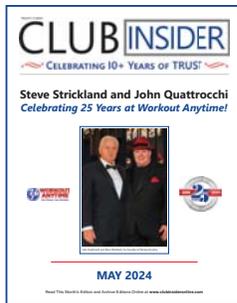
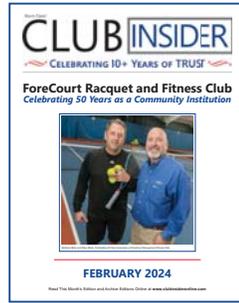
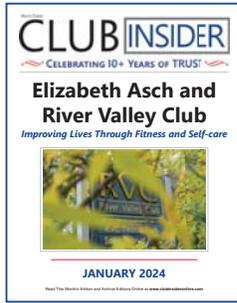


Norm Cates'

CLUB INSIDER

CELEBRATING 30+ YEARS OF TRUST



2024 In Review

DECEMBER 2024

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Norm Cates'

CLUB INSIDER

CELEBRATING 30+ YEARS OF TRUST

2024 In Review

By: Justin Cates

As 2024 comes to a close, I find myself thinking more and more about the future. In January, I turn the *BIG 4.0. 40!* I get to begin the second half of my life with 40 years of knowledge and experience behind me as the wind at my back, which is a great feeling. Conversely, though, as I get older, it feels like each year goes by faster and faster. So, I got to thinking about that... and I came to this conclusion: The proportion of life yet to live becomes less and less, so it feels like it goes faster and faster. For some, this can be a sad thought. For others, it can be the greatest motivator. Optimally, I suppose there should be a balance in those thoughts... we are mortal after all, but we are capable of much in a

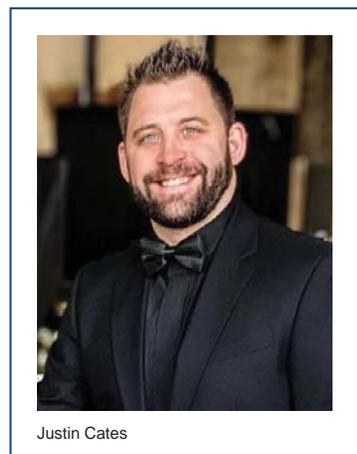
very short period of time, especially with knowledge and experience guiding our path. Why am I discussing this? Well, for the first time in my life, I feel like I understand. I understand life. I understand purpose. I understand legacy. Me as a person, *Justin Cates*, has had quite a ride, and it is no where near over. My family's company, *Club Insider*, is one of the great purposes of my life. We, too, have had quite a ride, and it is no where near over! Finally, I rest well knowing what I have done as a person and as a professional will eventually lead to legacy. The thousands of pages and millions of words of knowledge we have published and readers have turned into experience will live on well after my Dad and I are gone, and that is a great feeling. So, as you prepare for 2025, if you

never have before, I urge you to think about some of these things. The clarity and calm of mind created is a natural serenity no one can ever find in an artificial substance. **P.S.** I promise I am on no artificial substances as I write this! haha
Thank you for reading. Now, let's recap 2024!

A Summary of Our 2024 Cover Stories

January 2024: To begin the year, we featured **Elizabeth Asch** and *River Valley Club* in a follow-up story to the one we published back in June of 2012.

February 2024: At *C.I.*, we love to celebrate milestones, and **50 years** is the milestone (See *2024 In Review* Page 8)



Justin Cates

Powerhouse Gym Celebrates its 50th Anniversary: Honoring the Dabish Family Legacy

By: Shannel Brooks & John Mickelson

The **Dabish family** transformed *Powerhouse Gym* into a global powerhouse, marking a remarkable journey from humble beginnings to an international brand.

The Early Years

Family patriarch **Will Dabish** and his brother, **Norm**, grew up in challenging circumstances, facing early hardships as immigrants' kids. When they first arrived in the United States, they didn't speak English, everything was new, and the family

endured a number of challenges. The boys endured bullying from older kids in their neighborhood, which motivated them to find a way to defend themselves. Their solution came through martial arts. Determined to toughen up, Will and Norm began studying karate under the guidance of **Brian Frost**, a local sensei who would later gain international recognition. As they trained, Will, who was significantly smaller than Norm, added weight training to his regimen to build strength. This would mark the beginning of a series of unexpected events that would change the course of their lives.

A New Path Forward

When their father, **Karim**, suffered a heart attack and required surgery, the responsibility of supporting the family fell to Will and Norm. However, neither of them was passionate about the family grocery business, and they sought a "cleaner" way to make a living. Their solution came in the form of a martial arts supply business.

In the early 1970s, the brothers traveled to Japan for a karate training trip, and upon returning, they opened a martial arts supply store in Highland Park. In the back of the store, they built a gym, hoping



to sell memberships to make the business profitable. If the plan didn't work out, they figured they'd at least have the best private (See *Powerhouse Gym* Page 12)

Inside the Insider: Edition #372

- Fitness and Wellness Trends You Need to Know for 2025 - **By:** Frank Guengerich
- How to Maximize the January Rush and Capitalize on New Year's Resolutions - **By:** Jim Thomas
- How to Rewire Your Brain for Success - **By:** Margaret Graziano
- The Best (Pound-For-Pound) Salesperson I've Ever Met - **By:** Jeffrey Pinkerton
- What You Need to Know About the FTC's New Rules - **By:** Sara Kooperman, JD
- Crunch Fitness Franchise Unveils Its First 3.0 Gym Design with the Opening of Crunch East Plano
- Eight Education Tracks Unveiled for a Tailored Conference Experience at The HFA Show 2025
- The Health & Fitness Association Announces HFA Hall of Fame to Recognize Industry Leaders
- ACSM Announces Top Fitness Trends for 2025
- In-Shape Family Fitness Surpasses \$1 Million Milestone in Fight Against Cancer
- 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 **372nd monthly edition of this 32+ 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!!!**

■ **From our family to yours, we wish you all a very Merry Christmas, a Happy Holiday Season and a Happy, Healthy New Year!!!**

■ **JOHN QUATTROCHI (John Q) and STEVE STRICKLAND**, our good friends

who are the *Founders of Workout Anytime*, and long-time *C.I. Advertisers* (See their **Ad on Page #24**), have worked with some of the biggest names in the industry, including *Bally* and *American Fitness*. Their associate, **MS. CASSIDY SMALL**, who was writing about Steve and John, informed me of **BILL and BRET CESAK's** Grand Opening of their new Workout Anytime location in Hartwell, Georgia. Importantly, this new club will be the Workout Anytime brand's **200th location!** The Cesak boys celebrated this milestone with the opening of their new gym on December 7th. Their Grand Opening event featured a ribbon-cutting ceremony with the *Hart County Chamber of Commerce* members and associates. Bill Cesak spent 35 years in the corporate world before transitioning into entrepreneurship in 2016. Bill teamed up with his son, Bret, who was a trainer at Workout Anytime, to combine his business expertise with Bret's passion for fitness. Together, they've opened three successful Workout Anytime locations in Georgia, and they're expanding further with plans for clubs in the cities of Royston and Jefferson, Georgia area. **Congrats to Workout Anytime and the Cesaks!!! Stay Tuned Folks!**

■ **CONGRATULATIONS to The DABISH Family**, a special team that transformed *Powerhouse Gym* into a global powerhouse, making a remarkable journey from humble beginnings to an international brand. Folks, check out the story on **Page #3**, covering the **50th Anniversary Celebration** of The Powerhouse Gym folks! Special thanks to **Shannel Brooks and John Mickelson** for their authorship of this story.

■ **The Health and Fitness Association (HFA)** has made some exciting announcements about the upcoming **HFA 2025 Show**, taking place in Las Vegas, March 12 - 14, 2025. Those **Press Releases** appear on **Page #6**. Check out the **HFA Ad on Page #13**.

■ **Speaking of the Health and Fitness Association**, formerly *IHRSA*, our friend **Eddie Tock**, *CEO of REX Roundtables*, informed us about the return of the *IHRSA Institute*, now called the *REX Leadership Academy*. He sent out this announcement:

**REX Leadership Academy Is Coming
July 15 - 17, 2025**

Are you ready to take your leadership skills to the next level? Join us for



Norm Cates

the **REX Leadership Academy**, an exclusive, immersive experience designed for leaders like you who are ready to grow, challenge and transform their leadership potential.

Event Details:

Dates: Tuesday, July 15th (3:00 PM) - Thursday, July 17th (12:00 PM)

Location: TBD

(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 **32nd Year** of this home-based health and fitness club trade publication! The thought that this publication was *founded to serve an industry I truly love*, and so that *I could become a Mister Mom for my son, Justin*, is still *intriguing and amazing* to us. So, I wish to extend my most sincere **Thanks and Appreciation** to everyone who has made this amazing 30+ year run possible.

