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Norm Cates'

CLUB INSIDER

CELEBRATING 27 YEARS OF TRUST

Continuing Education *The Gamechanger of a Career*

By: Justin Cates

We spend years in general and specialized education: K-12, college, post-graduate, doctoral, etc. No matter what the level we may achieve, one thing is common between all of these levels: At the time of their achievement, they are the aggregate of past knowledge. More important is what occurs afterwards. Education is not a start to finish spectrum; it is start, then never finish. Moving from education into a career, the gamechanger that will make or break the success of that career is *continuing education*.

Within the health and fitness club industry, the number of sources that exist to

enable continuing education is incredible. This month, *Club Insider* will attempt to provide information about a chunk of those resources. We won't be able to cover them all, but via those that will be covered, you will find even more to utilize.

Continuing education in the health and fitness club industry is an ever-increasing web of options. And, as you utilize more and more of them, you will find the same people in your path over and over again. Those are the people with whom you want to connect. They thirst for knowledge and success as you do. And, together, those connections, the most important thing that can come from continuing education, are made.

If you're new to this industry, I welcome you to read on and utilize these resources. If you're a seasoned pro, read on as well, and try something new as soon as you can, even if it is not mentioned in this article. I guarantee something you've never seen or experienced before is out there. And, of course, thank you for reading *Club Insider!*

Conferences and Trade Shows

The most obvious and visible sources for continuing education are the industry's Conferences and Trade Shows. Here's some of the one's you definitely want to check out.

(See *Continuing Education* Page 10)



Justin Cates

COVID-19: The Re-Opening *Key Information From The Industry's Front Lines*

By: Justin Cates

Those who have fought say, "War is hell." Every day is a struggle. Those countless days end up in new battles. Every battle can have a decided effect on the outcome of the war. The seemingly endless cycle continues. But, one day, there is a breakthrough, and it leads to victory.

Make no mistake about it. The COVID-19 Pandemic is war. But, unlike previous wars, it is not with a people, a country or an ideology. In this case, it is against something insidious, a virus

unlike anything seen in over a century. And, in that, more so than in our lifetime, the world is together in terms of hope and determination to overcome an enemy.

At local levels, though, the tactics are different, but the goal is the same. Within the overall theater of this war, because of the nature of the enemy, life must go on. It won't go on normally, but it must go on. And, the key to that is the information needed to keep people safe.

Previously, in our May Edition, we reported on the Re-Opening plans of clubs across the country, but those were just

plans... In most cases, a plan becomes past tense on Day One, and constant adaptation is required. However, this month, we bring you something more concrete, key information from the industry's front lines!

We hope you find value from these kind contributors who want to see this industry survive and thrive. And, as our readers, you need to know that *Club Insider* will continue to report until and beyond the breakthrough to **ABSOLUTE VICTORY** is found. I welcome and encourage you to read on.

(See *The Re-Opening* Page 18)



Inside the Insider: Edition #319

- Exercise IS Medicine! - By: Mike Alpert
- IHRSA Launches Legislative Effort to Save the American Fitness Industry
- The Most Important Requirement for Re-Opening - By: Sumit Seth
- The Fitness Industry Embraces Innovative REME HALO Air Purifier to Address COVID-19
- Selling Amid Crisis - By: Casey Conrad
- IHRSA to Governors: "Gyms Aren't Responsible for Spread"
- The Use or Non-Use of Masks Within the Health Club Industry - By: Eric Durak
- And, of Course, *Norm's Notes*
- World Gym International Appoints New CEO and COO

Norm's Notes

■ **Hello Everybody!** This is your **Club Insider Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993** checking in with our **319th** monthly edition of **Club Insider**.

■ To kick this **Note** off, I want to repeat a phrase you may have heard before... **"We're damned GLAD to be here!"** First, I want to tell all of you that my prayers have been, and are, with you all and your club(s) with a sincere hope in my mind and heart that you've been healthy throughout the awful **COVID-19 Pandemic**. Now, I hope that you are able to reopen your club(s) and that your operation is successfully on what I know may well be a long and tough path to *returning to normal*. One thing I think we should all keep in mind is that our industry is certainly not the only industry in **America** that's *taken a real hard punch in the face* from this pandemic. Think of the *airline* industry. Think of the *hotel/resort* industry. Think of the *automobile* industry.

Importantly, I believe that our industry has an **"Ace in the Hole."** That ace is that our industry is loaded with people like you who are reading this... smart, creative,

determined and hard working owners and operators of clubs across the land, and it is you folks who will dig in and do whatever is necessary to rebuild your businesses and make them profitable again. **YES... I know** it has not been and **won't be easy!** But, **YES... I also know** that you owners of health and fitness clubs all across America don't just like your club(s)... you **LOVE** your club(s) and you **LOVE** the people you serve. To me, that's truly our industry's **"Ace in the Hole..."** **Your absolute LOVE for what you do and your LOVE of the people you serve in your clubs.** And, my honest belief is **THEY LOVE YOU BACK!**

And, it's with that thought that I close this missive by urging you all to reach out to your members. If it is *still necessary*, set up an outdoor meeting area and invite and meet with each and every one of them and energize them to help you bring back your club(s) to where they were before this pandemic hit and to help you find all the new members you possibly can to join your club(s). Don't just get out of bed tomorrow, go to your club and try to do this alone without help. **Pick two of your key staff**

members, then you three teammates pick a Top 10 List of Members to be on your Re-Opening Team. Invite those members to become part of your Top 10 for Club Growth Committee. Together, as a *determined TEAM*, ya'll can make this happen!

Yes, I know that many of you have already reopened your club(s), and if so, these ideas can still be of help to you as you dig out of the whole in your wallet that this pandemic has caused. **ATTACK THIS CHALLENGE LIKE A MIDDLE LINEBACKER. SPEAK OUT... TELL YOUR MEMBERS THE TRUTH! TELL THEM WHY YOU NEED THEIR HELP. Then, WORK YOUR TAIL OFF and DONT LOOK BACK! YOU CAN DO IT!** Folks, I just said a little prayer for all of you. If you're a person who believes in a higher power, then you can't go wrong right now by saying your own little prayer. **GOD BLESS YOU ALL!!!**

■ **A belated Happy Independence Day, Folks!** I'm writing this on the morning of the **4th of July. Is AMERICA a GREAT COUNTRY or WHAT!?** Looking back on the history of our great America, we've faced some *huge challenges*: **The Revolutionary War, The Civil War, World War I and World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and the 9/11 Attacks**, just to name a few. America has dealt with them and survived. And, **we WILL survive this pandemic** and the current **social unrest in America** caused by the **senseless killing of George Floyd**.

As we all deal with these multiple crises, day in and day out, I want to urge each of you to think about the path you took to get where you are today. Think about the *challenges in your life* that you have **ALREADY conquered!** Take great pride in overcoming the adversities you've experienced in your life. And, never, ever forget that each and every one of those challenges you faced head on, and overcame during your life, are challenges that made you stronger, made you smarter and made you better prepared for the very challenges I'm writing about Americans facing today. Right now, **you ARE better and more prepared for adversity than you have ever been in your life!** Don't EVER forget that. **TOGETHER... WE WILL SURVIVE!** And... never, ever forget that **AMERICA is a GREAT COUNTRY**, and we're **ALL lucky** to be here!

To close this Note, Be sure to check out the **Norm's Note** at the very end of this writing in which *Marietta Daily Journal* author **DAVID CARROLL** shares *40 Reasons to Love the USA*. I've shared the **first ten reasons** in this issue, and you can view the rest at bit.ly/clubinsider97.



Norm Cates

■ Welcome to new **Club Insider Advertiser, John Janszen** and **REME HALO**, the in-duct air purifier that boasts a 99% disinfectant rate. Check out their **Press Release and Ad on Page #13**. To learn more about **REME HALO** and get it plugged into your HVAC system, contact **John Janszen** by phone at **(513) 616 - 3369** or email at john.janszen@cyclebar.me.

■ This month, we also welcome long-time advertiser, **Visual Fitness Planner**, to our **Premium Page #5 position**. Just over 15 years ago, **DARON ALLEN** and **MARIO BRAVOMALO** took the industry by storm with their **VFP** product. Since then, it has evolved to become a full sales system called **VFPnext** for your health and fitness club facility. Check out the **VFP Ad** on the **Opposite Page**.

■ And, this month, we welcome **two new Contributing Authors!** A warm welcome to **SUMIT SETH**, *Co-Founder of Naamly*, a member experience platform designed for modern training gyms. Sumit is a strong believer in the power of human connections and had successfully built one of the fastest growing and largest staffing firms by focusing on creating long term relationships. He exited the venture to focus on his health, reconnect with family and found solace in fitness which led him to start *Naamly*. *Naamly* helps fitness studios impact more lives in their communities by building deeper member relationships to drive business success. Check out **Sumit's first Club Insider Article** on **Page #16**. Welcome back to **ERIC DURAK**, *President of Medical Health and Fitness*. Eric is a long-time industry educator and consultant. He's the **1999 IHRSA Institute Award Winner (with SBAC) for the Cancer Well-fit Program**, and he has spoken frequently at industry conferences for over 30 years. Check out **Erik's Article** is on **Page #20**.
(See *Norm's Notes* Page 7)

About Club Insider

CELEBRATING 27 YEARS OF TRUST

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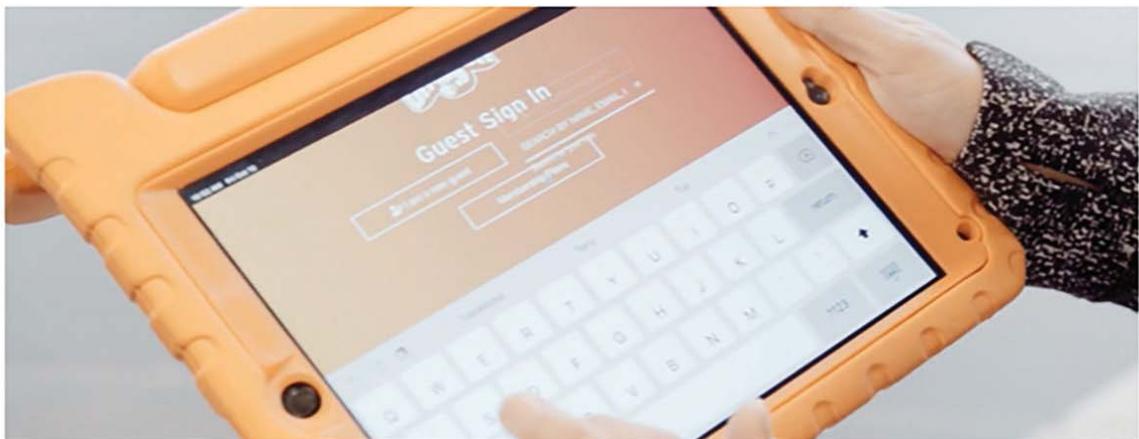
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Exercise IS Medicine!

By: **Mike Alpert**

The COVID-19 pandemic has reeked havoc on the health and fitness club industry and has changed so many things that we were accustomed to. Many of those changes have affected businesses throughout the world, and certainly, here in the United States. As States and counties begin to reopen, businesses are being required to change the way they operated in the past to meet guidelines set up by their governing officials. And, it seems that some of the guidelines continue to change on a somewhat regular basis.

Most recently, in Los Angeles County, it has been mandated that members at gyms and fitness centers must wear a cloth face covering and gloves at all times while in the club, including while exercising. How healthy can it be to wear a cloth face covering while exerting a lot of energy? According to the *World Health Organization (WHO)*, on June 16, 2020, they are quoted as saying, "people should not wear masks when exercising as masks may reduce the ability to breathe

comfortably. Sweat can make the mask become wet more quickly, which makes it difficult to breathe and promotes the growth of microorganisms." And, in some cities and States, like New York and New Jersey, clubs are still not allowed to reopen, even as they struggle to service their fixed costs and operating expenses.

It is hard to believe that exercise and fitness are not deemed essential businesses, although liquor stores, convenience stores and fast food chains are. It seems like some governing officials deem it more important to be able to purchase liquor and beer to relieve stress during this crisis than building up one's immune system, reducing anxiety and depression, improving one's overall health through exercise.

REX Roundtables surveyed their member clubs that had opened in mid-June to track the following: check-in since reopening; member COVID positive cases; employee COVID positive cases; total COVID positive cases and percent infection rate. Here are the results: 1,679,494 check-ins since respective reopening dates; 31

total COVID positive cases; 40,963 average check-ins per day; 0.73 average COVID positive cases. I would think that this would convince any elected official that gyms are indeed safe, as long as they are adhering to proper social distancing, masks while in common areas and proper sanitizing and disinfecting.

