

Norm Cates'

THE Club Insider[®]

NEWS

The Pulse of the Health, Racquet & Sports Club Business

JUNE 1996
VOLUME III NUMBER 6



(L to R) Ival McMains, Mark Mastrov & Craig Pepin-Donat

FUTURE FITNESS NOW

•Inside The Insider•

- The Importance Of Loyal Customers
- When Does Too Much Experience Affect Your Prospects For Employment?
- Welcome To Atlanta
- The Peak Performing Mind

By Norm Cates, Jr.

Ray Wilson has been in the health club industry for 49 years and recently sold his 70+

chain in Southern California-Family Fitness Centers, to Fitness Holdings, Inc. Wilson had reached a dominant position with Family Fitness generating \$100 million per year in revenues and serving 750,000 members. His formula for success was

simple..... but not easy: pick highly competitive locations, equip each facility with, on average, \$750,000 worth of new-state-of-the-art equipment, keep the facilities and equipment clean and well maintained, and price membership to be (See *Future Fitness Now* page 7)

THE INSIDER SPEAKS

• EDITORIALS • "INSIDER MAIL" • COMMENTS •

Why The CLUB INSIDER News Can Price its Advertising Rates Competitively

By Norm Cates, Jr.
Publisher and Editor,
The CLUB INSIDER News

I recently received the June, 1996 edition of one of the glossy magazines that many of you receive every month. Upon opening the "protective-cover" of this magazine, I read a letter to "Marketers" which was clearly directed

at our industry's equipment manufacturers and other vendors of products and services, i.e. advertising buyers.

This letter was written by the "Group Publisher" of the publication and was a somewhat misguided effort to explain why his publication was better for advertisers than other publications, especially those that charge less. Since he used the term "magazines" in his letter, I am not sure if he was directing the comments to-

ward The CLUB INSIDER News or not. But, even if it were not directed at The CLUB INSIDER News, I feel compelled to respond to his letter for several reasons:

(1) Those who live in glass houses should not throw rocks at others. Since he has never been in the club business, how could he know what club operators want?

(2) His argument was not well conceived, thought out or communicated.

(3) He tried to make a case

that if a publication does not spend significant dollars every year having its circulation audited that the publication is not delivering "quality" for its advertisers. I researched this magazine's audit and learned some interesting things.

If this publisher was targeting The CLUB INSIDER News in regard to our very competitive advertising rates, I would like to explain some things to all of our current and potential advertisers.

The CLUB INSIDER News is able to sell advertising for a 25,000-location monthly circulation at intensely competitive prices for several reasons, a combination of which gives us the most cost efficient - valued oriented advertising available in the health, racquet and sportsclub world today.

• The CLUB INSIDER News employs only 2 people. 1 - full time and 1-part time. Not 19. We provide outstanding editorial through a nationwide network of experts contributing writers who provide articles as a service to the health, racquet and sportsclub community.

• The CLUB INSIDER News is printed tabloid style-on newspaper on a Web press. This causes our monthly printing costs to be significantly lower than any glossy magazine.

• The CLUB INSIDER News has a no-office overhead as it is produced each month via "Desktop" publishing computers in my home office. Therefore, we have no office overhead. Just phones.

In respect to a "lack of quality" referred to in this man's letter, I have a comment. I challenge anyone in the health, racquet and sportsclub industry anywhere to compare the last 12 months of editions of The CLUB INSIDER News to the last 12 editions of the publica-

tion for whom this man works. And, I invite this fellow to ask anyone in the industry which publication is providing better "quality" for the readers.

This man's letter referred to the importance of audits of the circulation list. Well, because he mentioned it, I obtained copies of the audits of this publication and discovered some very interesting things.

(1) No where in the audit were the figures for title/job position of the alleged 30,000 monthly readers documented. In other words, this omission withheld the fact that most of the 30,000 readers WORK FOR the decision makers of the industry. In other words, most of the 30,000 readers are not in charge of SPENDING THE MONEY for their organization. In contrast, The CLUB INSIDER'S 25,000 readers were carefully selected and placed on the list by a company who has been in the health club industry for 15 years and had carefully cleaned the list. The CLUB INSIDER News readers are the DECISION MAKERS OF THE INDUSTRY.

(2) The audit showed that in June, 1994, 13,629 names were dropped from their list of 30,000. The audit also showed that in June, 1995, 10,333 were dropped. That is an average of 12,000 per year dropped, i.e. 40% per year. I suppose those names were dropped because they no longer were "qualified" readers for advertiser's purposes. But, if that is the case, how could this publication be legitimately selling advertising promising 30,000 qualified circulation every month when on average 40% of their circulation was unqualified by definition of the auditors? Go figure.

Last, this publisher claims that his publication is "the most valuable marketing resource" in the health club industry.

You know what?
I doubt it.

TCA
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Chicago, IL 60647
312/227-8100
Fax 312/227-4082

Club
Management

TCA

June 3, 1996

Mr. Norm Cates
The Club Insider
P. O. Box 671443
Marietta, GA 30067-0025

Dear Norm,

Spike Gonzales' article "Tennis Pros: Are you part of the problem or part of the solution?" is very practical and well written. It will help tennis pros become more professional and management oriented. This kind of advice is invaluable to running a successful tennis club and integrating tennis pros with management.

Spike is arguably the most knowledgeable person in tennis programming and tennis pro management in the country. You're lucky to have him aboard. Thanks for the article.

Sincerely,

TCA

Steven L. Schwartz
President

SLS:plb

•NORM'S NOTES•

Our condolences go out to the family of the young 16 year old girl, who recently accidentally drowned at the Atlantic Club in Wall, N.J. Our condolences also go out to **Pat Laus**, owner of the wildly successful **Atlantic Club** and her staff as I know they are deeply sorrowed by what happened. This tragic and freak accident happened at a post-high school prom pool party when the young lady was enjoying a hot whirlpool with friends and was sucked against a high pressure pipe, holding her helplessly underwater. All efforts to save her, including that of a policeman who dove in - in full uniform - to try to save her, failed. This is just another example of how fragile life is and how swiftly life can be snuffed out. We grieve with her family, Pat and the entire Atlantic Club organization.

BILL GOODING AND

MICHAEL DREIFUS, the operators of **Preferred Clubs**, have just rolled out a terrific new program called **Preferred Access** which is an excellent value-added opportunity for your members. Check out the ad on page #19 of this edition. **Preferred Access** is a hotel, golf resort and ski resort discount card which for only \$29.95 per year per member will entitle your members to receive discounts of up to 50% on hotels, golf, recreation and ski resorts. This plan is incredibly simple for your staff and members and involves very little annual cost for your club to enroll. In addition to being a great deal for members, it is also a super membership sales closing tool as well as employee perk for great performance. The enrollment of your membership is done on a simple-voluntary basis using a very attractive four-color board display

and brochure distribution system. Look for this to be a great benefit for any and all of your members as well as your staff, family and friends.

HAMMER NOT SOLD! Another 'hot' rumor which has been floating around since the IHRSA Convention is that **AUGIE NIETO** and **LifeFitness** is buying **Hammer Strength**. When I got a tip on the rumor from a source on the West Coast about two months ago, I immediately contacted **SCOTT WALSH**, the PR Director of LifeFitness to confirm or disaffirm it. Scott said he would have to call me back and about five minutes later he did and said that the information was false. About a month later, I read in the **Fitness Market Advisor** that it was still rumored. So, this time, I contacted **Tom Profit**, the Gen-



Norm Cates, Jr.

eral Manager of **Hammer Strength**, who gave me the latest scoop. He told me Augie had contacted Hammer during the IHRSA Convention about acquiring Hammer. Profit said they had a brief conversation or two and that the deal was going nowhere, so the rumor should be stopped. So, let's stop it.

for other operators to look up to. In short, what **Red Lerille** and his great family and staff have accomplished in Lafayette is nothing less than incredible! **HAPPY BIRTHDAY RED!**

DEAN KACHEL and his wife M.J. are in their 17th year of operation of the **Quadrangle Athletic Club** in Coral Springs, Florida. Congratulations to Dean as he recently has been named by his local Chamber of Commerce as "Veteran Businessman of the Year."

PAT PINE, the Executive Director of the Denver, Colorado based, **Western Association of Clubs**, has a terrific Summer Conference and Trade Show planned for August 11-14th. The Convention and Trade Show will be held at the **Copper Mountain Resort** in Copper Mountain, Colorado. To register, call Pat at: (303) 399-7687.

Congratulations to **Steve Krum**, President of the **Greenwood Athletic Club** in Englewood, Colorado, for the club's winning **Tennis Industry's 1996 Court-of-the-Year!** In addition to being a truly spectacular club, one of the reasons **Greenwood A.C.** won the award is that they had installed the **BEST LIGHTS** System as advertised and shown in the photo of the **Greenwood A.C.** on page 36 of this edition. **Gary Yurich**, the owner of **Best Lights**, installed a system at **Greenwood** which exceeds **USTA** standards with only 14 - 1,000 Watt **BEST LIGHTS** per (See *Norm's Notes* page 21)

Norm Cates' **THE Club Insider** NEWS

June 24, 1996

Mr. Steven L. Schwartz
President
Tennis Corporation of America
2020 West Fullerton
Chicago, IL 60647

Dear Steve,

Thank you for your letter praising the writings of tennis industry veteran, **Spike Gonzales**. I agree that he does an excellent job with his articles. I also agree that **The CLUB INSIDER News** is fortunate to have **Spike** as a contributing writer.

The contributing writers for **The CLUB INSIDER News** are key to what we do. We are fortunate to have our entire team of expert contributing writers. They provide the true link which makes **The CLUB INSIDER News** not just the only industry newspaper.....their work makes **The CLUB INSIDER News** a true educational tool every month for health, racquet and sportsclub professionals everywhere.

This combination of the latest news, truly excellent educational articles and our publication's focus on "telling it like it is" have placed **The CLUB INSIDER News** at the top of the monthly reading list of most club professionals. And, through the generous sponsorship of our advertisers, 25,000 locations receive **The CLUB INSIDER News** each month, thus contributing to the ongoing professionalization of our industry world-wide. I am very proud of what our team has accomplished.

Steve - thanks for reading and supporting **The CLUB INSIDER News**!

Very truly yours,

Norm Cates, Jr.
Norm Cates, Jr.
Publisher and Editor
The CLUB INSIDER News

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Red Lerille - Age 60

RED LERILLE, the legendary owner of **Red Lerille's Health and Racquet Club** in Lafayette, Louisiana, just turned 60 years old! Hard to believe, because the Mr. America from the early 1960's doesn't look a day over 40, and he is rock hard. Red started his facility in a 4,000 square-foot storefront 33 years ago, just after winning Mr. America. His club is now over 120,000 square feet with 13 acres, 22 tennis courts, three or four swimming pools and literally hundreds and hundreds of exercise machines. He is, in my opinion, the **NUMBER ONE** single club operator on the planet and a terrific club role model

MICROFIT'S HEALTHCARE CONNECTION

St. Francis Medical Center Purchases Universal Physique Fitness Center

By Neil Sol, Ph.D.

Just a few months ago I had the pleasure of working with the Saint Frances Medical Center (SFMC) of Cape Girardeau, Mo. in their effort to purchase and incorporate the services of the Universal Physique Fitness Center into the hospital. The Universal Physique Fitness Center is an IHRSA Club also located in Cape Girardeau. I had the privilege of working with a superb group of businessmen: Mr.

Bernie Gaydos, Director of Ambulatory Services; Mr. Bill Logan, Director of Fitness and Wellness; Mr. Gene Riegle, Service Director, Outpatient Rehabilitation of SFMC; and Mr. Doug Friese, owner and manager of UPFC, who are forward thinking professionals who see the benefits of a strong relationship between healthcare institutions and health clubs.

In keeping with the dynamic shift in healthcare toward prevention and with the soon to be published Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity and

Health, SFMC will purchase (effective July 1, 1996) UPFC to extend the continuum of care of the medical center with the goals of:

- providing a community health resource model that will reach out to the Cape Girardeau community to improve the quality of life for area residents.

- providing a new, medically oriented array of programs and services for special populations, such as those with arthritis, diabetes, the elderly, etc.

- becoming a comprehensive provider of wellness and preventive services for the community.

The relationship between UPFC and SFMC began in March, 1994 and will culminate in the purchase and incorporation of UPFC into SFMC July 1, 1996. It began with Doug Friese, owner and manager since 1982, contacting SFMC with a request for SFMC to offer wellness programs in the available space at the club. The UPFC is a 40,000 sq.ft. health club inclusive of 2 indoor tennis courts; 6 racquetball courts; an indoor track; therapeutic massage area; cardiovascular, weight and aerobics area. Doug realized that a relationship with a health care institution was in the future of health clubs and he knew that SFMC had an excellent regional reputation and provided quality wellness programs. As a result of Doug Friese's overture to the medical center "wheels began to spin." SFMC who also understood the requirements of the future and the changes occurring in healthcare requiring them to provide preventive programming and services, started to think about other types of relationships that might be developed with UPFC. SFMC gave consideration to various types of partnerships and other formal relationships, all with the intent of incorporating the health and fitness services of UPFC into a medical model to service the community.

After much consideration, SFMC, about 9 months ago, began the process of due diligence to purchase the UPFC

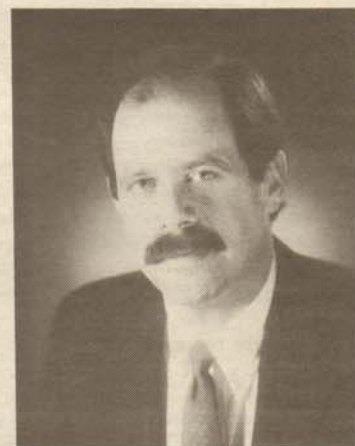
facility. Most importantly for SFMC in this purchase was the opportunity to purchase the professional services of Doug Friese and his staff. SFMC knew that to be successful in this "new aspect" of the healthcare business they would require leadership from health and fitness professionals.

