

Norm Cates'

CLUB INSIDER

CELEBRATING 29 YEARS OF TRUST

BRICK POWER... *Something to Behold!*



Victor and Lynne Brick

FEBRUARY 2022

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CELEBRATING 29 YEARS OF TRUST

BRICK POWER... *Something to Behold!*

By: Norm Cates

This wordsmith has been at the keyboard for 29 years now, crafting *Club Insider Cover Stories*, *Special Interest Articles* and monthly *Norm's Notes*, all of which provide a perspective that you will not find anywhere else in our wonderful health and fitness club industry. And, during those 29 years, I have taken *great pride in the fact* that I "**Tell-It-Like-It-Is.**" When I go to work writing any article, you, as one of our esteemed readers of *Club Insider*, should have faith that I have found and shared something very well worth your time reading and that I've told that story or discussed that topic with **no holds barred.**

I predict that, by the time you have read this *truly amazing story* of **VICTOR and LYNNE BRICK**, two of the greatest creators I've come across in my 47 years in our industry, you're going to be saying to

yourself... "**WOW! Norm was NOT kidding when he entitled the Brick's cover story: BRICK POWER... Something to Behold!**"

So, folks, take a quick break before you dig into this story. And, while you're up, be sure to get yourself a cup of hot coffee or a Coca-Cola or a glass of H2O. Then, pick the most comfortable place in your office or home where you do your most important reading and read this story in its entirety. I urge you to read it all, because when you're finished, *trust me folks*, when I tell you now that you are going to be *thanking this big boy* for finding and sharing one of the most amazing stories in our industry!

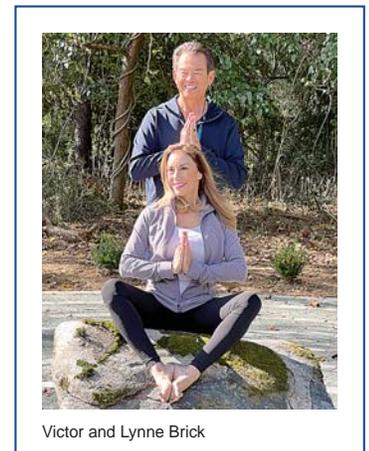
I know deep in my heart that the health and fitness club industry we all love is going to benefit greatly by hearing what **Victor and Lynne Brick** have to say during this *extremely special Cover Story Interview*. I've said a lot in this intro, so now, **I URGE YOU NOT TO MISS**

READING ANY PART OF THIS COVER STORY because the part that you might miss **COULD JUST SAVE YOUR LIFE** or the **LIFE of SOMEBODY YOU LOVE!** So, here goes, read on, my friends!

An Interview With Victor and Lynne Brick

Club Insider (C.I.) - Victor Brick, what a great name to have! As we start off, I want to share with our readers a little background information on both of you so they know more about the source of this amazing and very special cover story... **the one and only Team of Victor and Lynne Brick.** So, Victor, where were you born and where did you grow up?

Victor Brick (VB) - I was born in Okinawa, Japan. My father was part of the U.S. liberation force in the Philippines during WWII and my mom was Filipino. My parents



Victor and Lynne Brick

met after the Battle of Manila. At the end of the war, my Dad returned to the U.S. to be
(See Brick Power Page 10)

Crunch Continues to Climb Entrepreneur's Annual Franchise 500

PORTSMOUTH, N.H. - Crunch ranks in the Top 10% of all franchises in *Entrepreneur Magazine's 2022 Franchise 500*, the world's first, best and most comprehensive franchise ranking. The highly competitive Franchise 500 ranks Crunch as #43 for its outstanding performance in unit growth, financial strength and stability and brand power.

Crunch has consistently demonstrated increased growth, despite a challenging couple of years for the fitness industry. The brand exceeded 128% of

pre-pandemic membership levels and was the only major brand in the industry to grow throughout the pandemic. After rapidly climbing from its #148 ranking in *Entrepreneur's 2020 Franchise 500* list to #52 in 2021, Crunch again outperforms competitors as the top-ranking full-service fitness franchise for 2022. As a full-service gym, Crunch offers extensive cardio equipment, a full weight room, proprietary group fitness, HIIT classes, The Ride, Relax & Recover area, personal training, nutrition guidance and more.

"We are very proud to see Crunch recognized as a leading franchise this year. Our continued growth is a real testament to the strength of our franchisees, the franchise team, our members and their dedication to the Crunch brand," said **Ben Midgley, CEO of Crunch Franchising.**

"There are still more challenges ahead, to be sure," said *Entrepreneur Editor-in-Chief, Jason Feifer.* "But, the franchising industry has made its point: It is built for resilience. Its franchisees and
(See Crunch Honored Page 6)



Inside the Insider: Edition #338

- Exercise IS Medicine - By: Mike Alpert
- Maximizing YOUR Sales Model - By: Karen Woodard-Chavez
- Top Financing Options For Your Gym Business - By: Jim Thomas
- Is Selling Your Team's Strong Suit? - By: Jeffrey Pinkerton
- Jonas Fitness, Inc. Announces Tony Autin as President
- And, of Course, *Norm's Notes*

Norm's Notes

■Hello Everybody! This is your Club Insider Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993 checking in with our 338th monthly edition! Let's have some FUN today! To accomplish that, let me start this month's Norm's Notes with this special celebration writing:

GO DAWGS!
WOOF! WOOF! WOOF!

■Folks, while I'm still quite excited at this moment, I write these words in honor of our **GEORGIA FOOTBALL BULLDOGS**, the newly crowned *College Football National Champions!* I am writing this while I'm watching the *UGA Victory Ceremonies at Dooley Field in Sanford Stadium in Athens, Georgia!* After the *Celebration Parade, 90,000+ fans* are in Sanford Stadium for those proceedings. **JUSTIN CATES**, my son, and *Club Insider Partner*, is a *University of Georgia Alum*, and rightly so, he's even more excited for our Bulldogs than I am. The stadium is named **DOOLEY FIELD**, because 41 years ago, **COACH VINCE DOOLEY**, on the legs of

the *one and only HERSHEL WALKER*, the *1980 UGA Team won a National Championship*. The University of Georgia is blessed to have *another one and only*, and that is **COACH KIRBY SMART**, a former *All Conference Defensive Back* at the University of Georgia. Kirby has now grown to become one of America's greatest college football coaches, and he's just proven that by beating his mentor, *another one and only, THE GREAT NICK SABAN* of the University of Alabama and 7-time, count 'em, 7-time National Champion Head Coach, with one National Championship Title at LSU and six at Alabama! So, folks, **GOOOOOO DAWGS!!!**

■Is **AMERICA** a **GREAT Country**, or what? Thinking about the many events happening in our great country in the past month, my only comment here today is that I'm feeling very blessed to be an American, and I feel that way for many reasons, the total number of which we do not have adequate space nor time to chronicle. Suffice it to say, in my opinion, **ALL OF US who're Americans should feel blessed!**

■Let me **Tip My Black Hat to VICTOR and LYNNE BRICK**, our *Cover Story Subjects*

for this month, as we deliver one of the best cover stories ever in this edition. The Bricks are worthy of identification and disclosure as being two of the top club owner/operators anywhere on Planet Earth! As I wrote these words, I did not play on the fact that the Brick's own three *Brick Bodies* clubs and 81 *Planet Fitness* clubs. I wrote them because of how very far in advance they are with their thinking and operations targeted at the world's least understood phenomenon: **LONGEVITY**. Folks, whatever you do in the next 24 hours, I urge you to read this month's cover story **ENTIRELY** because I know you will be **GLAD YOU DID!** Read it and smile because the Bricks are writing about **OUR INDUSTRY and YOU!!!**

■My long-time friend, **RED LERILLE**, in Lafayette, Louisiana is **celebrating his club's 59th anniversary**, and **IF ANYBODY in our industry is worth looking up to and celebrating, it is the one and only RED**



Norm Cates

LERILLE. Red is one of the people that I admire the most in our industry. **Shoot... that I admire on the entire Planet Earth!**
(See Norm's Notes Page 7)

*MR. RAY WILSON'S SON, PACKY,
GEOFF DYER, ROBERT LINEBERGER
and NORM CATES*

*Wish MR. RAY WILSON
A Very Happy 94th Birthday
on February 19th!*

Thanks and Appreciation

At *Club Insider*, we are excited to be in our **29th Year** of this home-based health and fitness club trade publication! The thought that this publication was *founded to serve an industry I truly love*, and so that *I could become a Mister Mom for my son, Justin*, is still *intriguing and amazing* to us. So, I wish to extend my most sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to everyone who has made this amazing 29-year run possible.

