

health club management

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Demographics are dead

It's no longer possible to predict consumer behaviour based on long-accepted demographic norms – age, gender, income and so on. That was the clear message coming out of the recent London Trend Seminar, run by global agency trendwatching.com.

Consumers are no longer behaving as they 'should' according to demographic categories, choosing instead to construct their own identities and lifestyles around individual preferences and interests (see also p42). This in turn has a profound impact on businesses, which must go back to the drawing board to re-assess who their audience really is and what their expectations are.

The health and fitness sector is no exception, and it has already begun to refocus its offering in response to this trend. Yoga for men? Check. Engaging older generations via social media? Check. CrossFit for kids? Check.

But it's not only about understanding your evolving audience; it's also about appreciating who you're competing against – not just within fitness but beyond. What innovations are happening within people's lives that will change their expectations of your products and services? Because each new round of innovation creates new expectations, and you'll be left behind if you don't meet them. 'What do you mean I can't book via an app? Why can't I pay only for the facilities I use? Why can't I get a PT to turn up at my house within 15 minutes of booking?'

So what will be your innovations, and crucially what will drive these? Once again the Trend Seminar was full of inspiration, with one key notion being status – specifically the shift away from demonstrating status through material possessions, towards status as a product of who you are and what you do. Consumers today are looking for brands to help them achieve this, and it's a trend that fits well with the fitness sector's offering. As a spokesperson for Nike put it, it's a collaborative venture nowadays: 'Just [Help Me] Do It'.

So can your club be the partner that helps someone achieve the status of completing a marathon or Color Run?

Another trend, 'Peer Armies', is all about mobilising networks of peers to achieve things they couldn't do alone. A huge 93 per cent of consumers want brands to support social and environmental issues, so why not get your 'peer army' of members involved, encouraging them to get fit by doing good? The GoodGym project is a great example: it asks people to run somewhere they can do social good – to spend time with elderly people, for example, or to do some gardening in community spaces.



Don't be driven by your own history but by the evolving expectations of your audience. Who are you innovating for?

Another interesting thought lay in the 'Internet of Shared Things' trend, with the mention of an app called Breathe. This allows people to make very brief use of urban spaces – something clubs could use to burst beyond their walls and run lunchtime meditation sessions for local office workers.

The concluding thought at the seminar: be heretical towards your heritage. Challenge the things you do 'just because that's what you've always done', and don't be driven by your own history but by the constantly evolving expectations of your audience. Who are you innovating for, what do they expect, and what will they expect tomorrow?

Kate Cracknell, editor

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Buyers' guide

For suppliers of products and services in the health club and spa markets, turn to **p86**



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Paediatricians are being urged to play a part in guiding families to be more active

Huge opportunity to make an impact on childhood obesity

There was great news out of the US recently that should have far-reaching effects on our industry for years to come. In a clinical report from the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) – the country's largest organisation of medical professionals dedicated to the health and wellbeing of children – a mea culpa of sorts was issued on the topic of childhood obesity prevention and treatment. The report – *The role of the pediatrician in primary prevention of obesity* – finally clearly acknowledges the role doctors must play in this critical issue, for all overweight or obese children and their families.

In this journal two years ago, I wrote: "Physicians have an authority level that most parents respect and follow with little hesitation, especially when it comes to the health of their children. If we're going to win this battle, physicians have

to treat the obesity condition the same as all other illnesses. This not only includes appropriate testing for the condition, but also the issuance of a 'prescription' to exercise when justified."

In a section of the AAP report titled 'Leisure and Lifestyle Physical Activity', one of the strategies recommended is that paediatricians actively encourage families to meet physical activity guidelines daily, and help families identify opportunities for physical activity in the community – including at sports clubs. This is a direct invitation to our industry to reach out to these physicians to help fulfill this physical activity objective. We would be foolish to ignore it!

Doug Werner

Author of 'Abbie Gets Fit', and senior manager at Core Health and Fitness

Kids' activity: Data and realigned attitudes

The formation of ukactive Kids – and its recent *Generation Inactive* report into childhood inactivity – is hopefully a large step forward in an important journey. The benefits of a more active life reach far beyond reducing obesity in our children, with a positive impact on mental health and wellbeing, academic performance, social skills and physical health into adulthood.

Many schools are already informally monitoring activity levels, but the time has come for more widespread, formal, standardised measurement of physical literacy and motor skills – something only 1 per cent of schools currently do – to build our knowledge base and more effectively target our efforts.

One important fact raised by the report is that even within PE lessons, fewer than half the schools surveyed tracked actual time spent being active. We really don't know how much our children are benefiting from the current levels of physical education they receive.

We also need a more holistic approach to physical activity in schools: the 'whole day' approach advocated by the report, as well as the broadening of attitudes so physical activity means more than just PE lessons or structured sports classes. We need every child to be engaged in fun activity, even if they shy away from team sports or more traditional forms of exercise.

To achieve this, teachers must receive the right training and support, and parents must receive the right advice. This will help ensure we get everybody behind the incredible new initiative that ukactive Kids represents, and make physical illiteracy and damaging levels of inactivity a thing of the past.

Dean Horridge

Founder/CEO, Fit For Sport

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Barbell classes remain a huge growth area for clubs, a significant industry trend outperforming dance in the preferred workout stakes.**

The 'Future of Fitness' white paper*** concluded that RESULTS, entertainment and social bonds are critical to building a sustainable business in a highly competitive market. More than 16,000 facilities around the world have chosen BODYPUMP™ and LES MILLS programmes to power up their business.



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'We have to find new ways to make people fall in love with exercise' Les Mills, 1968

LES MILLS BODYPUMP

*Volume 4, Issue 1, April 2015 | JOURNAL OF FITNESS RESEARCH 21 Research shows participants use over 29% more energy when lifting a 5kg weight with fast reps compared to lifting a 20kg for less reps for the same length of time.

**'Strength and weight' is the most popular group exercise genre - it drives 20% of the total global group exercise attendance, Les Mills Global Scoreboard Survey 2014.

***Nilsen Global Consumer Fitness Survey 2013)

UK news update

Nuffield Health reaps rewards of expansion

Nuffield Health has published its accounts for 2014, with a solid showing across the business helping earnings hit £81m – a 13 per cent increase on 2013.

The not-for-profit healthcare organisation also saw revenue increase 9 per cent to hit £711m in a year which saw significant expansion. Nuffield Health now boasts 31 hospitals, 77 gyms and more than 200 corporate facilities to help people “get healthy, and stay healthy”. As well as major investment in its hospital division, close to £15m was invested in maintaining and developing gyms. Revenue from the health club arm exceeded £200m thanks to a 10 per cent (£19m) increase on 2013.

“Although the markets have been challenging, the business has performed strongly with significant growth over the past 12 months,” said Nuffield Health Group CEO David Mobbs.

Details: http://lei.sr7a=y2Y6U_O

1,000 runners stricken after French mud race



Obstacle races are increasingly popular

The events are often pitched as the ultimate challenge, but participants in a recent French obstacle course race faced an unexpected hurdle after their big day, as more than 1,000 runners contracted diarrhoea.

It's suspected the mud that participants were trawling through as part of the Mud Day race in Nice on 20 June may have been contaminated with animal faeces. French regional health authorities have confirmed that over 1,000 runners had contracted norovirus – a bug that causes fever, vomiting and diarrhoea. More than 8,400 contestants took part in the race, and many have since complained there was a “distinct smell of horse manure” on the course.

Mud Day organisers have said they are currently conducting an investigation. They said: “We thank the health services for their efficiency and offer all the ‘Mud Guys’ and ‘Mud Girls’ who fell ill our support.”

Details: http://lei.sr7a=y9v7T_O

Les Mills launches On Demand

Global fitness giant Les Mills has kicked off its new On Demand streaming service, enabling fitness fans to workout wherever and whenever they like by accessing classes via a computer, tablet, or smartphone.

The Spotify-like service, which was first revealed by HCM in March, will initially be available to consumers in the US, UK, Finland and Sweden. A subscription for the service – which currently carries seven Les Mills classes in 30-minute formats – costs £9.95 a month. Les Mills On Demand will aim to help health clubs enhance their member offering by extending exercise classes beyond the gym.

Based on research that found 82 per cent of gym-goers also exercise frequently at home, Les Mills believes the service will help clubs to boost member engagement.

“Around the world, there are millions of people using Les Mills to fuel their fitness, whether it's a dance class such as SH'BAM or our indoor cycle class RPM. Gym users come back time and time again,” said Les Mills CEO Phillip Mills. “We recognise sometimes people want to ‘have a go’ in the comfort of their own home before trying out a live class and we've had a great deal of interest across the globe.”

Details: http://lei.sr7a=j8c9k_O



Les Mills classes such as BodyPump have a major following in clubs around the world

Is Fitness First gearing up for sale?

Fitness First plans to sell up to 10 regional UK health clubs as the chain continues its strategic shift upmarket towards premium clubs in metropolitan centres, amid speculation that owner Oaktree Capital Management is planning to exit the business.

The potential offload comes as Oaktree recently replaced CEO Andrew Cosslett with Oren Peleg, one of its senior managers who has a strong pedigree in finance. Peleg's appointment sparked suggestions that he will move to cut costs and boost earnings ahead of a potential sale of Fitness First by Oaktree, which bought the company in 2012. A well-placed source told HCM that



The chain is looking to offload 10 sites outside of London

the gym chain is looking to offload 10 sites outside of London, in areas where “consumers are sensitive to price and budget gyms have gained a strong foothold”.

Details: http://lei.sr7a=Q9c5u_O

Foucan's Freerunning Academy



Film star Sébastien Foucan is credited as one of the founders of freerunning

Film star and parkour pioneer Sébastien Foucan is teaming up with David Stalker's new trampolining venture to launch a series of Foucan Freerunning Academies.

The man credited as one of the founders of freerunning will oversee a series of academies that will give children and adults the opportunity to experience the sport 'Foucan-style'. A dedicated 279sq m (3,000sq ft) Foucan obstacle course will feature at every trampoline park opened by Oxygen Freejumping – a new company set up by ex-ukactive chair Stalker and LA fitness founder Fred Turok. The first Foucan

Freerunning Academy has launched at Oxygen Freejumping in Acton, West London – which opened to the public on July 20 – and the French freerunner believes this has heralded the start of a "fantastic journey".

"I am very excited to be collaborating with Oxygen Freejumping to create a new experience of freerunning," said Foucan, who famously showcased his high-octane skills in the opening sequence to *Casino Royale*.

"What I am passionate about is developing an environment where people can play with freedom because for me, activity is vitality." Details: http://lei.sr?a=m8b6y_O

Dance fitness survey sheds light on growth



Classes are popular for being 'social'

A growing number of women are putting their best feet forward by working out in dance fitness classes, according to a new survey which highlights key trends in the fast-growing dance sector.

Around 13.7 per cent of women in England participate in dance fitness every year, according to a survey of 1,500 people by the Exercise, Movement & Dance Partnership: 1.5 million women took dance classes at least once a month as of March – up 25 per cent on December 2013.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=V4y7H_O

Use kids' phones to get them exercising: report



Kids could monitor exercise via phones

The screens and handheld devices that today's youngsters are 'hostages' to should be harnessed as tools to modernise PE and increase activity, suggests a new report.

The report, conducted for the Youth Sport Trust, warns that PE and school sport are at a critical crossroads and the subject should remain a key priority to avoid a physically and socially disengaged future generation, over-dependent on technology, which will result in low physical, social and emotional wellbeing. It highlights how the 'digital revolution' can improve school PE. Details: http://lei.sr?a=N8N45_O

SOFI 2015 report shows strong growth

Technological innovation and an enhanced consumer experience helped the UK health and fitness industry to gain more gyms, more members and a greater market value over the past year, according to the 2015 State of the UK Fitness Industry (SOFI) Report.

Building on the gains recorded in last year's report, the 12-month period to the end of March 2015 saw the industry make purposeful progress.

There were increases across all three KPIs, as market value jumped 5.4 per cent to £4.3bn, the number of gyms increased by 3.3 per cent to hit 6,312, while membership grew an impressive 5.8 per cent to reach



Low-cost gyms like Humphrey Cobbold's Pure Gym: growth

8.78 million. As a result, the penetration rate nudged up half a percentage point to 13.7 per cent – its highest ever level. Budget gyms were again the main drivers of growth. Details: http://lei.sr?a=q8T6G_O

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James Griffiths
Founder of Wild Training

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UK news update

Osborne unveils 'Living Wage'



George Osborne's Living Wage could have major implications for the health club sector

Chancellor George Osborne has unveiled plans for a new compulsory living wage in the first Tory government Budget for 20 years.

From April 2016, the Living Wage will come into effect in place of the minimum wage, which is currently £6.50 an hour. The Living Wage – intended to cover significant cuts being made to tax credits for low income workers – will start at £7.20 an hour for over-25s, gradually rising to £9 an hour in 2020.

The announcement will have big implications for the leisure industry – both in terms of revenue opportunities and staff costs – where the majority of entry-level workers

start their careers on minimum wage. For lifeguards, receptionists, junior personal trainers and a number of hospitality workers, the announcement heralds the prospect of a 38 per cent pay rise by 2020. Operators, meanwhile, must contemplate how to cover what are likely to be rapidly inflating wage bills.

"The industry must embrace this increase with a positive attitude, to ensure we continue to build our reputation as a credible sector which creates good jobs and offers solid employment prospects," said Leisure Media MD Liz Terry in reaction to the news.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=557q2_0

Tanni: Time to realise our true value

The physical activity sector has the potential to broaden its appeal to investors and gain 'an even bigger wingspan' if it can demonstrate its true economic value, according to new ukactive chair Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson.

Making her maiden speech at the ukactive Flame Conference in Telford on 24 June, the cross-bench peer said the physical activity sector must be bold, proactive and push boundaries if it is to continue on its growth trajectory and reach new heights.

Recent market developments have made the City of London 'prick up its ears', noted Grey-Thompson, adding that powerful backing could help the industry accelerate its progress.



ukactive chair Tanni Grey-Thompson at Flame 2015

"The astronomic growth of everything that we have to offer will attract the funders, investors and speculators that give the sector an even bigger wingspan," she said. Details: http://lei.sr?a=b8w4n_0

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EF Medispa set to offer i.v. vitamin infusions



EF Medispa founder Esther Fieldgrass

EF Medispa is opening its fourth London clinic in Canary Wharf this summer, bringing i.v. vitamin infusions to the stressed-out executives of the London financial hub.

The 75sq m (802sq ft) location will feature 10 types of Drip & Chill i.v. vitamin infusions created to support various conditions such as a low immune system, dehydration and weight loss. Treatments are also designed to improve athletic performance and boost libido.

"The new lounge-style, riverside premises, along Admiral's Way, will be offering Canary Wharf's stressed-out, time-poor executives a chance to recharge their batteries with energy-boosting vitamin infusions, and to refresh their image using the latest advances in medical aesthetics," said EF Medispa founder Esther Fieldgrass.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=x955h_O

Daley Thompson launches gym



Daley Thompson hosts a range of regular classes at his new gym in Putney, London

Olympic legend Daley Thompson has opened a new gym in Putney, London, with a team of former Great Britain athletes on-hand to help members hit their personal best.

Thompson – the first person ever to hold the World, Olympic, Commonwealth and European titles at the same time – has brought in former athletes Gavin Sunshine (chief executive of Daley Fitness Gyms) and Steve Gutteridge (general manager) to help realise his vision of a modern fitness facility with an "old-school approach to training".

"I've gained a lot of experience from a lot of different gyms and I've used it to design

a gym I hope people like," said Thompson. "We're integrating the best equipment and technology with highly experienced trainers and an old-school approach to training – results come from hard work."

Spread over two floors, Daley Fitness features more than 100 stations, with strength, cardio machines and bikes from Star Trac. The club also uses Myzone, with every member receiving a free Myzone heart rate belt and their own cloud-based account where all activity is automatically uploaded, acting as an online logbook of activity.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=m4e2f_O



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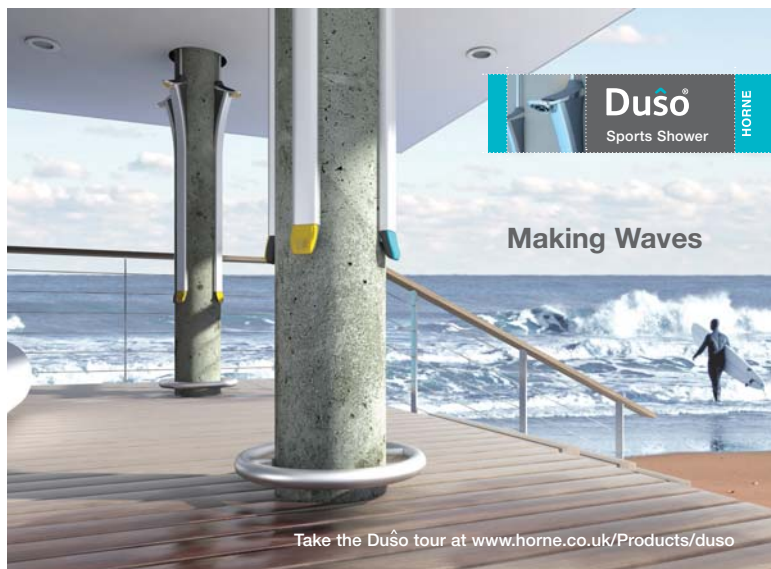
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Technology news

Murray to invest in wearables



The Scot says he is eager to expand his portfolio by investing in health and fitness

Andy Murray has entered into a long-term partnership with London-based equity crowdfunding platform Seedrs, which will see the tennis star advise on health, sport and wearable tech as well as investing in start-ups.

The Scot has a long-held interest in investment. He owns the Cromlix luxury hotel in Perthshire, Scotland, and says he is eager to expand his portfolio by investing in start-ups and other early-stage businesses through Seedrs. The new tie-up sees Murray join the Seedrs Advisory Board to offer guidance to the firm with respect to businesses working in the health, sport and wearable technology spaces, although he won't advise individual investors or recommend specific campaigns. He will also help Seedrs to grow its brand in the UK and internationally.

"I've always been interested in investment, and being able to get involved in an innovative

way to help support British start-ups really appealed to me," said Murray. "Equally as important was working with people I trusted and who fully understood the huge responsibility of handling people's money. I'm looking forward to working with Seedrs and the entrepreneurs of tomorrow."

Seedrs platform for equity crowdfunding raises capital by obtaining many small investments from a large number of people through online platforms. It says one of the main benefits of this is it allows businesses not only to obtain the capital they need, but also to build a community of supportive investors who can help them grow. Since launching in July 2012, Seedrs has reported 15 per cent month-on-month growth and has funded nearly 200 deals to date. The company has plans to launch in the US later this year.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=D3v7a_O

Fitbit fever as wearable tech giant floats on NYSE



Appetite for Fitbit shares was huge

Wearable tech giant Fitbit has floated on the New York Stock Exchange in one of the most high-profile IPOs of the year.

Wall Street was awash with excitement for the listing, which saw both the share count (34.5 million shares) and price range (US\$20) increased due to demand.

Shares jumped 52 per cent on opening, having been brought to market by the tier one lead underwriting team of Morgan Stanley, Deutsche Bank and BofA Merrill Lynch – indication of the scale of the deal.

Fitbit, which produces six wearable health and fitness trackers, has become one of the standard-bearers for the booming wearable tech market. In 2014 the company generated US\$745.4m in revenue – almost triple that of the previous year – and the same pace has continued into 2015. In Q1 2015, revenue surged 210 per cent to US\$336.8m, with the number of devices that were sold more than doubling year-on-year.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=k5R6K_O

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Supplier news

Pulse secures Imperial College London contract



Pulse will create and operate the facility

Pulse has started developing a £1.3m fitness suite at Imperial College London's new residential complex in North Acton.

