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Norm Cates' CLUB INSIDER™

FEBRUARY 2009

The "Pulse" of the Health, Racquet, and Sports Club Industry Worldwide

Established

1993



Greg Lappin Overlooks The "Neighborhood" at the Rochester Athletic Club



Greg Lappin

of the Rochester Athletic Club

Sets the Gold Standard For General Managers

An In-depth Interview With Award Winning RAC General Manager Greg Lappin

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Greg Lappin of the Rochester Athletic Club Sets the Gold Standard For General Managers

An In-depth Interview With Award Winning RAC General Manager Greg Lappin

By: Norm Cates

Folks, let me tell you about Greg Lappin, a partner, Vice President and General Manager of the giant 260,000 square-foot Rochester Athletic Club in Rochester, Minnesota. In my 16-year run of doing in-depth CLUB INSIDER case-study cover stories, I've shared the success stories of some amazingly dedicated and devoted club owner/operators. I've shared the great success stories of people in our industry who live and breathe their club business and truly have, as Job #1, making their members

happy. But, after doing all of these case studies, I don't believe I've ever come across a person with more dedication to member satisfaction and enjoyment of their club experience. Greg is a self-made expert at finding out what will make his members happy and creating plans to deliver more and more of what they want. He is one of the most passionate club industry leaders I've ever interviewed, or for that matter, ever met. So, as I told him, "Greg, we appreciate your organization and the leadership and service you've provided in your community and your work

for our industry through your years of IHRSA Board service. It will be a pleasure to share your RAC success story with our readers so that those who do not have the formula for the pursuit of such excellence may learn from you and improve their clubs in their goal of delivering an excellent member experience."

The Rochester Athletic Club and Greg Lappin have both earned significant honors. Rochester Athletic Club was the winner of the 2007 United States Tennis Association Facility of the Year, was a Finalist for the

(See Greg Lappin Page 10)



Joe Moore (L) Presents Greg Lappin with Dale Dibble Distinguished Service Award at IHRSA 2007

Visual Fitness Planner Reaches 600-Club Milestone!

By: Norm Cates

The energetic young man I call "Rocket Man," Daron Allen, a/k/a the CEO of Visual Fitness Planner, is on cloud nine these days.

First, he's on cloud nine because Daron and his lovely wife, Traci, have just had a new family member arrive and she is named Ainsley Siena.

And, of course, Daron is really excited and happy because Visual Fitness Planner, the brainchild of Mario Bravomalo 10 years ago, has now been

installed in 600 clubs.

So, CLUB INSIDER contacted Daron Allen to hear about the current status of the ever-improving, evolving and growing Visual Fitness Planner Company.

An Interview With Daron Allen

CLUB INSIDER (C.I.) - Tell our readers about the best practice sales system.

Daron Allen (DA) - What we've been able to do is learn from the best minds in the industry for 10 years. We are in our 10th year

(See Daron Allen Page 22)



Daron Allen

Joe Moore On What's Happening At IHRSA

With Comments From Rick Caro, Michael Levy, Julie Main and Greg Lappin

Since IHRSA's 28th Annual Conference and Trade Show is next month in San Francisco, March 16th through 19th, I decided to contact Joe Moore, IHRSA's CEO/President to get an update on what's happening at IHRSA. Joe has been in his new job as IHRSA President/CEO for two and a half years now. Don't forget to be at the only annual "Must Attend Industry Event" in the U.S. every year, IHRSA 2009 in San Francisco, March 16-19th.

Additionally, I reached out to some IHRSA Members

to ask for their input on Joe and his achievements at IHRSA so far. Here is Joe's update summary and the comments from Rick Caro, Michael Levy, Julie Main and Greg Lappin.

Joe Moore On What's Happening at IHRSA

Norm, it's an honor to serve this wonderful industry, as it is filled with people who are dedicated to making the world healthier. Our Board of Directors and Board Chairman, Gene

(See Joe Moore Page 24)

Inside The Insider

- Thrive vs Survive! Make it Happen!!! - By: Ray Gordon
- What If Everything You Have Prepared For Is Irrelevant? - By: Will Phillips
- The Economics of Weight Management in the Health Club Industry - By: Dr. Edward M. Slover
- Medical Fitness Association Provides Important Differentiating Tools - By: Norm Cates
- Is Attitude Everything? Yes, It Is! - By: Jeffrey Keller, M.S., M.B.A.
- Making the World a Better Place, One Community at a Time - By: Andrea Sobotka
- The Joy of the Sales and Retention Connection - By: Karen Woodard-Chavez
- Are Your Web Leads Falling Through the Cracks? - By: Casey Conrad
- Guy Cammilleri, New World Gym Managing Director, Shares Inside Story on Acquisitions - By: Norm Cates
- The Goal of Programming is Retention - By: Sandy Coffman
- The Great Untold Secret About Exercise - By: Bruce Carter

Norm's Notes: • Big Doings at IHRSA San Francisco! • Greg Lappin Brings The "Neighborhood" to the Neighborhood! • 4th Annual Augie's Quest Bash Set for March 18th in San Francisco... Silent Auction Items Needed! • Gale Landers and Fitness Formula Clubs Celebrating 25th Anniversary! • Ultimate Fighting Club Set to Fight in Health and Fitness Center Arena... but, Will They Have Referees? • Ron Poliseno Leaves CheckFree Now Fiserv! • Happy 81st Birthday Mr. Ray Wilson! • Welcome to MFA! • Jeff Klingler and Chuck Runyon Celebrate 1,000 Anytime Fitness Locations! • Pete Brown Takes Fitness Management Online Only • VFP Celebrates 10th Year and 600-Club Milestone! • Thomas Plummer Launches Blog! • LA Fitness Sued • Larry Metrick Offers Flash Videos!

- Fitness Management Goes Online
- The MFA Announces the First Annual Medical Fitness Institute
- IHRSA Announces 3rd Quarter Index
- IHRSA Launches New, Expanded 2008 Profiles of Success
- Improve Your Club's Sales Performance AND Support Augie's Quest... in Just 1 Hour!
- Plus One Acquires TimeOut Services, Inc.
- Visual Fitness Planner Promotes Warren Webb and Sam Lanasa to Key Vice President Positions
- Spectrum Athletic Clubs Completes Acquisition of Concord Athletic Club & Spa
- Wellbridge Announces 5th Colorado Athletic Club
- Cybex FT-450 Changes the Functional Training Landscape
- CheckFree is now Fiserv Delivering Webinars by Karen Woodard-Chavez

Norm's Notes

• **Hello Everybody!** This is your **CLUB INSIDER Publisher Since 1993** checking in! Stand by for another blockbuster edition of **CLUB INSIDER** with an all-time, 16-year record 52 pages this month! Growth!

• Is America a *GREAT* country or what? **God bless America!**

• How about if I start with the fact that, next month, **IHRSA** will gather in San Francisco for its **28th Annual Convention and Trade Show**, the one single, "**Must Attend Event**" of our industry every year. Check out the **IHRSA 2009 Ad on Page #37** and register now to be with over 12,000 people from around the world for the *four most important days in our industry every year*. To register, call **IHRSA at 800-228-4772**, or for exhibit information, contact **TOM HUNT** at the same number. And please, check out the **CLUB INSIDER Advertiser Exhibit Directory on This Page**. Please photo copy the directory and take it to the **IHRSA Trade Show** so you can be sure to visit with our advertisers, the great folks who bring **CLUB INSIDER** to you! Tell them, "Norm sent me and said you would give me a great deal and treat me right!"

Also, check out the report on **Page #3** about **JOE MOORE's** first 2½ years at the helm as **IHRSA President**

and **CEO**. In that report, Joe summarizes many things that he and the **IHRSA Board of Directors and Staff** have been working on. My pal, and **IHRSA Founder in 1981, RICK CARO**, will comment on **IHRSA**, as will the previous **IHRSA Board Chairman, MICHAEL LEVY**; former **Board Member, JULIE MAIN**; and this month's cover story subject, **GREG LAPPIN**, former **IHRSA Board Member and Partner, Vice President and General Manager** of the magnificent **Rochester Athletic Club** in Rochester, Minnesota. Folks, Joe Moore is working hard for all **IHRSA Members** and **Associate Members** everyday and doing a great job for all of us. I hope to see you all at the **IHRSA 2009 Opening Reception on March 16th** and at the **Trade Show** at our **Exhibit, Booth #2710**.

• **GREG LAPPIN** and **The Rochester Athletic Club** in Rochester, Minnesota, bring **The "Neighborhood"** to the neighborhood! Check out what they did with five indoor tennis courts that have made their family membership business rock solid! Be sure to read the entire cover story this month featuring the **RAC**, one of the world's top clubs and Greg Lappin, one of the top General Managers anywhere, as you will learn a lot,

including information on **General Management and Marketing!**

• Don't miss the **4th Annual Augie's Quest Bash** for the **CURE of ALS**, a/k/a **LOU GEHRIG'S Disease** on Wednesday evening, **March 18th** at the **IHRSA Convention**. Check out the **Clubs for the Cure Article on Page #26** and **Ad on Page #27**.

• **Congratulations** to **GALE LANDERS**, **Founder and CEO** of Chicago's great **Fitness Formula Clubs**, who is celebrating his 25th Club Anniversary! Truly a gentleman, Gale Landers is also a former **IHRSA Board Member** and is a great asset to our industry as his 9 Fitness Formula clubs in Chicago are on the leading edge of the market! Gale, thanks for sending me a copy of your club magazine, "Connections".

• **UFC...** Do you know what that acronym stands for? No? Well, it's the **Ultimate Fighting Championship**, and I want to thank the **Associated Press** for giving me one of the best laughs I've had for awhile when I read the headline of the press release, "**UFC to open line of gyms for regular folks.**" *Regular folks?*

The AP press release says: "We're going to force all these gyms to take it up another level." **UFC President, Dana White**, told the **Associated Press**

on Monday, "Just like we have in the fight business, and everyone's trying to compete with us now, same thing's going to happen in the fitness industry." So, I guess our already club-crowded industry is going to have to brace for a new onslaught of clubs going after *regular folks*. My only curiosity now is: Are they going to have referees in the **UFC Gyms** for these *regular folks*?

• Our friend, **RON POLISENO**, has left **CheckFree/Fiserv** a few months after the departure of another friend, **MATT MCKERNAN**. These are two great guys, and my bet is, wherever they land, they will continue to be successful. Ron is also the owner of **The Sports Connection** in Columbus, Ohio. Matt, a former **University of South Carolina football player** (linebacker) has struck out on his own. My hope is Ron and Matt will continue in a role somewhere in our industry because we need good folks like them.

• **Happy Birthday** to Mr. **RAY WILSON**, who turns **81** this month! And, best wishes for an excellent recovery from your recent shoulder surgery, Mr. Wilson!

• Welcome to the **Medical Fitness Association** as a new **CLUB INSIDER Advertiser!** Check out the illuminating interview with



Norm Cates

Dr. CARY WING, **MFA Executive Director** and the new **MFA Ad on Page #34**. **MFA Initiatives** include the new **MFA 2009 Standards and Guidelines**, the new **MFA Certification Program** and the new and **First Annual Medical Fitness Institute** that will take place **June 11-14th at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee**.

• **Congratulations** to **JEFF KLINGER** and **CHUCK RUNYON**, **Founders of Anytime Fitness**, because they have now reached the **1,000-club milestone** in their business, as **Anytime Fitness** now has 1,000 locations open! It's great to see hard driving industry leaders like Klinger and Runyon doing so well. And, **special congratulations** to Jeff Klinger... because he is able to
(See Norm's Notes Page 6)

Thank You!

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...Norm's Notes

continued from page 4

run his booming business and serve on the **IHRSA Board of Directors** at the same time. I know it takes a lot to live up to the obligations a new Board Member makes when anyone agrees to serve as an IHRSA Board Member, commitments that include spending the necessary time before meetings to prepare so that you can make intelligent decisions at the meetings and then to follow up. It's also important that all IHRSA Members know what a big commitment in time the Board actually does make for them, by the way, without compensation. So, I encourage all **IHRSA Member Club Owners** who go to IHRSA San Francisco next month to just say **THANKS to our IHRSA Board of Directors for their dedicated service.** If you're not going just look in CBI Magazine for their phone numbers and give them a call and say THANKS. It takes a lot of personal sacrifice to serve. So, I take my hat off to Jeff and his partner, Chuck, for their great success in balancing very busy lives!

•**ED WILLIAMS** and **JAY KELL**, the principals in the **Wellbridge Company** in Denver, are hot at commerce, and in one week, announced that they have sold **The Concord Athletic Club**

and **Spa** in San Antonio, Texas to **Spectrum Athletic Clubs, Inc.**, the El Segundo, California-based and 10th largest U.S. club group with 12 upscale locations in Southern California and 10 in San Antonio. And, they just announced the development of the new **Tabor Center Athletic Club**, a 40,000 square-foot multi-purpose club in Denver! Both former **IHRSA Board Members**, Williams and Kell are two of our industry's brightest shining lights over the past 30 years. See the story on **Page #45.**

•**PETE BROWN**, is the **Dean of Publishing** in our industry,, in my book as he has 33 years of publishing **Athletic Business Magazine** under his belt. He also publishes 3 other publications, including **Fitness Management Magazine.** Pete just announced that he's taken Fitness Management to an Online only production and distribution as of the February edition. Athletic Business acquired Fitness Management about 7 years ago. Fitness Management has produced the terrific **Nova 7 Awards** for years and I'd expect those honors to continue. I called Pete and he explained that the cost of printing and postage for Fitness Management was starting to outrun advertising revenues, so he decided to make the move to Online only. I wish Pete and **RONALE TUCKER RHODES**

and the rest of their great team all the best.

•**JAMES WEAVER**, the new **CEO at Gold's Gym International (GGI)** is already shaping things up at GGI. Last week, Weaver announced that the organizational changes at GGI would eliminate the job of **Chief Operating Officer, MIKE FEINMAN**, and that **Chief Financial Officer, RANDY SHULTZ**, is leaving GGI to work for a Philadelphia-based equity investment company. James Weaver and I communicated back and forth by email after the decisions, and it looks to me like he's re-working the company management staff chart just like he spoke of in his interview in **CLUB INSIDER** last month. Check out the James Weaver interview in our January, 2009 edition by going to www.clubinsideronline.com. **Stay Tuned!**

•**Congratulations to MARIO BRAVOMALO**, **Founder of Visual Fitness Planner** and **DARON "Rocket Man" Allen**, **CEO**, on reaching their **10th Year** of business and the **600-club level for Visual Fitness Planner** installations! Check out the great update interview with Daron starting on **Page #3**. Also, congratulations to **WARREN WEBB** and **SAM LANZA** on their *promotions* at VFP! Check out the **Article on Page #45.**

•**THOMAS PLUMMER** has launched a new website and blog that is honest and excellent. Check it out by going to www.thomasplummer.com. For example, on Thom's blog (1/21/09), he wrote, "**Signs it might be Time for you to Get Out and Get a Real Job!**" Then, his first sentence was, "*One of the negative parts about being a consultant is that the more experience you get, the easier it is to smell death.*" Thom then writes, "*Here are a few signs I've seen in the last year in clients who are near the end of their careers, whether they want to be or not. If you see yourself in here, remember that self-awareness is the first step toward changing a behavior that is killing you or your business.*"

Here are the bullet points from Thom's 1/21/09 blog, but you will have to go to www.thomasplummer.com to read his very honest truth to see if he's writing about you:

•You don't market

- Your lack of success is someone else's fault
- You go home at 5:00 p.m.
- You're training clients
- You own a club or a small chain, and you haven't sold a membership yourself in months
- You don't know your numbers
- You micro-manage.

Check out Thom's **National Fitness Business Alliance Ad** on **Page #25** and make it a must to attend one of Thomas Plummer's **NFBA** two-day seminars this year. If you sign up for the **Atlanta NFBA/Plummer Seminar November 18th and 19th, 2009**, I will see you there!

•Best wishes to **JOYCE CAMMILLERI** and to her sons **GUY, MARCUS** and **LEO**, as their Mom is the new owner of **World Gym International**. They are going to work with **MIKE URETZ** and **KARIN MICHAEL** to move forward with new company plans after the December 31st purchase from Planet Fitness. Check out the interview with Guy on **Page #44.**

•**BRUCE CARTER** is a 30+ year industry veteran who is the main man at **Optimal Designs Systems**, a South-Florida-based facility design and remodeling consulting company. Bruce is also a talented author and speaker. Bruce and I have teamed up to market his amazing "**Get Cyced**" **CD Program** that is an excellent motivational tool for those who wish to make a true, 100% lifestyle change (See **Bruce's Article and Photo on Page #48**). In 2001, I "made the break" to a new lifestyle and saved my own life by changing my lifestyle direction 180 degrees. I started with a 15-minute walk, and since then, I've walked over 7,500 miles! I lost 110 pounds and made daily activity my normal way of life since then. I'm not skinny, even now, and I know I never will be, but I am moving every day. I owe Bruce credit for his "Get Cyced" program helping me because, during my start-up weeks, I listened to it, and I can vouch for its *mind-changing power*. "Get Cyced" is a terrific product for personal trainers to use to help your clients "make-the-break" to regular physical activity and proper nutrition. I would urge you to urge them to buy it for the low **\$20 price** we're offering and re-launching it at. Moreover, for club owners who operate **Pro Shops**, the "Get

Cyced" Program is something that we believe will sell very well to your members. We're bringing it back at only **\$20 per copy** for a short period, and that includes the CD and the workbook. So, order "Get Cyced" today by contacting Bruce at **Bruce@optimaldsi.com**.

•When you meet **IHRSA's PETE BUCELLA** at **IHRSA San Francisco** ask him to tell you about all that is going on with **IHRSA's Public Policy Council (PPC)**. You should get a real feel for the importance of the **IHRSA** Washington, D.C. efforts because the **PPC** needs your support.

•**DAVID** to slay **GOLIATH? LA Fitness, LLC., LA Fitness International, LLC., and LA Fitness, Inc.** has been sued in a six-count lawsuit by one of its competitors in Feasterville, Pennsylvania. The Plaintiff, **FO Club d/b/a B & R Full Health Club** filed the lawsuit in the **Court of Common Pleas of Bucks County, Doylestown, PA on December 6, 2008**. The six counts are: **I - Injunctive Relief; II - Intentional Interference with prospective business relationships; III - Defamation; IV - Commercial disparagement; V - Unfair competition and VI - Violation of Lanham Act.** The plaintiff seeks \$50,000 plus punitive damages on several of the counts. Boiling a lot of pages down, the complaint was because **LA Fitness allegedly** made false and defamatory statements about the Plaintiff's health club, including representing in its **LA Fitness** location that **B & R Full Health Club** had declared bankruptcy or was going to file for bankruptcy and that **B & R** otherwise had severe financial difficulties that would prevent them from honoring its membership offers. **Judge CEPARULO** will hear the case at Trial, and Count **I - Injunctive Relief** has been already been entered. **STAY TUNED! And, thanks to my tipster!** And, if you would like a copy of the PDF with the entire complaint and court's record of responses, send me an email at **Norm@clubinsideronline.com**

•Here's a good idea from the **DAC Member E-Newsletter** of the **Downtown Athletic Club** in Miami, Florida. "**10 Trainers in 60 Minutes** - If you know you want to train, but do not know enough about our trainers so you (See *Norm's Notes Page 8*)

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PUBLISHER AND EDITOR - Norm Cates, Jr.
PRESIDENT - Justin Cates

PRINTING AND MAILING SERVICES - Walton Press
www.waltonpress.com

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Marietta, GA 30068
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www.clubinsideronline.com

Thrive vs Survive! Make It Happen!!!

By: Ray Gordon

Make it happen!!! Instead of spending your time thinking about how bad things are, think about how to capitalize on every opportunity. Then, spend your time thinking about how good it could be.

Now is the time for all salespeople to be aggressively active in the securing of memberships, referrals and appointments. Every business is operating their membership sales team as lean as possible to achieve a balanced bottom line. An important notation here is that, for this to succeed, everyone on the sales team must be extremely focused and proactive in creating new leads and qualified prospects.

Your club does not have room for a subpar performer on a lean team. It is not enough to just be a good "closer" with the uncertainty in the market. Great work ethics and following a planned system to generate qualified prospects must be

expected of your sales team. If they don't want to do the work that is necessary to make your club thrive, then you should consider replacing them with membership staff willing to put forth the effort. It has been said that good people are found. There is currently a large inventory of quality, hard-working men and women seeking employment.

There is no position on today's membership team for someone to hang around and wait for guests to come in. It is imperative that the majority of the membership staff's time is used productively. The priority goal must be an increase in net membership revenue.

Membership staff must take advantage of every opportunity to contact:

A. Members - Have a purpose for the call not just to say Hi).

B. Guests - Make your thank you calls and e-mail them pertinent health and medical studies on the

benefits of exercise (personalized to information previously gathered on the guest). The objective is to create a higher level of belief in the benefits of joining your club. If all you're doing is contacting them because of the "Deal of the Day," you are missing valuable opportunities.

C. Community Outreach - Now is the time to meet and establish a business relationship with all your business neighbors. Be creative, and remember they are struggling, also. Beyond consistent professional effort, the minimums required for effective community outreach are simple:

1st - A unique marketing campaign and promotional flyer.

2nd - 10% of their working schedule on community outreach.

3rd - Professionally impressing and educating the consumer with phone work, e-mails and personalized letters.

Every part of your club, and especially your sales team, must be focused on membership growth. My experience in more than 1,000 clubs has shown that over 80% of the sales people in our industry do not use their scheduled work time as efficiently as they could. Selling memberships, earning referrals and generating quality leads must be priority # 1 in their job description. Their extra focus on priority number one will relate directly to the success and profitability of your club. Communicate with them, and make sure they are not just told what to do but understand why it is so important. It reminds me of a great statement from Les Brown:

"You don't have to be great to get started, but you have to get started to be great."

There are multitudes of people seeking help with their overweight and non-exercising problems that will join your club.



Ray Gordon

But, only when they are convinced that your club, and your club alone, will successfully provide them with the solutions that they seek. They don't necessarily like the idea of joining a health club and probably have many perceived misconceptions about our industry because of previous experience in gyms. They need to understand and believe that you are the answer for them to

(See Ray Gordon Page 36)

Club Owners and General Managers

Current economic conditions and excessive competition have many independent health clubs performing below expectations. Upscale quality clubs with monthly dues ranging from \$40 - \$70 seem to be struggling the most. I have been very successful in achieving membership sales goals in these types of clubs for over 30 years. More importantly, during the last 6 months, even with a toughening economy as membership sales have fallen off sharply. Sales Makers will provide proven solutions you can apply immediately to get results. This requires new creative campaigns and lead generating programs along with some positive training, and a staff willing to work efficiently to make more money. Let Sales Makers help your club achieve your clubs necessary membership sales goals in 2009.

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Ray Gordon
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...Norm's Notes

continued from page 6

may decide who would be best for you, please join us on Tuesday, February 10 from 6 - 7 PM for "10 Trainers in 60 Minutes." Each Trainer will be focusing on a body part and spending a few minutes telling you about himself. No fee and no reservations. Just show up, work out and meet our trainers." The DAC in Miami seems to be rolling along as their newsletter says they had "150 new faces" (to join) in January.

•I could not agree more with the headline from a recent news bulletin from Joe Moore at IHRSA that reads, "The Key to a Healthy Lifestyle Is In the Mind." This is exactly what "Get Cycled" (reported in the note just

before this one) is all about. The report says:

The main factors influencing the amount of physical exercise people carry out are their self-perceived ability and the extent of their desire to exercise. A study of 5167 Canadians, reported in the open access journal BMC Public Health, has shown that psychological concerns are the most important barriers to an active lifestyle.

Sai Yi Pan, from the Public Health Agency of Canada, led a team of researchers who carried out a study which examined data from a nationwide series of telephone interviews. She said, "Our findings highlight the need for health promotion programs to enhance people's confidence and motivation, as well as providing education on

the health benefits of physical activity."