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

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

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

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

Norm Cates, Jr.



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Crunch Fitness Franchise Unveils Its First 3.0 Gym Design with the Opening of Crunch East Plano

PLANO, TX - CR Fitness Holdings, the largest, fastest-growing Crunch Fitness franchisee, announces the opening of Crunch East Plano, its second location in Plano, Texas, and sixth in the Dallas metro area. Located in a former Bed Bath & Beyond site, this expansive 44,000-square-foot facility officially opened its doors on Thursday, December 12th, at 5:00 AM. The new gym is the 72nd Crunch Fitness location for CR Fitness Holdings and the first to debut the brand-new Crunch Fitness 3.0 gym design.

Crunch Fitness unveils its innovative 3.0 design at Crunch East Plano, combining modern aesthetics with enhanced functionality to elevate the fitness experience. Highlights include expanded Olympic weightlifting racks, a

reimagined relax-and-recover zone and the Hot Stuff studio, all complemented by updated lighting, premium flooring, and vibrant new graphics. Members can enjoy premier cardio and strength equipment, group fitness studio, cycling, hot yoga, dry saunas, HydroMassage, tanning, upgraded spacious locker rooms and a modernized front desk, creating a community-focused and motivating environment.

"We're thrilled to bring Crunch East Plano to life as part of our continued commitment to expanding in Texas," said **Tony Scrimale**, CEO of CR Fitness. "This new 3.0 design represents the future of fitness spaces, combining innovation, functionality and community to deliver a premium experience for our members."

To celebrate this milestone,

Crunch East Plano invited members and the community to its Grand Opening Party on Thursday, December 12th. Guests toured the new 3.0 state-of-the-art facility, participated in free fitness class demonstrations and took advantage of special membership offers and giveaways.

CR Fitness Holdings is on track to operate 100 Crunch Fitness locations nationwide by 2026. With over 150 years of combined expertise, CR Fitness Holding is led by veteran leadership team, **Vince Julien**, **Geoff Dyer**, **Jeff Dotson** and **Tony Scrimale**, who currently oversees 72 locations across Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Texas and Tennessee, with plans to expand into Arizona. CR Fitness Holdings also partners with *Dallas Cowboys Quarterback*, **Dak Prescott**,



to further its mission of making fitness accessible, affordable, and impactful for communities nationwide.

Crunch East Plano represents a key market expansion for CR Fitness Holdings. The launch brings high-quality fitness facilities to the residents of East Plano and create valuable employment opportunities within the local community.

Eight Education Tracks Unveiled for a Tailored Conference Experience at The HFA Show 2025

BOSTON, MA - The Health & Fitness Association has released session details for the eight education tracks at *The HFA Show 2025*, which will occur March 12 - 14 in Las Vegas. Formerly the *IHRSA Convention & Trade Show*, The HFA Show has transformed its conference design, categorizing this year's sessions under eight education tracks so attendees can create a customized conference experience that meets their particular career and business needs. The tracks are:

1. Retention & Experience explores strategies to enhance member retention and elevate the club experience.

2. Research & Advocacy connects fitness industry leaders with the latest health and fitness industry data and insights so they can stay ahead of the curve.

3. Technology & Operations dissects how technology, data-driven design and AI are reshaping the fitness and wellness industry.

4. Sales & Marketing offers innovative strategies to reach prospects, drive member engagement and increase profitability.

5. Staff Management unlocks keys to effective recruitment, building high-performance teams and navigating modern HR challenges.

6. Programming guides operators on how to create impactful fitness programming that engages and inspires members with unique experiences they can't stop raving about.



7. Studio dives into the expansion opportunities available in the boutique space, from large franchised brands to independent studios and how brands have accelerated their growth.

8. Leadership & Career Growth explores the evolution of fitness careers, focusing on strategies for enhancing leadership skills, advancing professional development and driving organizational success.

Each track offers a variety of presentations, panels, workshops and roundtables from experts inside and outside the industry to provide fresh perspectives and actionable insights.

"These education tracks reflect the remarkable evolution and growth of the association, showcasing how far we've come in meeting the diverse needs of the industry through advocacy, education and research," said **Katie Philipp**, HFA Education and Events Manager. "By leveraging insights from research, focus groups and feedback from our board members and international and domestic committees, we've gained a deeper understanding of what professionals across the industry need to hear and learn. This enables us to connect meaningfully with the expanding range of professionals

The Health & Fitness Association Announces HFA Hall of Fame to Recognize Industry Leaders

BOSTON, MA - The Health & Fitness Association (HFA) is launching the HFA Hall of Fame during a special inaugural ceremony at *The HFA Show* in Las Vegas. The ceremony will take place from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM on Tuesday, March 11, 2025, the evening before *The HFA Show* officially begins at the Mandalay Bay Resort.

This celebratory, ticketed ceremony is open to those who have registered for *The HFA Show* and provides a unique opportunity to honor those whose exceptional contributions have shaped the health and fitness industry.

The HFA Hall of Fame seeks to recognize individuals whose contributions have elevated the Association and industry's profiles, set new standards for excellence in leadership and supported the industry's commitment to improved physical and mental health for all.

A new class will be inducted each year, based on the following criteria:

- Health and fitness business community leaders who have invented, innovated, created and grown services, products and programs that have shaped the industry;

- Those who have expanded the industry over time and its impact around the world and/or driven key development and

in the health and fitness arena by creating education opportunities that address their unique challenges and needs."

In addition to gaining valuable knowledge from expert speakers and industry leaders, attendees can earn continuing education credits from a variety of certifying agencies. More details on



improvement of the Association over time;

- Exceptional advocates whose message has resonated with non-Governmental organizations and Government officials on behalf of association and industry goals; or, seminal industry, academic and allied organization leaders as determined by the *Hall of Fame Selection Committee*.

Inductees for the inaugural class will be announced in January 2025. For future ceremonies, nominations will be accepted and may be submitted for posthumous individuals.

Tickets to the HFA Hall of Fame induction ceremony are available for **\$200** and can be added during *The HFA Show* registration process. Proceeds from the tickets go to the *HFA Foundation*, a 501(c)3 public charity that works to support health through exercise.

Business attire is recommended, and attendees will enjoy drinks and hors d'oeuvres throughout the evening. For more information on the Hall of Fame and to register for *The HFA Show*, visit healthandfitness.org/show.

these credits will be available soon.

Attendees can purchase education packages for three days, two days, or one day. All conference packages include free entry to the trade show. HFA members receive discounted pricing on education. For more information and to register, go to healthandfitness.org/show.

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...Norm's Notes

continued from page 4

Over the course of two-and-a-half days, you'll dive deep into critical leadership topics, including:

- Leadership & Strategy;
- Culture Building;
- Finance & Programming;
- Sales & Marketing;
- Personal Training & Operations.

This is a unique opportunity to engage with industry experts, share insights with peers and gain actionable strategies that will help you thrive as a leader in any environment.

Optional Experience: Add an extra layer to the academy by joining us for a special Thursday afternoon and Friday morning visit to exclusive clubs and studios in NYC. See leadership in action and gather fresh inspiration!

Spots are limited, so don't miss out on this transformative experience. To pre-register, simply email Eddie at eddie@rexroundtables.com or call (914) 643 - 3207.

Congrats Eddie! And, Stay Tuned Folks!

■ This **News Item** comes from *Athletech News (ATN): Former Topgolf CEO, TOM LEVERTON*, will lead *Purpose Brands*, a holding company comprised of *Orangetheory Fitness, Anytime Fitness* and more (*The Bar Method, Basecamp/ Sumhiit Fitness* and *Waxing the City*). The new company was formed by the merger of Orangetheory Fitness and Anytime Fitness parent *Self Esteem Brands* in early 2024. Purpose Brands will be headquartered in Boca Raton, Florida and Woodbury, Minnesota.

Leverton, who most recently served as a partner at investment firm *Pritzker Private Capital*, will lead the new company as its first-ever CEO. A former engineer, Leverton had stints as the CEO of brands including *Topgolf, Chuck. E Cheese* parent *CEC Entertainment* and *Omniflight*, a provider of medical helicopters. Leverton will also serve on the Purpose Brands Board of Directors.

Purpose Brands now operates more than 7,000 locations, including over 1,500 Orangetheory studios and 5,000 Anytime Fitness gyms, serving over 6 million total members worldwide and doing around \$3.7 billion in revenue. Nearly half of those locations are outside of the United States, with 50 countries and territories represented on seven continents.

Congrats Tom, and Good Luck!

