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THE Club Insider

NEWS

The Pulse of the Health, Racquet & Sports Club Business

OCTOBER 1996
VOLUME III NUMBER 9



DOUG LEVINE CRUNCH FOUNDER

CRUNCH FITNESS....

WAY OUT...AND RIGHT ON!!! PART I

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NEWS

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THE Club Insider[®]

NEWS

The Pulse of the Health, Racquet & Sports Club Business

Crunch Fitness... Way Out... And Right On!

PART I

By Norm Cates, Jr. With
Crunch Founder - Doug Levine

You may have heard the old saying, "If you can make it in New York..... you can make it anywhere!" This interview is with fitness club owner/operator Doug

Levine, who is truly "making it" in New York and is expanding his empire to the left coast with his first Los Angeles facility scheduled to open in January, 1997.

For starters, here are some numbers to consider. In 1995 Levine's Crunch Fitness Centers and the multitude of offshoot products he has created from the Crunch image, generated \$3.7 million in

revenues with \$1 million net profit. He expects to see the 1996 figures at \$14 million gross revenue with \$1.5 million in profit. And for 1997 and 1998 he is projecting \$20 million with \$3.5 net profit, and \$35 million with \$5 million profit respectively!

Doug Levine has created this New York City-based chain of fitness facilities called CRUNCH

FITNESS around the concept of "branding." New York City based club business expert and industry consultant, Rick Caro, comments, "Crunch is developing the first real brand emanating from the club industry. Its message and concept is being disseminated through a wide range of vehicles - clubs in metropolitan markets, fitness videos, TV

shows, fitness books, CD music, and-of course - their apparel. It is starting to become known even in other countries."

The entire Crunch Fitness Center business is based on the philosophy that health clubs, unlike some night clubs and bars, should be inclusive, i.e. "accepting" of all types and kinds of people, thin, fat, (See *Crunch* page 8)

Club Insider News Seeks Balance LAST FREE EDITION!

By Norm Cates, Jr.

The CLUB INSIDER News began publishing in December, 1993. To introduce The CLUB INSIDER to you, we've sent a complimentary edition to you every month from January, 1996 to July, 1996. You have received The

CLUB INSIDER for free by virtue of a complimentary "Nationwide Subscription" sponsored by our advertisers.

This October, 1996 edition, is the last complimentary monthly edition you will receive. To assure that you continue to receive The CLUB INSIDER News EVERY month in the future, you will need to subscribe by investing \$49 per year for 12 issues. Simply

complete the enclosed invoice and mail it with a check for \$49 or charge the \$49 to your American Express or Discover Card. The last edition you received prior to this one was our July edition. The August and September editions were combined into one September edition, so the September edition is the only one you have missed this year. As a special incentive to subscribe, we will send the September edition

to you (while supplies last) if we receive your \$49 subscription investment by November 20, 1996.

UNANTICIPATED - INCREASED COSTS FORCES CHANGE

The cost to produce and mail The CLUB INSIDER News has increased dramatically since we began distributing the

publication for free every month to 25,000 locations nationwide. We have absorbed paper/printing increases and a significant increase in our U.S. Postal Rates.

These increases have tapped our advertising revenues to the limit. Since we have been providing The CLUB INSIDER for free to you and 25,000 others each month, our subscription revenues (See *Last Free Edition* page 4)

Mike Lucci Steps Down At Bally Total Fitness

By Norm Cates, Jr.

Mike Lucci, Sr. 56, announced on Friday, October 4th, that he was going to retire as CEO and President of Bally Total Fitness. He will remain as a member of the Board of Directors of the public company, Bally Total Fitness.

Lee Hillman, 40, will take the positions of CEO and

President of Bally Total Fitness. Prior to his new role, Hillman has been Executive Vice President of Bally Total Fitness and Executive Vice President, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer of Bally Entertainment Corporation. Hillman will retain his current jobs with Bally Entertainment Corporation until its merger with Hilton Hotels Corporation is completed later this year. Hillman commented about Lucci, "Mike Lucci created a foundation for Bally Total Fitness where none existed before. I am thankful

for what he has accomplished and his dedication to this company. His contributions have been immeasurable."

Mike Lucci began his career with Bally in 1972 when he was still a professional football linebacker with the Detroit Lions. After playing for 12 years in the NFL, Lucci retired and became a full-time employee with Bally.

Bally Entertainment CEO and Bally Total Fitness Chairman, Arthur M. Goldberg, comments about Lucci, "When I came to this company nearly six years ago, Bally Total Fitness was on the verge of collapse. Mike Lucci was the one man who stepped up and took on the difficult task of rebuilding this company. I am truly grateful for his efforts and leadership during this critical period. More importantly, I appreciate his candor and friendship."

Nora Moretz, Lucci's assistant, comments: "I've worked

for Mike for 22 years. I watched him grow this business from the 'old-days' when we had alternating days for men and women. Mike had a vision that men and women could work out together. He is honest, fair and he is loyal. And that's with everybody he deals with, from executives to the porters that clean the clubs. He has been a terrific leader and he is a team player. He is a great guy."

Mary Butler, his assistant in the Chicago Bally offices, praised Lucci by commenting, "He is such a great guy....just terrific to work for."

Lucci, when contacted by The CLUB INSIDER was, as usual, cordial and candid. He contacted us from his car on the way to the airport where he was departing for a "short" vacation.

Q. CLUB INSIDER - "Mike, I got word on your retirement this morning. This is kind

of a shock. What can you share with me?"

A. Mike Lucci - "When I quit playing football I used to have a lot of people ask me, 'why did you quit?' And I would say that I wanted to quit before people asked me 'why the hell don't you quit?' There is timing for everything and I think that I fought the battle a long time..... and I think that it was the right time. I just believe that the company needs an infusion of cash, the real play is a financial one and they are going to have to go out and raise some capital and I think that the team that's in there now..... that's their strong suit and hopefully they will be able to do that.... it will help the company to grow. I wish them well. I've got stock and we are talking about my staying on the Board so I still have interest there obviously."

Q. CLUB INSIDER - "What was your official date of re- (See *Mike Lucci* page 14)

•Inside The Insider•

- Developing A U. S. P. To Differentiate Your Club
- Alan Schwartz V. P. Of U. S. T. A.
- Waukesha Hospital Drops Tax Exempt F. C. Plan
- Group Cycling Phenomenon - Part II
- Tennis And Fun: Part II
- Maximize Your Income From Personal Training

THE INSIDER SPEAKS

• EDITORIALS • "INSIDER MAIL" • COMMENTS •

...Last Free Edition

continued from page 3

have been low and nowhere near the "balance" necessary when combined with advertising revenues - to sustain the long-term viability of the publication.

FITNESS FACILITIES ASKED TO "CHIP-IN"

The CLUB INSIDER is

published every month to help health, racquet and fitness facility owners and managers improve their operations and keep abreast of the latest industry news and trends. By now, regular readers of The CLUB INSIDER realize and recognize the value and importance of every edition. If you are one of those regular readers, we hope you will elect NOT to miss any editions simply by investing just \$49 for each of your locations to receive all 12 editions, plus your bonus September edition. (By subscribing using the enclosed invoice by November 20, 1996.) Industry experts feel The CLUB INSIDER

is a great value as other such publications in other industries charge \$200-\$300 per year.

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To assure that you and your key managers receive The CLUB INSIDER every month, use the enclosed invoice and subscribe today! Send your check or credit card number (American Express or Discover Card) with the completed subscription form to: CLUB INSIDER News, P.O. Box 671443, Marietta, Ga. 30006-0025. Thanks in advance for your investment!

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October 1, 1996

Mr. Norm Cates, Jr.
Publisher and Editor, The Club Insider News
P.O. Box 671443
Marietta, Ga. 30067-0025

Dear Norm,

Norm, It was nice talking to you on the phone today. I wanted to tell you what a great job you are doing. Your publication has provided us with so much valuable information and we all look forward to reading it each month.

The Club Insider is a must for every Club Owner and manager. I cannot tell you how many times I have used information I have read in the Club Insider to benefit our operation.

Enclosed is my check for subscriptions for our three locations.

Keep up the great work Norm and have a Great Day.

Cordially,

Joe
Joseph Gomez
President,
Aquarius Athletic Clubs

Joseph Gomez
St. James Club
7337 W. Bancroft St.
Toledo, Oh. 43615

Terry Gomez
Aquarius Athletic Club- North
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•NORM'S NOTES•

LAST COMPLIMENTARY EDITION! Just in case you did not read our front page article explaining the last complimentary edition, let me cover it again. Each month, for the months of January '96 through July '96, you received a free copy of **THE CLUB INSIDER** News. While we would love to be able to continue to do this, we have learned that the economics simply will not allow us to continue to send out 25,000 free editions every month. However, we will **CONTINUE** to publish the paper every month and we urge you to invest just \$49 per year to assure that you continue to have this great source of industry news and educational articles delivered to you each month. A subscription invoice is enclosed inside the paper this month for your use in subscribing. Keep in mind the cost breaks down to only 13 cents per day! Here is what you missed if you aren't a paid subscriber: Q Clubs Withdraw SEC Filing, Olympic Village Health Club A First, The Group Cycling Phenomenon - Part I, Increasing Club Revenue Through Personal Training, Tennis and Fun: Part One, Texans Doing It Right!, The Elixir of Youth, Marketing Matters, U.S. Surgeon General's Report On Physical Activity & Health, IHRSA's Chuck Leve Promotes Gregg Shapiro, SalesMakers Tip of the Month, and Reebok and Cross Conditioning Systems Announce Partnership. Don't miss future editions! **SUBSCRIBE TODAY!**

IHRSA CONVENTIONS COMING UP! Don't miss the IHRSA/Athletic Business Sales, Marketing and Programming Convention and Trade Show in Orlando in December or the IHRSA International Convention and Trade Show in San Francisco in April. They are both well worth the time. For information call IHRSA at: (800) 228-4772.

