

Norm Cates'
CLUB INSIDERTM
The "Pulse" of the Health, Racquet, and Sports Club Industry
Established 1993

18th Anniversary Special Edition!



Curt Beusman
One of a Kind!

NOVEMBER 2010

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Curt Beusman

One of a Kind!

By: Justin Cates

Think of the phrase, *one-of-a-kind*. Think of the words, *genius* and *fortunate*. Sprinkle in a *great sense of humor* and a *sterling personality*, and you'll have the ingredients to describe the *people person* that is Dr. Curtis Beusman.

Curt Beusman, age 79, also known as "Brother Beusman," is a *one-of-a-kind genius* and *people person*, and our industry is very *fortunate* to have had the benefit of his mind and his many talents, which include his great *sense of humor* and *sterling personality*.

His life experience inside and outside of our industry

speaks for itself. His industry experience inside and outside of his clubs also speaks for itself. But, the special place inside the hearts of all who know him truly tell his story. He has touched so many, and his legacy, still a work in progress, is already great.

Rick Caro, a Co-founder of IHRSA and President of Management Vision had these kind words to say about Curt:

"Curt is a classic entrepreneur. He took risks, but they were calculated risks. He only had limited information available to make decisions but analyzed it wisely. He brought passion and dedication to the workplace. His creative thinking and break-

through ideas literally energized others in the club industry.

Curt is a sharer. As he learned a lesson, he communicated voluntarily to other club owners. He is considered a forefather of our industry, and we can attribute much of what we take for granted to Curt and his leadership. His teachings are still recognized today.

His volunteerism was substantial and his excitement for the club industry was boundless. He is brilliant, articulate, funny and extremely knowledgeable. He has been a force in the club industry for a long time, and I admire him greatly."

John McCarthy, esteem-
 (See *Curt Beusman* Page 8)



Curt Beusman Receives Club Industry's Lifetime Achievement Award from Pamela Kufahl

Commentary: Time for Doctors to Prescribe Exercise

By: Joe Moore & Edward Phillips, MD

The prescription pad is a powerful tool, and doctors need to start using it for more than just ordering medications. They need to prescribe exercise.

America is facing unprecedented epidemics of obesity and widespread physical inactivity. Chronic diseases remain the leading cause of death and disability in the United States despite the fact that most of those afflicted with these illnesses could have stayed well if only they had exercised regularly and

made healthier lifestyle choices.

Yet, while doctors continue to write more than 3.4 billion prescriptions each year and mention medications during more than 70 percent of their office visits, the vast majority of physicians are neither prescribing nor talking to their patients about the real wonder drug, exercise.

At the proper moderate intensity, regular exercise significantly improves overall health. Moderate intensity exercise can be achieved with a brisk walk that begins to elevate the heart and respiratory rates, making it

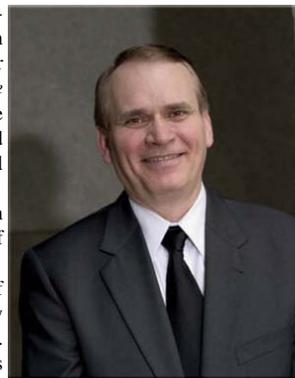
difficult to sustain a note while singing, yet it is not so strenuous that the individual is out of breath and cannot talk. The benefits are numerous as moderate intensity exercise reduces the risk of heart disease by 40 percent; lowers the risk of stroke by 27 percent; reduces the incidence of high blood pressure by almost 50 percent; reduces the incidence of diabetes by almost 50 percent; can reduce mortality and the risk of recurrent breast cancer by almost 50 percent; can lower the risk of colon cancer by over 60 percent; can reduce the risk of developing

of Alzheimer's disease by one-third; and can decrease depression as effectively as medications or behavioral therapy, says *Exercise is Medicine*, a global initiative calling on physicians to assess and review every patient's physical activity program at every visit.

The only problem with these statistics is that too many of us ignore them.

More than 25 percent of U.S. adults don't engage in any leisure-time physical activity. Only one in three exercises regularly, and one in four does

(See *Commentary* Page 6)



Joe Moore

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Norm's Notes: • 18 Years and Counting! • Congratulations to Lynne and Victor Brick • Congratulations to Daron "Rocketman" Allen • IHRSA30 is Coming! • San Francisco Franchisee to Leave Gold's Gym International • ABC Financial On The Move • Fitness First Sells 57 Locations • Lorcaserin Marketing Not Approved By FDA • Congratulations to Edison Pena • Vote For Linda Fondren • Important CPR Changes • Ron Polisen and ZX Fitness • Mastrov and Madonna To Open Hard Candy Gyms • Another Contract Black Eye • Michael Sheehan Doing Well At Bally • Rest In Piece John Hunsinger

Norm's Notes

•**Hello Everybody!** This is your **CLUB INSIDER Publisher and Tribal Leader Since 1993** checking in! Whoa boy am I glad to be writing this month's **Norm's Notes**, as this month marks the **18th Anniversary** of the launch of **CLUB INSIDER!** We got our start in early **November 1993** at the **Club Industry Show** in Chicago where I first distributed copies. It was ironic that I ended up launching **CLUB INSIDER** in Chicago because it was in Chicago just eight months before that I met with members of the **Faust Roundtable #1** to discuss a new direction in life for me. Those in the room that day included **Dr. CURT BEUSMAN**, our cover story subject this month; his wonderful wife, the late **JANE BEUSMAN**; **DR. GERRY FAUST**; **RICK CARO**; **RED LERILLE**; **DICK TRANT**; **CECIL SPEARMAN**; **TOM LYNEIS**; **JILL KINNEY**; **CARL PORTER**, **MITCH WALD**, **TODD PULIS**, **JAY KELL** and **MARK and DEBBIE EISENZIMMER**.

Prior to the meeting, I decided to leave the world of club ownership and operations after 19 years to start a new, home-based business in our industry. I chose to do this so I could be a "Mr. Mom" for my son, **JUSTIN**

CATES, who was eight years old at the time. I brought a list of ten potential business ideas to that January, 1993 Faust Roundtable Meeting. Each would allow me to (A) **work at home** and (B) **stay involved in the industry that I love**. After about 30 minutes of discussion, the group zeroed-in on making a **Publisher** out of me when the wonderful **Jane Beusman** said, "Our industry needs a new publication that will take on the tough issues that nobody else will touch. We need a publication that will be irreverent, outspoken and 'Tells-It-Like-It-Is.'"

So, we chose the idea of starting up what we then referred to as a newsletter, and what we now call an industry newspaper... **CLUB INSIDER**. A few months after the Chicago meeting, **CURT BEUSMAN** weighed in. We all affectionately call Curt "Brother Beusman" in honor of his Ten Commandments preaching, and he was one of nine members of the fourteen in attendance at the Roundtable Meeting in Del Mar, California in the Summer of 1993 who were throwing out name ideas simultaneously. Suddenly, Curt said "Insider... No... Club Insider... No... Club Insider News!" I said, "That's it!" And, it was. Now, 203 monthly

editions, and a full 17 years of publication later, we begin our 18th year! **We couldn't have done it without YOU!** I'm very thankful that many of you reading this right now have been reading **CLUB INSIDER** every month since we began, and I sincerely thank you from the bottom of my big ol' heart. There is no way I will ever be able to thank our **Readers**, our **Advertisers** and our **Contributing Authors** enough for the support. Suffice it to say, this written "THANK YOU!" would be a great big hug if I was with you right now!

This month, we are very excited to publish the amazing cover story of **CURT BEUSMAN**, well-written by my son, **Justin**, from a terrific phone interview Curt and I had. I also want to again congratulate Curt on his recent **Club Industry Lifetime Achievement Award**, presented to him in Chicago on **October 7th**. I also want all of us to remember Curt's lovely wife, **Jane**, whom was lost to **Alzheimer's Disease** in June of this year. **May Jane Beusman Rest In Peace**.

Also included in this **18th Anniversary Special Edition** are great articles from **WILL PHILLIPS**, **JIM THOMAS**, **DONNA KRECH**, **MICHAEL SENA**, **CARY WING**, **CASEY CONRAD** and **SANDY COFFMAN**. So, please kick back and enjoy!

•**Is America a Great Country or what!?** Mmm... Mmm... Mmm! I want to congratulate all of you who voted on **November 2nd** and used the system created by the wisdom of our wise Founders to guide America in the right direction. Many Americans, yours truly included, felt that this was one of the most important elections in the history of America, and history may well prove that it was. Most importantly, though, "We, the people" have had our say, and it's now up to those elected on both sides of the aisle in the **House** and **Senate** to figure out how to work together to fix the problems that America has. It's also up to **President Obama** to work for compromise with all of them on our behalf. "We, the people" deserve nothing less. **May God bless America and may God bless all of you great Americans!**

•**Congratulations** to **LYNNE** and **VICTOR BRICK**, as they celebrate the **25th Anniversary** of their **Brick Bodies** organization, which operates seven clubs in the Baltimore area. They've also launched a chain of **Planet Fitness** locations with plans to open **30** or more locations.

•**DARON "ROCKETMAN" ALLEN** and the **VFP Team** has **Visual Fitness Planner** cooking at **over 750 clubs**, and they're rolling out their new **Visual Fitness Planner Sales Fusion**



Norm Cates

Program now. We hope you'll pick up the phone today and give them a call at (877) VFP - 1212 to learn about it. Be sure to check out their **Center Spread Ad** on **Pages #16** and **#17**. Also, **Visual Fitness Planner's MICHAEL SENA** is back this month with **Part II** of his article series about **making money in personal training**. Be sure to check out the **Article** on **Page #27**. I'm also very happy to announce and congratulate **DARON** and his lovely wife, **TRACI**, on their new baby girl, **MACKENZIE BLYTHE ALLEN**, who came into this wonderful world, and joined her sister, **AINSLEY SIENA**, **Daron** and **Traci** on **Friday, November 1st!** **God bless the growing Allen Family!**

• I hope you've registered to attend and booked your hotel (See Norm's Notes Page 6)

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...Norm's Notes

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and flights for **IHRSA's 30th Anniversary Convention and Trade Show**, coming up in **San Francisco, March 16-19th, 2011**. A really cool idea, **IHRSA's 30th Anniversary Yearbook**, is also coming and will be distributed at the event! **JAY ABLONDI, IHRSA's Executive Vice President of Global Products**, says that everybody is invited to participate in the yearbook by going to www.ihrsa.org/yearbook and completing the online form so that you, your photo and comments will be included. All registered **IHRSA30 Convention Attendees and Trade Show Exhibitor Companies** will also receive a complimentary copy. All others will be able to purchase the yearbook on site. The deadline to be included in the Yearbook is **November 30, 2010!** Also, check out the **IHRSA30 Ad on Page #29**. Please note the list of **CLUB INSIDER Advertisers on This Page** who will be exhibiting. I urge you to take this list with you to San Francisco and visit and do business with these great

...Commentary

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not exercise at all. According to a study published in the journal *Obesity*, if the number of obese and overweight adults in the United States continues to grow as it has over the past three decades, nearly nine out of ten adults will be considered overweight or obese by 2030.

So, where do all these people go once the effects of sedentary, unhealthy lifestyles catch up with them?

To the doctor... Does it not make sense, then, that while America's 788,000 active physicians are writing prescriptions to treat their patients' lifestyle-related chronic diseases that perhaps, along with the pharmaceuticals, they should be writing a script for something really efficacious, like exercise?

According to a paper published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 92 percent of patients agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "If my doctor advised me to exercise, I would follow his or her advice." What's more, a public opinion survey conducted by the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) found that nearly two-thirds of patients

companies. They'll treat you right!

• **Speaking of San Francisco**, the **Gold's Gym** franchise owner and operator of four Gold's Gyms in the area, two in San Francisco, one in Oakland and the other in Marin County, serving **22,000 members**, has announced that they are pulling the plug on the Gold's brand when their franchise agreement expires in 2012, or sooner, if they are legally able. Reportedly, the franchisee made this move because **TRT Holdings, Inc. Owner, ROBERT ROWLING**, who owns **Omni Hotels, Gold's Gym International** and other businesses, **donated \$2 million to American Crossroads, KARL ROVE's Political Action Committee**. The issue that San Francisco Gold's spokesperson, **DON DICKERSON**, says has triggered their decision is that American Crossroads and Karl Rove are very gay adverse, and by giving to American Crossroads, Rowling has raised the ire of many of the San Francisco area Gold's Gym employees and members. Rowling, however, commented to **Fox News**, "The San Francisco branches leaving

Gold's Gym has nothing to do with my contributions to American Crossroads, and if they say that they did, they're absolutely lying." Elaborating on Rowling's statement, a spokesman for Gold's Gym International in Irvine, Texas said, "Discussions surrounding the termination of the (Bay Area) franchise agreement began many months ago due to completely unrelated matters." In retort, and responding to the TRT people's statements, Dickerson said, "We've been looking at other options, including staying with Gold's Gym, until now. So far, we've had a tremendously positive response from our member base, and from all over the country." I say, "Stay Tuned!"

• **ABC Financial's PAUL SCHALLER** is beefing up his **ABC Team**, and we invite you to check out the report covering their new **ABC Team Members on Page #26**.

• **Fitness First**, the world's largest health club chain, has announced that it's selling 57 locations in **Benelux (Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg)** to **HealthCity International**.

