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Five Trends Changing Everything

MAY 2026

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Five Trends Changing Everything: Macros Trends Shaping the Coming Decades in the Fitness Industry

By: **Thomas Plummer**

The fitness industry is a world of what's hot, what's not, who you are and maybe who you used to be. One day, a trend hits, we can't live without it, millions are spent, then a few years later, what we just had to have is gone and we are off to the next hot thing.

But, occasionally, something happens in the fitness world, resetting who we are and how we operate today and into the future. What we once held to be true fades, replaced by a new truth that takes all of us up another level of business practice, eventually allowing all of us to offer another layer of sophistication to our millions of clients.

The first set of changes, the short-

term burst that impacts the business, fades and lasts less than five years. It is called a micro trend, defined by the advent of a new methodology, such as group/team training, circuit training or the hot social media passion of the week. Again, and important to remember, most every micro trend since the early 1970s was based upon a fixed system of delivering training to the client.

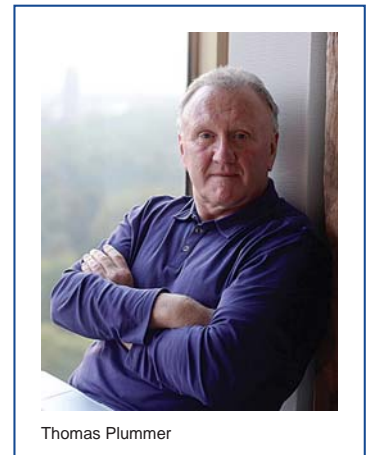
The built-in failure of all these short-term, one-hit wonders, is each one forces the client to adapt to the methodology, rather than adapting the methodology to the client. Here is what we do, how we do it, and one size fits all, or in other words, do it this way or go home.

Examples might include the breakout in the early '90s of the "must have now" concept circuit training, and within

just a few years, there were over 10,000 of these in the United States alone, not including mainstream, existing businesses that added circuit rooms... now gone.

In the early 2000s, we entered the group/team era, often with national competition attached, and again, the original players and their imitators massed over 20,000 locations. But, as in any business where you do one thing, over and over again, the client suffers from repetition fatigue and fades away. The once leaders in this category have all sold out, moved away from their founders or have simply closed.

There are new players, copying the old business ideas, dancing in this category today, driven by short-term glory (See **Thomas Plummer** Page 10)



Thomas Plummer

Crunch Franchise Brings Crunch 3.0 Gyms to Two Locations Across the Greater Atlanta Area

ATLANTA, GA - *Crunch Fitness* announces the upcoming opening of Crunch Newnan in Newnan, Georgia and Crunch Stone Mountain in Lilburn, Georgia. Each location will be a \$5 million, 30,000+ square-foot state-of-the-art fitness facility that will open its doors in the fall. Both locations will be operated by *Blue Ridge Fitness Holdings LLC*, a subsidiary of Crunch Fitness franchisee CR Fitness Holdings.

Both locations will feature the new Crunch 3.0 design, combining modern aesthetics with enhanced functionality to deliver an upgraded fitness experience. Fusing fitness with entertainment to make serious exercise fun, Crunch Newnan and Crunch Stone Mountain will offer: Expanded strength and functional training areas;



Top-quality cardio and strength training equipment; Personal training from certified Personal Trainers; Group Fitness studio with World-Famous Group Fitness classes; Hot Yoga Studio; Ride cycling classes (Crunch Stone Mountain only); Olympic lifting platforms; Power half-hour circuit (See **Crunch** Page 6)

Zumba Turns 25 and the Party Spans the Globe

MIAMI, FL - Twenty-five years ago, a single fitness class changed everything. Today, *Zumba* is the world's largest dance-fitness brand, and it marked a quarter century with a celebration the world could feel.

Thousands of Zumba fans boarded a sold-out cruise to Mexico for days of nonstop music, movement and community.

On April 29th, Times Square stopped --or rather, started dancing-- as Zumba took over New York City's iconic *TSQ LIVE* stage for a free public class that brought together thousands of locals, tourists and die-hard fans in the heart of Manhattan. Simultaneously, classes erupted in 185 countries, a single synchronized pulse of joy circling the globe.



This is what 25 years looks like:

- **Over 465 million live classes** have been taught, totaling more than 53,000 years of nonstop dance;
- **3 trillion+ calories** burned together by the Zumba community;
- **200,000 locations** worldwide have held weekly classes, more than five times the number of Starbucks globally.

But, it's a brand of more than just (See **Zumba** Page 6)

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- Play by the Rules but Be Ferocious - **By:** Jim Thomas
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- Bay Club Acquires Entire City Block in San Francisco
- Equinox Announces Women's Health Advisory Board
- Unleashed Brands Foundation Donates \$200,000 to Blood Cancer United
- 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 **389th** 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!!!**

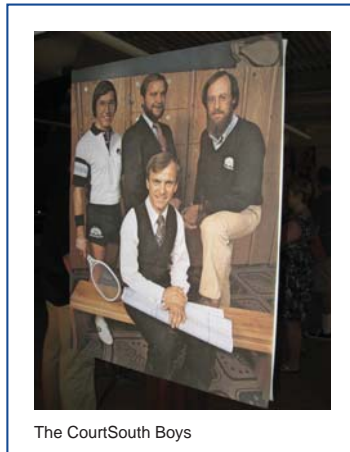
■On Friday, May 15, 2026, I got some **VERY SAD NEWS**. That news was that **RICH BOGGS**, my *CourtSouth* Founding Partner in 1976, had passed away! Rich's 50+ years in our industry were filled with successful happenings, and I'm very fortunate to have been a partner with him,



Rich Boggs

LYLE RAY IRWIN and **FRED STRECK**, all of whom have now passed away. **Growing old SUCKS!!!**

The story of the "CourtSouth Boys," as I affectionately call them is a fun and interesting one, and in our upcoming **June Edition**, our *Cover Story* will tell it, as well as provide a proper tribute to Rich. Because of the timing of his passing, we were not able to redirect our May Edition to that tall task, but it is a story that must



The CourtSouth Boys

be told because Rich deserves it. I can also promise it will be **FUN** and you will learn from it, always the key goals of *Club Insider*.

However, before I close this **Note**, for an initial brief comment, *Club Insider* did reach out to two very important people in the story of Rich Boggs:

■**LOUISE IRWIN**, Wife of the late Lyle Ray Irwin (Co-Founder of *The Step Company*



Norm Cates

with Rich in 1989, later known as *Body Training Systems* and now known as *MOSSA*), who is now *CEO of Step Fitness and Recreation*;

■**TERRY BROWNING**, *President and CEO of MOSSA*, having joined the company in 1992, with Rich as then-CEO.

Louise commented: "Rich and Ray's (See Norm's Notes Page 7)

About Club Insider

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Thanks and Appreciation

At *Club Insider*, we are excited to be in our **33rd 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 the **late 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, the **late 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 over the 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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HFA Launches the Fitness Industry Traffic (FIT) Tracker

WASHINGTON, D.C. - *The Fitness Industry Traffic (FIT) Tracker* is a new resource from the *Health & Fitness Association (HFA)* that provides regular updates on foot traffic to nearly 11,000 fitness facilities across the United States. Each quarter, the FIT Tracker analyzes millions of anonymized location data points to track visits to gyms and studios nationwide, providing timely, data-driven insights into consumer engagement across four key segments:

- High-volume low-price (HVLP) gyms;
- Mid-priced gyms;
- Luxury clubs;
- Boutique/studios.

Developed in partnership with *Sports Marketing Surveys USA* (a Buffalo Groupe company) and powered by *Placer.ai*, the tracker offers a clear view of consumer activity at gyms and studios over time, helping industry stakeholders monitor trends, benchmark performance and better understand how visitation patterns evolve across different price points and business models.

In addition to tracking visitation by segment, the report also breaks out regional patterns, offering geographic cuts that help illustrate where activity is rising or leveling off. This added layer of insight supports benchmarking and planning at



both national and local levels.

The FIT Tracker is intended as a practical tool for operators, suppliers and other industry partners looking to stay informed and make data-driven decisions. It complements HFA's existing research by offering more regular, facility-based indicators of consumer demand.

The FIT Tracker is available at

no cost to HFA members. Non-members may purchase each quarterly report for **\$99**. Custom data cuts are also available to HFA members upon request. For more information, please contact **Anton Severin**, *HFA Vice President of Research*, at aseverin@healthandfitness.org.

Bay Club Acquires Entire City Block in San Francisco, Reaffirming 50 Years of Commitment to its Founding City

SAN FRANCISCO, CA - Fifty years ago, *The Bay Club Company ("Bay Club")* was born in San Francisco, and today, it's making it clear that this city will always be home. Bay Club announces the acquisition of the full city block that has been home to its flagship San Francisco club for nearly five decades, comprising more than 150,000 square feet.

Purchased from *LaSalle Investment Management, Inc.* for \$65 million, the acquisition secures Bay Club's permanent presence in its founding city and cements the heritage that has defined the company for half a century.

Bay Club has called this corner of San Francisco home for nearly five decades, and now, it always will. Since opening at 150 Greenwich Street in 1977 as one of California's first coed athletic clubs, Bay Club has been woven into the fabric of this city and remains one of San Francisco's longest-standing private athletic institutions. The acquisition ensures continuity of ownership and operations for decades to come.

The acquired properties span an entire city block bounded by Sansome, Battery, Greenwich and Lombard Streets in San Francisco's North Waterfront, among the city's most desirable submarkets.

Bay Club's corporate headquarters previously operated from the Lombard Street location. In recent years, as member demand increased and programming expanded, the company relocated its headquarters to a new 13,000 square-foot office down the block, to prioritize accessible club space and enhance the on-campus member experience.

