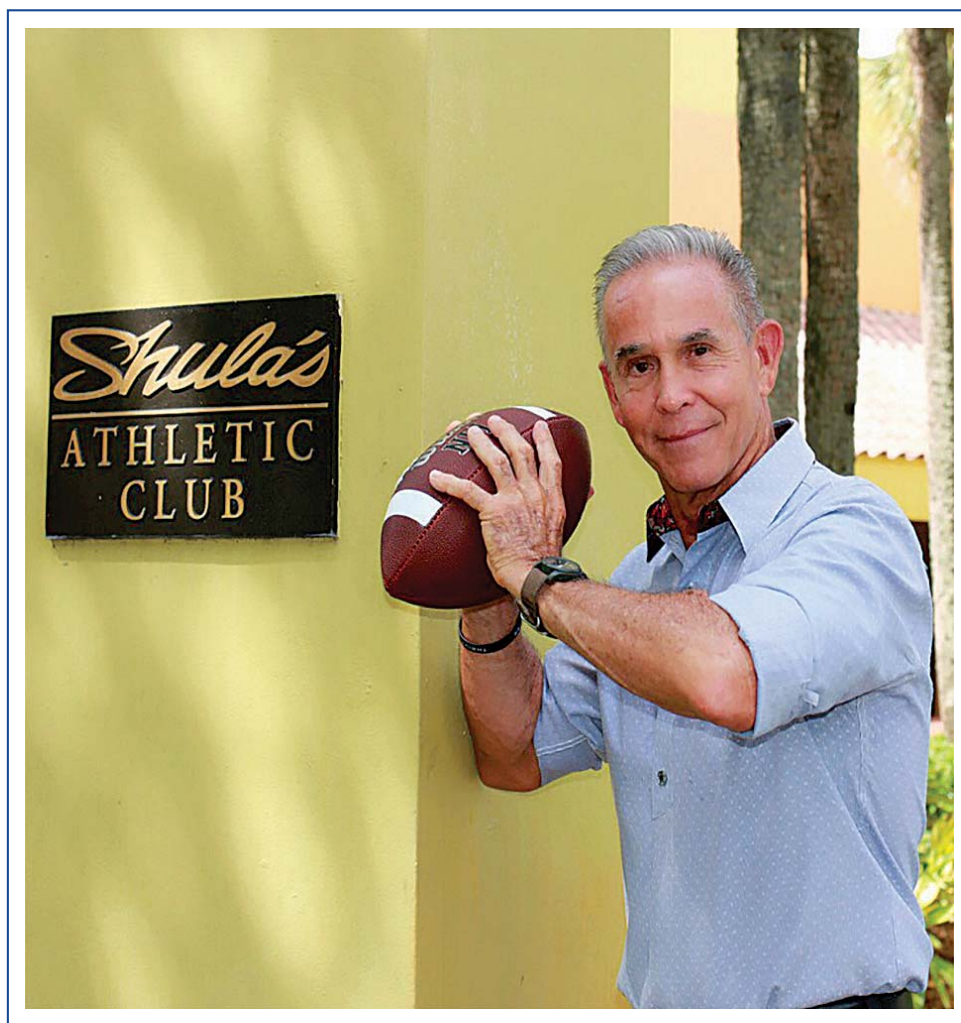


Norm Cates' CLUB INSIDER™

The Pulse of the Health and Fitness Club Industry

**Thanks and Appreciation to Bill Higgs
As He Retires After 35 Years of Service
at Shula's Athletic Club**



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A photograph of a Planet Fitness gym located on the ground floor of a multi-story brick building. The storefront features a large yellow sign with the words "planet fitness" in pink 3D lettering. To the left of the text is a circular logo with a yellow hand giving a thumbs up and the letters "pf". A purple flag with the Planet Fitness logo is flying from a pole on the right side of the building. The sky is blue with some clouds.

GET READY TO OWN THE CLUB... **LITERALLY.**

The Planet Fitness logo, which consists of a yellow hand giving a thumbs up inside a black gear-like circle, with the words "planet fitness" in white lowercase letters below it.

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Norm Cates' CLUB INSIDER™

The Pulse of the Health and Fitness Club Industry

Thanks and Appreciation to Bill Higgs As He Retires After 35 Years of Service at Shula's Athletic Club

By: Norm Cates

Bill Higgs, 66, has set a high standard for health and fitness club General Managers everywhere to learn from and apply to their own careers. The lessons this man has learned over his 35-year career as GM of Shula's Athletic Club in Miami Lakes, Florida, are numerous, and Bill has shared some of them with you here in this special **CLUB INSIDER** Cover Story, which is being published in honor of Bill Higgs and his retirement. The lessons he's learned and experiences he's had don't just apply to being a manager of a club business; they're lessons that, if applied to your life, will help you succeed in all of your endeavors. In short, Bill Higgs' story is a tale of 35 years of success that was caused by his dedication, his hard work, his flexibility and his consistency, to name just a few of the positive traits that Bill has applied to his career.

I'm not sure this author can come

up with a better way to express our sincere Thanks and Appreciation for his dedication and hard work in our industry, and then sharing it with all of us in the club world, than to echo the words of weekend NBC Nightly News Reporter, Jose Dias-Ballart, who consistently closes his weekend news shows with these special words: "Thanks for the privilege of your time." So, *Bill, thanks for the privilege of your time.*

This edition of **CLUB INSIDER** is our 284th monthly edition. Just like every one of our **CLUB INSIDER** Cover Stories, this one is special, and I want to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to Bill Higgs for dedicating his entire adult working life to our great industry. Bill retired from Shula's Athletic Club in Miami Lakes, Florida on August 9, 2017, and on that date, he was honored at Shula's Athletic Club with a grand Retirement Party.

Without further ado, let's proceed
(See *Bill Higgs* Page 12)



(L to R) Bill Higgs, Daughter Jenna, Wife Linda and Son Bradley at Bill's Retirement Party, August 9, 2017

Planet Fitness and its Franchisees Award \$50,000 in Inaugural Judgement Free Generation Scholarship Program

HAMPTON, N.H. - Planet Fitness, Inc., one of the largest and fastest-growing franchisors and operators of fitness centers in the United States, announced it has awarded ten deserving high school students nationwide as the recipients of its inaugural Judgement Free Generation Scholarship Program. As the home of the Judgement Free Zone, Planet Fitness seeks to recognize young people who have promoted kindness, acceptance and inclusion in their communities, qualities that Planet Fitness and its charitable

partner, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, strongly support.

As part of the program, each scholarship recipient will receive \$5,000 toward their college education. Applications were submitted from Boys & Girls Club youth throughout the country and the 10 winners were evaluated using the following criteria: demonstrated the values of kindness, acceptance, respect and tolerance; submitted a personal video and information about extracurricular activities, career and educational aspi-

rations and academic performance.

"As part of Planet Fitness' Judgement Free Generation Initiative, we want to empower the next generation to grow up contributing to a more judgement free society and our winners reflect this mission, embodying and promoting our shared values," said **Chris Rondeau**, Planet Fitness' Chief Executive Officer. "While most scholarship programs recognize students for academic or athletic abilities, we believe it's important to also

(See *Planet Fitness* Page 10)



Inside The Insider

- Exercise IS Medicine! - **By:** Shannon Malooy
- Properly Utilizing Facebook and Instagram Ads - **By:** Jillian Curl
- Key Components of an Effective Compliance Program - **By:** Paul R. Bedard, Esquire
- Maximizing Your Member-Guest Events - **By:** Karen Woodard-Chavez
- IDEA World Fitness Convention Celebrates 35th Anniversary! - **By:** Angie Pattengale
- Tapping the Niche Market - **By:** Casey Conrad
- Attracting Outdoor Enthusiasts Indoors - **By:** Nancy Trent
- Mountinside Fitness Partners With Sonora Quest Laboratories to Offer Customized Wellness Testing to Health Club Members
- Crunch Franchise Announces Its Newest State-of-the-Art Facilities In Tampa, FL; Colorado Springs, CO and Chamblee, GA
- Club Industry 2017 is on The Horizon! A Focus On This Year's Keynote Speakers
- And, of Course, *Norm's Notes*

Norm's Notes

• **Hello Everybody! This is your CLUB INSIDER Publisher and Tribal Leader Since 1993 checking in with our 284th monthly edition! YAHOO! Football is BACK, and I'm fired up waiting for the first college game kickoff!** Rather than waste your time if you're not interested in hearing me yack about football, this month, I'm reincarnating a former column we've produced in past issues of CLUB INSIDER. It's entitled **Norm's Personal Notes**. And, as I've done in the past, we're placing this installment of **Norm's Personal Notes** at the end of these Norm's Notes on **Page #10**.

• **Is America a great country, or what?** And, if you don't agree, you're a free man or woman, so you can think whatever you want to think. That's one of the **great BEAUTIES** of our America! God bless all of you, and God bless America!

• **BILL HIGGS**, this month's **Cover Story** subject, has a special story as a man who has **dedicated 35 years of his life to our industry** while serving as the **General Manager of Shula's Athletic Club** in **Miami Lakes, Florida**. Check out Bill's cover story starting on **Page #3**. **Congratulations Bill, and the best of good luck to you and your family in the future!**

• **Best wishes to DEREK GALLUP** as he's now in his second month of his **IHRSA Chairmanship**. Derek has an

opportunity to **advance IHRSA**, and I wish him well in all his endeavors during his term as IHRSA Chairman. **Good luck, DEREK, and to your Board of Directors!**

• Here's a little *reminder...* If you haven't booked your room at the **Chicago Hilton** where **Club Industry** will be hosting its **35th Annual Convention and Trade Show**, you can still do so. And, there are still real bargains on airfare to be had as I booked our flights on August 9th for *just \$321.95 for both of us roundtrip!* Check out **Pages #28 and #29** for information on the fast approaching **Club Industry Show**. And, please make plans to attend the **Club Industry Trade Show** where you will find new ideas, products and all kinds of solutions for your clubs.

• **Welcome to JEFF RUSSO** and his **Pro Fitness Program**, as they've joined our **CLUB INSIDER Advertising Team**. If you're a club owner/operator who would like to generate more revenue from your **Personal Training Program**, Jeff's **Pro Fitness Program** is definitely something you should investigate. Check out Jeff's **Ad on Page #27** in this issue. Also, I want to say **THANKS to AL TASSEL** for following up on this opportunity.

• **CHRIS RONDEAU** and his **Planet Fitness Team** are **rocking and rolling** at the company and making moves that will differentiate the company from all others big time. Check these news items out:

1. Planet Fitness has awarded ten deserving high school students nationwide with Planet Fitness' inaugural Judgement Free Generation Scholarships. The company has launched this special program because they seek to recognize young people who've promoted kindness, acceptance and inclusion in their communities. Check out the **Press Release** on **Page #3**.

2. Planet Fitness has announced that its **St. Petersburg** club has partnered with **Solar Energy Management** to become the **first 24/7 Planet Fitness to be a net-zero energy building!** The updated energy efficient Planet Fitness, located at 5335 66th Street North, St. Petersburg, FL 33709, is now **99.5% reliant on sustainable solar power**.

3. Planet Fitness has announced the upcoming opening of its first club in Panama. The club is expected to open this Fall in **Santa Maria**, with a second location opening in **Centennial** by the end of 2017.

• **BEN MIDGLEY** and **Crunch Franchising** is also **rocking and rolling** with announcements of new **Crunch Franchises** in **Tampa, Florida; Colorado Springs, Colorado; and Chamblee, Georgia!** It's nice to see **GEOFF DYER**, my old buddy and **IHRSA's 21st President**, and his partners, **VINCE JULIEN, TONY SCRIMALE, JEFF DOTSON** and **KEVIN LaFERRIER**, doing great and



Norm Cates

opening their 11th location as partners! Check out the **Press Release** on **Page #24**.

• **ANGIE PATTENGAL** is the **Director of Certification** for the **National Federation of Professional Trainers (NFPT)**, and she's been with that organization since 1994. In her role, she oversees the NFPT coordination of certification test development and delivery, and she directs the growth initiatives of their **Certification Program**. Angie and her NFPT Team attended **PETER and CATHY DAVIS' 35th Annual IDEA World Fitness Convention and Trade Show**, held in **Las Vegas, July 20-23rd**. Check out **Angie's Report and Group Photo** on **Page #25**.

