

health club management

APRIL 2018

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GO FIT

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MARTIN SEIBOLD

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Here come the franchises

The time for fitness franchising is now. We're seeing existing franchise businesses laying out ambitious growth plans, start-ups getting record funding and global brands heading our way

The UK fitness market is racing into its fifth wave of growth, with the mass arrival of the fitness franchises. We've been tracking franchise activity in the sector for a number of years. As recently as three years ago, there were only three companies in the market with a significant presence and their growth was relatively slow.

This year we're tracking at least 80 franchise businesses which are either in the UK, launching soon or making strong statements about entering the market at the first opportunity.

And many are well funded, so there's significant financial muscle behind this new wave of fitness businesses.

On page 48, we start a new series on fitness franchising, which will track this market as it grows. We've also added a chapter to the *Health Club Management Handbook* on franchising and expect this to expand as this market scales.

When you look at the lifecycle of the market, the franchising trend is bang on schedule. The early days of the industry were a wide open vista of opportunity and the first operators had the luxury of cherry picking the best locations and neighbourhoods.

Once the gold star locations had been developed, the second wave was the high-end clubs, such as David Lloyd. The third was the mid-market clubs – Fitness First, LA Fitness, Cannons and so forth – which ramped up the volume to get the value.

They've been disrupted by the fourth wave, the budget and low-cost gyms, which are taking advantage of mass market locations and pricing that unlocks new consumer demand: these operators report up to 35 per cent of joiners are first time gym members.

So now we're heading into the fifth wave – that of infilling smaller locations and meeting the needs of niche demographics.

This stage of the market lifecycle is perfect for franchises and boutiques, who can identify local markets and build around these opportunities. These types of operations suit entrepreneurs, who invest their own money and passion and are committed to delivering personalised service and really driving their businesses.

Plans by various operators to open up to 900 new franchise locations have already been announced for the UK so far this year.



The UK market is attracting global fitness franchise brands

Plans by various operators to open up to 900 new franchise locations have already been announced for the UK this year

Some of these announcements will be to please shareholders, but they're also a sign of the potential that investors see in the UK.

This trend coincides with the crisis on the high street, which is opening up a source of real estate to be repurposed for fitness.

Let's hope these new entrants unlock more demand in the same way budget and low cost operators are doing, so the entire sector continues to thrive and we don't cannibalise the market too much.

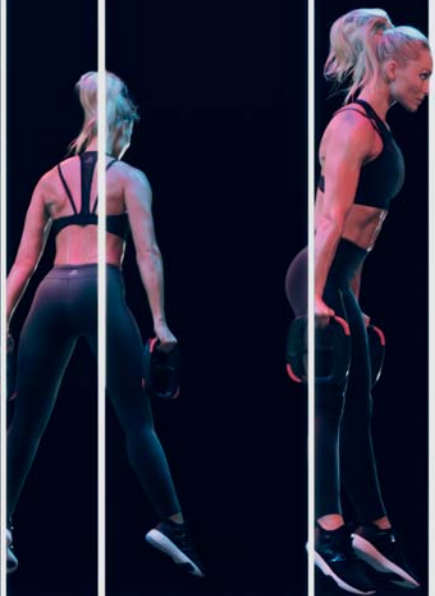
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PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GYM GROUP

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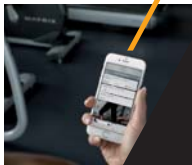
Conference season is in full swing

GET MORE

MIRRORING A SUCCESSFUL SHOW AT IHRSA '18, MATRIX FITNESS IS ALSO EXPANDING ITS PRESENCE AT FIBO '18, SHOWCASING SEVERAL NEW, INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS WITH A DEDICATED EDUCATION AREA, OFFERING FREE SEMINARS, LIVE DEMOS, CONNECTED TECHNOLOGY TOURS AND MUCH MORE.

A major highlight for Matrix at this years show includes a line-up of new commercial connected cardio and strength equipment, alongside group training, technology and education. The research and development team at Matrix global have had an intense 12 months but have subsequently created the most advanced digital ecosystem on the market - alongside a revolution in HIIT training - the S-Force Performance Trainer.

CONNECTED SOLUTIONS



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FIBO 2018 is the first year that new UK Managing Director, Matt Pengelly will be attending alongside his sales and marketing team. In his 10th month with the company, he's made an enormous impact, from improving staff engagement and morale to transforming sales with new structure and insight

Matt comments:

"IHRSA and FIBO 2018 are the perfect platform to showcase and launch these exciting products to our customers. Looking forward, Matrix is redefining the fitness industry in 2018, making for a challenging, although very positive year for Matrix Fitness UK"

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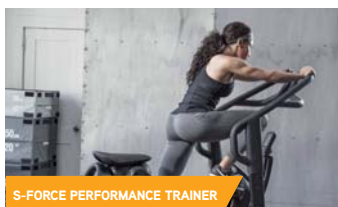
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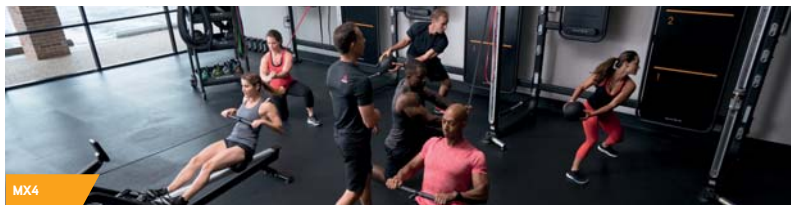
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MX4

Matrix Fitness continues to challenge the expected and deliver the unexpected as witnessed at IHRSA. FIBO 2018 plans to be no different, watch this space...

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MEET THE TEAM



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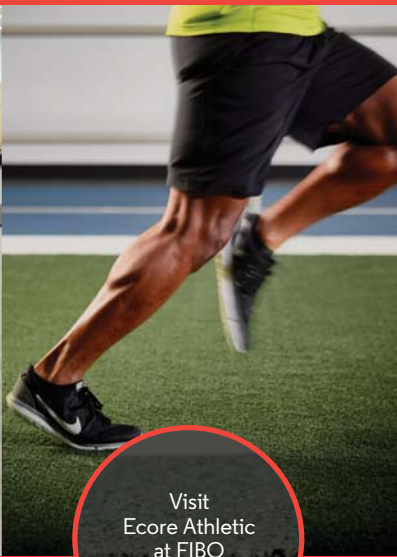
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PEOPLE

Leon's founding mission is to help people 'live and eat well' and wellbeing is a natural extension of this

JULIAN HITCH

DIRECTOR OF WELLBEING, LEON

When martial arts teacher Julian Hitch met John Vincent, the founder of healthy fast food chain Leon, two years ago, the food brand's official move into the fitness and wellbeing space was set in motion. Impressed with Hitch's expertise in wellbeing, Vincent brought him on board to lead the launch of Leon's first wellbeing centre, the Kwoon, in October.

THE KWON

The wellbeing centre, which is located above the restaurant chain's Eastcastle Street location in central London, has been designed around the ancient Chinese martial art of Wing Tsun Kung Fu and serves as a Zen-inspired space for achieving peace and relaxation in the heart of the British capital.

While martial arts classes are a key offering, other activities, such as Zumba, yoga, meditation, sound therapy, rebounder fitness and massages are available, free of charge, at the facility.

However, there is just one catch, explains Hitch. "It's a service provided primarily for Leon staff members."

He adds: "While we hold numerous wellness events for the general public, our focus, first and foremost, is on our own team members at Leon."

INSPIRING UPTAKE

The uptake has been "inspiring", says Hitch, with more than 1,500 members attending classes and activities since the Kwoon's soft launch last March.



John Vincent, the founder of Leon (left) with martial arts expert Julian Hitch

"Leon's founding mission is to help people to 'live and eat well' – and wellbeing is a natural extension of this," Hitch says. "For us, authenticity is important, so we want everything that we do to first be practised in our restaurants and by our staff."

Recognising the toll the work can take on staff who are on their feet all day, the Kwoon also offers a free injury rehabilitation service, as Hitch explains: "Wing Tsun teaches a concept called mini-max – that's minimal effort for maximum effect. In keeping with this, we offer something called AIS, which is active isolated stretching, it's a phenomenal injury prevention strategy."

THE ROAD AHEAD

"We're constantly developing our wellbeing concepts," says Hitch. "Our ultimate goal is to actively practice wellbeing in all our restaurants every day. At the end of January, we started training team members from every department in AIS, so our ability to help all our staff to stay healthy is significantly increasing."

"We're also aiming to have 'wellbeing champions' in every restaurant, develop new ergonomic programmes for our team members in the kitchen and provide rebounders in many of our restaurants."

■ Hitch is co-authoring a book with Vincent, called *Winning not Fighting*, which will be published by Penguin later this year. ►



Martial arts teacher Hitch led the launch of Leon's first wellbeing centre



The Kwoon exclusively caters for Leon staff



Steele joins the working group tasked with revising the chief medical officer's physical activity guidelines for adults

DR JAMES STEELE

RESEARCH LEAD, UKACTIVE

Dr James Steele has been appointed ukactive's principal investigator, spearheading the association's Research Institute ahead of a year of milestone research reports. Steele takes the reins from Dr Steven Mann as the not-for-profit's research lead.

So who is James Steele? Alongside his role at ukactive, he's also associate professor of sports and exercise science at Southampton Solent University, providing an effective link between university-based academic work, the real-world intervention studies of the ukactive Research Institute and ukactive's members and partners.

Steele arrived at Southampton Solent University as an undergraduate in 2007, completing a degree in applied sport

science in 2010 before choosing to continue studying towards his PhD.

During his degree, he worked with sports players at all levels, including international and Paralympic, while also studying a range of age groups, from schoolchildren to the elderly. In his PhD, he focused on people suffering chronic lower back pain and investigated the use of resistance training in its treatment.

RESISTANCE TRAINING

Steele has worked across a range of areas of physical activity and exercise, although his work has primarily revolved around resistance training.

Steele's research has demonstrated that simple applications of resistance training can be very effective and he has developed a keen interest in its

potential as a mode of exercise in the area of public health. This interest has expanded to a wider interest in the value of physical activity and exercise in the health and wellbeing of the nation.

Steele has recently been appointed to the working group tasked with revising the chief medical officer's physical activity guidelines for adults. The group is scheduled to produce a technical report with recommendations.

Current guidance recommends that adults get at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity per week.

Leading the ukactive Research Institute, Steele plans to further upweight major research taking place to increase the evidence base around physical activity and exercise. The ultimate goal is to illuminate the ways in which exercise benefits health. ▶

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DARRYL PRESTON

FOUNDER, CORE NATION FITNESS

“

I was approached by my rowing club to do more with their amazing facility, which is located on the river. I decided to create a comprehensive, branded group exercise experience

”

You've created a group exercise offering within a rowing club. How did this come about?

I've been involved in the fitness industry for over 30 years, working with many of the UK's founding fitness brands and leading cruise line brands, developing fitness programmes and consulting on studio design.

I could see that the industry was ready to reinvent itself. There appeared to be a shift away from the big chains as people started to demand more from their classes, their instructors and the overall experience of exercising. There was a call for a more intimate facility, not too far removed from the initial industry experiences in the early 1990s.

I was approached by my rowing club – Eton Excelsior Rowing Club – to do more with their amazing facility,

which is located on the River Thames at Bray, Berkshire. After some deliberation, I decided the time was right to commit to the project and create a comprehensive, branded group exercise experience.

What is the offering?

The Core Nation Fitness programme has been created by industry professionals with decades of experience. The aim is to inspire all generations of participants and to assist them in reaching their goals. We use a pay-as-you-go model, with no contracts, no membership fees and no cancellation policy.

Classes take place in a quiet, dedicated studio space within the rowing club, which overlooks the Thames. We offer a range of functional training, pilates and yoga classes. We're also introducing indoor cycling to the schedule this summer.

All of our classes have been designed as high quality, user friendly, non-intimidating and achievable

programmes that are delivered with professional instruction in an inclusive and motivating environment.

What are the benefits for the club?

Even though Core Nation Fitness will be operating as a separate business, income generated by the programme will be passed on to Eton Excelsior Rowing Club, allowing it to grow and mature.

Additional revenue is essential for any volunteer-managed rowing club, and the revenues that are raised will allow for the purchase of more rowing-based equipment and upgrades to the club house, which in turn improves the overall experience for the rowing members.

In addition, bringing members of the public into the club will no doubt result in some of them deciding to get involved in rowing, which will mean a growing membership base for the club itself.

The programme is also providing additional training opportunities for the rowing club members, allowing them to cross-train more effectively and improve their own rowing experience.

Do you plan to include any rowing machine classes?

I have started to introduce rowing machine training in my GFX45 (Group Functional X-Training) classes. In addition, we have a complete rowing machine-based HIIT class format that I created a number of years ago and have successfully implemented.

Are there any plans to expand to other spaces?

The Core Nation Fitness product has been created with expansion in mind. I've built a fully integrated online platform for the specific requirements of both the operator and the end user, which means that this programme could be implemented in any similar sports facility around the country or implemented in a standalone studio site. ●

Darryl Preston has 30 years' experience in the fitness industry



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Anytime Fitness opens 4,000th club – targets Antarctica

US-based franchise operator Anytime Fitness has this month opened its 4,000th club.

The company reached the milestone with the launch of a site in Shanghai, China on 16 March – its 11th club in a country where it is currently the only operating US-based fitness franchise.

Since its launch in 2002, Anytime has grown exponentially and last year revealed plans to have 500 clubs in China by 2020.

According to CEO and co-founder Chuck Runyon, the firm is also formalising agreements with a number of master franchisees to open 75 Anytime clubs in Morocco over the next 10 years.

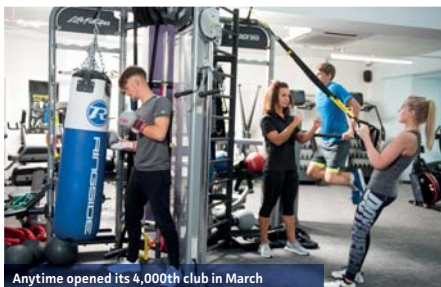
If successful, the deal will mark the group's entry into the African fitness market and secure the sixth continent for Anytime operations.

Runyon, however, has his sights set on one more



It may sound like an audacious goal, but we're very serious about it

Chuck Runyon



Anytime opened its 4,000th club in March

continent and has revealed ambitious – if quirky – plans to pursue the opening of a club in Antarctica, with the view to becoming the first franchised business to operate on all seven continents.

"We've already begun exploring options for Antarctica," he said. "It's going to happen – and sooner than you might think."

More: http://lei.sr?a=h2W4y_H

GOCO Hospitality invests in fitness brand Space Cycle

International wellness
consultancy GOCO Hospitality has entered into a strategic partnership with fitness company Space Cycle. Joining other investors, including Alibaba, GOCO will help bring the firm to a wider international market.

Space Cycle, the brainchild of former music industry

executive Matthew Allison, is a workout that involves high-intensity cycling combined with motivational playlists.

"We see Space Cycle as the leading brand changing the relationship of group fitness," said Ingo Schweder, founder and CEO of GOCO Hospitality.

More: http://lei.sr?a=p2q8J_H

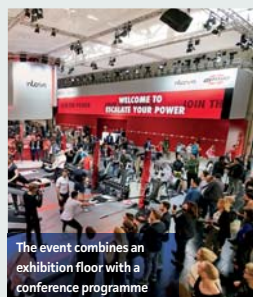


Details confirmed for first ever FIBO USA event

Reed Exhibitions has confirmed the dates and venue for the first ever FIBO USA fitness trade show later this year.

The event will take place between 6 and 8 December at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida. FIBO USA is part of Reed's strategy to expand FIBO's global activities.

While the main concept of FIBO – combining a large exhibition floor with a



The event combines an exhibition floor with a conference programme

conference featuring seminars and keynote speeches – will remain the same, the US edition will be calibrated to cater for the US market.

More: http://lei.sr?a=m9N6m_H

UFC Gym announces plan to enter European fitness market

Franchised chain UFC Gym has revealed plans to open 100 fitness clubs across the UK and Ireland – marking the company's entry into the European market.

The US-based chain – a brand extension of the world's largest mixed martial arts organisation, The Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) – has signed a 10-year partnership with TD Lifestyle, which will operate the sites.

TD Lifestyle is a venture set up to manage the portfolio. The ownership group includes former UFC middleweight champion Michael Bisping – who made history in 2016 as UFC's first

British champion – and former British karate heavyweight champion Joe Long.

The partnership with TD Lifestyle is the largest development partnership in the company's history.

"We are thrilled to announce this exclusive partnership and expand UFC Gym's global footprint throughout Europe," UFC Gym



This historic partnership serves as a milestone and an opportunity

Adam Sedlack



Each UFC Gym will feature the famous Octagon

president Adam Sedlack said. "This historic partnership serves as a milestone and an opportunity for both UFC and UFC Gym brands, as the UK and Ireland markets have a significant population of MMA fans and fitness enthusiasts."

UFC Gym will offer three formats – Signature, Core and Class – offering the choice of a full-range of functional fitness classes, group and private MMA training.

More: http://lei.sr?a=6B3K5_H

Club W in Sydney to help older women "live longer and well"

Fitness industry veteran, Tony de Leede has opened the inaugural Club W in Sydney, Australia.

Positioned as a women-only lifestyle space, the 400sq m club specifically targets older women – what de Leede calls the "forgotten generation" of Baby Boomers who have never really engaged with gyms and fitness in the traditional sense.

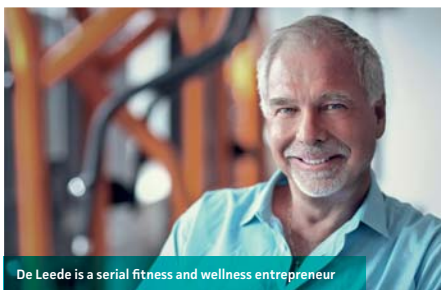
"Club W is a modern space where women can immerse themselves in health and wellness and recharge, restore and connect with others," de Leede told *Health Club Management*.

"I refer to it as a second home, based on activity and community and where you feel comfortable and safe," he said.

The AU\$650,000 club opened on 11 March and is based around a wellness lounge area, where members can relax and socialise.

In addition to the social spaces; there's also a strong focus on movement, with four virtual studios offering Move123 classes.

These cover eight categories – yoga, pilates, stretch, strength, dance, fight, cardio and meditation – and range in length from five to 30 minutes.



De Leede is a serial fitness and wellness entrepreneur

Complementing the four virtual studios is an 'active education' room – a small gym space kitted out with treadmills and recumbent bikes, where four large screens at the front of the room

allow members to access a pre-set schedule of Mind123 educational programmes – videos that offer lifestyle advice on a variety of topics.

More: http://lei.sr?a=t4m9v_H

Exercise4Less to open 10 clubs in 2018 – will reach 50 sites by June

Low-cost gym operator Exercise4Less will open its 50th UK club in Chesterfield later this year.

The 30,000sq ft (2,800sq m) site, due to open in June, will house a large free-weights area, a 50m sprint track, a self-contained ladies-only gym, large main studio and spin studio offering 200 free classes every month.

There will also be a functional training zone, dedicated 4Fit personal

training area and a combat zone, complete with boxing ring and MMA cage.

The opening is part of the budget chain's accelerating expansion plans, which will see 10 new clubs opening throughout 2018.

The company opened three new sites in 2017.

Launched in 2009 by entrepreneur Jon Wright, Exercise4Less currently has nearly 350,000 members – 30 per cent of whom have never



Jon Wright is scaling up Exercise4Less

previously been members of a health club or gym.

"The goal has always been to disrupt the fitness industry – not only by getting more people active, but also by running health clubs that appeal to a mainstream audience," Wright said.

"Unlike other budget operators, we're not selling on price, we thrive on 'changing lives' and feel the ability to offer more than the consumer imagined is what will help us grow."

More: http://lei.sr?a=X7P4K_H

Virgin Active relaunches Kensington club

Virgin Active has relaunched its Kensington Collection Club in West London as part of its UK-wide redevelopment programme.

Following a "substantial investment", Virgin has added a total of 502sq m (5,400sq ft) of new studio space to the flagship Kensington club as it looks to create a "hospitality-led, studio-rich environment".

Virgin has identified studios and group exercise as its focus and enhancements are now being made at a further seven clubs – including sites in Angel, Wandsworth and Mayfair in London.

During 2018, an additional 24 programmable spaces will be added across the estate, with 17 studios and a floor space increase of 15 per cent.



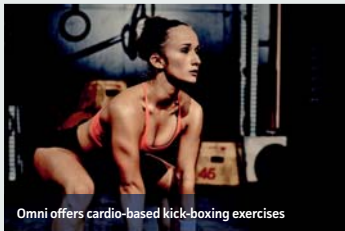
Robert Cook, Virgin Active managing director

The redevelopments are at the heart of Virgin Active's 360-degree wellness strategy, which is underpinned by an "awareness of member need."

Robert Cook, Virgin Active's managing director, added: "The Kensington Collection Club is the finest example yet of how we create 360-degree wellness environments."

More: http://lei.sr?a=R7S7G_H

US-based Omni Fight Club plans entry to UK market



Omni offers cardio-based kick-boxing exercises

Omni Fight Club has become the latest US-based franchise to enter the UK fitness market.

The cardio kickboxing experience, which operates under the slogan 'Fun Tough Fitness', has appointed property specialist Savills to seek its first UK sites as part of the brand's expansion into Europe. The first Omni-branded club opened in Georgia, US in 2005 and the

company has expanded rapidly across the US.

Omni Fight Club has now secured master franchisees for the UK, Ireland, Spain and Portugal, enabling the brand's European roll out.

In the UK, it's seeking sites of between 242sq m and 502sq m, located in areas of high population.

More: http://lei.sr?a=t8Q5q_H

The Gym Group 'still breaking records' as profits increase

The Gym Group has posted record revenues and profits as it strengthens its position in the UK's low-cost fitness sector.

Speaking to *Health Club Management*, CEO John Treharne said: "The year was one of many milestones for the Gym Group. It's great to see we're still breaking records after 10 years."

Reporting results for the year ending 31 December

2017, the company posted pre-tax profits (EBITDA) of £28m, an increase of 23.2 per cent on the 2016 figure of £22.7m. Revenue during the year increased by 24.3 per cent, from £73.5m to £91.4m.

"In terms of milestones, we opened our 100th club in 2017 and recorded our highest ever opening-day membership," said Treharne.

"We also had a record 26.7 million gym visits during 2017 – up from 21.7 million in 2016



CEO John Treharne will open 20 more clubs in 2018

– and achieved the busiest day ever in one of our gyms, with 2,364 people visiting in a 24-hour period."

On the development front, the group added 39

new clubs during 2017 – 21 new openings and 18 from the acquisitions of Lifestyle Fitness and Rush Fitness.

More: http://lei.sr?a=3b2u3_H

Bannatyne CEO Justin Musgrove predicts "further growth"

Health club operator Bannatyne Group has posted a 57 per cent increase in profits, thanks to a record turnover of £117.6m.

Announcing its results for the year up to 31 December 2017, the group reported overall profits of £14.3m.

It acquired four new sites during the year and spent £14m modernising its portfolio of 71 premium health clubs.

