

PRSR STD
U.S. Postage Paid
PERMIT #3592
ATLANTA, GA

Norm Cates' **CLUB INSIDER**TM

The "Pulse" of the Health, Racquet, and Sports Club Industry Worldwide

Established **1993**

OCTOBER 2008

NAKED WOMAN AT MY DOOR

...and why that's a bad thing



Lessons learned in the fitness business from a life on the road

THOMAS PLUMMER

Book Cover By Sue Kell of Susan K. Bailey Advertising

An Important Story For Our Industry

**A million members know a good deal.
So do our franchisees.**



The #1 health club on the



list.

For franchise information, call Ben Midgley at 603.750.0001, ext. 120

PLANETFITNESS.COM/FRANCHISING

Norm Cates' CLUB INSIDER™

The "Pulse" of the Health, Racquet, and Sports Club Industry Worldwide

Established 1993

Naked Woman At My Door...

and why that's a bad thing

Lessons learned in the fitness business from a life on the road

A Book Review By: Norm Cates

A Book By Thomas Plummer

-And-

An Important Story For Our Industry

"The Dash". That's what Thomas Plummer's book is really all about. It's not really about a "Naked Woman At My Door" as Plummer's provocative title might indicate.

What is "The Dash"? With me posing this question to

you, you might just be thinking, "Cates, are you writing about a 100-yard dash in this intro to Thomas Plummer's newest book? If so, Cates, I'm gonna move on!"

No folks. Don't move on. Read on! No 100-yard dash writing here. "The Dash" I am writing about is that little bit of punctuation that appears on the tombstone of people between the year of their birth and the year they passed away, or as I sometimes say, "Have gone to the happy hunting ground". Such as the tombstone dash annotation I

am shooting for: **1946 - 2046!**

The story of "The Dash" was written and captured by Linda Ellis in a brief, 3-minute video that 40 million Americans have viewed since it went on the net, and 20,000 per day still view it. You can view "The Dash" by going to: www.dashpoemmovie.com.

But, before you view "The Dash", here is my point. Thomas Plummer's FUN, educational and blunt book, a real page-turner read called, "Naked Woman At My Door", was intended by Thom to do two things:

1. Help club owners and operators really understand why they may not be doing as well in their clubs as they had envisioned or hoped, and point by point, what to do about that.

2. Provide serious and excellent life coaching ideas and concepts. These are concepts that, no matter who reads his book or whatever walk of life they may occupy, will be helped and will improve their life... if Plummer's advice is studied and followed.

(See "Naked Book" Page 12)



Thomas Plummer

IHRSA To Focus On Quality Clubs Again!

As previously announced in *Club Business International* magazine, IHRSA is working on a promising initiative to create a voluntary certification process for fitness facilities that will strengthen our industry and raise our standing as quality providers

of safe and healthy exercise.

The initiative is spearheaded by NSF International, a world leader in standards development for public health and safety. NSF has invited IHRSA to participate on the Joint Committee

(See *Quality Clubs* Page 6)

Happy Birthday To JACK LALANNE... Now 94!

Happy Birthday to Jack LaLanne, as he and his lovely wife, Elaine, and others celebrated his 94th birthday on September 26, 2008. Jack LaLanne, also known as the "Godfather of Fitness", has been a mover, shaker and motivator of Americans for over

72 years! Jack is a pioneer who opened the first modern health spa in the United States in 1936, and in 1951, brought exercise to TV. Although 94, Jack looks decades younger. He and his wife Elaine speak all over the world, inspiring

(See *Jack LaLanne* Page 6)

The Atlantic Clubs' Owner Pat Laus Honored With The Lou Gehrig Humanitarian Award

By: Norm Cates

I am happy to inform you that Pat Laus, the owner of The Atlantic Clubs in Manasquan and Red Bank, New Jersey was honored in New York City in September with the Lou Gehrig Humanitarian Award.

CLUB INSIDER asked Pat a few questions about this special honor and that report follows:

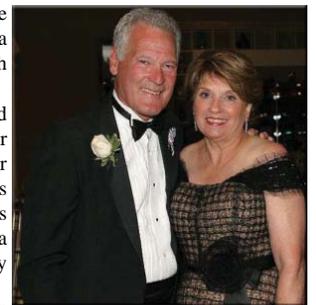
CLUB INSIDER (C.I.) - Pat, please tell us about the honor you received in New York City on September 20th.

Pat Laus (PL) - Phil Villipiano, former Oakland Raider linebacker and Super Bowl XI champion,

established the Field of Hope Gala thirteen years ago after a close friend was diagnosed with ALS.

The event is produced in conjunction with the Muscular Dystrophy Association, and over the years, the celebrity gala has raised several million dollars to benefit ALS Research as a part of the Muscular Dystrophy Association's mission.

This year, with 300 attendees on Saturday evening, September 20th, the dinner raised over \$200,000 for research, and I was very honored to receive "The Lou Gehrig Humanitarian Award" in recognition of my efforts to raise awareness of ALS, funds for



Phil Villapiano & Pat Laus

ALS research and contributions to the community. It was my privilege to share the recognition with our Atlantic Club CFTC Team and Kevin McHugh, COO. (See *Pat Laus* Page 8)

Inside The Insider

- Hey... How Weak is Our Economy... Really? - By: Norm Cates
- Membership Opportunities - By: Ray Gordon
- Maximum Money in Minimum Time - By: Donna Krech
- Incentivize for Success - By: Jeffrey Keller, M.S. M.B.A.
- Now Is The Time - By: Shawn Vint

- Tools for Predicting Your Program and Profit Center Success - By: Laurie Cingle, M.Ed
- Why The Right Health Club Interior Sells More Memberships - By: Bruce Carter
- Training For Good Customer Service Must Be Done Over And Over Again - By: Sandy Coffman
- Fiserv's CheckFree Compete Adds Innovative Features To Enhance Health Club Operations
- Fitness Fundraiser's Innovative New Program Connect Clubs

Norms NOTES: •CLUB INSIDER Now 16 and Counting! •"We the people" •1) Vote and 2) Pray for our country •The Naked Truth •World Gym International Under Contract •IHRSA Returns to Quality Clubs Idea •Pat Laus Honored •Laurie Cingle Joins Contributing Author Team •Ed Connors Honored •LVAC's Prospering •Boyko's Move National Fitness Trade Show •Donna Krech Teams Up With Dr. Denis Waitley •Red and Emma Lerille Approach 46th Club Anniversary! •Virgin HealthMiles Rolls Out in Commonwealth of Kentucky •Raphael Lima New Midtown Weston Aquatics Director •"Weight-based Bias in Workplace a Big Problem"

Norm's NOTES

•Hello everybody! This is your friendly CLUB INSIDER Publisher. Since 1993 checking in for 180 months now.

•CLUB INSIDER is now **16 years old and counting!** This edition completes the 15th year of publication of CLUB INSIDER, and we move into our 16th year. I want to **thank you all for reading** and giving your feedback, **thanks to our Advertisers** for their solid support and **thanks to our Contributing Authors** for their great work over all these years. And, special thanks to my son, **JUSTIN CATES**, now **President** of CLUB INSIDER. **Stay Tuned!**

•Is **America a Great Country** or what? Do you know **why** America is a great country? The answer is: **"We the people!"** **Keep smiling, keep showing up ready to work, keep working hard, keep giving your members an "Oasis" in the desert... a 3rd place, a wonderful place, away from the stress of work and home! Be a solution to stress for "We the people!"**

•**Hey... It's almost November!** Let me suggest that you plan to do two things on **November 4th**: **1) Vote and 2) Pray for our country.**

•**THOMAS PLUMMER'S** new book, **"Naked Woman At My Door... and why that's a bad thing"** cover story this month is intended to provide all of our readers with good horse sense that, yes, some of you lack. Plummer is, in the opinion of this author, the

#1 good horse sense distributor in our industry. His advice in this book touches on virtually every front in this industry; sales, hiring and firing, getting the job done, personal responsibility, making progress in good and bad times... You name it. Overall, I could not recommend any book to our industry more highly to club owners who: **A)** think they have been in this business so long that they know everything and cannot learn anything new **B)** new arrivals to our industry sniffing around and considering entering our industry with zero experience and zero resources and zero horse sense **C)** all club owners who actually have minds that are open to learning something new that will help their club(s) perform even better than they are now and make even a greater profit **D)** anybody in this industry who would like to reshape their new or

existing business to finally, after years and years of struggle, make a profit. Get it. Read it. Study it. **"Naked Woman At My Door... and why that's a bad thing"**. I call it the **"Naked Book"** because it carries **the naked truth**. And, about **Plummer's National Fitness Business Alliance**, I say ditto to all of the above. Check out the NFBA Seminar schedule in the cover story and NFBA ad on **Page #19**.

•Word is that a buyer from another country has contracted to purchase **World Gym International**. This is all the information I can share at this time, but as things develop, you will be the first to read it here in **CLUB INSIDER**. On the World Gym front, **CHRIS RONDEAU**, of **Planet Fitness/World Gym International**, tells me that the **World Gym 1440 All Access Gyms** are taking off like rockets!

One WG1440 All Access Club in Millsboro, Delaware, owned and operated by **PAM TRADER**, now has 630 members in just two months of operation in a market of 19 to 20,000 people. And, in Westmont, Illinois, a WG1440 Club owned by **JIM MECCHA** sold 200 memberships in its first week of presale! The Illinois 1440 location is in a heavily populated area, so **MIKE GRONDAHL'S** World Gym 1440 All Access concept is taking hold in both heavily populated and rural areas. Beyond World Gym, **JEFF INNOCENTI**, the former owner of 3 **Gold's Gyms**, is kicking major butt in the **New York City** area and now has **22 Planet Fitness** locations! One of those is generating **\$330,000 per month** in sales with a total of **\$110,000 overhead**. My bet is Innocenti is thrilled that he switched from the Gold's Gym brand to the Planet Fitness brand.

The Planet Fitness and World Gym organizations are playing through the soft economic times America is now enduring, and they are not paying attention to negativity that some in our industry spew. Maybe they are leaving their TV's off and going about business as usual! What a concept! **Stay tuned** for the soon to break full story on the World Gym International sale, a deal that came together in an amazingly short period of time after Mike Grondahl informed me that he had decided to sell WGI a few months ago. Why all this success for Mike Grondahl's Planet Fitness and World Gym acquisition about a year and a half ago and now its pending sale? The answer: **Mike Grondahl knows what he is doing. Stay Tuned!**

•I am thrilled to report that **JOE MOORE** informed me a couple of weeks ago that **IHRSA** has decided to go back to the **Quality Clubs issue**. Now, **IHRSA** is focused on Quality in clubs via a new and exciting program that will provide clubs with the ability to become certified, thus given bona-fides for your club for third party reimbursements as well as differentiating your club in the marketplace.

Joe Moore has led the way on this effort, and I want to thank Joe, the **IHRSA Board of Directors** and **DR. ART CURTIS**



Happy Halloween From Norm Cates!

and the **IHRSA Standards Committee** for the work they have and will be doing on this initiative. Check out the article on **Page #3**, and please respond to the survey questions in the article. **Stay tuned!**

•The **PAT LAUS' Story** is about one person (and her team) helping another person (and his team) change the world. Pat is the owner of two super clubs on the South Shore of New Jersey, **The Atlantic Clubs** in Manasquan and Red Bank. Pat built her Atlantic Club from a defunct racquetball club her former husband had owned. Pat's Atlantic Club is awesome, and a few years ago, she opened a smaller version called The Atlantic Club, Red Bank. On March 29, 2005, **AUGIE NIETO** was diagnosed with **Lou Gehrig's Disease, a/k/a ALS**. Augie is the fellow who started his career working for **RAY WILSON**, selling **Lifecycles** out of the back of his van. Augie went on to build **Life Fitness**, the world's largest manufacturer and seller of exercise equipment. Augie created Augie's Quest, and in 32 months, the organization, with the help of **PAT LAUS, JOHN MCCARTHY, PETE BROWN, MARK MASTROV** and other notables in our industry on the **Augie's Quest and Clubs for the Cure Teams**, have raised **\$16,936,449 in 32 months** with the goal of **\$18 million in 36 months**. On September 20th, Pat was honored in New York City with the **Lou Gehrig Humanitarian Award**. Check out the story on **Page #3**.

•**SHAWN VINT**, and his beautiful new bride, **LYNETTE**, have moved their **Greenmaple Wellness** operation to new digs, and I want to congratulate them both on this special move. In this (See Norm's NOTES Page 10)



Steve Goguen's World Gym 1440 All Access Club Mobile, Alabama

Thank You

To The CLUB INSIDER Contributing Author Team

- Rick Caro** - President, Management Vision, Inc. - (212) 987 - 4300
- John McCarthy** - 25-Year Executive Director of IHRSA
- Ray Gordon** - Founder, Sales Makers - ray@salesmakers.com or (239) 823 - 3769
- Andrea Sobotka** - Co-owner, Fitness Club Success - info@fitnessclubsuccess.com or (866) 855 - 5484
- Bonnie Patrick Mattalian** - The Club and Spa Synergy Group - (732) 236 - 2273
- Bruce Carter** - President, Optimal Design Systems International - (954) 385 - 9963
- Casey Conrad** - Communications Consultants - (800) 725 - 6147
- Dale Dibble** - Retired - dwdibble@hotmail.com
- Donna Krech** - Founder & President, Thin & Healthy's Total Solutions - (419) 991 - 1223
- Dr. Craig Wenborg** - System Developer, Oxyvital USA - (800) 528 - 1026
- Jeffrey Keller** - President, The Independent Health Club Networking Association - Jeffrey_Keller@msn.com
- Jeffrey Masten** - Sales Makers - (914) 213 - 1307
- Jim Thomas** - President, Fitness Management USA - (800) 929 - 2898
- Laurie Cingle, M.Ed** - Consultant/Coach, LaurieCingle.com - laurie@lauriecingle.com
- Sandy Coffman** - President, Programming for Profit - SLCOffman@aol.com
- Shawn Vint** - Greenmaple Wellness, Inc. - (888) 355 - 1055
- Will Phillips** - Roundtables for Executives - www.REXonline.org

prof•it•opia *n.*

A state in which everything is perfect because revenue is in excess of expenses resulting in extremely happy owners and ecstatic, jubilant club managers.

Clubs of all sizes rely on the proven value and flexibility of our complete solutions approach to acquire members, grow revenues, manage costs and improve loyalty at every opportunity.

CheckFree Compete™ is a membership performance management solution that enables you to optimize resources and simplify management for improved financial performance.

Visit us at www.checkfreecompete.com.

CheckFree Compete™ - complete membership performance management.

CheckFree[®]
is now part of **FISERV**

www.checkfree.com
1.800.324.9800

The "INSIDER SPEAKS"

Hey... How Weak is Our Economy... Really?

By: Norm Cates

On Friday, October 3rd, were you worried about whether the House of Representatives would approve the "salvation bill" that, two days before, had been approved, full of pork, by the U.S. Senate in a vote of 74 to 25? Well, as I sit here... the House of Representatives approved it (a bill now with a price tag of \$850 billion) by a vote of 263 to 171, after they had rejected the previous, and first version, on Monday, September 29th.

Ain't that sweet!? An absolutely huge "salvation bill" full of pork produced in record time... now the partisan politicians on both sides of the aisle can get back to what they all have really been thinking about... *campaigning to get re-elected!*

If I were a betting man, I would wager that amongst our readers, we have some of you smart

folks out there who were worried that the "salvation bill" *would be approved* and there are those who worried that *it would not*.

The purpose of this writing is to put the actual economy, not the self-induced Wall Street financial crisis that the President and the U.S. Congress have been trying to solve for two weeks now, into a little bit of perspective. This analysis may or may not have any value to you for your thinking about your own business.

I know you realize that during the past two weeks, our country's economy, according to the U.S. Government, could have been destroyed. I will add, however, if the government's tale was true, it could have been destroyed by the greed and stupidity of our partisan politicians and their cronies... people who've gotten rich off all of this.

However, the statistics presented in this article (See Sidebar) seem to clearly indicate that the overall U.S. economy, when compared to past eras, is not as bad off as the mass media would have you think.

Yes, I know new membership sales and retention in your clubs may be dropping for some of you. That truth, for those of you whom it is true, provides even more reason to work harder on both. And, remember, for new membership lead generation, if you have not already read Will Phillips' great, 2-part cover story that appeared in our August and September editions, go to www.americanhealthclubs.org and download it for free.

So, the message here is... hey, things could be worse! I urge you to just keep doing the hard work you need to do to make it a great day, a great week, a great month and a great end of the year!

Indicators From the Past and As Of October 3, 2008

Worst Unemployment Rates:

December 1932 - (Herbert Hoover era - Democrat) - 25.2%
 December 1982 - (Jimmy Carter era - Democrat) - 10.8%
 June 1982 - (Bill Clinton era - Democrat) - 7.8%
 August 2008 - (George W. Bush era - Republican) - 6.1%

Gross Domestic Product (GDP):

1932 - GDP Down 13%
 1980 - GDP Down 7.8%
 1990 - GDP Down 3.0%
 2008 - GDP Up an annualized .9% (1Q08) and 3.3% (2Q08)

Inflation - Consumer Price Index (CPI):

1932 - Down 10.3%*
 1979 - Up 13.3%
 1990 - Up 6.1%
 2008 - Up 5.4% (January-August 2008)

*There was very low demand due to there being little money available during the Great Depression.

Publisher's Note: Since written, things have gotten worse. *Stay Tuned!*

...Quality Clubs

continued from page 3

responsible for developing and approving the certification standards. We accepted the invitation after being assured that every IHRSA member would have the opportunity to participate in the process and make his/her voice heard.