(65%) would be more interested in exercising to stay healthy if advised by their doctor and given additional resources. Clearly, doctors have a pivotal role to play in reversing the current downward trend in America's health. Physicians have access to people when they are most focused on their health and when they are most receptive to receiving information and messages about their health. This is a highly privileged and decisive point of access. With it comes an obligation by doctors to encourage healthy behavior changes that will improve the well-being of their patients.

(Joe Moore is President and CEO of the International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association)

(Edward Phillips, M.D., is an Assistant Professor of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Harvard Medical School and Director of Outpatient Medical Services at the Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital Network in Boston. He is Founder and Director of The Institute of Lifestyle Medicine in the Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation at Harvard Medical School. He serves on the executive committee of the Exercise is Medicine global initiative and on the Health Care Sector of the National Physical Activity Plan)

HealthCity is one of the market leaders in the region and currently has 152 clubs trading under the HealthCity and **Basic Fit** brands, so the acquisition will push their total to over 200.

• According to the **Baltimore Sun**, and by way of **IHRSA**, "The FDA has told the makers of the proposed weight-loss drug **Lorcaserin** that it will not, at this time, approve the marketing of the medication, citing concerns about its marginal effectiveness and about cancers that occurred at higher-than-usual rates during clinical trials. The FDA's decision comes just two weeks after the makers of the prescription diet-pill **Meridia** pulled it from the **U.S. and Canadian** markets at

the request of the FDA. It is the first signal of how the U.S. drug agency will deliberate on a trio of new weight-loss drugs proposed for the U.S. market, where about one in three adults are obese.

• **Congratulations to New York Marathon finisher, EDISON PENA!** You may know Edison as one of the 33 amazing miners who was trapped underground in a mine in Chile for 69 days. Amazingly, Edison has been out of that dark place for less than a month. While trapped, he ran several miles a day in the dark underground network of tunnels with hopes that he and his buddies would be freed. **Congratulations to Edison Pena!**

(See Norm's Notes Page 7)

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*Exhibit numbers are subject to change

The 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans

The 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans state:

"Adults should do a minimum of 2 hours and 30 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity a week by doing activities like brisk walking, ballroom dancing, or general gardening. Adults can choose 1 hour and 15 minutes (75 minutes) a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity by doing exercise like jogging, aerobic dancing, and jumping rope. Adults also may choose combinations of moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity. Aerobic activity should be performed in episodes of at least 10 minutes, and preferably spread throughout the week. For additional and more extensive health benefits, adults should increase their aerobic physical activity to 5 hours (300 minutes) a week of moderate-intensity or 2 hours and 30 minutes a week of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity. Additional health benefits are gained by engaging in physical activity beyond this amount. Adults should also do muscle-strengthening activities on 2 or more days a week to achieve the unique benefits of strengthening activities." The Guidelines also include specific information for older adults, women during pregnancy and the postpartum period, adults with disabilities, older adults, people with chronic medical conditions, and children and adolescents. For more information on the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines, visit www.health.gov/paguidelines.

...Norm's Notes

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•If you're the owner of a small U.S. club chain (5 to 10) locations, I'm aware of a party that might be interested in buying your club business. Contact me at Norm@clubinsideronline.com, and I'll put you in touch.

•Please be sure to vote for **LINDA FONDREN**, our **October 2010 Cover Story Subject**, for **CNN's Hero Award**. Go to www.cnnheroes.com to vote. The voting deadline date is **November 19th**. **Good Luck, Linda!**

•**Important NOTE! Do not miss this! CPR procedures** have been modified, and you and everyone on your staff should know about

the changes. The **American Heart Association** is **rearranging the ABCs of Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR)** in its 2010 American Heart Association Guidelines for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and Emergency Cardiovascular Care, published in *Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association*. Recommending that chest compressions be the **first step** for lay and professional rescuers to revive victims of sudden cardiac arrest, the Association said the **A-B-Cs (Airway-Breathing-Compressions) of CPR** should now be changed to **C-A-B (Compressions-Airway-Breathing)**. "For more than 40 years, CPR training has emphasized the ABCs of CPR, which instructed people to open a victim's airway by tilting their

head back, pinching the nose and breathing into the victim's mouth, and only then, giving chest compressions," said **Michael Sayre, M.D.**, co-author of the guidelines and **Chairman of the American Heart Association's Emergency Cardiovascular Care (ECC) Committee**. "This approach was causing significant delays in starting chest compressions, which are essential to keeping oxygen-rich blood circulating through the body. **Changing the sequence from A-B-C to C-A-B for adults and children allows all rescuers to begin chest compressions right away.**" **Folks, take the time to train everybody on your team... the life they save could be your own!**

•**Speaking of CPR**, that's pretty close to what **RON POLISENO** is pulling off with the new club brand, **ZX Fitness**, pricing memberships at **\$10 a month** in twelve former **Peak Fitness** locations in Durham, Charlotte (three), Statesville, Lincolnton, Matthews, Harrisburg, and Concord, North Carolina, as well as three South Carolina locations in Greenville, Spartanburg, and Taylors. **Fuzion Investment Capital**, the parent company of **ZX Fitness**, announced that it has added a new private equity partner, **Allstate Financial Group**. Allstate has invested in **ZX Fitness** to ensure the continued growth of the fitness centers. **ZX Fitness** has also named **RON POLISENO**, **President** of the company. The well-known and great character, **Ron Poliseño**, an all-around good guy formerly with **CheckFree Health and Fitness**, has also been a club owner in Columbus, Ohio, for years. Now, he's got a big idea that's going to take a big time performance. Ron recently commented in a **Press Release**, provided by **DAVID BUZO**, "The bottom line of the business plan is to assert market dominance throughout the Carolinas," Poliseño said. "The opportunity is out there. We need to be the leader in customer service, offer the lowest membership rate and have the preeminent facilities in the market." **ZX Fitness** provides several fitness-related services for the community. The twelve **ZX Fitness** locations in the Carolinas offer memberships, starting at \$10 per month, and offers several amenities, including group fitness classes, personal trainers, tanning packages, child

care, cardiovascular equipment, free-weight areas, pin-loaded equipment and more. **Good Luck, Ron and the ZX Team!**

•**M&M** is set to launch a new club chain! You may be asking, is that **Eminem**, the white rapper? Nope. It's **MARK MASTROV** and **MADONNA**, who have announced a partnership to launch a chain of health clubs in Mexico and around the world called **Hard Candy Gym!** The gyms will offer dance, biking and yoga studios, saunas and steam rooms, as well as a juice bar. "**The Material Girl!**" also hopes to open ten more locations in Argentina, Russia, Brazil, and throughout Europe and Asia. **Stay Tuned!**

•Financial guru, **DAVE RAMSEY**, had a story on his radio show about a person who had co-signed for a health club membership! After ridiculing the intelligence of the person who had co-signed, he went on to tell the person to **NEVER-EVER co-sign anything under any circumstances**. Once again, contracts on health club memberships cause our industry embarrassment and ridicule.

•**MICHAEL SHEEHAN**, the **CEO of Bally Total Fitness**, was featured as **CBI Magazine's** November cover subject. The interesting report was well written by **PATRICIA AMEND**, and I was happy to read what Michael Sheehan had to say. His comments about Bally brought back lots of memories. In 1986, we had our **5th Annual IRSA Convention and Trade Show in New Orleans, Louisiana** (Yes, it was IRSA then). One of the events that had been scheduled was an evening **Mississippi Riverboat Cruise**. Scheduled right before the cruise was an early evening **Open Forum** for IRSA Members to express their feelings about the idea of admitting Bally Total Fitness into IRSA. Over 500 IRSA Members attended. Many took the podium to speak, and every single one of them was opposed to admitting Bally into IRSA. So, Bally was not admitted into IRSA that year, and many of us missed the cruise! Fast forward about ten years when a group of about 40 IRSA Founders, Board Members and former Board Members again met at one of our annual conventions to discuss admitting Bally Total Fitness into what had become IHRSA. After about 45 minutes of discussion,

someone in the group suggested that we take a vote, so we did. All 40 in attendance voted YES to admit Bally. The consensus of the group at that time was that, by admitting Bally into IHRSA, we might be able to influence their operations to become more ethical and consumer friendly, as opposed to the rap back then (and some would say the same today) on Bally Total Fitness being nothing but a high pressure sales machine with no real interest in serving their members well.

So, when I read in Sheehan's interview that, after its second Bankruptcy in about three years, Bally Total Fitness, under Sheehan's leadership, had closed 60 underperforming clubs; eliminated \$800 million in debt; stopped selling 3-year contracts; added a lot of new equipment; became transparent in their membership pricing, putting members in control of choosing the membership that's right for them; designed a club of the future; signing new club deals; now understand that community efforts are important, **contributing close to \$1 million to AUGIE'S QUEST** over the past three years; and that their "reputation scores" are rising... I must say that I'm encouraged. But, as they say, "The Jury is still out," and it's all up to the man, Michael Sheehan and his **Bally Team**. I wish them all well. For years, I've argued that it was/is important that they succeed because they were and still are one of the most high profile club chains in the world. When they do badly, our industry appears to consumers to be doing badly as well. So, my best wishes go out to Michael Sheehan and his Bally Team that they keep on doing the good and positive things mentioned in the CBI article and reviewed here. **Stay Tuned!**

•In closing these **NORM'S NOTES**, I would be remiss if I didn't remember my friend **JOHN HUNSINGER** here in Atlanta, who passed away at age 79 on **October 24th** due to complications with **Alzheimer's Disease**. Johnny was married to my friend, and the former **General Manager** of my **Downtown Athletic Club**, **KATHY BLALOCK**. On **November 1st**, John was remembered by over 750 friends who crowded into the beautiful **St. Luke's Episcopal Church** in Atlanta. Johnny Hunsinger set
(See Norm's Notes Page 15)

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...Curt Beusman

continued from page 3

ed former Executive Director of IHRSA, commented, "Not only did Curt loan IHRSA the money to get started, and not only was he the most popular and dynamic speaker at all of our early conventions, but it was his guidance and support that kept us all going and brought us all together in those early years."

This month, **CLUB INSIDER** is honored to bring you an interview with Curt Beusman that delves deep into his amazing story.

An In-Depth Interview With Dr. Curt Beusman By Norm Cates

CLUB INSIDER (C.I.) - Brother Beusman, please tell us about the role Tennis has played in your life?
Dr. Curt Beusman (CB) - It's funny because I just finished a 20-minute video talking about my early tennis career and my life in tennis. In Chicago, when I was at Club Industry 2010, I went around and visited my old high school, Oak Park High School in Illinois, and I went back to the River Forrest Tennis Club. It's a beautiful club and was just as I remembered it sixty years ago. My father was a great tennis nut in the '20s, and he told my mother before they got married that he'd teach her how to play tennis and buy her a piano, and that won her heart. I have my mother's first trophy that she won in 1930. So, I did this 20-minute video on the history of the River Forrest Tennis Club. I spent all my summers playing tennis competitively, hanging around the club, working with the Tennis Pro there and being a ball boy in the United States Lawn Tennis Association's National Clay Court Championships, which were held there for ten years, from the middle '40s to the early '50s. I was a linesman, and then, I played the tournament and lost to Jimmy Evert, Chris Evert's dad.

If you asked me what I did, or what I was, I would say I was a tennis player. I played four years at Northwestern. We won three Big 10 Championships. I was Captain of the team my senior year, and I won a #2 singles in the Big 10 Championships. Even last year, I played a tournament in December. Actually, it was the Century Men's Doubles. I was 78 at that point, and I played with a 23-year old kid from New Zealand, who had been on the

pro tour. We did really well and lost in the first round. We've been running that tournament at the Saw Mill Club for thirty years. I don't know if Alan Schwartz still does it or not, but it's just a favorite tournament for us. It runs for four days and has about 35 teams in it. It's a great, great tournament.

C.I. - After receiving your Doctorate in Physical Chemistry and spending some time working in the field, you founded Curtis Instruments with Edward Marwell. One of your devices, the Mercury Coulometer, ended up on the Apollo Lunar Lander. So, at this stage in your life, what's it like to literally have something you developed still on the moon?

CB - We have a few little gadgets on the moon, and I'm sure none of them are still working. I left the company in White Plains that I had been working at called Nuclear Development Associates. It was a very high tech company, with 180 PhDs and 280 employees. I licensed a patent on a little glass tube filled with mercury and a couple wires that could be used to measure how long something had been on for maintenance and warranty purposes. I started out of my basement. Then, I met Ed, and we became partners. It was just the two of us and a secretary. We also made a fuel gauge for the Lunar Roving Vehicle. It actually measured the battery life on the lunar 'dune-buggy,' and there's a few of them up there, not just one. In 1970, I exercised my stockholder agreement with Ed and left to start my other businesses. It is now a \$125 million company, and Ed's son runs it. They recently celebrated their 50th anniversary, and today, it's a very big company in electric vehicle controls and auxiliary equipment. Almost every EZ-GO Golf Cart in America has a Curtis Instruments accelerator pedal on it and fuel gauge to measure the battery life.

C.I. - Please tell us about the decision to leave Curtis Instruments to open a tennis club, which has evolved into your major league, multi-purpose Saw Mill Club in Mount Kisco, New York.

CB - In 1970, I was on the Chappaqua School Board and got involved in a contested race to serve on the Board. I did a lot of campaigning for about six weeks. I was out two or three times a day at teas at various houses and at night. I won the race. I was on the

School Board, and later, I became President. My wife, Jane, and I went away for a weekend just to recuperate, and on Monday morning, I sat up in bed and said, 'You know, Jane, I don't want to go back to Curtis Instruments.' She said, 'Well, what the hell do you want to do?' I said, 'I want to start an indoor tennis club.' I didn't do demographic studies. I didn't do a land search. I didn't know anything about the indoor tennis business. I knew tennis, and I built a lot of tennis courts at family clubs in the area. So, she said, 'Okay, let's do that,' and that's how it started.