A very sincere *Thanks and Appreciation* go to **Rick Caro**, the **late Dr. Gerry Faust** and the **Faust Executive Roundtable #1** for helping me decide in 1993 what my home-based business would be. *Thanks and Appreciation* to my long-time friends, **Ron Hudspeth** and **Cathy Miller**, formerly of *Atlanta's Hudspeth Report* for the tremendous assistance they provided. *Thanks and Appreciation* to all of the folks at **Walton Press** in Monroe, Georgia. They've done an absolutely excellent job for us all these years and have printed every one of our monthly editions! And, of course, *Thanks and Appreciation* to the **United States Postal Service** for sending those editions to our readers! *Thanks and Appreciation* to all of our **READERS**. Sincere *Thanks and Appreciation* to our **Club Insider Advertisers**, past and present, for their kind and dedicated support of this publication. *Thanks and Appreciation* to all of our **Club Insider Contributing Authors**, past and present. *Thanks and Appreciation* to **IHRSA** for all it does for all of us. And, sincere *Thanks and Appreciation* to my son, **Justin**, who has become our Publisher and is a truly great partner. You name it and Justin does it each and every month!

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

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

Norm Cates, Jr.

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CELEBRATING 29 YEARS OF TRUST

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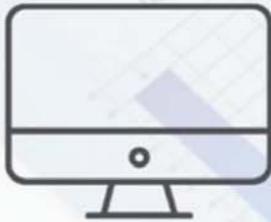
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Exercise IS Medicine

By: **Mike Alpert**

When I was a kid growing up, I don't ever remember hearing the words *Alzheimer's* or *Dementia*. I heard about mental illness but not a specific disease that caused the progressive mental deterioration that occurs in middle or old age due to generalized degeneration of the brain. It is the most common cause of premature senility. And, it seems that we are hearing more and more about people being affected by this awful disease all the time.

We all know the powerful effect that exercise has on health, but when we think about exercise, we mostly think about heart and lungs, better sleep, more energy, maintaining a healthy weight, muscle mass and bone strength, and certainly during COVID, the undeniable importance of a strong and healthy immune system. Although these are all true, we rarely think about the immediate effects that exercise can have on the most important organ in our bodies: **the brain**.

The brain is not a muscle; it is actually a complex organ that controls thought, memory, emotion, touch, motor skills, vision, breathing, temperature, hunger and every process that regulates our body. Together, the brain and spinal cord that extends from it make up the central nervous system (CNS).

If you are reading my article, I encourage you to click on the following link and watch this short video on the powerful affect of exercise on the brain. It is a *TED Talk* that **Wendy Suzuki, PhD**,

who is a *Neuroscientist and Professor of Neural Science and Psychology in the Center for Neural Science at New York University* did. Check it out at bit.ly/clubinsider140.

In her talk, Wendy speaks about how exercise boosts your brain health. The following are the four main points of her talk:

1. It decreases feelings of anxiety. When you move, a number of beneficial neurotransmitters get released into your brain. These substances can decrease feelings of anxiety and depression.

2. It improves your focus and concentration. A single workout can help improve your ability to shift and focus attention. And, it can also improve your reaction time.

3. It promotes the growth of new brain cells. This is one of the most significant benefits of exercise, because scientists have found that it promotes neurogenesis or the birth of new brain cells. This is extremely important because it is essential to improving cognitive function.

4. It protects your brain from aging and neurodegenerative diseases. Like working out your muscles, the more workout you put into it, the stronger and bigger it gets.

Longitudinal studies in humans suggest that regular exercise can increase the size of the hippocampus and prefrontal

cortex, both of which are susceptible to neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's.

It all seems to make sense that, just like the muscles and bones in our bodies, our mental health needs attention as well. The bottom line is the more we exercise and are active, the better quality of life we will have. But, don't wait, promote and start exercise programs for your members who are entering middle age and older. Although they need help with balance and core strength in order to reduce the occurrence of falls, they also need help with their brain health.

As kids, we were taught to eat carrots to build and maintain healthy brains. Today, we know that it is not carrots, it is *Exercise!*

Exercise IS Medicine.



Mike Alpert

(Mike Alpert is the COO of Smart Health Clubs. He can be contacted at mike@smarthealthclubs.com or 951 - 205 - 1136.)

Club Insider Seeks Contributing Authors

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Jonas Fitness, Inc. Announces Tony Autin as President

WEBSTER, TX - Jonas Fitness, Inc., a leading provider in enterprise club management software and payment solutions, announces **Tony Autin** as *President* of the organization. Autin, who has held the role of Executive Vice President of Research and Development at Jonas Fitness, Inc. since 2020, will assume official responsibility for the company's overall leadership and direction. He will also work closely with the executive team to formulate and implement ongoing strategic plans.

Autin replaces longtime industry veteran, **Scott Burgess**, who will move to the Jonas Software Group Leader role, where he will be supporting the President of Jonas Fitness Member Solutions and the newly created payment facilitator Jonas Financial Services. In this new role, Burgess will work closely with Autin to execute its strategic initiatives and support

JFI's continued growth.

Before joining Jonas Fitness, Inc., Autin was the Director of IT for InnoSoft Canada, Inc. Autin's background includes 14 years of experience in directorial support and implementation of software and services in the health, fitness, and information technology industries. In addition to Autin's professional experience, his academic background includes a Bachelor of Mathematics degree from Louisiana State University.

"I could not be prouder of the work that Scott and I have done to address the difficulties of the pandemic, and I look forward to continuing that partnership with this change. It's an honor to lead Jonas Fitness in this new opportunity. We are looking forward to the future, and I anticipate meeting and surpassing our clients' expectations as a pillar of our business," said Tony Autin.



...Crunch Honored

continued from page 3

franchisors are full of grit and innovation. They will tackle everything with the spirit of entrepreneurship because that is what's at their core."

Throughout its 43 years, *Entrepreneur's Franchise 500* has become a dominant competitive measure for franchisors and a primary research tool for potential franchisees. The company's 43-year-old ranking formula includes

research and assessment from the editorial team on franchise costs and fees, size and growth, support, brand strength, and financial strength and stability.

To view Crunch in the full ranking, visit www.entrepreneur.com/franchise500. To learn more about Crunch franchising opportunities, visit CrunchFranchise.com.

See the **Crunch Franchise Ad** on the **Inside Front Cover of This Edition**.

...Norm's Notes

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On the phone with Red to congratulate him on his 59-year run at his club, Red told me that, last year, he had a *nasty two-week battle with the COVID-19*. Thank GOD he also told me that he beat it, which is not surprising for me, even with Red now being 86 years old and working in his club like clockwork for 59 years. Over the 29 years we've been producing *Club Insider*, I've had a chance to go down to Lafayette, Louisiana to visit Red's club and spend the night at Red and his lovely and kind wife, **EMMA's**, home. Seeing his club is a true thrill as it is about 220,000 square feet, and he has over 10,000 members. The name of his club is: **RED's**. I've also had a chance to fly with Red in his Bi-Plane, one of those WWI two-wing aircraft. Since I'm a former airline pilot, the flights were a real hoot to say the least. Red's also a member of the **Faust Roundtable #1**, which Red and I were a member of when at a meeting in Chicago, one day, our group dreamed up *Club Insider*. And, now, I've been publishing it for 29 years! **THANKS to RED and the entire Faust Roundtable #1 for helping me create and start up Club Insider. And, may Dr. GERRY FAUST REST IN PEACE. THANKS PROFESSOR!**

■ This from **ANDY BERG**, *Executive Editor*, of our friend, **PETE BROWN's Athletic Business Magazine**, who shared this: **Planet Fitness CEO: Zero Locations Closed**. The fitness industry was hit hard during the pandemic, with IHRSA reporting that 22% of gyms closed permanently, but one franchise is now claiming that it has been relatively unscathed by COVID-19. Speaking to *Yahoo Finance Live*, **Planet Fitness CEO, CHRIS RONDEAU**, said that his company didn't lose any locations over the past two years. "I am extremely happy to say we lost no gyms in the pandemic. Of the 22% of the open gyms that had closed permanently during the pandemic, we lost none," said Rondeau. Yahoo reported that Planet Fitness currently operates **2,254** locations. Rondeau says the company is doubling down on its success with planned new investments in the business. He said Planet Fitness will **spend \$800 million to acquire Sunshine Fitness**, which will **add 100 company-operated locations to the company's portfolio**. After the Sunshine deal closes, Rondeau estimates that about 10% of Planet Fitness locations will be company-operated rather than franchisee-led. "Those franchisees have been some of our best-performing in the system," Rondeau said of the Sunshine deal. Rondeau suggested Planet Fitness' success is reason for investors to be optimistic. "We believe investors should appreciate that Planet Fitness has: (1) a capital-light, low-risk, defensible model with attractive pricing, (2) a large and growing unit presence, (3) an advertising flywheel and expanding affinity network,

and (4) enhanced digital strategies that reduce friction," said *Jefferies Analyst, RANDAL KONIK*.

