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Norm Cates

THE Club Insider

NEWS

The Pulse of the Health, Racquet & Sports Club Business



(L to R) Lou Off, Doug Levine, and Jerry Alles

CRUNCH Fitness Acquires Sportslife

The advertisement features a dark blue background. On the left is a mechanical part, likely a treadmill roller, with a black top and a silver base. On the right is a treadmill console with a digital display and a keypad. A hand is shown pressing one of the buttons. A dashed line of orange triangles forms a path from the mechanical part to the console. The text "START HERE" is written in white, slanted letters above the path. The phone number "1-800-GYM PART" is written in large, bold, yellow letters across the center. Below the phone number, the text "OEM Quality Replacement Parts and Electronic Repairs" is written in bold, yellow letters.

START HERE

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THE Club Insider[®]

NEWS

The Pulse of the Health, Racquet & Sports Club Business

CRUNCH FITNESS Acquires Sportslife

By Norm Cates, Jr.

Atlanta, GA. - Where does a 900-pound gorilla sit? Anywhere he wants, right? Well, the Doug Levine-owned Crunch Fitness conglomerate has now arrived way down South and sits comfortably here in Atlanta, the Capitol City of Georgia.

Crunch has just purchased The Sportslife Clubs in Atlanta, a group of six upscale multipurpose clubs ranging in size from 45,000

square feet to 130,000 square feet. For the past 17 years, Sportslife has held a strong grip on the rocking and rolling Atlanta health club market in this 3.4 million population jewel city of the South. Second only to Bally Total Fitness in member numbers in Atlanta, Sportslife's 74,000 members are in for a real surprise and treat as they get the flavor of the incredible Crunch creations of Doug Levine and his team.

Crunch Fitness is not just a health club or a gym. The Crunch personality is a vibrant expression of fitness, style, mu-

sic and entertainment - a gym with "no judgements". Crunch is a place that warmly welcomes people from all walks of life regardless of shape, size, sex or ability in an environment that brings exercise and entertainment together under one roof. Levine's clubs are a hybrid of show business and fitness. The philosophy of fun and being non-judgmental are keys to the operation.

The Crunch Fitness facilities and operations are a clear reflection of Levine's personality. He was described in an ar-

ticle published in CBI magazine as: "Quiet, unassuming and open-minded, but with an underlying intensity that nearly defies description." And, Levine echoed that description in CBI, "It seems to me that there are two basic types of people who can be quite successful in business. One is yogi-like-calm, centered and balanced. The other is intense, and tends to sweat every little detail. I try to borrow from both, to function, somewhere in the middle. Sometimes, you'd think I was the calmest person in the world. And, sometimes,

you'd think I was a maniac!"

Describing Crunch's basic strategy to CBI Magazine writers Bradley Keeny and Craig Waters, Levine commented, "Gyms and health clubs are, in a very real sense, a part of the entertainment industry, and fun figures prominently in everything we do. That's why we've designed our clubs to look like nightclubs. So, when it's 6 or 7 at night, people can say, I can rent a video at Blockbuster, or go home and order-in from Pizza Hut, or go to a bar-restaurant, or go to an AMC movie theater...or I can go to Crunch.

(See *CRUNCH* page 12)

CLUB SPORTS INTERNATIONAL ACQUIRES THE WELLBRIDGE COMPANY AND WITH IT A NEW BUSINESS PLATFORM

Denver, CO. - Tom Lyneis was an up and coming tennis pro years ago when he first entered the world of club management. In 1973 he was involved with the original Tennis World in Den-

ver, Colorado. Tennis World was one of the first big indoor tennis clubs in the country and it eventually evolved into a multi-sport club called Racquet World in 1978. In 1975 Ed Williams, now one of Tom's partners and co-

founder at CSI, came on board at Racquet World as the Membership Director. In 1980, Lyneis and Williams opened the Inverness Raquet World, one of the first clubs in the Denver area to be designed and built as a

multi-sport club from the ground up. At 134,000 square-feet, it was a major development for that era and cost \$13 million. It was one of the most expensive clubs in the country at that time.

In 1983, Lyneis and Williams formed Club Sports International, (CSI) because the partnership they were in with the two Denver clubs did not want to grow further.

Tom Lyneis comments,
(See *CSI* page 12)

WHEN THEY COME
THEY'LL EAT
THE FAT ONES FIRST.

24 HOUR FITNESS

Inside The Insider

- Targeting For Breakthrough Results
- Walk The Walk. Talk The Talk. Pump The Pump.
- Guaranteed Sales Increase
- Think Small!
- Out Of The Blame Game And Into Excellence
- IHRSA Capitol Report
- Top 10 Reasons To Get In The Swing

HERE COME THE ALIENS!

By Norm Cates, Jr.

It takes guts to do what Mark Mastrov and the folks at 24 Hour Fitness recently did when they posted the "Alien" billboard on Highway 101 in San Francisco. The billboard showed graphics of an outer space Alien with big bold letters on the board saying: "When The Aliens Come

They Will Eat The Fat Ones First." This may be the most outrageous, and to this reporter, most effective and humorous billboard, in the history of the fitness industry. The results, while not all positive, have been amazing from a pure advertising point of view.

First, let me say that as a resident of "Fat City" for years, I was not offended at all by the now infamous "Alien"

billboard. To the contrary, that billboard has, once again, gotten me to thinking about my current condition and about accelerating the pace of my exercise and weight-loss programs. Maybe this will be the Final straw that gets me back to the more trim physique that I had in days past when I lifted weights a couple of hours a day, played college football and even once a ran 26.2 mile marathon!

Also, and I think important
(See *Aliens* page 4)

THE INSIDER SPEAKS

• EDITORIALS • "INSIDER MAIL" • COMMENTS •

...Aliens

continued from page 3

to my reaction to the billboard, is that I actually believe in the existence of alien beings in our universe. That's because when I was in the 3rd grade (about age 8), I really saw three flying saucers high up in the sky. And, I was not alone. I was riding a bike down a neighborhood road with two friends following me on their bikes. I looked up into the sky and yep, there they were! Bright, silver-colored shaped disks at a high altitude, but not visibly moving left, right, up or down. We stopped our bikes and watched the UFOs for 3 or 4 minutes while they remained stationary. Then, all of a sudden, they simply vanished in thin air! This was about a year after the spaceship crash in the early 1950s which the government has so well covered up. I'll bet the spacecrafts my friends and I spotted were from the same "Mother-Ship" as the one that crashed in Roswell, New Mexico. I just wish they had landed that day for a visit!

So, since I'm a heavy guy and already believe in aliens and fully expect them to show up here any day now, it is easy to see why the 24 Hour Fitness billboard has had such an impact on me and I believe, many others. It is not as though I am actually afraid of being eaten alive! Instead, I believe that when they do come, they will eat some of us, but they won't eat me! Instead, I actually expect to be invited to come on board their spaceship and to be examined carefully by these little Critters to find out what makes ME tick and why I am still alive in the first place! When that happens and they bring me back, I'll be sure to write an in-depth report for ya'll on everything that happens. I just hope that they let me take my camera on board the spaceship!

SERIOUSLY THOUGH....

Seriously though, 24 Hour Fitness is a chain of fitness centers located in the Western U.S., Europe and Asia. They have approximately 285 locations worldwide. The clubs are owned by Fitness Holdings, Inc., a corporation controlled by McCown and DeLeeuw, a New York and California-based investment banking firm. 24 Hour Fitness was created about four years ago when McCown and DeLeeuw acquired Northern California-based 24 Hour Nautilus from Mark Mastrov and Ray Wilson's 72-location, Family Fitness Center chain, in Southern California.

Since then, 24 Hour Fitness has grown faster than any organization in health club history through new club construction and acquisitions of existing clubs. This growth has been fueled by the quality of the 24 Hour Fitness facilities and equipment line-ups and the excellent marketing efforts of the organization. It appears that the growth will continue well into the new millennium. When people respond to their marketing efforts by visiting a 24 Hour Fitness Center, they find a world class fitness facility that typically offers 20-35,000 square-feet of space packed with rows and rows of strength machines and equipment, multiple lines of cardiovascular machines and terrific group exercise classes, such as BodyPUMP and an awful lot more!

PAST 24 HOUR NAUTILUS BILLBOARDS CAUSED RUMBLINGS WITH IHRSA NORTH CALIFORNIA MEMBERSHIP

In the past, there has been

rumbling and complaining by Northern California IHRSA club members to the Association about the content of the 24 Hour Nautilus billboards. One in particular comes to mind. It showed a study young man with only blue jeans on. A pretty young girl with her arms wrapped around his waist had one hand inside the front of his pants, was shown. The billboard caption went something like: "If you really want to get HARD, come to 24 Hour Nautilus!" While the "Hard" billboard didn't receive worldwide attention like the Alien billboard, it certainly made an impression on Northern California club owners that were members of IHRSA. The irony was that while the billboard was on display in the Bay area of San Francisco, a blue-ribbon panel of IHRSA's top club owners were on tour of the San Francisco Bay area in a travel coach, along with John McCarthy, Executive Director of IHRSA. Some of the IHRSA members just about had a cow when they saw that billboard! A year or more later, John McCarthy spent a full hour after the San Francisco Member Open Forum listening to the Northern California IHRSA club owners belly-ache about the 24 Hour Nautilus advertising methods!

HERE COMES THE ALIEN BILLBOARD!

So, along comes the new 24 Hour Fitness Alien billboard, a creation of Grey Advertising, a New York and San Francisco-based advertising firm. Interestingly, only one billboard ever went up and it had been up for five weeks before members of the National Association for the Advancement of Fat Acceptance (NAAFA) members became upset and began to do protest marches outside the Van Nuys, 24 Hour Fitness club. The all female group of "fat" marchers carried protest signs on sticks. One of the signs read: "EAT ME!" One "fat" woman carried a stick with a string attached with a 5' long skeleton attached and a sign which read: "Am I skinny enough for you yet?"

A GOOD MESSAGE

We spoke to Craig Pepin-Donat, Northwest Division President at 24 Hour Fitness and the key person assigned by CEO Mark Mastrov to deal with media relations relative to the Alien Billboard saga. Before speaking to Craig, I'd viewed Mark on the TV clip for "Good Morning America".

He handled himself extremely well and was a true asset to our industry with his verbal communication skills, appearance and clear message. In short, he dominated the interview which featured a windbag from the NAAFA Group, Mark Mastrov and an advertising executive selected by the network.

Craig was interviewed by numerous TV and radio stations and newspapers. And, if Craig's communication was as clear and as eloquent as the conversation he had with me, then I'm sure he was very well received. Craig explained the position of 24 Hour Fitness as follows: "We had over 300 TV spots covering this billboard story. We were covered by every major network newshow in the Bay area and many across the country. We also received coverage in London, Paris and other countries. We accomplished our goal, which was to break through the clutter of media to raise the level of awareness of the real issue, the dangers of obesity and physical inactivity. We used the billboard as a platform to get that message across. We delivered our message in all of the television, radio and newspaper interviews.

Craig continues, "We got this billboard concept on spec from Grey Advertising. Mark Mastrov, our CEO, and Susan Powell, our Vice President of Marketing, attended a Division President's meeting along with myself, Don Harbick, Gene Lamott and Larry Gurney. After the initial viewing of the billboard drawing we kind of looked at each other and were very interested in it. We wondered what the result of putting up an ad with this content might be. We only hoped we could have gotten the vast exposure that we did. Our goal was to just get some exposure so we could use it for a platform to discuss the real issues of the dangers of obesity. That's how the whole thing started."

A TONGUE-IN-CHEEK-HUMOROUS APPROACH

Pepin-Donat adds, "One of the other things we've discussed as a purpose of putting the billboard out there is that obesity is the #2 cause of death in our country, second only to cigarette smoking. Hundreds of thousands of lives are lost each year to obesity costing an estimated in excess of \$100 million. That's re-

ally the position we are taking about the ad itself. It was a tongue-in-cheek humorous approach to raise the level of awareness of health and fitness and the dangers of obesity in the community. The end result of the involvement of members of NAAFA protesting our use of the word FAT was that we had all of the news agencies covering it! We met with our PR organization and we decided that we weren't going to just put out a company statement and be quiet about it. We actually did have a position on this billboard and the purpose was not meant to make fun of fat people, but to raise the awareness of the risks of obesity. So it didn't make sense for us to just be quiet about it and put out a company statement, because the purpose was served. Mark asked me to go down to the Van Nuys club, and do some live interviews with several TV stations, four or five radio stations and half a dozen newspapers. They interviewed some of the members as well. We also put messages on our web site which is www.24hourfitness.com to deliver the facts for anyone that was interested in educating themselves on the truth of the dangers and risks of obesity. The position that NAAFA takes is that it is an organization devoted to promoting the acceptance of fat people. We agree that everybody, no matter how they look, should feel good about themselves. But, in addition, they also should be aware of the dangers of obesity. That's where our agreement with NAAFA stops because we do not believe its O.K. to be obese because we know what the risk factors and dangers are and what they mean."

While 24 Hour Fitness executives were fielding the worldwide response to their Alien Billboard, John McCarthy, Executive Director of IHRSA, The International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association had weighed in about the billboard and the 24 Hour Fitness position.

John McCarthy:

"From a health club industry perspective, I congratulate 24-Hour Fitness for raising national awareness on this important issue."

"McCarthy adds, As the recent NIH statistics show, America is now the fattest nation on the face of the earth. 55% of adults now carry so much extra poundage that their weight makes them substantially more vulnerable to many serious health problems. Over 59-million Americans have now been

(See Aliens page 8)

Norm Cates' **THE Club Insider**
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• NORM'S NOTES •

SUPPORT OUR ADVERTISERS! If you enjoy reading this and other editions of **THE CLUB INSIDER** News, then we would sincerely appreciate it if you would take time to either call our advertisers or stop and see them at the IHRSA Trade Show in San Diego, or both! For your convenience, we've published below an easy-to-clip listing of our advertisers that will be exhibiting in San Diego. And, on page #28, we've published the fax number of all of our advertisers so you can easily inquire about information from our advertisers. A significant portion of the **CLUB INSIDER** News annual operating budget is derived from our advertiser's support and we appreciate that a great deal! I hope you do as a reader. Meet and work with these folks as they are some of the finest people and best suppliers of goods and services in our industry!