Following customer demand for a more holistic approach to wellness, Bannatyne also opened nine new spas in 2018, taking the total number of spas in its portfolio to 46.

As a result, spa revenue reached £16.5m for the year – an increase of more than 13 per cent on the year before.

According to CEO Justin Musgrove, the group is operating in a marketplace "that has strong fundamental growth drivers". He said that

there will be "significant further growth" during 2018.

"We're seeking to expand the business further, through both organic growth – as our current reinvested estate potential is realised – and by careful acquisition," Musgrove said.

"We're excited about prospects for 2018, a year which has started well, with more than 19,000 new members signed up to date, which is another record."

He added that during 2017, the company absorbed a number of "cost headwinds",

such as the increases in national and living wage and the apprenticeship levy.

At the end of December 2017, Bannatyne employed more than 3,000 people – up 10 per cent on 2016 figures.

More: http://lei.sr?a=3b2u3_H

Musgrove expects further growth in 2018



First qualifications in trampoline park monitoring handed out

Forty members of staff at trampoline park operator Oxygen Freejumping in Derby have become the first in the UK to gain the new Level 2 Trampoline Park Court Monitor qualification.

The first formal qualification of its kind, the training programme has been developed by health and safety experts Right Directions and has been given Active IQ Regulated Qualification status.

The three-day training course includes practical scenarios and workshops and an Emergency First Aid at Work (EFAW) qualification.

Valid for three years, the Level 2 qualification will require court monitors to complete work-based CPD as part of the retention of the certification, which will be completed in-house as ongoing training.

Staff will be required to attend a one-day refresher course every three years and renew their Emergency First Aid certificate.

Gill Twell, head of group development and Quest operations for Right Directions, said: "With trampolining becoming increasingly popular, there is a clear need to ensure we set high standards for safety.



The first cohort of graduates at Oxygen Freejumping

"This qualification will also assist the trampolining park industry to raise their profile and give customers additional confidence that staff who

are supervising the parks hold a nationally recognised qualification."

More: http://lei.sr?a=x6p4w_H

Customer Engagement Academy to improve member services

A new research and educational initiative aims to help fitness operators improve the customer experience they offer, by providing insight into their member interactions.

The Customer Engagement Academy (CEA), launched

in partnership by member engagement software provider TRP and a university academic, will aim to establish itself as a resource for research carried out in the field, as well as real-world examples of best practice.



We have some really exciting plans for where we can take the CEA over the next few years

Mike Hills, general manager, TRP



One of the first pieces of research CEA will undertake is an annual study measuring changes in customer engagement practices.

CEA will be led by TRP's general manager Mike Hills – who will chair the organisation – and Dr Melvyn Hillsdon, associate professor of sport and health sciences at University of Exeter in the UK, who will take up the position of honorary president.

Hills said: "We felt the industry was missing a resource like the CEA.

"As experts in the field of customer engagement within health, wellness and fitness, we saw this as a gap we were obliged to fill.

"We have some really exciting plans for where we can take the CEA over the next few years."

More: http://lei.sr?a=6q9f8_H



A new academy has launched to research customer engagement

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Free gym entry could 'increase activity across all social groups'

Offering free access to gyms and leisure centres – and promoting them heavily – could have dramatic results on the health of communities.

That's the finding of a study into Re:refresh, a subsidised activity access scheme which has been running for a decade in Blackburn and Darwen, a local authority in the north west of England.

The Re:refresh campaign – launched in 2008 – has removed access fees for gyms and leisure centres and coupled this with a strong marketing drive, as well as the appointment of five extra community health trainers.

As a result, the facilities involved in the scheme received 26,400 extra physical activity swim and gym visits per quarter – in a borough of 150,000 people.

Re:refresh has also seen the proportion of the population taking part in monthly physical activities increase from just 3 per cent to 15 per cent – with levels of participation being more pronounced in disadvantaged socioeconomic groups.

The scheme is a joint initiative driven by the NHS and local authorities. It costs the NHS about £1m per year, in addition to the £3m of



Re:refresh has increased activity levels from 3 to 15 per cent

funding which comes from the local authority.

"The Re:refresh approach shows a community-based multi-pronged public health intervention can increase

activity and reduce health inequalities," said Dr Rupert Suckling, director of public health at Doncaster Council.

More: http://lei.sr?z=D3r6X_H

New training levy under fire as apprenticeship numbers fall

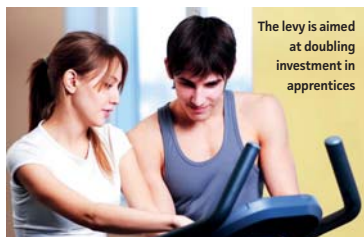
The number of people starting new apprenticeships has fallen by a third, igniting worries that the government's new apprenticeship levy is having an adverse effect on companies taking on apprentices.

According to government figures, apprenticeship starts in November 2017 were down by 35 per cent, when compared with 2016. The

latest decline follows an even more dramatic fall in the May to June 2017 quarter, when the number of young people starting apprenticeships fell by 59 per cent.

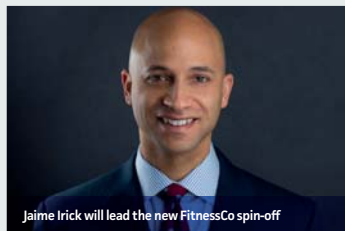
The levy is at the centre of the government's plans to double investment in apprenticeships in the UK, from £1.25bn (in 2010) to £2.5bn by 2020.

More: http://lei.sr?z=N5T4E_H



The levy is aimed at doubling investment in apprentices

Brunswick reveals plans to spin off US\$1bn Life Fitness



Jaime Irick will lead the new FitnessCo spin-off

US-based manufacturing conglomerate Brunswick has announced plans to spin off its fitness business, forming an independent, publicly-traded company called FitnessCo.

The move will see Brunswick's fitness brands – Life Fitness, Hammer Strength, Cybex, Indoor Cycling Group

and SCIFIT – being operated by the new company.

In a statement, Brunswick said the move would allow it to better focus on "driving product leadership, operational excellence and technology development."

More: http://lei.sr?z=U8c9d_H



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Bid platform hires McCurtin

WeBuyGymEquipment.com, a UK-based bidding platform for fitness equipment, has announced two new appointments after revealing plans to expand into the European and US markets.

Daniel Jones, CEO of WeBuyGymEquipment.com, described the expansion as a natural progression for the company.

Industry veteran Tracy

McCurtin, who previously served as a hospitality sector and key account manager for the EMEA region at Precor, will head up the EMEA division of the business.

Company CEO Daniel Jones says: "Having Tracy join the team is a real coup for WeBuyGymEquipment.com. Her 13 years' experience at Precor will be invaluable to our business."

The company has also named Rhys Jones as the UK sales executive. Jones has more than 15 years sales experience in the fitness and recruitment sectors.

In addition to the expansion, Jones has announced that the platform will be entering its final stage of development, which will see it become fully automated, including both logistics and online payment processes.



Tracy McCurtin joins from Precor

More: <http://lei.sr?a=F1h3j>

Gibbs to chair Ridgeway

Changing room furniture

specialist Ridgeway has strengthened its management team with the appointment of John Gibbs as chair.

Gibbs joins Ridgeway at a time of dramatic growth for the company, which has seen turnover increase by more than 20 per cent over five years.

An industry veteran with more than 25 years' experience in developing changing rooms and locker solutions at the highest level, Gibbs will be tasked with helping the company meet the challenges provided by the consistent growth it's experiencing.

Mark Cutler, managing director, said: "John's expertise in thinking outside of the box in developing innovative solutions and his experience in



handling rapid growth will both be a tremendous asset to Ridgeway. He will help us achieve the vision we have set for the next five years".

More: <http://lei.sr?a=E4k6v>



John's expertise in developing innovative solutions and experience in handling rapid growth will be a tremendous asset to Ridgeway

Mark Cutler, MD, Ridgeway

Core Health & Fitness names senior management team

Fitness equipment giant Core Health & Fitness has announced two major appointments, following the retirement of its MD and industry veteran John Gamble in November.

Adrian Message will take up Gamble's role as EMEA managing director, while Peter Webb has been named the new vice president of EMEA sales.

Message has more than 30 years' experience in the fitness industry and has held executive roles at

both suppliers (Life Fitness, Technogym) and club operators (Fitness First).

Webb – a former club operations director for Holmes Place – has a 21-year career in fitness and for the past 12 years has headed up the Core Health & Fitness' export team as EMEA general manager.

Commenting on his new role, Message said: "I'm looking forward to putting my industry experience into enhancing our customer offering and supporting our team in developing their



Core's Adrian Message, left and Peter Webb

roles and careers".

US-based Core Health & Fitness supplies a wide range of fitness products under the Star Trac, StairMaster,

Schwinn and Nautilus brands and currently employs more than 400 people worldwide.

More: http://lei.sr?a=V6f2x_H

Resistance training burns more fat than calorie count suggests

The results of a new study suggest that counting calories may not be the best way to measure the effectiveness of exercise as a means to lose fat.

A study, conducted by Auckland University of Technology in New Zealand, shows that different

workouts have different effects on the hormonal and physiological changes that take place in people's bodies, even if they burn the same number of calories. The study showed that certain types of exercise can trigger far greater fat-burning and other healthy responses



HGH oxidises fat and builds lean muscle tissue – and that's important because muscle burns more calories than fat

Bryce Hastings



The Les Mills study looked at HGH levels after training

in the body than calorie counting suggests.

For the research, the Auckland University team compared the levels of Human Growth Hormone (HGH) present in subjects after they had completed resistance training – in the form of Bodypump, a low-weight resistance training class by Les Mills International – and cardio cycling workouts.

The results showed that

those completing a resistance training session had HGH levels 56 per cent higher than those in the cardio test group.

Bryce Hastings, head of research for Les Mills International, said: "HGH oxidises fat and builds lean muscle tissue. That's important for ongoing calorie expenditure, because muscle burns more calories than fat."

More: http://lei.sr?a=p5v2F_H



There's been a huge increase in people doing HIIT

HIIT 'takes over from swimming'

The latest Active Lives Adult Survey has shown a shift away from traditional physical activities to more "modern" forms of exercise.

While both swimming and cycling have suffered falls in participation numbers – 283,000 and 93,000 people respectively – there's been a

huge increase in the number of people doing interval training sessions, such as HIIT classes. The survey, conducted by Sport England, shows that 518,000 people regularly take part in HIIT at home or at the gym.

More: http://lei.sr?a=v9B8F_H

Exercise in old age prevents immune system from declining

Regular exercise in older age can prevent the human immune system from declining and protect people against illness, according to a study by King's College London and the University of Birmingham.

A study of amateur, older cyclists found that many had levels of physiological

function that would place them at a much younger age, when compared to the general population.

The study, published in the *Aging Cell* journal, showed that loss of muscle mass and strength did not occur in those who exercise regularly.

More: http://lei.sr?a=p4n2G_H

Active people have younger bodies





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I have to do everything in my power to make Fitness First Germany a great, sustainable company again

MARTIN SEIBOLD

The new CEO of Fitness First Germany talks to Kate Cracknell about buying up the competition and a three-year plan to prepare for sale

Fitness First Germany is a very different proposition from Fitness First UK and the situation we faced when we came in to turn that business around," says Martin Seibold, who's been CEO of Fitness First Germany since November 2017.

"Ultimately the brief is the same: to get the business ready for sale. But where the UK required huge investment just to get the clubs up to scratch, as well as a significant streamlining of the portfolio – we went from 180 clubs to 60 – the German business is built on stronger foundations.

"The German clubs are in good shape and are in excellent locations: I expect to reduce the estate from 73 to 60–65. The people are strong too: in the UK, I changed 92 per cent of the general managers in the first 18 months, whereas in Germany all I've done is move people around. They've been with the business a long time – an average of six to eight years among club managers. Even the receptionists and fitness instructors have been with us for ages. It gives us a very strong base on which to build the business and prepare for the future."

REVIVING THE BUSINESS

For Seibold, the move to Fitness First Germany takes him full circle. His career began there in 1998 as marketing manager and he worked his way through the ranks to become MD in 2004.

In 2006, he moved to Fitness First UK as COO to help turn the business around – a project that lasted until 2009, when he took on a global role. He was called back to run the UK business as MD in 2012 – a role he held until April 2017, overseeing the sale of the UK business and its integration with buyer DW Fitness.



Seibold prepared Fitness First's UK business for sale and is doing the same in Germany

"I'm very proud of how those two businesses have integrated, with DW keeping the Fitness First team and the brands running in parallel – but for me, the time had come for a new challenge," says Seibold. "I wanted to leverage and build on my learnings of selling a business.

"I started consulting for Fitness First Germany, and in autumn 2017 the role of CEO presented itself. And it's such a cool job! As I say, the business has strong foundations, which means right now, in year one, we can leap straight into things we were doing in the UK in year three.

"I realised quickly what a opportunity the German business is. Already, by November 2017, we were seeing 10 to 15 per cent more joiners on a like-for-like basis, compared with 2016. Of course, it was low that year, but that's still a fast response to a change in direction."

A THREE-YEAR PLAN

"What I learned from the UK business is that people need a very clear plan. Even if they don't follow it 100 per cent, you need to provide it right at the beginning. So I immediately laid out a three-year

plan split into three distinct phases: alignment, refinement and breakout.

"The **alignment** stage is about focusing the business around your core purpose: what do you want to achieve? Why do people want to work at the business? What can the customer expect from us?

"You then make sure all your equipment and facilities are in order and that you have good staff. You create the product and standards you want to be known for.

"In the **refinement** phase, you build on your product, creating innovative training programmes and experiences, continuing ►



Unquestionably the most important thing we've done – and by far the biggest change in the business – has been empowering all the general managers to make their own decisions



The German business has now adopted Fitness First's bold new identity

- to develop your staff and returning good profit margins to the business.

"And then in the final **breakout** phase, you push the boundaries to achieve exceptional, best-in-class standards across the board, and you drive the business into strong growth."

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING?

For now, the Fitness First Germany business is firmly in the alignment phase. "In autumn 2017, we spent over €4m freshening up the clubs, with around two-thirds of that going on the facilities

and the rest on equipment," says Seibold. "Another €4m was spent between December and February – this time two-thirds on equipment, one-third on facilities – and there will be another wave of investment in the summer."

He continues: "We spent almost €1m just painting the clubs to get away from a colour scheme that was purple and brown and magenta. We've also taken out anything that was getting in the way of staff talking to members: we've removed most of the turnstiles, for example, so the receptionists' role is now

much less about managing queues and much more about welcoming members.

"Every decision we've made has been focused on the member and how they will benefit. We haven't invested in anything that didn't have a direct, positive impact on them. But in terms of the clubs, it was about a doing a refresh.

EMPOWERING MANAGERS

"Unquestionably the most important thing we've done – and by far the biggest change in the business – has been empowering all the general managers

Membership sales grew by 15 per cent within months of the new plan coming into effect





Seibold has spent his career in senior positions at Fitness First

to make their own decisions. We have great GMs who know their market and members far better than anyone at head office possibly could, but up until now, everything has been dictated by HQ.

"On 1 December we turned this on its head. We're now letting the clubs plan their own future, inviting the GMs to run them more entrepreneurially, as if they were in charge of their own businesses.

"To encourage our teams to try new things, we've even hijacked the 'FF' of Fitness First and introduced a philosophy we're calling *fehler feiern*, which translates

as 'celebrate failures'. We know that if we empower our people, they will have many triumphs, but also that they will make a few mistakes, but we've decided these will be celebrated.

"It's definitely the bravest thing I've done in my career, and of course there was some nervousness in the business, but it's staggering how quickly you can ignite people with this approach. We have good people in the business. We just needed to re-enthusiast them and give them their belief back in the company. Now we have a team that's smiling, positive and that's really got its mojo back."

LOCAL DECISION MAKING

He continues: "GMs can now change their opening hours without checking with us. They can decide what SKUs are best for their club when it comes to their F&B. If they have new ideas for group exercise classes, that's great: 20 per cent of the timetable is open to them trying whatever they think will work for their members. I've asked them what equipment they want in their clubs – we won't tell them what they have to have – and if they want to move existing gym equipment around, they can do so.

"We also asked every club manager to put together a three-year outlook of what they felt their club could deliver – if the right elements were in place – with

MARTIN SEIBOLD CAREER MAP

- ◆ 1998 Fitness First Germany marketing manager
- ◆ 2004 Fitness First Germany managing director
- ◆ 2006 Fitness First UK COO
- ◆ 2009 Fitness First global role
- ◆ 2012 - 17 Fitness First UK MD
- ◆ 2017 Fitness First Germany consultant
- ◆ 2017 Fitness First Germany CEO



Every Friday, all our members are allowed to bring a friend along to the club for free.

Since we started doing this, sales numbers are soaring and retention is also improving

a focus on the things that would have a customer impact. We also asked them what investment they'd need to achieve these outcomes and then created a three-year plan based on their figures.

"Ultimately what's happening, through the empowerment of individual clubs, is that we're becoming a local business."

A NETWORK MODEL

But will this empowerment lead to more disruptive diversity across the business at a time when the focus is on working to streamline and redefine what it stands for?

"Not at all," says Seibold. "We have the same basic model for all clubs. Any clubs that didn't fit within this – the club in Cologne that used to offer functional



Fitness First club managers are being empowered to run their own clubs like entrepreneurs

► training only, for example – have now been given all the things you'd expect in a health club. Yes, there's flexibility within that for the GMs to try out classes and look at the balance of equipment, but the overall model is essentially the same.

"What we're doing is maximising the value of our network – things such as the fact we have multiple clubs in a city.

"We're giving each club between one and three highlight features. We have eight clubs in Hamburg, for example, but I don't need eight pools, so three clubs have pools, one has Crosstraining, another has Jumping Fitness, in another there's a big Olympic platform, the next has a big running track. You have your core offering, and then – based on the

local demographics – each club has its own 'sexy' features, with a studio timetable adjusted to suit the market."

Seibold continues: "To make this network concept work, we made every single one of our memberships reciprocal, without it costing members any more. What usually happens in December is that people get an email telling them about a price increase for January. We didn't do that. We sent them a message saying: 'Great news – you can now use more clubs. You're in tier 3, paying €60, so you can now train at 40 clubs' or 'You're paying €85. That means you're in tier 1, so you can now train at every Fitness First club in Germany'.

FREE ON FRIDAYS

"We've also taken advantage of the fact that, in German, *Freitag* – Friday – means 'free day'. Every Friday, all our members are allowed to bring a friend along to the club for free. Sales numbers are soaring and retention is also improving.

"And we've simplified our pricing structure, with one starting price per club: from €35 to €85 depending on location and services. Say your club costs €50 a month on a 24-month contract. If you want a 12-month contract, just add €10. If you want a one-month contract, add another €10. If you want off-peak, subtract €10. It's as simple as that."



By 2019, all staff – including sales people and front of house – will have a fitness certification



Seibold is aiming to build Fitness First Germany to attract a trade sale or private equity deal

So far so very good then – enough of a change that Seibold has felt justified in switching from the old Fitness First logo to the new, dynamic, red brand. But what comes next for Fitness First Germany?

CERTIFIED TRAINING

"Let's talk first about our staff," says Seibold. "In phase one it's a cultural shift, embedding a sense of why you should work for Fitness First: to interact with people and to motivate them to train."

"The next phase will be about improving the calibre of staff. We have our own Fitness First Academy, which is a certified training provider. We'll look to grow revenue by training more non-Fitness First staff and also use the Academy to ensure that by 2019, all staff – not just fitness instructors – have a fitness certification."

"I want to develop multi-skilled staff, so we can redefine people's roles and they're not limited to being a receptionist or a trainer – they can be all of those things. It's more fulfilling for them and also means members can form relationships with people they meet at all touchpoints throughout the club."

"In the third year, we want to create 'entrepreneur' club teams so everyone working for Fitness First sees their club as their own. We want to be best in class."

He continues: "We're working on a number of things in terms of our offering:



At the moment, Fitness First has 13 sites in Berlin, but we should have 30. In Hamburg we have eight, but we should have 15

digital memberships in partnership with Wexer, for example, with app-based workouts for members; an improved online shop, again working with a partner to broaden it out to encompass hundreds of products; and partnerships in areas such as healthcare and health insurance.

"Over the past few years I've learned two key lessons: you don't have to give everything away, but equally you don't have to do everything yourself. You can expand and deliver the services and experiences members want by partnering with experts in their respective fields."

"From a commercial viewpoint, if I can achieve all this I'll have a strong consumer-facing brand, which in turn means I can increase prices and drive profitability."

Seibold's three-year timeframe will require bold steps to get the business in shape for a sale and his plan factors this in. "We want to own the premium mid-market segment," he says, "And we're aiming to do that by buying clubs."

"At the moment, Fitness First has 13 sites in Berlin, but we should have 30. In Hamburg, we have eight but we should have 15. This applies to all our club portfolio in metropolitan areas."

GETTING READY FOR SALE

"There's so much scope for us to make acquisitions and rapid growth becomes very manageable when you have a locally empowered business model," says Seibold.

"We won't go overboard at first, but just do it in one or two cities to show it works. It's about having a strong story to tell when we sell the business – about showing the potential and demonstrating that if you scale up to become market leader, it gives a good return."

"Then, once we've proven the model, we can hand over the business and say 'now you can do the same in the other cities', which keeps all options open in terms of buyers – whether that's another operator, or a private equity firm."

"The way I see my job over the next three years is simply to do everything in my power to make Fitness First Germany a great, sustainable company again." ●



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Functional training is overtaking traditional training methods

FUNCTION ROOM

Functional fitness is creating a revolution on the gym floor.

Kath Hudson asks the experts to assess the impact

Three out of the four most popular pieces of kit on the average gym floor are functional, according to ClubIntel's most recent research report.

Traditional functional equipment – such as bosu and medicine balls – are the most popular, being used by up to 76 per cent of members.

Treadmills are the most popular piece of cardio kit at 67 per cent and selectorised strength machines come in at 39 per cent. Interestingly, foam rollers are the fourth most

popular piece of kit, being used by 63 per cent of members, indicating an upsurge in indoor stretching. According to Stephen Tharrett, co-founder of ClubIntel, very few people were using foam rollers five years ago.

But what does this all mean for operators? Should clubs be extending functional areas? Creating stretching areas? Cutting down on cardio kit or traditional strength machines? Can the same gains be made with functional training, or does it have limitations? We open the floor for debate.



“More space for stretching is a burgeoning trend: East Bank Club of Chicago now offers stretching cubicles, so people can stretch privately”

Stephen Tharrett

Co-founder, ClubIntel

Functional training isn't a new trend: way back in the 1800s, people were using train wheels to do tyre flips. Plate loaded and selectorised equipment only came about when people who needed stabilisation wanted to work out.

The current use of non-traditional functional equipment has been driven by an increase in small group training. Millennials, in particular, really like these types of workouts and are influenced by celebrities and fitness instructors who highlight new trends via social media.

However, our research showed that clubs targeting an older demographic still favour free weights and more traditional functional equipment.

Selectorised and plate loaded equipment is very good for beginners and older people as you can start with the basics, but in contrast, functional workouts require a foundation of balance, agility and strength, which is beyond many deconditioned people and can sometimes be dangerous for them.