(See Norm's Notes Page 7)

About Club Insider

Established in 1993

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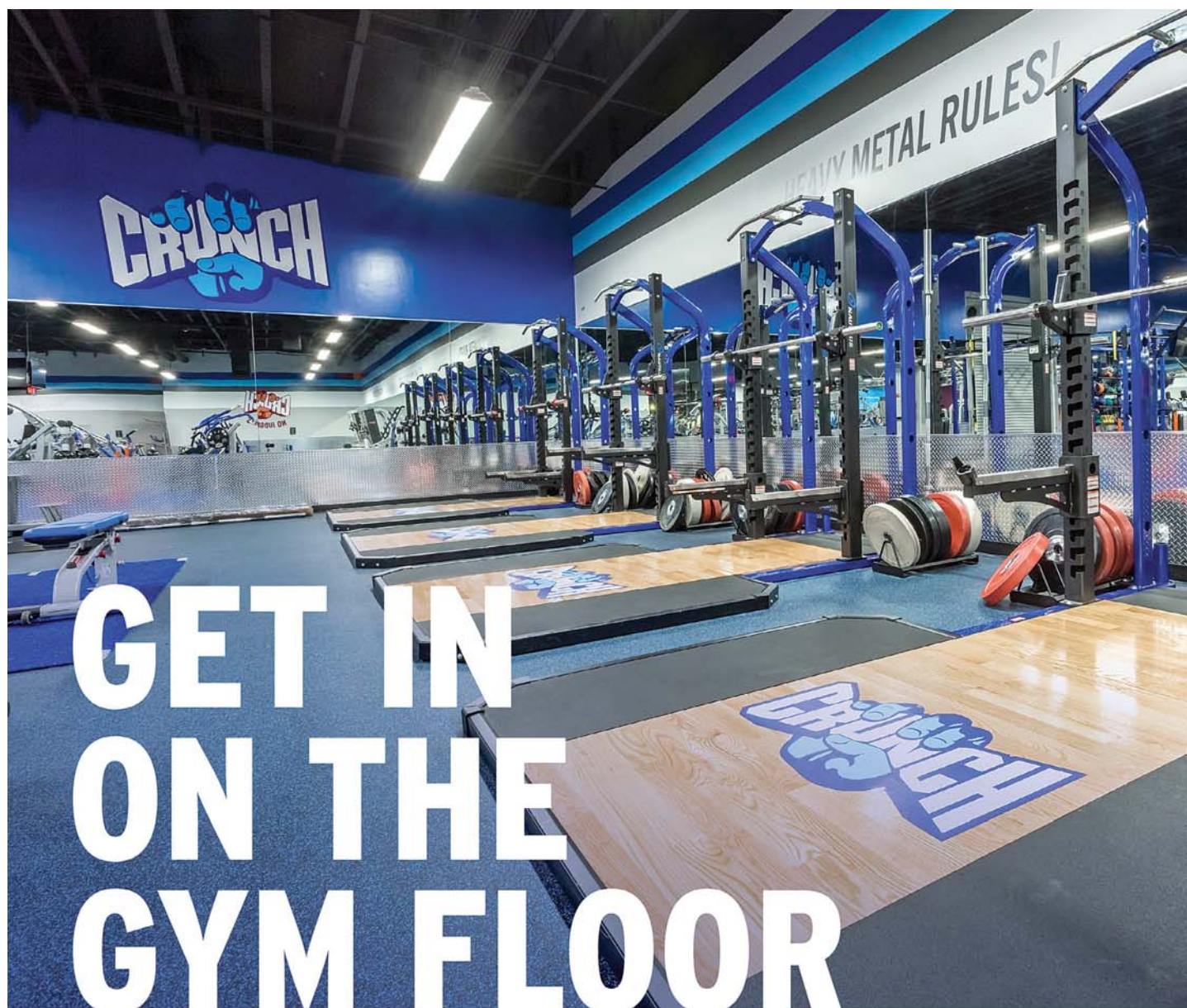
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Exercise IS Medicine!

By: Shannon Malooly

The beautiful attorney in pink, Elle Woods, from the movie *Legally Blonde*, said it best when she said, "Exercise builds endorphins, endorphins make you happy, and happy people just don't shoot their husbands!" I mean, if that's not reason enough to get exercising, I don't know what is!

In all seriousness, the word "medicine," the thought of medicine and the effects of medicine have always had a very negative effect on my psyche. I remember having to hold my nose to swallow cloying syrup that would burn my throat and then instantly sour my stomach. I used to think to myself, "Great, now my tummy hurts too!" Then, there was good ol' Mary Poppins who admitted herself that medicine was awful tasting and tried to persuade us to take a spoonful of sugar to help the medicine go down. It was always hard for me to understand how something so awful could make me feel better.

The exact same mentality goes for exercise. Let's be real. Everything in that weight room is so heavy! Sometimes, I feel like a rat on a wheel going nowhere and thinking about how my legs hurt and

that I'm tired. Everyone keeps touting the benefits: you'll feel better, you'll have more energy, your blood pressure will improve and wait for it... you'll be able to come off some of these meds you are on! Wait a second, you mean to tell me that this **Exercise IS Medicine** concept is not something new!?

How did we get to this place we are in where preventable and treatable diseases and conditions are at an all-time high in this country and the world? According to the United Health Foundation, more than 100 million U.S. adults, or 43% of the population, will be considered obese by 2018, which will add an additional \$344 billion to the already \$1.5 trillion in medical costs associated with chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and cancer.

My grandma taught me that the very best exercise I could do every day was pushing myself away from the table, and she wasn't far off. All of us know that weight gain or weight loss is a direct result of calories in vs. calories out. In our clubs, we preach the importance of having a healthy balance of nutrition and exercise. We offer weight loss programs and nutrition programs that include weigh-

ins and meal planning. But, let's get real folks. Two out of every five people are either obese or borderline obese.

This means that they are high risk for: Heart disease and stroke; High blood pressure; Diabetes; Infertility; Erectile Dysfunction; Colon Cancer; Breast Cancer; Kidney Cancer; Esophageal Cancer; Pancreatic Cancer; Rectal Cancer; Liver Cancer; Cervical Cancer; Endometrial Cancer; Ovarian Cancer; Prostate Cancer; Gallbladder disease and gallstones; Osteoarthritis; Gout; Breathing problems, sleep apnea and asthma; Depression; Anxiety; Mental Illness; COPD; Glaucoma; Osteoarthritis; and Mortality.

And, the list goes on! Additionally, for each one of these secondary complications that one will contract (because remember an obese person is HIGH RISK for these), there is an additional list of ancillary complications. We have not even considered yet what cards their existing risk factors or family health history have stacked against them.

So, to be clear, having a sedentary lifestyle or unhealthy eating habits will cause obesity, and becoming obese will lead to a very high probability of me contracting a secondary complication or life-threatening illness that could kill me.

It seems completely backwards to me that a physician would prescribe drugs to lower blood pressure or treat conditions caused by being obese rather than prescribing exercise to their patients. Not connecting an obese person with a health and fitness professional to educate them on what it takes to lead a healthy and independent lifestyle is irresponsible. The effects and side effects that drugs have on the body are not optimal and should not be the first consideration in treating patients.

Additionally, exercise can not only reverse the effects and risks of obesity, exercise can also reverse and minimize the effects of almost every ailment and disease known to man. Depression, anxiety, anger management, high blood sugar, heart disease, dementia, arthritis and on and on... **Exercise IS medicine!**

If exercise can prevent illness, if exercise can treat illness, and if exercise can cure illness, why is it that we continue



Shannon Malooly

to spend money on expensive surgical and pharmaceutical procedures rather than prescribing exercise as medicine? Why is it that the United States spends more than 50% on health care than the next highest spending country, but according to the World Health Organization, we rank 37th in results. And, of the eleven wealthiest countries in the world, we are last in terms of health care ratings including access, quality of care, outcomes and coverage for all populations.

Now is the time for the health and fitness industry to join forces with the medical community to combat and prevent illness, disease and chronic injuries. It is critical that we focus on keeping people healthy rather than on sick care. It is time to put the health focus back in *health*-clubs. It is time for us to shout: **Exercise IS Medicine!**

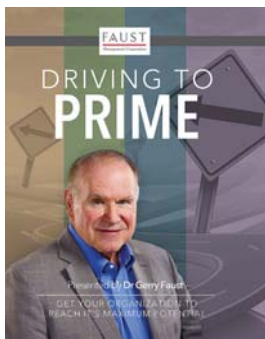
(Shannon Malooly has been in the club industry for over ten years as a health professional and is currently the Membership Sales and Marketing Director at The Claremont Club in Southern California. Shannon thrives off of thinking outside the box and creating conversational marketing pieces. She's sees opportunity for growth in all areas of the club business and believes that there is a branding opportunity around every corner. Shannon hopes to inspire others to be creative, thoughtful and brave in their business and marketing choices, and she believes the best is yet to come.)

Here's a Special Offer for Our CLUB INSIDER Friends:

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...Norm's Notes

continued from page 4

• **Congratulations to PETER and CATHY DAVIS** on their successful **35th Annual IDEA World Fitness Convention**, held in Las Vegas in July. And, make plans for the **IDEA World, 2018 Convention and Trade Show**, to be held in beautiful San Diego, California, June 27 - July 1, 2018.

• **The lovely Allison Flatley** has been committed to the health and fitness industry for 30 years. An accomplished leader and experienced club operator, a former **IHRSA Vice Chair, Nominations Committee Chair and IHRSA Board Member**, she has now started **Allison Flatley Consulting** to help organizations with their strategy, business growth and client engagement. Allison is helping champion and cultivate the corporate fitness and wellness market for **HydroMassage**. She is also working with IHRSA on industry relations, membership growth and leadership engagement. Allison can be reached by email at allisonflatley85@gmail.com or phone at (703) 868 - 8306.



Allison Flatley

• **MARCO FIORINI, Operations Manager for Cincinnati Sports Club**, has earned a **Six Sigma Black Belt Certification**, making Marco one of the few people in the health club industry to earn the title. **Congratulations to Marco on his special achievement!** Cincinnati Sports Club was featured as the subject of our **January 2015 Cover Story**.

• **Long ago**, way back in the late 1990s when **CLUB INSIDER** was in its early days, and my great son, **JUSTIN CATES**, was about ten years old, I wrote about **HARVEY SPEVAK** and the exciting growth of his great up and coming company, **Equinox**. In that writing, I quoted Harvey from a source that I can no longer remember because it's been so long ago. The quote was his humorous reply when asked by a reporter where he was headed with Equinox next, and he replied, "Well, I can tell you we won't be going to Albuquerque, that's for sure." It was then and there that I began to believe in

Harvey Spevak and his organization, and I began to believe that they were going to go far. I felt that way then, and I feel that way now, because I've **ALWAYS** believed a **good sense of humor will go a long way in life**, and now, Harvey continues to prove that to be true.

This note, however, is about **Equinox receiving a significant minority investment from L Catterton**, one of the largest and most consumer-focused private equity firms in the world. Here's what Harvey Spevak had to say about this new investor, as reported by **Cision PR Newswire**: "Partnering with L Catterton, which has unparalleled expertise and institutional knowledge of the consumer space, is a resounding endorsement of the strong positioning and performance of our brand. Equinox has never been in greater demand. This investment will allow us to continue our rapid growth and achieve our long-term strategic initiatives to provide exceptional, high performance lifestyle clubs across the U.S. and globally." So, **Stay Tuned Folks... maybe Harvey and his Equinox Team will show up in Albuquerque after all!**

• **Congratulations to PAM O'DONNELL, IHRSA's Vice President of Member Experience and Development**, and her **Team at IHRSA**, as they've produced another successful **IHRSA Institute**. The Institute was held in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, August 1-4th, with 85 club business professionals from across the country and around the world attending. And, **we thank those IHRSA "Fast Burners"** who gave their valuable time teaching knowledge-hungry club owners and operators at the Institute.

• The parent company for **Annapolis Athletic Club** in Annapolis, Maryland and **Coastal Fitness** in Ocean City, Maryland, **Ten Oaks Partners**, has announced that they've acquired **EDGEWATER FITNESS**, a 42,000 square-foot, multipurpose recreational club in Edgewater, Maryland. The Edgewater Fitness website reports that the facility serves 3,800 members and offers a great lineup of cardio equipment, free weights and weight machines and group fitness classes. **Best of luck to all involved!**

• The gigantic **Club Corporation of America** has announced that they've entered into a definitive agreement to be acquired by investment funds affiliated with **Apollo Global Management** in an all-cash transaction valued at **\$1.1 billion!** This will make the transaction one of the largest to ever happen in the club industry, with the largest still being **MARK MASTROV's** sale of **24 Hour Fitness** in 2005 for **\$1.68 billion**. **Congratulations to the ClubCorp folks!**

• **Town Sports International Holdings, Inc.** has announced that it will acquire **16 Lucille Roberts Health Clubs**.

Reportedly, **the clubs will continue to operate** under the **Lucille Roberts** brand.

• **BREAKING NEWS!** Today, August 14th, right at our press time, **CLUB INDUSTRY** released its **Top 100 Health Clubs of 2017** list. So, be sure to check out www.clubindustry.com for the **Top 100 Clubs** news. And, for sure while you are there, check out and make plans to attend the **35th Annual Club Industry Show**, to be held at **The Chicago Hilton**, **October 4 - 6th!**

• **DAVID HAGGERTY**, **International Tennis Federation (ITF) President**, will

be inducted into the **Tennis Industry Hall of Fame**. Haggerty has also presided over the largest tennis tournament in the world, the **U.S. Open**, in his former role as **Chairman and President of the United States Tennis Association**. The **U.S. Open Tennis Tournament** begins on **August 28 in New York**. On August 28th, at a morning ceremony in midtown Manhattan, Haggerty will be become the **13th member of the Tennis Industry Hall of Fame**, which will be held at the **Intercontinental Barclay Hotel**. Previous Hall of Fame inductees include: **HOWARD HEAD, DENNIS VAN DER MEER, ALAN** (See Norm's Notes Page 8)

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...Norm's Notes

continued from page 7

SCHWARTZ, BILLIE JEAN KING, NICK BOLLETTIERI, JIM BAUGH, PETER BURWASH, EVE KRAFT and GENE SCOTT. Haggerty commented: "I've been fortunate to have seen tennis from just about every vantage point. What I find most gratifying is leading change and taking on big challenges - they energize and excite me." **TIA Executive Director, JOLYN de BOER** added: "Dave is a calm and steady force in the industry and has been instrumental in the Tennis Industry Association's direction

and development. I feel fortunate that I had the opportunity to work directly with him when he was President, and I admire his ongoing engagement and accessibility. He has the vision and passion to move this sport forward."

• **RODNEY STEVEN, II, Owner of Kansas-based Genesis Health Clubs** has acquired **Fitness 2000** from **Owner MOHSEN ETEZAZI**, effective immediately. Fitness 2000 is a 22,000 square-foot facility in **Wichita, Kansas** featuring cardio, weight loss equipment and many more amenities. **Rodney Stevens' Genesis Health Clubs chain**

has 41 locations across the Midwest. Steven commented: "I've known Moe for a long time. He's been a great advocate for the health club industry, which I always admired, but he's also a friend. We're excited to be able to immediately upgrade all of his members to **Gold-Level Memberships at Genesis**, which will give them access to dozens of our clubs across **Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri and Oklahoma.** We can't wait to welcome them to the Genesis family."

