

Norm Cates'

CLUB INSIDER

CELEBRATING 30+ YEARS OF TRUST

HEALTH & FITNESS ASSOCIATION



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CLUB INSIDER

CELEBRATING 30+ YEARS OF TRUST

The Health & Fitness Association Finishing 2024 Strong!

By: Justin Cates

Since the March 2024 announcement of *IHRSA* changing its name and rebranding to become the *Health & Fitness Association (HFA)*, thus redefining/focusing its Mission for this industry, the organization has been on an absolute roll! We have reported on numerous Association announcements and news items throughout the year since this occurred. But, the past month has been a whirlwind, and HFA will end 2024 as strong as ever, setting the stage for a grand 2025.

The purpose of this cover story is to make sure you are up to date on

everything going on at HFA, because it's a lot, and it's important! With an agent of change, **Liz Clark**, *HFA President and CEO*, at the helm, this was expected, and it has been fun to watch. So, here we go! Let's begin with *HFA Events*:

The Health & Fitness Association Renames its Event to The HFA Show, Launches Registration

The Health & Fitness Association (formerly *IHRSA*) has taken the next step in its evolution by rebranding its annual convention and trade show to *The HFA Show*. Registration for the event, scheduled

HEALTH & FITNESS ASSOCIATION

for **March 12 - 14, 2025**, at the *Mandalay Bay Resort in Las Vegas, Nevada*, is now open.

"Las Vegas is an ideal place to kick off the new brand and focus of *The HFA Show*," said *Health & Fitness Association President & CEO, Liz Clark*. "With near perfect year-round weather, a thriving indoor and outdoor exercise scene, and as

a thriving hub of sports, technology, fitness and health activity, it is the ideal location to bring this industry together for the unique education and connections for which our flagship event is known."

The theme for this year's event is, "*Navigating a New Era of Global Wellness*." It speaks to not only the rebranding of the (See *HFA Page 10*)

Crunch Franchise Brings Facility to Apollo Beach, Florida; Announces Renovations at Two Facilities in Fort Myers

APOLLO BEACH, FL - Crunch Franchise announces the opening of *Crunch Apollo Beach* in Apollo Beach, Florida. The \$5 million, 30,000 square-foot state-of-the-art fitness facility is located in the center of family-friendly neighborhoods and near shopping, dining, schools and the Waterset planned community. *Crunch Apollo Beach* will be owned by *CR Fitness Holdings LLC*.

Crunch Apollo Beach will make serious exercise fun, offering an extensive selection of premier cardio equipment, top-quality strength training equipment, a dedicated group fitness studio, Ride cycling classes, a functional HIITZONE training area, HydroMassage beds, spacious locker rooms, Hot Yoga and more.

"We are looking forward to bringing the exciting and inclusive Crunch workout



experience to the community surrounding our newest location in Apollo Beach," said *CR Fitness CEO, Tony Scrimale*. "With top-quality equipment, amazing group fitness classes and personal training, there is something for everyone at an unbeatable value."

(See *Crunch Page 6*)

Workout Anytime's Personal Trainer Education Approved by NASM and AFAA

ATLANTA, GA - *Workout Anytime*, the 24/7 fitness concept with over 200 units across the U.S., announces that its Personal Trainer Education has received approval from the *National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM)* and the *Athletics and Fitness Association of America (AFAA)*.

The NASM and AFAA approval applies to the following live training academies offered by *Workout Anytime*:

- One Day Live Coaches Academy;
- Two Day PPT Academy;
- Two Day Performance Leadership Academy.

Greg Maurer, *Vice President of Fitness and Education at Workout Anytime*, emphasized the significance of this achievement: "It allows us to provide



those continuing education credits for our trainers --our coaches-- who go through our education process, but more importantly, it allows us to do that externally as well. Like everyone else, we need talented, driven individuals to join our team. And, we're growing, so we constantly need to attract them."

Maurer also highlighted the importance of this approval in validating the value of *Workout Anytime's* educational content: "It adds a level of validation to (See *Workout Anytime Page 6*)

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Norm's Notes

■ **Hello Everybody!** This is your **Club Insider Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993** checking in with our **370th monthly edition of this 31+ year running club business publication** I refer to as: **A Labor of Love!** I'm very thankful that you've tuned in again for this iteration of **Norm's Notes**, as I proceed on my keyboard with my longtime habit of "Telling-It-Like-It-Is!" I'm really happy that you're reading this edition, and I want to **THANK YOU ALL** for sticking with us every month! As usual, we have a bunch of health and fitness club business news, **so please read on!**

■ **Is AMERICA a GREAT COUNTRY, or WHAT!? Hm... hmm... hmm!** And, as usual, let me start these **Norm's Notes** with my normal monthly salutation to you all: **GOD BLESS AMERICA and GOD BLESS YOU, YOUR FAMILY and YOUR BUSINESS!!!**

■ I'm writing this on *Tuesday, October 1st*, which just happens to be **former PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER'S 100th Birthday!** Regardless of whether you're a Republican, a Democrat or an Independent with respect to your political leanings, Jimmy Carter is someone **ALL OF US**

CAN BE PROUD OF! Imagine living to be 100 years old with the life history he has accrued!!! Without a doubt, he is one of the most extraordinary human beings who has ever lived! **EVER! TO PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER, I SAY: HAPPY 100th BIRTHDAY!!!**

■ Related to the previous note, where I said, "Regardless of whether you're a Republican, a Democrat or an Independent with respect to your political leanings," let me add: **VOTE!!!** On November 5, not only do you have the **RIGHT to VOTE**, but it is your **DUTY to VOTE. MAY GOD BLESS AMERICA in this election year.**

■ **Here's a Tip of my Black Hat to the great folks at Crunch Fitness, who have opened their doors to members and non-members impacted by Hurricane Milton!** Much appreciation to the folks at *Athletech News* for sharing that story. **THANKS to ALL involved!**

■ Speaking of *Hurricane Milton*. I am happy to report that my *Son*, and *C.I. Publisher, JUSTIN CATES*, reported no damage at his *Clermont, Florida* home. Though on the far west-side of *Orlando*, and combined

with his property being a new build home in 2019, he was inland enough to avoid any damage. The power even stayed on thanks to the neighborhood's buried powerlines and infrastructure improvements on the main highway leading to his neighborhood! **For any of you affected by Helene or Milton, we hope you are doing okay.** We welcome any stories you want to share. Email **Norm Cates** at **Norm@clubinsideronline.com**.

■ **UFC GYM and UFC FIT** joined the fight against bullying with seminars and self-defense classes for *National Bullying Awareness Month*. All **UFC GYM** and **UFC FIT** locations across the country are hosting empowering events designed to educate and equip communities with the tools to fight against bullying in all its forms on Saturday, October 26. The seminars will provide a comprehensive overview of various forms of bullying, including verbal, physical and cyber, while offering actionable guidance on how to recognize these behaviors and intervene effectively. Additionally, participants will receive hands-on self-defense training from **UFC GYM** trainers, featuring practical demonstrations that not only enhance personal safety but also build



Norm Cates

confidence and resilience. "Bullying affects individuals, families and communities in profound ways, often in ways that go unseen," said **ADAM SEDLACK, CEO of UFC GYM**. "Our goal for these seminars is to empower individuals to recognize and confront bullying head-on, fostering safer and more inclusive communities where everyone can thrive." **Good On Ya, UFC!!!**

(See *Norm's Notes* Page 7)

About Club Insider

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PUBLISHER (p): (863) 999 - 2677
Justin Cates (e): Justin@clubinsideronline.com

FOUNDER & TRIBAL LEADER SINCE 1993 (p): (770) 635 - 7578
Norm Cates, Jr. (e): Norm@clubinsideronline.com

CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS - Bruce Carter, Cathy Spencer Browning, Chris Stevenson, Frank Guengerich, Gary Polic, Herb Lipsman, Jeffrey Pinkerton, Jim Thomas, Nancy Trent, Paul Bosley, Rick Caro, Sara Kooperman, JD, and Thomas Plummer

DISTRIBUTION - Club Insider Online (www.clubinsideronline.com)

Proudly Published in The United States of America



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Thanks and Appreciation

At *Club Insider*, we are excited to be in our **31st Year** of this home-based health and fitness club trade publication! The thought that this publication was *founded to serve an industry I truly love*, and so that *I could become a Mister Mom for my son, Justin*, is still *intriguing and amazing* to us. So, I wish to extend my most sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to everyone who has made this amazing 30+ year run possible.

Very sincere *Thanks and Appreciation* go to **Rick Caro**, the late **Dr. Gerry Faust** and the **Faust Executive Roundtable #1** for helping me decide in 1993 what my home-based business would be. *Thanks and Appreciation* to my long-time friends, **Ron Hudspeth** and **Cathy Miller**, formerly of **Atlanta's Hudspeth Report** for the tremendous assistance they provided. *Thanks and Appreciation* to all of the folks at **Walton Press** in Monroe, Georgia. They did an absolutely excellent job for us all these years and printed every one of our monthly printed editions! And, of course, *Thanks and Appreciation* to the **United States Postal Service** for sending those editions to our readers!