A third of clubs have a functional zone, and we're starting to see more clubs, including Equinox and Lifetime Fitness, removing chunks of their cardio equipment – especially steppers and bikes – and some selectorised equipment, to create functional zones.

More space for stretching is another burgeoning trend: East Bank Club of

Chicago now offers stretching cubicles, so people can stretch privately.

However, not all clubs should go down the route of creating large functional areas. It's less suitable for budget gyms, as they often have lower staffing levels and you need to be taught how to use functional equipment in order to be safe and benefit from it.

Also, clubs targeting people in the baby boomer generation should continue to offer more cardio and selectorised machines to this age group.

When buying kit and planning space, clubs need to look at their market, the business model and what their PTs favour to get the right balance.



East Bank Club Chicago offers private stretching cubicles



David Hughes working with athletes at Edinburgh University

▶ David Hughes

Strength and conditioning coach, Edinburgh University

Functional training – done using both traditional and non-traditional kit – has been providing the basis of training programmes at high performance level for decades. I use strength training with functional equipment as the starting point of my work with any new athlete, because it allows me to ensure they move properly.

The same principles apply to any health club member: functional training gets basic mobility right, which allows

people to not only function better in their everyday lives, but also to get better results out of all their training, wherever they do it, and to be less prone to injury.

Athletes working with free or fixed weights get strong, but they don't move better, and this can lead to limitations later on. Functional training teaches people how to move well and understand movement, which means they will get better results from other

training they do, including that which is done on resistance equipment.

I'd like to see gyms offering large functional rooms, where people could lift anywhere in the space. They'd need to be supported by well qualified, knowledgeable staff. Functional training classes could be offered and then members given a programme to use.

Although the need to coach on this equipment is sometimes seen as a negative, it builds interaction between staff and members, which is a good thing, and functional training areas tend to encourage people to be sociable, which is welcomed by the younger demographic.



David Hughes gives one-to-one coaching

“Functional training teaches people how to move well, which means they will get better results from other training they do, including that which is done on resistance equipment”



“The only time we see functional kit getting well used is when there are a lot of PTs or group exercise classes. When the class ends, the areas go back to very low usage”

Rory McGown

MD, GYMetrix

We've conducted surveys in almost 600 public, private and luxury gyms and carried out more than 100,000 face-to-face surveys and all our research points to the fact that despite more functional equipment being provided, not many gym members are using it.

We attach sensors to equipment to find out usage and back this up with face-to-face surveys, as well as researchers physically counting where people are working out. Our findings reflect that free weights are seeing the fastest rate of growth, followed

by resistance selectorised equipment (mainly cable crossovers and dual adjustable pulleys). Although cardio equipment is still the most used, this popularity is declining. Time spent using functional equipment is minimal.

According to our face-to-face surveys, 3.4 per cent of customers said functional was one of their favourite equipment types in 2018.

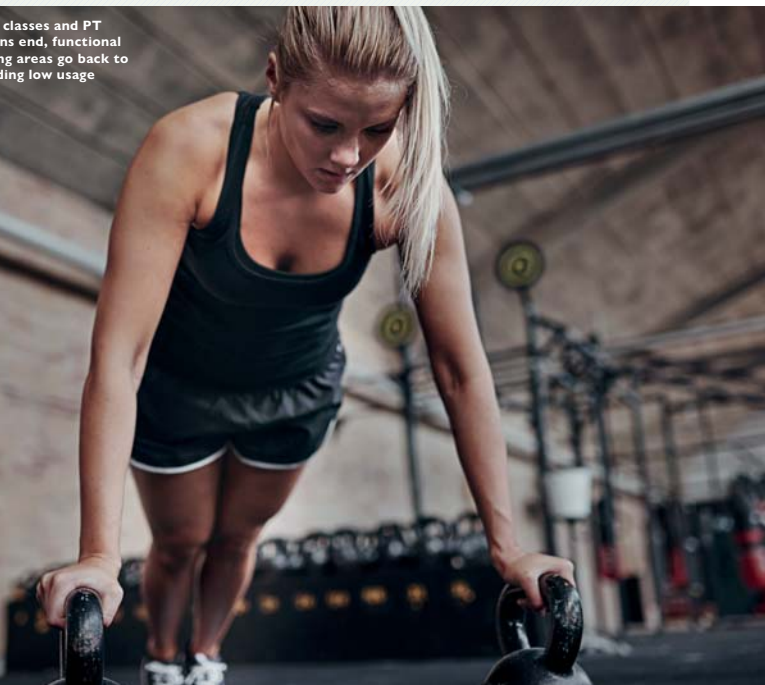
If we look at the people-counts, 4.3 per cent of customers are working out in functional areas and if we look at the sensor data attached to equipment, functional makes up just

2 per cent of total customer demand. This compares with 45 per cent on cardio, 23 per cent on free weights and 30 per cent on resistance.

The face of gyms has changed: gym floors have a lot more functional equipment, but the fact remains that uptake is low for much of the day and not really growing. The only time we see functional kit getting really well used is when there are a lot of PTs or during a group exercise class, which is great for half an hour, but when the class ends, the areas go back to recording very low usage.



When classes and PT sessions end, functional training areas go back to recording low usage



► **Andy McGlynn** **CEO, Squared Ventures**

Prior to joining the fitness industry in 2002, I was a marine and trained a lot with what could be termed non-traditional functional kit – beer kegs, logs and running with jerry cans and stretchers – just using what was available. It was fun and effective.

Functional fitness started getting popular around 2005, often driven by coaches bringing in their own kit: the main difference between functional equipment and traditional resistance machines is the need for coaching.

In the past few years, functional zones have become aesthetically pleasing and appeal to those who use a coach, people who get bored easily and early adopters.

Good gains can be made training with functional equipment, but you can't control the training variables in the same way – or as easily – as you can with traditional equipment, which targets muscles very specifically.

Now I'm gearing up to launch my own club in Manchester, I've had to think carefully about how to allocate space and budget. Because it's aimed at an informed audience, and to be different from the budget clubs, it will be divided into three areas: a strength and conditioning section with free weights and lifting platforms; a holistic area for low intensity activities like yoga and pilates and a functional area with a range of traditional and non-traditional kit.



Although I'm allowing space for non-traditional functional kit, I believe demand will stay strong for traditional equipment for some time yet. ●

“Good gains can be made, but you can't control the training variables in the same way, or as easily, as with traditional equipment, which target muscles specifically”

Andy McGlynn, Squared Ventures

■ JOIN THE DISCUSSION

What's your experience of providing and optimising functional training areas in your gym? We'd love to hear your views and feedback. Write to us at HCM@leisuremedia.com



PHOTO: COURTESY OF FITNESS FIRST

Physical

STRENGTH



FUNCTIONAL



FLOORING



STUDIO



*COMPLETE
FITNESS
SOLUTIONS*

COMBAT



MIND BODY



SPORT



WELLNESS



SKILLRUN

delivering an amazing running experience to members

Technogym launches SKILLRUN to deliver the very best in performance running

The evolution of the Technogym SKILL LINE continues with the launch of its third product – SKILLRUN.

Shattering all expectations of what a treadmill can be, SKILLRUN boasts a host of innovative features, making it one of the most versatile pieces of equipment on the market and able to meet the training requirements of both elite athletes and demanding fitness enthusiasts.

UNIQUE FEATURES

The SKILLRUN's innovative MULTIDRIVE TECHNOLOGY – a characteristic feature seen across all SKILL LINE products – enables users to perform running sessions and resistance workouts on the same piece of equipment, providing a well-rounded cardio and power training workout.

SKILLRUN is the only treadmill that incorporates resistance/power training exercises: SLED for maximum sprint and acceleration; PARACHUTE for top end speed and; RUN AGAINST RESISTANCE for lower body and core strength.

With a top end speed of 30km/h and gradient from –3 per cent up to an impressive 25 per cent, SKILLRUN offers a varied running session that can include hill sprints, rolling hills and decline work. Users can also change speed and gradient in an instant with QUICKPAD – a feature where a whole range of gradients and speeds are shown on the screen and changes can be selected at the click of a button.

"SKILLRUN gives the ability to provide total body, high intensity and varied workouts that involve both cardio and power modes," says Mauro Fabbrì, Cardio



SKILLRUN is the only treadmill that incorporates resistance training

and Format Product Manager at Technogym. "This provides maximum results in minimal time; ideal for all members, but especially those who are goal driven, but time poor. These types of exercise modes require high-quality, advanced technology and give members variety as well as new engaging ways to help meet and challenge their goals".

MAXIMISE TRAINING EFFICIENCY & IMPROVE PERFORMANCE

SKILLRUN provides live analysis of the user's performance with the unique BIOFEEDBACK feature which provides

colour-coded feedback on the main running parameters: running power, cadence, step length, ground contact time, propulsion and flight time.

The CADENCE TRAINING feature also allows users to find their ideal running cadence to maximise their training efficiency. Users can practice different cadences at a set speed to improve their performance.

"Following user feedback from both members and trainers, we see a growing interest and demand for biofeedback as running continues to grow in prominence and members get more educated



SKILLRUN launched at 1Rebel Southbank with amazing feedback

through applications and wearable devices. SKILLRUN responds to this with the introduction of BIOFEEDBACK and CADENCE TRAINING to meet this demand for members and fitness coaches to maximise during sessions," comments Mauro Fabbri.

SKILLRUN CLASSES

For members demanding a more effective and motivating group running workout, SKILLRUN can offer a totally new class that is seamlessly integrated from class booking to results management. A dedicated professional SKILLRUN App for operators, allows users to reserve their preferred treadmill in advance of the class and follow the class run profile with instructions on the UNITY console. As an operator, the class can be prepared in advance by selecting a profile from the library or by creating their own. Music and audio is sent directly to members' headphones giving operators the flexibility to run classes on the gym floor with no impact to other gym users.

SKILLRUN BOOTCAMP

The BOOTCAMP interface combines cardio and power training, allowing users to quickly switch between gradients and speeds, as well as the three training modes: SLED, PARACHUTE and RUN. The vision is that SKILLRUN can be combined with other functional products to create a full class experience based around full movement patterns and used with TEAMBEATS Heart Rate training solution.



Our members want to train hard, but they're also looking for quality, style and a unique experience. This is why Technogym and its incredible SKILLRUN represent the perfect fit

James Balfour, 1Rebel

levels for the first time.

Esmee Gummer, Head of Fitness at 1Rebel comments: "The SKILLRUN is a powerful piece of equipment from an instructor programming perspective – its response time means that our Rebels are sprinting within seconds of pressing a button, making the sessions even more challenging."

"Another personal favourite feature is PARACHUTE mode – at the end of each sprint you can see how far or fast you pushed the belt, which is proving to be a great motivator for clients," adds Esmee.

James Balfour, 1Rebel co-founder says: "Our members want to train hard, but at the same time they're looking for quality, style and a unique experience. This is why Technogym and its incredible SKILLRUN represents the perfect fit for 1Rebel to deliver the ultimate performance-focused classes in a premium environment."

SKILLRUN will be the product of choice in all new 1Rebel sites – up next is the launch of Bayswater, followed by Victoria. "Technogym understands our brand, needs and quite simply matches our commitment to delivering the best customer experience on the market."

SUCCESSFUL LAUNCH AT 1REBEL

Iconic boutique fitness brand, 1Rebel, utilises this function in its high intensity class, Reshape, at its new South Bank club.

The versatility of SKILLRUN allows 1Rebel instructors to deliver a varied body-sculpting experience that never gets dull. The top speed and gradient options also allow Reshape participants to challenge themselves to reach new performance



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FITNESS Franchising

The UK's franchised fitness sector is heating up, with more and more operators turning to this model to achieve ambitious growth plans. **Tom Walker** takes a closer look

In the 1950s, J Lyons & Co's restaurant chain Wimpy arrived in the UK, bringing with it a new approach to business strategy: franchising.

Spanning sectors that include retail, food and automotive, it's a business model that has enjoyed remarkable growth over the last 70 years. The fitness industry, however, has been a latecomer, waiting until 2003 to welcome its first franchise – *énergie Fitness*.

"When we launched in 2003, we were the market makers," says Jan Spaticchia, co-founder and CEO of *énergie Fitness*. "The closest we had to a competing franchised fitness business was Rosemary Conley's Diet and Fitness Clubs."

In the 15 years since, however, the fitness industry has more than caught up. The sector is now teeming with franchised brands – ranging in size from niche operators with a handful of sites to Anytime Fitness, which has 140 clubs in the UK and Ireland

GROWING BUSINESSES

The pace of growth has been accelerating over the last five years, with both budget and mid-market operators entering the fitness sector with ambitious growth plans.

easyGym, which owns 16 clubs, recently revealed plans to sell 500 franchise licenses globally by 2022, while *Snap Fitness* is in the fourth year of an expansion push designed to raise its club count to 250. ►



“

There are huge growth opportunities in the UK, due to the health and fitness boom. There's also an emerging demand for functional training. It's a concept many are making a priority

Rob Deutsch, founder of F45



Australian franchise F45 has recently ramped up expansion in the UK



Orangetheory has mushroomed to 900 studios in the US and is growing in the UK

- As well as large operators, the franchising model has attracted smaller, independently-owned chains. These include Fitness Space, launched by former Olympian Tim Benjamin (see HCM February, p14), which has expanded to 22 sites in five years, and family-owned truGym, which offers franchises under two brands – the budget truGym clubs and truIntensity, a boutique HIIT concept.

The sector has also attracted a number of foreign boutique operators, keen to take advantage of the UK's growing appetite for personalised and more intimate fitness experiences. One of these is Australian operator F45, which offers its members high-intensity circuit training classes in studios which are just 200 - 250sq m (2,150-2,690sq ft) in size.

"There are huge growth opportunities in the UK, due to the health and fitness boom right now," says Rob Deutsch, founder of F45. "There's also an, emerging demand for functional training. It's a concept that many people are making a priority in their life."

Another relative newcomer to the UK market is US-based boutique operator Orangetheory. Wildly successful in the US – where it has mushroomed from a single site in 2010 to more than 900 studios today – its concept is based on hour-long, group HIIT sessions that can accommodate up to 24 people.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

How do you identify potential locations?

ISAAC BUCHANAN
CEO, Snap Fitness

We invest quite significantly in our GIS (Geographic Information System) to ensure that we have the most up-to-date and thorough information available for our franchisees. We spend a lot of time segmenting our existing members and searching for look-alike audiences across UK towns to offer a best match against our high performing clubs. Our property team target these areas first and foremost.



DAN ALDESTEIN
VP of franchising development, Orangetheory

We use a mapping programme called Buxton, which overlays potential members, based on who they are, where they are and what their habits are.

We have that same programme available in the UK and we've been able to look at the masses of areas which could potentially be the best for us for business growth and match our potential members by type.

We know who our members are in London – what Mosaic group they are – and also who our members are in the US and Australia and in many other places, and they're all very similar.



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énergie Fitness was the first franchise to take off in the UK

- Following a slow start in the UK – it initially signed a partnership deal with David Lloyd Leisure in 2013, but has so far opened just three sites – the brand reports that it's now looking to accelerate its growth using franchisees and it has signed two master deals for a total of 110 sites across England.

"I definitely see the need for boutique fitness in the UK," says Dan Adelstein, Orangetheory's vice president of international development. "We just need to do a good job in growing our studios – and we are, with the ones we already have open – so it's now a case of getting the next leases done."

It isn't just the newcomers to the market that have big plans. Established operators are also looking to ramp up their growth plans. Anytime Fitness is the UK's largest fitness franchise operator – when measured by number of clubs – and the group is keen to keep its status. The company has a particularly strong presence in London, but is now ready to venture outside the capital.

"There's the potential across the UK, but we'd like to make greater inroads north of London and beyond," says Stuart Broster, CEO of Anytime Fitness UK.

Broster was appointed to the role in August 2017 and tasked with making Anytime the largest in the country – by reaching 400 clubs by 2020.

"The majority of our clubs are currently in London and the south, and there are a lot of opportunities for



Jan Spaticchia, énergie Fitness

I think the fact that so many international franchises are heading for the UK has really shown that this is very fertile ground for growth

our offering to thrive beyond that," he says. "Convenience and 24/7 access are increasingly important to today's consumers and we have the platform to deliver that model anywhere in the UK."

MARKET PENETRATION

Broster adds that while the growth plans are formidable – not just for his group, but for the industry as a whole – they're also based on a healthy outlook and genuine market trends.

"The fitness industry is absolutely a growth market and continues to be attractive to franchisees," he says.

"According to the 2017 State of the UK Fitness Industry Report, health and fitness is the sector to invest in. Market value has increased to £4.7bn and membership has exceeded 9.7m. Penetration is also at an all-time high of 14.9 per cent, meaning that one in every seven people in the UK is now a gym member."

Isaac Buchanan, CEO of Snap Fitness, agrees and adds that, while more people are visiting gyms than ever before, there's

plenty of room for growth. "If you look to the US and Australian markets membership penetration rates are up to 7 per cent higher than the UK," he says.

"Looking more locally to some European markets, the penetration rates are almost double that of the UK. I think the next 10 years will see a significant increase for UK penetration rates and that will be great for the sector."

FINDING FRANCHISEES

But with so many franchise operators looking to expand, could the recruitment of suitable franchisees and the availability of suitable sites become problematic?

For énergie's CEO Spaticchia, the answer is twofold. "It's tougher now and we need to work harder," he says. "But as the market has grown, so the number of people looking to get involved in franchising has also significantly increased."

Spaticchia adds that when it comes to an "ideal" énergie franchisee, although there's no set profile – there's one element that connects them all.

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Easygym has announced it plans to sell 500 franchises worldwide

- "Our franchisees come from all walks of life," he says. "Some have worked in fitness before but others haven't – there are doctors, people with an IT background and club managers. The only thing that connects them is that we recruit people who are passionate about providing fitness for others."

At Snap Fitness, the profile of potential franchisees is more defined and is heavily focused on entrepreneurial skills – as the strategy is to help each grow beyond a single site. "We look for small business experts," says Buchanan. "Previous experience owning or operating a business is compulsory in our network and we're looking for people who want to grow with us and learn along the way as they expand beyond a single location."

"All but six franchisees in our network are currently multi-site operators. Of those six, three have purchased additional territories already and we're actively finding them sites as we speak."

FUTURE VIEWS

It seems the future for the fitness sector looks bright. While competition is increasing, the consensus is that there's still plenty to go around – both in terms of market penetration and the number of potential franchisees ready to pick up sites.

"We feel very lucky because we're on the cusp of two very hot markets," says énergie's Spaticchia. "The budget fitness space is very hot from an investment point of view, but equally, fitness franchising has never been hotter."

"So while we have to deal with the environment getting more competitive, I think the fact that so many international franchises are heading for the UK has

really shown that this is very fertile ground for growth."

Adelstein says that a big reason for international companies, such as Orangetheory, arriving in the UK is the friendly business environment. "The franchising laws are easier here," he says. "There are less regulations for franchisors than there are in the US or Canada,

which makes the UK environment conducive to brands like us coming in."

The trend of new companies entering the market is likely to continue too, says Buchanan. He doesn't see any signs of a limit being reached: "I don't think we're anywhere near saturation point," he says. "When the market is still as attractive as it is, brands will just keep on coming." ●



STUART ROSENBERG

Fitness4Less franchisee

Rosenberg currently owns three clubs – Cambridge Heath (opened 2011), Canning Town (2013) and Worcester (September 2017)



How did you get into fitness franchising?

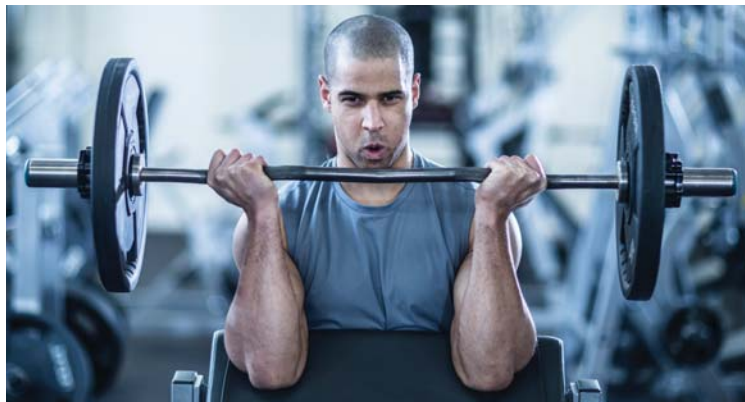
My background is all fitness and I've been in the industry for 20 years. I started as a graduate trainee at Holmes Place back in 2000 and worked my way up to become manager at Holmes Place Hendon. After that I worked for Top Notch Health Clubs – looking after London Bridge and Blackfriars – and then Greens Health and Fitness for five years before setting up my fitness franchising business with Fitness4Less.

What's the toughest thing to tackle?

The main challenge is the property aspect. Unless you're "in the know", it's really hard to find a decent site. Our Cambridge Heath club is 14,000sq ft, Canning Town is 13,000sq ft and Worcester is 16,000sq ft – so these aren't small clubs. You need strong property expertise to find sites like that.

What are the fitness sector's biggest strengths, when it comes to franchising?

It's still an emerging market, with penetration around 15 per cent, so there's a huge opportunity for the market to grow. It's also something that you can be passionate about and you see that in this industry – there are passionate people working in fitness and they enjoy what they "sell" and what they do every day.



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Something for everyone

Dyaco is shaking things up, with a raft of senior appointments and an exciting array of brands and products. MD David Hughes tells us more

Who is Dyaco International and what are the commercial plans globally?

Dyaco International is a global fitness company, founded in 1990, that manufactures world-class fitness and wellness products for home, commercial and medical markets. It owns both Spirit Fitness and Xterra Fitness.

2018 will be an incredibly busy, yet exciting year for Dyaco. Following the launch of our Global Commercial & Medical Division, we're preparing to unveil a versatile range of new equipment across the Spirit Fitness, UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship) and Johnny G brands in our portfolio.

By becoming a vehicle for these exciting brands, Dyaco plans to become a major player in the global fitness industry.

We've already turned heads with some major senior appointments,



David Hughes,
managing director

which will help us towards our goals. High-profile Dyaco International appointments so far include Daniel Clayton, former Vice President at Johnson Health Tech and Managing Director at Technogym Asia, who has joined as President - Dyaco Commercial & Medical Division. Alongside Daniel, industry renowned names Gary Peak, Robert Lake, Arjan van Dijk and Graham Stoney have also been appointed in senior roles.

What sort of things can we expect to see in the UK?

We've launched Dyaco UK, which will have a direct office to drive the commercial, medical and retail business. With a specialist team and investment in resource, products and servicing, we're able to better serve our existing customers but also attract new customers with a strong portfolio of products and brands.

There are some exciting new Spirit Fitness product launches, including the new Spirit Strength range and



Dyaco's UFC offering includes functional, free weight, combat and strength training equipment

UFC

The Ultimate fitness equipment

Dyaco holds the global licence to manufacture and distribute UFC branded Kombat and fitness equipment in both professional and retail markets.

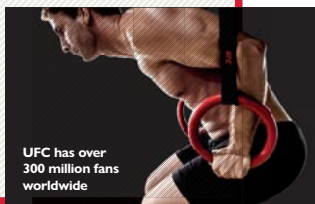
With over 300 million fans worldwide, the agreement allows Dyaco and their customers to capitalise on the popularity of mixed martial arts and one of the most popular brands in the world.

