

Norm Cates'

CLUB INSIDER

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF TRUST

The Eagle Has Landed

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CLUB INSIDER

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF TRUST

The Eagle Has Landed

By: Justin Cates & Norm Cates

As much as I wanted to be, I was not a child of the Apollo era... the *Apollo Missions* I mean. Instead, the names I became accustomed to were: *Columbia*, *Challenger*, *Discovery*, *Atlantis*, and now, *Artemis*. Watching the *Space Shuttle Missions* over the years was incredible, but sadly, on two occasions, they were devastating. However, this did not deter my curiosity of how it all came to be: *Mercury*, *Gemini* and *Apollo*. Over the years, I became as much a student viewer of the past as a hopeful observer of the future. Of course, particularly, I gravitated to *Apollo 11*. Who didn't!?

When **Neil Armstrong** and **Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin** landed on the moon, they had *20 seconds of fuel remaining*. After a *quarter-million-mile journey*, their landing was one of the most stressful, yet pivotal moments in human history. It was a success, though, and the famous words we all know today ("One small step...") will live forever. Before those words, though, in my opinion, equally important and famous words were spoken:

*"Tranquility Base Here.
The Eagle Has Landed."*

As cliché as it gets, the rest was history. The story has been told through the ages, and we all have our own sentiments related to it. For my Dad and me, all of this has a special meaning, so much so that I share the following story:

Years ago, from a flip chart of business ideas using colored markers at a

Faust Roundtable #1 Meeting, Club Insider was born. By any measurement, 30+ years now, we have exceeded our original goals and some. For us, every month, "*The Eagle Has Landed*." Sometimes with plenty of fuel to spare, sometimes with nothing left in the tank.

Interestingly enough, somewhere along the way, internally, we began using those famous words to signify that a new edition is complete. We say, "*The Eagle Has Landed on Edition #___*." Then, we experience a moment of tranquility before gearing up for the next.

I couldn't tell you when or how this tradition began, but I can tell you why... When the world's first satellite was catapulted into orbit, and then a person, it wasn't the *United States* leading the way. For quite a while, our country was behind in the *Space Race*. Eventually, though, we caught up and won.

When we began to publish *Club Insider* in 1993, we experienced something similar... Others had already been there and controlled the space. When we reached orbit, so to speak, we were the underdog, but we wanted to do our part in making our industry a better place. So, we kept on... Unlike the *Space Race*, though, where victory was achieved by landing on the moon, we gauged victory on being around in any capacity to help others.

As the *Author of this Article* and the *Publisher of Club Insider*, I felt it important to explain where we came from. Now, let me tell you where we are going. This month, I share the following important announcement about our future: *The August 2023 Edition of Club Insider will be our final PRINT edition. IMPORTANTLY,*



Justin Cates



Norm Cates

we will continue publishing weekly and monthly through our online platform, www.clubinsideronline.com.

After 30+ years of publishing in print, including surviving the pandemic, we are making this decision for one simple reason: **YOU**. We want to continue to be here for you. We will continue to be here for you. And, every month, via multiple digital formats and eBlasts, we will continue to deliver the following:

1. **In-Depth Cover Stories** that share stories of success within our industry;
2. **Best Practice Articles** from experts in the field;
3. **Norm's Notes** that share timely news and views;
4. **Press Releases** that share additional news;
5. **"Insider Speaks"** editorials as needed that tackle tough issues or topics of such

value they are a must-read.

On our end, nothing is changing. Our production schedule will essentially remain the same. All the support activities we do day-to-day to support future editions will continue. And, of course, we look forward to coming to you *every week and month* with more and more content. But, what does this mean for you? Well, frankly, it depends on if you are a *reader/subscriber* or a *supplier/advertiser*...

Readers/Subscribers

For quite some time, pre-pandemic included, to keep costs in check, we have had to limit what we have done in print. We have supplemented this printed content with a weekly online (See *The Eagle Has Landed Page 8*)

Inside the Insider: Edition #356

- Recovery: A Mega Revenue Opportunity for Fitness Business Owners - **By:** Gary Polic
- How the Internet and Social Media Have Changed Club Design Forever - **By:** Bruce Carter
- Unlocking Explosive Gym Business Growth: Four Powerful Strategies for Success - **By:** Jim Thomas
- Knowing When to Quit - **By:** Thomas Plummer
- Myths About Pre-Choreographed Group Fitness - **By:** Cathy Spencer Browning
- And, of Course, *Norm's Notes*

Norm's Notes

■Hello Everybody! This is your **Club Insider Founder and Tribal Leader** Since 1993 checking in with our **356th** monthly edition of this **30+** year running club business newspaper I refer to as: **A Labor of Love!** I'm *really happy* that you're reading this edition. And, I am *very thankful* that you've tuned in again for this iteration of *Norm's Notes*, as I proceed on my keyboard with my long-time habit of "Telling-It-Like-It-Is!" This month, we have some big news for you! **Read On!**

■Is AMERICA a GREAT COUNTRY, or WHAT!? Hmm... hmm... hmm! And, let me add my normal monthly salutation: **GOD BLESS AMERICA and GOD BLESS YOU, YOUR FAMILY and YOUR BUSINESS!!!**

■TODAY FOLKS... I sit at this keyboard producing my monthly **Norm's Notes** for you all like I have done every month for over 30 years now. *This particular Norm's Note is to inform you all that this is the last Club Insider edition that will be printed ON PAPER. BUT... DO NOT BE ALARMED! I'm still kicking!*

I, **NORM CATES**, your *Club Insider Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993*, and my Son, *Partner in and Pub-*

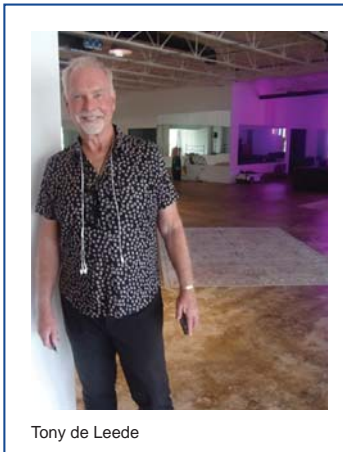
lisher of Club Insider, **JUSTIN CATES**, will continue publishing *Club Insider* every month. And, I will continue writing these *Norm's Notes* every month until I kick the bucket.

Now at **age 77**, I'm still totally mentally able to help produce *Club Insider*. And, thankfully, longevity runs in my family. My beloved **Dad, NORM CATES, SR.**, lived to be 92, so I'm planning to stay on this job for a good while... of course with **YOUR HELP** as our **ESTEEMED READERS!**

To learn more about this very important announcement, our reasons for this change and what it will mean for you, I invite you to read this month's Cover Story, "*The Eagle Has Landed*," which begins on **Page #3**.

