

health club management



MARCH 2013 No 200

IN RESIDENCE

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residential gym sector

INTERVIEW

CHUCK RUNYON

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of Anytime Fitness outlines
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and new ventures

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"Our centre is well known in the area as the premium entertainment facility for young and old. Despite this we knew there was still a segment of the market we were not capitalising on for gym membership. CFM in October/November 2012 turned this around in a traditionally slow period and now we have had one of the best starts to the year we have ever had. The numbers were important but the unexpected lift in motivation of my team was a real bonus."

Roger Davison, CEO, Brentwood Leisure Trust, Brentwood UK



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Pete Todd, Pontefract Squash & Leisure Club, Pontefract.

UKActive Board Director, Independent Operator



Hotel

"Sensing the rise in competition in the area and a rise in the Budget Club Model we brought CFM in to get on the front foot, after a recommendation from our sister hotel in Ireland. Over 3 years and 3 Campaigns later we are over 1500 members better off, giving our club income security and establishing a huge presence as a market leader in the area."

Cyril Patrick Baptist, General Manager, Croydon Park Hotel, Croydon UK



Franchise

"The intensity of the campaign that CFM ran for us really captured the attention of our local market. Awareness is all well and good but you want to turn that into action. They used over 20 types of marketing to bring members through the door and created over 300 brand new members in 6 weeks without me having to put my hand in my pocket. I would strongly recommend them as they were recommended to me."

David Webster, Owner Energie Fitness, Newbury UK

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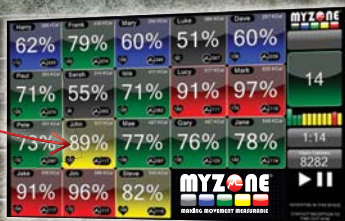
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Let's be clear

The fitness sector has, as yet, failed to cement a clear idea in people's minds of how much and how often they should be exercising, and what sort of activity they should do.

In spite of numerous attempts to offer guidelines to the general public, the question still pops up in the media on a regular basis – often without any significant new findings to spark the debate. In the first couple of weeks of February alone, the topic was raised in titles from *The Express* ('Get in shape with just two minutes of exercise a day') and the *Daily Mail* ('Long periods of gentle exercise are more beneficial than a high-intensity workout') to the *Guardian* ('Should I exercise harder, but in shorter bursts?'). Meanwhile in the US, the *Huffington Post* investigated the 10-minute workout, while *The New York Times* online explained "why four workouts a week may be better than six".

So what are we to make of all this, other than the fact that the myriad messages will be confusing the consumer no end – running the risk that people will be unclear on what exercise they need to do, and consequently may not hit minimum activity requirements for a healthy lifestyle. They may even use their confusion as an excuse not to exercise at all.

The fitness sector must offer guidance on being active generally, redefining its role as the hub and catalyst at the centre of a healthy lifestyle – with a clear, consistent message rooted in fact not fad

member has the correct programme to get the results they want. But this should be counterbalanced with simple, 'back to basics' messages for a mass audience: reiterating the CMO guidelines, for example (150 minutes of moderate activity a week, broken down however people choose), perhaps complemented by some fundamental truths of exercise, such as the fact you'll get quicker results with more intense exercise.

As part of this, the fitness sector needs to continue its drive to take ownership of members' activity outside of the gym, appreciating that not all 150 minutes will take place within its facilities. Indeed, new research suggests it may even be preferable if exercise isn't all formalised. The aforementioned *New York Times* article – outlining the findings of a study published last month in the journal *Exercise & Science in Sports & Medicine* – explained that, while the women who exercised twice or four times a week saw an increase in energy expenditure, those exercising six times a week actually expended "considerably less" energy on a daily basis by the end of the experiment. Although not fatigued by their workouts, they felt time-pressured by the exercise commitment and, as a result, tended to make choices outside of the gym such as driving instead of walking, or taking the elevator not the stairs. The fitness sector must offer guidance on being active generally, redefining its role as the hub and catalyst at the centre of a 24-hour healthy lifestyle.

At the heart of this must be a clear, consistent message rooted in fact not fad – a message that's unsuited by the flurry of conflicting reports – so consumers know they can come to us for sound advice.

Kate Cracknell, editor – katecracknell@leisuremedia.com / twitter: @HealthClubKate

To share your thoughts on this topic, visit www.healthclubmanagement.co.uk/blog



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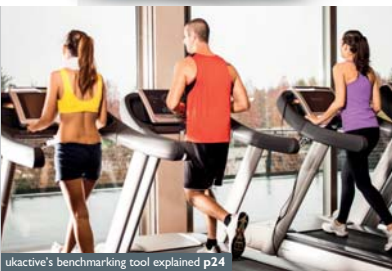
Personal training has proved a tough nut to crack for many operators, but there are some notable success stories from around the world



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Write to reply



Do you have a strong opinion or disagree with somebody else's views on the industry? If so, we'd love to hear from you – email: healthclub@leisuremedia.com



Errors in initial data input can make accurate analysis almost impossible

Fitness sector is struggling to generate robust retention data

With the FIA Retention Reports (2002–2008) still held in great regard, last year Dr Melvyn Hillsdon and I attempted to produce a new report. It was pulled due to a lack of robust data: of the 3.1 million member records that operators wanted us to analyse, we could access only 1.8 million. Many operators were simply unable to extract the data from their software systems or produce viable samples from their sites.

Even among these records, significant data cleaning was required, filtering out inputting errors and certain membership categories. Pay-as-you-go is hard to analyse, for example. We also remove complimentary memberships – which offer no useful insight into behaviour – and frozen memberships. To give a sense of the scale of the problem, one multi-site operator provided 200,000 member records; after eight weeks of cleaning, this was reduced to 60,000 usable records. Others provided data sets of live members only, from which it's not possible to identify retention/attrition behaviours.

All this raises points to be addressed:

- No operator submitted data that

was clean enough to conduct analysis without human intervention to prepare it, rendering automatic reporting redundant.

- Accurate data entry by staff is not considered a high enough priority, leading to errors.
- Software systems provide no range checks, providing opportunities for further inputting error.
- Reports produced by software systems cannot be considered error-free based on the quality of data they are working from.
- Due diligence is not possible if we're unable to compare the performance of sites for length of membership and churn rates using recognised statistical methods.
- For operators looking to sell their clubs, maximising the revenue from these sales cannot be achieved if membership length data is missing. This is also true for those looking to purchase sites.
- Asking the NHS/health agencies to take seriously the industry's attempts to improve the nation's physical activity is a non-starter if we cannot accurately collect even the most basic of information.

Dr Paul Bedford

Consultant & retention expert

Physicians must learn to prescribe exercise

A recent BBC News article announced: "Less than one per cent of obese children in Bedfordshire are taking part in a prevention programme that costs the taxpayer £120,000 a year." This is another example of a pathetic waste of NHS funds, a disservice to overweight children and the main reason that paediatricians/GPs must be more proactive.

As highlighted in this story, most parents of overweight children are either in denial about their child's condition, ashamed or totally ignorant. Physicians have an authority level that most parents respect and follow with little hesitation, especially when it comes to the health of their children. If we're going to win this battle, physicians have to treat the obesity condition the same as all other illnesses. This not only includes appropriate testing for the condition, but also the issuance of a prescription to exercise when justified.

And therein lies the obvious opportunity for the health and fitness industry. We are the authorities on wellness through physical activity. We have the history, the people, the know-how and the programmes that the medical world lacks. A recent study, published online by *The Lancet* – "Prescription of physical activity: an undervalued intervention" – supports this position. The fitness industry should be to the physical activity prescription what the chemist is to the pharmaceutical prescription.

Doug Werner

VP, Healthtrax Fitness and Wellness



Exercise should be prescribed by GPs and dispensed by gyms

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Council takes court action over faulty leisure complex

Local Scottish authority Dumfries and Galloway Council will take court action against contractor Kier Northern over a number of problems with the DG One leisure centre, which opened in 2008 at a cost of £17m.

A detailed report by independent technical experts found the cost of addressing defects in the gym, games hall, bar, swimming pool and changing village would total £3.7m. At its policy and resources committee meeting on 22 January, the council voted to take court action to recover £6m for remedial works and other reasonable costs and losses. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=M8liK>



The centre was designed by Cre8 Architecture

Linwood's £24m ON-X centre to open in March

The new ON-X community leisure complex in Linwood, Renfrewshire, Scotland will open its doors on 25 March.

Designed by Cre8 Architecture, the centre has been designed to be the region's primary leisure hub and houses a 600sq m (6,500sq ft) health club with four group exercise studios and three pool areas: a 25m, six-lane competition pool; a 15m learner pool; and a leisure pool.

Outdoor facilities at the centre will include an eight-lane, all-weather athletics arena. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=1v0L6>

Pure Gym launches new app for iPhones

Budget group Pure Gym has launched an iPhone app, with an Android version set to follow later this year.

The free app, available at the Apple online store, enables users to locate the nearest Pure Gym, book and cancel classes, refer friends and access fitness tips from personal trainers. Instruction videos filmed with Pure Gym's equipment provider Matrix explain how to use each piece of kit, and QR codes on individual machines link users to this information easily. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=c6Dz5>

Nuffield invests £8m in centres

A six-month project has seen a number of Nuffield Health Fitness and Wellbeing Centres refurbished, refitted and expanded with medical clinics as part of an £8m investment.

Seventeen of Nuffield's 65 centres across England and Scotland benefited from the revamp, with three of the redeveloped centres receiving investments of at least £1m.

At the Glasgow Central Centre, £780,000 was spent refurbishing showers, redecorating the gym and group cycling studio, and adding a medical clinic, bar and restaurant. Surbiton benefited from £1m, spent on new changing rooms, a sauna in the female changing rooms, a K1 gym floor, new functional training area and a complete refurbishment of the bar.



Works included new installations such as functional training spaces

Managing director of Nuffield Health Laura Kerby says: "The industry is constantly evolving, with 'bigger and better' a common theme. At Nuffield Health, we pride ourselves on making sure members have the right environment, as well as the best facilities and services."

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=jiR9c>

énergie Scotland to launch eight new clubs

The énergie Group Scotland is to become Scotland's biggest fitness operator as it prepares for eight new club openings in the country during 2013.

The group's portfolio currently includes 14 clubs and gyms from the énergie Fit4less, Fitness for Women and Fitness Clubs brands. Recent openings include a new Fit4less in East Kilbride, which was formerly a Fitness First, as well as a Fitness for Women club in Galashiels. The East Kilbride Fit4less opened in December – an 1,672sq m (18,000sq ft) space that includes the latest Precor and TKO equipment, extensive cardio, free weights, resistance and freestyle areas and exercise classes.

Elsewhere, the new Fitness for Women club in Galashiels consists of a 279sq m (3,000sq



énergie Group plans to become Scotland's largest fitness operator

ft) space and includes the hydraulic weight loss circuit and a fitness studio for daily classes. The opening consisted of two phases, the second being the opening of the club's mezzanine floor to offer additional services and facilities. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=Wzfy6>

Work completed on Soar Valley centre

Fusion Lifestyle has completed a £350,000 redevelopment of Soar Valley Leisure Centre in Mountsorrel, Leicestershire.

A brand new fitness studio and health suite has been added, while the reception and pool viewing areas have also been refurbished.

It is the second of two centres operated by Fusion on behalf of Charnwood Borough Council that have received upgrades in the past six months. Last year, Loughborough Leisure Centre benefitted from a new 75-station gym and studios. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=m6q0E>

Edited by Tom Walker. Email: tomwalker@leisuremedia.com

DLL opens second PT studio

David Lloyd Leisure (DLL) has opened its second DL Studio site – a high street-based concept offering personal training services for time-poor clients of all fitness levels – in Winchester.

The studios provide one-to-one personal training sessions, exercise classes and group training run by DLL-qualified instructors. There are no fixed memberships, with clients given a variety of options to purchase blocks of three or 10 sessions, or to pay monthly.

DL Studio Winchester manager Alastair Crew says: "I'm looking forward to bringing this new studio concept to Winchester."

"I'm excited by the positive response we've received so far and I can't wait to start helping the people of Winchester move towards their fitness goals."



Long distance runner Louise Damen (left) opened the second DL Studio

The inaugural DL Studio opened in Putney, London, and a third is planned for the centre of London. DLL is investing £500,000 in the three initial sites. Typically sized 1,500–2,500sq ft, there's also a retail area selling sports and nutritional products, including exercise equipment, healthy snacks and supplements. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=v2U1M>

Trial phase begins for aquatic register

The Register of Aquatic Professionals (RAPs) has officially been launched into its pilot phase.

Owned and operated by SkillsActive, the scheme has been developed in partnership with employers and looks to provide verification that those working in the sector are fully qualified to perform their roles. It will also bring together three awarding organisations – Amateur Swimming Association (ASA), Swimming Teachers Association (STA) and Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS) – for the first time to work towards the development of one single qualification structure for each aquatic role.

It is hoped that increased professionalism and standards will lead to increased



The scheme will initially be rolled out across England and then UK-wide

participation in swimming in Britain, benefitting both the industry and the sport.

The four-month pilot period will initially cover England, with plans to roll the scheme out across the UK. RAPs will formally launch in the summer. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=0oo5e>

Liverpool university gym opens after £5m revamp

University of Liverpool's Sport & Fitness Centre has re-opened with more than 100 new pieces of equipment as part of a £5m project to improve the university's sports facilities.

The revamped fitness centre features more than 100 new pieces of Cybex cardio and

strength training equipment, as well as an advanced strength training area. The training area includes Cybex power racks, adjustable, incline and decline benches, alongside plate-loaded equipment and Cybex's Bravo Functional Trainer. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=z6E1w>

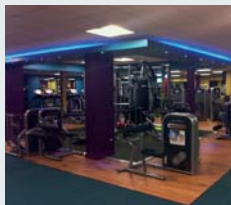
Ofsted recommends national strategy on PE

A report released by Ofsted recommends the government develop a new national strategy on PE and sports in schools, with teaching in more than a quarter of schools not improving pupils' fitness levels.

The *Beyond 2012* report, released on 14 February, found PE and sport had benefited from "considerable" investment over the past decade, but said the Department of Education needed to harness momentum from the Olympics and Paralympics.

According to the report, one-fifth of primary schools did not ensure all pupils learnt to swim, many teachers lacked specialist PE knowledge, and only a minority of schools played competitive sport to a high level.

Her Majesty's chief inspector Sir Michael Wilshaw said PE lessons often did not involve enough strenuous activity. "In many of the schools that were visited for the report, the more able pupils were not challenged sufficiently during classes because teachers' expectations of them were simply too low." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=foos0>



The centre has a new 95-station, £2.8m gym

£2.8m fitness suite opens in Rhondda Cynon Taf

Llantrisant Leisure Centre in Rhondda Cynon Taf, Wales, has undergone a major revamp of its facilities.

The development at Llantrisant Leisure Centre forms part of Rhondda Cynon Taf Council's wider £6m refurbishment programme to provide improved leisure facilities across the county borough.

Improvements at the centre include a new 95-station, £2.8m gym equipped with Life Fitness equipment, including the Lifescape station, which aims to bring workouts to life through outdoor adventures that include interactive, high-definition hikes and runs. Integrated machine controls adjust video speed and resistance to match the terrain. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=eoU3N>

Gym expansion at Devon leisure centre opens

Torbay Leisure Centre in Devon has opened its £200,000 gym extension this month, following three months of construction. Completely refitted with Precor equipment, the gym was extended by 50sq m (538sq ft) and now offers 75 stations.

GM Jeremy Wright says, since the 2 January opening, there has been an increase in casual use and membership sales.

The leisure centre, managed by Parkwood Leisure, includes a swimming pool, squash courts, sports hall, AstroTurf, indoor cycling studio, sauna, steamroom and spa. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=Z4OoR>*



The contract will include the Redcar Leisure and Community Heart centre when it opens in 2014

SLM secures contract for five new leisure centres

Sports Leisure Management, trading under its brand Everyone Active, has signed a contract with Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council to take over management of five leisure centres from Tees Valley Leisure.

The contract includes Redcar Leisure Centre, which is due to close in 2014. The centre will be replaced by the £31m Redcar Leisure and Community Heart, currently under construction nearby.

Other centres included in the contract are Guisborough, Loftus, Saltburn and Eston. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=E2m7V>*

Preferred site selected for Tewkesbury pool and gym

A preferred location has been decided for a proposed Gloucestershire leisure centre, should Tewkesbury Borough Council go ahead with plans to replace an existing leisure centre built in 1969.

If approved, the new facility at Gloucestershire Road would likely include a 25m pool, 20m learning pool, fitness gym, dance studio, health suite and café.

The estimated cost of refurbishing the existing Cascades Leisure Centre at Spring Gardens is £3.8m. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=R4v5o>*

Work starts on DC Leisure site

Work has started on a new £11m leisure centre for West Bromwich, due to open in summer 2014.

The centre will include a 25m pool with learner pool, sauna, steamroom, four-court sports hall, 100-station fitness suite, dance studio, indoor children's adventure play centre and parking.

DC Leisure is behind the planning for the facility and will also build, run and maintain the complex. Plans were approved by Sandwell Council last October, with conditions relating to opening hours and the submission of further details on external materials, drainage, lighting and CCTV.

Development director for DC Leisure Peter Kirkham says: "In partnership with Sandwell Council, we aim to continue the legacy of the London Olympic and Paralympic Games by



An artist's impression of the new £11m DC Leisure centre

encouraging increased participation in physical activity and sport."

Sandwell councillor Linda Horton says: "The centre will provide a real focal point for the community. We hope the new facilities will help improve the health and wellbeing of families in the area." *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=q55X>*

SRA and ukactive form partnership

The Sport and Recreation Alliance (SRA) and ukactive have joined forces to get more people active and to help national governing bodies (NGBs) understand the public health agenda – with a number of new reforms to be introduced in April.

At a recent Alliance divisional meeting, ukactive presented on the shifting health landscape in the first step in the partnership.

Chief executive of ukactive David Stalker says: "By forging a working partnership between ukactive and the Sport and Recreation Alliance, we hope to be able to share some of our knowledge of public health delivery, specifically how to target inactive populations and maximise local engagement in sport and physical activity."

From April, GPs will be responsible for commissioning community health services, such as emergency care, and local authorities will receive around £2.7bn annually for the commissioning of public health services.



ukactive chief executive David Stalker hopes to 'share knowledge' between the two trade bodies

Chief executive of the Sport and Recreation Alliance Tim Lamb says: "When you look at our combined membership, we have a huge footprint. I'm sure we can really put that to use in tackling ill-health." *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=s4Nl>*

Gym owner fined over under-age sunbed user

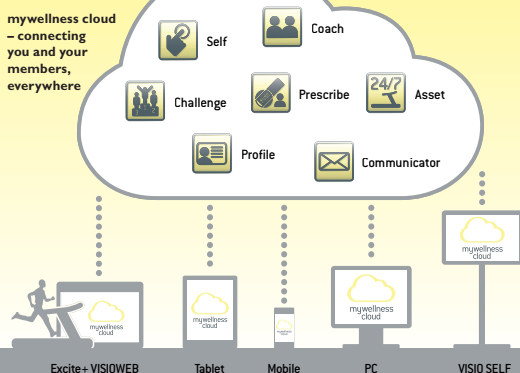
A gym owner in Lancashire has been fined £500 for failing to prevent a 15-year-old girl from using a sunbed. Stewart Hall, owner the Olympic Power Mill gym in Bury, didn't check the age of the teenage student, who developed severe burns and was hospitalised after using

an on-site sunbed. In addition to the £500 fine, Hall was ordered to pay court costs of £1,500. He has since sold the gym. The case has been seen as a landmark, as it's the first successful prosecution under the Sunbeds Regulation Act 2010. *Details: <http://lei.sr?a=w2Q7B>*



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- At home: from a TABLET or a PC, using the mywellness.com website

For Your Business

mywellness cloud provides a single access point for all the professional applications. This completely flexible, modular and scalable platform allows you to offer a tailored approach to your users via seven professional apps:

 **PROFILE:** Tailored wellness experience
PROFILE is an innovative, evidence-based application that offers your facility insights into the motives of why existing and target members workout. Based on extensive research conducted with the IULM University (Milan), Technogym developed the Aspiration Finder™ questionnaire, a unique tool for understanding end users and assessing their deepest motivation for exercising.