The components within Dyaco's UFC offering comprise:

- UFC Ultimate Kombat – Commercial combat training equipment and accessories, including UFC branded gloves and punchbags.
- UFC Ultimate MXS (Strength Series) – Commercial selectorised strength and plate loaded machines, plus benches.

- UFC Ultimate Training – Functional Training Rigs, free weights and accessories.

UFC at-home products will be distributed directly to consumers through an agreement with global retail giant Amazon.



UFC has over 300 million fans worldwide



Spirit Fitness

Spirit Fitness has been manufacturing fitness equipment for over 30 years and is the core Commercial CV & Strength brand from Dyaco.

All products are built with premium-grade components to give users a smooth workout experience and the newly released Spirit 900 CV range is already proving a popular upgrade to clubs and facilities across a number of markets. The much-anticipated new strength range is due out later this year.

The new Spirit 900 CV range is proving popular with health club members



additions to the Spirit commercial CV line, which provide leisure club operators with high quality and affordable options for their locations. With the ever-growing popularity of functional fitness, we're also excited to see the uptake of the UFC commercial range and the ability for clubs to have bespoke 'UFC Zones' complete with programming on their gym floors.

Who is the new team in the UK?

We've got some great personnel on board. I'll be heading up the UK business as Managing Director and we're delighted to have been able to attract some big names from the fitness

industry. Andy Loughray joins as UK Sales Director after six years at Matrix Fitness and previously spent over 14 years with Polaris Fitness. Sarah Hitchcock has been appointed as Commercial Director, previously holding the same role at Matrix Fitness UK after initially joining the company in 2009. Janette Rose has been appointed as Marketing Manager and also brings extensive fitness experience to the role, with previous posts at Precor, Matrix Fitness and Technogym.

How is Dyaco different from other fitness equipment suppliers?

We very much see Dyaco as a disruptor in the health and fitness industry. While there are suppliers of greater size, we see our competitive advantage as our ability to quickly manoeuvre and capitalise on the ever-changing marketplace.

In recent years, the industry has moved on significantly in adopting digital technology but at the same time, gone back to basics with the popularity of bodyweight exercises, free weights and functional training. We cater for all markets and aim to be at the cutting edge of any developments in the industry to react accordingly and provide operators and gym users with the equipment they need and want.

Where can we see you this year?

We'll be exhibiting at FIBO, Elevate and ukactive events.

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Johnny G by Spirit bikes

Dyaco signed a development agreement with Spinning® inventor Johnny Goldberg and through Spirit Fitness, will manufacture the future generations of Johnny G indoor bikes to be provided alongside the very best programming.

In partnership with Johnny G, Dyaco will be at the forefront of developing the future of this timeless popular fitness training category. Users will engage body, mind and bike for an authentic riding experience, inspiring them to ride beyond boundaries in a way that only Johnny G knows how.

The first wave of Johnny G by Spirit bikes will be launched this year and available to see at FIBO.



Indoor cycling legend Johnny G is working with Spirit Fitness

TECH POTENTIAL

New tech is coming down the track which will change the gym experience and improve retention. We take a look at the potential of artificial intelligence and beacons

The infrastructure of our industry's membership management technology is inhibiting our ability to move forward," claims global retention expert, Dr Paul Bedford. "More often than not it doesn't interact with other technology, behaving like a walled garden, as software companies try to do it all themselves."

He believes it's a question of build or buy. "Large operators with their own software engineers are in a far better position to develop their own retention technology, such as US-brand Equinox, which has built into its mobile app an AI-led digital coach, that learns customers'

habits in order to help keep them engaged. Smaller operators can commission projects, but it's fraught with challenges and there's massive cost associated with keeping software up to date.

"It's a rock and a hard place situation. To keep customers, membership management software companies (MMSC) create solutions themselves, but many are nowhere near as good as the best-in-class alternatives and it can be a challenge convincing them to integrate third-party solutions, particularly if they have their own competitor product."

But fitness tech expert, Bryan O'Rourke, says it's not the software

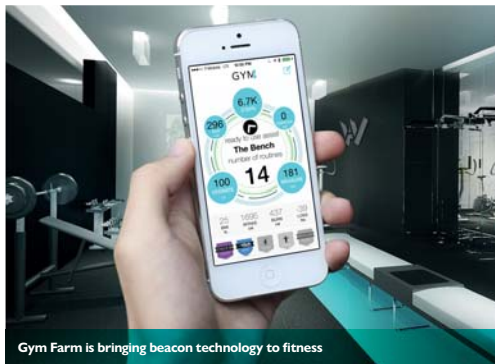
providers' fault: "There are some great MMSCs out there, but the market is complex, with many different business models. There's no one-size-fits-all and every time someone wants to integrate a product, money has to be spent on an API.

"Added to that, consumers are exposed to technology in every aspect of their lives, so expectations outpace fitness business delivery models. The ones winning are those that move fast enough to meet consumer's desire before others; those 'genius' health club brands that represent just 5 per cent of the market."

1. BEACON TECHNOLOGY

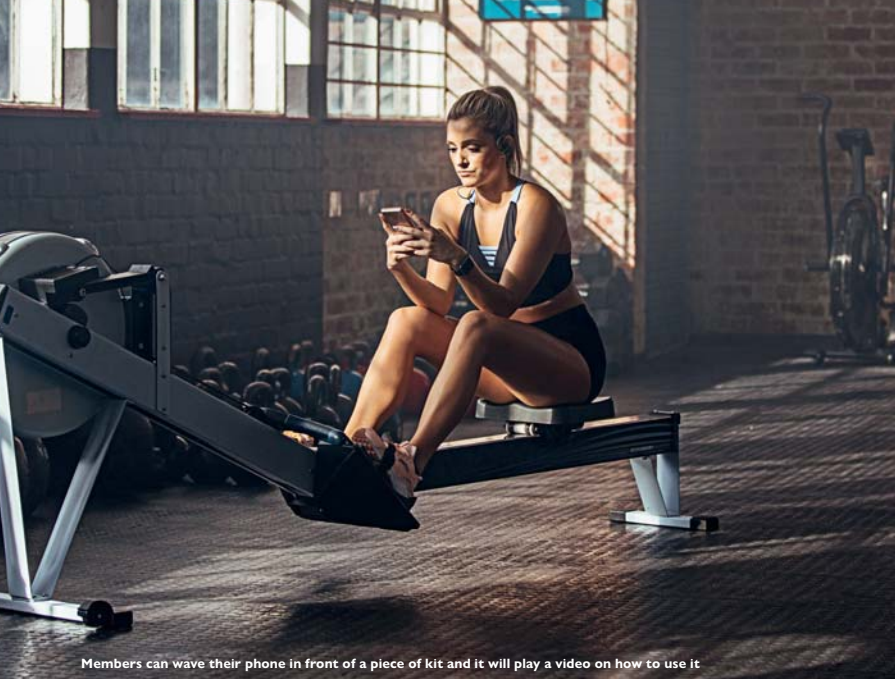
As demand increases from operators looking for data to better understand members, beacon technology is there to help. Beacons can detect where a customer is at any given moment, allowing operators to monitor their movements at the gym and also know what they do when they're there. The system can also push timely messages to members.

Matthew Schober, COO of US beacon technology firm Gym Farm, says: "A year ago, MMSCs were very closed off, but they're starting to feel



Gym Farm is bringing beacon technology to fitness





Members can wave their phone in front of a piece of kit and it will play a video on how to use it

the pressure. Based on the sheer size of our features and the speed at which we can build them, MMSCs realise they have to integrate with us. It's almost a requirement to have these features built in – without them they're behind."

Bedford agrees: "Beacons are traditionally used for sales and in sports stadiums and shopping centres to get people to buy a hot dog or lure them into a shop, but they also offer a 'right time, right place, right content' opportunity for fitness providers."

Equinox is ahead of the game, having already deployed beacons across test clubs to track users' patterns throughout their member journey, but few other operators are using them.

"We're sitting on some fabulous capabilities, but the market's just not ready for it yet," claims Schober. "Most clubs are starting to dabble with beacons, mostly using them as silent monitors to understand members' movements, but the opportunity is massive."

Insurance companies are a prime example, – incentives and rewards for good behaviour can be based on monitored activity, not just swiping in at the entrance.



Most clubs are just starting to dabble with beacons, mostly using them as silent monitors to understand members' movements, but the opportunity for more is massive

Matthew Schober
Gym Farm

"In many locations across the United States, English is the member's second language, so there's an automatic barrier when they walk into a facility," adds Schober. Gym Farm supports 10 different languages and works as a fitness translator. "Members can wave their phone in front of a piece of kit and it will play a video on how to use it correctly. The purpose is to educate and inform – it gives members exposure to alternative equipment and the confidence to use it."

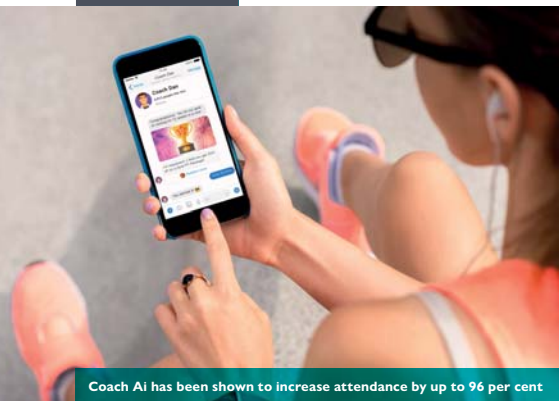
Gym Farm's technology integrates with equipment manufacturers (Precor and Life Fitness are the first) to automatically log members into their account as they approach the kit. It can be used to send push notifications to members in specific

areas of the gym, to add workout data to health insurance records, to provide a digital personal trainer or even to order lunch as the member enters the café.

2. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is another technology gearing up to aid retention in fitness. It could soon be creating personalised exercise programmes, simply using statistical analysis and the application of machine learning to data.

"Every two days we create as much data as we did from the beginning of time until 2003, but only a third is stored in traditional accounting format such as columns and rows, says Bedford. AI can unravel the other 70 per cent, quickly ▶



Coach Ai has been shown to increase attendance by up to 96 per cent



CoachAi is a virtual coach using AI-driven behavioural psychology to help people turn exercise into a habit. It's currently being piloted by three health club brands in Israel, including Space – the country's second largest health club chain

- computing huge amounts of data from various formats – including images.”

CoachAi is a virtual coach using AI-driven behavioural psychology to help people turn exercise into a habit. It's currently being piloted by three health club brands in Israel, including the country's second largest chain, Space.

“We've identified the key psychological, social and logistical problems that cause dropouts and created an AI solution to address them,” says CEO, Shai Neiger.

“CoachAi has been shown to increase attendance by up to 96 per cent, by motivating people and reducing friction associated with going to the gym. We've tailored fun content, including video, to drive people through the difficult process of behaviour change. They can ask questions and the chatbot responds; creating a conversation which gives tailored advice. CoachAi learns how each individual communicates, so we create personalised solutions that stack the odds in their favour.”

CHANGING MINDSETS

Schober believes the revenue share provided by companies like Gym Farm will help member management companies open up to the idea of integration. He says: “The industry sees this as a breath of fresh air because everyone's starting to work together; insurance companies send customers to clubs with better equipment, which helps our partners sell more connected equipment. This drives members into clubs, boosting the operator's revenue. It's a win-win, because by understanding the member journey, operators can show higher levels of care, via a personalised service.”

Operators with their hands tied, waiting for integration of these space-age capabilities, should look closely at what they already have, advises Bedford. “Existing CRM technology can be used to make a business more efficient, but also more impactful. The membership management software can generally do more than just sales, but operators often aren't using products to their full potential. Retargeting is a good example.”

A retargeting pixel, which can be embedded into a web page, can ‘stalk’ customers during internet browsing with banner ads. But according to Bedford, it's rarely used for anything other than sales. “It's really easy to use this tactic to improve the customer experience too, helping the member to feel important.

Rather than always pushing sales messages, ask when they're next coming in or if they need your help. Tell them what other members are doing that they might want to try or ask if they fancy a swim. Marketing teams are so used to thinking about selling they often don't see the retention opportunity.”

However, O'Rourke believes it isn't simply a case of asking, ‘what are the best products?’. He advises operators to spend time auditing how their business addresses the user experience and how they're going to compete. “You can't just keep layering on solutions to an existing business model without scrubbing down to the base boards sometimes. You can have a great product, but if you're just putting that on top of the original system it won't work.” ●

■ THE RETENTION GURU

Dr Paul Bedford is one of the fitness industry's authorities on the management of retention, attrition and the customer experience. He's author of a substantial study on retention and speaks regularly on the global conference circuit. Bedford runs the annual Retention Convention, where speakers Bryan O'Rourke, Matthew Schober and Shai Neiger will present this year. The convention takes place on 26 April 2018.



Paul Bedford
CEO, The
Retention Guru



Bryan O'Rourke
CEO Vedere
Ventures



Matthew Schober
Co-founder
GymFarm



Shai Neiger
Co-founder
Coach Ai



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Wattbike: innovating for a decade

The brand that revolutionised indoor cycling continues to transform its offering

Since breaking onto the indoor cycling scene 10 years ago, Wattbike has spent a decade at the forefront of innovation in this sector. Striving to create world class products, market leading technology, the most advanced software and the strongest partnerships.

Indoor cycling used to be just about spinning. But Wattbike brought group cycling out onto the gym floor in its own right. Bringing training with power, testing and training zones to the masses. Wattbike didn't just re-invent the indoor bike, they re-invented the entire indoor cycling genre.

Wattbike Zones are now being

installed across the country, with large operators, boutique studios and independents creating Zones with bespoke Wattbike graphics and branding to draw in the crowds.

PRODUCT

With a self-professed obsession with performance, and a desire to replicate the sensation of riding on the road, Wattbike created a real-ride feel thanks to the regulation of airflow through the flywheel and inclusion of a freehub. This had never been done before.

Spinning was a one-dimensional workout but with Wattbike came performance-based training. Indoor

The Wattbike app enables technique feedback



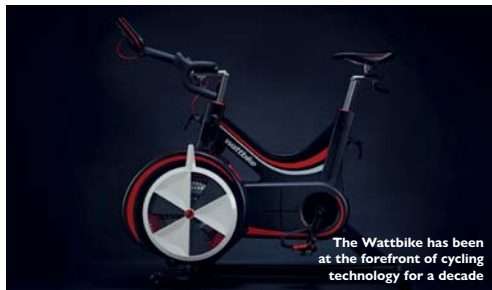
cycling saw a shift, and became about sport-specific training, fitness goals and accurately testing, tracking and measuring performance. This enticed a whole new consumer into the gym.

In September 2017, Wattbike unveiled the first smart bike in the world; the Atom. With patented technology and aimed at the home market, the Atom has unrivalled connectivity to apps such as Zwift and built in, climb software to allow riders to simulate gradient changes and mimic real climbs automatically.

TECHNOLOGY

Data is in Wattbike's DNA. The bike's technology initiated a unique way of collecting data that was calibrated and accurate. The patented sensor measures power at a level of accuracy that no other bike can match. It is this level of data that enabled Wattbike to create the patented Polar View and Pedalling Effectiveness Score (PES) technologies.

The Polar View technology introduced a distinctive analysis tool that presented the balance between left and right legs, and the force being applied through the whole pedal revolution. PES was the evolution of this, which transformed how users could assess the impact of changes in pedalling



The Wattbike has been at the forefront of cycling technology for a decade



We have a history of innovation and you'll never find us standing still. We focus on leading, not following advancements





Wattbike has brought performance-based training to the masses

technique in real time, something previously only possible in research lab settings.

When the Wattbike app was introduced, it was the first indoor bike to have an app that could save, store and transport data between the gym and home training environment. It initiated unrivalled performance analysis and technique feedback, and the Bluetooth technology in the monitor enables third party

connections via smart devices to popular apps including Strava, Zwift and Sufferfest.

PARTNERSHIPS

Wattbike was the first and only indoor bike developed in partnership with British Cycling, and are still, the only indoor bike to have been endorsed by them.

Following seven successful years with British Cycling, Wattbike elevated to a global level. In September 2015, they were chosen and endorsed by the UCI World Cycling Centre and housed in six of the UCI's satellite centres around the world, placing the Wattbike at the heart of their search for future stars.

Today, the Wattbike is used by the world's top cycling federations in addition to professional teams and elite athletes across every major sport, which included an official partnership with England Rugby in the lead up, and during the World Cup.

Beyond the fitness industry, Wattbike fundamentally altered military testing by partnering with the British Army to design a bespoke performance test, the Alternative Aerobic Assessment (A3), to support and motivate soldiers in maintaining fitness levels and help them in their

rehabilitation while recovering from injury.

From the health sector, in partnership with Wattbike, Discovery Vitality developed a specific health assessment which was first delivered in January 2017. Tests were delivered across over 450 different venues in South Africa, and last year, approximately 100,000 fitness assessments had been completed on the Wattbikes.

Richard Baker, Wattbike Managing Director, comments: "We have a history of innovation and you'll never find us standing still. We focus on leading, not following advancements, and strive to always be revolutionising our products, software, technology and education.

We work with excellence; elite athletes, the best sport scientists in the world and the top professional federations. Our determination to continually transform and improve our offering has made us the bike of choice for the health, fitness and sporting sectors."

Having completely revolutionised indoor cycling over the past 10 years, Wattbike have no plans to slow down now. Wattbike are the ones to watch, so expect the unexpected for 2018.

Visit the Wattbike stand at FIBO to find out more.



Wattbike have been the go-to bike for elite sport for over a decade

wattbike

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EMAIL: sales@wattbike.com

WEB: www.wattbike.com

www.facebook.com/wattbike

www.twitter.com/wattbike



The GO fit standard

Iberian fitness operator GO fit has launched a new club that's transforming service standards within the industry by combining a low-cost, high-quality service with a research-based personalised exercise prescription for all its members. Lauretta Ihonor talks to the team

With recent figures indicating that 67 per cent of the population of Spain never undertakes any kind of vigorous exercise, the country has a serious inactivity problem on its hands. And it's a problem Spain's town councils are addressing by tackling the most common barriers to exercise: cost and accessibility.

One approach that's proving effective is a concession-style business model that allows private companies to bid for long-term contracts to build and run low-cost but high-quality fitness facilities on public land, to make exercise more accessible.

It's a model that, according to Gabriel Sáez-Irigoyen – CEO of Spanish fitness facility operator Ingesport – not only makes good business sense for operators, but also saves the council and taxpayers a significant amount of money.

"It's estimated that it costs around €120m to operate council-run leisure centres in Madrid each year," he explains. "But only €25m of that cost is covered by member payments.

That leaves a deficit of €95m every single year. Just imagine how many schools, how many police, how many other vital services the city could have with an extra €95m."

GO FIT PEÑAGRANDE

Like many operators in the region, Saez-Irigoyen has been quick to embrace the model, using it to expand the presence of Ingesport's GO fit fitness centre brand throughout Iberia where possible. The newest club is a 20,000sq m facility in Peñagrande, Madrid, which opened its doors to an impressive 19,000 pre-signed members in late February.

With a monthly membership of just €81 for a family of four, the appeal of GO fit Peñagrande is obvious – especially when you consider the facilities: two indoor swimming pools, an outdoor pool, outdoor CrossFit terrace, spa, sauna, indoor cycling studio, three group exercise studios and a top-of-the-range gym – fully kitted out with the latest cutting-edge technology from Technogym.



Some GO fit health clubs have 19,000 pre-signed members before opening

“ A well-researched type of offering gives members what they really want and need: long-lasting results in all areas of their health



GO fit has 18 health clubs across Spain and Portugal

But according to Saez-Irigoyen, the appeal extends far beyond the wide range of high-quality services and low price.

“Large gyms tend to spend a lot of time and energy on offering value for money, providing great technology and offering all the services members want,” says Saez-Irigoyen, “But very few offer all of these things within a scientifically-based personalised programme. And that’s strange because it’s exactly this type of well-researched offering that gives members what they really want and need: long-lasting results and improvements in all areas of their health”.

“We ask customers for their time, money and effort – all of which are precious to them – so we should have a greater commitment to giving them real results,” he says.

“I’m not talking only about results from physical activity, but results that span their overall health and wellbeing,” he explains. “If we’re able to advise them on the best training methods, when and how to do them, and also advise them on how to sleep, manage daily stress, become more mindful etc, I think we’ll be able to truly increase the happiness of our customers.”

And that’s GO fit Peñañgrande’s USP.

TAPPING INTO SPORTS SCIENCE

Working in partnership with Coventry University’s Centre for Innovative Research Across the Life Course (CIRAL) since early 2017, GO fit is coming to the end of a pilot designed to explore how to deliver a personalised exercise prescription programme based on evaluations of physical capacity and health status.

Led by the university’s professor of exercise science and health, Alfonso Jimenez, Ingesport set up a research unit – called the GO fit LAB – within its Vallehermoso club in Madrid, where it has been gathering health data.

“Once we’ve finished the pilot, we’ll start offering tailored exercise programmes – supported by the GO fit Index – to all our health club members in 2018,” says Jimenez.

“It’s going to focus on seven key areas, such as cardiovascular disease risk factors (including obesity, diabetes, cholesterol and blood pressure), physical activity levels and nutritional habits. We’ll make these a core part of members’ training goals,” he explains.

“Everyone will be analysed when they join, their current health will be determined and goals for all seven areas of health will be set.

However, we won’t just set the goals and leave them to get on with it.

“If a customer comes in with high cholesterol



Gabriel Sáez-Irigoyen, CEO of GO fit (left), with Professor Alfonso Jimenez



GO fit's flagship facilities have indoor and outdoor pool complexes



I like to compare what we're doing with the first Apple Stores. The company did a great job of being there for its customers, helping with problems

- and high blood pressure, we'll be able to tell them, 'we can decrease your levels of bad cholesterol by 32 per cent', and we can do that because our research has shown that 96.7 per cent of those who use our method achieve this goal.

"But we stand by our approach, so we'll also tell them, 'If you don't hit that 32 per cent reduction, we'll give you back your money because it means that for whatever reason, our method doesn't work for you,'" says Jimenez.

It's an idea that's been long in the making. "In 2014 to 2015, the company was very successful," says Saez-Irigoyen. "But I felt that GO fit was stagnating. We were taking the same approach as everyone else in the sector, and not giving our customers the right answers in their quest for improvements.

"So we did an analysis of our services and resources and immediately spotted that, like everyone else in the sector, GO fit was really failing to use proven science in the process we were using to manage the member journey."

So how did this observation lead to a partnership with a UK university? "Alfonso and I studied together," says Saez-Irigoyen.

"We were in the same class, but while I was the worst student, he was the best," he adds with a mischievous smile.

"When I started thinking about making GO fit more scientific, I remembered what an amazing brain he had and how capable he was, so I got in touch with him. I told him about the challenge I was trying to overcome and it was like a meeting of minds. We said, 'Okay, let's go for this' and we've now been working at it together for the last three years."