And, this isn't just during the current COVID crisis. No one I know of, including elected officials deny the overall benefit that exercise has on health. If asked publicly, they all respond positively to that. But, what does it take to get them to take action on it? Look at what we as an industry have gone through with the PHIT bill: years of lobbying and meetings and still no signed bill. And, how do you even get meetings: You have to be contributing to your elected official's campaign. And, that is just the beginning. In many states, membership dues are taxed to support budgets that are out of control. We have a health care system that is broken. Health care costs are at an all-time high. The country, in my opinion has done a terrible job of teaching people how to manage their health care and their health care costs. We know that exercise and proper nutrition help people live a healthier and more independent life, and what do we do? In many states, we take away the incentive for them to join a health club by taxing their dues. This makes absolutely no sense to me.

Unfortunately, to get any real traction at the Federal and State levels, it seems that you must have a strong lobbying effort, which comes at a substantial cost. Although our industry has had many successes over the years,



Mike Alpert

especially regarding legislative advocacy, I have been somewhat let down during the COVID crisis. It just doesn't seem like our voice has been loud enough. Over the past 29 years, I have been writing and "preaching" about the need for us to help bridge the gap between health care and fitness by getting the experts from each industry to begin working together instead of so independently. Can you imagine the lobbying strength we would have if the AMA and IHRSA were working together to promote *Exercise is Medicine*? At no time is it more relevant or needed than NOW!

(Mike Alpert is CEO and President of The Claremont Club in Claremont, California, and he can be reached at malpert@claremontclub.com. Check out www.claremontclub.com.)



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...Norm's Notes

continued from page 4

■ **Our good friends at Club Industry are moving to St. Louis, Missouri**, and they have their always *great Conference and Trade show* scheduled for **October 14 - 16th, 2020**. The Club Industry conference program runs Wednesday through Friday and features themes suited to all facets of the fitness and wellness industry. We urge you to make plans to attend! To register, go to www.clubindustryshow.com/register.

■ **CHUCK and JOSH LEVE** have announced and are preparing for their **second SUCCEED! Online Event**, coming in **October**. On **July 7, 2020**, the Leves announced the **SUCCEED! Virtual Online Event, October 23 - 25th**. They intend to build on the great success of their May event that attracted over 4,400 attendees. Here's what their **SUCCEED! Press Release** had to say:

MINNEAPOLIS, MN - Supported by marketing alliances with leading fitness organizations, high impact vendors, and several certifying organizations, the October event promises even greater participatory growth.

"We struck an industry-wide, educational chord in May. The incredible turnout is indicative of the impact of COVID-19 and the desire of our audience to learn from each other on how to deal with it. We've expanded our agenda for October as we learn of more reopening strategies." said **Josh Leve, AFS Founder and CEO**.

The **SUCCEED! Virtual Online Event** will also feature the fitness industry's first bonafide virtual expo, with true exhibitors and the opportunity to interact with the over 5,000 anticipated attendees. As in May, the education will highlight the best of AFS and **SUCCEED!** presenters, a virtual 'swag bag' for all attendees, CECs/CEUs and a free admission option. Beyond the marketing assistance from the major groups already mentioned, **SUCCEED! October** will also feature pre-Conference education, sponsor presentations and interactive networking opportunities. Participating companies will also be spreading the word to help build the event, meaning the promotional effort will reach over 500,000 unique viewers. More information on the **October SUCCEED! Virtual Online Event** can be found at www.succeedwithafs.com.

■ **24 Hour Fitness Worldwide, Inc.** recently filed for **Chapter 11 bankruptcy**. The San Ramon, California-based company announced the **closing of 130 gyms in the U.S.** The chain expects to secure about **\$250 million** in funding to help their remaining **300 locations**. The

company released the following comment:

"24 Hour Fitness is dedicated to the health and wellness of our members, our team and the communities we serve and has been for more than 35 years. With the dramatic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy and the fitness industry, we are announcing a financial restructuring through a voluntary Chapter 11 filing that we expect will make us a stronger company. We will continue reopening clubs with a focus on uninterrupted service to our members, and we'll be able to reinvest in existing clubs, open new clubs and offer new innovations to better serve you long into the future. If it were not for **COVID-19** and its devastating effects, we would not be filing for Chapter 11. With that said, we intend to use the process to strengthen the future of 24 Hour Fitness for our team and club members, as well as our stakeholders." said **TONY UEBER, 24 Hour Fitness CEO** in a statement to **Business Insider**.

■ **Out of Deerfield Beach, Florida: YouFit Health Clubs** began as a family venture in 2008 and grew to over a hundred locations under the direction of **Rick Berks as CEO** with his daughter **Christy Berks-Stross**. Both have resigned from their positions within the company and as Board Members citing philosophical differences with the financial partners.

■ I received the following from my good friend, veteran club sales expert, **GARY POLIC** today, and I want to share it with you all. I asked Gary to tell us about his new

club consulting company's **WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE, WHY and HOW**.

Gary responded: **I'm excited to announce the launching of Polic Consultants Group, LLC**.

WHO: We are a Fitness Club Consulting Group consisting of a diversified group of accomplished and award-winning club business veterans. Each consultant has successful, proven experience relating to their field of expertise. It's your "one-stop-shop" for *all your club needs under one umbrella*.

WHAT: We provide a "hands-on" servant leadership style of coaching for your team regarding all of your Club Management, Operations, Recruiting, T&D, Marketing and Sales needs. We differentiate from most other club industry consultants by providing quality, experienced and accomplished consultants at an **AFFORDABLE RATE**.

WHEN: We are here to **HELP ANYTIME** day or night!

WHERE: **HELP** is on its way **ANYWHERE** in the world!

WHY: There are so many fitness clubs that need the accomplished and experienced guidance from industry veterans with **PROVEN** track records in order to maximize their profits. As established, experienced and accomplished professionals in the club industry, it's now our time to "**GIVE BACK**" to the industry by providing our services for an **AFFORDABLE RATE**. We

like to say: "**FINALLY...** Experienced Quality Consulting that won't break the bank!"

HOW: We provide services that can be utilized in several different formats, such as: webinars, zoom meetings, phone calls or club visits. **ALL SUPPORTED** by the material needed to implement proven systems and protocol.

Contact **Gary Polic - Polic Consultants Group, LLC - "Experienced & Affordable Club Consulting"** at **(630) 410 - 1120 (office), (708) 635 - 9522 (cell)** or gary@policconsultantsgroup.com. To learn more about Polic Consultants Group, go to www.policconsultantsgroup.com.

■ A *Marietta Daily Journal* author in my community named **DAVID CARROLL** wrote an article on **June 30th** entitled *40 Reasons to love the USA*. Since *World Class bad news* seems to be piling up on wonderful America lately, and I might add, since we celebrated our **244th Anniversary on the 4th of July**, I've decided to share David's column with you all, my highly esteemed readers. This month, I am sharing the first ten reasons he lists, and you can see the rest at bit.ly/clubinsider97.

• Thanks to cable TV and YouTube, we can still enjoy Elvis, Johnny Carson, Carol Burnett, Marshall Dillon and Hoss Cartwright, even though few people under 40 know who they are.

• We have amazing first responders who
(See *Norm's Notes* Page 8)

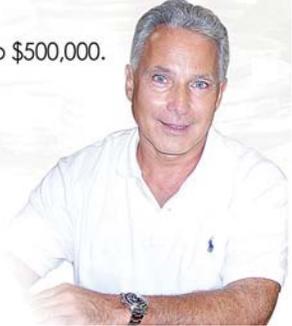


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...Norm's Notes

continued from page 7

respond directly to the situations the rest of us are trying to run away from.

●We have news channels that lean to the left and news channels that lean to the right. And, *we are not forced to watch any of them.*

●We have towns called Ducktown, Turtletown, Suck Creek, Gruetli Lauger, Orme, Hogjaw Valley, Rising Fawn, Talking Rock, Peavine, Nutbush. Bell Buckle, Rugby, Greeback, Busksport, Butusle, Flintstone, Burning Bush, Isabella, Box Springs, Rocky Face, Lick Skillet, Butts, Arab, Battlebaugh, Beershebe Springs, and Scratch Ankle. I've been *everywhere*, man!

●We have farmers' markets with fresh, homegrown produce.

●We have the Country Music Hall of Fame.

●They still make Yoo-hoo, Nehi Grape, Zagnut bars and Sampan Girl Scout Cookies.

●We have the "Hot Now" sign at Krispy Kreme.

●We have an American original named Dolly Parton, who shares her good fortune.

●We have Betty White, Tom Hanks, and Willie Nelson. Not long ago, Willie recorded a song called, *I'm Still Not Dead*. That's his best title since *Roll Me Up and Smoke Me When I Die*.

■JUSTIN and I want to say Thanks for reading Club Insider!

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■**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. God bless our EMTs, first responders, nurses, doctors, lab technicians and anyone who is helping make Coronavirus a thing of the past. You and your families are our warriors. Finally, God bless you, your family, your club(s) and your members. God Bless America! Laus Deo!**

(Norm Cates, Jr. is the Founder of Club Insider, now in its 27th year of publication, and its Tribal Leader Since 1993. He is a 45+ year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. As IHRSA's First President and a Co-Founder of the Association with Rick Caro and five others, in 1981; the 2001 DALE DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award, one of IHRSA's highest honors; and Club Industry's Lifetime Achievement Award Winner in 2017, Norm Cates, Jr. is a highly decorated veteran who cares about you. And, he wants to hear from you. Norm can be reached by phone at 770-635-7578 or email at Norm@clubinsideronline.com.)

IHRSA Launches Legislative Effort to Save the American Fitness Industry

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association (IHRSA) is launching a new legislative effort to save the American fitness industry.

"No industry has been harder hit by the COVID-19 pandemic than the fitness industry," said **Joe Moore, President/CEO of IHRSA**. "Millions of jobs and tens of thousands of small businesses are at risk. Congress and the Administration must act immediately to see that relief measures that have been available to other industries for months are expanded to include the fitness industry."

In a letter to Congressional leaders, IHRSA laid out the economic devastation felt by the industry as a result of the pandemic. Roughly 1/3, or \$10 billion, of health club industry revenue will leave for at-home fitness options, putting at risk the 3 million full- and part-time workers who are employed by the almost 40,000 clubs and studios in the U.S.

"Gyms and health clubs were among the first industries targeted for shutdowns as a result of the pandemic. Many clubs have been shuttered for months," continued Moore. "Unlike our friends in the restaurant industry, gyms and health clubs haven't been able to offer 'take-out' as a means to stay afloat during this difficult time."

Not only has the fitness industry been hit hard, it has also been unable to access funds available to other industries. The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), which is administered by the SBA and authorized by Congress in the CARES Act, has been largely unavailable to the fitness industry as a result of language in the legislation that inexplicably treats health

and fitness clubs differently than others in the service industry.

"As the Congress debates the future of the PPP, action should be immediately taken to give the fitness industry access to these funds, which is why IHRSA is launching this effort," said Moore.

Specifically, IHRSA is seeking three PPP fixes:

1. A waiver from the "affiliation rule" for health and fitness clubs, to allow those previously left out to participate in the PPP.
2. That funding prioritization be given to industries that can demonstrate revenue losses of 15% or more.
3. Businesses with demonstrated revenue losses over 20% should be eligible for a second round of funding under PPP.

IHRSA is mobilizing its member clubs across the country, urging them to contact their members of Congress and Senators and urge them to make these critical fixes to PPP. In addition to mobilizing tens of thousands of clubs and studios, IHRSA is also deploying its Government Affairs Team to make the case.

"As a result of the pandemic, IHRSA has built a talented team of lobbyists and government affairs experts to make the case for the fitness industry. We are mobilizing this team to work with our member clubs to urge Congress and the Administration that they must act immediately to save the fitness industry," concluded Moore.

Thanks and Appreciation

At *Club Insider*, we are excited to be in our **27th 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 27-year run possible.

A very sincere *Thanks and Appreciation* go to **Rick Caro**, the late **Dr. Gerry Faust** and the **Faust Executive Roundtable #1** for helping me decide in 1993 what my home-based business would be. *Thanks and Appreciation* to my long-time friends, **Ron Hudspeth** and **Cathy Miller**, 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've done an absolutely excellent job for us all these years and have printed every one of our monthly editions! And, of course, *Thanks and Appreciation* to the **United States Postal Service** for sending those editions to our readers! *Thanks and Appreciation* to all of our **READERS**. Sincere *Thanks and Appreciation* to our **Club Insider Advertisers**, past and present, for their kind and dedicated support of this publication. *Thanks and Appreciation* to all of our **Club Insider Contributing Authors**, past and present. *Thanks and Appreciation* to **IHRSA** for all it does for all of us. And, sincere *Thanks and Appreciation* to my son, **Justin**, who has become our Publisher and is a truly great partner. Now, 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.