One interview question asked participants how confident they were that they could regularly do a total of 30 minutes of moderate physical activity (PA) three or four times a week and a total of 60 minutes of light PA each day. This 'self-efficacy' score was consistently found to be related to higher PA across gender, age group, education level and family income level. According to the authors, "Confidence in one's personal ability to carry out exercise plays a central role in the direction, intensity and persistence of health-behavior change. People who have higher PA self-efficacy will perceive fewer barriers to PA, or be less influenced by them, and will be more likely to enjoy PA."

Likewise, participants were asked to what extent they intended to be physically active over the next six months. This 'intention score' was another important independent corollary of physical activity.

The strong effects of self-efficacy and intention on PA suggest that interventions designed to increase PA should target these factors. The authors conclude that, "Future research is needed to identify how those influences can be optimally incorporated into interventions that will increase people's belief in their ability and motivation/intention to be physically active."

•Last month, we published a Press Release from IHRSA about the new voluntary certification process being developed and the need for IHRSA Members

to participate from the start in the development process. With respect to that, **ART CURTIS, IHRSA Board Member and Chairman of the IHRSA Standards Committee**, will be hosting a session at **IHRSA** on **March 18** at 2:00 p.m. for members to discuss this very important idea. Joe Moore said, "The voluntary certification process must be developed with input from IHRSA members. A voluntary certification process could be a great opportunity for many IHRSA members," says Moore, "but only if the standards make sense for the industry. It is crucial for all interested IHRSA members to get involved, provide feedback and share expertise."

•Forbes Magazine published an article last month talking about store chains that will be in trouble in 2009. The piece is linked to a list of 10 things consumers will continue to purchase in 2009 and high on the list is health club memberships. The article says, "Just because you've been let go doesn't mean you have to let your appearance go. That's the sentiment many Americans are taking on this year, as total gym memberships are estimated to increase by 4% in 2009," according to St. Louis-based market research firm **Stifel Nicolaus**. Thanks to **MIKE GRONDAHL, CEO of Planet Fitness**, and **CHRIS RUSSO of Susan K. Bailey Advertising** (See the **SKB Ad on Page #29**) for sending this.

•This from an **IHRSA Bulletin**:
 Edwin Williams was lifting weights at Sante Fitness

& Wellness at the Chase Park Plaza. "For me, it's prevention," says Williams, 28, an engineering student at the University of Missouri - St. Louis. "A fitness club membership is cheaper than medical bills later." Local fitness centers are reporting that, while membership is somewhat stagnant -- an oddity for the start of a new year-- it is not declining. In some cases, it continues to grow. Kara Thompson at the International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association, a global trade association that tracks statistics, says that the fitness industry historically has fared well during tough economic times. "I think people find value in exercising," Thompson says, noting that many Americans see it as an investment in their health, rather than a luxury.

•I hope to see you all in San Francisco! If hotel costs are an issue for you, let me tell you about **The Mosser Hotel**, a quaint little place across the street from the **Moscone Center** and the **Marriott San Francisco**. This hotel was first introduced to me years ago by our friend, **JEFFREY RANDALL, of JLR Associates** (See Jeff's **JLR Associates Ad on Page #35**). You will find The Mosser to be quite comfortable, extremely convenient and very affordable, when compared to the Marriott and other hotels near the Moscone Center. So, check out the **The Mosser Hotel Ad Below** and realize that rooms are still available at The Mosser at about 1/3 of the rates of the others hotels in the area.

(See Norm's Notes Page 33)

Norm Cates' CLUB INSIDER
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...Greg Lappin

continued from page 3

Minnesota Better Business Bureau Integrity Award and was either the winner or a finalist for seven NOVA 7 Awards presented by Fitness Management Magazine.

Greg Lappin was the IHRSA 2006 Dale Dibble Distinguished Service Award winner and was the first recipient of the United States Professional Tennis Association General Manager of the Year Award. Greg also authored a book that has helped many improve their tennis doubles game, Tennis Doubles-Winning Strategies for all Levels, a national bestseller.

An Interview With Greg Lappin

CLUB INSIDER (C.I.) - Greg please tell us about yourself: your age, family, where you went to school, what you studied and if you were involved in sports or other special activities as a youth.

Greg Lappin (GL) - I am 58 years old. I have been married to my wife, Dona, for 30 years. Dona is one of the wisest and most compassionate persons I know. I am fortunate to be married to her. We have 4 children; Michelle and Melissa, who work in Minneapolis; and Jennifer and Gregory, who are in college. I received my Bachelor's Degree in School and Community Health Education from the University of Minnesota. I played varsity tennis while there.

C.I. - When and how did you first become involved in the health/fitness club industry?

GL - As a youth, my first love was baseball. When on the ninth grade school team and our team was up to bat, I took some grass and filled the finger holes in the

gloves of some of my teammates. When we went back onto the field, obviously, they could not use their gloves. I learned two things quickly; (1) the coach did not find this humorous and (2) a person (the coach) can scream at you while spitting, turning very red, having all the veins on his face bulge out and kick you off the team all at the same time. The next year, I went out for the tennis team. This changed my life dramatically because I went on to play tennis in college, was able to travel the world for a few years through tennis, met my wife on those travels and every job since then started with that tennis experience. My first was as a tennis professional in Hawaii. I had several tennis teaching positions until I was in my early thirties. I realized your body could not hold up forever, so it was get off the court or change careers. After 2 ½ years of mortgaging everything I had and risking everything, I was able to put together investors and developed the Flagship Athletic Club in Eden Prairie, Minnesota. It was one of the first four-season, multipurpose athletic clubs in the nation --a country club for non-golfers. After 8 years there, some investors in Rochester, Minnesota had the capital and vision to build a club in Rochester. They asked if I would be the point person for the project and stay on as the General Manager. I jumped at the opportunity to develop another club and improve upon what we had done at Flagship. The RAC was unique in many ways, opening in 1993. We were one of the first clubs to build a very open design, to have family locker rooms, to have included a water park and committed space to youth --trying to be a real family club and to have speed

and agility training programs for young athletes.

C.I. - What is your official title? Who are the other founding partners of the Rochester Athletic Club, and what are their roles as partners?

GL - I have a minority ownership interest. Jack Remick, and his son Matt, hold the majority of the club ownership. I am the General Manager and Vice President. Jack does get involved with the day-to-day operations. We involve him in the "essentials but not the incidentals." Matt is actively involved in club operations and also is our IT guru.

C.I. - Tell me more about Mr. Jack Remick.

GL - He was originally an IBM Engineer here in Rochester, and that's why he came here. He was one of the original founding partners of a company called Fastenal, which is a company that sells industrial and construction supplies. The main inventory is fasteners such screws, nuts and bolts. 30 years later, they sell more nuts, bolts and screws than anybody in the entire U.S., and they are now well over a billion dollar business with over 1,000 stores. A financial analyst said that if you had invested in Fastenal 30 years ago, your return would have been greater than Coca Cola or Microsoft. It's an unbelievably phenomenal American business success story, and the original founders have given huge amounts back to the community. Jack is the only Fastenal founder here in Rochester, and he's very philanthropic to our community. I could spend a whole hour talking about the Remick's giving to this community.

C.I. - How many square feet is RAC? I noticed on your website (www.rochesterathleticclub.com), the Rochester Athletic Club is on 35 acres. Given the amenities and sheer size, it is clear RAC is a mega club. How



The "Neighborhood" at the RAC

was financing arranged for such a project, and what was the original total cost of land and facilities when it opened in 1993?

GL - The RAC is 260,000 square feet under roof, and the original financing was about 50% equity and 50% bank loan. The original total cost, the land, construction, F&E, pre-opening, etc. was just over \$12,000,000. Jack Remick arranged the financing.

C.I. - Tell us about The Neighborhood.

GL - In a remodel three years ago, we took 35,000 square feet and turned it into a family entertainment center. We wanted to do more to attract the larger and untapped share of the market, have more activities for the 6-13 year olds, provide activities that families could do together and offer sport activities, such as golf and batting cages. It has proven to have been a good addition.

C.I. - Please share your company Mission Statement or Vision.

GL - I'll send you our Rochester Athletic Club Mission and Vision Statement (See sidebar below).

C.I. - Greg, I'd like to interview a couple of your key RAC team members. Please select two and give us some background on each.

GL - Norm, you should speak

with Matt Remick, President of RAC and the son of Founder, Jack Remick, and Jane Hein, our Director of Group Exercise. Also, I'd love for you to contact my close friend in the industry for over 20 years, Dan Zeman. **Publisher's Note:** The interviews begin on **Page #18**.

When we started 16 years ago, Matt Remick was still in college Jack Remick was the majority owner. His son Matt came onboard about seven years ago. It's been a great thing to me that the Remick family is a family of such strong character. When the Father, Jack Remick, was bringing his son into the business, he said to me, "Greg, the first thing I want you to know is your ownership and GM positions are not in jeopardy." He's a man of his word, so Matt came on as the Assistant General Manager. And really, Matt is also a computer whiz. He's our IT guy. Jack was always really kind of a hands-off owner, and he wanted to be an even more hands-off owner. So, Matt really now represents the majority owner family as the President of the company.

Jane is our Group Exercise Director of Pilates. She came from a physical therapy background as she was formerly a physical therapist at the Mayo (See *Greg Lappin Page 12*)



RAC Fitness Floor

Rochester Athletic Club Vision, Mission and Values

Vision: That all residents of Rochester and the surrounding area are active members.

Mission: To create member enthusiasm by providing service that exceeds their expectations.

- Values:**
1. Do nothing that is imprudent or unethical.
 2. Staff will treat each other in a courteous and respectful manner.
 3. We will maintain a superior level of cleanliness.
 4. We will be an industry leader in innovative programming and creative management processes.
 5. Operate the Club in a profitable manner to give a fair return to the investors and have resources available to maintain the mission and values.
 6. Participate as a good corporate citizen in the community.

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...Greg Lappin

continued from page 10

Clinic. She's really intelligent. I think Jane is one of the sharpest people in the industry in group exercise, especially in Pilates, where she is one of the top five people in the country. With all of her training, and with her clinical background, she is a very bright lady.

Dan Zeman is fascinating. When I started the Flagship Athletic Club, Dan was my Fitness Director in 1985. He's stayed in the fitness industry and always goes to the IHRSA Shows. He's kind of the fitness guru to the stars. He works with the Minnesota Timber Wolves and the Vikings. He really helped Greg Lamond a lot when he got shot and then couldn't figure out why he couldn't ride well after that. In fact, Zeman is now working at the Mayo Clinic to help them develop a Mayo Clinic program that is a lot like the bodybugg system. (See **Apex Fitness's bodybugg Ad** on our **Outside Back Page**). He's a sharp fitness expert, and he knows everything I've done over the past 25 years.

C.I. - Converting "memberships" to "total members," how many "total members" does RAC have and serve?

GL - We have over 4,200 memberships and 11,000 members.

C.I. - Depending upon your policy, please disclose the 2008 Annual Revenues RAC will report for 2008.

GL - We are around \$9,000,000 in annual revenues.

C.I. - Tell us about your community and market. Please share the value of RAC to your community and how you may

reach out via service efforts to your neighbors. How have your outreach efforts helped the RAC operations overall?

GL - The Rochester, Minnesota-area population is about 100,000. We're 80 miles south of the Twin Cities, Minneapolis/St. Paul. It really is an island community. So, to have a very cold climate in an island community in the middle of 80 miles of corn fields, with a very affluent, highly-educated community of people who've come in from New York and Boston... it's kind of a culture shock for them. Some of our members often say, 'The RAC makes life bearable!' To have a club that really is a social center, a community center and an athletic club... it becomes a big part of people's lives. We may have anywhere between 2,000 to 3,000 visits per day.

It really is a company town and the Mayo Clinic has over 25,000 employees here. One out of every four people in town work for the Mayo Clinic with the Headquarters right here in Rochester, Minnesota. Plus, we also have about 4,000 IBM employees here in Rochester. To put it in perspective, we have 350 employees here at the club, and we're probably in the top five largest employers in Rochester, not counting the city government. Coming from the Twin Cities, it was fascinating to me to see the economic climate where two businesses dominate a town like the Mayo Clinic and IBM do Rochester. That was good news and bad news. It was good news because Rochester has a very white collar and affluent population. It was bad news for us a year and a half ago when Mayo got a 20 million dollar gift from a patient to build a new fitness center. So, they used the

20 million dollar gift to build an employee fitness center. You can't fault them. You couldn't expect them to turn that down. So, Mayo built a 100,000 square-foot, state-of-the-art wellness center. All of their employees and their spouses have access for only \$15 a month! That was the first time we really had stiff competition here. Obviously, if you're a doctor, and you live and work downtown, you may as well go work out there. It's a first-class facility. With 20 million free dollars, you can build a lot. It is a brand new, free-standing facility because, anytime some property becomes available in downtown, the Mayo Clinic always scoops it up! With that kind of money, you can do things that a commercial facility cannot afford. For example, the audio/visual systems look like they cost more than somebody's home!

C.I. - So Greg, let's talk about how hard the new Mayo Clinic Fitness Center hit the RAC?

GL - Before the new Mayo Fitness Center opened, we had 4,600 memberships. We have 4,200 memberships now, so Mayo dinged us for about 400 memberships.

C.I. - Well, to me that's not too bad. I was going to guess 600 or 700 might be the number.

GL - Most of the friends I am in touch with in the industry thought that we'd lose a minimum of 750 memberships. But, the saving grace to us is that we have such a large club with three racquet sports; tennis, racquetball and squash, plus, we have 4 full-size gymnasiums. We fill up 2 or 3 basketball courts every morning and at lunch with pick-up games of basketball. So, to have basketball, three racquet sports, an outdoor water park and this huge family entertainment center of 35,000 square feet, we call "The Neighborhood", if you're a Mayo Clinic employee and you have children, or you are a basketball, tennis, racquetball or squash player, you're not going to quit the RAC. We already had "The Neighborhood" under construction when they announced the Mayo Clinic Fitness Center, so I think the strong family-oriented club we have kind of softened the impact.

C.I. - How's business so far this year, and what might you be doing differently to help your club continue to be successful? Since the new Mayo competition



RAC Basketball Gyms

arrived and during this current economic downturn, have you done anything new as far as prices? **GL** - The Mayo Clinic Fitness Center did have the impact on us I mentioned earlier, and we knew it would. I had predicted to the owners that we would lose between 250 to 400 members to the new Mayo facility, and we lost 400. But, the economy hasn't hurt us that badly. We've lost about 100 members to the economy. We're kind of an isolated, more affluent community here, and the Mayo Clinic and IBM are strong/stable employers. As far as what we're doing that is different because of the economy, there is one thing. We changed our administrative fee format. For 15 years, we've always had month-to-month dues and a processing fee ranging from \$150 to \$225. For the first time ever, with the Mayo Clinic arriving and a little bit because of the economy, we're providing a one-year membership option with a \$25 administration fee and a 12-month membership contract. In our town, they don't object to the dues very much, but they really do think about the processing/enrollment fee. Some of our prospective members thought our processing/enrollment fee was a bit high. People seem to like this new option and don't seem to mind enrolling for one year. They love to save \$200 on the family enrollment fee. We've been doing that for a month and a half, and that has been very successful for us.

As far as cost control management, our philosophy is not to lay anybody off. I don't want to do that, so we're looking at every line item and cutting hours here and there by having our *Managers on Duty* work the desk a little bit. We are looking

at all of our programs and are continuing to improve them. We're very sincere about trying to give good service to our members. My staff knows that when you check in, they are supposed to look you in the eyes and say your name, and my staff knows that you should say goodbye to everyone. Something as simple as that makes the member feel special. So, we're focusing on the bottom line, line item by line item, we're focusing on continually improving programs, and we're focusing on continually improving customer service.

Greg Lappin On General Management

C.I. - Greg, please share your philosophy and thoughts on General Management.

GL - We were a finalist this year for the Better Business Bureau "Integrity Award." Unfortunately, any business with over 100 employees can compete, and we were second to Best Buy!

C.I. - That's great, Greg! You know... if you go to the Better Business Bureau website, the first thing you will see on there is their name and then the slogan in big letters, "Start With TRUST." So, this is a high honor for The Rochester Athletic Club.

GL - You've often said and written the word **TRUST** about clubs before. That's one thing we focus on here. The phrase I use with my staff is, **'TRUST is the Foundation for all relationships.'** Whether it is personal between one's wife and children or between us and our members and staff, **TRUST** is the key. So, you may as well kiss anything goodbye if you're trying to develop good programming (See **Greg Lappin Page 14**)



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...Greg Lappin

continued from page 12

or good customer service and it doesn't start with **TRUST**. As far as developing staff, I've always believed that you cannot motivate employees; I think it's impossible. I believe my job as a manager is to create a motivating environment. That's totally different from motivating people. I try to hire people who are self-motivated, have good values and create an environment where they will thrive. That's what a leader is supposed to do.

There are different ways you create a motivating environment. *One is you create an atmosphere of trust.* Without that, you haven't got a motivating environment and everything else just goes right down the tubes. I take my role as General Manager very seriously. I really believe you have to have good processes and systems. One phrase I use is, 'You have to continually peel back the layers of the onion skin to get to the irreducible part.' That's why our tennis teaching system works. It is because I will ask someone what is the essence of tennis. So Norm, if all you could do was teach one concept and no others, what would you teach somebody? It makes you really understand what the most important concept in tennis is. I call it the 'Contact Point.' I am trying to give you the worst contact point possible, and you're trying to get the best contact point possible. That's why you have certain footwork so you can get to the ball more quickly to have a better contact point. It all builds from there. So, you have to look at the irreducible part, break everything down and build it back up. We do that in our tennis teaching systems.

And, I do that for

leadership and management, as well. I have a system that says, 'What is leadership, and what is management? As an RAC Director, what is your primary accountability?' This reminds me of our work on the IHRSA Search Committee to replace John McCarthy. It was fascinating because we had hundreds of resumes and interviewed several candidates. We interviewed former Congressmen, military colonels and high powered executives from different businesses. Since I was the Chair, I asked the first question, and it was, 'Would you please define leadership for us?' It was interesting how most of them beat around the bush and almost stuttered and stammered and said, 'It's kinda like... it's kinda like.' They never had a clear definition. I thought that was curious. To me, it is critical to have a very clear definition of leadership. I do that with everything we do. I have very clear programs for training. For example, in initial training, to train processes, my employees go through what I call the **FACT** Program. **FACT** is an acronym that means:

F is for **Focus**, which is the big picture vision and value.

A is for **Accountability**. What are you Accountable for?

C is for **Commitment**. What does that mean? We define and discuss commitment. This is what we expect from an employee. But, it's a two-way street. What does the employee expect from the club?

T is for **Tracking**. How do we keep track of things? Chain of command, problem resolution, even something simple like how you get your first check...

So, we really train employees on processes. It really boils down to outstanding service. I am not going to have a new employee come here and have that person's background define my level of hospitality. So, I developed an SOS Program in two parts. In our SOS Program, we have videos, workbooks, progressive learning and meeting with your Director. We really define our definition of service, go over mission and make it very clear what we mean about hospitality. From the first hour on the job, our employees go through the SOS Program. It tells the new person right away that we are serious about hospitality. Part II of our **SOS Program** is my own phrase, and it is about ownership, 'If it is **Said** to you, it is **Owned** by you, and it is **Solved** by you.'

If you're accountable, we can delegate to you. I have a thorough training program for my management team called, '**LEAD**', and it means **Leadership Ensures Associate Development**. I have chapters covering what leaders must understand, and what they are held accountable for. It is really critical to me to define everything clearly and have processes and systems for everything. It shortcuts learning processes and makes us more efficient. It adds fun to it and makes it an enjoyable place to learn because there are fewer problems, more understanding and more accountability. We seek to choose good people who enjoy that type of work climate so they will thrive here.

We have 350 employees in the Summer and 320 in the Winter. 75 to 80 are full-time employees, and we teach them that we all have the priorities that govern our lives and our work, and those are our values. We make value decisions every day. We value our staff. We value our members. I would never claim we are perfect, but I do claim we are sincere about treating people in a respectful and courteous fashion whether they are members or staff.

Greg Lappin's Approach to Marketing... World Class Results With Creativity and Hard Work

Greg Lappin shared his approach to marketing saying, 'As far as marketing, I've never been a huge fan of advertising for clubs. That's because I think we are a lifestyle change business. I don't think seeing an ad will



RAC Indoor Track

force someone to change their lifestyle. I've always believed in promotions and publicity. The one thing we're doing right now, and we just started this year's campaign, is our second annual Biggest Loser Campaign. We did one last year and were fortunate that an NBC TV affiliate was in Rochester. Last year, we had 436 spots on television for the contest! They think that 96% of the people in Rochester saw it. When we did the contest last year, we let the public pick the winner, and we had almost 7,000 email hits at the TV station. We chose 10 people for the Biggest Loser Contest, and they got 12 weeks at the club with a personal trainer. The branding, the image and the huge amount of publicity we get at the RAC from this effort drives memberships.

We're doing the contest again this year, but this time, it will be in a team format. We will have four people to a team. It could be four sisters or four co-workers; they will form their own teams. We hope to get hundreds of people to register. In this format, participants will not receive free memberships. We will, however, provide lifestyle coaches for them, free educational seminars in the club and throughout the community and assist in their team program planning. The Captain of a team may call in if they are not doing well, and we can tell them what to do to improve their results. Then, of course, what do they have to do? They have to come into the club to be weighed.

I believe I have to get a body into the door to really sell them a membership. The Contest will end this Spring, and in late May, we are going to have the awards party at our Water Park so people will get to see that, too.

Another beautiful aspect is we are knocking on the doors of all of the businesses in town giving them the information. It has been enthusiastically received. I go to a business and say to them, 'Norm, I want to tell you about our Biggest Loser Contest that we're doing with KTTC TV (which everyone knows in our community). Here's the format. Oh, by the way, Norm, here are our membership rates and our club information. Here's how, if you're not a member, you can do a trial membership during the 12-week contest. If you have four on your team, I will even give your team our group rate for our weight management personal training program to help you all.'

I use this for publicity, branding, promotion, and it also gives me an entree so it's not just a cold call to somebody. I'm going there to tell them about a contest, and now, I can sell a membership at the same time. So, this is the kind of thing I like to do to sell memberships. It is more promotion than it is raw advertising. Every major employer has agreed to participate and send it out to all of their employees. The county government is also going to be involved. Local schools have agreed to be in a contest where teachers take on the students. For example, if the students have the highest percentage of weight loss, the teachers will have to wash their cars! And, it's already set up that on the day of the car washes, KTTC TV will be there. They will film it, and it will be on the Six O'clock news. So, when we tie all this together, businesses are promoting the RAC to their employees, student government leaders in high schools are taking this to their students, plugging the RAC and KTTC is doing

(See Greg Lappin Page 16)



RAC Outdoor Playground



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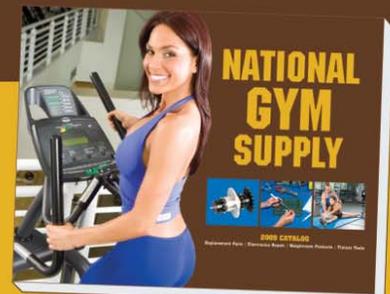
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...Greg Lappin

continued from page 14

\$30,000 of promotional spots! Virtually everyone in my city will know about this promotion and the RAC. I receive the exposure, increase my branding and image and create traffic through the club... all for a very little capital outlay. This is the kind of thing I like to do.

C.I. - Well Greg, that's a home run! And, you've just laid out a blueprint for the smart club owner/operators to create their own contests in their communities. It will be interesting to hear from those who read this and study every word you've said and then created their own contests. I've said for a long time that community outreach is a key to success in this business, and you've taken that principal concept to an outstanding level!

C.I. - Greg, please tell us a bit about your renowned tennis program?

