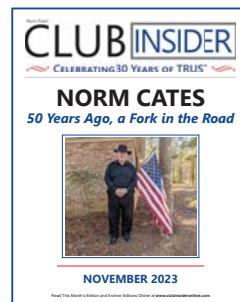
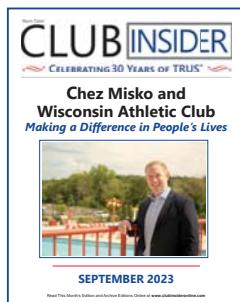
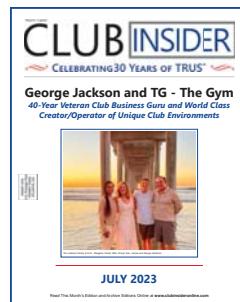
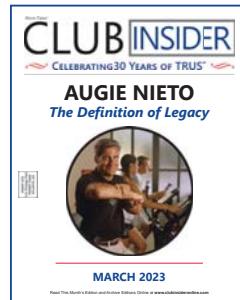
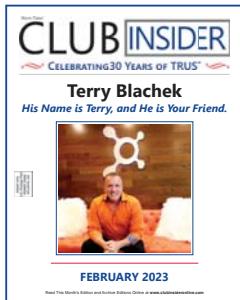
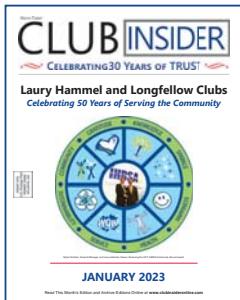


Norm Cates'

CLUB INSIDER

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF TRUST



2023 In Review

DECEMBER 2023

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CLUB INSIDER

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF TRUST

2023 In Review

By: Justin Cates

This has been a year for the books! In many good ways, and we hope it has been the same for you in your health and fitness club business. At *Club Insider*, after 30 years of print, we made the difficult but correct decision to move to an online-only format. The ability to continue what we do month-in and month-out, and the feedback we have received since this decision was made has been uplifting, and it has us energized for 2024! Before closing out 2023, though, let's take a quick look back at all we covered this year. Wow, did it go by fast!

A Summary of Our 2023 Cover Stories

January 2023: To begin the year, we

honored a very special fellow celebrating 50 years in the health and fitness club industry: **Laury Hammel and Longfellow Clubs!** Everyone, new or veteran, should definitely read this great story of long-term success.

February 2023: Next up, we featured **Terry Blachek** and his involvement with *Orangetheory Fitness* through *Austin Fitness Group*. Now, he is giving back through his Podcast, *Tuesdays With Terry*, where he shares the nitty and gritty of years of experience in the health and fitness club industry.

March 2023: We honored the life of **Augie Nieto**, who passed away from *ALS, a/k/a Lou Gehrig's Disease*. Since his diagnosis, with the advent of *Augie's*

Quest and involvement in *ALS TDI*, Nieto has changed the lives of so many suffering from the disease. It may be *Lou Gehrig's Disease*, but it will be *Augie's Cure*. **Lynne Nieto** carries on this fight day-in and day-out. **May Augie Nieto Rest In Peace.**

April 2023: Crafting and cultivating the member experience, we featured **Jeff Quinn** and *Echelon Health & Fitness*. This is a story about **TRUST** and the power of it. Be sure to check it out!

May 2023: Just as important as **TRUST**, **diversity** and **inclusion** is paramount in this day and age. It's so easy, there is no reason not to! Among many others, this was an important theme in the feature on (See *2023 In Review* Page 10)



Justin Cates

Crunch Fitness Selects Life Fitness As Preferred Supplier

ROSEMONT, IL - *Crunch Fitness*, a leading high-value, low-price gym known for its no judgments, inclusive experience, has selected *Life Fitness* as a preferred supplier for its U.S. locations. *Life Fitness*, a global leader in commercial fitness equipment, will provide both strength and cardio solutions to *Crunch* clubs across the country. *Crunch* opened its doors in 1989 and has been a *Life Fitness* customer for over 30 years. This agreement marks an important new milestone, with a mutual goal of long-term success for each company.

"The decision to select *Life Fitness* as a preferred supplier was based on the company's industry-leading biomechanical approach and its exceptional equipment, which is well known for its durability.

Like us, *Life Fitness* believes in inspiring everyone to lead a healthy life, and their equipment is truly accessible to exercisers at every level of fitness," said **Michael J. Blouin**, SVP Corporate Development, *Crunch Fitness*. "This new agreement will help our franchisees to further build community and create exciting in-house fitness experiences for their members."

"We are thrilled to extend our relationship with *Crunch*, and we are proud to serve as a preferred supplier with a consultative approach," said **Frank van de Ven**, Chief Commercial Officer, *Life Fitness*. "We will provide fitness solutions under our *Life Fitness* and *Hammer Strength* brands that help *Crunch* in its mission to make exercising fun and enjoyable for its diverse

membership. We look forward to supporting *Crunch* in achieving its business objectives, as well as helping *Crunch* exercisers on their fitness journeys."

For more than 55 years, *Life Fitness* has been the pioneer in premium fitness solutions, designed with a performance-first philosophy to benefit fitness facilities and exercisers and a commitment to elevating and co-creating fitness experiences that align with its partners' business goals. The company's best-in-class products are designed with an attention to superior biomechanics, resulting in memorable exerciser experiences. The company also provides exceptional, collaborative support focused on listening to and understanding partner



needs. By delivering unique member experiences, *Life Fitness* brings value and increased performance to its partners' staff, business, and most importantly, members.

Inside the Insider: Edition #360

- How to Design a Dynamic Recovery Area for Your Club - **By:** Bruce Carter
- It's a Great Time to Recommit to Your Health and Fitness Journey! - **By:** Frank Guengerich
- Are You Catching Your Next New Member... "Where They Are?" - **By:** Gary Polic
- Goal Setting For Your Group Fitness Department - **By:** Jeffrey Pinkerton
- Sara Kooperman Unveils New Book: Fit For Business
- Bay Club Acquires PRO Club in Pacific Northwest Expansion
- The Atlantic Club Awarded MFA-Certified Facility of the Year
- HWLS and KORB Health Group Announce Partnership
- And, of Course, *Norm's Notes*

Norm's Notes

■Hello Everybody! This is your Club Insider Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993 checking in with our **360th monthly edition of this 30+ year running club business publication** I refer to as: **A Labor of Love!** I'm very thankful that you've tuned in again for this iteration of **Norm's Notes**, as I proceed on my keyboard with my longtime habit of **"Telling-It-Like-It-Is!"** I'm really happy that you're reading this edition, and I want to **THANK YOU ALL** for sticking with us every month! As usual, we have a bunch of health and fitness club industry news. **so please read on!**

