

Norm Cates'

# CLUB INSIDER

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF TRUST

## REX For Women Leaders *Introducing The Iron Maidens*



**The Iron Maidens - Left to Right:** Kate Kreissl; Melissa Fields, Michel Umphrey, Tammy Arado, Allison Flatley, Tavia Patusky and Burch Valldejuli (Not Pictured: Britt Kleine and Sarah Stille)

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## JUNE 2023

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# CLUB INSIDER

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF TRUST

## REX For Women Leaders *Introducing The Iron Maidens*

By: Justin Cates

We all know what a Board of Directors is, at least in business. You have to be a big company worth a lot of money to need or have one, right? *Wrong!!!* Whether we are talking about a single person or a giant organization, the idea of a Board of Directors is simple and valid. It is a group of people who care about the person or organization they are representing enough to dedicate time, knowledge and advice.

This idea is nothing new, and in fact, it has been mentioned by several of our cover story subjects over the past few years. Interestingly enough, what they have in common is they are *REX Roundtable Members!* The reason for this is the power of outside insights. As we go

through our own day-to-day, we are more likely to experience tunnel vision than not. Our personal Board of Directors or that of an organization exists to offer an objective viewpoint, a periphery.

*REX Roundtables*, led by CEO, **Eddie Tock**, is the industry leader for executive roundtables, but very importantly, it's not just about business. Members of *REX Roundtables* develop both a personal and professional bond that carries them through thick and thin over many years. That trust, love and respect in and for each other makes all the difference in the world.

Recently, *REX* has embraced both the need and demand for a specialized *Roundtable of Women Leaders*. This inaugural group, led by *REX* Chair, **Allison Flatley**, is called *The Iron Maidens!* But,

men and women, alike, read on, as there is something for everyone in the interviews that follow.

**An Interview With Allison Flatley, Chair, REX Roundtables for Executives**

**Club Insider (C.I.)** - Where were you born, and where did you grow up?

**Allison Flatley (AF)** - I was born and raised in Minnetonka, Minnesota. So, the land of Lake Minnetonka, which was a great place to grow up. I grew up there because my father played for the *Minnesota Vikings*.

**C.I.** - I'm already getting the idea of one of those rope swings into the lake in my head.

**AF** - Yes, exactly. That and a lot of bridge (See *REX Women Leaders* Page 10)



Allison Flatley

## Workout Anytime's 2023 Run for the Roses Franchise Conference

ATLANTA, GA - A.C.E. - Attitude, Care and Excellence are Core Values that create the execution of this year's amazing event! Pre-Planning provided a backdrop along with Teamwork of the entire *Workout Anytime Franchise Support Center* to meet the goals of this year's 2023 Run for the Roses Franchise Conference.

The Franchise Conference was hosted at a new event venue, the *Renaissance Atlanta Waverly*, which is in proximity of the *Battery and Truist Park*. The chosen theme of the *Kentucky Derby* was delivered in such an impactful way with an opening video created by **Dan Mastrototaro** on comparison of training

of the horses for the Kentucky Derby with the member's focus of health and wellness in the *Workout Anytime* gym. It was very inspirational and a great opening to the 2023 Run for the Roses Franchise Conference. **John Quattrocchi**, President and Co-Founder, initiated the yearly reciting of the *Pledge of Allegiance* as an honor to the country and the event!

The Conference thereafter started with **Steve Strickland**, CEO and Co-Founder's announcement and celebration of five franchise partners' induction into the *Million Dollar Club*. **Mike and Ashley King** (Greenville, TN and Weaverville, NC), **Jerry Pugh and EJ Williams** (Palm Bay, FL



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and Hermitage, TN), and **Kevin Edmonds** (Titusville, FL). Each of these franchise partners received a special embroidered Million Dollar Club Jacket to proudly honor this amazing goal accomplished.

**Mike King** received a *Triple*

*Crown Award* at the Saturday night Award Ceremony with a nickname of "*Million Dollar Mike*" since he was the first franchise partner to hit the Million Dollar Revenue target last year!

(See *Workout Anytime* Page 8)

## Inside the Insider: Edition #354

- From Day Job to Dream Gym: Eight Essential Steps to Building Your Own Fitness Empire - By: Jim Thomas
- Getting Results: Setting Up a System of Accountability - By: Frank Guengerich
- Is Your Facility Socially Fit? - By: Cathy Spencer Browning
- Club Financing: USDA, Equipment Financing and Unsecured Loans - By: Paul Bosley
- 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 354th monthly edition! To start off this month's **Norm's Notes**, I want to mention that **JUSTIN CATES**, my Son and *Partner in Club Insider*, and I, are both very proud to be able to do this for you every month. I also want to say: **THANKS TO YOU ALL for reading Club Insider! And, very special THANKS and APPRECIATION TO YOU ALL for contacting and doing business with our esteemed advertisers! Special THANKS and APPRECIATION to you for doing business with our advertisers, because were it not for them, we would not be coming to you every month.**

■Is AMERICA a GREAT COUNTRY, or WHAT!? Hmm... hmm... hmm. GOD BLESS AMERICA!

■This **Norm's Note** was written on May 28th, the day before *Memorial Day 2023*. By the time you see this, Memorial Day 2023 has passed. Regardless, I want to say again that we ALL should remember million+ men and women who have lost their lives in service to our country. May all of those brave Americans, ALL of the

men and women who **LOST THEIR LIVES SERVING OUR GREAT COUNTRY, AND PRESERVING THE FREEDOM WE ALL ENJOY EVERYDAY AS FREE AMERICANS, REST IN PEACE!**

■**CONGRATULATIONS to MS. LIZ CLARK**, *IHRSA President and CEO*, as she was recently named to *Washingtonian Magazine's* annual "**Most Influential People of 2023**," the *Annual List of D.C.'s 500 Most Influential People!* On the day of the announcement, May 10, 2023, Liz noted, "I am honored to join mentors, colleagues and friends on this list. I am even more grateful to serve an industry dedicated to the belief that exercise benefits physical and mental health and improves their health." *Washingtonian Magazine* commented: "Liz Clark, IHRSA CEO and President, the first female leader of the global fitness association, has coupled aggressive advocacy with constant communication to revitalize the group and its Washington presence. Liz's Education: 'University of Dayton; George Mason (grad school).' Liz's First Job: 'Cleaning hotel rooms, groundskeeper and helping my mom as a prep cook at our small family business in Montana, at age nine.' Best

Career Advice from Liz: 'Work like you make \$100 per hour even if you only make \$10.' I Repeat: **CONGRATULATIONS, LIZ!**

■**Fly-In & Advocacy Summit a Success...** *IHRSA* recently brought a select group of 60+ gym, studio and supplier executive leaders to the nation's capital for what Liz Clark called, the "*IHRSA Fly-In & Advocacy Summit*." The event showed elected officials that *IHRSA* is active, engaged and leveraging our grassroots network to help build support for, and pass, the PHIT Act and other key policy priorities. All in all, *IHRSA* had **11 groups** who participated in **110 meetings** with members of Congress to advocate for PHIT and in support of our industry! Liz extended sincere *Thanks* and (See **Norm's Notes** Page 6)



Norm Cates



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**PRINTING and MAILING SERVICES** - Walton Press

**Club Insider**  
P.O. Box 137314  
Clermont, FL 34713-7314  
[www.clubinsideronline.com](http://www.clubinsideronline.com)

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## ...Norm's Notes

continued from page 4

*Appreciation* to all of the sponsors who made the event possible. IHRSA plans to host more Fly-Ins in the future to continue to make the Association's voice heard on Capitol Hill. **You all are encouraged to get involved in IHRSA's advocacy efforts!** Learn more at [ihrsa.org](https://ihrsa.org).

■ I'm happy to announce that our friend, **GEORGE JACKSON**, *Founder and Co-owner of TG The GYM*, with six locations in Southern California and one in Arizona, has opened a new location in Phoenix, Arizona and will open another in Dunedin, Florida.

