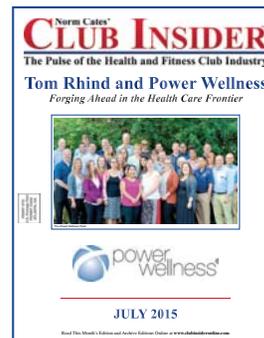
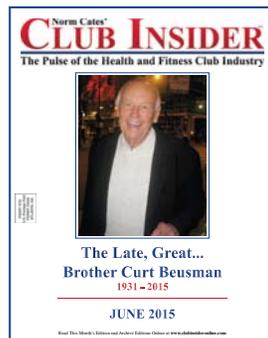
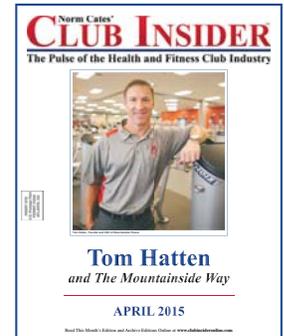
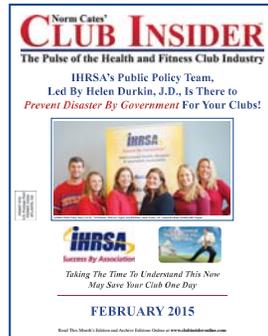
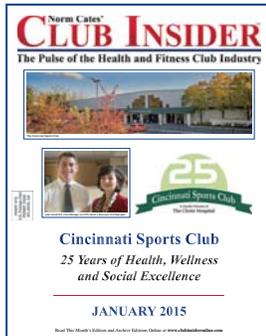
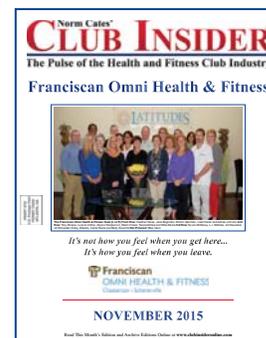
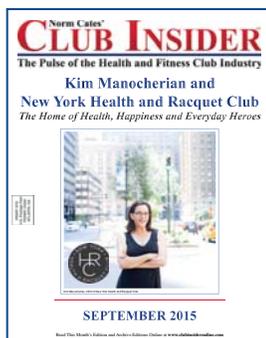


Norm Cates' CLUB INSIDER™

The Pulse of the Health and Fitness Club Industry



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“2015 In Review”

DECEMBER 2015

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Norm Cates' CLUB INSIDER™

The Pulse of the Health and Fitness Club Industry

“2015 In Review”

By: Justin Cates

I love to travel, and one of my fondest memories traveling was my first trip to New York City. During my visit, I needed to take the subway to a few of my sightseeing destinations. Waiting on the platform, I could hear and see the train in the distance, and it was getting closer at a seemingly faster rate. Right before its arrival, the wind gusts put off from the train hit all the travelers waiting on the platform. Moments later, the train arrived and began to decelerate, bringing more wind with it. On the platform, you could see traveler's clothes and hair moving with the direction of the arriving train. And, then, it stopped, the train's doors opened and boarding began. Moments later, the train was off again; this time with new passengers and to a new destination.

Every year in December, we feature an “In Review” cover story to review the year that will soon be

completed. Like the train and wind on that New York Subway platform, this year, like every, has come and gone so fast one could figuratively blink an eye and miss it. That's how it feels anyway, but when we take a moment to look back at everything our publication has covered this year, and to see what our industry has accomplished, it is a lot more than a gust of wind lost into the night. And, like those passengers, heading into the New Year, we are all aboard a new train headed to a new destination. Let's all continue to make a mark in 2016!

A Summary of Our 2015 Cover Stories

To begin the year, in January, we featured **Cincinnati Sports Club**. During my on-site visit to this vast and ever-evolving facility, I saw firsthand how some in our industry are reaching new heights with medical integration into their facilities. We believe in its importance, and it's something that is not going to go away.

So, it became a theme for **CLUB INSIDER** in 2015 with several cover stories dedicated to the topic.

In February, we featured **IHRSA's Public Policy Team**. The importance of this topic cannot be understated, but sadly, only a handful in our industry are contributing to the insurance protection against excessive government interference that is IHRSA's Public Policy effort. If you have not already, seek to become educated and see how important this topic is to your club business.

The incredible **Claremont Club**, led and directed by an amazingly dedicated and talented industry leader, **Mike Alpert**, in Claremont California, was our March Cover Story subject. What they are doing to make the lives of spinal cord-damaged people more normal is simply incredible. And, of course, what they have done for the friend of all of us, **Augie Nieto**, who has been suffering from ALS for 10+ years, is something most cannot believe is true.



Justin Cates, Assistant Publisher of CLUB INSIDER

The Claremont Club is literally helping those who cannot walk do so again.

Staying out West, **Tom Hatten and Mountainside Fitness** was our April Cover Story subject. Tom's story (See “2015 In Review” Page 10)

Augie's Quest Making Progress! An Update From John McCarthy

Publisher's Note: John McCarthy recently provided the Augie's Quest Media Advisory Committee with an update on the progress that the research for Augie's Quest has been producing, and it's truly encouraging! John commented:

This year, for the first time ever, the BASH is coming to the East Coast, to Orlando, FL, on Wednesday, March 23, 2016. Your readers may be interested to know:

First, that Augie's lab in Cambridge, MA (ALS TDI) now has two drugs, one of which has completed human clinical trials and another that is going through the process: both have been shown to significantly slow the progress of the disease in laboratory animals.

Second, spearheaded by Augie, there are now at least ten independent labs around the world that are now focused on the cure of ALS. In essence, this means that there is now a genuine “Race for the Cure” and for breakthroughs that will lead to the cure!

Third, once breakthroughs begin to happen, as is now the case, progress tends to escalate and cascade, as one breakthrough leads to another, and another and another.

So, the news is good, very good... better than ever before.

We hope to see you in Orlando. Let me know if I can help in any way. For further info, contact Gretchen Simoneux at gsimoneux@als.net.

IHRSA to Celebrate 35 Years and Counting!

By: Norm Cates

I'm pleased to comment on the fact that IHRSA will celebrate its **35th Anniversary in Orlando, Florida** at the **2016 IHRSA Convention and Trade Show, March 21st thru 24th**. To say that the IHRSA is something that has made Rick Caro and me very proud since we co-founded it in 1981 would be a real understatement.

IHRSA was the brainchild of our industry's best friend, Rick Caro, and together with five others, we got it rolling. IHRSA's seven founders included: the late Dale Dibble, the late Curt Beusman, Jennifer Mitchell, Todd Pulis and Peter Donahue. And, Rick and I were blessed

to have had John McCarthy take the helm as Executive Director for the first 25 years of the Association, and since then, to have had Joe Moore as our Executive Director for the past 10 years.

John, Joe and our entire industry have been blessed with the hard work and special contributions of many **IHRSA Board Members** elected by the Membership to serve over the past 35 Years. A very sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to all of those IHRSA Board Members, past and present, should be heard loud and clear here by all of them.

You are invited and urged to **Celebrate IHRSA's 35 Years and Counting** in Orlando in March, 2016.

Inside The Insider

- “Insider Speaks” - Dealing With Active Shooters in Your Club and Elsewhere - **By:** Norm Cates
- How Much Are Your Unemployment Claims Costing You? - **By:** Melissa Knowles
- A Value Proposition: Focus On Your Personal Training Department - **By:** Angie Pattengale
- Tips for Success and Being the Best - **By:** Karen Woodard
- Tips for Hiring, From JLR Associates - **By:** Jeff Randall and Dennie Noecker
- An Enlightened Prophecy for the Health and Fitness Industry in 2016 - **By:** Stephen Tharrett and Mark Williamson
- Tips to Succeed in the Gym Business - **By:** Jim Thomas
- Programming For The “Fun Of It!” - Program-Ready Checklist for the New Year - **By:** Laurie Cingle

- Planet Fitness Continues Growth in Oklahoma
- The Columbia Association Honored
- Daxko Acquires CSI Software
- Wellbridge Acquires Maryland Athletic Club Brand
- World Gym Celebrating 40th Anniversary in 2016
- Technogym's Program for Children Begins Third Year of: “Let's Move for a Better World”
- And, of course, *Norm's Notes*



Norm's Notes



•**Hello Everybody!** This is your CLUB INSIDER Publisher and Tribal Leader Since 1993 checking in!

•**Is America a great country, or what?** Hmm... hmm... hmm! With what's going on in our world, I felt 100% compelled in my heart and in my mind to write the Page #6 "Insider Speaks" Editorial entitled: **Dealing With Active Shooters in Your Club and Elsewhere.** Check it out, and as always, I'll appreciate your feedback, good or bad, sent to me at: Norm@clubinsideronline.com.

•**"Augie's Quest Making Progress?"** is one of our Page #3 headlines, which reports huge and great news about the results that the research to find a cure for ALS, a/k/a LOU GEHRIG's Disease, funded by AUGIE'S QUEST, is achieving. Thanks to BIG JOHN MCCARTHY for sending this encouraging news! If you've never gone there, or even if you have, you should again go to www.augiesquest.com, and you'll see that this fundraising effort, now ten years running, has raised over \$45 million for ALS research so far! BUT, the fight is not over. The fight must go on! AUGIE and LYNNE NIETO are going to win it with all of our help!

When you go to the website, you will also see on there that JIM WORTHINGTON's ever growing and improving Newtown Athletic Club in Newtown, Pennsylvania, has teamed up with MATT BELINA, and

through a number of events via what they're calling **Matt's Mission**, they have raised over \$180,000 for **Augie's Quest!** Here are the names and amounts of just a few of those who have given via that special effort: \$10,001 - BILL and NANCY McALISTER; \$10,000 - JIM WORTHINGTON; \$5,000 - HOWARD and JOY BERLIN; \$5,000 - PETER BROMS; \$5,000 - MICHAEL and ALLISON ANDERSON; \$1,525 - BILL and ANNA SIVETER; \$1,100 - RUTH and GEORGE PAZIAN; and \$1,000 - RICK HUCKLE. Before I move on, I must say that it has been fun for me watching JIM WORTHINGTON and his Newtown Team growing and improving their already amazing club, which CLUB INSIDER featured on our Cover in May of 2010, and Jim's been doing all this while still finding time to serve on IHRSA's Board of Directors! Good on you, JIM WORTHINGTON and Team NAC! Now, while I'm on the subject of Augie's Quest, let's move on to my next note, a Note about my 70th Birthday Party that's scheduled for January 16, 2016 here in Atlanta.

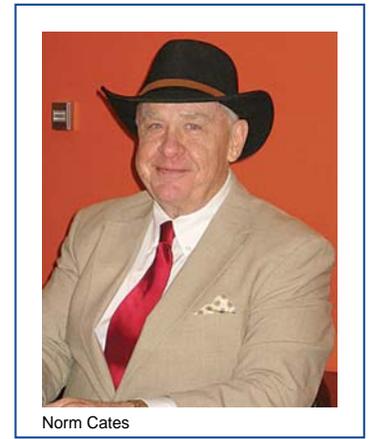
•This important Note is about our 70th Birthday and 31st Combo Birthday Party! To be clear, this is NOT just MY birthday party! This will be a very special Combo Party for me and my son, JUSTIN, as he'll turn 31 on January 18th the day after I turn 70... if the good Lord's willing. If you will

be anywhere near Atlanta, Georgia on Saturday Night, January 16, 2016, then YOU and COMPANIONS of your choice are cordially invited! Check out our Birthday Party Invitation on Page #7. And, so I'm very clear here, I want you all to know that Justin and I have dedicated our Birthday Party to Augie's Quest!

Here's how YOU can help. Regardless of whether you will be in Atlanta, Georgia on Saturday night, January 16th, Justin and I are asking each and every one of you reading this to step up and chip in some moola for Augie's Quest to help AUGIE and LYNNE NIETO Win the War On ALS and FIND the CURE! First, let me mention that I've asked the Hudson Grille folks, where we're hosting our party, to chip in to Augie's Quest in honor of our birthdays. They have agreed. FYI, here's how it's going to work:

The Hudson Grille has pledged to:

1. Provide the location complimentary, Hudson Grille - Sandy Springs, GA (They have 4 other terrific Atlanta locations, as well).
2. Provide complimentary food throughout the evening. Believe me folks, The Hudson Grille food is always terrific!
3. Cover our D.J. cost for the lovely D.J. VANESSA HUNDLEY and,
4. On top of all of the above, they're going to donate 10% of their sales during our party to Augie's Quest!