Obviously, the outright purchase of SFMC enabled the hospital to incorporate the UPFC into the mission statement of the hospital and insure quality control of the services rendered; but

rest assured the hospital yields to Doug's expertise in managing and operating this "new arm" of SFMC. Mr. John Fidler, President and CEO of SFMC indicated "that the partnership between SFMC and UPFC is in keeping with the mission of SFMC as a provider of community health needs." The new SFMC facility will be named Universal Health and Fitness Center (UH & FC), a department of St. Francis Medical Center. UH & FC will continue to provide health club services to all of its current membership. Expectation is that UH & FC membership will significantly increase because of its affiliation with SFMC and the provision of the new medically oriented programs that will be offered to benefit new populations of Cape Girardeau residents.

Under the guidance of SFMC, the UH & FC will become a location for outpatient rehabilitation of patients who progress to a point where they do not require supervised rehabilitation and graduate to a self directed fitness environment. The plan is to "download" these patients to the UH & FC qualified and certified staff, under the supervision of the SFMC Outpatient Rehabilitation Center. It is believed that with the UH & FC rehabilitation option, quality patient outcomes can be achieved less expensively.... which will be "music to the ears" of third-party payers.

The UH & FC is also



Neil Sol, Ph. D.

scheduled to offer an expanded Occupational Rehab and Health program that will offer less expensive rehabilitation to a growing number of corporate and business clients, but will now also be capable of providing local business with quality preventive programs. This appears to be of interest to area business as Missouri workers compensation premium rates are determined by corporate claims experience. It is assumed that a healthier workforce will ultimately result in lesser claims and lower premiums.

SFMC's ultimate goal with its new UH & FC is to offer both primary and secondary prevention programs. Primary prevention being those programs that help improve an individual's health in an effort to decrease the potential for an initial health problem or injury and secondary prevention, which is actually rehabilitation. (e.g. those programs that prevent a re-occurrence of a medical problem or injury.)

The new UH & FC will offer comprehensive wellness services including: screening, HRA's, nutrition education, weight management classes and extensive seniors and children's programs in addition to its traditional club membership. SFMC is currently upgrading the Center and its equipment to service the expanded vision of program and service offerings. The soon to be finalized SFMC buyout and incorporation of the

(See Neil Sol page 21)

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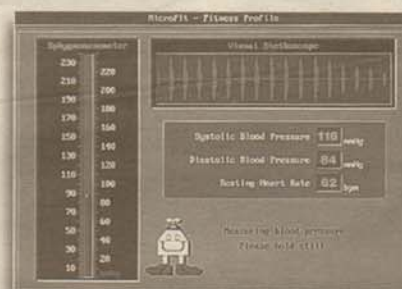
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THE IMPORTANCE OF LOYAL CUSTOMERS

By Gerry Faust, Ph.D.

It has regularly been reported that doing what it takes to keep our old customers happy is five to six times less expensive than what most companies spend to get a new one. A recent study has also shown that a decrease in customer dissatisfaction rate by 5% can result in an increase in profits by 25-95%. Some of the reasons for these increases are represented in Figure 1.

It has also been shown that regular customers are easier and less costly to serve. They make fewer de-

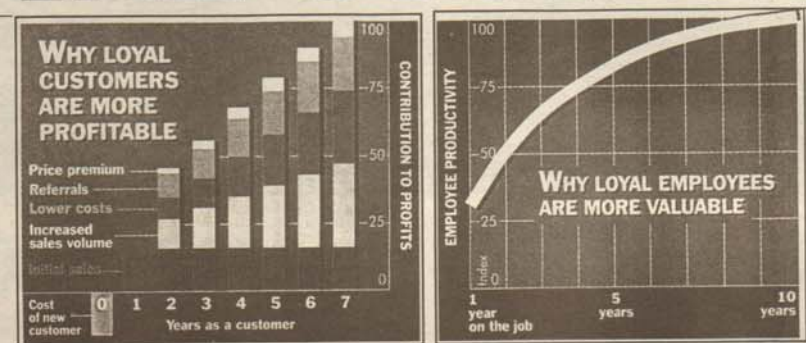


Figure 1- Why loyal customers are more profitable.
(Fortune Magazine, September 19, 1995. Original source Bain and Co.)

mands on employees time and in fact having more regular custom-

ers generally results in improved employee satisfaction. And we all know that loyal, long-term employees are generally more valuable and more productive.

Everybody is talking about customers and customer service these days. We are being bombarded by new books that give advice on the importance of and how to deliver great service. Almost on a parallel course has come the focus on Total Quality Management (TQM) and the newer related process: re-engineering.

Good quality management programs start with an emphasis on "learning how the customer defines quality" and good re-engineering focuses on making it easier for the customer to deal with the company. Whatever the methodology used to improve organizations the starting point is the marketplace and the customers. And the challenge is to understand the market and the customer. Here are a few things we've been learning over the years about markets and customers:

1. If you do not position yourself to provide what the markets want you're asking for trouble.

The marketplace always gets what it wants over time. Fighting this fact is like fighting Mother Nature. So learn what the markets want. It has been shown that positioning is the single greatest determiner of business success. Positioning involves defining your market product scope. That is what markets (customer and needs) you are going to serve and what products or services you will take to the selected markets. Positioning is a key output of strategic planning.

2. There is a real difference between marketing positioning research and customer satisfaction research.

Market research aims at understanding what the customer wants and needs with the objective of then positioning the organization to provide it. Customer satisfaction research aims at finding out how satisfied customers are and hopefully, what makes them more or less satisfied. Be careful you are doing research that is designed to answer the questions you want answered.

3. Standard customer satisfaction surveys may not tell you what you need to know about customer satisfaction.

Quality and value ratings and customer retention numbers are better indicators of customers' reactions than satisfaction ratings. Surveys may help but if you really want to get to understand your customers, go see them, talk to them, work with them, and do what they have to do to deal with your company.

The real measure of customer satisfaction is whether or not customers come back. Jim Farrell, the founder of Farrell's Ice Cream once said, "The three most important words a customer can say are, 'I'll be back'." He is right and often people who answer in the affirmative to the question, "Is everything all right?" in a restaurant,

won't be back. That gratuitous question is not half as important as an observant waiter. About 60-80% of customers who do not come back typically describe themselves as satisfied or reply satisfied on customer satisfaction surveys.

4. Resolving customers problems is a key to customer loyalty.

When customers have a problem, there is usually a big gap between what they want and what they expect. This gap provides a big opportunity to cause a memorable event and it has been shown that a company that handles these situations well is able to turn misery into magic, lemons into lemonade. It has repeatedly been found that customers who have problems resolved are more loyal than those who did not have a problem. They are also very likely to tell others about their "delight."

Training people who regularly deal with customers how to handle problems and empowering them to do so, are keys to creating customer loyalty.

(Dr. Gerry Faust is the President of San Diego based Faust Management, Inc. Faust Management provides management consulting, management training and problem solving seminars for companies of all kinds. Faust Management may be contacted at: (619) 536-7970.)



Gerry Faust, Ph. D.

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continued from cover

intensely competitive with every one in the marketplace.

Fitness Holdings, Inc. is controlled by McCown & DeLeeuw, an investment banking firm which specializes in acquiring companies with strong management teams within industries that are ripe for consolidation. The first move was the acquisition of the Northern California-based 24 Hour Nautilus in December, 1994 for \$34 million. It didn't take long before Fitness Holdings also acquired the Family Fitness Center chain for \$95 million in a deal which shook the health club landscape in California as if a 7.6 quake had hit. Since then, Fitness Holdings has proceeded on a path of intense development of new clubs..... at the rate of one new unit per month and soon to be two per month! With the highly fragmented fitness industry and the established management teams at 24 Hour Nautilus and Family Fitness, the acquisition was a natural.

THE NEXT GENERATION

By selling his interest in Family Fitness to Fitness Holdings, Inc., a Menlo Park, California-based company, Wilson has agreed to turn over control and operations to the "Next Generation" of hard charging day-to-day operators. Although Wilson still plays a major role in the company's operation, primarily as an advisor, he has in a sense passed the baton to the company's CEO Mark Mastrov, the divisional Presidents Craig Pepin-Donat (24 Hour Nautilus) and Ival McMains (Family Fitness), not to mention the depth of talent of the company's executive and club-level management teams. Wilson is also still involved in the company's expansion.

INTENSE CALIFORNIA COMPETITION

Fitness Holdings, Inc. is exploding with growth in California and several clubs in the Northern California Region have been hit the hardest by this new competition and are not pleased. In fact, many of those club owners are down-right upset. Why? For one thing, they don't like the low-pricing strategy (\$199 enrollment and \$34 per month) that 24 Hour Nautilus is using. And, understandably, some Northern California club operators

and others feel threatened as the Fitness Holdings machine is gobbling up markets at the rapid rate of one new facility per month.

What may be a thorn in the side of some these clubs who are upset is the fact that 24 Hour Nautilus is not just a chain of small fitness-only facilities. These 35-40,000 square-foot, multi-purpose facilities are much like the higher end clubs with full-sized basketball gyms, lap pools, racquetball, juice/snack-bars, aerobics studios and extensive fitness areas with huge quantities of weight and cardiovascular equipment. All are available at prices that are intensely competitive with the higher end clubs.

A GOAL OF ELIMINATING 90% OF ALL COMPLAINTS

24 Hour Nautilus has recently had some bad publicity in the San Francisco Bay Area, primarily due to members wishing to get out of their long-term memberships. Like others in the health club industry, 24 Hour Nautilus has been selling 12-month term memberships. Ray Wilson has now convinced his partners to sell initiation fee and monthly dues memberships that the members can discontinue with 30 days written notice. Wilson made this switch at Family Fitness to voluntary month-to-month memberships several years ago. Wilson says that this eliminated 90% of all member complaints because if the member wants to stop his or her membership, they just give 30 days notice in writing and the membership will be cancelled. Wilson, who has been involved in nearly 50 years of the growth and evolution of the health club industry actually invented the "Life Time" membership in the 1950's. He recalls that at that time, fitness was not as "accepted" the "in" thing to do as it is today. During that period of the health club industry's history, no matter how many members you enrolled, the clubs were not overcrowded. Wilson now strongly believes that monthly dues makes club operators much more aware of customer service and maintaining the club in first-class condition. He feels that this emphasis on service helps balance the organization, placing greater emphasis on service and satisfaction as opposed to focusing solely on sales. The objective is to build monthly dues income. Proof of the wisdom of this philosophy is the huge monthly dues income stream that

Family Fitness Centers now enjoys. Wilson strongly believes that due to increased awareness and education of the American consumer about the benefits of regular exercise and the value thereof, club operators no longer need to bind members with long-term contracts. He feels that he has changed his thinking and ultimately his operations with the times. And he believes that club operators who are unwilling to change with the times will be left behind. Ray Wilson predicts that if all clubs switched over to voluntary monthly dues our industry would be admired and respected much more than it is today. This writer agrees with that statement wholeheartedly. Wilson closes his convincing argument by highlighting the upcoming Surgeon General's Report and subsequent national pro-exercise campaign. He believes the result of this Report will be increased membership numbers and membership retention nationwide in facilities which are properly managed and marketed.

A CONVERSATION WITH THE OPERATORS

The CLUB INSIDER contacted three key people in the Fitness Holdings, Inc. organization to hear about their plans for acquisition growth, key challenges, thoughts on "branding" of the two chains into one national identity, national expansion plans, their prototype facility, their "600 Plan" for quality cleaning and maintenance and pricing strategy. We spoke with Mark Mastrov, the CEO and President of Fitness Holdings, Craig Pepin-Donat, President of the 24 Hour Nautilus Division and Ival McMains, the President of the Family Fitness Division.

A CONVERSATION WITH MARK MASTROV

Mark Mastrov, age 38, was a top-gun high school athlete who played football, basketball and ran track (9.9-100 yards, 4.5-40). He graduated from Cal State-Hayward with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration. He entered the club business literally by accident..... in this case he injured his knee while playing basketball. After initial therapy he was seeking a place to continue to train the knee, so he joined a Nautilus facility. In December,

1982, a buddy of his called and offered him a part-time job in a Nautilus facility where he was employed. Mastrov accepted the position which entailed servicing members on the 25-machine Nautilus floor, selling memberships and working the front desk. He took the part-time job for fun and began his health club career at age 24.

In June, 1983, the owner sold the Nautilus center and invited Mark to move to L.A. to open up several new facilities. The new owner of the Nautilus facility wanted Mark to work for him too and offered him a full-time job and advancement opportunity, which he accepted. 90 days later Mark was made a 10% partner in the facility. From that beginning, Mastrov has become the CEO and President of unquestionably the fastest growing health club chain in the world.

Here are Mark Mastrov's, Craig Pepin-Donat and Ival McMains' comments on a number of questions. (CIN Q = CLUB INSIDER News question. Mark M. = Mark Mastrov reply.)

CIN. Q. "Mark could you share your thoughts and plans on club acquisitions?"

MARK M. - "We like to pair the strong management teams with those who want to stay on board and continue to operate their clubs after they sell. We are looking to acquire club chains with a solid foundation and strong operations where we can add value. We first look at if they have been successful operating a profitable business. We then focus on things such as how they treat their employees, do we like the current management team, their management style and are they willing to stay. We believe that this business has to be fun or it just doesn't make sense. For example, we recently acquired three terrific Gold's Gyms from Odd Haugen on Oahu, Hawaii. He will be staying on to continue his role in operations for us. He is a great guy and we get along well with him, and he runs great clubs! That's ideally what we are looking for."

CIN.Q. - "Who should club chain owners contact within your organization if they would like to become a potential acquisition target?"

MARK M. - "Our VP of Real Estate & Acquisitions - Todd Smith - is the one who reviews all of the potential acquisitions to see if we have a possible match. Anyone interested can contact him at (510) 416-3157. We are constantly scouting for possible acquisitions that make good busi-

ness sense."

CIN.Q. - "What are some of your greatest challenges?"