IHRSA's participation in the process is guided by 5 principles:

1. Certification standards should be reflective of current responsible industry practice.
2. Certification should grow the health club industry by increasing consumer confidence in the safety of accredited facilities.
3. Certification should attract positive attention from the medical community, including an increase in the number of patient referrals to health clubs.
4. Certification should attract positive attention from employers, insurance companies, and other potential third-party payers.
5. Certification standards must be practical.

As we work with the Joint Committee to develop these principles and see that they are put into practice, we encourage you to send us your thoughts on the topics expected to be addressed by the certification standards:

1. Pre-activity screening and orientation.
2. Staffing requirements.
3. Emergency and risk management procedures.
4. Operational practices.

Please send comments to IHRSA's Public Policy Department at gr@ihrsa.org or 617-951-0056 (fax). Every IHRSA member will also have the opportunity to submit comments directly to the Joint Committee once the proposed certification standards are released to the public.

We look forward to hearing from you. We know that by working together we can create a certification process that will strengthen our industry and confirm its enormous value to the public. In the meantime, we will keep you posted with regular updates about the progress of the initiative.

-Joe Moore
 IHRSA President/CEO

...Jack LaLanne

continued from page 3

people to help themselves to a better life, physically, mentally and morally.

During Jack's career, he has been THE fitness guru for the world. In 1936, he celebrated the Grand Opening of America's first commercial health club by doing a handstand on the top of the flag pole on top the building where his new club was located. During his amazing career, Jack LaLanne has performed many physical feats that have amazed Americans and people around the world, including:

- 1954 - Age 40:** Swam the length of the San Francisco Golden Gate Bridge underwater with 140 pounds of equipment, including two air tanks... an undisputed world record.
- 1955 - Age 41:** Swam, handcuffed, from Alcatraz to Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco, CA.
- 1956 - Age 42:** Set a world record of 1,033 pushups in 23 minutes on "You Asked for It", a TV Show with Art Baker.
- 1957 - Age 43:** Swam the treacherous Golden Gate Channel, towing a 2,500-pound cabin

cruiser. This involved fighting the cold, swift ocean currents that made the 1-mile swim a 6½-mile test of strength and endurance.

•**1958 - Age 44:** Maneuvered a paddleboard 30 miles, 9½ hours non-stop from Farallon Islands to the San Francisco shore.

•**1959 - Age 45:** Completed 1,000 pushups and 1,000 chin-ups in 1 hour and 22 minutes. "Happy" is born, and *The Jack LaLanne Show* goes nationwide.

•**1974 - Age 60:** Swam from Alcatraz Island to Fisherman's Wharf, for a second time... handcuffed, shackled and towing a 1,000-pound boat.

•**1975 - Age 61:** Swam the length of the Golden Gate Bridge, underwater, for a third time... handcuffed, shackled and towing a 1,000-pound boat.

•**1976 - Age 62:** Commemorating the "Spirit of '76", swam 1 mile in Long Beach Harbor, handcuffed, shackled and towing 13 boats (representing the 13 original colonies) containing 76 people.

•**1979 - Age 65:** Towed 65 boats filled with 6,500-pounds of Louisiana Pacific pulp wood while handcuffed and shackled in Lake Ashinoko, near Tokyo, Japan.

•**1980 - Age 66:** Towed 10 boats in North Miami, Florida filled with 77 people for over a mile...

in less than 1 hour.

•**1984 - Age 70:** Handcuffed, shackled and fighting strong winds and currents, towed 70 boats with 70 people from the Queen's Way Bridge in the Long Beach Harbor to the Queen Mary, 1½ miles away.

•**1992 - Age 78:** Academy of Body Building and Fitness Award.

•**1994 - Age 80:** State of California Governor's Council on Physical Fitness Lifetime Achievement Award.

•**1996 - Age 82:** Dwight D. Eisenhower Fitness Award.

•**1999 - Age 85:** Spirit of Muscle Beach Award.

•**2002 - Age 88:** Jack receives his very own star on the Hollywood Boulevard Walk of Fame.

•**2004 - Age 90:** Jack celebrated his birthday with a major media blitz in New York, San Francisco and Los Angeles. ESPN Classic runs a 24 Hour marathon of the original Jack LaLanne Shows.

•**2005 - Age 91:** Received the Jack Webb Award from the Los Angeles Police Historical Society, the Arnold Classic Lifetime Achievement Award, Interglobal's International Infomercial Award, the Freddie, Medical Media Public Service Award, and he was a Free Spirit honoree at Al Neuharth's Freedom Forum.

Membership Opportunities

By: Ray Gordon

In today's competitive market, fueled by the recent emergence of really low priced clubs competing for your members, professional clubs needs to stand out in the community with special programs that are *highly successful*.

Every recent report on the weight epidemic in the United States places an emphasis on lack of proper exercise and oversized portions as major contributors to the weight problem.

How many of the thousands of members who have joined our clubs to lose weight have failed because they didn't get visual results fast enough and didn't continue their exercise long enough? It wasn't that we didn't try to help them exercise (free orientations and personal training sessions, "Missed You at the Club" cards, etc), but our industry has had to settle with an unacceptable rate of failures.

Diets and nutritional

consulting has been available in clubs for years; however, most member usage results are unsatisfactory, usually because the majority of new members try to get healthy and lose weight by starting an exercise program only. Next to genes and lifestyle habits, meals, exercising, shopping, cooking, and eating habits are the most powerful shapers of the human body. Dieting is a waste of time and energy. Diets don't change habits!!!

What matters most is their progress toward weight loss and a healthy body. This program should incorporate **Movement, Meals** and **Motivation** in an easily administrated program to really get results.

These amazing results will then motivate the members to tell their friends about their great new program.

Movement

It has been proven numerous times that a regular

exercise program will dramatically increase the success of both short- and long-term weight loss goals. The vast majority of the potential members who are searching for a permanent weight loss solution have tried exercise and failed... For some, many times!

For them to be successful, you are going to help them by making them accountable for the minimum exercise requirements of the program. Create a specific accountability system that encourages positive interaction between them and your staff!

Meals

Remember, the grand objective is to adjust the caloric intake with a person's daily eating habits. Training him to identify the proper nutritious serving size of a food group and incorporate this nutritious balance into a lifelong eating awareness is key. There are many programs designed to promote safe weight loss and maintaining lifelong healthy

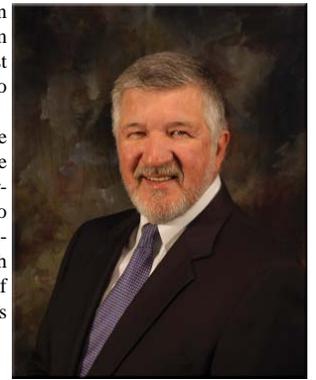
eating habits. The combination of healthy eating with a program of regular exercise will boost metabolism, the key ingredient to losing the weight permanently.

Although most people will be reducing their calorie intake by controlling their portions, remember the key to permanent weight loss is to maintain a higher metabolism which requires a sufficient number of calories. This is not a dangerous low-calorie diet!

Motivation

Membership sales staff MUST be a mandatory factor in motivating the new member to keep coming in the club during the first 30 days. Contacting them with positive support and confirming all their appointments.

A very, very important component for the success of this program is coaching them with the weekly weigh-ins and weekly "habit changing" workbooks. Mealtime can be a source of great



Ray Gordon

anxiety for people trying to lose weight. Mind games are common as people strive to change old habits...they must make their scheduled exercise and weigh-ins.

This will be a great opportunity to promote personal training every week. This alone should greatly increase your personal training revenue.

I feel that this program (See Ray Gordon Page 8)

Weight-Loss & Exercise

campaigns to increase membership and retention at your club now available!!!!



"Perfect Portion" Plate

Movement - Meals- Motivation

Call now for more information about this effective and affordable membership campaign



239-823-3769
SalesMakers.com

"Membership Specialists Since 1979"

Ray Gordon
ray@salesmakers.com

...Ray Gordon
 continued from page 7

can help 3 important areas for clubs; new members, higher retention of new and existing members and increased referrals from both groups.

New Members

There are literally thousands of overweight, non exercising people in your immediate market area. They would flock to a weight-loss and exercise program that really works. Because of their past efforts and failures with diets and exercise attempts they will be leery of all programs until

it is proven to them that it will work. This is why the "guarantee you will want to continue" will be so important to them.

Retention

70% to 90% of your members had weight-loss as a goal when they joined your club!! Inactivate your members with a quality, simple weight-loss program and watch them get psyched up about your club all over again. This DOES NOT have to be an expensive program for the members as your club will profit more from happy dues paying members and the potential for their referrals.

Referrals

Referrals from successful members who are walking, talking billboards of the success of your services is absolutely essential for net membership revenue increases.

Part of the "guarantee you will want to continue" program will have incentive points awarded for a member referral.

Professionally I am very impressed with how simple and yet effective this program can be. Maybe the fitness industry can start earning its share of the trillions of dollars that people on the quest to lose some weight are

spending in the diet industry.

(Ray Gordon is the founder of Sales Makers "membership specialists". Ray's 29 years of extensive experience allows both new and experienced membership staff to improve their skills.

Thousands of membership staff have used his unique training techniques and membership responsibilities to bring real pride and results to their job. Contact Ray with any questions or comments at: ray@salesmakers.com or 239-823-3769)



...Pat Laus
 continued from page 3

C.I. - Pat, our mutual friend, John McCarthy, wrote the following in an email to me on September 20th, "Good Morning, Norm: FYI... This evening, Pat Laus will receive the Tri-State (NY, NJ, and CT) Lou Gehrig Humanitarian Award at a major gathering of the MDA here in the East. It is an immense honor, and so magnificently deserved. For the past three years, Pat has made Augie's Quest her own. God bless

her, and you! Be Well, John".

So, two more questions Pat:

What drives you, Kevin McHugh and your Team to be so very dedicated to Augie's Quest?

And, what do you have to say to other club owners across the land when it comes to encouraging them to support the Clubs for the Cure Program? (Readers, see Pages 20 and 21).

PL - Many people ask me what drives our CFTC Team to be

so dedicated to Augie's Quest. There are several reasons for our compassion and dedication.

●As a Registered Nurse many years ago, I cared for ALS patients. During that time, I witnessed firsthand "the journey" that ALS patients and their families experienced.

●Oddly, aside from Augie, our Clubs for the Cure Team and I know seven individuals (business associates, family of staff and members) that have

been diagnosed with ALS in the last four years! Two of them have already succumbed to this dreaded disease. We have participated in ALS fundraising events frequently during these past years to try to find a cure to help all of them and thousands of others.

●I saw the possibility of using our already successful CFTC/Avon Breast Cancer template to create a grassroots program for Augie's Quest.

●Kevin and I had confidence in our Team's ability to communicate and execute the plan successfully nationwide for Augie's Quest.

●We believed that our great industry would want to "step-up to the plate" for Augie and his Quest, as well as for all the ALS victims that they may personally know in their communities.

●Most importantly, Augie Nieto is our "Chief Inspiration Officer" to the tenth power! In spite of his illness, he has demonstrated to all of us what true courage is by putting himself out to the world as the "face of ALS". He has chosen to share with all of us, what his and Lynne's journey with ALS looks like AND he continues to work harder than all of us at increasing awareness of ALS worldwide, raising funds with MDA to find the cause and cure for ALS and leading TDI in their research efforts! Augie has also taught us that as successful as we may be in business, there really is much more that each of us can do to make a difference in the lives of those who need our help.

had a very successful "first inning" in the first six months of 2008, raising ALS awareness and funds for research with over 200 IHRSA clubs participating. We are confident that many more of our incredible industry leaders, club staff and members will join us "on the field" and be in the game causing a breakthrough result in helping Augie with his Quest. Our CFTC Team is here to coach all clubs through the experience of "One Club, One Event, One Hour" to raise awareness and funds for ALS research. It's really about "The Power of Each of Us!!!" We need your help! Please join our CFTC/Augie's Quest Team. Your members and staff will thank you for giving them the opportunity to participate and make a difference! Do it because it's the right thing to do!!!

C.I. - In the lead-in to our cover story this month, I write about "The Dash". In this reference, I made it clear that "The Dash" I was writing about was the small little bit of punctuation found in obituaries and on tombstones to signify the year the person was born and the year the person passed physically from Earth. Such as 1946 - 2046, the one I seek. That little dash, however, is much more than punctuation. It also represents a person's time here on this Earth, how the person spent that time, what that person achieved while physically here and what that person will be remembered for.

Pat Laus, congratulations on your Lou Gehrig Humanitarian Award! In honor of that and all you do for our world, Pat, I wish to raise a symbolic keyboard toast to you and your Dash. God bless you, Pat, for your Dash.

CFTC/Augie's Quest has

***Improve the health of
your bottom line!***

Affiliated Acceptance Corporation

1-800-233-8483 • www.affiliated.org



25¢ EFT

45¢ MC/V

\$2.50 Mail-In



Software • Billing • Collections • Personal Training • Class Scheduling • FitTrak

...Norm's NOTES

continued from page 8

edition, Shawn has provided a really, really special and important article (like all of his are) entitled: "Now Is The Time". This article is about the times we are all experiencing and the concept of being prepared physically, mentally and emotionally for tough times. Shawn is completely experienced and qualified to write on such a subject, as he spent 15 years as a Fireman before he entered the publishing phase of his life. The article was published in the October Edition of Greenmaple Wellness' Ezine, and I would highly recommend that you read it. And, I would more than highly recommend that you make the real *Greenmaple Wellness Ezine a free monthly benefit for your members*. This is a great new membership selling tool and a great retention tool. The cost to provide this service for your member is so low that you will never, ever think of dropping it after you have set it up and begin to deliver it to your members. Check out *Greenmaple Wellness'* ad on Page #31.

•Gold's Gym Franchise Association (GGFA) - *The Inde-*

pendent Voice of the Franchisees, held its annual *Gold's Gym Owners Conference* with the theme of "Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow" in Santa Monica, California September 25-27th. **ED CONNORS**, one of the *true originals at Gold's Gym* (along with **JOE GOLD**, **PETE and PAUL GRYMKOWSKI** and **RICH MINZER**), was awarded the "GGFA Heart of Gold Award", the second such award in seven years. I hope that, as time passes, the *GGFA Members and all other Gold's Gym Franchisees* will begin to receive the real support they desire and deserve from *Gold's Gym International (GGI)* for the increased price they are now paying. We will keep you updated on this effort by a whole lot of great Gold's Gym owners to actually get what they are paying for from GGI! *Stay Tuned!*

•Welcome to **LAURIE CINGLE**, as she has joined our **CLUB INSIDER Contributing Author Team!** Check out Laurie's first article, "Tools for Predicting Your Program and Profit Center Success" - Part I on Page #34.

•**RUDY SMITH**, a 50+ year club industry veteran, his son, **CHAD** and son-in-law, **BRET**

FITZGERALD, are leaders of a team that is doing a bang-up job with their chain of six *Las Vegas Athletic Clubs*. Speaking with **Bret** at *Wally Boyko's NFTJ Trade Show* in Vegas last month, I learned that LVACs now have 150,000 members and track 20,000 workouts per day! Las Vegas is a really competitive market, with not only the six LVAC clubs, but many 24 Hour Fitness, LA Fitness, Life Time Fitness and other operations. However, the LVAC chain has carved out a real niche in the crowded market with its 24/7 operation and rates ranging from \$19 to \$24 per month. It was great seeing **Rudy**, **Chad** and **Bret** in Las Vegas, but I was saddened to see **Rudy** attending in a wheelchair due to a stroke he had earlier this year. **GET WELL RUDY!** I know **Rudy**, **Chad** and their entire family dearly miss **VIRGINIA**, **Rudy's** lovely and devoted wife of over 50 years... who passed on a few years ago. I miss her, too. Over the years, **Rudy**, **Virginia** and I had enjoyed spending time together at industry events.

•**WALLY** and **MESHELLE BOYKO's National Fitness Trade Show**, **Ms. Fitness USA** and **Ms. Fitness World** event has

seen its last days in Las Vegas. Check out the photo collage on Pages 36 and 37 from the event September 8-11th. Approximately 800 people from **IHRSA**, **ACE** and the **Medical Wellness Association** attended the last event in Las Vegas. The **Boyko's** are moving their **28th Annual National Fitness Trade Show** from Las Vegas to a new location just outside of **Reno, Nevada**. **Wally** wrote in an email to me on September 19th:

The 28th Annual National Fitness Trade Show will be held August 18th, 19th and 20th, 2009 at the Grand Sierra Resort in Reno/Tahoe. The venue is located 15 minutes from Reno and one half hour from Tahoe and is extremely family oriented (Goto: www.nationalfitnessradeshow.com). To inquire about Exhibit space, contact **Wally** at 541-830-0400.

•**Congratulations to DONNA KRECH**, the *Founder of Thin and Healthy's Total Solution*, as she has teamed up for her fight against obesity and other lifestyle issues that need fixing, with **Dr. DENIS WAITLEY**, the motivational speaker guru, author of the Number One personal and professional development product, "The Psychology of Winning", and coach to **NASA Astronauts** and **Gold Medal Olympians**. They've begun creating a program to be delivered via audio/video and book that they believe will revolutionize the weight loss world! When **Donna** asked **Dr. Waitley**, "Why me **Denis**? You could have built this program alone... You could have built it with anyone. Why did you choose me, us?" **Dr. Waitley** responded, "Donna, it's your spirit, your humility, your passion to see people succeed. Plus, the **Thin & Healthy Program** and its

business model is the best I've ever seen. It's an honor to work with you."

•If you are headed to Chicago for the *Club Industry Show*, then don't miss the *CheckFree* presentation, "While You're Running the Club, Who's Guarding Your Members Financial Data?" by **RON POLISENO** and **JONATHAN RUBENS** in **Chicago, October 15th in Room W194A at McCormick Place from 2:00 to 3:30 p.m.** Also, please note the Exhibit numbers of our advertisers on this page and stop by, visit and do business with the great folks who help bring **CLUB INSIDER** to you each month. And, please come by and see my son, **JUSTIN** and I at our **Booth #1063**.