Norm Cates

Here's what Justin and I are going to do:

1. Justin and I pledge to Make IT FUN, just like at the 60 or so big parties I've thrown in Atlanta over many years. If you want to see how we Make It Fun... then come on down to the ATL on January 16th, 2016!
2. From 8 to 9PM, I've agreed to buy draft beer, wine and soft drinks for everybody. After 9PM, it will be a Cash Bar and pay-as-you-go for drinks. Be sure to dress casually and wear your Dancin' Shoes so you can shake a leg or two. And, don't forget that our hosts at the Hudson Grille are donating 10% of sales to Augie's Quest!
3. Justin and I are inviting friends from Atlanta, from Nashville (where Justin (See Norm's Notes Page 7)

About Club Insider

Established in 1993

23 Years and Counting!

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“Insider Speaks”

Dealing With Active Shooters in Your Club and Elsewhere

By: Norm Cates

Since the first attack on the **World Trade Center in 1993**, our beautiful America has also been hit by a series of warlike efforts including bombings overseas and even in the U.S. **Then came 9/11/2001 when the World Trade Centers**

came down, and it became clear that **America had a real fight on its hands with lunatics**. Since then, and in particular for the last two to three years, Americans and people around the world have become subject to attacks of all kinds in all kinds of places... with the latest ISIS attack in **Paris, France** and then just this month

with the **ISIS-inspired San Bernadino, California massacre**.

Our future... YOUR future and the future of your family will depend in the long run on how our leaders react. So, if you feel helpless waiting for our leaders to react appropriately, then consider this: You and I don't have to wait to see how America's leaders are going to react. And, in particular, I would like to urge each of you who own a club, or clubs, to seriously consider preparing for what might be coming your way. Here are two ways you can prepare:

1. On December 11th, over 800 people attended what was called an “**Active Shooter Seminar**” here in **Marietta, Georgia**, in which members of the **Police Department** taught the attendees what they can do to avoid being a victim of an **Active Shooting Event**. And, I am sure many more Active Shooter Seminars will spring up all over America. **So, when you see news about an Active Shooting Seminar, go there and learn what you can to save yourself and your family in such an event.**

2. **For yourself, your family, your club staff and your members and guests, you should give serious thought to preparing yourself to deal with an Active Shooter in your club.** This could take the form of arming yourself, depending on local laws. Before arming yourself, obtain guidance on appropriate weapons from professionals. Then, make sure that you take appropriate training to handle a weapon in the sad and dangerous event of an Active Shooting inside the doors of your club. Arming is a decision one must make personally

Truth be told, I simply could not allow myself to go on any longer without

suggesting these things to you readers for your consideration because you all are so very important to us in our lives. Trust me when I say that, should something happen to any of you with respect to an Active Shooter, and you turn out to be unprepared, I will only be able to wish I'd written this for you sooner to convince you that you needed to do something to prepare to defend yourself, your staff and your members in the event of an Active Shooting actually happening in your club.

Many clubs are contacting local police and other law enforcement officials to attend proper educational training (e.g. evacuating, barricading, showing hands above the head, etc.). This is no different than the old fire drills for kids in schools in terms of preparedness.

God bless all of you. And, please do know this for sure: YOU have the power to do something to help yourself and your members survive an Active Shooting in your club or elsewhere in life. YOU are not helpless unless you choose to be helpless! Don't ALLOW yourself to be helpless! Your family and your members and guests are depending on YOU! If this writing ends up helping save just one life, it will have been totally worth it. So, don't delay! Don't be helpless! Prepare for the worst!

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 41+ year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. Cates is the Founder and Publisher of CLUB INSIDER, now in its 23rd year of publication. Cates was IHRSA's First President, and a Co-Founder with Rick Caro and five others, in 1981. In 2001, IHRSA honored Cates with its DALE DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award, one of its highest honors. Cates can be reached by phone at 770-635-7578 or email at Norm@clubinsideronline.com)

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Planet Fitness Continues Growth in Oklahoma

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK - Planet Fitness, the innovative health club franchise known for its Judgement Free Zone and affordable prices with memberships for only \$10 a month, will be opening two new locations in Ponca City and Enid, Oklahoma. Ponca City is slated to open by mid-February and Enid in the Spring of 2016.

The clubs will feature a wide variety of equipment, including treadmills, ellipticals, arc trainers and stationary bikes, all pointed at 70" televisions for member entertainment while working out. Planet Fitness also offers a popular 30-minute PF Express circuit room, dedicated abs/stretching room, a full complement of user-friendly strength equipment and full locker rooms that include free day-use lockers,

private changing rooms and tile showers. "These will be the most state-of-the-art clubs in the area. At only \$10 a month for memberships, the value will be second to none," said Trey Owen, CEO of PF-TO Management, a leading Planet Fitness Franchisee Group that currently operates 20+ locations across Oklahoma and Texas.

Additionally, a Black Card membership will be offered at \$19.99 a month and will include additional amenities such as the ability to bring a guest every day at no additional charge, access to over 1000+ clubs in the Planet Fitness chain, as well as use of massage chairs, HydroMassage beds, tanning and Total Body Enhancement booths, and 50% off select cooler drinks.

...Norm's Notes

continued from page 4

lives), and of course, from around the country wherever you might live... YOU are invited! The section of the expansive Hudson Grille - Sandy Springs facility where our party will be held will accommodate 350 people, and that's our target!

4. I'm asking everybody, including each of YOU, whether you will be able to attend or not, to send a little moola, \$10 or more, via a check made out to Augie's Quest. Of course, if you have a little more moola to spare than \$10, please chip in some extra bucks. Please make the check out to: **Augie's Quest** and mail it to me at:

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P.O. Box 681241
Marietta, GA 30068

I will add up all donations up and send them to Augie and Lynne at Augie's Quest. Your name as a contributor, but not the amount of your donation, will be published in the **February Edition of CLUB INSIDER**. Again, check out our **70th and 31st Birthday Party Invitation** on **This Page** and please chip in to help Augie's Quest. **We believe that Augie and Lynne are going to find a Cure for ALS, and someday, that cure to Lou Gehrig's Disease will be known as Augie's Cure!**

God bless you all for sending any and all moola you can spare to help this great cause. Don't forget you can write it off!

• **Planet Fitness** continues its march across America and around the world, and they've released news that they have new **Planet Fitness franchises** opening in **Ponca City and Enid, Oklahoma** with Ponca City opening in **mid-February, 2016** and Enid opening in the Spring. See **Press Release** on the **Opposite Page**.

• **World Gym International, Inc.** recently had their **39th Anniversary Convention** in **Las Vegas**, and next year, they will celebrate their **40th!** Check out the **Article** on **Page #22** for a quick review of some of the things that happened there.

• With recent news from the Government that the typical American kid averages only **39 minutes of activity per day**, the news that **Technogym** is continuing with its third year of the **"Let's Move for a Better World Challenge"** could not come at a better time! Check out the **Press Release** on **Page #28**.

• Welcome aboard to **ANGIE PATTEN-GALE** and the **National Federation of Professional Trainers (NFPT)** as new **CLUB INSIDER Advertiser Team Members** and **CLUB INSIDER Contributing Author Team members**.

Check out Angie's article and the new NFPT Ad on Page #18.

• **GEOFFREY DYER** called me recently to tell me that, on **December 2nd, he'd sold his two former Lifestyle Family Fitness Clubs** in the **Columbus, Ohio** market to **DAN CASKEY** and his **four partners in the Crunch Fitness Franchises** in the **Columbus area**. Geoff, a great character from **Down Under**, came to **America long ago** and planted himself in the **Tampa Bay area** where he worked hard to build, and ultimately sold, a chain of about **20 Lifestyle Family Fitness Centers** in the area for mega-bucks. Geoff

has served our industry unselfishly, and very well as an **IHRSA Board Member** and then **President of the IHRSA Board of Directors**. **Best of luck, Geoff**, as you and your partners grow your **Crunch Franchise groups of clubs** in **Atlanta, Orlando and the Tampa Bay areas!**

• Thanks to **JEFF RANDALL** and **DENNIE NOECKER** of **JLR and Associates** for the article this month entitled: **Tips on Hiring** on **Page #24**. **Jeffrey and Dennie** have been **LONG TIME CLUB INSIDER Advertisers**, and we Thank them for that support.

(See Norm's Notes Page 8)

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- Cash Bar after 9 P.M.
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Everyone attending, or not, is asked to please write a check for \$10 or more to help Augie and Lynne Nieto find a CURE for ALS. Please make your check payable to Augie's Quest and bring it to the party or mail it to the address below:

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All contributors of any amount will be thanked and acknowledged in the February 2016 edition of Club Insider!

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...Norm's Notes

continued from page 7

•Thanks to **KAREN WOODARD** of **Premium Performance Training**, as Karen has come on board for a new **monthly column series** in **CLUB INSIDER** entitled: *Tips for Success and Being the Best*. Check out **Karen's** first installment on **Page #22**.

•One more time for the **Holidays...** Thanks and sincere **Appreciation** to all of our terrific **Contributing Author Team Members** who spend their valuable time to share their expertise

and knowledge and to **ALL of our great Advertisers who make CLUB INSIDER possible!** And, of course... **Thanks to all of you who read CLUB INSIDER!** We greatly appreciate our very **Special Relationship with all of you** because we **LOVE y'all**, and we greatly want to **serve you all well!**

•**RODNEY STEVEN, II** is becoming one of the **true powers** in our industry with his chain of **21 Wichita, Kansas-based Genesis Health Clubs**. The latest news from Rodney's world is that they have acquired the **Jayhawk Tennis Center on the campus of the University of Kansas**

in **Lawrence, Kansas**. Rodney Steven, II has also played a prominent role in Kansas with his efforts to square things away and get fairness and balance on real estate property taxes between commercial health clubs and tax free health clubs such as **YMCAs and JCCs who get away with paying zero property taxes!** Rodney and his lovely wife, **JULIETTE**, have a beautiful family that includes **six wonderful children**, and all of them appeared on our **CLUB INSIDER Cover in July of 2012** (www.clubinsideronline.com/archives). **Continued Best of Luck, Rodney!**

•Here's an interesting one from **Sandy, Utah**, which was brought to my attention by a report by **STUART GOLDMAN** of **iClubs.com**. It seems that the employees at the **Crossroads Fitness Center in Sandy, Utah** were **allegedly not being paid by their employers**. Reportedly, they had endured everything from being *paid late* to *not being paid at all* to a degree where it pushed them to the breaking point, and their solution was to **Close the Club**, or maybe better stated, to **NOT OPEN the club!** In any case, according to **KUTV TV**, who contacted **National Fitness**, the owners of the club, they were told that they were *doing all they could to get squared away with utility companies and their employees so the club could go on*. I welcome any of my readers with knowledge of the events there to be in touch with me at: **Norm@clubinsideronline.com**. Stay Tuned, folks!

•This from **Canada...** it looks like our health club industry in the good 'Ol USA needs to catch up with our great neighbors north of the border, the **Canadians!** **FitNews...** a Newsletter from **Fitness Industry Council of Canada** reported in its **November** edition that, and I quote **FitNews** here: **"Quebec has started an amazing trend. Medical practitioners are now providing prescriptions for exercise. Patients are leaving their doctors office with a script for exercise rather than a prescription drug. Although the Primary Care Network, and other nationwide organizations (such as the Canadian Diabetes Association, and Exercise is Medicine Canada) has launched similar programs, Quebec is the first province that has provincially implemented this form of prescribed medicine via practitioners."**

So, there you have it, folks. Too bad our Congress is so buried in fighting each other over **pork and philosophies** that they can't see the forest for the trees when it comes to doing the right things to help us Americans. Maybe, just maybe... somebody will smell the roses, clip out and send this Note to their Congress representative and suggest to them that they could and should invite our smart neighbors, the **Canadians**, down to **Washington, D.C.** for a little powwow of sharing and teaching our legislators about how to do things that might

actually help us Americans! Stay Tuned, Ladies and Gentlemen!

•It was great seeing my old buddy, **KARL DROPPERS**, veteran club business leader, and long-time headman of the **MVP Sports Clubs in Orlando, Florida**, on the Cover of **IHRSA's CBI Magazine**. Carl was kind to invite the **IHRSA** folks to visit the **fabulous RDV Sportsplex** during the **IHRSA Convention in March**. And, if you have never been to the **RDV Sportsplex**, the place they call **"Orlando's Crown Jewel Sports and Fitness Health Complex,"** I would urge you to take the time to do so. The place is *amazing* and *belongs right up there* with facilities such as the **East Bank Club in Chicago; Red Lerille's in Lafayette, LA; Pat Laus' Atlantic Club and the Franciscan Omni Sports and Fitness Club (And yes, JIM WORTHINGTON's Newtown Athletic Club!)**. Carl, and **RDV Sportsplex Teammates, PETE OPRESKO, CHUCK OSTERINK, MATT CARLEN and FRAN SILVERNELL**, graced the **CLUB INSIDER Cover in February, 2003**, along with a photo of the expansive facility.