MARK M. - "I think that to continue to develop and implement proper training and control systems and the recruiting and development of good people are our two greatest challenges. We are constantly looking for people who are willing to relocate and are hungry for success."

CIN.Q. - "Who should they call if any of our readers are interested in joining Fitness Holdings?"

MARK K. - "Kristen Kiel, our recruiter, works very closely with Craig Pepin-Donat and Ival McMains to choose the right candidates. Although candidates can contact Kristen at (510) 416-3153, they will interview with several layers of our executive management team and ultimately end up in Craig's or Ival's office. If they have the right attributes to grow with our company.

CIN.Q. - "What about your challenges with the somewhat irate Northern California higher end clubs and the recent Channel 7 news pieces?"

MARK M. - "When you have a company as large as ours is now, even an error factor of way less than 1% is too high. As you know, negative press hurts the club industry at a time when we have finally started to gain credibility as an industry. We believe that competition is good and that it helps generate business for every market. It's unfortunate that some of our competitors don't see it that way. If we, as an industry, are only able to capture less than 20% of the market, that leaves 80% of the population as non-members that we can someday still reach and serve. We believe that we provide a sort of "feeder" system for some of the higher-end clubs because younger people who may have been our members at one time may at some point seek larger upscale clubs as they grow older and become more financially affluent."

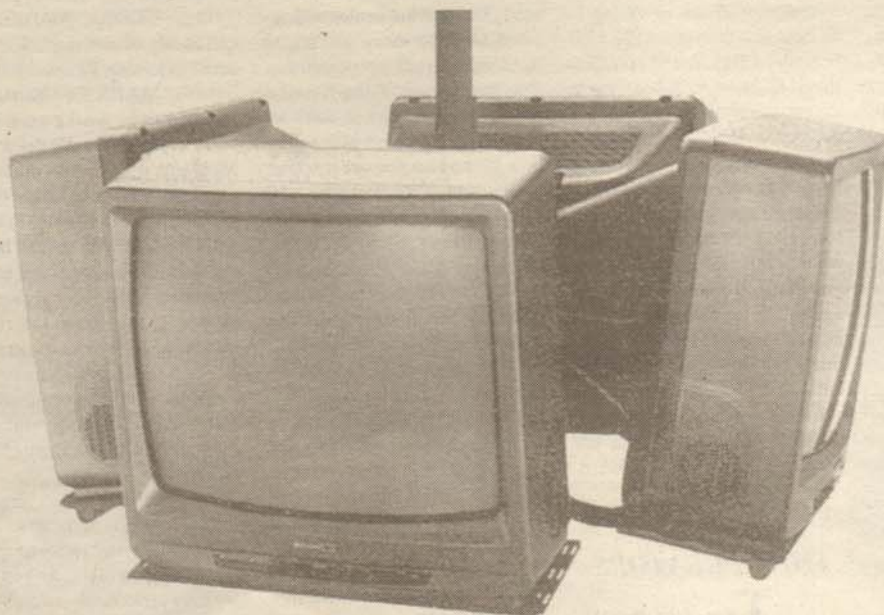
CIN.Q. - "Mark, what about the Channel 7 News reports, regarding the Better Business Bureau complaints about 24 Hour Nautilus?"

MARK M. - "Everybody in our organization that viewed the reports were shocked and amazed by the focus of the information. Let me emphasize, we only had 16 unresolved outstanding complaints. When you consider that we have over 200,000 members and 40+ Northern California clubs and only 160 complaints in three years, we believe we are doing a fairly good job, especially in California where people are so litigious. However, with our changing completely to (See More Fitness Future page 9)

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...More Fitness Future

continued from page 7

month-to-month dues memberships we will do even better."

CIN.Q. - "Since the entire TV report focused on membership contracts and the member's rights to cancel, what action(s) have you taken in response?"

MARK M. - "Taking Ray Wilson's advice, we have eliminated the 'Term Contracts' altogether and have gone to initiation fee and month-to-month voluntary dues memberships which may be cancelled at any time with a 30-day written notice."

CIN.Q. - "Just like many IHRSA clubs and Ray Wilson's Family Fitness Centers did some time ago?"

MARK M. - "That is correct. Although some of the IHRSA Northern California clubs do use term membership contracts, we have now followed Ray's suggestion and moved to offering 100% of our memberships on a month-to-month basis. Ray has convinced me that when everyone is paying month-to-month dues that they can cancel with 30 days' notice, it automatically eliminates almost all complaints."

CIN.Q. - "Can you tell us if you have or are making plans to create a 'single brand name' to allow Fitness Holdings to expand nationally, even internationally with a single identity?"

MARK M. - "We are definitely making plans to combine our 114 current locations and future clubs into one major brand name. Our Board of Directors are discussing approval of a new name and marketing identity change and we expect to roll this out in the Fall of 1996. I'll keep you posted."

CIN.Q. - "When do you plan to begin your national expansion efforts?"

MARK M. - "For now, we plan to stay West. We are going to concentrate on Denver and our current west coast markets. Of course, we already have a foothold in the Hawaii market with the acquisition of Odd Haugen's 3 locations and we plan to expand out there as well."

CIN.Q. - "Describe your typical 'box' or new club floor plan."

MARK M. - "We are building 30-40,000 square foot, multi-purpose facilities with basketball gyms, Olympic-size pools, a couple of racquetball courts, aerobic studio, a juice bar and of course, extensive weight training and cardiovascular areas. We are also opening 20-25,000 square foot centers that are dry fitness-only loca-

tions. Basically, we do our homework on the market and build the club based on the facilities and services offered by the competition and the needs of the demographics."

CIN.Q. - "How much do you typically spend on new club equipment?"

MARK M. - "Depending on the size of the box, we spend anywhere from \$400,000 to \$750,000 per unit and we always add equipment later to meet the demand as the club grows in membership."

CIN.Q. - "Describe for us your pricing strategy?"

MARK M. - "We are trying to make memberships available and affordable to anybody who wants to exercise. We keep it flexible. Also, due to Ray's philosophy, all family memberships are priced very inexpensively so that all 'age eligible' family members can use the facility. A husband and wife and two kids can be members for under \$50 per month in our bigger clubs and \$25 per month in our smaller ones."

A CONVERSATION WITH CRAIG PEPIN-DONAT

Craig Pepin-Donat, age 35, began his career in the fitness industry at age 19 as a fitness instructor for \$3.50 an hour. With a driving desire to grow and achieve, he worked his way into sales and management with a small New York club chain. Later in his career, Craig was recruited by the New York Health and Racquet Clubs as the Sales Director where he developed the company's first formal sales training program. Within two years he was named as the company's first Vice President and focused on developing programs that improved the overall management approach of the company through improved training and standardization of systems. At the age of 29, Pepin-Donat was appointed as the youngest President in that company's history. Craig was personally recruited by Mark Mastrov to become President of 24 Hour Nautilus, now a Division of Fitness Holdings, Inc., just prior to the Family Fitness Center acquisition of the company by McCown & DeLeeuw.

CIN.Q. - "Craig, what do you think will be keys to success for you, Mark and Ival as you move forward with the rapidly expanding Fitness Holdings?"

CRAIG P. - "By far the most important aspect of our success is team building. When you

are trying to operate and grow over a hundred locations, you're in a whole new ball game. If you can't recruit key players and develop them into winners, you're going to have a losing season. The most exciting aspect of being a part of this team is the fact that we have the ability to offer incredible growth opportunity to anyone that has the motivation, desire and drive to be successful. And in our company, you don't move up based on the length of time you've been with the company; growth is always based on performance."

CIN.Q. - "Since you are heavily involved in recruiting and training, could you outline some of the opportunities that are available with your company?"

CRAIG P. - "Let me start by sharing some words of wisdom that Ray Wilson shared with me about five years ago at one of the trade shows that had tremendous impact on my life. 'THE SUCCESS OF YOUR BUSINESS CAREER DOES NOT HAVE TO BE A HIT OR MISS AFFAIR. THERE IS A SUCCESSFUL CAREER OPPORTUNITY FORMULA IN BUSINESS AND IF YOU FOLLOW THIS SUCCESS FORMULA, YOU HAVE BETTER ODDS OF OBTAINING SECURITY AND WEALTH.'

1ST - TO HAVE A SUCCESSFUL CAREER OPPORTUNITY, YOU MUST BE IN AN INDUSTRY THAT IS GROWING.

2ND - YOU MUST BE WITH A YOUNG COMPANY THAT HAS GOOD ODDS OF GROWING IN THAT INDUSTRY.

With the constant flow of information in the media supporting the benefits of exercise and proper nutrition and the upcoming report from the Surgeon General that will stamp a seal of approval on our industry, the opportunity is incredible. When you are a player on the team of the fastest growing organization in that industry, you don't have to have a Ph.D. to see the opportunity.

There are only two things that you need to grow in any business: ability and opportunity. You can have all the skills in the world, but if there is no opportunity in the organization you are in, you cannot grow."

CIN.Q. - "Tell us about your company employee training program?"

CRAIG P. - "I believe we have developed one of the most extensive training programs in the industry. For our sales and manage-

ment track we require all new team members to complete a 40-hour, in club training program which involves completing a workbook that we call the "Passport to Sales Training." The workbook is an outline of information that they have to know before they enter into our corporate level sales training program. The completed workbook is the "passport" into sales training and covers information on our fitness orientation program, front desk, member service programs, operations, detailed competition surveys as well as hands-on training by shadowing our membership counselors and Managers to see first hand how we handle different situations. Once they complete the passport program, they attend a five day training program with fill-in-the-blanks workbooks, videos, extensive role playing sessions, incremental testing and a final exam and graduation.

We also have a complete module management training program which is spread over a six-week period which is taught by the department heads of each area that our people need to be trained on in order to manage a club. We train management candidates on human resources issues, payroll, the club operating system, operations and club management, interviewing and people management skills, to name a few. We also have an extensive in-house fitness certification program for our service staff that is second to none.

In respect to training, I believe in what Bobby Knight, Coach of the Indiana Hoosiers once said, "The will to succeed is important, but what is more important is the will to prepare."

A CONVERSATION WITH IVAL McMAIN

Ival McMain is a former United States Army tank commander who established his own CPA firm after serving his country. Ival had been operating his CPA firm for quite some time when he came in contact with Ray Wilson through some of Ray's joint-venture partners. Before long, Ival had been recruited by Ray to come into the Family Fitness Center organization's Central Office of Accounting and Administration. From that role, Ival grew to become Ray Wilson's top leader. After the acquisition of Family Fitness Centers by Fitness Holdings, Inc., Ival was named the President of the Family Fitness Center Division of Fitness

Holdings, Inc. and serves in that capacity at this time.

CIN.Q. - "Ival, one of the most impressive things to me when I shopped 6 or 7 of the Family Fitness Centers was the cleanliness and well maintained condition of the facilities. I was amazed at how clean and well maintained those facilities were considering the high daily traffic numbers. Could you give us an idea of what is done to keep the centers so clean and well maintained?"

IVAL M. - "We have a 600-point check system which rates every aspect of each facility maintenance and cleanliness. Our centers compete against each other every month based on those rating scores. We rely on our club coordinators to do their best every month in this area. They really compete intensely and none of them ever like to finish last! Also, each club has financial incentives tied to these ratings and they share in the savings when they keep costs low and on target."

CIN.Q. - "I understand that you are now in the process of instituting this system in Northern California as well."

IVAL M. - "Yes, that's correct. We are coming together with the merger of the two divisional cultures into one and this is just one aspect of that effort."

CIN.Q. - "Ray Wilson is famous for his Family Fitness Center Central office and the financial systems he put in place. I'm sure you had a lot to do with that area. How is the Central Office doing?"

IVAL M. - "Very well and very busy. We have moved Northern California into the Central Office in Southern Cal and the transition is going well. Our club support systems now handle all of the clubs in one Central Office."

CIN.Q. - "Of all the Fitness Holdings executive team, you have the most experience working with Ray Wilson. What have you learned from Ray that is now being shared throughout Fitness Holdings? Reflect back a moment. What is one of the greatest things Ray has taught you?"

IVAL M. - "He has empowered me to grow. And he's taught me how to empower others."

CIN.Q. - "What are some of the new thrusts that Fitness Holdings will be moving forward with?"

IVAL M. - "We are moving forward with a broad based personal training program for all facilities. And, we are going to install retail sales outlets in our facilities."

CIN.Q. - Ival, thanks to you, Mr. Wilson, Mark and Craig for sharing your time with me and our readers.

THE EXPERIENCE SYNDROME:

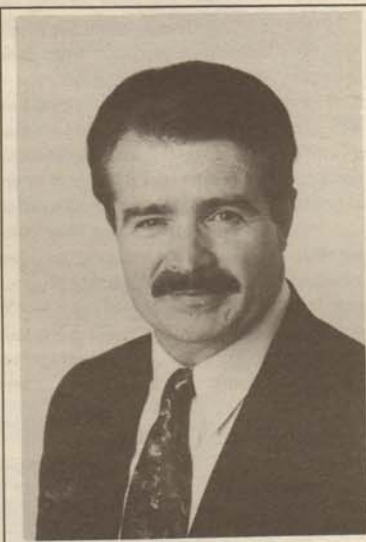
When Does Too Much Experience Affect Your Prospects For Employment?

By James M. Evans

Recently, a friend of mine was faced with the possibility of being laid off by a large community recreation center in the Midwest after 28 years as its Aquatic Director. The facility was facing serious financial problems and was considering either closing its doors or eliminating his position to reduce expenses. "Downsizing" is not unusual in today's economy, so he was not surprised that it might happen to him even though it is probably not as commonplace in the fitness industry as in the business world at large. What happened to him next, however, is more typical of our industry and has been going on for a long time.

My friend, John, is a veteran aquatics professional who sits on several national committees and has practically every certification and credential that he could possibly accrue in his long and distinguished career. Several times in the past he has turned down opportunities to be promoted to management positions because, very simply, he likes working in the aquatics environment, and he is very good at what he does. He is personable and friendly and has received superior evaluations every year for his job performance. But, John is almost fifty years old, and the industry which he has served so long and so well is now ready to put him out to pasture. The problem is that John isn't ready to call it quits.