A significant investment by the college will see Pulse design, develop and equip the facility, which will be open to Imperial's student residents free of charge, in addition to staff and private members. The facility will be fully operated by Pulse on a 10-year contract and is expected to open in time for the new academic year in October.

Pulse will transform the existing shell into an 867sq m (9,332sq ft), two-storey fitness facility with an 85-station gym and multifunctional studio space. The fitness suite will feature Pulse's Series 3 Fusion Cardio and Evolve Strength equipment, while the cardio equipment will feature Pulse's touch-screen Cirrus Console.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=U2c5Y_O

Suppliers get behind LIW 2015

With only weeks to go until the biggest date in the UK physical activity sector calendar, Leisure Industry Week (LIW) 2015 is gaining steady momentum with a number of major equipment suppliers booking stands for the event.

Matrix Fitness, Precor, Cybex, Octane Fitness and Jordan Fitness are among the fitness equipment suppliers to have confirmed they will exhibit at the two-day event.

They'll be joined on the show floor by heavyweights from the aquatics industry – such as Zoggs – and drinks giant Lucozade.

Having seen falling attendances in recent years, there had been uncertainty as to

whether suppliers would support LIW 2015, but a change of ownership and a fresh approach appear to have inspired renewed confidence. BodyPower Holdings – the company that produces popular health and fitness consumer show BodyPower Expo – recently acquired the longstanding industry event from previous custodians United Business Media (UBM) for an undisclosed fee.

The new owners are eager to bring new ideas to LIW and chief executive Nick Orton has advocated an innovative approach, with a renewed emphasis on educational sessions.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=G2z9n_O



A number of key suppliers have confirmed their presence on the show floor for LIW 15

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Jon Williams - Director

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People news

Sir Chris Hoy joins Pure Gym

Six-time Olympic gold medallist Sir Chris Hoy has invested in Pure Gym and will become a special adviser.

In his new role, Hoy will act as an ambassador for Pure Gym and advise on how the operator can enhance the overall customer experience, support members in being more active and help them achieve their individual goals. He will also act as a consultant on potential new Pure Gym products and services.

"Chris Hoy is a truly outstanding sportsman and a superb technician in terms of training expertise. As a multi Olympic medal winner he is well placed to advise on strengthening our product offering and services," said Pure Gym CEO Humphrey Cobbold.

"Having known Chris since before his retirement, I also know he is not just interested in elite sports but is deeply committed to helping people of both sexes and all abilities be healthier and more active. I therefore cannot think of a better person to join us and to support our mission of opening up access to affordable, high quality fitness facilities to as many people in Britain as possible."

Hoy joins Pure Gym as the business reaches a major milestone in its expansion. The chain recently opened the doors to its 100th club – in East Kilbride – and is also on course to acquire



Hoy has invested in the chain and will also be an advisor

43 LA fitness sites, pending Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) approval.

"I've followed Pure Gym's swift expansion over the past few years and have admired the way in which it has changed the gym market for the benefit of consumers of all ages, abilities and interests," said Hoy.

"I'm particularly interested by the fact that 30 per cent of its customers have never been members of a gym before. A business that's encouraging more people across the whole social spectrum to exercise more regularly is a business I will be proud to be a part of."

Details: http://lei.sr?a=TSCTM_O



Black will be a non-exec board director

PM's health advisor Carol Black joins ukactive board

Respected government health advisor Dame Carol Black has been announced as the latest member of ukactive's new board.

Black, who is a regular advisor to Prime Minister David Cameron, has enjoyed a distinguished career in public health which has seen her occupy several high-profile positions. She will now assume the role of non-executive board director at ukactive.

"We're delighted to welcome Dame Carol Black to our board. Her experience in the world of health is unrivalled. It takes our board onto yet another higher plain," said ukactive executive director Steven Ward, who revealed the appointment during his closing speech at the recent Flame Conference in Telford.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=u5d4t_O

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SoulCycle rumoured to be going public

SoulCycle LLC – the US-based boutique cycling studio operator – has hired investment banks in plans for an initial public offering, according to recent reports.

Earlier this year it was reported that founders Julie Rice and Elizabeth Cutler were looking to sell their remaining stake in the company to parent company Equinox Holdings, which has been the majority shareholder in SoulCycle since 2011.

The boutique cycling studio chain has been a game changer in the market and now has over 40 clubs and 50,000 weekly exercisers in the US. There are plans to have up to 60 clubs worldwide by 2016.
Details: http://lei.sr?a=Q2r3S_O

Blink Fitness launches franchise business

Blink Fitness, the low-cost chain started by Equinox in 2011, has launched a franchise programme with the intention of opening a further 300 gyms in the US by 2020.

The brand already has 50 gyms either open or in development in New York and New Jersey. Interested candidates will need to demonstrate a net worth of US\$1.5m and US\$300,000 in liquid assets.

Blink clubs measure 14,000–20,000sq ft (1,300–1,858sq m) and are designed to be bright and open, painted with colours that have a positive effect on mood.

Executive vice president, Todd Magazine, says Blink has perfected the model and is positioned for “immense growth”.
Details: http://lei.sr?a=E3g3n_O

AAP report officially recognises exercise

In a recent clinical report, the American Academy of Pediatrics has acknowledged the importance of exercise in obesity prevention and the reduction of many chronic diseases among children. In doing so, it has advised pediatricians to take a more proactive role in promoting and prescribing exercise (see also p8).

The report reviews existing research into obesity prevention in the pediatric care setting and gives evidence-informed practical approaches and targets for prevention. It also identifies important gaps in evidence that need to be filled by future research.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=N2A7H_O

Vivafit to launch in Kazakhstan

Portuguese women-only fitness chain Vivafit will shortly make its debut in Kazakhstan, with the launch of its first club in this market.

In June, the company signed an agreement to open a club in Atyrau, at a former state-owned swimming pool. This will be followed by a second site, in Almaty, next year.

The club will follow the usual Vivafit format, which has been conceived to help women achieve results in a safe, welcoming environment: the focus is equally on fitness training and nutritional programmes.

A range of programmes will be on offer, including personal training and circuit training,

as well as a range of group exercise options such as Zumba, pilates, high-intensity interval training and Les Mills programmes.

According to Vivafit CEO Pedro Ruiz, the renovation work will be quick because much of the infrastructure is already in place.

“The adaptations for Asian culture – mostly involving adaptations to cater to the Muslim culture – have already been done for other markets in which we operate,” he says. “Now we must adapt to the Russian language, adapt the pricing structure for the market and find Russian-speaking fitness instructors.”

Details: http://lei.sr?a=y2Z9P_O



Vivafit's Pedro Ruiz (right) signs the agreement to extend the brand into Kazakhstan

Oman chain opens women's club

The Oman-based health and fitness chain Horizon Fitness launched a new ladies spa and wellness retreat – Al Jasmine – in June.

Aiming to attract a discerning female clientele, the 3,900sq ft club offers a mix

of fitness and beauty services. There's a dynamic functional training studio branded as The Engine Room, a pool, steamrooms, sauna, juice bar, relaxation area, hair salon, four treatment rooms, a cycling studio and group exercise studio.

The gym is equipped with a range of Star Trac E-series cardio equipment.

Horizon Fitness was established in 1997 and has 24 sites and 20,000 members across Oman, including single-sex and mixed clubs. Owner Saleem Albarram says the new club is a one-stop shop for ladies' fitness and wellbeing. The site will be able to create bespoke memberships to suit individual member needs.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=C7a5f_O



Star Trac cardio equipment is now in use at Al Jasmine

Health hub for Komune Bali



Komune: An expanded fitness and yoga offering in response to a boom in wellness travel

Upmarket Balinese surf resort, The Hotel Komune, has recently launched an extensive all-round fitness and wellness offering.

The new Hotel Komune Health Club includes three separate yoga pavilions. These have been created following the success of a beachfront yoga pavilion, which was fully booked for six months prior to the new health club development.

The health hub also offers three functional equipment training areas, an outdoor training area, a 25m lap pool, and a spa with eight wet and dry treatment rooms plus a hair and beauty salon.

Other fitness activities available at the resort include surfing, paddleboarding, mountain biking, an adventure and obstacle course, a Balinese volcano climb, diving at a US navy shipwreck site and white water rafting in the area around Ubud town.

Co-founder of the resort, Tony de Leede, says the development was driven by the growth in fitness and wellness travel. "We feel our property caters well for the multiple needs and requests of either groups or individuals who want to incorporate activity into their holiday," he says.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=Y3C7y_5

Shangri-La sets sights on Manila

Shangri-La is opening a mixed use development in an "emerging contemporary lifestyle district" of Manila, Philippines, which is set to become one of the tallest buildings in the country at 250m (820ft).

Opening in Q4 this year, the building will include a Shangri-La hotel and residences, 19 multi-function rooms, two ballrooms, shops and seven dining options.

A 10,000sq m (107,639sq ft) lifestyle and leisure club will be spread over two floors, including a spa.

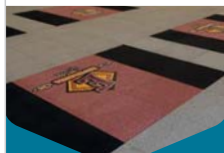
Australia-based Stack Studio has designed the Kerry Sports Manila, which will include an NBA-grade indoor basketball court, two tennis courts, two squash courts, an outdoor



The new Shangri-La will be a mixed use development

lap pool, gym facilities and exercise studio as well as an Adventure Zone: a multi-level indoor playground for children including a number of party rooms.

Details: http://lei.sr?a=v4F8T_O



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EUROPEAN UNION

Kristen Walsh looks forward to the IHRSA European Congress, which takes place in Marseille, France, in October

More than 500 health club industry professionals from around the world will convene in France this October for the 15th Annual IHRSA European Congress.

The event will feature presentations delivered by executives from inside and outside the industry, providing thought-provoking commentary on trends shaping business and the fitness industry. Meanwhile networking events, focus group discussions, and evening and lunch receptions will provide opportunities to build relationships with colleagues from across Europe.

Changing behaviours

Getting people to join clubs and retain their membership are two of the biggest challenges facing nearly all health clubs. The two keynote speakers at the European Congress will approach these topics with



Williams will talk on empowerment

IHRSA CALENDAR

17–19 September 2015

IHRSA / Fitness Brasil Latin American Conference – São Paulo, Brazil

22–24 October 2015

2nd Annual IHRSA / Mercado Fitness Mexico City Conference & Trade Show – Santa Fe, Mexico

10–13 November 2015

ChinaFit / IHRSA China Management Forum – Zhengzhou, China

21–24 March 2016

IHRSA 2016 – Orlando, Florida, US

Visit ihrsa.org/meetings for more details

About the venue

The Palais du Pharo, where the Congress will be held, is located in the heart of Marseille – at the entrance to the Vieux Port (Old Port) – with several hotels nearby. Temperatures in October average highs of 23°C during the day and 14°C in the evening, making outdoor excursions pleasant.

Founded in around 600BC, Marseille is one of the oldest cities in Europe. Located in southern France, this port city is a melting pot of different cultures. Rich in history, Marseille was named European Capital of Culture in 2013 and boasts many attractions, such as the ancient port.

With 15,000 shops, visitors also have plenty of retail options to choose from, including the Centre Bourse shopping centre in the heart of the city and a large entertainment and retail complex around the Vélodrome Stadium, where the European Football Championship will be held next year.



The Palais du Pharo is situated in the colourful French port city of Marseille



Hughes will show how health clubs can best cater for the 'digital native' generation

new perspectives aimed at helping delegates think "outside the box".

Consumer and shopper behaviouralist Ken Hughes, CEO of Ireland's Glacier Consulting, will present 'The digital native advance: a new DNA for shoppers'. As the 'digital natives' (those born in the 1980s)

are now entering their 30s, we're set to witness a major shift in global consumer behaviour. What does this generation expect from life, relationships, brands and retailers? And most importantly, how must we prepare to meet these needs? Hughes will answer these questions and more.

Embracing inclusivity

The full-day UFit event – which will focus on how operators can better cater for people with disabilities – will take place alongside the IHRSA European Congress.

Taking place on Monday 19 October, attendance is complimentary to all IHRSA Congress delegates who register before 26 August.

Why attend UFit?

Disabled people represent over 15 per cent of the global population, but at present this group remains a largely untapped market when it comes to health and fitness provision – even though health club staff already have

many of the necessary competencies to work with people with disabilities in their clubs and fitness facilities.

With this in mind, speakers at UFit will focus on innovative marketing, programming, training and more to enable health and fitness clubs to attract and retain this important population group. The UFit programme, training and resources will also be launched at the UFit conference.

Join the movement to make fitness more inclusive: #LetsInclusiviseFitness!

To register for UFit, simply tick the appropriate box on the European Congress registration form.

Other highlights

Exhibitors & club tour

Attendees will have the opportunity to meet one-to-one with leading suppliers of fitness equipment and services. They are also invited to tour some of Marseille's leading health clubs on 22 October.

Recognising excellence

The 2015 European Club Leadership Award will be presented during the European Congress. The award recognises the European club leader who has done the most to advance his or her company and the industry through strong leadership and performance. The recipient of last year's award was Olav Thorstad, CEO of Health & Fitness Nordic.

Bryan Williams, chief service officer of B Williams Enterprises in the US, will present 'Creating a culture of empowerment and ownership'. Getting your staff to exceed customer expectations, which in turn inspires members to renew, starts at the top. Williams, who received a standing ovation for his session on service excellence at IHRSA 2015 in Los Angeles, will share the knowledge and tools required to empower your workforce.

Other speakers will include Diogo Vidigal, in a session entitled 'Prepare your brand for the future fitness market'; Niki Dean on 'Thrive or survive: the seven secrets of a high-performance fitness business'; Casey Conrad on how to 'Create an extraordinary sales team'; and Phillip Mills on 'Global fitness trends – challenges and opportunities'.

The full speaker list and event agenda is available at ihrsa.org/congress and on the free IHRSA app under 'Events'. ●

Want to attend?

Event: 15th Annual IHRSA European Congress

Dates: 19–22 October 2015

Venue: Marseille, France

For more information: View the full agenda and speaker list or download the event brochure – ihrsa.org/congress

Register now: Visit ihrsa.org/congress, call +1 (617) 951 0055, or email intl@ihrsa.org

Quality assurance



ukactive chair
Baroness Tanni
Grey-Thompson
reports on the
move towards a

new workforce development
structure for the activity sector

Since joining ukactive earlier this year, one thing has been top of my priority list: providing a stable footing for workforce development that's able to meet the challenges of the future.

There's nothing lacking when it comes to our sector's ambition, potential to grow or desire to have a greater impact on the health of the nation. However, let's be frank: without getting our own house in order in terms of our workforce, we will never achieve our potential. We need to support employers of all sizes with a technical and regulatory system that doesn't just maintain the quality and standards of the industry as it is today, but that supports the industry as it strives to be in five, 10, 20 years' time.

Four objectives

At the outset of tackling this challenge I had four key objectives.

The first was to deliver the single, unified skills and workforce development strategy – through Levels 1–7 and covering all job roles – that employers within the ukactive membership base have been demanding: a single structure that brings a single method of assessing quality, awarding qualifications and recognising professional qualifications through registration.

Secondly, our goal must be to improve the breadth and reach of the role of the physical activity professional beyond its traditional borders, while maintaining the quality and standards of its core functions.

Thirdly, while we're very proud that there's a low barrier to entry for this sector (and no glass ceiling), we need a method of raising credibility and standards – something that's critical to the continued development of this sector.

Finally, I wanted to make sure that any workforce strategy recognised that working in the physical activity sector in any role, and at any level, provides a good job and a



The activity sector can offer good jobs and promising careers for many young people

promising career for an enormous number of young people in the UK.

Addressing the specifics

Over the past month, we've seen huge progress towards a new system of regulation and management of the skills and learning system, spurred by the sector itself.

At its first meeting on 7 July, the new ukactive Membership Council unanimously called for the ukactive board to throw the weight of employers' support behind the sector's chartered institute, CIMSPA, to take the lead role in making this happen.

This was followed by an open workshop involving employers, training providers and awarding organisations, starting the discussions regarding next steps and what a future workforce strategy may look like.

The crucial development at this event was that we started talking about specifics: how we begin to implement a system that's fit for purpose; and what questions we'll need to answer if we're to forge ahead.

What next?

In our forward-looking view of the sector and the opportunities that exist within the

public health system – working more closely with brands, charities and NGBs; alongside schools and colleges; and continually growing the product for the millions of consumers who engage with fitness every day – there's no room for complacency when it comes to front-line delivery.

Indeed, in the not so distant future, we want to be having conversations with the medical and academic community that will lead to the introduction of a Chartered Physical Activity Professional – again raising the profile of the sector and allowing activity professionals to stand side-by-side with colleagues in the healthcare sector as trusted professionals.

The burning question is: what next? The sector has a clear desire to develop a new skills framework, but on whose shoulders does it fall to build this system, and what changes might employers expect to see?

In the coming months, teams at ukactive and CIMSPA will continue to consult with employers, training providers and awarding bodies to build a picture of what's desired and needed, taking this forward to build a new system that has buy-in and commitment from across the sector. ●



The second FIBO China will take place at the Shanghai Convention & Exhibition Center in September 2015

SEPTEMBER

9 | National Fitness Day

Venue UK-wide

Summary

Following 2014's inaugural event, National Fitness Day 2015 will see fitness providers across the UK open their doors for free to allow members of the public to try out a wide range of fitness activities.

Web www.nationalfitnessday.com

16-18 | Health+Fitness Business Expo & Interbike Expo

Venue Mandalay Bay, Las Vegas, US

Summary

Since 1997, this event has brought manufacturers, suppliers, retailers, buyers, press, industry influencers and fitness professionals together to conduct the business of fitness.

Web www.healthandfitnessbiz.com

17-19 | 16th Annual IHRSA / FitnessBrasilLatinAmerican Conference & Trade Show

Venue Transamerica Expo Center,

São Paulo, Brazil

Summary

A key health and wellness event for Latin America, featuring three days of seminars, networking opportunities and a trade show, attracting 130 exhibitors and more than 10,000 attendees.

Web www.ihrsa.org/fitness-brasil

17-19 | FIBO China

Venue Shanghai Convention & Exhibition Center of International Sourcing, China

Summary

Last year's inaugural event attracted 55 exhibitors from 15 countries/regions, showcasing fitness equipment, training courses and wellbeing lifestyle products.

Web www.fibo-china.cn

22-23 | LeisureIndustryWeek

Venue NEC, Birmingham, UK

Summary

Following a broad consultation process, Leisure Industry Week (LIW) will be relaunched for 2015 with a new fitness-orientated focus. This year's event – which is being organised by the owners of

BodyPower – will offer five new, distinct zones on the show floor: The Gym Floor, Young Fitness, Group Exercise, Pool & Spa, and Leisure Facilities Management. Web www.liw.co.uk

29 – 2 October | SIBEC North America

Venue Omni La Costa, Carlsbad, California, US

Summary

Operators in the health, recreation, sports and fitness sectors meet with leading executives from national and international supplier companies for one-to-one meetings and networking.

Web www.sibecna.com

OCTOBER

19-22 | IHRSA European Congress

Venue Palais du Pharo, Marseille, France

Summary

Welcoming over 500 delegates from across Europe, this annual event features presentations from experts in and outside of the fitness sector. This year's line-up includes consumer/shopper behaviouralist Ken Hughes of Glacier Consulting.

Web www.ihrsa.org/congress



MEMBER

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OPERATOR



Offer your members the gym experience of the future

The fitness industry landscape continues to evolve with many operators looking at how they can connect and engage with their members both inside and outside their facilities.

Technology continues to 'disrupt' the conventional fitness offering, driven by how members want to train, what they want to track, what devices they want to use and when they want to train. The era of the 'quantified self' is here and as an operator the key question is, "How can I access this data to understand the needs of my members, support them more effectively and ultimately gain a connection and commitment to my facility?" This provides a huge opportunity for the industry and for the member; it's all about 'choice'.

To help operators take advantage of technology within their facilities, Technogym offers mywellness, The Wellness Lifestyle Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platform. It's the first and only open platform in the industry, offering ground-breaking technology to seamlessly connect members, operators and trainers.