•**JUSTIN** and I want to say **Thank you for reading CLUB INSIDER!**

•**Merry Christmas or Happy Holidays** (depending on your choice of religions) to you, your family and your club team... and a very **Happy, Healthy and prosperous New Year!**

•**CLUB INSIDER** is a **Paid Subscription based Publication with a money back guarantee on all new subscriptions**. Are you a **Paid Subscriber?** If the words **PROMOTIONAL COPY** appear above your name and address on the cover of this month's edition, you are not a **Paid Subscriber**, and you are not enjoying the *full benefits* of a **Paid Subscription** to **CLUB INSIDER**, which includes **one year of new editions** (print and online) and **online access to all previous 22 years of CLUB INSIDER's 264 archived monthly editions**. So, *don't delay!* **Subscribe today for just \$89 for one year or \$10 a month** by going to www.clubinsideronline.com/subscribe.

•**God bless** all of our troops, airmen and sailors worldwide and **keep them safe**. Thank you, **Congratulations and Welcome Home** to all of our troops who have served in **Iraq, Afghanistan** and around the world. **God bless you and your family, your club staff, your members and your club(s)**. **God Bless America!** **And, our very sincere condolences to the families of those murdered and injured by the radicals in San Bernadino, California not long ago.**

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 41-year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. Cates is the **Founder and Publisher of CLUB INSIDER**. Cates can be reached by phone at **770-635-7578** or email at **Norm@clubinsideronline.com**)



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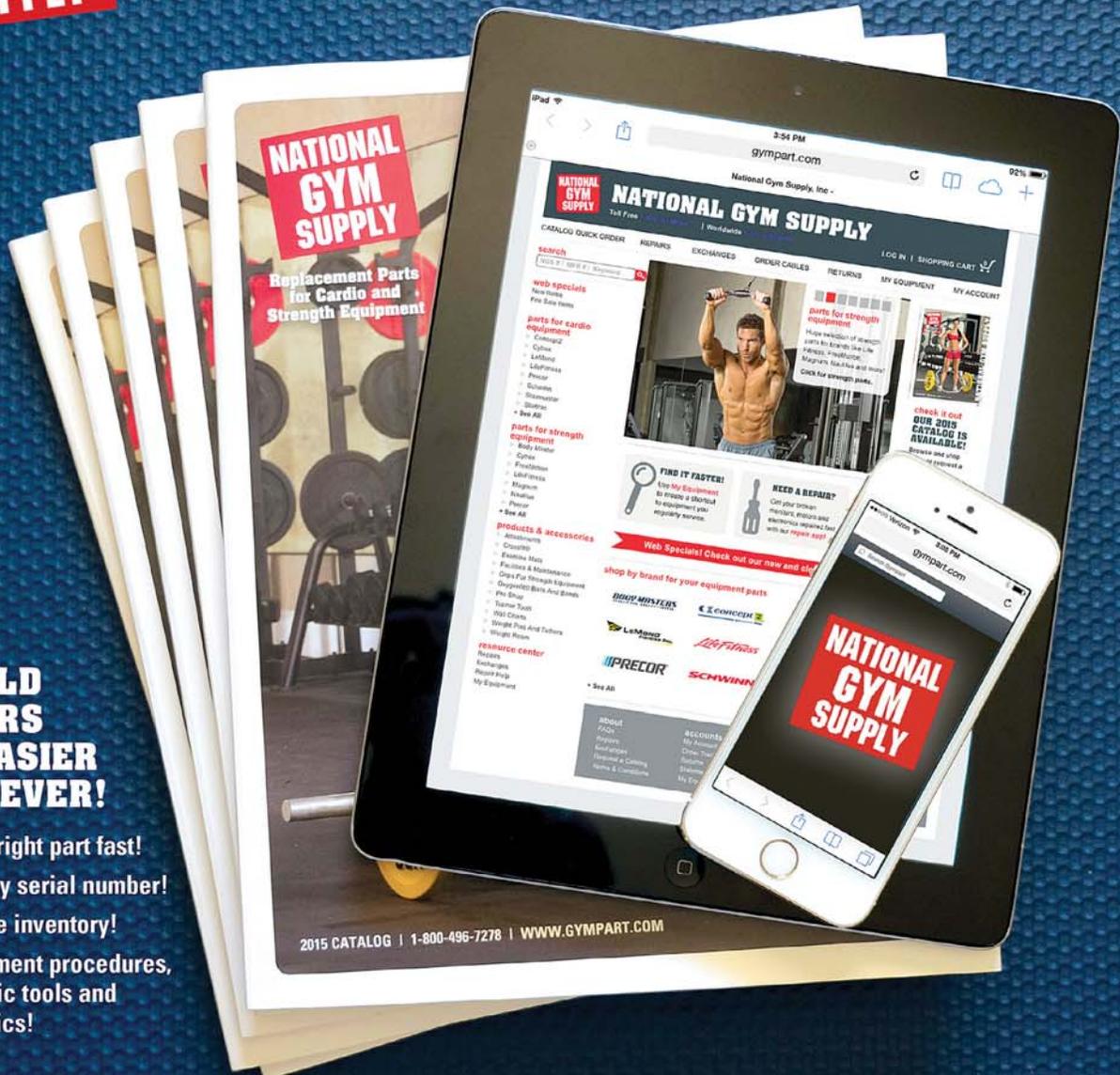
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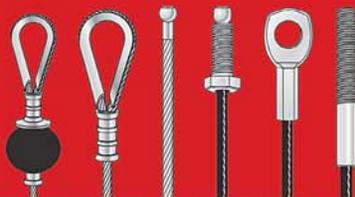
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... "2015 In Review"

continued from page 3

is a case study in constant reinvestment into a concept that works. Coupled with incredible club location scouting, including one facility literally located inside of Chase Field, home of the Arizona Diamondbacks, they have reached great heights regionally, and they plan to expand from there.

In May, we featured another story in the realm of medical fitness integration. **Mike Feitelberg and The Edge** are proving their concepts can work across a chain network. He and his team are among those who are pioneers in this arena, and in the future, our industry will thank all of them for bringing our industry to new heights because of these concepts.

Our June Cover Story was a tough one for my Dad and I to write, as we said goodbye to industry pioneer and great friend, **Curt Beusman**. The late Curt and Jane Beusman helped countless colleagues in this industry, including us, as they were instrumental in the creation of **CLUB INSIDER**. **May Curt and Jane Beusman Rest In Peace**.

Once again in the field of medical fitness, our July Cover Story featured **Tom Rhind and Power Wellness**. Power Wellness provides design, construction and operations management services customized for medically-integrated centers, commercial fitness centers and university or community fitness facilities.

In August, we featured our long-time *inside front-page Advertiser* and industry colleagues, **Planet Fitness**. This special edition featured the details of their Initial Public Offering on the New York Stock Exchange.

Our September Cover Story featured **Kim Manocherian** and the family business of **New York Health and Racquet Club**. Their story is a great one in terms of a health and fitness club business being a pioneer in various fields as well as adapting to the changing needs and wants of its customer base over time.

The title of *Oldest Health Club in America* is not an easy one to acquire. By our estimation, our October Cover Story subject, **Wareing's Gym** in Virginia Beach, Virginia, is just that. Once we delved deeper, it was easy to see why they have been around for as long as they have (since 1960). A true family business that is revered by the residents of the community it serves, Wareing's Gym exemplifies the ideals we write about time and time again.

With our November Cover Story, we closed out the 2015 calendar. Featuring **Franciscan Omni Health & Fitness**, we once again delved into the ever-important medical fitness field. Their story is another case study on the right things to do to properly serve the populations that need these services, as well as reinvesting in the tools that implement that vision.

Thank you to all of this year's Cover Story Subjects for their time and assistance sharing their stories with our

readers! We are grateful for that and for what you do for our industry.

Thank You All!

Before moving on, we must take a moment to thank those that make it possible for us to publish **CLUB INSIDER** each and every month.

First, we would like to thank you, our readers, for your support. The labor of love called **CLUB INSIDER** *always has you in mind, and we hope it shows*. We also want to say **Thank You** to our printer, Walton Press, a **fantastic** 115-year old company in Monroe, Georgia for all of the great work they've done on all 264 monthly editions of **CLUB INSIDER** since 1993.

Next, we'd like to thank all of our authors this year, as they took time out of their busy schedules to share a great mix of informative articles across a vast array of topics. Beyond our monthly cover stories and news coverage with both press releases and Norm's Notes, we try to bring Best Practices to you from the trenches. **Our authors this year included: Angie Pattengale, Bill McBride, Billy Dawson, Bruce Carter, Casey Conrad, Daron Allen, Deneen Laprade, Derek Barton, Donna Krech, Dr. Art Curtis, Jarod Cogswell, Jenna Wortham, Jim Thomas, Joe Imbrogno, Joe Moore, Jon Butts, Karen Woodard, Laurie Cingle, M.Ed., Maria Parrella-Turco, Mark Williamson, Michael Lipowski, Mike Alpert, Nancy Trent, Paul R. Bedard, Esquire, Robin Schuette, Ron Alterio, Stephen Tharrett, Thomas Plummer, Tracey Bourdon and Will Phillips. Thank you to our CLUB INSIDER Contributing Author Team.**

And, of course, we'd also like to thank all of the companies that advertised with us this year because we could not have come to you each month without their support. **Our advertisers this year included: Augie's Quest** (with several ads **CLUB INSIDER** contributed to the cause), **Business Finance Depot, CSI Software, Crunch Franchising, Fabiano Designs, Fitness Management & Consulting, FitRewards, Gym HQ, GymWipes, iGo Figure, IHRSA, Iron Grip Barbell Company, Jonas Fitness, JLR Associates, LA Fitness, Mike Grondahl's ALS Fundraising, MOSSA, Motionsoft, Muscle Up Marketing, National Gym Supply, New Paradigm Partners, NFPT, Planet Fitness, Sports & Fitness Insurance, Susan K. Bailey Marketing & Design, The STEP Company, Thin&Healthy's Total Solution, Visual Fitness Planner and World Gym International. Thank you to our CLUB INSIDER Advertiser Team!**

A Note About Subscriptions

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With **7,500+** pages of archived content, this is an incredible wealth of information for an even more incredible price! While reading this note and this edition, please remember that you may not receive a promotional copy next month or the month after because we alternate our promotional mailings frequently. So, we urge you subscribe today. It only takes a couple of minutes to securely subscribe through our website by going to www.clubinsideronline.com/subscribe, and you will have a wealth of industry information and the history of our great industry at your fingertips! **We also wish to express our most sincere Thanks and Appreciation** to all of you who have subscribed to **CLUB INSIDER** during our first 22 years of publication. We greatly appreciate your business and support.

And Now, 2015 In Review

January 2015

Front Page Article Headlines

• "Insider Speaks" - The State of the Health Club Industry Today - **By: Thomas Plummer**

Inside The Insider

• "Now What?" - Why We Fail At Booking The First Appointment And What We Can Do About It - **By: Ron Alterio** • Club Legal Considerations for the New Year - **By:**

Paul R. Bedard, Esquire • What Is The Relationship Between Club Design And The Prices It Can Charge? - **By: Bruce Carter** • Twelve Enlightening Business Insights for the New Year - **By: Stephen Tharrett and Mark Williamson** • 15 Ways To Avoid Exercise Disaster - **By: Michael Lipowski** • Doubling The Success Of New Members - **By: Will Phillips** • Programming For The "Fun Of It!" - Pricing Small Group Training Programs - **By: Laurie Cingle** • Weight Loss Goes Beyond "Eat Less, Move More" - From the January 2015 Harvard Letter • And, of Course, **Norm's Notes**

February 2015

Front Page Article Headlines

• 2015 IHRSA Awards To Be Presented At IHRSA Los Angeles

Inside The Insider

• Are We Asking The Right Question? - **By: Bill McBride** • Spring: The Real Season of Opportunity - **By: Deneen Laprade** • "Now What?" - Your 2015 EFT PT Report Card - **By: Ron Alterio** • Feel Like Adding Video Content Is Too Hard? - Think Value, Not Viral - **By: Joe Imbrogno** • Are You Ready to Grow Your Business? - **By: Jim Thomas** • The Resolution Revolution - **By: Billy Dawson** • Small Group Training Management - 7 Keys To Success - **By: Laurie Cingle** • Rick Caro's 19th Annual Financial Panel Set For IHRSA 2015 • iGo360 Software From iGo Figure - All The Features At No Extra Cost • World Gym Announces Two New Locations In Russia • CSI Software Launches Mobility, A New Mobile App for Health and Fitness Clubs • New Associate Partner, Bill Lemanski, Joins New Paradigm Partners • US Fitness Holdings Adds Atlanta Fitness To Its Portfolio • Ultimate Resource Manual For Implementing Standards Offers 1-Stop Resource • And, of Course, **Norm's Notes**

March 2015

Front Page Article Headlines

(See "2015 In Review" Page 12)



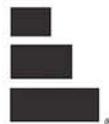
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...“2015 In Review”

continued from page 10

Norm Cates' CLUB INSIDER
The Pulse of the Health and Fitness Club Industry

*The Claremont Club...
An Amazing Story of
Club Innovation and Differentiation*

MARCH 2015

Read This Month's Edition and Archive Editions Online at www.clubinsideronline.com

