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THE Club Insider[®]

NEWS

The Pulse of the Health, Racquet & Sports Club Business

APRIL 1998
VOLUME V NUMBER 4



RON and SANDY FRANCO

10 Great Years of Mom-and-Pop Club Success!

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*Club Industry, July 1997

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THE Club Insider

NEWS

The Pulse of the Health, Racquet & Sports Club Business

RON AND SANDY FRANCO

10 Great Years of Mom-and-Pop Club Success!

By Norm Cates

The story of Ron and Sandy Franco is exciting and inspirational! It is the story of a young couple who have spent most of their adult lives together as husband and wife and business partners in a community they love and one that loves them. They love their staff, their members and their community. And, they give a lot of personal time and energy to community events and activities.

In 1986 Ron and Sandy were working in Foxy's Athletic Club in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Sandy had taken her first job ever at Foxy's when she was just 15 years old. Years later Sandy was a Manager at Foxy's when she met her husband to be, Ron Franco. They

began dating and found a special connection which has resulted in a successful 12-year marriage, four children and one of America's most successful multi-purpose athletic clubs. The strong focus on children and family oriented activities in Franco's Athletic Club is easy to understand given the line up of their children - Danielle (10), Mackenzie (8), Nickolas (6) and Shea (4).

The Francos married in 1986 and moved to Mandeville, Louisiana, hoping to purchase a then defunct club, formerly known as The Bon Temps Club, (Good Times Club). They were successful and purchased the club from the Resolution Trust Corporation (RTC) on April 4, 1988. The club was on two acres and had ten racquetball courts, a 1,000 s.f. weight room, an outdoor pool, four tennis courts and parking.

Now, Franco's Athletic Club includes 12 acres and is a 59,000 square-foot, multi-purpose facility with five swimming pools, a water slide, a children's theme pool, 12 tennis courts, a sand volleyball court and lots of parking.

After acquiring the club, the Francos spent two weeks of backbreaking around the clock work to remodel it, transforming the then 23,000 s.f. club into a viable new business. Franco's Athletic Club opened on April 17, 1988. Since the club had been closed for two years they were not sure what to expect during the early going. They had operated a temporary facility for over a year while they completed the negotiations for the defunct club. They were very happy and somewhat surprised to learn that the pent up demand in

Mandeville, at the time a 13,000-population suburb 24 miles from New Orleans, was very strong. So strong that they met their first membership goal/projection of 500 memberships - in their first month of operation! Franco's Athletic Club now has 14,000 members in the growing Mandeville market which now has a population of 32,000!

Sandy Franco comments, "Our club has soul to it. Being an owner and being a Mom and Pop operation possibly has some negative effects, but for us it's real positive. Our employees see us everyday. The members see us everyday and we are totally committed to them. When people see a commitment from you, they want to be committed also. Our members are from six weeks old to

92 years old and we have programs for every one of them. For example, one of our most popular is the Pace Circuit Training Program. Kevin Cavaretta, a former drum major, teaches the Pace Circuit Classes and does a terrific job! Kevin has been appointed by Rande LaDue, President of Pro*Fit Enterprises, to be the International Pace Circuit Master Trainer. When the Pace class is in session there is a big party going on in there! When our members pass by that Pace Circuit Training Room they want to know what it is, what's going on and can they get in there too! In conceiving our programs we start with the children. We think that it is very important that they are happy because if they are not happy they won't want to come to the club and then the parents won't come. Our first venture was to build a children's theme pool. (See *Franco* page 4)

State Of The Health Club Industry: Strong! 22.5 Million Members

PHOENIX, AZ.- The International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association conducted its 17th Annual Convention and Trade Show, March 18-21st in Phoenix, Arizona. During his State of the Industry address, John McCarthy, IHRSA Executive Director, announced that the number of health club members grew to 22.5 million in the U.S. in 1997 - up 8% over the 1996 figure of 20.1 million.

McCarthy said, "This is one of three key indicators that the industry is healthy and growing." The second indicator is that the last six months of 1997 saw a sizable leap in the number of health clubs in the U.S. In January, 1998, American Business Information reported that there were 13,799 health clubs-up by 5% over the July 1997 figure of 13,097.

The third indicator is new money coming into the busi-

ness. According to the just published IHRSA Report on the State of the Health Club Industry, several club companies enjoyed an infusion of new capital last year, resulting in expansion of their operations.

The 1998 IHRSA Report On The State Of The Health Club Industry was released at the Phoenix Convention. The 1998 IHRSA Report on the State of the Health Club Industry tells the story of where the industry has been and where it is today, based on industry facts and figures. It is a dynamic, ever-changing industry, constantly responding to new market demands. For many reasons, outlined in this report, it is a good time to be in the health club business. All indications are that this will continue to be the case for many years to come. Special thanks to Cathy

Masterson McNeil, the Editor of this report and to Hans Muench, IHRSA's Director of International Development, for his contribution to the global perspective of the report. The report was produced by IHRSA under the sponsorship of Reebok/Cross Conditioning Systems®. Copies of the publication are available to IHRSA members for \$50. The non-member price is \$275. To join IHRSA and/or order a copy of the report, call (800) 228-4772. A summary of the report follows.

THE U.S. HEALTH CLUB BUSINESS THEN.....

Fifteen years ago, health clubs had begun to embrace a new way of doing business that would provide them

with a more consistent cash flow-a necessary prerequisite to convincing financial institutions to loan them the money necessary to expand their facilities and grow the business. Expansion to most of these mom-and-pop operations meant adding a swimming pool or converting a tennis court to a fitness center or bubbling outdoor courts so the club could take care of more members on a year-round basis. To a handful of industry leaders, expansion meant something else: building more clubs and becoming multi-club companies.

At that time (1983), there were 6,309 commercial health clubs in the U.S. with an estimated 6.5 million members-most of them age 18 to 34. Club owners-many of whom had left other careers for the love of working in the racquet sport and fitness industry-had few re-

(See *Industry* page 14)

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- IHRSA Awards Ceremonies

THE INSIDER SPEAKS

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The Future Of Health Care... Not Sick Care

By Dr. Sal Arria

How many times a day do we hear something about the health care system in this country? Well let's face it. It's not really health care! It's SICK care. Even C. Everett Koop, M.D., the former Surgeon General, has called the system currently in place in this country a "sick care system." Unfortunately, it has very little to do with HEALTH care because after all, we only use it when we're sick, dying or to have something removed or repaired!

Health care on the other hand is a term that should be restricted to the services a HEALTH club provides! While the term 'sick care' may not sit well with many in the medical professions, the time has come for health clubs to step up to the plate and assume their rightful place as providers of HEALTH care. The health clubs must address the all-too-real issues involved in getting this country out of their easy chairs and into a fitness lifestyle. It is crystal clear to all that this sort of lifestyle is the key to a healthy life. And it must start with an understanding and

application of behaviors which promote prevention.

No one is better positioned or more qualified than health clubs to help get our country healthy again. You're in a position to teach the importance of prevention at the grass roots, community level and to draw families into a lifestyle of fitness and health. Let's face it, it is fitness facilities and their employees that can actually make a change in the HEALTH of this country. No one else can do it.....only YOU!

This change won't come easy, but a qualified staff can make the difference. Here's how it works. Trainers who are certified to work with post-rehab patients are the key component of what it takes to interact on a professional level with the medical community. Doctors in your community must have confidence in your staff before they refer their patients on a consistent basis. We now have the scientific proof that exercise is the treatment of choice after the prescribed therapy is over. Even though we've understood this for years—before science provided us with hard evidence—the medical community needs to see that evidence and be educated about what you can do for their patients.

Constant interaction with Chiropractors, General Practitioners, Orthopedists, Obstetricians, Osteopaths, Neurosurgeons and Cardiologists (just to name a few) can provide an endless source of new members for your club. But you've got to build, develop and maintain a professional relationship with these practitioners. And that's only going to be possible if your staff is trained to do so.

There are very few Fitness Therapy Certification organizations that are closely tied to the health club industry. One is ISSA (International Sport Sciences Association). ISSA developed its Fitness Therapy Certification program to train your staff to deal with the myriad clinical issues involved in the post rehabilitation fitness needs of your clients. But just as important, your staff members will also be trained to interact with these medical professionals on their level, to solicit patient referrals and bill insurance companies for the services they can render at your facility. More and more insurance companies are providing reimbursement for post-rehab care and even covering prevention through payment or co-payment of membership dues. It's just good business for them to prevent recur-



Bob Del Monteque (l), Dr. Sal Arria and Bill Pearl

rences. When the prescribed therapy and treatment is over, a vast majority of patients continue to need personal care, interaction, motivation and inspiration to get healthy again. Only a highly trained and qualified health club staff can provide this service. Not doctors, not nurses, not hospitals, but certified fitness therapy professionals whose base of operation is from HEALTH clubs.