GL - I'm proud of our tennis program and the caliber of players we have been creating. Here we are in Rochester, Minnesota, in the middle of nowhere, and we've already had a World Junior Champion, Ingrid Neel, who won the 10 and Under World Championship last Summer in Paris. We also have several National Champions. Plus, we've had 27 State Champions come from our program. I'm real proud of our Junior Tennis Program. When we built, "The Neighborhood," a 35,000 square-foot family entertainment center, we took out a bank of five indoor tennis courts three years ago, but we built a new six-court addition to the club. The phrase I shared with my Managers was, "We

have to innovate or evaporate.' Our tennis program is very successful because we hire good quality human beings who are good teachers, and we have well thought-out teaching systems with a Mission Statement that provides very clear progressions. Our teaching methods work, whether it's for adults or younger players. We've been open 15 years, and we've sent 23 adult teams to the National U.S. League Championships. It's high quality people implementing an excellent system that is producing results. Tennis is still something I enjoy, and I'm back at it once a week now after a couple of years off.

C.I. - Greg, I understand you also authored a book on tennis doubles. Tell us about that, please.
GL - Yes I did. When I was a teaching pro, one of my students came up to me and said, 'We like the doubles training drills you use with us. You should write a book.' She persisted and convinced me to do it. It actually ended up being a national bestseller. When I presented at the USTA International Tennis Teacher's Conference, Ron Woods, who directed tennis education for the USTA introduced me by saying, 'Greg has written the finest book in the history of the game on doubles.' It was a nice compliment, and the book was fun to do.

C.I. Again, for tennis player's the name of Greg's book is, Tennis Doubles-Winning Strategies for all Levels.

C.I. - Let's talk about the RAC's outreach efforts in your community with respect to your charity and other efforts.

GL - We make a very sincere attempt to really live our values

(See **Value #6** on the **Page #10 Sidebar**). **Participate as a good corporate citizen in the community.** I joke and say my employees and managers can call me bald and ugly, but I don't think anybody can accuse me of not being sincere about trying to live up to our values. So, one of them is to be a good corporate citizen. I get a minimum of one request a day for donations. We try to honor them all; anywhere from a daily guest pass to a one-year membership, up to cash. Some of our favorite charities are Salvation Army and the local food shelf. We support them as well as other charities in our effort to be good corporate citizens.

When we built this club 16 years ago, we bought the farm nearest to town. We have a couple hundred acres in total. As I mentioned before, the Remick Family, the majority owners, are very philanthropic, and they are a strong Catholic family of great character. Last year, they donated 21 acres near the club to be a new Catholic High School. Jack Remick also donated 120 acres behind the club and millions of dollars to fund the building of a 14,000 square-foot "green" building for a wetland educational center. Part of it is creating a 13-acre lake, and there will be a boardwalk through the wetlands. In the winter, we will have cross country ski trails, and all of this will be totally donated to the community.

C.I. - Greg, I know you're a loyal IHRSA Member, a former Board Member and a winner of the very special IHRSA Dale Dibble Distinguished Service Award. Please tell us what IHRSA Membership means to you personally and to your club operation. Also, please share your thoughts about being the 2007 IHRSA Dale Dibble Distinguished Service Award winner (See **Photo on Page #3**).
GL - IHRSA means a lot to me personally because it goes back to the mid 1980's when I was a tennis teaching pro and my knees were getting more and more sore. It was inevitable... I was forced to get off the court. I wouldn't be able to sustain a full-time teaching schedule. So, it was either change my career or go into management. A tennis pro has to garner a lot of respect to get into the management side of the business, and there were not many opportunities. Surely by the grace of God, I took two and a half



RAC Outdoor Pool

years and mortgaged every penny I had and ended up developing the Flagship Athletic Club which opened in 1985 in Minneapolis/St. Paul. When it opened, it was a really nice club and was one of the first true four-season, high quality athletic clubs. It was one of the first clubs to have a higher level of finishes and to treat tennis players as first-class citizens as well as treating fitness members that way. How this relates to IHRSA is, back in the mid 80's, it was what you didn't know that hurt you the most. I was a tennis pro. I didn't know. I didn't know anything about club development and management! So back then, IHRSA (then called IRSA) provided me with the chance to go to the convention, share ideas and listen to people that really could help me make that transition from a tennis pro to a club manager and developer.

I'm very grateful for the people I got to meet and for the conventions of substance that IHRSA puts on. I am grateful to IHRSA going back 25 years. Over all of these years, IHRSA has really been helpful to me personally because it allowed me to become educated more quickly on the athletic club business. Since then, I always come away with nuggets of ideas to go back and use at our club. The annual IHRSA Convention is inspirational and motivational, but it also provides concrete information. I go to those conventions and always come back and try to apply things at my club. I also find CBI Magazine very worthwhile, and I always take ideas from it. Then, serving on the Board from 2002 to 2006, I truly enjoyed the friendships that I made with the IHRSA Board Members. They really are a high quality group of people. We still

share ideas with other clubs, too. In fact, one of Rob Goldman's staff was here a week ago, and we shared some ideas on working with the youth. It's great to have people visit our club, or I visit their club, and freely share ideas. To have that connectedness with other people in the industry you have respect for and share ideas with is such a great thing. IHRSA makes that possible, and I'm grateful for that, as well.

C.I. - Greg, let's move on to your feelings about being named IHRSA's DALE DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award winner for 2006.

GL - Norm, it was a huge and humbling honor! It was humbling because I had gone to those early IHRSA Conventions and had gotten to know Dale. I can't say I was a close friend of his like you are Norm, but when I would hear him speak, it was clear that Dale was a truly kind man and a sharing man. In that respect, I was humbled, because I was given an award named after a person who is truly a very good, decent human being. I volunteered for the United States Tennis Association, and I started a similar award for the Northern USTA Section named after Frank Voigt, the person who started teaching pros in Minnesota. Frank was a mentor to so many people in Minneapolis, like Dale was for us during his years at IHRSA. Dale is a great guy, and I'm glad you told me he's doing well in Naples, Florida. Dale is not just a great individual, but he was also a great professional. He was one of the first guys to look at income in terms of per square foot revenue and truly looked at our industry in a businesslike fashion. So, knowing what a decent person he is, (See **Greg Lappin Page 18**)



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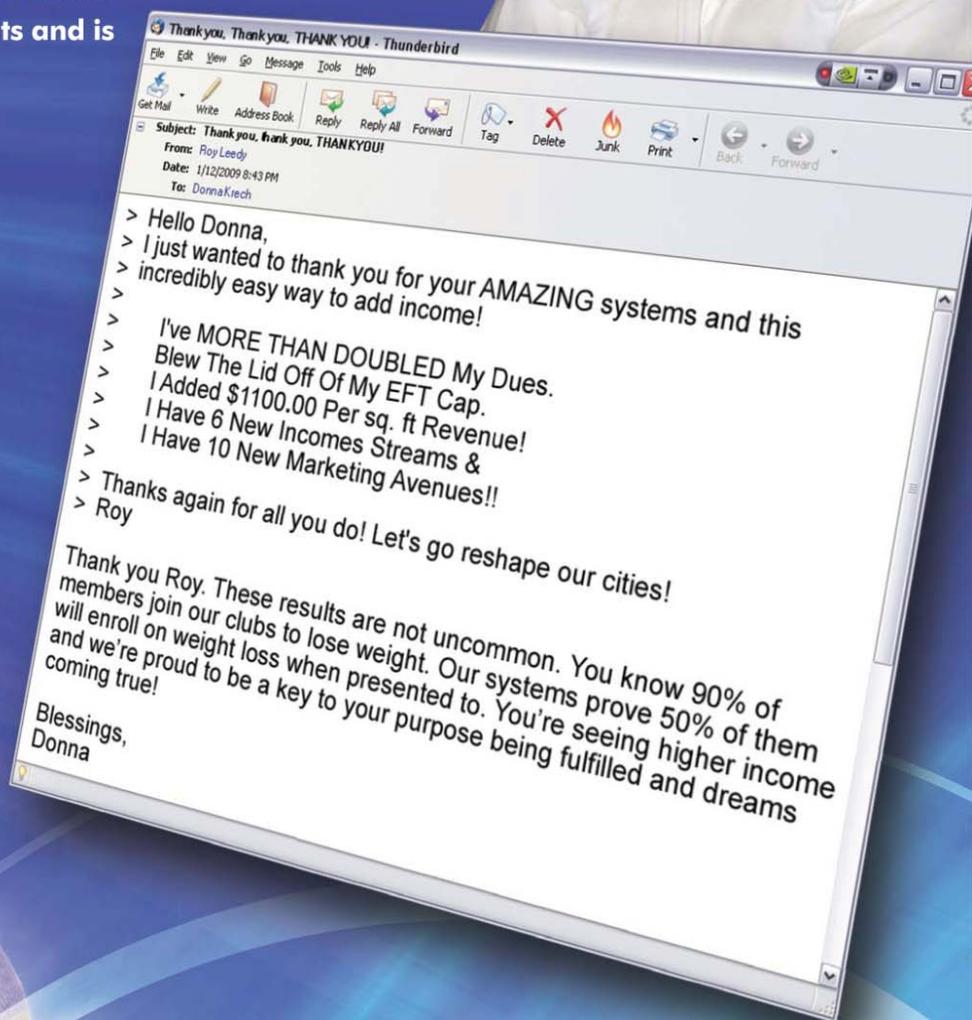
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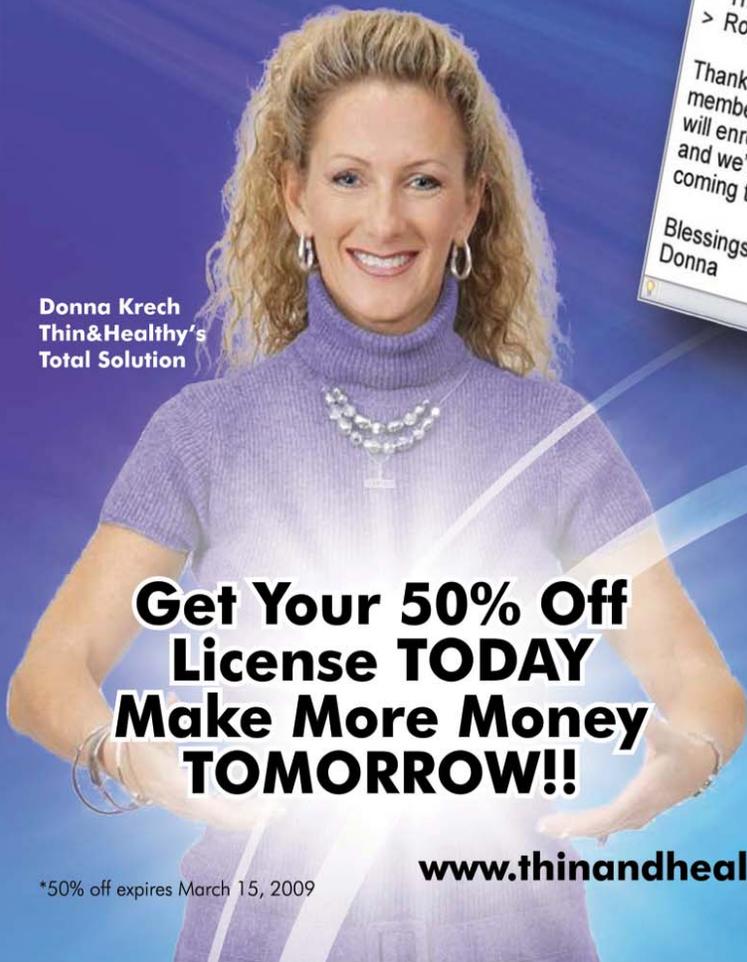
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Matt Remick, Rochester Athletic Club Partner and President, Comments on the Success of the RAC

Matt Remick is the President of the Rochester Athletic Club. Matt is married to Chantel, and they have three children: Jack, Susan and Megan. As the son of Club Founder, Jack Remick, Matt represents the majority ownership. As a key person at the RAC and their IT Director, Matt plays important roles in this very successful club organization. Matt's Dad teamed up with some other investors in 1992 and hired Greg Lappin as a consultant to create the club. They hired Hervey Lavoie of Ohlson/Lavoie in Denver, Colorado to design it. Matt was a freshman in college at the time the club was built and had taken family business classes at the University of St. Paul in Minnesota. He originally came onboard in 2000 to lead the search for a new software vendor because their IT provider had gone out of business. The switch was made in early 2001, and Matt was involved from the beginning with the installation of the new Windows-based system.

We wanted to share Matt's thoughts with you, so CLUB INSIDER contacted him for the following interview.

An Interview With Matt Remick

CLUB INSIDER (C.I.) - How has the club evolved since you joined

it full time?

Matt Remick (MR) - While the club was originally family-oriented, we've heightened our focus even more in the last three years to become more family-focused. We've always been a family-friendly club, but we've really targeted the family as our niche. As a result of that, we created, "The Neighborhood," which Hervey designed and Greg and I ran the project. We came up with the creative ideas with Hervey and worked with Dave Sprague, one of Hervey's associates. We had countless meetings together to come up with the right theme and the right combination of elements. So, we converted 35,000 square feet of space that was formerly 5 indoor tennis courts. But, before we did that, we built the new tennis building. All this took quite awhile. Overall, we renovated over 75,000 square feet when you consider we added a 40,000 square-foot tennis building with six courts (giving tennis members one more court than they had) and enhanced our offering by adding some additional locker room spaces. Also, with yoga, Pilates and cycling having a more prominent role than they did in 1993, we added three additional studios; a MindBody Studio, a new Pilates Studio and a new Cycling Studio. We're seeing a real increase in group exercise

participation because of these additions. So, we are just trying to react to what the members want. Obviously, we didn't want to make additions for anything that might have been a fad and not stick around. We've tried to constantly improve our offering to our members in the club and make it the easiest choice for where they want to have their membership in Rochester.

C.I. - Well, you guys have created something really special with "The Neighborhood" addition and the other improvements. The Neighborhood is amazing! Here you have brilliantly taken out five indoor tennis courts and converted the 35,000 square feet of space to a family and community entertainment center that is world class. (See photo). It serves multiple purpose and is a true bond for the families of your club and an anchor for family membership attraction and retention. Moreover, and equally as brilliantly, you folks built a six court indoor-tennis facility and opened that for your members before you ever made the changes to the original five tennis courts to create "The Neighborhood." Great planning and great execution, Greg! I know your members love "The Neighborhood!"

MR - Thanks. We're very happy with how it turned out.

C.I. - Matt, what are the three greatest challenges you face in your job?

MR - I think #1 is to be sure we make the best use of our money to offer the best combination of what our members want. Whether it's programming or updating the product, being the physical club, when it is time to update and change, that's a big challenge. Choosing the right things is important. All the commercial equipment is not cheap. If you make the wrong decision you could be stuck with the expense while adding no value. #2 a large responsibility of my job is employee relations. We want to offer our associates a great experience just like our members, only the parameters of that experience are a little different. We need to give them a sense of ownership - meaning they have the ability and authority to make decisions that get the desired result (for the Members and the Club) in every opportunity. It's making that balance, especially right now, when you need to make sure employees feel they make a significant contribution to the member experience during this downturn, while keeping certain expenses in line. And, #3 is dealing with the Mayo Clinic and that 20 million dollar gift from the founder of SlimFast.

So, they've opened up one of the finest fitness centers in



Matt Remick

the world with that gift. The Mayo Clinic employs approximately one-third of the population of Rochester. So, when you include spouses, it might be as high as 50% of the population could belong to a very nice facility for a maximum of \$25 on dues, and depending upon their usage, it could be as low as \$15 per month. So, it's not an equal level of competition that we are dealing with, and we are still managing to do well because we are family-focused.

C.I. - One key to your club continuing to do well in the face of this new Mayo competition is that you guys continue to fine tune and improve your product.

MR - Right. It's never going to be done. Our club is continually
 (See Matt Remick Page 20)

...Greg Lappin

continued from page 16

and how much he gave back, to be given the award named after him was very humbling.

The second thing I want to share is to say that I started in 1970 as a person working behind the desk! It is a typical American, rags to riches story. I started as a desk person, and now, I have the honor of being a minority owner and being the General Manager of what I am proud to say is one of the finest clubs in the country or the world. It just goes to show you, if you work hard, try to think things through clearly and make good decisions (and some bad ones), perseverance does pay off. In these tough economic times, I hope that gives hope to some others out there.

C.I. - It sure has in your case, Greg. That's why I do these case

study, cover stories. We try to share the greatest success stories that we can find so others in this industry can learn, imitate, and yes, copy what the greats are doing out there so they can become greater, too.

In my lifetime, I have never met a man with more excitement and energy for what he was doing than Dale Dibble before he retired to Naples, Florida. I remember visiting his amazing Cedardale Club, in Haverhill, MA outside of Boston. During the club tour with Dale, we stopped by the accounting office. He stopped and spoke to a lady working and said, "Let's show Norm how we're doing up until now." She said, "Okay" and then clicked her computer and printed out the Cedardale financial statement that was up-to-date at that precise moment. She handed it to him, and he handed it to me and said, "Norm, here's our up-

to-date financial statement. You can have it." So yes, I understand how you felt when you received the honor of the DALE DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award because I too, learned an awful lot from Dale, and I too, was humbled and honored when I received the first IHRSA Award bearing Dale Dibble's name in 2001.

It has been this author's great pleasure to share the great success story of Greg Lappin and his team's work at the amazing Rochester Athletic Club. After Greg had shared his experience about hosting a local, 13-week running PBS TV show called, "Health Connection," a production where he was responsible for selecting content and picking the guests, I told Greg that he was a Star in his community. But, Greg is a Star in his community for much, much more than a TV show. He's a Star for what he gives back to his

community overall. Probably, the most wonderful part of Greg's entire interview was at the end when he shared how he has seen the lives of some of his RAC Staff totally changed by working with him at the Rochester Athletic Club. He was deeply moved during these comments. Clearly, at this point in the interview, the deep love and caring that this fine man has for his staff and his members shined through brightly. I hope each of you will be able to glean nuggets of wisdom from Greg's interview and employ them in your effort to make your club better and better. I want to thank Greg Lappin for his time and energy used for this story and for providing CLUB INSIDER with the terrific photos of the magnificent Rochester Athletic Club. I also want to thank Greg for his dedication and service to IHRSA on the Board of Directors, his service as the Chairman of

the IHRSA Search Committee to replace John McCarthy, and before that, I want to thank Greg for the sacrifices that he made to make IHRSA better. Thanks also to Matt Remick, Jane Hein and Dan Zeman for their thoughts and comments that appear on **This Page** and on **Page #20**.

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 35-year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. Cates was the Founder and is now in his 16th year as the Publisher of CLUB INSIDER. He was IHRSA's 1st President, and a Co-founder of the Association with Rick Caro and five others, in 1981. In March, 2001, IHRSA honored Cates with its DALE DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award, one of IHRSA's highest honors. Cates may be reached by phone at: 770-850-8506 or email at: Norm@clubinsideronline.com)



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An Interview With Jane Hein, Group Exercise Director of the RAC

CLUB INSIDER (C.I.) - How long have you been with the Rochester Athletic Club, and how has the club evolved during your years there?

Jane Hein (JH) - I have worked at the Rochester Athletic Club since January of 2000, and the club has evolved in numerous ways in the past 9 years. One of the most significant changes in this timeframe was an innovative addition and remodel project which expanded the club not only in square footage, but allowed significant expansion of programming in virtually every department. The programs directly affected by this expansion were additional Tennis space, and an addition called the "Neighborhood," an indoor playground/sports area designed specifically for children & families. In addition, New Studio spaces were created which directly affected positive growth in the group exercise department that I oversee. We created a new Cycling Studio, a MindBody Studio and the Pilates Studio.

These expanded studio spaces allowed my own program to grow essentially 100% in programming, member attendance and staffing in the past 9 years. We were a program

with 70 classes per week in 2000 with 25 staff members supporting 6 programs. We are now a department which supports nearly 12 programs and 55 staff that teaches approximately 140 classes per week!

C.I. - What are the three greatest challenges you face on a regular basis, and how do you handle those challenges?

JH - 1. Greg Lappin has taught me that you must "innovate or evaporate" in the Fitness Industry, and this especially pertains to group exercise. Thus, the challenge is to constantly stay abreast of what is new in the industry. Members get bored with the same old fitness regimen. Thus, to "exceed their expectations," which is our mission, we must constantly strive to discern what is "fad" and what is an exercise or wellness trend that's worth investing in when considering education, equipment and staff costs. My background is Physical Therapy/Rehab and medicine (I'm a registered Physical Therapist). Medicine and fitness continues to meld towards "Wellness," and with this trend, there's much we can capitalize on to develop in the health & fitness club Industry. Fitness should

be fun (to maintain member interest and compliance), but it should also be safe and promote an improved overall quality of life and mobility. When I try to discern what trends are the ones that we'll invest in, I keep these things in mind.

2. Most group exercise instructors approach their jobs as a "hobby job." In other words, it's not a full-time job for them. However, commitment to our values and an exceptional work ethic are top expectations we have for our staff, thus, reinforcing good customer service and treating one another in a courteous and respectful manner as we deliver service that exceeds our members expectations is of utmost importance. When teaching group exercise conveniently fits into the space my instructors have in their life, it's all good. But, when it doesn't, life stressors elevate anxiety, and this can affect the service they provide and can also lead to sudden staffing shortages which can stress other staff. To avoid this potential problem, our program has ongoing training to nurture and support a consistent level of skill and to maintain a high level of staffing ratio for each program that constitutes our

group exercise program (Pilates, Yoga, Step, Studio Cycling, Water Aerobics, Special Populations, Sculpting, Low-High Aerobics, Power, Kickboxing, Belly Dance, etc). What we strive to avoid is not to have to change the schedule drastically when staffing availability can suddenly change.

3. Most of the problems I face are "people problems," and Greg has been integral in helping me grow tremendously as a manager. Understanding the concept that "people's perceptions are their own reality" is integral when mediating staff-staff, or member-staff conflict. When mediating conflict, always trying to nurture a neutral and supportive open communication is very important. I try to involve the parties and empower them to help seek a "solution-driven" approach when conflict ensues. Understanding the problem is important, but the focus of bringing parties together or mediating from the center is to stay positive as a leader, not take it personally and promote solutions. This approach helps avoid future problems in regards to similar circumstances and teaches the parties involved to mediate their own conflict in a more positive



Jane Hein

and constructive manner in the future, without needing to involve your skills as a manager.

C.I. - What is it like working at the Rochester Athletic Club?

JH - The Rochester Athletic Club is a supportive and positive working environment. Connecting with each other and the members is a daily focus for all of the management team at the RAC. Greg Lappin lives this focus and sets the tone for all of us. He is one of the #1 reasons I have stayed in this organization for almost a decade! Greg Lappin is the BEST boss I've ever had!!!

Dan Zeman, Exercise Physiologist and Long Time Friend, Comments on Greg Lappin and His Work at the RAC

Previous Success: Greg Lappin continues to amaze me with his ability to design facilities that evolve to meet the needs of the ever-changing fitness industry. The RAC is an updated, modern-day version of his first legendary fitness club called the Flagship Athletic Club.

Design: The physical design of the RAC consists of an all-encompassing, open-air design, spacious locker room facilities, a separate entrance for child care and an equally-inviting entrance to the restaurant for members and non-members.

City of Rochester: His

ability to be successful in the city of Rochester, which is primarily a very financially conservative group of Mayo Clinic and IBM employees who have never supported the fitness market, is testament to his creativity and integrity.

The "Neighborhood": The willingness to spend a significant amount of money to create an area for families inside the walls of the club demonstrates his commitment to fighting the childhood obesity epidemic. The uniqueness of the area gained national recognition and was featured in numerous publications

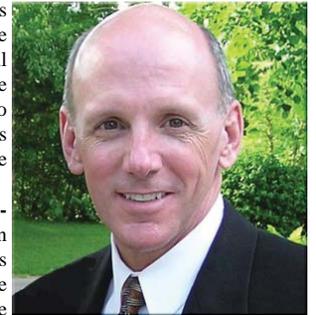
as well as on NBC's Today Show.

Commitment to Members: The two things that you have to plan for when walking through the RAC with Greg is (1) the number of members whom he knows by name, and (2) his inability to walk by any piece of debris without having to pick it up and put it in his pocket. Truly the walk is the same as the talk.