• **JENNIFER GILLON** has joined **Retro Fitness** as **Marketing Director.** **ERIC CASABURI, Retro Fitness Founder and Owner**, commented: "Jennifer comes to Retro Fitness loaded with an arsenal of knowledge in guest journey design, communication cadence, creative development, franchisee relations and field marketing. She's demonstrated a proven ability to launch local and national campaigns based on consumer insight, and she possesses strong strategic analysis skills when designing and implementing financial, media and marketing plans. We expect big things from her and know she is ready to infuse her ideas into our already fast-growing fitness brand to influence our overall success."

• **Congratulations to the BANOS Brothers, ANGEL and WILLY**, as they were honored when **Gold's Gym SoCal** was named **Franchisee of the Year** at the annual **Gold's Gym Annual Convention, July 24-26** at the **Mirage Hotel in Las**

Vegas. And, **congratulations to the other Gold's Gym award winners**, which included: **Best New Gym - North America - Port Coquitlam, Canada; Best New Gym - International - Amman, Jordan; Legacy Award - North America - RAMON RODRIGUEZ - Orangeburg, SC; Legacy Award - International - BOBBY AGUSTIN - Alabang, Philippines; Most Inspirational Member - NORMAN LARKIN - Vancouver, WA; Gold's Vision - GARY and KORY PRICE - Idaho; Master Franchisee of the Year - MARK and MYLENE DAYRIT - Philippines; Vendor of the Year - Service: Buck and Associates Insurance, Equipment: Power Systems, Non Equipment: Europa; Best Improved Gym - North America, Newburgh, NY; Best Improved Gym - International - Hachioji Tokyo, Japan; Best Community Engagement - North America, Kaysville, UT; Best Community Engagement - International - Gurgaon, India; Best GGX Programming - North America - Newburgh, NY; Best GGX Programming - International - New Manila, Metro Manila; Best Personal Training Program - North America - Issaquah, WA; Best Personal Training Program - International - Kandivali West, Maharashtra, India; Best Marketing Program - North America "Gold-Getters" Stuart, FL; and Best Marketing Program - International, "Stronger Day" Jakarta, Indonesia. Congrats to all award winners!**

(See Norm's Notes Page 10)



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...Norm's Notes

continued from page 8

• **JUSTIN and I** want to say **THANK YOU** for reading **CLUB INSIDER**!

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• God bless our troops, airmen and sailors worldwide and keep them safe. Thank you, **Congratulations and Welcome Home** to all of our troops who've served in Iraq, Afghanistan and around the world. God bless America's Policemen and Women and keep them safe. God bless you, your family and

your club(s). **God Bless America!**

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 40+ year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. Cates is the Founder and Publisher of **CLUB INSIDER**, now in its 24th year of publication. Cates was **IHRSA's**

First President, and a Co-Founder with Rick Caro and five others, in 1981. In 2001, **IHRSA** honored Cates with its **DALE DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award**, one of its highest honors. Cates may be reached by phone at **770-635-7578** or email at Norm@clubinsideronline.com)

Norm's Personal Notes

YAHOO! Football is BACK, and I'm fired up waiting for the first **2017 college football game kickoff!** If you're like me, you **LIVE** for this time of year. For me, this season is going to be particularly fun because we are having our **1967 N.C. Football Team's 50th Reunion**, and since January, I've been working with a couple of my teammates to produce our **50th Anniversary Reunion Party in Raleigh, North Carolina at the Clemson game**. So far, 45 guys on our team have already committed to be there, and I expect that to increase to 50 or more before party and game time.

We'll be having our **Reunion Party on Friday Night, November 3rd**, and then, we'll go to the **N.C. State - Clemson** game the next day where, at the end of the 1st quarter, we'll all go down on the field to be introduced to what will certainly be a sellout crowd of 57,583 since the **Clemson Tigers are the reigning National Champions!** It's good that they'll introduce us at the end of the first quarter, because most likely, most of the fans in the packed stadium will still be there to see us Geezers trundling out on the turf where, in 1967, **we came very close to winning a National Championship when we were 8 - 0 and ranked #3 in the U.S.A.!** Then, the **SIERRA** hit the fan when we confidently went up to the town of University Park, Pennsylvania to play Penn State. Sadly, we lost that game 13 - 8 after a goal line stand where they stopped us on 4th down and about a yard to go with almost all of the time gone.

After we lost that game to Penn State, a game that, had we won, we would have become **#2 in the USA**, guess where we had to play our next game? A game that, by the way, had we won that, we **STILL** might have gone to the **Orange Bowl... You guessed it! Clemson!** Do you know why my teammates and I who put this reunion together chose Clemson? **Because they'll still be the reigning National Champions, and we want revenge and expect our Wolfpack Team to beat Clemson! So, STAY TUNED, Folks!**

Anyway, we finished our **Senior year ranked #17 in the country**, and I was honored to be named to the **1st Team All Atlantic Coast Conference Team** and was an **Honorable Mention All American**. Not bad for a guy who wasn't even a starter until my senior year.



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...Planet Fitness

continued from page 3

recognize youth for their commitment to making their communities kinder, more accepting places where everyone can feel respected and like they belong."

2017 Judgement Free Generation Scholarship Winners: Angel C. - Atlanta, GA - Boys & Girls Club: Bellwood; Arielys T. - Manchester, NH - Boys & Girls Club: Manchester; Christian M. - Ramstein, Germany - Boys & Girls Club: Ramstein Airbase; Christopher B. - Wichita, KS - Boys & Girls Club: South Central Kansas; Ciara B. - Altamonte Spring, FL - Boys & Girls Clubs: Central Florida; Isabella A. - San Mateo, CA - Boys & Girls Club: Mid-Peninsula; Marina G. - Burbank, CA - Boys & Girls Club: Burbank; Maya J. - St. Louis, MO - Boys & Girls Club: Greater St. Louis; Rickey T. - Venice, FL - Boys & Girls Club: Robert & Joan Lee; Sharnae P. - Douglas, GA - Boys & Girls Club: Coffee County.

honored with Engage for Good's (formerly Cause Marketing Forum) 2017 Gold Halo Award for the Social Services category for The Judgement Free Generation initiative. Launched in 2016, The Judgement Free Generation aims to spread kindness and prevent bullying in the afterschool setting. To accomplish this, Planet Fitness has partnered with Boys & Girls Clubs of America, the nation's leading youth development organization supporting millions of kids and teens during the critical out-of-school time, and STOMP Out Bullying, the leading anti-bullying organization for kids and teens in the U.S. Planet Fitness and its franchisees have donated more than \$1.5 million to its charitable partners in support of this cause, have funded evidence-based training for Boys & Girls Clubs professionals and teen leaders to help create judgement free environments in their clubs and have launched the first of a series of Mini Judgement Free Zones, which are welcoming gym spaces in local Boys & Girls Clubs.

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...Bill Higgs

continued from page 3

with this in-depth interview with **Bill Higgs**, General Manager of Shula's Athletic Club.

Bill Higgs Shares 35 Years at Shula's Athletic Club

CLUB INSIDER (C.I.) - Bill, please tell us about your education and background prior to being hired at Shula's. Also, how did you prepare yourself for such a prominent role in our industry as General Manager of Shula's Athletic Club?

Bill Higgs (BH) - I graduated from the University of Florida, and I then earned my Master's Degree in Parks and Recreation from the University of Indiana. Going back to when you and I got into this industry, there really weren't too many people who were skilled or trained professionally for what we were doing. I just loved working out and was about 15 when I first started. I also loved playing sports. I started working at European Health Spas back in the day, which gave me some background in sales and training. So, when this new club opened up, I was probably one of the few around who even had *that* much experience as far as our industry goes.

Shula's Athletic Club Grand Opening was **October 15, 1982**. My whole goal when I was young and going to college was to work for the National Park System, so that's why I majored in outdoor education at Indiana University. After finishing my Master's, I came home and told my parents I was moving to California. I wanted to find a job in their parks system since I'd been out there a few times surfing and had just fallen in love with California because of its diversity. But, I ended up coming home from California with my tail between my legs without a job. I came back here to Miami and landed a job in inter-city recreation work. I then heard about this new club that was opening up here in Miami Lakes. I happened to have a friend,

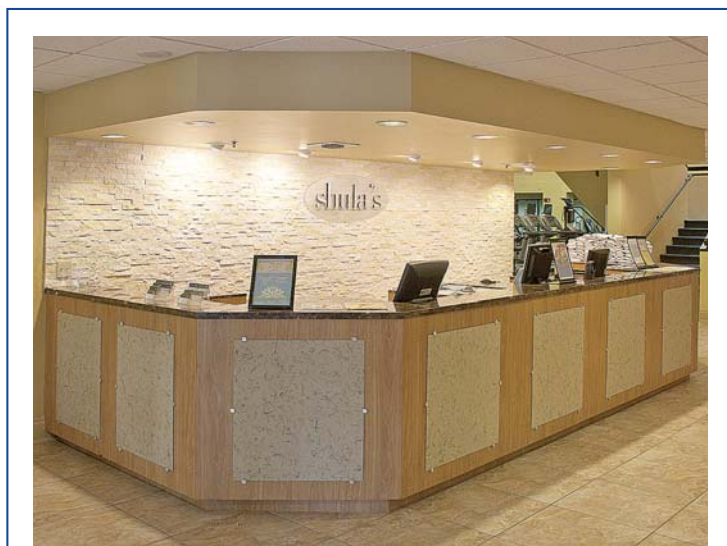
Gary Horsley, who had gotten hired as the Shula A.C.'s first General Manager. We had worked together in recreation, so he knew me and my educational background, and he knew that I enjoyed exercising. So, I came over and met the Graham Family, the owners. That started it, so to sum it up, it was more like *who you know*.

C.I. - When and how did you actually get hired to work at Shula's A.C.?

BH - I was hired on August 9, 1982. We had a little trailer by the club construction site, much like a lot of clubs under construction do before opening. We'd walk people through the site at certain times of the day to give them a vision of what the club would look like. A lot of people in the community seemed very responsive, and we took off from there. My responsibility was hiring all of the fitness staff. We really started it out more as a multipurpose sports club with racquetball, tennis and basketball. Also, Bill Graham was a big badminton player, so we had fantastic badminton tournaments. Fitness was kind of in its infancy as far as strength training was concerned. Aerobics was just getting started. The whole industry was in its infancy, and we were all kind of learning on the job day by day.

C.I. - Please tell us about the Graham family for whom you've worked for these 35 years.

BH - Miami Lakes, our community here, is about five square miles. The land has been owned by the Graham family for three generations. Originally, they grew sugar cane on this land and later added a dairy farm. There are three sons in the Graham family. One of them is **Bob Graham**, whom you may know as a *former Florida Governor and Senator*. There's **Bill Graham**, who was the *visionary behind the development of Miami Lakes as one of the nation's first planned communities*. Our Athletic Club is part of that master plan. The Graham Companies are developers



Reception at Shula's Athletic Club

and managers of both Commercial and Residential space throughout our town. The third brother was **Phillip Graham**, who was married to Katherine Graham of *Washington Post* fame. Currently, it's mainly Bill Graham's children that are running the different divisions of the Graham companies including our Hospitality Division. Our Division includes the *Don Shula Hotel*, *The Spa at Shula's*, *Shula's Athletic Club*, *Shula's Steakhouse*, *The Indigo Hotel* and *The Don Shula Golf Club* operations.

C.I. - Please tell us about Coach Shula's role.

BH - When he was hired by the Miami Dolphins in 1970, Coach Shula purchased a home here in Miami Lakes. So, he became a big part of our community, and he naturally developed a relationship with the Graham family. Coach would put his Dolphin players and Coaches in our hotel before each home game. They would have them all together for meals and meetings to prepare for Sunday's game. The Miami Hurricanes started doing the same thing with their football team. We became known as a sports hotel and began housing many pro and college teams in all sports.

In the late 1980s, **David Younts**, our *Hotel Division President* at the time, approached Coach Shula and asked him what he'd think about partnering in a steak house at the Golf Club and theming it after the 1972 perfect season. It took a little while, but Coach Shula came around, and we opened the first Shula's Steakhouse in 1989. It went so well that the next year our other Hotel Division properties took on the SHULA name as well. Coach became an 'equity' partner with our Hotel Division properties and the Graham Companies.

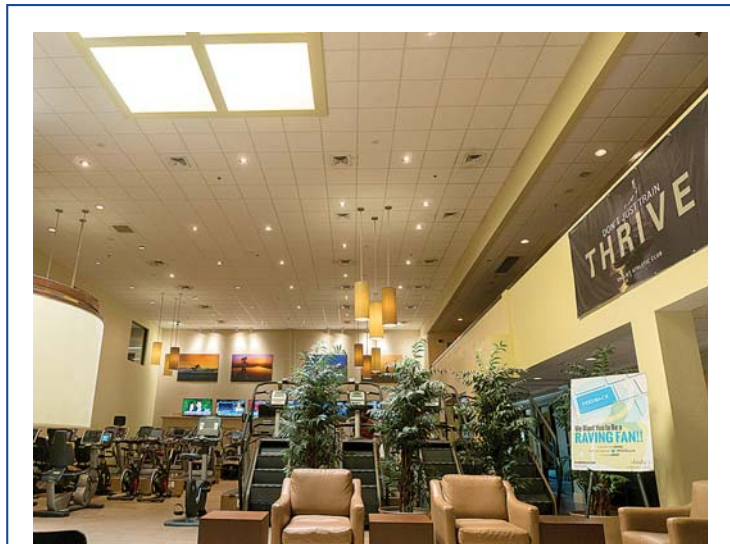
We used his fame and notoriety primarily to make personal appearances for our marketing efforts. The Steak House and our sports bar and restaurant called Shula's Steak 2 became shrines for the Dolphins and Coach Shula's accomplishments. We would host numerous sports related TV shows and radio shows from these locations. And, Norm, I know that I do not need to remind you that the 17-0 record in the 1972 season still stands today as the only undefeated season in the history of the NFL.