C.I. - What roles did your Jane, may she rest in peace, play in the club?

CB - Jane was very active in community affairs and really had not been involved in the business. She was raising our children. However, after about six months at the Saw Mill Club, I knew something was wrong in the office. Don't forget, I was running around like a mad man, so I said, 'Jane, come on over here and just take a look to see what's going on.' She pulled open the drawer of the bookkeeper's desk and bills fell out, and bills fell out of the back of the drawer, down onto the floor. She said, 'You know, you've got a problem.' Well, she helped me solve the problem for thirty years. She played a huge role, a huge role. People still talk about Jane going on her walk-around every week with a clipboard in her hand and a yellow piece of paper saying, 'That's got to be fixed, do this, do that,' and then, she would hold people's feet to the fire to get it done. She ran the front desk, the pro shop, maintenance and cleaning, and whenever we had financial problems, she had her own green spreadsheets that she would stretch out on her desk. We always knew Jane was working on her green sheets.

C.I. - How did you simultaneously manage three or four different entrepreneurial businesses, while also earning an MBA at Columbia University and raising three kids with Jane?

CB - Well, I went crazy. It's simple. I started Curtis Instruments with my partner, but there's something about men at age 40. There's a woman named Gale Sheehy, who wrote a book called *Passages*, and she said a 40-year old man enters the B.O.O.M. phase, **Becoming One's Own Man**. I kind of think that was it. I had a partner, we got along



Curt Beusman (R) Visits With Alan Schwartz

pretty well, but I wanted to do something different. So, I cut out and went someplace else. It really ended my career as a scientist, which I had been for about twenty years, and I went off and did more entrepreneurial businesses.

I built a radio station in northeastern Pennsylvania called WHPA. It was a small little station, a 500-watt AM day-timer. We opened up with the Farm and Home Hour, if you remember that. Then, I built two pure indoor tennis clubs, one in an old warehouse building in Peekskill, New York and another one on a piece of empty land in Mount Kisco, New York. I also bought an antique building down in Chappaqua, where Bill and Hillary Clinton live, and opened a restaurant called the Siding. The Columbia MBA thing was once a week. I went to school all day Friday for two years, four semesters.

C.I. - Why did you expand and become the owner/operator of two more clubs?

CB - We had a tough time in the early and mid-80s. Our daughter, who was our oldest child, had breast cancer, and she died in 1988. That slowed up anything I was going to do in terms of advancing the business. At that point, we had moved into fitness; however, these two opportunities came up. One was an indoor tennis club in New Windsor, New York, across the river, that had become a warehouse, and it was on the market to buy, including nine acres of land. The other was a 14-court racquetball club in Stamford, Connecticut that was owned by Peter Donahue. Peter was one of the founders of IHRSA. I knew Peter, and I was able to get some bank financing, so I was able to acquire those two

sites at the same time. This is kind of interesting. In the racquetball deal, there were seven courts on each side of the building. We took out five racquetball floors, took all that hardwood up to New Windsor and laid it down for a basketball floor up there. We recycled the wood from the racquetball courts, and we put a swimming pool on top of the five racquetball courts. That's how we got those two clubs, and we ultimately named them both 'Sportsplex' because it seemed like a branding name we could use. We liked the name, and they are still Sportsplex today, Sportsplex New Windsor and Sportsplex Stamford. We also acquired another racquetball club up in Bethel, Connecticut. It had ten courts, and we messed around with it for awhile. It was also called Sportsplex, and we sold it a couple years ago. It's still there.

Now, all during the '80s, I was seeing other people who were acquiring more facilities, and I kind of said to myself, 'Why don't I develop Saw Mill to its ultimate capability?' We had ten acres, and the club was built on about four of those ten. Then, across a little drainage creek, there were four acres of land owned by the New York State Department of Transportation. I was able to lease that on very favorable terms, and we put some outdoor courts there, which we put air structures over. I kept developing Saw Mill, and it became bigger and bigger. Then, the opportunities to move on these other sites just seemed so exciting that I decided to do it. It's a step up. You've got to manage four or five sites, and I was driving around like a mad man. I had two speeding tickets that made me go to driver's education school for New York State, and my license was suspended (See *Curt Beusman Page 10*)



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once for a month, going back and forward to all the clubs.

C.I. - I'm aware that you designated an Advisory Board of four or five individuals to help you make club business decisions. What were the backgrounds of those Advisory Board members, and how did the Advisory Board help the businesses?

CB - With the Advisory Board, I needed to get some outside, mature business input. One of them was a close friend of mine who was a stockbroker and investment guy from Wall Street, Steve Randolph. Another was Arnold Zais, who ran a company in Norwalk, Connecticut making radiation-proof rooms. He's the guy I signed the patent agreement with from the nuclear firm, starting Curtis Instruments. The other was Sidney Liebowitz, my attorney. He is the guy whose law firm acquired the radio station license rights to the station I built in 1970. Oh, and Rick Caro, of course. Rick was the only one who gave me good advice. The other guys just said, 'Isn't that nice?' I did that for a couple years, and I realized the Advisory Board required two days just to get ready to talk to them each time. The advice I was getting was good, but I would do what I wanted to do anyway. So, the Advisory Board kind of evaporated.

On Club Innovations

C.I. - You were a very creative innovator in your club market and for the industry on a number of issues. Please comment on each of the following thrusts going back to the '70s and '80s:

C.I. - Converting from Pay-for-Play to Membership Dues and Court Time:

CB - In 1971, when I opened the Saw Mill Club, we had seven indoor tennis courts, two outdoor tennis courts and a squash court. All the indoor clubs in New York were Pay-for-Play, primarily to avoid having to pay taxes to the state on membership dues. After a while, I realized I wasn't anything but a landlord leasing a 7,000 square-foot court to four people, or six, or eight or nine, and I had to provide light, heat, water, towels and a toilet. They would bring anyone they wanted to play, and they would only play nine months a year because it was

indoors. I only had two outdoor courts and no swimming pool. So, it seemed to me that, if I was going to have any kind of a real business, I had to have a monthly income, a *predictable* monthly income. The only way I could see to do that was to charge dues. That's how it started.

Fortunately, I was able to borrow some money from the bank. I made a physical improvement in the plant. I took out the two outdoors courts and put a swimming pool out there in the front of the building and a nice deck and a restaurant. Across the little creek I mentioned earlier, I was able to put four more outdoor courts in, so all of a sudden, we had a summer presence. The big argument my friends would all make was, 'Well, I belong to my country club in the summer. I don't need Saw Mill.' I would say, 'Well, let's talk about money,' and they would recognize Saw Mill was a bargain if they wanted to play some decent tennis and their kids just want to sit around the pool. They still kept their country club memberships for golf and sociability. Most country clubs have pools and stuff like that, but it was a determined thrust to get monthly income.

C.I. - Converting from indoor tennis to multi-sport clubs:

CB - At Saw Mill, we had about five major projects. The first was the outdoor swimming pool and outdoor tennis courts on the adjacent property. The next was an addition in the back of the building. That little drainage creek ran around behind the building, so I put a couple big pipes in there, back filled over the ditch and built five racquetball courts and two squash courts. There was a hallway between the racquetball courts upstairs, and somebody told me I should put some Nautilus machines there. I didn't know what the hell a Nautilus machine was, so I went to a local Nautilus club and worked out for about a month. I would come home and lie down on a couch because I was so tired. I bought a standard Nautilus line, and they went into about 400 or 500 square feet of hallway space along one side. The viewing windows for racquetball were up there, and we had these Nautilus machines. All of a sudden, I had people coming in using very little square footage, compared to tennis and racquetball courts, and they were paying my dues. So, I thought, 'Wow, this is pretty

cool.' I had an outdoor pool, so I needed an indoor pool. Dale Dibble had put an indoor pool on a tennis court in his club, so I put an indoor pool on one of my indoor tennis courts. I put a basketball floor above the indoor pool. The indoor pool was on the court level, and fortunately, I had a taller than normal building. I was just lucky, and I was able to put a basketball court and exercise floor above the swimming pool.

Next, we built four more outdoor courts next to those earlier four on the adjacent property and put air structures over all eight of them. I covered up another indoor court and put in a big aerobics studio, a big cardio space above and developed a very big child care area. We have five or six classrooms and a nursery, and we have about fifteen people who take care of them. We are filled up in the early mornings with women and their children. Then, the last thing we did was to take out four racquetball courts, double-deck those and expand the fitness area on top. Underneath, we put in a corporate headquarters for the various clubs. We run everything out of Saw Mill. And, we converted the ground floor of the racquetball courts into three dance studios. In the afternoons, we have Encore Dance, which comes in as a partner, and they share their income and rent space from us for this cute little dance studio that they run. We also took out one squash court. Above that, in the upper part, we have group cycling, and underneath, we have a physical therapist. So, we added massage, manicure and nails. We have a pro shop, which is leased out, and all of the other health and fitness activities. The only thing we don't have is a running track some place.

C.I. - You were fanatical about the fact that expenses were going up and dues increases were one way to keep pace with inflation:

CB - It wasn't so much inflation. I was just spending so much damn money fixing stuff up that my debt service went up. I had to borrow more money from the bank and pay more interest. It seemed to me that we were underpricing our product. Our product was health, feeling good, and ultimately, longevity; how long are you going to live? It's pretty clear. As a matter of fact, I read a *Harvard Business* article just last week that said physical activity and a reduction in caloric intake leads to maintenance of mental



(L to R) Rick Caro, Curt Beusman, John Doyle, and Ginny & Larry Krieger

acuity and extended life. We've known that. Ken Cooper came along and did aerobics. People were running all of a sudden, and the New York Marathon went from a few people to 35,000 people. It was clear that fitness was the way to go, and when you start looking at the spaces we had and the volumes we were dedicating to indoor tennis in permanent steel buildings, it was terribly inefficient. We couldn't get up to \$150 a court hour for tennis, so the only thing we could do was put more people in. The way to put more people in was to put fitness in, and people with fitness were the ones who would pay because it was to their benefit. Tennis players play for fun, basically, where fitness people work out for themselves. I felt that, yes, we had to increase dues to meet our needs. We've been profitable, lately, but I wasn't profitable for the first ten years we were in business. I kind of felt like a jerk when I would go to IHRSA and say you had to raise your dues. Everybody thought I was making money. I wasn't, but I kept my mouth shut.

C.I. - Measuring attrition and creating a calling team to extend members life spans at the club:

CB - I asked, 'Why do members quit?' I started analyzing it. We kept logs of who was coming in and when. I sat down and charted that. It was pretty clear to me, and the charts showed it quickly; people who only came to the club once a month, or never, were the ones who resigned. It was obvious that they were not getting any value. The idea was to increase their number of visits, so I set up a couple of people at night who would call and say, 'Hi, how are you? We missed you at the club. We have a new program. Would

you like to come in and try it?' We did that for a couple of years, and we dropped the attrition rate a good bit. Ultimately, however, one of my salespeople and my General Manager, Larry Krieger, said, 'Look, they are going to quit, regardless of whether they come once or ten times,' because we did have some of those. People were moving, particularly in this area. We had a lot of IBM employees, and you know what IBM stands for: **I've Been Moved**. So, we decided to focus on selling memberships and better marketing. Instead of trying to keep them from end-to-end, let's get more in. By adding more services, we were able to do that.

C.I. - Executive Roundtables with a facilitator:

CB - I don't know whether it was my Columbia MBA training, or what, but I always felt I could learn something about the health and fitness business by reading other people's books who were not necessarily in the industry. I wasn't going to talk to all my other competitive co-owners. As a matter of fact, most of them stayed with indoor tennis. Relatively few switched to multisport, and a lot of those clubs are gone now. Gerry Faust was a business consultant, which you know, because you were in the group of 12-14 people from all over the country (Faust Roundtable #1). We all got together three or four times a year. We would have a little bit of homework, or Gerry would present something, and we would learn a lot. That was invaluable. To this day, I still have files at home of problem solving seminars I ran at Saw Mill. As a matter of fact, there's something we've done for years called *Interpersonal Management Skills*, (See *Curt Beusman Page 12*)



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which is a Xerox program I discovered. I'm going to go back and teach that again. I've done that about ten times. These are not directly related to the club business. Interpersonal Management Skills are crediting, clarifying and confirming, constructive criticism, using discussion skills and managing differences. Nowhere in there does it say fitness, but what you learn in those courses is how to deal with members, angry members, needy members, members that are unhappy or nervous about joining something and also dealing with your fellow workers and your family.

C.I. - Energy co-generation, when you left Con Edison and created your own electricity system:

CB - When I said I gave up my scientific background, that's partially true. In the early '70s, we had these seven indoor tennis courts and a solid roof, and I went up and saw Dale Dibble's club, Cedardale, where he had put skylights in his roof. I said, 'Oh my goodness, that's brilliant.' So, I put in 28 skylights over my seven courts. We did such a bad job that they all leaked a week after they were in, dripping onto what were then clay courts. It made them slippery. So, we went out and got every paint bucket in Mount Kisco and went up 40-foot ladders hanging these buckets under the drip spots. I tell you, there's nothing scarier than going up a 40-foot ladder. You get halfway up, the ladder swings back and forward, and you say, 'What am I doing up here?' Then, I put in a lighting control system. As the sun came up and the light came in the skylights, it turned the light out in four stages. Our members called it, 'disco lighting' because, if a cloud went by the sun, the lights would come on. Then, when the sun came out again, the lights would go off. People would say, 'I was serving, and the lights went out!' I said, 'Well, wait a minute, they'll come back on.'