He has contacted several fitness and rec centers directly about employment and mailed resumes to even more. Most of them have not even given him the courtesy of a reply while others have responded with flimsy, almost apologetic excuses. John is mature enough to accept rejection, but it bothers him to know that he is more qualified than most, if not all, of their current employees and probably more qualified than any of their other ap-



James M. Evans

plicants, too. He is not unfamiliar with the employment process having interviewed more than a few applicants himself over the years, but he is frustrated by the apparent discrimination that he is facing now - because of his age. This frustration is heightened by his considerable work experience.

Of course, John is not the only veteran affected adversely by the experience syndrome. It is a cancer which affects countless seasoned health and fitness employees every year who find themselves in transition, and the industry loses some of its most dedicated and productive employees because of certain negative attitudes about their experience. Let's explore the reasons behind some of these attitudes:

OVER QUALIFICATION

Perhaps nothing is more frustrating for experienced applicants to hear than that they are "overqualified" for a position. John has heard this excuse several times. Granted, the applicants might have more experience than the position requires, but so

what? It doesn't mean that they can't do the job as well or better than someone with less or no experience. The position might even be a step down for the applicants based on their previous employment history, but again, so what? The applicants probably already know that before applying for the position they must be willing to accept something less so that they may demonstrate their proficiency and work back up the ladder. Why would anyone hesitate to hire a person just because they have too much experience? Doesn't experience usually make a better employee? Something doesn't make sense - or does it? Let's go on.

PERCEIVED INCOME EXPECTATIONS

Often employers automatically assume that applicants will not accept a certain position because it pays less than what the applicants have been used to earning. And, accordingly, they do not make an offer to the applicant. Sometimes it is true that experienced applicants will reject an offer because of greater financial needs or expectations. But, it is also true that many experienced applicants might be willing to accept less than they have previously earned for the right opportunity. Employers, of course, are worried that if applicants accept a position, they might leave at the first opportunity for something better; however, that theory applies to all employees regardless of experience. What if an applicant does leave after a short time? What has the employer sacrificed? The same thing might have happened with a less experienced applicant, too. All of your training will be for

naught in either case. In the meantime an experienced applicant should be able to contribute more even in a short time than a less experienced applicant and the company will be better for it. Employers should not assume that experienced applicants will not accept a position for the income level that you are offering, nor should they assume that experienced applicants who accept such a position will automatically be looking for a better position while working for you. Such assumptions might cost you some outstanding employees.

INTIMIDATION

This is often the underlying factor in the rejection of many older, more experienced applicants. Employers reviewing resumes and/or conducting interviews might be younger and less experienced than the applicants and are intimidated by the comparison. This is just an ego factor which shows a lack of maturity and self-confidence. Strong, intelligent employers will surround themselves with good people and learn from them while leading them in a common direction. Not surprising, though, many employers are afraid to hire anyone with more experience than themselves. They are threatened by the fact that someone with more knowledge or experience might make them look bad in front of other employees or challenge their authority. However, this is usually more of a perceived threat than a reality and a poor reason to look a gift horse in the mouth. Experienced applicants with good references are usually good risks and have learned to be team players.

MOTIVATION

Employers sometimes perceive experienced applicants to be lacking in motivation or why would they not have started their

own business rather than continue working for someone else. The fact is that everyone does not necessarily make a good entrepreneur just as every salesperson does not necessarily make a good manager, and every manager does not make necessarily make a good sales person. Some applicants may have been in business for themselves at one time or another during the course of their experience and have decided, for whatever reasons, that they prefer letting someone else have the headaches of running the business while they concentrate on whatever they do best. John recognized very early that he really enjoyed working in aquatics, and he works very hard to be the very best that he can be in his own specialty. He has found his niche and has not desire to be anything more than the best aquatics director that he can be. Older, more experienced applicants are not necessarily less motivated than other employees - they are usually just more sure of themselves and know their limitations or the extent of their ambitions and don't look to bite off more than they can chew.

John's employer hasn't made a decision yet, so John is still working. In the meantime, he is continuing to explore the opportunities in his field. Every 18 seconds someone turns age 50 in this country, and John will soon be one of them. He knows that as the fitness market ages there will be a need for experienced and mature employees who can relate to the senior market and he can make a positive contribution to the company which appreciates his experience and maturity and recognizes that the future is now.

(Jim Evans is Executive Director of Heartland Health Center/Boone County Hospital and President of Evans & Associates specializing in marketing to the senior population. He can be reached at (515) 795-2105.)

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WELCOME TO ATLANTA!

By Norm Cates, Jr.

On July 19, 1996, the world will come to Atlanta, Georgia for the Centennial Olympic Games. It is estimated that 1.5 million people will visit this great city by August 4, 1996 and that 3.5 billion people will witness the Olympic Games via television! So, I guess you might say that Atlanta is now on the map.

When you look at Atlanta now, it is hard to believe that just 132 years ago, that General Sherman and his troops burned Atlanta to the ground. It is hard to believe because the city of Atlanta is the core of an 18-county metropolitan growth area which has seen increased population from 1.3 million in 1973 when I first moved here to over 3 million now. In short, Atlanta is busting at the seams!

Since a lot of you will be coming here for the Olympics, I thought I would give you some tips on where to go and what to do

while you are here. Even if you aren't currently planning to come for this great event, you might want to read this because you may change your mind. Here are some things to know:

• **HUDSPETH REPORT**

- Immediately pick up a copy so you'll know the best places to eat, drink and be merry.

• **ACOG - The Atlanta**

Committee for the Olympic Games released on June 14, 1996, 30,000 more Olympic Tickets.... this time Gold Medal Round tickets have become available for a number of events. It has also been learned that ACOG will release even more good tickets very soon. So, if you weren't coming due to a lack of tickets - think again and call the ACOG Ticket Telephone Number for the latest information on available tickets. (Be sure to have a VISA Card in hand as that is the only charge card accepted.) ACOG Ticket Info: (404) 744-1996.

• **ACCOMMODATIONS -**

It is not as bad as it has been made out to be. There are tons of people trying to rent out their

homes or apartments.... the catch is that this situation has been far overplayed and 90% of the places for rent have not been rented. Second, I continue to hear about hotel rooms that have been released by ACOG, so be sure to check with them.

• **TRANSPORTATION -**

If you are flying to Atlanta and have accommodations within the Olympic ring downtown, take Marta from the airport. Or, there appears to be a glut of rental cars coming in that will be available. Of course, you could let Northside Limosene Service be your chauffeur. (See ad on page 25.)

• **SIGHTSEEING -**

It won't be easy, but you should fit in some time to see some of Atlanta's landmark spots. Such as the Cyclorama, an incredible presentation on the Civil War. Cyclorama is located next door to ZOO Atlanta, a world class zoo on par with the San Diego Zoo. Don't miss the Jimmy Carter Center or the Martin Luther King Tomb and Visitors Center. Oh, and yes, don't miss the chili dogs at the Varisity Drive In located across the ex-

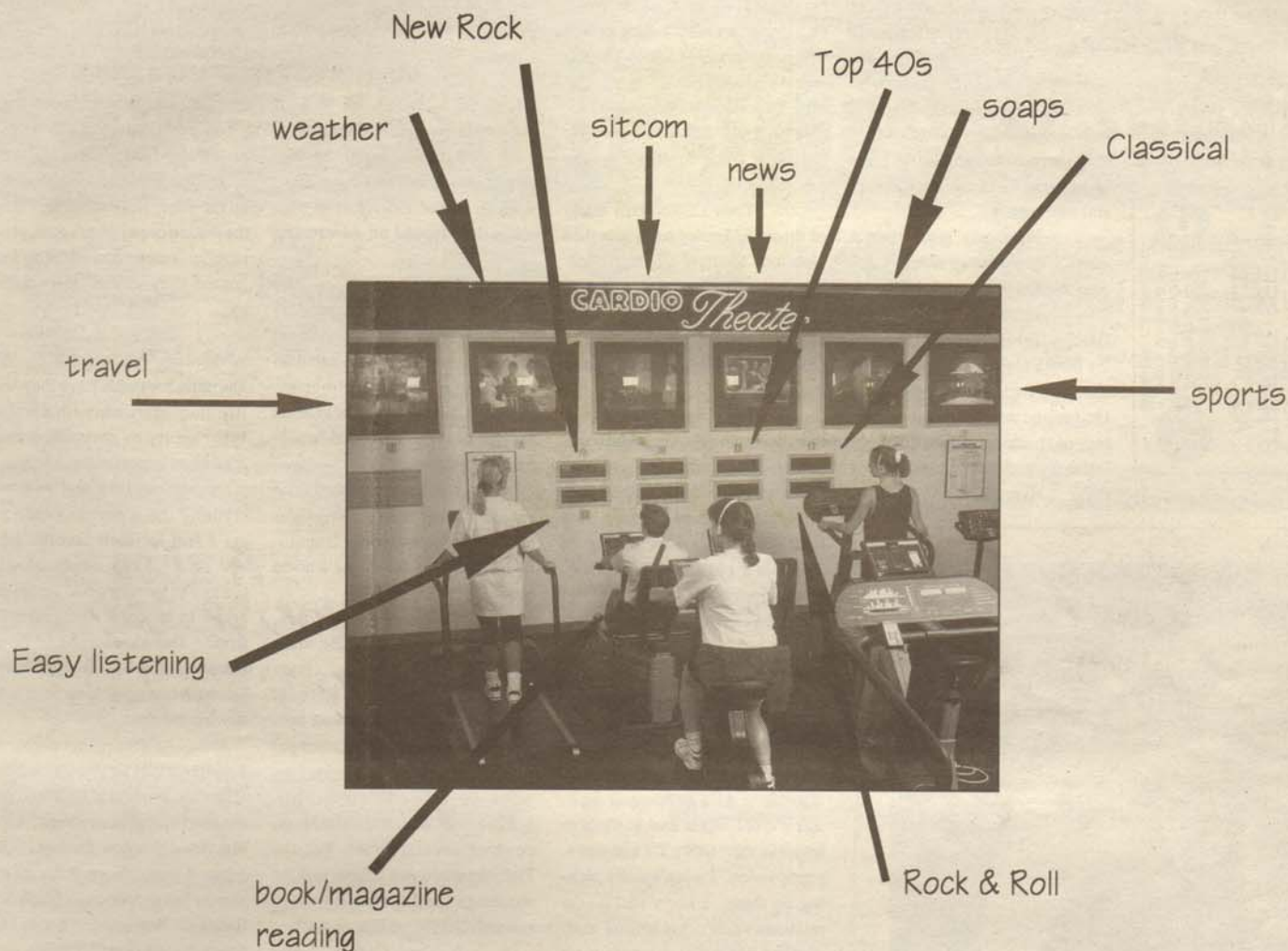
pressway from the Olympic Village at Georgia Tech. For shopping, visit LENOX SQUARE and PHIPPS Plaza. And, you might want to cool off from the summer heat by "Shooting the Hooch" - also known as taking a raft ride down the beautiful Chattahoochee River. Be sure to take a drive through North Atlanta's Mansion district and do it in the daytime so you can appreciate the splendor of the huge Southern Mansions. West Paces Ferry Road, Tuxedo Drive, Blackland Drive, Garman Road, and Northside Drive north of Blackland Drive are all loaded with elegant Southern Mansions which today sell for \$1 to \$20 million each.

• **FOOD and DRINK -** If you like the nightlife check out Buckhead, particularly East Paces Ferry area, where every Friday and Saturday night turns into a sort of Mardi Gras street party. Of course, my bet is that during the Olympics it will be like that every night. If you are part of the "artsy" crowd, don't miss the Virginia Highlands area. For the best Filet in town visit Hal's Restau-

rant and Bar on Old Ivy. Probably the hottest bar in town is the Tavern at Phipps. If you are staying in the suburbs, Houck's Restaurants (especially on Paper Mill Road) and Slocum's on Terrell Mill are all terrific!

• **CLUBS TO SEE -** Since you may want to mix some business with your Olympic pleasure and you may want to work out, here are some of the 125 or so health, racquet and sportsclubs you ought to try to see: Concourse Athletic Club, Sporting Club at Windy Hill, The Athletic Club Northeast, the Peachtree Center Athletic Club, the Australian Body Works Clubs (15), the SportsLife Clubs (7) and the Main Event on Powers Ferry Road. For a great 3.2 mile outdoor walk or run along the beautiful Chattahoochee River, go to the Powers Ferry Road/Northside Drive exit off I-285 and take the access road to the National Park where I-285 crosses the river.

• **HEAT TRAINING -** If you are not accustomed to high humidity and high temperatures, you might want to do some outdoor (See *Welcome to Atlanta* page 21)



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MY FAVORITE MYOPIANS

By Michael Hoffman

Successful club operators are my favorite myopians. Myopia- defined as "limited to seeing only objects close up." Since

they're myopians, these otherwise terrific businesspeople seem to think the universe exists almost exclusively of their club and those people in it or near it. They are so busy tending to immediate issues like today's sales and today's instructional classes and those inevitable member gripes that must be handled instantly, courteously and thoroughly.

Anybody more than a stone's throw away doesn't appear to exist to them. Like for instance, journalists. At the recent IHRSA Institute (summer school for health club operators who are already smart) at Michigan State University, where I had the privilege of speaking to over 60 of our industry's brightest and most committed myopians. I was cha-

grined but not surprised to discover that only five of them knew the name of their club town newspaper's health editor or any of the names of the major TV network affiliate fitness commentators. Reporters, editors and broadcast program directors were, for the most part, invisible to the myopians.

Then I asked how many of them had hosted a reporter on a club tour to show all their exciting and effective new exercise equipment and fitness programs at any time within the last five years. Only two reticent myopians raised their hands.

Undaunted, I queried further, asking how many were confident of their media relations skills and proud of their in-the-press track record. Again, two lone myopians - Ron Huling of America's Physique in Jackson, Mississippi and Laurie Cingle of the Gold Coast Multiplex in Chicago.