Make It Fun!

"My clubs are closed, but I'm still making money every single day! Here's How I'm Doing It..."

When you offer essential health as your business, your business is essential!



Karrah Foster-Freda

When the pandemic hit, our immediate thought was, "how are we going to pay our employees?" We were telling ourselves, "We can do this for two weeks. But when two weeks turned to a month, we started to worry. Our clubs are still closed, and we don't have any idea when we'll reopen.

We are so grateful for our Wellness income because the club business feels very out of our control right now. And when everything feels out of control, it's nice to know that you have control over something. Having other income streams while the doors are closed is another way to serve our members.

We've deposited close to \$25,000 this month, while we're closed and not collecting ANY dues, which gives us security.

How to serve your members when you can't get in your building. We have the solution!

Right now, people are looking for something to hang on to, something to be excited about. We've had an overwhelming response to the Wellness programs, products and services we're offering. People are searching; they're looking for something to look forward to, something to work on, some way to move forward. People want solutions right now. They are weary. We are providing those solutions to our members.

How to keep members from cancelling...

The fear you're feeling; the uncertainty you're feeling; your members are feeling that too. We reach out, we provide a support system to make them feel heard; to let them know that we're still there for them. We've learned this from the Wealth of Wellness company. While we are doing it ourselves in our club, they are now offering it to you as a "done for you service" for free.

How to serve your members who are scared to come back

We tried to think, once we re-open the doors, the members will come back. We assume they can't wait to come back. And there will be some. But, there are some members that are too afraid to come back, afraid to risk it. Wellness is a way to serve them virtually, keeping them engaged so the connection is maintained, even if they're not ready to walk back through the door. Our members love our club because they feel connected. This Wellness system provides that connection.

How will you recoup the money you've lost during this time?

Using this Wellness system, when you reopen, you'll have multiple, new income streams already bringing in money. And they're sustainable income streams that won't go away. It's offering wellness and not just fitness.

How to survive and thrive if this happens again?

Start taking the steps now to become an essential business. You have to offer solutions that are more than just fitness. You must find alternative ways to serve your members that aren't just related to fitness. When your club has reopened, you'll have multiple new income streams, and have new ways of reaching out and serving your members because you've become "wellness" and not just fitness. And should it be mandated for you to close again, you'll still be making money.

How to become an "essential" business NOW!

You have to see yourself differently. You have to realize that being a one dimensional business is not wisdom. You have to plan for your obsolescence. If you're not growing and changing, you're dying.

The company I work with will do the work FOR YOU and it won't cost you a dime!

Learn how to get this game-changing solution implemented in your club right now. See the details below:

Hurry! This Offer is Limited to the First 20 Clubs Who Apply...

Turn Your Club into an ESSENTIAL BUSINESS with MULTIPLE STREAMS OF INCOME Now!

We get it. You're in the midst of reopening, and are not in a place mentally where you can handle doing one more thing, so we'll do it for you. Apply to the Fit Biz Stimulus now. There is **NO INVESTMENT REQUIRED**, and **No Strings Attached**



Apply For The 'Done For You' Fit Biz Stimulus Program Now.

CALL (903) 277-2709 or visit FitBizStimulus.com

...Continuing Education

continued from page 3

IHRSA



IHRSA's educational events provide an array of speakers on business and strategy, instructional sessions for management success, peer-to-peer networking opportunities, and spectacular trade shows. Attending an IHRSA event will help grow your business:

Trade Shows - Don't miss the opportunity to test out the latest equipment, products and services from the industry's top suppliers, many of which unveil new offerings at IHRSA's trade shows.

Education - From sessions to intimate roundtables to hands-on workshops, IHRSA's education is designed to fit many learning styles and levels of professional development.

Keynotes - IHRSA's eclectic keynote speakers, from both inside and outside the industry, share inspiring and motivating perspectives that will leave you invigorated.

Networking - Lifelong relationships are born through IHRSA events when members connect with their peers in an environment that encourages education through communication.

Some of IHRSA's U.S. Events Include:

The International Convention & Trade Show

The IHRSA International Convention & Trade Show is world-renowned for its vibrant Trade Show, motivational keynote speakers, expert educational sessions and buzzing networking events. The event features more than 400 Trade Show exhibitors from around the globe, as well as over 100 education sessions taught by some of the industry's most successful individuals.

Save the date for next year: **March 10 - 13, 2021 at Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino, Las Vegas, NV!**

IHRSA Institute

Take your career to the next level by attending The IHRSA Institute. The exclusive, executive-level event is designed to provide a strong overall base for anyone working in the fitness industry. You'll learn from industry experts and college level professors in an intimate setting. Real-life examples and in-depth conversations with

faculty and students, in the classroom and beyond, will help you run a better club.

Two full scholarships are offered to attend The IHRSA Institute: **The John McCarthy Scholarship**, named for IHRSA's first Executive Director, and **The Curt & Jane Beusman Scholarship**, named for two of IHRSA's early and most passionate founders. Qualified candidates should be able to demonstrate their passion for, and absolute commitment to, the health club industry's future and their service, sales and leadership skills. Learn more at ihrsa.org/institute-scholarships.

IHRSA Women's Leadership Summit

Share best practices, network and develop your career at The IHRSA Women's Leadership Summit, hosted by *Athletic Business Magazine*. For over 10 years, IHRSA has led the way by bringing women in the health and fitness industry together to learn, share ideas and grow professionally. This forum includes a keynote presentation, industry panel and social activities all designed to help you strengthen your network, expertise, and influence.

Club Industry Show

CLUB INDUSTRY SHOW

Grow Your Business and Build Your Career - The Club Industry Show is a must-attend event for you and your team. The leaders. The innovators. The hardworking staff. The people who make things happen... It's you, the fitness and wellness professionals, who make this a can't miss event for the fitness industry year after year. Club Industry has a one-of-a-kind show planned.

At the *Club Industry Show Conference*, you will learn the newest concepts, unique approaches and strategies that will impact your business. The Club Industry Show is the only fitness conference focused on the business of fitness. This year's Club Industry Show is giving you the platform to increase your knowledge through a skills-elevating conference with seven tracks and 90+ sessions. The conference is designed to help you in your business and to build your client base, inspire personal growth and provide insight into the changes in the industry.

The *Special Events at the Club Industry Show* bring together industry members from every segment of the fitness industry. One of the best parts of attending the Club Industry Show is the opportunity to network. Hundreds of your peers will be there to celebrate, connect and have some fun at the Club Industry Show.

The *Club Industry Show Exhibit Hall* brings together must-see exhibitors displaying innovative fitness products, technology and equipment. Experience the newest products, services and trends all in

one venue.

This year's show will take place **October 14 - 16, 2020** in *St. Louis, MO*. To register, go to www.clubindustryshow.com/register.

Athletic Business Show

AIB ATHLETIC BUSINESS SHOW

The Athletic Business Show (AB Show) is a solution-focused event for athletics, fitness, recreation and military professionals. No matter where you are in your career or the types of projects you're working on, AB Show's leading educational conference has sessions that will provide you with actionable insights, unique solutions and new ideas you can implement right away. Plus, AB Show's expo hall features 250+ exhibiting companies offering all the products you need to manage successful programs and facilities.

Your success is AB Show's number one priority. That's why, each year, Athletic Business hosts 200+ exhibiting companies in the expo hall and 80+ industry experts who lead educational sessions. You can find the solutions you need to meet your goals. Plus, we have fun while we're at it! AB Show provides attendees and manufacturers the chance to make meaningful connections with like-minded professionals through engaging special events.

This year's show will take place **November 3 - 6, 2020** in *Baltimore, MD*. To register, go to www.abshow.com/register.

Roundtables and Workshops

Known to have their own presence at conferences and trade shows, Roundtables and Workshops also take place independently across the country. These are much more intimate settings where professionals can learn the deep ins and outs of their craft.

REX - Roundtables for Executives

REX

ROUNDTABLES FOR EXECUTIVES

REX is a global organization that runs mastermind groups for club business owners and chief executives, including over 135 of the top clubs and organizations (2,000+ clubs) in the industry. REX currently runs 13 groups of owners, executives and senior staff.

REX is designed specifically for business owners and club leaders who are passionate about getting better and achieving dramatically better results in

four areas:

- The performance of their business;
- Their leadership and management skills;
- Personal and corporate relationship to the community;
- Balance and quality of their personal lives.

With no competitors in the room, REX creates a climate of exceptional honesty and openness. Members report that the direct, straightforward communication they routinely get from REX is not available to them anywhere else in their work or personal lives.

Comments From Eddie Tock CEO of REX



Eddie Tock

Club Insider (C.I.) - What are your thoughts on the importance of continuing education within the health and fitness club industry?

Eddie Tock (ET) - One of the best things about life is that we never have to stop learning. There are always new skills to learn and techniques for us to adopt. When you look at the most successful people in the world, they understand this. The best entrepreneurs in the world don't act like they know everything. They all understand the fact that they have to continuously learn to be successful. *'It's what you learn after you know it all that counts.'* - **John Wooden**

C.I. - In your view, where does your organization fit into that prism?

ET - Benefits that a mastermind group like REX Roundtables can provide:

1. Accountability.
2. Regular connection.
3. Networks beyond your own to tap into (REX has 2,700 clubs, over 250 members in 25 Countries).
4. A trusted circle of colleagues to help you make decisions.
5. A chance to learn from other businesses and leaders.
6. A confidential space to discuss challenges and problems.
7. A laboratory to learn and experiment.
8. A reflection of your own wisdom and
(See *Continuing Education Page 12*)

Hyper-local **Fitness** Marketing 



**More members.
Period.**



Social Media

Direct Mail

Mobile Geofencing

Email Marketing

SEO



Website Design

Display Ads

Paid Search / PPC

Reputation Management

Guest Passes



Business Listings

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& get started with a

**Free Marketing
Assessment!**

*New clients only. Contact UpSwell for details.

fitness.upswellmarketing.com 888.597.5611



...Continuing Education

continued from page 10

expertise as you help others. At REX, our purpose is to improve the performance of your business and the quality of your life!

C.I. - What do participants of your content gain that they cannot find anywhere else?
ET - I'd like some of them to answer that for themselves (bit.ly/clubinsider96).

To learn more about Roundtables for Executives, go to www.rexroundtables.com.

SCW Fitness Education



SCW Fitness Education has been in business for 35 years and is the largest provider of continuing education conferences in the world, focusing on Group Fitness and Personal Training with an emphasis on execution, leadership and management. With eight regional shows spanning 32 years, MANIA Conferences are held in Washington D.C., California (San Francisco), Florida (Orlando), Atlanta, Dallas, Philadelphia, Midwest (Chicago) and Boston annually. SCW reaches over 8,500 fitness professionals in face-to-face contacts, 70,000 via our email list and another 200,000+ in virtual connections. MANIA® Conventions offer 17 sessions running every hour on all different aspects of the fitness and wellness industry (HIIT, Functional Training, Cycling, Mind/Body, Barre, Dance, Aqua, Nutrition, Recovery, Business & Leadership). SCW MANIA is unparalleled in its provision of certifications, continuing education courses and fitness professional conventions in multiple disciplines, both live and online.

Comments From Sara Kooperman, JD
CEO of SCW

Club Insider (C.I.) - What are your thoughts on the importance of continuing education



Sara Kooperman, JD

within the health and fitness club industry?
Sara Kooperman, JD (SK) - I think that continuing education within the health and fitness club industry is extremely important. SCW is committed to not only certifying instructors but providing continuing education through our Mania fitness instructor training conventions, our specialized certifications, our on-demand video program and our video CEC program. It is imperative that instructors stay up-to-date to provide creative and safe programming options to our clients. Now, more than ever, we need to entice people to return to our facilities and stay committed to healthy regimes. Without entertaining and diverse exercise options, we worry that our students will become bored and discontinue exercise. It is imperative that we help our customers continue with their fitness regimes as this promotes healthy immune systems.

C.I. - In your view, where does your organization fit into that prism?

SK - SCW Fitness Education has been offering continuing education programs for over 35 years. We have been running conferences, certifications and video programs for over 25 years. During the pandemic, we pivoted quickly and have offered live streaming certification since October 2019. We also build our own technology to be able to offer over 150 zoom sessions at our live stream conference. We were the first ever conference to be able to supply nine sessions running simultaneously, allowing the instructors and trainers, owners and managers, to drift from session to session easily and efficiently. It is our commitment to the industry to continue to provide high-quality, affordable fitness education and bring it into people's cities, their clubs and their homes.

C.I. - What do participants of your content gain that they cannot find anywhere else?

SK - Participants who enjoy our live streaming conferences and certifications are able to safely enjoy education and community from their own homes. Further, this allows access to international presenters that otherwise might be unavailable. Not having to deal with flights, hotels and incidental travel expenses, such as meals, makes the event an entirely more flexible and affordable educational offering.