C.I. - Bill, let's reflect back on your days as Shula's GM. What are some of your most prominent memories?

BH - Going back to the beginning, we had nine racquetball courts, and we were primarily a sports club. In addition to the nine racquetball courts, we had nine tennis courts, a regulation sized gymnasium and a restaurant and bar. It was very social. Members loved to party at the club! Somewhat different from today... Cardio areas were non-existent. Strength training was limited to mainly Nautilus machines, as Arthur Jones (Nautilus inventor) was the king of the hill at that time. And, aerobics was just kicking into gear with the influence of Jane Fonda and others. These were special times as IHRSA was just getting started by fine gentlemen such as yourself! Since then, we converted the nine racquetball courts into fitness space. When you walk into the club today, you would never know that a large portion of the club was once nine racquetball courts. The growth in group exercise, strength training, personal training and cardio all fueled that space's conversion and a new direction for us.

When you think back about how long ago this was, we only need to remember that we used typewriters and big land line telephones to communicate! We had no computers or cell phones! How did we ever get much done? Maybe we

(See Bill Higgs Page 14)



Sitting Area and Cardio Floor at Shula's Athletic Club

shula's
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-Aaron Stafford
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...Bill Higgs

continued from page 12

were *more* productive (laughing). Now there is an interesting thought! Everything was done on paper and filed away. That was a totally different type of operation than today's club. I remember doing a presentation once on what it was like operating a club in the early '80s compared to today. It's kind of fascinating. We did a lot of community events. We'd hold 5K and 10K races for different charities. We'd do Heart Walks for the American Heart Association. And, I remember our 20th and 30th Anniversary Parties with Coach Shula and many other good people. Those were all *fun* events. And I can't forget the Shula Steak House Openings, all of which were amazing!

Working With Coach Don Shula

C.I. - What was it like working with Coach Shula, perhaps one of the most famous, and clearly, the most successful coach in the history of the NFL, the *only* NFL Coach to *ever* go undefeated? What was his role? How did the club fit in with the Steak House and other properties on the campus?

BH - When Coach walked in to the Athletic Club, he was always very supportive. He would stay for long hours at a time and sign autographs forever. Coach Shula is really a great man. You could tell the values he believed in as they were reflected in his children and family. Coach's son, **David Shula**, runs the steakhouses today. David is the *former Cincinnati Bengals Head Coach*, and he came here after coaching and joined the restaurant business. Now, he's *President and CEO* of all the steakhouses. The whole family is just amazing, and I have loved doing business with them.

C.I. - Bill, that must have been truly amazing working with a man of Coach Shula's caliber... with his achievements... his reputation for winning... and him being

essentially a walking, talking legend in his own time among us. Coach Shula's role clearly is that of a great brand name that was known in every household in your market, and realistically, in every market in the United States, if not the world. What a great experience that must have been for you personally to work with Coach Shula! **WOW!**

BH - It truly was and is. He gave us *instant credibility!* I would call a vendor to buy a couple of pieces of equipment, and they would say something like, 'Where are you from, Bill?' I'd tell them, and they'd say, 'Is that the Coach?' I'd say, 'yeah.' And, 'Okay!!!' they'd say. That *WAS* fun! Coach Shula had his training facility for the Miami Dolphins right down the road at St. Thomas University. I think that's part of the reason he chose to live here in Miami Lakes. At the request of Coach, we'd send group instructors over there to help train the Miami Dolphin players in greater flexibility and movement. Coach Shula had a very open mind concerning exercise programs for his players. We even did some water (pool-based) exercise classes for the team. Soon, we started hosting all of their off-season training and conditioning programs here at the club. Members loved it! Coach Shula also had some fairly noteworthy assistant coaches, and most of them lived in our community as well. We even have one of Coach's former strength and conditioning coaches working with us today. His name is **Junior Wade**. He worked for Coach Shula for 20 years before joining us in 1995. He is one of our great THRIVE Training Coaches.

The Favorites

C.I. - Who are some of your favorite members that you've met and worked with over the years?

BH - Rather than risk offending somebody that I might not mention... somebody that really should be mentioned... let me say it this way. I've been blessed to have

met and worked with *so* many wonderful people over all these years. Those are the wonderful memories you take with you. But, the ones who really stick out and inspire you are the ones, who despite their personal battles, are relentless in their determination and positive attitude. Amputees with missing legs and other body parts, members fighting Cancer, Parkinson's Disease, Diabetes etc... those are the folks who inspire everyone. And, I must also include our Seniors (now that I am considered a silver sneaker). They come in every day with just an amazing attitude about life, so thankful and appreciative.

C.I. - Who are some of your greatest employees whom you've managed over the years? What stood out about them?

BH - I've been very fortunate to have had many very committed and passionate managers who have all helped me tremendously throughout my career. I could not have accomplished one thing without their leadership and support. But, equally important to our success are the team members who come in at 4AM in the morning to get the club presentable, the coffee made, the towels folded and are in position to warmly greet each member every morning. And, the ones who truly 'get it' and understand that this is a relationship business and that service is giving to others. They know that smiles and knowing a member's name makes a huge difference. They make me very proud, and they make a lot of members very happy.

C.I. - Who are some of your favorite vendor representatives whom you've dealt with during your career?

BH - From being involved in this industry for so long, I have become friends with so many great vendor reps that it would be very hard to choose. The list would go on and on frankly. This is a tight knit community as far as that goes. So, when I go to Trade Shows, I know people at almost every booth. Year after year at IHRSA, I'm dealing with all of them. I have great memories of the relationships with most of the companies. But, now that I think about

it... I WILL single one out. That would be the guys who helped me put our MBSC THRIVE coaching program in. They are **Bruce Mack** and **Nick Murtha** who have both been very helpful and inspirational to me in helping us accomplish what we wanted to do with the coaching program.

(See Sidebar on This Page to learn more about The THRIVE Program)

C.I. - Bill, you've mentioned a few from the past, but please tell us about the charities Shula's A.C. supports.

BH - Norm, I think as a company, one of the most rewarding fundraisers we do annually is a huge golf tournament to raise funds for St. Jude's Children's Hospital. In addition to that, we have also done events for The Boys and Girls Clubs of America, Susan G. Komen Foundation, The American Heart Association, Habitat for Humanity, American Cancer Society, U of Miami Sylvester Cancer Research, Toys For Tots, Angel Tree, Big Brothers and Big Sisters, U.S. Marines and The United Way... to name a few.

Greatest Challenges

C.I. - Bill, what would you say have been your greatest challenges during your career at Shula's?

BH - There's been a lot of challenges over the years as any business goes through if you're fortunate to be around as long as we have. First, we had to move from the racquetball era into the fitness era. We had to convert all of those courts into fitness space, and of course, we lost a few members because of that. Watching all those courts coming down was a big change and one that I hoped, at the time, would work out for us. It ended up being fine. But, that *was* a big deal.

As the years went along, we had more competition in our market, like everyone. So, we saw an opportunity to add kids programming, and we began to move more in the direction of a family club. We added a kid's basketball program,

(See Bill Higgs Page 16)

The THRIVE Program

MBSC THRIVE is a program-driven system 25+ years in the making that focuses on Small Group Training for adults and athletes. My partner, Mike Boyle, is a world-renowned Strength and Conditioning coach, author, speaker who has worked with many professional athletes and organizations as well as several Olympic athletes and teams.

We currently partner with like-minded health and fitness club operators to install tested and proven systems for coaches (trainers), middle and senior management, and owners. The mission to provide a great program and a memorable experience for the members.

Personally, I have **REALLY** valued the partnership with Bill Higgs and Shula's Athletic Club. He always supported the vision of the program for the member. Throughout the partnership over the years, I can say that the friendship we developed was what we at THRIVE have valued the most.

-Bruce Mack, Co-Founder, MBSC THRIVE (www.thrivefit.com)



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...Bill Higgs

continued from page 14

a soccer program and flag football. We offered Summer camps, and we added gymnastics... all for kids. So, that helped us diversify a little bit. In more recent times, changing the whole personal training philosophy and program was a challenge... what we do... and how we do what we do... we were evolving into much more of a group functional training program. All coaches work under the same training philosophy. I shopped a lot of the boutique type training gyms to see what they were doing.

Norm, if you or I were opening a gym, we'd want everybody to train like we do... united under the same philosophy. So, we thought that, to really make some changes, we've got to bring those ideas inside a larger club like ours. We went through a lot of staff turnover in making those changes. We had to expand and dedicate more training space, switch to all monthly EFT, add a whole new team and start from scratch. We've got a great group of coaches now in our training program called THRIVE. We've made big strides as far as reaching more members and helping more people. And, I mean people of all ages. We train kids in sports performance, and we train many seniors, whom I originally thought would not participate, but they love it! We can help everybody. We've been able to help so many people feel better... and move better. I'm very happy with that transition. Looking back at how we've evolved over the years is very interesting and quite amazing.

The Power of Knowledge Sharing

C.I. - Well, Bill, I know our readers are going to appreciate reading about THRIVE, if they don't already know about it. As you know, we try to make our **CLUB INSIDER** Cover Stories both interesting and helpful.

BH - This goes way back, but I know

you knew **Dale Dibble**. I remember him coming down here to Miami. He even brought his Cedardale financial statement with him, and he shared everything in it with me. Dale was *always* very generous with sharing his knowledge. And, there were many people back in the day I remember sharing knowledge with me, just like Dale did. I was also fortunate to get to sit down with **John McCarthy** on a number of occasions, and I always learned something. John is just amazing, and he was one of those great sharers right up there with Dale. It was people like Dale Dibble and John McCarthy who inspired me so much to stay in this industry.

C.I. - What have been the ways you've kept up in the industry, stayed fresh and learned about industry changes, etc.? Please tell us about your experiences with IHRSA and Club Industry. And, are there any other organizations you'd like to mention?

BH - As you know, because you always see me at IHRSA, I always had a quest for learning. I don't care how many years I was in the industry, I always felt there was still a lot more I could learn, so I would go to all of the programs I could at the IHRSA Conferences. Then, I would always come home with pages of notes, and when I brought other staff members with me, we'd all write things down, come back with great ideas and try to implement them. Even if we only got three ideas completed, it made a big difference.

I also want to mention one guy who kind of helped change my way of thinking on coaching, and that was **Thomas Plummer** and the NFBA. Thom is a fellow who taught me a lot about what functional training is all about, and I've taken a lot of great ideas from him and put them to work.

Also, I learned a lot from the late **Michael Scott Scudder**. I know you did a Tribute to him last month after he suddenly passed away. What a shock! It was very sad to see Michael go.



(L to R) Yohn Diaz, Director of Operations; Bill Higgs, GM; and Annette Prior-Perez, Fitness Director

C.I. - Yes, it was. Well Bill, we all were and continue to be, very fortunate to have had Big John McCarthy as I refer to him, in our lives. Plus, almost since the day John retired, he's been doing a great job helping Augie and Lynne with Augie's Quest. And, Joe Moore has done a great job for everybody at IHRSA for the past 12 years since Big John retired. Thomas Plummer and Michael Scott Scudder certainly have been great teachers in our industry.

Top 5 Lessons Learned

C.I. - Bill, what are the *Top 5 Lessons Learned* from your 35-year career as General Manager of Shula's Athletic Club?

BH - My *First Lesson Learned* would be: **This is a relationship business.** The better your relationship with your members are, the more successful your business will be. You need some systems in place that help support you, but to me, here at Shula's, what's made us successful over all these years is our relationships. And, we try to have great relationships with every single member. But, even today, if there's one person who's not on board, I feel *bad* about it. And, as much as I try to separate myself from some of that, I still want everybody to be happy and successful. So, to me, I think that's one of the best lessons I've learned.

My *Second Lesson Learned* is: **Don't be afraid to make a mistake!** Anybody in a management role needs new ideas and fresh perspectives... so if we're worried about it not working or making a mistake, sometimes we have opportunities that we don't take advantage of. Just set your vision and your goals and go for it!

My *Third Lesson Learned* is: **Always be open to learning.** We've

talked about that. There are so many great mentors in our industry and so many learning resources. And, learn from your members! That's something that I think is very important. We recently introduced the *MXM Medallia System* that surveys our members. What an eye-opener that was! We've only had it in for two years, but talk about getting feedback and really getting a great handle on the pulse of your members, instead of just me being out there talking one on one. So, we're open to learning... from our members, our industry and all the great resources we have out there.

My *Fourth Lesson Learned* is: **Coach... coach... coach your teams!** Every day is an opportunity to get better. We've got great people. Get to know them. We've got to keep coaching them. Keep helping them. Keep supporting them. You can accomplish a lot with that approach.

My *Fifth and Best Lesson Learned* would be: **Start each day and end each day with gratitude.** Take the time to be thankful for everything that you have. For your family. For your health. For your friends. For your business... whatever it is. We need to learn to remember to be grateful and to express gratitude every day. I just feel that, when I'm doing that, I have a lot more success, and life just opens up for me every day. There's something else in this part of my interview that I want to say, and it is something someone said that stuck with me: **One of the greatest gifts we have been given is our gift of imagination. When you think of it, everything that now exists was once imagined.**

C.I. - I love it! Bill, these **Five Lessons Learned** are going to be worth gold to anybody who reads and adopts them. Good on you!

The Passion

C.I. - Frankly, Bill, you've probably had other opportunities over the years to work (See *Bill Higgs* Page 18)

shula's
athletic club



Outdoor Tennis Courts at Shula's Athletic Club

A close-up photograph of a person's arm holding a black 30lb Iron Grip dumbbell. The person is wearing a black tank top. The dumbbell has a textured, concentric ring design on its head. The background is dark and out of focus.

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IRON GRIP
BARBELL COMPANY

AMERICAN TO THE CORE.

...Bill Higgs

continued from page 16

elsewhere. What's kept you there?