Now, as we have gone all digital, *Thanks and Appreciation* to all of our **READERS**. Sincere *Thanks and Appreciation* to our **Club Insider Advertisers**, past and present, for their kind and dedicated support of this publication. *Thanks and Appreciation* to all of our **Club Insider Contributing Authors**, past and present. *Thanks and Appreciation* to the **Health & Fitness Association** for all it does for all of us. And, sincere *Thanks and Appreciation* to my son, **Justin**, our *Publisher*, who is a truly great business partner. You name it and Justin does it each and every month!

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

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

Norm Cates, Jr.



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"Insider Speaks"

Bad Health Club Signs - Part II

By: Mike Manning

Imagine taking time out of your weekend to visit a health club that you have heard good things about. As you approach the front door to go in, talk to a manager, take a tour and maybe join the club, you see this sign on the door (See **Photo Right**).

As a potential new member, what are your first thoughts? My first thoughts include:

1. What if a parent with two toddlers is following me into the club?
2. What if a veteran with an artificial leg is following me into the club?
3. What if an older person who parked in a handicap spot and is struggling to get to the door is following me into the club?
4. What if I hold the door open for my significant other who is walking into the club with me?

In all four cases, I'm holding the door open, attempted fines be damned. However, I'm also thinking to myself that this might be one of the two or three if not *THE* worst sign I've seen in 35 years of working out in more health clubs than I can count, and I've seen a lot of bad signs.



Another Bad Health Club Sign

What could the operator of this club have been thinking when he came up with this policy? Is this operator as big of an a-hole as I'm imagining him to be as I'm holding the door open for whomever is coming in behind me? This sign is so bad that it reduces the chance I will join the club, and it is a horrible first impression of this club I've otherwise heard good things about.

Thankfully, the purpose of this sign is not what it first seems. This club is staffed and open to all members 111 hours a week, and members have the option to pay a bit extra for a premium membership that allows access to the club during the 57

hours each week it is not staffed, which is a sound idea that increases dues revenue without adding payroll expense. Premium members scan in at the front door during unstaffed hours, and the sign is intended to serve as a warning to those premium members not to sneak guests or help non-premium members into the club during the 57 unstaffed hours. The idea behind the sign is sound, but the execution of the idea is laughably bad. The owner of the club, who by all accounts is a decent human, would almost certainly hold the door open during staffed hours for anyone who was following him into the club and would not fine anyone else for doing so.

How we say or write things matters, and my draft rewrite of this sign would be something like:

Premium Members: Do not help anyone get into the club during non-staffed hours. We will assume they are your guests and charge you a \$50 fee per guest.

Is there someone in your company who feels comfortable pointing out bad signs or other obvious operational issues to you? We all have blind spots, and the owner of the club with this sign on the front door owns more than five clubs, thus obviously, cannot spend all day every day in each of his clubs. Getting honest



Mike Manning

feedback from someone is important, and if you own multiple locations, who is coming up with signs posted inside your clubs? Young managers who are still learning the business can sometimes come up with some *interesting* signs that might be doing more harm than good attached to your walls.

(Mike Manning has been a CFO, consultant and Board Member in the health and fitness club industry since 2006 and works with club owners and private equity groups who invest in fitness. Manning can be reached at manning@strategicadvice.com.)

...Crunch

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FORT MYERS, FL - Crunch Franchise announces \$5 million in upgrades and renovations to the state-of-the-art fitness facilities, *Crunch Six Mile* and *Crunch Boy Scout* in Fort Myers, Florida, will begin in phases this fall. Operated by Crunch Fitness franchisee, *CR Fitness Holdings, LLC*, *Crunch Six Mile* and *Crunch Boy Scout* are located in the former *New York Sports Club* locations, featuring leading fitness offerings for residents of Fort Myers.

Fusing fitness with entertainment to make serious fitness fun, *Crunch Six Mile* and *Crunch Boy Scout* will offer top-quality cardio and strength training equipment, personal training, a dedicated group fitness studio, Ride cycling classes, a functional HIITZONE training area with indoor turf, tanning, HydroMassage beds, Hot Yoga and more.

Tony Scrimale, CEO of *CR Fitness Holdings, LLC*, said, "We are thrilled with the opportunity to invest in these locations and transform them into Crunch gyms. Members will have access to high-quality equipment, a variety of unique fitness classes and exceptional trainers.

We are ecstatic to continue our vision of growth and success for the Crunch brand and CR Fitness."

CR Fitness Holdings, LLC is operated by **Vince Julien**, **Geoff Dyer**, **Tony Scrimale** and **Jeff Dotson**, who combined have more than 150 years of experience in the fitness industry. The CR Fitness team currently operates 69 Crunch Fitness locations in Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Texas and Tennessee, with plans to open 6 more locations in 2024 and a goal of operating 100 clubs by 2026.

Crunch Fitness ranked #1 in the fitness category and #29 overall in the annual *Entrepreneur Franchise 500*, the

world's most comprehensive franchise ranking. Crunch Fitness continues to expand nationwide and push the bar with innovative offerings for its members.

Crunch is expanding its team in Apollo Beach and Fort Myers and is looking for individuals who are eager to help their community experience fitness, wellness, relaxation, and recovery. Crunch believes in not only being the best place to work out, but also the best place to work. Interested applicants can apply today at crunch.co/jobs.

Check out the **Crunch Ad** on **Page #2**.

...Workout Anytime

continued from page 3

what you're doing. You're having a third party, which is one of the largest PT education providers out there, validate that your content is valuable and worthwhile for their hundreds of thousands of trainers."

In addition to benefiting Workout

Anytime's current trainers, this approval also positions the brand as an attractive destination for trainers seeking professional development. "With what we've put together in those three courses, you would more than fulfill your entire education requirements to maintain your current NASM status for another two years," Maurer said.

This milestone also aligns with

Workout Anytime's overall goals. "Our mission is to provide a friendly, convenient, life-changing journey with passion," Maurer said. "And, it actually starts with our team. For trainers, education is absolutely critical, and they typically love opportunities to get more education."

By offering these NASM and AFAA-approved academies, Workout Anytime

demonstrates its ongoing commitment to supporting the growth and success of personal trainers within the industry. Trainers from across the country can now attend these live training academies and earn valuable CECs required to maintain their NASM and AFAA approvals.

Check out the **Workout Anytime Ad** on **Page #20**.

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■ **CHRIS STEVENSON**, one of our excellent *C.I. Contributing Authors*, has recommended a book entitled: *The POWER of REGRET... How Looking Backward Brings Us Forward*, by **DANIEL H. PINK**. This book is a New York Times Best Seller, and here's what Chris had to say about the author: "Daniel Pink is one of my favorite authors, known for his ability to dig into the science of human behavior and make it accessible. Pink has consistently provided profound insights into motivation, work and the human experience from his widely acclaimed books like *Drive*, *To Sell is Human*, and *When*. His latest, *The Power of Regret*, explores a topic we all experience but often try to avoid: *Regret*. Far from being a negative emotion to suppress, Pink argues that regret, when appropriately used, can be a powerful force for growth and change. **Thank you Chris!**

■ Folks, here's something that may... No... something that **SHOULD BE** of interest to you! This **Norm's Note** is about **LEE SALZ**, the *Best-selling Author* of *Advance Masterclass to Engage Executives and Win Deals*. The intro reads:

Most salespeople feel that selling has never been more challenging than it

is today. Competition is brutal, it's difficult to differentiate, and reaching executives feels nearly impossible. But, you've got a revenue target to hit, so you need to elevate your sales game! Lee Salz is going to help you do just that in this Masterclass. You are invited to join the bestselling author of *Sales Differentiation and Sell Different!* for a masterclass on selling to the C-suite. You'll learn strategies and tactics you can immediately implement to *win more deals at the prices you want*. During this program, Lee will share:

■ The sales tool every salesperson must have, and it doesn't cost a single penny;

■ How to use AI to develop your deal game plan;

■ How to leverage *Empathetic Expertise* to engage emotion in every step of the sales process and keep your deal energized;

■ Why salespeople get stuck with gatekeepers and how to avoid a deal-killing mistake;

■ A creative prospecting strategy designed to engage key decision makers so they want to hear what you have to say;

■ How to put together a *winning first-*

meeting strategy that sparks interest in working with you;

■ An effective strategy to navigate this brutal deal obstacle: *"We're happy with our current provider,"*

■ What 99.999% of salespeople don't do for C-Suite, but they should;

■ And much, much more!

Be prepared to laugh while you learn with Lee. This is a great program to invite your sales team to participate with you. To register now, call Lee and his Team at **(866) 904 - 9666**.

■ Speaking of regret, here's a disgusting report out of Lubbock, Texas: *Thirteen cheerleaders suffered first- and second-degree burns after their coach forced them to do bear crawls and crab walks around an outdoor track, reportedly measuring over 125 degrees!* The air temperature in Lubbock that day was 95 degrees! The coach and teacher is now on leave while the school district looks into the situation. The middle schoolers claimed that the coach ordered them around the hot track as a punishment after they did a cheer that the coach did not want them to do at a football game. The coach claimed that, by

deviating from the planned cheer, the team was being disrespectful.