At that point, I was assured that the balance of my ACE-certified media skills presentation would have serious educational value for the myopians, if not to also serve as a subtle and well-intentioned reprimand to them to improve their radio, TV and newspaper vision. I wasn't really picking on them. I know that media relations skills come low on most club's priority list, because most owners like to be in the press, but can't see exactly how it contributes to the bottom line.

To slice through that bit of traditional bunk, I made the following points to the myopians, as they jotted notes furiously in their

PR 101 workbooks.

1. Strong media coverage costs less and creates a more powerful image than most advertising.

2. Media relations should be budgeted for 25% of your total marketing dollars.

3. Clubs that run consistent media campaigns have more walk-in traffic and referrals than clubs that depend on advertising alone.

4. Journalists appreciate and tend to favor club operators who take the time and effort to get to know them personally and who study their columns and programs to learn what type of fitness news they're likely to print and broadcast.

5. Club operators who run consistent media campaigns have more fun and better community reputations than those who do not.

By the end of my talk, hands were up all over the room for the Q. & A. session. Cindy Cantle of the Pierpont Racquet Club in Ventura, Ca. asked how she could make sure reporters put her club's name in the articles they write about fitness. Apparently, activities at Cantle's club had been covered several times, but the Pierpont name was left out and the words, "a local sports club" used instead.

I asked Cantle if she knew the reporters personally and she admitted she didn't. Enough said, I cautioned the myopians. Journalists are people, too, and they respond to the same kind of personal recognition that members do. Knowing them by name

is critical to developing a strong bond and good press coverage.

The myopians left my lecture with three key homework assignments, but the most important was to develop a little black book of every single newspaper, magazine, newsletter, radio and TV health and fitness reporter in their media market. And I added more to the job. Instead of just listing the station or paper, address, phone, reporter's name and job title, I suggested they gather information, too.

For instance, where did the reporter go to school? What journalism awards have they won? Are they married, with children? What sports do they enjoy most? And most importantly, I suggested the myopians read and watch everything the reporters produce to get a feel for their favorite topics and style. I kept emphasizing that the key to getting good media coverage is to know the journalists first. There's essentially no difference between getting to know a journalists and getting to know a new member.

At dinner that night, Big John Hamel of the Wheaton Sports Center in Wheaton, Ill., asked me if I would spend some time helping him develop a new facility PR program. I said, "Sure, John, as soon as you have your little black book finished. You need to get to know those people first."

On the flight back home, I read the NEW YORK TIMES, USA TODAY and the DETROIT FREE PRESS health and fitness sections looking for articles about clubs, but I didn't see any. I guess the myopians were busy doing something else, and you can't blame them. They have businesses to run and managing a year-round PR campaign does take time and money. It's a whole new skill they have to learn, but I have a feeling there won't be quite as much myopia from now on, at least for the people from the IHRSA Institute. After all, we're in a people business aren't we?"



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Clearly there is a long list

of benefits as a result of the agreement between Fitlinxx and Microfit, as both companies have established themselves as the standard for their industry. "The integration of data is a key factor for customers as information systems evolve in the industry. It lets them avoid repetitive entry and it allows customers to fully leverage the information they have available," said Keith Camhi, President of Fitlinxx.

Paul Vodak, president of Microfit, Inc. added, "The correlation of exercise tracking with assessments creates essential feedback and convenience for everyone involved."

The Microfit, Inc. health and fitness systems provides customers with interactive, on-line fitness and wellness assessments,

including body fat, strength, flexibility, heart rate, blood pressure and aerobic fitness. The system is self-contained and features simple menu-driven operation, real-time performance displays and ACSM-accepted protocols. Supplemental software programs include client contact and database management, group reporting functions, exercise plans and nutritional assessments.

Fitlinxx is comprised of a top-notch technical team, from leading universities, including MIT, Cornell, RPI and University of Pennsylvania, and from innovative companies in the medical, computer and electronics industries (i.e. Microsoft, IBM, America Online and Hughes). The benefits of Fitlinxx are obvious: tracking workout informa-

tion, making exercise hassle-free and enjoyable, and increasing motivation. Their mission is to improve health and wellness through fitness and technology.

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THE PEAK PERFORMING MIND

By Richard F. Gerson,
 Ph.D.CMC,CPC

MEET THE PEAK PERFORMING MIND

You've heard the saying "It's all in the mind". Well, the peak performing mind is not all in the mind. It starts with the mind but it also includes the entire body. In fact, the peak performing mind encompasses your thoughts, your emotions, your actions, your behaviors and everything else you can think of that will affect your performance.

Take a minute to relax. Go ahead. Sit back and take a few long, slow deep breaths. Feel the tension leave your mind and your body. Now, picture in your mind a time when you did everything perfectly. It could be a sporting event but it doesn't have to be. It can be when you were playing a musical instrument, singing, dancing, making love or doing anything else.

Feel how smoothly everything FLOWS. It all occurred without you having to think about it. You just were there in the moment doing your thing. You were acting "unconsciously", without thinking and everything going perfectly. In fact, when you started to think about it, the performance started to deteriorate.

Here's something fun you should try. Next time you're playing a sport, say golf or tennis, and your opponent is just beating the pants off of you and nothing you do seems to work, do this. Ask your opponent exactly what is he or she doing that is making him or her play so well. You can even be more specific and ask your opponent if it's in the preparation, follow-through or foot position. Your opponent will begin to think about the performance and everything he or she is doing and the performance will deteriorate. You may even win the match.

This works. I've used it hundreds of times, both in athletic competition and during training programs to emphasize a point. The point is that inappropriate thinking or excessive thought processes get in the way of the peak performing mind.

Your peak performing mind is the sum total of all of your thoughts, emotions, behaviors, past experiences, future desires, subconscious activity, and a belief that you are the best you can be. It is the mind that is operating when the right and left hemispheres of your brain, your conscious and subconscious and superconscious minds, and your reptilian, Mammalian and cortical brains are functioning in perfect synchrony. It's when your brain waves are perfectly attuned to the activity at hand.

Many people believe that when a person is engaged in a peak performance, their right brain has taken over from their left brain. Others believe that the subconscious has taken over from the conscious mind. As you can see from the previous paragraph, the truth is more than all the powers and capabilities of the mind are working together with the body to provide the peak performance.

The mental state of a peak performer has been described as flowing, free from anxiety and tension, with no competing or interfering thoughts. As an example, remember a time when everything you did went perfectly. You were just doing and being, not really thinking. In contrast, take a basketball player going up for a jump shot. Before he releases, he thinks "Is my arm in the proper position?" "Can I make this shot?" "Will I come out of the game if I miss?" Or consider the golfer, who before a drive, starts to think, "Now don't hit it into the rough." "Stay out of the sand trap." "Keep the club head up."

With all these thoughts running through someone's mind, the body doesn't have a chance to do its thing; which is, perform naturally. Instead of letting the mind go and relax, the performer has aggravated and overactivated the mind so that it can't do its job properly.

The peak performing mind has now become the meek performing mind.

You can prevent this from

happening by regularly training your peak performing mind. Start with a simple relaxation exercise, such as deep breathing. When you relax your body, your mind follows. Put another way, physiology creates psychology.

Also, work on relaxing your mind. When you relax your mind and dispel the myriad of competing thoughts, your body follows. Put another way, psychology creates physiology.

The relaxation response you're eliciting does several great things for you. It relaxes your muscles, makes breathing easier, lowers blood pressure, improves circulation and removes negative thoughts from your mind. It also makes you more receptive to positive suggestions that build up your positive attitude and belief system.

The best performances of the peak performing mind begin with your attitude that you can do this: You can relax and put your mind in the proper state. Then your body follows.

Your next step is to use positive affirmations. Tell yourself positive things, such as "I am great. I am capable. I am a successful person." Use these affirmations to put yourself into a highly motivated and confident state. Keep the affirmation statements in the present tense so you can experience them now, not in some hoped-for future state.

You are now relaxed, confident and motivated. Your next activity to create the peak performing mind is to visualize and imagine yourself achieving a peak performance. You can go back into your memory and pull out something you've already done and relive that.

In one program I conducted, I had a triathlete vividly describe his best ever Iron Man performance. I asked him to describe it using all his senses and to paint the most realistic(live) picture possible for the rest of the audience. He was so into his description, he started to relive all the positive feelings and emotions he had during the race. He was getting very excited. His description was also so good that

the audience started to have similar feelings. The joy, the elation, the chills, the desire to win, and the overwhelming feeling of accomplishment when the triathlon was completed. When he finished, they applauded as if everyone was actually at the finish line.

Use this "vividness" to put your mind in the right state. Include all the sights, sounds, smells, tastes and feelings of the previous peak performance. (Pay attention to how you start to feel all over when you relive this experience. You'll be amazed at "how tall you get").

If you can't visualize a past peak performance, create one in your mind. Act "as if" and become a peak performer. That's what all of us really do anyway. We pretend to be something and then with enough practice, that pretense becomes a reality. Just look at your children as they play pretend and copy role models. That's how they get so good at what they do and who they are. You should do it too.

Remember, you don't have to be an athlete to achieve this. We work with professional speakers, trainers, executives, teachers and many others to help them achieve peak performance in their line of work. So make yourself a peak performer to put your mind in the proper state for whatever you have to do.

Once you've imagined yourself successfully performing, go out and actually perform. Don't judge your actions and don't be critical. Just do it and notice the outcome. The less critical you are of yourself, the better you'll perform.

The more often you activate your mind in this manner, the more you'll achieve peak performances in all you do.

A HIGHER LEVEL PEAK PERFORMING MIND

Here's a way to achieve a higher level of peak per-



Richard Gerson, Ph. D.

formance. Use the acronym FIRE. It stands for Focus, Image, Relax and Execute.

The first thing you do is hone in on your target. You create a laser-like focus and stick with it. This arouses your desire and commitment to achieve a goal. Plus, when you are totally focused on something, your mind and your body (and the universe) will do everything possible to get you exactly what you want.

Think back to a time when you were totally focused on achieving something. Weren't you motivated and committed to getting what you wanted? Didn't you do everything in your power to achieve your goal? Wasn't your mind geared to guiding you to a top level performance that would help you achieve your goal?

This is the power of focus. When businesses have a focus, they succeed where their competitors fail. Focused corporations do well; unfocused ones do poorly. Athletes who focus on their sport do well while unfocused athletes never seem to make the grade.

So, in order to achieve a higher level peak performing mind begin with FOCUS.

Next, imagine yourself succeeding. Do this before you get involved in your task. You must constantly use imagery to take you to a higher level of achievement. Visualize, fantasize, dream, imagine, paint pictures, make mental movies or whatever. Do what you (See Gerson page 25)

SALESMAKERS Tip Of The Month

A STORY ABOUT FOUR PEOPLE

There's a story about four people named EVERYBODY, SOMEBODY, ANYBODY and NOBODY.

There was an important job to be done and EVERYBODY was sure that Somebody would do..... it. ANYBODY could have done it, but NOBODY did it. SOMEBODY got angry about that because it was EVERYBODY'S job. EVERYBODY thought ANYBODY could do it, but NOBODY realized EVERYBODY wouldn't do it. It ended up that EVERYBODY blamed SOMEBODY when NOBODY did what ANYBODY could have done!

The gap between enthusiasm and indifference is filled with failures!

Life After Death For Racquetball

By Dean Kachel

The Quadrangle Athletic Club opened its doors in Coral Springs, Florida in 1979, with 12 racquetball courts. The first two years saw 72% occupancy and court fees rolling in! By 1982, two courts were converted for fitness equipment. In 1985, another court bit the dust for free weights. Again, in 1988, two more disappeared for the expansion of aerobics and in 1991 The STEP caused another one to vanish. Down to six courts in 1993, two more were removed for additional equipment due to a takeover of a local fitness only club with over 2,000 members.

By the end of 1995, court usage had seen a 50% increase over the preceeding 12 months. No other competitor opted to install racquetball due to the cost and revenue per square foot equation. With the above in mind, the re-conversion of two courts; the construction of a state of the art aerobic studio on available land in the back of the building (with no 20' ceilings); and the relocation and expansion of the fitness center was determined to be a feasible project.

Through programming of the existing four plus two new courts, the Quad will be able to offer more leagues and challenge courts to a currently crammed schedule. With basketball leagues on one court and Wallyball being made available on another court, more people will be able to take advantage of the expanded courts. The 2-on-2 basketball league had to be limited to 24 teams 2 nights a week to balance our cur-

rent usage with the racquetball contingent in the club.

Over the upcoming year we plan to go back to having four Open tournaments and two in-house tournaments events, up from 3 events currently. Capacity for a racquetball event will be up 50% with the ability to have 120 players vs 80 now.

The additional courts will enable the club to offer corporate leagues with the flexibility of more court hours becoming available at prime time. It has been a deciding factor for several companies to join the Quad vs. the four other clubs in the market who have no racquet sports.

So, even though racquetball has seen no growth statistically and, in fact, has pretty much been dead in many areas of the country, the Quadrangle Athletic Club is experiencing a racquetball explosion due to lack of alternatives for the person who remembers how much fun it was 10 years ago; to the college grad who has played on the college campus indoor courts; to the teen/pre-teen who no longer has to pay court fees to experience the fun of indoor racquetball.

Racquetball is alive, well and thriving at The Quadrangle Athletic Club!

(Dean Kachel is the Founder and President of The Quadrangle Athletic Club in Coral Springs, Florida and a former member of the IHRSA Board of Directors. Kachel was recently named by the Coral Springs Chamber of Commerce as the communities' Veteran Business Leader of the Year.)