PERFECT TIMING

The timing, says Jimenez, has been perfect. "The current tsunami of inactivity is putting a lot of pressure on public health services and the fitness industry is well positioned to be a key architect of change. We have the expertise, experience and knowledge needed to do things in a different way and achieve better results for our members," he explains.

According to both Saez-Irigoyen and Jimenez, the success of the GO fit approach depends not only on the scientific rigour behind it, but also on its execution. As such, members

"We ask our customers for their time, money and effort – all of which are precious to them – and so we should have a higher commitment to giving them real results"



will have their health markers reassessed on a regular basis – depending on their particular needs – and will be given free access to health advisors throughout the gym.

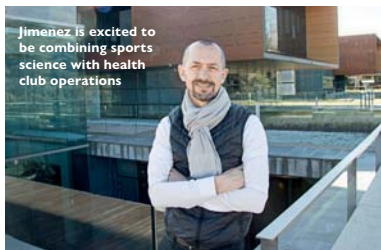
"When you enter the Peñagrande club, the first thing you'll notice is that we don't have receptionists sitting behind a desk," says Saez-Irigoyen. "We've moved them out to act as health advisors, giving members advice on everything related to their health. They're all trained by Alfonso's team and certified by Coventry University and Universidad Rey Juan Carlos as being qualified to advise on health."

He continues: "Another change from the traditional health club set-up is that we've taken away the mechanical procedures that customers can now do online. Instead, we have touchscreen kiosks that members can use. This allows our staff to focus on that health advisor role instead of that admin."

"To achieve true change and member commitment, you've got to actively engage with and advise people," says Jimenez. "We're focused on creating a transformational journey for our members, with the GO fit team on hand to nurture, support and facilitate that process."

"I like to compare what we're doing to the first Apple Stores," continues Jimenez. "Smart phones were a new way of doing things and the company did a great job of being there for

Jimenez is excited to be combining sports science with health club operations



its customers. It had lots of advisors on its shop floors, helping customers with both simple and complex problems."

THE GO FIT EXPERIENCE

While putting science centre stage is a key priority for the GO fit team, it's still eager to ensure its actual fitness offering is also exemplary. One way it's doing this is through its group exercise experience, as Saez-Irigoyen explains:

“We’re promoting active living, from physical activity counselling to exercise prescription and sports participation. It’s a complex and challenging approach

- ▶ “Around 35 per cent of GO fit members visit our facilities for group exercise, so we need to offer them the best possible experience,” he says. “We want to bring boutique experiences into our group exercise programmes – that means boutique-style boxing, mindfulness and indoor cycling classes are all on offer at the new Peñagrande club.”

Aside from bringing the boutique experience to a big-box gym setting, Saez-Irigoyen is also keen for GO fit to lead the way in children’s exercise. “Around 40,000 of GO fit’s customers are children and we have a responsibility to deliver a service that positively impacts their health,” he says. “We’re already doing this by providing a range of activities, from those for children who enjoy sport, to those that don’t and Super Kids sessions in which parents and children get active together.”

The company doesn’t stop at children’s exercise. Instead it aims to provide some sort of service for all popular forms of physical activity, from running to cycling and team sports.

“Our goal is to reach 100 per cent of the local population, and we can only do this by demonstrating that we’re the best place people can go to get advice on the type of activity they’re interested in – whatever it is,” says Saez-Irigoyen.

He adds: “We’ve kept the quality of everything we do high – equipment, space design, general facilities, etc. – but kept our prices low, to ensure we attract people from all walks of life.”

“And we’re masters at dealing with high levels of footfall without compromising the quality of the service. Our spaces are always clean, equipment is in working order and you’ll never find members queuing to use a treadmill or shower.”

THINKING LONG-TERM

As the first of GO fit’s 18 clubs across Spain and Portugal to adopt the GO fit Index and associated club format, it’s easy to view the Peñagrande facility as the exception rather than the rule; however, Saez-Irigoyen says the plan is to establish



Many GO fit clubs have spa and sauna offerings

and fine-tune the new mode of operation in the new Madrid club before introducing it into the company’s other facilities. “This year is the prototype year for us,” he says.

Jimenez agrees. “2018 is the year of intensive research into this concept, 2019 will be the year we drive the programme into all the company’s centres and 2020 will be the year in which absolutely everything we do will be evidence-based and implemented with cutting-edge technology,” he explains.

“We’re committed to a systemic approach to promoting active living, from physical activity counselling to exercise prescription and sports participation,” adds Jimenez. “It’s a complex and challenging approach, but we’re nearly there.”

He concludes: “It’s an exciting initiative, not only for us, but also for the industry as a whole. We’re confident that our success will show how much of a difference it can make when you address the full spectrum of members’ needs in a supportive and stimulating environment. We believe it will be a game changer, an absolute game changer.” ●

■ WHERE IS GO FIT?

Eighteen clubs across Spain and Portugal.

Madrid – 6 clubs

Canary Islands – 1 club

Andalucía – 5 clubs

Castilla y León – 1 club

Asturias – 1 club

Cantabria – 1 club

Castilla La Mancha – 1 club

Lisbon – 2 clubs





DFC

Bespoke Direct Debit Services

NEWSLETTER

Hooray - spring is here!

We've dispelled the winter blues and after spending Easter kicking back, we're ready to get back to the daily grind and continue doing what we do best.

2017 and the early seeds of 2018 have proven hugely fruitful, as have they for many of our fantastic clients and partners, which is great to see.

We enjoyed seeing a lot of your faces at Active Net and the Quest NBC and CIMSPA conference. It was a fantastic opportunity to catch up and we look forward to seeing even more of you at upcoming events. You can see which ones we'll be attending below.

Read on below to find out more about the imminent GDPR changes, tips for nurturing member acquisition and more!

Get in touch today



2017 was a record-breaking year for Direct Debit!



Another revolution around the sun, another celebration of record-breaking success for the ever-popular payment solution Direct Debit.

In 2017:

3.8%

Direct Debit experienced 3.8% growth

155 MILLION

That's a whopping 155 million more payments per annum than the previous year

This brings the total number of transactions in 2017 up to 4.2 billion, a big lead on 2016. Direct Debit payments average out at an additional three more for every adult in the UK.

95%

Bacs social media review figures show a 95% positivity rate for Direct Debit

RECORD JUNE

Direct Debit contributed to the record processing high set by Bacs last June

With assistance from Direct Debit's sibling, Direct Credit, more than 111 million payments were processed in just one day. This was 120,000 transactions in just one minute – an impressive PB!

The implications of GDPR on the Direct Debit industry

The introduction of GDPR, or the General Data Protection Regulation, is the largest change to data protection in the last 20 years. GDPR will replace the current Data Protection Act (DPA) in May. Whilst the rules under the new legislation don't stray too far from those under the DPA, the tightening of these will have effect a visible change to organisations, and the onus is on the controllers and processors of data to enforce these.

Controller: The ICO describes a controller as the person, or organisation, responsible for determining 'the purposes and means of processing personal data.' For example, a leisure organisation handling Direct Debit membership collections.

Processor: This is the body responsible for processing personal data on behalf of an organisation. We, at DFC, fall under this remit, alongside other Direct Debit bureaux who manage Direct Debit cashflow for third-parties.

What needs to be considered?

The GDPR's definition of 'personal data' is much broader than under the DPA. It is any information relating to an identifiable person, be this a name, an ID number as well as social, genetic, and importantly in the case of Direct Debit, economic identifiers.

Those in breach of non-compliance can face fines of up to €20 million or 4% of annual turnover (whichever is highest). Finally, people will no longer have to jump through hoops to access their own stored data. They can request corrections to inaccurate data and have the 'right to be forgotten' – i.e. controllers and processors must remove all information held on them.

Get in touch today



Online joining is the pinnacle of gym membership acquisition

Hooray for the internet! Without it, we wouldn't have cats and cucumbers, email and lazy shopping experiences. Gym personnel would also find themselves working a lot harder to onboard members.

Luckily for them, somewhere amongst the myriad of YouTube wormholes and social media, we also have an equally brilliant web function called online joining, removing the hassle of membership collection once and for all.

- Online joining is available 24/7. People can sign up at their convenience, even after the gym's lights are out for the night.
- The sign-up process is incredibly quick. A few personal questions, some bank details and it's done with very little inconvenience to the customer.
- It provides an easy marketing tactic for gyms, who generally rely on a well-constructed campaign as a way of getting new members through the door. The sheer ease of online joining is an attractive sales point in itself. Beyond this, a link to the portal can be included in marketing collateral, encouraging people to sign up on the spot.
- Some online joining platforms come with a white-labelling option, tailoring the system to your brand.
- Membership fees can be adjustable. Got an offer on the go? You can amend the pricing to suit this.
- It's paperless! All data can be stored safely online. This is automated and allows for a much more organised filing structure. Staff can devote more time to customer service and the gym's facilities.

Making sense of Direct Debit acronyms – a guide to BACS, AUDDIS ADDACS

Ever looked at Direct Debit documentation and been confused by all the financial jargon in it? Below, we break down some of this puzzling terminology in more detail.

Bacs

Before rebranding to Bacs Payments Ltd, Bacs stood for 'Bankers Automated Clearing Service.' They are the body responsible for the clearing and settlement of Direct Debit and Direct Credit. Bacs oversee all Direct Debit transactions and each instruction will follow through a payment system devised by Bacs.

AUDDIS – Automated Direct Debit Amendments and Cancellation Service

This is an automated service enabling banks or building societies to notify collecting organisations of any amendments or cancellations to a customer's Direct Debit. The service user will receive a report, generated either automatically or manually, outlining any changes to a Direct Debit instruction.

AUDDIS – Automated Direct Debit Instruction Service

AUDDIS is the service enabling Direct Debit instructions to be lodged electronically, rather than on paper. The Direct Debit process dramatically sped up through AUDDIS and the number of errors caused by manual handling reduced.

Visit our website for a further breakdown of even more Direct Debit acronyms.

DFC Bespoke Direct Debit Services

Debit Finance Collections Plc
16 Davy Ave, Milton Keynes, MK5 8PL

Leisure management service 1Life teams up with DFC to deliver Direct Debit offering

Exciting times are afoot for lifestyle and leisure company 1Life Management Solutions, who recently appointed DFC as the bureau provider to handle their members Direct Debit process.



Live more. Live well.

1Life is responsible for over 40 leisure and culture sites across the UK, including gyms, swimming pools, golf courses, theatres and more. Of their 50,000 fitness members and 25,000 swimming members, the majority use Direct Debit to pay for their memberships. However, a large number are still paying up front for annual memberships, whilst many others are using 1Life facilities on a pay-as-you-go basis.

By working with DFC, their aim is to increase the average length of stay, reduce attrition rates and improve debt recovery. Time will also be freed up to focus on customer service enquiries.

National Membership Manager, Neil Harrison, said, "the integration program has gone very smoothly. DFC has been very accommodating. There has been a bit of back and forth needed between ourselves and our CRM and DFC have facilitated this in a professional and efficient manner."

Sustainable Direct Debit solutions at the Quest NBS & CIMSPA conference

DFC returned to the Quest NBS & CIMSPA conference for the second year, loaded with solutions to the 2018 event theme 'our sector's challenges - practical solutions for front-line decision makers.'

The annual conference, which took place at Chesford Grange on 20 & 21 February, offers a chance for leisure professionals from public sector organisations to network and discuss the latest fitness trends.

DFC's Ivan Stevenson, Noel Glenister and Richard Jones attended the event as sponsor exhibitors. It proved a great opportunity catch up with current clients in a slightly more informal setting, as well as a chance to meet new faces.

DFC's primary drive was their role in facilitating the engagement process. They homed in on engaging people at the start, as well as reengaging members once their attendance slows down.

Beyond this, they placed a focus on the cost and practical benefits of working with a Direct Debit bureau, particularly when it comes to freeing up internal employee's time.

Ivan described the event as a big success, "it was a really great couple of days. It's always nice to support the industry and stay abreast of upcoming trends for our clients.

The conference has grown substantially from the previous year, which was positive to see."

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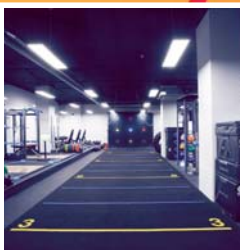


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All about the beat

Music is central to the group exercise experience, but what's its true impact? And how far does specifically engineered music go in terms of increasing participation, motivation, engagement and retention?

Kath Hudson asks the experts

Dr Costas Karageorghis

Reader in sport psychology, Brunel University London

Well-selected music can enhance people's emotional state and, when coupled with the communal feelings of a group exercise class, can facilitate adherence to exercise.

Part of our innate response to music is to rhythm, and research has shown that the synchronisation of movement to music in a controlled environment with a teacher can be hugely pleasurable.

However, interestingly, research shows the behaviour of the instructor can be a

more potent influence than music selection.

The optimal music for a class will please the instructor, fall within the musical choices of exercisers and match both the nature and intensity of the activity. If you get these various elements in alignment, then you're cooking!

If you're choosing your own music, my advice is to aim to democratise the music selection as much as possible and change the playlist every so often to keep things fresh.

It's worth bearing in mind that the volume of music is equally as

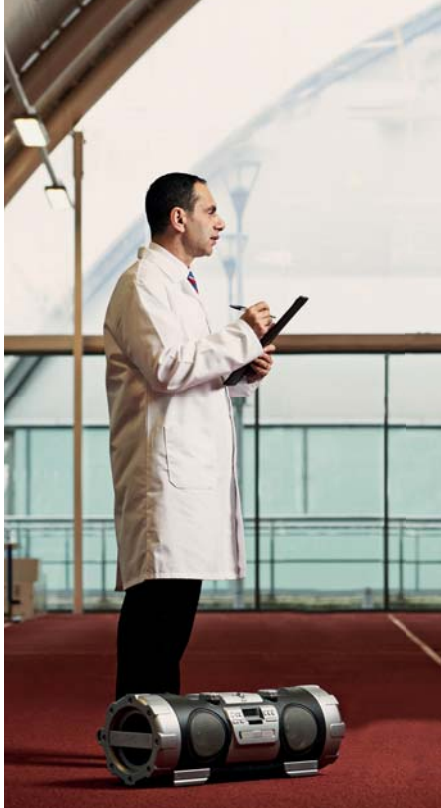
important as the type of music. It shouldn't be too loud, because the combination of very loud music with high-intensity exercise can damage hearing. During high-intensity exercise, blood drains away from the follicles in the cochlea (the shell-like part of the inner ear), making them more susceptible to damage. Repeated exposure to very loud music can result in tinnitus, which causes ringing in the ears.



We recommend that during the class participants should be able to maintain a conversation with their

neighbour, without needing to shout.

Another important rule is that when learning a new technique, music should be low, or even turned off altogether, as people generally find it difficult to process music and learn complex motor skills. Listening to background music generally uses up to 10 to 12 per cent of our attention.



People find it difficult to process music and learn complex motor skills at the same time, so when members are learning a new technique, the music should be low or switched off

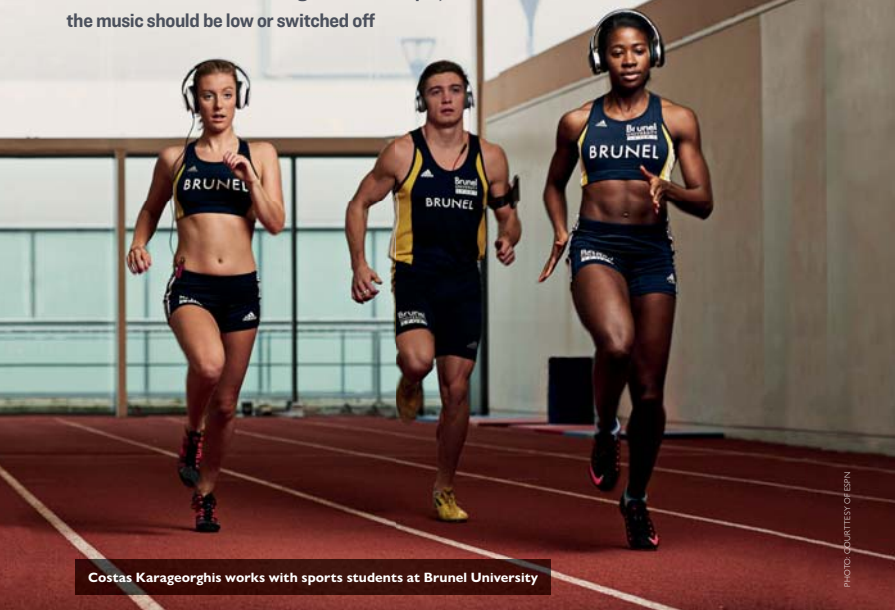


PHOTO: COURTESY OF ESPN

Costas Karageorghis works with sports students at Brunel University

Steve Tansey

Head of R&D, Les Mills UK

Music is integral to the Les Mills group exercise experience. We endeavour to provide eclectic motivational music for each of our programmes and produce our own cover music, which is available in many countries license-free. We customise music for some programmes, for example the GRIT series of Plyo, and



Strength has music created to fit with changes in intensity.

But music doesn't have to be produced specifically for a workout in order for it to be powerful. If the instructor loves the music, their energy will infect the class. Research shows that during steady state aerobic exercise, motivational music can improve affective states by

Research shows that during steady state aerobic exercise, motivational music can improve affective states and lower fatigue perception

up to 15 per cent and lower fatigue perception by up to 12 per cent. It also lowers the level of perceived exertion and encourages rhythm.

At Les Mills we believe the class and the music should be changed every three months. Once a class has been taught a new release for two weeks, we encourage the instructor

to mix in tracks from previous releases to keep the class engaged. Music for motivation is a personal choice, but participants and instructors rarely vote with their feet from one release to the next. However, if they feel we haven't provided the right music, they are highly opinionated – and with good reason. ▶

► Jeff Tong

Trainer and choreographer, SwingTrain

People light up when they hear swing music, and this was the inspiration for our exercise concept. We use classic swing, gospel and R&B music from the 20s, 30s and 40s, right up to modern-day pop, but it all has a swing feel to it. There are so many great songs out there from the past to the present that it's an exciting challenge as a choreographer to find existing songs to use and it's always nice to surprise our students with a vintage workout to a swing song that they know. As a



result, we don't currently feel the need to create our own custom music, but that's not to say never.

As one of the lead choreographers, I choreograph two new songs a month and it's difficult to find songs that tick all of the boxes, so I listen to a lot of music. It has to have a nice rise, be feel-good and happy, but it also needs to lend itself to the swing moves and have a clear structure – verse, chorus, verse, chorus, middle eight, chorus. There have to be repeating parts,

so you can repeat moves, which then activates muscle memory and makes people feel more accomplished.

The overall soundtrack has to fit the shape of the class, providing a balance between high and low intensity, with some power tracks to do the hard work and some quiet points for recovery. The class starts with a couple of warm-up tracks with simple and

easy-to-learn choreography, moves into two medium-to-high intensity tracks, then a slower one to recover, followed by a high intensity track, so they can push themselves hard before the break. After this there are three power tracks, back to back, before cooling down and stretching. Even the stretching track has a sassy beat – something like Minnie the Moocher.

There must be repeating parts in the song, so you can repeat moves, which then activates muscle memory and makes people feel more accomplished

SwingTrain classes are set to swing music from the 20s to today

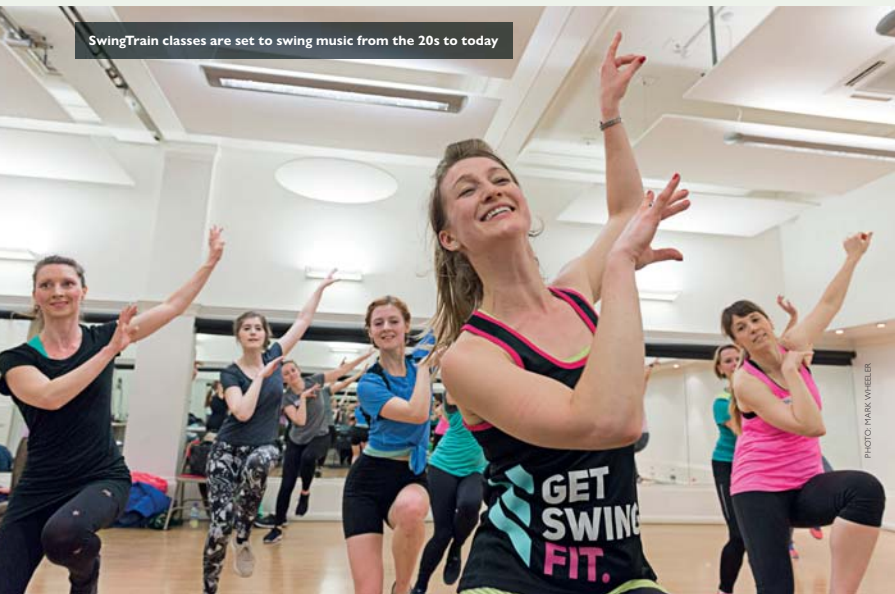


PHOTO: MARK WHEELER



Dave Sibley

Managing director, STRONG by Zumba Europe, Russia and India

Rather than sourcing music that matches the moves, for STRONG by Zumba we create our own music to complement the workout.

Sound effects that match specific moves have been added to the basic track – for example a specific drum sound accompanying a punch. This helps participants identify the move required, eventually doing so without thinking, so they start to feel more accomplished, which further increases their motivation.



Added to this, the track speed has to be right for the moves it's accompanying – for STRONG by Zumba, we need a challenging, but achievable, pace. The structure must have repetitive elements so that participants can repeat moves to the same musical phrases – something that starts to happen with less thought as the participant becomes more familiar with the music. And finally, the music needs great, engaging and uplifting hooks.

STRONG by Zumba participants are initially attracted by the style of music. The class is a high-energy experience and so the music is upbeat, uplifting and intense. Providing the participant is expecting this sort of workout, the music is universally well received. It's aimed at an audience with a good level of fitness and the music has been designed to enable them to push themselves.

Soundtracks need to provide a balance between familiarity and refreshment. Familiarity allows the participant to focus on performing with maximum effort and the best form, and gain satisfaction from improving. However, there needs to be the challenge of new tracks and moves so our policy is to provide new music for 25 per cent of a one-hour class each month. ●

We create our own music to complement the workout, with sound effects that match specific moves

SWIMMING STRONG

With swimming tuition provider Swimming Nature celebrating its 25th birthday, we ask its founder, Eduardo Ferré, to explain how the business keeps going from strength to strength

In business, being in the right place at the right time can make all the difference. For Swimming Nature founder, Eduardo Ferré, that statement certainly rings true. Teaching swimming lessons in the early 90s in central London, Eduardo was asked by parents to deliver private lessons to their children. With a passion for teaching children to swim, he eagerly agreed. From there, Swimming Nature was born and Eduardo was firmly positioned as the pioneer of swimming personal training in the UK.

Back then, he never dreamed his passion for teaching would result in Swimming Nature becoming the market leader in personalised swimming tuition with wide-ranging alliances with fitness operators and major hotel groups across the UK.

Swimming Nature celebrates its 25th birthday this year. What is the scale of the business today?

This year, our business will reach record turnover and student numbers. In the early 90s, I started as a sole trader by establishing my brand of personal swimming tuition in Kensington. Since then, we've grown the business to include 130 instructors teaching more than 5,000 students per week in more than 40 pools across the UK.



