

Norm Cates'

# CLUB INSIDER

CELEBRATING 30+ YEARS OF TRUST

## *Cover Story Classics:* Will Phillips' Generating a Waterfall of Leads



**MAY 2025**

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# CLUB INSIDER

CELEBRATING 30+ YEARS OF TRUST

## Cover Story Classics: Will Phillips' Generating a Waterfall of Leads

By: The Late Will Phillips

**Publisher's Note:** Our dear friend, **Will Phillips**, passed away on April 10. His Memorial Service will be held on Saturday, June 14 in Boston. As was his personality, he encourages anyone attending to wear "colorful, celebratory garb." When we went to the online press with the *April 2025 Edition of Club Insider*, we were able to share the news of Phillips' passing with our readers. However, this month, after deep reflection, we have decided to share one of his incredible works as a *Club Insider Cover Story Classic*. Brought to you in the *August and September 2008 Editions of Club Insider*, we hope *Will Phillips' Generating a Waterfall of Leads* will help you bring your business to the next level. He would have

wanted it that way...

• • •

**Will Wrote** (truncated for space; you can read it all at [www.clubinsideronline.com](http://www.clubinsideronline.com)):

### 125 Lead Channels

These are presented in 21 categories as a stimulus for you to invent more channels in each category and think of new categories! I would like to acknowledge the sources of these lead channels: The 100+ club executives in REX Roundtables, and from the writings of **Rick Caro, Casey Conrad, Jamie Hayes, Justin Tamsett and Karen Woodard-Chavez**.

### Category #1: Awareness

One theory of lead generation says it happens in two parts. First, the prospect needs *Top of the Mind Awareness* or *TOMA*. In other words, the prospect needs to know what your club does, where it's located and maybe something about its price range. They are not yet ready to shop. It is like moving to a new city, where you may not need a dry cleaner or a dentist today, but when you do, you are likely to approach the dry cleaner or dentist you are aware of. The next part is a *Significant Emotional Event* or *SEE* that triggers your need for a product or service. "I have an important appointment, and my suit needs cleaning," or "I have a toothache and it

(See *Will Phillips* Page 10)



The Late Will Phillips

### North Castle Partners' Awards Prestigious "CEO of the Year" Award to Crunch's Tony Scrimale

TAMPA, FL - North Castle Partners, a leading private equity firm and investment partner of CR Fitness Holdings LLC, the top franchisee for Crunch Fitness, has recognized **CEO, Tony Scrimale**, as the recipient of their 2025 "CEO of the Year" Award. A tradition now in its 25th year, this marks the second time in the past four years CR Fitness Holdings has been awarded, a rare occurrence in the ceremony's history.

North Castle selected Scrimale after review of its wide-ranging portfolio of 20+ companies within the Healthy, Active and Sustainable Living marketplace. The award is given annually to a CEO/management team who has made an



extraordinary contribution to the success of North Castle and best exemplifies their cornerstone approach of "Value & Values," creating value while operating by a set of core values.

(See *Crunch* Page 6)

### Workout Anytime Welcomes Larry Brayman as Chief Marketing Officer

ATLANTA, GA - *Workout Anytime*, the leading premium 24/7 fitness franchise with over 200 locations nationwide, announces the appointment of **Larry Brayman** as *Chief Marketing Officer*. This key leadership addition follows the recent naming of **Jerry Pugh** as *CEO*, reinforcing a bold new era of growth, innovation and brand elevation for the fitness franchise.

Brayman joins *Workout Anytime* with more than 30 years of marketing and franchise leadership experience across the fitness, retail and restaurant industries. He brings a powerful track record of brand-building, strategic marketing and franchise success. Most recently, he served as *North*



American Franchise Director for Luxottica Retail, which owns globally recognized brands like *Ray-Ban*, *Oakley* and *LensCrafters*. Prior to that, Brayman was Vice President of Marketing for the *Gold's Gym Midwest Franchise* and Vice President of Corporate Affairs for *CKE Restaurants*, overseeing powerhouse brands such as *Hardee's* and *Carl's Jr.*

"Larry's expertise, passion for  
(See *Workout Anytime* Page 6)

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- High-Leverage Activities: Multiplying Your Impact - **By:** Herb Lipsman
- TSG Consumer to Acquire EōS Fitness
- And, of Course, *Norm's Notes*

# Norm's Notes

■Hello Everybody! This is your Club Insider Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993 checking in with our 377th monthly edition of this 30+ year running club business publication I refer to as: A Labor of Love! I'm very thankful that you've tuned in again for this iteration of Norm's Notes, as I proceed on my keyboard with my longtime habit of "Telling-It-Like-It-Is!" I'm really happy that you're reading this edition, and I want to THANK YOU ALL for sticking

with us every month! As usual, we have a bunch of health and fitness club business news, so please read on!

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

■We hope you had a nice **Memorial Day Weekend**. Please always remember the difference between **Memorial Day** and **Veteran's Day**. Veteran's Day is for those who served. Memorial Day is for those who did not come home. My Dad, **NORM CATES, SR.**, and I served in the **United States Air Force**. Thankfully, he came home from **WWII**, and I was a **Jet Instructor Pilot** here at home during **Vietnam**; but we both knew many who did not come home. It is for their sacrifice, among countless others, that we **ALL** celebrate this day and will always do so. **May They All Rest In Peace.**

■**Congratulations** to my son, **JUSTIN**, for the purchase of his first airplane. He has named it "**Chip**" after yours truly, because that has been my nickname for many years, including when I was an airline pilot. Justin has always loved to fly, but a lot of it was on his various flight simulators over the years. Before flight school, where he got his Commercial Rating, anytime he got to fly on a real airplane, he was always very excited. Now, he gets to **FLY** anytime he wants! **Safe travels, Justin!!!**

■Our friends and **C.I. Advertiser, World Gym International**, is excited to announce



Norm Cates

their partnership with **Newtech**, a leading name in high-performance strength equipment and the esteemed title sponsor of the **Mr. Olympia & IFBB Pro Contests**.

"Our partnership with **World Gym** marks a new era of innovation and excellence in fitness. We're committed to enhancing the workout experience for every member, delivering cutting-edge equipment that sets the standard for (See **Norm's Notes** Page 7)



Justin and Chip

## About Club Insider

### CELEBRATING 30+ YEARS OF TRUST

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## Thanks and Appreciation

At **Club Insider**, we are excited to be in our **32nd Year** of this home-based health and fitness club trade publication! The thought that this publication was founded to serve an industry I truly love, and so that I could become a Mister Mom for my son, **Justin**, is still intriguing and amazing to us. So, I wish to extend my most sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to everyone who has made this amazing 30+ year run possible.

Very sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** go to **Rick Caro**, the late **Dr. Gerry Faust** and the **Faust Executive Roundtable #1** for helping me decide in 1993 what my home-based business would be. **Thanks and Appreciation** to my long-time friends, **Ron Hudspeth** and **Cathy Miller**, formerly of **Atlanta's Hudspeth Report** for the tremendous assistance they provided. **Thanks and Appreciation** to all of the folks at **Walton Press** in Monroe, Georgia. They did an absolutely excellent job for us all these years and printed every one of our monthly printed editions! And, of course, **Thanks and Appreciation** to the **United States Postal Service** for sending those editions to our readers!

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

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

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

*Norm Cates, Jr.*



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# TSG Consumer to Acquire EōS Fitness

**SAN FRANCISCO, CA and DALLAS, TX** - TSG Consumer Partners ("TSG"), a leading specialist private equity firm focused exclusively on the consumer sector, announces it has signed a definitive agreement to acquire EōS Fitness ("EōS"), a leading U.S. operator of High Value, Low Price. (HVLP) gyms. EōS Chief Executive Officer, **Rich Drengberg**, will continue to head the company with his tenured leadership team and will retain a vested interest in the go-forward company.

EōS is a rapidly growing gym chain with more than 175 gym locations open and on the way across the U.S. and a goal to make fitness accessible to everyone. The company is redefining the fitness experience for consumers and their communities by providing spacious facilities, cutting-edge equipment, diverse class offerings and an emphasis on cleanliness and friendliness, all at affordable prices. EōS is led by Drengberg, with a deep, cohesive team of industry veterans at the helm.

"We are honored to partner with TSG Consumer, a firm that shares our vision to make high-quality fitness available to everyone," said Drengberg. "Their deep experience partnering with leading brands in the fitness industry and helping them deliver long-term value to their customers makes them an ideal partner for our next chapter. Importantly, TSG Consumer shares our commitment to innovation, continuous improvement and the evolution

of our offering. I'd also like to extend my thanks to **Bruce Bruckmann** and **Rashad Rahman** of BRS for 11 years of partnership, as well as the incredible EōS leadership team and our team members, whose hard work and dedication have made this announcement possible. With TSG Consumer's support, we look forward to expanding our footprint while delivering exceptional value, experiences and a sense of community to our more than 1.5 million loyal members nationwide."

"Partnering with EōS at this pivotal point in their journey opens exciting avenues for growth and innovation," said **Michael Layman**, *Managing Director at TSG Consumer*. "With the help of their outstanding team, EōS has built a compelling brand that resonates with a broad and diverse member base, offering a premium experience at a price that opens the door to millions of people. Their company-owned model enables best-in-class operations across their locations, providing consumers with a high-quality and consistent experience that they love and trust. We look forward to partnering with EōS and supporting them through their next phase of growth."

"EōS is well known for its ability to deliver value without compromise," said **Adam Hemmer**, *Managing Director at TSG Consumer*. "Their commitment to customer service and their focus on offering fitness enthusiasts many ways to



train have helped them stand out at a time when more people than ever are focused on fitness and affordability. We're excited to bring our resources to support their mission to create loyal, lifelong fans and exercise practitioners."

"On behalf of my colleagues at BRS, we'd like to extend our congratulations to the EōS team," said **Rashad Rahman**, *Managing Director of BRS*. "Since originally investing in the business in 2014, we have worked closely alongside Rich and his leadership team to help scale the company into the fitness leader it is today, and we look forward to witnessing EōS' continued growth and success in this next chapter."

*Ropes & Gray LLP* provided legal counsel to TSG Consumer. *Piper Sandler & Co.* served as the lead financial advisor to EōS, with *Robert W. Baird & Co.* also acting as financial advisor. *Milbank LLP* served as EōS' legal counsel. The transaction is subject to customary closing conditions and regulatory approval.

## EōS Fitness Exceeds 1.5 Million Members, Continues Rapid Nationwide Growth

**DALLAS, TX** – EōS Fitness celebrates

the impressive milestone of surpassing 1.5 million members. With more than 175 locations open or on the way, the national High Value, Low Price (HVLP) gym brand continues to elevate the fitness experience across its national footprint.

"EōS' momentum continues to set the pace for the fitness industry. In just under 10 years, we reached a million members, and now, nearly two years later, we are half a million stronger," said Rich Drengberg, Chief Executive Officer of EōS Fitness. "More than numbers, our growth is about continuing to push the boundaries of what's expected. We're intentional about testing and innovating for the benefit of our members. We constantly challenge ourselves to provide our members and team members the very best, redefine the gym experience for our communities and move the industry forward."

Driven by rising demand for personalized wellness experiences, EōS is expanding its portfolio of gyms and services. According to the *Health and Fitness Association's 2025 U.S. Health & Fitness Consumer Report*, a record 25% of Americans belong to a gym, with the strongest growth coming from Gen Z.

## ...Crunch

continued from page 3

The decision to award Scrimale and CR Fitness Holdings was based on their recent 12-month financial achievements and execution against the major strategic initiatives that drive long-term equity value for North Castle. This includes the entering of new markets with new club builds and acquisitions, record-breaking new member growth and existing member retention, as well as personal training performance results.

Since being in CR Fitness' top leadership role, Scrimale has grown the group from 35 locations in 2022 to

now 85 across five states, an increase of 50 locations in the past three years. Membership growth eclipsed the 500,000 active member mark during Scrimale's time as CEO, now well exceeding 800,000 active members.

However, according to **Jon Canarick**, *Managing Director of North Castle Partners*, what separated Scrimale from the rest of the candidates within their portfolio includes the "How" and not just "What" or "How Much."

