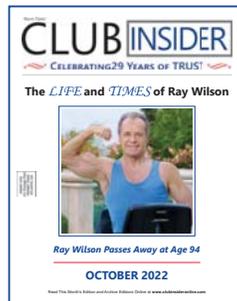
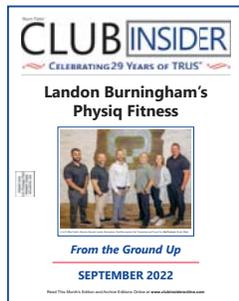
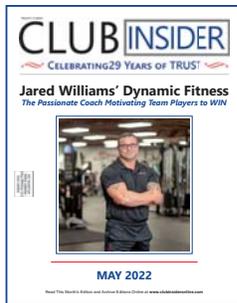


Norm Cates'

# CLUB INSIDER

CELEBRATING 29 YEARS OF TRUST



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## 2022 In Review

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# CLUB INSIDER

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## 2022 In Review

By: Justin Cates

Unlike 2020 and 2021, this year offered us a little more clarity than we have recently grown accustomed to, and that has been refreshing. For the industry, it has been the year to refuel, refocus and reemerge. It all still feels different, though, and I am sure it will a little while longer. Personally, I hope some of the work/life/family balance we all gained back during the pandemic has stayed in place.

For *Club Insider*, the year 2022 has been one of *keep on keeping on*. It has been challenging with the skyrocketing paper prices and postage rates, among everything else, but we have maintained print, as well as online offerings. And, with your help, we will continue to do so! More

on that later.

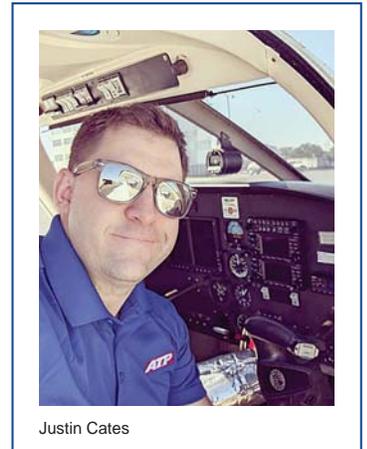
Personally, this year, I achieved a lifelong goal of becoming a Pilot, and I added an Instrument Rating for safety. I bring this up because, as I sat down to write this month's *2022 In Review Cover Story*, I thought about the past few years in the context of aviation and want to share some interesting thoughts with you now.

The first time one is at the controls of an airplane and flying through a cloud, it is completely disorienting. In fact, without proper training, and in some cases, even with training, when entering a cloud, a pilot can lose control of an aircraft within seconds. To prevent this, a pilot is trained to rely solely on instruments and TRUST them to keep wings level and direction true. As one gets more experience in the clouds,

it does become easier, but the instrument scan never ends!

In 2020, our industry, as well as the world, were thrown into some of the worst storm clouds imaginable, and arguably, without any training! Everyone stumbled, many fell and those who survived developed an entirely new skill set. What was our instrumentation? For some, it was the financials. How long would the money last? What does the new definition of growth mean? What happens if something like this happens again!? For others, it was their *Mission and Values*. Sticking to them through thick and thin helped see them find their way out and into the light again.

Moving into 2021, most of us could see the ground again, and that re- (See *2022 In Review* Page 12)



Justin Cates

## IHRSA Releases 2022 Health Club Consumer Report

**BOSTON, MA - IHRSA**, the *Global Health & Fitness Association*, has released its latest industry analysis report outlining the state of the industry. While still not fully recovered from the dramatic decline triggered by pandemic restrictions and closures, the report reflects positive progress across key metrics.

The *2022 IHRSA Health Club Consumer Report* provides an essential tool to gain a deep and thorough understanding of the current state of the health and fitness club industry. Key report users include industry health clubs and studios, finance and banking industry leaders, insurance partners, industry suppliers, investment analysts, facility and community developers, and others who monitor the industry's financial status

and consumer engagement benchmarks. Report data covers a full spectrum of details on consumer behavior and fitness choices, facility types, exercise choices, location size and performance, program and class trends, consumer demographics and spending, among other areas.

The report was sponsored by *Optum*, a division of *UnitedHealth Group*, supporting the fitness industry, and was assembled from detailed responses from 18,000 online consumer interviews and proprietary online panels representative of the U.S. population. Data analysis was conducted by L.E.K., a global strategy consulting firm.

The latest report indicates that the number of total health club consumers in the U.S. climbed to a record 76.5 million,

including 66.5 million who are currently active members of clubs, studios, programs and other similar locations. These members are more diverse than ever, including a marked increase in participation by Hispanic consumers, a 5% increase in Gen Z engagement and an approachable price point where 41% of members pay less than \$25 per month to access a facility.

Record high participation of health club consumers still does not reflect a recovery to pre-COVID pandemic levels for the industry overall. COVID restrictions and closures dramatically impacted studios, with the current market reflecting a 36.8% smaller presence, including a decline of 9 million members over 2019.

In 2021, health club members collectively logged 4.5 billion total visits, up



41.6% from the 2020 data released in last year's report. Current engagement levels represent 68% of pre-COVID levels.

Consistent with pre-COVID data, consumers continue to choose treadmills, resistance machines and free weights as the three most popular pieces of equipment. The top three activities among members are also consistent with 2019 (See *IHRSA* Page 10)

### Inside the Insider: Edition #348

- "Insider Speaks" - Lloyd Gainsboro Shares Important Thoughts - **By:** Norm Cates
- Exercise IS Medicine - **By:** Mike Alpert
- Get Ready to Rumble! An Interview With a Former Owner/CEO Club Industry Expert - **By:** Gary Polic
- Back to the Basics Means New Design Opportunities - **By:** Bruce Carter
- Why Understanding the Stages of Growth is Useful to Your Gym Business - **By:** Jim Thomas
- Engineering the Bitterness Out of Exercise - **By:** Jeffrey Pinkerton
- Crunch Hosts Sixth Annual Group Fitness Convention
- LA Fitness Hosts Statewide Event Celebrating \$3.5M Renovation of its Indiana Clubs
- And, of Course, *Norm's Notes*

# Norm's Notes

■Hello Everybody! This is your **Club Insider Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993** checking in! To start off this end-of-the-year month of December Norm's Notes, I want to mention that **JUSTIN CATES**, my Son and Partner in Club Insider, and I, are both very proud to be able to say to you all that this is our **348th monthly edition!** Moreover, it is with great pride in our minds and our hearts that we proudly deliver this special December 2022 Edition of Club Insider to all of you, our highly esteemed readers. Folks, we're simultaneously celebrating the amazing fact that last month, our November edition was the last one in our 29th year of publishing Club Insider! **This December 2022 edition starts our 30th year of Club Insider publishing!**

Folks, this TRUTH needs to be told here today... I truly believe that, for these 29 years, our monthly work on Club Insider has been Divinely Guided by GOD. Beyond these words that I've just written here, I really don't know how else to express how very grateful and how very thankful we are to you all for regularly reading and supporting Club Insider every time you pick up our printed edition or login to our website. **THANKS Y'ALL! And, A HAPPY, HEALTHY NEW YEAR to YOU and YOUR**

**FAMILY, and TO ALL OF YOUR CLUB EMPLOYEES and MEMBERS!!!**

■Continuing the previous Note, as we begin our **30th year** of publishing Club Insider, I want to be sure to write these very important words to **ALL OF YOU!** Here are the words you need to read, and when reading them, just imagine in your mind's eye **ME, Norm Cates**, simultaneously shaking your hand and hugging your neck with heartfelt and very sincere THANKS and APPRECIATION. YES... I want to express my very sincere THANKS and APPRECIATION to all of you... our **ESTEEMED READERS**, our **CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS**, and for **SURE**, our **GREAT TEAM OF ADVERTISERS**. Without the support of any one of you important Club Insider Team Member Factions out there, I would not be experiencing the great JOY and the sincere APPRECIATION and the heartfelt LOVE I feel for **ALL OF YOU!** Further I want to express **HUGE LOVE** and **THANKS and APPRECIATION** to my wonderful, dedicated son and business partner, **JUSTIN CATES**, and to my great friend for over 40 years now, the **ONE and ONLY** and a true **GIANT** in our industry...

**RICK CARO!**

■Is AMERICA a GREAT COUNTRY, or WHAT? Hmm... hmm... hmm! **GOD BLESS YOU ALL and GOD BLESS AMERICA!** If you're not AMERICAN, **GOD BLESS YOU** and whatever country you're blessed to be living in!

■As I write this, it is **Veterans Day, November 11, 2022**. If you're one who served our country, as my Dad, the late **Norman L. Cates, Sr.** and I have done, I want to **Thank You** for serving our country. It is folks like you who give our country the security and safety we need in this amazing world we live in. So, my **THANKS and immense APPRECIATION for YOUR SERVICE to our UNITED STATES of AMERICA cannot be overstated. THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!**

■This Norm's Note contains a very special **HOLIDAY MESSAGE** from my long-time friend, **DOUG MILLER** (who lives in England), about his annual **12 Days of Fitness Campaign**, which has been touted as one of the all-time best campaigns to drive potential members through your front door, especially in December. **Doug writes**



Norm Cates

from England:

"Let's face it, we ALL could use a good month to end this year. Basically, you take advantage of the spirit of gift giving by giving your members a **FREE 12-Day Pass (consecutive days)** so that they can give their friends or loved ones a free pass to join them at their club in the month of December (a historically slow month). (See Norm's Notes Page 7)

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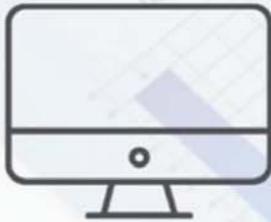
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## “Insider Speaks”

### Lloyd Gainsboro Shares Important Thoughts

By: Norm Cates

#### Reporting on a Conversation With Lloyd Gainsboro

(This is one man's opinion and should hopefully lead to future reactions and responses.)

