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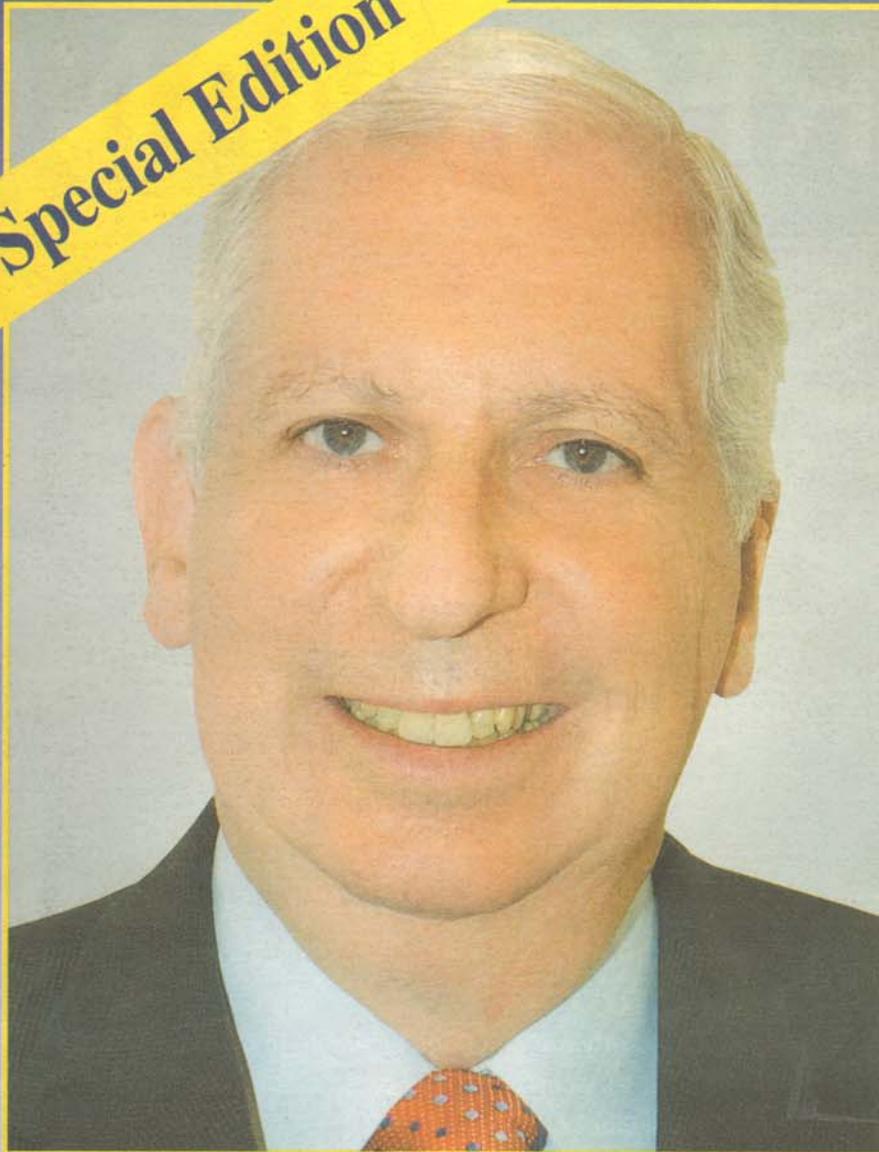
THE Club Insider

NEWS

MARCH 2006

The Pulse of the Health, Racquet & Sports Club Business Worldwide

IHRSA25 Special Edition

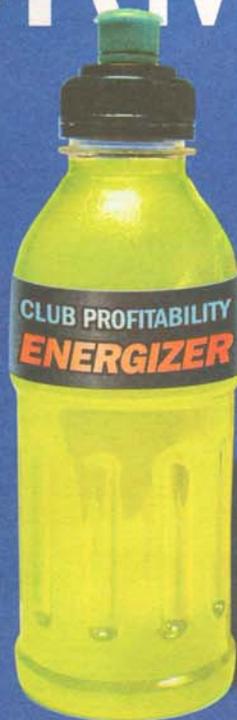


IHRSA Celebrates 25 Years!

**Founder, Rick Caro and John McCarthy, 25 Year Executive Director
to Headline gathering of 10,000 or more in Las Vegas!**

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Norm Cates'

THE Club Insider

NEWS

IHRSA Celebrates 25 Years!

Founder, Rick Caro and John McCarthy, 25 Year Executive Director to Headline gathering of 10,000 or more in Las Vegas!

By: Norm Cates, Jr. with an in-depth interview with Rick Caro

Rick Caro, the Founder of IRSA, now known as IHRSA, deserves huge credit for his idea, leadership and hard work in the creation, launch and shepherding of the Association for its first 25 years.

IHRSA, without the "H", for Health, was the original brainchild of Rick Caro, now the President of Management Vision in New York City. I believe it is fair to say that due to Rick Caro's creation, the health, racquet and sportsclub industry has improved vastly in quality and professionalism over the past 25 years. It could also be

argued that in 25 years, IHRSA has taken the worldwide health, racquet and sportsclub industry to the next level, from where it was in the approximately previous 35 years. And, IHRSA is well prepared now to continue this worldwide leadership role for 25 more years and beyond.

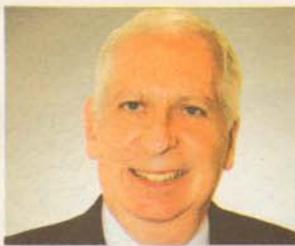
It could also be said that even non-member clubs

across the world have improved because of IHRSA. That is because clubs that did not invest in IHRSA over the years, for financial or other reasons, began to quickly realize they had to improve their club operations to stay competitive with the rapidly improving and growing numbers of IHRSA clubs around the world.

Big John McCarthy...the "Master of Alliances" to Retire In June, 2006

IHRSA's highly esteemed 25 year Executive Director, John McCarthy, has led with a vision that stemmed from his opportunity as IHRSA's Executive Director. John (See Rick Caro page 10)

IHRSA CEO/President Update



Rick Caro, IHRSA Founder

Many of you may know, IHRSA is facing the retirement of Big JOHN McCARTHY, 25-year IHRSA Executive Director, in June, 2006. John is a great man, whom I refer to as IHRSA's "Master of Alliances." For the last few months IHRSA has been conducting a search to find a new leader to step in for John and

assume the new title for the job: CEO/President. After a thorough search, they had selected the leading candidate out of 280 applicants. However, the agreement between IHRSA and the gentleman did not work out. So, the IHRSA Board of Directors, a group of "Team Players" who have already worked very hard on the search for a while, will

continue their effort until they find the right person and have a signed agreement with him. That means that Joe Moore was the last President of the Board of Directors in IHRSA's history and is the first Chairman of the IHRSA Board. And, Big John McCarthy will rightfully be the only Executive Director ever for IHRSA.



John McCarthy

"Leaving FAT City!" a book by the "SPY on Obesity" ...Norm Cates...

to be electronically launched May 15, 2006 -- See pages 4 & 5

• Inside The Insider •

- 10 Rules To Help You to Prevail Over the Competition – by John McCarthy
- "Norm's PERSONAL Notes"...I have a dream! – Join the Revolution!
- "Best of the Best" Club Consultants – Part II
- Power Up Your Management – by Will Phillips
- Create a Plan that Works – by Jim Thomas

IHRSA Presidents for 25 Years

Norm Cates, Jr.	1981-82
Rick Caro, Jr.	1982-83
Todd Pulis	1983-84
Ted Torcivia	1984-85
Jim Gerber	1985-86
Bob Fitzgerald	1986-87
Tom Lyneis	1987-88
Wayne Westwood	1988-89
Bob Larsen	1989-90
Mitch Wald	1990-91
Cecil Spearman	1991-92
Bruce Buckbee	1992-93
Larry Krieger	1993-94
Rob Goldman	1994-95
Frank Napolitano	1995-96
Stephen Tharrett	1996-97
Ben Emdin	1997-98
Annbeth Eschbach	1998-99
Gale Landers	1999-00
Joe Cirulli	2000-01
Geoffrey Dyer	July 2001 to December 2002
Tom Behan	January 2003 to June 2004
Julie Main	2004-05
Joe Moore	2005-06

"Best of the Best" Club Consultants Part II

By: Norm Cates, Jr.

"Best of the Best" – Part I published last month in our February edition included interviews with 7 of the "Best of the Best" health, racquet and sportsclub industry consultants. Criteria for those chosen for Part I was that their primary work focus is on what I call being a "road warrior" consultants one-on-one for the majority of their business.

Our subjects for the Part II Best of the Best Consultant report are: Mike Chaet, Casey Conrad and Michael Scott Scudder.

Those featured last month in "Best of the Best" Part I interviews were: Rick Caro, Ray Gordon, Sandy Coffman, Eddie Tock, Karen Woodard-Chavez, John Brown and Bonnie Patrick Mattalian.

This report carries company background and interviews with the three of top group educational seminar producers. These individuals started out as "road warrior consultants" too, but changed their primary focus to the delivery of group training seminars. As part of this report we asked each of our veteran consultants to answer the same four questions posed last month in Part I of "Best of the Best".

- (1) In your own opinion, what is the single greatest thing a club owner/operator can do to succeed, when the club numbers and oversupply of club products in North America is outpacing the membership growth, thus creating an excess club supply that very likely will result (See Best of... page 14)

Norm's PERSONAL Notes

I have a dream...the "FAT Friendly Health Club!"

Part I

By: Norm Cates, Jr.

I have a dream!

I am very excited about going to Las Vegas for IHRSA25...for thousands of reasons, which include you, if you will be there. I am also very excited because I may personally share my dream with you in person IF you come see me at my exhibit #2934. And, don't forget to visit our advertisers, whose company names and exhibit numbers appear on page

on Clearwater Beach, Florida with "hotties" everywhere at Springbreak 2006.

I was telling Justin about my writing this month and explaining to him the gist of this article, when he reminded me that we had watched together over the Christmas holidays, Ben Stiller's classic movie, *Dodgeball...A True Underdog Story*. This movie trashed badly health club operators across America more than any film or TV show I have ever seen.

website as "a charismatic underachiever and proprietor of a rundown gym called Average Joe's that was faced with going out of business. A group of Joe's Gym members and misfits entered a Las Vegas dodgeball tournament in order to save their cherished local gym from the onslaught of a corporate health fitness chain. Peter's humble gym had caught the eye of White Goodman, the power-mullet-sporting, Fu-Manchu-d, egomaniacal owner of Globo Gym, a gleaming monolith of fitness."

The part of the movie I am going to quote here are words from the glitzy club owner of Globo Gym, White Goodman. The Goodman character is played by Ben Stiller in the movie. At one point in the movie, Goodman, in a style only actor Stiller can deliver said, to Peter Fleur, Joe's Gym owner, "Your gym is a skidmark on the underpants of society." Additional classic quotes emerging from White Goodman's big mouth were, "Globo Gym employs a highly trained, quasi-cultural staff of personal alteration specialists." When describing his Globo Gym personal trainers. And then, when talking to character, Peter Houlihan, if I recall correctly, he says, "Here at Globo Gym we're better than you, and we know it."