The amazing **RAY WILSON** has just celebrated his 71st Birthday! A belated **HAPPY BIRTHDAY** and **CONGRATULATIONS RAY!** He is also celebrating the sale of his California Fitness Center club group in Hong Kong and Singapore to 24 Hour Fitness (Fitness Holdings). He sold 3 operational clubs and one in pre-sale in Hong Kong, plus 1 operational club in Singapore with one in pre-sale for a total of \$41.5 million! 24 Hour Fitness plans to build 200 clubs in Asia with an investment of \$500 million in the future! This acquisition puts the booming 24 Hour Fitness organization in the Western U.S., Europe and now Asia. In Europe, 24 Hour Fitness is now up to about 60 or more locations with more acquisitions to come. Globally, 24 Hour Fitness

now has about 288 locations! And, **RAY AND PERRY WILSON** have joined forces with **GEOFFREY DYER**, owner of the Lifestyle Family Fitness Center chain in Tampa. Ray and his son Perry have one location there and will soon open a second. The agreement between the Wilsons and Geoff Dyer entails joint marketing of Dyer's six clubs along with the Wilson's club(s) and Geoff Dyer's operation of Ray, Perry and Packy's Central Business Offices. Also, Ray's son **PACKY**, has his first location underway in Columbus, Ohio, with two in pre-sale and is negotiating for two more. The Wilson ventures in Tampa and Columbus, Ohio have been developed pursuant to an exception to the non-compete agreement executed simultaneously with the sale of Ray's Family Fitness Centers to Fitness Holdings in July, 1995. There is no telling what Ray Wilson, the health club industry's greatest pioneering legend, will do next. Hmm. How about Central and South America? Stay tuned! Oh, I forgot to mention that Ray will speak at the San Diego IHRSA Global Industry Summit - Globalization Forum Panel on Friday, March 26th from 11:40 am to 12:30 pm.

If you are reading this edition of **THE CLUB INSIDER** News in San Diego, California at the IHRSA Convention, then you can be part of our April edition by submitting your impressions and thoughts on the **IHRSA Convention and Trade Show**. Your input may be included in our April, 1999 edition which will go to press just after the event. Just **EMAIL** your thoughts to the **EMAIL** address shown on this page. By the time you read this we will have distributed 1,500 copies of this March edition at the Convention

Hotel and Trade Show. If you didn't make it to San Diego, stay tuned for our **HOT** April edition which will have an in-depth report on the happenings at **IHRSA's 18th Annual Convention and Trade Show**, the world's greatest club event. One of the stories you will read about in our April edition will be about the **Winners of IHRSA/Life Fitness' First Annual Club Managers of the Year Awards**. **DEBRA D. LEE, MS.** of the **Fitness Connection for Women** by Gainesville Health & Fitness Center in Gainesville, Florida will receive the multiple location managers award. **BRENT DARDEN, MS.** of the **Cooper Clinic, Dallas, Texas**, will receive the award for single facility category. Congratulations folks! Also, congratulations to the **EISENZIMMER FAMILY**, owners of the **Cascade Athletic Clubs** in Portland, Oregon as they will receive the **IHRSA/Keiser 50 Plus Award** in San Diego!

CLUB INSIDER NEWS email address is: clubinsidernews@mindspring.com or fax your thoughts and impressions to: (770) 933-9698. Also, if you would like to join our **CONTRIBUTING AUTHOR TEAM**, email your articles to the same email address or fax #. Hope to hear from you!

Congratulations to **JIM TEATUM**, as he has been named the new President of **Nautilus Sports/Medical Industries** by **BRIAN COOK, CEO** of **Direct Focus, Inc.**, the new owners of Nautilus. (See **Club Insider** News story in our January, 1999 edition about Nautilus sale to Direct Focus).

If you're like me, you're

CLUB INSIDER NEWS ADVERTISERS AT IHRSA SAN DIEGO TRADE SHOW

Company	Exhibit #
Affiliated Acceptance	4020
Body Pump	511
Cardio Theater	801
Club Runner	2228
E-Zone Newwork	1435
Faust Management	335
ISSA	742
KickBox Fitness	2149
Life Fitness	Entry Area
PACE Circuit	1841
Premium Performance Training	1746
SalesMakers	2233
StairMaster	601
Worldwide Fitness	236

going to want to go back to San Diego if you attended the Convention. Here is your chance. Sign up for **Jazzerjam '99**, the Celebration of the 30th Anniversary of Jazzercise to be held in San Diego this August 5-8th. For information call: (760) 434-2101.

Congratulations to **TONY de LEEDE** and his **Australian Body Works** team as they celebrate their 17th Anniversary in Atlanta.

J.D.HOLMES, the owner of **Club Peachtree** and **GymXpress** in Peachtree City, Georgia, has joined forces with **Gold's Gyms** and converted his two facilities to Gold's franchises. Best of luck J.D.!

Looks like **MIKE TALLA** and the **Sports Club Company** are doing well! The Sports Club Company year end reports showed revenue up by \$20 million (34%) and profit up by \$3.98 million (5%) compared to (2 1/2%) last year. Also, word is that the Sports Club Company is buying the **Sport House** in Thousand Oaks, California and the company is buying back some of its own stock.

LOREN BRINK'S Health and Fitness Corporation is selling their free-standing physical therapy units.

KEN GERMANO, currently Vice President of Glo-

bal Marketing for **Reebok/Cross Conditioning Systems**, has done a terrific job of development of **Operation FITKIDS**, a Nationwide charitable organization whose mission is to recycle used exercise equipment and install it in community centers and schools for kids in underprivileged areas. What a great cause! If you have some used equipment that you'd like to donate to a great cause and get a tax deduction, call Ken at: (949) 497-4526.

Congratulations to **WAYNE WESTWOOD**, owner of the **Griffith Park Athletic Clubs** in Beaverton, Oregon and former IHRSA President and Board Member on his appointment to the **Oregon Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports**. **Oregon Governor, John A. Kithaber's Council** is dedicated to expand the awareness of the importance of health and fitness in the State of Oregon.

The **Texas Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association (THRSA)** Annual Conference and Trade Show will be held at the Hilton Austin Hotel, Austin, Texas, Friday and Saturday, July 23-24, 1999. For information call (409) 823-1919 or Fax #: (409) 823-1921.

CASEY CONRAD'S Communication Consultants Company has entered into a marketing partnership with **The Step Company**, the U.S. distributors for the **BodyPUMP** group exercise program. Under the agreement, Conrad (See **Norm's Notes** page 8)

MAKE IT FUN!

Norm Cates' **THE Club Insider** NEWS

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Targeting For Breakthrough Results

By Klaus P. Hilgers,
President of Epoch Consultants, Inc.

ing to produce results like these?

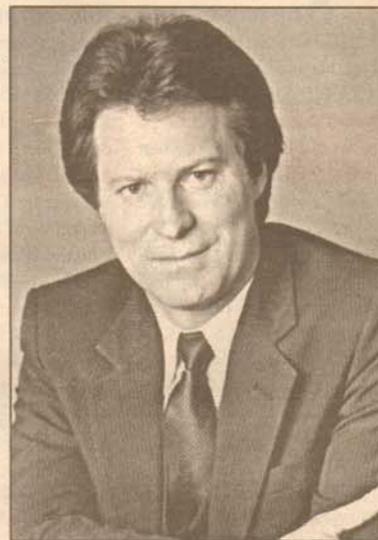
They played the "Breakthrough Game!"

Traditionally, businesses manage themselves by using the science of prediction or forecasting as a way of determin-

ing how to operate. It's a safe, realistic and rational method: to base current plans on what has been done in the past, taking into account present circumstances. It has worked well-at least, for those who have done it well.

new members as a result.

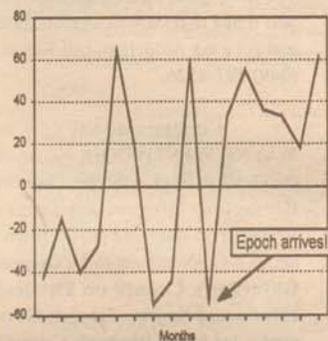
They were just lucky! Their interpretation of what is causing their "luck" are things that are outside of their control; such as the economy, the



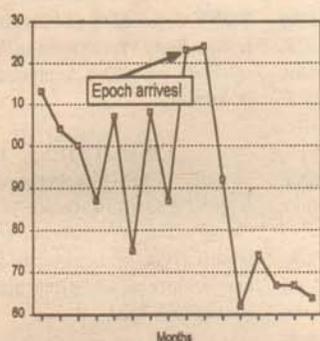
Klaus Hilgers

What is this club do-

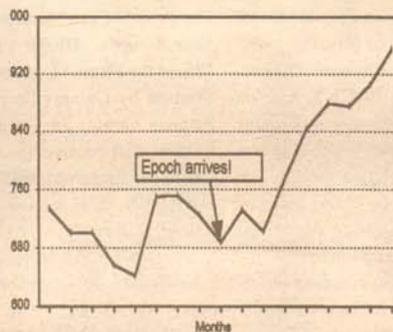
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Orientations Toward Producing Results

Not everyone produces results at the same level, nor does any one person or entity produce results at the same level all the time. There is a whole range of orientations toward producing results and achievement. We have divided this range into five major levels:

1. Unconsciousness
2. Accident
3. Goal-setting
4. Prediction
5. Breakthrough

Some people simply have no conscious attention on goals or results and are simply unaware of what it takes to produce results. They go through life just trying to make it, to get by. Some members just joined the club to hang out and have a good time, which is fine and they don't consciously work on improving their conditions. If they do improve, that is fine, but they are not consciously working on trying to achieve some goal. They just like the social life.

Another example, is that you have some part-time staff who are just putting in time, but have no real career goals with your club. They work, put in their time, and want their paychecks.

Results By Accident

Some people produce results by accident. They get hold of a hot product or a good location and they do very well. But if you ask them how they did it, they may say they were "just lucky." If a competitor goes out of business and they acquire a large number of

weather, the stock market—that's why they are doing well. If another club opens in their market, they are really in trouble!

In any case, they are not really responsible. You can see from their comments that they are not the cause of the results and they can't readily duplicate them. For an example outside of business, I once hit a terrific backhand while playing tennis. My opponent said, "Great backhand!" My response? "Just lucky."

Goal Setting

There are people who produce results through goal-setting. They've heard that it works, so they say, "Why not?" They write down some goals and then hope that they turn out, like a wish list or the traditional list of New Year's resolutions. A lot of Sales Managers operate this way. They are doing "Hope Management." Their sales people give them targets - the manager hopes they make it. Or the sales manager gives his team members targets in terms of sales for the month, such as, 25 new members and then he sits back and hopes it happens. And he checks the figures at the end of the month to see if he was lucky.

The fitness instructor as well, sets targets for one-on-one training. The target could be 10 new people this month. A target has been set but there is no action plan made to achieve it.

How many phone calls need to be made?

How many appointments need to be made?

How much advertising

needs to be done to get the leads?

How much training is required?

In essence there is no step-by-step program desired to support them in producing the results.

Prediction

On the other hand, there's management by prediction, or forecasting. In predictive management, goals are set and strategies and actions are planned to achieve those goals. The goals set are based on the best data available including last year's trends, present trends, marketing research, current sales and the current number of sales prospects. Based on this data, we make a safe prediction. Some very fine companies do this, and do it well. It's a necessary practice in the intelligent management of a business.

Breakthrough

This other level or realm of producing results is called the "breakthrough realm," where one produces results by taking risks intentionally. Against the background or context that a certain result is possible (no matter what the circumstances look like), you make a promise to produce that result for no other reason than that you said you would. You produce results as a function of giving your word.

"Breakthrough" is defined as "a strikingly important advance or discovery in any field

(See Klaus page 15)



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A F F I L I A T E D A C C E P T A N C E C O R P O R A T I O N

Norm's Notes

continued from page 5

will develop a turnkey advertising and sales training program to help clubs use **BodyPUMP** to attract new members. Check out **SALLY GOLDMAN's** (owner of **The Weymouth Club**) article entitled **Walk The Walk. Talk The Talk. Pump The Pump**, this month on page 10.

The folks at **WORK OUT WORLD** in Brick, New Jersey, are preparing for the arrival of the Aliens by introducing and launching **Weight Loss Now!**, a comprehensive behavioral modification program that allows participants to learn the tools and skills they need to successfully lose weight and maintain their weight loss. **Weight Loss Now** has been designed by Health Management Resources, a national health care company who for the last 15 years have been considered a leader for their work in

the weight loss arena.

RANDE LADUE, the owner of **PRO*FIT Enterprises**, has announced that he has appointed **JOHN SPENCER ELLIS** as a **PACE Master Trainer**. John Spencer Ellis is a studly dude with a resume in fitness a mile long! Good luck **Rande and John**. For information on **PACE** call: (949) 888-1610 or **ProFitPACE@aol.com**

BILL CROWLEY is a 25-year veteran owner of **The Mount Auburn Athletic Club** in Watertown, Massachusetts. Bill has developed a new program called **BOOKING PLUS** that is an advanced computerized reservation system and comprehensive management tool for health, racquet and sportsclubs. Bill has put an awful lot of work into the program and will have it on Exhibit at **IHRSA San Diego**. Good luck **Bill** with your new **Booking Plus!**

MARK SMITH and his **Town Sports International Team** continue to mount up the numbers of clubs in their organization. Last I heard was that they now have 72 operational facilities with 14 in various stages of development for a total of 86! Good luck folks for a great 1999!

LIFETIME FITNESS, the Minneapolis/St. Paul mega-club organization has entered into a five-year-deal with a chain of hospitals. More later.

Equinox, a 5-club New York City-based upscale club chain is adding clubs in the New York suburbs.

The **Canyon Ranch** organization is installing a 63,000 square foot spa in the new **Venetian Casino and Hotel** in Las Vegas. Bet that will be **SOME PLACE!**

Here are some interesting industry trends that might make you think. A recent report on long term stock market activity showed the following movements in particular industry segments: Long Term Healthcare- Up- 55%, Home Healthcare- Up 44%. Rehabilitation Up- 37%, Managed Care Up- 7%. Assisted living Up- 5%, Hospitals- Up 1%. How long do you reckon it will be before the big hospital companies turn elsewhere big-time for profits?

CML Corporation has sold **Nordic Track** to **ICON Corporation**.

Club Corporation of America has just purchased 24 golf clubs from the **Cobblestone Golf Group**. Also, at the same time, **American Golf** acquired 21 clubs from **Cobblestone**. A lot of action on the golf front.

Chelsea Piers, the gi-

gantic New York City facility (around 200,000 s.f.), released total visit numbers for their entire complex in 1998 of 3.8 million!

Don't forget that **DAVID TILLER** and his **TotalWellness 2000.com** team will be at the **San Diego Marriott** and available to speak to club owners about their revolutionary new retail web site. See ad page #19.

To put our little ole health, racquet and sportsclub \$8 billion industry in perspective, consider this. The weight loss industry is over \$30 billion. And, **Schroders**, a Wall Street Analyst Firm has stopped tracking any company that is in our industry and publically traded because they are too small. At **IHRSA San Diego** there will be a panel session with people from **Bear/Stearns and CIBC Oppenheimer** on **The Wall Street Perspective** with our industry. It will be held Thursday, March 25th from 1:30 to 3:00 pm.



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..Aliens

continued from page 4

classified as "clinically obese." Almost 20% of America's children are obese. As Dr. Koop and others have clearly stated, the obesity of Americans is now a national health crisis."

24 Hour Fitness' billboard campaign may not have been "politically correct," but neither are some of the ads that discourage smoking. I congratulate them for their courage in raising this vital issue."

