

Norm Cates'

# CLUB INSIDER

CELEBRATING 30+ YEARS OF TRUST

## IHRSA Modernization Continues with New Name



The IHRSA Board of Directors Cuts the Ribbon on The Health & Fitness Association

## MARCH 2024

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# CLUB INSIDER

CELEBRATING 30+ YEARS OF TRUST

## IHRSA Modernization Continues with New Name

**LOS ANGELES, CA** - Marking the next chapter of member service and engagement for an innovative and consumer-focused industry, *IHRSA President & CEO, Liz Clark*, unveiled a new name for the organization: *Health & Fitness Association*, which she described as a, "global community of industry leaders supporting an association committed to advocacy, education and research."

Clark made the announcement on March 6 during her *President's Address* prior to the keynote at the association's convention and trade show in Los Angeles.

"Every industry evolves, and the next step of evolution for our association is to have a name that exactly reflects

the breadth, diversity and consumer-oriented focus of the businesses in our sector," Clark said. "The Health & Fitness Association is clear, compelling and can also be easily translated into any language, which is vital given the international reach of the association and the global operations of our members."

"This decision is especially important when we focus on the association's primary mission: advocacy to government, media, NGOs and other key stakeholders around the world. From today on, there will be no question about the mission, vision and clarity of purpose of the Health & Fitness Association."

The Association originally launched

**HEALTH & FITNESS**  
ASSOCIATION

in 1981 as the *International Racquet & Sports Association (IRSA)*, and in 1994, it became the *International Health Racquet & Sportsclub Association (IHRSA)*.

During that time, the association has been proud to share the stories about how the industry has helped consumers improve their lives by providing facilities, tools, group programs, technology, digital tools, equipment and services to support

physical activity and to improve both mental and physical health.

The announcement about the name change marks the culmination of a year-long project involving Board Members, industry advisors and veterans, Association staff, as well as brand strategy and brand marketing consultants. In addition to the name, the rebrand involves  
(See *HealthFit* Page 6)

## IHRSA 2024 Hits a High Note with Association's New Name and Increased Attendance Numbers

**BOSTON, MA** - The *2024 IHRSA Convention & Trade Show* wrapped with buzz about the organization's new name launch and targeted mission to be the global community for health and fitness leaders focused on advocacy, education and research. The association's new name is the *Health & Fitness Association*.

*Health & Fitness Association President & CEO, Liz Clark*, revealed the new name prior to the keynote on the first day of the event, which occurred March 6 - 8 at the Los Angeles Convention Center in Los Angeles, California.

IHRSA 2024 welcomed more than 300 exhibitors, 150 speakers and 8,700 fitness professionals, which preliminary numbers show is a double-digit increase in overall attendance from last year.

"The feedback we have received from around the world has been overwhelmingly positive, as we are *THE Health & Fitness Association*," Liz said. "People from nearly 80 countries attended the event, and many of them were in the packed first-day keynote address to hear this announcement in person."

The Association arrived at the new name after consultation with members, supplier partners, consultants inside and outside the industry, as well as some of the original founders of the association.

"We were very deliberate in choosing our new name," Liz said. "The name demonstrates the breadth of our reach and our industry's impact --yes, we are fitness, but we are also health. We play a role in improving mental health and

**IHRSA 2024**  
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preventing chronic disease-- we are part of the solution. Our new name not only provides clarity about who we are, but it also will help us gain greater respect from policymakers whose decisions impact our members on a daily basis."

Rollout of the rebrand will continue for several months with updates to the website, social media platforms, email addresses, signage and contracts ongoing.

(See *IHRSA 2024* Page 10)

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- Putting Safety First in the Club Business - **By:** Herb Lipsman
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- Top Ten Mistakes for New Health Club Design and Renovations - **By:** Bruce Carter
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- Building an Effective Annual Sales and Marketing Plan - **By:** Frank Guengerich
- And, of Course, *Norm's Notes*

## Norm's Notes

■Hello Everybody! This is your **Club Insider Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993** checking in with our **363rd monthly edition of this 31+ year running club business publication** I refer to as: **A Labor of Love!** I'm very thankful that you've tuned in again for this iteration of **Norm's Notes**, as I proceed on my keyboard with my longtime habit of "Telling-It-Like-It-Is!" I'm really happy that you're reading this edition, and I want to **THANK YOU ALL** for sticking with us every month! As usual, we have a bunch of health and fitness club business news, so please read on!

■Is AMERICA a GREAT COUNTRY, or WHAT!? Hmm... hmm... hmm! And, as usual, let me start these **Norm's Notes** with my normal monthly salutation to you all: **GOD BLESS AMERICA and GOD BLESS YOU, YOUR FAMILY and YOUR BUSINESS!!!**

■The photo on **This Page** was taken of **JUSTIN CATES**, my great Son and Business Partner, as well as our **Club Insider Publisher**, at the **2024 IHRSA Convention & Trade Show** in Los Angeles on March 7th. It's very important to me to bring up the fact that Justin Cates has

been doing a terrific job with **Club Insider** as he continues on as our esteemed **Publisher**. But, IF you have been a regular **Club Insider** reader, you already know what a great job Justin does each and every month. And, IF you're a **NEW READER**, well then... **Justin and I WELCOME YOU and WE WISH YOU WELL!** I point out these facts, because as time has gone by, Justin has continued to get better and better at what he does for **Club Insider** and for our great industry worldwide! So, **Stay Tuned Folks**, as I have lots of news for you in this edition of **Norm's Notes**, and Justin has also assembled lots of great articles and industry information for you.

■**IHRSA RENAMED!** Importantly, the most significant news I have to bring to you today, just in case you have not heard this news already, is that **LIZ CLARK**, **IHRSA's President and CEO**, announced a name change for the 43-year running trade association formerly known as **IHRSA!** The new name is: **The Health & Fitness Association**. Folks, in my view, this new name is an excellent choice, because it clearly spells out the Association's Mission.

Liz Clark explained, "This decision



Justin Cates at IHRSA 2024



Norm Cates at IHRSA 2024

is especially important when we focus on the Association's primary mission: advocacy to government, media, NGOs and other key stakeholders around the world. From today on, there will be no question about the mission, the vision and or the clarity of purpose of **The Health & Fitness Association**."

Hear! Hear! I SAY!!! I think that's a terrific choice for the new name for the Association! **GOOD ON YOU Ms. Liz**

**Clark and GOOD ON the entire Board of Directors for this wise and excellent choice! HIP-HIP HOORAY!!!**

Folks, for those of you who do not know about the history of this world-class trade Association, known for years as **IHRSA**, it was originally launched in 1981 as the **International Racquet & Sports Association (IRSA)**. I was honored to be **IRSA's First President, 43 years ago...** (See **Norm's Notes Page 7**)

### About Club Insider

#### CELEBRATING 30+ YEARS OF TRUST

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### Thanks and Appreciation

At **Club Insider**, we are excited to be in our **31st Year** of this home-based health and fitness club trade publication! The thought that this publication was founded to serve an industry I truly love, and so that I could become a **Mister Mom** for my son, **Justin**, is still intriguing and amazing to us. So, I wish to extend my most sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to everyone who has made this amazing 30+ year run possible.

Very sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** go to **Rick Caro**, the late **Dr. Gerry Faust** and the **Faust Executive Roundtable #1** for helping me decide in 1993 what my home-based business would be. **Thanks and Appreciation** to my long-time friends, **Ron Hudspeth** and **Cathy Miller**, formerly of **Atlanta's Hudspeth Report** for the tremendous assistance they provided. **Thanks and Appreciation** to all of the folks at **Walton Press** in Monroe, Georgia. They did an absolutely excellent job for us all these years and printed every one of our monthly printed editions! And, of course, **Thanks and Appreciation** to the **United States Postal Service** for sending those editions to our readers!

Now, as we have gone all digital, **Thanks and Appreciation** to all of our **READERS**. Sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to our **Club Insider Advertisers**, past and present, for their kind and dedicated support of this publication. **Thanks and Appreciation** to all of our **Club Insider Contributing Authors**, past and present. **Thanks and Appreciation** to **IHRSA** for all it does for all of us. And, sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to my son, **Justin**, our **Publisher**, who is a truly great business partner. You name it and Justin does it each and every month!

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

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

*Norm Cates, Jr.*





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# Gold's Gym Inducts Pete Grymkowski, Ed Connors and Tim Kimber into its Hall of Fame

**VENICE BEACH, CA** - *Gold's Gym*, the iconic fitness brand known for its legacy in strength and performance training, inducts **Pete Grymkowski, Ed Connors** and **Tim Kimber** into the *Gold's Gym Hall of Fame*. These three individuals have been instrumental in shaping the history and growth of Gold's Gym during the 1980s and 1990s, leading the brand to unprecedented success and establishing its global presence.

Pete Grymkowski and Ed Connors first crossed paths in a Florida gym in the late 1970s. Together, they purchased Gold's Gym, then located in Santa Monica, California, in 1979. Two years later, joined by Tim Kimber, a close friend of Grymkowski, they relocated the gym to its

iconic Venice Beach location, known as the *Mecca of Bodybuilding*. Over the next 20 years, the trio expanded Gold's Gym into a global powerhouse, launching a licensing program that propelled the brand to over 500 locations worldwide.

Their leadership and vision revolutionized the fitness industry and inspired millions of individuals worldwide to pursue their fitness goals. Their contributions extend beyond the gym walls, as evidenced by the publication of "The Gold's Gym Encyclopedia of Bodybuilding," which became a staple resource for fitness enthusiasts around the globe.

"There is no question, Gold's Gym would not be the global icon it is today without the vision, passion and leadership

of Pete, Ed and Tim," said **Kevin Christie**, *Gold's Gym Vice President of Franchising*. "Each of them has left a lasting impression on Gold's Gym and the fitness industry as a whole. We welcome them into a group of storied Hall of Famers."

