

Norm Cates'

CLUB INSIDER

 CELEBRATING 30+ YEARS OF TRUST 

Plan on C.I. in 2025

SEPTEMBER 2024

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Plan on C.I. in 2025

By: Justin Cates

Time sure flies by, especially when you are having fun!!! It has now been one year since *Club Insider* moved on from print to a fully online model. As we explained then, our goal with that move was longevity. We wanted to continue to be here for you, providing you with articles, stories and news that can assist your club business in being the best it can be.

We believe we are achieving that goal. At this time, between our weekly and monthly publications, we are delivering more content to our readers than ever before. And, we are ready to deliver more!!!

During this move, we have gained new readers, both from the club and supplier sides. So, the purpose of this

Cover Story is to inform them of what *Club Insider* is, seeks to be and delivers week-in and week-out, month after month. If you are a long-time reader, though, you should still read on as you may learn new things about us and our offering that you didn't know about, and we will be announcing a few new initiatives for the New Year.

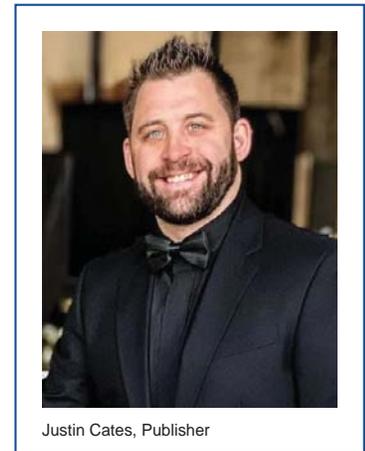
The Promise

Since our founding in 1993 by **Norm Cates**, the *Mission of Club Insider* has been, "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 (See **Plan on C.I. in 2025** Page 10)



Norm Cates, Founder and Tribal Leader



Justin Cates, Publisher

Crunch Fitness Franchisees, Fitness Holdings and CR Fitness, Each Acquire Two New York Sports Clubs Locations

GREENWICH, CT - *Fitness Holdings LLC*, *Crunch Fitness*' largest franchisee in the Northeast, announces the acquisition of two *New York Sports Clubs* locations in Boston. *Fitness Holdings* will take ownership of the two clubs on October 1st. The clubs will be a great addition to their portfolio and growth strategy to own and operate 60 clubs in the near term.

Fusing fitness with entertainment to make serious exercise fun, both clubs offer top-quality cardio and strength training equipment, group fitness, cycling, spacious locker rooms and more. These two clubs will see significant investment in renovations and upgrades over the next several months, enhancing their existing equipment and amenities to bring the best



fitness experience to residents.

"We are extremely excited about bringing new energy to these clubs as we continue to support the health and wellness goals of the local community," says *Fitness Holdings CEO*, **Mark Federico**.

Fitness Holdings currently owns (See **Crunch** Page 6)

Club Studio Opens New Location in Citrus Heights, California

IRVINE, CA - *Fitness International, LLC* announces it has opened a new *Club Studio* location in Citrus Heights, California on Sunrise Boulevard, bringing top-of-the-line amenities, boutique studio classes and wellness services together in one gym. With an investment of approximately \$10M, the club boasts a dynamic, modern and elegant interior space and equipment.

Club Studio Citrus Heights features five innovative boutique fitness studios and spacious free weights, strength, functional training and cardio areas, along with recovery services (including cryotherapy, red-light therapy), personal stretch stations, upscale locker rooms and more.

"We couldn't be more excited to bring the *Club Studio* experience to Citrus



Heights," said **Carie Blow**, *Vice President of Operations, Club Studio*. "It is our belief that the Citrus Heights community will thrive in *Club Studio*'s thoughtful environment designed to inspire members to reach for, achieve, and ultimately, surpass their personal fitness goals."

The 36,000-square-foot health club is the fifth *Club Studio* location to open, marking the continued expansion of *Club Studio*'s cutting-edge fitness offering. *Club Studio* plans to have 10 locations open nationwide by the end of 2024, and 23 locations open nationwide by the end of 2025. (See **Club Studio** Page 6)

Inside the Insider: Edition #369

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Norm's Notes

■ **Hello Everybody!** This is your **Club Insider Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993** checking in with our **369th monthly edition of this 31+ year running club business publication** I refer to as: **A Labor of Love!** I'm very thankful that you've tuned in again for this iteration of **Norm's Notes**, as I proceed on my keyboard with my longtime habit of "Telling-It-Like-It-Is!" I'm really happy that you're reading this edition, and I want to **THANK YOU ALL** for sticking with us every month! As usual, we have a bunch of health and fitness club business news, **so please read on!**

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

■ I'm writing this **Note** on Sunday, September 1, 2024. As I sit here writing, I'm also watching super-star pro golfer, **SCOTTIE SCHEFFLER** receive the **FEDEX Cup Golf Trophy** right here in Atlanta! **Congratulations to Scottie** as his huge prize money for winning was **\$25 million!**

The **FEDEX Cup Golf Tournament** is very special because it's hosted at the magnificent **East Lake Golf Club**, which was built and is owned by the **one and only, MR. THOMAS G. COUSINS**. Mr. Cousins is a legendary Atlanta gentleman.

During my 50 years of experience in our great club industry, I was honored to spend my first 20 years working with **Cousins' Properties**, creating and building two of my clubs in the early 1980s. Those two clubs were the **Downtown Athletic Club**, a 46,000 square-foot, three-level multi-purpose club that we built in the **Omni Complex**. That club included an indoor four-lane lap pool with an adjacent whirlpool, steam and sauna, an indoor track and a basketball court, which also gave us a second aerobic room when we scheduled classes there. We also had whirlpools, saunas and steam rooms in each of the men's and women's locker rooms. The **Omni** was a huge megaplex office building with a shopping mall in downtown Atlanta right next door to the **Omni Arena**, which was a huge complex that seated 16,000 for basketball games, conventions, music concerts and all kinds of special events.

I also built and owned the **Wildwood Athletic Club**, a 26,000 square-

foot club located in Mr. Cousins' **Wildwood Office Complex** in a suburb of Atlanta called **Marietta**, which is in **Cobb County** where we've lived for 30 years. The **Wildwood Athletic Club** was a two-level club that included an indoor lap pool with an adjacent whirlpool, sauna and a steam room, an indoor jogging track, a workout area with 24 **Nautilus Machines**, 20 **LifeCycles** and a 2,600 square-foot free-weight workout area, as well as four racquetball courts and one squash court, and men and women's locker rooms, both of which included steam rooms, saunas and whirlpools. We also had a bar/restaurant area adjacent to the side and back glass wall of racquetball court #1.

Both of those clubs that I did with Cousins Properties were really outstanding operations and complemented my 3rd and 4th clubs, **CourtSouth Lenox** and **Courtsouth Akers Mill**. Those were great memories indeed!

■ Also, here in Georgia, we experienced a very sad event on Thursday, September 4, 2024. That event was the horrendous mass murder at **Apalachee High School** in **Winder, Georgia**, a small town near Atlanta. The young 14-year-old shooter, who will not be named here because no



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one like this deserves the notoriety, shot 13 people, killing two teachers (39-year-old **RICHARD ASPINWALL** and 53-year-old **CHRISTINA IRINIE**) and two students (**MASON SCHERHORN** and **CHRISTINA ANGULO**, both 14) and wounding nine others! The **Georgia Bureau of Investigation** took the shooter into custody, and he is being charged as an adult. The **Governor of Georgia, BRIAN KEMP**, ordered flags (See **Norm's Notes Page 7**)

About Club Insider

CELEBRATING 30+ YEARS OF TRUST

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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

CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS - Bruce Carter, Cathy Spencer Browning, Chris Stevenson, Frank Guengerich, Gary Polic, Herb Lipsman, Jeffrey Pinkerton, Jim Thomas, Nancy Trent, Paul Bosley, Rick Caro, Sara Kooperman, JD, and Thomas Plummer

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Thanks and Appreciation

At **Club Insider**, we are excited to be in our **31st Year** of this home-based health and fitness club trade publication! The thought that this publication was *founded to serve an industry I truly love*, and so that *I could become a Mister Mom for my son, Justin*, is still *intriguing and amazing* to us. So, I wish to extend my most sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to everyone who has made this amazing 30+ year run possible.

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

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

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

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

Norm Cates, Jr.



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Photos depict a typical LA Fitness facility; clubs and amenities may vary. ©2024 Fitness International, LLC. All rights reserved.

Great Teammates!

By: **Herb Lipsman**

Great Teammates are such an important part of any team, department or organization. Great Teammates lift the attitudes, enthusiasm and performance of those around them by their mere presence, whether in the locker room, on the front line, in regular meetings or in the boardroom.