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To close this Note, I want to again reiterate, *Club Insider is not going*



Tony de Leede



Norm Cates

anywhere! We will continue our *Weekly and Monthly Editions*, but they will now be **ALL DIGITAL**. And, we thank you for reading! **Stay Tuned, Folks!!!**

■It was great to see **TONY deLEEDE** back here in Atlanta, all the way from Australia. Tony was formerly *Atlanta's Australian Body Works (ABW) Owner/Operator* of 10 or 11 clubs here for many years. In 1993, 30+ years ago, when we started publishing *Club*

Insider, we didn't sell advertising. Then, when we did begin to sell advertising, *Tony was one of our first Club Insider advertisers!* Well, our *old friend from "Down Under"* was here in July preparing to return to Atlanta with a new club product on the Northside of town. I had the pleasure of meeting him at *The Fountain Oaks Shopping Center* in Sandy Springs, about a mile from where he had started his first ABW Club over 30 (See *Norm's Notes* Page 6)

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PUBLISHER (p): (863) 999 - 2677
 Justin Cates (e): Justin@clubinsideronline.com

FOUNDER & TRIBAL LEADER SINCE 1993 (p): (770) 635 - 7578
 Norm Cates, Jr. (e): Norm@clubinsideronline.com

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PRINTING and MAILING SERVICES - Walton Press

Club Insider
 P.O. Box 137314
 Clermont, FL 34713-7314
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...Norm's Notes

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years ago. Tony's new Atlanta club will be 10,000 square feet, and he's building it with his Daughter, **NICOLE**, and other local Atlanta partners. That's right! This amazing dude is now 70 years old, and here he is returning to the very same Sandy Springs he started his chain of ABW clubs years ago. **Good Luck, Tony**, as you restart your business relationships here in Atlanta! Folks, stay tuned as we will provide updates as Tony's new club operations develop.

■As you know, our good friend, the late **AUGIE NIETO**, *Founder of Life Fitness* (along with the late **RAY WILSON**), and the *Founder and Chairman of Augie's Quest*, passed away in *February* of this year (See our March 2023 Cover Story). Many of the greatest memories of Augie share one thing in common - *his inappropriate sense of humor!* A recent email about Augie that I received had the headline: "*Incurable is Unacceptable!*" That writing about Augie made a good point of praise about him, and this is what it said: "Augie had a way of seeing the bright side of life, even in his darkest hours. Augie was self-deprecating, dry and irreverent. But... that's Augie. He was unapologetically authentic and candid. And, as his friends would later say, as the disease continued to advance, humor was a way to move from seeing him as someone with ALS to seeing the *real* Augie. Augie's *humor* was an *act of defiance*. And... Augie's Quest carries that *defiance* and that *determination*, to *beat the odds in curing ALS*." Folks, please go to augiesquest.org, and help **LYNNE NIETO**, her family and the Augie's Quest

Team find the **CURE** for ALS!

■Well, friends, **THANK GOD** it's **THAT TIME OF YEAR AGAIN!** Yahoo! "*WHAT, pray tell, Norm, in the HELL are you talking about!?*" Haha! Just in case you've not been one of our readers until now, I want to welcome you on board as one of our now highly esteemed *Club Insider Readers*... So, let me explain folks... Every year at this time, i.e. August, I kick off the *College Football Season* with my studied comments.

Before I do that here, let me explain something. A long time ago, when I had hair on the top of my head, I played high school football at *Rome Free Academy* in Rome, New York. In my senior year of high school, I was honored to be named to the *New York ALL-STATE Football Team* as a linebacker and guard. With those credentials, I earned a full-football scholarship to *N.C. State* in Raleigh, North Carolina where I majored in Parks and Recreation Administration. That was where I mastered the art of teaching and calling square dancing!

Every Summer, before practice would start for each football season, I would spend my days as a Life Guard. And, when I was not looking out for drowning human beings, I was either lifting weights or working as a bartender at a monster of a night club on Atlantic Beach, North Carolina called "*The PAVILION*." And, folks, when I describe that place as a "monster," I would estimate it to be 10,000 square feet with six bars surrounding a band stand and a big dance floor. On Friday and Saturday nights in the Summer, the Pavilion would have entertainment provided by the best bands in the South and draw 2,000 people, some of whom had driven three hours to get



The 1967 N.C. State Wolfpack Football Team



Norm Cates' Atlantic Coast Conference All-Conference Football 1967 Plaque

there! Dance bands such as *The Embers* and *The Tams*. It was there that I learned and loved to dance what was called "*The Shag*," and we would dance our young butts off well into the night. Ahhhh... **What FOND memories!**

But, I digress. Let me move on to telling you about our 1967 *N.C. State Football Team*, which was **ranked #3 in the United States**. That #3 Team ranking happened after we beat the #2 ranked *Houston Cougars* in the Astrodome, and the next weekend, we beat **Bobby Bowden's Florida State Seminoles** in Tallahassee on a Saturday night on our way to pushing our record up to 8 and 0. *We were well on our way to winning the National Championship!*

After those huge victories, we flew up to College Station, Pennsylvania where we played the now late **JOE PATERNO's Penn State Panthers**. Sadly, we lost that day in front of a packed stadium. Our next stop was in Clemson, South Carolina where we had to play the *Clemson Tigers*, whose Head Coach was the one and only **FRANK HOWARD**. And, guess what, we lost that game! Even after 56 years since that loss, my teammates and I still hold a very strong belief that **that game was STOLEN from us!**

Let me explain that experience because it was both amazing **AND** totally disgusting because the hotel we were sleeping in at Clemson the night before the game was right next to the Clemson Campus, and guess what happened? **You won't believe this, but it actually happened...** something close to 10,000 Clemson student fans also known as "*drunk students*" were standing outside our hotel the Friday night and Saturday morning before the game, yelling and hollering at us, blowing horns, etc. keeping our entire Wolfpack Team awake until 4 or 5 AM in the morning. *By the morning, we were hyped up but very few of us got ANY sleep.* And, that day, yep, you guessed it. We **LOST** that game that day to *Frank Howard's Clemson Student Body and Football Team*. **And, nobody on our N.C. State Team has EVER gotten over that!**

So, after back-to-back losses to Penn State and Clemson, a season record of 8 and 2 and our excitement of having been ranked #3 in the country being long gone, those two losses temporarily knocked us out of the top 20. So, instead of being a Top 2 ranked team playing an also top ranked team in the Orange Bowl Game in Miami, (See *Norm's Notes Page 7*)



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...Norm's Notes

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Florida, for the National Championship, we ended up playing *The University of Georgia Bulldogs* in the *Liberty Bowl* in Memphis, Tennessee. But, guess what!? **We BEAT that Vince Dooley-coached 1967 UGA Football Team 14 to 7**, and we ended up being ranked **#15** in the nation in one poll and **#17** in another. **WOW!** What memories!

Okay folks, **NOW YOU CAN WAKE UP!** By now, I'm sure I've put y'all to sleep. But, if you're an avid college football fan like I've been all my life after playing the game in high school and college, I hope you can see the pain, and again in the same year, the **JOY** my Teammates and I lived through. The kids today get to experience the same thing, year-in and year-out, and that is a beautiful thing! **Go Wolkpack!!!**

■ In this last **Norm's Note** that I have for y'all today in this **VERY SPECIAL EDITION**, because this is our last edition printed on paper, I want to **Tip My Black Hat to ALL OF YOU** and especially to a very special group, a group that I've been involved with here in Atlanta for over 30 years. I guess you could say, "*Involvement as the Leader*," and that group is called, "**The Great CHARACTERS of Atlanta.**" To qualify for admission to this esteemed group of Atlantans, nominees must believe in the importance of "**MAKING LIFE FUN**," and for sure, this bunch believes in doing that! Haha! And, needless to say, I'm very glad to have been their leader all these years! **GOD BLESS THEM ALL... DEAD or ALIVE!**

This special crew was originally assembled by our good friend, **RON HUDSPETH**, the former very popular *Atlanta Journal/Constitution Newspaper Columnist* who for many years, six days per week year-round, wrote a newspaper column about Atlanta's night life. But, one day, *Mi Amigo, Señor' Ron Hudspeth*, up and moved to Costa Rica, leaving our special group of *Great CHARACTERS* without our leader! Very importantly, without our leader, the special annual party that

he'd produced for the *Great CHARACTERS* and our many friends from all over town... stopped happening!