Awards and Recognitions: The RAC has won a wide variety awards from inside and outside the fitness industry, such as Facility of The Year from the USTA, various NOVA 7 awards and the Minnesota Better Business

Bureau. His instructional tennis programs have turned out 30 state high school champions, a handful of national champions and one world champion. Greg has also been recognized by IHRSA as the recipient of the Dale Dibble Distinguished Service Award.

Commitment to Education: Greg has always been committed to educating his staff on their role in making the members enjoy their visits to the RAC. Each of his lessons has a unique Acronym, such as F.A.C.T. However, his most creative yet simple statement is, 'I never heard of a member saying that he



Dan Zeman

decided to drop their membership because he was having too much fun.'

...Matt Remick

continued from page 18

evolving. That makes it fun. We're not stuck at what we're offering today. You've been to IHRSA every year, and there is always something new and exciting. You've just got to figure out if it is a fad or if it adds value.

Greg uses the term, 'Innovate or evaporate'.

C.I. - What's it like working at The Rochester Athletic Club?

MR - Well, I'm one of the owners, and I just recently got the title of President. Now, I mean this in a nice way; to me, it's almost like a second marriage. It's as big a part

of my identity as who my family is. It is something I am very proud of. So, I feel very strongly that we do ethically try to present the best fitness value in all of Rochester, if not in Minnesota. We strive to offer the best product for the dollar... the best value we can. So, if members are offering us free advice or feedback on how

to improve, we'd be foolish not to listen to what our customers are looking for. If they didn't care about your business, they wouldn't tell you when they are disappointed or what they would like to change. So, I think you need to listen to your customers and employees and constantly evolve.

C.I. - Matt, thanks for your time today. You're fortunate to be involved in what you're doing there because you are helping an awful lot of people.

MR - Thank you, Norm. I think you guys do a great job.



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...Daron Allen

continued from page 3

now! So, we've learned from many people the best ways to sell a membership using our collective experience to provide this expertise from many pros. This has allowed us to provide an automated technology solution that encompasses the best sales and other practices in the industry.

C.I. - Let's talk about what I call the "New Year's Resolutionists." My question is, how does Visual Fitness Planner impact the new members, the New Year's Resolutionists, a new joiner in his first month in the club in the ways we know are important to bond them to the club and get them started to get the results they should get started to way results?

DA - Norm, that's a great question, and to be honest with you, I think our system does this better than any in the industry. Visual impact. I believe our biggest strength is creating a customized visual impact for clubs. This Visual Impact is the key to enhanced revenue and retention through membership sales, personal training and for fee program participation. This leads to effective, consistent and branded sales presentations. Since a picture is worth a thousand words, we help clubs use those pictures to create revenue. That's because our system has the visual ability to educate and motivate the new member on what it actually takes to succeed and achieve results in the club. Our system actually educates them to understand what the next 60 to 90 days should look like in terms of the lifecycle of their membership in achieving results. On top of that, we have the ability to give them a glimpse of what those results will look like. So, they can actually be motivated to really strive to accomplish their goal

because our system has educated them on what it will take and motivated them to look into their future. Then, they can say, 'WOW... I see what I can do.'

What we do Norm is we help the new member or existing member who still is unfit to get a glimpse of what they can actually accomplish. We help make fitness tangible for the brand new club member. I've been saying for a long time that our industry is selling the intangible. But, our system gives them the ability to reduce their risk of failure and can actually change their life right at the beginning stage of their membership or their return and renewal of previous club activity after an absence from working out for a while. If we compare a Visual Fitness Planner member versus a non-Visual Fitness Planner member, first, we provide better value for the member in the club because of this education early on. Secondly, we know from feedback from our clubs that typically they experience a 20 to 30% increase in their "for-fee" services they sell. This means more personal training, cycling classes, weight-loss systems... anything that is going to provide more hands-on support to a member. Our clubs report a 20 to 30% increase, so if a new member is educated more thoroughly, has a greater motivation and also tends to purchase additional services to help hit their goals, there is no question they will remain members longer, and are much, much more likely to succeed. Plus, Visual Fitness Planner keeps prospects "in a constant loop" of regular follow up. We call this our "Automatic Feedback Loops. Success in Membership Sales is all about the basics and the ability to give a fantastic presentation time and time again. Clubs that excel at prospecting, getting referrals, providing solutions for motivational hot buttons,

effectively eliminating objections and procrastination and creating value away from price are the clubs that excel. The technology we have created gives owners, General Managers, Sales Manager and Personal Training directors instantaneous feedback loops.

C.I. - And, on top of that, I'd bet you could add that they are much more likely to refer their friends to become members of the VFP Club.
DA - There's no doubt that they do!

C.I. - Now in your 10th year, and in 600 clubs, how have you seen your product advance make Visual Fitness Planner more of a necessity for clubs?

DA - We have changed and built VFP so that it is branded specifically to the club we are working with. Not only is it branded, but it is customized to their specific system or method of selling. Therefore, VFP is the most consistent and effective system for selling. But, the key here Norm, is VFP is not just for selling, it has become the training platform for all of their new employees!

C.I. - We all know how differentiation of one's club in their market is a key to both new membership sales and retention. How does VFP truly differentiate one's club in their market?

DA - Our system, and this is key, differentiates the *EXPERIENCE* of the prospect and the brand new member. In order to win in today's environment, I believe that *differentiating the experience may be the number one metric of success for a club*. There are so many things that tie to the experience. Obviously, sales, referrals and ancillary purchases... are all tied to that experience. Our system engages the prospect and the new member at an EMOTIONAL LEVEL that gets them to focus on their health, their body and what is really important to them. Too many times during the sales experience and life, people don't focus on themselves enough. Our system provides the experience that differentiates the club for the consumer.

C.I. - The person truly feels cared for, dealt with... and serviced.

DA - Norm, I'd follow that up with another thing. You've gone through our VFP system, so you know about it. But, we hear statistics about how important



*The Visual Fitness Planner Team
 (L to R) Warren Webb, Daron Allen and Sam Lanasa*

exercise is and how the lack of exercise is related to various diseases and disease risk. Our system makes all of that data and all of those studies, relevant to the prospect, available to them, personally and specifically, with the click of a button. It makes it relevant and touches them on an emotional level personally within the natural flow of the presentation.

C.I. - Who are some of your leading edge independent club clients and club chain clients?

DA - This is a hard one to answer because all of our clients are great club operators. But, let me single out three from 140 of our independents: Joe Cirulli of The Gainesville Health and Fitness Center in Gainesville, Florida; Mike Minton of Minton's Sportsplex, Texarkana, Texas; and Phil Howard and Larry Lawrence of Fitness Connection in Houston, Texas, are some of our longest term and most successful VFP clubs as great examples, but we have many more.

On the club chain side, we have Lifestyle Family Fitness, Club One Fitness, XSport Fitness, Merritt Athletic Clubs, GoodLife Fitness, Urban Active, Gold's Gym LA (Willy and Angel Banos) and Brick Bodies.

C.I. - Your VFP Ad (Opposite Page) makes some amazing statements, and it says one of your client clubs has gone from zero Program/Personal Trainer sales revenue to \$12,000 to \$15,000 a day! That's an amazing number!
DA - We actually have the ability to automate personal training systems, whether it's at the point of sale or as part of their new

member integration process or appointment. Some of our clients literally were not selling any personal training at the point of sale. We have been able to help them, with our system, literally change the cash flow position of their company by helping them sell significant amounts of personal training at the point of sale.

Of course, there are many more greats among our 600 Visual Fitness Planner Clubs. But, I want to add one more thing if I may. That is, it seems our company has outgrown its name. We impact so many things, you know; membership sales, the entire new member integration, prospecting presentations and we also have the ability to build websites. We do these automated price presentations, and we are now integrating with the billing and management companies. We are also going to be launching a new website within the next 30 to 45 days, and we will have an announcement of the date for launch and the new website address. You'll be the first to know, Norm, so you get the scoop first.

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 35-year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. Cates was the Founder and is now in his 16th year as the Publisher of CLUB INSIDER. He was IHRSA's 1st President, and a Co-founder of the Association with Rick Caro and five others, in 1981. In March, 2001, IHRSA honored Cates with its DALE DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award, one of IHRSA's highest honors. Cates may be reached by phone at: 770-850-8506 or email at: Norm@clubinsideronline.com)





Daron Allen
CEO, Visual Fitness Planner

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A club chain in AZ reports – “The VFP is the standard presentation for both POS and New Member Orientation. Upon implementing the VFP, our club went from producing \$0 per day in Program/PT at the point of sale to now producing \$12,000-\$15,000 per day.”

A club in Canada reports – “Fitness Managers are averaging PT packages of \$3,500-\$6,000 per PT deal.”

A club in IL reports – “The VFP helped build our monthly PT drafts from \$0 per month to over \$40,000 per month in our 15,000 sq. ft. facility.”



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...Joe Moore

continued from page 3

Lamott, exemplify that dedication. All trade associations start in the same way; people decide they can accomplish more together than they can accomplish acting separately. You helped found IHRSA, so you know all about that. This is where IHRSA is so very important; we are able to convince competitors to cooperate for the good of the industry. A great example is the Public Policy Council (formerly the ILC), a group of members who give their time and money to promote and protect the industry. Among other things, we seek passage of legislation that creates financial incentives to exercise and removes government barriers. We raised a record amount last year.

Part of our strategic plan is to make IHRSA a recognized leader in Washington DC and a respected voice in the health promotion arena. So, we have opened an office in DC. Having staff there has helped us develop relationships with many organizations that are working for a healthier America: The Partnership to Prevent Chronic Disease, the American Heart Association, National Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity, the Department of Health and Human Services, etc. There are too many to name here, but these relationships are integral in our efforts to help grow the industry.

We are in the forefront of the effort to promote the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, in collaboration with HHS and the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, and we helped in launching a Supporter Network for over 1,000 organizations. The Supporter Network and the new *Be Active Your Way Online Community* are great tools to promote exercising in clubs. The HHS Guidelines could be as important to the industry as the 1996 Surgeon General's Report on Physical Activity and Health. The more clubs we convince to participate, the better.

IHRSA is an instrumental part of *Exercise Is Medicine*, an initiative started by Edward Phillips, M.D. the founder and director of the Institute of Lifestyle Medicine (ILM) at the Harvard Medical School. The underlying principle is to convince physicians to prescribe exercise for their patients. Dr. Phillips was featured

in the October issue of CBI and will be a presenter at IHRSA's International Trade Show in San Francisco. *Exercise Is Medicine* is an impressive program but raises the question: How can the industry demonstrate the safety and efficacy of the club programs that physicians prescribe?

For many clubs, the answer may be voluntary club certification, another project we are developing. We are participating in an initiative to create a voluntary certification process for fitness facilities. The goal is to strengthen the health and fitness industry and raise the industry's standing as the quality provider of safe and productive exercise.

We were investigating the possibility of IHRSA starting the process of voluntary club certification when NSF International, a world leader in standards development for public health and safety, approached Michael Levy and me. NSF invited IHRSA to participate on the Joint Committee responsible for developing and approving the certification guidelines. We accepted the invitation after being assured that every IHRSA member would have the opportunity to participate in the process of setting the guidelines. There are many great people involved, but I should say that Dr. Art Curtis, the Chair of IHRSA's Standards Committee and CEO of Millennium Partners Sports Club Management, has taken on the leadership role for IHRSA's board. And, Art will be moderating a session about the process at the Convention. I recommend everyone who is interested in voluntary club certification attend, and our latest member survey shows there is a lot of positive interest in this initiative.

On the state level, we have continued working for a

level playing field for tax-paying clubs. The sales tax victories we won in Maine and Maryland were exceptionally gratifying because they protected the club operators in those states. Sales taxes are one of the worst types of disincentives to joining clubs. The state governments are searching for places to raise taxes, and many have health clubs in mind. We must remain vigilant and be ready to fight on a moment's notice. This will be a very busy year.

Our culture is one of customer service, and with that in mind, six months ago, we reorganized IHRSA to be more efficient and responsive to our stakeholders. *IHRSA exists for the members*. So, we are focused on communicating in ways that connect with all the diverse groups we serve. We are continually working to align our products and services with our mission.

We have developed a broader member research capacity in order to ensure successful data driven strategies for the future. Research initiatives have been developed covering topics from member satisfaction, in general, to specific program and product surveys. That is the way we develop the products and services. So, we collect information from members and associate members through surveys, interviews and personal contact. The most enjoyable source of information for me comes from the personal contact I have with my many friends, and I consider all club operators my friends. They make my days fun, and the information I receive is invaluable.

Our data collection results in products that help people make decisions based on facts, not guesses.

In August we released "The Health Club Industry U.S. Economic Outlook".

In October, we released the 2008 European Market Report at the IHRSA Congress in Lisbon.

In November, we released the 2008 Asia-Pacific Market Report, the 2008 Profiles of Success Industry Data Survey and the 2008 Employee Compensation & Benefits Report.

And, we recently released the Economic Survival Kit. We have assembled many of our most popular products and services that help members take steps to protect clubs from economic challenges. Clubs asked for it, and we immediately created it.

We now have a presence on several social media outlets including: Facebook, YouTube, Flickr and Blogger. IHRSA already has two blogs, one from IT, *IHRSA Tech* (www.ihrsatech.org), and the new Global Public Policy blog, *Movement for a Healthier America* (movementforahealthieramerica.blogspot.com).

We have a new group on **LinkedIn** called "IHRSA". LinkedIn is an online network of more than 30 million experienced professionals from around the world, representing 150 industries. It is similar to a Facebook for professionals who want to connect and network. Our **LinkedIn** group, "IHRSA", has hundreds of members and is growing every day. The link to join the "IHRSA" group on **LinkedIn** is www.linkedin.com/e/gis/1034747.

Last year, we launched the newly-designed IHRSA website, complete with beautiful graphics and streaming video. It has a great look and information is easier to find, and do we ever have information: information that helps club operators become and stay profitable, information on best practices, information

about the scope of the industry and information on just about every Industry topic.

We have also redesigned **Healthclubs.com**, IHRSA's consumer website for adults. **Healthclubs.com** features resources including the enhanced IHRSA job finder, updated health benefits of exercise, Physical Activity Guidelines resources and Get Active magazine in digital form. **Healthclubs.com** makes it easier than ever for anyone to locate IHRSA member health clubs worldwide. It displays maps with the club locations, and visitors can also search for clubs that offer specific programs or amenities. Individuals who are traveling can access **Healthclubs.com** to find clubs that participate in the IHRSA Passport Program and find information on guest fees.

And, of course, we have completely redesigned Club Business International Magazine, making it a simple and fun read that is packed full of useful information. CBI is an extremely important part of our communication strategy. Our staff members are constantly searching out material for stories that will inform and motivate the industry. The magazine is one of the most valued resources we provide.

You'll recall the IHRSA 25th Annual Convention and Trade Show in Las Vegas. It was an amazing confluence of events: Bill Clinton was the keynote speaker, we were celebrating John McCarthy's industry contributions and retirement and it was our Silver Anniversary. So, people were asking me, how can you top this event? Well, we did at the 26th Convention in San Francisco and again at the 27th in San Diego. I can't wait for this year's event and our return to San Francisco. Sure, the economy is down, but that makes IHRSA more relevant than ever. One good idea can make a huge difference for any club operator.

Two of our initiatives are "Going Green" and "Women's Wellness," both passions for Lynne Brick, IHRSA Board member and Co-Founder and owner of Brick Bodies/Lynne Bricks Health Clubs, the 13th largest women-owned business in Baltimore. A growing environmental focus presents health club owners and operators with the opportunity to establish themselves as "green" leaders in their communities. A green

(See Joe Moore Page 28)



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•How our workshops can help you!

The National Fitness Business Alliance and IHRSA have formed a partnership, along with our elite team of industry leaders, to provide owners with a variety of information, tools and products that will provide financial success for today and the future. We can help you with almost any problem you encounter in your fitness business. Our workshops feature an exhibitor showcase that will provide you with the tools to overcome your staffing issues and network with other owners and managers who experience the same difficulties as you.

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OFFERS HEALTH AND FITNESS CLUB OWNERS THE OPPORTUNITY TO **INCREASE** THEIR BOTTOM LINE AND PROVIDE THE IMPORTANT MONIES TO FIND THE CURE FOR ALS

Over the past 18 months, The Clubs for the Cure /Augie's Quest Team has received positive feedback from over 450 Clubs about the Events they conducted to find a cure for ALS. Here are some of the results:

1. Involving the staff in creating the special fundraising event increased employee morale - Just ask *Kimberly Spreen, Director of Group Exercise from LifeTime Fitness*
2. Members and their friends experienced a strong sense of pride that their Club was taking a stand against ALS. They were eager to participate and make a difference - Just Ask *Gale Landers, President of Fitness Formula Clubs*
3. Incorporating The Clubs for the Cure/Augie's Quest efforts into a Club's New Member Promotional Calendar drives new membership sales. - Just ask *Art Curtis, President of Millennium Partners Sports Club Management*
4. Creating events for the Clubs for the Cure/Augie's Quest efforts will strengthen and differentiate your club in the marketplace. Plus, it provides unprecedented levels of local publicity. - Just ask *Patricia Laus, Owner and CEO of The Atlantic Clubs.*

In 2008, The Clubs for the Cure/Augie's Quest Team was comprised of Health and Fitness Clubs that were independent operators as well as large chain operations. However, the results achieved by the Events were universal. The Events created a positive buzz throughout the Club, and generated significant donations to Augie's Quest, from their membership. In addition, many Club Owners provided an additional donation but it is not a requirement.

The vision for the Clubs for the Cure/Augie's Quest Team remains constant. Our Team's effort is to raise the monies and public awareness to find the cure for ALS by harnessing the power that Club Owners have with their members and their community. When Club Owners use their power, the possibilities for raising money for ALS, growing their business and enjoying a healthier bottom line are limitless.

The Choice is simple... **Commit to run ONE Event by May 31st, 2009.** For more information or to register your Club, please visit our website at ClubsfortheCure.com.

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to achieve Augie's Quest to find a cure for ALS...



Fundraising programs and materials are all
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as well as helpful phone contacts to assist
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Together we can make a world of difference!

Augie Nieto, founder of Life Fitness,
was diagnosed with ALS in 2005.
Later that year, Augie and his wife
Lynne created the Augie's Quest
initiative in conjunction with the
Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA).
For more information visit
www.augiesquest.org

One Event. One Hour. One Man's Quest.

...Joe Moore

continued from page 24

club is one that is dedicated to improving the health of the environment as well as that of its members. Women's wellness track focuses on what we should call the "stronger sex". The club industry has grown and prospered from the leadership of thousands of women. Another of Lynne's ideas is to give recognition to the women leaders of the industry, and so this year at The IHRSA Convention and Trade Show, we will present the first annual Julie Main Emerging Woman Leader Scholarship. Julie is the Co-owner and President of the West Coast Athletic Clubs in California, Founder of the Cancer WellFit Program, a former IHRSA Board Member and past Board Chair. The award exemplifies what Julie stands for: courage, perseverance, excellence, and professionalism. Norm, you are friends with Julie, so you know her contributions to the Industry. She is truly amazing.

The Convention draws people from over 70 countries; members from each country have different needs and expectations from IHRSA. Just over a year ago, we developed the IHRSA Europe Council. One of the reasons for the Council is to help gather information about the wants and needs of IHRSA members in Europe. We will be meeting with the Europe Council and the Global Federations in San Francisco. In fact, during the Global Federations meeting back on March 24, 2007, Fitness Australia made a presentation about the potential of substantial increases in music copyright fees. This was an early warning. There is now the possibility of a major increase in Canada, as well. IHRSA is helping the operators in Australia and Canada in their efforts against these increases. In the United States, we are close to negotiating a discount for IHRSA members with one of the major copyright companies and may soon have a landmark recommendation about copyright for clubs in the USA. As you say, Norm: "Stay Tuned."

Part of our Global Strategy is to supply best practices to clubs and federations throughout the world. Information technology helps us communicate without borders so we are able to communicate on a daily basis, but the convention is a focal point for interaction and networking.

We have many formal advisory forums, but I also value the informal advisors I can call anytime for counsel and perspective. They have knowledge on every topic and give freely whenever I call upon them. I won't attempt to name them all, but foremost is John McCarthy. His experience and wisdom is invaluable to me, and he is only a phone call away. I can't express how much I value his support and the support of our wonderful IHRSA members.

Norm, IHRSA is a great Association serving a great Industry. There are some challenges, but they help to make life interesting. The industry will continue doing great things.



Comments By Rick Caro, IHRSA Founder and President and owner, Management Vision, NYC

Rick Caro, Founder of I(H)RSA with yours truly and five others in 1981, commented on IHRSA and Joe Moore:

There is no greater challenge than following an industry legend into a business position. John McCarthy was hired at the outset as the Executive Director (and then the title was renamed, President) of IHRSA. He truly created the position as well as much of IHRSA during its first 25 years. Much of the foundation in its products and services, outreach efforts, International growth, staff creation and development and image was directly attributed to John.

After John retired, the replacement is clearly going to be challenged to be his own person, especially since IHRSA is going through a different set of business opportunities and difficulties. Joe was chosen by the Board amongst a range of candidates from a variety of backgrounds. He has developed and re-organized the staff. He has met challenges from a variety of external means and has worked

through them. He has been responsive to a changing Board of Directors. As time passes, Joe Moore is making his own imprint on IHRSA. Hopefully, he realizes how much the membership and all of its constituencies appreciate his efforts and leadership.

I was at the Founding stage of IHRSA and continue to be actively involved each week. I am proud of what IHRSA stands for and am very excited about its future.



Comments By Michael Levy, Former IHRSA Chairman, Now Ex-Officio Chairman and Current Public Policy Committee Chairman

Michael Levy, former IHRSA Chairman and owner of Spa Chakra in Toronto, Canada wrote:

Joe Moore is an effective leader. He brings a quiet and strong presence to IHRSA, coordinating the internal workings of the Association to meet the needs of our members, both here in the U.S. and around the world. He instituted bringing manufacturers to our Board meetings and making the CEOs of our manufacturers an integral voice in planning and strategy for our industry. He has reached out to the major Club groups to make them an effective voice in dealing with their issues. He has invigorated the IHRSA staff and brought the Board into the planning process to ensure that the needs of our members are always in the forefront of the Association. He remains the thoughtful and directed leader who staff and Board members follow because of his inclusionary processes.

Public Policy Council (PPC): The ILC has a new name: Public Policy Council, and now accounts for over \$1.5 million in funding for Public Policy and its initiatives. However, at the beginning of Joe's new leadership role as the CEO, the ILC was in the process of breaking away

from IHRSA because they were not being listened to.

•When Joe took over, the ILC was in disarray. Over a period of six months, Joe Moore, Lloyd Gainsboro and I worked with Bahram Akradi and Kevin Steele to reinvigorate the ILC, to determine the proper role for the ILC, how to develop an effective executive and how to raise funds to accomplish our goals in Public Policy.

•Over a six-month period, Bahram Akradi came to the view that IHRSA should be the effective leader of the ILC, that the ILC should take the role of fundraising for IHRSA and that a new leader and executive should be created, which would link the ILC and all clubs together in developing strategic growth for Public Policy.

International: When Joe took over as CEO of IHRSA, the international issues were really a small part of what IHRSA was undertaking. However, over the past two years, international issues now account for much of the strategic planning of IHRSA, including:

•We have international members of the IHRSA Board. This was a first and goes toward making IHRSA a truly international body. Best practices are now brought to the Board, and Board Members go to international events. This will make our clubs stronger and a more effective voice in the fight against obesity.

•Joe undertook to set up an international body, the Global Public Policy Council to deal with International Public Policy Issues. The first of these is dealing with the music licensing issue in Australia and now in Canada. Joe has created an international team to ensure we coordinate the results and raise funding to fight these issues.

•We have been instrumental in helping our manufacturers in the drive to grow internationally. Because IHRSA is partnering on International Conferences, such as the Asia Pacific Forum, Brazil Conference and the European Congress, our IHRSA team is able to provide introductions and business contacts for our manufacturing partners and our international club groups.