A POLL FOR THE PURPOSE OF VENTING

24 Hour Fitness conducted an unscientific and informal poll rating responses to the Alien billboard as either humorous, offensive or neither. Here are the results of that poll at press time:
HUMOROUS- 1437 votes - 45%
OFFENSIVE - 1648 votes - 51%
NEITHER - 129 votes - 4%
TOTAL VOTES - 3,214

Also, an independent poll done by **YAHOO.com** showed a 70% approval rating.

24 Hour Fitness also posted a sample of the responses received on the web from people around the country. Here are few samples of the samples posted on the web at: www.24hourfitness.com

"I have had gastric bypass surgery to help with my weight loss. I am losing weight,

but I am still 293 pounds and I personally thought your campaign ad was hysterical. Keep your sense of humor and tell the upset fat people to BITE YOU!
[I lost 73 pounds!]" Margaret

"I'm pretty overweight [and]..being one of the first to be eaten, I'd tell everyone else to lighten up. We all know that in selecting a food source we look for what looks appetizing, so the plump ones look a little more tasty than the thin. Get over it."
Xandrea

"I'm overweight and I still think your 'alien' billboard is funny. Don't take it down. But, if the aliens are smart enough to get here, they should subscribe to a low-fat diet, in which case they would eat..." Charles

"This country is too [politically correct]! Making obesity a disability is a travesty and being offended because someone thinks you are fat is stupid, especially if you are fat. Good luck and don't take any crap about your billboard." Steve

"The ad is misleading: aliens don't eat people, they abduct and experiment with them, right? To those who feel offended, relax! The goal...is to promote good eating habits, health and fitness of the human body as well as enhancing the quality of life with the human spirit." John

"You can kiss my membership money goodbye for life... offending people is no way to get them to join your club. _____ you.

And kiss my fat ___!" HO

"As a fat woman who is fit (I exercise and swim at a club regularly-not yours). I find the link you are creating with "fat" and "unfit" erroneous.. if aliens came.... they would save the fat ones for breeding. So, while you skinny people are being slaughtered, we will all be having sex! Pdixon

"I think it is the funniest thing I have ever seen in my life. It is great! I want a T-shirt! Do you sell them, because I want one!" Trish

"I thought [your spokesperson's comments on the TODAY Show]..about exercise, whether it be walking or working out in a gym, with emphasis on not being sedentary, nutrition and the fact that it's a work in progress - were very good and true. Geez, these people need to get a life." Marie

The long term positive result of this Alien Billboard will be immeasurable. The more people that learn of the five major contributors to coronary heart disease: 1. Smoking, 2. Physical Inactivity, 3. High Cholesterol, 4. High Blood Pressure, and 5. Obesity, the more members we should gain toward the goal of 50 million.

(Norm Cates is the big-fat Publisher of **The CLUB INSIDER News** and a 25-year club industry veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. Cates was the 1st **IHRSA President** and a Co-founder of the Association in 1980/81.)



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Walk The Walk. Talk The Talk. Pump The Pump

How one club owner discovered BodyPUMP. And revitalized her club's group exercise program... and her own.

By Sally Goldman,
Owner, Weymouth Club

Doctors get sick. Auto mechanics have car problems. And fitness club owners have trouble staying in shape. It's a plain fact. I know. I'm a club owner. Have been for over ten years. And I love it. Well, almost all of it. You see one part I don't love so much is when I go into the club in the morning. I feel fresh. I look good. Even my mirror said I'm the fairest of them all. I've got a bounce in my step.

Then I see them.

The instructors and trainers. They are so...so...fit. They look perfect. And by contrast, I feel anything but. Maybe I should just go home, throw on my bathrobe, open up a diet Coke and a bag of M&Ms, sit down in front of the tube. I'll never look like them. So why should I try?

Now, before you conclude that I have sunk into a deep depres-

sion about this, let me tell you, the feeling goes away. And it comes back, nearly every day. Is this the cross I must bear?

Funny thing is, I am, generally a fit person. I work out. Some days are tougher than others, but I do. But it's not like some people who think, "well, she can work out anytime, on all this great equipment, with all the fabulous fitness professionals... she should be a specimen!" Well, not quite. What can I say? I am the typical club member. I'm a product of the baby boom, saw the big four oh, come and go, have three (mostly wonderful) kids. Four if you count my husband. I'm busy, darn it.

OK, so I'm busy, like 99 and 44/100% of the rest of the population. But I'm also challenged, every day. By them. The instructors and trainers. Now I love every one of them. I really do. But sometimes, I just get so jealous.

So, I set my sights on getting in the best possible shape

I can. About once a week.

For the longest time, I thought aerobics was going to be my salvation. What a workout! And the chance to rub shoulders (and if the class is crowded, other body parts) with some very fit and very motivated people. What's more, miss a class and everyone's asking...where were you last time? Peer pressure can be good for you. Yes, aerobics would be it for me.

I even got to the point that the moves started to make sense. In fact one class, I really felt I was at the top of my game. I mean, there I am, matching step-for-step, these perfect aerobics people (all female for that matter), and I'm movin' and groovin', my eyes are closed, the music's loud and motivating, and I'm thinking, this is it! Aerobics is my key to fitness. Then I open my eyes.

I'M FACING THE WRONG WAY!

I'll miss aerobics.
Every day that went by, I

still had to face them. The instructors and trainers. And I got to thinking again; I need something to get me going again. I need that feeling aerobics gave me. And I always, always need to face the right way.

So I took on a personal trainer. Right around the time the stories of Demi Moore's personal training regimen for "GI Jane" were hitting the rags. Cool. GI Sally. Maybe I'd look good in fatigues.

My trainer was terrific. Mark was a young father of two. A regular guy. Not intimidating. So we set off together on a twice-weekly journey designed to make me into a specimen.

The first revelation. I didn't know how to use the strength equipment. Mark had this look on his face like, "You OWN this equipment, and you don't know how to USE it?". Right Sparky, I can't know everything, can I?

The second revelation. What you do with a trainer isn't necessarily what you can do on your own. Here are the machines. The same ones I just used yesterday. But something happened. They grew. More arms and legs and pads. They were...monsters. Do I sit here? Or does my head go here? Arrgh! Was I destined to end up trapped in a machine that was certainly named by Dr. Seuss? Headline: "Jaws of Life used to free fitness club owner from the grips of an abductor-flexor-crunch-cardio-flux...film at 11."

I'll miss Mark.

So there I was. A successful club owner. With a rather unsuccessful fitness program. Well as fate would have it, meeting a business challenge would also lead me to beating the biggest personal challenge I've had...to find a fitness opportunity that would keep me motivated, to become the best darned specimen I could be.

We had been investigating, as most clubs owners, how to inject new life into our group exercise (formerly aerobics) program. For quite some time, it had been barely holding its own. Despite monumental efforts from our superb aerobics instructors, classes were getting only about eight or ten people, mostly regulars. And as you know, a studio is



Sally Goldman

an awful lot of real estate to be dark most of the time, and inhabited by a few stalwarts the rest of the time. On top of this, we dealt with the nagging question...where are the men?

Stationary cycling helped somewhat. But what we needed was a breakthrough group exercise program. Something that appealed to women and men alike. Something that incorporated the energy of group exercise, without being so intimidating that many discount it before they try it. And, if we could actually introduce a program that SELLS MEMBERSHIPS...would that be too much to ask? Apparently not.

BodyPUMP does it all

Now, before you dismiss this as jargon, hear me out. BodyPUMP is group exercise, set to very excellent music. That makes for a great and motivating environment. BodyPUMP is a strength workout. Guys love it! Women love it! And with the news of all the benefits of strength conditioning for seniors, juniors, for sports-specific training (we even get TENNIS PLAYERS!), it appeals to every one of our members in ways that traditional aerobics, stationary cycling, and kickboxing can't.

What's more, prospects ask for BodyPUMP. It's a key part of their buying decision. And since getting them to buy memberships is a key part of my life... once I heard about BodyPUMP, I knew we had to have it.

Yesterday.

Now, let me digress a bit. If you ask anyone who knows me, they'd probably describe me as a focused, determined person. And they would be being kind. Fact is,

(See Goldman page 16)

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...CSI

continued from page 3

"We saw an opportunity with the growth, strength and response we

had to take our expertise and do other facilities. We were primarily a management company. We worked to manage clubs and we also worked to develop clubs for other owners of real estate. They

tended to be large developers, and we developed projects primarily in Colorado, Texas and Georgia. We were involved when the Savings and Loans had the financial real estate crisis in this country

when it became very difficult to build new clubs and there was a lot of real estate going bad. We did a lot of what I'll call workout management. Either partnerships that had difficulties or situations

where clubs were part of multi faceted real estate developments, or in the case of some club partnerships where large facilities were built and they weren't performing (See CSI page 16)

...Crunch

continued from page 3

Those are really the other options we're competing with."

A MEAGER BEGINNING

Crunch started with a meager, single location in the East Village area of New York City. The first Crunch facility was built in 1989 and was only 1288 square-feet! A former New York and San Francisco stock broker and once aspiring actor, Levine has parlayed an investment of \$80,000 into what is now a 14-club organization that has clearly carved out a very distinct and very unique brand in the U.S. and Japan. An admittedly "poor to mediocre" student at Tufts University, Levine had made up for his poor academic performance by age 28 when his net worth reached \$1 million. He recalls his meager beginning in the East Village, "My first location was a one-room aerobic studio of 1,288 square-feet, with one bathroom and no shower. The place used to get broken into about once every two months, and we'd lose our stereo!"

Sportslife, now Crunch Fitness, has 500,000 square feet of club space. Doug Levine says the clubs "have real good bones." The six club Sportslife group generated just under \$20 million in 1998. With the acquisition of Sportslife, Doug

Levine now projects total revenues for Crunch in 1999 of \$64 million! Of that, he expects 65% to be generated from the club operations and 35% to come from Crunch's Athletic Apparel line, Crunch Care sports-oriented hair and body products, Crunch Exercise Videos, Crunch Exercise Music CD's, Crunch Books and Crunch TV Shows, all of which now bear Crunch's gorilla-fisted logo! Crunch International's strategic alliances include such leading edge companies as Doubleday, RCA Records and ESPN2. The fact that Levine has been growing annual Crunch revenues by 50% per year does not escape those that watch the financial world and Levine has admitted plans to one day take Crunch Fitness International public. He envisions revenues of \$600 million some day!

Growing Internationally

In addition to taking a major market position in Atlanta, Crunch operates Crunch state-of-the-art gyms in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Miami and Tokyo. Crunch will also soon open their doors in Mission Viejo, California (Orange County), Chicago and Las Vegas.

We had the opportunity to speak with Doug Levine, Jerry Alles and Lou Off about the recent deal. Alles and Off are the

former owners of Sportslife and will stay on in their former operating capacities with Crunch in the new Crunch Southern Regional Offices.

We asked Levine, "Doug, the people want to know what your plans are, given that the average Crunch Fitness facility is 28-30,000 square feet and the average Sportslife facility is 50-55,000 square-feet? What are your plans to transition to the larger size facilities?"

Levine responded, "We're going to do the same things we've done with Crunch, which is to have very innovative programming, great personal training programs, interesting juice bars and retail programs and we're going to take advantage of the additional swimming pools and basketball courts to do a whole new set of programming. Different kinds of swimming programs, aqua aerobics programs, underwater treadmills and the same type of things on the basketball courts. We are very good programmers of exercise classes and we basically think that over time, unless you offer a variety of things, it can become boring. So we will apply the same principals to the core of Sportslife."

We asked, "What will Jerry Alles and Lou Off, the former owners do now?"

He responded, "They will be staying on with us in basically the same roles, management and operations for Jerry and construction for Lou. We intend to open some additional units in the Atlanta area, but we don't have a specific time table for the new Atlanta developments. If everything continues to go smoothly here we will be opening new Atlanta area facilities before long."

We inquired, "What about additional acquisitions around the country. Do you have any plans to make acquisitions in other cities?"

Levine responded, "We are looking in San Francisco, Los Angeles and Chicago. We are looking to do a hybrid of acquisitions and high profile new built-to-suit locations. For example in Chicago we are going into the House of Blues Hotel and in San

Francisco we've opened in an entertainment district.

Asked about the staff in Atlanta, Levine commented, "I expect we will keep most of the people and we'll add some additional programming and personal training people. But, most of the people will stay."

Levine closed with, "I think the clubs here have real good bones. We'll be adding some programming, changing the marketing and using our branding everywhere. When you own a brand you're able to buy a regional health club and you lay your brand on top of it. That's why I wanted to acquire Sportslife."

We also had an opportunity to spend some time with Jerry Alles and Lou Off, the former principal owners of Sportslife. Jerry and Lou have been partners for 17 years and were formerly partners with Rich Boggs and Ray Irwin, the other original founders of Sportslife. When Jerry and Lou joined forces with Rich and Ray, they began with the old Courtsouth location in Marietta, an 18,000 square-foot facility with primarily racquetball, a small fitness room and small aerobic studio. From that beginning they have grown the Sportslife organization to be one of the top health club organizations in the South.

During the week of March 8th the new Crunch operation was publicly announced to the employees, members and the media. Jerry Alles commented, "There will be a public announcement, a press release will come out of the New York office, Doug Levine will be down here with us, there will be lot of excitement about it. We've developed a transitional plan in which we will be distributing a lot of information to the members including letters and videos to help educate them on what is going on. So far there is just great enthusiasm from our staff about it!"

Reflecting on their former partnership with Rich Boggs and Ray Irwin, now the owners of The STEP Company, Jerry Alles commented, "We were trusting souls with Rich and Ray. We did a lot of stuff just on handshakes. It turned out well because they are honorable guys, great

guys. We had a lot of great times together." Lou Off comments, "We were four very separate personalities, but it was a great marriage. We never did have any really bad times, but we had a lot of great times."

One thing is for sure, Jerry Alles and Lou Off have made a great contribution to the Metro Atlanta area with their Sportslife operations. And now with the acquisition by Crunch, I expect that we will see many more years of success and Crunch influence in the market. Alles commented on his feelings about Doug Levine and Crunch, "At the beginning of our negotiations last June, Doug Levine came down to meet with us and see our clubs. We all hit it off well. Doug is a very bright, very intelligent and smart guy. Crunch is a very brandable product because it is not just membership. It is everything that they do. Its all the videos, the skin and hair care products, the personal training programs, the athletic gear and nutritional products. They are moving into a lot of areas. Doug has assembled a team of real players. He has involved people from Time Warner. Besides club insiders, he has brought in people from outside the industry that have business and marketing savy bringing a lot to his table."

Crunch Fitness International clearly outdistances all other U.S. or International club organizations in the branding world. Through this brand and concept they are redefining club industry branding and teaching the rest of the health club industry lessons that will be helpful to anyone attempting to differentiate their club operations from others in their respective markets. There is no doubt that Doug Levine's ideas and formulas are working well. The question now appears to be, "Who are the players out there that are going to learn from Levine's branding lessons and emulate his ideas for greater club marketing success?"

