truly different by identifying and eliminating every customer hassle. The two resources below will further guide you in this evolution.

Next month, in **Part 2**, we will review additional emerging trends of the fourth wave of customer service and explore moving your club from an experience that members remember to a transformation that changes their lives.

Resources:

- *Do You Matter? How Great Design Will Make People Love Your Company* By Robert Brunner and Stewart Emery
- *Designful Company* by Marty Neumier

(Will Phillips is founder of REX Roundtables. REX seven facilitators orchestrates over 120 club owners in health club roundtables worldwide. For more information, visit REX on YouTube: www.youtube.com/REXRoundtables)

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Medical Fitness:

Is Your Club Part of the “Trend”?

By: Dr. Cary Wing

Since the *Exercise is Medicine* (EIM) initiative was launched in 2007 by the American Medical Association (AMA) and the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), there has been increased exposure for the medical fitness model. A key component of the model is the physician referral pathway and a physician's involvement in an individual's continuum of care or circle of health.

The results of a national benchmark survey conducted in September, 2011 indicate that fitness centers do not fully realize the potential of the medical fitness model, and specifically, the potential of physician referral programs (PRPs). The goal of the survey was to determine national benchmarks relative to the growth and development of PRPs within fitness facilities. The results and information are particularly timely due to the recent release of the ACSM Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends for 2012 that once again identifies physician referrals on the Top 20 list. "This is a trend toward an emergent emphasis being placed on partnerships with the medical community, resulting in seamless referrals to a health and fitness facility and health fitness professionals," according to the ACSM survey article. However, incorporating the medical fitness model into programs and services and reaping the benefits, continues to be a struggle for health clubs.

Why Incorporate the Medical Fitness Model?

The United States economy continues to struggle to rebound, and the potential for a strong recovery in 2012 remains uncertain. So, what is your club doing to increase revenue and position itself to operate in this environment? Developing Physician Referral Programs (PRPs) and creating a medical fitness circle of health can open doors for fitness facilities in this economy and in the future. Physician referrals can connect patients, potential members, with facilities and fitness professionals in the community. Physicians want to refer their de-conditioned or at-risk patients to local facilities as a pathway for the patient to implement an exercise prescription. Physicians will write referrals once they have first-hand knowledge of the standard of care and support a patient receives. Facilities can fill this need through development of a medical fitness model and the proper design, development and

marketing of a PRP. A facility should see significant growth in both membership and revenue after implementation of a program. Physicians will prescribe exercise.

What is a Physician Referral Program (PRP)?

The Exercise Is Medicine (EIM) initiative calls on healthcare providers to assess and review every patient's physical activity program at every visit. A PRP is a "treatment plan" for a patient, generally involving both education and physical activity that is prescribed to a patient by a physician after an evaluation. The specifics of the prescription are filled by a qualified fitness professional and/or a fitness facility. The PRP provides a pathway for healthcare providers to prescribe exercise after measuring a patient's Physical Activity Vital Sign (PAVS) and evaluating the results of other medical tests. Evidence indicates that patients are more likely to exercise and improve their health if doctors use the prescription pad for ordering physical activity.

Why Aren't Clubs Developing Programs and Marketing to the Medical Community?

Most clubs do not have the infrastructure to successfully connect with the healthcare community. They do not have the staff that can devote the time and energy to develop a platform and the marketing tools to engage physicians. Even though EIM provides numerous resources for providers, fitness professionals and clubs to use, the skill set required to implement a PRP is generally not available within the facility. Also, fitness facilities understand that, for the most part, there is a lack of trust in the health club industry. A club needs to position itself to provide safe, relevant and effective exercise programs so that a physician will be confident in referring a patient to the facility. This takes work that might include significant changes in the way the club does business.