■ Here are some recent *Club Insider Weekly* news headlines/summaries:

Planet Fitness Celebrates Tenth Year as Presenting Sponsor of Times Square New Year's Eve Celebration:

HAMPTON, N.H. - *Planet Fitness*, one of the largest and fastest-growing franchisors and operators of fitness centers with more members than any other fitness brand, announces that it will return for the tenth consecutive year as the presenting sponsor of the *Times Square's New Year's Eve* celebration, in partnership with the *Times Square Alliance* and *Countdown Entertainment*.

Tom Davies Appointed as Global Marketing Director for MYZONE:

U.K. - *Myzone*, a leading wearable fitness technology brand, has appointed **Tom Davies** as its new *Global Marketing Director*. Davies brings a wealth of experience from the fitness and marketing sectors, having served as *Director of Marketing for U.K. and Ireland at Anytime Fitness* for nearly three years, where he led a team of eight. Prior to this, Davies worked as *Sales and Marketing Director at Parkwood Leisure*.

Fitness International Hosts "Feeding America Day" at Club Studio and LA Fitness Locations Nationwide:

IRVINE, CA - *Fitness International, LLC*, the owner and operator of *LA Fitness* and *Club Studio*, has partnered with *Feeding America* to feed families through fitness, committing to raise **\$150,000** for at least **9.6 million meals** by the end of 2024.

The Health & Fitness Association Launches New Podcast, Shorts With Liz Clark:

BOSTON, MA - The *Health & Fitness Association (HFA)* releases the inaugural episode of its anticipated podcast, *Shorts With Liz Clark*. Hosted by **Liz Clark**, *HFA President and CEO*, this bi-weekly series brings together leaders from inside and outside the fitness industry for candid, 30-minute discussions on advocacy, research, business development and the evolving global fitness landscape.

Folks, our *Weekly Edition* goes out every Wednesday morning, and it covers a lot! So, if you are not receiving it, email **Justin Cates, C.I. Publisher**, today: justin@clubinsideronline.com.

■ As an *N.C. State Alumni*, I was proud to (See *Norm's Notes Page 14*)

...2024 In Review

continued from page 3

Dave Morin and *ForeCourt Racquet and Fitness Club* celebrated in this story!

March 2024: At *IHRSA 2024*, it was announced that the Association was updating its name and branding to *The Health & Fitness Association (HFA)*. Since the announcement, it has been a whirlwind of progress under the leadership of **Liz Clark**, *HFA President and CEO!*

April 2024: As an educational resource, we are happy to report on and share the stories of other educational resources! That is what progress is all about! In this case, we featured *C.I. Author, Sara Kooperman's SCW.*

May 2024: Celebrating another milestone, we featured our local friends and long-time *C.I. Advertisers, Steve Strickland and John Quattrocchi*, as *Workout Anytime* celebrated **25 years!** This paragraph comes with great timing, as this month, they are celebrating opening their **200th location!**

June 2024: Like *HFA*, our long-time friends and *C.I. Advertiser, Crunch Fitness*, has had a whirlwind 2024, and we covered a collection of stories showcasing this fact.

July 2024: This story featured **Luke Carlson**, *CEO of Discover Strength*, and within, was illustrated the power of specialization of concept. Luke also serves as the *Vice Chair of the HFA Board.*

August 2024: The story of **Maria Gonzalez** and her rise to *CEO of Club Fitness*, as well as an *HFA Board Member*, is beyond inspiring, and it showcases the fabric of American society: the immigrants who have brought their culture, passion and love for freedom to this country. We are all children of immigrants somewhere in our respective family trees.

September 2024: In celebration of completing one year of online-only publication, we featured ourselves! We reiterate that you can *Plan on C.I. in 2025!*

October 2024: Following the announcement of *IHRSA* becoming *The Health & Fitness Association*, it has simply been a whirlwind year for them! We featured a collection of stories showcasing this fact.

November 2024: Closing out our cover stories for 2024, we featured our local friends and long-time *C.I. Advertiser, MOSSA*. If you want your group exercise program to truly make a difference with your membership, and your bottom line, check this one out!

As with all of this year's cover stories, read all about it! Go to www.clubinsideronline.com/archives.

Thank You All!

Before moving on, we must take

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Elizabeth Asch and River Valley Club
Improving Lives Through Fitness and Self-care

JANUARY 2024

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a moment to thank those who make it possible for us to publish *Club Insider* each and every month.

First, we **THANK YOU!!!** If you aren't reading, we would have no reason to do this. So, we thank you for helping us fulfill our purpose.

Next, we'd like to thank all of our *C.I. Authors* this year, as they took time out of their busy schedules to share a great mix of informative articles across a vast array of topics. Beyond our monthly cover stories and news coverage with both press releases and **Norm's Notes**, we try to bring *Best Practices* to you from the trenches. Our authors this year included: **Bruce Carter, Cathy Spencer Browning, Chris Stevenson, Cosmo Wollan, Erik Durak, MSc, Frank Guengerich, Gary Polic, Herb Lipsman, Jeffrey Pinkerton, Jim Thomas, Margaret Graziano, Mike Manning, Nancy Trent, Paul Bosley, Pete Moore, Sara Kooperman, JD, Susan Robertson, Terry Browning and Thomas Plummer.** If you have a story to tell or expertise to share, we would love to hear from you! Email justin@clubinsideronline.com.

Finally, we'd also like to thank all of our *C.I. Advertisers* this year, because we could not have come to you each month without their financial support. Our advertisers this year included: **Augie's Quest, Business Finance Depot, Crunch Franchising, Fitness Premier, Health & Fitness Association, HWLS, IHRSA, JLR Associates, LA Fitness, MOSSA, Sports and Fitness Insurance, TG - The Gym, Transformation Mastery and Workout Anytime.** If you would like to learn more about joining this great group of companies making a difference in our wonderful industry, go to www.clubinsideronline.com/advertise.

And Now, 2024 In Review

January 2024

Elizabeth Asch and River Valley Club - Improving Lives Through Fitness and Self-care - **By: Justin Cates**

Front Page Article Headlines:

■ Rudy Nieto: Strengthening Fitness Businesses, One Relationship at a Time -

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ForeCourt Racquet and Fitness Club
Celebrating 50 Years as a Community Institution

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By: Mary Grace Bonner

Inside the Insider:

■ Three Key Points on Enforcement of Gym Etiquette Expectations - **By: Chris Stevenson** ■ Efficiency Versus an Experience - **By: Jeffrey Pinkerton** ■ From Rookie Rollercoaster to Sales Superstar: Avoiding Common Salesperson Blunders - **By: Jim Thomas** ■ IHRSA Releases 2023 U.S. Health & Fitness Consumer Report ■ Crunch Fitness Invites Members to "Feel Good, Not Bad" in New Creative Campaign ■ And, of Course, Norm's Notes

February 2024

ForeCourt Racquet and Fitness Club - Celebrating 50 Years as a Community Institution - **By: Justin Cates**

Front Page Article Headlines:

■ Crunch Appoints Chequan Lewis, Former COO of Pizza Hut U.S., as President ■ Genesis Health Clubs Acquires Both Locations of The Atlantic Club

Inside the Insider:

■ "Insider Speaks" - My Home Club for the Last 22 Years is Dying - **By: Mike Manning** ■ Turning Members Into Allies - **By: Herb Lipsman** ■ Our Future Is Our Past - **By: Thomas Plummer** ■ The Perfect Financing Combination - **By: Paul Bosley** ■ Team vs. Tech and the Member Experience - **By: Terry Browning** ■ HWLS Announces Club Wellness Advisors ■ Fitness Premier 24/7 Clubs Expands, Renovates and Elevates in 2024 ■ And, of Course, Norm's Notes

March 2024

IHRSA Modernization Continues with New Name

Front Page Article Headlines:

■ IHRSA 2024 Hits a High Note with Association's New Name and Increased Attendance Numbers

(See 2024 In Review Page 10)

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IHRSA Modernization
Continues with New Name

MARCH 2024

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Luke Carlson's Discover Strength Be Unstoppable



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■Trive Capital Invests in JF Fitness of North America, a Leading Crunch Fitness Franchisee
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...Powerhouse Gym

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gym in the world.

The Birth of Powerhouse Gym

The brothers' gamble paid off. They put up a simple sign that read "Gym" on the steel door of their windowless building. The location in Highland Park was far from ideal. Initial members were a mix of "half convicted felons and half cops," as Will humorously recalls. But, the gym began to attract attention, and its reputation grew.

Within a few years, Powerhouse Gym became known as "the place to work out," especially after *University of Michigan* football players started training there in defiance of legendary coach **Bo Schembechler's** ban on weightlifting. The players wore Powerhouse t-shirts, giving the brand valuable visibility.

Expansion and Growth

Though the brothers started small, it wasn't until 1984 that they opened their second gym, in Farmington Hills. From there, their business began to scale rapidly. In 1986, they created a franchise model, and by 1989, Powerhouse had expanded to 18 locations.

