

Norm Cates'

CLUB INSIDER

CELEBRATING 28 YEARS OF TRUST

Welcome to Elizabeth Clark... *IHRSA's New President and CEO!*



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CLUB INSIDER

CELEBRATING 28 YEARS OF TRUST

Welcome to Elizabeth Clark... *IHRSA's New President and CEO!*

By: Norm Cates

As the author of this month's very special *Club Insider Cover Story* featuring **Ms. Elizabeth Clark, a/k/a Liz**, I started this special production with the idea of providing all of you with an in-depth, thorough and informative introduction of Liz Clark so that you, our esteemed readers, could *really get to know* her and will find her to be as special as I've found her to be after spending an hour on the telephone with her. During this enlightening and fun hour speaking with Liz, I found her to be *vastly experienced in the trade association world, dedicated, talented, remarkably in touch and extremely determined to be the BEST SHE CAN BE in her new IHRSA leadership role as our President and CEO.*

I want to start by complimenting the *IHRSA Executive Search Team*, led by **Greta Wagner**, on finding such a talent to step into the very important job of *IHRSA President and CEO. Great job folks!* And, as an introduction to Liz Clark, the announcement IHRSA provided on June 10, 2021 about the selection process appears in the **Sidebar on Page #10.**

As a *Co-Founder of IHRSA*, I love the Association deeply. And, to that end, I am honored to bring you this very special *Club Insider Cover Story* containing information that will help the industry know more about Liz Clark's background as she moves into her new and very important role as *IHRSA's third President and CEO.* So, here we go with my report composed from an interview with Liz on September 8th. I predict that, by the time you finish reading this, you'll be as happy as I am about

the wisdom of IHRSA's terrific Search Committee and its Board in choosing **Ms. Elizabeth Clark**. Hold onto your hat... here we GO!

An Interview With Liz Clark, President and CEO of IHRSA

Club Insider (C.I.) - Liz, where did you grow up and where did you attend college and graduate school?

Liz Clark (LC) - I was born in Rochester, New York and lived there until I was nine years old until my family moved out west to Northwest Montana. There, in a little town called Marion, Montana, we ran a family business. Ultimately, we moved back to Rochester in the middle of high school, so I would call Rochester my 'hometown.' But, I enjoy going back to Montana, because my brother is still there. I get out there frequently and always enjoy my time there. I went to the *University of Dayton* in Ohio for undergrad, and I went to *George Mason University* here in Virginia for graduate school.

C.I. - What sports did you play at the collegiate level?

LC - I was on the Crew Team in college. When I went to the University of Dayton, I thought I was going to play tennis, but I changed my mind at the last minute and ended up on the Crew Team, a great but challenging sport to participate in, especially while you're in college!

C.I. - Liz, tell me if the word **PAINFUL** comes to mind...

LC - Yes, it does! (laughing) The biggest



The Clark Family - Liz and Casey (Center); Children (L to R): Finnegan, 14; Penelope, 8; and Connor, 20

pain was having to wake up at 4:30 in the morning after you may have been out a little late the night before. So, you learn to function with very little sleep!

A Love for Trade Associations

C.I. - Early on, you got involved in the trade association sector. What drew you to it?

LC - Like a lot of people, I didn't know what trade associations did. My undergraduate degree was in Sports Broadcasting, so it was a big awakening for me when I came to Washington, D.C. and saw what trade associations did and how powerful

they were. I started at the *National Paint and Coatings Association (NPCA)* as a Secretary, and throughout my time there, I was promoted four times. I was given a lot of responsibility in some really cool areas. I really didn't know how good associations were until I got into one, and I've been drawn to them ever since.

C.I. - Well, Liz, you really started on the ground floor and worked your way up, didn't you?

LC - Yes, I certainly did. I mean... it helped having a communications background be-

(See **Liz Clark** Page 10)

Inside the Insider: Edition #334

- Exercise IS Medicine - By: Mike Alpert
- Are You Asking Your Sales Managers The Right Questions To Grow Sales? - Part I - By: Gary Polic
- The Proven, Five Prong Client Experience Strategy That Wows Members Every Time - By: Sumit Seth
- Preventing Site Selection Mistakes When Opening Multiple Clubs in One City - By: Mike Manning
- Are You in the Recruitment Business? - By: Cathy Spencer Browning
- And, of Course, *Norm's Notes*

Norm's Notes

■Hello Everybody! This is your Club Insider Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993 checking in with our 334th monthly edition! As I sit here today, I think to myself... "SELF, what can you write here today that'll be worthy of this salutation, and an appropriate greeting to my friends out there who're reading this very special edition of *Club Insider*?" How about this... Hallelujah BOYS and GIRLS... isn't it just great that football is back!? Hooray!

■Is America a great country or what? Hmm... Hmm... Hmm! After writing above about football being back, what can I write here in this second Norm's Note that you'll find to be worth reading and that you'll tell your friends about? So, before I move on to my next Norm's Note about LIZ CLARK, the World Class Lady who's now stepped into the role of IHRSA President and CEO, let me I say this...

I feel very blessed to be able to see America. I thank God because I CAN SEE America, and I'm NOT blind like I was last year for almost three months, starting in late March of 2020.

At this juncture, and one more time, because it's so very important to me, I want to THANK JUSTIN CATES, my SON and PARTNER in Club Insider, from the very bottom of my heart. During those horrific blind months, he produced our monthly editions with very little help from me. And, as Justin and I are fixing to head out to beautiful Dallas, Texas for IHRSA's 40th Anniversary Convention and Trade Show, I want to scream this from the rooftop: JUSTIN CATES SAVED CLUB INSIDER! And, when Justin and I see y'all at our Booth #2525, I know he'll appreciate you coming by and doing what I'm doing right here... THANKING JUSTIN FOR SAVING CLUB INSIDER! I can't THANK JUSTIN ENOUGH all by myself! I NEED your HELP TO "ADEQUATELY" THANK JUSTIN!

Trust me, folks. After having experienced being blind in both eyes for almost three months, then being able to see with just one eye since May 27, 2020, I know I am TRULY BLESSED! I pray to God several times per day to let me keep my vision in my left eye. And, sincerely, I would

greatly appreciate your prayers, if you ever feel like sending a prayer my way. Sadly, I have no guarantee that I'll keep my vision in my left eye. That's a real BUMMER of a situation to be in, but as I said, every day, I Thank the Good Lord for blessing me with my vision being returned to my left eye and I pray to the Good Lord to let me keep my vision for as long as I live. And for sure, I'll continue to thank the Good Lord, and Justin Cates, for saving Club Insider!

Well folks, writing this Norm's Note has been really tough for me, and to close this expression of my very great GRATITUDE and APPRECIATION, to Justin and to you all, I CAN'T THANK YOU ALL ENOUGH! Nor can I express ENOUGH APPRECIATION for y'all sticking with us as Club Insider readers! I DO HOPE Justin and I will see you all in Dallas, Texas, October 13 - 15th. We will be at Booth #2525 at the Trade Show, and I'll be the one in the Black Hat!

■I want RICK HARRIS, my Rome Free Academy High School Football Team-mate and lifelong friend, and his family, to know that my prayers are with him every day for his recovery. Get well, RICK!

■Consider this, folks. How GREAT IS AMERICA for producing a lady who's as talented, as hard working and as determined to succeed as IHRSA's new President and CEO, LIZ CLARK!!! I was honored to have interviewed Liz for an hour so I could produce this month's Club Insider Cover Story, so IF you've not read it yet, when you DO read it (starting on Page #3), I predict that you'll become as BIG a FAN of LIZ CLARK as I've already become. Moreover,



Norm Cates

at this point, I want to draw everyone's attention to one particular statement she made in her cover story interview that really struck me. The statement she made that I'm referring to, and the one comment which I think is the most important message from Liz to all IHRSA Member Club Owners and Associate Members, came when she was describing her thoughts about her efforts to connect with IHRSA Members, describing her activities to date and hereafter as her: "Learning and Listening Tour." Liz explained that, during her "Tour," she would focus on listening carefully to the IHRSA members for whom she will be working.