●12 Good Reasons To Come To The Augie's Quest Bash ●Planet Fitness Franchisee Secures \$58.75 Million In Expansion Financing From GE Capital

Inside The Insider

●What Does “Fred The Baker” Have In Common With PT Sales? - **By:** Ron Alterio ●How To Give and Receive Feedback - **By:** Karen Woodard ●Reevaluating Referral Systems At Your Club - **By:** Casey Conrad ●Feel Like Adding Video Content Is Too Hard? - Think Value, Not Viral - Part II - **By:** Joe Imbrogno ●Planting The Seeds For Marketing Success - **By:** Tracey Bourdon ●Health Club Employee Non-Compete Agreements - **By:** Paul R. Bedard, Esquire ●Stay Ahead of Your Clients - **By:** Nancy Trent ●Define Metrics For Small Group Training Management Success - **By:** Laurie Cingle, M.Ed. ●World Gym Bulks Up Millennial Membership With HIIT ●Karen Woodard to Host 2nd Annual Results, Retention and Revenue Summit ●And, of Course, **Norm's Notes**

April 2015

Norm Cates' CLUB INSIDER
The Pulse of the Health and Fitness Club Industry

*Tom Hatten
and The Mountainside Way*

APRIL 2015

Read This Month's Edition and Archive Editions Online at www.clubinsideronline.com

Front Page Article Headlines

●The Claremont Club... An Amazing Story of Club Innovation and Differentiation - Part II - **By:** Norm Cates

Inside The Insider

●“Insider Speaks” - Cool People Like Cool Things - **By:** Derek Barton ●The Fate and Fortune of the Health and Fitness Industry - Part I - **By:** Stephen Tharrett and Mark Williamson ●Tips To Immediate And Exponential Facility Growth - **By:** Donna Krech ●Leverage Your Offerings For Small Group Training Management Success - **By:** Laurie Cingle ●LoDo Denver Home To New Colorado Athletic Club ●Rick Caro's 19th Annual Financial Panel A Big Draw At IHRSA 2015 ●Girls On The Run Is #50kStrong ●LifeTime Fitness Enters Into Definitive Agreement To Be Acquired by Affiliates of Leonard Green & Partners and TPG ●The Bay Club Company Acquires Spectrum Athletic Clubs ●And, of Course, **Norm's Notes**

May 2015

Norm Cates' CLUB INSIDER
The Pulse of the Health and Fitness Club Industry

*Mike Feitelberg and Team
The Future Begins At The Edge*

MAY 2015

Read This Month's Edition and Archive Editions Online at www.clubinsideronline.com

Front Page Article Headlines

●Molly Kemmer Selected as Chairperson of the IHRSA Board of Directors

Inside The Insider

●“Insider Speaks” - Warning!!! ClassPass... The New Serial Killer of the Fitness Industry - **By:** Jarod Cogswell ●Serve More People, Make More Money - **By:** Donna Krech ●Try Before You Buy... It's Not Just For Memberships Anymore! - **By:** Ron Alterio ●Exercise: The Best Medicine for Doctors and Patients - **By:** Joe Moore ●Make This One Simple Change And Watch Your Gym Memberships Explode - **By:** Joe Imbrogno ●The Fate and Fortune of the Health and Fitness Industry - Part II - **By:** Stephen Tharrett and Mark Williamson ●Fitness and Guest Reviews: How to Engage Members to Write Positive Reviews and Feedback - **By:** Maria Parrella-Turco ●ClassPass: The Joy and Guilt of the Digital Middleman Economy - **By:** Jenna Wortham ●Programming For The “Fun Of It!” - Leadership For Small Group Training Management Success - **By:** Laurie Cingle ●World Gym Eastlake Hosts Grand Opening Celebration Benefiting The Challenged Athletes Foundation ●The IHRSA Foundation Steps Up ●PTR

Elects New President And Board of Directors ●AFS and Martial Arts Teachers Association Announce Collaboration Agreement ●Join The Movement To Make The World More Active: #WhyGetActive ●And, of Course, **Norm's Notes**

June 2015

Norm Cates' CLUB INSIDER
The Pulse of the Health and Fitness Club Industry

*The Late, Great...
Brother Curt Beusman
1931 - 2015*

JUNE 2015

Read This Month's Edition and Archive Editions Online at www.clubinsideronline.com

Front Page Article Headlines

●Planet Fitness Opens 1,000th Club

Inside The Insider

●A Year of Achievement - **By:** Robert Brewster ●The #1 Barrier to Driving More Paid Group Training and What To Do About It Now! - **By:** Ron Alterio ●If You Have One Happy Member, You Can Build A Booming Business - **By:** Donna Krech ●The Fate and Fortune of the Health and Fitness Industry - Part III - **By:** Stephen Tharrett and Mark Williamson ●Digital Housekeeping For Your Business - **By:** Robin Schuette ●How to Design a Boutique Club Within a Club - **By:** Bruce Carter ●Human Talent - **By:** Bill McBride ●How to Close a Gym Membership Sale At Anytime, Under Any Circumstances - **By:** Jim Thomas ●It Really Is About The Frog and The Boiling Water... - **By:** Thomas Plummer ●Recruiting and Hiring Trainers For Small Group Training Management Success - **By:** Laurie Cingle ●Adam Zeitsiff, Jonas Fitness President, Honored With Outstanding CEO Award ●Matrix Fitness Expands Sales Team With Four New Hires ●And, of Course, **Norm's Notes**

July 2015

Front Page Article Headlines

●Ed Williams' Wellbridge Acquires MAC's Harbor East Club

Inside The Insider

●The ClassPass Paradox: Partner or Competitor - **By:** Stephen Tharrett and Mark Williamson ●You Only Get One Chance to Make a First Impression - Better Make it Count! - **By:** Dr. Art

Curtis ●Summer, The Real Busy Season - **By:** Deneen Laprade ●How to Create a Marketing Machine - **By:** Casey Conrad ●Recruiting and Hiring Trainers For Small Group Training Management Success - **By:** Laurie Cingle ●Letter to the Editor ●The Bay Club Company Acquires Santana Row Location ●Active Wellness, LLC and St. Joseph Health Join to Redefine Wellness ●Karen Woodard's 2nd Annual Results, Retention and Revenue Summit a Success! ●The IHRSA Institute Is Coming! ●And, of Course, **Norm's Notes**

August 2015

Norm Cates' CLUB INSIDER
The Pulse of the Health and Fitness Club Industry

*Planet Fitness
The IPO of The Juggernaut*

AUGUST 2015

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Inside The Insider

●“Insider Speaks” - Augie's Quest For A Cure - **By:** Mike Alpert ●How to Be Like “Mike” - **By:** Ron Alterio ●The Financial Power of The Crowd - **By:** Stephen Tharrett and Mark Williamson ●How Effective Are Your Sales Meetings? - **By:** Karen Woodard ●It IS Personal and It's Business - **By:** Jarod Cogswell ●Why Cutting Your Promotional Efforts Kills Your Gym - **By:** Jim Thomas ●Create a Space For Small Group Training Management Success - **By:** Laurie Cingle ●ALS Ice Bucket Challenge Gives Patients Hope ●World Gym Launches A Global Social Media Search For Its New Fitness Ambassadors ●Living Well After Cancer ●JoAnna Masloski Returns To Wellbridge As COO ●The Professional (See “2015 In Review” Page 14)

Norm Cates' CLUB INSIDER
The Pulse of the Health and Fitness Club Industry

*Tom Rhind and Power Wellness
Forging Ahead in the Health Care Frontier*

JULY 2015

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7 HORMONES ARE MAKING YOUR MEMBERS **FAT**

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SHAWN BOLLIG - WI



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SANDY MCCASLIN - CA



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SHELLEY ELROD - OH



**\$243,000
IN 60 DAYS**

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- *Donna Kueh*

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The Columbia Association Honored

COLUMBIA, MD - Columbia Association (CA) has been honored once again in Howard Magazine's annual awards, in which readers vote on the best that Howard County has to offer in 74 different categories. CA received four first-place awards:

- Best Golf Course: Hobbit's Glen Golf Club;
- Best Gym: Columbia Gym;
- Best Pool for Kids: Swansfield Pool and Mini-WaterPark;
- Best Workout Class: BodyPump at Columbia Association.

CA also received a total of seven honorable mentions in six other categories:

- First Date: Columbia Lakefront;

- Gym: Supreme Sports Club;
- Kids' Activity: Columbia SportsPark;
- Kids' Activity: SplashDown;
- Personal Trainer: Bonnie Pace (Columbia Gym);
- Place to Enjoy the Arts: Columbia Art Center;
- Pool for Kids: River Hill Pool.

"I'm thankful that Howard Magazine and its readers recognize the role Columbia Association serves through our wide range of programs and services," said CA President/CEO Milton W. Matthews. "These awards demonstrate the commitment CA team members have to fulfilling our mission, and we will continue to pursue our vision of making Columbia a community of choice, today and for generations to come."

Daxko Acquires CSI Software

BIRMINGHAM, AL - Daxko, Inc. announced it has acquired CSI Software LLC, a provider of enterprise software to health and fitness clubs, campus recreation centers, parks and recreation centers, wellness centers and nonprofit organizations. The acquisition represents a meaningful and logical market expansion, as Daxko is already the largest provider of health and wellness software to member-based nonprofits such as YMCAs and Jewish Community Centers.

"Our two companies have been familiar with each other over the last decade but with very little overlap in terms of the segments of the market we serve," says Daxko's CEO, David Gray. "This acquisition expands our product portfolio and our market opportunity, both of which will strengthen us as a business partner to the

benefit of all of our combined customers." Daxko has retained CSI Software's leadership and team members, and they will continue to operate out of their current office in Houston, Texas.

"On our visits to Daxko's offices, and through many conversations with their leadership team, we are certain that this is the right move," said CSI Software's President and CEO, Jonathan Ross. "Daxko has already done many of the things that we've been wanting to do to take our business to the next level, and they are doing them well," said Ross. "We look forward to seeing what we can accomplish together."

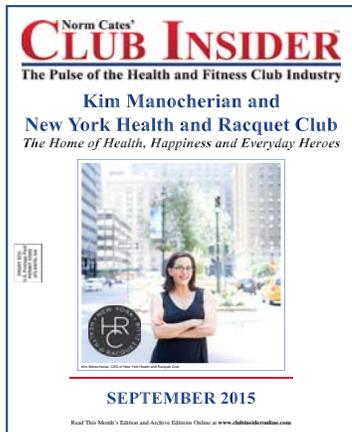
Ross will lead the Houston team as Senior Vice President and General Manager of CSI Software, a product division of Daxko, Inc.

... "2015 In Review"

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Tennis Registry to Host Directors of Tennis Conference •The American Council On Exercise Celebrates Its 30th Anniversary!
•And, of Course, **Norm's Notes**

September 2015



Front Page Article Headlines

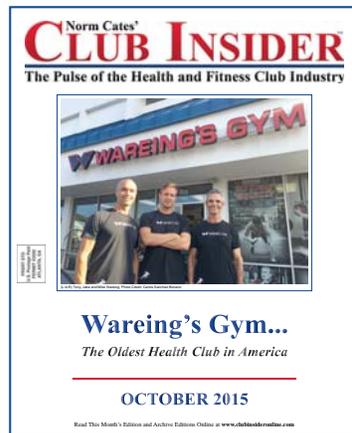
- The Emotional Cocktail - **By:** Derek Barton

Inside The Insider

- "Insider Speaks" - The State of the Health and Fitness Club Industry According to Thomas Plummer •The Financial Power of The Crowd - Part II - **By:** Stephen Tharrett and Mark Williamson •Five Things You Can Learn From the Small Studio Model - **By:** Maria Parrella-Turco •Mitigating Liability Through the Proper Hiring, Training and Ongoing Certification

of Employees - **By:** Paul R. Bedard •It's Time For A Different Approach - **By:** Daron Allen •Outline a Marketing Plan For Small Group Training Management Success - **By:** Laurie Cingle •Bill McBride's Club Industry Show Fitness Leadership Track •200th Participant Enrolled in Precision Medicine Program for ALS •Muscle Up Marketing Ranks #40 on Inc. 5000 List of Fastest Growing U.S. Companies •Two MAC Clubs to Become acac Fitness & Wellness Centers •Billie Jean King to Be Inducted Into the PTR Hall of Fame •Blink Fitness Appoints Todd Magazine as President •And, of Course, **Norm's Notes**

October 2015

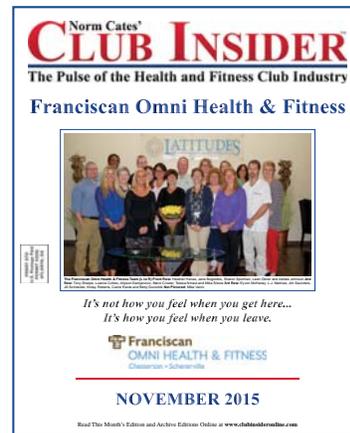


Inside The Insider

- Align Technology Solutions With Your Clubs' Strengths and Avoid Technology Missteps - **By:** Daron Allen •Digital Marketing - Affordable, Effective, Necessary - **By:** Deneen Laprade •Want