Despite having no formal business education, Will and Norm's instincts and entrepreneurial drive propelled them forward. Their next big move was to open high-profile, large gyms in major cities. A 24,000-square-foot gym on Chicago's Michigan Avenue became the first of these "billboard gyms," combining a top-tier workout facility with prime advertising space in a high-traffic area. By 1995, Powerhouse had 175 locations. By the year 2000, that number had grown to 300.

As the years passed, Powerhouse continued to expand. By design, the total

number of locations slowed to about 350. Today, Will's son, **Henry**, is the CEO, leading the next generation of Powerhouse gyms that offer a broader range of services, from physical therapy and racquetball courts to innovative workouts like the company's trademark FX Powerhouse programs.

Legacy of Faith and Perseverance

Will's faith, perseverance and success are deeply rooted in the values instilled in him by his father and grandfather. His family fled religious persecution in northern Iraq and made the arduous journey to the United States, where they built a community that would eventually support their business ventures. Will reflects on the hard work and sacrifice that laid the foundation for his success, with the guiding lesson from his father being to "fear no man, only God."

For Will, this faith and unwavering determination became the driving force behind his entrepreneurial spirit. He encourages others to take personal and business risks, trusting their instincts and moral compass.

A Test of Perseverance: Powerhouse Gym's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

On the heels of decades of business success, Powerhouse Gym faced a severe test of perseverance during the COVID-19 pandemic. The fitness industry, like many others, was hit hard and early by Government-enforced closure mandates in 2020. Gyms, like barbershops, restaurants, and bars, were among the first businesses to shut down. This forced gym owners to navigate uncharted waters, balancing the risks of remaining open with the need to protect their businesses and employees.

In the early months of the pandemic, Michigan's fitness industry, like



The Dabishes (L to R): Henry, Michael, William, Ibtisam, William Jr. and Victor.

many other sectors, applied for loans and grants to stay afloat. Powerhouse Gym CEO, Henry Dabish, recalls that March and April of 2020 were a blur of paperwork, grant applications and loan requests. Since Dabish and his extended family own multiple Michigan locations as separate business entities, each location required individual filings.

Despite the challenges, Henry said that all 14 of Powerhouse's directly-owned Michigan gyms received Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) from the U.S. *Small Business Administration*. Additionally, most of the gyms qualified for grant funding, though one location was ineligible.

Communication Challenges and Industry Collaboration

The biggest challenge for Powerhouse in 2020 was navigating the uncertainty and obtaining crucial information from the Government. The system was overwhelmed, and it took significant time and effort to relay information to franchisees. Powerhouse also had to manage unemployment claims for employees, many of whom were living paycheck-to-paycheck. The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans helped ensure that employees could be paid during the closures.

As the situation unfolded, Henry began connecting with other Michigan gym owners, including **Bryan Rief**, who

operates 50 *Planet Fitness* locations in Michigan and Ohio, and **Alyssa Tushman**, *Owner of three Burn Fitness locations* in Metro Detroit. Real estate professional, **Ed Eickhoff**, also joined the discussions. These conversations led to a crucial discovery: Other states were already planning gym re-openings by the end of May. Ohio, for example, required the creation of a professional association to develop and present safe reopening standards for the fitness industry.

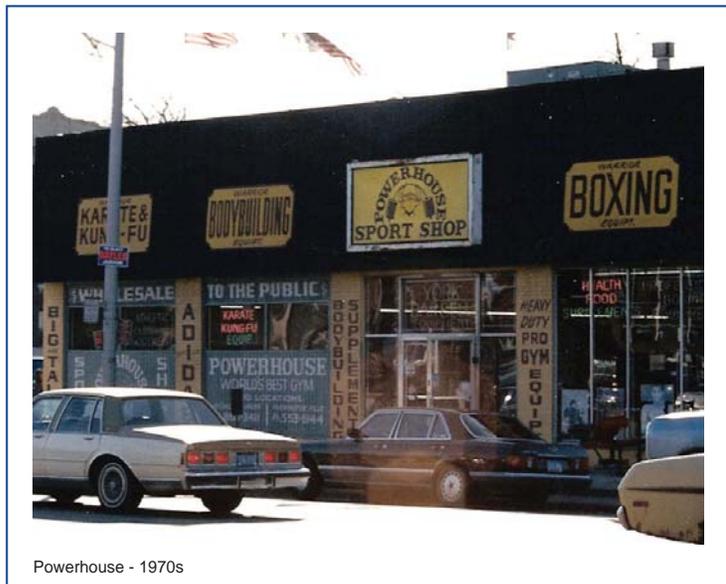
The Formation of the Michigan Fitness Club Association

Motivated by this information, Henry took the initiative to form the *Michigan Fitness Club Association (MFCA)*. The newly formed organization quickly mobilized to address the urgent needs of the industry. They drafted a Board, codified re-opening standards and hired a Lansing-based lobbying firm to advocate for the industry. The MFCA also met with officials from *Governor Gretchen Whitmer's Office* to present their recommendations.

Unfortunately, progress with State Government was slow, and the group received little response from the Governor's office. In the end, however, Henry noted that the MFCA's proposed standards were stricter than the guidelines eventually issued by the State Government. "We didn't wait for the Government to act," he said. "We acted first to ensure the safety of our members and staff."

Even before the pandemic, gyms took cleanliness seriously. It had long been standard gym etiquette for members to wipe down exercise machines after use, and gym staff were constantly cleaning and sanitizing the facility. With the pandemic, Powerhouse and other gyms implemented even more stringent cleaning protocols to ensure the safety of their members.

(See *Powerhouse Gym* Page 14)



Powerhouse - 1970s

IHRSA is now the HEALTH & FITNESS ASSOCIATION

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

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

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

healthandfitness.org



...Norm's Notes

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read the following report about something N.C. State calls the *Pantry Bowl*: "This past week was our fourth annual Pantry Bowl, and our Wolfpack showed up! We received 1,520 gifts, all of which are going to support *Feed the Pack's* mission of providing food and other essential resources to students, faculty and staff. Plus, it doesn't hurt that we secured our third Pantry Bowl win in a row. The Pantry Bowl is over, but *Giving Tuesday* has just started. **If you haven't yet had a chance to make a gift to Feed the**

Pack, today is a great time to show your support for their work. Every gift to Feed the Pack makes an important difference for our community, helping to address food insecurity on our campus. Our university is stronger because of our Pack. If you would like to give to the underprivileged, email uavicechancellor@ncsu.edu."

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(Norm Cates, Jr. is a 50-year veteran of the health, racquet and sportsclub industry. He is the Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993 of Club Insider, now in its 31st year of monthly publication. In 1981, he was honored by IHRSA as IHRSA's First President, and a Co-Founder of the Association with Rick Caro and five others. In 2001, he was honored by IHRSA with its DALE DIBBLE Distinguished Service Award, one of its highest honors. And, in 2017, he was honored with Club Industry's Lifetime Achievement Award. You can reach Norm by phone at 770-635-7578 or email at Norm@clubinsideronline.com.)

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■ **The FTC Ruling on "Click to Cancel" in Fitness Memberships - By:** Sara Kooperman, JD ■ **Lessons Learned from "Texas Skis" Teambuilding Exercise - By:** Herb Lipsman ■ **Designing a Healthy Health Club: A Guide to Sustainable and Safe Wellness Spaces - By:** Bruce Carter ■ **The Secrets of Visionary Thinkers: 10 Rules For Brainstorming Success - By:** Susan Robertson ■ **Maximize Your Holiday Sales with Expert PR Strategies from Nancy Trent** ■ **And, of Course, Norm's Notes**

Stay Tuned in 2025!

(Justin Cates is the Publisher of Club Insider. Having been born into a club business family in 1985, Justin grew up in the health and fitness club industry. He has lived and breathed this industry for 39 years, since his own day one, and he loves it dearly. Graduating from the Terry College of Business at The University of Georgia in 2007, Justin has run day-to-day operations of Club Insider for 15+ years. Justin became Publisher of Club Insider in April of 2020. Justin's Dad, Norm Cates, continues to serve as Founder and Tribal Leader Since 1993. You can reach Justin by phone at 863-999-2677 or email at Justin@clubinsideronline.com.)

...Powerhouse Gym

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Post-Pandemic Advocacy and Continued Work

Born out of crisis, the MFCA remains intact and continues to advocate for the fitness industry in Michigan. The MFCA's post-pandemic agenda includes ensuring due process in the development of new regulations, repealing the federal "tanning tax," advocating for tax credits on gym memberships, securing insurance

discounts for members and preserving the sales tax exemption that many gyms benefit from.