Herein lies the key to improving the health and fitness of this country. And, another idea, that if fully pursued, will greatly enhance your bottom line.

(Dr. Sal Arria is the Executive Director of the International Sports Sciences Association. Since 1988 the ISSA has provided quality certification and continuing education programs to over 25,000 health and fitness professionals. Dr. Arria was a team doctor for the U.S. Olympic Track and Field Team, US Powerlifting Team and was appointed as a Special Advisor to the Governor's Council for Physical Fitness. He was also three time California State Powerlifting champion and ranked in the Top 3 at the 220 and 242 divisions.)

Norm Cates'
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...Franco

continued from page 3

(The pool is beautiful with a Big Green Frog right in the middle). It attracts the toddlers. We also installed a water slide and rock adventure for the older kids. For the grown-ups we provide many programs. The Pace Circuit, CardioTheater, the terrific new BODY PUMP Classes, spinning classes and tennis programs are examples. One of the hardest groups to program for is the age 55 to 75 group. One thing we've realized is that they love to dance! We will be marketing more adult dance programs this year. Our overall goal is to make the community fit whether they are members or not. These four walls are just part of what we are. We are very

involved in our community. If there is something going on in this town..... Franco's is there!

One of the obvious keys to Franco's success is the great staff. Ron Franco relates, "We're in the entertainment business..... fitness is a by-product. What we try to do is hire people with the right attitude. We can teach them about fitness, but you can't teach them attitude." Karla Partridge of the Sales Team comments, "Selling Franco's is an easy job because it sells itself. I'm just here as a hostess." Franco's began in 1988 with 30 employees and now employs 164, of which 70 are full time! The General Manager, who works closely with Ron and Sandy, is Rory Picou.

A good example of Franco's wise approach to the

business is the creation of the Community Fitness Director position. The position is held by Joe Dimert whose full time job is to be out in the community giving luncheon speeches about subjects such as the Surgeon General's report and the value of regular exercise, conducting clinics and free exercise classes, speaking to AARP groups, attending fund raisers and road races and in general representing the club to the community it serves.

A very touching part of this story was when the Franco's first child, daughter Danielle, was just two years old and was diagnosed with Leukemia. She was in the hospital for two straight months. Sandy recalls: "The business was very new. Our staff and the members of the community just

(See Franco page 16)

•NORM'S NOTES•

•IHRSA held its 17th Annual Convention and Trade Show March 18-21st in downtown Phoenix. The weather was beautiful and the downtown area is architecturally inviting. However, there was one major issue which many feel needs to be corrected before downtown Phoenix will be able to handle a convention the size of IHRSA's. That problem is the lack of enough hotel rooms. Word is that many convention attendees were "bumped" by the main hotel and ending up staying many miles in suburban areas of Phoenix. The Convention agenda, as usual, was excellent with many important and contemporary topics covered. My special thanks to all of you that praised our work on **The CLUB INSIDER** News! It does my heart good to hear your comments.

•Last month we reported that **Nautilus** had been put up for sale by its parent company, **Delta Woodside Corporation**, based in Greenville, S.C. During the convention word was that **Life Fitness** was looking at a possible acquisition of **Nautilus** but the price was reportedly too high for the now Brunswick-owned **Life Fitness**. My view is that **Nautilus** is a terrific name brand which should somehow live forever and **Life Fitness** would be a perfect company to take on the challenge of bringing **Nautilus** back to a profitable business. Word is that **Life Fitness** is still interested even if they acquired **Nautilus** just to increase their capacity for manufacturing. Stay tuned for more on the **Nautilus** situation.

•I spoke to my good friend **RICK CARO** a couple of days before our press date. I was trying to get an update on who the potential players are for the assemblage of the group of clubs Rick is working on. (Reported in our April edition). Rick wouldn't tell me anything citing the fact that he had just signed confidentiality agreements with some potential players and he could disclose nothing at this time. I'm sure Rick will keep me informed when he is in a position to do so. Oh, just in case you missed the story in our April issue on **Club Vision Partners**, that is the name

of the organization that Rick is heading up. Their plan is to acquire 5 to 7 major regional club groups and merge them into one new company. Immediately after the merger they plan to take the company to the public market place. Good luck to Rick and his two partners **Troy Taylor** of Atlanta-based **Legacy Securities** and to **MATT SEWARD** of Tulsa, Oklahoma based **Innovative Partners**.

•My apologies to **PAT PINE**, Executive Director of Denver based **Western Association of Clubs** for incorrectly publishing the phone number of his new organization **National Physical Therapy Association**. The correct phone number is: (303) 399-4545.

•Ironman, **RAY WILSON** just turned 70 years old in February. A belated Happy Birthday Ray! During the IHRSA Convention Ray held a meeting so that he could brief interested parties on the Asian market where Ray is moving amazingly fast. Ray is seeking new partners to take over certain countries that he wants to develop. Ray and partner's two Hong Kong deals are doing extremely well and he foresees as many as 12 clubs there. Also, their newest location in Singapore is taking off like a rocket ship! They sold over 5,000 memberships as of mid-March, '98 and the club didn't even open until late January, '98! Ray is also well underway with the plans

to get involved heavily in the Tampa, Florida area in partnership with his son **PERRY WILSON**.

•**Life Fitness** has announced the selection of **JAMES SKINNER** as the new Chairman of **Life Fitness Academy and Medical Advisory Board**. Also, **Life Fitness** announced that four new board members had been added to the prestigious 31 member panel. They are: **WOJTEK J. CHODZKO-ZAJKO**, **STEVEN FLECK, Ph.D.**, **WALTER FRONTERA, M.D., Ph.D.** and **PAUL THOMPSON**.

•**RICH BOGGS** and **RAY IRWIN**, the principals of **The Step Company** are doing just as I had predicted they would do! They are rolling out this exciting and terrific results-producing new **Body Pump™** program, in a really big way. From the IHRSA Convention and the two weeks immediately after, they have now doubled the number of clubs that have committed to **BodyPUMP™**! Almost 400 clubs will be up and running with the program over the next several months. As I mentioned last month the list is beginning to look like a "Who's Who" of the club industry and includes **RED LERILLE'S Health and Racquet Club**, **JOE CIRULLI'S Gainesville Health & Fitness**,

Equinox in New York, **ROGER RALPH's Bel Air Athletic Club**, and the **Atlantic Coast Athletic Club**! They have signed up the first major chain, **24 Hour Fitness** and have a number of other major chains testing the concept in multiple locations. They rolled out a line of **BodyPUMP™** apparel at the convention and it was well received. The new web site at www.bodypump.com is generating a great deal of interest from the site being published in **Cosmopolitan**, **Shape** and **Self** Magazines. By the end of April they will be able to offer direct link to those clubs having their own web page in addition to enabling potential members to print out a "guest pass" through the **BodyPUMP™** web site! **Shape Magazine** is doing a story on **BodyPUMP™** this summer. There was a four-minute segment of **BodyPUMP™** on "Good Morning

America!" The early morning 6:30 am classes at the Convention were also a real hit with great attendance even at that hour.

•**Club Sports International** has purchased the 50,000 square-foot **Kingsport Athletic Club** in Kingsport, Texas. **CSI** continues to add to their units with 53 now under ownership and or management by the company.

•**LEE HILLMAN**, the CEO and President of **Bally Total Fitness**, addressed a luncheon group at the IHRSA Convention Global Industry Summit. He shared his thoughts on the challenges he has and is facing in his effort to turn the 320 club nationwide chain into a profit maker. Hillman has done some really good things since he stepped into the (See *Norm's Notes* page 23)

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MAKING PRICE a DETAIL and NOT the POINT

By Karen D. Woodard

Visualize this: you've just done a fabulous job with a prospective Member. You built a rapport to a point where both felt comfortable, the trust was high, you qualified them and they're a hot prospect. You masterfully did the needs analysis and you know we can meet their needs. On the tour you escalated their desire even higher. You tested the waters with trial closes and this one is sure to join today! You sit down to do the price presentation with them—the energy changes, they decide they need to think about it for a while and leave without joining today.

What happened here? Well, aside from not handling the objection at all (not the focus of this article), it could have something to do with how you are presenting your club's prices. The content of this article will focus on how you can present prices in a more masterful way and positively impact your first time closing rate.