What do I mean by *Great Teammates*? Here is my bullet list of characteristics of a Great Teammate:

- A Great Teammate arrives at work every day with a smile, a warm greeting and a positive attitude, regardless of what may be going on in their personal life.

- A Great Teammate is, first and foremost, trustworthy relative to their honesty,

character and competence.

- A Great Teammate puts the needs and goals of the team ahead of their own.

- A Great Teammate shows genuine interest in their teammates and those around them.

- A Great Teammate is reliable and dependable when it comes to showing up for practice or their shift or important meetings, and they always come prepared.

- A Great Teammate demonstrates a tremendous work ethic, often showing up early and staying late, working hard and rarely coasting.

- A Great Teammate never whines or complains about circumstances, but rather, they have a core principle of controlling

the things they can control and not letting things beyond their control bring them or those around them down.

- A Great Teammate sees the good qualities in those around them and helps their teammates play to their strengths while helping and influencing them with their weaknesses.

- A Great Teammate recognizes when their teammates are struggling physically, mentally or emotionally, and demonstrates sincere empathy in wanting to know what is wrong and offering to help or provide support.

- A Great Teammate is humble and doesn't seek the limelight. They regularly accept the blame and share the credit. It is just part of their DNA.



Herb Lipsman

- A Great Teammate is courageous and (See **Herb Lipsman** Page 8)

...Crunch

continued from page 3

and operates 45 locations in Massachusetts, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Delaware, New York and Connecticut.

"Fitness Holdings has doubled in growth over the last three to four years and we are looking to build fifteen to twenty new clubs per year," says Federico. "We are continuously searching for new opportunities to grow, and acquiring these two Boston Crunch clubs is a prime example of our efforts."

■ ■ ■

FT. MYERS, FL - CR Fitness Holdings, the largest, fastest-growing franchisee of *Crunch Fitness*, announces the acquisition of two *New York Sports Clubs* locations in Fort Myers, Florida. The newly branded

Crunch Six Mile and *Crunch Boy Scout* represent a significant growth in CR Fitness Holdings' presence in the Fort Myers area. This expansion not only enhances the company's footprint today but also sets the stage for future growth and continued investment in the community.

The new Crunch Six Mile spans 34,527 square feet, while Crunch Boy Scout covers 44,008 square feet. Both locations feature state-of-the-art equipment and premier amenities, including a Cycle Studio, Group Fitness Studio, HIIT Zone, Hot Yoga, Personal Training, tanning, Hydromassage and more.

This strategic move revitalizes the fitness experience for the Fort Myers community and significantly contributes to the local economy by creating hundreds of new employment opportunities. In addition to the immediate impact on job creation, this expansion is set to enrich the community

culture and support local businesses. The introduction of two to three additional locations in the Fort Myers area will further amplify these benefits, enhancing the overall quality of life and providing more convenient fitness options for residents.

Tony Scrimale, CEO of CR Fitness Holdings, expressed his excitement about the expansion, stating, "We are thrilled at the opportunity to invest millions of dollars into these gyms and transform them into the Crunch Fitness brand and model. Members will have access to high-quality equipment, a variety of unique fitness classes and exceptional trainers. We are ecstatic to continue our vision of growth and success for CR Fitness."

CR Fitness Holdings' goal is to operate 100 clubs nationwide by 2026. Led by industry veterans **Vince Julien, Geoff Dyer, Tony Scrimale and Jeff Dotson**, who collectively have over 150 years of

experience in the fitness sector, the team currently operates 65 locations across Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and Texas with growth plans for markets in Tennessee and Arizona. Their ambitious expansion plans aim to bring the unique Crunch Fitness experience to communities across the United States.

Crunch is known for its innovative group fitness programming and will offer a wide range of classes every week, including *BodyWeb with TRX, Zumba, Cardio Tai Box, Yoga Body Sculpt and Fat Burning Pilates*. Members looking for additional guidance or motivation can utilize the *HIITZone*, a proprietary high-intensity interval group training program.

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

...Club Studio

continued from page 3

Fitness in a Class of Its Own

Club Studio offers innovative classes with premier instructors and top-tier trainers. Key design elements are emphasized throughout individualized studios offering a variety of class selections, state-of-the-art amenities and best-in-class fitness equipment. Club Studio members will thrive in this thoughtfully designed environment that fosters physical and mental wellbeing. Members will recognize a sense of community manifested through visionary and sophisticated design.

Club Studio features five distinct boutique studio rooms offering vibrant and engaging fitness classes. Here's a breakdown of what members can expect at

Club Studio Citrus Heights:

- **Strength:** Boost endurance in a HIIT-style training class called CS4 that incorporates treadmills, rowers, ski-ergs and cutting-edge functional strength training equipment.

- **Box:** Glove up and experience nine rounds of signature boxing combinations, athletic drills and a full body burn.

- **Ride:** Lighting goes down as the beat drops and we get to work. Enjoy a full-body indoor cycle rhythm ride incorporating a weight sequence.

- **Hot Yoga:** Sweat, Flow and Restore to the beat of the music in a radiant heated "Sweat +" studio. Includes traditional yoga asanas, opening yin poses and heart-pumping burpees on the mat.

- **Pilates:** Reset the mind, recharge the soul and realign the body in a reformer-based Pilates class. Our high-intensity classes focus on resistance training, time under tension and muscle grouping to lengthen and strengthen the body.

- **Rebound:** Bounce it out in our three-signature 45-minute cardio trampoline classes. This low-impact, high-energy workout will have you bouncing to the beat as you lift and tone.

- **Cryotherapy and Recovery:** A dedicated area complete with whole body and localized Cryotherapy for athletic recovery and muscle repair. This area also includes massage beds, massage rollers, compression and percussion therapy precisely designed to adapt powerful vibration and pressure to the body's

unique physiology.

- **State-of-the-Art Gym:** Expansive free weights, selectorized and cardio sections showcase the latest in fitness equipment including dumbbells, Olympic lifting and plate-loaded machines, as well as top-of-the-line treadmills, stationary bikes, stairs, ellipticals and rowers, complete with a functional training area and personal stretch stations.

The Citrus Heights Club Studio also includes towel service, personal training, a sauna, and a Kalologie Medspa. Additionally, members can purchase apparel and necessities in the retail area.

Check out the **LA Fitness Ad on Page #5**.

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...Norm's Notes

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to fly at half-staff to recognize the four people who lost their lives in the school shootings. The Governor commented: "As all Georgians continue to grieve with their families and community, I have ordered the flags on all state buildings to be lowered in honor of Richard Aspinwall, Christina Irlinie, Christina Angulo and Mason Schermerhorn. May we remember and commemorate their lives in all the days to come." **May Those Lost Rest In Peace.**

■ This year, **September 11** marked the **23rd Anniversary** of the *9/11 attacks on the United States of America*. These horrific attacks, using jetliners as weapons killed **2,977 Americans**, including 343 firefighters, 71 police officers and other first responders. *May they all continue to rest in peace, and may we never forget.*

■ *Fitness Ventures*, one of the fastest growing *Crunch Fitness* franchisees, paid tribute to the heroic first responders who selflessly served on September 11, 2001. They paid tribute to those heroic first responders by hosting their **Annual 9/11 Remembrance Stair Climb Challenge** at all of its facilities nationwide in 25 states on Wednesday September 11. During the

9/11 Remembrance Stair Climb Challenge, members, non-members, employees, first responders and the local community were invited to climb 110 flights of stairs or 2,071 steps, representing the 110 floors of the World Trade Center. Every year on the 9/11 anniversary, local firefighters, dressed in full gear, utilize the Stairmasters at Crunch to honor the first responders who lost their lives on September 11th. This event aims to bring the communities together on a day dedicated to honor and remembrance. This tribute not only remembers the sacrifice of the *New York Fire Department*, it also recognizes the efforts our local fire departments make on a daily basis.

BRIAN HIBBARD, CEO of Fitness Ventures, commented: "We believe it's essential to remember and pay tribute to the heroes who responded on September 11, 2001. By organizing the 9/11 Remembrance Stair Climb Challenge at all of our clubs, we want to provide an opportunity for our members and communities to come together in unity and show our gratitude to these courageous individuals." The event was open to all fitness levels, and participants were allowed to choose their level of involvement, whether they climb a single flight of stairs or complete the full 110-story challenge. *Fitness Ventures* encouraged all participants to share their experiences on social media using the

hashtag **#CrunchStairChallenge** to foster a sense of unity and remembrance across the nation.