Liz was very focused when referring to her communication goal with the IHRSA Membership worldwide when she said: "All of them need to know that I want to hear from everybody! I want to hear (See Norm's Notes Page 7)

About Club Insider

CELEBRATING 28 YEARS OF TRUST

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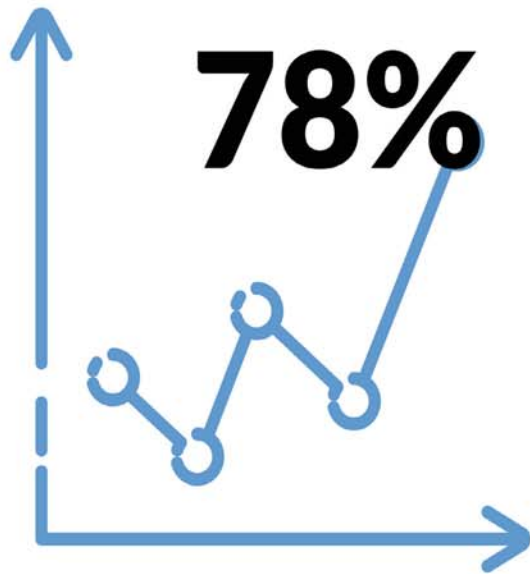
At Club Insider, we are excited to be in our 28th Year of this home-based health and fitness club trade publication! The thought that this publication was founded to serve an industry I truly love, and so that I could become a Mister Mom for my son, Justin, is still intriguing and amazing to us. So, I wish to extend my most sincere Thanks and Appreciation to everyone who has made this amazing 28-year run possible.

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

By: **Mike Alpert**

I have been blessed to have worked in the health club industry for 31 years, and during that time, I have been an advocate of the benefits that exercise has on overall health. Over the years, I have worked with physicians, hospital CEOs and educators, and I have read a lot of medical

articles that support the benefits of regular exercise on a person's health and quality of life. So, as we get ready for the IHRSA Convention this year, I want to go back and share with you two examples of the dramatic impact that exercise has had on two of my very dear friends: **Augie Nieto** and **Hal Hargrave**.

Most of you know Augie Nieto as

one of the true innovators of the health club industry. He is an amazing entrepreneur who was the Founder of Life Fitness and who, along with Ray Wilson, brought the Lifecycle to life. Most of you also know that Augie was diagnosed with ALS back in 2005. Since then, he has been working tirelessly as the *Chairman of Augie's Quest to Cure ALS* as well as *Chairman of the ALS Therapy Development Institute* in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Augie came to us at *The Claremont Club* back in 2015 when he heard about a club near Los Angeles that was having great success working with spinal cord injured people. He came out for a visit, and after seeing paralyzed individuals working out with a non-traditional methodology, he immediately asked if we would take him on as a client.

My concerns were many: How will we know if he is in distress (when he is out of his power chair he can only communicate with his eyes)? How will we work around his breathing tube and neck brace? And, there was the fact that we had never worked with anyone who had ALS. After some consideration and looking at the condition he was in, I agreed to a 30-day trial. Augie began coming in three times a week for two hours each time, and he remained as a client for several years. This required him to be driven from Corona Del Mar (in Newport Beach) to Claremont, roughly 40 miles each way.

I can tell you that I have never in my life seen anyone with more commitment and tenacity than Augie. And, the improvement in his quality of life and emotional wellbeing was simply beyond words. All the medicine in the world could not get Augie to move his arms or legs. But, getting back into the gym and doing what he built his business life on, exercise, enabled him to gain function, strength and a much better quality of life.

I encourage everyone reading this article to support Augie's Quest and get involved. Make a cash donation; sponsor a team to participate in an upcoming Race for the Cure; donate a product or service to be raffled off at IHRSA. As Augie and his wife, **Lynn**, say: *ALS is not an incurable disease; it is an underfunded disease.* Today, we are closer than ever before in finding a cure for this most terrible disease. Get involved! Go to www.augiesquest.org.

Let me now introduce you to **Hal Hargrave**. Hal was a high school graduate and an active athlete who was on his way to entering *Long Beach State University* with aspirations of playing baseball there. In the summer just before he was ready to enroll, he had a terrible auto accident that left him paralyzed with a C6 complete spinal



Mike Alpert

cord injury. At that time, he had only a 3% chance of survival or ever moving again. I knew Hal because he had grown up with my daughter, **Justene**, and his family were long time members of our club. Hal actually spent a lot of time at the club, working out six days a week.

After the accident, he was at an acute rehab hospital learning how to live in a wheelchair. I spoke with his parents and told them that, when he was released to go home, we should begin working with him at the club where he grew up and in an environment that would give him *HOPE*. So, we began working with Hal in a converted racquetball court, using muscle movement and loadbearing exercises below the level of his injury. Over the following months, Hal began making significant improvements, and his physiatrist at the hospital began referring other spinal cord patients to us.

Over the years, we built out a 7,000 square-foot studio and were serving over 100 people who had spinal cord injuries and other types of neuro muscular paralysis. Hal became a manager at the club and was responsible for running that department and the growth we had. When the club was sold last January, he and his family built out a world class center at their business campus in Pomona, California and rebranded it as *The Perfect Step*. I wish everyone could see the improvement and results that everyone participating in this program is experiencing. It is truly life changing. Hal will be at the IHRSA Convention, and I encourage all of you to contact him and to consider a contribution to *The Perfect Step*. Go to their website at www.theperfectstep.org.

These are two of many examples of **Exercise IS Medicine**. (Mike Alpert is the COO of Smart Health Clubs. He can be contacted at mike@smarthealthclubs.com or 951 - 205 - 1136.)

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- Private Health Club Owner Large Commercial Club in the Pacific Northwest, U.S.

...Norm's Notes

continued from page 4

what they think about what we're doing that is good, where we need to improve and where they think we should be expending our energy."

Folks, on **August 16, 2021**, the *Liz Clark Era* began at IHRSA. To me that's a really special day for ALL of us and a day that will show up in IHRSA history as monumental. I say that because Liz Clark has set the stage and is loudly and clearly **ASKING YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT**. I'm speaking up because I believe Liz has given all of us the **KEY to IHRSA's FUTURE** in her comment above, so please don't hesitate to welcome Liz Clark to IHRSA when you see her at IHRSA Dallas and engage her in conversation there, or anytime really, because **Ms. Liz Clark WILL BE RESPONSIVE!** Liz **KNOWS** she can't do this **HUGE JOB** alone... **without our HELP**. So, she's reaching out to **ALL OF US NOW FOR OUR HELP!**

I'm just one of Liz's messenger's carrying her important message to you via this month's special *Club Insider Cover Story* and this *Norm's Note*. So folks... **STAY TUNED** and please **DO NOT MISS** reading *Ms. Liz Clark's amazing Cover Story* this month! **YOU WILL BE GLAD YOU DID!**

■Speaking of **IHRSA Dallas**, let me mention our **Club Insider Advertisers** who're exhibiting there and give you their booth numbers. I urge you to drop by and tell them, "*Norm and Justin sent you!*" So, please do drop by and visit with these great companies.

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■I'm very sad to report today that *my friend* of 40 years, **GEOFF HAMPTON**, has suddenly passed away at the age of 69. The sad news was initially reported by *Club Insider*, and that report said that funeral services for Geoff were to be held at 4 PM on **September 10** at the *Christ Covenant Church* in Farragut, Tennessee. **MAY GEOFF HAMPTON Rest In Peace**, and may his wife, **EILEEN**, their four children and his grandchildren all find comfort in the fact that their Husband, Dad and Granddad was a really decent guy who loved our industry and a man who served it well all of his life. Geoff Hampton was very devoted to our industry. He will be missed.