Parents were not notified of their students' injuries despite many of the girls going to see the school nurse after practice. It is reported that one girl was even taken to the *University Medical Center* burn unit by her parents following the incident.

According to *KAMC TV*, one parent said, "It was malicious. It was intentional," as she described her daughter's account of the practice and alleged threats the coach made about the girl's future cheering careers. Many parents are hoping for criminal charges against the coach. One cheerleader, whose name has not been included in reporting said, "We told her our hands are burning, and she said she didn't care, and she made us go back down on the track."

According to newspaper *Everything Lubbock News*, the school district released a statement saying, "We are heartbroken over these events, as the safety and wellbeing of our students is our top priority. This type of incident does not reflect the standards or values of *Lubbock ISD* and *Evans Middle School*. We are addressing this matter with the utmost urgency and are fully committed to investigating the circumstances surrounding the incident. The teacher involved has been placed on

(See **Norm's Notes** Page 8)

Uncovering New Terrain in the Ever-Evolving Fitness World

By: **Nancy Trent**

FIT Expo 2024 once again proved itself as a premier event for fitness enthusiasts, industry professionals and wellness innovators. This year's event was packed with the latest advancements in women's athletic wear, energy drinks, snacks and even breakthroughs in pet health. Whether you're a fitness newbie or a seasoned athlete, FIT Expo had something for everyone, from interactive workouts and live demonstrations to expert-led seminars and unmatched networking opportunities. Competitions in every corner of the expo highlighted the sheer diversity of fitness paths one can take, reflecting the boundless options in this ever-growing industry.

Groundbreaking trends emerged, spanning nutrition, exercise and holistic wellbeing, all with the same goal: To elevate health, performance and lifestyle to new heights. Here's a look at some of the standout brands from the event that are shaping the future of fitness and wellness.

Diversifying Audiences

For women by women, *Vital Force* is redefining athletic apparel. Designed to enhance every lift, rep and stride, *Vital Force* is not just about fitness clothing, it's about empowerment. Founded by a powerlifting champion and mother, the brand celebrates inclusivity and body positivity, offering performance wear that's as strong and resilient as the women wearing it. It's a movement dedicated to inspiring strength and confidence, making every woman feel powerful on her fitness journey.

Elevating leg day is *Squat Wedgiez*, an innovative tool designed to reduce joint pain and back strain while building knee strength, flexibility and

muscle mass. It even comes with a six-week training program, motivating users to strengthen their legs for long-term health. With *Squat Wedgiez*, leg workouts become a key to living a longer, stronger life.

Clean, Convenient and Natural Energy Drinks

When it comes to clean energy, *VUUM* is leading the charge with the first-ever sparkling plant protein drink. This light, fruity beverage delivers clean caffeine without the crash and is packed with natural ingredients, minerals, vitamins and zero artificial sweeteners. Not only is it vegan, but it's also gentle on the stomach, helping to nourish the body and elevate your energy levels all day long.

Sol-ti is another player in the functional wellness shot space. Packaged in eco-friendly glass bottles, *Sol-ti* delivers superfoods in high doses, designed to boost immunity and vitality. It's a quick and convenient way to hydrate and replenish nutrients throughout the day.

If you're seeking clean sports energy, *Don't Quit* delivers with products that focus on hydration, energy and protein, all powered by natural ingredients and clean caffeine. These drinks are perfect for health-conscious consumers looking for simple, transparent labels and are made with coconut water for extra hydration.

Energy Snacking 2.0

Snacking just got a boost with *Protein Puck*, a plant-based energy bar made with real, ethically-sourced ingredients. With no processed foods, protein powders or isolates, *Protein Puck* is designed to fuel performance while tasting delicious. These bars are all about delivering clean energy that sustains you

throughout your day.

Tal's Mediterranean brings the rich flavors of sesame tahini to your kitchen with clean, family recipes made from naturally harvested ingredients. Their zero-waste packaging reflects their commitment to sustainability, while their products invite you to enjoy Mediterranean meals with minimal fuss.

Innovations in Pet Health

Your pets deserve the best, and *Canine Caviar Pet Foods* delivers with a holistic, alkaline diet that's completely allergen-free. Sourced from free-range animals and free from harmful chemicals and preservatives, *Canine Caviar's* products help to slow the aging process, reduce cellular degeneration and keep pets strong and vibrant.

Meanwhile, *Wag Brands* has made a name for itself with its award-winning pet products, including their *dogPACER treadmills*, the best-rated dog treadmill on the market today with real results. It keeps your dog active and enhances their life at every stage to avoid debilitating health issues such as obesity, myalgia, muscle weakness, etc., and comes in a variety to fit a dog of any size. With a focus on product innovation, branding and global buzz, *Wag Brands* continues to create products that meet the needs of pets while introducing cutting-edge innovations into the marketplace.

The Future of Fitness

As FIT Expo 2024 came to a close, it left a lasting impression of the exciting future ahead for the fitness industry. With inclusivity, innovation and diversity at the forefront, the event showcased the limitless possibilities that await in fitness and



Nancy Trent

wellness. The future of fitness is brighter, healthier and more exciting than ever before. We can't wait to see how these brands will continue to push boundaries and redefine what's possible in the world of health and wellness.

(Nancy Trent is a writer and speaker, a lifelong wellness activist, a globe-trotting trend watcher and the Founder and President of *Trent & Company*, a leading wellness PR firm. *Trent & Company*, which launched many health and beauty brands, grew out of Nancy's personal and passionate commitment to helping people live longer and healthier lives. A former journalist for *New York Magazine*, Nancy has written seven books on healthy lifestyles, serves on the editorial boards of several magazines and travels around the world speaking at conferences and trade shows on trends in the marketplace. She is a recognized expert in PR with more than 30 years of experience creating and managing highly successful campaigns. Learn more at www.trentandcompany.com or contact Nancy at nancy@trentandcompany.com.)

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administrative leave pending the outcome of this investigation."

Lubbock ISD has kept the name of the coach anonymous at this time until they are able to determine exactly what happened during last week's practice.

■ **FAU Offers Free Football Tickets to Hurricane Victims!** The *Florida Atlantic University Owls (FAU)* offered free football tickets to any Florida resident affected by *Hurricane Helene* or *Hurricane Milton*. When the Owls took the field against the *University of North Texas*, they celebrated the *Tri-County Appreciation Day* by filling the stadium with impacted families from Palm Beach, Dade and Broward counties. Families were given four tickets to take in the game, and FAU brought smiles and

sunshine to communities that have been experiencing nothing but cloudy days the past few weeks. While a football game couldn't fix their water-logged homes or communities, it could be a first step back toward normalcy for many. This game also marked a return to normal for FAU, as it shut down all campus operations during *Hurricane Helene* just a few weeks prior. According to *FAU News*, **BRIAN WHITE**, *Vice President and Director of Athletics* at FAU, said, "We extend our deepest condolences to those impacted this week by the devastating weather in our state. Our priority has always been to give back to the communities that mean so much to us and we hope that Saturday's game provides a few hours of normalcy for those impacted." Fans in attendance were encouraged to donate to the *Florida Disaster Fund* to continue to help fund the emergency response following these two

hurricanes. The fund goes toward helping local communities recover, no matter what they've lost after a storm. **Credit, Thanks and Great Appreciation** goes to my friend, **PETE BROWN**, and his great *Athletic Business Magazine* for this news item.

■ **JUSTIN and I want to THANK YOU for reading Club Insider! We appreciate you being with us. And, in particular, WE VERY SINCERELY APPRECIATE ANY and ALL SUPPORT OF OUR ESTEEMED Club Insider ADVERTISERS! PLEASE DO BUSINESS WITH THEM and WHEN YOU DO, PLEASE TELL 'EM Club Insider SENT YOU! THANK YOU ALL!**

■ **God bless our troops, airmen and sailors worldwide and keep them safe. Thank you, Congratulations and Welcome Home to all of our troops who have served around the world. God**

bless America's Policemen and women and Firemen and women; keep them safe. Finally, God bless you, your family, your club(s) and your members. God Bless America! Laus Deo!

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 50-year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. He is the Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993 of *Club Insider*, now in its 31st year of monthly publication. In 1981, he was *IHRSA's* First President, and a Co-Founder of the Association with Rick Caro and five others. In 2001, he was honored by *IHRSA* with its *DALE DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award*, one of its highest honors. And, in 2017, he was honored with *Club Industry's* Lifetime Achievement Award. You can reach Norm by phone at 770-635-7578 or email at Norm@clubinsideronline.com.)



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venmo

...HFA

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event but also the evolution of the health and fitness industry to embrace the mental as well as physical benefits of exercise through membership in brick and mortar fitness facilities.

To help club and studio operators gain insights into this new era, The HFA Show will feature more than 150 experts, from both within and outside of the industry, to lead sessions in eight tracks: staff management, sales and marketing, research and advocacy, technology and operations, programming, retention and experience, leadership and career growth and industry partners. The education sessions will include lectures, panels, roundtables and other interactive experiences for the best learning opportunities that will help businesses thrive. Continuing education credits will be available.