The fitness industry understands the concept of PRPs and EIM, but currently, there is limited information regarding program success, mainly financial success. The recurring question is, "How can the medical fitness model and specifically a PRP be financially viable?" This begs the question, "How do you determine the success of the medical fitness model?" Is it financial, or successful program outcomes, and/or is it improving the health of the

community? The fitness industry needs to answer these questions. Should all three be used to determine success? This author believes they should. Unfortunately, the results of the National Benchmark survey indicate that health and fitness centers that do have a PRP, in general, do not fully realize the potential and do not track the data associated with a program. Exceptions to the rule, however, are clubs such as *Dedham Health & Athletic Complex in Dedham, MA* and *ACAC Wellness & Fitness Centers in Charlottesville and Richmond, VA*. Both have successful programs.

What Can a Club Do to Establish the Medical Fitness Model and Attract Physician Referrals?

Clubs need to develop PRPs based on known guidelines with the appropriate tools that can be marketed to the healthcare community. If a club is positioned to provide safe, relevant and effective exercise programs, a physician will be confident in referring a patient to the facility. The goal is to create a circle of health for an individual through assessment, goal-setting and a specific plan tailored to the individual's needs. It is no longer appropriate to mass market in the fitness industry. Developing a PRP is not "business as usual," and there needs to be a change in the way clubs do business and view members.

Does your facility have protocols in place to go beyond the traditional club model and incorporate the medical fitness model and develop a PRP? The platform involves several key components that will increase the likelihood of success. They include the following:

•Staffing: A facility must have the appropriate staff in place to oversee a PRP. Degreed and certified exercise physiologists provide the expertise required to interact safely and effectively with the patient/client and communicate appropriately with the physician.

Note: The Exercise is Medicine (EIM) Credential has been launched. The EIM Credential shows healthcare providers that a fitness professional is qualified to help all their patients get the exercise that is prescribed. For fitness professionals, it's a new way to build a client base. Everyone who receives the EIM Credential will be entered into an online directory that EIM healthcare providers will access for referrals. For more information on



Dr. Cary Wing

the credential, including eligibility and requirements, visit the EIM website.

•Assessment: A comprehensive health risk assessment (HRA) is necessary to identify risk factors, to assess a patient's basic fitness level and to develop an exercise plan. The results of the assessment and the plan outlining goals and objectives are forwarded to the physician for review and approval. Progress reports are submitted to the physician at least every 30 days.

•Quality Management: A multi-disciplinary, team approach is recommended as one of the most effective mechanisms for a patient's success in improving outcomes. Incorporating the exercise physiologist, a dietician, wellness coach and other professionals in developing the exercise plan ensures that all components of an individual's unique footprint are evaluated to achieve positive results.

•Outcomes: Outcomes are measured for reasons that include, but are not limited to, tracking individual and program success, as well as benchmarking results for program improvement. Measuring success can validate the importance of the program as well as the impact on an individual's overall health.

•Accessibility: The environment should be inclusive, providing accessibility to all. This may involve, but is not limited to, equipment, facilities, programs, practices, staff training and marketing.

Facility Certification

Since 2008, there has been a mechanism in place for fitness facilities to *(See Dr. Cary Wing Page 22)*

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Social Media CAN Drive Revenue. But How?

Turn Facebook Into an Online Lead Box

By: Mario Bravomalo

Social media is changing our world. The adoption rate of users to Facebook was the fastest of any product in history. Facebook has done a remarkable job of connecting people. The concept of community is core to Facebook, as well as our clubs. But for most, it is still a mystery as to how social media communities can immediately and directly affect the bottom line and drive business for clubs.

They say that numbers don't lie, and the statistics tied to social media (Facebook, Twitter, Groupon, etc) are astounding. For most, they create confusion and cause the question, "Those numbers are significant, but how do they relate to me? How can I leverage this power?"

Let's look at two of the most compelling statistics related to social media:

1. People who interact with a company's Facebook page are documented to spend 20% more money with that company than with other companies which they do not interact with online.

2. People are 90% more likely to take their friend's recommendation about making a purchase than all other forms of marketing.