Public Policy: Under Joe's direction, we are getting close to having the WHIP and PHIT bills passed by Congress. IHRSA has an effective voice in Washington, whether it is a part of the Coalition to Fight Chronic Disease, being part of the group working with Health and Human Services (HHS) to develop operational guidelines for fitness and wellness or being part of the President's Council on Physical Fitness. Joe has been a leader in Public Policy.



Comments By Julie Main, Former IHRSA Chairperson and Board Member and Longest Serving IHRSA Officer in IHRSA History

Julie Main, the owner of the West Coast Athletic Clubs and a truly amazing lady, is the longest serving non-employee IHRSA person in the history of the Association with 8 years of service. Julie said this of IHRSA and Joe Moore:

John McCarthy's departure from IHRSA was originally thought of as a blow to the industry that would be tough to recover from. We interviewed countless candidates, and each of them had pros and cons, but none came close to exactly what we were looking for in a replacement. After a few months of looking, Joe Moore contacted me (I was the Chair of the Search Committee) and asked me what I thought about his throwing his hat in the ring. At first, I was surprised because I have always known Joe to be a wise and thoughtful person, but not necessarily the type to be a figurehead of such a large organization. But after a long discussion with Joe and hearing his vision for IHRSA, I knew that he was more than qualified and had the passion that we had not seen in other candidates. So, I encouraged Joe to go through the same process as all the other candidates. He scored higher than any other candidate on the personality exam the executive

(See Joe Moore Page 29)

...Joe Moore

continued from page 28

search company administered, and his interview with the Search Committee was flawless.

Here it is, more than two years later and Joe has done an excellent job leading IHRSA. His wisdom continues to amaze me, his cool demeanor has smoothed many situations over and his leadership during this difficult time of transition has been inspirational. IHRSA could not have found a better person to fill John McCarthy's shoes, whether he came from inside or outside the industry. Joe is capable of meeting any of the challenges that IHRSA may face over the next few years. I don't foresee Joe staying 25 years as John did, but if Joe decides to, it will be nothing but beneficial to IHRSA, the organization, the member clubs, and the industry as a whole. I wish Joe all the best!

Comments by Greg Lappin, Former IHRSA Board Member and Member of the John McCarthy Replacement Search Committee

Greg Lappin, a former IHRSA Board Member from 2002 until 2006 and Partner and the General Manager of the 260,000 square-foot Rochester Athletic Club in Rochester, Minnesota, had this to say about Joe Moore:

Three essential qualities in any employee are character, passion and experience. Interacting with Joe, it is instantaneously obvious he is a man of integrity and that he still has a passion for the industry. His extensive club ownership history, as well as his previous IHRSA experience, give him necessary tools to lead our industry. IHRSA is very fortunate to have Joe Moore as their CEO.

And finally, I, Norm Cates, 1st IHRSA President and Co-founder of the Association, have this to say about Joe Moore and his performance:

Joe Moore, like John McCarthy, is one of a kind. IHRSA was very fortunate to have John McCarthy at the helm of IHRSA for 25 years, and IHRSA is now very fortunate to have Joe Moore as its IHRSA President/CEO. If it were not for the influence of fate, IHRSA might not have been so lucky. After serving IHRSA for four years as a Board Member, and the last

President of the Association, Joe Moore worked with an executive search firm during an exhaustive search. Only good luck for IHRSA caused the originally-chosen candidate to not end up in this important role. At that point

in time, Joe Moore stepped in as interim IHRSA CEO because John McCarthy had retired. The Search Committee continued the search for awhile. But, they ultimately turned to the person I believed, from the start, was

the most qualified and most appropriate choice for the new Executive Director of IHRSA, Joe Moore. Joe Moore is the President/CEO for all of the IHRSA Member Clubs, and he works extremely hard to deliver

the services, products and results we all expect from him. Like I said, just like John McCarthy, Joe Moore is one of a kind, and IHRSA is fortunate to have him working with the IHRSA Board of Directors and Staff.



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What If Everything You Have Prepared For Is Irrelevant?

By: Will Phillips

You can now marshal evidence that this is not true. Or, you can explore in what ways it is true for your life, your family and your business. And how, by believing this, you gain an edge. Someone has to get out of the box every now and then. So, here we go.

Welcome to your new world. Jim Collins, author of *Good to Great*, thinks the era, from the 1950's to 1990's, was an extremely unusual time in history. It was unusual in its stability; a stability resulting from the balance between two world powers, the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. He states that the only other times of similar stability was the Pax Romana, a period of relative peace and stability in the first and second century A.D. and for an even longer time in Egypt hundreds of years earlier.

It is quite clear that during our lifetimes, we are experiencing an extraordinary degree of turmoil. I was raised as a child in the postwar

Eisenhower years when things were calm, predictable and pleasant. Simply look at the TV shows from that time (I Love Lucy!) as an example. Today, the world is heavily impacted with globalization, technology, revolutions, poverty and disease. We have rising complexity from a global economy combined with rising social complexity where everyone wants a voice and accelerating technology. These combine into a perfect storm producing disruptive patterns of change and innovation. We see institutions being challenged on all fronts.

Sociologists would also agree that another impact is a loss of norms or values compared to the '50s. As a result, there are no agreed upon guiding principles on how to react to all this change and challenge. Thus, every human falls back on three ways to respond to these disruptive times of turmoil when many of our sacred social institutions seem very fragile. Read these three. Decide what percent of your managerial behavior falls into

each category.

1. Muddle Ahead Harder - This is the one most of us choose to do. Do not think too much, just keep working and see what you can figure out. Be tough, be strong and bull your way ahead. This strategy is challenged because it does not address the changing world.

2. Reactive - Times used to be better somewhere in the past. Maybe it was the '50s, or maybe it was the 1850s. Whatever your view, let us go back to the past, to the fundamentals when things were clearer, simpler, more settled and happier. If you accept Jim Collins view of history, this is a doomed strategy.

3. Shaping the Future - This time of chaos is indicative of deep change in our world, and we may have to change in response. There is the four apartment model of change, which explains that all people in all organizations are in one of four rooms in this apartment house:

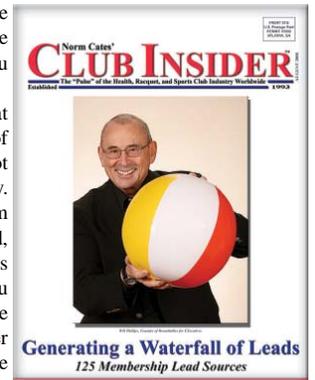
The first room is the room of joy. This is the place where who you are and what you are doing are exactly in sync.

The next room that you move into is the room of satisfaction. Things are not quite in sync, but they are okay. You have moved into this room because the world has changed, and you have changed. This disjunctiveness between who you are, what you are doing and the world around you increases over time. This then forces you into the third room.

This is an extremely uncomfortable and painful room because the fit between who you are, and what you are doing and what is going on in the world is so far out of sync. It challenges you and your beliefs about yourself and your business. The normal, human reaction in this room is to close your eyes and not see it; to put on the blindfold of denial and say, "Everything is fine." This is where we muddle along and work harder (Strategy One above). When we take the blindfold off and truly look at what is happening inside ourselves, our families, our organizations and our social structures, it is uncomfortable. Looking at reality can inspire you to be reactive and work as hard as we can to go back into the room of satisfaction (Strategy Two above).

Over time, it turns out that this is extremely difficult to do. It is like swimming upstream; as soon as you rest, you are washed down again. The other option in this room of denial is to let the chaos shatter your old ways, challenge your long-held assumptions, let go of everything you prepared for and leave you OPEN. Open to new ways of seeing and assuming. It is only during these periods of chaos that the deepest creativity and transformation occurs. This enables us to rethink the future and reshape our relationship with the future (Strategy Three above) which eventually leads us back into the room of joy.

Some of you have read about Joe Cirulli's path to success at Gainesville Health and Fitness Club in the cover article in INC magazine this past August. In discussing how Joe operates (thinks, feels and wills) with the author of the article, Bo Burlingham, he



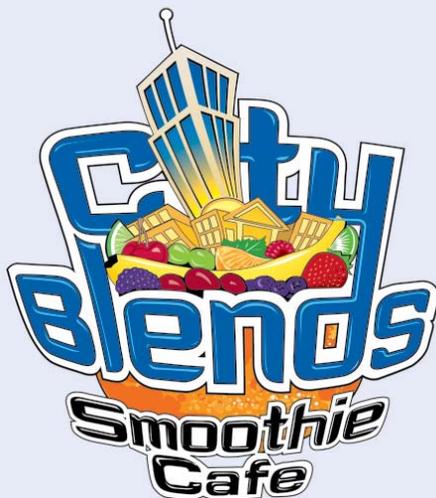
Will Phillips

places Joe in the third category above, Shaping the Future. In fact, one of the five values at GHFC is *We Shape Our Future*.

This is what Seth Godin is talking about in a more simplistic way in his new book, *Tribes* (Seth speaks at IHRSA in March 2009). He says the curious person seeks solutions by being open to new information about themselves and their world, rather than rejecting anything that does not fit. The key factor in this transformative process is not necessarily gaining new factual or perceptual information but gaining new information about yourself. This requires a totally different way of gain in the world, which is not addressed in this book but is addressed in *Theory U*, by Otto Scharmer, a partner of Peter Senge at the MIT Laboratory on organizational learning. Godin also paints a picture of the music industry which was built in the 50's and 60's on five assumptions:

- Free radio promotion
- A limited number of competing music labels
- High cost of production requiring musicians to get financing from record companies
- The top 40 stay focused on the Baby Boomer generation
- A high margin, non-reproducible medium, the LP.

As you can see, the digital age removed and weakened the strength of every one of these five assumptions, yet the music industry has found that hard to accept. They have not yet taken the blindfold of denial off. All music companies, all music labels and their enforcers, such as
(See Will Phillips Page 32)



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Lynette and I, and the talented team here, will help you reach the community you serve, and your members, in a much more effective manner than you are currently. We'll help convert leads and prospects into not just members, but members who are proud to be associated with the message you deliver.

It will be much easier than you think and much more effective than you can imagine...best of all, as we face this challenge together...we'll also considerably lower the costs you currently spend on retention and outreach efforts, at a time when you need that kind of help the most.

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Fitness Management Goes Online

MADISON, WI - Athletic Business Publications, Inc. has announced that the print and online brand, *Fitness Management*, will be consolidated as an online resource.

"Research has indicated that this market will be better served electronically," says Peter Brown, President. "More timely distribution will keep this market better informed, especially

because of *Fitness Management's* high level of online engagement, both from a reader and advertiser standpoint."

"The move online is another step in Athletic Business

Publications' commitment to best serve our advertisers, readers and conference attendees," Brown says. The magazine will be releasing a digital issue for February 2009 and then remain

an online presence. Look for new online lead generation products and other resources from both **Fitnessmanagement.com** and **Athleticbusiness.com** in the near future.

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...Will Phillips

continued from page 30

ASCAP, have chosen the reactive approach to change, trying to take things back to the old ways. They have spent huge amounts of money and energy on this and incurred the wrath of many listeners through their multitude of legal suits. Basically, they want to outlaw the changes that have taken place in music and technology over the last two decades rather than adapt.

As they squashed down the original attack from Napster, several more free music downloading and sharing sites sprang up that were even more difficult to control. When I consulted with ASCAP leaders, I found little interest in the music industry changing. The focus was on how to get back to the old ways and how to punish the musicians and listeners who are adapting and using new ways. This is not a powerful way to create a greater future.

The first step in getting out of the box is opening your mind and your heart to the challenge: **What If Everything You Have Prepared For Is Irrelevant?** And then, explore in what ways it is true for your life and your family and your business. And how, by believing

this, you gain an edge. This is one of humanity's most difficult journeys. The leaders of Enron, Arthur Anderson, Lehman Bros, Merrill, Washington Mutual, Citibank and Freddie Mac, to name few, could not move in this direction. Neither could many of the ancient heroes of Greek Mythology. All of them were struggling with the challenge of seeing reality.

Barriers to All Learning and Change

This leads to the four barriers to all change and learning; the barriers you face when you ask, "How can I get a better competitive strategy or more sales with all this new competition?"

- 1. Not Recognizing What You See** - The barrier of denial which is widespread in the club world.
- 2. Not Saying What You Think** - This is common in most gatherings of club leaders, whether in management teams or other settings.
- 3. Not Doing What You Say** - The barrier of execution.
- 4. Not Seeing What We Do** - Not being held accountable.

The true learning leader does not look at these and start thinking how good they are at each of the four barriers, but rather, how they can become better at addressing each one in themselves. Curiosity is the key. Deep curiosity...

The Challenge of Curiosity

It is difficult to become curious, when to a large extent, our parenting, our education, our schoolroom education, religious education, if any, and our work experience has largely required us not to be curious. This is one of the reasons why we often find the most creative people, and the most creative organizations, are developed by people who did not complete school. It is not that education would not have benefited them, but the suppression of curiosity would have killed their likelihood of truly being an entrepreneur. There is an interesting view that says the safest thing you can do feels risky, and the riskiest thing you can do is to play it safe.

So, What's The Answer?

If I am willing to get out of the box and take off the blindfold, what will I see? What's the answer, and of course, asking,

'What is the answer?' is like a homing beacon that says you are still in the box. To get out, you ask, 'What is the question?'

Could it be:

- What would a club look like if it was free?
- Suppose clubs were paid by how healthy its members were, how long they lived or how low their medical costs were?
- Suppose I had a club that never

needed a sales force. What would it have to look like? Has anyone ever run such a business? Who sells email? Or sex? Why don't they need to be sold?

(Will Phillips is the founder of the REX Roundtable network. REX chairs club owners round tables in the U.S., Australia, New Zealand and Brazil. Learn more at www.RexRoundtables.com. You can reach the author at Will@RexRoundtables.com)

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The Economics of Weight Management in the Health Club Industry

By: Dr. Edward M. Slover

There is little debate that, historically, the "life-blood" of the health club industry has been membership sales. It was the way businesses could increase cash flow quickly, build a solid monthly receivables base or both. As the industry has grown, and with more fitness options available to consumers than ever, health club memberships have become little more than "leased space" for gym goers, and over the long run, this challenges the ability of a facility to achieve financial viability. Now, with the turbulence of the economy resulting in the reduction of new member sales across the board, a decrease in total membership revenue requires club operators to fully understand the "Economics of Weight Management" and capitalize upon the myriad opportunities available within their businesses.

To address the Economics of Weight Management, we must first develop an operational definition of what Weight Management *is* and *is not*. Weight Management *is not* simply teaching movement patterns, as is common among personal trainers today. This practice invariably leads to the client moving on because they can either do it on their own, they stop progressing toward their goal for any number of reasons or they get comfortable with counting reps on their own. Additionally,

weight management *is not* taking a "magic" pill, joining the latest fad or making sure not to eat carbs after 6 pm. Alternatively, weight management *is* a comprehensive solution that must integrate proper food intake, cardiorespiratory activity, resistance training, dietary support and professional assistance to help someone achieve his fitness goal in the shortest amount of time. The net effect of delivering Weight Management in this manner provides a platform from which your members achieve their desired results and the foundation from which your business capitalizes on residual revenue streams.

Conceptually, understanding the Economics of Weight Management is fairly straightforward. Health club operators know that if a member gets properly integrated into their service offerings, he spends considerably more over the life of the membership than a member that does not. This is due to the residual, incremental purchases from personal training, nutritional product sales, and hopefully, "buddy" referrals. From a practical application standpoint, however, most operators do not appreciate the role and significance that, as an industry, Weight Management is a \$48+ billion per year juggernaut. All told, Weight Management-related sales are as much as three times larger than the entire health and fitness industry, and only a fraction of that total stems from

Weight Management-related revenue generated by health clubs. It is *this* opportunity that makes the Economics of Weight Management come to life!

Let's Do the Math...

Let's say, hypothetically, a club charges \$49 per month for membership dues and has a one-time enrollment fee of \$99. That equals an annualized receivable of \$687 per member. Now, let's assume that this member gets involved in Weight Management Programming with an average cost of \$50 per session. At two appointments per week, the club would generate an incremental \$1,200 over the subsequent 12-week period, almost twice as much as the original membership. As industry data suggests, clients are significantly more likely to continue working with a fitness professional if they continually progress toward their fitness goal. With that in mind, this member could generate an additional \$4,800 in annualized revenue, a seven-fold increase as compared to a membership alone! Plus, this calculation does not address ancillary revenue-generating opportunities in the form of nutritional products, which can easily average \$80-\$120 per client per month, and new member referrals, which at a minimum, leads to a new membership, but maximally, can create another recurring revenue generating opportunity. Thus, increases the revenue per member by effectively integrating Weight Management Programming goes far beyond that of selling a single membership!

From an implementation

and execution perspective, health club operators must ensure that *each* client session contains specific Weight Management-related education. A concentrated process to educate clients on approaches and strategies to Weight Management, in conjunction with focused exercise and non-exercise related physical activities, must be in place to give the client the best chance for success. If your club does not offer a Weight Management Program, numerous options exist that allow your staff to create and administer safe, accurate programs. It should be noted, however, that like anything else, your Weight Management Program is not a soda machine into which members will automatically funnel money. The recipe for successfully integrating Weight Management into your service offering lies in creating a unified vision from ownership, management, presenting simplified service offerings, implementing effective selling approaches and continually monitoring the day-to-day execution of established best practices. Otherwise, it will remain a fantastic idea that failed to live up to its potential.

With the current economic crisis in its infancy, and with economists asserting that we must brace for a lengthy "storm," the net effect of integrating Weight Management into each phase of your service offering will help "recession-proof"



Dr. Edward M. Slover

your business substantially and will enhance your business' contribution to helping people live healthier and reach their fitness goals. As the saying goes, "success begets success." As clients begin achieving their fitness goals, they experience a "cascade effect" wherein their success feeds greater success. Club operators that understand how to apply the Economics of Weight Management will reap a similar cascade effect related to residual, recurring revenue and truly achieve what it means to deliver exemplary service.

(Dr. Edward M. Slover has 12 years of diversified experience within the commercial health and fitness industry and holds a Doctorate of Management in Organizational Leadership. Presently, he works as the Manager of Licensing and Account Management for Apex Fitness, developer of bodybugg® - the World's Most Intelligent Calorie Management System. He may be reached at ed@apexfitness.com)



...Norm's Notes

continued from page 8

• Let me mention that I'm still working on preparing our "Question of the Century For The Industry" contest entry report and will have it for you in our next edition. **Stay Tuned!**

• In Atlanta, my old pal, **BEAU BOCK**, is with **790 TheZone Sportstalk Radio** as a Partner and Commentator and as their website, www.790TheZone.com, so aptly describes him, "Beau Bock is quite simply Atlanta sports personified. 'The Dean' of Atlanta sports, as he has been

dubbed, currently shares his vast experience and over-the-top personality with every program on the radio station." Beau Bock is a "Great Character" in Atlanta sports history, and we at **CLUB INSIDER** wish him well and continued success.

• Another Atlanta friend, **BILL HOUCK**, tells me he had 250 people attend the **Grand Re-Opening Party** for the **Fitness Center** at his **Brookfield Country Club** in Roswell, Georgia. And, says Mr. Bill, "the usage of the fitness center virtually doubled overnight and remains that way now." Perfect

timing **Bill!** Bill, his lovely wife, **JUDY**, and their terrific **Brookfield Country Club** staff, were the stars of our **September 2007 CLUB INSIDER Cover Story**. And, "Mr. Personality," **Bill Houck**, continues to do great things at the **Brookfield Country Club** where I am proud to be a member. See the **2007 CLUB INSIDER Archives**, coming soon at [www.clubinsideronline.com!](http://www.clubinsideronline.com)

• **LARRY METRICK, Creative Director of Metrick System**, com in Canada and I met in Atlanta with **RAY GORDON, Founder of Sales Makers** and **DOUG MILLER of Sales**

Makers International, per **Doug's** arrangement. **Larry** is a computer guru who specializes in the flash video business. **Larry**, a 20+ year club industry veteran, wrote this follow-up email to me, and I thought I would pass it on to you all because his services have a great potential for your club operation(s).

Larry wrote: "Hi Norm, The easiest way to see what I am talking about is go to www.metrickmovingpictures.com. A description of our services opens up with the launch of the URL. Under 'Portfolio' are a few examples from different industries (including one commissioned

by **IHRSA**). Our full website is www.metricksystem.com."

• **God Bless America! God Bless You, Your Family and Your Club(s)! And, very importantly, God Bless our troops, airmen and sailors fighting for us "over there!"**

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 35-year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. Cates was the Founder and is now in his 16th year as the Publisher of CLUB INSIDER. He may be reached by phone at: 770-850-8506 or email at: Norm@clubinsideronline.com)

Medical Fitness Association Provides Important *Differentiating* Tools An Interview with MFA Executive Director, Dr. Cary Wing

By: Norm Cates

The Medical Fitness Association, based in Richmond, Virginia, is revving up its offerings and seeking to spread the word about new club/fitness center opportunities and tools for commercial clubs to *differentiate* themselves in their respective marketplaces. **CLUB INSIDER** contacted Dr. Cary Wing, the Executive Director of MFA to learn more, and that interview follows. We are also pleased to welcome the MFA as a new advertiser, so please check out the new **MFA Ad** below.

Cary Wing has a Master's Degree from New York University in Physical Education and Support, with a concentration in Fitness Management and a Doctoral Degree in Applied Physiology from Columbia University in 1992. She's been involved in almost everything on the clinical side of the industry.

She started out in the late 1970's as an aerobics instructor at the YWCA. Then, she became Health Promotions Director for the local YWCA. Later, she went on and was the Director of a physician-owned cardiac rehabilitation clinic for 10 years and also worked in a physical therapy practice. After that, she began to provide start-up assistance for health and fitness centers and assistance in opening cardiac rehab centers for hospitals. She opened one for Northern Dutchess Hospital near Poughkeepsie, New York. She then became Director of Rehab and Wellness for the Hospital Corporation of America (HCA) hospital in Orlando, Florida and opened a women's health and fitness center there. Heading back to Virginia, she was the Director of the Riverside Briarwood facility in Richmond, and they had close to 8,000 members. In 2001, MFA was reorganizing, and she joined them and has been with the

MFA since then. Her background is diverse and has allowed her to provide both management and operational experience in a clinical setting, allowing her to talk the talk with people.

An Interview With Dr. Cary Wing

CLUB INSIDER (C.I.) - Cary, first let me ask a question of you that stems from my review prior to this interview of the MFA website, www.medicalfitness.org. There, it says, "MFA is 100% focused on medical fitness and is the first association to have focused on hospital fitness and wellness. Medical fitness is our #1 mission and our only mission." So Cary, for our readers, "*What is medical fitness?*"

Cary Wing (CW) - (Laughing out loud) I should have known you were going to ask me that question! That actually has been a challenge for our organization in

the past. I, and all of us here, know what medical fitness is, but to be able to explain it to club owners is sometimes a challenge. That is one reason that, about three years ago, we developed our "MFA Standards and Guidelines" so we could define medical fitness. It's really talking about *integrated care* as a *prescription for better health*. And, that has a lot to do with developing programs and services for individuals who (1) have no current disease risk, (2) are at risk now and (3) do have disease(s) now.

It's providing programs and services for the general fitness population, but then, having the medical oversight; the integration of services, such as dietician, physician referral patterns, rehab and being able to identify people with disease; and being able to do something about it. I think what people begin to think about the organization, or the term medical fitness when



Dr. Cary Wing

they hear it, is that our medical fitness centers are *just for* people who need rehab, whether it's cardiac or rehab a shoulder. But, it's not that at all. It's looking at the individual. They may not have any risk factors at all, and they may just want to find out about their chances of developing risk factors. They want to be in
 (See Dr. Cary Wing Page 35)

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The Medical Fitness Association (MFA) Announces the First Annual Medical Fitness Institute

Richmond, Virginia - February 1, 2009 - The Medical Fitness Association (MFA) has announced the first annual Medical Fitness Institute. The event will take place June 11-14, 2009 at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN.

The Medical Fitness Institute (MFI) will address the growing need for educated, talented individuals to manage medically integrated health

and fitness centers. The three-day program will highlight a variety of topics directly related to the operational success of medical fitness centers and the development of industry leaders for this growing field. The seminars will focus on the medical fitness model and medically-integrated facilities and will include marketing, recruiting and retention of staff, clinical integration, aspects of

the medical fitness difference, facility certification and strategic planning.