Back in 1981, I was honored to be involved in the creation of IRSA and to be elected by the Board of Directors to serve as the Association's 1st President. Rick Caro and I cofounded the Association along with five others, Lloyd Gainsboro, Nick Cotsidas, Dick Trant, Todd Pulis, the late Dale Dibble and the late Tim Richards. Recently, I caught up with Lloyd, and he had a lot to say. The following is from Lloyd Gainsboro in his own words:

**Lloyd Gainsboro:** “I recently attended the CEO SUMMIT produced by Club Industry in Chicago. This was my 12th CEO Summit, and it was absolutely amazing! (At least for me!) My history in our industry goes back a long way. I was one of the five club owners who put up \$5,000 each to help create what is now known as IHRSA but was known in the beginning as IRSA for its first 12 years of existence. I also sat on the IRSA Board for 4 1/2 years and served as *Chairman of Public Policy*.

I lobbied in Washington, D.C. for approximately eight years, visiting many Senators and Congressmen, not only from my state of Massachusetts, but for another 15 states. My efforts in Washington were FRUITLESS, along with the rest of those I worked with who were TRYING TO GET RECOGNITION from our Government as to our industry's place in the health

care system.

Reflecting back on the recent CEO Summit in Chicago, this was the first time I know of... EVER... that a group of leaders in our industry who were not large chains were asking these two questions:

- WHY DO 80% OF THE ADULTS IN THE USA NOT WANT OUR PRODUCT?
- WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO CHANGE THIS SITUATION?

And, if we **DON'T** change, adjust and reimagine, how many of those in the health club industry will survive, and probably, more important: **How many will prosper and grow?**

EINSTEIN SAID IT, and I quote him: “Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.” That witicism is usually attributed to **Albert Einstein**.

IHRSA worked for years to pass the *PHIT Bill* and the *WHIP Bill*... Despite our best efforts and spending well over a million dollars, BOTH bills were complete failures! I want to know: **WHY** are we continuing to try to push these pieces of legislation? It makes no sense!

We should be working toward redefining our industry into separate components. We need to define what a gym is vs. a medical wellness facility vs. a multipurpose facility, etc. Then, we need to create industry standards for each facility type, including: space, medical team, process and procedures, protocols, measurements / outcomes, affiliations/collaborations, etc.

We need EVERYONE to know what we are, what we do and the role

we can play in preventative health care.

What's the problem? Do our government officials believe we can deliver preventative health care or do they believe we are looking for a handout? All our industry does is give those who have decided that exercising regularly will either make them look good or make them healthier. Historical data claims that 30% of adult Americans exercise regularly, and it appears that 1/3 of those DO NOT need or want to join our facilities! Our reputation as health clubs is terrible! **Yet, we as an industry, CONTINUE TO DO NOTHING ABOUT IT!**

When *Town Sports* continued to charge their members for their dues when the pandemic closed us all down, where was the hue and cry from our industry leaders? Especially IHRSA (by the way, *Town Sports* was NOT at that time a member of IHRSA!). The solutions/changes that those of you in the industry need to make to fix this problem is far from insurmountable. Note here that I write: “Those of you in the industry need to fix this problem!” I write “Those of you...” because our club, *The Dedham Athletic Club*, has already done it!

Before the pandemic, we had around 600 new members who had medical issues join our facility annually and stay an average of 4.7 years. By the way, our facility is NOT an old age looking facility. Our biggest roadblock is the industry we represent! The general public in our market believe we have by far the best reputation (Sadly, the best reputation in our market for an industry, which has a bad reputation).

This is not to say that, if your company is a gym and you want it to service the 20%, there is anything wrong with that. But, your facility is a “convenience store”



Lloyd and Roberta Gainsboro

compared to a “large 60,000 square-foot super market,” if you catch my drift. The public knows the difference between a convenience store and a supermarket!

**Our industry has not distinctly divided itself into “Easily Understandable Groups.”** We continue to confuse the general population! So, **WHY** should the health care industry trust us, **EVEN** if they do know who we are and what we provide? What are our standards by category (Gyms, Fitness Centers, Health Clubs, Multipurpose Facilities, Medical Wellness Facilities, etc.)? And, in certain categories, do we have educational requirements for our staff? **That's a big NO!** And, until we fix these issues, we are doomed to insanity as previously defined. (Lloyd and Roberta Gainsboro are Co-Owners of *Dedham Health and Athletic Complex* in Dedham, MA. Lloyd can be reached at [lgloyd@dedhamhealth.com](mailto:lgloyd@dedhamhealth.com).)

## Exercise IS Medicine

By: Mike Alpert

I was recently invited to do a webinar sponsored by *The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM)* with **Amy Bantham** on the importance of being an inclusive health club. Inclusion is about ensuring that people with disabilities have the same opportunities to participate in programming and services as their peers without disabilities. For this webinar, we focused on working with populations with physical and intellectual disabilities and the need to have policies, programs, infrastructure, staff and member culture that are inclusive of people with disabilities.

For my article this month, I want to focus on culture, but first, let's look at why it is important via some facts:

- It is a large market as 25% of people are directly or indirectly affected by a disability;
- 1.5 billion people worldwide are living with a disability;
- It is a population that needs and wants our programming and services;
- Two times as many people with disabilities are inactive, compared with their peers without disabilities;
- 81% of people with disabilities report wanting to be more active than they are;
- And, they experience more barriers to

exercise than the general population: lack of money, time, transportation, welcoming environment, confidence and self-efficacy;

- It is a market that we are not currently serving;
- Over half of health clubs/studios report having 10% or fewer members with disabilities;
- It has an impact on culture, member and staff culture and profitability.

Being successful in business is not “rocket science.” Sure, you need to understand and be able to manage the financial part of your business, but don't simply concentrate on the bottom line. Understand completely what moves the

(See *Mike Alpert Page 10*)



Mike Alpert

## ...Norm's Notes

continued from page 4

To make it work, you need to also sell the passes (for \$20.22) and donate the proceeds to charity (May I suggest Augies' Quest).

Historically, I'll send out the invoice to members on Black Friday. This is almost the official start of Christmas shopping. The pass is good for 12 consecutive days of fun and fitness at the club. If you're concerned about over-crowding, you can limit its use to off-peak hours (I allow all hours now). Sending the offer of a pass for all of your corporate accounts generates good will and can reopen interest in corporate memberships. Outreach to businesses also generates sales (we require our sales team to do an hour of outreach every day in the afternoon), offering a pass to their employees (a great way to generate NEW Corporates).

In the old days, we used to print thousands of passes. This year, I've gone digital by teaming up with **FISIKAL.com**. They've created a dynamic app that has replaced all of that cost and simplifies the process enormously. It explains the offer, registers customer details, books the appointment with the sales team and serves as the temporary membership card. It also gives you the ability to send emails directly to their app.

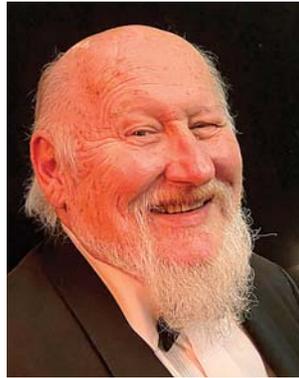
If all of this is something that you would like to learn more about, you can go direct to my blog where I've written a complete how-to, as well as created a video explaining some of the nuances. I'm planning on doing an online webinar as well (Details on the Blog at [salesmakersinternational.wordpress.com](http://salesmakersinternational.wordpress.com)).

If that doesn't work, send me an email at [Doug@SalesMakers.com](mailto:Doug@SalesMakers.com). You can also give me a call at: **+44(0) 7855 744 222 OR +44(0) 1449 744 222** (Bear in mind I'm in England with a different time zone).

Finally, I'd like to wish you all **Merry Fitness** and a **Healthy and Happy New Year!**

■ Thanks to **BRENT DARDEN, BILL McBRIDE, SARA COOPERMAN** and **BLAIR McHANEY** as these **Talks & Takes Hosts** once again covered the industry's hot topics! In case you missed it, these highly esteemed health and fitness industry leaders discussed a lot during the *October Talks & Takes Show*, hosted in partnership with **IHRSA** and **REX Roundtables** and sponsored by **ABC Fitness Solutions**. The hosts covered the *World Health Organization's* new report, mental health, chemotherapy and exercise, and more. Don't miss future Talks & Takes episodes, coming up in 2023.

■ I recently heard from **LLOYD GAINSBORO**, my long-time friend and former *Club Insider Cover Story* subject. To say that Lloyd had a lot to say would be an understatement! Therefore, I asked him to



Doug Miller

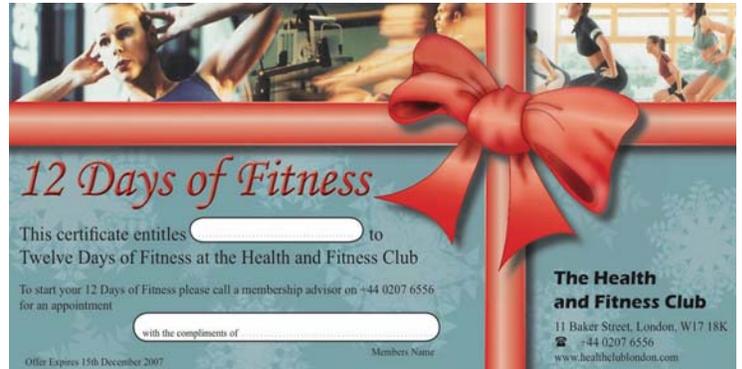
help me put his thoughts into writing, and he did just that. Lloyd's important thoughts are in our "Insider Speaks" column that you will see on **Page #6**.