Publications

Since the advent of the printing press, there have been publications across every topic. Technology has changed the game, but after hundreds of years, the original form still exists.

Club Business International (CBI)

Every month, IHRSA publishes *Club Business International* (CBI), one of the health club industry's leading trade

CLUB BUSINESS INTERNATIONAL

publications. CBI features industry news and stories on successful practices in sales, marketing, operations and programming from around the world. The wide range of areas covered each month can be as relevant to front desk staff as to club owners and managers.

To read CBI, go to www.ihrsa.org/cbi.

Club Industry

CLUB INDUSTRY

Having gone fully digital in 2014, *Club Industry* is a trusted voice in the fitness and wellness community. As a leading digital trade media source, *Club Industry* is helping to bring news and education to fitness facility owners, managers and professionals.

Comments From Pamela Kufahl
Director of Content for Club Industry

Club Insider (C.I.) - What are your thoughts on the importance of continuing education within the health and fitness club industry?

Pamela Kufahl (PK) - Many people believe the future of the fitness industry is in integration with the healthcare industry. For the health and wellness industry to partner to a greater extent with the healthcare community, the fitness industry must make continuing education a top priority. The medical community puts a premium on continuing education, and they expect the industries they work with to do the same.

C.I. - In your view, where does your organization fit into that prism?

PK - As a news and education brand, we offer education with our news stories, our special reports on topics such as trends to watch, the future of technology in the industry, the integration of healthcare and fitness and more. We also offer our monthly *Master Class Webinars* on topics such as dealing with the effects of COVID-19 on the industry, retention, leadership, qualities of a Top 100 club and more. And, for 35 years, we have hosted the *Club Industry Show*, which educates and connects members of the health and wellness community. The ability to get continuing education in-person will always be important, but the virtual option for that is growing, too, and we have the virtual education platform required to deliver continuing education online in a robust manner.

C.I. - What do participants of your content gain that they cannot find anywhere else?

PK - *Club Industry* offers some of the top presenters in the industry focused on the business of fitness. Our education focuses on leadership, retention, sales

and marketing, programming, technology, trends and personal training. We also have two unique summits: Our *Healthcare & Fitness Integration Summit* has the goal of educating the fitness industry about the opportunities in partnering with the healthcare community, bringing in physicians and payors as attendees and presenters to allow for the groups to get to know each other better and develop relationships. Our *CEO Summit* is the only event where the owners and CEOs of the top revenue-generating commercial club companies in North America come together for education and networking. This invitation-only event (you have to qualify based on your company's revenue) is now in its ninth year. This year, we are offering two new summits. The *Not-for-Profit Summit* will focus on issues of special concern to the YMCAs, JCCs, parks and rec facilities and university rec centers. And, the *Franchise Summit* is specific to franchisors and the challenges they face in expanding their franchise businesses.

Club Insider



The Mission of Club Insider is, "To help the owners and operators of health and fitness clubs professionalize their clubs and gain the trust and business of their community."

Club Insider is carefully read for many reasons including:

- **Sharing Great Stories of Club Success** with monthly, Case-Study Cover Stories;
- **Educating Owners and Operators** with articles by expert Contributing Authors;
- **"Telling-It-Like-It-Is"** about important industry matters with periodic "Insider Speaks" Editorials;
- **Serving as the Watchdog** of the health and fitness club industry with Norm's Notes.

All of this makes *Club Insider* The Pulse of the Health and Fitness Club Industry.

Comments from Norm Cates
Founder and Tribal Leader of Club Insider

Justin Cates (JC) - What are your thoughts on the importance of continuing education within the health and fitness club industry?

Norm Cates (NC) - The health, racquet and sportsclub industry across America, and around the world, is filled with individuals who're seeking an easy path to financial independence and prosperity. Many of them enter our industry thinking that making lots of money in our business is a piece of cake. How badly they are mistaken with that simple view of our industry. Some folks enter our industry thinking that all they have to do is rent some space in a building somewhere, install a front desk and a
(See *Continuing Education* Page 14)

The Fitness Industry Embraces Innovative Air Purifier to Address COVID-19

REME HALO In-Duct Air Purifier Boasts 99% Disinfectant Rate

RIVIERA BEACH, FL - RFG Environmental Group, Inc., a Florida-based environmental design and manufacturing company, is helping gyms and studios nationwide help open their doors post COVID-19. Businesses are installing RGF's REME HALO in-duct air purifying unit to purify the air to keep their members and their staff safe. The unit is installed directly into the HVAC system and actively distributes hydroperoxide that is circulated throughout the air and disinfectants every surface that comes in contact with it.

Hydrogen peroxide is a proven disinfectant with 99% efficacy in neutralizing viruses, bacteria and mold. When SARS-CoV arrived in Canada in 2003, Accelerated Hydrogen Peroxide (AHP) became the recommended disinfectant technology of choice by

healthcare providers. The purifier is currently in short supply due to the overwhelming demand, with waitlists up to 16 weeks through some distributors.

"We recognize that members may be hesitant to return to the studio amid COVID-19 concerns, especially given the reputation that gyms have for cleanliness. We are going to extreme measures to keep people healthy," says **John Janszen**, *Owner of multiple CycleBar studios in Ohio*. "Every business should want a REME

HALO to keep their members and employees safe."

The demand comes as part of the growing trend among both boutique fitness studios and big box gyms to have a 24/7 solution for keeping their facility clean and their members safe.

Not only is the REME HALO being installed in gyms, daycares and restaurants, it is also being used in office buildings, public transit networks, government and military facilities, assisted living, hospitals and dentist

offices nationwide. For many businesses, the REME HALO has become their front-line defense for keeping their customers and staff virus-free.

To learn more about REME HALO and get it plugged into your HVAC system, contact **John Janszen** by phone at **(513) 616 - 3369** or email at john.janszen@cyclebar.me.

About REME HALO: The award-winning REME HALO by RGF Environmental Group, Inc. is the next generation of indoor air quality (IAQ) technology and capable of purifying every cubic inch of air that an HVAC system comes in contact with. The unit kills up to 99% of bacteria, mold and viruses in the air and on surfaces. It also reduces sneeze germs by 99% in the time a sneeze can reach three feet.

Make It Clean!



24/7 Sanitizing Protection for Your Team and Members.

Get the highly-demanded REME HALO® in-duct air purifier at this exclusive value.

- Kills up to 99% of bacteria, viruses and mold in the air and on surfaces.
- New zinc ions kill 99% of viruses on surfaces
- Dual ionizers reduce airborne particulates (dust, dander, pollen, mold spores)
- Reduces sneeze germs by 99% in the time a sneeze can reach three feet

Available today for just **\$499** (Reg. \$800)

Visit bit.ly/buyremehalo.

Use promo code 'cleanfitness'.

For more information, contact John Janszen at 513-616-3369.



...Continuing Education

continued from page 12

reception area, rent some equipment and maybe allocate some space for group fitness classes. Then, start selling memberships and just sit back and rake in the moola. How badly they are mistaken.

For the record, to all of you out there thinking our health and fitness industry is a piece of cake to be successful in, I have some real true news for you. *It is NOT.* You should realize that opening a health and fitness club that's successful is a very tough, day-in and day-out, business challenge in which to engage. And, you should know that, to succeed, you must master many disciplines. Fortunately, our industry has help in many forms, many of which you are covering in this article.

JC - In your view, where does your organization fit into that prism?

NC - As a *Key Leader* of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry in the teaching and sharing of industry knowledge, experience, and very, very importantly, the *realm of needed ethics and integrity disciplines.*

JC - What do participants of your content gain that they cannot find anywhere else?

NC - First of all, and for sure, I, Norm Cates, as a *45+ year veteran* of the club business and industry and the *1st President and a Co-Founder of IHRSA* with my good friend, **RICK CARO**, and five others, *Club Insider* brings true "Inside" information and commentary that you will find *NOWHERE ELSE in our industry anywhere. PERIOD!* Since 1993, over the *27+ years of Club Insider* publishing, I have gone after crooks in our industry, people who are being deceitful in the things they do in the business and say about a variety of topics in our industry. I have stood up against wrongdoing in many areas.

In the editorial content of *Club Insider*, we have a voluntary lineup of *Club Insider Contributing Authors* who represent the most experienced and powerful lineup of experts in the entire industry worldwide. That list includes, but is not limited to: *the ONE and ONLY IHRSA Co-Founder and former President, RICK CARO; JOHN MCCARTHY, 25 Year-IHRSA CEO Emeritus; JOE MOORE, 14-year IHRSA President and CEO, as well as BILL McBRIDE, CASEY CONRAD, DARON ALLEN, DEREK BARTON, PAUL BEDARD, Esquire, and THOMAS PLUMMER*, just to name a few of our highly esteemed Contributing Authors (See the **Full List on Page #22**). Importantly, *our highly esteemed Club Insider Contributing Author Team* provides true expertise in all disciplines and phases of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. And, for sure, you can rely on the articles you read in *Club Insider* to have been written by the best experts in their disciplines in the entire world. This powerful and knowledgeable team gives our publication a leg up on all



Norm Cates

others and is a real resource of industry expertise for readers around the world.

Club Solutions Magazine

Club Solutions

Club Solutions Magazine is a leading business resource for the health and fitness industry. The mission of *Club Solutions* is to provide best practice, business resources that educate and empower health club professionals. The publication has aligned itself with the health club industry's top leaders to create the industry's most powerful advisory board. *Club Solutions* is read by health club owners, operators, presidents, general managers, managers and decision makers within the health club industry, and it provides many business ideas, strategies and solutions across its multimedia platform.

Athletic Business Magazine

Athletic Business

ELEVATING FACILITIES. ENRICHING PROGRAMS. EMPOWERING LEADERS.

Born more than 40 years ago as a magazine devoted to a sports industry just beginning to think of itself as an industry, *Athletic Business* has grown to become an internationally-recognized multimedia brand. *Athletic Business* is read by individuals representing colleges and universities, high schools, park and recreation departments, military branches and bases, health clubs, YMCAs, professional sports teams, stadiums and arenas, sports architecture firms and hospital and corporate wellness centers. Readers turn to *Athletic Business* for award-winning editorial content, as well as to view products and services offered by leading advertisers.

Industry Reports

IHRSA

The IHRSA Global Report pro-

vides the most comprehensive overview of health club markets worldwide, making it a must-have resource for industry insiders, including club operators, investors, market analysts and other professionals. It includes data on revenue, number of facilities and number of club members for nearly 70 markets. For the U.S. market, there is a breakdown of data for the number of clubs by state and infographic insights for consumer growth and member visits. The company profiles section highlights approximately 300 leading health club companies from around the world, including number of facilities, number of members and annual revenue (when available).

IHRSA's Profiles of Success, based on data gathered in the annual Industry Data Survey (IDS), provides benchmarks and other operational and financial data for select leading clubs. Included are key metrics such as revenue, membership growth and retention, traffic, payroll, non-dues revenue and EBITDA. Club reinvestment and profit center analysis as well as income statement and balance sheet data are also provided.

The IHRSA Health Club Consumer Report provides club operators, suppliers and fitness professionals with the data and insights to better understand health club consumers and fitness participants. It provides demographics and health, sports and fitness participation data on America's health club consumers. New to this year's report is an in-depth analysis of Generation Z health club users. Also included is a snapshot of personal and small group training clients.

To access these reports and others, go to www.ihrsa.org/publications.

Comments From Jay Ablondi

IHRSA Executive VP of Global Products

I currently oversee the publishing, research, education, convention, trade show, online media, marketing and information technology departments of IHRSA.

As a leader in providing education for the industry, IHRSA has a long history of providing world class presenters at our events as well as discovering

those operators in the industry who are exceptional in what they do and are thought leaders willing to share their best practices with the industry.

As you may know, many of the most sought-after presenters in the industry got their first big exposure at an IHRSA event and have gone on to become well known within the industry.

Over the past several years, IHRSA has hosted more than one hundred webinars on pertinent and relevant topics that club operators confront on a regular basis, such as member retention, staff training, digital marketing, sales, legal issues, just to name a few. These webinars are all available for free and on demand to IHRSA members.

In June, IHRSA launched a new series of on-demand educational video seminars from industry experts, many of whom have been our most popular presenters at the IHRSA International Convention as well as some emerging leaders in their fields. These classes are all free for members as well. A full listing is available at ihrsa.org/classes.