Anyway, co-generation came about because of the oil crunch in the late-70s. Con Edison electric bills were going sky high. At the same time, I had heard about Cummins Engine, which makes wonderful diesel engines in Indiana. They started a company in New York called Cummins Cogeneration, and they had put eight generators in

a huge office building in New York City and gotten them off the grid. They were not getting power from Con Edison. I looked into it, and we bought two 400-kilowatt co-gen plants. These were diesel engines running generators, and the waste heat would normally be shot out of an exhaust stack. We recaptured the waste heat and used it to heat the shower water and the indoor pool. It worked fine for a couple of years until two things happened. Con Edison sold all of their less profitable plants to New York State, and we needed more generation. So, I had to get another generator and a trailer. We also had to have a backup, so I had to put one alongside the building. Con Edison, in the meantime, had taken our transformer away, so there was no way we could even go back and get power from the utility. We were standing alone out there, just buying oil. We were the second largest oil consumer in Mount Kisco, behind our huge local hospital. It worked for about ten years. We did save some money but not a heck of a lot. It was a little difficult to maintain them, but ultimately, we had a fire. It caught on fire one night about 1AM, and it was a half million dollar fire. The generators were all shot. We were shut down for four days, and I went back to Con Edison and gave up on the generators.

C.I. - Leasing land from the state for development of your outdoor tennis courts with air structures:

CB - That was a really interesting experience. Saw Mill is built in the Village of Mount Kisco. The land was in the Town of Bedford. There's two jurisdictions right there. That's two Planning Boards, two Zoning Boards and two Departments of Environmental Conservation in these two jurisdictions. In addition, the land was owned by the Department of Transportation of New York State in Albany. Not only that, but we are right next to the Saw Mill Parkway, one of the original Parkways in America, and that was under the supervision of the Westchester Parkway Authority. So, I had about eight different jurisdictions I had to deal with. I just kept at it. I would talk and say what I wanted to do. They would say, 'Oh yea? You can't do that.' I would ask why not, and ultimately, I sold the idea. We now have four acres of land immediately adjacent to us from New York State with a very inexpensive lease. The New York

State land is totally landlocked. There's no way anyone could get to it except through Saw Mill property, so that's one of the reasons the State was happy to lease it to us. They get this money from us in rent for this dead piece of property. There's a swamp on one edge, the New York Centrum on the other and Saw Mill on the third edge, kind of a triangular piece. The State was happy. It was the other people who were the difficult ones.

C.I. - New types of tennis bubbles with a company in Canada:

CB - Everybody talks about a tennis bubble, and that is an unfortunate word because bubbles burst. We did work with a company in Canada called Yeadon, and they had, I think, the best air structures. They are not only used for tennis. They are used for indoor golf, warehouses, self storage during winter and things like that. The difficult part about an air structure is the anchoring system that ties the fabric of the air structure down to a concrete anchor that runs around the perimeter of the tennis court. Yeadon had some revolutionary ways to do that, and that's what we use. Saw Mill has two, and we have one in New Windsor. They've been very good. They're sturdy and don't wear out. We've had the current bubbles at Saw Mill over ten years, and they look almost brand new. They're Teflon-covered on the outside, so they are well done.

A quick story about air structures, Norm. In the late '80s, I went to England, and I gave a lecture at the National Sports Council. It was an indoor tennis symposium. A German guy was there, a guy from Holland, the English representative, and I was there. At that time, in Westchester County, our county, we had 26 indoor tennis clubs and 187 covered indoor tennis courts. I had started something called the Greater Westchester Tennis Association, before IHRS. In 1988, in Great Britain, the 'Home of Tennis,' they had 36 indoor courts. That's all. Amazing... So, after this symposium, they began the Indoor Tennis Initiative, the ITI, and they put up a lot of air structures all over Great Britain. But, they bought thin fabric, and one windy day, I think they all went down.

On the Ten Commandments

C.I. - I'd imagine the know-

ledge for each of your Ten Commandments was learned separately through your experiences over time. How did the idea originally come about, and when did you organize those experiences and knowledge into the Ten Commandments (Shown on **Page #14**) for our industry?

CB - This goes along with what I said before. I feel you can learn things anywhere and apply them to your own business. I went to the ten-year reunion of my Columbia MBA class in 1982.

I met Bob Waterman and Tom Peters, who wrote the famous book, *In Search of Excellence*, which was a huge business bestseller. So, Waterman spoke at the seminar and a guy named Ian MacMillan. He was a professor at Columbia who was leaving that year to become the head of the Wharton Business School at the University of Pennsylvania. Don't forget, he's talking to a completely different group of guys, all in different businesses. He said that major corporations have these big volumes for their culture, motivation, mandates and strategy. He went into some of them and said to the CEOs that you have to have simple rules. Ten rules were enough for Moses. Write ten rules. Don't use a one-inch thick book; people are not going to read it. He had seven things that had to be in those rules. One was a statement about the business. Another was how do you deal with your customers? How do you deal with employees? How do you make decisions? And, so on... There were seven basic things you had to have, and the other three you could put in whatever you wanted, kind of.

So, I got all charged up about the idea of Ten Commandments. Not from a religious standpoint, but

MacMillan was very compelling in that speech. I still have the notes at home. So, I came back to Saw Mill, got our team together and we wrote our Ten Corporate Commandments, which were simple rules. They are not the ones you will remember from my speeches. To this day, on our employment application, it has the Saw Mill's Ten Corporate Commandments, and in our Team Handbook, the Ten Commandments are transcribed there. They are simple sentences.

The first commandment we tell employees and prospective employees is, 'We are one of America's leading multi-sport clubs, and we are going to stay that way.' That says everything about our business. America: That means we are looking for national input. Going to stay that way: If we are going to be a leader, we better change. People say, 'Well, it sounds like you are going to be standing still.' I say, 'No, if we are going to be a leader, and we are going to stay that way, we have to change in order to be a leader. Leaders grow.'

Number two, 'Everyone's #1 job is getting, retaining and integrating members.' Everyone's number one job: It's not to sweep the floor or run the front desk; it's getting and retaining members. So, we have Maritza Budiuck, who is our front desk person from 5:30AM to 2PM. She knows everybody's first name and member number, and she's dealing with maybe 700 members everyday who come in during that time. 'Hello, how are you? Nice to see you, Curt. 44732? Okay, thanks, have a good day.' That's getting and retaining, isn't it?

And, on and on, it goes down like that. One of the more
 (See *Curt Beusman Page 14*)



"Brother Beusman" Preaching at Club Industry 2010

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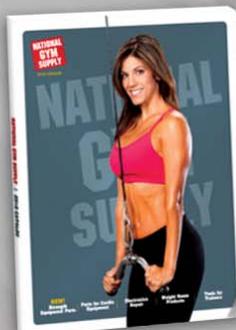
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important commandments was, 'We try to say yes if we can.' I found that we were saying no all the time. We put the indoor pool in, and we opened it at 8AM. People asked if we would open it at 7:30AM. No, it's too hard to get someone to come in at 7:30. Finally, we did 7:30. Then, they asked if we can open it at 7:00AM. Then, 6:30AM... It got harder and harder to say yes. You know what time we open the pool now? 5AM... We are not going to say no to everybody. We are going to say yes if we can, and as soon as we can, because 90% of what people want you to do you can do that day.

C.I. - How did you come up with the idea for your 'Brother Beusman' approach where you delivered your Ten Commandments while wearing a preacher's robe and holding in your hand a bible-like book clearly marked *Book of Profits*?

CB - You named me 'Brother Besuman.' You're the only

guy from Georgia that I know. Anyway, there was an IHRSA convention in San Francisco, or maybe, Las Vegas. I was going to write some funny stuff because I was on a panel with Alan Schwartz and, I think, John Wineman, and they were doom and gloom about the industry. So, I wrote these funny little Ten Commandments about recreation marketing and sort of did them with a Gospel flair. Later on, I did them another time or two. Then, John McCarthy asked me to kick off a convention, so I thought I would make a little theatre out of it. I took my son's graduation robe, and I went to a library and got a Gospel group singing, 'God is Working.' So, I played the Gospel music, came charging out on stage and said, 'Yes, God is working out!' I carried out a dumbbell and went through the Gospel stuff.

On Family Business Succession

C.I. - Okay, Brother Beusman, let's move on to a very important topic for some, and that is the *succession of your business to*

your family. For other family-run club businesses in our industry, please share your words of advice for working with other family members, as well as the succession of a family business.

CB - In 1996, I had a heart valve put in. My son, Rick, had finished his MBA from NYU and had worked with Rick Caro. A friend of mine told me about this firm in Newton, Massachusetts called Genus that handled family businesses, family succession and gave advice. So, Jane and I went up there, and I am glad we did. They were very good, and there are a number of people now that are doing that. They interviewed our kids, our employees, Jane and me, and then, they got us all together in a room and said, 'You are probably all going to cry when we talk to you.' Their role was to represent the business. The business was one of the elements in the decision. It became pretty obvious that, if we were going to have a transfer of ownership, a transfer of leadership and a transfer of management, it would be our younger son, Rick. Our older son is a filmmaker and was living in California. He was making films and documentaries and writing scripts and wasn't going to be the guy to come in and run the Saw Mill Club. By the same token, my son-in-law, my daughter's husband, wasn't going to come in. A lot of people bring in all their relatives into a business because they think it's a cash cow. Genus, the consulting group, told us they had a company that would have meetings that regularly ended up in a fist fight between two of the cousins and one of the brothers. A literal fist fight, and then, the women wanted this, that and the other thing.

So, what they cautioned us about, and I think this is very important in succession, is what they call *Triangulation*. Jane and I would still be at the club physically. We were working out and hanging out, and we knew a lot of the employees and a lot of the members. So, if a member came up to me and said, 'Do you know what Rick wants to do?' He wants to do such-and-such and so-and-so.' The triangulation comes if I then go to Rick and say, 'Rick, Suzie Glutz tells me you want to do such-and-such and so-and-so. Why are you doing that?' Then, he's mad at me, and he's mad at Suzie Glutz. I was careful to avoid that. I would say, 'Look, you know what, Rick is in charge. Talk to him.' Jane was a little bit



Rick and Curt Beusman (R) at Club Industry 2010

more eager to convey the good or the bad news, but that's how it came about. It's been terrific. Rick has done a wonderful job.

When I had the five clubs, my accounting and finance systems were not very good. Rick now runs the clubs with one CFO, one person doing all of the payables, one person doing payroll, a receivables person at every club because they have to deal with members and one HR person. Now, that's pretty cool, all out of one office, three quarters of a racquetball court. We did have a Regional Vice President for a while, who we felt was redundant. Rick has sort of taken that role on, and he goes to the clubs once a week and is back at the mother ship on Monday and Friday. It's been a great run. We were static in growth for a while, financially. Rick has come in and found ancillary sources of income. I'll give you an example of the kind of changes he's made. Jane and I ran everything. We had our own pro shop. We had our own restaurant. We had our own massage people and so forth. Rick has leased everything out. It's a much better deal. You don't have to worry about the inventory of the pro shop, bad shipments, 'this doesn't fit' and 'that's the wrong color.' I owned a restaurant for seven years. I know the problems of a restaurant, so it's much better to have someone come in and the tomatoes go sour. That's what we do now. We get good rent, per square-foot, and percentage of gross. We bill everything ourselves, so nobody is going to cheat. They're happy to do that because, if a member comes in and wants a chopped salad and a coke or something, they simply provide their member number and sign. Rick ran our first snack

bar out at the swimming pool. I think he may have been a freshman or sophomore in college. His now wife also worked there, and a friend of his did the graphics on the little signboards we had with the menu. So, Rick worked at the club in the beginning. He also started the New Windsor Club. He was in a sales trailer out front and supervised the construction work. Then, he got sick. He got what turned out to be Lyme disease. For four years, he was knocked out. Literally, he could hardly do anything. He has twin daughters, and when they were a year and a half old, he couldn't pick them up. He's healthy now, and the girls are now twenty years old. But, he did have his foot in the water at the clubs prior to taking over as the head of the whole deal.

Looking Back

C.I. - As a Co-founder of IHRSA, what has your experience with the Association meant to you? Do you plan to attend IHRSA30 in San Francisco in March, our 30th Anniversary of IHRSA, especially if there is a special event for Founders and Former Board Members?

CB - Watching the growth of our industry from the ground floor, really, and traveling all over the country and world, it was like an explosion and an excitement that was overwhelming. It was lovely to have something on the moon and have a company that did that, Curtis Instruments. But, it was something else to be able to go any place in the country and have people that you could talk to about their business and learn from and share. It goes on today. At the Club Industry show, I was really thrilled. My son, Rick, was

(See *Curt Beusman Page 15*)

Ten Commandments of Recreation Marketing

1. Thou shalt know all of thy customers and their total spendings at thy club, yea, even better than thou knowest thine own wife's charge accounts.
2. Take not the false teachings of thy most vocal members as the true gospel of thy flock.
3. Thou shalt follow thine own true counsel on marketing and pricing, unfettered by thy naysayers of lesser vision at thy competitor's club.
4. Cast thy eyes toward new fitness activities for the greater multitude that surely will benefit thy overall gross income and insure thine own retirement plans.
5. Gather thy disciples and employees unto thy conference room and teach them the love of thy members, that they might spread the gospel of thy true club value.
6. Even though thine neighbor's wife shall seeketh a special deal and entreat thee with pleas and promises, deny her from the Rule of Equity Pricing and for all thine members.
7. Deny all discounts for local corporations for their net profits far exceed thine own meager returns.
8. Thou shalt avoid optional choices like the plague, for they truly accounteth only to the benefit of the customer and destroyeth thine own bottom line.
9. Thou shalt stagger thy price increases throughout the whole year, increasing first one, then the others to dazzle thy members with footwork.
10. Yea, though thy profits be waning and thine neighboring clubs be multiplied, despair not, for the overall fitness business shall survive and prosper mightily.