POLAR ELECTRO, is sponsoring "Get Active Atlanta!" in conjunction with the **AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EXERCISE** and **AUSTRALIAN BODY WORKS** on Saturday, October 26th. The event is tied into a national effort that weekend to mobilize and energize non-exercisers and exercisers alike in support of the Surgeon General's report.

NEW LEGISLATION is passing on the Federal Government level that will help clubs ev-

erywhere. Look for an update next month!

RANDY SEFFERIN has left **Life Fitness** to take a position with Diversified Products in Opelika, Alabama.

KEN LUCAS has left **CYBEX** to become the Vice President of Sales and Marketing for **STRIVE Enterprises, Inc.**, the company that brought the 'Incredible Hulk' - **LOU FERIGNO** to their exhibit at the IHRSA Convention last March in San Diego. Also, **CHIP MAYBERRY**, formerly the National Sales Manager for **TRACKMASTER**, and **GENE RAY**, formerly with **ICARIAN** and **CYBEX**, have left those firms to take positions with Strive. Good luck men in your new ventures!

CLUB INDUSTRY will have its big Annual Conference and Trade Show in Chicago, November 7-9th. To register call: (800) 541-7706 ext. 3.

TIM AND LIZ RHODE have opened **THE MARYLAND ATHLETIC CLUB AND WELLNESS CENTER** in Baltimore, Maryland. Good luck with your new operation Tim and Liz!

MICHAEL TALLA, the CEO of Sports Club Company is reported to be looking for a site for a new 100,000 square foot signature club in the tony North-Atlanta shopping, office area called **BUCKHEAD**. Also, a Sports Club concept is rumored to be going into Houston, near the Summit Arena.

Congratulations to **KEN GERMANO**, Vice President of Sales for **Cross Conditioning Systems**, for his selection as one of 10 Heathy American Fitness Leaders, as presented by the **U.S. Junior Chamber of Commerce (Jaycees)**, the American Council On

Exercise (ACE) and the National Fitness Leaders Association (NFLA). Over the past 14 years, 140 Americans have been honored with this award including, **Dr. Ken Cooper, John McCarthy, Jack LaLanne** and former President, **Ronald Reagan**.

CLUB CLOSINGS when improperly done, are bad for everybody in our industry, not to mention the members of the club. Recent closings by a Powerhouse Gym in Indiana and three American Fitness Centers in Louisville, Kentucky, could have been handled much more proficiently if the owners had planned the closing, advised their members well in advance and executed their plan. I realize that sometimes 'things just pile up on you and you may give up' but please realize that you can save yourself, your members, your creditors and our industry a

lot of grief and bad publicity by conceptualizing, planning and executing your club closing. Next month, we will publish a feature article entitled: "HOW TO CLOSE A HEALTH CLUB" I would like to hear from any of you that have experienced or witnessed club closings that were done well or not so well.

Your comments or history of these events will be kept totally confidential. My goal is to help our industry avoid the ongoing 'black-eyes' that we keep inflicting on ourselves by improperly executed club closings. Call me at: (800) 700-2120 or fax to: (770) 933-9698, I'd appreciate hearing from you as I prepare this very important article.

Congratulations to **DEAN WALLACE**, the General Manager of the Courthouse Athletic Clubs in Salem, Oregon, for his honor of winning the **WILLARD MARSHALL AWARD** given annually to the communities' top volunteer for the (See Norm's Notes page 31)



Norm Cates, Jr.

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MICROFIT'S HEALTHCARE CONNECTION MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS

By Neil Sol, Ph. D.

In this month's column, I want to briefly discuss three topics. The first, concerning the opportunities available to club owner/managers to gain insight and education pertaining to hospital club relationships. The second, concerning a personal experience I had with alternative care procedures that are and should be services available in health clubs and will attract interest of health care providers, and third, the opportunity for you, the reader, to submit questions pertain-

ing to specific club situations as it relates to health care connection.

TOPIC #1

The next few months offer several conferences and workshops throughout the U.S. whose theme focuses on health club - health care relationships. There are at least three opportunities, not including trade association sponsored meetings, that will provide informational tracks on these relationships. The hard task this fall will be choosing the conference that best suits your needs and budget. Some conference agendas are academic and not

practical where others offer tangible information that can immediately be put into practice. Look at these conferences as opportunities to gain consultative advice to help you with your specific needs. Select the conference based on your ability to obtain this general direction. Also, select conferences that are focused and comprehensive. Don't get me wrong, many of these conferences will offer valuable information, the most value of which may be the interaction with fellow conferees. However, since you have a choice, compare the content for that which relates to your needs and go where you can get questions answered.

TOPIC #2

During this past month I had a positive personal experience with alternative health care and realized the opportunity truly available to health clubs in this growing area of health care. Like millions of Americans, I hurt my lower back. I bent over to pick up my dog's food bowl and couldn't get back up. There really was no reason for my injury, but regardless, I was in pain. Interestingly, I have been doing consulting in an alternative health care clinic and decided to try to have them help me with my back. I had a massage to start, and it helped but it didn't cure my problem. I then went through a Feldenkrais therapeutic exercise and massage session for 1 hour and amazingly my low back trouble was gone. In the past, I had been a skeptic, but the use of massage and Feldenkrais exercise eliminated my spasms and lack of mobility!

As I've suggested in previous columns, health clubs already offer programs and services that are now considered alternative care. With positive results that are realized in both rehabilitative and prevention, the growing demand among health care institutions for sources of these procedures will continue to expand. Recently, I heard that one of the largest hospital corporations developed an alternative health care clinic in Denver. When I asked what did the clinic look like inside, the person I

asked said it looked like a health club.

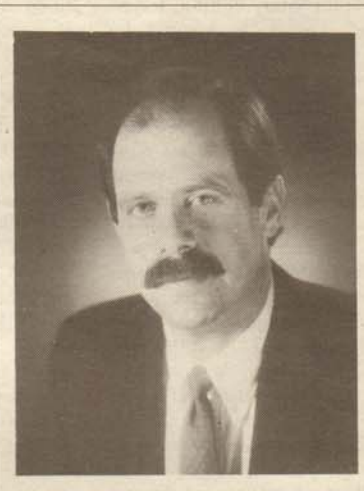
So how do clubs get Pilates or Feldenkrais and other alternative exercise instructors? Skilled - capable individuals are not always available, but I recently learned that there are certification programs for instructors of these forms of alternative exercise. Similar to ACE or AFAA certifications, clubs can send their exercise professionals to learn these procedures and not only develop new state-of-the-art programs and profit streams, but they can add another attractive addition to their portfolio. It brings the club to a relationship with health care. These certifications are now being developed and will soon be available for traditional trade groups. However, if you are interested in more information about current certification opportunities, write me: Neil Sol, Health Vantage, Inc., 664 South Ivy Way, Denver, Colorado, 80224.

TOPIC #3

For a number of years, **CLUB INSIDER** News with the sponsorship of the MICROFIT CORPORATION, has offered this column with a variety of tangible ideas for the club industry in developing and implementing mutually beneficial relationships with health care providers. We believe it is now time to become more specific and respond to your individual questions by presenting some columns as responses to those questions. You can be sure that if you have questions about a health care relationship that many other readers are also wondering about that same question. So, please feel free to write us and allow us the opportunity to offer insight into your efforts to connect to health care. We look forward to receiving your questions.

POST SCRIPT

As you have read on page 3 of this edition, The **CLUB INSIDER** News needs the sub-



Neil Sol, Ph. D.

scription support of you, the readers of the publication. A lot of you have been receiving complimentary copies of The **CLUB INSIDER** News each month for months now. However, you probably have noticed that the publication has not arrived for a couple of months, unless you paid for a subscription. So, to guarantee that you receive The **CLUB INSIDER** News every month, subscribe today!

In my opinion, The **CLUB INSIDER** News offers the industry practical- implementable information that aids facility managers in the day-to-day operation and strategic planning of their business. Norm Cates' publication is to the point and offers unadulterated trade information we all need. The **CLUB INSIDER** News is dedicated to keeping the club industry on the cutting edge. As a health club professional, it is incumbent on you to invest in multiple subscriptions to The **CLUB INSIDER** News; one for yourself and one for each of your key management staff. Don't miss any editions due to a delay in subscribing.... at its current subscription rate of \$49 per year, it is a steal.

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

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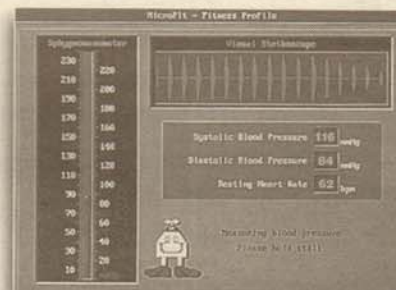
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...Crunch

continued from page 3

ugly, beautiful, white, black, yellow, old, young, professional, blue-collar, etc. His company philosophy has caused his operations in New York to be highly successful - now with 25,000 very diverse members in five locations.

To Madison Avenue types, branding is a term which is clear. To operators of health, racquet and sportsclubs, branding may be a concept which is unclear and unattainable. Levine begs to differ.

Doug Levine was born in New York City, educated at Tufts University (Class of '81) and by age 29 was a millionaire investment banker looking for a new challenge. He first gave acting a shot and found he wasn't good at it. He then started

Crunch. (The name was taken from the term used in abdominal training.) His first facility was a 1,288 square foot facility in Manhattan's East Village. Each of his locations now span at least 20,000 square feet.

Here is what Doug Levine had to say:

Q. CLUB INSIDER-
 "When you started Crunch, did you plan on starting a gym with plans to add more locations or did you start a gym with plans to add additional locations and build what appears to be the first ever multi-media conglomerate in the history of the health, racquet and sports club industry?"