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

■ Folks, I'm writing this Norm's Note on Sunday, November 19, 2023. This is a SAD day for America. It's a SAD day because today, **ROSALYNNE CARTER**, America's former First Lady and the wife of **JIMMY CARTER**, the former President of these United States, has passed away in

About Club Insider

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF TRUST

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First Lady, at the *Northeast Atlanta Glenn Memorial Church* was truly **WELL DONE** and **REMARKABLE!** President **JOE BIDEN** and First Lady **JILL BIDEN**; Vice President **KAMALA HARRIS** and Second Gentleman, **DOUGLAS EMHOFF**; and Former President **BILL CLINTON** and Former First Lady, **HILLARY**, were there, and the audience was composed of an amazing array of American luminaries. We have been blessed to have had her Funeral Service shared so well on television. **WOW!** If you can find a repeat of this service online, I believe your life will be better from having viewed it. Mine has been made better today, that's for **SURE!** *Hallelujah!!!*

The JIMMY and ROSALYNN CARTER STORY



Norm Gates

Jimmy, but he was three years older, and apparently took little notice of the shy kid next door. During WWII, he left town to join the Naval Academy. One day in the summer of 1945, Jimmy returned to Plains on vacation. While riding in the rumble seat of a friend's Ford, he looked toward the United Methodist Church and saw Rosie, who by then was seventeen and all grown up, standing out front. He was gobsmacked!

(See **Norm's Notes** Page 7)

Thanks and Appreciation

At Club Insider, we are excited to be in 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 did an absolutely excellent job for us all these years and printed every one of our monthly printed editions! And, of course, *Thanks and Appreciation* to the **United States Postal Service** for sending those editions to our readers!

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

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

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

Norm Cates, Jr.



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Sara Kooperman Unveils New Book: *Fit For Business*

Sara Kooperman, an influential figure in the fitness professional industry proudly unveils her highly anticipated debut book, *Fit For Business: An Unapologetic Look at the Life of a Witty Fitness Entrepreneur*.

Through candid storytelling, Sara shares invaluable insights, recounting both triumphs and setbacks, including the brink of losing everything. "With this book, I want to share the realities of being a leader... the nitty-gritty pitfalls of loneliness, exhaustion and frustration, but also the highs, the rewards, the friendships and the family that lift you and define you. With this book, I am sharing my personal vision, along with the blood, tears and lots of sweet, sweet sweat experienced through entrepreneurship."

A central message from "Fit For Business" is that of determination. Sara explains, "If you want it, you can have it. If you want to be a leader in your field, all you have to do is make the choice, work harder

than you ever imagined and set yourself on a path. All you have to do is make mistakes (plenty of them), get over them and then get on with it!"

Feel like you are sitting alongside Sara as she recounts her entrepreneurial journey with a unique blend of wit, humor, and moments filled with suspense. Sara intricately weaves her experiences, unveiling the challenges and triumphs she encountered as an entrepreneur.

The book doesn't just recount the typical entrepreneurial story; it's a captivating account sprinkled with witty anecdotes, offering readers an entertaining yet insightful exploration of the highs and lows that punctuated Sara's path to success.

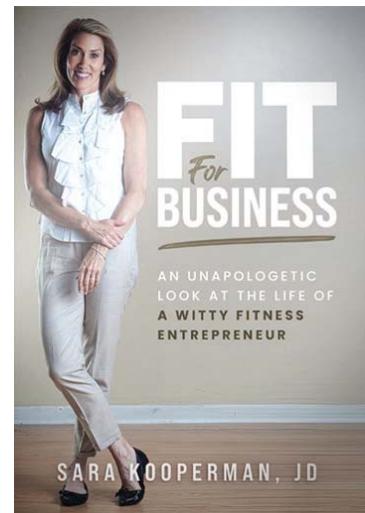
Sara's impact is exemplified by **Ann Gilbert**, *CEO & Founder of Shapes Fitness for Women*, who says, "Sara has supported my business growth with lighthearted coaching and positive

mentoring. She's been an inspiration, driving my success with compassion, honesty and humor."

In earnest, Sara has dedicated this book to her husband, **Alan**, without whom she would not be who she is. "He is my pillar and my pillow. He is strong and soft all at the same time, direct, honest and brilliant. He has given me four wonderful sons and a life filled with mountains to climb and moguls to ski."

"Fit For Business: An Unapologetic Look at the Life of a Witty Fitness Entrepreneur" is available on Amazon in hardback, paperback and Kindle e-book formats. Go to: www.sarakooperman.com/books.

For media inquiries or more information, contact editor@scwfit.com. To discover SCW Fitness Education, visit www.scwfit.com.



Bay Club Acquires PRO Club in Pacific Northwest Expansion

SAN FRANCISCO, CA - The Bay Club Company ("Bay Club") announces the acquisition of PRO Club Inc., owners/operators of the renowned health and wellness facilities in Seattle, marking a significant milestone in the company's growth in the Pacific Northwest. Bay Club's acquisition of the two PRO Club locations marks the company's third major acquisition in just three months and further ignites their strategic expansion along the West Coast. Bay Club now boasts 26 locations including 10 Campuses from Seattle to San Diego. With a projected membership exceeding 135,000 and a workforce of over 4,000 employees, the company is poised for ongoing, sustainable growth, with more acquisitions coming in 2024.

Rick Caro, an industry veteran, *Board Member of The Bay Club Company*,

President of Management Vision, Inc. and *IHRSA Co-Founder*, connected the two active lifestyle brands, knowing they share a natural cultural connection. Caro commented, "This transaction involves the single largest revenue-grossing health/athletic club in the U.S. PRO Club has been a market leader for decades in terms of revenue, memberships, programming and its service levels."

PRO Club's Seattle and Bellevue locations offer a combined 600,000 square feet of active lifestyle, leisure and luxury amenities for members. In addition, PRO Club amplifies members' experiences with a five-star spa and medical services, such as physician and dietician supervised weight management programs, hyperbaric oxygen therapy and more, most of which were pioneered by **Dr. Mark Dedomenico**,

PRO Club Co-Founder.

"We are thrilled to join forces with the Bay Club, an exceptional active lifestyle brand that shares our passion and culture for empowering individuals to achieve their health and wellness goals," said **Dick Knight**, *PRO Club President*. "With the Bay Club, opportunities are elevated for members and associates, fostering an even more vibrant community whose focus aligns on achieving lifestyle goals and promoting overall wellbeing."

"This acquisition marks a momentous occasion for the club industry as a whole," said **Matthew Stevens**, *Bay Club President and CEO*. "By welcoming PRO Club into our Bay Club family, we not only expand our reach in the Pacific Northwest while enhancing the active lifestyle offerings for our members, but we

also create another investment proof point for courageous Founders such as Dick Knight and Dr. Mark Dedomenico." Both will be staying on with Bay Club as strategic advisors for a minimum of three years.