George commented: "TG The GYM Phoenix, Arizona started operating on April 2, 2023. We will be serving our community of bodybuilders, powerlifters and serious fitness enthusiasts with over 28,000 square feet of indoor gym space, saunas, private spin studio, cardio theater room and a huge functional training room. Plus, we will have all the hard-core equipment that TG is known for along with *TG Supps*, a supplement line for the serious fitness enthusiast. We will be adding *TG Wellbeing* (a anti-aging clinic and recovery center) in addition to *TG Café* in the future. We are so fortunate and excited to continue to serve our members every day, with the same passion and excitement we have always had! TG The GYM has been home to the best fitness training for over 37 years, offering men and women across our communities the opportunity to challenge their bodies and build strength every day. We will continue to promote the fact that a good immune system is essential to living a long healthy life. Daily vigorous exercise, a healthy well-balanced diet, proper amount of sleep, Vitamin D (get in sun and outdoors) and managing your stress are the main ingredients to maintaining a good immune system. We are also excited to announce the opening of another location: *TG Dunedin, Florida*. More details to come! These openings bring our number of TG locations to nine." **STAY TUNED Folks!**

■ Before I proceed, let me mention that I would be remiss should I write these **Norm's Notes** today and fail to mention the **one person in world athletic history that I honestly believe was the best individual athlete in the entire history of the world, JIM BROWN**. Some of you reading this may never even have heard of Jim Brown. But, those of you who do know the name Jim Brown may only think of him as one of the greatest, if not the greatest football players in the history of the sport. Honestly, I think he was the best football player in history. But, what most of you reading this do not know is that Jim Brown was not just an *All American Football Player*, he was an *All American Lacrosse Player*, too! AND, on top of that, at *Syracuse University*,

the school where he was a multi-year All American Football and Lacrosse player, he was ALSO a top-flight Baseball, Basketball and Water Polo Player, AND to top it off, he ran track! In 1956, even though he was only slightly familiar with some of the ten Decathlon events, he finished 5th in the competition, which was considered by many as the truest test of athleticism. That finish qualified him for the *Melbourne, Australian Olympic Games*. But, he skipped the Olympics to focus on football, the sport offering him the most lucrative future financially. **May the great JIM BROWN Rest In Peace!**

■ The following news is from **KARI BEDGOOD**, *Active Wellness Chief Marketing Officer*, in San Francisco, California, as well as **JILL KINNEY** and **BILL MCBRIDE**, both long-time industry friends, and friends of *Club Insider* for many years. Jill, Bill and Kari announced that they're teaming up their *Active Wellness* company with *NorthBay Health*, a leading hospital system in Solano County, California. Together, this Summer, they will reopen NorthBay Health's wellness center in Vacaville with the name: *Active Wellness Center at NorthBay Health*. This will be the fifth *Active Wellness Center* location to open in the United States, and it joins the network of the first commercially branded wellness center chain.

The three-story, 37,000 square-foot fitness center, which anchors the *VacaValley Wellness Center* in Vacaville, California for NorthBay Health, was closed in March 2020 due to the mandated shutdowns at the onset of the pandemic. During the three-year closure, NorthBay set out to find the right management partner and selected *Active Wellness* after careful consideration. The revived and reopened fitness center will offer the latest cardio and strength training equipment, multiple indoor pools, an indoor track, medically integrated fitness programs, recovery and massage therapy, childcare and youth programs and more. *Active Wellness Center at NorthBay Health* will be open to the greater Vacaville community, as well as hospital employees and patients.

**KONARD JONES**, *NorthBay Health President and CEO*, commented: "We're very excited to have found the ideal partner to manage the fitness center for us. Our priorities are in alignment, and we are looking forward to creating an exceptional experience in an environment where a healthy lifestyle is created, one that will well serve the members, our patients and our community."

**MICHELE WONG**, *Active Wellness COO*, added: "Active Wellness Center at NorthBay Health is set to reopen stronger than ever. We're honored to serve the Vacaville community, in partnership with NorthBay Health, to inspire healthier, more active lives. We are excited to grow the *Active Wellness Center* brand as we forge ahead on our mission to positively

impact the health and happiness of the communities we serve."

Staff recruiting is now in progress, so prospective employees should go to [activewellness.com/careers](https://activewellness.com/careers).

■ **PAUL BEDFORD** is an experienced, well-known and respected British club consultant/club operator. This month, Paul wrote about offering the *components of motivation* and the simple framework he uses to teach and help people understand motivation in one's self and others. To view Paul's latest offering, please contact Paul at [paul@retentionguru.co.uk](mailto:paul@retentionguru.co.uk).

■ **MARK WAHLBERG**, *movie star, producer, director* and overall movie industry magnate, is in the process of producing a movie about the one and only **JACK LaLANNE**. Not only will Mark's company that he calls *Unrealistic Ideas* produce the movie in tandem with a company called *Wonderfilm Media*, our friend, Jack's widow, **ELAINE "LaLa" LaLANNE** said **MARK WAHLBERG will play the lead role as JACK LaLANNE!** I'm excited for "LaLa" and his family about the upcoming documentary feature and narrative film about the fitness pioneer.

Long before wellness was christened an industry and fitness deemed a lifestyle, Jack LaLanne was an exercise and nutrition guru. After opening a gym in Oakland, California in the 1930s (often credited as America's first fitness club), he began to evangelize the benefits of personal health, later hosting *The Jack LaLanne TV Show* from 1951 to 1985. A long-time bodybuilder, LaLanne also became synonymous with his feats of strength, including, at age 60 years old, swimming to Alcatraz while handcuffed! "It doesn't matter where you go, there is a health club, and it all started with Jack LaLanne," said bodybuilder turned actor, **ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER**, after LaLanne's death in 2011 at the age of 96.

**SCOT ARMSTRONG**, the writer behind comedies *Old School*, *Semi-Pro* and *The Hangover Part II*, has been tapped to pen the movie, which is eyeing a spring 2024 production start. Producers for the documentary and scripted feature movie on Jack include **WAHLBERG**, **STEPHEN LEVINSON** and **ARCHIE GIPS** for *Unrealistic Ideas* and **JEFF BOWLER** and **BRET SAXON** for *Wonderfilm Media*. Also producing are **RD Robb** and **Elaine, Dan, John and Yvonne LaLanne**.

Elaine "LaLa" LaLanne said, "When Mark Wahlberg first came to visit with me, I recognized the parallels between Jack and Mark. I believed he and his company were the right ones to bring Jack's legacy forward. After meeting with [Wonderfilm's] Jeff and Bret, I knew we had the perfect team."

"Jack revolutionized America's health and fitness culture," added *Unrealistic Ideas President*, **Archie Gips**. "Working with Elaine and the LaLanne

family, as well as the thousands of hours of archival material at our disposal, we will be able to tell the authentic, deeply personal and definitive story of Jack LaLanne."

"Jack's story is so inspiring. His journey grabs at your heart and exemplifies the triumphs of the human spirit when driven and focused," said *Wonderfilm's Bret Saxon* and *Jeff Bowler*. "Jack was a pop culture icon, but there is so much more about the man the world doesn't know that both these projects will explore."

Folks, this movie will be **one for the AGES! STAY TUNED**, and we'll keep you posted as we learn more about its production.