A committee of Gold's Gym executives and franchisees from the *Gold's Gym Franchise Association* select Hall of Fame inductees based on each individual's substantial leadership, influence and enduring impact on the brand. Grymkowski, Connors and Kimber join fellow Gold's Gym Hall of Famers including *Gold's Gym Founder Joe Gold, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Lou Ferrigno, Gabby Reese* and *Laird Hamilton*, in addition to several domestic and international

esteemed franchisees.

The selection of Pete Grymkowski, Ed Connors and Tim Kimber for induction into the Gold's Gym Hall of Fame reflects their enduring impact and legacy within the organization and the broader fitness community.

The Gold's Gym Hall of Fame induction ceremony took place Wednesday, March 6, at 6:00PM, during a private dinner at the Hotel Per La in downtown Los Angeles to honor the remarkable achievements of these three individuals and their profound influence on the brand's legacy. **Derek Barton** served as the *Master of Ceremonies* for this very special event.



Derek Barton Presenting the Gold's Gym Hall of Fame Inductees



Gold's Gym Hall of Fame Inductees (L to R): Ed Connors, Pete Grymkowski and Tim Kimber

## ...HealthFit

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clarifying and refining the member service and onboarding journey to maximize efficiency and effectiveness, and implementing new operational plans that support ongoing strategic planning.

As part of the process, the Association unveiled a new logo, brand usage guidelines, colors and fonts. In the coming months, the Association will roll out a full transition of the brand, iconography, images, website, social media platforms, email addresses and collateral materials. The association will use the hashtag **#HealthFit**.

The association's strategic pillars are:

**Advocacy:** The Health & Fitness Association serves as the voice for health and fitness facilities, their employees and members to stakeholders, policymakers, the media and consumers, as well as to national and international NGOs and government bodies. The Health & Fitness Association convenes meetings, brings together diverse sectors of the industry to establish a consensus view on key policy and legislative issues and serves as the voice to promote facility owners and their businesses, to protect the industry and to ensure government officials are educated about the impact of policies and laws on the industry, its supplier partners and member consumers. The association also helps drive global conversations about important health and fitness-related topics and shares industry expertise, such as

working to transition the health sector and consumer decisions from a treatment model to a preventative model.

**Education:** The Health & Fitness Association provides services, products and events, including the leading convention and trade show, that inform industry members, partners and employees, and helps improve their businesses. The Association provides extensive resources, products and events to educate members about improving operations and about trends and topics, public policy and related topics that impact their businesses. And, the Association provides in-depth news and industry reporting via *Club Business International (CBI)*, a leading industry publication, and through a variety of website and social media resources as well

as a weekly member newsletter.

**Research:** The Health & Fitness Association identifies and offers to the industry, the financial community and research professionals data and over-the-horizon analysis about operations, consumer opinions, industry services and benefits, as well as other developing topics.

"This renaming came after serious consideration and a long process that will move the association forward as a stronger brand that is more recognizable to consumers, policymakers, investors and the media worldwide," *IHRSA Board Chair, Chris Craytor*, said. "We look forward to completing the transition in all areas of the brand within the next few months."



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### ...Norm's Notes

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way back in the very beginning in 1981! In 1994, the Association became the **International Health Racquet & Sportsclub Association (IHRSA)**. The Board voted to insert the word **Health** into the name, making the new acronym **IHRSA**. Getting from IRSa to IHRSA was an interesting process to say the least, and that story is available in the 1994 section of the *Club Insider Archives* ([www.clubinsideronline.com/archives](http://www.clubinsideronline.com/archives)).

Now, the sun sets on the name IHRSA and rises on the *Health & Fitness Association (HFA)*. Importantly, all members should know that this name change announcement marks the culmination of a year-long project involving dedicated and hard-working IHRSA Board Members, industry advisors and veterans, Association staff, as well as brand strategy and brand marketing consultants. Importantly, in addition to the new name, the re-brand involves clarifying and refining the member service and onboarding journey to maximize efficiency and effectiveness, and implementing new operational plans that support ongoing strategic planning.

You can read more about this important announcement beginning on **Page #3**.

■ Now, let me move on into this month's first **TIP of MY BLACK HAT** to all of you whom I had the great pleasure of seeing in Los Angeles, California at the terrific **2024 IHRSA Convention and Trade Show!** First, I want to **CONGRATULATE IHRSA's President & CEO, LIZ CLARK**, and her **terrific Team**, on *another great convention and trade show!* Next, let me congratulate **MARK MASTROV**, a long-time club industry veteran who provided a terrific Keynote presentation to kick off this great convention when he sat down on the stage with Liz Clark for a unique and very well-done series of astute responses to her well-crafted questions that Liz had prepared and presented to him. Once a rising star in the fitness industry, Mark Mastrov is now one of the senior veterans of the business worldwide and a prolific entrepreneur who has created and led to success a series of excellent and successful businesses. He has also nurtured several new generations of rising stars. In this one-on-one session, Mark provided his astute insights on leadership, entrepreneurship, financial relationships, partnerships, emerging trends, technology's impact on the industry and remaining relevant. The entire session was **FUN** and **EDUCATIONAL** for the thousands in the room, learning from one of the founders of the modern fitness industry about how the industry has been and is

evolving. **GREAT Job MARK and LIZ!**

■ The two other IHRSA Los Angeles Keynote Speakers were: **MARIANA ATENCIO**, an award-winning Journalist and Best-selling Author of *Perfectly You: Embracing the Power of Being Real*. And, **WILL GUIDARA**, Restaurateur and Best-selling Author of *Unreasonable Hospitality*.

■ Here's another **TIP of MY BLACK HAT** to someone that, for sure, it's **WELL DESERVED!** This one is for the great fellow I call "**UNCLE RICK**," who's my long-time friend, and 43 years ago, an **IHRSA Co-Founder**, along with me and five others. Again, this year, **RICK CARO** produced another of his annual, always stellar **FINANCIAL PANELS...** As always, it provided excellent commentary on our industry's financial world by four expert panelists. Rick's Financial Panelists this year were: **JOHN DORAZIO, MCCONNELL SMITH, CHARLEY HURT and JOHN JORDAN**.

I also had the pleasure of seeing and spending some time with the lovely **JILL KINNEY**, one of the **Faust Roundtable #1 Members**, who **31 years ago**, along with **RICK CARO** and several other **Roundtable Members**, helped me dream up and create *Club Insider*! Now, **31 years and 363 monthly editions later**, I

say again "**THANKS**" and express my **Sincere Appreciation to RICK, JILL** and to that **entire Faust Roundtable #1 group!**

■ Beyond these fond memories of events long ago, more recently, at the **2024 IHRSA Convention and Trade Show**, let me review the **IHRSA Awards** that were presented at this year's convention in Los Angeles. First, I would be remiss were I not to mention that this segment of the IHRSA Awards Ceremony was launched nicely by IHRSA's current **Chair, CHRIS CRAYTOR**. The Awards were presented to:

■ **Lynne Brick**, Co-Founder of *Brick Bodies* and one of the largest franchisees of *Planet Fitness*, who received the **Woman Leader Award in Honor of Julie Main**.

■ **Kevin McHugh**, COO of *Genesis Health Clubs - The Atlantic Club Manasquan* and *Genesis Health Clubs - The Atlantic Club Red Bank*, who received the **Jim Worthington Advocate of the Year Award**.

■ **Alan Leach**, CEO of *The West Wood Clubs* in Ireland, who received the **John Holsinger Global Leadership Award**.

**Congratulations to all Award Winners!** And, you can read more about this year's **IHRSA Convention and Trade Show** beginning on **Page #3**.

(See *Norm's Notes* Page 8)

## ...Norm's Notes

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■While at the IHRSA Convention and Trade Show, I had the great pleasure I always have of seeing and spending time with some of my very long-time health, racquet and sports club industry friends and veterans including, but not limited to: **RICK CARO, RAYBOB GORDON, BRUCE and JOHANNA CARTER, MIKE MANNING, PAM KUFUHL, LYNNE DEVANEY, BRENT DARDEN, EDDIE TOCK, ALLISON FLATLEY, SARA KOOPERMAN. THANKS TO BILL McBRIDE** for hosting us at his always very nice annual *Active Connections Party*. I also had the pleasure of meeting for the first time ever, **JIM SCHMALTZ**, *CBI Magazine's Editor-in-chief*. Now, let me close this item in my **IHRSA 2024 Norm's Notes** with this: **We're really looking forward to seeing Y'all in LAS VEGAS next year, March 12 - 14, 2025!!!**

■**DEREK BARTON**, a long-time friend of mine and club industry icon updated me on the events in Los Angeles that the *Gold's Gym* folks participated in. Several long-time Gold's Gym leaders were honored at a **Hall of Fame Ceremony**. Honored at that ceremony, which was a very special event where Derek served as the *Master of Ceremonies*, were long-time Gold's Gym luminaries: **TIM KIMBER, ED CONNORS and PETE GRYMKOWSKI**, as they were inducted into the Gold's Gym Hall of Fame. Best wishes to you all, **DEREK, TIM, ED, PETE** and Gold's Gyms folks everywhere!

Check out the **Press Release** on **Page #6**, and on **This Page**, check out the fun **Graphic** Derek sent over of the *Gold's Leadership Team* back in the day!

■This **Norm's Note** is from **TONY deLEEDE**, our friend "Down Under" (also known as Australia), who sent this update on his activities there, and soon to be here in the United States with a new club product he calls: **"WELLO WORKS."** Tony writes: "Just writing to let you know we had our *VIP Opening of Wello Works* here on Thursday, March 7th. It was a big night and a good success. As I mentioned, we will be opening *Wello Works* in Atlanta in the near future. It appears that our U.S. *Wello Works* opening will be in the first half of May. Norm, you and Justin will be invited to our Grand Opening in Atlanta, as we believe our concept will become a relevant part of the fitness industry, as well as a stand-alone concept."