■ **BREAKING NEWS!!!** I, for one, have never been a big fan of **PELOTON**, because I've always believed that they were competitors of my friends... **YES... you folks who own and operate health and fitness clubs across the country and around the world are my friends**. Well, on January 20, it was announced that *Peloton has shut down new production of bikes and treadmills*. **CNBC's LAUREN THOMAS**, wrote, and I quote: "**Peloton to halt production of its bikes, treadmills as demand wanes**." Then, there was this, and I quote: "*However, Peloton said, the latest forecast doesn't take into account any impact to demand the company might see when it begins to charge customers an extra \$250 in delivery and setup fees for its Bike, and another \$350 for its Treadmills, beginning at the end of this month.*" Peloton stock has been on the decline for some time, down from its all-time high of **\$166.57** to around **\$32** the day of the CNBC report. Following the report's release, it cratered to **\$23.25** with some recovery the following day. **Stay Tuned Folks!**

■ **HERB LIPSMAN**, *our friend and busy author*, wrote a comment for us last month, and it was so good that I asked Herb for one more from him this month. He's extracting these comments from his new book: **CARING... the Sequel**. Herb writes:

Last month, in *Club Insider*, I wrote about how to "**Be a Better Boss**." This month, I'd like to make some recommendations for "**Being a Better Co-Worker**." Each of us can probably think of one or two friends at work who, despite whatever misery comes their way, always seem to make the best of the situation and maintain their positive outlook and demeanor. What is it about these remarkable co-workers that make them a joy to work with and what can we learn from them?

1. They treat everyone they meet cordially with dignity and respect at all times, no matter what the person's position in the company. In other words, they treat the lowest paid employee with the same respect that they treat the CEO or boss.
2. They are totally trustworthy in all aspects of their life, such that co-workers know they can trust them with sensitive information.
3. They are naturally positive people (it's in their DNA) who take joy in virtually everything they do. This may be difficult for some of us to replicate, but it is definitely helpful to acknowledge it and strive to emulate their "glass half full" attitude.
4. They love to serve others, and they demonstrate this throughout every day, by jumping in to help with manual labor, filling

in when others "call out," gladly taking on the dirtiest jobs.

5. They regularly recognize and show their appreciation for their teammates providing a lift to everyone on the team.
6. They accept the blame and hold themselves accountable when things go wrong rather than pointing blame.
7. They take a sincere personal interest in each of their teammates, wanting to know about the things which matter most to their teammates outside of the workplace.

8. They are extraordinarily dependable and rarely call out except when truly sick or due to serious emergencies.

9. They are problem-solvers... not "problem-identifiers."

10. Their enthusiasm is contagious and lifts everyone around them.

I'm not saying that we all have to demonstrate 100% of these special qualities and character traits all the time, but I do assert that being mindful about how (See *Norm's Notes Page 8*)



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...Norm's Notes

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we conduct ourselves with each of our co-workers makes a huge difference in the work experience for those around us and morale of the team. "If it is to be...it's up to me!"

Thank you for the contribution Herb! And, folks, be sure to order this book today by emailing Herb at herbnlipsman@gmail.com or going to amzn.to/3mumkTx.

■ Here are some **State by State Legislative Headlines** presented by **IHRSA'S JAKE LANDRY**:

■ **Indiana Considers Bill Expanding Sales Tax to Services;**

■ **South Carolina Considers Bill Restricting Collection of Biometric Data;**

■ **West Virginia Files Bill Requiring Notification Before Auto-Renewal;**

■ **Virginia to Consider Bill Regulating Automatic Renewal of Free Trials;**

■ **Illinois Files Bill Further Regulating Automatic Renewal Contracts.**

IHRSA will continue to actively monitor these and future bills and will provide IHRSA Members with further information and advocacy opportunities as they develop.

IHRSA's JAKE LANDRY can be reached at jlандry@ihrsa.org. If you are a club owner or operator, and you're not an IHRSA Member, we urge you to join

IHRSA today! Just tell Jake that Norm Cates introduced you and he will take it from there!

■ If ever there was a man who was worshipped more in his field of expertise than **COACH JOHN MADDEN**, former Pro Football Head Coach, later on reaching celebrity status in broadcasting and then becoming a superstar developer and owner in the world of entrepreneurship, with his now world-famous *Madden Game Series*, I would like to know who that man is. The NFL lost an iconic figure on **December 28, 2021** when **COACH JOHN MADDEN** unexpectedly passed away at the age of **85**. According to **CYDNEY HENDERSON** of *USA TODAY Sports*, just three days before Madden passed away, he had a simple request and that was he wanted to spend **Christmas** surrounded by his family and friends watching the *FOX Sports' "All Madden" documentary*. **May Coach John Madden Rest In Peace.**

■ Then... the ink wasn't even dry on the previous **Norm's Note** before it was announced that **DAN REEVES**, the great NFL Football Coach, had passed away at age **77**. Folks, this is more sad/bad news for the world and the NFL, and if you're a fan, then you're very sad with me about this news. **May Coach DAN REEVES Rest In Peace.**

■ Speaking previously of football, here's a **Special Note** about a special guy who plays football and is also a doctor. His name is **LAURENT DUVERNAY-TARDIF**, and he's a Canadian medical school graduate who was drafted by the Kansas City Chiefs in the sixth round of the 2014 NFL Draft.

Make It Fun!

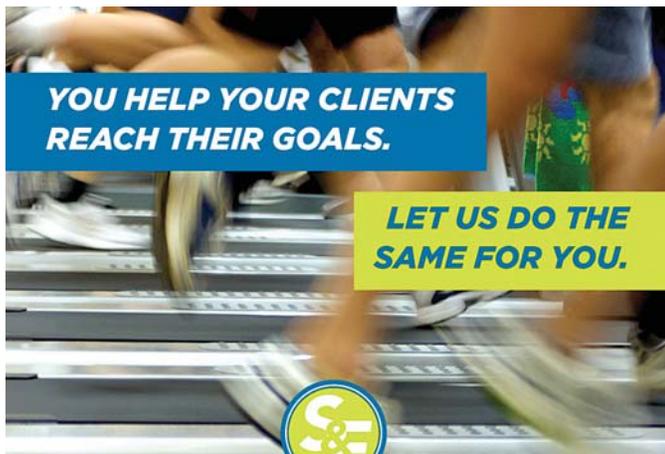
Later, he was traded to the New York Jets. On January 4, 2021, **Laurent**, who goes by **Larry** was featured on *NBC Nightly News*, because last year, he decided to leave pro football to practice medicine. His special decision was attributed to have happened because he wanted to help people during the COVID Pandemic. So, folks, here's a **Tip of My Black Hat to Larry!**

■ **JUSTIN** and I want to say **Thanks for reading Club Insider!**

■ **Are you a Paid Subscriber?** *Club Insider* is a *Paid Subscription-based Publication*. 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*, so you are not enjoying the full benefits of a *Paid Subscription to Club Insider*, which includes **new print and online editions and online access to ALL PREVIOUS editions**. So, don't delay, subscribe today for just **\$99 for one year** or **\$10 a month** by going to www.clubinsideronline.com/subscribe.

■ **God bless our troops, airmen and sailors worldwide and keep them safe. Thank you, Congratulations and Welcome Home to all of our troops who have served around the world. God bless America's Policemen and women and Firemen and women; keep them safe. Finally, God bless you, your family, your club(s) and your members. God Bless America! Laus Deo!**

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 47-year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. He is the Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993 of *Club Insider*, now in its 29th year of monthly publication. In 1981, he was IHRSA's First President, and a Co-Founder of the Association with Rick Caro and five others. In 2001, he was honored by IHRSA with its **DALE DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award**, one of its highest honors. And, in 2017, he was honored with *Club Industry's Lifetime Achievement Award*. He can be reached by phone at **770-635-7578** or email at Norm@clubinsideronline.com.)



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...Brick Power

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decommissioned, and Mom didn't know if she would ever see him again. But, he did return for her, this time as a civilian and the *Director of the Army Corp of Engineers*, headquartered in Manila. He was transferred to Okinawa, where I was born and then to Hawaii, where I spent my early elementary school years. I was there when Hawaii became a State! He was eventually transferred to Washington, D.C., and I ended up growing up in Silver Spring, Maryland.

C.I. - Wow! I know a little bit about that military life, especially the part about living in Okinawa! Lynne, how about you?

Lynne Brick (LB) - I was born in an Army hospital in Fort Sill, Oklahoma exactly two and a half years and ten minutes after Victor was born! My dad was a *Lieutenant* in the Army and was stationed in Germany for the first three years of my life. Both of my parents grew up in Pittsburgh, but we eventually settled in Maryland. So, I grew up in Timonium, a suburb of Baltimore.

C.I. - Victor and Lynne, where did you go to school, and what did you study? Did you play any sports?

VB - I started at the *University of Delaware* where I played basketball. I hurt my knee and ended up transferring to *Towson University* where I ran track and where I met Lynne. I'll tell you that story later.