A. DOUG LEVINE-
 "The idea was to use the gym as an engine for a brand. And I saw the fitness business as a fragmented business that was dominated by 'Mom and Pops' that was part of a broad positive long-term trend of Americans eating better and working out longer and socializing, not in bars, but in gyms, too. So, I thought I had a broad positive long-term trend, and it was an industry that was dominated by small regional players and Mom and Pops with the exception of Bally's. And, the idea was to create a gym that would be the engine for the brand."

DIFFERENTIATION LEADS TO BRANDING

The way that we did that - sought to differentiate ourselves in the early stages, was through eclectic group exercise classes. We had classes in the early days with live gospel choirs. We had classes that Geraldo and Cindy Crawford used to take and were featured on MTV House of Style. We had hip-hop classes with live rappers that were on the Today Show and on Good Morning America - so that different record labels would bring rappers. It was kind of neat. We were the first people to publicize the Spinning craze which had been around for 10 years. Then, Crunch publicized it for two years and it became a big national craze. We were also the first people to put a boxing ring in a health club. So we got to be known as innovators - people that were doing new and different - kind of exciting things."

"SO ALL THESE ECLECTIC AND UNUSUAL THINGS DID TWO THINGS:"

"It kept our members that were there happy..... people tend to get bored and tend to drop out and

by doing this we kept the retention very high..... because you didn't have to quit and go somewhere else because Crunch was always doing something which was new and different as well as the other stuff. And it got us a lot of national exposure. The national exposure is what attracted a group of substantial companies to joint venture projects to license our name. In the early days we were approached by Danskin to license our apparel. The deal didn't work, but what they were attracted to was Crunch's innovation and our ability to create out of a small New York presence, national exposure. So the creative programming side was one part of our business. The second part of our business was that we were the first people to design our clubs to look.... feel innovative.... almost like a night club.... a very cool - slick - hip night club. And so that we visually weren't throwing fluorescent lights in the ceiling and putting white tile on the floor and regular lockers from the locker companies. We spent a lot of attention to detail in the way that the clubs physically looked. So you had these clubs that were written about as being cool and hip and innovative anywhere from Self Magazine to the hip magazines like Details. And being featured on MTV

House of Style as well as CNN. Then you had these clubs that looked visually different than any other health clubs."

'AND THEN THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF OUR BUSINESS WAS THAT WE WERE VERY, VERY COOL AND HIP..... VERY, VERY NOTICED, BUT WE WERE VERY ACCEPTING,' unlike a night club that has a velvet rope that decides if you can come in. Crunch's tag line is 'No Judgements.' Crunch is a very sort of accepting..... non-judgmental place. Our staff could be 21 years old wearing a nose ring and we don't care about that, but they have to address everybody here in the universal language. So, if 50 Years ago "23 Skidoo" was a contemporary slang and you have whatever your contemporary slang is that you use makes people feel old... makes people feel not cool or not current, then you have to speak to people like I am speaking now in sort of a universal language. We train people to be very accepting of fat people, thin people, ugly people and we don't 'ga-ga' models or if somebody comes in with a bad nose job, we wouldn't be making comments at the desk after they walked by. We pay a lot (See *Crunch* page 9)

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Alan Schwartz Nominated Vice President of U. S. Tennis Association

Chicago, IL. - Alan Schwartz, Chairman of the Board of Tennis Corporation of America, was recently nominated as a Vice President of the United States Tennis Association (USTA). Schwartz has been a USTA Director at-large since January, 1995.

"As measured by the sale of tennis balls, tennis play has been increasing steadily for the past two years," said Schwartz. "The USTA, the governing body of tennis in the United States, has been working aggressively to continue this upward surge."

A resident of Highland Park, IL., Schwartz recently received a lifetime achievement award from Roosevelt University's (Chicago, IL.) Manfred Steinfeld hospitality management program for his leadership in the health and racquet club industry and his success in hospitality management.

In 1992, he received the International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association (IHRSA) Distinguished Service Award.

Schwartz, who is the winner of eight national tennis championships, serves on the Boards of the Graduate School of Business at Duke University, the Institute for European and Asian Studies, the National Public Parks Tennis Association and Firststar Illinois Bank Corporation.

In addition, he is Past President of the National Tennis Association and a member of the Club Industry Hall of Fame.

TCA currently owns and/or manages more than 40 clubs in the United States and Canada and consults for fitness and racquet sports facilities throughout the world. In addition, TCA manages corporate fitness centers for the McDonald's Corporation, The Travelers, Equity Group Investments, General Motors and Henry Ford Health System.



Alan Schwartz - Chairman Tennis Corporation Of America

...Crunch

continued from page 8

of attention, and it's a real concerted effort, to be very accepting of all different kinds of people from all walks of life. So we've attracted, over the years, a very, very diverse clientele..... from severely obese people to Cindy Crawford and Rachel Hunter. In L.A. (I'm out here now) they told me about all of the movie stars that have joined, Jeff Goldblum, David Schwimmer, all the people from Models, Inc., to our biggest corporate deal which is the UPS truck drivers and everybody in between. We have Hassidic Jews working out in one of our clubs in New York City next to all the production assistants at MTV. You know - with the nose rings and all that stuff. It tracks a sort of live and let live kind of philosophy. That's the backbone of our advertising, that's the backbone of our company. The idea is to have a cool gym that's progressively programmed with this underlying-pinning philosophy that is very, very accepting of all different types of people from all different walks of life. And using that gym philoso-

phy and the gym programming and the gym packaging in terms of how it looks as the engine we've created a lot of different - unique to the industry joint ventures and licensing opportunities."

MUCH MORE THAN A HEALTH CLUB CHAIN!

"We have a CD series, it's called "Heavy Breathing" the Crunch High Energy Workout by RCA Records, that's going to be out on November 1st. It will be sold at Virgin, Tower, Sam Goody - you know, all the major record retailers across the country. Big-big cross promotion we're doing with Sony at Service Merchandise. If you buy a Sony Walkman, you get the Crunch Heavy Breathing Album. We are doing a book with Doubleday called: 'Crunch - The Complete Guide To Health and Fitness' by Liz Neporent..... that will be out in early January. This year we had four exercise tapes on the market distributed through a Division of Handelman called Anchor Bay Entertainment. We sold over

400,000 exercise tapes.....we were in the Top 10 on the Billboard Charts and in the Top 10 on the Video Scan Charts. It was a huge initial launch. They were picked best videos by Shape Magazine. We are re-releasing those for 1997 as well as four more we've just completed. We think we will sell over 3/4 of a million videos in 1997. Those are sold in every Wal Mart, K Mart, Blockbuster, Target, Best Buy and they are in over 9,000 stores across the country. We've also licensed our name to three different apparel companies to produce Crunch Clothes to sell them to Macy's, Nordstroms, Sports Chalet, Sports Authority, Foot Locker, Paragon and Bloomingdales. The clothes are selling very well. We are in over 350 different doors across the country. Its been a big-big success for us. We are doing watches and back packs, hats, bags and bandanas. We are also doing a joint venture product with the Founder of Bobby Brown Cosmetics. We're not just licensing our name, we are joint venturing the project with him. We will have a complete line of hair and

skin care products with items from shampoo to sweat proof sunscreens and all kinds of stuff like that. That will be on the market in early March next year.

That's what we're doing. We have five gyms in New York City and we have one that's going to open on January 1st in Los Angeles which is why I am out here. It is in the Virgin Record Complex at 8000 Sunset Blvd..

Q. CLUB INSIDER - "What's the size of the LA deal?"

A. Doug Levine - "30,000 square feet."

Q. CLUB INSIDER - "What about the latest New York club?"

A. Doug Levine - "It is 44,000 square feet."

"The only other thing we are doing is a deal in Japan with Itochu, a giant Japanese trading company, to license our name for men's and women's apparel and sneakers in the Japanese market as well as to explore the possibility of licensing our gyms in Japan."

(NEXT MONTH - PART II of The CLUB INSIDER's interview with Doug Levine we ask

and get answers from Doug on the questions which follow. Don't miss our November edition for Part II of "CRUNCH FITNESS.... WAY OUT..... AND RIGHT ON!"

(1) How do you go about selecting employees and training them for your clubs?

(2) Your company is involved in publishing a book, making CDs, videos, apparel, internet 'Dream Shop', TV shows, mini-discs, international licensing, Crunch Course Infomercials, "Crunch-For-Kids" and Hypoxic Training and you are one guy. How are you keeping up with all of this?