The event will include a kick-off party, keynotes, the popular **Financial Panel by Rick Caro**, the international reception and international forums. The trade show will be open March 13 - 14, 2025. More than 400 exhibitors are expected, with booth selection is under way, and the list of 2025 exhibitors will be made available soon.

The full education agenda, keynotes, and new events will be released on October 25. HFA members who register by November 30 can get free trade show access, as well as the lowest pricing on the conference program.

"The decision on the new name came after an extensive review and feedback process with rebranding experts, members, supplier partners, exhibitors, and association leaders," HFA President & CEO Liz Clark said. "We wanted to continue to emphasize the connection between the association's mission to benefit members, their employees, and the industry as a whole, with the long proven value of our convention to deliver education, networking, and professional development opportunities all under one roof."

Go to healthandfitness.org/show to register today.

HFA's European Congress Returns, Exploring the Future of Fitness

The 21st European Congress, powered by the Health & Fitness Association, is days away, and excitement continues to build for this year's educational segments, which feature fresh voices and new topics.

This annual event, hosted October 21 - 23 in Barcelona, Spain, is designed to provide industry insight for stakeholders and companies alike at the intersection of fitness, health and wellness through a sponsor marketplace, networking, keynote speakers, panels, educational sessions and club tours.



EUROPEAN CONGRESS
Powered by the Health & Fitness Association

Education, in addition to *Advocacy* and *Research*, is one of HFA's three guiding pillars. The European Congress is designed to educate by offering attendees opportunities to explore industry innovation and engage with thought-provoking commentary on best practices and trends shaping the industry.

"The initiative this year was to provide fresh faces and conversation on hard-hitting topics, including global franchising, active aging and AI for business," said **Alison Giannaras**, HFA's Associate Vice President of International Development and Operations. "We're excited to be offering panels with C-suite participants and an overall roster that is a nice representation of Europe, with folks from a diversity of countries and within various niches of the industry."

Such representation includes **Bernardo Álvarez Merino**, newly appointed Minister of Sports for the Generalitat of Catalonia, and **Martin Seibold**, CEO of LifeFit Group, and non-executive Director of the Les Mills International Board.

On October 24, attendees of the upcoming Congress can participate in exclusive visits to four standout fitness centers, but they must register in advance for the tours. Each facility represents a unique approach to health and wellness:

■ **Marítim by Claror** is owned by a private non-profit Catalan organization with four municipal sports facilities traditionally focused on family-oriented services. With a €850,000 investment, it has expanded its services to include a spa, new strength-

training spaces, a beachfront location with outdoor activities by the sea and more.

■ **VivaGym** is a leading low-priced fitness chain with over 120 clubs and approximately 320,000 members across Spain and Portugal. With new acquisitions, this chain is positioned for continued rapid growth. During the Congress, participants will learn how this company is leveraging big data to predict customer churn, providing deeper insights into client retention strategies.

■ **Metropolitan** is a premium gym chain with 20 locations. Its newest location includes a fully equipped gym, spa, beauty center, coworking area, café-restaurant, children's play area and outdoor training zone. Metropolitan is known for its lifestyle concept, offering a holistic approach to health, leisure and wellbeing.

■ **Inner Flow Studio** is a boutique fitness center that opened in 2023, situated in an iconic beachfront building offering expansive sports areas and a luxurious spa with state-of-the-art locker rooms. The center boasts several dedicated spaces, such as "The Gym" with cutting-edge equipment and "The Bubble," a meditation sanctuary.

For further program details, visit healthandfitness.org/congress.

IHRSA Fitness Brasil Rebrands to Fitness Brasil Expo

IHRSA Fitness Brasil is being



rebranded as *Fitness Brasil Expo*, organizers of the event announced during this year's show at the Transamérica Expo in São Paulo, Brazil. The new name will take effect with the 2025 show, which is set for August 28 - 30, 2025, in São Paulo. The expo is a partnership with the Health & Fitness Association (HFA), which rebranded in March from IHRSA.

Alison Giannaras, HFA Associate Vice President of International Development and Operations, and **Maria Gonzalez**, HFA Board Member, offered opening remarks to the attendees.

"We are excited and honored to be here with you to celebrate our 25-year partnership with Fitness Brasil, and even more importantly, to look forward to the next 25 years," Giannaras said in her opening remarks. "Our relationship with Fitness Brasil is stronger than ever, and Fitness Brasil is one of our closest partners."

Gonzalez underscored those sentiments, stating, "This event is a testament to the strength and value of the health and fitness industry in Brazil."

This year's event attracted 16,000 visitors, a 15% increase from last year. The event included 190 speakers and 121 exhibitors, producing 167 hours of content over the three-day show.

"The fair was bigger, more beautiful and more dynamic than ever, clearly showing visitor satisfaction with the variety and range of products and services available," said **Gustavo Almeida**, Executive Director of Fitness Brasil.

In the rebrand announcement, Fitness Brasil shared that even though the event's name has changed, its mission continues to be to provide a place where the world of fitness connects, learns and evolves.

"It was an absolute honor to attend Fitness Brasil's 25th anniversary event, which was not only impeccably organized but also radiated the warmth and spirit of the Brazilian people," Gonzalez said. "The teamwork behind the scenes was truly remarkable, and it showed in every aspect... The energy and passion shared by everyone present left me feeling inspired and deeply connected to this incredible industry."

HFA and Fitness Brasil are working together on *Missão Fitness Brasil*, which will be a group tour to the HFA Show, March 12 - 14, 2025, in Las Vegas, Nevada. The tour will include a travel agent to help with flights, visits to some of Las Vegas' best health clubs and studios and exclusive learning opportunities for the Fitness Brasil Group.

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HFA Ribbon Cutting at IHRSA 2024

IHRSA is now the HEALTH & FITNESS ASSOCIATION

After two years of discussion and planning, IHRSA has made the next move in our evolution—we've rebranded as the Health & Fitness Association!

Our new name more readily reflects the amazing community of health and fitness leaders that we represent worldwide.

We will be transitioning to the new name during the next several months, so watch our website as we transition our url, social media platforms, newsletters, and more.

healthandfitness.org



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Next, we move on to *HFA Research and Advocacy* with these important announcements:

Health & Fitness Association Expands Research Arm with Addition of VP of Research

The Health & Fitness Association announces that **Anton Severin** has joined the Association as *Vice President of Research*. He will be based in Washington, D.C.

In this newly created position, Severin will conceive and direct a robust series of economic, data and market intelligence products designed to benefit fitness facilities and supplier partners. He will also lead education sessions, webinars and custom projects, as well as serve as a research spokesperson to the media, at public events and with industry partners and coalitions.

Liz Clark, *President and CEO of HFA*, commented: "HFA's core pillars are advocacy, education and research, and the work Anton will provide for our members, staff and the industry at large will help us take the Association to the next level of service, cutting-edge analysis, and insight. Anton's education and early career experience in Europe will also help support our global membership and international efforts with valuable perspectives and accelerate our launch of a host of new data and research-oriented products and services."

"Data and products led by Anton will help our industry members better understand the marketplace, share insights with partners, serve customers and support industry advocacy programs, and most importantly, help us continue to be the leading voice about the positive effects of exercise on physical and mental health and our industry's role in improving individual and public health," Clark added.

Severin said: "I look forward to bringing my international background and association research expertise to HFA

and its members. Having spent time in the Swedish military, I know well the importance of physical and mental health, and as an avid cyclist and athlete, I am excited to merge my passion with my profession and support an industry working to improve lives."

Most recently, Severin served as *Director of Research for the American Gaming Association*, a national trade association representing the \$329 billion U.S. casino gaming industry. In this role, Severin built a track record of advancing the industry's strategic goals through data-driven insights, tackling key issues such as consumer perceptions, economic trends, taxation, sports betting, responsible gaming and regulatory challenges.

U.S. Fitness Facility Membership Reaches Historic High

As more Americans prioritize their health and wellness, U.S. fitness facilities reached a record 72.9 million members in 2023, representing 23.7% of the U.S. population aged six and older, according to new data from the Health & Fitness Association (HFA). These findings are detailed in the *2024 U.S. Health & Fitness Consumer Report*, which outlines trends in membership growth, participation, and emerging opportunities for the industry.

The number of fitness facility members increased 5.8% year-over-year, marking the highest annual growth rate since 2017. Growth was strong across all facility types, with fitness-only gyms, multipurpose centers and boutique studios all seeing gains. Additionally, the total number of facility and studio users, including both members and non-members, rose by 9.7% year-over-year, reaching 90.7 million.

"Last year's robust growth underscores the increasing demand for fitness services nationwide," said *HFA President & CEO, Liz Clark*. "As more Americans recognize the benefits of fitness for both physical and mental health, our industry continues to play a vital role in promoting healthier lifestyles across the country."

Beyond membership growth, fitness facility attendance increased for

a third consecutive year. The average member visited a facility 81 times in 2023, up from 78 visits in 2022 and 72 visits in 2021. Although attendance has risen steadily, it remains below 2019, when members averaged 119 visits. Download the report at healthandfitness.org.