■ **EXI unveils first digital implementations of Exercise is Medicine**. EXI, the Software as a Medical Device (SaMD) that delivers personalized physical activity prescription and behavior change support for people with long-term health conditions, has unveiled its first *Exercise is Medicine (EIM)* deployment alliances. *The Freedom Aquatic & Fitness Center (FAFC)*, which is located onsite at *George Mason University Science & Technology* campus in Manassas, Virginia, with a specialist team that delivers EIM in the community and via health provider referrals, and *Logan Health*, a Montana healthcare system offering EIM programs through its medical fitness center in Kalispell, Montana, will be the first facilities to deploy *Exercise is Medicine* using EXI's digital platform. Both initiatives went live in May, identifying patients across multiple hospital departments and health conditions to be onboarded into EXI and were officially launched at exclusive *EIM powered by EXI* stakeholder events on May 23 and 25, respectively. The announcements follow EXI's appointment as *Strategic Partner* to the *ACSM's (American College of Sports Medicine) Exercise is Medicine* program in January, the first tech platform to incorporate *Exercise is Medicine* protocols. **STAY TUNED, Folks!**

■ **This from ATHLETECH News:** "Equinox has been ordered to pay **\$11.25 million** in damages after being found liable in a race and gender discrimination trial brought forth by **ROBYNN EUROPE**, a fitness professional and former *Personal Training Manager* at the luxury fitness operator. Europe, who was employed at Equinox's East 92nd Street location in New York, alleged she was subjected to a hostile work environment and was unlawfully fired based on her race and gender. She alleged that Equinox failed to investigate repeated racist and sexually inappropriate behaviors at its 92nd Street location and that the fitness club used 'lateness' to target and fire her in September 2019. The case, handled by the *U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York*, included a jury of five women and three men and found that Equinox was liable for both race and gender discrimination. According to the (See *Norm's Notes* Page 8)

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## ...Norm's Notes

continued from page 6

complaint, Europe was hired in November 2018 as a *Fitness Manager* at the East 61st Street Equinox location, and after excelling in her position, was quickly promoted to personal training manager at the East 92nd Street location at the end of December 2018. In her leadership role, Europe supervised approximately 15 fitness employees, including a male fitness manager who reported to her. In her complaint, Europe alleged that, when she was promoted, the male manager refused to accept her as his supervisor and repeatedly informed her that she shouldn't be his supervisor. The complaint outlines that the male colleague would treat Europe inappropriately and disrespectfully, creating a hostile work environment pertaining to race and gender. The filing states that he would make unsolicited comments regarding Black women, including clients, and make objectifying remarks. In addition

to sexually inappropriate comments, he is alleged to have made discriminatory comments to and about other Equinox staff members, referring to Black and other nonwhite staff as 'lazy' and untrustworthy, and openly stated his intention to get them fired from Equinox. Europe also alleged that Equinox targeted her for reprisals rather than address and fix the issues. On April 15, 2019, Equinox issued Europe a written *Record of Discussion* ('ROD') for 'attendance and punctuality' and fired her for 'lateness.' However, swipe-in data presented at trial revealed that other Equinox managers had imperfect time and attendance records, some worse than Europe, yet she was the only employee disciplined. The trial will now move to the damages phase, where Europe will testify about the impact of Equinox's racism on her mental and physical health. Europe's attorney, **SUSAN CRUMILLER**, stated that the civil justice system 'prevailed.' **CRUMILLER** added: 'Equinox thought it could get away with its appalling behavior

and a jury of New Yorkers said otherwise. This is not just a victory for our client, but for all Black women who have suffered that noxious combination of racism and sexism that is too often tolerated in the workplace.'

**STAY TUNED, Folks!**

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

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■ **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 49-year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. He is the Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993 of *Club Insider*, now in its 30th 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](mailto:Norm@clubinsideronline.com).)

## ...Workout Anytime

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John Quattrocchi invited his long-time associate and friend, **Bill Clement**, to proudly be the Keynote speaker at the Conference event. Bill Clement, *NHL Hall of Famer*, book author of *EveryDay Leadership* (Crossing Gorges on Tightropes to Success) and acclaimed public speaker talked with the group on topics of Leadership and focus of success. Positive feedback was received on the message delivered. *Dream Big and Dare to Fail* was presented to the group as something to remember!

The Conference Agenda was packed with many educational topics selected to help all those who attended. **Greg Maurer**, *VP of Fitness and Education*, delivered a powerful message on wellness with a focus in member results and increase in revenue. Teamed up with Greg was **Mike Leveque** of *Myzone*, who introduced how this key fitness platform is a proven successful tool to elevate the clubs' offerings to their members. A breakout session took place to review the club participation of those who have already put *Myzone* in their clubs. **John Waskow**, **Rachel Borrello** and **Amanda McBrayer** shared the success of this program with the group.

Many attendees participated in the *Myzone Fitness Challenge* directed by **Terry Woods** and **Amanda Fitzpatrick** throughout the conference by attending early morning workouts designed by **Greg Maurer** and several other key sponsor partners providing new approved equipment for consideration.

A selected panel of franchise partners, including **Jerry Pugh**, **EJ Williams** as well as **Anthony and Gina Greenwood**, moderated by **Dennis Holcom**, *SVP of Franchise Support*, shared with the group key elements of Culture and

Team Building in the Growth to 300!

**Lynsay Flynt**, *Marketing Manager*, presented a valuable marketing message in general session as well as a breakout with **Sarah Troutman**, *Director of Social Media/Digital Marketing*, on a deeper dive into the evaluation of marketing results and how Google Analytics can drive important decisions on strategic marketing for the clubs. This interactive workshop provided tools for the owners' success.

There was also room for celebration of five clubs that had their PT program revenues hit over 200K in 2022. This is a milestone to celebrate! Other breakout sessions and workshops presented topics including *PT Recruiting Tools and Strategy* by **Brandon Daniels** and **Crystal Decheine**, *PT Directors*; and *Club Sales Production* in the current payroll environment, presented by two very successful multi club franchise partners, **Kevin Edmonds** and **Mike King**. When franchise partners share their personal experiences and challenges, this creates a valuable learning environment for all.

A creative workshop session was delivered to the group by **Jody Womble**, *Manager of Field Support and ABC Fitness Key Customer Success Managers* to *Teach a Zee to Fish: Empowerment and Expertise* in ABC.

Another workshop focus was presented to look at the ability to retrofit a legacy Workout Anytime club to drive premium membership sales. In today's competitive market, Workout Anytime

wants to provide the best experience and premium features for members in a friendly welcoming environment. **Luke McCartney**, **Allie Haring**, **Greg Maurer**, **John Carsillo** and **Bob Whittier** teamed up to discuss options and updates to be considered in adding value to the clubs.

Friday was Derby Night with a special event of Derby Horse racing and Casino combo provided by *Monte Carlo Productions*. This was a fun night with much entertainment activity to create new and strengthen bonding relationships among the Workout Anytime network and the Workout Anytime Franchise Support Center Team. The night ended with a raffle consisting of over 30+ prizes sponsored by *Sponsor Partners*.

Saturday ended the three-day conference with the *Run for the Roses Award Ceremony*, which is most important to the celebration of many successes within the Workout Anytime brand. We care about all of the Franchise Partners, and we are honored to celebrate their successes by presenting a variety of awards. We wanted to stream the actual running of the Kentucky Derby race, which was highlighted by it working out that it aired right after the announcement of the most coveted award that Workout Anytime presents: *Franchisee of the Year*, which was awarded to **Jerry Pugh** and **EJ Williams**. The timing of this was remarkable.

The *Triple Crown Gala* dinner and party celebration ended with the entertainment of **Dana** and **Sharon** and

their band, a special derby attire contest for those who dressed in the spirit of the conference and much bonding time in building relationships among the network.

Overall, this year's conference delivered three major goals:

- 1. Increased Premium Membership Sales** - Focus on using approved Premium Wellness Amenities to build value in Premium Membership.
- 2. Increase Club Marketing Spend** - Through the rollout of the Marketing Playbook and buy in to Marketing Partners.
- 3. Drive New Club Openings and Legacy Club Upgrades** - By presenting the Million Dollar Club and showing how legacy clubs can dramatically increase sales and recurring revenue.

The Sponsor Partners participating in the Partner Expo are valuable to Workout Anytime. We appreciate their participation and connectivity to the success of the event! Over 35 Sponsor Partners participated this year presenting newly approved service offerings and equipment to the Franchise Partners. The same Professional Event Partners helped us to deliver a conference to remember in all key elements of event planning!

The 2023 *Run for the Roses Franchise Conference* is *Workout Anytime's 7th Annual Conference* delivered with the focus of education, inspiration, celebration of the success from the prior year and a way to provide connectivity among the network of valuable Franchise Partners and their key staff strengthening the Workout Anytime brand! Post Conference surveys confirm the success of this event, and we look forward to a new theme, new education and added ways to create a new memorable event in 2024!





## ...REX Women Leaders

continued from page 3

jumping into the lake.