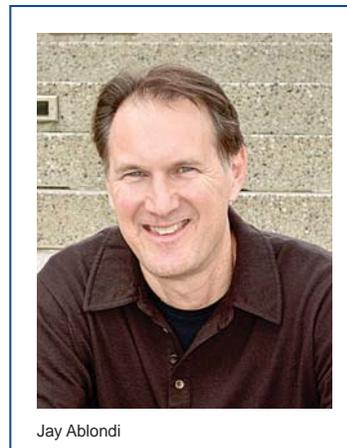
For clubs that are not yet IHRSA members, classes and webinars can be purchased for a modest fee. It is important to note that IHRSA has made all COVID-19 related resources, which includes several webinars, free to all in order to aid as many clubs as possible during these challenging times. These resources can be found at ihrsa.org/coronavirus. In addition, IHRSA also has hundreds of audio recordings from past IHRSA convention sessions available at ihrsa.org as well.

One exciting project we are currently working on is the new *IHRSA Innovation Summit*. This will be a one-day interactive, virtual event for health club operators and fitness professionals. The IHRSA Innovation Summit will be held on **Thursday, September 17, 2020**, and it is not to be missed, as it will be the one Fall online event that everyone will want to be a part of. Details will be available in early August. **Stay Tuned!** For those in Europe, IHRSA will also be hosting a virtual European Congress later this fall.

Of course, IHRSA will continue to host in-person events, such as *IHRSA 2021, the IHRSA International Convention and Trade Show* that will be held **March 10 - 13, 2021** at Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino in Las Vegas. As *IHRSA's First President and Co-Founder with Rick Caro and five others, and Club Insider Founder, Norm Cates*, knows firsthand, 2021 marks the 40th Anniversary of IHRSA, so this March will certainly be a time to celebrate the rebirth of the industry as we all emerge from this pandemic.

Another popular feature IHRSA launched earlier this year is the new *IHRSA Forum* (forum.ihrsa.org), a free online community where club operators discuss topics concerning their businesses.

Looking further ahead, the *IHRSA* (See **Continuing Education Page 15**)



Jay Ablondi

...Continuing Education

continued from page 14

Institute, a four-day executive-level event held at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill will return in **August 2021** as well. The IHRSA Institute has been called one of the best kept secrets within the industry. This is a bit ironic in the sense that those that graduate from the IHRSA Institute are its greatest promoters and ambassadors. The intimate class sizes and university setting the Institute provides make for an ideal opportunity for those in the industry to forge life-long business connections and friendships.

It is important to realize that IHRSA is a member-owned, non-profit association, and therefore, it is only as strong as its Membership. Because of this, IHRSA devotes a tremendous time and effort into providing club operators resources and networking opportunities to help them grow their careers and businesses. As *Club Insider* has reported extensively on, IHRSA is also the leading and most effective *advocate for the industry* at the Federal and State levels of government. Detailing all of those Herculean efforts would consume entire issues of *Club Insider* and *Club Business International*, too!

ClubIntel



ClubIntel is a brand and consumer insight firm serving the fitness and club industry. We are passionate about helping those involved in the fitness and club industry understand, appreciate and leverage the needs and wants of their respective audiences in delivering a uniquely differentiated and successful value proposition.

Comments from **Stephen Tharrett** and **Mark Williamson**, *Principals of ClubIntel*

Club Insider (C.I.) - What are your thoughts on the importance of continuing education within the health and fitness club industry?

Stephen Tharrett and Mark Williamson (ST/MW) - Albert Einstein said two things: first, 'learn from yesterday' and second, '...The important thing is not to stop questioning.' I believe it's the statement about never stop questioning that speaks to the value of continuing education. Professionals not pursuing continuing education is akin to wading water in the face of a strong current; either you go backward, or you drown. Successful leaders and businesspeople never stop asking questions, and they never stop searching for new information. Knowledge is power, and you only get it by focusing on seeking out knowledge you don't have.



Stephen Tharrett

I know that I would never have achieved what I have without constantly learning from a variety of resources.

C.I. - In your view, where does your organization fit into that prism?

ST/MW - Part of ClubIntel's mission is to 'educate the industry.' Our competitive advantage is grounded in our approach around educating our clients, the industry and individuals. Our whitepapers are educational as they bring forward information and ideas not commonly found in our industry. Our reports explore questions our industry has and then offers factual data and interpretation. When we work with clients, we are providing them with solutions to challenges and questions they have. When we do presentations and webinars for the industry or clients, it is about education and entertainment, making learning fun. Everything we do could be viewed through an educational prism.

C.I. - What do participants of your content gain that they cannot find anywhere else?

IHRSA to Governors: "Gyms Aren't Responsible for Spread"

BOSTON, MA - In the continued fight to open health and fitness facilities across the country, IHRSA, the International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association, sent a letter to all 50 U.S. governors to show that the fitness industry is not part of transmitting COVID-19. To show a united fitness industry, the letter was signed by many industry leaders, representing thousands of gyms, fitness clubs and studios.

Health and wellness have never been more essential to our country as they are at this very moment. With a spike in the number of COVID-19 cases, and the decision by the Arizona governor to, once again, close health clubs in the state, our industry united to send a strong message directly to every state's governor. The letter has three asks for each governor:

1. Consider the scientific evidence that the



Mark Williamson

ST/MW - The individuals who access our resources will receive:

1. Thoroughly researched and sourced information on topics not always covered in our industry. We tend to focus on management, leadership, branding and innovation topics that are not frequently addressed by industry pundits. We try to draw insight and inspiration from thought leaders in other industries and translate them to meaningful and applicable insights for the fitness industry.

2. Our reports provide data and interpretation of data around topics of relevance to the industry, from our *Annual Trend Report* to our recent report on the *Member Perspective on COVID-19* closure or even our authoring of reports for industry associations.

To read ClubIntel's Whitepapers and Reports, go to www.club-intel.com.

3. Do not shut down gyms and fitness centers that can operate safely.

IHRSA to Governors: "Gyms Aren't Responsible for Spread"

fitness industry is not the problem when it comes to the spread of the virus.

2. Take into account Americans' mental and physical health.

3. Do not shut down gyms and fitness centers that can operate safely.

The letter outlines evidence to show that fitness facilities have not been to blame for the transmission of COVID-19. In a survey consisting of 135 clubs with 3,443,123 total check-ins, fitness industry consultant, **Blair McHaney** of *MXM/Medallia*, reports that there were 0.004% of positive cases reported as of June 30.

Contact tracing in some states supports this finding. For example, while Arkansas is experiencing a spike in COVID-19 cases, contact tracing from the state government shows less than

Webinars and Virtual Town Halls

To close out this cover story on Continuing Education, I would be remiss were I not to mention Webinars and Virtual Town Halls. These have existed prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic, but they have simply exploded since the virus took hold of the world. Almost all of the organizations covered in this story, and many others not covered, have featured this virtual information source in recent months, and what's even better, is a lot of them have built libraries featuring the ones they have already done. If you have not already done so, be sure you check out this form of continuing education! Start with *IHRSA* at www.ihrsa.org/webinars and *Club Industry* at www.clubindustry.com/webinars.

■ ■ ■

Thank you to **Eddie Tock, Jay Ablondi, Mark Williamson, Norm Cates, Pamela Kufahl, Sara Kooperman** and **Stephen Tharrett** for their comments and contributions to this article. Enjoy the world of knowledge, and thanks for reading!

(Justin Cates is the Publisher of *Club Insider*. Having been born into a club business family in 1985, Justin grew up in the health and fitness club industry. He has lived and breathed this industry for 35 years, since his own day one, and he loves it dearly. Graduating from the Terry College of Business at The University of Georgia in 2007, Justin has run day-to-day operations of *Club Insider* for 12 years. Justin was elevated to Publisher of *Club Insider* on April 5, 2020. Justin's Dad, Norm Cates, continues to serve as Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993. You can reach Justin by phone at 423-314-4310 or email at Justin@clubinsideronline.com.)

0.3% of newly infected individuals visited a gym. Additionally, new research from the University of Oslo found no COVID-19 transmissions associated with fitness centers in a randomized trial of reopened fitness facilities (As a result, Norway reopened its gyms nationwide).

Combined, these data points offer clear indications that the safety and sanitation policies implemented at gyms, clubs and studios that have been allowed to reopen are effective and that these businesses may pose little to no additional risk for COVID-19 transmission compared to other public places.

The letter also reinforces the value of fitness, our industry's commitment to stringent safety and sanitation protocols and the mindset of our members to be safe and responsible with their health.

The Most Important Requirement for Re-Opening

By: **Sumit Seth**

Re-opening a gym during a global pandemic seems to be even more difficult than opening a gym the first time you started your business. This is primarily because of this truly being unprecedented, a new territory for all of us. None of the uncertainty that we face today has ever been successfully overcome by any other, with the result being there is no seminar or cookbook that lists out the secret recipe one needs to follow to come out triumphant on the other side.

What we do have, are plenty of varying opinions and advice for what to do tactically as you open your gym. The one thing that is universal in all said information is also the one that has stood the test of time and has really never wavered: **TRUST!**

TRUST laid the very foundation of your gym business prior to COVID-19. It built your relationship with the member, made them take the steps in their fitness journey with you and eventually was the glue that built your community. And, now more than ever, it is the same thing that will help you to rebuild your gym business. You

now have the unique opportunity to not only welcome clients back and get your business on track but to have a direct tangible impact on starting the recovery process for your entire community by cultivating a genuine human connection with each of your clients.

There are two quotes that are especially appropriate for what we are dealing with today.

One is the wisdom of a French horse-riding master named **Antoine de Pluvinel** of the 16th century who said, *"You can never rely on a horse that is educated by fear! There will always be something that he fears more than you. But, when he trusts you, he will ask you what to do when he is afraid."*

The Second is by **Dan Brown**, *"Men go to far greater lengths to avoid what they fear than to obtain what they desire."*

In today's world, the one thing that is spreading even faster than COVID-19 is FEAR. There is of course the fear of the pandemic and the economic crisis, but then, we have the current socio-political situation, which is exacerbating the burden of the unknown.

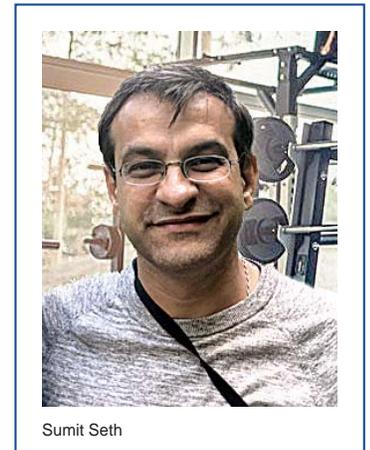
Our job, then, as essential local

service providers, is to develop TRUST with our community. When we can establish our trustworthiness, we can begin to make a real difference in the lives of people who simply want to know what to do now that they are afraid.

In the case of gym members, the shutdown brings out some specific fears. They are afraid of regressing physically after so many hard-fought gains. They are afraid of being permanently disconnected from their community, their accountability and support groups. They are afraid of forced budget constraints and difficult decisions regarding their lifestyles. They are afraid of getting sick, or perhaps even worse, spreading sickness to others.

All of these fears are valid. But, all of them can and need to be overcome.

TRUST starts with truth. In the 24-hour news cycle world we live in, it can be difficult to discern truth. Everybody seems to have an angle or an agenda. Your clients will be looking to you for not just the information about safely working out and staying fit but for the application of that information. If you do not fill that information void, they will either receive



Sumit Seth

blatant misinformation or continue to sit in a vacuum stewing in the fears we discussed earlier. Neither is acceptable.

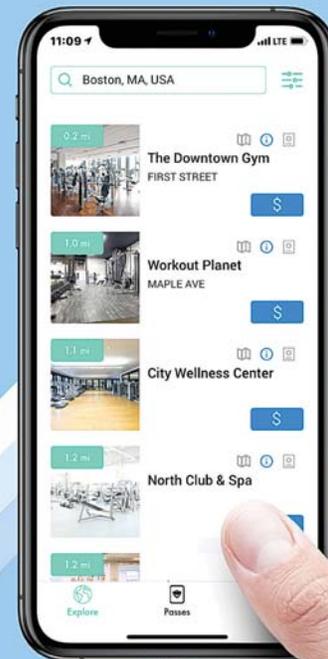
The first thing we need to do after consuming the information --action plans, requirements, phases, etc.-- being mandated by the local government is to translate them into digestible, (See **Sumit Seth** Page 17)



Reach the Unreachable

Zeamo makes it easy for gyms and clubs to attract employees and health plan members with money to spend on fitness via their company-sponsored wellness subsidies and reimbursements

- A secure platform that generates additive revenue from users who are not joining gyms
- Generate higher quality guest traffic
- A marketing channel that pays YOU every time a lead is generated
- Seamless check-in experience for the end-user and the club staff
- Total transparency-access user information to market to them for membership



zeamo.com/gym-owner

Selling Amid Crisis

By: **Casey Conrad**

No matter what state in which your facility is located, and regardless of what "Phase" of re-opening you may be operating in, it's fair to say that "Back to normal" does not yet exist for health and fitness operators worldwide. Even for clubs or training centers that may be allowed to have a higher capacity, the public mindset of crisis is still amuck for many consumers. Of course, the population is very split, with some feeling that masks and social distancing is absolutely ridiculous while others look at you with disgust if you are walking your dog without a mask and gloves on. Regardless of your beliefs, as a business owner/operator, you must be sensitive and professional to all customers and prospects. Most importantly, you must abide by Federal, State and local guidelines so as to avoid any legal issues.