After having gone a few years without these parties, I was frequently hearing from members who'd been left high and dry without our annual party. So, I stepped up and took it on as something I now do every year. By the way, I don't do our party for **MONEY**. I do it for **The FUN of it!** And, I don't have much help with this annual party, except for the help of my good friend, **JOHN GORMLEY**, who's a *Great CHARACTER* member who's helped a lot. So, I want to **THANK GORM** for his help all these years! And, I want to thank all of those member friends who've been kind enough to chip in the needed Moola to help me pay some of the expenses each year! I want to say **Thanks** to and express my **Sincere Appreciation to MS. VANESSA HUNDLEY**, our lovely D.J. who plays the dance music for our always **FUN** party. I also want to say **Thanks** to and express my **Sincere Appreciation to MS. HEATHER WATSON**, the boss lady of the terrific *HUDSON GRILLE* in Sandy Springs, a very special place that's a truly fabulous Atlanta area bar, restaurant and party place where we've had these parties the last 10 years. Heather, thank you many times over! We greatly **APPRECIATE** what you do for us! Now, Y'all listen to me here folks, IF YOU or anybody you know in the Atlanta Metro Area are **EVER** looking for a great place to throw a special party, or just a super place to dine out and entertain friends, you simply cannot beat the *HUDSON GRILLE* in Sandy Springs, a Northside Atlanta suburb.

Over the 30+ years we've been publishing *Club Insider*, I've repeatedly urged you club owners out there to "**MAKE-IT-FUN**" in your clubs for your members because doing that will help you **KEEP the MEMBERS** you already have and to **ATTRACT NEW MEMBERS!** So, folks... **DO "MAKE-IT-FUN"** for your members in your clubs, and you will get back a return of your investment in time and money that will thrill you! Know this, part of my reason for sharing my work with *The Great CHARACTERS of Atlanta* with you is so

that ALL of you know that: "**I PRACTICE WHAT I PREACH!**"

Last, I would be remiss were I not to share the names of those who attended our *2023 Great CHARACTERS of Atlanta Party* on July 18th: **JOHN GORMLEY**, and our six brand-new *Great CHARACTERS*: **JIM BURK, TOM HAM, STEVE CUPP, DAVE GROVEMAN, LAURENT KAHL** and **DENNIS MOSS**. Welcome Aboard, Gents! Also, my little Brother whom I love very much, "**GATOR DAVE**" **CATES**; retired Delta Airlines Captain, **SCOTT MURRAY**; **GENE GILBERT**; **J. CLARKE DAVIS**; **BENNY MURRAY**; **HAROLD "SPEEDY" SULLIVAN**, *World Class Barkeep*; *the one and only BullDawg*, **STEVE HONEY**; **BILLY SIMPSON**; **JOHN HASTINGS**; **JACK BENNETT**; **BEN JONES**; **PETE GLOVER**; **CARL BORTLE**; **LEE MERRELLI**; **JIM MILLER**; **DICK RING** and **DAVID "CHAMP" MATLOSZ**.

At the party, I also introduced the following *Great CHARACTERS* first, because during the last 12 months, these four esteemed *Great CHARACTERS* and dear friends have passed away: **JOHN ESPY**, **GAROLD JORDAN**, **BILL PERRY** and **TONY PINTO**. Those four great fellows joined the other 30 *Great CHARACTERS* who've already passed on to "**The HAPPY HUNTING GROUND.**" Among those 30 fellows who've already passed, were the very special **ATLANTA MAYOR SAM MASSELL**; *the Legendary and famous Atlanta Radio, D.J. "SKINNY" BOBBY HARPER*; and a night club operator to top all night club operators... **JERYL HENSLEY** just to name a few. **May all those we lost Rest In Peace. Thank you all for reading, folks.**

■ Well, folks, that does it for our printed editions! We will see you next month Online!!! And, as a **REMINDER**, to make sure you receive *Future Editions of Club Insider*, please again see/do the following...

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

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

(*Norm Cates, Jr. is a 49-year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. He is the Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993 of Club Insider, now in its 30th year of monthly publication. In 1981, he was IHRSA's First President, and a Co-Founder of the Association with Rick Caro and five others. In 2001, he was honored by IHRSA with its DALE DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award, one of its highest honors. And, in 2017, he was honored with Club Industry's Lifetime Achievement Award. You can reach Norm by phone at 770-635-7578 or email at Norm@clubinsideronline.com.*)



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...The Eagle Has Landed

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edition. With our future monthly online editions, though, we will no longer have to constrain ourselves. You can expect more content than ever.

If you are already a *Paid Subscriber*, you can skip to the **Important Note** below. However, if you are **NOT** a *Paid Subscriber*, let me tell you about our newly expanded subscription options:

Monthly Subscription: For **\$10 per month**, you will receive *Club Insider Monthly* editions, as well as access to all previous editions, for as long as the subscription remains active. Think of it as your *Netflix* for industry content.

Yearly Subscription: If you'd like to save a little bit of money, for **\$99 per year**, you will receive **12** *Club Insider Monthly* editions, as well as access to all previous editions.

Team Subscription: If you want to make sure your team also receives *Club Insider*, and you want to do it on the up-and-up (i.e. no password sharing), for **\$249 per year**, you and **five** teammates will receive *Club Insider Monthly* editions, as well as access to all previous editions.

All Subscription Options include our *Club Insider Weekly eBlasts* and full access to *ALL Archives*, over 30 years of industry knowledge! No matter which option you choose, the dollar value cannot be beat!!!

Regardless of your subscription status, please read the following **IMPORTANT NOTE** to make sure you receive *Club Insider* next month!

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Supplier/Advertisers

As we go to press with this edition, we are working with all of our *Current Advertisers* to convert/renew their support to a new advertising system and ensure their message continues to reach our readers. If you are reading this as a *Prospective Advertiser*, here is what we are doing... Essentially, we are converting the dated model of pricing based on Ad Size and Number of Advertisements during an Agreement Term into something much simpler, a **Tiered System of Benefits**:

Directory Tier: Company Logo is included on every page of our website and in every eblast. When that logo is clicked, it directs users to an *Advertiser Profile* on our

website that includes additional company information, contact details and a link to the company's website.

Primary Tier: *Directory Tier Benefits* are included plus the following: Choice of up to a Half Page Ad is included in all versions of *Club Insider Monthly*. Additionally, Square-and Leaderboard-size Web/Email Ads are included in the Sidebar and Content Areas of our website on a rotating basis with others in the Primary Tier. Finally, the Leaderboard-size Web Ad is included in all Weekly and Monthly eBlasts (totaling 4 - 6 per month, up to 64 per year). All Web/Email Ads will link directly to the company's website.