■ *Easy Mile Fitness*, a privately-held *Planet Fitness* franchisee, has announced it has acquired nine *Planet Fitness* locations in Oregon from the *Lubrano Franchise Group (OKTA Holdings)*. The new territory marks *Easy Mile Fitness*' entry into the west coast market. The nine *Planet Fitness* locations are located in the fast-growing market of Portland and Eugene, Oregon. With this acquisition, *Easy Mile Fitness* now owns and operates 50 locations across six territories including Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Puerto Rico and Ontario, Canada. The nine clubs will benefit from plans for new construction in the future, new local marketing strategies and company culture. **Stay Tuned!**

■ *Blink Fitness*, the affordable fitness brand known for its commitment to an inclusive and inviting environment, announces it has reached an agreement with *Pinnacle US Holdings*, a subsidiary of *PureGym Ltd.*, a leading global gym operator, to acquire *Blink's* corporate operations and a substantial portion of *Blink's* locations, with a focus on New York and New Jersey. The agreement is subject to court approval and gives *PureGym* 'stalking horse' status

ahead of an auction, scheduled to take place on October 28 if competing bids are received.

■ *In-Shape Family Fitness* launches its *10th Annual In-Shape Fights Cancer* campaign, a six-week-long initiative dedicated to raising funds for cancer research and support services. This year, the campaign aims to raise an ambitious **\$200,000**, bringing *In-Shape's* total contribution to an extraordinary **\$1 million** over the past decade.

As a proud supporter of the *American Cancer Society* and *St. Jude Children's Research Hospital*, *In-Shape Family Fitness* is committed to making a tangible impact in the fight against cancer.

■ The *United States Professional Tennis Association (USPTA)*, a leading trade organization for tennis professionals since 1927, has rebranded to the *Racquet Sports Professionals Association (RSPA)*. This change positions the *RSPA* to elevate and support a broad spectrum of careers across the entire racquet sports industry. As the *RSPA*, the organization continues to expand its teaching certification program to train professionals in numerous racquet sports including tennis, pickleball, padel, squash and platform tennis. In addition to
(See *Norm's Notes* Page 8)

Global Fitness Participation Reached New Heights in 2023

BOSTON, MA - The global fitness industry reached new milestones in 2023 as more people than ever embraced health and fitness across key regions. According to data collected by the *Health & Fitness Association (HFA)* and published in its *2024 HFA Global Report*, several established markets reported record membership levels and fitness penetration, while many emerging markets displayed robust potential for further development.

In the U.S., a record 23.7% of the population belonged to a fitness facility in 2023, the highest penetration rate among 17 surveyed markets. The U.K. followed with an all-time high penetration rate of 15.9%, while Switzerland (14.9%), New Zealand (13.6%) and Germany (13.4%) rounded out the top five.

As fitness club memberships surged in 2023, consumers in many

regions benefited from access to an expanded number of fitness facilities. Among operators, *Rizap Group* led global expansion, increasing its footprint from 240 facilities in Japan in 2022 to 1,225 locations by 2023. *HOTWORX* ranked second with a 43% growth rate, adding 176 new locations globally. Elsewhere, *BestFit Group* in Germany (41%), *HILEFIT* in China (40%), and *FitActive* in Italy (39.5%) also demonstrated strong growth.

"As demand for fitness services reaches record levels across key regions, our industry is playing an indispensable role in advancing global health and wellbeing," said *HFA President & CEO, Liz Clark*. "The *2024 HFA Global Report* demonstrates how the industry continues to evolve and thrive, reaffirming that fitness is more essential than ever in both established and emerging markets."

HEALTH & FITNESS ASSOCIATION

The *2024 HFA Global Report* provides an in-depth analysis of the health and fitness industry, offering valuable insights from HFA members, industry federations, partners and financial experts. It includes a detailed look at revenue, growth in units and membership trends for some of the world's largest fitness brands, along with data-driven insights on year-over-year performance.

The *2024 HFA Global Report* is available for download in PDF format. Premium HFA members can access the report for free via their HFA profile, while other membership levels are eligible for

discounted pricing. The report is available to non-members for **\$399**.

Methodology: Data for the *2024 HFA Global Report* was gathered from 132 HFA member clubs, gyms and studios between April and July 2024. This data was cleaned and analyzed to compile company profiles and rankings of leading fitness brands. Additionally, internal audits and research provided supplemental data for selected countries.

Check out the **HFA Ad on Page #9**.

...Herb Lipsman

continued from page 6

doesn't shy away from facing up to the hard challenges. They set a great example for others on the team to show courage in the face of hardship.

■ A Great Teammate regularly volunteers for the "dirty" jobs others shy away from.

■ A Great Teammate is never duplicitous, behaving one way in one compartment of their life or around certain people while behaving far differently around others or in other parts of their life. In other words, they are who they are, regardless of the people they are with or the circumstances

they face.

■ A Great Teammate never harbors a "hidden agenda" appearing to support team goals and values, while plotting secretly for outcomes that benefit self over teammates.

I'm sure you may be able to add a few more characteristics, but this is a pretty good list. I encourage you to use this list for a self-assessment report card. Go back through the list and grade yourself on each item with a **score of 1 - 10** with a score of *10 being a perfect score* and *1 being as low as you can go*. Once you have completed this part of the exercise, identify those items where you scored below an 8 and write out how you plan to improve in this important

aspect of your behaviors to make yourself a better teammate.

Look, I'll be the first to admit that I have work to do on a number of these character traits/behaviors. Striving to be a better teammate is a mindset. First you must want to improve. Good luck!

For more information like this, order *Caring (The Sequel): Valuable Insights Into Effective Club and Hospitality Management*, by emailing herbnlipsman@gmail.com.

(Herb Lipsman is a veteran of the club industry, having managed some of the most prestigious athletic clubs and golf/country clubs in the Houston, Texas market over the past 30 years, most notably *The Houstonian*

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

...Norm's Notes

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certification programs, the RSPA will offer a full spectrum of career advancement support for all racquet sports professionals, both on and off the court.

■ This Note is a **WARNING** to all who are *soon-to-be* or *already parents of newborn babies*. Last night, I was watching TV when a news bulletin produced by SaferProducts.gov issued a clear warning for all parents of newborn babies. The bulletin explained to parents that deaths have been reported by parents who had placed their children in *sleeping robes* that

are now being sold to well-meaning, brand-new parents. The purpose of the bulletin was to warn new parents that, while they are trying to help their newborn babies sleep, some have been found to accidentally kill their babies! The bulletin explained to parents that they should avoid such dangers by not putting their newborns in such gowns because of the deaths that have been reported by parents who have placed their new-born babies in such sleeping robes! Check out SaferProducts.gov, tell your friends with newborns, and maybe, we can save a life here!

■ **JUSTIN** and I want to **THANK YOU** for reading **Club Insider!** We appreciate you

being with us. And, in particular, WE VERY SINCERELY APPRECIATE ANY and ALL SUPPORT OF OUR ESTEEMED Club Insider ADVERTISERS! PLEASE DO BUSINESS WITH THEM and WHEN YOU DO, PLEASE TELL 'EM Club Insider SENT YOU! THANK YOU ALL!

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

Bless America! Laus Deo!

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 50-year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. He is the Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993 of *Club Insider*, now in its 31st 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.)

Make It Fun Every Day!

IHRSA is now the HEALTH & FITNESS ASSOCIATION

After two years of discussion and planning, IHRSA has made the next move in our evolution—we've rebranded as the Health & Fitness Association!

Our new name more readily reflects the amazing community of health and fitness leaders that we represent worldwide.

We will be transitioning to the new name during the next several months, so watch our website as we transition our url, social media platforms, newsletters, and more.

healthandfitness.org



...Plan on C.I. in 2025

continued from page 3

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 "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.**

The Content

Like all printed publications, as we adapted to new technologies over the past 30+ years, we now have the opportunity to deliver more content to our readers than ever before. We understand not everything is pertinent to everyone all the time, but it is our duty to provide as much as we can and let readers decide what is best for them and their club business.

In order to push that initiative forward, we continue our *Monthly Edition*. This features the cover stories, authored articles, news releases and Norm's Notes previously mentioned. The *Monthly Edition* has always been and will always be our bread and butter.

But, almost a decade ago, we began sending out the *Club Insider Weekly eblast* every Wednesday morning. Within, we featured one article from our current *Monthly Edition*, as well as pertinent industry news releases from the previous week. The way in which we view both of these publications working together is the following:

■ *Club Insider Weekly's* presentation of industry news provides the macro view in which your club business operates. What is going on "out there?"

■ *Club Insider Monthly* then brings the reader into the micro view of the club business. What is going on "in here?"

We strive for the combination to provide that overall perspective combined with ideas to help make any club business better. Now, almost ten years into having both publications, each complements the other and we can't imagine not having both. In fact, our own business model now relies on having both.