■The following update is from our friend, **HELEN DURKIN**, IHRSA's *Vice President of Public Policy*, and I quote Helen: "IHRSA and the *Community Gyms Coalition*

released a statement following the release of the House Committee on Small Business's approved version of the reconciliation bill. Since the House Committee on Small Business approved and released their version of the reconciliation package --without direct relief for any industry-- we are encouraged to hear that work is underway on a package to address the needs of the hard-hit industries, including gyms. Although the final version of this bill will almost certainly look different than what it is now, IHRSA is hopeful of the industry's inclusion in the industry-specific package. Communications with Congressional leadership, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and members of the House Committee on Small Business have produced a broad understanding that gyms desperately need financial relief. We continue to apply pressure to Congress through PR and lobbying efforts to deliver relief for the industry. If you have any questions or would like to learn more about the GYMS Act and current efforts, please contact pr@ihrsa.org. Best Regards, Helen."

■*Longtime Club Insider Premium Inside Front Page Advertiser*, **Crunch Franchise**, has announced a new location in my backyard. Folks, I live in a wonderful suburb of Atlanta called *East Cobb*. Well, over in *West Cobb* will be a new Crunch Franchise location. They have announced the upcoming June 2022 opening of a 32,000 square-foot fitness facility with state-of-the-art fitness equipment nestled in the heart of Marietta, Georgia.

Crunch West Cobb is owned by **VINCE JULIEN, GEOFF DYER, TONY SCRIMALE** and **JEFF DOTSON**, creating an ownership team with more than 100+ years of experience in the fitness industry. This Crunch team currently owns and operates 34 locations in Florida and Atlanta.

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Check out the **Crunch Franchise Ad** on the **Inside Front Page** of this edition.

■*Friends and Neighbors*, this **Norm's Note** started off as one short and sweet Note just hours before our October Deadline but has evolved into one with contributions from several folks, **all of whom I Tip My Black Hat to!** So, here go my Black Hat tips:

1. **BILL PERRY**, who gave me a heads up on a YouTube Video featuring the *N.C. State Marching Band*, the band of my Alma Mater in Raleigh, N.C. at the September 5, 2021 football game, in which, at half-time, they unfurled a **HUGE and BEAUTIFUL AMERICAN FLAG** that *literally covered the ENTIRE football field...* that's right.... the American flag covered all 100 yards of

the football field! I've never seen anything like that, and I want to Thank the N.C. State Marching Band, and their leaders, for the beautiful job they did on this special Saturday, which was just six days before September 11, 2021, the **20th Anniversary** of the sad day when we lost nearly 3,000 Americans. Additionally, the flag was in honor of and memory of the recent murder of 13 American Soldiers in Afghanistan.

2. **TOM "STUIE" HENDERSON** is to my good friend from my high school days, a classmate at *Rome Free Academy High School* in Rome, New York. Thanks Stue

for sending me your email about one of our long-time *Club Insider Subscribers and Readers*, **STEVE RODERICK**, Owner of *The Ridge Athletic Clubs* in Bozeman, Montana where you are a member. Stue gave me a heads up on something that happened earlier this month at Steve Roderick's "Big Ridge" Club in Bozeman in honor of **September 11, 2001**. Here's Stue's recollection of what happened:

"Norm, on September 21, 2021, I went to The 'Big Ridge Club' for a workout, and in the parking lot, there were two fire trucks
(See *Norm's Notes* Page 8)



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...Norm's Notes

continued from page 7

(maybe three), including the hook and ladder, with a very large American Flag suspended from the extended ladder. There were firefighters outside talking with the patrons, and those inside were in FULL equipment climbing the StairMaster in honor of those brave men and women who climbed the stairs of the Twin Towers that fateful day twenty years ago. (Lynda and I lost five friends and acquaintances that horrible 9/11 day, what a sucker punch that was!). Steve is obviously a patriot

and should be thanked and commended for working with his local Fire Department to remember and bring attention to the fallen heroes of 9/11/2001. The PA system also requested a moment of silence in their honor. I must say that the whole presentation was very emotional and moving for me and Lynda that day."

Folks, let me add my sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** here to **STEVE RODERICK** for what he's done at his big club in Bozeman, and thanks to my friend, **Stuie Henderson**, for sharing this impressive effort with *Club Insider*! **THANKS VERY MUCH, GUYS!**

■Folks, I left this comment out of my Norm's Note about **IHRSA's LIZ CLARK** because it's more personal and one of those "Boy-oh-Boy-what a small world this actually is!" coincidences. During my great interview with Liz, I discovered that we have an amazing connection in our past. That connection is **JOE CLARK**, Liz's Father-In-Law, who went to the same high school I went to in Rome, New York. BUT, it gets better... it turns out that Joe and I played on the **RFA High School Football Team** together in 1963! Liz informed Joe about that, because during my interview with Liz, I'd mentioned going to RFA High School in Rome, New York, playing football there and being the **Team's Co-Captain**. **WOW! What a small world!** Then, the very next day, I got an email from Liz in which she had forwarded an email to her from her Father-In-Law, Joe Clark, and that email contained a photo of our 1963 RFA Football Team with Joe Clark, #11, and me, #63, BOTH in the photo! What FUN it was to find this connection with Liz Clark's Father-In-Law, Joe Clark after 57 years! I was a Senior and Joe was a Sophomore, so we didn't know each other really well, but there we were right there in that 1963 RFA Team photo! **WOW! As they say: "What a small world!"**

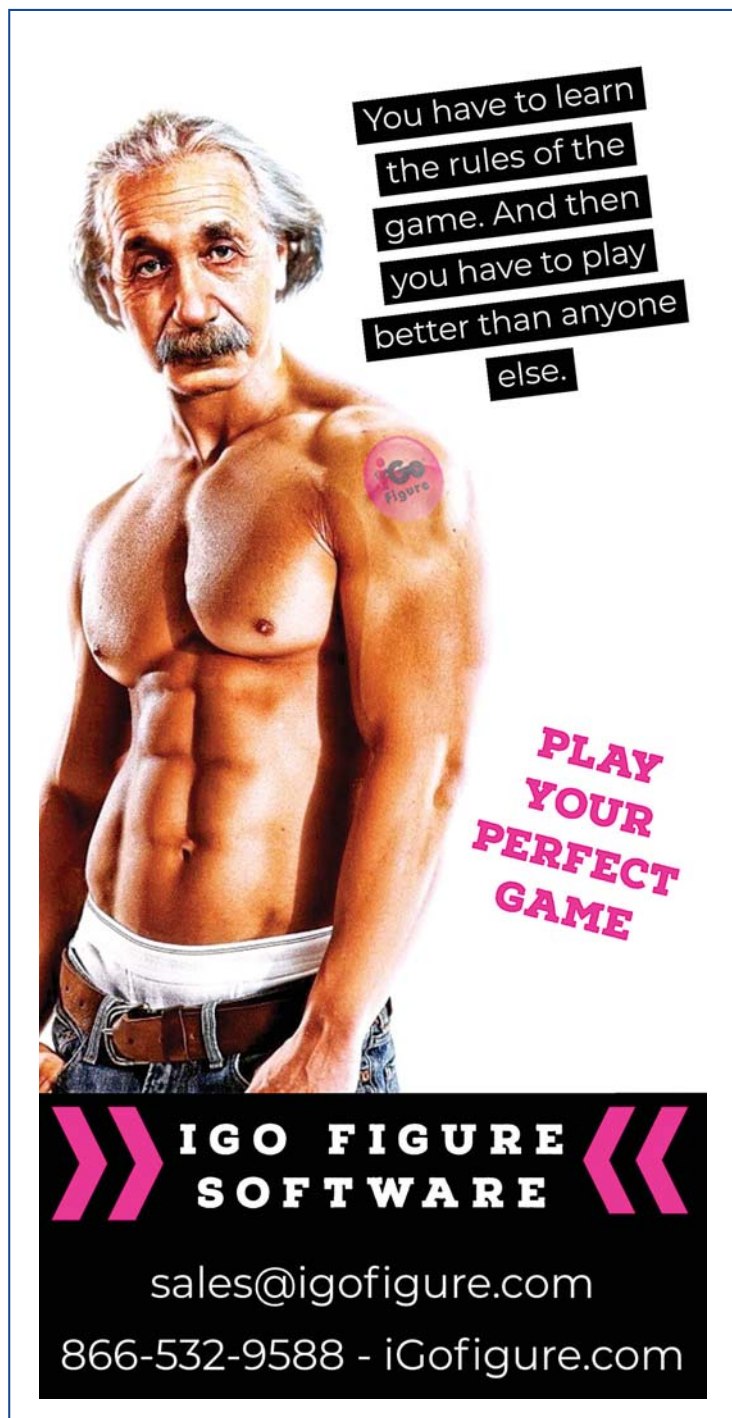
■Welcome back to **PETE MOORE** and **Integrity Square** as they rejoin the *Club Insider Advertising Team* this month. Pete, who provides excellent education with **HALO TALKS** and **HALO ACADEMY**, is at it again, this time authoring a new book entitled **TIME TO WIN AGAIN: 52 Takeaways From Team Sports To Ensure Your Business Success**. It is available for **\$29.99** by going to www.timetowinagain.com. Check out the Ad on the **Opposite Page**.