**Eduardo Ferré founded
Swimming Nature**

Recently, we strengthened our senior team with the appointment of former Swim England CEO Adam Parker, who will usher us into the next phase of growth for our business as our new Group CEO. As a sports leader with extensive experience in aquatics and a track record of success, Adam has a bold plan to break new frontiers in water-based exercise and tuition.

How is Swimming Nature different from other swimming lesson providers?

Everything we do is rooted in our unique

teaching method. Our instructors train students in the water, one-to-one or two-to-one, maximising teaching and contact time. We focus on teaching the correct mechanics of the four recognised strokes which allows pupils to see rapid progress.

Our instructors have a passion for water, hold ASA or STA qualifications (or international equivalents) and complete our Swimming Nature Foundation Course, developed in partnership with Future Fit Training. We use the latest technology to track the progress of all our students, both children and adults. We know our customers love what we do. We've earned a Net Promoter Score of 77, and 87 per cent of our customers rate our instructors as 'Excellent.'

“We’ve grown the business to include 130 instructors teaching more than 5,000 students per week in more than 40 pools across the UK”



Lessons are conducted one-to-one or two-to-one

Your approach to data and tracking is unique. Can you tell us about the FLOW system?

FLOW is our proprietary, award-winning software platform, operated by Sporting Technology, our 100 per cent owned sister company. FLOW gives us a competitive advantage in scaling up our business and taking it to new territories. For students, achievements and improvements are recorded. For partners, our FLOW Back product allows pool owners to gain real-time data on pool usage, adding transparency and functionality to those business relationships. And for us, we have access to a wealth of data on our business operations and customers.

What are your most successful partnerships with operators, and why are they so successful?

We're extremely proud of our partnerships across the UK. DW Fitness First has been a partner since 2015 and we've successfully worked with them to integrate premium swimming tuition into their offering. Similarly, we recently partnered with Bannatyne's Health Club in Chafford to create an offering that wouldn't interfere with regular members' use of the pool. Using a small area of the pool, we've been hugely successful in creating a premium swimming offer that has turned their pool into a more lucrative asset. Finally, we're also proud to partner with Mosaic Spa and Health Clubs. Together, our unique approach to swimming tuition has yielded major returns in terms of both customer retention and long-term revenue opportunities for the business.

What's next for Swimming Nature?

We're starting the year energised, with a new corporate structure and a streamlined portfolio. We're targeting growth on multiple fronts: taking on new sites and targeting international markets with a fresh focus on monetising the digital assets that we've developed in-house.

We're a company with tech at our core and have big ambitions to find new and innovative ways to generate useful data. We believe this will highlight the quality of instruction, allowing us to standardise our offering as we continue to grow. For students and parents, it will also offer completely unique insights into personal progress, resonating clearly with the premium experience we deliver.



Ferré says he always had a passion for teaching children to swim

A SWIMMING NATURE PROMOTION



On average, Swimming Nature students can swim 25m by the time they're six

ADAM PAKER, CEO

Previously, you worked with the ASA/Swim England. What role do you think Swimming Nature can play in the market?

For the last decade, the ambition in the UK has been to get children to swim 25 metres by the time they're 11. Currently, the national success rate is just 45 per cent and recently, the new Learn to Swim standards introduced by the European Swimming Federation has raised that benchmark to 200 metres. While swimming is on the National Curriculum, many schools offer lessons infrequently throughout the year or not at all. This is where Swimming Nature can play a massive role – in teaching children

this vital life skill. On average, Swimming Nature students can swim 25 metres in a recognised stroke by the time they're six years old. What's more, our approach helps develop children who will make swimming a lifelong habit, leading fit and healthy lives for years to come.

What do you think are the biggest opportunities for operators in the swimming market right now?

The pool is often the largest piece of real estate in a facility and it's often overlooked as a commercially lucrative space. There is the perception that offering swimming lessons is high maintenance. While the operational challenges of lessons cannot be overlooked, swimming tuition is different. One-to-one or two-to-one tuition



Adam Paker is the new Group CEO

can be much more profitable and more straightforward than traditional swimming lessons. We know this presents a major

opportunity for operators. It doesn't require much space, so if it needs to fit around existing pool-based activity, it can easily do so without interrupting the timetable. There are multiple tuition options teaching children, adults and helping strong swimmers become better through elite programming. Often the pool lags behind the rest of the facility, so if you are an ambitious operator, you need to offer a swim experience that matches that. Doing it well can result in exponential revenue growth for your business.

Eduardo Ferre (left) shakes hands with his successor as CEO, Adam Paker



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PTs reported having a maximum average availability of 21.4 hours a week during which they could work

TRAINING EUROPE



The PT market varies hugely across Europe. **Niels Gronau** and **Julian Berriman** present the highlights of new research into the sector



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF FITNESSFIRST



There are 70,700 personal trainers in Europe. The highest number is seen in the United Kingdom, with a total of more than 26,000

26,000

**highest number of PTs
in one country - UK**

59.7%

**highest proportion of
female PTs - Finland**

€53

**average price for a
one-to-one PT session**

70,700

**total number of PTs
in 15 European countries surveyed**

The market for personal training is growing fast, but we know very little about its scope and the livelihoods of the people working in the sector, so industry body EuropeActive set out to put that right.

In 2017, the organisation commissioned German research company Edelthelfer to look into the state of the PT market in 15 European countries via an online survey. The report which was produced – *Personal Training in Europe* – was sponsored by industry supplier MIHA Bodytec and TomTom.

Industry professionals were asked about various aspects of personal training, such as pricing, client-types, marketing activity and also threats and opportunities.

A total of 4,370 people took part in the survey; 3,944 were located in the target countries and 2,819 were personal trainers.

Due to the scarcity of information, carefully curated numbers from LinkedIn were also used to get an understanding of individual market sizes across the 15 countries.

Although the figures must be interpreted carefully, they allow for a basic comparison between the different countries and an initial assessment of the size of the PT market in Europe.

How many PTs are there?

Taking these calculations as a basis, the total number of PTs in all 15 countries comes to 70,700. The highest number by far, is seen in the UK, with a total of more than 26,000.

In relation to the overall population, the highest market penetration was identified as being in Ireland and the UK.

In 13 of the 15 analysed countries, there are more male personal trainers than female, with the proportion ranging from almost equal in Austria (47.6 per cent) to less than a fifth in Italy (18.5 per cent). The only exceptions were Finland and Norway with 59.7 per cent and 51.5 per cent female.

Personal trainers are a young group, with an average age of 34. This might be due to capability or to personal training ▶



Most PTs are satisfied with their decision to take this career path. The happiest PTs are in the Netherlands

“

The average price for a one-to-one personal training session in Europe is €53. The lowest average is €35 in Italy, Spain, Portugal and Ireland, the highest is €119 in Switzerland

- being a new industry that's still developing, or because the career choice wasn't available to previous generations. It might also be that active work appeals to younger people.

How much do PTs charge?

The average price for a one-to-one personal training session in Europe is €53. The lowest average of €35 is seen in Italy, Spain, Portugal and Ireland. By far the highest average rate for a one-to-one session is seen in Switzerland at €119.

Beyond the description of the actual prices of personal training in the individual markets, the relationship between these prices and specific parameters is worth examining.

It seems that the higher the fitness-related qualification achieved, the higher the price charged by that trainer: while a personal trainer with a basic qualification charges €53.30 an hour, the price increases with higher levels of education.

Do they enjoy the work?

Most PTs are generally satisfied with their decision to take this career path, reportedly enjoying their work.

The 'happiest' PTs are based in the Netherlands, Germany and Austria and the most important reason for this generally high level of satisfaction is seen as the 'opportunity to help people', followed by the fun nature of the work and the potential for personal development.

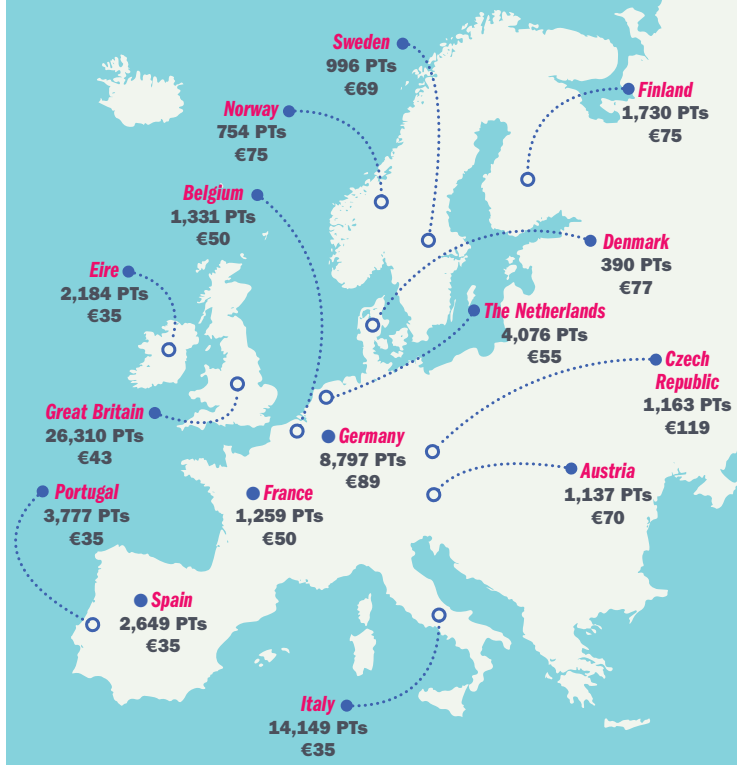
Full-time and part-time personal trainers are distributed relatively evenly throughout the industry. However, the huge majority work on a self-employed basis. On average, PTs reported having a maximum availability of 21.4 hours during which they could work each week.

The time spent in actual PT sessions – as a proportion of the total overall work of being a trainer – varies from 30 per cent to more than 50 per cent, depending on the country.

Does getting trained make a difference?

It's generally accepted that a good education is an essential prerequisite to becoming a successful personal trainer. An adequate education is also a strong selling proposition and a requirement for good customer retention. Official educational requirements, however, differ greatly from country to country.

NUMBER OF PERSONAL TRAINERS + PRICE FOR A ONE-TO-ONE TRAINING SESSION



While a personal trainer doesn't need a formal education in some countries, in others there are specific minimum requirements that have to be fulfilled before someone can work as a personal trainer and again, the offerings of the different national training providers vary hugely from country to country, with no real average being identified.

Given this complex international educational system, the majority of personal trainers said they believe international standards would be useful and the European Register of Exercise Professionals (EREPS) is seen as a driving force for the development of these, not only for personal trainers, but also for fitness professionals in general. ●

FIND OUT MORE

Personal Training in Europe, EuropeActive and Edelheffer's study into the personal training market across 15 European countries can be ordered by emailing research company Edelheffer at contact@edelheffer.eu





"As a company, Willmott Dixon is now becoming a complete solution provider"

Roger Forsdyke, managing director, Willmott Dixon

A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

Construction specialist Willmott Dixon is looking to shake up the way public sector procures leisure facilities, with a new partnership-based approach

Austerity cuts to local authority budgets – and the effects they have on the delivery of leisure services – are well documented. In its latest budget submission to the Treasury in November 2017, the Local Government Association expressed its concern over the future of the UK's ageing leisure centres and called on the government to provide a £400m funding pot to pay for improvements to leisure infrastructure.

Meanwhile, a survey by the Local Government Information Unit in 2017 found that 75 per cent of local authorities had "little or no confidence" in the sustainability of local government finances. The report – *2017 State of Local Government Finance* – also revealed that one in 10 authorities are in danger of failing to meet legal requirements to deliver statutory, core services.

A COMPLETE SOLUTION

As leisure is still treated as a non-statutory service, it's often at the back of the queue when funding decisions are made – even if there's a need for new facilities.

What has made procurement even harder for the public sector is the drain of expertise. As leisure budgets have been cut, those responsible for their allocation have seen their roles being changed to focus on other areas of spending.

"Most local authorities would love to have a new leisure centre," says Roger Forsdyke, managing director of construction specialist Willmott Dixon.

"But what we often find is that some local authorities no longer know how to get one. Money is tight, so many authorities don't see a way to finance facilities – never mind being able to decide what a facility should look like or include."

To tackle the issue, Willmott Dixon is introducing a new process to leisure facility procurement, designed to help local authorities struggling to get their leisure projects off the ground. The company's new collaborative approach will deliver authorities a nose-to-tail service, by providing key partners at each stage of facility development, from site finding to financing design and completion.

"We're moving away from being 'just builders' and are becoming complete solution providers," says Forsdyke.

"Working with our partners, we'll help find and provide the solutions for those local authorities who are unable to see a route to having a new leisure facility."

PICKING A SUCCESSFUL TEAM

The collaborative approach will see Willmott Dixon forming partnerships with companies working in leisure and bringing together teams for each project to achieve a common goal – delivering sustainable leisure facilities, which become focal points for communities.

As one of the country's leading leisure builders, Willmott Dixon already has many of the partnerships "ready to go". In the past 12 years, the company has delivered

PROACTIVE: A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

A new publication from Willmott Dixon – called *Proactive: A collaborative approach to leisure delivery* – outlines the company's solutions to the funding crisis in local government leisure. "Willmott Dixon believes in building lives less ordinary, through the provision of great leisure buildings which become a focal point for the community for young and old," it says.

The company is focused on partnership working with councils and trusts, finding ways to enable development.





Willmott Dixon will pick up a project at any stage in its development

more than 150 leisure facilities of all shapes and sizes across the UK.

"With our partners, we'll be able to provide a fully-funded and costed proposal from start to finish," says Stephen Parker, Willmott Dixon's head of leisure.

"We start by producing a business case for a facility, then we develop the design and help the authority to source the funding it needs to complete the project.

"We then project manage the construction and are also able to bring in a selection of operators for the authority to choose from. In other words, we're able to offer all of the benefits of a developer-led approach, with none of the costs."

Parker adds that the collaborative approach will see each partner buying into Willmott Dixon's commitment to "build lives less ordinary" and deliver facilities which improve communities.

"Ultimately, this isn't about the bricks and mortar of buildings," he says. "This is about the bricks and mortar of people's lives. Our focal point will be the people who will use the facilities that we build."

LEISURE TOOLKIT

To help authorities visualise the new model, Willmott Dixon has created the concept of a "leisure toolkit", from which specific services and solutions can be deployed when needed. Consisting of 20 elements, the "tools" range from



"Ultimately, this isn't about the bricks and mortar of buildings. This is about the bricks and mortar of people's lives"

Stephen Parker, head of leisure, Willmott Dixon ►



Willmott Dixon's Leisure Toolkit solution can include design and build services, as well as feasibility



"The new approach means we can help a project at any stage, even if we weren't there at the start"

Nick Mennell, leisure sector manager, Willmott Dixon

- feasibility services and funding to business planning and facility operations.

For those looking for a flexible facility, for example, the toolkit offers the new Core+ concept – a new modular-based leisure space solution, developed in partnership with GT3 Architects. The pre-designed format aims to add greater cost certainty and flexibility to leisure centre projects.

Using Core+, customers can choose the elements inside a centre, based on the community's specific needs – such as choosing between a group exercise studio or a sports court or sports hall.

Because finding the cash to drive projects is often a hurdle for authorities, the toolkit also offers a dedicated funding structure called Adjuto. The system has been designed to reduce the costs for financing leisure facility construction by using the benefits of the private sector to secure finance for the public sector.

It does this by attracting private sector investors and offering them low-risk returns, while ensuring public sector beneficiaries retain control of the project interests.

"The toolkit means that we can talk to customers about what they want and match their specific needs with the elements in our toolkit," says Parker. "This service is 100 per cent unique to our business."

Nick Mennell, Willmott Dixon's leisure sector manager, says that the new

collaborative approach – and toolkit – will allow authorities to turn to the company for help at any stage in a project.

ENTRY POINTS

"While we can offer those looking to build leisure facilities an entire package, from start to finish, the new approach also means that there are multiple entry levels, from where we can pick up and help a project move forward," Mennell says.

"So you don't necessarily have to start a project with us – you might be in the middle of a scheme – but you can benefit from a number of the services we can now offer."

Parker concludes that the approach has the potential to transform leisure centre development in the UK, at a time when investment is badly needed, saying, "It's about making a difference in communities – we acknowledge that there are lots of local authorities who are cash-strapped

and the money has to go to core services, but the message we're sending it out is that, with our help, authorities can have the facilities they want and deserve." ●

To explore the opportunities with Willmott Dixon, get in touch:

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Announcing Core+

Leisure builder, Willmott Dixon, has announced the Core+ concept – a new, modular-based leisure space and building solution, which has been developed in partnership with GT3 Architects.

The pre-designed format aims to add greater cost certainty and flexibility to leisure centre projects.

The concept allows customers to choose the elements inside the centre, based on community needs. In some areas, for example, providing group exercise studios will ensure high footfall and drive membership, while in others, using the same space for sports courts will deliver better results.

pulsebeat

All the latest news and headline-grabbing stories from Pulse Fitness Worldwide



The Pulse Group Receives Private Investment

The Pulse Group is pleased to mark a milestone in the company's history – the welcoming of a significant investment into the business from M Investment Group. M Investment Group is owned by business entrepreneur, Mo Chaudry, and as such, will bring a wealth of business acumen to The Pulse Group.


This investment will enable The Pulse Group to diversify and grow their leisure offer, whilst continuing to meet the needs of the leisure industry.


Read the story in full at
www.thepulsegroup.com/category/news


"I am extremely pleased that a respected, long-term oriented local business partner, like Mo, shares our view and philosophy for The Pulse Group and we warmly welcome him and his committed investment to the Pulse family."


Chris Johnson
Managing Director



 40% growth in global Fitness equipment sales

 Pulse Fitness attending FIBO 2018 find out more

 New exciting products added to the Pulse Fitness portfolio

 All the news on the latest Pulse Fitness installs



What could we do for you? Let's start the conversation today. Call us on (+44) 1260 294610.

Global growth in emerging and new markets

We are incredibly proud of our global business growth over the last year. With a growing number of dealers right across the globe, we've enjoyed a 40% increase in global sales year on year. With the new year well underway, we are dedicated to maintaining this momentum in 2018.

We have had great success in China, Germany and Sweden making them our top countries in terms of global expansion. Going forward, we have our sights set on Japan. With the overall fitness market in Japan growing rapidly, we are

seizing this opportunity. Similarly, we're focused on growth and expansion in the US, coinciding with our presence at IHRSA this year.

The global growth of the business is a real testament to the strength of the Pulse Fitness brand. With a heritage of international export, we're truly entering a new phase where we will offer more products and more support to a greater number of distributors worldwide. With new dealers coming on board, it's an exciting time for the business.



Phill Griffin is the International Sales Manager for Pulse Fitness. He manages all existing distributors and is exploring new opportunities to continually grow the Pulse presence worldwide.

What was your favourite install in 2017 and why?

PG: We installed a fantastic gym into central Shanghai and this club was fitted out with the full Pulse Fitness equipment portfolio and PulseMove. The reason why it is my favourite, is because I find it incredible that through business/networking you can see our product in a city on the other side of the planet in a country that our products have never been sold into before. This gives me great job satisfaction!

Jimmy Andrew is Global Sales Director and is responsible for everything from product education and client support to driving global awareness of the Pulse brand.

What was your favourite install in 2017 and why?

JA: My favourite install in 2017 was Update Fitness in Switzerland. The finish of the club is amazing, and they are some of the best clubs I have ever seen.

Where to find Pulse in 2018?



San Diego, USA
21 – 24 March



Cologne, Germany
12 – 15 April



Manchester, UK
20 – 23 June.

If you will be attending any of these shows, please stop by the Pulse Fitness stand to see some of our latest products and innovations. We look forward to seeing you there.

What to expect from Pulse Fitness at FIBO (Hall 7 stand C48)

At FIBO 2018, Pulse Fitness will be showcasing products from all product ranges including cardio, strength, freeweights, functional, plateloaded and exergaming. Plus, they will be demonstrating PulseMove their connectivity fitness tracking software solution. New product launches will include;

Dual Strength machines

The new dual strength line features 10 products. Each machine easily adjusts to accommodate two different exercises, gym owners, operators and users can save space while purchasing fewer pieces of equipment.

Exergaming Fitness

With virtual reality becoming ever prevalent within the Fitness Industry, Pulse Fitness will be showcasing their VR Treadmill, the Trixter VR and iWall.

VR Treadmill - With the VR Treadmill users can explore 126 different virtual gaming programmes and environments such as coastal, countryside and city-based locations. The software gives users a unique 360° real life experience.

Trixter VR - Trixter Virtual Reality is the world's first fitness gaming bike to showcase facial recognition to log user workouts and gives a unique 360° virtual cycling experience over an array of environments including medieval forests, mountain lakes and tropical islands.

iWall - iWall is a fun and versatile exergaming product that lets users become part of the game. Complete with six different games, using the iWall motion sensor, you are the game controller.

At FIBO 2018 Pulse Fitness will also be joined by their ambassador and World's Strongest Man Eddie Hall – come and say hello to team Pulse and Eddie on stand C48 in Hall 7.

New products added to Pulse Fitness portfolio

Fueling the rise in functional training, Pulse Fitness has added several new products to its growing portfolio. The products range from a new half rack, full rack and platforms to medicine ball sets and battle ropes.

Though it may still be considered a trend, functional training is here to stay. It covers a wide range of movement and strength training and therefore, Pulse Fitness is continually providing new and dynamic fitness equipment.

Items in the range include:



1. BOSU balance trainer set. 2. Half rack and full rack with additional platforms. 3. 1-10kg medicine ball set. 4. 5-30kg basebag set with racks. 5. New Olympic bars including a 20 kg competition bar, 20 kg training bar and 20 kg cross-fit bar. 6. Battle rope set. 7. 5-25 kg black and coloured bumper plates and 10-25 kg elite competition black and coloured bumper plates. 8. Swiss ball sets with racks.

What could we do for you? Let's start the conversation today. Call us on (+44) 1260 294610.



Inspiring designs secure deal with Christchurch and East Dorset Council



The Pulse Group was awarded a new contract with Christchurch and East Dorset Council to upgrade the fitness equipment at Queen Elizabeth Leisure Centre and Two Riversmeet. The council was thoroughly impressed by Pulse's offering and ability to bring the project to life through inspiring and personalised 2D and 3D designs, which is what ultimately clinched the contract for the supplier.

Both facilities have now been kitted out with a wide range of innovative equipment from Pulse Fitness's latest Series 3 Cardiovascular lines, complete with 18.5" touch screen console as well as IFI accredited CV equipment from

its series 2 range. Pulse Fitness also installed equipment from its H-range strength line.

Through clever design, Pulse's team maximised on space to create a large functional training area at each site. Both have been kitted out with a functional training rig, Watt Bikes and self-powered treadmills. The new additions have allowed the council to expand its offering and create brand new HIIT classes. As part of the project, Pulse's in-house marketing team has also delivered a range of marketing support services including the creation of bespoke wall art at each site.

Pulse Fitness completes install at Darlaston Swimming Pool



Pulse Fitness has recently transformed and upgraded the fitness facilities at Darlaston Swimming Pool, which is operated by Walsall Council.