My reason for these quotes is to give you just a tiny sample of the classic writing/dialogue in this film about our health club industry so you will not fail to rent and watch it. In fact, if I were you, I'd throw a staff party at my home and watch it with all of them: "Dodgeball...A True Underdog Story."

Ladies and gentlemen, the comments laced in the dialogue throughout this movie embodies, just part of the problem that is causing the 21st century health club industry to currently be failing in its pursuit of 185 or 190 million obese and fat people. But, you can change this situation.

The other meaningful part of picture is this. There are some of you out there that are not pursuing obese and fat

people as prospective members at all.

Why? Those of you are still in the archaic, behind the times ways of thinking from that 20th century that "We don't want the fatsoes in my club", are 'cruisin for a bruisein'.

And, as an aside, those of you that still hold that "We're better than you are!" mentality and actually do externally verbalize it to prospective members about your competition, are really shooting yourselves in the foot.

into his small market of just over 100,000 population may not be coming to many more health club conventions or be in business that year, if you don't wake up and smell the roses!

"Smell the Roses"... study my dream!

My dream... the "FAT Friendly Health Club", shared in this writing and soon in chats with you at IHRSA25 and then in my book, "Leaving FAT City!", includes you and your



Norm at 343 pounds & 60" waist "Before"... "Leaving FAT City!"

#6. Please BUY FROM them and to get better deals at the show, whisper these two words in the ear of your representative of the company you are negotiating your purchase with: "CLUB INSIDER".

After thinking about it today, I feel I have lived for 60 years just to prepare for what I am writing to you about here today. My dream has made me feel that it was a message of guidance for us all. But, somehow, it came to me for communication to and sharing with you!

The idea for the "FAT Friendly Health Club" came to me a couple of months after watching Ben Stiller's movie, *Dodge Ball...A True Underdog Story*. Actually, it took a phone call from my son, Justin, who was, at the time, drinking beer

You must see it to understand the depth of the writing in the movie and thus to get more from the writing I have done for you from my keyboard here.

The movie will give you an introspect into what the viewpoint of many Americans, including the obese fat population, truly feels about health club owners and operators in general.

Again, let me say, even to the point of irritating you, "If you have not seen this movie, as a health club professional, it is absolutely must viewing for your edification as a health and fitness club professional."

The movie was set in Joe's Gym, an old fashioned, worn out early 60's gym. The gym is owned by a guy named Peter LaFleur, described on the www.dodgeballbenstiller.com



Norm 4-years "AFTER" 33%, 110 pound loss

Beginning with your reading of this article today, you can start to change things in your club, if you have not already and many of you have, to provide a "FAT Friendly Health Club", and construct a multi-platform marketing message just for them and to target them, all 185 to 190 million of them, specifically for membership in your clubs.

Think of it like this folks. There are many of you reading this that are being inundated with new competition in your markets of all sizes, shapes and descriptions. There are many of you out there whose January and February membership sales numbers "ain't what they used to be."

So, I ask those of you that fit into this picture I describe, like a good friend of mine in Northern California, who has seen over 20 health clubs come

heart!

My dream is very clear to me now, more clear than any other I've ever had! And, you long-time readers do know that once in a while, I have come up with other dreams...and am working hard too to make those happen for me, for IHRSA and our industry. Take, for example, my work in progress...the new "CLUB INSIDER for consumers..." is a monthly CLUB INSIDER with educational, motivational and inspirational content for health, racquet and sportsclub members everywhere. When launched, it will be mailed without charge to the health club members that sign up for this free service from CLUB INSIDER.

My dream is to help IHRSA and all other American institutions WIN the War On (See Personal Notes page 8)

Norm Cates'

Club Insider

Announces...

Two initiatives to help IHRSA "Win the War on Obesity"!

The worldwide electronic launch of Norm Cates' book "Leaving FAT City!" will be on May 15, 2006, at NO charge.

- This "Tough Love" book for America and the world's obese and fat population will "Tell-It-Like-Is" about obesity like no other book in history.
- The May 15, 2006 electronic launch via the internet will be "Wave I" of Author, Norm Cates' "Spy on Obesity" book for the obese everywhere. The other purpose will be to bring together the health club industry and the vast population of obese and fat people around the world, including 190 million in America.
- The accelerated War will continue with release of the printed version of "Leaving FAT City!" on October 15, 2006... Just in time for Christmas.
- The second WAVE... Initiative #2, will be the launch of CLUB INSIDER's "FAT Friendly Health Club Network"... the unheard of and brand spanking new worldwide "feeder system" created by Norm Cates. This will successfully pour "Graduated, FAT Friendly Health Club" members, originally from the huge untapped obese 190 million population, into IHRSA clubs everywhere!
- For the first time in the history of the commercial health club history, IHRSA clubs will have a direct worldwide "pipeline feeder system" from untouched millions of obese and overweight human beings.

The "FAT Friendly Health Club" will be differentiated by:

- A MINIMUM excess weight requirement for new "FAT Friendly Health Club Member" prospects. Those overweight that fail the first requirement, I.E. Are Not Overweight Enough, will immediately be referred and directed to the closest local IHRSA Clubs.
- "FAT Friendly Health Club Network" "in-house" FFHCN licensing program for existing and new IHRSA commercial clubs will be built.
- A REQUIRED "FAT Friendly Health Club" Graduation, meaning that once the FFHC member has reached his goal and is no longer over the minimum weight, he must step out of membership and "step up" to The "Next Level". The "Next Level" will be IHRSA clubs everywhere. Departure of "FFHC" members who have "Trained Their Minds to Train Their Bodies", succeeded and found their way to be "Leaving FAT City!" will motivate the obese everywhere. The excitement of reaching the "Next Level" with their formerly overweight bodies, their mortal "vessels for their souls", will cause the "FFHC Graduates to NO longer carry a mind full of INTIMIDATION and FEAR of EMBARRASSMENT with the mere thought of entering "regular" commercial health clubs. They will work hard for this "Graduation" and look forward to it.
- A new, worldwide "FAT Friendly Health Club Network" protocol will provide a new "Gold Standard" for the obesity fight worldwide. There will finally be a new "Obesity State of the Art FFHC Treatment" with respect to reaching out and marketing to, obtaining responses from, inviting and enrolling America and the world's obese into FFHC Network membership.
- The pre-opening "FAT Friendly Health Club Network" marketing will include, but will not be limited to, an electronically delivered "FAT Friendly Health Club TV Talk Show" hosted by your friendly CLUB INSIDER Publisher Since 1993, a "SPY on OBESITY" for 60-years, Norm Cates.

Come to CLUB INSIDER Booth #2934 for Additional Information...

Come early on the first IHRSA25 Trade Show day to get copies of the world-changing March 2006 CLUB INSIDER that includes Norm's NOTES and Norm's "PERSONAL" Notes writings on "Leaving Fat City" and the "Fat Friendly Health Club".

FFHCN

Email Inquiries to Norm Cates:
clubinsidernews@mindspring.com

Supporting...
IHRSA
and America in the

"War On Obesity"!

NORM's Notes

• *Hello everybody!*

This is your friendly **CLUB INSIDER** Publisher for 12.5 years checking in! This edition was printed on March 15th

and on March 19th, I boarded a plane to *Las Vegas* with a huge suitcase full, plus I air freighted a bunch via FedEx, just so my wonderful assistant for the

big **IHRSA25 Trade Show in Las Vegas**, **JONI TATTIE-PITCOCK**, of *Jonifitnes.com* in Tampa, Florida and I could personally give them to you. I

sure hope you enjoy this edition, as on page #4, I announced some very important news you may have already read by now. *This month's NORM's Notes* has been moved to page #6, just for these **IHRSA25 Special Editions**, this month and next month, only to get my announcements on pages #4 and #5 up front. If you are just now reading this issue after receiving it in the U.S. Mail, or if you are in Las Vegas reading this now, whatever you do, don't miss our April, 2006, **2nd in a row, IHRSA25 Special Edition**, wrapping up all the news and photos from this grand 25th Annual...world-class event!



Norm Cates, Jr.

Distinguished Service Award! As Julie's friend and since I am also a survivor of cancer, as she is, I am thrilled for Julie! **Peter Kight**, Founder, CEO and Chairman of **CheckFree Corporation**, a mega-company now that flows \$3 billion a night in EFT processing, will be honored with IHRSA's 3rd annual Entrepreneur of the Year Award! It was also a high honor to have featured Pete Kight as our cover story subject in January, 2006, where he told us about how he started CheckFree 25 years ago after his attendance at our 1st IHRSA (the acronym back then) Annual Convention and Trade Show and about how he started (See Norm's Notes page 24)

• **Congratulations** in advance to **AUGIE NIETO**, **JULIE MAIN** and **PETER KIGHT** because "rumor" has it that all three will be honored at **IHRSA25!** **Augie Nieto**, Co-founder of **Life Fitness**, after getting the break of his life, when **RAY WILSON** selected **Augie** to be his National Sales Manager and they went on to make **LifeCycle** a smashing, world class success, will be honored by **IHRSA** as its Person of the Year! **Julie Main**, IHRSA President for 2004/2005, Ex-officio President now, Partner and GM of the **Santa Barbara Athletic Clubs**, will be honored in Las Vegas with its most prestigious honor for club people, the one and only, **DALE DIBBLE**

Thank You

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A State of the Industry Message reprinted courtesy of IHRSA and John McCarthy

10 Rules To Help You to Prevail Over the Competition in Your Market

By: John McCarthy

Today, quantitatively and qualitatively, the competition that most fitness centers face is more challenging than ever before. Not only does every club face more competitors than ever before, but many of these competitors are of higher quality than ever before. Here are ten rules that can help you win the war against even the toughest competitors.

Rule # 1. Be Fresh. "Store Blindness" is an affliction that besets everyone who works in the same space, day after day, month after month, year after year. After a while, we don't notice the worn carpets, the tired colors, the musty smells, the dirt, the grime, the clutter, etc. But anyone who walks into a club for the first time and sees it with *fresh eyes* will notice all of these things. Whenever a strong competitor enters a market, it is imperative

that clubs undergo a 360-degree examination from the perspective of the first-time visitor. It is imperative to "get fresh," i.e., to update one's image, so that the experience of being in the club is not an experience that is locked into the 1970's, 80's or 90's.

Rule # 2. Be Connected. "Connectivity" may be the most important advantage that existing clubs enjoy over powerful, new entrants into the market. It needs to be leveraged to the hilt. "Connectivity" refers not only to the relationships between members and staff, but more importantly, to the *relationships between members themselves*. "Connectivity" is the basic reason why some neighborhood restaurants and coffee shops, though their operations may be flawed, succeed year after year after year. Their businesses, like ours, are - at their best - *all about connectivity*.

Rule # 3. Be United. Many club owners say that they

never knew how well their club could perform until they were faced with an imminent threat from a powerful competitor. *Whenever a new competitor announces its entry into your market, you have the opportunity to unite your staff in the pursuit of a higher level of performance.* Smart club managers do this. Not only do they unite their team leaders, but they also unite their smaller teams-their front desk team, their sales team, their group exercise team, etc., challenging all of them to raise their performance to higher levels than ever before. The advantage of external threats is that they can unite your staff in the pursuit of better performance. In such circumstances, your team-motivated and mobilized-becomes the defining weapon with which you can *win the war*.