■ Our friend and *Club Insider Contributing Author*, **MIKE ALPERT**, recently provided an update on some things going on at *Smart Health Clubs*. First, the renowned **Dr. Robert Sallis** has joined as a *Medical Advisor*. Second, on November 15th, in partnership with **ACSM**, a panel discussion was held on *Health Club Inclusion*. Finally, upcoming on December 8th, a panel discussion on the future of health clubs will be held. Panelists will include **Dr. Robert Sallis**, **Dr. Karen Wonders** (*Maple Tree Cancer Alliance*), **Dr. Amy Bantham** (*Move to Live More*) and **Mike Feitelberg** (*The Edge*). *Club Insider* will provide the links to the replay of the November 15th presentation as well as a signup link for the December 8th presentation once received. In the meantime, be sure to read **Mike's Article on Page #6**.

■ My good friends, **BRUCE** and **JOHANNA CARTER** of **Optimal Designs International**, have produced a really impressive and useful **Design Trends Newsletter** that, if you're building a new club, or remodeling an existing club, you definitely should see. To sign up, contact Bruce Carter at [bruce@obtimaldsi.com](mailto:bruce@obtimaldsi.com). And, be sure to check out **Bruce's Article on Page #19**.

■ **NEWS** from **REX ROUNDTABLE'S EDDIE TOCK** and **ALLISON FLATLEY**, and I'm quoting Allison here: "We're excited to announce that **new REX Women's Leadership Roundtables are now forming!** Calling all women who are *Club Owners, Club General Managers, Club Senior Leaders!* This Women's REX Roundtable is starting for you, and it will be chaired by yours truly, Allison Flatley."

**Folks, this is great news!** I say that because Allison Flatley has been instrumental in the health and fitness club industry for over 30 years as an operator, executive and leader, and she's passionate (See *Norm's Notes Page 8*)



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Dennie Noecker  
p: 609-430-8455  
e: [dennie@jrassoc.com](mailto:dennie@jrassoc.com)



## ...Norm's Notes

continued from page 7

about empowering women and helping them succeed. The goal of the announced roundtable is to provide a welcoming and empowering place for women leaders to learn from each other and to focus on a growth mindset, professionally and personally. It is an ideal place for women to work on their business and join the highly successful network of REX Roundtable Members. To learn more about this new REX ROUNDTABLE for Women, contact Allison directly at [allison@rexroundtables.com](mailto:allison@rexroundtables.com), and tell her **NORM of Club Insider** wrote about her and Eddie's new REX Roundtable for Women. And, **STAY TUNED, FOLKS!**

■ **Congratulations to PETER BROWN** and the **Athletic Business Team** for the celebrating **40 years** at their recent *Athletic Business Show* in Orlando, Florida. Being just down the road from his house, *Club Insider Publisher, Justin Cates*, was in attendance. He sends his **Thanks and Appreciation** to **RACHEL LESZCZYNSKI** for assistance with the Press Pass. While there, Justin ran into some friends at the *IHRSA Booth*, **LUKE ABLONDI** and **LYNNE DEVANEY**, and that leads me to my next **Note** about **IHRSA 2023**.

■ Speaking of **IHRSA 2023**, folks, just in case you've never had the pleasure of visiting the *truly amazingly beautiful City of SAN DIEGO, California*, let me tell you about it. San Diego is, by far, my favorite city for our **annual IHRSA Convention and Trade Show**. I'd also bet that, were you to ask many other **IHRSA** members what they think, they will agree with me. During the past **42 years** since we started **IRSA/IHRSA in 1981**, we've had the Convention and Trade Show there quite a few times. And, I'm very pleased to report to you all that the **2023 IHRSA Convention and**

**Trade Show** will be in San Diego **March 20 - 22, 2023. YAHOO! DO NOT MISS IT! Registration is Now Open!**

**IHRSA** invites you all to recharge and reconnect to the global health and fitness industry at **IHRSA 2023!** By returning to sunny San Diego, March 20 - 22, for **IHRSA's 42nd International Convention and Trade Show**, you will be presented with a plethora of opportunities for your business to succeed and stay ahead of the game. While in San Diego, you will be able to network with 6,000+ industry professionals, learn from 100+ expert presenters and view the latest technology and products from 300+ exhibitors during the 2-day Trade Show. To register, go to [ihrsa.org/convention](http://ihrsa.org/convention).

■ Founded by **DAVID PATCHEL-EVANS, GoodLife Fitness**, the huge Canadian health club chain based in London, Ontario, Canada is the leading club group in the great country of Canada. **GoodLife Fitness** has launched a new marketing campaign that features real people rather than models in a bid to reclaim fitness for everyone, the company said. **GoodLife Fitness**, which has more than 200 clubs, 900,000 members and 10,000 employees, launched a nationwide casting call that generated close to 3,000 applications before choosing the people it will spotlight as "fitfluencers" in the campaign that launched in late October. "With this campaign, **GoodLife Fitness** is reclaiming fitness for everyone," said **GoodLife Fitness COO, Jason Sheridan**. "Fitness isn't only represented by a perfect six-pack or how many followers you have. It's about getting up and showing up. We're celebrating the people who show up and put in the work to be active and then share that experience with people around them. It's the positive feeling you get when you take care of yourself and connect with others so they can feel the same way. That's where the magic is." **Club Insider wishes everyone at GoodLife Fitness all**

**the best in this new endeavor!**

■ Since I'm writing this **NOTE on Veteran's Day**, this is quite timely. This from the folks at **9Round Franchising** about being ranked a **top franchise for Veterans** by *Entrepreneur Magazine*: "9Round Franchising, LLC, the world's largest kickboxing franchise, has been ranked 78th on *Entrepreneur Magazine's* 2022 list of Top Franchises for Veterans. This is the sixth consecutive year 9Round has been included on this list, which features a diverse range of franchises that offer advantageous opportunities to military veterans. **SHANNON HUDSON, Founder and CEO of 9Round** commented, "Many of the most qualified and ideal candidates for franchise business ownership are military veterans. Their military experience has equipped them with the discipline, drive, integrity and courage that are essential for running a successful business. 9Round has an outstanding track record of assisting military veterans in starting their own businesses as franchisees and entrepreneurs in our organization. Not only is it an honor to have these types of owners in our system, it is essential to the growth and success of 9Round as a whole."

■ **Peloton and Echelon** announced the settlement of all pending litigation between them. All pending actions will be dismissed. As a result of this global settlement, Echelon has agreed that it will cease using Peloton's patented leaderboard technology in on-demand classes. The parties are pleased to put the litigation behind them and will have no further comment.

■ **UFC GYM and UFC FIT** have announced a partnership with **NRG**, one of the most successful professional gaming and entertainment companies in the world, for an exciting product collaboration including a complimentary 30-day membership at select **UFC GYM** and **UFC FIT**

locations. With each company having a broad reach into the e-sports and fitness industries, this unique collaboration between the two market leaders will provide a glimpse into both worlds of each brand. **ADAM SEDLACK, CEO of UFC GYM**, commented, "We are very excited to partner with **NRG** and expand our reach into the gaming world. Gamers love fitness, and we are thrilled to welcome gaming enthusiasts to **UFC GYM**, where they can 'train different' with the best coaches and exercise equipment in the industry. **UFC GYM** is the perfect first partner for collaboration with **NRG!** This merger brings together two great brands from different worlds." **ANDY MILLER, NRG FOUNDER and CEO**, commented, "Our fans will love the fun, durable, high-quality merchandise represented in the capsule and will also get rewarded with a complimentary 30-day membership to check out the amazing facilities and programs at **UFC GYM**."

■ **DR. MARCUS MARTIN** was a college football teammate of mine on the **1965 - 67 N.C. State Football Team** in Raleigh, North Carolina. Some **55 years later**, I have some great news to share about Marcus. On October 20th, it was announced that he has been named as one of two **Atlantic Coast Conference UNITE Award winners!** The **ACC UNITE Award** is an initiative of the **ACC's Committee for Racial and Social Justice (CORE - Champions of Racial Equity)**, which was developed and approved by its 15 member institutions. The **UNITE Award** will be presented annually to individuals who: **(1)** Best exemplify **ACC CORE's** Mission to promote and encourage racial equity and social justice through education, partnerships; **(2)** Have been a pioneer and/or helped pave the way for minorities either at the institution or in the community engagement and advocacy; **(3)** Have helped create meaningful, lasting change by improving systems, (See *Norm's Notes Page 10*)



Athletic Business 2022, Celebrating 40 Years!



IHRSA Booth at Athletic Business 2022, Featuring Luke Ablondi and Lynne Devaney

# Are You Worried that the Economy is Going to HURT YOUR BUSINESS?

## Some thoughts from Donna Krech

Founder/CEO, Total Life Nutritionals & WOW Wellness



### Industry Veterans Guide on How to Make Your Business Not Only Recession Proof - But DEPRESSION PROOF!

Wellness industry stats prove that 60 to 83% of your members... at this very moment... are spending money elsewhere on supplements because you don't offer them.

Not only is offering supplements a way to recoup money being spent elsewhere, (like a MINIMUM of \$100,000.00 to you!) it's also a smart move during a down economy.

According to NutritionInsight, "The supplements segment has historically been found to be recession proof."

And, according to a plethora of historical data collected, even during the *Great Depression*, consumers bought products to keep them healthy or restore their health.

All today's data says the same thing. Your clients are spending most of their dollars with someone else.

That's right. After working with thousands of Health and Wellness Professionals we discovered something shocking...

More than half of their clients were spending all their dollars on Weight Loss, Nutrition, and Wellness supplements, with one of their competitors. In fact, between 60% to 83% were spending money somewhere else.

The reason? We found that many clients were spending their money with other health and wellness competitors, simply because their coach did not OFFER them!

Think about this in your own business. If you only have 200 clients in your data base, between 60% to 83% of them are giving someone else, on average, \$167 per month.