The Atlantic Club Awarded MFA-Certified Facility of the Year

MANASQUAN and RED BANK, N.J. - The Atlantic Club, health and fitness clubs in Manasquan and Red Bank, announces that they have been awarded the *Medical Fitness Association's Certified Facility of the Year* in recognition of its outstanding achievement in meeting the highest standards of MFA certification procedures and guidelines. The Atlantic Club is the first Commercial Medical Fitness Center to be presented with this prestigious award. This esteemed accolade serves as a testament to The Atlantic Club's unwavering commitment to excellence, innovation and leadership in the health and wellness industry.

Attending the *MFA Annual Conference* in Baltimore, Maryland, on

November 1 - 4, and on hand to receive the award as representatives of The Atlantic Club were **Kevin McHugh**, *President and COO*; **Grace Janny**, *Senior Director of Member Services*; **Karen Santini**, *Fitness Manager*; and **Josh Hooglyet** and **Jamie Vasta**, *Directors of Operations*.

Over 20 years ago, The Atlantic Club was one of the first for-profit commercial fitness centers to embrace and incorporate medical fitness into the philosophy, programming, staffing and operations of the center. Owner, **Pat Laus**, and President, **Kevin McHugh**, made several facility and operational changes and additions to position The Atlantic Club for MFA Facility Certification and scored a perfect 100 on their most recent MFA

Facility Certification examinations in both of their locations. The Atlantic Club also has a dedicated, 13-member Medical Advisory Council and works with multiple healthcare providers in its market to provide medical fitness services and programs to residents of Manasquan, Red Bank and surrounding communities in New Jersey.

The Atlantic Club has been featured in several professional and news publications for its medical fitness philosophy and programming and is an ambassador for the MFA and the Medical Fitness Industry. Kevin and his team have hosted several fitness leaders from around the country to showcase their medical fitness programs and help them learn about their successful model.



THE ATLANTIC CLUB

Kevin states, "When you achieve Medical Fitness Association Facility Certification, you not only build a better facility but most importantly strengthen your team who are focused on total excellence in each area of The Atlantic Club. The Medical Fitness Certification Process is truly a team effort!"

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...Norm's Notes

continued from page 4

Jimmy hopped out of the rumble seat and asked her to go to the movies with him. She jumped right in! He came home that night and told his mother that the baby she'd helped deliver seventeen years earlier was the girl he was going to marry! The 77-year marriage of Jimmy and Rosalynn was the longest in presidential history, and before Rosalynn's death, they had known each other for almost one hundred years."

YES, I know full-well that the **JIMMY and ROSALYNN CARTER Story** has nothing to do with our health and fitness club industry. But, regardless of that fact, one of the things I've done here at this keyboard for over 30 years now is that I have shared stories and information with y'all that I believe is worth sharing and that you will appreciate reading. **The JIMMY and ROSALYNN CARTER Story is an important AMERICAN STORY.** And, I shared it with you here today, because in one-short paragraph, it tells the story of two truly amazing Americans!

May ROSALYNN CARTER "Rest In Peace." And, may PRESIDENT JIMMY CARTER live on until the good Lord decides it is time for him to join his beloved ROSALYNN in the PROMISED LAND. PRESIDENT CARTER is now

99 years old. GOD HAS BLESSED THEM BOTH WITH AMAZINGLY WONDERFUL LIVES!

■ **PICKLEBALL** has become a significant contributor to the exercise world we live in, as noted in a November 16th *Atlanta Journal Constitution* (AJC) Newspaper Article, and a follow-up article dated November 30th. The following excerpts are from those AJC articles about Pickleball and are written by **ADRIANNE MURCHISON**:

"A new 22,300 square-foot Pickleball facility is coming to Alpharetta, an affluent Northside suburb of Atlanta, after approval of a zoning variance for an organization called *Competitive Social Ventures*. The facility will have eight indoor and six outdoor courts, a pavilion for corporate events, a 14,000 square-foot restaurant and rooftop bar, as well as an 8,100 square-foot steakhouse and wine bar. Currently, the six-acre site is undeveloped. The Alpharetta City Council approved a variance that will allow parking between the steakhouse and Rock Mill Road. The developer, *Competitive Social Ventures*, led by **NEAL FREEMAN**, CEO, has numerous restaurant, recreation and entertainment properties in Georgia and Alabama. Freeman's *Competitive Social Ventures* Corporation will locate its Headquarters

in a 5,000 square-foot basement of the new Alpharetta Pickle and Social location. AJC Reporter Murchison noted that the fast-growing sport of Pickleball, which has typically drawn players age 55 and older, is now becoming a favorite of young people. Reportedly, according to **Pickleheads.com**, ages 18 - 34 make up 29% of the 36.5 million players in the U.S. Neal Freeman also noted that his Competitive Social Ventures Corporation also plans to open a new Pickle and Social facility in the Atlanta suburb of Buford on December 7th."

Folks, viewing **Pickleheads.com**, I discovered there is what I would describe as a "significant" number of Pickleball courts in the Atlanta Metro area. I wish **NEAL FREEMAN** and his Team, the best of luck in their Pickleball developments everywhere! Folks, **STAY TUNED** for future updates on **Neal Freeman's Pickleball development activities!**

■ Folks, as the calendar turns to the **end of 2023** and the **beginning of 2024**, I came across a very interesting article the *New York Times* entitled: *Running vs. Walking: Which Is Better for Lasting Health?* by **CINDY KUZMA**. Cindy's excellent article shares her thoughts, which include that they're both beneficial physically and

mentally, but there's a *clear winner*. Folks, I'm almost a 78-year-old Senior Citizen, a/k/a fellow I now categorize as a "GEEZER" but one who has an extensive exercise history that includes 10 years of and hours and hours and hours of free weight training and running virtually every day for football, handball, racquetball and tennis. My regular exercise history also included a period during 15 of my middle age years when I walked at least 3.2 miles per day, and often on some days, I walked 6.4 or even 9.4 miles in a day. From my background and experience, I can tell you this article by Cindy Kuzma will be very much worth your time and your member's time if you will share it with them. Check it out at bit.ly/clubinsider153.

■ It's that time of year, where it is a great idea to make sure you are getting the best possible rates on insurance. Our friends at **Sports & Fitness Insurance** are here to help you with that. Check out their **Ad** on **Page #17** and check out www.sportsfitness.com.