**Folks, Stay Tuned** as we will cover the *Grand Opening of Tony's new Wello Works club chain* in Atlanta in May. Importantly, I want to mention now that, over 30 years ago, **TONY deLEEDE** was one of our first *Club Insider* Advertisers

**EVER**, and he was very instrumental in helping us successfully launch *Club Insider* because of his monthly *Australian Body Works* advertising placements and his frequent news items from his chain of 12 clubs. **THANK YOU TONY...** and **WELCOME BACK** as you and your family members launch **WELLO WORKS** here in Atlanta!

■Here's a *truly amazing* story that I will summarize for y'all in this short missive! The man known as: **HOLDEN MINOR RIGER'S** family was incredulous when he told his family *he had the bright idea of walking across the United States*. But, in March 2023, he packed a few belongings and set out on a trek on foot across America! Riger began his planned hike across America to start on Second Beach, which is near LaPush, Washington. With the goal of walking all the way across America, he labeled his planned amazing feat: **"Walk2Washington!"** After a year of walking, he finally stepped foot in **Washington, D.C. on Sunday, March 10th!** "I had this dream," Riger said in an interview upon his arrival at the National Mall. "I had maybe some kind of expectation of what was going to happen, but I definitely couldn't have imagined what HAS happened!" Folks, that might be the understatement

of the year! **Congratulations HOLDEN MINOR RIGER!**

■**Very sad news** on Thursday, March 14th as it was announced in the *AJC Newspaper* that **TIM ECCLESTONE**, age 76, passed away on March 2, 2024. Tim was a professional ice-hockey player here in Atlanta, and he was known as **"Coach."** He had a very successful life, both on and off the ice where he excelled as a professional ice hockey player for the *St. Louis Blues*, *Detroit Red Wings*, *Toronto Maple Leafs* and the *Atlanta Flames*. Later, Tim served as an *Assistant Coach* for the *Atlanta Flames Hockey Team*. Additionally, many of us Atlantans enjoyed his nightclubs, which were called: *Timothy Johns* in Sandy Springs, *The ClubHouse* in Buckhead and *T.J.'s Sports Bar* in Roswell. **REST IN PEACE, COACH TIM ECCLESTONE!**

■**March 5th** marked my late friend, **PAUL GRYMKOWSKI's** birthday. Every year, Paul's Family remembers Paul's birthday with an email to those of us who knew and loved Paul. Here is this year's message: "Dear Norm, Today, March 5th, marks Paul's birthday, which can be an emotional time for family and friends. As you honor and remember Paul on this day, consider leaving a new tribute, adding a new photo,

or sharing as yet an untold story that's on your mind and in your heart. Click the web address below to visit Paul's website: **paul-michael-grzymkowski.forevermissed.com."**

■**Folks, don't hold back on your industry or personal reports to me!** We can't do this job without your help **AND your support**. You can call me anytime at **(770) 635 - 7578** or email me at **norm@clubinsideronline.com**. **STAY TUNED FOLKS! And, BE IN TOUCH WITH ME WITH YOUR REPORTS!**

■I'm thrilled to announce that the **N.C. State University Wolfpack**, my Alma Mater, which is located in Raleigh, North Carolina, has won **The Atlantic Coast Conference Basketball Championship** by beating the *North Carolina Tar Heels* in the *Atlantic Coast Conference Basketball Championship Game* tonight, March 16, 2024, by a score of 84 to 76! This amazing Wolfpack Basketball Team achieved this by winning five ACC Playoff games in a row, starting on March 12th and winning one game each day for five days in a row! This achievement was something that has **NEVER** been done before in sports history... **EVER! YAHOO!!!**

■**JUSTIN** and I want to **THANK YOU** for reading *Club Insider*! We appreciate you being with us. And, in particular, **WE VERY SINCERELY APPRECIATE ANY and ALL SUPPORT OF OUR ESTEEMED Club Insider ADVERTISERS! PLEASE DO BUSINESS WITH THEM and WHEN YOU DO, PLEASE TELL 'EM Club Insider SENT YOU! THANK YOU ALL!**

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

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 50-year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. He is the *Founder and Tribal Leader* Since 1993 of *Club Insider*, now in its 31st year of monthly publication. In 1981, he was *IHRSA's First President*, and a *Co-Founder* of the *Association* with *Rick Caro* and five others. In 2001, he was honored by *IHRSA* with its *DALE DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award*, one of its highest honors. And, in 2017, he was honored with *Club Industry's Lifetime Achievement Award*. You can reach Norm by phone at **770-635-7578** or email at **Norm@clubinsideronline.com**.)



Pete Grymkowski  
President/CEO

### THE GOLD'S GYM TEAM



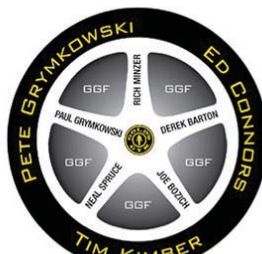
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Paul Grymkowski  
Head of Franchising



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## ...IHRSA 2024

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### The Health & Fitness Association Elects New Board Members

On March 8, at its annual meeting, which occurred at the 2024 IHRSA Convention & Trade Show March 6 - 8, 2024, at the Los Angeles Convention Center in Los Angeles, California, The Health & Fitness Association (formerly IHRSA), a global community of industry leaders, elected five new Board Members:

**Ahmar Azam**, Founder and CEO of TriFit;  
**Deborah Fiorella**, Chief Technology and Digital Officer at 24 Hour Fitness;  
**Richard Idgar**, COO of EoS Fitness;  
**Mel Kleist**, CEO of East Bank Club;  
**Matthew Stevens**, President and CEO of Bay Club Company.

**Ahmar Azam** founded TriFit in January 2020, just prior to the start of the COVID pandemic. Prior to that, he served as CFO and then CEO of Leejam Sports Company. He also spent time at Obeikan Investment Group; ICS Risk Advisors; National Bank of Pakistan, Americas; Centerline Corp USA; Life Sciences Research, USA; and Deloitte LLP, USA.

**Deborah Fiorella** has been with 24 Hour Fitness since June of 2021. Prior to that, she was Senior Vice President of IT at NBC Universal Theme Parks & Resorts for eight years and Vice President of Enterprise Planning and Operations at EarthLink for 15 years.

**Richard Idgar's** passion for health and fitness began in 2003 when he started a nine-year collaboration with Gold's Gym in Hollywood, California. He then joined the



Lynne Brick

Equinox Fitness team where he oversaw the Equinox Sports Club West. Richard joined EoS Fitness in 2015 as the brand was just starting out. The brand is now at nearly 100 locations, and he serves as its current COO.

**Mel Kleist** has been with East Bank Club since 2015, starting as Executive Director prior to his role as CEO. His previous fitness industry experience includes 10 years as a Regional General Manager at Xport Fitness. Mel is a Founding Board Member of the Illinois Fitness Alliance, and he is on the Advisory Board for The Habitat Company.

**Matthew Stevens** became President and CEO of The Bay Club Company in 2008 after Bay Club purchased Spectrum Clubs where he was President and CEO. Prior to working for Spectrum, Matthew had held the role of Senior Vice President of Sales and Marketing at Club Sports International and General Manager at New York Health & Racquet Club.



Kevin McHugh

"This is a stellar group of new Board Members with a real passion for the fitness industry," Health & Fitness Association President & CEO, Liz Clark, said. "I'm looking forward to getting fresh insights from each of them and mining their experience as we continue the evolution of our association."

The new Board Members will begin their four-year terms on July 1, 2024. A new Chair and Treasurer will be elected at the June board meeting.

### The Health & Fitness Association Bestows Awards on Three Industry Leaders

Also at the 2024 IHRSA Convention & Trade Show March 6 - 8, 2024, at the Los Angeles Convention Center in Los Angeles, CA, The Health & Fitness Association (formerly IHRSA), a global community of industry leaders, honored three industry leaders with awards:

**Lynne Brick**, Co-Founder of Brick Bodies



Alan Leach

and one of the largest franchisees of Planet Fitness, who received the Woman Leader Award in Honor of Julie Main.

**Kevin McHugh**, COO of Genesis Health Clubs - The Atlantic Club Manasquan and Genesis Health Clubs - The Atlantic Club Red Bank, who received the Jim Worthington Advocate of the Year Award.

**Alan Leach**, CEO of The West Wood Clubs in Ireland, who received the John Holsinger Global Leadership Award.

### Woman Leader Award

The Health & Fitness Association (formerly IHRSA) celebrates the legacy of the late **Julie Main** by presenting the Woman Leader Award to a woman who exemplifies what Julie Main stood for: courage, perseverance, excellence and professionalism. This year's honoree, **Lynne Brick**, embodies the award not only through the entrepreneurial spirit that she (See IHRSA 2024 Page 14)



The Health and Fitness Association Board of Directors



# IHRSA is now the HEALTH & FITNESS ASSOCIATION

After two years of discussion and planning, IHRSA has made the next move in our evolution—we've rebranded as the Health & Fitness Association!

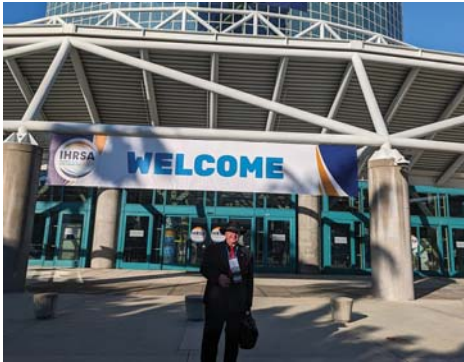
Our new name more readily reflects the amazing community of health and fitness leaders that we represent worldwide.

We will be transitioning to the new name during the next several months, so watch our website as we transition our url, social media platforms, newsletters, and more.