Having a smooth and confident price presentation can make or break the close you've just done such a good job on getting. Pre-

senting the prices is not the close—the close should take place much earlier than before you go over the details of price. If you wait until the price presentation—you make price the focus of the close and put yourself at a disadvantage. Instead, because you've qualified them financially in the first three to five minutes (see below) you know (and they should know) that the memberships offered fit in their price range—this should not be an issue—don't make it one. When presenting price follow this six-step format and it will be a winner for you every time.

6 Step Price Presentation Guide

1.) Make sure you are financially qualifying the prospective Member within the first 3-5 minutes you are with them. You should be asking your qualifying questions early (pre-tour) to uncover concerns before they become objections. A good choice to uncover any financial concerns would be "Susan, what price range are you considering for membership?" Susan will respond in one of two ways: she will tell you what she has in mind

or she will respond with "I'm not sure, how much does it cost?:". If she responds with a number that works with your club's pricing structure then your response should be along the lines of "Excellent!" We have several programs that will work for you." Then proceed with your conversational questioning. There is also the chance that she will respond with a number that does not work with your club's pricing structure to which you should respond with "Susan, our memberships at ABC Club start at \$45 per month and go to \$75 per month. Are you firm at \$35 or can you stretch a bit? If she can't stretch, I advise you take the following approach. "Susan, I can understand that the membership price may not work for you so we have two options at this point—IF YOU don't feel as though you want to take the time to see the club, I understand, however, I know that I would love to show you the club." By doing this, you are gracefully giving them an option to leave without feeling embarrassed and you are still letting them know that you want them to see the club. If they leave, that's O.K.—they were not financially qualified. If they stay, they are still interested and are probably more financially qualified than they are

representing. If she can stretch, you'll know she has just qualified herself financially and price will not be an issue in her joining the club today. The other response from Susan, that being unsure of what she can spend or unsure of what it costs to join a club should be handled in the same way starting with "Susan, our memberships at the ABC Club start at \$45 per month and go to \$75 per month—does that fit with what you have in mind?" If it does—great—she's qualified and continue with your other qualifying and needs analysis questions. If your club's pricing does not fit with what she had in mind, still ask if she can stretch and if she cannot, then you may want to respond with the same tact as in the example above.

If at any point before you go on tour the prospective Member starts to ask you detailed questions about different memberships in the range you just gave, simply respond with "Since it looks like our range fits with your range, let's wait to go over those details until after you've seen the club—it'll make a lot more sense then." You don't want to make price the focal point of your time together. You do, however, want to give them "psychological air" or the assurance that they can afford your club so that they relax and any tension is minimized.

2.) Relax! They've already said yes—especially because you've qualified them early, built desire on the tour, met their needs and done some good trial closes. If you choke on the money—they'll get a mixed message. So continue to support their decision with positive language and genuine enthusiasm and paint them into the picture of membership at your club. The more comfortable you are with the numbers and membership options, the easier this becomes for you to see as a detail. Being able to relax in the price presentation simply takes practice so make sure that you are role playing price presentation frequently



Karen Woodard

with this format.

3.) Have a professionally printed price sheet with options. I advise no more than 4 options whether there are several types of memberships or several ways to make payment on a price sheet so it doesn't get confusing for the Member. If we have too many options, it's too much to think about and make a decision on now. Simplify your pricing structure and printed presentation to encourage an easier decision making process. Conversely, clubs that have only one membership with one way to do it end up shooting themselves in the foot. You always want to offer a choice so a choice can be made; otherwise, the only choice is this does or does not work.

4.) Always start with high-end price membership and address it as your "most popular" membership. The reasons to do this are that if that membership doesn't work, you can always go down to your next option. However, if you start low or mid, you have limited your options. Additionally, if you start at low or mid price, it appears that you may be nickeling and diming for additional services and when you start high and come from the perspective that this is the best membership you will sell more of them and if you need to go down, it will be received more positively.

5.) Break the information down into little pieces and test the waters as you go along to make sure (See Woodard page 25)

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MAKE IT FUN!

If you have read *The CLUB INSIDER* News you've probably seen our little ads stating **MAKE IT FUN!**

Those ads are our little reminders to all of you that you can make your club more successful if you **MAKE IT FUN!** for your members who come there and for your employees who work there. It is just that simple. A Happy Club is usually a healthy club.

Sandy Coffman, the President of Programming for Profit, probably knows more about how to **MAKE IT FUN!** in clubs than anybody in the industry. Starting this month, Sandy is going to provide us with a **MAKE IT FUN!** idea each month. So, here is Sandy's first idea:

MAKE IT FUN!

It is so easy to create a "fun environment" around any holiday. I look forward to every holi-

day as a celebration, an excuse for a party, a time to reflect on the positive. Isn't that what we call a "holiday spirit?"

One of the most joyous of holidays is **EASTER**. Among a myriad of reasons why this holiday is joyous is the Easter Bunny. The delightful little rabbit that hides colored eggs, brings candy and makes you remember the good times as a child as well as allowing you to pretend he is real. Have you capitalized on making your club fun during this wonderful holiday?

EXAMPLE: A ONE DAY EASTER EVENT

First, I would definitely give it a "fun" name - The (Your Club) Easter Parade, or The (Your Club) Bunny Bash. The event can be a tournament or round robin organized with any

racquet sport or gymnasium sport - racquetball, tennis, squash, volleyball, badminton - or a combination. You can also run fitness and/or aerobic competitions with or without the sport activities.

The promotion is easy. The week prior to the event, the staff should wear bunny ears and tails. They can make their own as I did in the photo shown here. I made my ears out of coat hangers, covered them with material, and secured them with a headband. If you create this kind of "fun environment" you'll be surprised at how many of your participants will come to the event with Easter bunny ears on!

Have someone on staff dress like a bunny and walk around the club or parking lot passing out Easter treats. Hide some plastic Easter eggs with prizes in them in the lockers. For prizes obtain Easter baskets filled with goodies, promotional items,



Sandy Coffman As Easter Bunny

and club cash. Be sure to announce the winners over a microphone in the true holiday spirit.

If done right the first time, this can become an annual

event and become a retention tool. It's easy. Just "MAKE IT FUN!" (Sandy Coffman may be reached at Programming for Profit (414) 782-5490.)



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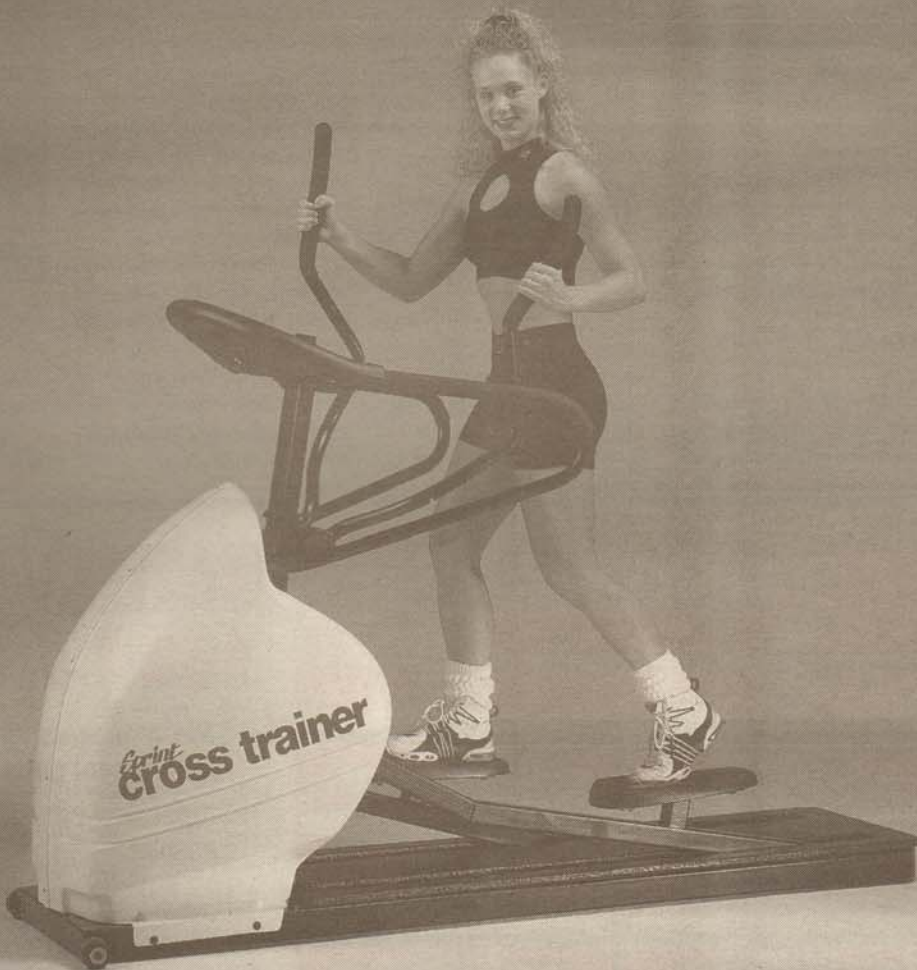
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PACE: The "No-Time" Objection Solution

By Rande LaDue

It has been written in many articles that intimidation is the #1 reason why the deconditioned person does not join a health club. We firmly believe this is true; however, perhaps the most common reason a club owner or salesperson will hear from a potential new member is "I don't have the time". After all, who wants to admit that they are too intimidated to work out among people who are already in good shape? This excuse is valid even for those people who may not be out of shape, but honestly don't think they can find the time to join a club, especially with today's busy executives and their hectic lifestyles. Some of

them buy home fitness equipment which unfortunately usually ends up as expensive clothes hangers.