"Tony Scrimale and CR Fitness embody the same core principles as North Castle. Their passion and commitment to being on this journey with us, their approach to the development of their people and

dedication to building a strong community. The commonalities in our shared values is why this partnership has been a true honor and surpassed any expectations we had. This team is truly best in class and we're incredibly thankful for our continued partnership with them." - **Jon Canarick**, *Managing Director, North Castle Partners*

Scrimale's passion and commitment to the industry, its members and staff, and dedication to communities served is evident in his daily approach.

"It's been an honor and a privilege to go on this journey with our partners at North Castle, along with our executive leadership team at CR Fitness; and to serve our 5,000 full and part-time dedicated

employees across the country." - **Tony Scrimale**, *CEO, CR Fitness Holdings LLC*

The executive leadership team referred to by Scrimale is fellow partners **Vince Julien**, **Geoff Dyer** and **Jeff Dotson**, who combined, have more than 150 years of industry experience. CR Fitness Holdings currently operates 85 Crunch Fitness locations across Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Texas and Tennessee, with plans to expand into Arizona. The franchise is on track to operate 100 locations nationwide by 2026.

Check out the **Crunch Ad** on Page #2.

## ...Workout Anytime

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fitness and proven leadership make him the perfect addition to our executive team," said Pugh. "His appointment marks a pivotal step in our brand's evolution as we continue expanding our footprint and elevating the Workout Anytime experience for members and franchisees alike."

Brayman's arrival aligns with a strategic leadership transition under Pugh,

Workout Anytime's largest franchisee, whose promotion to CEO was announced earlier this year. With Pugh's deep understanding of the brand and Brayman's dynamic marketing acumen, Workout Anytime is uniquely positioned to accelerate its growth and innovation strategy.

"I'm thrilled to join Workout Anytime at such a transformational moment," said Brayman. "This brand has an incredible foundation and a clear purpose, making high-quality, premium

fitness accessible and affordable for all. I look forward to working closely with Jerry and the entire team to strengthen our brand, deepen member engagement and support franchisees as we grow."

Founded in 1999, Workout Anytime has become a trusted fitness brand recognized for its convenience, value and commitment to community. The appointment of Brayman further underscores the company's investment in building a world-class leadership team

to support its national expansion and enhanced member experience.

As Workout Anytime enters this exciting new chapter, the brand remains focused on its mission: empowering individuals and communities through accessible fitness: anytime, anywhere.

Check out the **Workout Anytime Ad** on Page #24.

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## ...Norm's Notes

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strength and performance," says **Ivan Galvan**, Newtech's VP – North America.

Check out the **World Gym Ad** on Page #15.

■ **Congratulations** to our friend and *C.I. Advertiser*, **GEORGE JACKSON**, who is celebrating **40 YEARS** in business with **TG The Gym!!!** They now have 11 locations, and celebrities like **DWAYNE "The ROCK" JOHNSON** and **JOHN CENA** have trained with them. That's as good as it gets for a true bodybuilding gym!!! **Congrats to GEORGE, RICK, BRAD, ED, NICK, JOHN CENA, "The ROCK" and ALL INVOLVED!**

Check out the **TG The Gym Ad** in our *Weekly and Monthly Eblasts!!!*

■ Here's some news from our friends, **JILL KINNEY** and **BILL MCBRIDE's**, *Active Wellness*. This is via **KARI BEDGOOD**, *Chief Marketing Officer*.

**Active Wellness Announces MARTY McCALLEN as Executive Director of New Business**

Active Wellness, a leading fit-

ness design and management services company, announces the appointment of **Marty McCallen** as its *Executive Director of New Business*. With decades of global experience in the fitness and wellness industry, Marty has built a reputation for forging strong, strategic relationships and delivering tailored, results-driven solutions that create success for both his partners and organizations. His deep industry knowledge and expansive network, including connections with top gym operators, franchise leaders, consultants and equipment manufacturers, will be instrumental in advancing Active Wellness' mission and supporting the growth of our strategic management partnerships as it continues building healthier communities.

As Executive Director of New Business, Marty will focus on developing new sales strategies and identifying potential clients, nurturing these relationships to successfully close contracts. His efforts will play a key role in driving new recurring revenue streams for the organization. Additionally, Marty will collaborate with **MARK SIEBERT**, *Director of Client Services*, and other executive leaders to represent Active Wellness at industry conferences and trade shows, where they will connect with buyers seeking reliable and innovative fitness and wellness solutions.

## Congrats to Jill, Bill and Marty!!!

■ Here I am sitting in my office near Atlanta, and I find out the "Largest Indoor Pickleball Facility in U.S. Bound for Atlanta!" As our friends at *Athletic Business* report: "Metro Atlanta's pickleball craze shows few signs of cooling off, as the largest indoor facility in the United States for playing the madly popular game hopes to be operational at an intown location this year, according to project officials. A new concept called *Pickleball Club of Georgia* is preparing to start converting an empty warehouse in Blandtown into more than 100,000 square feet of pickleball playing courts. According to project architects, *Terminus Design Group*, the concept has passed Atlanta Beltline Design Review Committee vetting and is awaiting permits for demolition and construction. With more than 30 courts in the works, plus a full-service gym, a golf-simulator wing, multiple event spaces and a full kitchen and bar, the project will qualify as the largest indoor pickleball facility in the country, per the design firm."

**Folks, it is FUN to be in the heart of this development!!!**

■ Speaking of Pickleball (*From our Friends at The Athletic*), **ANDRE AGASSI** is a fellow, who years ago, was one the **BEST**

*TENNIS PLAYERS* in the world. Now, nearly 20 years after Agassi retired from the sport, he's coming back to a court as a pro. But, this time around, he's swapping his tennis racket for a pickleball paddle! The winner of *eight Grand Slam Tennis Titles* has now competed in his first professional pickleball tournament at the *Minto U.S. Open Pickleball Championships* in Naples, Florida, alongside 18-year-old pro pickler **ANNA LEIGH WATERS**, who's the sport's No. 1 ranked women's player.

"It was very apparent that Anna Leigh was tired of winning," Agassi joked to *The Athletic*, of their partnership. "She's right up there with the greatest ever in what she does, and the idea of **challenging myself to not screw things up for her is daunting**."

As for Ms. Waters, she's ready to see what their teamwork brings to the court... and the sport as a whole. "We both tend to err on the aggressive side, and I think that works," she told *CNBC*. "Andre's goals are to grow the sport of pickleball, and that's a huge goal of mine. I thought if we partnered together, this would be a **really awesome way to grow the sport**."

**Congrats Anna, and Welcome Andre!**

■ Here's something that might help you  
(See **Norm's Notes** Page 8)

# Planning Your Summer Programming:

## *Creating Engaging and Effective Fitness Experiences*

By: Sara Kooperman, JD

Summer presents a unique opportunity for fitness facilities to revamp their offerings and attract new members. With warm weather, longer days and a shift in people's routines, it's the perfect time to introduce fresh, engaging programming. Thoughtful planning ensures your summer offerings cater to diverse audiences, keeping participation high and members motivated.

### 1. Assess Member Interests and Trends -

Before launching summer programs, evaluate member needs and seasonal trends:

- Conduct surveys to understand what members are looking for.
- Review past summer attendance and participation data.
- Identify emerging fitness trends such as outdoor workouts or hybrid training options.

### 2. Offer Seasonal Outdoor Workouts -

Summer is ideal for incorporating outdoor fitness activities, including:

- Beach boot camps for full-body workouts in a scenic setting.
- Park yoga and meditation classes for relaxation and mindfulness.
- Outdoor running clubs to encourage group motivation and endurance building.

### 3. Introduce Themed Challenges and Events -

Engage members with exciting, time-bound fitness challenges:

- Summer Slim-Down Challenge to help

members stay active and accountable.

- Adventure Fitness Series, featuring hiking, paddleboarding or obstacle races.
- Community Wellness Days with free classes and local business partnerships.

### 4. Adapt Scheduling for Seasonal Preferences -

Modify class schedules to accommodate vacation plans and summer schedules:

- Offer early morning or evening sessions to beat the heat.
- Implement flexible drop-in classes for members with travel plans.
- Provide virtual options for those maintaining routines on the go.
- Consider extended facility hours to accommodate longer daylight hours and member availability.

### 5. Utilize Off-Hours for Community Programs -

Maximize facility usage by opening doors to additional groups:

- Offer space to dance troupes or performance groups for rehearsals.
- Introduce children's programs like medicine ball workouts and fun agility drills.
- Partner with local organizations to host specialized classes or workshops during low-traffic hours.

### 6. Create Family-Friendly and Youth Programs -

Summer is a great time to introduce family and kid-friendly activities:

- Parent and Child Fitness Classes to promote family wellness.
- Summer Youth Camps offering sports

training, agility drills and fun games.

- Teen Strength Training Programs to build healthy habits early.

### 7. Promote Your Programs Effectively -

To maximize participation, strategic marketing is essential:

- Use social media countdowns and teaser videos to build excitement.
- Offer early bird registration discounts to encourage signups.
- Leverage member referral incentives to increase engagement.

### 8. Evaluate and Improve Throughout the Season -

Monitor participation and gather feedback to refine your approach:

- Send mid-season surveys to understand participant satisfaction.

- Track attendance and engagement levels for different programs.

- Be flexible and adjust offerings based on real-time feedback.

■ ■ ■

Well-planned summer programming keeps members engaged, attracts new participants and enhances the overall fitness experience. By incorporating seasonal trends, outdoor activities, community engagement and creative scheduling strategies, your facility can make the most of the summer months while strengthening member retention and satisfaction.

(Sara Kooperman, JD, CEO of SCW

### ...Norm's Notes

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in your business. The article is entitled: "THREE THINGS YOU MUST KNOW ABOUT SELLING TO YOUNGER BUYERS," by TROY HARRISON. The article introduction reads: "Salespeople are getting older. Buyers are getting younger. You have a disconnect. In raw terms, the average age of a professional B2B salesperson in the United States is 47.1 years old. Meanwhile, the average age of a B2B purchasing agent right now is 36 years old. While an eleven-year age gap doesn't sound like much, it can be a chasm as wide as the Grand Canyon."

In this article, Troy shows readers that they need to sell the way buyers want to buy. This means that some salespeople who were acculturated to different methods of selling and different buyer expectations have to do some serious adapting to stay relevant. Harrison's three style

matches includes:

- Younger buyers flip the relationship-building script;
- Younger buyers demand versatility in communication; and,
- Younger buyers are social media savvy; you had better be, too.

#### Give it a Google.

- I'm happy on this Friday afternoon in May, because I got a phone call from my long-time friend, CECIL SPEARMAN. Cecil is now 95 years old, and he's still going strong! He told me that his two *Laguna Niguel Racquet Clubs* in southern California are doing well. Cecil now has his son, MARK, running things for him. Over 30 years ago, Cecil was one of those at the special FAUST ROUNDTABLE #1 in which Club Insider was born. THANKS to the late DR. GERRY FAUST; the one and only, RICK CARO; CECIL SPEARMAN;

DICK TRANT; PETER DONAHUE; the late CURT and JANE BEUSMAN; among others, for helping me create Club Insider!

■ JUSTIN and I want to THANK YOU for reading Club Insider! We appreciate you being with us. And, in particular, WE VERY SINCERELY APPRECIATE ANY and ALL SUPPORT OF OUR ESTEEMED Club Insider ADVERTISERS! PLEASE DO BUSINESS WITH THEM and WHEN YOU DO, PLEASE TELL 'EM Club Insider SENT YOU! THANK YOU ALL!

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



Sara Kooperman, JD

*Fitness Education, WATERinMOTION, and S.E.A.T. Fitness won the Most Innovating Fitness Pro by Fitness Industry Technology Council. Sara is the best-selling author of FIT FOR BUSINESS, an inductee into the National Fitness Hall of Fame, an Illinois State Businesswoman of the Year, esteemed host for NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS Monthly Talk Show and sits on the ACSM Communication & Public Information Committee. Kooperman sits on the Gold's Gym Think Tank and the canfitpro Advisory Panel and was a founding board member for the Women In Fitness Association (WIFA). Plus, Sara was recently nominated for the IDEA Fitness Leader of the Year Award. Learn more at [www.sarakooperman.com](http://www.sarakooperman.com).)*

**Make  
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# HOW DOES YOUR FITNESS FACILITY COMPARE TO THE COMPETITION?