"We had a simple idea in 1977: build a great club for this city. We're grateful San Francisco let us, and we're proud to see it still standing on the same block where it all started," said **Pete Jones**, *Co-Founder of the Bay Club*.

What started at 150 Greenwich Street has grown into a network of 35+ locations and more than 150,000 members, making Bay Club one of the West Coast's leading sports, outdoor recreation and active lifestyle operators. Bay Club San Francisco

remains its heart, serving approximately 12,500 members, with nearly 20,000 members across the Bay Club network actively using its San Francisco locations, underscoring the club's enduring role as the cornerstone of the Bay Club portfolio.

"San Francisco didn't just shape Bay Club, it made us," said **Matthew Stevens**, *President and Chief Executive Officer*. "We were born here, we grew here, and we're not going anywhere. As we approach our 50th year, this acquisition is our commitment, to this city, to our members and to the next half century. San Francisco is our home, and we're tripling down on it."

This acquisition reflects Bay Club's broader philosophy that owned real estate is foundational to building durable, community-centered infrastructure. Bay Club's ownership model provides long-term stability for members and employees, enhances capital flexibility and enables sustained reinvestment in its physical assets.

The acquisition also supports Bay Club's three-part growth strategy: building

interconnected regional campuses, expanding sports, outdoor recreation and active lifestyle offerings within those campuses, as well as connecting members across locations through its Shared Membership model, which allows up to 10 people to join under one flexible membership.

Bay Club's roots in San Francisco run deeper than its four locations across the city, through its budding partnership with the *Boys & Girls Clubs of San Francisco (BGCSF)*.

Bay Club was advised in the transaction by *CBRE's Bay Area Capital Markets* team, including **Mike Taquino**, **Kyle Kovac**, **Jesse Millman**, **Kati Thabit**, **Jack Fleischmann** and **Mindy Nguyen**.

"CBRE is pleased to have assisted Bay Club in this strategic acquisition, which reflects the continued resurgence of San Francisco and marks a long-term commitment to the city from a deeply rooted local institution," said **Mike Taquino**.

Kristin Macdonald and **Sydne Levy** of *Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, LLP* served as legal advisors to Bay Club.

...Crunch

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training; Functional HIITZone training area with indoor turf; Advanced HIIT classes; TRX; Relax & Recover services - Infrared Sauna, HydroMassage beds, CryoLounge, Human Touch Massage Chairs, Tanning; Full-service locker rooms with showers and a dry sauna; and more.

"We're excited to expand our Georgia footprint with Crunch Newnan and Crunch Stone Mountain," said **Tony Scrimale**, *CEO of CR Fitness Holdings*. "Newnan and Lilburn are growing communities and we look forward to delivering high-energy, welcoming gyms where everyone feels supported in their fitness journey."

Both new club openings will bring over 70 career opportunities to the

greater Atlanta area across Personal Training, Group Fitness, Sales, Operations and more. Interested applicants can learn more at CrunchNewnan.com and CrunchStoneMountain.com.

Blue Ridge Fitness Holdings LLC currently operates 15 Crunch gyms in the Greater Atlanta metropolitan area and is on track to operate 17 total by the end of 2026. Its parent company, *CR Fitness Holdings* is a leading Crunch Fitness franchisee that currently serves over one million members. Backed by major investment firms *North Castle Partners* and *Sixth Street*, CR Fitness is on track to operate 110 locations nationwide this year. Its expansion across the U.S. reflects Crunch's commitment to providing accessible fitness experiences that combine high-quality equipment, a fun atmosphere, and exceptional value.

Crunch Fitness was ranked #2

in the fitness category and #20 overall in the annual *Entrepreneur Franchise 500*, up from #32 last year in the world's most comprehensive franchise ranking. Crunch was also recognized on the annual Inc.

...Zumba

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numbers. It's the one instructor who started teaching in her living room. The participant who walked into a class after a divorce and hasn't left for ten years. The college student who says Zumba is the only hour of the week that's entirely hers.

"Zumba has always been about more than fitness," said **Alberto Perlman**, *CEO*, who co-founded the brand in 2001. "It's about joy, community and the freedom to move. This milestone belongs to every

5000 list of America's fastest-growing companies. The brand continues to expand nationwide and push the bar with innovative offerings for its members.

instructor and participant who has ever walked into a class and found their people. We didn't build Zumba; they did."

What started with an idea that exercise should feel like a party, became a cultural force that outlasted countless fitness trends, survived a global pandemic and emerged stronger than ever. In an era defined by disconnection, Zumba remains stubbornly, defiantly communal.

Twenty-five years in, the brand isn't slowing down. Expanded programming, new experiences and global activations are planned throughout the rest of 2026.

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...Norm's Notes

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friendship and partnership spanned a lifetime and became an important part of both their lives and the fitness industry they helped shape together. My husband lovingly called him 'Talk, Inc.' because he could talk to anyone, anywhere and always had a quick smile and a sharp wit to share. One of his greatest gifts was making people feel seen and heard. When he spoke with you, he gave you his full attention. I have always respected the deep bond he shared with my husband, as well as his dedication, intelligence and larger-than-life personality. Together, they shared years of hard work, vision, challenges and success that helped leave a lasting impact on countless people. He will be remembered not only for what he accomplished but for the friendship and loyalty that meant so much to my husband over the years. This was written by Ray about Rich: 'I don't think that I could have found a better partner than Rich Boggs and the fact that we are still together after 34+ years says a lot.'

Terry commented: "The MOSSA Team is deeply saddened by Rich's passing. I had the privilege of working beside Rich since 1992, first as my mentor and CEO, and over the years as a trusted colleague

and dear friend. His passion, enthusiasm and unwavering optimism touched all who knew him."

Thank you to Louise and Terry for these comments during this sad moment. Folks, you will hear more from them and a lot more from me about Rich in our upcoming **June Cover Story: Rich Boggs: 1942 - 2026.**

MAY RICH BOGGS REST IN PEACE.

■ **CONGRATULATIONS, and BEST WISHES, to STEVE VUCOVICH** and his son, **BRAD.** Steve officially retired on April 1, 2026, which is 40 years from the date of his club opening on April 1, 1986! I want to send my **"BEST OF LUCK"** wishes to them both, as Steve enters a well-earned retirement after 40 years on the job and Brad takes over *Club Apple*. Steve isn't taking any time off yet, though, as an **Article** from him appears on **Page #18** of this month's edition!

■ This from *THE JOHN W. BRICK Mental Health Foundation*: May is Mental Health Awareness Month, a time to reflect and take action on the ways we support our mental wellbeing each day. At the John W. Brick Mental Health Foundation, their mission is to change the way the world treats mental health by integrating self-care approaches

such as exercise, nutrition and mind-body practices, into treating mental health and promoting mental wellbeing. To further support this month's initiative, they created the *JWB May Mental Wellbeing Resource Calendar*, a science-backed collection of daily tips, prompts and resources grounded in the JWB Wellbeing Ecosystem. Each day highlights a different approach to wellbeing, from movement and nutrition to rest, connection, spirituality and service, offering simple, practical ways to engage in daily self-care practices that support mental wellbeing.

■ Speaking of mental health awareness, here's a **good one** for **Y'all**. I recently saw this report: *"People are using RAGE WORKOUTS TO BLOW THROUGH THEIR ANGER and FUEL THEIR FITNESS."* Classes in some places are selling out where people are punching and hitting things with loud music in the background. *I guess you gotta do what you gotta do...*

■ The *Columbia Association (CA) Racquet Sports and KidSpace Departments* have been designated: *"Certified Autism Centers"* (CAC) by the *International Board of Credentialing and Continuing Education Standards (IBCCES)*. To achieve this certification, at least 80% of guest-facing staff completed autism and sensory training,

reflecting CA's commitment to creating inclusive spaces and programs for autistic and sensory-sensitive individuals and their families. The training and certification process ensures that staff from both the Racquet Sports and KidSpace departments are equipped with the knowledge, skills and best practices to better understand and welcome these community members. As part of the CAC partnership, both departments also received onsite reviews conducted by IBCCES to help develop sensory guides and provide additional accessibility recommendations. **ANISH MANRAI** of CA commented: "At Columbia Association, we believe that **FUN, CONNECTION** and **BELONGING** should be accessible to all."

FOLKS... let me pause here for this comment. Reading these words **DOES MY HEART REALLY GOOD** because for 33+ years now, in *Club Insider*, we have written and published these words: **"MAKE IT FUN!!!"** We have written these important words every month in a sincere effort to make life better for **YOU**, our esteemed *Club Insider* readers! So, for me, sitting here at age 80 now, I'm extremely **HAPPY** and **GRATEFUL** to read these wise words from Anish Manrai: **FUN, CONNECTION** and **BELONGING**.

(See *Norm's Notes* Page 12)

...Thomas Plummer

continued from page 3

on social media, featuring competitors demonstrating their athletic prowess, at levels 90%+ of the population has no interest in being part of their daily fitness routine. But, again, if we learn anything from past history, which we seldom do in the fitness industry, we are still forcing the typical person into a narrow focus, forcing him or her to adapt to the methodology, which has failed every single time over time.

The industry has been riddled by micro trends. We could mention aerobics, the race phenomena, kick boxing/boxing, tanning, cycle-only studios, aerobics again disguised as an almost cult from South America, cleansing, caveman eating and so many more it would take this entire article to discuss. The key... micro trends fail and macro trends are forever.

What is a Macro Trend?

Macro trends change how we think, and how we do business, over extended periods of time, or often, permanently. Start with the barbell and bodybuilding, while fading for a while due to how it was offered to the public; it never left us and is rising again because we always return to what works.