•**RICK CARO** will also host a panel discussion featuring **CARL LIEBERT of 24 Hour Fitness**, **JEFF KLINGER of Anytime Fitness**, **GALE LANDERS of Chicago's Fitness Formula** and **SCOTT CHOVANEC of Scott Chovanec & Associates**. The discussion is entitled, "Fitness Business at a Crossroad: How to Hold On in Today's Economy and Prosper in the Future" and will take place on **Friday, October 17th from 11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.** It is free for all attendees. It is a wide-open Q & A session for all attendees.

•Mark your calendar for **March 16-19th, 2008** for the **28th Annual IHRSA Convention and Trade Show in San Francisco!**

•*Speaking of motivation*, here is some for all of you out there! Let me congratulate **RED and EMMA LERILLE**, of Lafayette, Louisiana, a little early, as they will (See *Norm's NOTES* Page 26)

WAISTS WILL COME DOWN

ROBOTIC

WAIST REDUCER

200 side bends in
4 minutes with resistance



Be the first in your market to offer this equipment.
call Ed Shelby
(405)720-9213



CLUB INSIDER Advertisers Exhibiting at Club Industry Chicago - October 16-18

- ABC Financial Services - #539
- Affiliated Acceptance Corporation - #1062
- Apex Fitness - #976
- CheckFree - #739
- CLUB INSIDER - #1063
- Cybox International - #901
- Fabiano Designs International - #947
- IHRSA - #854
- InTek Strength - #1101
- Iron Grip Barbell Company - #639
- Optimal Design Systems International - #871
- Sports & Fitness Insurance Corporation - #1225
- Thin & Healthy's Total Solution - #1057
- Visual Fitness Planner - #686

Created in 1989, we introduced the fitness industry to the benefits of Step Training.

THE ORIGINAL STEP®

We began the Group Fitness revolution in 1989 with the invention of THE ORIGINAL STEP. Today, thousands of health and fitness facilities worldwide have discovered its superiority.

- ▶ The ORIGINAL Health Club Step
- ▶ Large step surface (36" X 14") covered with durable, non-slip mat
- ▶ Designed for safety - won't tip
- ▶ Adjusts, with support blocks, from 4" to 6" to 8"
- ▶ Inclines and declines, with the support blocks, for body sculpting
- ▶ Doubles as a weight bench
- ▶ **MADE IN THE USA!**



THE STEP GROUP FITNESS WEIGHTS

THE WEIGHTS

- ▶ Specifically designed for use in Group Fitness classes
- ▶ The center of each weight is tapered - easier to grip during hand-held exercises
- ▶ Weights are covered in a commercial-grade high-density polyethylene (HDPE) to improve durability
- ▶ Up to 300% stronger than standard weights
- ▶ Filled with DURACAST VX, a very high strength concrete developed by the US Army for protective applications and used to build skyscrapers and bridges
- ▶ The HDPE material won't scratch or scuff your Group Fitness floor
- ▶ Flexural toughness/compressive strength 10 times over conventional fill materials
- ▶ **MADE IN THE USA!**

THE BARS

- ▶ Made of heavy gauge, powder-coated steel
- ▶ Bars will not bend or scratch
- ▶ 54 inches long with 8.5 inches available for weights on each end

THE STORAGE RACK

- ▶ Durable powder-coated steel construction
- ▶ Holds up to 24 sets of bars, collars and weights

THE COLLARS

- ▶ Quick release tab for convenient loading and unloading of the bar
- ▶ Will not scratch or damage the bar

THE 10 KG SIDE RACK

- ▶ Durable powder-coated steel construction
- ▶ Holds up to 8 of the 10 kg weights



CONTACT US FOR A FREE QUOTE OR FURTHER INFORMATION:



The ORIGINAL Since 1989

• US Clubs & Instructors
• International Clubs, Retailers & Instructors

▶ **877.296.9990**

stepfitness@thestep.com

www.thestep.com

...*"Naked Book"*

continued from page 3

Thomas Plummer ends his book with these words:

"You can create the life you want. It is your choice. Stop complaining about other people and take responsibility for who you are and what you achieve. If you're a success, it's your fault. If you're not, it is still your fault. Only you can take responsibility for how you choose to lead your life.

At the end, when you're old and walking the streets in funny house slippers and a bathrobe hanging open in the front, you still might remember to ask the only question left in your wine-addled mind that is still relevant. Did I create a life that mattered and made a difference, or did I simply waste the talents

I was given by merely taking the life that was handed to me? Tough question, but only you can determine the answer yourself."

So, I wanted to get your attention here with my illustration of "The Dash" – because "The Dash" in all of our lives is what Thomas Plummer's 217-page book is really all about, and **you should not miss reading it**. It could be the best \$24.95 you have ever spent in this business to advance the start of your club art, and as a bonus, it could change your life!

Thinking Back

Thinking back over the last 16 years as the Publisher of **CLUB INSIDER**, I recall that I have attended Thomas Plummer's two-day club business seminar three times. Each time, I have come

away further enlightened, and each time, amazed. Keep in mind folks, I've been involved in this wonderful industry for 36 years now and spent my first 20 years as a club developer/owner/operator and my last 15 years as Publisher of **CLUB INSIDER**. To say that I've attended many, many educational seminars/meetings/sessions might be accurate. I lost track back in the 1980's.

Each time I have attended Plummer's presentations, I have heard him say the following words: "I'll be covering a lot over the next 2 days, so when you hear me say the words, 'Write this down'... then do it!"

During my first Plummer seminar, 7 or 8 years ago, here in Atlanta, I did write down brief notes about each item identified with his "Write this down" command. Each time, this very dedicated industry guru would utter "Write this down", I did and ended up with a yellow pad with all the pages filled and then some.

After attending, I am sure, hundreds and hundreds of seminars/classes/lessons, I can honestly say that I have never, ever attended anything that compares with the overall body of Thomas Plummer's work. Without a doubt in my mind, Thomas Plummer and his National Fitness Business Alliance presentation, offers the single best investment you can make in a seminar to advance the state of your club's art. Simply put... no other traveling road show compares to Plummer's.

Importantly, and to the point, Thomas Plummer has followed his own command of "Write this down" and has, in his new book, "Naked Woman At My Door... and why that's a bad thing", written it all down for you.

So, I would recommend to anyone in our industry that wishes to advance the state of their club art to do two things:

1. Buy Thomas Plummer's book and spend the time it takes to read it front to back. Be sure to underline the most important points so you can easily go back for review in the future. Note and use the underlined advice! It took me about 7 hours to read the book, so goto: www.jointhenfba.com, and order Thomas Plummer's new book today!

2. Go to the next Thomas Plummer seminar you can find. See the schedule above for upcoming NFBA Seminars, and see the



2009 NFBA Seminar Schedule

January 28-29	-	Charleston, SC
February 25-26	-	Philadelphia, PA
March 25-26	-	Orlando, FL
April 22-23	-	Portland, OR
May 20-21	-	Dallas, TX
June 24-25	-	Newport Beach, CA
July 22-23	-	Hartford, CT
August 19-20	-	Chicago, IL
September 23-24	-	Nashville, TN
October 21-22	-	Kansas City, KS
November 18-19	-	Atlanta, GA
December 9-10	-	Phoenix, AZ

NFBA ad on **Page #19**. Do these two things, and you will change your business performance and your life!

Comments From The Man, Thomas Plummer, Himself...

In this cover story, I am going to delve into Thomas Plummer's new book and quote it a little bit. But, before doing so, I contacted Thomas to ask him a few questions and those questions and answers appear below.

CLUB INSIDER (C.I.) - Thomas, how long did it take you to write this book and why did you decide to write it?

Thomas Plummer (TP) - I started and stopped this book probably 10 times over 4 years. This book actually pre-dated all but one of my other four books, but October a year ago, I decided it was just the time to do it. It is kind of an accumulation of important lessons I've learned from my health and fitness clients over the years. There is a commonality between our industry and business in general. There are a lot of things that are just fundamentally true in any small business. It is supposed to be a small business book in general and was written as a general small business book, but it still has the fitness industry flavor. If I was a new person just starting off, I would read this book before my other four. It is almost like a Dad talking to a son about business... saying things

like here's what I learned, here is where I got my butt kicked and here is where some of my friends got their butt kicked. I hope it has that feel to it.

C.I. - Thomas, I know you've had over 50,000 students in your seminars over the years. Please describe the industry "walks of life" your students come from?

TP - In the early days, we would get almost anybody you could imagine. Years ago, we would get some of the hard core gym guys, but almost all of those guys are gone now. We would get people just starting out. Now, we get a much more sophisticated crowd. In the last couple of seminars, we've literally gotten people from all over the country and from all over the world. They are much better business people who want to get better. We're seeing a trend now where the small chains are sending people. We've had representatives from all of the franchises. We're also getting corporate people from Curves, Lady of America, Anytime Fitness, etc. We've even started to attract some non-profits. People are searching for information, and we provide a great source for them. We're the source for innovation, the source for what's next, and we're still the source of 'drop this' and 'do this'. We're attracting a broad segment of the entire industry. It is very flattering. We've had a very blessed run over the past few years. It's growing (See "Naked Book" Page 14)

JLR Associates

Announces the placement of

John Diloreto Regional Director Gold's Gym International

Whether you are seeking employment or are in need of qualified candidates to fill your vacancy, JLR Associates can meet your needs. We specialize in executive recruitment for the health, fitness, and wellness industry.

For all of your employment needs,
Contact JLR Associates!

Jeff Randall

Office: (781) 251 - 0094

Cell: (617) 823 - 9020

jr@jlrassoc.com

www.jlrassoc.com



Since you need insurance, why not **SAVE MONEY** and have **PEACE of MIND?**

“ Ken Reinig and Association Insurance Group have provided us with excellent insurance protection for our clubs for over ten years. We started with Ken because he saved us money and we stay with his company because their service is the best we have ever experienced. Owning three clubs is enough of a challenge without having to worry about insurance. Using Association Insurance Group has been one of the best business decisions we have ever made. ”

Mark and Karen Steinfield

Gold's Gyms of Howell, Point Pleasant, and Long Branch



If You Would Like to Save Money Now and Have Peace of Mind that Your Club Is Properly Insured Call 800.985.2021 ext 10 or For A No Obligation Quote go to www.clubinsurance.com.



Association Insurance Group

...“Naked Book”

continued from page 12

substantially. Our seminar attendance is stronger now than it has ever been. For example, at our most recent seminar in Baltimore, we had 145 people there, and they were the widest range of people we've ever seen. The owner of a small kettle bell club might be sitting next to the owner of a 150,000 square-foot, multi-purpose club. It is growing and growing.

C.I. - For those who've never had the benefit of hearing your presentations, I am going to describe them here: They are blunt, to the point, full of wisdom and experience and really should make people think. Moreover, your presentation style in person is very much like your writing style in print. So, my question simply is, "What do you have to say to anybody who is sensitive and might become upset with your bluntness and somewhat whimsical presentation and writing styles?"

TP - I was talking to Carlos Santana from Boca Raton, Florida. He may be one of the three or four best functional training minds in the world. We were discussing our mutual visions of being able to change the world in our fields. When I started, I really thought we could change it all, but now, if we change 10%, I'm happy. When you're fighting to change something you know is wrong, you have to put more energy into it, you have to put more passion into it and you have to make it more edgy to get people to pay attention. You can't suggest. You have to tell them that what they are doing is wrong. It's almost like an intervention process. For example, if you are dealing with someone who has an excessive drinking problem, suggesting that they cut back is not going to get it done. So, most of the seminars over the years require that you be bold. You have to keep people awake for two days. I don't mind offending people, because at the end of the day, if you have not changed anybody, you probably have not done a good job. Dan Kennedy and some of the other famous teaching gurus out there all say the same thing. You've got to push the limits to make people seek change. You've got to push hard. I am fighting for 10%. I'm fighting for my life in there. You've got to change somebody. You've got to make

sure somebody learns, goes home, makes changes and grows.

The Naked Book

Henceforth, I am going to refer to Thomas Plummer's book: "Naked Woman At My Door... and why that's a bad thing... Lessons learned in the fitness business from a life on the road" as "The Naked Book" because it contains *The NAKED Truth* about Thom's experiences with people in the world of the health club industry. Some of you will read it and weep because the examples Thom gives from his 30-year career on the road as a consultant and teacher will remind you *SO MUCH* of yourself. So, go ahead and read it and weep if you must. And, I might add, I marveled at his recount of his experiences during my read! It is very likely that you will experience one of the following should you order and read The Naked Book. You may weep, laugh and live vicariously through Thom's recollection of his consulting experiences, and for sure, if you go from stem to stern in The Naked Book, there is **NO WAY YOU WILL NOT LEARN A LOT!**

Then, the remaining question will clearly and simply be: "What will you do with this real plethora of experiences, ideas, concepts, best practices and vast knowledge?" That, folks of the club world, is the \$64 question!

First, I have extracted some of the most interesting Chapter Titles. Thomas Plummer calls them Lessons. So, here are some of my favorite *Lesson* titles, extracted from the first part of the book total of 30:

Lesson #1 - 95% of what we do in small business is to sell somebody something everyday.
Lesson #2 - If you want to survive in small business, you have to develop a killer instinct about money.
Lesson #3 - The first question you should ask yourself before you consider opening a small business is "Am I willing to do the work?"
Lesson #6 - Price is part of your image in small business.
Lesson #7 - They are employees, not projects.
Lesson #8 - Most people don't change until they are out of options.
Lesson #9 - It only takes about 90 seconds to make a first impression.

Lesson #13 - Your staff isn't nearly as dumb as you think they are.
Lesson #14 - If you can simply explain it, you can simply market it.
Lesson #15 - Where is your pride?
Lesson #18 - Why would anyone want to get in a partnership?
Lesson #21 - You're better off firing staff than cutting marketing.
Lesson #22 - The perfect sales pitch includes asking and listening.
Lesson #23 - Discounting is for losers.
Lesson #24 - You need customer service more than ever.
Lesson #25 - If it's not in writing, it's not real.
Lesson #27 - Reward production, not loyalty.
Lesson #28 - Do only work that matters.
Lesson #30 - The most important lesson of them all: You can create the life you want. It is your choice.

In the sections of writing Thomas Plummer calls, *Life on the Road*, here are a few of the titles that stood out to me:

- Anyone is a genius when you don't have competition.
- Fix what you can; accept what you can't.
- Few people have the guts and drive to actually go for their dreams.
- Beware of the employee who never leaves.
- Born-again fitness people make lousy owners.
- This year's hero is next year's bankruptcy.
- Park the ego, big guy, and start thinking like a woman.
- Get some clothes, people. You're running a business.
- Members never miss anything in the club, no matter how hard you try.
- Your new member had a choice. Learn to say, "Thank you."
- Accidental owners are usually their own worst enemies.
- My airline stories will beat your airline stories.
- Smart people look at buying used clubs before building new ones.
- The more time you spend in your business, the less you see.
- The fitness world is changing, and the future belongs to the independent.
- You can sell your way out of almost any mess.
- You pay peanuts; you get monkeys.
- Remember the power of the group experience.



Thomas Plummer & Ken Reinig

• True fitness lies in finding the simplest approach.

Thomas Plummer's book contains some of the most wise, most real and most helpful commentary of any industry book or document I've ever delved into. Frankly, this author has prided himself for "Telling-it-like-it-is" for 16 years now, and I am proud to present some of Thomas Plummer's most profound and meaningful comments. Keep in mind, what you are going to read from this point forward represents less than 5% of the content of this amazing book.

Why The Naked Title?

On Why the Naked Title? Hey... to get your attention, of course! But, beyond that, an experience Thomas Plummer had early in his consulting career explains the title.

On Page 10, Plummer explained that on one of his first consulting assignments, he was working with the owner of a small karate school/fitness center. The owner was a scientist during the day and worked in his school/center part time, and his wife handled the remaining operational hours. The owner was tight with money, and rather than put Plummer up in a local hotel, he provided Thom with overnight accommodations in his small apartment in the second bedroom. There, Plummer tried to sleep in a room that doubled as the storeroom for this couple. On the first day of Plummer's consulting agreement, the owner went to his club at 7 a.m. and left Plummer to sleep in until 9 a.m. with plans for them to meet at 10 a.m. But, the club owner's wife also stayed home. At 7:30 a.m., Plummer recalls that the owner's wife

slowly pushed open the door of the bedroom/storeroom, and her out-of-shape, 5'5", 180-pound image was standing there inside the bedroom... buck naked. Then, Plummer recalls, she came over and sat on the side of the bed next to Plummer. She told Plummer her husband was a jerk, wasn't interested in sex, and that since Plummer was there, they might as well enjoy the next several hours. Plummer wrote, "I knew he was a jerk, could have guessed about the sex, and wished desperately that I could be anywhere but where I was." Plummer says he had read some books on consulting during the previous year, but the books had "failed to inform me as to how to handle a naked woman on the edge of your bed, let alone one who might have been bigger than me, and who was a third-degree black belt." Plummer pulled the covers up under his chin and argued against any such activity with the naked woman. Before long, she gave up and left the bed/storage room... feeling rejected. But, Plummer had learned lesson #1 and wrote, "Never, ever stay at a client's house, no matter how good of friends you are or how good the story they give you about privacy."

A Note To The Reader From Thomas Plummer

Before moving into his Lessons and On the Road writing, Thomas Plummer wrote a Note to the Reader:

"This book was not written to be read straight through, although, at some point I do hope you read every single chapter because I believe there are gems of wisdom in each one that will help you be more successful in your business and your life.