...Norm's Notes
 continued from page 7

a whole new standard for people that are surely going to **Heaven!** He was **Valedictorian** of his **Senior Class** at **Brown High School**, an **All American High School Football** player and the **starting running back** for **Coach BOBBY DODD** at **Georgia Tech** on teams whose 3-year records were **52-4**. He became a real estate man, and over his lifetime, he served over **60 different community organizations** in the Atlanta area, including **The Atlanta Touchdown Club**, the **Atlanta Symphony Orchestra**, the **Scottish Rite Children's Hospital** and the list goes on and on. John did more for the people of Atlanta than anybody I know. He was relentless in his community service. There may have never

been a greater and more involved community giver and leader in Atlanta, Georgia. Perhaps the best description of Johnny Hunsinger came in a letter published on November 2nd in the **Atlanta Journal Constitution** editorial pages from **BRIAN HAILES**, who wrote:

"To your recent obituary about John Hunsinger, I would like to add recognition of his outstanding service and support for the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. During the 15 years I knew John, I had the privilege of serving on the Symphony's Board, and a number of committees with him. The same commitment and dedication that he showed for his beloved Georgia Tech football carried over to his love of classical music and our symphony. He was a tireless and enthusiastic champion,

cheerleader and fundraiser. With his flamboyant personality and a lifetime of achievements, John was a natural leader, but he also displayed a down-to-earth common touch and sensitivity. When it was my turn to chair a fundraising committee, I was humbled that this local legend would regularly ask for direction and would, without the slightest hint of irony, address me as 'Chief' or 'Boss.' No task was too small for him. No detail was unimportant. Such humility inspired me and others to learn many lessons from him.

John Hunsinger was a star in many walks of life and the ultimate team player. He will be missed."

-Brian Hailes

So, to **Kathy Hunsinger** and her sons, **JONATHAN** and **MATTHEW**, and to John's children from his first marriage, **JOHN, JR., HALL** and daughter, **ROBBIE**, I say God bless you all and may the great **Atlantan** and **Georgia Tech** man, **John Hunsinger**, Rest In Peace. He



John Hunsinger, Always Attired in Georgia Tech Colors
 was one very, very special guy.

•God bless our troops, airmen and sailors in the Middle East and around the world as they protect America's freedoms and liberty. God bless you, your family and your club(s). God bless America!

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 36-year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. Cates

is the Founder and Publisher of **CLUB INSIDER**, now in its 18th year of publication. Cates was IHRSA's 1st President, and a Co-founder of the Association with Rick Caro and five others, in 1981. In 2001, IHRSA honored Cates with its **DALE DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award**, one of its highest honors. Cates may be reached by phone at **(770) 850 - 8506** or email at **Norm@clubinsideronline.com**)

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...Curt Beusman
 continued from page 14

talking to Mitch Wald and said, 'Mitch, I will send you some information on that.' That's the kind of thing that makes an industry great; it's sharing. What bothers me a little bit --I could see it starting-- was that with the newer people, the chains and bigger people coming in with venture capital money, it was getting to be a secret. 'No, we're not going to tell them what we are going to do. We won't share that.' So, I hope IHRSA continues to share information, and I think it has. It's really why this industry has become as important as it is. It's made the industry healthy. Before IHRSA, there was fragmentation and unhappiness. Racquetball was up, and then it was down. Indoor tennis didn't have any real place to go. We were all basically landlords renting out space.

IHRSA gave me 30 years that were really a lot of fun, both for me and for Jane because she was always by my side. I once figured out that, in the 30 years that we ran Saw Mill together, Jane and I weren't apart at night more than seven or eight times, ever. We went to all the meetings, business meetings and everything else. I sure am going to be there,

the Good Lord willing, and if the sun comes up tomorrow. I will definitely make that 30th Anniversary meeting.

C.I. - If you could make one statement of advice to club owners who aspire to grow their club business to become *institutions in their community*, like your Saw Mill Club has become, what would that advice be?

CB - Well, there are two things. One is a specific thing that everybody can do, and that would be to go get Stanley Marcus' book about Neiman Marcus and read it. He was a genius in creating a business that really respected its members. Everybody that bought something from Neiman Marcus would get a thank you note from the sales person. He told his people that there are no bad customers; there are only people who want us to do better. There was also a book by the guy who ran Scandinavian Airlines. He made his people recognize that the people flying in the planes were valuable.

My second suggestion: Get to know and respect your members. Know what they want, deliver what they want, tell them you've delivered it, and then, ask them what else they want. You can't take your customers for granted, and I think a lot of

times we do. We think of them as clumps and not as individuals. Everybody is an individual. Get to know them, and train your people to know them."

• • •

You've just read an interview with one of the smartest people in the entire health and fitness club industry. We urge you to think about Curt Beusman's comments so you can apply his ideas to your club business.

CLUB INSIDER would like to thank Curt Beusman for taking the time for this interview, and we'd like to thank Rick Caro and John McCarthy for their comments.

(Justin Cates is the President and Assistant Publisher of **CLUB INSIDER**. Justin was born into a club business family in 1985, and from the age of eight, he spent his non-school and sports hours in a home which doubled as **CLUB INSIDER Headquarters**. He has lived and breathed this industry for 25 years, since his own day one. Now, he is an integral part of the "Story" of Norm Cates and **CLUB INSIDER**. Justin may be reached by phone at **(770) 595 - 6086** or email at **Justin@clubinsideronline.com**)

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Debriefing: Can You Learn?

Step Fourteen in the Series: Fifteen Steps to Paradise

By: Will Phillips

The person who makes the most decisions wins. Not the person who makes the best decisions.

Too often, club owners and managers make good first decisions on such areas as pricing, programs, personnel and then avoid making the secondary decisions that produce winning results. Conducting good debriefings about what worked and what did not, then applying the insights quickly is one of the sure signs of a learning organization. A club which learns quickly and applies those teachings has one of the strongest qualities for success. Service organizations which have not learned how to learn simply become repositories for past learning.

The problem in conducting a debriefing successfully is that it is like taking out your own appendix. You can learn the steps, but the fear prevents a successful operation. Having a designated debriefing facilitator who is trained makes the process much easier and much more successful. Assign this role to a current staff member who is willing to speak up and has some skill in running a meeting. To get started, have a debriefing session every quarter. Simply choose a new project, policy, program or

change and debrief it. Here is how:

Purpose

Announce the purpose of the debriefing in advance of the session. For example, the purpose of the upcoming debriefing is to learn from our new group exercise program or our budgeting process for next year or the recent renovation so that we can apply those teachings to make the next cycle better. Only by doing this can we stay healthy as an organization. You are invited to share your perceptions with fullness and honesty in the debriefing. At the same time, you are expected to maintain mutual respect for everyone involved. In the session, be sure to ask (with depth) if any one has any questions, doubts, disagreements, additions or changes (QDDAC) with the purpose. If so, discuss them and decide which to address in fine tuning the purpose of the session.

People

Invite the right people: the planners and designers who exercised authority over the project or event; the doers who did the work; the experts who advised; the users or customers who experienced the results. If they are not there in

person, bring their feedback and any other stakeholders as well. Essentially, all who touched the project or issue...

The ideal size is 5-12 people; however, with thoughtful and skilled facilitation, you can involve two dozen or so. Do not limit the attendance for efficiency if this means leaving out the right people. Sometimes, one or two may be invited more for their education than their contribution. They learn not only the specifics of the topic being debriefed, but more importantly, they see demonstrated that this organization openly and constructively reviews what it does and learns from it. This strengthens a healthy organizational culture.

Process

Generally, the project leader would call the meeting; however, it is important to have someone else facilitate the meeting for two reasons. First, this allows the leader to participate fully in the substantive part of the agenda without being distracted by running the meeting. Second, most leaders will have a tendency to be defensive as the process proceeds since it may feel like criticism. If the defensiveness comes from the person leading the meeting, there is little chance the participants will open up.

If at all possible, schedule the meeting when the project is about 90% completed. Otherwise, hold the meeting close on the heels of the activity being de-briefed. If you wait until it is all wrapped up and cleaned up, there is a tendency for participant's attention to have shifted to recovery or to the next project. Waiting also lets the details disappear.

Preparation

Announce the purpose in advance. Schedule the times and place of the meeting. Pass out useful data in advance. This might include customer reactions, costs, shortfalls, comparisons to other similar projects/events, etc. Encourage the invitees to

submit requests for the obvious information so it is prepared and distributed in advance.

You could also ask participants to think of the three best and the three worst parts of the project. They might also consider the following things if they were appropriate to the individual project: unintended consequences, safety, teamwork, scheduling, resource allocation, morale, relationships between people, decision making, innovation, flexibility, legal issues, attainment of milestones and financial results.

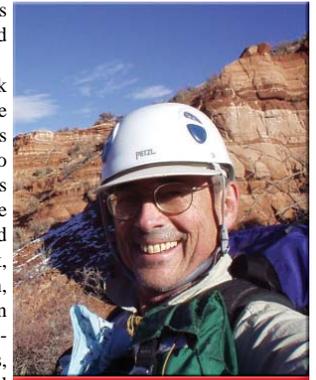
You will be collecting a lot of Potential Improvement Points (PIPs) about the issue being debriefed. They can be collected in two different ways. The choice is yours as long as no PIPs are missed. Flip chart pads with self stick backs allow you to record, and then post, all PIPs in view. A better method is to have each person write his PIP on a large-5 x 7 inch Post It with a Sharpie pen so it is bold and large print.

It is also most useful if everyone sits at a round or square table so each person can see everyone else.

Time

Allow enough meeting time, at least two hours. Ideally, two sessions of two to four hours each separated by a night's sleep. The night allows a whole different level of depth to occur in the debriefing. Actual studies in creativity have shown that 80% of the best ideas occur after a night's sleep. Don't separate the two sessions by more than a day or momentum is lost.

The generic task is to identify all the potential areas of improvement surrounding the area being debriefed. This includes how well the work achieved its intended goals plus the impact on the end users, for the immediate customers, for the creators, for the sponsors, for the club, the members, staff, etc. through improved effectiveness, improved efficiency and improved working conditions.



Will Phillips

Climate

Set the climate of the sessions consciously. Decide on how the ground rules will make the debriefing most productive for learning. For example, honesty, full openness and mutual respect. Avoid niceness, blaming, discounting and attacking. Do not avoid an area just because it will be uncomfortable to explore. Do not shoot the messenger. Driving out fear from the process is the ultimate goal.

An example may help. The SnowBirds, the Canadian Air Force Precision Flying Team, conducts debriefings after every practice and show. They do this even when there were no obvious problems. They are committed to always getting better; therefore, they do not wait for an incident! When they enter the debriefing room, all the pilots take their shoulder insignia for their rank off and check it on a table, like checking a gun at the door. While in the debriefing, everyone is equal and deserves to be heard and understood in full. Not only does such a debriefing drive improvement, it also builds an unbreakable camaraderie and culture.

Agenda

In the first meeting, the purpose and ground rules are reviewed and fine tuned so that everyone is onboard. Next, the PIPs are collected in depth, explored and analyzed. Now, solutions are generated, and then,

(See Will Phillips Page 19)

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...Will Phillips

continued from page 18

prioritized based on their cost/benefits. Actions are then taken to incorporate these improvements in the way the club operates.

Finally, the team assesses how the debriefing process worked and how to improve it.

Further Reading

A detailed agenda and the process for leading a Debriefing Meeting are available by contacting the author.

(Will Phillips is the President of REX Roundtables for Executives. REX chairs eighteen club owner Roundtables in the U.S., Australia, New Zealand, Brazil and Italy. Apply now for admission to one for you. The newest REX Roundtable will focus on Small Giant businesses in all industries. Your comments and inquiries are welcome at Will@RexRoundtables.com)

Harvard Study Claims Obesity Is Contagious

A Harvard study has shown that people who are not obese are likely to become obese after they come in contact with people who are obese. Obesity seems to have a cascading effect on non-obese people, and the chances of them becoming obese increases as they stay in contact with obese people.