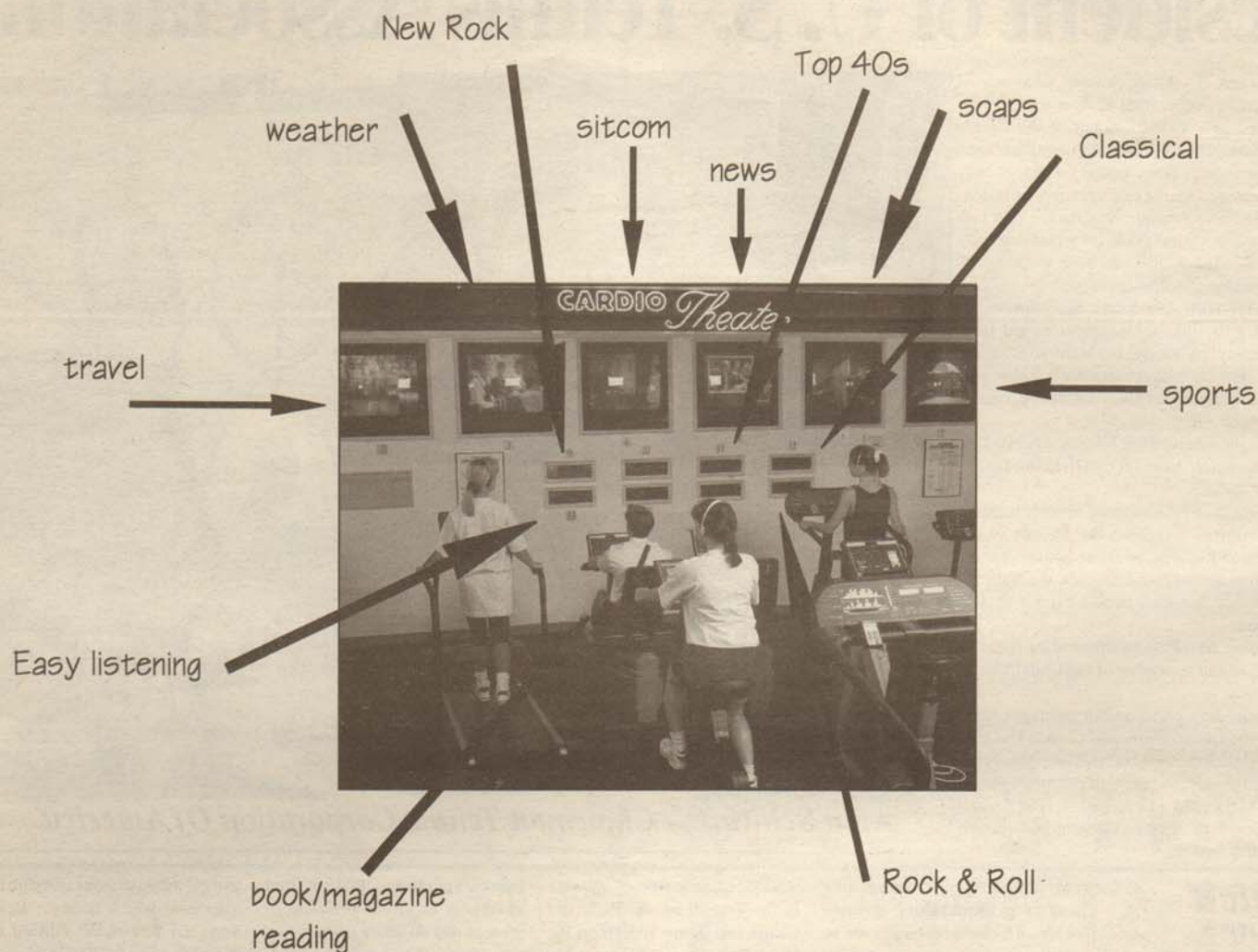
(3) For club owners out there that would like to 'Build A Brand'. What does building a brand really mean?

(4) Are you going to do licensing for clubs in the U.S.?

(5) How many locations do you project for L.A. and what are your next target cities?

(6) Could you tell me about the Hypoxic Training Room and how that is going?

(7) What is the story on the VH1 TV specials on Thanksgiving?



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Developing A U. S. P. To Differentiate Your Club From Your Competitor's

by Karen D. Woodard, President
 Premium Performance Training

(The following article is the first in a six-part series focusing on increasing the profitability of the membership sales process. In addition to Part 1, *Developing A U.S.P. To Differentiate Your Club From Your Competitor's*, the series will include: (2) *Using Competition Analysis To Your Advantage*, (3) *Image Boosting and Image Busting Language*, (4) *Creating A Partnership Between Front Desk and Membership*, (5) *Accreditation For Sales People*, and (6) *Staying Fresh To*

Avoid Burn-Out. Look for these separate articles over the next five editions of The CLUB INSIDER News.

Imagine a club that has everything a prospective member could possibly want or need, is reasonably priced so anyone in town could afford to be a member and there is no competition. The membership sales staff has a 95% first time closing ratio and those prospective members that don't join on the first visit always come back tomorrow to join.

OK, OK, OK — this sounds more like a goal we're

striving for than current reality for most clubs in the industry. Most of us have more competition than we care for, don't have an entire sales staff with closing ratios that high and lose some of our "be back" traffic to other clubs for numerous reasons. That is current reality. One of the best ways to move from current reality toward "the goal" is by using a 'power tool' called a U.S.P.

U.S.P. stands for Unique Selling Position. Basic level marketing courses teach you that U.S.P. stands for Unique Selling Proposition, which is also true and somewhat different than what we are discussing in this article. We are purposely talking about position because with a U.S.P. we are creating differentiation between our club and our competitor's that gives the prospective member a very clear picture of why your club is the club for them to join today. What I find most often in the majority of clubs is membership sales staff laundry listing features rather than how the feature will benefit the prospective member. For review purposes, your club having 20 Stair Climbers is a feature — the benefits of having 20 Stair Climbers would be no waiting to get in there to burn that fat, "cook your calories" and work on getting that heart to be stronger. In short, your U.S.P. is an honest, customized benefit statement on how your club will meet the needs of the prospective member better than any other facility in town.

HOW DO YOU CREATE YOUR U.S.P. ?

Let's do it right now, together, with these 3 steps:

(1) Think about the reasons people become members of your club over any other club in town and write those reasons down. Before you start writing, remember that this is a benefit statement not a feature statement, so you can't include features of the club. Think about adjectives or phrases such as "personalized", "no attitude", "your pace", "high energy", etc.

(2) Now think about the reasons people stay members of your club. This part is a biggie because it helps to answer the often unspoken objection of "will I really stick with this and get my

money's worth?" Follow the same process as outlined in Step 1.

(3) Now that you've come up with a good list of why people join and stay members of your club, it's time to put them together in sentence form. It is critical that you open your U.S.P. with the following verbiage:

"Mr. Prospect, there are really three major reasons people decide to join _____ (insert your club's name) over the other clubs in town and they are: (1) _____ and (2) _____ and (3) _____."

It is also critical that you continue with the following verbiage: "More importantly, our members stay with the _____ (insert your club's name). Does that sound like a match with what you're looking for?"

An example would be: "Mr. Prospect, there are really three major reasons people choose the ABC Club over other clubs in town and they are the creativity we provide in our fitness programming so you don't get bored with your workouts in a few months and stop coming, the personalized attention of our staff to your needs so we can help you reach those goals and finally the attention to detail and cleanliness in the club so you can always trust that you're getting your money's worth."

"More importantly, our members stay with the ABC Club because we have a solid reputation for not only getting you into better condition, but keeping you in better condition. Does that sound like a match with what you're looking for?"

You're now at the point where you've followed the 3 Steps and have developed a strong, general U.S.P. for your club. The next step is for you to take that statement and customize it based on the needs of the person you are with — which means the structure will remain the same but you will tweak, add and emphasize according to



Karen Woodard

what they need.

WHERE IS THE BEST PLACE TO USE YOUR U.S.P.?

The two most powerful places I recommend are on incoming phone calls and at the beginning of the tour. When you have an info call and you've thoroughly determined what the caller's needs are and feel there is a match to be made, that is the perfect time to employ your customized U.S.P. followed by "how does that fit with what you're looking for?" When the caller says "that sounds perfect", proceed to schedule an appointment for them to see the club. The tour scenario plays out equally as well when you've found out why they've come to your club today and what will motivate them to join or not join. At this point, based on what they've told you, you will deliver your U.S.P. and again follow up with "how does that fit with what you're looking for?" **HINT:** all of this needs to be done *before* you give the tour of the club to fully determine what the prospective member's real needs are and be able to customize your tour. Using the U.S.P. before the tour will assist in heightening their desire to be a member as well as affirm that this club is what they're looking for. In essence, you've started with a trial close. Good job!

Your U.S.P. will be a strong tool for you to build your (See Karen Woodard page 19)



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Healthy American Fitness Leaders Honored

Washington, D.C. - Health, sports and fitness dignitaries from around the country honored the inspiration and dedication of a special group of 10 people voted the 1996 Healthy American Fitness Leaders (HAFL) on Saturday, October 5, in Washington, D.C.

The 15th Annual HAFL banquet and awards ceremony, presented by the U.S. Junior Chamber of Commerce (the Jaycees) in cooperation with the American Council on Exercise (ACE) and the National Fitness Leaders Association

(NFLA), saluted dedicated Americans whose significant contributions to the promotion of health and fitness makes them role models for the nation.

Olympian John Naber, winner of four gold and one silver medal for swimming in the 1976 Olympic Games in Montreal, served as master of ceremonies for the gala.

Highlights of the ceremony weekend include a giant Jazzercise class led by Judi Sheppard Missett, a past HAFL

winner and founder and CEO of Jazzercise, Inc., in-line skating classes in front of the White House, a fun run and power walk, a Wet Workout class and a country western dance class.

Known as the "Academy Awards of Health and Fitness," 140 of America's premier health and fitness leaders have received the HAFL award, including Dr. Kenneth Cooper, Jack LaLanne, Kathy Smith, and former President Ronald Reagan. Judges seek accomplishments such as over-

coming a physical hardship or limitation, development of new physical fitness and health methods, voluntary service and contributions in physical science and education.

Being honored as 1996 Healthy American Fitness Leaders are:

- Lorna L. Francis, Ph.D., 42, San Diego, California
- Ken Germano, 44, Laguna Beach, California
- Jimmy Green, 41, Lawrenceville, Georgia

• Dr. Robert V. Hockey, 59, San Antonio, Texas

• Donna A. Lopiano, Ph.D., 50, East Meadow, New York

• Judy Mahle Lutter, 56, St. Paul, Minnesota

• Michael L. Pollock, Ph.D., 60, Gainesville, Florida

• Rich Ruffalo, 44, Bloomfield, New Jersey

• Vern D. Seefeldt, Ph.D., East Lansing, Michigan

• Glenn V. Swengros, 65, Kensington, Maryland

...Mike Lucci

continued from page 3

tirement?"

A. Mike Lucci - "Well, we haven't finalized everything.... there's still a bunch of loose ends. I don't know, I'll continue on for about 30 days, but the reality was last Friday (Oct.4th.) that's the day of the decision."