(See "Naked Book" Page 16)

Why do the most successful club owners choose ABC Financial?

In our area we are competing with Bally's, LA Fitness, and a beautiful YMCA. ABC Financial helps us to not only compete but to thrive by allowing us to focus on what really matters - the growth of our business. ABC's software provided us with a platform to continue to take our clubs into the future and easily gives us the ability to over see multiple facilities in real time. Most importantly the 'above and beyond' service provided by ABC truly sets them at a level that exceed all experiences we've had in the Fitness Industry.

David & Molly Hill
Owners of Mavericks Sports Clubs
and Total Woman Fitness in Southern California

All aspects of ABC Financial Services were created and designed to help your business succeed.

- billing and collections
- club management software
- marketing and retention tools
- onsite training and support

We are health club people and we understand the challenges you face in your club. Our business is to focus on your business.

It all begins and ends with you.



EFT/BILLING SOFTWARE MARKETING SUPPORT

800.551.9733
www.abcfinancial.com



...**"Naked Book"**

continued from page 4

There is also information in some of the lessons that is mentioned in others as well. Some of the information just made sense repeating it where I did, since I wanted you to be able to read any chapter and have all the information you needed to get the point without looking somewhere else.

Keep in mind that this is not a how-to business book. If you're looking for working, practical information, please pick up my other books, all of which offer pages of ideas and systems that can be worked into any fitness business immediately.

This book is about the experiences I have gathered from hundreds of owners whom I have either consulted with in their businesses or who have wandered through my workshops and business schools. Their experiences can offer lessons for you to learn that can be applied in your own life and businesses that might save you the harsh learning of trial and error. Some have succeeded, many more have failed, and what I learned from observing them is what is contained in the lessons in this book."

Publisher's Note: The covers of the books by Thomas Plummer are shown below and are also available if you are seeking How-To books. But, read *The Naked Book* first! It has the greatest accumulation of good horse sense I've read for our industry! Goto: www.jointhenfba.com, and place your order today!

Choice Items I had To Mention!

I could fill this month's CLUB INSIDER entirely with

material from Thomas Plummer's book. Instead, I have picked some of the most choice and important items to help you now, with sincere hopes and my urgent recommendation to use this sampling to make the choice to buy *The Naked Book* and read it. So, here are some samples of the writing in *The Naked Book*:

●We sell in small business, and we sell everyday. It's what we do, and it's what almost all small business is about. At least 95 percent of what you should be doing everyday in your business is selling somebody something.

●Anyone is a genius when you don't have competition. Success breeds arrogance, especially when the success is by luck and not skill. Owners who create something magical from nothing deserve a bottle of wine and have earned the right to sit in the bar and tell you how they did it.

●One of the hardest things to understand about opening a small business is that the reason you do it should never be confused with the expected outcome. There is only one correct motivation anyone should have who wants to open a business: To generate a profit on the services or products offered.

●Personal insecurities appear as all kinds of quirks in owners. Some people have the need to control everything and punish any member of the staff who makes a decision without asking first.

●The first question you should ask yourself before you consider opening a small business is, "Am I willing to do the work?"

●Personal responsibility is almost a lost concept in today's society where the majority of people

spend their time blaming someone else for their problems and lack of success.

●Fix what you can; accept what you can't.

●The type of business you work in may change, but how you work never should.

●A company called the Conference Board commissioned a survey that found only 14 percent of the surveyed workforce said they are very satisfied with their jobs.

●The business you chose to build should reflect your values and how you feel people should be treated. What you create, which is really an extension of what might be called your life's work, should fully engage your creativity, passion, and willingness to work to make this vision a reality.

●Few people have the guts and drive to actually go for their dreams.

●Every business plan has to evolve and so does the owner. Every business has to evolve or it will die. If you listen, your members will tell you how to make money. Competitors force you to operate at a higher level. They also force you to develop a real business plan rather than rely on habits developed in other markets where less-than-good business practices work because the consumer simply has no place to go. In this example, the owner just refused to acknowledge that there was anything wrong with the way he ran his business. He carried too many staff, a luxury you can afford when you have high income and no competitors. He also wasted a large sum of money throwing equipment at the members to make them happy. Throwing equipment at members

is what you do when you don't know what else to do.

●Beware of the employee who never leaves. Nice owners usually have nice employees. Nice employees aren't always effective employees. Nice employees often stay way past their freshness expiration date. Old staff doesn't always mean effective; it just sometimes means old.

●Price is part of your image in a service business. Price equals perception equals price.

●Everyone has the right to fail. Sometimes, no matter how painful it is to watch, you have to let people fail. One of the hardest things to do in life is to gain the maturity where you can sit back and watch someone else get his butt kicked by doing something you knew was death from the beginning.

●They are employees, not projects. Where we fail is we get attached to our employees. We hire relatives or friends, or we start hanging out with people we hire to work for us and become buddies. All of these factors lead to the problem that they, as employees, are no longer held accountable.

►In the real world, if you don't perform, you get fired. In the gym world, you simply become a pet that needs to be trained without the nagging burden of having to actually produce anything.

►People who work for you must produce to keep their jobs, and you have to learn to hold them accountable for that production in your business.

●This year's hero is next year's bankruptcy.

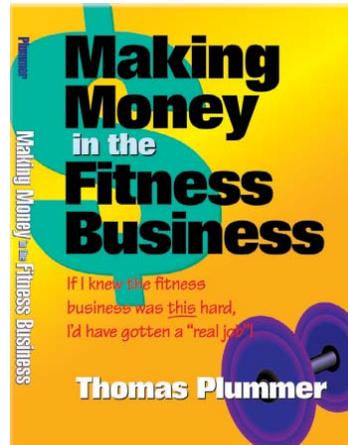
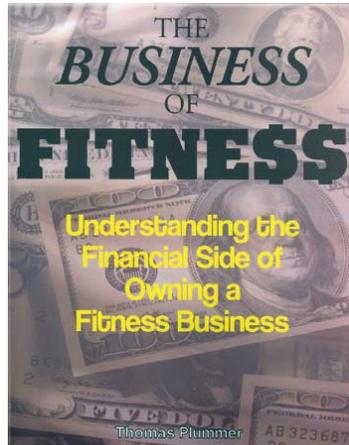
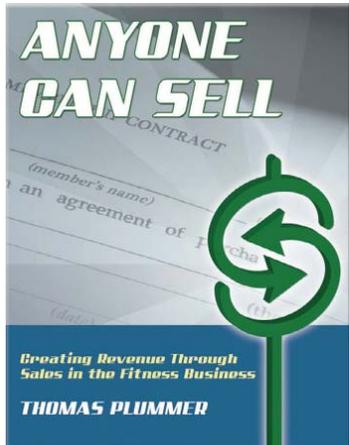
►The aggravating part is that most of us who work in the industry almost live in fear of

the big chains. Whoever is on top struts their teams through the trade shows, flaunts their buying power with the arrogance possible to make business in the fitness industry miserable. Then, three years later, that company is gone (or knocked down a few pegs), and the cycle starts again. Whatever happened to being nice to people on the way up because you will meet them on the way down?

●Most people don't change until they are out of options.

►I've always lived by a simple philosophy as an educator in the seminar-tour business and as a consultant. If you open against me and try to take my clients and my income, I will burn your house down; beat your dog, talk bad about your mama, buy your kids drum sets and ponies, and date your wife if she's worth dating. I will do everything possible to put you down if you threaten my financial well-being, or that of my family's. But that's just me, and I have a bad attitude about competition and an even worse attitude about people trying to hurt me financially.

►Change your behavior first, and remember that it all adds up. If I ran a business for years, and it didn't work, I'd be willing to change my brand of underwear if I thought it would help. If you're not getting the results in your business or life, then what you're doing isn't working. Your plan is failing and repeating that plan over and over again will tend to get you nothing more but another dose of failure. If it isn't working, then consider changing everything. In our business, one of the startling comments the people who man the phones hear at least four or five times per week is, "I've been in the fitness business for years, and I doubt there is (See "Naked Book" Page 18)





imagine

a treadmill
that will change
the way you think
about treadmills

CYBEX 750T

The CYBEX 750T sets a new standard for treadmills. Its closed-section welded steel frame and 6hp brushless motor provide unparalleled durability. Additionally, its IS3 Intelligent Suspension system combines a large, stable running surface that your members need with the smaller overall footprint your gym demands. So if you've ever thought that all treadmills are created equal — it's time to think again.

CYBEX[®]
www.cybexintl.com

Call us at +1.774.324.8000 to learn more about the equipment that's making the world healthier!

© 2008 CYBEX International. All rights reserved. CYBEX is a registered trademark of CYBEX International.

FABIANO



Architecture / Interior Design / Consulting / Concept Studies

A GREAT REPUTATION IS EARNED.

ARCHITECTURAL & INTERIOR DESIGN

We create buildings proven to increase membership participation, satisfaction and retention.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

We supervise each project for cost control, quality control and timely completion.

CLIENT SATISFACTION

We provide exceptional service that is direct and personal and driven by a passion for success.

EXPERIENCE

We have developed over 300 successful facilities nationwide. As leaders in the industry, clients know they can put their reputation and trust in our hands.

We specialize in developing beautiful, affordable buildings that dominate the market.

Experience Success.

www.fabianodesigns.com / info@fabianodesigns.com / (973) 746-5100

...*"Naked Book"*

continued from page 16

anything I could learn there." Really? Nothing? Not one new idea from four different speakers over two days? And, you really know everything there is to know about business because of your experience in one club, in one market, doing it one way?

•Every decision you make now should lead to an increased value later. Every day you're in business, you're faced with decisions that effect the long-term value of your business. For example, opting to collect your own receivable base rather than using a proven third-party financial service company is a short-term consideration. The false sense of saving money by collecting your own memberships now will actually lower the value of your business later when you decide to sell.

•Park the ego, big guy, and start thinking like a woman. The new male owners let their egos run their businesses. Owners who are female think differently.

•It only takes about 90 seconds to make a first impression. Get some clothes, people. You're running a business. Set the image of your business. You've started your own business, something millions of people just dream about, and yet, once you get it open, you give yourself permission to be the slob you always were. Change your look, change your outlook, and be proud of who you are and what you accomplished --and show it by dressing for success.

•If you can simply explain it, you can simply market it. If you can't tell me what you do in less than a minute, then you probably don't really know what you do. The "elevator pitch" is a term meaning you can clearly and precisely explain the service or product you offer to me in a short elevator ride in the typical hotel. This is just a modern version of the old marketing book adage: "Tell me fast, tell me true, or my friend, the hell with you."

►Marketing your club or yourself, is tough because there is just so much other marketing to compete against. But you still have to market. You still have

to buy leads. You still have to differentiate yourself from your competitors. But, before you get big, you have to get basic and the elevator pitch --that defining statement that simply explains what you are selling-- is where you have to start.

•Members never miss anything in the club, no matter how hard you try. The members think differently about the club than you do. Remember, the members miss nothing, and it is your job to give them as little to talk about as possible.

•Where is your pride? Pride is the driver that leads to success. Pride is reflected in how you dress each day. Have pride in yourself, and you dress better. Dress like a loser and you will become a loser. Have pride in yourself and you will spend an hour a day studying and reading how to improve your life. Personal pride is personal belief in yourself.

O.K. Folks...

Thinking back over my almost 36 years of involvement

in our great industry, I sought to identify the single person who has contributed to the careers of the most people with their influence in the club industry teaching world. Clearly, Thomas Plummer emerges as the leader with respect to how many people he's influenced with his seminars, his books and his consulting. In my view, there is no other person who has impacted more people in sheer numbers than Thomas Plummer, and Thomas deserves our industry's sincere thanks and appreciation.

O.K. folks...I've given you a few teaser tidbits from Thomas Plummer's new book: *"Naked Woman At My Door... and why that's a bad thing"*. Now, it is up to you to choose to order the book and read it, so you

can have the remaining 99% of information this very informative book provides. Goto: www.jointhenfba.com, and order Thomas Plummer's new book today!

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 36-year veteran of the health, racquet and sports club industry. Cates was the Founder and is now celebrating his 16th Anniversary as the Publisher of CLUB INSIDER. He was IHRSA's 1st President, and a Co-founder of the Association with Rick Caro and five others, in 1981. In March, 2001, IHRSA honored Cates with its DALE DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award, one of IHRSA's highest honors. Cates may be reached by phone at 770-850-8506 or email at norm@clubinsideronline.com)



NATIONAL FITNESS BUSINESS ALLIANCE

total support for the independent club owner

1-800-726-3506

Visit us at www.totalclubsupport.com

PRESENT:

*The More Competition You Have,
 The Better You Have To Be!*

A 2-DAY WORKSHOP AND EXHIBITOR SHOWCASE

*featuring our Key Note Speaker, Thomas Plummer
 Also featuring industry expert, Mike Campetelle*



•Who is the National Fitness Business Alliance?

The National Fitness Business Alliance was created with help from independent club owners who were looking for information and ideas that would help them reach financial success. The National Fitness Business Alliance believes you can make money ethically without negative sales images. We can attract new members without offensive ads. We can make money by charging a fair price for the product we sell. Most importantly, we can learn to compete as independent club owners and operators against any club or chain in the country.

•How our workshops can help you!

The National Fitness Business Alliance and IHRSA have formed a partnership, along with our elite team of industry leaders, to provide owners with a variety of information, tools and products that will provide financial success for today and the future. We can help you with almost any problem you encounter in your fitness business. Our workshops feature an exhibitor showcase that will provide you with the tools to overcome your staffing issues and network with other owners and managers who experience the same difficulties as you.

Upcoming Tour Dates

Remaining 2008 Dates

- October 22-23 - Stamford, CT
- November 12-13 - Austin, TX
- December 10-11 - San Francisco, CA

2009 Dates Coming Soon...

NFBFA would like to welcome our new alliance partners:



Call 800-726-3506 today or log on to www.jointhenfba.com to register for the workshop in your area!

Look Who'll Be There...



National Fitness Business Alliance reserves the right to change dates and locations as availability dictates. Workshop presenters are subject to change based on workshop subjects and dates.

Call today to register 800-726-3506 • www.jointhenfba.com



Clubs for the Cure Augie's Quest Team invites all sectors of the health and fitness industry to join them in the quest to find a cure for ALS.

"Our focus," states Patricia Laus, Founder of Clubs for the Cure/Augie's Quest "is to be successful in uniting all sectors of the industry to work together as one and show the country as well as all of our members the power that our Health and Fitness Industry has when we work together as One.

The Clubs for the Cure/Augie's Quest initiative is a focused effort that works very closely with Augie Nieto and his team to help find a cure for this disease. It is evident that when we all work together and place our business differences and competitiveness aside, we can and will create levels of success that were not possible when operating as a single unit. Lastly, our efforts over the next nine months, working together as One Industry will raise substantial monies that will continue the fight in finding a cure."

The Clubs for the Cure/Augie's Quest Team will be at the upcoming Athletic Business Conference and Trade Show where our team will be inviting the attendees from all sectors of the industry to join our effort and commit to **One Event, on One Day, for One Hour to Achieve One Man's Quest** to find the cure for ALS. The Clubs for the Cure/ Augie's Quest Team has been provided tremendous support by Athletic Business and the team will definitely build awareness and enrollment for our upcoming campaign in February.

The Clubs for the Cure/Augie's Quest effort for February 2009 is simple. We are asking for each business to join our Clubs for the Cure/Augie's Quest Team by visiting www.clubsfortheCure.com and register that you will be conducting One Event on One Day for One Hour that will help in funding the research that will find the cure for ALS.

There are several options that are available that The Clubs for the Cure/Augie's Quest Team can work with your organization to facilitate in developing a seamless promotional campaign for your selected event. In addition, The Clubs for the Cure/ Augie's Quest Team can provide numerous examples of creativity in our 2008 nationwide campaign that was showcased by Owners and their teams.

Here is How You Can Get Involved as A Member of The Clubs for the Cure/Augie's Quest Team by participating in one or more events.

"Riding for Augie"

**National Indoor Cycling Event
Saturday, February 7, 2009**

Goal: 500 Health and Fitness Clubs, Recreation Centers, Colleges, Universities, Hospital-Based Health and Fitness Centers striding together for Augie



"One Step Closer for Augie's Cure"

**Saturday, February 14, 2009
Valentine's Day**

Goal: 500 Health and Fitness Clubs, Group Exercise Studios Recreation Centers, Colleges, Universities, Hospital-Based Health and Fitness Centers stepping together for Augie



"Trainers for Augie's Cure" **Saturday, February 7th- Saturday, February 14th 2009**

Goal: 250 Trainers involved in the program Trainers are invited to donate a portion of their training revenues for Augie's Cure



"Donate a percentage of your New Member Enrollment Fees in February"

Several clubs have donated in this manner during the initial phase of the program. It provides an excellent

opportunity to build your positioning in the marketplace as a Club that is taking a stand for Health and Wellness.

"Develop an In-Club Mobile Promotion"

One of the elements of the outstanding promotion that Bally's Fitness conducted for Clubs for the Cure/ Augie's Quest Team involved the selling of mobile's that were placed throughout the Club which provided the opportunity for members to donate to Augie's Quest as well as build awareness for this disease and the need for a cure.

"Create Your Own Fundraising Story!"

The Clubs for the Cure/ Augie's Quest Team is here to support each participant with not only information but marketing support that will allow your event to accomplish your objectives. We are here for you!

"Vendors for Augie's Cure"

The Clubs for the Cure/Augie's Quest Team will also be asking our vendors throughout the Health and Fitness industry to join our team and be part of finding a cure for ALS. There have been many vendors that have expressed an interest in participating in our upcoming effort and we will be very happy to work with each to assist in customizing their program.