You Need a Strategy and a System

By looking at these statistics, it is clear that an opportunity exists for the health club industry, especially since significant numbers of our members are generated through referrals. But, in order to capitalize, you must have a strategy, and most importantly, you must be able to execute that strategy each and every day with each and every prospect and member of your club. You need a system.

...Dr. Cary Wing

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benchmark programs and services against standards and guidelines developed specifically for medically integrated facilities. The Medical Fitness Association's (MFA) Medical Fitness Facility Certification defines standards of quality and safety. One of the primary goals of the certification is to elicit trust and confidence within the healthcare system, and the community, for the fitness industry.

In addition to the MFA Medical Fitness Facility Certification, a nationally-represented group consisting of various segments of the fitness industry has been hard at work to develop a broad set of voluntary standards for all health

Converting the social media platform from just connecting people to actually connecting people with your club is the strategy. Now, for the execution. You need a system. You need to be able to ask new members who join, and existing members of your club, to promote you. You do this by posting messages about your club on Facebook, sending Tweets about how great it is to work out, adding your club logo onto their Facebook wall, sending emails to their friends and family and sending "special deals" to all their friends and family from your club. Your club's Facebook page needs to have relevant content and be updated daily or at least weekly. The top level staff in the club need to Tweet about special services, special offerings and/or added value. Your special deals should give consumers the ability to "buy the deal of the day/week" and refer their friends to your special offers as well. All of this requires systems to be able to execute.

After interviewing various sources, the response was, "We know most of this, we just cannot consistently execute these strategies." This cemented in our minds that the *execution* to the strategy was the *key* and created an *application* that is incredibly simple for your club staff to execute. Simply provide your prospects and members with a link that, when clicked, will post formatted messages via Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and more in exchange for a small reward from the club. This link can be clicked on when they join, in the privacy of their home, or on their smartphone. The formatted post can have your club logo, a link to your Facebook page and any special deals or offers from your club. Think 'membership referrals meets Facebook meets Groupon.'

and fitness centers. NSF International, an independent, nonprofit organization, oversees the NSF Joint Committee on Health Fitness Facilities Standards. The committee includes organizations such as the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), the American Council on Exercise (ACE), IHRSA, the Y and MFA. At the end of 2011, the NSF Joint Committee passed the ballot for a Standard for fitness facility certification. At the time of this writing, the next step is for the NSF Council of Public Health Consultants to approve the Standard. If this happens, a certification based on the Standard can be created. It is possible that facilities will be able to apply for certification in late 2012 (www.nsf.org).

New Online Lead Box

Think about how your paper-based lead boxes work. Lead boxes are placed around the community. The lead box prompts people to try and get a "deal" or special offer. They will fill out an entry form with their information and put it in the lead box to get the special deal and for your salespeople to have as a lead the next day.

Now, apply this concept to social media. View social media as the new online lead box. You offer special deals that consumers are able to access instantly. They can purchase and refer their friends. Your club offers can now go viral within the social media world driven by prospects and members and exposing your club deals and offers to potentially thousands of people. Any person wanting to claim a special offer or deal via your club's "deal site" will simply fill out minimal information and can be followed up by your team as a new lead.

Your offers and deals become more powerful because they were recommended among friends within the social media communities. The formatted messages with your club logo also gives you the ability to connect people with your company's Facebook page, resulting in more company loyalty and revenue per member.

Social media as a way to connect people with your business is only going to become more mainstream as time passes. Finding ways to implement strategies and execute consistently is key.

Finding tools and applications that help you achieve your goal of driving in more leads and increasing your revenue per member through social media will become critical business functions in the health club industry. You will probably be able to find various systems designed



Mario Bravomalo, VFP Founder

to help you leverage social media at the IHRSA trade show, March 15th and 16th in Los Angeles, California. We encourage you to begin finding systems to leverage social media.

Don't miss your chance for a personal demonstration! Stop by our **Booth #647** for a free demonstration! Make sure you test drive our new application designed to give you a turnkey solution to leveraging social media.