**C.I.** - Bridge jumping! Oh my. That sounds like a new sport. So, where did you go to school, and what did you study?  
**AF** - I studied at *Miami University* in Oxford, Ohio. I received a *Bachelor's in Health and Sports Studies* with a *Nutrition Minor* followed by a *Master's in Exercise and Health Studies*.

I've always teased that I was football recruited because I knew of the school as the *cradle of coaches*. My dad grew up near the school in Indiana, and he had **Ara Parseghian** as his coach and mentor. So, that's really what attracted me to Miami University... the cradle of coaches. Interestingly enough, they recently inducted **Sean McVay**, so the long history of great coaches continues... **Woody Hayes, Bo Schembechler, Ara Parseghian...**

**C.I.** - Those are some huge names!  
**AF** - Yes, and it continues with Sean being the youngest head coach to win the *Super Bowl* with the *Los Angeles Rams* being inducted. It's a great school, and I would highly recommend Miami University to anyone.

**C.I.** - That's awesome. I'm glad your experience turned out well. What sports did you play?

**AF** - In high school, I played volleyball, basketball, track and softball. I did well in high school sports; however, I wasn't a Division I athlete. So, in college, I decided to focus on my studies and be a student first. That only lasted a few months as I quickly missed sports and competition. I ended up joining the club volleyball team at Miami which became my sport and activity outlet. It was a great option for me because it was co-ed, and we travelled around to area schools. This allowed me the

opportunity to further explore the Midwest, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky and other areas of the country I wasn't familiar with growing up in Minnesota.

**C.I.** - When and how did you become involved in the health and fitness club industry? Please take us through some key career highlights.

**AF** - I always wanted to be in the health, medical or dental field. However, when I went to college, I met people for the first time that didn't know how to swim or didn't do activity every day, which was so foreign to me growing up on Lake Minnetonka. We did sport or activity every day. Physical activity was like brushing your teeth in my household. We did it every day no matter what. I was attracted to health promotion and prevention, and it became my passion. I wanted to be on the prevention side of medicine, so I started working part-time in community health and then at my local mall fitness center, *International Fitness Center*.

After college, I started in corporate fitness. My first job after college was with *Conoco Oil* in Houston, Texas as a fitness specialist. From there, I had the opportunity to work with *GTE* in Connecticut, *General Foods* in New York, and eventually *PKI*, which was a management group led by **Bob Karch**. Our funding was from a Japanese company, so I had the pleasure of working and living in Tokyo in 1991 - 1992. It was an incredible experience. At that time, fitness equipment was very comparable to the U.S. market; however, the education was about ten years behind the U.S. So, I did a lot of education and teaching with an interpreter, which made it fun and challenging.

When I came back to the U.S., I started working in Washington D.C., running the *IRS Fitness Center* and *Department of Justice Fitness Centers*. From there, I moved into multi-site management for *L&T Health and Fitness*, working with **Sue Liebenow** and **Sue Torok**. We ran government, corporate,



**REX Chairs at IHRSA 2023 - Left to Right:** Justin Tamsett, Allison Flatley, Frank Ancharski, Dan Duran, Fausto Di Giulio, Eddie Tock, Mary Laudati, Brent Darden and Mark Miller (Not Pictured: Jenn Kuehn)

residential, commercial and hospital-based fitness and wellness programs. I worked as an executive with *L&T Health and Fitness* for over 25 years.

**C.I.** - Wow, your background is incredible, and I know there's more, but a quick question related to L&T. I noticed you moved around early on, but you stayed at L&T for a long period of time. What shifted for you?

**AF** - **Sue Liebenow** and **Sue Torok** were tremendous leaders. They were very growth focused, so there was always a new opportunity for me. We were constantly growing. We were in 26 states. When Sue and Sue were ready to retire, we sold the business to *Corporate Fitness Works*. I stayed with *Corporate Fitness Works* for three years and merged both operations. Then, in 2017, I started consulting with clubs, studios and industry suppliers, including working with *IHRSA* and *Hydromassage*.

I would say one career highlight was serving on the *IHRSA Board*. It was amazing, and I got to work with great leaders... **Brent Darden, Bill McBride, Carol Nalevanko, Bill Beck, Jim Worthington, Molly Kemmer, Robert Brewster, Derek Gallup, Steve Cappezzone, Larry Conner and Gustavo Borges**. I served with so many amazing industry leaders.

I think another highlight was working on the *Membership Headlight Team* that Brent put together during the pandemic. It was a unique opportunity to work with a passionate group of volunteers to help *IHRSA* redesign their membership categories.

Another highlight for me was being *Adjunct Faculty at American University* for 16 years. It was a great opportunity to empower future leaders in our industry. And, to be honest, it was a great recruiting tool for *L&T Health and Fitness* and *Corporate Fitness Works*.

**C.I.** - Wow, Allison, what an incredible overview. Thank you for that and thank you for your service to our industry and *IHRSA*.

**AF** - Thank you. It's been a great journey.

**C.I.** - That is definitely a word to use for that! We're glad to hear that the journey's gone well, and we know it's not over. So, when and how did you become involved with REX?

**AF** - Early in my career, I had a lot of personal success managing workplace fitness centers. Then, the owners of L&T had asked me to manage 6 to 8 clubs in the Washington D.C. area. I knew how to lead, manage and supervise people I worked with every day, but I wasn't so sure how to lead people that I didn't see every day.

After some research and some familiarity with REX, I joined a REX Roundtable for General Managers. This was 2003 - 2005, and our nickname was *Raven RT*. **Frank Ancharski** was our Chair. We had **Mark Miller, Danielle Bouchard, Jay Basgall, Will Ferguson, Mark Rullo, LeeAnn Shelburne, Cindy Browning, Ted Vickey, Leighann Moll and Kevin Sanker**, all strong leaders in the Mid-Atlantic. I attribute that Roundtable to really helping me learn how to supervise people that I don't see every day. My leadership (See *REX Women Leaders Page 12*)



**An REX Dinner - Left to Right:** Alisa Anderson (EGYM, REX Trusted Supplier), Tavia Patuskus, Melissa Fields, Eddie Tock, Kate Kreissl, Tammy Arado, Allison Flatley, Burch Valdelejuli and Michel Umphrey



## **AUGIE'S QUEST IS GRATEFUL TO OUR 2023/2024 FITNESS ADVISORY COUNCIL!**



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## ...REX Women Leaders

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skills and operation skills soared learning from the other GMs on the Roundtable. That is the power of REX, because I can't believe I was on a roundtable named for the Ravens when I'm a huge Minnesota Viking fan. (laughing)

**C.I.** - When did you become a *REX Roundtable Chair*, and what has that experience been like?

**AF** - Throughout the pandemic, REX Chairs and Members held weekly Zoom meetings. When U.S. travel began opening up, REX resumed in-person meetings. Unfortunately, **Justin Tamsett** was unable to travel to the U.S. from Australia, so Eddie took on some of his Roundtables. Eddie reached out to me and said, 'Why don't you help me, and we'll start training you as a Chair.' So, I had the pleasure of attending a few of Eddie's and Brent's Roundtables to learn how to facilitate. Training to be a facilitator was a fascinating experience because every Roundtable is so different.

The members of each Roundtable dictate the pace, the agenda and the activities. The REX Chair is responsible for taking those agenda items, requests and ideas and putting everything together in a productive learning and sharing environment. Additionally, there are over 100+ REX tools and resources. Each Roundtable uses those tools and resources differently. So, one job is for the Chair to bring the appropriate tools to each meeting and Roundtable. I've learned a lot from Eddie and Brent.

While attending Eddie's and Brent's Roundtables, I shared that I was creating a *REX Roundtable for Women Leaders*, and the support I received was overwhelming. Every REX member recognized the need for more women in our industry and more women owners. It also gave me an opportunity

to ask each Roundtable for feedback and recommendations on what makes a successful Roundtable, what makes a successful facilitator, etc. The comments were invaluable.

**C.I.** - Well, that takes us right into the next question. Please take us through the development of *REX Roundtable for Women Leaders*, from the initial idea to launch to now.