For members

With mywellness, you can invite your members to create a personal account on mywellness.com and use the app to

monitor and aggregate all of the data surrounding their physical activity, both in and out of the gym, along with their daily movement and body measurements.

Members can manage their workouts in the gym on Technogym



Workouts can also be managed via mobile devices and wearables

equipment, outdoors on their mobile devices and wearables, and at home via PCs and tablets for a truly personalised and seamless Wellness experience. Technogym continues to expand the number of integrations with many popular GPS activity tracking apps, health devices, nutrition and fitness applications to provide the most comprehensive experience for the member of all their Wellness data.

Linked apps include Strava, MapmyRun, RunKeeper, Fitbit, Polar, Garmin and Swimtag.

For operators

The data gathered through the mywellness platform presents several CRM opportunities for operators as you can analyse real time members' health habits and develop personalised programmes, tailor made to their needs. In addition to the end-user website and app, Technogym has seven business applications available via the cloud to manage your members' lifestyles both inside and outside the facility allowing you to choose the applications that best suit your facility business model.



THE FITNESS SPACE'S FIVE KEY PILLARS:

- **FitnessFoodFocusConsultation and Review service** - a set methodology around understanding members and helping them achieve their goals in a structured manner
- **Service** - looking after members in the facility and beyond
- **Programming** - a specifically designed and structured programme built around the consultation, lifestyle and goals
- **Optimise membership** - through support services such as high quality personal training, fit camps and classes
- **Results focused** - reporting on progress, support and expert service

Wellness Lifestyle CRM platform benefits:

Programming and Coaching

With the PRESCRIBE App, you can easily create truly personalised training programs for your members.

The SELF App is especially tailored for unsupervised facilities, enabling members to pick and choose programmes most suited to them from a pre-defined library of programmes based on their fitness level, time available and equipment installed in your facility.

Engagement

With the CHALLENGE App, you can engage members and prospects with competitions and social initiatives, such as the globally popular Let's Move for a Better World challenge. Users can interact with others and track performance results on a leader board.

Member Assessment

With the PROFILE App, you can better understand members' deeper motivations for exercise to create programmes that match their aspirations. Body analyser integration enables you to check the members health status and show biometric progress. ●

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CASE STUDY: THE FITNESS SPACE

The Fitness Space opened in 2010 in Ascot, led by former Olympic Athlete Tim Benjamin. Inspired by his experience in athletic training methods, the club focuses strongly on the individual needs of each member – an approach that's proven to be very successful in raising programme compliance and member retention rates. Following the success of the first site, their first franchise operation was opened at Hughenden Valley in 2014.

Programming and Coaching

To help drive its service-led approach, both clubs installed Technogym's connected equipment and mywellness cloud technology with the member journey structured around Technogym's PRESCRIBE business application.

Each new member receives a dedicated personal consultation that reviews health and exercise history, preference, diet and aspirations. This enables specific goal setting and the creation of a custom programme – supported by reference pictures and videos that members can assess via the mywellness app. Benjamin says: "Programming with Prescribe is quick, easy and effective. The programme library is extensive and we can add and customise our own exercises to suit every client's specific need offering a truly tailored programming."

Over 80 per cent of members now have an assigned programme at The Fitness Space. "Programming is vital to success; without it, members are missing out on measuring and optimising their goals," says Benjamin. "With the integration of the mywellness app and mywellness.com it also ensures that members can complete programmes and track other activities outside the club, whilst travelling or on holiday and we have full visibility which is great step forward."

So far in 2015, there have been 14,252 member logins to mywellness.com and the app by members at The Fitness Space with over 25 per cent of members tracking outdoor activity.

Member Assessment

In 2015, The Fitness Space has invested in a Tanita Composition Device. Tanita syncs directly with mywellness cloud allowing members to track their results via the app. Benjamin says: "As we are building our network of franchisees, it is vital that all future investments in our service offering have tangible benefits to our franchise owners. Tanita does exactly that! In our first month offering Tanita, we've doubled the amount of programme reviews delivered compared to the previous month. In addition, we've increased our secondary spend income via even more PT being delivered."

Is healthy offensive?

Protein World caused massive controversy and widescale offence with its recent 'beach body ready' advert – in which the model, while slim, was healthy and toned. Are we losing sight of normal?

The recent Protein World 'Beach Body' advert – which was defaced on a mass scale, banned by the UK advertising watchdog and the subject of a campaign on Change.org – raises interesting issues.

Although the model is enviably – and unattainably for many – slim, she's essentially healthy and toned. This in contrast to the waiflike, sickly-looking model in the controversial Yves St Laurent advert, which came out around the same time, who looked like she'd just collapsed.

Critics claimed the Beach Body ad was sexist and fat-shaming, presenting an unrealistic image of women's bodies. However, although the ad was eventually banned, this was over concerns about the

health and weight loss claims made, and last month the ASA ruled that the advert was not offensive or irresponsible.

Adverts on the London Underground were defaced with messages like: "Yes, everyone is beach body ready", while spoof ads quickly sprung up using 'real women' models. However, with new figures predicting that almost three-quarters of British men and two-thirds of women will be obese or overweight by 2030, are we right to keep accepting excess weight as the norm? We're talking health here, not appearance.

The UK has one of the worst rates of obesity in Europe, which directly costs the NHS £6bn a year. With more people becoming overweight, are we

getting a warped view of normal? We're adjusting to our increased size with bigger beds, bigger clothes, bigger car seats and portion sizes, but is adjusting to being bigger, and urging acceptance of it, glossing over the fact that we have a very serious problem? Obesity and inactivity could bring down the NHS. Children could die before their parents.

On the flipside, Protein World claims the ad drove US\$1m of direct sales. But just because this approach has been shown to work, is it appropriate to use it?

What can the fitness industry learn from this debacle? How can we help ease the problem, having conversations about body shape without causing offence? We ask the experts....

Is this a healthy role model or is it fat shaming? Email us healthclub@leisuremedia.com

ROSI PRESCOTT

CEO • Central YMCA

"There's nothing wrong with showing a fit and healthy model, but this does perpetuate an idealised view which 95 per cent of the population are unable to attain.

Being bombarded with this imagery can lower self-esteem and confidence and lead to extreme behaviours to achieve weight loss. According to our research, 20 per cent of adults skip meals and 10 per cent are considering surgery.

Two-thirds of the population know it's not achievable to look like the model in the advert, but 70 per cent of women and 40 per cent of men say they feel pressure from the media to look a certain way. The YMCA's Body Confidence campaign, launched in 2011, was about reflecting what we really look like in terms of age, gender, ethnicities and disabilities. We want companies to understand that you can't base a business model on insecurity.

We're definitely not saying it's good to be fat, but to make the right lifestyle choices you need mental, emotional and social fitness, so people need to be empowered, not shamed. We want to put across the message that you should strive to be the best you can be, and would like the fitness industry to stop using weight loss and appearance to appeal to people."



PAUL SACHER

Consultant psychologist • Momena

"The population does have a skewed and unhelpful perception of what a healthy body looks like. However, the resetting of subjective body-size norms due to the increasing prevalence of overweight and obesity is only part of the story.

The current visual shorthand within the fitness industry for what counts as 'healthy' – the thin and toned, or highly muscular, body – is a poor reflection of what actual health looks and feels like for the majority of the population. It simplifies the complex notion of health – defined by the WHO as 'a complete state of physical, emotional and social well-being' – to having a body that has an arbitrarily defined aesthetic.

Repeated exposure to aspirational but unattainable imagery is driving the epidemic of body dissatisfaction in the UK, which then leads to unhealthy practices such as fasting, laxative and steroid abuse, causing lasting physical and emotional harm.

Until recently, the power to decide what kind of bodies should be promoted as 'healthy' has been with those with a vested interest in keeping people dissatisfied. The rise of social media means that dissenting voices now have a powerful platform on which to promote alternative views and ideas about what 'healthy' looks like. Vive La Revolution!"





Protein World's ad was defaced on a mass scale, but the Advertising Standards Authority ruled it wasn't offensive or irresponsible

TAM FRY

Spokesperson • Child Obesity Forum

In this case, I think it's the product, rather than the advert, which should be called into question, because excess protein is dangerous and many people will buy this product without knowing how to use it.

This is indicative of many of the pressures currently put on people, because they are constantly at the mercy of heavy advertising for unhealthy food and drink. The government needs to get on top of food manufacturers and the advertising industry to change their practices.

People do have confused body images, which the clothing industry and fashion magazines need to take the blame for. However, to encourage everyone to accept their bodies regardless of size is not appropriate either. I do a lot of media appearances with 'size acceptance' people who claim to be fat and happy, and I say to them that if I hear they have developed an illness linked to obesity then I don't want to hear a whisper!

One of the things the health and fitness industry could do to help people determine whether they are overweight and healthy, or overweight and unhealthy, is to offer free BMI checks. This could be used as a way to market the club and help educate people about how being overweight can impact on their short- and long-term health."



DEBBIE LAWRENCE

Freelance technical writer and consultant

"What is a normal, healthy body?

There isn't one specific type – even elite athletes vary in shape and size – so no wonder the public perception is skewed. We're all operating from an individual frame of reference, and the historical pushing of ideal body shapes and looks from the fashion, media and fitness industries is at odds with the way most people look.

This image isn't a realistic beach body in my world. It's one example of a beach body, and not that familiar or representative of a majority. It's potentially a continuation of our 'shaming and blaming' culture, which scaremongers people into getting active or going on a diet. In my view, this is unlikely to get anyone moving – if anything, it will trigger the feelings and thoughts which contribute to people being inactive in the first place.

I would like to see the media, as well as the health and fitness industry, use more diverse images of people: all sizes, races, genders, ages and abilities. Although this model looks very good in a yellow (a difficult colour to carry off!) bikini, we don't know if she is flexible, strong, co-ordinated or can move for an extended period of time. We need more education to show people what healthy is and show them how they can improve their health and develop healthy behaviours."



TOTAL TRANSFORMATION

Kate Cracknell speaks to the team responsible for the turnaround and future growth of the Total Fitness health club chain: CEO **Richard Millman**, turnaround expert **Warwick Ley**, and private equity investor **Ray Stenton**



Richard Millman

“
If we don't have the best people delivering the best experiences, we may as well not bother
”

Richard Millman CEO, Total Fitness

“**T**otal Fitness was in a bad way by the end of 2012,” says Richard Millman, CEO of the health club chain since early 2013, very matter-of-factly. “It had been owned since 2010 by Barclays Bank and the Co-op Bank – a debt for equity swap – and the two banks had done a lot of the heavy lifting, including closing Total Fitness’ three clubs in Ireland and a further four sites in the UK to leave a core of 16 clubs. But the business was still in bad shape financially.

“At that point, Barclays invited turnaround specialist RooGreen Ventures to come on board, which it did in December 2013. RooGreen is essentially two guys – Warwick Ley and Brian Davidson – who I already knew, and they asked me to help with the due diligence. We then presented a business turnaround plan to the banks, and I officially came on board as Total Fitness CEO in February 2013.

“We then got stuck into the turnaround. Brian continued to work with the landlords, sorting the leaseholds – in fact, the landlords ended up investing £8.5m themselves towards the refurbishment of 14 of our 16 clubs. Warwick continued to look at the cash position of the business, and I worked on the operational side of things.

“Nine months later Brian stepped back, and in May 2013 we appointed Andy Mellor as FD, which meant Warwick could step into the role of chair.”

Refurbishing the estate

He continues: “The business used to bump along at the top of its overdraft limit on a continual basis, so we worked closely with suppliers to improve our cashflow. We also realised there was a lot of cash going out on non-key projects, so we reined those in and focused on growing the top line of the business: the 87 per cent of revenue that comes from membership subscriptions.

“We discussed putting prices up, but in the end decided against it; the members had been through a load of pain over recent years and wouldn’t have responded well to a rise. Instead we focused on growing the member base.

“We relaunched the business to potential new members, but we also approached our 300,000+ former members. They consistently told us ours were the best clubs they’d ever been members of: big gym floors so they never had to queue, a great group exercise timetable across three or four large studios, 25m pools, hydrotherapy pools, heat treatments, squash, big changing rooms, hundreds of car parking spaces... And they said they’d come back if we gave the clubs a bit of TLC.

“Our existing members said similar: they’d stay as long as we remained open, but we needed to invest in the clubs.

“So in mid-2013, we started a refurbishment project across the whole estate – not only the gym floors, with new functional zones, brand new Pulse CV and resistance, but also the studios,



Member feedback indicated that customers would return to Total Fitness if the facilities were given some TLC and investment

changing rooms and aquatic areas. We get a lot of customer feedback via Net Promoter Score (NPS) – thousands of customers a month – which has allowed us to set an agenda by club and in minute detail. NPS informs every decision we make across the business.

"It all links in to what I call the 'Reasons to Believe' model. For members who are wondering 'Why should I stay, not leave – what are you going to do differently?' we make sure we respond to all member feedback and we use all available channels to communicate the improvements coming through the pipeline. For former members, it's 'Why should I come back to you? What's changed?' – and we need to have those answers ready too.

"We're about 60 per cent of the way through the refurb project now and should be finished by early 2017. In addition to the £8.5m from the landlords, we've invested £4m so far, with probably another £6m to go before the end of the project. Nobody had invested any money for a long time, so it's a mammoth task."

A growth curve

He continues: "But the business is now standing on its own two feet. By May 2015, membership was over 90,000 – up from 76,000 – and revenues have continued to rise since we started generating cash at the end of 2013. In April 2015, we also opened our 17th club in Wrexham – a £1m overhaul of one of



The Becky Adlington Swim Stars programme for kids has seen a large take-up

“

Partnerships are key. Having recognised brands in-house brings something different and eye-catching to our offering

”



Beth Tweddle gymnastics clubs for young children have been trialled at two clubs

the four UK Total Fitness sites that closed in 2011. It's a beautiful club and is well ahead of target on membership sales.

"Meanwhile moving annual total NPS is now +5 per cent overall; some clubs that are further on in their refurbishments are as high as +28 per cent. When I joined the company, it was worse than minus 30 per cent. People are starting to believe.

"We're now going to take it up a gear, working with a software provider called Reputation.com to transform our use of NPS. Rather than just managing negative feedback, we'll be focusing on making positive feedback work harder for us via online reputation management. As part of that, we'll be installing tablets all round the clubs so members can provide live NPS feedback of that day's experience.

"So we don't use the word 'turnaround' any more. We talk about growth, and we'll certainly be looking for more opportunities to open new clubs. For now it will remain full-service clubs in the north of England, but I'd never say never about exploring new opportunities, either geographically or in terms of business model."

Indeed, although unconformed by Total Fitness at this stage, reports suggest the operator is entering into a partnership with supermarket chain Asda to pilot – and if successful roll out – a functional training studio concept.

Millman continues: "We're certainly on a growth curve, and in fact that was what prompted the withdrawal of Barclays and Co-op: it marked a new phase of the business. They exited and we completed a management buy-out of the business in March 2015, backed by a £11.5m investment from NorthEdge Capital."

People skills

So how will the business ensure it continues to flourish and retain members in a competitive marketplace?

"We've deployed a new people model," explains Millman. "Previously it only really mattered what level of fitness qualification people had. We now focus on their interpersonal skills, how good they are at representing the brand, whether their own values fit with ours.

"In Wrexham, top to bottom, we've recruited on values and behaviour first, and functional skills second. Now, across all the other clubs and in head office, no-one – from receptionist to lifeguard to fitness manager to finance director – joins the business without going through a values and behaviour assessment day before we even talk to them about functional skills. Because ours aren't self-service budget clubs – ours is a supported model. If we don't have the best people delivering the best experiences, we may as well not bother."

Power of partnership

"We're also doing a lot of work on ensuring members see relevance in the whole of our offering," Millman adds. "If we can do that, our membership fee – already good value at around £40 – becomes unbeatable.

"For example, we're taking the dialogue from 'swimming and swimming pools' to 'aquatic'. That can encompass swimming lessons for toddlers and children, but also aquatic fitness and aquatic training programmes. We've realised our pools are a big draw for triathlon training: individuals and local clubs use our facilities because we have at a minimum a six-lane, 25m pool in every club. They can combine that with dry-side training – six of our clubs have four-lane, 200m indoor running tracks.

"Partnerships are key to this initiative, because having recognised brands in-house brings something different and eye-catching to our offering. For example, we were originally running

our own swimming lessons for children and toddlers, but we weren't doing it very well. So in 2013 we teamed up with Water Babies, which now delivers all our toddler swimming. And we then did the same thing with the children's swimming lessons, teaming up with Becky Adlington Swim Stars, and it's absolutely flying. Becky even comes along now and then to teach a lesson herself.

"Our IT systems aren't yet keeping up with where we're driving the business, so I can't give you actual participation figures, but I can go into any club any morning or evening and the number of people in the pools is significantly higher than it was two years ago."

He continues: "Importantly, it isn't just about playing catch-up to 2015, but also leveraging the opportunity to spring forward. We might do that ourselves, but equally we might find the right partner to do it with. Becky Adlington is a great example, but there are others: we're trialling Beth Tweddle gymnastics classes for young children at two clubs. It's going down a storm so we'll probably roll it out.

"Those are just two children's examples. In the head office club in Wilmslow, we've given 5,000sq ft to Royleys, the leading high-end bike retailer in the north of England. It has a bike showroom and repair shop in our club. We're going to start leveraging that in the club, with Royleys-endorsed cycling training. Royleys rides for members and so on. We also have a F&B partnership there that I believe leaves Costa or Starbucks for dead. And we're now looking at potential partners to deliver value to the over-55s, who make up 27 per cent of membership.

"Partnerships will be key going forward. We might be 60 per cent through the refurb project, but we're nowhere near 60 per cent through the opportunity of taking our offer and member experience to the next level."



Ley says the arrival of budget gyms has made Total Fitness more unique, and it can now operate in a less crowded market

Warwick Ley

Partner, RooGreen Ventures & chair, Total Fitness

“I’m the mid-way point between Richard and Ray: 50 per cent operational and 50 per cent investor,” explains Warwick Ley, chair of Total Fitness and partner of RooGreen Ventures, the turnaround fund brought in by Total Fitness’ previous owners – Barclays Bank and Co-op Bank – to set the business back on track.

“Back in 2012, when we were asked by the banking syndicate to get involved, we – my colleague Brian Davidson and I – replaced the incumbent board. Our whole model for a turnaround is to get in there, get the sleeves rolled up, reset the strategy and often rebuild the management team – although at Total Fitness there are some cracking veterans who’ve been with us all the way, and I’m delighted for them and what it means to them.”

He continues: “I personally came up through the private equity and advisory route, spending many years in restructuring for one of the big four professional services firms, which is when I met Brian – we were advising on the management buy-out of a manufacturing business of which he was CEO.

“In 2005, a few of us broke away from Ernst & Young to set up a private equity house – a turnaround fund called Endless LLP. One of our investments

was Crown Paint, and we parachuted Brian in as CEO; I was chair. We took the business from losing £20m a year to making £22m – this at the time Lehmans went bust, when the housing market collapsed and the paint market with it.

“Following on from that, Brian and I decided we’d like to do something together – Total Fitness-type deals – and we set up turnaround specialist RooGreen Ventures. We go in, we will in certain circumstances put in some cash ourselves, but fundamentally what we’re there to do is fix the company, get it back on track strategically, get its management structure back on track – and that means a lot of sleeves rolled up, heavy working for an initial six- to 12-month period. All being well we then ease back on our time involvement, take a shareholding in the business and drive it forward for growth.”

Worth fixing

In the case of Total Fitness, no money was invested upfront by RooGreen – “the equity in the business was worth nothing”. It was simply a case of Barclays and Co-op asking Ley and Davidson to help sort out the problems. The pair agreed but, stresses Ley: “I was very clear that, for us to get involved, we needed the banks to continue to support the business financially, and not ▶



Warwick Ley

“
I’m happy to admit it – I was so wrong back in 2012 when I hoped the project wouldn’t be Total Fitness
”

for one moment did they step back from that responsibility. They've been a fundamental part of the turnaround."