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November 2015



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Inside The Insider

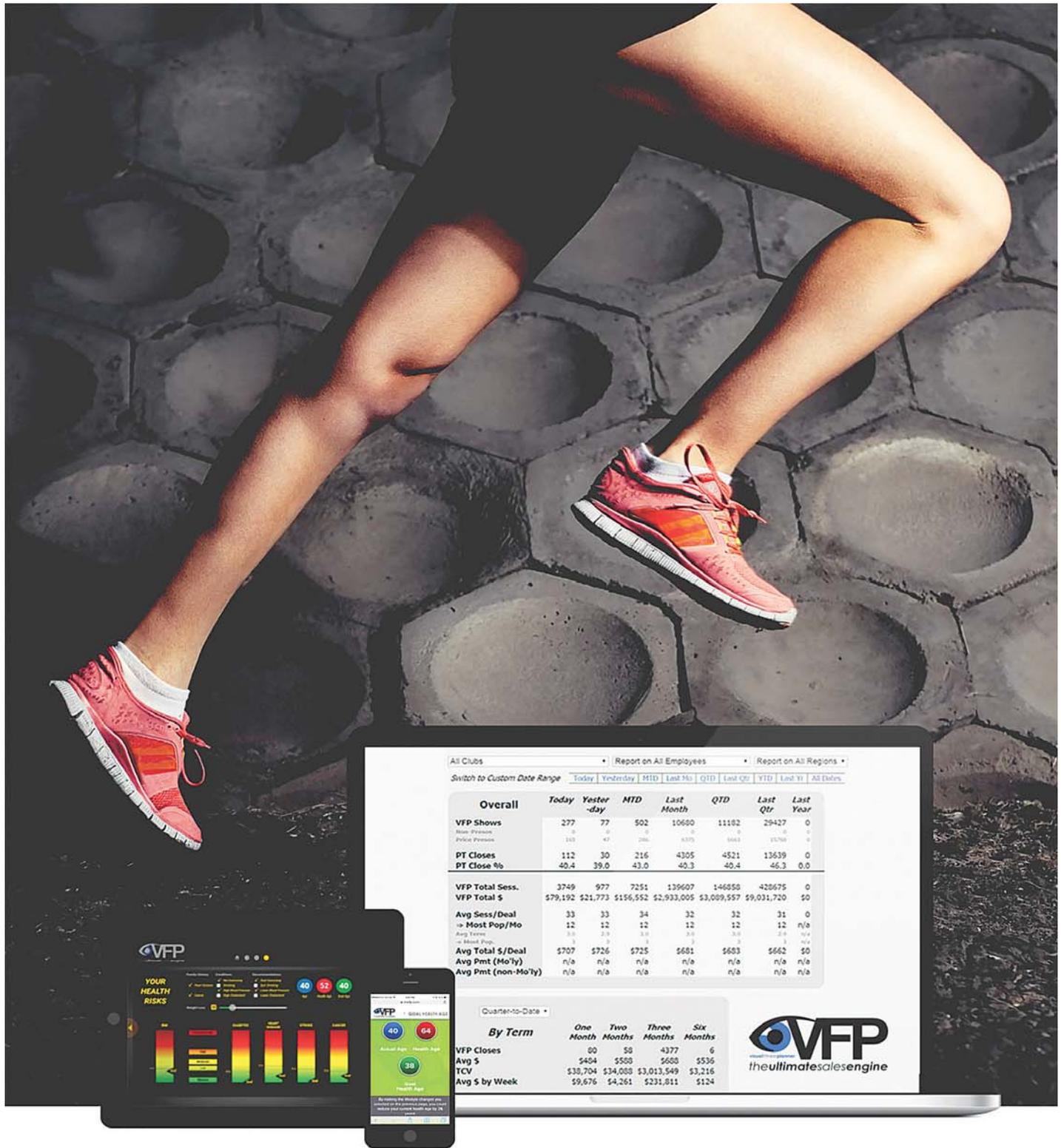
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Stay Tuned in 2016!

(Justin Cates is the President and Assistant Publisher of CLUB INSIDER and grew up in the health and fitness club industry. 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 that doubled as CLUB INSIDER Headquarters. He has lived and breathed this industry for 30+ years, since his own day one. Cates graduated from the Terry College of Business at The University of Georgia in 2007 and then went on to two years at The Art Institute of Atlanta, where he studied Interactive Media Design. Now, he is an integral part of the "Story" of Norm Cates and CLUB INSIDER. Justin can be reached by phone at 423-314-4310 or email at Justin@clubinsideronline.com)

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Overall	Today	Yesterday	MTD	Last Month	QTD	Last Qtr	Last Year
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Non-Press	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Price Press	113	47	286	4375	5663	15768	0
PT Closes	112	30	216	4305	4521	13639	0
PT Close %	40.4	39.0	43.0	40.3	40.4	46.3	0.0
VFP Total Sess.	3749	977	7251	139607	146858	428675	0
VFP Total \$	\$79,192	\$21,773	\$156,552	\$2,933,005	\$3,089,557	\$9,031,720	\$0
Avg Sess/Deal	33	33	34	32	32	31	0
→ Most Pop/Mo	12	12	12	12	12	12	n/a
Avg Term	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	n/a
→ Actual Term	3	3	3	3	3	3	n/a
Avg Total \$/Deal	\$707	\$726	\$725	\$681	\$683	\$662	\$0
Avg Pmt (Mo'ly)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Avg Pmt (non-Mo'ly)	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Quarter-to-Date

By Term	One Month	Two Months	Three Months	Six Months
VFP Closes	90	50	4377	6
Avg \$	\$404	\$500	\$600	\$536
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How Much Are Your Unemployment Claims Costing You?

By: Melissa Knowles

How you are handling your employee onboarding, management and termination procedures make a HUGE difference in your experience rating and how much you pay to the state each payroll.

State Unemployment Insurance (SUI) is a cost of business, like Workers' Compensation or liability coverage. But, believe it or not, it's a cost that you as an owner have a great deal of control over. Your policies and procedures have a big impact on your experience rating and your

bottom line.

What Is An Experience Rating?

Experience rating is the method by which employer contribution payments under the State Unemployment Compensation laws may be varied on the basis of each individual employer's experience with unemployment. Experience rating is based on the proposition that the cost of unemployment compensation should be paid in such a way that those employers whose workers

suffer the most involuntary unemployment should pay at a higher rate than those employers whose workers suffer little involuntary unemployment.

In plain English: The more successful claims you have against you, the higher your rate. Much like a credit rating, those who manage their staff in such a way to avoid unemployment claims (much like those who pay their credit card bills on time and stay within their credit limits) enjoy significantly lower rates than those who don't have a solid system in place.

And, this is real money. Imagine



Melissa Knowles

you have a semi-monthly payroll of \$50,000 in gross wages and an experience rating of 2.7%. Your cost yearly for SUI is \$32,400. A drop of just .7% would save \$8,400 each year! At a \$30/month club, that's similar to adding 11 new members per month. We have a current client with such a stellar claims track record, that they're enjoying a 0% rate in one of their states! So, what can you do to get your rating down?

1. Be selective in your hiring process. I know many times that managers' backs are against the wall and they feel the need to fill a vacancy with a warm body, but a poor or hasty hiring decision will cost a business in more ways than one. Be clear on your job description, qualifications needed and interview process.

2. Establish written policies and procedures and adhere to them. This is your playbook, and your entire team should know it. If you have a member who isn't keeping with the plan, they need to be counseled. Be sure to treat all team members equally when it comes to enforcement. This ensures a fair and operationally efficient work environment.

3. Document, document, document. When policy and procedure (P&P) violations occur and a counseling session is needed, make sure you get it on paper. Better yet, obtain a statement of understanding from the team member, establish an action plan (and timeframe) for correction and have the team member sign off on it. Keeping detailed, accurate records is important should the time come when termination is prudent.

4. Get your ducks in a row before you fire. Sometimes, a violation doesn't provide time for planning (safety issues for members/employees, egregious acts), but most of the time, a few minutes spent planning can benefit you greatly. Is the

(See *Melissa Knowles* Page 20)

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A Value Proposition: Focus On Your Personal Training Department

By: Angie Pattengale

There are approximately 54 million health club members in the United States, of which about 13% of them, or roughly 7 million club members, are signed up for sessions with a personal trainer. That's a collective 13% across the entire U.S. health club sector. What percentage of your club members take advantage of personal training services? And, what does it mean to you?

Over 80% of profitable health clubs offer personal training services. Consider this against other non-dues revenue streams. Take a juice bar, for example. With proper planning and execution, operating a juice bar can be extremely profitable. But, like any new endeavor, you are best serving the project when you start with learning (specific to operating expenses and potential ROI) based on the experiences of

those who have successfully taken on the same venture. Do your research; don't go on a hunch. Whether utilizing local stats or a colleague's personal experiences, learn from the knowledge of what's working in club businesses in your area. Compare your profit sources to those of other successful clubs. Always ask if this service is, or can become, a core competency within your business. Can you do it well, or better, than someone else is already doing it?

Personal training is no doubt a tremendous profit prospect, but it has to be implemented and managed properly. Though very different challenges exist inside a personal training department versus the establishment of a juice bar, from a very high level, we can say that the "popularity" of both among members is fairly similar. So, when comparing and/or considering value-add, non-dues services, what's the most important aspect to consider? *Your Return On Investment*

potential. Assume that the implementation of this service is a consideration in your club at this stage, or perhaps, it is an area that could use improvement or it may be time to look at the ground floor of it. Your ROI can be a projected estimate as an expectation of profits based on cost of investment, price points and profit margins, as well as a research-based "Penetration Level" (which, in this case, is a ratio of personal training consumers to the number of total club members). When projecting these figures, you may find that potential ROI with personal training services yields a much greater ROI than most other non-dues profit sources.

More than 50% of clubs that use personal training services report this as being one of their most profitable offerings, accounting for approximately 10-15% of non-dues revenue. Personal training start-up costs and ongoing expenses are



Angie Pattengale

generally lower than that of other non-dues services... with a profit margin per consumer that is generally much higher. *But*, after taking on the initial investment (See *Angie Pattengale Page 20*)





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Wellbridge Acquires Maryland Athletic Club Brand

BALTIMORE, MD - Wellbridge, a Denver-based company that operates a family of 21 premium athletic and tennis clubs across the country, announced the purchase of the Maryland Athletic Club (MAC) brand. This follows Wellbridge's acquisition of the MAC Harbor East location on July 1, 2015.

"Thanks to the efforts of people like Tim Rhode, who is a co-founder of the MAC, the brand has an impressive reputation and great name recognition," said Wellbridge President and CEO, Ed Williams. "Keeping the name is one way to demonstrate how much we want to be a part of the community. We look forward to building on the positive energy Maryland Athletic Club has already established."

In 2000, Wellbridge acquired the Bel Air Athletic Club in Bel Air, MD and had been looking for additional opportunities to expand into the Baltimore area.

"When you look at the Harbor East neighborhood and other parts of the city, there's so much opportunity for growth," Williams added. "We feel fortunate to be a part of everything that's going on."

The MAC Harbor East opened in September 2007, and Wellbridge has had the distinct pleasure of serving its members since July 2015 with the same high-quality programs, membership experiences and customer service that were synonymous with Maryland Athletic Club.

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...Melissa Knowles

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problem something that can be corrected? Has the team member been counseled before concerning the issue? Were they given an action plan for improvement? Would you treat your other team members the same way for a similar violation? If you can answer yes, proceed. But, be sure to check with your HR department to ensure you are working within the state specific

laws for termination (final check payment, documentation, etc.).

5. When an Unemployment claim is filed, fight it! If you don't answer the state's request for documentation on a claim and/or you fail to show up for a phone hearing, the odds are nearly 100% in the favor of the ex-employee. And, that claim goes against your experience rating.

By making smart hiring decisions, having clear rules and adhering to them, documenting missteps, being thoughtful

when the need for termination arises and fighting all claims, you can begin to ensure an experience rating improvement over time. As a bonus, these same practices also go a long way in protecting you against discrimination claims. Smart operations for a smart business!

(Melissa Knowles serves as the CEO for Gym HQ. With over a decade of industry experience, her knowledge spans many areas: strategic operations, development of staff training materials and programs, cost

savings analysis, reporting development and implementation, fitness department overhaul, client retention systems and corporate management. She's especially well-versed in all operational and HR focused areas. Melissa is a graduate of the University of West Florida and holds an MS in Exercise Science and a BS in Sports Medicine. You can reach Melissa at mknowles@gymhq.club or 404-921-2269. For more information, go to www.gymhq.club.)