**AF** - Throughout the pandemic, Eddie and I talked regularly about my getting involved in REX and creating a Roundtable for Women Leaders. I had been involved in the *IHRSA Women's Leadership Summit* since 2009, so I knew there was a need for women to get together. With the *IHRSA Women's Leadership Summit*, **Debra Siena** created an email list called *Women Who Rock*. During the pandemic, I sent emails to the list and hosted a few *Zoom Happy Hours*. It was so empowering and fun to have a screen full of industry women together, again, I knew there was a need. In 2022, Eddie and I hosted an open call to learn more about *REX Roundtable for Women Leaders*, and we had 136 women attend the call!

The attendance exceeded Eddie's expectation and cemented the need and desire for women to get together. I will say that I teased Eddie after the open call, 'I bet you couldn't have named 136 women prior to the call.' (laughing) With the 136 women, the diversity of jobs and roles in our industry was huge. I believe that is unique to women. Many of the women held multiple roles in the industry or a few industry side hustles.

After the call, we grouped the women into three groups:

1. **Leaders In the Club**, women who work in and own clubs and studios;
2. **Leaders Outside the Club**, women who own or manage a club, but they are not involved in the day-to-day operations;



Club Visit at Hotworx - Irving (Las Colinas) Texas by Michel Umphrey, Owner

### 3. Suppliers.

Of these three groups, the women who were club-based and spent most of their time in the club were eager to get started. We kicked off that group in December of 2022 and met a couple of times over Zoom. In 2023, we've met once a month, and in April of 2023, we had our first in-person meeting in Dallas at the *Cooper Aerobics Center*. Our next in-person meeting is in Chicago in July.

**C.I.** - Perfect timing for this story! What are some of the unique issues women face in our industry and how do you go about discussing/tackling those in the Roundtable?

**AF** - Well, I will say the biggest difference with women leaders in our industry is there's fewer women at the top. So, when women show up, regardless of the setting, there are typically fewer women in the room. Many times, over the years, I can remember being the only woman in the room. There are different discussions and camaraderie when there are all women in the room. I came from the health promotion field, which was dominated by women. At my first *IHRSA* conference, the Board walked on stage, and it was all men in dark suits. *My first impression was I can make*

*an impact here.*

My goal with this *REX Roundtable* is to create a place where *women can grow their growth mindset*. REX is a place where women can learn to think big and grow their business exponentially and exceed their personal goals. This *REX Roundtable* is a place where women can learn from each other, have influence in the industry if that is something they want to achieve and improve their lives and their families. These women will impact businesses and communities. I want more women owners and senior leaders in our industry. I hope every webinar, panel and Board has women on it. I want women to be able to achieve anything personally in their life or professionally in the industry.

My experience is the issues women face are not different than men; it's more how it's discussed. Women talk about things differently. They bring a different perspective to the table. Half of all club members are women, but only 29% of club owners are women, according to *The Women in Fitness Association*. That's why I wanted to create an environment that understands, supports and is welcoming and empowering for women to learn from each other and develop their growth mindset.

**C.I.** - What does a win in 2023 look like for *REX Roundtable for Women Leaders*?

**AF** - Today, there are eight amazing club owners, operators and leaders in the group. They chose their name at the first in-person meeting: *The Iron Maidens*.

**C.I.** - I love it! That's great!

**AF** - The goal is to grow the *Iron Maidens* to 12 to 15 women, and that group will meet three times a year in person for two days. We meet monthly on Zoom in the off months, and that meeting is two hours.

(See *REX Women Leaders* Page 13)



Hotworx Workout - Left to Right: Michel Umphrey, Melissa Fields, Tammy Arado. Tavia Patusk, Burch Valdejuli, Kate Kreissl and Allison Flatley



## ...REX Women Leaders

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**C.I.** - Over the next 3 to 5 years, what does the future hold for this Roundtable? Possibly others related to other groups or special interests?

**AF** - Over the next 3 - 5 years, I hope the REX Roundtable will grow and you'll see these Iron Maidens, these women leaders, in more places in the industry because REX is about helping people and businesses grow. Eddie and I would like to start the Roundtable for Women Leaders outside the club. We have a handful of women who'd love to get started and are close to launching, but we're looking for a few more women to kick off this group. This would be women who are in senior positions that spend a little bit of time in the clubs but are more working on the business outside of the club. There are several women suppliers who are really interested in starting a Roundtable. That one is a little tricky because we never put competitors on the same Roundtable. We're working to find the right mix of women and right mix of suppliers.

Eddie and I are also talking about creating a Roundtable for Pickleball Leaders. This would be women and men. We've also talked about a Roundtable for studio owners and leaders. Lastly, a Roundtable that is dedicated to franchisees, helping the brand and franchise grow.

**C.I.** - Please speak to the importance/value of being involved in a Roundtable. And, very importantly, if anyone reading wants to get involved in one, how can they go about doing that?

**AF** - I highly recommend a REX Roundtable for ALL Leaders. I believe everyone needs a Roundtable or Board of Directors for their career and life. I think outside perspective helps a lot. When Roundtable members ask you questions about your business, that's the best way to grow your business.

A Roundtable helps you see around the corner before things become an issue. They prepare you for the future. The other thing about Roundtables that I'd love to get across is that there are Roundtables for GMs, Personal Training Directors, Sales and Marketing Professionals, Group Fitness Directors, Suppliers, Owners and Operators. Roundtables are not just for the big guys in the industry. There are REX Roundtable groups for all. The goal is to have a Roundtable or a group of peers to challenge you and to really hold you accountable.

Eddie is a numbers guy, and he will tell you that REX Clubs and leaders outperform industry averages in all categories. Their retention numbers are better, their revenue is better, their gross margins are better, and they're growing faster than non-roundtable clubs and brands. So, the quantitative proof is evident.

I think one of the greatest  
 (See *REX Women Leaders* Page 15)

## An Interview With Eddie Tock, CEO of REX Roundtables

**Club Insider (C.I.)** - When and how did REX Roundtables come to be?

**Eddie Tock (ET)** - REX started in 1989. The late **Gerry Faust** and **Will Phillips** came in at the request of **Rick Caro** to do one Roundtable (in 1985 - 86). Gerry stayed with that one, but Will really enjoyed doing Roundtables. He started #2 in 1989, then eventually got four Roundtables going. Between 1989 and 2008, I used to send my best clients from *Sales Makers* to go join a Roundtable. We had a great relationship, and in 2008, I took over the company. Since then, we grew it from those four to today, where we have 17 in the U.S., four in Australia and four in Europe. And, we actually have two more Roundtables in the planning stage for this year.

**C.I.** - Every 'overnight success' takes years of hard work. In recent years, REX Roundtables have exploded, and from the outside looking in, it could be easy to make the mistake of thinking this growth is one of those overnight successes. Please take us through what it has taken to get to this point.

**ET** - Well, I just have an amazing team that makes me look good, and I really want it said that way because it's very true. When you look at the team we've got with **Allison Flatley**, **Brent Darden**, **Justin Tamsett**, **Mark Miller**, **Frank Ancharski**, **Mary Laudati**, **Jenn Kuehn** and **Dan Duran**, it's just an amazing team. They're really bright, caring and dedicated professionals who genuinely want to see the industry grow and everyone do really well together. So, I think that's part of it.

The other part, and I'm very serious on this part, is that we have amazing REX Members, whether they're new to REX in their first year or they're people like **Steve Wild** and **Joe Cirulli** who have been in REX for almost 30 years. How much they're willing to share and support each other to help each other grow and help the industry grow is just priceless. When you join an REX roundtable, it's not just an unofficial advisory board to help your business, but they truly become a second family to you in so many ways, personally and professionally. And, in times of trouble, in times of crisis, the REX team steps up faster and better than anybody else I've seen in my life, and not just in our industry.

So, that's really what has made it work. It's not just a networking group. It's not just a group where you go to get a couple of nuggets. That's part of it, but that's not all of it.