He continues: "When I originally took the call from Barclays, there were a few 'we can't tell you what the business is' sort of conversations. I had a strong hunch it was Total Fitness, but I don't mind admitting I hoped it wasn't – there had been so much noise and negativity around the business."

So what was it about Total Fitness that made them realise it could be turned around? "We have a few golden rules for any projects we take on. One is: do we think the business has an exciting future post-turnaround – does it have some strategic importance over the next three, five, 10 years? That was top of my list with Total Fitness, because I didn't really have any prior gym experience – I'd just heard about their sort of model being dead thanks to the budget gyms."

"But I took a lot of encouragement from the fact that – in spite of a tough prior five or six years, with very little investment in the clubs, no focus on retention whatsoever, a lot of management change, really everything counting against it – the loyalty of the membership base was astounding. One in four members had been with their club for longer than five years, despite everything weighing against it."

"That was the killer point for me: I knew, if members were staying in spite of all that, there was something worth fixing."

Beyond the club

And fix it they did, in conjunction with Richard Millman who they brought in as CEO: membership is up 14 per cent and the business is profitable again.



The scale of Total Fitness clubs has been turned into a positive differentiator

"One of the main reasons for Total Fitness' downfall was its facilities: it had huge property costs, including big pools to maintain," says Ley. "But that's also one of the main reasons for its resurgence: the size and quality of the facilities is a huge differentiator for the business. A big part of the turnaround was renegotiating terms with the landlords, getting costs at more realistic levels."

"So now we have large clubs that are profitable, and where you get a huge amount for your money. We see David Lloyd as more of a like-for-like market peer than the budget gyms, except we're half the price of David Lloyd: £40–£45 a month. In fact, the arrival of the budget gyms has just made Total Fitness more unique, because our segment of the market is less crowded now."

"So we offer great facilities with a great breadth of offering. However, without good people you're nothing, and it's our people who will really set us apart going forward. If I look at the turnaround from a people perspective,

it's inspiring to see the level of focus, commitment, enthusiasm and passion among the staff. Nevertheless, there's still a long way to go."

"As part of that, we need to refine our customer service and member experience USPs: the way we communicate, how members are treated when they come in to the gym, how they're treated outside the gym – how we interact with them there. Our digital strategy is pretty basic at the moment, but we have some exciting plans."

"We also want to go beyond bricks and mortar: we're trying to get that magic dust to make us part of someone's everyday life, wherever they are. That's the vision."

"Because it can't just be about clubs. There aren't many 70,000–80,000sq ft sites in the north of England, so at some point over the next four or five years – other than picking up the odd gym here and there – we'll reach maturity. We therefore have to look at how we're going to generate revenue outside the 80,000sq ft gyms over the next five to 10 years."



Total Fitness memberships are up 14 per cent and the business is profitable again

“
The loyalty of the membership base was astounding. One in four members had been with their club for longer than five years
”



Refurbished clubs are seeing NPS scores of up to +28 per cent, whereas before some were worse than -30 per cent

“Effective turnaround is about having a five- or 10-year vision. There’s no point otherwise. Even if that’s outside of our investment timeline – which isn’t set in stone, incidentally – we have to think now about our growth story to pitch to the next owner, and we have to put the foundations in place to make that happen.”

Genuine partnership

That potential new owner is some way down the line though, with the latest change of hands only taking place at the end of March 2015: a management buyout, with Barclays and Co-op exiting the business and the trio of Millman, Ley and Davidson investing their own personal funds, alongside a reported

£11.5m investment from private equity firm NorthEdge Capital – a private equity firm brought in by RooGreen specifically to drive growth.

Ley is quick to stress, however, that it will be measured growth: “It’s very easy to get giddy, but we have to make sure the house remains in order. That’s been a big cultural change and I’m very confident that, with Richard’s leadership and the structures we have in place, operational discipline will always be central to our DNA.”

Ley remains chair and shareholder of Total Fitness, with Millman as CEO. The two men – and to a lesser extent Davidson, who remains on the board as a silent investor – will now work closely

with NorthEdge to take Total Fitness into the next phase of its life.

“The biggest mistake private equity guys and management teams make – and it happens a lot – is that they see it as ‘them and us,’” says Ley. “That’s a very unhealthy dynamic. It needs to be a genuine partnership, and I’m not being all fluffy with that word. That’s NorthEdge’s ethic and is the key reason I approached them.”

And Ley is, it seems, more than happy to remain active in that partnership: “I just love being involved in the business and I’m incredibly proud. I’m happy to admit it – I was so wrong back in 2012 when I hoped the project wouldn’t be Total Fitness.” ▶

Ray Stenton

Partner, NorthEdge Capital & non-exec director, Total Fitness



Ray Stenton



Closed in 2011, the Wrexham site has now re-opened after a £1m overhaul

“Our investments are typically for three to five years, and in that timeframe I’d expect Total Fitness to have grown to 100,000 members,” says Ray Stenton, partner at NorthEdge Capital – the private equity firm brought in at the time of the Total Fitness MBO to help drive the new growth phase of the business. “There’ll also be at least one more full-service club and some other exciting, differentiated new formats too.”

“Beyond our ownership, I’d expect there to be a more aggressive focus on opening new clubs and rolling out new formats. And the next owner will need to crack digital too, to really drive value. We’ll make some progress on that, but we won’t have all the answers during our ownership. It’s a huge opportunity though, and could be very interesting.”

NorthEdge is what Stenton calls a “generalist investor” whose model involves bringing broader business expertise to back management teams in delivering their plans. It focuses exclusively on northern-based businesses and has invested a reported £11.5m in Total Fitness – this in addition to the funds being invested by the management team – which Stenton sees as “an interesting growth opportunity”.

He elaborates: “People are getting more health-aware. At the same time the market is polarising into full-service versus self-service, and I believe Total

Fitness has a unique offer within that: it’s at the top end in terms of its broad full-service proposition – not stuck in the squeezed mid-market – but its price point means it’s also high value.

“We need to invest in the facilities to ensure they’re at the standard we would wish them to be – we’ve already embarked on a significant CapEx project across the estate – but once that’s completed, we’ll absolutely be competing with the likes of David Lloyd rather than the budget operators.

“But it’s a very competitive market and we have to stay focused on the detail. Good facilities aren’t enough – you have to continually stimulate and innovate.”

Opportunistic growth

He continues: “With that in mind, our growth agenda is about looking at the business differently: investing in people, IT, facilities. The business has grown well with limited investment and there’s a real opportunity to build on that.

“There’ll be opportunistic new site openings based on acquisition – we’re looking at two or three possibilities at the moment. New builds aren’t on the immediate radar, although we might consider it were the right site to come up. But there are a number of former Total Fitness sites that were sold during the restructuring of the business, and they’re the most obvious things to look at if we can get them to work; the Wrexham re-opening was the first of those.

“We’re looking at new formats, such as the ‘pay as you go’ city centre boutique clubs and other standalone offerings”

“We’re looking closely at our digital strategy too, and at new formats like the ‘pay as you go’ city centre boutique clubs and other standalone offerings. It’s a different market dynamic from London, where we’ve seen the majority of the boutique clubs opening, but we need to be clear what people want – we’re already seeing indoor cycling centres and boxing clubs in the north of England.

“In fact we’re doing a lot of work with NPS generally, so our investments are based on an understanding of what members really want. We’ll test various things to see what works and then roll the successful concepts out.” ●

What would 300 new members mean to you?

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INTENZA UK SETS NEW STANDARDS IN GYM EQUIPMENT



Whitling and Bertrand have over 50 years of experience between them



Intenza is made in Taiwan to the highest eco build standards

TWO FITNESS INDUSTRY EXPERTS HAVE TEAMED UP TO LAUNCH A SLEEK NEW ENERGY-SAVING PRODUCT RANGE IN THE UK

Jez Whitling, 25 year veteran of the UK fitness industry and former Precor sales director, and Graham Bertrand, of Physique Sports equipment services for 30 years, are introducing the Intenza range of fitness machines to the UK fitness industry.

Intenza is an impressive selection of eco-friendly cardio equipment manufactured by HealthStream in Taiwan. The brand has been built on producing high quality, energy efficient equipment in an eco-friendly way, and is already in more than 35 international markets since its launch in 2012. The range is also being distributed by Gym80 in Germany and Exceed Performance in Sweden, part of the Eleiko Group.

Bertrand and Whitling met with Mark Chang, CEO of HealthStream, at the Intenza factory in Taiwan, to find out more about the range and the distribution opportunities. Bertrand says: "As soon as we saw the incredibly

high quality standard of the Intenza range and the impressive manufacturing set-up, we both agreed this opportunity was too good not to look at seriously."

Whitling says: "We were hugely impressed with the high quality of the cardio ranges and within an hour of walking into the state-of-the-art facility my mind was made up."

He adds: "I've seen a number of fitness equipment manufacturing plants over the years, but nothing on this scale. It was clean and efficient, attention to detail was very high and it has almost zero carbon emissions, with most of the energy used to drive the facility coming from rows and rows of solar panels on the roof. The factory actually delivers excess energy back into the grid."

Smart energy savings

The machines themselves combine a sleek aluminium design built on high performing engineering and technology.

Engineers took 18 months to develop this high level range, which includes treadmills, upright and recumbent bikes and ellipticals in two series.

The Intenza Interactive Series (i Series) commercial cardio line features a simple to use, single dial control – Intenza's Uni-Dial Navigation Control. All workout programmes and varieties can be accessed by turning the dial and pressing the dial.

The Entertainment Series (e Series) delivers television, movies and music on 15" touchscreen monitors that have been built to last.

An internal diagnostics system, InCare, has been built into the machines which automatically alert Intenza if and when an issue arises with the equipment and what the issue is.

The range has been developed with some clever energy saving devices to help the gym facility save power and money. For instance, when the exercise console is not in use it goes into a power-saving mode, reducing its energy consumption to .4 watts on the treadmills and 0.25 watts on the ellipticals and bikes. The e-series elliptical and bike consoles are activated ▶



The e-series elliptical and bike consoles are activated by the exerciser's effort, at 40 strides or 40 revs per minute



Internal diagnostics alert Intenza to any equipment issues



When the console is not in use, it enters power saving mode

INTENZA UK PROMOTION



Intenza offers an Interactive and an Entertainment series

► by the exerciser's effort, at 40 strides per minute or 40 revs per minute.

Whitling and Bertrand are now drawing on their combined 55 years of experience of the fitness industry to grow the Intenza brand in the UK.

Bertrand says: "We've both developed strong industry reputations from looking after our loyal customers and ensuring we go about business the right way. In fact, this was the main driver in us wanting to work together."

"We both understand that if we can keep customers happy, then it serves to build a sustainable, profitable business."

The duo are supported by a full UK logistics and service team as well as an international marketing team. And the response from the UK fitness community to the pair's news about Intenza? "Overwhelming!" says Whitling.

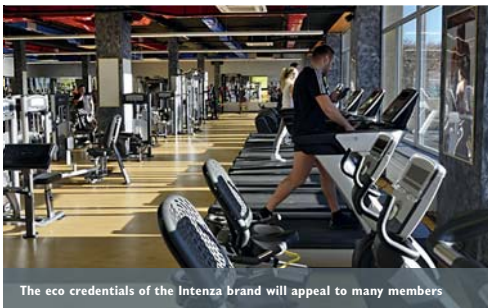
"That is most definitely the word that best describes the response from industry leaders that we've spoken to so far, both in terms of how excited they are that Graham and I are working together and also on how exciting the Intenza brand and equipment looks."

Their first UK order came from Mark Anthony, chief executive of expanding low-cost gym chain Rush Fitness - even before the new company had been announced - based on the strength of the equipment and Anthony's trust and belief in them.

The installation took place at Anthony's Rush Fitness in Aylesbury



The range includes treadmills, upright and recumbent bikes and ellipticals



The eco credentials of the Intenza brand will appeal to many members



The Intenza cardio equipment has a sleek, contemporary design

this summer and he is planning to roll the equipment out to other new sites this year. Anthony says: "I'm very excited about the new Rush Fitness Aylesbury club being kitted out with new Intenza cardio equipment."

"As soon as I first saw the range at FIBO, I could see the superior build quality and sleek, contemporary design of the products."

"And knowing that Intenza in the UK was being led by Graham and Jez, with their vast industry experience, I

knew the support they would provide would be world class."

"Knowing our club will be the first in the UK to take delivery of the Intenza range also gives us an added benefit when pre-selling memberships." ●

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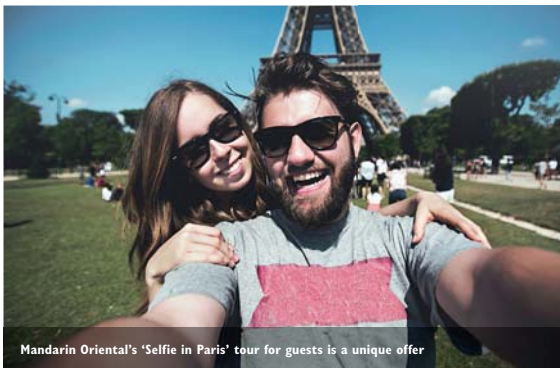
TIMELESS DESIGN

Intenza equipment is made without compromise. No detail is too small and no process is "too much" when it comes to setting a new gold standard for overall customer satisfaction.

Breaking the MOULD

Is your business ready for post-demographic consumerism? Global trend agency trendwatching.com explains why it's time to throw out the traditional (and tired) demographic models of consumer behaviour

WORLD FOCUS



Mandarin Oriental's 'Selfie in Paris' tour for guests is a unique offer

Consumer behaviour can seem increasingly chaotic. In September 2014, Canada-based yoga wear brand Lululemon announced plans to open its first men's-only store in New York. The move followed a successful Man Camp pop-up store in North Carolina and the launch of a popular Lululemon Men twitter account. In the UK, women account for the majority of video game players, and there are more gamers aged over 44 than under 18. Meanwhile, in August 2014, luxury hotel chain Mandarin Oriental launched its Selfie in Paris initiative, offering guests a tour of the French capital's best 'selfie' spots with a private car and driver.

Confused? You should be: consumers are increasingly behaving in ways we least expect. These examples give glimpses into one of the most important shifts in consumerism of modern times, and one that will require a fundamental overhaul of the demographic-focused approach that businesses have used to understand and predict consumer behaviour for decades. Global trend firm trendwatching.com focuses on this topic in its *Post-Demographic Consumer* briefing, and here details what this means for the global wellness industry.

Welcome to post-demographic

So what's driving this shift in consumerism? Well, we're entering an age of post-demographic consumerism: one in which the traditional demographic segments – age, gender, income bracket, nationality and more – are becoming less meaningful as predictors of consumer behaviour. Instead, consumers are freer than ever to construct identities and lifestyles of their own choosing.

This trend will have a fundamental impact on fitness and wellness businesses that previously relied on traditional demographic models to target and connect with consumers. But it will also have a far-reaching implication for all consumer-facing businesses: namely, that few new products, services and experiences, if any, will remain the preserve of a single demographic for long.

This new era is driven by the merging of many of the mega-trends that have shaped the economy and society over the past few decades: globalisation, urbanisation, mass affluence and expanding consumer markets, widespread adoption of digital technologies and increasing socio-cultural diversity.

Why the change?

Four powerful forces are driving the shift towards post-demographic consumerism: the global brain, the decline of old social norms, increased product and service choice, and new ways of accruing and displaying status.

The emergence of an online global brain is seeing consumers from all walks of life buying and using services from the same top brands: think Facebook, Apple, Amazon and more. The worldwide reach of information has caused the emergence of a global shared consciousness and left consumers from Seattle to Shanghai lusting after the same sneakers, smartphones and sushi.

Meanwhile, urbanisation has shattered traditional social structures and values/norms such as the family unit and gender roles, giving consumers permission to live the lives they choose rather than those determined for them by age, gender, location and other traditional demographic labels. According to JWT Intelligence, 87 per cent of BRIC millennials believe the freedom and exposure of living in the city has widened their world view. The choice and freedom found in cities gives these individuals more opportunities to construct their own identities outside



Growing urbanisation has shattered traditional social structures and values such as the family unit and gender roles

“ The world has become too blurred, too fluid, for new innovations to remain the preserve of the young for long ”

of the traditions of their specific demographic, and this group has become more accepting of alternative and non-mainstream lifestyles.

A greater variety in product choice and an international expansion of the global class has allowed people to personalise and express themselves through their consumptions at a greater degree than ever before. All demographics are using social media to relate and associate themselves with brands – even if they don't necessarily use or buy the product or service.

Consumers are ignoring demographic convictions and are picking – as well as identifying with – a wide range of brands. They're frequently stepping across demographic boundaries. As BBC Radio 1's head of music George Ergatoudis

observes: “If you look at the list of the 1,000 favourite artists for 60-year-olds and the 1,000 favourite artists for 13-year-olds, there's a 40 per cent overlap.”

Yes, younger consumers are still the most frequent first adopters of new and compelling inventions. They're more open, more experimental and have fewer commitments. However, the world has become too blurred, too fluid, for new innovations to remain the preserve of the young for long. Now, all demographics are taking an active role as users of new and revolutionary gadgets and inventions.

Indeed, we see this again and again when looking at the adoption of novel and supposedly niche consumption habits. A 2014 study by Crowd Companies shows that, while 48 per

cent of those who had used 'neo-sharing' collaborative consumption platforms (such as Airbnb, Zipcar and Kickstarter) were aged 18–34 years, 33 per cent were aged 35–54 and 19 per cent were aged over 55.

Action plan

So, how should businesses respond to these shifts in consumerism? Below, we detail four axes along which wellness businesses can plot their response.

Embrace the new normal:

Celebrate new racial, social, cultural and sexual norms. Coca-Cola's (in)famous 2014 Super Bowl spot – featuring *America the Beautiful* sung in a wide variety of languages (including Tagalog, Hindi and Hebrew) and by people from ▶

“Brands should be willing to re-interpret or even overturn decades of brand history and tradition and do the opposite of what everyone expects”



Crowdfunding enables companies like Zen Float to pre-test their products on the 'new consumer'

► various races, religions and families – caused controversy with its non-traditional depiction of US society. But the drinks giant knew that demographics were on its side: the US saw a 32 per cent growth in its multi-racial population between 2000 and 2010.

Similarly, in October 2013, Indian jewellery brand Tanishq promoted its wedding collection in a commercial featuring a bride with her daughter from a previous union – the first campaign of its kind in India.

Be heretical towards your brand heritage:

Brands should be willing to re-interpret or even overturn decades of brand history and tradition and do the opposite of what everyone expects: a powerful way to win the attention of new customers. In 2014, the Thug Kitchen vegan diet blog abandoned the 'new age' image typically associated

with veganism and gave itself a sweaty, aggressive makeover. It now bills itself "the only website dedicated to verbally abusing you into a healthier diet".

Another example? For decades, the Harley Davidson brand could be summed up by one word: rebel. But in October 2014 the brand went heretical: it embraced environmental responsibility by partnering with The Nature Conservancy on a pledge to plant 50 million trees by 2020.

Encourage cross-demographic fertilisation:

With consumer preferences ever more universal, the opportunities to transfer innovations from an initial demographic to another have never been greater – a very potent play for health and wellness brands. Ex-wrestler Diamond Dallas Page created DDP Yoga after finding that practising yoga helped him recover from injury. Targeting men who might be sceptical of conventional spiritual yoga programmes, DDP Yoga incorporates additional muscle strengthening elements.

Similarly, CrossFit Kids – a variant of the high-intensity workout phenomenon – can now be found in over 1,800 gyms and 1,000 schools around the world.

Focus on small niches: Thanks to expanding and online markets, there's a real opportunity for businesses to focus on small groups and fringe niches that weren't previously accessible.