Rule # 4. Be Serious. This has two implications. First, whenever a new competitor enters the market, it is no longer

"business as usual." Both the staff and the members expect to see signs that the ownership of the company will step up to the plate and make whatever replacements and/or improvements are necessary to present the strongest possible challenge to the new competitor. These replacements/improvements will often be items that otherwise might have been delayed for years. Second, "*get serious*" implies that this is *the time to expunge from the staff any personnel who are not totally on board with a united effort to raise the level of performance to heights never before achieved.*

Rule # 5. Be Receptive. Now is the time to ask your staff for their input as to how you can improve the club and better serve your members. By doing this, *you leverage their creativity, passion and "ownership" in the business.* Invariably, they will think of ways to improve your operation that you might



John McCarthy

never have conceived. Some of these items may not cost a dime, and many of them will be worth their weight in gold. Make your staff realize that their opinions count. By doing this, their loyalty and commitment to your business may rise to the roof. (See John McCarthy page 24)

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...Personal Notes

continued from page 4

Obesity! My book, "Leaving FAT City!"

Then, through further study, conversations with many club owners in Las Vegas and through conceptual development of my "FAT Friendly Health Club" concept for installation into existing clubs and for the development of a possible network of "FFHC" clubs across America.

Who knows where this could go if my early business development thoughts take hold and make sense to all of you.

I am a publisher and have been one for almost 13 years. But, importantly here, in the context of my thinking right now about this idea, is that I am also a club developer, owner, operator and franchisor of 14 clubs who has over 20 years of health, racquet and sportsclub industry experience to go with my amazing learning from the best club operators and consultants anywhere.

I can tell you this...although I plan now to always produce CLUB INSIDER...I

might just get back into the health club industry if my concept planning and development continues to produce the signals my mind is giving me now.

My dream actually originated as a result of a very personal experience as a "SPY on Obesity"! My dream emerged, first in my heart, then was transmitted from my heart to my mind and then, from my mind to my body, my "vessel for my soul", as I lost 110 pounds, 33% of my body weight and 18 inches off my waist. My dream has evolved rapidly to the point that I want to share it with all of you.

I am Very Glad to Be Alive!

A big part of my dream has been caused by my sheer JOY about still being ALIVE! I recall the song that goes like that... "To be alive!"

They say that 87% of all Americans believe in a higher power. I do. I pray to my 'higher-power' all the time. Although approximately 250 million Americans do believe in a higher power, for many of them, their relationships with

and acknowledgment of such a 'higher-power' in their hearts and minds comes too late, when they are having problems. And, for some, acknowledgment of a 'higher-power' is never even expressed and does not take its final form, until after they have passed with perhaps, an empty soul, from this good Earth.

I intend, with this keyboard today and because of my dream, to place my PASSION, my perceived DESTINY and my PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP with the "MAN" above, onto the record here. That's because to live my dream and make it come true, I must be honest. I am always honest with you all, my readers of CLUB INSIDER. And, because we all will need help from a 'higher power' when we "Team UP" and achieve OUR dream once you have adopted it from me.

Why you all are so important to me and this world...

If you are amongst that 87% or approximately 250 million or so Americans that do believe in help from above, I hereby ask for YOUR help by

the adoption of my dream.

I need your help. I want you to be on my TEAM that will help IHRSA and for us to work closely to reverse significantly, not slightly, obesity in America.

As we all move forward from Las Vegas and IHRSA25 with renewed vigor, better plans and more energy, I hope we will all continue to fight hard with IHRSA and its already launched, in motion and excellent ongoing attacks on obesity in America and around the world.

Through living my dream with YOU as a partner, I intend to do all I can to help facilitate success in this fight and to help IHRSA continue and grow their focused efforts in this realm

Whether you sensed it or not, my dream includes you because in my view, you all are "chosen ones" on earth. You are what I call a "chosen one". As there are nearly 7 billion human beings on Earth...and you are one of the relatively few that have personally chosen to be a professional in this very helpful and giving to humanity health club industry. The decision all of you made to be in this busi-

ness impresses the heck out of me. *And, I compliment each and every one of you!*

And, you have chosen to be right where you are now reading and perhaps are prepared and ready to receive this message.

It will be from YOUR receipt of and acceptance of my dream and my message that you will rise and begin to act in a different way toward obese and fat people everywhere.

Many of You Already Have a "FAT Friendly Club!"

Many of you, thank goodness, are already well on the right path. I say: good on you!

But also, many of you, when you see an obese, fat people in your club, view them *secretly* as "eye-pollution". My experience is that many of you simply do not want fat people in your beautiful club with your beautiful exercising fit members, because they "pollute" visually, the club scene you have in your mind that you want!

This is a prejudice
(See Personal Notes page 22)

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...Rick Caro

continued from page 3

McCarthy's deep belief that "high tides float all boats" could be translated to mean this: *More is better.* More involvement from club's of all sizes, shapes and descriptions, more involvement of equipment companies, industry service providers and vendors and more involvement in alliances for industry growth, would cause all players to rise. I now think he was right on target with his long term - vision.

Big John McCarthy plans to retire this coming June. The new IHRSA leader will be called: IHRSA CEO/President.

Although John is retiring, I do hope and pray he will keep on inspiring and helping teach this great industry with his pen.

Contained within the pages of this edition, as published from his March 1, State of the Industry Report, John McCarthy offers some of the best advice to club owners I have ever read in his writing: "10 Rules To Help You to Prevail Over the Competition in Your Market". See page #7. In our June Edition, I plan to provide an interview with the man I call: "Big John McCarthy...the Master of Alliances". We hope that before his retirement, John will share with all of you his vi-

sion, his memories and what he believes are his most meaningful achievements in his 25 years of IHRSA leadership,

There is an in-depth and well organized search and interview process being conducted by Korn/Ferry, an executive search firm, that resulted in over 280 applicants so far for the job! The applicants will be narrowed down then they will individually meet with IHRSA Board Search Committee Members, Chaired by Greg Lappin. Ultimately, the IHRSA Board of Directors make the final choice. See page 3.

CLUB INSIDER to Honor Rick Caro and John McCarthy at IHRSA25

By the time you read this, I will have presented, CLUB INSIDER's 3rd Annual Health Club Pioneer of the Year Awards to Rick Caro and John McCarthy. That presentation will have taken place at the first official IHRSA keynote event, immediately before IHRSA keynote speaker, Steve Lundin, Author of the book entitled: "The FISH Philosophy" opens the show to what will be a packed house. Immediately after the FISH Philosophy presentation by Lundin is done, the three or four thousand in attendance will move to another ballroom in the Las Vegas Hilton for the huge IHRSA25 Grand Opening Reception.

Previous CLUB INSIDER Pioneer honorees were: Ray Wilson, Dale Dibble, Red Lerille and the late Joe Gold. The CLUB INSIDER Health Club Pioneer Award is presented each year to two individuals that have contributed significantly in shaping today's 21st century health club industry.

A World Class Event for a World Class Association

IHRSA now has over 6,500 member clubs in over 70 countries. Those IHRSA clubs serve millions and millions of club members all over the planet. Additionally, IHRSA has over 420 exhibitors whose equipment, products and services will be exhibited at the IHRSA25 Trade Show.

The IHRSA Trade Show is the #1 health, racquet and sportsclub buying extravaganza in the world. Those of you who are reading this now in Las Vegas should definitely plan, in addition to attending the keynote

presentations and educational seminars, to be at the IHRSA Trade Show all three days. That is because this show will take a full three days to see and experience it all. Folks...put in the time and be at this Trade Show all three days because you just never know which exhibitor, of the 420+ manufactures and vendors might have a solution that will mean much to your club's future! Please BUY from the CLUB INSIDER Advertisers in this edition and those listed on our page #6 in LAS VEGAS! Whisper: "CLUB INSIDER" to the trade show exhibitors for better deals!

"Team IHRSA" Has Made It All Happen!

Rick Caro is a brilliant...dedicated...and talented man!

In 1980, Caro had a great idea...in essence a vision at the time. His vision was to build an Association that would benefit racquet club owners and operators and in the back of his mind, ultimately would grow to include health and fitness clubs. However, as brilliant, dedicated and talented as Rick Caro is, he is still just one man.

He is a master and is gifted at helping and working with others to achieve great things, as exemplified by, his largely unknown to our industry, not-for-profit work in New York City.

Caro's involvement, service and contributions to two club associations at the same time led to his idea.

An Interview with IHRSA Founder Rick Caro

CLUB INSIDER is honored to present this interesting and informative interview with Rick Caro. Because of its length this report is being presented in a Part I this month and Part II next month.

How did you get the idea behind the creation of IRSA (International Racquet Sports Association), now known as IHRSA?

Caro - Part of the early idea of IRSA, the International Racquet Sports Association, started well before the actual event that created it. It started because I personally was serving as President of the National Tennis Association (NTA), the tennis club owners association

in those days and the racquetball club owners Association, the National Court Club Association (NCCA), where I was a common Board member of both. (And NTA President.)

I continued to find great duplication with a lot of the programs and in fact, often suggested things that were working in one organization that should be considered by the other. Each one had its own strengths and weaknesses.

The famous capstone event occurred in 1980 when I went to the same hotel at the O'Hare Airport in Chicago two Fridays in a row for board meetings. The first board meeting was for the tennis owner's group, NTA, and I ran that meeting. Then one week later, in the very same hotel, I attended the NCCA Board meeting which was run by you, Norm Cates, President.

It wasn't until the fourth item of the agenda that I realized that the agendas had been exactly the same with topics in the same order. Then I suggested, out loud, that there was enough duplication and enough resources that could perhaps be shared, that maybe we ought to consider the combination of the two.

I suggested that both had limited resources in those days and in my view, both had limited futures. They had futures, but limited futures.

It seemed to me that there was a 'big-picture opportunity' to do one thing that had not been contemplated. That was to share overhead and leverage out the limited resources of the combined resource's entities. And, maybe in the future, serve as an open door to health and fitness facilities which were out there, but were not represented by anyone. (But, the IFPA) But, that was a secondary thought.

So, the idea was that maybe we ought to consider creating one new large organization that would be the best of all worlds.

You know the story. Together, we selected three independently sensitive and well meaning individuals from each Board. I decided that I should not be a participant because I really wanted to see if there was true understanding and buy-in from others.

I suggested that those six people, three from each organization, would meet in Chicago shortly after that (NCCA) (See Rick Caro page 12)

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...Rick Caro

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meeting.

And, as you know, because you were there, that meeting did take place. It was determined that the vision I had for creating a new entity and winding down the existing two, seemed to make sense to everyone once they had a chance to see and discuss the commonality and the similarity of purpose and business concepts. So, the group decided that they would call me at that point. We arranged a meeting a couple of weeks later of the six people, plus myself in my New York office.