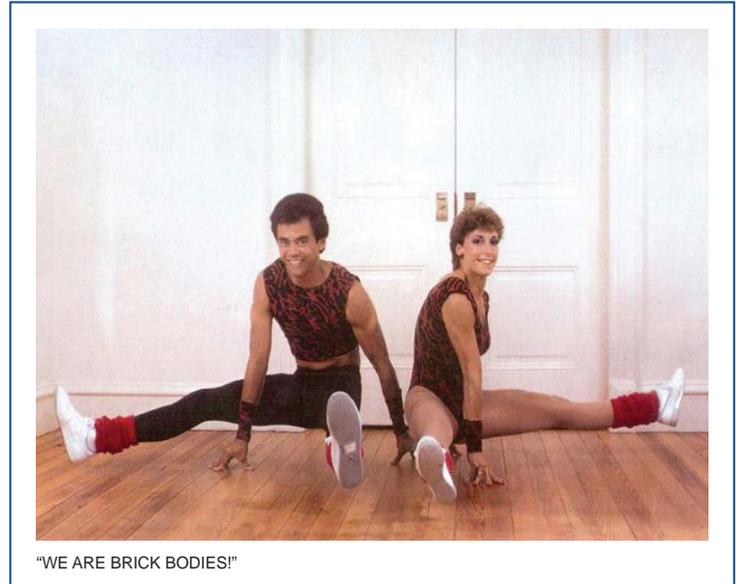
LB - I went to *Towson University* as well with the intention of majoring in medical technology. Then, I got a job at a local hospital and realized that being isolated in a lab by myself was really not my cup of tea. So, I changed my major to nursing. Because I changed my major, I had an extra year of college, so I played tennis my last year. I was also in the dance company.

VB - No story about college is complete

without how we met. I was playing basketball in the gym one day, and this beautiful girl in leotards and tights walked through heading to the dance studio. Somebody whistled at her, and instead of just looking away, she turned and smiled. I thought she was smiling right at me! I turned to my buddy, Dave Schwartz, who is still a dear friend, and said, 'See that girl... I'm going to marry her!' I had never seen her before in my life. I didn't even know her name. But, I knew I was going to marry her, and I did!

C.I. - WOW, Victor! That's a *truly classic and beautiful story* about how you two met!
LB - That was 1974. We got married in 1978, and I started working as a *Nurse* at the University of Maryland Shock Trauma Unit, the first shock trauma unit in the world. Victor was working as a *Recreation Director* for Baltimore County. I was making more money than he was! We started our fitness business in 1982 as a part-time aerobics business where we rented racquetball courts in local racquetball clubs. I taught all the classes and Victor, the marketing genius, promoted the business. That was the Jane Fonda era of aerobics! Our daughter, **Vicki**, had just been born in 1981. She runs our *Brick Bodies* division now.

VB - We had this part-time aerobic business, and Lynne was teaching 22 classes a week. People were paying us \$39 cash money to take our class. Some way, some how Lynne got pregnant! (**Lynne**: With Baby #2, our son, **Jon**). All of a sudden, she couldn't teach any classes, so there went our income! So, we had a choice. We were kind of like **Yogi Berra**: 'When you come to a fork in the road, take it!' The two choices were: (1) Give up on fitness and go back to being a Nurse and a Recreation Director, or (2) Get serious about this fitness thing and follow our dream. We made the decision... *Follow our dream!* We borrowed \$125,000 from my parents and bought *The Padonia*



"WE ARE BRICK BODIES!"

Fitness Center in 1985.

Brick Bodies Is Born

C.I. - When and how did you and Lynne create *Brick Bodies*?

VB - In 1984, when we were trying to build our part-time aerobic business, I saw an ad in *Fit Magazine* for the first-ever *FitAerobic National Championships*. I talked Lynne into entering, and she put together a routine in one week and flew out to San Francisco for herself (we didn't have the money for me to go with her) where she finished third! We got a lot of local publicity because of it. A few months later, **Karen and Howard Schwartz** came up with a different competition called the *Crystal Light National Aerobics Championships*, and Lynne and I entered in the doubles competition because I figured we had to get some male presence in our business. I was always the 'marketing genius.' (*Victor, Lynne and Norm laugh*) We went down to Miami as a pair, and I wore a leopard-skin, midriff-showing leotard, tights and leopard-skin leg warmers! You have to pay money to see that picture, though! (*everyone laughs again*)

We're at the competition in North Miami and **Bess Motta**, the TV personality who was the Master of Ceremonies, asked everybody who they were, where they were from and the name of their company. Well, we didn't really have a name. Here we are at the base of the steps getting ready to go up on stage to do our routine, and I say, 'What are we going to call ourselves?' Lynne says, 'We're both Bricks.' Then I said, 'Why don't we call ourselves *Brick Bodies*?' So, we go up on stage, and Bess Motta sticks the mic in Lynne's face and asks her who we are and where we are from. Lynne replies, 'We are Lynne and Victor Brick from Baltimore, and *WE ARE BRICK BODIES!*' She has been saying that ever since. By the way, we placed second in the competition, and the

publicity we received really helped launch our careers.

LB - Three years ago, we were in the *Aventura Mall* here in Miami with industry friends **Christophe and Claudie Andanson** from France, and as we walked into the huge rotunda area, I said to Victor, 'THIS is where we did that aerobics competition!!!'

VB - And, we live ten miles from there now!

C.I. - That's a great story! Please describe a typical *Brick Bodies* facility. How many *Brick Bodies* locations are now in operation and across what geographic areas are they located?

VB - A typical *Brick Bodies* facility is a 40,000 - 60,000 square-foot, multi-service facility. It is a classic 'Big-Box' facility. Our differentiation, of course, is that it's a family-run-business. Our daughter, **Vicki**, has been the *CEO* since 2014. Then, of course, there is our group exercise and small group training, which carries on the tradition of excellence started by Lynne, who at one time was the *IDEA International Aerobic Instructor of the Year*.

C.I. - Victor, I think I recall reading that you have seven *Brick Bodies* locations. Is that correct?

VB - Norm, before the Pandemic, we had seven, but we are now down to three, all in the Baltimore area. COVID has hit our mid-market *Brick Bodies* clubs much more than our *High-Volume, Low-Price (HVLPL) Planet Fitness* clubs. On average, our 81 *Planet Fitness* clubs are at 85% to 97% of pre-COVID numbers for usage and over 100% for EBITDA. Many are ahead of pre-COVID numbers for sales and retention, so we couldn't be happier! And, we opened eight new *Planet Fitness* locations in 2021 *DURING COVID!!!* We will open at least 20 (See *Brick Power* Page 12)



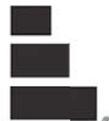
Welcome to *Brick Bodies* (L to R) - Victor, Lynne and Vicki Brick



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STEPFITNESS

...Brick Power

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in 2022. Many of those will be in Australia with our Australian Planet Fitness partners, *Bravo-Fit*, who also operate a Planet Fitness franchise in Oregon. Besides Australia, we have Planet Fitness clubs in Maryland, D.C., Florida, Tennessee, Washington and California.

During COVID, Vicki decided to focus on our stronger Brick Bodies clubs, and that meant our bigger clubs. Currently, she is putting \$3 million worth of renovations into our three remaining clubs because she believes in the product and feels the brand is still very compelling.

A Life Well Lived

C.I. - At still a young age, you two have already lived a fulfilling life, changing the lives of others. And, you aren't done yet! Our communication about longevity is how we ended up doing this cover story with you. *There's an awful lot to learn on the subject of longevity.* How about if you start by telling us about **Dr. Roizen's 32 Rules for a Younger You** (View the **Sidebar on This Page**).

LB - Dr. Roizen is the former Chief Wellness Officer of the World Famous Cleveland Clinic and a personal friend. We recently heard him speak on longevity at the 2021 Global Wellness Summit in Boston, where he was the MC and keynote speaker. He started his presentation by stating that there is **HOPE for EVERYONE**. He said that, until recently, it was common practice to say *60 was the new 40*. He is now saying that **90 is going to be the new 40!!!**

VB - Dr. Roizen said that, historically, the average life expectancy in the U.S. has increased two years every decade since the start of the industrial revolution, and it is now about 79 years old. Because of

dramatic advancements in science and technology **and** an increased awareness of the benefits of health and fitness, much of which is due to COVID, from 2020 to 2030, the average life expectancy will increase **30 YEARS to 110!**

C.I. - **WOW!** *That's some really exciting stuff!*

VB - Once you realize you will probably live to be 105 to 110 no matter what, it changes your whole perspective on how you're going to take care of yourself. It changes how you are going to manage your time, and it changes your approach to your health and wellbeing. For example, you could have multiple careers *after* the age of 70! You could make such a difference in the world if you live that long. And, of course, you could have many more great memories with family and friends. But, **ONLY** if you are physically **and** mentally able to enjoy those years. The **KEY** that I got from Dr. Roizen's presentation was to start thinking that you **WILL** live to be 110, and to start thinking of all the things you should be doing **TODAY** so that you can live a healthy and productive life in your latter years! *That's really mind blowing!*

C.I. - Yes, it really is! And, it's really an amazing series of thoughts to be having. When I look at myself from my own personal point of view, the one thing that I have helping me with the idea of accomplishing anything like this is heredity. My Dad lived to be 93, and we believe he would have made it to 100, for sure, had he not had a freak accident when he one day set his pants leg on fire. This required a hospital stay where he eventually succumbed to pneumonia.