The Health & Fitness Association Releases 2024 State Advocacy Report

At a recent Health & Fitness Association strategy meeting, the HFA staff reconfirmed its Mission to inform members and the broader industry about policy issues that affect them and the HFA advocacy team's efforts to prevent legislative harm to the industry. HFA's advocacy efforts have continued to grow since the world's last crisis because threats to the industry are omnipresent, and the future is unpredictable.

During the past year, HFA secured 48 state legislative wins, safeguarding businesses from costly regulatory burdens. Those efforts are detailed in the Association's *2024 State Advocacy Report: Empowering the Industry Through Strategic Engagement*, which includes the issues being tracked, the reasons behind stances on each issue, and why wins continued to be racked for the industry.

The State of the States:

As much as 70% of HFA's advocacy focus is on protecting and promoting the industry at the State level. Because legislation is easier to introduce and pass on the State level and tends to stay under the radar, State Houses are the incubators of many policy ideas that eventually find their way to the U.S. Congress.

Here at the HFA, nothing stays under the radar. We're on it. While we continue to build a foundation in D.C. for a strong future of engagement and positioning of the industry, the State work is often how we impact the industry's bottom line.

In 2024, the HFA tracked more than 1,000 bills in 20 states and reviewed each to determine if these bills impacted

the industry positively or negatively. Once we made that determination, we mobilized our grassroots supporters and directly engaged with lawmakers, sometimes with an HFA member(s) who owned a business in the region. In 2024, we met with more than 100 state lawmakers. In many of these meetings, *HFA Manager of Government Affairs, Charles Regnante*, represented the Association, but we also worked with State lobbyists and other industry allies to assist in our outreach.

The top issues we dealt with were (and likely will continue to be): auto-renew, click-to-cancel, price transparency, data privacy protections, cashless retail bans, sales tax on memberships and Liability waivers.

In our report, we explain why these issues are so important to the industry and the reasons we oppose these bills all-out or work with lawmakers to modify the legislation.

Stressing the Positive:

It's not always about tackling harmful legislation. Promoting policies and laws that increase safety, service and access to facilities and fitness services is also part of our advocacy mandate.

In 2024, the HFA supported legislation that addressed AED liability protections, fitness facility subsidies and tax credits for military personnel who are members of fitness facilities. In Pennsylvania, a bill we supported offered a \$600 credit for National Guardsman, reservists and active military personnel to use at the fitness facility of their choice. The bill passed, and others are being proposed in more states.

The HFA is also proactive in the consumer protection space. Legislation that the HFA opposes may be well-intentioned, but once the practical realities on the ground are considered, these bills fall short and may actually harm the consumer. For instance, "click-to-cancel" may sound good in theory, but without considering how such a policy is carried out in today's complex digital processing world and other practicalities, these proposed laws end up
(See *HFA* Page 13)



Liz Clark



Anton Severin



2024 Consumer Report



2024 Advocacy Report

FITNESS FACILITIES



LIABILITY
PROPERTY
WORKERS
COMPENSATION
SURETY BONDS

THE PROTECTION YOU NEED

TAILORED FOR YOUR FITNESS BUSINESS



SPORTS & FITNESS
INSURANCE CORPORATION

sportsfitness.com

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not just harming businesses but also the customers they serve.

Next year, we will provide more resources and communications around proactive advocacy. We also plan to update state regulations for fitness facilities to ensure clarity, certainty and uniformity around the country in an effort to protect companies that expand across state lines and sometimes face unexpected burdens and costs.

Stay Informed and Involved:

Although the 2024 State Advocacy Report covers our U.S. advocacy efforts, the HFA is fully committed to its global advocacy mission. We know that the policies we address in U.S. statehouses will eventually or have already been introduced in other countries. That's why this report and virtually all of our advocacy work in the U.S. has relevance to our global members.

This brings up an important part of successful advocacy for any trade association. The HFA policy team can't do it alone. Our members must be involved and support our advocacy cause. At the HFA, we are fortunate to have so many of our members step up and play important roles in our advocacy efforts. The 15 industry

leaders who make up the *National Health & Fitness Alliance (NHFA)*, which is the HFA policy committee, are volunteers who lead the charge in updating language to better reflect current business practices and promote uniformity in states around the country.

In addition to these supporters, we also need our grassroots army to have our back. It's not just important for the HFA's advocacy work, but it also empowers everyday people to take power back. Engaging the system can seem daunting, but you do have a voice. Work with us, and we'll make it roar! Download the report at healthandfitness.org.



Wow, HFA has been up to a lot! And, of course, getting that information out there is truly important to the success of the Association and our industry. So, we were happy to see the following New Hire:

The Health & Fitness Association Hires Communication Coordinator

The Health & Fitness Association has expanded its communication team with the hiring of **Kelsi Steinkamp** as its Communication Coordinator. Steinkamp joins the Association as a graduate of the University of Dayton, College of

Arts & Sciences, where she earned a bachelor's degree in communication and public relations, with a minor in business administration.

During her time in university, she co-founded a student-run public relations firm, working with nonprofit and small business clients across sectors, from sports programming to agriculture. After graduating, she worked for *Montgomery County Educational Service Center/Huber Heights City Schools*, where she managed media relations and crisis communications, led a website redesign and produced a variety of communication materials.

"HFA has completed a year-long transition from good to great as we continue pursuing our mission to deliver advocacy, education and research for our members, supplier partners and the industry as a whole," said HFA President & CEO, **Liz Clark**. "Kelsi's addition to our team will help us expand our services, increase the cadence and type of projects we deliver and evolve to meet the needs of a dynamic and thriving industry."

In her role with HFA, she will take on communication responsibilities surrounding social media, marketing, content writing and media outreach. With a background in and passion for generating fresh communications that meet the unique needs of an audience, Steinkamp is a strong addition to the HFA's evolving

communication team.

"HFA has a long-standing history of advocating for the health and wellness of folks around the world, and it's an honor to become part of that mission. I'm eager to work alongside a very talented and committed team to serve our members," said Steinkamp.



Stay tuned folks, as 2025 looks to be a big year for The Health & Fitness Association, as well as the industry!!!

(Justin Cates is the Publisher of Club Insider. Having been born into a club business family in 1985, Justin grew up in the health and fitness club industry. He has lived and breathed this industry for 38 years, since his own day one, and he loves it dearly. Graduating from the Terry College of Business at The University of Georgia in 2007, Justin has run day-to-day operations of Club Insider for 15+ years. Justin became Publisher of Club Insider in April of 2020. Justin's Dad, Norm Cates, continues to serve as Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993. You can reach Justin by phone at 863-999-2677 or email at Justin@clubinsideronline.com.)

It Is Time to Let Our Past Fade

By: **Thomas Plummer**

Publisher's Note: One of the cornerstones of *C.I.* is to "Tell-It-Like-It-Is," or in this case, it's one of our Authors doing the telling. Our goal in presenting these viewpoints, whether correct or incorrect, anecdotal or empirical, is to spur debate. *What is needed for this industry to reach new heights?* The views on this are wide-ranging, and this article presents but a few.

■ ■ ■

The standards of excellence we celebrate in the fitness industry would be considered failures in most other business models. If we consider the modern fitness era began in 1945, then after almost eighty years of opportunity, we have only touched 20% of the people in the U.S., meaning in harsh business language, 80% of the people in this country do not believe in what we offer nor are willing to support us.

Screams from the backrow seats say we have done better... We reached 23% pre-COVID, but that correction, along with the 2008 economic disaster, are part of doing business, and we are again huddling behind the 20% barrier. Yet, as of today, according to the *National Institute of Health*, 73% of the population is overweight or obese.

In simple words, we as an industry seem to be selling something the consumer obviously needs but does not believe we have the answer they are seeking. This 20% penetration rate will not change unless we are willing to question what we do and why we still do it if it is obviously not working...

Here are a few questions we should be asking in this industry that might lead to a deeper penetration into the market, more money for all of us, and most importantly, finally living up to the mission that we are here to spread the fitness message to a wider audience.

Just because we were right then doesn't mean we are right now.

The big box model, with vast square footage and designed to service multiple demographics in one location, was right in the 1970s for the markets of that era, but they are not right for today's market.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the small neighborhood gym barely existed, and we didn't see the rise of the first aerobics studios and small independents, in significant numbers, until the late '80s. In those years, the big box was a correct model because one size did indeed have to fit all due to lack of competition. The big box owner was forced to offer many different activities, such as racquetball,

pools, workout space, kid's areas, big locker rooms and aerobic studios, because you had to have it all to attract the widest range of people possible to feed the huge cost of running that model.

This business worked back in the day because the owner might have had just one or two competitors within his five-mile ring of business. Clients would drive further, usually up to twenty minutes back then, because there was no other place to go if you wanted to work out... and the box owners offered it all to make sure everyone in the market had an activity to attract them to the business.

Now, you put 40,000 square feet in a market such as the Coastal Route 95 corridor of Connecticut, and you are likely to have a dozen or more competitors within your three-mile ring. Why would a consumer drive past a boot camp, a personal training gym, a Pilates studio, a cycle studio, a boxing gym and three Planet Fitness plaza sites to get to a one-size-fits-all gym that offers everything but really does nothing well? Bluntly, if this model still worked, where are the breakout groups pushing past 150 units and dominating their markets?