BH - Yes, I have. But, what's kept me at Shula's was the support of the Graham Family. They allowed me to make mistakes. They helped me grow. They mentored me and challenged me in many ways. So, our closeness, and the family aspect of it all, meant everything to me.

C.I. - If a young person in the industry wanted to grow his industry knowledge and expertise, what are some of the ways you would recommend? (IHRSA Institute, key mentors, round tables, key authors, which clubs to visit, etc.)

BH - Certainly, all the ways you mentioned in your question are great ways to learn. Plus, I wish I had gotten involved in a Roundtable. **Eddie Tock** was trying to get me to join one of their REX Roundtables, but I held off because I was planning to retire. But, now, I wish I'd done that a long time ago. So, that's one of my few regrets. I would say it has got to be *your passion*, and if you get to the point where what you're doing feels good to you, and it is *your passion*, then **it will never be like a day of work**. When it's your passion you're studying, and you're learning at every opportunity you get, it just never stops!

C.I. - Bill, I've honestly got to say to you that you're hitting the nail right on the head. Years ago, I said to my son, 'Justin, you were eight years old when I started **CLUB INSIDER**. But, I want to teach you now that, at age 16, you will enjoy and love your life at work if you can find work that you can have a raging passion to do... a love for and a mindset that it's the most important and exciting thing in your life so that every day that you wake up to go do that job, you're going to be the happiest guy there is... And, you're going to be in the minority because so many people go

through life without this raging passion for what they do.' When I hear you, Bill, I hear that raging passion. It's so great!

BH - Yes. You know, Norm, we're very fortunate. When you look back at your life, things seem to follow a plan, and it's fascinating to say the least.

C.I. - If you could point to one item in your life, what are you most proud of in your career?

BH - That's a simple one for me. **It would be helping others find joy in their life.**

Heading into the Sunset

C.I. - When you step down from your post at Shula's, if you know at this point, who will be filling your position and what have you done to mentor to him or her for the position?

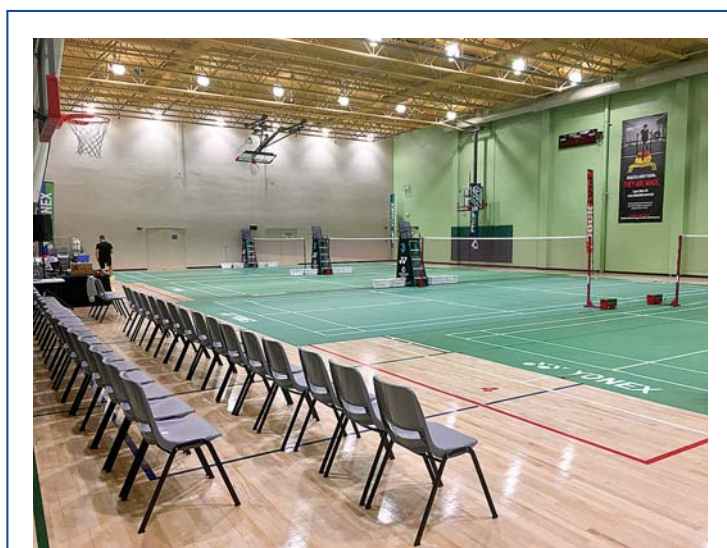
BH - His name is **Anthony Artiles**. Seven to eight years ago, he was our *Director of Operations* and did a fantastic job. Many of the staff remember him, and they are excited to see him return. He is a quality guy who understands high-level customer service. I'm sure he will take Shula's to the next level!

C.I. - I haven't asked, so let me ask now. When is your retirement party?

BH - I'm not supposed to know about it, but I think it's going to be on August 9th.

C.I. - Do you have any special plans or ideas for your retirement?

BH - Norm, my latest passion is in studying **Nutrition and Functional Medicine** or what's called '*getting to the root cause of disease*,' not just treating symptoms with prescription drugs. Through the use of the latest in diagnostic lab testing, whole food nutrition, exercise and therapeutic diet and detoxification, integrative physicians can treat and prevent many of today's chronic diseases. I feel developing business relationships between our clubs and Integrative Functional Medical practitioners would be the *Holy Grail*



Indoor Courts at Shula's Athletic Club

to controlling the growing amounts of chronic disease and health care costs. And, finally, being able to truly help many more people **get well**. I see some clubs such as *Life Time* adding *Health Coaches* to their program offering, and to me, that is a big step in the right direction.

Fortunately, I did not have any major health issues; I stumbled on to this through wanting to fully optimize my own health, and later, the health of my family and friends. I made dietary changes over the last five years, eating mostly real foods (fruits, vegetables, grass-fed meats, wild-caught fish, pastured eggs, nuts and seeds, and good fats such as olive oil, coconut oil, avocados and grass-fed butter, as well as eliminating wheat and processed foods and oils). It's totally improved my energy level, brain function and overall health tremendously. I'm far from 100% compliant, but I am committed to making this my lifestyle of choice.

Besides my wife's 'Honey-Do' list, which is rather extensive, I plan to spend my time doing the following: meditation, exercise, juicing (fruits and veggies), planting and growing fruits and herbs, studying and learning more about nutrition and spirituality, spending more time with my kids (Jenna is in her last year of high school, and Brad is away in college), cooking more for my wife, travelling (some solo and some with Linda), working with a charity, learning more about Functional Medicine and pushing for its acceptance, spending some time in nature (surfing, paddle boarding, kayaking, mountain biking; we call it more like trail riding in Florida), and last but not least, enjoying time FUN times with friends and family. I truly have so much

to be thankful for with a loving family and my health and my fitness, so expressing gratitude will be a big part of my daily ritual as well as giving back for all that I have received.

C.I. - Bill, what's it like to be looking back at your 35-year career as General Manager of Shula's Athletic Club?

BH - Looking back, I'm thankful for everyone that I've met. Everyone's played a big role in my life, and I'm just so thankful for those wonderful people. It's just kind of shocking. Time goes by so quickly. When I started here, I never thought that I was going to be here this long or that it would be this wonderful of an experience. I have lot of people to thank for that.

C.I. - Bill, let's wrap up this wonderful **CLUB INSIDER Cover Story** with a final comment from you.

BH - **Thank you... thank you... thank you to everyone I've been able to meet in the industry. It's been a great ride. I want them all to remember that to touch someone's life is more valuable than ANY amount of money. What we are able to do with the opportunity that we have in our clubs is something that goes a long way. When you get to my age and your age, Norm, those are memories that we have for the rest of our lives that they can't take away.**

• • •

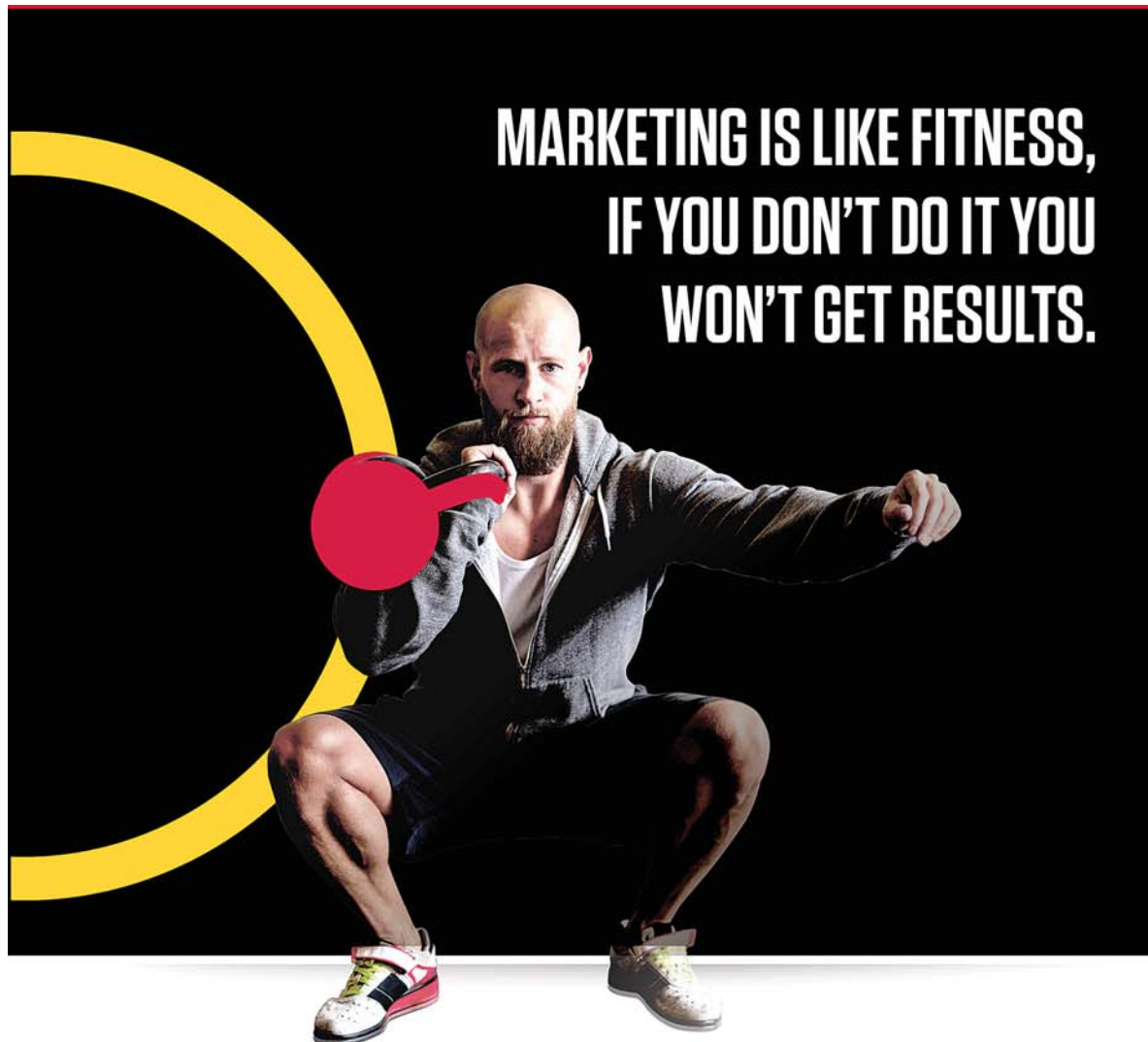
I'm pleased to close this special cover story with the one and only Bill Higgs with the following announcement: Bill has joined our **Contributing Author Team** and will *periodically write articles for CLUB INSIDER to assist our industry in its greatest challenge which is to get better every day.*

Thanks very much to Bill Higgs for his time sharing his past 35 years at Shula's Athletic Club. Bill Higgs is a great (See *Bill Higgs* Page 19)

shula's
athletic club



The Spa at Shula's Athletic Club



**MARKETING IS LIKE FITNESS,
IF YOU DON'T DO IT YOU
WON'T GET RESULTS.**

...Bill Higgs
continued from page 18

credit to our industry, and I want to wish Bill, Linda and their family the very best. Bill Higgs is a walking, talking and healthy resource for our industry from whom we can continue to learn. And, I've made a commitment in my life to be one of the contributors to the teaching and learning process for our wonderful industry to get better. So, I want to Thank You, Bill, for joining me and our Contributing Author Team in this life-long endeavor of helping our great industry get even better.

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 40+ year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. Cates is the Founder and Publisher of CLUB INSIDER, now in its 24th year of publication. Cates was IHRSA's First President, and a Co-Founder with Rick Caro and five others, in 1981. In 2001, IHRSA honored Cates with its DALE DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award, one of its highest honors. Cates can be reached by phone at 770-635-7578 or email at Norm@clubinsideronline.com)

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Make It FUN!

Properly Utilizing Facebook and Instagram Ads

By: Jillian Curl

Incorporating Facebook and Instagram ads is a great way to effectively market to prospects in your area... **when done properly.** I put an emphasis on "when done properly" because Facebook and Instagram are continually evolving, and something changes in their platform almost every week. It is a full-time job to keep up with all of these changes and to understand how the changes affect you.

Unfortunately, the majority of club owners and GMs continue to underutilize the power of Facebook and Instagram ads. There are typically two recurring reasons for this:

1. The owner or GM doesn't have the time to properly keep up with everything. They get preoccupied with running everything else within the business, and marketing and social media falls by the wayside. They will occasionally remember it, do a quick promoted post on a whim, have no real strategy in mind and then wonder why the results were not as great as they expected.

2. They assign this task to someone internally. This is usually someone in their 20s who was initially hired for sales and NOT social media, but now, they want to try and get more value out of that employee and save some money. The thinking is that, because that person is young and spends a lot of time posting on their personal social media pages, they must know the ins and outs of B2C marketing and how to effectively utilize ads. The reality is that these are two completely different skill sets, and going this route almost always leads to clubs underutilizing the power of social media ads.

As mentioned, social media is a constantly changing landscape, and there are a lot of different options out there for ads. Here is a brief synopsis of the types of ads that can be used, how to use targeting with your ads, the most effective devices and platforms, cost, image/video tips and the analytics behind them.

Types of Ads

Whether one is seeking to raise their brand awareness, drive likes to their club's page, collect people's information, drive people to a website and/or have people engage on a post, there is an ad to meet one's needs. Fortunately, when setting up ads, Facebook makes it really clear in helping one choose an objective:

• **Brand Awareness** and **Page Likes Ads** are self-explanatory, as the ad is helping one

do just that.

• **Engagement Ads** are great to use if one wants to boost a post or event that has already been created on one's Facebook page.

• If one wants to drive people to their website to obtain information about their club, a **Website Clicks Ad** would be used. This allows for a URL to be embedded in the ad, so when someone clicks on the ad, it takes them to the URL that was set up. A lot of time, this ad is used to drive people to a landing page, online signup page or to obtain a guest pass on a club's website. This is the only ad that Facebook uses to promote on the audience network (refer to device/platforms paragraph).