VB - Norm, you've got **multiple** things going for you, as do most people. But, they don't even realize it. Here are three things most people have going for them to help them extend their lives:

(See **Brick Power** Page 13)

Dr. Roizen's 32 Rules for a Younger You

1. BP: Systolic <130, diastolic<85;
2. BMI: 21-29.9, or waist < ½ height;
3. FBS: <107 or HgBA1C <6.4;
4. LDL: <130 or <100 (Now <100, <70 elsewhere);
5. No cotinine in urine;
6. Stress management program completed (asthma management);
7. See primary care provider;
8. Immunizations;
9. **Manage Stress - friends and purpose;**
10. Four components of physical activity: **Strength training;**
11. Four components of physical activity: **Cardiovascular training;**
12. Four components of physical activity: **Flexibility training;**
13. Four components of physical activity: **Balance training;**
14. Do "speed of processing" games, like Double Decision and Freeze Frame;
15. Eat salmon or ocean trout or 900mg DHA;
16. Eat only when the sun is up;
17. Avoid snake oil foods;
18. **Give sleep respect;**
19. Avoid toxins (tobacco, vapes, BPA, texting, wallet-biopsy supplements);
20. Drink coffee if you're a *fast metabolizer* - no additives;
21. Enjoy nuts;
22. Enjoy blueberries;
23. Take the Fab 8+;
24. Stay up to date on Rx's for aging;
25. Do preventive procedures;
26. **Enjoy an infrared sauna for 20 minutes, four times each week;**
27. Decrease inflammation - Floss;
28. See a dental pro;
29. Keep immunizations up to date;
30. Smell the roses (olfactory);
31. Keep hearing (music stimulation);
32. Eyesight.



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1. Science: Not everybody has heredity going for them, so that's a good thing for you. But, everyone has science going for them. Science is advancing to the point where they will be able to treat almost all serious illnesses and disease and dramatically extend life expectancy by that fact alone. And, I don't mean hooked up to a ventilator in a hospital bed; I mean being active and happy. There will be improved treatments for Alzheimer's and dementia. They will simplify joint replacements (this is already happening) and be able to control pain (again, this is already happening). They will develop vaccines to prevent cancer and use targeted treatments based on gene therapy so people that DO have cancer will either not have to go through chemo or will be administered chemo that only attacks the cancer cells and does not 'nuke' the entire body.

2. Support System: Most people have a support system going for them, IF they take advantage of it. They not only have a support system of family and friends, but one day very soon we hope they have more access to fitness trainers qualified to help their clients with longevity and wellness, and not just appearance and weightloss.

This is one of the opportunities for the fitness industry. We need to become a critical part of people's support systems.

3. Frame of Mind: The third thing most people have going for them, IF they choose it, and I know YOU have it going for you, Norm, is the *RIGHT frame of mind*. As **Henry Ford** said, 'If you think you can or think you can't, you're probably right.' Norm, if I tell you you're going to live to be 110, you get *excited!!!* But, when I tell some people they're going to live to be 110, you know what they say? *'I hope NOT!'* You know why? Because their vision of living to be 110 is somebody in a nursing home confined to a wheelchair! But, it doesn't have to be that way. When you age, you should fall off a ledge, not go down a long, slippery slope. It should be one day you're playing tennis, and the next week, people are saying, 'Hey, did you hear about Vic? He died in his sleep!' 'Really? I just saw him playing tennis... he was 115!' (I am going to *beat the average*). There's no reason why, as you age, you go into this long decline of hopelessness and despair. But, that's what many people think of when they think of living to 110. When I think of 110, I think of who I am now, because I'm almost 70, and I'm still thinking the same way I was when I was 35, when Lynne and I started our business. Sure, I am a little older and

have slowed down a bit, but I still have the same energy and approach to life. *'Do not go gentle into that good night. Rage, rage against the dying of the light!'*

C.I. - Victor, I really appreciate the thinking process you're sharing with us here.

VB - Most people need to reorient their thinking. If you are going to live to be 110, you have to start taking care of yourself *NOW* so you can enjoy life when you get there. And, I mean taking care of yourself in every way. For example, let's look at something as simple as taking care of your teeth. How many people do you know who didn't take care of their teeth because they say, 'Ahhhh, I don't have time,' etc. Then, they get into their 50s and 60s and start losing their teeth or having major dental problems. Boy do they regret it! How much more will they regret it if they live to 110!? That extends to everything. So, start taking care of yourself *TODAY* because you are going to be around a lot longer than you think.

LB - The bottom line, Norm, is that *Self Care* is as equally important as Health Care. As Dr. Roizen said, you have control to be your own **'Genetic Engineer.'** In other words, you can change the way your genes express themselves through your lifestyle choices.

VB - Norm, everybody knows about genetics. However, many people don't understand the new field of *epigenetics*. Genetics is what you are born with. Epigenetics is how your genes express themselves. For example, if you have a gene for high cholesterol, but you do the right things, such as eat well, exercise, get good sleep and reduce stress, that gene may never express itself. To a great extent, you can control your gene expression through lifestyle choices. **STOP BEING A VICTIM!** Too many people go through life being a victim! Norm, You played football. What did they tell you before every football game... **'Be the hammer... Don't be the nail!'**

Dr. Roizen's 32 Rules for a Younger You

C.I. - Let's examine some of the 32 points on Dr. Roizen's list. Among the 32, which do you believe are the five most important points for people to follow who want to live a long and healthy life (View the **Sidebar** on the **Opposite Page**).

LB - From our perspective, we feel that **#9 - Manage Stress** is *really critical*. Dr. Roizen includes having friends and having a sense of *PURPOSE* help to manage stress. Then, **#10 - #13**, which are the **four components of physical activity: strength training**, (See **Brick Power** Page 14)

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cardiovascular training, flexibility training and balance training. And, as a bonus, #18 - **Give Sleep Respect**. Sleep is really your body's way to heal itself and to prepare for the next day, every single day. *Sleep deprivation is becoming epidemic.*

VB - Sleep is the most underrated part of self care. It is essential for good physical AND mental health.

LB - Those are our *Top Six*. I would like to add a seventh: #26 - **Enjoy an infrared sauna for 20 minutes four times each week.**

VB - The medicinal effects of infrared sauna are much greater than a normal sauna because radiant heat penetrates deep into the joints, muscle and tissue. Traditional saunas heat from the outside in. Infrared saunas heat from the inside out. Heat is, of course, therapeutic. It helps reduce inflammation, which therefore helps eliminate pain. Pain retards healing and can also cause emotional issues such as depression. We have an infrared sauna in our house in Baltimore, and we have one in our condo in Miami Beach, so we sauna almost every night!

All of these practices are examples of **SELF CARE! Take control of your own health and wellbeing.** Don't abdicate complete control of your health to medical professionals. Health care by it's very definition focuses on illness. Self care focuses on wellness. Do the things you need to do so you can **'Die young as OLD as possible!'**

C.I. - Wow! What a *great* slogan that is!
VB and LB - YES, it is!

C.I. - Victor and Lynne, while you have pointed out that Dr. Roizen's 32 points are critical in maintaining good health, you have also pointed out that, as part of your philosophy of aging, there are two things you believe are important to help you, *'die young as old as possible.'*

VB - That's right, Norm. The *first* is the concept of a **long time horizon**. It's important to realize you may live to be 110 and start doing things *NOW* that will allow you to live an active, fulfilling life right up until the time comes to, 'cash in your chips.' **Lou Holtz** calls that the **WIN Philosophy**. **What's Important Now** to live a long, happy, active life?

The *second* is the concept of **positive stress**. In order to maintain optimum mental and physical health into your early 100s, you need to understand the *Yerkes-Dodson Law of Positive Stress*, which states, 'Performance increases with physiological or mental arousal (stress) but only up to a point.' Too little stress; no improvement. And, too much stress actually hurts improvement. In other words, you must put yourself under some stress

both physically and mentally to improve or maintain physical and mental performance: *Positive Stress*. There is a little bit of truth to, 'no pain, no gain', but again, only to a point.

C.I. - So, Lynne, *what are those physical and mental exercises and activities to maintain your total health?*

LB - The **good news** is you can reverse the aging process at any age. I will start by saying that, to maintain your total health, you really need to start with what we call: **The Fab 4** (#10 - 13 of Dr. Roizen's list, mentioned earlier):

1. Strength Training - Strength training is critical to prevent sarcopenia, which is the natural loss of muscle mass as we age. Most people lose 1/2 a pound of muscle every year after the age of 30 **UNLESS** they strength train. Here's the good news. Regardless of when someone starts strength training, **even at the age of 89**, they can still reverse the aging process! Strength training is critical!