Listed below is an example of a Vendor's Support of The Clubs for the Cure/ Augie's Quest Team:

Industry juice bar supplier, **Performance Food Centers (PFC)**, decided to get involved in Augie's Quest and Clubs for the Cure after meeting Augie at the IHRSA trade show in March. John Hocker, Vice President of Performance Food Centers remembers it this way, "Augie really made an impression on myself and my staff when we met him at the show. His unwavering courage and positive spirit left us no choice but to jump on board and do what we could". As a result of that meeting, PFC decided to enlist the power of their clubs by making it relatable. Using a product that was new to the market, they created a shake called 'Augie's Shake' for promotion in each of their locations. "It was actually Augie's idea", says Hocker. "He came up with the initial

concept and we just rolled with it". All in all, the concept really took off. Each club was offered 'Augie's Shake' to promote in their clubs for one month with the option of donating a portion of profits to Augie's Quest. In addition, PFC and Dr. Smoothie, the product manufacturer, also donated a percentage of each case of product that was sold. All in all,



Performance Food Centers, Dr. Smoothie & the participating clubs managed to fundraise thousands of dollars; bringing us one step closer to the cure.

The 'Augie's Shake' promotion will never end. If any club has interest, we encourage them to please contact Performance Food Centers for details. Let's keep the ball rolling.



(888) PFC-9151

info@performancefoodcenters.com

The Clubs for the Cure/ Augie's Quest Team would like to thank all the Clubs that participated in the initial ramp-up of this program last Spring and appreciate all the feedback on how to build the program for the future.

"Our goal" states Pat Laus, " is to conduct 1,000 events across the industry for Augie's Quest in February, 2009, realizing that this represents a very small percentage of the industry. I invite all club's to join together in making a positive difference to individuals within our communities that have been impacted by ALS. Together, we will make a difference!"





The POWER of ONE

One Industry United to Help AUGIE'S QUEST *Cure* ALS!

Harness the power of your members by hosting one fundraising event to help cure ALS the week of February 7 - 14, 2009.

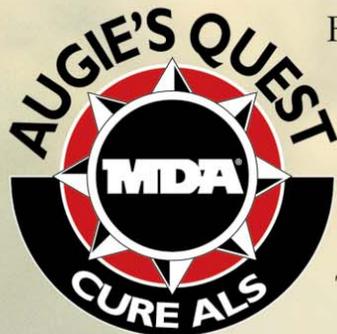
Choose one of these events:

Saturday, 2/7/09 Riding for Augie Indoor Cycle Event

Saturday 2/14/09 One Step Closer for the Cure
Group Exercise Event

Saturday 2/7/09 -
Saturday 2/14/09 Trainers for the Cure Week

Register your club now to participate in one of these events and become part of our Clubs for the Cure/Augie's Quest Team.

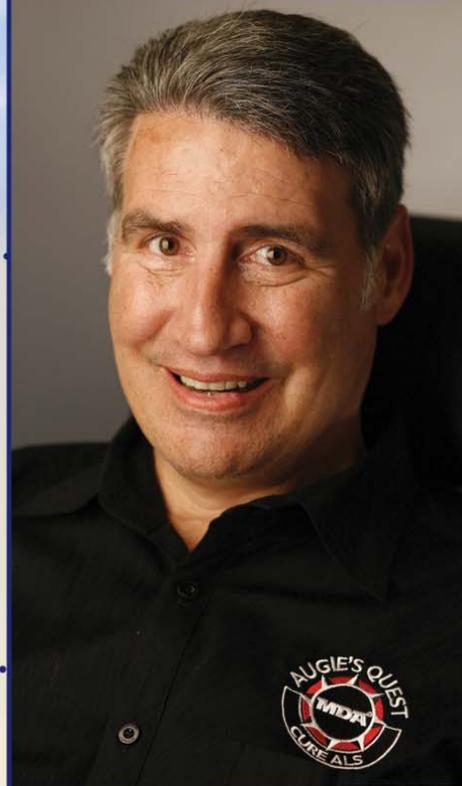


Fundraising programs and materials are all provided for your use at

www.clubsforthecure.com

as well as helpful phone contacts to assist your club in becoming part of this effort.

Together we can make a world of difference!



Augie Nieto, founder of Life Fitness, was diagnosed with ALS in 2005. Later that year, Augie and his wife Lynne created the Augie's Quest initiative in conjunction with the Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA).

One Club. One Event. One Man's Quest.

Maximum Money in Minimum Time: Taking Your Profits Up During a Down Economy

By: Donna Krech

Are you choosing to participate in the current down economy?

That may sound like a strange question, but given that there are owners just like you thriving in this economy, doesn't it stand to reason that there is a way (actually, there are many ways) to not participate in this weakening economy?

Don't answer just yet. Let me tell you about some of those ways first...

One of the best, easiest and fastest ways to UP your profits during a down economy is to go back to the basics and use Marketing 101. That means you prioritize your marketing in order of your most responsive customers. In other words:

1. You market first to your existing customers.
2. You market second to people who have been your customers in the past.
3. You market third to people who have thought about being your customer (showed interest but did not convert for one reason or another).
4. You market last to brand new people (who have never shown interest before).

Everybody claims they

get this idea, but take a look at typical marketing efforts and you'll see an almost exclusive focus on only marketing to brand new folks. Look at it this way. Marketing to new people (by definition - people who do not know you, have never done business with you and have no reason to trust you) is the most expensive form of marketing there is with the lowest probability of success. Hello?

I do understand there are new markets to tap into. I also know we can add amazing revenue without ever leaving our building by just plugging in timely, intelligent solutions. I know this because I roll up my sleeves and go into the trenches everyday just like you do. I own several businesses, and I've seen numerous returns on investment when I market a new program, product or service to existing customers. As a matter of fact, I've seen up to ten times my money back when I've done so!

Another way to increase your profits is by adding a weight-loss component to your fitness business. Now, some will say I am biased when it comes to this topic, and to them, I'll answer, "You better believe it, baby!" I mean, seriously, how could I not be totally excited about a business that has changed the lives and fortunes of countless people (including yours truly) for the better?

Many in our industry have been exploring and attempting to explain this option for some time now. Here's a list of reasons why everyone who owns a club should give this option a long hard look:

- The universe of people interested, eager and willing to trade dollars for a weight-loss program is over **FOUR TIMES** larger than the market for fitness (add it to your facility for a **400% potential increase in business!**).
- They spend more and get far better results.
- They convert better. While typical walk-ins for a club convert at a rate of about 3 out of every 10, they get up to a 90% conversion --that's 9 out of 10.
- They stay members longer, so retention is high.
- They spend more and get far better results.
- Fitness may be a "want" but for this market we are talking about "**wants and needs**" (in some cases, we are talking about life and death). There is **NOTHING** like having someone tell you that you've changed their life. Imagine what it's like when they tell you you've saved it!!!
- Again, they spend more and get far better results!

I could go on, as the list is exhaustive, but I'll illustrate its power with an actual example. Roy Leedy took over a club that had been losing money for 2.5 years. It had done only \$230,000 the year prior to getting into the weight loss business, and as you can imagine, he needed to do something quick.

He decided to implement a weight-loss program (he chose Thin and Healthy. Thank you, Roy!) and proceeded to generate \$57,000 within the first month, \$127,000 the second month and finished the year with \$974,000! That works out to about a 400% increase in business!

Yet another way to make more money --even during a time that others are saying it can't be

done-- is to "encourage" better performance out of your "human" resources. Now, we need to be clear on exactly what that means. I know what it's like when cash flow is down and you have payroll to meet. It's easy to get caught up in seeing employees as an expense, but that isn't what I am referring to here. No, I'm talking about covering your payroll from the extra income that your staff has brought in... free money! It's a win/win for everyone. You meet the financial needs of your business and the person helping you achieves their financial goals, too!

By providing incentives and bonuses for **results** (rather than being busy, making efforts, or spending time), you'll increase morale, generate excitement, foster a competitive spirit, generate new members, and yes, make some serious extra bucks.

How do you implement this strategy? My system includes dozens of ways to get more out of your employees and turn even troublesome employees into your greatest asset (see below for free info on this). Some quick ways to stimulate a quick cash infusion are:

- Fine tuning your commission structure for optimal performance. You would not believe how many businesses have commission scales that are counter-productive.
- Run a contest for your team. You'd be amazed at the excitement this creates and how it gets them focused on their target numbers.
- Give special incentives to team leaders. Somebody has to monitor what is going on, track results and keep the team pulling in the same direction, so get them super invested in your successful outcome.
- Provide incentives for retention improvements. This is an overlooked, but real, bottom-line cash builder.
- Tie it together with a theme. By making the theme different from the norm, it makes it fresh. Stumped for ideas? Use whatever is going on. If there is a storm in the area, run a rain or flood



Donna Krech
 special. Get the idea?

There is a lot more I'd like to share, but we are obviously limited on space, so here's what I'd like to do for you. I did an exclusive IHRSA call a few weeks ago. It was called More Money in Minimum Time. I covered MANY topics on adding profit to your facility and participants received two special reports: "Make Money in Your Sleep" and "Turning Your Most Difficult Employee Into Your Most Productive", and you can hear that call and get those two reports as my gift at www.donnakrech.com/ihrsacall.html.

Note to you, my friend and comrade in the industry we love... I can only open the door for you by sharing the information I share; you have to take the next step and walk through the door. You can join the companies that are thriving, or you can choose to participate in America's currently slower times... the choice is yours! We have so much opportunity we don't know which way to turn!!! Our story can be your story too!!!

(Donna Krech is the Founder and CEO of Thin & Healthy's Total Solution and may be reached at Donna@DonnaKrech.com)



oxygenate your studio

- pilates
- yoga
- cardio

OXYVITAL USA • 1-800-528-1026 • www.oxyvitalusa.com

advice, etc.

“From \$200K in ONE YEAR... to \$200K in ONE MONTH!”

I'm Roy Leedy. My club wasn't making money...but it is now!

I was a plant manager and the company I was working for was not doing well, so I was let go. I wanted to be back in fitness, as I'd been 20 years prior. I'd also had a little involvement with weight loss, so I knew something about that world—and knew the two needed to be intertwined. I began researching and found Thin&Healthy's Total Solution to be cutting edge. They were way ahead of the trend and offered something no other company offered.

I knew the club I was buying hadn't made money in two years. It only did \$240K the year before. I also knew fitness club staff had real trouble staying on the phone.

What are some things you need to be successful? I like the idea of Healthy Foods Education; you're buying your foods at the grocery store. I do not like prepackaged foods that I've seen at some other weight loss programs, because I do not like the word diet. That means you're going to do something short-term then go back to your normal eating habits and gain your weight back, like most Americans do.

When I looked at Thin&Healthy's Total Solution, I saw they had the motivation. I knew no one was talking about motivation, so they were cutting edge. This matched my beliefs, so I elected to research this more.

In our society, everybody is looking for advice or help, and I thought Life Success (the motivational piece of the program) would end up being as big as the weight loss industry. I saw Thin&Healthy's Total Solution as the company that would go out and tell the story and help turn the tide with the obesity rate.

ROY LEEDY

talks about how adding Thin&Healthy's Total Solution to his fitness club was an obvious choice.

When I came to Lima and attended the first meeting, before I was even an owner, I was very excited because I saw a company that had all the training and everything laid out.

I noticed in my club the staff got to be very lazy. No one wanted to do what they were supposed to do, the phone calls and the things that carry the business. Here was a company that had systems in place that were far better than anything I'd ever seen and I worked for fitness companies for years. This company got down to brass tacks and offered systems that, if followed, would lead to success.

My first month as a club owner, we did \$15,000. I started polling people to find out if they were members at any weight-loss facilities. They would say, “Yes, I'm a member at such-and-such.”

“Here was a company that had systems in place that were far better than anything I'd ever seen and I worked for fitness companies for years.”

I started thinking to myself, “These people are going somewhere else and paying for it. Why not join with a company that does it better than anyone else, offer it all under one roof, and bring that money back into our club?” Our second month we brought in some new selectorized equipment, and we added Thin&Healthy's Total Solution, and that month our enrollment skyrocketed to about \$57,000 gross. The next month we ran some ads and did \$126,000. We hit the ground running and haven't stopped since.

In relation to the business model, Thin&Healthy's Total Solution knows the importance of taking stats and understanding them as more than numbers. Stats are tools to train people in their weak areas, such as why they didn't make all their phone calls.

Along with that, I like the morning meetings, the plan for the day. These

systems encourage accountability because people have to answer for their time. You don't have that most places, the accountability at the end of the day. Even the monthly meetings help, because we all know we're going to talk about our numbers from the previous month.

I'm a firm believer in systems and in what Thin&Healthy's Total Solution is doing. I think this is the vehicle that will help turn the nation around. I want to be a part of that so I'm currently looking at a master license for some larger cities, to get involved in a bigger way. I think we can meet the masses and help people keep their weight off.

That's what I see as the biggest difference with this business: we actually teach people how to keep their weight off. Most weight loss systems are set up to get people in the door and lose weight, knowing full well people will regain their weight. I don't want to be part of that.

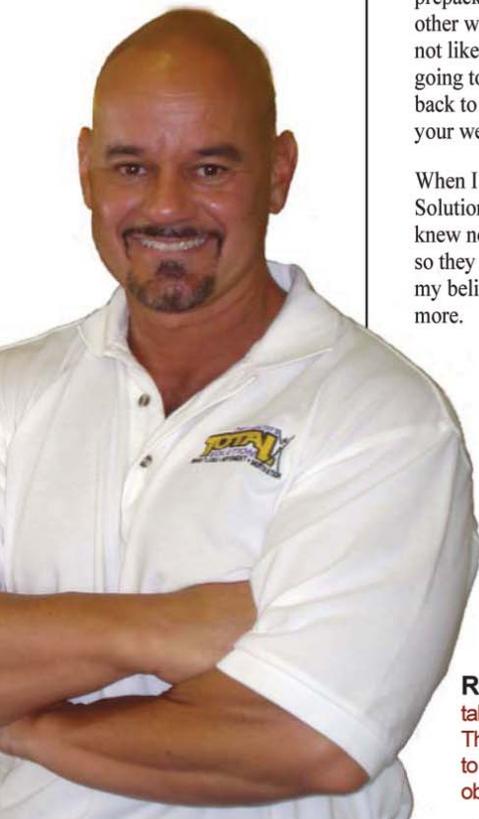
To all the club owners across our nation who just aren't making money and feel like there is no hope for making money, remember this; with 13% of people that workout regularly, all the clubs are competing for a shrinking market. When I saw that 67% of people want to lose weight, thus meaning our ads reach 80% of people, I realized that's where I wanted to put my money because I would get a bigger bang for my buck. When you add weight loss to your fitness center, you will explode with cash flow and new members. This is a no-brainer.

Five years from now this will be commonplace. Clubs will get on the bandwagon and go help the 67% that need to lose weight, or they will fail.

Adding weight loss is a must. You will not succeed in a strictly gym-based business. You have to incorporate weight loss along with Life Success; that will open doors in new arenas in the future. Being part of this company means being cutting edge. I see it as a tidal wave, and you need to get on and ride that wave.

To sum it all up, I enjoy the fact that now I feel I'm helping people's lives.

When we hit that record (of \$126K) I said, “We aren't thinking big enough.” And we're about to do a \$200K month.



THIN&HEALTHY'S
TOTAL
SOLUTION
WEIGHT LOSS • MOVEMENT • MOTIVATION

Call Marcia Bigler at (866)260-8446

www.thinandhealthy.com

Incentivize for Success

By: Jeffrey Keller, M.S., M.B.A.

My wife works for a very large national therapy contracting company. Just recently, she received a nice company logoed, multi-purpose laptop bag from her employer. She has never received something like that from an employer before, and as intended, she felt very appreciated when she received the unexpected gift. But despite the employee appreciation that comes from an employer gesture like this, companies need to think long and hard about their goals and actions and how they can best use their money to incentivize their employees to achieve maximum performance. The club industry is notorious for using nothing but cash incentives to reward performance. There is a huge world of incentive compensation out there that clubs have yet to explore. This month's article is going to focus on the basics of structuring an incentive program as well as apply this to motivating specific departments in a club.

The Basics of Performance-Based Incentives

Too often, employers make performance-based incentive programs too simple. They think that designing one is nothing more than having a goal and rewarding goal achievement. Though this may be true in its simplest form, employers go wrong when they apply one sweeping goal to all employees. If the goal is designed to maximize the performance of the very best employee, which of course, every company would want, then all of the other employees are left to struggle, probably not achieve the goal, become frustrated, and at the very least, become apathetic towards the goal, but probably quit working for the club altogether. No company, least of all a company in an industry that is geared towards customer service, can maintain long-term success with poor customer service and a revolving door for employees. So what's the solution?

Here's seven points to keep in mind when designing your performance-based incentive program.

1. *Most importantly,*

performance-based incentives MUST be linked to the company's goals. For instance, if a club's strategy is to offer mid-range prices on memberships in an effort to maximize upsell strategies during each membership, then rewarding Sales Associates for "membership dollars" earned during a month might not be as appropriate as rewarding for total memberships sold. The link here being more members means more upsell opportunities. Of course, this only works for a company's bottom line if Sales Associates have limited authority to discount.

2. *Not all people are motivated by the same things.* Money is a powerful motivator, but many people in the health and fitness industry got into it not necessarily to make a lot of money, but rather to help people. Don't forget that.

3. *Performance-based incentive programs need structured guidelines.* There needs to be a definitive link between the performance sought and the benefit that will be received. Without this, employees perceive that their effort at work has no bearing on their personal "pay off", which leads to apathy and a lack of "extra effort", and ultimately, the individual's performance becomes a drain on the department's goal achievement (decreased productivity) or the individual quits (no productivity).