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PRESCRIBE allows operators to differentiate themselves through superior quality of service by creating truly personalised programmes for their users. Each programme is stored in the TGS Key, a personal device that sets up the equipment and guides the user throughout the entire session. The results are automatically collected and used to monitor progress.

 **SELF:** Automated programme assignment


With the SELF application users can create a training programme in seconds without supervision. The programme is selected from a library according to the user's real needs, sports or aspirations.


 **COACH:** Indoor & outdoor lifestyle management


COACH extends the operator role into that of a personal coach. Operators can track and assess nutritional and lifestyle habits, create personalised action plans and interact in new ways to increase contact with users.

SHEFFIELD INTERNATIONAL VENUES

SIV's Fitness Unlimited gym at Hillsborough Leisure Centre is already seeing great feedback on mywellness cloud, with over 200 Challenge participants signing up within just three weeks. In a survey conducted via Communicator on the Centre's VISIOWEB-enabled cardio machines, almost 90% of members said that Communicator was a great way to keep them up-to-date on the latest gym activities.

 **CHALLENGE:** Interactive engagement and competitions
 Users can join challenges you create, via the web, their smartphone or directly from VISIOWEB on the equipment, and VISIOSELF touch-screen kiosks. By improving their ranking to win challenges and prizes, they will spend more time in your facility.

 **COMMUNICATOR:** Improve marketing & secondary revenues
COMMUNICATOR can transform each VISIOWEB unit into a powerful marketing tool. Promote activities, products and services, promotions, co-marketing and surveys directly through the interactive touch screen display.

 **ASSET:** Equipment monitoring
ASSET remotely monitors equipment using VISIOWEB. Have access to a dashboard of equipment usage and uptime.



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Active4Less opens ninth club

Independently-owned budget gym operator Active4Less has opened its ninth club in Burnham, Buckinghamshire.

Located at the home ground of Burnham Football Club, the new site spans 464sq m (5,000sq ft) and offers a gym floor with CV and resistance stations, a TRX functional training zone and exercise studios offering classes such as Zumba, boxercise and circuits. Strength equipment includes pieces from Star Trac's Inspiration line, while cardio kit features Star Trac's E-series range.

The official Spinning programme from Mad Dogg Athletics will also feature on the class timetable, using Spinner NXT bikes.

Burnham is the first Active4Less site to be equipped with Star Trac kit. Following the installation, there are now plans to upgrade all Active4Less facilities with Star Trac



The new club is the first in the estate to be kitted out by Star Trac

equipment, as well as to roll out the official Spinning programme in all of the clubs.

Active4Less opened its first gym in Stevenage in 1999. There are no contracts and the concept is based on monthly memberships, which cost £15.95. An annual payment of £17 is paid by each member, which is then re-invested into the club and spent on new equipment.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=cxg8T>

Cycling studio Cyclebeat makes debut



The new concept has been launched to offer riders a more inclusive and interactive cycling experience

A new cycling studio concept aiming to put a 'hi-tech spin on the indoor cycling phenomenon' launched in London last month.

The Cyclebeat studio has a stadium-style layout and a motivating performance Beatboard, designed to offer customers a more inclusive and interactive cycling experience than those offered by traditional gyms.

The concept offers riders an experience which starts the moment they log on to the studio website. Having decided which class they would like to attend, riders can reserve a particular bike just as they would when booking a seat on a plane. They will also be able to check out their instructor's profile and

even listen to a sample playlist. Meanwhile, the club's 'Beatboard' allows riders to see their performance streamed live onto a board at the front of class – although riders are only identified by their bike number, so there will be no 'naming and shaming'.

Cyclebeat was founded by two London lawyers, Justin Crewe and Greg Allon – both passionate indoor cyclists – and is equipped by Keiser. Crewe says: "We love indoor cycling, but found the standard varied so much from gym to gym and class to class. We set out to create an indoor cycling experience that's consistently brilliant." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=X6I5V>

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Performance Director,
Prime Health

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Icon Training secures government contract

Icon Training has become the UK's first sport training provider to be given go-ahead by the Education Funding Agency to provide its Ofsted Grade 1 training to 16- and 17-year-olds.

The new programme will be specifically designed for foundation learners looking to work as sports coaches, fitness instructors or lifeguards. The 36-week course will comprise four Level 1 compulsory subjects and two Level 2 qualifications. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=tsj5N>



The one-day courses will be introduced in March

Premier launches barefoot running training clinic

Premier Training International, in collaboration with Vivobarefoot, is launching a barefoot running coaching course, developed by world-renowned expert Lee Saxby.

The one-day course will be held at Premier's venues across the UK, starting at their London Academy on 23 March.

Premier's research and development manager Kesh Patel says: "Over the last decade, barefoot running has proven that it offers fantastic health and fitness benefits in terms of posture and technique."

The health and fitness industry education provider is looking at the possibility of incorporating the course into its flagship Diploma in Fitness Instructing and Personal Training. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=p2B4d>

Feedback sought on fitness training

SkillsActive and ukactive have launched a survey to determine what employers want for training solutions, in order to guide bids for a government scheme to invest £340m in skills training and career development.

Applications for the Employer Ownership of Skills Pilot – overseen by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES), Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the Department for Education – close on 28 March, and interest needs to be registered by 11 March.

The programme is open to employers of all sizes and sectors within England, but bids from groups of employers working together in their sector, supply chain or locality will be viewed favourably.

SkillsActive and ukactive will collate feedback from the online survey and develop options or themes that employers can partner underneath in order to make bids.

ukactive CEO David Stalker says: "There are no rules to this fund: you're not constricted by a set of available qualifications



Applications for the funding will close on 28 March

or training programmes. Rather, as long as we can demonstrate that our suggested solutions will solve a skills gap and improve performance, we have a chance of success."

UKCES has outlined apprenticeships, work experience, paid internships, job trials and mentoring as themes it would like to explore for the scheme. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=n6Oom>

Matrix secures The Gym Group contract

Budget gym operator The Gym Group and Johnson Health Tech (JHT) have signed a three-year extension that will see Matrix Fitness equipment installed in all of The Gym Group's new UK clubs.

The partnership will include 16 Gym Group sites set to open this year. Matrix has already kitted out the company's 32 existing sites.

John Treharne, The Gym Group CEO, says: "Matrix Fitness equipment has been installed in all of our sites for almost four years and we frequently receive compliments on how reliable it is from staff and clients alike."

The Gym Group also reported a record intake of new members at the start of 2013. The company experienced an increase of 15 per cent



The deal includes 16 clubs due to open during 2013

in total membership across all clubs nationwide during the first two weeks of January. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=U8p4s>

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IN BRIEF

Just Fit heads for MediaPark

German operator Just Fit has signed a deal to take over Cologne's top fitness location, situated in the city's MediaPark, this year.

The site will be redeveloped into a premium, 4,500sq m club set over four floors, to open in September. Facilities will include a swimming pool, five saunas, a Technogym-equipped gym and three group exercise studios.

"The new fitness club in Cologne's MediaPark will be our flagship," says Just Fit founder Frank Böhme.

In line with the group's ethos of affordable fitness, monthly membership of the club – including free parking – will be offered for €49.90 for a limited period.

New club concept for MPSCM

US-based Millennium Partners Sports Club Management (MPSCM) has added a seventh club to its estate.

MPSCM is known primarily as an operator of large-scale clubs in major cities, but this new facility is located in Chestnut Hill, just outside Boston, and measures 3,065sq m.

The club is the first to fall under the company's new 'Jewel Box' umbrella – a new concept that draws on technology and state-of-the-art architecture to deliver "access to the unique gems our clubs have consistently provided, presented in a way that the fitness industry has not yet seen," according to MPSCM CEO Smayra Million.

FFME to invest US\$150m

Fitness First Middle East has announced plans to inject US\$150m into its growth through fresh equity and internal accruals over a three-year period.

Since its acquisition by the Landmark Group, Fitness First has added 22 new clubs to its regional network. In 2012, the fitness chain saw a 33 per cent increase in membership across its clubs and a 30 per cent growth in sales compared to the same period in 2012.

Plans are in place to roll out more clubs in the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and Turkey during 2013. The brand is also exploring a new sub-franchising model.

Bonga Gym opens fourth site

Bonga Gym – the premium low-cost operation in Mexico, which launched its first site in January 2011 – opened its fourth club in December 2012.

Located in Mexico City, the 1,500sq m facility is said to be the largest budget

club in the country. It offers a Life Fitness-equipped gym, a range of group exercise classes, a lounge with WiFi and vending machines, and shower/locker areas. The previous three sites were kitted out by Matrix.

Monthly fees at Bonga Gyms sites start at 399 Mexican pesos (£20), based on an upfront annual payment. Although it's billed as a 'self-service' offering, a gym floor instructor is on-site during certain hours, with PT also available at an additional cost.

With a stated aim of being market leader in the budget sector, Bonga Gyms' mission is, through its affordable pricing, to help address the soaring levels of overweight and obesity in Mexico, encouraging people to improve their quality of life via sports and healthy nutritional habits.

The operator is currently looking for a further two locations.



Bonga Gym La Raza is said to be the largest budget club in Mexico

CrossFit 'club in club' concept for SATS

Scandinavian market leader SATS has launched a CrossFit 'club in club' concept at an existing facility – Regeringsgatan in Stockholm, Sweden.

The 300sq m 'box' has been created as a separate facility on-site, designed to attract those who want to try out CrossFit but who still want access to a full-service offering. It currently runs around 40 classes a week, with more planned to meet demand.

"We've watched the CrossFit trend grow for the past couple of years," says Daniel Almgren, Nordic product manager for SATS. "With our level of resources, we believe we can lift CrossFit to a new level."

SATS now plans to roll the concept out to other sites in its estate.



The new CrossFit facility consists of a 300sq m 'box' within the Stockholm club

FITLane sells 35 per cent equity stake

French health club operator FITLane, the market leader in the Cote d'Azur, has sold a 35 per cent equity stake in the business to Naxicap, a French private equity company (and a subsidiary of Natixis) for a reported €3.4m.

FITLane's president Hans Peter Franklin remains the majority financial stakeholder, but this additional financial backing will allow the brand to expand further and more rapidly: plans are for another five clubs on the Cote d'Azur over the next couple of years, taking the chain to 12 sites.

"The successful and rapid development of FITLane to date, as well as the clear strategy put in place by Hans Peter Franklin and his team, was what attracted us to this project. We view our role as an accelerator of the brand's development. There are already projects for a number of new clubs in the pipeline," says Naxicap's Thomas Barrochin.

FITLane is also due to open its seventh facility this month in the heart of Nice. Having reached its pre-sale target of 1,000 members, the 100sq m club is ultimately expected to cater for 3,000 members.



SATS Spaarvagnshallarna, which opened in January 2012, is in an old train building in Stockholm

SATS grows across the Nordics

Already market leader in Scandinavia, SATS continues its growth in the region.

It opened 12 new clubs in Sweden, Norway and Finland during 2012: a total of 24,340sq m. Openings in Norway included Tromsø, which relocated and opened in November. Now based in a listed wooden building, with the facade preserved, the 2,000sq m club is split across four floors. Alongside the gym are two group exercise studios, a cycling studio and childcare.

SATS Tasta, in the town of Stavanger, opened in October. The 2,230sq m club is designed on one floor, with windows all around, and has a strong focus on PT.

SATS Sjølyst, at 3,300sq m the largest club in Norway, also re-opened in

September after a major refurb. The club includes a large functional training zone, a large glass-ceilinged studio, cycling studio, cardio zone, sprint track, boxing ring and bespoke hot yoga studio.

The 2,140sq m SATS Sarpsborg opened in December following a relocation.

Moving into 2013, SATS Vinderen opened in Oslo, Norway, in January – a 940sq m offering in a residential area. Meanwhile in Sweden, SATS Torpavallen opened in Gothenburg, also in January. Facilities at the 2,040sq m club include two group exercise studios, a cycling studio and PT zone. Also in Sweden, 1,700sq m SATS Varmdö – previously a WorldClass franchise – opened last month.

NuYu opens inaugural facility in Saudi

NuYu has launched its first club in Saudi Arabia – a women-only offering designed to address health issues in a country where only 33 per cent of women practise sport, and 66 per cent are overweight.

A lack of facilities, as well as religious constraints, means Saudi women currently have little access to reasonably priced health clubs. NuYu has therefore been created to offer accessible, affordable fitness for this market, with an ethos to “get women active and keep them active”.

The 1,115sq m club, which opened in Riyadh in December, is independently

owned by Princess Sara Bint Mohammed Al Saud and managed by Heights International (Kate Fearon and Susan Kass). It's the first female-only fitness centre to be fully licensed by the government and run independently as a pure fitness centre.

A Precor-equipped gym is complemented by a functional zone, a main studio offering BTS, aerobics and Zumba, and separate Power Plate, holistic and group cycling studios. Prices start at 400 Saudi riyals (£67) a month.

The plan is to roll out a further five NuYu clubs in Saudi Arabia.

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Millman: A leisure and retail industry veteran

Total Fitness appoints Millman as new CEO

Total Fitness Health Clubs, with its 16 clubs in the north of England, has appointed Richard Millman as its new CEO.

Millman is a leisure and retail industry veteran. He recently led the turnaround of Leisure Connection as CEO and has held senior positions in companies such as Dixons Retail and Coca Cola.

His arrival at Total Fitness coincides with a strong start to the year for the business, with January membership growing by 4 per cent, a like-for-like improvement of over 35 per cent on the same period last year.



Jane Parish takes on the CEO role on 1 April

New CEO for Sencio Community Leisure

Sencio Community Leisure (SCL) has announced the appointment of Jane Parish as its new chief executive.

Parish succeeds Mark Whyman, who set up the not-for-profit leisure trust in 2004 and who retires on 31 March.

Currently its commercial services director, Parish has been a member of the SCL team since the trust was formed. She was previously part of Sevenoaks District Council's leisure and recreation services department. Parish will take up the new role on 1 April.

Head of comms for Fitness First

Fitness First has appointed Mark Hutcheon as its new director of communications.

He joins the operator from PR agency ReputationInc, where he held the role of associate partner. Since joining ReputationInc in 2005, Hutcheon worked on a number of leisure clients, including international brands such as Travelodge, Diageo and Virgin Atlantic.

His new role at Fitness First will be an international position, and he will sit on the new management team led by chief executive officer Andy Cosslett.

According to Cosslett, Hutcheon will be tasked with designing a new, international communications strategy for the company: "Mark's job will involve creating a clear and compelling set of messages for the business,



Hutcheon will design a new, international communications strategy

working with regional management to put in place a process for managing our internal and external comms better, and raising our profile and stature with media, government, suppliers and other business partners."

Role changes within Cybex team

Equipment supplier Cybex has appointed Tim Bleakley to its sales team in order to give greater support to business development in London and the surrounding counties.

Bleakley takes up the newly created position with immediate effect.

There has also been a change in roles for two of Cybex's existing sales team members. Luke Berry has been promoted to key account manager. His new role, which will see him working with national key account manager Alan Ellis, primarily focuses on driving new business and expanding the company's presence nationwide. Meanwhile, regional sales manager Tony Vaughan has also



Tim Bleakley has taken up the role of business development manager

seen his role expanded – he is now responsible for London, South East and East Anglia territories, supported by new colleague Tim Bleakley.

'Fellow' status for Leisure Connection's Terry Gibbs

Leisure Connection's head of sales, Terry Gibbs, has been awarded the Institute of Sales and Marketing Management's (ISSM) 'Fellow' status. The ISSM is the foremost sales and marketing trade organisation in the UK, and Fellow status is the highest awardable grade.

Gibbs says: "It's always great to be recognised at an industry level, and the ISSM is an organisation of strong prestige and reputation. I'm looking forward to helping Leisure Connection push on to ever greater sales levels in the future."

PEOPLE PROFILE



Rachel Davies

In January, Nuffield Health introduced health mentors to all of its gyms. More than just a PT, mentors are tasked with providing a tailored service for each member. We spoke to one of the operator's first mentors

How many years have you worked in the leisure industry?

Seven years, initially as a climbing instructor and trip leader at a summer camp in the US while studying for my degree in Sport and PE at UWIC. I was an avid gym-goer, so I decided to turn my passion into a career.

You spent more than two years in New Zealand, specialising in working with amputees. Tell us more.

I made loads of friends from New Zealand while working in America. When I graduated in 2007, I decided to move out there. I worked as a marketing consultant initially, but one of my clients had a fantastic wellness centre. The owner soon realised I was really passionate about the industry and, once aware of my background, offered me a position at the centre. Working with the neuro-physios at the centre taught me so much, and the clients I worked with were so inspirational. I genuinely loved getting up for work each day, so I knew this was the industry for me.

How did you end up working at Nuffield in the UK?

Having had my first taste of understanding true wellbeing, I knew I wanted to work for a company that shared this wellbeing-focused, collaborative way of working. When I came back to the UK, I searched for a company sharing this ethos; this is when I found Nuffield Health.

And you also were involved with Great Ormond Street Hospital?

Exercise has been shown to improve lung function and life expectancy in those with cystic fibrosis, so Great Ormond Street and Nuffield joined forces to provide a fitness programme aimed at alleviating the symptoms of the illness.

I was lucky enough to get involved with the programme and Sarah Rand, a specialist physiotherapist at the hospital,

explained more about the condition and how we as trainers could help. It was an absolute joy to be a part of.

How did you end up becoming a Nuffield health mentor?

When I was first introduced to the wellbeing membership concept that Nuffield Health would be offering, I knew straight away that it was something I wanted to be a part of. It's a really exciting time for us – it's something no-one else in the industry is offering, and I truly believe it can, and will, help so many people reach their wellbeing goals.

What do health mentors do? What's your typical day?

I wouldn't say there is a typical day (which is what makes it such a great job!) Our role is to help people realise their health and fitness goals, and support and guide them throughout their wellbeing journey.

Is it important for operators to provide personalised services?

It's absolutely imperative that a more personalised service is made available to customers. When it comes to fitness and wellbeing, there's no single best way for everyone to achieve their goals – it isn't a one-size-fits-all venture. I think the industry needs to understand this if we are to increase the number of gym users and, in turn, improve the health and wellbeing of the nation.

What's the number one weakness in the fitness industry?

Historically, the lack of personalised services and the lack of collaboration between trainers, physiotherapists, physiologists and other health professionals. I think the gym can be quite an intimidating place for new users, so I'm really pleased to be part of a programme leading the way in offering a joined-up wellbeing service.

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Maximising media impact

• Jennifer H McInerney • Editor, Club Business International

Whether you're staging a grand opening or celebrating your club's 50th anniversary, it's likely that, at some point, you'll be approached by a member of the media. To maximise this opportunity to obtain positive publicity for your facility, consider your Media-Friendliness Quotient (MFQ) – ie how prepared you are to handle a reporter's call.

The key to successful media relations is to be as responsive and co-operative as possible at all times. Journalists often work under tight deadlines, so don't delay. A swift response to media enquiries is the first step to developing a healthy MFQ. Additional tips include:

Display your phone number: It's a mistake to leave your phone number off your website in a bid to oblige people to contact you via email. You'll frustrate reporters on deadline, who may well turn to your competitors for information instead. To prevent that from happening, clearly list your number on your 'contact' or 'about' page.

Encourage follow-up: Prepare for an interview by jotting down some notes. Then, when it's over, make it clear that you're available to answer any additional questions, and provide the journalist with



Are you geared up to take advantage of any opportunities for media coverage that present themselves?

a direct phone number and email address for this purpose.

Designate a media point-person: This could be the owner, general manager or marketing professional. What matters is that you have someone who's prepared to take these calls. At Anytime Fitness, for example, Mark Daly, the national media director, draws on his 20 years as a journalist to facilitate coverage of the company's milestones.