New Initiatives

When we first began in 1993, our publication was print-only, one edition at a time. The internet barely existed let alone was the primary source of information for the world. Over time, we added an online version of our publication. Then, we took on the task of digitizing those previously print-only editions, building what may be one of the largest information archives for the health and fitness club industry. Here's the kicker, we did all of that at no additional cost to our Paid Subscribers! Our goal has been to make a subscription to *Club Insider* pay for itself on day one. Well, it certainly does that... multiple times over.

Since then, we have also added several different ways to visually read our publication. Ironically, though, even with technology, and maybe because of it, people are busier than ever. Many don't have the time to sit down and read each edition. Once again comes technology to assist. In the coming month, we will soon be implementing AI on our website to bring real-time, text-to-voice options to our readers, now viewers. While you're on the way to work, you can keep your eyes on the road but still consume content that will help you when you get there! We are going to call it, "Chip," after our *Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993, Norm Cates*. Many years ago, he was given that nickname because he was a "chip off the old block." And, once again, this will be at no additional cost to our Paid Subscribers. Our goal is your success! And, in turn, we hope you honor us with continued loyalty and a renewed Paid Subscription.

Additionally, coming in 2025 will be *Cover Story Classics!* Over the course of 30+ years, we have interviewed and shared the stories of many of the industry's greats, the legends. We have also covered many



Norm Cates and Justin Cates at HFA 2024

topics that are ageless in time. Now, we are going to go back through and present what we believe to be our very best, the ones that were not to be missed then and certainly are not to be missed now! **Stay Tuned!!!**

The Ask: Planning for 2025

We explain all of this to bring you to the most important section of this Cover Story. **Simply put, we can't do any of this without you.**

First, of course, we need you, our readers, to continue reading. And, we need you to do so on a *Paid Subscription* status. If you are unsure what your status is, email me at justin@clubinsideronline.com. If you are not a Paid Subscriber, we have two subscription options: **\$10 per Month or \$99 per Year**. That is more affordable than any streaming service with the added benefit of big money ideas all over the place! You won't get that from Netflix, so subscribe today at www.clubinsideronline.com/subscribe.

Next, we are always on the lookout for additional authored articles/content, and the best comes from the trenches. Whether you are a Frontliner, Director, Manager or Owner, we know you have a topic to share or a story to tell, and others can learn from you. And, we will be happy and honored to work with you to share those articles/stories. If you are interested in becoming a *Club Insider Contributing Author*, email me at justin@clubinsideronline.com.

Finally, like any publication, in the end, beyond paid subscriptions, it is advertising dollars that make it all possible. We understand this paragraph is not for everyone, but if it is for you, please read on. Simply put, *Club Insider* needs your *Advertising Support*, and in return, we will do what we always have: *provide top value for that support*. *Club Insider* is the most affordable advertising proposition in the industry, and our offering for that money is not matched. This all-inclusive offering is comprised of:

- Web-ad style (rectangular leaderboard) placement in all Weekly and Monthly eblast emails;
- Web-ad style placements (square and rectangular leaderboard) on our website (rotating basis with other current advertisers);
- Company Logo on all pages of website, linking to your company's website;
- Company Logo in all Weekly and Monthly eblast emails, linking to your company's website;
- Written introduction in Monthly Edition;
- Press Releases published on demand;
- And, more!

The 2025 budget season is upon us, and we hope you will consider *Club Insider* in your 2025 plan. Advertising options begin at just **\$100 per month!!!** To view our *2025 Media Kit*, please go to www.clubinsideronline.com/advertise. Then, be sure to email me at justin@clubinsideronline.com.

2025 and Beyond

As 2024 sets and 2025 is on the horizon, we look forward to continuing to help you chart your course. Whether you are a reader, an author, an advertiser or all three, we are humbled by and thank you for your support. And, you can count on us in 2025 and beyond!

(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.)

- Print-ad style placement in the Monthly Digital Edition;



December 1993 - First Print Edition



August 2023 - Final Print Edition



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It's Time to Start Planning New Year's Programming

By: **Frank Guengerich**

Yes, summer just ended. It's hard to believe, but it's only a couple months away from the New Year, so now is a great time to start planning programming for the season. I've outlined a few reminders of what you should be considering when developing your club programming.

Get Ahead - Start Planning Now. I suggest you pull your team together now as a group and discuss what goals and objectives you have for New Year's Programming. Get total club staff leadership participation so you can leverage every person, idea, resource and strategy early on. This will ensure you don't miss an opportunity to achieve maximum success. Take notes, flush out ideas and set a follow up meeting soon after. A list of action items should be distributed to every person involved so everyone understands their role and what is required of them.

Keep It Simple. As the saying goes, keep it simple stupid. Don't make your plan too complicated or full of details that don't matter. When I first started pulling together

New Year's Programming, I'd clutter the plan with unimportant information that was not central to our success. The items listed below are the primary topics and tactics that I recommend you focus on.

Who are you Targeting? Will programming be focused on new members, existing members or both? The goal is always to offer programs that make members more "sticky." This is especially the case with existing members. For new members, it may be included as part of the promotion and used to ensure proper integration into the club. Programming for new members should also be used to assist in getting them on the right track towards exercise adherence. Other goals may be:

1. Meet new people;
2. Create loyalty;
3. Assist members to have a health and wellness breakthrough;
4. Make a profit;
5. Educate members on nutrition, proper exercise techniques, the benefits of recovery, how to properly stretch, the list is endless;

6. Grow your personal training business;
7. Grow other departmental participation such as small group or sports.

Programming can be geared towards groups or individuals. I suggest you do both since some people thrive in groups and others want the flexibility to participate but also want to be somewhat independent.

Resources / Program Details. Identifying what resources will be needed and outlining program details is essential to minimize chaos and maximize success. Key points are: What's the name of the program, what's the maximum and minimum number of participants, where will it be held, dates, days, times, cost, staffing, and will there be awards or items included, such as a t-shirt.

Budget. Is the program intended to make a profit, break-even or be a cost? If the program is intended to integrate new members into the club, it may be a cost built into the joining fee and included as part of the promotion. If a profit is expected, it is vital to keep labor costs to a minimum. Make sure to have a minimum number of



Frank Guengerich

participants to enroll for the program to be conducted.

Marketing. A multi-faceted approach is always the best. The more opportunities to get eyes on the program, the better. A combination of internal signage, social with posts and stories, a display table in
 (See **Frank Guengerich** Page 13)



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Non-Compete Agreements in the Fitness Industry: Implications for Club Owners, Personal Trainers and Group Exercise Instructors

By: Sara Kooperman, JD

Non-compete agreements have long been a controversial topic across various industries, and the fitness sector is no exception. These agreements, which restrict employees from working with competitors for a certain period after leaving a company, are commonly used by fitness facility owners, personal trainers and group exercise instructors to protect proprietary business interests. However, recent legal developments, including a significant Federal court ruling in Texas, have thrown the future of non-compete agreements into uncertainty.

The Fitness Industry Landscape - In the fitness industry, non-compete agreements are often employed by fitness facility owners to safeguard their investments in training and business development. For example, when a fitness facility invests in the development of a trainer or group exercise instructor, they may require a non-compete agreement to prevent the employee from taking that specialized knowledge and client base to a competitor. This is particularly important in densely populated areas where competition between gyms and studios is fierce. However, the enforceability of these agreements varies significantly by state, and recent legal challenges at the Federal level have further complicated their future.

Texas Federal Court's Ruling Blocks FTC's Ban on All Non-Competes - The Texas Federal court's decision to block the *Federal Trade Commission's (FTC)* nationwide rule banning nearly all non-compete agreements underscores the ongoing legal battle surrounding these

contracts. The ruling found that the FTC exceeded its authority in attempting to impose a blanket ban on non-competes, leaving fitness facility owners and other employers in a state of uncertainty. While this decision is a temporary reprieve for those who favor non-compete agreements, it also signals that the legal landscape is shifting, and fitness facility owners must be prepared to adapt.

Personal Trainers and Group Exercise Instructors: Navigating Career Mobility - Personal trainers and group exercise instructors are often at the heart of non-compete agreements in the fitness industry. These professionals rely heavily on their reputation and client relationships, making non-competes a potential barrier to career growth. A restrictive non-compete agreement can limit a trainer's ability to move freely between gyms or start their own business, effectively stifling their career advancement.

For trainers and instructors, the Texas court's ruling offers a glimmer of hope. If the FTC's rule had gone into effect, it would have eliminated most non-compete agreements, potentially freeing up opportunities for these professionals to explore new career paths without fear of legal repercussions. However, with the rule now blocked, trainers and instructors must continue to navigate the complex web of state laws governing non-competes.