[healthandfitness.org](https://healthandfitness.org)

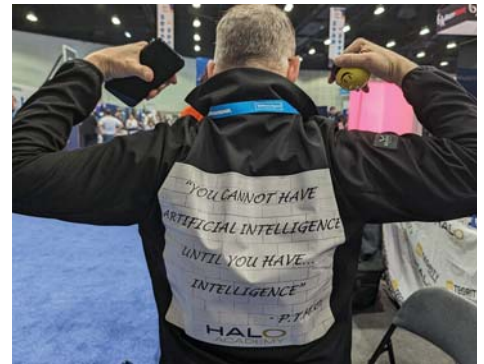
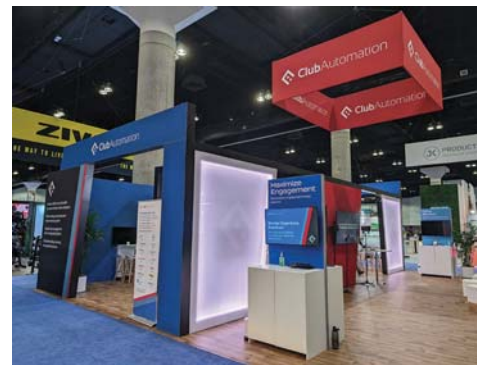


# HEALTH & FITNESS ASSOCIATION





# HEALTH & FITNESS ASSOCIATION





## ...IHRSA 2024

continued from page 10

exemplifies in the years of work at *Brick Bodies*, which she co-founded with her husband, **Victor Brick**, but also through their efforts as one of the largest *Planet Fitness* franchisees.

Most recently, Lynne co-founded the *John W. Brick Mental Health Foundation*, named in honor of her brother-in-law, who battled schizophrenia. His battle with this condition led to her desire to advocate for others with mental health conditions, especially as mounting research shows that physical exercise can help improve certain mental health conditions. The foundation incorporates healthy lifestyle practices into mental health care.

"I was honored to receive the Health & Fitness Association's Julie Main Women's Leadership Award, especially on International Women's Day," Lynne said. "I have always been inspired by Julie and so many other women leaders who have had crosses to bear and yet persevere in spite of adversity."

### Advocate of the Year Award

The Advocate of the Year Award

was created as a reminder about the importance of public policy in the fitness industry and is awarded to an individual who demonstrates their understanding of this importance on a state or federal level. **Kevin McHugh's** work in this area has been long-standing and has increased policymakers' understanding about the essentialness of the fitness industry.

Kevin is lead advocate at the *New Jersey State Fitness Alliance*, was pivotal in development of the *National Health & Fitness Alliance* and is dedicated to the policy and advocacy work that improves our industry.

He helped create *Team 435*, the industry's grassroots army that has identified individuals across every U.S. Congressional District willing to take action and contact their elected officials through communication crafted by the Health & Fitness Association.

"Our involvement in advocating for the fitness industry is even more important than ever, and this award is an opportunity for me to encourage others to join us in speaking with a united voice for the health and fitness industry," Kevin said. "We are an essential part of healthcare, the preventive piece of that. And, we need to ensure policymakers understand that.

Make a difference by letting your voice be heard. Join *Team 435* or similar efforts in whatever country you operate."

### Global Leader Award

In 2023, the *John Holsinger Global Leadership Award* was established in memory and honor of **John Holsinger**, who served the association in international markets for many years.

**Alan Leach** received this year's award for his leadership in the European sphere and his passion for the industry. He displays both these traits through his service to the industry, including as former *Board Chair for the Health & Fitness Association*, as a current member of the *Global Health & Fitness Alliance* and as a speaker at fitness events around the world.

Alan's leadership was especially evident through his efforts for the past eight months to donate fitness equipment to rehabilitation centers in Ukraine that help wounded civilians and soldiers and his clubs' efforts to collect donations for Ukrainian refugees in Poland.

"To receive the John Holsinger Award is without doubt the single most monumental highlight of my career in fitness," Alan said. "It was because of

John Holsinger that I personally got to speak to so many in the fitness industry at fitness conferences around the world. And, just like so many other speakers and presenters who benefited from John's work on the international stage, I will be eternally grateful for the opportunities John brought my way."

■ ■ ■

Other highlights of the 2024 Convention & Trade Show included the three keynotes:

■ In the March 6 keynote, sponsored by *ABC Fitness*, **Mariana Atencio**, award-winning journalist and best-selling author of *Perfectly You: Embracing the Power of Being Real*, shared her personal story of realizing the power of being her unique self and offered advice on how attendees can do the same.

■ In the March 7 keynote, sponsored by *Keiser Corporation*, **Mark Mastrov**, Principal at *New Evolution Ventures, LLC*, and Founder of *24 Hour Fitness Worldwide Inc.*, *UFC Gym* and *Crunch 2.0*, responded to questions from Liz Clark about entrepreneurship, the direction of the industry, investor interest and more.

■ In the March 8 keynote, sponsored by *Matrix Fitness*, **Will Guidara**, restaurateur and best-selling author of *Unreasonable Hospitality*, offered examples of how giving people more than they expect can not only boost your brand's reputation and business but can also create unexpected returns with your staff.

The 2025 Convention & Trade Show is scheduled for March 12 - 14, 2025, in Las Vegas, Nevada.

■ ■ ■

Thank you to **Pam Kufahl**, Senior Director of Communications for the Health & Fitness Association, as well as the entire Communications Team for their production of this in-depth report about the Name Change and 2024 Convention and Trade Show.



Pam Kufahl

# A NEW CHAPTER

*IHRSA's new name is...*

# HEALTH & FITNESS

## ASSOCIATION

*Under this name, we will continue our dedication to advocacy, education, and research on behalf of the global community of health and fitness industry leaders.*

**Learn more at**  
**healthandfitness.org**



# IHRSA 2024: A Global Showcase of Health and Fitness Innovation

By: **Nancy Trent**

From March 6 - 8, the *International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association* (IHRSA - now the *Health & Fitness Association*) once again brought together a vibrant community of health and fitness professionals, marking a significant milestone in promoting physical activity and enhancing overall wellbeing. As the global hub for the fitness industry, IHRSA's annual trade show continues to evolve, reflecting an increasingly diverse dynamic and profitable landscape of fitness innovations and opportunities for gyms, as well as fitness equipment retailers.

This year's event, hosted in the bustling city of Los Angeles, served as a testament to the industry's commitment to empowering individuals to lead healthier lifestyles. From established fitness brands to emerging startups, exhibitors from around the world converged to showcase their latest offerings and share their vision for the future of gym culture.

The trade show floor buzzed with energy as attendees explored a myriad of health and fitness solutions, ranging from cutting-edge equipment to innovative wellness technologies. One brand that utilizes technology for precise results is *MYE Technologies*, "Knowledge is power. Our BodyScript body composition analyzer grows in popularity as facilities turn to more accurate, efficient health and fitness solutions. IHRSA is always a great show for AppAudio and MYE Fitness entertainment products," shared **Laura Garcia**, *Director of Sales*.

One of the notable trends that emerged was the evolution of basic fitness equipment, which now incorporates a blend of high- and low-tech features. Adding equipment that makes members feel better while working out can also expedite results as well as the recognition of them between workouts in the gym and or with a trainer. From automated recovery systems to self-monitoring devices and full-body workout solutions, these advancements are revolutionizing the way individuals engage with their fitness routines, both in the gym and at home.

**Julian Barnes**, *Co-Founder & CEO of BFS*, a leading growth accelerator for fitness, wellness and self-care businesses, highlighted the spirit of openness and collaboration that permeated the conference. "The most important trend that I discovered at IHRSA was the spirit of openness and collaboration that was pervasive at the conference," said Barnes. "The three most important meetings that I had were with people I met at the convention."

In addition to showcasing the latest fitness innovations, IHRSA 2024 also placed a significant emphasis on recovery

and wellbeing, which are services everyone who goes into a gym, for any objective whether it's improved health, looks or mental wellbeing, needs. Exhibitors such as *HaloTherapy Solutions*, *Dr. B* and *PNOE* garnered attention with their offerings aimed at promoting holistic wellness and enhancing recovery processes. This growing focus on wellbeing underscores the industry's recognition of the importance of addressing not only physical fitness, but also mental and emotional health.

**Pete Moore**, *Managing Partner, D.A. at Integrity Square*, *The HALO Advisors*, shared three key takeaways, "Capital, software and passion. There were more private equity professionals in attendance, which is a forward indicator that there is more investment in the growth of the sector because they see the proliferation of self-care, technology and fitness. Software, data, MRM, Billing and AI are now larger than the equipment presence and the show was oozing with entrepreneurs who have been through the COVID ringer and have come out the other side... smarter, bolder and with more conviction. These emerging brands are executing stronger business models to win big."

Furthermore, the trade show served as a platform for fostering inclusivity within the fitness community. With a diverse range of exhibitors and programming tailored to cater to individuals of all ages, abilities and backgrounds, IHRSA 2024 highlighted the industry's commitment to making fitness accessible to everyone.

As the curtains close on another successful IHRSA trade show, the global health and fitness community looks forward to continuing its mission of empowering individuals to lead healthier, more active lives. With an ever-expanding array of innovative solutions and a shared commitment to collaboration and inclusivity, the future of fitness has never looked brighter.

## Embracing Personal Resistance for a Healthier Lifestyle

As we journey through life, our desire for simplicity, accessibility and enjoyment in staying active becomes increasingly paramount. Having exercise equipment readily available at gyms and at home becomes indispensable, granting us the freedom to work out according to our schedule, unhindered by external constraints such as weather or time limitations. Moreover, the ability to confront and conquer challenges encountered during physical activity is crucial. This is where manual machines, powered solely by the user's physical effort, come into play. By embracing products that offer greater self-resistance, freedom of movement and enhanced control, we not only support

our quest for a healthier lifestyle but also propel ourselves closer to achieving our fitness goals.

*Tru Grit* empowers individuals to discover their true strength through their innovative range of manual treadmills and bikes equipped with optional resistance features. These high-quality, accessible pieces of equipment challenge personal limits while providing the flexibility to adjust resistance levels according to individual preferences. Whether engaging in cardio with the *Grit Runner*, utilizing their weights for a full-body workout, or recovering with their inflatable ice bath, *Tru Grit* offers versatile solutions to meet diverse fitness needs.