Q. CLUB INSIDER - "From the perspective of the capital raising issue, can you comment on that?"

A. Mike Lucci - "I think that might be premature..... we've

been chasing it for a while and I think they are getting closer. I don't have all the particulars and I think it might be a little premature to discuss how they are going to bring it in. They have three or four alternatives and I really don't know when its going to come to pass. A deal is not done until it is done.

Q. CLUB INSIDER - "Who is going to step into your shoes?"

A. Mike Lucci - "Lee Hillman. Lee was the CFO of Entertainment and for a while the CFO of Bally Total Fitness and for a while the Executive Vice Presi-

dent of Bally Total Fitness. His strong suit and his team, they have worked long and hard.... they did the securitization..... many people thought that wouldn't get done.... they did the securitization a couple of years ago - that's coming up for renewal - they will get that rolled over. Their focus obviously has been in the financial community..... I believe that they are going to be able to do some good things with the restructuring of the debt."

Q. CLUB INSIDER - "Which is a paramount issue at this time I'm sure."

A. Mike Lucci - "We've been doing things with mirrors..... I mean one of the frustrating things during the time I have been in charge, is that there are many things that have needed to be done and there are many things that I wanted to do, but the capital limitations were such that you had to kind of bite your tongue and say we'll do part of it. We spent 2 or 3 million dollars on treadmills and that didn't even dent the surface. When you start looking at the amount of clubs we have and you start spreading them around, in many cases we've got 3 or 4 tread-

mills where we need 20. In some of our larger clubs in our bigger markets we have a sufficient amount of equipment, but in many of the clubs in the outlying communities, they certainly have not had the benefit of the new equipment."

Q. CLUB INSIDER - "How many years were you in the role of CEO and President of the Bally chain?"

A. Mike Lucci - "Since 1991."

Q. CLUB INSIDER - "Prior to that you were with Chi- (See Mike Lucci page 22)

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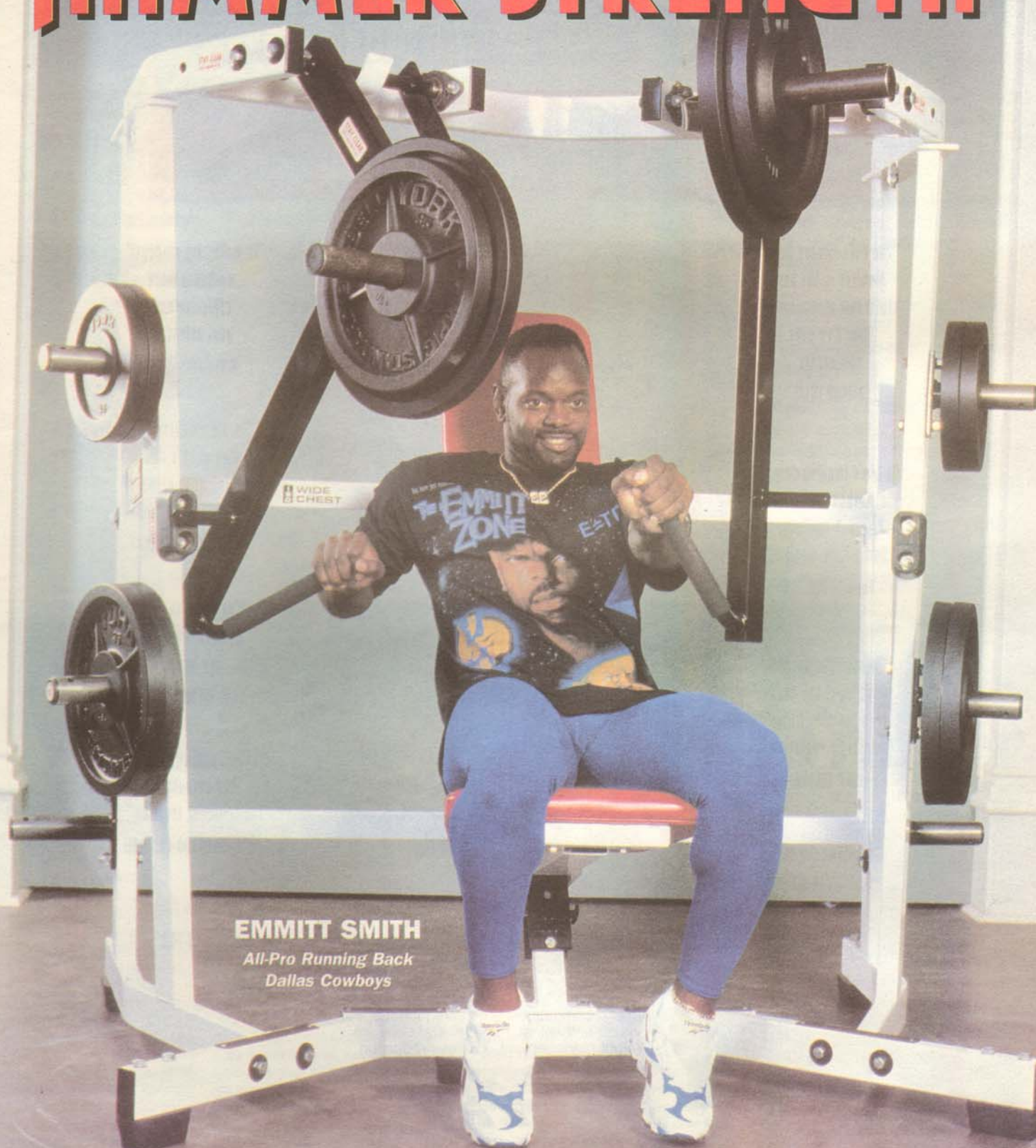


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How To Maximize Your Income Working As A Personal Trainer

By Paul Bruni

If there's one thing I've learned over my 10-year career working as a personal trainer, it's that what I do for a living is a business. Not unlike any service business, a personal trainer provides a service in exchange for a fee.

To maximize your income, you simply need to train as many people as possible every business day and be compensated fairly for your time. The problem is, many trainers don't understand the business aspects of the personal training profession. There are 3 basic rules you need to know in order to maximize your income:

- (1) Effectively market your services.
- (2) Create a rate structure payment plan that is fair and competitive.
- (3) Learn how to efficiently schedule and reschedule clients.

If you are not efficiently executing each segment of your business, you are definitely losing money. In order to give you the tools needed to maximize your income, let's break down each segment specifically and give you some ideas to work with

HOW TO EFFECTIVELY MARKET YOUR SERVICE

In order to effectively market your services, you need to know who your market is. Given the cost of working out with a trainer (approximately \$35 per session), your prospective clients are those who have the disposable income to afford your service.

Knowing this, you must concentrate your marketing efforts to those who fall into this category. Depending on where you operate your business, there are 2 parts to your marketing plan - Part 1 - for the residential market and Part 2 - for the commercial mar-

ket.

The residential market consists of prospective clients who live in the area you work, while the commercial market consists of those who work but may not live in this area.

RESIDENTIAL MARKET

To target the residential market, you can implement some of the following low cost/ no cost marketing ideas:

Send a direct mail piece which briefly explains the many benefits of working with a personal trainer. You can acquire a mailing list by simply using a local phone book and target specific streets or neighborhoods, again limiting it to those prospective clients who may have the disposable income to afford your service.

Provide a complimentary presentation on the topic of health and fitness to various organizations. By giving a seminar on the topic of health and fit-

ness, you can get recognition, meet with potential clients and possibly provide an informative handout that includes your name and phone number as well as information covered in the presentation. The local country club or private social club may be an excellent audience to reach.

Get involved with local charities or social organizations looking for prizes to give away at specific events. Provide a complimentary workout session pass for all who attend a charity event and a grand prize of 3 or 4 workout sessions. This will give you tremendous exposure to a select audience and provides the event with a quality gift and prize.

Run an advertisement in a local publication. This approach can be very effective if the



Paul Bruni

community you wish to service has a widely read publication. Running a consistent advertisement can become an effective investment if you get calls from sincerely interested (See Paul Bruni page 28)

TENNIS AND FUN: PART II

By Spike Gonzales

Tennis pros and administrators are the most significant influence on the mind-set of your members and the nature of your club culture. Have you, as a club owner or manager, examined the philosophies and practices of these tennis leaders?

A tennis club can thrive when it has a culture exuding fun. Fun is what keeps members coming back. Fun is the "engagement of the mind in a satisfying pattern or sequence."* Do your pros and administrators know how to enhance the qualities of tennis to engage the minds of your members?

Tennis is without a doubt one of the most valuable recreational outlets. Compared to many of its alternatives it is a compact, economical, invigorating, social, healthful and fitness-oriented activity. While tennis offers so many benefits, we should recognize its shortcomings in providing fun for its participants.... particularly in relation to our club environment.

First, for many of its participants, tennis is not aerobic. This is particularly so when racquet skills are not advanced enough for players to sustain rallies. The goal of improved physical fitness is a powerful element in engaging the mind, as shown by the legions of enthusiasts in our pure fitness activities. Too often, newcomers to tennis never reach the skill level where they can receive weight management and cardio-vascular benefits from tennis. There is no engaging in the satisfying process of physical fitness improvement.

Address the issue of tennis falling short in providing fitness, pros and administrators should provide convenient, economic and expert instruction in developing beginner and advanced beginner playing skills. In the past decade, unfortunately, it seems clubs have focused on developing tournament juniors and competitive league adults.

They've spent more time in refining skills of players already committed to tennis rather than in bringing in new players through the difficult early learning stages.

Another shortcoming of tennis in engaging our minds is that its action generally occupies only 20% of the time on the court. Whether we like it or not, much of our tennis activity is taken up with retrieving balls, determining score, changing starting positions and sides and waiting for the serve to start play. While the rally is the molecule of fun in tennis, these non-engaging activities outweigh rallies by three or four times.