The Path Forward: Alternatives to Non-Competes - Given the uncertain future of non-compete agreements, fitness industry professionals, whether fitness facility owners or employees, should consider alternative methods to

protect their interests. Non-solicitation agreements, for instance, can prevent former employees from poaching clients or staff without imposing broad restrictions on their ability to work in the industry. Enhanced non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) can also protect sensitive business information without limiting an individual's career options.

Another option gaining traction is the use of garden leave clauses, where an employee is paid for a period after leaving a company but is restricted from working for competitors during that time. This approach offers a compromise, providing the employer with some protection while compensating the employee for their time away from the industry.

Conclusion

The fitness industry's reliance on non-compete agreements is under scrutiny, and the legal landscape is evolving rapidly. Fitness facility owners, personal trainers, and group exercise instructors must stay informed about these changes and consider alternative strategies to protect their interests. Whether through non-solicitation agreements, enhanced NDAs (Non-Disclosure Agreements), or garden leave, there are viable options to balance the needs of both employers and employees in this dynamic industry.

As the legal battles over non-competes continue, it is crucial for those in the fitness industry to monitor developments and seek legal counsel to ensure their agreements are both enforceable and fair. The future may hold further restrictions on non-competes, but with thoughtful planning, businesses and professionals can navigate



Sara Kooperman, JD

this uncertain terrain successfully.

(Sara Kooperman, JD, CEO of SCW Fitness Education, WATERinMOTION, and S.E.A.T. Fitness, Founder of the MANIA, Convention, sits on the canfitpro Advisory Panel and the Gold's Gym Think Tank and was a Founding Board Member for the Women In Fitness Association - WIFA. Recently nominated for the IDEA Fitness Leader of the Year Award, Kooperman won the Most Innovating Fitness Pro by Fitness Industry Technology Council - FIT-C. Sara is the best-selling author of FIT FOR BUSINESS, an inductee into the National Fitness Hall of Fame, an Illinois State Businesswoman of the Year, esteemed panelist for multiple Webinars & Podcasts and sits on the ACSM Communication & Public Information Committee.)

...Frank Guengerich

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the lobby or at the entrance, staff t-shirts and buttons, flyers at the front desk or throughout the club. Always incentivize staff to promote programs through word of mouth and to repost on their social media platforms. Saturate the members with every possible avenue.

Hot Tip: One of the most effective ways is to do a series of high-energy, organic stories on social media, specifically *Facebook* and *Instagram*. These stories should be done with different staff members and be 10 - 15 seconds long, maximum. Do 3 - 5 a week starting 2 - 3 weeks from the start date. Make the stories fun, informative, yet simple. Too much information will cause the story to be ineffective. Keep it simple.

Be Fluid. Your programming plan is a document that should be updated and adjusted according to the success you are having with participation. There are several reasons why your plan may need to be updated such as weather, staff availability or current local events.

Track and Measure Results. It is vital that you know how effective program was to make sure your goals were met and your dollars are working correctly for you. Keep a written record of everything involved so that you can refer to it a year later.



In conclusion, developing a New Year's Programming plan now is perhaps one of the most important things you'll do in the planning phase for the upcoming year. Keep it simple, stay focused on the members it's designed for and develop and execute fun, motivating and well promoted programs. Good luck!

If you'd like a complementary sample template of a Programming Plan, I'd be delighted to share one. Email me at frank@hwlservices.com.

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

Make It Fun Every Day!

Offense vs. Defense:

The Strategic Game Plan for Your Gym Business

By: **Jim Thomas**

In the competitive world of gym ownership, whether you run an independent gym, boutique studio or personal training business, your success hinges on one critical question: Are you playing offense or defense? Understanding the difference between these two approaches can be the deciding factor in whether your business thrives or merely survives. In this article, we will dive into what it means to play offense versus defense in the gym industry, how to recognize which mode you're operating in, and strategies to ensure you're always on the offensive.

The Difference Between Playing Offense and Defense

Playing Offense:

When you're playing offense, your gym is in growth mode. This means you're actively seeking new opportunities, innovating and expanding your reach. Offense is about being proactive: launching new programs, investing in marketing, engaging with your community and setting ambitious goals. It's a mindset of abundance where you believe that the best way to grow is to create new opportunities and take calculated risks.

Key Characteristics of Playing Offense:

- **Proactive Growth:** Constantly looking for ways to expand, whether it's through new services, partnerships or locations.
- **Innovation:** Continuously developing and implementing new ideas, classes and fitness programs.
- **Investment in Marketing:** Actively promoting your brand to attract new clients and retain existing ones.
- **Bold Decision-Making:** Taking risks that have the potential to yield significant returns, such as investing in new technology or expanding into new markets.

Playing Defense:

On the other hand, playing defense means your gym is in protection mode. You're focused on preserving what you have rather than pursuing growth. This often happens when you're reacting to external pressures, such as increased competition, economic downturns, or internal challenges, such as declining membership numbers. Defense is about minimizing risk, cutting costs and holding onto existing customers, often at the expense of innovation and

long-term growth.

Key Characteristics of Playing Defense:

- **Cost-Cutting:** Reducing expenses wherever possible, often leading to a decrease in the quality of services.
- **Risk Aversion:** Avoiding new initiatives or investments that could potentially fail.
- **Reactive Decision-Making:** Making changes in response to external threats rather than from a position of strength.
- **Focus on Retention:** Prioritizing existing members over attracting new ones, often leading to stagnant growth.

How to Tell the Difference

Determining whether your gym is playing offense or defense requires a critical assessment of your current strategies and mindset. Here are some signs to help you identify your position:

1. **Membership Trends:** If your membership numbers are growing and you're constantly attracting new clients, you're likely playing offense. If they're stagnant or declining, you may be on the defensive.
2. **Marketing Efforts:** Are you launching new campaigns and actively seeking out new clients? Or, are you focusing solely on retention and reducing marketing spend? The former suggests an offensive strategy, while the latter is more defensive.
3. **Innovation and Expansion:** Look at your programming and service offerings. Are you regularly introducing new classes, upgrading equipment or exploring new business opportunities? If not, you might be playing it safe, signaling a defensive stance.
4. **Financial Investments:** Offense requires investment, whether it's in new technology, staff or facilities. If you're cutting costs and delaying investments, you're likely in defense mode.
5. **Leadership Mindset:** Consider the attitude of your leadership team. Are they excited about the future and willing to take risks, or are they primarily concerned with maintaining the status quo?

Why You Should Always Play Offense

In the fitness industry, playing offense is crucial for long-term success. Here's why:

- **Competitive Advantage:** In a saturated

market, the gyms that innovate and grow are the ones that stand out. Playing offense keeps you ahead of the competition and positions you as a leader in your community.

- **Resilience in Tough Times:** Gyms that are used to playing offense are better equipped to handle downturns. They have diversified revenue streams, strong brand recognition and loyal members who appreciate the constant improvements.

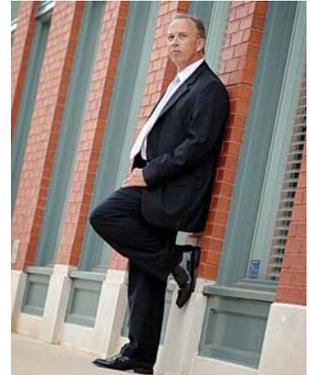
- **Attracting Top Talent:** A gym that is growing and innovating is more attractive to top trainers and staff. High-quality employees want to work for a business that is dynamic and forward-thinking.

- **Maximizing Profit Potential:** Offense opens up new revenue opportunities. Whether it's through expanding services, entering new markets or upselling current members, a growth-focused strategy increases your profit potential.

Strategies to Ensure You're Always Playing Offense

To ensure your gym is always on the offensive, consider the following strategies:

1. **Set Ambitious Goals:** Regularly set and review growth targets. This could be increasing membership by a certain percentage, launching new programs or expanding into a new market. Ambitious goals keep your team motivated and focused on growth.
2. **Invest in Marketing:** Never stop promoting your gym. Utilize digital marketing, social media and community engagement to attract new clients. A steady flow of new members is essential for sustained growth.
3. **Innovate Constantly:** Regularly assess your offerings and look for ways to improve. Introduce new classes, upgrade equipment and stay ahead of fitness trends. Innovation keeps your current members engaged and attracts new ones.
4. **Build a Strong Brand:** Develop a brand that stands for something unique. Whether it's exceptional customer service, specialized training programs or a strong community focus, a strong brand helps you stand out in a crowded market.
5. **Empower Your Team:** Invest in training and development for your staff. A motivated, skilled team is crucial for executing offensive strategies and delivering exceptional service to your members.