■ **Paul Bosley's Business Finance Depot** is an excellent resource if you have New Year plans to refurbish and update any of your facilities or to create new clubs. At this point, in Paul's company's existence, (See **Norm's Notes** Page 8)

...Norm's Notes

continued from page 7

his clients have received **\$198,000,000** in financial support via SBA loans, USDA loans, Equipment Leases and Alternate Financing. Call **(800) 788 - 3884** to learn more today.

■ **Orangetheory Fitness** has heavily invested in the United Kingdom and is considering the territory a "cornerstone" of its international growth strategy. Orangetheory Fitness, a heart-rated-based total body group workout franchise, has inked a deal that accelerates its global expansion plans, and *Digme Fitness*, a London-based boutique operator, has acquired its London studios. The deal sees the company becoming a Master Franchisee to Orangetheory London's four studios in Fulham, Wandsworth, Islington and Bromley, with a base of over 1,200 clients. Plans to expand with four additional studio openings before the end of 2025 are also in the works. **DAVE LONG**, *Co-Founder and CEO* of **Orangetheory**, commented, "We are very excited about the partnership with **DAN WILLIAMS** and the Team at *Digme*. London is a prime market, and the community response fuels our motivation to expand in and outside the city. With our proven track record in **24 countries**, and with Dan's extensive experience in the fitness industry, we feel confident about our expansion plans in this market." **STAY TUNED, Folks!**

■ **CHRIS STEVENSON** is a member of our *Club Insider Contributing Author Team*. He also writes articles for other publications such as for our friend, **PETE BROWN'S ATHLETIC BUSINESS MAGAZINE**. I received an email from Chris containing a very important article that I think is something you all should see... just in case you have not already seen it. The way I look at it is that, if we can **SAVE JUST ONE LIFE** by reprinting the article written by Chris, and published by *Pete Brown's Athletic Business Magazine*, we will have done a good thing.

Chris's fine article is entitled: **How to Achieve Emergency Preparedness in the Fitness Setting**

Chris writes:

"In August, a weightlifting accident claimed the life of a teen at an Anytime Fitness location in Redmond, Oregon. In July, a mother of four fell on a treadmill at an LA Fitness in Kent, Washington, hit her head on the front of the machine and never regained consciousness. Also, weeks apart in late summer, in separate gyms overseas, one man suffered a fatal injury while performing a squatting exercise, another was left paralyzed when a squatting machine's safety mechanism failed as he was resting between exercises, a former fitness club trainer who was bench pressing without a

spotter died under weight he couldn't lift off his neck, and a 19-year-old man collapsed and died on a treadmill.

Running a fitness facility is fun and rewarding, providing an environment where individuals can enjoy themselves while enhancing their health and wellness. However, despite the positive atmosphere we create, *we must acknowledge that unforeseen challenges can arise*. Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of your members is paramount in the event of an emergency, from member accidents and medical episodes to fire outbreaks within the facility, a well-prepared staff is crucial to creating a safe and secure fitness environment. Not only is training your fitness facility staff to handle emergencies a *legal requirement* in most places, it should also be seen as a *moral obligation* to protect the health and lives of your valued clients.

Imagine if one of your members, while running on a treadmill in your fitness facility, starts feeling light-headed and dizzy, suddenly passes out and falls off the treadmill. How ready would your staff be to respond? This column will discuss five key points to effectively train and prepare your staff to respond confidently and competently to emergency scenarios.

1. Comprehensive Emergency Action Plan (EAP): Your staff should be well-versed in the EAP, which includes clear guidelines for responding to emergencies such as medical incidents and natural disasters, as well as detailed evacuation procedures, communication protocols and staff responsibilities. In the example of a treadmill user's collapse, a staff member should immediately assess the situation while another staff member notifies the front desk to call emergency services. They should also know how to safely move other clients from the immediate area to ensure a clear path for medical responders. Regular updates and reviews of an EAP should take place to promote and confirm its effectiveness.

2. CPR and First Aid Certification: Fitness facility staff must be certified in CPR and First Aid to respond to medical emergencies swiftly and effectively. When an exerciser passes out while using the treadmill, a CPR-Certified Staff Member should quickly reach the individual and check for vital signs. If the person is not breathing and has no pulse, the trained staff member should start performing CPR. Another staff member should locate the nearest automated external defibrillator (AED) and bring it to the scene. AED training will instruct on how to use the AED effectively, and the unit itself will prompt when to administer shocks if needed. When a CPR/AED-Certified Staff Member acts quickly, it significantly increases the likelihood of a positive outcome in dire situations, improving the victim's chances of survival.

3. Role-specific Training: In our example of a member passing out on the treadmill, the fitness trainers should utilize their training to assess the individual's condition swiftly, provide basic first aid if needed, and assist in safely moving the individual to a designated area away from potential hazards. The front desk staff, meanwhile, should promptly call emergency services, providing essential information about the incident's location and details, and maintenance staff members should follow their training to power down the treadmill and other relevant equipment, minimizing potential risks. This collective response, driven by role-specific training, ensures that every staff member is well-prepared to contribute effectively and efficiently during emergencies.

4. Simulated Emergency Drills: Regularly conducting simulated emergency drills is vital. These drills prepare staff for real-life emergencies and help them understand the dynamics of working together under pressure. Drills can take the form of role-playing exercises during staff meetings, where different scenarios are presented, discussed and acted out. For instance, the scenario described here, in which one of your members passes out on a treadmill, could be incorporated into a drill. This would enable staff members to practice their roles, improve coordination and refine their response strategies based on real-time feedback, enhancing their readiness to handle such situations effectively, in the unfortunate event they happen in real life.

5. Effective Communication and Leadership: In an emergency, communication and leadership matter! The staff member in the leadership role should coordinate the response, assign tasks and communicate with emergency services and other staff members. Effective communication techniques learned during training will be critical in maintaining a calm and organized atmosphere.

Leading with confidence and transparent decision-making can help stabilize the situation until professional help arrives. This proactive approach increases the chances of a positive outcome in scenarios, such as the collapsed treadmill user and instills confidence among staff and clients.

After the emergency, it is crucial that you conduct a thorough review and debriefing session with all staff members involved. This discussion allows for evaluating what went well and areas needing improvement, fostering a continuous learning process.

When emergencies strike, there is no room for hesitation or uncertainty. The safety and wellbeing of your fitness facility's clients and staff depend on a well-prepared team that can respond promptly and efficiently. By implementing a comprehensive EAP, ensuring staff



Chris Stevenson

members are certified in CPR and first aid, providing role-specific training, conducting regular emergency drills, and emphasizing effective communication and leadership, you can create an environment in which members not only feel secure and protected, but in fact are.

Remember, preparedness is not just about checking off boxes. It's about cultivating a culture of safety and responsibility that resonates throughout your fitness facility, leaving a lasting positive impact on staff and members. I urge you ALL to take this important EMERGENCY PROCEDURES EDUCATION SERIOUSLY and SAVE SOME LIVES!