You can also scan the **QR Code** Below to find more information or see our **Ad** on the **Opposite Page**.

(Mario Bravomalo is the Founder of Visual Fitness Planner)



Summary

Health and fitness facilities have a unique opportunity today. The emphasis on the prevention of disease should encourage all clubs to evaluate staff, programs and services to determine if the club can provide a continuum of care for the healthcare community and develop the medical fitness model. Don't wait, be a part of the trend.

Resources:

- Exercise is Medicine, www.exerciseismedicine.org;
- Inclusive Fitness Coalition, Health & Fitness Clubs, www.incfit.org;

- National Benchmark Survey, How Fitness Facilities Engage Physicians, November 2011, at <http://slidesha.re/tM14fI>;
- Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends, 2012

(Cary Wing, EdD, has been a leader in the medical fitness industry for over 30 years and most recently served as Director of Business Development for Medical Fitness for Fitmarc. She was previously the Executive Director of the Medical Fitness Association (MFA) for over ten years. Currently, she is actively involved in uniting healthcare and fitness throughout the industry. Contact Cary at carywing@aol.com, visit her website at www.carywing.com or follow her on Twitter @carywing)



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A Secret Million Dollar Weapon

By: Donna Krech

In 1982, I started in this industry without so much as a pot to 'you know what' in and owned my first location in 1986. I've owned dozens of clubs since, and in addition to the hundreds we've been blessed to serve, I still own a club to this day. The most amazing thing about that is I started with absolutely nothing; no place to live, no car, no money. Yet today, we've produced \$10+ million per year and taken

clubs from \$28,000 per month to \$228,000.

How is that possible? Simple, I had a secret weapon, and today, I will share it with you.

She is my mom, Jetta. She is 90 years young and has had a very successful 65-year career in direct sales. I grew up in it. I watched the marketing and sales that allowed her to win award after award. I've built my success with the same techniques of *Make a Difference Marketing and Selling to Serve*. So, I thought you might like to 'sit in' on the interview.

Donna: Mom, you sold Stanley Home Products for 65 years?

Jetta: Yes, ma'am.

Donna: Now, Stanley Products, for the most part, are cleaning products and they are high priced. Window Cleaner is much more expensive than Windex, so why would somebody want to buy it?

Jetta: Because it does a better job, and it lasts longer. You get more for your money.

Donna: So, when you would tell people about the products, you would tell them about the value and how it lasts longer?

Jetta: Yes, you educate them.

Donna: You weren't just telling them that you had a Window Cleaner?

Jetta: Oh no! I would *show* them, not just tell them.

Donna: So, you would demonstrate?

Jetta: Right, for example, I would show them how to use just a tiny bit where, with Windex, they had to use a whole bunch.

If we explain to our prospect the value perspective of our membership, we are demonstrating the difference between us and other clubs.

Donna: Let's talk about the act of selling itself. When you were selling by doing a demonstration in a hostess' home, how is it you never felt you were 'pushing' her to buy more?

Jetta: Because I didn't have to. When you know what you have is the best, you simply say that.

Donna: Well, there are some people out there, believe it or not Mom, who say selling is pushing.

Jetta: That is not true. Those people aren't selling needs then. If you're talking someone into something they don't need, that's wrong. Everyone needed my products.

Hint, my industry friends, everyone needs what we have too.

Donna: Okay. So when you would demonstrate your products and educate, how did you communicate they needed what you had?

Jetta: Because I showed what a great job the product would do. I told them the truth, and then, I proved the truth to them.

Donna: What does that mean exactly?

Jetta: It means I showed them what it would do on many different types of surfaces. I even showed them on something right in their home. I explained why it would last longer and why they would even be coming back for more.

You are never going to feel like you are pushing when you're selling if you're telling the truth and then proving the truth. Give examples, show demonstrations, share testimonials. Don't just say something is wonderful. Prove something is wonderful. My mom didn't just hold up the bottle of Window Cleaner, nor should we just say, "There's the fitness floor." She showed them how it would work. When's the last time

you sat someone on a leg extension who wants their thighs to look better?