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

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

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 47-year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. He is the Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993 of *Club Insider*, now in its 28th 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. He can be reached by phone at 770-635-7578 or email at Norm@clubinsideronline.com.)



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...Liz Clark

continued from page 3

cause that provided me with a nice base to be able to do a lot of things. But, yes... that's where I learned, very early, that when you work hard and say, 'Yes,' when people ask you to do projects, even if you don't know what you're doing, you *can* figure it out! A lot of success can come from that. So, as a result, I was promoted quite a bit.

I worked with a lot of engineers. Engineering is like a different language, but I was able to figure it out working with those folks. In doing so, over time, I was given responsibility to handle recycling projects. I was there during 9/11 and chemical security became a really big deal. I was given the Chemical Security Committee, which offered me a 'Secret' clearance. This is because we were doing activities with the FBI in the chemical sector and explosives front. So, paint and coatings might not sound that cool, but there was quite a lot of cool stuff that I was able to do just by the nature of being there throughout that time.

C.I. - Liz, that *is* cool! Saying, 'YES,' is a great thing to be able to do when you wonder IF you can do it because then the monkey is on your back. And, if you need to, you can go back to the person who hired you and ask them for assistance. And, IF they don't help you, then BOTH of you don't have a win!

LC - Yes!

C.I. - After your time at the NPCA, you moved on to the *U.S. Chamber of Commerce*, which is quite a prestigious organization. What was your role there? What did you learn?

LC - I ran a division called *TradeRootes*, which was all of our grassroots outreach on trade. So, we engaged the business community on the benefits of trade; the opportunities for trade; the resources for trade; and I traveled all around the country

giving speeches on trade, partnering with members of Congress, Senators and other government officials to talk about the opportunities and benefits of trade. I learned a lot. I learned how to become a presenter and a speaker. I became a real subject matter policy expert on the issue of trade. And, as a result, I was invited to testify before Congress three times, which was a pretty intimidating experience. I think I was probably 28 years old.

Again, it was a great challenge and a really good opportunity. I went to the White House and met Presidents and met Ambassadors, and I just had a really fascinating experience. It was a lot of hard work and a lot of travel, but I got to see the entire country. I've been to all 50 states and probably every city! (laughing) Other major accomplishments with the Chamber of Commerce was that we were able to pass trade agreements with Panama and Columbia and lay the groundwork for other future trade agreements, which was really exciting.

The National Confectioners Association

C.I. - Incredible! For the last 10+ years, you were on the Leadership Team at the *National Confectioners Association (NCA)* or a/k/a the "Candy" Association). Please tell us what roles you had there.

LC - I was the *Senior Vice President, a/k/a the SVP, of Public Policy*, so I oversaw everything we did from Federal policy, State policy, our Candy PAC and our grassroots campaigns. So, in addition to overseeing all things policy or political, being part of the senior leadership team, I did a lot of association management functions, such as strategic planning, budgeting, rebranding, marketing, trade shows, etc. I had a hand in all of that. I spent ten years and one month with the NCA, and if the fitness industry opportunity wasn't so good, I never would have considered leaving the Candy Association.

C.I. - What were some of your wins there at the *NCA*?

LC - On the Federal side, we had quite a few wins, some of which were policy-related and some of which were regulator-related. On the trade side, we were able to have some trade wins that saved our industry millions and millions of dollars. We had some labeling wins and marketing to kids wins... Those led a little bit into regulatory issues as well, and they are very complicated. Then, on the State side, we were able to defeat a handful of proposed candy taxes in States around the country.

C.I. - Well, Liz, being able to help hold off further taxes from being passed must have made you popular with your members.

LC - (laughing) Yes, it would vary in what it would mean in real dollars. So, a proposed candy tax in California, which there was, and we won, was much more significant

than the proposed candy tax in Nebraska, which we also won. But... yes!

C.I. - Liz, I appreciate your sending to me the *Wall Street Journal (WSJ)* article recently published about you. Please tell us about that.

LC - Norm, one of the things I commented about in that *WSJ* interview was that I've personally had a lifelong commitment to fitness *AND* to candy! I say that now because there may be some folks out there who're wondering how somebody like me, an association executive, one who spent ten years with a candy association, can possibly make the switch to leading IHRSA, the trade association for the fitness industry. So, Norm, let me address that question now. I think that the two industries can live harmoniously together. I say that because if you regularly put in the time to

(See *Liz Clark Page 14*)

The IHRSA Announcement

IHRSA Names Elizabeth Clark President and Chief Executive Officer...

A Seasoned Association and Advocacy Executive to Be Just the Third CEO in IHRSA's 40-Year History

BOSTON, MA - *IHRSA, the Global Health & Fitness Association*, has announced the appointment of **Elizabeth Clark** as the Association's next *President and CEO*. Clark, a seasoned Association Executive, joins IHRSA at a critical time for the fitness industry and the Association. IHRSA is the world's leading authority on the commercial health club industry.

Liz previously led government relations and advocacy at the *National Confectioners Association (NCA)*, the trade association for the \$44 billion candy industry. That was Liz's third association leadership job. Beginning August 16, she became the first female chief executive in IHRSA's 40-year history.

"IHRSA's mission --to grow, protect and promote the health and fitness industry-- has never been more important," said **Carrie Kepple, IHRSA Board of Director's Chairwoman**. "For the past year, the Board of Directors and IHRSA Team have been focused on reopening, rebuilding and reimagining our industry and our Association. Liz's long, successful career in association management, her expertise in advocacy and her commitment to member service, not to mention her energy and passion, will serve IHRSA and all our members very well."

Clark's appointment concludes a five-month national search process completed by a six-member search committee chaired by **Greta Wagner, Executive Director, Chelsea Piers Connecticut** an *IHRSA Board Member*.

"The search committee was tasked with working with industry leaders to find a transformational CEO to move IHRSA and its member clubs into a new era," said Wagner. "It was evident to the committee almost immediately that Liz's ability to perform at the highest level along with her business acumen made her a natural fit. She will bring new energy to the mission to scale up our business and advocate for our industry, and I know she's the right person to lead IHRSA at this important time."

Clark has led advocacy efforts at *NCA* since 2011, serving as the candy industry's voice on Capitol Hill and in State capitols across the country. Among her notable accomplishments, Clark successfully lobbied the administration to have confection manufacturing deemed "essential" during the pandemic. Prior to *NCA*, she was an *Executive Director* at the *U.S. Chamber of Commerce*.