In 2016, Pulse Fitness was appointed by the council as their strategic leisure equipment partner. The initial contract saw them supply new equipment to Bloxwich Leisure Centre and Oak Park Leisure Centre. The council was so impressed by Pulse that when it came to upgrading the facilities at Darlaston, they turned to Pulse once again.

This latest project has seen the team supply and install a mix of Pulse's top of the range Series 2 and Series 3 CV equipment, a titan functional training rig as well as equipment from its new H-Range strength line. As part of the contract, all equipment has come with a full five-year warranty. Pulse Fitness has also provided the council with a fully comprehensive product training package that includes REPs accredited training.

Pulse Fitness transforms high use gym facility at Harper Adams University



Demonstrating skill within the higher education sector once again, Pulse Fitness has recently completed a project at Harper Adams University. The contract, which was awarded and completed in just three weeks, saw the team upgrade the facilities at the University to create a high quality, robust health and fitness environment.

Pulse Fitness supplied 33 stations of CV equipment from its Series 2 range and a wide range of free-weights and functional training

equipment to reflect the growing interest in this method of training. All cardiovascular equipment is IFI accredited, creating an inclusive fitness environment. The Pulse Fitness team was also responsible for the removal and trade out of the old equipment. Students have access to Pulse Move, allowing them to track their progress both in and outside the gym.

In just the short time since completing the install, the gym has received over 160 new members.



ELEVATE

9-10 MAY 2018 | EXCEL | LONDON

Now in its third year, the UK's largest physical activity trade event is returning next month bigger and better than ever, this time with its inaugural conference. We take a look at what's in store for delegates



We need the broadest possible coalition of partners; public sector, private sector and third sector working together

Elevate, the largest physical activity trade event in the UK, returns to ExCel London on 9-10 May 2018. This year's show will also run alongside COPA Series and the Elite Sports Performance and Rehabilitation Expo; attracting an audience of over 8,000 purchasers, specifiers and potential partners.

THOUGHT LEADERS CONFERENCE

With growing support from the industry, organisers of the trade show have invested this year in creating an inaugural Elevate Conference, sponsored by MINDBODY. The conference will cover subjects that range from social prescribing and active urban design, through to digital disruption and community-wide behaviour change initiatives. The goal is to facilitate bigger picture thinking that can unleash the full power of the physical activity sector as a force for good in society.

Thought leaders from a variety of sectors include MP Tracey Crouch, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Sport and Civil Society, Sir Muir Gray, Dr Michael Mosley, This Girl Can architect Tanya Joseph, World Health Organisation's Alana Officer, National Obesity Forum's spokesperson Tam Fry, NHS England's clinical lead for social prescribing Michael Dixon GP, Sport England's strategic lead of campaigns Kate Dale and Parkwood Leisure's managing director, Peter Fitzboydon.

During the conference, Steve Ward, chief executive of ukactive, will chair a session on unleashing the potential of the sporting economy, with speakers including Andrew Honeyman, head of sport at Department for Culture, Media and Sport; Tara Dillon, chief executive at CIMSPA; and Robert Cook, managing director UK at Virgin Active.

Ward comments: "If we're going to get more people, more active, more often, and improve the health of the nation, we need the broadest possible coalition of partners; public sector, private sector and third sector working together, and that's what Elevate is all about."

ELEVATE

Elevate 2018 speakers include:



Tracey Crouch MP
Parliamentary Under
Secretary of State



Sir Muir Gray
Better Value Healthcare



Michael Mosley
BBC



Hannah Behrendt
Behavioural Insights
Team



Tanja Joseph
This Girl Can



Alana Officer
World Health
Organisation



Tam Fry
National Obesity Forum



Michael Dixon
NHS England



Kate Dale
Sport England



Peter Fitzboydon
Parkwood Leisure



Steven Ward
ukactive



Andrew Honeyman
Department for Culture,
Media and Sport



Tara Dillon
CIMSPA



Robert Cook
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There are infinite opportunities to make consumer experiences deeper and more meaningful. We just need to work together and collaborate as much as possible

► SEMINARS

In addition to the new two-day conference, the seminar programme continues to develop, and this year will include four streams: Physical Activity for Health and Wellbeing; Strategies for an Active Nation; The Business of Physical Activity; and Performance: Maximising Potential.

In total, the programme includes 40 free-to-attend seminar sessions with over 230 leading speakers, representing such organisations as: Department of Health, GLL, World Health Organisation, NHS England, Sport England, ukactive, Virgin Active, parkrun, DCMS, Macmillan Cancer Research, David Lloyd Clubs, England Athletics, Places for People, England & Wales Cricket Board and British Gas.

In the business stream, one seminar will consider how operators can 'create an experience' for customers with new and exciting ways to exercise – both in and out of the gym – in groups and families. Mark Learnihan, business



Industry insights are shared by Elevate speakers during the conference, which will have over 200 speakers



Delegates will hear from high level speakers

development and partnership director of Active Nation, along with Ariana Alexander-Sefre from Sweat and Sound and Kevin Yates, co-founder and CEO of TRIB3, will explore ways in which the fitness industry can stay ahead of the curve, delivering the 'experience' customers are seeking.

Ariana comments: "We believe that experiences are like art; they should comfort those who seek answers and provoke those who think they don't. In wellness, this is particularly true, as we have so many possible avenues to become fitter, healthier and happier, therefore, offering more options to people is a fantastic thing. With so many professionals offering unique things, there are infinite opportunities to make consumer experiences deeper and more meaningful. We just need to work together and collaborate as much as possible." ►

STAY ACTIVE AT WORK



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If you are attending the **Elevate Show at the Excel London** between **9-10 May** then we would love for you to visit us at stand **G06**. Come and have a chat, pick up a new catalogue and we can make your workplace happier and healthier!



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The Elevate event includes demonstrations, presentations, a trade show and – new for 2018 – the Elevate Conference. More at elevatearena.com



► EXHIBITION

During Elevate the growing exhibition takes centre stage, with over 200 leading suppliers showcasing the latest innovations designed to help operators get the nation moving. Exhibitors include Matrix, Clubright, Core Health & Fitness, eGym, Gerflor, Gympass, Jordan Fitness, Power2SMS, Total Gym, Willmott Dixon and Xn Leisure.

Elevate will provide the platform for SWIMTAG to officially launch a series of exciting new challenge features. Kieran Sloyan, managing director at 222 Sports, developers of SWIMTAG, says: "We're really looking forward to Elevate this year. Last year the show connected us with several new partners, so we're hoping for a similar level of engagement this year."

"It's the perfect environment for us to showcase our new innovations. This

Last year the show connected us with several new partners, so we're hoping for a similar level of engagement this year

year we'll be officially launching our new challenge features that will enable operators to organise internet-based team battles across multiple locations."

Total Gym will be showcasing their range of adaptable gym equipment for the first time in the UK, while SportsArt will introduce two new models to their ECO-POWER and ECO-NATURAL lines including VERDE, the only energy-producing treadmill in the industry, and the new N685 non-motorised, completely self-powered treadmill, which allows walking, jogging, running, sprinting or sled-pushing.

Matrix will help gyms take HIIT to the next level with their S-Force Performance Trainer, which combines a motion and magnetic resistance system to automatically increase the intensity, the harder the user trains. ►

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ELEVATE

► AWARDS

A popular addition to last year's show, the Elevate Innovation Awards return in 2018 to recognise the best products and services in defined categories, linking to the show's themes of inclusivity, performance, health and wellbeing, and business. Judged by a panel of industry experts, the five categories are: Best Health and Wellness Innovation; Best Workout Innovation; Best Facility Innovation; Best Innovation for Human Performance; and Best Start-up.

Commenting on the show's huge success in its first two years, Max Quittenton, founder and director of Elevate, says: "We're incredibly proud of the support and contributions that so many passionate and knowledgeable professionals make to Elevate each year.

"For all the right reasons, tackling physical inactivity remains the shared goal of all those involved; speakers,



The Elevate Innovation Awards celebrates the best products and services in the industry



Max Quittenton, founder

For all the right reasons, tackling physical inactivity remains the shared goal of all those involved; speakers, judges, exhibitors, press, organisers and attendees

judges, exhibitors, press, organisers and attendees. Put simply, Elevate 2018 is unrivalled as the best opportunity of the year to learn more about the whole subject of physical activity."

He continues: "All the latest innovations and products that have been created to help increase physical activity are under one roof, but that's not the end of the story. The entirely free-to-attend information programme, networking opportunities and unrivalled collection of leading exhibitors all help make Elevate the must-attend event for thousands of leading gym operators, policy makers, leisure centres, public health specialists, physiotherapists, sport scientists, GPs, PTs, sports coaches, hoteliers, schools and universities, sports clubs, local authorities, retailers, spas and many more. We look forward to seeing you all at ExCeL London this May." ●

FIND OUT MORE

Date of event: May 9-10, 2018

Venue: ExCeL London, Royal Victoria Dock, 1 Western Gateway, London E16 1XL

Registration:

This event is free to attend

Twitter: @elevatearena

Facebook: Elevate

LinkedIn: Elevate

Website: elevatearena.com

CARDIFF COMMUNITY SPORTS HUB HELPED BY GERFLOR



Sport in the UK contributes significantly to community life. It is a valued activity bringing benefits to all the community as an enjoyable leisure pursuit, and as a contributor to enhancing quality of life. Community sport centres are important to local people and bring fun, challenge and competition as well as opportunities for social interaction as part of leisure time activities. Access to sports facilities and opportunities that meet local needs positively influence the communities' perception of their local area, particularly for children and young people.

The all-new STAR Hub in Cardiff opened its doors in September 2016 and now proudly sits at the heart of the Splott, Tremorfa, Adamsdown and Roath communities. This state of the art facility includes a new swimming pool with access for all users. Their spacious Health & Fitness Suite houses all-new TechnoGym equipment, including a Functional Fitness frame to allow for fun and challenging adaptation of traditional workouts. In short, it's a haven for fitness that's inspiring the local community to become fitter and more active.

A spokesperson for City of Cardiff Council commented, "The STAR Hub project is one of several community hubs developed by the City of Cardiff Council in recent years, at strategic

locations around the City. The Hub concept allows the Council and its partners to bring together a range of services under one roof so that they can be delivered to local communities in a more effective and efficient manner".

In constructing the new STAR Hub facility, the specification of the flooring choice would be at the very top of the agenda to enable only the very best products to be used. The ultimate decision would fall to the installer CS Flooring Solutions who would specify some 320m² of Taraflex® vinyl sports flooring from international flooring and interiors specialist Gerflor.

Taraflex® vinyl sports flooring from Gerflor has been used in many international and local sporting events and is available in 17 colours and three wood-effect designs.

It is available in various solutions meeting different levels of the EN 14904 Standard delivering the full scope of indoor sports surfaces from P1 to P3 shock absorption solutions.

Taraflex® is recognised for providing durability, safety and comfort without impairing performance. A unique value proposition, the Comfort range offers greater than 45% force reduction, making it unrivalled in the marketplace

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"We were delighted with the total project from a flooring perspective, with Gerflor products playing a major role."

Working and specifying Gerflor products has enhanced our capability to the main contractor Willmott Dixon. It demonstrates our commitment to quality."

Anthony Mynett, Director, Carpet Services Ltd Installer

in terms of offering comfort for users lowering the risk of long term injuries.

Taraflex® meets the EN Standard of 22196 for anti-bacterial activity (E. coli - S.aureus - MRSA) (3) returning >99% levels of growth inhibition. The product is also treated with Protecsole®, which renders polish redundant and is triple action meaning no polish is ever required, it's easy to maintain and is anti-friction burn and slide/grip. Taraflex® has a double density foam backing and with another bonus, it's environmentally friendly.



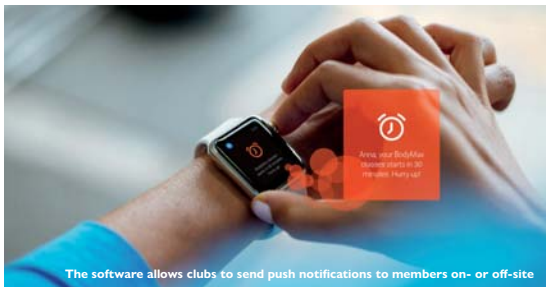
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IMPROVING RETENTION WITH

AI

Perfect Gym's improved management solution takes a new approach to boosting health club retention rates: using artificial intelligence (AI) to analyse member data and predict future behaviour



The software allows clubs to send push notifications to members on- or off-site

Despite the annual surge in new member signups seen every year, most gym newcomers lose focus and motivation after a month or two. While many health clubs try to remedy this problem with new promotions, improved PT-member communication and new studio classes, there's a highly effective approach that's often overlooked: an intelligent gym management software system.

A multidimensional fitness management solution is vital for customer retention because it allows clubs to:

- Collect essential data to improve member interactions
- Remind members about their personal goals
- Send push notifications about upcoming classes or promotions
- Send tips that are specific to each member's goals and fitness interests
- Reward members through a loyalty programme

In short, an effective management system enables clubs to actively and consistently interact with customers through personalised campaigns designed with their specific goals in mind.

MEMBER DATA

Effective member communication requires a good understanding of member preferences and behaviour above all else. Armed with this information, operators can build a successful strategy for keeping members motivated in the long term. To facilitate this goal, Perfect Gym's

management system generates member datasets, and displays the information on dashboards and in reports that management staff can access and interpret with ease. The system has recently been updated to use machine learning. This approach makes data analysis more interactive, while creating opportunities



Using an interactive model, Perfect Gym's management system provides gym managers and owners with an in-depth analysis of their data

The use of AI in Perfect Gym's system allows operators to access the information they need to really understand their members



for operators to predict future member behaviour based on existing information.

Such technology-driven processes for analysing data and presenting actionable information to management staff makes fitness businesses more predictable through the use of AI. This computer science, which involves the creation of intelligent machines that work and react like humans, includes the more recently developed area of machine learning – the ability of computers to automatically apply complex mathematical calculations to big datasets over and over again.

THE PERFECT GYM ADVANTAGE

Perfect Gym understands that fast and efficient data analysis is crucial for health clubs that are eager to achieve business success. As such, Perfect Gym's software has been created to provide gym and health club owners with a comprehensive assessment of their business' operations. The company has been working with business intelligence specialists to improve the existing system, as well as to develop entirely new, advanced tools that aim to revolutionise the way gyms are managed.

Using an interactive model, Perfect Gym's management system provides gym managers and owners with an in-depth analysis of their data, allowing them to increase both cost effectiveness and overall performance. And by implementing AI into the updated system, club owners will now have access to predictions about member behaviour. They will also be able to identify clients who are ready to end their membership, and, as such, react quickly and accordingly to prevent the loss of members.

RECOMMENDATION SYSTEM

Perfect Gym's goal is to ensure that operators can help their members to achieve their goals. That is why Perfect Gym's updated software includes a recommendation system for members. This system provides members with fitness class suggestions



and training programme adjustments, while motivating them to attend the gym regularly. By keeping in touch with members in this way, clubs can improve their relationship with gym-goers – encouraging loyalty and attendance.

The system's machine learning capabilities will also allow gyms to better predict club visit rates and timings, which, in turn, will help to improve staff management and shift scheduling.

SALES BENEFITS

Not only can AI help with increasing retention rates and predicting club visits, it can be used to forecast product sales and monitor stock levels with greater accuracy, as machine learning enables in-club product demand to be predicted with greater precision. This ensures that staff can order and replenish stock as needed, which, in turn, eliminates the waste that comes from over ordering stock and avoids the poor impression that empty shelves can give to members.

PERSONALISED CAMPAIGNS

The impact of understanding member preferences and behaviour extends beyond targeting those who are at risk of ending their membership. Perfect Gym's predictive capabilities allow operators to create

targeted campaigns for specific member groups. Using data drawn from interactive dashboards and reports, communication strategies can be adjusted to meet the differing needs and preferences of members. This allows clubs to send emails, push notifications and SMS messages to members who have shown an interest in a specific topic or activity, encouraging them to use the services available in-club. ●

Want to know more about retention and data-driven software solutions? Join Perfect Gym at IHRSA 2018 in San Diego on 21 to 24 March. Visit booth 4305 to find out more about Perfect Gym's innovations.



PerfectGym

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PERSONAL APPROACH



Personal and small group training can engage members and keep them regularly coming through the doors of a club.

Kristen Walsh shares the findings of a recent IHRSA report that looks at how members use these sessions



Women dominate small personal training classes at 54 per cent

IHRSA found personal training is the number one profit centre among leading US health clubs



Fitness training clients tend to be more committed to their workouts, have better retention rates and get better results

Personal and small-group training forms a significant share of non-dues revenue for health clubs. Personal training (PT) is the number one profit centre among leading health clubs, according to IHRSA's *Profiles of Success*, while small-group training (SGT) is a close second among top fitness-only centres.

Given the popularity of these training types, The *IHRSA Fitness Training Report* – published in February – aims to help health club owners and operators to better understand their PT and SGT clients.

"With this report, IHRSA aims to provide a deeper understanding of consumer demographics and the usage trends of fitness training services, in order to help club operators attract and engage more customers," says Jay Ablondi, IHRSA's executive VP of global products.

"Fitness training clients tend to be more committed to their workouts, have higher retention rates and get better results, so the more successful operators are at converting

occasional exercisers to PT and SGT, the healthier their members – and bottom lines – will be," he adds.

Data analysed and reported in *The IHRSA Fitness Training Report* was compiled in 2016 by Sports Marketing Surveys Inc. The report concentrates on analysing data around US health club consumers (specifically those who used a health club in the US within the last 12 months).

GENDER PREFERENCES

According to the report, men and women have an inverse relationship when it comes to training preferences. Men accounted for 54 per cent of total PT users, while women accounted for 46 per cent. The reverse was the case for SGT. Men made up 46 per cent of users while women accounted for 54 per cent.

This is somewhat comparable to the gender division for member participation in group exercise. As reported in *The 2017 IHRSA Health Club Consumer Report*, 61 per cent of group exercise participants are women, while 39



In 2016, **8.4 million** US health club consumers engaged in PT, representing 12.6% of total consumers

In 2016, **26.6%** (17.7 million) of **all US health club consumers** utilised SGT

Nearly **nine out of 10** (87%) US PT users were health club members

15% of total US SGT users were **non-members**, while the remaining 85% were card-carrying members

Fitness-only clubs in the US had **higher penetration rates for SGT** than multipurpose facilities (26.4% vs 19.1%), while **multipurpose clubs** had **higher penetration rates for PT** (14.9% vs 11.6%)

Gen Z consumers in the US were the **most likely** age cohort to utilise SGT **45.8%**

The US age groups **most likely** to use a PT were **Gen Z** 17.5% and **Millennial consumers** 17.2%

US health club members used a **PT** for an average of **29 sessions** in 2016; **non-members** for **21 sessions**

Health club members in the US engaged in **SGT** for an average of **26 sessions** in 2016; **non-members** **27 times**

Of **non-member** consumers, slightly **more engaged** in SGT than PT

US studio consumers were, on average, more likely to **engage** in PT (21%) and SGT (31.7%) than users of other clubs and gyms

SGT users in the US were more likely to be **female** 54%, while **PT clients** were more likely to be **male** 54%

Training utilisation among **minority groups** in the US was high relative to overall penetration rates. **14.4%** of **African-American** club consumers reported using a PT in 2016, while **28.3%** indicated engaging in SGT. Among **Hispanic** club consumers, **17.4%** used a PT in 2016, while **44.7%** participated in SGT

IHRSA found that women in the US use group exercise more and pay less for personal training

per cent are men. Based on these statistics, it appears that female health club consumers are more likely to participate in group-based activities.

Overall, a total of 9.6 million female club consumers (including members and non-members) participated in SGT during the research period, accounting for 28 per cent of total female health club consumers. For male consumers it was one in four – a total of 8.1 million.

When it came to PT, 14 per cent of men used a personal trainer, while 11.2 per cent of women used one.

PAYMENT LEVELS

In general, men appear to pay more in training fees than women. Men paid an average of US\$70.09 (£50/£57) for an hourly PT session, nearly US\$5 (£3.60/£4.05) more than the average. Women paid an average of US\$58.88 (£42/£48), roughly US\$7 (£5/£5.70) less than the average. Men were also more likely to pay more for SGT, reporting an average of US\$39.88 (£28.50/£32.30) per session. Women paid an average of US\$29.14 (£20.84/£23.60) per SGT session.

The inclination of men to pay more in training fees is consistent with consumer findings regarding membership fees paid by gender. According to *The 2017 IHRSA Health Club Consumer Report*, men are also more likely to pay more in membership fees. In 2016, they paid an average of US\$53.25 (£38/£43) in monthly membership fees, while women paid an average of US\$47.64 (£34/£38.60).

Women members used both PT and SGT more frequently than male members. Although men were

likely to pay more in training fees, female health club members were likely to use both PT and SGT slightly more frequently than male members.

Female members engaged in PT for an average of 30 sessions in 2016, while male members engaged for 29 sessions. Female members used SGT for an average of 27 sessions, while males used it for an average of 25.

MEMBERS VERSUS NON-MEMBERS

Interestingly, although women had higher utilisation rates for SGT, non-member men used it approximately the same number of times as women members.

The study also found that non-member men also used a PT more frequently than non-member women.

Higher utilisation rates of training among non-member men may provide clubs with the opportunity to attract men into membership. Historically, frequent utilisation of a gym is positively correlated with length of membership. ●

ACCESS THE REPORT

● Visit ihrsa.org/publications to access the entire report as well other relevant IHRSA resources. Please contact store@ihrsa.org with any questions.



ACTIVE IQ ADDS FLAIR

Active IQ is reinforcing the training and assessment of its robust, refreshed CIMSPA endorsed Level 3 Diploma in Personal Training by providing the new Flair for Fitness app to learners and trainers

First to market in November 2016, the Active IQ Level 3 Diploma in Personal Training is currently being implemented by over 15 training centres in the UK. This 'work ready' employer-led qualification was refreshed and redeveloped to ensure a far greater emphasis on updated content and a more rigorous assessment.

FULL SUPPORT

To help centres and learners navigate the updated course, Active IQ has created a complete suite of updated wraparound resources including:

- Work ready support and lecture packs
- Fully updated eLearning materials
- A completely refreshed learners' manual in line with current trends.



Jenny Patrickson, managing director of ActiveIQ

As a result, the Active IQ Level 3 Diploma in Personal Training is more valid and engaging than ever before and completely in line with employer needs and the new industry standards set out by CIMSPA.

ADDING SOME FLAIR

Active IQ has added a further layer of scrutiny to its assessment process in the form of the new TRAIN ME Flair for Fitness app. Flair for Fitness is a pioneering technology for operators, PTs and their clients, which uses a sophisticated algorithm to measure a PT's performance and success using input from themselves, their employer and clients.