What if you could say that your club offered a program which combined a strength and cardiovascular workout in a half hour? And what if this program was in a separate area of the club away from the hardbodies? And what if this program was fun, easy to do, did not cause muscle soreness, but produced results very quickly? Your answer to the "No Time" objection would be The PACE Group Exercise Program™. PACE can be an excellent sales tool when giving club tours when you can tell your prospective member that they will get great results with only three 1/2-hour PACE workouts a week.

This is one of the reasons why many corporate fitness cen-

ters are adding PACE to their fitness sites and health clubs are adding PACE to attract the corporate markets. We all know the benefits to companies with employees that work out on a regular basis; reduced absenteeism, a positive attitude, reduced health risks, etc. But one of the biggest problems companies with corporate fitness centers have is getting their employees (especially executives) to find the time to actually use them. With PACE, they can literally get a complete strength and cardiovascular workout, shower, change and get back to work during their lunch hour.

Ray Gordon and Ed Tock, partners of Sales Makers Membership Specialists in Cape Coral, Florida, (800) 428-3334, are advocates of using PACE as a sales, retention and referral tool for clubs. Tock says, "We have advised several of our health club customers to go with The PACE Group Exercise Program because

it's a great closing tool for the non-exerciser. They find themselves in a comfortable setting; they can work out at their own "pace." PACE is easy to do and it services many members at the same time. We have customers that have 20-22 station PACE circuits and conduct at least 5-6 classes a day which are 80-100% full!"

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Kevin Cavaretta (l) teaches Pace Class at IHRSA

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Town Sports International Announces Third Quarter Earnings Continues Record Growth In Revenues and EBITDA

New York, N.Y., March 31, 1998 - Town Sports International today released third quarter and nine months earnings for the period ended February 28, 1998, reporting a net profit for the quarter of \$451,000 compared with a net loss of \$2.6 million for the same period last year. Revenues for the quarter increased by \$7 million to \$21.6 million, a 48% increase from last year's \$14.6 million. Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization and other non-cash charges (EBITDA) climbed by 76% during the period to \$5.5 million from \$3.1 million for the same period in 1997. EBITDA as a percentage of revenues increased by 4% from the previous year to 25%.

For the nine months ended February 28, 1998, the company reported net income of

\$550,000, compared with a net loss of \$1.3 million for the same period in 1997. Net income before extraordinary items stands at \$1.3 million for the year to date ended February 28, 1998. Revenues reached \$57.9 million, a \$17.4 million or 43% increase from the \$40.5 million reported for the nine months ended February 28, 1997. EBITDA was up 60% to \$14.6 million from \$9.1 million for the previous year, with margins increasing by 3% to 25%.

The leading owner and operator of health clubs in New York City, the company credited the increased revenues to membership growth resulting from the maturation of the nine clubs opened or acquired in fiscal years 1996 and 1997, and the 10 new clubs in the first nine months of fiscal 1998, as well as solid growth from its more mature op-

erations. The company has also continued its expansion program, adding five clubs during the third quarter.

"The results confirm the promise of our growth plan, reflecting the improved mix of mature and newer clubs operated by the company and the proportionate increase in profitability as the clubs continue to thrive individually and collectively," said company Chief Executive Officer Mark Smith.

During the nine-month period, Town Sports also completed an \$85 million senior note financing to repay an existing term loan, line of credit and subordinated note. Related fees and expenses were written off net of tax effect for \$700,000 as an extraordinary item.

New York-based Town Sports International is a leading owner and operator of fitness clubs in the Northeast and mid-Atlantic region of the U.S. and is the largest operator of such clubs in Manhattan. The company operates fitness centers in the New York, Boston and Washington, D.C. areas, consisting of 43 clubs with more than 110,000 members, and has committed to opening seven clubs within the next 12 months.

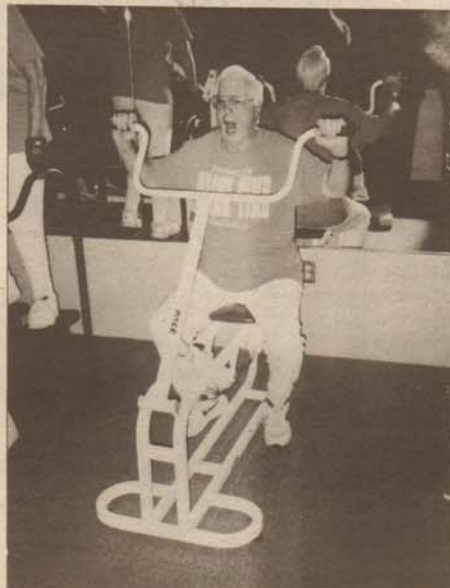
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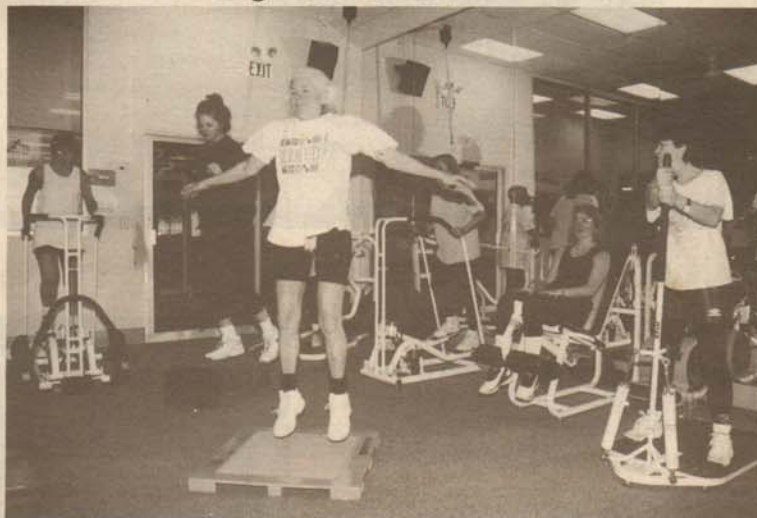
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BALLY TOTAL FITNESS FILES REGISTRATION STATEMENT FOR 2.5 MILLION NEW SHARES

Chicago, IL. - Bally Total Fitness Corporation (Nasdaq National Market:BFTF) announced on March 19, 1998 that it had filed a registration statement with the Securities and Exchange Commission

to offer 2.5 million new shares of common stock. The process of this offering will be used to fund the development of growth opportunities consisting primarily of the development of new clubs, the selective acquisition of club-related

real estate and the acquisition of strategically located fitness centers.

All of the shares to be offered pursuant to this filing are primary shares. No Bally Total Fitness executives or board mem-

bers will be selling shares of stock in this offering.

In addition, Bally Total Fitness has applied for listing of its common stock on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol "BFT."

Bally Total Fitness is the largest and only nationwide, commercial operator of fitness centers in the United States, with approximately four million members and 320 facilities in 27 states and Canada.

...Industry

continued from page 3

sources for learning about this new and rapidly changing business. There were half-a-dozen fitness equipment suppliers and a few newsletters, one of which was produced by the International Racquet Sports Association, the predecessor to IHRSA. Articles in these publications focused largely on the day-to-day operations of running one club.

For a small but growing group of multi-club operators a new kind of knowledge was becoming necessary. In order to achieve major growth-perhaps even to go public some day-they had to develop management teams that were structured for such growth. A few such operators continued to run two,

three and more clubs as though they were sole proprietorships. Those operations have long since closed or been sold to other companies-the companies that successfully planned for and have since achieved major growth. Many of them are profiled in this publication.