Jim Thomas

6. **Monitor Key Metrics:** Regularly review your business metrics: membership growth, retention rates, revenue per member, etc. These will give you insights into whether you're on the right track and where you need to make adjustments.

7. **Stay Agile:** The fitness industry is always evolving. Be prepared to pivot and adapt your strategies as needed. Staying agile ensures you can respond to new opportunities and challenges with confidence.

Conclusion

In the dynamic and competitive world of gym ownership, the choice between playing offense and defense can determine the trajectory of your business. While there may be times when a defensive strategy is necessary, the long-term success of your gym hinges on your ability to play offense consistently. By focusing on growth, innovation and proactive decision-making, you position your gym not just to survive but to thrive. Remember, in this game, the best defense is a good offense.

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

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The Fitness Industry Gets a Workout

 By: **Nancy Trent**

Gyms are really feeling the pressure these days. Contributing factors include the popularity of weight loss drugs, the FTC getting involved in membership cancellation policies and Gen Z making the most of their membership fees.

So, gyms are upping their game, which was apparent at the recent *IDEA World Fitness and Nutrition Expo*, an event organized by the *IDEA Health & Fitness Association*, which took place from July 10 - 14 at the Los Angeles Convention center. Here are the *Top Trends* spotted at IDEA:

AI Goes Fitness

One of the most exciting trends gaining traction is the integration of virtual reality into fitness routines. **Carolina Moraes**, CMO of Zumba, believes this trend is here to stay. "Last year, Zumba launched in VR + MR with FitXR. As the hardware becomes lighter and more user-friendly, I think more brands will explore providing mixed-reality experiences. Entertainment is becoming increasingly important in the

fitness industry as consumers seek variety and excitement," Moraes explained. It's clear that people are looking for ways to stay motivated and make their workouts more enjoyable and engaging.

However, some traditions remain strong, like in-person classes. "We now know that people don't ONLY want at-home fitness; they want in-person classes too. While one won't replace the other, it's important that they coexist harmoniously," added Moraes.

Making Fitness Accessible Anytime, Anywhere

CoreSpring offers Pilates-inspired workouts that don't require a reformer. Their approach is holistic, affordable and portable, using a direct spring resistance method that enhances wellness. *CoreSpring's* specialized equipment and tailored classes help build core strength, improve posture and boost overall wellbeing. Their custom app, filled with video tutorials, allows you to enjoy these benefits anytime, anywhere, making it perfect for all ages.

YogaWorks has expanded its

much-loved studios into one of the largest online yoga class libraries. Whether you're a beginner or looking for a challenging workout, *YogaWorks* offers something for everyone. Their weekly live classes provide real-time instruction and a two-way chat with instructors, helping you increase strength, flexibility, stability and mental clarity from the comfort of your home.

Entertainment Focus

XPR Labs is revolutionizing fitness with virtual Taebo, using painless, no-motivation-required VR tools that people love so much that, if exercise isn't their preference, they would want to do it anyway. Their innovations make navigating the metaverse easier while promoting a healthier life outside of it, setting a new standard for generations to come.

Recovery and Adaptive Massage Revolution

GoFit focuses on recovery and plays a key role in the adaptive massage revolution with their patent-pending



Nancy Trent

Revolve Roller. They are the only full-line, at-home fitness brand that combines high-quality equipment with professional training through the GoFit Fitness App. Their range of products includes core and resistance training gear, muscle massage tools, yoga equipment, and trekking gear, offering a complete fitness experience at home.

(See **Nancy Trent** Page 17)

Exploring Success in Marketing & Advertising: *Perspectives From iHeartMedia - Part I*

By: **Gary Polic**

The landscape of advertising has become increasingly intricate, with a multitude of vendors, media companies and platforms to choose from. Deciding which options will deliver the best outcomes for your business can be challenging. *Polic Consultants Group, LLC* has teamed up with *iHeartMedia* to offer specialized marketing and advertising services designed for the fitness industry.

In my additional role as a *National Accounts Executive at iHeartMedia*, I have significantly advanced in understanding the intricacies of sound advertising investments and their importance. Recognizing the ongoing challenges of securing innovative marketing solutions and effective staffing and grappling with the financial implications of suboptimal marketing ROI, we aim to address these issues comprehensively.

This article series is designed to illuminate the diverse marketing options available today, with a specific focus on the offerings of *iHeartMedia*. Our goal is to enhance your understanding of the numerous platforms at your disposal and underscore the importance of leveraging these resources.

This series will be presented in three parts due to the extensive information to be covered. With over forty years of experience in marketing, I have continually sought agencies and professionals capable of delivering comprehensive solutions across various marketing platforms, including up-to-date data, attribution metrics and creative expertise.

The objective of this series is to raise awareness of the extensive possibilities within the marketing domain and encourage informed decision-making. Staying ahead of competitors by embracing advanced marketing techniques is crucial, and this series will provide valuable insights to facilitate that.

In the first installment, we will conduct a Q&A. The second and third articles will explore Case Studies and real-time performance metrics to demonstrate the efficacy of these media platforms in driving sales growth and enhancing marketing ROI.

Prepare for a detailed exploration of the marketing landscape and stay tuned for the second and third article in this enlightening series.

Polic Consultants Group, LLC (PCG): What should a fitness company look for when choosing a reputable marketing agency?

Gary Polic (GP): The simple answer

is the team behind the campaign. At *iHeartMedia*, we recognize that your main focus is running your business, not tracking every new trend in media; that is our responsibility. Supporting every *iHeartMedia* representative is a team of expert marketers, data analysts, research specialists, producers and designers, all ready to address your queries, navigate you through the process and assist you in making informed decisions aligned with your business objectives.

PCG: Who is *iHeartMedia*?

GP: *iHeart* is the #1 Media Company in the U.S., and *iHeart Digital Solutions* provide 360-degree marketing campaigns for businesses of all sizes. Our full suite of digital marketing products works together with *iHeartMedia's* multi-platform audio and video channels to drive measurable results and leads for our clients.

PCG: What is one way you differentiate yourself from other Marketing companies?

GP: We begin with LISTENING... What goals are you aiming for? What obstacles are you facing? Who are your customers? Once we grasp your requirements and objectives, our team will suggest the most suitable options from our media portfolio to ensure your success, all supported by top-tier data and complete transparency. Additionally, we offer a 2-week cancellation policy at any point during your agreement, freeing you from long-term contracts or commitments.

PCG: What can a client expect?

GP: We provide unified collaboration and expertise. The four steps include:

1. Local Marketer - You will be assigned an *iHeartMedia* Consultant, and he/she is your boots on the ground, making sure you have someone to call when you need a need.

2. Digital Solution Strategist - From Streaming Audio to OTT to SEO, we engage specialized digital product experts and leaders to plan and guide your digital strategy. Every campaign is unique and so is our approach.

3. Digital Solution Services - Our design, support & fulfillment teams, 100+ professionals strong, are there to make sure your campaigns are activated and optimized to ensure your desired results in a competitive market.

4. Digital Creative Design Hub - A centrally-managed, world-class team

of 25 experienced design professionals supporting all *iHeartMedia* Markets.

PCG: What platform solutions do you offer specifically?

GP: We offer a plethora of media mediums, such as:

■ **Broadcast Radio** - #1 Audio Company in America. Over 860 broadcast radio stations across the U.S.;

■ **Television** - We are Amazon Prime Video's premier partner. Yes, we can put your ad on Amazon;

■ **Mobile** - Connect with your customers on their TVs, laptops, tablets or mobile phones;

■ **Digital Display** - Your ad across multiple (trusted) sites and publishers;

■ **Influencer Marketing** - With 1,000s of personalities, we can connect your brand to a celebrity;

■ **Podcasting** - #1 Podcast Publisher in America. Millions of downloads, fast-growing and countless genres and personalities;

■ **Audio Streaming** - Listen to any *iHeart* station in the country, wherever you are;

■ **Social Media** - Get on all major social media platforms with one buy, one partner: *iHeart*;

■ **Targeted Email** - Over 280+ million emails and highly targetable: Gender, City, Income, Age;

■ **Website Build** - We build websites from the ground up using Google guidelines;

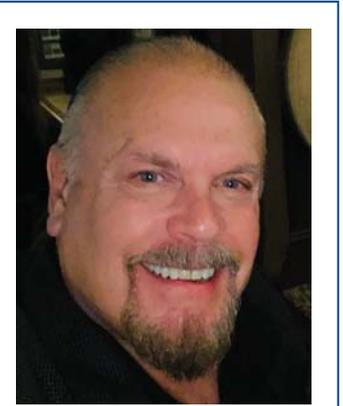
■ **SEO** - Make sure your customers find you when searching for your services;

■ **Concerts & Events** - Hundreds of local and major events to promote your business;

■ **Sweepstakes** - Want to do a sweepstakes? Let us manage the promotion, design, legal and drawing;

■ **1st & 3rd Party Data** - Everything we do is backed by industry-leading metrics and data to ensure your success. Target by Age, Gender, Ethnicity, DMA, Income level, Lifestyle, Interests, Purchase habits.