Do your pros aim to counterbalance this shortcoming? They can enhance the fun of tennis by imparting defensive skills to their students. As players learn to use the racquet to keep the ball in play, they improve their chances of longer rallies and more fun (and fitness) on the tennis court.

Further, do your pros spend time helping novice players develop the habits related to keeping play moving? Many pros overlook some of the most elementary fundamentals in teaching structure. These are issues such as maintaining agreement on the score, proper and efficient warm-up procedures and keeping track of the balls. Weaknesses in such areas increase the tedium at the beginning levels of play, sometimes making it impossible for the players to stay involved with the game.

One example of a weakness in teaching the lower levels of play is the common reliance by pros on a basket of balls during supervised play periods in group lessons. The students never acquire the habits of keeping play moving with the usual three balls. When they try playing on their own, significant time is wasted when the balls and server don't rendez-vous at the appropriate place promptly after each point. The resulting slow pace can effectively demotivate the new players.

While a win-or-lose outcome is one of the most important

factors in engaging the minds of goal-oriented tennis players, it can also be a detracting element when pros do not perceive some of its nuances. Pros inducing students to measure success solely on wins and losses can very often frustrate players to the point of quitting altogether. Keep in mind, 50% of your players are going to lose. If everyday 50% of your clientele feel they have been thwarted in attaining their goals, the longevity of your business is certainly jeopardized.

Pros and club programs should always emphasize the incremental development of playing skills as the main element of tennis goal-setting. A culture of acquiring skills and self-improvement will be much healthier than a culture in which winning is tantamount. Pros should help students learn to accept goals such as developing consistent backhands, learning to hit with spin, improving serve accuracy and the like. Clubs should have programs allowing players to "graduate" to higher instructional levels based on skill development, not just on competitive results.

Likewise, clubs should provide tennis classification systems allowing players to set realistic competitive goals. It's inadequate to operate in .5 increments on the National Tennis Rating Program. It's unrealistic for a 3.5 player, for instance, to set a short term goal to get to the next level of 4.0. The segmentation is too broad. Going to a higher level could take many years of concerted effort, if possible at all.

As an owner or manager, are you in touch with the philosophies and practices of your pros and programs? I always encourage regularly scheduled weekly meetings between owners/managers and pros. "Are the club's programs developing a culture of fun?" This should be a frequently discussed

topic at these meetings! (*See last month's column.)

(Spike Gonzales has been building tennis markets since 1971. He was a prime developer of Tennis Corporation of America's "Tennis in No Time"®, and an advisor to the USTA in starting Play Tennis America. An influential member of the USPTA, USTA and IHRSA, he helped bring those organizations together to found the National Tennis Rating Program. He presently serves as an advisor to Tencaps, Inc., a USPTA-endorsed tennis rating and handicapping system, and consults with clubs wishing to improve their marketing, management teams and tennis



Spike Gonzales

professionals. He may be reached at: (941) 774-2442.)

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AAC... "We're Here To Work"

...Karen
Woodard

continued from page 12

success in sales personally as well as for the club. The sooner you implement it and use it regularly on every call and tour, the sooner you will notice a difference in your clos-

ing ratio because you are creating a difference in the prospective member's mind about your club.

(Karen Woodard, President of Premium Performance Training in Boulder, Colorado, creates successful sales training, operations training and management training programs for the health, racquet and fitness industry. Karen

is a 12-year veteran of the club industry and co-owner of four Boulder, Colorado fitness facilities. She can be reached at: (303) 417-0653 and will also be speaking at Club Industry November 6-9, the IHRSA/Athletic Business Conference in December and the IHRSA International Convention in April.)

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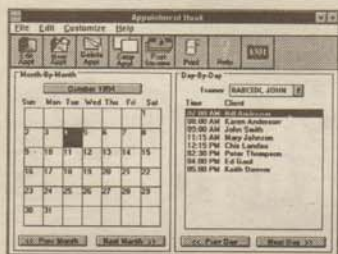
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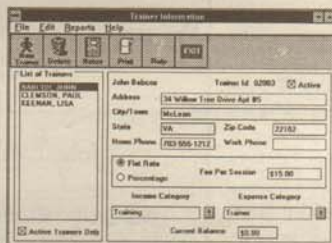
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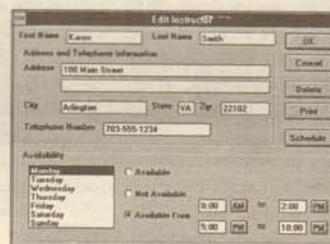
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Waukesha Hospital Drops Plan For Tax-Exempt Fitness Center

Waukesha, WI. - The Waukesha Memorial Hospital has announced that it will not seek tax-exempt financing for a proposed \$11 million fitness center. Officials at the hospital admitted that public opposition to the tax-exempt facility, which was led by local IHRSA members, was a major factor in this decision.

According to Waukesha Memorial Hospital President, Ford Titus, the hospital will still build the fitness center but it will use taxable financing and will operate as a for-profit entity subject to income and sales taxes.

The announcement by

Titus marks a 180-degree reversal from his previous stance. Although club owners first expressed their opposition to the proposal in June, Titus and other Waukesha Memorial Hospital officials dismissed the IHRSA members' concerns as unwarranted. Undaunted, club operators led by John Gebhardt of Lake Country Racquet Club, Kay Yuseph of Highlander Elite Fitness and Racquet Club, Ted Torcivia of West Allis Athletic Club and Ray O'Connor of Waukesha Athletic Club, organized an effort to oppose the facility. They enlisted the help of

two area Congressmen, Gerald D. Kleczka, a Democrat, and F. James Sensenbrenner, a Republican. Both Congressmen publicly opposed the use of tax-exempt bonds for this project and introduced legislation to prohibit such use nationwide. Club owners wrote letters to the editor and even bought advertising space to get their message out.

All in all, IHRSA members along with other small business owners, a restaurant association, the Wisconsin Merchants Federation and many state and local officials, put forth an impressive coalition to oppose the hospital's tax-exempt plans. Now that the

victory over the proposed fitness center's tax status has been won, IHRSA members hope to influence the kind of facility the hospital will build. Club owners would like the hospital to build what it claims it wants, namely, a medical wellness center that is easily accessible to patients and Waukesha residents of all income levels. They question why the hospital needs a fitness center that will rival the best commercial clubs in the area and why it will be located in an affluent community several miles away from the main hospital campus. IHRSA members intend to keep

public pressure on the hospital to answer these questions.

Is there a lesson to be learned from this situation? "Club operators facing unfair competition should examine every avenue available to them," says Helen Durkin, IHRSA's Director of Government Relations. "Visit your member of Congress, talk to the media, network with other businesses and community leaders," she says. "Because you never know which contact will pay off." There is no doubt that Kleczka and Sensenbrenner's vocal opposition of the Waukesha facility helped bring about this important victory.

...Mike Lucci

continued from page 14

cago Health & Tennis before you retired from football weren't you?"

A. Mike Lucci - "Yes, I did, I started in 1972. Of course Bally didn't purchase the clubs until 1983, but I served in different functions and was part of the Corporation prior to that."

Q. **CLUB INSIDER** - "Back to football, how many years did you play in the NFL?"

A. Mike Lucci - "12 years."

Q. **CLUB INSIDER** - "I remember when I was a kid and I used to watch you on T.V."

A. Mike Lucci - "Yeah, I see a lot of guys who tell me that and when I hear it, I look at them and say damn, am I that old? Its been a great run. I've got no complaints."

Q. **CLUB INSIDER** -

"How old are you now?"

A. Mike Lucci - "56"

Q. **CLUB INSIDER** -

"Mike, I wish you the very best in the future. Do you have any idea for your next challenge? You've already had two great careers - 12 years in the NFL and 24 years in the club business."

A. Mike Lucci - "Yes, I have had two great careers. I've got some business interests. I've got a partner and we own some fast food restaurants. You know, I've got a lot of things to keep me busy..... the phones are ringing off the hook. I've got people telling me, 'we've got some money, if you want to do something. I've said I'm looking to get out of work, not to get into work. You know, the business (club) is in my blood.... I think that's a big part of it. Who knows? I may resurface with kind of a little operation

and have a little fun with it and not have to worry about 327 (locations) of them."

Q. **CLUB INSIDER** - "I guess not having to worry about 327 locations will be a relief for you won't it?"

A. Mike Lucci - "The frustration is the tough part of it. Had we had the capital to do it right, I think that it would have been a wonderful job and a lot of fun. I had a great time and I'm not saying it was a bad job by any means, but the point of it is when you feel like you are hamstrung it's very difficult..... you get frustrated and it wears on you slightly."

Q. **CLUB INSIDER** - "Mike, I wish you the very best of luck in the future. I really appreciate your call and appreciate the time with you."

A. Mike Lucci - "Thank you, Norm."

Bel Air A. C. And Central Maryland YMCA Hold Seminar

The Bel Air Athletic Club and the YMCA of Central Maryland recently held a senior management staff seminar day at the Bel Air Athletic Club in Harford County, Maryland. The purpose of the program was for personnel of both organizations to obtain a more direct and personal understanding of each organizations' current activities and to identify potential joint programs that will benefit the Harford County community. Late this summer the Bel Air Athletic Club and the Harford County YMCA sponsored bicycle and canoe trips for county teens.

Bel Air Athletic Club staff this fall will visit the newly renovated Druid Hill YMCA which has been a Baltimore City institution since the early 1900's and one of eight branches that comprise the YMCA of Central Maryland. Bel Air Athletic Club President and Chairman of the International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association's (IHRSA) Fair Competition Committee, Roger Ralph said, "it has long been my view that there has been far too little direct dialogue between YMCAs and tax-paying health clubs. The result of this is an absence of mutual appreciation

and understanding of each other's role in a community. More importantly, without this dialogue it's difficult to build models of cooperation which we view as an important long-term positive objective for IHRSA Clubs and YMCAs throughout the country."