IRSA Founders Meet and Go to Work Creating What Became IHRSA

The IRSA Founders group included me, you, Curt Beusman, Dale Dibble, Todd Pulis, Jennifer (Wayt) Saslaw and Peter Donahue.

On one day we created

the name, wrote the by-laws, determined how we would combine the Boards of Directors, set the concept for a future convention and began the workings of what then became IRSA, which was called the *International Racquet Sports Association, now called IHRSA*.

How does your vision for when you founded IRSA in 1980 and launched it in Las Vegas in January, 1981, compare with what the organization is like today?

When I look at IRSA today, which is now IHRSA, compared to the original concept, it is *huge in its scope, in its vision, in its resources, in its products and services. It has about 7,000 member clubs in 70 countries.*

The most significant thing that IHRSA has achieved is that it really has become an *industry association, not just a trade association.*

The trade association concept was one where it was

to serve the owners of clubs who would be the key element of the decision making of the trade association and would embrace just the needs and wants of only those member clubs who were part of that organization.

Over the years, it has been transformed into serving the benefits of exercise and fitness, moving the association into a leadership role with various kinds of outside entities as a spokesmen for various kinds of national and international fitness initiatives. It has gained the respect of other major trades associations and organizations in related fields to share resources for specific initiatives.

In the past, the initial focus was really looking to make the existing club members and their owners more educated, more successful and giving them the benefit from group resources as well as obviously the interaction of networking of owners and their management teams to better their own businesses. It was a much more limited concept at that time. It has grown wider and deeper, by far, over the last 25 years.

What do you view as the most important things IHRSA member clubs must do to get their money's worth and results from IHRSA Membership?

I think when mentioning how IHRSA members may get their money's worth, it very much depends (and I mean this in the nicest way) on their "using IHRSA". I think they first have to, in a member club organization, learn about the vast array of diverse programs and services of IHRSA, its educational and research materials, its events, its ability to help network for solutions and try to understand all of its offerings, before it can figure out what it wants to take advantage of.

A World of Help For All Clubs

Even if it's a start-up club or a turnaround club or an existing club that has been around for some time or a fast growing club or an acquiring club company, IHRSA can help. IHRSA has always been organized to do so. It is not limited in its ability to help clubs of any size or scope.

So, just as an example, if a club needed help learning what the ideal programs in the United States for weight loss or member retention or to know

which clubs have really adopted the environmentally 'green' buildings as a concept, IHRSA can help make those connections and introduce them to people with expertise that could help them out. If someone wanted to know how to purchase in a certain category, IHRSA in some cases is tied in with office products and other kinds of categories that allow it, through the IHRSA size and buying power, to get special deals that maybe can't be achieved locally.

Another example, in dealing sometimes with intrusive legislation that's being contemplated in some states, IHRSA has been able to provide materials, lobbyists and various kinds of coaching that have allowed clubs to get together and get what might be a more relevant story out that informs state legislators, so that proper legislation gets enacted and it's based on today's world - not on perhaps, the upset constituent of one legislator who brought some action, not realizing that was not representative of any state's industry or that the action was really not needed at the state level.

If someone needed help with staff training materials, IHRSA might be an ideal place that they could go to. If they needed to educate a local banker, IHRSA has the materials that could help. Thinking of trying to identify the current financial trends and financial data? That's updated for the industry. IHRSA has that available often in reports and written documents; the IHRSA Industry Data Survey, the IHRSA Index, Compensation reports, a Guide to Industry Investors & Lenders in the Industry, written by John McCarthy and another book on Bank Financing are all available. There are all kinds of helpful materials that IHRSA has published. If some club is dealing with sales training needs, often there are videos or written materials available. If someone said, "Gee, I need some sample contracts or agreements, for let's say, non-competes that have been determined to be valid, IHRSA might be a resource for some examples of those things. If someone wanted a referral to a consultant for a special need they have because they needed to do a club valuation or to contest real estate taxes or help with an insurance problem, IHRSA might be an ideal place to go to.

So, part of what the message is that IHRSA has a

wealth of resources and materials that clubs need to find out about them and then need to take advantage of them more appropriately. That is what IHRSA should be as part of their reason for existing. Frankly, it's up to the clubs to help educate themselves for success.

Next month in Part II, Rick Caro will respond to the following questions:

• Please "grade" IHRSA in the following areas as either an A, B, C, D or F and support each grade with your reasons.

- **Achievement of its Mission Statement: "To Grow, Protect and Promote the health and fitness industry, and to provide its members with benefits that will help them be more successful.**

- **Results in America to date with respect to IHRSA's efforts to lead the industry as steps up as a solution to the growing public health crisis of obesity and overweight. Initiatives such as "Get Active America", 120 Million by 2010, and our newest initiative: "I Lost It at the Club."**

- **Success of its Public Policy Policy as the primary defender and promoter of the health club industry in Washington, DC and in state capitals across the country?**

- **IHRSA Club Member satisfaction with the organization's Meetings and Events?**

- **Value to IHRSA member clubs of CBI Magazine, Industry Data Survey, the new "Get Active Magazine" and the also new "Club Business Entrepreneur Magazine?"**

- **IHRSA's library of educational materials assembled over 25 years and intended to provide IHRSA member clubs with resources to advance their industry knowledge and expertise?**

- **IHRSA Board Structure now with 16 members compared to 9 members in the when you started the Association?**

• **What 'suggestions for success' would you give the new, incoming CEO/President of IHRSA (See Rick Caro page 24)**

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... **Customized Marketing Programs.**

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...Best Of

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in a club industry 'shake-out'?

- (2) When consulting with a club owner, what steps do you take to cause an excellent, very productive working relationship with your client to happen? What makes a "good client"? What makes him ready to benefit from your consulting expertise? How do you help him to "use" your services fully?
- (3) What is the main area you consult in? How have you made a difference with your clients and their success?
- (4) How do you define a successful consulting assignment?

As in Part I- the questions listed above are not restated before each consultant's responses show below. Each question above is numbered with the same number below that precedes our expert's comments.



Mike Chaet



Mike Chaet
 Founder - CMS
 Club Marketing and
 Management Systems

Mike Chaet, also known as the Clubdoc, is a veteran industry consultant who started "on-the-road" too. Today, Chaet heads CMS Global,

an organization with a line-up of consultants around the world. "Clubdoc" moved from being a club manager, then a "road-warrior" consultant in the 1970's to build a big business that has, as his newsletter for clubs title indicates "Survived and Thrived".

"Clubdoc's" "Survive & Thrive" Strategies

The Advice to club owners who want to make the most of both the "good" and the "bad" times:

1. Make your members the central focus of your business.
2. Create market differentiation.
3. Have a focused marketing plan and execute it precisely and aggressively.
4. Have a proactive sales plan and execute it impeccably.
5. Reduce waste and improve efficiencies.
6. Plan for, create, and master - change.
7. Focus on critical concerns.
8. Acquire and use good information.
9. Learn and improve on a daily basis.

Mike Chaet also founded the Independent Club Operators Association for independent club owners only. The recent CBI Cover subject developed ICOA to provide the following services for the ICOA Members:

- Subscription to Official ICOA News Journal "Survive and Thrive".
- Monthly ICOA Cybercasts and Training Programs.
- Password to Members Only ICOA Website.
- Monthly ICOA E-Letter and Industry Updates.
- Networking Opportunities for Thousands of Other Independent Club Owners.
- News Journal Archives
- ICOA Travel Pass Reciprocal Program Access to:
- Official Membership Certificate and Front Door Sticker.
- Preferred Vendor Discounts.
- ICOA Meetings and Global Conventions.



Mike Chaet's response to the four questions.

1) The single greatest strategy any business, whether a club or other type of business, is to create a product that is significantly different from what everyone else is offering. This product or service should be very different from what everyone else is offering. This product or service should be so different that its benefits and features should be automatically looked at as "unique" and virtually with no competition. A different or "unique" club might have differentiators in: club appearance; ambiance, services offered, delivery systems, pricing models, features, programs, equipment and even business models. If your product is truly unique it will not be part of a shake-out. Being different and unique will provide "shake-out" insurance.

2) It all begins before we accept someone as a client. We start with a very thorough evaluation of the potential client's situation. We need to be sure we can help the person and the club. It is our job to find out who we are working with first. What their objectives are and to make sure the fit is there. One thing we know for sure is if we "sell" our services hard and they become a client, they end up not being what we call a "good" client because, we may have gotten them before they were truly ready to have an "outsider" help. We therefore, do not sell our services but rather see if we can be of assistance.

A good client is someone who is "ready" for someone else to take an objective look at their club and situation, provide a plan for improvement and is willing to be objective about this process. A good client asks us to work beside them to help them reach their goals. A good client takes our materials and systems and runs full speed with them.

Usually things are not going quite as well as they expected. Things may be a bit overwhelming and the client is looking for direction and structure. We provide solutions, direction and structure in the form of a system. When they see we will be providing this and the light goes off, we know they are ready. Let the fun begin!

We help our client use our services full through communication and education. Our entire process always starts with a complete profile or analysis of the operation. From this we build an improvement plan and then we move into regular communications, training and education. We have six or more forms of communication with our clients that we use regularly. Throughout the year we will offer hundreds of training programs worldwide in as many as 7 different formats. Our education reaches them from all directions.

3) Our focus is on the entire club operation as an integrated process. Each department is interlinked with every other part, much like every part of the body interlinks with every other part. Even a small hangnail can interfere with other functions in the body. So, a poorly executed fitness program can interfere with the future of new membership sales. Through a systematic approach we start with what we call the Big Three.

These are the three most important things that are impairing profitability, we improve them first and go on from there.

We have been in this consulting business for thirty years as of this year. Some of our clients have been with us since day one. We consider ourselves partners in our client's business operations. With that said, our clients, preferred vendors, consultants in over 50 countries and suppliers are all considered part of team CMS. We do what we have to make all of them profitable and successful in their own right. That way everyone is a winner.

4) When we work side-by-side with our clients to reach their objectives. Success is when this mission is completed successfully at which time we go out for a glass of wine or a beer and have a good laugh.

Michael Scott Scudder, CEO
 "MSS Fit Biz Connection"

Michael Scott Scudder (I call him Brother Scudder), is CEO of "MSS FitBiz Connection." While still conducting select private consulting assignments with quality clubs



Michael Scott Scudder

and multi-club companies, he is concentrating more and more on his "LearnShops" - monthly online training seminars with small groups of non-competing clubs. Some of his current offerings are: "Modern Marketing;" "Building A Personal Training Business in Your Club;" "Making Sense of Your Group Fitness Program;" "A NEW New Member Orientation System;" and "The Low-down on Low Pricing." Brother Scudder also offers a software-based member retention system. Upcoming appearances will be at IHRSA (March 20 - "Learning & Profiting from the Top 10 Errors Club Operators Make"); MACMA Special Seminar (Columbia, MD April 20 - "Protecting and Growing Your Fitness Business in Challenging Times"); California Clubs of Distinction Special Seminars (Los Angeles, CA May 8 and Oakland, CA May 10 - "Protecting and Growing Your Fitness Business in Challenging Times"); and Club Industry East (Philadelphia, PA June 7 - "Small Club Soup-to-Nuts Success Formula"; June 8 - "How The Heck Do You Compete With \$19 A Month?"; June 9 - "Franchising: Should You or Shouldn't You?"). For details about seminars or services, phone (505) 751-4248 or email mss@michaelscottscudder.com.