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by the April 30 deadline.**



Questions? Contact [aseverin@healthandfitness.org](mailto:aseverin@healthandfitness.org).

**HEALTH & FITNESS  
ASSOCIATION**

## ...Will Phillips

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hurts!" Now, I can SEE the supplier that I have TOMA of.

**1. GREAT LOCATION** - Locate your club at an intersection of two, multilane highways so thousands of motorists see your building every hour. Make your building externally attractive. Consider large glass windows so outsiders can see in.

**2. GET A GREAT SIGN** - Large and easy to read in a half-a-second glance as you drive by. Have a sign where you can change offers and information frequently. Maybe a new health tip every day! If your permanent signage is poor, improve it. If you face local signage regulations, seek out the state or regional sign associations. They are interested in helping their members sell signs and may help you get local approvals. Another alternative to poor signage are billboards. More on them soon...

**3. PORTABLE SIGNS** - When your permanent signage is bad, consider portable signs that you place on the sidewalk or trailers and cars with signs. Make these classy! A promotional trend in several major cities is a semi-trailer that is essentially a two-foot-wide and sixty-foot-long lighted sign. The truck simply drives around town all day.

**4. TRADITIONAL MEDIA** - This includes TV, radio, newspapers and magazines. These are often expensive, but there are many low-cost options. One club offers free memberships to a local radio station in return for daily spots on health and wellness. Much of the content for these is taken from IHRSA (now HFA) email blasts. Another owner has a weekly health and fitness call in radio show for an hour. Drive-time radio can be particularly useful if you have large traffic counts of commuters passing your club. Many newspapers will accept an ad without a date for its appearance. When they have unsold ad space, they use your ad at steeply discounted rates up to 70%. Have three different sized ads ready to go!

**5. LOCAL MEDIA** - Newspapers and newsletters published by church groups, outdoor groups, hobbyists of all kinds, etc. These are often more carefully read and more highly trusted than the major papers in town. One club owner spent thousands on an ad in the glossy, urban city magazine and got no leads. He then bought a year of monthly ads for \$500 in the *Porsche* owner's newsletter: *You tuned up your car, how about your body?* A dozen leads came from the first issue.

**6. BILLBOARDS** - These are a special type of media. They are signs that are huge and not right in front of your club. The best ones can carry powerful and memorable graphic messages. To do this, they must

have very, very few words and be instantly understandable. Got Milk? Some clubs are finding that billboards which refer people to their web sites work well. For example: two big bellies on each side of the billboard with the words: Are You Ready? www.website.com. You will often see a billboard that is out of date, advertising an event that occurred months ago. Call and see if you can rent space at a special price on that board until it is sold to a big buyer.

**7. SCREEN CARS** - Several clubs have screened cars with the club name and an offer, and these are less expensive than a billboard. A San Francisco software producer pays employees several hundred dollars a month if they have their car screened. You could do this with all full-time employee cars that are in good shape and saturate your community with moving billboards.

*Remember, all the channels above get people ready to act by building awareness.*

### Category #2: Referrals

These are the very best lead sources. They are more carefully chosen, and thus, member loyalty is most heavily improved by better member selection. Some of the guerilla marketing lead channels like *Prop and Stop* can generate high sales, but of the wrong type of person (one unlikely to use the club or stay for long). A third-party referral is significantly more powerful in creating a lead or making a sale than the company's self-promotion. Every club might consider having at least a half dozen proven referral channels with tried-and-true offers and sales scripts. Perfecting your referral repertoire so you have six to eight strong channels could drive sales up by dozens each month.

**8. POINT-OF-SALE REFERRALS** - Starting to exercise means changing habits, and one of the best ways to change a habit is to have support from family, friends and co-workers. Stop selling individual memberships and start selling social clusters. They will have more fun, stay longer and use the club more. A good average is two-and-a-half referrals per sale. Outstanding is nine, on average. Develop a script and attitude that will support social cluster selling by your team.

**9. EMERGENCY NUMBERS** - Emergency contacts collected at the *Point of Sale*. This includes e-mails and phone numbers. May we contact these people to confirm the information is correct in our system and tell them you have joined and how they can support your commitment? If "yes," contact them to confirm, educate on how to support and invite them to visit the club as the highest form of support.

**10. GROUP FITNESS REFERRALS** - Have salespeople in every *Group Fitness*

Class, as participants in the class. Be sure they attend regularly enough so the class knows them. At the end of the class, they announce an offer for participant's friends: *Free TRY A CLASS Passes*. In one club with 50% of the users in group fitness classes, 55% of all sales come from group fitness referrals.

**11. RAFFLE REFERRALS** - Raffle a BIG SCREEN TV, a PRIUS, a HUGE BARBECUE GRILL, a \$1,000 BIKE, SKI EQUIPMENT or a KAYAK four times a year. Give us the names of three prospects. Every three gets you another raffle ticket, and you don't have to be here to win.

**12. PHYSICIAN REFERRALS** - May we inform your doctor that you have joined? May we keep your doctor posted on your progress? Of course, you must follow up regularly with the doctor. Later, we visit your doctor with information. And, leave a prescription pad for exercise.

**13. STAFF'S DOCTORS** - Create a packet for your staff to give to their doctors, dentists, chiropractors, x-ray technicians, etc. A small-and-elegant-something you'd be proud to give to your doctor with a great health care offer: We are both committed to helping our community be healthy and well, so visit our club and...

**14. PERSONAL TRAINING (PT) REFERRALS** - Prepare an elegant envelope and invitation for personal trainers to give to clients four times a year offering three PT sessions for a friend.

**15. AMBASSADORS** - Select 10 - 50 heavy club users who already promote the club informally. Provide special, logoed, high-end jackets, special social events, meetings where they evaluate new programs and equipment. You will need special Ambassador sales materials.

**16. STAFF SALE** - Every employee can sell memberships for one week to friends and family only. The offer is 50% off our rates for six months. After six months, full membership is charged. Goals are set for each department and winners chosen for each. At one club with 200 full- and part-time employees, 300 new memberships in one month were the actual results.

**17. MINI FAIR** - Hold a monthly two- to three-hour mini fair, alternating days and evenings to reach everyone. Solicit six to eight local businesses as an opportunity for them to reach your members. They can set up in the club, give free samples and special discounted offers. The cost of their participation is to invite all their clients to the mini fair with direct mail and in-store posters and to provide a dozen names of either co-workers or friends that might be interested in joining the club. Encourage your members to bring in their friends to the event. The visitors have an active, fun, non-



The Late Will Phillips

intimidating environment. Your staff can also set up booths and displays on group exercise, nutrition, personal training, etc. Build the energy with strolling musicians, jugglers, etc.

**18. POOL PARTIES** - One club with a large outdoor pool and a great view rents out the venue to a local promoter every Friday in the Summer for a pool party. The individual promotes the party, sells tickets and provides a band and cash bar. Several hundred people regularly show up. The club has permission for sales staff to circulate and distribute offers and make sales. Aside from the revenue of renting the pool, new members are added each Friday.

### Category #3: Traditional Ways to Build Net Membership

**19. FORMER MEMBERS** - Provide a "no-joining fee" amnesty four times a year. For a club with 2,000 members at 50% attrition, 1,000 former members a year are created. After ten years, you have 10,000 former members as a pool to market to. Each salesperson contacts thirty in the morning and thirty in the afternoon... forever!

**20. BE BACKS** - Always collect mailing addresses, phone numbers and email addresses on every guest visit. Have an accurate follow-up system that begins on the day they miss with an alternative offer.

**21. EXITING MEMBERS** - Thank them before they leave!!! **Assume:** Their goal now has not changed from when they joined AND the club failed! **Ask Why? Why? Why?** Learn to probe for the real reason(s) for their membership cancellation. **Learn why** they are leaving and **fix the reasons!** Have 5 - 6 alternative offers ready to provide if they will stay, offers such as: three free PT sessions, three free months, selling their membership at a discount to a friend, and an at-home membership: \$9/mo, 1 pass/mo, etc., and finally give them a \$250 check to discount their membership when they rejoin. **Skilled Exit Managers** save about 30%+ of exiting members.

(See Will Phillips Page 12)



# INCURABLE IS UNACCEPTABLE



Donate via Credit Card



**venmo**

## ...Will Phillips

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**22. DIRECT MAIL** - Send out 5,000 direct mail cards each month on a consistent basis. *The key is consistency.* A new *Planet Fitness* owner reported that his direct mail went out and was received on a Friday and that fifty sales were consistently made the next Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Then, he discovered, the mail was going to the wrong Zip Codes and even that worked!

**23. AD CARDS** - Every month, distribute 5,000 ad cards through bag stuffers, apartment complex newsletters and business-to-business relationships. Have your staff do the distribution. It will be done better than a service.

**24. GRAND RE-OPENINGS** - Every time an improvement occurs (new paint, new equipment), make a big deal of it! Close the club one day and have a Grand Re-opening the next day with a sale and ancillary promo. Include music and food. Plan for at least one or two such Grand Re-openings a year!

**25. NO ENROLLMENT FEE FIRST DAY OF EVERY QUARTER** - Offer a no enrollment fee membership once a quarter. This offer should have no date flexibility or carry-over dates. On New Year's Day, use a Post-It on the front page of the newspaper with your offer. In one group of clubs, their New Year's Day sale is their largest sale day of the year.

### Category #4: Guerilla Marketing By Individual Sales People

**26. DOOR HANGER OFFERS** - Focus on neighborhoods to create some buzz. Offer 5 days for \$5. Offer "Come as a Pair" - 10 days for \$5. Focus on neighborhoods where you already have members. Mention that 24% of the members of this apartment belong to our club or your neighborhood has 47 members of our club. People like to do what others do!

**27. MAGNETIZED WIND SCREEN OFFERS** - These are offers similar to a lead box or tear off or door hanger. But, these are placed on windshields or made as refrigerator magnets and stuck on car doors. Some shopping center lot owners do not like you to use these as customers complain and they create trash, but magnet messages are less likely to be thrown away, and they do produce leads!

**28. COVER A CAR** - If you get free pass magnets, order 1,000 and print a big sign with the word FREE MAGNETS! in large type. Put the Free Magnets sign on the windshield or side of your car. Cover your car with the magnets and park your car where people will see it! Stand by and watch the magnets disappear!

**29. LOCAL PUBLICATIONS** - Every local publication, newspaper, magazine, *Penny Saver*, etc. can be assigned to a champion to manage. The champion's job should be to scan issues to identify their needs, events and other opportunities for contacting prospects. These might be local events where your club can have a kiosk with a wheel to spin with offers.

**30. LEAD BOXES** - Every salesperson should build relationships with potential lead box sites. Dry cleaners, submarine sandwich shops, printers, small retailers, etc. should get passes and/or free-discounted memberships for employees in exchange for permanent placement of a lead box in their store. For example, lead boxes for dry cleaners should have a sign on them saying: "We recommend *Atlas Health Club*." This can generate 100 sales per salesperson per month, if properly managed.

**31. LEAD BOX QUEEN** - Not every person is a natural with lead boxes. One club found a college student to work part-time. She was self-scheduled to place lead boxes and collect slips. Her very engaging personality meant she personally managed 200 lead boxes in a few hours a week. She collected slips weekly and built relationships on each visit. She served a local group of six clubs, and it resulted in one hundred sales a month.

**32. TEAR OFFS** - Use the same distribution approach as you use for lead boxes but a different look. Start with a really nice poster focusing on the prospect's needs (one more poster of a sea of equipment is not a very unique way to sell your club). Provide five tear-offs per poster, little business card size tear-offs... attached along the bottom of the poster. Produce each tear off to have a different offer. For example: a \$10 for 10-day sample or get information online about starting to exercise. This leads them to your website for a free download, or you can provide a coupon for a free assessment of what exercise will best suit the prospect.

