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CLUB INSIDER

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The Chair is a Growth Strategy

SEPTEMBER 2026

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CLUB INSIDER

CELEBRATING 30+ YEARS OF TRUST

The Chair is a Growth Strategy

By: **Sara Kooperman, JD**

For years, chair-based exercise was viewed as a limited option for frail adults or individuals unable to participate in traditional fitness classes. That perception is changing. Research now demonstrates that well-designed, chair-based workouts can improve strength, muscular endurance, flexibility, balance, mobility, daily function and emotional wellbeing.

For health clubs, YMCAs, recreation centers and fitness studios, chair-based programming represents more than an accommodation. It is an opportunity to welcome a rapidly growing population that many facilities are not currently serving.

According to the *U.S. Census Bureau*, the number of Americans age 65

and older reached 61.2 million in 2024, representing 18% of the population. From 2020 to 2024, the older population grew by 13%, substantially faster than the working-age population. By 2060, adults age 65 and older are projected to represent 23.4% of the United States population.

This is not a niche audience. It is an expanding market of prospective members seeking approachable, purposeful and professionally delivered exercise.

Meeting People Where They Are

Many adults understand that exercise is important but do not feel prepared to enter a traditional fitness environment. A room filled with treadmills, complicated equipment, high-intensity

classes and experienced exercisers can feel intimidating, particularly for someone managing arthritis, balance concerns, limited mobility, fatigue, deconditioning or fear of falling.

The *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)* recommends that older adults participate in aerobic, muscle-strengthening and balance activities each week. The CDC also emphasizes that adults who cannot meet the full recommendations should remain as physically active as their abilities and conditions allow.

Chair-based exercise creates an accessible entry point. The chair provides stability and familiarity while allowing participants to perform purposeful cardiovascular, strength, mobility, flexibility, (See *The Chair* Page 10)



Sara Kooperman, JD

HFA Releases 2026 Global Report

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Among fitness operators responding to *HFA's Global Survey*, median revenue increased 10.7% in 2025, median net membership grew 6.1%, and the median EBITDA margin reached 22.1%. Across leading fitness markets, participation and revenue also reached new highs, making 2025 a landmark year for the global fitness industry, according to the *2026 HFA Global Report*.

The annual report from the *Health & Fitness Association (HFA)* covers 33 countries and includes more than 200 operator profiles. It combines operator-submitted data with HFA proprietary research, independent audits, third-party studies and insights from national fitness federations, trade groups and local

HEALTH & FITNESS ASSOCIATION

market experts. HFA's 2026 Global Survey included 244 operators representing nearly 27,000 fitness facilities worldwide.

"The global fitness industry is growing, but the larger story is how the role of physical activity in people's lives is entering an important new chapter. Growth is strong, but what is equally significant is the expanding recognition of physical activity as essential to long-term health and wellbeing," said **Greta Wagner**, *HFA Interim President and CEO*. "Consumers are increasingly prioritizing strength, (See *HFA Global Report* Page 6)

REX Launches Roundtables for Racquet Sports

NEW YORK, N.Y. - *REX Roundtables*, the peer advisory organization that has served club and fitness industry executives for 37 years, announces the formation of *Roundtables for Racquet Sports*, peer group built specifically for the leaders of tennis, padel, pickleball and multi-sport racquet facilities. The inaugural in-person roundtable is scheduled for mid-December in Orlando, and applications are now open at rexroundtables.com/apply-racquet.

The launch responds to explosive growth across racquet sports. Pickleball participation is up 172% over three years, with 24.3 million Americans playing in 2025. Padel courts have increased 250% since 2022 and is now the fastest growing sport in America with over 1.0 million

REX
ROUNDTABLES FOR EXECUTIVES

participants. Tennis remains the global core of the industry, with nearly 27 million U.S. players and 120 million worldwide. Today, more than 75% of facilities offer multiple racquet sports, forcing every club leader to determine how tennis, padel, pickleball and other racquet sports coexist under one roof, quickly, and usually without an established playbook.

(See *REX* Page 6)

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- Why Pvolve's Julie Cartwright Believes Differentiation Built on Solving Meaningful Problems Creates Lasting Demand - **By:** Nancy Trent
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Norm's Notes

■Hello Everybody! This is your **Club Insider Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993** checking in with our **393rd monthly edition of this 30+ year running club business publication** I refer to as: **A Labor of Love!** I'm very thankful that you've tuned in again for this iteration of **Norm's Notes**, as I proceed on my keyboard with my longtime habit of "Telling-It-Like-It-Is!" I'm really happy that you're reading this edition, and I want to **THANK YOU ALL** for sticking with us every month! As usual, we have a bunch of health and fitness club business news, so please read on!

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

■September 11, 2026 was the 25th Anniversary of the ghastly 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington D.C. The passengers of Flight 93 brought down another airplane that was soon to be used as a weapon. In all, 2,977 perished on that

fateful day. **MAY THEY CONTINUE TO REST IN PEACE.**

■Our friends and *Club Insider Advertisers*, **Crunch Fitness** and **LA Fitness**, held honorary 9/11 Memorial Stair Climbs at various facilities throughout the United States. Thank you to them for not letting the memory of the **343 FDNY Firefighters** who died on 9/11 be forgotten. Additionally, may the memory of the *Police Officers* and other *first responders* be remembered for all time.

■Congratulations to **ALEXANDER ZVEREV**, U.S. Open Tennis Champion, who won on Sunday, September 13, 2026!

■Here's some news items we shared during the month of September via our *Club Insider Weekly* eblast! Released each Wednesday morning at 9AM EST, you'll find there is always a lot going on in the industry! Make sure you are signed up at www.clubinsideronline.com.

■Crunch Franchise Brings Premier Fitness Destinations to Greater Dallas-Fort Worth Area

FORT WORTH, TX - Crunch Fitness

announces the upcoming openings of *Crunch Benbrook* and *Crunch Burleson* in the Dallas-Fort Worth area. The brand new \$12 million, 27,000 - 40,000-square-foot state-of-the-art fitness facilities will open doors soon, with pre-sale now underway. Operated by Crunch Fitness franchisee *Southwest Fitness Holdings, LLC*, a subsidiary of CR Fitness Holdings, Crunch Benbrook and Crunch Burleson will create new fitness offerings for residents of the greater Dallas-Fort Worth area.