Henry is proud that the MFCA is the only state fitness industry association still active in Michigan. The Association continues to provide education, resources and grants to its members, helping gym owners adapt to the evolving landscape.

The Next Generation

Powerhouse Gym's future is in good hands, as Will and Norm's children

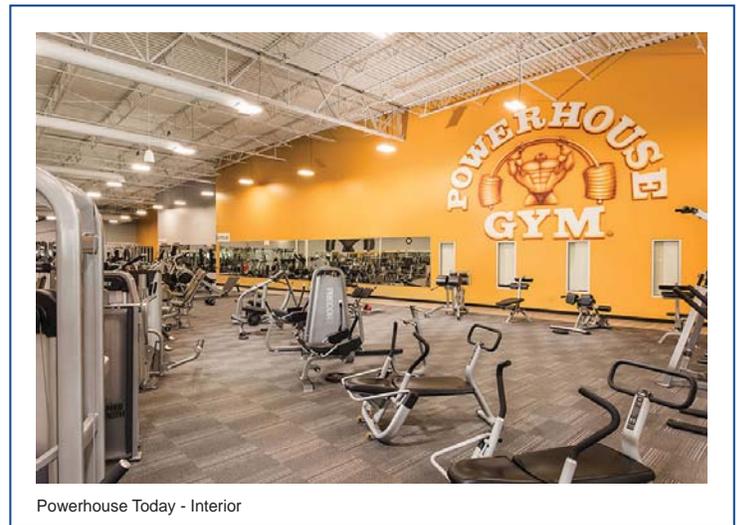
have stepped into leadership roles. Will's four sons --**Henry, William, Victor and Michael**-- along with Norm's son, **Johnny**, now form the next generation of Powerhouse leadership. Their collaborative approach allows each family member to focus on different aspects of the business, ensuring that the company continues to thrive.

For Henry, growing up in the family business has meant not just learning the ropes of the industry but also absorbing the work ethic and values passed down through generations. "My dad always made

time for us, despite his long hours," Henry says. "He taught us the importance of prayer, faith, and hard work."

As Powerhouse Gym celebrates 50 years of success, the company remains a testament to the determination and resilience of the Dabish family. And, as the business continues to evolve, Will's motto endures: *Work hard, trust your instincts, and fear no one, except God.*

(Shannel Brooks is a Regional Account Manager for Petra-1. John Mickelson is an Ambassador for Petra-1.)



Powerhouse Today - Exterior

Powerhouse Today - Interior



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Fitness and Wellness Trends You Need to Know for 2025

By: Frank Guengerich

As we enter the New Year, our members are recommitting to their New Year's Resolutions, and improving their health and wellness is most often a top priority. For that reason, we need to be mindful of what trends are on the horizon or are already upon us. These trends impact virtually every aspect of how you will approach your fitness and wellness business, such as:

- What steps you should be taking to remain competitive, ideally be the leader.
- How you should design and renovate your facilities to accommodate the future needs of your members.
- How you will spend capital.
- How you should budget for operations.
- How you should market both internally and externally.

Strength Training Over Cardiovascular Exercise: One of the most important trends that club operators need to be aware of is that there is a movement away from fitness centers being cardiovascular-equipment-dominant and having more strength training

equipment. The inclusion of free weight platforms and multi-functional strength training equipment instead of bikes, stairs, ellipticals and even treadmills is the trend. With that said, treadmills are still very popular and are the cardio equipment item of choice.

Women's Strength Training: Women are strength training more than ever as members are being educated that the best way to lose weight is to strength train in combination with cardiovascular conditioning. By strength training, the metabolism is "fired up," and this only enhances the ability to lose weight and get and maintain a tighter, firmer physique. Also, if done correctly, strength training burns as many calories as a cardio workout.

Functional Fitness: Making sure the fitness center has an appropriately sized space designated for functional fitness is vital. This would include turf open space that would be used to stretch, perform core and plyometric exercises and various strength/cardio exercises. Equipment, such as rigs, kettlebells, plyo-boxes, sleds, bands, medicine and bosu balls, battle

ropes and suspension training, are just a few types of exercises and equipment that would be used in this area.

Recovery: Two questions are important here:

What exactly is Recovery? Recovery refers to the physiological and psychological processes that help someone who has done physical activity to restore their body and mind to pre-exercise states after intense physical activity. These processes aid in repairing tissue damage, replenishing energy stores and reducing fatigue, ultimately facilitating enhanced performance and injury prevention.

Why has Recovery become such a hot topic? There are several reasons why, but the primary ones are because fitness professionals have learned that it is vital to emphasize all aspects of wellness. They have become educated on the benefits of recovery and are passing that knowledge onto their clients.

The vast use of social media is contributing to the explosion of wellness and recovery programming. Furthermore,



Frank Guengerich

recovery/biohacking is quickly becoming mainstream. Lastly, the increase of boutiques recovery franchises along with better equipment are contributing to the exposure.

Biohacking: Like recovery, two questions are important here:

(See Frank Guengerich Page 17)

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...Frank Guengerich

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What exactly is Biohacking? Biohacking is the process of altering the body's physiology in a passive manner, as opposed to exercise which is active. So, the use of a sauna is considered biohacking. Modalities such as steam, sauna, cold plunge, red light therapy, cryotherapy and hyperbaric chamber therapy are all forms of recovery and biohacking.

Why has Biohacking become such a hot topic? Members are being educated on the benefits of biohacking and realizing this is just one more way to improve the quality of life and increase lifespan and longevity.

Medical Wellness: You can't escape it... commercial after commercial on medical weight loss. Wegovy, Ozempic and so many others. The use of GLP-1 agonists have become mainstream and widely accepted. Major health club brands such as *LifeTime* and *Equinox* have even incorporated them into their programming. Other medically based items, such as peptides and TRT, are being used and have become a normal practice to supplement and/or increase the quality of physical / mental performance and results.

Hot Tip: One of the fitness programming core principles that is missed too often is the vital importance of always having two types of fitness programming going on at all times throughout the year:

Fitness Immersion Programming: This is programming designed specifically for new members to get them introduced to all that the club has to offer. Furthermore, the intent is to ensure a new member finds the type of programming that they enjoy so that the club becomes "sticky" for them. The ultimate goal of fitness immersion programming is to support and assist your new members with creating a lifestyle of exercise adherence.

Engagement: This programming is designed specifically for existing members to ensure the club is always reaching out to them with new and innovative programs to encourage on-going use of the fitness center. All regular members will at some point have an "upset" with their exercise program such that they will stop exercising for a period of time. The key is to never allow that to become a full "breakdown" where they stop exercising all together. But, instead, resume their program once they are recovered from whatever caused the upset.

Final Tips and Takeaways: The fitness

and wellness industry continues to evolve. New trends continue to emerge, and most will become a normal practice or part of your programming well into the future. For this reason, it is important that, as club operators, we stay educated and on top of current and future trends so we remain competitive and ideally are leaders in our business. Always make sure your members are engaged and thoroughly immersed into the fitness and wellness programming that is going on at you club.

(Frank Guengerich is the President and Chief Executive Officer of Club Wellness

Advisors (CWA), which specializes in exclusively serving private clubs by proving fitness and wellness design and operational consulting services. CWA is a division of Health, Wellness and Lifestyle Services (HWLS), a health club ownership and management consulting firm. HWLS specializes in assisting clubs maximize revenue and profitability, with a focus on membership marketing and sales, fitness programming and wellness/medically supervised programs. For more information about CWA or HWLS, visit the website at www.hwlservices.com or email frank@hwlservices.com.)

Club Insider Seeks Contributing Authors

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How to Maximize the January Rush and Capitalize on New Year's Resolutions

By: **Jim Thomas**

January is a golden opportunity for gym owners, boutique studio operators and personal trainers to significantly boost membership, increase engagement and build long-term client relationships. The "New Year, New Me" mindset leads to a surge of people eager to prioritize fitness, offering a once-a-year chance to capture new business and make a lasting impression. To fully capitalize on the January rush, it's essential to implement a strategic plan that covers marketing, operations, member retention and staff preparation. Here's a comprehensive guide to ensure your gym thrives during this pivotal period.

1. Prepare Early for the January Surge:

Evaluate Resources: Assess your current resources, including staff, equipment and facilities. Ensure you're well-equipped to handle an influx of new members.

Staff Training: Train your staff to provide exceptional customer service and address common questions and concerns from new members. Role-play scenarios for engaging new clients and upselling services like personal training and group classes.

Optimize Scheduling: Add extra classes or increase facility hours to accommodate higher foot traffic during January.

2. Develop Targeted Marketing Campaigns:

Emphasize New Year's Resolutions: Tailor your marketing messages to appeal to common resolutions, such as weight loss, strength building or overall health improvement.