Is the three-step investor conundrum affecting long term growth?

When will we learn... when will we learn? If we look back at *Bally Total Fitness* and *Living Well*, and now, look at most of the major chains today, there is a pattern of failure we tend to ignore and repeat, and repeat again.

Initially, individual gym owners opened a business, either as an independent small chain, as back in the Bally era, or as a franchisee today. Secondly, the money guys/investment groups come in, buy out the original owner, then pay him over a several year earnout. Then, that owner goes away leaving a staff in place, maybe, or the investment group now has to run these gyms, spread across multiple states, with managers... then, the cracks appear, and system collapses into itself.

Three steps, and it is over. Three steps from the original owner, and you have investment groups attempting to create a system to run multiple units in a business they seldom understand. Remove the daily touch of a founding owner, and a few years later, you now have people running businesses with little vested interest in its success except to protect the original investment group.

Why is this important? Because the first step forward by the original owner in the market becomes two steps back as the image of fitness is now tarnished by a business offering poor service, endless

billing mistakes, ineffective and often offensive marketing, and the ultimate plunge to low price because that is what you do when you do not know what you are doing.

We are not ready for the silver wave.

More than 10,000 people a day turn 65 years old. Lifespan today is estimated to be 80+ years, and those born in 2000 or later are expected to live to 100 and more. As of today, 35% of the population is 65+, and by 2035, people 65+ will outnumber those 18 and under. Finally, by the year 2050, the percentage of people 50+ will double.

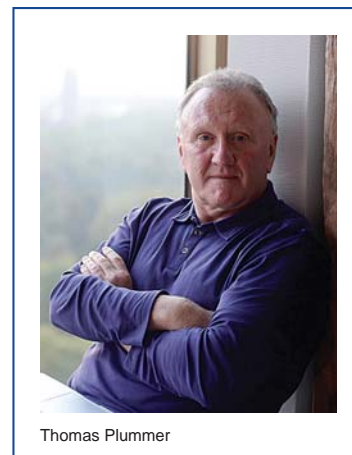
We are not ready for any of this in the fitness industry. We run advertising for home fitness equipment featuring semi-naked, sweaty models so thin they are offensive. We sell price, price specials, the deals of the week and discounts, all designed to steal people from other gyms with zero appeal to the 80%, including the potential 50+ client who do not belong to the gyms but never respond to price because they haven't been to a gym in a decade, if ever. Price means nothing if you don't understand the product.

We build 1970s group locker rooms, still popular in prisons and low-end high schools, but offensive to adults with a little money in their pockets. Our staff is too young, our programming unrelatable to the 50+ person, and few of the chains have any type of extended, "how to do this," induction program without a client paying big money to hire a trainer from day one.

Yet, this 50+ client, in the top 35% of the population by affluence (makes approximately \$100,000 or more) is the most neglected person in fitness but the most desirable because income and education are the two biggest determinants of someone joining a fitness facility and then staying as a member. The older client is out there, but in an industry dominated by the young forever culture, we don't speak their language and have done nothing to prepare for the wave of gray heading our way.

Our marketing is our biggest barrier to attracting the 80% not in gyms.

All price marketing is based upon a single, false assumption. We assume that, when we run any price-driven ad, there is an untapped market out there, stomping their feet and ready to break down your front door, if you just offer the right price combination. Go low, you scream, "They are at \$10, and I will go to \$9." Then, "50% off the joiner's fee this month, and this month only, until next month." Or, "Just one dollar down and then a cheap monthly."



Thomas Plummer

Every price driven ad is based upon a market that does not exist, and all price ads simply target people who already get fitness, belong to gyms and are maybe changing gyms, moving or really just want the lowest price. *None*, stated clearly again, none of the 80% of the people not in a gym, who might consider fitness if they knew where to start, care about price as the first step. Price works for those who get us, with gym knowledge, but fails to attract those who don't know who we are and lack gym savvy knowledge.

We spend all of our time telling people what we do and how we do it followed by how much we charge. Yes, you have a room for the bigger lifters. Yes, you have a special cardio room for movie people. Yes, you have a private coaching corral. None of this matters if you haven't been in a gym ever, or in years, or failed in the last three gyms you tried, because this marketing breaks the most fundamental rule of marketing... always market to develop new clients but answering who is this gym for, do I fit in, and can I try it with little risk to see if I can even do this nonsense?

Price marketing does work for the bottom 35% by affluence, if they are in the 20% already in a gym, or that small group who tries because it is just so cheap, why not? The middle 30% by affluence, those roughly \$50,000 - \$100,000 in income, consider price but now seek differentiation. They are the people who won't pay for first class on a flight but will upgrade to economy plus for the bigger seats and better service.

We fail in our marketing for the top 35% segment. This group will not go to a giant box. This group likes small and elite, such as the country club they belong to, which only has 300 members. This group will not respond to deals and discounts because, if you have money, you know anything put on sale is either so bad it can't be sold at full price or was jacked up so

(See **Thomas Plummer** Page 17)



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26North Acquires High Growth Health Club Operator Onelife Fitness

NEW YORK, N.Y. - 26North Partners LP ("26North"), a next-generation alternatives firm founded by **Josh Harris**, announces it has acquired leading health club operator *Onelife Fitness* from *Delos Capital* ("Delos").

With locations across the Mid-Atlantic and Southeastern United States, Onelife Fitness is a high-value fitness club delivering a premium health and wellness experience with high-end amenities at affordable rates. Onelife Fitness currently serves over 400,000 members across 61 clubs, with plans for significant growth.

"Onelife is a fantastic opportunity to back what we believe to be a best-in-class operator and enduring platform in a growing category that is underpinned by a long-term consumer focus on physical fitness and wellness," said **Mark Weinberg**, 26North Partner and Head of Private Equity. "We are excited to use 26North's Alpha Creation Team (ACT) to enhance Onelife's growth."

Kirk and John Galiani founded Onelife Fitness to give members a premium experience and amenities at an affordable price. Along with CEO, **Ori Gorfine**,

they have remained true to that vision, achieving strong operational and financial metrics, while steadily increasing the company's footprint.

"We are thrilled to partner with Ori, Kirk, John and the rest of Onelife's leadership team to build on the strong foundation they have established in their core markets," said **Gary Freilich**, 26North Private Equity Partner. "With our backing, Onelife will continue its efforts to innovate its service offerings and introduce new clubs in additional cities, all while keeping the member at the center of everything Onelife does."

"Onelife is committed to taking care of people, from our passionate team to each individual member who walks through our doors," said Gorfine. "We have grown over the years organically as communities clamor for a fitness concept that offers compelling value, high-end experiences and top amenities at affordable rates. We could not be more excited to marry our successful formula with 26North's experience, resources and guidance to bring Onelife Fitness to the next level."

"It is amazing to see how Onelife Fitness has grown. It is a testament to the brand's value proposition and our incredible team," said founders Kirk and John Galiani. "While we couldn't be prouder of what has been accomplished, after developing a trusting relationship with Josh Harris and his team, we are convinced the best years of Onelife Fitness are ahead."

"We are excited for 26North to acquire Onelife and are confident in their capabilities to take the business to the next level," said *Delos Managing Partner*, **Matt Constantino**. "We have known the Onelife team since 2012, have developed deep relationships with them and have built a robust knowledge of the business and



industry. Together, the team has created immense value and has built a leading platform that we believe is poised for continued growth."

Jefferies LLC and *North Point* served as financial advisors to Onelife Fitness. *Kirkland & Ellis* served as legal counsel to 26North. Financial terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

Make It Fun!

Exploring Success in Marketing & Advertising: *Perspectives From iHeartMedia - Part II*

By: **Gary Polic**

In **Part I** of this article series on *iHeartMedia (iHM)*, we outlined the various media available in today's marketing and advertising landscape. In **Part II**, we will present ten case studies and their performance metrics.

Our goal is to inspire curiosity and encourage creative thinking within your marketing teams, in the hope of uncovering new marketing opportunities. Please note that the companies involved in each case study have been kept confidential for proprietary reasons.

Let's get started! It is time to think creatively and explore new possibilities in marketing and advertising!

1. Broadcast Radio - Broadcast Radio Drives Substantial Web Lift for Direct Response

Goal: Generate incremental web traffic, leads and sales of the brand's new product offering iHM.

Solutions:

- A four-week broadcast radio campaign across six stations in two key markets;
- Audio creative voiced by iHM's on-air influencers from the markets it aired in;
- The brand leveraged iHM's partnership with *Veritone* to measure and optimize the campaign's effectiveness in driving incremental web traffic.

Results: +56% Increase in Web Traffic; 715K Attributable.

2. Streaming Audio - Business Increases Sales & In-store Traffic

Goal: Single location business sought to increase daily in-store traffic and sales.

Solutions:

- Launched with a broadcast campaign on three top stations in the market;
- Amplified campaign with streaming audio across multiple genres, such as classic rock, news/talk, oldies and more;
- Drove measurable in-store traffic with location display messages targeted to exercisers, baby boomers, moms, health and wellness consumers, and luxury/affluent shoppers;
- Added custom email campaign to reinforce messaging to ages 25 - 64 within seven miles of the store.