**33. PROP AND STOP** - This is a very aggressive way to get leads, and it is used more in the U.K. than the U.S. These are items imprinted with your club name and contact information and an offer that costs less than a dollar.

**34. MEMBER BIRTHDAYS** - Free Personal Training session or a gift for you when you work out on your birthday with a friend.

**35. FACEBOOK** - Encourage all staff to be on Facebook or another social network. Reward them for any links that come from their FaceBook site to your website. They can nurture the links by what they say about exercise and the club on their site. This is one place where it is easy to see how Raving Staff can create Raving Members.

### Category #5: Significant Emotional Events

**36. BIRTHS** - Simply scan the local list of newborns in the papers (or birth certificates registered in your city hall) each week. Then, send a congratulatory offer about a month later to the mom and be sure to mention getting back in shape after her child's birth.

**37. RETIREMENTS** - What better way to attract the 50+ market than to keep your eye on local newspapers and business chronicles for retirement announcements and then follow up with a congratulations card along with a one-month trial membership for the new retiree.



The Late Will Phillips and Daughter, Anna

**38. POST PARTUM DEPRESSION** - The exact number of women with depression during pregnancy or within a year after giving birth is unknown, but researchers believe that depression is one of the most common complications during and after pregnancy. Often, depression is not recognized or treated because some normal pregnancy changes cause similar symptoms and are happening at the same time. Normal exhaustion, problems sleeping, stronger emotional reactions and changes in body weight may occur during pregnancy and after pregnancy. But, these symptoms may also be signs of depression. We know exercise is a powerful antidote to depression, and every pregnant woman has about a 19-month span when she is at risk for post-partum depression. You can identify many pregnant women in your market through baby shower announcements, encouraging your members to share the names of pregnant friends and partnering with baby retail stores, etc.

**39. WEDDINGS and ENGAGEMENTS** - Establish a *Buff Brides Program*! Sell your club's program to all-in-the wedding party. Encourage them to work out as a group. Measure and take before and after photos. Then, collect online kudos. Work through and with wedding consultants and retail wedding stores.

**40. PROMOTIONS** - Scan all local publications for promotions, especially newsletters from local and major employers. Offer the newly promoted person a special for building resilience, confidence and stress management to handle their new responsibilities.

**41. GRADUATIONS** - Every high school and college graduate is entering a new phase of life. This is a great time to form new habits, like exercise. *USA Today* reported that overweight people face a real disadvantage in hiring and promotions. Promote exercise and weight loss as a way to enhance the career opportunities of new graduates. You should be able to easily access lists of graduating seniors in your area.

**42. BIRTHS - GRANDPARENTS** - Grandchildren are one of the most significant pleasures available to grandparents. The grandparent relationship is powerful enough that grandparents often make major decisions, such as where to live, just so they can be near their grandchildren. If you are a grandparent who is in poor health, so you can't take a walk with a grandchild or lift your grandchild up and give them a hug, there is a great loss and a great motivation to build strength, balance and wellness. This is a wonderful promotion to every grandparent. How do you reach them? Start with your members' grandparents, and then, find how to link to families with newborns through hospitals, doctors, and retail baby stores.

**43. DIRECT MAIL ON BIRTHDAYS** - Purchase birthday lists online for your zip codes. Mail a birthday gift from your club: 10 days free for you and a friend! You can have staff hand address (more are opened this way) about 100 a day. That would be  $100 \times 365 = 36,500$  birthdays a year you could reach.

### Category #6: Internet

**44. FREE PASS** - Make sure your website has a strong, clear offer on its home page. Change it regularly. Have ending dates. Consider one day sales.

**45. ONE MONTH TRIAL MEMBERSHIP** - Another offer on your website.

**46. FREE DOWNLOAD** - of health, nutrition and exercise educational articles from your website.

**47. YOUTUBE** - There are the hugely successful commercial viral campaigns, such as *Blendtec's "Will It Blend?"*, the brilliant video series on various household objects that are run through a Blendtec blender, including: marbles, batteries and golf balls. They also emailed their customer base and asked for suggestions of things to blend. They were featured on a *Today Show* segment the Wednesday before

(See *Will Phillips* Page 13)



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**I highly recommend the HWLS team. They've provided us invaluable guidance regarding membership marketing and fitness programming.**

## ...Will Phillips

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Thanksgiving. iVillage Live did a segment on them too. They were interviewed by *Newsweek*, *Playboy Magazine* and the *New York Times*. Blendtec had a surprisingly low budget. The first five videos ran somewhere between \$50 to \$100, including: buying the domain name, a video camera and some marbles and a few other supplies. Web sales were more than four times greater than in the previous top-selling month. All other channels have seen big increases as well.

Online jewelry retailer **Ice.com** made its first foray into YouTube marketing with its "Mr. Cupid" interviews of passers-bys. One product that got some excellent brand recognition and building from being on YouTube was *Smirnoff's Raw Tea*. Smirnoff produced an uproarious music video called "Tea Party," with preppies rapping.

Another beverage, Mountain Dew, executed a successful YouTube campaign with its videos of jive-talking octogenarian Sue Teller offering surprisingly hip advice to young viewers. *H & R Block* is used YouTube to promote its Tax Cuts software. The *promo* to the "Me & My Super Sweet Refund" contest was the *most linked* to comedy video in the history of YouTube.

You tube guide: Make it fun, poke fun of yourself and your clubs, demo your club's services and equipment, and be real. Watch the best of YouTube and learn what works.

**48. MYSPACE - Publisher's Note:** Moved into antiquity.

### Category #7: Medical Niches

Your prospect may already be suffering from cancer, diabetes, back pain, etc. Each niche has special programs, knowledge and experience. Each niche has its own referral sources. Each has national organizations to collaborate with. For example, three studies by the *American Cancer Society* show regular exercise is related to lower cancer incidence: 30% for breast; 45% colorectal; 50% for ovarian. For each medical niche, you will need knowledge, medical community relationships, special programs targeted to that niche, a staff champion (manager), a special flyer, local speakers and member advocates. Each niche lends itself to a separate web presence.

**49. PARTICIPATE IN A WEIGHT LOSS EXPERIMENT** - A different type of offer that seems to always appeal to some. Run it three to four times a year.

**50. ARTHRITIS WEBSITE** - Build a home page saturated with arthritis info and offers. This will target your marketing to arthritis users. Link the home page to your main website for information on programs, equipment, location(s), etc. Write or get permission to use a booklet explaining the impact of exercise on arthritis. Offer it as a free download. When someone clicks to download, have them enter their email and zip code. You just generated a lead! Knowing the zip code tells you if it is a lead for your club. The next step is to send a personal email (auto responder can do this automatically) thanking them for taking advantage of the download, asking if they have questions, provide information on a free upcoming arthritis and exercise study your club is doing. Collaborate with local arthritis doctors and make sure their office has a special arthritis brochure from you.

**51. CANCER RECOVERY WEBSITE;**  
**52. WEIGHT LOSS WEBSITE;**  
**53. TYPE II DIABETES;**  
**54. PHYSICAL THERAPY FOLLOW-UP;**  
**55. BACK PAIN;**  
**56. LOW ENERGY;**  
**57. HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE;**  
**58. MENOPAUSE:** Similar to #44.

**59. TRIPS AND FALLS** - Also similar to #44. Every person over 65 knows the story

of friends who tripped, fell, broke a hip and never left the hospital! These can be reduced dramatically with the right training. *Sell balance, not fitness here.*

**60. MULTIPLE WEBSITE STRATEGY** - Each website should be focused on a particular market niche vs. a cluttered website that tries to appeal to all market niches. Cluttered websites rarely develop strong search engine optimization. Provide information for those contemplating joining and action for those ready to join more and more clubs are exploring online sign up. In the UK: 32% who joined online never visited the club. 42% said online joining was more convenient. 11% were former members. This is full joining online including taking an exercise history, credit card info and explaining all important policies.

### Category #8: Current Events

When the general news spotlights an item, it drives sales of items that are related to the news. When the Mars Lander arrived on the planet Mars, it was in the news for weeks, and the sales for MARS Bars jumped up during those weeks. Link your promotions to current events. For example:

**61. GAS PRICES SOAR! JOIN NOW -**  
(See *Will Phillips* Page 14)

## ...Will Phillips

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**\$100 GAS CARD OR** - For every month of membership you buy (you can extend current memberships), we pay your gas cost to come and workout. 10-mile average commute X 1 workout a week = 40 miles a month = 4 gallons x \$4 = \$16 a month discount.

**62. \$40 BILLION IN TAX REBATES GOING OUT NOW** - Some retailers gave 10% discounts if the prospect spent his tax rebate with the club. This plan works well for IRS tax refund checks as well.

**63. NO SALES TAX WEEKEND** - A Massachusetts tradition in August.

### Category #9: Gambling

This can be a touchy issue, but you can link some promotions to gambling. For example:

#### 64. NO PAYMENTS UNTIL PATRIOTS LOSE!

**65. SPIN THE WHEEL!** The noise attracts people. People love to gamble. It builds crowd energy. Put various offers on the wheel such as a free month, five free Personal Training sessions, a water bottle, six months free, then add a \$20 and \$100 bill. Sign up for our newsletter and get a spin. Buy a wheel online or call (phone number), the sales distributor.

**66. ROLE THE DICE FOR YOUR DOWN PAYMENT** - Use enough dice so that all sixes equals the current down payment.

**67. THE MORE YOU WEIGH, THE LESS YOU PAY** - Get a one dollar discount for each pound you weigh over your ideal weight. If you weigh 220 pounds and your ideal weight is 180, you get a \$40 discount. *Fitness DK* in Denmark, a chain with forty clubs, did a one-day sale like this and sold 5,000 memberships.

### Category #10: Anniversaries

**68. YOUR CLUB'S ANNIVERSARY** - Celebrate your club's founding/opening with free food, a hot local band, a health fair and a special membership promotion. Do this every year.

**69. FOUNDING OF YOUR CLUB'S TOWN OR CITY** - Contact the local historical society and create a joint celebration.

**70. LOCAL HISTORICAL EVENTS** - Contact the local historical society for a joint celebration.

### Category #11: Holidays

**71. VALENTINE'S DAY** - Who do you love? Give them the gift of love: health! Decorate your club with hearts. Lovers join with no initiation or an extra two months.

**72. THANKSGIVING DAY** - Fight the annual weight gain from the holidays by joining now and losing a few pounds.

**73. MOTHER'S DAY** - Keep Mom Healthy. Do you know a mother who is stressed, in menopause, recovering from cancer or has arthritis?

**74. FATHER'S DAY** - Keep Dad healthy!

**75. MEMORIAL DAY** - Celebrate the arrival of Summer!

**76. JULY 4th** - Celebrate America's Independence Day and fight for freedom from your old habits and the extra pounds you carry around.

**77. CHRISTMAS IN JULY** - Join now and get December FREE, and you'll have more money for presents! *Arthur Saran, of Davol Fitness and Spa, Providence, Rhode Island, quadrupled his July membership sales.*

### Category #12: Strategic Partnerships

**78. RETAIL PARTNERSHIP** - Here is an example of what you might do with retail partners. Approach a nutrition or sporting goods store to setup a booth in front of the main entrance to the business on a Saturday. Set up your booth with a contest promotion box (Lead BOX) for a FREE six-month membership drawing. The business will like it because you are attracting people to their store. At the booth, offer free body fat testing, group fitness demonstrations and/or Personal Training demonstrations using exercise balls and/or bands. "Spin and Win" wheels work well in attracting a crowd. People love a contest to win anything. Have a drawing every 15 minutes for one month free. Tell the people waiting for the drawing to browse the store until it's time for the drawing. Call all leads immediately and setup appointments for a "second chance" drawing at the club.

**79. BAR/NIGHT CLUB PARTNERSHIP** - Have a "best chest" for guys and dolls contest with your most club friendly local bar operation! The bar offers cash prizes and you offer a free six-month membership. All of the "best chest" contestants, as well as the customers, enter a drawing to win a six-month free club membership and other door prizes that you might arrange with other local community businesses. Use the entries to book a second chance drawing, maybe at a mini party at the club.