Over the course of the year that means \$2000 per client is going into someone else's pocket instead of yours.

At 60%, that means 120 of your clients are buying product from someone else, which means you're losing \$20,040 every month or \$240,000 per year. (120 X \$2000 = \$240,000) Even if you only got half of those customers to buy from you instead of the competition, you're looking at \$120,000 that drops into your bank account this year.

If 83% are buying from someone else, you're losing \$33,200 every month or \$332,000 over the course of one year that is NOT going into your pocket, but someone else's instead.

Again, even if you cut that number in half, and gain back 41.5% of that, you could add \$166,000 to your income.

### Would \$120,000 or \$166,000 make a difference to your business?

That money is there for you to take, you just need to see if you qualify for the TOTAL LIFE BETA LAUNCH program we've put together for you.

Imagine for just a moment... that you had an easy-to-implement marketing campaign that cost you ZERO dollars AND that each

prospect, not customer, but prospect were paying you \$549 EACH for you to market to them...

Imagine that you had physician grade quality, custom blended supplements with the highest potency and absorption available anywhere, with a markup between 70% and 120%...

...And that you, and you alone had exclusive rights to sell these supplements within a 50-mile radius...

This is what you get with the TOTAL LIFE BETA LAUNCH program!

Imagine that you had a guaranteed way to get your clients walking through your door and paying you, monthly...

...A way to retain your clients twice as long as average... (Statistics say the average client stays with a health coach for one year, our system keeps clients two years and longer.)

...Plus, you had a plug & play system that offers ADDITIONAL, PREDICTABLE monthly residual income...

...AND Imagine that you were guaranteed to make a profit within your first 30 days...

*Wouldn't that be nice?*

The amazing news is that is not only possible, it's proven! In fact, I reveal the complete, proven, repeatable system in a FREE Guide that you can download in under 30 seconds, just by visiting our site. There's no cost or obligation, and the guide is 100% free. Plus, if you qualify, we'll also enroll you in our brand-new TOTAL LIFE BETA LAUNCH program, where we'll walk you through the complete system, step-by-step to make absolute sure you're set up for success with our system. (within the first 30 days!)

**Do you have 30 seconds to download the guide that could actually save your business and protect you from recession? Visit our site now!**



Get your FREE guide at: [TotalLifeBetaLaunch.com](http://TotalLifeBetaLaunch.com)



## ...Norm's Notes

continued from page 8

organizational structures, policies, practices and attitudes; and (4) Have been a pioneer and/or helped pave the way for minorities either at the institution or in the community. **Congratulations to my Wolfpack teammate of long ago, DR. MARCUS MARTIN, and to the other UNITE Award winner: MS. CHARECE WILLIAMS.**

■ **JUSTIN and I want to THANK YOU ALL for reading Club Insider!** We wish you and your family a very **MERRY CHRISTMAS,**

or a **HAPPY HANUKKAH,** and a **VERY HEALTHY and HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

■ **Are you a Paid Subscriber?** *Club Insider* is a *Paid Subscription-based Publication.* If the words **"NON-SUBSCRIBER COPY"** appear above your name and address on the cover of this month's edition, *you are not a Paid Subscriber,* so you are not enjoying the full benefits of a *Paid Subscription to Club Insider,* which includes **new print and online editions and online access to ALL PREVIOUS editions.** So, *don't delay, HELP US, HELP YOU* by subscribing today for just **\$99 for one year or \$10 a month** at

[www.clubinsideronline.com/subscribe](http://www.clubinsideronline.com/subscribe).

■ **God bless our troops, airmen and sailors worldwide and keep them safe. Thank you, Congratulations and Welcome Home to all of our troops who have served around the world. God bless America's Policemen and women and Firemen and women; keep them safe. Finally, God bless you, your family, your club(s) and your members. God Bless America! Laus Deo!**

*(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 49-year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry.*

*He is the Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993 of Club Insider, now in its 30th year of monthly publication. In 1981, he was IHRSA's First President, and a Co-Founder of the Association with Rick Caro and five others. In 2001, he was honored by IHRSA with its DALE DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award, one of its highest honors. And, in 2017, he was honored with Club Industry's Lifetime Achievement Award. You can reach Norm by phone at 770-635-7578 or email at Norm@clubinsideronline.com.)*

## ...Mike Alpert

continued from page 6

bottom line, and that is People! People move the bottom line! Creating and maintaining *Meaningful and Purposeful* work inspires and motivates people. To me, that is the secret sauce. Great People move mountains. Great People make the impossible, possible. And, I can tell you that focusing a small part of your total operation on people with disabilities, and/or chronic illnesses, inspires and motivates people: your staff, your managers, your members

and people in your community.

You should not be afraid to work with this population. My recommendation is that you start with a small group. Work with your managers and front line staff to decide on a chronic illness (such as Cancer or Diabetes) that they are passionate about; do your homework on that illness; take time to ask for help from others in the industry who have successfully run programs for people with this illness; be patient about building relationships with key players in your community like school superintendents, hospital CEOs

and respected physicians; and get the proper education and certifications from professional organizations like *Maple Tree Cancer Alliance.*

There is a new paradigm taking place in health care and your club needs to be part of it. Our health care system is broken and not sustainable. Over the last 50 years, the cost of healthcare in the United States has gone up 820% while our GDP has only gone up 136% and labor a very small percent. And, according to the *World Health Organization (WHO),* among the 11 wealthiest industrialized countries,

the United States ranks last in access, delivery and outcomes.

The solution is making exercise and nutrition an adjunctive standard of care for all people with chronic illnesses, chronic injuries and those with disabilities. You will play a major role in this shift and the train is about to leave the station. **Get onboard with Exercise IS Medicine!**

*(Mike Alpert is the COO of Smart Health Clubs. He can be contacted at [mike@smarthealthclubs.com](mailto:mike@smarthealthclubs.com) or 951 - 205 - 1136.)*

# Crunch Hosts Sixth Annual Group Fitness Convention

**PONTE VEDRA BEACH, FL** - *Crunch* announced 12 new proprietary classes at their sixth annual Group Fitness Convention held at the Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort Hotel & Spa in Ponte Vedra, Florida. Held from October 24 - 27, the *"Crunch Built Strong: Growing Stronger Together"* themed convention gathered more than 120 group fitness coordinators across all of Crunch's club locations for four days of educational workshops, live specialty group fitness training and opportunities to obtain custom fitness certifications.

Crunch will release these classes throughout 2023, including three new

HIITZone formats, five new group fitness classes, three new Ride cycling formats and a new custom boxing rig from Throwdown, all programming unique to Crunch. These new offerings will join a library of more than 80 existing group fitness formats.

"What makes our franchise unique is that we are the only fitness company to host a convention focused exclusively on group fitness," said **Jen Renfro**, *Senior Vice President of Group Fitness at Crunch.* "Convening our talented group of coordinators to share knowledge, expertise, and network, in addition to launching new programming together that

can only be found at Crunch is part of what makes our brand so unique."

Coordinators were acknowledged throughout the convention with awards and recognition. **Cristal Barnes**, from the *Fitness Ventures* franchise group, won the Group Fitness Leadership Award for managing more than 25 locations, a team of coordinators and a rapidly growing portfolio. Additionally, Crunch

announced the promotion of **Katz Foley** to *Vice President of Group Fitness for Crunch Canada.*

Designed to focus on education and group fitness business development, the 2022 convention featured industry speakers, including Renfro and Crunch Operations team leaders, breakout workshops, new class intensives, product training, demonstrations and more.

## ...IHRSA

continued from page 3

data in ranked order: yoga, high-intensity interval training and swimming.

"This year's report paints a stark picture, outlining how the health and fitness industry remains popular, engages customers, and provides demonstrable value and benefits for physical and mental health, but at the same time, we also see that our industry has only reached about two thirds of pre-COVID levels," *IHRSA President & CEO, Liz Clark* said.

The *2022 IHRSA Health Club Consumer Report* is now available to purchase at [ihrsa.org/publications](http://ihrsa.org/publications) for **\$199.95.** All IHRSA members receive a discount.



Liz Clark

## Thanks and Appreciation

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

Very sincere *Thanks and Appreciation* go to **Rick Caro**, the **late Dr. Gerry Faust** and the **Faust Executive Roundtable #1** for helping me decide in 1993 what my home-based business would be. *Thanks and Appreciation* to my long-time friends, **Ron Hudspeth** and **Cathy Miller**, formerly of *Atlanta's Hudspeth Report* for the tremendous assistance they provided. *Thanks and Appreciation* to all of the folks at **Walton Press** in Monroe, Georgia. They've done an absolutely excellent job for us all these years and have printed every one of our monthly editions! And, of course, *Thanks and Appreciation* to the **United States Postal Service** for sending those editions to our readers! *Thanks and Appreciation* to all of our **READERS**. Sincere *Thanks and Appreciation* to our **Club Insider Advertisers**, past and present, for their kind and dedicated support of this publication. *Thanks and Appreciation* to all of our **Club Insider Contributing Authors**, past and present. *Thanks and Appreciation* to **IHRSA** for all it does for all of us. And, sincere *Thanks and Appreciation* to my son, **Justin**, who has become our Publisher and is a truly great partner. You name it and Justin does it each and every month!

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

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

*Norm Cates, Jr.*

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## ...2022 In Review

continued from page 3

opened the horizon. When flying an aircraft visually, the scan becomes 90% out the window and 10% inside, confirming that instrumentation agrees up with what one is seeing. As you all know from being commercial jet passengers at one time or another, compared to being on the ground, things look very different from above. The 10,000-foot view brings to light things we never thought of.

For the industry, once again being able to see from the 10,000-foot view has allowed us to return to normal, albeit a new one. Regardless, things do feel normal again, but I think all of us are now better-utilizing and always double-checking that instrumentation we have learned to use. Do the numbers mean what we think? Are there blind spots? Are we prepared for the next crisis, whatever it may be?