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

■VASA Fitness Names Liz Crisafi Chief Marketing Officer

GREENWOOD VILLAGE, CO - VASA Fitness, one of the nation's fastest-growing high-value, low-price fitness club operators, announces that **Liz Crisafi** has joined the company as *Chief Marketing Officer*. Crisafi will serve as a member of VASA's Executive Leadership Team and report directly to **Michael Osanloo**, *Chief Executive Officer*.

■Workout Anytime Accelerates Growth with Strategic Leadership Hires and a Capital-Efficient Growth Strategy



Norm Cates

ATLANTA, GA - *Workout Anytime* is primed to continue building on a successful year of growth with the fitness industry expected to reach \$29.5B this year. The 24/7 fitness franchise with nearly 200 units continues to attract experienced multi-unit operators as it makes strategic investments to enhance franchisee support and the member experience.

(See *Norm's Notes* Page 7)

About Club Insider

CELEBRATING 30+ YEARS OF TRUST

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Thanks and Appreciation

At *Club Insider*, we are excited to be in our **33rd Year** of this home-based health and fitness club trade publication! The thought that this publication was founded to serve an industry I truly love, and so that I could become a *Mister Mom* for my son, **Justin**, is still intriguing and amazing to us. So, I wish to extend my most sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to everyone who has made this amazing 30+ year run possible.

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

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

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

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

Norm Cates, Jr.



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...HFA Global Report

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mobility, healthy aging and connection, while governments and health systems are beginning to recognize how structured physical activity can support prevention. This creates an extraordinary opportunity for fitness facilities, not only to serve more people but also to become an integral part of the global health and wellness ecosystem."

Growth opportunities remain particularly substantial in markets where fitness participation remains relatively low. India already has an estimated 13.65 million members and 49,300 facilities at just 0.9% penetration, with membership and revenue projected to grow at annual rates of 11% and 15%, respectively, through 2030. Brazil's latest available figures show 14.7 million members and more than 45,000 facilities at 7% penetration. China already has an estimated 50 million members and roughly 50,000 facilities, yet penetration is only 3.6%. Its market continues to shift toward smaller, lower-priced, 24-hour and more flexible formats.

HFA's Global Survey also shows that operators remain confident about what comes next. More than nine in 10 respondents (92.3%) expect revenue to increase in 2026, including 70.9% who anticipate growth above 5%. More than 85% expect membership to rise, while 83.4% expect EBITDA to increase and 57.7% anticipate EBITDA growth above 5%. Operators also appear prepared to invest behind that outlook: two-thirds expect technology spending to rise, 60.7% expect higher marketing spending and 45.8% expect staffing to increase.

The report also documents a growing number of cases where physical activity is being integrated into health policy and healthcare systems. In the United States, Medicare now reimburses standardized physical activity assessments as part of the Annual Wellness Visit. In Australia, private health insurance rebates have been reintroduced for selected therapies such as Pilates. In Japan,

selected expenses at government-certified exercise therapy facilities may qualify as tax-deductible medical expenses, while agreements in the Netherlands encourage collaboration among municipalities, health care providers, sports organizations, and fitness operators.

The developments are uneven, but together, they show a more concrete policy role emerging for the industry. While approaches vary by market, collectively these developments point to a more substantive role for physical activity, and the fitness industry within broader health and prevention strategies.

A Global View of a Growing Industry

The 2026 Global Report provides a data-driven overview of the commercial health and fitness industry across 33 countries and five major regions.

Combining industry data with perspectives from national federations and other market experts, the report examines the forces shaping fitness markets worldwide. It is designed for operators, suppliers, investors, policymakers and advocates seeking reliable information on the industry's size, performance and direction.

What the Report Covers

The 2026 edition spans Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and North America. Its country profiles pair available market data with local analysis from fitness federations and industry leaders. Depending on data availability, profiles include:

- Number of Fitness Facilities;
- Number of Members or Consumers;



- Industry Revenue;
- Population Penetration;
- Market Structure and Segmentation;
- Consumer and Operating Trends;
- Economic and Policy Context;
- Industry Outlook.

The report also includes more than 200 operator profiles and global rankings of leading fitness companies by 2025 revenue, facility count and membership.

What's New in 2026

This year's report offers expanded analysis and a more accessible reading experience, including:

- **New Global Operator Snapshot:** A concise view of operator performance in 2025, including revenue, membership, retention and profitability.
- **Expanded 2026 Expectations:** Insights

into operator sentiment and expectations for revenue, membership, EBITDA, staffing and technology investment.

How the Data is Gathered

The report draws on several complementary sources:

- HFA's global survey of commercial fitness operators;
- Proprietary HFA consumer and industry research;
- Data and analysis supplied by national fitness federations and trade associations;
- Independent audits and third-party research;
- Company disclosures, established industry publications and historical data.

Data availability and methodology vary by country. The report identifies important differences and limitations to support appropriate comparisons across markets.

For the first time, the Global Report is available to the entire industry. Explore the interactive Foleon edition online or download the complete report as a PDF. The report is available to HFA members and nonmembers by going to www.healthandfitness.org/2026-hfa-global-report.

Make It Fun!

...REX

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"The racquet sports industry is exploding, and that growth is forcing fast decisions on revenue, programming, membership, capital, staffing and new competition," said **Brian Dillman**, REX Chair of Roundtables for Racquet Sports. "REX has spent 37 years proving that a confidential room of non-competing peers is the fastest way to turn a moment like this into a repeatable advantage instead of a scramble. Racquet sports leaders deserve that same room."

REX Roundtables' peer model has more than 350 members and a retention rate above 90%. Member clubs that have added new segments to their offerings

are already reporting 72% EBITDA growth and 217% dues growth. Roundtables for Racquet Sports extends that model to the operators, directors and owners at the center of the industry's multi-sport shift.

REX introduced the new roundtable during a public open call on July 28, 2026, which drew strong attendance. A recording of the session is available at bit.ly/clubinsider170.

Program Details:

- **First In-person Roundtable:** Mid-December;
- **Location:** To be announced; the facility of one of the Roundtable's Founding Members will be selected as the first host site;

- **Chair:** Brian Dillman;

■ **Membership:** Capped at 12 members for the inaugural roundtable; five founding members have already committed;

■ **Dues:** \$799 per month plus expenses. Members who join by the October 2026 roundtable receive a founding rate of \$599 per month for the first year;

■ **Apply:** rexroundtables.com/apply-racquet.