Sports performance changed the future of sports and how we train modern athletes. Cardio equipment, starting with **Augie Nieto**, driving gym-to-gym selling the first *LifeCycles*, brought the outdoor world into the gym world, and the first personal trainers, who hit the market hard in the '70s, are now indispensable in most every gym in America. And, we could add national certification companies, electronic funds transfers and the power of the franchisers, now along with investment groups, and you still only have a partial list of strategies and practices that permanently changed our business.

The Macro Trends of Our Future Are Already Here

Here are the five big trends now in play and what they will mean to the future of our business:

1. We are running out of children.
2. We all want to live longer, but no one wants to get old.
3. The rebirth of the middle demographic driven gym.
4. Why you can't find trainers any longer.
5. I need a place to hang out... how about your gym?

Three Years From Now, the Six-year-old of the Future Won't Be Here

For a guy who lives in terror that I will spend eternity as a ride attendant at the hell I know as an amusement park, I should

celebrate the dearth of new children, but while I may not miss them much, the fitness industry will.

About three years ago, data started appearing citing the trend of fewer babies being born. We see this, and understand it intellectually, but if we open your eyes, we can see it all around us even today. One of my closest friends has four children, ranging from mid-twenties to early thirties... and not one child amongst them. My brother has three boys, now in their early thirties to early forties and not one child. The Z generation, and the younger Millennials, simply are not having kids at the same rate as previous generations.

In approximately 2030, there will be several hundred thousand fewer 5 - 6 year olds than we might expect... the ones feeding gymnastic studios, youth golf, martial arts kid programs, dance studios, and in our world, sports performance centers and other youth development businesses.

There will be children, but fewer, meaning more businesses fighting over fewer potential clients. We see it already with grade schools shutting down, and it is already being seen with even colleges showing declines in total numbers. While the data began in earnest just a few years ago, the trend has been slowly developing for almost twenty years.

In three years, we will feel the first impact, but in the next fifteen years or so, entry level workers will decline as well, affecting all fitness businesses of any type. Basic counter help, new salespeople, and especially, next generation trainers won't be available because they were never born. This also segways into our next point, the rise of the older adult, as illustrated in this chart.

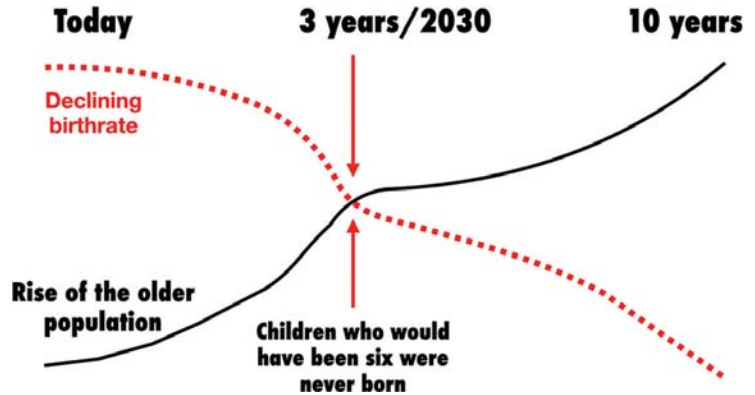
We All Want to Live Longer, but No One Wants to Get Old

Ten thousand people a day turn 65 years old. By 2035, there will be more people over 65 than 18 or younger. The life expectancy for a woman born in 2000 or later is expected to reach 100. And, somewhere on this planet, according to aging specialists, there is already a woman born in a western country who will live to be the first person to reach 150 years old.

Yes, we all welcome this news. We all want to live longer... but it's important to note for the future of the fitness industry that, while we welcome longevity, no one wants to get old or live old. The problem is, we in the fitness world, are seriously far behind in adapting to this trend.

Typical training gyms, centered on private coaching and small group training, once known as boutique studios back in the days of **Jack LaLanne**, currently serve the top 30% in the market by affluence, and approximately 90% or more are over 40 or above. Yet, we still aren't where we need to be for these clients who have already found us.

Our youthful trainers usually have



no idea as to whom they are serving. We overtrain the clients (is anyone really still throwing a barbell on the back of a 50+ person who hasn't been in a gym in five years), we have no linger space, we don't know how to support the client beyond the workout, and just about everything we offer is a mismatch between who the client is and who we are.

Many of the successful gyms that are adapting are offering things such as small group with a limit of four (over four does not work for the upper scale affluent client), private pod areas (mini gyms within the gym, usually three hundred square feet) where the clients don't have to be dragged all over a gym looking for equipment, and support group classes such as adult sports performance or adult PE classes, focusing on mobility and functionality. Again, in most training gyms, we force the client to adapt to systems created last century rather than adapting what we do today to the changing client population.

The mainstream players seldom offer enough help to properly get a client of a certain age started in the gym. Statistically, the majority of the U.S. population does not belong to a fitness facility, yet we know that the nonmembers are aging, looking for lifestyle support and need more help to get started. Beginner intro workshops, more individual help and more patience will be mandatory if we want to capitalize with this group. And, no, saying we offer great online support hardly works for a generation still face down on *Facebook*.

Marketing will also have to change. Young trainers, or semi-naked, under-40 members pushing sleds the size of my first car in our ads are not motivational for this group. And, the training gym segments will also have to adapt. Money people, again defined as the top-30% by affluence in a market, hate cheap price marketing, so how good can coaching be if it is put on sale to get buyers?

Trial memberships, and six-weeks are highly effective, so they can still be the tool of choice for the aging potential client. Let me try this before I buy it. Let me experience what you do and how you do it before I decide. It isn't about the money you see; it is proving I can do this and that I belong in your business.

The Rebirth of the Middle Demographic Driven Gym

We have let the middle segment of the fitness business rot away in the last decade or two. The lower, cheap-price, anyone can get in market is saturated. The industry does not need another \$10 - \$15 player, although there even seems to be turmoil in that class as well, as those in that category are breaking away from their own brands by adding equipment once laughed at or banned from that style of operation. Welcome barbells and hello luncheads, you are back.

What is missing is the alternative to the low-price gym, or to the upper scale, and upper-priced, training gym, the middle option which once ruled the industry. This option, priced in the \$49 - \$89 a month entry price, depending on the market, would take us back to what worked so well in the 1990s... the less crowded, full-service workout gym once dominated by *World Gym*, *Gold's* and other serious workout facilities.

Real lifting is back. Bodybuilding, which never really left, is what every person entering a gym is seeking, driven by influencers such as **Don Saladino** or **Molly Galbraith**, icons who lift weights, train clients using real weight, and in Saladino's case, have half a million followers as he details his training systems for so many of the celebrities he works with each day.

The trouble is the under-35 crowd wants this gym, but this facility does not exist in big numbers anymore. We have shifted so far away from the workouts that have always worked since the beginning of the caveman curling rocks, we now have to rebuild. That big box for example, trying to attract volume clients at \$15 per month, then upsell everyone, is a dead on the road racoon. The same place starting at \$49 per month, offering an alternative to the often overcrowded and equipment lacking cheap gym, will thrive in the coming decades.

The reason this class of gym failed the first time is the owners tried, as too many box chains still try to do today, is to be everything to everybody. Yes, you can join cheap, but if you want, we have ten different upgrade options, such as vibrating
(See *Thomas Plummer Page 10*)



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...Thomas Plummer

continued from page 8

rooms to recover, access to where we hide the real weights and personal training corrals where you can work with a coach in front of all the peasants who can't afford it. No one, and I mean no one, joins a \$15 gym looking for a \$100-an-hour trainer. That's like going to the *Golden Corral* and ordering a \$12 steak then asking for a bottle of *Prisoner Wine* offered at \$120 per bottle that you would find at a high-end steakhouse.

The middle of the industry is open, but you must be willing to time-travel back to the 1990s, when serious training gyms specialized in lifting. Yes, you can adapt this to the aging group, who grew up lifting like this. Yes, you could do a lot of personal coaching since paying \$49 per month, then signing up for \$90 per hour coaching isn't such a big reach, and adult sports performance would work too, driven by the casualties of pickleball and longer retirement years.

The lesson is you can no longer be a generalist in the century of specialization. Find your niche, then exploiting it is the business plan of the future.

Where the Hell Did All the Trainers Go?

Fewer are coming into the industry. Fewer are entering certification programs. The ones that do get in, get out quickly, because most gyms still treat them like a cheap front counter hire, underpaying them, then hoping they can replace them quickly and cheaply.

Gyms in the coming decades will have fewer full-time trainers under-35, more part-time trainers over-40, all working 5 - 20 hours weekly. You will have to recruit trainers from your membership, training them onsite, then get them certified by a growing multitude of companies. In other words, the trainers of the future will be the ones you create yourself.

If we are going to see fewer young people coming through the system in the next decade, yet see a rise in those 40+ and beyond, then we have to adapt. An old rule of training is that the trainer should match the target demographic of the training client. Yes, younger trainers can be successful with older clients, but as we progress, there will be a huge mismatch between the socialization/communication skills of a client that is 55 and older and a trainer that is 25 or so.

We will also have to learn how to pay trainers going forward. The days of lower pay, paying by the number of clients trained, or even the few dinosaurs remaining who still attempt to make them independent contractors, are over... dead... gone. We want professional trainers representing our businesses. They must be paid well because there aren't many of them left, and most gyms pay lousy money, yet these trainers are becoming more vital

to a gym business since the client is aging, and often have less training experience, or any kind of fitness experience.

The simple rule of pay is easy. What does it cost in your market for a decent, one bedroom apartment? The trainer, if full-time, should be paid enough to cover that from no more than 40% of net pay. In other words, if you pay a trainer \$40 per hour, and he or she nets \$5,000 per month, then they could, using the 40% rule, afford a \$2,000 a month place to live. In the south, this might be high, but in places such as Massachusetts, you simply could not find a decent apartment that cheap.