Let me close this introduction with the following: **Congratulations on 2022... Being here. Working hard. Making a difference.** Let's complete the rebound in 2023, and from there, the sky is the limit. And, now, we know how to soar visually or in the darkest storm clouds.

### A Summary of Our 2022 Cover Stories

**January 2022:** To begin the year, **Jeff Sanders**, *Chief Growth Officer of Energy Fitness*, shared lessons in the important

areas of leadership, alliances and advocacy. There was a lot covered in this story, so be sure to check it out!

**February 2022:** As the title of this story says: **BRICK POWER** is *something to behold!* **Victor and Lynne Brick** are an industry power couple, and this story covered their decades-long history and important lessons along the way.

**March 2022:** *Long-time friends and Club Insider Advertisers*, **Mario Bravomalo** and **Daron Allen's VFPnext** was acquired by *Daxko*. This story covered the history of Mario and Daron's brainchild and what the acquisition means for the future of *VFP, Daxko* and the industry.

**April 2022:** **Eric Schmitz** and *California Athletic Clubs* strives to be its members' "Happy and Healthy Place." This story shares how they do it and why it makes a difference.

**May 2022:** **Jared Williams** and his football history made this story an extra fun one for me to write. Now, he is the *Passionate Coach* who motivates players to win at *Dynamic Fitness*, where Jared is the *CEO and Managing Partner*.

**June 2022:** **Jason Markowicz' Fitness Premier 24/7** is a franchise group that is beginning to turn heads. For this company, it's all about "One Team. One Dream."

**July 2022:** Living in Orlando, this story was in my backyard of Ocala. I had the wonderful opportunity to meet **Ben Marciano** and tour one of his *Zone Health and Fitness* facilities. The key lesson of this story is "Fulfillment Through Serving Others," and Ben is one of the most passionate deliverers of a message whom I have ever met.

**August 2022: Help Us. Help You.** That is *Club Insider's* battle cry now and throughout 2023. Like everyone, for the past few years, we have put it all on the line to continue production, bringing to you important stories of club success, best practices articles from industry experts and the reporting of pertinent news as it shapes our industry. Now, more than ever, we need your help to continue our *Mission*. If you see the words, "**Non-Subscriber Copy**" on the cover of this edition, you are **not** a Paid Subscriber, and we need you to subscribe by going to [www.clubinsideronline.com/subscribe](http://www.clubinsideronline.com/subscribe). You will be glad you did, and we thank you for it!

**September 2022:** The words "From the Ground Up" took on new meaning when we featured **Landon Burningham**, *Founder, President and CEO of Physiq Fitness*. In fact, as we wrote, this story would have been better titled, "From One Resistance Band Up," but it just didn't have the same ring. The sentiment is the same, and if you need some motivation, check this one out to see exactly what we mean!

**October 2022:** On August 22, 2022, 75+ year industry veteran and true legend, **Ray Wilson** passed away at the age of 94. Mr. Wilson's life and career are truly remarkable, and this story chronicled much of it, as well as featured comments from industry friends. **May Mr. Ray Wilson Rest In Peace.**

**November 2022:** **Martin Johns** and **Dave Veldman** have brought two great clubs to the Fort Collins, Colorado area: *The Raintree Athletic Club* and *Alive by Raintree*. The key to this story is culture, and they call it "Intentional Culture."

As with all of this year's cover stories, read all about it! Go to [www.clubinsideronline.com/archives](http://www.clubinsideronline.com/archives).

### Thank You All!

Before moving on, we must take a moment to thank those who 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. This publication *always has you in mind*, and we *hope it shows*. We also want to say thank you to our printer, **Walton Press**, a fantastic 120+ year-old company in Monroe, Georgia for the great work they've done printing all **348 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 **Contributing Authors** this year included: **Alex Wolf, Bruce Carter, Cathy Spencer Browning, Chris Stevenson, Donna Krech, Ellen de Werd, Frank Guengerich, Gary Polic, Jeffrey Pinkerton, Jim Thomas, Karen Woodard-Chavez, Mike Alpert, Paul Bosley, Paul R. Bedard, Esquire, Sara Kooperman, JD, Terry Browning and Thomas Plummer.**

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 financial support. Our **Advertising Team** this year included: **Augie's Quest, Business Finance Depot, Club Industry, Crunch Franchising, Fabiano Designs, Fitness Premier 24/7, FlexIt, iGo Figure, IHRSA, Iron Grip Barbell Company, JLR Associates, LA Fitness, MOSSA, Paramount Acceptance, Polic Consultants Group, Sports and Fitness Insurance, Step Fitness and Recreation, Swift Financial Services, TG - The Gym, TotalLife, Visual Fitness Planner, Workout Anytime and Zeamo.**

### A Note About Subscriptions

Before we move forward with *2022 In Review*, let me mention our **Paid Subscription** options. As I wrote before when recapping our **Help Us. Help You.** cover story, some of you reading this are doing so on a *complimentary basis* with a promotional copy of our printed edition. If the words "**Non-Subscriber Copy**" appear above your name and address on the front cover, you are *not* reaping the full benefits of a **Paid Subscription** to *Club Insider*. One thing to think about when considering a subscription investment to **Club Insider** is that, for just **\$99**, you will receive **one year** of printed and online editions *plus* online access to **all archived editions (348 to date)** of *Club Insider*! Or, you can select our **\$10** monthly option. To subscribe, go to [www.clubinsideronline.com/subscribe](http://www.clubinsideronline.com/subscribe).

Folks, every subscription includes **thousands of pages** of archived content. This is a wealth of information for an incredible price, one that certainly beats *Netflix* or *Hulu* and provides much more educational value! 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. So, we urge you to subscribe today. It only takes a couple of minutes to securely subscribe through our website by going to [www.clubinsideronline.com/subscribe](http://www.clubinsideronline.com/subscribe), (See *2022 In Review Page 14*)

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Norm Cates'

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**...2022 In Review**

continued from page 12

and you will have that wealth of industry information and history at your fingertips! **We also wish to express our most sincere Thanks and Appreciation** to all of you who have subscribed to *Club Insider* in the past. We greatly appreciate your business and support.

**And Now, 2022 In Review**

**January 2022**

Jeff Sanders - Lessons in Leadership, Alliances and Advocacy - **By:** Justin Cates

**Front Page Article Headlines:**

■Reimagining IHRSA: An Open Letter From IHRSA President and CEO, Liz Clark

**Inside the Insider:**

■Risk Management Assessment for The New Year - **By:** Paul R. Bedard, Esquire  
 ■Two Simple Ways to Consistently Build Sales - **By:** Karen Woodard-Chavez  
 ■Is Your Marketing Killing Your Business? - **By:** Thomas Plummer  
 ■Are You Up For A Challenge? Keeping Members Engaged. - **By:** Jeffrey Pinkerton  
 ■Technology Validates the Term "Exercise IS Medicine" - **By:** Mike Alpert  
 ■Is Your Gym Ready For The New Year? ■And, of Course, Norm's Notes

**February 2022**

BRICK POWER... Something to Behold! - **By:** Norm Cates

**Front Page Article Headlines:**

■Crunch Continues to Climb Entrepreneur's Annual Franchise 500

**Inside the Insider:**

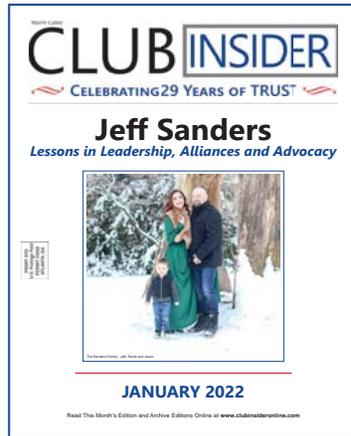
■Exercise IS Medicine - **By:** Mike Alpert  
 ■Maximizing YOUR Sales Model - **By:** Karen Woodard-Chavez  
 ■Top Financing Options For Your Gym Business - **By:** Jim Thomas  
 ■Is Selling Your Team's Strong Suit? - **By:** Jeffrey Pinkerton  
 ■Jonas Fitness, Inc. Announces Tony Autin as President ■And, of Course, Norm's Notes

**March 2022**

VFPnext... From the Industry, For the Industry - **By:** Justin Cates

**Inside the Insider:**

■A Promising Future in Employment for the Fitness Industry - **By:** Jeff Randall and Dennie Noecker  
 ■Are You Onboarding Your New Salespeople Successfully? - **By:** Gary Polic  
 ■The Seven Steps in an Effective Sales Process - **By:** Frank



Guengerich ■An Open Window Into 2022 - **By:** Sara Kooperman, JD  
 ■The Team to Reach the 80% - **By:** Terry Browning  
 ■Ten Creative Fitness Ideas to Attract More Members  
 ■Crunch Fitness Launches New Military-Based Fellowship and Employment Placement Program  
 ■In Case You Missed Them: February 2022 Headlines  
 ■And, of Course, Norm's Notes

**April 2022**

Eric Schmitz and California Athletic Clubs - "Your Happy and Healthy Place" - **By:** Justin Cates

**Front Page Article Headlines:**

■Statement From IHRSA President and CEO, Liz Clark, On Congress' Failure to Provide Relief; Update on Rebranding

**Inside the Insider:**

■Exercise IS Medicine - **By:** Mike Alpert  
 ■"Why Would I Do A Group Fitness Workout?" - **By:** Jeffrey Pinkerton  
 ■A Club's Cycle of Life - **By:** Karen Woodard-Chavez  
 ■Connecticut Supreme Court Rules: Women-Only Gym Areas Violate State Law - **By:** Paul R. Bedard, Esquire  
 ■In Case You Missed Them: March 2022 Headlines  
 ■And, of Course, Norm's Notes