**80. RESTAURANT - CLUB LINK** - This is a great membership-lead generating promotion for a high-end club to team up with a dozen high-end restaurants. The club features one restaurant a month in its lobby. Anyone who refers a new member that month receives a \$75 gift certificate for the featured restaurant. It gives *Julie Main's Santa Barbara Athletic Club* 60% of their

yearly memberships.

**81. COUPON BOOKS** - Feature 10 to 12 or more products and services, such as sporting goods and travel discounts sold for a good cause, such as school sports programs. The coupon book sellers are partners and students. All partners finance the coupon books.

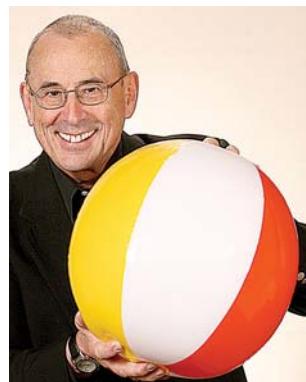
**82. TALENT SCOUTS OPEN CALL** - Club arranges relationships with modeling/talent agencies to host open calls in the club. The agencies structure the events with individual interviews or performances for talent scouts in hopes of gaining representation. One of my client clubs hosts one of these events a month. The events draw up to 100 participants. Everyone gets a one-week free membership and a drawing for a longer-term free membership. Hotels often host these events and charge the agency for space in the hotel. In a strategic partnership between your club and a modeling agency, your club provides the space for the modeling agency and you get the leads.

**83. HOTELS** - Charge hotels a flat fee for unlimited passes for their guests. The guest passes includes local restaurant promotion, shopping promotion and additional guest passes are provided for people the hotel guests are visiting. The hotel guest becomes your agent... so their buddies choose that hotel!

**84. DRY CLEANER TAGS** - Produce dry cleaning hanger tags with a printed club offer on one side and a strategic partner/local merchant offer on the other side (a sporting goods store, a local restaurant, a weight watchers clinic, etc.). The local merchant pays for the tags. The inducement for the dry cleaner is that an offer from the dry cleaner appears on the bottom of each side of the tag. Use sparingly so they don't become common.

**85. PROFESSIONAL SPORTS** - Several clubs have partnered with professional sports teams. The club provides workout space for the team or the team's cheerleaders in return for highly discounted tickets they can use in promotions, billboards in the stadium and/or Jumbotron ads for their club e.g. This touchdown brought to you by *SUPER FIT HEALTH CLUBS*. There are a myriad of other promotional partnerships where the pro team supports kids fitness or fund raises with the club for a local charity like the *Boys and Girls Clubs*.

**86. REAL ESTATE DEVELOPERS** - These are people to connect with and explore how your club can be an amenity to residential or office buildings they own. In return, they foster your prospecting of their tenants. You might even consider designing and/or running small in-house fitness facilities for them or providing on-site classes,



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massages, etc. In-office massage has become a fairly wide-spread corporate perk, especially during peak workloads, such as CPA firms during tax season.

**87. BUSINESS BANK AND CLUB** - A great source of new member prospects is the bank where you and your club do business. Get to know your banker, if you don't already. Give him the idea of having a special "Hello Day from Club ABC/Bank ABC." Provide the bank with nicely done two-sided glossy cards that are about the size of a check. Make it a mutual deal. Arrange for his tellers and managers to each have a stack of your glossy cards and for them to give one to every customer with their deposit slips, cash, etc. (Be sure to give all tellers and managers the same offer before you start!) Make the offer on your card a good one: "One month free at your ABC Club or 50% off your Enrollment Fee." In exchange, offer to do the same thing at your reception desk on the same day. Work hard for the bank at your club. Then later, discuss and arrange to do this once a month. A win - win deal.

### Category #13: Corporate Connections

Corporations are becoming more and more aware that exercise reduces health care costs and absenteeism, while improving morale and production. Begin by building a list of corporations within a 10- to 15-minute drive time of your club and make a list of your members and where they work. Then, start looking for connections and using some of the corporate programs that follow. Remember, a typical club salesperson will not be prepared to sell at the corporate level. Most likely, the owner will be the best salesperson here: *one CEO to another*.

**88. CORPORATE FAT LOSS/MUSCLE GAIN CHALLENGE** - The local bank's business customers may nominate up to three of their top employees. The bank or the company pays for three months at the club, which includes personal training sessions four days a week and a Monday (See *Will Phillips* Page 15)



# FRANCHISE OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE

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weigh in.

**89. REALTORS WELCOME TO THE AREA PACKAGES** - Be sure to get the realtors into your club and working out. Try a realtor's special. One month free will help your club link to new people who've transferred into your community and are in the home market.

**90. WELCOME TO THE COMPANY PACKAGES** - Similar to the new movers welcome packages but for new staff hired by local companies. Make this connection by coordinating with the human resources department of local corporations. This opens the corporate door. The bigger the company, the more you should invest in opening the door. Some single clubs earn up to \$30,000 a month from corporate-sponsored memberships. Use public relations and press releases sent to local business media public relations to be sure this news gets out.

**91. A CORPORATE PROGRAM** - The Club offers a discounted package with additional benefits to companies based on their size and level of promotional commitment and support of the club. Benefits to the

corporate member:

- 0.00 to \$50.00 enrollment;
- Two weeks to one month free dues;
- A corporate tanning card (10 free tans);
- A corporate guest card (30 days of free guest privileges);
- A corporate play center card (10 free visits).

### 92. DIFFERENT FORMS OF ADVERTISING WE OFFER TO COMPANY EMPLOYEES:

- Payroll stuffers;
- Company newsletter article submissions;
- PDF flyer to distribute via email;
- Posters for break rooms.

The club's marketing department creates all marketing materials for corporate accounts. Offer onsite enrollment opportunities right in the company office/business. If you do an "onsite," pair up with a fitness coordinator to do BMI testing or bring a massage therapist to do a chair massage.

**93. CORPORATE APPLES** - Produce corporate proposals professionally. Use all the hot Human Resources language: Absenteeism, Presenteeism, Workers Comp Costs and Productivity. Deliver a big box of apples with a proposal on top. So far, this program has brought in \$35,000 in

corporate membership sales.

**94. CORPORATE STRESS MANAGEMENT** - Masseurs/Masseuses go to the corporation location. Provide on-site classes in yoga. Conduct health-wellness fairs on-site. Provide membership program package during visit.

### Category #14: Community Outreach

Sponsor events such as a middle school fun run. Support local charities so you are central in the minds of the community. Create and provide an adult education center on wellness issues and give access to your community for free.

**95. SPEAKER SERVICE ON HEALTH AND WELLNESS** - Choose staff and/or members who have the ability to speak in public and formulate one or two presentations (this is not free form) about health and wellness topics. Then, promote your speaker services to groups in your community that have speakers and to all public schools at all levels. Speak mostly about the impact of exercise with a brief history of your club. Maybe some examples of how your club has changed some member's lives. Have an offer that you quietly place at each person's seat before you start speaking.

**96. MEETING VENUE FOR THEIR GROUP** - If your club has nice meeting space, offer it for free to groups in your community, such as the Realtors Association, Chamber of Commerce, cancer support groups, etc. Provide great audiovisual support like a laptop and LCD projector, flip charts and pens, whiteboard, etc. Offer to cater coffee or lunches. The goal is to increase non-member traffic and enable them to be comfortable meeting at your club and to nurture their referrals.

**97. JOINT PROMOTION (TO HELP THEM RAISE FUNDS)** - Instead of waiting for a local non-profit to solicit your support, design a health-wellness promotion that could enlist support and raise funds for an appropriate charity. One New England club has a spinning bike marathon and raises money for the local Heating Oil Fund for those not able to heat their homes in the winter. This event regularly gets evening TV News broadcast coverage.

### Category #15: Fundraisers

Utilize a "10 for 10 Program" to help schools, churches, charities and other civic groups with fundraising efforts. The cards allow ten workouts and are sold by the charity for \$10 each. Do not charge (See **Will Phillips** Page 16)

## ...Will Phillips

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the civic organization anything. Print the cards and deliver whatever amount may be needed. This program establishes a strong relationship with the community and consistently produces new leads and guest traffic.

**98. OUTREACH FITNESS TESTING LOCATIONS:** Clubs, Schools, Meetings, Mall, Sports Store, Community Center, etc.

**99. ADVISORY BOARDS:** Medical, Elementary School, Middle School, High School, Adventure Travel, Religious, etc. Form an advisory board that meets in your club 2 - 3 times a year to discuss how to encourage healthy lifestyles among the people the board represents.

**100. ELEGANT SCHOOL FUNDRAISER -** Begin with a health month at schools where every staff is in a class teaching health, exercise and nutrition fundamentals to youngsters. Build relationships and support with the school superintendent and the PTA. **"21 Days for \$21:"** Give to middle schools in the Fall to raise money for the school. The school collects the \$21. Everyone who shows up provides \$21 more for the school. The middle school with the most people participating gets \$1,000. The top 100 sellers get a family evening of fun at the club. Get a local business (perhaps a bank) to sponsor the fund raising and cover the materials and local adds in the newspapers.

**101. COMMUNITY WIDE ACTION -** 10,000,000 steps a day in our community, 1,000,000 pushups in four hours, halftime group fitness demonstration at school sporting events... **Community Outreach:** Rotary, Chamber, PTA, garden clubs, political parties, travel clubs, investment, alumni, church club, soccer coaches, historic, music, soccer leagues... all community groups that are worthy of support. Provide a speaker on fitness-wellness and build relationships with each Champion for each group.

**102. CHAMBER OF COMMERCE - Best Lead Generation** - One club representative reports, "The best lead generation program that I feel we have used is our involvement with the Chamber of Commerce and other civic groups, such as the *Kiwanis Club*. The Chamber has proven to be a valuable networking source for leads, as well as contacts that we can use within our day-to-day business. Even though the actual Chamber leaders may not be members of the gym, they constantly promote our business throughout the county.

### Category #16: Strategic Stars

The Local Stars have an audience. The Strategic Stars need such things as:

Weight loss, Exercise, Post-operative Recovery, Stress Management, Meeting Space and Training for BIG Events. By recruiting them face-to-face for a trial membership, you have the opportunity to change their lives. To make them raving fans of your club, and guess who they will rave to about you? Consider all the following channels:

**103. MINISTERS, PRIESTS, and RABBIS;**  
**104. MEDIA PERSONALITIES;**

**105. POLITICIANS;**  
**106. SPORTS FIGURES;**

**107. SPORTS TEAMS;**  
**108. ENTERTAINERS;**  
**109. HAIRDRESSER** - Work out a relationship with each hairdresser in your shop of choice whereby they put a small fishbowl at their styling chair with a sign that says, "My customers receive a two-week membership to ABC Club. Simply fill out a slip and drop it in!" Hairdressers love to talk, and they have a fabulous rapport with their customers. What men may not know is that women book their hair appointments sometimes weeks in advance simply to ensure they can see "their stylist." The point is, if this hairdresser likes you and your club, they will refer clients to you. In exchange, either offer them a referral fee for anyone who joins (yes, that means \$) or give them a temporary membership to the club that is renewed on a monthly basis as long as they keep the fishbowl at their station. This is an ideal option for two reasons: 1. It doesn't cost you any out of pocket investment and 2. They become a raving fan. Thanks to **Casey Conrad** for this one.

### Category #17: Strategic Niches

**110. SPORTS SPECIFIC TRAINING -** Golf, Soccer, Baseball, Basketball, Hockey, etc.

**111. INDIVIDUALS WHO'VE BEEN LAID OFF** - Have a special section of the club offering special staff and focus on helping the laid off person prepare for a new job. Offer special incentives to come in and exercise and special rate opportunities to help the laid off person find a new and better job.

**112. SUPPORT GROUPS** - One club has launched a support group for parents of autistic children. This becomes a unique and easily defined niche. Autism networks have promoted the group so that it is self-marketed. Why should this be in a club? Because it brings two things to the club: First, "Wow! Isn't that cool that the Super Health Club sponsors this and makes space available? Aren't they the good guys?!" This is positive reputation building which enhances all your marketing as it makes members and prospects proud to be associated with your club. Second, it brings people into your club who might never cross your threshold. Once in, they find out what a cool, comfortable place your

club is to join!