Powered by *KingSmith*, *WalkingPad* was born out of a quest for exercise equipment unbound by space limitations. This foldable treadmill introduces a fusion of new concepts and mature technology, enabling users to walk or run within the confines of their home or office, irrespective of time or weather constraints. With numerous technology and design patents, *WalkingPad* stands as a unique and unrivaled product, distinguished by its ability to fold 180° and incorporate smart step-sensing speed control. Join the revolution in home fitness with *WalkingPad* and experience unparalleled convenience and performance on your journey to wellness.

## Automated Recovery: Revolutionizing Fitness with Self-Care Innovations

In a landscape characterized by labor scarcities and an increasing preference for minimal interpersonal contact, the trend of automated self-care is swiftly gaining traction. From immersive baths to contactless water-jet massages and self-operating saunas, the possibilities seem endless. Let's explore the accessible options for fitness directors and professionals, along with their perspectives on integrating AI within gym facilities.

Gyms are undergoing a transformative shift by offering on-demand massages, transforming workout sessions into luxurious spa-like experiences. This evolution signifies a bold move towards automated indulgences, enticing health enthusiasts with a blend of convenience and relaxation. Dry water massages represent just the tip of the iceberg in the innovative luxuries gyms are adopting. Advanced technology utilizing warm water jets provides a soothing massage experience without requiring users to get wet, catering to fitness enthusiasts seeking a rejuvenating post-workout treat. High-tech systems such as the *WellSystem Wave* by *WellnessJK* elevate massage treatments with features like lights and calming music, enhancing the overall experience.



Nancy Trent

As the fitness industry continues to evolve, automated recovery at the gym is not merely a passing trend but a substantial transformation in how individuals perceive and value their health. **Brynn Scarborough**, *CEO of WellnessJK*, posits that, "the future of fitness entails integrating in-person services with automation to provide a more accessible foundation of care." In a society that values customization, convenience and independence, the potential for automated wellness within gym settings is boundless.

Luxury ice baths, also known as cryotherapy chambers or cold plunge pools, offer an indulgent experience for those seeking the benefits of cold therapy in a lavish setting. These baths typically provide a controlled environment for users to immerse themselves in cold water, often incorporating additional features for enhanced comfort and relaxation.

*LifeSmart Ice Baths* impact an overall healthy lifestyle with their affordable, portable plunges. *LifeSmart* has affordable technologies that make it easy to live well at home and easy to experience by bringing the celebrity-approved cold plunge experience to your doorstep.

*Chilly GOAT* by *Master Spas*, in collaboration with **Michael Phelps**, leads the charge in aquatic wellness, fitness and therapy. Their cold plunge tubs encourage users to embrace an exhilarating lifestyle while providing a safe and enjoyable experience. Utilizing *SoftTread* non-slip material and a quality circulation pump, *Chilly GOAT* ensures optimal safety and enjoyment for users.

*Orca Plunge* offers cold plunge tubs constructed with drop-stitch inflatable technology, ensuring durability and strength. With options to stand up, sit down or lay down, *Orca Plunge* caters to every preference. Easy assembly and a built-in filtration system contribute to a hassle-free experience, eliminating the need for constant draining and refilling.

*FUJIMI*, a leading supplier of  
(See **Nancy Trent** Page 17)

# Putting Safety First in the Club Business

By: **Herb Lipsman**

The *Deepwater Horizon* (2010) explosion and subsequent loss of life and environmental catastrophe caused an entire industry to make drastic changes in how they conducted business. It moved safety and risk management to the top of company priorities across the globe. This had an impact on my mindset for how I viewed safety protocols in the clubs I managed. Safety had always been a priority for me, but observing how so many companies put safety-first in all company communications, led me to make similar changes in my own management approach.

The investigations that ensued following the *Deepwater Horizon* explosion exposed a multitude of missteps and judgmental errors at all levels of the organizations that developed and operated this oil rig in the Gulf. Cutting corners to save money was found to be the norm rather than the exception for all parties concerned, leading to disaster. In hindsight, this tragedy could and should have been prevented.

Most club managers and owners fall into the trap of relegating safety and risk management to little more than an afterthought or necessary evil that is time-consuming on topics that are unlikely to happen, or if they do, "we will just deal with it." They delude themselves into thinking, "it won't happen to us, and we'll get to it when things slow down." But, in this business, things never seem to slow down. This common judgmental error by club operators can have catastrophic results not unlike what the companies responsible for the *Deepwater Horizon* experienced following that horrific accident.

Let's consider one common example in the club business... *slip and fall hazards*. Think about your front entrance, the club lobby or reception area or the wet areas of your locker rooms (showers, steam room, Jacuzzi) or the indoor or outdoor pool decks. Each of these areas is vulnerable to hazards like beverage spills, puddles, ice build-up (in cold climates) and slippery conditions.

Consider for a moment a company that has not made safety a priority in its training or its culture. The club management and staff are so busy with other priorities that they neglect to treat known slip hazards with the attention they deserve to prevent recurring accidents. Club staff become blind to obvious slip hazards that are clearly visible because none of the company's leaders has made it a priority with consequences for failing to address them.

One day, a member slips and falls in the shower area on a section of tile that has been repeatedly pointed out as a

slip hazard to staff and management, but fell on deaf ears, with no effort to remedy the problem. The member who falls re-injures the hip they had replaced in the past year and ends up requiring another surgery and lengthy rehab. The insurance investigators dig into the factors that led to this unfortunate accident and find the club negligent. Guess who ultimately pays for this large insurance claim...

While performing this standard insurance investigation, the claims adjusters learn from staff they had been warned about this slip hazard dozens of times over the past several months by a variety of members who either slipped themselves or witnessed fellow members slipping and falling. They also found that these same staff had informed their supervisors and the *General Manager* of this obvious "accident-waiting-to-happen." Now, the owners demand to know how so many on the club staff could have ignored this obvious hazard resulting in a huge hit to the company's bottom line. You see where this is going, and unfortunately, these kinds of preventable accidents happen in our clubs all the time.

Now, consider the club or club company that has made safety a top priority as a key part of their company culture. At this club, there is signage in all areas of the club warning of potential hazards, including slippery floors. They order professionally made caution signs that can quickly be displayed when there is an unusual slip hazard, such as a spill or leak that has not yet been cleaned up. The staff culture is also to have a "sense of urgency" when addressing obvious slip hazards promptly upon becoming aware of such hazards.

Management starts every meeting with a safety tip to keep common safety issues top of mind, such as slip and falls, safe lifting, responding to fire alarms, dealing with an active shooter, etc. Every new employee orientation includes a heavy dose of safety training on the common risk factors facing the club and how to respond to them. An incident reporting system is in place that ensures that every accident or incident is documented for future reference and for careful review in the club's ongoing continuous improvement efforts. One-on-one coaching is common throughout the club each day to ensure that everyone on the staff embraces a "safety first" mindset.

You can clearly see the difference that this sort of approach can make for a club operator. This is not rocket science, but it is essential to a club's long term viability... and it's just the right thing to do.

*"Leaders who are more concerned with greed and saving money than investing money for the good of their People put those people and their organizations in harm's way. Because the multi-billion-dollar BP Oil*

*Company was unwilling to pay \$125,000 for a cement inspection, their rig exploded, burned for 87 days, became the worst oil spill in American history, cost the company billions, and caused 11 men to lose their lives."* - **Unknown Author Pertaining to Deep Water Horizon Catastrophe**

Here is simple list of actions you can implement that will elevate safety and risk management to the level of attention it deserves in your club(s) and make your company far more protected from severe accidents, insurance claims and lawsuits:

- Form a Safety Committee of key staff.
- Appoint a Safety Chairperson or Leader.
- Identify the most common Safety Vulnerabilities in the club.
- Spell out accident prevention measures for each of the vulnerabilities noted.
- Identify the most common natural disasters that the club might face.
- Spell out how the club team will respond to such natural disasters.
- Identify man-made disasters that could happen in the club (i.e. active shooter, chemical plant explosion, etc.).
- Spell out how the club team will respond to such man-made disasters.
- Develop employee safety training materials and protocols.
- Establish ongoing safety communication and training to keep safety awareness alive and "Top of Mind." For example, start every departmental or leadership team meeting or activity with a safety tip.
- Perform a safety and risk management audit periodically (seasonally).
- Review all significant accidents, incidents, or emergencies during weekly leadership meetings.
- Incorporate safety training in new hire orientations or onboarding.

Here is a list of the most common accident/incident prevention and emergencies clubs are likely to face:

## Common Accidents and Incidents:

- Drowning;
- Slip & Fall;
- Head Injury;
- Athletic Injury;
- Heart Attack;
- Missing Child;
- Heat Illness;
- Cuts and Bruises;
- Nausea.

## Common Natural Disasters:

- Hurricane;
- Tornado;
- Wildfire;
- Earthquake;
- Winter Storm/Blizzard;



Herb Lipsman

- Flooding;
- Drought.

## Man-Made Disasters:

- Fire;
- Active Shooter;
- Bomb Threat;
- Chemical Plant Explosion or Leak;
- Gas Leak.

Club managers and owners who procrastinate on developing a safety-first focus for their company will pay a price for their neglect. There is no good excuse in our industry today for allowing this to happen. It does not cost more to focus on safety. It simply requires a shift in focus by those already on the payroll.

For more information like this, read *Caring (The Sequel): Valuable Insights Into Effective Club and Hospitality Management*. To order, email [herbnlipsman@gmail.com](mailto:herbnlipsman@gmail.com).

*(Herb Lipsman is a veteran of the club industry, having managed some of the most prestigious athletic clubs and golf/country clubs in the Houston, Texas market over the past 30 years, most notably The Houstonian Hotel, Club and Spa. Lipsman has served on the Board of Directors for IHRSA. He was appointed by Mayor Bill White to serve as Chairman of the Mayor's Wellness Council for the City of Houston. Lipsman has also been invited to speak at numerous industry conferences and conventions around the world, including the U.S., UK, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Italy, Russia and Mexico. Most recently, Lipsman authored and published his book, Caring (The Sequel): Valuable Insights into Effective Club and Hospitality Management. Learn more about Herb and order his book at [bit.ly/herb-lipsman-caring](http://bit.ly/herb-lipsman-caring).)*



## ...Nancy Trent

continued from page 15

medical electronics and physical therapy units, presents state-of-the-art massage chairs featuring cutting-edge technologies. Equipped with an acupoint auto-induction system fused with magnetic therapy, FUJIMI chairs offer relief from the pains and stresses of modern lifestyles.