(Norm Cates, Jr. is the Publisher and Editor of *The CLUB INSIDER News* and an 25-year club industry veteran. Cates was the 1st President and a Co-Founder of IHRSA in 1980/81.)

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Guaranteed Sales Increase

By Karen D. Woodard

The #1 reason sales people in any industry fall short of their success is?

There are a multitude of reasons that can hold us back from being top producers but the number one reason is that we don't talk to enough people about what we're selling. You may initially think that it is lack of selling skills but think about it — even the best closers are not going to succeed if they aren't talking to enough people. Perhaps more positively stated — even the least skilled salesperson can still do well as long as they have a deluge

of leads — someone who will buy from them.

The focus of this article is how we can create more - qualified leads for ourselves and get the entire staff involved in the membership function by implementing a strong All-Staff Referral Program.

Most clubs I work with subscribe to the philosophy that every one on their staff sells the club whether they are in the membership department or not. That is a good thing if it is reality and if there are clearly outlined duties. What is a bad thing is that most clubs don't have any system designed to support that philosophy, consequently, there is very little lead generation results from those

staff. To increase production in that area we have to make it easy for our staff to produce. To make it easy you'll need the following elements: a referral vehicle, a communication vehicle, an incentive and thorough follow-up. This article will discuss how to put all those pieces together to create a strong lead producing program.

The referral vehicle is simply a tool that your staff has in their hands that provides value for them and the person they are referring. The best way I've found to do this for my clubs as well as my clients is to create a special staff referral pass that can be given to friends or associates. It will differ from your regular guest passes in appearance and value in that it should be different looking, should state that it is a staff pass and should have a special joining incentive printed on the pass for the guest to redeem upon joining. By utilizing a special staff pass, you create more value for your staff people from their employment at the club because the pass and joining incentive extends a privilege to their guests that otherwise could not be enjoyed. It also creates a "VIP" feel for the guest that uses the pass. Another function of using a pass distinct from your regular guest passes is that it helps with lead tracking and knowing which staff person should get the credit.

Next, you'll need your communication vehicle. The most effective ways to communicate the staff referral program are 1.) upon initial hiring when you communicate all the ways a staff person can create additional income for himself at the club, 2.) including the staff referral program in your staff handbook in detail explaining how the program works and 3.) in an ongoing vehicle as in a staff payroll memo or newsletter. The staff payroll memo is an excellent tool with which to communicate because most of your staff will be paid twice per month so you have two opportunities to provide them with this distinctive staff referral pass. You'll want to include one pass for each staff person that has an expiration date of two weeks maximum. Additionally, you'll want to always include reminders of how the program works and what the staff person gets when someone takes his pass and joins.

If we don't do this consistently, the staff will forget that the program exists.

Now let's talk about the incentive. I know we think that the staff should simply tell all their friends and family about the club and get them to join, but that is not always reality. Here is where we provide a little more incentive to get the result we want. There should be a consistent monetary incentive for all non-membership sales staff ranging from \$10 - \$20 for a referral sale. This referral fee should not be additional labor dollars but instead should be shared from the original commission. For all of you membership reps out there reading this — please don't make the mistake of thinking that something is being taken away from you. Instead, look at it as though you are now making additional commission from sales you would not have otherwise had. From the non-membership staff perspective, this shared referral fee creates the opportunity for any enterprising staff person to make up to \$100 more per month. That's some pretty nice change in the pocket for most of our staff. In addition to the referral fee that can be earned, you can sweeten the program by periodically offering more incentive (i.e. the staff people who have two or more referrals per month go into a drawing for a weekend getaway, dinners, event tickets, etc...).

The last element to create success in this program is the follow up. This is the element that tends to be lacking most of the time and it is critical to ensure success. Let's say including all departments and all positions you have 50 staff people at your club and you have four membership representatives. You will divide the staff up between membership representatives and each rep will have their own team. Each rep will make follow-up calls to each team member monthly to ensure they received their passes, to update them on the incentive, and to see how they can help them to get their friends started. The reps should always come from the place of "how can I help you with



Karen Woodard

this" versus "hey, who do you know that I could sell a membership to?" By having the membership sales staff connect with all the other staff regularly this will accomplish the elusive goal of having the entire staff become more a part of the membership process as opposed to apart from the membership process.

Each of the four elements of the program: (referral vehicle, communication vehicle, incentive and follow up) are all imperative to the success of the program. If any one is missing, the program will not produce at its maximum potential and you and the staff will be disappointed with the results. With the implementation of a strong All-Staff Referral Program at our clubs, we accomplish several goals — we consistently create more leads for ourselves, create more financial opportunity for the staff and increase the total focus on membership production at the club. The more staff we have involved in the membership process at different levels along the way is a guarantee for increased membership sales. With a guarantee and enjoying the benefits mentioned in this paragraph, why would you not implement an All-Staff Referral Program?

(Karen D. Woodard, President of Premium Performance Training, provides successful sales, service and management training to the health and fitness industry. She owns clubs and has been in the industry for 13 years. She can be reached at 303.417.0653)

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...Klaus

continued from page 6

of knowledge or activity." It is also "the act, result or place of breaking through against resistance."

A well-known example is Lee Iacocca declaring, at the time of the Federal loan to Chrysler, that he would repay the loan and make the company profitable. Despite the skepticism, and the criticism of the loan, he did it. He stated it publically and took the risk.

Pat Laus at the Atlantic Club declared to her staff when they were at 1,400 members that, when they got to 2,000 members, she would rebuild the club. They did it. Now it's one of the best clubs in the USA.

When you operate in the breakthrough realm, you take a stand that your vision will be realized and you then take actions consistent with your vision, even when they seem difficult or risky.

Playing the Game - The Highest Ever Game

To get into the realm of the breakthrough requires that you play the game. At the Nirvana Club we always play the Highest Ever game on a monthly basis and reward it.

Why do some clubs seem to hit a ceiling in terms of membership? No matter what they do they can't seem to get past 1200 members. Even though throughout the year the membership goes up and down, but at the end of the year we are still at 1200. What could cause that? Maybe it is because of their own expectations, or possibly that they are thinking too small. Maybe it is simply that they are being reasonable? In actuality, they are suffering from Club Managers' Disease. They are not writing step-by-step programs to help their staff achieve breakthrough results. They have become too reasonable and realistic. They will even agree why membership levels never seem to get beyond 1200 members. You may want to notice that effect is pointed out in the book, Jonathan Livingston Seagull, "If you argue for your limitations, you get them."

Fitness Instructors are usually trying to motivate the individual club member to do that extra repetition to go a step beyond what they thought was possible during their workout — to break through their own personal best. What if the club manager applied this same principle to all the profit centers in the club? What would happen if a highest ever or best ever target was set for each profit center was created as well as a corresponding special reward for whenever that person or team

achieved it? That would create some interest! Would your staff play?

This can be carried on to even bigger games as well. How about a highest ever game for the whole club, for all staff that consists of total membership, retention and profit and a reward for the entire staff? Would that create some interest? Remember the highest ever could be one (1) more member, one dollar more, or one member re-activated. All it means is the best you have ever done. The next month or quarter or year there is a new highest ever. There is one club that has hit its highest ever for 14 months in a row! Can you imagine the morale at that club?

If you were doing management by prediction you could write a program to insure its success. This would be accomplished by playing the game by using the 3-tier goal-setting method:

- Breakthrough-Taking a risk and making a commitment to the highest-ever realm for key areas of your business (the bonus realm).

- Realistic-Making a prediction and playing it safe. For this you get your salary.

- Minimum Acceptable-Break-even point; financial floor. When you hit this you get to keep your job.

When you set up your goals in this fashion you enter the realm of the breakthrough. The first step in management is to think big, and set goals. The next step is to remember that what gets measured and rewarded gets done. Therefore, by setting up the graph, it keeps the staffs intention and attention on the game.

Every department at one of the premier clubs in the United States received a breakthrough target, and set up a reward system for achieving it. By using our S. T. A. T. program (Success Through Appropriate Training), we taught them how to write programs (step-by-step procedures) to be able to achieve their breakthrough targets. They could see from their programs that it could be done and then they did it.

How do you get started? The game starts with a commitment to play. Commit yourself to the highest ever game and reap its rewards!

To find out more about how to Manage by Prediction and how to create a Highest Ever Game for your staff you can contact Klaus Hilgers at Epoch Consultants, Inc. 1220 Turner Street, Suite F Clearwater, Florida 33755. 727-447-1773 (phone) 727-449-0931 (fax) or epoch@gte.net.

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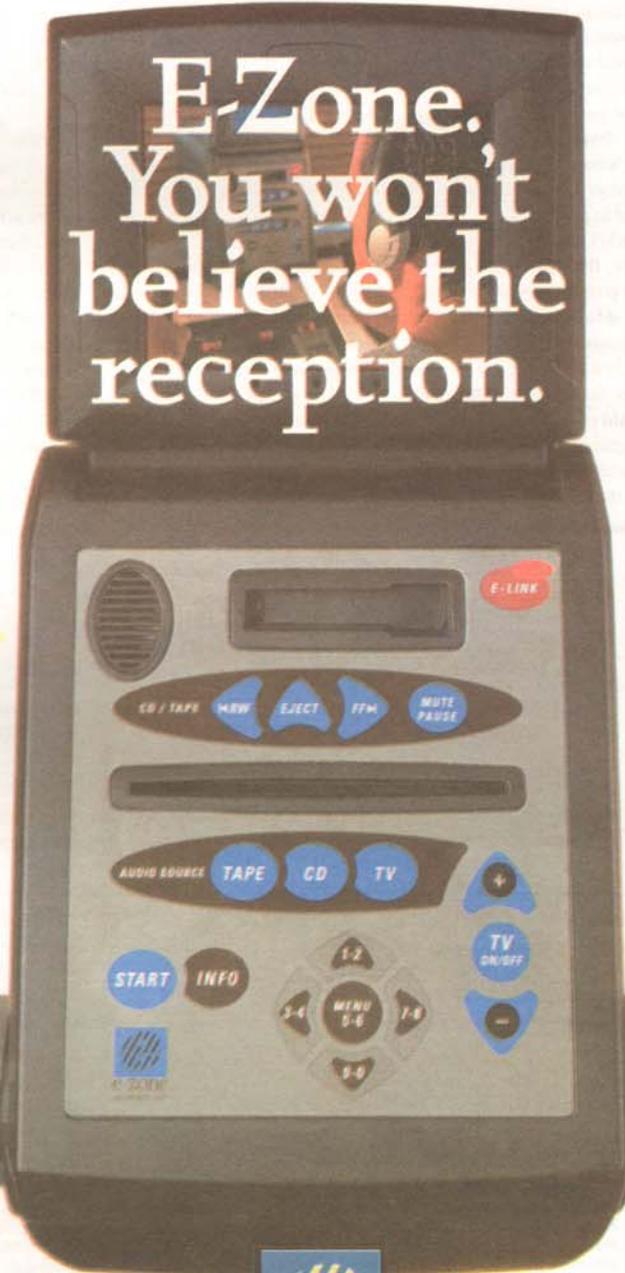
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Norm Cates' **The Club Insider**

...CSI

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up to expectations. We built our business around management, although we did occasionally get into ownership positions on various projects. We worked for some of the largest real estate companies in the country including Arvida, Equitable, Trammel Crow and Landmark. These were all high profile real estate companies that had large clubs in their portfolios. We could see as time went on that management had its ups and downs. Contracts always had a definite length. Real estate owners were many times looking to exit the real estate. In the management company it was more difficult to control your own future as opposed to those people in the club business who owned their properties. We also recognized that since we tended to operate in the segment of the market which were the larger properties, the capital investment for these properties was very substantial. Much more so than a 20,000 square-foot club in a leased property in a shopping center. The properties that we typically managed would cost \$8 to \$20 million. We recognized that with our limited resources it was very difficult to amass the kind of capital to par-

ticipate on that level in terms of putting any number of clubs together in an organization."

Lyneis continues, "From that standpoint we began to investigate how CSI could become an owner and what type of a structure would work out best. We investigated all types of vehicles such as going public on an IPO. We investigated the REIT structure. We ultimately entered a Joint Venture relationship with two capital funds, Chilmark of Chicago and Starwood Capital Corp. of Greenwich, Connecticut. We basically rolled our equity in CSI in with their capital and business expertise. We then began to search out acquisition candidates that met our criteria for investment. The very first was the Northwest Athletic Clubs in Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN and the second was the New Mexico Health and Wellness Group in Albuquerque, New Mexico."

WellBridge has distinguished itself in the health and fitness club industry through its development of "wellness centers." WellBridge has been very successful in developing programs to address members' "whole person health" needs which integrate physical fitness with other ele-

ments of personal health management. CSI views the WellBridge concept as offering great appeal to the demands of an aging Baby Boomer population that is deconditioned and over 40, but increasingly concerned about improving their health and maintaining an active lifestyle.

Now, the acquisition of WellBridge, Inc. from giant Monsanto Corporation positions CSI for a major thrust into the world of wellness facilities, hospital-owned clubs and medical programming. Not only has CSI acquired the 7 large, upscale WellBridge locations in Boston, St. Louis and Baltimore, WellBridge, Inc. provides CSI with a new business platform for growth through the infrastructure of operations and training for the wellness business created at significant costs by WellBridge over the past few years. WellBridge has developed programs for coping with arthritis, high blood pressure, osteoporosis and other ailments. CSI plans to utilize the WellBridge menu of wellness services to provide the same capability in CSI's other flagship clubs, especially those in San Antonio and Boca Raton and

Tampa, Florida, where CSI has a significant number of older members. CSI plans to grow the business as well as leverage WellBridge's talent, programs and training across CSI clubs where appropriate. Through WellBridge, CSI will reach new demographic groups, enter into alliances with hospital-affiliated health clubs and manage corporate wellness centers. CSI will also be able to offer WellBridge's medically-based programs to the members of CSI's existing clubs, appealing particularly to those with a significant middle-aged membership base. Finally, CSI will gain the expertise of the WellBridge management team which joins CSI with many years of experience in the health club industry and in the design and operation of "wellness centers."

The expanded capability of CSI to target and serve the 50-plus age category, the fastest segment of fitness club membership nationwide according to IHRSA, The International Health, Racquet and Sportsclub Association should produce long-term memberships results in keeping with the demographic trends in the market and their own clubs. The average age of CSI's 250,000 members is in

the mid-40s. CSI projects a growing need for programs that maintain fitness and that acknowledge and address the physical changes of aging.

Larry Krieger, formerly Vice President for WellBridge, Inc. and new President of the WellBridge Group, a Division of CSI, comments, "We are looking forward and are very happy to be a part of CSI. We're glad to have a parent company that is very interested in helping us grow the markets we've been trained to grow which are the wellness, hospital and medical programming markets. We think it's a great deal for WellBridge and we're very happy to be part of Club Sports International."

While terms of the transaction were not made available, it is safe to say that the purchase amount was in the multi-million dollar range as the cost of building a large-multisport facility such as those in the CSI Group can easily be \$20 million.