...Angie Pattengale

continued from page 18

and implementing personal training services in your club, you must consider some significant trade-offs to secure the success of your personal training department. Successfully managing human capital is as important a consideration to potential profitability as is the initial investment. A juice bar, again for example, represents more of a turnkey-style business that, upon its construction, is ready for immediate use and requires a limited amount of involvement... but that's not the case for personal training. Personal training may require less initial start-up cost than say, building and staffing a juice bar, but be prepared for costs that come on the backend of this venture if not managed properly. People and processes are your keys to success with a personal

training department.

On the average, 5% of club members use personal training services. Sure, there are clubs that have penetration levels of 10-25% for PT, certainly not unheard of, and that is a testament to a properly executed and well managed PT Department/Director. But, more typically, about 90% of health club members aren't taking advantage of personal training services, and even still, more than 50% of profitable clubs claim that it is the most profitable offering in their facility. Imagine then if your penetration level for PT service was above 10%. How would that impact your bottom line? The key target audience is right there in your club. Members are walking through your door and are already using your facility; the right kind of marketing to capture their attention for PT services will work as long as there's follow through, which

goes back to the key ingredients: people and processes. The good news is there's room for growth! What's the gentle nudge that your members need to seal the PT deal? Better yet, what's your strategy for member retention and new member sign-ups... both of which impact the profitability of your training department.

Approximately 75% of clients will stick with their trainer for at least one year.

What does that mean for you? It means that you have a potential long-term member, even if and when they decide not to use training services anymore. Also, knowing that you can estimate these figures will allow you to make better projections. For almost any membership-based company, it costs more to attract new members than it does to keep them. Therefore, retention alone will be a major factor in the success of your member-based business.

So, what do you do to keep club members? In part, strengthen and support your personal training staff. When a client sticks with their trainer, the client sticks with your club. *Results = Retention.* When your members start to see results, they'll stick to the program, long-term.

(Angie Pattengale has a BS in Business Management with a minor in Human Resources from Purdue University's Krannert School of Management. She has worked with the National Federation of Professional Trainers, NFPT, since 1992 with major organizational accomplishments that include the coordination of NCCA accreditation activities and the American Council on Education college credit award program. Mrs. Pattengale is the NFPT Director of Certification and acting supervisor of certification business functions.)

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Tips for Success and Being the Best

By: Karen Woodard

Publisher's Note: CLUB INSIDER is pleased to introduce Karen Woodard's new monthly column we are calling: *Tips for Success and Being the Best*.

• • •

As a new leader in your organization, you need to be aware of the pitfalls that can muck up the path to success. The following are a few:

Pitfall #1: Not being clear on the company's strategic direction and bigger picture. It is critical that you understand where the company is headed and what it takes to get there so you can rally your staff to move in that direction. Share the strategic initiatives with them. If you or your staff are unclear, you will not be able to produce the kinds of results you need.

Pitfall #2: Blaming Your Supervisor - This occurs when you are uncomfortable with

a decision that has been made at a level higher up than you. You may disagree or do not support the decision, so you let your staff know that by saying that, "your boss is making you do it." BIG MISTAKE. This is not okay. You are part of the leadership team; if you do not understand the decision then get clarity.

If you still do not agree with it, that is okay, but you do not let your staff know that you do not agree with it. As a leader, you need to support the direction of the company or move on. You should NEVER create a "we vs. they" culture in any organization.

Pitfall #3: Lack of Appropriate Tone in communication and the big "But" - Have you ever had someone in a professional setting raise their voice at you in a condescending or threatening manner? How about responding to you in a sarcastic tone? These are just two of the ways inappropriate tone ruins relationships and trust in company culture. The big "but" - This may be the most common

and subconscious of management pitfalls. It's the conversation when someone agrees with you, or provides you with positive feedback in one breath, only to be followed by "but." After the "but" comes, the "other shoe drops" and staff end up feeling misled, disappointed and resentful. Learn to listen, value people's ideas and respectfully disagree without getting your big "but" involved.

Becoming a strong and effective leader is earned and therefore takes time. There is no doubt that, in your management career, you will experience some pitfalls and you will have some terrific success. If you abide by the belief that it is your role to create a platform for your staff's success in your company, you will experience a greater amount of success in a shorter amount of time and have a much longer career.

(Karen Woodard is President of Premium Performance Training in Boulder, Colorado and Ixtapa, Mexico. She has owned and operated clubs since 1985



Karen Woodard

and now consults with and trains staff throughout the world. She provides her services on-site, online, by phone and through her books, CDs, DVDs and manuals. She can be contacted at 303-417-0653 or karen@karenwoodard.com)

World Gym Celebrating 40th Anniversary in 2016

World Gym International, Inc. recently had their 39th Anniversary Convention and Trade Show in Las Vegas, and next year, they will celebrate their 40th! In honor of their 40th Anniversary, CLUB INSIDER will feature World Gym International, Inc. in a 2016 Cover Story, and I'm looking forward to sharing their story with all of you.

World Gym Chairwoman, JOYCE J. CAMMILLERI, wrote A NOTE FROM JOYCE in their latest newsletter: "It was so great seeing everybody again at the recently concluded World Gym Convention. Of all the great memories from those three days, one of the highlights was to watch Mike Uretz win the Joe Gold Lifetime Achievement Award. He had no idea he had been chosen as this year's recipient, and the look on his face when his name was announced was priceless. As someone who helped found the company back in 1976, and someone who "bleeds World Gym," he was an obvious choice for the award. Thanks again for all of you who joined us at this year's convention."

The World Gym Awards this year were really special and included honors for many World Gym owner/operators, in particular for two greats: The World Gym Visionary Award went to the late KEITH R. ALBRIGHT. Keith Albright received a posthumous World Gym

Visionary Award for his many years of hard work in expanding the World Gym franchisee program. Lifelong friend Jack Temple was on hand to accept the award on Keith's behalf and offer some heartfelt memories of the man we knew and loved. The JOE GOLD Lifetime Achievement Award went to MIKE URETZ. The biggest surprise of the night: Mike Uretz was shocked to learn he'd been selected for the 2015 Joe Gold Lifetime Achievement Award. He was also presented with a surprise video featuring his closest friends and family congratulating him on the award. Wife Claudia said, "He once told me he'd divorce me if I threw him a surprise party!" We assume by the smile on his face that all is forgiven.

FRANCHISEE OF THE YEAR - It's unanimous! The Talmadge family accepts the award for Franchisee of the Year. A leader in the Franchisee network, Joe and his family have been in operation for 26 years and were unanimously chosen by their peers who voted for a gym other than their own.

Other winners included:

Best PR Campaign - Southside, Australia;
 Best Overall Marketing - Saudi Arabia;
 Best Rebranding under 10,000 square feet - Phoenix, NY;



Best Rebranding - USA - Tracy, CA;
 Best Social Media Marketing Campaign - Asa Norte, Brazil;
 Best Gym Rebranding - International - Tijuana, Mexico;
 Best Gym Design and Branding in the USA - Eastlake, CA;
 Best Gym Design and Branding - International - Sterlitamak, Russia;
 Most Improved Gym - Penrith, Australia;
 Best New Gym - USA - Texas City, Texas;
 Best New Gym - Australia - Burleigh, Australia;
 Best New Gym - International - Gongguan, Taiwan;
 Best American Gym - Victorville, CA.;
 Best Australian Gym - Rockhampton, Queensland;

Best Canadian Gym - St. Catherines, Ontario;
 Best Taiwanese Gym - Linkou;
 Fastest-growing Country - Canada;
 Vendor of the Year - X-Treme World Sport.

Also, World Gym announced the winners of their first-ever **World Gym Ambassador Search**, and they are: **MATT WOLD of Mishawaka, Indiana** and **ANGIE SLOAN, Barrie, Ontario, Canada**. Congratulations Matt and Angie!

GUY CAMMILLERI, Managing Director and **KARIN MICHAEL, Director of Franchise Relations**, do a great job on their quarterly newsletter. Thanks Guy and Karin!

Congratulations to all of the 2015 World Gym Award Winners!

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Tips for Hiring, From JLR Associates

By: Jeff Randall and Dennie Noecker

Whether you are adding staff for the upcoming busy season or you are doing some staff reengineering, it's important to remember that any organization is only as strong as its weakest link. It only takes a few poor performers to adversely impact your company. Most managers understand the importance of hiring wisely, yet many don't know how to do it. They wind up making hiring decisions based on their gut reactions. This may work some of the time, but for the most part, the organization winds up with poor performers and unmotivated staff members who will drag an organization down. We hope the following nine hiring tips will help you avoid making bad hiring decisions. We believe that, if you follow the suggestions made in these hiring tips, you will identify candidates who will be able to meet the performance objectives in the position you're looking to fill.

Tip 1 - Make Your Job Description Equal to the Real Job: A problem with many job descriptions is that they are too vague and wander from what the job really needs to accomplish. These job descriptions may describe, in detail, academic requirements, industry background skills necessary and a whole host of job responsibilities; however, they often neglect to spell out the most necessary requirements of the job. As a result, the wrong person may be hired and ultimately set up for failure.

A job description must clearly define responsibilities that will lead to clearly specified goals that determine success. The more quantifiable these goals, the better. The job requirement section of the job description should directly reflect what the expectations of the job are. Clarifying expectations puts the employee in a far better position to succeed. The more your job description accurately reflects what the hire needs to do to succeed, the more success you will have with your hires. In short, make sure the job description describes the *real* job.

Tip 2 - How to Select Better Candidates: Before you begin the interview process, you must first define what the person has to accomplish within the first six months to one year in order for you to consider them a successful hire. Once you know what the person needs to do, be sure during the interview to find out if the candidate has accomplished something comparable.

As long as the candidate is a rough match on skills and experience and is doing similar work with a track record of success, you know that they are at least in the game. If the person appears to be motivated to do the work, ask him

to describe a major accomplishment he handled that would be comparable to the work he will be required to do. If you find the candidate's accomplishments are significant and comparable to what needs to be done, this candidate should then receive serious consideration.

Remember, you should be primarily interested in past accomplishments and successes, not responsibilities.

Tip 3 - Do First Impressions Matter? How do you avoid overvaluing presentation and being seduced by first impressions in the initial interview? Remaining objective can be the most difficult part of the interview. We are programmed to make instant judgments. Here are some ideas that may help you:

If you really like someone, become a little more cynical; ask more questions, get more details. This will help overcome the urge to be too accepting. If you don't like someone, become more open-minded. Give the person the benefit of the doubt; this overcomes the urge to look for negative information.

Make a conscious decision to wait 30 minutes before you decide whether you like a candidate or not. This is the "golden rule," according to Lou Adler, author of *Hire with your Head*, a noted recruiting industry expert, national speaker and one who has worked with many Fortune 500 companies. According to Adler, if you follow this golden rule, you will eliminate 50% of your hiring mistakes.

Tip 4 - How to Evaluate a Candidate: There is no proof or data to suggest that interviewing and presentation skills have anything to do with how the person performs on the job. Evaluating candidates solely on how well they interview is a poor way to assess ability.

Many times, the most suitable and best person for the job will not get hired because they didn't interview well. Even top candidates get nervous when being interviewed, and many good candidates can be excluded for superficial reasons. For hiring purposes, one way to avoid this is to identify the top two primary performance objectives, ideally, quantifiable ones. These objectives should be the top two tasks this person must accomplish within the first six months or one year for the hire to be considered successful, and these objectives should be used to qualify candidates. Once you have clearly defined the objectives, make sure the candidate has successfully achieved these primary performance objectives in his previous position, and be sure to verify this with the candidate's references.

Tip 5 - Work History Review: When



Jeff Randall



Dennie Noecker

considering a candidate, in order to save you time, we recommend that the initial interview be a phone screening, during which you conduct a work history review job-by-job. Ask him about his title and to describe any promotions or recognition received, what the work place was like, how decisions were made, who he reported to, who reported to him and what he liked most and least about the job.

Ask the candidate to explain gaps in employment. If the candidate moves around frequently (a potential red flag), make sure you get an adequate explanation. Ask the candidate to highlight major accomplishments at each position, and ask why he stayed, left or took another job.

Be sure to focus on the candidate's past performance and successes, rather than a list of responsibilities associated with the candidate's previous positions. Make sure the candidate gives you detailed information about the kind of numbers he was responsible for.

This work history review should take no more than 15 to 20 minutes, and at the end, you should know whether it's worth your time to move forward with a face-to-face interview.

Tip 6 - How Do You Determine if the Candidate is Genuinely Motivated? Finding candidates who are not only *qualified* to do the work, but also *motivated* to do the work, may be more difficult than you think. It is difficult to accurately assess motivation in the interview process because it can be faked. The candidate may appear to be energetic, motivated and competent. In order to determine if someone is truly motivated to do the work, you must ask a series of questions and get examples from the last several positions the candidate has held; how the candidate has exceeded expectations; when the candidate was motivated to excel; and circumstances in which the candidate showed real drive and took initiative on the job.