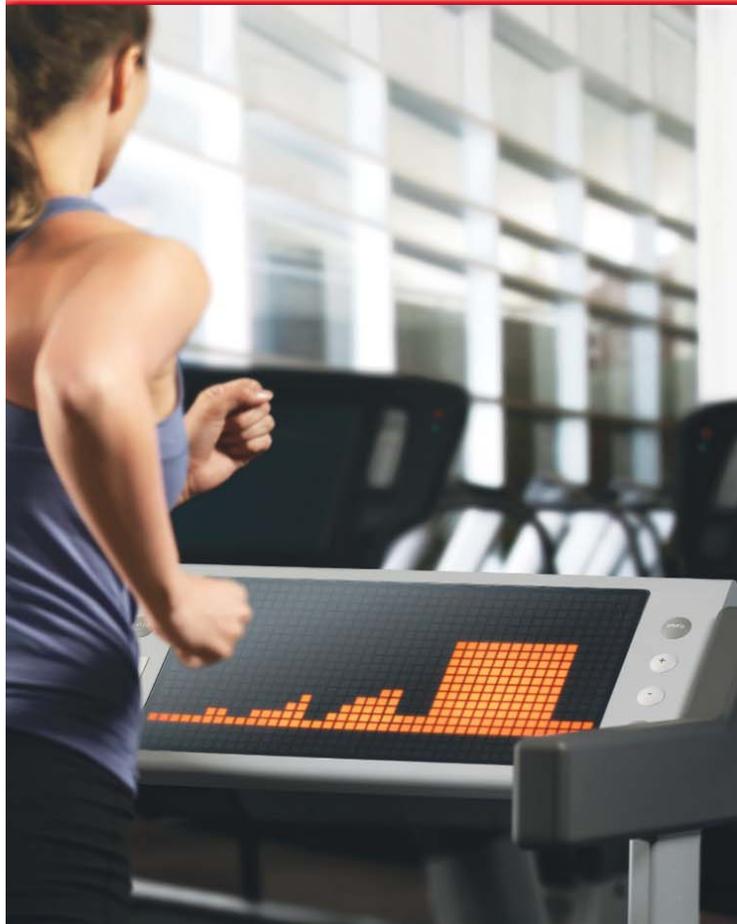
Alison Hill, Study Researcher for Harvard's Program for Evolutionary Dynamics, and her colleagues based the findings of the study on the model of spread of obesity through social networks, similar to that of the spread of contagious diseases like the flu.

"Data suggests the dynamics are the same for obesity, even if the mechanisms are different," Hill said.

The research found that there are three primary factors affecting the obesity rate; personal contact via social networks, individual factors like exercise and diet and the rate at which obese people lose weight.

An average person has a two percent chance of becoming obese in any given year due to individual factors like lack of exercise and unhealthy diet. These chances increase by half a percent with each obese family member, friend or co-worker around.

The study based its findings on the analysis of data from 75,000 people in the Framingham Heart Study.



Club Members Standing Out From The Rest

By: Donna Krech

The continuation of the video history of Thin & Healthy Total Solutions Members of the Month shows that our members involve themselves with the club significantly beyond the average member's involvement. This month, you will again see how our members changed their lives using the secrets Thin & Healthy lives and preaches every day, and you will see how they have participated in a life changing opportunity, such as "Taking A Walk In Her Shoes," a fundraiser we held to support breast cancer research.

Andrew, a new father of two adopted babies, loves his increased energy and the smaller clothes with the help of his membership at Total Solution. With his increased energy, he "Took A Walk In Her Shoes" for his mom. From that experience, Andrew walked away with an appreciation for women in general, and especially, those fighting a battle with breast cancer. Each participant of "Taking A Walk In Her Shoes" was given an entry into a \$500 drawing for wearing their pink t-shirt during the event. Andrew wore his pink t-shirt --and the required high heels-- and won the \$500 drawing!

Sonya was one of our featured members last month, but we wanted to recognize her again this month because she is also a breast cancer survivor! Sonya was a breast cancer survivor who was struggling with her weight until she joined Thin & Healthy. She was able to lose the 25 pounds she had been struggling to lose. Her doctor also informed her that she no longer has high blood pressure nor a high cholesterol reading, and she is no longer considered borderline diabetic! Her health stats are not all that's rocking; she's now wearing a size two, something she's never done before! Sonya took part in "Taking A Walk In Her Shoes" as a fifteen-year, first-time survivor and an eight-year, second-time survivor. She wants to make sure her daughter, Andrea,

doesn't take a walk in her shoes. Andrea has lost 40 pounds on her program so far.

Tim was also a featured member last month who went all out for "Taking A Walk In Her Shoes." Tim not only wore the required high heels, but he wore a skirt to match! Talk about raising awareness! When it came to losing weight, Tim struggled for eight months on his own, working out faithfully at the gym and having no results to show for his efforts. After realizing this was something he couldn't do on his own, he joined Thin&Healthy's Total Solution. He's now happy to report that he's lost 57 pounds. He sleeps better and has more endurance and stamina to get more done every day. He took part in "Taking A Walk In Her Shoes" to remember his mom and a dear friend who both lost their lives to breast cancer. He's hoping that, with more events like this, his wife will not have to take a walk in their shoes.

Stacy has kept off 35 pounds over the last year and gone from a size 22 to size 12. So, taking part in "Taking A Walk In Her Shoes" was a no-brainer for her. Her goal was to raise money and awareness, and she definitely plans on taking part in the event again next year.

Wow, how blessed we are to be a part of such life-changing opportunities! It's exciting to think that they were able to do all of this without taking away the foods they love. Meeting a member where they are is what allows them to progress at a pace they can live with, thus they lose ALL of their goal weight and keep it off. Visit www.clubinsideronline.com/thinandhealthy to meet these members personally and hear their stories.

If we can help in any way, please call us at (866) 260 - 8446 or email bhammond@thinandhealthy.com. If you don't put Thin and Healthy's into your club, please put in some kind of weight loss program. There are lives to save!

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On average 33% of Thin&Healthy's Total Solution members invest in personal training versus 1% of regular club members. Our personal training profits have tripled! Thin&Healthy's Total Solution rocks!

The Total Solution program really attracts a bigger percentage of the population than the club does. According to the latest Centers for Disease Control (CDC) report 73% of the US population is either overweight or obese. That's 7 out of every 10 people! The average fitness club (including ours) attracts 13% of the US population (1 out of every 10 people). Now, here's the kicker; the over weight population are the ones joining Thin&Healthy's Total Solution and they normally aren't regular exercisers so they want extra help and that is adding up to big personal training dollars that our club just wasn't seeing before.

The Thin&Healthy's Total Solution program helps our members lose weight faster and teaches them lifestyle changes so the weight stays off.

The program really covers

it all—healthy foods education, movement and motivation. It has made a huge difference in our member usage. In fact, we keep our members actively coming in ten months compared to the average three months for just a club. With the Total Solution added into our program our trainers became coaches and it has made all the difference! The members are seeing results and that keeps retention high! Of our active members, 42% of our Thin&Healthy's Total Solution members use the facility three or more times per week, versus 32% of our fitness-club-only members. We are seeing more of our overweight members exercising regularly than we are seeing the fit people! Because of Thin&Healthy's Total Solution we are selling more ancillary programs and more product. The bottom line is that Thin&Healthy's Total Solution helps generate more revenue in our club.

Fitness industry people ask if our Thin&Healthy's Total Solution members come from inside the club or just from the outside community.

There really are three ways Thin&Healthy's Total Solution increases club profit.

1. Current club members upgrade to the Total Solution program (think double or triple dues!) We have a lot of members that think fitness is going to be their answer to losing weight but find they aren't getting there as easily as they thought they were going to so they upgrade to the

Total Solution. That's when we hear a lot of, "I could just kick myself! I wish I would have gotten the Total Solution when I first started, because the results are so much better!"

2. People walking into the club for just fitness but have weight to lose join the Total Solution. We have a simple way of finding out if that prospective new club member is interested in losing weight and offer them the Total Solution opportunity.

3. We market Total Solution to the general public which is the 73% of the overweight population. So instead of us just pulling from that 13% of the population I mentioned earlier that will join a club we get to pull from everyone, exercisers and non-exercisers. That comes out to be about 80% of the population who is our market. The whole community really is your prospective new member when you have Thin&Healthy's Total Solution inside your fitness club.

Adding Thin&Healthy's Total Solution equals more prospects, more members, double or triple dues, more product sales, more ancillary program sales, higher retention, better member results and more profit! --That's the impact Thin&Healthy's Total Solution can have on a club. X

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Why Health Club Salespeople Fail

By: Jim Thomas

I see it and hear it frequently. Why do health club salespeople fail? It's a question that health club owners and managers seem to always be asking, and the primary reason that keeps health clubs asking this question is that there is not just one answer. Whether the health club salesperson's failure is blamed on the club salesperson, on the club manager or the club owner... or maybe, it's everyone.

No matter if your health club sales team is just one rep or a force of ten, the simple fact remains... It all starts with YOU. It starts at the top. Here are some thoughts to help you build a top-flight sales team in your health club.

YOU need to take the responsibility for the sales reps in your health club. Make the decision to be accountable for the success or failures of your health club sales team. You can justify anything. Choose to be accountable for everything that happens. Failure to do so is the number one reason for the failure of a health club sales person. You're accountable for all of the excuses used as to why your health club salespeople fail, just like you are accountable for the sales team in your health club. How many of these excuses have you used lately?

1. I inherited this sales team at this club. I didn't hire these reps.

2. We just don't have time for sales training.

3. That's normal in the health club business. Turnover is just something we have to accept.

4. Our club can't offer competitive compensation like other health clubs can. We're straight commission on membership sales. No base salary or benefit packages are available.

5. Our membership salespeople are really in business for themselves, so if they need help with sales, they should get help on their own.

6. If our club reps fail, they really weren't cut out for the health club business.

7. Our reps needed help? Then the reps should have come to us. We would have helped them. That's up to them. How am I supposed to read their minds if they're having a problem?

8. It's hard to find good health club sales talent right now. Our market is very competitive, and this is what I have to work with.

Does any of that sound familiar?

Since you are evaluated and ultimately compensated by

how successful your health club sales team performs, tolerating these excuses will be at a heavy price. Ultimately, YOU are the one responsible, and you need to rid yourself of all excuses. Once you decide to take full accountability for yourself as well as each sales rep in your health club, then you can start to empower others to be fully accountable.

Develop YOUR sales training skills. Just because you were once number one in sales and just because you can sell anyone doesn't necessarily mean that you know how to train someone else to do it. Sales training isn't about giving information. The successful health club sales trainer is responsible for club reps finding the answers themselves and developing their own problem-solving skills.

YOU must be consistent in providing weekly training classes. While many health club owners and managers tell me they don't always have the time to meet with their membership sales reps, I promise you that many of the issues you're dealing with in your health club are actually a result of not training and communicating with your club membership sales team on an individual and more regular basis.

I compare: sales training to regular exercise, the more consistent you are (exercise or sales training), the better results

you will get.

YOU must have a new-hire training program for all sales reps. Regardless of circumstances, every health club owner or manager needs to be able to determine whether a club rep is going to make it within their first 30 days in the position. What do you expect from your health club new hires within the first 30 days? What do you want them to learn or achieve each day? Whether they make it with your health club doesn't rest only on whether they are selling memberships. There are other factors you can use to determine if you made the right hire, such as his commitment to the club, their sales acumen, his assimilation of product and club industry knowledge and his general attitude. Is he following through with any initial work that needs to be completed before he is ready to sell memberships on his own? Does he have a daily plan and routine? Is he working within your clubs selling system? Is he following the core basics for success: showing up to work on time, following through with club



Jim Thomas

sales training, putting together his target list of prospects and going through role-playing with you? And finally, if the rep doesn't make it, you must ask yourself this question, did he fail himself or did YOU fail him? Be honest.

It all starts with YOU!

(Jim Thomas is the President of Fitness Management USA and may be reached by phone at 800-929-2898 or email at jthomas@fmconsulting.net)

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Kim Kenyon & Bill Austin
With Gold's Gym Hudson Valley

The Medical Fitness Model: *Defining the Difference*

By: Dr. Cary Wing

The country is witnessing a significant transformation in how physicians, healthcare providers and the public view strategies to reduce the risk of disease and to maintain a lifetime of healthy living. Initiatives such as *Exercise is Medicine* are evidence that the entire healthcare industry is embracing the concept of prevention and disease management through health education and regular participation in physical activity.

In the current environment, a medically-integrated health and fitness center can provide the appropriate oversight and continuum of care individuals are seeking to achieve their goals. Understanding the model and implementing strategies for success will assist a health club in building trust in the community and will provide opportunities for business growth and development.

Uniting Fitness with Healthcare

Since the first hospital-owned fitness center, Integris Health PACER Fitness Center, opened its doors in 1979 in Oklahoma, medically-integrated facilities have been merging fitness and healthcare. The medical fitness industry has grown from approximately 79 centers in 1985 to over 1,100 centers in 2010. The industry has been, and still is, predominantly composed of fitness facilities owned by hospitals. However, many other segments of the health and fitness industry are now developing medically-integrated centers. Facilities such as the *Dedham Health & Athletic Complex* and *ACAC Wellness & Fitness Centers* are examples of the expansion. These centers bring together clinical and fitness/wellness services in an environment that is typically shared by both general members and by patients under one roof. There is a seamless integration of programs and services that include physical activity and exercise, as well as clinical integration and/or rehabilitation.

The Medical Fitness Difference

Simply defined, the medical fitness difference, or medical fitness model, is the ability to appropriately screen for and identify risk factors for disease in an individual, and then, provide the tools to manage a person's health, i.e., trained staff, physical activity programs and services and education to modify risk factors. In other words, a medical fitness center provides a continuum of care for an individual, the member, that is determined through a Health Risk Assessment (HRA) and other analyses such as body composition, sub-max exercise testing and muscular strength and endurance tests. A facility that embraces the medical fitness difference places emphasis and focus on the specific needs of the individual. The goal for each member in a facility is to achieve a state of optimal health wherein health disease risk is controlled, reduced or eliminated.