Premium Tier: *Directory and Primary Tier Benefits* are included with the following modifications: The Half Page Ad becomes a prominently positioned Full Page Ad in all versions of *Club Insider Monthly*. Additionally, all Web/Email Ads will be denoted as Premium and contained within their own more prominent sections on the website and eBlasts in which they reside.

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Sincere Thanks and Appreciation

We would be remiss if we did not send out the following **Sincere Thanks and Appreciation**:

- **Our Editor.**
- **Walton Press**, the 123-year-old company that has printed every edition of *Club Insider* since our founding in 1993.
- **Our Advertisers**, 267 of them to date, who have kept the presses running (See **Page #10**).
- **Our Authors**, 323 of them to date, who have kept the content flowing (See **Page #11**).



Norm Cates and Justin Cates at IHRSA 2023

■ And, to you, our **THOUSANDS** of readers, month-in and month-out, who provide us with our reason to do this.

An Artemis Future

Following Apollo, missions such as *SkyLab*, *Space Shuttle* and *ISS* occurred. None captivated the public's imagination as much as Apollo... until now, with *Artemis*, humanity's next venture to the Moon with the eventual goal of Mars. As the sun sets on our print edition format and fully rises on a digital future, unlike the missions following Apollo, we are going straight to an *Artemis Future*: **bigger, better and beyond our previous limits**. *The Eagle May Have Landed*, but we are now **GO FOR ARTEMIS!!!** We thank you all for reading *Club Insider*! We will see you next month.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: To make sure you receive next month's edition, please go to www.clubinsideronline.com/convert and input the **Edition ID #** from the *Address Label on the Cover of this Edition*.

(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 38 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 15 years. Justin became Publisher of *Club Insider* in April of 2020. Justin's Dad, Norm Cates, continues to serve as Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993. You can reach Justin by phone at **863-999-2677** or email at Justin@clubinsideronline.com.)

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 49-year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. He is the Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993 of *Club Insider*, now in its 30th year of monthly publication. In 1981, he was IHRSA's First President, and a Co-Founder of the Association with Rick Caro and five others. In 2001, he was honored by IHRSA with its DALE DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award, one of its highest honors. And, in 2017, he was honored with Club Industry's Lifetime Achievement Award. You can reach Norm by phone at **770-635-7578** or email at Norm@clubinsideronline.com.)



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The November 2017 Edition of Club Insider



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Recovery:

A Mega Revenue Opportunity for Fitness Business Owners

By: Gary Polic

The next *Big Ancillary Income Opportunity* is here! And, I am interviewing one of the industry's Rock Stars, **Victor "V-Man" Verhage**. He has given me the opportunity to perform an in-depth Q&A with him on the next big income producer for your fitness clubs. VMan is an experienced *Personal Training/Small Group Training/Group Fitness, Design, Recovery and Solutions Specialist* with a demonstrated 28-year history working in the health, fitness and wellness industry. He is skilled in maximizing usage, profitability and member traffic in the personal training, small group training and group fitness areas and spaces.

An Interview With Victor "V-Man" Verhage

Polic Consultants Group (PCG) - What do you see as the #1 revenue growth opportunity area for fitness club owners?

Victor "V-Man" Verhage (V) - *Recovery* was the biggest trend from the *IHRSA 2023* show in San Diego, CA, but how to apply it to a fitness business, a PT session or class is often misunderstood. Make no mistake, *Recovery* is a growing trend that is only about to get much, much bigger and more important to a fitness business' revenue and income earning potential.

What I find so fascinating is how very few companies, owners or PT staff

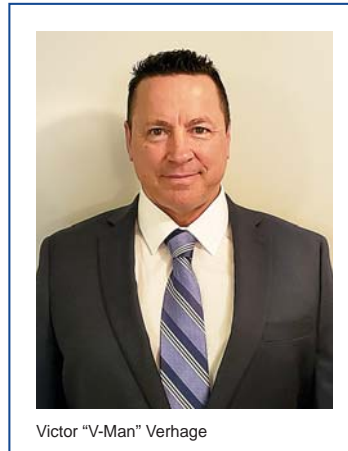
can even provide a specific definition for what recovery is or the expected benefits. I'm curious how they test and prove the recovery strategy they sell or prescribe is effective or does what they say. You hear it all the time, "this helps with recovery," then prove it and show me how you test and measure a member' or client's readiness to train or participate in a class today.

Recovery training and spaces inside a fitness club in today's extremely competitive market is an entirely new massive additional income revenue generating opportunity.

Top earning fitness professionals view recovery programming, testing, measuring and methods as necessary for the acquisition, retention, renewals and referrals to their business and earning potential. When recovery is planned and measured for members and clients, they can expect significantly improved results for their physical, mental and emotional health and wellness.

PCG - There are a lot of options to choose from when adding or designing a Recovery revenue generating space or program. Where should a club owner, GM or PT Director start?

V - It depends on your members' and clients' needs and wants. Also, how much space do you want to dedicate specifically for Recovery, and what is your budget to accomplish this?



Victor "V-Man" Verhage



Gary Polic

There are a few options to consider. First, do you want a medical or non-medical Recovery space? A non-medical fitness Recovery space could start at **\$44K up to \$75K** and on average generate an additional **\$12K - \$37K per month**. The medical option starts around **\$750K to over a million dollars** and generates **\$150K - \$200K per month**.

Additional revenue options could include red light therapy, cold plunges, massage chairs, infrared sauna, hot/cold therapies, vibration therapy from *Hyperice* or *Power Plate*, IV/NAD Therapy, skin care, facials, compression, PEMF, salt therapy, cryo, oxygen therapy, acupuncture, guided meditation like *Brain Tap* and floating. All should be individualized as needed.

In healthy fitness programs, Recovery is focused on managing stress and energy levels.

Mental recovery such as deep breathing using a heart rate monitor to lower heart rate, meditation, *Drishti Beats* Yoga, Tai Chi, aromatherapy, music and art therapy each help with the mental stressors from an intense training session or classes.

The #1 objective of a complete measured recovery plan is to have members and clients wake up feeling ready to perform at their optimal best in each aspect of their life and work.

PCG - When should a member or PT client begin a Recovery program?

V - Recovery begins just as soon as a PT session or a class ends, so what's your specific recovery plan for each one of them? What if they wake up so sore or tired that they can't go to work or take care of their family? Then, they quit, cancel and want refunds.

If members and clients continue to train at high intensities, which places high demands on their body, then count on injuries, no shows and cancellations

to begin and occur on a frequent basis. Most members and clients only start doing recovery training when they feel pain or are very sore and fatigued.

That's why helping your members and clients to be proactive and prevent negative outcomes before they happen to them and your business is critical.

PCG - What should PT clients and members who participate in group classes do?

V - If club owners, GMs, and PT Directors value injury prevention, show the percentage and retention. Then, how effective the recovery plan they have after that session or class will determine when they make it back for the next session or class.