2. Cardiovascular Training - You don't have to spend hours on a piece of cardio equipment, running or doing group exercise classes to get cardiovascular benefit. High intensity interval cardio training done for 20 to 22 minutes will help build heart health and help you receive positive hormonal responses. When you work out at moderate to intense levels for short workout intervals, you produce hormones that can retard aging. Specifically, cardiovascular interval training helps to produce human growth hormones (HGH). By the way, walking at a low cadence has been shown to only be 1/4 as effective as moderate to strenuous exercise in reversing or slowing the aging process. *Positive Stress*.

3. Flexibility Training - When people think about flexibility, they think holding a stretch for 30 seconds is a long time. In our Yin Yoga sessions, Victor and I hold each stretch for five to six minutes. It takes that long to go from stretching the muscles to stretching the fascia and the connective tissue. The former is temporary. The latter is permanent.

4. Balance Training - Balance is one of the key areas that declines as you age. Balance training every single day will help prevent those unwanted accidental falls, which can cause secondary complications such as fractures and back injuries. In addition, due to sarcopenia, many older people really struggle getting up after they fall.

VB - For many people, *losing cognitive function is an even bigger fear than losing physical ability*. In order to understand how to 'train your mind,' it is important to understand the concept of *neuroplasticity*. Simply put, neuroplasticity states that your brain has the ability to learn indefinitely! The old concept that, 'You can't teach an old dog new tricks,' couldn't be further from

the truth. In other words, Norm, you can learn to play a musical instrument when you are 100 years old. You can learn a foreign language. You can learn how to dance. You can learn how to paint or draw.

So, what are those things that you should be doing to stimulate neuroplasticity and maintain mental acuity? **READ!!!** Read novels and books. **Learn something new. Learn to play an instrument. Learn to paint. Learn how to dance.** Lynne and I are taking social dance classes now. **Think. DO crossword puzzles. Travel.** Finally, the big sleeper in this list of recommendations is... **SLEEP!!!** You don't think of sleep as being important to maintaining mental acuity and neuroplasticity, but it could be the single most important thing. Your brain regenerates itself when you sleep.

VB and LB (*laughing*) - So, Norm, after this interview, we are going to quiz you on the definition of: *neuroplasticity, sarcopenia, epigenetics, salutogenics*, etc.

An Appeal to the Fitness Industry to Collaborate More with the Wellness Industry

VB - Norm, what's really disappointed us is how little our fitness industry has embraced the Wellness Community and concepts such as *Self Care* and *Longevity*, epitomized in things like *Dr. Roizen's 32 Rules for a Younger You* and scientific information included in publications like the **John W. Brick Foundation's Move Your Mental Health Report**. For example, depression and anxiety are the two main forms of mental illness affecting people today, especially during COVID. The *Move Your Mental Health Report* shows conclusively that BOTH can be addressed by movement.

The mental and emotional benefits of exercise and movement are things we should be promoting to the general public instead of the traditional 'get bigger' (body building), 'get smaller' (weight loss) mentality. The funny thing is this is what the public wants. The international research firm, *Euromonitor*, did a survey for the *Global Wellness Summit* on exercise. When asked why they worked out, **66% or two-thirds** of 10,000 international respondents across the four major demographic groups, that being the Boomers (58 - 75+), Gen X (42 - 57), Gen Y/Millennials (26 - 41) and Gen Z (10 - 25), all said the same thing: **For Mental Wellbeing. Not to lose weight. Not to look better. Mental Wellbeing.** And, that was BEFORE COVID. How much more now?

There are so many resources from the wellness community that could be used to further the credibility of the fitness industry. So many people say the same thing, 'Everybody knows the benefits of exercise on physical and mental health...' Well, IF everybody *knows* it, why aren't insurance companies *paying* for it? Why did they close us down during the start of COVID? Why do they classify us as non-

essential along with bars and restaurants? Why are we struggling so hard with getting positive health club legislation and Government financial support? It's because **WE SAY IT and THEY DON'T BELIEVE IT!** We need to do a better PR job of presenting our case. For instance, research proves conclusively that exercise and movement helps with mental wellbeing, depression and anxiety! We just have to promote it better.

The John W. Brick Mental Health Foundation

C.I. - Please tell us about the **John W. Brick Mental Health Foundation**. Who established the Foundation? Why was it established and when? What's the goal of the Foundation?

VB - Norm, the *John W. Brick Mental Health Foundation* was established by Lynne and myself in 2015. It's named after my Brother, **John**, who suffered from schizophrenia his entire life and died from complications of the disease. In all the years of his treatment, sometimes in the best hospitals and institutions in the world, he was *never* given a fully integrated program that included things like exercise, nutrition and mind-body practices, *along with* psychoanalysis, medication and institutionalization. It was always just psychoanalysis, medication and institutionalization. Unfortunately, these are *STILL* the three main ways people are treated for mental health issues today! We started the *John W. Brick Mental Health Foundation* to change that. Our **BHAG (Big, Hairy, Audacious Goal)**, is to **change the way the world treats mental health**. Our **Mission** is *integrating salutogenic (wellness) processes, such as exercise, nutrition and mind-body practices, into the treatment of mental illness and the promotion of mental wellness*. And, how do we do that?

1. Funding Research - We are funding a \$1.2 million study at the *University of California, San Francisco*, to test how three different forms of movement affect depression. They are the *Wim Hof Method*, High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT) and meditation. **Wim Hof**, also known as the Ice Man, includes in his *Wim Hof Method* (WHM) cold showers, ice baths and deep breathing/breath holding. Both Lynne and I can hold our breath for well over three minutes! We take cold showers every day and do ice baths on occasion as well. **Wim** says this allows you to access your body's autonomic nervous system. *Positive Stress!*

2. Creating Programs - Our big initiative this year is to develop a *'Mental Well-Being Fitness Trainer Certification Program.'*

3. Serving as a collaborative hub - As a collaborative hub, we work with other organizations to share and promote research, advancements, programs and services in the mental health field. The
(See *Brick Power* Page 15)

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Move Your Mental Health Report is an example of what we do in this area. Our next project is a report compiling the results of studies on nutrition and mental health.

LB - The *Move Your Mental Health Report* is a ground-breaking compilation of thirty years worth of research covering 1,440 studies done on movement and the positive effect it has on mental wellbeing. My favorite comment in the Executive Summary is: *'People meeting criteria for depressive disorder should be prescribed 30 to 45 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise 3 to 5 times per week.'* The key words here are: *moderate to vigorous exercise* as opposed to low intensity exercise such as walking your dog. This presents **ANOTHER GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY FOR OUR INDUSTRY** to realize we can **HELP PEOPLE OVERCOME DEPRESSION**, regardless of where they are on the mental health spectrum, by simply prescribing cardio and strength training together! The research also shows that cardio and strength have a greater effect on depression and mind/body practices, such as yoga and QiGong, are more effective in the treatment of anxiety.

Leadership in the Field of Wellness

C.I. - Let's talk about your leadership role in the field of wellness, in general, and the field of mental health in particular. First, please comment on your leadership role in the field of wellness, starting with your role as a *Member of the Advisory Board of the Global Wellness Summit* and how it affords you the opportunity for interaction with the leaders in the field of wellness around the world.

VB - We initially got involved with wellness through the *Global Wellness Summit*, due to a recommendation from our great friend, **Tony deLeede** to attend their conference in 2017 at the Breakers Resort in Palm Beach, Florida. It was a life-changing experience. One of our personal credos is: *lead, follow or get out of the way.* We realized this was a group that we wanted to be involved with, so we went from being idle spectators (following) to me being on the *Board of Advisors for the Global Wellness Summit* (Leading). By the way, that's where we met Dr. Roizen and Wim Hof, as well as the head researcher for our *UCSF Study*, **Dr. Elissa Epel**, author of the *Telomere Effect*. We think it is sad that Tony, Lynne and I are the **ONLY** members of the fitness industry involved with the *Global Wellness Summit* to this day. Tony is also on the Board.

C.I. - Please share how, as a result of your work in the field of mental health and wellbeing, you and Lynne were honored with the **2020 Debra Simon Award** for leadership in mental health.

VB - Being the recipient of the **2020 Debra Simon Award** for leadership in mental health was quite a surprise for us.

LB - We were very grateful to receive it. It really is a testament to the *John W Brick Foundation* team and all of the energy they put into their work.

VB - When the *CEO of the Global Wellness Summit*, **Susie Ellis**, was announcing the winners of the award, she said it was going to a couple that was very active in the field of mental health. I looked around the room thinking, 'What couple is that?' It turned out to be us!

In Closing

VB - Norm, we'd each like to make a closing comment.

LB - My closing comment is: *'What you do and think today determines your health and wellbeing tomorrow.'*

VB - And, I would like to close with our motivation for why we do what we do. *Start with Why.* Lynne and I believe that, *'Ultimately, you will be judged by what you give back to society.'*

C.I. - Let me close by saying **Thank You** and expressing my **Sincere Appreciation** to you two health and fitness club industry icons and leaders for sharing your wonderful story with all of us and for helping the people on this Earth live better lives.