"I'm honored to work alongside and on behalf of this dynamic and evolving industry," said Clark. "This is an exceptional opportunity to bring my experience to bear for an industry I have been personally committed to for my entire life, and I can't wait to roll up my sleeves and get to work."

Clark succeeds *IHRSA Interim President and CEO, Brent Darden*, who stepped in last August at the Board's request and led the Association back to stability and united the industry during the pandemic until a permanent CEO was selected.

Executive search firm *Spencer Stuart* led the nationwide search for IHRSA's next President and CEO. The process was led by a representative search committee consisting of **Wagner, Kepple, Alan Leach (IHRSA Chair International Committee), Chris Smith, Jim Worthington (IHRSA Board Ex Officio)** and **Bryan O'Rourke**.



Liz Clark and Jim Worthington on the Job!!

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"A 40 year celebration is a very special moment. IHRSA is bringing back the trade show and educational workshops but is also bringing in new alliances, new partnerships, new strategies, new structure and leadership. Businesses are starting to recover and grow. October is the perfect time for clubs to join together."

Monica Marques
Director and Partner
Companhia Athletica
São Paulo, Brazil

"More than ever, it is important for all of us to come together and celebrate the resiliency of the fitness industry and the impact we collectively create by promoting healthier lives. IHRSA 2021 will be the time to ignite creativity and redefine innovation for the future."

– **Bill Davis**, Chief Executive Officer, ABC Fitness Solutions, LLC



IHRSA 2021 Exhibitors As of July 6, 2021

XL Corporation (GymWipes)	American Specialty Health	Buck & Affiliates Insurance	Echelon Fit	Fitness On Demand	HOIST Fitness Systems, Inc.
ABC Fitness Solutions	American Wholesale Lighting	CareerPlug	Ecore	ForzaFitt	Hollman, Inc.
ABS Company	Animalhouse Ventures, Inc.	CedarWorks Playsets	eGym, Inc.	Fujimi, Inc.	Humane Manufacturing, LLC
Accuro	Aqua Training Bag	Century Martial Arts	Eleiko Sport, Inc.	GANTNER Electronic GmbH	Human Touch
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Michele Melker-son-Granryd, M.Ed.

Senior Advisor for Personal Training & Wellness
Personal Trainer,
Cancer Exercise Specialist
Castle Hill Fitness
Austin, Texas

"After spending so much time on screen trying to stay up to maneuver through the challenges of operating in a pandemic, we are thrilled to be bringing our team, in-person, to IHRSA 2021 in Dallas! I can't wait to see industry innovations up close on the tradeshow floor, reconnect with my industry associates from all over and learn from thought provoking keynote speakers!"



"Eleiko is excited to be a part of IHRSA this year. Health and fitness has never been more important, and Eleiko is committed to supporting the industry to recover. The time to get together in person, to share ideas, and to work towards getting more people stronger, healthier, and fitter is now."

– Rickard Blomberg, President, Eleiko Sport Inc.



IHRSA thanks its Industry Partner members for their vital support aiding the global health and fitness industry's recovery and revival. Their support of IHRSA, a member owned not-for-profit trade association, has been instrumental in securing a stronger future for the industry we all love.

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...Liz Clark

continued from page 10

exercise, from time to time, you can also reward yourself with a treat. Yes! I think that, importantly, exercise is a lot like candy because it makes you feel really good immediately! Not only that, there are so many ongoing benefits to regular exercise, not only from a physical perspective, but the benefit of what it does for us mentally. And, with stress release, it actually is quite easy to truly become 'hooked' on regular exercise. Some people may hate exercising, but I'm not one of them. **I LOVE IT!**

C.I. - Me, too, Liz. I'm one of those who *loves regular exercise*, though at almost age 76, regular walking is my primary exercise these days. I'm very happy to have had hip surgery done on May 6th, which has allowed me to get back to my daily walking exercise. I'm working my way back up to my habit of 3.2 miles a day, and it feels great! Nobody believes me when I tell them that, before my hip problem hit me, I had walked 18,000 miles over a 15-year period. (laughing)

C.I. - We've heard that, during COVID, you got the Candy Association labeled as an 'essential service.' Did I get that right? Can you enlighten us?

LC - Yes, you got that right. Part of that was because candy manufacturing is part of food manufacturing, so we really made the argument that Government shouldn't be picking the types of food that should be allowed to be manufactured. And, we made the point that it would become more burdensome than not, and that was a pretty compelling argument. The other piece was that people in the candy industry really wanted to work... really wanted their jobs... So, we made the argument on that. Then, last but not least, we were making products that were providing happiness to folks, and I think that was a factor as well with some of the lawmakers that we were talking to. People were going through so many horrible things with COVID, so we shouldn't opt to deprive them of a little treat. We also earned some goodwill with lawmakers early on because we were in food manufacturing, which had a lot of PPE involved. We had masks. We had gloves. We had polypropylene plastic. We had a lot of the things that were in tight supply, and a lot of our members were able to provide those to frontline workers. In some cases, some of our members changed what they were making and manufacturing to shift to making sanitizer products, so a lot went into it.

Taking the Helm of IHRSA

C.I. - With 20+ years of experience, you seem very well prepared and groomed to be a leader of a trade association like IHRSA. What drew you to want to apply for

this President and CEO role?

LC - As I mentioned earlier, I've always loved associations. And, being in the forefront of the last one, and being on the senior leadership team, I knew I was ready to be a CEO. However, I wanted to be a CEO of an association that *I really can relate to* and that *I really respect and admire*. So, when this job became available, I thought that it was potentially a *match made in heaven* because between my experience in association management and familiarity with the fitness industry, it was something that I was really drawn to.

C.I. - Liz, that's great! How did you find out about the job being available?

LC - IHRSA leaders used the executive search firm of *Spencer Stuart* as their 'headhunters.' IHRSA's headhunter process had been going on for a while when they found me, so Spencer Stuart worked with the IHRSA Search Committee and the IHRSA Board. It was a pretty long process.

C.I. - Well, Liz, I can already tell from our conversation that we (IHRSA) have hit a home run finding and bringing you on board to lead IHRSA! So, I'm very happy about that! Congratulations to you and all at IHRSA who were involved in that winning effort! Now, even though you're just getting started, and on this date of September 8th, you've got just three weeks under your belt on the new job, what are two or three things you've identified that you might focus on in the early days of your tenure?

LC - First, let me mention that we're still continuing to *push for financial relief* for gyms from Congress in whatever legislative vehicle that we can use and that we can leverage. So, I will be pushing Congress hard. And, IHRSA's advocacy arm, the new NHFA. For those who're not familiar with the **NHFA**, it's the acronym for The **National Health & Fitness Alliance**, a broad-based, open-platform, community-driven alliance. It brings together thought leaders and change makers from a variety of fields and disciplines to do something

important for the promotion of health and fitness, including: *Fitness Professionals*. So, we're actually bringing the NHFA into Washington, D.C. to meet with lawmakers and to strategize about our path forward in policies that we want to focus on.

Those are two really early issues for me. Broader and down the line, pivoting the organization to truly be focused on advocacy and communications will be something we will pursue. That doesn't happen overnight. There's a way that we can continue to have a fabulous trade show, have a fabulous magazine but also spend some additional energy and focus on the advocacy front. We *will* find that way.

C.I. - Liz, when you really look at this from the point you are arriving with, it seems to me that *we're dam lucky, as an industry, to have found somebody with your background and experience in Washington, D.C. in this field of coping with those lawmakers*. You know what I mean? Because as you know, Liz, **THAT'S AN EXTREMELY IMPORTANT JOB FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR INDUSTRY THAT YOU'VE TAKEN ON and IT WON'T BE A PICNIC!**

LC - Right! It won't be! You know, you've got to be a soldier, and I have been at that for a long time here in Washington. It's part of the reason the Search Committee did want somebody with a strong political background versus something else.