And Now

Fast forward to 1998. The number of health clubs has more than doubled (to 13,799) and the number of members has more than tripled (to 22.5 million). The industry is now served by several respected trade magazines along with volumes of literature and dozens of experienced consultants on all aspects of managing the health club business. There are more than two dozen fitness

equipment suppliers.

Mom-and-pop operations represent less than half of the health club business in the U.S. Many of yesterday's owners now own two, three or more clubs. Others have sold their facilities or turned the management of their clubs over to one of a growing number of professional club management companies. Some have acquired dozens of clubs in an effort to dominate a market or a region.

And a few have gone public, following in the footsteps of the nation's only national public player: Bally Total Fitness (BTF). Under the leadership of Lee S. Hillman, BTF enjoyed a banner year in 1997. In the first quarter, the company was profitable for the first time in ten quarters. The year ended even better

than it began with estimated total revenues (according to Jeffries & Company Equity Research) of \$662 million-up by 3% over the 1996 figure of \$640 million. Early in the year, Jeffries & Company and Oppenheimer Co. Inc., issued a "Buy" recommendation on stock in BTF. The company raised \$200 million in bonds, and \$100 million in new equity. And BTF's stock rose from 5 to 22. (In 1998 the BTF stock has reached over 33!)

While BTF is the biggest, it is not the only star in the health club industry. There are several players in regional and metro markets that continue to acquire and build new clubs. For example, in the past year:

• Town Sports International (TSI) completed a recapitalization of the company, with a \$15

million credit obtained for additional acquisitions and new facility development. The company raised another \$100 million in bonds. TSI, which also operates in Switzerland, acquired four American clubs.

•Six other companies including The Fitness Company, Sport and Health, 24 Hour Fitness, Healthrax, Health Fitness Corporation and Lifetime Fitness -received new infusions of venture capital.

•The Sports Club Company's (SCC) stock rose from 3 to 9. SCC acquired four mega-clubs in Southern California and one such club in Nevada, and purchased a controlling interest in the Reebok Sports Club in New York (See *Industry* page 20)



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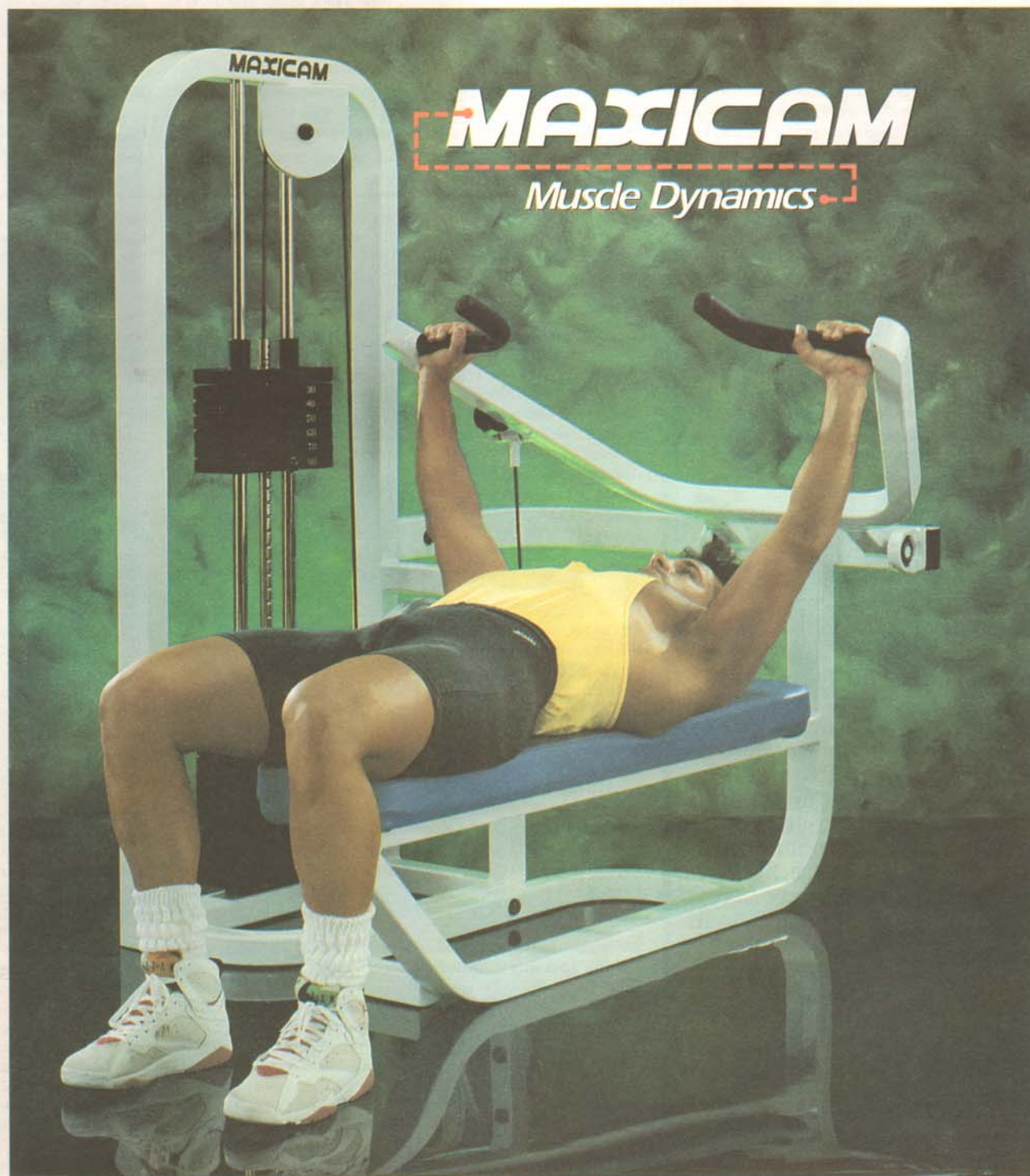
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barded each month with offers in their credit card statements. NOW, for the first time, club owners will be able to market directly to qualified credit card holders.

This program is a win-win for everyone. The bank gets an ongoing monthly charge, the club owner gets new members,

and the consumer gets a great value. This credit card enhancement creates a loyal customer and a great incentive for them to use the card, because fitness is a lifestyle.

For More Information
Contact: Bob Beals - (540) 774-4440.

...Franco

continued from page 4

pulled together to help and kind of ran the place for us. She is doing great now and has been in remission for seven years! But, it was just amazing to see how the community came out and supported us. Ever since then, we have definitely been committed to this great com-

munity. Now, every year we are involved and serve as Chairpersons for a huge fund raising event for the Louisiana Bone Marrow Registry which is one of the largest fund raising events in this area every year. The event is held at the Covington Country Club and 900 people attend on average each year. We raise about \$50,000 each year

for the Registry. In addition to fund raising the Francos are very involved with the area schools and civic associations providing a constant outreach focus on fitness and fun.

Ron and Sandy Franco and their staff represent everything that is good about the great club operators of North America. And, they are quick to give credit where credit is due for their success to date. Ron Franco says that in addition to their terrific staff, they owe the most thanks for their success to IHRSA, Foxy and Linda Denham (their former boss and his wife down the road in Baton Rouge) and Red Lerille (further down the road in LaFayette). Ron Franco comments, "We've learned a lot by attending the IHRSA, Club Industry and IDEA Conferences. People like Peter and Kathie Davis of IDEA and John McCarthy of IHRSA personally have encouraged and inspired us with their commitment and leadership to our industry. Also, when Ron mentioned IHRSA, it is important that we explain IHRSA means much more than the staff. IHRSA members like Ben Emdin, Frank Napolitano, Roger Ralph and Dave Bradshaw and many others have given their time to us and shared their experiences with us. We've also used several excellent industry consultants, including Rick Caro, Fern Pessin and Michael Hoffman."

In addition to reaching out for help in their learning process the Francos have found success by finding innovative ideas and immediately seizing the moment to take advantage of such opportunities. Ron Franco explains, "Sandy and I are the only owners and we act as a committee of two, although we always try to involve

our staff when we make major decisions. Still, we can move quickly if necessary when good opportunities come along.

The fact that the Francos are active-ever present workers at their club has been another key to their success. Sandy directs the group exercise programs (offering 140 classes per week) and is responsible for the marketing and advertising of the club. She also works closely with the managers of the sales department, pro shop, child care centers, children's programs (her favorite), special events and programs. Ron negotiates deals for the club, oversees the maintenance and housekeeping departments, the tennis program and oversees the business office.