• **Lead Form Ads** allow potential clients to see a form that is already filled with info they have shared with Facebook, such as their name, phone number or email address. This is a great ad to use to painlessly capture lead information and follow up with them. We recommend integrating this with a tool that automatically emails you when someone fills out a form vs. the normal way of manually having to go into Facebook and pull/fetch data.

All of these ads (besides page likes and event responses) can be shown on Facebook and Instagram, which allows for people to see ads multiple times.

Audience/Targeting

Facebook remains the most-used social media site and just hit the 2 BILLION user mark. About 64% percent of Americans ages 12 and up are daily active users. Targeting is not too complex on a high level, but there are a ton of selects that can be incorporated to deliver extremely relevant ads.

When selecting an audience to target, it is important to not get too broad or specific. Facebook has a ton of filters, but the best place to start is age and radius. After that, there are so many other factors to choose from, such as household income, interests, gender, net worth, etc. The amount of data Facebook has on all of us is honestly scary; one could literally create a Bridal Bootcamp ad and only show it to females who are engaged around their club.

It is good to use these filters to increase targeting, and it is also important not to tighten them too much. Otherwise, you will target yourself right out of an audience. Balance comes from starting with a few filters, analyzing your ads performance and then making adjustments.

Device/Platforms

Over 90% of Facebook users in the U.S. are now using it via mobile. For this reason, it is smart to go where the eyes are and selecting mobile as the device. We usually see better stats on doing only mobile and excluding impressions on other devices, but I suggest you experiment and analyze that on your own.

Depending on the type of ad one chooses, there are different platforms that one's ad can be delivered to. For example, if one chooses to create a **Lead Form Ad**, this can be shown on people's Facebook feeds and Instagram feed. If one decides to use a **Website Clicks Ad**, this can be shown on people's Facebook feeds and instant articles, Instagram feed and stories and on the Audience Network.

The Audience Network is one of the best platforms because it allows one to show their ads off Facebook via apps in three creative formats: banner, interstitial and native. For example, if a viewer is in the Uber app, he might see a banner ad across the bottom with an ad, or if a viewer is in the Shazam app, he might see a native ad shaped like a square to fit the look and feel of that app.

Cost

Facebook and Instagram marketing is still cost effective, and there is an ad to meet anyone's budget. For most clubs, \$250 - \$500 per month on ads is a good spot to start. **It is important to note that, while there is still good value in properly structured Facebook and Instagram ads, the value is decreasing month-by-month.** We have been doing Facebook ads for our clients for over six years and have seen the cost rise dramatically in that period. **It is a marketplace, so the more businesses there are competing for ad space, the more each impression/click/conversion will cost.**

We believe that, as the television industry continues to get disrupted by Netflix, Hulu, etc. and people cut the cord (cable), there is going to be a massive shift in marketing budgets from television to social. Even those that still have cable don't watch commercials anymore; they either fast forward through them using DVR or play around on their smart phones if watching TV live.

The massive influx of marketing dollars that are about to shift from TV to social, combined with the increasing number of small businesses utilizing Facebook ads, makes it very apparent that **the cost of social ads will dramatically rise (and the value decline) as time progresses.** We believe there is still a window of 18 - 36 months where great



Jillian Curl

value can be found before the cost gets too high to see great ROI.

Images/Videos

Images/Videos are responsible for 75 - 90% of an ad's performance on Facebook. With that being said, the image one uses is crucial to the success of the ad. One cannot have more than 20% text on his images. Facebook does not want people's newsfeeds to be filled with text-heavy images screaming for attention. Fortunately, Facebook has a text overlay tool that will test the image and will let one know if the text overlay is okay to run. Also, since so many Facebook users watch video without the sound on, captioned video ads can increase video view time by an average of 12%, so make sure your video can be viewed without sound and still make an impact.

Analytics

Analytics are crucial to have at your fingertips in order to monitor what is working and what isn't. Fortunately, Facebook's analytics offer a ton of insight; in fact, this can be overwhelming to many who do not know the important ones to focus on or the benchmarks for them.

It is extremely beneficial that ads can be updated on the fly at anytime. For example, if one sees that females are responding better to a particular ad, the targeting can be adjusted to target females only. It is imperative to look at the analytics and make the necessary adjustments to achieve the best results. Unfortunately, there is no such thing as "set it and forget it" when it comes to effective social media advertising.

Conclusion

A diversified marketing mix is always your best bet, and we never (See Jillian Curl Page 23)

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Key Components of an Effective Compliance Program

By: Paul R. Bedard, Esquire

Policies and procedures, including but not limited to those prohibiting sexual harassment and discrimination, or those detailing how to respond to sudden emergencies or handle issues of confidentiality, are ultimately useless if they cannot be consistently complied with. Whatever the policy or procedure, an effective compliance program will help to ensure that theory translates into practice.

An effective compliance program requires clearly articulated written policies and procedures, designated oversight, ongoing education and training, internal auditing and monitoring, reporting mechanisms, active enforcement and discipline and demonstrated response and prevention. This piece is intended to provide an overview of these components. **However, this article is not intended as legal advice. Widely varying business needs and legal requirements prohibit one-size-fits-all recommendations. Please consider these comments as merely an educational guide to assist you when you consult your own attorney or compliance professional for specific direction.**

Written Policies and Procedures

Written policies and procedures must be developed and clearly communicated across the organization. This will help shape your company's culture by establishing the values of the organization and by defining expectations as they relate to employee behavior. An employee code of conduct can be coupled with your employee handbook, the latter of which I've talked about in detail in past editions of **CLUB INSIDER**, as an effective compliance tool for widely communicating company values and employee expectations. The employee code of conduct cannot contradict the employee handbook or any other company publication and should be distributed to all employees and be publicly available on your organization's website.

The code of conduct, like the employee handbook, should demonstrate a tone of compliance from the top of the organization. It should also be readable and expressed in terms easily understood by the target audience. Your employee code of conduct may include prohibitions on discrimination, harassment, smoking, foul language, illegal activities or any prohibited behaviors. It may also detail expectations for confidentiality, dress and appearance requirements or any other organizational expectations. As is the case with the employee handbook, the employee code of conduct should be signed by the receiving employee and kept within the employee's personnel file.

Written policies and procedures should address legal and regulatory concerns

by explaining the relevant laws and any potential for civil and/or criminal liability in a language and format that is easily understood by the lowest-level employees across the organization. By educating your employees on the risk realities of the health club industry, your employees will remain focused and cognizant of the most prevalent compliance risks faced by the organization. Once established, your policies and procedures should be updated regularly to maintain pace with a constantly evolving legal environment.

Designating a Compliance Officer and/or Committee for Oversight

A demonstrated commitment and tone of compliance must start at the top of the organization. The *Chief Compliance Officer*, or similarly situated professional and/or committee, must have direct and unfiltered access to your company's key decision makers. Furthermore, anyone to whom substantial discretionary authority is delegated in this regard must be fully vetted through the exercise of due diligence to ensure that only trustworthy individuals occupy such roles.

Ongoing Education and Training

Ongoing education and training is the constant reinforcement that is critical for the establishment of a long-term record of ethical conduct and legal compliance. Your training must address challenges within each category of job function and educate employees of the legal implications that will affect the performance of their job function. This ongoing training must further reinforce your organization's commitment to ethical conduct and compliance and must consistently demonstrate a continued commitment from the company's top leadership. This training should further emphasize an open-door policy and the duty of employees to report any concerns or misconduct. All levels of the organization, from top to bottom, should participate in ongoing education and training. All training must be documented.

Internal Auditing and Monitoring

Internal auditing and monitoring functions allow for the measurement and evaluation of the organization's level of compliance with legal requirements and established expectations. Self-evaluation is critical for discovering weaknesses in practices or procedures before they create the risk for significant legal liability or reputational harm. Deep-dive audits will need to be undertaken if serious weaknesses or gaps in compliance become apparent. Ongoing risk assessments will help identify opportunities for improvement in this regard. Site visits, interviews of personnel across

the organization, spot-checks of potentially legally risky activities and reviews of records and organic documents all help to comprise an effective process of auditing and monitoring. Additionally, a records management policy should be communicated broadly in an understandable format with an assignment of responsibility and accountability for all levels of employees.

Reporting Mechanisms

To quickly identify and address any potential compliance concerns, a method for anonymous reporting must be implemented. In conjunction with promotion of the organization's open-door policy on reporting, a hotline can be established providing a safe-haven for employees who remain reluctant to report concerns or misconduct to their direct supervisor or internal department. A third-party vendor can be chosen, allowing employees access to the reporting hotline at any time. The tone for reporting expectations must start at the top. Therefore, senior leadership should deliver a message personally encouraging employees to utilize the company's reporting methods and to take advantage of the hotline should an employee feel there is no realistic avenue to report. A non-retaliation/non-retribution policy should be established and widely communicated from the top-down to reassure employees of their ability to safely and confidently report misconduct or concerns.

Active Enforcement and Discipline

A process for enforcing compliance standards and for disciplining individuals should be present and openly communicated. Clearly communicating the enforcement and disciplinary standards throughout the organization will increase the effectiveness of the compliance program. The standards must apply to all organizational employees and must be fully supported and embraced by senior leadership. An organization investigations program should be implemented and the investigations group should be part of any compliance team or department. The investigation protocol should detail how the company will respond to reported, suspected, or confirmed non-compliance.

Demonstrated Response and Prevention

Responding to compliance violations often involves taking affirmative action to remedy the harm caused by non-compliance. In scenarios that warrant heavy discipline or the termination of employment, upon the conclusion of a full investigation, written protocols must be followed without regard to personal influence or the level of one's position. These protocols should include a process for independent verification



Paul R. Bedard, Esquire

that necessary corrective actions were taken. It is important for employees and for any legal authority to view the organization as a consistent, fair and transparent entity in this regard. Furthermore, a track record of prompt and consistent responses to unethical and/or non-compliant conduct will bolster the organization's ability to prevent such conduct from repeating.

Conclusion

Although the complex and multifaceted day-to-day operations of a health club involve many inherent legal risks, these risks can be successfully managed through an effective compliance program. A tone of ethical conduct and compliance must originate from the very top of the organization. The overall success of organizational compliance efforts is greatest when senior leadership fully supports these efforts. Moreover, organizations that are perceived to be compliant and "ethical" with the resulting track records of compliant conduct are viewed more positively by employees, customers, regulators and the general marketplace. Therefore, a culture and reputation exuding compliant conduct and ethical behavior will not only mitigate your legal risk, it will also add measurable value to your organization.

(Paul Bedard, Esquire has nearly twenty years of management, leadership and operations experience in the health and fitness industry. As a practicing attorney, Paul's health and fitness industry experience provides him with a unique perspective when advising on or litigating matters involving health club handbooks, policies, contracts, disputes or injuries. Paul strives to be active in his local community and has served on the Southington Zoning Board of Appeals and the Board of the Central Connecticut Regional Planning Agency. He also volunteers his time and contributes to various local charities. Paul can be reached at pbedard@smddlaw.com)

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Mountainside Fitness Partners With Sonora Quest Laboratories to Offer Customized Wellness Testing to Health Club Members

TEMPE, AZ - Mountainside Fitness and Sonora Quest Laboratories have collaborated to offer a select menu of wellness screens and health profiles to Mountainside Fitness members, empowering them to take control of their health by ordering certain lab tests on their own. These tests are available through Sonora Quest Laboratories' My Lab ReQuest service which, per Arizona law, allows consumers to order lab tests from a licensed clinical laboratory without physician orders.

Mountainside Fitness members will have the opportunity to order any of the following tests through this partnership:

- Cardio Health Screen (Lipid Panel including Cholesterol, HDL, LDL, VLDL and Triglycerides);
- Diabetes Health Screen (Glucose);
- Men's Complete Health Profile (Lipid Panel, Comprehensive Metabolic Panel, Diabetes Screen, and PSA Screen);
- Women's Complete Health Profile (Lipid Panel, Comprehensive Metabolic Panel, Diabetes Screen, and Thyroid Screen);
- Hemoglobin A1c;
- Testosterone, Total (Adult Male);

- Testosterone, Total (Women/Children);
- Testosterone, Total & Free;
- Vitamin D, 25-Hydroxy;

"Health and wellness are the cornerstones of the Mountainside Fitness organization. To be able to provide expanded services, which include blood testing, to our members is just another example of how we want to continue to support their health and fitness goals," noted Tom Hatten, founder and CEO of Mountainside Fitness.

Hatten added, "Health insights that were once only available to top-level athletes, we can now offer to our members. Sonora Quest Laboratories will arm our customers with inside information on their health that will allow them to optimize their training at our facilities."

Christina Noble, VP of Business Development with Sonora Quest, said, "As Sonora Quest continues to empower consumers to take more control over their own health, we are proud to partner with Mountainside Fitness and provide a solution that allows their members to play a more active role in managing their health. In this new era of personalized



health care consumerism, My Lab ReQuest gives consumers more choice and flexibility in a convenient, efficient and confidential way."

Mountainside Fitness is a home-grown success story that was started by an Arizona State University student with a small fitness center in Ahwatukee in 1991. The founder turned his sweat equity and hands-on operational efforts into a successful health club with 14 locations around Greater Phoenix and more than 60,000 active members. Just recently, Mountainside Fitness opened at the award-winning and stunning Marina Heights development along Tempe Town Lake.

...Jillian Curl

continued from page 22

recommend putting all of your eggs into one basket. Facebook and Instagram ads should be in that mix and present a ton of opportunity for your business when properly designed, targeted, executed and analyzed. However, there are a lot of complexities within this continuously moving landscape. It is important not to take a passive approach on this part of your marketing strategy, or to allow someone who only knows the basics be in charge. Doing so will undoubtedly leave you with lackluster results.

There are already over three million companies that regularly use Facebook to market their business. As this number continues to grow, and massive amounts of marketing budgets shift from television to social, the cost of Facebook and Instagram ads will continue to rise dramatically. Therefore, to avoid missing out on the peak value of social media, it is important to evaluate and properly align your social strategy as soon as possible.