Tip 7 - Don't Send Mixed Messages to the Candidate During the Interview: If you are going to have multiple employees in your organization involved in the interview process, everyone interviewing the candidate must agree to the real job needs and everyone needs to be on the same page. This ensures that your company presents itself as a cohesive team with a cohesive message to the prospective candidates.

If everyone interviewing the candidate is not on the same page, and different interviewers present different company needs and scenarios, prospective candidates will leave the interview with no clear or consistent picture of the job. Really good candidates will look at this process as indicative of the professionalism of the organization and will most likely withdraw themselves from the process.

At the start of your interview, make sure your interviewers fully understand the job description. Make sure your interviewers know what personality type will best fit in with your organization. Make sure your interviewers know what will constitute success in the job.

Tip 8 - The Importance of Checking References: Once you get to a point where you are serious about a candidate, you need to conduct reference checks. You will find that strong candidates usually have good references that will talk candidly about the candidate.

An important reason to check references is that, if an employee you hire does something that causes your company to be sued, and you didn't check their references, you could be considered negligent because you didn't conduct a proper reference check.

If a reference mentions a particular strength or skill that the candidate has, remember to ask the reference for an example demonstrating that specific skill. If you are trying to uncover weaknesses, (See *JLR Associates Page 27*)



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An Enlightened Prophecy for the Health and Fitness Industry in 2016

By: Stephen Tharrett and Mark Williamson

Neils Bohr, a historical legend in physics, once said about prediction, "Prediction is very difficult, especially about the future." Yet, in today's universally and real-time connected environment, predictions and forecasts abound whether it's in economics, politics, sports or in the case of this paper, the fitness industry. We do not portend to see the future. Rather, we believe as Voltaire so eloquently stated in the *Portable Voltaire*, "It is said the present is pregnant with the future." Consequently, it is our intent with this paper to deliver ten predictions based on the industry's present state of abundance.

Ten Predictions for 2016

1. Boutique studios will continue to flourish and further alter the industry landscape. As of 2014, 42% of health and fitness consumers frequented boutique studios. We suspect this percentage will grow in 2016 as the "Millennial Effect" continues to push the demand for specialized boutiques. The boutique studio phenomenon is driven primarily by the Millennial Generation, which now represents the largest consumer segment in the U.S. and around the world. Millennials seek experiences that offer them adventure, authenticity, community, individual expression, inspiration, novelty, specialization, transparency and tribal alliances. These experiences apply to the fitness industry as well, and the boutique segment has managed to create a value proposition that delivers on these needs far more effectively than traditional fitness clubs. We would not be surprised if the boutique segment further upsets the applecart in 2016.

2. Budget club wars will heat up. Over the past several years, in Europe, Latin America and the U.S., the budget segment of the fitness industry has evolved into one of the fastest growing segments of the fitness club industry. It's not just the growth of this segment that astounds us. It is the enormous growth in the number of players in the segment with "unicorn-like dreams." In the U.S., which may be the most competitive, there is the industry leader with Planet Fitness, but challengers to their throne abound including Blink Fitness, Crunch Fitness, Charter Fitness, Chuze Fitness, Fitness Evolution, Gold's Gym Express, Retro Fitness and YouFit. In Europe, there is the industry pioneer McFit, headquartered in Germany; Basic-Fit of the Netherlands; Pure Gym, The Gym Group and Fitness4Less based in the U.K.; and Fresh Fitness out of Denmark. In Brazil, Fresh Fit, launched by Bio Ritmo, has emerged as the budget gym leader.

It appears that, in the U.S. budget sector, we are quickly approaching a time when the supply of budget gyms will exceed consumer demand, thus reducing the ability of the respective gyms to achieve a critical mass of members sufficient to achieve their ROI requirements. The fallout from this over supply dynamic is likely to be a blend of consolidation, repositioning and closures. The question then becomes, "Which budget club brands will rise to the top?" We don't have the answer for that. But we do feel confident in saying the landscape for budget clubs will begin to change in 2016, and possibly, dramatically.

3. Digital middlemen will forever change the fitness industry, just like they have lodging, ride sharing and eating out. In 2015, the digital middleman took center stage in the fitness industry, led by ClassPass, FitReserve and Wildfire in the U.S., and PayasUgym in the U.K. The digital middlemen have opened a "wormhole" so to speak to a new purchasing dynamic where fitness consumers can purchase access to hundreds, and in some instances, thousands of studios and clubs for less than what it costs to purchase a single club membership. Furthermore, these digital experience distributors offer fitness consumers real-time convenience and flexibility, novelty, and perhaps most importantly, the opportunity to sample a variety of inspirational exercise experiences. In 2015, nearly 20% of studios and 13% of traditional clubs had engaged with one or more of these digital middlemen. Where it goes in 2016 is anyone's guess, but we suspect it will continue to grow and in doing so, cause traditional clubs and studios to change the way they do business.

4. Technology will emerge as an essential attribute of the fitness club value proposition. In the 2015 *International Fitness Industry Trend Report*, conducted by ACE, ClubIntel and IHRSA, it was apparent that the fitness industry has not adopted technology to the extent it needs to, despite its rapid growth over the past two years. Research pertaining to consumer behavior, in particular, the behaviors of the Millennial Generation, indicates that an organization's degree of innovation regarding the use of technology lay near the top of their decision making pyramid. Intuitive websites, a strong social media presence focused on dialogue and mobile-friendly applications that offer transparent and convenient information searches, scheduling and purchases will become as important, if not more important than the type of equipment a club offers. Those clubs that can't rapidly transition to this new consumer expectation will find themselves losing members.



Stephen Tharrett



Mark Williamson

5. Group fitness programming, traditional and non-traditional, will evolve as the primary way of delivering the fitness experiences consumers want. The days of members accepting the industry's traditional approach of expecting them to take a self-directed approach to exercise (e.g., run on the treadmill, lift weights by themselves, etc.) is giving way to a demand for caring coaching through group programs. Today's fitness consumer covets an experience that offers caring coaching with communal support and dual accountability for results. Consumers continue to move away from an approach of, "show me what to do, and I'll do it in the hope of achieving my goals," to an approach of, "provide me with expert and caring coaching supported by a community of like-minded individuals." Oh, by the way, the consumer expects this to be part of what they purchase, not an upsell.

6. The consumer's preference for paying for what they want, how they want it and when they want it will have a profound influence on the industry's traditional approach to membership. Since its inception, the industry has leaned heavily on payment models that provide a cash flow safety net. The industry depends heavily on contracts, automatic renewal and EFT, and rightly so, to provide itself with a form of guaranteed cash flow. The thing is... today's consumers despise contracts and obligations or having to pay for something they may or may not use. Today's consumers only want to buy what they intend to use, they don't want long-term obligations, and furthermore, they want to make the purchase when they are ready to begin. The boutique industry was the first to move away from the traditional model and move to selling outcome-driven experiences in units that made sense to the consumer. The emergence of digital middlemen has now taken this purchasing dynamic to another level. The question becomes, "How do traditional fitness clubs integrate their present membership models with this new consumer dynamic?"

7. Traditional fitness equipment will continue to decline in usage. A variety of studies conducted over the past year, from IHRSA's *Health Club Consumer Report* to the 2015 *International Fitness Industry Trend Report*, show that consumers are migrating away from fitness modalities that use traditional equipment (e.g., resistance machines and free standing cardio pieces), yet instead, they are pursuing fitness modalities that use bodyweight and traditional (e.g., hand weights, stability balls, Bosu balls, medicine balls and bands) and non-traditional accessories (kettlebells, ropes, suspension apparatus and tires). Data from the past several years reinforces this trend, and as a result, we expect, at least for 2016, the trend will continue.

8. Clubs that offer everything to everyone will begin evolving from being the norm to one of many niche offerings in the industry. Since the 1980s, the industry has evolved into one that offers consumers numerous options under one roof. The industry's largest players have achieved their lofty status by providing an extensive menu of options to their members. Pricing in the past has been heavily influenced by the scope of amenities and offerings provided to the member, with the price point rising as the number of amenities, facilities and programs being offered expanded. While this approach has dominated the market to date, it appears to have considerably less appeal among today's consumers. The new consumer is demanding specialization, meaning amenities and programs that align with their lifestyle. In some instances, this may mean having a buffet of options to select from, but in the majority of instances, it will mean having options that are highly specialized. In essence, as the industry has matured, specialization has become the name of the game. Offering a club experience that incorporates a host of options will not go away, but instead, it will need to be refined so it becomes recognized as a specialized niche.

(See Predictions Page 27)

Tips to Succeed in the Gym Business

By: Jim Thomas

One of my favorite quotes comes from Jack Welch of General Electric when he said, "If you can't dominate, don't spend your time there."

Of course, all gym owners want to succeed, but many times, they are more focused on trying to compete and not dominate their marketplace. When you are forced to compete, you run the risk of becoming a commodity and are forced to compete on price. If you want to grow and dominate your market, you must know your unique selling position. "Why should I join your gym over all other options?" You must overcome obscurity by being seen anywhere and everywhere by your marketplace. You can't have a small think. Many gym owners will significantly underestimate what it takes to market and promote their business.

Here are six other tips to help your gym succeed:

1. Your Decisions Determine Everything. Make the decision. I see this quite a bit. Planning, thinking, talking to others, getting ready, waiting for the perfect time, etc... everything but actually making the

decision and moving forward. **The most important sale you will ever make is the one you make to yourself. You must be sold.** This will help you overcome uncertainty in decision making.

2. Promote Before You Advertise. Brand your business first. The same goes for personal trainers and any staffer... brand yourself as the expert in your field. Here's an easy way to start (And, by the way, don't worry about being perfect): write a short article or blog that you can post on your website, LinkedIn or medium.com, then post a video discussing what you just wrote about and do a podcast in the same manner. All of this should be shared out to your social media networks. **Repeat.**

3. Good Sales Fix All. Okay. Let me ask you this question: how would it impact your business if you were to increase your sales by 30%? 20%? Or, even 10%? I see this a lot... sales get pushed to the backburner because we lose focus. **I can promise you this... if your sales improved, whatever problems you're facing would not seem near as troublesome.**

4. Deliver more than you Promise and

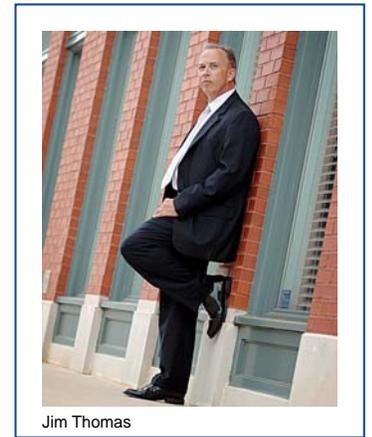
Promise a Lot. Here's something I hear frequently: We want to under-promise and over-deliver. Why would you ever want to do that? What if your local restaurant or movie theatre said that? Would you go? **Your best solution is to promise a lot to your members and guests and then over-deliver.**

5. Measure Everything and Make Adjustments Fast. You must track everything and know your numbers. **Recognize that the conditions of the field can change quickly, and unless you are tracking and measuring what is happening in your gym, you won't know how to respond.**

6. Reinvest. Do this with your gym. You want your gym to be as trendy today as the day it first opened. **Invest in your people. Get them some training. Your staff is your most valuable asset. Treat them like it and continually reinvest in them.**

Now, go succeed in the gym business!

(Jim Thomas is the Founder and President of Fitness Management USA Inc., a management consulting and turnaround



Jim Thomas

firm specializing in the fitness and health club industry. With more than 25 years of experience owning, operating and managing clubs of all sizes, Thomas lectures and delivers seminars, webinars and workshops across the globe on the practical skills required to successfully grow sales, build teamwork and market fitness programs and products. Visit his Web site at www.fmconsulting.net or www.jimthomasondemand.com

...Predictions

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9. The era of the sales person is giving way to the cloud and the experience concierge. Since the birth of the modern fitness club industry, salespeople have been at the heart of the business. Salespeople have been the cornerstone of our industry. Without them, we would not have members. They prospected for potential members, they toured prospects, they inquired about the goals of prospects, and most importantly, they closed, sometimes with a heavy hand. Well, today, the sales process is being turned on its head. First, consumers search for what they want to purchase online with over 90% doing so and 60% doing so on their mobile device. In conducting their searches, they expect transparency. They want to see what you have to offer, understand what fellow consumers are saying about you, and finally, they want to see what it costs. What they don't want is to sit through a pitch and not know whether the price they are getting is the best one or even a fair one. Second, consumers prefer the convenience

of purchasing online, whether it's at their desk or while sitting in Starbucks using their phone. What the consumer despises is taking a canned tour, sitting through a pitch and then having to make a purchase under pressure. Third, consumers want to leverage their purchase when they are ready and to receive assistance in making sure they know how to use their purchase. What this means for the industry in 2016 is a shift toward the Internet for the majority of the sales process and having concierges in the club, rather than sales people, that can assist new members enjoy their new purchase.