Lee Jensen, who became the Chief Executive Officer of the YMCA of Central Maryland in April of 1995 said, "this staff exchange was the first step in building people relationships, because without relationships of staff, it is almost impossible to accomplish anything of substance for the future."

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

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Building Our Future Through Team Building And Development

By Craig Pepin-Donat

As club operators, there are many things that we can focus on in an effort to build our industry for the future. One of the primary ways to grow our industry, is by building our member base through creative advertising and marketing campaigns as well as effective sales systems and service programs. Obviously, these are key areas to focus on if we are to build our industry. There is however, the other side of the coin in terms of growing our industry which is our abil-

ity to recruit, train and develop key individuals that will become our next generation of fitness management professionals. Since we know that there are as few as 15% of the U.S. population involved in a regular exercise program and the media continues to flood the public with information on the positive benefits of exercise and proper nutrition along with the new position from the Surgeon General on the negative effects of physical inactivity, there is nowhere to go but up in terms of growing our industry! The real key to our future success is in **TEAM BUILDING**.

I remember when I first

started in the industry about 16 years ago as a fitness instructor how excited I was to have the opportunity to work in such an exciting environment. Once I grew into sales and management, I knew right away that I was in it for life. The odd thing was that every time someone asked me what I did for a living and I told them I managed a health club, they would always say, "Oh, are you also in school?" or "What do you plan on doing in the future?" It was as if people didn't think of the fitness industry as a real career. Needless to say, I love it when I see some of those same people today, most of whom spent years in school preparing themselves for a career that they are now miserable in. The point is, our industry offers one of the most incredible career opportunities in the world. The only thing we need to do is get the message across to all the people that have not yet figured out what they want to be when they grow up.

By the way, figuring out what you want to be when you grow up has nothing to do with your age. It has more to do with reaching the point in your life when you are no longer confused or unhappy about your future, you are excited and enthusiastic about what you do for a living, you have a clear growth path and you are making great money while doing it. I have seen people of all ages that are unhappy with their career who fall into the industry because they decided that they needed to get into shape, which led them to joining a club, which led them to a position in the club. Once a member, they start to see how exciting the environment can be and if they get lucky enough to meet a staff member in the club that can give them some encouragement, they just might find themselves on a new career path with fantastic opportunity. The unfortunate thing is that we have an incredible number of individuals that are already working for us that have not yet figured out what they want to be when they grow up.

Many of the individuals that work in our industry have fallen into it for reasons other



Craig Pepin-Donat

Tom Gergley and Kevin Sagafi, who gave me my first shot in upper management, or Mark Mastrov who is currently giving me my club industry MBA. Everything you are in life is based on the sum total of those that you surround yourself with and learn from.

2. Monitor their progress - Offer suggestions on ways to improve their performance and expand their skill set. Get them to read material that is relevant to their profession. It still amazes me to this day how few of our club level staff even read our industry publications. Get them a subscription to The CLUB INSIDER News, CLUB INDUSTRY, CBI or any other publications that you think will educate them on the industry. Constantly give them articles to read, tape series to listen to, training videos to watch, or send them to relevant seminars. In short, keep them busy learning.

3. Show them what you do - Have them sit in on a portion of a project or task that you are personally taking responsibility for that you think will help develop their skills. Explain what the nature of the project is and how you are handling it and why. Encourage them to ask questions and even give input.

4. Give them minor tasks or projects that are beyond their scope of responsibility - Let them know you are doing this to see how they can handle different situations as a way to evaluate their ability to take on more responsibility for the future. Once they have completed the project or task, sit down and review it with them. Ask questions as to how they went about it and why. Offer feedback, direction and of course praise their efforts.

5. Expose them to different environments and different people - Give them the opportunity to learn from as many individuals and environments as possible. If, for example, you are trying to develop a future club manager from a sales counselor position, you would want them to spend time with your various department heads so they can understand (See *Craig Pepin-Donat* page 28)

than pursuing a long-term career. Some are working their way through school or are competitive individuals that have been involved in some kind of sports or athletics and work for a club simply so they don't have to pay for a membership. Many get into club sales as a fun way to make some money until they figure out what they want to do in life. There are many other circumstances in which we get our team players, but the key to team building is identifying the characteristics of a future key player and grooming them for success.

TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT BASICS

1. Become a Mentor - Identify a key individual and let them know that you want to help them grow and go out of your way to spend time with them. Act as a guidance counselor by listening to their problems and give them feedback and direction on a regular basis. Share with them some of your experiences on the things that you have done to become successful as well as the things you have done that may have taken you off course at some point and what you did to get back on track.

Any level of success that I have experienced in life I owe to individuals that took the time to help me grow and steer me in the right direction. Starting from when I was eleven years old heading down the wrong road when a guy named Ron Pirez, the Director of a local YMCA, took me under his wing and got me involved in sports,

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AAC... "We're Here To Work"

...Craig Pepin-Donat

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stand all aspects of the club operation.

In our structure at 24 Hour Fitness, we have multiple locations and scenarios available to develop individuals. For example, before we would ever consider promoting an Assistant Manager to the position of Club Manager, we

would have them work in several locations with different club managers and district managers so they can learn from a variety of individuals. In addition, it gives us the flexibility to monitor performance in different scenarios such as, small lower volume clubs where outreach skills are a must, large multi-purpose high volume clubs where time management skills are essential or suburban family oriented clubs where strong member service skills are a major focus. The key is simply to train them to be well rounded by exposing them to different learning environments.

...Bruni

continued from page 18

prospective clients or a waste of money if you don't get the message across. I would prefer you initially try promoting yourself before spending any money on a advertisement.

COMMERCIAL MARKET

To target the commercial market, try some of the following approaches:

Get the name of each doctor, lawyer, accountant and beauty parlor in your area through the local yellow pages and send a letter or brochure promoting your service. You have absolutely nothing to lose by calling or sending information to prominent business people in your area. Most likely, they have disposable income and may want a way to alleviate stress, decrease unwanted body fat and increase their level of energy.

Contact the human resources person in a large company and have that person either distribute information for you or offer to give a presenta-

6. Become an Artist - If you are going to maintain the level of interest and focus of the individual that you are trying to develop, you have to constantly paint the picture for their long term growth, development and success. The reason people move from job to job or industry to industry is that they are looking for something better. If they see light at the end of the tunnel and understand that there are long term benefits for them, you will have a much higher success rate in developing them and lower your attrition.

One of the most important

tion right in their office. The job of someone in human relations is to bring this kind of information to company employees. Simply call any big business in your area and ask for the director of human resources. Introduce yourself and tell them how your services can benefit employee productivity, reduce employee absenteeism and increase employee morale.

Provide a complimentary workout session.

Once you get a prospective client inquiring about your service, an excellent way to start a working relationship is to provide

messages that I try to convey to team members that are confused about their future is that every time they make a change to a new job or a new industry, they have to start all over again, usually at the bottom. I always tell them that one of the primary reasons that I have been able to achieve any level of success in my life is because sixteen years ago I figured out what I wanted to be when I grew up and I stuck with it and opened my mind to learn as much as I could in order to develop my skill set and knowledge base within the fitness industry.

Plain and simple, the fu-

a complimentary workout session. This will give you an opportunity to show the prospective client what a personal training session is all about and it gives the interested person a risk-free way of finding out about the service you provide.

I've experienced tremendous success by offering a complimentary session because it shows the prospective client you are a professional and confident in your abilities. I highly recommend you try this approach.

Once your business is starting to become established, you'll find that referrals will be the main source for your new clients.

ture growth of our industry will be based on our ability to recognize the diamonds in the rough and follow a specific course of actions that will simply help them determine what they want to be when they grow up and help them get there.

(Craig Pepin-Donat is the President of The Northern Division of Fitness Holdings, Inc. d/b/a 24-Hour Fitness, which now operates 114 facilities in California, Nevada and Colorado. Pepin-Donat was formerly the President of New York Health & Racquet Clubs in New York City.)

A satisfied client is your best advertisement and will no doubt help your business grow to it's greatest potential. If a client comments that a friend or relative seems interested in working with you, simply tell your client you'll provide a complimentary consultation so the person can see for themselves what the service is all about.

Create a rate structure/payment plan that is fair and competitive.

Once you provide a complimentary session to a prospective client, you will always be asked how much your service (See Bruni page 29)

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...Bruni

continued from page 28

costs. I wouldn't be surprised if this is the first question asked by most prospective clients. Don't ever be afraid to quote your rate per session, but make sure the person understands what they're getting for their dollar.

I've always looked at my service as an investment for my clients. They are investing in their health and fitness and this particular investment pays tremendous dividends to those who take full advantage of the wealth of knowledge provided by their trainer.

You need to determine a session rate for your service based on:

- the service itself
- the travel time involved
- the number of sessions

per week the client is purchasing. It is safe to say that a rate of \$35 to \$55 and in some cases even more, is fair based on the three

factors stated above.

Offer a payment plan

There are 3 basic ways you can accept a payment for your services:

- by the session
- on a weekly payment plan
- on a monthly payment plan

It is always best to have a client pay in advance for your service. This way you are guaranteed payment and your client is now motivated to make his session. Remember, time is money and make sure your clients understand that.

If they miss a session that is pre-paid, make sure it was for a very good reason if they intend to be able to make it up without losing it. If a client decides to cancel at the last minute due to laziness or a last minute business meeting, that is their loss. They shouldn't put their business ahead of your scheduled session, because that says it's more important for them to make

money and it's acceptable to let you lose a training slot.

If you offer a weekly or monthly payment plan, make sure to discount their rate accordingly. Obviously, a monthly payment plan deserves a better discount than a weekly. Very often, I would have a client pay for 11 sessions and throw in the 12th for free if they chose to train 3 times per week for a month on a pre-payment basis.