Your Sales Team

Selling during these times of crisis can be challenging. Not just because a percentage of the population won't feel comfortable being in such an interactive environment, but also because you will have employees who may have unspoken concerns that unconsciously, and negatively, impact their effectiveness.

Therefore, the first step in getting your sales numbers back on track is to meet with each staff member responsible for sales. Check in with how they are feeling and if they have any concerns about performing their job. If yes, how can

you collectively come up with a strategy to move forward? This step is imperative, because without sales revenue, no facility will succeed.

Unless you are the one responsible for sales, take the time to have these meetings one-on-one, be genuine, be honest with one another and be willing to accept that the outcome may be that you will have some positions that need filling.

Mindset Training

With the right sales staff in place, it's time to incorporate some training. An important element of re-launch training is acknowledging and openly discussing the amazing opportunity the crisis has brought to our industry. Specifically, at no other time in our lives has the awareness about wellness been so pronounced. Specifically, you would have to be living under a rock to not now know:

"Those individuals who have co-morbidities, such as obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure, are many more times likely to die of COVID-19 than healthy individuals."

Think of how many people during this crisis began some kind of exercise program at home. Not just those of us who already exercised and simply needed to find a way to get our workouts in without a gym. Specifically, hundreds of thousands of people made a conscious decision to start exercising. People couldn't go out to eat, so many began to learn how to cook healthier meals. Millions of people were

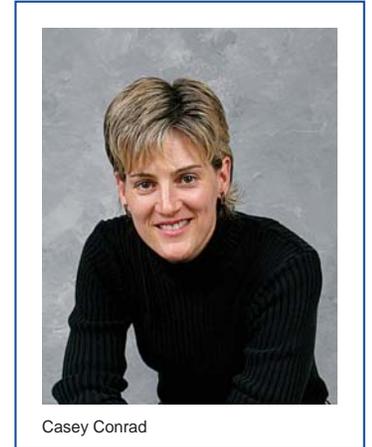
stuck at home and had time to go online and watch webinars and YouTube videos about health and wellness in general. The bottom line is that there are literally millions of people who are primed and ready to now join a commercial fitness facility.

Every person on your sales staff needs to realize what an opportune time this is for selling memberships. Yes, of course there will be some people that aren't ready to come into the club, but we only had about a 19% penetration rate to begin with! If you don't keep your staff focused on the positive aspects, they will get pulled down by all the negativity in the media. Find online articles and resources that support this shift towards wellness as a way to reinforce their opportunities to prospect.

Sales Skills

Although mindset is a huge part of sales success amid crisis, skills are also necessary. Of course, the basic sales process is still fundamental: meet & greet, qualify, touring, price presentation and overcome objections. However, there are some additional skills that are highly effective and necessary to incorporate into today's sales presentation.

The first is weaving current health education into the tour. Specifically, I would suggest having a "Learning Center" for members that highlights the articles that support why exercising during this crisis is one of the best decisions an individual can make. Having this information is great for members and seconds as a touring spot for guests. Most importantly, presenting



Casey Conrad

information in this format allows for the discussion to be one of education and not some kind of scare tactic. This is critical. The prospect must feel good about starting an exercise program, not feel guilty or scared because they haven't been. An added benefit is that with printed articles comes an element of credibility and social proof, which all help to support a positive buying decision by the prospect.

Once the prospect has been exposed to the learning center area and a conversation has been had, it is very important for the salesperson to affirm the prospect's decision to get started on a new exercise program. By literally congratulating the prospect for starting, you utilize the psychological concept of "commitment and consistency." This unconscious law (See **Casey Conrad Page 21**)

...Sumit Seth

continued from page 16

understandable truths that mean something to your clients. For, even though the same broader information is being received by your clients, they crave for the experts' (yours) translation and the effect it would have on their lives. It can take various forms, such as:

- We would require you to reserve your spot for group classes as we will limit the class sizes.
- We would cut down the session time from an hour to 45 mins to account for an extra deep cleaning in between sessions.
- You would need to work out in masks.

Your translations have to be clear, fair, reasonable, and at the crux, need to come from a place of wanting to help, educate and be part of the broader solution. Of course, they will never trust you if they don't hear you. **Trust also comes through communication.** And, for communication

to be effective in gaining the client's trust, it needs to be *clear and consistent*.

All of the expertise and education we shared earlier needs to be discussed with your clients. These need to be sent via all possible channels --text messages, video clips, emails, snail mail, websites, social media-- for everyone consumes information differently. The more personal the touches, the better. Clients need to see, feel and know that you can be relied upon, are on top of things like safety and cleanliness, and above all, have their best interest in mind. From a tactical perspective, it can take forms, such as:

- Calling and Texting individually to check in with each client (it's not really that hard, folks).
- Doing a video walkthrough of your facility to account for social distancing.
- Demonstrating the cleaning process and location of sanitization stations and masks.
- Creating a FAQ document that addresses questions that your clients are pondering.

Not all of your communications in these times should be about Government mandates, safety protocols or delayed start dates. Use your passion, expertise and friendliness to spread some good cheer and inspiration! When your clients repeatedly get nudged by a combination of such truths, positivity and check-ins, it calms down their fears, and they know that, through these changes and options you've made, you genuinely care about them and are invested in their success.

This approach will not only help you to weather the current storm but also set you up for massive success in the future when things return to normalcy for you would have demonstrated tremendous trustworthiness.

One last thing to remember is that your communications should not be purely transactional; they have to be personal. I know of so many gym owners who have automated their communication to the point that it seems they have forgotten that we're in the people business. My humble request, especially during this time when

there is an insatiable demand for being connected, is to please shut off routine transactional messages (the ones where they get payment reminders via texts or mass texts informing them about the same standing zoom live meetings). It's the best way to kill the process of building solid personal relationships.

Be that, and you will be loved forever.

(Sumit Seth is the Co-Founder of Naamly, www.naamly.com, the member experience platform designed for modern training gyms. Sumit is a strong believer in the power of human connections and had successfully built one of the fastest growing and largest staffing firms by focusing on creating long-term relationships. He exited the venture to focus on his health, reconnect with family and found solace in fitness which led him to start Naamly. Naamly helps fitness studios impact more lives in their communities by building deeper member relationships to drive business success.)

...The Re-Opening

continued from page 3

ACAC Fitness Centers

Phil Wendel, Owner

We have 12 clubs in three states (Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania): 7 are larger flagships, 4 are express and one is a kid's campus. As of July 1st, all are now reopened.

Membership Accounts: On March 10th, Pre-COVID, we had 33,700 membership accounts (individuals, couples and families). On July 1st, we had 26,000 membership accounts (60% of the 7,000 lost are on freeze. Cancels are up 20%, but the real issue is the lack of the ability to sell memberships; sales through July are down 50%).

Attendance Year Over Year: In Week 1 of re-opening, we were seeing about 21% of what we saw in 2019 (attendance); in Week 2 of reopening, we were seeing about 25% attendance (compared to same day in 2019); in Week 3, we were seeing about 33% of what we saw same date in 2019; now, in Week 4, we hit 36%.

Revenue: We'll hit about 50% of what we had in July of 2019. Historically, our revenue mix is 65% membership and 35% non-dues. Our non-dues revenue has taken the biggest hit.

Personal Training: We were on pace in early March to have \$10,000,000 in personal training revenue in 2020. Some trainers want to come back, but their clients don't; some clients want to come back, but their trainers don't. Put simply, our 2020 revenue for Personal Training is a huge unknown.

Youth Programming: Summer camps, pre-school and swim lessons are coming back at a faster pace than our members, but we're still running only at 60% of what we did in 2019.

Fixed Costs: Most of us in the industry have large fixed costs; ours are \$30,000 per day (without payroll) and consist of rent, debt service, utilities, taxes and others.

Outcome: Our Balance Sheet was in pretty solid condition in early March, so we will get through this.

Cincinnati Sports Club

Mary Frank, Sales and Marketing Manager

Key Statistical Measures

2020 compared to 2019

- **Total Revenue:** 85% of 2019
- **Total Paying Members:** 80%
- **New Member Sales (#s):** 77% (We only sold memberships from June 15 to June 30 in 2020)

■ **Member Cancellations (#s):** 22% fewer in 2020 than in 2019.

■ **Total Check-Ins (#s):** 65%

■ **Total Non-Dues Revenue:** 80%

■ **EBITDA:** 65 - 70% (estimated) of previous year. The company is striving to restore 85 - 90% of commission and bonus pay for all staff.

■ **Total # On Freeze** (As % of Members on March 15, 2020): 20%. Freeze members continue to pay monthly dues of approximately 10 - 20% of dues.

Other Key Info

■ **List of Current Restrictions** (% of Capacity, No Childcare/Summer Camps, Small Group Exercise, Lockers/Sauna/Steam, Spa/Massage, Food & Beverage, Social Space, Basketball, Other): The Governor of Ohio has issued mandatory and advisory guidelines for various business sectors. Due to the size of the Cincinnati Sports Club, we have to adhere to 12 business sectors guidelines, exceeding 40 pages. The restrictions affect the spacing, density, disinfecting and staffing for the various venues of the club.

■ **Key Surprises (Positives/Negatives):** 1. Our customer service scores were 50% higher when we were shut down than when we have been re-opened. 2. Very few people will allow facts, data or science to change their personal views or emotions.

■ **Key Recommendations to Other Clubs:** The news cycle will continue to be negative through November and possibly beyond. Clubs should proactively develop and implement a plan to present a positive and empowering message to its members to counteract the national media's doomsday message. It is possible to be COVID-safe and stay active.

■ **Any commentary you'd like to provide on any of these subjects** (Freeze Group, Cleaning Protocols, Reservation App, Who Is Cancelling, Estimated Dates of Full Facility Use, Timing of Full Marketing Launch, Staffing Issues, COVID Member/Staff Positive Testing & Steps, Preparation For Surge #2): The CDC, due to the early

South Korean case studies on gyms, have a skewed bias against health clubs, which has been adopted by some Governors, Mayors and health officials. It is great to see IHRSA and Medallia present data to counteract these biases. We believe the South Korean case studies can be easily explained by the high density and limited spacing of members.

Club Greenwood

Paula Neubert, President/General Manager

Key Statistical Measures

2020 compared to 2019

■ **Total Paying Members:** This is for memberships, not members: 3,067 (June 2020) vs. 3,726 (June 2019).

■ **New Member Sales (#s):** 90 (June 2020) vs. 71 (June 2019). A very nice surprise...

■ **Member Cancellations (#s):** 143 (June 2020) vs. 54 (June 2019). Not a surprise, but still disappointing.

■ **Total Check-Ins (#s):** 16,170 (from June 9 - June 30, 2020) vs. 37,624 (June 2019). We opened at 48% of normal check-ins and have hit 60%+ as we continue to increase daily.

■ **Total # On Freeze** (As % of Members On March 15, 2020): We currently have 61 memberships on the extended 60-day High Risk Hold, and we currently have 62 memberships on Medical Freeze.

Other Key Info

■ **List of Current Restrictions:** We opened at 25% of capacity per room, allowing for six-foot physical distancing in each room. We have been able to move to 50% capacity per room allowing for six-foot physical distancing. This only changed the weight room and indoor pool. Since, we have left the weight room as is to better monitor members but did increase the indoor pool. Summer Camp opened the day before the club opened at a maximum of 50 campers. We have been full each week. Kids' Club and the Youth Activity Club have been open since day one (June 9) with limited capacity. Group Fitness has been offered since we opened with limited capacity, 30 minutes between classes, instructors

in face shields, by reservation only and decreased total number of classes. Lockers and showers are open with physical distancing requirements (locked lockers, sticks at vanities, no amenities). No steam or dry sauna, but whirlpools are open with limited capacity. Spa is open. Food and beverage are open for takeout. No seating or social gathering allowed. Basketball and organized sports are available with capacity and restrictions.

■ Key Surprises (Positives/Negatives):

Positive: the total number of sales we had in June. Great month, far exceeding our goal, and it beat the previous year. It seems to be carrying over to July as well. **Negative:** the number of cancels that continue to come in. We felt we weathered the storm during the shutdown, but resigns continue to come in after opening. Since July is our first full month of billing since March, hopefully, this is the final big month of resigns.