Yes, there are plenty of conferences and webinars out there, but I think most of us are over-Zoomed. I mean, I had two zooms yesterday. Thankfully, they were direct calls. But, I think an important point to make here is that we still do Zoom calls in between our in-person meetings. We meet three times a year in person, and we do monthly Zoom calls in between. But, the feedback I'm getting is that most people in our industry are just over-Zoomed, and they don't want to be sitting in class for an hour on a Zoom call that often. I mean, occasionally, yes, but we're social beings. It's interesting because one of the Roundtables that started when everything was shut down was on Zoom for months before we had the opportunity to meet in person, and you could see the difference. All of them said, 'We thought this was really good, then we got to meet in person, and now, this is really great.'

I don't think anything in life is an overnight success. There's always a story behind the curtain. You really have to believe in what you're doing and really love what you do. I can tell you I don't feel like I have a job. It's not work to me. I love what I do. I'm committed to each and every REX Member, getting them what they need and getting the results that they want out of being in REX. That's why we have an amazing retention rate of over 90%. Normally, for industry-specific roundtables, it's about 50%, and they have full-time sales staff. We don't. That says something about the values that we have and the values our members agree to when they become part of a REX Roundtable.

We have a couple of candidates right now who are applying. Part of the vetting process is we want them to talk to two or three REX Members, not just me and the REX Team, to make sure they're a good fit. We want them to talk to the REX members to really understand the value of what they get coming in and why people join a Roundtable and don't quit. That's important.

**C.I.** - That is fantastic stuff, Eddie. Now, when and how did REX Roundtables for Women Leaders come to be?

**ET** - I've known Allison for years and really respect all of her success and her energy. We were talking about the opportunities for growth in different areas of our industry, and we both realized that there's a need and definitely a desire to have women have their own Roundtable. We do have a lot of women in all the other Roundtables, so it's not that it's better or worse, it's just different. Allison has told me that some of the women feel more comfortable communicating just with women. So, we did an open Zoom call last October, and we had 136 women join the call.

That told us that we were headed in the right direction. I would've been thrilled with 35, right? But, we had 136 show up from all different parts of our industry, different types of entrepreneurs, women who worked for supplier companies, women who were department heads to club owners. It was a really big mix, so for the current Roundtable that we started, we decided to start with women who work at the club level. So, we have owners in there, GMs, department heads, and it's a good mix. The titles don't mean as much as their commitment to each other and to learning and growing in their positions.

That's what we've found has been really valuable. And, we're still looking for a few candidates for that group. From there, we have a list of women who are at a higher entrepreneur level and don't operate the clubs on a daily basis from within the club. That'll be the second group we'll probably start.

**C.I.** - Please tell us about the decision to have **Allison Flatley** run this group.

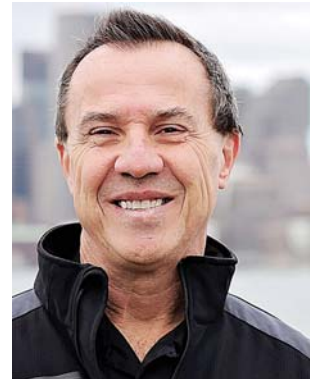
**ET** - For me, that was easy. I think Allison is amazing, and she's always been a well-respected leader in our industry. She's a former IHRSA Board Member. She's just been great. That's not to say there aren't other great leaders that could have done this in our industry, but she's always had a relationship with most of the REX Chairs and is very well respected and just has the right energy to fit the high level of commitment and dedication required to help others. Again, my team makes me look great.

**C.I.** - Eddie, that is well said. She is excellent! What has been the initial outcome/feedback?

**ET** - Even in the short amount of time that Allison's group has spent together, I think they've had some pretty amazing results so far. And, the feedback has been great. I think there's room to grow and add more women and leaders into that type of group, and there's also room for women and leaders to go into any Roundtable that has openings.

**C.I.** - To finish up, Eddie, please share the difference of being involved with a Roundtable vs. Not and why all club owners, managers, department heads, suppliers, etc. should consider joining one.

**ET** - We believe the potential for the industry to continue to grow and share is great. At REX, while not all are back in terms of membership numbers, they're back in revenue and they're back in profits. The majority of REX Members are 85 - 135% back compared to 2019. The reason is because they've all trimmed expenses, they've raised dues and they're just operating as a much more efficient business today than they were five years ago, and everyone in the Roundtable has helped each other get to those points. Of all the REX Clubs, we only had two clubs close. And, the two that closed were because of the landlord. So, I think that speaks a lot to REX members helping each other out. They have gotten through this, and we still think there are opportunities to grow further. And, we have a substantial amount of REX Members who are doing major renovations or opening new locations. We believe the difference is clear.



# From Day Job to Dream Gym:

## *Eight Essential Steps to Building Your Own Fitness Empire*

By: **Jim Thomas**

Embarking on a new gym venture can be an overwhelming prospect, whether you are an aspiring entrepreneur or simply an individual pursuing your passion. While the idea of leaving a day job you despise to start your own business may be enticing, it requires careful consideration and thorough planning to increase your chances of success. Before taking the plunge and purchasing your dream gym, there are several things to think through as well as steps to follow. Below are eight essential steps to guide you on your journey towards quitting your day job and acquiring your dream gym.

### **Step One - Capitalize on Your Strengths -**

When considering buying a gym, resist the temptation to rush into purchasing the first cool-looking gym you come across. Your ultimate dream gym must align with your passion, hobbies and interests. Evaluate the various types of gyms available and ask yourself if you would genuinely enjoy pursuing a career in that field.

### **Step Two - Conduct Your Research -**

Familiarize yourself with the gym market and gather information regarding the gyms available for purchase. Industry publications and gym listings can give you an idea of what's available and provide

the knowledge required to increase your chances of success. However, refrain from quitting your job at this stage.

### **Step Three - Evaluate Your Funding Options -**

Do you have the financial resources to buy a gym outright? Do you have a backup savings plan? Could you secure a loan, and if so, how much would you need? Would you prefer a partner or an independent investor? If buying a gym outright isn't feasible, explore your options and assess how much you could borrow based on your assets. Financial considerations play a vital role in determining when to quit your day job for your dream gym. A steady income can help you navigate the initial stages of development when profits are scarce.

### **Step Four - Create a Business Plan -**

Never venture into buying a gym without a solid plan in place. You need a clear idea of how to take your dream gym forward and generate profits. A comprehensive business plan is necessary, not a luxury, to increase your chances of success. If you intend to apply for a business loan, you'll require a business plan.

### **Step Five - Seek Expert Advice -**

You'll need a lawyer and a business appraiser, at the very least, depending on the size of the gym you're purchasing. Experienced

lawyers and accountants can guide you through the process of buying the right gym and advise you on the necessary steps to take. They'll also be there for you during the teething process to offer guidance and support.

### **Step Six - Wait for the Right Gym -**

Your dream gym will come to you, so don't rush into anything if you're unsure. A dream gym is worth waiting for, no matter how long it takes. If you're proactive, you can even hire someone to help you find the right gym.

### **Step Seven - Make an Offer -**

The amount you offer should be based on a business appraiser's assessment. Submitting an offer doesn't guarantee acceptance, but it opens negotiations. Decide on a price point and go from there. When to quit your day job for your dream gym is entirely up to you. However, ensure the timing is right and that you have the financial means to sustain yourself before taking the plunge and starting your entrepreneurial future.

### **Step Eight - Develop a Marketing Strategy -**

Once you've acquired your dream gym, it's time to develop a marketing strategy. Marketing is vital to attract new customers and retain existing ones. Start by identifying your target audience and understanding their needs and preferences. Develop a marketing plan that caters to their needs and interests. Social media, email marketing and influencer marketing are just a few marketing channels you can explore. Building a strong online presence is crucial in today's digital age. Ensure that your gym has a professional website and social media pages. Use these platforms to showcase your gym's features and services, offer promotions and discounts, and share testimonials and success stories. You can also consider partnering with local businesses or organizing community events to increase your gym's visibility. In addition to digital marketing, word-of-mouth marketing is an effective way to promote your gym. Encourage your members to refer their friends and family and offer referral rewards to do so. Host fitness challenges and events to attract new members and engage existing ones. Provide exceptional customer service and ensure that your members have a positive experience at your gym. Happy customers are more likely to spread the word and attract new members.