Results: Sales soared during the campaign by as much as 30 - 50%, and clients saw a

significant increase in daily in-store traffic.

3. Podcast - Custom Podcast Platform Engages Hard-To-Reach Audience

Goals:

- Elevate a suite of existing business offerings to hard-to-reach business decision-makers;
- Drive brand awareness and consideration amongst enterprise clients.

Solutions:

- Building upon two previous seasons, the brand leveraged their existing podcast platform to reach a new, hard-to-reach audience;
- 10X interview episodes hosted by podcaster and best-selling author, **Malcolm Gladwell**;
- Cross-platform promotion shared too across digital, social and broadcast;
- Targeted host-read ads served in contextually relevant environments.

Results:

- Drove brand lift amongst new and existing listeners;
- Drove purchase intent + consideration;
- Purchase intent + 11 points higher amongst listeners exposed to the podcast;
- 8% more listeners exposed to the custom podcast agreed.

4. Multi-Platform Campaign - Study Enrollment

Goals:

- Looking to increase participants (ages 50 - 80) and raise awareness with participants' family, loved ones and friends;
- Secondary goals were web lift, form fills and conversions (study enrollment).

Solutions:

- The iHM team created a comprehensive media plan with broadcast (English and Spanish), location-targeted podcasting, streaming and display. Crossix data was used to find the right audience;
- Success was tracked with *ArtsAI* and *Veritone*.

Results:

- +1,629 qualified participants secured;
- +1,906 conversions attributed to iHM campaign.

5. Amazon Shopper Suite - Brand Sees

47x ROAS in First Month

Goal: Aid client in closing the loop on their current marketing initiatives by re-targeting to high propensity users on their website.

Solutions:

- Utilized Shopper Suite's unique ability to identify and re-target warm leads on the client's website to complement the client's current marketing mix;
- Amplify messaging to consumers across social media and extended display to keep the client top of mind and influence potential consumers to request an estimate.

Results:

- Total Attributable Estimates (valued at \$600 each): \$429K;
- Revenue Total Sales (\$6,000 avg sale): 158.

6. Streaming Video - iHeart Delivered Incremental Views and Subscribers

Goal: Drive incremental views and subscribers for a video streaming partner.

Solutions:

- iHM created a custom podcast campaign centered around the host-read podcast ads and audience targeting across the *iHeartPodcast Network*, and Campaign Measurement and Results;
- iHM partnered with *Claritas* for first-to-market study to track the views and subscribers that the campaign generated and were directly attributable to the *iHeartPodcast Network* campaign.

Results:

- 82% Lift in incremental views;
- 36% Lift in Incremental subscribers.

7. Targeted Digital Display Geofencing - Campaign Drives Big Results

Goals:

- iHM has performed well for this client in the past, so they turned to iHM when looking to drive brand awareness and in-store traffic to specific retail locations;
- The ability to track in-store traffic helped the iHM team get the business.

Solutions:

- iHM team put together a multi-product digital campaign targeting regulars within five miles from each location, including geofenced mobile location and



Gary Polic

psychographic podcasting;

- *GroundTruth* was utilized to track store visits campaign.

Results:

- +1,398 store visits;
- +15,743 clicks on display ads attributed to campaign resulting in .88% CTR.

8. Email - Company Drives LEADS with iHeartMedia Email Marketing

Goal: Complement the broadcast campaign and reach new customers, driving them to the website for more information.

Solutions:

- Extend reach via a hyper-targeted email program. Target consumers who are looking for products/services. Include a strong call to action on the creative to increase qualified leads on website;
- Custom email marketing program delivers hyper targeted emails directly to consumers inboxes.

Results:

- 300+ leads;
- 1,270 visits drove consumers to website;
- Website traffic increased 15.8%.

9. Total Traffic & Weather Network (TTWN) - Company Drives ROI with TTWN and Shopper Suite

Goal: Increase unique visitors to the website and increase the number of return visits from potential customers, which is a strong indicator of intent to buy.

(See **Gary Polic** Page 17)

Is Teaching Group Fitness an Individual Sport?

By: **Jeffrey Pinkerton**

Group Fitness is an amazing way to build community and encourage connection. It has the power to create a team-like atmosphere for your members – a shared experience driven by the collective work and comradery of the group. However, with all its potential to connect and build community, *teaching* group fitness can be quite the individual sport. In the freestyle model, where instructors build their own workouts and choose their own music, they act more as a solopreneur, training and getting certified on their own, making up workouts, picking playlists and practicing alone, often managing and marketing the unique brand of their group fitness experience... alone. They are part of the group fitness team per se, but they don't actually practice, collaborate with or work with their teammates. Teaching

group fitness in the freestyle model is an individual sport.

A Team Approach to Group Fitness

At MOSSA, we know group fitness is a team sport. We create group fitness programs for health clubs – high quality, field tested, professionally-developed workouts in every major category of exercise. We are the training partners, the playlist engineers, the workout architects, the exercise science research and development departments, and the instructor educators for the clubs that run our system. We are the creative ad agency, the social media consultants, the scheduling and strategy advisors. Our clients deliver high quality, consistent, group fitness experiences for their members... by a team of instructors.

And, a team, working out of the same playbook, training together, practicing

together, getting regular coaching and feedback together, working and working out together, covering for and connecting with each other, can change the dynamics of how your club approaches group fitness. It changes the way you attract and recruit people to your team, the way you manage and mentor, and it puts the power of *group* into your group fitness instructor team.

Team Trainings

Most facilities that I talk to need more group fitness instructors. Over the years, escalated by the pandemic, instructors are retiring faster than they are being replaced. Maybe by happenstance, a miscellaneous instructor or two has been added to the team, maybe they provide a certification from a freestyle group fitness training module, maybe they are taken through an audition and interview process



Jeffrey Pinkerton

(scary version, maybe not), and then, they are added to the team. They're added to the team. (See **Jeffrey Pinkerton** Page 18)

...Thomas Plummer

continued from page 14

high the discount is fake. Ever see a top-end Land Rover on sale? Neither have they.

Trial memberships work for the 50+ and for the top-end gyms, and they also have wide appeal to the those in the 80% who might try a gym at little risk. Those in the price range of **\$49 - \$89** might try *thirty days* for \$69 and give the client a taste of all you offer. Top-end gyms should only do six weeks for somewhere in the **\$129 - \$299** range.

Where growth could come from in the future.

Growth is only possible by shifting to smaller, target-specific gyms based upon demographic populations and affluence. Except for rare markets, such as isolated cities in the Midwest and maybe upper-Midwest, why would anyone build a 40,000 square-foot box again? Too big, too expensive to create and maintain, and you end up surrounded by a dozen small competitors draining your top end clients who don't believe bigger is better. It's like laying in a field and being pecked to death by a thousand crows, each stealing a small chunk of your body.

The future is gyms targeting specific demos, such as fitness after forty specialists or adult sports performance. Note these gyms would be based on

demographics, not tools or methodology, such as the worn-out group training gym or boot camp model.

A weird side note is that, if we look back to the 1950s and early 1960s, we started in this industry creating gyms based upon target demos, such as women-only gyms or bodybuilding gyms, and we should be heading back in that direction again.

The future also belongs to anyone who masters marketing to the 80% not in gyms. We can never get them all, but even 2% of 313,000,000 would make us all a little happier.

Nearly 80 years in, and we haven't touched 80% of the market we chase. What we have done does not work anymore, but the potential to make money, and change

the world, is right in front of us.

(Thomas Plummer has been one of the primary thought leaders in the fitness industry for over 40 years. His approach of change through leadership, delivered in the 1,100+ workshops he has taught all around the world since 1980, has resulted in the creation of many of the current business concepts now in use in the industry, such as the modern training gym business model and layered pricing structure used by so many financially successful fitness businesses. He is perhaps best known for helping young fitness professionals understand and master the business side of the gym business. You can contact Thom at info@thomasplummer.com.)

...Gary Polic

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Solutions:

- iHM created a custom on-air and digital campaign built to drive site traffic and return traffic;
- High frequency TTWN messaging was used to increase website visits;
- Campaign was amplified with Shopper Suite, leveraging customized direct mail, email and social to re-engage customers who had visited the website.

Results:

- TTWN High Frequency Messaging Drove Website Visits +300% strong engagement;
- Multiplatform Audio + Display campaign drives results;
- Increase in unique visitors; increase in return site visitation;
- Coupled with iHeartMedia's Shopper

Suite, visitors returned with intent.

10. Digital/Audio Display - Register to WIN!

Goal: Business wanted to amplify their broadcast campaign by delivering 1:1 messaging directly to those in the market or soon to be in the market for their product, as well as grow their internal email database.

Solution: Leverage multiple tactics with iHM, all promoting and driving listeners to register to win a prize with optional email opt-in through a digital contest page built and executed by iHM and supported with heavy iHeart Radio, Digital Audio, station ROS display and iHeart Radio Mobile App display.

Results:

- Clicks delivering an above avg CTR of .18%;
- 368 Contest Registrations.