Graduates of the program will have the opportunity to participate in a year-long mentorship program. Industry leaders will be assigned MFI graduates providing input and motivation to assist in the implementation of the MFI curriculum over the course of the next year.

"This program represents an important step in driving forward the medical fitness industry," said John Caliri, Director, FirstHealth Centers for Health & Fitness, Pinehurst, NC. "The Institute will provide managers, directors and rising-star employees who are soon to be managers with the information, training, and resources they need to be effective and skilled leaders. By

having industry leaders guide the graduates through the year with the mentorship program, we can ensure that the future leaders of our industry have the knowledge and experience to succeed."

For more information on the event, please visit www.medicalfitness.org.



...Dr. Cary Wing
continued from page 34

an environment where they know there is a Medical Director or Advisory Board. So, I think that

one of the challenges for us as an organization is to make sure that people understand that our centers are not just rehab centers.

C.I. - Cary, let's talk about

MFA's newly launched facility certification program.

CW - Norm, it all started several years ago when we developed our standards and guidelines with the idea of defining the medical fitness industry. So, we did that, and they have been received very well. Just about the same time, we decided it would be really helpful for the industry to have Medical Fitness Center Certifications so that they could define who they are, set themselves apart from other centers who don't have integrated care, don't have a medical director and don't have risk assessments. We started the development of certifications two years ago, and in early 2008, we ran a pilot study. We had four facilities that were in the pilot. We looked at different facility sizes, and we had a very small facility and a large facility. We tried to have a good sampling of different types of facilities. We were successful with that, and in July 2008, we rolled out and launched the first medical fitness center certification

C.I. - You, I and over 12,000 other club owners/operators/managers from around the world, will convene in San Francisco, March 16-19th. First, let me say that I believe any club operation in America will benefit greatly for many reasons by being an IHRSA Member Club. In addition, existing clubs should always keep their IHRSA Membership and Non-IHRSA Clubs should really look into and become IHRSA Member Clubs. So, my question is related to IHRSA Club Owners. Why should IHRSA Club owners continue their IHRSA Membership and also consider adding a Medical Fitness Association membership, as well? **CW** - Well Norm, I think they need

to look at the Mission Statement for their facility. And, that's one of the things that we added to the certification application, and the certification, after we completed the pilot tests. It's very important to know what the mission of the facility is. If their mission is to *improve the health status of their community*, the medical fitness model can help them. It can provide guidelines for physician referrals to help clubs build relationships with physicians in the community. They will be able to do that because they have these standards and guidelines that we like to see as sort of another level; a level where you do have a medical director or advisory board linked to your club/center. You do have a system for health risk assessments, and when you do those health risk assessments, you *do something with the information*. You are looking at *outcomes*. When someone joins our club, *do they see success in six months?* So, it would give them an opportunity to really *define themselves as a facility that goes a step beyond*. A step where they can provide programs and services to include improving the health of the community and to work with physicians and clinicians locally.

C.I. - So Cary, I write about and report a lot on the important concept of *differentiation* for clubs and fitness centers. To me, the MFA provides an *instant opportunity to differentiate their clubs from many other club/fitness centers in their respective marketplaces*. Am I on target with this comment?

CW - Yes, Norm. Exactly. And, for example, Phil Wendel's Atlantic Coast Athletic Clubs in Charlottesville, Virginia have received the Medical Fitness

Association Certification.

C.I. - Well, that's great Cary! Phil is one of the leading edge club operators in the world, and we plan to reach out to him and the ACAC's for a cover story in the very near future. Phil also has been committing his time and energy to serve IHRSA and the entire industry as a member of the IHRSA Board of Directors.

CW - Norm, from my perspective, I just want your readers to know that the medical fitness industry is a growing industry, and I think that is what we've seen as an organization when we did our benchmarks for 2008. The numbers show that it's growing, and there is no indication that it is going to stop growing. It doesn't seem to be static at all. I think a lot of facilities across the country are seeing that the medical fitness model can be very positive for them, and there are tools there that they can use to reach out to their community.

C.I. - Thanks to Dr. Cary Wing, Executive Director of the Medical Fitness Association for her time for this interview and for MFA joining our **CLUB INSIDER Advertising Team!**

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 35-year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. Cates was the Founder and is now in his 16th year as the Publisher of CLUB INSIDER. He was IHRSA's 1st President, and a Co-founder of the Association with Rick Caro and five others, in 1981. In March, 2001, IHRSA honored Cates with its DALE DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award, one of IHRSA's highest honors. Cates may be reached by phone at: 770-850-8506 or email at: Norm@clubinsideronline.com)

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IHRSA Launches New, Expanded 2008 Profiles of Success Comprehensive Resource Provides Insight into Performance of Health Clubs

BOSTON, MA - January 21, 2009 - The International Health Racquet and Sportsclub Association (IHRSA) announced the recent release of the 27th annual *2008 IHRSA Profiles of Success*, a snapshot of the annual performance of leading clubs within the health and fitness club industry.

The *2008 Profiles of Success* is based upon 2007 data provided by leading IHRSA member club companies in the U.S. and Canada. This data is collected through a voluntary online survey in March every year. The report provides financial and operating performance metrics for several types of commercial health and sports clubs.

Companies in this study reported median revenue of \$2.26 million in 2007 and median growth in revenue of 6%. Further analysis of the study's data confirms the strong growth of health clubs' top line, as median revenue across all respondents

grew by 7.5%, from \$2.10 million in 2006 to \$2.26 million in 2007. This growth in revenue is driven by a combination of growth in membership, and in total, spending per member, from \$675.00 in 2006 to \$698.00 in 2007. Across all respondents, the median membership growth was 1.9%, while revenue per member grew at 3.4%, and non-dues revenue grew by 3.4%.

"While the nation's economy slowed, unemployment rose and consumers cut their discretionary spending, health clubs in aggregate in this study enjoyed higher revenue and operating profit," as reported by Katie Rollauer, IHRSA's Senior Manager of Research.

Despite the strong growth in sales, operating profitability as measured by earnings before interest, taxes and debt, grew more slowly. The median of reported EBITDA values for 2007 was 17.3%, up by 3.6% from the 16.7% median reported

for 2006. And after accounting for debt, depreciation, and amortization, companies report median pre-tax earnings of 7.2%.

"Even with solid sales growth and maintaining pre-tax earnings year over year, it is important for club operators to examine expenses and make adjustments in order to be in a strong position moving into 2009," mentions Rollauer.

Threatened with a shortage of capital and broad economic slowdown, health club management has managed membership retention rates closely. In this year's study, respondents report a median member retention rate of 75.4%.

"This year's median member retention rate --75.4%-- represents an extension of member loyalty that will help carry health clubs through the difficult economic times ahead," reports Rollauer.

Even though the report contains data from calendar

year 2007, it is important for club operators to evaluate and fully understand their individual business segments. "Savvy club operators have used this report to compare their business performance in relation to industry benchmarks in order to identify profit centers and minimize expenses going forward," said Rollauer.

The 2008 report contains new expanded features, including an in-depth analysis of the state of the industry and club company income statement and balance sheet data. Highlights of the 2008 Profiles of Success - Expanded Analysis Features include:

•**Industry in Review** - Reviews leading club companies, publicly traded fitness clubs, growing franchises, mergers and acquisitions, membership demographics, member attendance, and consumer participation.

•**Benchmark and Financial Per-**

formance Analysis - Analysis of financial performance by club type and size, membership growth and traffic, club pricing, and income statement/balance sheet data.

•**Workbook Section** - Provides club operators opportunity to compare their clubs' financial performance with similar leading club companies.

The 2008 IHRSA Profiles of Success may be purchased in full or in sections at the newly designed IHRSA online store, www.ihrsastore.com. The entire PDF can be purchased for \$399.95 (or \$199.95 for IHRSA members) or as individual parts for \$139.95 (or \$69.95 for IHRSA members) each.

For more information or questions, contact IHRSA Public Relations at pr@ihrsa.org, or call 617-951-0055.

IHRSA Announces 3rd Quarter Index from 17 Leading U.S. Club Companies

BOSTON, MA. - January 26, 2009 - The International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association (IHRSA) announced today the release of the IHRSA Third Quarter Index, which demonstrates the financial performance of the commercial health club industry. The survey of 17 leading U.S. health and sports club companies, representing a total of 200 facilities, determined that commercial health club financial performance has slightly improved for the third quarter ending September 30, 2008, relative to the same period last year.

The IHRSA Index reports that health club companies maintained performance from 3Q07 to 3Q08 in company sales by an increase of 1.0%. This moderate growth was led by an increase in membership dues, 3.8% from 3Q07 to 3Q08, while non-dues revenue held at 0.1% during the same periods. Total membership accounts also increased by 1.5% over 3Q07.

Clubs were able to maintain EBITDAR* as a percent

of total revenue from 3Q07 to 3Q08 to 31%. Despite this steady performance in percent of total revenues, total EBITDAR dropped 3.9% from \$1.43 million in 3Q07 to \$1.38 million in 3Q08. "It is a concern that expenses appear to be creeping up for clubs within this sample while the country is in the midst of a recession. We will look to the fourth quarter Index, as it should shed more light on club expenses," said Katie Rollauer, IHRSA's Senior Manager of Research.

Same-store revenue experienced marginal growth during this time frame. Same-store total revenue increased slightly to \$5 million or an increase of 1.0% 3Q07 to 3Q08. Again, this growth was fueled by same-store membership revenue increasing to 1.4% over 3Q07, while same-store non-dues revenue increased a negligible 0.8%, over 3Q07. Same-store total membership accounts also increased by a modest 0.6% over 3Q07. "It is most likely that improved performance

for some companies has been due to new club openings and entrance into new consumer markets, while mature sites have experienced more moderate growth, potentially attributable to increasing dues prices, compared 3Q07," reflects Rollauer.

Clubs are still reporting, on average, 28% of total revenues being generated from non-dues sales. "It is encouraging to see that clubs are successfully selling non-dues related items such as personal training, apparel, tennis lessons, etc. even when consumers are tightening their discretionary spending," said Rollauer.

Note: Data reflects information for 17 leading U.S. health and sport club companies representing 200 facilities. Same-store revenue data reflects clubs that have been in operation for at least two years. Participating companies reported owning/managing an average of 12 facilities (same-store count average of 5 facilities). Data is intended to provide a snapshot of U.S. health

club industry performance; however, results are based on a small sample of companies and care should be taken when making comparisons of these findings to the overall industry-at-large. Industry Insights, Inc conducted the survey for IHRSA.

***EBITDAR:** Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, amortization and rent. The "% Change" reflects the percentage change from one quarter to the next in the group's overall mean/

...Ray Gordon

continued from page 7

succeed in changing at least some part of their unhealthy lifestyle.

Members are the reward you receive for the efforts you render. The more you impress them, the greater the value of the membership. Thinking of ways you can make a greater impression will not only help you earn more money, it will also enable your club to grow in reputation and community awareness. It is

how you can outperform your competitors. Don't worry about what the competitors are doing, yet be aware of their pricing and advertisements but don't always react by lowering dues and reducing staff. Instead, create ways to introduce your future members to your club.

**Thrive vs Survive!
 Make It Happen!!!**

(Ray Gordon may be reached at rayg@salesmakers.com)



Announcing the IHRSA 2009 PRICE FREEZE

**You need a great Convention and Trade Show.
You need economic relief.
IHRSA gives you both.**

IHRSA 2009 is shaping up to be one of the most important events to date in the fitness industry. As we deal with global economic uncertainty, this is our chance to come together to share and to learn new metrics for success in a changed global economy.

IHRSA understands that you are looking to control your expenses, and we want to be sure that this year's Convention & Trade Show is a great value. We are committed to making this year's Convention & Trade Show a great success and a true value for you. These are the steps we are taking:

CONVENTION PRICE FREEZE

We are freezing registration rates at the January 15 level for all Convention registration packages. Special group discounts are available for five or more. The price freeze applies to all registrations **received by March 13, 2009**.

Rates through March 13:

- Four Days - \$675
- One Day - \$450
- Social Pass - \$300
- Executive Pass - \$500
- Trade Show Pass - \$25

TRADE SHOW PRICE FREEZE

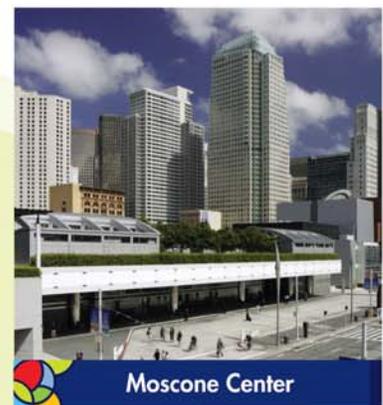
We are freezing registration rates at the January 15 level for Trade Show passes as well through March 13. Pay only \$25 for a three-day pass.

REGISTER TODAY!

To register or for more details, visit ihrsa.org/convention or contact Nicole Johnson, nj@ihrsa.org or call 1-800-228-4772. For even bigger savings, take advantage of our group discount program!

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Is Attitude Everything? Yes It Is!

By: Jeffrey Keller, M.S., M.B.A.

When approached about my educational history, many people give me a puzzled look when I say that my focus during business school was Leadership. For most, accounting is an understandable major. Marketing is an understandable major. Even finance is an understandable major. But, when you tell people that your major was "leadership," it throws them for a loop. It is an area of focus that, for the most part, escapes most formal learning curricula, but people toss the word around like it was a normal part of everyone's vocabulary. Everyone thinks they know what it is, but few actually do. The truth is, leadership is very difficult to fully characterize, but if you had to sum it up in one word, that word would be **Attitude**.

"Ability is what you're capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it."

- Lou Holtz

Why is Attitude So Important?

Here's the unbelievable thing about leadership. For all the books, seminars, newsletters, tips and posters about leadership, very little is spoken about *Attitude*. Sure, consultants and educators will tell you that you have to keep a good *Attitude*, but it pretty much stops there. The reason: *Attitude* can't be taught... at least not in a traditional sense. So, *Attitude* takes a backseat to other things that can be taught in mass.

Leadership has three major components; knowledge, skills and attitude. *Knowledge* is what we know about leadership. It involves the known impact --good and bad-- leadership can have on an individual or organization. There's a ton of research on it. *Skills* are the abilities we pick up through learning, whether on the job, in training or at a retreat or seminar. These are abilities like active listening, conflict resolution or delegation proficiency. You can find a million websites out there, and probably more than a few thousand books, teaching this skill or that skill or all the skills necessary to supposedly be a

good leader. However, *Attitude* is different. It comes from who we are. It is learned over the years but not through any textbook or traditional learning medium. It is the sum of our beliefs, feelings, morals and experiences. *Attitude* is the spark for the fire that is leadership. *Knowledge* and *Skills* are nothing more than logs, and as any good Boy Scout will tell you, all you need is one decent log and a really good spark, and you're cookin' dinner.

"Managers are people who do things right. Leaders are people who do the right thing."

- Warren Bennis

What is the Difference Between Management and Leadership?

If the difference between the two isn't inherently obvious, here's the sarcastic response for the day: Managers manage, Leaders lead. The main focus of management is to maintain consistency and standardization for organizations. It is all about stabilizing situations. In a nutshell, it's about putting out fires. Leadership, on the other hand, is inherently progressive. It is all about guidance towards adaptive and constructive change. So, how does *Attitude* fit into these definitions? Well, most people will tell you that you don't necessarily have to have a positive *Attitude* to put out fires. In fact, if you constantly berate people, you'll probably be pretty effective at keeping the status quo out of shear fear. However, if you want to martial the forces to move forward, a positive *Attitude* will come in handy if you expect anyone to follow you.

"Leaders take people where they want to go. Great leaders take people where they don't necessarily want to go, but ought to."

- Rosalyn Carter

So, Why is Attitude So Important for the Future of the Health Club Industry?

The health club industry is at a standstill. Some may even argue that the health club industry is regressing. Only 14% of America is utilizing our services while better than 60%

of America needs our services. Using U.S. population estimates for 2008, we are not providing a convincing product for nearly 140 million Americans who need us, know they need us, and yet, refuse to utilize what we have to offer. Why is that? In one word, the reason is *Attitude*. Those 140 million people view us as having *Attitude* but not in a good way. They view us as being high on endorphins wanting to force healthy, tasteless foods on them, only to drain their wallets of their hard earned paychecks. That's the *Attitude* they see from us, and it has to change if we are to survive as an industry.

"There are two ways of exerting one's strength; one is pushing down, the other is pulling up."

- Booker T. Washington

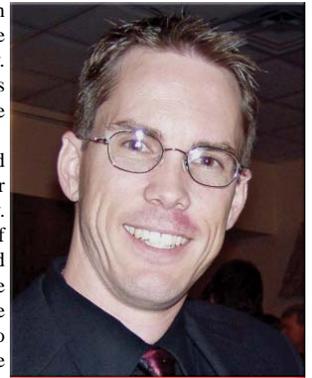
What's the Answer? Get Your Attitude in Check

First of all, in this industry, we are only as good as our employees. No bones about it. Say what you will about stripped down business models with very little payroll. Health clubs are about the *experience*, and you need great people to produce a great experience, not just keys to the door. So, if we are to progress towards motivating some of those 140 million people out there, we had better treat our employees right. This doesn't necessarily mean paying them more money, though a bigger paycheck will make many people happy, but rather, it means that we need to care about them. We need to care about their personal and professional development as well as how much money they're making us. We need to invest in their wellbeing as much as our own. How many of your personal trainers do you see in your club walking the floors, making calls, and training clients, but they don't seem to find time for their own workouts anymore? It's more common than you think, and guess what... It has an impact on them and our industry in a tremendous way. A little encouragement for them to do what they know is right for themselves goes a long way. It shows we care. Our employees are the face of our clubs, and if we

don't pay attention to them, listen to them, and actively motivate them, we're done. End of story. We might as well close our doors now and save ourselves the time and frustration.

However, leadership and *Attitude* with respect to our employees are only half the story. How about turning the notion of *Attitude* and leadership outward from your club and into the community? Bring the positive *Attitude* for a healthy lifestyle to the public, not because they're going to instantly be inspired to join your club, but because it's the right thing to do. Do it unselfishly, with the same enthusiasm and passion that got you into this industry. Do it because, if we don't engage those 140 million Americans with sincerity and genuineness, we are in trouble.

We, as an industry, need to think progressively. We need to adapt to the public and offer something they want, not just something they need. We need to drop the bad, sell-it-any-way-we-can *Attitude* and support a positive change *Attitude*. We need to focus on not just selling the experience, but re-creating the experience, because apparently, the current experience we're selling isn't inspiring them to join. We need to prove we have their best interest in mind, not just our own. We need to invest in our members, our potential members, and all the people who aren't even sitting on the fence. In essence, we need to pay it forward, and the law of



Jeffrey Keller

pay it forward is we have to pay something substantial to reap any reward; that substantial something is changing our *Attitude*.

"A good head and a good heart are a formidable combination."

- Nelson Mandela

We are poised to do something special. Walk into your club every day with the deep seeded belief that you, your staff, and what you provide has as much to do with the success of this industry as any corporate CEO. If you don't believe that right now, figure out why and fix it. Only then will this industry achieve what it has the capacity to achieve.

(Jeffrey Keller, MBA, MS is the General Manager of Eagle Point Recreation Complex outside of Houston, Texas. Jeff may be reached by email at jeffrey_keller@msn.com)

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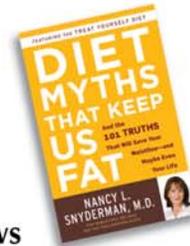
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Making the World a Better Place, One Community at a Time

By: Andrea Sobotka

We've always known that the fitness industry was worthy of holding a special place in the hearts of communities. If you have managed to accomplish this in your community, then kudos to you and your team! The reality, however, is that over the years, just like other industry sectors, health clubs and fitness businesses have become "silos" within their communities caught up in the day-to-day grind of running and managing what goes on inside the business. There is a shift happening in the world... can you feel it? It's a pretty big shift, and more importantly, it's a wake up call telling us all that it is time to start thinking "WE" instead of "ME". Your bottom line depends on it.

Now is the time for our industry to really shine! It's not just about becoming one of the good guys.... it's very much about survival, success and growth. Let's begin by reaffirming all the obvious reasons we are **GREAT** for a community:

•We teach, encourage and

promote health and fitness

- We foster strong bodies, hearts and minds
- We develop professional and qualified fitness staff
- We provide employment opportunity
- We provide safe environments for members to let their guard down and work on the "self" for an hour or two
- We are conveniently located
- We appeal to every age group and a broad demographic
- Our product will never be obsolete.

And, of course, I could go on and on. Now is the time to take what you have to offer to the community. Stop waiting for it to come to you. It is no secret that some of the most successful health club operators have become integral members of their community, and in doing so, have hit on the wave of the future of doing business through organic networking and giving back from the heart. For simplicity sake, we'll call this focus on the community, "marketing," and in the next few paragraphs, I will suggest some ways that you can

become a bigger part of your community, thus, making your club "top of mind" when the question of wellness, health and fitness comes up.

Volunteering

There are many organizations in every community ranging from food banks to youth groups to churches. They all need real manpower to keep their missions going. I know everybody is super busy, but 2 to 4 hours a week can make a world of difference to a group that provides free and vital services. That hour spent can make the entire day bright for a child, animal or senior that might benefit from those services or your time directly. When choosing a group to volunteer your services for, take into consideration:

1. What skill sets or resources do you have that you could contribute with?
2. What causes are, or could be, close to your heart?

Stay inside your community if you can, for both

convenience sake and for serving your community directly. What time of the day, week or month can you free up a little time? How much time are you willing to give initially? Start small. You can always up your hours if you find you are really enjoying your volunteering venture.

Join a Non Profit Group

There are several organizations in every community that are comprised of everything from Moms to War Vets to Alumni or to Business Owners. Most of these groups are an excellent venue for networking and sharing of ideas for both business and social purposes. Even better, many organizations, such as some local Chamber of Commerce groups, will offer its members excellent business workshops and training resources that are headed up by the efforts of other members and business leaders with expertise in particular fields relevant to the group. Although many of these organized groups have a large focus on business networking and resources, they usually have a charitable focal point and pet



Andrea Sobotka

projects for the group members to participate in or support financially. Giving back is a culture, not a chore.

Start by asking around your client base and even get an invitation to visit, speak at or join a group. So you don't have to look in the phone book, here are a few suggestions; Lions Club, Rotary, Kiwanis, Knights of Columbus, Toastmasters, Professional Women's Clubs, Sister City Groups, and, of course, a whole slew of recreational-focused groups. Join something!
 (See *Andrea Sobotka* Page 41)

Fitness Fundraisers Can Drive Hundreds of Qualified Prospects Through Your Door At No Cost To You...Saving You Thousands!

If you are like most fitness facility owners and operators, you are constantly striving to increase your membership base. Unless you are in a very unique and fortunate situation where you have no need to market, you are most likely spending hundreds, maybe even thousands of dollars, on marketing media such as newspaper, direct mail, radio, television and more...all in an attempt to increase your membership. While these can be effective ways to acquire new members, using traditional marketing strategies can also be extremely expensive and only targets the 12% to 14% of a market per IHRSA statistics.

The Fitness Fundraiser program is an innovative new approach to marketing that will...

- ★ Reduce the need to market using expensive media...saving you thousands!
- ★ Have prospects pouring through your doors...
- ★ Increase your market penetration!
- ★ Dramatically boost your bottom line, and...
- ★ Make you a hero in your community!

Fitness Fundraisers is a unique marketing program that drives valuable traffic to your door while at the same time, allowing you to directly support many charitable fundraising efforts in your community. The key to this unique opportunity is **SIMPLICITY!** At Fitness Fundraisers, we have made it incredibly easy for both fitness facilities and fundraising organizations, to participate in this fantastic "win-win" program. At Fitness Fundraisers we provide both participating fitness facilities and fundraising organizations with a complete turn-key system...everything that you will need to make this program a huge success.

And there's MORE...