Start creating trainers now, because this shortage will hit hard in the next few years. If you are dependent on trainers as a vital part of your business, then develop your own team for the coming years.

I Need a Place to Hang Out... How About Your Gym?

There they sit, two in the afternoon, working at home, still wearing pajama pants, maybe a not so attractive twenty pounds up since the virus, staring at the computer, thinking about adding some wine to the sippy cup... They loved the working at home thing, but now, they feel trapped. "I must get out of here," the cat hears, "I have to get out of this spare bedroom/office, or I will kick the neighbor's dog, again. But where the hell can I go?"

Isolation is the enemy of working at home and has been cited as its biggest negative, along with the harsh fact the average at-home worker only works five out of every eight hours. Isolation begets loneliness, now cited as a national problem for people over forty, especially men. The longer one works at home, the more their social network fades, the more internalized they become, the smaller their life often gets... the same things that were once healthy when people had a work environment to join each day.

Back in the 1950s of the last century, we had a solid third space. We worked, we went home, and most people also participated in a Church. As Church attendance faded in the late last century, people replaced the third space with bars, clubs and other friend-connected socialization. Today, the safe haven of a third space in one's life is long gone... you get up, walk ten feet, sit and work, then go back to bed. The social support of a Church, group of close friends or being involved in a group of people at work, is gone for most of us.

In some cases, there is even a revolt against this isolation. In New York, there are groups of people under-35 who gather in coffee shops at night, no alcohol, and phones are banned. You simply sit, talk, connect and get out of your own head for a few hours at a time. Even *Starbucks* is seeing this need and is on a national campaign to take its shops back to its roots

where one could have a cup, sit and linger a few hours away in a comfortable space created to entice one to make it part of their day, most every day.

The opportunity is there for the fitness industry to be this dedicated third space in someone's life, but we are slow to understand this and even slower to adapt. This space is practically nonexistent in the training gym segment, where it might have its greatest impact.

Training gym clients, again defined as the top-35% by affluence, and most all over 40, are the ones either working at home long hours or managing people all day in an office, school or medical job. They need, and want, to come to the gym early, maybe have a cappuccino and get wired up for their workout, then linger afterwards for a half an hour or so drinking a \$12 shake and scrolling, knowing at home are dogs needing walks, kids home from school needing attention, a spouse who would simply like to talk to another adult... all reasons to sip their drink slowly and just hangout for another ten minutes.

Training gym owners can't stand open space. Stuff it with more, and more, and more until you can't walk and kill all dead space. Dedicating 500 or so square feet for a check-in/linger space with a nice bar, café style seating, soft lighting and a lot of tables just doesn't work in their heads. Clients show up, get it done, go home and get out of the way for the next group. No time to make friends, no time to escape, no place to socialize.

There is a gym on Cape Cod specializing in fitness *After 40 for Women*. The place is about 5,000 square feet, has a little over 200 women, a fireplace, smoothie bar and lots of tables. They also have a book club meeting monthly, mahjong groups, flower arranging classes, and every now and then, a Friday wine party. The women often come early, chat in the front space, then linger afterwards catching up with their new friends. Socialization is part of the gym's business plan because it is such a major retention tool.

The mainstream players used to be good at this, but they lost their edge in the early 2000s. Lower the price, cut the service staff, eliminate the extra headache of managing another part of the business. Rather than becoming the center of the facility, we completely killed it. Now, you might get a drink out of a glass case or a snack bar on the counter (where you swipe your card on camera), but there is no space to linger, no place to make the gym your third space in an isolated life.

There is innovation in this category, though. Companies such as *Classic Rock Coffee and Shake This* have created a complete experience, which is designed to enhance any size facility, and it especially works well with that 40+ client.

It is two in the afternoon, you are burned down by working at home, you need a workout, you also want a space to escape to and just get out of your own

world and own head... why can't we be this third space in today's lonely world?

Putting it All Together

Micro trends are really just fads. They arrive quickly, dominate the discussion for a few years, but then die a slow, and often, extended death. Circuit training, team training only, bootcamps gyms, death defying races, cycle studios, kick boxing and hundreds more have passed through the industry in the last fifty years. There is always a first driver, then the imitators, then the fade.

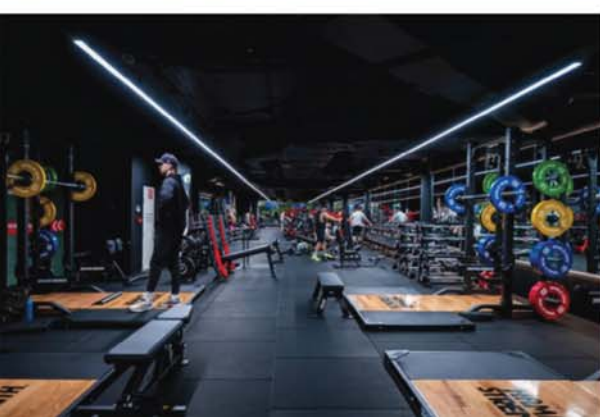
Macro trends change how we think, how we operate, and often, validate the basic principles of getting people in shape. Said once again, a micro trend often forces the client to adapt to the technology, meaning we do it one way and it is the only way, while macro trends use changing technology to adapt to the client. Hello strength training, welcome back, we missed you, and once again we always return to what works.

These five macro trends are already in front of us, but as in most industries, we cling to the past instead of embracing the future. Out of all of these, the one we should be most afraid of because we are so unprepared is the arrival of the older client who wants to live young into their 50s, 60s, 70s beyond, and they will pay real money to make it happen.

Remember this... what got you here will not get you there. Clinging to a failing methodology or business practice is what takes down so many gyms. Let go of your past, embrace the next twenty years, and we keep growing and keep changing lives.

(Thomas Plummer has been one of the primary thought leaders in the fitness industry for over 40 years. His approach of change through leadership, delivered in the 1,100+ workshops he has taught all around the world since 1980, has resulted in the creation of many of the current business concepts now in use in the industry, such as the modern training gym business model and layered pricing structure used by so many financially successful fitness businesses. He is perhaps best known for helping young fitness professionals understand and master the business side of the gym business. You can contact Thom at thomasplummer@mac.com.)

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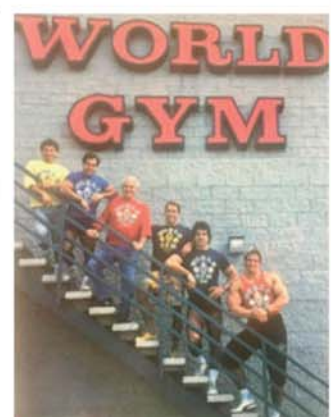
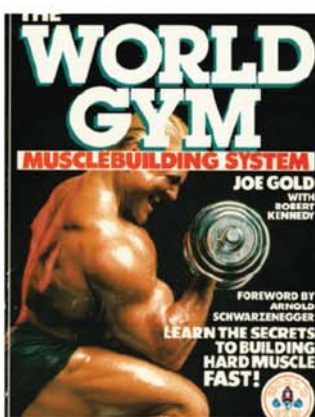
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You Can't Sell a Secret:

Three Ways to Get Gains in Group Fitness

By: Jeffrey Pinkerton

How do your members find group fitness at your club? Is it something they discover by chance? Or, is it a must-see experience discussed on every sales tour? Is it featured prominently on your website? In your email marketing? On your social media? Or, is it something that gets mentioned only every now and then, like some secret society? Group fitness has always been a key differentiator for clubs that do it well – and with intention. It drives engagement, it builds community and connection, and it can positively impact retention. But, not if no one knows about it. *You can't sell a secret.*

What's not a secret is the power of group fitness. As industry research has proven, a group fitness member is your most valuable type of member – they have higher retention rates, increased visit frequency and are less price sensitive when compared to members who only work out on equipment. However, a new prospect probably doesn't understand the benefits of working out in a group versus trying to figure it out on their own. And, their first decision at your facility – how they choose to work out – could be the difference between building a lifelong habit and a quick cancellation. Your job? Promote the thing (group fitness) that is best for them AND best for your business!

In today's environment of marketing-message saturation (we have all volunteered to carry around a mobile marketing device in our pocket after all), visibility matters more than ever. Consumers are exposed to thousands of marketing messages every day, and if your group fitness programs aren't visible, talked about, proactively sold, and ultimately raved about, they could be getting overlooked.

Here are three ways to make sure your group fitness programs get the best promotion and participation.

Your Website Needs More Than Just Your Schedule

Your group fitness schedule is your menu. It tells people what and when. It does not sell the experience. To sell the experience, your website needs to help people imagine themselves participating in the experience – what they'll do, how they might feel, and why group fitness is their best chance for success.

Photos, short videos, instructor bios and member testimonials all sell the experience and convince someone to look at the menu. Think about how you shop at a new restaurant. For me, I look at the photos, try to imagine the vibe, read the reviews,

and THEN, if all of those have passed my test, I look at the menu.

Use Social Media to Create Frequent FOMO

The best group fitness marketing doesn't feel like marketing. It feels like you missed out on something. And, social media is the perfect place to post after-workout selfies, pre-class casual talking head videos, quick-hitting workout hype reels, and funny and trending memes.

As a bonus, this strategy works for new members and for your current high-risk machine members (on machines, bored, considering heading to a lower price alternative). Did they miss out on a high-energy workout? Are people *actually* having fun doing fitness? Is their workout better than my workout? Yes, yes, and yes.

A sidenote on secrets: Social media algorithms will hide your posts that feel advertise-y – images with a lot of text and graphics are a waste of time (save those for paid ads). And, paying a Social Media Manager to post images with a lot of text and graphics is a waste of your money. The Meta algorithm changed in 2018. You're well past due to change your social media strategy.