Inform your front desk: Finally, make sure that anyone who answers the club's phone knows who takes media calls, and also understands that reporters want information pronto. Like most of us, journalists hate being sent to voicemail, not knowing when – or if – their call will be returned.

In a word, if you want to enhance your press relations and maximise your exposure in the media, be professional.

Ask the experts: Rewarding member referrals

What's the most effective reward for members who refer one or more new members to our club? Jim Worthington, owner/president of Newtown Athletic Club in Newtown, Pennsylvania, US, offers his thoughts:

"Member referrals are still the biggest source of new memberships in the industry. We've found that the most successful referral programme is not based on the actual reward itself as much as the consistency of the offer and the way it's marketed to members.

"Our most successful referral reward programme has been in place for two years. Every two months, we mail our members a letter with 10 referral cards. The letter outlines our latest promotion



Recognise the members who refer new members

and the fact that, when they refer a new member, they will receive a cash bonus (we believe that cash speaks volumes). You can also offer a credit to their account, which is equal to cash in most people's minds. Our

referral bonus is US\$100. It's not a magic number, but it works for us.

"By putting referral cards directly into members' hands, we've found they are more likely to use them. Our referrals increased threefold when we began consistently promoting this offer. We also promote it in-house, using banners, signs and stations throughout the club for easy access to referral cards.

"Finally, we post the names of those who referred new members, so they receive recognition. All of these strategies combined and consistently implemented are what I believe has brought our success with member referrals."

Read more answers to this question at www.ihrsa.org/industryleader

Features added to IHRSA app

If you're heading to Las Vegas this month for IHRSA 2013, be sure to install the IHRSA app on your iPhone, iPad or Android device. The app will enhance your experience as an attendee before, during and after the convention and trade show.

Even if you can't make it to the big event, many of the app's features may be of interest to you. These include:

- The ability to find sponsor information and exhibitor contact details, and locate them on the trade show floor.
- The option to browse schedules, speakers and sessions.
- Marking favourites so you don't miss them at the show, and can reference them after the event.
- Viewing venue maps, important information and specific event locations.



The app works on iPhones, iPads and Androids

- The option to contact other IHRSA convention attendees and easily schedule meetings with them.
- Viewing job openings at health clubs and wellness companies located around the world.
- Browsing the *IHRSA Buyer's Guide* to find the products and services you need.
- The option to read the digital edition of *CBI* via the app.

Log on to www.ihrsa.org/app to download the IHRSA app.



Find exhibitor contact details via the IHRSA app

Events diary

Visit www.ihrsa.org/calendar

19–22 March 2013

IHRSA's 32nd Annual International Convention & Trade Show – Las Vegas, Nevada, US

11 April 2013

Personal Training – Developing A Million Dollar Business! (webinar)

5–7 September 2013

14th Annual IHRSA / Fitness Brasil Latin American Conference & Trade Show – São Paulo, Brazil

17–20 October 2013

13th Annual IHRSA European Congress – Madrid, Spain

China concerns over youth fitness levels

Despite its formidable performance in recent Olympic Games, China has seen the fitness of its young people decline, according to *TIME* World. In 2010, 13.3 per cent of urban male students were obese, compared to 8.7 per cent a decade earlier.

"Our economic power has grown, while our people's physiques have deteriorated," says Sun Yunxiao, deputy director of China Youth and Children Research Center in Beijing. "This worries the nation."

Sun attributes the decline to an obsession with academic testing scores in China's competitive environment for college admissions, as well as a proliferation of indoor entertainment options like video games and surfing the internet.

The Chinese government has now urged schools to beef up their physical education.

NEWS IN BRIEF

2013 Global Survey deadline

Each year, *The IHRSA Global Report* profiles leading club companies based on information provided by the Global Survey. More than 240 club companies were included in last year's report (available at www.ihrsa.org/2012-ihrsa-global-report).

Friday 15 March is the deadline to complete the 2013 survey, for a chance to be recognised as a key player in the health club industry. All Global Survey participants will receive a complimentary PDF of the 2013 report in May.

Log on to www.ihrsa.org/research to complete the brief survey. Please contact research@ihrsa.org with questions.

Ingerslev to join IHRSA board

This month, IHRSA 2013 attendees will vote on the addition of Rasmus Ingerslev to the IHRSA board of directors – the board's third European representative.

Ingerslev is CEO of budget operation Fresh Fitness, as well as online health club and virtual group exercise provider Wexer. He was also co-founder of the Danish Fitness and Health Organization (DFHO), and of health club chain fitness dk, where he was previously CEO and marketing director.

Ingerslev was awarded the IHRSA European Club Leadership Award in 2007, and, the same year, named one of Denmark's top 10 CEOs under the age of 35.

About IHRSA

Founded in 1981, the International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association is the only global trade association, representing more than 10,000 health and fitness facilities and suppliers worldwide.

To learn how IHRSA can help your business thrive, visit www.ihrsa.org

Locate a quality IHRSA club at www.healthclubs.com

Employee compensation

Kristen A Walsh outlines the highlights from IHRSA's Employee Compensation & Benefits Report

Last month, IHRSA released *The 2013 IHRSA Employee Compensation & Benefits Report*, a detailed analysis of compensation and benefits practices for the health club industry. More than 100 North American clubs provided salary and compensation data for the report.

Salary benchmarks

"Historically, payroll is one of the largest expenses for health clubs" says Jay Ablandi, IHRSA's executive vice president of global products. "However, investing wisely in the recruitment and retention of star employees is often what distinguishes very successful clubs from the average performers. *The 2013 IHRSA Employee Compensation & Benefits Report* provides valuable compensation data characteristic of leading clubs, against which club operators can measure their own practices."

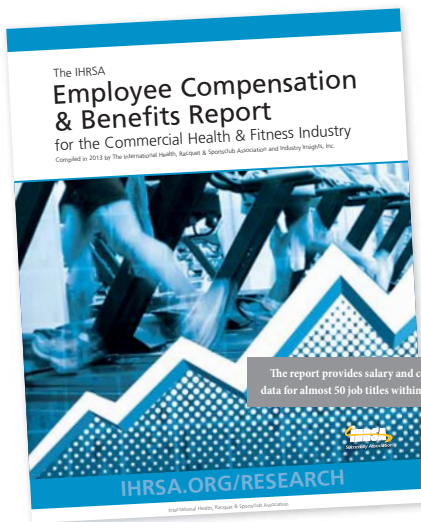
The new report provides salary and compensation data for nearly 50 job titles, including industry-specific positions such as fitness director and group exercise instructor, as well as support staff such as general manager and housekeeping.

On average, participating clubs pay fitness directors US\$55,441 in total annual compensation, while general managers earn an average of US\$95,333 a year. Full-time group exercise instructors are paid an average hourly rate of US\$21.97.

Comparable data

New to this year's report are additional breakdowns by club type, allowing club operators to compare their compensation practices with those of similar companies. The following filters are included for breakdowns by club type:

- Independent
- Part of a chain
- Franchise
- Fitness-only
- Multi-purpose



The report provides salary and compensation data for almost 50 job titles within the industry

Independent clubs indicated paying their chief operating officer (COO) a base salary of US\$129,157. In contrast, franchise clubs indicate paying their COOs a base salary of US\$109,771.

The report also provides a brief macro-economic outlook on compensation and unemployment. According to a separate WorldatWork Salary Budget Survey, across the US, companies offered salary increases ranging from 2 per cent to 2.9 per cent to employees in 2010 and 2012. Salary increases are also expected to be modest in 2013.

Future prospects

"The employment outlook looks promising for health clubs as unemployment rates gradually fall and the industry continues to grow," says Melissa Rodriguez, IHRSA's senior research manager. "As the economy continues to improve, health club operators may hire additional employees to administer non-dues programmes and grant larger pay increases in order to retain loyal staff."

The 2013 IHRSA Employee Compensation & Benefits Report is based on voluntary survey data that has been provided by leading IHRSA member clubs in the United States and Canada. The report provides compensation information for senior management/corporate staff, salaried club-level employees, as well as hourly club-level employees. Salary information by job title is provided by geographical region, by club type, and by size in terms of total annual revenues.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The 2013 IHRSA Employee Compensation & Benefits Report is available at www.ihrsa.org/compensation-report. The PDF can be purchased either in full for US\$399.95 (US\$199.95 for IHRSA members) or in three separate parts for US\$149.95 each (US\$79.95 each for IHRSA members). Contact store@ihrsa.org with questions.

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Measuring up



David Stalker, CEO of ukactive, reports on the growth of ukactive's operator-driven benchmarking tool and encourages Health Club Management readers to get involved with the next stage of the project of the project

Identifying the areas in which your business is performing, and the areas that need developing, is a constant and crucial part of running any organisation in any sector. A key tool used by all of the major sectors in the UK is benchmarking – a process by which businesses can compare themselves against their competitors across the key performance metrics that directly affect the running of their business.

The reports are anonymous and the data confidential – your strengths and weaknesses will not be exposed to your closest competitors – but the tool is recognised by business leaders as invaluable for the evaluation and contextualisation of organisational performance. It helps to formulate and frame the right questions, enabling greater focus on priorities for further assessment and better use of scarce resources.

Free benchmarking tool

The fitness sector has historically trailed other sectors in the effective use and sharing of data. One of ukactive's key objectives is therefore to enable the sector to use data in a more sophisticated and intelligent manner, and to equip business

leaders with the knowledge and insight they need to make informed decisions.

Speaking to colleagues working in other parts of the leisure or business world, the thought of not having a benchmarking tool would be completely anathema to their management culture. When I used to run clubs, the benchmarking report was the first thing my board wanted to look at, and one of the key factors I used in identifying the sites that needed more support.

In the past, the cost of a benchmarking report tended to be prohibitively expensive, precluding all but large multi-site operators from participating. Following a consultation with the industry, ukactive has therefore developed a free benchmarking tool that can be used by any of our members, whether large or small, public or private.

The first metrics to be measured (attrition, total membership, joiner rates, membership yield and average membership length) were devised by our operators, for our operators. Starting with around 15 operators submitting data just for one site, the project has gone from strength to strength: around 300 sites up and down the UK were involved in the

most recent round, from the biggest multi-site operators through to independent single site gyms and leisure centres.

So what sort of insights can the sector glean from the benchmarking tool? Well for instance, the data suggests that November is a particularly lean month for joiner rates and monthly memberships, but any member leaving in November will on average have been a member for longer than those leaving in other months. We may have anecdotally been able to predict this, but each participating fitness operator can now understand the different trends, measure whether it's performing above or below the average, and adjust its efforts accordingly.

By operators, for operators

With the number of participating operators growing with each report, we're now looking to make the tool an entirely digital platform. There will be extra functionality to allow operators to set the parameters of who they want to compare themselves against and in which specific business performance areas, with the number of metrics also increased.

This is absolutely invaluable insight for any operator looking to better understand its own business and have an idea of the wider context within which it operates.

We want the tool to be driven by what is crucial to our members' businesses, so please do get in touch with the team and get involved. If you have any suggestions regarding further metrics, or how you would like the tool to develop, I would very much value your input.



The tool looks at factors like attrition, joiner rates and average membership lengths

For further information

Visit: www.ukactive.com/policy-insight/ukactive-market-intelligence/business-performance-benchmarkingppl@ukactive.org.uk
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COMPETITIVE EDGE

15 MARCH 2013

Red Nose Day

Blue Peter presenter Helen Skelton is urging people to set up a sporting challenge, or take part in one, to raise money for Red Nose Day (RND) on 15 March. Why not get sponsored to use a space hopper for a day, she suggests, or try out a mountain climbing?

This year, Skelton is taking part in Helen's Magnificent 7, in which she'll attempt seven weekly tasks in the run-up to RND. The first involved kicking a rugby ball through the goal at Twickenham, others included a rope-bridge challenge. Previously, Skelton has rowed the Amazon and trekked to the South Pole for charity. Details: www.rednoseday.com



Sports Relief 2012 raised £67.9m

27-28 APRIL 2013

Big Green Bike Ride

As a different take on the London-to-Brighton challenge, this event for Friends of the Earth will see cyclists ride from London to the New Forest, to raise funds to help find solutions for environmental sustainability.

The first day includes an 85-mile ride from London, through the quiet lanes of Surrey and Hampshire, with the last stop being a campsite set in a 1,000-acre private estate. The optional second day is a shorter (40-mile), more leisurely bike route to explore the heather-covered heath, gentle farmland and picturesque villages of the New Forest. Entry costs £75 for the whole weekend and minimum sponsorship is £300 (or day one only for £35 and £150).

Details: www.biggreenbikeride.co.uk



Riders can camp overnight



The kayak section is 8km

16-18 AUGUST 2013

Polskaman 2013

If a triathlon's not enough of a challenge for you, then you might consider taking on a quadrathlon, where a kayak/row is added to the traditional disciplines of swimming, running and cycling.

The British Quadrathlon organisation lists a series of events taking place in the UK or abroad. One of the foreign highlights is Polskaman in Poland, which involves a 1.5km swim, 40km cycle, 8km kayak and 10km run. Cash prizes are on offer. Details: www.polskaman.pl



FIBO moves to a new venue this year – it will take place in Cologne, Germany, in April

MARCH

19–22 | IHRSA 2013 Annual International Convention & Trade Show

Venue Mandalay Bay Hotel,
Las Vegas, Nevada, US

Summary

The 32nd IHRSA Annual Convention & Trade Show takes place at the Mandalay Bay Hotel – the first time in many years that the general sessions, educational sessions, exercise programming and trade show will be held in one building.
Web www.ihrsa.org/convention

22–24 | International Fitness Showcase

Venue Winter Gardens, Blackpool, UK

Summary

Three days of dance, aerobics, step, combat, conditioning, lectures, workshops, mind/body sessions and more.
Web www.chrysalispromotions.com

26–27 | BASES Student Conference

Venue Cardiff Metropolitan
University, Cardiff, UK

Summary

With lectures and a range of applied workshops, the conference focuses on the BASES accreditation pathways to practice, the application of knowledge developed through this process, and the advancement of health and performance as a result of scientific support.
Web www.bases.org.uk/Student-Conference

APRIL

7–10 | SPATEC Spring, North America

Venue Ritz-Carlton, New Orleans, US

Summary

One-to-one meetings between corporate spa owners, directors and design/management companies, and leading spa suppliers and vendors from a range of categories.
Web www.mcleaneventsinternational.com

11–14 | FIBO 2013

Venue Exhibition Centre
Cologne, Germany

Summary

FIBO is moving from Essen to Cologne from 2013. Over 600 exhibitors from 38 countries will showcase products to more than 76,000 visitors from over 100 different countries. Topics include fitness, wellness, beauty, health promotion, sports nutrition, services and equipment, plus music and fashion.
Web www.fibo.de

19–21 | Australian Fitness & Health Expo

Venue Sydney Convention &
Exhibition Centre, Sydney, Australia

Summary

All the latest gym equipment, training aids, clothing, music, boxing kit and nutritional products, plus a wide range of information on health, fitness and sports science.
Web www.fitnessexpo.com.au

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Gym floor skill sets

So much fitness information is now available on the internet that it begs the question: do we even need instructors with fitness know-how on the gym floor, or are communication skills more valuable?

The group fitness director of a national health club chain recently suggested to *Health Club Management* that, in an age when people can download workout programmes from the internet – with videos showing how to do the exercises – fitness know-how is less important among gym staff than soft skills. Indeed, he questioned whether we even needed qualified fitness people on the gym floor.

His view was that you have to build a relationship with members before they will accept help from you: you can have the most in-depth physiological knowledge, but unless you can chat to someone – and have the ability to push

them out of their comfort zone – then all that knowledge will go to waste.

So does this mean the fitness industry can start skimping on the wage bill, employing people with a winning manner even if they don't know much about fitness? Or does it mean that, in addition to employing fitness instructors, we need hosts as well: people who will give members a warm welcome and have a friendly, motivational chat with them each time they come in?

Alternatively, should we be ramping up the training in soft skills to ensure fitness instructors are able to offer the full package? Should we be more selective in our interviewing process,

actively choosing people with soft skills to work our gym floors? As the sector strives to encourage new – less gym-savvy – audiences into its facilities, will it become more important to have both sets of skills? Will service increasingly be the differentiator between operators?

The tourism industry realised the importance of soft skills almost 20 years ago, working out that, unless the bar was raised, the UK would lose customers to other countries who prided themselves on customer service. So what can the fitness industry learn from other sectors? Can soft skills be learned – and if so, who should teach them? We ask the experts...

DO WE NEED QUALIFIED FITNESS INSTRUCTORS ON OUR GYM FLOORS? EMAIL US: HEALTHCLUB@LEISUREMEDIA.COM

Dave Stalker
ukactive • CEO



"There's a lot of information on the internet, but it's not necessarily accurate. I think we would be going down a dangerous route to employ less skilled people on the gym floor: if anything, we need more skilled people. We can never expect to be seen as a priority sector if we don't consider skills in our field as anything other than

hugely important. I'm a strong believer in the importance of technical-based roles for fitness professionals.

That said, soft skills do need to catch up. The ability to communicate with a mass audience, especially those who lack motivation, is important. As we grow our market, we will have more people as members who are there as a requirement to change their lifestyle – because they have underlying health problems – but who don't really want to be there. That's where having qualifications, as well as soft skills, is crucial.

Soft skills can be taught. The Olympic 2012 Gamesmakers, trained by McDonalds, are a fantastic example of soft skills in action. There's a lot we can learn from other industries, and to this end ukactive is now talking to McDonalds and many others who work in the hospitality industry."

Andy Brown
FitPro • Editor



"The short answer to the question is yes. Yes, gyms and fitness centres still need qualified fitness people on the gym floor, with a strong knowledge of anatomy and physiology. If members who are working out have any questions, they need to be answered by a qualified professional.

However, just because these trained professionals can tell members whether they should be super-setting or not, and about the metabolic benefits of HIT, doesn't mean they shouldn't also have great soft skills. Why should the proposition be either/or? We strongly believe that the successful modern instructor has a well-rounded skill set, and part of this is soft skills. The ability to communicate comfortably and confidently, to build rapport, and to know how and when to approach members is key.

PTA Global, the training provider powered by FitPro, has a strong emphasis on training soft and business skills. These skills are like anything – with the right training and hard work, anyone can learn them. Fitness professionals who walk our gym floors need to have a well-rounded skill set to take themselves, and our industry, forward."



Soft skills won't make up for a lack of technical knowledge, but today's fitness instructors can't get by without them

Sue Gill

Welcome Host • Head of skills and training



Like the fitness industry, the tourism industry recognised the need for customer service training when it became obvious customer expectations were rising and people were experiencing better service from rival destinations.

As the fitness industry matures, customer service may become the differentiating point. Staff will need to offer the full package: fitness know-how and good customer service.

We've found there to be a powerful business case for investing in soft skills. One of our hospitality clients has reported compliments are up by 90 per cent and complaints down by 70 per cent after putting their staff through training, while another saw an uplift in profits of 25 per cent.

Soft skills may not make up for lack of technical knowledge, but they can make or break businesses, and so are vital for those with frontline jobs. It's about dealing with each customer as an individual. And customer service can't be done in isolation: it needs to go from the top down and the bottom up. Encountering one grumpy member of staff can tarnish the whole experience and perception of a business."

Jean-Ann Marnoch

REPS • Pralister



Soft skills are extremely important. A real interest in the person and an ability to know when to interact, and when to just leave alone, is crucial to the member's enjoyment. The client is investing trust in an instructor, who must be as enthusiastic about their goals as they are.

However, soft skills are not mutually exclusive to fitness know-how. An instructor has to have a basic understanding of how the body works, as exercise places stress on the body's systems and structure: that stress must be in line with the basic functionality of the body to avoid injury and get results.

One of the most important aspects of designing exercises – as well as understanding exactly what that exercise does for the body – is to understand the impact of the individual's ability, body type, fitness level, health history, wants and needs on their capacity to perform the exercise. Mostly this can only be observed and corrected at the time of executing an exercise, and that's when a registered (ie fully trained and currently competent) instructor is needed – to ensure the member has the right type of exercises to get the results they want."