**113. SALES TERRITORIES** - By street, By development, By condo, By office building, By neighborhood, etc. Take half the staff and canvas a condo going door to door or an office building.

### Category #18: Programming

**114. PROFESSIONAL GROUP EXERCISE -** Having a group exercise program with new choreography every quarter and classes at several levels gives you the opportunity of a new launch every three months. In the best group exercise classes, the participants can be your best salespeople. Set up a strong referral offer for them to bring friends and family.

**115. SPRING GARDENERS SHAPE UP -** If your club has some external landscaping, consider working with a local garden store to run a six-week "Spring Gardener Shape Up." A study in the U.K. showed that individuals ages 46 to 70 who gardened improved their fitness a bit better than those only using a health club. Learn how to garden without straining arms, legs back and shoulders!

**116. FIVE-WEEK PROGRAMS** - These are five-week accelerated results programs. Two weeks to sign up plus six weeks of program equals two months a session. Create and offer several programs a session based on your community, your members and your staff's capabilities and interests such as: flexibility, balance, abs, legs, arms, butts, etc. Create catchy names, make the classes tough and tell participants exactly what to expect. Spell out what they will get and guarantee it! Price at **\$79 to \$149** a program for non-members and give members a big discount on the non-member rate. Design the program pricing to make membership attractive to non-members. Use half-hour classes and allow each participant to attend two a week, but schedule ten per week so it fits the user's schedules. Let people reserve a class, and if they miss it, there is no transfer, they lose it. Keep classes small, say 20 people maximum, for personal attention and to make these people feel special. This is a great way to enable your best staff to earn significantly more income. Look for a champion for each type of program i.e. "Awesome Abs" and pay them for "Awesome Ab" classes that others teach. This way, a real go-getter can operate a mini-business with several part-time staff members. One club claims that a Champion can earn another \$20,000 a year.

**117. BEGINNER'S GROUP FITNESS TRAINING ON EQUIPMENT and FREE WEIGHTS** - This concept involves scheduling start times for new and current members to go through a beginners level group equipment and free weight training

class with one instructor. Here is how it works: Each month, the club produces the Beginners Group Fitness Training Class Schedule and provides it to members just like the Group Exercise Class Schedule. Then, the club keeps a sign-up sheet for each class time at the reception desk. This is done to limit attendance to 10 to 12 members. This number might be greater but depends on the fitness floor space and equipment alignment. This is a perfect program for Personal Trainers to teach the very basics for machine use and very basic free weight training. This initial contact will provide Personal Trainers with a very steady stream of potential new clients, as long as the Personal Trainer approaches this program *with the spirit of an employee of the club first*, then makes his presentation with an upbeat, friendly and helpful attitude and manner. Importantly, if you have ten Personal Trainers, pick the ones with the best attitude about the program, and then, divide up the schedule so those trainers do the beginners teaching and get the prospects that result from the classes they teach. This introductory class can be the basis of a promotion. **Ten Dollars for Ten Sessions:** A Special Class Designed to Introduce Beginners to Free Weights.

**118. MEMBER TRANSFERS FROM FAILING CLUBS** - Keep tabs on all clubs near you that are small local operations. Contact and have coffee with the owners of any club that you know may be struggling. Wish them well, *but make it clear that, if and when, they may need and be forced to close*, your club will offer a transfer of their members to your club (instead of them just announcing that their club has failed and is closing, thus putting them in a position where they may have to pay refunds). Prior to the "D-day," arrange to have the owner announce to their members in a letter they will send that everyone who is a member of their club will automatically become a member of your club on the day that owner has chosen to close, and on the first of the month, the members of the closing club will be able to join your club at their existing rate. Remember, you will have to re-sign all the monthly members, and it is very wise to go ahead and honor the pre-pays for their term, too. This is important for a total takeover of the closing club's membership. Have the owner that is closing the club explain in his letter to his members that their current rates will be honored and will apply for X months, the length of their current contract and then their rates will increase to your club's rates. If you have developed a good and proper relationship with the club owner that is in trouble, a letter, carefully crafted and written by you on your club letterhead and then distributed by the closing club owner with his own announcement letter is an excellent way to make this transition.

**119. WEIGHT LOSS CONTEST** - Promote and sell a contest rather than membership. (See *Will Phillips* Page 17)



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### ...Will Phillips

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Choose a timeframe like three months and have big awards (\$1,000) for the *Biggest Loser*, the team that loses the most per person, etc. Encourage families and teams and other local social groups, like the garden club, to field a team. Everyone has full access to the club for three months, and everyone pays an entry fee of \$99 or 10 times the number of pounds they want to lose in the three months. Have a kickoff weigh-in and look for some TV coverage. Then, provide classes for contestants three times a week, cardio, strength and nutrition. Offer all participants a special membership at the end.

#### Category #19: Unique Promotions

**120. SOCIAL CLUSTER CD** - Explain to your new members that whenever a person tries to change a habit or build a new one, like regular exercise, they will experience three forces that will work against the change. Those forces are:

1. The general environment ads, fast food, you deserve a break today, etc.

2. The people around you, your family, friends and co-workers. Explain and warn your new members that their family will want them home after work, not exercising.

Explain that their friends can discourage them. Explain that they must have the discipline to show up and exercise regularly, at least three days a week.

3. Last is yourself, and your own lack of commitment or self-discipline. Clubs rarely address these barriers head on. Consider producing a very short audio CD for playing in the car which your new member can give to their family, friends and co-workers to learn how they can help you with your new commitment to exercise with an offer at the end for them to visit the club within two weeks of receiving this CD so they can learn how to become a true fitness supporter.

**121. SORORITY SAMPLER** - If you are near a college with sororities (or fraternities), meet with the leaders of these groups and offer a contest. For every activity (group class, circuit, cardio equipment, etc.) a sorority member participates in, they get ten points. At the end of the month, the sorority most committed to fitness (most points) is announced and all the members are given a 25% discount. And, the club donates a dollar a point (or a dollar for 10 points) earned to the sorority's social fund.

#### Category #20: Public Relations

Public relations is the process of getting covered in the media as NEWS. This means you don't pay for it, and it is a

bit like free advertising. Clubs strong in this area count the minutes of airtime on radio and TV and the column inches in printed media each quarter. Clubs with strong PR might get a total annual count of 500 - 800 minutes and inches combined. This is a wonderful third-party endorsement for your club. To get PR, you must understand the needs of your local media and one of the number one needs is LOCAL NEWS. Search the web for a few basic articles on how to make PR work for your club. Consider hiring a part-time PR expert in your community for \$1,500 a month. It is inexpensive advertising.

**122. ONE HOUR SALE AT MIDNIGHT** - Party and dancing at eleven! And, a one-hour sale, let's say no joining fee or a six-month special.

**123. \$129 BILL** - Print up a weird \$129 dollar bill with your club logo on it. Make it FUN! Make it so funny it does not look like you are counterfeiting! And, be sure you print: "Promotional Currency Negotiable Only for ABC Club \$129 Enrollment Fee." The offer is for a club with a standard \$129 enrollment fee, adapt this idea for your enrollment fee rate. Mail to all ex-members. The \$129 bill covers only the enrollment fee in a one-day sale. One club sold 67 memberships in five hours, 33 brought in the \$129 bill.

#### Category #21: Social and Emotional Bonding

**124. and 125.** Valuable research on customer loyalty has been done in close to a dozen other industries. Everything boils down to this statement by one of the researchers, **Fred Reicheld**, "All customer loyalty is emotionally based. Quality is a given. People expect good looking, well-equipped clubs. But, what keeps them there? The emotional connections they have with staff and with each other." In one of my early Roundtable meetings, fifteen years ago, **Ben Emden** reported some research he did on retention. The figures are representative. Family memberships were retained at 88% a year, couple memberships at 73% and singles at 70%. Any club with tennis is familiar with the high retention of tennis-playing members. All of this higher retention is based on the connections members have with other members, their friends. When your social circle is at the club, it is extremely difficult to leave the club. And when you make a new friend, they are brought to the club to join.



Thank you to Will Phillips for this exhaustive list of productive ideas. **May Will Phillips Rest In Peace.**

# The Second Wind:

## What Gym Owners Do After They Almost Quit

By: Jim Thomas

The gym business is both rewarding and grueling. It demands not only sharp business acumen but also deep wells of spirit, patience and resilience. At some point, nearly every independent gym owner or boutique studio operator faces a moment of crisis... a moment where the financial pressures, member churn, staffing challenges or sheer exhaustion makes quitting seem inevitable.

But, the owners who find a second wind don't just survive; they transform. They rise stronger, wiser, and often, more successful than ever before. This article explores what happens after gym owners almost quit, how they find their second wind, and how you, too, can rediscover your drive, rebuild your business and create your next (and best) chapter.

**The Breaking Point is Normal:** If you've ever reached the point where you almost walked away from your gym, know this; you are not alone. Nearly every successful gym owner has spent sleepless nights staring at the ceiling, wondering if it's time to close the doors. What separates success stories from failures isn't the absence of struggle; it's how they respond when the struggle becomes overwhelming. The "second wind" isn't just a burst of energy; it's a total realignment of purpose, business strategy and mindset. It's where real transformation begins.

**Common Causes of the "Almost Quit" Moment:** Understanding why you hit the wall is critical if you want to move beyond it:

■ **Chronic Cash Flow Issues:** Recurring revenue shortfalls slowly erode confidence and hope.

■ **Burnout and Emotional Exhaustion:** Long days, endless firefighting and constant stress drain your emotional reserves.

■ **Staffing Problems:** High turnover, poor team dynamics or cultural misalignment make leadership draining.

■ **Market Shifts:** Competition from new players, whether big-box gyms or online fitness, can make you feel obsolete.

■ **Loss of Purpose:** When the passion that fueled you fades under operational pressure, everything feels heavier.

Recognizing the true root causes is the first step toward reclaiming your energy and rebuilding smarter.

**The Shift - Moving from Desperation to Determination:** Owners who come back stronger don't merely "tough it out;" they evolve. They stop working harder on broken systems and start working smarter with fresh strategies. The critical realization: *The gym isn't the problem; the current approach is.* This mindset shift, from victim to strategist, unlocks the door to your second wind.

### Strategies to Find Your Second Wind

**1. Reframe the Problem:** Don't see your situation as a personal failure:

- "My model needs upgrading."
- "My marketing needs modernization."
- "My systems need to evolve."

Ask yourself:

- What worked before that no longer works?
- Where have I stopped innovating?
- Where am I avoiding necessary change?

**2. Cut the Dead Weight:** One of the fastest ways to regain momentum is subtraction:

- Release underperforming staff.
- Cancel ineffective marketing programs.
- Eliminate services that few value.
- Cut personal habits that drain your effectiveness.

*Sometimes success isn't about adding more. It's about removing what's weighing you down.*

**3. Reinvest in the Basics:** When businesses stall, it's often because they abandoned the fundamentals:

- Deliver world-class member service.
- Follow up relentlessly with leads.
- Drive community outreach.
- Maintain tight expense control.
- Prioritize daily sales training.

*The path forward often lies in doing the simple things brilliantly, every single day.*

**4. Find New Revenue Pathways:** Injecting new energy into your business often comes through new income streams:

- Launch a six-week transformation challenge.
- Introduce small group training.
- Build corporate wellness programs.
- Host specialty workshops (e.g., kettlebell clinics, recovery and mobility workshops).

*A fresh focus on new solutions often reignites passion and profitability.*

**5. Focus on Member Experience, Not Just Numbers:** Desperation can lead owners to obsess over revenue metrics. Recovery comes by obsessing over member experience instead of:

- Making every member feel like a VIP.
- Overdelivering on promised value.
- Celebrating milestones, birthdays and small wins.

*When members feel valued, retention improves, and revenue follows naturally.*

### Case Studies: Second Wind Stories

**Case Study 1: The Owner Who Cut 40% of Expenses:** A boutique gym owner in Florida faced an \$8,000 monthly loss.

Instead of closing, she aggressively cut unnecessary expenses, renegotiated her lease, shifted from costly ads to local partnerships and returned to profitability within 90 days.