For example Kickstarter, the online crowdfunding platform, is enabling creators to pre-sell and therefore test demand for their products and services. It's seen US\$1.3bn worth of pledges to over 70,000 projects – including US\$296,000 raised by Zen Float, a US-based isolation tank

company that's designed the first affordable floatation tank for the home.

Brave new world

It's now a brave new post-demographic world, where consumer tastes and behaviours can no longer be understood by traditional demographic approaches. Successful products, services and brands will transcend their initial demographics almost instantaneously.

As a result, businesses that continue to attempt to navigate using demographic maps – with their borders defined by age, gender, location and income – will be ill-prepared for the speed, scale and direction of change.

By contrast, organisations that explore opportunities for innovation among seemingly dissimilar or even opposite demographics – and that can incorporate their learning into their strategies (no matter which demographic segment they target) – will be the most likely to succeed. ●

Find out more

As one of the world's leading trend firms, trendwatching.com sends out its free, monthly Trends Briefings in nine languages to more than 160,000 subscribers. Sign up at www.trendwatching.com

This feature first appeared in the 2015 edition of the *Spa Business Handbook*, published in June 2015. For more information visit spahandbook.com



Ex-wrestler Diamond Dallas Page aims his yoga at men

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From concept to design, through manufacture and installation Aachen Wellness offer meticulous attention to detail, using quality materials together with highly skilled craftsmen, tillers, joiners and service engineers to present an end-to-end service second to none in the wellness market. Our design offices and factory have been producing saunas and steam rooms for nearly 20 years and so it is no surprise that Aachen Wellness products are provided to the UK's best known spa resort facilities.

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Rebranding EXERCISE

Michelle Segar, PhD, explores how health clubs can retain members by helping them find joy in exercise, both in and outside of the gym

Let's start by defining the problem: gyms and health clubs are seeking ways to retain members. Many people join because they think they should – for better health, fitness and weight loss. But many of them subsequently fail to attend – despite paying a lot of money for membership – because they have scheduling difficulties and can't get there as often as they think they should, and/or don't enjoy the intense exercise they think they need to do to succeed. Their initial burst of motivation wanes and they end up feeling like failures, and feeling

ambivalent (at best) about the value of exercise. They often see the gym as the source of their failure, so drop out.

What can be done about this? I believe the solution is rebranding exercise, whereby gyms become people's physical activity partners. We need to teach members that finding opportunities to move outside the gym is a great way to complement their structured exercise at the gym – an approach that will help foster motivation and sustainability.

Gyms and health clubs can actually boost member retention by de-emphasising the 'health/wellness/weight loss' message and prescribed reps/minutes of intense exercise in the gym. By redefining successful exercise as coming to the gym for some things, but also giving permission to members to enjoy physical movement outside of the gym, you help them form a lifelong partnership with enjoyable exercise.

Encourage your members to maintain the gym as a place to go for some things – classes, weights, machines, intense bouts of exercise, community and so on – while helping them be even more successful through incorporating fitness in other ways too. If you teach them how to be successful with both – exercise in gyms and in daily life – it helps them view gyms as their partners instead of the source of their failures.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michelle Segar, PhD, is a motivation scientist and author of *No Sweat! How the simple science of motivation can bring you a lifetime of fitness*.



A leading authority on what motivates people to choose and maintain physically active lives, Segar is director of the Sport, Health and Activity Research and Policy Center (SHARP) at the University of Michigan, and chair of the US National Physical Activity Plan's Communications Committee, charged with advising the Plan on more persuasive messaging for American people and policymakers.

Her expertise has been featured in *The New York Times*, *Forbes*, *The Washington Post*, *Prevention* and *Oprah* and her corporate clients include global organisations such as Adidas, Google, Walmart and PepsiCo. For more information, please visit: www.michellesegar.com



Help people realise that even tasks like carrying the laundry count towards daily activity

ALL PHOTOS WWW.SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

- We're more likely to do the things we've taken ownership of and want to do for ourselves, rather than things we think we should do.
- Studies show regular exercise benefits our mood and emotional wellbeing, as well as our overall physical health.

Food for thought

So what does all this mean for gym owners? Here are just a few ways you might implement this knowledge:

'Everything counts' is the doorway to retaining members:

Teach members to think of formal structured exercise (gym) and informal exercise (daily life) as equally valid. Even carrying the laundry downstairs and upstairs is a form of physical movement that makes you stronger. Remind them that fitness is a lifelong learning process, not a target they have to hit. This means learning to be flexible about scheduling, setting realistic expectations and so on. Having a flexible mindset helps members feel successful, even when they can't make it

The facts

- Studies show that many women in particular have negative feelings about, during, and after intense exercise.
- Studies show that our brains are wired to respond to what makes us feel good (immediate gratification), not to logical promises of abstract future improvement (health, weight loss).
- Everything counts: Exercise can be added up over the course of a day and doesn't have to be done in one intense bout over 20 or 40 minutes.



Clubs could encourage members to walk, cycle or even skate to the gym, and might also sponsor outdoor groups

to the gym at all, or for the planned amount of time. Successful perceptions means happy, retained customers.

Lower intensity exercise is OK: Today, many people don't believe lower intensity counts. Teach people that it's OK to move at lower intensity levels, such as walking (including on the treadmill), yoga, pilates, stretching. Adding steps to your day by parking further from the gym and walking an extra block is a great way to build your movement repertoire.

"We'll help you make exercise your lifelong partner, inside and outside the gym": Giving members permission to enjoy movement they like doing outside the gym makes them more likely to come back to the gym for structured ways to stay strong and healthy.

Sponsor member walking, biking and hiking groups; encourage biking, walking or skating to the gym; hold dances in conjunction with dance workout classes. Offer workshops in how to find

movement opportunities in daily life. When you show your members how to be active inside and out of the gym, you become their ally in activity.

Strengthen the 'core': Just as you need to strengthen your core muscles to support your body without injury, so you need to build up your core relationship with movement. Encourage members to build consistency (fitting movement into every day in some way, shape or form) before constancy (coming to the gym three times a week and working out for a hard 45 minutes).

"Exercise today to feel good about yourself today" is a more motivational message than the promise of health, wellness and beauty in the future. Encourage members to explore the gym's programme to find classes or machines that make them happy and connect with friends, not to stick with something that makes them feel like failures because they believe it's 'good for them' or they 'should' like it. ●

WANT TO READ MORE?

No Sweat! How the simple science of motivation can bring you a lifetime of fitness translates 20 years of research on exercise and motivation into a simple four-point programme, helping readers understand why most people lose their motivation to exercise, drop out of gyms and dislike exercising.

No Sweat was written to help people who have struggled to stay motivated, as well as the professionals and organisations that work with them. Practical, proven and loaded with inspiring stories, *No Sweat* shows how to help people convert exercise from a chore into a gift, motivating a lifetime of exercise.



FITNESS FOR A NEW GENERATION OF PERSONAL TRAINERS



The system uses EMS (electrical muscle stimulation)

It's come to that time of year again, where your clients think they've left it too late to achieve the perfect beach body they'd envisioned for their holiday. Nevertheless, miha bodytec has seen an opportunity and created a fast-track to superior fitness

What's been noted by miha bodytec is a human conflict common in many; the desire to improve one's physical appearance and yet the complete reluctance or lack of time to exert the energy into doing so. The new high-tech miha bodytec workout system has arrived on the UK market as

an easy solution to the busy lifestyle and a bright ray of hope for the lazy couch potato. Just a 20 minute workout on the device can equate to a full week's worth of training, and for a personal trainer it'll probably make those two hour gym sessions seem dull and futile.

Miha bodytec utilises innovative EMS (electrical muscle stimulation)

technology developed by German engineers, offering a full-body regime new to the fitness world. With an improved EMS ability, the miha bodytec system uses such advances to offer an unparalleled body conditioning program which can guarantee quick results.

How does it work?

Users are fastened into a fitted exercise vest and a belt containing electrodes, all strategically placed for targeting your main muscle groups, from around the back to buttocks and arms to legs. Electronic impulses are then sent to the body in intervals to trigger muscle growth – it basically works to mimic the brain's nerve impulses that activate your muscles and this causes them to contract. The current penetrates the deepest underlying muscle tissue which makes for a powerful sensation; you can sense the science working its magic.

Various studies confirm that use of EMS in eliciting muscle stimulation



Impulses are sent to the body in intervals, triggering muscle growth



After trying the miha bodytec system, I experienced an intense training effect and was totally convinced by the technology. To achieve the same result I would have to perform heavy squats, potentially putting pressure on my joints and lower back. All I needed was my body weight.

Since buying the system I've been able to tap into a market previously unavailable to me as many people are intimidated by the thought of seeing a trainer, and also lack the time. Word of mouth has quickly spread and within a few weeks I'd increased my client base significantly.

Recently I had a client with a recurring Achilles tendon problem. Ordinarily she

would have to either stop sessions or just do upper body work. With the miha bodytec we've been able to continue whole body training and improve the pain level in her Achilles using the body relax mode.

Similarly I have a client in his early 70s with a history of lumbar pain. He would have to visit his chiropractor once every two or three weeks for treatment. He hasn't been now for three months.

Lastly a client who has been with me for eight years recently told me she now looks forward to sessions with me! I tried not to take it personally! The Miha Bodytec EMS system has injected a new lease of life into my PT business."

James Sello, PT and life coach



James Sello

can have a significant impact on overall strength gains.

Moreover, there has been proof that this form of exercise provides physiological benefits such as improved circulation, reduced body fat and increased collagen production.

With an increasing trend towards health and wellbeing in the UK, it seems as though there is always a new fitness

fad around the corner, though miha bodytec is more than just another 'get fit fast' marketing gimmick – its benefits are wholly scientifically-proven.

Favoured by elite athletes and models alike, miha bodytec is fuss-free fitness, for fast people seeking fast results. It may be the right time to put down the dumbbells and start investing into miha bodytec, as such cutting-edge exercise

techniques are looking to be a major part of an exciting future in the world of health and fitness.

More information:
Email: uk@miha-bodytec.com
Tel: +44 (0)7470 380 280
Web: www.miha-bodytec.com

DESIGN SPOTLIGHT

In the second part of our series showcasing best practice in health club design and architecture, we take a look around the world and spotlight four of our favourites

INVITATION ONLY Fitness First Gravity, Singapore



Gravity's hexagon motif represents the brand's six points of health focus

Fitness First recently unveiled its 'invitation-only' health club concept, Gravity, with the first location due to open later this year in the CapitaGreen building in Singapore's central business district. Membership costs around £300 a month plus a £1,500 joining fee.

The US\$7.3m club has been designed by Nick Gray and Studio HBA, a division of hospitality design firm HBA. The theme of the six points of Gravity – wellness, vitality, lifestyle, structure, performance and equilibrium – is echoed in subtle design cues around the club, represented by the hexagon motifs including on the ceiling and floors.

Meanwhile, a strong part of the design brief was to maximise the space, and particularly the outdoor space. This is in keeping with the overall CapitaGreen building which, designed by Pritzker Laureate Toyo Ito, has been created to be like a plant growing towards the sky, with lush greenery enveloping the building.

Alongside the outdoor pool area and deck, with its view of the CBD skyline, the Gravity club therefore incorporates a yoga deck for sunrise yoga.



The great outdoors: The pool offers a panoramic view of Singapore CBD's skyline, and there's also a yoga deck for sunrise yoga classes



HOME FROM HOME

Aspria Uhlenhorst, Hamburg, Germany



At Aspria Uhlenhorst in Hamburg, Germany, the club interiors mix sheer glamour with 'aspirational home' comfort

It's hard to choose one club from the Aspria portfolio on which to focus – all are market leaders in terms of concept, design and delivery – but on this occasion we've chosen Aspria Uhlenhorst, Hamburg. Uhlenhorst is a redevelopment of the 100-year-old Klipper club, representing a €25m investment. Aspria used a local Hamburg-based architect for the basic

building and a British interior design company, SparcStudio, for some of the fit-out work. The rest of the design and specification work was carried out internally by the Aspria team.

The club – encompassing hotel, gym, pool and spa – feels almost 'aspirational home' in design. Both floors have large windows looking out over the gardens, and the colour scheme is gentle

– browns, creams, lots of wood. There's a flow between gym and recreational, non-workout space: an open doorway links the first floor area of the gym with the restaurant, and there are leather sofas, standard lamps and even a pool table encroaching into the gym space. Huge, gilt-framed mirrors add glamour to the free weight and functional areas.

Membership costs €135 a month. ►



The club debuts a 270-degree Les Mills Immersive Fitness studio

HIT THEM FOR SIX

Pure Fitness, California Tower, Hong Kong



The small floor areas on each level lend themselves to a boutique gym feel

Occupying 25,000sq ft over six floors, this new HK\$30m (£2.5m) Pure Fitness club in the central business district of Hong Kong opened in April 2015.

Designed by Elaine Jamieson from Positive Partnership, its design is high-end in keeping with its location. The design vision is industrial urban chic with elements of cool sophistication – bare concrete and raw steel with a touch of glamour, and floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the city.

The challenge of operating across so many floors was addressed with a new internal staircase, which has become a major design feature that's integrated all elements of the gym. The relatively small area of each floor assists in giving the club a boutique feel.

Also incorporated is what's said to be the world's first 270-degree Les Mills Immersive Fitness studio. Membership costs HK\$1,119 (£95) a month for Pure Fitness California Tower, or HK\$1,499 (£125) for all Pure Fitness and Yoga locations in Asia – plus joining fee.



MAKING A SPLASH

Metropolitan Eurobuilding, Madrid, Spain



Members can relax on a 500sq m sandy beach terrace

This 4,000sq m club was designed by architect Esteban Becerril in line with other Metropolitan clubs, with a brief to create spaces where design and innovation play a crucial role, but without detracting from the need to make the member feel at home.

Unique design elements of the urban club include a 500sq m sandy beach terrace. There's also a 500sq m spa – the wet areas of Metropolitan clubs are a key design focus – and 400sq m of changing room facilities alongside the 500sq m gym.

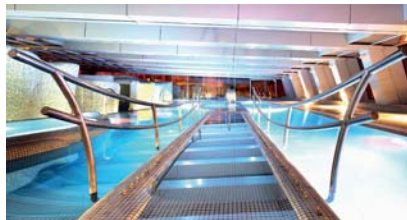
Membership costs from €70 a month. ●

NOMINATE YOUR CLUB

Think your club is worthy of inclusion in our series?

Drop us an email with a few photos:

healthclub@leisuremedia.com



The wet areas of Metropolitan clubs are a key design focus



The 400sq m of changing facilities are very high spec

MATRIX FITNESS PROMOTION

EXTEND YOUR REACH



IN-TRINITY®
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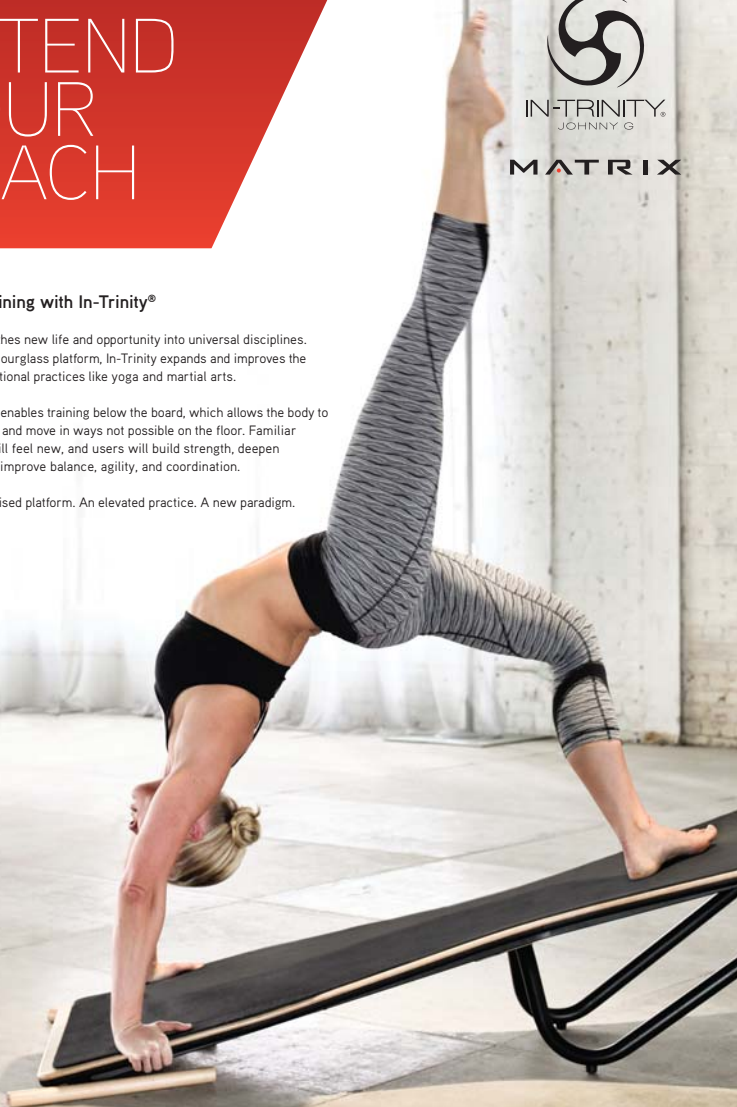
MATRIX

Elevate training with In-Trinity®

In-Trinity breathes new life and opportunity into universal disciplines. With a raised hourglass platform, In-Trinity expands and improves the results of traditional practices like yoga and martial arts.

Only In-Trinity enables training below the board, which allows the body to stretch farther and move in ways not possible on the floor. Familiar movements will feel new, and users will build strength, deepen flexibility, and improve balance, agility, and coordination.

In-Trinity: A raised platform. An elevated practice. A new paradigm.



www.matrixfitness.co.uk

EXTEND YOUR REACH

Matrix Fitness is renowned for its innovative approach to fitness and wellbeing, and its latest product offering sees the brand leading the pack once more, following further collaboration with Johnny G. After partnering with the fitness visionary to produce the Johnny G Krankcycle® by Matrix, the Matrix team has fused Johnny's concept for a new training platform with their intelligent engineering, to bring the Johnny G In-Trinity® Board by Matrix to life.

ELEVATE TRAINING WITH IN-TRINITY

The groundbreaking In-Trinity incline training platform is built around the concept of negative space, which creates the unique opportunity for movement below the board.

The exclusive hourglass shape and detachable legs allow users to perform yoga, Pilates, strength training, and stretching, above and below the platform; working with and against gravity to extend their range of motion beyond what can be accomplished with traditional floor exercises.

This intensive bodyweight training helps to build strength, deepen flexibility, and improve overall balance, co-ordination, and agility.



THE EIGHT KEY ELEMENTS OF IN-TRINITY

- / **INCLINE** – Performing dynamic movements on an incline increases muscle activation for the hamstrings, quads, glutes, and calves.
- / **DECLINE** – Movements on the decline activate eccentric muscle contraction, applying force to muscles as they lengthen.
- / **GRAVITY** – The In-Trinity Board and Training Programme harness the power of gravity to create resistance and facilitate movement.
- / **NEGATIVE SPACE** – Access to space beneath the board allows the range of motion to be extended beyond what is possible when training on the floor.
- / **HOURGLASS DECK** – The hourglass shape allows users to comfortably straddle the board, facilitating flowing transitions between movements on the incline and decline, while the wider ends enable stability, flexibility, and strength movements.
- / **ERGO-GRIP RAILS** – Ergonomic rails extend the entire length of the board. Access to this secure grasp anchors the body to deepen stretches and explore new movements. The rails also keep wrists in a comfortable, neutral position that is not possible on the floor.
- / **IN-TRINITY STICKS*** – Inspired by martial arts training, In-Trinity sticks provide light resistance and lengthen arm extensions. Stick work assists balance, and improves hand-eye coordination and agility.
- / **IN-TRINITY QUICK CONNECT STRAPS*** – The quick-connect straps serve as an extension of the board, keeping users connected and centred. They also provide resistance and stabilisation for more challenging movements.