CHUCK RUNYON

THE CEO AND CO-FOUNDER OF ANYTIME FITNESS, THE WORLD'S LARGEST AND FASTEST-GROWING CO-ED FITNESS FRANCHISE, TALKS TO KATE CRACKNELL ABOUT INCENTIVISING HEALTHY HABITS AND EXPANSION INTO NEW SECTORS

“Money plays an important role in behaviour change,” states Chuck Runyon, CEO and co-founder of fitness franchise Anytime Fitness.

He's talking about the initiative in Anytime's own backyard of Minnesota, US – a scheme known as Fit Minnesota. Set up five months ago, the project has seen Anytime teaming up with Snap Fitness, the YMCAs and Life Time Fitness “to find a way to get consumers healthier”. Runyon explains: “We can't ignore the stats on how obesity, or even just overweight, is dramatically impacting our health insurance costs. It threatens to bankrupt the US.”

INCENTIVISING HEALTH

He continues: “In recent years, the World Health Organization said we didn't have an obesity problem, but rather a physical inactivity problem. With the Fit Minnesota initiative, we're working to get the State of Minnesota to be a nationwide – and hopefully a

global – leader in financially incentivising individuals or employers to be healthy, to get off their sofas and join a health club or just get their families active. And we've seen that money changes behaviour far faster than education ever could.

“In the State of Minnesota, our four largest health insurance providers now subsidise gym memberships. They reimburse people based on usage: those using a Minnesota health club 12 times or more a month receive US\$20 a month to offset against their membership fees.

“Now I'm going to give you some remarkable stats. The people on that programme use a health club four times more than those not on a reimbursement scheme. They also renew their membership at a rate of 93 per cent, whereas those not receiving reimbursement renew at a rate of 60 per cent. So a lousy US\$20 a month really does change behaviour and gets people to be more active.

“We believe that, if we can provide taxable incentives for an individual to work out – such as a tax or income



tax credit, for example – or for an employer to pay for their employees' wellness using pre-tax dollars and not pass on any taxable consequences, it will stimulate physical activity and begin to reverse our obesity epidemic.

“What we're working on in Minnesota right now is therefore to get legislation passed, an actual law, that gives tax incentives to either employers or individuals to be healthy. We're hopeful we can get that passed in 2013. It will be specific to Minnesota for now – IHRSA's been trying for many years to get this sort of legislation passed nationally, with no joy so far – but we hope it will then be like a domino effect, with other States following suit.

“As we go forward, I believe there will be a collision of health insurance, obesity, and employers' and government intervention. I see more insurance companies getting involved in the reimbursement, I see government intervention in the shape of incentives for employers and employees, and I see the medical community moving towards a preventative approach, with doctors being paid based on the positive impact they have on getting their patients healthier.”

I mention the fact that, in the UK, GPs still aren't incentivised through QOF to refer people into physical activity. “I think it's insane that they literally can't prescribe fitness when it's proven



Diverse markets: The brand has a male-only club in Qatar, with valet parking



What people want: CV, resistance and free weights form the core offer

that exercise is medicine in a variety of ways," says Runyon. "But our industry shouldn't stop trying. It's frustrating that it hasn't happened already, but as healthcare costs continue to escalate, change will happen. We just have to make sure our foot's in the door to ensure we can take advantage of that."

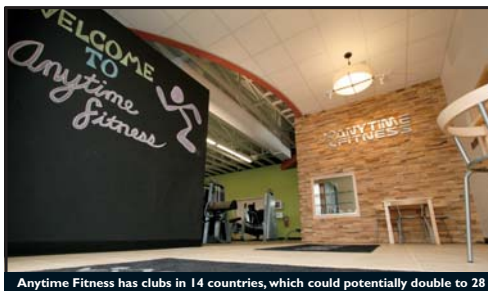
A NEW MODEL

But let's backtrack to tell the Anytime Fitness story – a story that has seen the franchise grow faster even than the likes of McDonalds.

Prior to launching Anytime in 2002, the company's two co-founders – Runyon and Dave Mortensen – ran a marketing company in the fitness industry. They also acquired distressed assets – large format health clubs – into which they would invest, growing the membership and running the facility until the time was right to resell.

"When we were running the larger clubs, we realised that 90 per cent of members used the same 4,000sq ft on every visit: the cardio, resistance equipment, free weights... Fewer than 10 per cent used the swimming pools, racketball courts, daycare, smoothie bars. Although the clubs were profitable, most of the square footage was under-utilised.

"That's where the idea for Anytime Fitness came about. We took everything that people liked the most – the CV,



Anytime Fitness has clubs in 14 countries, which could potentially double to 28

the weights – and put it in a much smaller format, in a more convenient location. We develop clubs in what we call 'strip centres' – a little run of shops in a local community. We also turned to technology to allow 24/7 access and minimise payroll, which as you know is the single largest expense for most clubs. We knew we'd lose a few members by not offering daycare or racketball, but we also knew that most people just wanted the convenience of a quick workout with cardio and resistance kit."

The model proved a great success: Anytime opened its 100th club in 2005, its 1,000th in 2009, signed its

millionth member in 2010 and then, in December 2012, opened its 2,000th club at a location in the Netherlands.

So had they envisaged this sort of rapid expansion when they first set out? "We were very optimistic that this concept and this brand would do well, but 10 years ago did we predict that we'd have 2,000 clubs in 14 countries? Absolutely not," admits Runyon.

DIVERSE MARKETS

Thus far, the UK hasn't contributed as much to that 2,000-club total as had originally been hoped. The stated goal at the time of the UK launch in 2010 was



Technology enables
Anytime clubs to open 24/7

- to have 50 sites by the end of 2012; the total by January 2013 was in fact 10 clubs. So what went wrong?

"There have been a variety of challenges," says Runyon. "First and foremost, real estate is not as prevalent in the UK as it is in other countries, particularly here in the US where there's a strip centre on almost every corner. Construction costs are also higher in the UK. In some countries, a landlord will actually pay for your build, whereas in the UK our franchisees have to come up with the money in order to do the construction themselves. There are still some issues with lending for a new business too.

"All that adds up to mean that people are a bit more conservative about entrepreneurial decisions in the UK than in other markets – there are headwinds that make things more difficult for them.

"I think those challenges are surmountable, but we're going to need to work closely with our UK partners as well as some of the UK banks. We'll have to be a bit more creative, putting loss pools in place – shared lending pools that we participate in along with the banks, so they're more confident about lending to our franchisees.

"Every country is different and we're not that disappointed – it's not uncommon to put extra resources in place. And once the clubs open in the UK, they perform very well. So we're



Runyon says clients still need the 'compassion, coaching and education' of clubs

still confident in the market – it's just a matter of franchisee growth, but we will get there. It usually takes two or three years for most countries to get the momentum going.

"Australia has been the exception to that rule, and it's exceeded all expectations. We have the right partnership group there and the climate is very ripe: it's a health-minded country with more available space, lending, and landlords who are willing to put in money for construction."

India, on the other hand, has proved tricky for Anytime to date, with an aborted attempt to enter the market a few years ago. "We just chose the wrong partner," explains Runyon. "The individual we partner with in each market is the most important decision we make, and unfortunately we chose someone who

wanted to make Anytime Fitness different in India. We realise the model might need to be slightly modified for some countries – in Qatar for example, we have a male-only club with more staff, valet parking and so on. It's a larger, more upscale Anytime Fitness experience. But our original Indian partner wanted to go in an entirely different direction, and we just couldn't find a way to align our visions.

"It was unfortunate, but we don't think it caused any major harm to the brand in India, so we're going to rebuild it and take our time. We have a new group in India now, which opened its first club in New Delhi in February.

"There are also a few other European countries we're looking at, subject to the right partner coming on board, but I'd be reluctant to say which purely for competitive reasons. It takes eight to

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Anytime's 2,000th club opened in the Netherlands in December. Another 1,500 clubs may open over the next five years

► 12 months to open a club after a deal's arranged, so I expect we'll have clubs opening in some new markets in 2014.

"Overall, I think we can still continue to open 300 clubs globally each year for the next five years, so five years from now we should have 3,500 clubs, bringing perhaps another 10 to 14 new countries into the mix."

NEW VENTURES

As if opening its 2,000th club wasn't enough excitement for one year, in late 2012 Anytime also announced the acquisition of a non-fitness brand: a small, US-based waxing salon business called Waxing the City.

"We found four terrific partners who had four salons in Denver and one in Dallas. They had a track record, proof of concept, and they were looking to franchise. We opened our first Minnesota salon in December, with a second on its way, and we'll begin franchising the concept in March. We don't really need to tweak the concept at all – it's just a case of putting the franchising infrastructure in place.

"To the consumer, there's no direct connection between Anytime Fitness and Waxing the City, but of course we have two client bases: end customers and franchisees. And franchisees have immediate confidence in Waxing the City, because they know the best practices we have at Anytime Fitness will now be transferred to the new venture. We've already had a huge response from

existing Anytime franchisees who want to open a Waxing the City salon.

"We'll focus on the US to start off with and expect to sell close to 50 units in our first year – although most of them won't open until 2014 – and should open another 50 or more in 2015. It's early days, and I don't think we'll ever have 2,000 units in 10 years as we did with Anytime Fitness, but there's no reason why, 10 years from now, we wouldn't have hundreds, perhaps even over 1,000, Waxing the City salons.

"Really we see ourselves as a franchising business rather than a fitness business, and over the coming years we want to bring on more service-focused, boutique type brands in what we call the 'personal improvement' space – a space that might encompass hair removal, fitness, nutrition, massage... Our company vision statement is to improve people's self-esteem, so we'll be looking for brands that help people feel better about themselves and that improve their lives in some way.

"In fact, we already have a physiotherapy pilot going on, and there's another project I'm really excited about which we're hoping to roll out within the next calendar year. Some of the new ventures will be acquisitions; others will be start-ups. In the long run, we envision a collection of brands that improve the self-esteem of both the franchisees and the consumers, all of which share our best practices of franchising and consumer engagement."

FITNESS FUTURE

So if Runyon is stretching his wings beyond fitness, is that because he sees fitness as a sector of limited opportunity?

"Not at all – I'm very optimistic about the fitness industry. The next decade will be highly competitive, with low-cost and microgym operators continuing to expand, but at the same time there'll be a lot of wind at our back thanks to the changes I already mentioned in the areas of medical insurance, government intervention and so on.

"So it won't be easy, but I still think it will be an opportunistic decade and a decade of change. Technology will play a big role in that and is something we're focusing on heavily in our offering: we have a new online offering designed to help our members make smart nutrition and activity choices throughout the entire week, not just when they're at our clubs.

"But the need for good people skills won't go away – quite the opposite. Even now, you can train with a virtual personal trainer, so why should health clubs even exist 10 years from now? The reason we will exist is because people will still need the compassion, coaching and education that we can offer.

"So when we develop technology, it's not to replace a human being – it's to make the human better, more able to have a deep, engaged relationship with members. Ten years from now, I believe it will be the brands and clubs that best deliver what I call 'relational innovation' that will succeed." ●



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THE RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

With today's buzzwords being free weights, functional and bodyweight training, how is the resistance offering at the gym evolving – and is there still a place for fixed resistance kit? Julie Fisher asks a panel of suppliers for their thoughts

EASE OF USE AND EDUCATION

Miles Rimell, marketing director EMEA & APAC, Precor



At Precor, we believe fixed resistance machines still command a place on the gym floor. Indeed, according to IHRSA's *Profiles of Success 2011* report – which looks at

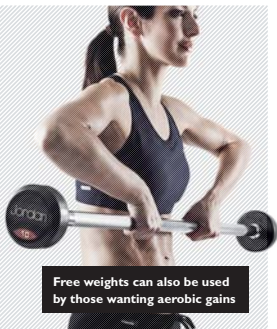
member participation by equipment and group exercise category – 2.1 million members use resistance machines annually. I think the important issue is not whether they are here to stay, but how we enable those new to exercise to use them, as well as improving the offering for more experienced users.

A key benefit of conventional strength training is how it adapts to meet the user's level of fitness and encourages proper technique, which reduces injuries. But it has to be easy to use, and educating the user is paramount.

When we developed the Precor Discovery Series Selectorised Line, we observed people using their smartphones and took inspiration from consumer products. We focused on taking the intimidation away from strength equipment, making it inviting and approachable, while still providing an improved experience for serious strength exercisers. That meant incorporating easy to understand graphics and, if members are still unsure about a piece of equipment, there are Quick Response (QR) codes that enable them to use their smartphones to view instruction videos.



Precor Discovery Series: QR codes offer access to instruction videos



Free weights can also be used by those wanting aerobic gains

NEW THINKING

Allan Collins, director of education, Jordan Fitness

The traditional view has always been that resistance training is used for strength and bodybuilding, while CV machines are used for aerobic fitness and fat loss.

However, the concept of resistance training has changed over the last few years – it's no longer just about strength training – with a paradigm shift in the use of free weights as functional training has evolved. Now trainers understand that it's more about movement, with the



end result in fact subject to the training parameters used: free weights can be used for aerobic gains, for example, just as a treadmill can.

Describing exercise in terms of resistance training or CV training is an outdated concept. Kettlebells are a great example of how free weights are now an accepted method for strength endurance, body composition changes (fat loss) and even cardiovascular improvements, as well as an alternative to CV machines.



Cable machines: Smaller footprint, but more functionality

FREEING UP FLOOR SPACE

Rob Thurston, commercial director, Cybex International UK



We're seeing a significant increase in the number of high street gyms and health clubs that are growing their strength equipment

provision through products that would, conventionally, have been associated with high performance and sports conditioning facilities. Power racks, half racks and lifting platforms are replacing more traditional options, like squat racks, as members demand versatility and quality from their gym's equipment.

The shift from selectorised and free weights equipment towards cable-based machines is also a growing trend among gyms. Cable machines or functional trainers are multi-purpose, offering users a full body workout with an extensive range of exercise options; compare that to a single piece of selectorised equipment, for example a leg press, that could feasibly take up just as much floor space but targets just one muscle group.

Product innovation has also meant strength equipment is becoming easier to use, more aesthetically pleasing and less intimidating, while better awareness and understanding from the user means cable machines offer a highly accessible strength training option, regardless of age, gender or training ability.

The demand for information from users has also fuelled a rise in educational tools and aids, with equipment suppliers offering online tutorials, smartphone apps and training guides to support workouts.



Life Fitness SYNRGY360 system uses body weight to provide the resistance

MACHINE-FREE GYMS

Nick Mennell, EMEA education and global journey manager, Life Fitness



New forces are reshaping the health club model globally, and strength training is smack bang at the forefront. Radical changes have been taking place, with a shift from cardiovascular to strength training using body weight as the resistance.

We're seeing the emergence of a new, unconventional gym model – the strength and conditioning gym – which is a refreshing antidote to the conventional model. Examples include the warehouse gym model, with clubs like the Better Body Shop; MMA clubs such as Fight Science; and athletic performance gyms

including City Athletic. The common denominator is that they are largely machine-free. The body is the machine and bodyweight training is an essential conditioning stimulus.

From researching global fitness trends, including the popularity of strength training, Life Fitness developed the SYNRGY360, a customisable exercise system that facilitates eight of the top 20 trends in the ACSM's recent survey of fitness trends: functional fitness, strength training, personal training, core training, group personal training, boot camp and sport-specific training.

The modular design of the system makes it possible to choose a configuration that meets varying training philosophies, and many of the training applications focus on the user's body as the source of resistance: suspension training, for example, and boxing.

SMALL CIRCUITS

Tim Colston, managing director, Keiser UK



There's still a place for single station resistance machines. However, the days of rows and rows of single station machines are numbered. Instead, gyms will offer a single line or small number of single station machines, predominantly for beginners to use.

At Keiser UK, we're seeing more demand for small circuits, with one line of multi-faceted fixed resistance equipment that will cater for everyone, from the elite to older populations and, of course, new members.

As more zoned and open plan areas are introduced into gyms, at the expense of traditional CV and resistance areas, the ratio of CV



A line of multi-faceted fixed strength kit can cater for all populations

equipment to resistance equipment is also likely to change. Moveable equipment will become more prevalent, catering for a multi-purpose gym that can be focused around personal training areas and gym floor-based group exercise classes.



Equipment must adapt to new trends to stay relevant

ADAPTATION OF EQUIPMENT

James Anderson, UK sales manager, Star Trac



There's still a need for fixed strength kit in gyms, not least because that's what members are used to. However, manufacturers

need to adapt existing resistance equipment to make sure traditional resistance methods cater to new trends – for example, the focus on free weights, functional and bodyweight training to help the body move with more freedom.

Star Trac's HumanSport range offers the best of both worlds, using cable resistance to help people move in a more natural way, free from restrictions. The range can be used by personal trainers, but can also be incorporated into a group exercise class, where participants work around the station as they would in a circuit class. Royal County of Berkshire Health and Rackets Club – part of the Virgin Active Group in the UK – has been running very successful classes for some time.

Our MaxRack – another 'bridge' piece of equipment – lets people perform free weight power rack training with the safety of a Smith machine. A halfway house between fixed and free weight, it's an example of how traditional resistance equipment can be adapted rather than being sidelined by new trends.

FREE WEIGHT FLEXIBILITY

Matthew Januszek, customer solutions director, Escape Fitness



As a longstanding staple of a club's equipment list, members are back on board with free weights. Why has the recent upsurge occurred? One of the key reasons is training

methods. Functional training is on the rise and trainers are incorporating free weights into exercise programmes.

As education and training evolves and progresses, trainers are becoming more aware of the variety of exercises that are possible with free weights, and how using them correctly can aid weight loss, provide body definition and build strength. Free weights are now used in more rounded programmes – from studio classes to small group training – offering full body workouts and thus appealing to a far broader demographic.



Free weights are being used by a broader demographic

The evolution of resistance training has seen a growth in innovative functional equipment, moving away from fixed machines, providing more choice and an increased demand for functional training sessions. Indeed, functional training has been the driving force behind increased usage and demand. Not only do free weights continue to give results, but they are also flexible enough to adapt to market changes, which is why they're still the backbone of a club's equipment list.

“The evolution of resistance training has seen a growth in innovative functional equipment, moving away from fixed machines”

BRIDGING THE GAP

Craig Swyer, product manager, Technogym

We see the move towards functional training and away from traditional resistance training as an interesting opportunity for operators, and we believe new product and programming opportunities exist. For example, in 2011 we launched Kinesis Stations, which were designed to bridge the gap between functional and traditional strength training.

Offering complete freedom of movement through 360 degrees, the product can be used by any exerciser, regardless of level or ability, as well as in a variety of ways: small group training, personal training, or independent use by members.

Progressive training is what members are looking for – along with more flexibility, fun and engagement in their workouts – and Kinesis



Stations facilitate this in a number of ways. They allow for ongoing progression of exercises, motivating clients to achieve their goals by continually challenging them, as well as driving engagement and

interaction on the gym floor with staff able to demonstrate new exercises on the equipment. A great example of progressive strength training using Kinesis Stations can be seen at Hereford Leisure Pool, which has integrated the machines into its GP referral programme, supporting post-surgery rehabilitation.

Secondary spend can also be enhanced, as the stations are an excellent personal training tool, and operators can introduce new programming options specific to sports or special target groups. ●

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FITNESS FINDS A NEW HOME

DEVELOPERS ARE INCORPORATING LEISURE FACILITIES INTO THEIR RESIDENTIAL SCHEMES TO ENHANCE EXCLUSIVITY AND ADD VALUE. NEENA DHILLON ASKS HEALTH AND FITNESS OPERATORS IN THE UK AND THE US HOW THIS GROWING SECTOR CAN BEST BE SERVED

Browse through the property pages of major newspapers and the signs indicate the housing market is on the move once more. As the UK government considers pushing through changes to planning regulations that will allow for more office blocks to be converted to residential, it seems as though our big cities could be on the verge of welcoming a greater number of walk-to-work homes.

Property developers keen to promote the benefits of their new residential schemes are increasingly listing on-site leisure facilities as a key selling point in their pre-opening marketing campaigns. So as health clubs become an integral part of residential urban communities, what are the opportunities for operators interested in this niche sector?