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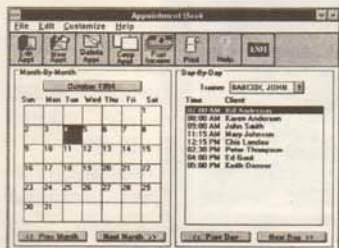
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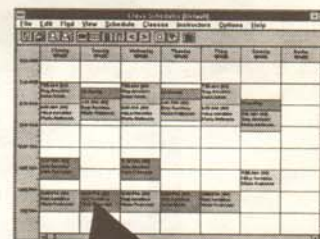
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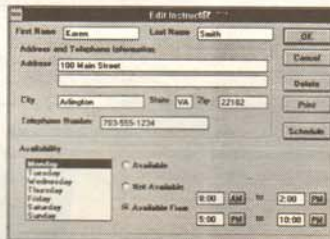
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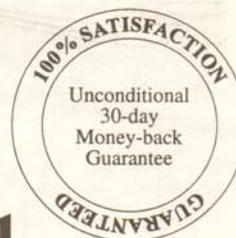
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...Norm's Notes

continued from page 3

court, averaging 160 footcandles!

TODD PULIS, owner of the fabulous Thoreau Club outside of Boston and some of his staff members, are due some special praise. You may recall my reports about our good friend **DICK TRANT'S** auto accident on Super Bowl Sunday. Well, Dick is recovering, but had not recovered fully enough to perform the removal of his air-structures from his eight tennis courts for the Spring/Summer season. Well, good old Todd put together some help from his team and went to Dick's club to help Dick's staff remove the domes. This was on top of the help Todd gave Dick last winter when a blizzard threatened Dick's courts while we were at a meeting in Montego Bay, Jamaica. Great job Todd and team!

TONY de Leede, the hot Atlanta club entrepreneur from "down-under", is fixing to have quite a summer. Not only has he

just opened up his 15th Atlanta area facility, he will be the first health club operator in the history of the **Olympic Games** to open and operate a health club in the Olympic Village. The facility will be called: **THE CARDIO THEATER OLYMPIC HEALTH CLUB** and it will be located smack dab in the middle of the Olympic Village, the Olympic home of over 10,000 athletes located on the Georgia Tech Campus. The club, exclusively for athletes, coaches and other Olympic authorized people, will feature Tony's very successful Cardio Theater System (Tony owns 50% of Cardio Theater) and it will be packed with cardiovascular and weight equipment for the athletes to use during the Olympics. Cybex, Star Trac, Tectrix, Precor, Technogym, Heartrate, Reebok-Skywalker, Icarian, Stairmaster, Ad Trainer and Polar all contributed to the cause. The club construction will start on June 15th and will be completed by June 30th, equipped and set for five days of training of staff. On July 6th, the day the Olympic Village opens, the club will open. The club will be packed

with media, I am sure, so this should be great exposure for Tony's efforts. And, that is just part of what Tony will be up to this summer. The other part is that he is taking a two-month 'leave of absence' from his two

companies to serve as the Olympic Envoy to the athletes from Australia. It hasn't escaped me that this will set Tony up very nicely for an encore health club and Cardio Theater in his home country of Australia when the Olympic Games are

there in the year 2000. Keep up the terrific work 'mate' and put another shrimp on the barbee!

I HOPE TO SEE YOU ALL IN ATLANTA NEXT MONTH!

...Neil Sol

continued from page 4

UPFC is one of many of this type of activity occurring across the country. It is this writer's opinion that everyone at SFMC and UPFC is happy about this relationship and is anxious for the future opportunities it presents. This was best summed up by Mr. Fidler when he said, "UH & FC

will allow SFMC to provide a fully integrated continuum of care to those we serve."

Cape Girardeau, Mo. is not the booming metropolis of NY, Chicago, LA or even St. Louis. But it has a healthcare institution and health club that have established themselves as leadership organizations in the shifting healthcare paradigm by joining forces. Other communities should take a lesson from the St. Francis

Medical Center initiative. Congratulations to St. Francis Medical Center and its new Universal Health and Fitness Center!

(Neil Sol, Ph.D. is the President of Health Vantage, Inc. a consulting firm for the health, racquet and sportsclub industry which specializes in the relationship between the healthcare community and health clubs. Neil may be contacted by calling: (303) 399-3224)

...Welcome To Atlanta

continued from page 12

walking/running in your town's hottest weather. The reason is that you can expect Atlanta to be hot as hell with humidity in the 90% range everyday. Don't forget to dress very comfortably with loose fitting clothes. The only time you might need a jacket

or sweater would be in the nighttime right after a rain storm.

These are just a few of the sights you should see while in Atlanta. I'm sure I've left out a lot, but this is a good start.

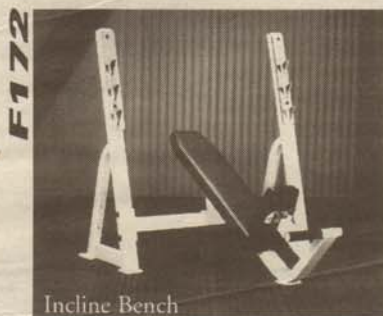
Oh.... and yes. Be prepared to stay. I can tell you that the first time I came to Atlanta was on a cross-country training flight in 1968. I was in the U.S. Air Force pilot training program at the time and spent just one night in Atlanta during that visit. But, I fell deeply

in love with this beautiful Southern City and vowed that after I got out of the Air Force, I would someday come to Atlanta to live and I would never leave. Well, I came here in 1973 and as I expected, I have never lived anywhere else since then. This is going to happen to some of you too..... so, don't fight it..... relax, enjoy, celebrate the Centennial Olympic Games and get to know this beautiful and majestic city set in the beautiful forests of north Georgia. You will be glad you did!



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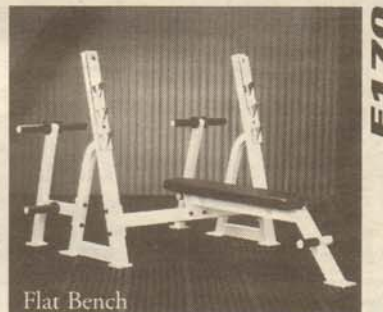


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ISSA Fitness • Education And Certification Leader

By Norm Cates, Jr.

In an industry marked by fragmentation and a lack of standards, one organization is receiving high marks for its forward-thinking curriculums and attention to personalized service.

ISSA (The International Sports Sciences Association) has succeeded, at least in part, by capitalizing on areas which their competitors have all but ignored. Case in point: personalized service. From your very first call to inquire about their programs (you'll talk to a real person, not an automated phone menu), to receiving your certification (an ISSA representative actually calls to congratulate you!), to post-certification attention (members have free ongoing, unlimited access to ISSA's technical-support staff via their 800 line and electronic mail) it's clear that ISSA has virtually re-defined the concept of member support.

ISSA Pioneers the Concept of Specialization in Fitness Education

Borrowing from a medi-



Dr. Sal Arria

cal model of education, where students are required to become competent in a range of specialties, ISSA responded to the need for specialization in the sports and fitness industry with a wide array of certification array and continuing educational programs, ranging from youth fitness to senior fitness, to fitness therapy. Other curriculums include police fitness, martial arts conditioning, adapted fitness, aerobic fitness, sports conditioning, water fitness, performance nutrition, in addition to ISSA's cornerstone program,

certified fitness trainer.

ISSA WELL RECOGNIZED

Founded in 1988 by Sal A. Arria, D.C., MSS, and Frederick C. Hatfield, Ph.D., MSS, the International Sports Sciences Association (ISSA) has certified well over 10,000 students as of this writing, with several thousand more currently in the process of independent study or foreign student programs. Muscle and Fitness magazine has ranked the ISSA in the top

certification agencies three times and describes ISSA as "spearheading certification in weightroom training and nutrition."

Many top bodybuilding stars such as Jim Quinn, Lou Ferrigno, Eddie Robinson, Milos Sarcev, Monica Brandt, and many others have chosen ISSA certification. Hundreds of physicians, chiropractors, coaches, physical therapists, athletic trainers, and others have also taken ISSA specialized courses for certification and continuing education.

Today, ISSA hosts semi-

nars in most states across the nation, as well as numerous countries around the world. This means that anywhere that ISSA trainers travel, they can find professional colleagues practicing the same fundamental skills of exercise assessment, nutritional guidance, fitness instruction, sports medicine practices, and legal procedure. In addition, many ISSA courses are taught in major colleges and universities around the world.



Dr. Fred Hatfield

ISSA Founders and Directors are From the Trenches AND the Ivory Towers!

The founders, directors and professors of the ISSA are unique in the respect that they come from both academic and athletic backgrounds. The majority are both doctors and elite level athletes. This is in keeping with the philosophy that fitness education cannot be learned solely by "hitting the books" - time must be spent "in the trenches" as well.

in all aspects of salesmanship, professionalism, personal communication, and client retention.

Seminars Tailor Made

ISSA recognizes that each club has its own specific requirements, policies and procedures, and therefore offers customized certification seminars to meet the specific needs of clubs with multiple trainers. These seminars are not only information dense, but extremely motivational as well. For more information on holding a customized seminar at your site call Rick Hughes at (800) 892-ISSA.)

New ISSA Team Member

The ISSA has brought the "Dean of Fitness," and the #1 Senior Fitness authority in the world, Bob DeMonteque, N.D., aboard to head its senior fitness program and **CLUB INSIDER** readers can look forward to periodic articles by Bob on senior fitness.

ISSA Members Are Taught the Value of a "Team Approach"

When health club members receive contradictory advice from the club's training staff, confidence (and therefore, member satisfaction and word of mouth referrals) suffers. ISSA-certified trainers are taught to appreciate this and understand that the club's success is a precursor to their own success. ISSA-certified trainers are well-schooled

LIGHT THE CANDLES!

Northbrook, IL - ATA Information Systems recently celebrated its 20th Anniversary. ATA first began in 1976 as a billing company in the health and fitness industry. In 1983, ATA became one of the first companies to offer automatic payment programs to health clubs. Today, ATA is one of the nation's largest processors of Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) Payments, processing millions of EFT payments each year.

ATA Company President, Eric Roehl, has seen many changes over the past 20 years. Advancements in technology have played a major role in the way ATA does business with its customers. Roehl comments, "In the mid-seventies, only the large health clubs had com-

puters and the term Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) was yet to be heard. Today, even the smaller clubs are computerized and the demand for EFT is tremendous. In the health and fitness industry, clubs have gone from thinking that EFT is a convenient option, to realizing it's an essential part of running a profitable facility. Club owners and managers have also become computer literate, which has helped in raising the quality of club management software packages introduced to the club market."

During the past year, ATA has introduced a new membership management software program called Club Vision for Windows. Marketing analysts for the company are expecting the

recent release to further heighten the level of quality that health and fitness facilities come to expect. According to Roehl, "Based upon the reaction that we've had from clients who are using the Windows software and trade show attendees who have participated in demonstrations, we feel that Club Vision for Windows will match and possibly exceed the first year sales goals that we've set for the introduction of the product."

ATA's customer base spans the United States and Canada. For more information regarding ATA Information Systems membership management software or EFT services, call (800) 282-0031.

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Dr. Fred Hatfield, ISSA Co-Founder & Author of Over 50 Texts on Fitness



Dr. Sal Arria, ISSA Co-Founder and U.S. Olympic Team Doctor



Bob Delmonteque, ND, Worlds #1 Senior Fitness Consultant



Bill Pearl, Worlds Leading Health & Fitness Consultant & 5x Mr. Universe



Tom Platz, B.S. MSS, Multi-Mr. Universe and World Renown Lecturer and Fitness Expert



E.J. 'Doc' Kreis, 3 time Strength Coach of the Year University of Colorado



Dr. James Peterson, Director of Aerobic Fitness - Past Sports Medicine Director for Cybex

THIS IS JUST A FEW OF THE MANY FITNESS EXPERTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE INTERNATIONAL SPORTS SCIENCES ASSOCIATION

The ISSA was founded in 1988 by Sal A. Arria, D.C., MSS, and Frederick C. Hatfield, Ph.D., MSS. Together, they sought to build a solid foundation for health and fitness education that would standardize knowledge, techniques, and philosophy both nationally and internationally. ISSA then formed an advisory board culled from the elite ranks of research, coaching, sports medicine, and other branches of sport and fitness science. The majority of ISSA professors & advisors are both world class athletes *and* Masters or Ph.D.s—people who have extraordinary academic backgrounds and also decades of practical "in the trenches" fitness and training experience.

Today, the International Sports Sciences Association has certified over 10,000 fitness instructors around the world. This means that your health club can now have an entire staff of fitness professionals practicing the same fundamental skills of exercise assessment, nutritional counseling, fitness instruction, sports medicine practice, and legal procedure. This gives you and your staff the professional credibility and a valuable education needed in today's ever competitive market. Many ISSA courses are taught in major colleges and universities around the world so when it comes to choosing a certification program, no other organization can come close to what we have to offer...no one!

HERE IS WHAT ISSA CAN DO FOR YOU:

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Are You Sifting Or Lifting Your Tennis Market?

By Spike Gonzales

These days tennis clubs have a unique opportunity to increase their memberships, or at least increase the number of tennis players in their areas. This opportunity comes from the support of the Tennis Industry Association's Free Lesson Blitz and the United States Tennis Association's Play Tennis America program. Hundreds of clubs are enlisting the aid of hundreds of thousands of dollars of advertising, administrative help and

teaching materials to bring new players into the game. It's a "freebie" most owners, managers and pros can hardly resist!

There are two ways to approach this opportunity. One is "sifting". This is the use of these programs to bring dozens of potential new players to the site and going through motions step by step.

Sifting involves putting the participants, unsegregated by ability and experience, into lines to individually get their turns to hit pro-fed tennis balls. It includes some instruction about various techni-

cal aspects of the game. It induces those who can absorb or who can quickly adapt physically to consider taking up tennis. These are generally the very athletic or highly motivated among the prospects.

For each 100 people showing up, perhaps 10 or 20 of them are sifted into the ranks of those giving the game continued effort. Often the other 80 or 90 candidates are either bored or intimidated and decide that tennis is not for them. They then report accordingly back to their family and friends in their market areas. The sifting approach may, in the long run, be doing more harm than good! It can spread negative word-of-mouth about tennis and about the club throughout the host club's market!