C.I. - Oh yeah, Liz, that really is clear, especially given your background and some of the early initiatives you've laid out. I think it's really terrific that we've been able to find somebody with your background, credentials and vast experience to lead IHRSA!

Not Only Ready But Excited!!!

C.I. - Liz, at this juncture, you seem to be smiling through the telephone, and I believe it would be fair for me to say here and now that *YOU DESERVE to be smiling!* **AND, ALL WHO REALLY CARE ABOUT**

IHRSA's FUTURE SHOULD BE SMILING, TOO! Is there anything you would like to add to the aforementioned commentary?

LC - Yes, let me add: *To define ourselves and to bring others into the tent, so to speak, we really need to be speaking in one unified voice*. I think there's a real opportunity here... to bring more of the big mega clubs back into IHRSA... to bring more of the studios into IHRSA for the first time... and to be the voice for *ALL* health, racquet and sports clubs, including all the aforementioned.

C.I. - To get immersed in the IHRSA world, do you have some early plans on how you will go about that process?

LC - Yes. I'm actually already onto it. It's the *'Learning and Listening Tour,'* and while I would prefer to be able to do this in person, traveling to meet folks, but we're just not in that world right now. But, I'm doing as much industry *'Meet and Greet'* as I can, and that's for all sorts and sizes and varieties of companies. I'm just learning what it is they want out of the organization. Where do they think the organization can go? And, to share some of my vision of the future for it. So, it has been a *packed, packed* start! It has also really been phenomenal to have already met so many great industry leaders.

We have great champions of this industry in IHRSA, and we also have critics. BUT, all of them need to know that I want to hear from everybody! I want to hear what they think about what we're doing that is good, where we need to improve and where they think we should be expending our energy. So far, it seems to fit pretty nicely with my background, and I hope that will be the path to success.

C.I. - Liz, we all look forward to meeting you in person at the *IHRSA Convention in Dallas, October 13 - 15th*. What would be a goal for you to achieve starting then and going forward?

LC - First and foremost, we've got to produce and conduct a successful convention and trade show that is focused on health and safety, which we will do! We're continuing right now to push and are continuing to get registrations. We are continuing to build up the program. While it probably won't be to the scale of what it's been in the past, it will be a great event, and it will be an intimate setting for an industry to come together. **So, that's my #1 GOAL: producing a successful convention and trade show.** Beyond that, we have a Board Meeting that will happen there. We've got to look at where we're at organizationally as a Board. We've got to get through to have a successful Association, and it's really about me connecting with the industry. *I want to be a sponge. I want to listen to everybody. I want to learn from everybody. I want to build personal relationships.* That's what I've done all my life. *Build relationships.* And, I'm really looking forward to beginning to do all of that in Dallas.

(See **Liz Clark** Page 16)



The NHFA Advisory Council in Washington, D.C. (L to R) - Liz Clark, IHRSA; Jim Worthington, Newtown Athletic Club; Kevin McHugh, The Atlantic Clubs; Ori Gorfine, US Fitness Holdings; Chris Craytor, acac Fitness & Wellness Centers; Tom Richards, IHRSA; Adam Zeitsiff, Intellivideo, Inc.; Debra Strougo Frohlich, Row House; Rodney L. Steven II, Genesis Health Clubs; and Gale Landers, Fitness Formula Clubs



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...Liz Clark

continued from page 14

C.I. - Well, Liz, you'll see **Justin and me** there in Dallas. *I'll be the one with the black hat on.* I told Justin to get us a booth number that's easy to remember, so we will be at **Booth #2525 at the IHRSA40 Trade Show**. So, I hope you will drop by our **Booth #2525** and say, **'Hi.'** We'd love to see you there and get a photo taken with Justin and me. That'll be **FUN!** I can also tell you that I've been looking at the booth signups, and given the world we're all living in these days, I think they're doing a hell of a job. **I tip my black hat to your IHRSA Team on that effort!**

In Closing

C.I. - Out of curiosity, Liz, before we end this great interview, do you have any significant mentors in your career so far that you would like to highlight?

LC - Having spent a long time in D.C. and working my way up with a lot of these folks, I've been very blessed to have a very strong network of other association CEOs, so I've got a lot of learning to take away from that space. I'm also blessed to have a phenomenal mentor in my family, especially my Sister-In-Law, **Suzanne Clark**, from the *U.S. Chamber of Commerce*. She's

just down the street, so I'm lucky to have her thoughts whenever I need input. And, my husband, **Casey Clark**, has been a mentor to me. He's been in the association world a long time, as well. He does PR and communications, so he's always very helpful to me on that front.

C.I. - WOW Liz! You've got a *great team* surrounding you!

LC - Yes, I do!

C.I. - What type of fitness experience do you currently focus on personally?

LC - I run. I lift weights. I ride a bike. I kayak. I golf. I swim.

C.I. - How have you coped during COVID, personally and professionally?

LC - (laughing) Would it be inappropriate to

say: *'With wine!?'*

C.I. - (laughing) - No Liz, it would not!

LC - I've done a lot of fun, after-hours things with my friends. Because of the Zoom technology, I've actually been able to reconnect with a lot of my friends across the country that I don't see as much. So, that's been great. I've played a lot of golf, which is nice to get out and reconnect with being outside. And, I've been spending more time with my kids: **Connor**, 20; **Finnegan**, 14; and **Penelope**, 8. We also got a COVID puppy, an English Bull Dog, and her name is **Mother Maybelle!**

C.I. - **Ms. Clark, Thank You** very much for sharing your background and experience, insights and plans for IHRSA's future under your leadership with us. We wish you every

success with IHRSA going forward, and we look forward to meeting you in person in *Dallas, Texas, October 13 - 15!*

■ ■ ■

I want to say **THANKS** and express my **APPRECIATION** to **Ms. Liz Clark** for her time interviewing, and *I wish her the best as her tenure begins.* Thank you also to **Jay Ablondi** for assistance with photos and graphics. And, thank you also to **John McCarthy**, our good friend for many years, and *highly esteemed former 25-year IHRSA Executive Director*, for his kind assistance in the production of Liz's interview questions. **Thanks Big John!**

(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 47-year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. He is the Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993 of Club Insider, now in its 28th 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**. He can be reached by phone at **770-635-7578** or email at **Norm@clubinsideronline.com.**)



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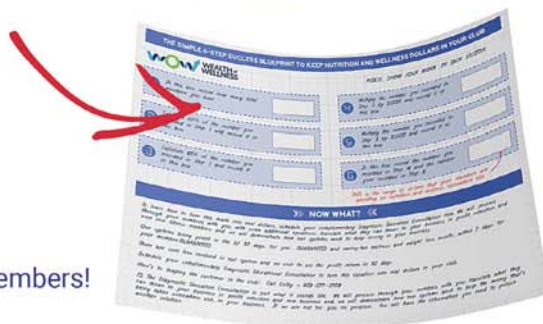
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Are You Asking Your Sales Managers The Right Questions To Grow Sales?

By: **Gary Polic**

Part I

We all know the statement, "You get what you put up with in management," is a true statement. Therefore, I wanted to share a few questions to ask your *Sales Manager* on a consistent basis. In **Part I**, I will share *Questions 1 - 10*. Next, month, in **Part II**, I will complete the list with *Questions 11 - 20*. These questions will alert your Sales Manager to *what's most important* in achieving their team's sales goals:

1. Do you know your salespeople's "Super Why?" People buy-in emotionally, not logically. Find out your people's "Super Why." Why do they go to work at your club? Do they want to pay off debt, buy a new home or car? Then, do the simple math. Start with the additional sales they will need to write to earn the additional dollars per month. It works! And, guess what? They will fight for their Super Why!