The HRA is a key component of this model. A medical fitness center offers each new member a detailed HRA, and upon completion of the assessment, the fitness professional (Exercise Physiologist) reviews the information and then acts accordingly based on the results. The new member is either cleared to exercise by the fitness professional or is referred to a healthcare provider for follow-up and clearance to participate in physical activity. Once cleared to exercise, an individualized exercise program is developed based on the person's current activity level and interests to maintain adherence. In addition, a medical fitness center offers a variety of educational programs or specific therapies to address the needs of members to achieve total health and wellness. The "one size fits all" philosophy is not evident in a medically-integrated health club.

On occasion, a fitness facility will define itself as medically-integrated, or as a medical fitness center, based solely on the fact that the facility "houses" a rehabilitation program

such as physical therapy, cardiac rehabilitation or sports medicine, or it has weight management or diabetes education classes. Holding these classes and providing members access to these programs is undeniably beneficial, but merely locating a rehabilitation program onsite does not make the entire facility medically-integrated. There must be "integration" between the clinical program and all other programs in the facility, with medical oversight being a core component.

Examples of the Medical Fitness Model

Good Shepherd Institute for Healthy Living - The *Good Shepherd Institute for Healthy Living* in Texas is an example of the medical fitness model and the integration of wellness and disease management programs. According to their website, "*The Good Shepherd Institute for Healthy Living* is the region's only medically-integrated wellness center where healthcare and fitness merge to help people live healthier and happier lives. It is designed to offer the community two paths of wellness. The facility provides advanced outpatient rehabilitative services for individuals requiring a medically-guided continuum of care. The second path provides individuals and area employers the ability to improve and maintain their health and the health of their employees through a comprehensive fitness and wellness facility. The Institute for Healthy Living encompasses 75,000 square feet of specially-designed space for the delivery of medical, educational and fitness programs." Services offered at the Institute include cardiovascular and strength training equipment; aquatic center; group exercise; nutrition and lifestyle counseling services; and rehabilitation programs such as outpatient physical therapy, sports medicine, occupational therapy, speech therapy and cardiac rehabilitation.

Roseville Health & Wellness Center - In 2008, the Medical Fitness Association (MFA)

launched the first industry facility certification program. The certification provides a mechanism for health and fitness facilities to benchmark their programs and services against standards and guidelines specifically for medically-integrated centers. *Roseville Health & Wellness Center* in California is a certified facility, and the center was founded on the principle of total wellness and clinical integration. As their website states, "Our goal is to make Roseville the healthiest community in America. We provide a unique combination of medical, rehabilitation and fitness services allowing each individual to achieve total body wellness." Roseville has been successful in blending all aspects of the medical fitness model and providing a continuum of care in their community.

Summary

The unique nature of a medical fitness center can impact increasing healthcare costs and provide a safe and effective environment for an individual to change patterns of behavior related to negative lifestyle habits. This article has provided a broad overview of the medical fitness difference and the scope of a medical fitness center. Future articles will focus on the importance of medical oversight, specific requirements for medical fitness facility certification, as well as the physician referral pathway and prescribing exercise.



Dr. Cary Wing

Resources:

Benchmarks for Success 2010, Medical Fitness Association, www.medicalfitness.org

Medical Fitness Association (MFA), www.medicalfitness.org

Good Shepherd Institute for Healthy Living, www.gsmcinstitute.org

Roseville Health and Wellness Center, www.rosevillehwc.com

(Cary Wing, EdD, has been a leader in the medical fitness industry for over 25 years and most recently served as Executive Director of the Medical Fitness Association (MFA). Currently she is actively involved in uniting healthcare and fitness throughout the industry. Questions and comments are welcome by email at caryhwing@aol.com)



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Critical Website Strategies Every Club Needs

By: Casey Conrad

Part II

In the first article of this series, we discussed that the increasing use of the Internet by consumers to locate and research products and the decreased effectiveness of traditional marketing means club operators must utilize the Internet as a significant marketing component. We established that the primary goal of all Internet marketing is to build a massive list of prospects who have opted in to your database. It sounds simple enough, but it is considerably different than traditional "list building." Specifically, you are not just trying to attract prospects who are close to buying but a wide variety of prospects with varying levels of interest in fitness, not necessarily a club just yet. Once someone has identified himself by opting into a list, club operators can then use specific strategies and offers to move the prospect closer to a buying decision with the ultimate goal being that of a membership sale.

With the primary goal of all Internet marketing being online list building, identifying the best capture mechanisms is critical. Although there are many different ways to attract online prospects, this article will focus on situations where people are visiting your website. The reason for this is because prospects that are visiting your site are "low hanging fruit." That is, they have already found your website--something you have spent lots of time and money promoting--so why not start with the easy leads.

Online Guest Passes

The first website capture mechanism that every club must utilize is an online guest pass. Although many clubs have a guest pass option on their website, most are doing it incorrectly. First, the link for the guest pass is often so buried within other web pages that the majority of visitors don't ever find it. Second, the request form is set up with too many required fields (name, phone number, address, etc.) that the click to opt-in rate is very low. Third, the delivery system for the guest pass allows people

to "cheat" the system because so long as they fill in the required fields a PDF version of the guest pass pops up on the screen. This results in entries like, "Fred Flintstone" or "Mickey Mouse." Finally, leads are usually sent to the inbox of a club manager (or owner) who then forwards them to the appropriate salesperson, which leaves a lot of room for human oversight and error. If your club is falling prey to any one of these mistakes, you are underutilizing your website for guest pass prospects.

You can make your clubs online guest pass incredibly powerful and efficient by doing several things:

- Reduce the amount of "required" information that is necessary to obtain a guest pass. Let's face it; your goal is to get them into the club, so what if you don't have their phone number? If your front desk is working properly, you can screen guest pass abusers at the point of entry. Make the telephone number an "optional" field and those who want to talk to a salesperson will give it! Further, only have one field entitled "Name" instead of requiring both first and last name. Some people are really uncomfortable giving both because they believe you will try to track them down through another medium. Yes, that may be a slight paranoia on their part, but why put up barriers to entry?

- Do NOT use a pop up guest pass system. Instead, have the guest pass be delivered to the person's e-mail address. They may put a bogus name down, but if they want the guest pass they have to at least put a valid e-mail.

- Have the entire system connected to an auto-responder system so you are capturing all the information into a system that will work for you while you are sleeping! I could write an entire article on this, but if you want to know about the system I encourage all our clients to use, go to www.ourfavoritecart.com.

- Put Google Analytics onto your website to monitor the conversion statistics and continue to tweak the offer and the fields until you are maxi-

mizing opt-ins for guest passes.

Free eBooks

Cleaning up your online guest pass system will go a long way to prevent "lead-losses," but that's only going to attract visitors who are ready to join or at least close to a decision to visit, hence the registration for the guest pass. To attract the "not yet ready to join" visitor, clubs must find ways to entice these individuals to give their name and e-mail address.

The most popular and successful Internet marketing strategy utilized to capture visitors' information is the eBook. An eBook is exactly as it sounds. It's a book (or booklet) that is distributed in an electronic format, usually a PDF. Regardless of what is being offered, a visitor to a website obviously has some interest in the products and services of that company (unless his search erroneously brought him there). An eBook that offers the visitor information, insights or possibly solutions to their current search could prove valuable enough to the visitor that they are willing to give their name and email in exchange for the free eBook.

Imagine if, on your club's website, you offered visitors an eBook entitled, "How to Shape Up At Home So You Feel Better Visiting a Fitness Club!" Or perhaps one called, "How to Create a Lunchtime Walking Group at Your Workplace."

Whether you like those titles or not isn't important; the key is that these eBooks are geared towards attracting people who just aren't yet ready to join the club but ARE ready to start living the benefits and privileges of exercise. If you can get someone exercising at home, there is a much greater chance that they'll eventually come to the club. When they are ready, where do you think they will join? Will it be the club who just had an advertised special or the one who has been helping them get into shape at home?

Of course, the eBook concept is just as applicable to a visitor who could be closer to buying. Imagine offering an eBook entitled, "The Five Biggest Mistakes People Make When Finding a Health Club & How to Avoid Them."

You can immediately begin utilizing eBooks to obtain more web leads. Keep these



Casey Conrad

things in mind:

- Choose topics that are relevant to the market you cater to, not what your fitness staff might think is interesting.

- Make sure the content is high quality and rich with information. If the person gets the eBook and thinks, "This is lame," you have completely sabotaged the process.

- Once you have great content, spend the money to have the eBook formatted by someone who has reasonable design skills. We're not talking about (See Casey Conrad Page 27)

ABC Financial On The Move!

SHERWOOD, AR - Paul Schaller, President of ABC Financial, announced several key personnel additions in October, including the promotion of Anna Welsh to Sales Director of National Accounts.

"Anna has demonstrated that she has the expertise to handle accounts. Not only does she know this business, but she is dedicated to providing the best possible experience to ABC clients across the country," stated Steve Ayers, Vice President of Sales for ABC. "She is simply the best person to fill this role, and I am excited to see her excel in it."

Schaller also announced the addition of two new Regional Sales Directors, Timothy Andrews and Clay Whitaker. In their new positions, both Andrews and Whitaker will oversee all sales operations within their respective territories, as well as present detailed billing, hardware and software solutions and analysis to prospective clients. Andrews will assist ABC clients in the Central

region, and Whitaker will serve the West Coast region.

Schaller commented, "We are excited to have each of these true professionals on board. Both Tim and Clay have proven themselves to be leaders in the field and are excellent businessmen, as well as salesmen."

The busy month of October also found Paul Schaller announcing the addition of two new Business Development Managers, Andrea Cobbs and Jeanne Richardson. In these roles, Cobbs and Richardson will target startup accounts and cultivate referral business, expanding the presence of ABC in the market and continually promoting a positive customer experience.

Since 2008, Cobbs has served as a club marketing representative for ABC Financial. Her promotion is well deserved, according to Vice President of Sales, Steve Ayers, who stated that Cobbs has had "three years of superior results and service while



at ABC." Prior to joining ABC, Cobbs worked in the banking industry. She is a 2003 graduate of the University of Arkansas.

Richardson has ten years of sales experience, having served as a consultant in pharmaceutical sales since 2006. Prior to that, she worked as a research coordinator and regional director for a clinical research group. Richardson graduated from Ouachita Baptist University in 2000.

Schaller commented, "I am excited to welcome Jeanne to our team and to watch Anna and Andrea's careers continue to progress with ABC. All have exceptional sales experience, and we are excited to have them working to further develop our relationships with our customers."

3 Guaranteed Ways To Make Sure Your PT Department Makes Money!

By: Michael A. Sena

Welcome to Part II of this 3-part series. I hope you enjoyed my first article in October about recruiting and hiring and recognized how vital it is to building a strong and productive Personal Training department. Regardless of the business that you are in, recruiting and hiring correctly is a must. It is the first level of building a strong department. Any top CEO would agree.

Part II: Train & Develop Thoroughly

I want to talk about training and developing your staff once you have assembled the right team. It is no secret that many companies and health clubs fail to allocate the needed resources in this area, and in fact, are just plain 'lazy' when it comes to training their staff.

But first, let's look at why people leave a company. I did some research for employee retention statistics. While I couldn't find any statistics more recent than 2007, the results were frightening. Pick an industry or geographical location; it doesn't matter which. Turnover rates averaged from 25% to almost 60%. Those are staggering numbers. I don't know if they included seasonal workers, but

even if we halve these numbers, employee retention statistics are very telling. That's why recruiting and hiring is so important. We need to find as many of the 'full-time, career-minded' individuals as possible before we start to invest in all of the training that the new employee will need to be successful.

All companies have employee turnover. Certainly, employees leave for reasons that have nothing to do with the company, such as relocation of a spouse or partner, illness and a host of other reasons. Yet I suspect, in fact I know from my years in the PT business, most employee turnover is related to the company. I spent 30+ years as a trainer, PT studio owner and Director of Sales Education for a \$120 million dollar per year club chain, and when employees left, it was rarely due to non-company issues or even money. They left because there were limited opportunities for growth, poor or ineffective leadership, they felt undervalued or they were *undertrained and ineffective at their position*.

These and other reasons cause people to seek opportunities outside the company they work for. The cost of employees leaving your company/health club is calculated at 1.5 times that of their salary. For example, an individual who is making \$50,000 a year

would actually cost you \$75,000 to replace and re-train someone to fill his position! These are costs that you *can* quantify. Consider costs you can't quantify, such as employee morale, customer dissatisfaction, quality control issues, projects that get delayed and lost productivity while the new employee is learning the ropes. In the health and fitness club industry, we cannot afford to spend this kind of money, over and over again. The margins just won't allow it. Hence, turnover is one of the biggest reasons why so many clubs go out of business every year!

Let's focus on training and developing your personal trainers and see if we can't fix a thing or two. There is an expression, "don't be penny-wise and pound-foolish." Truer words were never spoken when it comes to training your staff properly and thoroughly. Permitting your management staff to be lazy, as I mentioned earlier, is unacceptable and according to the statistics, it will certainly lead to the higher attrition numbers of employees leaving your club, guaranteed! Failing to provide proper training and development programs for each department of your company and management team is career suicide in my book.

Employees are just that, employees. They need to be led and trained by the best.

Both your sales team and your PT departments must have a leader who can continually train and develop (weekly/monthly) to improve the performance of his people and to increase the overall productivity of the team members and the company's bottom line. Follow these steps when looking to improve your hiring process and continued education system at your club. You will see the attitudes change for the better, along with everyone's job performance, tenure and company profitability.