It is important to get at least 40% of the Play Tennis America students motivated to continue playing tennis. Hopefully at least 20% will join your club. It's equally important to ensure that the other 60-80% of the students develop positive impressions. They will be the ambassadors of the experience they've had with tennis at your club. At their homes, offices and parties, they will be

spreading the word favorably or unfavorably about their interactions with you and our game.

Rather than exposing people to the possible decision that tennis is not for them, it's crucial that Play Tennis America or similar programs be a boost to the reputation of your club and to the general tennis market. This is accomplished by running a well-orchestrated program attending to the details of every possible "moment of truth" your prospects have with the club and their tennis trial.

Particularly, the initiation of potential tennis players has to be a fun experience in which the participants learn how to successfully rally the ball. They shouldn't be given too much technical information, and they shouldn't be put into lines where their inabilities and insecurities are exposed to others!

There are many obstacles facing new players trying to learn the game. Not the least of these is



Spike Gonzales

the difficulty getting to the level where the fun and fitness of the game outweigh the frustrations. Pros and administrators have to be sure their programs nurture the new students through the beginning levels with extra doses of aggressive hospitality, salesmanship, attentive orchestration and carefully planned curriculum.

(See Gonzales page 30)



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...Gerson

continued from page 25

must to get clear, solid pictures in your mind of what you want to achieve and how you're going to go about achieving it.

Remember that the mind doesn't know the difference between a real or an imagined event. So, if you create pictures in your mind, your mind will think they are actual perceptions of what is happening in your world. Then, the mind and body respond accordingly.

Therefore, when you envision peak performance, you respond with peak performance. IMAGINE the possibilities.

After you've imagined yourself performing at your peak, and before you actually go out to perform, relax. When I say relax, I don't mean sleep. You're still focused on what you want. You're just going to achieve it without tensing

up.

Every physical performance occurs better when the mind and the body are in a state of relaxed alertness. Your conscious and subconscious minds are working together to take you to a higher level. Relaxed alertness makes everything move in slow motion, it makes your targets bigger, it makes fatigue disappear, it makes your confidence soar, and it moves your peak performance to a higher level. So, RELAX.

The last part of the FIRE acronym is to execute your actions. This means you perform as if you were just running off your motor program, much like a computer program. There is no outside interference. The program just runs.

Your mind and your body already know how to perfectly execute your desired activity (sports, speeches, music, it doesn't matter). So it's up to you

to let them do their thing. When you execute properly, you can't help but excel. It's when you try to think too much, when you let your mind get too active in the process, that the performance is less than peak.

Now that you've achieved a higher level of peak performance, you can store the behaviors, thoughts, emotions and feelings in your memory for playback at a later date. You can rehearse for new situations by reliving old ones. You can transfer skills and feelings from previous peak experiences, using your imagination, to future peak experiences before they happen.

It's really all up to you. Do you want to continue as a run-of-the-mill, average performer who disappears in a crowd? Or do you want people to consider you a peak performer, someone they can count on to do his or her best at all times. Someone they can get the ball to for the last shot

of the game; to be in the batter's box in the bottom of the ninth; to get on stage to deliver a speech to motivate the sales team; and the list goes on.

I strongly believe that we'd all like to be the latter person. Now, knowing what you know about the peak performing mind and how to develop, nurture and maintain that mindset, you can be a peak performer all the time.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The peak performing mind also remembers acronyms and mnemonic devices to help it perform. Here are several that will help you maintain your peak performing mind.

The 5 F's: Focus, Feel, Fire (perform), Follow-through, Feedback

The 5 D's: Direction, Discipline, Dedication, Desire, Determination

The 5 P's of Peak Performance: Power, Purpose, Passion, Patience, Persistence, Practice

The 12 C's of being a Champion:

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- Courage
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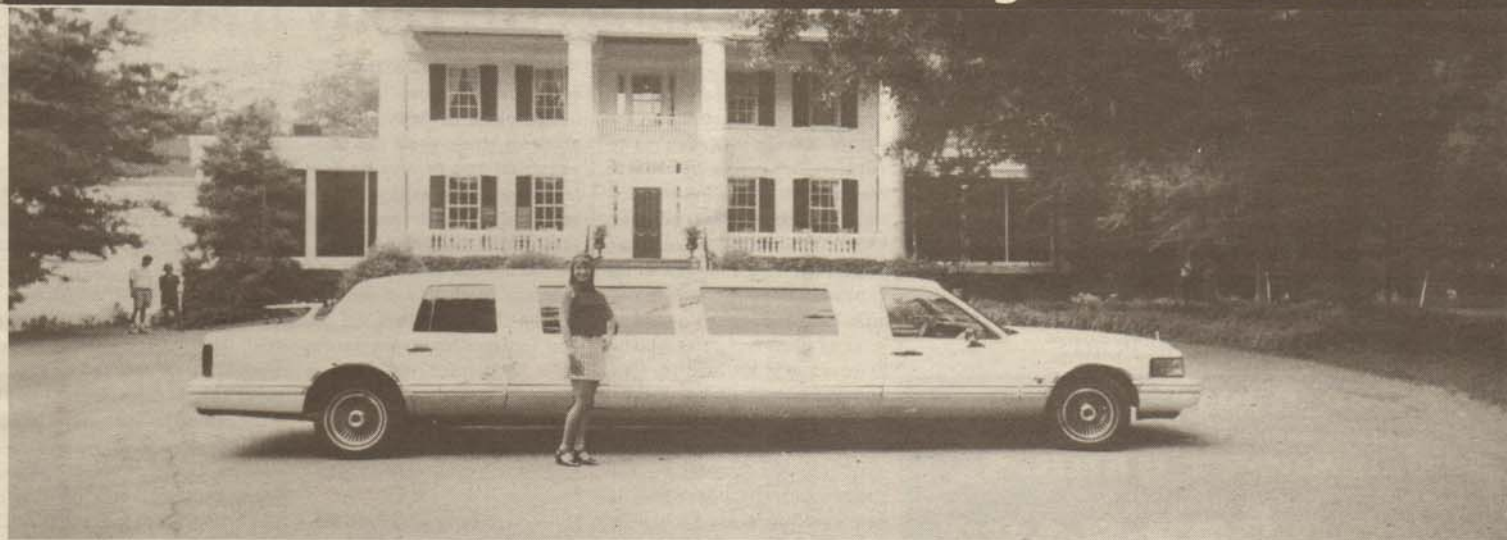
(Richard Gerson, Ph.D. is a noted author and speaker and the President of the Peak Performance Learning Center at 2451 McMullen Booth Road, Suite 203, Clearwater, Florida 34619. He may be reached by calling: (813) 726-6508.)

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REFURBISHED TIMES

You have a big investment in your facility's fitness equipment, managing that investment is very important to your bottom line.

By Steve Paterson

Club operators tell me they're concerned about members hurting themselves on the treadmills. Their main worry is the circuit breakers kicking off while a member is in the middle of a run. You hear stories of this happening at facilities around the country. How can you prevent this from happening at your facility?

Injuring one of your members can be very costly to your bottom line. There are steps you can take to prevent this breaker shutoff

from happening at your facility.

Some of the more common reasons for this shutoff problem are important to know. How to be sure your power set-up is correct and how to inspect your treadmills for potential 'breaker' problems is also important. And, you should know what to do to assure your circuit breakers won't kick-off your treadmills while your members are using them.

Most Common Reasons For Breaker Shutoff:

1.) The treadmill is not on a dedicated 20 amp. circuit line.

2.) Too much friction between the running belt and deck is being generated.

Steve Paterson



3.) Faulty drive motor.
4.) Choke "shorted" out.

Your treadmills need to be on a dedicated 20 amp. line. It amazes me how many clubs don't do this. It's necessary for safety and easy to accomplish. Call an electrician if your aren't on dedicated lines.

Too much friction between your running belt and deck is the number one reason for circuit shutoff! The first thing you need to do is clean out the dust and dirt under the running belt. (Very important). Then raise the treadmill up to its highest elevation (15%). Keep the treadmill off and stand in the middle of the belt. Your weight should cause the belt to move back slowly. If the belt only moves a little or not at all,

you have at least a worn running belt. Next, loosen the belt and feel underneath with your hand. If it's smooth and glassed over, you need a new running belt. Also run your fingers across the running deck toward the front where most people run. Is it scratched, rough or have grooves in it? If it does you need to replace your deck, too or just flip it over if it has two sides.

If your running belt doesn't feel glazed and your deck feels smooth, then scratch the underside of the belt with your fingernail and check for wax. If it feels dry, you need to lubricate the running surface. (Call National Gym Supply at: (800) GYMPART for lubricants). Be sure to use proper deck lubricants and clean the dust and dirt from under the belts regularly.

A less common problem is a faulty drive motor. To check yours, you need to remove your running belt. Then run the treadmill with the belt removed for 5 minutes or more. Check the motor to see if it gets hot. If it does, have it checked out by a service tech. If it doesn't, then it's not a motor problem.

Another possibility is a bad 'choke'. A choke on a treadmill regulates the amperage. If you let your running deck and belt get worn and the friction increases too much, you may have blown the choke. If you are having circuit shut-off problems

even after you replaced your deck and belt and your motor is good, you probably need to replace the choke. Your choke is easy to replace. Call your treadmill's manufacturer and they can send you a new one and explain how to replace it.

When your treadmills kick off the circuit breakers it's a dangerous problem. But it's also a symptom for future treadmill mechanical problems. The problems that cause your breakers to kick off will eventually lead to costly mechanical repairs.

Keep your running belt and deck lubricated properly and keep the dirt cleaned from under the belt. This will prevent most of your treadmill problems. And if you do let your belt or deck get worn, replace it immediately. I know it's costly, but if you don't you will have continuous treadmill problems.

(Editor's Note: Steve Paterson has invented a tool called: "The Treadmill Saver" to facilitate proper treadmill cleaning and maintenance. See the Treadmill Saver FREE TRIAL OFFER advertised in this edition or call Steve at (714) 770-1267. Steve is the V.P. of Marketing and Sales for Pre-Owned fitness equipment at Fitness Systems, Inc. Call (888) 348-7978 for a current pre-owned equipment inventory and price list. Also call and get on our Fax list for bank-repossessed fitness equipment.)

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An Apology To Body Masters®

DAVE LeCOMPTE has of late been getting on the nerves of some pretty big manufacturers such as Life Fitness with his comments in his Fax newsletter, *Fitness Market Advisor*. Dave's most recent venture into journalistic irritation came at the expense of *BodyMaster®*, the terrific Louisiana-based manufacturer of great weight machines. Dave wrote in his June 14, 1996 newsletter and I quote: "Hello, *BodyMaster*? We had five separate phone calls this week asking us if troubled *BodyMaster* had filed for Chapter 11 protection. In fact, everyone seemed to call us except *BodyMaster*, which did not return our repeated queries. Inquiring minds want to know, you know?" Well, it looks like Dave finally got a return call, because later that day he published an "An

Apology to Body Masters®" which stated in part: "We wish to apologize to Body Masters about an article about the company that you received a few hours ago. In creating the 44-word article, we were responding to rumors in the fitness industry. We did not talk directly with the company in advance of publishing the article and thus did not hear the company's view nor receive factual information from the company related to the rumors in the industry. Our article was therefore not an accurate reflection of the company's position."

According to President GLENN FOREMAN in a phone conversation at about 9:00 am this morning, "The Company is financially strong and is in the process of introducing new products to the markets, expanding

territories and appointing sales representatives. We are continuing to expand our management team to reflect new challenges in the industry and to look forward to maintaining our sales advantage in the marketplace. A revolutionary joint marketing and sales venture will be announced in a matter of days. LeCompte closed with "We apologize to Body Masters for this error." The *CLUB INSIDER* wishes *BodyMaster®* well and we expect great things from a great company.... we'll try to keep you posted on their new marketing and sales venture. Dave LeCompte's *Fitness Market Advisor* is very informative and interesting to read and overall. He does a real good job keeping up with the financial end of the industry. To order Dave's financial Fax, which usually goes out twice per month, call: (800) 325-0599.

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Dear Club Operator:

Hello, my name is Steve Paterson and I've been selling refurbished treadmills for 6 years. This experience has lead to an easy way to take care of your treadmills to improve their work capacity and save you money. I'm not a service technician, but I've been fortunate to work with the best fitness equipment technicians in the business. For years I listened when they told me the importance of keeping the dirt and dust cleaned out from under the treadmills running belt. They showed me how the dirt was like sandpaper on the running deck and 'roughed-up' the running surface. Most of your members who use the treadmills have some dirt and pebbles stuck to the bottom of their shoes. When they walk or run on your treadmills it falls off the shoe and some of it gets underneath the running belt. Dust from around the gym also gets underneath your belts.

They explained how this was the beginning of most treadmill service problems. Because once the deck gets scratched and the belt roughed up. The friction increases and the motor has to work much harder. This increases the demand for electricity which increases the amperage draw. They showed me how this increase in the amps, is what blows out the lower motor control boards, the upper computer control boards, transformers and fuses.

This creates a dangerous situation because the extra friction can cause the circuit breakers to kick off, which stops your treadmill and can throw your members to the ground. (not a good thing to happen)

Once your treadmills deck get scuffed up, your in trouble ! This friction can actually melt the underside of your running belts and cause them to glass over. I don't know if you've ever had to replace a belt and deck on a treadmill but it can cost you \$800 with installation. And every treadmill I've ever seen with a burned out motor had a worn deck and belt.

When was the last time you cleaned under your treadmills running belt ?

The *Treadmill Saver* is a custom designed cleaning tool that easily slides underneath your treadmills running belt while the treadmill is off. It has a special synthetic sheepskin surface that is chemically treaded to make dust & dirt clump together. After you push it under the running belt, you turn the treadmill on. The running belt slides over the T.S. and the dirt is removed from the underside of the belt. It's also designed to sweep down the length of the running deck, pushed along by the movement of the belt. This wipes the deck surface and removes the abrasive particles that can cause future expensive service problems. The T.S. has a specially designed handle to allow you to easily control it's movement. The best part is the belt does most the work for you, you just hold onto the handle and guide it's movement. It's that easy, and it takes only 30 seconds a few times a week per treadmill.