GROWTH SECTOR

UK-based consultancy Motive8 began designing residential gyms 10 years ago, as managing director Nick Sadler explains: "We initially designed home gyms for individuals, which led to us branching out into apartment blocks. As I used to live in New York, where it was commonplace for residential towers to have their own gym, I took inspiration from that model."

The consultancy has since worked with companies such as Barratt Homes and Savills on 140 residential sites in cities across England, many of which are designed, built and managed by Motive8's 49-strong team.

Sadler says there is growth in the sector, partly driven by people taking greater interest in their own fitness, and partly by developers seeking to maximise their commercial spaces. "In a high-rise block, the ground floor is

usually allocated to commercial use, so not only does the installation of a gym give developers an edge over competitor schemes, but it also means they can recover some of their costs via a service charge generated from renting the space back to the tenants' association.

"From the residents' point of view, think of the annual saving a couple can make when they don't have to pay separate gym membership, because they have access to facilities on a par with a health club through their service charge."

IN IT FROM THE OUTSET

Residential gyms are no longer an afterthought. Instead, developers are approaching operators at the planning phase of a new build, seeking input into the size, layout and fit-out of an on-site club. With required services ranging from design consultation to a turnkey solution – where a health club is built, maintained and managed by an operator – business models are typically based on consultancy fees or a management contract.

One of Motive8's latest projects is a 370sq m (4,000sq ft) gym and spa at The Lancasters, a luxury 77-home development by Northacre and Minerva, overlooking Hyde Park in London, UK. Comprising a swimming pool, state-of-the-art gym, sauna, steam and treatment room, the facility is open exclusively to residents. Motive8 is responsible for monthly technical maintenance of the part-time managed site. It also supplies staff such as PTs, fitness instructors and therapists, who are charged out to residents at a fee, and it has marketed the gym with a bespoke brochure.

"We don't pay rent or other operating costs and enjoy healthy margins by



Williamsburg Edge – in Brooklyn, NY – offers a 'lifestyle' centre

providing services, products and staff to this sector," acknowledges Sadler.

"But there are certain things you have to get right. Developers expect amazing customer service; you'll need to put in the hours to work with these demanding clients. An understanding of the industry is also required because a developer, architect, interior designer or management company might engage you."

"Finally you need an innate grasp of how to tailor your marketing. Affluent residents may respond to awareness drives in the form of glossy brochures or the offer of exclusive spa products. Others may be motivated by incentives like a free nutritionist consultation if they buy five PT sessions."

"Some of our sites have a daily footfall of 70–90 residents. This is essential to secure future work: you must prove to developers that a gym is a worthwhile investment."



As an example of “going the extra mile”, Sadler explains that Motive8 has established sinking funds at selected full-service locations. This is to enable the repair and upgrade of equipment years down the line: “Once a developer has sold a block and its accompanying freehold, it often won’t commit further investment to the leisure facility. We prepare for this eventuality with a fund that can be accessed by the management company when the time comes.”

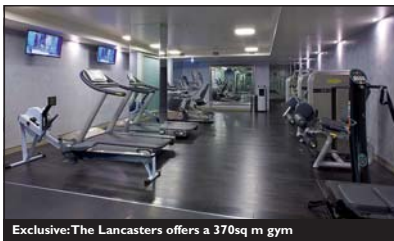
BALANCING AUDIENCES

As a new entrant to the sector, with five residential clubs in south-east England, Nuffield Health has incorporated this stream of business into its corporate wellbeing division and is looking to expand through partnerships with developers such as Ballymore. In two of the sites it operates, Nuffield works on

a management contract basis, taking a monthly fee with a built-in margin.

“Some developers see a health club primarily as a promotional tool and are therefore willing to subsidise a residents-only facility because of the marketing benefits,” says account director Chris Harrison. “After all, would you rather live above a Tesco Express or a full-service health club?”

Nuffield, though, is equally interested in evolving a more commercial model, enabling it to take on a development’s facility akin to a leaseholder, by assuming responsibility for all costs and profits. Harrison explains more: “Under a management contract,



Exclusive: The Lancasters offers a 370sq m gym

much of the risk sits with the developer or freeholder. We’re seeking control of our own destiny by taking on the risks and costs associated with fitting out and operating a club, while also keeping any income generated from the space. For ▶

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RESIDENTIAL GYMS



Residents or Joe Public: Nuffield's Club Baltimore operates with a 50/50 split



Diverse offer: Residents and members can try out the club's boxing ring

- ▶ this model to succeed, a developer must agree to the health club being opened out to non-residents."

A feasibility study – exploring indicators such as local demographics, head count and location – is carried out to assess whether Nuffield can sell sufficient 'outside' memberships to boost the fixed income due from the residents' service charge. Just as potential income is input into a P&L, so too are costs such as initial outlay for equipment, club maintenance and monthly service charges back to the freeholder (examples include utilities, security and grounds upkeep).

Harrison points out, however, that careful consideration should be given to the number of non-residential memberships being sold, to ensure a developer does not believe its building and residents are no longer a priority.

Opened in 2012 by Nuffield, the 1,425sq m (15,340sq ft) Club Baltimore is part of the Baltimore Wharf development in London's Docklands. With 1,000 paying members (on a fixed monthly fee of £49.50) and 1,000 residential members, the club offers an array of facilities from a 75-station gym to a boxing ring, swimming pool and 44 group exercise classes a week.

"We launched with a heavy local marketing campaign to achieve our target goal of 50/50 residents/non-residents. It helped that the club has its own high

street frontage," says Harrison. "Having said that, residents really do see Club Baltimore as an extension of their homes, and often introduce friends to the site. So not only do we have ready-made membership with good retention levels, but there's word-of-mouth too."

Nuffield has aimed to engender a sense of belonging by launching three clubs-within-club, all offered as part of the studio timetable. Fight Club, for example – for those interested in exercise-based sessions in the boxing ring – encourages residents to train together by attending regularly.

There's a sizeable area equipped with a pool table, table tennis, table football and Xbox, where residents are invited to unwind and socialise with neighbours. As a further incentive to use Club Baltimore, residents receive discounts on PT sessions.

"There are constraints to the model because you still report to your client, who will expect to be shown that your priorities remain aligned," Harrison adds. "But when the relationship works, with a tight agreement in place from the outset, the residential sector is an attractive proposition."

HOLISTIC HEALTH

As a pioneer in the US market, American Leisure operated the first sizeable lifestyle centre to be opened by a real estate developer in Manhattan in the

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Life Fitness
WHAT WE LIVE FOR

- 1980s. Today the company manages over 80 locations in New York, New Jersey and southern Florida.

President Wendy Bosalavage says that sophisticated US consumers are driving growth: "Savvy consumers who are buying or renting property now expect leisure facilities at home to be on a par with the best commercial health clubs. In New York and the surrounding regions, the market is benefiting from new developments in urban and suburban neighbourhoods, where real estate companies are looking to create a sense of community through lifestyle centres."

Bosalavage explains that the term 'lifestyle centre' is pertinent, indicating a range of services beyond a traditional gym – incorporating fitness machines, movement studios, therapy rooms, dry and wet spa areas, swimming pools, basketball courts and lounges. In return for operating the facility and providing staff – depending on the client, requirements can vary from fitness to cleaning teams – American Leisure takes a management fee and captures additional revenue from specialised services such as swimming lessons, massage and personal training. The company budgets for the running costs of a centre either through a share of the residents' common charge or, in the case of rentals, by estimating a monthly membership fee for individuals below market value. This is so the developer can run a self-sustaining facility rather than make a profit.

"We're there to support real estate companies to leverage their developments for sale or rental and, as such, we're brought in at the conceptual stage to assess local demographics and incorporate the latest lifestyle trends," Bosalavage explains. "We shape the



Residents at Williamsburg Edge can mix and socialise at the on-site cinema

design and content of the bricks and mortar – so, for example, we will tailor the type of branded equipment according to the demographic. This may mean installing a significant free weights area for a young audience, or looking at facilities that support functional medicine for the over-50s. But in addition to the bricks and mortar, we provide forward-thinking programming."

In real terms, this equates to American Leisure staff working with residents to create programmes with measurable goals. "Using the technology inherent in modern residential developments, we disseminate information about our clubs, free community events and programme offerings," she continues. "We hold regular focus groups so we can respond to changing needs."

A newly launched initiative is 'Your Wellbeing', which invites residents to consider five pillars of wellbeing: physical, emotional, intellectual, social and mindful. Under the programme, a resident could enjoy a two-hour 'digital detox' session by playing backgammon or table tennis with neighbours. Intellectual stimulation could come in the form of film screenings, wine tastings or cookery lessons, all within the setting of the lifestyle centre.

While those residents engaging with the Your Wellbeing initiative will be charged for this type of service, some of American Leisure's other goals-orientated programmes are complimentary.

One of American Leisure's recent success stories is Williamsburg Edge on the waterfront in Brooklyn, New York. Two buildings consisting of 780 condo units offer lifestyle centres occupying a combined space of 6,320sq m (68,000sq ft). Bosalavage describes the "quintessential" centres as incorporating the full array of lifestyle amenities, with additional touches such as a communal fire pit, chef's kitchens and screening rooms.

The focus here was to attract and build a youthful community in an area that had once been depressed, so American Leisure ran neighbourhood contests, organised a trek, put on healthy eating dinners and designed events to highlight organic products and recipes – all with its young audience in mind.

"Our residential audiences are not transient, so it's important to programme for a stable community and to staff centres with highly trained team members who appreciate the relevance of five-star service in a home environment," Bosalavage adds. "This is a particularly exciting time for our industry as more time-starved people turn to the convenience of residential lifestyle centres where they can take care of their health holistically."

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Examples from the UK and US markets show that residential gyms are not a new phenomenon. But as more property developers seek to differentiate their schemes with sophisticated leisure facilities equivalent to the leading high street clubs, the sector offers promise to those operators who have the required stamina, imagination and commercial awareness, and who can tap into its potential by programming and marketing to different demographics. ●



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GETTING PERSONAL

PERSONAL TRAINING HAS PROVED A TOUGH NUT TO CRACK FOR MANY OPERATORS – BUT THERE ARE SOME NOTABLE SUCCESS STORIES. KATH HUDSON REPORTS

With its high hourly rates, personal training has sometimes been seen by fitness instructors as a 'get rich quick' scheme. However, the reality is somewhat different. IHRSA's 2011

Profiles of Success report found that in the US, only 15 per cent of members pay for PT – and as a result, disillusioned no doubt by the reality versus their expectations, 57 per cent of personal trainers give up in the first six months.

Why is this? Is PT a service most members simply don't want? Has the recession made gym-goers more price-conscious? Is the gym culture not supportive? Or is word-of-mouth not happening because clients aren't seeing results?

US chain Planet Fitness stopped offering PT in 2011, claiming people were just using the service to "rent a friend". But other operators might turn the same argument on its head, seeing the counselling aspect as a selling point of good PT.

Consultant and PT expert Nic Jarvis certainly believes that being successful as a PT requires innovation and a sophisticated skill set, encompassing knowledge of behavioural

change, nutrition and counselling. But he feels that, at the moment, few PTs are meeting the grade: "Very often, clubs are just sending staff for a minimal amount of training to tick boxes. But for people to see results with PT, they need to change their behaviour, which is a mental shift and not a physical change. For long-term change, PTs need to be able to coach people through that behavioural change process.

"I've been encouraging the PTs I work with to target a younger audience – generation Y – as an untapped and potentially lucrative market," he continues. "Many PTs are intimidated by this group and prefer to target older, deconditioned people, as it's easier to put a programme together. Superior knowledge is needed to make a difference to an already fit 20-year-old – it requires a different type of programming and knowledge of nutrition."

It's this sort of out-of-the-box thinking that could boost PT in clubs, ensuring members are engaged, PTs retained and revenues boosted. We look at the innovation already bearing fruit for some entrepreneurial chains, clubs and individuals.

PHOENIX PRO FITNESS, UK

Godalming-based gym Phoenix Pro Fitness has integrated personal training into its membership structure. Club owner Charlotte Ord says the model was inspired by her mentor, a Californian health club operator.

There are a number of different membership packages on offer which include personal training and semi-private training, where people train alongside a few other clients. These integrated packages are driving take-up of personal training at the club.

"Having several clients working together is slightly harder work for the PT, but it means the club can offer more PT sessions during peak times," says Ord. "Also, there's group accountability and motivation, and PT is made more affordable. People with different goals happily train together and it's made the club more sociable."

Fees start at £70 a month for gym membership, rising to £600 a month for the VIP membership, which includes eight private PT sessions a month. "The most popular package is the All Access which, at £179 a month, gives four one-hour, semi-private sessions a month and access to all the classes and gym," says Ord.

"Our retention is very good, and we think this is because the personal training makes sure people come regularly and get better results. PT is all about continuity."



Group PT sessions at Phoenix have improved club sociability



The DL Studio concept focuses on PT and small group functional training

DAVID LLOYD LEISURE, UK

Having enjoyed success with PT in its full-service clubs, David Lloyd Leisure is currently rolling out a new standalone high street concept – DL Studios – based on PT and small group functional training.

“The David Lloyd Leisure brand has seen the number of people who use PT treble over the last four years,” says Rob Beale, head of sports, health and fitness at DLL. “It’s the most rapidly growing part of the business.”

Beale says the recipe for success is a great environment, attracting and retaining the best PTs by offering a good salary package and excellent training. All DLL PTs are REPs Level 3 qualified and then undertake the DLL Trainer Journey, which takes two years and involves different training, including soft skills on changing behaviour and nutrition advice.

DL Studios build on this success, and are shaped specifically around the expertise of PTs. On offer is one-to-one training, small group training, a 12-week Lose and Shape Up weight-loss programme, TRX classes and a running club. People can buy blocks of three to 10 sessions, or pay monthly. Beale says most are choosing to pay by monthly direct debit, usually for one or two PT sessions a week, spending an average of £60 a week.

The first two sites are open – in Putney, south London, and Winchester – and a central London site is next. No definite decision has been made on the rollout, but around 20 sites are expected to open in the next 12 months. ►



Personal training is now a rapidly growing area of the DLL business

SPORTS AND
LEISURE GROUP,
NETHERLANDS

"When I joined the industry 16 years ago, I predicted it would go from fitness to wellness and then to oneness, which is about the mind, body and soul," says Theo Hendriks, CEO at Sports and Leisure Group in the Netherlands, which operates Capital Sports, Family Fitness, and Sports and Recreation.

"This shift is reflected in personal training: people don't just come for the physical exercise. Many clients now see it as a way of getting contact with someone who's focused on them. My wife has had a PT studio for seven years and provides counselling as much as a workout," he says.

For this reason, Hendriks says PTs need to be increasingly knowledgeable about exercise, diet and psychology. "We can help people to use exercise to control their weight, but the real question is: why are they eating that much in the first place?" he observes.

At the Family Fitness clubs, Hendriks is creating designated PT rooms away from the main gym area. "The industry has assumed that having PT visible encourages other people to try it, but I disagree," he says. "Those who aren't receiving individual attention start to feel resentful when they see PT taking place on the next treadmill – they feel they are paying a lot of money for membership and believe they should also be getting personal attention, even without PT."

Family Fitness members pay €40–50 a month, with the option to buy into PT at an additional cost of €50 for a 30-minute session, all taking place in the PT studio. Hendriks believes the benefit for members is that, where those attending a fully standalone PT studio would need to commit to perhaps three sessions a week to achieve their goals, the location of the studios on-site at his clubs means members can supplement PT with normal gym use – they can take their personalised programmes into the gym, making their training more cost-effective.

"In the Netherlands, many people make a deal direct with their PT, but our set-up offers the best of both worlds: fully kitted-out PT studio, but access to a gym too," he adds. On average, PT members book one or two sessions a week.

Meanwhile, the studio doesn't pay rent but instead pays Family Fitness €6 per PT session. This, says Hendriks, makes for an easier start-up, as the studio is not penalised in the early weeks of operation when there are likely to be fewer clients.



Pure Fitness PT clients average five sessions a month

PURE FITNESS, ASIA

At Asian operator Pure Fitness, PT is the most significant ancillary revenue stream: each month, 20 per cent of members use a PT, with the average user having five sessions a month.

PTs are managed and incentivised similarly to the sales teams, and are expected to drive up PT performance each month. But PTs don't have other responsibilities to hinder their efforts and are supported by other departments. For example, the membership sales team sign up 30 per cent of new members for PT. All trainers are employed by the clubs and run an average of 33 sessions a week.

To ensure this is a sustainable business model, the PTs are also very well

supported, with regular training including coaching in business and sales skills. For example, when one Pure Fitness club acquired the functional training frame PurMotion FTS200, the inventor was brought into the club to train the team.

Regional fitness operations director Marco Ferdinandi says PT is well integrated into the company structure and clubs: the equipment used, training methods and club design are all focused around PT. "If we can make it a fun and exciting environment, where our staff and our members can see our dedication to great training and results, we're confident our team will return the results we want as an organisation," he says.

JOSH WARRELL, UK PERSONAL
TRAINER OF THE YEAR 2011

Based in Eastbourne, UK, Josh Warrell is an example of a PT who has thrived. Initially training with Premier Training to Level 2, he then joined David Lloyd Leisure and swiftly moved to the top of the pay band, running 25 sessions a week.

He says building a client base was just a case of talking to people: "I worked out that, to get one appointment, I would have to talk to five people, and would need three to five appointments to get a client," he says. "Each month I had to find two to three new clients as people met their goals and moved on."

Now that Warrell is self-employed, he has adapted his business by adding multiple income streams, including teaming up with Herbalife to sell meal replacements. He also 'sees' clients online, meaning that he can have more clients and not be limited by geography. More recently, he has been mentoring other PTs on how to grow their business, which has created an additional income stream for him.

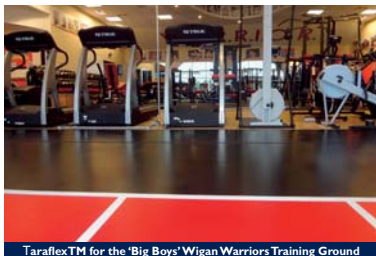
Warrell recommends that PTs find a niche. He chose weight loss, as this seemed to be what people were most interested in. His standard package lasts a month and encompasses exercise, meal plans and meal replacements. If people are gym members, he prescribes a gym-based programme; if not, he gives them exercises to do at home and can supply the necessary equipment. "To get results, it's 20 per cent exercise and 80 per cent nutrition," he says. ●



Warrell: "Find a niche"



New Look - Cardinal Heenan School



TaraflexTM for the 'Big Boys' Wigan Warriors Training Ground

New Regional Show Sites for Liverpool and Wigan - It could be your facility next!



As the public purse strings tighten, manufacturers are having to offer innovation in products, services and solutions. Gerflor now offer 4 products that can ensure the existing sports floor stays in position and allows a new Taraflex™ surface to be overlaid. This innovation reduces down time, refurbishment cost and environmental impact. Taking advantage of Gerflor's REGIONAL SHOW SITE programme, was a major contributory factor which enabled a recent project in Liverpool to proceed.

Founded in 1958 Cardinal Heenan excels in sport. The school, which is a regular finalist in the National Schools Cup for football, is always looking to improve and invest in the sports stars of tomorrow. No pressure, but Steven Gerrard was a former pupil at the school. The main sports hall had seen better days, the old timber floor had become slippery and had an ongoing financial cost with a need for sanding, polishing and re line marking every several years. With the expectation of both students and local community members reflecting their ambitions to do well in sport, an upgrade was inevitable.

"We wanted to provide the pupils, staff and local community with a new and modern sports facility and we looked at a number of solutions that would enable us to do that" comments Jake Collins, Director of Community Sport who helped project manage

The feedback so far from the students, staff and community users has been fantastic

Jake Collin, Director of Community Sport, Cardinal Heenan

the scheme. "The walls were re painted, repairs to the lighting system were undertaken and a brand new Taraflex™ Sports floor was installed. This has given us what looks like a million pound venue for a fraction of the price, in fact we spent just £45k"

Other recent Regional Show Sites include: Abbey Park Badminton Club - Sheffield, Croft School - Stafford on Avon and Wigan Warriors RLFC, the professional Rugby League Club needed a sprint track, functional zone and boxing area installing that would protect their key assets - Their Players. The project was very time sensitive

as Pre Season training beckoned and a full renovation programme was out of the question.