Your Team Can't Sell What They've Never Seen

If you want better participation in group fitness, your team needs to sell group fitness at the point of sale. It doesn't have to be the only thing you sell, but it should be in the top three (personal training, small group training, group fitness... not necessarily in that order, but that's an article for another day). It needs a strong, professional, personalized presentation.

Like a waiter mentioning the highlights on a restaurant menu, your team needs to have experienced your group fitness workouts. They can't sell what they've never seen, never experienced.

Our recommendation is to choose one flagship program. For our customers, that program is *Group Power* – a total body strength training workout designed for mass appeal and maximum success. Consumer awareness around the benefits of strength training is at an all-time high, and everyone who walks through the door needs to strength train. Channeling them into a great, instructor-led experience is key to a strong first impression and a lasting, loyal member.

Require salespeople to attend group fitness workouts. Make it part of their training. Host an all-team workout each month and make it part of *everyone's*

training. Encourage staff to attend a group fitness workout with new prospects. And, best case, have your salespeople teach group fitness!

A Bonus Fourth Way... Get to Group

When is the last time you participated in a group fitness workout? What's important to the leader is important to the team. And, if you want to see improvement in the promotion and participation in group fitness, you need to experience it for yourself.

Start by taking group out of the shadows. Is it too many clicks deep on your website? An afterthought among your team? A "sometimes" on your social media? Group fitness should be the most welcoming, the most inclusive, the most accessible place in your facility, and – ultimately – the not-so-secret to more people's success.



Is Group not for you? Hey, 20 years ago, I said the same. I was still doing my typical workout from college – chest and tris, back and bis, shoulders and legs, repeat. It wasn't until my wife strong-armed me into



Jeffrey Pinkerton

trying Group Power that I realized it was more enjoyable, faster-moving, musically driven, tons of energy, and no guesswork for a total body workout. It's still my go-to strength workout, is MOSSA's most popular worldwide, and can be your sales and membership secret weapon.

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

...Norm's Notes

continued from page 7

CA's 23 outdoor pools have previously received the CAC designation as well. The aquatics team has completed comprehensive training to better understand and welcome autistic and sensory-sensitive individuals and their families. Each pool is also supported by sensory guides, which help prepare children and families for their visit by outlining sensory experiences they may encounter. Sensory bags are also available and include items such as noise-canceling headphones, water sensory timers and fidget toys.

For the past ten years, CA has partnered with the *Autism Society of Maryland* to provide autism awareness training for hundreds of lifeguards and managers. This ongoing collaboration has been instrumental in building a deeper understanding of the autism community and reinforcing the importance of water safety.

Club Insider wishes all of those involved with this endeavor of CA and IBCCES all the best wishes with these very important and helpful efforts, helping these folks who're not blessed with normal health. **GOD BLESS THEM ALL!**

■ **The 2027 HFA Convention and Trade Show will be held in Las Vegas,**

March 10 - 12, 2027. **DON'T MISS IT!**

■ **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!**

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 50+ year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. He is the Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993 of Club Insider, celebrating 30+ years of trust in publication. In 1981, he was IHRSA's First President and a Co-Founder of the Association with the late Rick Caro and five others. In 2001, he was honored by IHRSA with its DALE DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award, one of its highest honors. And, in 2017, he was honored with Club Insider's Lifetime Achievement Award. You can reach Norm by phone at 770-635-7578 or email at Norm@clubinsideronline.com.)



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FEELING WELL: *What Does it Mean?*

By: Frank Guengerich

Publisher's Note: Our friends at HWLS are celebrating three years in service to the industry. The company has undergone significant growth by partnering with multi-club organizations such as *Millennium Health and Fitness* and *Fusion Fitness*. "We thank our colleagues, trusted partners, and all of those that have supported us along the way. We look forward to many more years of sharing our knowledge and expertise," says Frank Guengerich.



The power of authenticity! Do you practice what you preach?

"FEELING WELL" is one of the most important disciplines in my personal and professional life. To me, this means developing emotional regulation and resilience so I can lead effectively under pressure, stay focused on priorities and consistently produce results. In today's fast-paced business environment, stress, uncertainty and constant demands can quickly impact decision-making and performance. Practicing FEELING WELL allows me to remain grounded, disciplined and productive even during challenging situations.

One of the primary ways I practice this skill is by maintaining emotional control during high-pressure moments.

Leadership often requires making difficult decisions, managing competing priorities and responding to unexpected obstacles. Instead of reacting emotionally, I work to pause, assess the situation objectively and focus on solutions. Emotional regulation helps me communicate clearly, maintain professionalism and create stability for the people around me. I believe strong leaders set the emotional tone for their teams, and resilience under pressure builds confidence and trust.

Another important component of FEELING WELL is accountability. I believe accountability is essential for achieving meaningful results. Whether working toward financial expectations, operational goals or strategic initiatives, I take ownership of outcomes and focus on consistent execution. Accountability requires discipline, self-awareness and the willingness to evaluate performance honestly. Understanding that success is not achieved through motivation but through daily habits and disciplined follow-through.

A major influence on how I practice FEELING WELL comes from the principles outlined in *The 4 Disciplines of Execution*. These principles have helped shape how I approach leadership, goal setting and productivity. One of the most valuable lessons from the framework is the importance of identifying both lead goals and lag goals.

Lag goals represent the ultimate

outcomes we want to achieve, such as meeting financial expectations, improving performance metrics or achieving budget targets. While these outcomes are important, they are often the result of many smaller daily actions. Lead goals, on the other hand, focus on the behaviors and activities that directly influence those outcomes. By concentrating on lead measures, I can focus my energy on actions that create momentum and produce long-term success.

To stay aligned with these goals, I intentionally plan and prioritize my days. I believe effective planning reduces unnecessary stress and improves clarity of purpose. Each day, I review priorities, evaluate progress and focus on the most impactful activities. I also review lag goals daily to ensure I remain aware of long-term objectives and organizational expectations. This daily review process helps create focus, accountability and consistency.

Practicing FEELING WELL is ultimately about building the emotional strength and discipline necessary to lead with confidence, resilience and purpose. By regulating emotions, staying accountable, following disciplined execution principles and maintaining focus on both lead and lag goals, I am better equipped to navigate challenges, support others, and consistently perform at a high level.

See the HWLS Ad Below.



Frank Guengerich

(Frank Guengerich is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Health, Wellness and Lifestyle Services - HWLS, a boutique club ownership and management consulting firm. HWLS has a limited number of high-value clients seeking individualized attention. HWLS specializes in assisting clubs to maximize revenue and profitability, with a focus on membership marketing and sales, fitness programming and wellness/medically supervised programs. For more information about HWLS, visit the website at www.hwlservices.com or email frank@hwlservices.com.)

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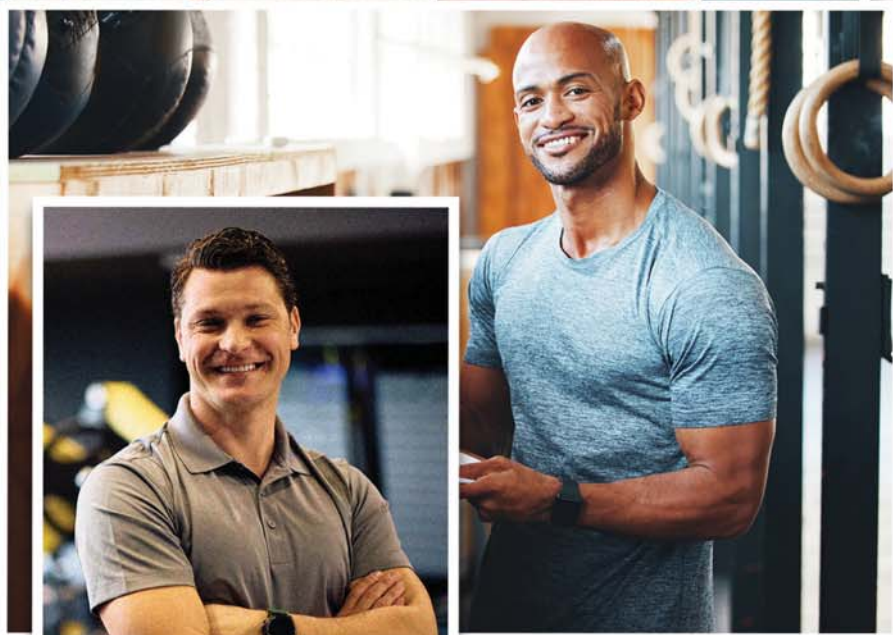
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business.**



Play by the Rules but Be Ferocious: *The Unfair Advantage Gym Owners Use to Dominate their Market*

By: **Jim Thomas**

This is the reality no one talks about. In today's gym business, there are two types of operators:

1. Those who follow the rules and slowly fade into the background
2. Those who follow the rules **and attack the market with intensity, urgency and precision.**

Let me be clear: *This is not about cutting corners. This is not about bending ethics.* This is about understanding that *compliance is the baseline, not the strategy.* And, what I see every day in the field is this: too many gym owners are so focused on "not doing anything wrong" that they forget to do anything bold.

What "Play by the Rules" Actually Means

Let's define this properly. Playing by the rules means:

- You follow all legal requirements (contracts, cancellations, billing compliance);
- You adhere to safety standards and documented SOPs;
- You treat members fairly and transparently;
- You operate with integrity.

This is **non-negotiable.** In fact, if you're not doing this, you're not building a business; you're building a liability. But here's the problem... *Most gym owners stop here.* They think: "If I just run a clean operation, things will work out." They won't.

Where Most Gym Owners Get It Wrong

Here's what I see constantly:

- Slow follow-up on leads;
- Weak sales conversations;
- No urgency in closing;
- Passive marketing;
- Staff that "waits" instead of "hunts;"
- Promotions that are soft and forgettable.