WHO CAN BENEFIT?

The simplicity of In-Trinity allows users to train with movements they already know, and work with or against gravity to make them easier or harder, so it is an ideal product for yoga or Pilates enthusiasts, and facilitates promoting flexibility, balance, and strength. The platform also offers increased accessibility for those with mobility issues – perfect for active ageing members, or those undergoing rehabilitation.

An Orientation Programme is included with each product purchase, enabling immediate integration into existing group training classes or the creation of new programming. Each programme includes progressions and modifications to ensure proper technique and to accommodate users at all levels.



IN-TRINITY WILL BE
AVAILABLE IN THE UK –
AUTUMN 2015



MOVEMENT, COMMUNITY and SERVICE

The team at Rochester's Midtown Athletic Club believes there's no charitable cause too big or too small to support. Ray Algar reports

When I look at some of the world's most remarkable health club brands, I often discover a strategic intent to play a proactive part in the prosperity of their communities; they're not just there harvesting its resources. They forge a reputation for compassion and generosity and over time become an influential, valued, integral part of the community.

This month, I want to share the story of how Midtown Athletic Clubs in the US has embraced a strong sense of corporate citizenship and a wider definition of community to enable its clubs to flourish even as competition intensifies.

Three generations

The Schwartz family founded its first club, the Midtown Tennis Club, in Chicago in 1970 with a simple everyday mission: "Bringing out the best tennis player in you." The club was founded by Alan Schwartz and his father Kevie, who were passionate about tennis and used the club as a vehicle to help grow the game. The company expanded and during the 1980s began adding fitness areas to its tennis clubs.



CEO Steven Schwartz (right) and colleagues at the IHRSA awards

Steven Schwartz, Alan's son, joined in 1987 to help position and grow what has become the Midtown Athletic Club brand.

Eight Midtown Athletic Clubs now operate in what Steven Schwartz – now president and CEO – describes as the 'upscale sports resort' segment. The brand's mission has also evolved beyond tennis: it aims to inspire through a pledge to 'movement, community and service'.

Leading by example

True to its mission, earlier this year the company's second club – which opened in 1974 in the city of Rochester, New

York State – received IHRSA's Outstanding Community Service Award for its sustained contribution to, and impact on, its wider community.

All of the Rochester club's charitable activities are driven by its 7,000 members and staff. "We're a club of people who believe in giving, and nearly every charity or organisation we give to is the beneficiary of a suggestion or request from one of our members," says general manager Glenn William.

This large, multi-purpose club – around 15,600sq m (168,000sq ft) of fitness, tennis, pools, spa and retail facilities – is a formidable size by international standards, but the extent of its charitable activities is remarkable. This single club contributes to 17 charities and altruistic organisations, with its efforts encompassing more than 275 annual events. That's equivalent to five events a week, every week of the year. "There is no cause too big or small for the club to support, either through event hosting, sponsorship or in-kind giving," explains William.

One nine-year partnership is with the American Diabetes Association and its Tour de Cure bike ride – a mass participation fundraising event held across 40 US states. The Midtown

Gymtopia – a place where clubs do social good

Gymtopia was conceived by founder and chief engagement officer Ray Algar, who believes the global health and fitness industry has enormous influence and potential to do good in the world, beyond its immediate customers. The idea of Gymtopia is simple: to curate and spread remarkable stories in which the fitness industry uses its influence to reach out and support an external community in need. It was created with the generous support of five organisations: Companhia Athletica, Gantner Technologies, Les Mills, Retention Management and The Gym Group. Gymtopia received an Outstanding Achievement Award in the UKactive Matrix Flame Awards 2014.

Read more stories and submit your own: www.Gymtopia.org





The fitness brand has so far raised US\$100,000 for the EquiCenter charity

Rochester club spends 10 months organising a one-day ride, which in 2015 involved 1,800 member and community riders. The club serves as the official indoor training centre for the Rochester event and provides free weekly sessions for non-members and members.

The club's own cycling team – called Chain Reaction/Midtown – has grown from nine riders in the first year to around 200 riders in 2015. The team has raised US\$330,000 for diabetes research and treatment over the nine-year period; this year it raised US\$73,000.

Tom DeRoller, the club's lifestyle director, also serves as chair of the planning committee for the Rochester Tour de Cure fundraising ride. "The great thing about the Tour de Cure fundraiser, and all our community service efforts, is that they produce a different dynamic with members, creating a closer member-club relationship," he says.

A local partner

Another more local project involves providing financial support for EquiCenter, a non-profit organisation that provides therapeutic equestrian activities for people with disabilities, military veterans and vulnerable young

people. So far, US\$100,000 has been raised through weekend table tennis tournaments and other events.

The club is also a long-term supporter of the area's only children's hospital, as well as the Bivona Child Advocacy Center, which supports children who have suffered sexual or physical abuse.

Rather than simply write cheques, the club prefers to raise awareness of a charity by operating in-club events.

Clearly these are not fleeting acts of 'charitising' where advertising the business is the real motivation, dressed up as some superficial and short-lived charitable act. Community is a core pillar of what the brand stands for.

Return on investment

For all you financially-driven operators eager to understand how all this generosity is feeding the club's bottom line, look away now. "We don't think about it in terms of retention, or what's good for the business, or the bottom line. We just want to share our knowledge and all of the good things we're going. It's about opening your doors and hearts," says William.

Nevertheless, he believes having a philanthropic orientation correlates

with long-term success. "Success can be measured many different ways, but I believe that philanthropy – and serving others who are in need – is a key measurement of personal, professional and corporate success," he explains. "Our members give, and it's our mission to take every opportunity to support them by giving along with them."

In fact, the parent company goes further and donates 10 per cent of the group's net profit to charity each year.

Over to you

So what should your business be doing? The Edelman *goodpurpose* 2012 global consumer survey asked what role business should play in positively contributing to societal issues.

Fifty-one per cent of respondents expected companies to be donating a portion of their profits, with 50 per cent expecting donations of products or services. Four out of 10 wanted companies to give their staff the opportunity to volunteer.

This was the fifth annual survey showing a clear trend. Businesses that demonstrated a strong social purpose were more likely to be recommended, promoted and chosen. ●

THE GLOBAL NETWORK

Earlier this year, Under Armour – the sportswear giant and owner of MapMyFitness – made a major play to dominate the fitness tracking sector by acquiring the MyFitnessPal and Endomondo apps, for US\$475m and US\$85m respectively. Doug Ziewacz explains why

Under Armour is a clothing company. Why did you decide to acquire these fitness tracking apps?

Clearly we've made some big moves for a brand that's primarily known for its shirts and shoes!

Our CEO Kevin Plank says: "Moving forward, the world's first handshake with Under Armour will be digital." This move towards digital is in keeping with our core mission to empower athletes through passion, design and the relentless pursuit of innovation. In this day and age, data is the big topic. We want to provide athletes with the best sporting apparel, and with access to the data that's going to help inform their decision-making.

Expanding our digital footprint is about enabling our customers to accomplish their goals, whatever they are. Goals are the reason why people are gravitating



Doug Ziewacz, Under Armour's head of North America digital media and advertising

towards tracking their fitness. We want to be the world's largest brand at the forefront of that enablement.

Facebook is the king of social media, but we've made a big bet and believe Under Armour can be the brand that owns health and fitness.

Why did you choose to acquire those specific apps?

With 30 million users, MapMyFitness was the largest and most comprehensive fitness tracking app in the US. It was an open platform, which was important for us to achieve the scale we're looking for. We currently have 130 million users, but want to get beyond 500 million, so we need to be able to connect to all wearables.

Meanwhile MyFitnessPal is the world's leading nutrition and health tracker, with 80 million users.

And in Europe, we wanted to find the best in class and a company that was aligned with our core philosophy of open integration and broad usage. Endomondo has done an incredible job of getting market share and penetration, with around 20 million users.

When you put the three apps together, you get the world's largest



The apps allow everyone to track their activity, from elite athletes to enthusiastic amateurs



Under Armour's current goal is to create a single, aggregated view of the user

health and fitness platform and very little overlap among users.

What do you like most about each of these apps?

It doesn't do MapMyFitness justice to say it's simple and easy, because behind that is a lot of complex work – but it's true that our teams really have made it very simple and easy.

Meanwhile our members are fanatical about MyFitnessPal, which they're using to accomplish their goals – a lot of them weight loss. There aren't many opportunities in life to be part of something where you're changing people for the better, so that's really, really exciting.

And finally, Endomondo has sophisticated training programmes that are self-calibrating, based on the individual's activity. As the team is based in Copenhagen, they've done a lot of globalisation and have a very passionate following.

I don't think we could have found better partners to bring into the Under Armour family, to help us build this path as a connected business.

How are you integrating the apps into your business?

These three platforms create an ecosystem and sit under the umbrella of Under Armour Record, which is really the dashboard for the connected user. The user today could be using MapMyRun and MyFitnessPal for different reasons, and get an aggregated view through Record.

Will you be upgrading the platforms?

The goal is to make living healthy as cohesive as possible, with single user sign-in. We're always trying to provide best-in-class experiences, improving functionality and user experience. Users demand high levels of reliability and validity, so sometimes the changes we make are not the sexiest, but we

know they're important in terms of the user experience.

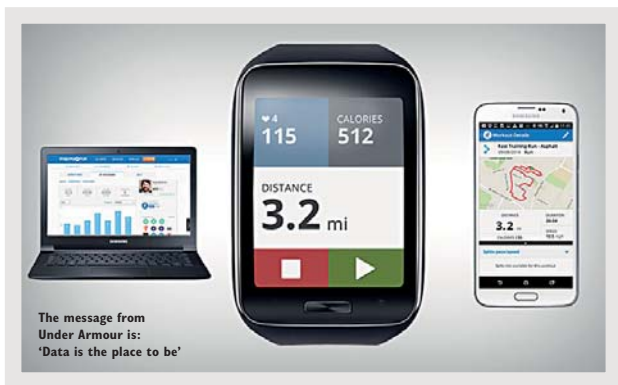
How are you planning to use the data you've acquired?

Ultimately it has to serve the end user experience: it's their data, so the goal is to provide them with as much of it as possible, to inform their actions and get the best out of what they're doing, whether that's workouts or nutrition.

I think one of the best opportunities with connected fitness is self-actualisation and being able to measure progress. It's a continuation of the quantified self and is paramount to the core experience.

How soon do you hope for a return on these apps?

What we're really moving for is a bigger experience around the consumer. Digital will complement our core revenue streams in every way possible and will drive the brand as a whole. ▶



► What are the synergies between all the elements of your business?

Over time you will see changes, especially in the area of wearables. Connectivity will find its way into apparel and footwear and there will be a tighter integration between these two sides of our business.

Are you looking to buy any more apps?

No comment!

How about developing more platforms or apps yourself?

Right now, we're really focused on taking what we have and creating the concept of the single view of the user.

What are the immediate opportunities, and in the future?

The opportunities are endless. Ultimately the biggest opportunity is to move the Under Armour brand forward: having a digital platform to tell our brand story and serve our core business is the most immediate one.

We're really excited to be in this space and the growth potential is really exciting: we have the largest health and fitness network in the world.

Do you have plans to move into bricks and mortar fitness facilities?

We're always looking at partnerships in the gym space. We think that's an important part of the ecosystem and we know our users are in the gym. Gym is a fragmented space, so we'll look at identifying best-in-class partners and continue to grow our experience.

We've made a big bet and believe we can be the brand that owns health and fitness

How could health club operators work with Under Armour?

Our message is 'data is the place to be', and we can lead with connected fitness. We really think of ourselves as an operating system – the central depository for fitness and activity.

Our message to operators is to embrace the opportunity to refer us and bring their clients on board, so we can help them meet their fitness goals. We have the opportunity to collect data regardless of the wearable, and one in four consumers owns a wearable.

How do you think things will look in this field in five years?

I honestly don't know, but connectivity will be everywhere. When MapMyFitness launched in 2007, it allowed users to track their runs in real time for the first time. When I think about the progress that's been made between then and now, it's shocking.

I'm really excited about data being used more predictively and the use of artificial intelligence. There are really exciting things to come for sure.

Will it help get people more active?

That's the perfect sentiment to end with, because that's exactly what we're trying to do. We're just trying to get people to

work out more, and I think there's an opportunity to do this.

In the United Kingdom and the United States, 30 per cent of the population are regularly active, but more than half have a smartphone. If we can get participation levels up to somewhere in between those figures, we'll have accomplished something. ●

NEWS UPDATE

Since this interview was conducted, Under Armour has continued its charge into the fitness technology sector with the acquisition of workout-focused search engine Gritness, which helps people find and join workouts. The financial aspects of the deal have not been revealed.

The acquisition of Gritness marks another step in Under Armour's progress towards building a platform and developer network whereby it supplies the apparel, hardware and tracking apps used in a workout, as well as owning the resultant data. Gritness is a significant piece of the puzzle, both in terms of its advertising possibilities, as well as its insight into how users approach a workout.



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Building on their success, Speedflex is looking to invest in health clubs, leisure centres and gyms nationwide to create standalone studios, featuring the Speedflex concept.

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HOLDING STRONG

We round up the latest launches and innovations in the world of strength training

POWERING THROUGH

Jordan Fitness has added an updated version of PowerWave and new technique discs to its product range.

A workout for the entire body, PowerWave 2.0 is designed to aid posture and develop core strength and endurance. The latest version features a special grip training system, with thick padded griptracks allowing for greater movement within the workout while extending the movement repertoire of the programme. It is available in three models – Super, Spartan and Beast.

Meanwhile, PoweR Olympic technique weightlifting discs are



for beginners, allowing them to adopt correct posture through an entire movement. They can be used for novice or junior weightlifting, physiotherapy, CrossFit or boot camp classes, or standard training.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

Jordan Fitness



SPEEDY ALTERNATIVE

Circuit-based group training concept Speedflex has been created to offer individuals an alternative to conventional exercise. Each 45-minute session is led by an experienced personal trainer and aims to combine a low impact, high intensity CV and resistance workout for optimum calorie burn.

Hydraulics and electrical impulses allow the machines to create resistance, using only concentrically-based forces while eliminating all gravity-based (eccentric) forces. By getting rid of these forces, which usually need to be performed at a slow speed with great control, there is a greatly reduced chance of injury, according to Speedflex.

The Speedflex machine has a free motion bar which requires



users to apply force through the entirety of the exercise, as opposed to increased force in one direction, followed by a controlled movement back to the starting position.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

Speedflex

DESIGN DISCOVERY

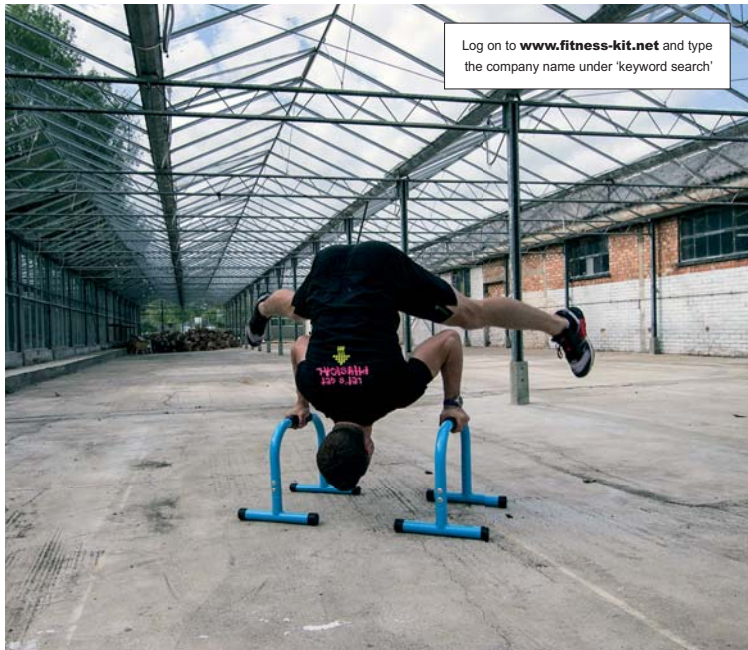
Precor has unveiled a redesigned Smith machine as part of its Discovery Series plate-loaded strength range. Its ergonomically designed 11-degree frame angle optimises the way the body moves naturally through a squat movement, according to the company.

At 25lbs, Precor says the bar assembly provides a comfortable starting point for new exercisers, while the weight plate storage is optimised for easy loading and unloading at sensible heights. In line with the rest of the Discovery range, QR codes link to instruction videos in the Precor Coaching Centre.



fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

Precor



Log on to **www.fitness-kit.net** and type the company name under 'keyword search'

PARALLETES DIMENSION

Identifying a trend towards bodyweight training and developing strength through loaded balance moves sparked the development of Physical Company's newly-launched parallettes. They were created in conjunction with Wild Training founder and personal trainer James Griffiths.

The Physical Company parallettes have been designed to be sturdy, with handles made from foam offering support and grip.

Each weighs just over 2kg and they are fitted with rubber feet to ensure stability and grip on the ground. The parallettes can be used indoors and outdoors on a range of floors and surfaces.

At 10 inches high and with handles 12 inches long, they offer enough ground clearance for key moves but are low enough to ensure users combine skills and strength to keep good form.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD **Physical Company**



STRENGTH SELECTION

Cybex has launched a 21-piece line of selectorised strength equipment that has been created as a solution for 'walk-up and workout' users. Design emphasis for the Prestige Strength VRS line was placed on being biomechanically correct, visually striking and durable, according to Cybex.

Meanwhile, Cybex has also become the official equipment supplier to British Weight Lifting, the national governing body for Olympic weightlifting and Paralympic powerlifting.

Under the terms of a long-term agreement, Cybex will be providing its strength training equipment for British athletes and at all the British Weight Lifting competitions.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD **Cybex**



Donna Karan meditates:
The fashion designer has
long been an advocate of
complementary therapies

IN SICKNESS & IN HEALTH

Conceived by fashion designer Donna Karan, the Urban Zen Integrative Therapy programme merges medical and complementary therapies and trains professionals in its own effective style of sickness and preventative care. Julie Cramer reports

When renowned fashion designer Donna Karan launched her Urban Zen Integrative Therapy (UZIT) programme – a pioneering complementary therapy initiative aimed at helping acutely ill patients in health and social care settings – she had already faced the trauma of losing friends, colleagues and family members as a result of terminal illness.

As a rookie designer in the 70s, Karan went to work for Anne Klein in New York and was promptly handed the responsibility of finishing her new boss's collection, as Klein had terminal breast cancer. That tragedy was the catalyst that helped launch Karan's career, but it was also the beginning of many personal losses, including her best friend who died of breast and brain cancer, and her second husband, Stephen Weiss, who died of lung cancer in 2001.

Karan had always been a proponent of the healing powers of complementary therapies like reiki and acupuncture,

and her own homes are known to be spa-like sanctuaries. She used what her husband called her 'woo woo' therapies to help him through the final years of his life, and after his death went on a quest to fill the gap missing between medical treatment of the patient's disease, and sympathetic care of the individual.

Her search culminated in the creation of a 10-day Wellbeing Forum in 2007, to stimulate an exchange of ideas between patients, doctors, nurses, yoga instructors and alternative healthcare practitioners. Two years later, in 2009, the first UZIT training programme was born; since then almost 500 UZIT practitioners from both the medical and wellness worlds have been trained, with another 100 or so in the training system.