Thank you to **Victor and Lynne Brick** for their time interviewing for this in-depth cover story, as well as their service to this industry and humanity in general. Thank you also to **Sara Cheek** for her assistance with photos and graphics to accompany the powerful words of this story.

To learn more about the *John W. Brick Mental Health Foundation*, please visit their website at **JohnWBrickFoundation.org**.

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 47-year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. He is the Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993 of Club Insider, now in its 29th year of monthly publication. In 1981, he was IHRSA's First President, and a Co-Founder of the Association with Rick Caro and five others. In 2001, he was honored by IHRSA with its DALE DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award, one of its highest honors. And, in 2017, he was honored with Club Industry's Lifetime Achievement Award. He can be reached by phone at 770-635-7578 or email at Norm@clubinsideronline.com.)



Global Wellness Summit Presents the 2020 Debra Simon Award to Victor and Lynne Brick

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Maximizing YOUR Sales Model

By: **Karen Woodard-Chavez**

There are several sales models in our industry, and the point of this article is not to claim that one is better than another and try to convince you to change your model. The point of this article is to *maximize* whichever model *you utilize* so that you can more effectively grow your business. The three models I most commonly see in this business are outlined below:

1. Full-Service Sales Department -

This model typically employs 1 - 5 salespeople with their primary purpose and job description being to get and keep members. These staff are typically full-time and are responsible for the *Five Core Competencies of Selling*, which are lead generation, appointment setting, face-to-face selling/touring/closing, lead follow-up and business planning as it relates to sales.

2. No Dedicated Sales Team -

This model typically has all sales being done through the reception desk. These staff are responsible for taking orders when a prospective member walks into the club as well as all other reception desk functions.

3. Online Only Sales - This model has no sales team, and all sales are done through the club website.

Note: There are also hybrids of these three models.

The model a club chooses relates to several factors such as level of service they want to offer prospects and members, budget, business model as well as the Founder's personal beliefs/opinions of selling. Let's now compare the advantages and disadvantages with each model, as well as how to maximize each model to increase sales.

Full-Service Sales Department

Advantages: The advantages to this model when the model is *managed correctly* include proactive business growth due to the staff creating business rather than simply waiting for business to walk-in, call-in or for web leads to be distributed. Additionally, the sales staff shares responsibility for lead generation for the business rather than the business bearing 100% of the responsibility for producing business. In this model, stronger follow-up on all leads to get them from prospect to member exists because the sales team wants to earn their commissions. Non-Dues Revenues Sales (NDRS) also increase when NDRS is part of the monthly sales department's goals. This also has a positive impact on retention when the club engages more members in

NDRS and members start seeing better results. Further, as it relates to retention, the Full-Service Sales Department is also responsible for continuing to build relationships (and referrals) with current members. More community relationship building occurs as the sales staff is out in the community building corporate and collaborative relationships in the community to grow business. Finally, better staff coverage occurs as the sales team is often scheduled until 8 or 9 PM in the evening, and they can act as a Manager On Duty (MOD). The compensation for this model is typically a blend of salary (or hourly wage), commission, bonuses and benefits.

Disadvantages: There are two disadvantages to this model which relate to management and hiring. It is a challenge to find people in this industry who love to sell and want to do it full-time. The management issue lies in the fact that, often, not all Five Core Competencies are managed well. When that happens, the sales team is not fully functioning, which results in the department becoming an expensive one to operate if paying commissions, salaries and bonuses when the job is not being fully executed.

Measures to Maximize: (1) Do *not* hire part-time salespeople. This model requires full-time attention to get the job done. If you hire part-time salespeople, lead follow-up and lead generation will falter. Part-time sales people often simply take what is calling in, walking in or web leads. **(2)** Hire a strong Sales Manager who can hire and train salespeople to be very productive. **(3)** Focus on lead follow-up; *wayyyyyy too many* sales get left on the table due to poor follow-up skills. This is a shame as the club/salespeople have already invested in creating that lead and having an initial selling conversation. Do not let good leads go to waste. **(4)** Pay people fairly and pay them well to grow your business. Pay them so they do not want to leave and find another job.

No Dedicated Sales Team

Advantages: The advantages of this model are focused around low-cost and low need for personnel. When this model is utilized, there are NO salespeople. The reception staff, trainer or whomever is on duty at the time a prospect walks in has the selling conversation, may give a tour and takes care of the member agreement and exchange of payment. With this model, there may be a small commission paid to the person who conducts the transaction. This person is typically paid an hourly wage for whatever other job duties they are doing (receptionist or trainer). The club does not

incur additional payroll of a salesperson nor compiling commission reports.

Disadvantages: There are multiple disadvantages to this model. The first is that, while the Founder often feels this is a low-pressure form of operation, it is also a very low level of service to the members. When a prospect who is new to fitness walks into the business, there is not anyone available to give them the time and attention they may need to feel confident in starting an exercise program. Therefore, you may lose that prospect. If your market is the "fit and ready" demographic, then this may not concern you. This model is also very reactionary in that you are reacting to prospects walking into your business. There is no lead generation done by staff because they have no time; it is not their primary focus. The business is responsible for all marketing. Additionally, there is no lead follow-up on prospects, so the business misses out on sales potential. Lastly, the staff often perceives sales as their last priority versus the priority of their job as a trainer or receptionist, which results in a lack of enthusiasm for the selling conversation.

Measures to Maximize: (1) Create a *simple* lead follow-up system to engage the prospects who took the time to respond to your marketing to come back in and join. Organizations such as *Keep Me* can help with this. **(2)** Train staff to understand the difference between someone who is ready to go or someone who may need a bit more time and attention. **(3)** Incentivize staff so that each new member sale means something to them individually, and they *want* to make it happen.

Online Only Sales

Advantages: The advantages of this model are straightforward and three-fold: simplicity, extremely low cost and no sales personnel.

Disadvantages: The disadvantages of this model include no personal contact if the prospect has questions; they need to take an extra step, when initially, the process seemed simple. For others, the online process is intimidating if they have questions/concerns before committing to your program. This is a terrific model if your demographic is younger and tech savvy. If your market is older and perhaps not so tech savvy, this may be a problem for you.

Measures to Maximize: (1) Consider adding a scheduler to your online process. Include the option to meet with someone to discuss questions. Doing this allows you as a business Founder/



Karen Woodard-Chavez

Manager to manage your time effectively knowing when someone is coming in to discuss membership rather than having people simply stop by when you might be occupied with someone/something else. **(2)** Implement a simple lead follow-up system to get prospects who start but bail on the process to take the next step in your process. This will engage them.



As referenced earlier in this article, there are reasons you as a business have chosen the model you are utilizing. Avoid the mistake of doing the "same ol' same ol'" just because "that is how we have always done it." The key is to continually analyze and make adjustments to the model to understand where the model can serve your business and the creation of new sales more effectively.

(Karen is President of Premium Performance Training in Boulder, Colorado and San Jose del Cabo Mexico. She has owned and operated clubs since 1985 and now consults with and trains club staff throughout the world. She provides her services on-site, online, by phone and through her books and manuals. She can be reached at 303-417-0653 or karen@karenwoodard.com.)

Make It Fun!

Top Financing Options For Your Gym Business

By: **Jim Thomas**

Are you seeking financing to open a new gym or expand your current gym business and are wondering where to turn to for funding? Finding financing for a gym business is always a challenge, but as a gym owner, you now have more financing options than ever before thanks to a number of creative web-based businesses offering new alternatives such as crowdfunding and peer-to-peer lending. Banks? They are just the beginning of the journey. Here's an updated guide to gym business financing options you should know about as you seek funding for your gym business:

1. Bank Loans and SBA Loans - The first type of gym business financing that usually comes to mind when you hear the term "small business loan" is a traditional bank loan. Bank loans come in many forms (short-term, long-term) and can be used for a wide variety of purposes (working capital, expansion, equipment purchasing, commercial real estate, etc.). Sometimes, these loans are secured with collateral, sometimes not. What are the most important things to know about small business bank loans? You are going to need to demonstrate stability (in the form of revenue, for example).

As for the best place to get a bank loan, well, that depends on your business needs. Each bank has its own set of offerings and requirements. Regardless of where you go for a loan, though, you are likely to encounter the option to apply for a Small Business Administration (SBA) loan. A popular subtype of bank loans, a large portion of each SBA loan is guaranteed

by the SBA, a government agency that provides resources to gym owners to help them develop strong businesses.

This SBA guarantee makes the idea of lending to gym business owners more appealing to some banks, but the loans can be difficult to get because of the stringent requirements (in order to qualify for an SBA loan, you need to have a decent credit score, measurable cash flow and a solid business plan, among other qualifications). Despite that, SBA loans are attractive to many gym business owners because they offer a lot of options and flexibility in terms of how the funds can be used. What's more, the SBA also offers a variety of loan options for minority gym owners and those that operate in underserved markets.