This revolution in relaxation is attracting a new wave of health-conscious consumers seeking innovative and rejuvenating methods to supplement their traditional fitness routines and recovery processes. With automated self-care solutions becoming increasingly accessible, the future of fitness recovery promises unparalleled convenience and luxury.

### Empowering Self-Monitoring: Harnessing the Power of Fitness Technology

As individuals increasingly prioritize proactive health management, the demand for self-monitoring tools continues to surge. From tracking sleep quality to monitoring heart health and assessing vital nutrient levels, people are eager to anticipate and address internal changes before they escalate. A plethora of emerging technologies is facilitating self-monitoring and fostering connections with healthcare providers who can offer timely guidance. Let's delve into the latest advancements in fitness technology that are revolutionizing the way we monitor our health.

PNOE's groundbreaking cardio-metabolic analyzer has democratized the power of breath-based analysis, revolutionizing how we assess heart, lung and metabolic fitness, as well as nutrition and exercise programming. Traditionally confined to labs, clinics and hospitals for over a century, breath-based cardio-metabolic analysis is now accessible to everyone, thanks to PNOE. Their diagnostic capabilities and personalized programming empower individuals to take control of their health, while also serving as a valuable resource for health professionals, including coaches, nutritionists, physical therapists and medical professionals, offering continued education opportunities.

As a global leader in body composition technology, InBody is committed to providing non-invasive, convenient and accurate data to simplify the understanding of health and wellness. From their body water analyzer to their blood pressure monitor and stadiometer, InBody's suite of biomedical tech offers reproducibility and precision, empowering individuals to track and manage their health with confidence.

In a world where proactive health management is becoming increasingly essential, the integration of innovative self-monitoring technologies holds immense promise. By leveraging these cutting-edge

tools, individuals can take proactive steps towards optimizing their health and well-being, fostering a future where preventive care is the cornerstone of wellness.

### Elevating Fitness Fun: Innovations for Engaging Workouts and Profitable Service Offerings

In today's fast-paced world, individuals are increasingly prioritizing their daily wellbeing, seeking cost-effective methods and accessible technologies to support their fitness journey. For fitness professionals, this presents an opportunity to embrace innovative strategies that enhance client engagement, modernize service offerings, and drive profitability within their gyms. Let's explore some fresh innovations and reliable strategies to achieve these goals.

Introducing *Hup6*, a brand-new fitness class offering an exhilarating way to stay in shape. With motivating videos and energizing music, *Hup6* classes utilize patented gear and audio cues to deliver custom exercises. Each session comprises six rounds, guiding participants through moves with certified *Hup6* coaches. With the flexibility to learn at one's own pace and tackle optimal challenges, *Hup6* transforms workouts into engaging experiences.

### Quick Hits

**Targeted Workouts for Optimal Results:** *Zone Training* revolutionizes fitness by allowing members to focus on specific body parts based on different heart rate zones. This tailored approach ensures individuals train at the appropriate intensity for their prime results at the gym. Safe and effective equipment is essential for optimal training effects, making *Zone Training* a must-have for modern fitness facilities.

**Core Strength Re-worked:** As a leader in core and functional training solutions, *The Abs Company* offers innovative equipment to elevate abdominal workouts. Their patented concept, *The 6-Minute Ab Zone*, combines six popular ab machines with a timing light to guide users through the circuit.

With intuitive, easy-to-use equipment, *The Abs Company* provides a simple technique for users to feel successful and comfortable in their workouts.

**Comprehensive Fitness Solutions:** *The Johnson Health Tech* family encompasses multiple fitness and wellness brands catering to diverse markets worldwide. From *Matrix's* dynamic workout equipment to *Horizon Fitness'* at-home training solutions and *Synca's* massage chairs, they offer solutions for every fitness level, budget, and lifestyle. With a commitment to quality and innovation, *Johnson Health Tech* transforms fitness experiences across the globe.

**Personalized Rowing Workouts:** For rowing enthusiasts seeking customized workouts, *myrow* offers a 22" tablet streaming classes, providing robust stats, and fostering a community of rowers. With precise analytics evaluating performance for all fitness levels, *myrow* helps users achieve their fitness goals while syncing seamlessly with the *Concept2 Online Logbook*.

**Preparing for Parenthood:** *ProNatal Fitness* is dedicated to helping individuals successfully navigate the pregnancy, childbirth and parenthood journey through self-guided programs and exercises. Grounded in performance training principles, their products and services aim to prepare individuals for the physical demands of pregnancy and recovery, ensuring a smoother transition into parenthood.

**Your Fitness Gear Partner:** As the #1 provider of new and used fitness gear worldwide, *Primo Fitness U.S.* offers comprehensive services including logistics, assembly, and installation. Whether furnishing a home gym or commercial facility, *Primo Fitness US* turns fitness dreams into reality with quality products and expert services.

**Smart Dumbbells for Smart Workouts:** *SMARTFT's* smart, adjustable dumbbells

revolutionize strength training and conditioning with efficiency and effectiveness. Whether a professional athlete or stay-at-home parent, *SMARTFT's* nuobell collections cater to diverse fitness goals with ethical manufacturing, impeccable quality, and timeless design.

■ ■ ■

Incorporating these innovative solutions and reliable strategies, fitness professionals can elevate client experiences, drive engagement and unlock new opportunities for profitability within their gyms. With a commitment to innovation and customer satisfaction, the future of fitness is brighter than ever before.

The IHRSA trade show offered an opportunity for a diverse range of individuals and businesses involved in the fitness industry to connect, learn and discover new ways to grow and innovate. It served as a catalyst for collaboration and technological advancement within this community. We gained valuable insights into the future direction of this health and wellness space through these magnificent upgrades and evolution of products and services. We are looking forward to what lays ahead at the *2025 Health and Fitness Association Convention and Trade Show*.

*(Nancy Trent is a writer and speaker, a lifelong wellness activist, a globe-trotting trend watcher and the Founder and President of Trent & Company, a leading wellness PR firm. Trent & Company, which launched many health and beauty brands, grew out of Nancy's personal and passionate commitment to helping people live longer and healthier lives. A former journalist for New York Magazine, Nancy has written seven books on healthy lifestyles, serves on the editorial boards of several magazines and travels around the world speaking at conferences and trade shows on trends in the marketplace. She is a recognized expert in PR with more than 30 years of experience creating and managing highly successful campaigns. Learn more at [www.trentandcompany.com](http://www.trentandcompany.com) or contact Nancy at [nancy@trentandcompany.com](mailto:nancy@trentandcompany.com).)*

# Club Insider Seeks Contributing Authors

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# Top Ten Mistakes for New Health Club Design and Renovations

By: **Bruce Carter**

Interior design plays a crucial role in shaping the atmosphere and functionality of health clubs. From fostering motivation to enhancing relaxation, the design of these spaces can significantly impact the overall experience of members. However, in the process of designing or renovating health clubs, certain mistakes can detract from the intended ambiance and functionality. Here are the top ten interior mistakes to avoid when undertaking health club design and renovations.

Within the design world, much of the commercial attention for design has focused on restaurants, hospitality and retail. The health club industry has been focused primarily on the product of fitness, and rightfully so. However, environments are continually gaining in their importance to a club's success. To further support this, consider the question, "Would most people prefer to eat or exercise?" Yet, look at the effort within the restaurant industry that goes into creating very inviting and exciting environments, even after the market already loves the product: food! Therefore, selling a "product" that most people dislike, exercise, supports the need for extra attention to the environment.

Interestingly so, at the most recent 2024 IHRSA Convention and Trade Show (with the new name of *Health & Fitness Association*), the equipment vendors are all about selling equipment. But, to do so, their booths were more exciting than ever before. The use of large digital displays, lighting, finishes and dynamic branding brought so much more value and meaningfulness to their product. The very same thing is true with a club.

1. Therefore, the first design mistake for a club is not paying enough attention to its visual environments. How a club "looks" affects the positive, neutral or negative experience as much as any other part of the experience a person has. Keep in mind, the member may be having a tough time dealing with exercise, but an inspiring environment can help change that attitude from a negative one to a positive one. Also, it is a mistake to think a low budget for build-out or renovation means less emphasis on interiors. Creativity is needed, but a lot can be done with any level of budget.

2. Related to the first design mistake, is the second, which is to not create a "do-it-yourself" interior. Yes, it may be okay, but ask the questions: are members looking for an "okay" exercise experience? Ultimately, are members better off with a highly trained professional setting up a program to meet their needs, or are they going to be just as good as if a member created their

own program? Related to this, is creating environments that you, yourself, like the best. Let's say you like to do a TRX-type bodyweight workout, and then assume this will be best for all your members. Design professionals create spaces that much of your market will love being in, not just a select few that may relate to your personal preferences.

3. A third common mistake is assuming that a club or studio can charge a very high rate and then thinking the environment does not have to support the price. Great programs with great trainers are key to the formula of club success, but charging a high amount without a "higher-end" environment will significantly lower the potential for the facility.

4. It is surprising how often a new club design or renovation is started without knowing the specific environments of all the competition. As a fourth design mistake, often owners assume that their facilities and programming will be so unique that they have little or no competition, and therefore, the design moves forward with such a viewpoint. If someone is looking to improve their life with fitness, then most any club offering that prospect is competition. Therefore, the successful use of spaces, colors, finishes, lighting and branding should be known before design, then your club can be as unique as possible and as budget allows.