■ Key Recommendations to Other Clubs:

Be flexible and patient. Know things are changing daily. Admit this is uncharted territory for everyone, and we are trying our best to do right by members while protecting our business. Remind local and State health officials of the positive role we play in keeping the community healthy and remind them that we are part of the solution, not part of the problem.

■ Any commentary you'd like to provide:

We are continuing with our enhanced disinfecting procedures and are concentrating more on appropriate ventilation and air filtration. It's surprising to see our cancels are not in one age category or another. The percentages by age group are pretty consistent to pre-COVID. Thankfully, we were able to keep all 240 staff members on payroll while we were shutdown, so they were all eagerly waiting to get back to work. The biggest issue is the added staff we have had to bring on board to monitor capacity restrictions. This is increasing our overall payroll expense while we are not bringing in the same amount of revenue.

Gainesville Health & Fitness

Joe Cirulli, Founder/CEO

Key Statistical Measures

2020 compared to 2019

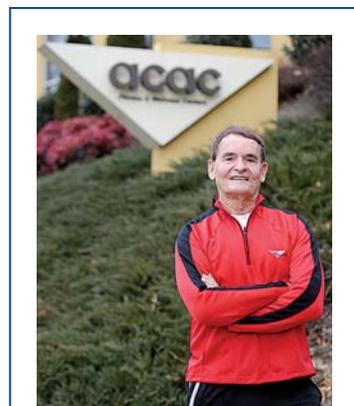
■ **Member Cancellations (#s):** +5%

Other Key Info

■ **List of Current Restrictions:** No capacity issues. Basketball games not allowed.

■ Key Surprises (Positives/Negatives):

Positive: the number of members who continued to pay during the shutdown. **Negative:** the massive fear.



Phil Wendel



Paula Neubert

(See *The Re-Opening* Page 19)

...The Re-Opening

continued from page 18

■ **Key Recommendations to Other Clubs:** Keep the facilities clean and sanitized all day long. Enforce social distancing.

■ **Any commentary you'd like to provide:** Members who are terrified to come back are mainly the older members and those who are compromised in any way.

Saco Sport & Fitness

Scott and Beth Gillespie, Owners

Key Statistical Measures

2020 compared to 2019 (% change)

Note: Only open 2 weeks and owed members 1/2 month's dues billed in March.

- **Total Revenue:** -69%
- **Total Paying Members:** -2.3%
- **New Member Sales (#s):** -4.8%
- **Member Cancellations (#s):** +66%
- **Total Check-Ins (#s):** -78%
- **Total Non-Dues Revenue:** -57%
- **Total # On Freeze** (As % of Members on March 15, 2020): 12.75%

Other Key Info

■ **List of Current Restrictions:** Only Open 2 weeks in June. No Kids Club, No Pool, No sauna, No Jacuzzi. Capacity limited to only 50 people (in all clubs over 10,000 square feet); we are 25,000. Social Distancing or 14' with "Intense exercising/heavy Breathing."

■ **Key Surprises (Positives/Negatives):**
Positives: Most member's compliance and appreciation for the work we did to reopen safely. The higher than expected volume of Seniors still coming back, craving social and healthy movement community.
Negative: The "Mask Issue" - With proper education, coaching and follow up, most members are okay with it.

■ **Key Recommendations to Other Clubs:** Safety, Safety, Safety. Air Quality, Hand Sanitation, Physical Distancing, Equipment Sanitation, Staff Training to teach, coach,

and guide members to comply in a friendly manner.

■ **Any commentary you'd like to provide:** There are challenges getting back Trainers and Instructors. Maine has the strictest regulations yet at 14' social distancing and a max capacity at 50 people, which for Saco is at 18% state capacity and 25% of our parking capacity. *When our State's opening date was pushed back from 6/1 to "TBD," we formed a coalition of Maine clubs and hired a lobbyist to fight to get us open. It worked, and we were open in two weeks. Without that effort, I believe we'd still be closed.* The Maine Governor and the CDC Director have said publicly many times versions of "Gym's aren't safe!" This has all been based on the South Korea Zumba Studio study. It has done irreparable harm to our industry in Maine. We have some massive PR ahead of us to regain safety credibility.

Stone Creek Club & Spa

Larry Conner, General Manager
 Marvin Gresse, Assistant GM

Key Statistical Measures

2020 compared to 2019

- **Total Revenue:** 85% of 2019
- **Total Paying Members:** 91%
- **New Member Sales (#s):** 117%
- **Member Cancellations (#s):** 121%
- **Total Check-Ins (#s):** 86%
- **Total Non-Dues Revenue:** 84%
- **EBITDA:** Loss for 2020
- **Total # On Freeze** (As % of Members on March 15, 2020): 15%

Other Key Info

■ **List of Current Restrictions:** Louisiana is currently in Phase 2 of reopening, which limits our building capacity and studios to roughly 50% of normal capacity. There are guidelines for proper spacing of Food & Beverage tables and seating in the club, as well as social distancing with minimum spacing of at least six feet for equipment and group fitness studios. The pool deck is also limited to 50% capacity. Wet areas in the locker rooms are open, and

each is limited to 50% of capacity. We have signs and space decals in place to remind members of the restrictions in these areas. Childcare is operating at 50% capacity, and we have implemented a call-in reservation system for those spaces available. Basketball is limited to half court, as we have used the other half to space out fitness equipment. We strictly enforce individual basketball shooting only, and no contact among those making the shots. This has been a point of emphasis for the State Health Department and Fire Marshall.

■ **Key Surprises:** The unknowns and having the ability to adapt to them quickly as they come. You will have to adhere to new government regulations and emergency orders, evolving information and guidance from health officials, as well as questions and concerns from members, staff and the community you serve. There is no manual for operating in a pandemic; you will have to digest the information and make the adjustments and realignment of your organization in a timely and accurate manner. Rely on your experience, mission of your club, your team and lean on your industry peers and fellow industry professionals for support and resources.

■ Key Recommendations to Other Clubs:

Be Present! - Encourage your management team to be on the floor to assist and work with your team. Interact with members and employees to answer their questions and instill confidence in the protocols and procedures you have enacted to keep everyone safe and healthy.

Be active and vocal with your state, local, and national elected officials - These government officials can help or hurt your reopening and future operations. Give them the information they need to make the correct decisions when it comes to the health and fitness industry. Show them the necessary and essential function you perform for your community and how much your members depend on the club for their health and wellness needs. *Exercise is Medicine!* And, it leads to a bolstered immune system

and overall health to deter and combat the virus. Forge that relationship with officials in your area now! And, show them how you operate safely.

Support the ILC wing of IHRSA - They are the industry voice and lead on the Federal level and who needs to help shine the light on our industry and show how we can operate in a safe and responsible manner for our members.

■ Any commentary you'd like to provide:

We are working with the group of members that are currently on Freeze, and we are being flexible as they are comfortable to return. We are keeping them updated with the current programs and services that are happening at the club. We also give them the information that shows we are cleaning and disinfecting, as well as all of the enhanced protocols in relation to safeguarding the club against COVID-19. We have extensive signage for entry and procedures of members and staff, new hospital grade disinfectants, hydrostatic sprayers, wipes and hand sanitizer throughout the club. We are showing pictures of all of this to them in emails and social media posts, and we created several videos that we sent to members, especially those on Freeze. We also have our management team contacting anyone on Freeze with whom they have a personal relationship with to answer any questions they may have and to just check in with them. We are also looking at doing a featured Guest Day for those on Freeze to come back and experience the club for a day. We are watching the possibility of a future surge, and of course, we are hoping it does not come. But, hope is not a plan: Being prepared for it and ready to handle it will set us up to work the best for our team, members and community overall. We learned a great deal when we were forced to close in March. We will use that knowledge and lessons learned in the event another closure comes in the future.

VillaSport

Laurie Smith, Senior Vice President

Providing data for four clubs that were open
 (See **The Re-Opening** Page 21)



Joe Cirulli



Scott and Beth Gillespie



Larry Conner



Marvin Gresse

The Use or Non-Use of Masks Within the Health Club Industry: *Suggestions for Best Practices in the Acute and Long-term Situation*

By: **Eric Durak**

A recent white paper by Minnesota exercise physiologist, Dan Zeman, piqued my interest regarding wearing masks in the health club setting. With many clubs opening, his report was interesting in that the thrust of his report stated that, when clubs open, they should be willing to let the coronavirus in as well. In discussing the coronavirus, the topic of wearing or not wearing masks became one of the seminal topics for public health vs. personal liberty. For our discussion here, I want to look at the use (or non-use) of masks within the health club setting in several areas.

I come from a unique perspective. My career started in personal training. I also worked in medical research, performing clinical exercise studies. In 1992, I started the Cancer Well-fit program, and now over 27 years later, thousands of survivors have trained in the club setting. During that time, no overt medical PPE has ever been worn by staff. Over the past 15 years, I have worked in environmental health and safety and injury prevention, and my skills in OSHA regulations and safety at the workplace has become part of my daily routine. This perspective has allowed me to discuss aspects of this issue on social media, and the recent conversation with exercise physiologist Dan Zeman (who posted his piece on LinkedIn on June 5, 2020), sparked yet more debate on the topic. Here are my thoughts.

The Use of Masks Within the Hospital Setting - Masks have been used in the operating room and intensive care wards for decades. The key is not spreading infections, mostly in open wounds. But, surgeons and nurses are quick to point out that masks, gloves and gowns are used only as needed (Desai, Klompas). There are few health professionals that wear masks in private rooms, or outside, as they have been practicing a social distance with patients for a long time. A report by Zhu in 2014 surveyed health care professionals who wore N95 masks for extended periods. Over 1/3 developed headaches and dizziness with extended use. Another report found that N95 masks offered a high protection against clinical respiratory illnesses and bacterial infections but not viral infections or influenza-like illnesses. Cloth masks offer almost no protection against influenza-like illness.

The Use of Specific Masks in the Social or Work Setting - Those who ski recognize the Balaclava brand of face and ear mask protection on the ski slopes. However, it should be remembered that this mask protects against frostbite, not infection.

So, its designation as a guard against any type of coronavirus or bacteria should be stated. It is meant to be worn outside in cold weather and not any type of indoor exercise.

The Issue of Mask Use in COVID-19 - Until recently, the World Health Organization, the US Surgeon General, and the CDC did not recommend wearing a face mask or covering of any kind, unless a person was known to be infected with a virus. According to Blaylock, the current recommendations are not based on any research of this virus and have never been used to contain any other virus pandemic or epidemic in history. These recommendations from international associations are listed as follows:

Annals of Internal Medicine: "In conclusion, both surgical and cotton masks seem to be ineffective in preventing the dissemination of SARS-CoV-2 from the coughs of patients with COVID-19 to the environment and external mask surface."
bit.ly/clubinsider93

WHO: "A medical mask is not required, as no evidence is available on its usefulness to protect non-sick persons."
bit.ly/clubinsider94

WHO: "However, there is currently no evidence that wearing a mask (whether medical or other types) by healthy persons in the wider community setting, including universal community masking, can prevent them from infection with respiratory viruses, including COVID-19."
bit.ly/clubinsider94

Current Recommendation (after June 1, 2020) - So, why in the past few weeks have many county and city public health officers recommended (through mandates) wearing a mask while out in public? In my opinion, it is an attempt by public health departments to be doing something regarding the coronavirus issue. They see using a mask as a way for the public not to spread germs. From one perspective, it may make sense. Don't spread a virus by covering up. In reality, people were using whatever means of covering their faces they could to comply with public health recommendations, which bordered on the ridiculous when people wear crocheted masks to the shopping center.

Science vs. Policy vs. Politics - It is interesting to see people wear knock-off versions of N95 masks, which have one way ventilators that allow air to filter through the material, and expired air flow through valves (true N95 masks must be fitted to the individual, and are used in the occupational and medical setting while

handling materials that may cause bodily damage if inhaled). Persons are also walking into stores and restaurants using cotton masks and bandanas, neither of which can trap the small particulates that would come from a sneeze or expelled water droplets into the air. The main thrust is that business owners, restaurants and other public places want to be seen as, "doing the right thing," and many are mandated by city governments with the threat of closure if their staff and patrons do not wear masks while in their buildings.

The Use of Masks Within the Health Club Environment

It is not my place to tell any health club owner-operator not to mandate the use of masks for employees. Their goal is to maintain a clean environment and to limit contact of any potential virus from person to person. But, Management should know that the use of masks over time does present challenges in the following domains:

- Many reports are coming out citing that the use of masks doing routine work is causing difficulty in breathing. This may occur due to the change in O₂ / CO₂ breathing ratios over time. According to health journalist, Dr. Jennifer Margulis, masks do this and more.

- According to research by Zhaoshi et al, masks increase blood carbon dioxide, and the longer the wearing of masks, the higher the levels.