Ron says, "We complement each other in our work." Sandy adds, "Our Mission Statement is:

"Education-Motivation-Innovation". Innovation is where we are always trying to be one step ahead. We always are trying to look like an entertainment center. We evaluate as many opportunities as possible. We don't just go to the IHRSA and Club Industry Shows; we go to things like Entertainment Shows and Fun Expos to get ideas from other people outside our industry. We try to integrate those new ideas into our club. We have a goal of being leaders in the business by bringing entertainment here so that people can come and bring their kids and have a good time. We want to be more of an entertainment center. Yes, the members will be having fun, but they will still be exercising. They just won't know it."

Franco's Athletic Club has been honored and recognized

locally on three occasions by the Chamber of Commerce. In 1990, when the club was just two years old, Franco's was named Business of the Year by the Mandeville Chamber of Commerce. That honor was awarded to Franco's again last year. Also, Franco's received the Chamber of Commerce Community Leadership Award, a high community honor, in 1997. And, in 1997 IHRSA honored Franco's Sales Team as the IHRSA Sales Team of the Year!

Over the years, as other highly successful club owners across North America have done, Franco's has been constantly expanding and/or refurbishing and renovating the club and outdoor facilities, including the children's facility. They are now preparing a new lockerroom facility for the club. And, they are going to build an entirely separate children's club with their own membership, club entrance, a sports training center, birthday party rooms, etc. They are also in the planning stages for a second 35,000 square-foot club in Covington, about 7 1/2 miles away. The Franco's expect to expand the second facility by 10-15,000 s.f. within three to four years after opening if all goes according to plan.

Across North America the blue-print for success that one sees time and again could easily be summarized with Franco's Mission Statement: 'Education, Motivation-Innovation'. These three very important ingredients have been used very well by Ron and Sandy over the past 10 years. Sandy Franco summarized the whole situation very well when she said, "Our club is about relationships. it's not just about being fit....that is just one component of it. It's how we make people feel when they walk in our doors. Never forget to ask them why they came in! God gave us this business and he's going to take care of us!"

(Norm Cates is the Publisher of *The CLUB INSIDER* News and a 25-year veteran of the club industry. Cates was a Co-founder and the 1st President of IHRSA in 1981).



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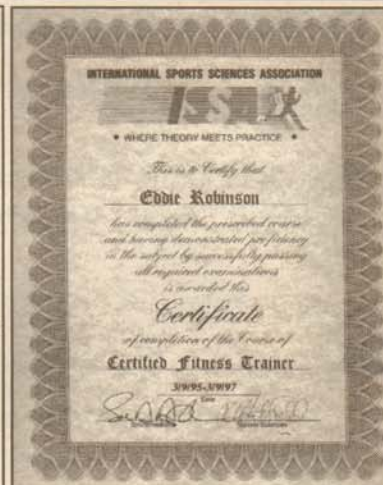
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"Sales Makers delivered on every promise — increasing our sales dramatically without discounting our dues. We followed their procedures and dedicated ourselves to the excellent techniques and systems they implemented, with the result being a complete "turnaround" in our sales. Again — thanks for everything!"

— Ellen Koelsch, Marketing Director
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...Industry

continued from page 14

City.

•Sport and Health in McLean, Virginia, acquired four large Smith Club Management facilities in Northern Virginia.

•Gold's Gym Licensing opened 78 new gyms.

•World Gym Licensing grew its total number of operating entities by 13% - from 255 to 288 facilities..

This is just a sample of industry activity. The company profiles at the end of this publication

offer a more comprehensive look at the industry's increasing consolidation over the past five years.

A Global View of the Business

"All major trends are international," says John McCarthy, Executive Director of IHRSA. The gap between a new product introduction in the U.S. and its spinoff around the globe has closed from up to 10 years to as little as a few months.

Some products are actually launched first outside the U.S. at major foreign trade shows, such as the FIBO in Germany or LIW in England. Programs can initiate elsewhere as

well. The BODY PUMP, for example, originated in New Zealand and is now gaining acceptance in several countries, including the U.S.

In addition to the U.S., major world markets for the health club industry include the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, Brazil and Canada. Multi-club operators are present and active from South Africa to Sweden. Some of the largest international chains and public companies are cited later in this summary.

The Booming British Market

The British fitness and leisure market experienced

its best year ever in 1997. With a growing number of public-traded companies (David Lloyd Leisure, Dragon's, First Fitness, First Leisure, Holmes Place, Stakis, Vardon), investor and public confidence in the fitness/leisure sector is very high and further growth is expected.

As in the U.S. and Japan (where 20 companies run approximately half of the country's health clubs) the club market in the U.K. is experiencing consolidation. Some of the multi-club operators worthy of mention but not detailed in the international profiles at end of this report summary include:

- Civic (18 facilities)
- Circa (15)
- DC Leisure (24)

- Fitness Express (10)
- Fitness for Industry (47)
- Greenhals/Village Leisure (24)
- Jarvis (28)
- Relaxion (29)
- Serco Leisure (15)
- Swallow Hotel Group and Queen's Moat (22).

There are four major reasons for the recent success of the U.K. market:

1) High profit margins. On average, U.K. clubs are charging higher rates than in North America while being able to control costs.

2) Clubs compete on service rather than on price.

3) Management from the broader leisure market- the hotel, restaurant and entertainment industries- has established industry benchmarks. This "applied learning" allowed the U.K. market to mature before the major growth phase kicked in.

4) Cooperation with public sector facilities and government. There is a ten-year history of public facilities being managed by the private sector.

The industry in the U.K. has also come together through their national trade organization, the Fitness Industry Association (FIA). For more information on these companies and the U.K. market, contact the FIA at: (44) 1276-676-275; Fax: (44) 1276-29766. Contact IHRSA for further information on other markets.

POSITIONED FOR GROWTH

As the following statistics show, the club industry is growing. The public's interest in exercise and fitness has never been stronger. One year after the publishing of the U.S. Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity and Health, a survey found that almost one-third of Americans said they had heard of the Report - a higher figure than was expected by most in the fitness industry. Commissioned by the National Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity and Health (NCPHA) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the study found that more than 30 million adults are thinking about starting an exercise program.

This interest is fueled by the graying of America. The older we get, the greater importance we attach to regular exercise as a means of improving or maintaining health. This is good news for the industry. According to Age Wave, Inc., currently there are 69 million Americans age 50 and over. By the year 2000, there will be 76 million persons in that age group; and by the year 2020, the figure will be 115 million. The 50+ market accounts for

(See Industry page 22)

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 Rep: DEMO
 Member Number: 1
 Source: Yellow Pages
 Category: Member
 Sub: Englewood Insurance

Phone Numbers
 Home: (954) 796-9007
 Work Phone/Ext: (954) 796-9007
 Fax: (954) 796-9010
 Cellular: (954) 796-1004
 Other:

Profile Summary: Source = Yellow Pages
 ORIGIN: Yellow Pages
 HEALTH: Diabetic Stress
 OBJECTION: Convenience
 FACILITY: Aerobics Free Weights
 GOALS: Gain Muscle Lose Weight Tone-Up
 EXPERIENCE: Walking

History Log
 Thu Feb 12: 9 Active Contract Active
 Thu Feb 12: 9 Phone Contact
 Thu Feb 12: 9 Tour

Filter
 Category: All
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Calendar **Lists** **Tour** **Contract** **Reports** **Promos and Pricing**

1106 Leads in List.

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...Industry

continued from page 20

41% of all discretionary income in the U.S. (\$169 billion), and 58% of all health care spending.

Interest in exercise and fitness is not limited to the older population, however. More people of all ages are exercising and joining health clubs today than they were a decade ago. Regardless of age, weight control is a concern of all Americans - whether for a desire to improve physical appearance or concerns about health. More and more people are coming to understand that exercise-not dieting- is the key to reaching and maintaining proper weight.

Health clubs play a key role in keeping the nation fit. By offering the expertise of a professional fitness staff and an array of ever-changing programs and fitness equipment to keep members interested and motivated, health clubs are helping more and more people to commit to-and stay with-an exercise program.

With the aging of the population, the growing awareness of the myriad benefits of regular exercise and the ongoing innova-

tion in fitness programming and equipment, health clubs are positioned to achieve major membership growth in the coming decade.

DEMOGRAPHICS U.S. Health Club Growth

With the recessionary years of the early '90s behind us, the number of health clubs once again shows fairly consistent growth on an annual basis.

Number of U.S. Health, Racquet and Sportsclubs

1982- 6,211
1983- 6,309
1984- 6,742
1985- 9,222
1986- 10,307
1987- 11,804
1988- 12,358
1989- 13,047
1990- 13,854
1991- 12,146
1992- 12,635
1993- 11,655
1994- 12,408
1995- 12,608
1996- 13,354
1997- 13,097
1998- 13,799

U.S. Health Club Membership
The increasing number

of health clubs has been in response to growing interest in health club membership. From 1995 to 1996, the number of health club members in the U.S. grew by 9% from 19.1 million to 20.8 million. That's a 26% increase over the 1992 figure of 16.5 million and a 51% increase over the 1987 figure of 13.8 million.