5. Not prioritizing thoughtful space planning to ensure members have ample room to move freely and engage in various activities without feeling overcrowded is a common problem and the fifth mistake. Another way of putting this is being overly optimistic about how much space you have available to work with, leading to cramped and inefficient layouts. This is especially true with smaller studios. Overlooking storage solutions will lead to cluttered spaces and a disorganized environment. In addition is a lack of privacy and personal space, neglecting to provide designated areas for personal privacy and relaxation can leave members feeling exposed and uncomfortable. Incorporating private changing rooms, quiet corners and secluded retreats where individuals can unwind, rejuvenate and enjoy moments of solitude away from the hustle and bustle of the main part of the facility is highly recommended. Nowadays, not having a designated and appealing selfie wall is also a mistake.

6. Overlooking brand identity as part of the design is the sixth mistake. Maintain a cohesive design language across all interior elements, including color schemes, signage, branding elements and decorative

accents, to reinforce the club's unique identity and create a memorable and immersive brand experience for members.

7. Poor and outdated lighting choices are the seventh mistake and a huge, missed opportunity. The use of the latest LED lighting options such as cove, accent, colored, theatrical and channel lighting are all to consider. Opt for a combination of natural light, accent lighting and ambient lighting to enhance visibility, highlight key areas and create a vibrant and inviting atmosphere. Also, unflattering light sources can deter members and compromise the overall atmosphere. The good news is there are many new options at reasonable prices.

8. COVID had clubs focus on a lack of ventilation and air quality. The eighth mistake is to overlook instead of optimizing this. Invest in effective ventilation systems and air purifiers to maintain fresh and clean air throughout the facility, promoting a healthier and more enjoyable experience for members.

9. The ninth mistake negatively affects the member experience and that is ignoring acoustic considerations. Excessive noise levels can disrupt members' concentration and hinder relaxation in areas such as yoga studios and meditation rooms. Implement sound-absorbing materials, strategic layout designs and acoustic treatments to minimize noise pollution and create tranquil environments conducive to mindfulness and focus.

10. Designing for today is key but inflexible design elements can fail to anticipate future growth and adaptability and could limit the facility's scalability and versatility.



Bruce Carter

Incorporate design that can be feasibility expanded, and consider flexible partitions and multifunctional spaces that can easily accommodate evolving programmatic requirements and diverse user preferences. Not doing so is the tenth mistake.

In conclusion, by avoiding these common interior design mistakes and prioritizing thoughtful planning, attention to detail and user-centric design principles, health clubs can create engaging, functional and harmonious spaces that inspire wellness, foster community and enhance the overall member experience. Through strategic design interventions and a commitment to excellence, health clubs can cultivate environments that promote health, happiness and holistic wellbeing for all who enter their doors.

*(Bruce Carter is the owner of Optimal Design Systems, International. Bruce can be reached at [bruce@optimaldsi.com](mailto:bruce@optimaldsi.com).)*

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## Building an Effective Annual Sales and Marketing Plan

By: **Frank Guengerich**

There are several ways to approach the development of an Annual Sales and Marketing Plan. The question is, what way is the most impactful, effective and yields the best return on investment? Having spent over 30 years of selling memberships in most states in U.S. and most major U.S. cities, this is what I've learned works best:

**Keep It Simple.** As the saying goes, keep it simple stupid. Don't make your plan too complicated or full of details that don't matter. When I first started pulling together an Annual Sales and Marketing Plan, I'd clutter it with meaningless data and information that was not central to our success. The items listed below are the primary topics and tactics that I recommend you focus on.

**Think Like a Prospect.** The most important thing you will do is to identify your target market / audience and ensure

your message speaks to them. What do they need or want? You must see your product and brand through the customer's lens because this is vital to not only immediately get their attention but cause them to take action. The visual and written communication must be compelling and immediately catch their eye. When I say immediately, I mean within two seconds.

**Your Message is Clear and Concise.** If your message or advertisement is cluttered with words or pictures, a prospect will not even look at it. One picture, maybe a maximum of two, along with a few simple compelling words is most effective. If you catch their attention, you can redirect them to your website or a different page that tells more about your facility or other pertinent information you want to share.

**Where and When to Spend.** When should you spend your advertising dollars? Should you spend more money when it's slow, busy or even it out throughout the year? I've tried it all, and what I once had a wise marketing

guru tell me is, "spend money marketing snow shovels when it's about to snow or is snowing." That's when you get the biggest bang for your buck. Spending a bunch of money in an off-peak season is like trying to sell snow shovels in the summer. It doesn't work no matter how much you spend.

**Campaigns.** I recommend that you create 3 - 5 campaigns and then several promotions within each campaign. I like five annual campaigns: *New Year* (Jan - Feb), *Spring* (Mar - Apr), *Summer* (May - Aug), *Fall* (Sep - Oct) and *Winter* (Nov - Dec).

Each campaign should have a 60- to 90-day theme. Themes can be focused on New Year's Resolutions, Summer Shape Up, your outdoor pool if you have one, or other topics. Take each campaign and break out your annual sales quotas and goals so that you know what outcome you expect.

**Hot Tip:** The Fall tends to be the toughest time for clubs to attract new members. For



that reason, I recommend that you create an event that is compelling and build your campaign around that. For example, you can have an Anniversary Event or Fundraiser. Any type of event to give your sales team a reason to call a prospect and create energy.

(See **Frank Guengerich** Page 20)

# Lights, Camera, Action!

## Turn Your Gym into the Summer Blockbuster of Fitness

By: **Jim Thomas**

Gym owners, are you ready to trade in your tired routines for a box office smash? Forget the same old flyers and forgettable slogans. It's time to unleash the *inner-Hollywood* and promote your gym like a summer blockbuster! Why? Because in the fitness industry, *attention is currency*, and *engagement is your ticket to success*.

**Think About It:** Summer blockbusters captivate audiences, leaving them breathless and begging for more. They offer *epic experiences*, *unforgettable characters* and a *powerful emotional connection*. That's exactly what your gym should be doing too! Here's your director's cut to fitness fame:

**1. Craft a Captivating Trailer** (aka your marketing campaign):

■ **Ditch the Generic:** Ditch the stock photos and bland slogans. Invest in high-quality video showcasing your gym's unique vibe, passionate trainers and real transformations.

■ **Target Your Audience:** Who are your fitness heroes? Create content that speaks directly to their desires and challenges. Highlight the emotional benefits beyond just weight loss, like confidence, community and empowerment.

■ **Teaser Trailers Work:** Build anticipation with sneak peeks at new classes, events or challenges. Generate buzz and get

people talking.

**2. Assemble Your All-Star Cast** (aka your staff):

■ **Train Your Team:** Your instructors and staff are your leading actors. Invest in ongoing training to hone their skills, knowledge and customer service magic. Remember, enthusiasm is contagious!

■ **Showcase Their Star Power:** Feature your trainers in social media spotlights, blog interviews or even workout videos. Let their personalities shine and connect with potential members on a deeper level.

**3. Create a Blockbuster Experience** (aka your unique offerings):

■ **Go Beyond the Machines:** Offer innovative classes, specialized programs or outdoor fitness experiences. Think themed workouts, charity events or even team challenges. Surprise and delight your members, keeping them coming back for more.

■ **Level Up Your Tech Game:** Utilize fitness apps, online booking systems and social media communities. Make it easy for people to connect, track progress and share their fitness journey.

**4. Build Anticipation** (aka pre-launch specials and events):

■ **Early Bird Gets the Best Bod:** Offer exclusive discounts or limited-time

memberships before your new program or class launch. Generate excitement and create a sense of urgency.

■ **Host a Red Carpet Event:** Throw a grand opening or a special member appreciation event. Offer free trials, demos and sneak peeks of your new offerings. Create a memorable experience that gets people talking.

**5. Embrace the Feedback Loop** (aka listen and adapt):

■ **Collect Reviews and Testimonials:** Encourage feedback from members and potential clients. Identify pain points and areas for improvement. Show them you care and are constantly striving to be the best.

■ **Adapt Your Script:** Use feedback to fine-tune your marketing message, class offerings and overall gym experience. Remember, the fitness industry is dynamic, so be prepared to evolve with your audience.

■ ■ ■

**Remember, you're not just selling memberships, you're selling a transformation.** By promoting your gym like a summer blockbuster, you'll captivate your audience, create an unforgettable experience and leave them wanting more. So, grab your popcorn, dim the lights and get ready to witness the rise of your fitness empire!



Jim Thomas

**P.S.** Don't forget the power of collaboration! Share your success stories, industry insights, and marketing wins with others.

(An Outsourced CEO, Turnaround Expert and Author, Jim Thomas is the Founder and President of FMC USA Inc., a management consulting, turnaround, financing and brokerage firm specializing in the leisure services industry. With more than 25 years of experience owning, operating and managing facilities of all sizes, Thomas lectures and delivers seminars, webinars and workshops across the globe on the practical skills required to successfully overcome obscurity, improve gym sales, build teamwork and market fitness programs and products. Learn more at [www.fmcconsulting.net](http://www.fmcconsulting.net) or [www.youtube.com/gymconsultant](http://www.youtube.com/gymconsultant).)

## ...Frank Guengerich

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**Promotions.** Promotions are an effective way to get prospects to take action. I suggest you have a promotion each month that ends at the end of the month. Therefore, within a 60-day campaign, you would run two promotions. For purposes of consistency, promotions should typically have a similar value throughout most of the year. Perhaps, you may want to have one or two that are your strongest promotions. There should be a "call to action" as part of the promotion such as "Join Now and Save."

**Discounts vs. Building Value.** Rather than offer too many discounts, I suggest you build value and offer premiums as a

call to action. For example, you can offer a complimentary beach towel with your logo on it as part of a summer pool campaign. Perhaps a heart rate monitor as part of a New Year's Resolution campaign. The list of possibilities is endless, and prospects get motivated to buy and excited about well-thought-out premiums that add value.

**Be Fluid.** The Annual Sales and Marketing Plan is a document that should be updated every month and adjusted according to the previous month's success and current market conditions. There are a number of reasons why your plan may need to be updated, such as current local or national events.