Donna: Let's talk marketing. How did people find out about Stanley?

Jetta: The party plan of selling. We went to doors and offered a dust mop and duster if they invited a few ladies into their home and let us come and demonstrate. When we got there, we would take some products and demonstrate on something we had with us and something in their home.

Donna: So you went knocking on doors and said, 'If you will have a few ladies in your home to let me show you this product, I will give you this gift.' Mom, if one of the grandkids came to you and said they thought about going into sales, but they didn't want to because sales was associated with lying and being deceitful, what would you say?

Jetta: No! You cannot be a good salesman and a liar. A good salesman has to be truthful in everything.

Donna: How about sales in general? Why would somebody want to go into sales?

Jetta: Because you can make more money selling than you can in anything else. Because when you sell, you make more than a wage; you make a profit.

We've gotten out there wherever there are people, shook hands, made friends and just offered something of value for free for hearing about our memberships. There's been only success. My mom still has a full stock of inventory. Now, again, she's 90 and she still has a full cabinet of her products.

Donna: Mom, why do you still have all those products?

Jetta: Because I use them myself. I couldn't keep house without them!

So when you're selling something, you need to feel that you couldn't live without it. That's the passion I learned.

Donna: We were raised packing orders and going to Stanley parties. I watched you be passionate about what you sold. You believed in it.

Jetta: I still believe in it.

Donna: So, there's the secret to my success. I was raised around sales, I was raised around integrity marketing in a strong, faith-filled family to the degree where 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, someone from my family is with my mom, who we love.

Jetta: I love you, too. My family is exceptional.

Donna: Because you are exceptional.

So, get out there, believe in what you have and live it with passion. Now, she is your secret to success, too. For more free training, go to www.donnakrech.com.

(Donna Krech may be reached at donna@donnakrech.com)

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Control and Manage Your Money!

By: Norm Cates

Publisher's Note: Moving forward in 2012, if you are not doing so already, one of the most important things you can do to be a success in your club business is carefully control and manage your money. If you're trying to do this in your club without the help of a professional financial company that specializes in membership dues collections and other financial services for clubs, you may lose thousands and thousands of dollars each year that you should be collecting. In general, you may live your club business life in an ever-revolving state of financial distress.

CLUB INSIDER has four great advertisers that can help you control and manage your money, and they have weighed in with comments on their services. They are **ABC Financial, Affiliate Acceptance Corporation, Fiserv** and **iGoFigure**. We want to urge all club owners to move away from back office operations without professional help. I predict that you will be glad you read these offerings once you

make a choice and get started.

• • •

ABC Financial



ABC Financial (ABC) is the leading software and payment processor in the fitness industry and has been for over 30 years. ABC continues to deliver the most advanced and cutting-edge software, recurring payment processing solutions and member marketing and retention programs for the industry. ABC also has a deep commitment and mission to building lasting relationships with our customers, and this will always remain our top priority.

ABC's DataTrak software is robust and contains many features, which include: POS, Check-in, Scheduler, Locker Management, Electronic Membership Agreements, Kid's Club, iPhone Apps, Gift Cards and much more. DataTrak has also developed the most advanced Dashboard and MyiCLUB functionality available to date. ABC's DataTrak Dashboard is a business monitoring tool with displays of fast, convenient measuring and monitoring tools. The Dashboard is highly customizable and intuitive. It allows you to manipulate items by changing filters and save your favorite views, group or settings for on-demand viewing. The Dashboard is actionable, versatile, comprehensive and contains vast security rules. It allows you to compare your actual results against your budget or established goals. The Dashboard provides at-a-glance information about events or employees in real-time, which will allow you to quickly spot errors or problems. The Dashboard also allows you to go beyond just recognizing problems. It provides you

with the ability to spot opportunities based on the trending analysis and measurement that it provides.