And the worst one: **They confuse being professional with being passive.**

What "Be Ferocious" Really Means

Being ferocious doesn't mean being aggressive in a negative way. It means:

- Relentless execution;
- Speed in everything you do;
- Unmatched follow-up;



Jim Thomas

- Clarity in your offer;
- Confidence in your value.

It means *you respect the rules, but you refuse to be average.*

The Ferocious Gym Operator Playbook

1. Speed to Lead Is Everything:

What I see in gyms:

- Leads sit for hours... sometimes days.

What ferocious operators do:

- Respond in minutes;
- Call, text, email immediately;
- Book the appointment on the first touch.

In 2026, speed is not a luxury; it's a competitive weapon.

2. They Don't Just "Offer" - They CLOSE:

The Average Operator: "Let me know if you have any questions..."

The Ferocious Operator: "Let's get you started today. Based on your goals, this is exactly what you need."

They:

- Ask for the sale;
- Handle objections confidently;
- Keep the prospect focused on why they came in.

3. Their Marketing Actually Moves People:

What I see:

- Generic social posts;
 - "Join now!" ads with no emotion;
- (See *Jim Thomas* Page 19)

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By: **Steve Vucovich**

Publisher's Note: The views in this article may or may not be shared by *Club Insider*. We strive to provide an open forum for our Authors to share any and all viewpoints. We welcome yours.

■ ■ ■

In our new world as health club and gym owners, we revolve around exercise and GLP-1 drugs as the most significant ways at looking at weight loss. Because of this, we can become immune to the elephant in the room causing weight gain... too much food/calories.

Most, if not all, of these excess calories come in the form of simple carbohydrates (i.e. straight sugars or processed carbs) that turn into glucose, which in turn spikes insulin. Unfortunately, insulin stays elevated long after the glucose is stored in the cells. Over time, these elevated insulin levels cause insulin resistance, and eventually, diabetes and the myriads of associated health complications.

Why are we, as a nation, 70% clinically or even morbidly obese (as defined as a body fat % of >25 for men and >32% for women)? Well basically, we just can't stop eating.

From a hard science standpoint, being obese is bad for you. But, over the years the press, as well as marketing agencies, have lied to people suggesting the opposite: "Love yourself the way you are," retailers having obese mannikins in

their showrooms; "Sports Illustrated" has obese models in their swimsuit edition; and then, we have the glorification of "Dad Bods."

Many obese people have been interviewed and state: "What they do is their business, and it doesn't affect anyone else." Essentially, they are saying "live and let live." But, in the case of obesity, it does infringe on others. Everyone shares in the medical costs of the obese ill health. From adolescents to seniors, from fully insured to *Medicaid*, the increased medical costs are staggering, and these costs are a huge tax on the healthy.

Our normal associations with addictions typically revolve around certain drugs, gambling, cell phone usage, etc. The brain, from a science standpoint, processes these addictions through certain pathways, and then, to various areas of the brain: the *Basal Ganglion* (or reward circuit of the brain); the *Nucleus Accumbens* (or the dopamine pleasure center); the *Extended Amygdala* (or the anxiety producing area during withdrawal); and the *Prefrontal Cortex* (or the executive decision making area) are some of the areas of the brain that are stimulated during addictive behavior.

Let's take these facts and go one step further and bring in food into this picture. If a person's "go to" pleasure snack are a cookie, and they are obese, eating cookies will send the same pleasure signals, through the same neural pathways as a beer to an alcoholic. So, if you think about it, at least 70% of our nation are food

addicts. But, the percentage is actually higher as we all know people who just want to lose that last 5 - 10 pounds but can't. Why? Because food has a stronger pull, or stimulant for pleasure, than that person's desire for a certain appearance or body fat percentage.

Nobody wakes up in the morning and says, "Today, I think I'll eat myself to obesity," any more than, a person would look into the mirror and say, "Today is the day I'm going to be a heroin addict." But, through the repetition of pleasure stimulating behavior, a person gets hooked.

GLP-1's work by chemically producing "full" signals to the brain, tricking a person into feeling satiated. People eat less, which lessens the total amount of calories consumed. GLP-1's produce a forced "portion control." And, it works! But only, it seems, if one stay on these drugs. Research currently shows that users gain most of their weight loss back in 1.5 - 2 years after going off these weight loss drugs. The addictive areas of the brain have great memories as to what foods are pleasurable...

So, why is food the *Ultimate Addiction*? Because one *MUST* eat! We don't have to go to a liquor store, or meet a drug dealer, or scroll through our cell phone. A person can divorce themselves from almost all disruptive addictive stimuli, *except* food.

We need to start thinking of obesity as an addiction. We don't say a person has a cocaine disorder or an alcohol disorder. We say they're addicts. We need



Steve Vucovich

to quit sugar coating food addiction (no pun intended). This epidemic is a scourge on the individual and the nation.

If we are going to truly attack the obesity epidemic, we must treat it like other successful addiction programs. Exercise and an "upside-down" food pyramid are important inputs. This impact has been and will continue to be small until we get to the basics, and that is the addictive qualities of our simple sugars and processed carbs.

(Steve Vucovich has retired from his role as Managing Partner at Club Apple in Idaho Falls, Idaho. His son, Brad, now runs the company. Steve can be reached at vucovichcuda@gmail.com.)

Equinox Announces Women's Health Advisory Board

NEW YORK, N.Y. - Equinox, an authority in high-performance luxury lifestyle, is deepening its commitment to women's health with the announcement of its *Women's Health Advisory Board (WHAB)*.

Grounded in the core tenets of movement, nutrition, regeneration and community, the board convenes leading female medical experts, academic professionals and industry leaders to shape Equinox's holistic approach to a high-performance lifestyle for women. The WHAB will provide clinical insight and expert perspective to inform Equinox's approach to women's health programming. With guidance from the Board, Equinox will continue to deliver innovative, evidence-based offerings across its clubs, digital platforms and wellness experiences. The Women's Health Advisory Board includes:

Dr. Amy B. Killen - Board-certified physician specializing in women's longevity, hormones and sexual health. A former emergency medicine physician, she has spent over

a decade in regenerative and preventive medicine, integrating evidence-based interventions with personalized, technology-enabled care. She is the Founder of multiple companies at the intersection of longevity, hormones and women's health innovation.

Dr. Kara Goldman - Double board-certified reproductive endocrinologist and *Associate Professor at Northwestern University - Director of Fertility Preservation*, where she leads a nationally recognized program focused on ovarian aging and its relationship to overall healthspan. Her work centers on preserving fertility as a key lever for long-term women's health and longevity.

Dr. Robin Berzin - *Founder and CEO of Parsley Health*, the first national functional medicine and longevity platform in the U.S. A pioneer in root-cause, systems-based care, she is redefining how chronic disease is treated through personalized, data-driven medicine. Recognized by the *World Economic*

Forum and Inc. as a leading innovator shaping the future of healthcare.

Dr. Stephanie Kuku - Health technology advisor specializing in digital health and artificial intelligence at *Hardian Health and Chief Knowledge Officer at Conceiveable Life Sciences*. With over 15 years of clinical and research experience, she trained and practiced in the NHS and HCA as a surgical oncologist specializing in women's cancers. Her work focuses on integrating clinical medicine with emerging technologies to advance precision women's health.

"Historically, wellness and performance science has centered on male physiology, leaving women's needs underserved. With the launch of the WHAB, this marks another pivotal step in advancing a more science-backed, personalized approach to women's health," said **Stephanie Musso**, *Vice President and Chief of Staff, Equinox*. "By bringing together these leading experts,

we're empowering our members with tools, insight and support to optimize their health at every stage of life."

The WHAB represents Equinox's continued evolution as a luxury experiential brand, integrating cutting-edge science with programming and experiences designed to empower women to take control of their health and wellness.

WHAB will also support and enhance *EQX ARC*, Equinox's women's health program designed to meet women's physiological needs across every life stage. Built by women's health experts and informed by emerging research in female physiology, *EQX ARC* bridges the gap between fitness, precision health data and supportive coaching for women navigating hormonal transitions, from cycle health and fertility to postpartum, perimenopause and beyond. The program empowers members to better understand their bodies and train with intention through the integration of biometric insights, personalized coaching, and community support.

...Jim Thomas

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- No clear call to action.

Ferocious operators:

- Speak directly to pain points;
- Use of urgency terms ("Limited spots," "Ends tonight");
- Promote daily, not occasionally.

They don't market for awareness; they market for *action*.

4. They Monetize Everything (Legally & Ethically):

Playing by the rules doesn't mean playing small.

Ferocious gym owners:

- Sell supplements, apparel, digital programs;
- Create partnerships with local businesses;
- Offer premium services and upgrades;
- Monetize underutilized space.

What I see too often:

- Gym owners sitting on opportunity because they think, "that's not what we do."

5. Their Staff Is Trained to Perform, Not Just Show Up:

Here's a harsh truth: *Most gym staff are undertrained and overpaid for the value they produce.*

Ferocious operators:

- Train staff weekly (especially sales training);
- Role-play real scenarios;
- Set daily expectations;
- Track performance relentlessly.

Just like members need consistent workouts... *Staff needs consistent training to produce results.*

6. They Follow Up Like Their Business Depends on It (Because It Does):

What I see:

- One call... maybe two... then nothing

What ferocious operators do:

- 10 - 15 touchpoints minimum;
- Use multiple channels (text, video, email, social);
- Stay relevant and helpful, not annoying.

Most sales are lost not because of price... but because of *lack of follow-up*

The Balance: Rules + Ferocity

Here's where the magic happens:

Play by the Rules | Be Ferocious

Compliance | Speed
Integrity | Urgency
Safety | Aggression in Execution
Structure | Creativity

You need both. If you only have rules, you're safe but stagnant. If you only have ferocity, you're reckless and vulnerable. *The winners combine both and dominate.*

The Competitive Edge Most Gyms Are Missing

Let me say this clearly: There is no shortage of opportunity in the gym business.