Club owners, general managers and racquet sports directors interested in joining, or in having a director join on their behalf, are encouraged to apply before the October roundtable to secure one of the remaining founding seats.

For 37 years, REX Roundtables has brought together club and fitness industry leaders in confidential, non-competing peer groups that meet regularly to share results, solve problems and hold one another accountable. With more than 350 members and retention above 90%, REX has become the industry's leading peer advisory community. Roundtables for Racquet Sports is REX's newest roundtable, created for the leaders of tennis, padel, pickleball and multi-sport racquet facilities. Learn more at rexroundtables.com.

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...Norm's Notes

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■ Rasheed Behrooznia Joins Daxko as President and Chief Operating Officer

BIRMINGHAM, AL - Daxko, a leading global integrated software and payments provider to the health and wellness industry, announces technology veteran **Rasheed Behrooznia** has been named **President and Chief Operating Officer**. In his new role, Behrooznia will drive operational excellence, accelerate product innovation and drive Daxko's next phase of scale, performance and execution.

■ Jonas Fitness Partners with FitBudd to Introduce Compete Perform Pro

HOUSTON, TX - Jonas Fitness, Inc., the company behind *Compete Member Management Software*, announces a partnership with *FitBudd, Inc.*, a fitness technology company specializing in digital coaching and branded member experiences. Through this partnership, Jonas Fitness will offer Compete Perform Pro, a digital training and coaching product built on FitBudd's technology and designed for the Compete ecosystem.

■ ABC Fitness Expands Connected AI

Capabilities With New Virtual Agents and Coaching Tools

DALLAS, TX - ABC Fitness, technology provider for fitness businesses everywhere, announces the expansion of its connected AI capabilities across the workflows used by gym and studio operators and coaches, helping fitness businesses answer more inquiries, capture more demand, reduce repetitive work and deliver personalized coaching to more clients.

■ The 2027 HFA Convention and Trade Show will be held in Las Vegas March 10 - 12, 2027. DON'T MISS IT!

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

■ God bless our troops, airmen and sailors worldwide and keep them safe. Thank you, Congratulations and Welcome Home to all of our troops who have served around the world. God bless America's Policemen and women

and Firemen and women; keep them safe. Finally, God bless you, your family, your club(s) and your members. God Bless America! Laus Deo!

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 50+ year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. He is the Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993 of Club Insider, celebrating 30+ years of trust in publication. In 1981,

he was IHRSA's First President and a Co-Founder of the Association with the late Rick Caro and five others. In 2001, he was honored by IHRSA with its DALE DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award, one of its highest honors. And, in 2017, he was honored with Club Industry's Lifetime Achievement Award. You can reach Norm by phone at 770-635-7578 or email at Norm@clubinsideronline.com.)

Club Insider Seeks Contributing Authors

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Elevating Group Fitness, Literally

By: Jeffrey Pinkerton

Five years of convincing, undone in five minutes of frustration. My Mom and Dad were working out at a facility that offered our mind-body program, *Group Centergy*. I knew that the program would be a great addition to their workout routine and help build mobility and flexibility into their active senior-living, senior-traveling, young-at-heart lives. They had a friend who loved Centergy, and after a few invitations from her and some heavy-handed conversations with me, they decided to give it a try. I got a text from my Mom with an update. My Dad left after five minutes, utterly frustrated.

I called the *Group Fitness Director* first to try to get some intel on the situation. To her credit, she had taken wonderful care to make sure my parents received the VIP treatment – she personally gave them an extended tour of the facility, remembered them by name each time they visited and was a ball of positive energy for their new fitness routine.

"Hey, my Mom and Dad tried

Group Centergy today for the first time... my Mom loved it, but my Dad left after five minutes." She was shocked. The *Instructor* was one of the best on her team, did an amazing job in the 10 AM timeslot, coached well and moved beautifully. She was so confused that they didn't have an amazing experience.

But, I had a suspicion. "Do you have a stage in your group fitness room?" I asked. "Oh. No. We don't. Why?" I knew exactly what had happened. After five years of trying to convince my Dad to try his first group fitness workout (the first group fitness workout in his 70+ years of life), it was all undone when the instructor disappeared from view as the warm-up moved from standing to the ground. He lost the visual reference; quickly fell behind; and feeling out of place, awkward and frustrated, for good reason, when it was time to fight or flight, he fled.

There are enough challenges in attracting people into the group fitness room. Some people don't see anyone in the room that looks like them. Some people

aren't convinced the workout will meet their needs (or fit their level of fitness or ability). And, some people are simply too intimidated to enter a room of strangers to try something new for the first time.

But, once they get the courage to enter the room, our job is to make sure they have a great experience and help them feel as successful as possible as soon as possible. And, let's be realistic: most new participants stand in the back of the room, and without a stage, they are unlikely to have a clear line of sight to the instructor.

The instructor is the coach, role model, encourager and motivator, and without a visual reference to the instructor, participants struggle to follow along. In fact, studies (bit.ly/clubinsider171) show that observational learning improves motor-skill learning. So, in addition to improving instructor visibility, a stage will literally increase a participant's chance of success. And, as important as a stage is for the participant, it's equally important for the instructor to see the participants. An instructor with a clear line of sight to



Jeffrey Pinkerton

members improves their ability to cue, coach, connect and even correct.

Don't let the size of the room become a limitation. There is no group fitness room too small for a stage. In fact, a stage can actually help create usable space. Participants will naturally stand closer to an elevated instructor than they will to an instructor standing on the floor at the same level. Without a stage, people tend to leave a larger buffer around the instructor, which can push the entire class farther back into the room. Even a modest platform can establish a clear front of the room, improve sightlines and make the space feel more organized and elevate the experience (literally and figuratively).

A great group fitness experience relies on a great workout, a great instructor and a great delivery – it is a combination of program, people and presentation. And, without a stage, even a small one, you are in jeopardy of not only lowering the instructor's visibility but also the participants' chance of success and the likelihood they return again.

In order to elevate the group fitness experience – an experience that can and should drive your member connection, community and retention – put your instructor on a stage (not a pedestal; that's an article for another day), and let your member experience be the star of the show.

♦ ♦ ♦

Want to elevate your group fitness experience? Download MOSSA's *Group Fitness Room Design* white paper (bit.ly/clubinsider172) for practical recommendations on creating a space that encourages participation and helps members feel successful. From stages and sightlines to layout, spacing, sound, lighting, mirrors, and more, the room plays an important role in the experience you deliver.