A simple way of getting clients to pay when it comes to the initial purchasing of sessions or at renewal time, simply provide them with a bill that has a breakdown of the number of sessions they purchased, the cost per session and the day and date (if applicable) of each workout session. They will either pay you right then or usually at your next workout session.

Always keep very accurate records of when you trained each client, especially if they've paid in advance. You want to know at all times where you stand with clients in order to notify them when their sessions are up and make sure you don't give any workouts away for free because you don't know when the client has used all of his sessions.

Learn how to efficiently schedule and reschedule clients.

Once you successfully market your services and get clients, now you need to become an expert at effectively scheduling clients.

You must obviously re-

alize that prime time training hours are opposite prime time work hours. Your busy times of day should be about 6 am, to 10 am and from about 4 pm to 8 pm. The mid day is generally a slow time for training.

You definitely need to let every client know what the rules are regarding postponements and cancellations before a situation arises. My advice is to have clients call you the day before a scheduled session, if possible, to inform you of a cancellation or postponement because it gives you ample time to schedule other clients into that time slot or maybe switch clients around to prevent a cancellation altogether.

A factor that can get in the way of maximizing your income is clients who may constantly cancel or postpone sessions at the last minute, which undoubtedly some will do. When you have a situation where a client cancels at the last minute, how do you handle it? Should you allow the client to reschedule at no cost or should the cancellation constitute a workout session?

The answer is it's a judgment call. If you feel the client is in a jam and has no choice, then you may let it slide once in a while, but beware of clients who will cancel at any time and expect to be able to make up the session without being charged. You need to stand your ground if you feel a client is trying to take advantage of your system.

A classic example of this occurred when a client told me he couldn't make a workout at the last minute due to an unexpected business meeting. I simply told him if

he needed to cancel a workout because he was trying to make more money, then he must compensate me for my time in order for me not to lose money.

Basically, it comes down to mutual respect. If a client understands by cancelling at the last minute you lose money, he should understand and be willing to compensate you. If certain clients don't see the logic to that concept, then they probably don't respect your business.

I'm not saying this will happen often, but if it does occur, you should know how to appropriately handle the situation.

In the event of a client who gives you advance notice of a cancellation or postponement, immediately reschedule the session in order to keep the client training on a consistent basis. It's very easy for some clients to get so caught up in cancellations that they start missing more workouts than they make. Always find another time or day that works with your client's busy schedule and prevent interruptions in your training schedule.

Remember, to effectively maximize your income, you need to conduct as many training sessions on a daily basis as possible and be compensated fairly for your time. Hopefully, some of the information provided will allow you to generate more revenue.

(Paul Bruni is the owner of Garden City Personal Training Center in Garden City, New Jersey and a veteran of 10 years as a personal trainer. Thanks for the article Paul!)

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Life Fitness Complex World Class

By Norm Cates, Jr.

Franklin Park, IL.- Augie Nieto, the CEO and President of the giant Life Fitness Corporation based in Franklin Park, Illinois, is without a doubt one of the fitness industries' most successful entrepreneurs. He has taken his company from its origin 17 years ago, when he began selling Life Cycles out of the back of a van in Southern California to a highly successful company with annual gross revenues in the range of \$175 million. Life Fitness manufactures and sells a complete line of computerized cardiovascular equipment, computerized Life Circuit weight equipment and a line of

selectorized weight machines.

Recently, fitness and club industry journalists were invited to visit the Life Fitness headquarters, factory and new, 206,000 square-foot warehousing facility located in Franklin Park, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. The Life Fitness Complex can best be described as "World Class." In addition to the marketing, sales and administration teams at the Life Fitness factory/headquarters building, Life Fitness employs 150 hourly wage employees at the complex. Life Fitness also has a factory in California.

QUALITY CONTROL MAJOR FOCUS

Life Fitness products

have been known from the beginning for being very durable and dependable in heavy-use commercial environments. The reason is that every single machine sold by Life Fitness endures inspections via a rigid four-step Quality Control system that Life Fitness employees to insure quality.

(1) All materials used to create the various lines of equipment sold by Life Fitness are carefully inspected in the Step One inspection facility located in the new warehouse building located across the street from the Headquarters/Factory building.

(2) A second level of inspection happens during the assembly period for each machine.

(3) After production is completed, each machine is again

tested for perfect operation prior to packaging in the shipping crate.

(4) Final post-production inspections are done on a random basis when sealed crates are actually pulled off the line, the machine removed from the crate and tested one final time.

Of course, what goes on prior to production, testing, packaging and shipping is equally important and impressive. Life Fitness employs a staff of 55 full-time engineers whose job it is to research, design and specify exact dimensions, weights and functions of the thousands of parts to compose the equipment. Each engineer uses high-tech computerization to aid in the design and pre-pro-

duction testing of all equipment. And, each component of each machine is carefully considered and studied for improvement prior to production.

Life Fitness has developed a new piece of equipment which is currently going through the intensely thorough pre-production testing and fine tuning. After seeing the machine in the testing facility and trying it myself, I predict that the new machine, whose identity has yet to be unveiled to the marketplace by Life Fitness, will be extremely well received by club members world-wide and club operators will be thrilled when they get their hands on it!

Stay tuned for more news on the latest Life Fitness creation!

Group Cycling Phenomenon - Part II All Body Cycling Program A Hit!

By Norm Cates, Jr.

Last month we published a report for you on the Group Cycling Programs which are taking the fitness industry by storm. In that article, we interviewed two club operators who have successfully installed the Group Cycling Programs developed by the Keiser Corporation.

This month we interviewed two club operators who had installed and are operating the Life Fitness All Body Cycling Program. We spoke with Pam Green, the Fitness Manager and newsletter editor for the Wimbledon Sportsplex in Memphis, Tennessee, and Carolyn Wisdom, the Programs Director at the Mission Valley YMCA in San Diego, California.

**PAM GREEN -
FITNESS MANAGER -
WIMBLETON
SPORTSPLEX -
MEMPHIS, TENN.**

Pam has been with the

175,000 square-foot Wimbledon Sportsplex since 1985. The facility is 25 years old and in 1985 the owners added a full fitness component to the club. Pam related with great enthusiasm her feelings about the Life Fitness ABC Program. Here is what she had to say: "We installed the Life Fitness ABC Cycling Program after the IHRSA Convention in San Diego in March. We went to the convention with the intention of acquiring new bikes. We looked at everything available including the Schwinn 'Spinning' Program. At the convention we met Steve Wright and tried the ABC Program on the showroom floor. We purchased 14 new ABC Program bikes. The program is working out great! The big plus about the ABC Cycling Program is that when the bikes are not being used for classes, they are readily available on the fitness center floor for any member to use. We purchased a microphone and headset system so each member during class can hear the music and the instructor without disrupting the others on the fitness floor. The sound system only

cost \$2,500 and it gives us this great flexibility. We considered the typical "spinning" bikes, but decided on the Life Fitness ABC Program so the bikes can be used during non-class hours and if group cycling ever declines in popularity, (which I don't think will happen anytime soon). We will still have bikes that are much more member user friendly than the typical "spinning" bikes. We conduct 14-ABC classes per week with a total of 45 aerobic classes per week for the club. The great part of the ABC Program is that the member can set his/her own level of intensity. This allows the classes to be attended with a mixed group of low-fit and highly fit members. Another great part of the program is that probably everybody has ridden a bike at one time or the other. This is causing all kinds of people to try it. And, it is causing men to try the ABC Program. Also, we don't use aerobic instructors typically. We use fitness people that we have trained to instruct. We were also blessed to have a full page article in the local newspaper about the ABC

Program. We've signed a lot of new members who called off of the article. The first day I had 11 phone calls from non-members who then came in on one week guest passes! The program is easy to sell because people can picture themselves doing it. We also use the weights in our classes because it gives a great cross-training result. Life Fitness has done a bang up job of teaching us how to teach the group classes. They provide a video and send a teacher who got us started and the program is going really well."

**CAROLYN WISDOM-
PROGRAM DIRECTOR-
MISSION VALLEY
YMCA-SAN DIEGO, CA.**

Carolyn Wisdom has been with the Mission Valley YMCA since it opened 14 years ago. She is the Program Director for the facility which serves 8,000 members. Here is what she had to say: "We installed the Life Fitness ABC Program in May, 1996. We purchased 21

bikes. We provide 7 classes per week and the response from our members has been excellent. We've had a great response to the program from a number of populations. It's been exciting to offer cross training to our current exercisers and to new exercisers as well. In the early morning, we have active seniors of 70+ age riding in classes with new mothers. It's wonderful to witness. We focus on heart-based training using the heart rate monitors. We get into the cross-training aspect with the use of the hand-held weights and the rubber bands for resistance. We are in the planning phase of adding more classes in the early am and late evening. I'm very pleased with the program. I think it's exciting. I also see new participation by males who would never before go to group exercise classes because they are uncomfortable with the dance steps, etc. They are responding to it in an exciting way. We're very excited to see the great variety of people that are getting involved!"

Norm's Notes (Continued from page 5)

previous year. Dean, amongst other contributions, has served for the past year as Chairman of 'Team Riverfront' which has raised \$1.2

million in donations and pledges to date, to build a city park along the river complete with amphitheater, children's play areas, water fountains and a Signature of Salem Pavillion.

MITCH WALD, the

President of Smith Club Management in the Washington, D. C. area, has appointed **FRANK GUENGERICH** as General Manager of Worldgate Athletic Club, the mega-club located in Herndon, Virginia.

STEVEN SCHWARTZ, President of Tennis Corporation of America, announced that TCA will offer a unique club management class on Roosevelt University's Robin Campus. The class will be conducted through the university's Manfred

Steinfeld Program in Hospitality Management. The weekly classes begin this fall and will be taught by a group of TCA executives, industry experts and club managers.

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