Promote Limited-Time Offers: Create special deals, such as "Join Now and Get January Free" or discounted personal training packages. Urgency drives action, so highlight deadlines for these offers.

Leverage Social Media: Share testimonials, before-and-after photos and motivational content to inspire potential members. Use platforms like Instagram and TikTok for short, engaging fitness tips and promotions.

Run Referral Campaigns: Encourage current members to bring friends or family. Offer rewards like free classes, merchandise or membership discounts for successful referrals.

3. Optimize the Onboarding Process:

Simplify Enrollment: Make joining as easy as possible with streamlined online sign-ups, clear pricing and transparent terms.

Welcome New Members: Offer orientation sessions to introduce them to the facility, staff and available services. A personal touch goes a long way in reducing anxiety and improving retention.

Provide Starter Packs: Consider giving new members branded welcome kits with items like a water bottle, towel or fitness tracker.

4. Enhance Member Experience:

Focus on Personalization: Use member profiles to recommend classes, training programs or nutrition plans tailored to individual goals.

Host Goal-Setting Workshops: Help members set realistic, measurable fitness goals. Offer free workshops or consultations in the first week of January.

Create Accountability Programs: Implement challenges or progress trackers to keep members engaged. Examples include "Attend 10 Classes in January" or "Lose 5 Pounds in 30 Days."

5. Boost Group Class Participation:

Offer Beginner-Friendly Options: January attracts many first-timers. Create beginner-friendly classes that cater to various fitness levels.

Introduce Themed Classes: Themes like "New Year Bootcamp" or "Resolution Yoga" can generate excitement and differentiate your offerings.

Encourage Community: Promote group camaraderie to enhance member retention. Friendships and a sense of belonging keep members returning.

6. Leverage Personal Training Services:

Run Introductory Packages: Offer discounted personal training sessions for new members. For example, "3 Sessions for \$99" can provide value while introducing clients to personalized coaching.

Highlight Success Stories: Showcase clients who achieved their goals through personal training. Real-life transformations build trust and motivate prospects.

Follow Up Proactively: Use data from initial consultations to recommend ongoing training programs based on

members' goals.

7. Prioritize Member Retention:

Check-In Regularly: Contact new members to see how they're progressing and address any concerns. Regular touchpoints build loyalty.

Celebrate Milestones: Acknowledge achievements with certificates, shoutouts on social media or small rewards.

Solicit Feedback: Gather feedback on their experience to identify and address potential pain points early.

8. Maximize Visibility:

Collaborate Locally: Partner with local businesses like health food stores, wellness coaches or physiotherapists to cross-promote services.

Sponsor Events: Sponsor or host January events like fitness expos, wellness fairs or charity runs.

Engage with Media: Reach out to local newspapers, radio stations or influencers to feature your gym and its January initiatives.

9. Maintain Momentum Beyond January:

Launch Loyalty Programs: Reward consistent attendance or long-term memberships to encourage retention.

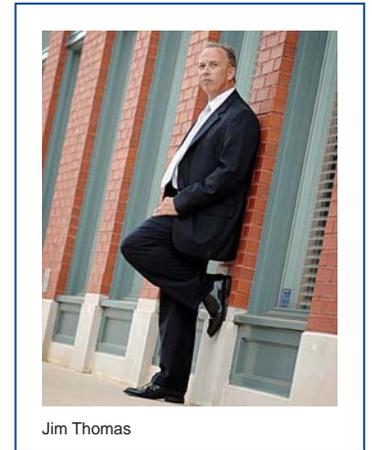
Plan Future Campaigns: Follow up the January rush with seasonal campaigns, such as a spring fitness challenge or summer bootcamp.

Track Key Metrics: Analyze membership growth, retention rates and revenue generated during January. Use these insights to refine strategies for future years.

10. Create a Culture of Success:

Empower Your Team: Foster a positive, enthusiastic team environment where staff feels motivated to deliver exceptional service.

Invest in Facilities: Use the increased revenue from January to reinvest in



Jim Thomas

equipment, amenities or staff training.

Communicate Your Mission: Reinforce your commitment to helping members achieve their goals. Share your gym's story and values to build an emotional connection.

Final Thoughts:

The January rush presents a unique opportunity to grow your gym's membership base, engage with your community and set the tone for a successful year. By preparing in advance, delivering an exceptional experience and focusing on retention, you can turn New Year's resolutions into lasting memberships and loyal clients. Act now to maximize this critical period. Remember, the work you put in today will set the foundation for your gym's success throughout the year!

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

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ACSM Announces Top Fitness Trends for 2025

INDIANAPOLIS, IN - Technology applications in the fitness industry continue to build momentum as Wearable Technology, Mobile Exercise Apps and Data-Driven Training Technology all appear in the Top 10 of the *2025 ACSM Worldwide Fitness Trends*. The report was published by the American College of Sports Medicine in its November/December issue of *ACSM's Health & Fitness Journal*.

Based on the annual survey of 2,000 clinicians, researchers and practitioners in the fitness industry, Wearable Technology was named the number one trend for 2025, followed by Mobile Exercise Apps (#2) and Exercise Programs for Older Adults (#3).

The outcomes of this research provide valuable data for fitness professionals, business owners and exercise enthusiasts and help inform critical business decisions and professional development plans.

"Digital technologies are becoming more critical to the way we design, deliver and evaluate health and fitness services," said **A'Naja Newsome, PhD, ACSM Certified Exercise Physiologist and Co-Author of 2025 ACSM Worldwide**

Fitness Trends: Future Directions of the Health and Fitness Industry. "Wearable devices, mobile apps and data-driven training methods will create avenues for reaching new clientele and elevating fitness experiences. The exercise professional will need to be innovative in their approach to using technology while increasing client adherence and autonomy."

Mobile Exercise Apps were next as the number two trend, continuing the focus on technology. One of the fastest risers on the trends list, mobile apps landed as the second biggest trend just two years after coming in at #20. In 2023, there were 850 million fitness app downloads by nearly 370 million users. This popularity, along with complementing wearable technology, may have fueled the quick rise up the list.

Completing the Top 10 technology trifecta was Data-driven Training Technology, which made a significant jump from #18 in 2024 to #7 in 2025. Benefits of data-driven training technology include better understanding of the physiological responses to an exercise stimulus in real-time, individualized coaching and instruction, even in a group setting where there may be various fitness levels, and the

use of biofeedback (i.e., sleep, and heart rate variability) as critical components of training and recovery. Importantly, exercise professionals can use real-time data to tailor daily exercise sessions to account for acute and chronic conditions, which increases the safety of exercise for special populations.

"Clients desire instant feedback on their training so they can adjust or modify to maximize outcomes and reduce injury," continued Newsome. "We are seeing this in individualized programming and in group-based classes."

In addition to digital technology, two other trend categories formed in the Top 10: Training Modalities and Fitness Programming. Exercise Programs for Older Adults (#3), Exercise for Weight Loss (#4) and Exercise for Mental Health (#8) reflect strong trends toward programs designed for specific needs and populations.

Training modality trends were represented in the Top 10 by Traditional Strength Training (#5), High Intensity Interval Training (#6) and Functional Fitness Training (#9).

Of the top 10 trends, only Health and Wellness Coaching (#10) was not



included in the three dominant categories of digital technology, training modalities and targeted programs.

Here are the *Top 10 Trends for 2025*, with expert commentary from the authors* and other content professionals:

1. Wearable Technology;
2. Mobile Exercise Applications (Apps);
3. Fitness Programs for Older Adults;
4. Exercise for Weight Loss;
5. Traditional Strength Training;
6. High Intensity Interval Training (HIIT);
7. Data-driven Training Technology;
8. Exercise for Mental Health;
9. Functional Fitness Training;
10. Health/Wellness Coaching.

The full list of Top 20 Trends is available in the article. Additional details and resources, including expert commentaries and infographics, are also available at www.acsm.org/trends.

How to Rewire Your Brain for Success

By: **Margaret Graziano**

The human brain is incredibly adaptable. It holds the potential to change, learn and grow throughout our lives. However, many people unknowingly sabotage this by operating with a fixed mindset, the belief that abilities and intelligence are static. Research shows that this mindset limits personal and professional success, as well as discourages any positive change. On the other hand, a growth mindset, the belief that skills can be developed, unlocks boundless possibilities.

Do you feel stuck, unmotivated or frustrated by repeated challenges? Maybe you find yourself resisting new experiences or feeling overwhelmed and burnt out by stress. These are just a few of the symptoms of a fixed mindset.

The key to shifting from a fixed to a growth mindset is in the chemistry of our brains. The chemicals dopamine, serotonin, endorphins and oxytocin all play a role in our motivation, emotional resilience and adaptability. If your brain has lower levels of these chemicals, change becomes a challenge. However, just adding some simple self-care practices to your life can increase these neurotransmitters and prime your brain for growth.