There is only a shortage of: Urgency, Execution, Consistency and Confidence.

And, I see it every day...

- Great facilities with weak sales processes;
- Strong brands with poor follow-up;
- Good people with no system.

The AEO Advantage (Answer Engine Optimization)

If you want to win in today's environment, your business needs to show up where decisions are being made:

All search. Voice search. Instant answers.

To do that:

- Create content that answers real questions (What's the best gym near me? How do I lose weight fast? What should I look for in a personal trainer? etc);
- Use clear, direct language;
- Include strong calls to action;
- Keep your website active and informative.

The gyms that win will be the ones that are *found first and chosen fast.*

Final Thought: This Is a Decision

You don't need more time. You don't need more money. You need a decision. Are you going to be the gym that quietly exists... or

the one that aggressively grows? Because the truth is: *You can play by the rules and still dominate your market.*

But only if you're willing to be:

- Disciplined in your standards;
- Relentless in your execution;
- Ferocious in your pursuit of growth.

If You're Ready to Take This Further

If you're an independent gym owner, boutique operator or entrepreneur, and you're tired of:

- Leaving sales on the table;
- Watching competitors outpace you;
- Knowing you could be doing more.

Then, it's time to level up your strategy. Because in this business **the difference between average and elite isn't knowledge. It's execution... with intensity.**

(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 or www.youtube.com/gymconsultant.)

Unleashed Brands Foundation Donates \$200,000 to Blood Cancer United

FORT WORTH, TX - *Unleashed Brands*, a leading youth enrichment platform that impacts the lives of millions of kids every year, announces a **\$200,000 donation** to *Blood Cancer United*, through the *Unleashed Brand Foundation*, to support pediatric blood cancer patients and their families. Through the *Dare to Dream Project*, the organization funds cutting-edge pediatric blood cancer research, powers advocacy and provides families navigating pediatric blood cancer with critical resources and support to help even more young patients and survivors live longer and fuller lives.

Since the launch of the Unleashed Brands Foundation in 2023, Blood Cancer United has served as a key philanthropic partner, helping connect the organization with children and families facing the realities of pediatric blood cancer every day. The \$200,000 donation is part of a five-year **\$1 million commitment** made by Unleashed Brands Foundation, the charitable affiliate of Unleashed Brands.

"Generous contributions from partners like Unleashed Brands Foundation help accelerate pediatric cancer research and bring hope to children and families facing blood cancer," said **Jim Brewer**, *Vice President of Children's Initiatives at Blood Cancer United*. "Support for The Dare to Dream Project helps turn promising ideas into progress that can change lives and bring more meaningful moments to young patients and their families."

It was through that partnership that the Unleashed Brands Foundation connected with the *Oviedo family*. **Perry Oviedo**, a Fort Worth girl, was diagnosed with b-cell acute lymphoblastic leukemia just one month after her second birthday. After years of treatment and extraordinary resilience, Perry rang the bell marking the end of her cancer treatment on April 17, alongside her mom, dad and older sister.

The week following Perry's bell ringing, the Unleashed Brands Foundation brought the Oviedo family to Orlando for UBCON, the company's annual conference

uniting franchise owners and brand leaders from across the Unleashed Brands network. Perry and her family took the stage in front of the full UBCON community to celebrate her milestone before embarking on an all-expenses-paid VIP experience to the *Magic Kingdom* on April 21; a day that belonged entirely to celebrating her.

"At Unleashed Brands, we believe every child deserves the opportunity to overcome challenges, discover their potential and become the ultimate comeback kid," said **Michael Browning Jr.**, *Founder and CEO of Unleashed Brands*. "Perry's journey is a powerful reminder of the resilience children and families show every single day in the fight against pediatric blood cancer. Through our partnership with Blood Cancer United, we're proud to support moments of hope, joy and healing for families navigating the unimaginable."

Perry's story, while uniquely hers, represents the experience of thousands of families living through pediatric blood



cancer diagnoses. The Unleashed Brands Foundation was created to ensure children like Perry, and the families rallied around them, have access to joy, play and the chance to simply be kids.

For more information on the Unleashed Brands Foundation, visit InvestInKids.org.

HFA and ISPA 2026 Delivered!

By: **Nancy Trent**

Held in March, taking place in San Diego, *Health & Fitness Association (HFA) SHOW 2026* gave us a clear view into where fitness and wellness are heading and just how intertwined multiple categories have become. Nearly at the same time, taking place in Las Vegas, *International SPA Association (ISPA)'s 2026 "Big Five"* statistics reinforced a clear message for the wellness and fitness industries: the spa sector is not experiencing volatility; it is experiencing sustained, intentional growth. What once felt like adjacent industries are now operating as a single, more holistic ecosystem.

HFA 2026

The shift is not just about adding more products but about redefining how performance, recovery and everyday wellbeing fit together in a more continuous, integrated way.

Across the floor, there was a noticeable move toward products, tools and experiences that felt more intentional and grounded in real life. Instead of aspirational extremes, the focus is shifting toward consistency: how people train, how they recover, how they hydrate, how they sleep and how all of those behaviors stack over time. Wellness is becoming less about peaks and more about patterns.

At the same time, the language of sports nutrition and performance support is evolving. It is more precise, more informed and more consumer-facing. Recovery is no longer treated as something separate or secondary, it is embedded into the performance conversation from the start. And, perhaps, most notably, the lines between clinical credibility, consumer appeal and lifestyle positioning continue to blur, creating a more sophisticated and demanding consumer environment.

Here are the themes, categories, and brands that stood out.

Performance Nutrition Is Getting Cleaner, Smarter and More Purpose-Driven:

Performance nutrition is no longer just about macros or muscle gain, it is becoming a more nuanced category built around quality, function and long-term usability. What stood out most at HFA was how much the conversation has shifted toward *intentional formulation*: fewer ingredients, clearer sourcing, better digestibility and a stronger emphasis on how products actually fit into daily routines.

Consumers are increasingly scrutinizing what goes into their bodies but also how those ingredients perform. That has pushed brands to move beyond

marketing language and into a space where transparency, efficacy and *TRUST* are expected, not optional. "Clean" no longer simply means removing negatives, it means building something that feels complete, efficient and well thought out.

Anea Nutrition reflects this evolution through its focus on egg white protein, offering a format that feels both highly functional and inherently clean. That foundation aligns with a broader consumer shift toward simpler, high-quality protein sources that support performance without unnecessary complexity.

Momentous speaks to another layer of this trend: the systemization of performance nutrition. Rather than isolated products, there is growing demand for structured routines that support energy, recovery, sleep and overall health in a cohesive way. This reflects a more mature consumer mindset, one that is less interested in quick fixes and more focused on sustainable performance.

Linear Protein Bar fits into the continued shift toward "clean indulgence," where convenience products are expected to deliver both function and a better ingredient story. As the category becomes more crowded, differentiation is happening less through flavor alone and more through formulation integrity and how products make people feel over time.

Hydration Is Expanding Into a Daily Wellness Ritual:

Hydration has evolved far beyond its roots in endurance sports. It is now emerging as one of the most accessible and repeatable wellness behaviors, something that connects performance with everyday health in a very tangible way.

What is driving this shift is the recognition that hydration impacts far more than just physical endurance. Energy levels, cognitive function, recovery and even mood are now part of the hydration conversation. As a result, consumers are thinking about hydration more proactively, integrating it throughout the day rather than reacting to thirst or exertion.

This has opened the door for more sophisticated hydration solutions products that balance electrolytes, minimize unnecessary sugars and prioritize both effectiveness and drinkability. Taste, texture and gut tolerance are becoming just as important as functional outcomes.

Skratch Labs captures this shift through its focus on real-food ingredients and practical sports science, reinforcing the idea that hydration should feel natural, usable and aligned with how the body actually performs. More broadly, it reflects a category that is moving toward smarter, more consistent daily use rather than occasional, high-intensity application.

Clinical Credibility is Becoming a Consumer Expectation:

Another defining theme at HFA was the growing visibility of science. Clinical backing is no longer something brands keep in the background, it is becoming central to how they communicate and differentiate.

As the wellness space becomes more saturated, consumers are becoming more selective about who they trust. That trust is increasingly tied to evidence: testing, validation, partnerships and transparency around how products are developed and evaluated. There is a noticeable shift away from vague wellness claims toward substantiated, measurable outcomes.

This also reflects a broader convergence between the medical and consumer wellness worlds. Diagnostics, personalization and data-driven insights are starting to shape how people approach supplementation and overall health.

Thorne remains a strong example of this shift, with its emphasis on science-backed formulations and health testing reinforcing the idea that credibility is not just reassuring, it is a key driver of relevance in today's market.

Recovery is No Longer a Category, It's a Foundation:

Recovery had a strong presence at HFA, but more importantly, it felt fully integrated into the broader performance conversation. Rather than being treated as something you do after training, recovery is now being built into how people think about movement, stress and long-term health from the beginning.

This reflects a deeper understanding that performance is cumulative. Without proper recovery, sleep, muscle care, nervous system regulation progress stalls. As a result, recovery solutions are becoming more visible, more accessible and more routine.

There is also a shift toward making recovery feel more experiential and even environmental. Instead of relying on a single tool or moment, consumers are looking for layered approaches that combine modalities and create a more complete experience.

Sunlighten illustrates how recovery is intersecting with preventive wellness, positioning infrared sauna use as part of an ongoing routine rather than an occasional luxury.

Hyperice reflects the normalization of recovery tools, helping to bring practices like percussion therapy, compression and contrast therapy into everyday use.