In addition to providing both the participating Fitness Facilities AND the Fundraising organizations with an array of professional, full color printed materials, marketing pieces, and a wide range of web plus live support, we also provide our participating Fitness Facilities with...

- ★ A comprehensive 4 Step Sales Training and Implementation program
- ★ Front desk and new member service coaching.
- ★ A Fitness Fundraiser Area Representative to directly assist in marketing efforts to secure Fundraising Organizations.
- ★ Access to a web resource center for 24/7 training and marketing materials, PLUS...
- ★ MARKET EXCLUSIVITY!

In today's competitive market, isn't it time to get an edge?

If you are a community minded, well run co-ed Fitness Facility, can you afford NOT to participate in the Fitness Fundraisers program? To learn more and be THE Fitness Facility in YOUR community to participate in this incredible marketing program contact us at:

1-866-855-5484

Or e-mail us at

info@fitnessfundraisers.com

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The Joy of the Sales and Retention Connection

By: Karen Woodard-Chavez

Most of us in the health and fitness business experience something unique and fortunate every day... We truly love our work. How many people do you know who go to work every day and don't love or look forward to their work? Instead, they are a slave to their paycheck? I have worked in this industry since 1983 and have done some consulting outside of this industry as well. My experience consulting in other industries shows me that we who work in this business are indeed a happy and inspiring bunch.

Okay, now that we have patted ourselves on the back and agree that we are fortunate to do the work we do, it is now time to address what drives us and how it can effect revenue and retention at our facilities.

What does drive you personally? Have you defined it? Most of us have an idea but have not defined it or documented it. For me, it varies a bit, from year to year, in how I approach my goals. I use acronyms quite a bit because they are simple and easy to remember. For example, last year the acronym

that supported my goals was AID - Authentic, Inspired and Discipline which allowed me to hit the goals that I had defined for myself in a way that allowed me to stay true to myself. This year, my focus word is "Joy". I want to make sure that I do experience joy each and everyday rather than get caught up in only reaching all of my other goals. What will drive you to reach your goals this year individually and as a club?

At our clubs, our feeling of "Joy" about our work is somewhat unconscious for many of us. I encourage all of you reading this article to make "Joy" a very conscious part of how we deliver our contribution on a daily basis. One of the ways to do this is to consider our primary and secondary purpose at the club. There is often times confusion about the primary and secondary purpose. Here is what I mean: most staff believes their primary purpose is the job description that they were given, such as being a reception person, tennis pro, fitness trainer, group fitness instructor, child care attendant, manager, membership person or housekeeping. The tasks of the job description are actually

the *secondary* purpose. The *primary* purpose, regardless of the position in a joyful club, will always be the following for **every** position:

"To create and deepen relationships with Members we know, and do not yet know, that will add value to their membership, enhance their sense of belonging and community within the club."

This statement is the primary purpose for every staff person. My experience shows me that this is not clear to all staff people. If this is the case at your club, then perhaps some redefining of job descriptions needs to occur by adding this to each and every job description as the number one, primary purpose followed by the "tasks" of the position. Then, perhaps some retraining of the staff needs to happen so they know how to deliver their primary purpose. It is not always obvious to all staff how to deliver this, thus the need for training.

Once the staff is clear on this fact, the primary purpose of their role, they will start getting more "Joy" from their job, and more importantly, giving more "Joy"

to each other as staff and to the Members. When this happens, an extra measure of "value" becomes apparent to both the staff and Members. This creates a stronger connection to the club. Especially now, in challenging times for many people financially and emotionally, the added value of receiving "Joy" is something that most people cherish because much of it has been drained from their lives due to loss, reversal or worry. What a "big-gun-competitive-edge" you can create with three simple letters: *J. O. Y.* The investment in doing so is next to nothing and the ROI has huge potential.

I encourage you to take a look at your business and determine if there is confusion among your staff as to what their primary and secondary purposes are. Discuss this with them. Then, take the time to *redefine, retrain and remind consistently* so that this initiative becomes a signature habit in your business. Once that occurs, you will see a change in retention as well as new sales as your community seeks a place that offers more than simply a place to exercise, but in addition, a place that truly offers a sense of "Joy" each and every day.



Karen Woodard-Chavez

*(Karen D. Woodard is President of Premium Performance Training in Boulder, Colorado and Ixtapa, GRO, Mexico. She is an international author, speaker and consultant and provides successful marketing, sales, service and management training as well as consulting to the health and fitness industry. Karen has owned and operated six clubs since 1985 and now devotes her time entirely to consulting, developing staff training materials, research, writing, speaking and consulting. She can be contacted at **Karen@karenwoodard.com**)*

...Andrea Sobotka

continued from page 40

You might even find it's a nice outlet and you might have FUN! And the BEST part is that you will meet new people, get to know your business neighbors and gain the opportunity to spread your credibility and expertise beyond the front doors of your club.

Host a Local Event

By now, you are probably hollering, "enough already! I don't have time!" Well, "Delegation" is a beautiful thing; you don't have to be Atlas here. Yes, you know those big events that go on in your town such as; Turkey Trots, Half Marathons, Run for the Cure, Car Rallies, Easter Egg Hunts, Toy and Food Drives... *yes those* events. I suggest that you start today by lobbying to host one or two of these events on an annual basis. It is a time commitment, and maybe a space and/or resource commitment, on your part... but think about it. **SOMEBODY** has to step up to the plate to host and run these things, otherwise, we'd

all just shrivel up into our own little self-centered worlds. These events are what really bring a community together. You have the energy; you have people to help you, and most importantly, a community that will appreciate you so much for doing this! If you are getting tired just thinking about spending all this time and energy, just think of the eyes, ears, and hearts that will be tuned into your business just for being a community leader for a day or weekend. But, if you decide to do this, put your heart into it and your true intent will be felt on the receiving end. A good heart attracts good energy.

Make a Donation

This one is easy because you are probably asked **ALL THE TIME** for a donation to this or a donation to that, whether it be actual hard cash or a membership for a silent auction. These donations are very important because it directly supports your community, but choose what you donate to wisely, and keep track! Not just for tax purposes, but so that you can actually be proactive and beat 'em

to the punch next year. Imagine if you called them instead of waiting for them to call you! Or, you may want to develop a policy of rotating whom you donate to from year to year in order to "be fair." You may also have a set budget for cash donations, and you need to be clear on relaying what is or is not within your budget.

Although the donation option seems the easiest, it can also cause the most anxiety because you actually have to give something out of pocket. You **FEEEEEL** it, plus, most operators tend to think in terms of ROI. Unfortunately, the ROI on spot donations are usually small to nil (because there is so little personal/social involvement!), yet monetarily cost you the most.



A GREAT solution to the donation option is a program called Fitness Fundraisers. Yes, I might be biased, but it IS a great solution to every good club operator's dilemma of needing LOTS of qualified traffic, giving back to the community in a BIG way, while not physically having to spend a dime and yet being responsible for helping local fundraising organizations raise THOUSANDS of dollars. This program **FEELS GOOD!** You **WILL** get attention, and the Community **WILL** appreciate you! Through this very special program, not only do you support multiple great causes in your community big time, but hundreds of people will be introduced to healthier lifestyles because of YOU... and they are brought right to your business to lead the way. Of course, there are even more benefits to you and everyone involved, but you can visit **www.fitnessfundraisers.com** to learn more.

The Bottom Line

The bottom line is what goes around truly comes around. If you are willing to give selflessly

and patiently from the heart, the universe rewards you. It is time to start thinking and acting as a "member of a great tribe," so to speak, instead of "every man for himself". Surviving the economic AND social shift depends on this important culture change. You and I are blessed to be in an industry that can make a big impact on the need for changing the way we live and the way we interact as a social AND business community. If fitness businesses everywhere made it a standard practice to become a big part of their community by getting involved in anything and everything that directly supports that community, then as an industry, not only will we thrive and grow, but we can make the whole world a better, healthier, stronger place... one community at a time.

*(Andrea Sobotka, in partnership with her husband, Rick, is the Co-Founder and Co-owner of Fitness Club Success and Fitness Fundraisers. Andrea may be reached by phone at: **866-855-5484** and by email at: **Fitnessclubsuccess.com**)*

Are Your Web Leads Falling Through the Cracks?

By: Casey Conrad

Every club operator I talk with believes the Internet is an important part of how they should be finding more prospects and selling more memberships. Unfortunately, most operators are unknowingly letting hundreds or thousands of eLeads fall through the cracks (an "eLead" is any lead you obtain through using the Internet). This article will outline several of the biggest mistakes club operators are making with attracting and capturing web leads into membership sales.

Attracting Visitors

Getting eLeads requires that people somehow reach you on the Internet. Although there are many different ways in which that can happen, this article will focus on situations where people are visiting your website.

There are two primary types of visitors to your clubs' site: (1) those that are actually looking for your business and (2) those who find you through an Internet search. There are often significant differences in what each of these visitors are looking for on your site. Not providing the right information can dramatically decrease the success of turning a visitor into a prospect. Let me explain.

Obviously, someone who was looking for your specific health club knew you existed. Maybe they saw an ad, drove by the club or heard about your club from a friend. Regardless of how they know about your business, this prospect often has a different "sales" frame of mind than someone who is unaware of your business.

First of all, a prospect who has some knowledge of your business may trust you more, especially if you have been around for some years, or they were a referral. Second, they are coming to the website to learn more about your health club. That may be a blinding flash of the obvious, but it is an important distinction; *this visitor is proactively thinking about joining a health club*. Therefore, they are farther down the behavioral change process, hence closer to making a buying decision.

Contrast that thought

process with someone who finds your site through an Internet search, "Starting a fitness program in Wakefield, RI." The former is looking for club details while the latter may be searching for general fitness information but has no intention of joining a health club.

Here's where this distinction is important. Most club websites only have information about the facility; rarely do they provide visitors with educational information about fitness basics --how to start, pitfalls to avoid and specific health issues and how exercise can improve or eliminate those problems, etc. The result is that visitors who find your website, but are not yet ready to consider joining or even clicking on for a free guest pass, aren't staying on your site, and they certainly aren't sharing their contact information with you because the site is "all about your club."

When your site is nothing more than an online brochure for the club, you are letting many, many potential leads fall through the cracks. Conversely, sites that provide visitors with information that helps them understand and solve their problems gains trust and respect. Once a visitor likes and trusts a site because of the content it provides, they will be much more apt to do business with that company now or sometime in the future.

There's another important benefit of having health and fitness content on your clubs' website; content drives search engine optimization (someone finding you when they type in key words or a sentence). In fact, you can pay a Webmaster thousands of dollars to "optimize" your site, but those strategies have limited success and are almost always short-term. Content, on the other hand, is what drives the search engine rankings and keeps them high.

In order to maximize the possibility that all kinds of prospects find your club's website, you need to do the following things:

- Make sure your URL (domain name) is on everything you produce --not just advertising and marketing materials.
- Add meaningful and current

health and fitness content to your website. Make sure it is the type of information your "client profile" is seeking and that it gives them solutions to their most pressing concerns and questions.

- Add multiple types of media content --articles (text), audio and video.
- Find ways to get links in and out of your site, making sure they are "enhancing" your topic/content, not detracting from it.
- Although it has lower importance to search engines nowadays, be certain that your Webmaster has as many keywords and phrases attached to your website that you can possibly think of. I have seen some sites that have more than 100 keywords and phrases tagged.

Capturing Prospects

Having an attractive website is a good thing. Having a website that provides the type of information prospects want is more important. But, getting them to your site is just one part of the Internet marketing process. Next, you must turn that visitor into a "prospect," and that can only happen if you capture the visitor's contact information.

Sadly, most club websites do a terrible job of capturing visitor information. Often you will see a tiny little box in some obscure border of the home page offering the visitor to sign up for the club's eNewsletter. Enrollment rates are understandably low, and more often than not, are from members of the club, not prospects.

Many clubs offer visitors some sort of free guest pass; this is a good strategy. Unfortunately, most Webmasters have inefficiently set up the lead capturing system for guest passes. Typically, there is a series of "required fields" that the visitor must fill out, often including address and phone number. Next, upon completion, a PDF guest pass pops onto the screen of the visitor allowing him to print it out. The incoming information is then e-mailed to a general manager or sales manager who then does the leads out to the appropriate salesperson.

This system seems logical enough, but anyone with Internet marketing skills recognizes the pitfalls. First, the

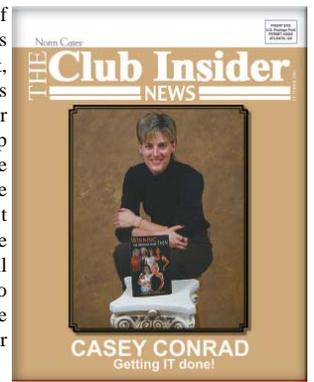
more information you require of a customer, the less likely he is to complete the form. As a result, the concern management has about "wanting the phone number and information to follow up on" backfires with many people simply clicking off the site before completing the form. If you don't believe me, simply put Google Analytics on your site. You will find the number of visitors who click onto your guest pass page much higher than the number who are submitting the request.

Second, when your system has a pop-up guest pass, Internet-savvy people know they can cheat the system; simply make sure all the fields are filled out and get the guest pass anyway. If you've ever had bogus phone numbers or "Fred Flintstone" subscribers, you know what I'm referring to.

Third, having the person's information go to an e-mail address and not an auto responder results in too many leads falling through the cracks with a "manual" follow-up system. Think about it, the salesperson follows up but has no luck getting the prospect, and eventually, that name gets put into a file folder or, at best, a database. Either way, there is a human element necessary for the follow up.

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

- Reduce the amount of "required" information that is necessary to obtain a guest pass. Let's face it, your goal is to get them into the club. So what if you don't have their phone number? If your front desk is working properly, you can screen guest pass abusers at the point of entry. Make the telephone number an "optional" field, and those who want to talk to a salesperson will give it!
- Do NOT use a pop up, guest pass system. Instead, have the guest pass be delivered to the person's e-mail address. They may put a bogus name down, but if they want the guest pass, they have to at least put in a valid e-mail address.
- Have the entire system connected to an auto-responder system so you are capturing all the information into a system that will work for you while you



Casey Conrad

are sleeping! I could write an entire article on this, but if you want to know about the system I encourage all our clients to use, go to www.OurFavoriteCart.com.

- Put Google Analytics onto your website to monitor the conversion statistics and continue to tweak the offer and the fields until you are maximizing opt-ins for guest passes.

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

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

On your club's website, imagine an eBook entitled, "How to shape up at home so you feel better visiting a fitness club!" Or perhaps, one called, "How to create a lunch-time walking group at your workplace."

(See Casey Conrad Page 43)

Improve Your Club's Sales Performance AND Support Augie's Quest... in Just 1 Hour!

Sales Expert Casey Conrad to Host Tele-seminar

January 30, 2009 - Like any business in a tough economy, health club operators are looking for any edge or insight that will help generate more sales. On February 26th, at 3pm EST, health club sales expert, Casey Conrad, will be holding a 1-hour teleseminar entitled, "Closing Skills in a Tough Economy." Some of the many things participants will learn include: how the mindset of consumers has changed and how that impacts the sales process; key approaches to take that will establish a greater level of customer rapport; specific qualifying questions to help facilitate the sales process; and closing and follow up skills that will separate you from the competition.

Participants will walk away with skills and strategies to immediately implement in their sales process. The teleseminar will be recorded (so, it's "impossible" to miss), and all participants will receive an audio download, allowing operators to listen to it at their convenience and use it with their entire staff without limitation.

To participate, clubs simply need to register (www.clubsalestraining.com) and make a minimum donation to Augie's Quest of \$37, which includes the download. Conrad has also given clubs the ability to make larger donations and receive many of her sales training programs. 100%

of the donations will go towards MDA'S Augie's Quest initiative.

Pat Laus, Founder of Clubs for the Cure and the CEO/Owner of The Atlantic Clubs says this about the upcoming event, "I am very excited about Casey's generous contribution of time, sales tools and the offering of her training products to help raise money for the Clubs for the Cure campaign for MDA's Augie's Quest. We have benefitted greatly by utilizing her new eTechnology concepts to drive new prospects into our business. The Atlantic Club Sales Team has also incorporated many of the sales techniques that she is offering in the product for this fundraising campaign. I look forward to our team being involved, along with health and fitness clubs across the industry in Casey's upcoming

sales teleseminar for Augie!"

To register for the event, go to www.clubsalestraining.com.

About Casey Conrad

Casey Conrad is the President of Communication Consultants, a company that provides high quality sales and marketing training to health clubs worldwide. She has been in the health and fitness industry for 25 years. In addition to authoring Selling Fitness: The Complete Guide to Selling Health Club Memberships, she has created and published over 20 other sales, marketing and management training products specifically for the health and fitness industry (www.HealthClubSalesTraining.com).

She is also the creator of the in-club licensed weight loss program called Take It Off! (www.TakeItOffWeightLoss.com). Most recently, she launched a new division to her company that teaches health club operators how to utilize Internet marketing tools to drive more prospects through the clubs' doors (www.SmartClubMarketing.com). She has spoken in 17 countries, is a featured presenter at conventions and trade shows worldwide and writes monthly for numerous international magazines. She can be reached at CaseysHealthClubTraining@yahoo.com.

About Augie's Quest

Augustine (Augie) Nieto, a prominent leader in the nation's



Casey Conrad

fitness industry for nearly three decades, received a diagnosis of ALS in March 2005. Augie was Co-founder and former President of Life Fitness and is now Chairman of Octane Fitness. In September 2005, he received the fitness industry's top honor, the Lifetime Achievement Award. Augie and his wife, Lynne, work closely with MDA staff to coordinate fundraising events that will benefit MDA's worldwide ALS research program. Augie's Quest has raised \$18 million for ALS research since it began in 2005. As co-chairs of the ALS Division, the Nietos help raise awareness through public appearances, speaking engagements, media interviews, and public service announcements. For more information, visit www.augiesquest.org.



...Casey Conrad

continued from page 42

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

Of course, the eBook

concept is just as applicable to a visitor who could be closer to buying. Imagine offering an eBook, "The 5 biggest mistakes people make when finding a health club & how to avoid them."

You can immediately begin utilizing eBooks/booklets to obtain more web leads. Keep these things in mind:

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

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

- Once you have great content, spend the money to have the eBook formatted by someone who has reasonable design skills. We're not talking about Illustrator quality here, but you want nice formatted text and some graphics or photos to make it more visually interesting.

- Be certain to PDF all your eBooks. This ensures easy delivery no matter what computer type or program the individual is using.

The bottom line is that eBooks are a fabulous tool that can entice a visitor to give their contact information. Once you have their e-mail address, you

can begin the important process of communicating with them and building a level of trust that can ultimately lead them to eventually buying a membership at your club. I will be discussing the conversion process in my next article.

The Internet is an incredibly powerful tool. Ironically enough, like a "power tool," if you don't know how to use it, it really doesn't matter whether you have a 6-volt or 12-volt battery attached! By taking the time now to educate yourself on how to use these incredible Internet marketing strategies and then ensuring your club is using them to the maximum benefit, you will not only prevent your valuable

web leads from falling through the cracks but will begin seeing the numbers grow at an amazing rate.

If you would like free eTips on Internet marketing strategies, tactics and tools, please visit our website, www.SmartClubMarketing.com. You can also submit a question on our new Internet marketing blog at www.SmartClubMarketing.com/blog.

(Casey Conrad is a 25-year industry leader and veteran. She is the Founder of Communications Consultants and the Take-It-Off Weight Program. Casey may be reached at takeitoffweightloss@yahoo.com)

Guy Cammilleri, New World Gym Managing Director, Shares Inside Story on Acquisition

By: Norm Cates

Guy Cammilleri is the Managing Director of World Gym International. World Gym was acquired by Guy's Mother, Mrs. Joyce J. Cammilleri, from Planet Fitness on December 31, 2008. From 1996-2001, Guy was the Director of Strategic Planning at JOICO International, the company his Mom Co-Founded. JOICO is a hair care brand recognized globally for its revolutionary approach to restoring health to damaged hair. Ever since the family sold JOICO in 2001, Guy has focused his time on investment management, real estate investment, and entrepreneurial pursuits.

CLUB INSIDER contacted Guy Cammilleri by phone, and we are pleased to file this report on the plans his family has for World Gym.

An Interview With Guy Cammilleri

CLUB INSIDER (C.I.) - Guy, please tell us about the Cammilleri family background.

GC - Let's start with my Mom, as she is the majority owner of World Gym. Without her, our family's purchase of World Gym wouldn't have happened. She and my Dad co-founded a successful chain of hair salons, and then a salon hair care brand back in the 1970's called JOICO. From very humble beginnings, they grew JOICO

into a well-known international brand over the course of 30 years. For various reasons, my parents sold JOICO in 2001 and have been fulltime investors and entrepreneurs ever since.

C.I. - Please tell us how your family became involved with World Gym.

GC - Having grown up in Southern California and seriously interested in fitness our entire lives, we were well aware of World Gym. World Gym, having been started by Joe Gold in Southern California, was in our view, an iconic American fitness brand. When we heard that Planet Fitness intended to sell World Gym, we contacted them immediately. Fortunately for us, we worked out a successful deal with them. We believe that World Gym should be and will become THE iconic and premier fitness brand globally. We expect to, over time, nurture World Gym in that direction. We believe that the DNA and roots that will contribute to World Gym's future iconic status already exist, with World Gym being founded by Joe Gold and the folks that have been associated with World Gym over the years. So, we're excited to begin to work with our franchisees to help World Gym become the #1 workout destination and community globally.

We know we have a long way to go, and we know that in some states in the U.S., and in

some countries, the World Gym brand is much stronger than it is in other places. As in everything in life, such as raising a child or developing a company culture, we feel like you can't develop a world class brand over night. It takes time. It's going to take a lot of love and energy and passion. We expect to grow and nurture this brand for the rest of our lives. Our investment philosophy follows in the steps of Warren Buffet; once you buy a great American brand, there is no reason to sell it. Manage that Brand well over time, and the rest will take care of itself.

C.I. - Who will be on the management team?

GC - The management team will include my Mom, as the Board Chair, and my brothers, Leo and Marcus, as Advisors. As Managing Director, and until we hire our new COO, I'm responsible for working with my family and other key stakeholders to develop World Gym's long term strategic growth plans. We have begun a search for our future COO and expect to hire that person by April, 2009. Karin Michael is our Director of Franchisee Relations. She is responsible for taking care of the World Gym franchisees, and we are very excited that she has decided to join us. She's been a pleasure to work with. Mike Uretz is involved as our Key Advisor, and he's been great to work with. We're really excited

that he and Karin wanted to be involved with World Gym again. People should know that part of my family's excitement for World Gym is its rich heritage in the fitness industry. That being said, it's fantastic to be able to work with Mike and Karin, both such important parts of the World Gym legacy. Both Mike and Karin have so much experience with and love for World Gym, and they both live here in Southern California, so we believe that it was serendipitous that they were able to join the World Gym Team once again.

C.I. - Guy, could you give us a broad brush overview of what your family's plans are for World Gym?

GC - First, let us say that since we've only had responsibility for World Gym for four weeks, our strategy is in its infant stages of development. That being said, although we don't have a lot of details yet, we can tell you the vision we have for the company. Our vision is that World Gym becomes the #1 workout destination and community in the world. We know we have a long way to go to get there, but that is what we are committed to help create. Our strategies for becoming #1 are still evolving, but our first focus is to ensure that our current franchisees know that we care about them and their success. We have begun to develop strategies that will

help ensure that the World Gym franchisees have the support they need to become the #1 workout destination for people in their communities.

C.I. - Guy, what about folks who read this interview? Would you prefer to have prospective franchisees contact you now or should they be on the lookout for announcements in **CLUB INSIDER** in the near future when the new World Gym Team has further developed its growth strategies?

GC - We welcome any interested potential future franchisees and future employees to contact us directly. They can contact Karin Michael by email or they can go to our website. Karin's email address is Karin.Michael@worldgym.com. Our website is www.worldgym.com.