Eight Strategies to Rewire Your Brain

1. Improve Your Sleep Habits: Sleep is foundational for mental and physical health. During sleep, the brain clears toxins, consolidates memories and prepares for new learning. Aim for 7 - 9 hours of consistent, high-quality sleep by establishing a bedtime routine, avoiding screens before bed and creating a relaxing sleep environment.

2. Eat for Brain Health: Nutrition profoundly

impacts the brain. A diet rich in fruits, vegetables, lean proteins and complex carbohydrates supports the production of neurotransmitters like serotonin. Avoid processed foods and added sugars, as they can disrupt your gut microbiome and negatively affect mood and cognitive function. Even small dietary changes, such as reducing sugar or increasing fiber intake, can make a noticeable difference.

3. Get Moving: Regular physical activity boosts endorphins, reduces stress and improves overall brain function. Even moderate exercise, like walking, swimming or yoga, oxygenates the brain and strengthens its adaptability. Consistency is key, so find a form of movement that feels enjoyable and sustainable.

4. Practice Mindful Focus: In today's fast-paced world, constant distractions diminish focus and productivity. Train your brain by practicing mindfulness or meditation. Focus on one task at a time, and take periodic breaks from technology to recalibrate your attention. Even five minutes a day of deep breathing or intentional concentration can improve your ability to manage stress and improve clarity.

5. Calm Your Mind: Chronic stress impairs the brain's ability to adapt and grow. Counteract stress by engaging in calming activities like nature walks, deep breathing exercises or journaling. Quiet moments allow the brain to reset and process information more effectively. Immersing yourself in peaceful surroundings, such as a park or forest, can significantly lower cortisol levels and foster a sense of well-being.

6. Embrace New Experiences: Novel experiences stimulate neuroplasticity

by challenging the brain to form new connections. Learning a new skill, taking up a hobby or exploring a creative activity all encourage growth and adaptability in your brain. Whether it's learning to cook, play an instrument or paint, pushing yourself to try something unfamiliar keeps your brain active and flexible.

7. Cultivate Gratitude: Gratitude directly impacts brain chemistry by increasing dopamine and serotonin levels. Start a daily gratitude journal to focus on the positive aspects of your life. This simple practice shifts your perspective toward growth. Gratitude also enhances your relationships, which strengthens social bonds and further supports emotional health.

8. Engage Your Senses: Deep observation helps you become more present and aware of the world around you. Take time to fully engage your senses, whether it's savoring the taste of food, listening to the sounds of nature or noticing details in your surroundings. This practice promotes mindfulness, stimulates curiosity and encourages a sense of wonder about the world.

The Growth Journey Starts Now

Rewiring your brain is not an overnight process. It requires discipline, rigor and the development of the right habits. By incorporating even just a few of these self-care strategies into your life, you'll create the foundation for sustained personal and professional growth.

Start with one practice today and commit to building from there. Small, consistent changes lead to significant transformations over time. Embrace the journey and watch your mindset shift from thinking about what isn't possible to



Margaret Graziano

everything that is possible.

Having an open mindset is a necessity. With rapid advancements in technology, shifting social landscapes and global challenges, those who stay curious, adaptable and open to new ideas are the ones who thrive. An open mindset encourages innovation, strengthens relationships and helps us navigate change with confidence. On the other hand, holding onto rigid beliefs or outdated views can lead to missed opportunities and stalled growth. In a world that rewards flexibility, a closed mind can hold you back more than ever before.

(Margaret Graziano, known as the Evolutionist, is the Founder and CEO of KeenAlignment, as well as a Wall Street Journal Best-Selling Author for her book "Ignite Culture." She has been recognized as one of Silicon Valley's Top 100 Women Leaders. Mag's groundbreaking work is driven by her power to uncover and catalyze human potential. For more information, go to www.MargaretGraziano.com.)

In-Shape Family Fitness Surpasses \$1 Million Milestone in Fight Against Cancer

SACRAMENTO, CA - *In-Shape Family Fitness* announces that its 10th annual *In-Shape Fights Cancer* campaign raised **\$172,307 this year** to bring its **total contributions to \$1,035,336** in the past decade. This milestone marks a significant achievement in the campaign's mission to support cancer research, education and services through *The American Cancer Society* and *St. Jude Children's Research Hospital*.

The six-week campaign, which ran from September 16 to October 31, mobilized In-Shape members, team members and local communities in a shared effort to

make a difference. From purchasing paper kettlebells to participating in fitness events, pickleball and racquetball tournaments, and sharing social media posts using the hashtag **#InShapeFightsCancer**, supporters joined forces to take a stand against cancer.

"We are overwhelmed with gratitude for the unwavering support from our members, team and sponsors," said **Kris Mulkey, Chief Marketing Officer of In-Shape Family Fitness**. "Reaching \$1 million over 10 years is a testament to the power of community and what we can achieve when we come together for a cause. This

milestone fuels our commitment to continue fighting for a world without cancer."

Beyond fundraising and campaign events, In-Shape supported cancer survivors directly through its partnership with the *Triumph Cancer Foundation*, offering free club access and specialty recovery classes designed to rebuild strength post-treatment.

Over 10 years, the In-Shape Fights Cancer campaign has raised \$1,035,336 for lifesaving programs and groundbreaking research. The funds have supported cancer education, emotional resources for patients and caregivers, and

IN-SHAPE
FAMILY FITNESS

advancements in treatment and prevention.

Sonya Silva from the American Cancer Society commented, "In-Shape's decade-long commitment to this cause is truly inspiring. Their efforts not only provide critical support but also inspire hope for the future. We are honored to be part of this journey."

The Best (Pound-For-Pound) Salesperson I've Ever Met

By: **Jeffrey Pinkerton**

It was a sunny Saturday afternoon, when our doorbell rang. At the time, we lived in a neighborhood with lots of families, and it wasn't uncommon for a friend of one of our kids to ring the doorbell in search of a pickup soccer game or a Pokémon card swap. As I reached for the door handle, I saw a mom-aged woman standing off our front porch, down on the sidewalk. Opening the door, having been out of sight because of her size, stood a small young girl, bright smile, dressed in a *Brownie* uniform. She made direct eye contact with me and started her sales pitch with a voice that projected twice her size. Long story short, I

bought ten boxes.

Growing up, we went door to door selling for all types of clubs and sports teams. As a soccer player, in the church youth group, member of the marching band, and *Boy Scout*, I had something to sell in every season. We sold coupon books and raffle tickets, chocolate bars and fruit boxes, wrapping paper and holiday treats. It's a great life lesson to learn how to sell – one that is sadly disappearing as most selling and fundraising has moved to parent-facilitated social media link sharing and email spamming.

"Hi, my name is Jessica and I'm selling *Girl Scout* cookies to raise money for my *Brownie Troop*, Troop 185. I live in

Suwanee just a few neighborhoods away. And, we're raising money so we can go on a trip this summer to Washington, D.C. I've been busy today going door to door asking people if they'll help support me and our troop, and I only need to sell TWENTY MORE boxes to reach my goal for today. Last year, I was the number one seller in our area, and I earned THAT special bag." She pointed to her mom who was holding the handle to a rolling duffel bag, covered in patches and *Girl Scout* logos. "I'm hoping to sell even more this year to be the top salesperson in the State."

Smiling, I looked up her mother, who smiled and shrugged as if to confirm (See *Jeffrey Pinkerton Page 22*)



Jeffrey Pinkerton

Unsubscribes Do Not Mean Cancellations: What You Need to Know About the FTC's New Rules

By: **Sara Kooperman, JD**

Good news for consumers (and businesses that value transparency)! The *Federal Trade Commission (FTC)* is rolling out updates to its "Negative Option Rule," which are set to shake up the way subscription services work. One of the biggest changes? A "click-to-cancel" requirement, designed to make it easier than ever for customers to opt out of services. These changes could start as early as March 2025, so it's time to prepare. For subscription-based businesses, this isn't just about following the rules, it's a chance to build trust and improve customer experiences.

The Big Shift: Click-to-Cancel Made Easy

Nobody likes jumping through hoops to cancel a subscription, and now they won't have to. The FTC's new guidelines are all about making cancellation as simple as signing up. Here's what's expected:

■ **Keep It Simple:** Let customers cancel without hassle: no lengthy forms or complicated steps.

■ **No Forced Conversations:** Cancellation shouldn't require talking to a live or virtual agent unless that's how the customer subscribed in the first place.

■ **Immediate Action:** When someone cancels, stop the charges right away.

■ **Clear and Accessible Options:** Make the cancellation process easy to find and use, ideally through the same method the customer used to sign up.