Andrew Coley - Player Welfare Manager, Wigan Warriors comments: "We searched the market for a flooring product that could

offer both player protection and also cope with the extreme exercise and conditioning demands you would expect to carry out in professional sporting environment. It quickly became apparent it had to be Taraflex™. The fit out was seamless and every thing was planned and executed with quality precision and Wigan Warriors were consulted fully throughout the process".

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Trending NOW?

In the seventh annual ACSM fitness survey, which polls industry professionals for their views on exercise trends for the coming year, pilates – previously a regular entry on the list – failed to make the top 20 for a third consecutive year. So is the exercise technique falling out of favour, and if so, why? Kate Cracknell asks the experts

GLENN WITHERS

Founding director,
APPI Health Group



It's a shame that pilates appears to be losing its steam in the ACSM list of fitness trends – but actually, pilates is not a fitness trend. I feel the explosion of pilates in gyms may have led it to be portrayed as such, with a slight watering-down of the technique, but in fact it's a solid, consistent form of exercise that's still experiencing great growth around the

world. Certainly in our centres, overall participation rates continue to increase.

I would question the growth of pilates in gyms though, and certainly don't believe its future rests solely in fitness-specific environments. Pilates is very multi-faceted – it's equally suitable for health centres, medical centres, rehab centres, old age facilities etc – so it's less reliant on being included in fitness trend listings.

Having said all that, I do feel the pilates industry needs to wake up and ensure it's continuing to be innovative and inclusive. For example, APPI is launching a new programme this year – Performance

Pilates – which uses pilates as a performance booster targeted at specific sports and populations, using functional movements to create a new workout around pilates moves. This approach will energise the sector and help redefine what pilates can be used for.

I also believe the fitness industry needs to do more to prove its effectiveness – something those in the pilates sector are well-placed to do. If we can get some great studies proving what a difference pilates can make in different areas, gyms may yet see the technique back on the list of hot trends for the future.

**Pilates: Less
a trend, more
a lifelong
exercise choice**



KEN FITZMAURICE

Master trainer,
TenPilates



I believe one of the reasons pilates isn't listed among the ACSM trends has as much to do with the survey itself as with the relevance of pilates today. The survey was completed by 3,346 health and fitness professionals worldwide: not necessarily an accurate view of what the fitness industry is doing, considering there are over 250,000 fitness trainers in the US alone. For many respondents, pilates may simply not be part of their skillset or frame of reference. That said, it's always good to see how industry professionals view the sector, and it's important for pilates instructors to keep pushing the name and benefits of this form of training to the forefront.

In addition, while pilates itself may not be listed as one of the top trends, many of the trends that do make it onto the top 10 – strength training, bodyweight training, fitness for older adults, functional training and core training – are constituent elements of pilates. Trends, by definition, come and go; at TenPilates, we're more interested in the underlying fundamentals that have ongoing benefit for individuals in their daily lives.

Nevertheless, the whole shape of the fitness industry is changing, and these changes are affecting the ability of pilates to become part of the mainstream. The sector is becoming polarised in terms of facilities, specialisation and price, with



Pilates requires precision, and may be more suited to specialist training facilities

more people joining high-end, boutique/specialist or budget clubs. Everything in the middle will die away or downsize rapidly – we're seeing this already. The investment in both people and equipment that has enabled gyms to offer pilates is not there any more: those doing pilates in a mainstream gym will find it's usually mat rather than reformer, and taught by a non-specialist instructor.

Pilates requires precision in the way it's taught and practised, and it may well be that its delivery therefore moves into more specialist studios going forward. In the end, any discipline is only as good as the results and experience it provides to its users: if you don't create an experience that will keep people coming back, they won't get results and will move on to the next thing.

KEN ENDELMAN

Founder & CEO,
Balanced Body



From a club's perspective, I honestly wouldn't be too alarmed about the ACSM ranking. And I don't say that blindly – I say that because these last two years, when pilates has fallen off the ACSM list, have been the most successful in Balanced Body's 35-year history. That means a lot of our customers' pilates offerings are also flourishing.

There may be a decrease in 'newbies' trying pilates for the first time, and of course there are those who always seem to move on to the latest exercise trend. However, pilates definitely has a rock-solid foundation with a dedicated following. What you see now is pilates programming making the transition between 'hot and new' to 'here to stay'.

That being said, this transition isn't automatic for any club, and it isn't easy money. The clubs that are expanding or launching successful pilates programming must continue to do the legwork to keep it strong: aggressively marketing it to their members, keeping internal staff up to speed so they can answer any questions, creating innovative group programming (eg speciality classes for members with similar demographics, such as pilates for golfers), and making sure instructors keep up on their continuing education so programming stays fresh and relevant to members.

If clubs do that, pilates will do what it's always done: provide a key source of non-dues revenue. Clubs that don't will most likely fail.

CHRIS ONSLOW

MD,
Mbodies Training Academy



Pilates has matured and become established, with other new trends coming to the fore and grabbing the attention. The new 'wellness' trend, for example, actually provides many pilates therapists with high client retention and rich pickings once they've invested in the right training and infrastructure. However, 'wellness' rather than 'pilates' is the current buzz-term, and successful pilates teachers are therefore using their expertise to work within this new trend, as well as other niche markets.

In the noughties, the masses were crammed into the rapidly renamed legs, bums and tums classes, now called pilates matwork. This sort of fitness offered little for the 'sweaters', who moved on to group cycling, circuits, kettlebells and so on

to fulfil their cardio urges. Meanwhile, the typical 25- to 40-year-old 'no sweat' brigade found no greater benefits from matwork pilates than the generations before gained from callanetics or legs, bums and tums; some stayed with pilates, but many moved on as new trends came along.

Wellness pilates, on the other hand, is taught by better qualified therapists and addresses conditions such as ante natal exercise, osteoporosis, incontinence and pelvic disorders, rehab from injury, lower back pain, breast cancer rehab, neuromuscular conditions, menopause and so on. Baby Boomers and affluent seniors seeking active lifestyles into their 80s and 90s – despite the barriers of medical conditions – often come to pilates, recognising it meets their needs.

The challenge for the sector is to provide new tools for the 75 per cent of pilates teachers who are qualified to teach matwork only, helping them adapt into the new trend markets rather than relying on pilates itself as the trend.

LINDSAY G MERRITHEW

**President & CEO,
Merrithew Health & Fitness**



It's disappointing that pilates has been left off the 2013 ACSM Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends, particularly as the survey results are widely discussed and debated among fitness professionals. However, while commentary around the survey results suggests that pilates has run its useful course, this is far from the reality we have been experiencing: enrolment on our STOTT PILATES teacher education courses and workshops, which I consider to be an appropriate barometer for the modality, continues to grow year-on-year, worldwide.

What is most gratifying about the survey results is that pilates delivers on at least eight of the top 10 identified trends: pilates has endless applications (encompassing strength, bodyweight training, core training and functional fitness trends listed by the ACSM), numerous means of delivery (including two further ACSM trends: personal and group personal training), and appeals to diverse populations, like older adults. The industry would be wrong if it didn't recognise this, and acknowledge that pilates is far more than a passing fad.

What can be done differently to ensure pilates resurfaces as a trend within the ACSM survey will most likely come down to the way pilates, or other forms of mindful movement, are marketed to the diverse set of survey participants (commercial, clinical, community and corporate). These participants embrace the importance of health and wellbeing, but may still view the pilates modality as sitting within a narrowly defined set of parameters.



**Enrolment on STOTT
PILATES courses is
growing year-on-year**

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**“WHAT IS MOST GRATIFYING ABOUT THE ACSM
SURVEY RESULTS IS THAT PILATES DELIVERS ON
AT LEAST EIGHT OF THE TOP 10 TRENDS”**

DAVID ELLIOTT

**MD,
Pilates-Mad**




The majority of the trends in the ACSM list are broader than specific activities such as pilates: pilates could be seen to fall within 10 or more of the top 20 trends identified.

I feel equipment-based pilates in particular is very rewarding, and in

keeping with many of the ACSM trends. However, while there are thousands of studios offering equipment-based pilates in the US, this hasn't taken off to the same extent in the UK – due, I believe, to the high cost of training and equipment, and a lack of co-operation between training providers that means progressing to specialist courses is time-consuming and expensive. This must be addressed, and is something we're looking at through new equipment ranges and training at the Mbodies Training Academy.

The pilates sector also needs to keep its offering fresh, with innovations in equipment and programming to keep members engaged. And it needs to make it more financially and logistically viable for operators to continue to deliver a high quality pilates offering – developing equipment that could be used without the need for a bespoke studio, for example, and even used for other types of classes.

All that said, based on our sales of equipment and accessories, pilates in no way seems to be losing popularity. ●



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POLARISING NATION

The national Health and Fitness Omnibus Survey (HAFOS) – the annual barometer of UK consumers' attitudes towards health, fitness and physical activity – is now in its 10th year. A street-based consumer survey, HAFOS uses a national sample of over 1,200 people, interviewed in five locations throughout England. To date, HAFOS has interviewed well over 15,000 people, making it the largest and longest running annual survey of its kind.

This year's HAFOS provided some interesting information regarding participation in the aftermath of the London Olympics, as well as insight into consumers' ongoing reluctance to exercise in spite of understanding the value of physical activity for good health.

EXERCISE IS HEALTHY? THAT'S A GIVEN

After a decade of campaigns at every level, it seems consumers are getting the message about being active. In the 2012 HAFOS report, more than 90 per cent of the population now recognise that regular exercise/activity is important to their health, with only a marginal two per cent saying it's unimportant. In terms of perceptions of how much activity you need to do and what type, more are starting to recognise the key message that regular amounts of moderate physical activity, even for short periods, can be beneficial to health (see Figure 1).

People are also saying they want to do more exercise: 51 per cent of HAFOS respondents said they either definitely

What are customers' current attitudes towards health and fitness, and what are the implications for our industry? Mike Hill reports on the findings from this year's Health and Fitness Omnibus Survey

or probably do not exercise as much as they'd like. Only 19 per cent said they definitely do as much as they want, with 20 per cent saying they probably do.

Overall, the percentage of the population claiming they'd like to be more active has remained relatively static over the last 10 years, with 52 per cent of people overall stating yes, they would.

There are, however, interesting differences to be noted between males and females, with more than half (55 per cent) of women saying they would like to be more active, compared to only 47 per cent of males. Even more dramatic is the noticeable decline in those wanting to be more active among the older age groups, with only 22 per cent of those aged 75 and over wishing to do so (see Figure 2).



Most understand the benefits of exercise, but many remain inactive

FIGURE 1: Do you agree with the following statements: Strongly agree only

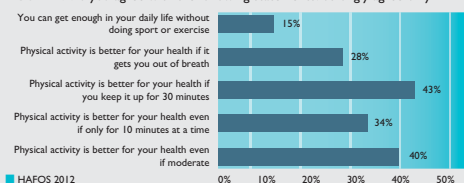
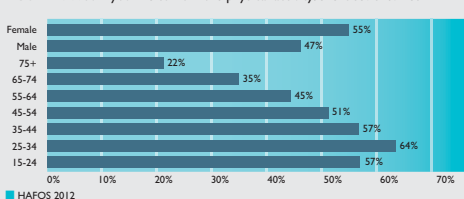


FIGURE 2: Would you like to do more physical activity/exercise? 52% Yes





The survey found that 55 per cent of female respondents wanted to be more active, compared to only 47 per cent of males

DON'T ABANDON OLD MESSAGES

Among HAFOS respondents, the main motivation for being active is – or would be – general improvement or maintenance of health, at 51 per cent. However, the two reasons quoted that relate to weight/body shape follow closely behind, both at 18 per cent (see Figure 3). The sector must not ignore the fact that weight loss/maintenance remains a key motivating factor.

Indeed, other research by Leisure-net suggests that weight loss/maintenance is in fact the main motivation for many existing gym users – this in spite of the fact that people tend to be reticent about admitting they're concerned more with how they look than how they feel. The importance of the weight loss message is certainly not something the sector should be underestimating, either in its marketing or its retention strategies.

EXCUSES, EXCUSES...

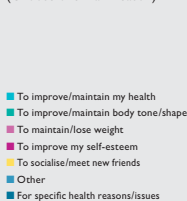
But however highly people now claim to rate regular exercise/activity in principle, HAFOS revealed that reasons for not converting that into action remain a challenge. A perceived lack of time due

to work is still the number one barrier preventing people from being more active. This is followed by cost: although only 13 per cent of respondents named high costs as a barrier, when asked what would encourage them to use leisure centres/health clubs, lower prices were quoted by the most people, at 62 per cent (see Figures 4 & 5).

Other factors that people said would encourage them to use leisure

facilities included improved equipment and facilities (42 per cent), better programming (43 per cent), and access to more information (47 per cent). A quarter of respondents said they would like better childcare provision. While some of these elements would require investment in facilities – perhaps difficult in the current economic climate – areas such as programming and information could easily be addressed by a more

FIGURE 3: Why would you like to undertake more activity/exercise? (Choose one main reason)



- ▶ customer-centric approach: providing information through channels that people can readily access, for example, and making programming/activities more convenient for people to fit into their busy everyday lives.

THE LONDON 2012 LEGACY

Continuing on the participation theme, HAFOS also asked about the London 2012 Olympic Games. An overwhelming 76 per cent of respondents said they thought the event had encouraged people to be more active, with only 15 per cent disagreeing with this statement. However, overall only 22 per cent of respondents said the Games had encouraged them personally to be more active, while only eight per cent of inactive people said that the 2012 Games had encouraged them to get moving.

Among respondents who had been encouraged to be more active, most had taken to running/walking (49 per cent), followed by using a gym/health club (30 per cent). Only nine per cent said they had taken up formal sport. Opportunities to get back into traditional sports after

school/university are generally not as readily available as other activities. In addition, while there have been attempts by sports such as hockey and netball in particular to bring adults back into sport, more could be done to make sport attractive and an enjoyable social opportunity for people of all age groups.

Of those who were encouraged by the Olympics to be more active, seven per cent had done no moderate activity in the previous three months. Ten per cent had previously achieved only 1 x 30 minutes of moderate activity a week, and 19 per cent previously did 2 x 30. In total, therefore, 36 per cent of those who were

inspired by the Games to be more active had previously not been meeting the recommended minimum levels of weekly physical activity. Nevertheless, the group that saw the biggest uplift was those already achieving 3 x 30 – 24 per cent of those who had been inspired by the Games fell into this category.

Overall, then, the message seems to be that people saw the Games as having a positive impact on everyone else, but not necessarily on themselves. The event also seemed to have more of an impact on those already active and open to doing more, rather than on sedentary people.



Olympic Legacy: 30 per cent of those inspired to be more active went to the gym

FIGURE 4: What's stopping you from doing more?

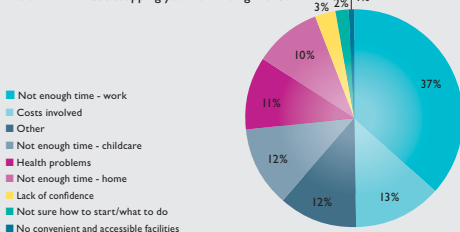
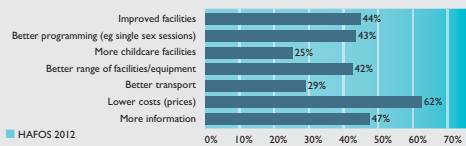


FIGURE 5: To what extent would the following encourage you to use these leisure centres/facilities? (strongly encourage/encourage)



POPULATION POLARISATION

This latest HAFOS shows a degree of improvement compared to previous years, perhaps in part due to the positive impact of London 2012. However, there is a real concern that these changes in activity may not be permanent, and also that the divide between the active and the inactive is becoming ever greater.

Those who are interested in their health – who are participating in an increasingly wide range of activities, as well as getting more active, more often – are distancing themselves more and more from the sedentary population who still struggle to find the motivation and time to do anything but basic physical activity. ●

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Mike Hill is managing director of customer insight specialist Leisure-net Solutions, which conducts the annual HAFOS survey. To find out more, to purchase a full report or to find out about other research undertaken by Leisure-net, contact info@leisure-net.org or call +44 (0)1603 814233



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Perhaps we should hear why they have joined the CoreFitnessRoller™ Revolution:

"For those of us who are over 55, who know what fitness is... weight loss is secondary to muscle control for us. Poor posture is the first sign that we have given up and moved into ageing without grace. Loss of stamina is the next most important sign that we have given up and cannot see our physical condition improving.

"If we give up, the impact on our psyche is almost irreversibly damaging. I believe

the CoreFitnessRoller™ has reversed the effects of these two issues for me... this is a great (if not the best) piece of equipment... I have only lost a few pounds over the last several weeks, but I have gained self-confidence, and that will make all the difference for how I approach the next several years of my life."

Basha Millhollen (Retired)

"As a triathlete, having a strong core is vital to being able to compete for long distances. Using the CoreFitnessRoller™ really pushed me and strengthened my core better than anything else I have tried. It is also great for building all the muscle



groups. I've never used a product with so many different ways to work out. If you want a compact, functional training device and want a challenging, fun way to improve your fitness, whether you are a beginner or seasoned athlete, then you need the CoreFitnessRoller™"

Jim Johnson, Ironman Triathlete

"After 20 years of teaching singing plus two 'C' sections, I was well aware of my core, but was afraid I would never have the core strength I had before the birth of my children. I thought the muscles were simply too compromised from the trauma. The CoreFitnessRoller™ was an answer to my prayers. After only five weeks of training on the CFR I began to see definition and have renewed stamina. What I learned and developed on the CoreFitnessRoller™ plus what I already teach my students regarding how we use our bodies in singing was a match made in heaven... The biggest surprise is my improved balance. Better balance changes everything, not only how we move but how we optimise all of our activities. I feel 10 years younger.

"My car wouldn't start a few days ago and I immediately hopped on my bike and rode seven miles to my CoreFitnessRoller™ class because I couldn't imagine the day without this experience. I'm hooked!"

Kimberly Ford, Vocalist and Mother.

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APPLIANCE OF SCIENCE

The Sports Science Institute of South Africa can identify the need for a piece of research, commission it, produce it and then apply its findings directly at its site and through its outreach work. Kath Hudson talks to chief operating officer Brent Walsh about this unique facility



What's your background?

I started at the institute in 1998, as an intern, having completed my honours degree in Sports Science and Biokinetics: a unique qualification in South Africa to provide intervention through movement and exercise, to rehabilitate and train a broad range of clients. A year later I was employed, having completed the qualification requirements. Through time I have channelled my energy into the business aspects of the institute.

When and why was SSISA set up?

The Sports Science Institute of South Africa (SSISA) was the brainchild of two leaders in their respective fields.

Professor Tim Noakes is an internationally respected sports science

academic and researcher who was looking for an opportunity to expand his Exercise Science and Sports Medicine Research (ESSM) Unit of the University of Cape Town into new premises.

Morné du Plessis is one of South Africa's most acclaimed Springbok rugby captains turned businessman who, having previously been isolated through the apartheid regime, wanted to provide infrastructure and support for the new era of South African sport.

What does the institute offer, and how has it evolved over time?

Although the initial focus was primarily on sporting performance, it took less than 18 months to make the facility fully accessible to the general public for both

medical and wellness services, with more of a community focus.

Medical services include orthopaedic consultation, radiology and surgery, sports physicians, physiotherapy, biokinetics, dietetics, sports psychology, sports vision testing and training, and podiatry.

The wellness offering includes a fitness centre: a 1,500sq m, state of the art facility with the usual mix of free weights, cardio, swimming pool, yoga/pilates studio. As many of our members come through referral programmes, they tend to be slightly older and higher risk, but our retention rate is exceptional for the industry: 70–75 per cent. The gym is an important commercial arm for us, helping to fund work such as the outreach projects.