10. Franchising is becoming the preferred pathway to entrepreneurship in the industry. While franchising has existed for decades in our industry, it has only been in the last decade that it has risen to prominence with such established brands as Planet Fitness, Crunch Fitness, World Gym, Anytime Fitness, Gold's Gym and Snap Fitness. The era of entrepreneurs prepared to build a corporation with its own unique culture and who owns and operates its own clubs (e.g., 24 Hour

Fitness, Bay Clubs, ClubCorp, Equinox, Fitness Formula, Fitness First, LA Fitness, Midtown Athletic clubs and Virgin Active) is giving way to franchise models. Today's entrepreneur is far less likely to want to create his own business model, brand and corporate culture, but instead, leverage the inherent benefits of a franchise model that has proven that its value proposition can generate market appeal and profitability (not always the case with some franchise models). The fastest growing fitness businesses in the industry, including those in the studio segment, are all franchise models. In the more traditional club segment, franchisees such as Planet Fitness, World Gym, Crunch Fitness, Anytime Fitness, Gold's Gym, Retro Fitness and Snap Fitness represent some of the largest and most successful multi-site operations in the industry. In the studio segment, franchisees such as 9Round, Pure Barre, Bar Method, IM=X Pilates, Orangetheory, Title Boxing Club and newcomers such as Define Mind & Body and Gravity have emerged. While pursuing the independent path to entrepreneurial success in the fitness industry remains strong, especially

in the boutique segment, it appears that the road to entrepreneurship in 2016 is more likely to follow the franchise path.

Final Thoughts

In the quote from Niels Bohr that launched this white paper, predicting what will happen in the future is difficult. Some would say it's foolish to assume we know what will happen in the future, other than as Voltaire indicated... the future is the birth of what is taking place today. We like to believe, as Oscar Wilde said, "To expect the unexpected shows a thoroughly modern intellect." Consequently, we see our ten predictions as intellectual expressions of the unexpected occurrences that our industry might expect in 2016 as a result of its current state of affairs.

(Steve Tharrett and Mark Williamson are veteran club business executives and Co-Founders of ClubIntel, a consulting firm serving the industry worldwide. Steve can be reached at stevet@clubintel.com and Mark can be reached at markw@club-intel.com)

...JLR Associates

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ask the reference to describe one thing that the candidate can do or change to be more effective in their next job and what advice he or she might give to the candidate.

Use the reference to validate information you obtained during the interview with the candidate.

Tip 9 - Respect the Hiring Process: If you want to avoid bad hires and attract top talent, you must respect the hiring process.

Remember that, as far as candidates are concerned, they believe the hiring process that your organization uses is indicative of the quality of your organization. If that process is too arduous, if it is disorganized or if it is unprofessional, that sends a clear message to good candidates to run the

other way.
(Jeff Randall and Dennie Noecker are the principals in Boston-area based JLR and Associates and have been helping health and fitness club industry executives find new jobs for decades. Check out their Ad on Page #7.)

Technogym's Program for Children Begins Third Year of: "Let's Move for a Better World"

NEW YORK, N.Y. - Technogym, a leading wellness and fitness company, announced its global "Let's Move for a Better World" challenge will take place in 2016, for the third consecutive year. Sign up is now open for fitness facilities across the United States to join the Challenge.

The 2015 edition saw impressive improvements from participating facilities: visits increased by an average of 34%, new memberships increased by 17% and more than three quarters of participants saw an increase in the engagement and motivation of existing members.

Technogym has grand ambitions for Let's Move for a Better World 2016, following the success of the 2015 edition that boasted impressive figures and tripled 2014 results: 80,000 participants in 17 countries completed more than 315 million MOVES, burning a total of 140 million calories and losing a staggering 45,000 pounds.

"Let's Move for a Better World

embodies Technogym's mission to improve wellness on a global scale. We recognize that the education of the younger generation is a crucial starting point for achieving this and building a more sustainable society based on personal health," said Nerio Alessandri, President and Founder of Technogym. "We encourage fitness facilities, and individuals in local communities to get involved, sign up, get fit and make an impact."

From March 1 to 19, 2016, gym members in fitness facilities all over the world will challenge each other and join forces to donate their movements in support of promoting wellness and healthy lifestyles in their local community and beyond, particularly raising awareness around childhood obesity.

How Does It Work?

Participants' MOVES, Technogym's unit for measuring movement, will be logged and tracked through

Technogym's mywellness cloud, the industry's first cloud-based open platform.

The top three most active fitness facilities in each participating country, those that accumulate the highest number of MOVES, will win the opportunity to help children in their local community get more active and healthy by donating Technogym-funded equipment to a school of their choice. Prizes will also be awarded to the members who achieve the highest contribution to the challenge.

In addition to promoting a healthy lifestyle, the "Let's Move for a Better World" challenge is a great opportunity for fitness facilities to attract new members through the initiative's social media communication campaign as well as the viral effect created by existing members sharing their training sessions online.

"Let's Move for a Better World" is also a unique and powerful tool to build member loyalty, motivation and footfall through its competitive mechanism. By

placing the spotlight on the fitness facility's local community, it creates a positive team spirit that brings people together towards a common objective.

Childhood obesity stats:

- In the past 30 years, childhood obesity has more than doubled in children and quadrupled in adolescents.
- By 2025, 70 million children under five will be overweight or obese if current trends continue.
- In 2013, 42 million children under the age of five were overweight or obese.
- Overweight and obese children are more likely to develop diseases like diabetes and cardiovascular diseases at a younger age.

Sources: World Health Organization, European Public Health Alliance, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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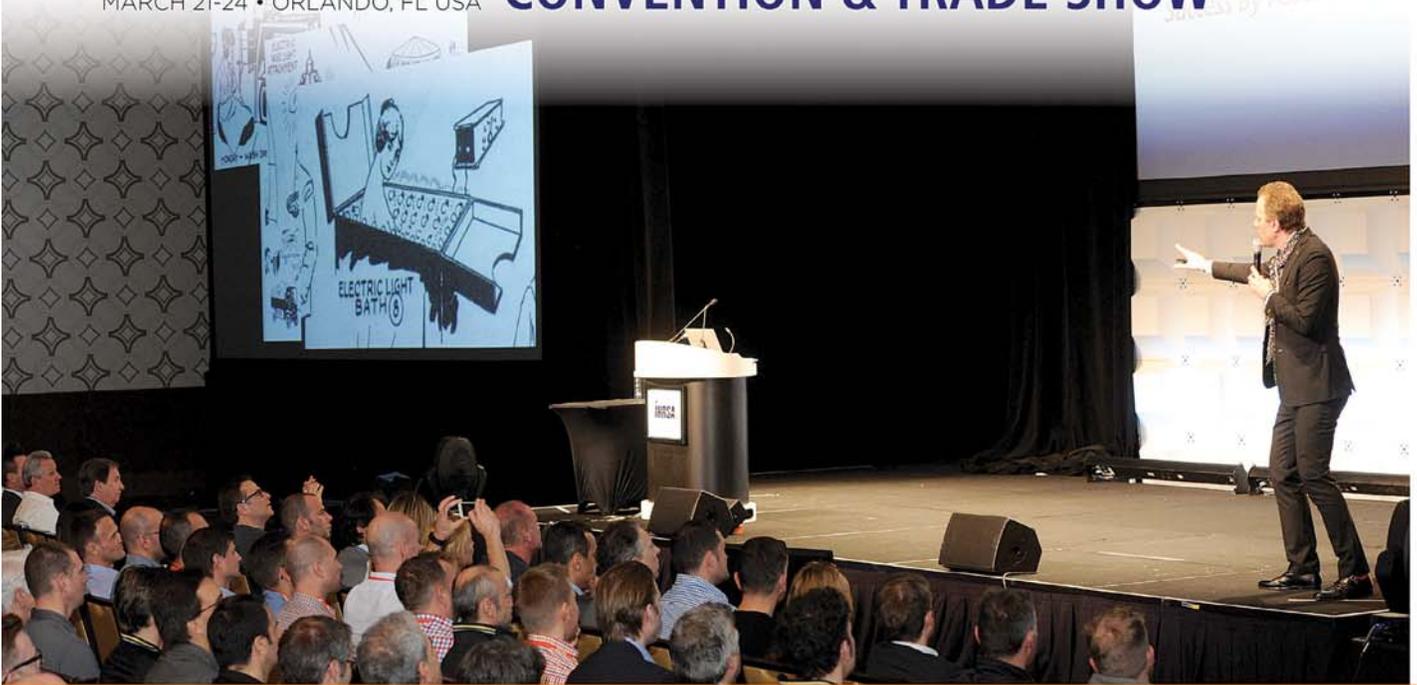
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Programming For The “Fun Of It!”

Program-Ready Checklist for the New Year

By: Laurie Cingle, M.Ed.

Are you “program-ready” for the New Year? Check the box to the left of each item or task to determine what remains undone before the New Year’s rush:

- Program and Events Calendar for the entire year (January through December) is completed and documented on paper. Openings are left available on the calendar for additions throughout the year for hot topics and innovative ideas.
- Program Budget has been submitted to upper management and approvals have been received. Every program on the calendar is included in the budget.
- A Champion (leader) has been assigned to each program and tasked with its success.

Expectations have been outlined with the Champion (budget, participation goals, etc.). Appropriate tools and resources per the budget have been provided to them.

- January program marketing, both in-house and community, is complete and ready to be distributed and posted.
- January program prizes/give-aways have been ordered (if applicable). Estimated date of delivery has been confirmed with the vendor.
- Individual staff in all departments have been educated on the details of the January program by the Champion to ensure maximum member enrollments: dates, registration procedures, target market, benefits to participants, prizes/rewards, fees, goals and Champion’s contact information.

- For optimal face-to-face member engagement, scripts have been created and provided to staff to help build confidence and ensure the correct information is being presented. Staff are roleplaying using the scripts to refine their presentation.
- Details are set to ensure that the January program is used to promote the program immediately following it on the calendar so participants can be enrolled with no loss of momentum (This should be the case for every program on the calendar; one program is used to promote another).
- Meeting is scheduled with each department 30 days prior to the start date of the next program offered to ensure maximum member enrollments.



Laurie Cingle

Next Steps:

- Review the checklist and make a plan now to complete all open items and tasks by a deadline.
- Work with your team, delegating to the appropriate individuals. Follow up and hold them accountable to the deadline.
- Apply this checklist to every single month of the year! Simply replace “January” with the upcoming program month. Be sure to complete the checklist at least three months before the scheduled program date (we’ve

cut it too close for comfort for January).

Do you need help with your annual program calendar? Check out **CLUB INSIDER’s September 2013 Programming for the Fun of It** article entitled, “Best Practices for Creating Your Facility’s 12-Month Retention Program Calendar.”

(Laurie Cingle, M.Ed., is a fitness business success coach, club consultant and a member of the Leadership Team at Akron General LifeStyles. Contact her at laurie@lauriecingle.com.)

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Thanks and Appreciation

At **CLUB INSIDER**, we are excited to be in our **23rd Year** of this home-based health and fitness club trade newspaper! The thought that this newspaper was *founded to serve an industry I truly love*, and so that *I could become a Mister Mom for my son, Justin*, is still *intriguing and amazing* to us. I wish to extend our most sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to everyone that’s made this amazing 23-year run possible.

A very sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** go to **Rick Caro, Dr. Gerry Faust** and the **Faust Executive Roundtable #1** for helping me decide in 1993 what my home-based business would be. **Thanks and Appreciation** to my long-time friends, **Ron Hudspeth** and **Cathy Miller** of **Atlanta’s Hudspeth Report** for the tremendous assistance they provided us during our *first 8 years of publication*. **Thanks and Appreciation** to all of the folks at **Walton Press** in Monroe, Georgia. They’ve done an absolutely excellent job for us all these years and have printed every one of our **264** monthly editions! **Thanks and Appreciation** to all of our **READERS**. Sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to our **CLUB INSIDER Advertisers**, past and present, for their kind and dedicated support of this publication. It’s amazing to know that we have several advertisers with over 15 years of continuous advertising with us. Plus, we have one advertiser, **National Gym Supply**, with over 21 years advertising with us! We also want to say sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to all of our **CLUB INSIDER Contributing Authors**, past and present, who’ve contributed *hundreds and hundreds* of excellent articles to help our readers with their Best Business Practices. **Thanks and Appreciation** to **IHRSA** for all it does.

Sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to my son, Justin, who started working part-time for **CLUB INSIDER** when he was just 8 years old (helping with mailings). This young man, pretty much behind the scenes for 23 years now, has truly been a fantastic partner for his Dad in **CLUB INSIDER**. Justin does our editing, publication layouts, all of our website design and maintenance, all of our bookkeeping and subscription processing work, as well as archive management and anything else that needs doing, including writing eight cover stories per year.

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

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

Norm Cates, Jr.

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