Here are Michael Scott Scudder's responses to the four questions. And again, the # preceding the response matches the question.

1) A club owner has got to understand that he/she must identify his club's "niche" - in terms of demographic/sociographic makeup, what those people (members) need, and then systematize his club to accomplish the service component to make sure that those

(See Best Of page 16)



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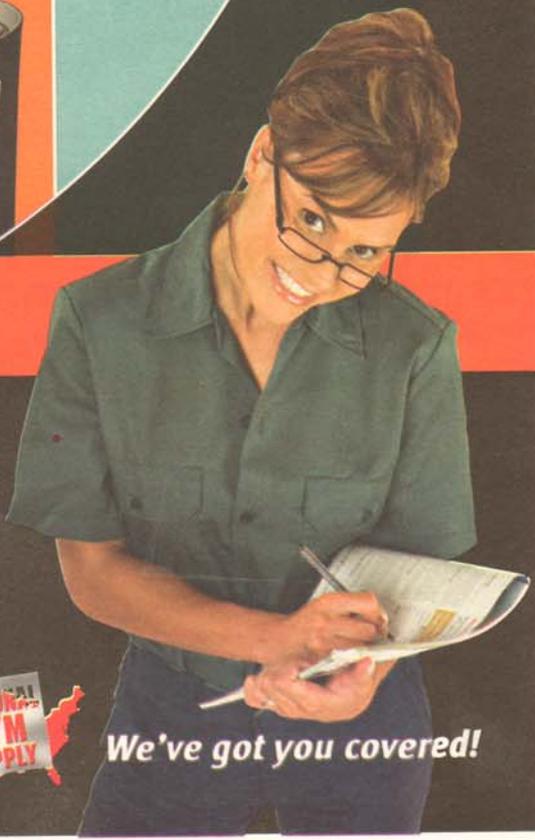
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...Best Of

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customers get what they need and want. In other words, there must be a bona fide, quality "delivery system" of fitness services in the club or it is likely to fail, later or sooner. There is simply too much competition in most areas for a club to rest on its laurels and *keep delivering "same old, same old fitness."* (Same old, same old is the routine "basic orientation, one or two equipment demonstrations and then you're on your own" brand of fitness. *That is very old style and destines a club for the scrap heap.*)

2) The first thing I do with every potential client is hold an up-to-one-hour complimentary conference call with them. I want to find out if they know what their challenges are, if they understand their numbers, if they have a focus on what they are calling me for. Also, that one hour really helps *both* of us to see *whether we can work together*. If we decide to go to the next step, then I ask them to send me certain documentation, like two or three years of P & Ls, their club marketing and advertising materials, their membership sales materials, a brief assessment of their staff management team, photos or a video of the club(s), a description of their program offerings and a description of their new member orientation process. If the club owner can't even tell me *why* he is calling, he is likely not a candidate for consulting...at least not with me! If they don't *understand their numbers* or don't have a certain *focus* on what they want to accomplish, I probably can't help them.

By getting all of this info in advance, I have a pretty good "feel" for the organization by the time I walk in the door.

2) A good client is one who *puts his ego aside* for the few days that I am there working with them (and then ongoing, if that is what the relationship turns out to be). What makes him ready is a combination of answers above to first part of #2...and a goal or set of goals that he wants me to assist them in reaching.

The best way I can help any client is to be open and straight-forward with my suggestions to him...and to expect the same in return. Much of quality consulting occurs in what I call the "*dialogue of discovery*" – the willingness of both parties to uncover non-workability in the club's systems of operation and to mutually develop strategies to make for more workability.

4) I am fortunate, Norm, in that for the last several years, almost all of my clients have been already-successful clubs – usually in the range of 20,000 square feet to about 50,000 square feet – that want me to come in and take a complete look at their operations and tell them frankly what I see. Many of my recent clients have been 3-4-5 or more regional chain operations that want to look at their entire structure of organization and how it

will fare going forward in a more competitive industry. Mostly, I have done two-or-three day comprehensive evaluations accompanied with specific consulting in certain problem areas. Usually, with that approach, I will do a 2-hour or even half-day seminar for the entire management team.

Perhaps, because I'm getting older and have been lucky enough to gain some notoriety in our industry, many club organizations are now calling on me for more of a "mentoring relationship" – which means I am on-site maybe once each year *and* conducting ongoing conference calls and online work together throughout the year.

I think my best attributes as a consultant – that stuff that "*makes a difference*" – is twofold. One, I have learned to be a very "active committed listener." I can usually hear solutions to perceived problems just in the ways that the ownership/management group speaks about its operations. The other is the fact that I have three decades of experience in this industry, with all types and sizes of clubs and in all different kinds of geographic and demographic areas. (Ironically, I don't seem to do much work anymore in really large cities like Los Angeles or New York...but clubs in secondary and tertiary cities call me a lot. *Perhaps that's because they know I'm "a country boy with city smarts."*)

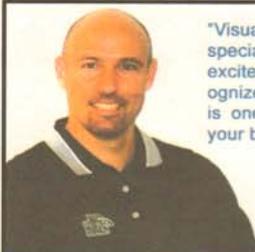
4) I consider a consulting assignment successful when:

- The client is able to develop better systems of operations than he had before.
- The client is more clear about his/her business goals...and the path that will take them there.
- The "bottom line" of the organization is impacted positively, be it from increased revenue generation and/or savings in expenses.
- We continue a "dialogue for excellence" on a longer-term basis, to facilitate the client staying on track and growing in business skills and profitability.

Casey Conrad
 Founder and President of
 Communications Consultants
 and Healthy Inspirations

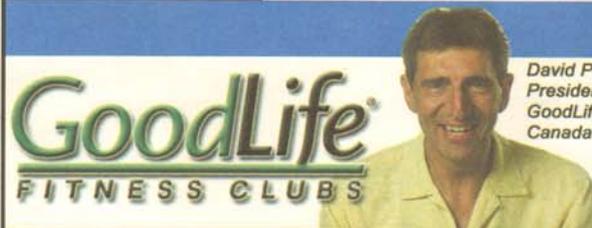
Communication Consultants is a company dedicated to providing high quality sales and marketing training to the health and fitness industry worldwide. Its Founder and President, Casey Conrad, has over 23 years experience in the industry. She is the author of "**Selling Fitness: The Complete Guide to Selling Health Club Memberships**," the first book in the industry which is specifically designed to

(See Best Of page 17)



"Visual Fitness Planner wants to extend a special thanks to our customers. We are excited to be working with many of the recognized industry leaders. GoodLife Fitness is one of those customers and we value your business. Thank you!"

Daron Allen
 CEO
 Visual Fitness Planner



David Patchell-Evans
 President and Founder
 GoodLife Fitness Clubs
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David Patchell-Evans
 President and Founder
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...Best Of

continued from page 16

help salespeople sell memberships. In addition, she has created 17 other sales, marketing and management books, videos and audio-tapes, including the best sellers **"Mastering Fitness Sales"**, **"How to Give A Professional Fitness Sales Presentation"** and **"How to Close the Sale and Overcome Objections"**. All programs are available through **Communication Consultants**. Casey and other staff members at Communication Consultants speak at industry conventions and are available on a limited basis to do in-house speaking and consulting work worldwide, with a primary focus on successful systems, strategies and tools for selling health club memberships as well as creating powerful and creative marketing strategies and plans. Communication Consultants contact information is 401-792-7009 or 800-725-6147 or via e-mail through their web site at www.communication-consultants.us.



Casey Conrad



Here are Casey Conrad's responses to all four questions show above and each is numbered to match.

1) "There are three real ways to 'beat the competition':

- 1. Have a *vastly different product or service* than anyone else in your market is delivering;
- 2. Have such a far superior product and/or service that people will be more likely to want to buy from you, or;
- 3. Have the *cheapest price*.

Although they certainly have their place in the market, unless someone is al-

ready the cheapest price in the market (#3 above), I am not a fan of price slashing to try and win the competition game. It almost always results in a business going "out of business." If this doesn't happen, then it takes an already notoriously low quality of business and further worsens thr profits, not to mention what this does to the quality of the existing product. #2, (See **Best Of** page 28)

Apologies and Correction

In "Best of the Best" - Part I, last month, part of the response to Karen Woodard-Chavez' question #3 was accidentally omitted. We apologize to Karen and you, our readers.

Karen's response to our interview question #3 : **"What is the main area you consult in? How have you made a difference with your clients and their success?"** appears below.

I provide the following services to my clients:

- Marketing which includes strategic planning and branding to create differentiation in the marketplace as well as tactical marketing to create more traffic to create more sales.
- Sales training which includes interpersonal and selling skills for Membership Staff, Personal Trainers, Tennis Pros, Golf Pros and all other non-dues revenue departments. In addition to teaching skills, I also provide logistical and organizational development for the sales department.
- Management training that includes organizational management, strategic planning as well



Karen Woodard-Chavez

as leadership and day-to-day facilities and staff management.

- Service training that impacts all staff and their ability to communicate, serve and connect appropriately with multiple generations, cultures and expectations. A large emphasis of my service training is on social and courtesy skills as well as creating a service culture that imparts value to the member and retention for the club.

"Double our personal training sales???"

"Yeah right, when pigs fly."



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Powering Up Your Business

Part II

By: Will Phillips.

Conflict Builds Better Decisions

To fully understand the necessity of conflict from a management team, I'm going to divide the reason into two parts. The first part has to do with improving the quality of the decision. You must see better to decide better. This means getting different perspectives and viewpoints clearly on the table. A barrier to such full truthfulness getting used is the non-permeable manager. This is the person who is not open to new informa-

tion, often because it challenges his world and makes him uncomfortable. In his desire to be safe and comfortable, he will put up a wall which prevents new information from being truly integrated in his thinking process. From the outside, we often call these people arrogant, egotistical, inflexible or authoritarian. Their inability to learn dooms their business to modest performance because they do not learn and their business can not adapt to change.

Another way to look at barriers which make it impossible to truly define the problem or issue as described in Patrick Len-

cioni's "Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions of a Team". On page 124, he presents a conflict resolution model that describes four sets of barriers that distort any issue and decision.

First barrier, we rarely have all the facts. Next barrier, the company culture may not encourage full, upfront sharing of information and opinions, and company politics distorts the information.

The third set of obstacles is style differences between managers, status differences due to age, sex or title. The last type of barriers includes legacy events. These are bad things that happened between two or more people on the team, sometime in the past. It might have been an open position that both applied for and one got promoted and one didn't. And, the harboring of ill will can sometimes go on for decades. This last set of obstacles have to do with your style, your skills, your IQ, your experience, your EQ, your values, your knowledge or self-esteem.

All of these four types of obstacles create clouds which mask the real issue and prevent the best in decision making. If you go to the conflict resolution model on page 125, you will find a useful exercise for your management team which identifies the barriers on your management team and what you might do to overcome them. Posting your team's plot on the wall of the meeting room can be insightful!