**May 2022**

Jared Williams' Dynamic Fitness - The Passionate Coach Motivating Team Players to WIN - **By:** Justin Cates

**Front Page Article Headlines:**

■Crunch Franchise Debuts National Training Center in Jacksonville, Florida  
 ■Inside Workout Anytime's 2022 License to Win Franchise Conference

**Inside the Insider:**

■Exercise IS Medicine - **By:** Mike Alpert  
 ■A Variety of Club Financing Options - **By:** Paul Bosley  
 ■Revenue-Based Gym Financing - **By:** Jim Thomas  
 ■Onboarding to Improve

Staff Retention and Performance - **By:** Karen Woodard-Chavez  
 ■Conversation: Common Courtesy? Or, New Non-Talkative Norm? - **By:** Jeffrey Pinkerton  
 ■And, of Course, Norm's Notes

**June 2022**

Jason Markowicz' Fitness Premier 24/7 - One Team. One Dream. - **By:** Justin Cates

**Front Page Article Headlines:**

■Six Reasons to Attend the IHRSA 2022 Trade Show

**Inside the Insider:**

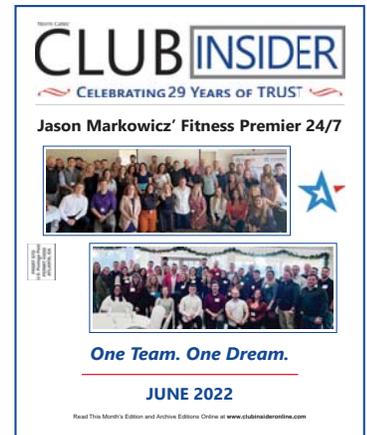
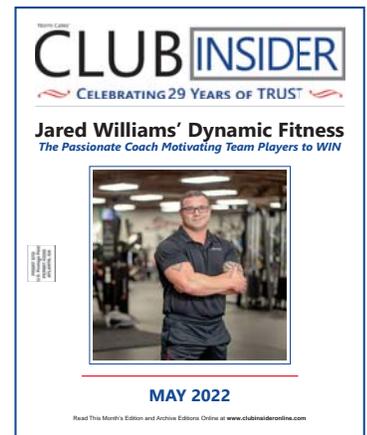
■Exercise IS Medicine - **By:** Mike Alpert  
 ■Best Fitness and EOS Fitness Partner with Swift Financial to Get Members Back on Draft - **By:** Alex Wolf  
 ■Get Ready to Rumble! An Interview With a Personal Training Expert - **By:** Gary Polic  
 ■Exercising at Home Vs. Exercising at a Club - Competition or Members on the Same Team? - **By:** Bruce Carter  
 ■Tips On How To Grow Your Gym Business and Secure Business Financing - **By:** Jim Thomas  
 ■What Do You Believe About the Future of Fitness? - **By:** Terry Browning  
 ■Tony de Leede Named as Wellness Partner for Storylines Private Residential Ship  
 ■And, of Course, Norm's Notes

**July 2022**

Ben Marciano's Zone Health and Fitness - Fulfillment Through Serving Others - **By:** Justin Cates

**Inside the Insider:**

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 ■And, of Course, Norm's Notes



**Stay Tuned in 2023!**

*(Justin Cates is the Publisher of Club Insider. Having been born into a club business family in 1985, Justin grew up in the health and fitness club industry. He has lived and breathed this industry for 37 years, since his own day one, and he loves it dearly. Graduating from the Terry College of Business at The University of Georgia in 2007, Justin has run day-to-day operations of Club Insider for 14 years. Justin became Publisher of Club Insider in April of 2020. Justin's Dad, Norm Cates, continues to serve as Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993. You can reach Justin by phone at 863-999-2677 or email at Justin@clubinsideronline.com.)*

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## Get Ready to Rumble!

### An Interview With a Former Owner/CEO Club Industry Expert

By: Gary Polic

I was thinking; "Who would be the best Polic Consultants Group expert on our team to interview that could provide great feedback to empower other CEOs of small- to medium-sized club companies?" Well, I didn't have to think too long and hard before landing on **Jim Brewer**. Jim is my mentor and dear friend. Not only did he hire me when I began in the industry, but he also trained me, as well. I am forever grateful to him.

For the past 20+ years, as a **Chief Executive Officer**, Jim has gained invaluable experience in business formation, sales and marketing and business expansions and turnarounds within the health and fitness club industry. Jim is also responsible for developing and implementing business plans, strategic plans and operational plans for fitness centers and healthcare organizations worldwide. Even more impressive, Jim has branched out into integrated medical services aimed at supporting operators' business models and introducing new and innovative health/fitness/medical practices into the fitness space.

#### An Interview With Jim Brewer of Polic Consultants Group, LLC

**Polic Consultants Group (PCG)** - Since COVID-19, what financial changes should club owners consider?

**Jim Brewer (JB)** - By now, if you already haven't, all landlords and financial institutions should consider new deals.

The larger chains did lease renegotiations across the board. If you have a long-term lease in good standing, landlords and lenders do not want to get into your business. They are better off with a win-win relationship with you. These negotiations are best done by a third party. If you have any pending lawsuits, now is a good time to settle but only if you have the cash. Your vendors are in the same boat as you, so extending receivables time is an option or settle balances early at a discount. COVID has created some unique opportunities.

**PCG** - What should the owners do in the community given the changes due to COVID?

**JB** - Mental wellness has become a big priority as physical fitness, judging from the surge in downloads of meditation and mindfulness apps. We know that the pandemic took an outsized toll on public health and a far-reaching impact on all business sectors, including the fitness industry. The fitness industry is seeing a mini boom. Consumers who have missed the social interaction and motivation of in-person classes are excited to be back and are spending more than ever. Be sure to partner with local medical and health associations in your markets.

**PCG** - How do you make the right important decisions at certain crossroads in business?

**JB** - No matter how confident or experienced you are as the decision maker, it's always wise to get a second or even third opinion before you make those crossroad decisions. I've seen business owners take a different

course or sometimes just confirm their current decision. As a previous owner of a chain of fitness centers, this was a bedrock method. Are you expanding or possibly approached by a potential buyer or seller? Are you considering mezzanine financing? These are the type of crossroad decisions.

**PCG** - How do you grow your business?

**JB** - In order to be successful in going from one location to multiple locations, you need to have a plan that answers questions like: Do I want to stay in a local geographic region so I can benefit in marketing, staffing and member reciprocity? Or, do I have a new market to open in. Most often, these decisions are a result of investors or real estate opportunities. As you grow from 5 - 10 locations to 11 - 20 locations, it becomes a totally different game because you are now adding layers of locations. At that point, you may want to rely on a franchise company if you do not have the resources.

**PCG** - What if I want to acquire a competitor's location in my current market?

**JB** - This would be a good move provided it's a good deal and you can bring in your culture as a result. I made a business out of this, because if done right, it has a lower capital cost and cash flow can be almost immediate. A mini-boom in the fitness industry has been triggered by COVID-fatigued consumers who have missed social interaction and motivation from in-person classes, as 80% of consumers said they're open to hitting the gym again; therefore, growth opportunities are out there in abundance. You are a survivor in this turbulent market, which opens better market share. Or, maybe you took my advice in 2019 where I told my clients who were not capital strong to shut down to preserve capital and wait for the turn around.

**PCG** - When is the right time to sell a business?

**JB** - It's imperative that, when you start in business, you have an exit strategy. It could be based on time or size, just to name a few. This will help in deciding when. I suggest you know your competition very well in your markets, because they could be your future buyers and/or sellers. Large chains are usually buyers, and in most cases, their interest is in membership dues and your location.

**PCG** - What do you consider sound business practices?

**JB** - This is a very important part of your business plan and the way you operate your business on a day-to-day basis. It starts with your **Vision** and **Mission** statements, which should be embedded in every employee's vocabulary. Without these, you become a wandering generality and confusing to your employees. Face it: We are in the service business, helping others improve their health and wellness. How can you do this without a vision and mission? Your



Gary Polic

most valuable assets are your employees. Without them, you cannot accomplish your goals and grow your business. So, it makes sense investing in them and their training and development, just as you do for your members. Many times, you may create your own competition by falling short in leading your team; therefore, they feel they "can do it better" by becoming your competition.

**PCG** - What is your most valuable asset?

**JB** - Your employees make your business. That is why *Polic Consultants Group* created a highly professional team to provide its clients with the "Best of the Best!" Also, as an owner of seven locations, I always had an industry consultant or two on retainer to continue to "think out of the box" and grow my business at all levels in each individual department regarding the industry's Best Practices. Consultants know these Best Practices because they work with many other club companies as their resources.

**PCG** - For those reading this who are employees, how do you go from employee to employer?

**JB** - Glad you asked this question because I'm approached regularly by employees, usually of larger chains who want to branch out. I will usually help them understand the real question... Are they entrepreneurial? Can they sign the front and back of their paycheck in which they are getting paid last? Not all are best suited for the task; however, the good ones are wildly successful.

♦ ♦ ♦

Jim Brewer of PCG can be reached via phone at **(805) 331 - 4025** or email at **Brewer7519@gmail.com**.

(Gary Polic is the Owner of Polic Consultants Group, LLC and National Director at The Wellbridge Company. Gary can be reached by phone at 630-410-1120 or email at gary@policconsultantsgroup.com. You can also visit [www.policconsultantsgroup.com](http://www.policconsultantsgroup.com).)



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**Meet PCG's Jim Brewer**



Jim excels in offering fiscal, strategic, and operations leadership in both startup/scaled growth stages, building fruitful partnerships with key clients to elevate sales and deliver business growth, and in spearheading organizational improvements to drive productivity and reduce costs.