East meets west

UZIT's mission is to integrate ancient healing techniques into Western medical practices, as well as spread this work further through yoga, spa and wellness centres. Its core modalities are yoga ▶





There are around 500 UZIT practitioners, and the long-term goal is to open standalone centres



Yoga gurus Rodney Yee and Colleen Saidman-Yee have played a part in creating Karan's highly respected UZIT programme



Buddhist monks Robert Chodo Campbell (left) and Koshin Paley Ellison (right) are members of the UZIT faculty

“Everyone will be a patient one day – but using UZIT in both sickness and wellness care can make the journey better”

► therapy, reiki, essential oil therapy, nutrition and contemplative end-of-life care and self-care (this last one being for the therapists’ personal development) and the curriculum is designed to treat the common symptoms of illness: pain, anxiety, nausea, insomnia and constipation (UZIT uses the acronym PANIC™) and exhaustion.

To date, its practitioners have carried out over 25,000 documented sessions in hospitals, outpatient care centres, support groups, private practices, corporate environments, nursing homes and medical schools.

One of the 2009 inaugural training therapists was Gillian Cilibrasi, who is now the UZIT programme director, charged with, among many other tasks, standardising the UZIT training and scaling the programme so it can touch more lives within the US and beyond.

Cilibrasi brings a perfect combination of wellness knowledge and business background to her role, having been a massage therapist for 15 years and a yoga teacher for a decade, in addition to having worked on all commercial aspects of a medical device start-up

company. She’s owned one of the top health and wellness spas in the Hudson Valley, River Rock Health Spa, and still maintains a private clientele. And like Karan, she’s had her own experience of seeing a loved one become ill and die.

Cilibrasi says: “Several years ago, my stepfather was diagnosed with cancer in the May and he died in the December. He’d come home from chemotherapy and not want to eat. My sister, mother and I, who are all trained therapists, would give him acupuncture, prop him into a supported restorative pose and do energy work with him. He’d fall into a deep sleep and wake up famished.

“We could see how his quality of life improved and he was able to stay well enough to check off many things on his bucket list. When he died, we were at peace with his passing.”

Changing perceptions

It’s exactly this kind of practice and result that forms the basis of the UZIT programme. Cilibrasi admits it wasn’t always easy in the early days, as some areas of the medical profession remained staunchly sceptical – yet she

says there were an equal number of medical institutions that “welcomed us with open arms”.

UZIT has very strong partnerships with major treatment centres such as the Beth Israel Center in New York – the location of the first UZIT pilots in 2008 – and the UCLA Health System in California, as well as smaller community facilities such as Southampton Hospital in the Hamptons, which is now one of the strongest employers of UZIT practitioners across all departments.

“If you want to work with the medical profession, you have to be prepared to speak their language,” says Cilibrasi. “We’re meticulous in collecting outcome data and have several studies ready to go. You have to create evidence-based work to show how the therapies are working and how they can be used to best effect.

“One of our studies looked at a 24-bed floor at Beth Israel where UZIT was active. It showed a US\$496 saving per patient on pain and nausea and anxiety meds alone. Over a year, that meant a saving of almost US\$1m for the hospital, so you can see how it quickly adds up.

The UZIT mission is to 'bring care back into healthcare'



"A lot of our studies contain qualitative data, such as how patients' pain scores have been affected or their perceived reduction in stress levels, but we also realise the importance of qualitative data and we have a large study pending from UCLA covering such markers.

"For example, one of 'the crown jewels' for hospitals is whether you can affect length of stay and the associated patient satisfaction and cost savings of that, and it's something we'll be able to quantify more in the future."

Wellness army

UZIT works both by training medical practitioners in complementary therapies, and by putting experienced wellness practitioners into a medical setting. Wellness practitioners, such as those working in spa facilities and yoga studios, need to show a minimum of five years' practice in their field before joining UZIT either on an intensive training programme (which includes clinical rotation hours) at studios such as Yoga Shanti in New York, Piedmont Yoga in California, and Yoga on High in Columbus, or else by taking part in longer, part-time training currently delivered at centres like YogaWorks studios across the US west coast.

Meanwhile Cilibrasi says UCLA is a great example of a top-down initiative where UZIT has worked entirely with existing medical staff. Around 140 of them have been trained to date – spread across a variety of departments such



Programme director Gillian Cilibrasi: Scaling UZIT to touch more lives in the US and beyond

as oncology, nursing, rehab services, respiratory therapy and radiology. A further 50 staff will have been UZIT trained by summer 2015.

Layering therapies

So is there a magic formula to UZIT's five chosen modalities, which have been put together with the help of Karan's high-profile associates – yoga gurus such as Rodney Yee and Colleen Saidman-Yee? Cilibrasi simply says: "Those who work in spa or wellness settings know that a deep tissue massage is very healing, but if you then ▶



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The foundation has an outreach programme in Port-au-Prince in Haiti

► combine it with some energy work it becomes so much more powerful. So we layer the therapies as required, using either some or all of them.

"We wouldn't normally use movement with someone at end-of-life care. We're always careful to meet patients at their stage of the journey, to help bring them into the present moment, and not to assume we know what's best for them.

"A great thing about the therapies is that they're designed to be performed hands-on or hands-off with the same effect, as many wellness practitioners going into a medical setting may not be able to physically touch patients."

Therapist self-care

Another interesting aspect of the UZIT programme is the prime emphasis it puts on the wellbeing of practitioners: the self-care and nutrition modalities are targeted at them. UZIT trainees are required to develop a daily yoga and meditation practice, to eat healthily, and be under the care of a personal mentor.

As someone who still actively practises in a private spa setting with yoga and massage, Cilibrasi is only too aware of the dangers of burnout that therapists and practitioners face. "I've seen many massage therapists burn out in 10 years or less because they haven't set out with a strategy of self-care," she says. "I'm still going strong after 15 years because I'm able to employ the strategies that we teach our trainees. I've made my home a very spa-like sanctuary where I can take care of myself – otherwise how will I ever be able to take care of others?"

"Compassion fatigue is a real danger. UZIT practitioners especially will be going into very challenging settings where they may be required to spend long periods of time with patients who are very ill. They need to be able to deal with all situations as they show up, how to be with the living and the dying, and not impose their teachings on a patient or relative."

UZIT expansion

Currently the UZIT programme, which is funded mostly by donations and board participation, is only available at selected US centres. Cilibrasi says the past five

years have been spent consolidating the training and refining it, while the next five to 10 years will focus more on expansion around the US and beyond.

"We've been in talks with organisations in Europe, Japan and India about how we can expand the UZIT programme and work in different cultures, and several pilot projects that could be scaleable and exportable are currently in the early stages here in the US. We've also been taking our outreach work to places like Port-au-Prince in Haiti to further develop and enrich our programme."

In addition, Cilibrasi says there's now a very popular public programme available at partner wellness facilities around the US – various yoga studios where anyone can experience the UZIT modalities in public Urban Zen classes.

"We've actually been quite overwhelmed by how popular these programmes have been, often becoming the most attended classes at a facility – we're talking about 40 people turning up to a class on a Saturday night in New York's Soho!" she says. "So many people are looking for balance and

healing in their lives. The guy next to you at work – you may have no idea what he's going through or what kind of healing journey he may be on."

While it's not likely to happen in the immediate future, Cilibrasi nevertheless foresees a time when there will be standalone UZIT centres alongside hospitals, as well as in wellness settings such as spas and health clubs.

She says: "Our programme is a natural fit in both acute and preventative wellness settings. Our future growth will be fuelled by attracting more and more spa and wellness professionals to come and take our training and send this work further out into the world.

"As Donna always says: 'Everyone will be a patient one day' – but I truly believe that using the UZIT programme in both sickness and wellness care can make the journey better." ●



This feature first appeared in *Spa Business* issue 2 2015





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THOUGHT LEADERS

One of my very first jobs, as a recently appointed 'policy geek' at the old FIA in 2007, was to research the options for the UK fitness industry to have a greater influence and impact in Brussels. A hospital pass if ever I've seen one. After all, rarely does the word 'European' come up in British discourse without being closely followed by the word 'exit'.

So when I was invited to spend three days with the leaders of the European health and fitness industry in Vienna in June – at the European Leaders Forum hosted by EuropeActive – I naturally had to think about whether this was the best use of my time.

But attend I did, and what struck me was how far EuropeActive has come in those seven years. Some of the largest operators in Europe – including Basic Fit, Health City, Pure Gym, Migros, VivaFit, Fit for Free and many others – joined

Competitive advantage through data, and thinking outside our four walls. ukactive executive director Steven Ward reports on discussions at the recent European Leaders Forum



the EuropeActive team for three days of networking, debate and discussion.

What surprised me was how closely shared the views were among operators across the continent regarding the challenges and opportunities for the sector. Every single one was facing up to the new dynamics that have emerged in the European market over the past few years: the boutique, niche, specialist providers able to charge a small fortune at the top of the market; the low-cost, high-value operators engaged in a brutal

battle for membership at the opposite end; and squashed between these dual pressures, the 'squeezed middle' with an ever decreasing slice of the pie as operators strive either to bring value into their product – and with it charge a premium – or else strip back to be able to compete at the bottom.

Beyond our four walls

By far the most fascinating aspect of the agenda, however, was the half-day spent looking at trends in data and technology. We heard from a range of experts, such as professor Evgeny Kaganer from IESE, and were treated to valuable insights into the wearable technology market – not least with an extensive review of the future of the Apple Watch.

Operators in Europe are already confronting their own existential crisis, trying to establish the future role of facility operators when personalised programmes can be delivered to a consumer's wrist – linked to heart rate and with instructional guides and motivational support – without the consumer ever needing to go anywhere near a facility. But instead of seeing this as a risk, operators at the EuropeActive event discussed the role technology will play in the sector's future.

Delegates were inspired by the tale of Mercedes purchasing German-based taxi company MyTaxi as a result of its sector-leading navigation technology. Why did Mercedes do this? Because it sees itself as being in the business of transportation, not selling cars. Transportation of the future, in an age of driverless cars, will not be about car ownership. It will be about getting from A to B. Acquiring a company with specialist technology that means it delivers this exceptionally well will, Mercedes hopes, give it the head-start

The organisations that create a role for themselves in this new connected world will be those that are able to extract insights from the data they possess



Delegates acknowledged a polarising market, driven in part by the low-cost sector



The delineation between our online and offline selves will disappear as more devices become linked

it wants on its competitors. Thinking without boundaries, or fitness facilities' walls, came up again and again.

Drowning in data?

The discussion centred for some time on the 'end of the internet'. The view from experts is that the delineation between our online and offline selves is going to disappear as devices become increasingly linked through their core functions. The discussion led to a conclusion that the operator of the future will have to fit seamlessly into this connected world, in which the Internet of Things determines the way consumers run their entire household, let alone their fitness routine.

This trend is going to lead to organisations potentially drowning in data, and failing to reach their potential as a result. The organisations that successfully create a role for themselves in this new connected world, and march ahead of their competitors as a result, will be those that are able to extract insights from the data they possess – those that can see the pictures this data can help them to draw.

This was a debate that only just got started and will no doubt be a defining factor of what the physical activity sector looks like in five years' time.

EUROPEAN INFLUENCE

It was clear at the event how established our sector is becoming with the European Commission, with the event attended by a leading official from the Commission's Sport Unit.

EuropeActive is increasingly seen as a key stakeholder in Brussels and counted alongside bodies such as UEFA and the UCI as a priority for partnership, aided by statistics that demonstrate that fitness is a European's favourite participation 'sport'. Indeed, EuropeActive has been enlisted as one of the primary stakeholders in the

European Week of Sport, which will take place in September. The initiative has a range of superstars to lend it support – including Steven Gerrard and ukactive chair Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson – and it's the type of thing the Commission will continue to get behind, and invest in, for years to come.

Encouragingly the European Commission spoke our language at the event, talking of the challenges posed by inactivity across Europe, and I would expect future research and policy opportunities to open up as a result.

Winds of change

The speed of change in the technology world can render entire categories of product, and even total industries, obsolete; I struggle to comprehend sometimes that it's only seven years since the first iPhone came out, given the level of disruption and enhancement it has brought to everyday life. A conversation with any of the major equipment manufacturers will tell you this is something they're grappling with on behalf of the industry.

This technological change also helps create an environment in which breakthrough innovation can happen in our sector – anywhere in the world.

That's why our sector needs a strong infrastructure through which best practice and knowledge can be shared. We truly have a European market in the health and fitness sector – one in which operators freely move across borders and ideas move even quicker. If only we could replicate that globally, I'd be one very happy policy geek. ●

Q&A with England Rugby's TOM YOUNGS

England and Leicester hooker Tom Youngs is included in Stuart Lancaster's 50-man training squad for the upcoming World Cup. The Norfolk born hooker tells us about the players we should be keeping an eye out for in September, a typical training week and if he really eats 7,000 calories a day!

Where did it all begin?

It all started at Holt Rugby Club in Norfolk when I was six years old. It was my local club and my cousins played there, as it was just down the road I went along too.

What would it mean to you to play in the World Cup?

It would mean everything and it's been my main goal for a while now. It's incredibly exciting to think it's this year but saying that there is still a long way to go, so I'm aiming just to stay injury free and get into the final squad.

Which players do you think will have the biggest impact?

Julian Savea – New Zealand. He's a very hard man to stop and can create something out of nothing. Then there's David Pocock – Australia. He's been out injured but he's a quality player so it will be interesting to see how he goes in the World Cup.

Who are England's toughest opponents going to be?

I think we've got a really tough pool. Fiji have nothing to lose... and then Australia and Wales speak for themselves so it is going to be tough. Hopefully if we get through, those difficult matches will stand us in good stead for the quarter final.

What makes up a typical training week?

Match day is usually on a Saturday so Sunday's are all about recovery. I'll usually jump on the Wattbike to flush out the legs. Monday is then a lighter day based on upper body weights and pulling. Tuesday is often then heavier which could be lower limb and based on pushing or a Wattbike conditioning



Youngs trains regularly on the Wattbike, for building power, body conditioning and recovery

session. Wednesdays are a rest day and then Thursdays are usually a power session either on the Wattbike or five metre sprints followed by rugby and then I'll usually spend some time with the England throwing coach in the afternoon. On Fridays we have the captain's run, focus on some line outs and just generally make sure we're feeling good ahead of the match.

Do you really eat 7,000 calories a day?!

I doubt it! On a heavy day I guess that might not be far off, but I don't really keep count of what I eat or don't eat. I don't eat rubbish, it's the right thing at the right time. We always have breakfast and lunch at the club, and of course there are guys that have really big

appetites – but to be honest everyone wolfs it away! It's what fuels us.

What's the banter like between you and your brother? (Tom's brother Ben also plays for England)

My brother is quite cheeky so he likes to take the mic out of me, but we don't get stuck into each other too much.

What would you be doing if you weren't a professional rugby player?

I'd be working on a farm! My family owns a farm in Norfolk and I love spending time there.

What might people be surprised to know about you?

I don't really have any party tricks, I'm quite an open book really so what you see is what you get.

What's your guilty pleasure?

Vanilla ice cream and farming magazines. Anything to do with farming really!

Tom Youngs is an ambassador for Wattbike, the world's leading indoor bike. To find out more visit: www.wattbike.com

wattbike


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Train like Tom

Tom Youngs and his England teammates will be using the Wattbike as one of their key training tools in their preparations for the world's biggest rugby tournament.

Whether you're a forward, back or winger, the Wattbike enables the players to train smarter minimising the impact on the players' bodies, whether it's recovering from a big match or helping to improve maximum power. The accurate and reliable data means that the England

strength and conditioning team can tailor training sessions for individual players.

Why not give one of Tom's sessions a go for yourself? Remember – everyone has their own specific training zones so you may need to adjust the setting for your own capabilities. You can find out more about this by visiting www.wattbike.com

The following session will help you to increase lactic tolerance:

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3 min spin with several 5 sec bursts, resistance 1
Set the resistance to 4/5

BLOCK 1:

Set the resistance to 5
200m as fast as possible (aim for under 12 secs) – 50 secs rest – x 5 reps
2 mins rest after last rep

BLOCK 2:

Set the resistance to 2/3
500m as fast as possible (aim for under 36 secs) – 75 secs

rest – x 4 reps
2 mins rest after last rep

BLOCK 3:

Set the resistance to 1/2
750m as fast as possible (aim for under 60 secs) – 90 secs rest – x 2 reps
2 mins rest after last rep

BLOCK 4:

Set the resistance to 4/5
200m as fast as possible (aim for under 22 secs) – 30 secs rest – x 3 reps
2 mins rest after last rep



Data can improve motivation, but only if it's explained to members

EXPANDING THE CIRCLE

How can we broaden the appeal of indoor cycling?
Kath Hudson asks the experts

Indoor cycling should have a broad appeal: there are no tricky dance moves and most people are familiar with bikes. It's also a low impact, joint-friendly cardiovascular workout that can be adapted to all fitness levels. However, the way indoor cycling is delivered in many health clubs means it's often perceived as being too hardcore and too cool for all but the most confident members to try.

So how can we broaden the appeal of indoor cycling, helping ensure a wider range of people feel drawn to give it a go? We ask the experts...

THE INSTRUCTOR

The instructor needs to make participants feel safe and let them know they're there for them, not to work out

themselves. Staff must be well trained and there should be an annual audit, making sure instructors' certificates are up to date. Clubs should continually invest in training to keep classes fresh.

Sarah Morelli

Classes tend to be taught by high-energy, fit, young, athletic instructors who feed into that 'give me more' mentality, which tends to feed the vicious cycle of intimidation in the eyes of less fit potential participants. We recommend club owners hire a diverse teaching staff, mixing up the schedule with seasoned instructors, both female and male, who can relate to the various stages of life.

Establish some instructor protocols that make the cycling room feel inclusive. Instructors should truly care about members' goals and get to know everyone in the room. It's refreshingly helpful when an instructor takes some time to walk the floor before and during class, offering support where needed.

Finally, instructors should also be able to teach a variety of formats, so

they can cross-promote indoor cycling classes during their dance, strength and yoga classes to recruit new riders. This skill can also be leveraged to incorporate fusion classes onto the weekly schedule.

Jackie Mendes

Instructors must strive to be 'cue-municators': indicating their intentions in numerous ways so everyone gets it. They need an excellent beginner's perspective, appreciating what it's like to experience indoor cycling for the first time, and need a higher degree of empathy than the average instructor.

Cameron Chinatti

It must be fun and friendly. I always think about how my mum would feel and what would make her comfortable. For people who are new to the class, it's a nice touch to welcome them personally at the door and show them to the bike, help them set it up and explain the structure of the class. Instructors should also encourage people to feel



ICG's virtual reality technology drives engagement levels in cycling classes

comfortable in leaving after a few tracks and to gradually build up to a full class.

Laura McStay

MARKETING

Offer shorter classes of 20–30 minutes during off-peak hours, labelled as Express classes – no-one wants to be called a beginner, even if they are one! If you offer shorter classes and have your best instructors teach them, new participants will gravitate towards them.

The key to making this work is to label your classes well and offer informative and enticing class descriptions.

'Introduction to indoor cycling' is not selling the dream! Think 'Indoor cycling for real people', with a description explaining the class. To recruit more out-of-shape riders, market a Beat Ride – using heart rate training as a guide with fun, upbeat music – or Empower Ride, which aims to lift members' spirits using positive motivational cues and emotionally-driven music.

Jackie Mendes

Before launching new programmes to appeal to a wider audience, work hard to understand your non-indoor cyclists' training habits. Discovering more about ►

Meet our experts



Lou Atkinson
Master instructor,
Schwinn



Richard Baker
Commercial director,
Wattbike



Cameron Chinatti
Director of education,
Stages Indoor Cycling



Duncan Lawson
Director,
Fithealth



Laura McStay–Customer
implementation manager,
Les Mills UK



Jackie Mendes
Brand manager,
RealRyder International



Phillip Mills
CEO,
Les Mills International



Jonathan Monks
Business development
manager UK & Ireland, CFM



Sarah Morelli–Education
& development manager,
Star Trac Europe



Tracy Morrell – Sales
and marketing director,
React Fitness



Gary Warren
CXO, Indoor Cycling
Group (ICG)

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PANEL DISCUSSIONS

● KEYNOTES

THE FUTURE OF THE PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN
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CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND HANDLING EXTREME
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INDOOR CYCLING



Think about the studio environment: A cinema-type atmosphere is more forgiving for those who don't want to feel exposed

- ▶ the exercise formats and services they like, and critically why they like them, will provide context to your marketing plan, assisting conversion and avoiding mismatched programming.