■ **JUSTIN** and I want to say THANK YOU for reading Club Insider! And, we both want to WISH YOU ALL VERY HAPPY and HEALTHY HOLIDAYS and a VERY HAPPY and HEALTHY NEW YEAR for your FAMILY and MEMBERS!

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

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 50-year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. He is the Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993 of Club Insider, now in its 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.)



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...2023 In Review

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Brian Vahaly and **YouFit Gyms**, Where YOU Fit In.

June 2023: In this story, **Allison Flatley** shared the advent of **REX For Women Leaders**, where she introduced the *Iron Maidens*. Allison has been a trailblazer for years, and this is right on brand!

July 2023: Out on the west coast, **George Jackson** and **TG - The Gym** has been at it for 40 years! These are old-school lifting clubs with modern twists. The key is the atmosphere, which makes all the difference in the world!

August 2023: After 30 years of print, we made the difficult but correct decision to move *Club Insider* to an online-only format. The ability to continue what we do month-in and month-out, and the feedback we have received since this decision was made has been uplifting, and you can expect much more to come from us!

September 2023: Unlike most, **Chez Misko** has spent his entire career with one company, **Wisconsin Athletic Club**. That is incredible, and the stories he tells are numerous and advice/knowledge he offers vast!

October 2023: As we continue the transition to online-only publication, we took a moment to feature and thank the **Advertisers** who stuck with us and made continuation of *Club Insider* possible. Those companies include: **Crunch Franchise**, **LA Fitness**, **MOSSA**, **Workout Anytime**, **Augie's Quest**, **HWLS**, **IHRSA**, **JLR Associates**, **Sports and Fitness Insurance**, **Business Finance Depot**, **Fitness Premier** and **TG - The Gym**.

November 2023: The year 2023 signifies the *50th Anniversary* of **Norm Cates** moving on from what he thought would be his only career: *aviation*, as he was a *Jet Instructor Pilot* during the Vietnam War then an *Airline Pilot* following that. This led him to the health and fitness club industry, and as they say, the rest is history! Read this story to learn that history!

As with all of this year's cover stories, read all about it! Go to 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 did printing **356 monthly editions of Club Insider** before we went online-only in August.

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CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF TRUST

Laury Hammel and Longfellow Clubs
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JANUARY 2023

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Terry Blachek
His Name is Terry, and He is Your Friend.

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AUGIE NIETO
The Definition of Legacy

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Jeff Quinn and Echelon Health & Fitness
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Laury Hammel and Longfellow Clubs - Celebrating 50 Years of Serving the Community - **By:** Norm Cates

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■ Exercise IS Medicine - **By:** Mike Alpert
■ The Fitness Industry is Looking Up! - **By:** Sara Kooperman, JD ■ Club Financing: SBA 7(a) and 504 Loans - **By:** Paul Bosley
■ Get Ready to Rumble! An Interview With a Membership Sales Expert - **By:** Gary Polic ■ Your Guide to Choosing Recovery Devices - **By:** Casey Conrad ■ Is it Time for a Reboot? - **By:** Jeffrey Pinkerton
■ Augie Nieto Dies at Age 65 - 1958 - 2023
■ Sandra Gordon Passes Away - 1958 - 2023 ■ Paramount Acceptance Celebrates (See 2023 In Review Page 12)



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50 Years! ■ Iron Grip Barbell Company Celebrates 30 Years! ■ And, of Course, Norm's Notes

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Chez Misko and Wisconsin Athletic Club
 Making a Difference in People's Lives



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NORM CATES
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■ ■ ■

Stay Tuned in 2024!

(Justin Cates is the Publisher of Club Insider. You can reach Justin by phone at 863-999-2677 or email at Justin@clubinsideronline.com.)

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How to Design a Dynamic Recovery Area for Your Club

By: Bruce Carter

In the ever-evolving landscape of fitness, the importance of recovery is gaining recognition as an essential component of a well-rounded fitness and wellness experience. A thoughtfully designed recovery area in a club can transform a space into a sanctuary for relaxation, rejuvenation and overall wellbeing.

Overall, wellness is a \$4 trillion industry and is even a "new status symbol" with populations of all ages tuning into holistic health therapies. Much of the growing trend in recovery and mental health was triggered by COVID-19 and people looking for solutions to growing anxiety and stress. According to research from IHRSA, millennials are particularly interested in wellness-based services.

As a result, this demand opens up an opportunity for you to attract potential members who had never considered joining a fitness center before.

Knowing that this demand exists, it is therefore critical that gym operators recognize that giving important attention to recovery within the overall club offering is increasingly essential. Clubs that support

the overall wellness of their members beyond the intensity of workouts with innovative recovery offerings will set themselves apart.

Keep in mind, recognizing the need for a break from technology, this designated area should be where members can disconnect. These spaces should encourage "digital detox," providing a quiet respite for individuals looking to unwind without the distractions of electronic devices.

There are key innovative design concepts that will elevate your gym's recovery area and provide members with a memorable holistic experience. Whether you are an existing club adding recovery or designing a new club, there are steps to take in creating the optimal recovery space.

The very first thing is to decide what to provide in the recovery area. There are a variety of tools and equipment to choose from, and the amount of space you have available, or want to commit to, will be part of the decision process. Figure 400 square feet to 1,500 square feet for a space. Too little space or a minimal offering can create the opposite effect you are looking for.

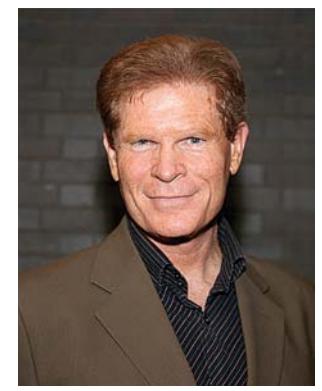
In deciding on what to offer, there

are many choices that will affect your design. Some are more extensive than others, and some are very effective do-it-yourself (DIY) choices.

Massage, either in the form of massage chairs, aqua massage units or massage by therapists, is very much in demand. The chairs and aqua massage are easy to use and provide a "feel good" experience right away. Plan on 9' x 7' for chairs and aqua units and 10' x 12' for massage therapists.

There are other bodywork options including massage guns (percussing therapy), recovery boots and stretching (either on the floor or tables). A 9' x 7' space is needed for one person to stretch. Massage gun areas usually have a small bench, stool or floor space to work from. Boots require a chair with a long space to elevate the legs straight out. Foam rollers can also be part of this type of recovery area, needing floor space.

Red-light therapy comes either as units put on a wall (a minimum of two is recommended) or a self-contained stand-up unit (like a stand-up tanning bed). If units are on a wall, a 4' x 5' space is minimally required.