**Testimonial:** "I have worked with Jim for more than 20 years in the health and fitness industry and have enjoyed Jim's deep knowledge when it comes to running health clubs. Jim has also branched out into integrated medical services aimed at supporting operators' business models and introducing new and innovative health/fitness/medical practices into the fitness space." *Rick Wallace, past President of Icarian Fitness and Precor Fitness*

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## Back to the Basics Means New Design Opportunities

By: **Bruce Carter**

When gyms first appeared with any level of volume back in the mid-1900s, they were all about weight training. Initially, to the vast majority of people (and even more so with women), the idea of weight training made little sense. But, technology started to take away more and more daily physical activity so people needed to seek out places to be active. Initially, training was all about free weights, barbells, dumbbells, kettle bells, medicine balls, etc., and also with emphasis on functional movements. Cardio came on the scene in the 1960s, first with bikes, treadmills entering in the '70s, stair climbers in the '80s and ellipticals in the '90s. Importantly, in the 1970s, the *Lifecycle* was created by the late **Ray Wilson** and marketed by **Augie Nieto**, which helped start the cardio revolution for clubs where "cardio is king."

In the 1960s, single-station selectorized machines evolved as a more convenient way to strength train, helping to expand the appeal of strength training to a broader audience. Members of the general public needed quick, less strenuous and

more specified forms of training.

It is interesting to note that exercise machines first appeared back in the 1700s and 1800s, used primarily for health rehabilitation, not muscle building. Then, in the late 1800s and early 1900s, **Gustav Zander**, a Swedish physician collaborating with **Dudley Sergeant**, a renowned physical education teacher at *Harvard University* started creating a wide variety of machines, and much of what these two created are the foundation for many modern day machines.

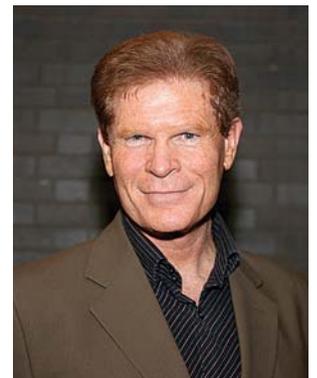
Clubs started to be dominated by cardio and machines and even large, low-price chains minimized free weights with success. There were still free weights, but the emphasis had changed. Weight training machines were clearly a strong reason why weight training became more accepted by the general public and the growth of clubs.

Around 2000, machine usage stayed around the same, cardio continued to be "king" but functional training, circuit training and high-intensity interval training came on the scene. Studios featuring this type of training came about, and strength

areas in clubs expanded in size and diversity with functional training, adding emphasis on cable stations and plate-loaded machines.

As we know, things are cyclical. As **Arnold Schwarzenegger**, put it in 1998, "We live in a technological age, and the exercise machines being designed and manufactured today are better than ever. But, your muscles were designed by evolution to overcome the pull of gravity rather than to work against machine resistance, so the biggest gains you will make in building size and strength will come from pumping iron... rather than by exercising on machines."

All of this brings us to today, as we are seeing a clear rebirth of strength training. Cardio is strong but is no longer the "king." Machines are and will always be popular, but free weights, multipurpose power racks, platforms and multi-purpose cable units are growing in popularity, especially by the *Millennials* and *Generation Z* groups. And, within these 18- to 40-year-old groups, women are using free weights and racks like never before (As a reference: Baby Boomers were born



Bruce Carter

between 1946 - 1965; Generation X 1965 - 1980; Millennials 1981 - 1996; Generation Z 1997 - 2012).

All of this shift was recently confirmed by a visit to a new prototype club by one of the leading fitness chains. They were putting a much stronger emphasis on free weights, functional training and (See **Bruce Carter** Page 20)

## Why Understanding the Stages of Growth is Useful to Your Gym Business

By: **Jim Thomas**

Small businesses are the heart of the economy. They generate more than half of the nation's job growth and contribute significantly to global financial wellness. Notwithstanding the challenges that accompany entrepreneurship, small businesses are increasingly thriving. The secret to success is persistence. To be a successful entrepreneur, you need to know how to lead your team through the necessary stages of growth in small business startups.

By the end of this article, you will know and recognize the four stages of growth in small business management and understand how to lead your company through each.

Different stages of small business growth require different approaches. Innumerable variables are involved in the production, marketing and sale of products and services, and it is impossible to manage them all without being overwhelmed.

There are tangible actions you can take to understand and predict a business's behavior and growth. The *Dynamic Growth Model (DGM)* refers to a small business' four discrete growth stages. Understanding the DGM will lend you the confidence to persist through difficult moments and the faith it takes to see a small business through to success.

### How to Grow a Small Business into a Large Business

The first and most crucial step toward growing your business is

establishing a clear and comprehensive *Vision*. Once you have set the foundation, you'll be ready to launch into the next phase: Promoting Growth.

The primary drivers for business growth apply to every business across all four stages of the DGM. For example, if you were looking for how to grow your gym business, you would want to connect with your customers and community, market your business well and take tips from other successful entrepreneurs in your area.

If you don't have an idea of where to start, however, here are a few tricks that can help.

**Maintain Consistent, Effective Marketing:** Marketing is the key to reaching your audience and driving sales. To ensure you are continuously promoting your business and inviting more customers into your community, you should make sure you're keeping in touch with clients through social media, internet searches and email.

**Prioritize Growth and Quality:** Growth and quality are often inversely correlated. Developing an understanding of growth and quality and when to focus on each is essential to last success. Alternate your focus between quality and growth to ensure that scaling your business doesn't mean sacrificing the value of your product.

**Plan Your Growth Strategy:** To grow your business, you will need a firm understanding of the stages and strategies for growth. With your team, develop quarterly plans for growth, accounting for quality in the process.

training areas should be "WOW" spaces. In the past, these areas were given little design attention. They were just part of the workout area in the back. Spaciousness, dynamic lighting, accented flooring, eye catching branding, large graphics and specialized finishes when combined together will make your facility stand out from the competition. This applies to larger clubs and smaller studios.

As mentioned, allocating more space for free weights and functional training can be a solid decision. In a renovation, it may mean taking away space from cardio and machines, which is a hard thing to do. The key is not to cram too much into a small space, which can be counterproductive. Make this area seem like it is its own special area even though it may be in the same space as all the other equipment. Specialty lighting is a must for these areas. Consider LED lighting strips on the wall, cove lighting, colored accent lighting or back lit letters for the club's name, or you may want to give this part of the club a special name.

Flooring should be a combination

### Four Critical Stages of Growth in Small Business, When They Occur and How to Survive Them

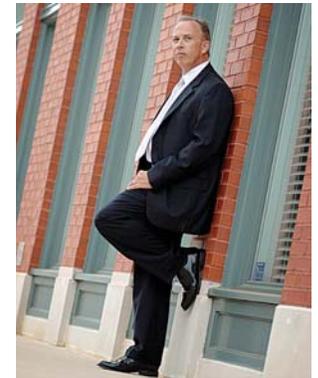
The four stages of growth in business often occur in consecutive order and require different responses from leaders. Why is an understanding of stages of growth useful to your business? Understanding the demands of each step can mean the difference between success and failure.

**The Start-Up Stage:** This stage represents the beginning of your entrepreneurial journey. At this point, you are building and launching products and focusing on raising capital and developing marketing strategies. This stage consists of dramatic highs and lows, as you are still testing products and strategies.

Success during the start-up stage depends on your ability to acknowledge misconceptions and errors and adjust rapidly. You must maintain confidence and humility to defy the expectations of what your business is "supposed to be."

**The Grow-Up Stage:** At this stage, your business gains momentum. Your focus will be primarily on sales as you seek to build a loyal consumer base and generate enough capital to justify the existence and operation of your business.

During the grow-up stage, the complexity of your operations is likely to reach new heights; you will need to delegate tasks and hire the right people. You will likely have to consider some fixed expenses as you work out potential flaws in



Jim Thomas

your business model.

Again, you will need humility to navigate this stage and appropriately delegate tasks successfully. You must clarify roles and allow people to perform those roles with sufficient freedom and trust.

**The Scale-Up Stage:** At this point, your business is likely experiencing consistent growth. You have tested and selected employees, products and strategies to identify what works for you. You have solidified systems and processes and have developed consistency in your operations.

Businesses face important decisions about their potential for continued growth during the scale-up stage. Your business will likely need to expand into new markets and develop a more robust

(See *Jim Thomas Page 21*)

## ...Bruce Carter

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strength. They have seen increased membership and usage of their expanded strength training areas by everyone but especially the Millennials and Gen Z crowds. Cardio and selectorized machines, although present, were in smaller amounts and footprint. Then, a visit to the 8th largest university in the country and the head of all sports, fitness and recreational activities, indicated that usage has clearly changed. With approximately 5,000 daily visits of a mostly Gen Z crowd, there is less usage of cardio and machines and more usage of free weights, racks and functional training and more women in these areas than ever before.

So, this new/old trend leaves a great opportunity for new club design and renovations. More space for these areas is a good idea even if it may mean less space for cardio and machines. However, keep in mind that the breakdown of space as always is driven by your target markets.

Now, free weight and functional

of rubber for free weight areas and turf as a possibility for functional areas. Make sure to add stripes and training program markings to the turf area, and consider other colors in addition to green. Turf and power platforms are a great place for branding. Consider different solid-colored accents added into your overall rubber flooring area.

Large, dynamic fitness-oriented or motivational word collage graphics from web sites such as *Shutterstock* or *iStock* can add energy. You may also consider partially separating this area from the other areas using a plant wall, colored Plexiglas sections or louvered wood walls for room dividers.

A low-budget option is hanging banners with motivational words on them. You can think to add special frame colors and upholstery for this area, and stay away from the basic white or gray frame with black upholstery. Also, consider different colored rubber coated Olympic plates instead of basic black. Everything should make this area inviting, non-intimating and cutting edge.

Another thing to consider is

bringing music back to the club. There is quite a difference between a mostly quiet room full of people using their personal listening devices and a good sound system vibrating energy, another "back to the basics" consideration.