■ ■ ■

In conclusion, these case studies and performance metrics offer just a glimpse of what we can achieve. For further details and to take advantage of a complimentary discovery call to uncover how iHeart Media can dramatically boost your Marketing ROI in 2025, contact Gary by phone at **(708) 635 - 9522** or by email at garypolic@iheartmedia.com or gary@policonsultantsgroup.com. You can also visit PCG at www.policonsultantsgroup.com.

(Gary Polic is the Owner of Polic Consultants Group, LLC. He has 40 years of experience in the Fitness Industry. Gary is also a National Accounts Executive with iHeartMedia. He can help you with any questions or concerns you may have regarding your club sales or marketing investment. You can reach Gary on his company's website at www.policonsultantsgroup.com or by phone at 708-635-9522 or by email at gary@policonsultantsgroup.com or garypolic@iheartmedia.com.)

Make It Fun!

...Jeffrey Pinkerton

continued from page 17

email distribution list for group fitness with a "Welcome to the team" announcement, and that's it.

How do you recruit for this type of team? How would you attract new talent? Or, mentor someone? It's a nearly impossible situation and one that has left many *Group Fitness Directors* endlessly "searching for instructors," and predictably, not finding anyone.

In our system, each program is its own training event. For example, *Group Power*, our strength training program, is a three-day training – covering everything from details about the program brand, proper execution, coaching strategies, working with the music and all the components of creating a great group fitness experience. The three days are challenging, inspiring and encouraging.

Additionally, the training is an amazing team building event. It's a shared experience for your instructors that leads to launching a new program with new instructors on your team. And, it opens the door to do team-like things – team practices to learn workouts, team teaching for special events and covering one another's

workouts as subs. The team is playing out of the same Group Power playbook, speaking the same language and even wearing a similar uniform (each program has a brand color).

Team Teaching

MOSSA instructors get new workouts each quarter for clubs to host launch events to create excitement and show appreciation to members. Quite simply, a special event helps your members feel special! And, one great way to up the energy is to have instructors team teach together. In preparation for these quarterly launches, we encourage instructors to get together for team practices – where the team can review the newest quarterly education, run through workouts together, practice their coaching, give constructive feedback to one another or even video the session so they can review their delivery and fine-tune everything. Ideally, the facility would have a team leader for each program. Think of it like a team captain on a sports team. So, for Group Power, there would be one "resident expert" of the program. They organize team practices, assign songs for launch events, help mentor new instructors and can even be a first point of contact for

potential new recruits.

Team Recruiting

"Considering teaching Group Power? You should talk with Catherine! She is the Team Leader for our Group Power team. She teaches on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. Why don't you go try one of her workouts and introduce yourself? I'll let her know that you'll be there and that you might be interested in going through training and joining the team!" This model for recruitment sets the pathway for new talent to truly join a team, not just an email distribution list.

Team Meetings

A team approach to Group Fitness opens the door to train your entire staff on your Group Fitness offerings. In the freestyle model, you couldn't possibly showcase everything on your schedule to your team. At best, you could encourage them to try a few, and at worse, you'd send them a copy of the schedule with so many class descriptions.

Or, your whole team – front desk, membership staff, personal trainers, HR, management – can attend a Group

Power workout together. That's what our partners at *Courthouse Club Fitness* in Salem, Oregon do; they host an all-team lunchtime workout on the first Tuesday of each month. It's a team meeting and team product training, with all the benefits of the social connection and comradery your group fitness members experience. As a bonus, they have instructors team teach the workout.

And, I can say from personal experience, if you've never taught a Group Fitness workout with the entire team and the *President* of the company in the room, it will put a little extra pressure on you to bring your A game!

■ ■ ■

At MOSSA, we believe that a team approach to group fitness is the best way to manage group fitness, train and mentor new instructors, and market the experience. If you'd like to learn more about how your team can build a better team, visit mossa.net/clubs-facilities/why-mossa.

(Jeffrey Pinkerton is the Business Development Manager for MOSSA. Jeffrey can be reached by phone at 770-989-4737 or email at jeffreypinkerton@mossa.net.)

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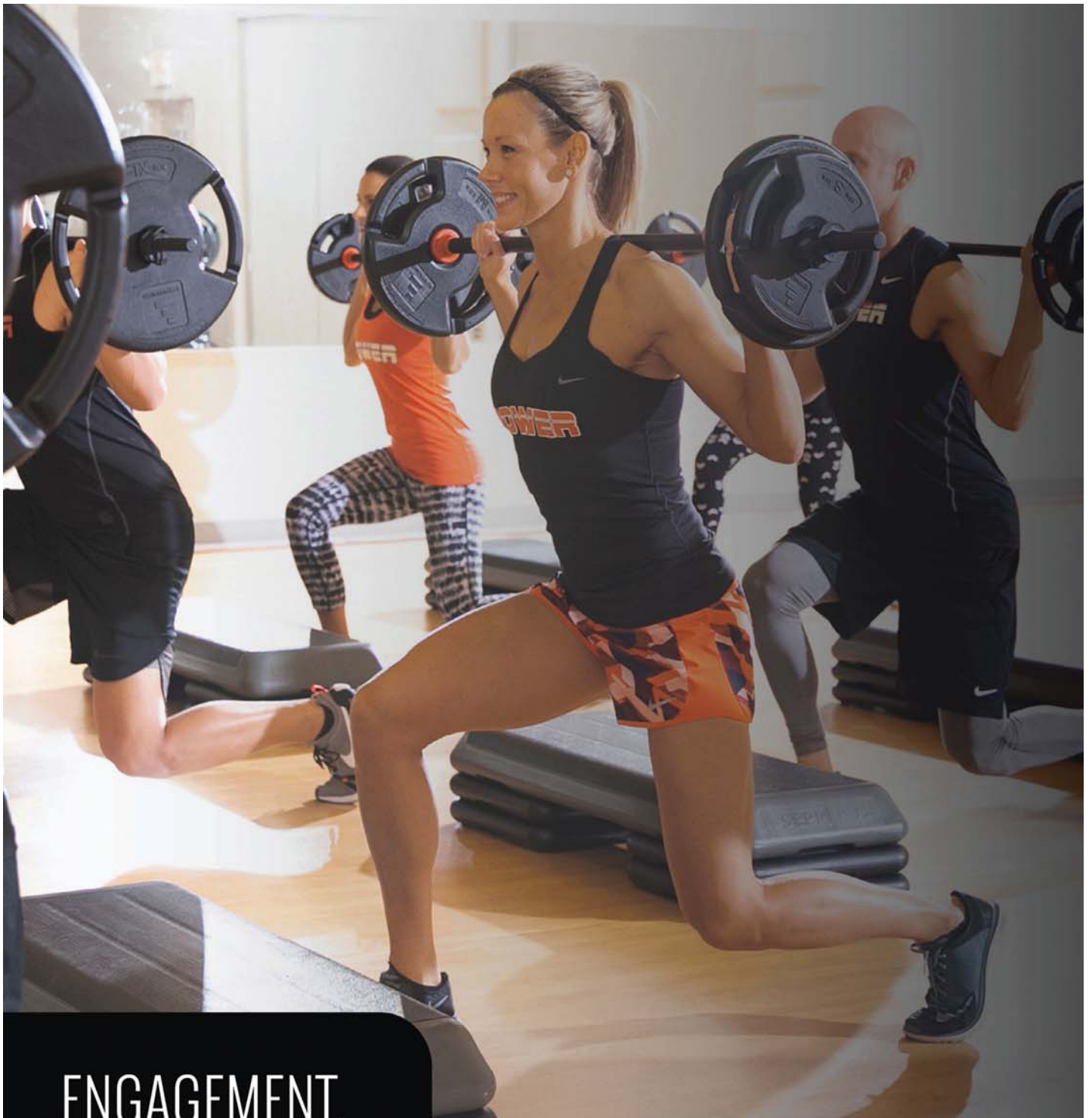
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Thank You to Our Contributing Authors

- **Bruce Carter** - President, Optimal Design Systems International - (954) 888 - 5960
- **Cathy Spencer Browning** - VP of Training & Programming, MOSSA - (770) 989 - 4700
- **Chris Stevenson** - Founder, The Empower Group - chris@stevensonempowers.com
- **Frank Guengerich** - President of Hospitality, Williams Group - frank@williamsgroup.com
- **Gary Polic** - Owner, Polic Consultants Group - (630) 410 - 1120
- **Herb Lipsman** - Author and Industry Consultant - www.herblipsman.com
- **Jeffrey Pinkerton** - Business Development Manager, MOSSA - (770) 989 - 4737
- **Jim Thomas** - President, Fitness Management USA - (800) 929 - 2898
- **Nancy Trent** - President, Trent and Company - nancy@trentandcompany.com
- **Paul Bosley** - Owner, Business Finance Depot - (800) 788 - 3884
- **Rick Caro** - President, Management Vision, Inc. - (212) 987 - 4300
- **Sara Kooperman, JD** - CEO, SCW Fitness Education - scwfit.com
- **Thomas Plummer** - National Fitness Business Alliance - (800) 726 - 3506



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