**Case Study 2: The Trainer Who Pivoted to Semi-Private Training:** A personal trainer turned gym owner lost 70% of his members during COVID. Rather than giving up, he pivoted to semi-private training, raised his prices and positioned his gym as a premium coaching facility. His revenue today is 30% higher than pre-pandemic levels.

### The Personal Transformation

The second wind isn't just about business mechanics; it's about personal rebirth. Gym owners who find their second wind report:

- A stronger connection to their original purpose.
- A more resilient mindset.
- Greater decisiveness and speed in decision-making.
- Clearer boundaries and non-negotiables.

*They don't just emerge with a better business; they emerge as better leaders.*

### Creating Your "Second Wind" Action Plan

**Take a Full Business Inventory:** Identify what's working, what's broken and what's missing.

**Set a New 90-Day Goal:** Short timelines create urgency and drive focus.

**Prioritize Ruthlessly:** Pick the 3 - 5 highest-impact actions. Ignore the rest, at least temporarily.



Jim Thomas

■ **Recommit Publicly:** Tell your team and community that you're not quitting; you're recharging and evolving.

■ **Get Help:** Don't try to figure everything out alone. Bring in coaches, consultants or mentors to accelerate your turnaround.

### Your Best Chapter is Ahead

Feeling like quitting doesn't make you weak; it makes you human. But, finding the courage to keep going, and to *reinvent yourself in the process*, makes you unstoppable. Your second wind isn't about just surviving a rough patch, it's about stepping into a smarter, stronger, more powerful version of yourself and building a business that's more resilient and rewarding than ever. The gym owner who almost quit often becomes the one who builds something legendary.

### It's your turn.

(An Outsourced CEO, Turnaround Expert and Author, Jim Thomas is the Founder and President of FMC USA Inc., a management consulting, turnaround, financing and brokerage firm specializing in the leisure services industry. With more than 25 years of experience owning, operating and managing facilities of all sizes, Thomas lectures and delivers seminars, webinars and workshops across the globe on the practical skills required to successfully overcome obscurity, improve gym sales, build teamwork and market fitness programs and products. Learn more at [www.fmconsulting.net](http://www.fmconsulting.net) or [www.youtube.com/gymconsultant](http://www.youtube.com/gymconsultant).)

# Connected Health Shares the Fitness Industry's Next Chapter

By: Nancy Trent

The sixth annual *Connected: Health & Fitness Summit* returned to Los Angeles earlier this year, serving as a powerful barometer for the intersection of fitness, wellness and technology. With over 450 high-level attendees, including industry leaders, entrepreneurs and innovators, the summit provided a dynamic platform to explore emerging trends, exchange groundbreaking ideas and forge strategic partnerships shaping the future of health and fitness.

One of the most significant themes to emerge is how the weight loss landscape is transforming fitness habits. The rise of GLP-1 medications, coupled with the increasing demand for digital health solutions and personalized training, signals a new era of data and holistic wellbeing converge. The conversations at the summit underscored the urgency for brands to evolve alongside consumers, offering solutions that align with these shifting priorities.

Instead of thinking GLP-1 medications will take consumers away from exercising and eating right, industry veterans know that the better consumers look and feel, the more they invest in their wellness. They want to be seen in clothes and gyms that they were embarrassed to be seen in before, and looking better makes them feel better so they spend more on that. Notably, as people achieve their weight loss goals (the last five pounds), they spend even more on their wellness.

## GLP-1 and the New Motivation to Move

A topic that dominated nearly every discussion was GLP-1 medications like Ozempic and Wegovy. With millions turning to these drugs for rapid weight loss, the industry is confronting their long-term impact, particularly, concerns around muscle loss, metabolic slowdown and the critical need for strength training to maintain overall health. As demand for these medications skyrockets, fitness brands, trainers and wellness professionals are rethinking their approach to support consumers navigating this new era of weight management.

"There is a lot of discussion around understanding the market opportunities with GLP-1," says **Chris Schreiber, Director of Sales & Marketing at Feed Media Group**. Brands are exploring how to adapt their products and services to better serve this audience, from high-protein foods and functional beverages to metabolism-boosting supplements, smart fitness devices and AI-driven coaching.

**Julie Cartwright, President of Pvolve,**

highlights the importance of strength training in this context, stating, "If you're on GLP-1, you have to strength train... up to 40% of the weight lost can be muscle. The long-term effect of not having muscle can trigger the next epidemic." Prioritizing resistance exercises and muscle preservation has become a crucial strategy to help consumers sustain long-term health and functional movement.

In response, fitness brands are pivoting to not only address muscle loss but to emphasize long-term health and performance. This shift has ignited innovation across protein-based nutrition, blood testing, IV drips, resistance training programs and recovery-focused solutions, supporting consumers in optimizing metabolism, maintaining lean muscle mass and embracing a more balanced approach to longevity.

The summit made it clear: *The fitness industry is on the cusp of a paradigm shift where holistic, data-driven solutions will drive the next chapter of health and wellness.*

## The Shift from Cardio to Strength Training

There is a growing understanding that cardio helps you live longer, but strength training helps you live better. Strength training is becoming more and more recognized as an essential part for improving daily function, enhancing mobility and preventing physical decline.

The new fitness mantra, "You have to be strong to live long," reflects the growing recognition that muscle health is crucial for overall wellbeing. As people age, maintaining strength not only supports mobility and independence but also helps prevent conditions like osteoporosis, sarcopenia and metabolic decline. Strength training has been shown to improve bone density, joint function and heart health, making it an essential component of a long and healthy life. As the focus shifts from weight loss to longevity to quality of life, being strong is now seen as a foundational pillar for aging well.

Pvolve has carved out a unique position in the strength training conversation by emphasizing functional fitness over traditional, high-intensity workouts. Their approach focuses on low-impact, joint-friendly movements that target small, stabilizing muscles to improve mobility, posture and overall strength. This method appeals to a broader audience, particularly those who may be intimidated by traditional weightlifting or have concerns about injury. By combining strength training with rehabilitation techniques, Pvolve offers a sustainable fitness model that promotes long-term health and injury prevention,

making strength training accessible and effective for people of all fitness levels and ages.

Cartwright states how strength training helps women through different life phases from fertility to menopause. It addresses specific physical needs at each stage. For example, strength training helps to balance hormones and improve circulation, all of which support reproductive health. It also reduces stress and can promote better sleep, which is crucial for fertility. As women navigate pregnancy, help with posture, muscle endurance and joint stability, eases discomfort and improves overall body alignment to accommodate a growing baby. It can also reduce the risk of gestational diabetes and boost energy levels.

When women go through post-partum, strength training aids in core recovery and helps rebuild lost muscle mass. As far as perimenopause and menopause, hormone levels fluctuate so strength training becomes even more vital. It helps mitigate bone density loss, muscle mass decline and metabolic slowdown, all of which are common in this stage. Additionally, it can reduce symptoms like hot flashes, sleep disturbances and mood swings, promoting overall wellbeing during this transition. By incorporating strength training throughout these stages, women can better manage their health, maintain functional strength and support both physical and mental wellbeing at every phase of life.

Pvolve has made their programs easily accessible to consumers of all ages and in all situations as well as a wide range of businesses.

## Digital Transformation and Partnerships Over Direct Sales

As the fitness industry continues to embrace technology, innovative solutions are providing gyms with new ways to enhance member experiences and boost their bottom line. Kinotek's movement assessment technology is generating new revenue streams for gyms. By offering personalized insights into clients' mobility and performance, Kinotek helps gyms provide customized training programs that enhance member results and satisfaction. This technology-driven approach not only improves client retention but also allows gyms to diversify their services, creating opportunities for premium memberships and specialized training offerings that attract new clientele.

**Joey Spitz, Chief Revenue Officer at Kinotek**, says, "This year was all about potential partnerships vs. direct revenue opportunities." Brands are increasingly leaning into tech partnerships



Nancy Trent

to drive growth by integrating cutting-edge solutions into their products and services. These collaborations allow brands to leverage data analytics, AI-driven insights and personalized experiences to better meet consumer needs and enhance user engagement.

**Moonbird** is also embracing this transformation by integrating its breathwork technology into wellness apps, healthcare platforms and corporate wellbeing programs. By leveraging B2B collaborations and digital ecosystems, Moonbird expands its reach, providing personalized breathwork solutions to a wider audience while positioning itself as a key player in the growing health tech space. These partnerships offer brands a unique opportunity to improve customer retention and stay competitive in a rapidly evolving market. By tapping into the tech ecosystem, brands can offer innovative, tech-enabled experiences that resonate with today's tech-savvy consumers.

**Jonathan Shottan, Tonal's Chief Product and Content Officer**, speaks on the value of industry density at the summit, emphasizing, "There are great opportunities for stacking meetings." He highlights how the concentrated gathering of industry leaders at the summit creates an ideal environment for fostering collaborations, sharing insights and forming strategic partnerships that can accelerate growth and innovation across the health and fitness space.

Shottan also underscores how the summit provides a unique platform for brands like Tonal to engage in meaningful conversations with potential partners, investors and thought leaders. "The ability to meet with multiple key players in one setting streamlines decision-making and opens doors to opportunities that might otherwise take months to materialize," he adds. This high-caliber networking fosters a dynamic exchange of ideas, helping (See Nancy Trent Page 21)

# Stop Selling Everything: The Paradox of Choice

By: Jeffrey Pinkerton

My wife and I recently went to the *Cheesecake Factory*. I hadn't been in 20+ years, but she had a gift card... Neither of us wanted to cook on a Tuesday night, so we headed to the *Mall of Georgia* for some almost-free food. I had heard their menu was *massive*, but I wasn't ready for *how massive*. We actually sent the waiter away three times to give us more time to flip through endless pages of dinner options: pastas, pizzas, salads, sandwiches, seafood, steaks. With 100+ options, we were overwhelmed... a perfect example of the paradox of choice. And, if your group fitness menu boasts 100+ different classes, you're guilty of the same.

**Fewer Choices, Higher Quality:** One of my favorite restaurants is a small bistro in the college town of Lexington, Virginia. We ate there while visiting our kids, often to celebrate a birthday or the end of a successful semester. They offer four appetizers, four salads and seven main courses. A total of 15 items on the menu, all great. The *Cheesecake Factory*, for comparison, offers 26 different appetizers alone, along with 50+ other items in the sandwich, burger and salad categories. Can the *Cheesecake Factory* cooks really excel at crafting hundreds of meals to cover Italian, Asian, American, Mexican and more? Honestly, no. I ordered carne asada steak that was nothing to write about. And, alas, here we are.

**The Paradox of Choice:** We tend to think that more options will attract more people. Or, in the case of group fitness, that more variety will attract more members, but psychology tells us otherwise. Too many choices can cause analysis paralysis and not only make the choice more difficult but can lead consumers to the worst choice of all: *no choice*. When presented with too many options for group fitness, like ten different formats for strength training, an overwhelmed member is more likely to choose none of them.

Psychologists **Sheena Iyengar** and **Mark Lepper's** 2000 study on the topic is simple (and sweet) proof that less is more. In one version of the experiment, at a

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Jeffrey Pinkerton

# High-Leverage Activities: Multiplying Your Impact

By: Herb Lipsman

As we are preparing to launch *SOZO Clubs Inc.*, I have been diving deep into the challenges that startups face... and how great founders overcome them. One resource that has resonated with me lately is *High Output Management* by **Andy Grove**, the legendary Co-Founder and CEO of Intel.

Though written decades ago, Grove's insights are as relevant today as ever. One concept leapt out to me, not because it was new, but because it affirmed a truth I have lived by for years: *the power of high-leverage activities*.

High-leverage activities are those intentional efforts that yield disproportionate results. These are the 20% that drives 80% of the outcome. In a world of endless to-do lists and competing demands, these are the moves that move the needle. Here are some examples:

- One-on-one meetings with staff and members;
- Off-site team-building experiences;
- Staff training and professional development;
- Strategic planning sessions;
- MBWA (Managing By Wandering Around);
- Personal workouts;
- Taking time off to recharge;
- Active listening;
- Independent learning and study.