A recovery plan that includes a combination of active (*FreeMotion, Power Plate, Spine Fitter, Drishti Beats Yoga*) and passive (*Hyperice, Cold Plunges, Red Light, PEMF, Massage Chairs*) methods might help you progress better than just passive recovery methods only.

PCG - How important is being consistent with a recovery plan for every member and PT client?

V - Just like with personal training or attending classes, an effective recovery plan requires more than attempting to do the very minimum. Consistency in recovery is just as important as the weight training and conditioning program. Poor quality sleep will put any client and member in a negative recovery deficit.

This is one reason why a person should evaluate their sleep trends using some form of wearable tech. I currently use the *Polar Grit X Pro* orthostatic test and the *Morpheus HRV* test each morning (about 3 - 5 minutes); and the data is critical to make an accurate decision for anyone's recovery plan.

When your training becomes (See **Gary Polic** Page 13)



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V-Man is an experienced Personal Training/Small Group Training/Group Fitness, Design, Recovery and Solutions Specialist with a demonstrated 28-year history working in the health, fitness and wellness industry.

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...Gary Polic

continued from page 12

more intense and results begin to diminish, especially for muscle gain, weight loss and reducing stress and fatigue, have a closer look at sleep trends and HRV, each one can provide major insights and an important area to focus on.

PCG - How should a club owner, GM or PT Director begin a conversation about recovery with a member or PT client?

V - What to say to clients who don't see the value in discussing, tracking and ultimately practicing recovery methods? If a person desires optimal health, achieving their specific results and creating lasting benefits that result in higher quality life, it all begins with a personalized training and

recovery plan.

Many trainers, coaches and instructors only focus on training members and clients in the high intensity "Red Zone" and avoid recovery or see little to value in it, because they don't measure or practice it on themselves. You don't just want to train a PT client or member for 30 - 60 minutes and then not have a plan to help each system of their body, mind and central nervous system to recover.

PCG - Vman, any final thoughts?

V - First, just putting in "Recovery" equipment does not guarantee additional revenue, but this is exactly the mindset of most club owners. They just put the "New" thing in, use all the current buzzwords ("helps with recovery"), then believe they've got it, and the revenue and new members

will just easily come in.

Second, the greatest success and revenue growth will come from how educated, specifically in Recovery training methods and programming (*Recover to Win* course by **Joel Jamison**), and how skilled your personal trainers and group fitness instructors are at applying each method and modality to your members and clients. This creates more and better member engagement, excellent customer service, retention, renewals, referrals and then revenue. Just an FYI, if you need and want high quality trainers, coaches and instructors, this is how I recruited and retained them for the last 18 years.

Finally, you need to know the definition of Recovery, how to measure its effectiveness, how to program and individualize it each day for each member

and PT client using a wearable tech device, and specifically, what it is supposed to do to help members and clients feel better, look better and move better.



Thank you V-Man!!! To reach VMan, call/text (630) 913 - 0097 or email victor@restrecoverywellness.com.

(Gary Polic is the Owner of Polic Consultants Group, LLC and National Director of Sales Support at The Wellbridge Company. Gary can be reached by phone at 630-410-1120 or email at gary@policonsultantsgroup.com. You can also visit www.policonsultantsgroup.com.)

Make It Fun Every Day!!!

How the Internet and Social Media Have Changed Club Design Forever

By: **Bruce Carter**

At one time, the sales and marketing goal of all clubs was to get people in the door so potential members could see the facility and interact with staff. The internet has changed this process entirely. Now, the goal is to get potential members to look at a screen: a phone, tablet or computer.

The process has changed, and seldom will someone come into a club without first “checking it out” and researching the club online. It may be the club’s website, *Instagram*, *Facebook*, *TikTok*, *Pinterest*, *Yelp* or *LinkedIn*, or often, more than one of these social media platforms.

So, the question then becomes: How do you get people to bring your club up on their screen? The answer to that is quite involved in the new realm of internet marketing, and therefore, not the focus of this article. However, the next question is: How does your club look on their screen? All of the wonderment, professionalism, service and commitment initially come down to what people see, hear and read on a device.

Obviously, there are two key components of what people view: pictures and video. But, there are many things they can read, such as website content, reviews,

testimonials, etc.

Therefore, the visuals of your club are key. The pictures and videos of what people post in your club are key. The proverbial saying, “A picture is worth a thousand words,” has now morphed into, “A picture is worth 10,000 words.”

Now, your club design is more important than ever. In the past, when someone would walk into a club, coming in from ads or referrals, no matter how the club looked, a staff person could inject a certain amount of enthusiasm and knowledge that would work to increase an individual’s level of excitement. Nowadays, even if someone is referred, they will first research the club online, and “what they see is key!”

Here are some important points about having a club design that will work well with a website and social media presence to impress potential and existing members.

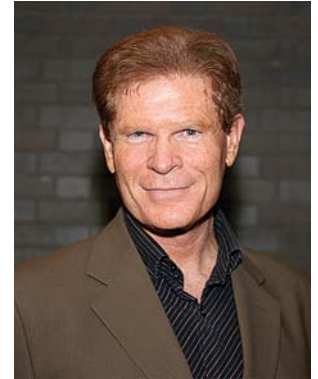
If you want great pictures and videos of your club, as a starting point, consider hiring a professional to design the club. The visual concepts, such as a “wow factor”, inviting, exciting, soothing and state-of-the-art manifest when the variables of color, lighting, flooring, managing space, line of sight, texture, finishes, harmony and balance all come together successfully.

Often nowadays, the trend is to have someone with a cellphone take

pictures, and these become part of the website. It is strongly recommended that a professional photographer or videographer is used to achieve the best possible “a picture is worth 10,000 words” experience. To show off a beautiful club, consider having no people in the picture. If there is a specific message the photo is trying to send, such as displaying your virtual classes, people can be part of the experience. Again, a professional shot of this makes a big difference.

Whatever pictures or videos you create, make sure they are all platform friendly. This is especially true with phones because most people will look at a club on a phone first. Web traffic on phones has increased from 11% in 2012 to 58% in 2022.

Always make sure that the lobby and locker rooms have extra attention in your design and result in attention-getting visuals. If you have a studio without locker rooms (just bathrooms), then focus on the studio experience of finishes, graphics and lighting. Unless an area looks really great, it is better not to have a visual of that area. You might consider using a combination of your pictures and stock photos to create a motivating “experience” for your club. Ask your non-club friends if your website and its visuals would motivate them to want to visit the club.



Bruce Carter

A picture/video should never show a cramped, dirty and cluttered space. None of these should be part of a design, especially in the post-COVID era.

Providing a dynamic “selfie” wall with a very visible location within the club is a must. Consider the club name and logo to be a backlit sign or even neon. Also, consider making the background an artificial plant green wall, wood or other eye-catching finish. Do it right, and more smiling faces in your club will start to appear on social media platforms.

(See **Bruce Carter** Page 17)

Unlocking Explosive Gym Business Growth: Four Powerful Strategies for Success

By: **Jim Thomas**

Are you a fitness enthusiast with an entrepreneurial spirit? Are you looking to skyrocket your gym business growth and leave your competitors in the dust? Look no further! In this article, I will reveal four proven strategies that will not only help you attract more customers but also keep them coming back for more. Let’s dive in and unlock the secrets to success!