(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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...The Chair

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coordination and balance-related exercises. Participants do not need to get onto the floor, navigate complex equipment or keep pace with a traditional group exercise class.

An effective chair-based class is not passive. Participants can perform seated marching, knee extensions, heel and toe movements, resistance-band exercises, upper-body strength work, trunk rotation, multidirectional reaches, coordinated movement patterns and rhythmic cardiovascular combinations. Supported standing may be offered when appropriate, but it does not need to be the primary focus.

The Research Is Strong

A 2021 systematic review and meta-analysis examined 25 chair-based exercise studies involving 1,388 older adults. Researchers found significant improvements in handgrip strength and upper- and lower-body muscular endurance. Individual studies within the review also reported improvements in mobility, gait speed, balance, flexibility and quality of life. The authors concluded that chair-based exercise should be promoted as an effective and easily implemented way to maintain and improve physical function in older adults. (Klempel et al., 2021)

A separate systematic review and meta-analysis evaluated nine randomized controlled trials involving older adults in long-term-care settings. Chair-based resistance-band exercise produced significant improvements in activities of daily living, lung capacity, handgrip strength, upper- and lower-body muscular endurance, flexibility and dynamic balance. Researchers also found improvements in sleep quality and reductions in depression. (Efendi et al., 2023)

The results are especially important for fitness businesses because they demonstrate that chair-based programming can address several

needs within one class. It can combine cardiovascular activity, resistance training, functional movement, flexibility, coordination and balance-related exercise without requiring multiple rooms or large amounts of equipment.

Research involving pre-frail older women provides additional support. In a 14-week controlled study, participants completed a multicomponent chair-based program two to three times per week. The program included resistance-band exercises, balance activities, gait-related training, mobility and stretching. Participants experienced improvements in gait speed, balance, functional fitness, happiness, perceived stress and depressive symptoms. (Furtado et al., 2021)

A 2025 systematic review and meta-analysis of chair-based exercise among postmenopausal women also found improvements in upper- and lower-body muscular endurance, flexibility and dynamic balance. The researchers described chair-based exercise as an easily implemented strategy for maintaining and developing physical function. (Gao et al., 2025)

The evidence is clear: participants can receive meaningful physical and psychological benefits while exercising primarily from a chair.

A Broader Definition of a Fitness Member

Traditional fitness marketing often focuses on people who already identify as exercisers. Chair-based programming gives clubs an opportunity to reach adults who may not yet see themselves as fitness consumers.

Potential participants include:

- Older adults beginning or returning to exercise;
- Individuals who are deconditioned;
- Adults concerned about balance or falling;
- People managing joint discomfort or limited mobility;
- Individuals who are uncomfortable getting onto the floor;



- Adults transitioning from rehabilitation to community fitness;
- Caregivers seeking appropriate activity for a family member;
- Current members who need an alternative during recovery;
- Retirees looking for movement and social connection;
- People who find traditional group fitness intimidating.

Turning Outreach into Opportunity

Chair-based exercise is highly adaptable and requires minimal equipment, making it especially suitable for community outreach. A qualified instructor can bring a structured program to locations that do not have a traditional fitness room.

Potential community partners include:

- Senior living communities;
- Independent and assisted-living facilities;
- Hospitals and medical fitness programs;
- Physical therapy and rehabilitation practices;
- Park districts and recreation departments;
- Libraries and community centers;
- Churches and faith-based organizations;
- Retirement communities;
- Corporate wellness programs;
- Caregiver support organizations;
- Veteran and disability organizations;
- Adult day programs.

These individuals may not respond to an advertisement for boot camp, HIIT or advanced strength training. They may respond to messages centered on confidence, independence, energy, mobility, strength and community. Chair-based classes can help a facility communicate a powerful message: fitness belongs to everyone.

Retaining Members as Their Needs Change

Chair-based exercise is not only a member-acquisition strategy. It can also support retention. Longtime members may eventually experience surgery, illness, arthritis, balance concerns or changes in mobility. Without appropriate options, these individuals may suspend or cancel their memberships. A chair-based program gives them a way to remain active and connected to the facility.

It can also serve members on days when a traditional workout is not appropriate. Some participants may attend chair-based classes permanently, while others may use them temporarily or combine them with aquatic exercise, personal training, walking, Pilates, strength training or other programs.

A fitness facility that provides multiple ways to participate can continue serving members through changing stages of life. The goal is not to move every participant into a standing class. The goal is to provide an effective experience that meets the member's present needs.

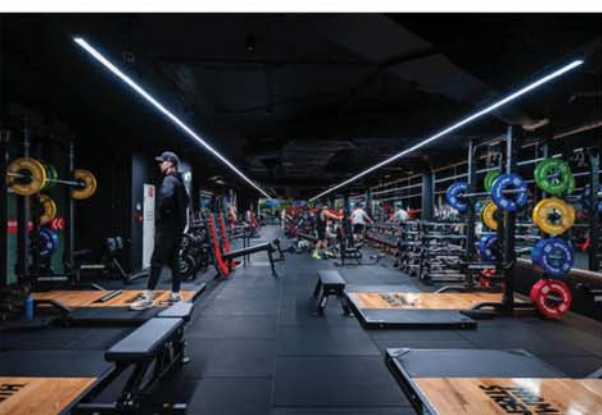
Rather than waiting for prospective members to walk through the club's doors, the club can introduce its instructors and services within trusted community environments.

A short demonstration class, four-week introductory series, educational seminar, or community wellness day can allow participants to experience the program before making a larger commitment. Outreach programs can also establish relationships with healthcare professionals, senior-service organizations and community leaders who regularly encounter adults seeking accessible exercise.

Revenue Models for Chair-Based Programming: Chair-based exercise can support several revenue models. The best approach depends on the facility, audience, instructor availability and community partnerships.