(Jillian Curl is the Social Media Manager for Muscle Up Marketing. She holds degrees in both Communications and Media Studies from Clayton State University and has been managing B2C social media pages and paid ad strategy for numerous companies over the last seven years. To learn more about Muscle Up Marketing, please visit www.muscleupmarketing.com.)

Maximizing Your Member-Guest Events

By: Karen Woodard-Chavez

Does your club host a monthly Member-Guest event at the club to showcase the club to prospects as well as utilize the event as a tool to increase participation and retention with members? If so, KUDOS to you. If not, you are missing out on a simple event that should be part of your monthly marketing mix.

Years ago, I wrote an article for **CLUB INSIDER** featuring tips to hosting a profitable party at the club. The tips in that article absolutely apply to a successful Member-Guest event. However, there are some additional points in this article that serve a different purpose than simply having a party for members and should not be missed. These eight tips include:

1. Being clear about your purpose. Your purpose with a Member-Guest event is threefold: (1) To create a reason for prospects that you have had a selling conversation with in the past to come back into the club, have a terrific time and want to join that day. (2) To invite members to come to the event to experience programs, services and professionals that they did not know about. (3) For members to be able to have a guest come to the club with them during the event. *To be clear, the event is to have a consistent monthly bump in membership sales as well as non-dues revenue (NDR) programs.*

2. This event is not solely sponsored and presented by the Membership Department. That is a HUGE misperception. If your Member-Guest event is largely being produced by the Membership Department, that is not only unfair, but your event may not be as strong as it could be due to the lack of collaboration and collective genius. *The event is sponsored and produced by ALL departments in the club.*

3. Planning for the event needs to happen two months ahead, and all departments should be involved in the planning. The plan needs to begin with the end in mind. The end includes how many members you expect to attend, how many guests/prospects you expect to attend, how many new memberships you expect to sell during the event and how many non-dues revenue programs you expect to sell during the event. From there, you will collaborate on the activities, demos, entertainment, refreshments, etc. and who will be doing what. This planning is most successfully done in a leadership meeting when all department leadership is present. Consider having this planning happen during the first meeting of the month and dedicating the entire meeting to the event. By doing

so, all parties are prepared to participate and create a successful event, and the event planning is wrapped up two months ahead of time. *As a side note, this will not only create a successful event, but it will be a terrific tool in breaking down silos that may exist in your business.*

4. After the planning meeting, all parties know exactly what is expected to be done by whom, and they can get to work to make it happen. If you recall in the previous point, we discussed outcomes from the event. Now the Membership Team knows how many contacts they need to make to get the targeted number of members, guests and prospects to the event so the targets can be met or exceeded.

5. With one of the goals being NDR sales, there needs to be a line-up of demos throughout the event that members, guests and prospects can participate in and purchase during the event. For example, if your event is in September, you will be demonstrating and enrolling for the NDR programs that will commence in October. To maximize enrollment, make it super easy for members to purchase by having a membership person in each demo after the demo to invite the sale: *"We hope you loved the demo you participated in today. The results from this program will be phenomenal! We have a few spaces left in the program and can enroll you right now for the next session at our enrollment station right outside of the studio. I will*

meet you out there; don't miss out!"

6. Avoid inviting the same members to your events time and time again. You will need to make an active effort to reach out to all members to invite them to your events. A perfect tool to accomplish this is the "Anniversary Promo" event. The Anniversary Promo requires you to celebrate the anniversary of every member who joined during the month of September since the beginning of time for your club. You will provide a celebration, guest privileges, a thank you gift and perhaps preferred pricing on programs. You will also do this in October for all the members who joined during October since the beginning of time at your club. Then November, December, etc. Do you see how this is a perfect tool to not only actively reach out to all members but also to impact retention, results, referrals and revenue?

7. Follow up with all prospects for membership sales as well as all members who participated for NDR sales immediately following the event to further maximize sales.

8. Review the previous month's event in the next month's planning meeting to determine what was a success and what was a stinker. Analyze and adjust to maximize each event. However, do not overthink and insist on constantly recreating the wheel if what you are doing is working. Remember, each month, you



Karen Woodard-Chavez

will have a different group of members, guests and prospects, so you do not have to always start over with something new each month. You absolutely can theme your events, and if the core basics of your event are working and you are meeting or exceeding your numbers, then keep on doing what is working.

(Karen is President of Premium Performance Training in Boulder, Colorado and Ixtapa, Mexico. She has owned and operated clubs since 1985 and now consults with and trains staff throughout the world. She provides her services on-site, online, by phone and through her books, CDs, DVDs and manuals. She can be reached at 303-417-0653 or karen@karenwoodard.com)

Crunch Franchise Announces Its Newest State-of-the-Art Facilities In Tampa, FL; Colorado Springs, CO and Chamblee, GA

NEW YORK, N.Y. - Crunch Fitness has announced the planned openings of new state-of-the-art facilities in Tampa, Florida; Colorado Springs, Colorado and Chamblee, Georgia:

TAMPA FL - Crunch Fitness announced the planned opening of a new 21,400-square foot gym with state-of-the-art equipment and amenities in the Channelside District of Tampa, Florida. The club, housed on the ground floor of the west building at Grand Central at Kennedy, entered into pre-sale on August 1st in anticipation of an opening in December of this year.

This new facility will serve the needs of residents and professionals in downtown Tampa, Davis Island and Harbor Island, as more than 400,000 people reside within a 10-minute drive of this new location. Crunch's new gym location offers a new fitness experience complete with group fitness, a designated

cardio and strength training area as well as HydroMassage beds and a private stretching area.

Crunch Channelside is Crunch Fitness' ninth in Florida and the 11th overall for the franchise ownership team of Vince Julien, Geoff Dyer, Tony Scrimale, Jeff Dotson and Kevin La Ferriere. These five owners have more than 120 combined years of management experience in the fitness industry.

"We are very excited to announce pre-sale and the planned opening of our newest state-of-the-art Crunch Fitness location in the Channelside District," co-owner Geoff Dyer said. "Our 'No Judgment' philosophy is ideally suited to the sensibilities of this community, and members will have the opportunity to shape their fitness and wellness routine according to how they live today."

COLORADO SPRINGS, CO - Colorado

Spring, Colorado is now home to its second Crunch Fitness center, which opened to the public earlier this month. The 21,000 square-foot facility, which boasts some of the most advanced fitness equipment and amenities in the industry, is situated in a busy shopping district surrounded by a residential community at 1801 South Academy Boulevard.

CHAMBLEE, GA - The Chamblee, Georgia community will become the home of a new 22,500-square foot Crunch Fitness center with state-of-the-art fitness equipment and amenities. The club, housed at 5508 Peachtree Industrial Blvd., sits behind the plaza's Chick-Fil-A in one of metro-Atlanta's fastest growing rental markets.

To learn more about Crunch franchising opportunities, visit **CrunchFranchise.com**, and see the **Crunch Ad on Page #5**.

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IDEA World Fitness Convention Celebrates 35th Anniversary!

By: Angie Pattengale

This year, the IDEA World Fitness Convention celebrated its 35th anniversary, and it was exciting and inspiring to be part of it! Each year, IDEA World brings 10,000+ fitness enthusiasts and industry professionals to one place for high energy, impactful education, inspiring sessions and events and a ton of trainer support products and services. And, of course, there is the personal favorite, the nutrition section of the Expo Hall! Sampling the goodness of healthy new eats was a fun food adventure.

This year was no exception to greatness. IDEA World is one place that you can get inspired and be inspiring. It's an event where like-minded people come together to be part of something bigger than the day-to-day. We meet new people, we reconnect with friends and colleagues, we learn from our mentors, network with one another and we get our fit on!

Anywhere you'd go in the sprawling Las Vegas Convention Center, there was action and excitement and a love for fitness exuding from every room. Banquet halls turned group fitness rooms, educational sessions for every interest and CE need and so many exercise demo stages in the Expo Hall that I lost count. But, I did join in and

"dancercised," more than once!

Before the dance party got started, there were keynote and opening ceremony events that left us ready to be the best we could be, to make the most out of our time there and to engage with the people who

make our industry the greatest on the planet! It felt exhilarating to be among people who would all agree that there is no greater benefit or sustainable body and mind advantage than what a healthy and fit lifestyle can provide at any age and at any level.

My Favorites

Of course, I had my favorite events and sessions. I always enjoy the keynote speaker, but this year was one of my favorites. **Darren Hardy** gave the keynote presentation. He is a mentor and consultant to top CEOs and professionals across many industries. His overall message was, **'Be the Exception.'** We all have the ability to reach a full and fulfilling potential, and sometimes a little encouragement and direction from those who have been there makes all the difference. I encourage you to watch this and the opening ceremonies videos; it'll be like you were there! Check them out at bit.ly/clubinsider37.

So, what did our **National Federation of Professional Trainers (NFPT)** do? We had some of our cast and crew there for the Expo, in a booth near the *Xertainment* stage. We had plenty of people to talk to and work out with, we attended sessions and networked, as well as reconnected with our partners and friends. We attended the Founder's Dinner where we were honored to be in the presence of such an inspiring and influential group of industry spearheads. **Peter and Kathy Davis** presented achievement awards and gave a

(See Angie Pattengale Page 26)



Back Row (L to R) - The NFPT Expo Cast, Crew and Friends: Charles DeFrancesco, Kevin Chen, Brett Kehler, Angie Pattengale, Billie Pattengale, April Pattee. Front Row: Steve Sarno and Beverly Hosford

Tapping the Niche Market

By: Casey Conrad

I was introduced to the slogan, *"You get rich in the niche,"* in 2006 while attending a 3-day marketing course in Los Angeles held by **Mark Victor Hanson**. If you don't recognize the name, he is the co-author of the brand, *"Chicken Soup for the Soul,"* which started out with a single book that offered inspirational stories submitted by others and put into a collection. That book became a series that has now sold more than the Bible! The books morphed into a brand that included food items, pet items, clothing and more.

Hansen's message was simple and clear: by marketing to a very specific niche, you can connect with the target consumer at a deeper level and build a business faster than trying to appeal to the masses. It makes sense. A personal trainer who markets himself to a very narrow population --for example, only individuals suffering from Multiple Sclerosis-- has a much easier time attracting his customers for a number of reasons.

First of all, consumers are crystal clear as to who the service is for. Second, the trainer is perceived as a specialist and, over time, will be seen as an expert (assuming he delivers what he promises). Third, referrals from happy clients happen much more organically because people with the same issue or condition tend to form greater bonds and communities. Fourth, and most obvious, creating marketing messages and making marketing medium decisions becomes very simple, because it's easy to ascertain if your target market is exposed to that particular source.

As someone who is fascinated with the psychology behind marketing, I always have my antenna up for interesting trends, strategies and techniques. Here's one that is **TOTALLY RELEVANT** to our health and fitness industry: *"Health condition specific products."* What I'm referring to are products that have been created specifically for individuals dealing with things like diabetes, low back pain, sleep disorders, etc. These are products that once were a generic category but are now very niche!

Now, before you say, "Duh, Casey, of course there are products for specific health conditions," let me take you on a journey of one product line that exemplifies this marketing trend perfectly: body lotion. Let's just work with one of the most recognized brands on the market: Vaseline (Total toxic crap, but that's another article for a different magazine!).

When Vaseline first hit the market, it was called just that, Vaseline, with a tag line, "Intensive Care Lotion." It came in a pale-yellow container. Walk down the aisle of your local drugstore now and look for

Vaseline. If you haven't done it lately, go do it just for the impact. I haven't counted, but there have to be close to two dozen types of Vaseline. Let's walk through the process of how Unilver took ONE product and morphed it into dozens.

Since women and men clearly have different needs when it comes to moisturizing, one of the first "break-offs" that was created was "For Women" and "For Men." Obviously, those categories could be too broad for some individuals looking for just the right moisturizer, so the next generation started to roll out different skin types and moisturizing ingredients. These include Dry Skin, Sensitive Skin, Oily Skin, Total Moisture, Aloe Fresh, Intensive Rescue, Cocoa Butter and Shea Butter, just to name a few.

Now, if you are a moisturizing novice and aren't quite sure which particular type would be just right for you, the company decided to make it easy for some of us and released the seasonal collection, which included Winter, Spring, Summer and Fall. I'm NOT making this stuff up!

For the serious moisturizer, you can get super-targeted according to your pigment type and go for Dark Skin, Skin Whitening, Instant Fairness, Triple Whitening, Healthy White, Even Skin Tone or Glowing.

For the super health conscious person who is concerned about sun damage, you can moisturize and protect at the same time with SPF15, SPF24, Complete 10 or UV Lightening (whatever the heck that is).

And, now, drum roll... consumers are being treated to the newest additions, which are targeted towards health concerns and/or conditions. These include, Eczema Relief, Anti-Aging, Stretch Mark, and their very latest addition, Diabetic Dry Skin Relief! Their competitor, Gold Bond, also has a version for diabetics.

ARE YOU SERIOUS? Yes, I'm serious! Here's the most comical thing: the difference in terms of ingredients between these products is absolutely nothing! A few chemicals, that's it, but the packaging colors and the specialized application is unique.

Call it crazy or call it marketing genius (I don't really care), it teaches us a valuable lesson - the same one Mark Victor Hansen was touting a decade ago. **You get rich in the niche!**

This trend is not limited to the Vaseline product line. Look around and you will see every product category, and every brand is doing the same thing. You have cereals for cholesterol, constipation and diabetes. Yogurts labeled for IBS and diabetes. Start paying attention to the packaging of all your food and personal care products; more and more of them are

beginning to add verbiage that speaks to specific populations of health conditions.