**Track and Measure Results.** It is vital that you know where your sales came

from and if your marketing dollars are working correctly for you. You need to make sure your membership sales team identifies where each sale came from. Just as important, you'll want to take the total monthly spend and divide it by total monthly sales to get an average cost per sale.

■ ■ ■

In conclusion, developing an Annual Sales and Marketing Plan is perhaps one of the most important things you'll do in the planning phase for each upcoming year. And, it is never too early to start! Keep it simple, stay focused on the customer you want to attract and build compelling and exciting campaigns. Always adjust the plan throughout the year and your chances of success will be maximized. Good luck!

If you'd like a complimentary sample template of an Annual Sales and Marketing Plan, I'd be delighted to share one. Email me at the address listed below.

(Frank Guengerich is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Health, Wellness and Lifestyle Services (HWLS), a club ownership and management consulting firm. HWLS specializes in assisting clubs maximize revenue and profitability, with a focus on membership marketing and sales, fitness programming and wellness/medically supervised programs. For more information about HWLS, visit the website at [www.hwlservices.com](http://www.hwlservices.com) or email [frank@hwlservices.com](mailto:frank@hwlservices.com).)



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## IHRSA 2024 Proves Better than a Zoom Call

By: **Jeffrey Pinkerton**

Cross country flights, days away from home, time zone changes, countless hours of planning and preparation, booths shipped and exhibit halls configured, all to get together in-person in Los Angeles at *IHRSA 2024*. Wouldn't it have been simpler to just schedule a handful of Zoom meetings? Pre-record the keynote speakers so participants could watch on their own schedule? And, maybe even set up a virtual exhibit hall complete with on-demand videos from vendors? Of course, it would have been simpler, but it would not have been at all the same. Don't let the tech titans fool you. It's better when we're together.

**Time Efficiency Isn't Everything:** People are so busy these days, or so the saying goes. But, for most, we make time for the things that we value. In fact, we often choose a less efficient option because of the improved experience. Have you seen the gumball machine that spirals gum round and round, taking ten to fifteen seconds to deliver? In **Pine and Gilmore's** book, *The Experience Economy: Competing for Customer Time, Attention, and Money*, they use this example to make that very point: "The device offers the same old good – while, arguably, providing worse service because it takes longer to deliver the gumball." Which, if you are in the stage of life where this contraption stops you and your young children in their tracks while at

the grocery store, I stand corrected; you are pretty busy.

**Face to Face Time is Different than Facetime:** If you spend any time on Zoom, you know that it can be great for presentations, pretty good for one-on-one conversations and pretty difficult for collaborative discussions. We miss out on eye contact, body language and other social cues, not to mention people's tendency (guilty as charged) to multitask if the topic of conversation doesn't directly involve them. Odd interruptions, dogs barking, Amazon doorbell deliveries, chronic mute-button'ing, and the ominous, "um... [insert name here] you're muted, we

(See **Jeffrey Pinkerton** Page 22)



Jeffrey Pinkerton

# Make It Fun Every Day!

## ...Jeffrey Pinkerton

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can't hear you." Bottom line, face to face time, complete with handshakes and high-fives and hugs, is more meaningful, more memorable and more impactful.

### Less Tech Time, More Team Time:

The three-day event of the *IHRSA Convention and Trade Show* (going forward, now known as the *Health & Fitness Association Convention and Trade Show*), was a whirlwind of connection and conversations. Early morning breakfasts with the team (most of us were still on Eastern time) provided the perfect place for long discussions about work and life. A buzz at the booth of customers and curious prospects filled our days talking about programs and progress. And, we wrapped up the busy days with dinners out, complete with great food, loud laughs and great conversation. Of course, there was time to catch up on emails and check our phones, but overall, my week had a drastic reduction in tech time and much more team time.

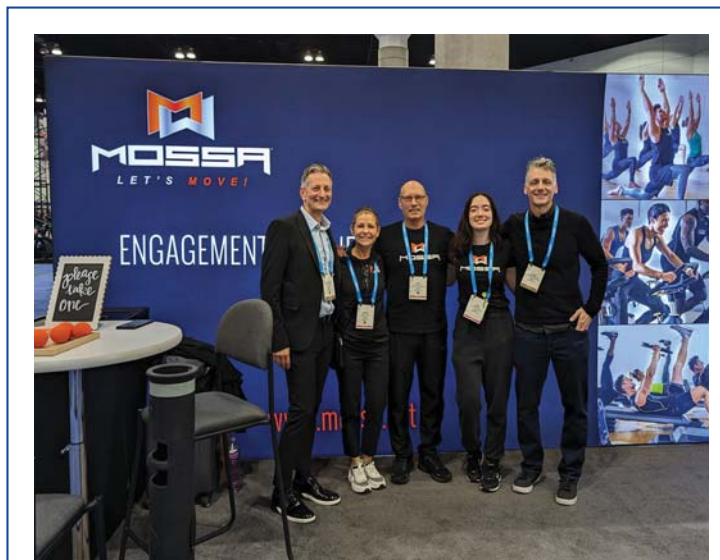
you've read this far, you may be thinking to yourself, of course, everyone knows that a great experience is more important than time efficiency. After all, the most *efficient* way to watch an LA Lakers game is to watch it on TV. But, as I learned while in LA, the *best* way to watch an LA Lakers game is at the Arena. And, of course, face-to-face time is better than screen time. We can all admit we spend too much time staring at screens all day. And, maybe the most obvious, aside from the benefits of occasional solitude (solo run, bike ride, hike in the woods), most events are more enjoyable with acquaintances and made even better with friends.

So, here's the irony... of all the companies at IHRSA, guess which ones spent the most money to get there, to be part of the experience, to get off their screens and be together? The machine companies! Yes, the very ones trying to convince the industry that the future of fitness is time-efficient, screen-filled, solo workouts. Hmmm. Curious, right?

■ ■ ■

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The Irony of the IHRSA Convention: If



The MOSSA Team at IHRSA 2024 (L to R): Terry Browning, Kristin White, Mike Campetelle, Anna O'Neal and Jeffrey Pinkerton

experiences – the kind that can turn your group fitness department into an engaging community of longtime, loyal movers – visit [mossa.net/clubs-facilities/why-mossa](https://mossa.net/clubs-facilities/why-mossa).

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

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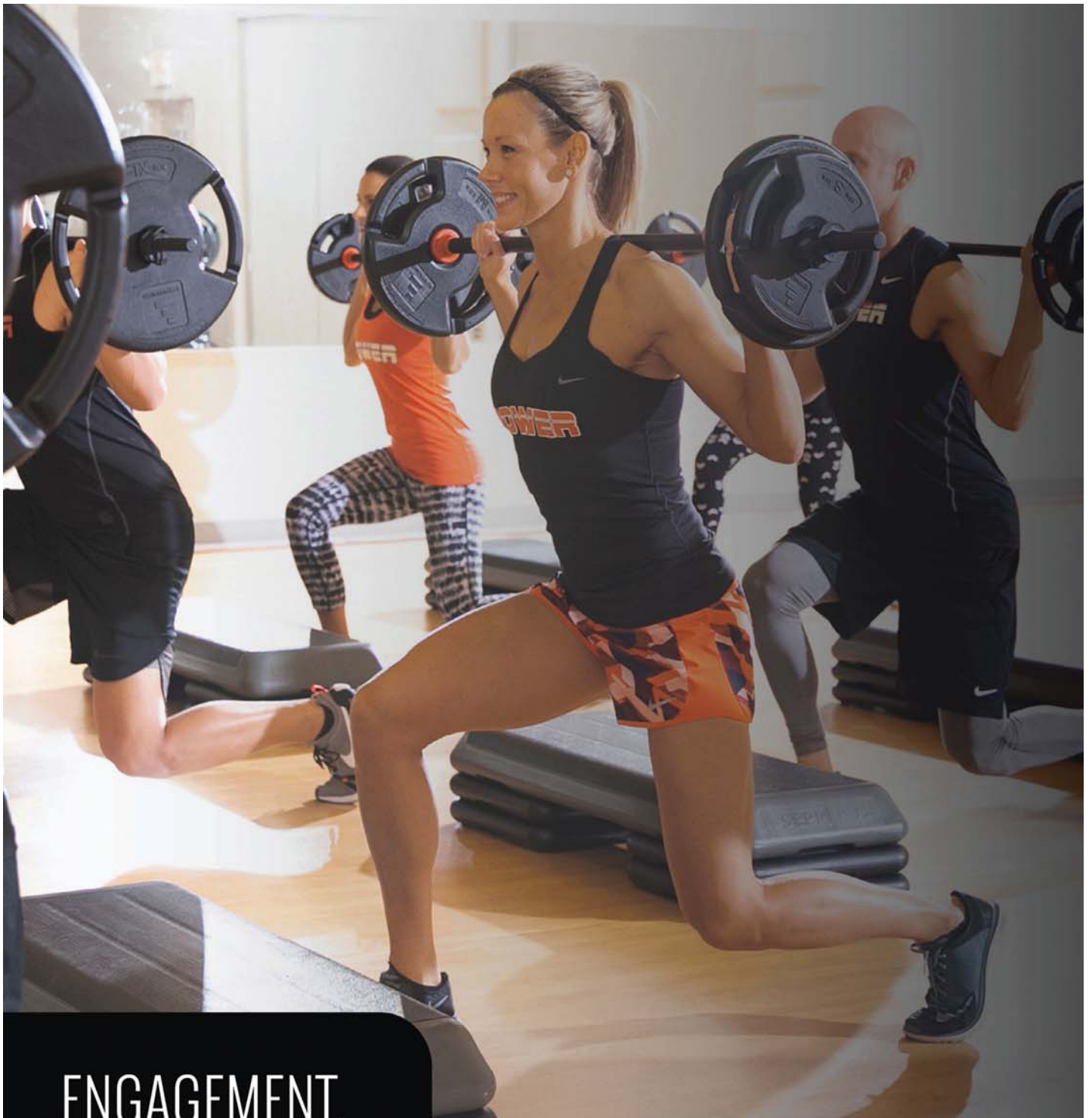


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