There's a medically supervised risk stratification and reversal programme, as well as short-term programmes catering for specific groups (weight management, children, triathlon, boot-campers, one-to-one training opportunities).

High performance sports services remain critical to the image of the institute, and SSISA currently services a multitude of sporting federations in South Africa, with several Olympic heroes based here. But all elements of the offering are equally important in maintaining the complete brand experience in our facility. Application of science in our service delivery, on all levels, underscores all activity.

What about the research arm?

The University of Cape Town's Exercise Science and Sports Medicine Research Unit, while being a university entity, is



The fitness centre receives lots of referrals, so members tend to be older and higher risk



SSISA's mission is to improve the health of all South Africans

integral to the provision of science in all that SSISA does.

Outside of the academically inclined research, there's also a lot of applied research that's either initiated within the research unit, or else specifically commissioned by the institute through the unit, to ensure the application of best practice and science in client management. This relationship extends through all aspects of the SSISA business: social responsibility programmes, high performance and wellness.

Was the institute based on any blueprint?

It was the first of its kind in South Africa. Despite researching similar facilities worldwide, the founders were drawn to the unique requirements of South African sporting life and culture. They designed a unique facility incorporating the interests of the broader medical, wellness and sporting industries. Industry-related tenants are also housed in the building and there are conferencing facilities.

What is SSISA's philosophy?

Our mission is to improve the sporting performance and health of all South Africans through the execution, dissemination and application of science. This requires a broad focus, from servicing wellness and performance needs, to the ongoing relationship with the research unit that provides the science behind everything we do.

Disseminating information to the greater South African audience is a

“It was the first of its kind in South Africa – a unique facility incorporating the interests of the broader medical, wellness and sporting industries”

responsibility the institute takes seriously. Over the last three years, we've invested heavily in improving our web presence and social media, as well as providing workshops and lectures to specific populations and the general public.

The institute, in conjunction with one of its key partners, also presents an annual Wellness and Fitness Convention in Johannesburg for the broader industry. This has shown remarkable growth over the 10 years it's been in existence, and represents the largest gathering of the industry in South Africa to promote and share information.

How was the institute funded?

At the outset, corporates in South Africa gave generous donations, wanting to invest in the future of South African sporting performances and general health. Now, SSISA generates revenues of approximately 50 million Rand (£3.5m) a year across the entire business.

The commercialisation of the wellness and fitness centre was a big stepping-stone that assisted in the funding of

additional non-commercial programmes and activities. Commercial revenue makes up 70 per cent of the funding and sponsorship funding 30 per cent.

The institute is a not-for-profit company, so the emphasis is on using the funding we generate to push our non-commercial activity into the marketplace and communities. Our CHIPs programme (see below) is self-funded and there is a mandate for each of our business units to take on some level of social investment, which is all funded through SSISA.

Our commercial partners/sponsors also play a crucial role, giving us the funding to allow additional projects to be delivered which are not commercially driven.

Tell us more about CHIPs

For the last 15 years, SSISA's Community Health Intervention Programmes (CHIPs) have been successfully entering into previously inactive communities, training leaders to facilitate sessions, monitoring progress, providing ongoing mentorship and eventually ensuring the long-term sustainability of the project.



The CHIPs scheme targets inactive communities

- CHIPs engages with over 6,000 members of the community each week, across programmes for children, the elderly, workplace activities and general community fitness. We create the exercise opportunities and a structured programme, and we educate the group leaders. Each community has different needs and takes varying amounts of time to become self-sufficient: some are self-sufficient within six months while others continue to need help after 10 years.

The programmes are not expensive to run: we get a community facility for free and the community makes the equipment themselves. People are charged a very nominal fee (about 5 Rand or 35 pence) to take part, which we charge simply to keep them accountable.

CHIPs has provided a model of sustainable implementation of physical activity in disadvantaged communities, positively impacting both quality of life and personal responsibility for health.

Can you explain SSISA's approach to social change?

We call it social investment and have three channels through which we invest in social change: CHIPs, the Macsteel Maestros Programme, and the Laureus Sport for Good Foundation South Africa.

Macsteel Maestros provides support for those South African national athletes for who are not able to perform at their full potential due to lack of access to medical support, appropriate training, coaching and equipment.

The Laureus Sport for Good Foundation is an international project

that has a South African chapter. This project is managed by SSISA and it currently supports 16 projects nationally, with the underlying principle of effecting social change through sport.

What have been SSISA's most notable successes?

In the South African market, to be an independent facility with no government funding, providing the level of expertise that we do across the range of services on offer, is testament to the overall success of the facility.

The success of our commercial business units allows for the level of commitment we provide to our non-commercial activity. Our relationships with our commercial partners/sponsors are of major significance, and the longevity of our relationship with them is testament to the success of the projects that we deliver.

On an education level, in 2009 our education and training division partnered with our national soccer league to provide life skills training to every professional soccer player in the country. Many of the Premier League soccer players come from disadvantaged backgrounds and struggle to adjust to the environment once they become professional players. We put together a programme of life skills, including career guidance, dealing with the media, financial management, drug-free sport, and social drug and alcohol use. An academic research project was linked to the programme and the results and impact were a resounding success.

Our facility also hosted, assessed, trained and monitored numerous Olympic athletes in preparation for the London 2012 Games.

And academically, over the last 12 months, 58 scientific publications were produced in peer-reviewed journals, and ESSM researchers were cited 1,093 times by other scientists.

Are there any plans to further develop the offer?

SSISA has been involved in numerous international facility developments, consulting with them on appropriate assessment needs and providing structure to the business plan.

Locally, we're looking to partner with organisations in the industry to channel our intellectual property into assisting the industry where we can, to grow through the implementation of best practice principles and evidence-based science.

What are the main challenges of running the institute?

Keeping the balance right between all the different services. We're multi-faceted, and it's crucial to remain world-class across all of those services.

What do you enjoy most about your job at SSISA?

The diversity: there are so many different disciplines that contribute to the value of the brand, and so many different types of relationships to build and manage. To get them to work together in a single direction is the most challenging and satisfying aspect. ●

fitness fx

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AN UNTAPPED MARKET

Colin Milner, CEO of the ICAA, outlines nine principles of active ageing – guidelines for operators wanting to better cater for older people

For the past 66 years, corporations around the world have profited from the baby boomer market. And as baby boomers swell the ranks of the 810 million people aged 60 and over, their economic impact continues to be felt. According to UNFPA and HelpAge International, 30 years ago there were no 'aged economies' in which consumption by older people surpassed that of youth. In 2010, there were 23 aged economies, and by 2040 there will be 89.

An example of this can be found in the US, where the older market represents more than US\$2.3tn in spending power (Age Wave). It's 47 times richer than its younger counterpart (Pew Research Center), controls roughly 50 per cent of all discretionary income (Deloitte), and dominates 1,023 out of 1,083 categories in the consumer packaged goods industry alone (Nielsenwire).

On paper there's no reason to neglect this sector, and yet the health and fitness industry consistently does so. So how can gyms do more for this lucrative, loyal audience? To address this question, the International Council on Active Ageing


(ICAA) has created Nine Principles of Active Ageing to guide operators.

1 POPULATIONS

The older population is extremely diverse – whether in terms of ability, age, income, culture, sexual orientation. The first step is to identify exactly who you want as members. Will it be highly functioning adults aged 55–70, with a high level of disposable income, for example? No matter how you answer this question, your answer to the next question is crucial to your success: how will you meet the expectations, wants, needs, dreams and desires of such different individuals? The answer to this is knowledge. Become a student of the older consumer and success is there for the taking.

2 PERCEPTIONS

Ageism and negative stereotypes of ageing will impede your success. To maximise the opportunity, you – and your staff – must embrace it and all it means to your business. The realities of ageing today are very different from the past, so leave old ways of thinking behind. Older adults are often invisible in society. Help



In the US, grey market spending power tops \$2.3tn

them feel valued and you will be seen as a business with their best interests at heart.

This is a unique position that will bode well for your bottom line. An example: according to a 2002 study on behalf of Help the Aged, only 5 per cent of all advertising spend in the UK is targeted at the 35-plus market. How can you position your organisation's marketing so older adults see themselves as a consumer of your services? The answer lies within two words: 'ageless' and 'inclusive'. By becoming ageless and

OLDER ADULTS OFTEN FEEL INVISIBLE IN SOCIETY. BY BECOMING AGELESS AND INCLUSIVE, YOU'RE SAYING THAT YOU SEE THE OLDER CONSUMER – AND THEY WILL NOW SEE YOU



inclusive, you're saying you see the older consumer – and they will now see you.

3 PEOPLE

Now that you have decided on who you will serve and how to become an advocate for them, the next question relates to your workforce: with fewer people entering the labour force, and the field of ageing in particular, where will the people come from to meet the market's demands and needs? This is a challenge for all industries, not just health and fitness.

Start by looking at the requirements in WHO's International Guidelines for Preparing Physical Activity Instructors for Older Adults. How do your staff stack up? Are they qualified to train older members? If not, seek out universities, colleges or certification providers that offer specialist training and work with these groups – alongside

the WHO Guidelines – to create an in-house training programme for future instructors. Seek out student interns to help build a solid base of potential instructors. You need to have the right people working in your club.

4 POTENTIAL

With population ageing, consumers aged 50-plus will dominate purchasing decisions for decades to come. So how can businesses tap into this opportunity? Think of one word: wellness. By implementing the seven dimensions of wellness at your fitness centre (physical, emotional, spiritual, environmental, intellectual, social and vocational) you will not only have a diverse set of programmes and services to offer, but will also have the services that match with the diversity of your potential audience. Think club, not fitness club.

5 PRODUCTS

Many clubs today continue to focus their products and services towards youth. Research from the United Nations suggests this lack of interest in the older consumer stems from ageism and a limited understanding of the market.

Ask yourself this: can your current and potential older members navigate through your club with ease, or are there dumbbells, bars, benches and other items that are hazards? Are your products and services inclusive for the older consumer – from your fitness equipment to your lighting, from your pool to the programmes you offer?

Think function, think inclusive, and think about how what you offer impacts all five senses: vision, hearing, touch, smell, and taste. It's an obvious point to make, but having the right products for the right audience is key to success. ▶



Clubs should invite older groups to visit their facility and give feedback on what they did and did not like

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6 PROMOTIONS

We mentioned earlier that a great majority of marketers have neglected older consumers, despite their purchasing power. Effective promotions and marketing must be rooted in the reality of life for older adults; many of today's older people will simply not recognise themselves in the somewhat negative stereotypes of older people used in many marketing campaigns, and will be turned off by the messages that ostensibly target them.

Shifting the marketing model will not only meet consumer demand, but will also inspire societal change. We need to be real, ageless and inclusive in our messaging. We should tell a story – the past is filled with great memories, so don't be afraid of nostalgia. Talk about what people will be able to achieve now, not in the future: more energy, better sleep, greater strength and balance that will enable them to do the things they wish, now. And use real older models, not beauty queens, in your marketing.

7 PLACES

Environments can encourage or discourage people of all ages when it comes to leading active, engaged lives. From indoors to outdoors, what environments will you need to engage the older member? Hire a group of older adults to visit your club and your competitors' clubs, and have them jot down on a piece of paper what they liked and didn't like. Put all the recommendations on a large board for your staff to see, then start the process of improvement, whether that's changing

signs, lighting or the way your club's laid out. Don't stop until the list is completed. Then ask the group to walk through your club again. How is their reaction now?

8 POLICIES

Ask the group that reviewed your club to share their thoughts on your policies too: do they support inclusiveness, or do any of them create barriers to entry? Are any unacceptable? You may find things such as refund policies don't work for this group, or that they want a longer trial period. You may also find that your policies on club hours, accessibility, music and how your staff interact with members need adjustments to better accommodate this group.

Whatever policies you create, ensure they are posted for all to see and that they are legible – in a sufficiently large print – and understandable, in language that can be understood by someone other than a lawyer.

9 PROGRAMMES

As promoted by ICAA, the seven dimensions of wellness are the backbone of active ageing. They are also key to providing the breadth of programmes and environments that fulfill the needs and interests of the 50-plus population.

When looking at what you offer this diverse group, think functional ability, not age. An example of this is chair aerobics. One of the main reasons to offer chair aerobics is the simple fact that 42 per cent of adults aged 60–69 years, 52 per cent of individuals aged 70–79 and 66 per cent of those aged 80–89 have

some difficulty stooping, crouching or kneeling. You could also consider buying stairclimbers or providing step aerobics classes, as 18 per cent of adults aged 60–69, 26 per cent of people aged 70–79 and 41 per cent of those aged 80–89 have difficulty climbing 10 stairs without a rest.

You could offer 30-minute classes, as 21 per cent of adults aged 60–69 years, 30 per cent of individuals aged 70–79 and 49 per cent of those aged 80–89 have difficulty walking a quarter of a mile.

Creating programmes for older adults is about enabling the user to find what they 'can do'. By doing so, you will create services that are used by all generations.

CALL TO ACTION

So when should you begin your efforts to better cater for older people? Ask yourself three questions: What's the cost of taking action? What's the cost of inaction? And what's the cost of reaction, addressing these needs with wholesale changes further down the path? The time is now. ●

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Colin Milner is the founder and CEO of the International Council on Active Aging (ICAA), a leading authority on the health and wellbeing of the older adult. For the past five years, the World Economic Forum has invited Milner to serve on its Network of Global Agenda Councils, recognising him as one of "the most innovative and influential minds" in the world on ageing-related topics.

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LOCAL TOUCH

All across the country, 'unsung hero' initiatives – community-focused projects being delivered by sporta members – are having a significant impact on their respective local communities. We take a look at a selection of these initiatives taking place across the north-west of England

DOING IT FOR THE KIDS

Fusion, a community-based youth engagement project, was launched in June 2011. A detailed consultation led by Rossendale Neighbourhood Forums had uncovered a lack of activities for young people, specifically in the Haslingden area of Rossendale. In response to this, Rossendale Leisure Trust teamed up with Rossendale Young People's Service (YPS) and Rossendale Borough Council to apply for funding to provide youth activities.

Consultation carried out in schools and youth clubs found that young people wanted a place to 'hang out', with a range of sports activities on offer. Thanks to funding from Sportivate and Lancashire Drug and Alcohol Team, Fusion was therefore born – a youth zone created within the local sports centre from 6.00–8.00pm every Friday evening.

Costing just £1 a visit, young people can come with friends and take up new

ORGANISATION
Rossendale Leisure Trust

PROJECT
Fusion

activities; the subsidised cost means that those from deprived areas, who might otherwise be out and about on the streets, can afford to get involved.

Rossendale YPS provided a youth worker who co-ordinates the project each week, working hand-in-hand with a sports coach to develop a rapport with the young people and build their confidence levels. The overall idea is to use sport as a positive tool to engage with young people and promote a healthy lifestyle, building their interest in the activities slowly through an informal approach to sport,

without any barriers to participation. Activities have included street dance, boxing, breakdancing, parkour, table tennis and Xbox sports sessions.

An average of 18 young people attend every week, and other initiatives have stemmed from the project: a parkour club now runs every Friday for youngsters who first tried it at Fusion. Many parkour club members stay on for Fusion afterwards, and some have joined the sports centre as junior gym members.

Having successfully developed a brand young people relate to, the project has now been linked with Street Games and is offering volunteer and training opportunities. Regular consultation is carried out to allow the young people to view Fusion as a youth-led project.

Further funding has been obtained to develop this project, including increasing its volunteer base and the number of young people gaining training qualifications.



The youth project aims to remove any barriers to participation and gradually engage youngsters through different sports



The foundation has 20 schools engaged in sports coaching and wellbeing programmes

The foundation has secured its first year running costs, with income streams through service delivery, fundraising, sponsorship, grant and partnership income totalling £175,000

COUNTERING ADVERSITY

Carlisle & District Sport and Physical Activity Alliance Foundation is a not-for-profit Independent Industrial Provident Society. Its main aim is to provide inspirational sport and recreational activities, as well as lifestyle coaching provision, across schools and local communities. Although based in Carlisle, its remit also extends across surrounding districts throughout Cumbria.

In 2008, Carlisle was one of many districts across England to form a Sport and Physical Activity Alliance (SPAA) – also known as a Community Sports Network (CSN). Through a partnership approach involving public, private and voluntary sector organisations, its key aim – through significant match capital and revenue funding from Sport England – was to develop new sporting opportunities, supporting new facilities and developing appropriate programmes to raise participation levels.

In early 2011, after a successful two-and-a-half years of SPAA projects, financial austerity measures meant that Carlisle was facing reductions in service provision

ORGANISATION

Carlisle & District Sport and Physical Activity Alliance Foundation

PROJECT

Combating funding cuts

for sport and recreational activity provided through the local authority and the School Sports Partnership.

Carlisle SPAA partnership therefore decided to use its remaining Sport England funding to appoint a development manager on a six-month contract, tasked with the following objectives:

- To review existing programmes and establish the impact of imposed funding cuts, and try to attract sufficient interest and funding to retain as many as possible.
- To investigate the possibility of establishing a social enterprise or similar to work alongside the existing leisure trust (CLL).

On 31 January 2012, Carlisle & District SPAA Foundation was officially registered as a not-for-profit Independent Industrial Provident Society. It currently has four full-time and six part-time employees – a development manager, three full-time community coaches and six casual coaches – and has retained the commitment of partner organisations concerned at the level of programmes that would be affected.

The foundation has secured its first year running costs, with income streams through service delivery, fundraising, sponsorship, grants and partnerships totalling £175,000 for the first financial year, 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013.

It currently has 20 schools – around 2,000 children – involved in its sports coaching and/or U Can Shine Well Being programmes. Holiday sports activities are also offered at community centres across the Carlisle district, including a rural activity scheme. A health project in a deprived ward of Carlisle had 100 adult attendees in 2012, while a social inclusion programme across seven sites attracted 500 young people in 2012.

HOLISTIC WELLBEING

Arts on Prescription provides art courses for people who are finding life tough – people who are isolated, stressed, lacking confidence in themselves or suffering from anxiety or depression. It offers a range of courses with professional artists including glass-making, creative writing and storytelling, traditional painting, classical drawing techniques, crafts, journalling and scrap-booking, cookery, textiles, jewellery and sculpture.

The project is run by Pendle Leisure Trust and has been funded by Target Wellbeing, Lancashire Adult Learning, Lancashire County Council, Pendle Borough Council, Burnley Borough Council and Ribbles Valley Borough Council. It has been running since April 2008 and has worked with over 750 individuals across Burnley, Pendle and the Ribbles Valley.

Arts on Prescription uses the Warwick-Edinburgh scale of mental wellbeing as a measure of how people feel both at the beginning of the course and at the end (whereby a higher score

ORGANISATION

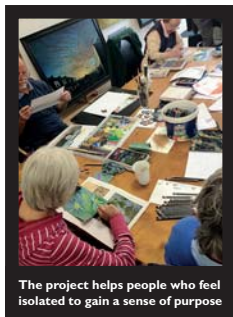
**Pendle Leisure Trust,
East Lancashire**

PROJECT

Arts on Prescription

denotes feeling more positive). For 2011/12, the average starting score among participants was 43 points, going up to 50 by the end. This is based on the 14-question Warwick-Edinburgh.

For comparison purposes, the average Warwick-Edinburgh score for Lancashire (where the shorter seven-question scale is used) is 27. East Lancashire scores slightly below this. Pendle is therefore working with people who score significantly below average (21.5 points for a comparative number of questions); by the end of the course, they are brought up to 25 points – much closer to the average East Lancashire score.



The project helps people who feel isolated to gain a sense of purpose

One participant, Karen, tells her story: "I was depressed, had no job, no friends and nothing to fill my time with. It was a big step to contact Arts on Prescription and ask if I could take part. I enjoyed the creativity, met new people and became interested in new things. I started a blog and did more arts and crafts."

Karen has since secured a full-time job after almost two years of unemployment.

FORGET THE FADS

When it comes to managing weight and improving health, it really doesn't get any more straightforward. No faddy food matching or celeb-endorsed calorie-counting – just common sense advice and the right support to help you get up, get active and get more out of life. This simple ethos has worked for people in Wigan Borough for over four years as part of WLCT's 'Lose Weight, Feel Great' initiative.