Premium Small-Group Programs: A club (See *The Chair* Page 12)





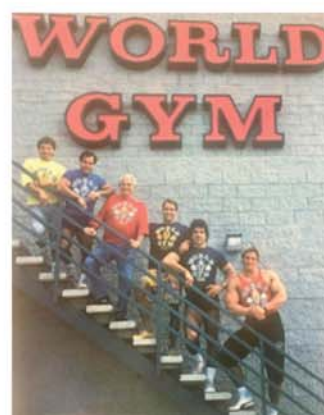
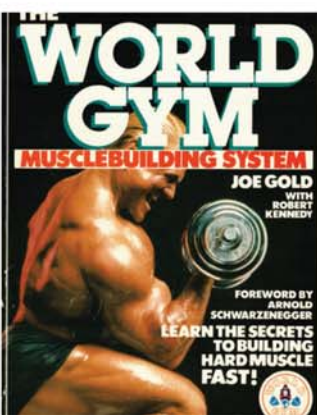
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...The Chair

continued from page 10

can offer a four-, six- or eight-week chair-based fitness series for an additional fee. A smaller class can include individual attention, progress tracking, resistance equipment and education related to strength, mobility, balance and daily function.

Community Contracts: Senior communities, retirement residences, park districts and community organizations may contract with a fitness facility to provide weekly onsite classes. The organization pays the club, and the club supplies a qualified instructor and structured program.

Satellite Memberships: Participants attending an outreach location can be offered a limited or introductory club membership. This may include access to chair-based classes, aquatic exercise, social events, wellness seminars or selected facility amenities.

Personal and Small-Group Training: Chair-based movement can become part of personal training for clients who require greater stability or a more accessible starting point. Trainers can also offer small-group sessions focused on active aging, strength, mobility or balance.

Sponsored Community Programs: Hospitals, senior organizations, healthcare groups or local businesses may sponsor a community chair-fitness series. Sponsorship can reduce participant cost while compensating the facility and instructor.

Workshops and Special Events

Clubs can host seminars for older adults and caregivers on strength, mobility, fall prevention, active aging and exercise confidence. A short chair-based workout can transform the event from a lecture into an engaging experience.

These approaches do not guarantee revenue. They provide realistic ways to package and deliver an evidence-supported service to populations that may be underserved by conventional fitness programming.

The Instructor Makes the Difference

A chair does not create an effective program; a qualified instructor does.

The instructor must understand exercise science, class design, cueing, intensity, resistance selection, movement modifications and the needs of older adults. The class should feel like a professional fitness experience, not an activity offered merely to occupy participants.

Effective instructors avoid speaking to older adults as though they are children. They create an energetic, respectful environment that celebrates ability. They provide options without making

participants feel singled out and deliver appropriate challenges without sacrificing movement quality.

Professional education and certification help instructors understand how to combine seated cardiovascular exercise, resistance training, mobility, flexibility, coordination and functional movement. They also help instructors distinguish fitness instruction from medical advice and recognize when a participant should be referred to an appropriate healthcare professional.

Marketing Without Stigma

The words used to market chair fitness matter. Phrases such as "frail seniors," "limited elderly," or "classes for people who cannot exercise" may discourage the very participants a facility hopes to reach. More inviting language includes:

- Build strength and confidence;
- Move better at every age;
- Improve mobility and energy;
- Stay strong for everyday life;
- Fitness that meets you where you are;
- Support your active lifestyle;
- Exercise with confidence;
- Seated strength, cardio and mobility.

Promotional images should show engaged participants moving with energy, using resistance, interacting with the instructor and enjoying the experience. Chair-based fitness should appear purposeful, modern and empowering.

Consider offering the first class as a complimentary community event. Invite adult children, caregivers, healthcare professionals and current members to bring someone who may benefit. Once participants experience a well-designed program, the chair often stops representing limitation and begins representing possibility.

Measure What Matters

Club leaders should evaluate chair-based programming with the same seriousness applied to every other program. Useful measures include:

- Registration and attendance;
- Repeat participation;
- Conversion from guest to member;
- Member retention;
- Referrals from community partners;
- Participant satisfaction;
- Instructor utilization;
- Revenue per program;
- Contract renewals;
- Demand for related services.

Participant stories can also be powerful. Increased confidence, improved ability to complete daily activities, greater social engagement and renewed willingness to exercise may not appear on a traditional attendance report, but they demonstrate meaningful program value.

Any testimonials used in marketing should represent individual experiences and should not promise identical results to every participant.

Start With One Chair... and a Strategy

Launching chair-based fitness does not require a major renovation or expensive equipment investment. Most facilities already have an appropriate room, chairs, resistance bands, light weights and qualified fitness professionals who can receive specialized training.

Begin with one pilot class or short series. Identify the audience, train the instructor, establish an outreach partner, create respectful marketing and monitor participation. Ask attendees what brought them to the program and what additional services they would value.

Then, build from the response.

The larger opportunity is not simply

adding another class to the schedule. It is creating an accessible pathway into fitness for adults who may believe that traditional exercise has left them behind.

Chair-based programming can help clubs serve current members longer, reach new populations, strengthen community partnerships and develop additional sources of revenue. Most importantly, it allows more people to experience the strength, confidence, connection and independence that effective exercise can provide.

For club owners and managers, the message is simple: *Do not underestimate the chair.* It may be one of the most practical tools available for expanding both your mission and your membership.

■ ■ ■

S.E.A.T. Fitness offers two exciting, ready-to-teach programming options for active-aging adults and participants of all fitness levels. *S.E.A.T. Original* delivers accessible, chair-based functional fitness designed to improve strength, mobility, balance, flexibility and confidence. *S.E.A.T. BEATS* combines movement and music with rhythm sticks, shaker eggs and scarves to enhance coordination, cognitive engagement, dexterity and enjoyment. Both programs help facilities upskill instructors by providing professionally produced videos, music, choreography flashcards and fresh quarterly updates, making classes easy to learn, teach, and continually refresh. Instructor memberships are available for only **\$9.99 per month**. Learn more at www.seatfitness.com.

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



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Successful Health Clubs Do These Two Things All the Time

By: **Frank Guengerich**

The health club industry has never been more competitive. Members today have more choices than ever before, including boutique fitness studios, home fitness equipment, fitness apps and virtual training programs. Yet, despite all of these options, the most successful clubs continue to grow, retain members and build thriving communities. Why? Because they consistently do two things exceptionally well:

- **Integrate new members into the club experience;**
- **Engage existing members in programs, activities and relationships.**

These two practices create what every club owner and manager wants: a "sticky" membership. Members don't just belong to the club; they feel connected to it.

1. Integrate New Members into the Club Experience:

Many clubs focus heavily on

membership sales but fall short when it comes to member integration. The reality is simple: joining a club and becoming part of a club are two very different things.