The powered up management team brings together people with different perspectives and different barriers. Their fully honest interaction now enables the issue to become clear and the decision to become better formed. Each viewpoint and each different barrier when on the table enables them to collectively see better.

In my work, I've always referred to this as the "beach ball issue." When you hold up a beach ball between two people, it represents the problem, opportunity or decision that you are about to make. As long as you have two different people, you're seeing two different sides of the beach ball and you'll never be able to see the other person's side without asking

questions of them and having a dialogue. In reality, the beach ball is an overly simplistic model for the complexity that shows up in such issues as when do we raise prices and how much and what market should we focus on? Should we expand in our present facility or go to the other side of town?

An additional resource, if your team is having trouble engaging in these difficult and uncomfortable conversations which may arise, particularly around some of the obstacles, I'll refer you to the book, "Difficult Conversations". You won't learn anything radically new here, but it will remind you of how to have those conversations that are important, but uncomfortable or difficult. It provides simple guidelines (like don't blame) so in engaging in such conflicts, so you do not get sidetracked from the real issue and turn in style conflicts or political conflicts or positional conflicts or the very worst-interpersonal conflicts, which invariably make blood!

Conflict Builds Deepest Commitment

The second most important region for engaging in conflict is to build deep levels of commitment to decisions -- even uncomfortable ones. This occurs when a team is addressing an issue. Most teams and most owners are fairly quick to want to shape a decision having seen the opportunity or problem. When this information is presented to the management team, as an initial problem or as a proposed solution, it is highly likely that others on the team will not agree exactly on what the problem is or how to solve it. If it turns out that you always agree with the owner's definition of the problem and the owner's solution of the problem, you're probably not a manager, but rather a sycophant. The way that you contribute to the value of the organization is by presenting other sides of the beach ball which those on your team don't yet see. *Engaging in this conflict to discover various aspects of the issue and its solution is what enables everyone to be HEARD. Being heard is the same as being respected.* It builds true



Will Phillips

commitment to the final decision. And without commitment there is no self-accountability. And with no self-accountability there can be no team accountability. And without accountability organizational results are severely compromised.

One of the curious dynamics of human beings is pointed out in the "Five Dysfunctions of a Team" that when a decision is made, you don't have to be in 100% agreement with it to give it 100% of your support. Over and over again, when human beings are not involved in the making or the fashioning of the decision, they will withhold a certain amount of commitment. We often say they don't own the decision. The way ownership is built is by grappling with the decision, by engaging in the conflicts and exploring the differences that arise between you and the others on the management team. As this occurs it is critical for others to listen and let those different views permeate them. You may not like them or agree with them, but do you truly understand them? Do you understand how another manager comes to hold those views?

Once individuals have done this and feel that they have been heard, they are willing to go along with a decision that may not have been their first choice because they have ownership in the process of making the decision, and because they realize that they are not the CEO. They realize that taking more time to collect more data or to postpone the decision is an impractical approach. By being engaged in the (See Will Phillips page 20)

(In your day-to-day club operations battleground)

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...Will Phillips

continued from page 20

process of fashioning the decision, i.e., the conflict, they own it. And, in 99.9% of the time, when individuals have fully engaged in the conflict, they are then willing to support the decision even if it is not their favorite. In fact, this guideline has been so valid that when I find someone on a management team who is not committed to the decision, I immediately assume that they were not involved in the making of the decision and that it may be necessary to go back and review that.

99.9% of the time, when individuals have fully engaged in the conflict, they are then willing to support the decision even if it is not their favorite.

Another interesting tool in Lencioni's books is on page 129 in the "Overcoming The Field Guide To The Five Dysfunctions of a Team" where he presents a model for the depth and frequency of conflict. It ends up with four different possibilities and it asks this question to each person on your management team ---- how often are there conflicts on your management team? And, how deep are they? And with those two different dimensions, we get four possibilities. Not many conflicts, not very deep. They're rare and shallow. On the other hand, we have frequent and substantive conflicts. This is what Peter Drucker was talking about ---- the foundation of good decision making and commitment building. But, there are two other extremes that are also interesting. And, that is that we have in-depth conflicts, but

they are extraordinarily rare. Or, that we have frequent, but shallow conflicts. By encouraging each person on your management team to rate one another on this four-square model, it will give you a very interesting perspective of areas where your management team can improve in its decision making ability and in achieving results.

So in summary, conflict gives you better decisions and higher commitment. Adjusting the fuel rods of the management team which nurture productive conflict is now your challenge.

(Author Will Phillips is the Founder and CEO of REX Roundtables for Executives which operates 24 industry roundtables including 10 for club owners and GMs in the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. A down load-

able copy of this article will be on www.REXonline.org under Management Briefings.)

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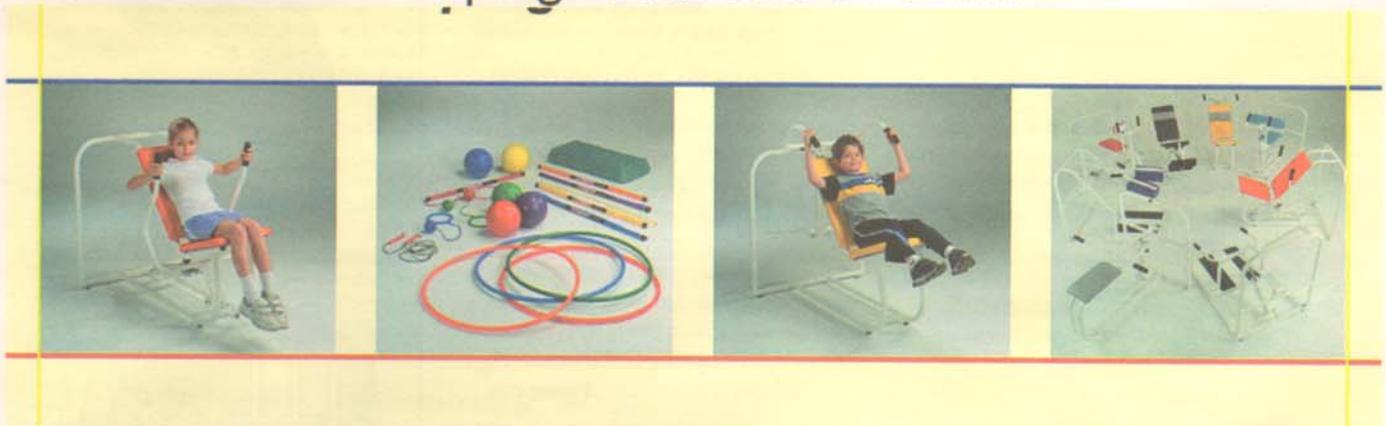
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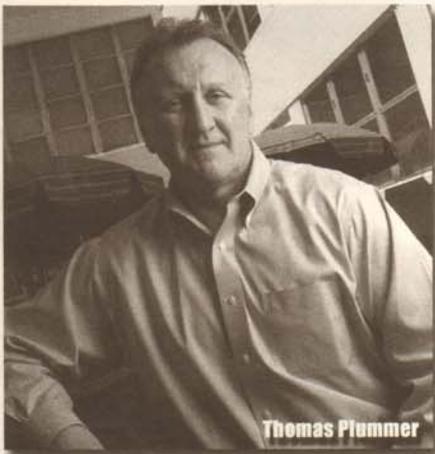


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It's been hard to make money in this business during the last several years but we have the ideas and resources to help you change what happens. New ideas and leadership is what the Thomas Plummer Company is all about, and we promise that if you give us two days, we can make a major difference in how you make money.

In Their Own Words...

-Every club owner, no matter how long they have been in the industry, needs to attend a Thomas Plummer seminar.

Jason West
North Columbus Athletic Club

-Thomas Plummer is very fun and inspirational, the information is top notch, and I just enjoy being around other gym owners for 2 days.

Ken Laurie
World Gym Express

-I look forward to attending and sending my staff to a Plummer seminar every year. I take something back each time that will help take my business to the next level.

Mike Shirley
Double Diamond Athletic Club

...Personal Notes

continued from page 8

against the obese and fat people of America that needs to be changed in your heart and your mind! I am writing to you here to try my best to do that, if you are not already there.

Maybe you have already risen to these heights in the fight against obesity and you lead others there too. Again... *good on you!* If you have pre-pared for them and are targeting and helping the obese, please accept my thanks and my appreciation for your work to date with the obese and overweight. Keep it up! And, I do want to hear from you about what you do and how you do it, so that I may share your wisdom, knowledge and experiences in this realm with CLUB INSIDER readers worldwide. And, hopefully from this, you may even wish to accelerate your efforts in this area.

If you and your club are not prepared for and doing all you can to be a "FAT Friendly Health Club" please realize that this writing will help you to do so.

Part of my dream is that your single act of reading, understanding and embracing this message from me, will give you a NEW VISION for the BIGGEST and BEST TRUE MARKET for your club. A market thousands of health clubs in America are NOT tapping yet. And, I hope we can give your club a NEW LIFE from seeking and signing new members from the masses of obese and fat in our American society.

I seek only affirmative action from you now.

So, I say now with no fear about sharing my dream with you...*read about my dream and after examining my message herein, adopt it if you will. Share my dream with your staff. Modify your club and operations as I describe them below and help me and IHRSA, make this happen.* Keep this message in your heart forever. After study, understanding and adoption of my dream, then act fast to begin to change your club and pursue this market, a market that may be a brand new market for your club.

Adapt them and make YOUR club a "FAT Friendly Club"!

Realize now that your people, those on your membership rolls, should begin today to include a LOT more, millions and millions of Americas that are members of the world's obese and fat population. They need your *need your help now!* But, because of "intimidation, embarrassment and fear of embarrassment" they are afraid to come into your club's doors

A Description of the 21st Century... "FAT Friendly Health Club!"

My dream calls for those of you in our industry that have NOT changed your club's lobby and some workout area layouts to make obese and fat individuals feel at ease and comfortable coming into your well equipped club...you should perhaps, immediately consider doing so.

However, "physical changes to your club" will not work unless you as the owner, manager and employee of your club, adjust and change your own mentality and your staff's.

You must meet regularly and discuss this change to become a true "FAT Friendly Health Club!" Your club's "corporate culture" and resulting operations must be modified and changed.

And, importantly you must get yourself and your staff outside of the doors of your club to seek, meet and openly recruit obese and fat people everywhere you go in society. Welcome them, embrace them and support the arrival of obese and fat people...and trust me, you will score hundreds of new memberships if you treat them as you would wish to be treated, were you obese and fat. Remember the GOLDEN RULE! Begin to do this now! And, STAY TUNED...for next month's blockbuster, Part II in our 2nd month in a row, IHRSA25 Special Edition that will carry the latest news and photos from the big show!

The article headlines for Part II of this very special Norm's PERSONAL Notes coming in April are: *Therein Is the Rub!; A Monstrous Disconnect Exists NOW Between Obese and Fat Americans and the 21st century health club industry! They are dying for help...to coin a sad and true phrase; The "FAT Friendly Health Club" In Action; My Book... "Leaving FAT City!"*

Arrives Electronically on May 15th, go back to ad on #5 in March and April issues and sign up now; Become a "FAT Friendly Health Club!" owner today!