4. *Newbies and Experts need to be separated.* When designing the performance-based program, remember that Newbies do not usually perform to the same level as your club's experts. Newbies are still learning how to produce, so their rewards need to be tied to quality, not quantity. In sales, reward them for number of calls made, or lead follow-ups completed, or appointments scheduled, rather than memberships sold. Not separating them creates a distaste for sales in newcomers, which again leads to apathy, poor long-term performance, and turnover. Just remember, as competency improves, so should the expectations and what group they should be in.

5. *Try not to copy the competition.* Just like with anything in the club industry, *differentiation* is the name of

the game. This applies to your employees as much as with your members. Having the exact same performance-based incentive program as the club down the street may work at first, or even for a little while, but eventually, employees become apathetic towards it because, as far as they know, it's an "industry standard". Don't fall victim to lack of creativity.

6. *Individual goals must be "individual".* The best way to accomplish this is to discuss and determine individual goals during weekly, monthly, quarterly and annual evaluations. By and large, most companies employ a method that establishes goals for the best of the best, and operate with the approach that sales is "sink or swim". Though you want your employees to strive for the highest levels, goals must be designed to be individual, otherwise, new or struggling employees will feel they are judged by an unfair standard.

7. *Don't fall victim to bending the rules.* Guidelines for an incentive program need to be designed to be flexible, but they are still the rules of the game. Bending the rules, so poor performers can achieve, leads to nothing more than higher performers being slighted. On the flip side, designing a program in which goals are very easy to achieve by everyone participating was a management error. So, you had better reward employees exactly as they were originally told they would be rewarded.

These points are the basics of designing an incentive compensation program. There is plenty of advice out there on how to fine tune a program, but all of that advice is worthless without a program designed with the above points in mind.

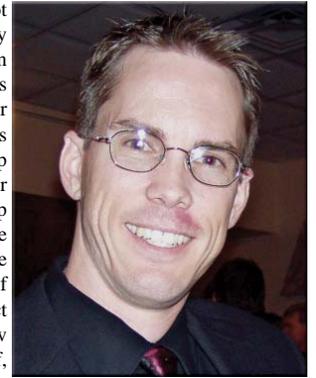
Adapting Performance-Based Programs to Health Club Departments

Sales - Simply put, good Sales Associates are in it to make money. That's what motivates them. They are usually competitive individuals and dollars are their trophies, but don't lose an opportunity to bring other incentive opportunities to the table. Survey the Sales Staff during the next department meeting to determine the top five things

they'd love to receive that is not cash but has a definite monetary value. From there, see if you can barter with other area companies for those motivating prizes. For instance, many sales departments over the years have used the "trip to Hawaii" prize for the quarter or year's best performer. A trip doesn't necessarily have to be to Hawaii, but it does have to be commensurate with the volume of sales to be produced. If you expect the winner to produce 200 new members in a quarter by himself, then the trip should be appropriate to the dollar amount you would see on the bottom line. See if an area travel agency will trade out a trip for two somewhere in exchange for being able to place some print ad panels on the walls in your lobby or a banner ad on your website or in your monthly email newsletter.

Front Desk - Because the Front Desk is typically staffed with minimum wagers or Sales Staff who don't have anything to do, it is difficult to engage them in a way that pushes the customer service standard up. Utilizing a similar strategy for them as for the sales department, design an incentive program that focuses on member satisfaction. Send out email surveys once per quarter to assess how members feel about dealing with the front desk. Make the survey simple and give the members something for returning their surveys. Base incentives on quarter-to-quarter improvements in satisfaction scores. However, be sure to delineate between employees so that employees know who is eligible. Nothing will derail your club like an employee from another department putting in maximum effort at the Front Desk under the assumption that he will be getting some sort of bonus only to end up not receiving one.

Child Watch - This again is a member satisfaction issue. Place membership satisfaction surveys in a very prominent place with questions very specific to Child Watch. Or, send out email surveys to regular users, since you should have all of their contact information. Base incentives on quarter-to-quarter improvements in satisfaction scores. Just remember the point about delineating between employees in case you



Jeffrey Keller, M.S., M.B.A.

have some cross-over from time to time between departments.

Personal Training - Personal trainers get into this industry because they enjoy fitness, and they like working with people. Money is a motivator, but not the biggest one. Personal trainers like to feel they are growing professionally because this allows them to bring more creativity to their clients. However, this is inhibited by one of the biggest drains on a personal trainer's budget, his or her continuing education. The solution is to create an in-house continuing education budget and tie annual department revenue production to the CEU line item. If the department reaches its annual goal, then the trainers split the budgeted amount on the following year's budget. To calculate how much each trainer should receive, simply take the percentage he or she contributed to the previous year's personal training revenue and give him that percentage of the CEU budgeted amount. The end result, the trainers get an incentive that the club can benefit from.

Management - Rewarding managers is always a difficult endeavor. Too often, owners make the fatal mistake of rewarding them merely for the financial factors they have control over. Unfortunately, this reduces managers, especially General Managers and Personal Training Managers, to Sales Staff because that's where they'll make their bonuses. Including member satisfaction metrics and employee satisfaction metrics are important for maintaining a long-term growth strategy as both of these are definitively linked to member

(See Jeffrey Keller Page 26)



NEED A PARTNER BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER
YOUR PURCHASE? WE'LL SPOT YOU.

When it comes to being a true business partner, the rest of the industry is simply no match. Iron Grip is there for you at every step of the buying process—from proposal and estimate to delivery and follow-through to service and support. No worries or hassles, just personal attention from dedicated professionals under the same roof as our state-of-the-art manufacturing facility, right here in the U.S. So if you're looking for a trusted partner who's easy to do business with, call Iron Grip. We'll give you a spot. Call 800-664-4766 or visit www.irongrip.com for more information.



IRON GRIP
BARBELL COMPANY

...Norm's NOTES

continued from page 10

celebrate the **46th anniversary of Red Lerille's Health and Fitness Club this coming January 13, 2009!** Red's terrific website, www.redlerilles.com, starts with a comment from Red, "Well, it all started with my Uncle Harold and the rest is history." At the age of 15, Red was a skinny red haired kid who was inspired by his Uncle Harold's muscles. Red's dream was to be **Mr. America** and own a gym. Inspired by his **UNCLE HAROLD, JOE GOLD and BILL PEARL**, Red became Mr. America in 1960. Red's dream was spurred on during a conversation with Joe Gold in 1953. Joe Gold (Founder of Gold's Gym and World Gym International) opened his first gym called "Ajax Gym" in New Orleans in 1953. Joe really seemed to like Red, even though he was a kid at the age of 17. One Saturday over lunch, Joe looked at a magazine with **BILL PEARL** on the cover and told Red that "You could win Mr. America one day". From that day, Joe became Red's mentor. After **Mr. New Orleans, Mr. Audubon Park, Mr. Navy** and several other titles, Red's dream was realized in 1960 as he won the Mr. America title that year. On January 13, 1963 Red opened a 4,000 square-foot club in what was formerly called **Country Boy Boots and Western Wear**. Today, Red's is a 185,000 square-foot club on 20 acres with 22 outdoor tennis courts, 3 indoor tennis courts, four swimming pools, full-size indoor basketball court, workout areas with over 600 machines, indoor and outdoor jogging tracks, 4 racquetball courts and a squash court to name only part of the club's facilities. Red has 14,000 members in Lafayette, Louisiana, a city of about 120,000. We

featured Red Lerille on page one of our **1st edition of CLUB INSIDER**, some 180 months ago. Red always tells people the key to success in his and any business is "Show up on time, ready to work." To see what Red's is all about go to www.redlerilles.com.

•This just in from **TOM ABSHIRE, Senior Vice President of Marketing for Virgin HealthMiles**: Virgin HealthMiles, a member of Sir Richard Branson's world-renowned Virgin Group, announced that the company's award-winning HealthMiles program will be rolled out to employees of the Commonwealth of Kentucky in early 2009. The state has incorporated Virgin HealthMiles as part of the Commonwealth's Journey to Wellness Program that launched today. Kentucky is the first state in the nation to launch the Virgin HealthMiles program to all state employees. Virgin HealthMiles is a first-of-its kind health incentives program designed to get an employer's workforce more active and healthy. Virgin leverages its extensive consumer experience to bring a fresh approach to wellness by keeping **fun** at the core of the program that keeps large percentages of employees engaged (ranging from 30 to 85 percent). Virgin HealthMiles takes a unique approach to activity, encouraging employees to do what they enjoy most and all kinds of activities are encouraged, supported and incented as employees make strides on their journey toward healthier living. For information on the Commonwealth's Journey to Wellness, visit: www.personnel.ky.gov. I might add that if the Virgin HealthMiles program is being launched in Kentucky, why not launch it in every state? Good question for those of you with connections in

your own State governments!

•You've heard it from me before... that is how clubs should focus on **marketing benefits to prospective members** as opposed to **marketing features**, such as your 25,000 pounds of free weights. One of the benefits I have mentioned over and over is that new members who join, use the club, lose weight and get in shape **benefit in their pocket book**. This point was made recently in an *Atlanta Journal Constitution* article entitled, "**Weight-based bias in workplace a big problem**". The article begins with, "Weight matters. Not only can it cost you your health, it can cost you your job. Researchers at **Wayne State University** in Detroit have found that prejudice against overweight people is rampant in the workplace in hiring and promotion decisions. And, it can also make overweight people feel upset, causing a loss of self-esteem that could negatively affect productivity", said **CORT RUDOLPH**, a psychology professor and lead author of the study. The article continued with, "Weight-based bias is a big issue in the workplace and worse for people in or aspiring to sales positions", said Rudolph.

"It's worse for folks in sales because of the biases held by others. **The issue: How will overweight salespeople be perceived by potential clients?**" So folks, maybe there are a couple of lessons here for you: **1) your club can use, as a tool to sell memberships, the fact that exercise, losing weight and getting fit will help members make more money. An excellent argument can be made that, "If you join our club, use it regularly, watch your diet and stick with it, your membership is not going to cost you a thing because it is very likely that you will more than pay for your membership with**

the increase in your personal income and productivity, and you will even have a lot left over". If this is not a poignant and important message in these times, I will kiss your foot in front of millions at the Orange Bowl! **2) The second lesson might be to take a look at the membership sales staff at your club. How many folks do you have whose primary responsibility is selling memberships who are also toting around an extra 20, 30, 40 or 50 pounds?**

•**STEVE STRUMPH**, the General Manager of **Midtown Athletic Club Weston** in Weston, Florida, and long-time **CLUB INSIDER** reader, announced that former Brazilian national swimmer, **RAPHAEL LIMA**, has joined the club as its new **Aquatics Director**. Congratulations and best wishes to Raphael in his new role.

•**Speaking of memberships not costing a member anything** (mentioned above), I was recently contacted by a fellow who wanted me to introduce him to one of our industry entrepreneurs so they could team up and **build a health club that gives away all memberships for free**. I held him off for now because I wanted to write to you all and obtain contacts

from any industry people who would like to meet this guy and consider his new club model and business proposition. While on the surface, this sounds like a hare-brained scheme, I can assure you that from our communications, this guy is not an idiot. So, I will wait to hear from you. Just pop an email to me at: **Norm@clubinsideronline.com**.

•**God bless our troops, airmen and seamen**, as these brave men and women risk life and limb everyday for all of us in Iraq and the Middle-East. **God bless their families** for the sacrifice they make for all of us. **God bless you and your family** as we all deal with a tough economy. **God bless America!** (Norm Cates, Jr. is a 36-year veteran of the health, racquet and sports club industry. Cates was the Founder and is now celebrating his 16th Anniversary as the Publisher of **CLUB INSIDER**. He was **IHRSA's 1st President**, and a Co-founder of the Association with **Rick Caro** and five others, in 1981. In March, 2001, **IHRSA honored Cates with its DALE DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award**, one of **IHRSA's highest honors**. Cates may be reached by phone at **770-850-8506** or email at **norm@clubinsideronline.com**)

...Jeffrey Keller

continued from page 24

retention. All the sales in the world won't grow a club's membership if members are leaving as fast as they are joining. Try creating three individual compensatory programs for General Managers that reward each of these components. Since most General Managers already have a monetary bonus plan linked to either sales or the bottom line, the two other programs are all that need to be designed. Use the survey process described for

Front Desk Staff and Child Watch Staff to measure progress from quarter-to-quarter or year-to-year, whichever you currently use for the GM's monetary bonus plan, then reward for achieving goals in those areas. Great rewards for General Managers are trips to trade shows, online professional development courses of their choice, maybe a company car lease, or even something as simple as recognition in front of employees or other managers. It's amazing how far a pat on the back will go but make sure it doesn't seem patronizing as

General Managers will see right through that.

These are some very simple applications of incentives for employees. With some creativity and listening to what motivates your staff, any of these ideas can be tailored specific to your club. One final tip: to prevent overwhelming your members with surveys, construct one survey that includes very specific questions about Front Desk Staff, Child Watch Staff, and the General Manager. This will create a sense for your members that they have control over the behavior of the

club's staff, as well as it will give you the information you need for the incentive program without having them tune you out from survey burnout.

Good luck with your incentivizing.

(Jeffrey Keller is part of a new breed of young visionaries in the health and fitness industry. In January 2007, he founded the **Independent Health Club Networking Association (IHCNA)** in an effort to bring independent health club owners and managers

together and push the industry to the next level in a collaborative way using the web. He currently manages a rapidly growing 60,000 square-foot club East of Houston, Texas, in addition to being President of the **IHCNA**. He regularly writes for local magazines and newspapers, as well as health and fitness industry publications. But mostly he writes to freely share what works for him so others will share what works for them. He may be reached at: jkeller@montbelvieu.net)

CLUB BROKER

"I specialize in selling clubs"

Todd D. Lipton

480-821-8993

HealthClubBroker.com



Daron Allen
CEO, Visual Fitness Planner

“Want the most from your PROFIT CENTERS? Add our technology!”

10 WAYS OUR TECHNOLOGY INCREASES YOUR BUSINESS PROFIT

- 1 Industry **“BEST-PRACTICE”** membership sales system
- 2 Turn-Key **NEW MEMBER INTEGRATION** system
- 3 Complete **PERSONAL TRAINING** platform
- 4 Emotional **STIMULUS** to purchase
- 5 Motivation through **VISUALIZATION**
- 6 Distinct marketplace **ADVANTAGE**
- 7 Highly effective **CORPORATE** presentations
- 8 **RETENTION** driven by education-based selling
- 9 Highly professional **PRICE PRESENTATIONS**
- 10 **BRANDED/CUSTOMIZED/CONSISTENT**



A club chain in AZ reports – “The VFP is the standard presentation for both POS and New Member Orientation. Upon implementing the VFP, our club went from producing \$0 per day in Program/PT at the point of sale to now producing \$12,000-\$15,000 per day.”

A club in Canada reports – “Fitness Managers are averaging PT packages of \$3,500-\$6,000 per PT deal.”

A club in IL reports – “The VFP helped build our monthly PT drafts from \$0 per month to over \$40,000 per month in our 15,000 sq. ft. facility.”



YOUR SALES SYSTEMS. OUR TECHNOLOGY. GREATER PROFITS.

CALL TODAY - 877-837-1212 - www.vfp.us - sales@vfp.us

Fiserv's CheckFree Compete Adds Innovative Features to Enhance Health Club Operations

Brookfield, WI, October 6, 2008 - CheckFree Health & Fitness, now a part of Fiserv, Inc. (NASDAQ: FISV), a leading provider of information technology services to the financial industry, today announced that the next version of its CheckFree Compete™ software is now available for health and fitness clubs of all sizes.

CheckFree Compete is a revolutionary club management software solution that delivers unprecedented performance and ease-of-use. It is flexible and scalable and can be combined with the company's industry-leading electronic funds transfer (EFT) processing and world-class outsourced billing and customer service. "CheckFree Compete offers innovative capabilities and advanced functionality to help health and fitness clubs minimize operational expenses and deliver an exceptional member experience," said Matt McKernan, senior vice president and general manager, CheckFree Health & Fitness, now part of Fiserv. "It is a product that truly changes the landscape in club management software." The latest release of CheckFree Compete includes functionality that allows health and fitness clubs to schedule simultaneous events, group and individual activities, and provides nursery monitoring to give members peace of mind regarding their children's safety. In addition, the solution enables member self-service for scheduling activities and managing personal club accounts, provides locker management to assign and manage lockers throughout the club, and facilitates gift card purchase and redemption.

Each version of CheckFree Compete includes modules for check-in, point-of-sale, data entry, billing and reporting, all in a simple user interface with touch-screen capability. Compete is offered in both an easily updated web-based version and in a software version ideal for clubs that prefer to utilize in-house applications, enabling clubs of all sizes to be more efficient and profitable.

CheckFree Compete was developed with security in mind and provides clubs with a tool to help ensure that transactions, both point-of-sale (POS) and batch, are securely processed. CheckFree Compete software has been designed based on requirements of the Payment Application Data

Security Standard, a best practice published by the Payment Card Industry (PCI) Security Standards Council, for merchants and service providers that store, process and transmit cardholder data, helping to ensure the security of such

information.

"CheckFree Compete combines ease-of-use with robust back-office functionality, facilitating the gathering and reporting of information that can provide clubs with in-depth

insight into their operations," said McKernan. "Our 27 years of industry experience has shown that the main challenge club operators have with software is getting to the data they really need. Most solutions are difficult to use

and, therefore, usually less than 50 percent of the application is leveraged. We created CheckFree Compete with one goal in mind, ease-of-use, so the club operator can utilize 100 percent of their technology investment."

Getting noticed is easier than you think!

Susan K. Bailey
 will make sure you
 get **noticed** with a
 fall **marketing** plan
 for your club
 that really, really
works out.