1. Solving Problems and Providing Solutions: The Key to Unbeatable Appeal.

At the heart of every successful gym business lies the ability to identify and address the problems faced by potential customers. Understand your target audience, listen to their needs and tailor your services to offer effective solutions. Whether it’s weight loss, muscle gain or overall wellbeing, your gym should be the ultimate solution hub for fitness enthusiasts.

Consider offering personalized training programs, nutritional guidance and expert coaching to empower your members in achieving their fitness goals. By becoming a go-to source for results-driven solutions, your gym will gain an unbeatable appeal that draws people in and keeps them coming back for more.

2. Value Creation: Where Price Takes a Backseat.

While price matters, creating unmatched value is the secret ingredient that sets exceptional gyms apart from the competition. Strive to over-deliver on your promises, offering a range of benefits that make your gym membership feel like a steal.

One way to achieve this is by offering free trials, demo classes or workshops to showcase the quality of your services. Let potential members experience the magic of your gym firsthand. Encourage

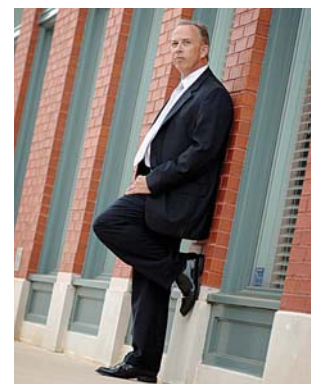
existing members to refer friends and family by offering incentives, such as discounted memberships or exclusive access to premium services.

Remember, when the value exceeds the price, people are not only convinced to buy but are also more likely to remain loyal patrons for the long haul.

3. Crafting a Delightful Customer Experience: The Golden Ticket to Member Retention.

In the fitness industry, member experience and retention go hand-in-hand. A delightful customer experience will build loyalty and turn members into brand advocates, promoting your gym through word-of-mouth.

Ensure that every aspect of your gym, from the reception area to the workout floors, exudes a welcoming and positive atmosphere. Friendly staff, state-of-the-art equipment and well-maintained



Jim Thomas

facilities will leave a lasting impression on your members.

Embrace technology to enhance the member experience further. Consider offering an easy-to-navigate mobile app (See **Jim Thomas** Page 15)

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...Jim Thomas

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for class schedules, progress tracking and personalized workout plans. By staying ahead of the curve and adapting to members' needs, your gym will continue to thrive.

4. Be Easy to Do Business With: Streamlining Convenience.

In today's fast-paced world, convenience is king. Make it easy for potential members to join your gym and for existing members to manage their memberships effortlessly. Implement an intuitive online registration process and offer multiple payment options. Avoid hidden fees and complex contracts, as transparency fosters trust.

Additionally, be responsive to member feedback and concerns. Actively seek feedback through surveys or comment cards and take necessary steps to address issues promptly. Demonstrating your commitment to improving their experience will strengthen the bond with your members and encourage loyalty.

Embrace These Strategies and Witness Unstoppable Growth!

As you integrate these proven strategies into your gym business model, brace yourself for an influx of new members and soaring member retention rates. Gaining an understanding of your audience's needs, providing unbeatable value, crafting delightful experiences and prioritizing convenience are the cornerstones of explosive gym business growth.

Remember, Rome wasn't built in a day, and sustainable growth takes time. Stay committed, continuously innovate and keep pushing the boundaries of what your gym can offer. Embrace change and your gym will not only thrive in the present but also emerge as an industry leader in the future.

So, what are you waiting for? It's time to revolutionize your gym business and embark on a journey towards unparalleled success!

How Fitness Management & Consulting Can Propel Your Gym to New Heights

While the strategies outlined

lay a strong foundation for gym business growth, enlisting the expertise of *Fitness Management & Consulting* can supercharge your success. Fitness Management & Consulting is a team of seasoned professionals with a deep understanding of the fitness industry. They can provide invaluable guidance on market analysis, strategic planning and member engagement strategies that are tailored to your gym's unique needs.

Through their experience and data-driven insights, Fitness Management & Consulting can help you fine-tune your offerings, optimize pricing structures and implement cutting-edge technologies to enhance the member experience. Moreover, they can assist in training your staff, instilling a customer-centric culture and streamlining operations for maximum efficiency.

In a competitive landscape where staying ahead is crucial, Fitness Management & Consulting offers the winning edge that can set your gym apart from the rest. By partnering with them, you'll have access to a wealth of industry knowledge and proven methodologies that will undoubtedly propel your gym to new heights of success. Embrace the

opportunity to collaborate with Fitness Management & Consulting and witness your gym business reach its full potential and beyond.

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(An Outsourced CEO and expert witness, Jim Thomas is the Founder and President of Fitness Management USA Inc., a management consulting, turnaround and brokerage firm specializing in the gym and sports industry. With more than 25 years of experience owning, operating and managing clubs of all sizes, Thomas lectures and delivers seminars, webinars and workshops across the globe on the practical skills required to successfully to overcome obscurity, improve sales, build teamwork and market fitness programs and products. In addition, his company will buy gym equipment from gyms liquidating or closing, provide financing or advance funds on receivables. Visit his websites at www.fmconsulting.net or www.youtube.com/gymconsultant.)

Knowing When to Quit

By: **Thomas Plummer**

The legendary football coach, **Mike Ditka**, once owned a night club in Chicago, a favorite stop for fitness people making the annual pilgrimage to the Windy City for trade shows we didn't need to attend so we could go hang in bars we couldn't live without.

One of Ditka's quirks was to hire retired boxers, dress them in tuxes and let them wander the floor schmoozing. After too many shots with an assortment of IHRSA people, I wandered into the restroom and found one of these boxers, a guy who fought *Muhammad* in his prime, sitting on the floor by the urinals, back against the wall, singing softly to himself. The word "drunk" did not do justice to his condition since he seemed to be in an entirely new category of messed up.

I took his hand, hauled this big man to his feet and helped him to the back office. He hugged me, mumbling in my ear, "I stayed too long man, I should have quit earlier. I never knew when to give it up." Wise words for a boxer who had battled the best ever, and wiser words for an industry like ours, which never knows when to let go of the ghost we used to be.

While other industries innovate, the fitness world, and most of its suppliers, cling to our past. We watched *Sears*, one of the great American companies, fade from domination to closure. We watched *K-Mart* disappear. And, today, we see former greats in retailing plunge to the bottom. Yet, we never learn the primary lessons: generalization does not work in business anymore, and you can never, *meaning never*, be anything except number one or two in your chosen niche and hope to win. The World Cup is on now, and except for a few diehard fans from a country few Americans have probably ever visited, no one next year will remember who finished third.

Wait, you scream, "What about *Wal-Mart*, are they not a company built to serve everyone?" No, they were never a generalist but a target-specific business chasing the lower-end demographics by affluence and education, and they remain a category killer. And, *Target* survives by fighting for the middle-class market, offering better quality and serving as an alternative to the lower-end model, and they too, dominate a niche they created.

In the fitness market, time has stood still, and we still fight the fitness wars as if it is 1990. Investment groups try to outsize and outspend each other vying to open another big box down the street from other big boxes. Build it big, build more of them, build one model that attracts everyone in the community and hope the other guy fails before you do.