When I first designed the *Treadmill Saver* 2 years ago I had no intention of selling them. I wanted one for my treadmill at home and for the service technicians I work with at Fitness Systems Inc. (we sell refurbished fitness equipment and every treadmill we bring in has some dirt built up underneath the running belt.) But once the word got, how easy it made cleaning under a treadmills running belt I couldn't make them fast enough. Now I have them manufactured for me to keep up with the demand.

I named it the *Treadmill Saver* after my clients who used it, called me and told me how easy it was and how it saved their treadmills from costly repairs. If it only saves you from buying 1 less treadmill belt in the next year, that's reason enough to get one. And if it doubles the life of your treadmills, what's that worth to you ?

The way I look at it, I'm not in the business of selling treadmill cleaners. I sell refurbished fitness equipment domestically and internationally, and it takes all my time. I am offering one to you at only \$59, which covers my expenses and brings me about \$15 profit on each one for my time and effort. To tell you the truth, the money I earn from it really isn't worth the time I put into it. The reason I promote it is because of all the fitness equipment sales it brings me. Believe it or not this is the best advertising I've ever done in my 6 years selling refurbished equipment. Club operators are so happy with the results they get, that it builds tremendous goodwill for me, which brings in future fitness equipment sales. It's a win-win relationship with my clients.

I know the Treadmill Saver is worth a lot more than \$59, but I refuse to raise the price.

I want to make you an offer you can't refuse because that's how strong I feel this product will help you keep your treadmills maintenance and service costs under control. There has never been a device for the health club industry that can make such a difference for your treadmills.

All you have to do is call my voice mail #(714)770-1267 and leave me your name and mailing information. I will quickly mail out a video showing you the *Treadmill Saver* in action. You will see first hand how much a difference this tool will make. And how simple it is to use. After you view the video, call my voice mail # and tell me to send you one C.O.D. When UPS shows up at your facility give them a check for \$59 plus \$8 shipping & handling. (Ca. sales tax) Open up your box and use it! In fact, it takes UPS 10 or more days to return your check to me. So you get to use it on all your treadmills for 10 or more days. If you don't think the *Treadmill Saver* will save you hundreds of dollars. **I WON'T CASH YOUR CHECK!** If you don't want to keep it, call my voice mail and I'll cut your check in 2 pieces and mail it back to you. And I'll send UPS back to pick it up. ... No questions asked.

And if you do like it, I'll give you a 1 year replacement guarantee if it was to break.

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Hurry and call today.

Sincerely

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MARKETING MATTERS

By Mike Chaet

Dear Mike,
 What form of marketing would be most effective in helping me grow my club both short and long term?

Dr. Leroy Moore
 Exertec
 Napa Valley, California

Dear Leroy,
 You have asked the sixty four dollar question. During my 31 years in the club business this has been the question most asked by club marketing people. How to develop a marketing plan that generates a sufficient number of members

now while having a long-term residual effect. The answer is: "CONCEPT MARKETING."

Concept marketing is a strategy whose time has finally come within the club industry. Rather than continuously throwing away money at discounted membership programs, turn your efforts to a more positive program of growth. Concept marketing is a process that is based around the following two steps:

(1) Develop a concept within your club that fills the needs of a specific segment of your market population.

(2) Wrap a great marketing program around that concept and sell it to potential members as well as to existing members.

Whereas most marketing efforts within the club industry have traditionally focused on the mass marketing approach to selling memberships by featuring whole shopping lists of choices, concept marketing focuses on selling a specific segment, or program within your club. Put another way, rather than selling an entire collection of features, concept marketing focuses on a single feature, benefit or concept, hence the name concept marketing.

Recently you might have observed several good examples of concept marketing if you had seen the following ads and promotions: The "30 minute workout" as offered by The Bally Clubs, a concept that is aimed at time-effective workouts for people on the go. The "Step Reebok Center" at the Downtown Athletic Club in Helena, Montana focuses on the simple concept of devoting an entire room to the one singular activity of step classes. No moving of steps - no mixed classes, plain and simple: just steps. John Wood and John Cooley of the Final Results Fitness Center in Pennsylvania recently installed a "PACE Aerobic Training Center" for class and "drop-in"-usage. "CardioTheater" is the concept that wraps the cardio equipment around the idea of personalized entertainment. The "Boathouse Program" from Concept II encourages club members to get involved in a selection of fun rowing exercise programs. The "Fitness Express" program at The Works in Somersworth, New Hampshire, allows each user to track through a three-piece diverse cardio workout in 30 minutes. And the new and exciting "LifeFitness Personal Performance Center" provides the user with a personalized and private, full cardio and strength workout that is stored in memory and printed out on demand, the first truly personal and validated fitness program of its kind. All of these are excellent examples of concept marketing.

Concept marketing has distinct advantages in today's market over the typical mass "try to sell memberships to the whole club" market approach.....

1. Since you are selling one concept, program or addition to the club, it is easier for the buyer to understand your mes-

sage. In today's "noisy" world this is critical. Your marketing will be targeted at those people who will be interested in the concept you have recently introduced to your club. Don't misunderstand that this may very well be your entire marketplace due to the broad appeal of your new concept such as a time saving workout program.

2. Your sales focus and message are much more concentrated. Therefore, you, as the marketer, can FOCUS a more concentrated effort and apply more resources to getting your message out. This makes what you are trying to say clearer and much more powerful than the typical campaign that lists all of your services and facilities in a menu type format.

3. A recently introduced pricing strategy of "unbundling memberships" to give people a choice of paying for what they use can be destructive to all that has been done at a club. While adding additional concept options and upgrades allows you the ability to do what is called "reverse unbundling," which means keeping your base membership as is and add upgraded memberships as a purchase option. This makes the basic membership look more valuable while offering a "premium membership for those who wish to pay for it."

The life of a concept is similar to that of a new car. The higher the quality of the concept the longer the life it will have. You may recall fitness equipment that talked to the members as they were exercising. It was a concept based around fitness equipment that coached you while you were working out and was trying to be a personal trainer. The concept had a very short life because the equipment had an essential biomechanical flaw. It apparently didn't represent what people wanted in exercise movement and that was push-pull. However the "Adult Only Swimming Pool" built at the Paerdegat Athletic Club in New York has been going strong for ten years now. The point here is that a fundamentally sound concept will help your club grow both on the short and long term. It serves as a foundation for the next conceptual and as each concept builds on the next you can expect to have a rosy future. Some concepts are worth trying because of the low



Mike Chaet, Ph.D.

entry cost. A good example of this is the slide fitness program. It doesn't cost a whole lot to get in so if it goes bad not much is lost.

Commitment is truly the key word to success when it comes to concept marketing. Simply adding steps to your aerobics program will have a totally different effect on your club than adding a totally dedicated "Step Center." Basketball in a racquetball court, or even two courts is certainly not the same as a full size basketball court. When evaluating the possibility of adding a new concept, it is highly recommended that: "if you cannot do the concept with full commitment it may be best not to consider it until you are in a position to commit the proper resources which will in return create maximum impact."

A final note here is for you to understand that each concept may be developed within your club over a period of time. The best way is to develop one concept at a time, market it, sell memberships against it to maximize the growth potential within your club, and then start thinking about developing the next concept. This is a long term approach to growing your club.

As one club owner recently said, "I used to buy equipment, now I develop concepts."

(If you have a marketing question for Mike Chaet, Please submit it to him by fax at: (406) 449-0110 or mail to: Marketing Matters, C/O CMS, Box 1156, Helena, Montana, 59624. For additional information, you may reach Mike at: (406) 449-5559.)

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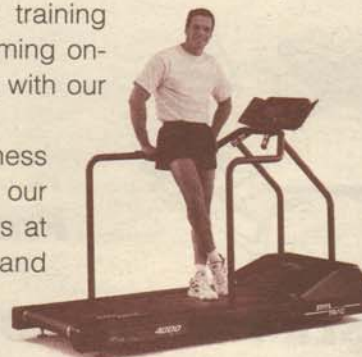
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DENNIS KEISER'S VISION

Dennis Keiser is recognized as a visionary and leader in his field. In the 1970's, he and brother Randy were running a small engineering consulting firm that designed conventional weight stack exercise machines for a leading manufacturer. Dissatisfied with the resistance produced by the standard weight stacks, Dennis sought to develop an alternative strength training system.

In 1978, when "Iron was King," Keiser introduced air-power as an entirely new form of resistance to the fitness industry. The line he

eventually called KeiserAir utilized a low-inertia, variable resistance system—without the use of chains, sprockets, cables or pulleys—providing a smooth, consistent and optimal load during a muscle's concentric and eccentric phase of movement. While the concept was misunderstood and doubted, Keiser dared to change a hundred years of tradition.

Today, more than 30,000 Keiser strength training machines are in use world-wide in leading health clubs, corporate fitness centers, YMCAs, colleges, universities, elite athlete programs and

senior care facilities. Now, the value of Keiser equipment's high-intensity, low-impact, user-friendly features is internationally recognized by researchers and fitness experts, even industry competitors. In fact, there are now more than six companies worldwide copying Keiser's air technology, and when the patent expires in the U.S. and Canada, there will be even more.

Now, Dennis Keiser is turning up the heat again..... this time in the area of the trendy group cycling programs. With

the development of the new Keiser Free Wheel stationary bike and the new Power Pacer bike, Keiser has designed superior equipment and training programs for those clubs interested in group cycling programs. And, Keiser has signed on Karen Voight, an international fitness authority. Voight, recognized as one of "The Ten Most Outstanding Working Women In America", was named both "Fitness Instructor of the Year" and "Businessperson of the Year" by IDEA/The Association of Fitness Professionals. Voight has authored and has been the subject of more than 200 national and international maga-

zine articles. And, instructors across North America will have the opportunity to participate in training sessions developed by Voight and delivered by Voight Staff.

To exemplify the power of the group cycling thrust in the health and fitness market, consider the recent Keiser sale of 1150 bikes to LA Fitness. This huge order and a number of other purchases by leading health club chains will thrust Keiser squarely into the competition for the North American group cycling business.

...Gonzales

continued from page 24

Clubs with high standards of beginner lesson programming lift their local tennis markets. They benefit immediately with new members who are a delight to have around, moldable to the needs of the club, and likely to be the club's greatest promoters. Prospects who don't immediately join spread good word about tennis and the host club,

and often come back as members when their time is right.

Clubs that simply sift through the beginner lesson prospects may be doing themselves a disservice in the long run with non-enthusiastic or even negative word-of-mouth in their markets.

(Spike Gonzales has been building tennis markets since 1971. An influential member of the USPTA, USTA and IHRSA, he was involved in bring-

ing those organizations together in founding the National Tennis Rating Program. He presently serves as an advisor to Tencaps R, a USPTA-endorsed tennis handicapping and rating system. As President of AD-In Club Management and the owner of The Naples Racquet Club in Naples, Florida, he specializes in the development of pros and managers in the tennis industry. To reach Spike, call 941/262-6647.)

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International fitness authority Karen Voight is the designer of Keiser's Power Pacing and Pace and Shape programs.

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THE BIKE. The Keiser Power Pacer™ puts a new spin on stationary biking. Because it's made entirely in the U.S. And with superior Keiser manufacturing and design. Examples? An extra-wide 24-inch base for a stable ride. Handlebars that extend forward as well as upward to fit all body types. A 2400 lb-test nylon belt that's easy to adjust and replace. A frame that's warranted for 10 years.

And since even the best bikes need to be properly steered, we've put one of the world's leading fitness experts on top of it.

THE TRAINER. International fitness authority Karen Voight is a workout pioneer, celebrity trainer, club owner and columnist. We're delighted to say she is also the creator of our two Power Pacer programs: *Power Pacing* and *Pace and Shape*.

Power Pacing strengthens glutes, quads, hamstrings and calves, while melting fat and building stamina. *Pace and Shape* gives members a total workout and introduces many cardio-only members to the joys of strength training.

Both are intensely cardiovascular, low-impact and non-intimidating. They're also highly motivating so members will keep coming back.

THE PR. *Power Pacing* is starting out a step ahead of everything else. To keep us in front, we'll supply you with all the materials you need — including banners, posters and ads reminding your existing and potential members where to go for *Power Pacing*. Meanwhile, our PR firm will be telling media about *Power Pacing* directly and through national magazine articles. We'll also supply training manuals and videos. Or you can choose our personal instruction package. Either way, you can be up to speed in under a day. What other stationary bike offers that kind of support?

THE BOTTOM LINE. People of all ages will be asking you about *Power Pacing*. So make sure you're prepared. Call Keiser today at (209) 265-4700 and we'll show you how easy it is to bring *Power Pacing* to your club. There's no telling how far you could go.

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Tim Mansour Wins Small Business Person-Of-The-Year Award

By Norm Cates, Jr.

Tim Mansour, the Founder and President of Fitness International, a chain of four quality Atlanta area health clubs, has won the Gwinett Chamber of Commerce Small Business Person of the Year Award. He had been a finalist for the award in 1993 and 1995, but did not win the big trophy. This time, Tim Mansour won. Mansour's clubs range in size from 40,000 sq. ft. up to his newest and most spectacular facility in Lawrenceville, Georgia which is 52,000 sq.ft.

In his acceptance speech, Mansour, who opened his first club in 1986, commented, "It's really not because of Tim Mansour, it's because of the people who work

with me that made Fitness International successful." He specifically mentioned his wife, Cherry; his brother and 'right-hand man' Joseph; his mother and father and six members of his management team.

Probably a significant contributing factor to Mansour's success is his dedication to honest and ethical club operations. He comments, "Our non-pressure sales efforts and our fair price philosophy will always be the way we do business. Our prices are published so you can be assured that everyone receives the same price. There are no "better deals" or "buy-one-get-one-free" memberships.

Congratulations to Tim Mansour and the Fitness International team for this well deserved award!

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