Gary Warren

NEW FORMATS

Fusion classes are good for entry level: classes that include a mix of elements are fun, like boxing and cycling. However, don't do weights or yoga on the bike as this does neither discipline properly – run consecutive sessions instead.

Sarah Morelli

Change the schedule every quarter and keep the fun factor in mind to lessen the fear for unfit riders. Ask instructors to come up with theme-based rides and market them around holidays and club events. Overweight or obese members have a challenging time sitting on an upright bike for a full hour; we're finding many people prefer 30-minute classes.

Clubs could also market a six-week challenge asking members to attend at least two classes a week, with a specific start and end date, and track their progress week-by-week. This is an excellent way to get new people to sign up, as there's a do-able commitment and

an end in sight, but in the process they will build relationships with each other as well as the instructor.

Jackie Mendes

THE ENVIRONMENT

The studio environment and choice of instructor play a huge part in turning the dark and sweaty boom-boom room into a welcoming, beginner-friendly space. If people can hear and see what's going on prior to attending, there's less apprehension with that first class experience. Ideally the instructor should be able to make eye contact with ▶



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WHAT WE LIVE FOR

“Put on classes for families. Families who are active and eat together are healthier, but there’s a shortage of opportunities”

Lou Atkinson

every spot in the room. This tends to be most easily accomplished with the stadium-seating set-up.

Cameron Chinatti

Aesthetics are important: not too white and bright. A cinema-like atmosphere is more forgiving for those who don’t want to feel so exposed and visible. Also it’s important not to have bikes pushed so close together that people can hardly squeeze through – you need to make people feel comfortable.

Laura McStay

One far-too-often forgotten ingredient in studio design is a fresh scent. Smell is proven to elicit strong emotional responses, and influences our rating of people and places. It’s key to making your studio appealing to newcomers.

Gary Warren

GOING VIRTUAL

Virtual classes are good way in to cycling for those who haven’t tried the concept before: 55 per cent of those who attend virtual classes are first-timers, testing out a class and building confidence before they go into a live class.

Les Mills is releasing a bunch of new cycling programming, including our immersive class – The Trip – which we believe will engage new audiences, drawing people in thanks to its wow factor and helping ensure the experience is as entertaining as it is hard work.

Phillip Mills

Virtual reality, where you control what happens on screen, really engages the brain. Add in an element of group interaction and competition (managed, so as not to demotivate people) and you create an environment where people want to keep participating. We’ve found this keeps even those people who don’t normally like to work out on bikes exercising for longer: ladies who don’t exercise much prefer to be given a



WebRacing takes its offering outside health clubs, to draw a more diverse audience

course to complete rather than a set amount of time or distance.

Duncan Lawson

PERSONAL EFFORT

MYZONE’s heart rate-based system creates a level playing field in classes by giving feedback to individual participants based on how hard they’re working – which is in their own control – rather than power output.

If anything our approach favours the more unfit, because they hit the higher heart rate zones faster. Rewarding people for the effort they’re putting in is very motivating.

Jonathan Monks

Data can improve both motivation and efficiency of the workout. Although initially it can be confusing and intimidating, if instructors and PTs educate members on how to use the data, it helps more people understand the benefits of cycling – teaching them how to work more efficiently, achieve better results and track their progress.

Richard Baker

NEW AUDIENCES

Schwinn runs special populations training, teaching instructors to feel confident with people who might be nervous in their classes. There are courses for coaching under-18s, mature people and pregnant/post natal women. One key benefit for clubs is that classes for these groups of the population can be run in off-peak hours.

Put on classes for families: public health research shows families who are active and eat together are healthier, but there’s a shortage of opportunities for families to be active together.

Offer classes with a variety of structure and intensity, such as a recovery class for those getting over an illness or injury, or a rehab class for sufferers of stroke or cardiac disease. It’s advisable to hook up with local programmes, physios or sports injury specialists to make sure classes are safe.

Lou Atkinson

Children love acknowledgement and recognition of their successes – that’s key to getting this group involved. Expresso’s HD Youth bike targets the youth community by incorporating fun, tracking goals and reinforcing accomplishments. The bike provides an interactive and virtual experience, including video games that encourage exercising to attain higher level status.

Tracy Morrell

Reaching out to other locations beyond the club can be a great way of spreading the message. We’ve taken WebRacing to the Tour de France in Yorkshire; to Bloomingdale; and to the Nuffield Orthopaedic Unit Oxford, to introduce cycling to children who fear exercise due to long-term chronic pain. The entertainment aspect meant the children saw it as play rather than exercise and overcame their fears. The physios saved their personal bests and challenged the children to beat it on the next visit.

Duncan Lawson ●

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ME
Medical Research



Thermal areas should at a minimum include a sauna, spa bath, cold shower and relaxation area

LESS IS MORE

Operators with limited space can still create viable thermal areas with the potential to generate revenue, as our international spa and wellness experts explain

When it comes to designing thermal areas for small spaces, experts agree that less can be more: a few well-chosen experiences can enhance your offering and also generate income. But working in limited space leaves less margin for error, so planning is vital.

"Make sure you do your research. Who are you targeting? How many

individual experiences can be planned into the space? How many people can each experience seat? What are your competitors doing? What's your USP? These are just some of the things operators need to consider when planning a thermal area," says Sarah Watts, chief executive of Alliance Leisure, which specialises in spa and leisure facility development.

"Sometimes people build spas without enough information and will include similar facilities such as a sauna and a sanarium, which we wouldn't advise in a small space," she adds.

Good research will give you a better understanding of your user profile, allowing you to tailor your offer to your clientele. "Most females prefer a gentle, soothing heat, so if your users are



Dalesauna: Steamrooms offer a gentler heat (left), while infrared saunas help post-exercise muscle recovery (right)



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predominately women, it makes sense to invest in a steam or aromatherapy room rather than a sauna, which has higher temperatures," says Gerard McCarthy, sales director at Dalesauna.

MULTI-FUNCTIONAL ROOMS

"A thermal area should offer a relaxing cycle of alternating hot and cold experiences. Ideally, this should include a minimum of a sauna, a spa bath, a cold shower and a relaxation area. A steam room could be included if space allows," says Aysegül Sungur, architect and vice president of Promet Spa Wellness.

Barry Humphries, sales director at Topline Electronics – which manufactures the Aachen Wellness range of wellness rooms, suites and accessories – adds: "Sauna and steam

rooms are the basic requirement for any site; after that we would recommend a rasul room (mud treatment room) or some heated tiled loungers."

But where space is limited, it's worth considering multi-functional rooms. Dalesauna's Combi Sauna combines infrared technology with a traditional Finnish sauna to offer two different heat experiences in one. The infrared sauna uses infrared light to heat the body directly, while the Finnish sauna relies on a traditional heat source to warm the air in the sauna.

"The combination of sauna and infrared is ideal for health and fitness facilities. Infrared is great for post-exercise muscle recovery and operators can still offer a traditional relaxing sauna experience. The combination is still

relatively new, so it gives operators a USP too," says McCarthy.

Klafts' foldaway InfraPLUS seat can be integrated into its sauna and sanarium cabins to offer a similar combination of sauna and infrared. The heat lamp, which is set into the wall, is flanked by back rests that can be adjusted by the user to find a comfortable seating position.

Meanwhile Klafts' sanarium offers five heat experiences in one: a classic sauna, a warm air bath, a tropical bath, an aroma bath and a soft steam bath. Users simply select the climate zone, and the humidity and temperature then adjust accordingly.

Other experiences such as salt inhalation and ice fountains are also increasing in popularity. The Microsalt from Klafts can be installed into a sauna ▶



Promet's thermal area at the Sheraton Hotel in Adana



Alliance Leisure specialises in modern local authority spas



Using light colours and lighting effects will increase the sense of space in smaller spa and thermal areas, says Promet's Sungur

► to produce a dry salt mist, thereby creating a salt inhalation experience.

As well as the heat experiences, it's important to remember the relaxation areas in your thermal area, says Markus Muller, international consultant for Klafs:

"Very often the relaxation area gets forgotten. This is where users will rest between experiences, so it's important to create an appropriate space for them."

A rest area could comprise a few heated loungers or a heated tiled bench with individual foot spas.

Regardless of the products you choose, the layout of the thermal area is critical.

TIPS FOR MAXIMISING USAGE OF YOUR THERMAL AREA

- Focus on the design and lighting of the thermal area to create a welcoming and relaxing space that clients will want to return to
- Invest in multi-functional rooms so you can offer more than one type of experience
- Make sure you have a good booking system to manage the arrival and departure of guests, so the area is never too busy
- Consider offering ladies-only and men-only sessions
- Run promotional offers to attract users during quieter times
- Offer online bookings to make it easier for users
- Make sure your facility opens early morning and late evening to accommodate all users

The experiences should flow from hot to cool and there should be good signage to educate clients about the benefits of the facilities and how to use them.

DESIGN DETAILS

"One of the most common mistakes operators make is thinking the feature rooms need to be very large. They don't usually need to seat more than 10 people, even at the busiest of times. The rooms are designed to be relaxing and therapeutic; overcrowding can ruin that tranquil experience," says Humphries.

When it comes to design for small thermal areas, the advice is to keep it simple. "I'd recommend a modern and minimal concept using light colours and transparent surfaces to give a sense of space. Lighting effects can be used to create a relaxing ambience," says Sungur.

"Choose products with a clean design that's based on a few, but expressive, materials," advises Muller.

Very often it's the functional components that can let a thermal area down, so operators must be vigilant about these less glamorous features too. Given the nature of heat experiences, and the heat and humidity they produce, effective insulation is a must. "Water insulation, heat insulation and sound insulation – as well as good ventilation, sanitary equipment and fire precautions – are critical. Failing to use anti-slip flooring and/or high quality, durable, easy-to-clean materials and non-corrosive fixtures for drains, vents and ducts can also lead to the failure of thermal areas," says Sungur.

"If you're working in a new build or an extension, access to services

like electrical power shouldn't be an issue, but if you're retrofitting heat experiences into an existing area, the provision of services may be more of a challenge," adds McCarthy.

MAXIMISING REVENUE

The cost of heat experiences will vary depending on the supplier, materials used and any ancillary items used to enhance the facilities, such as mood lighting and music systems. But all operators should be looking to make a return on their investment as soon as possible. Thermal areas can be run as a standalone unit or as part of an existing membership, and there are a number of ways to maximise revenue potential.

"Some clubs have a basic membership and an additional membership, where suites such as rasul treatment rooms and sanarium can be charged on top of the basic membership. Operators can charge as much as £90 for a 45-minute rasul treatment," says Humphries.

Watts has other suggestions: "Create a dedicated spa membership – an add-on spa package to your existing gym membership. Host private parties like hen dos or birthday parties, and offer themed events such as teen parties. Also create promotions with discounts for clients willing to commit to more than one session – for example, eight sessions for the price of six."

With careful planning and creative programming and marketing, even operators with limited space can create successful thermal areas. As Muller says: "Focus on a few quality products that have the most potential for achieving success. Less is definitely more." ●



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Music Maestro

Chris Wilcox of PEL Services looks at the importance of sound in creating a consistent brand for your facility

PHOTO: WWW.SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

“**W**hat song are you?” In a brief moment of unguarded downtime the other day, I did one of those online personality tests whereby the resulting song is meant to represent your personality and is arrived at by answering a stream of daft questions about what clothes you wear, your favourite colour, what makes you angry and so on. I shared it with my friends on Facebook and soon they were all at it, some delighted with their assigned song (*You are so beautiful* – OK then!), some less impressed (come on, *The Joker* – really?)

It was just a bit of fun during the dull commute to work – not to be taken too seriously... Or is that really all it was? Comments from my friends hint at something more fundamental: these songs represent a common experience, a common language we all can engage in.

You see, music is undeniably powerful. Yet it's also intimate and often subliminal.

Don't leave it to chance

Health clubs, spas and salons plugged in to the power of music a long time ago. It's now rare to enter one and not hear music, whether it's in the background or front/centre in key areas of the site.

But the choice of playlist can be hit and miss, or lazy and formulaic. Silence is awkward and instinctively avoided, but it's often the case that individual staff are left to improvise by plugging in their mp3 player with their own choice of tracks on shuffle, resulting in a playlist that can be the polar opposite of what the brand represents. This in turn has a direct and negative impact on the intended experience for customers.

For clubs that have invested energy and resources into developing their brand, leaving something as important as a brand's soundtrack to chance is, at best, risky. For starters you have the issue of potentially causing offence through inappropriate lyrics on a track.

But it's not just about avoiding offence. Music has a positive contribution to make. It represents an excellent opportunity to reinforce your brand's identity and even provide a richer brand experience.

I believe the time has therefore come for health clubs and leisure centres to pay expert attention to this area of their business, developing a brand soundtrack that adapts their sound to different demographics and applying this audio-branding consistently but adaptively over days, weeks, months and years.

■ A soundtrack should address emotions and desires while retaining a brand's identity

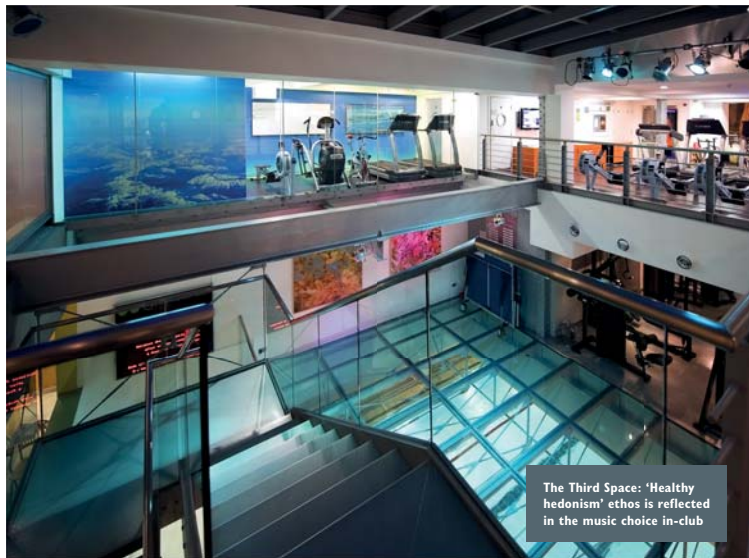
What are your options?

So how can this be done? It's about matching the music directly to the brand and, just as importantly, to the customer. But that's not as easy as you might think.

Our experience shows that success comes from understanding your target market's emotional and rational desires and habits, reflecting this in your soundtrack while at the same time retaining a clear brand identity.

The delivery of that soundtrack then has to be flexible enough to accommodate customers' requirements as they change throughout the day – and across different regions if you have a number of branches.

For large organisations with multiple clubs, an in-house live radio feel – syndicated across all clubs – is one highly effective solution, albeit an expensive one. The radio stations have to be staffed by experienced professionals who are fully immersed in the brand and understand the customers they're playing for. The stations are run very much along similar lines to real broadcast radio stations, with playlists,



DJs, producers and so on. However, for the majority of health and fitness clubs the outlay is prohibitive.

Not that this should rule out smart forms of pre-recorded in-house radio for health clubs though – bespoke pre-recorded radio shows, but without the expense of your own dedicated radio station. This service is a very flexible one in that you can incorporate music, a DJ, ads and promotions. You can also have different promotions for different clubs, and even different DJ accents for different geographic regions.

A cost-effective solution that's popular with smaller organisations and clubs is a professional music-only supply service. Companies providing this service will create a music playlist that reflects the brand image and customer profile. It's updated monthly, either by broadband or CD, to be downloaded onto a hard disc music player in each club.

Outsourced expertise

The Third Space is a prime example of a health club that embraces music as part of its branding, having invested in a monthly-update playlist service.

The Third Space – with its two clubs in Soho and Marylebone, central London – is dedicated to delivering

a new form of 'healthy hedonism', adopting an integrated approach by bringing together leading experts and facilities to cater for all requirements in the areas of exercise, health, medicine, relaxation, nutrition and fun.

There are several areas within the premises that require different types and tempo of music – although all music must of course support the company's brand values and customer base.

On the main floor areas, the focus is on dance music with upbeat, fast tempos to coincide with peak hours; in contrast, the changing rooms feature relaxing acoustic and chill music for a calm atmosphere.

Diane Kay, director of sales & marketing for The Third Space and its two sister clubs – thirtysevendegrees Tower Bridge and the Reebok Sports Club London – explains why the operator chose to outsource music curation. "Having a professional music supplier takes all the time-consuming research and playlist-building processes out of our hands and leaves it to the professionals," she says. "Music is an ever-changing entity and we need that expert knowledge to stay abreast with current trends; it's what our members have come to expect from us."

The Third Space playlists cycle on a daily basis and up to 20 new tracks are added each month. But the type of music played has to go beyond merely what's in vogue, as Kay adds: "The music we play has to be something our members enjoy listening to in the background, whether it be while they're having a workout, having a shower or getting changed and ready for work."

"The music played in the different zones of the club needs to reflect the activities taking place within them and, hopefully, should enhance people's moods to best prepare them for the rest of their day." ●

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chris Wilcox is music & media manager at PEL Services, which specialises in the design, installation, supply and maintenance of corporate music, radio and music licensing, from radio programming to bespoke playlists. For further information: W: www.pel.co.uk/music-media T: +44 (0)333 123 2100 E: studio@pel.co.uk



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Heart warming

New research shows that having a sauna can aid cardiovascular health – and the more frequent and longer the sessions, the better



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Men who went for a sauna four to seven times a week were 63 per cent less likely to die from heart complications

The therapeutic benefits of having a sauna have been proven in a new study* published in February.

Researchers from Finland, where there's a strong tradition for this form of heat experience, found that middle-aged men who have frequent sauna sessions are significantly less likely to die from heart disease than those who don't. In fact, the men who visited a sauna the most, even as much as once a day, experienced the greatest benefits.

Regular benefits

A total of 2,315 men from eastern Finland, aged 42–60, were monitored over 21 years. In the follow-up period,

scientists recorded 190 sudden cardiac deaths, 281 fatal causes of coronary heart disease, 407 deaths from cardiovascular disease and 929 deaths from all causes.

Those who used saunas regularly, however, seem to have been protected from heart complications. The risk of sudden cardiac death was found to be 22 per cent lower for men who went to a sauna two or three times a week, and 63 per cent lower for those visiting four to seven times a week. Coronary heart disease and cardiovascular disease death rates were similarly cut by using saunas.

Time well spent

Participants benefited if they spent longer in the sauna. Those whose

sessions lasted 11–19 minutes were 7 per cent less likely to suffer a sudden cardiac death compared to those who spent less than 11 minutes in the sauna.

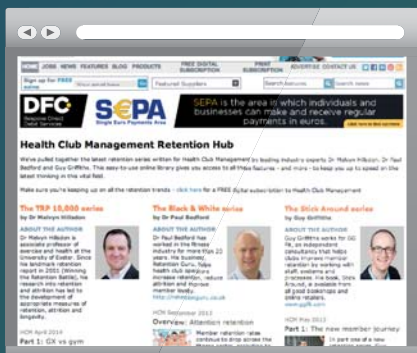
Men who spent longer than 19 minutes in the heat were linked with a 52 per cent reduced risk.

Dr Rita Redberg, editor of *JAMA Internal Medicine* and a scientist at the University of California, commented: "Although we don't know why the men who went to saunas more frequently had greater longevity – whether it's the time spent in the hot room, the relaxation time, the leisure of a life that allows for more relaxation time, or the camaraderie of the sauna – clearly time spent in the sauna is time well spent."

*Laukkanen, J et al. Association Between Sauna Bathing and Fatal Cardiovascular and All-Cause Mortality Events. *JAMA Internal Medicine*. February 2015

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