2. Are you mentoring your salespeople? *Daily Leading By Example.* Seeing is believing! Are you performing the tasks you expect your people to do on a day-to-day basis? Perfect example is represented by **George Sikkink**, the *General Manager* for the *Highpoint Sports & Wellness Club*, an elite Wellbridge property. Here is what George lives by: "If I expect my people to do it; I must do it first and often, myself!"

3. Are you managing in a Firm, Friendly

and Fair way? *Firm = Manage Objectively.* It is your people and you (as their leader) against the numbers. *Friendly = Thank People For Their Day.* Ask them how their families are. *Fair = Catch Everyone Doing Something Right.* Different strokes for different folks. Treat people the way they want to be treated.

4. Are you truly developing your salespeople's skill level? The only way to develop skill level is to shadow a "live" presentation. Your people shadow you "live" networking/prospecting inside and outside the club; on the phones scheduling appointments; on a tour presenting and closing a sale. Then, you shadow your people "live."

5. Are you holding your salespeople accountable to the company standards? "You get what you put up with in management." You are letting your people down if you "the leader" settles for Mr. Nice Guy and mediocrity. It does not pay the bills and does not build winners and winning teams! If there are no consequences, then they are not standards but a simple wish list.

6. Do you measure and reward activity as much as a sale? "What gets measured, gets done" And, "Measure the activity, and the production will take care of itself." Leads, Calls Made, Appointments, Shows, Sales. They are all equally important.

7. Are you applying true leadership?

The definition of *Leadership* by **Vince Lombardi** is *the ability to inspire others to follow.* You do this by not accepting negative attitudes or chit chat and gossip. A positive mindset philosophy of the glass half full is the sales department modus operandi. Are you creating a **FUN** and **energetic** environment? Are you having your one-on-ones weekly and team meetings daily? Increase lines of communication!

8. Are you providing your people with the proper lists and scripts to call? Make sure data entry and lists are inspected daily. It is all about your lists! Write up script docs and roleplay. Can you pull a list from your CRM of all your trials in the club this month?

9. Do you pull out your CRM Reporting each day to coach down stats? Again, *what gets measured, gets done.* Metrics and standards must be part of each day's conversation. What solutions are being applied for the day for each down stat?

10. Are you creating a WINNING-MINDSET? Are you winning? **W = What's;** **I = Important;** **N = Now.** Is what you are doing now singlehandedly the most important thing you need to do to **WIN THE**



Gary Polic

DAY? Ask your people this question several times per day until you catch them doing something right.

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

The Proven, Five Prong Client Experience Strategy That Wows Members Every Time

By: **Sumit Seth**

"People everywhere are just completing tasks to move onto the next to-do item. They're going through the motions. They're reading scripts. There's no ownership." That's how a flourishing, multi-location gym owner recently described the state of the client experience in the fitness industry. Sadly, his evaluation is truer than we'd like it to be.

While most fitness professionals are bought in on the idea that client experience is no longer a differentiator but a necessity, not everyone subscribes to the vision of a highly individualized, relational approach to client care. To do it well takes work. A LOT of work. It also takes intentionality. And, it takes a team that's on mission to get it done.

Achieving insane client lifetime values and maintaining a nearly 100% retention rate isn't impossible... but it's not going to happen by accident. With a comprehensive five prong client experience strategy, you'll have the foundational elements in place to **wow your members every single time they interact with your business.**

If that's what you're aiming for,



Sumit Seth

you're in the right place! Let's dive into the five essential prongs that make up an airtight client experience strategy:

1. Personalization

Every interaction needs to be crafted to meet that individual's needs. The pleasantries exchanged, the programs designed, the cards sent... all need to (See **Sumit Seth** Page 20)



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Preventing Site Selection Mistakes When Opening Multiple Clubs in One City

By: Mike Manning

One problem I've seen several times when working on fitness industry acquisitions is that operators sometimes open clubs too close together. In the past, this was fairly easy to do because tools didn't exist to make it easy for operators to understand where their members lived. But, this problem has been overcome by software providers who can link to your club billing system to plot the addresses of existing members on scalable maps. Used correctly, for operators who own multiple clubs in a market, this member mapping software is the biggest mistake prevention tool I've ever seen for new location selection.

Every market is different, and actual club trade areas aren't always what we assume. Depending on the demographics of the surrounding population, the size of your clubs and nearby competitors, it might make perfect sense to have two clubs that are three miles apart in one market. But, in another market, having clubs that close can be a disaster because your second club is competing for members with your first club. Then, there aren't enough potential members in the area to generate an acceptable return for both clubs.

Most know that real estate brokers have access to software systems that will tell you the population within 3, 5 and 10 miles of your proposed new club,

the average income of that population, plus other demographic information. These real estate systems might also tell you the population within what is assumed to be a 10-, 15- or 20-minute drive time, which some operators prefer over miles. If you're a large chain with a dedicated in-house real estate team, you might acquire access to these systems yourself. All of these inputs are helpful in determining whether opening a new location might make sense.

Especially in days gone by, you might have been guessing what portion of members your clubs pulled from three miles away or five miles away. I've seen a situation when looking only at demographic reports and the results of nearby clubs, an owner reasonably assumed a new club might mature at \$170,000 to \$180,000 of recurring monthly dues when opening it in between two of his very nice existing clubs that were approximately ten miles apart. What the owner missed was that the two existing clubs, which were ten miles apart, were already pulling the majority of available members in the area between them. So, after being open for almost two years, the third club had monthly dues of \$60,000, which was a terribly unpleasant surprise. Having access to the member mapping software might have prevented that mistake.

Most multi-unit operators intuitively spread their clubs out to avoid cannibalization from overlapping club trade areas in a market. As market gaps

are filled in to keep competitors away or for other reasons, intuition often doesn't work as well. That is where technology can make a big difference by showing you where the members of your existing clubs are concentrated. Some clubs pull members from well outside what might be considered the trade area, which is great until an operator wants to open a club in what was assumed to be nearby white space but really isn't. The member mapping technology might let the owner know that his existing clubs are already pulling 5,000 members from what he assumes to be white space. For several reasons, you might still build a club in a trade area where your existing clubs already pull 5,000 members, but knowing about them and where they're located on a map might alter the location of your new club as well as how large a club you choose to build.

Site selection is different in midtown Chicago, Illinois than in Birmingham Alabama, but the basic analysis is the same. If you can identify a trade area, which many of the real estate software systems now do, a certain percentage of the trade area population will join a health club. Until COVID, that percentage had been trending up for many years. Your club or clubs will have a certain market share of those members. If your trade area has a population of 300,000, and 22% of that population will join a club, there are 66,000 potential health club members. After assessing your concept



Mike Manning

versus the competition, if you feel you can capture 25% market share of the 66,000, your concept would have 16,500 potential members in the trade area. If you have five existing clubs within an 8-mile radius of your potential new location that already pull 11,000 members out of what you consider the trade area of the new location, your new location will eventually net around 5,500 new members if your assumptions turn out to be correct.

Seeing those 11,000 existing members as dots on a map is quite useful. Maybe a new club with 5,500 members works well for your concept, or maybe you need at least 7,000 to get the investment
(See Mike Manning Page 21)

...Sumit Seth

continued from page 18

speak to the individual member you're interacting with.

This is what distinguishes the "customer service as a task" mentality versus the "customer service as a mission" mentality. Personalization demonstrates to members that you understand their specific needs and that you actually care to personally connect with them (they're not just dollar signs to you!).

2. Resolution

Unfortunately, problems are inevitable when you're running a business. Equipment will break; programs might disappoint; phone calls may be missed. The power in the Resolution prong is in your ability to turn a poor experience into a great one.

Accepting and correcting an issue goes a long way in humanizing the business, taking responsibility (which clients expect AND respect) and also fostering long-term relationships. As a gym owner, it is your responsibility to dictate resolution protocols so you and your team know exactly how to respond when (not if!) things go wrong.