1985- 13.8 million
1987- 16.5 "
1989- 18.1 "
1991- 20.0 "
1993- 19.1 "
1995- 20.8 "
1997- 22.5 "

U.S. Health Club Membership By Age

While the 18-34 age group claims the greatest share of the health club membership pie for the tenth consecutive year, the 55-64 age group is catching up fast. In a few years, these two age groups will achieve parity.

	1987	1996
Age 18-34	53%	42%
Age 35-54	30%	38%
Age < 18	9%	11%
Age 55+	8%	9%

U.S. Health Club Membership
By Gender

A decade ago, in 1987, there was virtually a 50/50 split between the number of men and women holding health club memberships. Between 1987 and 1996, the number of female health club members increased by 64%; the number of men increased by 37% in the same period.

	1987	1996
Women	52%	57%
Men	48%	43%

U.S. Health Club Membership By Gender and Age

The gender split is most pronounced in the younger age groups. There is little or no difference in the percentage of men and women over age 35 who hold health club memberships.

	Women	Men
Age - 18-24	9.2%	4.9%
- 25-34	16.4%	11.2%
- 35-44	12.1%	12.1%
- 45- 54	7.4%	6.9%
- 55+	6.9%	4.7%

WHY PEOPLE EXERCISE

Reasons for exercising vary by gender, and by age

within gender. Younger people are driven by a desire to improve physical appearance. As people age, health concerns come more to the forefront as a motivator to exercise.

Women and Men and Health Club Membership

Women represent 57% of all health club members, numbering 11,825,000 in January, '97

Men represent 43% of all health club members, numbering 9,010,000 in January, '97.

CLUB USAGE

The average member used the health club 85 days during 1996 - up by 18% over the 1987 figure of 72 days.

Health Club Attendance (average # of days per year)

1987- 72 days
1988 - 71.1
1989 - 74.2
1990 - 78.2
1991 - 81.4
1992 - 85.1
1993 - 85.6
1994 - 81.2
1995 - 89.7
1996 - 85.0

Average club usage is considerably higher for those age 55 and (See *Industry* page 23)

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

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How the Best Find Solutions - Not Excuses

by Gerald W. Faust, Richard I. Lyles and Will Phillips

...Industry

continued from page 22

over.

Average Number of Days for Health Club Attendance By Age

Age 18-34 - 86.2 days
 35-54 - 86.7
 55+ - 99.5

Men Use The Club More Than Women

While women comprise a greater percentage of health club members, men use the club more frequently — averaging 88.4 days a year vs. 82.3 for women. In only one age group — 35-44 — do women visit the club more often than men. In all other age groups, men significantly outdistance women in club usage.

Average Number of Days for Health Club Attendance by Age Within Gender

Age 65+ - 139.3 days for men
 107.5 days for women
 Age 55-64 90.9 days for men
 70.6 days for women
 Age 45-54 113.7 days for men
 80.8 days for women
 Age 35-44 76.8 days for men
 85.2 days for women
 Age 25-34 95.4 days for men
 86.7 days for women
 Age 18-24 85.3 days for men
 74.3 days for women

CLUB FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS

(% of clubs offering)

The core of the average health club facility consists of cardiovascular and weight equipment and an area for aerobics and group exercise.

Cardiovascular - 94%
 Fitness Center - 93%
 Group Exercise - 92%
 Free Weights - 91%
 Variable Resistance - 84%

Clubs are more apt to offer an indoor pool than an outdoor pool:

Indoor Pool - 42%
 Outdoor Pool - 19%

Basketball rivals racquetball as the number one sport facility offered by health clubs.

Racquetball - 35%
 Basketball - 32%
 Squash - 21%
 Outdoor Tennis - 19%
 Indoor Tennis - 15%

A growing number of clubs are offering wellness programming:

Weight control - 62%
 Nutritional Counseling - 61%
 Health Education - 38%
 Physical Therapy - 31%
 Stress Reduction - 27%
 Hospital Affiliation - 24%

Smoking Cessation - 15%

And a growing number of hospitals are getting into the health club business.

In 1989, there were 133 hospital fitness centers serving 150,000 members, according to the Medical Fitness Association. By 1998, there were 375 such facilities serving 582,000 members. 72% of hospital fitness centers are tax-exempt:
 72% - Tax exempt
 28% - Tax paying

Interest in Weight-Resistance Training has skyrocketed over the past decade.

Free Weights

1987 - 17.1 million males
 1996 - 26 million males + 52%
 1987 - 7.4 million females
 1996 - 16.8 females + 127%

RESISTANCE MACHINES

1987 - 8.8 million males
 1996 - 11.1 million males + 26%
 1987 - 6.5 million females
 1996 - 11.5 million females + 75%

Aerobics gives way to a new category of exercise.

A decade ago, aerobics was considered a category of exercise. Today, it is just one form of activity included in the new "Group Exercise" category — a change

that was fueled by club members' desire and need for new kinds of programming to keep them motivated.

GROUP EXERCISE

That was then:

Group Exercise in 1987

• Low - impact aerobics
 • High - impact aerobics
 • Jazz dancing

This Is Now:

Group Exercise in 1998

• Low-impact aerobics
 • High-impact aerobics
 • Jazz dancing
 • Combo-impact aerobics
 • Step aerobics
 • Back pain prevention
 • Abdominals only
 • Lower body only
 • Upper body only
 • Interval and circuit training
 • Strength and cardiovascular circuits

• Group strength
 • Stationary indoor cycling
 • Treadmill
 • Rowing
 • Outdoor walking and cross training
 • Martial arts
 • Tai chi
 • Yoga
 • Classes based on Joseph Pilates' work
 • Boxing-based aerobics
 • Pre and postnatal
 • Kids' fitness
 • Senior-specific
 • Sports specific
 • Stability ball
 • Slide
 • Stretching/flexibility
 • Water fitness
 • Funk
 • Hip Hop

Source: IDEA, The Health and Fitness Source

Norm's Notes

continued from page 5

CEO role about 1 1/2 years ago. And, the stock market has embraced Hillman's efforts as the stock has increased from 5 to as high as 33 in early April. I have been asked by many people if I think Bally Total Fitness should be admitted to IHRSA and next month I'll have an editorial explaining my answer to the question and my reasons for that answer. Stay tuned!

*Oh, I forgot to mention the MOCK TRIAL presented at the IHRSA Convention and sponsored by the Club Pak Insurance Company. The whole idea was to videotape, for training purposes, a mock trial which puts a 17-year old star high school quarterback in a lawsuit against a health club. While on a treadmill he fell while reaching for a towel and injured his throwing shoulder and elbow. The accident caused him to lose his football scholarship and all

chances of playing pro football. His family sues the club and its insurance company for \$4 million and the trial occurs 3 years later. The players in the IHRSA All Star cast included one RICK CARO who played the role of 'da-Judge. Since the production ran overtime and a total of 4 hours I did not see it all. But, in my judgement, the "Star" of the show was the videographer that while squatted down taking a shot of MITCH WALD, Plaintiff's Attorney, lost his balance and fell over backwards on his back, camera and all. I can tell you that the laugh that that scene gave all of us was truly priceless and it brought the house down! Speaking of lawsuits and insurance, IHRSA has published a document called Liability Cases Affecting Health Clubs which summarizes 73 legal cases dating from 1952 to 1997. The document also states that the best defense injury liability is a good waiver. HELEN DURKIN noted that the document was the result of \$10,000 worth of legal research. For information on the report call IHRSA (800) 228-4772.