A new member may be excited on the day they enroll, but if they don't quickly find their place within the community, their enthusiasm often fades. The first 30 to 90 days are critical.

Successful clubs take the time to learn about each new member's interests, goals, passions and lifestyle. They ask questions such as:

- What activities do you enjoy?
- Have you participated in fitness programs before?
- Are you interested in sports, social events or wellness programs?
- What are your health and fitness goals?

Once they understand the member, they connect them to the right opportunities. A runner may be introduced to the club's running group. A tennis player may be invited to leagues, clinics or tournaments. A member looking for accountability may be encouraged to join

small group training. Someone seeking social connections may be invited to club events, wellness workshops or member mixers.

The key is helping members find "their people." The most successful clubs make integration a team effort. Department Heads, Fitness Directors, Racquet Sports Professionals, Group Exercise Leaders, Aquatics Managers and Wellness Staff all play a role.

A simple phone call, email, text message or personal invitation can make a tremendous difference. Imagine receiving a call from the Fitness Director that says:

"Welcome to the club. I noticed you're interested in strength training. We have a great small group training program starting next week, and I'd love to personally invite you."

That personal connection creates immediate value and helps the member feel seen, welcomed and supported.

2. Engage Existing Members Continuously:

Member engagement doesn't stop after onboarding. The best clubs



Frank Guengerich

understand that retention is built through ongoing participation and meaningful experiences.

Members who regularly participate in programs and activities are significantly more likely to renew their memberships than members who simply check in occasionally and leave.

(See **Frank Guengerich** Page 16)



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Alternative Financing Methods for a New or Expanding Fitness Center

By: **Paul Bosley**

Opening a new fitness center or expanding an existing facility may require significant capital. In addition to real estate and construction costs, fitness businesses often need substantial investments in exercise equipment, technology, furnishings, signage, marketing and working capital. While traditional bank and SBA loans can be excellent financing options, they are not the only solutions available. Alternative financing methods can help fitness center owners acquire equipment and access working capital while preserving cash for other business needs. On the personal level, these methods also avoid having to use your real estate for collateral to secure financing.

Four financing options worth considering are *Equipment Leasing*, *Equipment Financing Agreements (EFAs)*, *Unsecured Business Loans* and *Business Lines of Credit*.

Equipment Leasing

Equipment Leasing can be an effective way to acquire the latest fitness equipment without making a large upfront investment. Instead of purchasing equipment, the fitness center leases it for a specified period and makes monthly payments.

Leasing can be particularly attractive for treadmills, ellipticals, strength equipment, bikes, digital fitness systems and other equipment that may need to be upgraded periodically. By spreading the cost over time, leasing can help preserve cash for construction, marketing, payroll and other startup or expansion expenses.

Depending on the structure of the lease, there will be options to either purchase the equipment at the end of the lease term, return it or upgrade to newer equipment.

Equipment Financing Agreements

An Equipment Financing Agreement, commonly called an "EFA," allows a business to purchase equipment and repay the financing through scheduled monthly payments. Unlike a traditional lease, the business will own the equipment from the beginning, while the financing company maintains a security interest in the equipment until the obligation is paid.

EFAs can be useful when a fitness center wants to own its equipment but does not want to use a large amount of cash for the purchase. They can finance individual pieces of equipment, or in some cases, a larger package of equipment for a new facility.

For expanding fitness centers, EFAs can provide a practical way to add equipment as membership grows without substantially reducing available working capital.

Unsecured Business Loans

Unsecured Business Loans provide another potential source of capital without requiring specific business assets as collateral. Because these loans are not secured by equipment or real estate, lenders typically place greater emphasis on factors such as business cash flow, the owners' personal credit history, time in business and the business's overall financial strength.

Unsecured financing can be particularly useful for expenses that are difficult to finance with equipment-specific loans. These may include marketing, employee expenses, deposits, technology, renovations, inventory or other working-capital requirements.

For a new fitness center, an unsecured loan may supplement equipment financing or leasing by providing capital for costs that fall outside the equipment purchase itself.

Business Lines of Credit

A Business Line of Credit provides flexible access to capital when it is needed rather than requiring the business to receive one large lump-sum loan. The fitness center can draw funds up to an approved credit limit and generally pays interest only on the amount being used.

This flexibility can be valuable for established fitness centers. A new facility may use a line of credit for working capital during the ramp-up period, while an existing center could use it for seasonal expenses, unexpected repairs, marketing campaigns or expansion-related costs.

Combining Financing Methods

One of the biggest advantages of alternative financing is that these methods do not necessarily have to be used independently. A fitness center may, for example, use an equipment lease for exercise equipment, an EFA for equipment it wants to own and a unsecured business loan for working capital.

The right financing structure depends on the project's size, the



Paul Bosley

owner's financial strength, available cash, equipment requirements and projected cash flow. By considering multiple financing options, fitness center owners can potentially reduce their initial cash investment, preserve working capital and create a financing structure that supports long-term growth.

(Paul Bosley is the Managing Member of Healthclubexperts.com dba Business Finance Depot. Bosley is known for his expertise in financing franchises and has partnered with several national brands to assist new franchisees acquire the capital needed to launch their new businesses or to expand their current business. Paul has been a volunteer counselor for SCORE, a division of the SBA, for over a decade where he learned the value of SBA loans for funding new and existing businesses. Paul can be reached at paul@businessfinancedepot.com.)

...Frank Guengerich

continued from page 14

Engagement can take many forms:

- Fitness Challenges;
- Weight-loss Programs;
- Walking and Running Clubs;
- Personal Training;
- Small Group Training;
- Group Exercise Classes;
- Racquet Leagues;
- Pickleball Tournaments;
- Wellness Seminars;
- Social Events;
- Member Appreciation Activities;
- Incentive Programs.

Every activity creates another touchpoint between the member and the club. These touchpoints strengthen relationships with staff and fellow members, creating a sense of belonging that competitors cannot easily replicate.

The goal is not simply to fill classes

or increase program revenue. The goal is to help members become active participants in the club community.

When members build friendships at the club, they become emotionally connected. When they participate in challenges, they gain confidence. When they attend social events, they feel included. When they achieve fitness goals, they feel successful.

All of these experiences increase loyalty and retention.