Advertising should be **simple**. First, we identify what we want: **More members!** Then, we identify our target market; decide on the strategy to reach them and execute it with a clear, appealing message using direct mail postcards, flyers, inserts and guerrilla marketing. Simply **make your plan** and **work your plan**.

Repetition is the mantra for promotional **success**. Communicate consistently and people will believe you and they will respond; they will come, **they will buy**.

Call us pronto.

susankbailey
 Advertising

1.888.349.4594 www.clubads.com

advertising that works out

NATIONAL GYM SUPPLY



1-800-GYMPART / WWW.GYMPART.COM

Products designed for high-use fitness environments.



**2008 Catalog
Available Now!**

You're covered!

- BEST SELECTION
- GREAT PRICES
- FAST SERVICE
- EXPERT TECHNICAL SUPPORT

TIRED OF PULLING YOUR HAIR OUT RUNNING YOUR CLUB!



- Are low cost club competitors moving into your market and impacting your business?
- Are you looking for new ways to drive guest traffic necessary to reach your sales goals and ensure membership growth?
- Do you need a marketing plan that will grab attention, brand your club and generate the inquiry that will fulfill your sales objectives for 2008?

IF YOU ANSWERED YES TO ANY OF THESE QUESTIONS, WE NEED TO MEET!

New Paradigm Partners, LLC. has over 75 years cumulative experience and has the reputation for successfully assisting health and fitness clubs.



Call now to schedule a complimentary phone consultation.
800-840-0705
 www.newparadigmpartners.com

"For our ten years, I have worked with New Paradigm Partners, which has helped us turn a struggling gym into a state-of-the-art successful fitness facility. We have adapted new systems that allow us to give our members great service and, in turn, set a platform for increased membership and profits. It is an evolving and changing process that keeps us three steps ahead of our competitors."

Barry Field - Club Owner, Gold's Gym, Pawtucket and East Greenwich, Rhode Island

New Paradigm Partners

- Provides:
- Consulting
 - Management
 - Brokerage Services

Six Points of Service

- Business & Financial Development
- Staff Development & Training
- Membership Sales Training
- Marketing Plans
- Programming Services
- Member Services & Retention

Now Is The Time

By: Shawn Vint

We are living in those rarest of times, forced by circumstance to question long held assumptions about many things. In such times, it becomes imperative to make decisions based on evidences we see versus what we are being told. In such times, it becomes even more important for us, and our families, to stay fit, healthy and ready for change. In family meetings around the globe, budgets are being tightened in order to deal with economic realities. If your family is in the process of making these choices, make no mistake, fitness and wellness spending by individuals and families should not be among the items considered for reduction.

Regardless how policymakers move forward, the situation we find ourselves, and what it reveals regarding the fragility of our global economy, should serve to all as a reminder of where we place our priorities. Our health, and the health and safety of our families, ought to be our top and utmost priority. Preparedness for emergency is not just for your local Boy Scout troop anymore, and fitness is a crucial element to that preparedness. Fitness readiness will likely determine whether or not you become a help or a hindrance in any situation requiring quick action of a physical nature.

We have always known that life will throw us curves... the 'unknown' makes life the adventure that it is. Before us, we find another unknown, in the form of the unfolding, global economic drama. Although always hopeful of positive outcomes, we must also be responsible to those who rely on us by being prepared for less optimistic outcomes.

Most understand the responsibilities we have toward family, but if you train regularly, chances are that you are a role model to far more people than you realize. You have shown uncommon discipline, setting aside a portion of your weekly schedule for fitness. This is an accomplishment far too few achieve... even though for most, it is ever an aspiration. In any emergency, the discipline you have demonstrated will hold you well, when those around you will not be as steady. Understanding beforehand (read NOW), that you WILL be looked upon as a leader in an emergency situation should especially encourage you to 'walk the talk' in both your physical and logistical (food/emergency item) preparations.

Some believe that this kind of preparedness is a sign of giving in to the negativity. They would be incorrect. I purchase home fire insurance each and every year without fear that, in so doing, my house is more likely to ignite. I also recognize that the more self sufficient and fit I am, the less of a burden I would be on the emergency services grid at the very moment

those services are in highest demand... back to that 'help or hindrance' issue.

As a professional firefighter for over 15 years, I saw the drain on services that, many times, a simple preparedness skill-set and a small storage of supplies would have prevented. Most of the public fail to grasp that in a major emergency situation, most if not all equipment and personnel are 'used up', so to speak, within the very first few moments of any type of major occurrence, leaving the vast majority to their own devices and resources. In those situations, fitness and discipline are assets that everyone will wish they had invested in previously.

Every generation has a moment that defines them. Like many things, our response to what is before us is likely more emblematic of our character than what or who caused the problems. If you are reading this article, wellness is likely a life priority. This is our time. As nations of individuals 'wake up' to the fragility, and the fleetingness, of a life built around the accumulation of things versus the simpler, more financially prudent lifestyle preferred by our forefathers, our *lifestyle* will once again take center stage... if you and I step up to the plate and tell those around us.

Here are some basic highlights of our wellness lifestyle:

- Looking after our mind, our spirit, and our body... wellness... is as far removed from "keeping up with the Jones'" as chalk is from cheese.
- It is one of the basic tenets of what constitutes a high quality of life.
- The investment in financial terms is miniscule in comparison to the return in value.
- Your family will be the better for it.
- The prevention of many stress related diseases is a proven accomplishment of consistent training and good eating.
- The positive affects to our mindset, our leadership capabilities and our quality of life in the here and now... is worth experiencing and sharing with others.

So, if you aren't yet a participant, get in the game. If you are in the game, step up to the plate... and hit these times out of the park.

(Articles like this are enjoyed every month by the members of Greenmaple Wellness Inc.'s client clubs, in a club-customized Wellness E-Zine that puts facilities at the forefront of community wellness education. Visit www.greenmaplewellness.net, or better yet, give them a call toll free 1-888-355-1055. Shawn can be reached personally at shawn@greenmaplewellness.net)



For every business with a focus on health and wellness, our services provide affordable, effective client relationship and retention tools. Greenmaple Wellness has packaged these powerful email and marketing modules along with the well written, original articles and wellness resources found every month in the Wellness E-Zine we've attached to many hundreds of industry leading client websites.

It's About the Relationship



- ✓ ARE WE A WELLNESS AMBASSADOR WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY?
- ✓ DO WE CONNECT WITH OUR MEMBERS EVERY MONTH IN A COST EFFECTIVE WAY?
- ✓ DO WE CONTINUOUSLY RAISE OUR CLUB'S 'WELLNESS CREDENTIALS'?
- ✓ DO WE PROVIDE OUR TEAM THE RIGHT TOOLS FOR CLOSING THE SALE?
- ✓ DO OUR TRAINERS HAVE THE RIGHT RESOURCES TO BUILD BETTER RELATIONSHIPS?



- ✓ DO OUR SALES STAFF PERSONALLY AND EFFECTIVELY BUILD RELATIONSHIPS, CONVERTING MORE PROSPECTS TO MEMBERS?
- ✓ ARE WE PROVIDING TARGETED OUTREACH, SAVING OUR BUDGET?
- ✓ DO WE HAVE A CUSTOMIZED, PROFESSIONALLY WRITTEN LETTER SERIES FOR EFFECTIVE FOLLOW-UP?
- ✓ DO WE CONTINUOUSLY BUILD BETTER RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUR PROSPECTS?



- ✓ DO WE HAVE AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO COMMUNICATE ANY MESSAGE IMMEDIATELY TO OUR MEMBERS AND MEMBER GROUPS?
- ✓ DO WE HAVE AN EMAIL TEMPLATE DESIGNED EXCLUSIVELY FOR US, ENSURING THE MOST PROFESSIONAL OUTREACH POSSIBLE?



- ✓ ARE THE PERSONAL TRAINERS ON THE FLOOR TRAINING AND GENERATING REVENUE?
- ✓ DO THEY HAVE UP TO DATE, INTERNET BASED TOOLS TO ENSURE SUCCESS?
- ✓ DO WE PROVIDE OUR TRAINERS WITH BRIDGE-BUILDING PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES DESIGNED TO BUILD BETTER RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE ENTIRE MEMBERSHIP BASE?
- ✓ DO WE PROVIDE THE MOST EFFECTIVE INTRODUCTORY PROGRAM TO ENSURE BETTER RETENTION?

Greenmaple Wellness. Member Relationships made meaningful...bottom line results delivered.

Fitness Fundraisers' Innovative New Program Connects Clubs With Local Fundraising Organizations For Mutual Benefit

Fountain Hills, Arizona - October 8, 2008 - Fitness Fundraisers, LLC is tapping into the cutting-edge marketing and informational medium of fundraising to create health and economic synergy in communities by bringing together local fitness facilities and fundraising organizations.

"Most fitness facilities believe it is good for business to reach out to their local communities to help with fundraising for different causes," said Andrea Sobotka, owner of Fitness Fundraisers. "Our goal is to provide a win-win structure in which both the facility and the organization benefit."

Fitness Fundraisers engages a fitness facility in a 'grass roots' solution to generating traffic for the club without heavy advertising costs or administrative burdens. A club provides 3-month packages to Fitness Fundraisers who secure agreements with local fundraising organizations (i.e. schools, teams, youth groups) looking for ways to raise money and packages them for the non-profit to sell at \$20 each in their community for a period of two to four weeks at the end of which time, the organization simply keeps 50% of the proceeds.

derstands the importance of fundraising and the challenges organizations face. Their professional turn-key fundraising approach assists organizations by eliminating the need to store products (which are often perishable), while at the same time, providing both entities with the necessary resources --publicity, materials, extensive training, web and live support-- for the health club and organization to run a very successful fundraising campaign. Good corporate citizenship can pay off handsomely for a business because it generates goodwill and positive publicity while boosting member traffic.



Andrea Sobotka

sands of dollars for fundraising organizations.

"This accomplishes a couple of things," explains Sobotka. "One, because we give one club market exclusivity in a defined area, it gives our clients a strong foothold within the community. And two, it provides the club an opportunity to bring volumes of guests into the fitness center that otherwise might not come, potentially increasing their membership by significant numbers."

Fitness Fundraisers, LLC is a for-profit entity and sister business of Fitness Club Success. They are dedicated to supporting the growth of non-profit and for-profit organizations by bringing fundraising groups together with local health and fitness clubs to promote healthier, more active communities, and strong Fitness Businesses while generating thou-

Fitness Fundraisers has a qualified team of professionals trained to handle all aspects of marketing, packaging, sales training and support. To learn more about the program and how to participate as a donor facility or a fundraising organization, call **1-866-855-5484** or go to www.fitnessfundraisers.com.

Fitness Fundraisers un-

Achieve EXcellence in Business and Life

The most powerful success and achievement experience offering extraordinary peer support and profound professional growth.

"The REX Roundtable keep me inside my industry with smart peers and is equivalent to an Executive MBA, but more focused. Everyone is stretched to keep up with the others. ~ David Patchell-Evans"

David Patchell-Evans, Goodlife Fitness & Canadian Business London, ON

Roundtables for EXecutives
Affiliated with Qm*

To learn more about becoming a REX Roundtable member
 Call 858.513.7835 REXonline.org

Operating a Fitness Facility Just Got Easier!

FCS FITNESS CLUB SUCCESS

"Although you can find generic resources for business owners online, finding the resources that fill the unique requirements of wellness industries has been an entirely different matter...until now. Fitness Club Success has established the most comprehensive, wellness industry specific collection of tools and ready-to-use applications that we have seen, at a time in our economy when Facility Operators need all the assistance he or she can get at the most affordable price!

For any wellness business, enrolling with FCS's *Virtual Business Resource Center* would be one of the year's wisest business investments."

The Team at Green Maple Wellness.Net

Relax and Plug Into the Revolutionary
FCS Virtual Business Resource Center for 24/7 access to

- Comprehensive Staff Training
- Management & Money
- HR Info & Resources
- Marketing ideas & Ads
- Programming Solutions
- And so much more!

Contact us today for your Private Site Tour
1-866-855-5484 or info@fitnessclubsuccess.com
www.fitnessclubsuccess.com

5%

of ALL people who join a health club
in the US visit GymTicket.com to
help them make their decision.

Will They See Your Club?

Call 1-888-321-GYMS to find out



Tools for Predicting Your Program and Profit Center Success

By: Laurie Cingle, M.Ed

Publisher's Note: We would like to welcome Laurie Cingle on board as CLUB INSIDER's newest Contributing Author. With her background, we are pleased to have her on our Contributing Author Team, and we believe her contributions, beginning with this article, can help anyone's club business if studied. In uncertain economic times, it is important to examine the basics of your business to be sure you are maximizing revenue, minimizing costs, and incentivizing growth properly. That is what this article is all about, and we urge you to read and study it in hopes that you can implement some of these suggestions and grow your business in a time where some will struggle.

Part I

The number one source of revenue in most clubs is dues. Personal training income is number two. As a club manager or owner, it makes sense that you do whatever you can to protect your dues line and to grow your personal training business.

To ensure that you are maximizing your resources and member service, it is appropriate right now to review the productivity and feasibility of 1) your current programs and systems that feed and support personal training and retention, 2) your current fitness programs staff, and 3) departmental expenses, especially the compensation packages of your key positions.

Step One Review Your Current Programs and Systems

Program success is measured by participation, the "buzz" created and/or profit. To give you insight in determining what's working, what needs tweaking, and what should be eliminated from your menu of program offerings, start by gathering the following information:

1. List your clubs' profit centers outside of membership dues. Include average fees charged to members, average monthly gross revenue for each profit center and the percentage of total gross revenues.

2. What is your best selling program and why? What is your worst selling program and why?

3. What is your system for selling these services?

4. What is your biggest challenge with staff in selling programs?

5. What is your total non-dues revenue as a % of total gross revenue?

6. What is your greatest source of leads for programs?

7. What is your system for tracking the revenues and program participants?

8. List the programs you offer for either fun, education or that encourage participation. For each program, include average fees charged to members (if any), average number of participants and average cost for delivery.

9. Which of these programs attract the most participants and why? Which attract the least participants and why?

See Sidebar: "System Failure In a Personal Training Program"

Step Two Review Your Current Program Department Staff

Success in any and all programs and profit centers stems from highly committed, motivated and passionate Program Champions. Your success in programming and profit centers is directly related to the number of program champions on your team. The more champions, the more successful programs you will offer. The more successful programs you offer, the higher your member participation. The more members that participate in programs and services, the higher your non-dues program revenues and member retention will be.

Do you have the right people in the right roles? Do your programming people have passion for their programs? Or, is their attitude that of the programs just being one more thing for them to do? Does your club cultivate the development of program champions for success? Do you have the right leader in place? Answer the following questions to gain some insight:

1. How many staff people do you have on average in each club in the following departments?

Fitness Floor - ____ full-time
____ part-time

Personal Training - ____ full-time
____ part-time

Group Exercise - ____ full-time
____ part-time

2. What is your management structure for these departments?

3. What, if any, weaknesses do

you see in your fitness/exercise programming staff?

4. What percent of your staff would you like to replace and for what reasons?

5. How much fitness/exercise program staff turnover have you had in the past year? What are the top two reasons given for leaving employment at your club?

6. What would you like to see change in each of these departments?

7. What training has your fitness/exercise programming team had in the past 6 months?

8. Describe your ongoing fitness/exercise programming staff training program.

9. Describe the salary structure for the different positions within your fitness/exercise programming departments.

10. Does your entire staff have the ability to provide the level of service to your members that the members expect? If not, why?

11. Go back to your answers to question 1 and question 7 in Step One. Write the name of the Program Champion next to each program you listed.

See Sidebar: "What's the Real Issue As To Why This Program Is Not Succeeding?"

Laurie and CLUB INSIDER will present Part II of her report next month and that will cover Step Three - Review Your Payroll Costs Along with Other Expenses and Step Four - Coaching Your Team For Success



Laurie Cingle, M.Ed.

(Laurie Cingle, M.Ed. is a fitness business success coach and club consultant. Her specialties include: creating successful club program champions through coaching, developing and operating non-dues revenue profit centers, especially personal training and weight management, establishing club market differentiation and designing programs that result in profit and retention. The recipient of the IHRSA Fitness Director of the Year award, she has mentored 3 industry award winners --the 1998 and 2001 IHRSA/ACE Fitness Directors of the Year and the 2003 ACE Personal Trainer of the Year. She is certified through ACSM, NASM and the Coach Training Alliance as a certified business coach. For information on speaking engagements, staff success coaching, or consulting, please contact her at laurie@lauriecingle.com)

What's The Real Issue As To Why This Program Is Not Succeeding?

A certain club tasked the responsibility for the success of their massage department to their fitness/wellness programs manager. She was responsible for the departments of fitness, personal training, group exercise, mind/body programming, nutrition, the monthly program calendar and massage therapy. Her education, experience, interest and passion were in the areas of fitness and personal training. She had previously been a full time personal trainer. Nutrition and massage were failing. Personal training wasn't hitting their targets. She was struggling. Upper management said she had been trained on the important aspects of the business of massage; she said she was unsure as to what she should do to help the department succeed. Upper management said she had complete control over the massage department and was able to do whatever it took to increase business (within certain boundaries, of course); she said most of her ideas were shot down and her requests were repeatedly denied.

Of course, there are two sides to every story, but in all cases, perception is reality. Was she falling short because she was unprepared? Was she unsuccessful because she had limited support from upper management? Was performance amiss because she preferred to work within her strengths of fitness and personal training rather than go outside her comfort zone and learn new things? Was she truly qualified to meet the expectations upper management had for the role as a whole? Was she struggling because she had the wrong people on her team? This case requires careful analysis based on the director's performance, the scope of the job and the department's performance as a whole.

This is a common scenario. In my experience, club owners often comment that they are unhappy with their fitness and wellness-related programs and profit centers stemming from what they feel is under-performance of staff. Fitness programs managers have said to me that they are unhappy and unsatisfied with their jobs, feeling that they have little chance for success in their role.