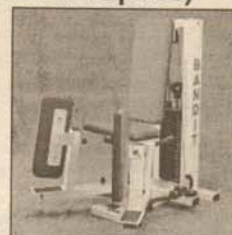
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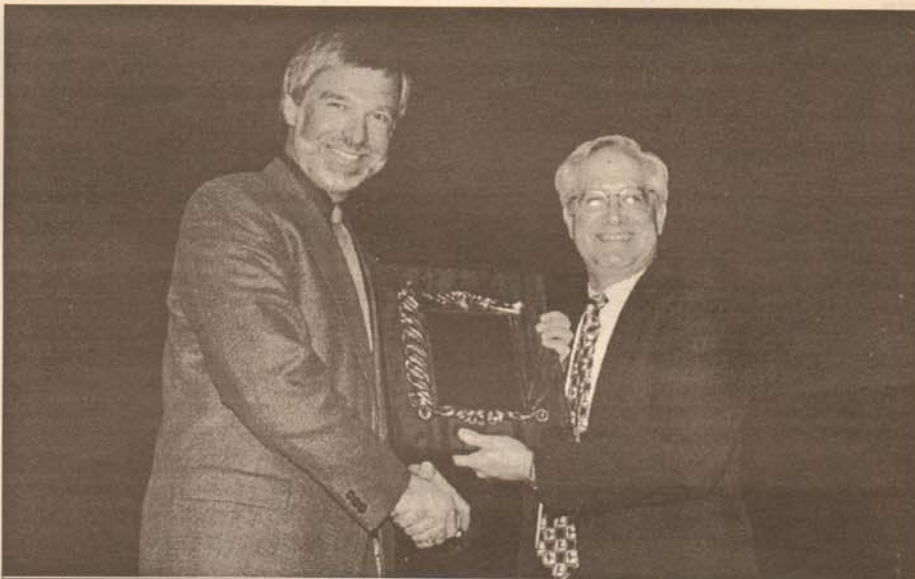


IHRSA Awards Ceremonies

During IHRSA's 17th Annual Convention in Phoenix a number of honors were given:

Robert Dedman, received the Distinguished Service Award. Oprah Winfrey was named IHRSA's Person of the Year, Bruce Hendin of Racquetball Clubs of San Antonio and Julie Main of the Santa Barbara Athletic Club received the

President's Award for Community Service. CardioTheater, Inc. was inducted into The IHRSA Associate Member Wall of Fame, the New Mexico Sports & Wellness Center received the IHRSA/Keiser 50+ Award, Fred Kronk was named Fitness Director of the Year and Cascade Athletic Club received the first annual IHRSA Racquetball Award.



Tony de Leede (l) receives IHRSA Wall Of Fame Award from Chuck Leve



Bruce Hendin (l) receives IHRSA's President's Award from Ben Emdin



Julie Main receives IHRSA's President's Award from Ben Emdin



Fred Kronk receives IHRSA's Cybex Fitness Director Of The Year Award From Cybex's Richard O'Reagan



Cascade Athletic Club's Brian Archeta (l) and Connie Peterson-Martin receive first ever IHRSA Racquetball Award from Chuck Leve

...Woodard

continued from page 6

they are with you. Sometimes numbers can weird us out and we get foggy - make sure you can cut through the fog if it's there by breaking it down and not getting too far ahead. A big mistake I see so many membership reps make is to present all the options all at once, speaking far too quickly (because we are uncomfortable) and leaving the prospective Member wide eyed, whirling and confused to the point that they don't get what you just said to them. Thus, making the decision a harder one than need be. Make sure you present the options one at a time and let them respond before you move to the next one.

6.) Close each option before you move to the next. How many times have you presented a price to a Member and they respond with "what is this other price down here?" Then you proceed to bounce down to that price and tell them all about it and they respond with "O.K., now what is this other price?" And you repeat the same process with them. The problem with this is that you haven't gotten any feedback from them on what you presented originally—you don't know whether it will or will not work for them—you need to find out. The best way to discover this when they respond about "other" price options is to say: "I'd be happy to tell you more about that membership—before I do, tell me what your thoughts are on this one (the one you just presented)". By doing this, you'll know whether this option is indeed still an option to continue with or to move on.

That's it—the six steps to making your price presentation a detail and not the point. Let's take a look at the whole format put together:

"Susan, I'm excited you've decided to join the club today - I know you'll get what you want and more from your membership so let's see which one works best for you. We have a few options and the one I'm going to recommend first is our full service membership. It's our most popular membership because it's really our best value and here's why: it includes everything you've seen in the

club today plus towel service and you get privilege pricing on tanning, massage and pro-shop items. Can you see why this is our best value?"

"Now there are two ways you can take care of your membership—you can choose the annual program or the monthly dues program - which would you like to hear about first?"

"Alrighty, the way the monthly dues program works is all we need to start your membership today is your Enrollment Fee of

\$125 and the monthly dues of \$55. How does that work for you? Great then let's go ahead and finish up the details."

That's all the price presentation needs to be. If Susan wanted to know more about the Paid-In-Full or the annual plan, you would have found out exactly what her thoughts were on the monthly dues, handled anything that needed to be handled then proceeded to close her on the annual plan. This process would be re-

peated with any other membership you would show her.

Simplify your price presentation by qualifying the prospective Member before you go on tour, relax through practicing and role playing the price presentation, offer professionally printed price options, start with your highest membership as your most popular and best value, break the information into little pieces and close on each area before you move on. By creating this flow,

you will make price a detail and not the point and notice a significant increase in your first-time closing skills.

(Karen D. Woodard, President of Premium Performance Training and an international speaker and author, provides tapes, books and seminars on successful sales, service and management training to the health and fitness industry. She can be contacted by phone at 303.417.0653.)

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Life Fitness Launches Education Programs

Franklin Park, IL— Fitness professionals now have additional resources to stay current on the advancements of research and education in exercise science and fitness. In addition, they will be able to help fitness facility members improve their exercise effectiveness through a more in-depth knowledge of the features and benefits of Life Fitness' full line of exercise equipment.

Life Fitness, a division of Brunswick Corp., has announced a comprehensive program of fitness education and equipment training. Developed by the Life Fitness Academy, the training and education programs are designed to meet fitness professionals, health practitioners, and fitness facility members' growing demand for current, practical information on fitness and exercise science.

"At Life Fitness we not only have a full line of high-quality, reliable fitness equipment, we also have a strong commitment to assisting fitness professionals with their

continuing education needs and to helping them provide their members with successful, safe and enjoyable exercise experiences. These comprehensive training and educational programs, as well as other Life Fitness Academy activities, demonstrate that commitment," said Augie Nieto, Life Fitness President.

The Life Fitness Academy's training and education programs include Life Fitness Product Training Workshops and Continuing Education Workshops. They are conducted by a network of Life Fitness Academy certified trainers, all of whom have degrees in Exercise Science or a related field, are certified by a nationally recognized professional fitness certification group and currently work at a fitness facility or with clients a minimum of 20 hours per week. The instructors also must pass in-depth written and practical exams administered by

Life Fitness before becoming authorized to educate customers on Life Fitness equipment features and benefits.

The Product Training and Continuing Education Workshops are available to fitness facilities for \$995 each and can be customized for member training.

PRODUCT TRAINING WORKSHOPS

The Life Fitness Academy Product Training Workshops were developed to give fitness professionals and health and wellness practitioners current, practical information on Life Fitness products' benefits and features that enhance end-user results. The one-day, on-site workshops include topics such as Heart Rate Zone Training, Alternative Strength Training and how to address the needs of special populations.

CONTINUING EDUCATION WORKSHOPS

The one-day, one-site Con-

tinuing Education Workshops provide fitness professionals with continuing education credits toward maintaining nationally recognized fitness professional certifications. The courses are designed to benefit both the fitness professional and the fitness facility by providing a cost-effective and convenient way to address continuing education needs. Fitness professionals currently can choose from the following courses:

- Safe and Effective Strength Training Basics for Mature Adults;
- Safe and Effective Zone Training Skills for Mature Adults;
- Exercise as Therapy: Exercise and Osteoporosis.

Additional courses on topics such as hypertension, diabetes and heart disease will be added later in

1998.

Scientific and Medical Advisory Board

To ensure the highest quality programming and education, the Life Fitness Scientific and Medical Advisory Board (SMAB) guides the Life Fitness Academy's education endeavors. It is a 31-member panel of the country's most renowned physicians and Ph.D. professionals in exercise science and medicine who have authored over 200 textbooks and many thousands of journals and popular press articles on exercise. Board members lend their time and expertise in the preparation of seminars and workshops that keep fitness professionals abreast of the latest advancements in exercise science.

For more information on the Life Fitness Academy Product Training, Continuing Education Workshops or the SMAB, call (800) 634-8637, ext. 3841.

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Fax resume to Tom Johnston, 914-241-0683.

GENERAL MANAGER

Mature, reliable, responsible, hands-on person wanted to manage successful health club, in business 20 years, located in Westchester County, New York. Health club management experience necessary. Total responsibility for all aspects of club - essentially as if you owned it. Salary, benefits, profit sharing, unlimited potential for the right person. Fax resume, which must include salary history & references to:

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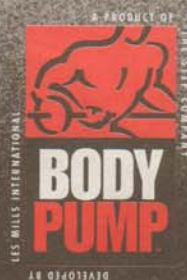
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