Bruce Carter

Heat and cold compression need a table and/or chair, as well as the heating and chilling units.

Infra-red saunas in recovery areas are often individual units (4' x 5') that people pay to use. Also, the standard larger sauna units, as well as the typical steam units, are always in-demand offerings. With both, do not do the standard, basic lighting.

(See Bruce Carter Page 15)

It's a Great Time to Recommit to Your Health and Fitness Journey!

By: Frank Guengerich

As we close out the year and start 2024, as club owners, managers and fitness professionals, we must always remember that we serve as a role model for our staff and members. I'm constantly reminded that my personal commitment to my health journey is not only a vital part of my physical and mental wellbeing, but I must be an example for those that I lead. I celebrated my 60th birthday in 2023 and have never felt better. While I don't agree that "age is just a number," it is possible to improve your health, physique and overall wellness as you age.

One of my favorite topics to discuss is the importance of a strong core. As the saying goes, "abs are made in the kitchen." But, are they really? As a NASM-certified nutrition coach and 5-time *Texas State Classic Physique* bodybuilding champion, I'll tell you my coaching advice and how I recommend you obtain and maintain a strong core. I've coached many 40+ year-old men and women develop a strong core, lean out, and if they are determined enough, uncover their abs. Anyone can do it, and it can be done at any age.

Consistency: Discipline to be consistent is perhaps the most important thing anyone can do to improve and maintain their health, fitness and physique. I recommend you set a goal that is compelling so that you're motivated and inspired to be consistent. Perhaps you want to run a 5K, compete in a *Spartan Race*, look amazing for an event like a wedding or even compete in a bodybuilding competition. Having a goal that will keep you focused and motivated

will influence your approach and assist you in being consistent.

They were there all along, begging to be let out: Assuming you exercise regularly, you're almost always using your core to stabilize your body. Your abdominals are constantly getting used and tested. What I've learned is that by consistently doing ab exercises, you will not magically begin to see an outline of your abs. If they are covered by a layer of fat, they may be there, you just can't see them. As a matter of fact, I only do core specific exercises as I get close to a competition. This isn't to say that you shouldn't do core exercises. You most certainly should to maintain and/or improve your core strength. Core exercises also help prevent injuries and is vital for movement and functionality. But, to get a defined core, the first thing you have to do is get the body fat off your belly.

Meal Preparation: The first thing I always recommend to everyone is to do meal preparation weekly for the upcoming week. I do mine every Sunday evening. We work hard, long hours, and it's far too easy to miss a meal or eat poorly. By doing meal prep, this will ensure that you have a predetermined meal portion size, defined macro count (proteins, fats, carbs), and the food you're consuming is meeting your nutritional requirements. One of the most important things you need to do is eliminate, or at least minimize, wasted calories. That would be those calories that really don't provide any nutritional value. The five items I always suggest you watch closely are fried foods, alcohol, sweets, bread and junk food like chips.

Deficit: The math is simple, take in fewer calories than you expend, and you go into a deficit. By minimizing the amount of fat intake that you put into your body, your body will begin to attack your stored fat. Excessive carbohydrates will convert into fat if unused as an energy source, but they are not the enemy. Carbs are actually a vital part of your nutrition, but they need to be properly regulated when you're trying to lean out. Regular strength and cardiovascular exercise (a minimum of three times a week) will increase your caloric expenditure and assist in putting you into a deficit. It's okay to "wander" periodically and eat foods that are not necessarily a part of a strict diet. So, pizza or a burger and fries are all fine to eat but just not regularly. This can refeed your body and replace missing glycogen, fats and carbohydrates that your body is craving. But, at the end of the day, consistently eating a well-balanced diet and doing regular exercise is the key.

It's a lifestyle: Leaning out doesn't happen overnight. It should be done slowly and safely. Making sure your caloric intake is modestly lower than your total caloric expenditure will get you to your goal. It may take you three months, six months or even longer. But, once you achieve the results you're seeking, then it's all about maintenance. Can you shred off that unwanted fat and maintain a strong, defined core? Yes, you can but it has to become a lifestyle.

• • •

Eating a proper diet and then



Frank Guengerich

regularly doing both strength and cardio exercise is the healthiest way to get there. We all know that. But, we must have the motivation, discipline and purpose in order to meet our goals and then maintain our health and wellbeing.

(Frank Guengerich is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Health, Wellness and Lifestyle Services (HWLS), a club ownership, consulting and management company. HWLS specializes in maximizing revenue, with a focus on membership marketing and sales, fitness programming and wellness/medically supervised programs. For more information about HWLS, visit the website at www.hwlservices.com or email frank@hwlservices.com. Follow Frank's fitness page on Instagram @f_guengerich.)

HWLS and KORB Health Group Partner to Bring Affordable Medical Wellness Programs to Athletic and Fitness Clubs Across the U.S.

AUSTIN, TX - *Health, Wellness and Lifestyle Services (HWLS)*, an organization improving athletic and fitness club operations by implementing simple and highly profitable medical wellness and recovery programs, and *KORB Health Group*, a leading virtual healthcare organization offering quick and easy access to highly personalized medical wellness programs to help people improve their mental, physical and emotional health, announce a partnership to support fitness clubs and their members across the U.S.

Through this partnership, KORB will provide access to their telehealth providers and medical wellness programs to HWLS's affiliated athletic and fitness clubs and their members. "Our approach is to improve human wellness holistically by jumpstarting people's journey to a healthier life through customized wellness programs designed to offer clinical support and life-altering prescription therapies," says **Brock Rush, CEO of KORB.**

"We are thrilled to have this premier healthcare organization

become a partner of HWLS," says **Frank Guengerich, President and CEO of HWLS.** "KORB Health Group is led by an extremely experienced and talented group of professionals that are passionate, as HWLS is, about providing outstanding medical services for customers." The services include medically supervised weight loss, hormone replacement therapy, sexual health, sleep health and many others. "We can't imagine having a better partner than KORB," Guengerich goes on to add.

"Through this exciting partnership with HWLS, we will be able to expand on our goal of providing people with the products and tools necessary to lead healthier lifestyles, embrace positive changes and take ownership in their healthcare journey," says Rush.

To learn more about how HWLS can assist you with improving your operation's revenue by offering medical wellness program in partnership with KORB, email frank@hwlservices.com or visit www.hwlservices.com.

Make It Fun In 2024!!!



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...Bruce Carter

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Consider better LED accent lighting for these units, which adds to the overall positive impact they have.

Meditation areas are starting to grow in popularity. These can be small quiet rooms or meditation pods with soothing music and visual components.