The Dashboard is a versatile and comprehensive drag and drop application that is very easy to customize. You can easily move from task to task allowing you to preview each by moving your cursor over the item. It also allows you to quickly select different timeframes, clubs, sort data and generate the views you need to help run your business more profitably.

The Dashboard is fully integrated into our DataTrak Health Club Management Software and contains deep levels of security. The security measures it has taken guarantee that your staff can only view the data that you want them to see. It also allows item-by-item controls that ensure the displays that are most important to you or your staff are the default views that are seen when logging in.

ABC's MyiCLUB self-service member portal is a web-based application that allows clubs to enroll new members

(See Your Money Page 27)

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... Your Money

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online and gives current members on-demand access to their account information. MYiCLUB allows prospects to join online and members to manage their class schedules, purchase and book personal training classes, review their check-in and POS history and update their billing information from a laptop or smart phone. Unlike stand-alone options that are offered by many other providers within the industry, MYiCLUB is fully integrated with ABC's DataTrak Health Club Management Software, which eliminates configuration and entries into two different software platforms. ABC provides MYiCLUB in two offerings, our Basic version and our Premium version.

The Basic version allows your current members to manage their account by updating address, phone number, email, and billing information via our online portal. Your members can also review, print or download their check-in history and club purchases. They can also review their billing history, check payment status, make payments and schedule future payments.

The Premium version includes all of the features and functionality of the Basic version, plus much more. The Premium version allows you to capture prospects and sell memberships online. Your members can also purchase and schedule classes, personal training and have the ability to view and print reports on class activity and remaining sessions.

All in all, ABC Financial offers club owners everything they need to ensure their business is running in tip top shape with top-of-the line technological offerings and software enhancements that are second to none. Call or email ABC today at (800) 551 - 9733 or steve.ayers@abefinancial.com for more information on how we can help make your business even more successful!

Fiserv

Affiliate Acceptance Corporation



AFFILIATED ACCEPTANCE CORPORATION

Affiliated Acceptance Corporation (AAC) has named Bruce Kennedy, Director of Sales, responsible for sales team development and national sales. Kennedy comes to AAC with over 25 years in professional sales, most recently as

Director of Sales with Core Fitness Online. In his position at Core Fitness, he was instrumental in helping the company expand into new markets and implement a new product upgrade.

"The addition of Bruce to the AAC team is a critical step in our growth plans as we continue to expand our product offerings and enter new markets," said Alan Downey, CEO of AAC. "His experience and passion for the fitness business will help him hit the ground running and integrate into the fantastic team we already have in place."

After more than two decades at the forefront of innovation in health club management software, billing and collections, AAC has become an industry leader in powerful business solutions. AAC's wide array of services assist owners of health clubs, martial art studios and tanning salons increase efficiency and profits in unprecedented proportions.

AAC's simple, full-service solution will help achieve financial goals, streamline operations, and most importantly, keep members happy. Many industry providers have over-complicated solutions that require more time and money, which takes focus from the most important aspect of managing a successful club, member satisfaction. AAC's goal is to create a better user experience while still providing a feature rich product. Clients have access to cutting-edge software, flexible process automation and a highly trained, dedicated staff.

AAC has thousands of clients nationwide and decades of industry experience; they are proven experts in what you need most to manage a successful club. To learn more about AAC and get a sneak peek at what they have planned for the future, visit www.affiliated.org/simplesolution or call (800) 233 - 8483.



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GO VIRAL!

fiserv.

Fiserv, a leading global provider of financial services technology solutions announces the availability of two new modules for its Compete club management software: Join Online and Employee Self Service. Through these new modules, health and fitness clubs using Compete (See Your Money Page 28)

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continued from page 27

from Fiserv will have access to two customizable, Fiserv-hosted websites, one that enables prospective members to join the club remotely and another that gives club employees the ability to better manage their schedules. Both websites are mobile device-enabled, meaning that when viewed on an iPhone, iPad or any Android device, the sites will appear in a mobile-friendly format that is easy to navigate regardless of the channel.