The leisure trust teamed up with the borough's health services (NHS Ashton, Leigh and Wigan) and Slimming World to pilot the scheme in 2008. Jane Hynes, who leads on weight management for the trust's Active Living Team, explains: "More than 60 per cent of people in our borough are heavier than they

ORGANISATION

**Wigan Leisure & Culture
Trust (WLCT)**

PROJECT

Lose Weight, Feel Great

should be, so there was a real need for a programme that addressed healthy eating and physical activity."

'Lose Weight, Feel Great' typically targets those with a BMI of over 25, but is shaped around individual preferences. Hynes explains: "We know that losing weight and improving your fitness is a very personal thing – one size does not fit all – so our scheme offers a bespoke

service tailored to the needs of the individual. At its core are some very basic concepts: healthy eating, physical activity and motivational support."

The partnership between WLCT and Slimming World is one option: a 12-week programme with further support for up to 12 months. WLCT creates a personalised exercise programme, Slimming World delivers a healthy eating schedule, and support comes from a specialist activity instructor and Slimming World consultant – and fellow slimmers.

At the end of the 12 weeks, 36 per cent of participants have lost on average 5 per cent of their starting weight. Weight loss then continues over the 12 months of follow-up support.

Retired nurse Margaret McNulty, 64, was struggling to come to terms with her body image post-mastectomy following breast cancer. With a BMI of over 30, she was also in denial about the fact that her weight was putting her health at risk. She enrolled on the course and over time dropped from a size 18–22 to size 14.

Based on the success in Wigan, WLCT will roll out the scheme in Selby, North Yorkshire, where it also delivers services. ●

More than 60 per cent of people in our borough are heavier than they should be, so there was a real need for a programme that addressed healthy eating and physical activity

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Drinks



New juices added to Folkington's range

Metro Drinks has added two new varieties to its Folkington's fruit juice range: Mango Juice, pressed from Magdalena River variety mangos grown in the Colombian Andes, and English Elderflower Drink with Timperley early rhubarb juice and Femminello lemon juice. The range is available now in packs of 12 x single-serve 250ml glass bottles for gym cafés and bars.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

metro



X-Treme sports a new cap for easy drinking

Inkspor, part of Nutrichem, has developed a new edition of its X-TREME protein drink, now with a sports cap. With less carbohydrate and low in fat, the drink comes in a brand new bottle designed to attract consumers. The bottle is rounder with a convenient tapered middle, designed to make it easier to hold. The protein drink also has a new wide sports cap added for convenience and is available from April.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

nutrichem

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MiTonics launches two nutrition drinks

MiTonics (previously BioSauce) offers two new personalised sports nutrition products: Body Tone and Meal Replacement for Weight Loss. Its post-workout personalised drinks are dispensed based on weight, training goal (Muscle Gain, Body Tone or Weight Management) and body fat percentage, which the user enters into a MiTonics machine. MiTonics' Meal Replacement contains slow release carbs and protein, vitamins, minerals, chromium, conjugated linoleic acid and dark chocolate.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

mitonics



Lucozade Sport rugby heroes sales campaign

GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare (GSK) is featuring rugby ambassadors from England, Scotland and Wales as part of a Lucozade Sport campaign. The makers of the isotonic carbohydrate-electrolyte drink have also been named a partner of the Rugby Football Union. Players Chris Robshaw (England), Richie Gray (Scotland) and Leigh Halfpenny (Wales) appear on Lucozade Sport posters and point of sale material for gyms and clubs as part of the £1m investment, timed to coincide with the RBS 6 Nations. The bold in-store material is designed to create more consumer interest.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD

gsk

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



The G Series Pro Range

The G Series Pro Range by Gatorade consists of nutritional support at the three stages of physical activity – before, during and after – with a product for each of the three stages. Prime, with B vitamins and isomaltulose, is for 15 minutes before training and comes in orange and berry flavours. Perform, with carbohydrates and electrolytes, is to be drunk during exercise and comes in blackcurrant, lemon and orange flavours. Recover is a protein, carbohydrate and electrolyte recovery drink for post-workout and comes in berry flavour.

fitness-kit.net KEYWORD **britvic**



fitness-kit.net KEYWORD **usn**

New Smooth Vanilla Protein Fuel 50 drink

Ultimate Sports Nutrition has added a new Smooth Vanilla flavour to its ready to drink Protein Fuel 50 range. Available to order from 19 March 2013 in six-packs, this high protein drink contains 10.6g BCAAs, 50g protein and 20g carbohydrates. It also comes in chocolate and strawberry flavours. Ingredients include skimmed milk, milk protein, water, cocoa powder (1.8 per cent), sucralose and the stabiliser carrageenan. As with other products from USN, the ready to drink Protein Fuel 50 is available in a 500ml bottle and is designed to be taken to and from the gym, as an 'on the go' product.

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Show preview

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State-of-the-art exhibition halls with natural lighting and excellent transport connections: visitors and exhibitors can look forward to FIBO taking place in Cologne this year.

Exhibitors from around 40 countries will present the latest in training equipment and intelligent health promotion concepts, complemented by a range of specialist lectures and action-packed events. With 100,000sq m of fitness, wellness and health, the show will be 20 per cent larger than in 2012.

The trade show will occupy exhibition halls 6, 7, 8 and 9 at the Exhibition Centre Cologne – new halls completed in 2006. In addition, FIBOactive will spread into halls 4.2 and 5.1, while FIBO POWER – held as a separate event alongside FIBO and encompassing bodybuilding, weightlifting and martial arts – takes place in halls 1, 2.1. and 2.2.

FIBOmed: More room for healthy concepts

With 20 per cent of trade visitors at FIBO working in the health profession – whether at a physiotherapy or medical practice, a health or rehab centre

FIBO 2013

From the Ruhr to the Rhine – FIBO moves to Cologne for 2013

– health as a focal theme will be developed further with the innovative FIBOmed section. This area will encompass everything from diagnostic equipment, through training equipment and functional therapy methods, to professional health consulting.

Visitors will find the heart of FIBOmed in hall 9, which includes the FIBOmed Pavilion and the forum, in which seminars will be on offer around the themes of FIBOmed.

Additionally the FIBOmed Congress – the first Interdisciplinary Congress on Exercise Medicine – will take place during this year's FIBO in the Congress Centre North, within the Cologne Exhibition Centre. From Thursday through to Sunday, it will deal with all aspects of the impact which exercise and fitness can have on health.

The congress targets a specialist audience which includes sports and general physicians, sports scientists and sports educators, physiotherapists, fitness coaches and fitness instructors.

FIBO Innovation Awards

When FIBO opens its doors in Cologne, visitors will be able to see first-hand the latest, most innovative product developments from approximately 650 exhibitors from around the world – and on Friday 12 April, three products will be awarded a FIBO Innovation Award.

The winners will come from three categories: training equipment, health promotion, and design & communication.

Visitors will be able to see nominated products at the new Innovation Forum in hall 9. For the first time, this will include a lounge area with seating where visitors can find out more about the nominated products on display and exchange views in a relaxed atmosphere.

FIBOactive will once more offer everything from the fields of fashion, music, fun and action. New and established exhibitors will present a comprehensive range of products, supplemented by a large number of action programmes and stage shows.

FIBOactive will again offer a multitude of join-in and stage programmes on the FIBOactive show stage in hall 4.2. The international DFAC Convention and the Fit for Fun Cycling Festival will also take place once again this year.

FIBO 2013

Dates: 11–14 April 2013 (11–12 April – trade visitors only, 13–14 April private and trade visitors)

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Injury prevention:
Suunto watches offer
recovery time display

No longer the exclusive domain of elite athletes, heart rate monitors are now increasingly user-friendly – so how can we best use the data to motivate people? Kath Hudson reports

Hear rate monitors can boost motivation in three main ways: measuring progress, training optimally and recording achievements. So says Julia Dalgleish, master trainer at Cybex, adding: “Clarity of goal and the ability to view training progress increases intrinsic motivation, helping us to stay on track to reach our goals. Motivation comes from setting goals and seeing progression towards them, and heart rate monitors present this progression.”

Historically, heart rate monitors were highly complicated, reporting on the likes of lactate inflection point and anaerobic threshold. However, manufacturers have worked hard to make them more user-friendly, using parameters such as percentages or colour zones to help people understand what they should be aiming for. And now that apps are also becoming available, heart rate monitoring is heading for the mainstream. So how can operators make the most of the motivation potential it offers?

Rewarding effort

“MYZONE has changed the game on heart rate monitors by focusing on effort rather than fitness,” says CEO Dave Wright. “MYZONE Effort Points (MEPs) are accredited to minutes spent in specific effort zones, so the system offers an inclusive approach for people of all ages, shapes, sizes and levels of fitness: an unfit person can earn as many points as a fit person, provided they put in the effort.”

“I like the way MYZONE creates a level playing field for members,” agrees Sol Gilbert, MD of ZT Group. “We run regular MEP challenges, with the

MYZONE's inclusive approach rewards effort, not fitness ▶



last challenge being won by one of our more unfit members. That gave them a tremendous boost."

Wright continues: "Although not specifically heart rate-related, MYZONE also motivates users in a couple of other ways. Firstly, it helps to change behaviour by making people accountable for their actions. It wirelessly uploads fitness data, so there's nowhere to hide if they've skimped on their programme – they know their gym can keep tabs on them. There's also an iPhone app that tracks food consumed: users photograph their meals, with the photos then date-stamped and recorded in their online account. Although people can cheat, it still inspires accountability: if people really want to achieve their goals, they need to be honest with themselves.

"Another motivating aspect is showing users how their body is changing through exercise. The iPhone app provides the consumer with the ability to store 'before and after' photos, which can be compared to see results.

"MYZONE also integrates with body fat scales such as Inbody and Intelemetrix, allowing information such as body fat,

muscle mass and visceral fat to be automatically uploaded into MYZONE users' accounts.

This also helps people track outcomes over time and keep tabs on how their body is changing."

All about apps

"We're seeing a move away from traditional heart rate monitors towards apps. People can be scared of science, but they're not scared of apps," says Liz Shenton of Polar Electro UK. "In response to this, we launched the Polar Beat app in September last year, which works with iPhone 4S and iPhone 5 and will soon work with Android. It links with our heart rate monitor belt and uses bluetooth technology.

"The app is designed to help users understand their workout and get the most effective results. Users can choose a training target – calorie burn, for example, or a time or distance record to beat – and choose the type of exercise. Real-time graphs and voice guidance are used to keep the user at the right intensity. GPS tracks the distance, the pace and the route.

"The workout is analysed at the end, so the user finds out how many calories they have burned – many users are motivated by calories. They also receive a summary of how the workout benefited them and can then share the results on Facebook and Twitter." This in itself can add to people's motivation levels, as they want to impress their friends with their workout efforts.

Jon Johnston, MD of Matrix Fitness, agrees: "Over the last couple of years, there have been major improvements in software and web portals, allowing people to download their information and analyse it afterwards in order to track their progress.

"Smartphone apps are changing the way heart rate is sensed and is the next big growth area. Smartphones can be ▶

WE'RE SEEING A MOVE AWAY FROM TRADITIONAL HEART RATE MONITORS TOWARDS APPS



▶ **New generation:** The Polar Beat app gives users a summary of their workout that they can then share on social media

► very easily converted to a heart rate monitor using just a dongle and an app. "Although it's currently used mainly by elite athletes, Training-Peaks is a good example of this and demonstrates the future direction of heart rate monitoring and data interpretation. It can be used with Garmin, Polar and Suunto watches, as well as many other devices such as cycling power meters and GPS. As well as setting a programme and capturing the heart rate, the app records other useful data such as resting heart rate, body weight, and whether the body is getting fatigued. These ideas are already starting to be incorporated into more consumer-orientated programmes."

Knowledge is power

"What consumers want is changing rapidly, and the scientific data Wattbike provides is the product's main motivating factor," says sales manager Richard Baker. "Consumers are more tech-savvy and demanding, with a thirst for knowledge when it comes to training more efficiently and effectively. Members are seeking to understand the science behind their training and how they can use the data."

He continues: "Our onboard computer displays a wide range of fitness parameters – such as heart rate and power – in real time. That enables users to fine-tune their training and track improvements, both during the workout and over a longer period of time. Tracking fitness parameters shows the user their workouts are having the desired effect. That's fantastic motivation for them, and a strong retention tool for the gym."

"We're continually working to help our customers analyse the performance

data from their workouts, and we currently have some very exciting development plans to enhance the offering for both members and operators."

Importance of education

"The most important factor in the use of heart rate monitoring as a motivational tool for exercise is education – for example, educating users about aerobic thresholds and how this can benefit them with their training," says Jason Kerry, senior sales executive at Suunto.

"Health club users often remain in a comfort zone when it comes to the intensity of their workouts, so features incorporated within modern heart rate monitors – such as an inbuilt training coach and increasingly accurate data collection and calculation – can play a significant role in getting results and motivating the user. Meanwhile, a new feature of Suunto watches is recovery time generation and display, which estimates how long it will take to recover and prevents people from over-training – a common cause of demotivation."

But it's not only experienced exercisers who can derive motivation from understanding heart rate training. Precor and Suunto – both owned by Amer Sport – have recently collaborated to provide Wennington College in Lancashire, UK, with heart rate monitors and wristwatches. All the boys at the school are statemented with social, emotional or behavioural difficulties, and one of the aims of the school is to bring the boys back into the mainstream. Sport



▲ **Wattbike:** Today's tech-savvy consumers want more in-depth data to improve their workout efficiency

and exercise is one of the ways in which they aim to achieve this.

"As it's a boys-only school there's a lot of testosterone, but sport and exercise helps channel this and burns off excess energy and aggression," says Precor's Paul Bolus. "The heart rate monitors have helped because they've given the boys goals to aim for. Many come from disadvantaged backgrounds and have no idea about healthy lifestyles, but the monitors – alongside education from PE teachers – are helping them understand their bodies, health and exercise."

Immediacy & accountability

"Our concept and studio focus on the idea of working out based on science, and using heart rate monitors fits with this," says David Long, CEO of Orangetheory Fitness in the US. "We introduced Polar Cardio GX about two and a half years ago and saw our member retention improve by about 15 to 20 per cent."

"Members have the instant gratification of seeing their data at the end of the session. A summary draft of how much time they spent in each zone, and calories burned, is emailed to them at the end of their workout. That's very motivating because they can easily track progress: the data is objective, simple to understand, and clearly shows the impact their workout is having."

ZT Group's Gilbert agrees: "In the 18 months that we've been using MYZONE, both retention and motivation have improved massively. I can check up on our members – there's no hiding place – which keeps them accountable. And that helps change behaviour." ●



Wennington College: Heart rate monitors are giving the pupils goals to aim for

SUPPLIER SHOWCASE

TRACKING ACTIVITY IN-CENTRE AND OUT: ASPIRE TAKES ON THE MYZONE SYSTEM

SUPPLIER: **MYZONE**

CLIENT: **ASPIRE SPORTS & CULTURAL TRUST**

Aspire Sports and Cultural Trust is a charitable trust working across Gloucestershire, which operates three facilities: GLI Leisure Centre, Oxstalls Tennis Centre and Xpress Fitness Cheltenham.

The trust has some 3,500 fitness members across its three sites and wanted to improve its interaction with members to boost retention. It wanted a tool that would allow staff not only to engage more with members, but also have meaningful conversations about their activity and progress.

In addition, as a not-for-profit organisation, being able to accurately measure the impact of all exercise programmes – including community obesity and health projects that operate outside of the facilities – was critical for securing future funding. With three funding applications pending for community health projects, the need for accurate and independent data proving the value of exercise intervention had never been greater.

Working with Big Wave Media as part of a wider member interaction and retention strategy, the trust decided to invest in MYZONE, a heart rate-based system that uses wireless and cloud technology to monitor physical activity that takes place both in and outside of its centres, from jogging to golf.

To get the project rolling, all 250 of Aspire's staff were given a MYZONE physical activity belt in December 2012. The belt, which is worn during all concerted physical activity, has a memory chip that stores up to 16 hours of activity performed away from the centres. The data is automatically and wirelessly uploaded when the wearer comes into one of the centres, within range of a MYZONE console.

The belt was a hit with staff, who started competing with one another in their day-to-day activities to burn calories and earn effort points: the system rewards effort rather than



MYZONE tracks everything from jogging to tennis

fitness, with points accumulated for every minute of activity users spend in the five effort (intensity) zones based on their maximum heart rate. More effort means more points earned.

Encouraged by the success of the staff trial, Aspire went live with the system in January 2013, with more than 500 members enrolling in the scheme. MYZONE consoles and plasma screens were installed in various locations throughout each of the three Aspire sites – including the gym, group exercise and group cycling studios – to allow members to monitor their effort during exercise. The system has been particularly popular in the cycling studios, where members can compete against each other during class and instructors can monitor how much effort each member is making.

Among the most surprising advocates are the toning centre members, with an average age of over 65. It has also proved popular with tennis players.

To ensure members can measure all of their activity, Aspire has linked MYZONE to Swimtag, a training aid and monitoring system that tracks members' progress in the swimming pool including the number of lengths, stroke rate and stroke type.

The trust aims to have three-quarters of members using the system by the end of this year, as well as 25,000 belts in use in the wider community.



The MYZONE system awards points linked to heart rate zones

For more information: www.myzone.org

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Lightweights

SKI RACE IS AN UPHILL STRUGGLE

This year's ski season may be coming to a close, but there's one race you will need to start practising for now if you want to enter it next year – an uphill ski race from the bottom to the top of the longest black ski run in the Alps.

The Champ or Cramp competition is open to professionals and avid skiers alike and every year attracts up to 200 entrants and more than 1,000 visitors. It's staged in the town of Spittal an der Drau, in the Carinthia region in the heart of the Alps. The route itself covers part of Goldeck, Carinthia's sports mountain: a 8.5km distance with a 1,600m altitude climb. This year, the race was won by Nejc Kuhar, a skier from Slovenia who completed it in 50 minutes and 36 seconds.

Champ or Cramp is held in January every year, at the peak of the main winter season. It attracts coverage from major sports channels including the BBC, and includes live entertainment and awards ceremonies. Details: www.champorcramp.com



PLATE COLOUR CAN HELP WEIGHT LOSS



Failing to choose a contrasting plate colour could mean bigger portions

If you have white plates at home and serve up white food such as rice and potatoes, you could be giving yourself far more generous helpings than you're aware of, according to a recent study.

Researchers from Cornell University in the US found that people serve themselves up to 20 per cent bigger portions when food 'blends in' with the colour of crockery it's placed on, compared to when it's served up on a plate of contrasting colour.

It's believed that the difference in colour prompts people to examine what they're putting on their plate more closely.



HAIR TODAY, WORKOUT TOMORROW

A new hairstyle may be costing African-American females their health as well as their money. In a study published in the *Archives of Dermatology*, nearly 40 per cent of women said they avoid physical activity at times because of their hair.

The study, by the Wake Forest School of Medicine in North Carolina, US, was based on 103 African-American women who had high levels of obesity. Most of the women (62.1 per cent) had chemically straightened hair, which cannot be maintained if washed frequently. The majority of the participants (81.6 per cent) washed their hair every one to two weeks, so avoided exercise because of sweating.

Women who didn't work out due to hair concerns were almost three times as likely not to exercise for more than 150 minutes a week.

Rock music preferred for exercise

It's no secret that music can motivate people to push themselves more at the gym – but what tunes would most people choose?

In a Tesco Phone Shop survey of 2,000 fitness enthusiasts, rock music – from artists like the Prodigy and Lady Gaga – was the most popular choice, with 35 per cent of people choosing it.

Pop music came in second, with 29 per cent of respondents saying they

opted to listen to it while exercising, while 25 per cent of people opted for dance and house tunes. The less popular choices were classical music and heavy metal tracks, which both got three per cent, as well as RnB soundtracks, which only five per cent of people go for.

Don't Stop Me Now by Queen was singled out as the best song, followed by *Survivor's Eye of the Tiger* and *Simply the Best* by Tina Turner.



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