System Failure In a Personal Training Program

In one club, the department director revealed to me that personal training payroll took at least 6 hours to complete each pay period. The reason for this was that the club was not using their club management software for their personal training program. It had a module built in to track the sales and delivery of personal training sessions, and thus, trainer payroll. They did everything by hand! The director did not realize that this capability existed. She employed a part-time assistant to help exclusively with the tracking of clients and completing payroll.

The moral of this story --once you discover a system in your department that is not working, look for a solution within the tools you have already invested in. Ask the vendor to provide training to your team so they use the system effectively and efficiently.

Why The Right Health Club Interior Sells More Memberships

By: Bruce Carter

Having given seminars in the fitness industry over the years, a question I commonly ask is, "Do most people love or hate exercise?"

The answer is always the same. Most people hate exercise. It is also accepted that some people love exercise, but most don't. It comes down to about 1 out of 5 people love it; the other 4 out of 5 don't. This is supported by the fact that approximately 14% of the population is currently a member at some kind of fitness or recreation facility. Yet, even many of the people who are members still dislike exercise. This makes for quite a daunting task of getting new members, and then, getting them to stay members.

Doesn't it become obvious then that a club has to sell something far more than the base product of exercise if it is to attract a much broader segment of the population?

There is one area that has increasingly proven to motivate people to join a club. Inspiring and exciting health club design and décor can make a dramatic

difference in overcoming the dislike people have with exercise. The key point here is the cause and effect of the proper interior atmosphere. Membership sales are then far more powerful than what has previously been accepted.

City Place is a multi-billion dollar casino hotel and residential project under construction on the strip in Las Vegas. The chief architect talked about why he did certain things from a psychological point of view. The gaming industry has long been using techniques to get people to gamble and keep gambling. Stimulating lights and sounds create excitement. No windows or clocks cause people to lose their sense of time and gamble longer than they normally would. One of the more memorable concepts indicated by this architect was the James Bond design principle. The architect did not believe in the use of any mirrors in the hotel or casino common areas. "Look, the average guy coming into a casino to gamble thinks he is James Bond. If he were to see himself in the mirror, he realizes is *not* James Bond and stops gambling".

There are significant

things that can already be negatively affecting people about health clubs when they walk in and a beautiful interior can turn so many of these negatives into a positive. If people hate exercise, then shouldn't there be a lot of other things at a club that they like? Obviously, friendly people are an important component. Yet, a stimulating environment using a combination of shapes, colors, finishes and lighting can do wonders in getting people to love a facility place --where they can't wait to get there, and don't want to leave.

Forexample, most people are intimidated by exercise, so the first impression should not be immediately lots of people on exercise equipment in their faces. It should be soft and welcoming. Ease them into it.

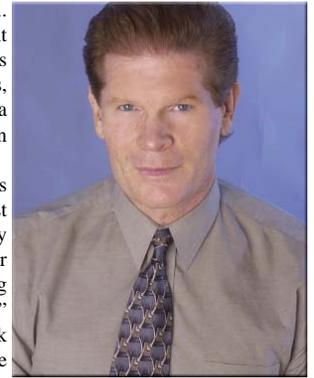
What about something as simple as the use of mirrors? Surely some mirrors are necessary, especially in the free weight area, but if most people are not happy with how they look, why keep reminding them everywhere they turn? It is so easy for people to cross over from being at a club with hope to disliking the discomfort of exercise and how

out-of-shape they look and feel. A study by the U.S. Department of Health showed most people's attitude about exercise is, "What's the use?" Having pizza and watching Seinfeld reruns can easily win out.

The impact of a club's interior is that significant and must become an immediate priority with a club. It's one of your strongest (or weakest) marketing tools. Do a "visual excitement" inventory of your club. Ask people who are not into exercise how they feel about your facility. One thing is for sure, if your club is bland and basic, and your competition has state-of-the-art interiors, you lose and they win, especially with the deconditioned growth part of the market.

Clubs have to stop being just a place to exercise. They have to turn into an experience, an overwhelmingly positive one that helps in motivation and communicates that this is where they can change their life.

The message is clear, whether it be for new or existing clubs. They need to put far more attention on the environment they provide, just as the retail, food and entertainment industries do.



Bruce Carter

Everything needs to be done to present fitness in a much more inviting manner. Most people need substantial added help in overcoming their dislike of the product. An exciting and inspiring atmosphere, therefore, becomes an integral ingredient to success in this highly competitive industry.

(Bruce Carter is the owner of Optimal Design Systems International, a 29-year old health club design company that has created over half a billion dollars of clubs in 45 states and 26 countries. Bruce may be reached at 954-385-9963)

OPTIMAL DESIGN
SYSTEMS INTERNATIONAL

One of the World's Leading Design Firms in the Fitness Industry

Interior Design + Renovations + Consulting

Better Design • More Excitement • More Profit

Optimal design is known for "profit designing". We have the ability to create beautiful and exciting, award winning facilities that increase sales and retention, yet are inexpensive to build. This results in more revenue, less debt and therefore more profits. We have created approximately \$500 million dollars worth of facilities in 45 states and 25 countries. Our experience results in the best possible design, stimulating décor and increased profits for your new club or renovtion.



Bruce Carter
bruce@optimaldsi.com

optimaldsi.com

Tel: (954) 888-5960
Fax: (954) 888-5961

4th Annual IHRSA Profitability Conference



27th Annual National Fitness Trade Show



Programming Tip of the Month:

Training For Good Customer Service Must Be Done Over And Over Again - Now Is The Time To Rev It Up!

By: Sandy Coffman

You Can Do This!

Any business--especially ours-- would be crazy not to think of the influence that the state of our country and world has on our market and our business today. The economic crisis is now and

will continue to effect the mood and actions of our customers as well as our staff. I can't think of a more important time to "kick it up a notch!" Here are a couple of thoughts and tips to make the coming months more successful than ever, even in these troubled times. These tips are expanded and detailed in the beginning

chapters of my book because the success of the 101 programs presented are dependent on them.

1. Chances are, you are considering hiring new employees or programmers to get the new season and the New Year underway. Identify and take to heart the priorities you are looking for. Expertise and knowledge is important, but remember, it can be acquired. You need top performers in communication skills, empathy, energy and enthusiasm. You can't afford to spend time and money on someone who will not deliver these attributes to your members. They will only turn members away and/or quit after a short period of time because they didn't have the understanding or the compassion for the job in the first place. A good, no, a *great* customer service employee will create the environment that will make your members want to come to your club regularly. *Programming for Profit* and running *Successful Programs for Fitness and Health Clubs* begins with having the right people in place as leaders and promoters.

If I were to interview someone who was interested in assuming the role of a programmer or program director, I would ask a few questions such as, "Have you been working in the industry as an instructor or trainer and are you considering a move into management?" (You want someone who is motivated and success oriented). "Are you genuinely interested in the growth and development of the members as well as the club?" (It must be clear that it's all about our members, or the business fails).

The ultimate service that you can provide your members is to be sure that they join a program that will be delivered in a fun, inspiring, and educational manner. The total experience will depend on the leader.

The following may offer a place to start: *Wanted! Program director, instructor, trainer, or service minded employee for a*

fitness club. High energy leader with organizational, teaching, telephone and interpersonal communication skills. Duties include: promotion, marketing, administration, documentation and follow-up of programs. Training provided.

2. Training for good customer service should never end. Sure, you have periodic staff meetings that talk about customer service. You go over the obvious, smiles, eye contact, learn and use people's names. We all take these things for granted, and after mentioning them, lapse into old forms of habitual behavior. If you are going to change behavior, rev-up customer service skills and maintain them for any length of time, you must have continual training to reinforce the wanted behavior.

Good, no, *great* clubs have customer service training every month to ensure that exceptional customer service stays in the forefront. Training must include teaching your staff how to be aware of body language and voice inflections and knowing when and how to take action, instead of being passive or seemingly rude or uncaring. Customer service and upbeat energy provided by your staff is a critical function of clubs and may be the only way to keep your customers happy and retuning and bringing you more business. Statistics tell you that it costs 6 times more to get a new member than to keep one, and 60% to 80% of your new business will come from referrals and word of mouth touting the experiences in your programs.

Every club needs to have a continual customer service training program for all their employees who interact with customers. This training should use role playing to simulate various problems and situations the staff might encounter. Having other staff observe the way an employee deals with a simulated situation is a powerful motivator

for changed behavior. Customer service training should also cover the appropriate and effective words to use when a member is upset, when they are dealing with current member issues and how to be proactive in customer service.

So, be sure to hire the right people who are open to and willing to participate in a good, no, *great* customer service training program. Be sure to look at whom you have already hired. Are they open to and willing to participate in a great, maybe new and revamped up, more professional customer service training program? Are they willing to be held accountable for that training?

Next, take a look at the service training in your club now. How long has it been since you have had a *great* training session with your staff? If you are the manager or owner, are you prepared or qualified to deliver new and productive ways to make your service actually increase your bottom line and bring in new members?

If you want to offer creative and high-caliber programs, then you need employees who are well trained and highly motivated. Our fitness programs will continue to be judged on the basis of leadership, recognition, and camaraderie, as well as individual results. Group programming, with unending service and constant calendar of events is the answer, and the future success of your programs lie in the quality of the people we hire to develop and run those programs.

You can do this. There has never been a more important time to rev it up. Once learned and accepted, teeth and eyes become your biggest assets and will realize your biggest rewards.

(To order Sandy's great new programming book, "*Successful Programs for Fitness and Health Clubs*" 101 Profitable Ideas go to: www.humankinetics.com Contact Sandy: SLCoffman@aol.com or www.sandycoffman.com)



INFORMATION REQUEST

If you would like to receive information from or be contacted by advertisers in this issue, just clip or photocopy this form, mark the block(s) of the respective companies, include the information requested in the blanks and fax to (770) - 933 - 9698.

___ Please mail information to me.

___ Please contact me by (check one) ___ Phone ___ Email.

Your Name: _____

Club or Company Name: _____

Address: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Our Advertising Team

___ CheckFree Corporation - Pg 5	www.checkfree.com
___ Affiliated Acceptance - Pg 9	www.affiliated.org
___ ABC Financial Services - Pg 15	www.abcfinancial.com
___ Sales Makers - Pg 7	www.sales-makers.com
___ Body Training Systems - Pg 39	www.bodytrainingsystems.com
___ National Gym Supply - Pg 29	www.gymupart.com
___ Visual Fitness Planner - Pg 27	www.myvfp.com
___ NFBA - Pg 18 & 19	www.jointhenfba.com
___ Greenmaple Wellness - Pg 31	www.greenmaplewellness.net
___ REX Roundtables - Pg 32	www.rexonline.org
___ Association Insurance Group - Pg 13	www.clubinsurance.com
___ Thin & Healthy - Pg 23	www.thinandhealthy.com
___ The STEP Company - Pg 11	www.thestep.com
___ InTek Strength	www.intekstrength.com
___ JLR Associates - Pg 12	www.jlrassoc.com
___ Oxyvital - Pg 22	www.oxyvitalusa.com
___ Iron Grip - Pg 25	www.ironrip.com
___ Fabiano Designs - Pg 18	www.fabianodesign.com
___ Sports & Fitness Insurance	www.sportsfitness.com
___ Susan K. Bailey Advertising - Pg 28	www.clubads.com
___ fitRewards!	www.fitrewards.com
___ Club Broker - Pg 26	www.healthclubbroker.com
___ GymTicket.com - Pg 33	www.gymticket.com
___ New Paradigm Partners - Pg 30	newparadigmpartners.com
___ Fitness Club Success - Pg 32	www.fitnessclubsuccess.com
___ City Blends - Pg 8	www.cityblends.com
___ Robotic Waist Reducer - Pg 10	Call (405) 720 - 9213
___ Cybex International - Pg 17	www.cybexintl.com
___ HEX Tanning	www.hextanning.com
___ Apex Fitness (bodybugg) - Pg 40	www.apexfitness.com
___ Clubs For The Cure - Page 20 & 21	www.clubfortheure.com
___ Optimal Design Systems - Pg 35	www.optimaldsi.com
___ Planet Fitness - Pg 2	www.planetfitness.com

Sincere Thanks and Great Appreciation To:

All who have advertised, purchased subscriptions, read and pitched in as Contributing Authors. We are now in our 16th year of publication! All of you are on the "Team" that makes CLUB INSIDER, and we will be grateful to you forever.

I appreciate and LOVE 'Ya!
 Very Sincerely, Norm Cates, Jr.

• 360 Fitness • All Sport Club • Fishkill • Bayshore Fitness and Wellness Center Hazlet • Bayshore Fitness and Well-
 ness Center Parlin • Body Shapes for Women • Body Works Studio • Bodyworks 24 Hour • Bodyworks 50th Street •
 Bodyworks Family Sports Center • Carolina Woman • Cascade Athletic Club East Gresham • Cascade Athletic Club
 Gresham • Cascade Athletic Club Portland • CentraState Fitness & Wellness Center • Club Fitness • ClubSport of
 Oregon • Courthouse Athletic Club Battle Creek • Courthouse Athletic Club Keizer • Courthouse Athletic Club Lan-
 caster • Courthouse Athletic Club South • Courthouse Athletic Club West • Dana's Body Zone • Dynamic Dimensions
 Moss Bluff • Dynamic Dimensions Sulphur • Expert Fitness Health Club • Extreme Fitness Dunfield Club • Exygon •
 Firehouse Gym • Fitness Factory Atlanta • Form & Fitness • Galter Lifecenter • Gettysburg Health & Fitness • Global
 Fitness Center Fitchburg • Global Fitness Center Leominster • Global Fitness Center Tyngsboro • Global Fitness Stow
 • Gold's Gym Chapel Hill • Gold's Gym Conyers • Gold's Gym Dewitt • Gold's Gym Eagle's Landing • Gold's Gym
 Elite • Gold's Gym Ellenwood • Gold's Gym Ellijay • Gold's Gym Eugene • Gold's Gym Hamilton Mill • Gold's Gym
 Hospital Drive • Gold's Gym Lawrenceville • Gold's Gym Lilburn • Gold's Gym Liverpool • Gold's Gym McDonough
 • Gold's Gym Newnan • Gold's Gym Norcross • Gold's Gym Regina • Gold's Gym Snellville • Gold's Gym Spring-
 field • Gold's Gym Suwanee • Gold's Gym West Cobb • Gold's Gym Worcester • Highland Park Hospital • Highline
 Athletic Club • Impact Sports & Fitness • In Shape Fitness Center Branford • In Shape Fitness Center North Haven •
 Kennedy Club Fitness Arroyo Grande • Kennedy Club Fitness Atascadero • Kennedy Club Fitness Paso Robles • Ken-
 nedy Club Fitness San Luis Obispo • Kent Women's Spa & Fitness Center • Ladies Fitness & Health • Ladies World
 Health & Fitness • Lady Wellness Fitness & Spa • Leader Health & Fitness • Matrix Fitness • Mawson Health & Fitness
 • Mid Town Athletic Club Willowbrook • Midtown Athletic Club Forest Grove • Mike Arteaga's Health & Fitness Cen-
 ters Highland • Mike Arteaga's Health & Fitness Centers Poughkeepsie • Miramont Lifestyle Fitness North • Miramont
 Lifestyle Fitness South • Mount Wachusett Community College • NCH Dr. John Briggs Wellness Center • NCH Whitaker
 Wellness Center • Nike Lance Armstrong Fitness Center • Peak Fitness Spartanburg Peak • Physiques Inc. • Power-
 house Gym Webster • Princeton Fitness and Wellness Center • Quantum Fitness • Riverside Health Club • RWJ Hamil-
 ton Center for Health and Fitness • RWJ Rahway Fitness & Wellness Center • Shapes Fitness Centre Pembina •
 Shapes Fitness Centre McPhillips • Shapes Fitness Centre Narin • Sims Health And Racquet • Spartanburg Athletic
 Club • Suburban Athletic Club • Superior Athletic Club • Superior Athletic Club II • The Edge • The Sports Center •
 Thoreau Club Of Concord • Transformations Fitness for Women • Women's Fitness Company • World Class Women Fitness &
 Nutrition • World Gym Fayetteville • World Gym Fitness Center • World Gym Highway 54 • World Gym Peachtree City •
 WOW! Brick • WOW! East Brunswick • WOW! Fitness Corvallis • WOW! Fitness Lebanon • WOW! Freehold •
 WOW! Middletown • WOW! North Brunswick • WOW! Ocean • Yang's Fitness Center • Yorktowne Racquet & Fitness Club



**These "elite" operators are driving their business
 through branded programming and producing
 record results for group visits and profitability.
 The BTS team has 30+ years experience to ensure
 your success. *And we guarantee it!***

CALL 1-800-729-7837

TO SEE IF YOUR CLUB QUALIFIES FOR OUR

ONE YEAR GUARANTEE!

What have you got to lose?





Ali Vincent
Winner, NBC's *The Biggest Loser* and
bodybugg user

The bodybugg®

The Most Accurate Weight Loss Device on the Market Today.

Apex and the bodybugg... What we can do for you!

- Give you great margins
- Provide the next level of service that health clubs need
- Increase client/member retention by giving better results
- Attract a completely different clientele
- Serve as a profit center with "two prongs" – programming and products
- Bullet proof your business in a challenging economy
- Help your club stand out from the rest

With over **\$1 Million in sales** last month, how much have you profited from?

Call for more information
1.800.656.2739 ext 4067

Visit us at Club Industry
October 16th – 18th in Chicago, IL
BOOTH #976

The bodybugg® as seen on
NBC's *The Biggest Loser*

powered by apex business solutions™!

bodybugg®
www.bodybugg.com

apex
www.myapex.com