So, now you're wondering: *"What the heck does all this have to do with me, the fitness operator?"* Simple... *If you want to attract more clients, niche. Stop selling "Fitness" and focus on fitness for particular health concerns or conditions. In doing so, you will appeal to individuals who have never considered walking through your doors.*

For the past several years, I have been working with clients who have embraced this niche marketing strategy. Together, we have developed programs for better sleep, more energy, stress reduction, blood sugar control and mental clarity, just to name a few. The programs typically run between 4 - 8 weeks and incorporate key elements of any successful Program Marketing activity. These include having personal interaction; specific points of measurement before, during and after; attendance tracking and accountability; and interventions if participation drops off.

The results are extraordinary. Because the message and the programs are highly targeted, it becomes simple to reach out to special groups, medical professionals and associations for marketing activities. Often, a representative from the club is asked to speak at a meeting or networking event, for free!

Yes, niche marketing isn't going to drive hundreds of guests into your door at once, but what marketing activity can



Casey Conrad

accomplish that today, anyway? And, yes, it takes longer to build a niche market, but the benefits far outweigh the challenges.

More than ever, I believe that niche marketing using specialized programs provides fitness operators with the most cost effective, outcome-orientated platform our industry has seen in a very long time. The only thing you need to do is decide what niche you want to target and design a program to meet its needs.

(Casey Conrad is the author of numerous industry publications on sales and marketing. She has been an international presenter for 27 years. Learn more at www.HealthClubSalesTraining.com.)

...Angie Pattengale

continued from page 25

heartfelt address to dinner guests. We had the privilege of reconnecting with **ClubConnect**, who we're honored to know and grow with. ClubConnect has developed what is, in my opinion, the fastest-growing club support software in the industry, and we're thrilled to be partner with them and meet club owners and managers at the Club Summit part of IDEA World. I was also able to reconnect with **Carol Michaels**, last year's *Personal Trainer of the Year* award winner and *NFPT's Cancer Recovery course* author. Then, there was the most exciting thing of all: NFPT sponsored two anatomy sessions.

NFPT believes in a foundational approach to learning and a back-to-the-roots approach to exercise methodologies and training. Pursuing that approach, we wanted to bring an emphasis on anatomy and human movement and going deeper into this topic supports trainers' abilities to train their clients more effectively. NFPT author, publisher, expert trainer, anatomy professor and entrepreneur for over 15 years, **Beverly Hosford**, presented to over 100+ participants in her sessions *Cue Movement & Exercise with Abdominal Anatomy* and *Cue Movement & Exercise with Hip Anatomy*. These sessions

and her teaching style were so well received and provided such high-quality learning that IDEA has videoed them both for purchase from their site (coming soon) as a continuing education offering for CECs.

IDEA World is THE place for Continuing Education Credits (CECs). You can get them all in one weekend event. But, it's also a place for *sheer inspiration!* They certainly hold true to their mission to *'Inspire the World to Fitness.'* If you weren't able to be there this year, consider going next year when it will be held in **San Diego, June 27 - July 1, 2018**. I hope to have the opportunity to meet you someday at this or other industry conferences. Look up educational conferences in your area or consider a workcation to an event destination. Get out there, be heard, be seen and make the most out of being **YOU!**

(Angie Pattengale has been with National Federation of Professional Trainers, NFPT, since 1994, and she is currently serving as the Director of Certification. Angie oversees the coordination of certification test development and delivery and directs the growth initiatives of the certification program. Angie works to support and advance the NFPT Certification mission as it relates to health, public safety and industry authority.)

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Performance Health (6,000 sq ft), Ontario | Spartanburg Athletic Club (25,000 sq ft), SC | Penfield Fitness (40,000 sq ft), NY
Cederdale Fitness (180,000 sq ft), MA | Fitness Firm (12,000 sq ft), Ontario | Franklin Athletic Club (230,000 sq ft), MI
Blush Fitness (12,000 sq ft), KS | Latitude Sports Clubs (80,000 sq ft) MA | RPM Total Fitness (12,000 sq ft), Ontario

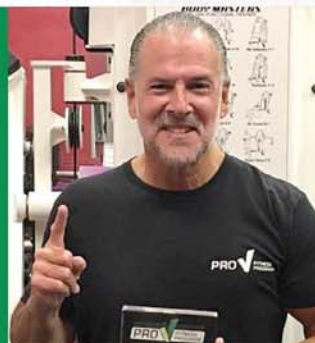
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"Before we implemented the program we only had enough demand for a handful of trainers. For the past 16 years we followed the program to a tee and experienced tremendous growth. We now have 34 trainers and last year grossed 2.2 million in PT sales. I would highly recommend this program to any club!"

Jen Poljatic – CEO, River Valley Club



"I tried every which way to make money in 1 to 1 training and failed miserably. We implemented the Pro Fitness Program and in the past 2 years our 1200 member club grossed nearly 1.7 million in revenue. Our staff loves the program, the margins are incredible and the upfront costs are minimal!"

Al Tassel – Owner, Pumps Fitness



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Club Industry 2017 is on The *Horizon!*

A Focus On This Year's Keynote Speakers

It's that time of year again; the **2017 Club Industry Show** is on the horizon and will take place in *Chicago, October 4 - 6* at the *Chicago Hilton Hotel*. We want to take a moment to inform you about this year's keynote speakers. Every year, the educational value of Club Industry cannot be understated, especially the lessons that can be learned from the keynote presentations, and this year is no exception. This year's keynote presentations include:

Michelle Poler
What Are We So Afraid Of?

Wednesday, October 4th
4:00PM - 5:00PM
Hilton International Ballroom

Born and raised in Caracas, Venezuela to a family of Holocaust survivors, Michelle was accustomed to living with fear. But, when she moved to New York to pursue a Master's Degree in Branding at the School of Visual Arts, Michelle quickly realized that NYC was not for the fearful.

In efforts to re-write her definition of fear, Michelle set out to face 100 fears in 100 days. Halfway into the journey, the project was discovered by the media, becoming an instant viral phenomenon. Michelle completed her 100th challenge on a TEDx's stage. This helped her turn a personal project into a global movement, allowing her to quit her job as an Art Director in advertising to pursue her passion.

Michelle discovered that inspiring others to go after their fears was her new calling. She is now touring the world speaking at companies, schools and organizations, teaching audiences how to

step outside of their comfort zones as a way to tap into their full potential. She is also the Founder of Hello Fears, a platform where everyday people get to inspire everyday people with stories of courage.

Michelle Poler's humorous and inspiring speaking style has been captivating audiences across the globe. With authentic storytelling, engaging visuals and her 100 Days Without Fear experience, Poler will show you how to challenge your comfort zone to tap into your full potential. This presentation will change your perception of fear and inspire you to take action.

Note: Prior to the Wednesday Keynote Presentation, this year's PFP Winner will be announced. So, be sure to arrive early.

Nick Sarillo
*Building a Culture of Trust,
One Slice at a Time*

Thursday, October 5th
9:00AM - 10:00AM
Hilton International Ballroom

Nick Sarillo does not own a big national brand. Outside of Chicago, few will recognize his name or his company. Yet, he has been featured in *The New York Times*, *The Economist*, *Inc Magazine*, *Fast Company*, *Newsweek*, *Investor's Business Daily*, *American Express Open Forum* and more. He also appeared on *NBC Nightly News* when they featured Nick's very own "It's a Wonderful Life" story.

Nick Sarillo is the Founder, CEO and "primary keeper" of the Purpose and Operational Values of Nick's Pizza & Pub,



Michelle Poler



Nick Sarillo

one of the top ten busiest independent pizza companies in per-store sales in the United States. Founded with the purpose of providing the community with an unforgettable place where families could relax and have fun, Nick's Pizza & Pub has margins nearly twice that of the average pizza restaurant and boasts more than a 75% employee retention rate in an industry in which the average annual turnover is more than 150%.

Nick credits his company's success to his purpose-driven culture, which is the focus of his book, *A Slice of the Pie: How to Build a Big Little Business*. Nick has and is doing amazing work with his restaurants, and through his speaking and writing, helps other businesses understand the importance of having and following their purpose and values to create an unstoppable culture.

Using real-life experiences, Sarillo will share how to create a

meaningful place to work where leaders are coaches that build and inspire their team.

Note: Prior to the Thursday Keynote Presentation, **CLUB INSIDER** Publisher, **Norm Cates**, will be awarded with *Club Industry's Lifetime Achievement Award*. So, be sure to arrive early to see this special presentation.

• • •

Save The Date! The 2017 Club Industry Show will take place in *Chicago, October 4 - 6*, and we hope to see you there. As a reminder, **CLUB INSIDER** will be celebrating its **25th Anniversary** at the show! If you have not already registered, now is the time to do so. Go to www.clubindustryshow.com, click *Register*, and use the *Promo Code: INSIDER25* for a **25% discount!** See you in the Windy City!





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Attracting Outdoor Enthusiasts Indoors

By: Nancy Trent

Soon, outdoor enthusiasts will be looking for a warm place to blow off steam and stay in shape. Chilly weather can heat up profits in the fitness community. Here are a few ways you can capture the attention of an audience that is about to head indoors:

Doctor's Orders - Extreme sports call for extreme weather, but unfortunately, not everyone can handle the extreme conditions. There are doctors who are encouraging their patients to stay in shape and be healthy by keeping their workouts indoors. Incorporating a doctor referral program into your business can extend your reach to new customers. This requires seeking doctors who are aligned with your philosophy and building trust with them so they can confidently refer their patients to you. Start by engaging with like-minded doctors through face-to-face meetings and allow them to experience your services in order to build a relationship that garners

genuine feedback.

Buddy System - Recreational racers are often very social and active in their communities. If you can sign on one, it is likely you will be able to sign on the rest of their network. Encourage your local runners, cyclists, swimmers and hikers to invite their friends.

Earn It - Outdoor types are competitive. They like to surpass themselves. Give them a challenge in the form of a rewards program, and they are likely to take you up on it.

Business Partners - What other businesses in the area are looking to attract outdoor customers? Think beyond the local sporting goods shop. Get in touch with neighboring businesses such as restaurants that cater to healthy eaters, health food stores, apparel stores and spas. Then, develop cross-promotions that hit the outdoor customer where they live, relax and shop.

Selfie Contest - Outdoor workouts are photogenic. Give people a reason to Instagram with interiors that appeal to the senses and which will make them want to show off their picturesque location. Up the ante with a photo contest using a hashtag, and watch people start posting. Take it a step further by setting up a selfie station in your space, and encourage your members to have fun with it.

Differentiate your Classes - Introduce classes that change with the seasons. Offering seasonal classes will attract a new audience, retain current ones and keep everyone engaged through "fear of missing out" on what's new.

Time for Talks - Invite local experts including physicians, nutritionists, restaurant owners or chefs to share their tips for healthy living and winter wellness. This not only a great form of cross promotion, but it will also foster a strong network among the businesses in your area.

Virtual Reality - One of the latest fitness trends is merging technology and fitness through virtual reality (VR) experiences. Incorporating VR into workouts will cater to a variety of client interests and will literally bring the outdoor experience indoors.

A League of Their Own - Introducing team sports to your fitness center will appeal to larger groups of people.



Nancy Trent

Pamper Them - Offer hair blowouts, pedicures and other spa services to members in between workouts and encourage them to schedule dates at your center for them.

All of these promotions can be supported with press coverage and social media sharing.

(Nancy Trent, *The Trend Spotter*, is a writer and speaker, a lifelong health advocate, a globe-trotting trend watcher and the Founder and President of Trent & Company, a New York-based marketing communications firm with an office in Los Angeles. Nancy can be reached at 212-966-0024 or nancy@trentandcompany.com.)

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Thanks and Appreciation

At CLUB INSIDER, we are excited to be in our 24th Year of this home-based health and fitness club trade publication! The thought that this publication was founded to serve an industry I truly love, and so that I could become a **Mister Mom** for my son, Justin, is still intriguing and amazing to us. I wish to extend our most sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to everyone that's made this amazing 24-year run possible.

A very sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** go to Rick Caro, Dr. Gerry Faust and the Faust Executive Roundtable #1 for helping me decide in 1993 what my home-based business would be. **Thanks and Appreciation** to my long-time friends, Ron Hudspeth and Cathy Miller of Atlanta's Hudspeth Report for the tremendous assistance they provided us during our first eight years of publication. **Thanks and Appreciation** to all of the folks at Walton Press in Monroe, Georgia. They've done an absolutely excellent job for us all these years and have printed every one of our 284 monthly editions! **Thanks and Appreciation** to all of our READERS. Sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to our CLUB INSIDER Advertisers, past and present, for their kind and dedicated support of this publication. It's amazing to know that we have several advertisers with over 15 years of continuous advertising with us. Plus, we have one advertiser, National Gym Supply, with over 23 years advertising with us! We also want to say sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to all of our CLUB INSIDER Contributing Authors, past and present, who've contributed hundreds and hundreds of excellent articles to help our readers with their Best Business Practices. **Thanks and Appreciation** to IHRSA for all it does.

Sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to my son, Justin, who started working part-time for CLUB INSIDER when he was just 8 years old (helping with mailings). This young man, pretty much behind the scenes for 24 years now, has truly been a fantastic partner for his Dad in CLUB INSIDER. Justin does our editing, publication layouts, as well as our website design and maintenance, all of our bookkeeping and subscription processing work, as well as archive management and anything else that needs doing, including writing eight cover stories per year.

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

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

Norm Cates, Jr.

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BE IN BUSINESS FOR YOURSELF, BUT NOT BY YOURSELF

Dianna's Story...

"With drive, moxie, and a passion for fitness, I decided it was time to open my own business. After 10 years as a PE teacher, I knew I was independent enough to not HAVE to work for someone else. Joining Workout Anytime was the best decision I ever made. I bleed red, gray and blue! This isn't my job; it's my life; it's my family and my club is my baby. I found my home with Workout Anytime."

Dianna Kaga, Owner
Kennesaw & Marietta GA

- PROFITABLE BUSINESS MODEL
- EASY-TO-OPERATE FRANCHISE SYSTEM
- EXCELLENT SUPPORT & TRAINING
- OVER 130+ LOCATIONS
- TERRITORIES AVAILABLE NATIONWIDE



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