PCG: Final question. So, with all this information, how does one begin that first step of their marketing journey to formulate a game plan?



Gary Polic

GP: That is the allure of *iHeart*. Simply entrust everything to us. Share your objectives, and we will craft the optimal quantified plan tailored to your budget, a plan that is currently proven effective. If we believe your budget will not meet your desired goals, we will not accept your funds. That is the reason our client renewal rate is so high. Engage with us and expect success. It is truly that straightforward.

■ ■ ■

Your input on the influence of media in today's competitive landscape is invaluable. As previously announced, this is the first installment of a 3-Part Series. The forthcoming article will delve into Case Studies and real-time performance metrics, designed to pique your interest in elevating your marketing strategies. Stay tuned for more!

If you are interested in learning more about how you can increase your sales and/or marketing ROI, please contact Gary at (708) 635 - 9522 or by email at gary@policconsultantsgroup.com or garypolic@iheartmedia.com. You can also visit PCG at www.policconsultantsgroup.com.

(Gary Polic is the Owner of Polic Consultants Group, LLC. He has 40 years of experience in the Fitness Industry. Gary is also a National Accounts Executive with iHeartMedia. He can help you with any questions or concerns you may have regarding your club sales or marketing investment. You can reach Gary on his company's website at www.policconsultantsgroup.com or by phone at 708-635-9522 or by email at gary@policconsultantsgroup.com or garypolic@iheartmedia.com.)

Is Wii Tennis the Future of Pickleball?

By: **Jeffrey Pinkerton**

What a ridiculous headline. Could the high-tech, motion-sensing, digital-paddle game of *Wii Tennis* be the future of Pickleball? Well, no. *Nintendo* shut down production of the *Wii* in 2013. How did pickleball, with no technology, no data-tracking, no AI, no ultra-personalized and customized specifications reach millions of people? To be clear, I am not here to talk entirely about Pickleball, but instead, to discuss what we can learn about its massive and growing rise in popularity and its similarities to great group fitness - it's social; it's simple; and it's inclusive.

Engage and Reach More People

"Nintendo will reshape the home entertainment and video game landscape with the launch of its heralded *Wii* home video game console" with plans to "reinvent" video games for devoted players and with

hopes to engage more video game players, experienced or not, from around the world. This, according to the press release from 2006. Bloggers and reporters followed the release of the *Wii* and the subsequent releases of *Wii Fit*, and they speculated about its impact of providing easy access to exercise, benefits to special audiences like seniors (who allegedly like to play video games together?) and the convenience of working out at home.

Does this sound eerily familiar to the current media buzz surrounding technology, data-tracking, AI and ultra-personalized workouts? You can substitute a few words from the press release, and you'll get a fairly close rendition of today's technology press releases and marketing email blasts.

Pickleball (and Great Group Fitness): It's Social

There is an overwhelming amount

of research on the benefits of social connection and shared experiences. Pick up most any book on change, habit forming, living life well or aging healthfully, and I have no doubt, you'll read about the power of our social events and experiences. **Catherine Price**, *Ted Talk Presenter* and *Author* of, "The Power of Fun: How to Feel Alive Again," defines three common elements of activities that bring us fulfillment and joy: *Playfulness* (a lightheartedness and not taking something too seriously), *Connection* (a shared experience, even true for introverts), and *Flow* (the ability to lose track of time, similar to an athlete during a game or a musician playing an instrument). All three are found in great group fitness (and Pickleball).

Pickleball (and Great Group Fitness): It's Simple

I was introduced to Pickleball by a coworker who organized a game in the



Jeffrey Pinkerton

parking lot at MOSSA headquarters. She gave us a quick overview, showed us the equipment, went over some of the rules and then suggested that we hit a little to (See **Jeffrey Pinkerton** Page 18)

...Nancy Trent

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Women-Focused Nutrition

A clear trend emerged that put women's health at the forefront. With a focus on tailoring fitness and nutrition solutions specifically for women, industry leaders are acknowledging the unique needs of women's bodies and the importance of hormone balance in overall wellbeing. This shift is more than just a nod to gender-specific marketing; it's a recognition of the critical role that targeted fitness and nutrition play in women's health.

One of the standout innovations is *Epic-T*, a groundbreaking product that challenges the conventional wisdom that testosterone support is solely for men. *Epic-T* is an all-natural solution designed to address low testosterone levels in women, offering benefits such as increased lean muscle mass, enhanced energy and stamina, and improved libido and mood. Backed by science, *Epic-T*'s formulation boasts an impressive 214 patents, 35 human clinical studies and 72 peer-reviewed publications. Made from natural ingredients, it supports hormonal balance without harmful side effects, proving that testosterone support can be both effective and safe for women.

Mental Fitness

Nano Genesis Labs, a pioneer in the nootropics space, is leading this shift to mental fitness with its cutting-edge formulations, setting itself apart by developing ultra-premium supplements using advanced nanotechnology. The brand's innovation lies in its use of the

most clinically researched nano carbon molecule, designed to enhance the benefits of potent minerals on a molecular level. These all-natural products offer a wide range of benefits, working to balance and calm the mind, clear brain fog and improve focus. But, the impact goes far beyond mental clarity.

One of the most exciting aspects of *Nano Genesis Labs*' nootropics is their ability to promote neuroplasticity, the brain's capacity to adapt and form new neural connections. This is a crucial factor in learning, memory and overall cognitive health. By supporting neuroplasticity, *Nano Genesis Labs* is not only helping individuals think more clearly but also laying the groundwork for long-term brain health.

In addition to these cognitive benefits, *Nano Genesis Labs*' products are designed to reduce inflammation, boost immunity, increase energy levels and detoxify the body. This comprehensive approach means that users can experience a cascade of positive effects, from improved mental performance to enhanced physical health, all without the harmful side effects often associated with traditional supplements.

The emphasis on mental fitness and the rise of nootropics reflects a broader trend in the health and wellness industry: the understanding that the mind and body are inextricably linked and that optimizing one requires attention to the other. *Nano Genesis Labs* is at the forefront of this movement, offering solutions that not only boost cognitive function but also contribute to overall wellbeing.

Bottoms Up

As fitness enthusiasts and experts

alike continue to recognize the importance of strengthening the muscles that support our foundation, brands like *Glute Slide*, *Squat Wedgiez* and *Naboso* are developing innovative products designed to target the lower half of the body.

The *Glute Slide* has quickly become a go-to for anyone looking to sculpt, strengthen and tone their glutes. This cutting-edge device is equipped with a patented push-pin resistance change technology and a first-of-its-kind foot wedge that provides maximal traction. Its robust handlebar assembly ensures maximum stability, making it suitable for users of all fitness levels. With up to 120 pounds of resistance, the *Glute Slide* is ideal for everyone, from elite athletes focusing on performance training to fitness enthusiasts working out in their home gyms.

Peter Holman, a leading fitness expert, physical therapist and the innovator behind *Glute Slide*, spoke about the growing focus on glute training. "Glutes are the most powerful muscle in the body," Holman explained. "Aesthetically, it seems like women are now empowered to have muscles and not be stick thin; they want to look strong. This trend started with figures like **Gal Gadot** and the **Kardashians**, and the rise of the 'belfie,' a selfie of your butt. All proof that glutes are an obsession now."

But, this trend isn't just about looks. Holman's background in physical therapy underscores the functional importance of strong glutes. "If your glutes aren't strong, you're likely to end up with lower back issues," he said. With *Glute Slide*, users can take their glute training to the next level, ensuring both aesthetic and functional benefits.

Another standout in the lower body training category is *Squat Wedgiez*, a

unique product that offers an elevated leg workout while reducing joint and back pain. *Squat Wedgiez* is designed to strengthen the knees, increase flexibility and build muscle mass. The brand also offers a six-week workout program, providing users with a structured path to stronger, more resilient legs.

While glutes and legs often take center stage in lower body workouts, it's crucial not to overlook the feet, the foundation of all movement. *Naboso* is revolutionizing the way we think about foot health with its small nerve proprioceptive insoles and mats. These products are specifically designed to stimulate the nervous system and enhance movement by improving dynamic stability through sensory stimulation of the feet.

♦ ♦ ♦

These Top Trends from IDEA showcase the exciting directions in which the fitness industry is heading. Whether it's the flexibility of working out anywhere, the tailored approach to women's health, the rise of mental fitness or the focus on lower body strength, each trend reflects a deeper understanding of what consumers want and need in their fitness journeys. As these innovations continue to evolve, they are set to shape the future of fitness, making it more accessible, personalized and effective for everyone.