The health club industry is *truly in a unique position to be different and to help America...* when no one else on Earth can. *Doctors, weight loss shops, home fitness equipment and the "infomercials" cannot do what you can do. YOU are a "chosen one".*

Will you scoff at this **REVOLUTION I am starting here today?** Will you **RISE** to this truly once in a lifetime opportunity? In 10 years, those of you that do rise will be glad you did.

America will one day thank you for **saving it from economic ruin at the hands of obesity.** This is a tall order. This is your country. Dr. Carmona was right...obesity could be worse than terrorism someday...but the fight involves heart and soul.

Are you going to **FIGHT for your country or not?** Join this **REVOLUTION!** And...**STAY TUNED!**

• U.S. Surgeon General Vice Admiral Richard S. Carmona, M.D., P.P.H., F.A.C.S., America's Chief Health Educator, testified on July 16, 2003, before a subcommittee in the U.S. Congress on the "Obesity Crisis in America." He stated: "The crisis is obesity. It's the fastest growing - cause of disease and death in America. And, it's completely preventable." He went on to say, nearly two out of three Americans are obese or overweight." He added "Nearly one out of eight deaths in America is caused by an illness directly related to overweight and obesity." In early February he stated in a speech that "If the United States does not take action to address the obesity epidemic, it could become a bigger threat than terrorism! Obesity is America's terror within, and health and fitness experts continue to attack it stressing the vitality exercise has on Americans' daily routine." Next month, in my Norm's PERSONAL Notes - Part II, contained in our April and 2nd IHRSA25 Special Edition, I have some comments about the U.S. Surgeon General's comments reported here.

Well, this "SPY on Obesity" for our health club industry would like to weigh-in

just a bit now after Vice Admiral Carmona's comments with a comment of my own to you about where I think America is headed. In my new book, "Leaving FAT City!" soon to be released *electronically worldwide on May 15, 2006, (see pages 4 and 5),* I write about some *ILLs* in America that don't get much press. *They do not get much press because the press in America is afraid to write about itself like I candidly have in my new book.* These two ills are *directly linked* to each other. One, is the *unspoken national crisis... of alcohol abuse, that easily and sometimes ultimately leads to alcoholism.* In my not so humble opinion, *that my friends is "America's terror within"!* I comment in my book that *alcohol abuse starts as a small part of one's life and grows, just like a normal body starts small and grows and if left unchecked, it becomes clinically obese over time* Ultimately, unless checked and gotten under control, *alcohol abuse, will grow, like a body out of control and abuse will become alcoholism.* The fact that both the abuse of alcohol and alcoholism are huge contributing factors to obesity is not a silly idea. Trust me. The truth is, even *relatively innocent early alcohol abuse helps the body become obese.* It's about the *calories and diminished discipline from the early drinking days thereafter.*

Then alcohol abuse or alcoholism (call it *what you will*) *teams-up* with obesity to cause a third national crisis, **DIVORCE** in America! To me, it is very sad to think that in this great country, with all we have that is **GOOD** for the people, marriage, our family institution, is on the rocks, too.

I, from my bad experiences with alcohol in my 60 years, (from age 16 to age 54) credit alcohol abuse as a "feeder" of obesity and that I believe they are the two root causes of America's 50% divorce rate.

You can throw money, or the lack of it, into the divorce formula too, as sort of a bad offshoot of it all. Drink more, eat more, exercise less, get big and round and ugly fat...make less money...get divorced...cry...and wonder *why that all happened? Hello!* Moreover, I liken marriage in America as sort of "bait and switch". How many couples do you know where when the wedding bells rang, both were slim, beautiful

and handsome. Then, *for some couples, only one of the two get really big and fat.* So, what does the other party to the marriage feel like? That party, provided she has stayed slim, feels that she got rooked! One thing for sure, though...the **FAT one does not feel screwed** (anymore). I think you follow my drift.

Now don't get me wrong here...I am not talking about *your drinking.* I'm talking from *experience* about *my drinking* and relating here as "part of the problem" for a portion of 185 million obese Americans. In fact, virtually all of my friends drink regularly. I just gave it up 5 1/2 years ago for life because I knew it was bad for me personally, since I am of Irish, Scottish and Cherokee Indian descent. But, we have a great time together in my community. In fact, I have a little part-time entertainment deal called "Norm Cates's Special Events, Inc." and I produce two of Atlanta biggest parties every year. They are called The "Great Characters of Atlanta Party" (19th year coming up) and the "Legendary Ladies of Atlanta Party." So, I am no holy roller, thou I believe in a God. I never bug my friends about their drinking, except as a D.D., unless they are complaining to me about the fact that they can't lose any weight, even though they are exercising some. Basically, I love to raise hell and dance and that's pretty much it. It gets harder to raise much hell when you turn 60 because folks expect you to behave...but they know me around here and don't bug me when I get rowdy. I love to "Make It Fun!"

So, with the above said, let me explain why I just wrote all that. It is because as a veteran of both excessive drinking and obesity, *I am now very convinced that at least 50% of the obese fat people in America are that way, at least partially, because of alcohol abuse.* I would love to discuss these beliefs I have with our U.S. Surgeon General. *All four* are all linked with one common denominator: **FAT = A crummy life, less achievement, little pride and significantly less, REAL happiness.** Alcohol abuse destroys exercise and nutritional discipline. People who drink a lot of any form of alcohol tend to eat too much of the wrong things, get obese and fat, make less money (studies prove that) (See *Personal Notes* page 24)

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...Personal Notes

continued from page 22

and then get divorced. The cycle goes on. Then...the fat one will often lose weight, get pretty or handsome again...get married. Settle down...start drinking more again, etc. And the beat goes on. He or she gets bigger and bigger, again and again and then they die. Do you know why they don't have many obese fat people in old

folks homes? Because the fat ones are dead or in the hospital.

Do any of you great folks out there in our wonderful, illness-prevention and healing industry have any idea of the power you collectively hold in your hands with respect to fixin' many of the ILLS in America described very briefly here with much more in my book about the true realities of obesity from your 'ol SPY here!

...Norm's Notes

continued from page 6

his great company with just \$777 in his bank account!

• **Congratulations** to RAY BOUDREAUX and all of his team at **BodyMasters**, as Ray announced that the 27-year old privately held business Chapter 11 Plan of Reorganization has been formally and overwhelmingly approved by the federal court and its creditors, just 14 months after the filing.

• **CHRIS BALLARD**

...John McCarthy

continued from page 7

Rule # 6. Be Positive. When all is said and done, staying positive, confident and bullish on your future is never more important than when your ship is being buffeted by the storms of competition. Then, more than ever, your staff needs to feel your drive, your confidence and your commitment. Never grouse, never blame and never go negative-either toward your own team or toward your competitors. The moment that you begin complaining, especially about a competitor is the moment that they sense fear, defensiveness and a lack of confidence. None of these emotions build confidence in

...Rick Caro

continued from page 12

that will be challenged with filling John McCarthy's shoes worn in his Executive Director role over the first 25 years?

• As the "Father of IHRSA" you've stayed close to the Association for 25 years, often working behind the scenes to help. What do you now envision for IHRSA for the next 25-years?

• Last summer, when I published my writing in our June, 2005 cover report entitled: "The FUTURE of IHRSA" you indicated to me that you might be supportive of a two - part division of IHRSA to provide independents with a more focused Independent Club/ IHRSA relationship. What is your view on that idea today and why?

• IHRSA has had over 100 Board Members since the beginning. Now, as the Association moves forward for the next 25 years, what advice would you give any IHRSA member who might be interested in serving as a volunteer, uncompensated IHRSA Board Member?

(I, Norm Cates, am a 32-year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry having developed, owned and operated clubs in the Southeast for 20+ years before beginning Publication of CLUB INSIDER 13 years ago. I was the 1st President of and a Co-founder, with Rick Caro and others. Rick Caro should have been both the Founder and 1st President of I(H)RSA. But, he was too busy that year. The IRSA (then) Board chose me. Rick was our

Think about this cycle and the honest obligation you have to your members to really help them. Think about how YOU can make a difference, a very big difference in their lives by discussing these serious issues with your members. OHHHHHHHHH! You don't want to talk to them about this stuff, eh?

Then I will do it through my book "Leaving Fat

Winner: LifeStyleRx, Liver more, Calif.

• Category 3: Exercise Incentive Programming

Winner: Choosing Health Fitness Center, Nutley, N.J.

• Category 4: Events, Classes and Community Outreach

Winner: Merritt Athletic Club, Baltimore, Md.

• Category 5: Customer Service

Winner: MediFit — Nokia Wellness Center, Irving, Texas.

• Category 6: Websites and New

down in a defensive position.

Rule # 8. Be Sharp.

This is the time, in the words of Stephen Covey, to "sharpen the saw," to invest in sales training, service training and hospitality training to help your people "be all that they can be." Whenever any new competitor enters a market, it is likely that, at least for awhile, your club's "leads" will diminish, which means you will need to score a higher "closing percentage" than ever before. Also, keeping every member that you have now becomes more important than ever, so it is crucial that your staff's hospitality and service skills be honed to a higher pitch.

Rule # 9 Be Real. Never put your head in the sand and

2nd President. It was the greatest honor of my life, except for being the Father of my son, Justin and a 10-year "stay-at-home"... "Mr. Mom". That's actually how the CLUB INSIDER got started. Now that Justin is grown and away as a Junior at the University of Georgia, I now pour all of my heart, energy, dedication and passion in my heart to try to HELP all of you every month, the best I can. I honestly do LOVE all of you "chosen ones" with a true passion, for who you are in our world and what you do for humanity. In March, 2001, I was honored by IHRSA with its DALE DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award and was thrilled. I may be reached at: 770.850.8506 or email: clubinsidernews@mindspring.com)

City" on May 15, 2006..

Oh yes, and let me throw in the close here...the bottom line of obesity in America. If we in our industry do not team up and turn America around in the other direction with respect to helping people get control over their lives, bankruptcy of the United States Government due to runaway health care costs for America's Corporations and private citizens is clearly in

Technology

Winner: Pulse Fitness and Weight Loss Centers, Mundelein, Ill.

• Category 7: Management, Marketing and Sales

Winner: TELOS Performance Center, Dallas, Texas.

• Nova7 Supplier award for Best Cardio Equipment: **SportsArt.**

Well folks...this has been a busy edition and it's time to go. Hope to see you in Las Vegas at IHRSA25.

suggest to anyone that the new competition will not affect you. Every competitor takes a slice of the market. It may be a small slice-but it's still a slice. Maybe it's only 25 members or 50 or 100 or 200, but at most clubs, it's that final 10%, 15% or 20% of the membership that constitutes 100% of a club's profitability. Losing just 10% of the membership often means losing 100% of your profitability. The stakes are high, and one strong competitor can spell the difference between life and death. Take every competitor seriously.

Rule # 10. Be Partnered. Clay Hammer, one of the industry's premier consultants in the 70's and 80's, never tired of repeating the refrain "same bed,

swami's cards!