And, we see bloat in the markets built to chase that middle affluence demographic. We see rip off after rip off of the *CrossFit* model, an innovator I wish would have kept on innovating. Now, there are not just a few choices in that team concept category but a list now surging past ten different franchise models chasing the same client, that 24 - 35, slightly affluent person who was once attracted to doing team stuff but who also has moved on since that category is no longer fresh or exciting.

So, where should we go and how should we think about the future of fitness? Here are a couple of ideas I believe should guide us going forward:

The generalist anything is dead.

If one studies the industry carefully, the truth is revealed. The winners have gravitated towards target specific markets while those struggling still build businesses where it is believed the more stuff you offer, the more clients you get... and this doesn't model does not work under scrutiny.

For example, *Planet Fitness* continues to survive and thrive because they found "The Wal-Mart" secret. They have seemingly concentrated on the affluence factor, or in this case, lack of affluence. Economical, clean, on every corner, Planet has become the mecca for the demographic gyms struggled to attract prior to their arrival on the scene. Big, full of equipment and the perfect alternative for someone not wanting to spend **\$39 or more per month** on what is often seen as the *same thing* by the consumer.

Where we failed in this industry is few positioned themselves as the Target alternative, where you pay more but get more in quality and services. In fact, we are going the other way where we continue to build big boxes, too big for most consumers, and try to charge more for what the low-cost providers actually do quite well.

We would do well as an industry to revisit two key thoughts: Who we are we chasing and what do they want? Think of the market by age, then affluence, as three groups:

- The 40-plus;
- The 35 - 55;
- The 24 - 35.

We also need to apply this thinking to a demographic chart based upon 10ths.

10% of population/most money/most education;
10%...
10%...

10%...
10%...
10%...
10%...

10%...
10%...

10% of population/least money/least education/least likely to support or buy fitness.

The bottom grouping are those who might support the low-price, value gyms, and of course, all of those gyms do have clients ranging upwards in the higher demos. But price, for many in the bottom 50% by affluence, is often the main driver of which fitness facility they might choose.

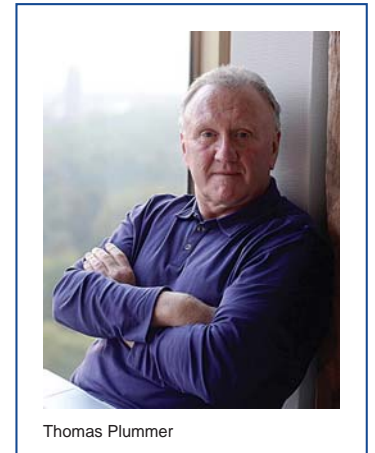
The upper group, those in the top 30% by affluence, and ages 40-plus, are the most underserved in the market. They do not, and will not, become one of many. This is why small, high-end restaurants exist. This is why boutique hotels exist, charging \$2,000 a night and more. This is why first class exists on airplanes, limited to a few seats in the front, where you get on first, get a drink, then watch the people heading to the back board and bet which ones will get drunk and get the plane diverted.

The modern training gym, focused on the 40-plus crowd, is a recent coming in the fitness industry but is the first to serve this affluent, older clientele. And, no, those big boxes that pretend to cater to this class do not serve this group because people with money want to be one of few and never one of many. How special is it in this business if there are 6,000 other members? How special is it if you stay in the Auberge in Napa, that has limited rooms and charges up to \$5,000 per night for one of them? The upward 30% play by rules we haven't yet mastered in this industry.

This affluent group wants small, to be surrounded by people like themselves, older trainers and showers in individual locker rooms. They want the service and touch that is validated by their money. These are also your high-end clients willing to pay for one-on-one, but remember no one joins a \$39 per month club looking for a \$250 per hour trainer. We have this elite model in the restaurant, hotel and car industry, but nowhere yet has anyone figured this out in the fitness world and replicated it.

There is an overlap between the 24 - 35 and the 35 - 55, which is money. You can be 35 and working as a waiter or 35 and own the café. The difference here is what they do with their money. The 35 - 55-year-old client, with money, is one who wants more, but is still young enough to do a wider range of activities.

These are your small group people in training gyms, the early generation clients in the group/team training chains, or the Pilates and nice yoga studio people, and the ones willing to pay for extra support



Thomas Plummer

and services. This group might find a larger gym satisfactory, as many did in the Gold's Gyms that charged \$59 and higher in the '90s and early 2000s before the price wars, and we can think of them as people who don't yet have big affluence but still want to live as if they do.

The 24 - 35-year-old group is somewhat easy to attract but difficult to keep. They want to be first in, search for the newest fitness fads, whom we used to call early adopters, but often get bored and move on. Early kick boxing, *CrossFit*, *Spartan Races* and *Orangetheory* when it first raged, were all filled with this client who wanted to be the one who found the newest "fitness secret." But, again, been there, done that, move on.

The mistake the industry makes is we always assume a current trend is our new reality. The industry was terrified of the early circuit stars, such as *Curves*, and there followed a dozen new franchises in their wake several years after *Curves* peak, offering the same concept. Nothing new, too late and gone. It's the same thing we see now in team fitness. Too many competitors, too late and offering nothing really new as innovation. Take the idea and innovate instead of merely replicating.

What is the point of all of this?

We continue to build fitness businesses based upon short-termed trends, or we create brands based upon a '90s concept where you can build a large fitness facility that attracts all segments of the community. It worked then; it doesn't work now.

We would be better served by mastering our demographics, meaning we create fitness experiences based upon target specific groups and what they need and want in a fitness business. Again, the example is a new training gym for people
(See *Thomas Plummer Page 17*)

Myths About Pre-Choreographed Group Fitness

By: **Cathy Spencer Browning**

Freestyle versus pre-choreography. It's a debate as old as group fitness itself, or at least as old as the leg warmers, thong leotards and cassette tapes we sported when I started teaching "aerobics" in the 1980s.

Early in my career, freestyle, where instructors build a class any way they want, was the only model. Pre-choreography, or pre-programming, came along later, and today, delivers workouts that are pre-designed from the ground up, including movements and music.

Which model delivers freedom for instructors? Excitement and results for members? And, a program that's easier to manage? Having experienced group fitness in every form, I'll share my feelings on the great debate, and I hope to debunk some common misconceptions about pre-programming.

Myth #1: It is always the same.

Yes, certain elements of a pre-programmed workout are the same. That's the point. But, many elements change from

workout to workout. At MOSSA, we say our workouts, which are pre-programmed, are always *and never* the same.

Here's the "always the same" part: We are after program loyalty, meaning the experience must be consistent. Participants know what equipment to use. They know what the class format will look like. There is reliability in the language and the staple movements, no matter the instructor, day, time or location.

But, we also know that participants like a certain amount of surprise and delight. This is the "never the same" part: *how* we reach the physical objectives. Maybe the training type will alter. The reps, rhythms, break lengths and transitions will vary. Exercise selection will vary. And, of course, the music will vary. People will consistently improve their fitness, but the way they get there... will vary!

Myth #2: Participants will get bored.