Cold water therapy as an anti-inflammatory option is also gaining in popularity with the general population. There are cryotherapy "beds" (requiring no plumbing), above-ground tubs and inground plunge pools. If you decide on an inground plunge pool, many cities will require that such a pool be treated like a swimming pool with similar code requirements. Importantly, it will need an ADA lift on the side of the pool for accessibility standards. Such pools usually range from 4' x 6' to 5' x 9'.

Combined with the decision on what to offer, think about how you will monetize your space. Will there be another level of higher membership dues for members to participate in? Will the services be available on an a-la-carte basis or tied into your personal training sessions? Would staffing be needed to administer certain services or will it be a "do it yourself" offering? All of this can affect how much space you will allocate and how you will

control access to the space.

The environment for recovery can substantially add value to the overall experience. Soothing lighting is needed in any area where relaxation is the goal. Consider recessed can lighting, cove lighting or wall sconces, all with the capability of colored (RGBW) lighting. Stretching and percussion therapy can have more light and stick with 3000K - 4000K color temperature. All recovery lighting should be on dimmers, allowing you to better create an inviting lighting experience.

Colors should also be soothing, such as off-whites, beiges and lighter shades of greys, and these areas are not meant to have bold colors. Soothing graphics also add to the rejuvenating environment. Plants are always a good idea for such spaces.

The flooring should be luxury vinyl (LVT) or carpet and porcelain tile for any wet areas.

Privacy, such as walls or sheer curtains, between massage chairs or beds is highly recommended. It may be necessary to add sound insulation to the walls for a quieter atmosphere.

Music of a soothing nature can be part of the experience. It should be just instrumental without singing.

The location of the recovery within a club is key. Rule number one is "out of

sight, out of mind." The recovery area should not be in a non-visible, "down a hallway" location. It should be as close to the lobby and entry to the club as possible, especially if it is restricted to members paying higher dues. The entrance to the recovery area, possibly with a lobby and seating area, should be very inviting, yet depending on your pricing structure of the area, it should also be somewhat separate and exclusive.

Educational "touchpoints" are highly recommended either in or just outside the recovery space. Empowering members with knowledge by displaying information on recovery offerings and techniques, proper stretching and the benefits of all the recovery options results

in both better results and marketing impact.

In conclusion, the design of a club's recovery area plays a pivotal role in fostering a culture of holistic wellbeing. By incorporating these innovative design ideas, you can create a space that not only complements the physical aspects of fitness but also nurtures the mental and emotional dimensions of wellness. Elevate your gym's recovery area into a sanctuary where members can recharge, rejuvenate and embark on a comprehensive journey toward optimum health.

(Bruce Carter is the owner of Optimal Design Systems, International. Bruce can be reached at bruce@optimaldsi.com.)

Club Insider Seeks Contributing Authors

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Are You Catching Your Next New Member... "Where They Are?"

By: Gary Polic

This article aims to guide *Club Insider* subscribers to innovative strategies for attracting high-quality leads by meeting them "Where They Are!" Given the constraints of time and resources, visiting every potential new member in your club's vicinity regularly is impractical. Furthermore, traditional marketing efforts that do not meet our return on investment (ROI) expectations are not practical or within our budget. So, how do we reach the next new member "Where They Are?" The answer is simple. We reach them on their smartphones! With that said, check out these stats:

1. Americans spend around 5.4 hours a day using their smartphones (*ZDNet*).

2. Millennials are on their phones 5.7 hours per day, while baby boomers devote five hours to their smartphones (*ZDNet*).

3. People check their phones 58 times a day on average with 30 of those occurring during work hours (*Rescue Time*).

4. 90% of smartphone users' time is devoted to Apps (*eMarketer*).

Having now understood our focus on smartphones, let us delve into our discussion topics which pertain to applying a successful Mobile Ad (Smartphone) advertising campaign. Those topics are: *Geo-Fencing*; *Relevant Audience*; *Re-Targeting*; *Frequency*; *Hot Leads Lists*; *Tracking Reports & Follow-Up Customer Service*; *Geo-Conquesting*, and finally; *How You Can Find Assistance to Learn More*. Keep in mind, we are not referring to Google, Facebook, or Instagram advertising. We are discussing *Mobile Ad Digital Display Advertising*. Where smartphone users spend 90% of their time, on apps and website platforms.

Geo-Fencing: Geofencing, which has been around for a few years, uses GPS or RFID technology to establish virtual geographical boundaries. This enables software to trigger a response when a mobile device enters or leaves a particular area. For instance, setting up a Geofence blueprint around a location like *Costco* (which, for argument's sake, is down the street from your club) would capture each *Costco* member's Mobile ID when they enter the store. That *Costco* member will then start seeing your *Custom Banner Ad* on their smartphone that day or later that night or week! It is called *Programmatic Advertising*. Geofencing enables targeting the demographics and reaching the high-quality leads you are looking for near your club!

Relevant Audience: Your ad placement is tailored to reach only the most relevant audience, saving you time and resources. Additionally, your ad placement can be tailored based on the demographic and geographic information of the potential new members. This ensures that the right people see your ad placement when they are considering joining a fitness club. This increases the chances of their joining your club and reduces the chances of their joining a competitor. Furthermore, it also increases the rate of conversions, meaning that more people will join your club. This also helps to increase customer loyalty, as customers are more likely to stay with your club if they see relevant ads.

Additionally, it can help to improve your brand reputation, as customers are more likely to trust a club that tailors its ad placements to their specific needs. This can also lead to increased revenue, as customers are more likely to purchase from a club that offers personalized ads because it can help to create a personalized customer experience, which can improve customer satisfaction and loyalty. This can also lead to increased customer referrals, as people are more likely to recommend a club that offers personalized ads.

Re-Targeting: The most attractive aspect of this compelling technology, however, is the "Re-Targeting" process that follows a consumer who views or clicks on your ad. What that means is they will begin to receive your *Custom Banner Ad* numerous times throughout a randomly selected algorithm cycle that is pre-determined. The algorithm picks up their activity and re-targets them!

Frequency: The significance of Re-Targeting lies in the "Frequency" aspect in any marketing game plan. The more times the consumer sees your ad, the more likely your brand will become "Top of Mind!" So, for example, when they are sluggish and out of energy getting ready for work in the morning, they will think of your ad and consider joining or visiting your club! Wouldn't you like to be top of mind when your next potential new member is considering joining a fitness club in your area?

Hot Leads Lists: Receive a "Hot Leads List" of all the people who click on your ad and go to your landing page/website! Through placing a pixel on your landing page with an "opt-in" option, you can capture hot leads who visit your website. Why wait to see if they fill out the form? Technology today enables us to capture that lead for you! To be FTC compliant, you should always work with a reputable resource concerning this practice.