CSI now operates their 44 clubs in 14 markets, including six in the Denver area and 14 in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. The 250,000 members in CSI clubs nationwide are served by 4,000 employees. The projected 1999 revenue for CSI is \$150 million.

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I'm driven. And when I see something that I know will help keep our club the best club in our marketplace, I want it, like I said... yesterday.

So, we adopted the BodyPUMP program, start to finish, in three weeks. Now the program says you should allow 6 weeks to ramp up, set up your schedule, get your instructors trained and certified, create the "buzz" in the club, prepare your outside promotions and the like. Do all this, take six weeks, and your BodyPUMP program will be an instant success. So I said okay, we'll do all this IN HALF THE TIME.

What a rush! The entire staff got, well PUMPED. This was going to be a great program. What's more, we were able to tap into the STEP Company's resources. Casey Conrad, the marketing maven who designed the BodyPUMP marketing strategies, was good enough to visit us during our staff kick-off and provide valuable direction.

Throughout the ramp up, Casey and the entire STEP Company stayed in close touch to make sure our launch was a suc-

cess. We developed our internal campaign in just a few days. We put up posters. We set up a teaser program that led members to the group exercise studio and to a BodyPUMP display. We had a series of packed introduction classes. And we were off!

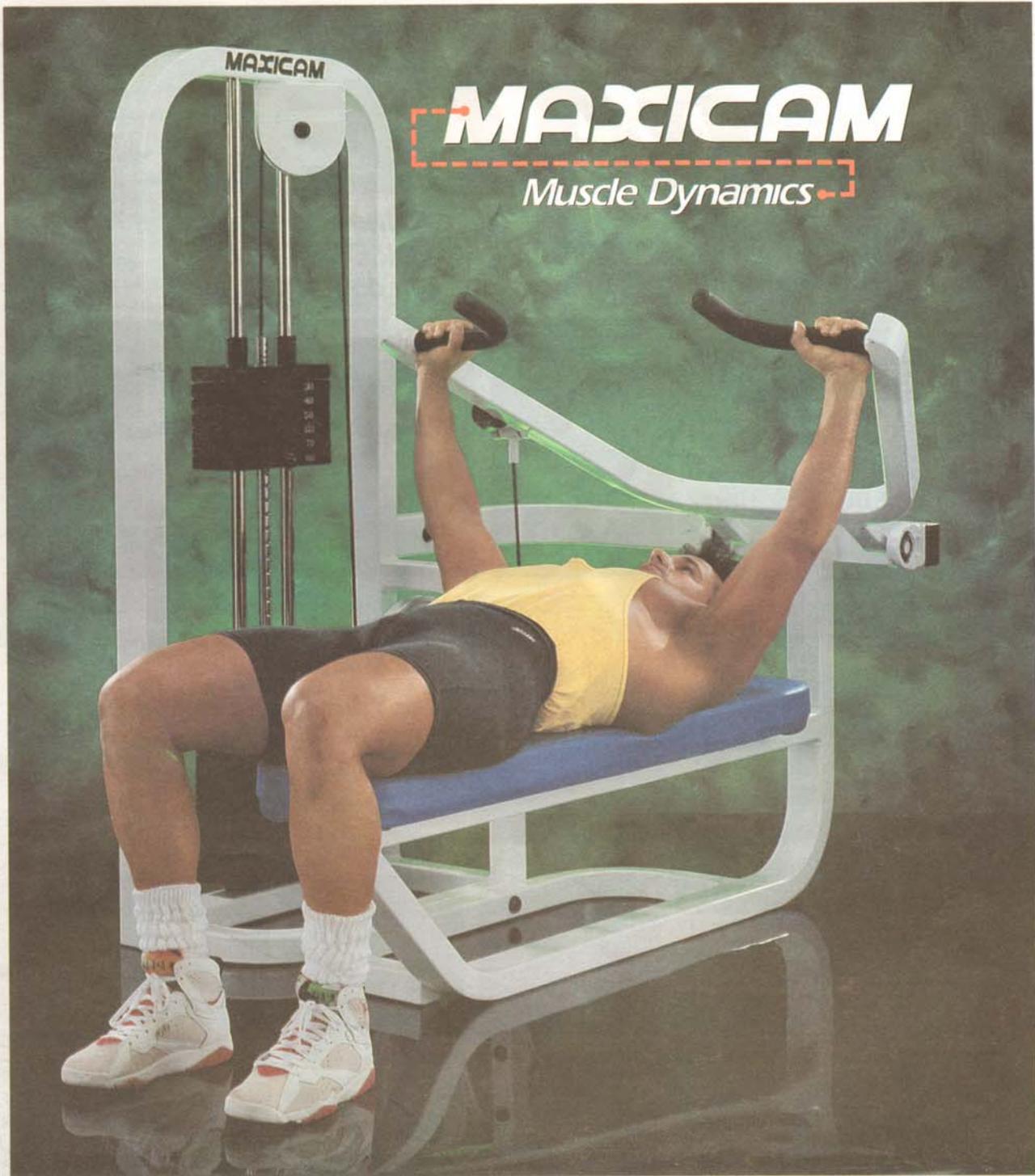
Now, we have nearly a dozen classes per week, and we're planning to add more. Our members can't get enough of BodyPUMP. This program has revitalized our group exercise program like never before. Members who take BodyPUMP are taking other classes too.

Talk about revitalizing. That's one thing BodyPUMP has done for me. More than aerobics. Or personal training. Or the jealousy I'd feel every day I walked into the club when I saw THEM. In fact, I'm becoming one of them. I'm becoming a specimen. I also took training along side each of the BodyPUMP instructors, so I PUMP the PUMP!

And now when I look in the mirror, it no longer says, "You're the fairest of them all". My mirror looks back at me and says:

"Damn, you're pumped!"

(Sally Goldman is the owner of the Weymouth club in Weymouth, Massachusetts.)



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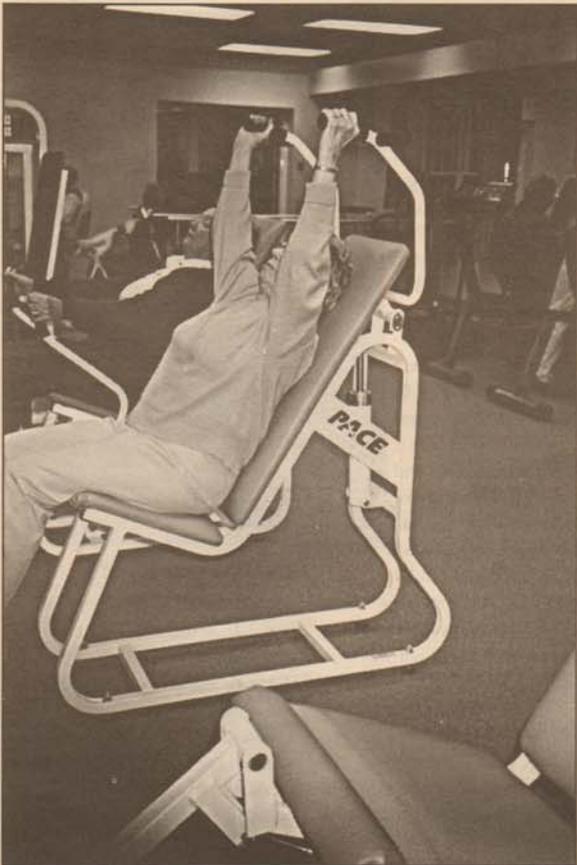
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SENIOR FITNESS PROGRAMS



PACE SENIOR FITNESS TRAINING

By Rande LaDue

Ask a Fitness Director of a Hospital Wellness center or YMCA what they use as their Senior Fitness Program. If they have a pool, the answer is bound to be 'Aquatics'. After all, water aerobics is an excellent choice of fitness programs for seniors or those recovering from injury since it is one of the safest workouts available with no impact to the joints and no eccentric (negative) resistance which causes muscle soreness. We can all remember moving our hand back and forth through water; the faster we moved, the harder it became.

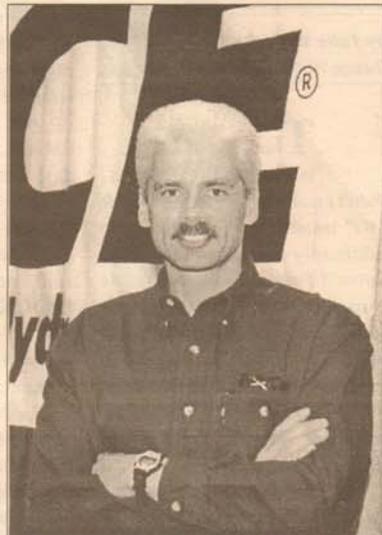
That is the same principle we use with The PACE Group Exercise Program™. We call it "acconodating resistance" which makes PACE one of the safest, most fun group programs available (without getting wet). With PACE, the user is moving fluid from one chamber of our patented hydraulic cylinder to another. The faster one pushes, the more the resistance, or the slower one pushes, the slower the resistance.

Warning! Do not try this

with any form of resistance which has negative resistance (weight stacks, air resistance, electromagnetic, etc.). Not only can one injure them self seriously, if the negative resistance is too heavy, they can also perform ballistic movements if the negative resistance is too light, also causing the chance of muscle or joint injury. Be very careful when putting seniors on any equipment on which you can vary the negative resistance during the exercise. Adding more "negative" resistance than positive is a great way for a bodybuilder to overload their muscles and build them bigger.

Most people do not know it, but it is the "negative" (or lowering the resistance) phase of the muscle contraction which will build bigger muscles, if that is your goal. It is also the part of the muscle contraction which causes muscle soreness. Because of the constant positive and negative load against the muscles and joints, every manufacture specification for PACE suggest to move their equipment "in a smooth, controlled manner".

So, which is the best form of resistance for seniors? Obviously, we say PACE with it's hydraulic resistance. Another big plus for PACE is that the machines are easily movable into a group format for PACE classes.



Rande LaDue

Seniors love the camaraderie of a class format with the personal motivation & inspiration from a PACE Instructor. Often times seniors come to PACE classes for the social aspects of the program; the fitness benefits are nice by-products. Swimsuits are optional.

Cathy Getchell, Wellness Director of Sinusoid Presbyterian Retirement Community has had PACE for several years now. She believes in the PACE program so much that she has become a PACE Sales Rep for Virginia and as a "Seniors" Consultant.

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Delaware Valley Alliance Career Fair to be held at the Sporting Club at the Bellevue

The Delaware Valley Alliance of Health and Sportsclubs' First Annual Career Fair will be held at the Sporting Club at the Bellevue, on Wednesday, April 14th, from 11 am to 3pm. The DelVal Alliance is a consortium of the top health clubs in the Delaware Valley area. Many Alliance clubs will be present at this event. The clubs are looking for both fresh faces and veterans in the health and fitness field. Experienced

and entry-level positions are available in a variety of areas, including full- and part-time staff for sales/marketing, personal training, group fitness, administrative, and management. Individuals with backgrounds in Physical Education, Corporate Fitness, Sports Management, Business, Marketing or other related fields are welcome to attend. Those interested should bring plenty of resumes and be ready to network. For directions or specifics please contact Linda Mitchell at 215/968-0600 x14.

THINK SMALL!

By Julia Wheatley
Owner, Women's Fitness Center, Inc.

Think SMALL!

Is my headline correct? Didn't I really mean to write "Think BIG" instead, since it's the more commonly known and used phrase?! Perhaps I selected my title to capture your attention and get you to read further! You did, didn't you?! My strategy has paid off in that I *now* have your attention to get you to truly focus, and I mean *tunnel vision, myopic FOCUS*, on "thinking SMALL"!!

What exactly do I mean? Do you really care to know? Well, I hope so!!

Let me introduce myself. I am a club owner, manager, aerobic instructor, membership salesperson, fluorescent lightbulb changer (thanks, Michael Scott Scudder, for *that* kick in the pants!), all-purpose janitor, retention supervisor, program coordinator, management team leader, bill payer, staffing scheduler, personal trainer, fitness counselor and, generally, the "Cat of ALL Hats." When I attend industry trade shows and seminars, I fit in appropriately in EVERY category of seminar! I can learn in each and every session, because I personally handle each and every one of the jobs described!!

That's not the "norm" in our industry, is it? I read every day about the "super size" clubs, the mergers, the acquisitions, the "mega" facilities with umpteen thousand square feet. I visit many of these all-star sites when I travel, and yes, the jaw-drop factor is huge! But that's the main reason that I want you to "think SMALL" (are you catching on to my theme yet?!).

I love your spacious, cavernous facilities where I can select from over 200 aerobics classes weekly, hold my child's birthday party, take yoga, spinning, and train for a biathlon, learn to swing dance, order a club sandwich for lunch and have a fruit smoothie drink too, have my car washed, my laundry cleaned, nails done, legs waxed, muscles massaged, and the list goes on! Then there's *my* club - all 5,250 square feet of it in a rural corner of Virginia. You can get a great workout and have a lot of *fun* doing it, choosing from the typical cardio machines, strength circuit and aerobic classes. I'm not making the case

that one type of club is superior or inferior to the other. No! Instead, my purpose in writing today is to remind each and every one of you in our industry to "Think SMALL," as I have to do every day! Let me further clarify.

What's the advantage in thinking like a small club owner? It's in creating, to quote from a recent newspaper column, a "POCKET OF COMMUNITY." I fell in love with this phrase the minute I read it!! It's so warm, cozy, *special!* Now you may be thinking that your club has thousands of members and that yours is not the type of place that's into conveying a "warm fuzzy" image. That's okay! No one has to know about this mission of creative awareness that I'm sending you on but *you!* Why and/or how can you create "pockets of community" on an individual basis within your location(s)!! The key is the "Think SMALL" concept!

Pretend you have a magnifying glass (or if you're brave, find an actual one!), and walk around your club truly examining each "area," "department," or "division" as if you were an integral part of it, as if you "wore its hat." Let's start with one of the real industry buzzwords these days: "retention." It's certainly easy to sell a membership, isn't it? Why then, oh why, is it that we have so much trouble keeping the members?

Industry companies and consultants are staying very busy right now with the retention theme, because we're all trying to "solve" it, aren't we? We know that it costs far less to retain a member than to attract a new one, and I agree that revenues can be improved by increasing the length of each member's stay. I submit, however, that our industry ALWAYS will be on a "revolving door" basis. All we can do is stem the tide (by "Thinking SMALL," no less!). The very nature of the commitment required by an individual to undertake and succeed at this intangible product that we sell called "better health through exercise" is going to *guarantee* a natural ebb and flow, or a "yo yo" effect. People ARE going to start and stop, people ARE going to quit, people ARE going to have unrealistic expectations and then get frustrated. Heck, now I've got you wondering: why are we even in this crazy business?! Because,

as several wonderful presenters in our industry always mention, it's FUN!!