Yes, we have heard stories of instructors teaching the same pre-programmed workout for three months straight. And, yes, I'm deathly bored just thinking about it! But, here's how we beat

boredom in the pre-programmed model: MOSSA instructors are trained to stick to "shelf life," which is the length of time in which we recommend teaching a specific workout. For *Group Power*, for example, we suggest teaching the same workout for three to four weeks, during which time, participants will improve and get stronger.

After this period, instructors incorporate past workouts into the remaining eight weeks of the quarterly cycle, again sticking with the shelf life, until a new release is launched. And, the cycle continues!

Myth #3: You take away your instructor's creativity.

The freestyle model assumes (and requires) that instructors are also workout designers and music producers. And, that *might* be true... but it's not often the case. Let's compare fitness instructors to people on a different stage: Broadway. A stage production has performers and script writers. Only rarely, maybe **Lin-Manuel Miranda** in *Hamilton*, are they one and the same. More often, there are experts in each discipline... visionaries in their own lanes.



Cathy Spencer Browning

In our business, instructors are performers, not necessarily workout designers. People gravitate towards being an instructor not because they love creating choreography but because they love motivating and coaching people. They love teaching. They don't necessarily love creating programming.

With a pre-programmed workout, (See **Cathy Spencer Browning** Page 18)

...Bruce Carter

continued from page 14

In design, and in your images, always consider sight lines. This is especially true of the lobby/first impression view of a club. An exciting lobby welcoming people in a non-intimidating way (without equipment too close to the lobby) can make people feel like they would want to be part of that experience.

Clubs that are larger on an impressive property should consider a drone to view the club from above, and this can continue as a video going through the club. A video walkthrough of your club can be very instrumental in getting people to want to visit your club. However, if the walkthrough is not that great, it can have a negative, unwanted effect where people have already "seen enough" and decide not to come in.

If your club or studio has a high price point, your images should validate the higher prices. Don't assume great service is all that is necessary to charge more. One reason? Everyone says they have great service. Images will make you stand out from the crowd.

What if you do not have something good to take a picture of in your club? First, that is a weakness that should be corrected with some type of renovation. In the meantime, use stock

photos of people enjoying exercise and add lots of testimonials. Testimonials and great pictures/videos are a wonderful combination to have people transfer from what they see on a screen to actually visiting the club.

More and more, we will be living in a world of viewing life on a screen. That is fine. However, a focused effort must be made to take advantage of this phenomenon. This is the new world of club marketing and sales. Some clubs do a great job and really stand out. Others just think taking a few cellphone shots, posting them or making them part of their website is all that is necessary. Always think about how your club looks on a screen. Add newer visual content when it becomes available.

Your club design and interiors have more exposure than ever before. This will increasingly be the case, so more focus than ever needs to go into a club's visual environment. Your club, no matter the size, should have an inviting "story" with pictures and videos of how people will improve their health and wellbeing as a member. The internet and social media are wonderful opportunities to help people more than ever.

(Bruce Carter is the owner of *Optimal Design Systems, International*. Bruce can be reached at bruce@optimaldsi.com.)

...Thomas Plummer

continued from page 16

over 40 who do not feel they fit into a typical box concept. Therefore, they have no place to spend their money. We try to force them into boxes, but they want a place for people like them and only like them.

Even the suppliers get trapped by this, yet the industry is littered with success stories from leaders who chased specific target markets we forget. Early *Nautilus* and *Stairmaster* was almost a cult, *Rogue* and its initial grasp on the CrossFit market and *Keiser* and its loyal following in sports performance... Then, we watch today's big players fight for a dwindling market share because why be specific when you can try and be it all to everyone?

The example of course is a company rep who just visited a big Jewish Community Center then tries visiting a training gym down the street. Why not have specific reps for specific industries, and no, training gyms and large community-based fitness businesses are not in the same industry.

We miss completely the idea of

the smaller gym of the '90s, now mostly extinct, that charged decent prices and served the needs of the fitness middle class, and above, in the smaller rural and neglected communities. We want bigger and more instead of realizing target specific is the way of the business world today. Like the old boxer, we stayed too long, never letting go of who we were back in our glory days.

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

Make It Fun!!!

...Cathy Spencer Browning

continued from page 17

an instructor's creative bandwidth is now available to deliver an amazing experience. Instead of spending time choosing music and making up moves, the focus is on how to be an effective, entertaining, inspiring, connected coach.

Myth #4: Participants won't like the music.

In the same way instructors aren't screenwriters, they may not be DJs either. And, that's the trouble with freestyle music; it's a single person's choice. If that instructor likes hard rock, you're in for a hard rock workout... every time.

With pre-programmed workouts, at least at MOSSA, the playlist has something for everyone (hits from many decades and genres), the movements are driven by the music, and the music is thoroughly tested for broad appeal. Will every participant love every single song? Maybe not, but we leverage that diversity to help clubs pack rooms with a diverse audience (different music tastes, and by design, different demographics).

Myth #5: Pre-programmed workouts are

hard to learn.

Like any muscle, the memorization muscle builds and grows with training. Maybe initially, learning pre-programmed workouts takes some extra time, but instructors create their own personal learning systems, and the process becomes more efficient.

Myth #6: The programs have been around so long that they are "old fashioned."

The names, *Group Power*, *Group Core*, *Group Ride*, may be the same, but the programs have evolved and grown with the times. For example, ten years ago, *Group Power* was a very barbell-centric workout, which also made it very linear with less variety and variability across workouts, because... well, you can only do so many movements with a barbell. But, we've evolved *Group Power* to add more training with plates and body weight. Now, there is more three-dimensional movement, ensuring that participants are not just muscle strong, but that they are also movement strong.

This evolution also means that participants grow with the programs, getting

stronger from workout to workout, while continuing to experience results for as long as they do the workouts, for decades and beyond.

Myth #7: It's all or nothing.

A group fitness program can be a peaceful and popular. Coexistence of both amazing, pre-programmed workouts and high-quality freestyle classes can exist. And, specialty classes, pop-up classes... something for everyone! (Although we do have recommendations for successful scheduling, a topic for a different day) Bottom line, you don't have to choose all one or the other, and in fact, instructors can cross over!

Myth #8: It is harder to manage.

Let's say you own a restaurant; you have a few different chefs, and they get to cook whatever they want every time they come to work. What would your menu look like? Would you be able to attract loyal customers? Or, would the customers be loyal to a particular chef? And, what if your most popular chef left?

The business model of pre-choreographed group fitness is the

same business model of any successful restaurant, coffee shop... any service industry experience. The goal is to create a reliable, high-quality, repeatable experience, one where you can slot in any instructor, and that instructor will deliver the consistent workout members love. That's a program-driven schedule versus an instructor-driven schedule. And, it's proven to be more sustainable, more successful and easier to manage.



At MOSSA, we've had a front row seat to the evolution of group fitness. We've tasted every recipe. And, we may have mixed every metaphor to prove what we know to be true: The pre-programmed model benefits instructors, members and facilities. If your group fitness program needs a revival, you have performers writing bland scripts, you have too many items on your menu or too many rogue chefs in the kitchen, let's talk!

(Cathy Spencer Browning is the VP of Training & Programming for MOSSA. Cathy can be reached by phone at 770-989-4700 or email at cathy@mossa.net.)

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