2. Credit Card Financing - If you need to purchase equipment or materials for your gym business, credit cards, or in a crunch, credit card cash advances, are easily accessible options that save you the trouble of applying for some other type of gym business loan. Credit card financing, however, can be risky, and you should strongly consider only using it for short-term needs. If you go this route, consider paying off the card in time to avoid hefty finance charges and look for cards that offer cash back rewards or airline miles.

3. Business Line of Credit - A gym business line of credit gives you access to a certain amount of capital to use as needed, typically based on your business's cash flow and credit score (a gym business line of credit functions more like a credit card than a gym business loan, but they are

not one in the same). You don't have to tap into the line of credit until you actually need the funds, and you won't accrue interest on funds you aren't accessing, either. Once you borrow from it, though, you will need to start making payments on the amount you used right away. As you pay back the actual funds borrowed, your line of credit will gradually replenish (meaning you once again have access to the money).

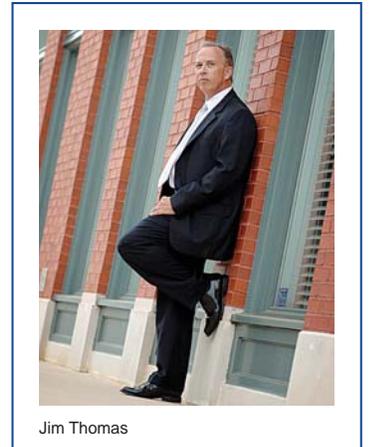
4. Equipment Financing - Some lending companies specialize in financing the purchase of gym equipment. Another option? Ask the company you're buying the gym equipment from about financing; many offer their own financing programs.

5. Merchant Cash Advance (MCA) - In this type of financing, you get a lump sum advanced in anticipation of future credit card sales. Daily payments are made automatically by ACH transfer and are typically based on a percentage of that day's credit card transactions, so on a day when you make less, you pay less.

6. Invoice Factoring - Factoring is a system where you sell your outstanding invoices to a third party "factoring" company at a discount (typically, around 80% of the value of the invoices). The factoring company then takes over the job of collecting payment on those outstanding invoices from customers on your behalf (they return the 80% to you and keep the rest as their fee). Factoring can be helpful to gym businesses that operate on a Net 30 to Net 90 payment system because it allows the businesses to get paid immediately rather than waiting until payment is officially due. The main downside to invoice factoring? You don't receive your full payment. However, it can help alleviate cash flow concerns in some cases.

7. Purchase Order Financing - With purchase order financing, a lender provides the funds to buy inventory or materials to a gym business that doesn't have the cash on hand to fulfill a large order. After the order ships, the lender collects payment from the customer, subtracts fees and transfers the balance of the invoice back to the gym business at hand. Be aware that purchase order loans don't apply to would-be orders; you need to have actual orders on the books in order to qualify.

8. Peer-to-Peer Loans - Peer-to-peer lending sites are online marketplaces where gym businesses and individuals can obtain loans from individual investors. The online marketplace manages the transaction, serving as a kind of escrow service and takes a fee in return. This can be a good way to get a small, short-term loan if other



Jim Thomas

methods haven't worked.

9. Crowdfunding - A variation of peer-to-peer lending, crowdfunding sites allow gym businesses to pitch their ideas and seek financing from interested individuals. The difference is that the money isn't a loan but a payment in return for something from your gym business, most often in the form of equity in your company to these early investors or even something as simple as early access to your product or service. If your idea sparks the public's interest, it's possible (though not probable) to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars through crowdfunding. And, even though it sounds like a long shot, it could be an option for some gym businesses to consider because the crowdfunding market is expected to grow nearly \$200 billion by 2025. The downside? If for some reason you are unable to deliver on your promise to your investors, they are going to be very disappointed.



Now, go get funded.

(An Outsourced CEO and expert witness, Jim Thomas is the Founder and President of Fitness Management USA Inc., a management consulting, turnaround and brokerage firm specializing in the gym and sports industry. With more than 25 years of experience owning, operating and managing clubs of all sizes, Thomas lectures and delivers seminars, webinars and workshops across the globe on the practical skills required to successfully to overcome obscurity, improve sales, build teamwork and market fitness programs and products. In addition, his company will buy gym equipment from gyms liquidating or closing, provide financing or advance funds on receivables. Visit his websites at www.fmconsulting.net or www.youtube.com/gymconsultant.)

Is Selling Your Team's Strong Suit?

By: **Jeffrey Pinkerton**

When my college-aged son was in his junior year, as a Christmas gift, we decided to give him a new suit. We have always been practical gift givers, and this one fit the timing of life quite well, as we knew that fraternity formals, upcoming job interviews and future friends' weddings were on the horizon. We were also fairly certain that he was done growing. I took him to a well-known, brand-name, somewhat ordinary men's store; however, the sales interaction that we experienced was anything but ordinary. Two hours later, as we left the store, energized from the experience and a little face-sore from laughing and smiling, my son looked at me and said, "Is it just me, or was that guy an INCREDIBLE salesman?" It was a masterclass in service and in selling.



Jeffrey Pinkerton

This man loved his job, and (See [Jeffrey Pinkerton Page 18](#))

...Jeffrey Pinkerton

continued from page 17

he obviously loved suits. It was clear that he loved helping other people look their best. He was energetic but not over the top. He was polite and professional with just the right amount of persistence. He asked great questions and made adjustments through the process. He wasn't in a hurry, but he kept things moving. For all the people who claim, "no one likes to be sold to," I wholeheartedly disagree. *People don't like being sold to by bad salespeople. There is a difference.* And, here are three things I learned from James, one of the best salesmen I've ever met.

1. He made a great first impression, dressed the part and clearly loved the product. Even for a men's suit store, James was almost overdressed. Even though it was early evening, his shirt looked impeccable, his tie still cinched tight and his pocket square in place. For the fitness industry, this means your team should of course be professional and "in uniform," but it also means they have to love your product. They need to work out at your facility. They need to experience working out with a trainer. They need to regularly participate in group fitness. They have to believe in what they are selling and in the services you provide.

2. He asked intentional questions, made great recommendations and never left our side. James didn't ask us *if we needed help.* He approached us confidently, introduced himself and asked, "How can I help you two young men?" I knew his compliment was part of his salesmanship. I accepted it without complaint. He made it clear in his body language, his tone and his energy that he was ready to help us. After we explained that the visit was for my son to buy his first suit, he looked at Harry, paused and said, "40 Regular. Now, a fit guy like you, you're going to look great in anything that I put you in. But, try this one first." He handed Harry a jacket that, as promised, looked great. James grabbed a few other options as he asked Harry some questions about what he liked and what he didn't like about each. After he had tried on a few others, Harry had picked out his first suit. The pants were marked for a quick hem, Harry went back into the dressing room and James disappeared. As Harry came out of the dressing room, James reappeared and quickly laid out three shirt and tie combinations that looked amazing with the jacket. With a quick loop of the tie, he would tuck the shirt under jacket and ask for feedback: too bright, too bold, too boring, just right. Quickly, and happily, our Christmas gift was now a suit, a couple of shirts and a tie. James was perfectly role

modeling what we call *High-Touch, High-Service.* It is the idea that, when people come into your facility, your team should be with them every step of the process until they find what they need and until they find where they can become successful, long-term members at your club. James did not give us a tour of the store, tell us where to find certain things and pat us on the back to browse alone. You shouldn't either.

3. He sold us what we didn't know we actually really needed. I thought James was walking us towards the register to checkout when he slowed down at the belts. "No, I think he's good with his current belt." "What about some nice socks? They are a great price if you buy three pairs." "No, I think he's good with socks, too," I laughingly said. "Now, hold on," he said with a bit more seriousness. "Do you have shoes that you are going to wear to this first interview?" Harry didn't have an interview yet, but James was helping him see the big picture, imagine his future self and was literally selling the dream... to walk into his first interview looking sharp, suited up, dressed to impress. I think James could sense that I was eager to wrap things up, and he addressed me directly, "Dad, you wouldn't put old tires on a new car, would you? Let's at least take a look (insert James' big smile)." For that perfectly delivered question

alone, new shoes were worth considering and buying. For your salespeople, what is the lesson? James set us up for success. He sold us everything that Harry needed to look his best. Could he have waited for us to ask? Could he have sheepishly made a few recommendations? Sure. Have your team make confident recommendations. Be shocked when people want to work out alone. Let people know where they will be most successful (with personal trainers and in group fitness) and help people envision their future, more active, selves.

■ ■ ■

Find people who love your product and who genuinely want to help your members be their best. Find people who ask great questions, who are *High-Touch High Service* and who push just enough to sell people what they need, even if they don't know they need it. Find people who help others see the big picture and imagine their future, fitter selves and give your team permission to be professionally and pleasantly persistent.

(Jeffrey Pinkerton is the Business Development Manager for MOSSA. Jeffrey can be reached by phone at 770-989-4737 or email at jeffreypinkerton@mossa.net.)

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