### **Final Thoughts**

Embarking on a new gym venture can be a challenging but rewarding



Jim Thomas

experience. It requires careful planning, research and investment, both in terms of time and money. Ensure that your dream gym aligns with your passion, evaluate your funding options and develop a solid business plan. Seek expert advice and wait for the right gym before making an offer.

Once you've acquired your dream gym, develop a marketing strategy that caters to your target audience's needs and preferences. Use a combination of digital marketing and word-of-mouth marketing to promote your gym and attract new members. Provide exceptional customer service and ensure that your members have a positive experience.

Remember, building a successful gym business takes time and effort. Be patient, stay committed and keep learning and adapting to stay ahead of the competition. With the right mindset and approach, you can turn your dream gym into a thriving business and achieve your entrepreneurial goals.

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



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## ...REX Women Leaders

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resources is the REX Roundtable website ([rexroundtables.com](http://rexroundtables.com)). There are wonderful testimonials from REX Roundtable Members. I'd highly encourage anyone who's thinking about REX to go through the testimonials and find people they know. Find business models that are similar and just listen. The Roundtable Members' experiences are so impactful.

And, I'm happy to talk to anybody about REX Roundtables. To get the conversation started, you can email me at [Allison@REXroundtables.com](mailto:Allison@REXroundtables.com).

C.I. - Allison, this has been a pleasure. I welcome any closing comments you'd like to share.

AF - I'll end with an exercise that I do in a lot of my presentations.

First, I ask attendees: When you have a success in your business, write down the names of three people you'd call and share the success with.

Then, I ask attendees: Write down the names of three people you would call if you had a business crisis.

I continue asking similar questions, and essentially, each attendee creates a list of names. The next thing I tell them is: Look at your names, cross out anybody who is family. Because, whether you like it or not,

your family is biased toward you. Everyone needs an outside Board of Directors that can give them feedback and input on crisis, challenges and celebrations, because that's where we grow. We grow in the change phase.

When you take people through this exercise, most of the time, people cross off the majority of the names on their list. Their list is small. If you are in a REX Roundtable, you have 12 to 15 business leaders in your group, those business leaders end up on your list. And, I truly believe that's why REX Roundtable Members are constantly growing... They've got a great network!

■ ■ ■

Thank you to **Allison Flatley** and **Eddie Tock** for their time interviewing for this cover story and sharing the continuing evolution of *REX Roundtables*. Is a Roundtable right for you? The answer is "Yes!"

*(Justin Cates is the Publisher of Club Insider. Having been born into a club business family in 1985, Justin grew up in the health and fitness club industry. He has lived and breathed this industry for 38 years, since his own day one, and he loves it dearly. Graduating from the Terry College of Business at The University of Georgia in 2007, Justin has run day-to-day operations of Club Insider for 15 years.*

Justin became Publisher of Club Insider in April of 2020. Justin's Dad, Norm Cates, continues to serve as Founder and Tribal

Leader Since 1993. You can reach Justin by phone at 863-999-2677 or email at [Justin@clubinsideronline.com](mailto:Justin@clubinsideronline.com).)



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# Getting Results:

## Setting Up a System of Accountability

By: Frank Guengerich

I've spent most of my career in the pursuit of how to maximize results. In my last article (*April 2023 Edition*), I wrote about a six-step process on how to implement a results-based management approach. There have been a tremendous number of books written about how to get results, and I've tried to read as many as possible. However, one of the most logical and straight forward approaches that totally resonated with was from the late **Gerry Faust**. I had the opportunity to learn from this amazing educator, motivator and management leadership guru. In this article, I'm focusing on things I learned from Gerry and have learned from personal experience.

### Activity Vs. Results

One of the most common errors leaders can make is to mistake "activities" for "results."

**Activities** - This is simply defined as the condition in which things are happening or being done. The problem is it's easy to think that, because someone is busy and working long hours, they are getting results. While these are characteristics of someone who often gets results, it doesn't guarantee it so don't be fooled. The definition of activity does not mention the

phrase "getting results."

Too often, we see an employee displaying these characteristics, and we just assume they are getting results. But, in reality, they may be failing badly.

Let me give an example. Say you have a program that you expect to generate \$5,000 in gross income. You assign the program to a specific Department Head, and you clearly state the intended result. You even agree to bonus the Department Head if they achieve the goal. The Staff Leader acknowledges what is expected of them and is excited about the program and goal.

They then set out to accomplish the goal by making calls to previous participants, sending emails, a text message campaign, setting up the program registration in the software, creating a flyer/poster and updating the website. The activities list looks great, and you see them hard at work attempting to achieve the result of generating \$5,000 in revenue.

However, the closing date for registration comes around, and instead of generating \$5,000, they only generate 50% of what you expected. So, what went wrong?

Here are some questions you should ask:

1. How many calls did you make, and did you reach them or just leave a message?
2. When you spoke to someone, did you

attempt to close?

3. What exactly did the email and text message say?

4. Was there a 'call to action'?

5. Was the program priced correctly?

6. Was the registration process clear?

7. Where did you place the flyers and posters?

The list can go on.

In the end, the activities that took place were either the wrong ones or they were done incorrectly. Don't mistake activities for results.

What I've learned is that most fail at achieving results because they don't know exactly how to execute the plan. What do I mean by that? Results vary when it's not clear how to actually go about execution.

The first thing is the goal must be clear and measurable. Once that is established and agreed on, then those involved must make sure the activities are "influenceable" and "predictive." **Sean Covey** talks about this in great detail in his book, *The Four Disciplines of Execution*.

**Influenceable** - First, an activity must be able to be influenced, or in other words, you must have control of whether or not you can complete a task. This may seem obvious, but surprisingly, this is overlooked. A simple example of this would be to host an event outdoors and not plan for rain. You can't influence the weather, so if you don't plan accordingly, a goal can be missed due to poor execution.

**Predictive** - Second, the activities one pursues have to be predictive of achieving the desired outcome. In other words, if you do a certain activity, is there a greater likelihood that the result will happen?

Only under these two conditions, should an activity occur.

### Responsibility Vs. Accountability

To have an effective system of accountability, you must first understand the difference between "accountability" and "responsibility." These two words are often used interchangeably, but I believe they have very different meanings.

**Responsibility** - I believe the first and most important characteristic a team member must demonstrate is responsibility. Without this, you're wasting your time training and developing that person. Responsibility, in this case, is defined as an individual gift that someone gives themselves. It starts with them believing they are cause



Frank Guengerich

in the matter and what they do makes a difference for themselves and those around them. They choose to be responsible, and it shows up in their life all around them. You cannot force or make someone become responsible. They either are or they are not responsible.

**Accountability** - This is an organizational phenomenon. It starts with the organization being clear about "to" and "for." What is an individual accountable "for" and who are they accountable "to?" If a team member doesn't know what they are specifically supposed to be doing or who they report to, that is the organization's fault.

Ultimately, accountability can only exist if there are consequences for good and poor behavior or performance. Positive consequences can be a raise, a bonus or promotion. Likewise, poor behavior or performance needs to be addressed with more coaching, and if not adjusted, could mean written warning and even separation as a last means.

In conclusion, to consistently obtain quality intended results, you must have responsible employees that are held accountable. Their activities must be influenceable and predictive of the intended result and it is up to the organization to provide clear and consistent feedback.

(Frank Guengerich is the President of Hospitality and Lifestyle at the Williams Group. The Williams Group is a Texas-based, multi-company organization specializing in real estate development. The Williams Group owns several brands, one of which is VERDURE. VERDURE is a luxury multi-sport athletic, wellness and lifestyle brand. For information on partnerships or consulting, email [frank@williamsgroup.com](mailto:frank@williamsgroup.com).)



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# Is Your Facility Socially Fit?

By: **Cathy Spencer Browning**

What if we could simultaneously offer a cure to two epidemics? Yes, we're all in the business of battling the inactivity epidemic, but our mission to get more people moving can also address this increasingly common public health problem: **Loneliness**.