These actions create long-term ripple effects. They strengthen culture, sharpen execution, deepen relationships and improve decision-making. They multiply, not just add, value to the organization.

Grove reminds us that every leader, no matter how senior, faces the same fixed constraint: **time**. We all get 24 hours a day. The difference between those who succeed and those who stagnate is not effort; it's **focus**.

The key is not just working harder but being ruthlessly intentional about where we direct our time and energy. Every minute we spend is a choice. The most successful people are those who choose to spend theirs on what matters most.

As we build *SOZO*, I'm keeping this front of mind. What we focus on today will define who we become tomorrow.

## Two Practical Examples of High-Leverage Activities:

**One-on-One Conversations:** Imagine sitting down with an employee for a dedicated, distraction-free conversation. You ask how things are going in their role: what's working, what's not, where they need support... You show genuine interest in their wellbeing by asking if anything in their personal life is affecting their work, either positively or negatively. Then, you invite their perspective on how the organization

can improve. This single conversation can build trust, uncover hidden issues and create a stronger sense of alignment and engagement. It's a small investment of time with massive downstream impact. In addition to strengthening your relationship with this employee, this employee will be motivated to conduct one-on-ones with their co-workers and members, thereby multiplying the positive impact.

**Training and Development:** Consider launching a program that pays employees on an ongoing basis to build leadership, management or technical skills. This isn't a one-time workshop; it's a sustained investment in their growth. Over time, this enables them to contribute at a higher level, take on more responsibility and feel more deeply connected to the company's mission. The organization benefits from stronger performance, fewer mistakes, higher retention and a bench of future leaders.

For more insights like this, see Herb's book, *Caring (The Sequel)* (link in bio).

(*Herb Lipsman is a veteran of the club*



Herb Lipsman

*industry, having managed some of the most prestigious athletic clubs and golf/country clubs in the Houston, Texas market over the past 30 years, most notably The Houstonian Hotel, Club and Spa. Lipsman has served on the Board of Directors for IHRSA. He was appointed by Mayor Bill White to serve as Chairman of the Mayor's Wellness Council for the City of Houston. Lipsman has also been invited to speak at numerous industry conferences and conventions around the world, including the U.S., UK, Australia, New Zealand, Germany, Italy, Russia and Mexico. Most recently, Lipsman authored and published his book, *Caring (The Sequel): Valuable Insights into Effective Club and Hospitality Management*. Learn more about Herb and order his book at [bit.ly/herb-lipsman-caring.](http://bit.ly/herb-lipsman-caring.)*

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## ***...Nancy Trent***

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shape the future of fitness technology and personalized training solutions.

As the leader in smart strength training, Tonal is redefining at-home fitness by combining AI-powered coaching with sleek, space-saving design. "Owning a Tonal is like having a spotter and a strength coach on demand," Shottan explains. With 15 different modalities, including yoga, mobility, strength, and cardio, Tonal offers a fully immersive training experience that keeps users engaged and progressing.

The latest innovation, Aero HIIT workouts, blends cardio and strength for an even more dynamic way to stay fit. Meanwhile, built-in Smart View technology analyzes real-time movement data to provide personalized coaching cues, ensuring users train safely and effectively. For those looking to push their limits, new Drop Sets on Tonal allow for muscle-building up to two times faster, while Spotter Mode ensures a challenging yet safe workout, features once exclusive to high-end gyms, now accessible at home.

Beyond performance, Tonal's beautifully refined design, featuring chrome accents and a minimalist aesthetic, seamlessly integrates into any living space. It's not just a fitness tool, it's a statement piece that enhances both strength and style.

### **The Power of Music in Fitness Spaces**

Music plays a crucial role in fostering engagement and community building by setting the tone for workouts and

creating a shared atmosphere. Whether through curated playlists or live music events, it helps strengthen connections among participants, making fitness experiences more enjoyable, motivating and socially inclusive.

A company that has established itself as a leader in music licensing and programming for fitness apps is Feed Media Group, by offering a curated library of high-energy, copyright-compliant tracks designed to enhance the workout experience. By partnering with top music publishers and leveraging its expertise in trending music genres, Feed helps fitness apps create motivating playlists that sync seamlessly with different types of workouts, from yoga to high-intensity training. According to Schreiber, women dominating pop music is shaping fitness playlists. Their empowering and upbeat tracks provide the perfect soundtrack for motivation and performance.

Curated music enhances the overall atmosphere in fitness spaces, creating an immersive environment that boosts client mood and engagement during workouts. By tailoring playlists to match the energy and flow of different exercise routines, gyms can improve client satisfaction, increase motivation and foster a sense of community, ultimately leading to higher retention rates and long-term loyalty.

### **Women's Health and Longevity**

Biohacking tailored to women's hormonal cycles focuses on optimizing health and performance by aligning lifestyle choices, such as diet, exercise and sleep, with the natural fluctuations of hormones

throughout the menstrual cycle. By syncing activities with different phases, such as emphasizing strength training during the follicular phase and restorative practices during the luteal phase, women can enhance their energy levels, mental clarity and overall wellbeing while supporting hormonal balance.

Pvolve emphasizes the importance of mobility and functional movement to prevent muscle loss and promote longevity, focusing on low-impact exercises that support joint health and strengthen stabilizing muscles. Their approach encourages sustainable fitness by integrating mobility-focused strength training, helping individuals maintain independence and quality of life as they age.

What's next for Pvolve involves expanding their reach through a combination of boutique studio experiences and enhanced at-home options. With the success of their unique approach to functional, low-impact strength training, Pvolve plans to open more boutique studios that offer personalized, hands-on sessions in a community-focused environment. At the same time, they are strengthening their digital platform, offering on-demand classes, live sessions and personalized workout plans that bring the Pvolve experience directly to users' homes. This hybrid model allows Pvolve to cater to a wider audience, providing flexibility for those who prefer the social interaction of a studio or the convenience of training from home. By blending both in-person and virtual options, Pvolve is positioning itself to become a leading brand in accessible, functional fitness.

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The *Connected: Health & Fitness Summit* made it clear: GLP-1 medications are transforming the industry, but they are just the beginning of a larger shift in how we approach weight management and overall wellness. The future of fitness lies in adapting to new consumer needs, balancing weight loss with muscle preservation and integrating technology, nutrition and strength training into sustainable health solutions. As brands and professionals navigate this evolving landscape, those who innovate beyond the current trends will define the next era of fitness and longevity.

(Nancy Trent is a writer and speaker, a lifelong wellness activist, a globe-trotting trend watcher and the Founder and President of Trent & Company, a leading wellness PR firm. Trent & Company, which launched many health and beauty brands, grew out of Nancy's personal and passionate commitment to helping people live longer and healthier lives. A former journalist for New York Magazine, Nancy has written seven books on healthy lifestyles, serves on the editorial boards of several magazines and travels around the world speaking at conferences and trade shows on trends in the marketplace. She is a recognized expert in PR with more than 30 years of experience creating and managing highly successful campaigns. Learn more at [www.trentandcompany.com](http://www.trentandcompany.com) or contact Nancy at [nancy@trentandcompany.com](mailto:nancy@trentandcompany.com).)

## ...Jeffrey Pinkerton

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local food market, they set up a table with six different types of jams. On a different day, they set up a table with 24 different types of jams. While the table with 24 options received more traffic, the people looking at fewer options were ten times more likely to make a purchase!

**Market a Smaller Menu:** Like the Cheesecake Factory, you may have fallen into the trap of trying to be everything to everyone. If you are guilty of marketing everything available at your facility, I encourage you to do your own experiment.

Instead of marketing all of the various equipment and all of the possible options for exercising at your facility, including "100+ classes per week!," instead, focus on marketing and onboarding to the small handful of experiences at your facility that provide the best experience, the best return (dollar value, lifetime value, retention), and if you have the data, have the highest close rate. These should be the experiences that you are known for and be the highlights of your marketing and your member onboarding. And, if your strength training program in group fitness, with the proven benefits of community, connection and moving to music, isn't near the top of

that list, we need to talk.

**The Final Course:** I'll take my own advice. When I work out, I want *Group Power*, *Group Ride* and *Group Centergy*. And, when I dine out, I want a place with a smaller, more digestible (and delicious) menu. So, next time we have a Cheesecake Factory gift card - my wife is a school teacher and some parents are very generous, especially this time of year - we'll turn to what they are known for: a slice of cheesecake. (Right!?)

• • •

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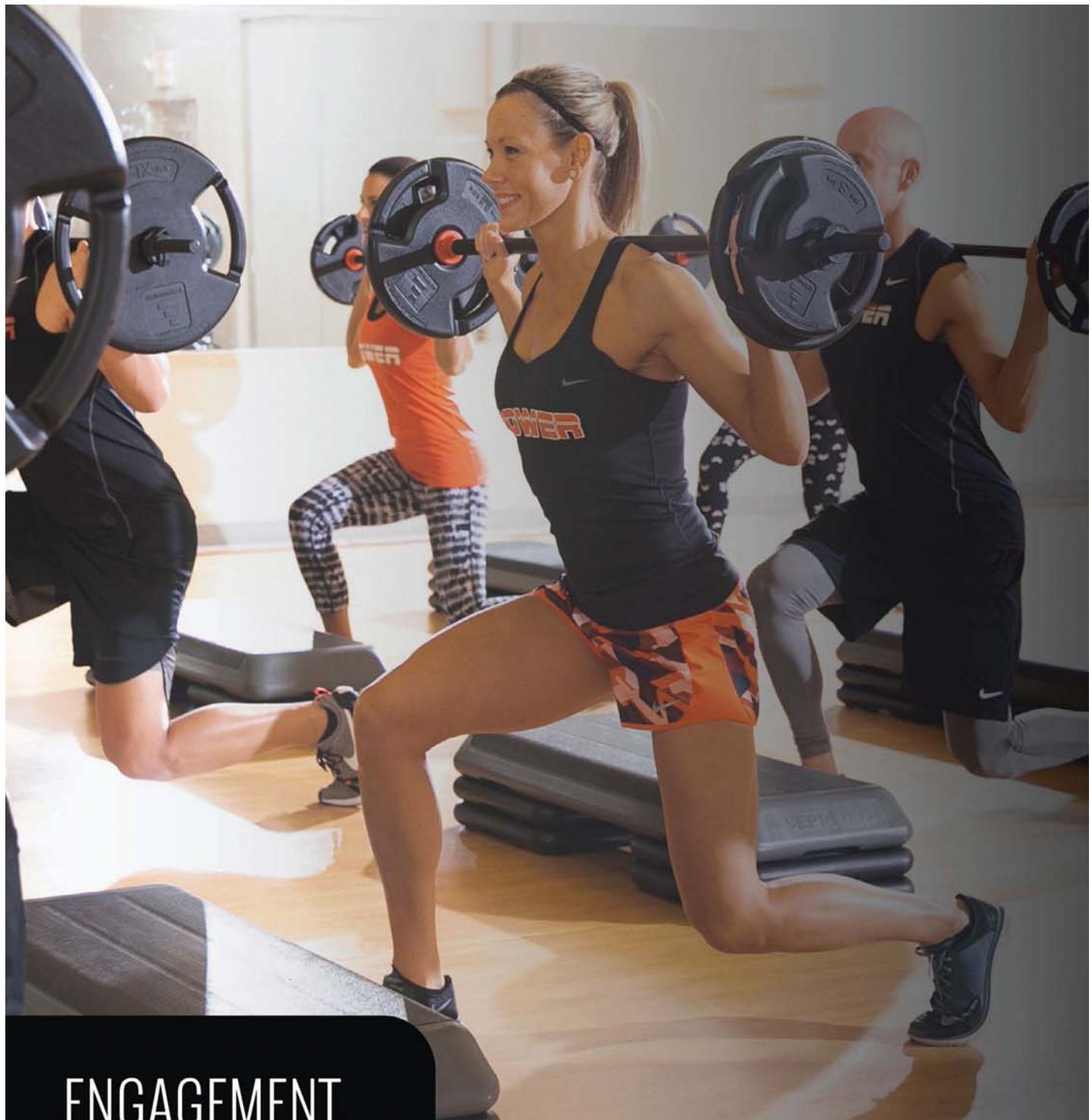


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