Why These Rules Matter

The FTC's Negative Option Rule aims to protect consumers from subscription traps, situations where people are charged for services they didn't realize they were agreeing to. Key principles businesses need to follow include:

■ **Honesty Counts:** Clearly communicate costs, renewal terms and how to cancel.

■ **No Tricks:** Subscription terms must be upfront and easy to understand.

■ **Get Consent:** Customers must explicitly agree to any recurring charges.

Turning Compliance into Opportunity

Meeting these new rules doesn't have to mean losing customers. In fact, creating a smooth cancellation experience can leave a lasting positive impression. Here's how you can use this as a chance to strengthen relationships:

■ **Make It Effortless:** A user-friendly process, like a one-click cancellation button, shows customers you respect their time.

■ **Ask (Gently) for Feedback:** Use the cancellation page to ask why they're leaving. Keep it optional, and you might

uncover valuable insights to improve your services.

■ **Offer Alternatives:** Sometimes, people don't want to leave entirely; they just need a break. Consider giving options like pausing a subscription, freezing the subscription for a time, or downgrading to a more affordable plan.

Why Easy Cancellation is Good for Business

While it may seem counterintuitive, making it simple for customers to cancel can actually improve loyalty. Customers are more likely to return, or even recommend your service, if they feel respected and valued. By aligning with the FTC's new rules, you're not just avoiding fines, you're showing that your business prioritizes transparency and customer satisfaction.

The Bottom Line

The FTC's click-to-cancel rule is a step forward for both consumers and businesses. It encourages fairness and builds trust, making it easier to retain happy customers in the long run. By getting ahead of these changes now, you can:

■ **Build trust with clear communication.**
 ■ **Improve customer experiences with simple systems.**
 ■ **Strengthen your brand by respecting customer choices.**

A cancellation process that's easy to navigate isn't just good compliance; it's



Sara Kooperman, JD

smart business.

(Sara Kooperman, JD, CEO of SCW Fitness Education, WATERinMOTION, and S.E.A.T. Fitness won the Most Innovating 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 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.)

...Jeffrey Pinkerton

continued from page 21

that she was as bewildered as I was, that her small-statured daughter powered through such a confident sales pitch.

“Good news, we don’t collect any money until we deliver the cookies, I am just taking orders today, and the cookies will be delivered by me and my mom in the next 4 to 6 weeks. If you have a favorite, like Tagalongs or Thin Mints, that’s great, but if you want to try something new, this year they are rolling out a new Chocolate Chip Cookie. We got to taste it at our last meeting, and it’s REALLY good. My personal favorites are the Trefoils and Peanut Butter Do-si-dos.”

She pointed to her favorites while handing me the order form with a smile. She rolled on...

“Here’s the full list of all the cookies that we’re selling this year, you can see the pictures and read the descriptions. Would you like to take a look?”

Before this encounter, I had a rule that I would only purchase two boxes of cookies per Girl Scout. With lots of kids

in the neighborhood, this ensured that we supported the kids who came to the door, and that we didn’t end up with 50 boxes of cookies in the pantry. But, with this sales presentation, I decided to ditch the rule. And, honestly, she set a high bar for every future door-to-door sales pitch (school kids and adults).

I asked a few follow-up questions to little Jessica, asking her more about her personal favorites and why. As I put numbers in multiple columns on her order form (with a pen she provided), we talked a little more about the planned trip to Washington, D.C. and how the troop would use the money they were raising. As she thanked me for the order and headed down the stairs to her mom, I had to ask, “Are you or your husband in sales? Did you practice with her or... like... how did this happen?” Neither mom nor dad were in sales. Apparently, Jessica just loves her Brownie troop and loves selling cookies.

To state the obvious, selling fitness is much more difficult than selling Girl Scout cookies. And, with a decent percentage of membership sales moving to online transactions, your team might be

spending more time guiding and directing people, more so than closing people.

But, it’s still selling – selling healthy habits, selling your menu of services and selling the experience that you provide (hopefully one that helps people get results, build connection, drive community and set yourself apart from your competition).

Does your team love selling fitness? Are they confident and energetic? Are they genuinely excited about group fitness (the experience that can drive results and retention)? Have they tried the products you offer? Do you have a menu that is easy to navigate and simple to explain? Maybe even with photos and descriptions? Do they have a favorite workout, and do they tell new members what your most popular – and even new – offerings are?

If little Jessica can make me ditch my strict cookie-buying rules and set an impossibly high bar for all salespeople to come (and convince me to wait a month for those Thin Mints), what can your team learn from her? The smart cookies in this crowded and competitive business are those whose big passion and deep knowledge and personal pitch and

guidance make customers enthusiastic to join your troop. And, without the long wait because you’ll lead them to your favorite workout right away. **Let’s Move!**



If you want our guidance on a great workout, one that is the cornerstone program for our most successful customers and a favorite at MOSSA HQ during our lunchtime workouts, learn more about our strength training program, Group Power: mossa.net/workouts/group-power.

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

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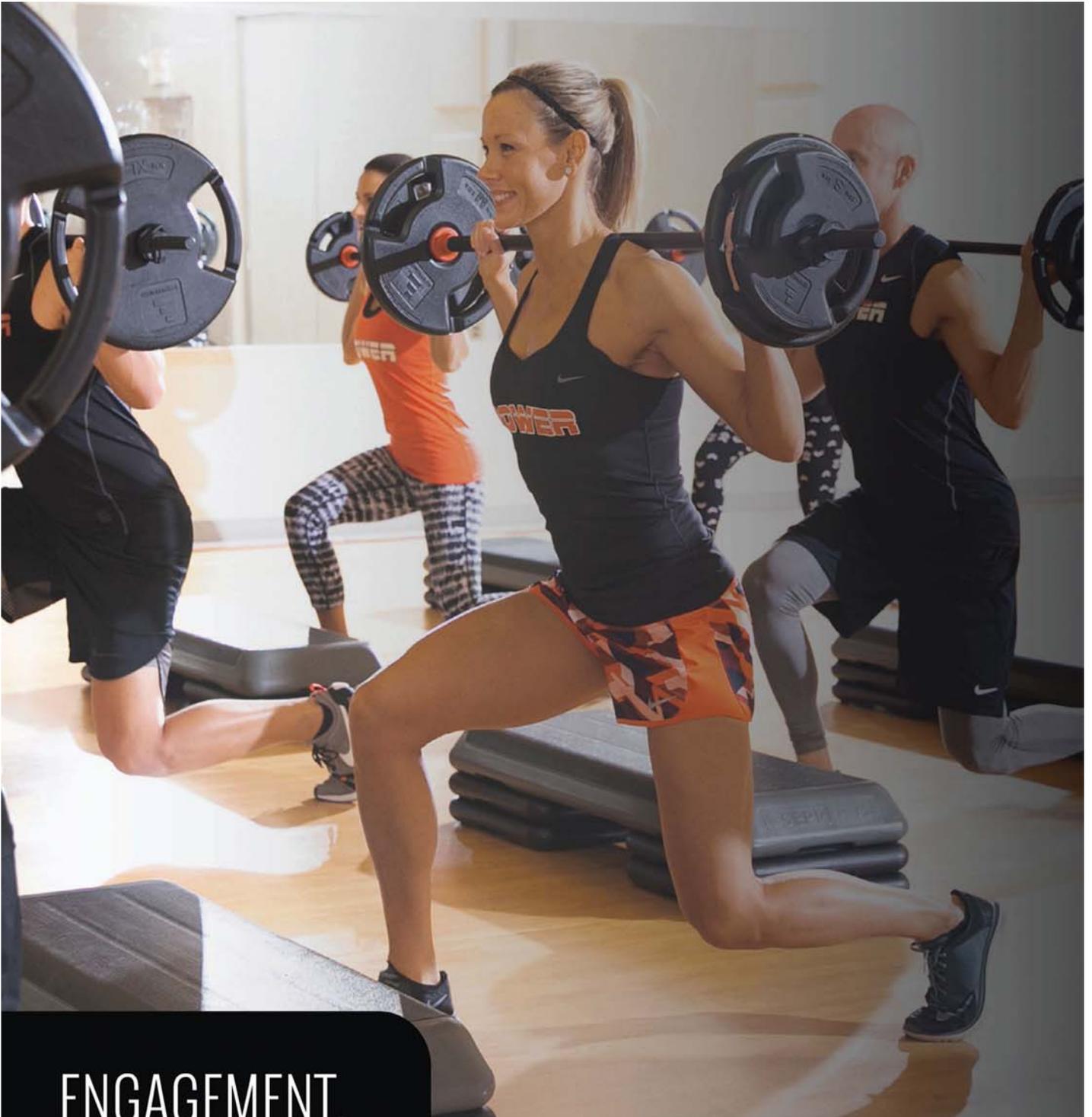
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