Join Online, one of the modules now available through Compete from Fiserv, provides a web-based, step-by-step process that allows a prospect to become a member of a gym by selecting from a menu of plans, adding optional services, completing the membership agreement, setting up a payment plan and paying remotely. Employee Self Service, the other module now available through Compete, expands mobile access to club employees, allowing them to view their existing schedule, schedule classes and training sessions and receive alerts of changes. Providing flexible, intuitive applications to club employees empowers associates to be more effective in their interactions with members by giving them access to their information anywhere, anytime.

"These new modules are a direct response to feedback from our clients who said that they needed to make their businesses more mobile," said Chris Millner, General Manager of Club Solutions at Fiserv. "With these new modules, we are making the lives of our clients more convenient by enabling them to connect with their customers and their employees anytime, anywhere."

Fiserv, formerly CheckFree, pioneered the electronification of payments in the health club industry and has a history of applying innovation to enable health clubs to run more efficiently and profitably. These new modules will help Fiserv clients increase memberships, profitability and customer satisfaction through convenient, user-friendly interactions on mobile devices and online channels.

Club Solutions from Fiserv provides software and services designed to meet the operational, financial and membership management needs of the health and fitness industry. Providing more than 5,000 club locations worldwide with one or more solutions, including club management software, transaction processing and outsourced member billing and data management, the suite of solutions offered by Fiserv enables clubs of all sizes to grow and retain membership while maximizing revenue and minimizing

day-to-day costs.

iGoFigure



iGo Figure Software is relied upon by thousands of health clubs around the world to successfully run their businesses. The company is proud to announce another service partner, First Credit Services, that will enhance the software user's experience. Go Figure's President, Kyle Zagrodzky, stated, "Our focus has always been to develop a robust software product that does everything an owner needs to run his club, but at the same time, is so easy and intuitive to use. Club employees of all types have no problem picking it up."

Zagrodzky continued, "Providing great club management software is one thing; giving a club owner all the tools

they need for success is another. Long ago, we realized that being a Microsoft Gold Certified partner and using development best-practices would only take us so far. That is where key strategic partnerships can make all the difference."

Go Figure identified areas where it would be much easier to find an expert who already delivers the service rather than reinventing the wheel. By seamlessly integrating the service, a customer is able to use one application, yet get all the extras our business partners provide.

The relationship with First Credit Services will allow iGo Figure Software users to collect from customers who have missed payments. Zagrodzky said, "First Credit Services has the reputation as one of the best collections companies in the fitness industry, so we approached them about integrating." He added, "Now, our customers can have the best software available to run their club and access to use the best collections company through our relationships."

iGo Figure has also partnered with Retention Management to provide member retention services, ACH Direct for payment processing services in the United States, EZIDebit for Australia and New Zealand payment processing and Harland for payment processing in the United Kingdom and throughout Europe.

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Photo depicts a typical facility; some locations may vary. ©2011 Fitness International, LLC. All rights reserved.

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Leadership Track Sessions Include:

> WEDNESDAY, MARCH 14



- Practically Radical: Transforming Your Company & Challenging Yourself
William Taylor, Founding Editor, Fast Company, and Best-Selling Author
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- Leadership Tactics that Will Drive Your Team to Respond to Your Vision
- Principles to Survive & Thrive in Difficult Times
- The PRIMES: Leading in Uncertain Times
- 10 Proven Leadership Skills to Build a Successful Team
- 3rd Annual Women's Leadership Summit: Success Through Vision, Value & Verve!
- Strategic Philanthropy: Establish a Corporate Social Responsibility Program for Your Club
- Effectively Launch & Implement New Concepts & Programs at Your Club

> FRIDAY, MARCH 16



- The Art of Enchantment
Guy Kawasaki, Co-Founder, Alltop.com, Founding Partner, Garage Technology Ventures, and Former Chief Evangelist, Apple, Inc.
Sponsored by Technogym®
- Six Habits of Highly Effective Clubs

- 16th Annual IHRSA Financial Panel: Insights Into the Financial Health of the Club Industry
- Driving Growth of Your Business Through Relentless Innovation

This is a partial listing of the IHRSA 2012 schedule. For the complete schedule, please visit ihsra.org/convention.