- Masks may cause brain fog (which I believe is exacerbated with exercise) due to insufficient oxygen during exercise.

- Masks may increase risk of infection. A recent report on the use of masks causing pulmonary pleurisy has just been published, and I feel that this will be the tip of the iceberg with employees who are wearing masks for eight or more hours a day are already complaining of sore throats and tight lungs and breathing problems.

We need only to take a look at research in exercise physiology (Astrand and Rodahl) to note that exercise has effects on the following mechanisms: the need of circulation in the removal of lactate from the system, reduction in gas transport and oxyhemoglobin, changes in bicarbonate ions in gas exchange and the limitations of the oxygen transport system. These are all affected by reducing ambient air coming into the lungs. This is why I would not recommend the use of masks while exercising, as the physical results of such would include dizziness, fainting, tightness in the chest, vomiting, higher



Eric Durak

than normal heart rate based on work load, changes in blood pressure and the aforementioned chemistries in the blood, all of which would make for an unpleasant exercise experience to say the least.

These symptoms would depend on the type of exercise (strength training vs. continual, intensity - light vs. heavy, and the current state of the individual - deconditioned vs. highly conditioned). A recent MSN report also discusses long-term issues while wearing masks, such as dyspnea, headaches, contact dermatitis, chronic respiratory issues and depressed immune systems. The immune system issue was discussed by Dave Nieman back in 1990 when he published on how intense endurance exercise had a suppressive effect on immune cell function. We could make a case for training with masks that may exacerbate this effect due to lower oxygen and higher carbon dioxide levels over time.

With this information in mind, the last thing that club owners would want to think about are the legal and constitutional issues relating for a forced medical procedure for healthy people. This has become a hot issue in the vaccine field nationwide, and the use of masks has been challenged already. Lawsuits in California for violation of 18 USC section 1804 of the *United States Civil Rights law* that states a person has the right to gather in certain places (public) and cannot be turned away due to specific condition (in this case, not wearing a mask while healthy). It should be noted that as of June 15, 2020, testing for antibodies or diagnostic testing, but neither test is accurate, and some estimates state that the positive predictive value (sensitivity and specificity) of the COVID-19 test is less than 50%. With so little information about the actual illness, and more healthcare professionals questioning headline stories, club owners should weigh the following:

- The actual risk of members (a self-selected population) actually infecting
 (See *Eric Durak Page 21*)

...Casey Conrad

continued from page 17

of persuasion relies on the fact that most human beings want to do what they say they will. Saying to a prospect, "You know, you should be proud of yourself for starting a program," sends a powerful message.

Backing that message up with what is called a "validating story" helps to further the effect. Put together, it might sound like this: "You know, you should be proud of yourself for starting a program. I say that because, even though we know exercise is one of the best things someone can do to stay healthy during this pandemic, you would be shocked at how many people

come in, have a chat and look around but don't get started. I had a gentleman the other day who was overweight, had pre-diabetes and his doctor told him to come see us, but for whatever reason, he continued to procrastinate. Kind of sad. Anyway, good for you." Incorporating stories takes all the pressure off the situation because you are not just telling the prospect what they should do but reinforcing their decision by way of a third-party story. Stories are powerful.

Finally, be proactive about outlining the facility's policy regarding cleaning, social distancing and any other regulation that you are required to follow for Federal, State or county laws. Not

every prospect is going to admit that they are having concerns about utilizing a gym environment. By bringing up the guidelines and how the staff is taking every precaution necessary, you will help to put the prospect's questions and/or concerns at ease. Personally, I would add a tie-down question at the end of that discussion. One such example would be, "Knowing that we are doing all those things to keep you safe while working out, do you feel more comfortable?" People who aren't concerned will usually tell you, while people who may have had concerns will express their level of comfort or ask additional questions. Either way, you will have pre-handled any safety objections before moving to the

price presentation.

At the end of the day, "Sales is sales," but by taking a few extra steps with a prospect, you will have them create more desire to start, reduce resistance to buying and simply feel more comfortable with exercising at your facility despite the current crisis.

(Casey Conrad has been a sales and marketing consultant in the fitness industry for over 30 years. She is the author of numerous books and online training programs. Her newest book is entitled Selling Against the Low Cost Competitor and can be purchased at www.CaseyConrad.com/products/books.)

...The Re-Opening

continued from page 19

in June 2019 and also were reopened in June 2020 for the majority of the month (CO, TX, OR).

Key Statistical Measures

2020 compared to 2019 (% change)

- **Total Revenue:** -64%
- **Total Paying Members:** -34%
- **New Member Sales (#s):** -16%
- **Member Cancellations (#s):** +41%
- **Total Check-Ins (#s):** -68%
- **Total Non-Dues Revenue:** -58%
- **Total # On Freeze** (As % of Members on March 15, 2020): 17%

Other Key Info

■ **List of Current Restrictions:** Texas Clubs: 50% capacity; Colorado Springs, CO: 25% capacity or up to 50 patrons per room, whichever is less; Beaverton, OR: capacity set to accommodate 6' distancing throughout club, no indoor or outdoor pools, no childcare; Roseville, CA: capacity set to accommodate 6' distancing throughout club, no whirlpools, saunas or steam rooms; and San Jose, CA: Will reopen on July 13, awaiting final guidance from State/county.

■ Key Surprises (Positives/Negatives):

Positive: How effectively our home office team has been able to work and collaborate remotely (since March 13). *Negative:* The sometimes unclear and/or contradictory reopening guidelines or restrictions issued by state or local governments.

The extremely short notice typically given by state or local governments for closing, reopening or changing a safety protocol. How much the reopening guidelines and timelines differed between states and between counties in a state. How politically charged the issue of wearing or not wearing masks became.

■ Key Recommendations to Other Clubs:

No silos; staffing models during this time need to be lean and flexible, with people cross-trained and able to help and cover in a variety of departments. Ensure all employees take the safety protocols and precautions seriously and follow them, every day, every hour; we need to keep our teams safe and prevent a domino effect if one person tests positive for COVID-19. Decide up front how strict you will be with enforcing member protocols, and then, stay consistent. Visible cleaning and disinfecting by everyone on the team throughout the day and throughout the club; demonstrate to members how serious you are about maintaining a clean and safe environment. Form alliances with other club operators, for advocacy efforts in your state or community and for sharing best practices, information, etc.

■ Any commentary you'd like to provide:

Positive COVID-19 Tests: Recommended steps to follow if anyone is notified that a member or employee has tested positive for COVID-19, immediately do the following:

1. Consult with public health authorities for then-current guidance at the time of the incident.

2. Review the situation (viewing security camera footage as applicable) and speak with the individual to see if he/she came within six feet of anyone for at least 15 minutes while at the club any time from 48 hours before illness onset to the time he/she began isolation. *This corresponds to the CDC's definition of a close contact.*

3. Confirm the individual has reported his/her positive test to the public health department, which will then reach out and help them recall everyone with whom they had close contact during the timeframe while they may have been infectious and then begin contact tracing by warning any exposed individuals (contacts) of their potential exposure as rapidly and sensitively as possible.

4. Although close contacts will likely be contacted by public health staff, the club may also endeavor to reach out to any member or employee who meets the criteria of a close contact.

■ ■ ■

Continuing through these unprecedented times, I want to thank **Joe Cirulli, Larry Conner, Laurie Smith, Marvin Gresse, Mary Frank, Paula Neubert, Phil Wendel, and Scott and Beth Gillespie**, who took time out of their busy schedules, literally keeping their businesses alive, and their staff and members safe, to contribute to this article. They have shared sensitive information. They have shared lessons they have learned. And, it is my hope you have



Laurie Smith

read and then re-read this article in order to fully utilize the statistical information and lessons learned that are pertinent to your own health and fitness club business. *Club Insider* will continue to report on this topic until it has become a thing of the past. Thank you for reading.

(Justin Cates is the Publisher of Club Insider. Having been born into a club business family in 1985, Justin grew up in the health and fitness club industry. He has lived and breathed this industry for 35 years, since his own day one, and he loves it dearly. Graduating from the Terry College of Business at The University of Georgia in 2007, Justin has run day-to-day operations of Club Insider for 12 years. Justin was elevated to Publisher of Club Insider on April 5, 2020. Justin's Dad, Norm Cates, continues to serve as Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993. You can reach Justin by phone at 423-314-4310 or email at [Justin@clubinsideronline.com.](mailto:Justin@clubinsideronline.com))

...Eric Durak

continued from page 20

others in the health club setting (see report by Gao et al) is rare.

■ The timing of the ending of the "curve" of any pandemic infection, based on the work of William Farr in the 1800s, which still applies today.

■ The overall cleanliness of health clubs and their impact on keeping people at a

higher level of sanitation (which includes hand washing pre and post workout).

■ Enhanced use of HVAC systems that will filter air, move air, and in some cases, purify air. Even moving air has a big effect regarding fresh air. One of the big improvements in this was the introduction of products such as Big Ass Fans to the marketplace. They work very well.

In conclusion, the use of masks in

the health club setting presents a challenge to owners and operators, from a staff and member standpoint. My takeaway here is, like any other virus, COVID-19 will have a finality, and when it does, it should allow health clubs to operate at a less stringent level but maintaining their elevated standards of cleanliness, customer support and wellness offerings.

To view the list of References for this article,

please go to bit.ly/clubinsider95.

(Eric Durak is President of Medical Health and Fitness and is a long-time industry educator and consultant. He is the 1999 IHRSA Institute Award Winner (with SBAC) for the Cancer Well-fit Program and has spoken at industry conferences for over 30 years. For more information, go to www.medhealthfit.com.)

World Gym International Appoints Lewis Stanton Chief Executive Officer and Jarrod Saracco Chief Operations Officer

LOS ANGELES, CA - World Gym International, an iconic global fitness brand, has reorganized its senior leadership and appointed two new executives to its team. **Lewis Stanton** has been appointed *Chief Executive Officer*, taking over all day-to-day management for the company. The *previous CEO, Guy Cammilleri*, is now *non-executive Chairman of the Board*. **Jarrold Saracco** has been named *Chief Operations Officer*, taking over operations at all corporate-owned gym locations and supporting franchisee operations at more than 200 locations in 15 countries.

"Lewis and his team have helped us navigate the current pandemic while continuing franchise development in the United States and internationally. Lewis' experience transforming companies to achieve rapid growth and his commitment to fitness make him the perfect CEO for World Gym," said Guy Cammilleri.

Lewis Stanton added, "World Gym is a storied brand that helped to shape the modern fitness industry as we know it. I am

honored to lead this passionate team and to continue to grow this company globally. We are focused on helping our franchised and corporate gyms reopen and be successful."

Stanton has been the CEO in multiple companies across several industries. He was the COO and CFO of a prominent publicly traded technology company which was a leader in the hospitality industry. Stanton has also advised many companies, both as a consultant and a board member, on strategies and tactics for rapid growth and value creation.

Since joining the company, Stanton has appointed a new Chief Operations Officer, Jarrod Saracco. Saracco is a 25-year veteran of the health and fitness industry with experience in every level of club operations. As Founder and President of Health Club Doctor Inc, he has travelled the world helping fitness businesses of all shapes and sizes reach maximum profitability. He has been a featured presenter and keynote speaker

at major industry conferences, has held countless workshops and webinars around the world and has been a published author in industry trade magazines and other journals. He brings a wealth of industry knowledge and support across many functions, including lead generation, sales, daily operations, systems and processes, gym equipment selection and more.

"Working with our corporate-owned gyms and several of the franchisees over the last few weeks, I have seen the talent and limitless potential in the World Gym family," said Jarrod Saracco. "I am

looking forward to growing this iconic fitness brand by leading our operations team, supporting all of our corporate-owned and franchised World Gym locations and ultimately, helping our more than 1,000,000 members in 15 countries achieve their fitness goals. I'm excited for what lies ahead."

Over the past few years, World Gym has continued to grow, adding 39 new gyms in 2019. World Gym International credits its growth to the strength of the modernized World Gym brand.



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FROM FOOD TO FITNESS

Aaron Davis's story...

Aaron is a serial entrepreneur and experienced multi-unit franchisee owning 17 Little Caesars. He was looking for an opportunity to diversify his portfolio and has always been a fitness nut, so branching out into the fitness franchise segment was the logical next step. Food service operators know firsthand the challenges of the restaurant industry, which include high labor costs, extensive employee turnover and skyrocketing operating costs. Aaron was very impressed with the ease of operations and the need for only 3-4 employees to operate the club. After speaking with Workout Anytime franchisees, he was equally impressed that 73% own multiple units. Aaron leaned on Workout Anytime's proven franchise model to 'hit the ground running' and opened two locations within one year with a third on the way. Workout Anytime has more than tripled their club count over the past 5 years and have averaged 38% growth in new club openings.

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