Now is the time, IHRSA25 in Las Vegas, is the place. So, while I am in Las Vegas I think I will just start a little revolution "outside-the-box" in our industry in America. I do hope you will join me! **Cherio and STAY TUNED!**

MAKE IT FUN!

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Troops, Airmen and Seamen in IRAQ as they fight on for freedom and another Democratic foothold in the middle east. GOD BLESS the families of all of our servicemen and women. GOD help those poor citizens of IRAQ as they try to survive to enjoy the changes being made by American sacrifice in their country. And, GOD BLESS all of you and may he bring you health, happiness and more profits in your life!

same dream." This was his way of saying that the best ways to mobilize your team to mount an all-out, counter-offensive against a formidable competitor is to create incentives for them to "partner" with you in achieving desired results. As the leader in your company, you do not want to go into battle alone. You want your entire team behind you and in front of you. You want them to be as committed as you are. To achieve this, put some financial incentives on the line, so that when you win, they win, too.

John McCarthy, Executive Director, IHRSA

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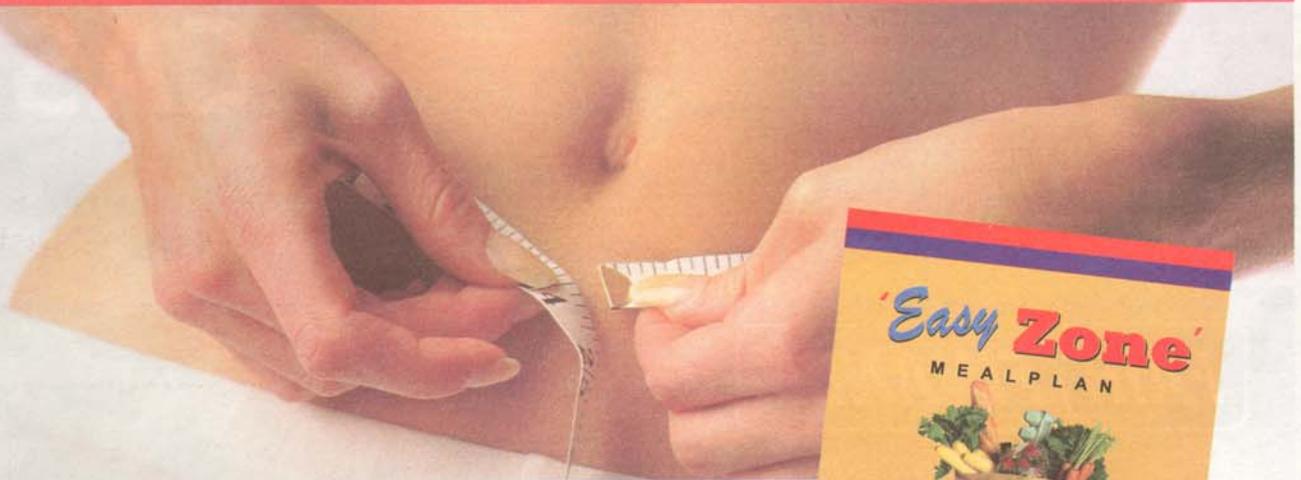
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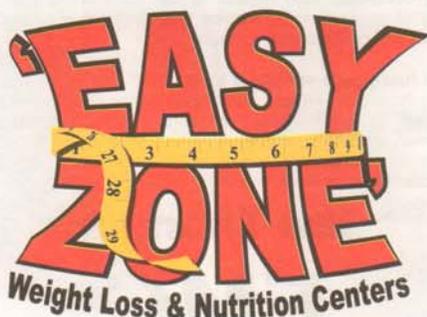
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Create a Plan that Works

By: *Jim Thomas*

Well, February has passed. Were January and February the success you thought they would be? We're always telling anyone who is willing to listen, that January success is guaranteed to no one. It's about following a proven system and having a winning attitude.

The successful clubs we see all have one thing in common in this regard...they are proactive versus reactive. They think it through and they have a plan.

By putting your plan on paper you will be more empowered and feel less stressed.

It all sounds very easy, but most people who sit down to do this for the first time find it very challenging. Most likely you've become accustomed to putting out fires and reacting to the things around you. Take control today!

Here is a good place to start each month. A Plan of Action. It becomes your roadmap for success. Use this outline and

let us know how you're doing.

1. Starting point. Before deciding where you want to go, see where you are at. Find a quiet spot and write out a clear statement of where you are today. Take your time. You have been without a road map for this long, a little longer won't hurt.

Be as professional as you can. This is not a "make me proud of you" exercise nor is it a "kick-me" one. Be honest.

2. Written Goals. Writing crystallizes thought and thought motivates action! Begin to compile a list of what you would like to accomplish in your club. List both tangible and intangible goals.

After completing this list, go back and arrange them in order of their priority – most important to least important. As you do this, be careful your priorities are not all coming from one area.

3. A Plan. Now that you have prioritized your goals, why do you need a plan?

• It will be easier to make things happen



Jim Thomas

• Knowing the big picture will allow you to make fewer and easier decisions. Sound planning will not always make it clear what your current decision should be, but it will make your decision-making easier. Ask yourself: Will what I am about to do help me in the attainment of my goals? Planning will allow you to make the
(See *Jim Thomas* page 30)

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Jim Thomas
FMC



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"A well trained, member oriented staff is critical to differentiating your club in today's competitive market."

Gerry Faust, Consultant to the Club Industry

...Best Of

continued from page 17

although being far superior, is something everyone strives for, the vast majority of businesses simply fall into a "middle" category, with no real selling advantage in products or services over the competition.

Let's face it. Most clubs look the same, have the same equipment and offer almost identical services to their members.

This is NOT to say that every club operator shouldn't strive to offer the best, most exceptional service to members, because they should. It is just harder to do than it sounds.

This leaves #1, having a vastly different product or service. The book *"Differentiate or Die"*, is a phenomenal read, as well as *"The Blue Ocean Strategy"*.

Both of these books illustrate how coming up with a new product, service or market segment is the one thing that makes competition irrelevant. *Think about Curves.*

Oh, sure, some people will say that the reason they are successful is because they are cheap at \$29 per month. But that is an

inaccurate assessment.

There are many, many health clubs that are in the \$29 range. There always have been and always will. And, droves of women were not and are not flocking to those doors to join a gym! And, not taking anything away from their success, it certainly wasn't because they had a far superior product or service. Curves is succeeding because they have made and delivered a very different product!

Certainly, doing everything you can from a management, operational, and functional standpoint to create a superior product, is always important and necessary to increase any business success. But, to really break out from the pack and make competition less of a concern, to be bold, to be remarkable, to be memorable by being different, is the KEY.

2) Step one is to do a complete assessment of the club's business. Personally, I have developed an extensive questionnaire for the owner to fill out. This provides me with a complete snapshot of how the business is set up—from organizational charts to operations—as well as how they are performing in membership sales

and non-dues revenue. Only until you completely understand the business, can you begin to work towards solutions. Step two is identifying exactly what areas of the business need to be worked on. Step three is establishing performance indicators—meaning how are you going to measure if what is being worked on is actually having a positive impact. Step four is establishing a time schedule, which means determining how long you are planning on working together and, in the event that the outcomes are not being reached, what is the "separation" plan. All too often clubs and consultants do not establish these guidelines, which can lead to problems. I always use the phrase, "Contracts are established on bright and sunny days and read on dark and stormy nights." Therefore, just like any business relationship, all these things need to be planned out before beginning to avoid problems.

A "good client" is one who is willing to do what the consultant tells him to do once the plan has been established. Club operators MUST realize that a consultant is just that—someone who gives advice and

provides training. They are not at the club to follow through and integrate. All too often, because club operators are so busy "working in their business," that they are unable to take the consultant's advice and go "work on their business." Inevitably, this will lead to frustration for both parties to the relationship.

As to benefiting fully, follow-up is key. This means that the consultant needs to set specific action points for the club owner with time deadlines. (This is assuming it is a client-club relationship and not just a one-time training.) Then, the consultant must follow up with the client to create accountability. Certainly the consultant cannot "make" an owner do anything, but if they are not at least following up, the club owner will be less apt to integrate advice and skills.

3) The main area of my consulting expertise is in sales and marketing. I could give you sensational success stories as well as failures. Any consultant who tells you otherwise is lying! The clubs that have the most success with my sales services are ones that embrace the selling process, follow up with regular sales training

and use sales tools to measure performance. As far as marketing, this is a much easier area to consult on and get success because helping someone create a marketing plan and coaching them on improving marketing pieces is objective and does not require the human follow-up like sales training does.

4) A successful consulting assignment is one where the club attains the established, measurable indicators that were set as a goal. Like everything else in life, if you don't set a goal and then measure it, the result will be floundering around with no direction.

CLUB INSIDER would like to thank all of those that participated in our "Best of the Best" Parts I and II. We urge you to seek help from your choice of consultants from our Part I or II. And, if you do not select one of this "Fabulous 11" featured in Parts I and II...or in the article on the Thomas Plummer Company last month, please do find help somewhere rather than staying with your own thoughts and ideas until it is too late.

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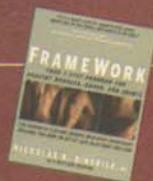


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...Jim Thomas

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best possible decisions about what to do now.

- You will control rather than be controlled.

- Planning doesn't make the future predictable. It does, however, allow you to anticipate what is most likely to occur.

- Planning is a continuous activity, not a periodic one.

- You will be better able to translate general goals into specific, measurable objectives.

- Planning will help you to identify what must be

done to insure desired results.

In your Plan-of-Action notebook, starting with Goal #1, begin to write out just how you plan to go about achieving your goals.

4. How To Deal With Roadblocks and Setbacks.

When you have done this for the high-priority goals, write next to each goal where the potential roadblocks and setbacks might occur. Then, assuming they will actually happen, how will you handle them? This may be the toughest part of the program, but no one ever said making your goals happen would be easy. Then only thing easy is running around shouting, "What

happened?"

5. Checkpoints. Decide upon a realistic "when" for each of your goals.

Once you have chosen a date to accomplish each of your goals, break each goal down into smaller segments of minor goals. Select date accomplished times for these shorter-range goals.

6. Scorecard. Go! Using your plan-of-action and its checkpoints, act on it! You will begin to notice a new internal enthusiasm! What you have to do on a daily basis won't seem as painful and/or difficult because you will know why you are doing it.

7. Reward System.

As part of your goals program, decide up-front how you intend to satisfy yourself. You can accomplish any *HOW* if you know your *WHY*.

8. Review. Nothing is carved in stone. As often as you like, step back and take a look at your big picture. Want to make a change? Go ahead. It's your plan.

Now you're all set for next month's plan of action. Good selling!

(Jim Thomas is Dallas, Texas is the President area-based Fitness Management and Consulting, and may be reached at: 800.929.2898)

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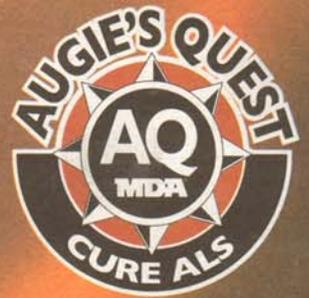


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