3. Friction Reduction

Friction reduction is based on the idea that everything your members do to interact with your business, from paying for their services to throwing their car keys and water bottle in a cubby before class to walking out to the parking lot, takes time and energy. Precious time and energy.

In a world of instant gratification in which people would rather take a pill than exercise for better health, designing as many ways as possible to reduce friction for members goes a LONG WAY in building excitement and commitment in your gym.

Here are a few rhetorical questions to get you thinking about friction reduction...

■ How fast and easy is your payment system for members? If you're constantly chasing down late payments or you're still selling training packages (versus recurring monthly memberships on auto-pay), what can you do to make the payment process simpler and less frequent for members?

■ Scheduling can be a tricky topic for training gyms. Is your scheduling process user-friendly, intuitive and done on-demand by members? Do you have automated reminders built into your system so

members don't have to spend energy inputting each session into their calendars?

■ How much friction do your members encounter looking for a parking spot when they arrive at your gym? Is there anything you can do as a business to make the in-and-out process painless for members?

4. Empowered Teams

One of our partner affiliates, Rachel Cosgrove, said it best, "We're not in the fitness business; we're in the relationship business." Ultimately, everything we do is about people, both our customers and our teams.

It can be shockingly easy to neglect our teams when building our client experience strategies, but that would be a huge mistake. Engaged employees create engaged customers. Employees are engaged when they're empowered and part of a business where their voices are heard.

5. Compassion and Empathy

This is the linchpin of your business. Don't underestimate the importance of this fifth prong: your ability to understand your

members; know their desires, needs and values; and demonstrate sincere care for them as well as your employees will make or break your business. Authentic human connections are so powerful in driving customer loyalty and belonging within your community.

■ ■ ■

Lead with these five qualities to design your customer experience and you will have a powerful mechanism for not only growing your business and retaining your clients, but you'll also be making the fitness industry (and world!) a better place.

(Sumit Seth is a strong believer in the power of human connections and successfully built one of the fastest growing and largest staffing firms by focusing on creating long-term relationships. He exited the venture to focus on his health, reconnect with family and found solace in fitness, which led him to start Naamly, www.naamly.com. Naamly helps training gyms increase customer lifetime value and overall profitability by empowering their team to deliver a consistent client experience.)

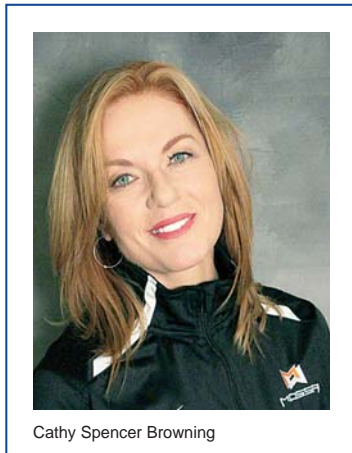
Are You in the Recruitment Business?

By: **Cathy Spencer Browning**

Jim Collins, researcher, business consultant and iconic author wrote, *"The old adage 'People are your most important asset' turns out to be wrong. People are not your most important asset. The right people are."* We all know this to be true, so why is it that recruitment doesn't seem to be anyone's priority? Instead, it seems like a lot of complaining along the lines of "good people are hard to find."

I am going to add that "Good people are hard to find, especially when you aren't **ACTIVELY** looking." Because here's the thing... Recruitment is an active, ongoing process. It never ends. If you oversee a team, you oversee recruitment. You are "in the business of recruitment." When you are in the business of recruitment, you are never **NOT** looking for talented people to join your team. *It's a mindset.*

I was visiting a club in Florida and their **Group Fitness Manager (GFM)** picked us up from the airport. On our way to the facility, we stopped at Starbucks. We were greeted by a super-friendly barista who was chatty, smiley and friendly. The next minute,



Cathy Spencer Browning

the GFM was asking whether the barista was into fitness and where he worked out. After a few minutes of conversation, the GFM handed the barista a business card and said, *"We are looking for some new recruits and starting a training next month... give me a call if you are interested."* Now, I don't know if the barista ever called; that's not the point of the story. The point of the (See **Cathy Spencer Browning** Page 22)

...Mike Manning

continued from page 20

return you're looking for. Either way, it's great to know about the 11,000 existing members and to be able to see where they live. Some of them might find your proposed new location more convenient than driving to your existing location they currently use, so your new location might be full of people even if it only nets you a small number of new members. If your existing clubs within an 8-mile radius already capture 14,000 members within what you consider to be the trade area of a potential new club with 16,500 potential members for your concept, and you will only net 2,500 new members, you might reach a different conclusion about whether to open that new club.

If you operate or plan to operate multiple clubs in one city, and you aren't aware of member mapping software, asking your existing billing and operating system provider might be a good place to start educating yourself. I did a quick survey of people I know at the large billing/operating software systems that most clubs use, and they responded with three providers who have some form of the member mapping

technology. There could easily be two or three additional vendors on the floor of the IHRSA trade show in October who have the technology. If member mapping software helps you prevent even one big site selection mistake, it'll be worth your time and money, and the software becomes increasingly helpful as you continue to open new clubs and fill in markets. I've long felt that making a few mistakes was the best way to get good at site selection, but if you can use new technology to prevent making some of those mistakes, that is a much better outcome.

(Mike Manning is the former CFO of The Rush Fitness Complex and owns Strategic Advice LLC, a business consulting firm that works with business owners and private equity groups. Manning is passionate about working with business owners to grow great companies and has extensive experience with corporate boards, private equity transactions, mergers and acquisitions, bank agreements, club software systems, site selection and lease negotiation. Manning can be reached at manning@strategicadvicellc.com.)



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...Cathy Spencer Browning

continued from page 21

story is that this GFM was clearly in the business of recruitment. He was *never* NOT looking for talent.

First who, then what. In his book *Good to Great*, Jim Collins identifies that great organizations make sure they have the right people on the bus first (and the wrong people off the bus) before deciding where to drive the bus. Many "Good to Great" leaders understand that, if people are on the bus only because of where it is going, if you change course, you have a problem. But, if people are on the bus because of the other people on the bus (the team), then you can change course more easily.

Like attracts like. Once you get on a recruitment roll, it is the gift that keeps on giving. When a team is firing on all cylinders, it can be felt. There is an energy, a gravitational pull if you will. People want to be part of a high performing team. If you have amazing instructors that pull

big numbers and deliver high energy experiences, then that looks appealing. Other people will start to say, "I'd love to do that." The opposite is also true.

Why would they want to work for me? If you can't come up with a compelling reason why someone would want to work for you or be a part of your team, then it is time to do a little reflecting. It takes two to tango, so hiring great people requires you to be a great employer. Gone are the days when a salary alone is compelling. Today's employees are looking for other things, like flexibility, childcare, training, working with people they are fond of, etc.

Create a sticky web. Ultimately, in the fitness business, we are trying to create a sticky web that attracts members. The sticky web is your team. It is not the bricks and mortar. It is your people and how your people make people feel.

Know your WHY. Legendary speaker, thought leader, and author, **Simon Sinek**, has said, "*The goal is not to do business*

with everybody who needs what you have. The goal is to do business with people who believe what you believe." This is also true when it comes to recruitment. You should always be looking for people who believe what you believe, who believe in your WHY. Do you know your WHY? Why do you exist? If you are not clear on your WHY for doing business (besides being profitable), then how will you attract like-minded people to help you with your cause?

Have a plan or plan to fail! Want to be better at recruitment? Well, you need to have a system in place. Whether it's job fairs, movement auditions, info seminars, something must feed the funnel. This is the "active" part of being in the recruitment business. All team leaders should have "recruiting to build a world class team" in first position on their job descriptions.

■ ■ ■

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

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FINANCING AVAILABLE : With our long-time financial partners to put you on the road to success!

MULTIPLE REVENUE STREAMS: Variety of membership options and personal training packages

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CONTACT TERRI HAROF TO LEARN MORE

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