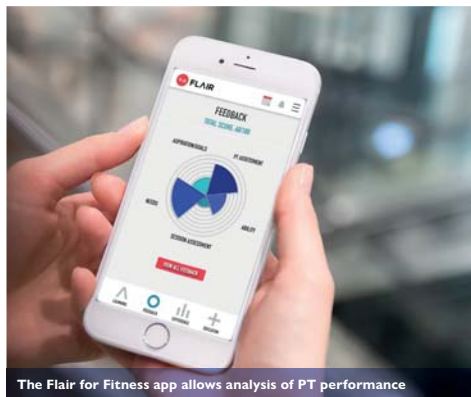
FIRST TO MARKET – AGAIN

Active IQ is the first to partner with Flair for Fitness and started using the platform with its Advanced Level 4 PT learners this year. The app helps learners capture and review relevant data from their learning process. As they record the course milestones via their phone, tablet or laptop using Flair, the training centre assessors can view this in real time ready for review and feedback.



**We identified a need
for training to be more
transparent and
rigorous**

Jenny Patrickson, MD



The Flair for Fitness app allows analysis of PT performance



Active IQ's Level 3 Diploma in Personal Training has been redeveloped to be in line with CIMSPA's industry standards

LISTENING TO OPERATORS

"Speaking to employers we clearly identified a need for learners' training and assessment to be more transparent and rigorous," says Jenny Patrickson, Active IQ managing director. "Our refreshed Level 3 Diploma in Personal Training was significantly updated in line with industry needs and a year down the line we are seeing great results from centres and learners," she says. "Recording progress, purpose-driven training, milestone measurement and tracking evidence-based progress in real life situations in real time are all crucial upgrades for today's learners and trainers," says Jenny. "Combining Flair for Fitness with our now tried and tested refreshed Level 3 Diploma in Personal Training content is a real step forward for us and the industry."

Active iQ

TEL: 01480 467950

EMAIL: businessdevelopment@activeiq.co.uk

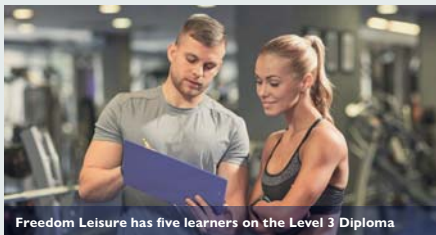
WEB: www.activeiq.co.uk

GREAT POINT OF DIFFERENCE

Freedom Leisure is one of the employers successfully delivering the Active IQ Level 3 Diploma in Personal Training with five learners currently on the course. They chose the diploma as it is more in line with where the industry is heading and, as an employer provider under the levy, it streamlines into the standards.

In addition, Freedom Leisure trialled the Flair for Fitness app across its Brighton and Hove contract to good effect. "Collectively, the feedback gave us very valuable

data, a clearer picture and in-depth analysis of our PTs' programming," says Ryan O'Gorman, Freedom Leisure Health & Fitness Manager. "I can see how the 'helicopter view' would prove really helpful in keeping an eye on learners' progress. Also, introducing Flair for Fitness to PTs as they learn will help embed this new system early on to ensure they adopt this measure of best practice once they are qualified. It's a great point of difference that Active IQ is offering at the training level."



Freedom Leisure has five learners on the Level 3 Diploma

TRAINING PLACES

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Howard Hill, Owner,
365 Functional Fitness, Workshop

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Steven Ward
CEO, ukactive

ukactive's Flame event has been replaced by Active Uprising

Join the uprising

ukactive has replaced Flame with a new event called Active Uprising, to better serve the evolving health and fitness sector, as Steve Ward explains

Each year, ukactive brings members and partners together to celebrate the best of our sector at the Flame event.

However, the landscape has changed rapidly since the event began and we believe it's time for Flame to evolve to meet the future needs of the sector.

The physical activity sector continues to thrive, both in terms of revenues and membership numbers and we're seeing our work inform policies, touch communities and transform societies.

A multitude of sectors are converging on the health and fitness industry and new business models, partnerships and thinking are disrupting the market.

In response, we've developed Active Uprising, a new flagship event which will take place in Manchester. This expanded multi-day celebration of physical activity marks the evolution of Flame.

CELEBRATE ACTIVITY

We're not calling for an uprising, because it's already happening all around us.

Just look at the list of global brands making activity their core business, the technology moguls who are stepping

in, the rise of boutique studios and the new innovations – both those disrupting the market and those increasing collaboration between governments.

Active Uprising will celebrate all such developments, becoming the main event for physical activity in the UK.

Our aim is also for the event to eventually position us at the epicentre of the global physical activity movement, becoming a focal point in tackling the inactivity crisis worldwide.

GO NORTH

We're taking the event from Flame's established venue in Telford to Manchester. The city is a hotbed of innovation and creativity and the perfect place to deliver the Active Uprising Weekend, which will take place during the 22nd and 23rd of June with a range of events on offer.

The Conference will include talks from leading figures on key trends impacting our sector and will incorporate strands from our other events, including the latest tech innovation from ActiveLab Live! and an event for the boutique sector with our new Sweat North conference.

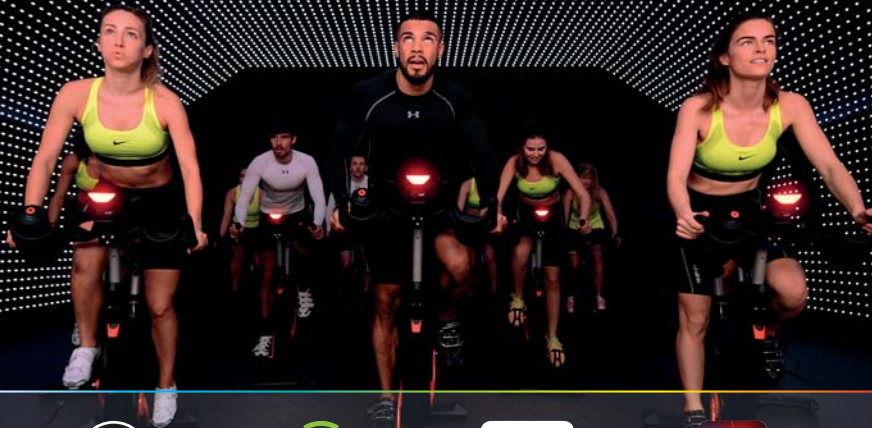
In the evening, we'll host a red-carpet ceremony for the revamped ukactive Awards, where we'll see some exciting new categories to celebrate the stars driving the physical activity movement – from the individual to the organisation.

WORKING TOGETHER

As a sector, we're in a stronger position than ever before, and the opportunities ahead of us are many. Yet we also face bigger challenges, both as a nation and globally: physical inactivity is taking thousands of lives a year. We need high-impact moments where we not only talk, network and learn but also inspire real and lasting change, coming together to re-energise the movement as we continue to build it.

We want Active Uprising to form the vanguard of a global movement for physical activity. Anyone with a role to play in creating an active planet should be part of this – it's only by coming together that we can resolve the inactivity crisis. ●

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Turn up the heat

Indoor Cycling Group gives Nuffield Health members exclusive access to its new group exercise offering

Nuffield Health has extended its partnership with Indoor Cycling Group (ICG) to launch an exclusive group exercise programme – ICG HEAT.

Last year ICG won the tender to provide equipment and programming to Nuffield Health's NuCycle, its indoor cycling studios and programming concept. The partnership between Nuffield Health and ICG will continue to roll out IC6 and IC7 bikes across its NuCycle proposition, along with the introduction of the new ICG HEAT indoor cycling class.



ICG HEAT incorporates the two top trends in fitness – HIIT and group training – so it is clearly in line with what gym users want

Charlie Banfield, Nuffield Health

Nuffield Health members will be able to tailor their indoor cycling workouts using the ICG Coach by Color system, which assigns five coloured training zones to users based on power or heart rate to accurately coach their exercise efforts and provide the best customised results.

"ICG is renowned for its state-of-the-art equipment and programming and technology that's designed to deliver a personalised workout in a group cycling environment. This makes it the perfect solution for us," explains Charlie Banfield, Nuffield Health's national commercial manager – group exercise and swim.



ICG HEAT is a 30 minute HIIT workout utilising personalised training zones

PERSONALISED TRAINING

Members new to ICG are encouraged to attend a NuCycle Baseline class to determine their five coloured training zones through a Functional Threshold Power (FTP) test. The FTP score is then inputted into the bike at the start of each class to tailor the workout to the member; a feature that underpins ICG's unique offering.

"Indoor cycling remains incredibly popular in gyms, yet often the training experience isn't bespoke, so members won't be getting the most out of their workouts," says Doyle Armstrong, core ICG business manager. "Through FTP and the Coach by Color training system, facilities can offer a truly inclusive group exercise experience that is entirely unique and targeted to the member."

A GROUP EFFORT

With 35 ICG propositions set to be open across both consumer and corporate clubs by the end of 2018, Nuffield Health

has also recently added to its indoor cycling offering with a new group training programme, ICG HEAT.

This ICG HEAT programme, which will be exclusive to Nuffield in the UK and was launched in its first clubs last month. It's Personal training is the number one profit centre among leading US health clubs based on a 30-minute HIIT workout that encourages participants to work both with and against each other in order to win team battles and achieve personal bests.

Members will experience repeated periods of hard effort followed by periods of rest, utilising the personal training zones displayed on the bikes' consoles and studio screens for a unique and engaging digital experience.

"HIIT remains the most popular trend in fitness, with group training a close second," explains Banfield. "ICG HEAT incorporates both these trends, so it is clearly in line with what gym users want."



GIVE YOUR MEMBERS THE VARIETY THEY SEEK

*Xcite, Livingston site with the largest Queenax in the World as of March 2017.

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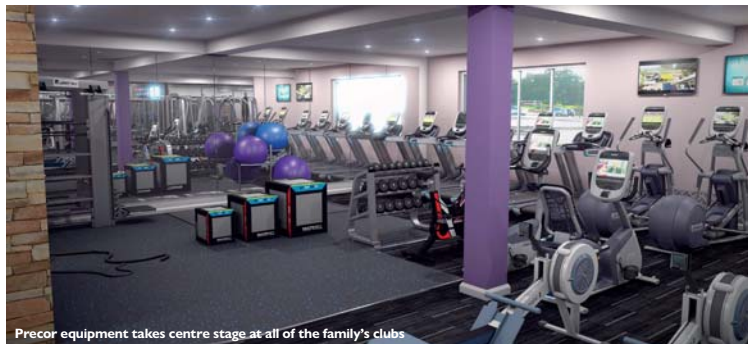
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Family success

Precor equipment proves popular at Hoyle family's Anytime Fitness franchises



Precor equipment takes centre stage at all of the family's clubs

With four successful Anytime Fitness gyms already operating and their fifth about to open, the Hoyle family knows a thing or two about how to run a successful business and what members of Anytime Fitness are looking for.

The family's first gym opened in a vacant office building in the small historical town of Knutsford two years ago. At just 3,650 sq ft, they needed to maximise space in the gym, but also wanted to capitalise on the current trend towards functional training and boutique facilities, and so incorporated a versatile corner Queenax unit to fulfil the role.

Sophie Hoyle, manager, said: "We wanted to utilise the space as much as possible, and with the demand for functional training on the rise, the 2.5 sq m Queenax corner unit was a natural choice for us."

THE WOW FACTOR

Following the same form and principles that worked for their first gym, just over a year later the family opened its second and largest gym in Macclesfield. At 10,764 sq ft the gym showcases a large Queenax Format Unit which stands alone, and, according to Sophie's brother, James Hoyle, 'creates a wow factor' that puts them on the map.

He said: "A favourite with members and personal trainers, the Queenax provides a versatile offering for small group exercise classes and one-to-ones. It also taps into the current trend for a boutique experience."

Macclesfield was an instant success, which James puts down to its location and the fact that they learnt so much from their first opening. "Our family's

not new to business, but we were new to the fitness industry and so needed a dependable supplier to support us on our journey," he says.

"The quality of the Precor equipment is high-end, but equally important is the fact that the company is reliable and accessible. Staff are friendly and go out of their way to help – not just to sell equipment. For example, we had an issue with the acoustics at Stockton Heath and our Precor sales representative took time to help us rectify this, even though it had nothing to do with the equipment."



A favourite with members and personal trainers, the Queenax provides a versatile offering for small group exercise classes and one-to-ones

**James Hoyle,
Anytime Fitness franchisee**

FUN AND GAMES

The Hoyles aim to open around 10 gyms over the next three years and, to date, each one has been fitted with a Queenax, with the most recent, Allerton Road, also benefiting from an Assault AirBike Elite and Assault AirRunner, completing the high impact interval training experience.

James continued: "We're very happy with our equipment choice of Precor. When members use it they realise just how good it is. The P82 console really makes a difference and benefits from apps such as Netflix and games. My sisters and I are very competitive – we'll each play the same game while on the treadmill and whoever gets the lowest score has to either raise the incline or go an extra kilometre!"



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Measuring progress

FitQuest teams up with The Gym Group to offer members enhanced experience

FitQuest has partnered with The Gym Group to make accurate body composition testing – previously only available to professional athletes – available to the everyday gym member. FitQuest enables gym goers to track their progress beyond just weight loss.

Powered by MIE medical, the machine measures a person's physical capacity over eight parameters in just four minutes, offering a wider range of data and feedback than other devices available, as well as a much more accurate analysis. This unique testing method can support operators' goals by offering tailored exercise programming for gym goers, based on a breadth of data on their physical fitness.

STAYING ON TRACK

Following the installation of 44 FitQuest machines in The Gym Group's gyms across London, machines are now set to roll out to 76 further locations nationwide, meaning that a total of 120 sites will benefit from the machines. Addressing the growing popularity of fitness tracking in gyms, the machines provide a comprehensive fitness assessment that helps members to improve their overall health and wellbeing.

The new machines for The Gym Group are the first of their kind to be fitted with the MIE FitQuest Body Composition Analyser, which uses standard techniques to determine body composition. Tracking body composition gives a much greater insight into a person's health than measuring weight loss. Members who track their results are also far more likely to stay on track and meet their fitness goals.

COMPLETE ASSESSMENT

Through small, varying electrical currents, the machines can determine body fat and muscle percentage as well as a user's hydration levels. In addition to the standard FitQuest score, which measures fitness against average gender and age groups, the new machines will provide a more complete assessment for users with both a fitness and body composition analysis. Not only does this provide a value-added service for members, the machines can



The FitQuest machines measure a person's health across eight parameters

be operated by members without staff supervision, making it the perfect addition to a low-cost fitness operator.

"The FitQuest machine is a tool to help members on their fitness journey," said John Treharne, The Gym Group CEO. "With an engaging and easy-to-use interface, combined with the comprehensive body composition analysis, the machines provide sophisticated fitness measurements for our members."

"The FitQuest machines are a key benefit for our members, providing them with the tools and information they need to track their progress."

FitQuest worked alongside The Gym Group to install the machines and will continue assisting with programming. The installation follows a successful pilot programme earlier in 2017. The machines will be available to members of The Gym Group in Spring 2018.



The FitQuest machines are a key benefit for our members, providing them with the tools and information they need to track their progress

John Treharne, The Gym Group

PRODUCT INNOVATION

Lauren Heath-Jones rounds up the latest newly-released products and services

Polar Club enables clubs to offer a personalised member experience, says **Marco Suvilaakso**



The system is not only an effective tool for community building, class management and engagement, it also provides a way for instructors to make real-time adjustments to help their clients reach their fitness goals

Marco Suvilaakso

Finnish wearable tech company Polar has launched a new training system for health clubs.

Polar Club is a cloud-based system that can be used to implement group training sessions. It uses Polar heart rate sensors and the Polar Club app to give instructors access to participants' live heart rate data during classes. Instructors are then able to offer real-time feedback and advice.

Polar Club is designed to offer personalised and engaging training experiences for members, by allowing them to track their progress, workouts and daily activity.

Polar's group product director Marco Suvilaakso says: "Polar Club provides gyms with a unique personal touch to the member experience. We've built it to support an in-club experience, as well as an online community where instructors and club members can share training sessions and comments and make announcements.

"The system is not only an effective tool for community building, class management and engagement, it also provides a way for instructors to make real-time adjustments to help their clients reach their fitness goals more easily."



Polar Club gives real-time heart rate data

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD
POLAR

Matthew Januszek on Hit Hub from Escape Fitness

Escape Fitness has announced it will launch Hit Hub, a frame-based training solution targeted at boutiques and studios.

Hit Hub is a single workout station that can be expanded with additional modules. It's designed to maximise small spaces, and provides multiple training options that cater for users at every ability level.

The company is launching attachments including: Hit Board, an integrated adjustable bench with configurations to accommodate incline, decline or flat workouts. Wod Rings, gymnastic rings that enable flexibility and body strength training. Plyo Five, a collection of five boxes of differing heights designed for plyometric training and the



Exercisers are realising they are capable of so much more than they ever thought possible. They crave challenge through experiences that deliver novelty, community and results

Matthew Januszek

Holster, a vertical space-saving dumbbell rack designed for Escape's Octagon frame.

Escape Fitness co-founder Matthew Januszek says: "In the age of fitspo, exercisers

are realising they're capable of so much more than they ever thought possible. They crave challenge through experiences that deliver novelty, community and results."

"Functional training can be the perfect offering because of its potential to challenge exercisers, often in small groups, with equipment that's exciting, versatile, contained and effective across varying ability levels. That's the why and how of our new Hit Hub. Whether for a stand-alone



The system gives users freedom to play

boutique or boutique-within-a-gym, this new frame empowers members to unleash their inner athlete with all functional training has to offer, from plyometrics to strength training to core work to boxing and more in a small, efficient footprint," he adds.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD
ESCAPE FITNESS

New partnership “highlights best practice”, says Active IQ’s **Jenny Patrickson**

UK-based training provider Active IQ has partnered with Train Me, to offer students on Active IQ’s Level 4 Advanced Personal Training course access to Train Me’s Flair for Fitness platform.

Flair for Fitness is an online platform for personal trainers that allows them to identify their strengths and weaknesses through their ‘flair’ score. Flair tracks a

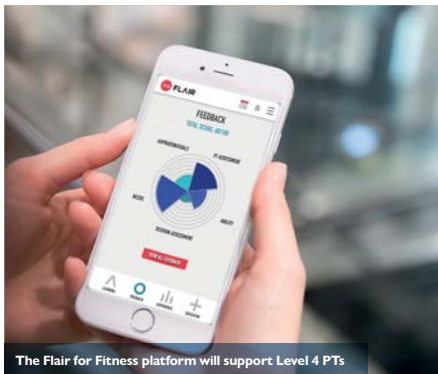
trainer’s performance, using a sophisticated algorithm, which produces a score based on education, client feedback, expertise and background. It’s designed to offer a complete picture of the trainer’s ability to both the operator and the client, as well as giving the trainer the opportunity to improve their practice.

Level 4 students will use the platform to complete modules, and capture and review relevant information. Assessors will also have access to Flair, and will be able to offer feedback in real-time.

Jenny Patrickson, Active IQ MD says: “Flair for Fitness is an exciting concept to help operators, PTs and clients keep track of PT’s expertise, performance and customer satisfaction.

“It will be a great tool to highlight best practice and mark out those PTs and operators who are upholding the highest standards.

“We’re excited to be partnering with Flair to bring its



The Flair for Fitness platform will support Level 4 PTs

Flair for Fitness will be a great tool to highlight best practice in our industry and mark out those PTs and operators who are upholding the highest standards

Jenny Patrickson

technology to our training and assessment process,” she said.

John Mooren, CEO at Train Me Fitness, the company that created Flair, says: “Active IQ is moving fitness education into the digital age. We’re proud to be able to work with

such a reputable organisation and give learners their first exposure to Flair – an excellent tool to help them build on their Level 4 Certificate.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD
TRAIN ME

New FitQuest machine gives users a ‘greater insight into health’, says **Brian Firth**



FitQuest has launched a second-generation version of its body composition machine.

Powered by MIE FitQuest Body Composition Analyser technology, the new machine measures eight different factors, including motor sensory control, explosive leg power, upper and lower body strength and endurance, as well as speed of response and cardiovascular endurance.

Users are guided through four simple exercises and a heart rate recovery measurement over four

Body composition and performance scores enable customisation



There’s a consumer demand to be able to track body composition statistics as well as physical fitness levels

Brian Firth

minutes, while small electrical currents determine body fat, muscle percentage and hydration levels.

The user is then given a FitQuest score which measures their fitness against gender and age averages,

and provides a complete overall assessment of their body composition. This score can then be used to create personalised workouts tailored to the individual’s current fitness levels and goals.

“We wanted to build on the existing offering, recognising a consumer demand to be able to track body composition statistics, as well as physical fitness levels,” says FitQuest CEO Brian Firth.

FitQuest is being offered as part of a premium membership by low-cost gym operator the Gym Group, with members paying an additional fee each month to upgrade their membership to use FitQuest.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD
FITQUEST

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www.europeactive.eu/events/ehff18

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www.bases.org.uk

20-22 | Fitness Show Sydney ICC, Sydney, NSW, Australia

This year's show contains three zones – Active, Strength and Industry. Two further expos are held at Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre, Brisbane, Qld (14-15 July) and Melbourne Convention & Exhibition Centre, Melbourne, Vic (13-14 October).
<http://fitness-show.com.au>

Climb Helvellyn with Race the Sun



CHARITY CHALLENGE

1 September | Race the Sun Penrith, Helvellyn and Thirlmere, Lake District, UK

Race the Sun is a fantastic team challenge. Teams of four cycle on and off-road, climb Helvellyn – the third-highest peak in England – and canoe Lake Thirlmere. You'll start the 57 mile route at sunrise and finish by sunset – racing the sun!

This is the perfect chance to grab your teammates and get moving in the breathtakingly beautiful surroundings of the Lake District National Park while raising funds to help sick and disabled babies and children, with money raised going to Action Medical Research.

There are trophies for the fastest teams, the best team spirit, the top fundraising team and more! Registration is £48.75 per person and there's a minimum sponsorship target of £1800 per team.
www.dream-challenges.com

20-22 | OM Yoga Show Manchester EventCity, Manchester, UK

The total yoga experience under one roof, including free yoga and pilates classes, a range of workshops, children's yoga and hundreds of exhibition stands covering all aspects of yoga, pilates, ayurveda and naturally healthy products.
www.omyogashow.com

MAY

9-10 | Elevate ExCel, London, UK

The UK's cross-sector event brings together academia, healthcare, government, the physical activity sector and performance experts to focus on an increasingly important and complex societal challenge – tackling inactivity.
www.elevatearena.com



Elevate is the largest UK physical activity trade event



23-24 May 2018

The Belfry, Wishaw, West Midlands, UK

www.sibecuk.com



7-10 November 2018

Mövenpick Hotel Mansour Eddahbi,
Marrakech, Morocco

www.sibeceu.com



What do you get at SIBEC?

- Guaranteed pre-qualified audience of key decision makers
- Pre-set appointments with buyers of your choice
- Limited competition
- 3 full days of exceptional networking
- Unparalleled value for money
- High Quality Seminar Program

“ I think will be my 5th year at SIBEC and from both a business and personal perspective there are a number of reasons why I continue to attend yearly-

1. It is one of the best business networking events I have attended in the industry and year on year continues to put me in touch with new suppliers and buyers that consistently open my eyes to further business opportunities.
2. It allows me to be a source of referral for any of our existing suppliers who are looking to work with other operators.
3. It gives me the opportunity to meet up and socialise with other industry leaders within their field. ”

Michelle Dand,
Group Health & Fitness Manager,
David Lloyd Leisure Ltd

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SIBEC please contact:

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