Step 1: Make sure you have the right person in position as the leader of your PT department. Just because someone is your 'top' producer/seller doesn't necessarily make him the best leader and or teacher. Your department leaders must be organized, professional and able to *teach* others, host positive meetings/workshops and hold themselves and their team accountable.

Step 2: Develop a Best Practices manual for your department leaders, specific to each department, for them to use and reference daily with their staff. Make it simple with easy-to-follow bullet points and appropriate topics.

Step 3: Have the needed PT systems in place and make sure



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your leaders are testing their staff regularly on ability and knowledge levels so that they are ready to perform when needed.

Step 4: Always use role playing as the cornerstone of your training and development system. Your leaders should have solid experience of their own and be able to *tell*, then *show* and finally *observe* your staff doing their respective jobs, over and over again.

Step 5: Have an ongoing weekly or monthly training and development program for your PT department, and remember, good quality training and development never ends!

In Part III, I will address the importance of managing and tracking your department results for maximum growth.

(Michael Sena is the Visual Fitness Planner Regional Director of Sales for the Midwest and may be reached by email at Michael@myvfp.com or phone at 219-707-6113)

...Casey Conrad

continued from page 26

Illustrator quality here, but you want nice formatted text and some graphics or photos to make it more visually interesting.

●Be certain to PDF all your eBooks. This ensures easy delivery no matter what computer type or program the individual is using. The person who designs your eBook will be able to do this for you.

The bottom line is that an eBook is a fabulous tool that can entice a visitor to give up their contact information. Once you have their email address, you can begin the important process of communicating with them and

building a level of trust that can lead them to eventually buying a membership (or other service) at your club.

Video

The third critical strategy that you need to integrate into your website is the use of video. When done correctly, video is a powerful driver of search engine traffic but also of viewer engagement. People come to expect video on a website now. They want to be both educated and entertained, and video is the only medium that can easily do both. Further, with video making tools so readily available, clubs can make professional quality videos at a negligible cost or even

free with programs like Windows Media Maker. The best part is that, if you are technologically challenged, you can easily get one of your kids, nieces or nephews to do it for you!

Certainly, there are many clubs that have placed video on their websites, but some common mistakes can greatly reduce their effectiveness. First, although there are some things you want only viewed on your website, use YouTube for any content that would be interesting and relevant to non-members. Not only will the video usually play a lot faster than one hosted by your own platform, but you also get the benefit of search engine optimization. Second, be certain to add a call to action

and URL link at the end of each video, even if it is pointing them to something on the same website. Send them to your online guest pass registration, an eBook or other educational content offer that is driven by a squeeze page. Remember, the goal is to capture their name and email address. With the use of interesting, educational content, you will increase the chances of engaging the viewer, gaining their trust and driving them to your website's capture mechanisms.

The Internet is an incredibly powerful tool. Ironically enough, like a "power tool," if you don't know how to use it, it really doesn't matter whether you have a 6-volt or a 12-volt battery attached! By

taking the time now to educate yourself on how to use these incredible Internet marketing strategies and then ensuring your club is using them to the maximum benefit, you will begin seeing your efforts turn into prospects in your database, and eventually, members of the club.

(Casey Conrad has been in the health and fitness industry for over 25 years. She has authored over 25 different books, audios and DVD's in the area of sales and marketing for health clubs. To learn more about free resources on sales and marketing visit www.caseyconrad.com or email her at casey@caseyconrad.com)

IHRSA Celebrates Three Decades of Excellence in Industry Education

BOSTON, MA - IHRSA will celebrate its 30th Anniversary by continuing its tradition of offering the industry's most outstanding business educational and networking experience at its 30th Annual International Convention and Trade Show in San Francisco, March 16-19, 2011.

Headlining the event will be four of the most sought after speakers on the lecture circuit:

•**Daniel Pink**, the author of four provocative, bestselling books on the changing world of work;

•**Patrick Lencioni**, Founder and President of The Table Group, Inc., a specialized management consulting firm focused on organizational health and the author of many best-selling business management books;

•**Tony Hsieh**, the CEO of Zappos.com, who grew the

company's gross sales from \$1.6 million to \$1 billion over the past decade and the author of a Top 10 business management book, *Delivering Happiness*;

•**Phil Keoghan**, host of the television show *The Amazing Race*, who attributes his success and zest for living now to a near-death experience at the age of 19.

Daniel Pink will kick off the event with his presentation on *Drive: What The Science of Motivation Can Teach You About High Performance* (sponsored by Matrix Fitness). Based on forty years of scientific data supporting his argument that people need intrinsic rather than external motivation, Pink's work revolutionizes the way we look at performance and motivation.

Patrick Lencioni will focus on *The Four Disciplines of a Healthy Organization* (sponsored

by Precor Incorporated). Lencioni has been described by Ken Blanchard, author of *The One Minute Manager*, as "fast defining the next generation of leadership thinkers." He is the author of six best-selling books with over 2.5 million copies sold.

One of the most widely respected and successful business innovators in the new economy, Tony Hsieh will speak on *Happiness: A Path to Profits, Passion & Purpose* (sponsored by Technogym). As the CEO of Zappos.com, the online shoe sales company, he has achieved phenomenal company growth through revolutionary approaches to marketing, human resources and customer service.

Phil Keoghan will present a talk entitled *No Opportunity Wasted: Creating the Life You Want* (sponsored by SPRI Products, Inc.). Originally from New Zealand, Keoghan has worked in over 100 countries around the world as a motivational speaker, author, television host, actor, producer and cameraman on thousands of program episodes.

The IHRSA Convention and Trade Show annually draws thousands of industry



professionals for four days of education and networking opportunities. The remarkable, and still growing, international attendance has established the IHRSA event as the premier program for the health club

industry, both in the US and in the overseas marketplace. Be sure to mark your calendar now for IHRSA30 in San Francisco! Go to www.ihrsa.org/convention for more details and to register.



Clubsourc Announces New Partnership

SAN RAFAEL, CA - Jill Stevens Kinney, Founder and Managing Director of Clubsourc Development Partners and Co-founder of the successful Club One chain of fitness clubs, announces her new partnership with Sandy Hoeffler, former Vice President of Western Athletic Clubs. Clubsourc designs and develops high-end fitness and athletic clubs. With over 50 years of combined experience as successful club owners and operators, Kinney and Hoeffler bring a unique combination of development skills together with a history of operating best-in-

class clubs throughout the United States, including Club One, the Pacific Athletic Club, Bay Club Marin, Courtside Club and Decathlon Club.

Clubsourc is currently focused on building privately-owned community clubs that offer cash-strapped municipalities quality recreation and fitness facilities for families. Last year, Clubsourc opened the first of these models in Petaluma, CA, a 40,000 square-foot club managed by Club One that has earned the title of *Top Project in the North Bay*, *Best Health Club* and *Best Family Club*.

Kinney and Hoeffler, both former Board Members of the IHRSA, have been active in the industry for over 25 years. As part of the new partnership, Clubsourc has expanded its services to include design consulting, project management and equipment procurement. They are experienced in serving athletic clubs, community centers, golf and country clubs and employee wellness centers. Kinney and Hoeffler are both longtime residents of Marin County and maintain their office at the San Rafael Corporate Center.

The 2011 Industry Defense Campaign

Between now and June 30, 2011, the Public Policy Council must raise over \$1 million to ensure that our industry has the financial resources necessary to protect clubs from dangerous legislation, while also positioning the industry at the forefront of health promotion and wellness policy.

Consider this your invitation to join hundreds of industry operators in the fight to protect clubs from dangerous legislation and misguided taxes. For a list of this year's contributors, please visit www.ihrsa.org/council.

IHRSA's Public Policy Team currently has a two-year legislative record of 50 wins and zero losses. For a list of those victories, please visit www.ihrsa.org/victories.

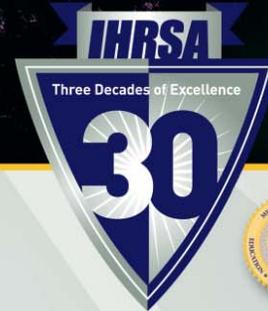


PPC
 Public Policy Council

These battles would not have been won without the financial support of the Industry Defense Fund. If any one of those 50 bills had become law, it could have had a significant impact on your ability to do business.

Please join the campaign today! Learn more at www.ihrsa.org/idf.

The Club Industry Gathers for IHRSA30!



IHRSA30 – The 30th Anniversary International
Convention & Trade Show
March 16-19, 2011 | San Francisco, California USA

Join club owners, operators and staff from over 70 countries as we celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the IHRSA International Convention & Trade Show. The agenda is packed with education, social events and a fantastic lineup of General Session speakers including:



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REGISTER TODAY!

Register today for the lowest rate by visiting ihrsa.org/go2011.

Contact Nicole Johnson at nj@ihrsa.org or call 800-228-4772 ext. 197.



Programming Tip of the Month: *Specialty Programs... A Must for December and January*

By: Sandy Coffman

Specialty programs are programs that are run annually, seasonally or as one-time special events. Specialty programs can be run with many different formats and focus on many different niches. They usually will involve several activity areas and departments in the club and almost always will require support and participation by the entire staff.

Specialty programs can be adapted to any type of facility or fitness setting and can use equipment you already have. Most of the specialty programs will have lots of variations, and you will find that the variations create additional programs within the original framework of a specialty program. You can be creative, but I have offered several other ideas.

December and/or January are great months to introduce your facility to new members, provide a *come-back program* for members

who were inactive, invite potential members to enjoy a fun experience and to offer a special event to your existing members.

Here is an example of a specialty program that is great for a holiday party. It's fun, easy to do, provides camaraderie, lots of action, new experiences and is a great start for follow-up programming. More variations, supplemental material and promotional downloads are available in the CD for *Successful Programs for Fitness and Health Clubs*, but I encourage you to try this event for a Christmas party or New Year's party. You'll love it.

The Grand Prix

The Grand Prix provides a fun group experience that offers a variety of exercises and uses several different activity areas of the club. The program offers diversification and introduces the cross-training concept. The

program moves quickly and covers a lot of ground in the allotted time. It involves lots of exercise, lots of experience, lots of fun and very little competition.

Description

1. The Grand Prix program is 100 minutes of total activity.
2. The number of participants will vary according to individual clubs, but this program can accommodate 10 to 100 participants.
3. The 100 minutes of total activity can be broken down as follows:
 - 20 minutes - warm-up exercises and aerobics;
 - 20 minutes - court sports (racquetball, tennis, squash, etc);
 - 20 minutes - fitness center (cardio or other circuit equipment);
 - 20 minutes - walking or jogging;
 - 20 minutes - cool-down exercise and stretches.

Tips for Success and Points to Consider

If the group is small (10 participants or fewer), the whole group stays together in each

activity. With a larger group (30+ participants), you can divide the group into three groups of 10. The whole group (30) can begin together in the group exercise studio for the warm-up exercises, and then, you can divide each group of ten among the next three activities. Each group will rotate until everyone experiences all of the activities. Conclude with the entire group (30) back in the exercise studio for the cool-down and stretches.

- An added feature or the final 20-minute segment can be a clinic or workshop for educational purposes or a Q&A segment.
- You could end the program with a swimming event. It would be too difficult to include it within the 100 minutes.
- The instructors and trainers must be on the ball, keeping the groups together, moving through the activities quickly and maintaining a high energy level throughout the program.
- Using props like bells, whistles, tambourines and gongs to start and stop the 20-minute sessions adds a



Sandy Coffman

fun flavor to the program.

Variations

- The Grand Prix is a terrific format for any party, such as a corporate party, end-of-league party or holiday party.
- The Grand Prix can be tailored for special populations, such as kids, seniors, families, working organizations, etc.

Always take advantage of holidays and season changes to offer specialty programs to promote and market your club!

(Sandy Coffman is the "Dean of Club Programming." Contact Sandy at SLCoffman@aol.com or visit www.sandycoffman.com)

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All who have advertised, purchased subscriptions, pitched in as Contributing Authors and read CLUB INSIDER! We are now in our 18th year of publication! All of you are on the "Team" that makes this publication, and we will be grateful to you forever. **I appreciate and LOVE 'Ya!**

Very Sincerely,

Norm Cates, Jr.

bodytraining systems



"I have never seen anything else in the industry have such a high impact on guest traffic, member retention, member satisfaction and profits. With BTS we've increased monthly group participation from 800 visits to 6,000 visits, added over 2,600 new members increased retention from 50% to 73% and increased profits by over 400%!"



John Bonica
Co-Owner, Global Fitness Centers

"We have learned the impact that marketing BTS programs can have on driving traffic into our clubs. We have advertised FREE classes to non-members in various media which has increased traffic by over 25%. On top of that, 90% of prospects who visit WOW! and experience a BTS program, join that day!"



Stephen S. Roma
Owner, WOW! Work Out World

"We began working with BTS in 2006 and within two years we had dramatic impact on our business. We went from only servicing 9% of our members in Group to 37%. Our retention rate for Group members has skyrocketed to 93%! And amazingly, by executing one of BTS' management principles of integration, we have developed a cohesive team of instructors and personal trainers. This has resulted in our PT revenue increasing by over 55%!"



Mike Silva
Owner, The Edge

"BTS is the single best investment I have ever made, not only in Group Fitness, but also for my club as a whole. It services our members, sells memberships, markets our club and motivates our members and staff, including me! BTS has enabled me to increase my membership price from \$30 to \$49 per month, and we no longer compete on price."



Jason West
Owner, Gold's Gym Elite

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