Okay, let's get to the nitty gritty part! Do you know how *shocking* it is to me when I have members join my club and say that they have belonged to facilities elsewhere and never undergone the process of sitting with a fitness counselor to have a complete medical history taken, baseline assessment completed (not even blood pressure or resting pulse), and program goals reviewed?! Do you know how many former members of other clubs join my facility and are amazed that we actually *teach* them how to properly use the equipment?! They thank us profusely! I wonder to myself: how hard is this to do? Isn't it our *fundamental responsibility* as an industry promoting the principles of the Surgeon General's frequently cited report? *Where* is the communication breaking down that we're not offering these *basic steps* in the process to beginning a long-term commitment to exercise?! It's time to "Think SMALL" and find a way to implement a system for doing this, even in the biggest clubs! Never underestimate the power of human contact.

Once your stellar sales staff has convinced a prospective member to join, remember the lyrics of the Janet Jackson song and hum to yourself "What Have You Done For Me Lately?!" What does your club do for its members once they sign on the dotted line? Is the procedure simply to hand them a new member booklet of guidelines and send them merrily on their way? (It happens! And we wonder why we have a tough retention problem?!). Once again, the feeling of abandonment among health club members is strong. Here's your chance to create that "pocket of community" and earn some member loyalty! Roll out the red carpet - we know that our industry is a creative one! Have Member "M.A.D.ness" events frequently, and prior to the initial one, offer a "teaser" in your newsletter with a prize for the first member to correctly guess what the acronym "M.A.D." represents! (Did you guess and/or know - it's Member Appreciation Day, of course!) Every tenth, thirteenth, or you-pick-the-number member

checking in that day receives a choice from a prize list, *plus* all members can guess the number of pretzels, jelly beans or other item in a jar for a chance to win the latest exercise video (Tae Bo, anyone?!). Have a "Member Retail Detail" Day in which members are able to set up booths displaying information about their businesses and/or hobbies so that other members can browse! It's a great social outing and icebreaker where members of similar interests can come together!

You're continually rolling out the welcome mat! Your clients should view their memberships as *journeys*, not destinations!

Going back to the sales staff, how superficial does the joining process seem? Go through it yourself (do you still have your magnifying glass with you for examining all that is "small"?). Again, to quote from the newspaper article, "our 'servers' have been coached in what to say and the chipper little voice they should say it in. We doubt their sincerity on anything but a wish for a decent tip." Or, in our industry's sales staff's lingo, a decent *commission!* I have been a guest in a large club before and requested a thorough tour. I waited some time for an available person, and once he learned that I wasn't a potential "catch," he barely gave me the time of day. Now I know and appreciate that a sales person's time is money, but my impression was a lasting one. If I ever relocate to that area or have friends doing likewise, I may be hard pressed to speak positively of my experience at that facility where I perceived that it was all about the almighty dollar (which, in business, we all know that it is, but by creating "pockets of community," you can help the members forget!).

What's going on at the front desk? In large clubs, I frequently feel like I'm going through a turnstile that's clicking off each person passing through the doors that day. I get the sensation of being "herded" along. The basic "hi" from the staff



Julia Wheatley

somehow isn't satisfactory enough. Yes, I grant that many, many members come and go each day, and I don't expect any one staff person to know every single client. It's unrealistic. But what if you adopted the Dale Carnegie person recognition approach touted by consultants and rewarded front desk staff for helping members to feel that they are truly integral parts of the facility's "pockets of community?" Your member is less likely to leave if he or she feels that his or her presence is recognized and appreciated. "Being seen, being known, being treated as if you actually exist" are vital links for a member within *any* club.

What's happening in the marketing department? I think we all know the power of testimonials, and obviously you want the person(s) portrayed to be an accurate representation of your club's image and niche market. In marketing, your goal is to create that "Aha!" moment, in which a person sees your advertising piece and exclaims "That's me! That's *my* life!" They must believe that they will be comfortable and "fit in" to your club's community. Don't feature a hard body look if your members are more representative of the general population, and vice versa. For example, when I purchased my club, I inherited a logo that was extremely outdated. It was a drawing featuring a headshot of a woman with a 1980's looking "spiked" haircut, a sweatband around her forehead, and holding a dumbbell in front of her face looking very intimidating. The sig-
(See *Women's Fitness* page 22)

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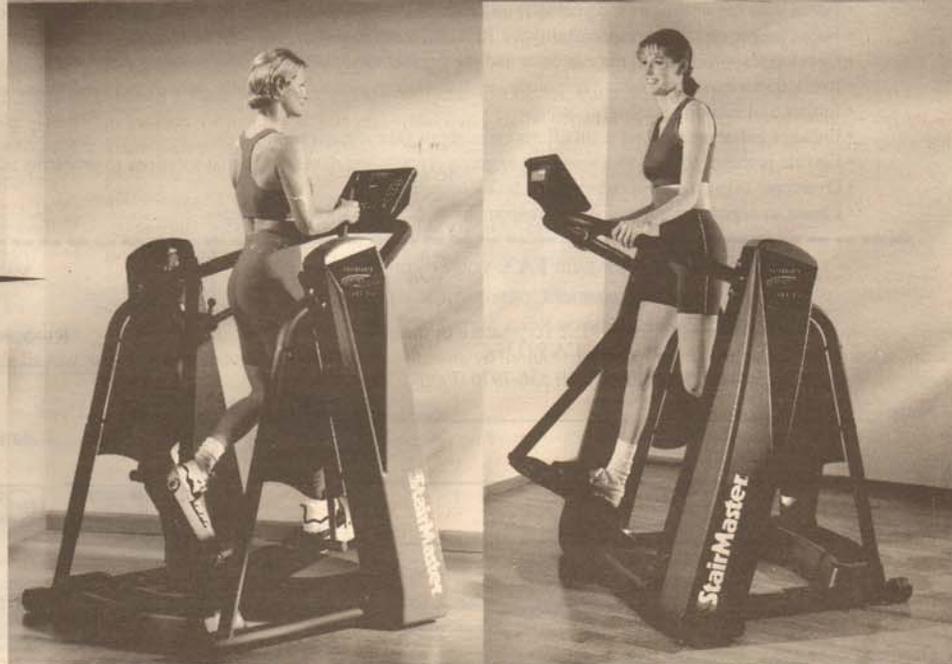
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...Women's Fitness
continued from page 20

nificance of describing this image in detail is that it had *absolutely nothing* to do with my niche market, which consists primarily of women ages 35 to 55 years, relatively new to the health club experience, overweight and self-conscious about it, and very concerned about participating in a coed environment. I ditched the old logo right away! You just can't afford to sink marketing dollars into territory that's irrelevant to your facility. Common sense, probably, but are you guilty of falling into the trap? "Think SMALL," and examine your current approach from all angles!

Your members' perceptions of the club's atmosphere and level of caring are impacted by our staff's detail and attention to cleanliness throughout. It is simply *unacceptable* to have an unclean club! This is so obvious to me, and yet many former members of clubs (perhaps yours!) report great dissatisfaction with the "look" and "smell" of their previous location. Do your members "ooh" and "aah" over your club's sparkling equipment and locker room facilities? My members teasingly ask my staff

to come clean their homes, a compliment I consider the ultimate sign of satisfaction! We've even had prospective members comment on our club's cleanliness as one of the reasons for their joining our facility! So take your magnifying glass, pretend you're a member, walk around and inspect EVERYTHING with a fine tooth comb! Do you like what you see and smell?! If not, "Think SMALL" and change it!

I mentioned "retention" earlier as a buzzword within our industry, and I now submit that "customer service" has become an overused and overworked buzz phrase in all avenues of business today. Mere lip service to this concept is NOT enough and, quite frankly, your members will see right through it! Empty promises will haunt you, so deliver ones you can *keep* instead! "Think SMALL," and see whether your club is "overdelivering" on some of the glitz and hype! You want to *earn* the respect and loyalty from your customers, and true service IN ALL AREAS will produce results for you!

As a small club owner, I have the great pleasure of wearing *all* of the hats in my facility! You should see what the view is like some time! In fact, DO IT! Provide an "Owner/Manager for

the Day" program in which you and your employees have the opportunity to treat the club as *your own*! Does it look differently to you somehow?! Consider the following statement as you walk around:

Human nature is to gravitate toward "places where we know and are known by others - where kindness and thoughtfulness are valued."

I have the dream that I could spend several months traveling around the nation, interning for one week apiece in clubs of different sizes, geographical regions, and target market composition, and just be a "fly on the wall" absorbing and soaking in as much as I can learn! I sometimes think I'd like to work in a larger club with all of the "bells and whistles" and amenities, but I'd struggle trying to decide which hat to focus upon. I'm not sure what I'd select, because I love them all! I enjoy "thinking SMALL" on a daily basis, and I hope you'll implement the plan on some scale within your club! Which hat are you going to try on for size after reading this article? Let me know!

(Julie Wheatley is the owner and manager of the Women's Fitness Center in Harrisonburg, VA.)

CLUB INSIDER News DEBUTS 1999 CONTRIBUTING AUTHOR TEAM

Here are the members of The **CLUB INSIDER** News Contributing Author Team for our first three editions of 1999. There are many more new Contributing Authors scheduled to join the team during the year.

•KLAUS HILGERS - President, Epoch Consultants - (727) 447-1773

•SALLY GOLDMAN - Owner- Weymouth Club - (617) 696-2627

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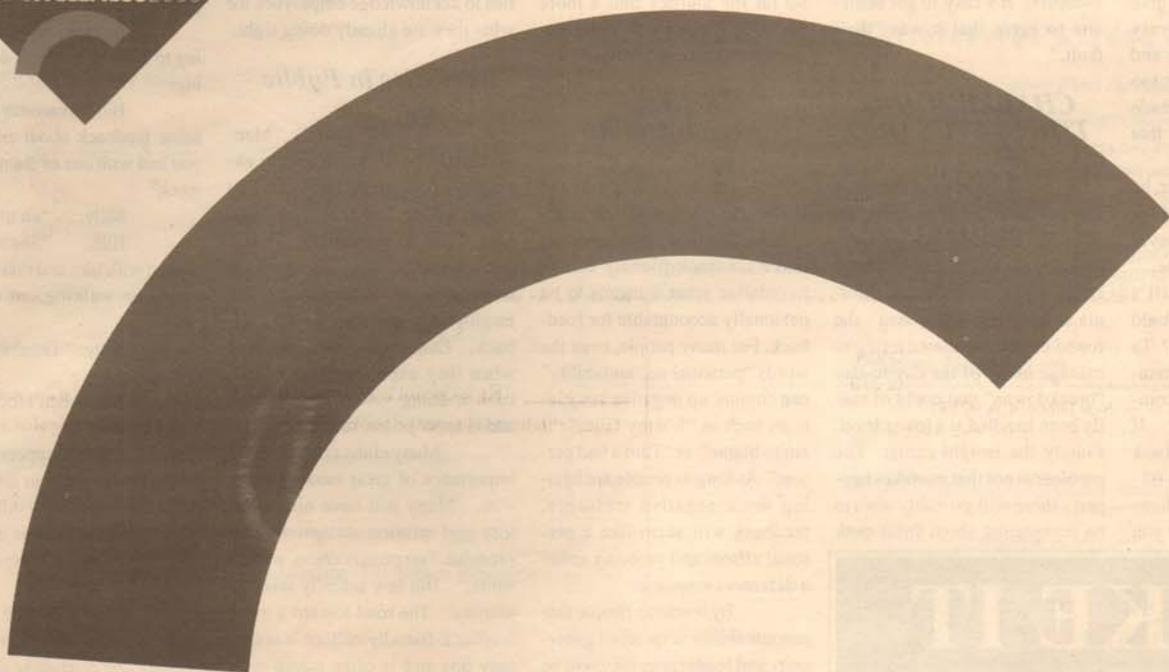
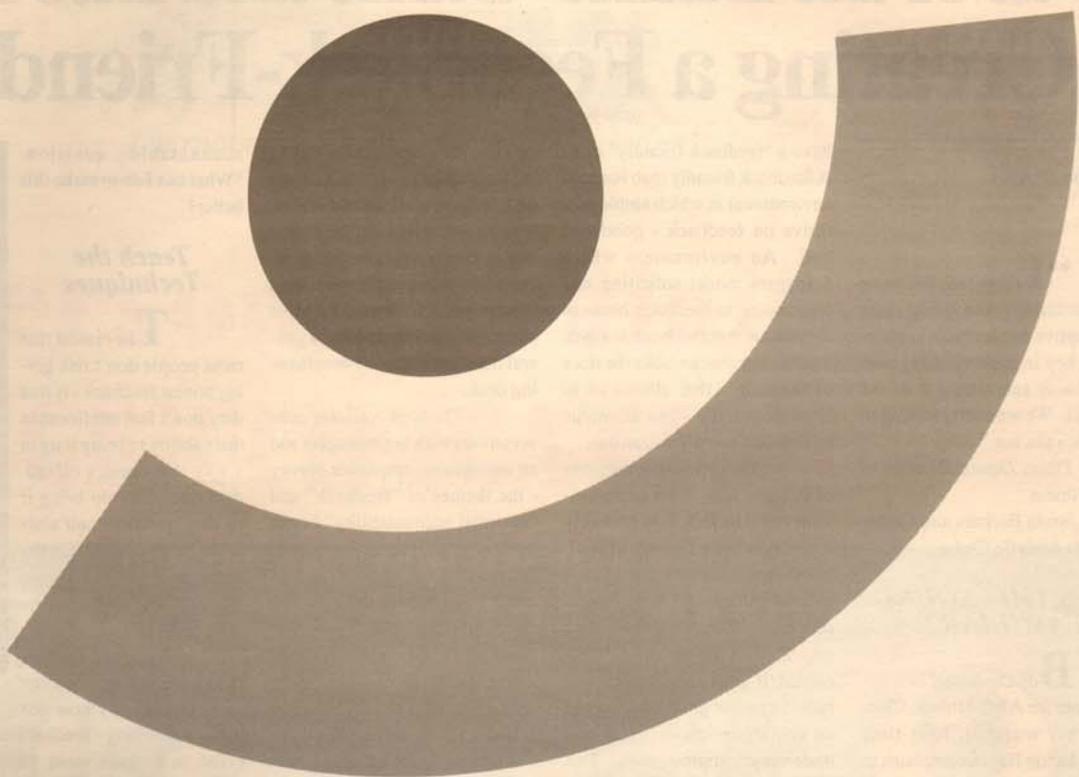
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Out of the Blame-Game and Into Excellence Creating a Feedback-Friendly Club

By Simon D'Arcy

"I think that this issue of accountability and being open and receptive to feedback is probably the key in making changes in our business and taking it to the next level. We are either willing to do it or we are not."

Diana Zapata, Director of Group Fitness

Santa Barbara and Cathedral Oaks Athletic Clubs

DOES THIS SOUND FAMILIAR?

Bill Davidson is a fitness trainer for ABC Athletic Club. During her workout, long-time member Jackie Hayes complains to him:

Jackie: "I saw Sally at the front desk arguing with a member over who was responsible for lost and found. The member looked very upset and eventually walked out, cursing and shaking his head."