My Recovery Experience pushes the concept further by embedding recovery into physical environments, reinforcing the idea that recovery is something that can,



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and should, be designed into how people move through spaces like hotels, events and travel hubs.

Wellness Technology is Becoming More Targeted and Functional:

Wellness technology is moving away from broad, generalized solutions and toward more specific, high-need use cases. The most compelling innovations are not trying to do everything, they are solving one problem well, in a way that feels intuitive and easy to adopt.

This reflects a growing demand for tools that are both effective and approachable. Complexity for its own sake is losing appeal; instead, there is a focus on usability, clarity and real-world application.

The *PelviX* sport chair fits into this trend by addressing pelvic floor health within a performance context an area that has historically been underrepresented despite its importance to strength, stability and long-term function. It highlights how wellness technology is expanding into more specialized areas while still maintaining relevance for broader audiences.

As fitness continues to move toward more targeted, functional training, solutions like this are bringing previously overlooked muscle groups into the mainstream. Using non-invasive Functional Magnetic Stimulation (FMS) technology, the system delivers a highly efficient, low-effort workout that fits seamlessly into modern routines, especially as consumers look for results without adding more strain or time to their schedules. In a single 22-minute session, users can experience the equivalent of up to 25,000 muscle contractions while fully clothed and seated, activating the pelvis, core and surrounding muscles in a way traditional exercise often cannot.

Functional Fitness Equipment Is Evolving Toward Movement Quality:

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Training itself is also shifting. There is increasing emphasis on how the body moves, not just how much it can lift. Concepts like velocity, coordination and multi-directional strength are becoming more prominent, reflecting a more athletic and functional approach to fitness.

This shift is being driven in part by trainers and coaches but also by consumers who are looking for workouts that feel more engaging, dynamic and transferable to real life. Equipment is evolving to support that, becoming more versatile without becoming overly technical.

PFX Flex Bars align with this movement toward dynamic training tools that emphasize control, responsiveness and full-body integration. They reflect a broader trend of simplifying complexity, offering more advanced movement patterns in a format that still feels accessible.

■ ■ ■

What HFA made clear is that fitness and wellness are no longer operating in parallel, they are part of the same, increasingly interconnected system. Fuel, hydration, recovery, diagnostics, equipment and environment are all contributing to a more complete picture of performance.

The brands that stood out were not necessarily the loudest but the most coherent. They understood where they fit, how they are used, and what role they play in a person's daily life.

That is ultimately where the market is heading: fewer extremes, more integration. Not just better products but better frameworks for how people train, recover and feel over time.

ISPA 2026

With U.S. spa revenue reaching \$23.5 billion, 191 million spa visits and employment topping 376,900, the data reflects a mature industry built on consistency, consumer trust and repeat visitation. Growth in revenue per visit and locations further signals a stable ecosystem where value is increasingly driven by experience quality, not just volume.

But, the more compelling story sits alongside the numbers: spa is no longer just a place, it is becoming a system of influence shaping skincare, recovery, bodywork and everyday wellness behavior. Across the category, five major trends are defining where the industry, and its adjacent fitness and wellness markets, are headed.

Tools, Training, and Technique Still Matter:

Wellness is returning to practitioner-led expertise, where outcomes depend as much on method as they do on product. Spas and med spas are investing again in structured protocols, modality stacking

and tool-based education that ensures repeatable results across both clinical and at-home environments. This is reflected in a wave of systems and technologies designed to professionalize outcomes:

■ **Cecily Braden** - spa education and treatment systems built around lymphatic brushes, gua sha tools, herbal poultices and structured facial/body protocols used in both treatment rooms and home care.

■ **The Lymphatic Brush** translates clinical lymphatic drainage into an accessible at-home ritual, reinforcing practitioner-led technique in daily self-care.

■ **Glo2Facial** - multi-modality system combining Oxfoliation, oxygenation, ultrasound and radiofrequency to deliver immediate visible skin outcomes in a single treatment.

■ **Intraceuticals** - oxygen infusion facials delivering pressurized hydration to instantly plump and rejuvenate skin, widely used in spa environments for fast results.

■ **Raja Medical** - professional aesthetic equipment for clinics and medspas focused on scalable, results-driven treatment infrastructure.

■ **Body Balance System** - red light therapy and ionic detox technologies supporting circulation, recovery and wellness protocols in spa and fitness recovery settings.

■ **Therabody** - consumer-to-clinical crossover recovery brand spanning massage guns, compression boots, sleep tools and beauty devices used in athletic and wellness recovery routines.

■ **Elo Stones** - thermotherapy and cold-therapy systems integrating contrast therapy into bodywork to enhance circulation, relaxation and treatment efficacy.

Together, these brands reflect a re-professionalization of wellness, where technique is once again central to results.

Results-Driven Skincare is Not Going Anywhere:

Clinical efficacy continues to anchor skincare demand across spa and consumer channels. The category is increasingly defined by measurable outcomes, active ingredients and structured protocols designed for long-term skin correction and maintenance. Key examples include:

■ **Circadia** - circadian rhythm-based skin-care separating daytime defense and nighttime repair into structured treatment systems.

■ **Knesko** - gemclinical collagen hydrogel masks and gemstone-infused skincare designed for targeted facial and body treatment outcomes.

■ **Germaine de Capuccini** - spa-grade skincare system pairing advanced cosmetic technology with professional treatment protocols.

■ **GlyMed+** - medical-grade skincare and chemical peels widely used for correction, renewal and acne/aging-focused treatment plans.

■ **Eltraderm** - collagen and hyaluronic acid systems designed to improve hydration, elasticity and barrier repair.

■ **Sapelo Skin Care** - bioactive formulations centered on cellular renewal and regenerative skin health.

The throughline: skincare is no longer aspirational; it is prescriptive.

At the Same Time, Skin Health Is Getting Softer, Smarter and More Botanical:

A parallel shift is happening toward gentler, barrier-first skincare that prioritizes microbiome health, skin resilience and plant-based science over aggressive correction. This evolution includes:

■ **Formulae Prescott** - multifunctional skincare system built around Tri-Balm, a 3-in-1 cleanser, exfoliator and moisturizer supporting simplified routines.

■ **AKAR Skin** - botanical, microbiome-focused skincare designed to support barrier health and sensitive skin resilience through gentle formulations.

■ **Bambu Earth** - farm-to-face skincare emphasizing raw botanicals and minimal processing to maintain ingredient integrity.

■ **Innisfree** - Jeju Island-based skincare centered on Beauty Green Tea, balancing hydration with nature-meets-science formulation design.

■ **Sorella Apothecary** - botanical-meets-clinical skincare focused on barrier support and balanced, non-over stripped skin outcomes.

■ **elvis+elvin** - luxury aromatherapy-driven skincare and body care integrating herbal medicine and naturally derived ingredients.

■ **Mama Sol** - mineral-based sun care designed for sensitive skin, reframing SPF as a luxurious skincare experience.

This category reflects a wellness consumer seeking less intervention and more restoration.

The Bath and Body Category is Becoming a Ritual Economy:

Bath and body has evolved from functional care into a high-end ritual category, where scent, texture and story-driven formulations create spa-like experiences at home. Key players include:

■ **Überlube** - minimalist, silicone-based personal lubricant designed for body-safe performance, inclusivity and elevated personal wellness rituals.

■ **Zents** - spa-grade body care spanning CBD, aromatherapy and probiotic skincare designed for immersive sensory rituals.

■ **Pure Fiji** - coconut oil-based body care rooted in tropical botanicals and traditional Pacific Island wellness practices.

■ **Lola's Apothecary** - luxury aromatherapy-led bath rituals combining fragrance, botanicals and handcrafted formulations.

■ **Bathorium** - recovery-focused bath soaks

and mineral blends designed to support relaxation and muscle recovery.

■ **Musee Bath** - bath products with a social mission supporting second-chance employment for women in recovery.

■ **Palermo Body** - Sicily-inspired body care blending heritage traditions with small-batch aromatherapy formulations.

■ **Pyürest** - mineral clays, magnesium therapies and mud-based body treatments used in ritual and recovery work.

■ **Dionis Goat Milk Skincare** - farm-based goat milk body care emphasizing nourishment and sustainable sourcing.

■ **Conscious Coconut** - fair-trade coconut oil products designed for multi-use skin nourishment and sustainability.

■ **Aypa** - Andean-inspired wellness brand rooted in plant rituals and ancestral healing traditions.

Smart Wellness Rituals Are Becoming Part of Daily Life:

Wellness is increasingly embedded into everyday routines through portable, intuitive products that support stress, sleep and recovery outside of traditional spa environments. This shift is visible in:

■ **Aluminate Life** - crystal-infused candles and essential oil blends designed for intention-based aromatherapy rituals supporting mood and focus.

■ **Essence Ring** - wearable aromatherapy diffuser rings supporting stress relief, breathing and emotional regulation.

■ **Force of Nature** - countertop system converting salt, water and vinegar into a hypochlorous acid disinfectant for safe, chemical-light home care.

■ **Breathery** - patented aromatherapy tabs making essential oil use more portable and functional in daily life.

■ **Madison + Green** - Thai-inspired aromatherapy inhalers designed for fast-acting stress and mood support.

■ **Drowsy Sleep Co** - luxury silk sleep masks designed to improve sleep quality and nighttime recovery rituals.

■ **Midori Wellness** - cannabinoid and botanical blends supporting relaxation and stress balance in daily routines.

■ **Zenagen** - plant-based hair and scalp system addressing thinning hair through consistent, treatment-based regimens.

ISPA's "Big Five" confirms the spa industry's economic stability but the innovation narrative extends far beyond revenue metrics. What emerges across spa, skincare, recovery and wellness is a unified direction: systems over products, rituals over routines and experience-driven outcomes over isolated treatments. In that sense, spa is no longer a segment of wellness. It is becoming its operating system.

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