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 35-year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. Cates was the Founder and is now in his 16th year as the Publisher of CLUB INSIDER. He was IHRSA's 1st President, and a Co-founder of the Association with Rick Caro and five others, in 1981. In March, 2001, IHRSA honored Cates with its DALE DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award, one of IHRSA's highest honors. Cates may be reached by phone at: 770-850-8506 or email at: Norm@clubinsideronline.com)

Plus One Acquires TimeOut Services, Inc.

Acquisition Expands Presence on West Coast and in Community Marketplace

NEW YORK, NY, January 29, 2009 - Plus One Health Management, Inc. announced today that it has acquired TimeOut Services, Inc., a provider of workplace and community fitness and wellness services in California. Plus One will immediately assume management of TimeOut Services' existing corporate contracts in the Bay Area, including leaders in the network and communications equipment, internet services, food and drug store and semiconductor industries, along with Community BootCamp, a community-based

group fitness program with seven locations. The acquisition continues Plus One's growth as an industry leader nationwide and provides significant new lines of business. Financial terms of this agreement were not released.

"The acquisition of TimeOut Services allows Plus One to continue our focus on

strategic growth opportunities," said Chris Ciatto, Plus One Chief Operating Officer. "The Bay Area in particular is an area where we have seen recent success, and TimeOut Services was a perfect fit for advancing Plus One's goals in the region."

Under the agreement, Patty Purpur, TimeOut Services'

Founder, President, and Chief Executive Officer, will become a Senior Vice President with Plus One. Additionally, John Holding, TimeOut Services' current Chief Operating Officer, will become Plus One's Regional Vice President overseeing the existing TimeOut Services portfolio along with locations in development

along the West Coast.

Founded in 1992 by Patty Purpur, TimeOut Services provides a comprehensive range of services including fitness facility design, wellness program development and implementation, fitness center management and group exercise programs for corporate clients. In addition, TimeOut's Community BootCamp provides structured group fitness programs in seven Bay Area communities that continually challenge all fitness levels.

Make It Fun!

Visual Fitness Planner Promotes Warren Webb and Sam Lanasa to Key Vice President Positions

Fort Worth, TX - February 2, 2009 - The Visual Fitness Planner™ (VFP), celebrating its 10th year anniversary, is proud to announce the promotion of key team members to the positions of Vice President of Business Development and Vice President of Sales.



Warren Webb

The VFP has experienced significant growth over the last 2 years and is positioned to continue making a significant impact in the health and fitness industry. The VFP is a completely customized technology platform, creating a unique, visually powerful and successful sales and retention process for facilities in the Health and Fitness Industry. Currently, the VFP is serving 600 clubs in the U.S. and Canada.

Warren H. Webb, Vice President of Business Development, has been with VFP

for 6 years and is a mainstay with the company as it has grown. "Webb is a guy every company would love to have on their team. He is committed to the vision and long-term goals of the company and is tenacious in his ability to stay the course," says Daron E. Allen, President/CEO. Mr. Webb has been a business consultant for over 15 years

and specializes in the cutting-edge field of early to mid-stage companies. He was the founding director of two nationally known business incubators and nurtured numerous companies to economic success. Prior to that, he was an award winning Senior Analyst for Dun & Bradstreet.

Having joined the VFP in 2003, Webb's consulting and training services includes an array of services that focuses on key segments of operating performances that are essential to accelerate business growth, including marketing, business development, operational management and strategic planning and execution.

A key part of the growth in the VFP can be accounted for in the person of Sam M. Lanasa. Sam has been with VFP for over two years and has earned the



Sam Lanasa

promotion to Vice President of Sales. "Sam has proven himself day in and day out over the last 2 plus years with the Visual Fitness Planner. Since Sam has been on the team, he has managed to bring on over 160 clubs to the VFP platform. His internal motivation and personal commitment to success is contagious," says Daron E. Allen, President/CEO.

Sam has key expertise in the fitness industry that owners can tap to drive their business to greater profitability. "If you need help with sales systems from selling personal training at point of sale or building a profitable personal training department... Sam is your man", says Mr. Allen. Sam has ten years of experience from being a personal trainer, to a PT Manager to Regional Vice President of Sales. Sam has at one point managed over 800 personal trainers and developed sales systems for some of the best gyms in the country. Sam was one of the people involved in developing and launching the monthly EFT personal training business model. He has now developed, implemented and launched personal training systems in over 200 various health clubs.

Spectrum Athletic Clubs Completes Acquisition of Concord Athletic Club & Spa

San Antonio, TX - Spectrum Athletic Clubs announces the acquisition of the Concord Athletic Club and Spa in San Antonio, TX effective January 20, 2009. This acquisition expands the company's market share dominance in the local health and fitness industry. The purchase of the 65,000 square-foot facility adds another key component

to the company's larger goal of providing the health-conscious consumer with multi-location resort-like facilities and excellent customer service in a family friendly environment.

The acquisition of the Concord Plaza location is part of a major expansion program in the San Antonio marketplace, and follows the opening of Spectrum's

50,000 square-foot Evans Road Club in December, 2008. The acquisition gives Spectrum ten state-of-the-art venues in San Antonio. In late spring 2009, The UT Health Science Center will welcome the 11th Spectrum location on Floyd Curl Drive. Spectrum currently serves over 70,000 members in the San Antonio market. "The Concord

Plaza club is a great addition to the 'clustering' concept, which creates convenient fitness options to both home and work for our members," said Andy Gillen, Chief Operating Officer of Spectrum Athletic Clubs.

Spectrum Clubs, Inc. is one of the ten largest fitness companies in the United States. It currently has 10 locations in San

Antonio, Texas and 12 locations in Southern California and is headquartered in El Segundo, CA. With roots that trace back to 1974, in San Antonio, and 1979, in Southern California, Spectrum offers spacious, modern facilities, highly trained staff, the latest in fitness equipment, high-end amenities and a full range of fitness programming.

Wellbridge Announces 5th Colorado Athletic Club

DENVER, CO - On January 22, The Wellbridge Company announced the expansion of its Colorado Athletic Club brand with a 40,000 square-foot club in Downtown Denver's Tabor Center. Ed Williams, President and CEO of The Wellbridge Company/Colorado Athletic Clubs, noted, "we are fortunate to have the financial strength and industry track record to take advantage of the opportunities that this challenging economy presents to strong businesses."

Jay Kell, Chief Operating Officer of The Wellbridge Company/Colorado Athletic Clubs said, "We are excited to expand Colorado

Athletic Club's innovative and upscale fitness and wellness services in downtown Denver, Colorado. The Tabor Center location will make state-of-the-art, individual and group fitness and swimming conveniently available to the constantly expanding northern downtown business and residential market. With this brand expansion, we will also provide more suburban commuters with an opportunity to be active at work and at play."

The Colorado Athletic Club-Tabor Center is expected to open in late 2009 and will offer an open floor plan accented by floor-to-ceiling windows to provide abundant natural light

and downtown views. The club's facilities will be highlighted by a 25-meter, 4-lane indoor pool, state-of-the-art cardio and strength training equipment and innovative group fitness classes with studios dedicated to spinning, yoga and pilates. The club will also feature signature amenities such as well-appointed locker rooms with whirlpool/steam/sauna, towel service, certified massage therapy and a juice bar. More details are available at www.ColoradoAthleticClubs.com/TaborCenter.

The Colorado Athletic Clubs are a member of the Wellbridge family of clubs and serve as the premier athletic and

tennis clubs in the Denver market. All 4 current clubs specialize in programming such as Club Outdoors, and Triathlon Club that cater to the Colorado lifestyle by

challenging the elite and inspiring recreational fitness. They are also well known for their tenure, facilities and professionals in Tennis.



Programming Tip of the Month:

The Goal of Programming is Retention

By: Sandy Coffman

The objective of every program is to get members to use the club, enjoy the club and therefore come closer to becoming a retained member. But members do leave our clubs. Why? These are the excuses we've heard for years and still hear today (In fact, you are probably hearing many of them now from the members who joined your club in January!) "I'm not using the club enough," or "I don't have time." Members are not exactly lying with these excuses, but the reality is that they are not using the club and can't find the time to exercise because the experience they have while at the club is not of value to them. The value of a club membership is in sociability, camaraderie, friendships, relationships, leadership and group experiences. Those are things that programs provide.

In the **January Issue of CLUB INSIDER**, I shared a great checklist to help you evaluate your programs and to be assured that they are set up for success... fun, participation and retention. The list includes the **TEN KEYS TO RETENTION**. The first five were:

1. Communication
2. Responsibility
3. Recognition
4. Sociability
5. Commitment

As promised, here are keys 6 through 10. Enjoy.

6. Diversification - People get bored doing the same routine over and over, so new challenges, goals and experiences will keep them interested or renew their interest in exercising. Cross-training is another reason why diversified programming is so important. We know that cross-training will give better fitness results, so diversified programming is good mentally, emotionally and physically. Diversification also can come in the form of a higher level of achievement in the same program, such as moving through beginning, intermediate or advanced levels of performance. Diversified programming is key for existing and already active members. It will keep them coming back, and that's the goal of programming.

7. Progression - Progressing through a series of programs is the objective of The Wheel of Logical Progression. It ensures retention through a year of diversified programming. New members begin their membership tenure with an introductory program and progress to instructional opportunities that prepare them for the regular involvement in programs. Participating in progressive programming is absolutely essential to keeping members active, interested, goal-

driven and successful. Always use one program to promote another and the progression will continue. The Wheel of Logical Progression will be in another Programming Tip for the **CLUB INSIDER**.

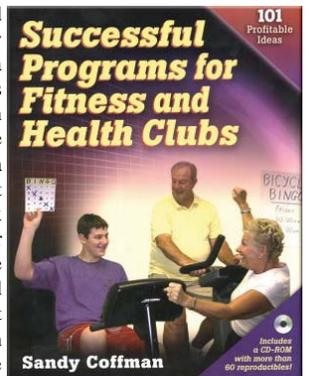
8. Promotion - A member is not considered a retained member until he is using your club every week consistently for a full year. Professional promotion starts with a calendar of events that is posted at the beginning of the year and offers a variety of activities and programs that will remain consistent throughout the year. The promotions of these and other programs must include posters, notices posted on bulletin boards and fliers promoting the onset of the programs, and those promotions must be completed and available no less than three weeks in advance of a program. In addition to the readable promotions, telephone campaigns inviting members to a specific event at a specific time are productive if done no less than three weeks in advance and followed up with confirmation calls 12 to 24 hours in advance of the program.

9. Reliability - Reliability is a key issue that is most often misunderstood or ignored altogether. Reliability means that you must set a precedent whereby the programming schedule is not

only reasonable to get started with but, more importantly, easy to progress with. For example, a programming schedule that offers a beginning level program on a Tuesday and an intermediate level of the same program on a Thursday should remain constant with that schedule for at least six months and preferably a year or more. Members and prospective members need to plan ahead, and your club must remain consistent in some of its core program offerings to allow people to make room in their weekly routines for your club and its programs. If you constantly change the same program to a different time and different day, you eliminate the members who spend weeks preparing their schedules to make room for a 9 am Tuesday class only to find out that it has been changed to Wednesdays!

Keep a number of core programs on a consistent calendar of events to set a reliable precedent for members and potential members.

10. Accountability - Every program must have a leader who is held accountable for all 10 keys to retention. If it is not feasible to hire a program director, you must assign a leader to each program that is capable, responsible and held accountable for taking every program through all 10 keys of program development. The success or failure of a program will



be linked to how well the 10 keys presented here and in the **January Issue of CLUB INSIDER** were implemented in the program's structure and development. A program cannot run successfully without accountability, not only for its presentation, but for growth and retention as well. Professional programming is the heart of membership growth and retention.

Never Run a Program Unless You Run it 100 Percent!

(To order Sandy's great new programming book, "**Successful Programs for Fitness and Health Clubs**," 101 Profitable Ideas go to: www.humankinetics.com Contact Sandy: SLCoffman@aol.com or www.sandycoffman.com)

CYBEX FT-450 Changes the Functional Training Landscape

MEDWAY, MA, January 22, 2009 - Trends in the fitness industry come and go, but functional training has captured public attention and stayed there. Often under the guidance of a personal trainer or sports trainer, popular approaches to functional training involve exercises that mimic daily activities and athletic movements. In most gyms today, there are two primary strength training methods; one is machines that stabilize the body to allow lifting of heavy weights. In the other, the body is unstable which allows muscles to work together but with less weight. Individually, both strategies have their advantages, and together,

they would create a complete functional training solution. Up until now, no product has bridged this gap. The CYBEX FT-450 combines the two exercise methods, for a new total strength training solution.

The new CYBEX FT-450 Functional Trainer is a breakthrough product which takes functional strength training to new ground. A unique patent-pending design adds two key features to revolutionize strength training applications. The Progressive Stabilization Pad allows users to incrementally decrease their stability which increases the work the core muscles are called upon to perform. Additionally, this

feature supports the use of higher weight loads which are typically achievable only on selectorized or other isolative strength machines. The Cable Width Adjustment feature allows innumerable height and width configurations giving the most creative trainers unlimited exercise possibilities.

Ed Trainor, Town Sports International (TSI), Vice President of Fitness Services, stated, "With its ability to train clients in multiple positions with varying degrees of functional stability, I anticipate the new CYBEX functional trainer (FT-450) will play an important role in our personal training program. The options it offers

our trainers and the results it can deliver to their clients are a potent combination to enhance an important part of our business."

Tom Shaw, Performance Enhancement Coach stated, "The FT-450 is an amazing machine. The stabilization pad is incredible; it sets this machine apart from any other Cable Pulley machine that I have ever used before. Moving the pad just a few inches creates an entirely different effect on the muscles. This is by far the most popular machine I have used in training. My athletes love the results they get after working

out on this unit, and they ask for it because of the versatility in training that it offers!"

The FT-450 is a total training solution, offering more training options and versatility than any product in its class. Whether training is for the upper body, lower body, isolated, or fully integrated, the only limitation to the FT-450 is the user's imagination. And, like all CYBEX products - safe and effective - with better results.

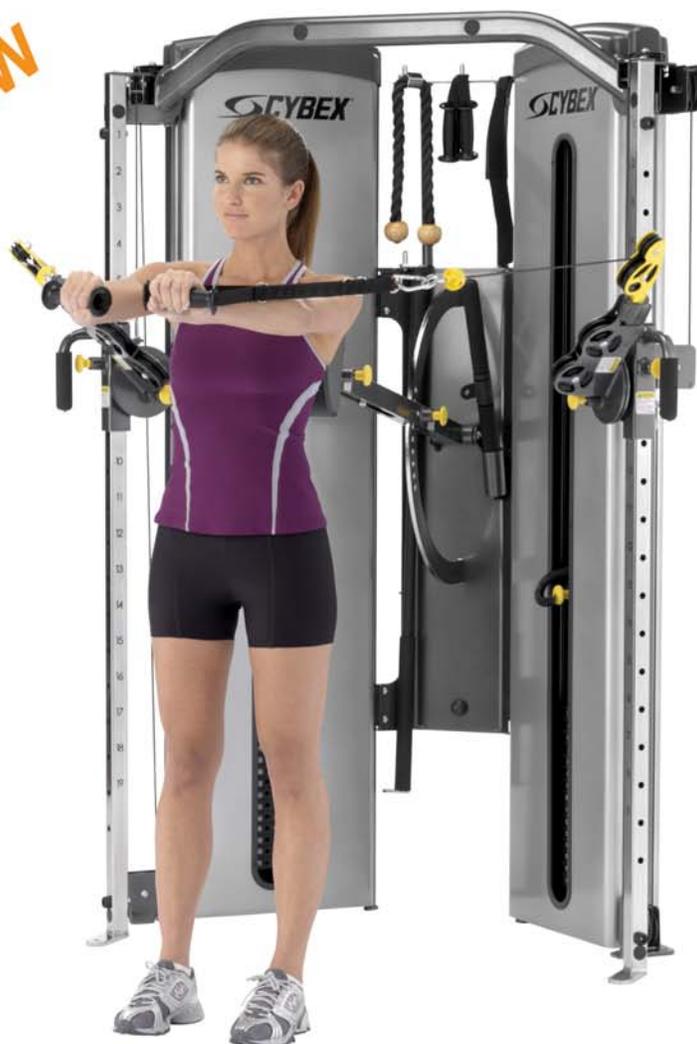
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The Great Untold Secret About Exercise

By: Bruce Carter

Why is it that there are more health clubs than ever yet more overweight people than ever? With all the focus on exercise and all the efforts clubs have put on retention, why is it still one of the main problems in the fitness industry?

Why is it that 9 out of 10 people know it is better to take the stairs instead of the escalator, yet only 1 out of 10 actually take the stairs when given the choice? In fact, a USA Today poll showed that 93% of those interviewed felt that exercise was one of the most important things they could do to improve their life, yet only 17% were doing it.

Clearly, something is missing. There is a great untold secret about exercise, and it is not what kind of exercise to do or how to do it. It is about how you get yourself to do it, any of it, and keep doing it.

What is lacking is the required motivation that gets people to truly act and go beyond agreeing to the value of exercise, joining clubs and reading about exercise. As obvious as this may seem, there is the big obstacle with exercise motivation.

The vast majority of non-exercisers truly think they

are motivated but simply don't have the time, energy, or money. They feel that, because of their desire and interest in exercise, they therefore are automatically motivated. This could not be further from the truth.

Yet, as any regular exerciser will tell you, they had to be motivated to find the time to exercise. This is why most people don't exercise regularly --the failure to accept the fact that they are not personally motivated.

Therefore, the surprising first step to regular activity (and a lifetime of regular exercise) is to accept the fact that the problem is with you and to stop using the guilt-reducing "tried and true" excuses. Saying you don't have the time will minimize your own responsibility to solving the problem, but if you are not exercising regularly, you are not motivated, period. And, *the solution therefore is a mental one, not a physical one. Physical activity does not lead to mental changes, but mental changes lead to physical activity.*

In the past, the whole idea of mental training for exercise was just a vague concept. Many would agree to its need, but how does one go about training the mind to a desired course of action? The

Nike ad campaign summarized the problem best by saying, "Just Do It." Books by such experts as Tony Robbins or Stephen Covey were great at talking about motivation, but they did not relate to the specifics of how to become more physically active.

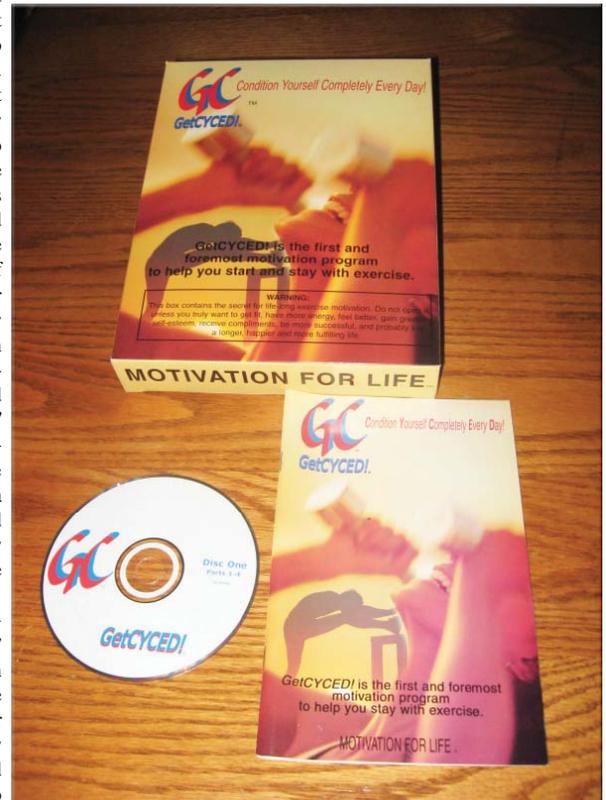
The good news is that this type of motivation has finally become available in an easy to follow, step-by-step program. The new GetCYCED! Program uses proven principles, techniques and secrets which can help anyone make exercise a regular part of their lives. **CYCED!** stands for **Condition Yourself Completely Every Day** for it is only when someone does complete conditioning --both *mental* and *physical*-- are they truly **CYCED!** (motivated). The program involves a CD and workbook to be followed for about 20 minutes a day for 14 days. Listen to it, and the magic happens, for it is truly amazing just how effectively the program works.

The GetCYCED! Program is not an "exercise system," and therefore, can be used in conjunction with any exercise type or program. It is great for any member that wants to finally become a regular exerciser and a perfect tool for trainers who want to be an expert in exercise

motivation for their clients.

(Bruce Carter is a 30+ year industry veteran, author and

speaker and the CEO of Optimal Design Systems. He may be reached at bruce@optimaldsi.com or at (954) 888 - 5960)



NASM and California University Pennsylvania Select 2009 Pursuit of Excellence in Health and Fitness Award Winners

\$15,000 Tuition Grants Awarded to Two Fitness Professionals for Online Graduate Degree Program

CALABASAS, CA - January 14, 2009 - The National Academy of Sports Medicine (NASM), a health and fitness education authority and leading sports performance solutions provider, and its higher education partner, California University of Pennsylvania, today announced Craig Stull and Brenda Eiseman as recipients of the 2009 Pursuit of Excellence in Health and Fitness Award. Each award winner is currently a practicing health and fitness professional and will be prepared for NASM credentials through their planned educational work.

Stull and Eiseman will be rewarded for their accomplishments and dedication within the fitness industry by each receiving full tuition

funding, valued at more than \$15,000, towards a Master of Science in Exercise Science and Health Promotion at California University of Pennsylvania. During the 2008-09 academic year, each will choose to specialize in one of the school's four, internet-based specific tracks; fitness and wellness, performance enhancement and injury prevention, rehabilitation science, and sports psychology.

"The recipients of this year's Pursuit of Excellence in Health and Fitness Award have proven their commitment and dedication toward the fitness and health industry," said Dr. Micheal Clark, NASM President and Chief Executive Officer. "With the education these individuals receive from the California

University of Pennsylvania, they will be equipped with all of the tools they need to not only advanced their careers, but be leaders within their industry."

Stull is an alumnus of the University of Indianapolis, where he earned a double major in exercise science and athletic training. Currently, he is the assistant athletic trainer for the WNBA's Indiana Fever and volunteers his services to the NBA's Indiana Pacers. Stull's past experience includes providing athletic training support for the USA Track & Field team, RCA Tennis Championships and NFL Combine.

Eiseman began her fitness career while in the U.S. Army, where she was responsible for the physical conditioning and

preparedness of more than 300 soldiers. She has received many accolades as a soldier including a bronze star medal for meritorious service. Eiseman also placed within the top four of several Army fitness competitions including an Iron Woman race.

"Stull and Eiseman are both extremely qualified health and fitness professionals that have achieved a great deal individually and been highly recommended by their peers and colleagues to receive this award," said Barry McGlumphy, program coordinator and Associate Professor for exercise science and health promotion at California University of Pennsylvania. "With our convenient online graduate degree programs, both trainers will be able to complete

their selected educational tracks while continuing to work as well as balance their personal lives."

The bi-annual Pursuit of Excellence in Health and Fitness Award program was developed as part of a collaborative effort between NASM and the California University of Pennsylvania to support fitness and health professionals embodying the determination and ideals to become industry leaders. The university's undergraduate and graduate health and fitness degrees, all powered by NASM's industry-leading, evidence-based fitness programs and research, provide busy professionals with a variety of convenient methods to advance their career in several specialized areas.

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Karen Woodard-Chavez, a renowned sales operations, management and customer service training consultant for the health & fitness club industry, has been providing webinars in conjunction with CheckFree now part of Fiserv.

we serve. Secondly, by providing these webinars, we can engage more of our staff in the training of our front line folks with tools they need and can use daily to support new and current members service needs.

and seminar budgets have been suspended. Your creative webinars allow us to continue the training vital to maximizing our training and utilization of your fitness management products.

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If you have any questions, please contact Randy Ivey by email at rivey@checkfree.com or by phone at (832) 864-1110.

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Mike Bass,



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All who have advertised, purchased subscriptions, read and pitched in as Contributing Authors. We are now in our 16th year of publication! All of you are on the "Team" that makes **CLUB INSIDER**, and we will be grateful to you forever. **I appreciate and LOVE 'Ya!**

Very Sincerely,
 Norm Cates, Jr.

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