Bill thinks to himself:

Arguing with a member!?, What was she thinking? I am tired of having to apologize to members for upsets I didn't personally cause. Last time I tried to give Sally feedback it didn't go very well. She got very defensive and accused me of criticizing her too harshly. In the end, it only made things worse. I won't make that mistake again.

As he walks to his car, he catches up with Tammy, one of the yoga teachers. Bill: "You'll never believe what Sally did this time..."

Put yourself in Bill's shoes: What would you do? Would you give the feedback to Sally? To her manager? To the general manager? or do what Bill did - complain to yourself and others? If you did choose to give the feedback directly - how would you say it?

How you answer these questions depends on whether you

have a "feedback friendly" club. A feedback friendly club is a club environment in which employees thrive on feedback - good and bad. An environment where managers model soliciting and responding to feedback because they know that feedback is a gift. It is the key that unlocks the door of learning - that allows us to grow personally - and allows us to improve our organizations.

Unfortunately, the story of Bill and Sally is not an uncommon one. In fact, it is probably one of hundreds of pieces of feedback that won't be given that month by dozens of different employees. When feedback isn't given, or is given and not received, it goes underground and fuels a cycle of gossip, blame and an employee defensiveness that undermines improvement. This self-reinforcing cycle is called the "blame-game."

The blame-game seems to be everywhere. Fitness blames maintenance, maintenance blames "too many projects/not enough help." Front desk blames "low pay and part-time staff" and everybody blames management. People are quick to assign fault to someone or something else. This attitude gains strength in numbers. It's easy to get someone to agree that it was "their fault."

CHALLENGING THE STATUS QUO

The issue of feedback was not the first one to appear on Julie Main's desk. As the General Manager of four athletic clubs - three in southern California and one in the Bay area - she found herself inundated trying to manage many of the day-to-day "breakdowns" that could be easily been handled at a lower level. Finally the insight came: The problem is not that mistakes happen - there will probably always be complaints about front desk

service, club cleanliness, billing errors, equipment breakdowns and lack of staff attentiveness. The real issue is that these everyday problems were not getting resolved by the people who were creating them. Instead people passed the buck up to the general manager's already overflowing desk.

Through various conversations with her managers and an anonymous employee survey - the themes of "feedback" and "personal accountability" began to emerge as the missing ingredients.

It has been three months since Julie and the department heads of The Santa Barbara Athletic Club, Cathedral Oaks Athletic Club, and the Ojai Valley Athletic Club - all in Southern California - decided to address the challenge head on. Their vision is to create a club environment where any staff member can give feedback to any other staff member with the confidence that it will be heard and responded to in a timely manner. This means that they are willing to examine how open they are to feedback. Is it easy for another employee or a member to give them feedback? Or do they get defensive? So far the journey into a more feedback-friendly culture has encountered these milestones:

Activate Accountability

The antidote to the blame-game is personal accountability. The first step to moving into a feedback-friendly club is to redefine what it means to be personally accountable for feedback. For many people, even the words "personal accountability" can conjure up negative associations such as "It's my fault," "I am to blame" or "I am a bad person." As long as people are hearing these negative messages, feedback will seem like a personal affront and probably cause a defensive response.

By teaching people that accountability is an act of generosity and leadership, they will be more motivated to "own" their contribution to problems. Instead of people pointing fingers at each other - they can start to ask the

accountable question: "What can I do to make this better?"

Teach the Techniques

The reason that most people don't risk giving honest feedback - is that they don't feel confident in their ability to bring it up in a way that doesn't offend. And once they do bring it up they question their ability to be able to handle the potential negative response. The last thing anyone wants is a conflict.

By learning how to say something - or even more importantly how not to say something - feedback can be given in a much more "listener-friendly" manner.

Catch Them Doing Something Right

If the only feedback people hear is negative, then someone is not doing their job. People will be much more able to hear constructive feedback when they know that they are appreciated for what they do well. Look for opportunities to acknowledge employees for what they are already doing right.

Practice in Public

Walk the talk. Managers must be willing to lead by example. They must be willing to model giving and receiving feedback - and do it publicly. This is not a secret initiative. Managers are responsible for making it safe for employees to give their honest feedback. Employees will feel safe when they experience their feedback is being valued, considered, and if appropriate, responded to.

Many clubs talk about the importance of great customer service. Many still have nifty mottoes and mission statements that promise "responsiveness with a smile." But few actually take the journey. The road toward a more feedback-friendly culture is not an easy one and is often paved with old beliefs, assumptions and habits. Julie Main, two general managers, and twenty six department heads at three clubs have chosen to



Simon D'Arcy

take this journey.

Feedback is the bread and butter of improvement in the service industry. A staff that is responsive to each other's needs - will be responsive to member needs. When responsiveness goes up - so does the quality of customer service. Better service means happier members. Happier members means higher retention. Higher retention makes for a more profitable club and maybe more important than that - an environment charged with purpose and pride.

Imagine Bill Davidson going to Sally at the front desk and saying:

Bill: "A member just gave me some feedback about an interaction you had with one of the members last week"

Sally: "uh uh..."

Bill: "She said that you argued with him and that the member ended up walking out shaking his head."

Sally: "Thanks for bringing this up."

Bill: "I didn't feel good about how I handled that conversation... let me tell you what happened and then I would love to get your input on how I could have handled it differently."

For some this is just a fantasy. For others, it is the future.

(Simon D'Arcy is the Principal of Business Success Teams - a training and consulting firm based in Santa Barbara, California that specializes in cultivating accountability in the workplace. He can be reached at (805) 566-8213)

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Bally Total Fitness Enters Agreement with Unit of Interpublic Group to Expand Strategic Partnerships and Leverage Bally's Dominant Fitness Brand

CHICAGO- Bally Total Fitness (NYSE: BFT) announced it has entered into an agreement with KBA Marketing, a division of Draft Worldwide and a unit of The Interpublic Group of Companies, Inc. (NYSE: IPG), to serve as Bally's agent for developing sponsorship and other strategic partnership programs.

This new agreement with KBA is designed to help Bally Total Fitness create incremental cash flows from this potentially significant revenue source. According to

"IEG Sponsorship Report," the leading trade publication covering the sponsorship and events marketing industry, sponsorship agreements are expected to generate \$7.6 billion in revenue for North American companies in 1999.

"Bally Total Fitness is the dominant, most recognized fitness services brand in the nation," said Paul Toback, Senior Vice President, Corporate Development for Bally Total Fitness. "This brand strength, combined with our membership base of ap-

proximately 4 million members and retail traffic of nearly 120 million visitations annually, makes Bally a very attractive strategic partner for businesses targeting customers who are active and fitness-conscious."

"We look forward to working with KBA Marketing to further leverage our brand and build additional incremental cash flow opportunities for Bally Total Fitness," Toback concluded.

Bally also announced that in December it had hired Leveraged Marketing Corporation

of America (LMCA) as the Company's exclusive agent to develop additional licensing agreements with leading manufacturers and distributors.

LMCA is a leading licensing agent representing many top consumer brands, including Procter & Gamble, Arm & Hammer, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Mobil and Eastman Kodak. Bally currently has one licensing agreement with Sports & Leisure Technology for a line of portable fitness equipment. This agreement pays to Bally a guaranteed mini-

mum of more than \$100,000.

KBA Marketing is a \$200 million promotional marketing company whose clients include Nike, General Motors, and Coca-Cola. KBA Marketing operates through 40 offices located throughout the United States and Mexico.

Bally Total Fitness is the largest, and only nationwide, commercial operator of fitness centers in the United States, with approximately four million members and 330 facilities in 27 states and Canada.

BALLY TOTAL FITNESS TO BECOME EXCLUSIVE HEALTH, FITNESS AND NUTRITIONAL WEBSTORE ON SPREE.COM New Marketing Agreement Builds Value, for Bally's Members and Expands Company's Distribution

CHICAGO, Bally Total Fitness (NYSE: BFT) has announced an agreement to become the exclusive health, fitness and nutritional supplement store on Spree.com's heavily trafficked cyber-retail website. This agreement between Bally and the nation's seventh largest e-commerce site expands Bally's means for distribution of guest passes, as well as its

other new products and services. It also provides added value to Bally's members, as they will be able to earn cash back on purchases made by them, as well as people they refer, on purchases made from any Spree.com stores. Finally, the agreement also provides an incremental cash flow opportunity to Bally Total Fitness in the form of a percentage of dollars spent by its members via Spree.com.

According to Mike Karoff, Vice President of Bally Total Fitness, "We have distributed 25,000 guest passes through our website, www.ballyfitness.com, since we began distributing these passes in January of 1998, and these guest passes have led to new membership sales of more than \$3.5 million."

Karoff continued, "We have received 11 million bites to our website over the past year and

continue to see very strong growth in activity on our site, with almost 2 million hits alone in January, and approximately 5,000 guest passes requested during this same month, in virtually every area measured — hits, unique visitors, renewal dues, guest passes and on line joins — is two to four times higher than it was during January of 1998. While this level of activity is already becoming meaningful to the business, our new agreement with Spree.com

gives us an opportunity for tremendous incremental Internet traffic and sales. It also increases Bally's visibility and distribution to prospects with whom we haven't connected before - not to mention the opportunity to rapidly expand the strong sales we have already achieved from our line of Bally Nutritional supplements to customers who are not already members of Bally Total Fitness," concluded Karoff.

George Bush, Tennis VIPs Lend All-Star Support As Co-Chairs Of USPTA's Tennis Across America VIPs Promote Benefits Of Tennis, Voice Support For Free Lesson Program In May

Former President George Bush joins legendary tennis coach Nick Bollettieri, touring pro Zina Garrison, health and fitness expert Jack Groppel, Ph.D., U.S. Davis Cup captain Tom Gullikson, U.S. Rep. Steve Largent, Tennis Week publisher Gene Scott, tour star and commentator Pam Shriver, and former world's No. 1 Stan Smith in support of USPTA's Tennis Across America™ grassroots program of free instruction for the public. The VIPs are each lending their support as honorary Co-Chairs of the 1999 event.

The United States Professional Tennis Association is gearing up to run its 10th annual program of free public tennis lessons at hun-

dreds of tennis centers, public parks, country clubs and other facilities. To celebrate Tennis Across America, teaching pros will host public events on May 8 and run follow-up tennis programs throughout the summer.

Honorary Co-Chair George Bush is used to sharing his enthusiasm for tennis with the public and world leaders alike. Bush was a regular player on the White House tennis court and, in 1992, attended a Tennis Across America children's clinic on that court. He also has family connections to the sport: Bush's uncle Joseph Wear was the captain of the 1935 U.S. Davis Cup team that competed against Great Britain in the finals. Bush's mother,

a frequent player, was a finalist at a national junior tournament in her youth. In 1997, USPTA named Bush an honorary member of the Association due to his lifelong advocacy of the sport.

"I've been a tennis player all my life," Bush said. "The sport has given me a wonderful sense of competition. It teaches you a lot about the joys of victory and how to take a defeat."

"I'm glad to pitch in and support the 10th year of USPTA's Tennis Across America program," he added. "Tennis really is such a worthwhile sport for kids and adults, so of course I'm pleased to be a part of this effort to bring people to the

game."

Nick Bollettieri also added his support to the grassroots effort. "Tennis Across America is a realistic plan to stimulate the growth of tennis at all levels of play," he said. "Its success is largely due to the fact that people from the community conduct the programs in the community. The USPTA continues to refine the program, making it a valuable asset to our sport. Last, but certainly not least, Tennis Across America has followed through. It's unlike the typical programs that explode onto the scene for one day and are gone the next," said Bollettieri.

USPTA Master Professional Jack Groppel, Ph.D., is quick to point out the health ben-

efits of playing the sport. "You can't beat tennis if you're looking for a fun, healthy activity," said Groppel, executive vice president of LGE Performance Systems in Orlando, Fla. "Research has shown that the sport offers tremendous mind and body benefits. Plus, it's one of the few sports that people can play at any age. USPTA's Tennis Across America is a perfect chance to show people that tennis can make them healthier and happier."

U.S. Rep. Steve Largent (R-Okla.) is a frequent competitor on the tennis courts between his congressional duties in Washington, D.C. Largent was a receiver for 14 years with the Seattle

(See USPTA page 30)

POWER TOOLS FOR PROFITABILITY



Karen D. Woodard
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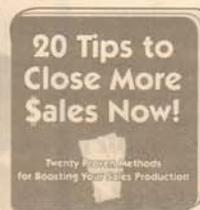
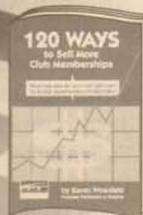
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IHRSA CAPITOL REPORT

(Reprinted courtesy of IHRSA)

IHRSA STIRS TAX DEBATE

Further proof that IHRSA's actions are fueling a national debate on the commercial activities of tax-exempt organizations appeared last month in Tax Notes, an influential publication read by tax accountants and lawyers nationwide.

On January 11, Tax Notes explored in depth the issue of unfair competition in the fitness industry under the headline, "Exempt Health Clubs Give For-Profits the Blues." Below is an excerpt from the article.

"In yet another area of conflict between businesses and tax-exempt organizations, commercial health and fitness club operators are complaining about... unfair competition from exempt organizations that operate fitness centers. For-profits fear their business will suffer as nonprofits operate clubs in ways that have little if any connection to charitable purposes and, because of their exempt status, pay no tax on the income their clubs bring in. For-profits, on the other hand, must pay the tax man.

No wonder, then, that when Congress directed the IRS to examine whether health and fitness clubs operated by tax-exempt organizations have been competing unfairly with for-profits, the reaction of commercial health club operators was: 'It's about time.'"

The article goes on to discuss competition in the fitness industry from tax-exempt hospitals, universities, YMCA's and park and recreation facilities.

Marcus Owens, the director of the IRS Exempt Organizations Division, and IHRSA's John McCarthy and Helen Durkin are quoted extensively. Several tax-exempt executives, including David Mercer, National Executive Director of the YMCA, are quoted as well.

According to Tom Scanlon, who is working on this issue for IHRSA in Washington, the significance of appearing in Tax Notes cannot be overstated.

"The people reading Tax Notes are tax attorneys and accountants, many of whom advise tax-exempt officials on a regular basis," Scanlon said.

"Tax-exempt organizations that are involved or are planning to be involved in fitness should

be aware that the IRS is looking closely at the taxation of those activities."

For a copy of the 5-page Tax Notes article, contact IHRSA Government Relations.

IHRSA PAC IN ACTION

IHRSA PAC, the health club industry's only political action committee, made four campaign contributions this month. The recipients were:

Sen. Robert Torricelli (D-NJ)
Rep. Jim Kolbe (R-AZ)
Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI)
Rep. Gerald Kleczka (D-WI).

Torricelli and Kolbe were instrumental in getting Congress to instruct the IRS to report on unfair competition in the fitness industry this year.

Sensenbrenner and Kleczka cosponsored the Taxpayer Bond Fairness Act which would restrict funding for tax-exempt hospital fitness centers. Sensenbrenner was also the key sponsor of the Fairness in Music Licensing Act that passed last year. For information on IHRSA PAC, contact IHRSA Government Relations.