(*Nancy Trent is the Founder and President of Trent & Company, a leading wellness PR firm. Learn more at www.trentandcompany.com or contact Nancy at nancy@trentandcompany.com.)*

...Jeffrey Pinkerton

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get warmed up. A few minutes later, we started playing a few points for fun. We were running and swinging and sweating (and swatting) and smiling.

She didn't take time discussing the strategy of serving versus returning or showing us the proper form for drives, dinks and drops. She gave us enough information to feel comfortable, and then, she got us moving. It was simple to start and relatively simple to play. And, great group fitness should be the same. A new member comes in (maybe brought by a friend), gets a quick overview, an explanation of the equipment, and then, gets moving... sweating and smiling preferred.

Pickleball (and Great Group Fitness): It's Inclusive

One of the cornerstones of Pickleball is the concept of "open play." During these designated times, the courts cannot be reserved. They are available to everyone, of all skill levels, and most courts have a paddle stacking feature that forces people to mix together to play one game at a time and then leave the court, rotating

out for the next four people waiting to play. Where I play, the only rule and request is that you are able to hit the ball over the net for the serve. No other experience or expertise is required.

What follows is a mixing and mingling of skill levels and ages, sometimes playing with people you know and sometimes playing with people that you've just met for the first time. The time waiting, usually just outside the fence, is spent catching up with friends or introducing yourself to someone you've never met or reliving a great point with your partner from the last match. Sometimes matches are super competitive, sometimes they are lopsided mismatches, but the end goal is not winning (or so people say). The goal is to play and have fun, introduce more people to the sport, get moving and burn some calories and burn off some stress.

In great group fitness, every member feels welcome (and successful) in every workout. The room is a beautiful mixing and mingling of all fitness levels and all ages. And, the goal is not winning. The goal is to create a space that is super welcoming.

Pickleball (and Great Group Fitness): What it's Not

Pickleball isn't high tech. In fact, most times I play, I put my phone in my bag and don't see the screen until I am packing up to go home. I do use my Apple Watch to track my steps and heart rate, but the technology complements the experience, it's not involved in the experience. It's the reason why here at MOSSA we aren't huge fans of televisions and trackers and screens and scoreboards in group fitness. It's an unnecessary (and in my opinion, unhelpful) distraction from the experience.

Pickleball isn't time efficient. I don't go hard for 20 minutes, then head home. There is a lot of discussion in the fitness business about consumer demand for shorter workouts. The challenge is that shorter workouts still involve the same amount of preparation (changing clothes, driving to the gym, cleaning up, driving back home) without the same payoff and results. And, in an effort to be more efficient, to get the CDC's recommended 150 weekly minutes of physical activity, you would need to work out five or six times per week, compared to two to three times per week in one-hour blocks. A less efficient approach. My theory, and I believe Pickleball and our

one-hour strength training workout *Group Power* is proof, it's worth the time spent because it's a great, engaging combination of sport and social.

Finally, Pickleball isn't going anywhere. It's social, it's challenging, it's fun. It's come-as-you-are and get better over time. It's connections and it's experiences that are irreplaceable by a screen.

And, like pickleball, great group fitness, point for point, has the potential to draw people in, in a way no other physical phenomenon, and certainly no video game or circuit training screen, can match. Reach out if you want to talk about either of my favorite topics, and while I may not share my Pickleball secrets, I'll give you all the tools for winning at group fitness.



To learn how your health club can partner with MOSSA to deliver engaging and inclusive group fitness experiences, visit mossa.net/clubs-facilities/why-mossa.

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

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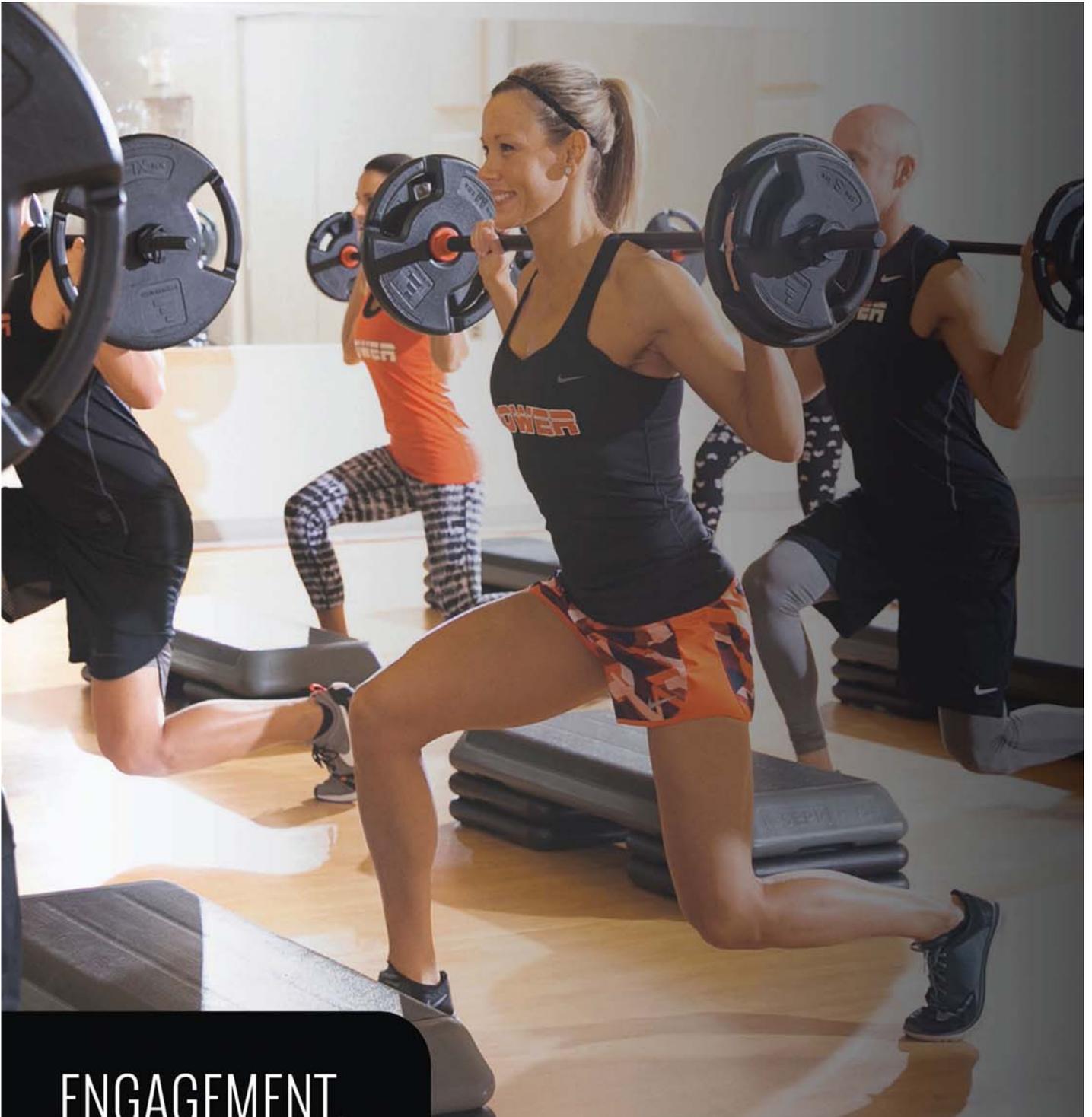


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Thank You to Our Contributing Authors

- **Bruce Carter** - President, Optimal Design Systems International - (954) 888 - 5960
- **Cathy Spencer Browning** - VP of Training & Programming, MOSSA - (770) 989 - 4700
- **Chris Stevenson** - Founder, The Empower Group - chris@stevensonempowers.com
- **Frank Guengerich** - President of Hospitality, Williams Group - frank@williamsgroup.com
- **Gary Polic** - Owner, Polic Consultants Group - (630) 410 - 1120
- **Herb Lipsman** - Author and Industry Consultant - www.herblipsman.com
- **Jeffrey Pinkerton** - Business Development Manager, MOSSA - (770) 989 - 4737
- **Jim Thomas** - President, Fitness Management USA - (800) 929 - 2898
- **Nancy Trent** - President, Trent and Company - nancy@trentandcompany.com
- **Paul Bosley** - Owner, Business Finance Depot - (800) 788 - 3884
- **Rick Caro** - President, Management Vision, Inc. - (212) 987 - 4300
- **Sara Kooperman, JD** - CEO, SCW Fitness Education - scwfit.com
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