Create a Club Community People Don't Want to Leave

At the end of the day, successful clubs understand a powerful truth: *People may initially join for fitness, but they stay for connection.*

Members want to feel better about themselves. They want encouragement, support and a place where they belong.

The most successful clubs create environments where people feel accepted

regardless of age, fitness level, body type or experience. There is no judgment, only support.

Staff members celebrate victories, encourage participation and help members overcome obstacles. Every interaction should answer an important question: *"Do I feel welcome here?"*

When the answer is yes, members return. When members return, they build relationships. When relationships grow, retention follows.

Health clubs that consistently integrate new members and engage existing members create communities that people don't want to leave.

In a world full of fitness options, community remains the ultimate competitive advantage.

If you want stronger retention, higher member satisfaction and long-term growth, focus on these two fundamentals every day:

1. Integrate every new member into the

club community.

2. Continuously engage existing members in meaningful programs and activities.

Do those two things consistently, and your club will become more than a fitness facility; it will become a place where people belong.

See the **HWLS Ad on Page #14.**

(Frank Guengerich is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Health, Wellness and Lifestyle Services (HWLS) and Club Wellness Advisors (CWA). HWLS and CWA are boutique club ownership, management and consulting companies that assist a limited number of private equity and real estate developers in maximizing their financial performance and value. For more information about HWLS, visit www.hwlservices.com or email frank@hwlservices.com.)

You Can't Make Members Feel Valued if Your Employees Don't Feel Valued

By: **Herb Lipsman**

Throughout my career in the club and hospitality business, I have talked often about the thousands of daily "Moments of Truth" that ultimately determine how members feel about an organization:

- A member walks through the front door and encounters a receptionist.
- They ask a fitness professional for help.
- They pass a housekeeper in the locker room.
- They order a drink from a bartender.
- They have a question about their account.
- They walk past a manager in the hallway.

Each interaction may last only a few seconds, but collectively, these moments become the member experience. We spend enormous amounts of time training frontline employees to smile, make eye contact, learn names, anticipate needs, solve problems, demonstrate enthusiasm and make members feel genuinely cared for. There is an important question we may sometimes forget to ask: How are we treating the people we expect to treat our members this way?

■ If we want our employees to make members feel seen, are we making our employees feel seen?

■ If we expect them to listen carefully to members, are their leaders listening carefully to them?

■ If we expect them to make members feel valued, do they feel valued by the organization?

■ If we want them to create meaningful connections with members, have we created an environment where they feel connected to their teammates and leaders?

I have become convinced that the employee experience and member experience cannot be separated. One eventually shows up in the other. Imagine two employees performing exactly the same frontline job:

One works for a leader who rarely speaks to them unless something goes wrong. Their ideas are seldom solicited. Their schedule changes without much consideration for their life outside of work. Training is minimal. Recognition is rare. Staffing is inadequate. Their compensation doesn't seem commensurate with what is expected of them, and when a member needs something outside the normal procedure, they have little authority to help.

The other employee works for a leader who knows them as a person. Their ideas are encouraged. Their good work is noticed. They receive regular coaching and opportunities to grow. They are compensated fairly. They have the tools and staffing necessary to succeed. Most importantly, they know that when they use good judgment to take care of a member, their leader will support them.

Now, imagine being the member interacting with each of these employees. Which one is more likely to smile naturally rather than because the employee handbook says to smile? Which one is more likely to notice if someone seems a little down and asks if everything is okay? Which one is more likely to stop what they are doing and help, rather than saying, "That's not my department?" Which one is more likely to introduce someone to another member, solve an unexpected problem, celebrate people's accomplishments or create one of those special moments someone remembers long after they leave?

We sometimes describe these employees as having a great attitude. Certainly, individual attitude and personal responsibility matter enormously. We must hire people who genuinely enjoy helping others, but leadership also creates the soil in which those attitudes either flourish or slowly disappear:

■ You cannot repeatedly make people feel unimportant and expect them to make customers feel important.

■ You cannot ignore employees and expect them to notice members.

■ You cannot refuse to listen and expect them to become great listeners.

■ You cannot treat people primarily as a labor expense and then expect them to treat customers as treasured relationships.

This is where I believe leadership carries an enormous responsibility. The frontline employee may deliver the *Moment of Truth*, but leaders create much of the environment surrounding that moment. As we begin to create the culture of *SOZO Clubs*, this is something our leadership team intends to take very seriously. We want every member to feel:

Seen – Heard – Valued – Connected.

However, those four words cannot simply describe the desired member experience. They must also describe the

experience of the people who come to work every day to make it possible. This means hiring thoughtfully, onboarding intentionally, training relentlessly, listening genuinely, coaching constructively, providing the right tools, recognizing meaningful contributions, creating opportunities for personal and professional growth and compensating people equitably for the value they create. It also means remembering that the person standing at the front desk or cleaning a locker room may have more Moments of Truth with our members in a week than some Senior Executives will have in a month. An organizational chart may tell us who has the most authority, but it tells us very little about who has the greatest opportunity to influence how a member feels.

I want our frontline team members to understand just how important they are, and I expect those of us privileged to lead them to understand the responsibility that comes with asking other human beings to represent our organization thousands of times every day:

Seen – Heard – Valued – Connected.

If we want our members to experience those four things, maybe the first place to start is with one another. Ultimately, the culture our members



Herb Lipsman

experience will be a reflection of the culture our team members experience every day. If this resonates with you and you are looking for this sort of work environment, please visit our website at www.sozoclubs.com and complete the *Join Our List* form under the *Careers* tab.

Every organization is perfectly aligned to get the results it gets!

(Herb Lipsman is the Co-Founder and CEO of *SOZO Clubs* and can be reached at herb.lipsman@sozoclubs.com. Learn more about *SOZO Clubs* at sozoclubs.com.)

Planet Fitness Announces Rebrand

HAMPTON, N.H. - Planet Fitness, Inc. (NYSE: PLNT) (the "Company") announces an evolution of its brand identity and logo grounded in the welcoming energy and *Judgement Free* spirit of its clubs and the momentum of its members around the world. The refreshed gear logo reflects movement, progress and the collective energy of the Planet Fitness community, complemented by a new custom font and an update to the brand's iconic purple and yellow color palette that reflects the warmth, energy and optimism of Planet Fitness' clubs.