Tracking Reports and Follow-Up

Customer Service: Marketing efforts in this regard need monthly follow-up meetings through Microsoft Teams or Zoom to review your club's tracking report. Why? Because adjustments may need to be made to the creative piece or geofenced locations. This will help you ensure that the campaign is running smoothly and that any potential issues can be addressed quickly. Additionally, it will provide an opportunity to discuss future campaigns and adjust strategies as needed.

The tracking report should show impressions (how many saw your ad), clicked on it and conversion of customers who walked into your club. You must have a reliable resource review the results of the current campaign and provide feedback on how you can optimize your marketing efforts. Evaluating stats with your marketing team also creates what I like to call a "Discovery Time" experience, meaning as marketing experts, you can brainstorm and mastermind. This is where the real imagination and creativity begins, and the marketing ROI is subsequently affected! This Discovery Time allows you to think creatively and produce new ideas, strategies and tactics. It can help to identify any potential problems or issues before they become costly errors, as well as giving you the opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of your potential customers and their needs.



Gary Polic

games begin through Geo-Conquesting!

How You Can Find Assistance to Learn More: *Polic Consultants Group, LLC* has partnered with a high-tech company that has scaled this type of costly marketing down for the small business owner. We have made it very affordable and provide the tracking report and exceptional customer service you would expect when working with a reputable marketing agency. Contact us below to learn more. We would be happy to help answer any questions you may have.

• • •

So again, I need to ask you... "Are You Catching Your Next New Member... *Where They Are?*" I hope so! The success of your marketing plan and club depends on it!

(*Gary Polic*, as a 30-year veteran, is the Owner of *Polic Consultants Group, LLC*. *Gary* can be reached on his office phone at 630-410-1120; cell/text at 708-635-9522 or email at gary@policconsultantsgroup.com. You can also visit the website at www.policconsultantsgroup.com or connect with *Gary* on LinkedIn at www.linkedin.com/in/garypolic.)

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Goal Setting For Your Group Fitness Department

By: Jeffrey Pinkerton

This month is the perfect time to finalize your goals for the new year – plans for upgrades, budgets and benchmarks. I assume you have metrics and goals for your sales team and your personal training department. And, if you have a savvy marketing team, they've laid out their plans for new campaigns, upcoming promotions and a content calendar for social media. But, what about your group fitness department? Any goals for the new year? If not, let me offer up three categories – participation, programming and people – to help you build a better plan for 2024.

When is a Goal Not Smart?

When our first-born, highly analytical, super competitive son was in the second grade, his teacher took the class through an exercise in goal setting. At dinner, Harrison proudly reported that goals should be SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-specific.

"When you write them down, you're more likely to do them," he said, smiling and bright eyed. My wife and I were happily nodding our heads, impressed by the teacher's life lesson, until he got to his academic goals: "For math, my goal is to get a B." "Wait... WHAT?!? Your goal is to get a B!?" But, you did great in math last year," we said assuredly. "But, I've heard math is harder this year and the homework will take a lot more time. Plus, I know I can get a B."

What followed, as you can imagine, was a discussion about setting goals that challenge us, that we know will take hard work, but that we know we'll be proud of when we accomplish them.

As you make plans for group fitness in 2024, I hope you won't settle for what you know you can do. What you did last year. Like a B, maybe. Yes, with more competition, it may be harder this year. And, yes, with consumer expectations higher, it will take more time to create and deliver a great experience. But, I hope you'll read on and set goals in the following categories that your team can be proud of when you

accomplish them.

Goal Category 1: Group Fitness Participation

If you agree that group fitness is an amazing way to service members, a great way to build social connection, increase member loyalty and improve retention, your number one goal should be to increase group fitness participation. You should measure and record this number each month (the percentage of monthly check-ins that participate in group fitness), and your goal for the new year should be to increase participation by ____ percentage points.

Here are some helpful recommendations for group fitness participation benchmarks:

- 10-15% – Poor;
- 16-20% – Fair;
- 21-30% – Good;
- 31-50% – Great;
- 50%+ – World-Class.



Jeffrey Pinkerton

To increase participation, you have three options: increase the average attendance of your current classes; or add more classes to your schedule to accommodate more people; or add new programming to attract more members into group fitness.

(See Jeffrey Pinkerton Page 18)

...Jeffrey Pinkerton

continued from page 17

Goal Category 2: New Programming

Speaking of new programming... even if your current programs are successful, there is always an opportunity to add new programs to your schedule. New programs create excitement, and they are likely to attract a new demographic to group fitness. When speaking with a skeptical prospect, I'll hear something like, "Well, I'm not sure that our group fitness people will like that." My reply: "That's fine. The new program is not for them. Your current group fitness participants have already found what they like. They are already connected to a community, working out with an instructor. The new program is to help you attract new people – the people who are *not* coming to group fitness now."

When was the last time you added a new program with a team of new trainees? Now, what are your plans and goals for adding new programs in 2024?

Goal Category 3: New People

Recruiting, training and adding new instructors to your team injects new energy and enthusiasm to the schedule and to the entire department. It can also elevate others on the team who may be operating at half-hearted speed, going through the motions, teaching the exact same workout month after month and – brace yourself – even year after year. Your goals for recruitment should be to have a steady pipeline of new instructor recruits at different stages of the process – identify, interest, interview, movement interview, training, practicing, assessing, team-teaching, launched and on the schedule.

Your goals and benchmarks for recruiting should resemble a sales pipeline. For example, let's say you have a goal to recruit eight new instructors this year (two per quarter). If it usually takes talking to 10 people to find a great person to go through training, then you'll need to identify and talk to 80 people (leads) over the course of the year, or one to two people per week. If your conversion rate is higher, you can afford to talk to fewer people. If it's lower, then you'll

need to identify even more.

What are your recruitment goals for the year? Do you need younger instructors on your team? Do you need more men? Set goals, then set benchmarks for conversations per week, people to train per month, etc. Need a pipeline? Send me an email, and I'll send over a Google doc that we created.

Additionally, if you aren't sure about the well-roundedness and diversity of your current team, I'd be happy to send you our Team Inventory – it will give you great insight into the makeup of your current team, where you are lacking, and where you need to focus your recruitment efforts.

Participation, Programming, People... and Promotion

I promised three categories for goal setting but will leave you with one more critical ingredient in planning for 2024 and taking group fitness from a B to an A+: promotion. Invest time – not necessarily a ton of money – in promoting your new programs and new people (you can't sell a secret!) through social media,

member events, onboarding strategies, instructor-influencer marketing, digital advertising, etc., to create new excitement and new traffic. And, if you need help with best practices and resources for your promotions, just include "contact Jeffrey" on your list of near-term goals. And, don't forget to write it down!



If you are interested in learning more about how we can help you with your group fitness plans – adding new programs and training new people, all with the goal of increasing group fitness participation, visit www.mossa.net.

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

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