Look at the social potential of your facility. With the right programs and people, it's the perfect environment for friendships, a place where everyone knows your name, a place where physical fitness and social fitness can be equally important. Imagine the battle you could wage against isolation, as well as inactivity, not to mention member retention, by making your facility more socially fit.

Here's what I mean: The phrase "social fitness" was coined in a *CNBC* article about longevity. The article explained the importance of viewing our social life as a living system, and it needs exercise. In other words, we need to make "being social" a priority for our health and wellbeing.

You've likely heard about the epidemic of loneliness and social isolation. It's so important, and so widespread, that the *Surgeon General* recently published a report on the topic. I won't dissect the report, but let's suffice to say that social isolation is having a profoundly negative effect on our health. In fact, the Surgeon General is suggesting that we treat this social isolation epidemic with the same attention that we give tobacco use, obesity

and addiction, and "if we fail to do so, we will pay an ever-increasing price in the form of our collective health and wellbeing."

Research, and common sense if you're in our business, supports the idea that we need to stop separating low levels of physical activity and high levels of loneliness, thinking of them as disparate concerns... that maybe we can start looking at them in tandem. Each has been independently associated with poorer mental and physical health outcomes and mortality. But, some research has also shown how one can compound the other: how when we are lonely, we tend to exercise less; and how when we are inactive, we are at risk of the psychosocial health factors that are associated with depression (See **Cathy Spencer Browning** Page 18)



Cathy Spencer Browning

## Club Financing: USDA, Equipment Financing and Unsecured Loans

By: **Paul Bosley**

This article series illustrates the variety of financing products available in today's marketplace and lists some franchises that use each option to provide financing to launch a start-up fitness center and to expand an existing fitness center business.

All financing options require the borrower(s) to contribute an equity injection, so they have "skin in the game." The equity injection cannot be borrowed funds, such as a home equity loan unless the loan will be repaid from an unrelated source, such as spousal earnings or investment income. The typical sources of equity injection are savings, the sale of marketable securities, gifts from family members and/or the Rollover as Business Start-up (ROBS) plan established by the IRS. A ROBS plan is an arrangement in which prospective franchisees use their retirement funds to pay for their new business start-up costs in a tax-free transaction. The ROBS plan then uses the rollover assets to purchase the stock of the new C Corporation franchise business.

### USDA Loans (\$250,000 up to \$25,000,000)

This national program is designed to provide loans to for-profit entities, nonprofits, cooperatives, federally recognized tribes and public bodies, given they are in a city or town with a population under 50,000. The USDA offers loan guarantees from 60% to 80% depending

on the loan size.

**Use of Funds** - Purchase real estate, machinery and equipment. Development costs, working capital and franchise fees can be included.

**Repayment Term** - 30 years.

**Interest Rates** - May be fixed or variable rates as negotiated between the borrower and lender, subject to USDA approval. USDA loans typically have lower interest rates than SBA loans.

**Qualification Rules:**

■ Once a location is identified, eligibility is determined by inputting the address in the *USDA Property Eligibility Website*.

■ Environmental studies are required that follow NEPA regulations.

■ Feasibility studies are required for new businesses.

**2-Step Loan Process** - Loans are first approved by the lender and then approved by the USDA district office up to \$10,000.

**3-Step Loan Process** - Loans over \$10,000 are first approved by the lender, then approved by the USDA district office and sent to the USDA national office for approval.

### Equipment Financing (\$5,000 up to \$2,000,000)

(F45 Training, Athletic Republic, The Camp Transformation Center, HOTWORX and Workout Anytime)

One of the main benefits of equipment leasing is that these

transactions are completed much faster than SBA and USDA loans. There are two products: equipment leases and equipment finance agreements. The lender owns the equipment when an equipment lease is used. The borrower owns the equipment when an equipment finance agreement is used.

**Use of Funds** - Any equipment needed to operate the business, which can include signage, point of sale systems, furniture, vehicles and tools.

**Interest Rates** - Fixed rates vary by the borrower's financial strength, time in business and industry experience.

**Collateral** - The equipment package being financed.

**Equity Injection** - The down payment or security deposit ranges from one lease payment up to 20% of the dollar amount being financed depending upon the useful life of the collateral.

**Repayment Term** - Ranges from 3 to 7 years.

**End of Term** - Once the equipment lease is paid, the ownership of the equipment is transferred to the company leasing the equipment.

### Unsecured Personal Loans (\$25,000 up to \$250,000)

Unsecured personal loans are used to provide working capital and combined with an equipment lease or for clients not interested in or eligible for SBA loans. One of the main benefits of personal loans is these transactions are completed much faster than SBA and USDA loans.



Paul Bosley

**Use of Funds** - The funds are unrestricted and can be used for any purpose.

**Repayment Term** - 5-7 years.

**Interest Rates** - Fixed rates varying from 6% - 10% depending on the borrower's credit score and annual income.

(Paul Bosley is the Managing Member of *Healthclubexperts.com* dba *Business Finance Depot*. Bosley is known for his expertise in financing franchises and has partnered with several national brands to assist new franchisees acquire the capital needed to launch their new businesses or to expand their current business. Paul has been a volunteer counselor for SCORE, a division of the SBA, for over a decade where he learned the value of SBA loans for funding new and existing businesses. Paul can be reached at [paul@businessfinancedepot.com](mailto:paul@businessfinancedepot.com).)

## ...Cathy Spencer Browning

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and loneliness.

Maybe the solution then is to treat these issues as one and the same. Maybe, just maybe, *fitness experiences that are social* are one of the more impactful solutions to tackle both the inactivity and the loneliness epidemics.

Two other studies come to mind as we discuss what constitutes an impactful social fitness experience, then I'll jump ahead to what I believe our collective solution can be.

First, let me introduce the concept of *groupness* from this study: *Perceptions of groupness during fitness classes positively predict recalled perceptions of exertion, enjoyment and affective valence: An intensive longitudinal investigation.*

The study concluded that, no surprise, groupness positively influenced

effort, enjoyment and a feeling that exercise is good. And, groupness isn't achieved simply by being in a space together. It's about the perception of belonging to a group, relying on fellow members and interacting to form a social structure. In other words, it's more than just standing in the same room. There needs to be a feeling of collective identity, of shared purpose, an interdependence on each other.

Along the same lines, an article in *Blue Zones* entitled *Social Motion Boosts Performance and Connection* beautifully articulated the idea of "collective effervescence," a phrase coined by *Anthropologist Émile Durkheim* in 1912. It describes a euphoric unity that occurs when humans don't just come together, but they move together. Think dancing, or rituals, or sport. The article coined the phrase "social motion" to describe the many benefits of collective movement, from delaying feelings of fatigue to improving

performance to creating feelings of oneness (or groupness).

### Okay... so what am I getting at?

High quality group fitness experiences are the most effective solution to tackling the loneliness and inactivity pandemics simultaneously. When you are in a room of people working together, moving to the same music, working hard for the same 30- or 60-minute time block, you have a unified passion. The shared experience, the highs and the lows of the hard work, the 'hellos' before and the high-fives after the workout are all key components of a memorable, repeatable member experience.

The *right group fitness is social motion it is groupness, it is social fitness.* People moving together, with music driving the experience. Group fitness is social before, during and after the workout... just

look in your busiest rooms. Or, if you're ever in Atlanta, come visit MOSSA HQ for our lunchtime workouts.

In contrast, have you watched people on your equipment lately? Headphones in, alone... they come and go, and it's likely that no one at the facility knows their name. Maybe you're helping them look after their physical fitness, but that's only half the battle; great group fitness at your facility and an onboarding strategy that feed it will help people boost and maintain their social fitness, to keep them moving and connected and to ward off not one but two epidemics simultaneously.

To learn more about MOSSA group fitness programs and how to leverage the power of social motion at your facility, visit [www.mossa.net](http://www.mossa.net).

(Cathy Spencer Browning is the VP of Training & Programming for MOSSA. Cathy can be reached by phone at 770-989-4700 or email at [cathy@mossa.net](mailto:cathy@mossa.net).)

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