The refreshed identity, informed by member feedback, builds on the enhancements Planet Fitness has made across the member experience in line with consumer trends and preferences. Since 2025, the Company has expanded equipment offerings, refined club floor layouts to better reflect how members of all fitness levels train and rolled out new *Black Card Spa* amenities, such as red-light recovery.

"For more than 30 years, Planet Fitness has made fitness more

approachable and accessible for all members, wherever they may be on their fitness journey," said **Brian Povinelli**, Chief Marketing Officer of Planet Fitness. "Our goal was to ensure that our evolved visual identity would continue to reflect our welcoming and supportive ethos while also allowing for a more seamless and flexible presentation of the brand across traditional marketing formats and digital channels. This refreshed identity is the culmination of a thoughtful process to elevate the member experience while staying true to the *Judgement Free* promise, and we look forward to rolling it out across our clubs and platforms in the coming months."

Elevating the In-Club and Digital Member Experience

The Company also announces an upgraded Planet Fitness mobile app designed to make the member journey easier from day one, with tools that help members plan their visits, navigate workouts and track progress. The new (See *Planet Fitness* Page 18)

Why Pvolve's Julie Cartwright Believes Differentiation Built on Solving Meaningful Problems Creates Lasting Demand

By: **Nancy Trent**

As fitness, healthcare and wellness continue to converge, few brands have been better positioned for this moment than Pvolve. Founded on the idea that exercise should help people move better for life, not simply look better for a season, Pvolve has spent the past decade championing functional movement, low-impact training, and evidence-based programming long before "longevity" became the wellness buzzword of the day.

Today, the company sits at the intersection of several of the industry's biggest trends: women's health, healthy aging, preventative wellness, recovery and personalized fitness. With consumers increasingly prioritizing healthspan over aesthetics and demanding workouts that support mobility, strength and independence over time, Pvolve's approach appears increasingly prescient.

We interviewed **Julie Cartwright**, *President of Pvolve*, about the evolution of low-impact fitness, the business case for science-backed programming, and what club operators need to understand about the next era of fitness.

An Interview With Julie Cartwright

Nancy Trent (NT) - What has driven Pvolve's growth in an increasingly crowded fitness market?

Julie Cartwright (JC) - Our growth comes down to real results, real science and solving real problems rather than chasing trends. From the beginning, Pvolve was designed to help people move better for life, not simply pursue short-term aesthetic goals.

We've also been intentional about building a true omnichannel experience that allows members to move seamlessly between digital and studio experiences. Most importantly, we've listened closely to our members and let their needs, supported by science, shape where we go next.

NT - How has consumer demand for low-impact fitness evolved since Pvolve launched?

JC - When we launched, low-impact fitness was often viewed as something for injury recovery or older adults. Today, consumers understand that effective exercise doesn't have to come at the expense of joint health or long-term mobility.

The conversation has shifted from "How do I get in shape?" to "How do I stay strong and independent for the rest of my life?" That's a longevity conversation, and it's one Pvolve was built for from day one.

NT - What role has evidence-led pro-

gramming played in growth and retention?

JC - Evidence-led programming is foundational to our business. Consumers want to understand the "why" behind what they're doing, not simply trust the process.

Research, clinical studies and partnerships with health experts have built credibility with both members and healthcare professionals. More importantly, understanding the science creates trust, and trust drives retention. Members aren't chasing trends; they're investing in a method they believe in.

NT - How do you maintain a consistent experience across digital, studios and franchise locations?

JC - It starts with the member experience. Whether someone works out at home, in a studio or both, they should experience the same coaching philosophy and movement principles.

Our advantage is that the workout is fundamentally the same everywhere. Many fitness brands can't replicate their studio experience digitally, but our model creates consistency across every touchpoint.

NT - What can independent club operators learn from Pvolve's approach?

JC - Consumers want more than aesthetic results. They want less pain, more energy and greater independence as they age.

Operators who connect workouts to real-life outcomes --playing with children, hiking comfortably, moving confidently through daily life-- create stronger member loyalty. Community also matters. Shared goals around health and longevity build powerful connections.

NT - How has the women's health conversation influenced Pvolve's strategy?

JC - For too long, women were given fitness solutions that weren't designed around their bodies or life stages.

We've intentionally focused on supporting women through every phase of life, particularly midlife and menopause, through programming, education, research and partnerships. Women's health has been underserved for decades, and we see addressing that gap as both a responsibility and an opportunity.

NT - What trends will shape fitness clubs over the next three to five years?

JC - Fitness, healthcare and wellness will continue to converge. Consumers increasingly view exercise as a core health intervention alongside nutrition, sleep and stress management.

We're also seeing growing demand for personalization, meaningful health data, recovery and measurable



Julie Cartwright



Nancy Trent

outcomes. Longevity will be the throughline connecting all of these trends.

NT - What opportunities are operators missing around recovery and healthy aging?

JC - Many operators remain focused on intensity, performance and "more is better." Consumers, however, are becoming increasingly interested in strength, balance, mobility, recovery and functional independence.

These are no longer niche offerings. They are becoming central to how people think about healthspan and quality of life.

NT - How can fitness businesses better position themselves within the wellness ecosystem?

JC - Fitness businesses need to stop thinking of themselves as places to burn calories and start thinking about the whole person: strength, mobility, stress, recovery and overall wellbeing.

Consumers aren't simply pursuing fitness goals anymore. They're investing in bodies and lifestyles that will support them for decades to come.

NT - What advice would you give operators looking to build a differentiated fitness brand?

JC - Don't start with differentiation; start with unmet needs.

For us, that meant listening to women who felt underserved by traditional fitness models. The clinical rigor and longevity focus came from solving a real problem, not from trying to appear different.

Differentiation built on novelty fades quickly. Differentiation built on solving meaningful problems creates lasting demand.

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

...Planet Fitness

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app features are rolling out and will include:

■ A redesigned member profile with seamless syncing across major wellness platforms and a home screen that changes when a member is in the club.

■ Enhanced equipment-aligned tracking, allowing members to log weights, reps and sets directly from their phones.

■ An upgraded, real-time Crowd Meter to

help members plan their visits with ease.

The evolved branding will start to appear this month across all new and remodeled clubs, marketing assets, social media, the PF App and website, with key in-club touchpoints rolling out through the first quarter of 2027 in existing clubs. Planet Fitness' "thumbs up" icon will also remain part of the brand's identity, showing up in select places to remind members of the 30 years of motivation and positive reinforcement the gesture has provided.

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