One other thing that the Millennial and Gen Z age groups love is social media posting. So, consider a "selfie wall" for the area, but make sure to have your brand and name as a key part of the wall, maybe a neon club name. If you do this, it will get used and added to your marketing.

The days of heavily focused bodybuilding strength training have passed. Often, the free weight area was intimidating to many, especially women. Now is the opportunity to create an exciting space with a special design focus that is inviting to all members and makes any club more cutting edge. Back to the basics is good for business.

(Bruce Carter is the owner of *Optimal Design Systems, International*. Bruce can be reached at [bruce@optimalsi.com](mailto:bruce@optimalsi.com).)

## LA Fitness Hosts Statewide Event Celebrating Completion of \$3.5M Renovation of its Indiana Clubs

**INDIANAPOLIS, IN** - After investing more than \$3.5 million upgrading its Indianapolis clubs, LA Fitness invited the public to see the results. LA Fitness held a statewide celebration with complimentary fitness classes, tours of its newly-renovated clubs and chances to win complimentary, year-long memberships.

"Indianapolis is a health-conscious community, and at LA Fitness, we make it easy and enjoyable for our members to achieve their fitness goals," said **Justin Rivers**, *Executive Vice President of Sales and Marketing at LA Fitness*. "This renovation brings our Indiana clubs to the next level with an energizing environment and amenities that reflect our members' active and busy lifestyles."

LA Fitness' refurbishments range in features including:

- New Olympic lifting platforms;
- An array of functional training equipment;
- New strength equipment;
- Upgraded luxury vinyl tile and ceramic tile flooring;
- Renovations to the basketball courts;
- Refreshed pools and saunas;
- Updated reception and personal training areas;
- Fresh new look with updated graphics and paint.

One of the most prominent features of the renovations is the addition of a newly designed space for Functional

Training. This new fully equipped turf area is designed for members seeking a dedicated space for combining strength, cardio, plyometrics and mobility, meeting the demand for a high energy multi-modal workout.

Throughout the daylong celebration, staff was on hand to provide tours of the remodeled facilities. Guests also had an opportunity to take advantage of complimentary fitness classes such as Zumba, indoor cycling, yoga and more.

LA Fitness encouraged guests to take the next step toward better health with giveaways of fitness items like t-shirts, towels and gym bags (with new membership purchases) and more. Attendees also entered to win a one-year



LA Fitness membership. A total of 20 year-long memberships, two at each Indianapolis club, were given away.

"The winter holidays are just around the corner, so it's the perfect time to recommit to your fitness goals," said Rivers. "With New Year's resolutions being top-of-mind, there's no better time to check out our newly-remodeled facilities."

### ...Jim Thomas

continued from page 20

sales infrastructure.

To succeed during this stage, you will need either financial understanding or the help of a finance expert. You will need to take risks and trust in the long-term potential of rewards. You must exercise flexibility and comfortably invest money in your business.

**The Dominant/Enterprise Stage:** The final stage of growth in small business has two names for two conflicting considerations. At this point, your business will have widespread recognition and established

employees, and you can comfortably depend on an influx of profit.

However, you must consider whether or not to continue expansion (typically by acquiring other companies) or rest on your laurels. You may also struggle with the sheer volume of employees, expenses, operations and day-to-day tasks.

Continue to remain open-minded, humble and flexible. Think towards longevity rather than short-term success. Don't forget to keep quality front and center as you continue to grow. Remember that you will have to make short-term sacrifices for long-term gains.

### Before You Go

Now that you know the different stages of small business growth, you can successfully lead your company through each discrete step to becoming a household name. Remember that the essential characteristics of a good leader are not just management skills; they are one's ability to remain humble, flexible and open to others' suggestions.

*(An Outsourced CEO and expert witness, Jim Thomas is the Founder and President of Fitness Management USA Inc., a management consulting, turnaround and brokerage firm specializing in the gym*

*and sports 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 overcome obscurity, improve sales, build teamwork and market fitness programs and products. In addition, his company will buy gym equipment from gyms liquidating or closing, provide financing or advance funds on receivables. Visit his websites at [www.fmconsulting.net](http://www.fmconsulting.net) or [www.youtube.com/gymconsultant](http://www.youtube.com/gymconsultant).)*

## Engineering the Bitterness Out of Exercise

By: **Jeffrey Pinkerton**

Do you remember trying brussels sprouts as a kid? Boiled. Bitter. And, bleh. But, apparently, they're really good for you, or at least that's what I was told. Have you tried them recently? They taste amazing, especially grilled in the oven and served with a drizzle of olive oil and a dousing of Parmesan cheese. So, what happened? Did our taste buds really change that much?

No, actually, brussels sprouts changed. In the 1990s, Dutch scientist **Hans van Doorn** identified the chemical cause of the bitter taste and began measuring glucosinolate levels in the most commonly sold sprouts. Through testing, sorting and cross-pollinating with hundreds of archived varieties, they were able to engineer the bitterness out, and now, thirty years later, the milder, better tasting brussels sprouts business is booming.

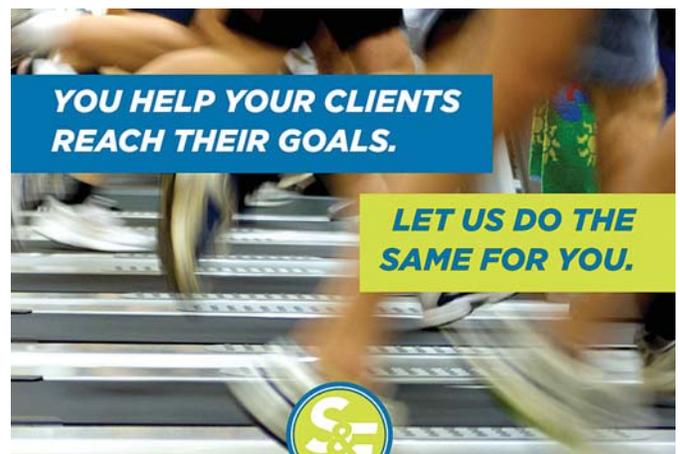
But, let's think back to the original. Really good for you. Tastes pretty terrible.



Jeffrey Pinkerton

And, leaves a bitter taste in your mouth. Sounds a lot like exercise. Imagine if you were trying to sell Brussels sprouts in the '80s. What would have been your sales pitch?

*(See Jeffrey Pinkerton Page 22)*



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**...Jeffrey Pinkerton**

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You could sell the health benefits: They are a great source of vitamin K, vitamin C and folate, rich in antioxidants, may help maintain a healthy blood sugar, may reduce inflammation, could improve bone health, reduce risk of Diabetes, lower your risk of heart disease, improve your skin, improve gut health and prevent cancer. But, they taste terrible.

You could sell a time-efficient solution: Boil them, so they are easier to eat. Timely, sure, but now they're bitter and soggy? Yeah, no thanks.

Another option would be to sell something other than the actual brussels sprouts, smoke and mirrors-style. So, while you're eating brussels sprouts, you're going to also watch a movie! While you're eating brussels sprouts, you'll be earning points to color in your cruciferous badge for the day!

Or, you could offer them as the cheapest greens in town. Just a big pile of cheap brussels sprouts.

Another option: Create a pill to make eating brussels sprouts more palatable. The TA2SR receptor is responsible for tasting bitterness (or so

I have learned on the internet), so the brussels sprouts farming conglomerate could develop a pill that would dull sensitivity to bitterness, thereby making sprouts more popular.

You could just tell people to deal with it. Eat your vegetables, no matter how unfun and painful. "I'm sorry you're uncomfortable and unhappy, but it's good for you." You could drizzle a small amount of inspiration mixed with a dousing of regret, "If you don't make time for your health now, you'll have to make time for your sickness later." Or something with a little more spice, "No one ever said on their deathbed, 'I wish I had eaten fewer brussels sprouts.'"

Or, you could reengineer them, so they actually taste great.

For those who have read this far and don't understand why I am still talking about brussels sprouts, let me connect the dots. If the version of exercise that you sell is really good for people but tastes pretty terrible, is kind of soggy and leaves a bitter taste in people's mouths, consider reengineering the experience. Offer an experience that is so engaging, encouraging, enticing, inclusive and electric that people are shocked that it's the same thing they tried in the past.

The research on the power of music, social connection and working out with a group is overwhelmingly convincing that, when people work out together, with a motivating instructor, in sync and in time with amazing music, the act of exercising can be more about the experience and less about the act of doing the exercises. According to **Chip and Dan Heath**, authors of *The Power of Moments*, "When we assess our experiences, we don't average minute-by-minute sensations. Rather, we tend to remember flagship moments: the peaks, the pits and the transitions." In fact, they go as far as saying that people will even forget the length of time spent in an experience, a phenomenon called "duration neglect." People instead focus on the highs, the lows and how they feel at the end.

Bottom line, a well-designed, thoughtfully crafted, fine-tuned and tested group fitness experience can be instrumental in helping people feel surprising successful, create a healthy habit, and thankfully, change their perception of exercise. We'd love them to say at the end of a workout, "Wait, THAT was working out!?"

A few years ago, my wife was

working on dinner plans for the week and was asking for suggestions on what we wanted for sides. She asked, "How about brussels sprouts?" I replied, "No, I don't really like them. How about those miniature artichokes that you made a couple of weeks ago." She asked again, "What?? You mean brussels sprouts?" I said, "Huh?? No. I just said I don't like brussels sprouts. You know, those little green things. They were cut in half, baked in the oven, with the olive oil and Parmesan cheese all over them?" She exclaimed, "THOSE ARE BRUSSELS SPROUTS!"



*If you are interested in learning about our proprietary M4 Programming and how we've reengineered exercise using Movement, Music, Motivation and Metrics, visit [mossa.net/workouts/m4-programming](http://mossa.net/workouts/m4-programming).*

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