IHRSA SETS MARKET SHARE GOAL OF 80% FOR TAXPAYING CLUBS

As part of the industry-wide initiative to increase the number of US health club members to 50 million by the year 2010, IHRSA has announced that it will develop a plan to help taxpaying facilities increase their market share from the current 66% to 80% over the next 11 years.

In 1997, there were 22.5 million health club members in the US, 14.8 million of whom belong to taxpaying fitness facilities, according to the annual IHRSA/ASD Health Club Trend Report. In 1987, there were 13.8 million members, with 8.3 million (60%) belonging to taxpaying clubs.

"Since 1987, the number of people belonging to taxpaying fitness facilities has increased by 78%," said John McCarthy, executive director of IHRSA. "In the same period, tax-exempt facilities have increased their total members by only 40%. The taxpaying sector has simply done a better job of marketing its product and taking

care of its customers."

Noting that the plan to increase the number of members of taxpaying facilities from 14.8 million to 40 million represents a 170% increase, McCarthy is confident that the goal will be reached. "It is an ambitious goal," he acknowledged. "But the combination of an aging market in need of exercise and the industry's growing expertise in marketing and customer service make it an achievable one."

HEALTH CLUB MARKET SHARE

Taxpaying	Tax-Exempt
2010	80% 20%
1997	66% 34%
1987	60% 40%

ATTEND IHRSA'S FAIR COMPETITION OPEN FORUM

March 24, 1999
3:30-5:30pm

San Diego Marriott Hotel & Marina, Marriott Hall 2

Join industry leaders from across North America to discuss IHRSA's Fair Competition Strategy 2000. In addition, IHRSA will provide an update on all recent progress made on this important issue including IHRSA's submission of a detailed report to the Internal Revenue Service on unfair competition from tax-exempt fitness facilities.

TENNESSEE IS LATEST TO ATTEMPT SALES TAX REPEAL

Legislation filed in Tennessee would broaden the exemption from the state amusement tax for health clubs by eliminating the requirement that clubs have at least 15,000 square feet for physical fitness purposes.

Under Tennessee law, health clubs that are exempt from the amusement tax are also exempt from the state Health Club Act. While IHRSA supports this legislation, IHRSA believes that all health clubs — for-profit and tax-exempt — should comply with the consumer

(See IHRSA page 30)

Norm Cates' THE Club Insider NEWS

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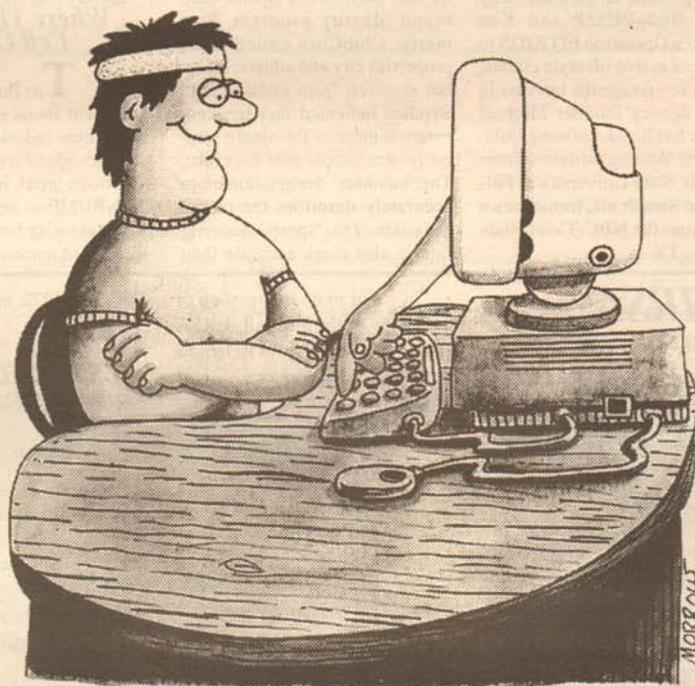
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Top 10 Reasons To Get In The Swing Of Things

With summer coming up, millions of people will be getting out their racquets, lacing up their shoes and hitting the tennis courts. It makes sense, since the sport offers a host of benefits for people of all ages. Here are just a few:

1. Tennis is inexpensive. Nearly 70 percent of tennis in America is played on public courts - usually free or nearly free!

2. Tennis is F-U-N. It's fun to get outside and run, swing and interact with other people - especially compared to sitting on a stationary cycle or climbing on a stair machine.

3. Tennis is social - You can catch up with old friends and make new ones.

4. Tennis burns calories - A 150-pound person can burn up to 420 calories for each hour of tennis played at moderate inten-

sity.

5. Tennis is a lifetime sport. You can play tennis when you're in grade school, middle school, high school and college. Then continue playing as an adult, "middle aged," senior and super senior. It's one of the few true sports for a lifetime.

6. Tennis helps players manage stress. Having fun with tennis soothes mental, emotional and physical stress.

7. Tennis teaches players to compete individually as well as with a partner. Singles lets people compete one-on-one, while doubles builds team skills and communication.

8. Tennis fits into your schedule. It only takes an hour to get in a great interval aerobic workout.

9. Tennis instruction is readily available. It's easy to im-

prove your game with the help of nearly 12,000 teaching professionals certified by the United States Professional Tennis Association. Contact your local tennis facility, or call (800) USPTA-4U to find a certified pro for a lesson.

10. Tennis is healthy for body and mind. Tennis allows you to exercise muscles, develop flexibility, keep your mind sharp from tactical thinking and develop confidence in yourself.

HEART COMMUNICATIONS ADDS CLUBCORP, BODYPUMP and FITKIDS TO CLIENT LIST Reputation Management Firm Focuses on Branding With Expanded Staff

Dana Point, CA-Heart Communications, a Southern California based reputation management agency, has added the Business & Sports Club division of ClubCorp, Rich Bogg's and Ray Irwin's BodyPUMP and Ken Germano's Operation FITKIDS to its roster of active lifestyle clients.

To manage the increase in activity, agency founder Michael Hoffman has hired Anthony Daly, a Business Writing professor from California State University at Fullerton and Sara Pentz, former news anchor from the NBC-TV affiliate in Dallas, TX.

ClubCorp Debuts New Branding

Heart Communications is helping ClubCorp launch its new Business & Sports Club brand identity program. Formerly, ClubCorp called these properties city and athletic clubs, but research from Dallas-based Syndics indicated that business entertainment is the single largest reason people join the clubs. The 'business' designation more accurately describes the clubs' activities. The 'sports' designation is also more accurate than

'athletic,' because ClubCorp fitness facilities provide comprehensive sporting event ticket concierge privileges and recreation field trips.

BodyPUMP Starts Where The Step Left Off!

The BodyPUMP program will focus exclusively on key fitness industry influencers and club operators. The communications goal is to position BodyPUMP as an evolutionary group exercise brand that offers significant marketing and mem-

ber retention advantages over aerobic dance. Rich Boggs, whose Step Company revolutionized group exercise in the 1980s, claims that BodyPUMP is an even more complete and effective program and should eclipse The Step's marketplace success.

Operation FITKIDS to Protect Its Name

Ken Germano's key agenda for Heart Communications is to protect the brand identity of Operation FITKIDS. In an open letter to the industry last month, Germano decried a number of

copycat programs that have closely mimicked the FITKIDS name and operational model.

In order to help Operation FITKIDS expand its service to inner city secondary schools nationwide, Heart Communications will increase awareness of the unique advantages of the program by spotlighting individual school successes and giving proper credit to companies and individuals who contribute.

Heart Communications, founded in 1992, specializes in helping active lifestyle companies increase their brand recognition by improving their reputations as communicators and responsible corporate citizens.

...IHRSA

continued from page 28

protection provisions of the Tennessee Health Club Act.

For a copy of the current amusement tax exemption or the Tennessee health club statute, contact IHRSA.

WOMEN-ONLY PROTECTION BILL FILED IN CONNECTICUT

State Representative John Piscopo has filed legislation in Connecticut that would authorize the operation of a single-sex facility as long as it is bona fide fitness facility for the sole purpose of promoting and maintaining physical and mental health through physical exercise and instruction."

Women-only health clubs exist throughout the United States, but those in states with no explicit legal protection risk being accused of illegal discrimination. Such a challenge to a women-only fitness center in Boston led to the enactment of similar legislation in Massachusetts last year.

For more information or for a copy of the bill, call IHRSA or visit the Government Relations section of www.ihrsa.org.

IHRSA'S INDUSTRY DATA SURVEY AIDS CLUBS' LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS

IHRSAs annual Industry Data Survey (IDS) can aid your legislative and fair competition efforts. In Ohio, IDS data (compiled in Profiles of Success) is being used to illustrate the negative impact of the 1993 sales tax on club dues. Elsewhere, IDS data has been used to detail the cost of unfair competition in the fitness industry.

Recently, IHRSA mailed a survey to your club. Please complete this confidential survey and return it in the envelope provided to the University of Massachusetts. The deadline is March 31 to receive a free copy of Profiles of Success (a \$125 value).

If you have any questions or would like another survey sent to you, contact Bill Howland at

(800) 228-4772, ext. 118.

WANT TO "BUILD" A STRONG CASE AGAINST THE Y?

IHRSAs member George Eusterman of the Riverside Health Club in Mount Vernon, Washington, was recently asked by the Seattle Times for his thoughts on unfair competition. We liked his response so much, we decided to reprint it here.

"If there was ever a time that we needed the charitable focus of the YMCA, it's today. Nonprofit status should be reserved for groups that serve only people not reached by for-profit businesses."

As tax-exempt fitness grows, he says, it erodes the tax base and shifts the tax burden onto others. Eusterman draws an analogy to a nonprofit group with which he works:

"If Habitat for Humanity started building low-cost homes for everyone, and not just the needy, they'd be undercutting the taxpaying building industry."

...USPTA

continued from page 26

Seahawks and earned membership in the NFL Pro Football Hall of Fame in 1995. Now, he continues his love of sports through activities including tennis.

"I'm 61 years old with two artificial hips," quipped Tennis Week Publisher Gene Scott. "If you can't beat me, you need lessons from a USPTA pro during the Tennis Across America program."

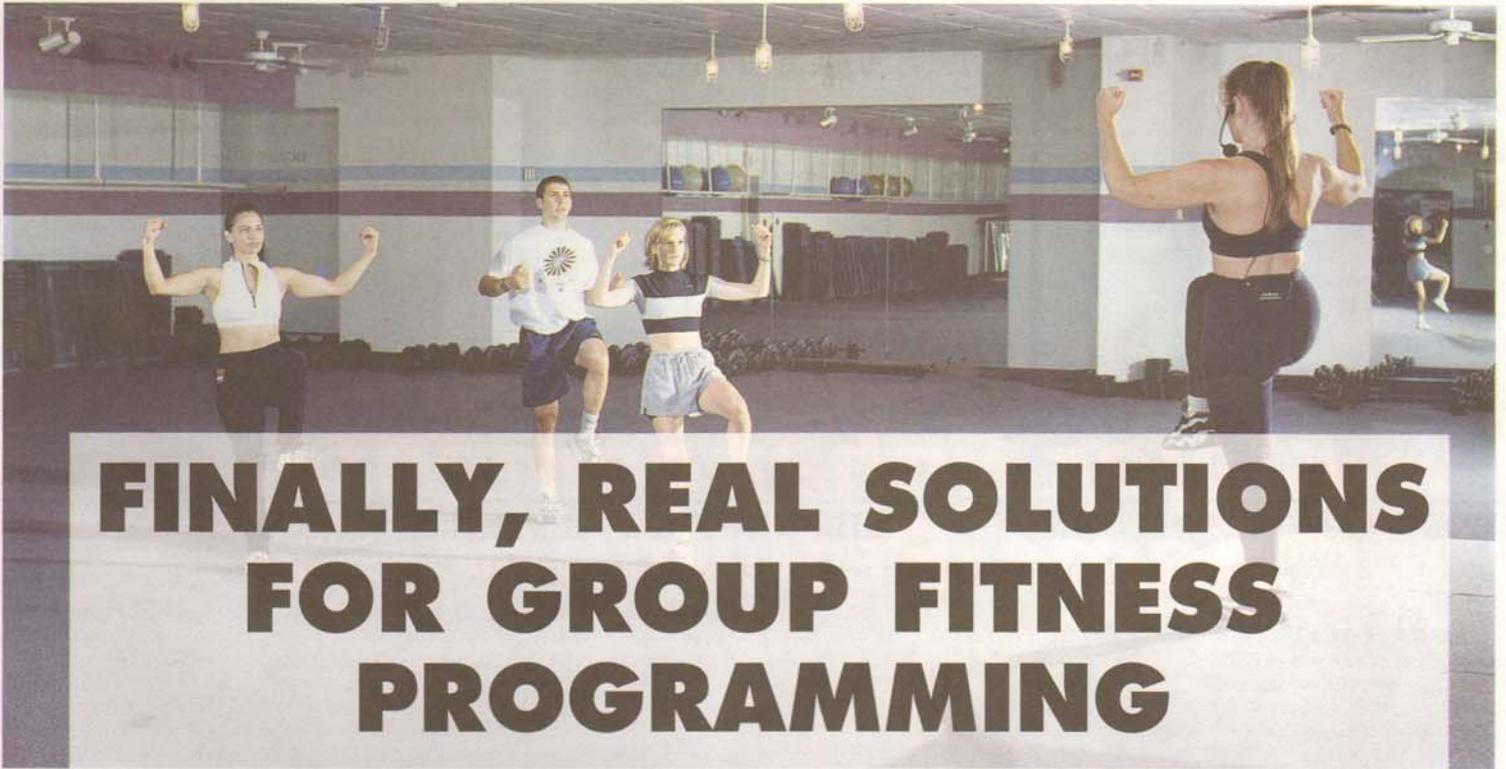
Scott was ranked among America's top 10 players five times and reached a career high ranking of No. 11 in the world.

Last year, nearly 100,000 players of all ages and skill levels were introduced to the sport through the Tennis Across America program. Special events included a children's instructional clinic on the White House tennis court in May.

To find a local event, the public is invited to contact USPTA-certified professionals at local tennis facilities or call

(800) USPTA-4U (877-8248) in May. Playing tips and program details will also be listed on USPTA's web site at www.uspta.org.

USPTA's nearly 12,000 members work as tennis directors, club managers, teaching professionals and instructors at public and private tennis facilities. They serve as the sport's primary delivery system of grassroots programs to grow the game, and are a leading influence among recreational and club players for tennis equipment and services. Founded in 1927, USPTA is the sport's oldest and largest association of tennis-teaching professionals. The nonprofit, democratically governed association raises the standards of the tennis profession while promoting greater awareness of the sport. USPTA offers more than 30 professional benefits, including the sport's most-respected certification, \$4 million in on-court liability insurance, educational resources, Advantage magazine, exclusive product packages, member publicity and extensive education and networking throughout 17 U.S. divisions.



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