> THURSDAY, MARCH 15



- "State of the Industry" Report
Joe Moore, IHRSA President & CEO



- How Great Leaders Inspire Action
Simon Sinek, Founder, Simon Sinek Inc., and Author
Sponsored by Precor Incorporated
- 10 Proven Leadership Skills to Build a Successful Team
- The Five Temptations of a Leader: Overcoming the Challenges to Teamwork

- Excellence in Operating Quality, Profitable Clubs

> SATURDAY, MARCH 17



- An Open Forum with the President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition
Shellie Y. Pfohl, M.S., Executive Director, President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition
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- Developing the Leader Within
- The Leadership Blackout: Where Have the Great Leaders Gone?
- Leading by Intuition: Managing a Successful Club Operation by Following Your Instincts

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Programming Tip of the Month:

Get Your Act Together!

By: Sandy Coffman

Specialty programs are programs that are run annually, seasonally or as one-time special events. Specialty programs can be run with many different formats and focus on many different niches. They will usually involve several activity areas and departments in the club and almost always will require support and participation by the entire staff. Specialty programs will almost always serve all four groups of members: new members, existing members, inactive members and potential members.

In my book, *Successful Programs for Fitness and Health Clubs: 101 Profitable Ideas*, there are several specialty programs that you should certainly include in your programming calendar of events. Be creative. All the programs can be adapted to any type of facility or fitness setting and can use whatever equipment you have. Most of the specialty programs

will have lots of variations, and you will find that the variations create additional programs within the original framework of a specialty program.

The one I'm going to tell you about here is a favorite everywhere and anytime with any club! It not only is a wonderfully fun event, it is the essence of "social programming."

You've heard me speak about the importance of getting your new members involved in your club, and you've also heard me admit that it can be difficult to overcome the intimidation they feel from your existing members. Here is a program that will engage your existing member and attract your new members to come and see the fun that awaits them. "Get Your Act Together" will get your inactive members back to the club too. All they need is an invitation! This is also a great opportunity for your members to invite their friends for an evening of fun at your club. Oh yes, why

not invite those who have toured your club in the past month but have not yet joined? I'll bet many will reconsider after they experience the type of social programming you have. Whether on stage or in the audience, this is an event that everyone can enjoy. Take advantage of it and have fun while you grow your business.

1. Get Your Act Together is basically a social program that is promoted as a contest night.

2. The contest night runs for four weeks every Thursday evening (or whatever evening you choose). Here is an example:

• **Hula Hoops** - "You Provide the Hula, We'll Provide the Hoops!" Hula hoops will be available during the week for practice, on request. Prizes can be given for the longest hula hooper or the one with the most intricate moves.

• **Limbo Contest** - Always a winner! "How Low Can You Go? Get those abdominals and quadriceps in shape now!"

• **Polka Contest** - A very aerobic dance indeed! The tango, salsa, disco... all possibilities. Make it fun!

• **Puttin' on the Hits!** - The art of karaoke!

The momentum of this program progresses each week. More and more people will want to be on stage each week, and many more will want to come and watch. Your follow up will be key. Here's a tip: Take pictures of everyone, participants and audience alike. Have a special place in the club (preferably the front lobby) to display them. One more tip: Make this an annual event, same month same days every year.



Sandy Coffman

Grow your programs. Grow your business. Grow your bottom line. Program for profit!

(Sandy Coffman is the Dean of Club Programming and the author of the book *Successful Programs for Fitness and Health Clubs: 101 Profitable Ideas*. To order Sandy's programming book, go to www.human kinetics.com. You can contact Sandy at scoffman@aol.com or www.sandycoffman.com)

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